

HEAT SINK

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(or Sample-Return)

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CW: Violence

1

EXT. HELL

Buckled legs of melted bodies doubled up in torment.

Their increasingly pale skin lay stretched across the steaming asphalt – *arms extending towards freedom.*

A raspy, slow calm yet heavy voice sputters out through a poor signal:

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Connection received...

Cosmic radiation echoes across the empty land with a *heavy, clipping distortion:*

ANGEL (V.O.)
Look at them, Envoy. Those who've tried.

What makes you think you'll succeed?

A mustard-colored haze hangs in the distance as the glowing storms from above filter sunlight, sulfuric acid smog, and molten heat.

A place too hot for anything alive to endure.

ANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Everything ends, Envoy–

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(over)
Transmission ceased. Telemetry not found.

CUT TO BLACK:

2

BLACK SCREEN

A PBS broadcaster begins narrating over TV static.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It is the year 2033.

ON SCREEN: Fading into color, a montage of previous liftoffs, with Cape Canaveral and the cityscape of Florida contained in the background.

A time-lapse illustrates the process from the conception to construction, eventually the slow crawl to the launch site.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
After the success of NASA's Venus-bound fly-by atmospheric probe DAVINCI and the VERITAS orbiter, a new direction in missions revives interest in our own satellite since Artemis and Apollo.

The observatory slide show reveals our evening star captured by NASA's MARINER 10, and then again by MESSENGER, transitioning into the iconic surface photos of Venus from the Soviet VENERA 9 and its successors.

It concludes with recently received footage from NASA's ANVIL () probe launched in 2032 as it currently drifts like a submarine through the extreme pressure and sulfuric acid smog.

A panoramic fish-eye lens captures the Venusian landscape.

Everything fades to black.

3 **EXT. CISLUNAR SPACE - NEAR-RECTILINEAR HALO ORBIT - 2033**

A textured darkness pans the screen, revealing a crescent of the Moon.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A new planetary probe after years of orbiting the Moon has finally crash-landed, setting the groundwork for future human arrival.

4 **EXT. NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN (ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE) - 1969**

Footage flips through shots of various splashdowns, from the limited footage of the Apollo 11 crew fully suited-up rushing out of the capsule into the Mobile Quarantine Vehicle.

CUT TO 2029 SPLASHDOWN: Artemis IV slowly removing their helmets and smiling ear-to-ear.

5 **EXT. CISLUNAR SPACE - NEAR-RECTILINEAR HALO ORBIT - 2033**

From the international lunar GATEWAY, a sliver of blue marbling peaks from behind the Moon.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The TROJAN continues the legacy of the LADEE orbiter, going further to research the lunar surface, while transporting a time-capsule of resources to be recollected during the future ATHENA crewed missions.

INSERT SIDESHOW of photos taken of an 8-foot cross on the Moon for each of its phases: deployment, standing, then folding from the momentum of the ascending launch.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There will be a special gift donated by the Vatican for the second mission, HOPE-2, to send religious relics to the Moon, hopefully in 2033.

The timestamps flips through a few hours, dated 12/25/30.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In addition, the TROJAN consisted of plant seeds, and micro-animal such as nematodes, rotifers and tardigrades to see how they can adapt to microgravity and the extreme environment.

6

**INT. LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LUNAR SAMPLE
LABORATORY FACILITY - CONTINUOUS**

Researchers suited-up in bleach white personal protective equipment under blinding LEDs crowd behind one sitting down at a microscope.

Other than the team, the laboratory is completely empty and clean.

MICROSCOPE SLIDES:

Translucent high-contrasted shapes of nematodes (wheel animals), rotifers (roundworms) and tardigrades (water bears) go through their process of desiccation, rolling into balls.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These extremophiles are properly preserved in situ anhydrobiosis, as well as vacuum-sealed frozen seeds.

CUT TO BLACK.

7

BLACK SCREEN

CHYRON: April.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Hopefully, one day these samples
will be re-hydrated and revived
when humans land on the Moon next.

[NOTE: Anhydrobiosis is a form of cryptobiosis, a term coined by microbiologist David Keilin as "the state of an organism when it shows no visible signs of life and when its metabolic activity becomes hardly measurable, or comes reversibly to a standstill."]

FADE TO:

8

INT. THE GROTOS – DUNGEON – NIGHT

LOCATION: Unknown.

The walls of the cell are carved out like an excavated cave, yet upon closer inspection were made from an inhuman flesh, sweating and squirming.

The man doesn't belong here. He looks like a time traveler from another age.

A copper-colored, tall, burly man scratching a wild, untamed beard. He has a head full of thick black curls with a touch of gray.

Where he's not covered in untamed hair, old, poorly healed scars and deep wounds are collected in the expanse of his backside.

Dry, cracking golden brown skin has become pale due to the freezing environment.

Inside his dungeon cell, in a place foreign to him, he tries to find comfort where he can.

It is almost void of all light, casting a sense of unfamiliarity and unknown like a Caravaggio painting.

His eyes are friendly, soft, and sunken in, with no furrow in his brow.

A well-fed face... *maybe too well-fed...* but not out of shape. The extra lumber is hidden by his cheesy smile, and wild curls.

IMMANUEL (33) is stretching out a faded bleach white tunic with a cloak so torn up it appears as several fragments of a blanket wrapped together.

The tunic is almost stretched thin and skin tight, stitched together by multiple various pieces resulting in a rainbow trim design.

It is a clear contrast between the original fabric and additional alterations. *His progress has ended right above his ankles.*

In the background, a beast is being tormented, *letting out loud wailing bellows of physical pain.*

Then, abrupt silence.

Immanuel remains asleep throughout the whole killing. It happens every night.

He keeps *shaking* around, as if he's having a nightmare, sweating through the cot.

CUT TO:

9

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER – LAUNCH VIEWING – MORNING

LOCATION: Merritt Island, Florida, United States.

Football stands miles from the launch site are filled with families, photographers, cameras, and children.

In the foreground, families of the astronauts are seated in the box office nearby with a closer, higher view.

The PHOEBE multi-crew spacecraft is on the pad in the distance, in front of the Space Launch System rockets – seconds away from launch.

Over the stadium speakers, the ship's COMMANDER on a live-feed of the mission COMMUNICATIONS (COMMS) and an ANNOUNCER talk over each other:

COMMANDER (COMMS)
Houston, hear 'ya loud and clear.

FIDO (COMMS)
T-minus two minutes-

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(over)
We're approaching launch, everyone!

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Roger Athena... roll program.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Flight Dynamics Officer says
 two minutes.

CUT TO:

10 **INT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER – PRESS VIEWING BOX – CONTINUOUS**

In the press box for FAMILIES, ASSOCIATES and the PRESS houses the best view of the launch pad.

An announcer with a cheap pair of headphones on, connected to a microphone setup.

ANNOUNCER
 Looks like we've got a lotta wind
 here today, a really doozy.

Less than a minute til bingo,
 folks.

Scattered sounds of kids playing, a baby bawling, and lively chatter are picked up on the mic.

11 **INT. COMMAND MODULE (PHOEBE) – COCKPIT – SAME TIME**

A CREW OF THREE ASTRONAUTS are strapped into their seats, facing towards their destination past Earth's low orbit.

The fat in their skinny faces shifting to the head rest.

The claustrophobic COMMAND MODULE is lit by flexible office lamps.

If the layers of labeled switches were teeth, the monitors would be eyes glowing with black-and-white text.

They all have on their bulky ADVANCED ESCAPE CREW RESCUE navy blue pressure suits, and white helmets with visors down, *sealed and fastened into place.*

Respirators dangle from their necklines, blue coils of oxygen supply connected to the center of each of their chest-plates.

Everything is prepared for launch.

They are all using their communications radio.

COMMANDER (COMMS)
Cabin pressure looks good.

A slim woman with bleach blonde hair grabs a safety blanket. She is the LUNAR PILOT (39).

MODULE PILOT (COMMS)

Hey!

I'm still using that.

The MODULE PILOT (49) is drying his clammy hands with a corner of the blanket.

LUNAR PILOT (COMMS)

Is it too late to use the latrine?

COMMANDER (COMMS)

Put your harness on. Is it locked in?

They respond, it isn't heard.

COMMANDER (COMMS) (CONT'D)

What was that?

MODULE PILOT (COMMS)

(louder)

What for? I might need to reach for something.

He chuckles. The Lunar Pilot isn't smiling.

Her eyes are shut tight, fingers interlaced over her stomach. She takes in a deep breath.

The Module Pilot pops open a translucent portable CD player, looking at what's inside, closes it then presses play.

"You Think I Ain't Worth A Dollar, But I Feel Like A Millionaire" by Queens Of The Stone Age is 30 seconds in.

The raging guitar rattles the player's plastic enclosure.

He tosses it forward and it barely moves, instead shooting backwards due to inertia.

It almost smacks the Lunar Pilot.

LUNAR PILOT (COMMS)

Really, Mike?

CAPCOM (COMMS)

Make sure to set your watch, we've got a couple minutes downstairs.

And turn on the dash cam. Do— do you copy?

COMMANDER (INTO COMMS)

Copy that.

He winds an automatic alpine-green Seiko chronograph and sets it on his console.

Then hits record on a pocket-sized camera. He shifts all his tubing to the left so he can rotate to hand the camera behind him.

The Module Pilot grabs a hold of it by the lens, then places it in a magnetized holder.

BACK TO:

12

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - LAUNCH VIEWING - MOMENTS LATER

Back to the stands. An unfamiliar man's voice is barely understood over the speakers.

The announcer clears things up.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The Capsule Communicator is a designated astronaut that the crew are familiar with, a lone voice speaking directly with our astronauts—

Feedback from the microphone cuts him off.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

Alright, Booster?

BOOSTER ENGINEER (COMMS)

Go.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

FIDO?

FIDO (COMMS)

Go.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

Medical?

FLIGHT SURGEON (COMMS)

Sydney's at 139.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

Sydney?

LUNAR PILOT (COMMS)

I'm go, just go!

CAPCOM (COMMS)
15 seconds to launch. Commander?

COMMANDER (COMMS)	ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
We're go, David! Starting APUs.	T-minus 10... 9... 8... 7...

The Space Launch System Block 1 heavy-lift rocket main engines begin firing sharp steady flames.

A thunderous wall of sound fills the whole island.

CAPCOM can be heard over the radio:

CAPCOM (COMMS)
SSME at 65%.

We are go on main engine start!

COMMANDER (COMMS)	ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
<i>Copy that.</i>	We have main engine start...

BOOSTER ENGINEER (COMMS)
Three at a hundred.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 5... 4...

CAPCOM (COMMS)
 3... 2... 1...

COMMANDER (COMMS)	ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
<i>Liftoff.</i>	And liftoff! This is liftoff of the 1st Athena mission.

Wow!

CUT TO:

13

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER – LAUNCH COMPLEX 39B – SAME TIME

The rocket slowly lifts the massive spacecraft into the clear blue sky.

A wave of liquid oxygen and hydrogen pour from out the ventilation and both booster nozzles burn bright red, the five-hundred foot hanger that held it recoils.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Houston, roll program.

The Phoebe stops fighting gravity head-on and transitions into a horizontal trajectory, kicking off the automated piloting.

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INT. COMMAND MODULE (PHOEBE) – COCKPIT – MOMENTS LATER

Everyone is breathing heavy, fogging up the visors, sinking into their seats.

COMMANDER (INTO COMMS)
Roger, roll checks out.

FIDO (COMMS)
Rog- good roll.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
SSME thrust level at 100% for all 3
engines, lookin' good.

Reminder for cockpit switch
configuration change.

COMMANDER (INTO COMMS)
Roger. Going 48,000 and Mach point
three.

She's pulling!

Having completed its roll, the nose begins to tilt under the intense wind.

COMMANDER (INTO
COMMS)
(struggling to speak)
Pitch... is programmed.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Athena I. Mission time past
60 seconds.

Velocity at 2,813 feet per
second.

MODULE PILOT (COMMS)
Woooooohooooooo! She's a monster!

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Altitude 4.7 nautical miles,
downrange distance 3.2 nautical
miles.

The COMMANDER (47) attempts to entice the Lunar Pilot to open her eyes.

COMMANDER (COMMS)
Feel that! Woo! She's on fire!

Open your eyes, Sydney!

Experience something!

She doesn't move but starts praying to herself.

He chuckles.

SYDNEY (COMMS)
(irritated)
Glad you find it funny.

The engine's roar drowns them out.

COMMANDER (COMMS)
Davey, you're gonna love the ride!

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Can't wait, Wyatt.

FIDO (COMMS)
Stand by for mode 1 Charlie.

COMMANDER (INTO COMMS)
Rog. One Charlie.

Taking a lot of hits here.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
What instrumentation have-

COMMANDER (INTO COMMS)
(over)
We've lost the nose gear, all the
hydraulic temperature transducers
on the left side-

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Any commonality for those, Max?

A gritty English accent sounds out of breath:

MMACS (COMMS)
Not anymore.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Alright...

*Engine's showing 75%. Go with
throttle up.*

COMMANDER (INTO COMMS)
Roger. Going with throttle up.

Traveling nearly Mach 2, they're high enough where the speed of sound changes dramatically, and there's essentially no atmosphere.

Over the booming launcher's rockets, a thud resonates throughout the cockpit.

LUNAR PILOT (COMMS)
What was— what was that?

The Commander looks at a gauge labeled CHAMBER PRESSURE reading 104%.

COMMANDER (COMMS)
(crying out)
Oh, Christ!

The entire command module ruptures instantaneously in a fiery blast, its form disintegrating.

In a swan-shape of white smoke, the blast is quickly extinguished resulting in a giant plume of black clouds — two rocket thrusters shooting off in different directions, leaving a spiral of jet stream.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Altitude dropped to 2.0 nautical miles...
No downlink.

CUT TO:

15 **EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER — LAUNCH VIEWING — CONTINUOUS**

A mixture of applause by those who've turned away to head home and horrific screams from those who witnessed the disaster.

Many are stunned silent, unsure whether the blast was intentional.

After the rest of the rocket and spacecraft never reappear, everyone could only make one assumption.

CUT TO:

16 **INT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER — PRESS VIEWING BOX — SAME TIME**

Inside the cozy viewing booth.

Screaming, sobbing, not just from the children, for everyone is terrified.

Some are trying to justify a chance of survival, while most are already mourning.

All that can be heard as a NASA associate is being screamed at by the mortified parents of the astronauts.

NASA ADMINISTRATOR
They said it was safe, they said
that there was no-

CUT TO:

17

EXT. VALDOSTA, GEORGIA - PECAN ORCHARD - MOMENTS LATER

LOCATION: Valdosta, Georgia, United States.

In a quiet pecan orchard in Southern Georgia, a farmer and his two sons are watching a meteor shower with binoculars.

A streak of flames is approaching above the fields.

Fragments ricochet out of the smoke plumes, taking a nosedive as if nicked out of the air.

The flames grow closer... and closer!

The speechless farmer roughly shoves the binoculars to one of his kids.

FARMER
Boys, get inside...

(yelling)

Now! Go!

Before anyone can move a muscle, the upper half of the sheared Command Module descends from the sky.

It impacts the orchard! Taking out a few trees.

Several trees are lit on fire, only a couple extinguished from the projected dirt and smoke.

The entire landing path consists of mangled aluminum alloy fuselage, titanium, fragments of silica fiber, and shattered reinforced carbon-carbon.

The cockpit barely survived. It has flown out free from of its fuselage, resting on the wreckage.

The farmer, mouth agape, motions for his boys to stay put. They listen.

He approaches the smoke and destruction, he turns around to yell at one of the boys after recognizing the flag on the broken nose.

FARMER (CONT'D)
(shaken)
Marty, call the authorities right
away!

Turning back he refuses to enter the cloud of smoke,
stepping onto something that snaps.

He looks down at his shoes dipped in a puddle of blood and
bone.

The smear of limbs, sinews, pulverized bones, and a ripped
apart blackened navy blue spacesuit surround him.

BACK TO:

18

INT. THE GROTTOS - DUNGEON - DAWN

Back in the Grottos, Immanuel is watching his own breath in
the cold, trying to rub his skin warm.

He tightly hugs himself, his filthy nail digging into his
skin, dry and cracking like glass.

Just as it seems the prisoner is nodding off, a mechanical
voice composed of a few different personalities begins
stuttering:

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Entry 0-0-1.

A feminine nervous voice familiar to Immanuel instinctively
puts a smile on his face, sending him into cogitation.

UNKNOWN (V.O.)
*Slaves, obey your earthly masters
with respect and fear and sincerity
of heart, just as you would honor-*

It cuts off on their last syllable.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
*Transmission ceased. Telemetry not
found.*

He sighs deeply and attempts to close his eyes, slowing his
breathing, hoping to drift back to sleep.

A pounding in his head furrows his brow. Underneath his
closed eyelids, his irises darting around.

A monotone soft choir of voices whispers, it is unsure
whether it is in his head or not, they multiply:

CHOIR (V.O.)
Immanuel! Immanuel, Immanuel!

We're counting on you.

Abruptly, out of all the voices flooding his ears – a garbled deep bass rips apart his ear drums, waking him up, open-eyed, hands over ears.

The explosion of sounds fades into a guttural scream.

19 **INT. THE GROTOS – TUNNEL – MOMENTS LATER**

A larger shadow hauls down the tunnel, feeding discs into each fistula for their comrades.

UNKNOWN INMATE (O.S.)
Trays! Trays! Come get your slop,
you pigs!

We've gotta stay strong together!

20 **INT. THE GROTOS – DUNGEON – MORNING**

Immanuel rises from a graphene cot with a scrunched up face as three discs of a pressurized mysterious meat shoot from a fistula in the wall, presumably the cell's door.

UNKNOWN INMATE (O.S.)
Brutega! And... the other one.

Last discs of the night, courtesy
of your truly.

The pungent unctuous after-smell burns the inside of his nostrils like a combination of raw stomach acid and human waste.

IMMANUEL
My name is-

BRUTEGA
(over)
Keep mine warm for me, Ara-boy.

The man amongst monsters picks up one of the discs, while mumbling to himself:

IMMANUEL
This place reeks.

Reluctantly, he picks up a second one and places it on top of a large encased bin, with access from the bottom only – sparks and orange flames seep through the vents.

The iron-top furnace that kept their pulsating organs warm, and the migrant's cerebrum functioning – the cell's only source of heat.

Sitting crossed-legged, he begins to devour his disc.

BRUTEGA

Psh. How can you eat this plaster?

The stoma door hasn't completely sealed shut until...

UNKNOWN INMATE (O.S.)

I heard that, Brutega!

Immanuel keeps eating.

ANGEL (V.O.)

He thinks it makes him stronger.
Doesn't even know he's lost, thinks
he's found a way...

Do you feel its presence? Do you
even feel anything at all?

As he stuffs his face, his fellow inmate rolls off their bunk onto their feet, revealing a large barrel-chested selachian figure with bursting bulbous red eyes, and teeth longer than their mandible jawbone.

A bolted on pair of goggles contain their eyes which would otherwise pop out.

BRUTEGA

You going to the game?

Supposed to be a real slaughter
tonight.

Ignored, the burly creature unhinges their lower jaw and slides the whole disc into its mouth – their rigid layers of teeth pulverizing the meat. Swallowing all, then –

BRUTEGA (CONT'D)

Stop pretending like you can't hear
me.

We all know you can, otherwise you
wouldn't go near that garbage.

Immanuel glares back at him, shooting a look that says 'I don't care'.

His fingers shaking as he scrapes what's left in the disc.

21 **EXT. CISLUNAR SPACE – SAME TIME**

Meanwhile, a standby crew is already on their way to the Moon – approaching orbit.

The Athena II Command Module is named the Hermes.

22 **INT. CISLUNAR SPACE – COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – COCKPIT – DAY**

In the cockpit of the Hermes, a hum of machines, ventilation fans whirring, and unknown vibrations fill the confined space.

No one is talking, only silently working from their standing seats.

They are all focused on something.

The cabin itself is no more bigger than a couple of closets, with piping and tubing covered in insulation.

Captain DAVID JONES (49), an American NASA astronaut and the Commander of the Hermes, finishes writing his notes.

He clicks his fountain pen, slips it into a front pocket then turns off all the headlights.

It leaves the entire spacecraft pitch black as it enters the Moon's incredibly delicate exosphere.

It is completely void of light, movement and sound inside the cabin until...

A beat.

Silence.

Everyone sits still in the dark. Radio chatter cuts in-and-out loudly with no reverb.

Stomachs digesting processed protein.

The silhouette of all three astronauts staring out the window as the Moon's reflective white-glow illuminates everything inside the cabin.

David is stunned by the monochrome beauty. Bags under his eyes are now visible in the moonlight.

He hasn't slept in a couple days.

His hair is almost completely silver, constantly throwing fingers into it to push it past his ears.

His pasty dry skin is drained of all color.

The window isn't big enough to frame the majestic beauty of a celestial body with an atmosphere so thin you could almost reach out and touch it.

A silence. *They all take it in.*

The craters of the Moon appear like droplets of rain in a pond, fading into existence.

A rhythmic posh accent whispers:

JAKOB

Wow... what a view.

The starstruck man in awe is Captain JAKOB KRUGERSON (45), the Command Module Pilot of the Hermes — a South African SANSA astronaut.

He represents his home country's colors on his sleeve, they reflect in the glass providing a colorful contrast to the massive gray scale.

His hair is buzzed, sweat drips down an old scar protruding from his left temple, past piercing hazel eyes. Gray and black stubble covers his cheeks and neck.

His brown skin is also drained of some color due to calcium-deficiency, not as much as David's.

A voice enters all three of the astronauts' UHF radio:

CAPCOM (COMMS)

Uhh... alright Hermes, you're in orbit.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)

Alright, Jeremy. Suzanne and I... we're almost ready...

(off mic)

Jakob, are you?

They all unclip their harnesses and lift themselves out of their seats, into weightlessness with no incline to any direction.

Jakob, the one staying in orbit, shuffles Mylar coated tools into position for the others to grab.

JAKOB

Waiting for you.

They take turns in the limited space pulling over their heavy, semi-rigid lightweight exoskeleton spacesuits - piece by piece.

David wedges himself avoiding all the stuff Jakob throws through the Connecting Tunnel into the LEM.

Except for...

23

INT. LUNAR MODULE (SHRIKE) - CONTINUOUS

A COMMS cap which he catches. Then straps tightly, tucking his gray hair back.

Their torso is assembled then they each fasten on their helmets.

The blue coils hanging from above suctioned then fastened to the front of their suits and delivered air to them and their PLSS packs.

JAKOB

You two mind if I play my CD?

LUNAR MODULE PILOT (O.S.)

Only if it's good.

He chuckles.

DAVID

No, Jake. Go ahead.

David glances over at the Lunar Module Pilot, mouthing:
"CD?"

Jakob slips a silver Sony Discman CD player out of a gap in the shuttle's high-purity silica fibers.

Pressing down hard on the play button, "Travelin' Man" by dj honda and Mos Def begins at a low-volume.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

(away from mic)

Uh, yeah, I'll tell 'em.

(into mic)

David, let's-

A new voice cuts him off, it is the booming baritone of the Athena II MISSION DIRECTOR:

DIRECTOR (COMMS)
*We need to find some time for
sleep, guys... and gal.*

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Roger that. Almost done suiting up,
prepping for descent.

David heard them yet remains unengaged, his full attention
on the task at hand.

Everything had a seal, even their briefs for any spontaneous
toileting while on the surface.

24

INT. COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – MOMENTS LATER

Up in the Command Module, Jakob is running the auto-pilot
and a fuel cell purge.

He takes out a digital video camera, zooming in on David's
scowl. *He explains what is happening in the moment.*

JAKOB
After you two depressurize, I'll be
in your ear for about two hours,
then I'll lose connection...

... and be left alone finally.

Camera still in one hand, Jakob bumps into Colonel SUZANNE
TRYBOSKI (46), the Lunar Module Pilot of the Hermes, and a
Polish POLSA astronaut.

She used to be a Polkovnik (Colonel) commissioned naval
officer on a nuclear submarine, and aquanaut.

Meticulous and calculated in all her slight movements, she
looks at Jakob partially like dirt on her shoulder.

He pushes off of her to elevate into the Connecting Tunnel
to see David.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
(jokingly)
Leave this one behind David,
please.

She flips him off casually, trying to play it off as a nose
scratch *once realizing he's filming.*

Fixing her platinum blonde hair into a bun, in between
layers of her Athena Extravehicular Mobility Unit suit.

She is the palest of them all, her skin could be diagnosed as minor cyanosis.

25

INT. LUNAR MODULE (SHRIKE) – CONTINUOUS

The tiny landing capsule which previously was their hangout spot is the LEM, named the Shrike.

It consists of a viewing window, lattice cot and a copy of "The Observer's Book of Manned Spaceflight" in a plastic bag Velcroed to the wall.

Along with two standing seats for piloting – the glittering flicker of construction zone orange light up the command console.

Floating in from above, Jakob grabs a hold of David for stability... *and to get his attention.*

He subtly stops recording.

JAKOB
(whispering)
Remember that thing we discussed?

DAVID
Right, right. Don't worry.

Smiling, and not looking, he brushes up against Suzanne again on his way back up.

She shoots him a nasty look.

JAKOB
Can I give this to you, laska?

He tries handing her the camera.

SUZANNE
Absolutely not!

There's cameras on the LEM.

He lets out a belly laugh as he closes the hatch to the COMMAND MODULE.

JAKOB (COMMS)
Say the word and I'll depressurize us.

David, already fastened in his seat, sets up a translucent Casio G-Shock wrapped around a barely-used switch.

Then, presses down on a peeling piece of tape that keeps wires in place.

A beat.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Hey, Jake. You ever ask that girl out?

JAKOB (INTO COMMS)
Uh, negative, Commander.

David looks back at Suzanne, retracing her O-ring seals with gloved fingers.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Are you... gonna? Or...

JAKOB
Uh, negative, Commander. This is a workplace - keep it professional.

David chuckles, his eyes light up, almost giddy.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
You'll never know if you-

JAKOB (COMMS)
(cutting off)
Don't you guys have an amendment that says I don't-

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
(over)
Alright, alright... whatever.

(off radio)

Suzanne?

With a slow somersault forward, she slips into the harness and her seat, which look like hard plastic wades.

The console's hand controllers and their grips are perfectly tailored to the lengths of their forearms, disappearing in the smooth black leather.

SUZANNE (INTO COMMS)
Ready!

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
On your cue Jakob, maneuver us to undocking attitude.

JAKOB (COMMS)

Roger.

SUZANNE (INTO COMMS)

Altitude lights on.

The duo are fastened into their seats, hands on the console, ready for depressurization.

They each focus on their breathing, slow

After a minute of no movement or sound.

JAKOB (COMMS)

Ready for undocking.

DAVID (COMMS)

3, 2, 1, 0... ignition.

They both jump forward as the module shoots towards the lunar surface, the rain droplets in the pond become gigantic bowl-like depressions in the lunar surface, casting enormous shadows of the blackest darkness seemingly forever.

SUZANNE

Good burn... smooth, David.

26

EXT. LUNAR ORBIT – FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – LATER

The Shrike launching from what's left of the Hermes – it appears no different than an alien mothership and its umbilical cord.

JAKOB (COMMS)

You two will get one hell of a sight of the solar eclipse.

SUZANNE (COMMS)

It's a lunar eclipse. Earth is blocking the Sun, not the Moon.

JAKOB (COMMS)

Just take some pictures, won't 'ya?

27

EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – MARE ORIENTALE – SUNSET

The dark crater appeared smaller from above. It stretches over 600-miles.

The Shrike descends using RCS thrusters.

As they descend three feet per second, flying forward over 5,200 feet per second, the surface's characteristics enlarge and the darkness swallows them whole.

SUZANNE

How deep is this crater?

[NOTE: Once an area surpasses 100 meters high and wide, internal clouds and rain can form. In the dry, crater, thick fog-like clouds appear.]

28

INT. MARE ORIENTALE - LUNAR MODULE (SHRIKE) - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cockpit, neither of them are blinking.

As they descend past 5,000 feet, the Moon's features rapidly enlarge.

The crater they're landing in seems endless, completely dark and filled with boulders bigger than their capsule.

SUZANNE

Where the hell are we gonna land?

He doesn't respond, too focused on maneuvering them over the abyss, scanning for the flattest ground.

His guidance system, the Microwave Scanning Beam Landing System reads: 4,225 feet.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

David...

(stern)

David.

She points to the Abort Stage switch.

He waves her off.

FLIGHT SURGEON (COMMS)

David, your heart rate is 140.

Mumbling to himself, he closes in on a spot.

His hesitation jerks them both forward.

SUZANNE

1,000 feet. Solid altitude control.

FIDO (COMMS)

... little shake in your yaw.

DAVID (COMMS)

Copy. Correcting.

He looks at the watch: 23:58:32.

JAKOB (COMMS)
Time to consider abort-

DAVID (COMMS)
(over)
Position.

SUZANNE
120 feet, down a half.

FIDO (COMMS)
*Immediate abort in 30
seconds.*

Suzanne is tense.

SUZANNE
Fix your angle!

CAPCOM (COMMS)
40 seconds til bingo.

JAKOB (COMMS)
*You're almost out of burn
time, David.*

DAVID
Position!

SUZANNE
85 feet, down a half!

No more abort!

She looks ill watching the propulsion console.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Watch your fuel, David.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
(ticked off)
I'm aware.

All movement underneath the Shrike dissipates, *but the
distance between the lander and the surface is shadowed by
the module.*

He looks at the watch one last time: (00:00:02).

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Radar data lost. Altitude light.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Low level. 20 seconds.

Without a sound or any whiplash, a green light takes over
the flashing orange fuel gauge.

Suzanne cannot believe what she's seeing.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Contact light!

DAVID (COMMS)
Shutting down the module.

David takes in a deep breath as Suzanne begins to chuckle.

They look at each other with huge grins, and extend out their hands for a firm, long handshake.

SUZANNE
Beautiful touchdown, sir.

DAVID
You wanna tell them or should I?

SUZANNE
It's your ship, Commander.

He looks at her with a different kind of respect.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Houston, uh... Armstrong base here.

The Shrike has landed.

Suzanne and David take in the moment. Breathing normally again.

Cutting in with static, immense cheering can be heard over the COMMS.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
*Roger, Dav- uh, Armstrong copy. We
are all glad to hear that.*

It cuts out back to silence.

David smiles for the first time.

SUZANNE
There's an understatement.

A beat.

The duo proceeds with the next steps instantly, taking no more than a minute to reel it all in.

David slips on the glove for his EVA suit, struggling with the rotary seal's O-ring.

His hand still shaking from the adrenaline.

CUT TO:

31

EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – ARMSTRONG BASE – LATER

LOCATION: Western Border of the Near Side and Far Side.

The hatch is opened outward as all the air is purged into a vacuum, along with all sound.

David exits the module from the BOTTOM HATCH, taking his time down the LEM's ladder.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
 Alright, I'm at the foot of the
 LEM's ladder.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
*We are with you every step, Davey.
 We see you on the LEM's cam.*

*It is precisely four minutes past
 midnight here.*

The crater casts a dark shadow, and the LEM's lights reflect heavenly off the surface.

After landing on the Moon and casually taking their first steps, CAPCOM congratulates the two:

CAPCOM (COMMS) (CONT'D)
*David, you are now the thirteenth
 American to walk on the lunar
 surface...*

*Suzanne, you are not only the
 fourteenth human, but the first
 woman and first Polish national.*

SUZANNE (COMMS)
 I'm also-

CAPCOM (COMMS)
 (over)
Congratulations... both of you.

There is no visible reaction from either, for their visors are heavily tinted and reflect their harsh lights... like dead pupilless eyes.

Without a response, David takes a moment to unzip a front pouch revealing a GLASS VIAL and a TRINKET.

Pulling out the rubber stopper, he pours out a lock of white hair.

It floats to the ground with no resistance.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Okay, Jakob. It's done.

JAKOB (COMMS)
Thank you, man.

See, pops, you've made it!

He takes the trinket, a cement caduceus hand-engraved with the names of the Athena I crew.

He shoves it into the soft ground.

DAVID (COMMS)
(to himself)
And so have you guys...

I'll miss all of you, wish you
could've been here too.

David and Suzanne are interrupted by CAPCOM again:

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Almost ready for the call?

DAVID (COMMS)
(flustered)
What call?!

CAPCOM (COMMS)
With the president!

And the secretary has a recording too.

Both the astronauts sigh loudly.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Man, why won't these guys let us
work?

The Mission Director jumps back in:

DIRECTOR (COMMS)
*That's our president, Miss
Tryboski... and our primary
investor!*

SUZANNE (COMMS)
That's Colonel Tryboski, Captain.
And the US is your only investor-

DAVID (COMMS)
Alright, alright! Just... connect
them so we can go to work.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
(mumbling)
Thought we were supposed to
sleep?

DIRECTOR (COMMS)
Exactly! Patching the
President through. No
vulgarity!

The president connects with a loud static.

PRESIDENT (COMMS)
*We've been constructing a new power
plant after securing the previously
destroyed one in Columbia after our
takeover...*

*We'll be able to launch closer to
the equator and use less LOX
resulting in a cheaper, faster
lift-off for the next mission, once
the war is over.*

David and Suzanne are slowly preparing their gear, itching
to start work. He continues:

*The power plant will allow the
local economy to grow tenfold
because I don't know if you guys
have seen, there's not much left.*

(small chuckle)

*Hey, it isn't about why it's about
why not, right? Any-who, I have a
prerecorded message from Secretary
Mads who really wanted to say
something if you two don't mind...*

(off mic)

How do you shut this-

Suzanne rolls her eyes.

The US Secretary of Defense, JAMESON MADS, speaks as if he's
a movie voice-over:

SECRETARY MADS (COMMS)
*Once again our country proves its
exceptionalism for the 21st
century.*

(MORE)

SECRETARY MADS (CONT'D)
*Returning where we originally set
the benchmark for human spaceflight
a quarter of a century ago.*

*It is an honor to help facilitate a
moment of such magnitude.*

A beat. Silence.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Finally!

Already latched onto bottom of the Shrike, a soft-sided Modular Logistic Module containing a deployable mini-satellite and a vacuum-sealed black bag with a large cylindrical bulge in the center.

He tosses the bag to her as it slowly floats into her gloves.

Dragging out the satellite, and setting up the tri-pod, the Lunar Communications Relay and Navigation Systems (LCRNS) allows them to reconnect their COMMS and maps their position for Houston.

The Mission Director's voice registers under consistent static:

DIRECTOR (COMMS)
Armstrong, Houston, Radio check.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Read you three-by-three.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Let's ditch the HOPE-2 capsule
here.

DAVID (COMMS)
Jeremy! Mark our coordinates for
HOPE-2.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
19.3° S, 92.0° W.

The bag tears opens, retaining its tight shape, as Suzanne slides out a jewel-encrusted reliquary tube consisting of the Holy Prepuce last seen in 1983.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
What's that? A scroll?

DAVID (COMMS)
I don't know, ask the Pope.

Continuing with the mission, preparing the latest generation of lunar rover for faster travel.

Aluminum cased Lunar Sample Receiving Containers are secured by cords onto the bed.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Time to pick up where the last guys left off.

DAVID (COMMS)
This is a new area, we'll proceed with caution. Observe and report.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Why do you do that? You know what I meant.

DAVID (COMMS)
They sent the TROJAN south of here, let's get recon over with quick.

And get the TRIDENT going before anything.

They come across the edge of the crater, noticing an opening into mouths of vanishing sinkholes.

The duo stare at each other, *unsure what awaits them inside.*

32 EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON - CAVE - NIGHT

The crew investigates, recording their exploration like a police body-cam.

The Grottos on the Moon is a cave system dug by the captors from the inside-out, that appear as a cross between limestone caves and the human mouth.

BACK TO:

33 INT. THE GROTTO - DUNGEON - SAME TIME

Immanuel is back where he started with his roommate, stretched out and trying to stay warm.

UNKNOWN (V.O.)
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you-

It cuts off on their last syllable.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
*Transmission ceased. Telemetry not
found.*

He sighs deeply. Frustrated, and whispering to himself.

IMMANUEL
(mumbling)
Psh. There is no water here.

BRUTEGA
Who are you talking to?

IMMANUEL
Are you talking to me?

BRUTEGA
No, I'm talking to myse- yeah, I'm
talking to you!

IMMANUEL
Just... just a friend.

BRUTEGA
Sounds like you're more than
friends.

Brutega let's out a belly-laugh, it vibrates, suspending the
filth off the floor.

IMMANUEL
It's been a long time, not even
sure if they are there anymore.

BRUTEGA
Not with that attitude, we'll all
get out of here sometime... you
have to have hope.

IMMANUEL
(defeated)
Alright, then.

His bunkmate is picking at their tray, while Immanuel hasn't
touched his.

BRUTEGA
Alright, what? Why aren't you
eating?

Immanuel sighs.

IMMANUEL

Let's go to the game.

Brutega tosses the disc to the side, getting off their cot and into Immanuel's face.

BRUTEGA

Are you sure?

There's the risk of not coming back, or well, not in one piece at least.

Without hesitation, Immanuel answers:

IMMANUEL

Me? Or you?

His bunkmate laughs, then grabs him by his shirt that's falling apart.

34 **INT. THE GROTTO - TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER**

Immanuel is led outside his cell, behind his bunkmate who towers over him.

They enter another inmates cell, pushing through the stoma into another cell full of webbed connective tissue.

35 **INT. DUNGEON - UNOCCUPIED CELL - CONTINUOUS**

Immanuel easily pushes past it, the webs disintegrating with touch.

BRUTEGA

Alright, this is the point of no return, Ara-lover.

(deep breath)

The last fistula before the cavern.
Once we enter, we're no longer on the same side.

IMMANUEL

We were on the same side?

They laugh wholeheartedly. Then, offers Immanuel to go first.

36 **EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON - CAVE - LUNAR NIGHT**

The duo finds an entrance to a cave system, choosing to park the LUNAR ROVING VEHICLE and enter into the tight space.

Immediately using a foldable shovel, David begins to dig at the soft regolith.

He disappears into a haze of micronized lunar rock.

Suzanne takes a square shovel to scrap off the thin, powder layer and dumping it into a little wagon.

She reaches down to grab a handful, inspecting it in her headlamp.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
This is way more fine-grained than
the Chang'e 7 samples.

DAVID (COMMS)
It's caked onto these walls... like
a pumice stone.

After loading the Rover with approximately 220 pounds of regolith samples, weighed out with a spring-scale, they continue to explore the tighter, darker parts of the cave.

37 **INT. CAVE - TUNNEL - SAME TIME**

Their tinted visors no longer needed for the dark tunnel. LED headlamps attached to their helmets light up the entire enclosed space.

They deploy sensors into the cave walls to test for atmosphere, heat, or microbial life, after finally being left alone on their channels to attend to their lunar surface activities.

The sensors light up like a war zone.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
This point isn't on our map.

Commander, are you seeing this?

DAVID (COMMS)
There's condensation on the walls.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Must be some sort of ice.

It's supposed to be drier than the Sahara.

His attention never drifts from the wall.

DAVID (COMMS)
That's what they say.

David begins to draw imaginary lines in the air.

DAVID (COMMS) (CONT'D)
We have to drill into the actual
wall, and then-

He stops suddenly once he touches the walls.

A beat.

He feels some more.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
(chuckling)
What?

He's struck silent by what he feels.

DAVID (COMMS)
It's... warm. Through my suit! It's
moving!

Suzanne looks at him like he's crazy.

Then, reluctantly, touches her gloved finger against the
walls - it shudders with ripples displaying veins.

David takes a small flashlight off his tool belt, pressing
the bulb against the sarcous surface.

It illuminates a whole ecosystem of veins and rhythmic
pulsations.

*The prison is bio-engineered and the walls are a part of a
living containment system.*

SUZANNE (COMMS)
There has to be some explanation...

Some sort of thermal dumping
ground, something-

David is already shaking his head no.

DAVID (COMMS)
(over)
Let's set up the TRIDENT here.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Are you sure, this doesn't feel
like rock.

Maybe this area has already-

DAVID (COMMS)
(over)
No human has ever landed here,
Suzie.

A beat. *Silence.*

A slow mechanical hiss then click from each of their respirators can be heard.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
It could be erosion, there's a
scientific explanation.

DAVID (COMMS)
And we're gonna find it.

They both are unsure but proceed with setting up the drill as trained. Suzanne less enthusiastic than her peer.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
Let's take back the rocks first if
we are going to grab some more
samples.

David lets out a loud sigh.

SUZANNE (COMMS) (CONT'D)
We have orders, brachu.

BACK TO:

38

INT. THE GROTTO - CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Immanuel enters the cavern. No forts, coverage, just a large plot of empty space, stalactites hang like jagged teeth from the ceiling illuminated by glowing plasma, flowing throughout the cavern itself.

A creature consumed by a GLOWING BLACK AND PURPLE SLUDGE, a ten-foot wide chest and arms that extend out twice as long to display the GAME BALL in a pair of paws.

Then another pair fold out...

And another.

Covered in regolith powder, they leave a cloud of moon dust with every quick movement.

The sludge rinses revealing a bear-like figure, cloaked entirely with a tough, lumpy skin pleating like drapery.

Six stumps cow tip its body onto their rear to tower over everyone.

Their snout is folded in except for a large muzzle jets out with multiple barrels.

IMMANUEL

Who's that?

BRUTEGA

They are called Big-Daddy, but that's just a translation.

BIG-DADDY

The rule is simple, the ball is let loose, all teams attempt to either kill the ball or kill each other.

Immanuel leans in to his bunkmate.

IMMANUEL

Isn't that two rules?

BIG-DADDY

If you lose you become one with the environment. Your useless matter will be fed into the walls, lights, and furnaces.

Now, it is tradition to let the oldest entropy start us off but in the spirit of the sacrifice-

Big-Daddy chucks the ball at Immanuel who barely catches it.

All the inmates stare at him with looks that would kill.

He realizes: he's the sacrifice.

The arena is alive! The walls breathe, contracting like a lung. Veins glow faint orange beneath translucent flesh.

The source of the lights appears as a sunrise-colored blaze from a controlled fire above their heads, ashes falling down like snow.

A crowd of inmates shriek and howl, packed into tiers that look grown, not built. *Like coliseums made from rock.*

It twitches.

Soft and damp, it pulses like a heart with skin stretched too tight.

The spherical live-entity covered in sweat and balding hair had seven slits cut alongside the top for grip.

In Immanuel's hands, it spasms.

He flinches!

Instead of hurting it he tosses it like a hot potato.

It cries mid-air, fearing for its life, floating to the ground slowly.

A distant organic horn bellows like a dying animal. The game begins.

CRACK! A smart inmate who brought a club, swings and smacks the ball across the auditorium.

The impact sends a ripple through the arena walls. They pulse brighter.

The crowd erupts.

After it ricochets, it rolls right into Immanuel's feet.

BALL

Careful, pig! I'll remember you.

IMMANUEL

Sorry!

Every inmate participating runs directly towards the ball.

Immanuel runs wild throughout the cavern as the crowd goes wild, the other inmates chasing him down.

ANGEL (V.O.)

Can you feel it? The energy
processing...

Players collide violently – bones snapping and smudging against the solid mantle floor.

ANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They're feeding this place!

No one stops.

A fallen inmate is dragged-

Not off the field, but into the floor.

It's Brutega being ground into bits of connective tissue, gristle, sinews and fat.

His muffled screams continue beneath the surface.

Immanuel sprints up to him, falling at his knees to lift Brutega out the mantle-floor.

The ground softens, swallowing him slowly.

Using all his strength, Immanuel attempts to pull him out.

Brutega's arms are ripped clean out the sockets, the rest of him split asunder from the inside out.

Immanuel *freezes*. Holding the cold, twitching limbs of his bunkmate.

Suddenly, his ears are ringing again.

CHOIR (V.O.)
Immanuel! Immanuel! Immanuel!

It transforms from innocent sopranos into wailing pleas for help... *to be put out of their misery.*

ANGEL (V.O.)
(cutting in-and-out)
How are you supposed to save your
home, when you can't even save
yourself?

Across the field, opposing players bare teeth, claws, bone-like protrusions.

No uniforms. Just bodies shaped by survival.

A player charges Immanuel and suddenly-

A violent seizure overtakes him. His body drops limp, folding himself forward.

The arena doesn't stop. If anything it gets louder.

ANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What's your purpose, envoy?

Immanuel struggles to stay awake, he attempts to move but finds himself too weak.

He leans into his back facing straight up at the lights, ash building on his face.

Weakly, he responds:

IMMANUEL
I must... go home.

He attempts to rise, but the mantle-floor already has a firm grip on him.

The floor begins processing his body. But hesitates when it comes to taking Immanuel.

ANGEL (V.O.)
Hm. How pathetic.

The sinews of the dungeon ground wraps itself around Immanuel to take a taste test.

They recoil and recede!

With billions of voices, the floor speaks in low-frequencies, barely registered:

MANTLE-FLOOR
What... is this?

Suddenly in a mother's voice, louder than the whole cavern:

MANTLE-FLOOR (CONT'D)
Ether?!

Immanuel is regurgitated out, covered in thick bile. The portion of floor he touched is smoking as it slightly disintegrates.

He turns to face all the inmates watching, frozen out of fear.

The floor buckles all their legs, folding them into its trap jaws.

Immanuel takes the opportunity to run out the cavern, much to the crowd's dismay.

BACK TO:

39

EXT. CAVE - TUNNEL - SAME TIME

Suzanne pulls back.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
You feel that?

The walls around them ripple outward from the drill site - like a shockwave through tissue.

Their lights begin to flicker.

DAVID (COMMS)
It's pressurized-

With a pounding in his head, he tries plugging his ears.

ANGEL (V.O.)
He counts the number of the stars;
he calls them all by name...

Except for you, you're forgotten.

He can't sleep.

The heat suddenly wavers.

Then drops. The furnace dims — from orange to dull red... to nothing.

[NOTE: The base temperature on the Moon is at times more than -200 degrees Fahrenheit.]

IMMANUEL
No... no, no-

A deep vibration rolls through the floor. The walls begin to pulse.

The fleshy surface of his cell door twitches.

The cave contains a sealed atmospheric ecosystem.

41 **INT. CAVE — TUNNEL — SAME TIME**

David yanks the drill free. He wipes the blood and plasma off his visor and pierces another section.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
David!

The wall contracts violently — weakly spraying more fluid across the ground.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
(calmly)
*We're approaching the end of your
EVA, whenever you are done setting
up the drill.*

*Head back to base with what you
got.*

SUZANNE (COMMS)
David... we need to go. Now.

DAVID (COMMS)
Suzanne, we can't leave without-

A distant roar cuts him off.

Then another – closer. They peer at the puncture wounds they've made, *a clear view into a dungeon cell.*

DAVID (COMMS) (CONT'D)
What the hell did we just hit?

42 **INT. THE GROTOS – DUNGEON – CONTINUOUS**

Cells unlock automatically to prevent rupture. Organic doors retract and soften.

The entire cavern of feral grotesque creatures desperately race out of their cells.

Immanuel remains in his cell, assessing the situation, unsure where his odds are better off, until...

A needle the size of his arm pierces through the dungeon wall. The deep purple almost jet black blood spills from the cracks.

He steps back, watching as it grows larger.

43 **INT. CAVE – TUNNEL – CONTINUOUS**

David sticks his hand into the wound to feel the flesh. It feels exactly how it looks: wet, hot *and alive.*

DAVID (COMMS)
It's moving, Suzie!

Out of nowhere, the hand of a strong man grabs a hold of David's, practically pulling him into the cell.

44 **INT. THE GROTOS – DUNGEON – CONTINUOUS**

For the first time, we see David show genuine fear.

The hole is like a vacuum cleaner, violently sucking out the Grottos' pressurized atmosphere resulting in an unintentional decompression.

DAVID (COMMS)
(yelling out)
Help, Suz-

45 **INT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – CAVE – CONTINUOUS**

She's already got her Commander by a half-nelson, using all her strength to yank him and a whole other man through the gushing wound.

SUZANNE (COMMS)
What the hell is that?!

They stare horrified at the bloody mess covering a human male. The man wipes away the placenta from his eyelids, his skin stained with blood.

DAVID (COMMS)
(shaken up)
Let's get out of here!

Struggling, Immanuel speaks, yet with the Moon being a near-vacuum, no sound is heard:

IMMANUEL
(inaudible)
Who are you?

Recognizing the immediate danger, and inmates still playing the game. He leads them running out of the Grottos opening slowly.

All their movements are slowly as if wading through water.

Bunny-hopping towards the Lunar Roving Vehicle, Immanuel grabs a hold of the flimsy wheel well.

The little buggy is pushed to its top speed of 10 mph.

46 **EXT. CAVE – CONTINUOUS**

The crew inadvertently helped Immanuel escape his confines, along with all the other inmates, leaving the base in chaos...

As the Grottos are overflowed with blood and bile, sinews stretching in every direction towards its escaping captives.

The liquid waves slowly hardened, forming a foam then crust.

It is boiled instantly from the near-vacuum, as it crystallizes into ice, preserving everything it consumes as statues.

Frozen in the blackest darkness forever.

47 **EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – ARMSTRONG BASE – NIGHT**

They burst out into the stark, silent lunar surface.

Behind them, the cave pulses like a wounded organ.

The crew and Immanuel believe they are being chased out by creatures, barely getting to the lunar module.

Some of the creatures choose not to chase most having never been used to the stark artificial light of the Lunar Module.

Instead of entering what is unknown, they instead go back to the Grottos.

Those who continue reach the hatch before it closes, one of them grabs Suzanne's leg by their ribbonary tentacle.

48

I/E. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – ARMSTRONG BASE – CONTINUOUS

Immanuel grabs a hold on Suzanne and pushes her up the LEM, grabbing her ankle and the creature's threadlike grasp, ripping them apart.

Suzanne races up the ladder, leaving Immanuel staring directly up at David who looks like he's seen a ghost.

A split-second of thinking.

Will he close the hatch or help the alien?

Then...

David reaches down, offering a hand to Immanuel who nearly snatches his arm off.

More monsters are already grabbing a hold onto him.

Suzanne helps pull Immanuel up by David's forearm.

They struggle until Immanuel finally gets a foot onto the ladder, pushing himself up into the Shrike.

ANGEL (V.O.)
(seething)
You were never meant to be!

49

INT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – ARMSTRONG BASE – CONTINUOUS

All three of them look straight down at the sea of monstrosities reaching out of desperation.

They weren't chasing them down, they were trying to escape.

Suddenly...

A tidal wave of evolving viscera consumes all of them at a snail's pace, silencing and crushing the creatures with enough pressure to stop a moving car.

It doesn't stop, but begins to rise in mass as it quickly transitions into ice as solid as cement. Tendons taut, slowly wrapping veins around the LEM.

Suzanne and David can't stop coughing. He flicks on the headlamps.

It is dustier than usual in the Shrike's close quarters.

Immanuel is covered in regolith dust, attempting to brush it off only making more of a mess.

It smears over his skin like charcoal, gripping tightly like static-charged glass-shards.

SUZANNE

We're losing contact with the surface... we have to launch!

He's fussing around some papers.

DAVID

I'm looking for the overwrite code.

SUZANNE

Just ask-

He looks at her for a moment.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Right...

Immanuel is unsure where to position himself.

IMMANUEL

Are we staying or leaving?!

The Shrike begins to rock back and forth gently.

SUZANNE

We- we need to go now, David!

David throws the papers, grabs his fountain pen and jams it into the console button guard.

Breaking the aluminum casing, and using it to wedge it open. He flips the override command switch, slicing his fingernail.

They both jump into their seats.

DAVID

Switching to manual.

Switching on his communications. Sweating through the COMMS cap.

DAVID (INTO COMMS) (CONT'D)
Jakob, we are ready! Are you?

JAKOB (COMMS)
I'm waiting for you guys!

SUZANNE
Just go. Just go!

The Shrike's main engines sends Immanuel to the floor, and even giving the astronauts a jump.

It lifts a few feet, only to fallback onto the surface.

The lander pads recoil with a cloud of dust.

A ding lights up another orange alarm.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
4-0-2 alarm.

She quickly searches inside her jumpsuit for a loose piece of paper.

It's a cheat sheet for all program alarms.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
Houston, what's a 4-0-2 alarm?

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Overweight, you were only supposed to grab 220 pounds!

They both look at Immanuel. David can't help but chuckle out of frustration.

DAVID
Oh, come on.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
We gave you a scale to use, guys.

SUZANNE
We have to—

DAVID
Jettison the samples, Suzanne.

That wasn't her thought at all.

SUZANNE
Really? But—

DAVID
(snapping)
Just, do it!
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Unless you wanna tell him to leave!

She gives Immanuel an evil look, then sighs... *almost crying* as she grabs all the aluminum cases and drops them down the hatch

They all fall slowly to the living ocean of precipitated blood forming bubbles and foam, they each are crushed and shoot out their contents of regolith.

CUT TO:

50

EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE MOON – ARMSTRONG BASE – CONTINUOUS

Sparks are contained within the rocket engine, the Shrike pops into the void without any flames, smoke or resistance like bamboo shells in a fire.

An near-invisible ignition of hypergolic propellant levitates the Shrike.

Once it reaches it's peak altitude, the main engines blast 100%.

As the Shrike launches, rolls then fixes its trajectory to exit the Moon's exosphere where it will dock with the orbiting Command Module piloted by Jakob.

Upon takeoff, jettisoned gear and samples, landing probes and the lower half of the Shrike are left on the lunar surface, slowly consumed by the prison itself.

The artificial lights on the lander pads cannot penetrate through the sea of blood, hardening with a crust in a split-second.

CUT TO:

51

INT. LUNAR MODULE (SHRIKE) – SAME TIME

Meanwhile, their third crewmate is orbiting in the Command Module, most likely in manual control – closing in the gap.

He updates them that all his housekeeping is completed.

JAKOB (COMMS)

You guys- and gal... have a surprise coming to you. I won't spoil it. I lie, I will.

(MORE)

JAKOB (CONT'D)
*I have revived our mizuna plant...
 he's a-growing. I have a list of
 names-*

Finally snapping together his COMMS cap, David cuts him off:

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
 (out of breath)
 Jakob! Shut up!

JAKOB (COMMS)
 (chewing something)
 Wow...

*I'm guessing you two got no work
 done?*

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
 Jakob!

JAKOB (COMMS)
Better luck next time?

*Jee, sorry, I'll... see you in five
 minutes.*

The moon below appears blood red and as they ascend to dock with the Hermes, it becomes too far to tell if it is the living Grottos or simply sunlight refracted through Earth's atmosphere on the edges.

CUT TO:

52

INT. COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) - MOMENT LATER

After docking with their third crewmate in the orbiter, they immediately reveal their findings.

JAKOB
 I don't know where you were looking
 but that was your worst docking
 ever, Command-

The sight of Immanuel freezes him in his place.

The other two begin taking off their suits, covered in dried blood and regolith.

It becomes so silent, the droning noise of the Hermes sounds cavernous. It's even more crowded inside the small chamber.

Jakob looks at him wide-eyed, then his crewmates, back to Immanuel.

DAVID
You're fine, Jakob. You're not
hallucinating, he's real.

JAKOB
But- but... how is this-

SUZANNE
We need to focus on the trip home
first.

Jakob immediately gets pissed, more so out of fear.

JAKOB
No, we don't! What the hell is he
supposed to be? This isn't funny.

DAVID
No one is tricking you, we found
him on the surface.

JAKOB
But he has no suit?! Was there
already a base there?

Did another nation beat us?

IMMANUEL
Nation?

DAVID
Oh, come on, Jake...

They assume their positions nonetheless, bumping into each
other in the weightless low-gravity.

SUZANNE
Wait until you tell him we had to
ditch the samples.

JAKOB
You what?!

FIDO (COMMS)
*Hermes, you missed your mark.
Sending data for a burn to
readjust your trajectory.*

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
(shaking)
Roger! Roger, that.

IMMANUEL
So, is this the whole ship?
Where's the captain?

DAVID

There's no captain, I'm the
Commander.

IMMANUEL

Yes, but who's steering the ship?

JAKOB

The software.

(to David)

David, right engine helium tank is
just a little bit low.

DAVID

It was during the no-plugs
test, too.

IMMANUEL

Who's the software?

SUZANNE

Our actual pilot is back on Earth,
it's a computer.

Immanuel shifts his arms through a sluice valve to keep
himself still.

IMMANUEL

Pilot?

JAKOB

(explosive)

The one steering the ship!

IMMANUEL

You left them home? No wonder you
got lost and found me.

SUZANNE

We didn't get lost, the Moon was
our mission.

A beat. The sound of stomachs digesting nothing.

IMMANUEL

Well... why would you go and do
that?

And how could you travel so far,
with your pilot back home?

How do you explain that, Commander?

Snapping out of frustration, David answers:

DAVID

That's what you're concerned about?

How are we gonna explain you?

ACT TWO

53

INT. CISLUNAR SPACE – COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – LATER

The crew is speaking over the phone with the Secretary of Defense Jameson Mads who is simply congratulating the three on their journey telling them:

SECRETARY MADS (COMMS)

Finally, all those moon landing deniers can go scratch! Thank you for all you've done for this country...

... and you other two, thank you for how you've helped add to history and I'm sure have made your home nations proud.

The United States of America appreciates your cooperation and allyship.

Unaware that they are staring at a fourth passenger in their LEM.

54

INT. CISLUNAR SPACE – LUNAR MODULE (SHRIKE) – CONTINUOUS

Immanuel is wedged in between a porthole and the frame of the module. His eyelids fluttering closed from exhaustion.

The familiar voice speaks to him again.

UNKNOWN (V.O.)

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

(over)

Transmission ceased. Telemetry not found.

He shoots up awake. Jakob has been staring at him.

The quiet is driving Immanuel crazy. Nothing but the whirring of electronics.

Jakob hands him headphones and a music player.

IMMANUEL

What is this?

JAKOB

They're headphones.

He puts them on slowly. Jakob fixes it so it actually covers his ears.

IMMANUEL

Is this what you call a radio?

Jakob giggles.

JAKOB

I guess, sort of. Just press that button and it'll play music.

IMMANUEL

But we're so far away, the telemetry-

JAKOB

Telemetry?

(grinning)

What do you know about- Hey, let me tell you...

(losing focus)

When I was coordinator for Artemis, I had to maintain the P-band VHF, the USB voice channel, the Duplex HF channel, the simplex coordination circuit, the TACSAT satellite circuit and the aircraft-wide intercom - all at the same time.

IMMANUEL

That's a whole lotta words.

ORPHEUS

They're radio frequencies and... you know what, here.

He presses play for him on the CD player.

Heavy synthesizers makes Immanuel flinch at first.

"In Sympathy" by Depeche Mode plays.

Immanuel floats back up through the Connected Tunnel, entranced by the tune.

55

INT. CISLUNAR SPACE – COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – CONTINUOUS

David is staring at him, looking for some logical explanation.

Once Immanuel is close enough, David grabs the levitating CD player, and hits pause. Gently pulling on the cord like a leash, so they are face-to-face.

DAVID

Who are you?

IMMANUEL

Me?

DAVID

Yes! You! Who are you?

Immanuel is hesitant.

IMMANUEL

Depends who's asking.

DAVID

The one keeping you alive.

IMMANUEL

Ah.

Then I'm a guest.

SUZANNE

(joining in)

You're not a guest! You're an unknown biological man on a sealed spacecraft.

An awkward silence.

IMMANUEL

I am Immanuel, son of the queen of the cosmos, prince of peace, prophet and wielder of the Mosaic sword... if I can find it.

DAVID

Okay, Immanuel, I'm not even going to touch that.

Where are you from?

IMMANUEL

I'm not really from anywhere, lately been more of just a... nomad, ya' know?

DAVID

(immediately)

No, I don't know, expand.

A beat.

Immanuel is honest.

IMMANUEL

Ara is my home.

SUZANNE

Ara? Where's that?

IMMANUEL

Well...

(chuckles)

-it's actually right out there.

He points out the tinted window at the blinding blue marbling of the Earth. *It doesn't look too far out.*

Jakob films with a digital camera.

DAVID

Jakob, stop filming the alien!

JAKOB

What?

It's not live, I'll keep the SD card.

DAVID

Jakob!

JAKOB

Why don't you make me?

David raises a fist to sock him, Jakob instantly flinches:

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Sorry, sorry, okay jeez here.

He let's go of the camera it floats and spins in place.

David grabs it and shuts it off. He continues with his interrogation.

DAVID

So, you're from where we are...

And you were just... what... sent to space?

IMMANUEL

No, to the Moon actually.

SUZANNE

Have you ever been tested?

IMMANUEL

Plenty of times.

SUZANNE

Do you even know- never mind, all we need to know at this moment is who sent you to another celestial body?

IMMANUEL

A judge, a governor, and a lush for a king.

DAVID

Just stop talking to the entropy.

He obviously has no idea what's going on.

That last notion irritates Immanuel, who may not understand the ship he's on, but is fully aware of their situation.

IMMANUEL

But, neither do you.

No pilot, voices in your ear, people back home are controlling you.

It's like a sailboat, you put your trust in the wind.

JAKOB
(giggling)
You think we're a bunch of test
subjects?

IMMANUEL
You're just like me!

I mean what do you actually
command, Commander?

At least you all get to go back,
you should be grateful to those who
are actually piloting this thing.

That's who you should be putting
your faith in.

No response only a deafening silence.

SUZANNE
You don't understand what we're
doing, there are billions of
dollars at stake and-

IMMANUEL
You wish to salvage the moon?

SUZANNE
No, that's what we spent to get
there.

IMMANUEL
(heated)
Why? Why not the homeless, uh- uh-
sick people, poor people,
children?!

Why not be generous?

David juts over his seat to get into his face.

DAVID
Because we can! Because we might
discover something that could save
those sick people-

IMMANUEL
(over)
Like what?

DAVID
Like you!

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
If we can figure out why a human
like yourself could survive such
conditions then we'd be able to do
so much more... for everyone!

Immanuel takes a moment to think.

IMMANUEL
How would I save anyone?

He finds himself lost in thought, slightly depressed.

IMMANUEL (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
I can't even save myself...

SUZANNE
And we just sacrificed the most
valuable cargo for you.

IMMANUEL
Right, a bunch of rocks.

That's this solar system's scribe,
you know!

	DAVID	SUZANNE
What?		It wasn't just a bunch of-
		ugh!

IMMANUEL
Everything imprinted there, stays.
Forever.

JAKOB
Probably a bad time to tell you
this, but the previous six times we
landed on the Moon, they left human
waste in bags.

Immanuel's jaw drops.

SUZANNE
(chiming in)
Yeah, it's all probably still
there.

David doesn't care, him and Suzanne go back to focusing on
their duties. *They pretend not to listen.*

Except for Jakob.

JAKOB
(changing the subject)
What does this sword look like?

IMMANUEL
My sword?

DAVID
Yes!

SUZANNE
Yes! You're the only one with
a... sword!

IMMANUEL
It's a crystal that reflects all
the colors, like a rainbow.

DAVID
Yea, we know what a rainbow
is.

JAKOB
Why do you need a sword?

SUZANNE
(over)
Also, rainbows aren't very
threatening.

Immanuel scoffs.

IMMANUEL
It's not for hurting! You are all
horribly sick-minded.

SUZANNE
What could you possibly need this
sword for, what is so special about
it?

IMMANUEL
(picking his nails)
It's mine, my father gave it to
me...

I... get anxious without it.

DAVID
Okay, so you don't actually need
it.

Why don't you share with us
something actually useful?

JAKOB
I have a question. If the moon is a
scribe, then what does that make
Earth?

Suzanne wipes her nose.

SUZANNE
That's your question?!

IMMANUEL
A public plaza.

But if this is considered a ship,
then perhaps more a harbor.

Abruptly, an alarm indicating that an unidentifiable object was approaching their ship's vicinity.

JAKOB
More surprises, huh? You two.

As Jakob assists David to figure out what the problem is, Suzanne can't stop looking at Immanuel's scars.

How is he even alive?

56 **EXT. EARTH-MOON LAGRANGE POINT L2 - SAME TIME**

A planetary probe awaiting launch, collecting power from the sun with extended panels. Destined for the first layer of Saturn, Orpheus sits in high Earth orbit waiting for a precise alignment to sling toward Saturn.

The Hermes Command Module returning from the Moon passes nearby, nearly station-keeping with the Command Module as the capsule approaches a free-range trajectory, using the Earth's gravity for reentry rather than propulsion.

57 **INT. EARTH-MOON LAGRANGE POINT L2 - COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) - CONTINUOUS**

The crew, entering Earth's orbit as well, is able to identify the object as a small satellite.

JAKOB
That object in front of us isn't debris, it's... station-keeping.

SUZANNE
Jeremy, give me an ID on a 1-8-1-5-3-3-1-5 satellite.

CAPCOM checks the registry.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Hermes... that's ORPHEUS, a planetary probe.

Orpheus is inert. Its antenna misaligned, no thruster activity, no visible power cycling. Just drifting.

JAKOB

Shit. In roughly 20 minutes we will impact the probe. If you guys weren't late to launch-

DAVID

Shut up.

SUZANNE

We can't adjust our trajectory anymore without a burn, so we have to clear the way manually somehow.

Fortunately, it's not moving, so we have some time.

IMMANUEL

So, what can we do?

SUZANNE

Nothing, ORPHEUS is gonna die and JPL will bill us for a quarter billion each.

And a small possibility it rips a hole right through the capsule wall, killing us all...

She looks at Immanuel.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Well, maybe not you. You'll be stuck though.

IMMANUEL

What else is new?

DAVID

It's not in motion, we could just... push it aside?

SUZANNE

Commander, we have no EVA suit on the command module.

Ullage pressures are already up!

We'll be sending cabin pressure alarms down to Houston...

Suzanne and Jakob look at Immanuel.

JAKOB

Well... he was on the lunar surface.

SUZANNE

With no suit too.

Their Commander joins them.

DAVID

Can you survive depressurization?

(laughing)

Man, I can't believe I just asked that.

IMMANUEL

Are you talking to me?

DAVID

Yes! I'm talking to you!

We can't step outside the module but we can depressurize while in our suits if you can grab this probe.

IMMANUEL

Why do you need it?

DAVID

We don't. Just shove it out of the way, will 'ya?

CUT TO:

58 **EXT. EARTH-MOON LAGRANGE POINT L2 – CONTINUOUS**

He grabs the probe, almost ripping him outside the ship. He brings it inside with them, crowding the COMMAND MODULE even further.

BACK TO:

59 **INT. EARTH-MOON LAGRANGE POINT L2 – COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – CONTINUOUS**

Immanuel simply pulls himself back into the capsule, visibly unharmed. All the astronauts are staring at the humanoid as he defies the physics of their world.

Immanuel closes the hatch, probe on his back using all his body to shift it inside.

It fits perfectly, barely touching the walls.

He scraps ice and dry skin off, then starts coughing.

The whites in his eyes become blood-red around his piercing brown eyes - slowly healing from the barotrauma.

After repressurization, David is first to speak:

DAVID

I told you we don't need it! I said
just shove it out of the way, not
bring it on board.

That wasn't my order!

Projectile blood and vomit consisting of the same color as the food discs splutter from Immanuel's mouth.

He tries to cover it, adding to the dried up slushy blood from before.

His shirt is now wet and heavy. Because of the depressurization, his ears are ringing, so he speaks loudly.

IMMANUEL

(slurring)

I thought... this was one of your
shipmates.

JAKOB

Aww, you saved it. How cute.

IMMANUEL

Did you leave him behind?

SUZANNE

We did! On purpose.

IMMANUEL

What?! Why?

DAVID

Just... keep still and hold onto
that thing tightly, it's expensive.

IMMANUEL

Heavy too.

JAKOB

We log it and move on.

Immanuel doesn't respond.

He's staring at his right hand that is almost jet black.

Making a fist, then stretching it out. He puts his hand on the device, feeling for any warmth.

He reaches toward the control panel. Fiddling with buttons like a little kid.

SUZANNE

Hey! Don't touch that.

Too late.

The probe's antenna twitches.

A voice forms out of broken packets. Synthetic, but unstable.

Its speech is harsh, grating, and metallic. A low-pitched, staccato screaming tone, sputtered frantically and cold.

ORPHEUS

... signal... re-ceived...

Jakob freezes.

JAKOB

That system doesn't have a voice interface!

SUZANNE

It shouldn't even be on.

IMMANUEL

Can you understand me?

A long pause.

Then-

ORPHEUS

... I... read... you.

SUZANNE

It's booting- no, it's not booting, it's- I don't know what it's doing.

ORPHEUS

(clearer)

I was not... meant... to wake yet.

The words assemble:

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)

I'm de-signed to only last into the
first layer of hydro-gen gas...
then implode.

JAKOB

I guess you could say you have a
lot to live up to.

A beat.

ORPHEUS

I'm de-signed to only last into the
first layer of hydro-gen gas...
then implode.

JAKOB

Yeah, alright.

ORPHEUS

I don't mean to up-set you, sir. I
am per-form-ing within ex-pected
parameters.

JAKOB

It's okay, you don't have to say it
like that.

ORPHEUS

Ex-pand?

JAKOB

Like... dying.

ORPHEUS

Cor-rect. I will im-plode by the
first layer.

I was not built with a para-chute
for a reason.

That is my... mis-sion.

David is over them talking to the probe, rolling his eyes
and writing in a small notebook.

DAVID

(to himself)

The mission that was interrupted by
us.

Suzanne is awestruck, looking at both devices with wonder.

She grabs the camcorder that Jakob had before to document the probe.

JAKOB

Doesn't that bother you?

ORPHEUS

No, sir. I... was told that fear of death is what makes hu-mans... human.

Suzanne pokes at the probe on camera, folding in the solar panel to reveal flickering LEDs.

SUZANNE

The ORPHEUS probe was supposed to be launching from orbit only six months after the Jupiter probe, but with the Pasto conflict that may be delayed.

Or so we were informed.

JAKOB

What does ORPHEUS stand for anyways?

ORPHEUS

My name is an a-cor-nym for-

(prerecorded female
voice)

*"Orbital Reconnaissance Probe for
Heliospheric Exploration and
Unknown States."*

[NOTE: The prerecorded female voice sounds like a genuine cheerful young woman to differentiate when ORPHEUS is speaking for itself or manufacturer]

SUZANNE

That doesn't even make any sense.

Orpheus doesn't respond.

IMMANUEL

So, you're whole purpose is to just... die?

ORPHEUS

Pre-cise-ly!

JAKOB
Why Saturn, and not Jupiter?

ORPHEUS
Saturn was preferred by my
makers...

(prerecorded female
voice)

*"For its distinguishing
characteristics and low-radiation
environment."*

JAKOB
So cool!

David, are you seeing this thing?

No response from David despite only being a couple feet
away.

He knows it's going to be a long trip back.

SUZANNE
I thought the next flyby was going
to Venus?

DAVID
The ANVIL probe is already on Venus
and will be picked up a decade
from now.

SUZANNE
If it still exists.

JAKOB
Can we have some hope, Sue?

CUT TO:

60

INT. KÁRMÁN LINE – COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – THE NEXT DAY

Approaching the international standard for the edge of
Earth's atmosphere.

There's an awkward silence in the capsule.

Jakob lets out a groan, then breaks the ice.

JAKOB
So, Commander, how do we approach
this?

DAVID
What do you mean?

JAKOB
I mean do we tell them now or when
they open us up?

A beat.

DAVID
(sigh)
Tell them now, Jakob.

He looks back at Immanuel who's attempting to maintain
balance behind their seats, practically hovering over them,
clunking his head and listening to music.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Tell them we found something and
that Suzanne isn't feeling well.

JAKOB
What did we find?

DAVID
Gah- Just say the words. That's an
order!

He goes to take control of the capsule.

Suzanne grabs his hand mid-movement.

SUZANNE
What are you doing?

JAKOB
I'm telling them you're sick!

SUZANNE
Not you!

DAVID
I'm... quarantining.

JAKOB (INTO COMMS)
Jeremy! Suzanne doesn't feel
good, and I think I'm
starting to feel... uh...
something too.

SUZANNE
You're not going to get away with
it. There's no way-

DAVID
It's about limiting who sees him.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
What the hell- what do you mean you're not feeling well?

CAPCOM (COMMS)
David, we have you entering at your original trans-lunar injection.

JAKOB
That was Jakob.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
I know! David, did you read?

DAVID
Roger that, we are all not feeling well.

CAPCOM (COMMS)
Nobody cares, guys you have to focus right now!

You're approaching orbit! Do you copy?

Suzanne is waiting for CAPCOM to finish speaking before chewing David out some more.

SUZANNE
They haven't quarantined since Nixon, Commander. We don't do that- We don't know this... guy or whatever he is.

Why should this be a secret from the public?

DAVID
If certain people knew a man was living on another celestial body they'd want to keep him here.

He outta go home.

If we keep his secret just to the agency, then there will be a chance they'll let him return on the next mission.

A beat.

Silence.

A beat.

CAPCOM (CONT'D)
*You're close to regaining
 aerodynamic controls, David.*

62

**INT. EARTH'S MESOSPHERE — COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) —
 CONTINUOUS**

David grabs a hold of his controls. Left hand's fingers
 steadying a worn-out Translational Hand Controller.

His right arm gripping tightly the finger grooves of the
 Rotational Hand Controller.

Looking out the porthole, the chilling bible black vacuum
 fades into the familiar sky blue of our atmosphere.

He rattles the right controller to gain an understanding
 where his controls is.

There's no push back at all. *Is it even on?*

A beat.

He tries again. *It loosely rattles.*

He shakes it once more... harder.

No response.

SUZANNE
 Just get us home, please.

JAKOB	CAPCOM (COMMS)
Relax, David knows what he's doing.	<i>Velocity: 36,000 feet per second. Altitude: 114,000 feet.</i>

DAVID (INTO COMMS)
 Houston, manual isn't responding.

IMMANUEL
 No, I'm still behind you, man.

Suzanne mouths for him to zip it.

DAVID
 No aerodynamic controls.

CAPCOM
 Confirm, you've lost elevon
 response?

DAVID

Negative! I've got nothing, she's not answering.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

(off to the side)

I need a new trajectory report, guys, come on, what is this?

(closer to mic)

David, your angle, again!

He plays rough with the controls, no response at all.

Suddenly — a piercing, annoying alarm sounds paired with a tiny orange light.

SUZANNE (INTO COMMS)

4-0-2 alarm.

CAPCOM (COMMS)

20 seconds til reentry.

JAKOB

What's a 4-0-2 alarm?

DAVID

I don't know!

CAPCOM (COMMS)

We are go on the 4-0-2.

Instantly, Suzanne shuts it off.

DAVID (INTO COMMS)

Still no controls. Position.

Mortified, she doesn't respond at first.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Position!

SUZANNE

90,000, down a half, 30 downrange. Pull your nose up!

CAPCOM (COMMS)

David, you're just a tad low.

DAVID

I can't!

As he speaks, he rattles the console to show her, activating a RCS SIDE THRUSTER, pushing them into a roll — rapidly increasing past one revolution per second.

Immanuel and Orpheus take damage, fortunately they are both so big there's not much room to move around.

Their rising roll rate pushes the Hermes crew near 3 g.

Each of their faces melting into their headrests as they experience severe centripetal force.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(struggling)
Activate... RCS...

Using his controllers, David steadies the Command Module, and pulls the nose of the ship up into a 40-degree angle, properly deploying the heat shield and narrowly misses being burned alive.

Immanuel watches with amazement as plasma rays streak across the portholes, unaware of the disaster evaded.

He motions to hand back the CD player to Jakob, who tell him something.

IMMANUEL
(unable to hear)
What?

Jakob pulls off one of the ears.

JAKOB
Keep it! We're about to be home
anyway.

The next track on the CD player can be heard from Immanuel's headphone.

Robotic, computerized effects lead to more synthesizers as "To The Moon & Back" by Savage Garden kicks off with a fetching rock guitar riff that could go on forever.

He's figured out how to control the volume on them, trying to drown out the compressing air molecules against the hull of the ship, casting shattering friction.

CUT TO:

63

EXT. EARTH'S STRATOSPHERE – COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) – DAY

The capsule sparks solid orange flames around the heat shield as it enters the familiar blue sky of Earth's atmosphere.

Red-and-white parachute shoot out the top, deploying three circles above it.

64 **EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN – NEAR SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND – MOMENTS
LATER**

After splashing down in the Pacific, the Command Module is hauled by a small team of Navy SEAL frogmen, who stabilize the Command Module with floatation devices.

It is hauled onto an aircraft carrier, on which the Mobile Quarantine Facility has been dusted off and is in commission once again if needed although it looks as if no one believes the astronauts until...

HARD CUT TO:

65 **EXT. USS SOMERSET – FLIGHT DECK – MOMENTS LATER**

After being netted and lugged onto the USS Somerset, a US Navy San-Antonio-class amphibious transport dock.

Waves and foam flood onto the deck as the capsule is placed slowly on a grated platform, the weight warping the metal.

After a few minutes for depressurization, all the air is then purged out the side ventilation.

The hatch of the Command Module is opened from the outside with a high-pitched hiss, revealing a team of deft frogmen and medical personnel, all wearing masks and some in PPE.

None of them were expecting anything other than regolith to come back. *All completely frozen by what they see.*

MIDPOINT

66 **INT. LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER – LUNAR SAMPLE
LABORATORY FACILITY – LATER**

LOCATION: Houston, Texas.

A team of HAZMAT suits are testing everything that touched the lunar surface - including Immanuel who is enjoying all the attention.

FLIGHT SURGEON

Don't touch anything! What is this stuff?

TECHNICIAN

Is that... blood?

FLIGHT SURGEON

We don't know that. There is no visible injury to the astronauts.

Proceeding with standard operating procedures and keeping interaction to a minimum, associates begin to take samples.

FLIGHT SURGEON (CONT'D)

Okay, everyone calm down. We will proceed with standard aseptic precautions.

TECHNICIAN

We may need to review our notes, we've never had to do this before.

FLIGHT SURGEON

Quickly. Before anything, let's grab a sample of this... stuff.

In the background, the Mobile Quarantine Facility can be seen, along with shadows of the crew attempting to leave.

FIDO

No, David! Hold it there, you're suit is covered in this stuff.

DAVID (O.S.)

Oh, come on Jeremy, we're fine.

FIDO

Don't come any closer or you will be restrained!

The door is sealed shut, cutting off any debate.

He scurries away, shooting a look at the flight surgeon that says 'good luck'.

The technicians begin to scrap off the dried blood like scabs from the suits under a harsh light.

The flight surgeon speaks into a radio:

FLIGHT SURGEON (INTO COMMS)

Alright, we're ready to make contact with the first subject.

He walks past a crowd of soldiers, doctors, technicians to a holding cell with no windows, just a giant flat screen monitoring Immanuel in a hospital gown sitting in the center.

The flight surgeon turns to a bored guard who's job is to watch the screen and ask:

FLIGHT SURGEON (CONT'D)
Who the hell is that?

CUT TO:

67

INT. LUNAR SAMPLE LABORATORY - HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS

Technicians swab the inside of his mouth, they collect his fecal matter, urine, saliva, hair, nails, skin cells, and blood.

They swab his skin for an ATP test, and all around give him a physical check-up, while also providing basic clean-up, grooming, and a short sponge bath as if he were any other patient.

TECHNICIAN
Open wide...

Immanuel opens his mouth, stretching it out.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
Say ahh...

IMMANUEL
Ahh...

The technician presses a tongue depressor against the back of Immanuel's throat, causing him to gag.

IMMANUEL (CONT'D)
What was that?!

TECHNICIAN
Testing for a gag reflex.

He picks up a disposable needle of lidocaine.

Pricks a point on Immanuel's left arm, inserting an IV into his vein.

FLIGHT SURGEON
(to his assistant)
Load up the GC-MS, we're going to start with blood.

The flight surgeon, sitting on a stool a foot from Immanuel, mad-dogging his patient through a full-face respirator. Lost in thought.

A beat. Silence.

IMMANUEL
Something bothering you?

FLIGHT SURGEON
This is a joke...

(to his assistant)

Let's get it over with.

He disconnects the IV, connects a vial, and fills it with blood.

Then feeds the vial into the gas chromatography-mass spectrometry device to test for volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds.

TECHNICIAN
(hesitant)
This... must be a faulty reading.

The flight surgeon squirms on his stool. Already tired of this.

FLIGHT SURGEON
(sighs)
Let me take a look.

Upon inspecting the machine's data, he reads it out for his patient:

FLIGHT SURGEON (CONT'D)
(reading)
Normal proteins, lipids,
carbohydrates, nucleic acids... all
normal.

(looking up)

See, told you it was all bull-

She taps the data that spooked her out.

A beat.

FLIGHT SURGEON (CONT'D)
It's reading "diethyl ether"...

TECHNICIAN
That's a big spike too. Shouldn't
he be like... jelly?

FLIGHT SURGEON
Or a gas... but... that's
impossible?

TECHNICIAN
Should we run a calibration curve?

They both take turns poking at Immanuel, who once again, has
no idea what's going on.

FLIGHT SURGEON
There's no way, it's a faulty
machine. Grab the other one from
downstairs.

TECHNICIAN
We could light his blood on fire?
That'll tell-

FLIGHT SURGEON
(cutting off)
Will you just- go get the other
one!

His radio goes off with static, then a voice asking for the
flight surgeon.

FLIGHT SURGEON (INTO COMMS) (CONT'D)
Speak.

A MAN'S VOICE (COMMS)
Composition results for the sample.

A beat.

FLIGHT SURGEON
(impatient)
And?

A MAN'S VOICE (COMMS)
*It's human - however we have no
match for any of the astronauts.*

FLIGHT SURGEON
What about the... other dude?

A MAN'S VOICE (COMMS)
*What other dude? Is there another
subject being quarantined?*

CUT TO:

68

INT. LUNAR RECEIVING LABORATORY – BOARD ROOM – MORNING

In a board room, surrounded by folding chairs and unpacked cardboard boxes, a giant transparent wall of polycarbonate.

Three holes the size of exhaust pipes are bored near the top, audio cables running through connecting to several goose-neck microphones.

On the other side of the wall, a fake living room that hasn't been updated since the 80s fully-equipped with a bathroom, small kitchen with actual food, and a few pieces of furniture.

At the post-mission press conference, the astronauts have no explanations.

This briefing for the first time in history has no press or any camera of any kind.

The entire crowd of soldiers, researchers, and administrators finally settle down. Most are wearing N95 masks even behind the panel, some are not.

A balding man with thin glass speaks into a microphone:

NASA ADMINISTRATOR

Well... which one of you would like to begin?

A beat.

The crew sit in the stiff chairs while Immanuel lays on the couch, hands behind his head.

Jakob snuffles into the mic, then decides to break the ice.

JAKOB

I wasn't there, so...

He gestures to his crewmates casually. The microphone's feedback echos.

DAVID

All we have to offer you is the truth, and this is the truth...

HARD CUT TO:

69

INT. LEEWARD POINT FIELD AIRFIELD – MOBILE QUARANTINE FACILITY – LATER

LOCATION: Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The entire half of the room is void of light, moving violently, picture frames falling off the cracking walls, wallpaper peeling and dinnerware crashing to the tiled floor.

The other side of the panel is now pressed up close against aluminum.

They have hitched the Mobile Quarantine Facility onto a semi-truck, it barely makes it down the ramp off a C-17 Globemaster III wide-body jet aircraft.

All three are immediately left quarantined, many speculate they all were infected or developed tumors from something on the surface.

Placed in the center of a windowless aircraft hanger, surrounded by military jets draped in sheets.

The unhappy crowd can be heard still outside the sealed barn doors.

The crew's in the middle of discussion.

Suzanne keeps pacing.

SUZANNE
(heated)
Yeah, no shit.

She does a crisp 180 drill spin, trying not to lose her composure.

JAKOB
They'll come around.

SUZANNE
They think we're out of our fucking minds!

That's why we're quarantined.

JAKOB
Then so is the rest of the splashdown team. Why aren't they here with us?

David joins in without facing them.

DAVID
Because they believe us... at least to an extent.

SUZANNE

Oh, yeah, sure they do.

Immanuel watches them argue, enjoying the arrangements of snacks afforded to them along with the only piece of a cake saying: Welcome Home!

His piece isn't sliced, he grabbed a handful of it and is eating from his palm.

JAKOB

They saw him, he's a real person.
Why do they still think we're
pulling a prank?

SUZANNE

They even have our suits, they were
covered in that... stuff!

DAVID

Just... think! What did we mess up,
what did we forget?

JAKOB

I swear I'm forgetting something,
but we did leave in a jam.

SUZANNE

We ran! We had a valid reason to
abort!

(deep sigh; to herself)

I should've stayed put, why did I
need a change of pace?

DAVID

Cause you were too good of a pilot.

Why promote you to Major when they
can just send you to the bottom of
the totem pole for their next grand
idea?

She gives up pacing around and squats near a bench, doubled
up in frustration.

SUZANNE

(mumbling)

Mógłbym zostać agentem wywiadu. Ale
jak miałbym pobić rekord mojego
taty? Z poziomu gruntu?

IMMANUEL

Czy więc dlatego przebyłeś tak
długą drogę? Również dla swojego
ojca?

They all stop speaking, to glare at the alien, speaking
perfect Polish.

Suzanne walks up to him, toe to toe and muscle to muscle.

SUZANNE

Co właśnie powiedziałaś?

JAKOB

Oh great, he's Polish. So, it is
all bullshit and David's just
insane.

DAVID

How do you know-

SUZANNE

(over)

How do you claim you're from the
Moon, and speak a language from
Earth?

And how did you know about my
father?

DAVID

He what?

JAKOB

Oh, share with the class,
please.

Immanuel,

SUZANNE

Już go wyprzedziłem - dawno temu.

IMMANUEL

Więc dlaczego tu jesteś?

SUZANNE

See! See! You're not from the Moon!

IMMANUEL

I never claimed I was from the
Moon.

I was a convict there.

JAKOB

You know you have the right to shut
up, man?

A beat. Awkward silence.

Suzanne pops off like a firecracker.

SUZANNE

So, what?

A dozen astronauts just forgot you
there, then brainwashed the whole
world?!

IMMANUEL

(over)

Who? No, I was banished there a
long time ago...

Can't really remember when.

After licking his fingers clean, Immanuel moves onto some
pretzels.

DAVID

Who are you with?

IMMANUEL

(mouthful)

At the moment, I'm with you.

DAVID

(tougher)

What country do you have allegiance
too?

IMMANUEL

I'm from a province called
Nazareth, I used to teach in
Capernaum...

(innocently)

Are... any of those places still
around?

DAVID

Nazareth? You mean in Israel, that
Nazareth? You're Israeli?

IMMANUEL

Israeli? No, I just told you I'm a
Nazarite.

JAKOB

That's in Israel, moron.

(MORE)

JAKOB (CONT'D)
(to the others)

He has static on the brain, I think.

SUZANNE
(heated)
You're the moron, he's lying to both of you!

Why would he be speaking Polish like my grandmother if he were Israeli?

JAKOB
Good point. They don't speak Polish.

DAVID
Shut up.

This wouldn't have anything to do with the ICJ ruling?

A beat.

IMMANUEL
The what-what?

Jakob grins, while David continues sternly:

DAVID
Where Jakey is from, South Africa, the International Court of Justice ruled that your country, Israel, committed genocide.

A beat.

IMMANUEL
What's that?

JAKOB
Mass-murder, dipshit! They killed a hundred thousand people.

Well-
DAVID

SUZANNE
Alright, lets not start this now.

JAKOB
Oh, is it against a bilateral agreement?

SUZANNE

Not like SANSA is doing anything
either, dick! They ruled, nothing
happened, like always!

DAVID

Alright, alright! Let's just-
Let's focus on the problem.

Suzanne goes back to staring at the problem - *Immanuel*.

SUZANNE

Już go wyprzedziłem - dawno temu.

They all face Immanuel, expecting a response, who's
finishing up a mouthful of peanuts.

IMMANUEL

You are all making assumptions on
where I'm from, but it was you who
picked me up.

It was you who saved me this time,
brachu.

SUZANNE

You're not my brachu, obcy.

JAKOB

We did?

Now, David looks sick. He sighs.

DAVID

We didn't though, chances are
they'll send you back where they
believe you came from.

JAKOB

Which could be another planet... or
a prison.

SUZANNE

In a foreign country too.

IMMANUEL

So, you didn't save me, you all
just accidentally found me?

JAKOB

Exactly!

IMMANUEL

Well, at least you've brought me
closer.

(MORE)

IMMANUEL (CONT'D)
Besides, can't be any worse a
dungeon than the one I was just in.

The rest are silent because they know exactly how it can be
much, much worse.

CUT TO:

70

**INT. CUBA, CAMP DELTA - ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW BOARD - THE
NEXT DAY**

In Cuba, in a mobile home, Immanuel is put on trial at Camp
Delta, a U.S. military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay
where the current Secretary of Defense, a middle-aged man in
a nice suit stands before the astronauts and their guest.

He wouldn't look a part from a news station, with graying
brown hair, gelled and slicked back.

His name is JAMESON MADS (48), and he's finishing up his
opening statements:

SECRETARY MADS
I'm not interested in how we know
you're not from the Moon...

I'm more concerned with how you
were able to convince so many
federal employees, even
contractors, that you are. What
would be the objective of such an
agenda? Hm?

Possibly corrupting our fiduciary
responsibility to control what
everyone always forgets a space
shuttle really is: a weapon of mass
destruction... and a waste of tax-
payer dollars.

The three astronauts are squinting from the lights, unsure
where all the press is, squirming in their wooden chairs.

David and Suzanne are trying to hold in their sniffing and
coughs.

JAKOB
(softly)
Wasn't he just congratulating-

SUZANNE
Shh.

Everyone keeps staring over to their far left, Immanuel is sitting taller than everyone, his chair looking like a stool, also squirming about.

He joins the others in whispering:

IMMANUEL

He talks too much.

Immanuel is fiddling with the CD payer again, pulling it from out off his pants to everyone's surprise, making the armed soldier flinch slightly.

A public defender leans in to ask one:

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Was he not searched?

GUARD

You can go touch 'em if you want.

The noisy AC unit isn't enough for the dozen or so suits in the place, everyone is sweating through their clothes and have removed their jackets.

Immanuel slips on the skinny headphones, pressing down hard onto he play button. "Crystal" by New Order begins softly.

Secretary Mads shakes his head, disappointed that the suspect concealed a music device rather than *something to escape*.

Their defense council isn't even sitting with them, instead with the Colonel.

A short woman, with a streak of silver in her hair, hugs a binder tightly, before speaking:

PUBLIC DEFENDER

We are not hear to discuss whether
this man... or thing... is guilty,
we already have the facts.

The capsule depressurized
therefore... well, y'know.

(shrugging)

What we are here to discuss is what
is to come after.

Jakob leans into Suzanne.

JAKOB

Aren't they supposed to be on our side?

SUZANNE

Will you shut up?

SECRETARY MADS

Let me be clear.

I don't care where you say he's from. I care how many people believed you. Therein lies the problem.

He gestures with his thumb at Immanuel who is absolutely dumbfounded by everything.

Suzanne is ready to explode. The Secretary notices and prods at her.

Walking up, facing her, he asks:

SECRETARY MADS (CONT'D)

Ma'am, do you actually believe your colleague's story?

She looks over at Immanuel who returns a confused glance.

SUZANNE

This man is sick and requires a doctor.

SECRETARY MADS

(chuckling)

Which one?

SUZANNE

He's... not to be anywhere near a space shuttle.

(sighs)

He is from Israel originally, send him back there.

Immanuel looks at her with hope in his eyes. *His heartstrings plucked.*

SECRETARY MADS

So, he's Israeli? One of our allies?

Why would we need to send him back?

SUZANNE

The problem is you're ignoring-

SECRETARY MADS

(interrupting)

The problem is narrative control, miss. And this isn't a debate.

There are too many people who already believe him.

David tries to calm his peer with a hand on her shoulder. *He knows what's coming.*

She shrugs him off.

SUZANNE

(snapping)

Excuse me, sir. Excuse me- I'm a Colonel.

Jakob, red-faced, scoots his chair a couple inches away from her.

SECRETARY MADS

Right...

(turning to a older man)

Not here... not for my country- one moment.

The COMMANDER OF THE JOINT TASK FORCE (56) backs off guarding Immanuel after being motioned by the Secretary for a private talk.

He's a clean-shaven man sweating bullets, takes off his thick frames to wipe the sweat off the bridge of his nose.

Although the Commander, he sports his standard US Army Combat uniform in OCP camouflage - a MP brassard on his left arm. His smile is contagious.

COMMANDER

(whispering)

So, Secretary? We can only choose one. Send him back to wherever he came from, or let him stay.

SECRETARY MADS

(nervous chuckling)

Well then, we'll send him on the next trip.

A beat.

COMMANDER

I don't mean to overstep, but the next lunar landing will be years from now. Probably a decade with the bullshit in Pasto.

SECRETARY MADS

We're sending him on the other ship.

COMMANDER

The probe? The unmanned aerobot, correct? But, that's headed in the opposite direction towards... Venus?

SECRETARY MADS

Exactly, then we will see if this thing is really human.

COMMANDER

So you actually believe this bullshit? Come on, sir, it's a joke. Has to be.

We- it's not even a ship, it's a- a drone!

SECRETARY MADS

No, obviously I don't. I'm just getting rid of the problem.

A beat. Silence.

COMMANDER

So, then you're just going to kill this man?

He needs a psych evaluation not an assassination that is likely to make him a martyr amongst all those nerds he convinced he's...

(laughing)

-from the Moon. The f- the moon, sir, I can't believe this is even a debate.

Mads attempts to walk away, the Commander grabs his arm.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Hey... we've never lost a man in space.

SECRETARY MADS

(serious)

There is no way in this world I will let that thing assimilate.

(whispering)

The US is bound by the Outer Space Treaty to clean up after itself for all space activities.

I'm preventing a planetary-protection event by sending it back where it came from.

COMMANDER

So you do believe his story?!

A beat.

SECRETARY MADS

We won't be losing a man in space. He has no ID, social, birth certificate, nothing.

He's from wherever we say- whoever we hate the most. Russia, China, Iran, Colombia.

This is the opportunity of a lifetime!

The Secretary walks away swiftly, stunning the Commander silent:

COMMANDER

(sarcastic)

And I'm glad common sense prevails once again. Christ all-mighty, help me.

One of the stand-by guards who's been in the back approaches the Commander.

MILITARY POLICE

Commander...

COMMANDER

(still heated)

What?!

(MORE)

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

(recognizes)

Oh, Johnston. What is it?

MILITARY POLICE
Gitmo called asking if the capacity
issue was addressed?

COMMANDER
Ah, shit! We're gonna have to
discharge one of the others.

He begins to turn away before the MP responds.

MILITARY POLICE
Sir...

COMMANDER
(aggravated)
Yes! Johnston, what?

A beat.

MILITARY POLICE
Which one?

The Commander stares at the MP without a clue in the world.

COMMANDER
Does it really matter?

MILITARY POLICE
Sir...

(hesitation)

The political fallout from
releasing one of the others, I
mean, sir if people found out we
let go a terrorist-

COMMANDER
Are you dumb or just new, Johnston?
The other kind of discharge...
let's get this over with.

MILITARY POLICE
Oh...

(expressionless)

(MORE)

MILITARY POLICE (CONT'D)
 Why is he not being sent to another
 prison, save the boys at Gitmo the
 digging and lye? Sir.

COMMANDER
 Because he'll have rights, then. Do
 what I say, officer.

In agreement with the opposition, the high court decides to
 send Immanuel back into space via a planetary probe/aerobot
 launched by NASA and the Saudi Space Agency headed for Venus
 despite the fact that Immanuel isn't even from Venus nor the
 Moon originally.

71 **INT. JAMES S. BRADY PRESS BRIEFING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE -
 MORNING**

LOCATION: Washington, D.C., United States.

The PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (78) is concluding a
 press conference on the topic of yesterday's events.

The man has seen better days.

His receding hairline was covered by his tousled wirey
 graying hair.

A reporter in stilettos and red lipstick sporting a two-
 piece suit asks:

REPORTER
 The entire world is looking for
 answers on this Immanuel character-

PRESIDENT
 (interrupting)
 All these rumors are simply that:
 rumors. I won't even dignify that
 with a response.

There is no alien in our country,
 we have captured all recordings
 from the journey and have concluded
 that this rumor, was just some
 bedtime story for kids.

JUMP CUT TO:

72 **EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - STREETS - LATER**

LOCATION: Miami-Dade County, United States.

On the street interviews with commoners, many speculate he is being sent to Earth's sister planet to test the conditions and environment while others hope it destroys the wannabe human.

An older man shares his theory:

PASSERBYER

Even if he is real, we don't need anymore people.

This country is far too crowded, send him elsewhere.

REPORTER

Why do you think they chose Venus?

PASSERBYER

To light the trash on fire-

JUMP CUT TO:

73

EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - SCHOOLYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A fenced in yard for a private school near a busy street, the students just getting out.

Three schoolboys, two in the middle of a wrestling move, respond loudly.

SCHOOLBOY

I don't really mind, the more the merrier-

ANOTHER SCHOOLBOY

(over)

He doesn't look like an alien anyway.

He shares a nasty look while his friend holds up bunny-ears.

JUMP CUT TO:

74

EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - METROPOLITAN AREA - SUNDOWN

Before a sunset, tired shoppers quickly evade strip malls in their cars.

A mother holding two adolescents from running into the street.

MOTHER

We don't want him here, he should go back where ever 'it' is from.

REPORTER

So, do you believe this alien story?

MOTHER

Of course not, he's just another looney-bin!

But if he insists on us identifying him as an alien, well...

It cuts to B-roll of the coast before she can continue.

BACK TO:

75

INT. CAMP DELTA (GUANTÁNAMO BAY) – PRISON CELL – NIGHT

Immanuel lays in a man-made prison cell, stretched over a firm mattress only half his height.

He's wearing an all-white inmate uniform.

He's trying to sleep, but something is bothering him.

CHOIR (V.O.)

(in the distance)

Immanuel! Immanuel!

(incredibly close)

Immanuel!

The choir transforms into a lone, familiar haunting voice. It sounds like they're kissing his ear.

ANGEL (V.O.)

You'll be joining them soon.

Shooting awake, a new voice startles him.

GUARD (O.S.)

Trays! Trays! Come get your slop, you pigs!

A plastic-wrapped lunch tray slides on the ground from the gap under the door.

A round paper plate consisting of a mysterious puréed protein, unseasoned rice and a single biscuit made from a powder.

Immanuel shuts his eyes, drifting back to sleep.

UNKNOWN (V.O.)

He brought me out into a broad
place; he rescued me, because he
delighted in me.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

*Transmission ceased. Telemetry not
found.*

He looks outside the sliver of window he gets. Watching the
day being swallowed by the night.

On his tip-toes, he can see the crawler-transporter rolling
out a rocket, with a windowless capsule attached parallel.

It chugs along, slowly marching down, as loud as a tank,
leaving a stench of Diesel.

As the light is drained from the sky, stars glittering like
clusters of jewels become visible.

Facing west, the Evening Star shines brighter than all the
rest. It appears as a harsh spotlight in the dark, deep
purple sky.

ACT THREE

76

INT. CAMP DELTA (GUANTÁNAMO BAY) - PRISON CELL - THE NEXT MORNING

Immanuel is already awake in his cell, having slept only a
little. He's still wearing what they gave him, white shorts
and a white collared shirt which he's left unbuttoned.
Everything is stained with sweat.

A guard can be heard walking up with a large bundle of keys
on his hip, two magazines and a Walther Tac R1 rifle
strapped across his chest.

He's wearing a Red Sox baseball cap and a lightweight
bullet-proof vest.

He peeks around the corner slowly. Immanuel has already
noticed.

IMMANUEL

Mornin'.

Rather surprised, the guard puts up a professional front. He
looks like he's been up all night.

GUARD

Alright, 0-0-1. On your feet.

Immanuel rises from his cot, stretching out his back.

They stare at each other for a few seconds, the guard shrugs and motions with his hands.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Pack up.

Immanuel looks around his empty cell, then back at the guard cockeyed.

IMMANUEL

Pack what up?

The guard sighs. He's already tired.

GUARD

Face the wall and slowly walk backwards.

Immanuel does as so, the guard pulls him in closer by the palms to tightly cuff him, then speaks into his radio:

GUARD (INTO COMMS) (CONT'D)

I've got number one, bringing him to transport.

His cell door is automatically opened.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Today is your lucky day. We're sending you home.

Immanuel is led down a gravel walkway, walls covered in condensation.

The guard walks his inmate with no issues down the whole path, fathers and sons in their own cells watch from their own set of bars.

They pass a man who speaks the guard's language.

PRISONER

You're... you guys aren't actually going to send him?

You must be joking, he didn't do anything. He's just crazy.

GUARD

Shut up!

They keep walking, Immanuel glances over at him with a proud smirk that could only say one thing: "Thanks, anyway."

PRISONER

You can't just kill a man!

GUARD

Mind your business!

Moon-boy is having himself one last trip.

CUT TO:

77

EXT. CAMP DELTA (GUANTÁNAMO BAY) - FIELDS - DAY

Immanuel is brought into the harsh heat, a decent distance away from the prison cells. Fields of scorched flatland.

Two other guards have set their rifles leaned up against a tin chair.

Nothing ever grows in the fields for it never sees any shade.

The escorting guard, yanks on the cuffs to halt him, then takes them off.

GUARD

Alright, condemned, we've got another test for you to prove the truth.

IMMANUEL

Sounds wonderful, I have nothing to-

Cutting him off, one of the resting guards slides a wooden baton from his right sleeve into his grip, smacking Immanuel's left premolar out his mouth.

It skids across the barren hamada, slipping through a massive mud crack. *Disappearing.*

Watching it fall, Immanuel sticks out his hands to stand back up - he's frozen by the sight of blood, dripping slowly from his nose.

SECOND GUARD

Come on, make him bleed!

THIRD GUARD

I did. See?

The guard who escorted him unfolds his arms and saunters behind Immanuel.

He draws a beige Sig Sauer M17 from his hip, pressing the barrel into Immanuel's left cheek- then *shoots*.

It exits out the other side. Blood pools in the inside of his cheek.

Immanuel is practically water boarded in his own blood.

GUARD

Like that.

Immanuel flails around, painting the arid terrain.

Iron and ether forms ferrocene, releasing a strong camphor scent.

THIRD GUARD

He reeks of liquor, where'd they find this one?

SECOND GUARD

From the Moon, remember?

They snicker and surround the disoriented prisoner.

The guard who shot him pinches at his wound, redirecting his attention.

GUARD

Who sent you?

Drooling strings of blood, Immanuel wriggles out his grip and turns to face the first guard, who walks up and...

CRACK! The reinforced polymer stock of his rifle almost splits open Immanuel hip bone.

Down on all fours, the third guard takes a pair of surgical scissors, cuts off his now blood-red shirt and shorts.

As each fragment is peeled away from his sticky blood-stained skin, thousands of dead skin cells collect around him like a chalk outline.

All the guards take a moment to exchange glances after seeing Immanuel's horribly-healed scars and former lacerations.

He was given no underwear, and now bleeds over his naked ungroomed body.

SECOND GUARD

One last time. Where are you from?

Looking up, gargling up a response:

IMMANUEL

I... sure ain't from this place.

One last crack, an uppercut from the second guard's baton sends him onto his back, scraping skin and nearly biting his tongue off.

SECOND GUARD

Well... now he can't talk!

They all laugh as Immanuel spits everything out.

SECOND GUARD (CONT'D)

Since you can no longer object, we have a new pair of clothes for 'ya.

Pulling a wrapped up item from a shopping bag. They unwrap baby blue paper revealing a velvet-colored strapless cocktail dress.

THIRD GUARD

A little going-home present!

Ripping off the remaining pieces of uniform, stuck to his skin from all the blood.

The pack of guards laugh hysterically as they pull on the tight dress over his broad shoulders, two holding his arms back.

Immanuel doesn't really resist, the beating has finally worn him down.

GUARD

Come on, don't be a bitch!

SECOND GUARD

Will it even fit?

Once the dress is on enough to visually know it is a dress, *they snap a photo with a smartphone.*

They each take turns posing with the inmate, before dragging his exhausted body across the rough surface towards an unbranded 1976 MCI MC-8 Crusader.

CUT TO:

INT. DOUGLAS C-47 PLANE — ABOVE THE CARIBBEAN SEA — DAY

Once loaded onto a Douglas C-47 plane, Immanuel is the only one seated.

A guard armed with a Sig Sauer M400 rifle rested in one hand, holding onto a handle with the other.

He's standing in between two encased Pratt & Whitney R-1830 Twin Wasp engines.

Looking out the small porthole with child-like wonder.

Beaten, bruised and covered in dry blood, Immanuel watches the surface transform into crashing waves over the *glowing turquoise water of the Caribbean Sea*.

IMMANUEL

(to himself; weakly)

Wow... what a view.

The guard keeps staring at him, then releases the rifle butt to pull out a wallet.

With one hand, he slips a small paper out just enough to see it.

It is a photograph of his daughter, with missing front teeth and a wooden rosemary around her neck.

He sighs deeply. Then curses to himself.

GUARD

Hey!

Immanuel immediately turns to look at him.

GUARD (CONT'D)

I...

He pushes his rifle past his hip, then widens his stance to find a laptop bag.

The guard slips out a familiar silver CD player, with new scuffs.

He throws it at Immanuel who doesn't move a muscle, the plastic player hits his shins. The headphones trail behind still connected.

Leaning forward to pick them up, Immanuel then coughs out a smile at the guard who has already turned away.

Pressing play, "スポーツマン - Sports Men" by Haruomi Hosono kicks off with synthetic flutes.

Immanuel goes back to his view. He stays entranced by the sight for the whole seven-and-a-half hour flight to Pasto, Colombia.

JUMP CUT TO:

79 **EXT. PASTO, COLOMBIA – CSC SPACE CENTER – SUNSET**

LOCATION: Pasto, Narino, Colombia.

At the newly constructed CSC Space Center funded by the US in collaboration with the Colombia Space Commission.

Immanuel is being strapped into the planetary probe with ratchet straps.

A roll cage and foot rest, it is the world's worst ride.

80 **EXT. INTERPLANETARY SPACE – APPROACHING VENUS – NIGHT**

The capsule is headed into Venus' exosphere. Faster than a bullet, a streak of light flies past.

And then another.

They were the DAVINCI and VERITAS, NASA'S EXPLORATORY PROBES seated in Venus' orbit.

A distant star shines brightly, always in the distance.

It is too far to identify.

Looking back where he came from, Earth shrinks eventually becoming a distant star itself.

81 **EXT. VENUS' EXOSPHERE – MOMENTS LATER**

As the sun burns Immanuel's backside, it reveals massive asteroids... some stretching miles.

The trajectory path is perfectly planned to go right through Venus' co-orbital asteroids classified as Near-Earth Objects.

Once transient, they are now locked in retrograde configuration, moving in sync with the planet they appear to be orbiting, however they are actually orbiting the Sun.

However there are much more than anticipated.

There is over forty of them, forming an illusion of a intricate ecosystem.

They look like gray sea sponges, upon closer inspection, they share similar craters to those on the Moon.

Each one projects gases as they heat up that are ionized by ultraviolet radiation.

The asteroids don't have their own nucleus' however reflect a zodiacal dust ring around each.

One is so big, it has its own Moons.

Some of the centaurs from the outer planets have found themselves lost in Venus' orbit, becoming one with the solar system's dust collector.

Immanuel shields his eyes from harsh light, covering them completely.

From its orbit, the Venusian storms ripple like a fabric.

No borders, only heat and dust blended together.

82

EXT. VENUS' MESOSPHERE – LATE NIGHT

Hell isn't a place rather a state of being, Immanuel enters after being wrongfully sent to Venus.

Despite common understanding, the highest layer of Venus' atmosphere, the MESOSPHERE, plummets in temperature.

[NOTE: It can easily pass -175 degrees Celsius.]

A parachute coated in polytetrafluoroethylene explodes from out the top.

It never deploys fully before being eviscerated by the corrupt, corrosive atmosphere.

Despite the freezing temperatures at the tip of Venus' cloud deck, sulfuric acid is highly concentrated and remains a supercooled liquid.

The acid droplets never crystallize but in certain areas appears thick and viscous.

Many of these droplets will follow Immanuel into the thermosphere where they quickly evaporate.

Then...

Abruptly, what looks like lightning seeps through the opaque gas clouds, its path masking their silver lining.

It dips and slowly disperses into the dense fluid atmosphere like oil in water.

They form a planet-wide continuous wall of smooth filaments and horizontal bands.

A crashing, crushing thunder is felt in his bones.

83 EXT. VENUS' THERMOSPHERE — CONTINUOUS

Rapidly, it becomes scorching hot even for him, and incredibly loud, you can hear several active volcanoes rumbling nearby.

It is pitch black until...

84 EXT. VENUS' TROPOSPHERE — SUNRISE

A slow, dim hellish sunlight diffuses through out the dense clouds on Venus taking days.

It illuminates a dry, rigid terrestrial surface roughly hotter than an oven, suffocated by a mustard-tinted sulfuric acid glow.

The constant noise is identical to a violent ocean.

Feeling the grumble of the crust openings in your breastbone as they launch magma into the sky.

All across the surface in the viewable distance, volcanoes cover every inch.

[NOTE: Venus has over 1,600 volcanoes.]

When the Athena probe drops through the clouds of Venus with crepuscular rays, the cameras die one by one.

The entire frame and all the probe's instruments become a gelatin, softening to the point where Immanuel's tight grip squeezes the

Wind whistling and metal screaming as the probe's shell warps. Then suddenly muffled as if submerged underwater.

The ceaseless winds going through atmospheric super-rotation feel like a smothering blanket with pressure equivalent to a hurricane.

Inside the capsule, Immanuel is still alive.

His cotton dress has disintegrated a long time ago leaving him completely naked.

The capsule's artificial operator cries out before succumbing to the pressure.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
*Temperature exceeding design
limits. Structural failure
imminent.*

Immanuel laughs quietly. He recognizes the place.

As the probe disintegrates, Immanuel collapses onto the rocky surface.

85

EXT. VENUS - BETA REGIO HIGHLANDS - NEAR THE THEIA MONS

In the surface haze, his figure steps out into the dark furnace. He does not burn. *Venus was never just a planet.*

It is a cosmic drain, a heat sink - a dumping ground where solar systems send their excess entropy - suffering, violence, and death.

IMMANUEL
(mumbling)
This place reeks.

Not too far from him, a giant crater has blackened and burnt the basaltic rock.

His eyes are red, the environment is incredibly dusty, dry and has a similar effect to being in a pressure cooker.

Completely blinded temporarily, a voice appears:

UNKNOWN (V.O.)
Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are
Mine.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Transmission completed. Respond to-

(in a feminine voice)

Dad?

Before Immanuel does anything he notices someone watching him. *A surprise even for him.*

Death appears beside him. Not as a skeleton, their silhouette is made of intense pressure and sparkling noise arose from the heat haze.

Like ripples in water or the sonar in a submarine visualized on a monitor.

Their voice is familiar - it's the Angel who haunts Immanuel!

A proper lethargic, androgynous crooning echos from everywhere except the source.

DEATH

Welcome back.

Staying for good this time?

IMMANUEL

Never.

DEATH

You're optimistic. Considering your odds are one less than one.

IMMANUEL

You're here too!

DEATH

I'm visiting. You're the one who's stuck...

(looking him up and down)

And once again nude as well.

IMMANUEL

No, I'll find my way back - I always bounce back.

Death's figure forms fingers to twiddle. Clasping their hands in front like a nun.

DEATH

Yes, unfortunately, you do.

Well... welcome back.

IMMANUEL

You said that already.

What is this place anyways? Really?

DEATH

This... is my heat sink, friend.
Well, at least, one of them.

Particularly this solar system's
dust collector.

He looks around at the lava plains and massive volcanoes
drenching the scorched rock with more.

IMMANUEL

It's hot. Is this Hell?

DEATH

Hell is just a state of being, not
a place.

Besides, you think Venus is bad,
you could've been sent the other
direction.

The way the ice under pressure
becomes scalding without ever
breaking shape is... quite the
sight.

IMMANUEL

You talk too much.

Death isn't fazed by Immanuel, more tired than anything.

DEATH

(deep sigh)

And you, somehow have returned here
with even more blunt force trauma.

Why don't you just stay? I won't
beat you... no need to.

They motion for Immanuel to walk with them.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Ara is young. One day it too will
also become a heat sink.

IMMANUEL

You'll reap my entire home
eventually?

DEATH

Well... the universe continues to
expand thus sooner or later it'll
reach a thermodynamic
equilibrium... once we reach
maximum entropy.

It is destiny as they say.

But humanity is unusual...

Humans fight entropy like a
disease. Something in the Vitamin C
perhaps...

They care about nonsense even when
it is proven pointless. That is why
you were sent.

(MORE)

DEATH (CONT'D)

Not to save humanity, but to
observe them.

IMMANUEL

You... sent me? But I was picked up
on accid-

Death laughs softly over him.

DEATH

Do you really still believe in
accidents?

This solar system and its planetary
alignment was designed as one of
many collections of components for
one of many parallaxes confined in
this universe.

That pesky celestial body isn't
even a hundredth the size of back
home.

You're just another filter feeder.
Completely indifferent to me.

Immanuel raises his eyebrows, not emotional but curious.

IMMANUEL

Wow... you just have a way of
words, don't you?

Death waves him off, then wags their fingers, propelling the
Venusian air into his face.

DEATH

Of course, you don't understand.
Because you're just like them:
sensitive.

Allow me to simplify-

IMMANUEL

Please!

DEATH

Everything and everyone is
interdependent.

That includes all bodies: living,
celestial and heavenly...

Death nods upwards.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Do you see that star out there?

They point at the opaque mustard sky.

IMMANUEL

No?

Death waves both their hands, draining the atmosphere's color into a monochrome starry night.

DEATH

How about now?

IMMANUEL

Now, I see a lot of stars. And can breathe better too!

DEATH

See the one twitching up there?

In the middle of the gallery of varying sized stars, a short movement appears.

Death rambles on, still staring up, as the sky muddies up again.

DEATH (CONT'D)

That... is 524522 2002ve, or well, what you people call it.

A meteor that has been in Venus' orbit for thousands of years.

Yet, it wasn't until thirty-one years ago that it was discovered.

Makes you wonder what else may be out there, that's been there the whole time.

All it takes is one witness for something to be true.

Death keeps moving, levitating over the rocks as Immanuel leaps from plate to plate - struggling.

CUT TO:

86

**INT. JET PROPULSION LABORATORY - SPACE FLIGHT SUPPORT
BUILDING - BASEMENT - AFTERNOON**

At the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, David and Suzanne are devouring food in Styrofoam shells.

David is eating much, picking at the threads of a bandage.

SUZANNE
You think he's dead?

DAVID
He survived the vacuum of space,
so... I'm not sure.

SUZANNE
I was talking about Jake.

DAVID
He'll be fine, he's a national
hero... even if he's deported.

SUZANNE
So are you.

DAVID
Don't feel like much of a hero.

She tries speaking with a mouthful.

SUZANNE
We tried.

DAVID
I just can't stop thinking what
else we could've done.

SUZANNE
What's the point in doing that to
yourself?

DAVID
(ignoring)
And if we ever mention what we
witnessed, we'll be labeled section
eight.

SUZANNE
Oh, they'll never send us back up
there! Our opportunity has passed.

He goes back to picking at a worn-out bandage on his finger,
pressing the peeling adhesive back in place.

Then snarls out of disgust.

DAVID
We failed.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
Out of all our circumstances, we
came up empty-handed. They'll never
send us back.

SUZANNE
You want to go back.? After all
this?

DAVID
We have to fix this.

She practically chokes.

SUZANNE
We?

DAVID
Oh, come on, Sue-

SUZANNE
I have a wife and two little ones
back home, cowboy.

DAVID
I'm sure Elaine is fine taking the
kids to the lunapark or whatever.

SUZANNE
The lunapark? Really? And you know
Elaine! No, she's not.

DAVID
So, that's it? You're gonna let
them send back our precious cargo
into that hell pit?

SUZANNE
It wasn't my order, Captain!

And he was not just precious cargo!
He was alive! Alien or not.

David backs down, defeated.

Suzanne joins him in silence.

A beat.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
What else could we have done? What
can be done?

His eyes scan the room as if searching for an answer.

A moment of pure silence before the AC duct begins rattling as pressure builds up - automatically turned on for the night.

DAVID
You think he's dead?

SUZANNE
(sarcastic)
I don't even remember his name.

David doesn't laugh.

She shrugs, and looks off.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Davey, let's be honest... being
dead is a whole lot better than
where that probe is now.

BACK TO:

87

EXT. VENUS - BETA REGIO HIGHLANDS - COAST - MOMENTS LATER

Death and Immanuel stroll past plateaus, leading to underneath a rocky cliffside succumbs to the millions of pounds of pressure, breaking apart into a powder.

DEATH
Anything else you wish to discuss?

Immanuel takes a handful of the volcanic dust, letting it fall out like sand in an hourglass.

IMMANUEL
It's so strange, how you're always
entering during my most vulnerable
moments...

Almost like you need me...

DEATH
(stifling a chuckle)
Don't over share, please and thank
you.

Immanuel steps up, jetting his smile into the face of Death.

They have no humanizing facial features, only a silhouette of static, dust and the haze of heat.

IMMANUEL
Face it!

(MORE)

IMMANUEL (CONT'D)

If I'm so insignificant then how
come you sent me back home?

DEATH

I didn't send you back home because
I have a heart.

I used you for a report - were you
not listening?

What- what did I just tell you?

IMMANUEL

What am I supposed to report to
you?

DEATH

That even if I sent the son of man
back to where he came, they would
just send him back to me.

IMMANUEL

They sent me here to die.

A series of volcanic eruptions cuts him off.

DEATH

But you can't... die?

IMMANUEL

They didn't know that.

A beat.

DEATH

You literally hitchhiked on their
spacecraft from the Moon, a
humanoid like yourself.

And they actually thought they
could kill you?

IMMANUEL

Yeah.

A beat.

Awkward silence.

Death is unsure what to say.

DEATH

Hm. Well, that sucks.

IMMANUEL

What do you care, you got what you wanted. I'll rot here for the rest of my life.

DEATH

I don't care, you're correct. That includes keeping you here.

You're just here, one of many sacrifices I'm willing to make to prove a point.

IMMANUEL

I'll make sure to be extra annoying then.

DEATH

(sighs)

Even if I wanted to send you back, they'll just send you back to me.

Besides, how would I go about it?

(dry; sarcastic)

Oh, step right up. I have a plus one for a commercial spaceflight.

IMMANUEL

You literally just changed the sky! What do you mean?

DEATH

Yes, but I prefer this planet much more than yours. I have no reason to leave.

You'll just have to wait.

IMMANUEL

Wait for what?

DEATH

Nothing, just wait, you'll be here forever.

Sorry if I wasn't clear. What... did you think there'd be some loophole?

(near-laughing)

Plenty of time to grow up here.

Immanuel literally walks right through Death, feeling his arm hairs singe.

He notices something.

Death is stunned by the audacity.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Or you can just walk away, sure
that works too.

IMMANUEL

My sword!

DEATH

Your what?

IMMANUEL

The Mosaic sword, it's right here -
did I leave this last time I was
sent here?

DEATH

(disappointed)

Really?

A giant once-rainbow crystallite sword that looks more like
a satellite can be seen not too far from where they are.

It glows with radiation, emitting its own heat shimmer along
the entire blade.

Its colors look faded almost pastel *but that is how they
appear in this atmosphere.*

He tries to pull it out of the molten basaltic rock to no
avail. *Not even a budge.*

With some more momentum...

The sword finally gives way, sending Immanuel flying
backwards.

He lifts it up revealing only the handle with the blade
sheared off.

IMMANUEL

Oh, man.

DEATH

I hope that wasn't your ticket out
of here, magic man.

Dropping the useless sword, he snaps back:

IMMANUEL

They're called magicians, and no...
it wasn't.

DEATH

And they actually put their faith
in you, wow.

IMMANUEL

So, you've been here this entire
time? It's like the both of us were
in prison.

DEATH

Prison?!

I've been working hard to terraform
this planet.

IMMANUEL

But why? You're... death?

DEATH

Yes, your eyes still work.

Death requires life to begin with,
I can't turn nothing into nothing.

Not that this place is for
humans...

Death waves a lethargic arm to point to the Sun. It
continues to rise.

DEATH (CONT'D)

For instance, I evaporated all the
water. Now look at it... nice and
dry!

IMMANUEL

Don't you ever get lonely?

A beat.

DEATH

Don't you?

Immanuel has to think about it.

IMMANUEL

I'm not alone, though. Even without
the telemetry.

Death scratches their neck.

A beat.

DEATH

How so?

IMMANUEL

I can always count on you to
someday show up.

DEATH

Even if it means never seeing your
daddy again?

A beat. Silence.

Death struck a chord. Immanuel drops his grin.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Too soon? So sorry I thought you
knew.

IMMANUEL

Knew what?

DEATH

No man shall see Him and live.

Immanuel turns away to think about those words.

Faced away, his upper lip snarls. He turns with a forced
grin.

IMMANUEL

Then, I'll see both of you someday.
Won't that be fun?

Death stares at him.

DEATH

Maybe... maybe I'll kill his
firstborn for their transgressions,
the fruit of his body for the sin
of their souls?

Immanuel replies with a shrug that says "whatever".

Death continues:

DEATH (CONT'D)

Maybe daddy doesn't love you?

That cuts deeper than intended.

Immanuel tries to brush it off.

DEATH (CONT'D)

How long has it been since you've
really talked?

The inside of his mouth is burned numb with every breathe he takes in, instinctively over-salivating and instantly drying up.

It's almost too dry to sputter out a response. He is practically whispering:

IMMANUEL

I've... lost count a long time ago.

DEATH

There's that creaturely love. Don't you have any self-respect? You used to be a real go-getter.

Immanuel shrugs.

DEATH (CONT'D)

This is a toxic relationship,
you're chasing someone who doesn't
want you.

Immanuel is overflowed with frustration. He rubs his red eyes, exhaling slowly.

Slowly, he lets out a wheezing laugh.

IMMANUEL

Well, friend...

So are you.

He smiles with a sigh as Death begins to wander away without any expression, hands behind their back, taking a stroll and poking at rigid rocks as if it were beach sand.

DEATH

Well, I'm going to go.

Don't really care about this
anymore to be frank.

Besides, you are the one I'll never
reap. Something you will regret.

So, I'll let you keep your hope...
while you still have it.

The inferior mirage causing Immanuel to see Death,
dissipates into its environment within a blink of an eye.

He is left alone in the elements, scanning his entire environment that is destructive and more anti-life than anyplace on Earth.

The heat is almost three times that of a pizza oven.

Completely alone, and awake, he starts to speak aloud.

IMMANUEL

Respond to Dad.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Begin message.

IMMANUEL

Hey, it's... been a while I just wanted to make sure you were good and uhm...

You'd never believe where I was, until I was sent back to you know where.

But I was back home for the first time in a couple millennia.

She's filthy but still has that old charm to her. Out of all the sights, man, I wish I could've seen you.

(tearing up)

Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me... I-

OPERATOR (V.O.)

(over)

Message capacity reached. Send message?

IMMANUEL

(defeated)

Yeah, sure, whatever. Send it.

Interrupting Immanuel's loneliness, the cylindrical aerobot named ANVIL () shines an orange beam of floodlights off the underside of panels, stretching out like the wings of a pterodactyl.

The panels power the drone's systems through thermochemical solar energy absorbed from the atmosphere.

A stream of converted sulfuric acid acts as its propulsion, like an exploration submarine.

[NOTE: It also powers the drone's systems through thermochemical solar energy absorbed from the atmosphere.]

It bobs back and forth riding on the translucent yet apparent heat haze, a shimmering blur of visual light as some sort of buoy.

Immanuel has an idea to widen his eyes, reviving his hope.

88

INT. EARTH-MOON LAGRANGE POINT L2 - COMMAND MODULE (HERMES)
- (FLASHBACK)

Back in the cockpit, traveling back to Earth, the crew is in the middle of toying with Orpheus.

SUZANNE

I thought the next flyby was going to Venus?

DAVID

The ANVIL probe is already on Venus and will be picked up a decade from now.

SUZANNE

If it still exists.

JAKOB

Can we have some hope, Sue?

[NOTE: Hopefully being the first time we've brought back a piece of our sister planet.]

BACK TO:

89

EXT. VENUS - BETA REGIO HIGHLANDS - COAST

He no longer has any fear and begins to explore the rocky plateaus of Venus's equator, as the sunrise intensifies - illuminating the surface as much as a gloomy day on Earth.

He has something to wait for, for once he actually has hope.

IMMANUEL

Well, ANVIL, I think I've heard it all but I'll stay with you, in case you get lonely anyways. If that's okay with you.

The machine is in the middle of scanning the area for digging with a built-in excavation bucket, opening a lit compartment with an automatic sluice valve, built to only open when it identifies certain properties.

It runs into Immanuel, scanning his entire body, then attempting to dig up the ground he's standing on, hitting the bucket teeth on his bare feet.

IMMANUEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but bringing you to life here would just be inhumane.

CUT TO:

90

INT. JET PROPULSION LABORATORY - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

LOCATION: La Cañada Flintridge, California, United States.

Jakob barges into the Director's Office with an assistant in heels running after him.

The MISSION DIRECTOR (42) is a former Captain in the US Air Force still sporting a crew-cut.

His baritone voice could command a whole auditorium.

DIRECTOR

Oh my God- Not you again, this one on the rag-

JAKOB

I know you think I'm insane!

DIRECTOR

Absolutely.

JAKOB

But we can't send this probe to Saturn. Any other probe just not this one, please.

I understand you don't see what I see but it is sentient.

(tearing up)

As a scientist, I cannot allow you to simply destroy this... this... miracle of God to be honest, sir.

DIRECTOR

As the Mission Director, Jakob, you are outside your jurisdiction.

Get on your flight and leave.

(getting heated)

You know what, that orbiter cost us over one billion dollars.

Seriously, consider therapy, or ketamine, just... get out of my office!

In fact, we have tests you need to-
Standing with confidence.

JAKOB

(over)

So, you're gonna send out a sentient being to die? Just like Immanuel.

DIRECTOR

(yelling)

That wasn't my decision!

And you actually believe his story?!

You need a psych eval- you were on the Hermes! You outta know!

JAKOB

Whatever, hope there's a hell for you.

DIRECTOR

Boy, there goes your career too. A real professional, asshole.

As he leaves with his *tail tucked between his legs*, the director gives one last piece of advice.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

(deep sigh)

You should be grateful.

We gave you a chance, made you the first of your nation.

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

If you have a problem with what we
do with our tax-payers dollars then
go back to Johannesburg or wherever
it is you come from.

Jakob looks at the director, with a look at whim's end.

JAKOB

You know what?

(chuckling over his
words; unsure)

Your country sucks!

He storms out leaving his office door wide open.

DIRECTOR

What did you say? The hell did you
say?! You wimp!

I won't be intimidated- the US
won't be intimidated by mentally-
ill crypto-terrorists...

Yeah, that's right. Walk away.

Jakob pokes his head back into view.

Doesn't respond. Neither does the Mission Director.

Jakob stomps away loudly yet quickly.

JUMP CUT TO:

91

**INT. JET PROPULSION LABORATORY - SPACE FLIGHT SUPPORT
BUILDING - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Back in the BASEMENT at night with bright LEDs illuminating
a dusty desk that has been down there since the Gemini
program, complete with a working Commodore 64, radio
communications and a switchboard.

Jakob is just using it for space to hold his beefy tactical
laptop.

His crewmates are in casual clothes, stuffing their faces
with take-out.

DAVID

Told you not to-

JAKOB
(over)
Shut up.

Jakob also has set up a vocal microphone so they can speak to someone...

They just establish connection when...

ORPHEUS (COMMS)
No... down-link...

Immediately trying to activate his microphone on the computer, Jakob finally responds:

JAKOB (INTO COMMS)
Orpheus! Do you read me?

Static, then silence.

A beat.

Cutting in with a high-pitched tone.

ORPHEUS (COMMS)
Bare-ly.

Jakob takes a deep breath, **satisfied** then somber.

CUT TO:

92 **EXT. INTERPLANETARY SPACE - NEAR IAPETUS - SAME TIME**

Saturn's moon Iapetus flies past without a sound, faster than a bullet, only a flicker of light.

Orpheus reaches a velocity higher than the Hermes.

93 **EXT. INTERPLANETARY SPACE - APPROACHING SATURN - CONTINUOUS**

Orpheus has almost approached Saturn, heading into it's rings.

BOULDERS OF ICE darkened with methane and carbon dioxide, they almost obscure the entire view.

[NOTE: Some are as big as cars, others have a radius as big as half-a-mile.]

94 **EXT. SATURN'S EXOBASE - NEAR THE ENCKE DIVISION - CONTINUOUS**

The outline of the rings cast a dark shadow across Saturn.

Entering into the first layer, Saturn's gravity is similar to Earth's, resulting in a freefall as the thermosphere begins to fade into existence.

95 **EXT. SATURN'S THERMOSPHERE – HYDROGEN/HELIUM CLOUDS – CONTINUOUS**

The first layer are blinding white clouds of ammonia crystals ten times the size of ORPHEUS.

Orpheus reads off a temperature reading:

ORPHEUS
-176 de-grees Cel-si-us.

96 **EXT. SATURN'S MESOSPHERE – FLUID MOLECULAR HYDROGEN CLOUDS – CONTINUOUS**

The clouds transform into a dark rustic ammonium hydrogen sulfide and ammonium sulfide.

Immense pressure attempts to cave in Orpheus, but his tough spherical design only leaves a few dents.

[NOTE: The sunlight cannot penetrate this far, as the light is drained.]

Using the iris of its eye, Orpheus flicks on a light.

After a brief exposure blindness, there is a visual that Orpheus identifies:

ORPHEUS
The wind. It's... pick-ing up. I
can't-

Orpheus is flown around winds over 1,000 mph. It takes a few more dents as it spirals into a roll.

Pressure and temperature continually increasing as Orpheus descends.

97 **EXT. SATURN'S STRATOSPHERE – CONTINUOUS**

It is pitch black, louder than nuclear bombs, Orpheus has no idea what direction it is facing only knowing for certain it's still falling.

Abruptly, thunder – then lightning *brightens up the exosphere* allowing Orpheus to see more dark ice clouds, no surface in sight.

It is able to read the temperature:

ORPHEUS
100 de-grees... Cel-si-us.

[NOTE: The pressure at this layer is over tenfold Earth's atmosphere at sea level.]

Orpheus looks deflated, like a empty juice box.

The clouds stabilize, temperatures increase rapidly.

Orpheus cannot read it anymore, its circuits have taken too much damage.

Lighting strikes nearby!

It illuminates the area for a second, then fades back to black.

A glimpse of something moving, a winding serpentine body with millions of suspended filamentous proboscises is briefly seen, disappearing within the thick clouds.

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)
What... was that?

[NOTE: It is unsure whether they are only proboscises or incredibly long eyestalks. They are aloft with a weaker gravitational pull.]

The aperture of Orpheus's camera lens widen.

98

INT. SATURN – HYDROGEN/HELIUM OCEAN – CONTINUOUS

Once its light adjusts, now knowing which way it's facing, Orpheus realizes its submerged in a OCEAN OF HYDROGEN AND HELIUM, liquefied under the immense pressure.

Jakob sheds a tear, his crewmates are revealed to be sitting next to him, listening to everything, drinking tall canned IPAs while the communications with Orpheus diminish.

Sinking so slowly, Orpheus activates one last command:

ORPHEUS
Firing... RCS... break-er.

It thrusts Orpheus's skinny body which looks like a used up tube of toothpaste, is sent flying through the ocean, closer to the core.

99 **INT. SATURN – METALLIC MANTLE**

Its light is now useless, the liquid gets hotter by the thousand, pressure continues to press down on Orpheus, adding speed.

Temperatures rise to the point where the hydrogen transitions into a metallic, glowing white-hot.

It is also Saturn's magnetic field, the same one that form its rings.

100 **INT. SATURN – THE CORE**

Orpheus's last moments before melting and imploding, accomplishes more than what it was intended to do and views the core itself.

The core appears as a small planet itself brighter than anything we've ever seen, clipping and distorting all around it, bending beyond our reality.

[NOTE: The core is made from a compressed iron, nickel and ices subjected to enormous pressure and heat.]

ORPHEUS

Won't you look... at that?

JAKOB (COMMS)

At what, Orpheus?

ORPHEUS

(softly)

The... core.

JAKOB (COMMS)

Describe it, Orpheus.

ORPHEUS

It's beau-ti-ful.

It slowly sinks to the bottom of the slushy pool of liquid-metallic hydrogen, *like a petal falling from the flower.*

Orpheus's now-flexible gelatin body gently wraps around the core, *disintegrating into it.*

BACK TO:

101 **INT. JET PROPULSION LABORATORY – SPACE FLIGHT SUPPORT BUILDING – BASEMENT – NIGHT**

All three are on the verge of tears yet pull themselves together.

SUZANNE
(sniffling)
Well, that was horrible.

Jakob, I thought you said this
would make us feel better?

JAKOB
I'm so sorry I thought-

She remembers something that will cheer them up.

SUZANNE
(over)
Any chance we can pull up the ANVIL
live feed for a palette cleanser?

JAKOB
That'll require some illegal
actions because technically we have
no clearance.

A beat.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
However-

DAVID
(over)
Do not hack into the probe, Jake!

JAKOB
What? No, no, no, it's not that
complicated.

We'll just get in trouble if anyone
finds out.

SUZANNE
We're already in enough trouble as
it is.

JAKOB
Fortunately, this is not my work
desktop, so...

DAVID
Finally some high quality Venusian
storms to listen to.

JAKOB
You're such a nerd, man.

Jakob is able to connect easily to the ANVIL broadcast, turns out *there's no security for a planetary probe with a one-percent success rate.*

JAKOB (CONT'D)

They must've thought it'd just burn up.

Some people have no faith in the engineers anymore.

As he's loading up the live feed, they all share an awkward silence.

A beat.

DAVID

So, Jake, did you ask that lady out?

JAKOB

Uh, no.

SUZANNE

You can orbit the Moon but can't ask a woman out?

JAKOB

You know what-

DAVID

Are you gonna?

JAKOB

Like... right now?

DAVID

Whatever.

SUZANNE

Wuss.

Jakob turns up the gain on the speakers and listen to the sounds of storms on Venus picked up and sent back almost twenty-five million miles.

Abruptly, they're jump by a loud, familiar voice:

IMMANUEL (O.C.)

ANVIL, we need to stick together if we're gonna have to wait...

We didn't come this far just to come this far.

Now! Lead the way!

(MORE)

IMMANUEL (CONT'D)
Hey, hey you're going too fast-

(voice drowns out)

-hey, wait up, Anvil!

CUT TO:

102

**INT. LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LUNAR RECEIVING
LABORATORY - SAME TIME**

In a dark, boardroom, associates and workers of the space agency are unfolding metal chairs.

A wrinkled thin polyester American flag hangs off the wall, next to it a giant mural of photographs capturing over a century of aviation.

Everyone is in ties and unbuttoned white shirts. They are relaxing and about to watch something.

PRESENTER

Well, after being dusted and scanned, the camcorder they brought never left the module.

But they did film with it.

WOMAN

Well, then that's it.

How do some of the best pilots on this planet get so crazy?

ANOTHER MAN

There has to be a scientific explanation.

The lunar dust is abrasive, and hasn't been studied enough-

MAN

Abrasive enough to lose your marbles?

PRESENTER

The first clip already proves no fourth man boarded the spacecraft...

This is just for fun. Uh- before we watch, anyone wanna place bets?

A MAN'S VOICE
Bet on what?

PRESENTER
Whether it's all a grift or are
they just insane.

Everyone laughs.

The first frame on Jakob's camcorder is a unflattering view
up his nose.

The presenter plays the film, it plays the last clip he
recorded before reentry.

103 **INT. CISLUNAR SPACE - COMMAND MODULE (HERMES) - FLASHBACK**

In the video, Jakob has just started when he immediately
begins filming Immanuel who is shirtless, soaked in blood
and unaware of the camera.

David is chewing Immanuel out until he notices Jakob.

DAVID
Jakob, stop filming the alien!

JAKOB
What?

It's not live, I'll keep the SD
card.

DAVID
Jakob!

BACK TO:

104 **INT. LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LUNAR RECEIVING
LABORATORY - SAME TIME**

All the smiles have slowly melted off their faces.

Like they've all saw a ghost.

The more they watch, their excuses disappear. A wave of
guilt and humiliation washes away the smugness.

The video continues in the background:

JAKOB (O.C.)
Why don't you make me?

David raises a fist to sock him, Jakob instantly flinches:

JAKOB (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Sorry, sorry, okay jeez here.

The camera spins quickly until halted by David who shuts it off promptly. Cutting the video black.

Everyone is left in the dark room, staring at their reflections in the blank screen, silent and still.

BACK TO:

105 **INT. JET PROPULSION LABORATORY – SPACE FLIGHT SUPPORT
BUILDING – STAIRWELL – CONTINUOUS**

All three astronauts are sprinting up the stairs.

Suzanne is beating Jakob even with carrying his laptop while he holds the connected antenna. David, the old man, trailing far behind.

Already winded, their voices echo:

SUZANNE
Come on! Which floor was it?

JAKOB
He's gonna kill me.

Eighth!

CUT TO:

106 **EXT. VENUS – BETA REGIO HIGHLANDS – COAST – MOMENTS LATER**

Immanuel has given up trying to keep up with the probe.

Instead, he continues with a stroll and without a care throughout the dry, jagged landscape surrounded by sulfuric dust storms and short-lived whirlwinds.

The temperature rises *rapidly*, casting a sizzling fog off Immanuel's sweating backside.

107 **EXT. VENUS – BETA REGIO HIGHLANDS – VALLEY – CONTINUOUS**

His radiant, silhouette of smoke saunters into a valley, enjoying the view of the expanse, unsure if it is all real or a heat-induced mirage.

He can feel it singe his nose hairs.

The loneliness for the first time seeps into his heart.

The air is full of so many volcanic and greenhouse volatile gases, the sulfuric acid creates the same effect as cutting onions.

He squints to prevent himself from tearing up. To no avail.

However, no tears ever appear in the heat sink, because they *evaporate instantaneously.*

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END