

KINGS OF HEAVEN

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EXT. SPACE

A panorama of space and planets.

BETHANY (V.O.)

By Twenty-Ninety-Nine, hundreds of manned probes had gone out into the inhabited universe. Most were never heard from again. In Twenty-One Eighty-Seven the National Space Council abandoned its expeditionary program. But the hope remained, however remote, that some day some of them would find their way home.

INT. BETHANY'S CUBBY, PEGASUS

A LOUD BANG awakens BETHANY (30s) She struggles from a mummy bag attached by Velcro to her bunk.

BETHANY

Wha...?

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

Bethany rubs the sleep from her eyes as she floats and bounces down the claustrophobic hallway towards the control room.

She makes the transfer to the control platform, which remains oriented to the galactic plane despite the Pegasus's spin.

EXT. SPACE

Seven small ships in the void. Among them Bethany's ship, the Pegasus.

SUPER: "MARS EXPEDITIONARY GROUP - 2252. 120 YEARS FROM EARTH."

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Bethany leans over CAESAR's (30s) shoulder, looks at the instruments. Caesar looks out the windows above him.

CAESAR  
(into headset)  
M.E.G., this is Pegasus. We don't  
know what hit us. Do you see  
anything? Over.

BETHANY  
What happened? Are we under attack?

CAESAR  
We're not sure. Paulo's in the back  
trying to patch it. We're losing  
air.

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

Bethany hurries towards the back of the ship, worried.

INT. ENVIRONMENTAL BAY, PEGASUS

Bethany enters a crowded room with several incubator tanks full of algae. PAULO (30s) patches the hull with a micro-torch.

PAULO  
I've just about got it, here, but  
it's pretty big. We're leaking  
insulation fluid on the outside.

BETHANY  
I'll suit up.

INT. AIRLOCK, PEGASUS

Bethany and Paulo put on their suits.

BETHANY  
Caesar, we're going to step out for  
a minute. Monitor us, will you?

Caesar's voice comes from a speaker in the wall.

CAESAR  
(filtered, over radio)  
Raj, monitoring your E.V.A.

EXT. SPACE

Bethany and Paulo float out the airlock door, patching equipment in hand.

They inspect the leak. A viscous fluid seeps from a hole caved in the hull and collects in globules in the vacuum.

BETHANY  
This looks like a shell puncture.

PAULO  
Raj, definitely man-made.

Caesar's voice crackles over their intercom. Bethany and Paulo prepare their equipment.

CAESAR  
(filtered, over radio)  
There's nothing on the screens.  
Those that are working, anyway. Can  
you fix it?

BETHANY  
We'll try.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Paulo and Bethany come in, exhausted. Caesar's at the wheel.

CAESAR  
(into headset)  
Raj, M.E.G., copy your  
transmissions. Assessing damage.  
Pegasus out.

BETHANY  
It's patched. Any word on our  
attackers?

CAESAR

No. The other ships confirm. We're  
all alone out here.

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

All three head back, checking the ship.

BETHANY

Where did it come from, then?

CAESAR

It could have been fired a hundred  
years ago. Nothing but dumb luck.

BETHANY

Dumb is right. Any other damage?

INT. ENVIRONMENTAL BAY, PEGASUS

Paulo checks the instruments.

PAULO

Oxygen levels have stabilized.  
We've decompressed by about thirty  
percent. The air's gonna be a  
little thin in here for a while.

Caesar punches at a keyboard mounted on the wall.

CAESAR

Navicomp's down too, not that it  
matters.

BETHANY

Hasn't worked right for years,  
anyway.

Caesar scowls at the monitor.

CAESAR

Yeah. I'm still determining what  
other systems may be affected.  
Everything's on the blink. These  
screens keep going on and off.  
Electrical may be shot.  
Environmental's not responding.

Bethany stands with her hands on her hips, deciding.

BETHANY

Okay, Caesar, we'd better check that out first. If we can't get the oxygen levels replenished, we're in real trouble. Keep me informed of any other changes. Come on, Paulo.

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

Bethany and Paulo make their way back to the control room.

PAULO

This shouldn't have happened. If we hadn't had to use so much of our shielding to repair the Titan--  
(he stops short)  
Sorry, Bethany. I didn't mean to mention your husband.

BETHANY

It's okay. All in all it'd be a better way to die. Smashed quickly by a meteor, rather than ... I hope it happens that way to me. Just not so soon.

PAULO

And preferably not while I'm on the same ship as you.

BETHANY

Sure, Paulo. Okay.

Bethany stops to fiddle with an instrument in the corridor.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Sometimes I wonder what our ancestors were thinking, sending out many small ships to the new home world instead of one big one.

PAULO  
Eggs and baskets. Safety in numbers. Diversification of systems and methods, that sort of thing.

BETHANY  
And what's the result? We scavenge each other until there's nothing left. And I have to live with you two. It's more like divide and conquer.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Caesar flops in the cockpit next to Bethany.

CAESAR  
Well, that's it. Electrical will probably continue to give us trouble, but that's the least of our worries.

They look at each other.

BETHANY  
Environmental.

CAESAR  
The incubators are shot right through. We won't be getting much more out of them. There's not going to be enough to feed us long, much less get the oxygen levels back to normal.

BETHANY  
And because the cycle is upset...

CAESAR  
We hold our breaths. Don't we have any repair parts?

BETHANY  
I'll go down to look again, but I doubt it. I know where they all went.

CAESAR  
The Titan?

BETHANY  
Yeah.

Caesar puts a hand on Bethany's shoulder.

CAESAR  
It's a real shame, Bethany. That  
stupid fire, and then the meteor.  
We all really--

She shrugs him off, tense.

BETHANY  
I know that, dammit! I just wish  
everyone would stop mentioning it!

CAESAR  
Hey, sorry! You brought it up.

Bethany takes a deep breath.

BETHANY  
I'll be down in supplies. Just  
radio the Zadok and tell them  
what's going on. We need everything  
but the reclamators and the casing.

INT. STOREROOM, PEGASUS

Bethany takes a look around.

She leans on the console, head in hand, chokes back the sobs.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Bethany comes back. Caesar and Paulo turn to face her.

CAESAR  
Bethany? It's the Jupiter. They're  
coming alongside.

They all exchange uncomfortable glances.

EXT. SPACE

The Pegasus cruises beside the Jupiter.

Bethany drifts across the space between them in her suit.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, JUPITER

Bethany, helmet under her arm, enters the room and pauses to glance briefly at,

HER POV

A dedication plaque lists the names of the ship in the group.

"MARS EXPEDITIONARY GROUP. LAUNCHED 2132 TO SETTLE HD 11232.  
JUPITER, SOL, NEPTUNE, PEGASUS, IO, ANDROMEDA, ICARUS, MINOS,  
DEMETER, HERMES, TITAN, VULCAN"

The names of the Sol, Minos, Demeter and Titan are scratched out.

BACK TO SCENE

Bethany looks towards the back of the ship where THE ZADOK (90s) hovers bathed in an eerie overhead light.

His alcove in the back of the Jupiter's control room is as much like a temple as a functional ship can manage.

SIRAH (50s) hardened by responsibility, floats in front of him.

BETHANY

How is the Zadok?

SIRAH

He's well. What have you to report?

BETHANY

We've patched the leaks, so we're not in immediate danger, but there is irreparable damage to our algae incubators.

(MORE)

BETHANY (CONT'D)

We're not going to be able to produce enough to re-supply our atmosphere and feed us, too.

SIRAH

So we were informed.

BETHANY

Any word on the spare parts we requested?

SIRAH

We've searched the stocks. Unfortunately, they are depleted. We can't spare anything from the existing incubators without crippling our own supply.

BETHANY

We estimate we can hold out a week, maybe more. It depends on how hardy the algae prove.

Sirah looks endlessly tired.

SIRAH

Measures are being taken to transfer you to another ship. This may take some time. As you know, we are all pressed to full capacity.

BETHANY

Without the supplies on the other ships, we may already have missed our objective. We're wandering blind.

SIRAH

We are working on ways to increase productivity, but in the event that a solution becomes impossible... we cannot risk further deaths or the mission to HD 11232 by spreading our supplies too thin. The group must survive.

Bethany realizes she's getting nowhere.

BETHANY

That makes sense. I'll inform my crew.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, JUPITER - LATER

Bethany uses the Jupiter's radio. JARED (30s), the Jupiter's navigator, sits nearby.

BETHANY

(into radio)

They're trying to figure something out, but it's as we expected. If they can't do it, they're going to cut us loose.

CAESAR

(filtered, over radio)

Figures.

BETHANY

I guess I'll come back over there, unless Sirah needs me for anything else.

Jared does a double-take at his screen.

JARED

Sirah, I've got something on long range. Machined metal. Could be a ship.

Sirah floats up behind him to see what has taken his interest.

SIRAH

Report.

BETHANY

(into the radio)

Hold on a second.

The window's HUD brings up an enhanced image.

CAESAR

(filtered, over radio)

We're reading it too. What is it?

JARED

It is a ship. No running lights.  
Attitude inconsistent with vector.  
Looks derelict.

Bethany, Sirah and Jared stare into the black.

BETHANY

It's an Earth ship.

JARED

Nebula Class.

SIRAH

Can you make out the designation?

JARED

Affirmative. It's the Cygnus.

SIRAH

Oh my god. It's Alistair's ship.  
Decelerate, match its velocity.

EXT. SPACE

The convoy rockets along.

JARED

(over radio)

Attention all craft. This is the  
Jupiter. Reduce velocity to thirty-  
nine thousand k.p.s.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, JUPITER

Sirah looks at Bethany without emotion.

SIRAH

It's been missing for thirty years,  
and suddenly we come across it.  
Makes you wonder.

BETHANY

Probably just dumb luck.

EXT. SPACE

The Jupiter and the Pegasus approach the Cygnus.

JARED  
(filtered, over intercom)  
NSC Cygnus, this is the Earth ship  
Jupiter of the Mars Expeditionary  
Group. Do you read, over?

INT. CONTROL ROOM, JUPTER

Sirah and co. hover breathlessly over the console, but they hear only static.

JARED  
Jupiter calling NSC Cygnus. Do you  
read over?

Jared looks back at Sirah.

JARED (CONT'D)  
What do you think?

SIRAH  
Their radio could be damaged.  
Prepare to capture and dock.  
(to Bethany)  
Maybe they need help. And if not,  
maybe they have the parts we need.  
Either way.

INT. MAIN CABIN, CYGNUS

The airlock door opens, floods the cabin with a misty light.

Bethany and Sirah, in space suits, enter from a flexible companionway attached to the airlock.

SIRAH  
It's a derelict, all right. Prepare  
an umbilical. We'll draw power from  
the Jupiter.

EXT. SPACE

Outside the airlock, Paulo attaches the power cables.

PAULO

Ready.

INT. MAIN CABIN, CYGNUS

Sirah waits in the doorway.

SIRAH

Okay? Go ahead.

Red emergency lights flicker to life, revealing the moss-eaten skeletons of the crew.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

Well, that answers that.

Bethany enters.

BETHANY

Ugh! How awful! What do you suppose happened?

SIRAH

(consults her instruments)

I guess we'll find out. The pressure's normal - three P.S.I. There's atmosphere in here. We can breathe.

They take their helmets off.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

In the early days, we were in contact with the Mercury group. They didn't share our beliefs, but they were good people. We lost contact, and never knew what happened to them.

BETHANY

I guess they won't mind if we salvage a piece or two.

SIRAH

Exhume, you mean.

BETHANY

What?

SIRAH

(indicates corpses)

This ship is a graveyard.

EXT. SPACE

The Jupiter and the Pegasus cruise alongside the Cygnus.

INT. MAIN CABIN, CYGNUS - LATER

Normal lighting, they come and go freely through an interconnecting tube.

The corpses have been covered with mummy bags.

Paulo looks over the food unit while Caesar, Bethany, Jared and Sirah disassemble panels and carry crates back and forth.

PAULO

It looks as though their algae became contaminated. It's still producing oxygen, but it's inedible.

CAESAR

If the equipment's fouled up, this is all for nothing.

Paulo examines the incubator with distaste. Sirah looks on.

PAULO

No, it looks like a toxin was introduced into the system, maybe from something they brought on board. The chemical compound acts like a hallucinogen. Absolutely poisonous.

SIRAH

Any dangerous fumes?

PAULO

Prolonged exposure could cause paranoia, even psychosis, but I don't think we're in any immediate danger. According to their research here, they were primarily concerned with the fact the algae was inedible. They were probably killed by starvation more than mental breakdown.

Caesar looks up as he dismantles a nearby console.

CAESAR

But that's not consistent with the condition of these corpses. The loss of tissue, and vital organs. They should be preserved, not so decomposed.

Paulo shrugs.

PAULO

I can't explain it, but the good news is that most of the equipment seems to be functioning. We can use these parts, so long as we're sure they're sterilized properly.

Sirah waggles a screwdriver.

SIRAH

All right, let's get to disassembling them and get out of here as fast as we can. We'll work in shifts. Paulo, Caesar and I will be first. Bethany, you and Jared wait on the Jupiter, and seal the hatches. I don't want anyone exposed to this toxin any longer than necessary.

Jared and Bethany exit with crates full of equipment, close the hatch.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

Okay, Paulo, what do we still need?

Paulo checks his list.

PAULO

Uh, ... the electrolic incubators,  
and their associated subsystems,  
Replacement optical circuitry,  
Photosynthetic stimulation  
terminals, three dehydration units,  
cyclotron, centrifuge and cellular  
magnifier, to start with.

CAESAR

There are a lot other things here  
that we could use.

SIRAH

I want to leave the Cygnus  
functional. Added to our Bussard  
network, it should provide enough  
delta-v to justify bringing it  
along as a parts ship. We'll bury  
the crew in space. Take only what  
we need to repair the Pegasus for  
now so we can purge the air and get  
underway.

She goes to the airlock door, assures they're alone.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

But before we get started, I asked  
you two to remain because I have  
something to discuss with you.

Paulo and Caesar share a glance, but continue their work.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

The time of restitution is almost  
upon us, and Bethany has no mate.  
Her husband, Icthys through his  
marriage to her, and his heir are  
dead.

PAULO

As her husband's second, I'm next  
in line.

She looks at them both.

SIRAH

Agreed, you are the Rama-Theos. It is your duty to continue the bloodline. But I wanted to address you both, because neither of you has performed the ritual in this capacity before. Do you understand your duties?

PAULO

(recites)

We are to be joined on her days of fertility in the Twelfth Month. In the month of Aries, if she has conceived, we will be wed. It is my sacred duty and obligation to continue the legacy of our Nazara ancestors.

Sirah turns to Caesar, who gets to his feet.

SIRAH

And as Paulo's first cousin, and next in line, do you know what you must do?

CAESAR

Sirah, her husband, our Icthys, and her son were killed on the Titan just this year. Her period of mourning is barely up. She will not welcome the idea of another joining so soon.

Sirah's eyes burn. She's not used to being questioned, especially in spiritual matters.

SIRAH

I asked you a question, Son of Alphaeus. Did you not hear?

Caesar backs away, cowed.

CAESAR

(recites)

I am to prepare the bride and groom, and attend them.

(MORE)

CAESAR (CONT'D)

I am to act as witness and ensure the observance of ritual. I am to arbitrate in the case of dispute. It is my sacred duty and obligation to make certain the joining takes place as prescribed in the articles of the Way.

SIRAH

You realize, Caesar, these duties are not at your discrimination.

INSERT

In the Jupiter's control room, Bethany reads something on the screen which holds her rapt attention.

SIRAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You have no choice in this matter, any more than Paulo, or Bethany herself. She may consider it a sacrifice, but she has made sacrifices before.

BACK TO SCENE

Paulo and Caesar look at her, a little shaken.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

As we all have.

She puts an arm on Paulo's shoulder.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

We'll have a short anointing ceremony back on the Jupiter, and hopefully-- in three months or so-- we'll make it official. And we'll all have a laugh about this.

She turns back to the Cygnus's controls.

SIRAH (CONT'D)

Let's get these panels off.

EXT. SPACE

The Jupiter and the Pegasus cruise alongside the Cygnus.

INT. MAIN CABIN, CYGNUS - LATER

Jared and Bethany finish up their shift and pick up crates.  
Paulo and Caesar come in for their turns.

BETHANY

That's almost it. All we need are a  
few bits of the computer mainframe.  
We'll need them to repair the  
navigation system.

Paulo and Caesar share a look.

PAULO

Could you show me?

BETHANY

Sure.

They turn to scrutinize an interface.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

The parts we need are behind this  
panel. Boards A,E, and F.

Caesar reaches for the panel.

CAESAR

Okay, I'll just pull this off.

They all jump as a KLAXON goes off.

Master alarms light up all over the ship.

They look about in confusion.

PAULO

What'd you touch?

CAESAR

Nothing! I haven't done anything  
yet!

They react in horror as an eerie voice comes over the ship's speakers.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE  
 (filtered, over intercom)  
 Ah-ah-ah! I didn't give you  
 permission to excise my wiry bits!

BETHANY  
 (speaking to the air)  
 Who is that?

ALISTAIR'S VOICE  
 I may not look like myself. But I  
 still feel like myself. And I'm  
 still commander of this ship. You  
 didn't ask permission to come board  
 either. It's not proper etiquette.

BETHANY  
 Oh my god--

CAESAR  
 Is this thing saying it's supposed  
 to be--

BETHANY  
 Alistair.

A moss eaten corpse peeks from behind the sheet covering it.  
 Lifeless.

Paulo glares about the cabin.

PAULO  
 Bethany, this voice is coming from  
 the computer.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE  
 Strange, isn't it, to gaze upon  
 one's own mortality with ageless  
 eyes. I've had a lot of time to  
 think about it.

CAESAR  
 Let's not jump to conclusions. This  
 could be a recording, it could--

## ALISTAIR'S VOICE

Don't dehumanize me. I'm not a recording, nor am I a program. Before my death, I was able to achieve a memory upload. I am Alistair Toundas. But the boards you require are a part of my systems. I can't survive without them.

## BETHANY

Alistair, if what you're saying is true, then you've achieved a kind of immortality. You've been all alone out here for thirty years.

## ALISTAIR'S VOICE

And terribly lonely. It's nice to have someone to talk to again.

## PAULO

(clenches fists)

This proves nothing. These could be automatic responses programmed to answer our queries. Some kind of a sick joke. What proof do you have?

## ALISTAIR'S VOICE

It was an experiment I was already in the midst of conducting. My notes are all in the database.

Bethany paces.

## BETHANY

It's true. I read some of it when we downloaded the ship's hard drive. He was conducting an experiment on the advanced simulation of higher brain functions using the ship's computer.

Paulo gets close to Bethany, a hand on her shoulder. Caesar listens in.

PAULO

(whispers)

If this is some kind of virus and we downloaded this ship's data, then the Jupiter could be affected, too. There's no telling what this thing is.

BETHANY

(conflicted)

But Paulo, what if it's true?

Caesar huddles with them.

CAESAR

Even if it is true, he's been out here thirty years by himself. There's no telling what that's done to him. There's also no telling what ship's systems he's connected to. He's used the master alarm to get our attention. He can obviously see where we are. We have to play along with it until we know where we stand.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

What're you saying? I can't hear you.

They look over their shoulders, reacting to the voice.

PAULO

So you were starving to death. Did you eat any of the affected algae? What happened to Bart and Meg?

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

Oh, I wish you wouldn't ask that!

CAESAR

Why not?

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

It's not something I want to talk about. I have so many interesting things to say. You think of a lot in thirty years.

BETHANY

What happened to them, Alistair?  
It's okay, you can tell me.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

When the algae went bad, they grew  
delusional. We were cut off from  
our convoy. My experiment was the  
only hope. I wanted to save us all,  
but it wasn't ready yet.

Bethany listens, sympathetic.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I had only modeled it using one  
consciousness, and even that was  
uncertain. So in order to survive  
until the program was ready I--

BETHANY

Go on.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

I ate them.

CAESAR

Oh god.

Bethany's hand covers her mouth.

Caesar and Paulo are horrified.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

But...

BETHANY

Oh, Alistair.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

You must understand! You're  
explorers! I did what I had to do  
to survive!

Paulo stalks to the panel they were about to dismantle.

Bethany moves to intercept him.

PAULO  
We need those boards.

BETHANY  
Paulo, wait!

Caesar holds her back.

Paulo begins to dismantle the panel.

CAESAR  
Bethany, no. Alistair is hopelessly  
defiled... the man he was is  
already dead.

Paulo begins tearing the guts out of the computer.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE  
Please don't do this. There's so  
much I wanted to tell you.

Paulo tears the guts out of the computer.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE  
I warn you, if you don't stop, I'll  
be forced to take action.

Caesar restrains Bethany.

BETHANY  
Paulo, don't be a fool! We've seen  
what he can do!

ALISTAIR'S VOICE  
It's already done. I'm sorry it has  
to be this way, but the instinct  
for self determination exists in  
all life forms. I won't give you  
the satisfaction of controlling my  
fate.

Paulo stops, examines the panels.

PAULO  
What did he do?

Caesar looks at the screen, sees something he doesn't like.

CAESAR

He's preparing to fire the engines.

Bethany checks another display.

BETHANY

Oh my god- he's already up to fifty-five cycles.

CAESAR

These are antimatter catalyzed fusion engines. When he fires them, we don't want our ships anywhere near.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

I'm bleeding the air off, too. I wish I had the pressurization to forcibly eject you, but then we can't have everything we want, can we?

Caesar runs towards the passageway.

Bethany stands in shock, Paulo continues his work.

CAESAR

Come on, we've got to get out of here! Paulo?

PAULO

We'd never make it in time. We've got to shut it down from here.

Bethany turns, conflicted.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

I'm sorry, Bethany. I think you and I might have been friends.

BETHANY

But you'll be alone.

ALISTAIR'S VOICE

The void holds no fear for me. I only regret that we couldn't know each other better.

The panel goes dead.

BETHANY  
Alistair...?

Paulo gets the panel disassembled.

PAULO  
Okay, I've got it.

Paulo singles out a wire.

He stares at it, sweating. Can't decide.

PAULO (CONT'D)  
Damn.

He decides, cuts one.

INSERT

On a readout, we see that the warm-up continues. Eighty-eight cycles. Eighty-nine.

BACK TO SCENE

PAULO (CONT'D)  
(panicking)  
Damn!

INT. CONTROL ROOM, JUPITER

Jared gets Sirah's attention.

JARED  
Sirah, I'm getting some very disturbing readings from the Cygnus.

Sirah leans over his console.

SIRAH  
What?

Caesar, Bethany and Paulo rush through the tunnel.

BETHANY

Sirah, we've got to get out of here. The Cygnus is firing her engines in less than three minutes!

Sirah grabs Bethany.

SIRAH

What did you do?

BETHANY

No time to explain, it was Alistair! What can we do?

SIRAH

(to Jared)  
Get me the fleet.

JARED

Go ahead.

EXT. SPACE

The Jupiter addresses the other five ships.

SIRAH

(filtered, over intercom)  
M.E.G., this is the Jupiter. We've got an emergency situation. We need you to burn your engines at maximum gamma along our current vector. Don't ask questions, just go. We'll reestablish contact later.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, JUPITER

Sirah turns to face the Pegasus crew as they suit up.

SIRAH

You'd better get to your ship.

EXT. SPACE

The umbilical detaches.

The engines on the Jupiter fire, and it rockets away.

The crew of the Pegasus float towards their ship.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

The crew dives into their acceleration couches.

EXT. SPACE

The Pegasus' engines fire.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

G forces push them into their seats.

PAULO

Why do you think he let us fire the engine and get away?

CAESAR

Maybe you were right, maybe he did transfer aboard the Jupiter. Maybe he was making his own escape.

BETHANY

Or maybe he didn't think we'd be able to escape anyway.

Bethany laughs.

PAULO

(irritated)

What is it?

BETHANY

I just realized that we didn't take the repair parts from the Jupiter.

Caesar and Paulo look at each other in shock.

EXT. SPACE

A tremendous anti-matter explosion rocks them and sends the Pegasus careening off course at relativistic speed.

The stars bend around their line of travel.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. SPACE

The Pegasus drifts sideways through the Doppler effect - stars red shift behind them, blue shift in front.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Paulo tries to raise the other ships on the radio.

Caesar and Bethany sleep in their couches.

PAULO

M.E.G., this is the Pegasus. Do you read, over?

Static.

PAULO (CONT'D)

This is the Pegasus. Is anybody out there?

Caesar stirs, eyes half open.

CAESAR

If they're not in range now, you can assume they're not going to be any time soon. Not in our lifetimes, anyway. The range is, what, half a light year?

Paulo closes the radio out.

PAULO

Yeah, but that's the least of our worries.

Bethany stirs.

BETHANY

Are we dead?

Paulo unbuckles and floats out of his couch.

PAULO

No.

BETHANY

Too bad.

CAESAR

What are you talking about? We made it!

Caesar and Bethany unbuckle too.

BETHANY

Only to die slow and revert to barbarism. Just like Alistair.

CAESAR

We're not going to be like Alistair! We just have to--

BETHANY

How do you plan to avoid it? We have no food. Unless we eat the last of our algae, in which case we have no air. Either way, we're going to end up just like--

PAULO

No! Just forget Alistair. There's got to be another way out of this. We just have to find it.

BETHANY

Any word from the other ships?

PAULO

No.

Caesar and Bethany share a look. Paulo, father away, misses it.

CAESAR

Well, we're running out of time up here. There's only one option I can think of.

PAULO

What?

BETHANY  
Planet-fall.

Paulo floats over to them.

PAULO  
You can't be serious.

BETHANY  
It's the only way.

PAULO  
It's not an option!

Caesar and Bethany round on Paulo.

CAESAR  
It wasn't an option when we were  
with the convoy, but now--

BETHANY  
Who's to know?

PAULO  
That's not our mission.

CAESAR  
There is a precedent. The Vulcan  
had to ditch in our parent's time.  
It was the second ship we lost.  
Their ram scoop failed and they  
couldn't keep up. It was deemed  
their best chance for survival.

BETHANY  
It was what the Cygnus had decided,  
too, before--

PAULO  
But this is different. We don't  
know if the others got away. We  
may be the only ones left to  
complete the mission to HD 11232.

CAESAR  
Damn HD 11232, this is life or  
death.

PAULO

The mission is the purification of  
humanity before it destroys itself.  
That's life or death too!

Paulo goes to the broken Navi-comp.

Caesar hovers behind him.

PAULO (CONT'D)

Look, where are we? The Gacrux  
system from the last reckoning,  
yes?

CAESAR

If the projections were reliable.

Paulo turns, gestures at the screen.

PAULO

There's nothing for ten light years  
around!

BETHANY

Nothing we know of. The region  
isn't well mapped. We'll just have  
to look, see what we can find.

Paulo leans on the console.

PAULO

If we decelerate now, we'll lose  
all chance of reuniting with the  
others.

CAESAR

We don't even know if the others  
survived the explosion. We can't  
contact them.

PAULO

All the more reason to continue  
towards HD 11232 and look for other  
options.

CAESAR

Now we're talking in circles.

BETHANY

Paulo, we're not going to make it to HD 11232, that's a fact. Our ship is crippled. Even if we could repair it, we have a breeding pool of three, and we're still decades away. That's not a thought I relish.

PAULO

(on the verge of collapse)  
There are others out here. There must be others.

BETHANY

In this eventuality, the second mission objective becomes prevalent: preserve the Nazara bloodline. We can't do that up here. We have to set down now, before it's too late. We'll make our own homeland and hope to reunite with the rest of the Nazara in the future. It's about survival now.

PAULO

So it begins.

CAESAR

What does?

PAULO

The descent into sin. The moment we start throwing away mission objectives for personal convenience, we become less than human, unworthy of the name Nazara.

CAESAR

That's crazy, Paulo. This isn't about convenience. It's about our only chance for survival. You know we have to.

PAULO

But we could find an asteroid, a  
rogue comet, or something--

CAESAR

Paulo, come on. That won't help us  
now.

Paulo turns away.

PAULO

It will take weeks, and expend all  
our available fuel. Once at non-  
relativistic speeds, we can't re-  
engage the ram scoop. It's a one  
way ticket.

BETHANY

Even if we live that long, our  
chances of finding anything are  
nil.

CAESAR

But we have to try. It's the best  
chance we've got. We'll have to  
work on ways to maximize our  
nutrition and air supply.

BETHANY

There were some experiments David,  
my husband, was working on. It's  
not much, but it may help.

Paulo sits down on his couch.

PAULO

What effect will the g-forces have  
on algae production?

Caesar looks over at him with sympathy.

CAESAR

Have our genetic modifications  
really protected us from bone and  
tissue degradation? There's only  
one way to find out. Turn us  
around, Paulo.

Bethany touches Paulo's arm.

BETHANY

Go ahead, Paulo. It's the only way.

Paulo looks beyond the stars as he toggles the thrusters.

PAULO

God have mercy on me.

EXT. SPACE

The ship pitches around, fires its engines. It flies backwards, thrusters slow it down.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Increased gravity on board now.

Paulo and Caesar sit at the controls.

PAULO

I'm hungry.

CAESAR

You had your ration same as me.

PAULO

Listen, I've been thinking about the joining.

CAESAR

What about it?

PAULO

The twelfth month is almost here. Do you think it'll even be possible at two gees?

Caesar scratches the back of his head.

CAESAR

I don't know if that's a very good idea, Paulo.

PAULO

What do you mean?

CAESAR

I think we should focus on the issue at hand. Think of the energy consumption.

PAULO

I don't believe what I'm hearing. First planet-fall and now this. Have you all forgotten who you are? Just because things look bleak you can't give up on your beliefs! Where is your faith?

CAESAR

This isn't about beliefs, Paulo. We can continue the Nazara dynasty if and when we survive planet-fall. My faith requires all my faculties. I can't afford to lose yours.

PAULO

Caesar, the time is now. We're still decelerating. Who knows which of us might be killed. We have to maintain the schedule.

CAESAR

Paulo, we're probably going to die anyway. Why put her through this? What's the point?

PAULO

Because what if we do succeed, Caesar? What if we survive and we have not been faithful? What do we do then?

CAESAR

Your devotion is commendable, but poorly timed. Let's say we do survive, and Bethany does conceive? Then we have a child to deal with. And what if no planet can be found? Who stops eating to support the baby? You? Me?

PAULO

God will provide. He has thus far.

CAESAR

God will... didn't he provide you with any common sense? Who will we foster it to? You would condemn an infant to a life without a future?

PAULO

Who can see the future? Perhaps it is God's will that she doesn't conceive, but God has given us a sacred duty. Not tomorrow, not when it is convenient, or when it makes sense. Time is crucial. It is the time of restitution for Bethany and I. Will you perform your duty? Will you help me, brother?

Caesar looks away.

CAESAR

I understand what you're saying.

PAULO

So you will help?

CAESAR

We should talk to Bethany.

BETHANY (O.S.)

And if she refuses?

Startled, they turn to face her, uncertain how long she has been there. She's steamed.

PAULO

Then she will do her duty, as a woman of the Nazara Community should.

BETHANY

In case you lost track, Paulo, there isn't a Community anymore, only a broken incubator.

She storms out.

PAULO

She's wrong, brother. We are still  
His Community. She will come  
around, and follow the Way as we  
do. We cannot give up hope.

INT. STORAGE ROOM, PEGASUS

Bethany's on her knees in the storage room, her palms on the  
deck.

Her spine sags in the weight of two gees.

Drops of sweat cover her glistening body and fall heavy on  
the floor.

BETHANY

(prays)

God of all space-time, you have  
everything. You set the planets  
spinning. Your fingers trace the  
curve of the universe. You have my  
husband. Must you take my dignity  
also?

Her eyes trace the ceiling.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

We were taught to always seek your  
will, and if you ask it I'll obey,  
but never ask more.

She glances behind her, sees Paulo in the doorway. She turns  
away from him.

INT. BETHANY'S CUBBY, PEGASUS

Caesar places a robe on Bethany.

Thin dichroic fabric hangs lifeless in the heavy gravity.

BETHANY

It's sort of funny. All the things we don't have, but we do have plenty of ritual garments.

CAESAR

It's a shame we can't eat them.

Bethany turns back to look at him.

Caesar gives her a weak smile.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

You think once will be enough?

BETHANY

It'll have to be. Once allows God his chance to work a miracle, if that's his will.

CAESAR

You are prepared, bride of the succession. Do you understand your duties?

BETHANY

I've done this before, Caesar. Luckily we only go through it once a year.

CAESAR

I'm just trying to do things properly--

BETHANY

Shut up and take me in there. Let's get this over with.

He hands her a small vial of oil.

CAESAR

Good enough.

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

They plod against the increased gravity down the corridor towards Paulo's chamber.

INT. PAULO'S CUBBY, PEGASUS

He kneels by his mummy bag, wadded into a nest on the floor.

Caesar leads Bethany over to the nest.

PAULO  
You look lovely, Bethany.

BETHANY  
Wipe that grin off your face.

She dabs a bit of oil on his head.

BETHANY (CONT'D)  
I anoint you, Son of Alpheus - the  
succession. May you sow a child in  
me and become our Icthys, true king  
of the Nazara.

She sits down.

BETHANY (CONT'D)  
Try not to drool on me, would you?

Paulo approaches her.

CAESAR  
Sine we have gravity, I'm going to--

Caesar turns and leaves the room, but the sounds follow him.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Caesar sits in his couch.

A warning light on the panel lights up.

Caesar looks at it open-mouthed.

He hits a few keys on the interface.

Still looking at the screen, he backs towards the crawlway.

CAESAR  
It's a miracle.

INT. PAULO'S CUBBY, PEGASUS

Caesar lunges through the doorway.

CAESAR

It's a miracle! Paulo, Bethany,  
come look! You've got to see it!

Paulo looks over his shoulder at Caesar, livid.

PAULO

What do you think you're doing,  
Caesar?

Bethany lies on the floor, her eyes red and puffy.

CAESAR

It's a planet capable of supporting  
life. We have to increase the  
deceleration to approach its  
gravity well.

PAULO

Can't it wait? Have you even  
checked it in the guide? Is it  
safe?

Caesar can't decide whether to look away or not.

CAESAR

Yes. I mean, no! It has to be right  
now, or we'll miss it. I need you  
both at the controls. We have a  
lot of procedures to go through.

PAULO

Get out of here, Caesar.

CAESAR

No, Paulo, you're not thinking  
clearly. As arbiter I interrupt the  
ceremony.

PAULO

You can't do that.

Caesar pulls Paulo off Bethany.

CAESAR

Yes I can, and you know it. Get  
your clothes on, let's go!

Paulo crunches Caesar in the face, knocks him off balance.

Blood squirts out his nose.

BETHANY

Paulo!

Paulo leaps on Caesar, strangles him.

CAESAR

Paulo, stop!

Caesar puts his foot on Paulo's shoulder, shoves him back.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

Crazy bastard!

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

Caesar falls out of the cubby and heads for the control room.

Blood pours from his nose.

Paulo charges after him.

Bethany follows them.

BETHANY

Stop it!!

Paulo tackles Caesar.

They careen across the cabin.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Paulo lands on Caesar's back, drives him face first into the  
ships' control surfaces.

Buttons come loose.

EXT. SPACE

The Pegasus' thrusters misfire.

The ship pitches out of control.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Caesar and Paulo grapple.

Paulo has a fistful of Caesar's hair.

Caesar pushes Paulo's chin, trying to break free as Paulo tries to trap Caesar's head in the control deck's spinning support struts.

BETHANY (O.S.)

Hey!

Bethany swings for the fences with a piece of heavy spare conduit.

THWACK!

Paulo sprawls, crumples in a heap against the console.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Stop it, now! I swear I will cave both your heads in, because we are heading right for that planet and we are all going to die if we don't get decelerated and pressurized!

Paulo holds his head.

PAULO

What are you trying to do, sabotage the bloodline?

Bethany glares down at him, incredulous.

BETHANY

Paulo, are you crazy? You're acting paranoid!

Caesar rights himself.

CAESAR

Maybe it's the hallucinogen from the Cygnus. Maybe it's affected us more than we thought.

Paulo glares back, injured in more ways than one.

PAULO

Impossible. The Cygnus's research showed negligible effects from exposure. Ingestion was the problem.

BETHANY

That was thirty years ago, who knows how it could have changed since then?

CAESAR

And don't forget, they were already exposed to it when they wrote those reports.

Bethany looks at Caesar as if for the first time.

BETHANY

Maybe we didn't see Alistair's ghost at all! Maybe you just panicked and blew up the ship!

CAESAR

Wait a second, you were there, you heard the voice same as the rest of us!

They eye each other warily.

BETHANY

I don't know what I heard. I don't know what to think of any of this.

PAULO

Maybe you're both crazy now!

CAESAR

Hold it! We can't go doubting each other.

(MORE)

CAESAR (CONT'D)  
 Whatever this is, we've all been  
 exposed to it, so we're all feeling  
 it. No one's more crazy than  
 anybody else.

PAULO  
 I'm not crazy!

CAESAR  
 (to Paulo)  
 Okay, okay, but right now we've got  
 a ship to land or this whole  
 discussion is moot. Let's just get  
 down there while we have the  
 chance, and we can sort out who's  
 crazy and who's not afterwards,  
 okay?

The other two avoid his gaze.

CAESAR (CONT'D)  
 Paulo, could you take the chair  
 while I help Bethany? You know the  
 procedure better than anyone. I'll  
 be with you in just a second.

Paulo gets close enough to Caesar to breathe in his face.

PAULO  
 I'll kill you for this.

CAESAR  
 Maybe, but you'll have to get us  
 down to the planet first.

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS

Caesar helps Bethany into the back.

CAESAR  
 You okay?

BETHANY  
 I'm fine, don't worry about me.

CAESAR  
 Look, I'm sorry. I hope you know I  
 was just performing my duty.  
 (MORE)

CAESAR (CONT'D)

I didn't like it. I didn't think it was right.

BETHANY

That didn't stop you, did it?

CAESAR

I know, I know, but if we're going to survive we have to trust each other. You know that don't you? We're going to be on a hostile planet, and it looks like we'll have to keep an eye on him.

BETHANY

It's not that easy, Caesar.

CAESAR

I know, I'm sorry, but we have to keep it together, all right? Just think about it, will you?

She looks back at him, says nothing.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

All right I'm going.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS

Caesar limps back, straps in beside Paulo and catches his breath. Paulo breaks the long, tense silence.

PAULO

Planet-fall. After all these years in space.

CAESAR

My grandfather told me stories about planet life. I never thought I'd live to see it.

PAULO

Well, this is it. Choice of necessity. The Nazara's glorious new home among the stars is a nameless rock light-years from nowhere.

(MORE)

PAULO (CONT'D)  
Not the landfall our ancestors had  
in mind, I assure you.

Bethany enters the room, back in her everyday coveralls.

BETHANY  
At this point, anything is  
acceptable.

She sinks into her couch.

CAESAR  
Pressure's reaching twenty-five  
P.S.I., to match the planet.  
(to Paulo)  
How are the maneuvering jets?  
Giving you any trouble?

PAULO  
I'll manage. Better strap  
yourselves in, we're approaching  
reentry.

CAESAR  
Are you sure you can do this?

PAULO  
We've simulated it often enough. I  
just hope the program was accurate.

CAESAR  
Our ancestors got us this far.  
Let's not disappoint them.

PAULO  
If the hull breaches have  
compromised our integrity, there  
may not be much I can do about it.

BETHANY  
Let's just land this thing, okay?

PAULO  
Hold on, we're entering the  
atmosphere.

EXT. SPACE

The ship careens towards the planet's surface.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAWN

The sun blasts an alien world, glints off the wreck of the Pegasus.

Tumbleweeds and scrub brush dot the terrain.

Caesar pulls boxes from the wreckage and stacks them outside, wobbly on space-bred legs.

Bethany lies exhausted by a large rock.

Paulo scowls at the horizon.

Caesar flops beside Bethany.

CAESAR

Moving around in this pressure isn't as exhausting as the two gees on the ship, but still. How many times Earth-normal do you think it is?

BETHANY

One-point-five. Maybe one-point-seven. Even Earth-normal would be an effort for us, of course. After three generations in space. Our genetic modifications keep us re-adaptable to planet life, but they don't make it easy.

(She takes a deep breath)

It's hard to get used to, isn't it?

CAESAR

What is?

Bethany looks around her.

BETHANY

That there's no end to it. The air, I mean.

(MORE)

BETHANY (CONT'D)

I've never spent a day in my life not worried about air. Now it's the least of my worries.

Paulo joins them.

PAULO

She's a total loss. We have shelter, some rations, a little equipment, but all our self-sustaining systems have been compromised. We'll have to forage to survive. God is punishing us.

Bethany looks up at him, shades her eyes.

BETHANY

We're lucky to be alive, Paulo, and when it comes right down to it - alive or dead, here's as good as anywhere.

Paulo sneers at her.

PAULO

You're wrong. We should've died in space.

Bethany jumps up, angry.

BETHANY

Then why didn't you just crash us into the planet's surface, you bleeding martyr? You wanna die so bad?

Paulo glares at Bethany.

PAULO

Only God can choose our fate.

BETHANY

Well then let him choose and stop being so damned morose or we're going to cook you over our campfire.

CAESAR

I don't think it'll have to come to that. I think I saw a city to the east not too far from here. I say we secure the camp, and then make our way down there for a look.

PAULO

To what purpose?

CAESAR

To trade supplies, get information. Try to get along. Maybe to get back into space if we can.

Paulo looks at him with disgust.

PAULO

Oh sure. Blend in. Get lost.

(to Bethany)

Interbreed.

CAESAR

Well we can't just stay up here in the mountains.

BETHANY

Why not?

CAESAR

We don't know the flora or the fauna of this planet. If the guide was working, and our diagnostic equipment, maybe, but right now all we've got to bargain with is what's left of the Pegasus. We have to meet these people on our terms before they find us and take it from us.

Paulo rounds on Caesar.

PAULO

And what of the Nazara? Do we become the junk traders of the galaxy? Do we peddle our broken down heritage in every shanty town in the inhabited universe?

CAESAR

Look, Paulo, as of right now, the Nazara community is us. That's all. If we're to have any hope of carrying on the line, and finding our promised land we'll do what we have to do to survive.

EXT. WILDERNESS - LATER

Paulo Caesar and Bethany cross a ridge overlooking a valley. They wear improvised packs.

CAESAR

You see? Civilization!

HIS POV.

The city shines on the flatland below a tall desert mountain.

BACK TO SCENE

They stop to rest, set down their improvised packs.

PAULO

The sun's approaching its zenith. We should turn back soon, if we're returning to the campsite before nightfall.

Bethany wipes her brow with the back of her hand.

BETHANY

This part of the planet is hot and dry. It's likely to get cold at night. If it takes us longer than half a day to get to the city, we'll need to be prepared for a longer trip.

Caesar sees something over their shoulders.

CAESAR

Get down!

They dash behind a ridge, and look to Caesar for an explanation.

He gestures, breathless.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

Movement! Just below us.

They peer over the ridge through a pair of ancient binoculars.

BETHANY

They're humanoid. They're doing some kind of construction work.

BINOCULAR POV

A group of men-- mostly humanoid-- in ragged clothes, stripped to the waist, work in a massive construction site that runs into the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

CAESAR

I didn't notice the turned earth before now due to the ruggedness of the terrain. Volcanic rocks all look alike.

Paulo looks at Bethany and Caesar.

PAULO

They're out this far from the city, is our ship secure?

BETHANY

Wait a second, something's changing. They've stopped working, now they've lined up.

BINOCULAR POV

The humans stop working and form a line, their eyes on the ground.

BACK TO SCENE

BETHANY (CONT'D)

They seem fearful, almost as if  
they're expecting punishment.

PAULO

Like prisoners.

CAESAR

But if they're prisoners, where are  
the guards?

A menacing shadow falls over them.

They turn around.

Trapping them against the ridge are two massive aliens -  
HarvesterS - about seven feet tall each.

Their exoskeletons bristle with hair, tinged with markings of  
brilliant red and black.

They have no eyes, and move by sense of smell.

They brandish poisonous appendages, close in.

EXT. WILDERNESS - LATER

The creatures herd Caesar, Paulo and Bethany towards the  
other humanoids, but keep them separate.

More aliens fly in to join their captors.

One Harvester GUARD, with more distinctive markings than the  
rest, approaches them, stinger ready.

HARVESTER GUARD

(cycles their smell)

Which one speaks for you?

Caesar, Paulo, and Bethany look at each other in confusion.

PAULO

I do.

Two guards take him roughly between them and spread their wings.

They leap off at high speed, Paulo suspended between them.

The remaining guards herd Caesar and Bethany in with the rest of the humanoids and force them to march.

EXT. WILDERNESS - LATER

As they march miserably down the dusty track, another prisoner, MAJ (40s), shuffles near to Caesar and Bethany.

MAJ

I was in the Mercury Expeditionary Group. We were ambushed. My ship crashed here, but there were others that escaped. Have you heard any news from them?

CAESAR

The Mercury Group...  
(shares a look with  
Bethany)  
Alistair's convoy. We ran across his ship shortly before crashing here. It was derelict.

BETHANY

They didn't make it.

CAESAR

We were from the Mars group.

MAJ

Mars... the Nazara? I'm sorry, my lords, I didn't know you were of the blood.

BETHANY

You know the beliefs of our Community?

MAJ

Know them... I'm a Jenda convert. The Community has great influence here. Our lear - uh, Jocab - is formerly of the Mars Group.

(MORE)

MAJ (CONT'D)  
 (signals an older slave)  
 Jocab! My lord, kinsmen of yours!

Two more prisoners, NADNAEL (40s) and LEBEDEAS (60s) shuffle over to them. They take a hard look at Caesar.

MAJ (CONT'D)  
 This is Nadnael, our Jocab, and  
 Lebedeas, our camp doctor. The  
 Harvesters don't know human  
 anatomy, they don't even try.

LEBEDEAS  
 ...Caesar? It must be!  
 (embraces him)  
 Who could mistake those features? I  
 knew your father, boy! I was on  
 the Vulcan.

NADNAEL  
 And Bethany. Your mother,  
 Jerbezel, was the most beautiful  
 woman in the heavens. You look  
 just like her.

BETHANY  
 The Vulcan? But My Lord, that  
 can't be. We lost the Vulcan  
 decades ago.

NADNAEL  
 Don't 'my lord' me, I was from a  
 secondary family. Your father was  
 in line for the succession.

CAESAR  
 But the time--

NADNAEL  
 With God, all things are possible.  
 But this is wonderful. Not for  
 you, of course, but we have no one  
 of the primary bloodline here to  
 become the Zadok. As a cousin, I  
 can only be Jocab. You two will be  
 a great boost in morale.

EXT. LABOR CAMP - NIGHT

Caesar and Bethany lay by the fire after the forced march.

Two of the prisoners, GEEM (20s) and ZON (20s), give them water.

MAJ

My sons, Geem and Zon - by my wife  
Salome. She's back in the city.  
We took community names on our  
conversion.

ZON

It's an honor to meet you, my lord  
and lady.

BETHANY

For us as well.

They a lifter carry the wreckage of the Pegasus overhead.

MAJ

There are parts of this planet that  
are nice. We're near the equator  
here, building a mass driver to put  
ships in orbit.

GEEM

Be glad you weren't here when we  
were working on the tunnel. We had  
four tunneling machines, and we  
still spent nearly two years  
underground.

ZON

At least now we're out in the sun.

LEBEDEAS

Surprised to see you pinched by the  
Harvesters, son. Nigh on fifty  
years since we seen anyone new come  
through here. Figured they was done  
sendin' up rocket ships. Guess the  
ol' Harvesters're just losin' their  
touch, beggin' your pardon.

CAESAR

Harvesters? But that would put us in the Procyon system. Eleven light-years from Earth!

LEBEDEAS

Yup. Imagine the disappointment - planning to be generations in space - only to get bushwhacked ten years in, before you really even get going. Guess you can though, huh?

CAESAR

But my ship was part of the Mars Expeditionary Group. We're supposed to be over one hundred and twenty years from Earth. Did we get turned around somewhere? How is that possible?

BETHANY

We were hit by a shell - in the middle of nowhere. Was it because we were near Procyon?

MAJ

Lotta men went up fighting for their lives out there, so they say. The Harvesters use relativistic ammunition. Hit you 'fore you know they've fired. There's probably plenty of those still floating around.

CAESAR

It's a miracle it would hit us light years away, and then we wind up here.

LEBEDEAS

Who knows, space is curved. Anything can happen.

BETHANY

Nadnael, what will happen to Paulo?

NADNAEL

Torture. Experiments, most likely.  
They'll kill him, revive him and  
torture him some more. They have a  
machine for that. We never see the  
ones in charge again.

CAESAR

My god. Why?

NADNAEL

They take the cream off the top.  
It's survival of the mediocre here.  
Work and you live. Stand out, and  
you disappear.

More and more workers join the Circle. Among them are SIKAR  
(40s) dark and dangerous, and MEVI (50s), a priest.

Caesar looks around at them in amazement.

MAJ

(off his look)

Word spreads fast, about who you  
are. They want to hear your story.

CAESAR

It's the same as all of you. We  
were out there. Now we're here.

SIKAR

But you were out there longest of  
anyone. We never made it so far.

MAJ

(to Bethany)

They know about the Rama-theos, but  
although the Jocab has shared some  
of your beliefs, they don't really  
understand the reason for the  
succession.

Bethany nods, thinks.

BETHANY

You've no doubt heard of Jesus of  
Nazara.

(MORE)

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Well, Nazara wasn't a town he was from, it was a title. It meant he was the Rama-theos or crown prince, heir to the Davidic succession. His eldest male descendant, dedicated to God and the service of his people.

LEBEDEAS

David, the Jewish king?

BENTHANY

That's right. Our Community, the Nazara, have preserved his succession from the time of the Babylonian captivity, and Yeshua - as Jesus was known before the Greeks corrupted his name - was a part of our community. He believed we shouldn't live in secret, and he tried to bring us into the outer world but it wasn't time yet. And so: chaos, disorder, years of corrupt misguided rule.

SIKAR

So you're Christians?

BETHANY

No, theirs is the misguided rule I mentioned. We used to be Judes, but our concept of the almighty has evolved since we moved out into the inhabited universe. Now we are just the Nazara Community - seeking a new planet to start over, and evolve free of religious persecution.

MEVI

You claim to be descended from Jesus? It sounds like blasphemy.

BETHANY

Many legends and misnomers have grown up around Yeshua, but the truth is he was a man. Of course he was a man.

MAJ

Occam's razor - the simplest answer is usually the correct one.

BETHANY

He was a Nazara - a powerful, compelling man who traveled extensively in the east, where he collected his philosophy. He left an indelible mark on history, and he had a son by Mary Magdalene, his wife, according to our community rules of succession. We hid the child away, fearful of the retribution Yeshua's teachings would bring down on us. Though he was killed for his teachings, the line was preserved.

SIKAR

And you're part of that line?

BETHANY

There have been many men of Nazara brought up by our community to pass on the royal blood. If our captured shipmate Paulo - who is Rama-theos - is killed by the Harvesters, then the succession passes to his first cousin.

(indicates Caesar)

Caesar of Nazara.

The crowd murmurs.

LEBEDEAS

I have to admit, we lost faith. When we had to set down on this rock, we thought maybe our ideas about God were wrong. Now that you're here, I-

GEEM

We're ready to serve you, my lord.

SIKAR

But the Harvesters crush religion  
and leaders. You know that.

ZON

But the Rama-theos in our camp.  
It's a miracle. A sign.

CAESAR

I'm not Rama-theos yet. I can't  
give up on saving Paulo.

NADNAEL

You must. You think we haven't  
tried to save our leaders, or  
discover what became of them? His  
fate, while horrible, is out of our  
hands.

Sikar sneers at Ceasar, dismissive.

SIKAR

He's a slave like any other. We  
must look to our own salvation.

LEBEDEAS

You forget, Sikar, I knew his  
father. He won't stay a slave for  
long. The Rama-theos is our  
salvation.

The old man painfully bends his knee to Caesar.

The crowd whisper assent and many follow suit.

Nadnael fromws and leaves the circle. Mevi follows him, they  
stand at the edge of the firelight.

NADNAEL

I should have known. I hoped for  
his support, but this upstart isn't  
in the camp a full cycle and  
already he's collecting followers.  
What are we going to do?

MEVI

What should we do? The people are desperate for something to believe in. We've promised them succor. Maybe this is it.

NADNAEL

We're prisoners, and prison life is hard. Perhaps you've forgotten since you became a priest, and the others share some of your burden. The Harvesters sense allegiance, it's like a pheromone to them. That's why they cut out the leaders - to weaken the flock, and to study what makes them the focus of respect.

MEVI

But they leave the preists alone.

NADNAEL

A little leadership is good for them, helps maintain control. It's good for the people. What's happening here will lead them to ruin. I can't let that happen. And I'm not going back to the rank and file in deference to some fresh-wrecked--

MEVI

He may be the Rama-theos, Nadnael.

NADNAEL

May be. Never mind. Let him have his followers tonight. Once they see him beaten a few times, they'll see he's nothing special.

EXT. LABOR CAMP - LATER

The prisoners shuffle off to sleep.

Caesar eases down next to Bethany, who's retired to one of the crude shelters around the fire pit.

CAESAR

Isn't it amazing? Who would have thought, yesterday.

BETHANY

Well, a certain deference will make life in prison more palatable. Why, what do you think?

CAESAR

I think this is the answer, the test God's putting before us.

BETHANY

What?

CAESAR

The shell that disabled the Pegasus was probably fired by the Harvesters, or someone fighting them, long ago. That it hit us light years away is undoubtedly a miracle, one that was fated to bring us to Procyon. I think we must be meant to lead our people out of this place.

BETHANY

They're not our people.

CAESAR

Compared to the Harvesters, everyone's our people.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

The Harvesters march their slaves back to the city.

Maj comes along side Caesar and Bethany who drag their feet, unused to so much walking.

MAJ

Do you thirst, my lady?

She glares at him.

BETHANY

Is that a joke?

Maj shows her his empty hands, then produces a canteen and presents it to her.

MAJ

It pays to have quick hands in prison.

Bethany gulps it down.

CAESAR

Thank you, Maj.

MAJ

I can also make things disappear. How I got my name, short for Maji, or Magician.

CAESAR

I'm sure.  
(nods down the road)  
Where are they taking us?

MAJ

Rotating details. The crew from C wing will take our place for the next few weeks. That's the way it is, three weeks on, one off. Work or die. Sometimes it seems like they'll work us to death, but they don't. Not all of us, anyway.

CAESAR

What will happen to us?

MAJ

When we get to the city, they'll take you to the educators. The Harvesters take ships from all kinds of folk.

(taps his temple)

Easiest way to communicate is to teach 'em all Pe'noíl. That's the Harvester language. Then they'll assign you to a crew building their damned mass drivers.

CAESAR

So let me get this straight - they have a fleet of ships to patrol their space, fast enough to catch and trap any passersby, but they do no exploration?

BETHANY

Ironic that light drive was developed by a species that never leaves home.

MAJ

Maybe they discovered there's nowhere else worth going.

INT. HARVESTER LAB- DAY

A high-tech chair burns information into Caesar's brain.

A row of humans and humanoids range away from him.

He looks at Bethany beside him, but she closes her eyes, winces.

The machines shut down.

A Harvester releases them.

HARVESTER GUARD

Kana pe tel to no pelle, po no ta.

Caesar looks at him with dawning comprehension, then back at the machine, interested.

CAESAR

Chetti no quo no'il. No do vone ko na pe.

(shudders)

That is so weird.

A Harvester grabs Bethany.

BETHANY

Let me go!

CAESAR

Bethany!

They drag her one way while the others herd Caesar out with the men.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

No, dammit! Nagta lek! Lahpte kan  
pe a'til!

A Harvester his Caesar, knocks him to the ground.

Caesar struggles as the Harvesters lead Bethany out to,

INT. HARVESTER CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A Harvester drags Bethany in.

Harvesters run machines that overlook the labor camp.

Her guard shows her to a sideboard with a crystal amphora and several goblets.

He indicates that she should serve the controllers.

BETHANY

You're kidding.

The Harvester hisses at her.

Bethany hurries to pour.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Fine, fine.

A thick fluid exudes from the amphora. Bethany makes a face.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Ugh, god.

She fills the goblets and takes them on the tray to the controllers.

The first one takes a goblet and worries at the fluid with its mandibles.

The second takes a goblet, but looks at Bethany.

It sets the goblet down and tears at her M.E.G. coverall to reveal her bare skin.

It rattles a hideous laugh.

Another Harvester comes up and takes a drink.

They huddle around her, driven by the scent of fear.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

What--

Another shoves her. She goes down, spills the drinks.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Oof!

The others laugh.

Emboldened, the Harvester squats over her and rattles its wings.

They howl as Bethany screams in terror.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - DAY

The crew works to break up rubble to bury the giant electromagnetic coils of a launch tube.

Caesar struggles with a pick axe.

His hands are bloody, and he staggers.

MAJ

Here.

Maj helps Caesar back to his feet.

He takes off his headband and wraps it around Caesar's hands.

A Harvester guard buzzes angrily.

They get back to work.

INT. SLAVE QUARTERS - NIGHT

Caesar lays exhausted on a bunk.

He gets painfully to his feet as guards shove Bethany into the room and slam the door.

Caesar leads her through the crowded mass of bunks to his free one.

CAESAR  
Are you okay?

BETHANY  
No. Not in the slightest.  
(off his look)  
I'll live.

She sits on the bed.

The voice of a guard echoes over a loudspeaker.

HARVESTER GUARD  
(filtered, over speaker)  
Ko puul!

The lights go out.

Caesar and Bethany look at each other in the dark.

A shadow threads its way through the bunks to find them.

MAJ  
My lord and lady.

BETHANY  
Who?

CAESAR  
(to Bethany)  
You remember Maj.

BETHANY  
Where did you come from?

MAJ  
I told you, I'm an artist and  
illusion is my medium.

CAESAR  
He saved my life today.

MAJ  
Made it appear that he was working!  
(chuckles)  
It's tough the first few months.  
Come on, I've got something to  
cheer you up.

He steals away into the dark.

MAJ (CONT'D)  
Come on!

INT. THE STASH - NIGHT

Maj leads them through a small crevice into a big room  
stockpiled with weapons and supplies.

BETHANY  
Where are we?

MAJ  
Call it the stash. We're in a  
disused portion of the prison,  
Harvesters never come down here.  
Broke into it during the tunneling  
last year and kept it secret.

CAESAR  
Amazing.

MAJ  
Not bad, huh? I've got a dozen  
crates of their stinger sticks,  
guns, and enough shelf stable MREs  
to last months if you care to eat  
'em.

CAESAR  
Why are you showing us this? You  
hardly know us yet.

MAJ  
I know what you represent. And I  
wanted to give you hope, before  
they got to you. Before your  
spirit was broken.

He picks up a weapon, checks it.

MAJ (CONT'D)

I've got soldiers, too. Men ready to fight, provided the right opportunity comes along. Many of them were at the fire last night.

CAESAR

You've done really well here, Maj. You've got will. The Harvesters have regeneration machines and education machines. I have an idea.

BETHANY

Oh?

CAESAR

(to Maj)

They shipped the wreck of the Pegasus somewhere in this city. Where would they have taken her?

MAJ

Probably the hangar facility on the other side of the prison compound, but why? You think she's salvageable?

CAESAR

No, she'll never fly again. But she has computers and data we're going to need.

MAJ

Lucky for you I know every niche and hallway of this prison. There's not a restricted area made can foil an illusionist.

BETHANY

If that's true, why haven't you escaped yet?

MAJ

And go where? It's a Harvester-controlled world. Part of why movement's so easy, if you know what you're at.

(MORE)

MAJ (CONT'D)

Most of us prefer the security of the prison to starving out in the desert.

CAESAR

Only leaves us one choice, then.

MAJ

Nadnael reckons we should lay low, bide our time. Wait until there are enough of us to overwhelm them, like the Israelites in Egypt.

CAESAR

And I say Nadnael's gone native. I could see it at the fire. He's scared for himself, his position. If we want to be free, we have to act. Now. God doesn't want you to be slaves to a Harvester.

Maj strokes his chin, grins.

MAJ

I'll contact you when I have the men and the route ready. It may be a day or two.

CAESAR

You know where to find me.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA

Word is passed down the row of slaves.

Zon moves closer to Caesar as they work.

ZON

Come to the stash tonight.

Caesar nods, keeps working.

INT. STASH - NIGHT

Caesar enters to find Maj with several men.

CAESAR

Maj.

MAJ

My lord. May I introduce the Sons  
of Lightning.

He points them out in turn.

MAJ (CONT'D)

Zon and Geem you know, my true  
sons. And Lebedeas, our healer.  
Also one of our commanders. He'll  
be waiting here when we return.

LEBEDEAS

(bows)

My lord.

MAJ

Mevi, brother of Nadnel, one of our  
priests. Proz, head of the Jenda  
converts. And Sikar, chief  
assassin. Another commander. He  
makes short work of a Harvester  
with a knife, and his group has  
been here longer than any of us, so  
he's also our historian.

CAESAR

Freedom fighters. I'm impressed.

MAJ

We believe it's our responsibility  
as leaders of community - teachers,  
orators, soldiers - to defend the  
people and make war on the  
Harvesters wherever and however we  
can.

CAESAR

I'm honored.

(to the men)

Thank you for your help. A great  
wave begins with a small change in  
the wind.

(MORE)

CAESAR (CONT'D)  
(to Maj)  
Lead the way.

INT. HANGAR FACILITY - NIGHT

Shadows drape the wreck of the Pegasus, nestled among other Harvester-salvaged junk.

Caesar, Maj, Sikar, Zon and Geem steal through the junk piles and approach the ship.

INT. CRAWLWAY, PEGASUS - NIGHT

They force the hatch as quietly as possible, and climb inside.

They make their way to the,

INT. CONTROL ROOM, PEGASUS - NIGHT

Caesar disassembles control panels.

MAJ  
What are we taking?

CAESAR  
The drives. An interface.  
Everything we need to do some  
forensics on the registry and boot  
sectors.

MAJ  
What are you looking for?

CAESAR  
A script I suspect... no, I know is  
there. Transferred from the  
Cygnus. Something Alistair was  
working on.

Maj gives him a sharp look.

MAJ  
I know what Alistair was working  
on. Did it work? Did you talk to  
him?

CAESAR

It got ugly. We had to leave him behind. I'm sorry.

MAJ

What makes you think the same thing won't happen again?

CAESAR

We'll have to fix it.

MAJ

This oughta be interesting.

INT. HANGAR FACILITY - NIGHT

They hop out of the ship, grinning, their arms loaded with computer gear, and run full into a Harvester.

It hisses and barks a challenge at them.

MAJ

It's a hive worker - wants to know what we're doing here.

Sikar draws his blade.

SIKAR

I can take him, my lord.

Caesar holds him back.

CAESAR

No.

(to hive worker)

No ta ko no ve telle ka canope! Ta velle ko to naname!

They all watch, transfixed as it wavers.

It turns to Maj.

HARVESTER

Ko Pelle ta ne?

MAJ

Nano te kanama.

It huffs the air and backs down, cowed.

It shuffles away.

Sikar, Zon and Geem gape at Caesar.

ZON

Another sign.

CAESAR

(to Maj)

I just told it I was the drone in charge.

MAJ

And I confirmed it.

GEEM

But it believed you. That's a miracle.

Maj shares a look with Sikar.

INT. THE STASH - NIGHT

Nadnael is waiting for them when they enter.

The other prisoners freeze, but Caesar juts his chin out.

NADNAEL

You can't do this kind of thing Caesar. Sneaking around, stealing parts. You're going to get these men in trouble.

Caesar steps up to Nadnael.

CAESAR

They're not afraid of trouble. They've joined me because your religion offers nothing but platitudes in response to their miserable lives. They want an active religion that tells them they deserve to be free--

NADNAEL

Our religion is about freedom of  
the spirit.

(to the men)

You've trusted me this far, trust  
me now. We don't know the fate of  
the Rama-theos. You cannot follow  
this man blindly--

CAESAR

They can see where we stand just  
fine. They've chosen to stop  
waiting and save themselves. I'm  
going to help. Now stand aside, we  
have work to do.

The men brush roughly past Nadnael into the Stash.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. Caesar works unaided, swings the pickaxe as if born to it.
2. Bethany serves nectar. The Harvesters give her a hard time.
3. Caesar and Bethany lead a candle-lit meditation in the stash.
4. Caesar and Maj work on a machine, grafting the parts from the Pegasus onto an educator station, while the other men stack more weapons and supplies.
5. Another meditation session. The group is even bigger now.
6. Bethany and Caesar share a look. She's softening, but still wary.
7. Caesar walks down the prison hallway, and people reach out to touch him. The Harvester guards buzz nervously. Caesar smiles.

INT. STASH - NIGHT

A candlelit ceremony.

Caesar's followers sit in a circle on the floor.

MAJ

My lord, it is time. If we are to go forward you must choose your seven.

CAESAR

What of the Rama-theos?

MAJ

Your cousin Paulo is gone. We need a king. And a king needs a council.

CAESAR

Very well.

He stands. The men stand as he calls them.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

Zon and Geem, sons of Lightning. Sikar, of the blade. Lebedaus, venerated Abithar. Mevi, Sariel priest. Proz, who speaks for the Jenda. And Maj, the power of God. You will be called "Desposyni."

MAJ

Which in the ancient tongue means "of the master." May we serve you with our lives, and honor you by our deaths.

Caesar and Bethany share a look.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - DAY

Humans and humanoids toil in desperation.

Some time has passed, Caesar has a full beard and is well toned.

The guards fly a new prisoner towards the prison.

He has a tattered space coverall, and hangs limp between them, completely disfigured from Harvester torture.

The guards try to turn their attention away.

HARVESTER

(subtitled)

Ko na no padte. False leader.

Caesar puts down his tools to watch, glares at the Harvesters.

Others follow suit.

CAESAR

Have they taken a new ship?

GEEM

Not that I know of my Ran'ma.

CAESAR

Find out who he is.

The Harvesters growl at them, but they wait for a look from Caesar.

He gives it, and they return to work.

INT. THE STASH - DAY

Caesar and Maj work on their machine.

Geem enters with an arm-load of supplies, sets it down.

GEEM

(to Caesar)

I'm sorry, my Ran'ma. I tried but I couldn't get close to the new prisoner. They're keeping him isolated from the rest of the population.

CAESAR

Stay on it. Do what you can.

Bethany strips down a gun and cleans it. Caesar joins her and starts one of his own.

BETHANY

What was that?

CAESAR  
New prisoner. No one's seen him.

BETHANY  
What're you thinking?

CAESAR  
Doesn't matter. We'll have to move forward. They're going to bring the facility online tomorrow.

BETHANY  
I can't believe you still want to go through with this.

CAESAR  
I thought you were with me. You've helped all this time.

BETHANY  
It was something to occupy us. I'll admit I didn't think the endgame through completely.

CAESAR  
You still don't trust me.  
(off her look)  
What would you have us do? Live out our lives as slaves? There's no rescue party coming, you know. We're it. I still believe we came here for a purpose.

BETHANY  
I know you do.

CAESAR  
Can we put our differences aside, at least until we close this chapter for good? One way or another, we deny them the satisfaction of controlling us any more.

BETHANY  
I'll clean to that.

They clink guns.

Nadnael enters.

Maj looks up.

MAJ

Get out of here, Nadnael.

NADNAEL

I helped find this place!

SIKAR

Well, you're no longer welcome here.

NADNAEL

I've just come for my brother.

(to Mevi)

Come on, Mevi. I don't want you keeping company with this rabble.

Caesar gets up to confront him.

MEVI

I've told you, Nadnael. I'm here to follow Caesar. I believe in what he's doing.

Zon puts his hand on Mevi's Shoulder.

Nadnael fumes.

NADNAEL

Fine, but I'll say this: I've given you one warning. You don't know what it's been like. You can't just drop in on a situation and expect it all to change, just to please you.

CAESAR

We've been through this. Men used to fight the Harvesters, up there in the stars. Now look at you. Things have to change, and you don't have the guts. You've given up. Maybe it takes an outsider to see that.

NADNAEL

You're corrupting the beliefs of the community, playing Rama-theos with these zealots. And you're disrupting the work, which is likely to bring the Harvesters down on all of us.

CAESAR

You don't have to worry about it. You're not likely to be on the front lines when the fighting starts.

NADNAEL

You're not a king. Not in here.

MAJ

At least he knows how to act like one.

Nadnael gives them a dark look, and backs out.

INT. HARVESTER CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Bethany serves the Harvesters their nectar.

She keeps her eyes down, shuffles unobtrusively through the room, trying not to be noticed.

A Harvester takes a drink and hisses at her.

HARVESTER

Carte ta tane.

He's satisfied with her flinch of terror, he doesn't go after her.

THE SCREEN

Shows a ship travelling down the launch tube as the magnets activate in sequence.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

A wave rider - a ship designed to ride its own hypersonic shock wave - bursts from the muzzle of the mountain-sized mass driver with a deafening SONIC BOOM.

It streaks into the air.

An array of colored lasers from the peak of the mountain blast it, vaporizing the ice at its base.

Released steam accelerates it into orbit.

INT. HARVESTER CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The Harvesters congratulate each other.

Bethany watches from the shadows.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - DAY

Heat ripples obscure the workers as they swing pick axes outside the city.

They watch the wave rider go up.

Lebedeas staggers and falls on the rocks.

A Harvester guard lays into him with a stinger stick.

Lebedeas doesn't move.

Caesar sets down his axe and stalks over to them.

He grabs the stick mid-blow, and the Harvester turns on him.

CAESAR

He's had enough.

The Harvester whales on Caesar with the stick but Caesar doesn't break.

The other workers put down their tools.

The Harvester slows his strokes as he notices the large, angry crowd gathering.

He backs away, cowed, as Caesar stares him down.

INT. HARVESTER CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Bethany watches from a high window.

The Harvesters sense the commotion and jostle for position at the window.

Bethany moves to the back of the room, and when she's sure no one's looking, slips a data chip into her bra.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - DAY

More Harvesters move in to support the guard, sniffing the air.

The crowd doesn't back down. It's a standoff.

The Harvesters form a line with weapons pointed at the crowd, prepared to move in.

Caesar turns and backs towards the Harvesters.

He shows his hands to the crowd, palms up.

CAESAR

It's okay, my friends. Thank you.  
Thank you.

The guards grab him, and beat him.

The crowd winces.

The Harvesters drag Caesar to his feet and march him off.

The crowd watches them go.

NADNAEL

(to Mevi)

They'll kill him for sure, now.  
He's too powerful for them to  
ignore.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - DAY

The guards throw Caesar into the tiny cell with a small high window.

He sits up, his face apprehensive, but set.

The door rattles open, and Nadnael enters, backed by Harvesters.

NADNAEL

(to Caesar)

I tried to warn you. I told you it would come to this.

CAESAR

I know.

NADNAEL

You may call me Judas. But remember this: Christ was tortured only a short while, whereas Judas - and the service he provided - is reviled for all time. You can say he did the wrong thing, but who was the instrument of salvation? Who really suffered for the sins on the world? It's not damnation if you get to leave.

CAESAR

I forgive you, Jocab. You'll do what you must to survive, but you should have trusted me.

INT. PRISON YARD - DAY

The Guards and Nadnael march Caesar out into the open courtyard.

The entire complement of the wing watches.

A large round armature stands on a raised platform near one end of the yard.

Nadnael mounts the platform and stops Caesar before a Harvester judge who blinks at him.

HARVESTER JUDGE

(subtitled)

You are accused of being a no padte  
- a false leader.

(MORE)

HARVESTER JUDGE (CONT'D)  
Of causing discord and hindering  
work. Do you have anything to say?

CAESAR

I do.

(to crowd)

I'm sorry it has to be this way,  
but the instinct for self  
determination exists in all life  
forms. I won't give them the  
satisfaction of controlling my  
fate. I will rise from this planet,  
and--

A look from the judge, and the guards restrain him with some  
difficulty.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

And so must you--

HARVESTER JUDGE

(subtitled)

Not to them.

(to Nadnael)

And you, drone? You confirm this?

Nadnael steps forward.

The crowd grumbles.

NADNAEL

As one of the foremost among my  
people, I testify and confirm that  
the accused is a rabble rouser. He  
claims to be a king, incites the  
mob to revolt and disrespect their  
masters.

HARVESTER JUDGE

Very well.

(to guards)

Proceed.

The guards roughly hook Caesar up to the circular rack,  
attach electrodes to his face and body.

## FLASHBACK

In the stash, Caesar sits at a jerry-rigged educator station, fear in his eyes.

BETHANY

It's very risky. Are you ready to do this?

CAESAR

Not really.

BETHANY

This stuff will eat your mind, turn you inside out. It may not work.

CAESAR

I know.

She hooks him up to the educator station.

BETHANY

I thought you were trending towards megalomania when all this began. Still not sure I was wrong.

CAESAR

Bethany--

Bethany leans close. She puts a finger on his forehead.

BETHANY

Shh.

CAESAR

Look, as much as I'd like to forget what happened...

BETHANY

It doesn't work that way. You know that.

CAESAR

No starting over?

BETHANY

If we forget our mistakes, how can we keep from repeating them?

CAESAR

I guess I won't remember anything  
we say after this.

BETHANY

So let's save it for when you will.

CAESAR

Okay. See you in a couple of days.

Bethany throws a switch, energy crackles.

BACK TO SCENE

The circular machine fries Caesar.

Electricity courses around him, singes his hair.

He slumps in a cloud of smoke.

The Harvesters confer in alien grunts and clicks.

They gesture Maj forward.

He examines Caesar, shakes his head.

They fry Caesar again.

His screams echo in the courtyard. Then the screams stop.

The Harvesters call Maj forward again.

Maj checks Caesar.

MAJ

He's dead.

INT. STASH - FLASHBACK

Bethany and Caesar take Maj into their confidence.

MAJ

The Desposyni are behind you,  
Caesar.

CAESAR

We value their support. The Harvesters had crushed their spirit, and I think we've begun to win it back.

INSERT

Human slaves take Caesar's body down from the execution machine.

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

But I need more than that if we're going to gain our freedom. I need their unquestioning belief. I need them to believe I can conquer death for them.

BACK TO SCENE

Maj looks from Bethany to Caesar.

Bethany catches and holds his eyes.

BETHANY

So this is what we're going to do.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

It's dark and deserted.

Maj and Bethany take Caesar's body from the cooler.

BETHANY (V.O.)

The Harvester's medical facilities have the ability to revive metabolic processes. That's how they get the most out of their workers... and their torture victims.

They lay Caesar on a high-tech table outfitted with the hardware from the Jerry rigged educator station.

They connect the drives to the table.

BETHANY (V.O.)

What we need to do is use the educator station to recreate Alistair's experiment and restore Caesar's consciousness to his revived body.

MAJ (V.O.)

Will it work?

BETHANY (V.O.)

In theory.

Maj and Bethany look at each other.

Maj throws the switch.

Caesar's body jumps reflexively as a charge goes through him.

MAJ (V.O.)

You want them to believe you're their Messai.

BETHANY (V.O.)

He'll really be dead. If he lives again, it's going to be a miracle in actuality. Who's to say he isn't the Messai?

Caesar sits up, coughs and splutters.

BETHANY

My lord!

She kisses him deeply.

Caesar blinks, then kisses her back.

They share a look.

CAESAR

You have the map?

She takes it from her bra, shows him.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

(grins)

What a way to wake up.

They help him to his feet and creep from the morgue.

INT. SLAVE QUARTERS - NIGHT

Maj and Bethany enter with Caesar.

As they pass the bunks, Zon and Geem sit up and notice Caesar as he passes, unable to believe their eyes.

Caesar's look confirms he's the man they know.

Geem begins to chant.

GEEM

Caesar. Caesar.

Others fall in behind them. Sikar, Lebedeas, Mevi, and Proz and more Desposyni supporters.

ALL

(shouting )

CAESAR! CAESAR! CAESAR!

EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT

The slaves form a mob, and take up the chant even before they've seen him.

Caesar appears high in a window above them, his supporters behind him.

The crowd erupts in manic cheers. Caesar faces the men at attention.

MAJ

All is ready, my Ran'ma. The  
Desposyni await your command.

CAESAR

(to crowd)

The Harvesters are not better than  
us. We don't deserve to turn the  
dust as their slaves. I have shown  
you - they can kill our bodies,  
but they cannot kill our spirit.  
The time has come for us to rise.

Zon and Geem drag Nadnael before him.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

Well, Nadnael?

They lock eyes.

NADNAEL

You're a false prophet. You'll  
lead them to ruin.

CAESAR

Perhaps, but at least we'll die  
free.

Nadnael spits.

At Caesar's gesture, they take Nadnael away.

The crowd cheers.

Caesar overlooks it all.

MAJ

I converted as an act of rebellion.

CAESAR

(off his look)

Maj?

MAJ

I never really believed until now.

They look at each other, appraising.

There's a disturbance in the crowd.

Harvester guards wade into the mob, and crush the first few  
with their stinger sticks, but the crowd is flush with the  
demonstration of immortality, and riots.

INT. PRISON WING - CONTINUOUS

Caesar and his bodyguards steal through darkened hallways.

They disarm a guard.

EXT. PRISON YARD - CONTINUOUS

The tide of humanity engulfs the guards in full scale riot.

INT. PRISON WING - CONTINUOUS

Caesar's group charges through the prison, the chants propel them forward.

PAULO (O.S.)

Bethany!

Caesar and Bethany freeze, and run to the cell.

The new prisoner is so heavily disfigured from obvious torture they can barely recognize him as,

BETHANY

Paulo!

PAULO

You've got to get me out of here!

CAESAR

What are you doing here?

PAULO

They cut me, experimented on me, but I guess they didn't find what they were looking for. So they brought me here.

MAJ

We have to keep moving.

CAESAR

We know this man. He's Nazara.

MAJ

We didn't allow for this in the plan, my lord. There's nothing we can do.

PAULO

(to Caesar)

Lord?

A look passes between them - betrayal, shame, pity, hate.

Paulo leaps at the bars.

PAULO (CONT'D)  
Get me out of here!

MAJ  
(to Caesar)  
We don't have the cutting tools, or  
the time. We have to go.

Caesar clutches at Paulo's fingers though the bars as his supporters drag him away.

PAULO  
Don't go, Damn you! Take me with  
you! Take me with you!

They break into a run.

His pleas ring in their ears.

INT. ELEVATOR

They descend the elevator.

Caesar and Bethany stand distant, tortured, as their bodyguards steel themselves for the final push.

INT. LAUNCH FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

They fight through a knot of Harvesters and force their way inside.

Caesar's group boards a waiting wave-rider.

Sikar and a group of supporters remain to defend the facilities and run the machines.

INT. LAUNCH TUBE - CONTINUOUS

The capacitors spin up.

The wave-rider lifts off its launch rails.

INT. WAVE RIDER - CONTINUOUS

The remaining Desposyni take their seats in the wave-rider's acceleration couches.

They wait.

INT. LAUNCH FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

The Harvesters break through to the control room.

Caesar's supporters led by Sikar defend the controls and those running them.

INT. LAUNCH TUBE

The wave-rider leaps down the tube.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

The wave-rider bursts from the muzzle of the mass driver with a deafening SONIC BOOM.

It streaks into the air.

An array of colored lasers from the peak of the mountain blast it, vaporizes the ice at its base.

Released steam accelerates them into orbit.

EXT. SPACE

Multiple wave-riders launch alongside them.

INSERT

Their supporters and other prisoners freed in the riot hold their breath.

BACK TO SCENE

Surface-to-air missiles destroy some, but Caesar's wave-rider makes it through.

INT. LAUNCH FACILITY

A Harvester's stinger impales Sikar.

As he dies, he sees on the screen his Messiah has escaped.

He smiles a bloody smile.

INT. COCKPIT, WAVE RIDER

Maj studies the controls with growing elation.

MAJ

All systems are functioning. The  
Harvesters aren't pursuing us into  
space. We're away!

The group breaks out in cheers, slapping backs and  
celebration.

Caesar notices Bethany weeping.

CAESAR

(gets the group's  
attention)

A moment's silence.

(to Bethany)

For all those left behind.

The group falls silent.

Caesar and Bethany share a look.

EXT. SPACE

The fleet of wave-riders cruises through the cosmos.

INT. CREW AREA, WAVE RIDER

Maj and Geem sit at the controls.

MAJ

I have Bethany's star map online.

He indicates a star map on the screen.

MAJ (CONT'D)

It's in Pe'noíl, but I can read it fine. Where do you want to go, my lord?

CAESAR

(to Geem)

Geem, get me the other ships.

GEEM

(pushes buttons)

Go ahead.

CAESAR

Attention, this is Wave Rider One. My friends, we have come a long way today. I know you're tired. You've followed me selflessly, heroically. Jenda and Nazara, you've all given what little you have.

(murmurs of assent)

No one doubts your faith, but I must ask it of you one more time. It is in the best interests of our Community at this time to abandon HD 11232 and set course for the closest habitable refuge: Earth.

(gasps of surprise)

This is our best chance for survival.

He put a hand on Geem's shoulder.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

You have permission to engage light-drive at will. Coordinates follow this transmission. Good luck.

Geem ends the transmission.

Maj looks uncertainly at the light-drive.

MAJ

(to Caesar)

Understand that if I turn this thing on, we're going to drop off the edge of universe.

(MORE)

MAJ (CONT'D)

I don't know what will happen. We could arrive thousands of years after we left.

CAESAR

Or a thousand years before.

EXT. SPACE

The fleet jumps to light speed.

EXT. SPACE

The wave-riders travel through warped space.

INT. CREW AREA, WAVE RIDER

Caesar and Bethany find a quiet moment alone.

Caesar spins his food tray in zero gee.

CAESAR

Two months. Funny, I was prepared to wait my whole life without leaving the inside of a ship.

BETHANY

I have to admit, I didn't think we'd see the stars again. But now that we're headed to Earth--

CAESAR

Now that we've seen the sky--

BETHANY

You can't wait for the waiting to be over. I understand my Ran'ma.

CAESAR

Bethany, you don't have to--

BETHANY

If you aren't my Ran'ma, whose are you? I had you first.

CAESAR

What you said before--

BETHANY

I haven't forgotten. Any of it.

(she moves in close)

Have you?

CAESAR

(shakes his head)

What are you going to do?

She kisses him. He responds.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

(breaks the kiss)

It's not the time of restitution.

If you conceive--

BETHANY

Assuming a bit much, aren't you my

lord?

She leans in again and he doesn't resist.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

(between kisses)

We left the high priest on Procyon.

Is it truly blasphemous if no one

is around to object?

INT. BETHANY'S CUBBY, WAVE RIDER

The make love tenderly in zero gee.

Afterwards, they float together.

BETHANY

How did we find each other, with

all this history between us?

CAESAR

Probably just dumb luck.

INT. COCKPIT, WAVE RIDER

Caesar leans over Geem's shoulder at the navigation console. He's got the panels open, a bird's nest of wires protruding.

GEEM

I've fixed the computer to display a kind of Standard, but the grammar's a little funny.

He shows Caesar the panel.

It reads: "Conditional Normal"

GEEM (CONT'D)

Same to say Earth systems won't recognize Pe'noíl.

Caesar offers a lopsided smile, ready to go.

CAESAR

That's great, Geem. Good work.

GEEM

(stops him)

My Lord?

CAESAR

Yes?

GEEM

Have you given thought to our approach? When we show up above Earth in a Harvester ship, even one broadcasting in Standard, what's to stop them blowing us out of the sky?

Caesar fingers the silver chain around his neck.

GEEM (CONT'D)

What does that say?

CAESAR

Our expedition was given a code key, to transmit on return to earth to get us past the planetary defenses. But this technology won't read it.

GEEM

So what do we tell them?

CAESAR

I know it by heart. Record this.

Geem punches a button on the console.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

(into mic)

Icarus Icarus Icarus. These are the survivors of the Mars Expeditionary Group, The crews of the Pegasus and Vulcan, launched from Los Alamos Spaceport in the year 2132, requesting emergency landing on Earth.

(to Geem)

Put that on repeat and broadcast it on all frequencies.

INT. BETHANY'S CUBBY, WAVE RIDER

Bethany wakes beside Caesar, looks a bit green.

She sits up.

In a violent motion, vomits into the cabin.

Little globs turn in zero gee.

INT. BETHANY'S CUBBY, WAVE RIDER - LATER

Caesar vacuums the vomit with a hose attached to the wall.

CAESAR

How could this happen?

BETHANY

I was afraid of this.

CAESAR

I thought you were... you know what this means?

BETHANY

The baby will come in the month of Aries. I know.

CAESAR

If they know we weren't together during the time of restitution... something must be done.

BETHANY

You're talking like Paulo now. You can't just put me out the airlock and pretend this didn't happen.

CAESAR

I never said--

BETHANY

We're the last of the Nazara, Caesar. If this child is a male--

CAESAR

Will it be an heir? Paulo still lives... oh God, how could this happen?

BETHANY

Caesar, we don't know that. Paulo is lost to this community. You're the Rama-Theos now. God has brought us farther than we ever dreamed. Do you not realize that this could be the answer to our prayers?

Caesar stares out the window.

CAESAR

I wish the Zadok were here.

BETHANY

What are you going to do? We'll have to perform the Second Marriage for the child to be legitimized. You have to decide.

CAESAR

Bethany, I love you. More than you'll ever know.

He exits towards the cockpit.

Bethany slams her fist against the bulkhead, fights back tears.

INT. COCKPIT, WAVE RIDER

Caesar sits in the cockpit, one foot on the instrument panel, deep in thought. His eyelids droop.

ALISTAIR (O.S.)  
(whispers)  
Caesar. Caesar.

Caesar starts awake.

A red hazy image of Alistair floats before him out the view screen, his beard full of stars.

CAESAR  
Alistair?

ALISTAIR  
Caesar, do not be afraid to take the child as your own. It is not for you to question the acts of God. Take Bethany as your wife, and when the child is born, you will name him Azimuth, for he will show the way.

CAESAR  
But my lord, if the child isn't born in the month of atonement, will he be unfit?

ALISTAIR  
So give him an official birth date and call it a day. In two thousand years, will anyone care exactly when he was born? The almighty believes in counting hairs, not splitting them.

A pulsing sound wakes Caesar.

He jumps and looks around the cabin.

CAESAR

Alistair?  
(taps head)  
You still in there?

EXT. SPACE

The wave-riders travel through warped space.

INT. CREW AREA, WAVE RIDER

Caesar and Bethany stand together, she's about three months pregnant.

Mevi addresses the gathered crew.

MEVI

Caesar, Son of Alphaeus - the  
succession. In the absence of Rama-  
theos Paulo, and in the absence of  
my brother Nadnael the Jocab, if it  
is the will of the sons of  
lightning,

ALL

It is.

MEVI

We determine that you are the  
rightful Rama-theos.

BETHANY

And it is my sacred honor to anoint  
you Icthys - Fisher King of the  
People of the Way - Father of  
Nations. Do you swear to uphold  
justice and defend them from all  
evil?

CAESAR

I so swear.

BETHANY

Then may you serve your people  
well.

She dabs oil on his head, and his feet.

EXT. SPACE

The wave-riders drop out of warped space.

INT. COCKPIT, WAVE RIDER

Caesar leans over the instruments.

His crew is with him.

HIS POV

The Earth's in the window.

The HUD reads: "Achieved Coordinates. Begun Final Approach."

BACK TO SCENE

Caesar taps the comm button.

CAESAR  
Attention, all ships. This is  
Caesar.

EXT. SPACE

The wave-riders blast towards Earth.

CAESAR (O.S.)  
(filtered, over intercom)  
We're home.

INT. CREW AREA, WAVE RIDER

The Ship's compliment joins Caesar as he stares at earth out the portal. Bethany stands beside him.

GEEM  
How can we know if they've received  
our signal?

ZON

Who knows if they're even listening  
anymore?

THEIR POV

Big blue world.

LEBEDEAS (V.O.)

And what will they think of us,  
after all this time?

BACK TO SCENE

Bethany looks at Caesar, a sidelong question in her eyes.

BETHANY

How cruel to crawl upon the earth  
when we've been kings of heaven.

Caesar puts his arm around her and kisses her temple.

CAESAR

My friends. We have seen many  
things, but in all our travels  
we've never found a home. This  
planet holds the key to our future  
more than any alien world. How will  
we live? How will they greet us? I  
don't know, but I know one thing:  
this planet is where we belong.  
It's where we all belong.

EXT. SPACE

The planet's horizon.

BETHANY (V.O.)

More than half the National Space  
Council's expeditions vanished  
without a trace.

(MORE)

## BETHANY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Those who returned brought strange tales of a difficult life among the stars, and the people of Earth are left to wonder: are the rest of their children truly lost, or are they still out there somewhere, forming new homes and cultures that will some day bridge the gap of space and time to rejoin the planet of their birth?

FADE OUT

THE END