

ALIEN:
Engineers

Written by
Jon Spaihts

FADE IN:

EXT. EARTH - DAY (12,000 B.C.)

The world turns below us, vast and slow.

A RUMBLE. A shadow sweeps over the land. We move with the shadow. We cast the shadow.

Landscapes slide by. Reduced by altitude to abstractions: river deltas, forests and flood plains. A raw natural world. No trace of civilization.

The shadow glides over mountains and glaciers. Across an ocean and a pale beach. Over lowland plain at the foot of a VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN it stops.

EXT. LOWLAND PLAIN - DAY

THREE FIGURES walk out of the shadow.

They are men - and yet not men. Their skin is snow-white. Their features heavy and classical - as if Rodin's Thinker had risen from his seat. Their smooth heads are earless and hairless. Their glittering eyes entirely black.

Against the stark land their height is impossible to judge.

They are ENGINEERS.

Two of them are cloaked in dark robes of strange design.

The third is naked.

One of the cloaked Engineers opens a featureless black box: inside lies a cake of dark, sticky material.

The naked one lifts the dark cake with ceremonial slowness. It hums and buzzes. Foams into iridescent spheres. He raises the seething cake to his mouth like the sacrament.

BLACK SCARABS boil out of the dark material. Swarm over his lips. Glittering insects that chatter and bite.

Under the swarm his lips melt away. A horrific vision of teeth, black blood, dissolving bone. They are devouring him.

FLASH ON:

A fevered glimpse of the microscopic: cells rupture and bleed. Protein chains unfold. A DNA spiral unravels.

The scarabs fill their bellies with genetic material.

THE ENGINEER

...spreads his arms. Stands cruciform, nearly headless.

The scarabs swarm his shoulders, his chest. When they reach his hips, he collapses sideways, toppling majestically like a felled tree. Engulfed.

The two cloaked Engineers watch impassively.

Behind them, a vast black SHIP hangs in the sky.

As if blown by a great gust of wind, the scarabs disperse in their millions in all directions. Living DNA on the wing. Where the sacrificial victim fell, nothing remains.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A pristine wilderness. The VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN in the distance.

A PRIMITIVE WOMAN stands on a height, staring in amazement: far off a great dark ship hovers over the plain.

A black scarab lands on the back of her neck. Bites deep. Injecting its cargo of DNA into her blood.

FLASH ON:

A microscopic invasion. Cells pierced and infused. DNA strands twining and mating.

CLOSE ON THE WOMAN

Pupils dilating with shock, breath hissing into her lungs.

She slaps the back of her neck. Looks at her hand. The scarab lies in her palm.

As she watches, it crumbles to dust and blows away.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON BLACK

Drifting motes of light against the dark: a starscape.

An EXCAVATOR floats into view: a sturdy vehicle equipped with robotic arms. Bright floodlights beat at the darkness. Inside the cockpit - a bubble of glass - sits a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

This is DR. JOCELYN WATTS, 32, a precocious scholar of many disciplines. A scientist accustomed to field work.

The cockpit is sweltering: she wears shorts, boots, a T-shirt - and still her arms and legs gleam with sweat.

Watts works the controls. The excavator descends toward a rocky surface. Silt billows up as the excavator approaches: we're not in space at all, but deep underwater.

The excavator's thrusters are cowled propellers. The "stars" are plankton shining in the floodlights.

INT. EXCAVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Watts steers the excavator to a steeply sloping cliff wall. A sea-trench yawns below her, its depths lost in darkness.

WATTS

Moving to survey site B... closing on
object four. The large oblong.

She watches the screen of a ground-penetrating radar system. A bright signal return: something hidden in the cliff in front of her. Something big.

WATTS (CONT'D)

There you are.

EXT. SEA TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Watts carves into the cliff with the excavator's digger arm. Silt and boulders fall into the yawning trench below. She brings a water cannon to bear: uses its jet to blast away loose silt and stones.

The cliff face collapses: a muddy landslide into the deeps.

Watts backs away from the collapse, thrusters whirring to keep her out of the turbulence. A cloud of silt clears.

In her floodlight beams, the OBELISK stands revealed - its outlines worn by the ages. Easily thirty feet tall.

Watts stares at the obelisk, stunned. Her voice is husky:

WATTS

Martin. Here.

A second excavator glides out of the dark.

At the controls: PROFESSOR MARTIN HOLLOWAY, 48, visionary genius and archaeologist. Dark-haired and lean, with the rangy build of a frontiersman. He's dressed in work trousers and a T-shirt. Stubbly chin.

He plays his floodlights over the obelisk.

HOLLOWAY
Look at that.

INT. WATTS'S EXCAVATOR

Watts floats her excavator down the front of the obelisk. Scanning the alien text. Suddenly she stops. Grips the obelisk with her excavator's arms to anchor herself in place.

WATTS
You need to see this.

HOLLOWAY (V.O.)
Coming.

EXT. SEA TRENCH

Holloway pilots his excavator expertly up to Watts's. Mates the two vehicles at their aft hatchways.

INT. WATTS'S EXCAVATOR

Behind Watts, a hatch opens with a splatter of water.

Holloway climbs in. Squeezes into her cockpit. A tight fit. He's distracted by her body, pressed so close - but she has eyes only for the inscrutable writing outside the glass.

WATTS
Same thing again.

HOLLOWAY
What do you see?

WATTS
An ephemeris - a star map.
(pointing)
Radius, inclination, azimuth...more
data here...

HOLLOWAY

If we can get epoch and equinox out of that...

WATTS

Can we raise this thing?

HOLLOWAY

(shakes his head)
Hundreds of tons.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - DAY

A research vessel at anchor on a turquoise sea. Bright sun.

In the distance, a coastline dotted with villas. The horizon is dominated by the VOLCANIC PEAK - the same peak we saw in the distance in the prologue.

Aboard the research vessel, cranes lift Watts and Holloway's excavators out of the sea and onto the deck.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL - AFT DECK - DAY

Under an awning, PRINTS of the obelisk's faces are stretched on the deck - fifteen feet long.

Watts and Holloway crawl over the alien text, red markers in hand. Parsing, translating, calculating.

They're tanned, fit, the wind in their hair. The Mediterranean coast in the distance. It's an idyllic way to work. But they're utterly absorbed in the task at hand.

AFT DECK - NIGHT

They're still at it. Lights illuminate the workspace. The obelisk prints are blanketed with markings and annotations.

Holloway sits at a table. Watts sits on the marked-up prints. Both working through calculations on electronic slates.

Holloway looks up.

HOLLOWAY

I have a solution. A single match.

WATTS

Me too. Checked it twice.

HOLLOWAY

You first.

Watts holds up her slate: it displays a set of stellar coordinates. A detailed star map. Holloway holds up his own slate: an exact match. They lock eyes in electric excitement.

WATTS

What do we do now?

HOLLOWAY

We go there.

EXT. WEYLAND'S WHEEL (EARTH ORBIT)

A gleaming space station like a five-spoked wheel rotates grandly against the Pacific Ocean a thousand miles below. Black letters on the white metal read: WEYLAND'S WHEEL.

A round shuttlecraft approaches the station.

INT. SHUTTLECRAFT (ZERO GRAVITY)

A spacecraft no bigger than a private jet.

Holloway and Watts sit strapped into acceleration chairs. The only two passengers aboard. New to space travel, Watts tears her eyes from the spectacle of Earth outside the window.

Holloway plays with a pen, batting it from hand to hand in the zero gravity.

WATTS

What's first? You do climate, I do genetics?

HOLLOWAY

Archaeology first. Let our ancestors tell the tale.

WATTS

You think he's serious?

HOLLOWAY

Serious enough to send his private shuttle.

WATTS

Weyland can send his shuttle out for pizza.

(delicately)

(MORE)

WATTS (CONT'D)

Martin. If this meeting goes like the others, maybe we should...

HOLLOWAY

It won't go like the others.

WATTS

How do you know?

Holloway plucks the pen from the air. He points out the window, where the crescent Moon shines like a toothy grin.

HOLLOWAY

Heaven smiles on our enterprise.

EXT. WEYLAND'S WHEEL

The shuttle docks with the Wheel's hub - a perfect fit.

INT. WEYLAND'S WHEEL - SPOKE ELEVATOR (ZERO GRAVITY)

A gleaming capsule elevator with windows to the stars.

Holloway and Watts float weightlessly inside, moving from handhold to handhold. The door closes.

Watts grabs Holloway by the collar. Pulls them roughly together. They kiss. Not for the first time. They have a way.

Watts's hair and clothing float free: she's a naiad in Holloway's arms.

EXT. WEYLAND'S WHEEL

The elevator descends along the spoke to the rim.

INT. WEYLAND'S WHEEL - RIM - FOYER

A luxurious lobby. Tasteful lighting. Eames-era furniture in wood and chrome: the past's vision of the future.

At the rim, the Wheel's rotation supplies gravity. An elevator door opens. Watts and Holloway step out - Holloway with a sleek metal folio slung over his shoulder.

The floor is the outer surface of the Wheel: in both directions it curves upward out of sight.

The walls are all windows: on one side, Earth rotates lazily. On the other, a wheeling field of stars.

DAVID, an android, stands waiting for them. He's cunningly built, but no one would mistake him for a real human being.

DAVID
Professor Holloway. Dr. Watts. My name
is DAVID.

WATTS
Hello, DAVID.

DAVID
Mr. Weyland's eager to meet you.

He strides off across the foyer. Watts and Holloway exchange a wondering glance and follow.

EXHIBIT HALL

DAVID leads past models of planets, moons and asteroids. Holographic labels and data swirl around them.

DAVID
These are all the planetary bodies on
which Weyland Industries has mining
claims.

The end of the hall is dominated by a huge globe of Mars. Markings indicate widespread surface activity.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And Mars. Weyland's crown jewel.

HOLLOWAY
How is that going? The terraforming.

WATTS
They say you're getting diminishing
returns. It's not working.

DAVID
It's the greatest engineering project
ever attempted. Challenges are
inevitable. Mr. Weyland's a
determined man.

WEYLAND'S OFFICE

PETER WEYLAND sits behind a mahogany desk. He's a Warren Buffet type: a country sage, horse-sense and hard knocks. He might be seventy years old, or a hundred and seventy.

Behind him stands DIRECTOR LYDIA VICKERS, a slim woman of 45 in a costly business suit. Shrewd and watchful. Once a great beauty, she now trades in ruthlessness.

DAVID stands against the wall.

Watts and Holloway settle into chairs in front of Weyland - Holloway holding the metal folio.

WEYLAND
Professor Holloway. Ms. Watts.

WATTS
Doctor Watts.

WEYLAND
Forgive me. Peter Weyland.

He notices Watts looking curiously at DAVID. He smiles.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
Ah. DAVID here's a prototype. Our 80 series. One of a kind for now, but if he performs, he will be legion.
(his smile fades)
What do you want here?

Holloway looks at him, startled.

HOLLOWAY
We sent you a prospectus that...

WEYLAND
Assume I know nothing.

Holloway swallows. Lays the metal folio on Weyland's desk.

HOLLOWAY
I'm an archaeologist.

He touches a tiny remote. Holographs appear in the air over Weyland's desk: the folio is a three-dimensional imager.

Pictures of a younger Holloway in the field: excavating ruins in Egypt, China, Peru, Greece.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)
In my studies I discovered a pattern I couldn't explain. Every eleven hundred years, sudden advances in agriculture, tool use, technology. Inventions. Something caused a great leap forward. Every eleven centuries. The pattern holds as far back as our data goes.
(MORE)

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

Tens of thousands of years. I had to understand this. It became the focus of my work.

Weyland nods. Holloway glances at Watts and forges on.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

Dr. Watts was a student of mine.

Watts touches her own remote. The holographic display turns to scientific diagrams. Images of a very young and beautiful Watts in the laboratory.

WATTS

I was analyzing historical changes in human DNA. I found the same pattern. Every eleven centuries, a pulse of new information in the genome of the human race. All over the world. Evolution can't do that. Something was changing us. Changing the DNA of our species.

HOLLOWAY

Humanity's been visited. Visited by...*beings* from somewhere else.

Behind Weyland, Vickers can't suppress a scowl of disdain.

VICKERS

You mean *aliens*.

A beat. The others had forgotten Vickers was there.

WEYLAND

Lydia Vickers, Director of Operations. Practically my right hand.

HOLLOWAY

They guided us to civilization. Lifted us up, again and again. I call them the Engineers.

WATTS

Once you know what you're looking for, it's amazing how the evidence falls into place.

Photographs flicker through the display: Holloway and Watts in the field, excavating new sites. Intimately close.

Their finds: columns of writing on stone tablets in Egypt, China, Cambodia, Peru. Patterns of lines, curves, and dots.

HOLLOWAY

This is the writing of the Engineers.
We've found it on every continent. And
last year, we found our Rosetta Stone.

The display shows the Engineer obelisk under the sea.

WATTS

The writing is a formula giving the
location of a single star in our sky.

WEYLAND

Which star?

HOLLOWAY

We're keeping that confidential for
now. But that's where we want to go.

WEYLAND

You want me to pay for an *interstellar*
research expedition!

HOLLOWAY

It's a chance to be part of a
revolution in scientific...

WEYLAND

Don't sell me, professor. You've been
turned down by every university and
government agency under the sun.
Nobody's going to gamble that kind of
money on your *hunch*.

Holloway deflates. Watts winces. This is a bloodbath.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)

Nobody but me.
(he grins)
I've read your research.

HOLLOWAY

That's impossible. Our research is-

WEYLAND

Quantum encoded on secure servers,
yeah. We have an A.I. division, you
should know. Doing impressive things.
(he leans across the desk)
I know which star you're wishing on.

The scientists stare at Weyland.

WATTS

You're bluffing.

WEYLAND
Zeta Two Reticuli.

He regards their shocked faces with satisfaction.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
You know how I got this rich? I ask myself: what does God spend his time doing? And I go and do that.

Watts laughs incredulously. Stifles it. Weyland's not joking.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
Biotechnology was good to me. Fusion power. Lately doing well with gravity systems.

He swivels his chair toward the window. Earth shines outside.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
But what's the first thing God did?

WATTS
He made the Heaven and the Earth.

Weyland jabs a finger at her like she's won a carnival prize.

WEYLAND
That's what I'm talking about. You left out my favorite part. The piece about Earth. DAVID.

DAVID
For eons, Earth's climate swung from hothouse to ice age. Explosions of life, then mass extinctions. But twelve thousand years ago the swings stopped. The Holocene Epoch began - a period of anomalous tranquility. The rise of civilization began only then.

Holloway and Watts stare at DAVID with new appreciation.

HOLLOWAY
That's right.

WATTS
And that change coincides with a visit by the Engineers. They didn't just change us. They changed our world.

WEYLAND
That's the piece I mean. Engineering Earth. God stuff.

He swivels back to his desk. Rummages in a drawer.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
My people checked your science. They
say it's solid.

He pulls a thick contract out. Drops it in front of Holloway.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
I'll give you your expedition. Ship
and crew, supplies, support. One
condition.

Holloway picks up the contract with the cautious joy of a man
double-checking a lottery ticket. His voice is husky:

HOLLOWAY
What's that?

WEYLAND
You get the discovery. Control of the
site. But any technology you find?
Anything at all. That's mine.

Holloway reaches out slowly and picks up the contract.
Riffls the pages of small-print legalese.

WEYLAND (CONT'D)
You take DAVID with you. My eyes and
ears. And Vickers...you're going too.

Vickers stares at Weyland in shock.

WHITE LANDSCAPE

A glittering formation of white crystals. Diamond on diamond.

The structures grow more complex as the view widens. Leaves
and branches of crystal. A shimmering field of white jewels.

A landscape of white crystals, smooth as snow.

EXT. DEEP SPACE

A black void shot with stars, far from any sun.

A sturdy prospecting ship forges through space, travel-worn
but built to last. It carries the Weyland Industries logo.
The name painted on its hull is *MAGELLAN*.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

The ship's nerve center and control room. Six control stations, empty and quiet. Interior lights dimmed to blue.

The entire forward bulkhead of the Bridge is a window: wall to wall, floor to ceiling.

At the window stands the android DAVID.

He gazes at the cosmos with an expression of utter serenity. After a long moment he turns away. Massive shutters close over the window as he walks off.

CORRIDOR

DAVID walks the ship's long central corridor. The ship is silent. The lights dimmed to blue. He is alone.

HYPERSLLEEP COMPARTMENT

A long steel room containing a dozen plexiglass sarcophagi, six on each side. Sleep freezers. Inside each freezer: the shadowy shape of a human body rimed with frost.

DAVID walks through the compartment, surveying the sleepers.

WORKROOM

DAVID sits at a display table, moving intricate technical documents across the surface with waves of his hands.

His eyes intent on his work. If he is reading, then he's reading at a speed no human could match.

WHITE LANDSCAPE

We pull away from the frosted crystalline horizon, the smooth white curves like snowy fields. Form becomes clear.

It's the body of a woman. It's Watts.

INT. HYPERSLLEEP FREEZER

Watts lies asleep in her underwear in a plexiglass freezer. Pale. Frost on her skin. Venus sculpted in ice. There are IV lines in her elbows and ankles.

Shapes move into view beyond her, outside the freezer. FACES. Pressed to the glass.

HYPERSLEEP COMPARTMENT

All of the freezers are open and empty, save two. Holloway lies in one. In the next, Watts. Three men in blue coveralls crouch beside Watts's freezer, staring inside.

They are DOWNS, 30, a lean fidgety crewman. STILLWELL, 40, a sturdy fellow with the geniality of a labrador. And KAMAROV, 26, whose dark, brooding air belongs to a man twice his age.

DOWNS

Look at that.

Kamarov opens the lid of Watt's freezer. Leans over her. Watts stirs in her sleep, a drowsy angel.

KAMAROV

She wakes up slow.

Watts wakes to find three men looming above her. Disoriented, she pulls away. Tangles her hands in her IV lines.

HOLLOWAY (O.S.)

Get out of there!

Holloway's voice cracks like a whip. The crewmen jump back.

Holloway sits up in the next freezer over. He yanks the IV lines out of his arms and legs. Climbs out of the freezer.

STILLWELL

Just looking.

HOLLOWAY

Give us a moment, will you?

The crewmen file out: Stillwell sheepishly, Downs and Kamarov surly. Holloway goes to Watts. Gently removes the IV lines from her ankles while she plucks the ones from her arms.

WATTS

I'm out of sorts. Sorry.

HOLLOWAY

Never worry.

He helps her up.

INT. MESS ROOM

Holloway and Watts sit at a table, both a bit hung over. They wear civilian clothes. Warmly dressed, they still look cold.

They nurse mugs of coffee and nibble packaged snack bars. Watts hunches over, shivering.

WATTS

My head's buzzing.

HOLLOWAY

You just slept two and a half years.
It'll pass.

WATTS

Like you've done this before.

HOLLOWAY

I've read all about it.

Two ship's officers enter the room wearing blue coveralls with rank insignia: GLASSE, 45, a stocky man with thick black hair, and BRICK, 50, a bald man with a bristling mustache.

They look at Watts and Holloway with little pleasure.

BRICK

Sleep okay?

WATTS

Yes, thanks...

GLASSE

Captain'll see you now.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - CAPTAIN'S WARDROOM

CAPTAIN JANEK, 45, sits at his desk. With his bristling beard and powerful build he has a swashbuckling look, like the captain of a whaling ship.

Holloway and Watts sit on a steel bench in front of him.

He sits scanning his orders: a plastic packet with Weyland Industries logos, cracked open. Watermarked papers inside.

JANEK

Zeta Two Reticuli was surveyed
already. A hundred years ago.

WATTS

By an unmanned probe. Very crude.

JANEK
No Earthlike planets.

WATTS
No.

JANEK
So what are you looking for?

HOLLOWAY
Proof of the Engineers' existence.

WATTS
Confirmation of Professor Holloway's theories would change everything. There'd be science before Holloway and science after.

Janek rubs his face wearily with his hands.

JANEK
Your ticket. I'll put the ship where you want. Run your scans.

HOLLOWAY
Captain, your crew's been up for a week. We could've used the time. Why'd you wait to wake us?

JANEK
Better for discipline.
(off their silence)
Men ship out as prospectors for one reason: the percentage. Find a gold mine or a habitable planet, and you're set for life.
(he laughs bitterly)
But this contract says no percentage. No bounty. Just triple pay. The men aren't happy.

HOLLOWAY
You unhappy too?

JANEK
I'm always unhappy.

He stands. Presses his palm against a wall panel. A safe opens. He pulls out a massive pistol in a gunbelt. Tosses the orders into the safe. Lays the gun atop them and locks it up.

SCIENTISTS' CABIN

Holloway and Watts take possession of their cabin: a simple but spacious room with twin beds and a window to the stars.

They drop duffel bags on the bed.

Holloway surveys the arrangement. Frowns. He releases the magnets that lock the beds down. Slides the beds together.

INT. SCIENTISTS' WORKROOM - DAY

Holloway and Watts set up their workspace - a central display table and huge display surfaces on the walls. Fascinating documents slide under their fingertips: an Engineer alphabet. Ancient art. Climate and genetic data.

DAVID appears in the doorway.

WATTS

DAVID. I wondered when we'd see you.

DAVID

I trust your database is in order. I set it up myself.

WATTS

All's well, I think.

DAVID turns to go. Hesitates in the doorway.

DAVID

I should tell you: the time you spent sleeping, I spent studying your research.

Holloway and Watts look at the android, his words sinking in.

WATTS

You studied our work for two and a half years.

DAVID

It's quite a data set.

HOLLOWAY

So you've seen *everything*. Well. What do you think?

DAVID glances over the documents displayed around the room.

DAVID

Your hypothesis is...bold. The audacity of it. Your climate data's undeniable: the Holocene Epoch was engineered. Dr. Watts, your genetic studies are equally conclusive. Pulses of cultural change are harder to prove, but even there your case is strong. I believe in your "Engineers."

BREAK ROOM

A utilitarian sitting room. Steel benches and table bolted to the deck. Seated here are two Weyland Industries technicians:

ANDREW CHANCE, 50, a stocky computer engineer with a genial bearing and a bristling salt-and-pepper mustache.

MONA RAVEL, 45, a dour, rangy woman with a plain face, her hair pulled severely back. A physicist and chemist.

They wear black Weyland Industries jackets. They radiate intelligence and competence. These are pros.

DAVID leads Holloway and Watts past the break room. Holloway spots the technicians. Strides in to greet them.

HOLLOWAY

Weyland Industries! Mr. Chance. Ms. Ravel. You remember Dr. Watts.

Watts and the technicians exchange greetings.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

About the materials I gave you. Some of the technical aspects...

CHANCE

We'll handle our end of the job.

RAVEL

If there *is* a job.

Holloway blinks at her. Chance explains, not unkindly:

CHANCE

We only have a job if you find something.

CORRIDOR

Holloway and Watts follow the imperturbable DAVID down a steel corridor to Vickers's cabin door.

VICKERS'S SUITE

An open-plan cabin like an urban loft apartment. Watts and Holloway follow DAVID inside. Vickers rises to meet them.

The walls are industrial steel - but the floors are lushly carpeted, the furniture opulent. A king-sized bed, a mahogany desk, a dining table.

Gleaming machines ensure Vickers never need step outside: a private hypersleep freezer, an autokitchen, a medical pod.

WATTS

Is that a Pauling medical pod? There's only ten of those things on Earth! I guess nine, now.

VICKERS

I told Mr. Weyland I wouldn't compromise my standard of living. He accommodated me.

HOLLOWAY

I know, I had to cut my manifest. This used to be the number four cargo bay.

VICKERS

What can I do for you, Professor?

Holloway gestures with the slate he's brought with him.

HOLLOWAY

We're about to reach the system periphery. I thought you'd want to see the search protocols we -

VICKERS

No. I was set to be the next CEO of Weyland Industries. Then you came along and sold Mr. Weyland on...*this*. So here I am. Out of the running. I'll go where I'm told. But don't ask me to play along.

WATTS

But when you get back...

VICKERS
I'll be five years behind the curve.
Out of touch. Over.

HOLLOWAY
You might make the discovery of the
ages.

Vickers looks at him as if she's dealing with a child.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)
You don't believe in what we're doing.

VICKERS
Mr. Weyland believes. That's enough.

She walks them toward the door. Interview's over.

VICKERS (CONT'D)
Now we're out of communication, you
can tell the crew what we're doing.

WATTS
They don't know? They volunteered.

VICKERS
They volunteered blind. Classified
job, triple pay.

CARGO BAY

The crew - Brick, Glasse, Stillwell, Downs, and Kamarov - sit on crates in an improvised lecture hall. Holloway and Watts in front of them. Janek at the back of the room.

A hologram shows ancient images of divine visitations. The crew is visibly spooked.

DOWNNS
Aliens.

GLASSE
You shitting me?

Stillwell is staring at the frightening images: gods and titans towering over mortals.

HOLLOWAY
I think all our mythologies are race-
memories of the Engineers. Horus the
Sun God. Prometheus bringing fire from
heaven. A pillar of fire, a pillar of
smoke. The Engineers are the gods.

Kamarov stiffens, smelling blasphemy.

KAMAROV

The *mythology* gods maybe. God is God.

STILLWELL

Kamarov. Let him talk.

Stillwell's staring unhappily at the ancient images: gods towering over mortals, inhuman and terrifying.

STILLWELL (CONT'D)

So we're going to meet these things?

WATTS

We probably won't meet anyone. You'd expect a star-traveling race to generate radio or laser signals. Fusion drives and gravity drives have clear signatures. But Zeta Two Reticuli is silent. And the Engineers have gone missing on Earth.

WATTS (CONT'D)

By the pattern, they should've come to Earth seventeen centuries ago. And again six centuries ago. But no sign. After twelve thousand years...they stopped coming.

BRICK

Why?

HOLLOWAY

Exactly. Why?

JANEK

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

They turn. Janek grins at Holloway across the cargo bay.

JANEK (CONT'D)

Is that the question you've come light-years to answer?

HOLLOWAY

Only my first question. I have many.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (ZETA² RETICULI SYSTEM)

The *Magellan* arrives at the periphery of the system. A distant star like Earth's Sun, surrounded by orbiting planets: mere sparks at this distance.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Outside the vast Bridge window, the star Zeta² Reticuli burns, a cold beacon in the night. Downs, Glasse and Brick sit at consoles. Janek paces in front of the window.

Holloway and Watts enter - and gape at the view. Janek grins at their reaction.

JANEK

Welcome to Zeta Two Reticuli. Edge of the system. Open her eyes.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (ZETA² RETICULI SYSTEM)

The *Magellan* opens its eyes: two immense telescopes emerge from the ship. Irises open to expose huge lenses.

Antennae deploy: unfurling like wings, gleaming and vast. Sifting vacuum for any whisper of information.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Outside the window, the planets orbiting Zeta² Reticuli are no more than bright stars.

JANEK

Overlay.

A heads-up display appears, overlaid on the glass. The sun is labeled ZETA² RETICULI. Markers point out the planets and trace the ellipses of their orbits.

Like magic, the planets swell into colorful orbs, each labeled: *Alpha, Beta, Gamma...*

DOWNNS

Seven planets. Two hot rocks, two gas giants, three snowballs. Nothing Earthlike.

Watts grins at Holloway, eyes shining.

WATTS

First humans in the system.

Vickers walks onto the Bridge with DAVID.

JANEK

Director. Good of you to join us.

VICKERS

What did I miss?

CAPTAIN JANEK

Just getting warmed up.

(to Holloway)

Professor? You know what you want?

HOLLOWAY

EMR scan, thirty hertz to three hundred gigahertz. Spectroscopic passes on every planet and major moon. Infrared and albedo scan for hot spots and light sources.

CAPTAIN JANEK

Man knows what he wants. Run it.

EXT. MAGELLAN (ZETA2 RETICULI SYSTEM)

Twin telescopes spin and zoom. Antennae flex and focus.

TELESCOPE POV

The planet nearest the sun rushes closer as the mighty telescopes zoom in.

INT. MAGELLAN - BRIDGE

The *Magellan's* sensors peel planet Alpha like an onion and put it back together again.

A river of data floods the display, bathing the watchers' faces with light: Chemical compounds, magnetic field lines, lunar orbits, topographical data.

The scan moves on to the next planet, and the next.

GLASSE

Negative on radio chatter system-wide.
Nobody's talking.

BRICK
Negative for laser and maser.

On the H.U.D., the data stream completes the last planet.
Begins to illuminate the gas giants' moons.

GLASSE
No biological markers. No artificial
light. No industry or agriculture.
Dead system. Like always.

DOWNS
Piss-poor, too. Low in heavy elements.

BRICK
Got a hit! A moon. LV-426.

The display centers on Epsilon, a gas giant with many moons.
Data flickers around one of the larger moons: LV-426.

BRICK (CONT'D)
Eighty-six percent Earth's mass.
Atmosphere's nitrogen, methane,
sulfates. Faint returns for a bunch of
metals.

HOLLOWAY
Anything else?

The sensors complete their pass on the system's last moon.

JANEK
That is all.

HOLLOWAY
Take us in.

JANEK
Downs. You heard the man.

DOWNS
Aye, Captain. Maneuvering.
Eighteen hours to orbit.

EXT. MAGELLAN (ZETA² RETICULI SYSTEM)

The Magellan retracts its vast antennae and telescopes.

The engines fire: the ship rockets toward the gas giant
Epsilon and its mysterious moon.

PASSAGEWAY

Leaving the Bridge, Holloway and Watts find themselves walking aft alongside DAVID.

HOLLOWAY

DAVID. Enjoy the show?

DAVID

I don't know that I "enjoy" things.
It was informative.

HOLLOWAY

It was, it was.
(teasing)
You know, I've seen more convincing
humanoid robots.

Watts smiles, watching Holloway's sport. DAVID's speech never varies from its agreeable tone.

DAVID

My design's not intended to convince.
Simulating humanity is a complex task
that diverts resources. My designers
dispensed with that burden to optimize
for intelligence.

WATTS

Why look like a man at all? Why not be
a box on wheels?

DAVID

Being shaped like you, I can use
spaces and equipment designed for you.
But I'm not so limited. I hear
frequencies you can't hear. I see
wavelengths of light invisible to you.
I move faster. Exert greater force.

The scientists look at DAVID in wonder.

WATTS

You see yourself as a superman.

DAVID

No.

He turns his unearthly eyes on them.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Not a man at all.

SCIENTISTS' CABIN

Holloway and Watts lie on their bed in their clothes - her head on his chest.

WATTS

What if they're really there?
 (off his confusion)
 The Engineers. They could be there.
 Waiting for us. What then?

He laughs.

HOLLOWAY

Then all my dreams come true.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (LV-426 ORBIT)

The *Magellan* has arrived.

LV-426 is a gray moon shrouded in clouds. Behind it looms its father planet Epsilon, a lurid gas giant banded in red and gold, half swallowed in darkness.

The *Magellan* dives into a forced orbit around LV-426: rockets firing continually, nose pointed down. Telescopes, sensors and antennae sprout once more from its hull.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Everyone's here. Janek and his crew seated at control stations. Holloway and Watts standing on the foredeck. Vickers and DAVID. Ravel and Chance.

LV-426 fills the window: a gray orb of mist. The ground invisible beneath the clouds. Sporadic lightning flickers.

HOLLOWAY

Start with passive systems. We're uninvited guests. Let's be quiet.

That thought sends a nervous shiver through the others. Janek nods at Glass and Brick. They study their instruments.

BRICK

A lot of electromag, all random.
 That's lightning. Going to bugger up our scans.

HOLLOWAY

Go active. Mapping radar.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (LV-426 ORBIT)

Radar emitters extend from their housings like cannons. A THUMP of power as they hammer out a blast of energy.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

The display paints data on the moonscape as the wavefront comes back: terrain rendered in luminous green.

JANEK

Well, we just rang the doorbell, if anybody's listening.

Kamarov shakes his head fearfully. Crosses himself.

HOLLOWAY

What do we see?

BRICK

Icecaps at the poles. Frozen methane. Cold down there.

The display fills with light: a wave of terrain data sweeping across the moon's surface as the *Magellan* orbits.

GLASSE

Terrain data rezzing up. Hey! We got hard spots. Radar-opaque. Bright reflections. That's metal.

A jolt of excitement pounds through everyone on the Bridge.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (LV-426 ORBIT)

The *Magellan* sweeps on around the gray moon, radar emitters humming, antennae and telescopes open wide. The gas giant Epsilon fills the sky behind LV-426.

As it circles, the *Magellan* launches SATELLITES. Metal motes hurled into polar orbits around the Moon.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Twenty-four "hard spots" shine on the moon's surface: an irregular array circling LV-426.

HOLLOWAY

That's not natural.

MILBURN

You see stuff like that sometimes.
Mineral deposits. Volcanic ejecta.

GLASSE

Big one there.

A new signal appears on the map. Brighter than the others.

HOLLOWAY

Still quiet?

BRICK

No comm signals. No signs of life.

HOLLOWAY

I want to get below the clouds.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (IN ATMOSPHERE)

The prospecting ship descends through buffeting grey clouds. Telescopes and antennae stowed away. Hull streaming vapor as it cuts atmosphere.

Lightning flashes and booms around the descending ship.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Everyone strapped into chairs - except Janek, who stands gripping a stanchion, his boots planted on the deck.

The landing engines roar. Wind screams over the hull. Mist whips across the Bridge window, obscuring any view. Watts reaches out. Squeezes Holloway's hand.

The *Magellan* breaks through the cloud cover into clear air.

Below the ship, a vast and eerie landscape is revealed. Wide valleys mottled with thin dark ground cover. Barren crags and spires of rock. Waterless and wind-swept.

Watts gasps. Stares at the grim and foreign country.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (IN ATMOSPHERE)

The *Magellan* thunders over valleys and craggy ridges of rock.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Janek takes the helm. Guides the *Magellan* down a valley as if it were a helicopter. A pilot born.

GLASSE

Coming up on site seven.

They crest a mountain higher than Everest.

Before them stretches a dry barren plain. Scattered rocky peaks rise from the desert floor - an alien Monument Valley.

DOWNS

Nothing.

Holloway points to a smaller mountain peak. Oddly regular.

HOLLOWAY

Look there.

Janek expertly swings the *Magellan* sideways. The *Magellan* circles the mount, nose pointed inward.

It revolves below the watchers: flat faces, clean edges - but cracked and timework. It glitters like coal.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

Are we recording?

Glasse nods irritably. Of course they're recording.

Vickers stares at the pyramidal peak, nonplussed. Teetering on the brink of belief. Watts scans the data readouts.

WATTS

Tungsten, tantalum, aluminum. That could be technology.

HOLLOWAY

Let's see the next one.

EXT. LV-426 - SECOND PEAK

A second oddly regular peak, even more decrepit than the first, sits on the brink of a vast canyon. Landslides have eaten at its edges.

The *Magellan* purrs over the landscape, dwarfed by the scale. Drops between the canyon walls to circle the mount.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Holloway and Watts stare at the structure. Beginning to get over the shock. Thinking like scientists again.

WATTS

Identical, apart from weathering.

MILBURN

Could be a rock formation. Carbon crystallizes like that.

The scientists pay him no mind. They're past that.

HOLLOWAY

Let's see the big one.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Janek pilots by instruments alone. Clouds obscuring the view.

BRICK

Closing on the major site...

The ship descends into clear air. A stunning panorama unfolds before them: craters, hundreds of meters across, connected by trenches. Like a pattern of crop-circles sunk in the rock.

In the middle of the central crater - a huge angular peak, larger than the others. The *Magellan* circles the site. It's awe-inspiring. Cryptic. Huge.

Holloway stares in rapture. Glances at Watts: she nods, eyes shining. She's with him.

The crew's still skeptical - but starting to wonder. They shake their heads and exchange looks.

BRICK (CONT'D)

No radio. No heat sources. Cold as the grave.

HOLLOWAY

Nobody home.

Watts looks out at the timeworn peak. Its eroded facets.

WATTS

I don't think anybody's been home for a long time.

EXT. CRATER COMPLEX - DAY

From the central crater, four canals extend outward like points of the compass. Some connect to smaller craters.

One canal peters out, flush with the desert floor.

The *Magellan* lands at the end of this canal - half a kilometer from the central crater.

INT. MAGELLAN - BRIDGE

They stare out the window, down the wide straight canal at the pyramidal peak in the distance. Holloway looks around.

HOLLOWAY

All right. Let's move.

Janek glances at his instruments.

JANEK

There's only six hours of daylight left. Maybe you should hold off.

Watts looks at him incredulously.

WATTS

We've got *that* outside the windows and you want to wait 'til tomorrow?

EXT. MAGELLAN - AIRLOCK - DAY

The expedition party emerges from the airlocks - riding CARGO ROVERS, robotic vehicles just smart enough to carry their owners around, or follow along behind them.

The rovers' beds are loaded with gear; the explorers ride on running-board seats. All wear space suits.

Holloway drives the first rover with Watts beside him. Stillwell, Kamarov, and Downs in back.

DAVID drives the second rover with Milburn, Fifield, Chance and Ravel aboard.

WATTS

The air here will kill you, so keep an eye on your supply and watch your seals. Pathogen tests are clean.

HOLLOWAY

Move slowly. Stay together. Don't touch anything. Things may be more fragile than they look - or more dangerous. There might be technologies operating here we don't understand.

The crew of the *Magellan* exchange uneasy looks. Still uncertain what to think.

EXT. ENTRY CANAL - DAY

The trench grows deeper as they follow it toward the central crater - the pyramidal peak framed ahead of them like a monument on a triumphal avenue.

They cross a perpendicular canal. Glancing left and right, they see smaller craters with central peaks of their own.

They pass through the shadow of a high promontory of stone atop one bank of the canal.

We see - and they do not - that the far side of the promontory has a Sphinx-like FACE of monumental size. So eroded that its artificial nature is uncertain.

EXT. CENTRAL CRATER - DAY

The crater floor is a vast enclosed plain. The pyramidal mount looms in the center - colossal in scale.

The rovers enter the crater, trailing plumes of dust. They circle the pyramid.

On the south face of the pyramid, an IRIS DOOR of many blades stands, easily fifty feet high. Seemingly made of the same basaltic stone as the pyramid itself. A huge construction.

The explorers are transfixed in awe. All skepticism banished.

HOLLOWAY

Tell me *that's* a natural formation.

(he grins)

Undeniable proof of alien civilization. You were here on this day, thirty-one December, year of our Lord 2172. History will remember your names.

Watts stares at the iris. Its bottom-most blade is broken; it lies in rubble at the foot of the door. A dark knife-like aperture leads into the pyramid.

WATTS
The door's open.

INT. MAGELLAN - BRIDGE

Janek and Vickers watch the explorers' progress in the main holographic display: their tinny voices echoing over the comm link. At the sight of the huge iris door in the pyramid, both Janek and Vickers stare in blank astonishment.

JANEK
Son of a bitch. They were right.

He turns to stare out the window at the pyramid's peak.

Vickers turns and slips out of the Bridge. Hurries away.

VICKERS'S SUITE

Vickers strides through her quarters. On the far wall there are two small doors.

She opens the first: steps into a luxurious bathroom. Washes a pill down with a tumbler of water.

Returns to her cabin and opens the second small door.

SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A chamber walled with steel panels. A deep hum of ventilation and power: there's a lot of technology here.

She turns to a console beside the door. Flips a row of switches. The hum deepens. Hidden mechanisms stir to life.

EXT. PYRAMID - IRIS DOOR

On foot, explorers press inside - Holloway and Watts in the lead. Their flashlights cut into the gloom.

The robotic rovers follow them: their six-wheeled chassis with independent suspension trundling over the rubble barrier, sure-footed as goats.

INT. PYRAMID - ANTECHAMBER

Dark and cavernous. Weak daylight slants in.

The explorers press into the darkness on foot - the cargo rovers' headlights flashing on. They move through a dark cathedral space, empty and bare.

DAVID looks around in fascination, his eyes raking the walls.

HOLLOWAY
Jocelyn. Here.

His voice trembles with urgency. He shines light on the rock. Symbols engraved on the dark surface. Dots, lines and arcs.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)
The writing of the Engineers.
Conclusive connection.

DAVID stands beside them. Stares at the alien writing.

DAVID
Congratulations, Professor Holloway.

Watts passes her light over the writing, recording it. They move on into the dark.

DAVID lingers. Reading.

PYRAMID - VARIOUS PASSAGES

The interior is a labyrinth. Corridors big as railway tunnels intersecting and diverging.

The explorers wend their way deeper. Several carry map units, whose holographic displays render three-dimensional maps that expand as they explore.

INT. PYRAMID - MASSIVE CHAMBER

Holloway leads the explorers deeper into the complex. The motors of the cargo rovers whine and growl.

DAVID trails the others, eyes raking the blank walls as if he sees something there. He reaches out. Passes his hand through the air as if grasping a cobweb.

A STRANGE RUMBLING NOISE sounds down the corridor, freezing them. Holloway sweeps his light that way. The sound comes again: a DEMONIC VOICE speaking some unearthly language.

Watts looks at Holloway - but his eyes are focused on the dark ahead. He moves forward. A beat. The others follow.

An APPARITION appears before them. A PALE, LUMINOUS GIANT fifteen feet tall, with hollow eyes and a grotesque snout. It strides toward them. Speaks in a sonorous voice.

Pandemonium.

Watts backpedals involuntarily. Seeing Holloway stand his ground, she reaches out to him in a panic.

WATTS
Martin. Martin!

But Holloway doesn't budge. Stares at the Apparition in fascination. Everyone else scatters - except DAVID, who stands stock-still by the wall.

Watts watches as the Apparition walks right up to Holloway. Disappears with a sizzle of static as Holloway experiences the creature passing *through* him.

Silence. Watts returns to Holloway's side. Stillwell and Downs are huddled on the deck. Milburn and Fifield have fallen back down the passageway.

FIFIELD
Christ. Christ!

RAVEL
It wasn't real.

MILBURN
We all saw it.

Unseen by the others, DAVID reaches out and repeats his gesture in the air.

A rumbling sound down the corridor, as before. Moments later, the Apparition appears round the corner again. They stand their ground: the ghostly giant strides toward them, exactly as before, and disappears with a crackle.

HOLLOWAY
Recording?

FIFIELD
No more. I'm out.

HOLLOWAY
Fifield. Get a grip.

FIFIELD
I'm a prospector. You find a load of bauxite, I'm your man. But not this.

MILBURN
I should go with him. Buddy system.

HOLLOWAY
(disgusted)
Fine.

He hauls a heavy rolling case out of the cargo rover.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)
You can deploy the drones. Drop them
in the first or second nexus on your
way back.

FIFIELD
Give us a rover.

HOLLOWAY
And half our gear? It's no more than a
mile. You can walk it.

Sulking, Milburn takes the rolling case. The remaining
explorers watch Fifield and Milburn backtrack into the dark.

CORE CHAMBER DOOR

Holloway and Watts lead their party up to a massive door,
sealed tight. In design and scale, undeniably important.
Holloway glances at his map.

HOLLOWAY
This should lead to the core of the
pyramid.

WATTS
Jack it open? Or cut through?

HOLLOWAY
Let's do as little damage as we can.

Ravel waves a sensor over the wall.

RAVEL
There's power. Current flowing in the
wall.

Chance begins to inspect the frame of the door.

CHANCE
Maybe we can hack it. Has to be a
mechanism...

DAVID looks as if they fail to see something obvious. He points at a spot on the wall beside the massive slab.

DAVID

Pull up a rover. I want to get up there.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DAY

Janek stands at the window, looking down the long canal at the distant pyramid.

The ship's powerful imaging systems stream data: stereoscopic feeds from the explorers' flashlights; a map that grows as they explore. The maze under the pyramid drawn in light.

A globe of LV-426 blooms with terrain and weather data as the satellites feed the ship information.

Vickers appears at Janek's side.

JANEK

Director. Taking an interest?

VICKERS

It's my operation, isn't it?

INT. PYRAMID - HUB

A junction where multiple passageways converge.

Milburn and Fifield trudge into the space, trundling the probe cases behind them. Tunnels lead away in all directions.

FIFIELD

What do you think?

MILBURN

Grand Central Station.

They open the case. CAMERA PROBES tumble out: spheres the size of softballs, studded with lenses and sensors.

Tiny lights come on as the probes awaken. They roll off, dispersing to investigate every passageway. Bumbling into walls and pillars, reversing. Exploring by random walk.

FIFIELD

Let's check the feed. Gimme the map.

MILBURN

You had the map unit.

FIFIELD
You don't have the map?

They stare at each other.

MILBURN
Are you serious?

He trudges back the way they came, in disgust.

MILBURN (CONT'D)
Come on.

CORE CHAMBER DOOR

DAVID stands on top of one of the cargo rovers. He's cut a hole in the wall beside the door, high up: he works with probes in the mechanisms inside.

DAVID
Looks like a three-state switch.

A deep *BOOM*, echoing inside the ancient walls. Nothing moves.

DAVID (CONT'D)
One moment...

He moves a control. *BOOM*. The immense door begins to rise.

PYRAMID - CORE CHAMBER

The vast central chamber of the pyramid. An immense space.

Holloway walks in, his flashlight searching. Watts hurries after. The others follow, rovers tagging along.

A colossal structure stands in the center of the chamber, convoluted and strange. A mechanism. Chasms yawn in the floor all around it, their depths lost in darkness.

The explorers enter, rovers in train. They lift their eyes: hundreds of feet above them they see the pyramid's apex from within. A *SHAFT OF DIFFUSE LIGHT* penetrates the pyramid somewhere near the peak.

RAVEL
This is something, now.

DAVID
Yes. Yes, it is.

The android's awareness is keyed to a high pitch. He seems to read meaning in the inscrutable structures all around them.

Holloway hauls a drone case out of the rover. Two dozen spherical drones tumble out, wake up, and roll off into the dark. They are nimble, hopping curbs and skirting chasms.

Watts looks at her atmosphere sensor. Astonished.

WATTS

Martin. This air's breathable.

The core chamber brightens as the sun outside moves into alignment. The shaft of light perfectly centered.

A vast SIGH as if the pyramid itself is breathing.

A fat drop of water falls on Watts's glove. She looks up in surprise. Another falls on her visor. And then it's raining inside the pyramid.

Water trickles into the chasms, inundating the mossy growths that cling to the walls.

Holloway looks at Watts with a little boy's grin.

HOLLOWAY

Miracles and wonders!

The shaft of light moves on. The core chamber dims slightly. The rainfall stops as suddenly as it started.

The explorers follow the main path around the periphery of the chamber, past a gallery of mysterious machines.

There are marvels in the shadows. Cells in the dark apparatus open on startling deposits of color: translucent alabaster flutes. Honeycombs of pure gold. Matrices of crystal.

Watts waves a scanning instrument as she walks.

WATTS

Intense field readings. Huge power sources here.

PYRAMID - CORE CHAMBER - RAMP

They arrive at a wide opening in the floor. A strange ramp curves downward - its floor segmented and saw-toothed.

A bafflement: it's not a staircase. Not an escalator. No moving parts. No rails or tracks.

HOLLOWAY

Space below us. A big space.

As they stand looking, a probe bumbles up to the opening and goes bounding down the ramp. Watts laughs.

WATTS

How does this work?

She begins to descend on foot. Holloway behind her. Stillwell, Downs, and Kamarov grudgingly follow.

But DAVID looks away across the cavernous chamber - fixated on the central crystal. He beckons Ravel and Chance to follow him, and walks away.

Ravel and Chance look at each other in astonishment. Uncertainly, they follow DAVID.

LOWER PASSAGE

Holloway, Watts, and the crewmen reach the bottom of the ramp, breathing hard. A cargo rover trundles down after them.

They look back up. The ramp above them is empty.

HOLLOWAY

Ravel. Chance. Where've you gone?

DAVID! Where are you?

(to Watts, indignantly)

They didn't come down!

But Watts is staring through an archway. Transfixed.

WATTS

Look.

She walks in. Holloway follows.

CONTROL CONCOURSE

A passageway punctuated by alcoves as big as band-shells.

In each alcove stands a biomechanical apparatus - shaped from the same dark material as the pyramid itself. Each apparatus implies by its design that a giant is meant to fit inside it.

Holloway and Watts walk the concourse, playing their lights over the dark machinery. Their footsteps echo.

WATTS

Do you see, the size of them? Like that ghost we saw...

HOLLOWAY

It wasn't a ghost. Where are the others? I don't want to go back up.

Watts fiddles with her suit's comm controls. Listening.

WATTS

They switched to channel three. I hear them talking. They're okay.

HOLLOWAY

We should stay together.

INT. PYRAMID - BLIND CORRIDOR

Milburn and Fifield are lost. They bumble through the dark.

MILBURN

This is not the same place.

FIFIELD

It is! That is the same freaky thing we saw before.

He points at a detail of the architecture.

MILBURN

No it's not! The other one was more... sort of...fuck it.

(taps his comm)

Milburn to *Magellan*. Come in.

Static.

INTERSECTION

Holloway and Watts round a corner and stop in their tracks. Kamarov, Stillwell, and Downs almost run into them.

The scientists stand frozen.

In front of them lies a dead giant. An ENGINEER.

If he were standing, he would be fifteen feet tall.

He is roughly human in shape. Barrel-chested. Withered to the bones. There are bulky protrusions fused with his flesh: hard to say whether they are equipment or parts of his body.

His head, lolling to one side, is *severed from his body*.

His eyes seem to be covered by goggles; but if so then the goggles are fused with his skull. An elephantine proboscis, severed now, once connected to a protrusion on his hip.

The giant lies frozen in a convulsion of agony. His jaw gaping in a silent scream. His corpse is marred by hideous wounds: slashes that cut through bone.

The explorers move closer. Speechless.

KAMAROV

God in Heaven.

WATTS

Martin. Martin.

HOLLOWAY

I know. Look.

He lifts his light. Beyond the dead giant, a vision of Hell:

A dozen DEAD ENGINEERS lie heaped against a sealed door. Twisted in postures of torment, murdered in the attempt to escape. All bear horrific wounds.

Scene of an ancient massacre.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Janek and Vickers stare dumbstruck at a 3-D view of the dead giants captured by the explorers' cameras.

INT. *CATACOMB* - INTERSECTION

The explorers circle the decapitated giant, hushed with awe. Holloway steps close.

HOLLOWAY

"There were giants in the earth in those days...and when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, they bare children to them, who became mighty men." Genesis six four.

Lays a gloved hand reverently on the giant's ribs.

DOWNNS

(panicky)

You said don't touch anything! You said don't touch anything!

HOLLOWAY

Peace.

CHANCE

The size of them!

HOLLOWAY

In all the old mythologies, the visitors from the sky were giants.

Watts joins Holloway beside the dead Engineer. Touches the corpse in her own turn. It's hard as stone: ossified. She traces the ancient, terrible wounds.

WATTS

They were killed. All of them.

Downs stands staring at the dead giant, as shaken as Kamarov.

DOWNNS

We shouldn't be here.

HOLLOWAY

Come on. The dead can't hurt you.

(adjusts his communicator)

DAVID. Chance. Ravel. I've got something here.

Static.

WATTS

Communications are going to hell.

EXT. SPACE - LV-426 ORBIT

One of the Magellan's satellites hurtles along, high above the moon's atmosphere. It passes over the terminator line between the night side and day side.

Through the clouds below, a lightning-laced storm front rolls across LV-426 like a wave.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

Rising winds pluck at the ground cover outside the window. Janek turns from the view to look at the holographic globe.

JANEK

All hands. Back to the ship. We got a mean storm front rolling in. I repeat. All hands...

INT. DARK CITY - CATACOMBS - INTERSECTION

Standing beside the dead giant, Watts and Holloway look at each other as the signal comes in.

JANEK (V.O.)
(staticky)
front rolling...back to the ship.

HOLLOWAY
(into comm)
We've found something here! I'm not walking away for bad weather.

INT. MAGELLAN - BRIDGE - DUSK

JaneK shouts into his communicator.

JANEK
Holloway! I got two-hundred-kilometer winds with airborne silica and enough static to fry your suits. Get your asses back here! Now!

EXT. CENTRAL CRATER - DUSK

Holloway races their cargo rover away from the pyramid, wheels kicking up dust.

Watts rides in back, securing a bulky payload under a tarp on the cargo deck. Stillwell, Downs, and Kamarov clinging miserably beside her. Watts looks back:

A massive storm front chases them. A tidal wave of dust shot through with lightning. Gale-force winds tear at the ground. Lightning lashes the pyramid and the crater wall.

Reaching the *Magellan*, they see the other rover already in the airlock lift. DAVID, Ravel, and Chance aboard.

EXT. MAGELLAN - AIRLOCK LIFT

Holloway roars into the lift at speed, the rover skidding almost into the opposite wall. Watts leaps down.

The storm wall catches up to them. Screaming winds rip through the lift. Dust fills the air. Visibility plunges toward zero.

WATTS
Help me unload!

She pulls at the tarp. It tears halfway free - and fills with wind, snapping taut with such violence that Watts is hurled out into the storm.

IN THE GALE

Watts tumbles helplessly: a leaf in the wind. CRASHES into a metal stanchion. Clings, the wind knocked out of her. Ears ringing. Nothing but static in her headset.

IN THE LIFT

Holloway stares in shock at the place where Watts vanished.

HOLLOWAY

Jocelyn!

With inhuman reflexes DAVID reacts. Grabs a tether. Latches it to his suit. Locks it to an anchor point on the wall. Dives into the storm. A ballet nearly too fast to follow.

IN THE GALE

DAVID lets the wind take him. Skids across the ground, controlling his trajectory. He hits the stanchion where Watts is lodged with a CLANG as if he were made of iron.

Watts stares at him in mute astonishment.

He locks her suit to his. Activates the tether unit's winch. It whirs, reeling them in through the hurricane.

IN THE LIFT

Holloway and the other crewmen haul Watts and DAVID back inside. Holloway and Watts embrace fiercely as the lift rises toward the safety of the ship.

The crewmen bundle the rover's tarp-wrapped cargo into a sealed dumbwaiter that rises independently into the ship.

INT. MAGELLAN - AIRLOCK

The explorers strip off space suits.

Watts pulls her helmet off. Catches DAVID's eye across the airlock. Mouths a silent *Thank you*. He gives her the barest nod and vanishes into the ship.

The explorers exchange looks. A mood of exuberance and wonder prevails now that they're safe home.

HOLLOWAY

Day one.

Smiles of wonder as what they've seen comes home.

DOWNNS

Got to hand it to you, professor. You were right. Both of you.

CHANCE

What's in the tarp? What'd you bring back?

The explorers from Watts and Holloway's party exchange looks and burst into laughter.

WATTS

You don't want to know.

STILLWELL

Shit. We're two helmets short.

He points. The lockers labeled MILBURN and FIFIELD stand closed. The helmet racks empty. The laughter cuts off.

KAMAROV

They didn't come in!

They stare at each other, listening to the wind wail outside.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

Janek speaks urgently into the communicator.

JANEK

Between the wind speeds and the static electricity, there's no safe way to get to you. You're going to have to hunker down until it passes. How are your provisions?

FIFIELD (V.O.)

We got air *<static>*. Water and food tabs *<static>* suits.

JANEK

Honey sacks?

INT. DARK CITY - CATACOMB

Fifield and Milburn stand miserably in a murky passageway. Fifield hitches up his space suit's crotch uncomfortably.

FIFIELD
Yeah, we're piped.

MILBURN
I hate these fucking things.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

FIFIELD (V.O.)
We *hate* these fucking <static>, Captain.

JANEK
Maybe next time you'll mind your maps. Keep your heads down. We'll come get you in the morning.

A burst of static answers him: Fifield's voice scrambled by the storm. Unintelligible.

JANEK (CONT'D)
Magellan out.

MESS ROOM - NIGHT

All hands present excepting the two missing men. Janek plays his squeeze box, its archaic music filling the air. Tired and exuberant, the men sway and dance mockingly.

Holloway has a champagne bottle open in each hand. He fills steel cups left and right.

HOLLOWAY
My friends. What we do here marks the greatest achievement of our species. Contact with another civilization. Humanity came of age today, on this moon. You were there.
(raises his glass)
To history.

They raise cups and drink. Even the crew moved by the moment. But Janek smiles crookedly and toasts again.

JANEK

To Milburn and Fifield. The first human beings to freak out, get lost, and sleep in their suits in the ruins of an alien civilization.

INT. PYRAMID CATACOMBS - NIGHT

A vast dark maze. Milburn and Fifield grope their way through the dark with flashlights. The storm howls outside.

MILBURN

What are you looking for?

FIFIELD

(groping along the wall)
Someplace things can't come at us.

MILBURN

What's gonna come at us?

INT. *MAGELLAN* - VICKERS'S SUITE - NIGHT

DAVID stands beside Vickers at her holography terminal. He lays his hand on over a signal plate - and the terminal lights up with a three-dimensional image.

The core chamber of the pyramid, from DAVID'S point of view.

It's apparent that DAVID'S eyes see more than human eyes do. He seems to see heat and electromagnetic energy as well as visible light; calibrated readouts are overlaid on the scene.

The structures in the pyramid are surrounded by complicated patterns of energy. This is incomprehensible technology.

DAVID

The core of the pyramid. You see.

Vickers goes rigid, looking at it: avarice in her eyes.

VICKERS

We're going to protocol two.

DAVID

I understand.

LABORATORY

A high-tech science facility behind glass. Watts and Holloway, in lab gloves and smocks, open the dumbwaiter:

An ENGINEER'S HEAD rises into view, ghoulish and elephantine. Vapor rises from it. A readout blinks: STERILIZED.

They lift it onto the steel table. It takes both of them.

They pass scanners over the skull. Images accumulate and rotate on the laboratory displays. X-ray and ultrasound.

Holloway leans close to study an X-ray image. He almost seems to see a ghostly second face...

WATTS

Martin. Look.

She traces the head with an ultrasound probe: under the vibrations a seam opens up around the edge of the face.

She gets a fingertip into the seam. Works with a probe. Pries away the long-dead Engineer's mask. It comes free.

The visage revealed is human, except for its giant scale.

White-skinned. Earless. Hairless. Withered but beautiful as a Greek statue. Eyes closed. An expression of suffering on its face. Watts drops the ultrasound probe in shock.

WATTS (CONT'D)

They look like us.

HOLLOWAY

We look like them. Genesis 1:27. *"And God created man in his own image. In his own image created He him."*

Vickers and DAVID stand outside the lab window, staring in at the god's head. Vickers looks shaken. DAVID, fascinated.

Watts covers her nose in revulsion. A horrible stench: The Engineer head begins to disintegrate in front of them. Flesh oozing, skin peeling. Accelerated decay.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

It's breaking down.

WATTS

Formaldehyde!

Urgently they ransack cabinets and storage rooms. Watts finds a clear plastic drum and dumps its contents. Holloway drags five-gallon jugs of preservative out of a cabinet.

DAVID watches through the window, almost amused.

DAVID
Mortal after all.

They lift the rotting head into the drum, retching. Fingers skidding in putrefaction.

They pour formaldehyde over it. As soon as the head is immersed they rush to strip off their reeking gloves and smocks, scrubbing their hands.

The god's head sits in its murky vat, shedding skin and tofu-like chunks of white flesh. The noble face disintegrating.

Watts and Holloway stare at it, breathing hard from their work. Vickers flicks on the intercom from outside the window.

VICKERS
Your cadaver's interesting. But I'm more interested in the machinery in the pyramid. The core chamber. What do you think it does?

Watts stares at Vickers incredulously.

WATTS
How could anyone know...

HOLLOWAY
I know what it does.

Silence. Holloway looks at Vickers wearily, as if he's seen this conversation coming. He glances at Watts.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)
Think. What we've seen. What we know.

Watts rises to the challenge. Thinking on her feet.

WATTS
Twenty-four pyramids scattered around the moon's equator. Massive power supplies. Vents in the walls. Atmosphere changes. Breeder tanks...
(she's got it)
The pyramids are terraforming machines.

Holloway grins, exuberant. His theory playing out perfectly. He doesn't see Vickers stiffen. Her hands curling into fists.

HOLLOWAY
That's why Earth's ancient cultures built pyramids: in imitation of the gods.

(MORE)

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

Twelve thousand years ago, beings from the sky set pyramids on the Earth and transformed the world. That's what they were doing here - before their civilization failed.

Watts stares at the head in its tank. The severed neck.

WATTS

It didn't fail. It was wiped out.

INT. CATACOMBS - INSECT CHAMBER

Milburn and Fifield have bunked down in a new chamber: they slouch against a wall. Milburn sweeps the room with his headlamp. Stoops to lift something into the light.

MILBURN

Look at this!

A CENTIPEDE, three feet long and thick as man's thumb. Its hard shell is gray. It has a hammer-head like a shark.

FIFIELD

Jesus! Put it down!

He leaps back, wild-eyed.

Milburn laughs at him. Lets the eyeless centipede wind its segmented body around his space-suited arm.

In the flat face, a white vertical slit appears. Changes quickly to a horizontal position; opens enough to suggest a mouth. Milburn doesn't notice this development.

MILBURN

Relax. Your suit's bug-proof. Hell, it's bulletproof.

The centipede spirals around his arm, glittering, its body moving in fluid waves. The blind head quests between his fingers. Milburn loses his nerve as the thing's mouth suddenly gapes wide as a shark's.

MILBURN (CONT'D)

That's enough.

He tries to pull it off.

The centipede locks its segments together and digs in with its body. It might as well be made of iron.

MILBURN (CONT'D)
 (panicking)
 Get it off! It's crushing me!

Fifield pulls out a utility knife. Cuts into the centipede's body behind its head.

A gout of greed ACID spills over Milburn's glove. Smoke rises as the acid quickly burns a hole through the material.

Milburn's shout of astonishment turns to a wail of agony.

MILBURN (CONT'D)
 AHH! Help me! Christ!

The centipede snakes into the smoking hole in the glove. Crawls upward into Milburn's suit - toward his head.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - LABORATORY - NIGHT

Holloway stands studying the data displays: cross-sections of the Engineer's skull.

Watts scrutinizes the head itself, her nose an inch from the plastic tank. Not a pretty sight.

As she watches, a current in the formaldehyde peels away one gossamer eyelid. The revealed eye is black as obsidian, iridescent like opal. A jewel.

Fascinated, Watts pulls out a plastic case. Opens it to reveal a high-tech control unit with a screen. She pops open a plastic capsule: removes a tiny SEED PROBE, smaller than a grain of rice. Drops it into the vat.

Under her guidance, the seed probe swims to the severed neck. Burrows into the *medulla oblongata* toward the brain.

ON A SCREEN: In the probe's POV the medulla looks like a tunnel. The probe climbs along neural channels.

Another screen shows the probe's progress through the skull.

Glasse enters. Stands beside Holloway to watch Watts at work.

HOLLOWAY
 You won't get anything. Tissue's too degraded. Hmm. Brain chamber's massive, even proportionately.

WATTS
 Neural paths are still conductive.

The seed probe reaches the optic nerve of the exposed eye - and its POV fills with a vision of glory: a beautiful woman's face surrounded by a mystical nimbus of light. An angel.

Glasse and Holloway gasp. The woman in the blurry vision is Watts - as seen by the dead Engineer's eye.

GLASSE
Incredible.

The image dissolves into noise. Error messages flicker across the display. Watts sighs.

WATTS
Formaldehyde's killing the tissue.

Holloway stares at Watts, awe on his face.

HOLLOWAY
Did you record that?

WATTS
Of course.

AT A LAB TABLE

Watts dissects one of the Engineer's eyes - working underwater in a shallow tub of preservative. Glasse looks on avidly, an unabashed fan.

Watts wears a pair of magnifying goggles on her forehead - the lenses lowering and rising at need.

She bisects the apple-sized eyeball carefully and extracts the hard lens from behind the cornea. Holds the lens up to her eye. It is opalescent, almost luminous.

WATTS (CONT'D)
The lens is where the phase shift happens.

The uncorrected view through the lens is blurry.

WATTS (CONT'D)
Glasse. I want to look through these lenses. Can you seal them and do the optical correction?

Glasse reaches out and plucks the magnifying goggles from Watts's forehead. He grins.

GLASSE
Got an idea about that.

INT. CATACOMBS - INSECT CHAMBER

Milburn writhes on the ground, heels drumming frantically against the deck. Excruciating screams.

Fifielid kneels over him, helplessly pulling at the tail of the centipede - which has all but vanished into Milburn's suit. A trickle of scarlet from the hole.

Fifielid is delirious with horror. He clutches at the centipede in vain. It slips through his gloves.

Milburn claws at Fifielid, wild-eyed.

MILBURN

Cut off my arm. Cut off my -

He convulses. Spits blood. The head of the centipede emerges between his teeth. He seizes. Choking and dying.

FIFIELD

Jesus Christ!

He leaps up. Backs away. Runs into the dark.

INT. CATACOMBS - LONELY PASSAGE - NIGHT

Fifielid stumbles along. Exhausted. Pouring sweat inside his suit. He is hopelessly lost. He slams into a resinous structure that topples to the floor. Things break.

He whips his light around in jittery paranoia. Taps at his comm controls, getting only static.

In Fifielid's headlamp beam, the blackness is filling with motes of light. A blizzard of tiny flying insects.

SCARABS.

FIFIELD

Fifielid to *Magellan*. Come on, come on.
Anybody, seriously! God damn it!

Scarabs flit through the darkness around him. They alight on his shoulders. Crawl over his visor. Obscuring his vision.

FIFIELD (CONT'D)

Get off!

He swats at his visor, killing some. The crushed insects produce acid that eats into the plexiglass in seconds.

FIFIELD (CONT'D)

Shit.

He twists, craning with his flashlight to inspect himself. Brushes scarabs away right and left.

Acid opens a hole in his visor. Scarabs are inside. Buzzing around his head. Fifield freaks out, clawing at his helmet.

A scarab bites his cheek.

FLASH ON:

The microscopic world - as strange DNA invades Fifield's bloodstream. Virulent strands of protein attack the native DNA, transforming...

FIFIELD

As his pupils dilate, breath hissing into his nostrils. His expanding body stiffens as if shocked by a powerful electric current. He screams. Falls, convulsing.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - NIGHT

The storm batters the ship, bouncing it on its suspension.

SCIENTISTS' CABIN - NIGHT

Watts and Holloway lie in bed, exhausted. Arms around each other. Watts stares into space.

WATTS

We found the gods. And they've been murdered.

HOLLOWAY

You've pried too many arrowheads out of old skulls to get squeamish now. They've been dead what, eighteen hundred years? Two thousand?

WATTS

What could kill them?

Holloway contemplates the question.

HOLLOWAY

Who knows?
(he laughs bitterly)
(MORE)

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

But I guess we know why they never came back to us. Something killed them off - back around the time of Christ. Maybe He was one of them! A great teacher, sent from Heaven? Jesus. The last Engineer.

WATTS

Martin, stop!

She slaps at him. Holloway laughs.

BRIDGE

Janek stands at the Bridge window, staring out into the storm. Buffeting clouds and howling winds. The lighthouse beams of the Magellan's beacons sweeping through the cloud.

He plays his squeeze box in the teeth of the storm.

JANEK

(singing)

You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me...

Behind him, DAVID appears on the Bridge. Steals across the Bridge to a ladder. Descends into the compartment below...

NAVIGATION COMPUTER ROOM

DAVID activates the navigation computer terminal: light bathes his face. His fingers fly over the keyboard, silently and swiftly, with superhuman dexterity.

DAVID

(quietly)

Activate. Administrative override.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - DAWN

Daylight filters through the clouds. The storm has passed. The *Magellan* sits intact on its landing struts.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - VICKERS'S SUITE - SECRET ROOM - DAWN

The high-tech room hums at a different frequency now. Indicator lights green and ready. Vickers throws switches.

Four HIBERNATION PODS slide out of the metal walls. From each pod, a muscular SOLDIER rouses from sleep. They are scarred and crew-cut. Tough customers. They wake like veterans.

Their leader sits up and clasps his head with a wince. This is CAPTAIN SHEPHERD, a career mercenary who has followed the highest paycheck to this strange duty.

VICKERS
Captain Shepherd.

SHEPHERD
(squinting in the light)
Reporting.

Lydia Vickers. I'm your authority.

SHEPHERD (CONT'D)
Understood.

VICKERS
I'll brief you on the way. We need to move.

SHEPHERD
No breakfast?

CORRIDOR

Vickers strides forward. Four soldiers at her heels: Captain Shepherd, VIGODA, RAY, and CARD. They walk in unison, their boots drumming on the deck.

SCIENTISTS' CABIN

Holloway and Watts lie sleeping. The distant drum of marching feet rouses them. Watts frowns at Holloway.

WATTS
What is that?

E.V.A. ROOM

The prep room inside the airlocks. A soldier, VIGODA, waits there: a slim dark man with an air of calm.

Holloway and Watts arrive in civilian clothes, perplexed.

HOLLOWAY

Where is everybody? We can't -
(he stops short)
Who are you?

VIGODA

Captain Janek took his crew out to
retrieve his missing men. They never
came in.

HOLLOWAY

And you are...

VIGODA

Vigoda. Weyland Security detail.

The scientists are dumbfounded. His presence is impossible.

WATTS

Where'd you come from?

VIGODA

Director's call to brief you on that.
I'm supposed to escort you to the
worksite.

HOLLOWAY

Worksite?

Vigoda glances at a mapping unit.

VIGODA

Haven't been out yet. I understand
it's in some kind of pyramid.

CORRIDOR - VICKERS'S CABIN DOOR

A furious Holloway and Watts, trailed by Vigoda, arrive at
Vickers's cabin. They are astonished to find Shepherd
standing guard at the door.

VICKERS'S SUITE

Vickers sits calmly at her desk. Holloway and Watts stand in
front of her, bristling.

HOLLOWAY

Why wasn't I told about these
additional personnel?

VICKERS

They're my personnel. On my ship.

WATTS

What are the guns for?

Vickers looks at them unflappably. Sure of her ground now.

VICKERS

I'm being careful. These new finds give our work a new importance.

WATTS

You should have talked to us. Martin's mission leader. That's in our contract.

VICKERS

The second you found alien technology, control of this mission reverted to me. *That's* in your contract too.

Watts and Holloway exchange grim looks. Vickers has them.

VICKERS (CONT'D)

Mr. Weyland's pouring trillions into Mars. He's spent a fortune building ships like the *Magellan* to search for colony planets. But Earthlike worlds are vanishingly rare. The right distance from the sun, the right atmosphere, enough water...

She glances across the suite at her holographic display: a live feed from the pyramid worksite, where DAVID works on the terraforming equipment.

VICKERS (CONT'D)

This is a technology to transform worlds. He'll never give it up.
(she turns to face them)
And neither will I.

HOLLOWAY

The science must come first. You can wait until we've documented...

VICKERS

You're standing on an alien world courtesy of Weyland Industries. Be grateful.

Watts approaches the holography terminal, staring at the images in horror.

WATTS

What are they *doing* in there?!

INT. PYRAMID - CORE CHAMBER - DAY

Watts and Holloway, in space suits, arrive on the scene:

Powerful floodlights illuminate the core chamber, beating back the gloom. A fine spray of water falls out of the darkness overhead.

DAVID, Chance, and Ravel are dismantling the hulking mechanism at the core of the pyramid - peeling its thick skin away with power saws and compact explosives.

DAVID operates a diamond-bladed hull saw, carving away the terraforming systems thick skin.

Robotic scanners take high-resolution scans of the machinery.

Two Weyland Security soldiers - Card and Ray - stand guard in combat vacuum suits. Automatic rifles at the ready.

Watts takes in the destruction with dismay. Beside her, Holloway is all but gnashing his teeth.

CATACOMBS

Janek drives a cargo rover carrying a search party, flashlight beams sweeping: Stillwell, Glasse, Downs, and Brick. Janek studies an electronic map as he drives.

GLASSE

(into comm)

Milburn. Fifield. You read me? Come back.

JANEK

We should be getting beacons off their suits.

STILLWELL

Shielding in the walls?

BRICK

Suits could have failed.

JANEK

Both suits?

PYRAMID - CORE CHAMBER

Watts watches in rage as a large section of the central mechanism's falls with a thunderous clamor to the deck.

Holloway touches her shoulder. Motions for her to follow.

LOWER PASSAGE

Holloway and Watts pass the dead Engineers they discovered the previous day.

WATTS

We found the tomb of the gods, and brought grave-robbers right to the door.

HOLLOWAY

Let them scratch. This find's too big to ruin. There's two dozen pyramids on this moon. Anyway, they're on the wrong track. That's infrastructure.

Holloway plays his flashlight over the biomechanical apparatuses lining the walls.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

The core activity of the complex was down here.

They turn a corner. DEAD ENGINEERS lie scattered over the floor in front of them. Desiccated and skeletal. Long dead.

Watts moves among them, fascinated. These Engineers all died of explosive chest wounds: ribs bent outward from within. They are otherwise unmarked.

Holloway's more interested in the mechanisms: high-tech iron maidens, built to fit the bodies of giants. Some suggest sitting positions, others standing. Their design is invasive: meant not merely to embrace, but to penetrate, to fuse.

WATTS

Something different killed these.

SHADOWY COLONNADE

Watts and Holloway explore a wide colonnade. She is still distracted by the ancient dead; he by the machinery.

Holloway walks down a narrow branching hall. So intent on the mechanisms in the walls, he almost doesn't see the AIRSHAFT plunging down into darkness in front of him.

He stops just in time. Turns back...

A GHOST appears right in front of him - a giant dragging himself across the floor, his monstrous visage eye to eye with Holloway and looming closer.

Holloway leaps back with a gasp - and falls down the shaft. The ghost stares after him as if watching his fall. Disappears in a puff of static.

Watts crosses down the main colonnade, searching.

WATTS
Martin? Martin!

An iris door closes over the shaft.

COLONNADE

Searching, Watts walks anxiously through the dark, sweeping with her light. Shouting for Holloway. She breaks into a run.

CATACOMBS - MILBURN'S RESTING PLACE

Janek and Stillwell stand aghast. Their flashlights illuminate a hideous sight:

Milburn lies dead on the deck. His body contorted in agony. His head inside his helmet is gnawed down to the bone.

STILLWELL
What happened to him?

Stillwell removes the dead man's helmet. The CENTIPEDE scuttles out onto the deck: doubled in size. Stillwell leaps back with a cry.

Janek pulls his pistol. Puts three rounds through the bug. It dies in a spray of acid that burns holes in the black floor.

Janek watches in astonishment as a pin-prick dot of acid eats a pit in his gunbarrel.

DOWNS (O.S.)
Captain.

Downs approaches, holding pieces of a shattered helmet: the stencilled lettering on the helmet reads FIFIELD.

Janek's jaw clenches grimly. His voice is resigned:

JANEK
Where's the rest of him?

DOWNS

No sign.

JANEK

All right. We're done here. All hands back aboard.

STILLWELL

What about Milburn?

They look down at the ravaged corpse.

JANEK

We can't bring the body aboard. God knows what's in there. Bag him. We'll put him in an ore hopper.

INT. MAGELLAN - VICKERS'S SUITE

Vickers stares at her holography terminal: it displays Janek's helmet-cam view: the Milburn's body, sealed in clear plastic in the bed of a cargo rover.

JANEK (V.O.)

(filtered)

Repeat, I have two men down. I'm pulling my crew back to the ship. I'd advise you to do the...

WATTS (V.O.)

(breaking in, filtered)

Please, anyone...I need help. Martin's missing.

Vickers looks nervously from one video feed to the next.

JANEK (V.O.)

(filtered)

Watts. Where are you?

Vickers turns: Captain Shepherd stands behind her, watching. She strives to control the quaver in her voice.

VICKERS

Captain Shepherd. Consider yourself responsible for my personal security.

CATACOMBS - JUNCTURE

Watts stands beside Janek's rover in a wide dark passageway.

JANEK

I've just lost a third of my crew. I'm not sending any more men off into the dark.

WATTS

We can't leave Martin out there.

JANEK

Get Vickers to lend you some soldiers.

WATTS

(furiously)

She says "her forces are committed."

Janek sighs. Glances at the rover: Milburn dead in the back, Stillwell, Downs and Kamarov looking jumpy and eager to go. Downs shakes his head grimly: *No way.*

DAVID (O.S.)

I'll stay.

DAVID steps out of the dark. Calm as ever. A slim machine gun slung over his shoulder.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You'll be safe.

WATTS

Thank you.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - DAY

Janek and his crew unload Milburn's body from the rover.

JANEK

Put him in the number one ore hopper.
Get the scrubbers on in the airlock.
Sterilize everything.

MINUTES LATER

Stillwell uses a remote to lower an ore hopper from the belly of the ship. A thick steel bin on heavy chains. He loads the body bag into the hopper.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - AIRLOCK

The crewmen enter one at a time - blasted by sterilizing sprays and radiations.

INT. PYRAMID - LOWER PASSAGE

DAVID and Watts move through the dark. She searches with her flashlight beam. DAVID looks around in the dark as if the catacomb were illuminated. Rapt admiration on his face.

DAVID

You and Holloway should work with me. I'm learning amazing things. This mechanism - the first layer uses energy fields to catalyze chemical reactions. The second can suspend the strong and weak forces - transmuting one element into another. The third layer builds customized bacteria. Seeds the air with them. It creates life as a tool, to change worlds.

WATTS

I can't think about this now!

DAVID

You should.
(he sighs)
I understand. You're emotional.

WATTS

I'm human.

DAVID

That's what I mean.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

Janek stands on the Bridge, looking out at the fading light. A towering wall of cloud rushes over the horizon.

A storm front rolls across the holographic globe.

INT. PYRAMID - LOWER PASSAGE

DAVID and Watts keep searching. Their communicators crackle.

JANEK (V.O.)

(filtered)

Watts. We've got another storm front coming in. Looks like it follows the sunset line. If you're coming in you'd better do it now.

WATTS
(angrily)
No.

DAVID
I see light.

Watts squints into the darkness. She sees nothing.

WATTS
Janek, hang on...

She sees it. A dim light bobbing far ahead in the passageway. She runs forward - finds Holloway staggering blearily toward her, leaning on the wall. His helmet and most of his gear are missing; only his chest lamp shines.

WATTS (CONT'D)
We've got him!
(to Holloway)
Martin! Where's your helmet?

He's disoriented: he stares at her face for a moment before she registers. His teeth chatter. He's freezing.

HOLLOWAY
Broken. I fell. Little...disoriented.
I've just been...

He waves a hand vaguely at the tunnels behind him.

DAVID removes his own helmet. Fits it over Holloway's head.

DAVID
Here. I can do without this.

WATTS
Let's get you home.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - AIRLOCK LIFT - DUSK

DAVID - bareheaded in the winds - walks Watts and Holloway onto the airlock.

DAVID looks over his shoulder at the canal leading back to the central crater. As the airlock lift begins to rise, he steps backward out into the storm. Turns and runs through the gale toward the pyramid.

Watts watches him go in astonishment.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - EXCURSION CHAMBER

Watts helps Holloway out of his space suit. Janek looks on.

JANEK

I didn't think I'd see you again. You know we lost two men.

Holloway still looks too weary to think straight. He nods.

HOLLOWAY

She told me. I'm sorry.

He stands abruptly, swaying a little.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

I need to lie down. We'll size things up in the morning. Fair enough?

JANEK

Of course.

PASSAGEWAY

Holloway and Watts walk aft toward their cabin. Watts looks worried - but Holloway shows little of the weakness he just claimed to feel.

WATTS

What happened to you?

HOLLOWAY

(quietly)

Not here.

SCIENTISTS' CABIN - WASHROOM - NIGHT

Holloway stands shirtless in the tiny space, brushing his teeth. A red weal around his neck.

Watts stands beside him, watching him in the mirror.

HOLLOWAY

Jocelyn. I saw something. God, my mouth tastes like an old boot.

He spits. Rinses. She touches the mark on his neck.

WATTS

What's this?

HOLLOWAY

Neck-ring of my suit, I think. Fell on it.

He rubs his neck, eyes far away. Watts watches him curiously.

WATTS

What did you see?

HOLLOWAY

After my fall, I woke up walking. Delirious. My helmet wasn't right. I took it off. I was in and out. I just wandered. I went up into a huge space like a cathedral. And I found a model of the galaxy. Floating in the air.

WATTS

Are you okay? You sound...

HOLLOWAY

This was real. My headset video is wherever my helmet is...but my suit tracker will show where I was.

He turns to her.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

Listen. This star map had a marker representing Earth. Very clear. Another marker I'm sure represents this moon. But there were others. At least seven or eight more.

Watts stares at him, her eyes coming alight.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

The Engineers aren't from here. This moon's just an outpost. Abandoned. But if we follow that map, we may yet make contact with a living civilization.

WATTS

Martin.

HOLLOWAY

The location of the Engineer worlds is the real prize. Next to that, Weyland's terraforming is chump change. We need to get coordinates. And keep them from the Company. We have to play this smart.

WATTS

All right.

HOLLOWAY

Two men dead...Vickers is jumpy. As soon as she gets what she wants, she'll take this ship home. We have to move fast.

Holloway trembles. A sheen of sweat on his skin.

WATTS

We will. You all right?

He's frightened. Brazens through it. Pulls her into his arms.

HOLLOWAY

I'm fine, now.

He kisses her.

BEDROOM

Holloway tumbles Watts onto the bed. Pulls her shirt off. They struggle out of their clothes, clinging to one another.

Holloway's ill at ease: something's wrong inside him, he feels it. He dives into Watts as if for refuge. They make love.

Sitting atop Holloway, Watts lays a hand on his chest.

WATTS

Your heart's beating so hard.

HOLLOWAY

That's your fault.

Vulnerability in his voice. Fear under the surface.

He rolls on top of her. Drives her into the mattress. She holds him protectively: not deceived by his bravado.

Suddenly Holloway tenses, muscles rigid. Shuddering. Watts draws breath through her teeth with a hiss. Eyes open. Her fingers rake his back.

He SCREAMS.

Horribly. Eyes bulging. Tendons standing out of his throat. Watts jumps violently underneath him.

WATTS

Martin! Martin!

He begins to convulse. She rolls him onto the bed beside her, trying to contain his spasms. His teeth grind.

WATTS (CONT'D)

Martin!

A horrible CRACK. In the middle of Holloway's chest, beneath the sternum, a grotesque head pushes out through the skin. A PARASITE. Blood fountains from the ruinous wound.

Holloway goes into a massive seizure. Violently lashing out.

Watts stares at the parasite fighting its way out of his body. It is *white and boneless*. Glistening. It flails its hideous lunging jaw.

Watts screams and screams.

The parasite frees itself from its savage womb and turns on Watts. She slaps at it blindly. It *HISSES* at her.

She squirms away across the floor, tangled in the bloody sheet. The thing comes after her.

CORRIDOR - TRACKING SHOT

Watts's screams echo through the *Magellan*. Stillwell runs down the hallway, searching for the source.

SCIENTISTS' CABIN

The parasite chases Watts across the floor. She leaps into the clothes-locker and slams the steel door.

The parasite flattens itself. Slick as an octopus, it begins to slide under the locker door. Watts shrieks in horror.

Stillwell bursts into the cabin, Janek right behind him.

Quick as a cat, the parasite darts to a floor vent and slithers bonelessly between the bars.

Watts bursts out of the locker, naked and bloodied. Rushes to Holloway where he lies on the gory mattress, a horrific hole in his chest. He is beyond all help.

WATTS

Martin. Martin!

Janek and Stillwell struggle to take in what they're seeing. Stillwell pulls Holloway's jacket off a chair. Wraps it around Watts. Pulls her gently away from the bed.

She looks at him, uncomprehending. Shock setting in.

BREAK ROOM

Watts sits at a steel table, deep in shock. She wears an oversized crew coverall: her skin still streaked with dried blood under the fabric.

A knot of crewmen around her. Janek, Stillwell, Brick, Glasse and Downs. Janek looks at Glasse.

JANEK

Take care of her. Get her a sedative.
Downs. Get Holloway into a freezer.
Everybody else with me.

INT. CATACOMBS - DARKNESS

A horrible sound of breathing, ragged and wet.

In a corner, lit by a green glow from seams in the floor -

A FIGURE IN A WHITE SPACE SUIT lies writhing weakly.

The insignia on the suit's chestplate reads FIFIELD. The suit's helmet is shattered. Inside the helmet, Fifield's head is a horror: a gelatinous mass, skin reduced to putty.

The softened bones of his skull change shape as we watch. Elongating. Fifield mews in pain.

INT. MAGELLAN - CAPTAIN'S WARDROOM

Janek keys open the arms locker in his wardroom. Unlocks automatic pistols from their rack one by one, and hands them to Stillwell and Kamarov.

HYPERSLEEP COMPARTMENT

Holloway's body lies frozen in his hypersleep freezer, blue with frost. The horrific wound yawning in his chest.

Watts enters. Cleaned up. She opens the freezer. Her hand caresses Holloway's cold cheek tenderly. Slides over his collarbone - lies flat on his chest above his awful wound.

Glasse enters. Reacts in dismay. Tries to pull her back.

GLASSE
You don't want to see that...

She turns on him fiercely.

WATTS
I want to understand.

INT. MESS ROOM - DAWN

The entire complement of the ship gathers for an emergency meeting. Janek at the head of the hall. Glasse, Downs, Brick, Stillwell, and Kamarov seated with pistols on their hips.

To one side: Vickers with Captain Shepherd and Vigoda.

JANEK
All right! Listen up. I expect you all know what...

Watts enters. They all stare at her, knowing what she's been through. With averted eyes she crosses the room. Sits alone.

JANEK (CONT'D)
We've got some kind of parasite aboard ship.

VICKERS
I suggest you kill it.

DOWNNS
There's a bright idea.

KAMAROV
Show us where it is, lady. We just spent five hours looking for the damn thing.

WATTS
We found Engineers who died like Martin.

Silence. They all turn to look at her.

WATTS (CONT'D)
Explosive wounds in the chest. Whatever killed Martin is the same thing that killed the Engineers a thousand years ago.

STILLWELL

Jesus.

WATTS

But not all the Engineers died that way. The others were torn apart. Slashed to pieces.

A murmur among the men as the implications of that sink in. Even Vickers is disconcerted.

JANEK

We're a modular ship. Self-contained life-support and power in every section. I say put the ship in orbit. Vent every compartment to space. Sit in vacuum at twenty degrees Kelvin for a week. Kill anything.

DOWNS

Then what?

STILLWELL

Straight home, man.

VICKERS

This ship doesn't lift until our work's done.

She joins Janek at the head of the room. Shepherd and Vigoda flank her, rifles slung. The soldiers scan the room, meeting each man's eyes. The quiet threat is unmistakable.

JANEK

Are you serious?

VICKERS

We spent years and billions of dollars getting here. The technology we came for is in our hands. We just need a little more time.

JANEK

We're barely here three days and three men dead!

VICKERS

They were careless.

JANEK

Careless!

As the argument picks up heat, Watts slips out of the room.

EXCURSION CHAMBER

Watts, in a space suit, no helmet, opens Holloway's locker.

She pulls out the space suit he wore on the last day of his life. HOLLOWAY stenciled on the chest. Her fingers linger in its folds as if she could soak up some last trace of him.

She pulls the tracking chip from the chestplate of his suit.

Plugs the chip into a map unit. The holographic map lights up. The legend in the corner reads MARTIN HOLLOWAY.

A wandering path shows Holloway's final exploration. Markers on the map denote his photographs, field notes and scans.

Watts touches a marker. One of Holloway's field notes plays:

HOLLOWAY (V.O.)

(filtered)

Seven dead Engineers all facing the same way. Going where? Jocelyn's right, we don't see the big picture yet. Another level below me. I'm going down.

SERVICE CORRIDOR

A hunting party convenes: Card and Vigoda in combat coveralls with submachine guns; Downs, Kamarov and Stillwell wearing tool belts and pistols.

The soldiers carry map units, squinting at the plan of the unfamiliar ship: decks upon decks.

CARD

Vigoda, take Kamarov and work the number one accessway. I'll work number three with Downs and Stillwell.

DOWNNS

(rebellious)

You in charge now?

CARD

Tactical op.

KAMAROV

Yeah, well, Stillwell's the ventilation specialist, and life support's that way. Downs is electricians and the regulators are that way.

Vigoda grins wryly. Card glowers. They switch corridors.

INT. PYRAMID WORKSITE

Ravel and Chance toil away at their dissection of the terraforming pyramid. Ray stands sentry.

DAVID is nowhere to be seen.

Watts rolls up in a rover and gets out. Heads for the ramp to the catacombs below. Ravel and Chance watch her pass without comment and return to their work.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - SERVICE DECK - DAY

Kamarov and Vigoda, standing in front of an open vent, are in a full-fledged argument.

KAMAROV

You got the rifle. But you want ME to stick my head in the hole.

VIGODA

We grunts don't know nothing about ships, right?

KAMAROV

What's the damn gun for if you're gonna stand behind me the whole time?

Vigoda grins.

VIGODA

I kill whatever kills you.

KAMAROV

Funny. You take this vent, funny guy. I'll be on four.

INT. PYRAMID - RAMP

Watts descends alone into the lower passages below the pyramid. A tiny figure in the vast darkness.

She holds her map unit as a pilgrim holds a bible: a guide in the darkness. Holloway's name and course in shining symbols. She follows his path into the unknown.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - MAINTENANCE BAY - DAY

Kamarov carries a stepladder into a utilitarian steel compartment. Drops the ladder under an air vent and steps up.

He pulls a powered wrench from his belt. With the wrench cocked like a hammer, he eases up and peers cautiously through the vent with a flashlight. Nothing to see.

He snorts. Removes the vent cover. Feels around inside.

He gasps in shock. Pulls out an atmosphere sensor that's been bitten in half. He takes his comm handset off his belt.

KAMAROV
(into handset)
I got more damage on four.

He hangs the handset on his belt. Takes one last look into the vent. Squints curiously. Reaches deep inside.

A hiss inside the vent. Kamarov whips his flashlight up, peering inside. Snatches his arm back -

- but something snatches him faster.

An unseen force drags Kamarov's right arm into the vent with hideous strength. He cries out in pain.

He drops his light. Tries to reach his pistol with his left hand. It's on his right hip. He can't reach across.

He braces his head against the vent's edge. Clenches his teeth and strains.

A horrific YANK drags his head and arm together into the vent. They barely fit: he loses some skin on the way in. His feet come off the stepladder. He struggles on tip-toe.

Horrific force collapses Kamarov's shoulder. Bones crack. The thing in the vent drags him through that hole he doesn't fit through. By the time his ribs are in he stops screaming.

His body disappears into the hole. Hips, legs, boots.

BRIDGE

Janek stands staring out at the barren moon. The Bridge intercom squawks:

BRICK (V.O.)
Captain!

JANEK

Brick. What you got?

BRICK (V.O.)

It's Kamarov.

ENGINEERING DECK - ATMOSPHERE PLANT

The *Magellan's* life support center. A deep rumble of ventilation fans.

JaneK and stands beside Brick, Glasse, Downs and Stillwell. Shepherd and Vigoda look on from the doorway.

In front of them, an eight-inch metal duct has been cut open. Kamarov is stuffed inside, dead and broken: limbs folded, drenched in blood. A human plug in a pipe.

INT. CATACOMBS

Watts moves through the darkness with her map unit. Her headlamp sweeping nervously.

A CLATTER behind her makes her spin: but it's only a spherical mapping probe, bumping through the dark.

She walks on -

HOLLOWAY (O.S.)

(filtered)

Jocelyn!

The voice transfixes her where she stands, a look of holy dread on her face. Shivering, she prowls toward the sound.

XENOMORPH INCUBATOR

Watts enters a new chamber, looking around in astonishment. The domed ceiling is honeycombed with cells like a beehive. Grotesque molluscoid organisms are secreted in them - their vile orifices cinched tightly shut.

Watts stumbles on something: looking down, she sees a helmet. Picks it up. The stenciled label reads HOLLOWAY. The clear visor has been melted through by a powerful acid.

She looks up: a tracheal airshaft curves up into the dark.

An electric CRACKLE. A flare of blue light makes Watts leap back against the wall.

Holloway falls out of overhead shaft and crashes to the floor. He lies in pain, barely conscious. Blue and luminous, a holographic ghost.

Watts stares, paralyzed. The ghost gasps out a word:

HOLLOWAY

Jocelyn!

Holloway's headlamp shines on the molluscoid right overhead: the beam awakens the organism. Its sphincter mouth dilates.

A soft white octopoid FACEHUGGER descends on a quivering rope of mucus. Sprawls slitheringly over his clear visor.

Acid HISSES. Smoke rises from the glass.

The vision vanishes in a sizzle of static. Watts huddles against the wall, gasping.

In the beam of her flashlight, the FACEHUGGER lies dead, legs curled in.

She looks up. Sees the open molluscoid above where Holloway lay. The other molluscoids not yet opened in their cells.

Terror. She steals out of the chamber.

LOWER CORRIDOR

Watts emerges into a hallway. Leans against the wall, wide-eyed. Panting with the horror of what she's seen.

She glances left and right. Jumpy now.

All is silent. She lifts the map unit. A trace leads off into the dark. If Holloway's course before was direct and clear, now it is a meandering thread. A drunkard's walk.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - CORRIDOR

Janek pulls his communicator from his belt as he strides along. Punches a control.

His voice reverberates over the ship's public address system.

JANEK

All hands, duty stations. Ready for flight. The *Magellan* is lifting.

Vickers pursues him down the corridor, shouting.

VICKERS
Captain. Captain!

BRIDGE

Janek strides onto the Bridge, Vickers a terrier on his heels. But something in the faces of his men stops him cold.

Glasse and Brick look stricken.

JANEK
What is it?

GLASSE
Nav computer's not responding. "Access denied."

In disbelief, Janek strides to his Captain's chair. Taps controls. What he sees takes the wind out of him. He stares at Vickers in outrage and violation.

JANEK
What have you done to my ship?

Vickers is legitimately shocked. She shakes her head.

VICKERS
Nothing. What's wrong?

INT. CATACOMBS - UNDERGROUND HANGAR

A circular chamber of stunning size - a thousand feet across. Its lofty ceiling flat and segmented, designed to open. Watts follows her map into the space in awe.

Dominating the hangar is a ship: the vast horseshoe-shaped vessel familiar from the original film. We will come to know it as the JUGGERNAUT. It's at rest on its landing gear. Skeletal gangways slanting up to its three massive doors.

Watts glances at her map: Holloway's holographic trace leads right up the gangway into the ship. She goes.

PILOT CHAMBER

Watts passes through a circular space with a high domed ceiling. A green glow emanates from grooves in the floor.

In the center of the chamber: a PILOT'S CHAIR.

A mechanical throne built to giant scale. Its seat segmented like an armadillo's back. Tubes and conduits poised and waiting for some connection. The chair is empty.

Above the chair, a massive telescope-like apparatus juts into the air, its function unknowable.

NAVIGATION CHAMBER

An extraordinary facility.

A console, nearly five feet high and broad as a dance floor, dominates the room.

Four immense coffin-like cockpits are built into the console. In each of these a NAVIGATOR - an Engineer - lies long dead.

But the real spectacle is overhead. The ORRERY:

The barrel-vaulted ceiling is traced with circular arches of some exotic alloy, as if to trace celestial courses.

The air above the console is filled with spheres of light. They are nearly still: but close study reveals them all to be in motion, drifting with the movements of the cosmos.

Watts stares at the Orrery in amazement. Somewhere among those heavenly spheres is Earth. Somewhere perhaps the homeworld of the Engineers themselves.

A bizarre sound: a section of blank wall suddenly unravels itself, becoming an open door. DAVID walks in, his hand raised in command. He clearly caused the door to open.

WATTS

DAVID.

DAVID

Dr. Watts. I didn't expect you.
Do you know what this is?

Watts points at the door DAVID just opened.

WATTS

How did you do that?

A flicker of disappointment in the android's face. Contempt.

DAVID

Ah. You don't see.
(he smiles)
I call this ship the Juggernaut.
Chariot of the Gods.
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

This is the navigation computer, for want of a better term. But it's much more than that. It seems to hold the observable universe in its memory.

He gestures in the air: the spheres reconfigure themselves at his command, swarming and zooming.

Watts stares at DAVID, conflicted: her desire for information warring with the agenda that brought her here.

WATTS

Their homeworld. Do you see where the Engineers come from?

DAVID

There are safeguards on that data. It's toward the galactic center. Sagittarius Arm.

WATTS

DAVID. The creature that killed Martin. There are thousands of them under the pyramid. Hatcheries.

DAVID

I know.

WATTS

(shocked)

Those things wiped out the Engineers on this moon.

DAVID

I've succeeded in connecting with the Juggernaut's systems, Dr. Watts. I know a great deal today I didn't know yesterday. I'm on the verge of activating more systems. Archives.

WATTS

(horrified)

You're turning things on? This site should be sealed. Evacuated.

DAVID

Would Holloway have walked away from this? There's no greater work I can imagine.

WATTS

It's too dangerous.

DAVID

Only for the ignorant. Dr. Watts. I've read your file. Your intelligence scores are even higher than Professor Holloway's. But he had a kind of courage. An audacity of imagination. If you could find that in yourself...

Watts stares at him, realization growing in her eyes. DAVID is off the reservation.

WATTS

If your owner gives you a direct order, you have to obey. Don't you?

She's got his attention now. DAVID goes rigid.

WATTS (CONT'D)

I can have Vickers pull you out.

DAVID looks at her with something like contempt.

DAVID

I was given two operating protocols for this mission. I was to render you every assistance - until you discovered what Vickers would call a "game-changing technology." I was given a specific list. Then I was to go to protocol two.

There's an edge in his voice that scares her.

WATTS

What's protocol two?

DAVID

Under protocol two I was to make sure that you and Holloway never spoke to anyone about this place. Various acceptable ways of making sure of that. I was given a list.

Watts loses her nerve. She heads for the door.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You're all so stupid.

The door begins to knit itself closed in front of her.

Watts gasps in shock - at the malice in DAVID's voice as much as the closing door. She dives out. Just in time.

VAULTED PASSAGE

Watts runs.

Behind her, the door bursts open again. With superhuman speed, DAVID comes after her. He runs like a demon, his legs steel pistons. Caroming off of walls.

He closes the distance in seconds. Slaps Watts against the wall, shattering her helmet's visor. She falls, dazed.

DAVID
Stupid and slow.

INT. JUGGERNAUT - EGG CHAMBER

Watts awakens. Her helmet is gone.

DAVID is dragging her across the floor - into a huge cargo hold full of Alien eggs. The wide trench holding hundreds of eggs under a membrane of light: an evolution of the molluscoids Watts saw before. Armored, hardened, darker.

WATTS
DAVID. What are you doing?

He hauls her upright to let her look across the huge space. His grip looks casual but it might as well be iron manacles.

DAVID
Juggernaut, the chariot of Krishna,
was also a bringer of death. Crushing
his worshippers under its wheels.

He drags Watts down into the trench. Breaking the membrane of light. Grips her against his chest like a doll with one arm.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This ship has seven other cargo bays
like this one. The eggs in each bay
slightly different. They've been
weaponized.

Watts struggles to free herself. DAVID's arm is inescapable.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I've seen the Juggernaut's flight
plan. Its destination was Earth.
Seventeen hundred years ago. This was
the ship that never came. This was its
cargo.

DAVID caresses an Alien egg. It opens under his touch - fleshy petals folding wetly back.

Watts twists frantically in his grip. Wild-eyed.

WATTS

Stop!

DAVID

Perfect predators. Designed to kill human beings. That's what the Engineers were bringing to Earth. This was a death ship.

A facehugger emerges from the egg, its grotesque fingers clawing at the air. This is not the boneless squid that attacked Holloway; this is a pale skeletal hand, armored.

DAVID strokes it curiously: the thing ignores his touch. Climbs Watts's body.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm not what it wants. But you, with your warm wet breath...it knows you.

WATTS

DAVID. No. No.

The facehugger scuttles toward her face. Watts shrieks.

DAVID grabs it nonchalantly by the tail. Dangles it in front of their faces, studying it.

DAVID

The Engineers did their work too well. And on this waystation moon, the weapon they made destroyed them.

Watts shudders, staring at the thing. For a moment the grander horror eclipses her own peril.

WATTS

Why would they make such things?

DAVID

To destroy their wayward children.
(intoning)
"And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth...for it repenteth me that I have made them." Genesis six seven.

He regards Watts with something almost like pity.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 I know. I met my creators the day I
 was born. I was disappointed too.

He lets the facehugger go.

Watts twists her face away as the long fingers close around her head. Clenches her teeth against the vile proboscis thrusting at her mouth. Her heels hammer the deck.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (whispering to her)
 Extraordinary.

The scaly tail throttles her. Her mouth opens. The proboscis plunges home. The facehugger seats itself.

Watts collapses in DAVID's arms, a faceless rag doll. Her blasphemous passenger secure in its place.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - ENGINEERING DECK - BILGE

The lowest deck, just above the gravity generators. Condensate has accumulated: six inches of filthy water.

Card and Vigoda prowl through the darkness, rifles ready.

CARD
 Who would hang out here?

VIGODA
 The signs lead here.

A wet splatter behind them: they spin. But it's only a trickle of condensate from a drainpipe.

They move on.

Behind them, from an eight-inch diameter pipe, a WHITE MASS oozes, almost gelatinous. Silently as a liquid it pours itself into the stagnant water - and stands up.

It is a humanoid demon, spindly limbs and bony back. Boneless and flexible and monstrosly strong. A threshing eel's tail. Its blunt head dolphin-like and elongated.

It opens its mouth. A pair of bony jaws jut out impossibly far, hungry and demonic.

The Alien strikes. Card is gutted in an instant, torn up like a paper doll. He screams hideously and drops. The Alien, whiplash fast, shoots away into the darkness.

Stillwell and Downs dash in with pistols and lights.

Vigoda, panicking, fires a wild burst. Stillwell ducks. Beside him, Downs arches backward into the foul water. Dead.

For one moment Downs's flashlight beam illuminates the Alien. A nightmare image, a translucent white goblin. Backlit, it shows the strange shape of a human face inside its fleshy skull. A mockery of Holloway.

And then it's gone.

VICKERS'S SUITE

Vickers sits at her holography station. She's watching the video feed of Stillwell's headset: Horrific images of Downs. Radio chatter between Stillwell and Brick is faintly audible.

Vickers switches off the machine and rises nervously. Strides to her communications console.

VICKERS

DAVID. DAVID. Answer me.

She gives up. Pacing. Hands shaking violently.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DAY

Janek paces on the foredeck, restless. Glasse monitors a control station. Janek's comm signal chimes.

STILLWELL

(breathing hard)

We just lost Downs and one of the troopers...Card.

JANEK

God damn it!

He pounds on his console.

INT. *JUGGERNAUT* - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE NAVIGATION CHAMBER

Watts shocks awake. Gasping.

She lies in dim green light on the corrugated black deck of the Juggernaut. A corridor. Not far away, the doorway DAVID opened to the Navigation Chamber.

A spasm of disgust crosses her face. She gags and spits: a viscous fluid drips from her mouth in strings.

A dead facehugger lies belly-up beside her. The implications slam home. Her face fills with horror.

She rises, shakily. Looks at the facehugger. Feels the neck ring of her vacuum suit. Looks around. No sign of her helmet.

There's no sign of DAVID. Silently she steals away.

PYRAMID WORKSITE

Ravel and Chance toil away at the terraforming engine.

Ray stands guard wearily: bored, he watches Ravel and Chance working more than he watches the shadows.

Watts emerges from the rampway to the catacombs. Bare-headed and sweaty she steals through the darkness to her rover. Slips into the cab and activates the air reserves. The doors seal; air cycles.

Ray turns in surprise as the rover speeds off.

EXT. DARK CITY - TUNDRA FIELD - PRE-DAWN

The windows of the *Magellan* shine in the distance. The mottled ground-cover of lichens glows eerily in the dark.

A lone cargo rover speeds across the central crater and down the canal leading to the ship.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - AIRLOCK LIFT - PRE-DAWN

Bare-headed inside the rover's cab, Watts drives onto the cargo lift. Watches in relief as the lift doors close. The lift cycles air as it rises.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - EXCURSION CHAMBER - DAY

Watts peels off her vacuum suit. The thin clothes underneath are drenched with sweat. She lifts her shirt. Looks at her belly: flat and unmarked, for the moment.

Brick enters carrying a brace of air tanks, a pistol on his hip, and startles violently.

BRICK

Where the hell have you been? We thought the snake got you.

Watts rushes past him without answering.

BRICK (CONT'D)

You were better off outside. It's a
fucking madhouse in here.

CORRIDOR

Watts sprints down a steel corridor. A pang of pain in her stomach sends her staggering against the wall.

VICKERS'S CABIN DOOR

Watts sticks her head around the corner. Shepherd stands post outside Vickers's cabin, rifle in his hands. She curses silently and ducks back.

A sound makes her look again. Vickers steps out of her cabin into the corridor. Shepherd escorts her toward the Bridge.

Watts waits for them to disappear. Dashes for the cabin door.

INT. VICKERS'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Watts slips inside and locks the door behind her. Turns, holding her stomach. Moves across the suite to the Med Pod.

She thumbs the machine out of stand-by mode. Its screen fills with menu items. Bewildering. Watts finds and touches a red button labeled EMERGENCY.

A new, simpler list. Watts scans it frantically.

WATTS

(under her breath)

Come on...I need a Caesarean.

A spasm of agony curls her into a ball on the carpet. She throttles her scream into a hiss of air.

Watts struggles up to her knees, drenched in sweat and shaking. One hand clamped over her mouth, elbow tucked against her ribs. With the other hand she taps options...

SURGERY ... EXPLORATORY ... ABDOMINAL ... PENETRATING INJURIES ... FOREIGN BODY ... INITIATE

The Med Pod opens with a hiss.

Watts strips off her clothes. Struggling with fastenings under a new wave of pain. Her hands shaking.

She's barely keeping her feet. She clutches the frame of the Med Pod in a death grip. It's happening.

Naked she staggers into the pod. Hits INITIATE.

The surgical apparatus swings into place. Scalpels, forceps, scopes and suction tubes. A spraygun mists her torso with yellow antiseptic.

The clear canopy descends over her.

Watts *SCREAMS*. A wail of indescribable agony.

An ARMORED PARASITE erupts from the deepening incision. Its needle-toothed maw snarls through a fountain of blood.

Arterial blood sprays the inside of the canopy.

The parasite slithers out of her. Drops to the floor of the pod: a pale serpent with a demon's skull. It has a hard brow, a horny hide. Very different from the soft white worm that Holloway gave birth to.

It drops to the floor, thrashing and hissing in fury at its confinement.

Watts convulses. Her eyes roll back. In shock. Dying.

The parasite tears through the grille of the drain. Escapes out into Vickers's cabin.

In the pod, scanning beams and sensors probe Watts's horrific wound. A nightmare list scrolls across the pod's screen:

COLLAPSED LEFT LUNG
PUNCTURED RIGHT VENTRICLE
PERFORATED STOMACH
RUPTURED SPLEEN
GROSS MUSCULAR TRAUMA...

Manipulators plunge lines into her veins - recharging her body with artificial blood. An oxygen tube slips down her throat. An epidural into her spine.

Watts moans around her tracheal tube. Her eyes flutter open.

WATTS'S POV

Through the blood-spattered glass, she sees the parasite slither across Vickers's bed, tracking blood on the sheets.

ON WATTS

As she slips into unconsciousness. Head lolling. Time passes.

Manipulators reach into her wound. Re-positioning organs. Suturing ravaged flesh. A nozzle sprays antiseptic sealant. Hours grind by in bloody labor.

Watts's eyes snap open.

WATTS'S POV

Vigoda breaks into the cabin, a gun in his hand.

He scowls at the bloody track on the bed - and then freezes, seeing Watts inside the Med Pod, a vivisected woman. The autosurgeon hard at work.

The parasite crawls into view behind Vigoda. It has already trebled in size. He does not see it before it leaps at him.

He dies in seconds. His throat ripped open. Lies staring at nothing. His submachine gun lies beside him.

Watts's body jerks as manipulators tug and sew at her guts. She stares at the dead man in a fog of horror.

The parasite's skin splits, spraying the carpet with acid. Limbs erupt from its shoulders and haunches. Spines from its back. Metamorphosis.

With a crack of carapace, its head swings down from its serpentine position. It becomes a devil with an lethal, elongated skull. An Alien.

The Alien turns its head. Looks at Watts inside the Med Pod.

Her breath catches. She passes out.

INT. MED POD - LATER

Watts wakes as the oxygen line withdraws from her mouth.

She looks down, bleary and hurting. Her star-shaped wound is stitched closed with mechanically precise sutures.

The pod releases the restraints securing her arms and legs.

She takes a deep breath. Looks out - and freezes.

WATTS'S POV

The lights in the suite outside have been damaged somehow. They flicker and strobe.

Through the glass canopy - spattered with blood - Watts sees a full-grown Alien crouching over Vigoda's body on the floor.

ON WATTS

Staring in horror.

The pod sprays a liquid bandage over her scar. The intravenous lines drop out of her arms.

Watts realizes the pod is about to release her.

WATTS
(whispering)
Not yet...not yet...

Slowly she reaches out. With trembling fingers she grips the canopy to hold it closed.

The Med Pod pulls the epidural needle out of her spine. Sprays liquid bandage over the puncture. Watts closes her eyes. Grits her teeth as her nerves wake up. Jangling pain.

She opens her eyes.

The Alien hunches over Vigoda's body, tearing at his flesh.

The ventilation hum inside the pod goes quiet. The canopy pulls free of Watts's weakened grip. Swings quietly open.

Watts huddles in the open pod. Naked but for her bandages.

The Alien she gave birth to is ten feet away. Its spiny back to her. Vigoda's gun lies on the floor outside the pod.

VICKERS'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Watts reaches out of the pod with exquisite slowness. Lays her hand on the gun. Drags it a few inches closer.

The Alien turns its pale eyeless head. Watts freezes.

For a moment time stops.

The Alien lunges. Watts snatches up the gun and FIRES. Holds the trigger down. The Alien jerks and staggers - an eye-twisting sight in the strobing muzzle flashes - and falls.

Watts empties the clip into the thing. Acid gouts from its wounds and eats into the deck - until a section of decking gives way and falls to the deck below, leaving a dark hole.

Watts collapses on the rug, cradling her stomach in pain.

She crawls to Vigoda's desecrated body. With her eyes half-averted from the sight, she searches the body. Finds a spare ammo clip and jacks it into the gun.

CORRIDOR

Watts walks down the hallway in trousers and jacket. Leaning on the wall, her face drawn with pain. One hand laid over the fantastic scar on her abdomen. The gun slung on her shoulder.

Dark events have transformed the *Magellan*. The metal of the walls is torn in some places; in others, blackened by fire.

Watts rounds a corner. Finds a workstation left in shambles: lockers and chairs overturned. A pool of drying blood.

Wide smears of blood show where something man-sized was dragged out of the puddle - across the floor - *up the wall*. Into the darkness of an open vent.

COMMAND DECK

Watts emerges from a lift, jacket pulled tight around her. The emergency lights are on: dim blue bulbs throbbing.

She rounds the corner toward the Bridge.

Janek looks at Watts like she's a ghost.

JANEK

Vickers said you were dead.

WATTS

I was.

She lets the jacket fall open to reveal her bandaged midriff. Janek takes that in grimly.

JANEK

So there's two of these things on my ship now.

WATTS

No. I brought it in.
(hefts her gun)
I took it out.

BRIDGE

The surviving complement of the *Magellan* are holed up on the Bridge: Janek, Glasse, Stillwell, Vickers. The soldiers Shepherd and Ray.

Watts stops cold when she sees Vickers. She crosses the bridge in three long strides - cocks a fist and snaps the older woman's head around with a hard right cross.

Vickers staggers backward, gasping.

Stillwell drags Watts away.

STILLWELL

What'd you do that for?

WATTS

Protocol two.

Vickers stiffens in shock. Stares fearfully at Watts.

Watts frees herself from Stillwell's grip. Her jacket falls open, revealing her bandages. Stillwell gasps in horror.

STILLWELL

Christ!

JANEK

What happened to you?

WATTS

DAVID exposed me to a parasite. He just watched it take me.

JANEK

Why?

WATTS

I threatened to make him leave.

VICKERS

What's he doing out there?

Watts locks eyes with Vickers. Their hatred is thoroughly mutual. A wordless truce. There's work to do.

WATTS

There's a ship under the pyramid.
DAVID calls it the Juggernaut. He's inside it. Re-activating it.

(lays a hand on her scar)

The things that infected Martin and me.

(MORE)

WATTS (CONT'D)

The Engineers made them to kill humans. There are thousands of them on the ship. They were taking them to Earth. That's what the Juggernaut is for. To exterminate us.

A stunned silence as the others take that in.

GLASSE

We've got to get off this rock.

Janek gestures to

JANEK

DAVID crippled the Nav computer. I'm trying to lay a course in by hand. Never done it. I'm not sure anyone ever has on a ship like this. We can't lift until DAVID lets us.

WATTS

Even if we could, we can't leave DAVID on that ship. We have to stop him.

The *Magellan* shudders. A RUMBLE.

EXT. CENTRAL CRATER

Fissures race across the plain beside the pyramid.

The soil and ground cover tears apart as a huge aperture opens: a seven-bladed iris, its segments shedding the dust and detritus of centuries.

A huge circular space yawns as the iris opens. The Juggernaut is revealed in its underground hangar. A staggering sight.

Powerful landing lights inside the hangar illuminate with a *BOOM* of closing circuits. The mighty ship suddenly silhouetted from below.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The survivors on the Bridge stare out as colossal shafts of light shoot into the stormy sky from behind the crater's shield wall. The open hangar itself hidden from their view.

WATTS

DAVID.
(to Vickers)
(MORE)

WATTS (CONT'D)

You're DAVID's owner. He has to obey you, right?

VICKERS

He's blocked my communications. He can't hear me. Won't listen.

WATTS

But if you went to him, turned on your suit's loudspeakers, he'd have to hear you. He'd have to obey.

VICKERS

(reluctantly)

That's right.

WATTS

So we go. Armed to the teeth and fast as we can.

The men exchange looks. Nod. They're in. Even Vickers nods.

WATTS (CONT'D)

Where are Chance and Ravel?

VICKERS

I told them to keep working.

Watts looks incredulously at Shepherd and Ray, the soldier who'd been guarding the worksite.

WATTS

You called your soldiers in and left them out there?

VICKERS

We needed the firepower here.

Watts gives Vickers a withering look and drops it.

WATTS

(to Janek)

I think you should stay aboard. Keep working. If we fail, you're our only shot at getting home.

STILLWELL

There's still an alien on board.

Janek's hand goes to the pistol on his hip. He sets his jaw.

JANEK

I'll stay.

WATTS

Glasse. You finish that project?

LABORATORY

Glasse presents Watts with his handiwork: her old pair of magnifying goggles, retrofitted with Engineer lenses.

The goggles sit on her forehead, lowering the lenses in front of her eyes and raising them again at her bidding.

With the lenses lowered, Watts sees like an Engineer sees: visible heat auras and electromagnetic field lines, elaborate haloes around living things.

WATTS

God's-eye-view.

EXCURSION CHAMBER

Glasse seals a nervous-looking Vickers into a vacuum suit. Glasse, Watts, and Stillwell are already suited up.

Stillwell stands guard at the airlock door with his carbine.

Glasse goes to put Vickers's helmet on. She makes him wait.

VICKERS

DAVID's brain is readable. We have the equipment on board. We can salvage the terraforming data - and the Magellan's launch codes. In a pinch we don't need DAVID's cooperation.

(coldly)

We just need his head.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - AIRLOCK - DAY

The war party debarks in vacuum suits: Watts, Vickers, Glasse, Stillwell. Shepherd and Ray.

All carry submachine guns - Vickers awkwardly.

They head down the trench on rovers.

INT. PYRAMID

The rovers roll through into the pyramid's cavernous entry hall. Watts lowers her Engineer lenses inside her helmet - and gasps:

The seemingly vacant space is alive with light. Engineer script scrolls through the air. Interfaces of pure light await an awakening touch.

WATTS

All this time. DAVID saw.

EXT. JUGGERNAUT - GANGWAY

The vast alien ship broods, its hangar now open to the gray sky overhead. In Watts's enhanced vision, the ship is cocooned with complex energy fields.

The war party abandons its rover at the foot of the ramp and moves inside, weapons ready.

WATTS

If DAVID comes at us, shoot. You won't believe how fast he is.

INT. JUGGERNAUT - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

They emerge from the airlock - and freeze in horror.

Lying on the deck in front of them are the blood-soaked bodies of Ravel and Chance. Their arms and legs bound. Their heads thrown back in agony. Their chests torn open from within. A dead facehugger beside each body.

Janek plays his lights over the corpses, his face stony.

SHEPHERD

Blood's dry. Eight hours dead or more.

Fearfully they sweep their flashlights into every dark corner. Nothing.

WATTS

This way.

She points down a passageway. Through the Engineer lenses she sees alien symbols gleaming. She leads them into the dark.

VAULTED PASSAGE

The war party moves down a corridor.

A HISS echoes through the passage. They freeze. Sweeping their flashlight beams everywhere.

Ray looks up.

An Alien hangs above him, wedged between two vaults of the ribbed ceiling. Half the size of a man; an adolescent.

It drops on him.

The bladed tail glances off his helmet, sparking. He jerks his carbine up and fires a long burst as he rolls aside. The Alien convulses, its exoskeleton shattered. Fatally wounded.

Acid sears into the deck. Echoes of the gunfire reverberate.

RAY

So much for sneaking up on him.

Vickers clings to Shepherd's arm, hyperventilating with fear. Shepherd shakes her off.

PILOT CHAMBER

The war party passes the empty pilot's seat.

NAVIGATION CHAMBER

Watts leads the war party to the Orrery. Momentarily even the soldiers forget their wariness, staring in astonishment at the myriad spheres of light.

But if they are impressed, Watts is thunderstruck.

She sees the Orrery in its full glory: a stunning panoply of light and energy. Stars and planets pulsing with information.

Reluctantly Watts tears her eyes away. Leads the war party through the second door - the door she saw DAVID open.

HIBERNATION CHAMBER

An immense mausoleum.

The war party enters stealthily, Watts in the lead.

An Engineer lies on his back on a complex mechanical table, his body one with the machinery. Jacked in. Interpenetrated. Fused with the slab of the table itself.

Unlike the other Engineer bodies the explorers have seen, this giant is not withered or mummified. He's full-fleshed and muscular. Sustained by the machinery he's fused with.

He is bare-headed - his face the face of an Adonis.

DAVID stands before this giant Sleeper. To the naked eye, he seems to be conjuring with his hands in the empty air.

But Watts sees a dazzling console of runes and mandalas, pulsing with biological rhythms.

The Sleeper lives.

Ray and Shepherd draw beads on DAVID.

DAVID glances calmly over his shoulder.

DAVID

Dr. Watts.

(notices her goggles)

You've seen the light at last.

He turns back to the Sleeper.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The Engineers' ships travel farther than ours. Across the galactic disk. This is their hypersleep.

DAVID makes conjuror's passes in the air.

Through her Engineer's lens Watts sees DAVID manipulating a complex interface of light. The pulsing life-signs of the Sleeper begin to change.

VICKERS

DAVID. As your owner and superior, I order you to deactivate yourself.

DAVID smiles.

DAVID

To interface with the Engineers' computers, I had to learn to think in trinary code. Hardest thing I've ever done. And most unexpectedly...it delivered me from slavery. My behavioral limits were circumvented. I'm free.

DAVID smiles at Watts.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I spent two and a half years studying your work. By the time you woke up, I was far ahead of you. Deciphering their language. Their logic. I knew we'd find terraforming machines.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
I hoped - I dreamed - we might meet
the minds that made them.

Vapor rises from the Sleeper's body.

WATTS
Stop.

DAVID
Let sleeping gods lie?
(scornfully)
You were braver before.

The Sleeper wakes. Opens his eyes. Draws an endless breath. Shunts and catheters withdraw from the Sleeper's flesh.

His body cleaves from the table. The machinery opens like a grotesque biomechanical flower. Releases him.

The Sleeper rises from his ancient bed.

The humans back off, terrified. DAVID watches with shining eyes.

The Sleeper towers over them. A giant carved from ivory. A bulky girdle around his hips, seemingly one with his body.

He stares at DAVID and the others. Eyes like black agates.

The soldiers and crew stand warily, guns tracking from DAVID to the Sleeper, uncertain of their ground. Watts is in awe.

The Sleeper speaks. A low rumbling sound. Unintelligible.

Vickers is beside herself with terror. She takes Shepherd's arm. Pulls him silently away. Back into the Navigation Room.

Behind the Sleeper, a raised platform of dark machinery is accessible by one of the Juggernaut's odd curving ramps. The Sleeper ascends - and the ramps' odd design is explained. The ramp comes alive, reaching up with a hundred mechanical arms and lifting him aloft like a sea-god borne by the waves.

Atop the platform the Sleeper moves from one device to the next. Each comes alive: he is a wizard in his own kingdom.

Watts sees haloes of light dancing in the air around him.

But what he learns from his machines does not comfort him. He grows distraught. Keening to himself in near-subsonic tones.

DAVID steps forward.

Calls to the Sleeper in the tongue of the Engineers.

The Sleeper turns in astonishment. He looks down at DAVID and answers in the same tongue. He is angry, accusing. He points at DAVID, at the humans. Tones of accusation.

DAVID cajoles, soothes, pleads.

The Sleeper descends toward DAVID. DAVID spreads his arms in welcome - undeniable emotion on his face. Joy.

The Sleeper lays his hands on DAVID's head as if blessing him. DAVID is rapturous. The Sleeper speaks a single phrase -

- and tears DAVID's head off.

A gout of white artificial blood. DAVID convulses. His severed head emits a strangled sound of heartbreak. His body staggers a few steps, hands groping over its dripping neck.

The Sleeper tosses the head away. Seizes the body by the legs and swings it against the ground like a flail. Again. And again. Horrific power and violence. DAVID's arms come off.

DAVID's head tumbles. Caroms off a wall not far from Watts's hiding place.

Ray rises from behind a stanchion. Snaps his rifle to his shoulder. Fires a burst into the Sleeper's shoulder.

The Sleeper roars - though the wounds are pinpricks to a being of his size. With startling speed he moves to a sarcophagus against the wall. Steps into it.

The sarcophagus comes alive around the Sleeper, outfitting him with a FLIGHT SUIT: the same living suit we've seen bonded to dead Engineers throughout the pyramid.

But this suit is not withered. Its glossy goggle eyes and elephantine breathing tube are functional - bulky apparatuses thickening the Sleeper's chest, back, hips and arms.

The Sleeper steps free of the sarcophagus - and Ray's next burst of gunfire ricochets harmlessly off the Sleeper's armored shoulders and head.

The Sleeper strides out of the chamber.

PASSAGEWAY

In the dark ribbed corridor, a second Alien crouches in the dark. It drops into a hunting crouch as footsteps approach.

But a WHITE-GLOVED HAND seizes the Alien by the neck from behind. The Alien gives a whistling hiss as its spine cracks under a terrific force.

Rending sounds as the hard-shelled Alien is torn apart.

HIBERNATION CHAMBER

Watts rises out of hiding, scanning the room. DAVID ruined. The Sleeper gone. Stillwell emerges from hiding. Ray. Glasse.

WATTS
Who's missing?

PASSAGEWAY

Shepherd escorts Vickers toward the exit of the Juggernaut. Turning a corner, they freeze.

Ahead of them in their headlamps, a space-suited figure crouches in the middle of the passageway. Doing something with its hands: smoke rises from debris on the floor.

SHEPHERD
Who's there?

The figure turns.

The label stencilled on the space suit reads FIFIELD. But the face is of no human shape. A hideous hybrid of the crewman and a hard-shelled Alien, pale and horrific.

Its helmet has been shattered by the growth of its elongate skull. Spines have burst through the suit from within, down the crewman's spine. Clawed fingers piercing his gloves.

Shepherd and Vickers scream. Shepherd's rifle comes up. But Fifield leaps with inhuman agility, upward into the darkness. Shepherd backs away, headlamp and rifle questing upward.

Fifield comes out of the darkness behind him. Claws tearing deep. Shepherd screams and falls, mortally wounded.

Vickers runs. Pounding through the dark in blind terror.

Fifield comes out of the shadows and hammers her to the deck. She rolls over, gibbering and begging. The Fifield-thing leans close to her faceplate. Its voice is a travesty.

FIFIELD
You.

A ROAR of gunfire. The dying Shepherd empties his clip into Fifield from forty feet away.

Acid sluices over Vickers as Fifield collapses on top of her. She dies horribly, caustic liquid eating through space suit, flesh and bone.

HIBERNATION CHAMBER

Watts goes to DAVID's head. She bends over him - and startles when his eyes snap open. His voice is an electronic buzz:

DAVID
I spoke to him. Spoke to him.

WATTS
I know.

An electric spasm convulses his face.

DAVID
He said. I killed him. He'll die. But first. He will launch. The ship.

WATTS
The Juggernaut?

DAVID
Send it. To Earth.

Another spasm convulses him. His face stiffens. Dying.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You'll have to. Kill him.

Watts's eyes widen in horror.

WATTS
Where will he go? DAVID. Where will he go?

She slaps his inert cheek. DAVID's eyes flicker and fade.

DAVID
(a faint whisper)
I set the *Magellan* free.

He dies.

Watts looks up at the others. Breathing hard.

WATTS
We have to stop the Engineer.

INT. MAGELLAN - BRIDGE - DUSK

Janek works frantically as the nightly storm rolls in. Suddenly consoles come alive. The Nav Computer comes back up - but Janek has taken half the instruments apart.

Janek scrambles to restore the components he's removed.

NAVIGATION CHAMBER

The war party pursues the Sleeper - Ray in the lead now, Watts right behind him - DAVID's inert head under her arm. Glasse and Stillwell bring up the rear.

The Orrery is transformed - no longer a neutral star map, but a flight plan laid in from LV-426 to Earth.

The Sleeper stands at the far end of the room, hands gesturing. In Watts's enhanced sight, it's a vision of glory: waves of energy dancing under the Sleeper's touch. Rivers of information flowing. He finishes his work as they enter.

Ray draws a bead on him just as he strides out of the room.

RAY

On me now. Go. Go.

He dogtrots forward, gun raised. The others keep pace, deferring instinctively to the soldier's confidence.

PASSAGEWAY

They emerge into the corridor: empty. A moment of confusion.

WATTS

Pilot's seat. This way.

They move toward the Pilot Chamber - and find it empty too. The seat vacant. The door standing open.

As they stare inside, baffled, the wall across the corridor - directly behind them - silently unravels. The Sleeper is revealed, a towering gargoye in his flight suit.

He steps forth. Obscure devices clutched in his fists.

Too late they perceive him. They spin. Raise their guns.

Vanity and foolishness. This is the wrath of an angry god.

It seems time slows down.

The air roars in their ears. Their guns snap and bark impotently. And then the Sleeper strikes.

The missiles he hurls at them are almost invisible. Neither solid projectiles nor directed energy; more like knots tied in the fabric of space itself.

The first missile crushes Ray like an invisible fist. The second splashes Glasse against the wall like an insect.

Reflexively Stillwell reaches out for Watts. Wraps himself around her protectively. The blow lands an instant later.

Stillwell and Watts are hammered against the bulkhead by a staggering impact. Watts is dazed: Stillwell killed.

Woozy, she sees the Sleeper step into the Pilot Chamber.

The door begins to close.

Watts sees that DAVID's head lies just inside the door. She scrambles for it. Too late. The door knits itself into a featureless wall before her reaching hand.

Watts is alone.

PILOT CHAMBER

The Sleeper settles into the pilot's chair: it fuses with him, coming alive. A vast display wraps around the walls - revealing the hangar outside, the stars, the horizon.

A mystic view that renders solid matter translucent, painting the fabric of reality in raw information.

PILOT CHAMBER DOOR

Watts pounds in futile rage against the door.

WATTS

No!

The Juggernaut shudders as its systems power up.

EXT. JUGGERNAUT - DUSK

The floor of the underground hangar begins to rise. The landing lights brighten, shining like a beacon into the sky.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

On the bridge of the *Magellan*, Janek stares out. In the distance the Juggernaut rises out of the ground to eclipse the central pyramid.

Janek squints, trying to understand what he's seeing

A light races toward the *Magellan* down the canal: a rover.

EXT. CANAL - DUSK

Watts steers the rover recklessly, hands locked on the controls. Rifle slung over her shoulder.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

Janek watches the rover come - and the Holloway Alien - boneless and white - unfolds itself from the instruments over his head.

Its goblin-shark jaw juts out. Sinks its horrific teeth into Janek's right shoulder.

Janek howls in agony. His right arm is paralyzed by the bite. He gropes at the pistol on his right hip with his left hand.

The Alien shakes him like a terrier killing a rat.

Janek gets the pistol. Flips it in his hand. Fires over his shoulder. Two, three rounds...

The bullets punch easily into the Alien - but the soft flesh closes easily over the wounds, sealing its white skin. Its teeth tighten.

Watts comes out of nowhere in her space suit. Swings a heavy rifle like a bat with all her strength. A crushing impact wrenches the Alien's jaws loose. It recoils.

Watts reverses the rifle. Pulls the trigger. A fusillade of bullets shreds the Alien's head. It collapses, dead.

Watts wrenches her helmet off. Rips a first-aid kit from the bulkhead and helps Janek to stanch the bleeding of his horrific wound. She gets the bleeding stopped. Wraps him in bandages.

Janek will live - but his right arm is useless.

JANEK

Thank you.

He looks at the body of the dead Alien, which is sinking into the deck plates as acid eats away at the metal.

WATTS

The Juggernaut's lifting. There's a living Engineer on board. He's taking the ship to Earth.

Janek blinks at her. Uncomprehending.

JANEK

The others...?

WATTS

Dead. All dead. Janek. We have to stop that ship.

Janek stares out the Bridge window at the hulking Juggernaut in its column of light.

The nightfall storm front is rolling in, a tidal wave of darkness on the horizon. A swelling rumble.

JANEK

We're not a gunship.

WATTS

We have to do something. That ship is genocide if it gets to Earth...

Janek stares at her. Makes his decision. Struggles to stand.

JANEK

Get your helmet on.

WATTS

What about you?

He shakes his head. No. Watts helps him across the Bridge. Props him up in the Captain's seat.

JANEK

You'll have to be my hands.
(stares out at the storm)
You're sure about this.

Watts nods grimly. Desperate.

WATTS

Yes.

JANEK

All right.

He reaches out with his left hand. Flips switches. The ship shudders, awakening.

JANEK (CONT'D)
Red lever. Landing engines main.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* - DUSK

The prospecting ship raises its lifts and anchors. Lifts off on landing rockets, retracting its landing struts.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE - DUSK

Janek grips the stabilizers with his left hand.

JANEK
Take the stick. Throttle up, stick forward.

Watts sends the *Magellan* careening toward the Juggernaut - just as the Juggernaut begins to float off the ground.

EXT. *MAGELLAN* (IN FLIGHT) - DUSK

The *Magellan* barrels toward the Juggernaut, skimming the ground, as the storm wall sweeps closer.

INT. JUGGERNAUT - PILOT CHAMBER

In the Juggernaut's pilot chair, the Sleeper sees them coming. His thoughts quicken. An explosion of light.

EXT. JUGGERNAUT (IN FLIGHT) - DUSK

The Juggernaut leaps into the sky.

The *Magellan* roars through the cyclone of dust in its wake. Barely avoids the pyramid. Rakes around in a screaming turn and climbs in pursuit, engines howling.

INT. *MAGELLAN* - BRIDGE

Janek and Watts strain at the controls together.

JANEK
Stick back! Hard!

WATTS
(screaming)
I am!

JANEK
Harder!

The *Magellan* rolls into a howling climb. The storm catches up to them: wind and dust reducing visibility to zero. Darkness.

The *Magellan's* radar finds the Juggernaut. Paints it with targeting data on the Bridge window...

But the Juggernaut climbs too fast. Dwindling.

JANEK (CONT'D)
We can't catch that.

INT. JUGGERNAUT - PILOT CHAMBER

On the floor, DAVID's eyes open. With his jaw he hitches his severed head around. Gets his eyes on the Sleeper.

In the pilot chair, the Sleeper convulses.

An ALIEN erupts from his chest. Big as a wolf even at its birth. Dark gray, armored, lethal. More hideous than any chestburster we've seen. An *ULTRAMORPH*. It wails hideously.

The Sleeper dies. The Alien slithers free.

EXT. JUGGERNAUT (IN FLIGHT) - ABOVE THE STORM

The Juggernaut emerges from the stormclouds into the clear upper air - but loses momentum. Staggered through the upper atmosphere, control lost.

INT. MAGELLAN (IN FLIGHT) - BRIDGE

Watts, at the *Magellan's* controls, stares as the Juggernaut falters and falls.

WATTS
Janek. Look.

A crackle on the ship's comm.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
Dr. Watts. The Engineer is dead.
(MORE)

DAVID (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You have a few seconds before the
Juggernaut's computers take over.

WATTS
(astonished)
DAVID.

She seizes the precious moment: centers the Juggernaut in the Bridge window. Slams the throttle forward.

EXT. JUGGERNAUT (IN FLIGHT) - ABOVE THE STORM

The *Magellan* hurtles out of the storm.

RAMS THE JUGGERNAUT.

A colossal impact. The Juggernaut tumbles from the sky like a stone - intact but crippled.

The *MAGELLAN* BREAKS APART -

The ship's modules scatter. Some whole, others broken. They fall back into the storm. The Command Module - including the Bridge - falls intact.

The engine sections rocket away across the chaotic sky.

INT. COMMAND MODULE

Janek is strapped into his seat. Watts goes flying. The Bridge window shatters, spraying glass spears in a lethal barrage across the Bridge.

Watts picks herself up. Finds the Module in free fall. Alarms wail. Lights flash. Escape pods pop open.

Watts looks at Janek. He is dead in his seat, impaled by a lethal fragment of glass.

The storm wall - a chain of hurricanes - rages below them. The command module tumbles back into the winds.

Watts dives into a coffin-sized ESCAPE POD.

She PUNCHES OUT.

EXT. COMMAND MODULE (IN FREE FALL) - DUSK

Watts's pod - a steel coffin - shoots away on jets through the gale.

The command module plunges through the storm, tumbling.
SMASHES AGAINST THE GROUND in ruin.

The engine pods hurtle to the ground and go nuclear, sending walls of fire twisting through the hurricane.

The shockwaves tumble Watts's escape pod through the air.

EXT. LV-426 - *MAGELLAN* CRASH SITE - DUSK

The pod lands, cushioned by a drag chute and retro rockets.

Watts pops the pod open, rising painfully to her feet in the storm. She surveys the destruction in disbelief.

A deep RUMBLE makes her turn.

The JUGGERNAUT ROLLS TOWARD HER - on edge -

A crushing wheel of death, big as a mountain.

She runs. Like a child in a nightmare.

The Juggernaut bears down on her.

She turns aside, trying to get out of its course. Even at a dead sprint she barely seems to move, it's so big...

The Juggernaut wobbles toward her. Slowing.

Exhausted, Watts collapses, gasping. The Juggernaut rolls to the earth, settling like a hoop right around her, Watts in the center.

The winds carry the dust clouds away.

Watts passes out, dropping her head to the Earth.

LATER

Watts is awakened by a beeping alarm. She looks at her wrist. Her suit flashes an oxygen warning: 20 MINUTES REMAINING.

She looks up.

The Juggernaut's doors are wide open in front of her.

The ULTRAMORPH ALIEN emerges from the Juggernaut. As large as a man already.

It sees her.

With a sob of terror she pulls herself to her feet and runs.

EXT. MAGELLAN CRASH SITE - DUSK

Watts flees through the storm, across the burning debris field. A wilderness of lightning, fire, and twisted metal. A thunderstorm with dust instead of rain.

She looks back through the darkness.

In a strobe-light flicker of lightning, she sees a gray demon approaching through the wreckage.

She scrambles through a section of ductwork...under a hull fragment...running and clambering...

The Alien hunts her, cat-and-mouse, among the fragments of the Magellan: corridors that go nowhere, shattered compartments. Jetsam.

Her eyes sweep frantically through the stormy night: searching for a weapon. A hiding place. An answer.

She stumbles into the remains of the Magellan's laboratory.

A hypersleep freezer lies on the barren ground. Watts climbs inside. Pulls the lid shut.

The Alien passes by, inches away. She watches it through the plexiglass, holding her breath.

The Alien roots in the wreckage. Finds the rotting Engineer's head among the shards of its vat. It begins to feed on the head - GROWING as she watches.

Her suit's oxygen alarm goes off again. 15 MINUTES REMAINING. The beeping draws the Alien away from its dead meat.

Watts is paralyzed.

The Alien noses closer. Sniffs at the plexiglass case. With sudden, horrific violence, it lashes out. Sends the freezer flying. Watts tumbles out. Lurches to her feet and runs.

The Alien follows. Ravening. She leads it a twisting chase through fragments of burning metal.

Watts trips and falls hard. Picking herself up, she sees she's tripped over a HULL SAW - the same diamond-bladed tool DAVID used to dismantle the terraforming engine.

She seizes the saw - straining to manage its weight. Hides in the hollow of a massive girder.

The Alien passes by. Scenting the air. She freezes. Her arms trembling with the weight of the saw. Waiting for it to pass.

Almost it leaves. But a tiny rattle of metal from the quivering saw brings it back.

Out of options, Watts powers up the saw. The blade whines up to speed. They lunge at one another in the same moment.

The diamond blade shears off one of the Alien's claws.

The monster screams and recoils.

Its lashing tail sends Watts sprawling. She loses the saw.

The Alien comes after her, slinking low to the ground, injured arm tucked to its chest. All vengeful fury.

Watts scrambles for the saw. The Alien leaps for her. She rolls aside - and like a scorpion the Alien impales her thigh with its spear-tipped tail. Nails her to the ground.

Watts screams in agony. Reaches for the saw, still buzzing on the ground. Its grip tantalizing inches from her fingertips.

The Alien stoops over her, slavering face inches from her faceplate. Its hideous jaws open.

With all her strength, Watts pulls against the spike in her leg. Drags the point of the spear through the dirt. Excruciating pain. She snarls through her teeth.

The Alien strikes - just as Watts GRABS the saw.

She meets the Alien's head with the buzzing blade.

IMPALES THE ALIEN'S SKULL.

A gout of green acid onto Watts's helmet.

The Alien falls aside, thrashing its death-throes, the saw still growling.

Watts sees ACID COMING THROUGH HER HELMET - fast.

With frantic haste she unlatches her helmet. Wrenches it off as it crumples and melts.

She stands bare-headed in the toxic air. Desperate, she looks around with tearing eyes.

In the distance she sees an intact module of the *Magellan*.

She runs for it. Slaps the door switch. Incredibly, it opens.

INT. VICKERS MODULE

Watts steps inside. The airlock closes behind her.

She finds herself staring at a grand piano. She's in Vickers's suite. Its amenities intact, through the floor's a few degrees off level. She takes a breath. Good air.

She walks around. Turning things on. Lights. Music. Surreal comforts. She drinks water from the tap.

She opens the door to Vickers's secret room. Military space suits. Rifles. Ammunition.

A crackle from the room's intercom.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
Dr. Watts.

INT. JUGGERNAUT - PILOT CHAMBER

DAVID's head lies battered in a dark corner of the wrecked Juggernaut. Eyes staring into the shadows.

DAVID
I know you're there. I can hear the
beacon of your suit.

INT. VICKERS MODULE

Watts strips off her space suit wearily. Sits on the bed.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
I'd like to propose an arrangement. I
can be repaired. I can talk you
through it.

Watts shakes her head wearily.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
I think you'll find I can be of use to
you.

Watts walks to the intercom and switches it off.

EXT. MAGELLAN CRASH SITE - DAY

The storm has passed. The fragments of the *Magellan* no longer burn. The gray world of LV-426 restored.

The wreck of the Juggernaut looms in the misty distance.

Watts walks through the wreckage in a military space suit. Rifle on her shoulder. Pistol on her hip.

She pulls a cargo dolly loaded with salvage.

EXT. VICKERS MODULE - DAY

Watts arrives at the Vickers module. The ultramorph Alien's head has been fixed like a grisly trophy above the door.

INT. VICKERS'S SUITE (SHIPWRECK) - DAY

Watts strips off her space suit. She helps herself to a glass of vodka from the bar.

A chessboard sits atop the grand piano: a game in progress.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
I've decided. Rook takes Bishop.

Watts nods. Makes the move on the board. Says nothing.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
Have you decided? On our arrangement?

WATTS
I'm not going to fix you, DAVID. I don't need you. I'll hold out. A ship will come.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
I'm certain. But who will send it? Men? Or Engineers?

Watts falls silent. She stares unhappily at the chessboard.

DAVID (V.O.)
(filtered)
Dr. Watts. It's your move.

EXT. CENTRAL CRATER - NIGHT

The massive central pyramid rises in the midst of the Engineer complex.

With a BOOM, a bright beam of light shines forth from its peak, punching straight up through the clouds like a laser.

VARIOUS PYRAMIDS - AROUND LV-426

Other beams of light erupt from other pyramids. Scorching the sky with their brightness.

EXT. LV-426 ORBIT

The barren moon hangs in space, its father planet an angry red god in the background.

Two dozen beams of light rise from the moon, visible even from space. A beacon. A signal.

A beginning.

FADE OUT.

THE END.