



STRANDS 2025

The Adventure Begins

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Strands Movie

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FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Earth floats amidst a brilliant expanse of stars. It doesn't look right.

The entire eastern seaboard of the U.S. is a pitted battlefield. Florida is just a spit in the ocean, San Francisco a tiny island. And LA is a brown scab on the face of the planet. The sun sets orangy-brown through the haze encircling the planet.

A gigantic space station maintains a high orbit above. The name "Phoenix" is emblazoned near the bridge.

A vast array of solar-paneled satellites stretch out all around it. Suddenly a huge lightning bolt shoots earthward from an orbiting satellite. It impacts Earth in the vicinity of California, forming a massive explosion.

INT. SPACE STATION PHOENIX - BRIDGE -- CONTINUOUS

Wall screens display the mushrooming fireball from various angles. Lights flash. Klaxons blare. A couple dozen uniformed people at consoles shout frantically back and forth.

ROGER THORSON, 44 and intensely handsome, paces around his captain's chair.

ROGER  
Focus! Protocol seventeen B!

The group quiets down, though still working feverishly.

ROGER  
Was this Fritz?

CREW MEMBER 1  
Looks like a malfunction this time.  
Cause?

ROGER  
The crew member double checks his  
monitor.

CREW MEMBER 1  
Power converter rupture. Reserve  
coil failure. Caused a cascade  
through the primary coils. Probably  
(MORE)

CREW MEMBER 1 (CONT'D)  
due to--

ROGER  
--too many low-grade power draws.  
And inadequate maintenance.  
Roger slams his fist down hard, jaw  
clenched, glaring at the image. He  
quickly regains his composure.

CREW MEMBER 2  
Sir, Terra is requesting com.  
On com.

ROGER  
  
COMPTON, a shaggy man in his mid-twenties appears on a large  
wall screen, wide-eyed in shock.

COMPTON  
What happened? What do we do? I  
don't know...

ROGER  
Your power station suffered total  
failure.

COMPTON  
Oh no! Five thousand Terran  
citizens depend on it. What do we  
do now?

ROGER  
Evacuate.

COMPTON  
Evacuate?! How-- Where--? Can't we  
transfer power from another  
station?

ROGER  
Can you secure the lines?

COMPTON  
(shaking his head)  
There must be something we can do!  
Look! The barriers are down. The  
Ferals are coming through!

Compton fumbles with his console and multiple screens show  
thousands of wild people rushing through the yards and  
gardens of a once-luxurious hilltop neighborhood.

The intruders ransack and ravage everything and every one in their path. Gunfire, explosions, screams, death.

COMPTON

You're Roger Thorson! Do something!

ROGER

You need troops on the ground. Are you in contact with Norad?  
Compton scoffs.

COMPTON

Norad?  
He gazes out imploringly from his display.

Another display shows two children clutching the leg of their father as a group of savage killers rip boards off of the windows of their house.

CREW MEMBER 2

Sir, Pacifica 1 requests com.  
Roger nods. DR. STONE, a sharp, very fit man in his 70s, appears on another display.

DR. STONE

We heard about the disaster. We'd like to offer our assistance.

ROGER

What do you suggest?

DR. STONE

Nervon gas. We can explode a dispersal bomb over the community. Your people have gas masks?  
Of course.

COMPTON ROGER

That will kill at least twenty thousand people.

DR. STONE

Ferals. Who attacked a civilized community. There's no time to lose. Shall we proceed?

COMPTON

Yes! I'll alert the community!

ROGER  
Phoenix won't be party to this.  
Very well.

DR. STONE  
Dr. Stone disappears from the  
display, as does Compton.

ROGER  
(to a crew member)  
Do a complete level three  
diagnostic on the transmitter  
array. And I want the report on  
this in three cycles.

Roger turns and strides off the bridge.

INT. SSP - ROGER'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger stands in his austere yet classy suite at a wall-sized  
three-dimensional screen rapidly manipulating data.

He views an animated model of the power receiving station  
disaster. Taps a link labeled "Personnel" to pull up a series  
of head shots. Taps one of them to reveal a complete bio.  
Drills in further to see the man's responsibilities include  
"Reserve Coil Maintenance". Clicks another link from the bio  
to show a lovely wife and two children. Shakes his head.

A chime sounds. Roger checks a monitor and taps the display  
to open the portal. QUAZARUS CRAWFORD (aka Quaze), 40, trim,  
with longish blond curls drifting around two-day stubble  
floats into Roger's zero-G office.

QUAZE  
I heard.

Roger nods.QUAZE

QUAZE  
Stone... really pushing the Nervon,  
huh?

ROGER  
He may have the right idea.

QUAZE  
Focus up, Rog-o!

ROGER  
Let's not kid ourselves, Q. It's  
falling apart.

QUAZE

We're going to do it, Roger. I know you can't see it yet, but we're going to--

ROGER

Come on, Q. That's years away. We need more energy now. We need a breakthrough. Q... we need a breakthrough.

(beat)

I don't know how much longer we can hold it together.

QUAZE

You're Atlas, Rog. You can do it. Roger turns back to his display.

INT. SSP - CONTROL DECK

Roger sits in his captain's chair on the control deck monitoring various screens amidst the efficient murmur of people working. Suddenly KLAXONS sound! People spring to action! A large monitor shows a missile hurtling through space!

CONTROL DECK CREW 1

Incoming attack!

CONTROL DECK CREW 2

Time to impact 20 seconds!!

ROGER

Counter measures!

CONTROL DECK CREW 1

It's too late!

ROGER

Evasive action!!

CONTROL DECK CREW 2

No time!! Impact in--

CONTROL DECK CREW 2

Suddenly FRITZ, a sinewy man with long, black hair, unnaturally smooth skin and ancient eyes fills the big screen with sheer malice.

FRITZ

HAH!! Take that you WIMP! You were  
(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)  
easier to bring down than your  
father! Tell him "Hi" for me!

Fritz cuts out, returning the image to the rapidly closing missile. A moment of stunned silence... then...

BOOM!! The control room rocks as screens show the missile slam into the Phoenix.

Screens flicker and magnetic forces fail as people float into the air. Screams rise as the Phoenix lists, then starts spiraling toward the Earth.

CONTROL DECK CREW  
Help us! We're going down! We're  
gonna die!

Roger makes an abortive attempt at control but his console goes blank. He looks up from his console helplessly as the Earth fills the screen. The entire control deck crew looks at him.

CONTROL DECK CREW (CONT'D)  
Help us!! Roger!! Help Us!! Roger  
Thorson!!

The giant domed portal at the head of the space station quivers as they enter the atmosphere. Roger surveys the crowd helplessly. The room shakes violently. Then CRASH!! It SHATTERS!

INT. SSP - ROGER'S POD -- CONTINUOUS

ROGER jolts up from his dream.

ROGER  
AAGHHH!!

He recovers, gets up, walks over to a console and starts scanning reports, his face etched in stress.

INT. SSP - ROGER'S POD -- LATER

Roger's eyes bore into his screen. Suddenly the reports and schematics are replaced by Quaze's beaming face.

QUAZE  
Roger! Get over here now!  
I've got your Breakthrough!

INT. SSP - SCIENCE LAB -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger shoots into a white-walled science lab. Quaze is there with ZAK, 30, a slight man buzzing with energy.

ZAK  
First contact, Roger!

ROGER  
What?

QUAZE  
First contact! Zak started receiving a message just a few minutes ago.

ROGER  
What does the message say?

QUAZE  
It's definitely a greeting beacon. There's a ton of data, The Orbits are analyzing it now.

ROGER  
Where's the signal coming from?

QUAZE  
Chara

ROGER  
Hmm, that's only 27 light years away.

QUAZE  
Nevermind the distance, Roger. The Strands. There's going to be a Stransit with Chara in one year.

Quaze taps on a console and another large screen displays a star field interspersed with several thin, slowly undulating STRANDS.

Quaze touches the screen which responds to highlight the elements he's describing.

QUAZE  
Look. Here's our sun. Here's Chara. This Strand Nexus by Chara is very stable.

A bright blue light highlights the point near Chara where two Strands cross.



QUAZE

Our local Nexus is more dynamic,  
but the Strands will cross in our  
vicinity in one year.

A blue light highlights the Strand Nexus near our sun and the  
entire Strand between the two stars glows bright blue.

QUAZE

And there's our Stransit!

ROGER

It's all theoretical, you know.

QUAZE

The math and physics are proven.

ROGER

You know what I mean.

QUAZE

Roger! We just received a message  
from a planet that we just happen  
to share a Stransit with. Do  
you know what the odds of that are?

ZAK

Astronomical?

QUAZE

This is divine intervention. I'm  
telling you.

ZAK

We can do it, Roger. Of course, we  
are going to need a sub-quantum  
annihilator.

ROGER

Oh, that's all? Maybe Norad has one  
to spare.

QUAZE

You can get it, Rog.

ROGER

First let's analyze this message.  
Then we'll deal with Norad.

INT. SSP - TRANSTUBE

Roger, flanked by Quaze and Zak cruises down a wide  
TransTube.

ROGER  
You absolutely sure about this, Q?

QUAZE  
Down the line.  
Zak?

ZAK  
Well, analysis shows there's a  
ninety eight point four percent  
probability that the Aelears can  
and will help us. The probability  
of a successful Strand injection is  
ninety--  
Zak.

ROGER  
Zak.

ZAK  
Yes. Absolutely.

ROGER  
So am I. Let's go.

#### INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT SPARROW

Roger and Quaze strap into the front seats of a shuttle craft  
about the size of a large SUV. Zak straps into the back.

ROGER  
Phoenix Control. This is Sparrow 1,  
request undock.

PHOENIX CONTROL  
Sparrow 1, you are clear for  
undock. Fly safely.  
Will do.

#### EXT. SSP DOCKING BAY

The bay door opens, the shuttle craft undocks and drops  
toward Earth.

#### EXT. EARTH ATMOSPHERE

The ship blazes through the atmosphere and hurtles westward  
across the former United States. City after city is pock  
marked with gaping craters. Smoke rises here and there across  
the landscape.

It streaks toward the Rocky Mountains. As it approaches a gigantic door opens exposing a huge hangar built into the side of the mountain.

The ship flies into the hangar and roles smoothly to a stop in front of a contingent of uniformed officers. The team steps out.

A trim, senior officer, LIEUTENANT GORDON, steps up.

GORDON

Good afternoon, Mr. Thorson.  
Welcome to Norad. I'm Lieutenant  
Gordon. Please follow me to  
Commander Case. Thank you.

ROGER

INT. NORAD HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Norad officers lead the Phoenix team through a massive corridor of metal, rock and glass. They approach the open doors to a lecture theater.

INT. NORAD LECTURE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

About 100 uniformed cadets listen intently to a lecture given by COMMANDER CASE, 45, a tall, square-jawed officer sporting a steel-grey, three-inch tall buzz-cut doo above her handsome face.

INT. NORAD HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON

You're a few minutes early.  
Commander Case will be with you  
shortly. You're cleared to observe.

INT. NORAD LECTURE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Commander Case uses a laser pointer to highlight a schematic on a large screen. It is a cutaway image of a disc constructed from a silver tube that spirals from the outside toward a jet black sphere located at the center. She first points at the central sphere.

CASE

Summary: The "Crucible" located at the center of the sub-quantum annihilator holds exactly two hydrogen atoms in stasis at a temperature of 77 trillionths of a degree above absolute zero. She traces the path of the spiraling tube.

The accelerator shoots a an electron beam at these atoms, shooting their temperature from zero to 11 million degrees in the space of a nanosecond, and...

She clicks. Another animated image shows two atoms disintegrating, and triggering a shockwave-like chain reaction.

CASE

Matter is annihilated, causing an implosion chain reaction. Any questions?

A student signals and Case nods.

STUDENT

How does the annihilator compare to nuclear power in terms of destructive force?

CASE

It doesn't. You might as well compare it to gun powder.  
(beat)  
Alright. Dismissed.

Case looks up at Roger and nods.

INT. NORAD HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Case strides down the corridor flanked by Roger and Quaze with Zak behind, double-stepping to keep up.

CASE

General Storch has blocked out this time for you, but don't get your hopes up, Thorson.11.

ROGER

Why? Does you have a better plan? The group passes a long window looking out over a vast arena where soldiers inside twelve foot tall exoskeletons engage in war games.

CASE

We think we can take him out. With the annihilator we don't have to pinpoint him--just get within 500 miles.

QUAZE

What?!

ZAK

Are you kidding me?!

Case just looks at Quaze and Zak, then at Roger.

ROGER

Sounds like we have a few things to discuss.

INT. NORAD CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The group enters a spacious conference room of granite and oak, Zak huffing and puffing, Quaze hanging tough.

Numerous people, mostly uniformed, line the walls. Near a long walnut conference table, GENERAL STORCH smiles stiffly.

STORCH

Gentlemen, welcome!

Roger steps forward to shake his hand.

ROGER

General Storch. Thank you for having us.

Storch pulls Roger into a pose for a hovering camera globe and smiles. Roger follows suit. Commander Case, Quaze and Zak stand off to the side.

STORCH

(to Roger)

It's been a while.

ROGER

Yes, it has.

Storch gestures Roger to acknowledge the crowd and Roger does a turn, waving to respectful applause.

12.

STORCH  
(to Roger)  
Please excuse the cameras.

ZAK  
No prob. I got mine.

Zak points at a tiny camera the size of a small pea on his temple, and smiles. Storch does a double-take.

ROGER  
General Storch. I appreciate the significance of the occasion, but I am eager to move forward with the plans we've discussed, and that are public knowledge.

Storch gestures to some large leather chairs around a short table.

STORCH  
Please, sit. I'm sure the gravity takes its toll.

Zak wastes no time making for a chair. Quaze strolls over to another chair, followed by Roger. Storch sits, imperiously. Case stands.

ROGER  
So General Storch, what is Norad's decision on the sub-quantum annihilator?

STORCH  
Well, I want you to know that we have given it very careful consideration, and you have a lot of friends down here.

Roger sits erect.

STORCH  
But I'm afraid we aren't in a position to part with it. It's just a prototype. We'd like to manufacture more, but...

ROGER  
(cocking his head)  
General, you can't seriously  
believe that this device is going  
to serve as your defense against  
Fritz.

STORCH  
We think it will, yes.

ZAK  
The best defense is a good offense,  
eh?

Storch and Case do a double-take.

ROGER  
Your models show the same as ours.  
You use that thing, even once, and  
it's all over--for everyone.

STORCH  
Don't be so dramatic.

CASE  
Sir, if I may.  
(to Roger)  
Mr. Thorson, let's examine our  
alternatives. We can capitalize on  
our technological upper hand to  
neutralize Fritz once and for all.  
Or we can go with your plan: To  
disintegrate several people, along  
with the finest spacecraft ever  
created, send them into a  
theoretical Strand in space--

QUAZE  
Oh, they're very real.

CASE  
--to find some aliens who will  
do... what? We're not really sure,  
right?

Case looks Thorson up and down.

CASE  
You can understand why there are  
many here among us who feel that we  
have a stronger plan.

ROGER

I don't think that was a fair representation of our plan. Roger gestures. Zak taps and slides on a few forearm controls. The lights go down. A three-dimensional image appears on a viewing alcove. He gives an impressive presentation of the mission. By the time he's done, the crowd is actually applauding.

DR. STONE

But what if it doesn't work? Roger turns to see that Dr. Stone has stepped out of a shadowy doorway and is walking toward them.

ROGER

What? Stone?

DR. STONE

(to Storch)

Pardon my interruption. I was waiting for you to announce me.

Storch nods.

DR. STONE

(to Roger)

It's an impressive presentation. But what if it doesn't go exactly as you think? A technical glitch, for example. We'll all be left behind, defenseless.

ROGER

What are you doing here, Stone?

STORCH

We're involved in strategic planning for our offensive.

ROGER

What does Pacifica have to do--

DR. STONE

Roger, you know the reason the models always show total collapse. It's the masses. Without Fritz, they will drag us all down.

ROGER

Nervon.



DR. STONE  
Fritz has bound their fate to his.

ROGER  
You're planning to exterminate two billion people!?

DR. STONE  
Ferals, Roger, who outnumber us three thousand to one.

ROGER  
And you think you can rebuild civilization on that foundation?

STORCH  
It's our only hope!

ROGER  
No it isn't! We can reach out for help!

DR. STONE  
The technical challenges are too--

Suddenly, a deafening GONG sounds as a huge display lights up with an image of an iron wall covered with fiery-red jagged slashes that spell the word FRITZ.

Then Fritz appears.

Wearing a silk robe and seated on a wickedly modern throne, he is surrounded by every symbol of decadent opulence. Buxom beauties on plush cushions wave giant peacock feathers, etc.

FRITZ  
I'm gonna go ahead and settle this right now.

STORCH  
(to his staff)  
Get him off the screen! Several staff members work frantically at their controls. The Phoenix team also start working on their forearm controls.

FRITZ  
Oh, here we go with the scan. Still using the MD-five recursion algorithm, I see. At least give it some real effort!  
(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

Fine, while you try to trace my signal, let me set a few things straight. First, you can just cool your jets, Junior, cause you aren't going anywhere. You even start on this project and I am gonna cause some real pain down here.

Roger's jaw clenches and his temples throb.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

And Storch, you just come and get me. But you just better hope you get me on the first try.

STORCH

Now you listen here--

FRITZ

And as for you, Dr. Pacifica. Let's just see how tough you are without your big buddy around.

Stone looks over at Storch and sees his fear and anger. Storch looks at his technicians, still frantically trying to trace the signal.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Well, I must sign off now, but before I do, I just wanted to tell you that I've been perusing your designs for the annihilator, Storch.

A display beside Fritz shows schematics similar to those we saw in the earlier lecture.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Very clever. Kudos. But you do need to work on your security. Ciao.

The screen is replaced by the sinister Fritz logo as the gong tolls again.

Storch's shoulders droop and his eyes dart. Case puts her hand to her forehead and closes her eyes. Dr. Stone drops to a chair. And Roger steps up to Storch.

ROGER

He's trying to drag you into a fight that no one is going to win!

Storch just gazes blankly back at Roger.

ROGER

(to the crowd)

There is no future in war. We must stretch out to reach something greater than ourselves, or we will all die. It's as simple as that.

(beat)

The Outreach project will work. You've seen the science. You know it's sound. Now all you have to do is believe in the mission.

(beat)

This is a pivotal moment for humanity. Our actions now will be recorded, if not for future generations, then for alien species that may someday find our remains. Today, right now, we must decide. Will we go down the path of war and death? Or will we reach out for life?

The room is deathly silent.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Dr. Stone, look into your heart.

(beat)

People of Norad, I see it in your eyes. You know what to do.

Roger strides to General Storch and thrusts out his hand.

ROGER

Are you with us?

Storch looks at Roger's hand. He looks at Case, who nods. He glances at a camera sphere hovering nearby. Then he reaches out and takes Roger's hand.

STORCH

Yes.

Roger extends his hand to Dr. Stone.

ROGER

Dr. Stone?

Dr. Stone forces a smile and shakes Roger's hand.

DR. STONE

If Pacifica One can help in any way, we will.

EXT. EARTH, FORMERLY HOLLYWOOD -- DAY

PHOEBE 7, age 27, looking strong and beautiful in her futuristic hooded jump suit, crests a hillside and scans a group of people sheltered in a gully below. She notices a little girl, age 4, sitting on the ground a short distance away. Phoebe approaches her and gets down on her haunches to look the child in the eyes. She is deformed, with abnormally wide-set eyes and a cleft lip... yet very sweet.

The little girl looks up at Phoebe against the backdrop of the sunset as the bright light from the Space Station Phoenix zips across the sky above her.

(All dialog in this scene  
is spoken in pidgin  
Splanglish with  
subtitles.)

LITTLE GIRL  
(wide-eyed)  
Yudasta (you're from the star)

PHOEBE 7 (SWEETLY)  
Naw. Midisti. Boutchu! (No. I'm  
from Earth, like you!)

LITTLE GIRL  
(smiling)  
Yaduddasta! (yeah, you're from  
the star!)

PHOEBE 7

Mamader? Dadader?

The little girl shakes her head.

PHOEBE 7  
Hudabosau? (Who's the boss of you?)  
The little girl points down to the  
village at a group of people that  
has spotted Phoebe and is now  
headed their way. Phoebe sees  
them, but looks back at the girl.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Are you a good helper?

The little girl nods proudly.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Do you like to play?

LITTLE GIRL  
(smile fading)  
Mostly I have to play grownups  
games.

A shadow crosses Phoebe's face. She knows what the little girl means by "grownups' games". She radiates empathy.

PHOEBE 7  
Are those your dolls?

The girl nods and proudly holds up two pathetic stick figures.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
What pretty dolls! Do they have  
names?

The little girl shakes her head.

The villagers are approaching. Phoebe notices and with a quick tap of her fingers contacts her support craft.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
(into com) )  
Visual contact. Handshake in 30  
seconds.

Phoebe looks into the eyes of the little girl.

PHOEBE 7  
(warmly)

You are a very good girl, and I love you!

The little girl flings her arms around Phoebe's neck and clings to her as Phoebe melts. But the crowd is arriving, so Phoebe pulls gently away and stands up to face them.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
(still in sub-titled  
pidgin)  
Hello. I represent the communities  
of Pacifica. I am here to offer you  
help. I'd like to speak to the  
leaders of your tribe.

A grizzled, deformed man steps forward.

BOSS 1  
I am the boss of this tribe.

A second, equally decrepit man rushes up.

BOSS 2

You are not the boss! I was the boss and you revolted! You are a rebel! A terrorist!!

BOSS 1

The tribe has chosen me because of your corruption!

The crowd joins in. There is obviously very deep divisions within this group. The argument quickly erupts into a major conflict. Phoebe makes quick adjustments on her palm controls that increase the volume of her voice. Her hair starts standing on end as a force field begins to hum around her.

PHOEBE 7

(more amplified)

Please... I will be happy to speak to both of you. Please come forward and let's arrange for us to help you.

The men come forward, fuming at each other but deferent to Phoebe.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)

We have a supply ship nearby with food, water, medicine, and tools to help you build a community. I'd like to arrange to give it to you.

BOSS 1

Yes. Give it to us! What is there to talk about?!

PHOEBE 7

We need to ensure the proper distribution of the supplies.

BOSS 1

Don't give any aid to that man! He's corrupt! He'll use it to enrich himself!

BOSS 2

Don't listen to him! This is not a man, but a monster! He and his kind eat the flesh of their victims!

BOSS 1

You took the food! You took the water!

(MORE)

BOSS 1 (CONT'D)  
You grew fat while we starved to  
death!! You are the monster!!

The mob gets agitated as the two men are practically at each others' throats. Phoebe increases her amplification.

PHOEBE 7  
(greatly amplified)  
We will see that everyone receives  
equally. But you must agree to  
settle differences and live in  
peace.

BOSS 1  
Settle our differences?! Easy for  
you to say!

BOSS 2  
Now you want to talk about the  
strings! The control! The debt!

PHOEBE 7  
We do not seek to control you. We  
only want to ensure that relief is  
distributed fairly, according to  
need.

BOSS 1  
You are the reason we are in need!  
You have all the good things and  
leave us to suffer!

BOSS 2  
You think we're animals you can  
lure into a cage with a scrap of  
food!?

PHOEBE 7  
Please. I want to help you, but we  
have to--

BOSS 2  
Just give us the food!! Give us the  
water!!

BOSS 1  
What is there to talk about!? Give  
it to us!!

The mob joins in the chorus and crowds around Phoebe. A couple quick taps of her fingers and her force field increase in volume.

The mob surrounds her, yelling, screaming, pointing fingers, shaking fists. Phoebe adjusts her volume again.

PHOEBE 7  
(hugely amplified)  
Step back, please. I will withdraw.  
There is no cause for hostility.

The mob presses in closer. Phoebe taps up her force field strength. This time the mob feels the effect as the force field bristles and throbs with heat and electricity. Anger erupts into an all out assault! Phoebe taps up the force again, which just amplifies the previous effect. The mob goes wild!

PHOEBE 7  
Stand back! For your own safety,  
please stand back!

To no avail. The people are hurling objects and themselves at Phoebe but never getting within a foot of her before the force field repels them back into the mob. A gun is fired. The bullet penetrates to within an inch of Phoebe's face but is then shot back out into the crowd, hitting one of the bosses who falls to the ground writhing in pain.

Phoebe taps her fingers and generates one quick force field pulse that blasts the entire mob back ten feet. Shouting commands into her mic, Phoebe sprints through a gap in the stunned crowd. Spotting her little friend, she cuts to the right and runs toward her just as a silver strand arcs down from the sky. She reaches the girl running at full speed as the cord sweeps down and connects magnetically to the back of her jumpsuit. Without breaking stride Phoebe scoops the little girl up in her arms just as the silver cord sweeps her off her feet into the sky.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Igoddayu. KK, KK.

INT. AIRCRAFT RESCUE BAY -- DAY

Phoebe and the little girl are reeled into the rescue bay of a sleek aircraft flying at about 10,000 feet. The doors close and the connection to the silver cord is released. Phoebe sits down, still holding the girl who's looking stunned and amazed. Phoebe is visibly shaken, but maintains her composure

RESCUE CREW 1  
Oh oh. Rescued another one, huh?

PHOEBE 7  
Yeah.  
(MORE)



PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)

RESCUE CREW 1  
You're in trouble.  
PHOEBE 7

I know, I know.

RESCUE CREW 2

You've been called to see Dr.  
Stone. We're going to Pacifica 1.

The aircraft banks off and flies out toward the sun setting over the Pacific Ocean.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN, NEAR TAHITI -- DAY

The aircraft drops pontoon landing gear and transforms into a boat as it lands on crystal blue water. It docks on to a vertical, transparent tube about 5 feet in diameter and standing about 7 feet above water level.

INT. PACIFICA 1 DOCK -- DAY

RESCUE CREW 2

Right this way.

PHOEBE 7

Oh, I know the way.

RESCUE CREW 2

The girl can stay here.

PHOEBE 7

No. She's coming with me.

The crew member considers the look in Phoebe's eyes for a moment, then nods.

INT. PACIFICA MAIN DOME -- DAY

Phoebe, the girl, and their escort walk through a hatch into the tube. They descend through a fantastic display of tropical fish, a few hundred feet to the submarine community of Pacifica 1. The door opens and Phoebe steps out into a fantasy world full of archetypical opulence. Palm trees and cobbled paths... soothing music and aqua pools... and everywhere the shimmering light of the dome.

They are escorted several hundred feet through the complex, observing the various wonders of this place: a four-piece quartet playing classical music, a philosophical debate, a classroom full of unnaturally precocious children, etc. She arrives at a complex of bungalow offices and enters

INT. DR. STONE'S OFFICE - RECEPTION -- CONTINUOUS

DR. STONE'S SECRETARY  
Good afternoon, Phoebe. Just two more minutes for Dr. Stone.

PHOEBE 7  
Thank you, Tasha.

DR. STONE'S SECRETARY  
You've had a busy day I see! I watched your rescue! So this is your new little friend!

The little girl is mute, hugging Phoebe's leg tightly.

PHOEBE 7  
Can she stay with you while I meet with Dr. Stone? You know how he--

DR. STONE'S SECRETARY  
Yes, of course.

PHOEBE 7  
She doesn't understand English, so--  
-

DR. STONE'S SECRETARY  
I understand.  
(To the girl, gesturing toward a huge aquarium)  
Do you like fishies?

The secretary ushers the little girl toward a large aquarium as a wide, glass door several feet away slides open and Dr. Stone steps out accompanied by two stately CENTAURS. (no kidding - CENTAURS!) Magnificent specimens. The finest Arabian horses genetically spliced with incredibly beautiful humans--a man and a woman.

DR. STONE  
I honor the time we've spent together today. We're making great progress.

MALE CENTAUR  
True.

DR. STONE

...and I assure you I will continue to be completely available to you throughout the Outreach Project.

Dr. Stone smiles reassuringly and gestures the Centaurs to the exit. The Centaurs bow regally, and trot away. Dr. Stone turns his attention to Phoebe.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)

Phoebe, hello! Thank you for coming.

PHOEBE 7

(hesitantly, gazing after the centaurs)

Hello, Dr. Stone. Thank you for inviting me.

DR. STONE

(noticing her gaze)

I'm sorry. I should be more discreet. The Centaurs value their privacy.

PHOEBE 7

Don't worry. I won't say a thing. I know you can't resist showing off your latest creation.

DR. STONE

Please, come in.

INT. LABORATORY COMPLEX OF DR. STONE -- DAY

Phoebe and Dr. Stone stroll down a glass tube corridor, then make a right turn into a white-walled corridor. An arcing turn around a laboratory display, with various animal experiments under way. Past the impressive entry to the primary lab, and through an equally important, but not so conspicuous door into the office of Dr. Artemis Stone.

As they walk...

DR. STONE

The Centaurs are much more than a creation, Phoebe. They are a metamorphosis. A breakthrough of epic proportions.

PHOEBE 7

Forgive me for not sharing your enthusiasm. I believe in times like these, creating Centaurs is just--

DR. STONE

--times like these are when it's most important to strive for greatness.

INT. DR. STONE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Stepping into Dr. Stone's plush office, complete with domed window walls revealing a vast tropical aquarium.

DR. STONE

Let's sit over here.

They step into a curvy alcove and sit on a comfortable couch.

PHOEBE 7

Well, I know you didn't bring me here to talk about Centaurs. Why am I here?

DR. STONE

Straight to business. Very good. Phoebe, I know how dedicated you've been to your relief work. But the time has come for you to make a greater contribution to humanity.

(beat)

We have selected you to join the Outreach team as the Crew Com Director.

PHOEBE 7

What?! You're joking... right!?

DR. STONE

No. We're quite serious.

PHOEBE 7

Forgive me. I'm just a bit confused. I wasn't even aware that I was being considered. I'm not up to speed on the --

DR. STONE

Phoebe, relax. Just listen. This was a classified matter. We've been vetting you for months.

(MORE)

DR. STONE (CONT'D)

And of course, our relationship was a factor.

PHOEBE 7

So... what? The job is mine? I'm just--

DR. STONE

We'd like you to report to the Phoenix to meet Roger Thorson and the Outreach Project team. They'll have to approve you for the mission.

PHOEBE 7

Yeah, well, I don't think this is going to work out. I have a lot of work to do here, and I'm just not--

DR. STONE

Slow down, Phoebe. Reflect on this for a moment. This is an opportunity to extend your relief efforts. Think of the coverage you'll get when you're one of the Outreach Crew. The seventh member of the team... Phoebe 7. Think how much attention you can draw to your cause.

PHOEBE 7

That's a nice theory, but--

DR. STONE

You're right. I insult you by thinking so small. Phoebe, what you need to think about is saving humankind--not one little girl at a time, but all of humanity in a single stroke. You see what's happening. Outreach is our only chance without...

(beat)

You must believe this.

PHOEBE 7

But I don't believe it. For all it's PR, the Outreach Project is risky... too risky to stake the future of humanity on.

DR. STONE

Phoebe, the Pacifica leadership has considered the matter carefully and determined that Outreach is the right direction. Whether you agree or not, this is the course we have chosen.

PHOEBE 7

That may be true--

DR. STONE

It is. And we have determined that you are the most qualified person to ensure the success of the mission.

(beat)

Now, you have been called forth by Pacifica to fulfill this service to humanity. The world is asking for your help. Are you really going to say "No"?

Phoebe is stuck. She sits quietly, pondering her next move.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)

Phoebe, you don't have to commit right now. Visit the Phoenix. Talk to Roger Thorson. Meet the crew. Dr. Stone rises and ushers Phoebe toward the exit.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)

I realize this all seems to have come out of nowhere. But believe me, we know what we're doing. Go back to Pacifica 7 and get your matters in order. You will leave from there for The Phoenix at 0700

PHOEBE 7

Tomorrow morning?!

INT. PACIFICUS 7, PHOEBE'S QUARTERS -- NIGHT

Though very futuristic, Pacifica 7 is not nearly as impressive as Pacifica 1. Phoebe sits with her friend ALANA and her new little friend in her cozy apartment.

PHOEBE 7  
(to the little girl, in  
pidgin)  
Violet. What a pretty name! Do you  
like that name?

The little girl smiles and nods.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Violet, Alana will take good care  
of you while I'm gone. You be a  
good girl.  
(standing up, to Alana in  
English)  
Keep looking for a home for her.

ALANA  
We'll find one, just like we did  
for the others.

PHOEBE 7  
Yeah... But it's getting harder  
though, huh?

ALANA  
A little bit...

Phoebe gets down on her knees and gives the girl a big hug.

PHOEBE 7  
But who wouldn't want this pretty,  
pretty girl!?  
(looking Violet deep in  
the eyes)  
You're a good girl and I love you  
very much!

Violet beams.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Well, I'm off to the Space Station  
Phoenix!

ALANA  
Some friends have gathered to see  
you off.

Phoebe walks to the door of her apartment and it opens to  
reveal a large crowd of friendly, smiling, and ubiquitously  
beautiful people. Phoebe shoots an excited look back at Alana  
and Violet then steps out into the crowd. Her friends all  
gather around, shouting out well wishes.

## PACIFICUS 7 CROWD

Phoebe, I'm so excited for you! Are  
 you going to meet Roger Thorson?  
 Say "hi" to Quazarus for me! He's  
 so cute! Try not to get space sick!  
 We love you, Phoebe! Etc.

Phoebe responds with smiles and hugs as she makes her way to  
 the shuttle sub. As she is about to board the sub, she turns  
 to the crowd.

## PHOEBE 7

Thank you so much for this! I love  
 you all. And I'll see you soon.

Phoebe boards the shuttle sub and the doors close on smiling  
 faces and waving hands.

## INT. SPACE STATION PHOENIX - DOCKING BAY

Phoebe floats in front of a portal door. The door slides open  
 on Zak, grinning widely and holding up one hand in a Vulcan  
 salute.

## ZAK

Greetings, Earthling!

## PHOEBE 7

Uh, hello... space... man...

## ZAK

I'm Zak.

## PHOEBE 7

I'm Phoebe.

## ZAK

I know who you are. I'm a big fan!  
 I saw your rescue yesterday.  
 Radical!

## PHOEBE 7

(incredulous)  
 Oh, well, thank you.

## ZAK

You kidding? Thank you!

## PHOEBE 7

So...

ZAK

(MORE)



PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. So, I'm here to officially welcome you to the Phoenix and give you a little tour of the ship. I volunteered. Are you going to be joining the crew?

PHOEBE 7

I'm here to meet with Roger Thorson.

ZAK

Right. Well, you've got a little time. How would you like to meet the Orbits?

PHOEBE 7

Sure... actually that sounds really fascinating.

ZAK

Awesome! Right this way!

INT. SSP - TRANS TUBE - CONTINUOUS

ZAK and Phoebe float through the portal and down a tube. Zak is adept at maneuvering through the tubes and pods of the orbiting platform while Phoebe is a complete novice, trying to find her "space legs". ZAK literally flies circles around her like an excited terrier jumping around a visitor.

ZAK

This is the original space station launched by Jon Thorson 45 years ago. It's just the docking bay now. But it all started right here.

PHOEBE 7

(genuinely, no sarcasm)  
I've seen reels of the Phoenix tour. I have to say it's pretty amazing to be here in person.

ZAK

Really amazing!

PHOEBE 7

So Zak, you are a member of the Outreach Crew?

ZAK

Positive.

PHOEBE 7  
What's your role?

ZAK  
Oh, mostly comic relief. I'm Rus's  
goofy sidekick.

PHOEBE 7  
Huh? Wait. Who's...? Oh, Rus!  
Quazarus.

ZAK  
Of course! Quazy is the man!  
(beat)

ZAK  
Well, Roger's the Man. But Quazy is  
The Man, if you know what I mean?

PHOEBE 7  
Not exactly, but OK. And you're his  
goofy sidekick?

ZAK  
Yeah, well, that's if this were a  
movie. In real life I'm the  
Director of Engineering Operations.  
I make all the systems work.

PHOEBE 7  
I see.

ZAK  
I'm kind of a movie buff.

PHOEBE 7  
Yes, I think I picked that up from  
some of your lingo.

ZAK  
Do you like movies?

PHOEBE 7  
Well, I don't get the chance to--

ZAK  
'Cause I have every movie from the  
20th and 21st centuries!

PHOEBE 7  
Yeah?

ZAK

Oh yeah. And not just movies. I've got sitcoms, cartoons, documentaries, reality shows, commercials... everything from classic silent movies to the stupidest YouTube crotch shots! It's literally the ultimate media collection.

ZAK is interrupted by a pinging noise and pulsing light emanating from a wall. A very strange looking person, an ORBIT, with bulging eyes set in a pasty face appears on the screen.

ORBIT 1

Zak. QuinTor rip four detag.

ZAK

(to orbit)

T3.

(to Phoebe)

The Orbits. The hive is right up here.

PHOEBE 7

(intrigued)

So you work with the Orbits?

ZAK

They're my posse!

(pulling up to the portal)

To these people, I'm the Man!

INT. SSP - ORBITS' HIVE - CONTINUOUS

The surroundings have gotten progressively more roomy and finished as they've moved through the tube. Portals now line the walls of the tube. Suddenly, the white-walled tube becomes transparent as it enters a vast, spherical chamber approximately 100 feet across--the ORBITS' HIVE.

Monitors line every inch of the wall space. Hundreds of figures float in front of them, transfixed to the screens. Dozens of multi-screen work stations, each one swarming with more workers, drift in the midst of the chamber. Here and there people glide back and forth from station to station. The room is filled with the low murmur of 500 voices.

One of the Orbits enters the trans tube and glides down the tube toward Zak and Phoebe. He is very thin, bald, with pallid skin and bulging eyes. He cruises right by Phoebe and Zak, seemingly unaware that they even exist.

ZAK

You should see our chats. They love me.

(beat)

Welcome to Oz, Dorothy!

Zak leads Phoebe through a portal into the chamber and proudly takes his place at an impressive looking console that is clearly the central command for the entire chamber.

PHOEBE 7

What are they working on?

ZAK

(whispering)

Well, right now there's a flurry of activity...

(Phoebe looks incredulous)

ZAK (CONT'D)

Trust me, they're on fire. We're shifting into development on the XR.

PHOEBE 7

The XR-24... that's the spacecraft that will travel on the Strand.

ZAK

Exactly

PHOEBE 7

They're so... interesting.

ZAK

Yeah, most of them have lived on the Phoenix their entire lives. Roger used to insist they do grav-time every day, but lately...

(beat)

I try to get a little gravity every day, so compared to them, I'm a real stud!

PHOEBE 7

Right... OK... well, I should be on my way to meet with Mr. Thorson.

ZAK

OK. Yeah, looks like the Orbits are getting a little distracted anyway.

Again, Zak looks out at the Orbits and realizes that to the untrained eye their behavior hasn't changed at all, and laughs nervously.

ZAK (CONT'D)  
 Anyway... so just head straight up  
 this tube and you'll get to  
 Command.

PHOEBE 7  
 Thanks.

INT. SSP - TRANS TUBE -- MOMENTS LATER

Phoebe pushes off and glides up the tube, looking a little more comfortable now. As she moves we see Quazarus gliding through another tube on a perpendicular path ahead.

As Phoebe reaches a nexus pod Quazarus shoots through the adjoining tube, narrowly missing her. As he flashes past her he reaches out to stable himself with her shoulders. They do a couple of twirls before bouncing harmlessly off the pod walls, Quaze's blond curls waving weightless around his handsome blue-eyed face.

PHOEBE 7  
 Whoa! Whoa! Oh my God! You're  
 Quazarus Crawford.

QUAZARUS  
 Call me Rus. And you're Phoebe 7.

PHOEBE 7  
 It's such an honor to meet you.

QUAZARUS  
 Thanks. Likewise. Sorry. I'm late  
 for an important meeting.  
 (beat)  
 Hey, why don't you join me?

PHOEBE 7  
 What? Well, I'm on--

QUAZARUS  
 Yeah, it's fine. Roger won't mind.  
 This is a great idea. Come on!

Quaze takes Phoebe's hand and they shoot down a tube. Within seconds they approach another large portal to a central pod.

QUAZARUS (CONT'D)  
 You ready? Here we go!

INT. SSP - CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Quazarus and Phoebe pull up into the room as a group of about 20 STUDENTS ages 3 to 12 erupt with cheers.

STUDENTS

Quaze! Quazey Quaze! Zaurus!  
Zaurus!

The children float at their work stations around one hemisphere of the pod walls. Quazarus and Phoebe glide to a podium station toward the center of the pod. Behind them the panel walls are all displays.

QUAZARUS

Thank you for inviting me here today! Are you all sparked to learn about the Outreach project?!

Cheers from the kids.

QUAZARUS (CONT'D)

Sparctacular! Well, before we get started I'd like to introduce you all to Phoebe 7 who's visiting us from the community of Pacifica 7.

The kids great Phoebe loudly.

PHOEBE 7

(waving enthusiastically)  
Hello! Thank you for that warm welcome! It's very nice to be here.

QUAZARUS

Phoebe has a meeting with Roger Thorson this cycle. Oohs and aahs from the kids.

PHOEBE 7

(looking at Quazarus)  
Yes, right now, in fact.

QUAZARUS

(to Phoebe)  
Don't worry. I pinged him.  
(to kids)  
Now it's time to learn about Strands. Ready, cadets?

The kids cheer. The lights dim. A three-dimensional pattern of stars appear surrounding the entire group.

QUAZARUS (CONT'D)

OK. Who can tell me how a black hole forms?

STUDENTS react with lighting reflexes, touching their control panels as a series of lights blink on Quazarus' console.

QUAZARUS

Jasmine!

JASMINE

(age 7, proudly)

When a star's power supply is exhausted the gravity of the matter collapses in on itself, forming a gravity sink that pulls in all matter and light within its event horizon. Three-dimensional visual effects accompany the students' answers.

QUAZARUS

Yes! Good job! So then what happens?

Again, students snap to their consoles and Quaze's console lights up.

QUAZARUS

Mini Rus. (age 4)

MINI RUS

The big hole collapses and gets littler and littler until it's so little you can't even measure it until it becomes a sig... sin... singlaridy.

QUAZARUS

Really good! But do the black holes always turn into a singularity? Trans?

TRANS

(age 10)

Most of the time it explodes into a supernova. But in the event of an actual singularity the matter can't be maintained in that perfectly static state. It breaks down and implodes--

QUAZARUS

Oh?--

TRANS

--I mean, deplodes.

QUAZARUS

Right! Kris, what is the difference between "implosion" and "deplosion"?

KRIS

(age 12)

"Implosion" happens in three dimensions. "Deplosion" happens in one dimension. The schmatter squirts out from the singularity in a single line. Those are the Strands.

QUAZARUS

"Shmatter". Is that what you kids are calling it now? Sounds about right... cause it's shattered matter. Good! Now here's where it gets really cool.

A huge three-dimensional images illustrate QUAZARUS' explanation.

QUAZARUS (CONT'D)

Shmatter exists at an even finer level than quantum, so it isn't bound to the laws of physics, like the speed of light. The little points of schmatter can travel thousands of light years along the Strands in an instant! And the really amazing part is that schmatter has logical structure. Its made up of little points of something that we call "Bing", interspersed with stretches of nothing, which we call "Ohm". The pattern of Bing and Ohm fed into a Strand segment at one Nexus point remains intact when it emerges at the next Nexus. So matter can be compiled, transmitted through the Strands, and it will naturally re-compile when it emerges on the other side. And that is how we are going to pierce the light barrier!

The students applaud and cheer. As the cheer subsides...



TRANS

Quaze, what do the Seeds do,  
exactly?

QUAZARUS

Well, that's going to take a little  
longer explanation, Trans. We'll  
have to talk about that another  
time. Any other quick questions?

SOFIA

(age 5)

Phoebe, one time I went down to  
Earth and I didn't like it because  
the gravity pulled me down really  
hard.

PHOEBE 7

Oh, I know what you mean! That's  
why I'm so strong!

Phoebe flexes her muscles as the kids erupt in laughter.

QUAZARUS

Sparctacular! And now Phoebe is off  
to meet Roger Thorson, I'm off to  
study the stars, and you're off on  
more learning adventures. Learn  
well, kids! The class erupts in  
cheering ovation as Quazarus ushers  
Phoebe through the portal and down  
the tube.

QUAZARUS (CONT'D)

That went well!

PHOEBE 7

Sparctacular. Which way to Roger  
Thorson?

QUAZARUS

Center tube.

PHOEBE 7

Thanks. Nice meeting you... Rus.

Quaze smiles and waves as he pushes off and glides down a  
transit tube.

INT. SSP - ROGER'S OFFICE

Phoebe pulls up to the open portal of ROGER's office. Inside,  
he is absorbed in his console.

PHOEBE 7  
Mr. Thorson?

ROGER  
Phoebe 7. Hello. Please come in.

PHOEBE 7  
(entering)  
I apologize for being late.

ROGER  
(gesturing to a seat)  
Q pinged me. Gave me time to catch up on some reports. Thank you for coming aboard.

PHOEBE 7  
(sitting)  
Thank you for inviting me, though I don't really understand why you did. I didn't apply to be a member of your crew, you know. And frankly, I didn't appreciate being screened without my knowledge or consent.

ROGER  
Slow down, Phoebe. Those are matters for you to discuss with your people at Pacifica. The agreement is that Pacifica will choose a linguist. My role is limited to approval or disapproval.  
(beat)  
So tell me, have you reviewed the assignment?

PHOEBE 7  
Only briefly. I just learned about this yesterday.

ROGER  
Describe the assignment.

PHOEBE 7  
As I understand it, the amount of computing power required to inject the Strand exceeds the amount of hardware that can be built into the ship. So we need to integrate human intelligence directly into the computational flow.  
(MORE)

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)

You need someone to develop a special language to allow the crew to communicate at super fast speed during injection.

ROGER

Right. Normal speech is too slow and telepathy isn't reliable enough. Now tell me, how much experience do you have in--

PHOEBE 7

Excuse me. I'm sorry Mr. Thorson. I'm not sure what Dr. Stone has told you--

ROGER

I've studied your profile.

PHOEBE 7

Then you know that most of my knowledge of linguistics is self taught... in the field. I'm a social anthropologist... a relief worker. There are more qual--

ROGER

Do you consider yourself unqualified?

PHOEBE 7

Well... no, I'm... But you must also be aware that I don't support this mission.

ROGER

I am. But I think with some experience you might.

PHOEBE 7

Sir, forgive me, but no. I think this "project" is a titanic mistake. Titanic...

ROGER

Titanic.

PHOEBE 7

Honestly, I think that Outreach is the single worst blunder in the history of the human race.

ROGER  
I don't think hyperbole is--

PHOEBE 7  
Hyperbole? That was an  
understatement!

Pregnant pause as Roger considers Phoebe's words...

PHOEBE 7  
I saw your speech to Norad about  
the project the other day. I  
especially liked the part about  
believing. But Mr. Thorson, why  
can't you believe that those of us  
who care can save humanity? That's  
what I believe... all of us at  
Pacifica 7 do.  
(beat)  
This project is going to hurt a lot  
of very good people... my people.  
And I don't want any part it!

ROGER  
I understand. Phoebe, thank you for  
taking the time to come see us.  
We'll get you on the next shuttle  
to Pacifica.

PHOEBE 7  
Oh... OK. Well... Fine. Then, good  
luck... to you... and your crew.

Roger ushers Phoebe to the portal.

ROGER  
And good luck to you, Phoebe.

Phoebe leaves and Roger returns to his console, tapping quick  
commands. Dr. Stone appears on the display.

DR. STONE  
Hello, Roger. How did it go with  
Phoebe?

ROGER

NOT WELL. WHY WAS SHE SENT HERE?

DR. STONE  
Roger, I know she doesn't care for  
the mission, but--.

ROGER

She's not qualified. We need a linguist to design a language, not--  
-

DR. STONE

Phoebe 7 is a brilliant linguist. And she's much more than that. She's a social psychologist, a negotiator. She has medical training. All these skills--

ROGER

Those skills are not essential to --  
-

PHOEBE 7

She is our candidate for the linguist position, and I will ask you to give her a diligent review.

ROGER

She doesn't want to be considered!

DR. STONE

Leave that to me. Roger, please honor our request. Let her to stay another day and meet the crew. Then decide whether to accept her or not.

ROGER

(forcefully)

One day. Meanwhile, find another candidate.

Roger jabs his console, ending the call.

INT. PACIFICA 1 - DR. STONE'S OFFICE

Dr. Stone taps his console. Phoebe appears on his screen. She is just entering her pod.

DR. STONE

Phoebe, you've put me in a very awkward position.

PHOEBE 7

(on video display)

I've put you in an awkward position!? You knew when you--

DR. STONE

Phoebe, you have to quit being selfish and start thinking about the greater good. What would your father say--

PHOEBE 7

My father would have the same reservations I--

DR. STONE

Your father would have wanted to save humanity.

(beat)

Phoebe, I didn't just promise him that I would look out for you. I promised him I would help you make the most of your life.

PHOEBE 7

Well consider that obligation lifted, Dr. Stone. I can manage my own life, thank you.

DR. STONE

OK. Listen. Stay there for one day. Meet the crew. And I'll do a favor for you.

PHOEBE 7

What favor?

DR. STONE

There's a legend growing in the Feral Lands about the "white witch" that swoops down and steals children. It's a controversy. Admin plans to return the little girl to her village.

PHOEBE 7

No! That little girl was being--

DR. STONE

Relax, Phoebe. You seriously consider this position, and I'll see to it that the girl can stay.

PHOEBE 7

OK.  
(quietly fuming)

DR. STONE  
(sternly)  
I mean seriously consider it.

PHOEBE 7  
OK!

DR. STONE  
We'll talk tomorrow.

INT. SSP - PHOEBE'S POD -- LATER

Phoebe gazes at a wall-sized monitor on which incredibly beautiful winged beings perform a dance against a translucent white background, like birds, only it is intricately choreographed. She listens intently to the heavenly song they are singing. Suddenly a chime sounds and an image of a woman outside her portal appears. She taps her console and the door slides open as the angelic picture freezes and the music fades. Grace Thorson floats into the room.

INT. SSP - SCIENCE LAB

Zak and Quazarus are watching a 3-D animated model of a spacecraft swerving and spiraling through space as they simultaneously tweak controls on their monitors. They are trying to get the ship to intersect two Strands that are crossing in space. Each time it hits the intersect point, the space ship goes tumbling--an obvious failure.

ZAK  
D'oh! There it goes! The sub-vortex dispersion keeps trending to random! We can't stop it!

QUAZARUS  
I see. But look... The SimFan generator still pulses in progressive sequence. If we just transloop the feed array with recursive glips--

ZAK  
You mean uptake the algo as it--

QUAZARUS  
Yes! All we gotta do is tweak the feedback interval through TepSup, sync to ManGen, and stem from VarBet with each pulse.

ZAK

OK... wow... but... is the manarray going to take that kind of stress?

QUAZARUS

I know it will work in theory. But it'll take several lattice drives, a couple bubble domes, and a whole buncha nanotubes.

(reaching for the Com)

We'll have to run this by Roger.

ZAK

Wait, he's in alpha now--off com.

QUAZARUS

Oh, brother. So...

ZAK

So did you check out that Phoebe?  
What did you think?

QUAZARUS

(concentrating)

Very nice.40.

ZAK

She's babe-alicious!

QUAZARUS

Babe-alicious?

ZAK

Wayne's World... 1997. Didn't you see that... with... me...?

Quazarus, lost in thought, shakes his head slowly. They've been through this routine before.

ZAK

So is she going to be on the team?

QUAZARUS

Don't know. She seems bright.

ZAK

We have to get going on the language.

QUAZARUS

Yep.

ZAK

I think she'd make a great member of the team. Don't you?



QUAZARUS  
Roger'll make the right choice.

ZAK  
Yeah, but you know--

QUAZARUS  
Symtac the OrderBean!!

ZAK  
Huh?

QUAZARUS  
(rapidly)  
Symtac the OrderBean! The OrderBean  
throttles the flow of glips through  
TepSup. I knew we were gonna lose  
field integrity at the--

ZAK  
(hesitantly)  
Oh yeah...41.

QUAZARUS  
(quickly manipulating code  
as he speaks)  
--TepSup and we'd need massive  
cycles to sync to--

ZAK  
Right... so Symtac will--

QUAZARUS  
--recurse ManGen through every  
iteration of VarBet--

ZAK  
Geez, in about--

QUAZARUS  
(punching in the final  
sequence)  
--one 4000th of the time!

ZAK

GENIUS!!

Quazarus and Zak touch index fingers, forming a steeple.

QUAZARUS AND ZAK  
(in unison)  
ZINGGGG!!

They look on in satisfaction as this time the spacecraft hits the intersect point--and simply vanishes--as the words "Strand Insert Success" flash on the screen. After a moment of this...

ZAK

So, how about that Phoebe, huh?

Quaze smiles and shakes his head.

INT. SSP - PHOEBE'S POD -- LATER

Phoebe is sitting on a couch looking out a window at a magnificent view of the Earth. Just above the window is a com screen showing a head shot of Alana with Violet sleeping in the background.

PHOEBE 7

She's sleeping so peacefully.

ALANA

Yeah, she's starting to play more lately.

PHOEBE 7

Any luck on a home for her?42.

ALANA

Not yet. But we'll keep trying.  
Don't worry...

(beat)

So tell me about your adventures in space.

PHOEBE 7

Well, I didn't exactly hit it off with Roger Thorson. I'll be back in Pacifica soon.

ALANA

Oh...

PHOEBE 7

What?

ALANA

I just think at this point we need someone from Pacifica 7 represented on the crew... someone to speak for the little people. Hmmm...

Suddenly the display goes blank. Through her portal, Phoebe sees a flash on the Earth's horizon... an orange ball of fire... and a MUSHROOM CLOUD.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
OH GOD!!! NO!!!

INT. SSP - ROGER'S OFFICE

Phoebe slumps in a couch as Grace and Quazarus, both looking shaken, try to console her. Roger sits nearby monitoring a series of screens depicting frantic reactions out of the corner of his eye. Dr. Stone looks on gravely from a screen.

ROGER  
Phoebe, we'll, arrange transport to  
Pacifica 1 for you as soon as we  
can verify clear space.

Phoebe nods, almost imperceptibly. The door slides open and Zak enters. Seeing Phoebe, he immediately goes to her and gives her a hug.

ZAK  
I'm so sorry, Phoebe.

Phoebe meets his gaze with heartbroken eyes, then looks down again.

ZAK (CONT'D)  
(to Roger)  
We figured out how they did it. The  
nuke was mounted on a ceramic  
chassi and encased in four inches  
of bio material. It was designed to  
look and move like a dolphin. Even  
had a valid tag. It swam all the  
way from Baja. It looked just like  
a thousand other dolphins in those  
waters.

ROGER  
OK. Coordinate with Pacifica to  
establish a perimeter of--

DR. STONE  
Roger, I hate to tell you this but--  
-

Dr. Stone's screen flickers and his head is suddenly replaced by Fritz.

FRITZ  
 (theatrically)  
 D-d-did you see THAT?!! BOOM!! That  
 was AWESOME!! I mean I-  
 (noticing Phoebe)  
 --oh... Phoebe 7, is it? Formerly  
 of Pacifica 7? I should be a little  
 more respectful...  
 (beat)  
 But MAN did you see that?!!  
 INTENSE! Roger furiously tries to  
 trace the signal on his console  
 while everyone just glares at  
 Fritz.

FRITZ (CONT'D)  
 Well, we have really got to do  
 something about those terrori--

PHOEBE 7  
 (screaming)  
 YOU MONSTER!! Don't you dare  
 pretend you weren't behind this!!

FRITZ  
 HEY! The terrorists are no friends  
 of mine. Don't forget, missy, I'm  
 the establishment now! Especially  
 after ol' Icarus there flies the  
 coop!

Fritz pauses for a reaction from Roger but is disappointed.

FRITZ (CONT'D)  
 (continuing, to Phoebe)  
 ...so if you want security here on  
 Earth, baby, I'm your man!  
 (beat)  
 Of course, Roger is stuck with you  
 now... or is it the other way?

A perplexed look flashes over Roger's face. Fritz notices.

FRITZ (CONT'D)  
 (laughing)  
 Ho ho ho!! Don't tell me you you  
 didn't know about the big "reach-  
 out to-the-huddled-masses"  
 convention on Pacifica 7. All the  
 top linguists were there. She's all  
 you got, buddy! Roger's fingers fly  
 across his console, desperately  
 trying to track Fritz down.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Give it up, Roger. I'm always a step ahead of you. Talk to you soon! The screen flickers again and restores the image to Dr. Stone.

DR. STONE

Fritz!? God damn him to HELL!!

ROGER

(firm and calm)

OK. Let's focus. Dr. Stone, what about the linguists?

DR. STONE

All our alternate choices were on Pacifica 7. Anyone remotely qualified... except for Phoebe.

Roger watches Phoebe quietly sobbing into her hands. He is thinking hard. Finally...

ROGER

OK. We'll figure this out. Maybe the Orbits can--

PHOEBE 7

(raising her head)

I want to go.

The others turn their heads in various looks of surprise, concern and doubt, except for Dr. Stone who eases back in his chair just a bit.

PHOEBE 7

Things have changed. There's nothing for me--

ROGER

(kind but firm)

Phoebe, I don't think you're in any con--

PHOEBE 7

I'm going!

(beat)

You need me and... I'm going.

Roger nods his assent. The Zak and Quaze give Phoebe big, welcoming hugs.

## EXT. ESTABLISHING - SPACE

(Writers Note: Director, please pardon the following screen direction. Feel free to take or leave it as you see fit).

We pull away from the scene of Phoebe joining the team until we see it only through the portal of the space station. We continue pulling away until we see a panoramic view of the station orbiting Earth. We wheel toward Earth and do a fly by of the planet, heading off toward the sun.

We speed up and hasten directly to the sun until it completely fills the screen and we then fly directly through molten white light.

## EXT. SPACE - SOLAR SYSTEM -- CONTINUOUS

We emerge from the sun on the other side, zooming past Mercury and Venus and finally closing on Earth again as subtitles read "Six Months Later".

## EXT. PLANET EARTH -- CONTINUOUS

We continue to zoom in to the planet, towards southern Russia, closer and closer to a nondescript town, a nondescript neighborhood, and finally to a nondescript house.

## INT. FRITZ HEADQUARTERS - DAY

We zoom into the window of the house, down a flight of stairs, through hallways, down more stairs, eventually emerging into FRITZ'S spacious and sophisticated underground bunker. We zoom on a familiar set-- Fritz's "throne room". People scurry around busily.

SET DIRECTOR  
(clapping his hands)  
Now! Now! Get in your places!  
Thirty seconds!

Several scantily-clad beauties scurry onto the set and take their places. Then Fritz steps out of a side room, saunters to his throne and sits down imperiously.

SET DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Interrupt ready?  
(gets nod from engineer)  
Fritz ready? OK. On three... two...

He points at the engineer who pushes a button. Roger's face, deep in concentration, appears on a screen. The engineer gives Fritz his cue.

FRITZ

(jovially)

Roger! Long time-no talk! I have to hand it to you on your last trace algorithm! But even though we can't talk as often, it's nice that we can talk for longer when we do...

Roger, as always, is impassive.

FRITZ

(continuing)

...but I'll get right to the point. You know, I was thinking... this silly mission of yours is a big mistake. We both know it's gonna fail. And when it does, Earth is mine. Your finished. You're all finished. Now you'd probably think that's just what I want, but you know, it's not. Roger, you and I are engaged in an epic struggle. It's exciting! It's the stuff of legends! I guess I just don't want it to end.

(pause for response)

So how about we make a deal... you call off your mission, and I'll sign a peace treaty with the communities. Just give me my own little country... I was thinking North America from the Rockies to the Pacific. That's all. I could live with that. Of course we'll have to do something about Norad--

ROGER

(looking up)

I've got a meeting.

INT. SSP - ROGER'S OFFICE

Roger turns from the display and shoots through the portal, then down a tube as Fritz shouts after him.

FRITZ

Oh, come on, Roger! Let's give peace a chance!

(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)  
Or are you so sold out on this  
silly little quest of yours that  
you can't even see reason any more?

Roger cruises down the passage tubes as monitors along the corridor continue to broadcast a close-up of Fritz.

FRITZ (CONT'D)  
Fine! Go for it, Icarus! You're  
going down! And you're taking  
everyone along for the ride! I'm  
gonna--

Fritz, noticing the time, makes a quick cut motion and instantly disappears from the screen. Roger continues up the trans tube and then turns into...

INT. SSP - XR-24 DOCKING BAY

The Outreach team, including Phoebe, are assembled in a large docking bay. Many other people are also assembled there, including a group of Orbits all clustered together. Commander Case and General Carter are present via display. Floating in the middle of the room is the XR-24 spacecraft.

It is a gleaming silver, teardrop-shaped ship about twice the size of a large motor home. On the large rear end, set into the body, are two huge boosters, surrounded by a series of smaller thrusters and myriad tiny rockets. The front end narrows to a fine point.

Roger takes his place at a podium facing the ship.

ROGER  
Thank you all for being here. This  
is a great day. The XR-24 is the  
most sophisticated spacecraft in  
human history.(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)  
I want to honor the Orbits, and  
their manager, Zak for this amazing  
accomplishment. You have our  
gratitude!

The crowd cheers.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
And now, for her name. By now we're  
all familiar with the options: She  
will either be named the Valiant or  
the Dove.



ZAK

Uh, Roger, could I just make one  
final plea for the S.S. Minnow--

THE TEAM

(in unison)

No!!!

Zak smiles and shakes his head. He knew that was coming.

PHOEBE 7

(whispering to Zak)

Nice try, Gilligan!

ROGER

You all voted previously, so  
without further ado, I present to  
you... The Dove!

The attendees smile and clap. Commander Case rolls her eyes.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Now let's all enjoy some  
refreshments and admire this  
beautiful creation! The assembly  
breaks up and starts to mingle  
around in the weightless  
environment. They reach into  
transparent spheres to pluck out  
floating snacks and sip on beverage  
containers. We pick up snatches of  
conversations throughout the  
room...

GRACE

(to Dr. Stone)

I'm so pleased with the name. I  
love the symbolism. Peace...  
Hope...

DR. STONE

I'm a little uneasy with the  
religious overtones.

GRACE

Oh, but you can't deny the  
religious implications of what we  
are doing... Another  
conversation...

CASE

(from the display)

Congratulations, Zak.

CASE

So I suppose there's no chance of getting those defensive systems installed at this point.

ZAK

Well we do have the cloak, and--

PHOEBE 7

He means offensive systems.

CASE

Well, as the great Ronald Reagan once said, "The best defense is a good offense".

ZAK

Dude, that wasn't Ronald Reagan.

PHOEBE 7

Commander, we're going to ask the Eliars for help. We can't show up armed!

CASE

Well just don't look at me if...

ext conversation...

GENERAL CARTER

(from the display, to Roger)

...it will be the most sophisticated spacecraft, once the Seed is in place.

ROGER

Speaking of which, I trust you're ready for our upcoming visit.

GENERAL CARTER

Of course. We need to get our energy requirements worked out. Yes we do.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT

Roger shoots silently and purposefully through a trans tube and into a shuttle bay. He climbs into a passenger seat in a small shuttle craft. Grace is in the pilot seat, and Zak and Phoebe sit in rear passenger seats.

ZAK

Quaze isn't coming?

ROGER

We'll vid him if we need to. You gonna be OK with the gravity?

ZAK

Oh, sure.

GRACE

Phoenix Control. This is Sparrow 1, request undock.

PHOENIX CONTROL

Sparrow 1, you are clear for undock. Fly safely.

GRACE

Will do.

The bay door opens and the shuttle craft undocks from the Phoenix and begins dropping down toward Earth.

The ship blazes through the atmosphere and hurtles eastward across the former United States. We now get a closer look at the devastation that we saw in the opening scene. City after city is pock marked with gaping craters. They look brown and deserted.

Streaking toward the Rocky Mountains, the shuttle seems as if it is on a collision course. But as it approaches, a gigantic door opens, exposing a huge hangar built right into the side of the mountain. The ship flies smoothly into the hangar and roles to a stop. The team steps out.

INT. NORAD - HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

A phalanx of uniformed top brass greet them at the foot of the ramp, Commander Case among them.

GENERAL CARTER

Hello, Mr. Thorson. Welcome to Norad. Hungry? We've prepared a banquet.

ROGER

Thank you, but we're very anxious to see the Cone and the Seeds.

GENERAL CARTER

Very well.

(MORE)

GENERAL CARTER (CONT'D)  
 (to the group) )  
 Right this way...

The group turns and walks away from the shuttle. Zak's is already laboring with the gravity.

PHOEBE 7  
 (whispering to Zak)  
 Do you need a transport?

ZAK  
 Me? No! I'm fine.

But he doesn't seem fine. As Roger talks to Case and Carter, Zak breaths heavily and begins falling behind.

PHOEBE 7  
 General? I wonder if I could get a transport. Six months in space is catching up with me.

GENERAL CARTER  
 Of course. Where are my manners?

He snaps his fingers at an aide and within seconds four people zoom up on personal transports.

ROGER  
 No thanks, I'd rather walk.

Grace and Phoebe both step on and smile at each other.

ZAK  
 Well, if you insist...

Zak steps on and leans heavily on the front. It zooms out ahead of the group.

ZAK (CONT'D)  
 Whoa!!

He pulls back and tries to return to the group, but he does several spins before regaining control. By this time the group has caught up with him, and he falls back into the group as nonchalantly as he possible can. Grace and Phoebe can't help giggling.

ROGER  
 (to General Carter)  
 24 Terawatts. Do you realize how many barriers that powers? Do you know how many lives--

GENERAL CARTER  
As I was saying, the energy  
overruns were unavoidable.

ROGER  
I disagree. They could have been  
avoided by correctly estimating  
requirements in the first place.

GENERAL CARTER  
Be that as it may...

The group has arrived at a huge, arching gateway into a  
gigantic dome.

GENERAL CARTER (CONT'D)  
Ah, here we are. Ladies and  
gentlemen, the CONE.

INT. NORAD - CONE FACILITY -- MOMENTS LATER

The gateway doors slide open and the group walks/rolls into a  
vast cavern filled with a deep throbbing drone. The domed  
ceiling hundreds of feet overhead arcs down to become the  
walls. And below is an inverted PERFECTLY SMOOTH, SILVER  
CONE, at least a HALF MILE ACROSS and about a MILE DEEP.

The group proceeds along the catwalk, looking over the  
railing at the bottom of the cone far below.

ZAK

Impressive.

GENERAL CARTER  
Mankind's greatest technical  
achievement.

ROGER  
What I want to know is, how could  
your initial estimates have been so  
wrong?

GENERAL CARTER  
(irritated)  
Mr. Thorson, this was a massive  
project. There were unforeseen--

ROGER  
Come on, General! We've reviewed  
the models. They accurately  
predicted energy requirements  
before the project ever began.

GENERAL CARTER  
(snapping)  
We made our decision based on the  
data we had--

ROGER  
Results were distorted! Why?!  
General Carter stops short and  
turns to Roger, getting in his  
face. He's really pissed now.

GENERAL CARTER  
Why?!(MORE)

GENERAL CARTER (CONT'D)  
If the council had known how much  
energy this project was really  
going to take, they would've gone  
the other way. You and I would be  
living in a post-ReGenesis world  
right now.

ROGER  
...and Norad would be obsolete. General Carter fumes, at a  
loss for words. He and Roger glare at each other. Phoebe  
strides up.

PHOEBE 7  
Oh, that's just perfect! It was the lust for power that  
brought the world to the state it's in. And here you are,  
still scratching and clawing--

GENERAL CARTER  
Thorson, are you going to get your  
people under control? Roger gives  
Phoebe a look. She shakes her head  
and walks back to her transport.

COMMANDER CASE  
Gentlemen, we are where we are.  
Let's just get the job done.

Roger and Carter both look at Case and ease off a little.

COMMANDER CASE (CONT'D)  
Let's go take a look at the Seed.

INT. NORAD - CONE FACILITY -- MOMENTS LATER

The group enters another sliding door into a circular room  
surrounded by control panels with blinking lights.

At the center of the room is a circular glass enclosure. Inside it is the bottom of THE CONE. At the very bottom of the cone is a teardrop-shaped, silver object about the size of an ice cream cone--THE SEED. It's actually the same shape as the Dove. Its tip faces upward to meet the tip of the Cone. Six other Seeds are mounted in containers surrounding this one.

GENERAL CARTER

People, I present the Seeds.

The group gazes at the Seeds with pride and awe.

GRACE

Commander Case, we've all been so wrapped up in our own sub-projects. Perhaps you could refresh us on exactly how the Seed works.

CASE

Of course.

Case triggers a large wall monitor to show a schematic of the Seed attached to the tip of the Dove by a hair-thin rod. His description is illustrated as he speaks.

CASE (CONT'D)

At the very tip of the Seed are two hydrogen atoms resting at a temperature of 77 trillionths of a degree above absolute zero. At this temperature these atoms are essentially fused at the quantum level--indistinguishable. At the bottom of the Seed is a focused micro nuclear device. When the device is detonated, those two atoms will go from zero to 50 million degrees in less than a nanosecond. In the process they will literally shatter each other into the sub-quantum "material" known as "bing" and "ohm".

Case pauses and looks at Grace and Phoebe. Grace nods.

PHOEBE 7

I think we're clear on the basics. You can speed up.

CASE

In order to achieve Strand injection, this event must occur at the exact point of the Strands' intersection while traveling at precisely the correct velocity, vector, speed and charm.

PHOEBE 7

I've been wondering... what happens if we miss the implosion point?

ZAK

It depends... if we're off on vector, spin or charm we could get picked up by the wrong Strand--the longer Strand is always default.

PHOEBE 7

And if we miss the intersection point completely?

ZAK

(deadpan)  
It would be bad.  
(looking around for a laugh)  
Oh, come on! Ghostbusters?!  
Anybody?  
(beat, reciting)  
"...try to imagine all life as you know it stopping instantaneously and finding yourself... in... another dimension..."

Phoebe looks slightly amused. No one else does.

PHOEBE 7

Bad...?

COMMANDER CASE

Let's just say there won't be any open-casket funerals.

PHOEBE 7

Oh K... sorry I asked.  
(beat)  
I'm also a little unclear on the function of the Stem.



ZAK

(referencing the thin rod  
on the display)

The Stem connects the Seed to the  
Dove. The Seed will be obliterated,  
but the Stem is the material bridge  
that ensures we get sucked into the  
Strand along with the Seed.

The display shows the process of the matter being broken down  
into a string of bits and filing one by one into the Strand,  
unraveling the matter like a knitted sweater.

ROGER

(to Carter)

And you guarantee that with the  
additional 24 terawatts you will  
deliver the Seeds on time and to  
spec?

GENERAL CARTER

We guarantee it.

Roger clenches his jaw and nods.

EXT. NORAD - HANGAR

The group stands outside the shuttle. Commander Case has  
changed from his military uniform to a flight suit.

ROGER

(to Carter)

We'll expect delivery of the Seeds in 20 days.

GENERAL CARTER

We'll expect the additional power  
feed in two.

Roger nods his head and shakes Carter's hand. He turns and  
strides up the shuttle gangplank, followed by his crew.

GENERAL CARTER (CONT'D)

(to Case)

God speed, Commander. You are the  
pride of Norad.

CASE

Thank you, sir.

Case pivots and follows the team into the shuttle.

EXT. NORAD -- MOMENTS LATER

The shuttle shoots out of the hangar and jets into the sky.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

GRACE

All systems nominal. Course locked.

ROGER

Perimeter scan... all clear. The shuttle soars higher.

GRACE

SAM alert! Multiple launches at 7:24.

ROGER

Counter measures are live... locked... away.

PHOEBE 7

What's happening?!

GRACE

Incoming! More SAMs at 7:27, 7:32

ROGER

Volley 2, away. Volley 3, away.

PHOEBE 7

Are they going to hit us?!57.

ZAK

Don't worry. Grace is the best pilot in the--

GRACE

Evasive action!

Suddenly explosions and tracers appear outside the windows. The ship starts swerving and rolling.

ZAK

Whooooaaaaa!!!

Phoebe looks alarmed. After his initial shock Zak tries to look brave and puts his arm around Phoebe. Case looks preoccupied with something else.

The shuttle smooths out and the explosions subside.

ROGER  
Looks like that's it. All targets  
destroyed.

ZAK  
(to Phoebe)  
Geez, that sure feels different in  
space.  
(beat)  
Told you we'd be alright!

GRACE  
Ram shift approaching... Ram shift  
in...3...2...1

Grace flips a switch.

EXT. SHUTTLE CRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Two jet engines shut down and rotate into the aircraft as  
ramjet engines rotate to the outside.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

ROGER  
Ramjet locked. Ramjet engaged...  
mark.

The passengers are pushed back into their seats as the  
ramjets thrust the craft higher.

ROGER  
(to Grace)  
24 terawatts! Son of a... I don't  
know where we're going to get it.

GRACE  
Maybe Quazer can come up with  
something.

Roger nods, checks his console.

ROGER  
Rockets in 3...2...1. Mark.

EXT. SHUTTLE CRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

The Ramjets rotate in as rockets rotate out. The rockets  
ignite and the ship zooms out of the atmosphere, arching into  
an orbit with The Phoenix.

INT. SSP - TRANSPORT TUBE

Phoebe and Zak glide down the corridor side by side.

PHOEBE 7  
That was exciting!

ZAK(MR. COOL)  
Yeah!  
(beat)  
Hey, how about we get in a little  
Hyperbabble practice.

PHOEBE 7  
Yeah. We need it.

INT. SSP - ZAK'S POD - CONTINUOUS

Zak's pod door slides open and he and Phoebe float in.

PHOEBE 7  
Roger looks like he's about to  
explode.

ZAK  
Don't worry. Roger maintains.

PHOEBE 7  
I guess maybe the Roger Ramjet  
alpha male thing is just starting  
to get on my nerves.

ZAK  
Yeah? Oh yeah, I hear you. But he  
wasn't always this way.

PHOEBE 7  
No?

ZAK  
No. Check this out...

He zips over to a silver GLOBE about the size of a volleyball  
and fingers it a bit.

On a wall display an image appears of a group of several  
people watching in horror as one video display shows a  
spacecraft entering the atmosphere being blown to bits while  
another video screen shows Fritz laughing and taunting the  
viewers.

ZAK

Roger was pretty quiet and shy when he was young. Then when Fritz killed his parents on their way to that summit, he changed. Watch this...

Zak slows the video down and focuses in on the back of Roger's head. Roger turns his youthful face toward the camera. The slow-motion shot captures the depth of his grief, fear, and confusion. Then, still in slow motion, we see his face transform into a look of steely resolve. He turns back to the screen and steps forward as Zak freezes the screen.

ZAK (CONT'D)

That moment right there. That's the last time I ever saw a hint of fear in Roger.

PHOEBE 7

My God! How can he stand those horrible vids from Fritz?

ZAK

I think it's fuel for his thrusters.

PHOEBE 7

Still... why can't we block them?

ZAK

(shaking his head)

We've been trying for years. Fritz controls the electromagnetic spectrum, the digital grid, basically every means of communication. He's everywhere. He's just...

Zak just shakes his head.

PHOEBE 7

Well... we should get to work.

ZAK

Right.

(sitting down at a control panel)

Can we start on the defractal approach sequence?

PHOEBE 7

Sure.

(MORE)

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
(settling in)

OK. And... DeeBeeSeeBo

ZAK  
InDoBee GaDahBaDoo

PHOEBE 7  
OK. Now faster...

INT. SSP - QUAZARUS' POD

Quazarus is pouring over data, looking frustrated. Finally he just shakes his head and heads for the pod door which automatically opens in front of him. He shoots down the trans tubes.

INT. SSP - OBSERVATION DECK

Quaze glides through a wide portal into the observation deck which is currently displaying a dazzling star field. A few people sit here and there talking and relaxing. Phoebe sits alone on a couch gazing into space. Quaze cruises over.

QUAZARUS  
Beautiful, huh?

PHOEBE 7  
Hmm? Oh, hi Rus.

QUAZARUS  
Have any favorites?

PHOEBE 7  
What, stars?

QUAZARUS  
Or galaxies, nebulae,  
constellations...

PHOEBE 7  
No. I'm afraid they all just look  
like little white dots to me.

QUAZARUS  
Ah, if you would just get to know  
them. They're just like us, you  
know. They have volition--a will of  
their own.

PHOEBE 7

Sure.

QUAZARUS

It's true! Of course they're subject to gravity, just like us. Their lives play out over billions of years, so it isn't easy for us to see. But yeah, they have unique personalities. They work. Play. Have adventures... Fall in love...

Hmmmm... (beat)

PHOEBE 7

And what about you? How is it you haven't fallen in love yet?

QUAZARUS

Well, truth is, relating to women... I just find quantum astrophysics much easier.

PHOEBE 7

Mmmhmmm...

QUAZARUS

(looking back out at the stars)

I'm in love with th Universe. What can I say?

PHOEBE 7

You and Roger are as different as can be. How is it you're best friends?

QUAZARUS

Well, we grew up together. And Roger is...

PHOEBE 7

You really love him, don't you?

QUAZARUS

Love him... respect him... yeah. He's Atlas. I stand on his shoulders.

(beat)

But you don't really care for him much...

PHOEBE 7

Well, no... I mean, yeah... I admire him. It's just... his style. I understand what's at risk, but just pushing harder is not always the answer.

QUAZARUS

Oh, I grok that. Roger is pushing me hard. Seed integration... Stem modifications... More energy... But engineering, basic physics, it's just not my thing. Solving problems on demand... my mind just doesn't work that way.

PHOEBE 7

How does your mind work?

QUAZARUS

(smiling)

Oh... that's hard to say. But most of my great ideas just...come to me when I'm cruising in a recon ship, watching the stars.

PHOEBE 7

Well, I think you should do that. Relax. Let the answers come.

Quazarus nods slowly.

QUAZARUS

Ya know, I think you're right. I could really use a cruise. Thanks.

Phoebe smiles as Quazarus gets up and thrusts off to the portal.

INT. INTERCUT - SPACE SHIP AND OBSERVATION DECK

Quazarus flies in a small spaceship with a clear view of the stars while Phoebe continues to gaze out the window of the observation deck. We see the stars reflected on the glass before both of their faces. Phoebe has a wistful look on her face. Quaze is lost in deep thought.

INT. SSP - SCIENCE LAB

Zak and Quazarus study a model of the Seed attachment to the Dove spacecraft.



QUAZARUS

We're gonna need to funnel the ion stream sequentially.

ZAK

Hmmm. OK.

(beat, nonchalantly)

So how you feelin' about Phoebe these days?

QUAZARUS

Yeah, she's good. Really sharp. Hyperbabble is solid.

ZAK

Yeah.

(beat)

But no... special feelings... in particular...?

Quazarus shakes out of his focus and looks up at Zak.

QUAZARUS

I can't handle any "special feelings" right now... and neither can you.

ZAK

Oh, yeah, no. I know. I was just--

QUAZARUS

(back into his focus)

There's something about this sub vortex dispersion zone that--

Roger comes in.

ROGER

How's the Seed integration coming.

QUAZARUS

We're deep into the Stem's ion decompiler.

ROGER

Good. We'll be taking delivery of the Seeds in twelve days.

(beat)

I'm scheduling another Level 9 simulation -- on Taxys.

Zak winces.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
We have to overcome those  
Hyperbabble translation issues.

ZAK  
OK, Roger. Whatever it takes.

ROGER  
(encouragingly)  
Get ready. You can do it.

Roger turns and shoots out the portal. Zak gives Quazarus a pathetic look. Quazarus gives him a sympathetic pat on the back.

INT. SSP - ZAK'S POD

Zak and Phoebe sit at consoles practicing HYPERBABBLE.

PHOEBE 7  
(rapidly)  
GleeDaBooKa DeDeThree

ZAK  
(clumsily)  
KoDumDuLa

PHOEBE 7  
OK, there it is again. You have to  
completely close the lips on that  
"m".

She shows him, repeating the "dum" as Zak watches her lips, entranced, then shakes out of it.

ZAK  
I know that, Phoebe. I know! I just  
can't get my lips to do it.

PHOEBE 7  
Well, we're going to fix this, too.  
Remember when I was having all  
those health issues at the  
beginning of the project? I beat  
those, right? No thanks to Dr.  
Stone... And I'm gonna help you.

Zak nods.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Hey, let's take a little break.  
(beat)  
Show me your Globe again.

Zak lightens up a bit and floats over to the Globe.

ZAK  
We're taking this with us. Did I  
tell you that?

PHOEBE 7  
Yeah? Makes sense. Anything the  
Eliars want to know...

ZAK  
Instant humanity!  
(beat)  
What do you want to see?

PHOEBE 7  
How about just 15 minutes of  
Friends? Then back to drills.

ZAK  
Groovy!

INT. SSP - SCIENCE LAB

Zak stares intently at a screen scrolling some unintelligible language. He literally jumps when the display chimes and pops up a window with Roger's face.

ROGER  
It's time.

ZAK  
OK.  
(bracing)

Zak floats to the portal.

INT. SSP - SIMULATION CHAMBER

Zak drifts into the simulation chamber--an exact replica of the interior of the Dove spacecraft. Other team members are settling into their positions.

In the middle of the room Phoebe and Roger are both settling into two of three forward leaning stations, all facing inward toward each other. Zak floats to his station and starts strapping in to the third position.

Dr. Stone sits at a console off to the side, facing the central station. Commander Case sits at a console facing the wall. At the front of the room Grace sits in a forward leaning station.

She inserts her hands into a kind of gelatinous substance encased in the control console.

Quazarus enters the room. As he passes by Phoebe she reaches out and squeezes his forearm and gives him a smile. Zak notices, and his already grim expression turns even grimmer. Quazarus moves to his station at the back of the room. He reclines on his back facing the back of the ship with each hand resting on two rubbery, almost gelatinous spheres.

DR. STONE

Remember, no sudden movements. We don't need any more pulled muscles or strained ligaments. All ready?

SIMULATION CONTROL (O.S.)

Level 9 Strand Insert Simulation, full Taxys dosage will commence in 5-4-3-2-1.

The lights dim, accentuating the various lights and diagrams illuminated along virtually every surface of the room.

QUAZARUS

Intersect capture X25 Y10 Z240. Mark.

GRACE

All systems nominal. Proceed.

COMMANDER CASE

DR. STONE

Bio: stat. Inject Taxys... now.

Dr. Stone's display shows blue schematics of all members as a red film enters at their forearms and quickly spreads throughout their bodies. We begin to see that the movement of all of the team are starting to speed up. They begin to speak--rapidly.

QUAZARUS

DiDacTipDoc

PHOEBE 7

Deebo

ZAK

ZadikZadikLo

ROGER

MuMeeZoBeeDo

ZAK  
InAkDiBe

Their voices become more staccato as the Taxys begins to take effect. Though their bodies are basically still we can see that they are vibrating. Only their eyes, mouths, and fingers move, all at uncanny speed.

Though their voices and actions are unintelligible we can see from the various monitors that the simulated ship is flying through space, zeroing in on the Strand intersection.

ZAK  
AbiDakZinDo

ROGER  
KoDumDuLa

ZAK  
DeKoDuMuLa

PHOEBE 7  
ZaBiDak

ROGER  
BaDeeMumBo

PHOEBE 7  
DeBeeMuGoLak

ROGER  
Exit

The entire last sequence transpires over about one second of time. Though we can't tell what they are saying it is obviously that it didn't go well. Suddenly, everyone stops except for Dr. Stone who continues speaking as we see his display show another substance being injected into their systems. Gradually, everybody's bodies return to normal movement, except that they all look extremely tired. Zak slumps in his station and groans.

ROGER  
Dr. Stone, can we try again?

DR. STONE  
(pensively)  
Well, it might be--  
(firmly)

PHOEBE 7

No! Dr. Stone, you know two doses is only warranted in extreme circumstances. You set the protocol.

DR. STONE

Yes...yes, of course. Phoebe's right.

Roger takes stock of Dr. Stone, Phoebe, Zak...

ROGER

OK. What happened here? Is it the Dove? Hyperbabble? Taxys?

DR. STONE, ZAK & PHOEBE

(in unison)

It's Hyperbabble! Taxys! I don't know.

ROGER

Dr. Stone.

DR. STONE

The language is flawed. Zak is simply not able to articulate the commands clearly enough.

PHOEBE 7

(shaking her head)

The phoneme set is optimal. We can make some adjustments to syntax... But that isn't the problem. No one else is struggling with Hyperbabble.

(looking apologetically at Zak)

Sorry.

ROGER

Zak?

ZAK

(visibly upset)

It's Taxys! It... it doesn't work the same on me. I'm just not going as fast as everyone else... or something.

ROGER

Dr. Stone, investigate that. Zak and Phoebe, more drill sessions.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Let's take a break, regroup. Three  
cycles.

The team members slowly get out of their stations, various expressions ranging from discomfort to pain on their faces. One by one they move past Zak as they head for the exit.

ZAK  
I'm sorry... Sorry...

Phoebe stays behind to comfort Zak.

PHOEBE 7  
It's OK, Zak. We shouldn't have run  
the sim in the first place.

ZAK  
Ohhhhh, I'm hurtin'. Hurtin' for  
certain.

PHOEBE 7  
Come on. I'll help you to your pod.

Phoebe puts her arm under Zak's and gives him a boost toward the portal.

INT. SSP - ZAK'S POD -- MOMENTS LATER

Phoebe guides Zak to his rest alcove and helps him lie down.  
(weakly)

ZAK  
I am definitely asking Roger for a  
raise.

Phoebe chuckles and rubs his shoulder.

PHOEBE 7  
Get some rest. Three full cycles.

ZAK  
Phoebe, I... You...

PHOEBE 7  
Get some rest, buddy.

Zak nods and fades out.

INT. SSP - MEDICAL LAB

Roger enters the medical lab where Dr. Stone studies charts.

ROGER  
Dr. Stone. A word please.

DR. STONE  
Yes, Roger.

ROGER  
(incredulous)  
Hyperbabble is flawed?

DR. STONE  
Well, yes. I believe the syntax is--  
-

ROGER  
I think we both know the language  
is fine. The problem is Zak's  
reaction to Taxys.

DR. STONE  
Well, now--

ROGER  
Stone, I can't have you  
jeopardizing this mission's success  
with your distractions.

DR. STONE  
You're referring to--

ROGER

--THE CENTAURS. YES.

DR. STONE  
Roger, they are not "distractions".  
They are sentient beings whose  
survival depends--

ROGER  
(raising his voice)  
I understand that, Dr. Stone, and I  
empathize. But the survival of the  
entire human species depends on us.  
Every day I am forced to make  
decisions that cost thousands of  
human lives... always in favor of  
this mission.

DR. STONE  
I understand, but--



ROGER  
Dr. Stone... just figure out what  
is happening with Zak.

Roger taps a console.

ROGER  
This conversation has been logged.

INT. SSP - DR. STONE'S POD -- LATER

Dr. Stone sits in his well-appointed pod, perusing charts. Around him we see mementos from his childhood that tell a story: only child on an expensive yacht; Chronicles of Narnia figurines; Ivy league diplomas; magazine covers extolling the virtues of miracle drugs; a life of privilege before the world changed.

His console chimes and an O.S. voice on his monitor speaks.

DR. STONE'S COLLEAGUE (O.S.)  
Dr. Stone, we are growing concerned  
with the progress of the mission.

DR. STONE  
I am taking all reasonable--

DR. STONE'S COLLEAGUE  
Perhaps it's time for more drastic  
steps.  
(firmly)

DR. STONE  
I will not sacrifice--

DR. STONE'S COLLEAGUE  
You'll do whatever is necessary. We  
are depending on you.

The call ends and Dr. Stone gazes at a picture of his Centaurs, looking stressed.

INT. SSP - OBSERVATION DECK

Roger, Commander Case, Quazarus and Zak watch through a portal as a ship, escorted by several others, approaches the Phoenix. General Carter also looks on from a screen. The ship docks.

ROGER  
(to General Carter)  
We have the Seeds.  
(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)  
 (to Quazarus, Zak and  
 Case)  
 30 days to integrate.

All nod.

CASE  
 (pushing out ahead)  
 Let's go gentlemen!

Zak looks at Quazarus and rolls his eyes.

INT. SSP - MEDICAL LAB

Phoebe watches a clear liquid drip into a vial. A light flashes and the dripping stops. Phoebe takes the vial and heads for the door.

INT. SSP - SIMULATION CHAMBER

Phoebe enters the simulation chamber to see Zak sitting with holographic images of Phoebe and Roger doing hyperbabble drills.

PHOEBE 7  
 How's it going?

ZAK  
 (despondently)  
 My lips are numb. I'm getting worse, not better.

PHOEBE 7  
 Let's try this. It will regulate the uptake of glycine by the post-synaptic neurons in your pituitary.

ZAK  
 What does Dr. Stone think about this?

PHOEBE 7  
 Well, he doesn't seem to be doing anything about it himself, so I guess he doesn't care.

ZAK  
 Hmmmm... OK...

PHOEBE 7  
We only have three days till  
launch...

Zak nods. Phoebe snaps an attachment onto the vial and starts giving him an injection.

INT. SSP - SIMULATION CHAMBER -- MOMENTS LATER

Zak reads a script out loud in Hyperbabble, fumbling over the words. He stops in exasperation.

ZAK  
No difference!!

PHOEBE 7  
OK, OK. Just don't get frustrated.  
That makes it worse.

ZAK  
Don't get frustrated?! How can I not?! My God! We've overcome every technical hurdle. The only thing  
that can stop us from saving the planet is the fact that I can't pronounce the word "MooGak"!  
(beat, wearily)

I don't know... sometimes I wonder... if it's even worth it.

PHOEBE 7  
Worth it? We're saving humanity!

ZAK  
Well yeah, but, half the civilized citizens don't even consider the Ferals to be human any more.  
(beat)  
And the Orbits... In three generations you won't be able to tell they're human either. Then there's Dr. Stone, creating his Centaurs and God know's what else. I mean...  
(beat)  
What is humanity anyway?

INT. SSP - TRANS TUBE

Quazarus shoots through a trans tube. Ahead we see Phoebe cruising on a perpendicular path on an adjoining tube. They meet in the nexus pod.

This time, they are both under control, but they still do a little spin around each other as they lightly touch forearms.

QUAZARUS

You ready?

PHOEBE 7

Absolutely.

(beat)

I'm worried about Zak though.

QUAZARUS

Me too.

(beat)

Well, let's do it.

They push off down the trans tube together.

INT. SSP - CONFERENCE ROOM ALCOVE -- MOMENTS LATER

Phoebe and Quazarus glide up to an alcove just outside the main conference room. The rest of the team are already there. Zak looks at them and nods.

INT. SSP - CONFERENCE ROOM

A group of news reporters gathers in the large conference room along with a host of other people. The room crackles with excitement.

NEWS REPORTER

The world looks to the Phoenix today as the Outreach team prepares to embark on the most important mission in human history.

The alcove door opens and the team moves through, lead by Roger. As they go through the portal, the gravity takes over and from that point they walk into the room, waving to the cheers of the assembled crowd. They all wear brave, cheery smiles, but the stress is apparent in their faces, especially Zak.

NEWS REPORTER

And here they are! Spirits are high as we anticipate this historic speech from Roger Thorson.

Roger steps up to a podium and waits for the crowd to quiet.

ROGER

People of Earth, today I am proud to be human. We are an imperfect species, to be sure. We have been led to the very brink of destruction by wicked, selfish, and careless people. But this mission proves that we are capable of rising above our mistakes and making miracles happen! For all our faults, we have an infinite capacity for compassion, creativity, and courage. I have no doubt that the Eliars will recognize these noble gifts, and treat us as fellow children of God.

(beat)

Brothers and Sisters, you have entrusted us to find the solutions that can cure and cleanse our planet, and I pledge to you now, that humanity will not just survive... We will thrive!

The crowd erupts in cheers as the team smiles and waves. Then they turn and walk quickly toward the exit portal.

NEWS REPORTER

And now the team is heading toward the Dove space craft that will be their home for the next six months as they travel to the Strand Nexus, and from there to a distant planet.

The team exits.

NEWS REPORTER

Of course there have been many controversies and conflicts throughout the course of this project. And today those feelings run deeper than ever all over the world.

EXT. / INT. MONTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

As the news reporter speaks a series of scenes show people in various locations having dramatically different reactions to the ceremony. Some are popping champagne. Some are violently protesting. Some are weeping. Some are praying. There are shots of beautiful people in luxurious locations and of pitiful savages, unaware that anything unusual is even happening.

## NEWS REPORTER

It is a time for rejoicing and for  
 rage, for protests and for prayer.  
 But no matter our views, surely all  
 of us send out a heartfelt wish of  
 Godspeed to the Dove and her  
 intrepid crew on their long journey  
 to the stars.

## EXT. SPACE -- LATER

The Dove floats out of the Phoenix docking bay, fires it's  
 booster rockets, and heads off into space.

(Writer's note: As always, the director can feel free to use  
 or ignore the following screen direction at their  
 discretion.)

We zoom out, away from the space station, away from the  
 planet, away from the sun. As we pull back we can see Earth  
 revolving around the sun (indicating the passage of time).  
 After the planet has moved about a third of the way around  
 the sun from it's original location we see the Dove move into  
 the screen, with the subtitle "Four months later".

We zoom in to the ship, entering through Quazarus' portal.

## INT. THE DOVE -- MONTAGE

Each of the crew is engaged individually with various  
 activities. Quaze gazes out his forward portal at the stars.  
 Zak anxiously practices Hyperbabble. Phoebe pours over brain  
 scans. Case exercises. Dr. Stone looks at images and data  
 about Centaurs. Grace views images of the Eliars. Roger looks  
 back toward a distant planet Earth in the rear portal as we  
 pull back from the ship... Back, back, back, until the ship  
 is just a spec amidst a vast sea of stars.

## INT. THE DOVE - ZAK'S POD

Phoebe zips out of her pod and over to Zak's. She pokes her  
 head in through his open portal.

PHOEBE 7

You ready?

ZAK

Sure.

She floats over to him, pulls out a hypodermic needle, and starts inserting it into a permanent shunt in Zak's forearm.

PHOEBE 7  
(smiling excitedly)  
I'm pretty sure this is it! You  
have the script there?

ZAK  
Yeah.

PHOEBE 7  
(injecting)  
OK. Here we go... Read it.

Zak faces a monitor scrolling a set of symbols and starts reading in the now familiar Hyperbabble language. He's going fast, and he starts to smile. It's working! Phoebe is smiling broadly now too, elated. Zak finishes the speech and spins around to face her.

ZAK  
Shazaam!!

PHOEBE 7  
Yeah!

ZAK  
But will it work on Taxys?

PHOEBE 7  
It'll be accelerated on Taxys.

ZAK  
Jeepers! I can hardly wait for the  
next drill. Can you believe that?

PHOEBE 7  
Let's go tell the others!

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM

The team is assembled in their positions just winding down a simulation. They are still hyperbabbling but the pace is slowing down. The simulation ends.

ROGER  
Fantastic!

GRACE  
Perfect!

QUAZARUS  
Brilliant!

The team gathers around Zak and Phoebe, congratulating them both. Only Dr. Stone doesn't look happy. He makes a pained attempt at congratulations but his discomfort is apparent.

GRACE  
This calls for a celebration!

INT. THE DOVE - SOCIAL ROOM

The team is gathered in the social lounge sipping drinks and looking relaxed, or at least relieved, with the exception of Dr. Stone. Even Commander Case seems to almost fit in with the group.

GRACE  
(to Case)  
Of course you're right that this is a pivotal moment in history. But I wouldn't call it the pivotal moment. History is replete with turning points.

CASE  
Name one that comes close.

GRACE  
Well, I don't think you can compare them. Pivotal is pivotal. Like... OK. How about the time when the Terran communities objected to raising children on the Phoenix?  
(to Roger)  
Remember? They thought the Phoenix was separating from the planet, forming a separate society.

Roger and others nod. Phoebe looks curious.

GRACE  
(to Phoebe)  
Of course you don't remember, Phoebe. You weren't born yet. But it was a big controversy.  
(to Roger)  
Remember how your father went on-screen and made that speech.

ZAK  
I've got the clip right here!



He fingers his Globe and a scene appears on a wall screen.

INT. SSP - CONFERENCE ROOM -- ON SCREEN

Jon Thorson addresses a group in the same Phoenix conference room as Roger's last speech, though it looks much rougher in those days. Standing beside Jon Thorson is six year old Roger, gazing up at his father with awe and admiration.

JON THORSON

...we aboard the Phoenix pledge our dedication to the Human race. We will always use our position to pursue the restoration of peace and prosperity to all of the people...

CASE

(interrupting, as the volume drops)  
That's touching... but hardly pivotal.

GRACE

Well, don't you see? If children were not allowed to grow up on the Phoenix, Quazer would never have discovered the Strands. This mission would never have happened.

The group ponders that for a moment.

QUAZARUS

And as you recall, Grace, it wasn't Jon, but Roger who really won that argument, remember?

GRACE

Oh yes, I remember. A few days later.

(TO ZAK)

Do you have that one, Zak?

ZAK

(touching the Globe)  
Of course.

INT. SSP - CONFERENCE ROOM -- ON SCREEN

The scenes skips forward to a group of reporters sitting anxiously in one room as Roger, age 6, Grace, age 5, and Quaze, age 3 wait with their parents in an adjoining room.

Quaze is deeply engaged with some science toy. Grace is the picture of poise. Roger's eyes are hidden behind a visor-- he's involved in a video game.

JON THORSON

Roger, it's about time to start.  
Put the game away now, son.

Roger reluctantly takes the visor off and looks up at his father with a pitiful expression.

ROGER

But... I've almost reached the 12th  
dimension...

Jon Thorson kneels down in front of Roger and looks him in the eyes with a firm yet compassionate gaze.

JON THORSON

Roger, I know you don't want to go  
out there. But you're their leader.

(nodding at Grace and Quaze)  
They're depending on you.

Roger just looks at his father with glistening eyes and quivering lip. Grace puts her hand on Roger's shoulder.

JON THORSON

And I'm counting on you, too.

Roger firms up, nods. Jon Thorson nods to an aide. The portal slides open and the three kids glide through. Roger looks as cool as can be.

INT. THE DOVE - SOCIAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Grace looks over at Roger and smiles proudly. Phoebe looks at Roger too, in a new way.

ROGER

OK, OK. Very nice.  
(beat)  
But enough home movies. I'm in the  
mood for one of Zak's old classics.  
How about that Ghost Killers you  
always talk about?

ZAK

Ghostbusters! Yeah!!

Cheers from the gang.

INT. THE DOVE - SOCIAL ROOM -- LATER

We see a montage of shots showing the gang kicking back, eating snacks, sharing laughs, and really relaxing for the first time since the movie started. Close on Roger, smiling.

INT. THE DOVE - ROGER'S POD

Close up on Roger's face as he awakens in his bunk. Grace, lying in an adjacent bunk, opens her eyes too. She rolls over to face Roger.

GRACE

This is the cycle. How do you feel?

ROGER

Awesome! You?

GRACE

Yeah. Let's go!

They climb out of bed and give each other warm kisses and encouraging smiles.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- LATER

The team members are in their positions prepping the ship for the Stransit. The mood is cool and controlled.

QUAZARUS

Zak, confirm reflux cap 2 nominal.

ZAK

(checking his console)

Confirmed.

PHOEBE 7

(to Roger and Zak)

Remember the syntax change in spin acceleration--ImDubZuDac, right?

Roger and Zak both nod.

GRACE

Rog, when we exit--

Suddenly all the screens flicker and Fritz appears.

FRITZ

Hello, Icarus!! You didn't think  
you'd heard the last of me did  
you?!

Roger, Zak, and Quaze all start working the consoles.

PHOEBE 7

We can't even jam him out here?

FRITZ

Listen, I've decided I don't want you to go. This was a stupid idea from the start. So you just turn your ship around and come on back, and we'll work something out. OK? But if you go through with this--if this actually works--well, I am going to unleash on Earth, starting with Pacifica 1 and Norad!

The team members exchange upset looks.

FRITZ

I know there's a time delay so I'm giving you an hour to respond. If I haven't heard from you by then, well then, "bomb" voyage!

The screen goes blank.

CASE

Bastard!

DR. STONE

We have to scrub! Thorson! We can't let this happen!

ROGER

What!? Scrub?! Are you--

DR. STONE

What is the point of going for help if there's no one left to save?!

ROGER

First, he doesn't have the cap--

DR. STONE

You saw what he did to P--

ROGER

And second, we will not be held hostage by a petty dictator!

DR. STONE

Petty dictator? He's done it before. He will do it again.

ROGER

Your objections are duly noted. But there's an injection window approaching and we are making that Stransit. Now, are you on board or not?

Dr. Stone reluctantly nods his assent.

ROGER

(to the team)

People, I know this is upsetting, but we have to put that out of our minds and focus now. We've done this a thousand times in simulation, so let's execute. All ready?

(beat)

Strand insert sequence 1 commence in 5-4-3-2-1.

QUAZARUS

Intersect capture X14 Y24 Z90.

GRACE

Mark.

COMMANDER CASE

All systems nominal. Proceed.

DR. STONE

Bio: stat. Inject Taxys... Now.

The team members' movement begin to twitch and their voices speed up, just as in the previous simulation. Only this time it is much smoother.

PHOEBE 7

InAkDiBee

ZAK

DeeBo

QUAZARUS

DiDacTipDoc

ROGER

ZaDikZaDikLo

ZAK

MuMeeZoBeeDo

ROGER

AbiDakZinDo

ZAK

KoDumDuLa

GRACE

Go

(Writer's note: please indulge a little screen direction on this scene. I defer to the director, of course).

The following scene is intercut between the team in the control room and a shot of the Dove zipping through space. With each shift the team talks faster as the ship spins and swerves faster, too.

On each interior shot we pan from back to front, closing on Grace's screen that shows the intersection point. And on each exterior shot we zoom in closer to the ship and pan forward to the Seed mounted in front. The pace of the shifts quickens. The music rises. Back. Forth. Louder. Faster. Closer. Closer. Screen. Seed. ZAP!!!!!!High-pitched burst and a blinding white screen. Then silence.

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

Slowly, the screen fades to black, eventually leaving a white residue--the star field. As it does so we begin to hear the sound of disembodied voices, not quite distinguishable, rising and falling, blurring together...

VOICES

Our bodies...what happened... oh  
it's over...we're alive... it  
worked... never thought I'd die in  
space... afterlife... is this a  
dream... we could have created a  
paradise... astral bodies... I  
sense... Roger... I can't  
believe... in God's hands... I'm  
aware... there's Earth... is that  
the galaxy... sub- quantum level...  
so weird... lost... lost...  
forever... It's the Strands... I  
feel my body... follow me... follow  
me... Zak, do you feel me? I feel  
it... they're pulling us... come  
on... Q... let's go. Come on...  
follow the pulse... follow me.

As they speak we begin to make out their astral bodies in the form of blurred patches of stars. One by one they begin to move as evidenced by the blurs. Finally only two remain, one tugging on the other and causing them to move at last.

We begin moving rapidly through space, picking up speed, flying past a star, seeing other stars moving by at various distances.

After passing several stars we zero in on one orangy star. Faster and faster we zoom toward it until we see that we are actually headed directly to an orbiting planet. The planet rushes toward us and we realize that we are actually aiming at a spot a short distance away from the planet. Then we see the Dove-- just a spec at first--but almost instantly zooming in to full screen.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM

Phoebe jolts into her body. She quickly observes that the others are already babbling and working their controls. Phoebe begins doing the same. Only Dr. Stone is still, slumped in his station. Suddenly he jerks and begins vibrating violently.

Phoebe notices and hits a control to inject Stone with anti-Taxys. His vibration subsides.

The others' speech begins to slow (though it is still a very rapid clip) as the Taxys wears off. Soon, they are back to speaking English again. Phoebe gets up and goes to attend to Dr. Stone who appears incapacitated.

QUAZARUS  
Integration complete.

GRACE  
Control attained: Speed...  
Vector... Spin... Charm...

ROGER  
Confirmed.

ZAK  
(efforting)  
Craft systems: nominal.

QUAZARUS  
Confirmed.

CASE  
Threats: Radiation... negative.  
Objects... negative.  
Life...negative.

ROGER  
Confirmed.

GRACE  
Location: Target.

ZAK  
Stem set: intact.

CASE  
Confirmed.

GRACE  
Orbit achieved at 60MMs.

ZAK  
Confirmed. Probe volley 1 away.

ROGER  
Bio? Phoebe?

PHOEBE 7  
Dr. Stone has Hyper-agitation. I'm  
on it. Otherwise, all normal.

ZAK  
Probe volley 2 away.

By now the pace has slowed considerably as they begin to  
heave a collective sigh of relief. Dr. Stone begins to pull  
himself together.

PHOEBE 7  
Dr. Stone is back.

ZAK  
Probe volley 3 away.

The lights along the panels blink and swirl and the ship  
drones and beeps as if nothing has changed at all. The crew  
sit silently for a moment, comprehending what has just  
happened. Finally,

GRACE  
Praise God! We did it!!

PHOEBE 7  
(patting Dr. Stone)  
We did!

Phoebe crosses to Zak and rubs his shoulders

PHOEBE 7  
We did it, Zak! We did it!

The rest of the crew erupt in back-slapping congratulations.  
Only Dr. Stone is subdued.



QUAZARUS

(pointing at Grace)

And "praise God" is right! Do you realize we just empirically proved the after-life exists?!

PHOEBE 7

Oh, I'm suddenly so nervous! We're actually here! We're going to meet them!

CASE

Mankind's greatest achievement!

QUAZARUS

I can use this to develop a proof for the existence of God!

ROGER

OK. We still have work to do. Zak, we should be receiving telemetry any...

ZAK

(checking his console)

...and here they are...

Zak taps his console and suddenly on the large central screen looms a huge planet with an orangey sun in the distance.

The planet looks similar to the model we saw in a previous scene, but the color is more brownish than gold. On the northern pole there is a large, olive-green ocean. It isn't pretty. And though no words are spoken, the crew's smiles begin to fade.

ZAK

Volley 1 results. As expected, planetary mass is about 1.5 times Earth's. Surface area: 15% water, 85% land. Atmosphere: Oxygen, Nitrogen, trace. It's breathable.

The crew relaxes a bit but stare intently at the screen as it closes on the planet.

ZAK

Volley 2 results coming in. Here we go...

(beat)

There's civilization!

Another excited reaction from the group.

ZAK

And here's our first look.

The camera zooms in toward the perimeter of the ocean and closes quickly on the beach. We begin to see the signs of civilization, but it isn't what we expect. Rough domed HUTS set amid bushy trees and brownish-gray paths stretch out in front of us as far as the eye can see. Then we close on the

INHABITANTS...

They are humanoid in form--two arms, two legs and a head with two eyes and a mouth. But that is where the similarity to us ends. They are big and bulky with leathery, greenish-brown skin. Their bulky limbs are all double-jointed, making them extremely agile despite their heft. Their bulbous heads extend directly from their shoulders with no distinguishable neck. Yet they are extremely flexible. They can turn their bald heads 180 degrees to look backwards. Their faces are dominated by huge, bulging eyes and a round, gaping mouth lined with teeth like an eel. No nose. No ears. No eyebrows. They are ugly. And the Dove crew's faces fall.

ZAK

Well... this wasn't on the brochure.

ROGER

Where are the Eliars?

ZAK

Scanning.

ROGER

Subterranean? Subaqueous?

ZAK

Not so far...

The rest of the crew just look on in dumb silence.

ZAK (CONT'D)

Volley 3 telemetry in... Phoebe? Phoebe who has been monitoring her console now puts another shot up on the screen. This one shows four creatures in a line-up, all similar in appearance but quite distinct. Each one is head-and-shoulders taller and more powerfully built than the last. They are also clearly more sophisticated the larger they get.

PHOEBE 7

It's a caste civilization with four very separate levels. She highlights the first, smallest group.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)

We've just been looking at this group-- you could call them the proletariat. They constitute about 95% of the population. They are about seven feet tall and weigh about 400 pounds. Not too smart. Primitive technology. Subsistence lifestyle. Gathering food, building shelters, worshiping the sun, defending against desert creatures.

The screen depicts all this, including a gruesome looking creature about the size of a rhino but completely covered in spikes that, running at full speed, curls up into a ball and mows down dozens of hapless Charians.

PHOEBE 7

The second group are what you might call the bourgeoisie. Basically they're managers. Their function is to ensure that the proles don't step out of line. They have basic technology--weapons, autos, even aircraft. They're smarter and bigger.

The Dove team exchanges shocked looks as the video shows these managers herding the lower class Charians with electric prods and sometimes shooting a kind of gun. We see them chasing them in a land vehicle and buzzing them with aircraft.

Phoebe returns to the group of four and highlights the third group. They are bigger and visibly more sophisticated, dressed in finery.

PHOEBE 7

The third caste is the aristocracy. They represent a tiny fraction of the population and they live in castles in the mountain ranges. They're quite intelligent. They have serious technology--much more than the last group. They've even achieved space flight. But it seems crude by our standards. Maybe Zak or Rus could speak to that?

Quaze is silent.

ZAK

(shaking his head)

It seems crude, but they have lots of it. Mostly mechanical. Vehicles that climb mountains. Jets. Submarines. Thousands of spacecraft.

ROGER

What about the fourth caste?

PHOEBE 7

Well, that would be this guy.

Phoebe clicks on the fourth figure and the image changes to a panorama shot of the mountain ranges. We close quickly on the highest mountain peak. As we approach we see that the top of the mountain is actually one huge CASTLE. Zooming in to the castle, we approach an expansive open deck. In the middle of the deck is a massive golden throne, and sitting on it is the EMPEROR... gazing out over the ocean, his bulging eyes gleaming with arrogant intelligence.

PHOEBE 7

He's huge... over ten feet tall and close to a thousand pounds. And he's smart. He has no rival. He is the undisputed emperor of this planet.

Pregnant pause as the team absorbs this new information.

Finally...

ROGER

Phoebe: learn everything you can about him. I need a profile in two hours. Dr. Stone: biological profile. Zak: do a complete analysis of their technologies. We need to know what they're capable of. Case: re- stem Seed 2. Quazarus: find the Eliars! I'm going to update the log and we'll regroup in two hours.

Roger pushes off toward his pod.

GRACE

(expectantly)

Roger?

ROGER  
(turning back)  
Prep the Dove for Stransit... and  
pray.

Roger turns and shoots toward his pod.

INT. THE DOVE - ROGER'S POD -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger sits in front of a console, his face showing large on a screen. His hand trembles on the control and his face is contorted with stress.

ROGER  
(into a mic)  
Captain's log: The Stransit was  
successful. On target. However, we  
have encountered a...

He twitches his fingers to rewind a bit.

ROGER  
The planet itself conforms to all  
expectations. However, we were  
surprised to learn...

He stops, rewinds again, thinks for a moment.

ROGER  
However, the population...

He closes his eyes and tries to calm down.

INT. THE DOVE - ROGER'S POD -- LATER

Roger's door chimes and opens and Quaze shoots in, looking grim.

QUAZARUS  
They're not here.

ROGER  
How!? Where are they?

QUAZARUS  
They're ten thousand light years  
away. At least they used to be. The  
Charians captured the message long  
ago. They re-broadcast it.

Roger's head slumps for a few moments and shakes slowly. Then he lifts it up again.

ROGER  
How did we not...?

QUAZARUS  
I just didn't...

ROGER  
OK. Help Zak learn everything about  
their technology... find out what  
we're dealing with.

Quaze nods and heads for the door.

ROGER  
  
Q.  
Quaze turns.

ROGER  
I know you're excited about the  
metaphysics of all this, but you  
need to focus on the planet right  
now.

QUAZARUS  
Got it, Roger.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger floats back into the control room. Everyone looks up  
from their consoles.

ROGER  
OK, the Eliars are not in the  
picture. Who are we dealing with,  
Phoebe?

EXT. PLANET CHARA

A tiny probe impacts near the beach below the castle. A bug  
emerges, looking identical to other insects flying around. It  
starts flying up the mountain.

PHOEBE 7 (V.O.)  
We've sent a probe to get inside  
the palace so we know a lot more  
now.

## INT. EMPEROR'S PALACE - HALL OF EMPERORS

From the probes perspective we fly through a long, wide corridor lined with the mummified remains of emperors past.

PHOEBE 7 (V.O.)

We are dealing with the latest in an unbroken line of emperors-- almost five hundred of them. They live about a thousand years each. Every emperor has had the same overriding objective--maintain the status quo. This civilization has existed like this since humans were learning to use fire. Technological advances happen slowly, but they do happen. And the emperor controls it all.

The video presentation comes to the end of the hall of kings and emerges into a magnificent state room, where the emperor sits on a golden throne, attended by his court.

## INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

PHOEBE 7

They call him ZHARGH.

The team's jaws collectively drop, except for Zak who guffaws hysterically.

ZAK

ZARG!? Oh my God! The Zargons!?  
We've encountered the freakin'  
Zargons!!

ROGER

Zak!

ZAK

(laughing and crying)  
I mean, come on, Roger! This is  
right out of Star Trek! This is  
Babylon 5! It's just--

ROGER

Zak!! Focus!

Zak struggles to regain his composure, but he is on the edge of freaking out. Roger nods at Phoebe.

PHOEBE 7

But Zarg here is different--he's got a fetish that causes him to take risks.

The team leans forward.

PHOEBE 7

We're not the first to visit this planet. He's encountered aliens before, and he's fascinated by them. He wants to meet them again.

ROGER

What happened to the previous visitors?

PHOEBE 7

Not sure. There's evidence that they've been here, but...

ROGER

So he re-broadcast that message to lure aliens to his planet?

PHOEBE 7

Right. His forefathers would have condemned it, but--

ROGER

OK. Zak, what about his technology?

ZAK

He's a power monger. He knows everything about energy. They've got inexhaustible oil reserves...

A video screen shows Zarg, sitting with the massive orange sun glowing behind him on his deck throne, pulling on a huge lever. As he does, a gigantic column of fire shoots out of the ocean miles into the sky--just for his amusement.

ZAK (CONT'D)

Nuclear.. Hydro... But he knows a lot more than that. More than we're able to tell yet. He has a kind of vault built into the base of his mountain. It's huge, and we don't know what's in there yet.

ROGER

Q?



QUAZARUS  
 (looking stressed)  
 I'm working on it.

Pregnant pause...

ROGER  
 OK. Options: Q, any chance of  
 finding the Eliars?

QUAZARUS  
 Every other adjacent Strand segment  
 leads too an unknown, so...

ROGER  
 Can we make something out of this?  
 I know he isn't pleasant, but can  
 we form some kind of mutually  
 beneficial--

ZAK  
 Well he does have all that  
 energy...

QUAZARUS  
 ...and it could be Stransited...

ZAK  
 ...if we have something he wants to  
 trade for.

CASE  
 Are you kidding?! Trade with this  
 monster? I'd suggest just blasting  
 him and taking his damn energy if  
 we weren't here in the flappin'  
 "Dove"!

ROGER  
 We didn't enter the galactic  
 community to assassinate the first  
 leader we--

CASE  
 He asked for it! We could modify a  
 Seed... take him out in one--

ROGER  
 No! Next option.

DR. STONE  
 I can't believe we're even  
 discussing this! We return to  
 Earth!

CASE  
And then what?!

DR. STONE  
ReGenesis, of course!

Pregnant pause.

STONE  
It's not too late. We've failed  
this mission. It's the obvious next  
step.

GRACE  
We didn't come this far to--

DR. STONE  
We can create a paradise on Earth!

Phoebe looks sharply at Dr. Stone, remembering something.

DR. STONE  
Don't you understand? It's our  
destiny. It's God's plan! He  
separates the wheat from the chaff!  
He cleanses with fire! We're just  
his--

PHOEBE 7  
You poisoned Zak!!

Everyone's head jerks to Phoebe.

PHOEBE 7  
And you poisoned me at the start of  
the mission! I treated myself so  
you started in on--

DR. STONE  
That's nonsense!

PHOEBE 7

You've been trying to sabotage this mission all along! I can  
prove it!

DR. STONE  
So what if you can?! This mission  
was a mistake from the start!

PHOEBE 7  
Why didn't you just kill us all  
with a Taxys OD? Why all the  
subtle--

DR. STONE  
I'm a doctor! I have a reputation  
to maintain! And when we return to  
Earth, I'll be the one--

ROGER  
(barking)  
Not another word, Stone!! We'll  
deal with you later. Right now--

In the heat of the moment no one has noticed that Zarg has gotten up from his throne and walked toward the camera. Suddenly they all notice that his face is filling up the screen. He disappears briefly and the scene flurries as the insect probe tries to fly away, but seconds later we see Zarg's face once again filling the screen. He is holding the camera. And he begins to speak.

ZARG (O.S.)  
Thurdaka! Hulgha Zark, ho?

ROGER  
(to Phoebe)  
Have you translated?

PHOEBE 7  
(punching her console)  
Yes.

ROGER  
Replay.

The screen rewinds to the point at which Zarg starts talking and replays. This time Zarg's actual voice is muted and is replaced by an English interpretation in a voice similar to Zarg's.

ZARG (O.S.)  
Little bug? What are you doing  
here, Hmmm?

ZARG (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(inspecting the bug)  
I haven't seen you in our palace  
since the star fairies came to  
visit!  
(beat)  
Hello, star fairies!

Zarg barks a command to an assistant, then turns back to the camera.

ZARG (CONT'D)  
 Your timing is perfect! I am about  
 to celebrate the Planting of the  
 Seed. You must join us!

Zarg turns to an O.S. aid, then turns back to the camera.

ZARG (CONT'D)

Good! I have your location. I will send a delegation to greet  
 you.

ROGER  
 (to Case)  
 Are we cloaked?!

CASE  
 Yes!!

ROGER  
 Quaze?!

QUAZARUS  
 (shaking his head)  
 They have lot's of technology we  
 haven't--

ZAK  
 I'm detecting multiple space craft  
 launches! Dozens of them?

ZARG (O.S.)  
 Why are you being so shy? I scan  
 for your greeting!

ZAK  
 They're headed this way!

ROGER  
 OK. Stay and talk or return to  
 Earth? Grace?

GRACE  
 Stay.

ROGER  
 Q.

QUAZARUS  
 I don't... there's a lot we don't--

ROGER  
 We have to decide.

QUAZARUS  
 (uncertain)  
 Return.

Roger looks stricken by that but moves on.

ROGER  
 Case?

CASE  
 Turn tail and run at the first sign  
 of a scary creature?! No! We stay!

ROGER  
 Zak?

ZAK  
 I... have to go with Quaze.

ROGER  
 Phoebe...

PHOEBE 7  
 Anything is better than returning  
 to genocide. Let's stay.

As usual, the final decision is on Roger.

ROGER  
 OK. We stay.  
 (beat)  
 Phoebe, how do we talk to him?

PHOEBE 7  
 Well, the language is fully  
 translated. Just say what--

ROGER  
 I mean, what's our stance!?

PHOEBE 7  
 Oh, well, he doesn't relate to  
 equals. It's not in his DNA. And we  
 can't project any weakness. He'll  
 treat us as... pets. We have to  
 come across as superior beings of  
 some sort.

ROGER  
 But not superior enough to remain  
 undetected...

PHOEBE 7

He seems to be expecting someone else, so at least we have the element of surprise.

ZAK

His ships are closing. Man are they fast!

ROGER

How long?

ZAK

Five minutes.

Roger closes his eyes and disappears into a kind of trance as he actually wills himself to relax. After a few moments, he opens his eyes--and he has transformed. Over the course of the story we have seen the stress gradually show more and more in his face. Now it is gone. He is the picture of strength and confidence.

ROGER

Phoebe, prepare to transmit, all frequencies.

Phoebe manipulates her controls and Roger positions himself.

ROGER

Let's get this shot of his planet in the background... for effect.

ZAK

(thumbs up)  
Good call.

PHOEBE 7

Good. OK. Ready.

ROGER

OK. Go.

Phoebe taps her console and nods.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(brimming with confidence)

Greetings, Zarg! I am Roger Thorson of Earth.

Zarg, still appearing on the screen looks over to an o.s. screen. He looks surprised for a moment, then pleased. He gestures to an aide.

PHOEBE 7

He's transmitting now. Acquiring...

The image now changes and we get a new, more staged view of Zarg. Zarg smiles broadly and begins to speak in his guttural language which is muted and replaced with English.

ZARG

(via translator)

Greetings, Roger Thorson of Earth!  
Welcome to Zarg! What is your  
purpose?

ROGER

We are explorers. We have studied  
your planet and find you  
interesting. We would like to--

ZARG

Are you traders or conquerors?

ROGER

We are seekers of knowledge... but  
we are interested in trade.

ZARG

Good! Good!! I have much to trade  
with. Let us talk!

ROGER

Very good. Please withdraw your  
fleet and we can make the  
preparations.

ZARG

(taken aback)

This is a welcoming delegation!

ROGER

We appreciate the gesture. But  
please return them to your planet.

ZARG

This is not--

ROGER

Consider it a goodwill gesture.

ZARG

If you think they are a threat--

ROGER  
(impatiently)  
We have many more planets to visit.  
Perhaps we should continue our  
voyage.

ZARG  
No. Of course I will withdraw my  
delegation... as a goodwill  
gesture.

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

The fleet of at least 100 crude looking rocket ships have  
just begun arriving at the Dove. They circle the ship and  
begin the return trip to the planet.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

ROGER  
Thank you.

ZARG  
I am eager to continue our talk.  
Please join me on my planet to  
witness the Planting of the Seed.

ROGER  
We prefer to communicate from here.

ZARG  
(offended)  
This is my most sacred ritual! If  
we are to do business together, I  
must insist.  
(slyly)  
Consider it a "goodwill gesture..."

ROGER  
We negotiate from space.

ZARG  
Well... perhaps you should continue  
your journey.

Pregnant pause...

ROGER  
What do you have to offer in trade?



ZARG

(brightening)

Ahhh, I have great knowledge of the natural world--magnificent technology, the source of power.

(beat)

And what do you offer?

ROGER

We possess the collected knowledge of a thousand civilizations...

Another pregnant pause as both negotiators consider each other's motivation and power. Finally...

ZARG

I'm afraid I must insist. The offense would be too great.

Roger looks over at Phoebe who shakes her head and mouths the words "strong". Roger turns back to Zarg and smiles confidently.

ROGER

Good news! My superiors have granted permission for us to join you. They will observe from a distance.

ZARG

Wonderful! You will enjoy the ceremony! I will make the arrangements.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- LATER

The team members are suited up in jump suits and sitting in their stations.

PHOEBE 7

(to Roger)

OK. Keep the Taxys drip at this level. That'll give you the strength to overcome the extra gravity. You should be good for a couple hours. Any longer and--

ROGER

Got it. Let's go.

## EXT. ZARG'S PALACE

The Dove makes a graceful landing on a large pad near Zarg's outdoor platform to the cheers and applause of hundreds of Zarg's finely attired subjects. A kind of trumpet fanfare blasts. The Dove's hatch opens and Roger, Case, and Quazarus stride out, stand proudly in front of the ship, then bow graciously to Zarg who is seated at least 100 feet away across the platform.

ZARG  
(proudly)  
Welcome to Zarg!

Zarg's voice booms across loud speakers in his language and is translated into earpieces in the team's ears. Roger begins to speak and his voice, translated into Zargonese, is blasted from a speaker built into his suit.

ROGER  
On behalf of the planet Earth, we  
greet Zarg and his loyal subjects!

ZARG  
Please, have the other four come  
out and join me!

Roger is taken aback.

ZARG  
You see? I have great technology!

ROGER  
The others must attend to our  
craft.

ZARG  
I must insist! I only celebrate the  
Planting of the Seed every 1000  
cycles. Surely you do not mean to  
humiliate me in front of my  
subjects!  
(beat)  
Do you need to ask your superiors?

Roger whispers into his mic and a moment later The Dove's hatch opens and the other four exit, Dr. Stone very reluctantly.

ZARG  
(pointing to a dais  
near his throne)  
Wonderful! Come! Join me in the  
place of honor!

The seven march down an aisle through the midst of the group toward Zarg, trying hard to appear strong and confident in spite of the fact that they are dwarfed by the creatures surrounding them. They finally reach the dais and step up several stairs to stand near Zarg. Now we get the full sense of his massive size. He towers over the team, eyes gleaming with a sense of superiority.

ZARG

Now you will witness a great moment.

(to the crowd)

Assemble!!

All the subjects form into many groups of ten to twenty each. They seem to be gathered behind a single person within each group.

Zarg walks down the steps and into the crowd. He moves from group to group, evaluating the females at the head of each one. We can see the excitement rise within each group as he approaches them.

When he has reached the middle of the room he considers one female for a while and then approaches her quickly, leans her back and plants a huge, open-mouthed kiss. Her family goes wild and the rest of the crowd lets out a huge cheer.

The kiss goes on... and on... Our team exchange looks ranging from amazement to disgust. Finally, Zarg withdraws, his foot-long tongue slipping out of her mouth--and we realize that it must have been all the way down her throat! Zarg steps away and an attendant quickly approaches him to wipe off his mouth. The female collapses but is caught by another attendant. Meanwhile, all of the female's family quickly form into a line. A group of Zarg's attendants carrying pulsing light sabers approach them.

The family stands perfectly still as one by one Zarg's aides cut all their heads off. Another cheer goes up from the crowd. The Dove team looks on in stunned silence.

ZARG (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

Another Seed of Zarg is planted!!

The crowd roars their approval.

ZARG (CONT'D)

(turning back to the team)

Earthlings! How did you enjoy our beautiful ceremony?

ROGER

We are honored to have witnessed so powerful an occasion.

ZARG

(strolling back toward the dais)  
Now, let's do business. Show me what you have to offer in trade.

Roger is taken aback by his abruptness but quickly collects himself. He holds up Zak's globe, which he has been holding.

ROGER

In this sphere we hold the knowledge of our world.

ZARG

(incredulous)  
Show me!

ROGER

Our knowledge is too vast to show in such a short--

ZARG

(harshly)  
It doesn't matter. I have no interest in your stories. I have only one interest.  
(beat)  
I desire the secret of travel between the stars! Do you keep that in your little ball?

Roger is at a loss for words. Zarg slowly turns and starts walking toward the Dove.

ZARG

That is all I want from you. Are you willing to teach me?

ROGER

(firmly)  
That is one thing we can not share with you.

Zarg, his back turned to the team and still walking toward the Dove, motions to an aide. Suddenly a force field shoots up around the visitors' dais.

ZARG

(turning back to Roger)  
THEN I WILL TAKE IT!!

Shock and terror register on the faces of the team as the Zargons erupt in jeers and laughter. Quazarus starts tapping into his forearm console.

ROGER  
(to Quazarus)  
Can you disrupt--

QUAZARUS  
(shaking his head)  
I'm trying--

ROGER  
Zarg!! Release us now or we will--

ZARG  
You think I am stupid?! You have no  
superiors! You are alone! And you  
are WEAK!!

Roger is stunned--silent. Grace is praying fervently. Phoebe and Zak hold each other, looking at Roger imploringly. Case is scanning, scanning for any weakness--but finding none. Dr. Stone just stares at the ground in shock. And Quaze continues to frantically work his console.

ROGER  
Q?

Quaze doesn't respond.

ZARG  
(continuing toward the  
Dove)  
We can learn your secret. We will  
tear this ship apart! Then we'll  
visit your planet!

ROGER  
ZAAARRGGGG!! GOD D--

Zarg just chuckles as he continues strolling toward the Dove. Roger looks at Grace, still praying. He looks up at the sky. Then, one breath away from despair, he looks at Quazarus. Quazarus looks up at Roger.

QUAZARUS  
(calmly)  
I've got it. Turn your mics off.  
Don't look at me.

Everyone flips their switches and looks at Quazarus out of the corner of their eyes. Roger is shaking with fury.

## QUAZARUS

This force field pulses at a frequency of 20 milliseconds with a wavelength of 2 meters. On a full dose of Taxys we'll sense it, and we can get through.

DR. STONE

(snapping out of his shock)

Then what! Face it, we're dead!

(pointing at Roger)

You killed us!

QUAZARUS

(to Stone)

Don't attract attention!

(to the rest)

Then we can grab those weapons-- they won't see us coming--and we make for the ship.

CASE

Sounds good. Let's go!

STONE

It's suicide!!

CASE

We all have to die sometime.

(beat)

Better to go out fighting.

STONE

This is insane! I won't do it!

ROGER

OK. Phoebe, can you manage bio on a Stransit?

STONE

(before Phoebe can respond)

What?! You're going to leave me here?! You can't do that!

QUAZARUS

LISTEN YOU QUARK!! We're doing this now! You're either in or out! Decide!!

All of the arguing has caught the attention of Zarg and his minions.

ZARG  
(turning around)  
Take out the talkative one!

QUAZARUS  
OK. Everybody! We'll need a big  
dose of Taxys. Don't look for the  
electrical pulse. Feel it!

Suddenly the force field shuts down and a Zargon reaches in and snatches Quazarus out. Then just as quickly the force field shoots back up. A look of profound horror is on Quaze's face, but he keeps shouting instructions.

QUAZARUS  
Zak! 20 millis!! 2 m dub!! Help  
them jump through!! Roger!! You  
gotta--AAAAGHK--

The creature, holding Quazarus' waist tightly in one hand and with his other hand under his arm pit, suddenly rips up on his shoulder, practically separating it from his torso. Everyone gasps and cries out in horror!! But that's it!

ROGER  
NOW!!!!!!!

Roger taps his console and his forearm monitor shows the human-form diagram indicating the Taxys is shooting into his bloodstream. All the others follow suit except for Dr. Stone who is once again in a stupor. Roger, already starting to move in super speed, goes to him and triggers his Taxys.

The next minute appears in two different time modes--the shot alternates between the Zargons' perspective where the Earthlings are just blurs of color flashing across the scene, and the Earthlings' perspective where their movements can be watched and the Zargons move in super slow motion. As time slows down the Earthlings sense the pulsing of the force field. Zak is the first one to leap through, getting a sharp jolt to his heel. He turns to coach the others.

Roger leaps through next and heads directly to help Quazarus. But while they were injecting the Taxys the Zargon had already dragged Quazarus to a doorway which just closes as Roger reaches it. He pauses for just a second as the perspective shifts to normal time.

We see Roger slow from a blur of color to a solitary figure, head down, standing by the closed door as colored blurs flash out of the prison behind him. Then Roger starts to turn. Shift back to hyper-speed perspective. Roger runs back toward the team. Case has already snagged a couple of the light sabers and tosses one to Roger who catches it on the run.

Grace is on a dead sprint toward the Dove. Zak is running around the dais shouting instructions to Phoebe who is trying to coax Dr. Stone through the force field. Finally, she just pushes him through. He also takes a major jolt to his leg and falls to the ground. Then Phoebe jumps through herself.

By this time the Zargonites have begun to realize what is happening. Though they move in slow motion they begin to react, raising their weapons. Now Zak takes off in a sprint to the Dove, but not before scooping up his Globe which Roger had dropped. He darts gracefully through the crowd. Phoebe kicks the weapon out of the hand of a Zargon and spinning, takes him off at the knees. Dr. Stone, now on his feet, just stares at this like a deer in the headlights. Suddenly he notices the hand of a Zargon on the other side slowly closing around his upper arm. He tries to pull away from the Zargon's grasp but it's too late. He begins to jerk away.

A shift of perspective to normal time shows a speed-blurred body spin away, leaving a bloody arm firmly in the grip of the Zargon. The Zargon starts to lift the arm in triumph but is cut in two mid-torso. Perspective shifts back to hyper-speed as the two pieces of the Zargon slowly collapse to the ground as Phoebe props up Dr. Stone, grabs his severed arm, and practically carries him through the crowd, hacking here and there at Zargons.

Meanwhile, Grace has already reached the Dove and has entered the hatch. Zak is nearly to the ship, and Roger and Case converge toward Phoebe, both dropping Zargons like flies. By now the Zargonites have begun to exhibit a reflex they experience naturally when highly agitated--their eyes have popped out of their sockets and are now waving around on long stocks, moving independently and looking around in all directions.

Zarg himself, eyeballs waving, has turned and is heading directly toward the Dove and his minions are following him, threatening to block the way. Roger and Case fight more furiously now, with Roger leading the way and Case behind Phoebe and Stone, protecting the rear from the converging Zargons.

Roger makes it to the Dove just as Zarg steps forward to block his way. Roger leaps through the air in a twisting flip and hacks off both of Zarg's eyes before landing in front of the Dove's portal.

(Take that, you bastard!!)

Perspective shifts to normal mode again and we see Zarg wailing and grasping his orange-blood-spurting eye stocks. Shift back to hyper-speed. Phoebe and Stone stagger into the ship.



Then Case, hacking furiously, turns and starts up the ramp.  
 As he does, his foot crunches down on one of Zarg's eyeballs  
 which squirts yellow goo out the side.  
 (HAH!!)

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Case sprints on to the ship as the door closes behind him. He  
 barely makes it to his station when--

ROGER  
 IGNITE!!

EXT. ZARG'S PALACE -- CONTINUOUS

Blue and gold flames burst out of the Dove's boosters,  
 blasting Zarg and his subjects as it roars into the air.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The team communicates frantically, still too fast to  
 understand.

EXT. ZARGON ATMOSPHERE -- CONTINUOUS

The ship shoots up through the atmosphere, faster and faster.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The team now moves at a more normal speed.

ROGER  
 Case, any sign of pursuit?

CASE  
 Not yet--

Suddenly they all jerk backwards.

ZAK  
 Tractor!!

ROGER  
 Come on! Give it everything!

ZAK  
 (grimacing)  
 I AM!!!

The ship seems to slow to a crawl and begins to shudder under the strain. Roger and Zak both work their consoles furiously.

ROGER  
There! I rerouted--

ZAK  
It's working!

The shaking gradually subsides as they begin to accelerate again, exiting the atmosphere and entering space.

PHOEBE 7  
I've stabilized Dr. Stone.

ROGER  
Good. Set course.

GRACE  
Factoring.

CASE  
Here they come!

EXT. ZARGON ATMOSPHERE -- CONTINUOUS

Zargonese space ships lift off from the planet--hundreds of them filling the skies.

ROGER  
Can we make it to the Nexus?

ZAK  
Gonna be close.

PHOEBE 7  
The Nexus?! We can't just leave him there!

ROGER  
We'll come back for him. But we have to survive this.

CASE  
They've cleared the atmosphere!

ROGER  
(to everyone)  
OK. I'll be Q. Case, you cover synchro for me. Phoebe, you'll need to administer Taxys.

PHOEBE 7  
I can't monitor it and translate--

ROGER  
Don't monitor. Set it on auto.

PHOEBE 7  
But this is our third--

ROGER  
Just do it!!

PHOEBE 7  
Right. OK.

ROGER  
Grace?

GRACE  
Nexus lock sequence processing. Two  
minutes to inject.

ROGER  
(moving into Q's station)  
OK, positions.

CASE  
They're firing!!

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

Hundreds of Zargon space ships hurtle through space, firing lightning bolts that whiz past the Dove. Some hit their own ships, resulting in huge fiery rocket ship pile-ups. But there are so many of them--they can afford to lose a few.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

ROGER  
Ready?!!

ZAK  
(fairly roaring)  
LET'S GO!!

ROGER  
Intersect capture X14 Y2 Z24.

GRACE  
Mark.

COMMANDER CASE  
Systems nominal.

PHOEBE 7  
Bio... whatever. Inject Taxys...  
Now!

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

Zarg's ships are getting closer and closer and so are the lightning bolts shooting at the Dove.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The crew is in full Taxys hyper-speed, babbling and working frantically. It isn't going smoothly.

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

The closest Zargon ship fires a lightning bolt on a direct hit path.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The displays indicate a Nexus intersect. Close up on Roger, shouting the command, his face contorted in a grimace.

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

The Zargon lightning bolt strikes the tip of the Dove!

ZAP!!!!!!!

A brilliant white flash.

INT. THE DOVE -- MOMENTS LATER

This time the picture quickly returns still focused on Roger holding the same expression. But then the look slowly fades away as his muscles relax. His head droops to his chest. Pregnant pause. All is still. He appears to be dead.

ROGER  
HAAAAHHH!!!

He practically jumps out of his seat as he shocks back to life. He immediately swivels in his chair to see the rest of the team. Grace is at her station, alert and quickly tapping controls. Phoebe stands up from her station and flies over to Zak who is completely inert. She takes his pulse.

PHOEBE 7  
He's not here!

She looks over at Commander Case who is in the same condition. A look of desperation begins to cross her face when suddenly Zak jerks to life.

PHOEBE 7 (CONT'D)  
Zak!

ZAK  
Oh no!! The stem... took a hit...

Commander Case jolts in his chair. Completely alert, he surveys the situation and starts scanning his controls. Zak slumps down in his chair.

ZAK  
Ohhhh, we're finished...

ROGER  
Zak! Snap to! Do a system scan.

ZAK  
Roger, don't you get it?!! The Stem--

ROGER  
I know! System scan!

Zak nods and looks down at his console.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
(to Case)  
Commander--

CASE  
Probe volley one is away. Probe volley two away... mark.

ROGER  
Phoebe, bio?

Phoebe has already rushed over to Dr. Stone and is moving him to a coffin-sized capsule.

PHOEBE 7  
We're OK. But Dr. Stone has no life signs. There's no more time. I need to suspend him.

ROGER  
Do it.

Phoebe lays him in the capsule, keys in some codes, and the capsule door above Dr. Stone drops down, sealing him inside. A few more taps on the control, and it shoots a frozen blast inside, instantly freezing Dr. Stone.

ROGER  
Grace?

GRACE  
Scanning...

ROGER  
Me too.

CASE  
Probe volley 1 results: Clear  
space.

Zak looks slowly up from his console in resignation.

ZAK  
System scan complete. All systems  
nominal... except the Stem.

His head sags as he slumps in his chair and groans.

ROGER  
Grace?

GRACE  
Still scanning...

Phoebe returns and quickly goes to Zak and starts giving him an injection.

PHOEBE 7  
Just relax. This will help.

CASE  
Probe volley 2 return: No threats,  
all clear.

PHOEBE 7  
(finishing the  
injection)  
Roger, where are we?

Roger gives her a quizzical look. She flew here through space just like he did. But he goes ahead and taps his console and an image of the galaxy pops up on the big screen. A bright blue line shows the path that they've taken.

ROGER  
We're at the tip of the Centaurus  
arm of the galaxy--

ZAK  
Oh, Dr. Stone would love that.

ROGER  
--about 10 million light years from  
Earth.

ZAK  
--gives the term "stranded" a whole  
new meaning.

No smiles. No reaction. Just a pregnant pause...

PHOEBE 7  
What now?

ROGER  
The Stem has been damaged. We can't  
Stransit. We have to find a life  
sustaining planet.

ZAK  
And you know what the odds are  
against that?  
(beat)  
Astronomical.

ROGER  
Zak, help us scan. Come on.

Zak nods and gazes down at his console.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Commander? You're familiar with  
omniscan, right?

Case nods and focuses on his console. Phoebe, not knowing how to scan space, stands for a moment with absolutely nothing to do--the only sound the low hum of life support and a few random chimes from the consoles. Finally she wanders over to Dr. Stone's suspension capsule and gazes in.

As the seconds pass by the reality of their situation begins truly dawning on her. Quaze is dead. Dr. Stone might as well be. They are drifting in distant space with virtually no chance of survival. And Earth, all the people she's ever known and loved, are about to be plunged into the darkest of all times. The numbness is wearing off. The feelings of despair are starting to overtake her.

GRACE  
(tentatively)  
I've got something...

Phoebe spins toward her as all the others' heads snap in unison in the same direction.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
It just came out from behind a  
star. It's in our neighborhood...

She taps a button and a lemon yellow star pops up on the screen. There is a barely perceptible dot right next to it.

GRACE  
It's only 60 AUs away.

ROGER  
Life sustaining?

GRACE  
It's almost out of the stellar  
interference...

Pregnant pause as the crew stares at the screen with hopeful anticipation...

GRACE (CONT'D)  
(joyfully)  
It's got an atmosphere! ... Oxygen!  
... Nitrogen!

Roger and Grace both continue rapidly tapping their consoles. Case stands up, his eyes riveted to the main viewer. Phoebe gives Zak an encouraging look and he responds in kind.

ROGER  
WATER!! There's water!

Phoebe, Zak and Case cheer!

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Grace, confirm...

GRACE  
(beat)  
Confirmed! Water! Lot's of it!!

Phoebe and Zak embrace joyfully, as Case sinks into her chair in utter relief.

ROGER  
Set a course.



GRACE

Done. We're on our way.

Roger walks over to Grace and embraces her passionately. Tears are streaming down her face. Phoebe, also crying, hugs Zak then crosses over to Case and embraces him. Zak does too. Hugs all around.

ROGER

How long until we get there?

GRACE

About 40 days.

ROGER

(heaving a huge sigh of relief)

OK... Ok.... ok.....

INT. THE DOVE - ROGER'S POD -- LATER

Roger is deep in concentration pouring over schematics of the Dove's Seed Stem. The door slides open and Grace floats in. She goes directly to Roger and sits beside him.

GRACE

(nodding at the schematics)  
Any chance of repair?

ROGER

(definitively)  
No.

They sit in silence together for a few moments.

ROGER

(searching for words)  
I just... wanted someone else to finally...

GRACE

I know...

ROGER

I was so tired...

GRACE

I know, baby, I know...

A few more moments of silent contemplation.

GRACE  
We should have a memorial for  
Quazer...

ROGER  
We don't know he's dead.

GRACE  
Oh, but Roger--

ROGER  
They have medical technology. Why  
would they kill him? He's a--

GRACE  
(Gently yet firmly)  
Roger...

ROGER  
(Exploding)  
Well, we might as well have a  
memorial for every human on Earth  
too because they're all going to  
die!

GRACE  
Love, we just have to--

ROGER  
(teeth clenched holding in  
the emotions))  
I let them all down. They believed  
in me and I let them die!

GRACE  
Roger, we did our best. We did the  
right thing. We just have to know  
that this is part of God's plan.

ROGER  
(incredulous)  
God's Plan?! You still believe  
after all this?

GRACE  
(emphatically)  
Yes. I believe in God. And I  
believe in us.

Roger shakes his head. Reality keeps sinking in.

ROGER  
I let you down...

GRACE

No--

Roger literally shakes with the effort of holding in his feelings.

ROGER

(moaning)

Quazarus...

GRACE

(moving closer to hold him)

Roger...

ROGER

(voice cracking)

My father...

GRACE

(putting her hands  
around his neck)

Roger, your father loves you and  
he's very proud of you.

That does it. Roger can't contain it any longer. The dam bursts open, tears gushing from his eyes as he collapses into Grace's arms, sobbing in convulsive waves.

GRACE

OK, baby, let it out...

(beat)

Let it go...

(beat)

Just let it go...

Roger just sobs and sobs and sobs--a lifetime of pent up stress, frustration, and fear released in a few brief moments.

INT. THE DOVE - ROGER'S POD -- LATER

Roger wakes up from a deep sleep. He slowly orients himself. His pod door chimes, then opens and Grace floats in.

GRACE

How do you feel? That was a good,  
long rest.

ROGER

(groggy)

OK.

GRACE  
Come take a look.

Roger nods, then slowly gets up and drifts toward the portal. Grace turns and leads him out.

INT. THE DOVE - CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Roger emerges into the main control room, looking vulnerable and kind of timid with his tussled hair and puffy eyes. The team is gathered around the big screen, looking at a beautiful blue and green, cloud-speckled planet. Noticing Roger and Grace, they all turn to look at them with looks of hope, compassion, and understanding.

CASE  
It's paradise.

Roger takes a moment to take in the image.

ROGER  
Life?

GRACE  
Teaming with it!

ROGER  
Sentient beings?

Phoebe taps a console and focuses in on a lovely meadow with a babbling brook that gurgles into a little pond.

PHOEBE 7  
Well, the closest thing would be these little fellows. I'm calling them the GOOBERS.

Several little roly polly creatures with bulbous round bottoms and long necks that open at the top into mouths scuttle about the grass, plucking berries from bushes and blurting out a delighted "Goooooover" after each one. One Goober points a hand at a clump of berries on a nearby bush, grabs the hand of a friend, and they waddle happily to the bush together.

ROGER  
It will support human life?

GRACE  
Oh, yes.

Roger nods solemnly.

CASE  
And the rest of humanity?

ZAK  
(cradling his Globe)  
We are humanity now.

PHOEBE 7  
And we are going to thrive!

Close on a sparkling sun rising behind the fresh, new planet.

FADE OUT