

THE FORGE OF GOD

by
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Based on the novels
"The Forge of God" and "The Anvil of Stars"
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Current Revisions
by
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EXT. SPACE

A distant star glows in an infinite expanse, offering no heat or solace. The silence is absolutely deafening.

Then a MOON moves into view: a craggy, dead orb. As it whispers past us in a mindless orbit, we begin to move --

-- past ANOTHER MOON. Unlike it's sister, this one is active, the entire surface covered with VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS.

But we continue on, interested not in this moon or the DOZEN OTHER ones, distant, but in our vision. There's one in particular we're looking for, and we find it --

-- GLITTERING like an elegant jewel against the black veil of space, its surface coated almost entirely in ICE.

INSERT CARD -- **'Europa, sixth moon of Jupiter...'**

As we SWING AROUND the moon, it is dwarfed by the reveal of JUPITER -- a red and yellow-striped giant so mind-boggling in size that the moon looks like a speck of sand before it.

But we stay on Europa, getting closer... and closer...

... as hundreds of SPECKS OF LIGHT begin to cluster around it, moving erratically at first, but then SWARMING TOGETHER --

-- they suddenly DIVE into the moon, seeming to punch through the crust. BRIGHT FLASHES are visible beneath the ice, and VIOLENT DISTURBANCES begin to ripple across the ionosphere.

INSERT CARD -- **'... PRESENT DAY.'**

The FLASHES INTENSIFY as we suddenly RUSH TOWARDS the moon --

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - DRIVEWAY - DUSK

-- which becomes a BASKETBALL, sailing in a smooth arc through the air. It's a perfect shot, nothing but net.

MARTY GORDON (14), picks up the ball and walks back to the free-throw line he's chalked. His chocolate Lab GAUGE watches, tongue lolling, as Marty nails another shot.

A car pulls up to the curb and ARTHUR GORDON (40s) gets out.

ARTHUR
Practicing, huh?

MARTY
Don't need practice.

Arthur grins, raising his eyebrows at the teasing challenge.

ARTHUR

That right?

Marty casually takes another free-throw. Nothing but net. Arthur sighs, puts down his briefcase, takes off his jacket. Gently lays it on top, and rolls up his shirt sleeves.

ARTHUR

I really hate to take the wind out of your sails.

MARTY

You've got nothing but wind, Pop.

Touché. Marty scoops up the ball, holds it out to Arthur. But PULLS IT AWAY as his father reaches for it.

MARTY

You sure you're up for this? Looks like you've had a long day --

ARTHUR

Ball. Punk.

Marty grins, hands it over. Arthur immediately JERKS to the side, like he's gonna run at the net. Marty flinches --

-- and Arthur casually TAKES A SHOT. Nothing but net.

ARTHUR

Looks like the old man's still got some game left in him.

EXT. THE GREEN HOME - DUSK

A run-down looking place in a cramped suburban neighborhood.

INT. THE GREEN HOME - HANS' ROOM - DUSK

HANS GREEN (15), closes a ratty brown CASE. He secures the old leather straps, trying to ignore the muffled sounds of his parents ARGUING in the room next door.

HANS' MOTHER (O.S.)

It's been three days! Don't give me any of this "work trip" garbage!

HANS' FATHER (O.S.)

If you got a job, I wouldn't have
to take these shitty assignments --

As Hans reaches for the doorknob, there's the sound of GLASS
BREAKING from outside. He hesitates, his face a blank. He's
used to this. Maybe that's why he looks older than his age.

HANS' MOTHER (O.S.)

I'm not an idiot! I know you were
with her again! --

Hans walks across the room to a window, slides it open.

EXT. THE GREEN HOME - DUSK

As the ARGUMENT continues inside, Hans leans out and
carefully lowers the case to the ground. Then he slips out
and picks it up -- it's heavy, and he needs both hands.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - DUSK

Hans emerges from the woods by the house. Catching his
breath, he watches Marty and Arthur playing. It's a father-
son relationship he could only dream of. They see him:

ARTHUR

Hey, Hans.

HANS

You're not kicking his ass too
badly, are you Dr. Gordon?

ARTHUR

Nah, I gave him a couple freebies.

Marty observes Hans. He's sweating, carrying the heavy case.

MARTY

Piece-a-crap car still not running?

HANS

Brakes are out.

MARTY

Told ya: shoulda bought a new one.

Marty hurls the ball at Hans, who catches it in his free
hand. He puts down the case and takes a shot. SWISH.

THERESA (O.S.)

Showoff.

They turn to see THERESA (15) approaching on a bike.

THERESA

Hope I'm not too late, band
practice went long.

ARTHUR

Just in time -- Cat should be home
soon. I'll get dinner started.

Arthur heads inside. Theresa flashes the boys a grin.

THERESA

How about a little boys-against-
girls?

Marty smiles, tosses her the ball.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - NIGHT

The towering silhouettes of Douglas Fir trees penetrate the sky like multi-faceted knives. Another expanse lies below: the OCEAN, lapping along a rocky coast.

INSERT TITLE -- 'Puget Sound, Washington'.

Now we get a sight of just how spacious the Gordon home is. It's brightly-lit, and we can see THE DINNER going on inside. Arthur and the kids have been joined by --

CATHERINE (40s). She and Arthur sit almost shoulder-to-shoulder as they talk and laugh. Love radiates between them.

INT. THE GORDON HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arthur and Cat work as a unit, washing dishes. Marty and Theresa are visible in the next room, reading a brochure.

ARTHUR

Two weeks?

CATHERINE

Sixteen days.

ARTHUR

I don't think I'll make it.

She turns and he pulls her close. They share a kiss.

ARTHUR

Do those tree frogs really need you more than I do?

CATHERINE

Yes, they do. And your trips are always much longer than mine.

ARTHUR

My boss is a demanding man.

They kiss again, passionately. Cat looks past him.

CATHERINE

You'd better get in there before he blows a gasket.

Arthur follows her gaze to the living room, where Hans sits at a table, staring at a chess board, brow furrowed.

CATHERINE

(checking her watch:)

I'll finish packing. We've gotta leave for the airport in ten.

She walks down the hall, and Arthur enters THE LIVING ROOM. He sits across from Hans, who's watching Marty and Theresa. The two are leaning against each other, arms touching.

ARTHUR

How's it going?

HANS

I don't get it.

ARTHUR

Get what?

Hans makes a decision -- he TAKES ARTHUR'S QUEEN. He holds it up, his face darkening. Anger beneath the surface.

HANS

Just because you're teaching me how to play doesn't mean you should play down to my level.

Arthur realizes why Hans feels slighted. His face softens, and he MOVES HIS KNIGHT forward.

ARTHUR

Checkmate. See, sometimes you have to sacrifice your best piece to serve the greater purpose.

ON MARTY AND THERESA, as they look through the brochure:

THERESA

-- we'd be on the boundary waters
of Canada for fifty days. Lots of
portaging, that's when you carry
the canoe across land, and --

MARTY

(not enthused:)

Yeah, I know. So you'd be there
all summer.

THERESA

Pretty much.

MARTY

Maybe I could go, too.

THERESA

It's kinda for girls only.

MARTY

Sounds like a great time. For you.

Theresa interlaces her fingers with his. Smiles.

THERESA

It's just the summer, Marty. I'll
be back.

They don't notice Hans watching them from across the room.
He doesn't seem to appreciate their intimacy.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

A CRUISE SHIP makes it's way across the calm water. A
raucous PARTY is going on inside the upper decks.

INSERT TITLE -- 'Atlantic Ocean'.

ON DECK: a COUPLE slips outside, dressed to the nines.
Giggling drunkenly, they look around cautiously. They're
alone. They move to the railing and begin kissing.

DRUNK WOMAN

The windows... they can see us --

DRUNK MAN

No one can see us. Don't worry.

The groping becomes more passionate, and they don't notice --

OVER THEIR SHOULDER: a LIGHT in the sky, like a distant star, that begins GLOWING BRIGHTER... and BRIGHTER...

It's no star. It's something STREAKING DOWN from the heavens, leaving a billowing VAPOR TRAIL in it's wake --

SPLASH! It hits a hundred yards from the ship. Strangely, it hardly makes a ripple on the water. The couple turns.

DRUNK WOMAN

What was that?

They lean over the railing, looking down at --

THE WATER. A soft bluish/green GLOW moves down through the ocean, fading as it gets deeper... and finally disappears.

DRUNK MAN

Huh. Must've been a meteor.

DRUNK WOMAN

(seductive:)

Or a shooting star.

He turns back to her, getting her intention. They immediately continue where they left off, turning from --

THE WATER: a DEEP RED GLOW, barely visible from the surface, begins to FLICKER ominously far below.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - DOCK - NIGHT

Hans and Marty have TWO TELESCOPES set up on the edge of the dock. Marty's is top-of-the-line. Hans' looks like it's held together with duct tape. Theresa examines at a STAR CHART as she scratches Gauge's ears.

HANS

I'm still not seeing anything.

MARTY

Me either.

Theresa looks up, staring wistfully at the sky.

THERESA

Can you imagine what it would be like to be up there?

Marty glances over at her. They exchange a smile.

AT THE DRIVEWAY: Arthur's car pulls up to the house. He gets out and walks onto the back porch, heading for the dock.

ARTHUR

How's the Europa hunt going?

MARTY

We can't find it.

Theresa stands, putting a hand on Hans' shoulder:

THERESA

Let me try.

He's happy to let her try -- and to be touched by her. She holds back her hair as she peers through the eyepiece.

THERESA

Are you sure it's the right time?

HANS

Triple-checked it, Theresa.

ARTHUR

Stargazing takes patience.
Patience and endurance.

MARTY

Yeah, well, it was supposed to come
out of its occultation an hour ago.

Marty steps aside as Arthur checks the altitude-azimuth mount, compares it to the chart.

ARTHUR

Looks like you're aligned properly.

He leans forward, taking a look. Adjusts the focus. Frowns.

MARTY

See? It should be --

ARTHUR

To the left of Jupiter.

ARTHUR'S POV: the brilliant blue speck of JUPITER fills the screen. We PAN LEFT as he rotates a dial... but --

ARTHUR

Huh. There's nothing there.

He straightens, frowning. Everyone's quiet for a second.

HANS

So, can you sign a note for our teacher, saying something happened to Europa and it wasn't our fault?

Theresa laughs. Arthur's cell phone RINGS. He answers:

ARTHUR (INTO PHONE)

Arthur Gordon.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECH. POLICY - NIGHT

A cavernous area jammed with computers, cubicles, TV monitors. It's empty, save for CHRIS RILEY (27). Pasty pale, his skin looks like it's never seen the outside world.

INSERT TITLE -- 'Office of Science & Technology Policy, Washington, D.C.'

RILEY

Dr. Gordon, sorry to call so late --

ARTHUR

Who is this?

RILEY

Chris Riley. I work for you, sir. I got the call from a buddy at JPL --
- it's unbelievable -- it'll be on CNN in ten minutes --

ARTHUR

Riley, slow down and tell me what's going on.

RILEY

Europa is gone.

ON ARTHUR: he tenses. The kids notice.

RILEY

Europa. Sixth moon of Jupiter --

ARTHUR

I know what it is. What do you mean, it's "gone"?

RILEY

The majors were trained on the Galileo flyby, so we missed it --

Arthur doesn't seem to notice the SOUND that's growing closer: the whine of an ENGINE, and WHIPPING BLADES --

ARTHUR

That's impossible. Moons don't just vanish.

RILEY

Palomar and Mauna Kea have been looking for it all night. Europa isn't hiding, it's not misplaced, and it's not painted black, Dr. Gordon. It has disappeared.

A brilliant SPOTLIGHT suddenly illuminates the dock. Everyone stares up in wonder at the MILITARY HELICOPTER looming overhead. As it maneuvers towards the house:

ARTHUR

Riley, why is a military helicopter landing on my lawn?

Riley draws a breath. Doesn't quite know how to put this:

RILEY

Because of what they found in the desert, sir.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - BACK YARD - NIGHT

The helicopter settles. The CO-PILOT ducks under the blades, jogging to the edge of the dock, where everyone waits.

ARMY SERGEANT

Arthur Gordon? ID please, sir.

Arthur opens his wallet and hands it to the Sergeant.

ARTHUR

Where are we going?

ARMY SERGEANT

Sorry, sir. That's classified.

Arthur considers. Then:

ARTHUR

My son's coming with me.

ARMY SERGEANT

My orders are to pick you up solo --

ARTHUR

I can't leave my son alone. If you
have a problem with that, you can
take it up with my boss.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - BACK YARD - NIGHT (LATER)

Hans and Theresa watch, concerned, as the 'copter lifts off.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT (LATER)

The MILITARY CHOPPER tears across the desert.

INSERT TITLE -- **'Death Valley, Arizona'**

INSIDE: Marty stares out the window, watching the landscape
rush by. Arthur flips through a BINDER, examining the data.

MARTY

What's that?

Arthur looks out the window at a sudden BRIGHTNESS in the
desert, the light washing the inside of the chopper.

ARMY SERGEANT

The perimeter --

OUTSIDE THE HELICOPTER: two sleek APACHE GUNSHIPS drop down
out of nowhere, flanking the helicopter.

GUNSHIP PILOT (OVER COMM)

Identify.

HELICOPTER PILOT (INTO COMM)

Transport 562, clearance Alpha
Tango Delta Six. En route to site,
transporting Arthur Gordon and...

ARTHUR

Marty.

HELICOPTER PILOT (INTO COMM)

...Marty Gordon.

No response for a beat. Then one of the gunships maneuvers
DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE HELICOPTER. The Pilot curses and
pulls back on the stick, bringing the crafts nose-to-nose.

GUNSHIP PILOT (OVER COMM)

*You are carrying an unauthorized
individual. Hold for clearance.*

(MORE)

"Forge" -- Rewrite Draft (Susco), 11-4-05 12.

GUNSHIP PILOT (OVER COMM) (cont'd)
*Do not attempt to pass or you will
be shot down.*

A tense beat. Marty's wide are trained on the MISSILE
COMPARTMENTS and GATLING GUN mounted on the Apache craft.

ARMY SERGEANT
Told you they wouldn't like it.

After a beat, the gunships LIFT AWAY. The helicopter
advances, passing over a TRIPLE-LAYERED METALLIC FENCE.
Curls of RAZOR WIRE top it. The Sergeant points ahead:

ARMY SERGEANT
There it is.

Marty leans forward and looks ahead. Surrounded by a BASE
CAMP and an armada of MILITARY VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL is...

THE CINDER CONE. Five hundred meters long, half as wide, a
hundred meters high. An anomalous blemish in an otherwise
perfect stretch of sand to the horizon in all directions.

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

The helicopter touches down. Arthur and Marty get out, and
are met by COLONEL HALL (40s) and EDWARD SHAW (30s).

COLONEL HALL
(shaking his hand:)
Dr. Gordon, this is Edward Shaw,
Professor of Geology at Stanford.
He discovered the site yesterday
evening.
(to Shaw:)
This is Arthur Gordon, Science
Advisor to the President.

They walk away from the helicopter, approaching THE CINDER
CONE. Marty stares up at it, awestruck.

SHAW
Looks like the cone of a dead
volcano, right? But it's not in
our maps, or the Geostat directory.
At first I thought we'd found an
error in the survey charts.

Arthur puts his hand against the cone, examining the surface.

ARTHUR
How'd you find it?

SHAW

I brought my class out here on a field trip. We noticed it as we were driving out. Thing is, we didn't notice it on the way in.

ARTHUR

(getting it:)

It wasn't here two days ago.

SHAW

Exactly.

As the four men continue to confer, Marty walks further along the edge of the massive cone, studying it.

ARTHUR

Why do you think it's artificial?

SHAW

Besides the fact that it just appeared? Take a look at this.

He carefully makes his way up the slight incline, moving towards something about twenty feet above ground level --

-- a JAGGED HOLE in the cone about two feet in diameter.

SHAW

Looks like a flow tube, right? But check out how smooth it is. No collapse, no patterns.

Arthur reaches inside and runs his hand along the edge.

SHAW

Notice anything strange about it?

Arthur stares at the hole. Squints. Then realizes:

ARTHUR

It's symmetrical. The same jagged pattern on both halves.

SHAW

Meant to look natural. A bad disguise.

Wandering further away from the group, Marty sees something on the edge of the cone and stops in front of it --

-- it's ANOTHER "FLOW HOLE". But this one's wider, and only a foot off the ground. Marty leans closer, peering in.

HIS POV: something GLIMMERS in the darkness... three glittering EYES. Staring back at him.

Marty stumbles back and falls on his butt as --

-- an ALIEN LIFEFORM pulls itself from the hole. Four oddly-bent spindly legs, a head two feet long and shaped like a miter, with three sherry-colored eyes. It reaches out, wrapping it's long obsidian fingers around Marty's arm:

MARTY

DAD!!!

The Alien seems to have trouble balancing as it reaches the ground. On wobbly legs, it lowers its elongated head directly in front of Marty's... and SPEAKS:

THE GUEST

I am sorry, but there is bad news.

The Alien collapses. Arthur, Shaw and Colonel Hall run over as Marty's eyes roll back in his head and he passes out --

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Black waves roll under a night sky. A dull ROAR reaches us -- A MASSIVE CHINESE NAVY DESTROYER cuts through the darkness.

INSERT TITLE -- 'Russian Coastline, 49th Parallel'.

EXT. DESTROYER DECK - NIGHT

A skeleton crew of night shift personnel. One SKINNY SAILOR walks across the deck past the enormous triple cannons. He stops at the railing, reaching into his pocket for a pack of cigarettes. He pops one in his mouth and FLICKS his lighter--

A BRIGHT FLASH ABRUPTLY LIGHTS UP THE ENTIRE SKY -- followed by an instantaneous, deafening CRACK of THUNDER.

The Skinny Sailor looks up to see -- SOMETHING SCREAMING DOWN FROM THE SKY, directly at the ship. A missile? A meteor?

WHOOOOOSH-BOOOOM! IT IMPACTS into the HULL of the destroyer.

The Sailor is thrown against the bulkhead. A COLLISION KLAXON WAILS. Stunned, he gets to his feet, staring down --

-- at A SMOKING HOLE in the ship, three meters in diameter. It stretches ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE OCEAN, through layer upon layer of hull.

Faces of startled sailors stare up through the hole from each deck, the SIDES SIZZLING, red-hot. Black ocean begins POURING INTO THE HULL, many meters below.

The Skinny Sailor reaches up to his face. His nose trickles blood. Blood seeps from his ears. He falls to his knees. Only then does he hear the MOANS of AN INJURED SAILOR nearby--

-- who writhes on the deck, trying to stand up. But he can't. HE'S MISSING HALF HIS BODY. It's been torn away by whatever sliced through the hull.

The injured sailor stares at the perfect Gray's Anatomy cross-section of his own midsection. And he starts to SCREAM --

-- but we suddenly RUSH PAST HIM, down through the hole in the ship, in pursuit of the object that passed this way --

UNDER THE WATER: it's a NEEDLE. Nearly half a kilometer long, it RACES DOWN through the water, illuminated by it's own internal heat. It reaches THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN --

-- and PUNCHES THROUGH IT like a hot knife through butter.

INT. STERILE ROOM / INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - UNKNOWN

An almost featureless white room. Marty sits on the edge of a bed, in a hospital gown. Two MED TECHS in HAZMAT SUITS check his temperature and draw a blood sample.

Marty sits there stoically, recovering from the shock. He slowly turns and looks at the MIRROR which dominates a wall --

-- beyond which lies an OBSERVATION ROOM. Colonel Hall confers softly with a FOUR-STAR GENERAL:

COLONEL HALL

-- it may have created some sort of bond with the boy. He should be the one to try.

They pause as the two MedTechs turn to the window:

MED TECH #1 (OVER SPEAKER)

He's clean.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

Marty follows Colonel Hall down the corridor. He's still a bit dazed, watching SCIENTISTS and SOLDIERS scurry about.

INSERT TITLE -- 'Vandenberg Air Force Base, California'.

They pass an area where WORKERS are gathered around a TV --
"JUPITER MOON VANISHED" rolls below a NEWS REPORTER:

1ST REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
*"-- what scientists are calling an
unprecedented event in history."*

The report cuts to a SCIENTIST, giving a press conference:

SCIENTIST (ON SCREEN)
*"For a moon to simply disappear is,
well, impossible. Unless..."*

2ND REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
"Unless?"

SCIENTIST (ON SCREEN)
*"Unless there was some kind of
cataclysmic event the likes of
which we've never seen before."*

The report CUTS BACK to the first reporter. Another image
appears next to him: a FLAMING COMET --

1ST REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
*"Scientists have also discovered
two large comets moving through our
solar system, falling inward
towards Earth. No explanation has
been given for how they could have
gone unnoticed for so long --"*

Marty and Hall continue on, passing through a negative
pressure AIRLOCK with biohazard signs on the walls.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

A half-dozen TECHNICIANS are stationed at computer terminals
and monitors. They look exhausted, and tense. A row of
METAL CHAIRS at the front of the room face a CLOSED CURTAIN.

Arthur, at the rear of the room, is on the phone:

ARTHUR (INTO PHONE)
Yes, Mr. President. I understand.

He looks up as the door opens and Hall leads Marty inside.

ARTHUR (INTO PHONE)
We're trying again now. There will
be a recording when you arrive.
Thank you, sir.

He hangs up as Marty approaches. Pulls him into a hug.

MARTY

What's happening?

Pain lines Arthur's face. He's hiding something from Marty.

ARTHUR

Marty. We need your help.

Marty doesn't understand. All eyes are on him as Arthur, keeping a hand on his shoulder, leads him to the curtain. One of the TECHNICIANS suddenly looks up, startled.

TECHNICIAN

Sir -- it's standing.

ON HIS SCREEN: a pixelated infrared OUTLINE of something moving. Hall motions to another tech, who DIMS THE LIGHTS.

COLONEL HALL

It knows he's here.

Arthur hands Marty a headset mic, helps him put it on.

ARTHUR

I'll tell you what to say.

Bewildered, Marty watches as THE CURTAIN WITHDRAWS, revealing inch-thick transparent triple-paned Perspex panels, rubber-sealed. The room beyond is dimly-lit. But we can make out --

-- THE GUEST. It moves fluidly, with eerie grace, to the window. Now that we get a good look, it's not frightening at all. There's instead a regal quality to it, a kind of grace that it's unusual appearance threatens to obscure.

Marty's breath catches as the Guest lowers it's head to look into Marty's eyes. Then A VOICE, rich and melodious, drifts from the room's speakers:

THE GUEST

I have bad news.

Arthur leans forward, WHISPERING in Marty's ear. His throat is dry, and his voice cracks as he speaks:

MARTY

How did you learn our language?

THE GUEST

Your wasting provided much information.

Hall exchanges a look with Arthur. He doesn't understand.

ARTHUR

Maybe it means television and radio
signals, going out into space.

A YOUNG TECHNICIAN approaches, nervous to be so close. His
hand shakes as he holds out a glass of water for Marty.

THE GUEST

*Do you have the ability to leave
your planet?*

Arthur turns back to Marty, WHISPERING again:

MARTY

We have a limited ability.

THE GUEST

*A disease has entered your planet
system.*

Marty takes a moment to process this. So does Arthur. And
he doesn't need his father's help to query:

MARTY

What -- what kind of disease?

THE GUEST

One that will dismantle your world.

MARTY

You mean -- destroy?

THE GUEST

*The inside of your planet will be
placed into orbit. Life will not
be possible.*

The hissing voice draws out the last word like a razor over
ice. A creeping dread overtakes the room. The TICKING of a
WALL CLOCK is unusually loud. Colonel Hall picks up a mic:

COLONEL HALL

Are you part of this disease? Is
that your spaceship in the desert?

THE GUEST

*I am a -- flea. A stowaway. My
world was eaten long ago. I
survive to warn other worlds.*

(back to Marty:)

(MORE)

THE GUEST (cont'd)

*The disease is a voyager, an ender
of worlds. It makes the stars safe
for its Makers.*

MARTY

Can we stop this... disease?

THE GUEST

*Nothing can be done. You must
prepare for the death of your
world.*

MOVING OVER the faces of the people in the room. No one can breathe, all eyes on the Guest, the harbinger of doom. Then:

ARTHUR

When will this happen?

THE GUEST

*It has already begun. You are
already aware of the symptoms.*

Confused, Marty looks over at Arthur -- and immediately sees there's something his father hasn't told him.

MARTY

Dad?

Arthur is trying to find the words... but then Colonel Hall gestures to him. He walks to the back of the room. Marty turns back to the glass, to see the Guest leaning forward --

-- PRESSING A "HAND" against the glass, it's eyes fixed on Marty. After a beat, Marty raises his own hand to the glass.

THE GUEST

We will save what we can.

Everyone turns, startled by the words. The Guest's body seems to be faltering, it's BREATHING becoming more erratic --

THE GUEST

*We must save what we can.
Otherwise, we are all alone.*

ALARMS sound even before the Guest's body FALLS out of view. After a beat, it's "hand" slides away from the glass.

EXT. EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

The darkened slab of North America, seen from space. CITY LIGHTS flicker like embers in a dying fire.

A SHOOTING STAR flashes across the land mass. Then ANOTHER.

Soon the skies over North America are FILLED with a dazzling meteor shower, HUNDREDS streaking toward earth.

It's a strange shower, though: they seem to be traveling in CLUSTERS, heading mostly for the coastal cities. As if they've been targeted. And then we PAN TO REVEAL --

Similar SHOWERS are hitting South America as well. And Europe. And Africa, Asia, Australia. Not a single one of them are heading into the open oceans.

EXT. FISHERMAN'S WHARF - NIGHT

Perched by the edge of a smaller dock is an old RESTAURANT.

INSERT TITLE -- 'San Francisco, California'.

INT. WHARF RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A handful of PATRONS are shoveling down late suppers, shooting pool in the corner, nursing pints at the bar.

HAKIM (14, African-American) sits at the end of the bar, his nose in a Mathematics text book. But he's distracted by --

THE TELEVISION: the football game running in the background has been interrupted by a solemn-looking REPORTER:

REPORTER (ON TV)

*"We have some breaking news, just
in over our Wire --"*

GROANS from the patrons. A BEEFY GUY playing pool hollers:

BEEFY GUY

I told ya to get the Dish!

HAKIM'S FATHER (40s), wiping down the bar with a towel, doesn't look up as he retorts:

HAKIM'S FATHER

You gonna pay the bill every month?

BEEFY GUY

Try ESPN or somethin', at least.

Hakim's Father reaches for the TV remote.

HAKIM

Hold on a sec, Pop.

REPORTER (ON TV)

*"-- simultaneous meteor showers
appearing all over the world
indicates they're not part of the
same cluster, and are coming at the
Earth from all directions --"*

Hakim is immediately on his feet, heading for the door -- but a stern look from his father stops him cold.

HAKIM'S FATHER

Your butt stays on that seat until
you're done with that homework.

HAKIM

I'm almost done, Dad. I just want
to take a quick look, I promise.

His father finally gives in, and Hakim runs out the door.

EXT. WHARF DOCK - NIGHT

Hakim pulls on a coat as he runs out to the end of the quiet dock. The environment is being LIT UP with FLASHES --

HAKIM

Wow...

THE SKY is filled with meteors. But somehow they're not breaking up in the atmosphere -- they're HITTING THE WATER further out in the bay, making a sound like distant rain.

UNDER THE WATER: the fireworks above illuminate THE METEORS tearing through the surface. We PAN DOWN to reveal --

-- they're METALLIC SPHERES, each the size of a bowling ball. We stay on one as it hits the bottom and settles --

-- the metal ball quivers. EXPANDS. And OPENS like metal origami, GROWING rapidly. Now TWICE as big... SIX times...

One of it's arms extends towards ANOTHER EXPANDING SPHERE and they immediately interlock -- the silver metal turning black as a chemical reaction takes place...

...something's BUILDING ITSELF under the water. Quickly.

INT. DATA ANALYSIS ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The room is at capacity: SCIENTISTS, MILITARY BRASS and ADVISORS are squeezed around the long conference table. At the head sits THE PRESIDENT. He watches --

ARTHUR, at the other end of the room. He's standing in front of a bank of MONITORS. We can't hear what he's saying, but we can clearly see THE DISPLAYS:

-- ONE is an ANIMATION of two NEEDLE-SHAPED OBJECTS hitting the Earth and sliding inside like splinters, continuing to move, ORBITING deep within, drifting closer to the CORE...

-- ANOTHER shows two LARGE COMETS, falling inward from deep orbit, each heading on a collision course with MARS...

NEW ANGLE: we can't hear Arthur's voice because the conference room is a "Bubble" -- raised from the floor, soundproof. Spyproof. And our POV is...

MARTY'S. He's alone, in a chair outside the room. Watching his father with blank, glassy eyes. Arthur makes eye contact with his son. He can't hide the despair on his face.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAWN

Arthur and Marty are being transported back home. They sit in silence, staring out the window.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - BACK YARD - DAWN

The helicopter lifts off. Arthur pulls out his cell phone and dials a number. Marty heads for the house, seeing Hans, wearing sweats, waiting for him on the porch.

HANS

You guys missed a show last night.

Arthur gets an "*all circuits are busy*" recording as he climbs the deck. He CURSES, and re-dials his cell phone.

HANS

There was a meteor shower. Hundreds of 'em landed in the Sound. It was like the water was alive --

Arthur walks past Hans, entering the house. Hans watches him go, turns to Marty. He can read his friend's face clearly:

HANS
What's wrong?

INT. THE GORDON HOME - DEN - DAWN

A comfortable room that's been converted into a home office. Stacks of research are piled by the computer, TREE FROGS clinging to branches stare at us from photos on the walls.

Arthur enters quickly, grabbing a SATELLITE PHONE. He turns it on, gets a linkup, and dials a number.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AIRPORT - DAWN

CLOSE ON A DISPLAY: in Portuguese, English, Italian and German, the message is clear: *"All Flights Cancelled."*

The airport is in chaos. Tense-looking SOLDIERS cradle automatic weapons and alert eyes.

INSERT TITLE - **'Rio de Janeiro, Brazil'.**

Catherine makes her way through the crowd, duffel bag slung over her shoulder. She reaches the display and studies it.

A BEEPING SOUND grabs her attention. She fumbles through her bag for her SAT-PHONE. Turns it on.

CATHERINE
Arthur?

ARTHUR
Catherine! Where are you?

CATHERINE
My plane to Manaus is gone. The pilot just took off while we --

ARTHUR
Listen to me, Cat. You need to come back home. Right away.

CATHERINE
What's going on, Arthur?
Everyone's going nuts down here.

ON ARTHUR: he sits, hand on forehead, trying to stay calm. Trying to figure out how to speak the words to his wife...

INT. THE GORDON HOME - LIVING AREA - MORNING (LATER)

Marty and Hans sit by the embers of a dying fire. Gauge is curled up on blankets nearby, sleeping.

HANS

I don't understand -- how did those things, those Needles, get there?

MARTY

They just came down, like meteors. Punched through the crust.

HANS

But how do we know they're moving?

MARTY

Seismic activity. Halfway in it becomes liquid. They're orbiting, in opposite directions, getting closer to the middle. The core.

HANS

So it's like a time bomb.

Marty looks over at him. Hans' face is grave. He gets it.

HANS

How much time is there?

A slow RUMBLE builds, deeper than anything we can imagine --

INT. EARTH'S OUTER CORE

A red hot magma nightmare, a burbling kelvin cauldron.

SOMETHING slices through the magma, liquid metal rushing in to fill its wake. The OBJECT VANISHES at mach-plus speed --

-- just as ANOTHER OBJECT rips through the magma in the opposite direction, passing the first, SPARKS flying at the near-contact. They're --

-- THE TWO NEEDLES. Impossibly massive. And growing closer to one another with each orbit. Soon, now...

EXT. VARIOUS CITIES - NIGHT

THE WORLD has come to a stop. Holding it's breath.

- FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, the high-end shops are gated shut. A National Guard TRUCK RUMBLES along the empty streets;
- LONDON, a ghost town. 'CLOSED' signs everywhere;
- THE NIKKO STOCK EXCHANGE, completely deserted;
- THE FREEWAYS OF LOS ANGELES, packed with traffic, everyone fleeing for an unattainable safety;
- EMPTY AIRPORTS, BUS AND TRAIN STATIONS all around the world. There's nowhere to go now;
- YOSEMITE PARK, where HUNDREDS have gathered at Inspiration Point, overlooking El Capitan, Three Brothers and Half Dome.

These are VIEWS OF LIFE IN STASIS, tainted by the expectation of imminent destruction.

EXT. THE GORDON HOUSE - NIGHT

The BLEATING of SHIP HORNS in the foggy night ECHO across the waters. It's late, but lights still burn in the windows.

INT. THE GORDON HOME - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Marty and Hans sit by the tv, flipping channels. Most are just BLUE SCREENS. On a few NEWS OUTLETS, there's a camera monitoring the WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM. The podium is empty.

MARTY

Why isn't the President saying anything?

ARTHUR

There isn't anything to say.

Marty and Hans turn to Arthur. He sits in an easy chair, the Sat-Phone on his lap. His face is a total blank.

ARTHUR

Maybe you should go home, Hans.
You should be with your parents.

HANS

You may have noticed they haven't called yet.

But beneath his quip, and behind his eyes, there's dire intention. Arthur finally nods -- he can stay.

MARTY

Dad. It told me it would do something. It said it would save "what it could", save some of us.

HANS

What does that mean?

They both wait for Arthur's response. They don't get one.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - BACK YARD - PRE-DAWN

Arthur sits on a deck chair, wrapped in a quilt, sipping a mug of coffee. On his lap, he holds A FRAMED WEDDING PHOTO. The memory of a wife he knows he may never see again.

The SAT-PHONE lying nearby BEEPS. Arthur stares at it for a second. He knows what this means. He finally answers:

ARTHUR

Catherine...

CATHERINE (ON PHONE)

I don't have much time, Arthur. My battery is about to die, and...

She trails off. Arthur tries to hold back the tears.

ARTHUR

I love you, Cat... I wish... I wish there were more time...

Arthur doesn't notice HANS watching from the door behind him.

CATHERINE (ON PHONE)

(the connection CRACKLES:)

I sent you something. Some thoughts. Just in case...

STATIC fills the line. He's losing the connection.

CATHERINE (ON PHONE)

You were my dream, Arthur. My whole life with you was a dream --

CLICK. Arthur stares at the phone helplessly.

INT. THE GORDON HOME - THERESA'S STUDY - PRE-DAWN

Arthur slowly enters, lit by the glow of the computer screen. He sits down before it, pulling up his E-MAIL. There's a NEW MESSAGE from Catherine, with an attachment: an MP3 file.

Arthur stares at it for a beat. Then presses 'PLAY'.

INT. THE GORDON HOME - MARTY'S ROOM - DAWN

Marty lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. He's been up all night. A RATTLING grabs his attention. He looks over at --

HIS BUREAU. The trophies and pictures on it are TREMBLING.

His door opens. Hans stands there, looking pale.

HANS
It's starting.

INT. EARTH'S CORE

There's a high-pitched PINGING as the TWO NEEDLES pulsate back and forth, mere meters apart now, orbiting each other.

And then they suddenly FREEZE. Only inches separate them.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - DOCK - DAWN

Marty follows Hans down the dock. At the end are three chairs. Arthur is in one of them. But Marty's eyes are on --

-- the streamers of CHAIN LIGHTNING crackling across the sky.

ARTHUR
It's the magnetic fields. They're collapsing.

The PORTABLE RADIO Arthur holds blares a weakening channel:

REPORTER (ON RADIO)
"-- We have reports coming in now
that half of Tokyo is on fire -- an
earthquake has apparently destroyed
much of Beijing --"

Arthur numbly turns the radio off. Marty meets his father's lifeless gaze. Before he can speak, a SOUND makes him turn --

-- A JEEP pulls up the drive. Theresa gets out, and runs to the dock. Her PARENTS are close behind, fear in their eyes.

Marty meets Theresa halfway. Hans watches as the two embrace, tears streaming down their cheeks.

THERESA

There's something I need to tell
you. Something I couldn't before --

She trails off, looking at something over Marty's shoulder. He turns, following her gaze, to see --

-- the Gordon's BOAT. It's moving. Away from the dock.

Marty walks to the edge of the dock, looking down at --

THE WATER. It's receding from the shore. Very quickly.

Everyone stares out across the water, stunned to see THIS BEND of the estuary, impossibly, appears to be DRAINING.

Before anyone can speak, a SHAFT OF CRIMSON LIGHT lances up into the sky from above the distant tree-line.

THERESA

What is that?...

Marty stares up at it in awe, understanding:

MARTY

It's a beacon.
(to Arthur:)
It's them. It has to be.

Arthur is skeptical... but Hans approaches with the radio:

HANS

Listen --

He turns up the volume, a FRANTIC REPORTER is chattering:

FRANTIC REPORTER (ON RADIO)

-- the beams of light have been
sighted emanating from bodies of
water across the globe. They
appear to focused around major
metropolitan areas -- in the Tokyo
Bay, off the coasts of Sydney,
Taiwan, Dublin and Capetown, as
well as major American cities --"

EXT. PUGET SOUND - DAWN

The Gordon family's boat RACES THROUGH THE WATER. Arthur is at the wheel, and Marty and Hans stand at the fore, scanning the treeline ahead. Theresa sits with her parents.

The boat rounds a bend, the narrow waterway opening into --

THE JUAN DE FUCA STRAIT. And there, in the center, is the CRIMSON BEAM. The water is FOAMING AND RILING around it --

-- and the strait is filled with DOZENS OF WATERCRAFT. Canoes, row and sail boats. Other hastily-made floatation devices. People have gathered for a look. And above them --

-- the sky is nearly ABLAZE with crackling CHAIN LIGHTNING.

The crimson beam abruptly GOES OUT. And a teeth-rattling low-frequency RUMBLE begins to build as...

... a DARK-GRAY RECTANGLE smoothly rises up from the water, like a submarine conning tower. And then THE WATER begins to ripple. Everyone looks down at it, to see --

-- SOMETHING DARK JUST BELOW THE SURFACE. Whatever it is, it's massive. The tower is just the tip of this iceberg.

ON THE TOWER: a small hatch SLIDES OPEN in the top.

Some of the other BOATERS panic, turning their crafts around. One of the MEN raises a shotgun and OPENS FIRE on the tower.

MARTY

Don't run! We need to go inside!

INT. EARTH'S CORE

The NEEDLES, shaking violently, are on a final, inexorable collision course as they GLIDE FORWARD -- and TOUCH.

EXT. THE WORLD

- CITIES ALL OVER EARTH shudder at once. A death rattle.

- SKYSCRAPERS TOPPLE like drunken giants, BUILDINGS COLLAPSING inward under their own weight.

- THE GREAT LAKES spasm as the Earth's mantle REGURGITATES to the surface, fire and water wrestling for primacy.

EXT. PUGET SOUND - DAWN (SAME)

Around the tower the chaos ceases, as everyone turns to see --

-- the SEATTLE SKYLINE is crumbling. The Bank of America tower, Washington Mutual, Two Union Square, the Space Needle... all of them are TOPPLING or IMPLODING.

Some of the BOATERS are coming to their senses, turning to Marty as he continues to YELL at them:

MARTY
WE'VE GOT TO GO IN!!!

Some of the boats immediately begin to maneuver to the side of the tower. Others keep heading away from the Ark.

THE GORDON BOAT gets there as just PEOPLE BEGIN ENTERING THE HATCH without any more hesitation...

EXT. THE WORLD

- CHICAGO abruptly DROPS, engulfed in a rising flood of flame while billions of gallons of water flood into it.

- TSUNAMIS rocket towards COASTLINES, their thousand-meter high WAVES covering CITIES AND TOWNS like a blanket.

- VOLCANOES, long dormant, immediately ERUPT, jetting hot spasms of magma into the atmosphere.

EXT. PUGET SOUND - THE TOWER - DAWN (SAME)

Marty and Arthur help Hans, Theresa and her parents on-board. The only ones left, they take one long last look around at Earth, and THE FLAMES rising from what used to be Seattle.

Arthur puts a shaking hand on Marty's shoulder, his eyes too numb for tears. They finally enter the hatch. It CLOSES...

...and THE ARK slowly rises from the water. Five hundred yards long, it's a featureless rectangle. There appear to be no edges, no top or bottom. It's physically impossible. Aerodynamically all wrong. But there, nonetheless.

Without a sound of engines, in stunning silence, it begins to move gracefully skyward, water streaming off its surface.

EXT. YOSEMITE - DAY

The CROWD gathered at Inspiration Point stares dumbly at THE MANTLE EXPLODING into the atmosphere, jetting a FOUNTAIN OF MAGMA into the sky.

The ground is SHAKING AND POUNDING, everyone thrown off their feet as the center of the earth PUSHES UP, a monster within, banging away at a prison of stone, trying to crack it open --

-- THE ENTIRE CONTINENT beyond the SIERRA NEVADA RANGE SPLITS IN TWO, one half RISING INTO THE SKY, a jagged edge of continental shelf shearing miles upward into the atmosphere.

HALF DOME finally GIVES WAY, the STONE MONOLITH COLLAPSING in enormous sheets of stone. Like a grizzly shrugging something from its hide, YOSEMITE SHAKES its geological features loose--

-- and THE PEOPLE are lost, some holding onto one another, as they fall into the apocalypse --

EXT. PLANET EARTH

The WAVE OF ARKS rise from lakes, rivers, oceans. They glide silently towards the clouds, through the smoke from BURNING CITIES all over the planet, rising inexorably higher, as the crackling CHAIN LIGHTNING dances across their surfaces...

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE PACIFIC - DAY

The earth's MANTLE SPLITS APART. An unimaginable FISSURE YAWS OPEN like the hungry mouth of a long slumbering beast. Billions of tons of seawater sluices into the crevasse, down into the molten core of the planet itself.

Like a massive teakettle boiling over, an ocean's worth of STEAM SHRIEKS from the opening in the floor, rocketing upward tens of miles, filling the atmosphere with white-hot gasses.

EXT. SPACE

The Arks begin to MERGE, fitting perfectly into one another, becoming seamless, creating a SINGLE MASSIVE SPACECRAFT.

EXT. THE MOTHER ARK

As the craft retreats, it's components BLOSSOM OPEN like a flower, rotating it's widest face towards the Earth --

-- then the walls suddenly BECOME TRANSPARENT. And we see FIGURES IN SPACE: thousands of people, the remnants of humanity, stand in different sections of the craft. Looking around at each other, hanging in limbo...

And then we find MARTY. He stands in shocked silence with Arthur, Hans, Theresa and her parents. All eyes are on --

THE EARTH. It hangs in space, a majestic vision...

... now transforming. RED BLEMISHES pockmark the surface, hundreds of square miles of magma, rising up from below.

ON MOTHER ARK: tears fill Theresa's eyes, she turns away from

THE EARTH. Milky CLOUDS are now forming, STEAM EXPLODING into the stratosphere, spreading over the entire globe. Soon the entire surface is covered in a milky glaze.

One by one we pass over THE FACES OF THE SURVIVORS, tears in their eyes. This could be taking minutes -- it could be hours. Time no longer has meaning, as they watch...

...the WAVES that begin to RIPPLE ACROSS THE MILKY SURFACE, like a pebble tossed into a pond. Frantic lights STROBE above the poles: reds, greens, purples, the magnetic fields of the planet in havoc.

THERESA'S LIPS lips move in a silent prayer as...

... THE CLOUDS PART. The Earth has been TRANSFORMED -- no longer a blue and white ball, now it's an ugly brown-red blob, with one side a shuddering superheated liquid bulge.

And THE EARTH, now horribly bloated, begins to LOOSEN, becoming *"a LANTERN IN FOG, unbearably bright, an ovoid of plasma expanding outward, diminishing all that remains."*

And all of this occurs... in silence.

ON THE MOTHER ARK: the transparent walls begin to take on form again as a PALE SMOKE appears, filling the spaces.

Everyone looks around in panic at the FOG that drifts from the walls, the ceilings, from the very pores of the ship --

ARTHUR

It's okay... we're going to be o...

ARTHUR'S POV: the world goes FUZZY, as the friends, family and strangers around him DISAPPEAR INTO THE MIST --

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

CLOSE ON the face of a sleeping boy -- it's MARTY. He lies on a white cot, wearing the same clothes we last saw him in.

He stirs and wakes -- then sits up, startled, looking at --

HIS ROOM. It's stark white and is so bright, though there's no visible light source, that the room appears dimensionless.

Then he notices A DOOR at one end of the room. He fearfully gets up and walks toward it.

INT. QUARTERS HALLWAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A long, cylindrical hallway lined with identical arched doorways. A large IRIS-DOOR fills the end of the hall.

Marty's head pokes out of a doorway. He looks up and down the hall, hesitant to leave his room. But he finally does, stepping outside. The corridor is completely silent.

Marty stares at one of the metallic-white walls. Though shiny and polished, it doesn't reflect his image. He reaches out a hand -- THE SURFACE IS PLIABLE under his touch.

Then another door opens. THEO (12), steps out, wearing a Red Sox jacket. The boys stare at each other for a beat. Then:

MARTY

Do you know where we are?

(Theo shakes his head:)

My name's Marty.

Theo stuffs his hands in his pockets. He's scared.

THEO

Theo.

MARTY

Short for Theodore?

He's trying to calm the younger kid. It's not helping.

THEO

My parents called me 'Teddy'. I didn't like it.

MARTY

(noticing the jacket:)

Where are you from, Theo?

THEO

Boston. Aren't you from Boston?

Marty doesn't answer. His eyes go the strange iris-door.

THEO (CONT'D)

I wonder where my parents are.

MARTY

Let's go see if we can find other people, okay Theo?

But the boy's eyes are glazed, a faint smile on his lips:

THEO

This is a dream. Just a dream.

Marty knows better. But he doesn't say so.

MARTY

Then let's see what happens next.

He walks toward the iris-door, which silently SWIRLS OPEN.

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty and Theo enter a large dome-ceilinged room. A LONG WHITE TABLE sits in the middle, and another large iris-door is closed at the far end. Otherwise, it's empty.

MARTY

(calling out:)

HELLO?

The walls absorb the sound -- there's not even a single echo. Just a startling muffled silence. Theo digs in his jacket pocket and pulls out a candy bar.

THEO

I'm hungry.

MARTY

Well, maybe we should --

He stops, his breath catching as he sees --

THE TABLE. It was empty a moment ago. But now there are two place settings. On one plate is a hamburger. On the other is a bowl of macaroni and cheese.

THEO

Cool.

Theo smiles vacantly, sitting at the table and raising the fork above the mac-and-cheese.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Wait, I don't think --

But Theo digs in, taking a bite. He smiles.

THEO

Perfect.

He stuffs more into his mouth as Marty hesitantly stares at the hamburger on his own plate.

THEO (CONT'D)

There's cayenne pepper blended in.

It's just like my Mom makes it.

Marty lifts the bun from his burger, revealing two strips of bacon, onion rings and barbecue sauce. He smiles.

Famished, he takes a huge bite of the burger. His eyes light up with delight. He and Theo share a grin. Then:

THEO

See? I told you it was a dream.
First there was this earthquake,
and the whole city went under the
water -- WOOSH! Then somebody shot
my parents and took their car.
Then I got on an alien spaceship,
and the Earth got killed. Now I'm
just sitting here eating macaroni
and cheese. Weird, huh?

Marty puts down his burger, his appetite gone. Just then the other iris-door opens behind them. Marty turns to see --

-- HANS stands in the doorway. A relieved smile on his face.

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hans leads Marty and Theo into another white room -- this one is shaped like an AMPITHEATER with a DAIS in the center. A hundred SURVIVORS are collected here. Some are clustered together, some are off by themselves. Many are crying.

HANS

This is Marty and Theo. I think
they're the last ones.

Everyone looks over. And Marty sees ARTHUR standing with a few others. He RUNS OVER, hugging his father...

...and then Marty spies THERESA sitting by herself. She's watching him with tears in her eyes. He approaches:

THERESA

Marty...

He sits down, and she immediately embraces him. Her shoulders are trembling. After a moment, he realizes:

MARTY

Where are your parents?

She looks up at him, slowly shakes her head.

Arthur watches this reunion as two of the survivors he's with -- NATHAN (20s) and ERIC (40s) -- confer:

NATHAN

We need to find the others. My fiancée made it onboard --

ERIC

There were at least a few thousand. They have to be somewhere --

ELIZABETH (30s, pretty) watches the debate silently. Then she turns to Arthur, putting a hand on his arm. He turns:

ELIZABETH

You should say something.

Arthur looks around at the haggard survivors. She's right. He walks toward the dais, clears his throat. Everyone grows silent. Arthur feels the weight of the eyes of these desperate people boring into him. Finally:

ARTHUR

My name is Arthur Gordon. That's my son, Marty. And his friends, Hans, Theresa.

It's an awkward introduction. Everyone just stares at him. He tries a different approach:

ARTHUR

I don't know what to say about what we've all just been through. I don't know where we are now. But I know that we're lucky. Because we're still alive.

GARY (O.S.)

"Lucky"?

Arthur turns to a wiry man in a jacket (GARY, 30s) standing apart from the group, with eyes as unsettling as his voice:

GARY

It's all gone, man. Everything.
What's so goddamn "lucky" about it?

ARTHUR

If that's really the way you feel,
then why did you come on-board?

Arthur breaks his gaze, turning back to the group.

ARTHUR

There were many others who were
saved. Thousands. I don't know
why, or if, we've been separated
from them. But we need to find
out. I think one of us should try
to communicate with --

GARY

Hold on. We don't need any one
person running the show.

ARTHUR

We need to make decisions --

GARY

We don't need a leader to make
decisions --

NATHAN

Who the hell are we trying to
"communicate with", anyway? --

All the survivors begin to CHIME IN, the conversation rapidly
deteriorating. Hans suddenly stands, fists clenched:

HANS

What the hell's wrong with you!

Everyone quiets, turning to him. His face is red.

HANS

Don't you get it? We're all that's
left. We have to stick together.

(re: Arthur)

(MORE)

HANS (cont'd)

Dr. Gordon was the Chief Science
Advisor to the President of the
United States. He knows more than
any of us about what's happening.
So shut up and listen.

Before anyone can respond, the room BEGINS TO DIM --

-- there's a soft WHIRRING SOUND as the top of the dais
SLIDES OPEN. An oval-shaped SHINY OBJECT, like an oversized
metal football, drifts up from below.

It hovers above the dais a beat before SLOWLY TURNING, as if
taking in the presences around it. The FACES OF THE
SURVIVORS are distorted on it's surface. Then it stops.

WAR MOTHER

*We are sorry for your loss,
survivors of Earth.*

The VOICE comes from all around, a flat and toneless sound
entirely devoid of emotion, gender and inflection.

Everyone gapes open-mouthed at the object. Arthur notices
that many people are glancing at him. Looking for support.
Arthur steps forward, and the object SWIVELS towards him.

ARTHUR

Who do you mean by "we", exactly?

BEHIND ARTHUR: Gary edges away from the others, sweat
forming on his brow. He shifts a hand behind his back --

-- wrapping his fingers around A GUN tucked into his belt.

WAR MOTHER

*Those who constructed me. Those
whose consciousness lives on inside
this vessel. Your Benefactors.*

ARTHUR

Can you tell us where we are?

WAR MOTHER

*You are on a ship that has been
built from pieces of your dead
planet. It is your ship. A Ship
of the Law --*

Gary abruptly CRIES OUT and moves forward, eyes wide, RAISING
HIS GUN and PULLING THE TRIGGER --

-- there's a POPPING sound. Smoke drifts from the gun.

Everyone, including the War Mother, turns to see Gary staring at the gun in surprise. He TILTS IT forward --

-- a BULLET slides from the barrel, hitting the floor. And then the floor RIPPLES, pulling it under. Swallowing it.

WAR MOTHER

*You are a dangerous species. We
have taken measures to insure that
you will not injure yourselves.*

Gary backs away slowly, the gun slipping from his hand. The floor immediately swallows that, as well.

WAR MOTHER

*All refuse will be recycled and
reformed into useful components --*

ARTHUR

Where are the rest of us? There
were many other survivors.

The CEILING abruptly disappears. Everyone looks up to see --

MARS. It looms over them, filling the room with an orange glow. And hanging before it is the flower-like MOTHER ARK.

WAR MOTHER

*The rest of your species will sleep
until a new home can be prepared.*

A FLASH OF BLUE LIGHT streaks across the ceiling -- it's the two COMETS we saw earlier. Streaking in from opposite sides, they COLLIDE WITH MARS. The comets SHATTER, billowing clouds spreading out across the surface from the impact.

Understand seems to wash over Arthur. He nods:

ARTHUR

How long will it take?

WAR MOTHER

Two hundred of your years.

ARTHUR

(to the group:)

They were the ones who took Europa.
They directed pieces of it to
collide with Mars --

NATHAN

Why would they destroy Mars?

ARTHUR

Not destroy. Change. Europa's surface is mostly ice. That's what the comets were made of. The collision will release massive amounts of oxygen --

HANS

Terraforming. They're turning Mars into a new Earth.

Everyone stares in wonder at Mars. The ceiling becomes solid once again. A long beat. Then:

ARTHUR

What about us? Why aren't we with the others?

WAR MOTHER

Their purpose is to sleep. You have a different purpose --

It's interrupted by Hans, who steps forward, defiant:

HANS

Where are your creators? These "Benefactors"? We want to speak with them directly.

The War Mother is silent for a moment. Then a HOLOGRAM winks into existence: a stunningly beautiful GOLDEN PLANET, wrapped in a gauze-like atmosphere...

...a planet that is DYING. It's surface is BUCKLING, the atmosphere CATCHING FIRE. Two LARGE MOONS, yanked from their orbits, COLLIDE WITH IT. It's devastating.

WAR MOTHER

The Benefactors' world was disassembled by the Destroyers -- the same intelligences who sent their disease to your planet. Only a few survived. They lived long enough to create us -- machines that would outlive them. Machines that would attempt to save other species from annihilation.

The survivors watch numbly as HOLOGRAM AFTER HOLOGRAM appears around them. DOZENS OF WORLDS, in the throes of death.

WAR MOTHER

Many other civilizations across the universe have been destroyed. Civilizations far more advanced than your own.

The LIGHT of the holograms flashes across the faces of the survivors as they watch the massive destruction unfold:

WAR MOTHER

The damage is incalculable. The losses are irrecoverable. These crimes are unforgivable.

The other holograms VANISH as quickly as they came. A beat.

ELIZABETH

(softly:)

Why? Why would they do this?

WAR MOTHER

Because you exist.

Marty stares at the BENEFACTOR'S WORLD -- the MOONS pulverize the atmosphere as they BREAK APART upon impact.

WAR MOTHER

The Destroyers live in fear of all other intelligent life. They seek only solitude and dominance.

The holograms WINK OUT, one by one, as quickly as they came.

ARTHUR

You still haven't told us our "purpose".

WAR MOTHER

If victims of the Destroyers can be saved, a ship must be built from the remnants. Survivors best suited are selected and given a choice -- to sleep with the rest of their species, or to seek out and exterminate the Destroyers.

The reaction of the survivors is a stunned bewilderment. With the exception of HANS -- he seems to like this idea.

ERIC

We're supposed to track down these Destroyers? And kill them?

WAR MOTHER

If you so choose.

NATHAN

You've got to be kidding.

But the orb just hangs there in silence.

NATHAN

(to everyone else:)

Well, there's clearly not much of a choice. We stay with the others --

GARY

Hold on, hoss. Let's not be hasty.

(to the War Mother:)

You'll help us out, right?

WAR MOTHER

*The Ship of the Law is equipped
with all the knowledge of the
Benefactors.*

GARY

That include weapons?

WAR MOTHER

*Yes. You will be trained while you
sleep, and will awaken with maximum
proficiency --*

ARTHUR

You keep calling it a "Ship of the Law". Do you mean your law?

WAR MOTHER

*It is the Law of your species. The
Law of revenge. Is this accurate?*

Silence from the group. Theresa slowly stands:

THERESA

How many... species... that you've saved have agreed to this purpose?

WAR MOTHER

*Every species. None have yet been
successful.*

That puts a damper on things. A new HOLOGRAM appears -- TWO STARS, linked in orbit.

WAR MOTHER

The last surviving Ship sent a transmission before they were destroyed. They had discovered a suspect system. It is four hundred light years from this position.

ARTHUR

Oh my God...

Marty looks over at his father. He's gone pale.

ARTHUR

What is the maximum speed of this Ship?

WAR MOTHER

Ninety percent of the speed at which light travels.

All eyes are on Arthur as it sinks in. He turns to everyone.

ARTHUR

It will take four hundred and forty years just to get there --

WAR MOTHER

Four hundred and fifty-six years. Acceleration and deceleration must also be factored. You will sleep as if one night has passed --

ARTHUR

By the time we get back -- if we made it back -- everyone we knew, everyone who survived, would be gone.

The group is silent for a beat. Nathan shakes his head.

NATHAN

I was supposed to get married next week. Chrissy, she -- she's out there, sleeping. Waiting for me.
(to the others:)
We'd be crazy to try. You all know it. The only important thing now is to survive --

HANS (O.S.)

You coward.

Everyone turns to Hans as he steps forward to the dais.

HANS

They've taken everything from us.
Our friends. Our families. Our
home. Everything we've ever known.
Everything we've ever thought, or
built. It's all gone. And you
want to just let it go?

Nathan looks embarrassed. But he holds his ground:

NATHAN

They didn't take everything. Not
from me.

Hans regards him like he's no more than dirt under his
sneaker. Then he turns to the rest:

HANS

We're being given a chance to fight
back. To speak for those whose
voices have been silenced. If we
refuse, we shame them all.

(beat:)

I don't know about you. But I
won't allow Earth to be forgotten.

He slowly RAISES HIS HAND. It's a tense moment. Then --
-- he turns to Marty. His best friend. Needing support.

Marty looks at Theresa. She's undecided. So he makes a
decision of his own -- he slowly RAISES HIS HAND.

Arthur meets his son's gaze. And doesn't hesitate, raising
his own hand into the air.

And slowly, ONE AT A TIME, more hands appear in affirmation.

ON NATHAN as he watches them rise. Some are reluctant. Some
are determined. About two-thirds of the group join in.

ON THERESA: she's one of the last. But she looks into
Marty's eyes. And finally RAISES HER HAND.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. PARK - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

ON MARTY'S CLOSED EYES: they slowly flutter open, squinting
under the light of the BRIGHT SUN hanging above.

He sits up, looking around. He's on a blanket in a grassy hillside under a perfectly clear blue sky. Something's a bit off here, though... the SOUNDS around him are MUFFLED, and the COLORS are just a bit too bright...

A distant BARK makes him turn to see GAUGE running towards him, tongue lolling from his ridiculous dog grin. Marty scratches behind his ears, happy to see him --

-- a WHISTLE makes Gauge turn. And he's off, running to --

-- ARTHUR AND CATHERINE. They're standing further down the hillside, closer to the brilliant blue water. They smile at Marty and wave. Tears fill his eyes as he waves back --

THERESA (O.S.)

Marty.

He turns to see Theresa standing nearby. She's wearing a white lace dress blowing gently in the breeze. Marty stands as she approaches, a smile on her lips.

THERESA

There's something I need to tell
you. Something I couldn't before.

(beat:)

Marty, I lo--

Her words are cut off by an odd CHIMING sound --

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW) - DAWN

The rich light of a new day seeps in through the open window of MARTY'S BEDROOM, a slight breeze caresses the curtains. The water of the Puget Sound beyond is calm and still.

Marty stirs in bed, wearing a loose-fitting white shirt and matching slacks. He opens his eyes and turns to the window. He takes a long, deep breath of the morning air.

Another CHIME fills the room, bringing him back to reality.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

Good morning, Marty Gordon.

Marty's face goes blank. All the hopefulness -- that this may have all been a dream -- draining away.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

I have conditioned your room to resemble your former habitat, in order to soothe your transition to wakefulness. Are you now awake?

MARTY

Yes. I am.

After a beat, he pulls back his tightly-tucked quilt -- and immediately he's RISING INTO THE AIR, spinning awkwardly. He FLAILS wildly, grasping for the bed below.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

We are in a sustained period of slow deceleration. Artificial gravity will not be possible.

Marty reaches the ceiling -- but instead of a rough collision, the wall ABSORBS his fingers, his body.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

Zero-gravity movement at maximum proficiency was implanted during your sleep. You must concentrate.

Marty tries to calm himself. Closes his eyes. Mutters:

MARTY

"Maximum proficiency" my ass...

But then something happens. A look of surprise appears on his face. He opens his eyes, looks across the room --

-- and nimbly PUSHES HIMSELF from the ceiling to another wall. He gracefully launches himself towards the door, ROTATING in transit... and hits a PERFECT LANDING.

MARTY

Wow.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

Yes. Maximum proficiency.

INT. QUARTERS HALLWAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty sticks his head out of the room, looking down --

-- THE HALL. A handful of OTHER SURVIVORS, mostly children, are laughing as they FLOAT around the hall, trying to get their bearings. Direction has been turned on it's head.

HANS (O.S.)

Have a good sleep?

Marty turns to see Hans drifting by casually, lying on his back, arms crossed on his chest.

MARTY

Yeah. Getting the hang of it?

Hans just shrugs, as he continues down the hall. Marty smiles. It almost seems impossible. Then he turns --

-- and sees THERESA poking her head out from another room. She sees Marty and manages a smile of her own.

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The shape of the room has changed to accommodate the zero-g: no longer simply domed, it's now a SPHERICAL SPACE with segmented walls, like a hollowed-out Epcot Geosphere.

The DINING TABLE now juts up VERTICALLY from the middle of the floor like a stark white monolith. The adults take up one half of the table, the teenagers and children the other.

Marty eats with Theresa, Hans and Theo. He glances at --

-- ARTHUR, at the far end, speaking in hushed tones with some of the other adults. He meets Marty's gaze and gives him a faint smile.

THEO

What happened to all the rest?

Marty turns back to watch Theo as he takes another bite of his chocolate pudding.

MARTY

Not everyone wanted to come, Theo.

THEO

I know. I mean, the others. Mom said there were ninety-two of us before we went to sleep. But when we woke up, there were eighty-six.

Marty exchanges a look with Theresa. As delicate as she can:

THERESA

Well, Theo, we were asleep a long time, and --

HANS

They died, Theo.

Marty and Theresa look over at him, annoyed. He casually continues eating, speaking matter-of-factly.

HANS

Most of them were older. Their bodies couldn't take the strain.

Hans notices the way Marty and Theresa are staring at him.

HANS

It's time for all of us to grow up.

As he turns back to his food, a VOICE OVER guides us --

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

In our examinations of your physiology we have concluded that five meals a day will support optimum health. The largest meal will be first, and will be followed by cardiovascular activity...

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW) - LATER

The ADULTS are positioned at points along the dome, PUSHING THEIR LEGS into the porous walls. It's like a hyper-advanced Stairmaster... and it looks like quite a workout.

The CHILDREN and TEENAGERS are having much more fun -- they're playing a game, a fusion of baseball and cricket:

THERESA anchors her feet on the wall, readying her 'bat', as she faces down HANS. He stands on the 'ceiling', spinning a small BALL in his hands.

THERESA

Ready!

Hans PROPELS HIMSELF from the wall, passing Theresa on the perpendicular, rotating and spinning to conceal --

-- HIS THROW. The ball expertly careens towards her. She narrows her eyes, and SWINGS... and she connects, a perfect hit. She KICKS AWAY from the wall, heading to 'first base' as the ball CAREENS unpredictably off the angular surfaces.

HAKIM

I got it!

HAKIM lunges forward, NABBING THE BALL in mid-spin. He uses his inertia to HURL it towards 'second base' --

-- where PAOLA (15) catches it, just after Theresa arrives.

MARTY

Nice throw, Hakim!

Hakim grins, giving a slight bow before CRASHING against the wall. But he's okay -- it's just part of the show. He gives a sheepish grin to Paola and she laughs, smitten.

As Theresa catches her breath, she notices Marty watching her. She gives him a smile -- he smiles back.

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

*Once your metabolism is providing
optimal blood flow, you will
proceed to the classroom for your
daily instruction --*

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Under the watchful reflection of the War Mother, the SURVIVORS take seats in the amphitheater. As they sit, they're startled as their seats suddenly TILT BACK --

-- and TEN METALLIC RINGS rise up from each armrest, positioning themselves in front of their bodies.

WAR MOTHER

Welcome to your first lesson.

Marty stares at the rings, but it doesn't take long to figure out what they're for: he SLIDES HIS FINGERS into the rings. They immediately begin to glow --

-- and then A SMALL HOLOGRAM appears in front of him. It shows a SMALL CRAFT (we'll come to know them as 'Rifles') flying across the surface of a planet.

WAR MOTHER

*Today we will detail the method of
planetary surface sterilization via
atmospheric delivery and detonation
of antimatter Seeds.*

The craft DROPS A CLUSTER OF OBJECTS that BURST before they hit the planet's surface -- BLOSSOMING into an inferno that begins to spread, literally eating the sky.

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

*We have discovered that the minds
of certain individuals contain a
natural proclivity to excel at
specific tasks --*

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A smaller oval-shaped room at the front tip of the ship.
Hakim stands slack-jawed, looking around in amazement.

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

*--in these individuals we increased
the neural capacity beyond typical
species parameters in order to
maximize aptitude and efficiency.*

Marty stands next to Hakim, looking around with him.

MARTY

You sure?

HAKIM

Yeah, I'm sure...

And now we see the ARRAY OF HOLOGRAMS forming a ring around
Hakim. An impressive myriad of READOUTS and DISPLAYS.

HAKIM

...this is definitely my job.

INT. RIFLE BAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The darkness of the room is broken by A LARGE DOOR SLIDING
OPEN. The dozens of survivors are dwarfed by the space. The
eerie GLOW which seems emanate from the very walls themselves
starts to brighten, revealing --

-- THE RIFLES. The low-ceilinged hangar is filled with the
sleek vehicles, lined with razor-sharp edges.

HANS

When do we get to try them out?

WAR MOTHER

If the conflict requires.

Hans looks up at War Mother, surprised.

HANS

You mean we don't get to practice?

WAR MOTHER

*Your minds have been implanted with
the ability to pilot the vessels --*

HANS

-- at maximum proficiency. Got it.

Everyone looks uneasily at the Rifles. Arthur's gaze stays on War Mother. As if it can sense this, it turns to him.

ARTHUR

Is there any additional information
that you wish to implant?

WAR MOTHER

*Not at this time. There has been
sufficient --*

ARTHUR

Then you must never do it again.
Not without our express permission.
Stay out of our heads.

Everyone goes quiet. He looks really angry. After a beat:

WAR MOTHER

Yes, we understand.

Arthur turns and storms off. Marty watches him go.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

Arthur is visible in a transparent OBSERVATION NUB on the side of the ship. At first, it almost looks like he's sitting outside. But then we can see the light REFRACTING oddly through the clear shell around him.

INT. OBSERVATION NUB (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Arthur sits cross-legged, surrounded by space. His head is lowered, and he faces away from us. An iPod rests in his lap, playing the FINAL SECONDS of the only track it contains.

Light appears behind him as an iris-door opens. Marty stands in the doorway. Arthur doesn't turn.

MARTY

Dad?

Arthur out takes the earbuds, holds the iPod out to Marty.

ARTHUR

Your mother sent a message. She wanted us both to hear it. I probably should have given it to you earlier. But...

He trails off, hand shaking. Marty takes the iPod. Startled to see, for the first time, his father's cool composure breaking down. Arthur finally looks up at him:

ARTHUR

I can't do this without her.

MARTY

We have to.

He puts a hand on his father's shoulder. And together, they turn to stare back out at the void.

INT. QUARTERS HALLWAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Theresa makes her way down the dark hallway to Marty's room. As she raises her hand to knock, the door opens --

INT. MARTY'S ROOM / EXT. DOCK (SHIP OF THE LAW)

-- revealing THE DOCK behind his parents' home. It's a calm night over the water, a clear sky flooded with stars.

Theresa enters the room, and is surprised as she TOUCHES DOWN. As if gravity has returned, she's able to walk along the dock. The boards even CREAK under her feet.

Theresa walks to the end where Marty sits, pant legs rolled up, feet dangling in the water. She sits next to him.

THERESA

How'd you do that?

MARTY

I asked War Mother to make the floor sticky.

They're silent for a moment, listening to the sound of the water against the pylons below.

THERESA

You okay?

MARTY

I was just thinking.

THERESA

About what?

MARTY

Corn dogs.

Theresa can't stop the smile that crosses her lips.

THERESA

The Ship can make corn dogs.

MARTY

No, it can't. Not real ones. The kind that are dipped right in front of you. And you can't wait to sink your teeth into that first bite.

THERESA

Funnel cake. That's what I miss.

MARTY

Thunderstorms.

THERESA

The way the sun feels on your skin.

MARTY

Autumn.

THERESA

The smell of mowing the lawn.

Marty's smile fades. He looks back at THE GORDON HOME. The doorway has vanished, the illusion is complete.

MARTY

Dad used to go away on long trips. And whenever he came home, no matter how tired he was, or how tired mom was, the first thing they'd do it walk out to the end of the dock with a CD player, turn on Billie Holiday, and dance. They'd go out there and dance like nothing else mattered, as long as they were together. That's what I miss most of all. Watching them dance.

Marty turns back to look out over the water. A distant gaze. Theresa watches him for a beat, considering. Then:

THERESA

That guy who didn't want to come.
The one with the fiancée.

MARTY

Nathan.

THERESA

Maybe he had the right idea.

Marty turns back to her. She takes his hand:

THERESA

What we're doing won't bring any of
it back. Nothing can do that.

MARTY

I know. But it's our purpose now.

THERESA

It's our choice. We don't have to--

MARTY

It's our responsibility.

She holds his gaze for a beat. Not sure if she agrees. Then she turns away to look out over the water.

Marty watches her for a moment. Then he lowers a hand to the dock -- and FIVE METALLIC RINGS extricate themselves, rising up to slide onto his fingers. And then --

-- MUSIC can be heard all around. Billie Holiday, singing "Travelin' Light". Marty holds out a hand.

Theresa smiles, and takes it. And they begin to dance, on the end of the dock that doesn't really exist, as Billie sings about being "free as the breeze"...

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

...and now we finally see the survivor's new home. The SHIP OF THE LAW resembles a snake that has swallowed three eggs. The shafts that connect them are lined with storage tanks.

A thick BAND OF FIRE, the simulated sunlight, rings the central portion of the ship. And beyond it lies --

SPACE. The stars have a muddy quality, as if the speed at which the ship travels distorts the incoming light.

The MUSIC FADES as the ship drifts through the lonely void.

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The survivors have made this room their own: a tree-house like FORT has been built around one curve of the sphere. In it, ARIEL (14), a pretty girl with raven hair, reads "Peter Pan" from a hologram to the CHILDREN seated around her:

ARIEL

"We have reached the evening that was to be known as the Night of Nights, because of its adventures. The children were having their evening meal, all except Peter, who had gone out to get the time..."

In the center of the room a LARGE GRASSY MOUND, an artificial hillside, has been built. A few survivors "lie" around it, reading and talking. Others sit at the table, using LIGHT emitting from their rings to color their bland clothing.

Hans floats into the room, heading for Marty -- he's sitting in the hillside with Theresa, shoulder-to-shoulder.

HANS

Marty. Can I talk to you?

Theresa can tell he means in private. But she doesn't move.

HANS

I was studying the maps. Something didn't seem right --

He wiggles his finger, and a HOLOGRAM appears. It's an image of their Ship, moving through a mapped region of space.

HANS

We're moving faster than War Mother said we could. I think... we're moving faster than light.

MARTY

That's not possible. It's against the laws of physics --

HANS

So are many other things we've seen recently. The point is: they lied about the Ship's maximum speed.

(Marty just stares:)

I've double-checked the numbers --

MARTY

It was probably just a mistake.

HANS

Do they seem like they make a lot
of mistakes, Marty?

Just then there's a SHOUT from across the room. They turn to
see Gary holding Theo by the scruff of the neck, SHOUTING:

GARY

STOP SAYING THAT!!!

Marty, Hans and Theresa quickly make their way over, noticing
that EVERYONE ELSE is just staring. No one will intervene.
Theo has his hands clamped over his ears, whimpering.

MARTY

Gary! Let him go!

Gary doesn't. He turns to Marty, his face flushed with rage.

GARY

I'm tired of hearing him say this
is just a dream. If he says it
again, I'm gonna --

HANS

Alright, Gary.

Gary reluctantly lets go of Theo. Hans leans in, putting his
hands on Theo's shoulders, speaking softly:

HANS

Come on, Theo. I want to hear it.

Marty stares at his friend, bewildered, as he encourages:

HANS

Repeat after me: "This isn't a
dream. This is all real."

Theo just stares at him, wide-eyed. Having seen enough,
Marty puts a hand on Hans' arm.

MARTY

Leave him alone. He's just a kid.

Hans turns to look at the hand on his arm... then his eyes
meet Marty's. And there's something there that Marty has
never seen before. A dark coldness. Hans' lips curl.

HANS

I don't see any "kids" here, Marty.
Anyone else see any kids?

Everyone, even the adults, are silent. Hans smiles, relishing the silent affirmation. He shakes off Marty's arm.

INT. QUARTERS HALLWAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty catches up with Hans as he floats down the hall:

MARTY

(angry:)
Hans, wait a second.

HANS

(turning back:)
On Earth, you were the one with everything. You just can't handle the hard fact that now, out here, we're equal.

Marty stares at him, mouth agape, bewildered.

HANS

For the first time, you know what it's like to have nothing. And to understand that the world is a horrible place. You and Theo had better get used to that fact.

Marty can only watch, stunned, as Hans enters his room. He doesn't notice ARTHUR watching from the end of the hall.

INT. HANS' ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A plain, almost entirely featureless gray space. Hans sits at a small desk, wearing his "rings". By tapping his fingertips on the desk surface, he shifts through DIAGRAMS and SCHEMATICS that seem to resemble the Ship of the Law.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

You really need to do something
with this room, Hans.

Arthur stands in the doorway behind him. Hans quickly puts a palm on the desk, and the schematics disappear.

Arthur drifts inside, maneuvering to sit across from him.

ARTHUR

It's psychology. If you create an environment suited to your memory, you'll sleep better --

HANS

I sleep fine, Arthur.

Arthur is a bit taken aback by the usage of his first name.

ARTHUR

You were a little hard on Marty, don't you think? And Theo?

Hans finally turns to Arthur. His face a blank.

ARTHUR

Theo's young. And he still hasn't--

HANS

Youth is a luxury we can no longer afford. All boys are now men. And all men are soldiers. There aren't any other options.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Arthur, Hans, Theresa and Marty stand with Hakim and Eric in the center of a LARGE HOLOGRAM, between two STARS orbiting one another. One is BLUISH, the other a deep CRIMSON.

HAKIM

-- Analysis of the debris indicates intense industrial activity.

ARTHUR

Recently?

HAKIM

No. A long time ago, possibly thousands of years. We named the stars 'Ramses' and 'Leviathan'.

ON THE HOLOGRAM: we ZOOM IN on a nearly-invisible RING OF DUST surrounding the crimson star, between several PLANETS.

HAKIM

A molecular analysis of this dust cloud around Ramses revealed a high proportion of trace elements found in the Needles.

(beat:)

(MORE)

HAKIM (cont'd)

It's an exact match. The Needles
were definitely made here.

ARTHUR

What about Leviathan?

They turn towards LEVIATHAN, a larger and brighter star, with
FIVE PLANETS orbiting.

ERIC

No signs of life or technology. It
looks like a dead system. But the
readings are interesting. Like
there's something there we just
can't see. But in Ramses --

(turning to Ramses:)

There are three planets in the
system. They are mostly inactive.
However, this one --

The hologram zeroes in on the MIDDLE PLANET.

ERIC

-- the surface is riddled with
holes, so we named it 'Wormwood'.
We're not sure where the holes came
from. It looks like the planet was
attacked, or scorched --

THERESA

What's wrong with it?

ERIC

It's all wrong. If you compare the
temperature gradients to the
distance from Ramses, the numbers
just don't add up.

ARTHUR

Unless the planet's environment is
artificially controlled.

(Eric nods -- exactly:)

But there's no life?

ERIC

None that we've picked up.

HANS

Any defense systems?

HAKIM

None apparent. Although we did
register these --

Circles appear around five spherical DARK MASSES, spaced equidistantly around Wormwood.

HAKIM

Each one is about three thousand kilometers in diameter, with a mass of fourteen billion kilograms. They're practically invisible, and are very heavily shielded.

(beat:)

And we have no idea what they are.

Everyone stares gravely at the ominous masses for a beat.

THERESA

Maybe they're a source of power. They form a perfect ring around Wormwood, see? Perhaps it's a way of harnessing energy from the star.

ARTHUR

War Mother?

WAR MOTHER

These objects are outside our experience.

The group is silent for a moment.

ARTHUR

Alright. Let's take a closer look.

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

All the survivors are silent, seated around the dais, staring at a hologram of a familiar-looking object -- a NEEDLE.

Arthur, Marty, Hans, Eric and Hakim stand in the center of the room, gauging everyone's reaction.

ARTHUR

A few of them were found in the dust ring. They are identical to the Needles that destroyed Earth.

ELIZABETH

If the Needles were built here, why would they leave these dead ones around for evidence?

THERESA

Maybe they thought no one would
ever come looking.

GARY

Or maybe it's a trap.

Everyone turns to Gary. Marty and Hakim exchange a look.
This is something they hadn't considered.

HANS

There's no way to know for sure.
But they were here. Whoever
destroyed the Earth, and the six
billion people on it, were here.

His firm eyes sweep the room. He's preaching to the choir.

ARTHUR

Alright. Tomorrow we will
decelerate, and prepare to --

WAR MOTHER

Ignore Wormwood.

Everyone turns to see War Mother silently hovering nearby.

WAR MOTHER

*Wormwood is not the homeworld of
the Destroyers. Ignore it.*

Hans' face darkens. He steps towards War Mother.

HANS

What evidence do you have to
support that statement?
(War Mother is silent:)
Typical. You've been keeping us in
the dark ever since they --

ARTHUR

Hans.

HANS

They're lying. We shouldn't listen
to anything they say --

MARTY

Why would they lie to us, Hans?

HANS

Because they're afraid of us. They listened to humanity long enough to understand what we really are.

THERESA

Then why did they save us?

Hans turns to her. With a scornful expression.

HANS

Because they were programmed to. They're machines. They don't think. They just do what they were told to do.

(to the others:)

If these so-called "Benefactors" knew we might be in danger, then why didn't they try to save us before Earth was destroyed? Because we mean nothing to them. Not the Benefactors, not the Destroyers, not to anything else out there. We're little.

(to Marty:)

And you're just like your Father... you just play along, doing whatever you're told.

Marty can't believe the vitriol in Hans' eyes. It's clear this is the end of the line for their friendship.

Hans turns back to the rest of the survivors. All eyes are on him now. He's winning them over.

HANS

We have one purpose now. And that purpose is Wormwood. I'm tired of being told what to do.

(beat:)

My life on Earth was shit. But it was mine. And I want them to pay.

Everyone is silent. No one has ever seen Hans like this.

Hans slowly raises his hand. The five RINGS rise up from the floor, slide onto his fingers... And instantly turn GREEN.

And one at a time, each of the survivors ACTIVATE their own rings. Soon, Hans is surrounded by a FIELD OF GREEN --

-- except for Arthur, Theresa and Hakim. Their rings are RED. But Arthur's eyes are on MARTY --

-- his are GREEN. Hans holds his gaze as he speaks gravely:

HANS
We have decided.

INT. SHIP OF THE LAW

As we MOVE THROUGH THE SHIP, which appears deserted:

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)
*Super deceleration will begin in
one minute.*

THE SURVIVORS are in their quarters, encased in web-like hammocks attached to the walls. They nervously listen to the distant THUDDING that's building as the Ship VIBRATES --

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

A BRIGHTNESS appears at the tip of the Ship. Like the birth of a small star, raging to life, intensifying...

INT. SHIP OF THE LAW

MARTY AND THERESA lie together in his room, holding each other tightly. So do HAKIM AND PAOLA, in her cabin, as --

-- THE HAMMOCKS tighten around the survivors, beginning to lower towards the "ground".

THEO, curled up in the fetus position, whimpers in fear.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)
*Volumetric fields will activate in
ten seconds. The field will control
the motion of each individual
molecule in your body. The effect
may be slightly uncomfortable.*

GARY grips his hammock tightly, gritting his teeth.

GARY
Sounds fun.

The words barely leave his lips as we get a flash of A FIELD IMMERSING THE ROOM. And we RUSH TOWARDS GARY'S EYE as it is DISSECTED on a molecular level, each individual component isolated and firmly held in place --

ON THE OTHER SURVIVORS: drawing a shocked breath, eyes wide,
as the field DOES THE SAME TO THEIR BODIES --

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

The ship begins to change shape before our eyes: the bulbous
sections narrowing, the length swelling --

-- and the SPACE BEYOND shifts, the stars RESOLVING INTO
FOCUS as the ship finishes the process of slowing.

INT. HANS' ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A FOOT moves down into frame. Then another. Venturing to
rest on THE FLOOR BELOW. The toes WIGGLE for a beat. Then --

HANS stands. His face set in grim resolution.

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Wearing CEREMONIAL GOWNS of divided WHITE and BLACK, the
survivors are gathered in a circle around the hillside.
Arthur stands at the top with Hans, applying a streak of
WHITE PAINT to the shiny "face" of the War Mother:

ARTHUR

To eliminate the gray feelings, the
neutralities, the indecisions.

He switches to black paint, balancing the design:

ARTHUR

To show our resolve, to strengthen
our minds, and our courage.

The survivors turn to HANS as he steps forward. His makeup
is the most severe, and the gleam in his eyes is deadly:

HANS

In our actions, we represent all
that we have lost -- but we also
speak for others, the trillions of
lives that have been silenced by
the Destroyers, the Planet Killers.

(beat:)

We are the avenging angels of
Earth. And now is our time.

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Still in his ceremonial garb, Marty stands alone, in one final consultation with the War Mother:

WAR MOTHER

All the information you require has been provided.

MARTY

I mean background. Information about other civilizations, other Ships of the Law, other incidents and conflict strategies.

(no response:)

You have to trust us with all your information. We're calling for full disclosure.

WAR MOTHER

Your requests cannot be met. The information you seek is dangerous. If a Ship of the Law is captured, the information could be used by the Destroyers to seek out other intelligent species --

MARTY

That's not all, is it? It's us, too. We could become dangerous. We might seek them out as well.

(again, no response:)

We're just asking to be trusted.

WAR MOTHER

We are not empowered to trust.

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Frustrated, Marty exits the classroom. He stops short when he sees Theresa sitting on the grassy hill, waiting for him.

THERESA

I'm guessing you didn't hear what you wanted to hear.

Marty shakes his head. He walks up, sitting next to her. And then he notices THE WALLS OF THE SPHERE AROUND HIM are covered with glittering stars, in familiar constellations:

THERESA

It's the view from Earth. Even the
Milky Way, see?

She points. But he doesn't look. He seems broken. Finally:

THERESA

It's not too late. We can refuse
to fight. We can go home.

Her eyes plead for him to agree. He just leans in, putting
his head on her shoulder. She lets him, not noticing --

-- HANS, watching them from the darkness across the room.

INT. RIFLE BAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The survivors of Earth are gathered for what they all know
may be the final time. Half of them wear RED JUMPSUITS.
Half of the remainder wear BLUE, the others are in their
standard WHITE. And all of them have fear in their eyes.

HANS, in a blue jumpsuit, stands off to the side with GARY.
They're speaking softly, surveying the others.

A MINISTER (40s, in red) stands with a group of red and blue-
suited pilots, dipping a finger into a bowl of water and
anointing their foreheads with the sign of the Cross:

MINISTER

Through this Anointing may the Lord
in his love and mercy help you with
the grace of the Holy Spirit...

Marty and Theresa stand with Arthur (in red) by his Rifle as
he readies himself. Marty glances around at --

THE OTHERS: Hakim (in white) hugs a tearful Paola (in red)
by her ship; Eric (in red) shakes the hands of some friends,
trying to show his brave face; Theo (in red) sits on the
edge of his Rifle, swinging his legs casually. Oblivious.

MARTY

Most of the pilots are adults.

Arthur doesn't respond, opening the hatch and peering INSIDE:
the Rifle is a featureless capsule lined with cushioned
material, perfectly suited to Arthur's body.

MARTY

No offense, but don't kids and
teenagers have better reflexes --

ARTHUR

The War Mother chose the pilots for
a reason, Marty.

MARTY

I just wonder what reason.

Arthur turns back to him. Hardness in his eyes.

ARTHUR

Hans has really gotten to you,
hasn't he?

He turns away, walking around his ship.

MARTY

Dad --

Theresa puts a hand on his arm, stopping him from following.

ON ARTHUR: he's tracing the lines of the Rifle, his mind
racing. As he rounds the other side, he sees Elizabeth
approaching. She's also wearing a red jumpsuit.

ELIZABETH

Hi.

Arthur nods. They stand in silence for a beat.

ELIZABETH

Back on Earth I'd never even
consider firing a gun, or even
playing a violent video game. And
yet in my head, I know exactly how
we're about to disassemble an
entire planet, and anything that
might be hiding inside. How's that
for a change of pace.

Her attempt at humor only illuminates her fear.

ARTHUR

So just think of it as your first
violent video game.

She stares at him for a beat. Then she looks down at her
hand. At the WEDDING RING on her finger.

ELIZABETH

I lost someone, too. My husband.
If he were watching over me right
now, and he could whisper in my
ear, I know exactly what he'd say.

She slides off the ring, and tucks it into Arthur's palm.

ELIZABETH

He'd tell me to keep on living.

Elizabeth leans in and kisses his cheek. Then, flustered, she turns and walks back to her own Rifle. Arthur watches her go. But then something else grabs his attention --

-- HANS is opening the hatch of a Rifle and looking inside. Arthur's face darkens, and he walks over quickly.

ARTHUR

What are you doing? You're in the second wave.

HANS

Why, because the Moms said so?

Angry, Arthur PUTS A HAND on Hans' shoulder -- and Hans SPINS AROUND, grabbing Arthur's wrist. Fury in his gaze.

As the two burn holes into each other with their eyes:

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

*Your bodies are not equipped to
function properly under the stress
of Rifle acceleration --*

INT. RIFLE BAY / INT. RIFLES (SHIP OF THE LAW)

As Arthur settles into his body-proportioned capsule, a BLUE MEMBRANE begins to spread up from his feet to his neck:

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

*-- the membrane and water will
protect your physiologies against
velocities up to fifty of your
Earth's gravities.*

ON ELIZABETH: she takes a breath, trying to calm herself as WATER BEGINS TO FLOOD THE CAPSULE;

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

*Accelerations beyond that limit
will require a volumetric field.*

ON THEO: staring wide-eyed at the WATER rising to his knees;

ON HANS: calmly ignoring the membrane and water, he places his hands on two CLEAR PANELS at his side. They GLOW under his touch, and a HOLOGRAM rises before him -- it's WORMWOOD.

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

The planet named Wormwood has a solid inner core, molten outer core and protective mantle. Our Seeds cannot penetrate the crust...

The hologram EXPANDS, as if we're RUSHING TOWARDS THE SURFACE, which is pockmarked with IMPACT CRATERS:

WAR MOTHER (V.O.)

...the Rifles will target the selected impact craters. This should allow the Seeds access through the transition ridges.

HANS

Let's see what these babies can do.

THE RIFLE BAY: the Rifles COME TO LIFE, rotating en masse towards the far wall as it SLIDES OPEN.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty, Hakim and Theresa stand with a few others, watching through a transparent wall as THE RIFLES exit the ship.

MARTY

Everybody be careful out there.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

Arthur's Rifle leads three dozen others in a tight formation, leaving faint trails of reaction mass that quickly dissipate.

THE PILOTS are looking out their windows at the Ship of the Law. Seeing the immensity of it for the first time.

PAOLA

Wow. It's beautiful.

HANS (ON COMM)

We're not sightseeing, Paola. Stay in formation, keep your eyes open.

THE RIFLES streak towards an oblong MOON ahead of them.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hakim studies the HOLOGRAM hanging in the center of the room: the RIFLES swiftly approaching the large moon.

HAKIM

Planetary activity hasn't
increased. It's still dormant --

ERIC (ON COMM)

*If they were advanced enough to
build the Needles, they should have
detected us by now.*

All eyes are on Marty as he considers. Then:

MARTY

It looks quiet from here.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

Rifle Pilots. Initiate attack.

EXT. SPACE / WORMWOOD'S MOON

Using it for cover, the Rifles hang tight to the surface as
they race around it, SLING-SHOTING towards --

WORMWOOD. An ugly, seemingly-dead orb, it hangs languidly in
space. The Rifles tighten their formation, moving like a
scalpel. As they leave THE MOON behind them --

-- something happens on the DARK SIDE of it's surface.
LIGHTS wink on. Hundreds of them. And they're moving.

ERIC'S RIFLE: his eyes are on a tactical screen.

ERIC

I'm still not picking up any
orbital defense systems.

He doesn't notice THE LIGHTS flickering behind him --

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty turns as AN INDICATOR lights up the moon they've just
passed. Hakim sees it too, turning three shades of pale.

MARTY

Hans, we just got a large energy
reading from the surface of the
moon behind of you! --

EXT. SPACE

A cloud of metallic DRONES are swarming from the moon, about to overtake ERIC'S RIFLE --

HANS' RIFLE: he draws a breath as his hologram LIGHTS UP.

HANS

Squad A, protect the bombers!
Squad B, stay with me!

ON THE RIFLES: now we see what the ships -- and their pilots -- can do. Their formation BURSTS APART like a shower of sparks. Half of them regroup beyond the drones, continuing their approach vector. The others ENGAGE THE DRONES --

It's a DOGFIGHT beyond belief. The Rifles maneuver tightly, spinning and twisting through the chaotic cloud of battle.

INSIDE HANS' SHIP: he sits perfectly still, but HIS EYES are in rapid movement, sweat on his brow. And now we get it -- they're controlling the Rifles with their thoughts.

MULTIPLE TARGETS appear before him, and he concentrates --

-- a cluster of SPIKED DARTS burst forward from his ship, tracking the paths of their DRONE TARGETS. They collide, sticking to the surface -- and EXPLODE. The Drones shatter.

INT. RIFLE BAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The pilots in the blue uniforms, the second wave, let out a CHEER as they watch Hans' maneuver on a HOLOGRAM.

INT. ARTHUR'S RIFLE

The dogfight plays out on Arthur's hologram display as he reorients his Rifle towards Wormwood:

ARTHUR

Okay bombers, stay close...

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty watches the BOMBSHIP SQUADRON as it nears Wormwood:

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

We're about to commence the bombing run. Atmospheric penetration in five seconds.

MARTY

Any seismic disturbances?

HAKIM

No change. Same low-level rhythms.

MARTY

Project it for us.

The deep THUDDING WHISPER of the planet is like a heartbeat.

EXT. WORMWOOD / INT. RIFLES

IN PAOLA'S RIFLE: her hands clench anxiously as she listens to the sound of the planet's hum.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

Entering atmosphere in 3... 2... 1.

ABOVE THE PLANET: there's a devastating BOOM as the Rifles PUNCH THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE, buffeted by the resistance.

The HATCHES underneath them open, revealing the shiny oblong SEEDS perched within.

EXT. SPACE

ON HANS' GROUP: as they pick apart the last of the drones.

HANS

Good job, guys.

ERIC'S RIFLE: he can't help but smile with relief:

ERIC

Not bad for a first run --

Just then a BRIGHT BLUE FLASH overtakes his field of vision --

-- a BEAM OF PLASMA lances up from the moon, RIPPING through ERIC'S RIFLE. His horrific SCREAM is cut short as his Rifle SHATTERS into a thousand fragments.

HANS

They've got a surface cannon of some kind! Watch out for --

Another beam RACES towards Hans' squadron. The Rifles SCATTER out of the path of the beam.

EXT. WORMWOOD - SURFACE

Arthur's bombing squadron clears the atmosphere, ripping through the thin air at ultra-sonic speed. The DEAD LANDSCAPE races by below.

MARTY (OVER COMM)

Can you get a visual on the cannon?

ARTHUR

Negative! It's all dead down here!

ELIZABETH'S RIFLE: her hologram BEGINS TO FLASH.

ELIZABETH

We're approaching the target.

ARTHUR (OVER COMM)

Prepare for Seed insertion.

UNDER THE RIFLES: the Seeds in the hatches ROTATE and prime themselves with a CRACKLE of energy.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Everyone watches tensely as the Rifles near their drop zone --

The sound of Wormwood's HEARTBEAT around them abruptly stops.

THERESA

Subsurface activity has ceased.

MARTY

That's not possible --

INT. ARTHUR'S RIFLE

Hearing what's happening, Arthur doesn't waste any time:

ARTHUR

Drop the Seeds now!

INT. ELIZABETH'S RIFLE / EXT. WORMWOOD SURFACE

ELIZABETH

We're not at the drop zone --

ARTHUR (ON COMM)
They'll know how to get there!

The urgency in Arthur's voice startles her into action --

-- but her ship suddenly VIBRATES VIOLENTLY --

OUTSIDE THE SHIP: the sky around the Rifles seems to SHIMMER for a moment. There's a high-pitched HUMMING SOUND --

PAOLA (ON COMM)
What the hell was that? --

ARTHUR (ON COMM)
Release the Seeds and pull out!

There's a SHOWER OF SPARKS as, in perfect sync, the Rifles RELEASE THEIR PAYLOAD -- THOUSANDS OF SEEDS spill from the Rifles and propel themselves towards the surface.

The ships immediately BANK UP, heading back to the sky.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Warning indicators are coming up all around Marty and Hakim.

HAKIM
Marty...

Marty turns to Hakim, who stares wide-eyed at a display:

HAKIM
The entire surface of the planet
has just risen five centimeters.

The WORMWOOD HOLOGRAM suddenly changes dramatically, as --

EXT. WORMWOOD

Hot WHITE LINES streak from the poles to meet at the equator, turning bright red. The entire planet seems to SHUDDER as a PULSE OF FORCE is emitted, racing up to the sky --

-- intercepting the Seeds. They immediately SHATTER --

-- and the shockwave continues, catching up with the Rifles --

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

HAKIM
(in panic mode:)
The Seeds are gone!

MARTY
Dad! Get out of there!

EXT. WORMWOOD / INT. RIFLES

Too late. The shockwave OVERTAKES THE RIFLES -- but it just PASSES THROUGH THEM, igniting silvery HALOS around them.

INSIDE ARTHUR'S SHIP: the holographic screens FLICKER, jittering madly for a moment, before correcting.

ON HANS' GROUP: racing towards the planet, they see the energy wave CONVERGING ON THEM --

HANS
Take evasive action --

Too late. The wave OVERTAKES THEM... and just like the others, it seems to just pass through them.

HANS' RIFLE swings around the edge of the moon just in time -- it eclipses the ENERGY WAVE, and his ship is unscathed.

MARTY (ON COMM)
What happened? Are you --

ERIC
We're alright. It was an energy wave of some kind. But we're okay.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A sigh of relief passes over the group. It doesn't last --

ELIZABETH (ON COMM)
Something's wrong with my ship.

Marty quickly raises his wand. An image of ELIZABETH'S RIFLE appears -- the burning halo has tapered off, but the now the small craft is outlined by SPARKLES OF WHITE LIGHT.

PAOLA (ON COMM)
Mine too. We all have it, I think.

The image PULLS BACK to reveal THE COMBINED RIFLE SQUADRON.
They're all throwing off the same pale sparks.

MARTY

War Mother, what's the discharge?

WAR MOTHER

Not known.

HANS (ON COMM)

*We could have picked up something
in the atmosphere, maybe static --*

HAKIM

There is no radiation, no
atmospheric residue. The Rifles
are molecularly clean.

Everyone waits for Marty to make a decision. Finally:

MARTY

Bring them in. One at a time.

EXT. WORMWOOD / INT. RIFLES

INSIDE PAOLA'S RIFLE: she touches a display screen.

PAOLA

I'll go first.

Then she stares down at her hands. Her skin looks pale.

INSIDE ELIZABETH'S RIFLE: she watches as Paola's Rifle takes
the lead, moving closer to the docking bay.

PAOLA (ON COMM)

*I feel a little sick. Are you sure
it wasn't radiation?*

MARTY (ON COMM)

Positive. Elizabeth? How are you?

ELIZABETH

A little dizzy. But I'm okay.

Then she raises one of her hands into the light. It too
seems pale. But then she takes a closer look... and realizes
SHE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH HER OWN PALM.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty, Hakim and the others watch as Paola's ship approaches.

ELIZABETH (ON COMM)

Paola? Hold on, I think --

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

Paola's ship touches the docking bay -- and the pale sparks suddenly FLARE, leaping forward to connect with the ship --

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

WAR MOTHER

There is immediate danger of --

There's a VIOLENT EXPLOSION, and the entire room SHAKES --

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

Paola's ship, and the bay, IGNITES WITH WHITE-HOT ENERGY --

-- that ARCS back to the nearest Rifle. It's Elizabeth's. She sees the LASHING ENERGY approaching and SCREAMS --

-- Hans JERKS HIS RIFLE to life, spinning away as --

-- the dancing fire LANCES FROM SHIP TO SHIP, overtaking us --

-- as THE SHIP OF THE LAW is overcome by the SILVER FIRE, being EATEN APART FROM THE INSIDE --

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Everyone is thrown from their feet by the MASSIVE EXPLOSION --

-- and then they're FLAILING IN THE AIR as gravity cuts out.

HAKIM

What happened? --

WAR MOTHER

The Rifles have been converted to anti-matter --

HANS

WAR MOTHER! MOVE US AWAY FROM --

WAR MOTHER

The aft hemisphere is cracking --

The entire universe seems to SHATTER as we --

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. ARTHUR'S CAR (DREAM SEQUENCE) - NIGHT

A SOUND emerges from the darkness, a WHIRRING mechanical rhythm. We slowly FADE IN ON --

-- WINDSHIELD WIPERS whisking away the fat raindrops pattering against the glass. The effect, along with the purr of the engine, is strangely soothing.

Marty is in the back seat, looking out at the stormy night. Gauge is curled up on the seat next to him, head on his leg.

Marty turns forward to see HIS PARENTS in the front seats. They hold hands as they drive through the night.

MARTY

Dad?

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Mmmm-hmmm?

MARTY

Is space empty?

ARTHUR (V.O.)

Marty -- wake up --

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The room has gone dark. Debris floats throughout the room, gravity has not yet returned. Amidst the debris are --

BODIES. Marty, Hakim, a few others. But they're fixed in place, hanging limply, supported by an unseen field.

A chair languidly spins towards Marty's body -- and BURSTS APART in the impact. Whatever's sustaining him is powerful.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

Marty --

Marty comes to. He can't move, but his eyes scan the room.

"Forge" -- Rewrite Draft (Susco), 11-4-05 79.

MARTY

D -- Dad?

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

Arthur Gordon is in his Rifle.

MARTY

Let me see...

His body rotates, moving towards a wall that becomes translucent -- and ARTHUR'S RIFLE is beyond. His father is looking at him through his transparent cockpit...

... and both he, and his Rifle, are emitting PALE SPARKS.

MARTY

Dad... no...

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

It's alright, Marty. You're going to be okay.

MARTY

(in pain:)

What about the others --

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

No one aboard the Ship of the Law has died, but all are injured. The Ship has been disabled.

MARTY

Hans?

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

He managed to get clear.

Marty follows Arthur's gaze to HANS' SHIP, keeping distance.

MARTY

It was my fault. I shouldn't have--

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

We also did not draw the right conclusions until it was too late.

MARTY

Dad... we can try to convert you back to matter --

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

We already tried. Theo, he volunteered. It didn't work.

MARTY

There's got to be a way --

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

*Listen to me, Marty. War Mother
says the dark masses are moving.
They're falling into Wormwood.*

A HOLOGRAM appears next to Marty, showing an "overhead" view of the star. The FIVE DARK MASSES surrounding it are indeed moving -- inward, towards an inexorable collision.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

*It's their Final Solution. The
star will go supernova and destroy
everything within fifteen million
kilometers.*

Arthur's Rifle tilts as it moves closer -- as close as it can get to the ship's hull without touching.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

*With enough power, the ship can
regenerate some of it's systems.
Enough for a rapid acceleration.
Sort of like a jump start. My ship
can provide enough of that power --*

MARTY

How?

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

*A matter/anti-matter reaction. War
Mother says there's enough juice
left for a field that will protect
you from damage, but can syphon the
energy released by the explosion.*

Marty and Arthur stare at each other. Knowing this is the last moment they'll ever have together.

MARTY

This was their idea, wasn't it?

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

No, Marty. It was Hans' idea.

Marty's tear-filled eyes to go Hans. His friend's expression is blank. Marty shakes his head.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

It's the only way to save everyone.

MARTY

(desperate:)

We'll take you with us, carry you
in a field --

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

Recovery will not be possible.

MARTY

Please. I can't -- I can't do this
without you.

ON ARTHUR, as he repeats his son's own words back to him:

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

You have to.

Marty raises a hand to the "window". Inside his Rifle,
Arthur does the same. Their palms only inches apart.

ARTHUR (ON COMM)

I'm proud of you, Marty.

Marty watches through tear-stained eyes as his Rifle begins
to pull away, still throwing pale sparks as it drifts towards
the rear of the ship. It turns, maneuvering towards --

-- SEVEN METALLIC PELLETS that detach from the Ship of the
Law, forming a ring in perfect confluence directly behind it.
And BEYOND THEM, too far for the human eye to see --

-- THE FIVE DARK MASSES, blotting out the stars, are
converging on Wormwood. As they get nearer, the "surface" of
the sun begins to roil and writhe, shifting color --

SHIP OF THE LAW: losing consciousness, Marty whispers:

MARTY

I want... to see...

All the walls BECOME TRANSLUCENT, and Marty is hanging in
space, watching as Arthur's Rifle takes it's position in the
center of the pellets.

BACK TO WORMWOOD: the Dark Masses touch the outer rim of the
star. And there's AN ERUPTION OF COLOR --

BACK TO MARTY: he meets Arthur's sad eyes one final time --

In perfect synchronicity, matching the Dark Masses, the
metallic pellets rapidly FALL INWARD TOWARDS HIS RIFLE --

Marty closes his eyes. And light overtakes the world.

FLASH TO WHITE.

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

MARTY'S POV: a voice creeps in through the whiteness --

HANS (O.S.)
Arthur saved us, Marty. The
detonation gave us enough energy to
get away...

A FACE begins to resolve out of the blizzard --

HANS
...but some of us were too badly
burned by the neutrino wash. They
died in confinement.

MARTY (O.S.)
How... How many?

And now we can see HANS' FACE. He looks like a new man. A
harder one. But his eyes are etched with sorrow.

HANS
There are only fifteen of us left.

The white BLAZES around us, and Marty GROANS --

HANS
Lie back, you need more rest...

The white TAKES OVER AGAIN, and we abruptly CUT TO --

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW) - DUSK

Marty sits on his bed, staring blankly out at the sun setting
behind the tree line outside. He looks weak and pale.

MARTY
War Mother.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)
Yes, Marty.

MARTY
I want you to make me something.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

What would you like us to make?

MARTY

My dog. Gauge.

WAR MOTHER (O.S.)

*We cannot create life. We can only
simulate --*

MARTY

Do the best you can.

Marty turns -- and GAUGE is standing there, next to the bed, looking up at him. But the Lab's eyes are dead and unblinking. The tail hangs limply. It's quite creepy.

MARTY

Hey, boy.

The dog doesn't move. But it's tail does -- slowly to the right, then slowly to the left. Robotic. Without feeling.

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The room is dark and quiet. Hans is alone, standing before War Mother. Arms crossed. Simmering. Finally:

WAR MOTHER

*We regret this loss. We hope it
does not make you less efficient.*

Hans regards the War Mother for a long beat.

HANS

We need more. More information.
More training. More power. We
know you can provide us --

WAR MOTHER

*We have provided you with all the
Benefactors will allow us.*

Hans' eyes stay on the War Mother, ignoring the MOVEMENT behind the metallic object --

HANS

Then you're no longer needed.

As if sensing something, War Mother BEGINS TO TURN --

Too late. Gary RISES UP behind it, CRASHING A CHAIR on top of it. War Mother hits the ground with a CLANG --

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

ON MARTY: he sits with his back to the wall, head lowered. His hair is longer now, and hangs before his face. There's something different about the room around him --

A CHIME makes him raise his head. He stares at the door.

MARTY

Leave me alone.

But the door opens and Theresa stands in the doorway. As she enters, we now see what's different: the illusion of his bedroom on Earth is GONE. It's now back to being a completely white, entirely featureless room.

THERESA

It's been two weeks. Hans is --

MARTY

It's over. There's no point.

Theresa kneels down next to him, taking his hand.

THERESA

It's not over. We need you.

INT. QUARTERS HALLWAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Theresa supports Marty as he exits his room. He's weak, and leans on her shoulder. He looks around, surprised, at --

-- THE CORRIDOR. Something's changed. The illumination is dimmer, and the FAMILIAR SOUNDS of the Ship have vanished.

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty and Theresa enter. He immediately freezes, looking at --

THE WAR MOTHER. Dented and bruised, it's HANGING FROM THE CEILING, attached to a rope that appears to be made from the survivors' clothing. It ROCKS gently, creaking.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Theresa helps Marty inside -- the REMAINING SURVIVORS, mostly children, are gathered inside. The plain white clothing is gone, replaced by their Earth attire. All eyes are on Marty.

HANS

Nice of you to join us, Marty.

Hans stands at the head of the group, grinning like a satiated tiger. Gary, the only adult left, stands next to him. Obviously his right-hand man.

Theresa lets go of Marty -- he's stunned to watch as she walks through the crowd to stand next to Hans. She lowers her head, unable to look Marty in the eye.

MARTY

What happened to War Mother, Hans?

HANS

I've relieved it of it's duties.
We're running the Ship now.

MARTY

That's impossible. How --

HANS

They "improved" some of our
abilities just a bit too much.

Hans glances over at Hakim, who looks away, ashamed.

MARTY

So you proved them right. About
not trusting us.

HANS

They were lying to us, Marty.
About everything --

MARTY

We made the choice. Not them.

HANS

They've been studying us for a long
time. They knew exactly what to
say to us, how to manipulate us.
How to get what they wanted. But
we don't need them. In fact, we're
doing much better without them.

He nods to Hakim, who activates A HOLOGRAM that fills the room. We've seen it before: it's LEVIATHAN. Five colorless PLANETS revolve around the star.

HANS

This was the data we received
through the Benefactors' remotes.
Hakim figured out how to use a
deeper scan, something they didn't
want us to know how to do.

The hologram CHANGES DRAMATICALLY: now there are a DOZEN PLANETS, in colorful detail. Instead of disparate orbits, they are CLUSTERED TOGETHER in common movement.

MARTY

Oh my God...

Everyone else is as amazed. Hans clearly waited to show them all at the same time, for dramatic effect.

ON THE HOLOGRAM: bright CHAINS like Christmas lights stretch from one planet to the next, connecting ELEVEN PLANETS in a ring around a CENTRAL PLANET ("Sleep"). It's surface is so dark it's almost invisible.

MARTY

It doesn't make any sense. Why
would they hide this from us if
they wanted us to go there?

HANS

If we knew what was waiting, maybe
we wouldn't want to.

Hans turns to survey the hologram, his eyes cold and dark:

HANS

Now that we're in charge, we
understand the full potential of
this Ship. In our estimation, our
weapons far exceed their defenses.

It takes Marty a beat to understand the implications:

MARTY

You mean -- we're more powerful
than they are?

HANS

This ship is a powerhouse, Marty.
The Benefactors didn't want us to
know it's full capability...

(MORE)

HANS (cont'd)
(turning to Marty:)
...because they didn't want us to
know what gives it such power.

Hakim raises his hand, manipulating the rings --

-- and the wall behind him DISSOLVES. The remaining survivors stare in shock at the low-lit SLOPING CORRIDOR leading down into the bowels of the ship.

INT. DARK CORRIDOR (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hans, Theresa and Hakim lead the others down the corridor to another iris-door at the end. It opens as they approach. Hans and Hakim stand aside to let everyone stare in shock at--

THE CHAMBER. A deep but narrow room, CRACKLING with throbbing energy, shielded by a wall transparent material. And in the center, obviously the source of the power, is --

-- A NEEDLE. It dwarfs them, almost half a mile long.

MARTY
I don't understand. They said the
Destroyers made the Needles.

HANS
Yes. But they were lying.

As Marty stares at the Needle, a CHIME echoes throughout the cavernous room. It takes Hakim a moment to understand what it is. He raises his hand, summoning a HOLOGRAM --

HANS
What is it?

HAKIM
We're receiving a message.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The children gather around Hakim, THE MESSAGE appearing on a series of HOLOGRAMS hanging above them. One of them sketches an ORBITAL PATH through the planets.

HAKIM
It came from the central planet.
They've suggested an approach
vector --

GARY
Very neighborly of them.

ARIEL

They know we're coming.

HANS

Yeah. Wormwood was one hell of an early warning system, wasn't it?

HAKIM

Apparently there are two species in the system. They sent images:

The light on the group's faces SHIFTS as two new holograms appear -- and THE REACTION is a mixture of horror and rage.

HAKIM

Oh, my God.

One hologram shows a TOWERING PHANTOM. It looks like it's made of smoke. And the other --

-- shows a familiar image. It's THE GUEST.

MARTY

Hakim, transmit a language stream.

Hans swivels towards him as Hakim follows his command.

HANS

You want to talk to them?!?!

MARTY

We need to understand what --

HANS

That's what we tried on Earth. Talking to them. Didn't seem to help much, did it? All the time wasted trying to understand them, to negotiate with them, when we could have been doing something --

He's interrupted by A VOICE that emits through the very walls around them -- a neutral tone, with precise pronunciation:

SECOND GUEST (O.S.)

HELLO. GOOD DAY. YOU HAVE ENTERED
OUR COOPERATIVE AREAS AND ARE
WELCOME TO JOIN THE GATHERING OF
PARTNERS.

Everyone goes silent. Listening. Stunned.

SECOND GUEST (O.S.)
THERE ARE NO REQUIREMENTS EXCEPT
PEACEFUL INTENTIONS. WEAPONS ARE
NOT ALLOWED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.
IF YOU HAVE ANY WEAPONS, YOU MUST
NOTIFY US AND DISPOSE OF THEM. IS
THIS UNDERSTOOD?

ON HANS: his jaw is clenched. There's murder in his eyes.

HANS
It's a lie. Just another lie --

MARTY
Send an affirmative response.

Hakim does so with a flick of his fingers. Hans WHIRLS
towards Marty, losing control. Marty stays cool.

SECOND GUEST (O.S.)
OUR FIRST MEETING WILL OCCUR IN
ORBIT. WE HAVE EQUIPMENT SUITED TO
YOUR BIOLOGY TO PREVENT
CONTAMINATION. WE HAVE TRANSMITTED
COORDINATES. PROCEED WHEN READY.

The room goes silent again. All eyes are on Marty and Hans,
and the eruption just waiting to happen between them.

ARIEL
What do we do?

HANS
The only thing these things
understand -- we destroy.
(to the group:)
Prepare for the fucking assault.

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty sits on the bed in the bare room. His eyes are on the
IPOD sitting on a table nearby. He finally picks it up, puts
in the earbuds, and presses 'PLAY'.

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
Dearest Arthur. Forgive me if I'm
rambling. But at a time like this
-- I have a theory. A theory of
everything that's happening. I've
been a biologist for twenty years.
Thinking in terms of organisms,
evolutions, extinctions.
(MORE)

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES) (cont'd)
*Survival of the fittest. But what's
been happening has made me think on
an even larger scale. And just
like any living thing, the Earth is
subject to extinction...*

INT. HANS' ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The only illumination is from a makeshift TORCH that burns in the corner. Hans stands before a patch of REFLECTIVE WALL, his face stoic as he applies WAR PAINT...

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
*...Remember all the critics when
your father was at SETI? Skeptics
who said the universe is fourteen
and a half billion years old, and
if there was anyone else out there
we would've heard them by now?
Signals from other life should have
reached us. Something should have
made contact. It's always nagged
at me. Now I see the real reason
we never heard anything...*

INT. HAKIM'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hakim kneels on a ragged PRAYER RUG he's woven himself, eyes closed, lips moving as he prays:

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
*... we didn't hear anything not
because we were alone, but because
the galaxy is a jungle. A young,
primeval jungle, full of predators.
I'm guessing the more advanced
societies, the ones we've been
looking for, are smart enough to
stay quiet. No radio broadcasts.
No whispers in the dark. But Earth
is young. We didn't know any
better. So we cried out for
attention. And we got some, didn't
we? We let the predators know
exactly where we were. We lead
them right to us...*

INT. GARY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Gary huddles in the corner, naked, shivering with fear. He lifts up a long HUNTING KNIFE and stares at it.

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
...And all the while, the others
sat out in the silent darkness,
listening to us... and soon enough,
they'll hear us go silent...

Gary lowers the knife to his arm, placing the blade at the end of a LONG CHAIN OF SCARS. We move away, back to his face, as he CUTS... and we see his eyes become clear again.

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
...I can't help but wonder why they
didn't warn us. Why no one ever
extended a friendly hand. And it
makes me wonder, if everyone out
there is so afraid, and so lonely,
if it would be better to simply be
alone in the universe...

INT. THERESA'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Theresa sits at her desk, writing a NOTE with a stylus:

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
But if what the alien said to Marty
was true, that they're going to try
to help us -- that means somebody
out there, in the vastness of the
galaxy, thinks we're worth saving.
And if we are, maybe it's because
of the things that makes us
different from the others. Maybe
it's because we assumed the best
when we sent our messages of hope
into the galaxy...

Theresa finishes the letter, signing it to -- 'Marty'.

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
If we truly are given a second
chance, we must learn to embrace
what makes us human. What makes us
worth saving.

INT. MARTY'S ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

There are tears in his eyes as his mother's message ends:

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES)
Please don't hold on to me, Arthur.
You have to continue.
(MORE)

CATHERINE (OVER HEADPHONES) (cont'd)
*You have to be strong. Strong
enough for Marty. Strong enough
for everyone who is left.*

The recording ends. But Marty doesn't move.

INT. REC ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The room is dark. Flickering firelight reveals the iris-door as it opens and Marty enters, stepping towards --

THE HILLSIDE. The remaining survivors are standing in a ring, holding flaming torches, as they prepare for battle.

HANS stands in the center, with Gary nearby, as he speaks:

HANS
-- we are no longer the children of
Earth. We have been reborn in the
forge of God, and we have been
tempered on the anvil of stars. We
carry inside us the memory of six
billion lives, crying out for
vengeance. And those voices will
soon be heard.

Theresa, standing in the circle, sees Marty approaching.
Everyone turns as he climbs the hill, stepping up to Hans.

MARTY
There are a hundred billion living
creatures on these twelve planets.
And we haven't detected a single
Needle in the entire system. They
greeted us with a message of peace.
And you want to condemn them to
death before we can even be sure
they are guilty.

Most of the survivors can't look Marty in the eye. Gary
stares at Marty like he wants to tear him apart.

HANS
Everything they told us was a lie --

MARTY
You took away their ability to
explain themselves, Hans.

He points up at the now-defunct War Mother, hanging overhead.

MARTY

You silenced them. Should you be
the one to lead us now?

HANS

And what would you have us do? Go
back to Earth and hide? Pray they
don't realize we're still alive?

THERESA

Marty's right. They should have
the same opportunity we would have
given them back on Earth.

MARTY

If we betray what it means to be
human, our survival means nothing --

GARY

SHUT UP!!!!

Gary suddenly LUNGES FORWARD, swinging his torch into Marty's
back. Marty tumbles down the hill, hitting the bottom hard.
Theresa runs down, helping him to a knee as he gasps for air.

Hans stares down at Marty -- and for a moment, we see a flash
of concern in his eyes. It doesn't last. But:

MARTY

A vote. We always vote.

He manages to stand, raising his hand. Five RINGS emerge
from the floor as he keeps his eyes on Hans':

MARTY

To give them a chance.

His rings turn GREEN. The survivors all raise their hands --
half of the rings are GREEN, the other half are RED.

Theresa is the deciding vote. She looks from Hans to Marty.

Then she raises her hand. And her rings turn GREEN.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

A bulge appears in the rear of the Ship... and then a much
smaller ship, a modified version of a Rifle, emerges.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

It's much larger inside, with room to stand. Marty and Hans stand side-by-side at the controls.

HAKIM (OVER COMM)
How's it handling?

MARTY
Perfectly. Not bad for your first spaceship, Hakim.

Hans gives Marty a look. He's not in a jovial mood.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hakim examines dozens of holographic readouts. Theresa stares at a closer view of the CENTRAL PLANET --

THERESA
Look at this moon.

Hakim turns as she expands the hologram, to reveal PUFF: it looks like a dandelion swollen with seeds, an odd sight.

THERESA
Why does it look fuzzy?

HAKIM
It's artificial. Looks like it's a layer of tethered stations, suspended in orbit.

THERESA
An artificial moon? What's it for?

HAKIM
(shrugs:)
See how the planets move around the star together? The system didn't begin that way. They were either moved into place, one by one -- or some of them are also artificial.

They exchange a nervous look. Then Theresa glances at GARY. He's watching like a hawk from the other end of the room.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Marty stares at the holographic controls. Considers.

MARTY

Hakim, can you make the walls
transparent?

HAKIM (OVER COMM)

Hold on...

The wall before Marty and Hans GOES TRANSPARENT -- they draw
a breath as they take in --

LEVIATHAN. It's an awesome sight. Twelve planets this close
to each another, moving as one around their mother star.

Marty and Hans stare out at PUFF -- it's even more dazzling
up close. We can make out the massive TETHERS stretching
thousands of kilometers from the surface, supporting the
pristine white STRUCTURES that conceal the planet below.

MARTY

The central planet has two moons.
That's the first, the other we
should be seeing soon --

THE SECOND MOON emerges from behind Puff. The planet seems
to SHIFT COLOR every few seconds -- it's surface is liquid,
and the changes appear to be a constant tidal fluctuation.

MARTY

Hakim calls that one "Blinker". He
thinks it's a massive power source.

Hans doesn't reply. Marty turns to find him staring at him.

HANS

One month.
(Marty doesn't get it:)
We've been traveling for three
hundred years. But for us, Europa
disappeared one month ago, today.
Incredible.

But there's no love in his eyes. Just a stark emptiness.

MARTY

Yeah. Incredible.

EXT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Reaching the coordinates, the craft slows to a stop. Waits.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hakim's eyes widen as SOMETHING NEW APPEARS on the hologram:

HAKIM

Wow...

EXT. MODIFIED RIFLE

An ELEGANT CRAFT, white as snow, perfectly symmetrical and tapered, slides up next to Hans and Marty's ship.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Marty and Hans watch as the alien craft seems to BULGE, extruding a docking tunnel more organic than mechanical.

SECOND GUEST (O.S.)

WE ARE PREPARED TO JOIN WITH YOUR
VESSEL. WE HAVE CREATED AN
ENVIRONMENT YOU WILL FIND SUITABLE.

The Rifle door opens with a HISS, allowing passage into the glistening passageway connecting the two ships. Marty and Hans step inside, their footsteps strangely muted.

INT. ALIEN CRAFT

The interior is as starkly white, and featureless, as the exterior. Marty and Hans step inside facing --

-- THE GUEST. Or at least, another of his species. It moves towards them with surprising grace, miter-head nodding, sherry-colored eyes blinking rapidly.

SECOND GUEST

I AM YOUR HELPER. IT IS A PLEASURE
TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.

Hans just stares at the creature. Simmering.

MARTY

My name is Martin. This is Hans.

The CORRIDOR is reabsorbed by the ship, sealing the wall.

SECOND GUEST

WE WILL DESCEND NOW. THERE SHOULD
BE NO DISCOMFORT.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The survivors watch as the alien craft moves away from Marty and Hans' modified rifle. Theresa whispers:

THERESA
Be careful, Marty...

INT. ALIEN CRAFT

The Second Guest studies Marty and Hans as they descend.

SECOND GUEST
ARE YOU COMFORTABLE?

MARTY
I feel -- a little queasy.

SECOND GUEST
THE FIELD SIMULATES A GRAVITY MORE
SATISFACTORY TO YOUR SKELETAL
STRUCTURE. OUR PLANET WOULD
OTHERWISE INJURE YOU.
(beat:)
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OUR WORLD?

MARTY
Yes. Please.

And suddenly THE ALIEN CRAFT IS GONE. It's similar to the translucent-wall effect on the Ship of the Law, but far more sophisticated. Marty and Hans stand in awe as they see --

-- THE ALIEN HOMEWORLD. They're floating through billowing clouds in an orange-hued sky. A glittering CITY, looking as if it's made of crystal, stretches as far as the eye can see.

MARTY
Can you see this, Hakim?

HAKIM (OVER COMM)
Yes. It's... beautiful --

SECOND GUEST
ALL COMMUNICATIONS ARE MONITORED.

Marty turns to the Second Guest, surprised. It stares at him unblinkingly, as if trying to convey a silent message.

MARTY
From space, this planet seems dark.

"Forge" -- Rewrite Draft (Susco), 11-4-05 98.

SECOND GUEST
*IT IS A CURTAIN -- A SCREEN. IT
PROVIDES PROTECTION.*

MARTY
Against what? Solar radiation?

SECOND GUEST
AGAINST OTHERS.

EXT. SLEEP - DAY

The craft descends toward a MASSIVE LAKE ringed by towering mountain ranges. Then the ship UNFOLDS, leaving Marty, Hans and the Second Guest standing on a disc-shaped platform.

SECOND GUEST
*FIRST WE WILL HAVE A MEETING WITH
THE FOUNDERS. THEN --*

MARTY
"Founders"?

SECOND GUEST
*YES. THE BRINGERS OF LIGHT. THE
STAIRCASE GODS.*

Marty and Hans exchange a look. The Second Guest waves a hand, and the disc-ferry begins to glide across the water.

EXT. SLEEP - DAY

The disc-ferry approaches the shoreline: the liquid presses directly up against the mountain. The mouth of a ROCK TUNNEL looms high above them as they glide inside.

INT. SLEEP - TUNNEL - DAY

The ferry-disc fills the small tunnel with a vaguely bioluminescent glow. It begins to slow and finally stops.

The disc BEGINS TO RISE, passing through a gap overhead --

INT. SLEEP - ANTECHAMBER - DAY

-- and stopping in the center of a TOWERING ROUND ROOM. There are HUNDREDS MORE of the Second Guest's species seated around what appears to be a kind of council chamber.

"Forge" -- Rewrite Draft (Susco), 11-4-05 99.

Marty and Hans face them. Silence fills the hall. Until --
Hans steps forward. His face dark. His voice cold.

HANS

I'm sorry. But I bring bad news.

Marty turns to Hans, shocked. Before Hans can continue:

STAIRCASE GOD (O.S.)

WE KNOW WHY YOU ARE HERE.

The floor before Marty and Hans BEGINS TO RISE -- an intense brightness fills the room as a CLEAR TUBE rises to the ceiling, towering above them. And inside the tube is --

THE STAIRCASE GOD. Three stories tall, shimmering and phantasmic, yellow and orange contrails swirling in a helical form. The VOICE that follows it is rich and feminine:

STAIRCASE GOD

**YOU ARE PART OF A FORCE THAT WAS
SENT TO DESTROY THE CREATORS OF THE
PLANET-KILLING MACHINES.**

HANS

We are a part of no force. We are alone. And we are --

MARTY

Have we found the "creators"?

STAIRCASE GOD

**YOU HAVE FOUND THEIR HOME. YOU ARE
NOT THE FIRST TO HAVE DONE SO. AND
THERE WILL BE OTHERS WHO WILL COME
AFTER YOU.**

Marty and Hans exchange a look. Off-balance.

MARTY

Others?

STAIRCASE GOD

**FROM DESTROYED WORLDS. YOUR WORLD
WAS DESTROYED?**

MARTY

Yes.

STAIRCASE GOD

**WE SYMPATHIZE, AND UNDERSTAND YOUR
DESIRE FOR REVENGE --**

HANS

(enraged:)

How dare you speak of sympathy,
when you are the ones who --

STAIRCASE GOD

**OUR ANCESTORS LIVED IN FEAR OF
OTHERS FOR TOO LONG. THEY BUILT
MACHINES THAT ARE ETERNAL --
MACHINES THAT FOREVER SEARCH, AND
CANNOT BE RECALLED. THEIR WEAPONS
CONTINUE TO DAMAGE, BUT THE
CREATORS HAVE LONG SINCE GONE.**

Understanding the gravity of what he's being told:

MARTY

Your ancestors built the Needles.

STAIRCASE GOD

**YES. FOR THIS WE FEEL GREAT
SADNESS AND REMORSE --**

MARTY

How long ago?

STAIRCASE GOD

**ACCORDING TO YOUR CALENDAR, OVER
TEN THOUSAND YEARS.**

It's like a punch in the gut for Marty and Hans.

STAIRCASE GOD

**WE ARE SORRY FOR YOUR WORLD. WE
REGRET OUR ANCESTORS' DEEDS. BUT
WE CANNOT REPAIR THE DAMAGE THAT
HAS BEEN DONE. WE LIVE IN PEACE
NOW. THESE PLANETS CONTAIN
BILLIONS OF INTELLIGENCES. NONE OF
THEM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
DESTRUCTION OF YOUR WORLD.**

(beat:)

**PLEASE UNDERSTAND. IF YOU DESTROY
US, YOU ONLY KILL INNOCENTS.**

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Theresa and the others stand in silence, the alien's words
sinking in... realizing that their journey has been in vain.

EXT. MODIFIED RIFLE

The white alien craft once again docks with the modified Rifle. The dock retracts, and the craft heads for home.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Marty and Hans stare at Sleep as they consider the situation.

HANS

More lies.

MARTY

The burden of proof is on us, Hans.
And we don't have any.

(beat:)

They know what we can do. And
they're afraid of us --

HANS

They should be.

MARTY

-- but yet they freely admitted
what their ancestors had done.
They told us without being asked.
The guilty don't act that way.

Hans turns to Marty. A long beat. Finally:

HANS

You would let them get away with
what they've done?

MARTY

I will not allow the slaughter of
billions of lives that may very
well be innocent.

Hans holds Marty's firm gaze... then, after a beat, he nods.

HANS

Alright. We'll talk to the others.
Put it to a vote.

Marty is surprised that his friend is listening to reason.
He turns away, summoning a HOLOGRAM of Hakim:

MARTY

Hakim, get everyone together in the
rec room. We're going to --

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
(alarmed:)
Marty! Look out --

Marty whirls around -- too late. With fingers interlaced,
Hans SMASHES DOWN on Marty's neck, and we CUT TO BLACK --

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Marty lies on the floor, blood dripping down his forehead.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
(whispering:)
Marty... wake up...

Marty opens his eyes. It takes him a moment to realize where
he is. He scrambles to his feet, looking around --

-- Hans is gone. He winces, putting a hand to his head.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
*Marty, we don't have much time.
Hans is planning an attack.*

Marty turns to the HOLOGRAM of Hakim. He looks afraid.

MARTY
Can you stall him?

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
I'm trying. But it won't last --

MARTY
Good. Bring me back, and we'll --

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
Everyone's behind him, Marty.

MARTY
Even Theresa?

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
*No. But there's not much we can
do. He knows exactly what kind of
weapons the Ship has. And he's
going to use them.*

Marty lowers his head. Hope beginning to leave him.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
*There's something inside Puff,
Marty. Something I think they're
trying to hide.*

Marty turns to look out at PUFF. Getting Hakim's intent.

MARTY
Proof. If we can get proof...

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
It's our only chance.

Marty turns back to Hakim, resolved:

MARTY
Can you make me disappear?

Hakim smiles. Raises his ringed fingers.

OUTSIDE THE MODIFIED RIFLE: a stream of CLOAKING PARTICLES
emerge from the Rifle, swarming over the ship's surface...

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

On the HOLOGRAM, Marty's modified Rifle VANISHES. Just then,
Hans comes up behind Hakim, studying the readouts:

HANS
Is the Lance ready?

HAKIM
It's still priming. It takes a lot
of energy.

Hans stares at him suspiciously. Then he notices --

HANS
Where's Marty's ship?

HAKIM
I don't know. It just vanished. I
think they may have...

Something changes in Hans' face... for a beat, remorse seems
to flood him. He looks up to find everyone watching him.

THERESA
You shouldn't have left him alone.

HANS
He left me no choice.

But he can't shake the accusatory stares of the survivors.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Marty watches the scene on a hologram, as Hans leaves the room. Theresa and Hakim immediately turn to him:

THERESA (ON HOLOGRAM)
We don't have much time, Marty.

Marty turns away, looking out at Puff. Raises his hands.

EXT. SPACE / PUFF

Now invisible, Marty's Rifle is visible only as a BLURRINESS in front of the stars as it maneuvers toward the surface of --

PUFF. Now we get a good look at the TETHERED STRUCTURES covering the surface -- the undersides CRACKLE VIOLENTLY WITH ENERGY, betraying the otherwise calm-looking exterior.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Marty studies the structures as the ship navigates closer:

MARTY
What is it? Some kind of shield?

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)
It doesn't look like you'll have trouble getting in. So if it is a shield, it's not a very good one.

THERESA (ON HOLOGRAM)
Unless they're trying to keep something from getting out.

The threesome exchange a look. Maybe she's right.

INT. PUFF

The blurry form of the Rifle passes beneath the TETHERS. For a moment, the energy DANCES ALONG the outside of the ship.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

Beyond the structures on the surface, the tethers extend inward, swallowed up by a DENSE FOG.

THERESA (ON HOLOGRAM)

Marty, there's something -- I think there's something we're missing. Isn't it strange that two completely different species should co-exist so peacefully?

MARTY

Is it?

THERESA (ON HOLOGRAM)

On Earth, we only had one. And look how well we got along.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)

Theresa's right. It's possible that only one of them is native.

MARTY

Why is that important?

Hakim waves his fingers, and a NEW HOLOGRAM appears next to his image: a display of the TWELVE PLANETS.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)

I've confirmed that the other moon, Blinker, is a power source. And I've figured out what it powers: a massive shield system.

ON THE HOLOGRAM: vines of energy EXTEND from Blinker to the eleven outer planets, surrounding them.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)

When activated, it should be able to completely encapsulate and protect the eleven outer planets. But not the central planet.

Marty doesn't get where they're going with this.

THERESA (ON HOLOGRAM)

With the exception of the one we talked to, there are no Staircase Gods on the central planet. They're only on the outer eleven.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)

The central and unprotected planet is populated only by the species that came to Earth and saved us.

Marty considers this. Then turns to look outside:

MARTY

How far do these tethers extend?

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)

*They connect to an object at the
core of the moon.*

Another HOLOGRAM appears -- a perfectly RECTANGULAR OBJECT.

MARTY

That's the core?

INT. PUFF / INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

The fog begins to clear as the modified Rifle, visible only by the trail it leaves, reaches --

-- THE CORE. It's an awesome sight: a metallic RECTANGLE that goes on for miles, hundreds of thousands of TETHERS jutting every which way from the surface.

HAKIM (ON HOLOGRAM)

*The inside of the structure is
hollow. There's an entrance --*

MARTY

I see it.

The Rifle maneuvers along the outside of the massive metallic structure, slipping inside a seam --

INT. REPOSITORY / INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

-- and emerges into a massive, hollowed-out space. Marty looks around, horror filling his face.

MARTY

Oh my God...

OUTSIDE THE RIFLE: it's hovering in the center of an endless REPOSITORY. The walls around Marty are lined with shiny objects, that stretch as far as the eye can see --

NEEDLES. The machines that destroyed Earth. There are millions of them. A rhythmic CLANGING grabs Marty's attention. He turns to see --

-- A MECHANICAL FEEDER drop down from the ceiling, releasing it's burden: a QUIVER OF NEEDLES, glowing bright red.

MARTY

It's a factory. They're still
making them.

He's right -- the MACHINERY lining the walls appears to be a
massive ASSEMBLY LINE.

MARTY

Hans was right. They lied to us.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Theresa and Hakim stare at the images, stunned.

GARY (O.S.)

Holy Christ...

Hakim turns to see Gary standing directly behind him, eyes on
the Needle factory.

INT. MODIFIED RIFLE / INT. REPOSITORY

The hologram of Hakim abruptly CUTS OUT.

MARTY

Hakim? Theresa?

There's no response. He's been cut off. But then he sees --

-- AN OBSERVATION ROOM in a nearby area of the factory.
There are FACES staring at him through a transparent wall:
about a dozen GUESTS. All watching him.

MARTY

You bastards...

THE MODIFIED RIFLE drops it's invisibility, materializing
into view. It rotates towards the room --

MARTY wiggles his fingers, pulling up a FIRING MECHANISM.

MARTY

...burn in Hell...

But before he can fire, the Guests RAISE THEIR HANDS --

-- revealing the RINGS they're wearing on their "fingers".
Instead of glowing just one color, as we've seen the human
equivalent do, they're SHIFTING THROUGH THE RAINBOW.

Marty hesitates. Looks down at his hand. HIS RINGS are doing the exact same thing. He stares in wonder as the colors shift FASTER AND FASTER --

His body JERKS as his consciousness is BARRAGED WITH IMAGES:

- the planet WORMWOOD, dead and ragged, suddenly turning VIBRANT, a rich BLUE AND GREEN replacing the brown surface;
- endless CRYSTAL CITIES stretching across the surface, glistening under a cloudless sky;
- a BLACKNESS descending from the sky like a cloud, and thousands of GUESTS looking up in wonder;
- the cloud FRAGMENTING, resolving into millions of STAIRCASE GODS descending upon the helpless cities of the Guests;
- the endless crystal cities SHATTERING and collapsing under the attack of the phantasmagoric entities;

BACK TO MARTY: his face is a mask of fear and sorrow as the visions end. He raises his watering eyes back to THE GUESTS watching from outside the Ship --

-- the deep SORROW in their expressions now recognizable.

Marty stares at them, comprehension washing over him as HE REMEMBERS the Guest's final words:

THE GUEST (V.O.)
We must save what we can.
Otherwise, we are all alone.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hans stalks into the room. All the remaining survivors have gathered. But his attention is on Hakim, and Theresa -- Gary stands next to her, a hand clamped on her shoulder.

GARY
You were right. It's them.

Hans stops before the HOLOGRAM IMAGE of the Needle factory. Then he slowly turns to Hakim.

HANS
Start with the central planet.

HAKIM
Hans, please listen to me --

HANS

(to Gary:)

For every minute it takes for Hakim
to fire the Lance, I want you to
break one of Theresa's fingers --

A WARNING HOLOGRAM appears before Hakim. He turns to it:

HAKIM

It's Puff. Something's happening
to the surface.

INT. PUFF / INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

The tethered STRUCTURES under the surface are WIDENING,
closing the gaps, creating a SOLID SHELL around the moon.

MARTY'S RIFLE races up from the moon's core, trying to escape
before the shell closes entirely. It's going to be close.

MARTY sweats as he watches the gap narrowing...

MARTY (INTO COMM)

Hakim! Theresa! Can you hear me?

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hakim steps towards Hans, trying to reason with him --

HAKIM

Marty is inside Puff. The surface
is closing, we have to help him --

HANS

Gary. Start with her pinky.

Gary grins as he forces Theresa's hand open. Just then a
loud WARNING CHIME goes off. And another HOLOGRAM pops up --

HAKIM

Blinker... it's stopped blinking.

Everyone turns to a TRANSPARENT WALL, where they can see --

-- BLINKER has, in fact, ceased. It burns a fierce CRIMSON
that intensifies by the second. But Hans remains calm:

HANS

Better yet, start with her neck.

INT. PUFF / INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

MARTY'S RIFLE races towards the surface. It's almost impossible to see any space outside as the shell tightens...

MARTY braces himself --

The Rifle SQUEEZES THROUGH the opening just in time. The shell platforms SOLIDIFY mere milliseconds after his passage.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Gary's grin widens as he reaches up to Theresa's throat --

ARIEL (O.S.)

Let go of her!

He turns to see Ariel behind him, clutching a burned-out torch. TWO OTHER survivors are with her, holding the same.

ARIEL

You'll have to kill all of us.

It's a stalemate... and it's broken by --

-- MARTY. His image appears on a large hologram:

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

Hans! Can you hear me?

Hans keeps his eyes on the mutinous survivors as he speaks:

HANS

Yes, Marty. I can hear you.

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

I interfaced with them. I can't explain how, but -- they showed it to me. Hakim was right. It's not what we thought --

HANS

It's exactly what I thought, Marty--

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

They're the Benefactors, Hans.

Hans turns to him. Now he's got his undivided attention.

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

The aliens that saved us, the species on the central planet -- they are the Benefactors. Wormwood was their home. The Staircase Gods are the Destroyers. But the Benefactors are innocent.

HANS

Do you have proof?

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

The proof is the Needle that powers our Ship. It's Benefactor technology. The whole Ship is.

HANS

The Needles also destroyed the Earth, Marty --

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

The Staircase Gods weren't as advanced as the Benefactors. So they attacked them, destroyed their planet, and enslaved them. They forced the Benefactors to build the Needles for them. They're just prisoners, Hans.

Hans is silent. He's starting to believe Marty.

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

Every time a Needle is sent, they sneak one of their own species onboard, like a flea. They save others, in the hopes that someone will help save them. But no one has. Everyone is too afraid. Until us. We're the first, Hans. We're their only chance.

HANS

(softly:)

Why didn't they just tell us? Why all the lies?

MARTY (ON HOLOGRAM)

They thought we would be just like the others. They thought we would just say "no".

ON HANS: as he finally realizes he's been wrong all along. Everyone waits for him to make a decision. Finally:

HANS

Hakim. Make us disappear.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

As Marty's modified Rifle approaches the dock, the CLOAKING PARTICLES stray from it's surface, stretching to the massive Ship of the Law -- and they begin to conceal it's surface.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty rushes inside to find everyone gathered around the hologram readouts. He exchanges a look with Hans before --

HAKIM

Marty, the system is changing --

MARTY

Let me see.

All the walls around the room BECOME TRANSPARENT, revealing:

LEVIATHAN. It's going through a frightening transformation -- the bright beautiful colors of the ELEVEN MAIN PLANETS fades away, an illusion being abruptly cast aside like an old skin--

-- and the survivors now see them for what they are: BARREN WORLDS, devoid of life and atmosphere. PLUMES OF DARK SMOKE, like thousands of volcanos bursting to life, spill a dark viscous matter into the air...

MARTY

It's them... the Staircase Gods.

He's right. MILLIONS OF THEM are coming out of hiding from below the surfaces of the planets. On the HOLOGRAMS we see them in stark, terrifying detail -- malicious, parasitic PHANTOMS rushing into the open.

And that's not all -- more MOONS are WINKING INTO EXISTENCE, metallic behemoths that are clearly nothing more than gigantic WEAPONS, turning to angle at the Ship of the Law.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

The NEAREST MOON-WEAPON glows for a moment... and SHATTERS like a Christmas ornament, sending out a rippling SHOCKWAVE --

-- it hits the Ship, and the cloaking particles are BLOWN OFF it's surface. They ignite in a SPARKLING SHELL that engulfs the Ship... by the time they die off, THE SHIP IS VISIBLE.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The survivors watch in horror as another moon BEGINS TO UNFOLD like a nightmarish flower, forming what must be a frighteningly powerful weapon...

ARIEL

(panicked:)

We've got to get out of here... we can run... we can just go home --

MARTY

We can't. They know we're still alive. They'll come back, and finish the job.

Hans steps forward, eyes on the hologram, his voice cool:

HANS

Let's give them a response. Use the Lance on the nearest planet.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

A small CRIMSON LIGHT appears at the tip of the Ship, which suddenly swells to a FIERCE BEAM that rips through space --

-- and STRIKES ONE OF THE ELEVEN PLANETS. It immediately COMES OUT THE OTHER SIDE, completely piercing it --

-- and the planet SPLITS into three pieces. They begin to fall away from each other, RUPTURING into even more shards.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The survivors don't have time to celebrate: on the HOLOGRAM, the planet Blinker suddenly FLASHES --

HAKIM

Blinker is active -- the shields are up!

EXT. LEVIATHAN / EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

Almost too bright to look at, Blinker sends it's power OUTWARD -- and the remaining ten outer planets are SURROUNDED BY A RIPPLING FIELD OF ENERGY.

The Ship of the Law FIRES THE LANCE at another one of them -- but the blast is just ABSORBED by the shield.

Just then, the metallic UNFOLDING MOON releases a salvo of metallic DRONES. The cloud heads towards the Ship --

-- forming a tightly-wound cord that SLAMS INTO IT. The drones SPREAD ACROSS THE SHIP, trying to eat their way inside. Small FLASHES APPEAR as the Ship tries to fight back. But the Drones just re-group, continuing to feed...

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Everyone is THROWN OFF THEIR FEET under the impact. The sound of the Drones fills their ears, a maddening BUZZING...

Theresa manages to stand, her eyes on a holographic display:

THERESA

The Ship's fighting back, but it can't stop them...

MARTY

Can we get invisible again?

HAKIM

It'll take some time, but I can try... but Marty, they're... they're too powerful. They hid it well, and we couldn't detect...

He turns to Marty, his voice shaking:

HAKIM

We can't win.

All eyes go to Marty. Looking for leadership, for hope.

MARTY

Everyone get to the Rifles. Our best chance is to split up --

HANS

No. Prime the Lance, Hakim. Don't fire until I tell you. And take the Ship out of the system.

He turns and runs down the hallway.

MARTY

Hans!

He chases after him, with Theresa close behind.

INT. RIFLE BAY (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hans is opening his Rifle when Marty and Theresa catch up:

MARTY

Hans, wait! You can't go out --

The room ROCKS VIOLENTLY. Hans turns, resolution in his eyes.

HANS

The Needles are Benefactor technology, Marty. Which means we can talk to them.

Marty goes silent. Understanding.

HANS

Hakim needs to find a way to reverse the shield. Otherwise, we may not be able to save them.

Marty nods, understanding. But also realizing this is the last time he'll see his friend. Hans sticks out a hand. Marty takes it. Then --

-- Hans turns to Theresa. Managing a smile, he leans forward and KISSES HER CHEEK. Then:

HANS

We never gave up. We fought until the end. Earth would be proud.

He turns and gets inside his Rifle.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

A section of the swarming Drones BURSTS APART as Hans' Rifle exits the Ship at high speed. It immediately heads for Puff. A cloud of Drones follows in hot pursuit --

-- the rest of them CLING TO THE SHIP OF THE LAW as it turns, picking up speed in retreat.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty and Theresa stand with Hakim as he sweats:

MARTY

Get as far away as you can.

HAKIM

But the Drones, they're gonna get through --

MARTY

There's nothing we can do about them, Hakim. There's something else you need to worry about.

His eyes to go BLINKER, the source of the planet's shields...

EXT. LEVIATHAN / INT. RIFLE

HANS' RIFLE powers towards Puff, maneuvering deftly, trying to keep the pursuing DRONES from achieving a foothold...

IN THE RIFLE: Hans concentrates, sweat pouring down his face. But his eyes go to the battle outside as he sees --

-- THE REMNANTS of the destroyed planet COLLIDING WITH ANOTHER PLANET. It's a sight most mortal eyes have never seen, and couldn't possibly imagine.

The Rifle JOLTS, shaking him back to reality. Puff is approaching quickly. He's almost there...

HANS

Alright, Hakim. Just enough to get me inside.

The words have barely left his mouth before A CRIMSON BEAM passes by his Rifle, STRIKING THE SURFACE of Puff. A hole appears, and Hans grits his teeth --

INSIDE PUFF: Hans' rifle makes it through the hole. He immediately heads for the Needle factory within --

-- not noticing that THE SHELL around Puff almost immediately begins to HEAL ITSELF, closing up the hole...

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A temporary relief fills Hakim as he studies the holograms:

HAKIM

He made it inside.

MARTY

Okay. Now we've got to get those shields reversed. You need to find a way to communicate with Blinker.

Hakim shoots him an anxious look -- "That all you need?"

INT. REPOSITORY / INT. HANS' RIFLE

The Rifle drifts to a stop in the center of the chamber. Hans stares in awe at the THOUSANDS OF NEEDLES around him.

HANS

Okay, boys. Rise and shine.

He raises a hand... the RINGS on his finger GLOW --

-- and EVERY NEEDLE TURNS, pointing directly at his Rifle.

EXT. SHIP OF THE LAW

The Ship races away from Leviathan, but the Drones still swarm the surface... and THEY'RE MAKING PROGRESS. Pieces of the Ship are FALLING OFF, spinning away into space.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Warning holograms are popping up all around Hakim as he scrambles to open dialogue with the moon.

HAKIM

I can't make it happen.

MARTY

(realizing:)

I know someone who can.

INT. PUFF / INT. MODIFIED RIFLE

The Rifle emerges from the Needle factory, angling for the surface -- and a FLOOD OF NEEDLES follows right behind it, TWISTING AND SWARMING, streaming from the factory to follow him like the Pied Piper, leading his children away.

HANS focuses as the tethered structures under Puff grow closer... and closer... and then he realizes --

-- the way out HAS BEEN SEALED. He reacts quickly --

-- the Rifle PULLS AWAY just before it collides with the wall. The Needles immediately DIVERGE in every conceivable direction, seeking an exit.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty, Theresa and Ariel rush inside the room carrying WAR MOTHER. She's obviously pretty heavy. They lay her down --

-- Hakim waves his hands, pulling up some holograms, and --

WAR MOTHER RISES INTO THE AIR. Coming alive again.

WAR MOTHER

Survivors of Earth, I believe that--

HAKIM

Can it! I need you to reverse
Blinker's shields! Switch them
from the outer planets to the
central one!

WAR MOTHER

*I am sorry, but I have not been
authorized to endanger my Creators--*

War Mother abruptly CUTS OFF with a surprised "urp!" -- it JERKS for a moment, then RISES HIGHER into the air, it's voice suddenly seeming stronger than ever:

WAR MOTHER

I have just received authorization.

EXT. LEVIATHAN

Blinker suddenly FLASHES from bright crimson to a deep blue --

-- and THE FIELDS surrounding the outer planets disappear.
The energy regroups with the pulsing of Blinker's waves...

... and A NEW SHIELD, stronger than the rest, appears around
the central planet. Completely encircling it.

INT. SHIP OF THE LAW

The survivors CHEERS as they see it happen on a hologram:

HAKIM
We did it! The shields are --

HANS (ON COMM)
I need help, Hakim!!!

INT. PUFF / INT. HANS' RIFLE

Hans Rifle LETS OUT A BARRAGE of firepower against the inside
of Puff's shell. But it doesn't break. He's trapped.

HANS
ONE MORE SHOT! I NEED A WAY OUT!

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Hakim's eyes race across the holograms, reading the bad news:

HAKIM
The Lance is down, Hans! All the
systems are --

A violent explosion THROWS HAKIM OFF HIS FEET. He hits the
wall, slumping to the ground like a ragdoll. The rest of the
survivors GO DOWN as well --

INT. HANS' RIFLE

The hologram in front of him CUTS OUT. His eyes widen.

HANS
Hakim! Marty!

There's no response. He's alone.

INT. ANALYSIS ROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The lights in the room are FLICKERING as the Ship SHUDDERS. Smoke rapidly fills the space, making it hard to see --

THERESA. She crawls over to Marty, holding him. Tears spill down their cheeks as they realize this is the end --

THERESA
Marty... I love you...

Before Marty can tell her the same, THE ROOM GOES DARK --

INT. PUFF / INT. HANS' RIFLE

Hans' Rifle RACES towards the shell, closer and closer...

INSIDE THE RIFLE: Hans hears Hakim's last transmission. His face slowly relaxes, a new light entering his eyes.

He takes a deep breath. Smiles. And closes his eyes.

THE RIFLE abruptly ACCELERATES to maximum speed --

-- and SLAMS INTO PUFF'S SHELL --

EXT. PUFF / EXT. LEVIATHAN

Hans' Rifle BURSTS APART, shattering into sparkling dust --

-- which is immediately scattered by THE NEEDLES. They pour into space through the small hole Hans has made in Puff's shell, like a pinprick in a water balloon.

THE SURFACE OF PUFF begins to go dark as the Needles FLOOD OUT INTO SPACE, moving with one mind at first, then branching out to form a dozen arms --

-- one ARM lashes out towards THE STRANDS connecting the outer planets. They SHATTER in a brilliant display, sparkling and collapsing like dying angels --

-- the rest of the arms move towards THE OUTER PLANETS THEMSELVES. Swarming down like locusts upon the homes of the Staircase Gods. Engulfing them. Devouring them.

LEVIATHAN CONVULSES, being eaten by it's own creation. This could be taking minutes, it could be hours. Time no longer has meaning as we watch the system die...

... but THE CENTRAL PLANET, protected by Blinker's shield, survives. The carcasses of the dying planets SMASH HELPLESSLY AGAINST the energy field. But it holds firm --

-- and soon all that remains is the central planet, alone with it's two moons Puff and Blinker, glowing like beacons, lanterns in a thick fog, a monument to it's dark history...

EXT. DEEP SPACE

The Drones now simply slip away from the surface of the dying Ship of the Law, brushed aside like dust in a strong wind, as it hurtles powerless through space...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MARTY'S ROOM - DAWN (SHIP OF THE LAW)

A new day is waking over the Puget Sound. The sun creeps up over the treeline, sending colors across the quiet water.

Marty stirs in bed, sitting up. Taking a long breath of the crisp morning air. He looks out the window for a beat...

And then he turns to look at THERESA, asleep next to him.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME - DOCK - DAWN (SHIP OF THE LAW)

Marty stands at the end of the dock, cheeks turning red in the cold as he sips a mug of hot chocolate. There's something different about his face, a hard-won maturity that wasn't there before...

THERESA (O.S.)

Morning.

He turns to see her approaching, a quilt wrapped around herself. She takes his hand, looking out over the dawn.

THERESA

It's a beautiful day.

MARTY

Yeah.

Marty's clearly thinking about something. She notices.

THERESA

What is it?

He pulls something from his pocket -- it's Theresa's LETTER.

MARTY

I found this last night.

THERESA

(nodding:)

I wrote that after Wormwood.

MARTY

I wasn't sure if you wanted me to
read it, or...

She smiles. Turns him towards her, leans in.

THERESA

Later. We have plenty of time.

She's about to kiss him when a CHIME breaks the moment:

HAKIM (ON COMM)

We've arrived.

Marty and Theresa walk down the dock. At the end, the
ILLUSION IS BROKEN as an iris-door appears, opening into --

THE QUARTERS HALLWAY. Ariel RUSHES PAST THEM, excitedly:

ARIEL

Come on!

Marty and Theresa smile, picking up the pace...

INT. CLASSROOM (SHIP OF THE LAW)

The survivors are all gathered together, one final time.
They're standing before a CURVED WALL, next to --

WAR MOTHER. She's still bruised, but is clearly functional.

WAR MOTHER

Good morning Marty, Theresa.

THERESA

Good morning, War Mother.

WAR MOTHER

The planet you call Mars has been
successfully adjusted to suit the
survivors of Earth. The population
in the last six hundred years has
grown to --

MARTY

War Mother. Just show us.

The curved wall becomes TRANSPARENT, revealing --

THE NEW EARTH. Mars has been completely transformed into a blue-green sanctuary. It's a breathtaking sight.

MARTY

We're home.

There's a strange RIPPLING around the planet, the stars beyond seem to WAVER as an object resolves into clarity --

-- and massive, MAGNIFICENT SPACESHIPS that dwarf even the Ship of the Law begin to appear. Gleaming, elegant SOLAR SAILS drape from towering spires, shimmering with a soft glow. They're a variety of shapes and sizes, each unique.

MARTY

What -- what are those?--

WAR MOTHER

These are the vessels of other intelligences. The Quiet ones. Those who remained hidden.

Everyone watches open-mouthed as DOZENS OF THE SHIPS materialize around the New Earth. All facing them.

WAR MOTHER

Your species is unique. You are unpredictable in your responses and actions. And yet you have saved the lives of countless trillions of intelligences. Our Creators have decided they would like to deepen our understanding.

(beat:)

We have much to learn from you.

Marty looks back at War Mother, a smile on his lips, as the light of the New Earth fills his eyes:

MARTY

We all have a much to learn from each other...

(he takes Theresa's hand:)

...otherwise, we are all alone.

FADE TO BLACK.