

Planet What?

by

(c)Douglas Pike, all rights reserved

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSTON SPACE CENTER - DAY

(PRESENT)

INT. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Anxious high-ranking OFFICERS hover over stressed military TECHNICIANS seated at a communications console. A thick cloud of tobacco smoke hovers in the dimly lit room.

OFFICER #1

Are you getting anything from the VN-13, soldier?

TECHNICIAN

Not a word, general. It's been over two hours. Going behind Venus wouldn't account for that long a blackout.

OFFICER #2

Then what's causing it?

Officer #2 lights a new cigar with the smoldering stub of his old one. Officer #1 lights a new pipe with the remnants of an old one.

TECHNICIAN

I don't know, sir. It's unlike anything I've seen before. Some strange form of cosmic interference, like something out of a low-budget 1950s sci-fi movie.

Frustrated, the two officers step away to speak privately.

OFFICER #2

What are you going to say to Mrs. Friendly and her four kids, general? They've been in the waiting room along with those press hounds since dawn.

Officer #1 lights a cigarette, smokes it in addition to his pipe.

OFFICER #1

I'm not saying a word, you are, Colonel Mansfield.

COLONEL MANSFIELD

Why?

OFFICER #1
Because I outrank you, son.

COLONEL MANSFIELD
And what do you want me to say,
sir?

The general takes a step closer, stands toe-to-toe with the colonel.

OFFICER #1
What the military always says in a
situation like this, colonel:
everything is spit-and-polish
perfect.

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Young, frazzled, bra-less MRS. FRIENDLY futilely attempts to stop her three-year-old SON from tipping over a water cooler. It smashes, sending a cascade of water onto the legs of a nearby throng of NEWS REPORTERS and their CAMERAMEN. Disgusted, they moan and shout.

Her five-year-old twin DAUGHTERS fight over a threadbare teddy bear, ripping its ears off. An OLDER SON, eight, maniacally leaps from chair to chair and row to row, whipping Mrs. Friendly's purse overhead like a lariat.

NEWS REPORTERS

The newsmen observe the mayhem in disbelief.

NEWSMAN #1
Why would a guy with a wife and
four young kids ever want to take
a hare-brained, 25-million-mile
trip to Venus?

A crash is heard o.s.

NEWSMAN #2
I think the question pretty much
answers itself.

BACK TO SCENE

Colonel Mansfield exits the communications room and cautiously approaches Mrs. Friendly, as she rips the remnants of the teddy bear from the twins. Her violent

motion results in her accidentally slugging the colonel in the face.

MRS. FRIENDLY

Oh, I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to--

COLONEL MANSFIELD

That's quite all right, Mrs. Friendly. You certainly have your hands full with the little ones.

He reaches out to pat one twin on the head. They kick the colonel in both shins. He winces as she pulls them away.

MRS. FRIENDLY

Have you heard anything, private?

COLONEL MANSFIELD

Everything I hear is private. This facility is designated top secret.

MRS. FRIENDLY

No, I was referring to your rank. You are a private, correct?

COLONEL MANSFIELD

I'm a lieutenant colonel, Mrs. Friendly. Lieutenant Colonel Bradley Mansfield, but, um, you can call me Brad.

TWINS

Mommy has another boyfriend!
Mommy has a--

MRS. FRIENDLY

Girls! Go chase your little brother by the stairwell. And see who can make the most noise!

The twins shriek with joy and run off. Colonel Mansfield straightens his tie.

COLONEL MANSFIELD

As I was about to say, Mrs. Friendly--

MRS. FRIENDLY

Please, call me Hannah, all my closest friends do.

She coyly smiles, runs delicate, long red fingernails through her platinum blonde tresses.

GROUP OF REPORTERS

Two reporters observe Colonel Mansfield's conversation.

NEWSMAN #1

It's nice to see Colonel Mansfield trying to allay Mrs. Friendly's fears.

NEWSMAN #2

Oh, yeah, he's interested in allaying all right.

BACK TO SCENE

COLONEL MANSFIELD

There's no word from the VN-13. It could be for any number of technical reasons, most of which are transient in nature.

MRS. FRIENDLY

So you're confident they're okay.

COLONEL MANSFIELD

While I can't be one hundred percent sure... There's no reason to assume the worst.

The three-year-old's scream, followed by another crash of broken glass is heard o.s. It garners the colonel's attention.

COLONEL MANSFIELD (CONT'D)

You might as well take the children home, Mrs... I'm sorry... Hannah. You'll all be more comfortable there.

MRS. FRIENDLY

And you'll call?

COLONEL MANSFIELD

Yes, As soon as we identify the bodies. Sorry, I mean--

She smiles.

MRS. FRIENDLY

That wasn't what I was referring to.

CUT TO:

INT. NBC NEWS BROADCAST STUDIO - 7 P.M.

A grim-faced NEWSCASTER leads off the evening news with the latest update on the VN-13 mission to Venus.

NEWSCASTER

Hope is rapidly fading for the intrepid explorers aboard NASA's VN-13. The fate of its crew: commander WES PARKER, science officer ELLIOT WOOLCOTT, communications officer BUCK 'SPARKS' MCGEE and navigator DICK FRIENDLY, remains as clouded as the mysterious planet they've circled for the past three days. The entire nation anxiously sits on the edge of its seat awaiting even the faintest, briefest signal indicating they are still alive.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The following shows America's apathy towards the space program and the evening news.

A) An ELDERLY COUPLE in their comfy club chairs sleep soundly in a dark room whose only light emanates from the flickering TV. The remote is on the floor. Their DOG approaches and steps on it, changing the channel from the evening news story about the VN-13 to Animal Planet.

B) Two ten-year-old BOYS play a violent video game on their Playstation 4. Their FATHER, holding a newspaper, enters the living room, where they play. He points to the TV, then to the paper's headline: 'VN-13 Missing.' The boys pause, then resume game play. Father shrugs, tosses away the paper, picks up a controller and joins in.

C) A TV monitor showing the news is suspended from the ceiling inside a hospital maternity ward. A roomful of newborns cry, fidget, or sleep as the broadcast shows the spacecraft and its four occupants.

CUT TO:

EXT. VN-13 SPACECRAFT - DAY

The sleek, silver bullet-shaped ship streaks through space, above cloud-shrouded Venus.

INT. VN-13

Inside the spartan, cramped interior of the VN-13, four crew members, dressed in khakis, dutifully monitor the ship's myriad dials, gauges and screens.

Muscular, stolid commander West Parker, 39, along with fifty-ish and lean science officer Elliot Woolcott man the two front seats closest to the flight controls. 'Sparks' McGee presides over the communications console, while the anxious, gangly navigator Dick Friendly divides his time between performing calculations and pining over the photo of his wife and kids taped to his work station.

WES

Sparks, any reply to our last message to Houston?

Sparks, brow furrowed, turns dials and listens intently to headphones.

SPARKS

Negative, Skipper. I have my doubts our transmissions are getting through the interference I detected earlier.

Wes turns his attention to the monitor displaying Venus' rocky, forbidding terrain.

MONITOR

The monitor shows a rapidly moving view of craters, mountains, gorges, a gigantic pyramid and the word 'help' etched into the planet's surface.

BACK TO SCENE

WES

I wish we could land, even though there's no sign of intelligent life.

Elliot, open book in hand, swivels in Wes' direction. Perturbed, he raises an eyebrow.

ELLIOT

My seven-year-old granddaughter wishes she was a pony. Her wish is more likely to come true than yours.

WES
So mysterious... Maybe on the
next mission they'll--

ELLIOT
Hold that thought a second, Wes;
I've got to take a leak.

Elliot undoes his seat belt, unsteadily stands and clings
to an armrest.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Synthetic gravity is on, right?

Wes, somewhat disgusted, nods.

WES
Jesus, Elliot, a
twenty-five-million-mile voyage
and you've had to take a leak for
each one of them. Half the weight
of this ship must be your piss.

Elliot ignores the remark, carefully walks towards a door
at the rear of the craft marked 'men's room.' Next to it
is a door marked 'ladies' room.'

SPARKS
Don't mind the skipper, Elliot.
He just suffers from prostate
envy.

Elliot opens the door a crack, then notices Dick's
sorrowful expression as he stares at his family photo.

ELLIOT
You're not going to start crying
again, are you, Dick? You're
liable to short out your
navigation equipment.

Dick pulls the taped photo from a monitor, hastily folds it
and stuffs it into his shirt.

DICK
Happy now, Elliot?

ELLIOT
Ecstatic.

Elliot enters the restroom but leaves the door ajar.

Wes turns his seat in Dick's direction.

WES
 Communication problems or not,
 it's time to turn this bucket
 towards home. Dick, I'm going to
 need a flight plan, pronto.

Dick grabs a sheet of paper, starts writing.

SPARKS lowers extensive coffee-making equipment from an overhead compartment. His work area now resembles a coffee shop.

SPARKS
 Skipper, I trust there's time for
 cappuccinos all 'round before
 acceleration? Everything is
 piping hot.

DICK stands, shuffles over to Wes and hands him the sheet of paper he worked on.

WES
 Sure thing, Sparks; see what
 everyone will have.

DICK
 Here's our course heading,
 skipper.

SHEET OF PAPER

The sheet of paper has a crude circle at its center labeled 'Earth.' A large arrow points to it.

BACK TO SCENE

WES
 Thanks, Dick; I don't know what
 we'd do without you.

ELLIOT emerges from the restroom as Dick tries to get to his seat. Elliot stumbles when they try to pass each other, moves forward and slumps into his seat.

SPARKS
 What'll you have, Dick?

Sullen Dick sighs.

DICK
 Any chance of getting a chestnut
 praline frappuccino? That was
 always Hannah's favorite.

Sparks selects and presents the appropriate glass.

SPARKS

Coming right up, Dickie old boy!

Suddenly, the VN-13 is violently jolted. Paper, notebooks, coffee supplies, personal belongings and people are thrown in all directions. Debris, flames and smoke are visible through the portholes.

INT. VN-13/EXT. VN-13 INTERCUTTING

The VN-13 erratically gyrates within an undulating band of glowing energy.

Inside, Sparks persists in making Dick's drink, though ingredients, ice and equipment explode across the interior, splattering all. Emergency lights flash.

SPARKS

Dick! Dick! Did you want... did you want whipped creme?

Dick clings to an armrest, his legs extend straight up towards the ceiling.

DICK

Yes, if it's not too much bother!

The ship accelerates, glows red. It tumbles crazily causing a stabilizing fin to shear off.

Wes' seat endlessly spins in circles like a top.

WES

Can someone get an acceleration reading? We can't take this much longer.

Alarm sirens engage.

Sparks attempts to hand Dick the frappuccino. When he loses his grip, it flies off and smashes into Elliot's monitor.

Elliot's seat breaks loose from the floor, propelling him head first into the coffee-drenched screen.

WES (CONT'D)

Someone must hit the reverse thrusters or we're all going to die! Sparks! Sparks, can you?

SPARKS

One second, skipper. Dick, did you want me to start over on your cappuccino?

Dick now clings to the men's room doorknob. His body waves like a flag in a hurricane.

DICK

Maybe later. Oh, and it was a frappuccino, not a cappuccino.

The ship breaks free of the energy band, continues at fantastic speed.

Sparks, Dick and Elliot are unconscious.

Wes extends one leg that strikes Elliot's toppled seat, slowing his own down to a stop. He pulls himself forward to get a closeup view of the speed indicator. It's only a piece of paper taped to bare metal, with the image of a speedometer printed on it. Outraged, he rips it off.

WES

I had a feeling...

Wes blacks out when hit in the head by Sparks' ice bucket.

The VN-13 enters the atmosphere of an unknown planet. It hurtles through blue skies, plummets and crash lands between jagged mountains of ice blanketed in snow.

CUT TO:

INT. VN-13 - DAY

Elliot, the first to awaken, moans, slowly extricates his sooty head from his console's monitor. Warily, he stands, takes a wobbly step, falls and quickly stands back up.

Groggy Wes, Sparks and Dick gradually come-to and free themselves from the jumbled debris that was formerly the cabin of their spacecraft.

Wes rubs his bruised forehead, spies Elliot.

WES

Elliot, you're alive. Taken a post-crash piss yet?

Sparks and Dick stand, stare in amazement at Elliot's blackened head.

SPARKS

Elliot, you auditioning for The Wiz? If you are, it's in bad taste.

ELLIOT

You're all so clever. I haven't heard anyone of you ask if I'm all right.

Wes pulls ten feet of sparking electrical cable from his trousers.

WES

You're alive, upright and talking, so why ask? Besides, we've got bigger concerns at the moment, such as figuring out where we are and how we're going to survive.

A meowing cat is heard o.s.

SPARKS

Bitsy! She's alive!

ELLIOT

McGee, you brought your damn cat on a trip to Venus?

Sparks opens a compartment near his seat, pulls out a plump tabby. He holds it up, strokes it, tries to pass it to Elliot, who refuses when it tries to scratch him. Sparks then passes it to Wes.

WES

That's the first meow I've heard. How did you keep it quiet?

Sparks holds up a makeshift muzzle.

SPARKS

Kitty muzzle. Made it myself out of Elliot's emergency oxygen mask.

DICK

How about kitty litter? And how did you feed it for over three months?

Wes pounds the wall with his fist.

WES

It doesn't matter! We've got our own hides to worry about. Elliot, how much air do we have in here?

ELLIOT
Ten to twelve hours at most.

Elliot's attention is drawn to a gauge.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Synthetic gravity is off... and
we're not floating.

Dick looks out a porthole. Wes hands Bitsy back to Sparks.

DICK
Has anyone else noticed that the
sky is blue?

WES
I did. That plus normal gravity
is pretty encouraging.

ELLIOT
Don't jump to any conclusions,
Wes.

Dick pulls out the photo of his family, longingly looks at
it for a second, puts it away.

SPARKS
We need to know if we can breathe
out there. Elliot, is the
atmospheric analyzer intact?

Elliot rummages through wreckage on the floor, holds up a
tangle of smoking wires and dangling electronic components.

SPARKS (CONT'D)
Then how...?

Wes, Dick and Elliot stare at Bitsy.

SPARKS (CONT'D)
Guys... C'mon, that's not funny.
Bitsy's not a lab rat.

ELLIOT
That's right. I was thinking more
along the lines of a canary in a
coal mine.

EXT. VN-13

Bitsy, in a makeshift harness attached to the end of a long
metal pole, slowly emerges from the ship's exit door.

BITSY'S POV

Elongated shadows of two strange anthropomorphic creatures stretch across the snow.

INT. VN-13

Wes restrains Sparks as Elliot, wearing a gas mask, draws Bitsy back inside the VN-13.

DICK

Look, Sparks, she's fine.

WES

The air is breathable. Elliot, if the air is okay, the skies are blue and gravity is normal--then this is Earth! We made it back!

Dick cheers.

ELLIOT

No. Listen to me, I'm the science officer. You are letting your desire to return to Earth cloud your reasoning. We traveled, probably at the speed of light, for an unknown length of time along an equally unknown trajectory. Even a dullard like Sparks knows there are over one hundred billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, which means there are literally thousands of Earth-like planets.

SPARKS

Dullard, isn't that some kind of duck?

ELLIOT

Just to you. The odds we made a direct hit on Mother Earth are infinitesimal. Gentlemen, curb your enthusiasm.

Dick frowns, fights back tears.

WES

Despite Professor's Bummer's interpretation, I still think there's hope.

(MORE)

WES (CONT'D)

One thing is for sure: we'll never find out standing here. Let's gear up, get outside and check the damage to the exterior.

CUT TO:

EXT. VN-13 - DAY

Knee deep in snow, the crew check the gear they are not already wearing. Behind them, the VN-13 evidences structural damage and charring.

Wes hands out assault rifles, ammunition clips and hand grenades. Sparks adjusts the straps on the flamethrower he bears.

SPARKS

An assault rifle, too? Skipper, I'm already wearing a seventy-pound flamethrower. There's a limit to how much I can carry.

DICK

Were we sent to Venus to explore it, or conquer it?

Wes hands Dick five ammo clips.

WES

Just take these. We've got no idea what we'll come up against. And everyone take at least six grenades.

DICK

Wes, twenty minutes ago you were sure this was Earth. What if this turns out to be Wyoming or Montana?

WES

Then, armed like this, we'll fit right in.

Elliot slips a machete into its sheath, takes an assault rifle from Wes.

ELLIOT

I had a chance to look at the part of the fuselage that is not buried in ice.

WES

And?

ELLIOT

The stabilizers are gone. There is evidence of melting, two gaping tears and a dozen micrometeorite punctures.

WES

Sounds like we'll be here awhile.

ICE-COVERED BOULDERS

Fifty feet away, boulders conceal two broad-shouldered, fur-covered creatures, seen from behind. Though lacking heads, they are focused on the four newcomers.

BACK TO SCENE

DICK

Sparks, where's Bitsy?

SPARKS

She ran off, goddamn cat.

Wes, heavily burdened with gear, picks up a supply satchel.

WES

Let's move out. We'll follow that natural path off to the right. It looks like the shortest way to get down below the snowline.

Wes leads, the others follow.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELOW SNOWLINE - DAY

Now below the snowline, the crew wearily trudge through dry, rocky terrain sparsely covered with scrub brush.

DICK

Skipper, how about we take five?
I'm exhausted.

SPARKS

That's what we get for bringing along a math whiz. All brain and no brawn. Next he'll want a foot massage.

Dick shoves Sparks.

DICK
Somebody had to have a brain on
this mission.

ELLIOT
Children, behave yourselves.

Wes steps in between Sparks and Dick.

WES
Break it up. Look, we're all
tired. Everyone relax, have some
water.

The men remove their burdens, break out canteens and rest. Nearby and behind, off the path, the wreckage of a Verizon service truck is partially concealed by vegetation.

Dick guzzles water.

ELLIOT
Dick, take small sips. We've got
to conserve the water until we
come to a source of replenishment.

Dick sneers, reluctantly lowers and caps his canteen.

DICK
Elliot, if this isn't Earth, there
might not be any water, right?

ELLIOT
From what I can tell from the
geology and plants, there is water
on this planet. The question is,
where does it accumulate?

WES
Regarding your stubborn
skepticism, the rocks and plants
are all Earth-like. Plus, look at
the sun; it's the same color and
size as--

Elliot dismissively waves his hand. Sparks stands and stretches.

ELLIOT
Poppycock. Earth's sun is a main
sequence star, one of the most
plentiful types.
(MORE)

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

This planet, fortunately, resides within what is colloquially known as the Goldilocks Zone, the narrow band that is neither too close nor too far from its sun. That accommodates the evolution of an Earth-like geology and flora.

SPARKS

Since I'm all out of bullshit repellent, I'm going to take a little stroll. Elliot, please verbally exhaust yourself in my absence.

Sparks, armed, departs.

DICK

Elliot, how is it you're so well versed in so many subjects? Medicine, geology, astronomy, biology, physics, botany, cosmetology--it's baffling.

Elliot smiles, dusts off his trousers.

ELLIOT

Well, I don't want to bore you gentlemen, but--

WES

Good. Let's just sit here quietly. As soon as Sparks gets back we'll head out.

SPARKS

Sparks weaves his way through progressively thicker brush and bramble, lured by the sound of falling water o.s.

He reaches a clearing and pauses, stunned.

SPARKS POV

A sloping hillside terminates at a chalky cliff. Flowing water cascades over it into a sparkling pond below.

Sparks fires off a single shot into the air, alerting the others.

RESTING AREA

Wes, Dick and Elliot hear the shot o.s., jump to their feet.

WES
Sparks must be in trouble! Grab
the gear! It came from that way!
Let's go!

ELLIOT
I have to pee.

DICK
Oh, my god, again?

WES
You only had two sips of water.
You must have a bladder the size
of a lima bean.

DICK
The longer we wait...

ELLIOT
Yes?

Dick tips his cap back.

DICK
I don't know; I kind of lost my
train of thought.

WES
Just go and piss--now!

Elliot steps into the closest brush. Wes and Dick avert their eyes.

WES (CONT'D)
So, you hear from your wife? She
ask you to pick up milk on the way
home?

DICK
That's a lousy thing to ask. How
could I possibly--

WES
Okay, okay. I was just kidding.
Don't come unglued. Elliot!
We're waiting!

ELLIOT IN THE BRUSH

ELLIOT

Don't rush me; you're only making things worse. I'm having trouble getting a stream started. Wait, here we go.

BACK TO SCENE

Elliot emerges, refreshed.

WES

C'mon!

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

Wes, Dick and Elliot find Sparks.

DICK

I don't believe it, a waterfall! That's fantastic! Water problem solved!

ELLIOT

Assuming it's potable.

Wes points toward the waterfall.

WES

What's that dark area behind it?

SPARKS

A cave, skipper. I poked around while you were on your way. It's accessible. By the way, what took you so long? Wait, let me guess. Did Elliot find a bush he hadn't pissed on yet?

Wes rocks on his heels.

WES

Y-y-yep.

CAVE ENTRANCE

WES

Everyone check weapons.

Wes, Elliot and Dick take the safeties off their assault rifles. Sparks turns and releases a short burst from the flamethrower.

INT. CAVE

Cautiously, the four enter. The dimly lit cavern is rock strewn and partially illuminated by shafts of light filtering through fissures.

Farther in they come to a massive, lightly undulating white mound, ten feet long and equally high. It's texture appears soft.

The men whisper MOS. Wes motions for them to spread out.

SPARKS

Looks inviting, Skipper; I could jump right in and take a little snooze.

Sparks moves to within inches of the object. He turns, faces the others, speaks in a normal tone.

SPARKS (CONT'D)

It's just a pile of feathers.

Startled, the pile of feathers rises to its feet, displaying its enormous height. Wings emerge and flap.

ELLIOT

Sparks, look out!

Sparks spins to look at the creature, falls back onto the flamethrower tank, loses his grip on its barrel.

WES

My god, it's headless!

The headless chicken struts about brandishing sickle claws, then turns, revealing its backside.

ELLIOT

That's an udder. What kind of Darwin's nightmare is this?

DICK

You mean there's something you actually don't know?

Wes fires a round to draw the thing's attention.

ELLIOT
No, I never said that. It's
obviously a... giant, headless...
chicken-cow.

Sparks regains his footing and charges the animal, placing
himself directly beneath it.

SPARKS
What do you want me to do,
Skipper?

WES
It's a chicken--roast it!

Sparks points the flamethrower's barrel straight up,
releases a long spray of fire. The animal's belly feathers
ignite. The flames instantly charge up the beast's flanks,
engulfing it.

Sparks, covered in smoldering embers of partially burnt
feathers, runs to join Wes.

The anguished mutation collapses in a heap of
crimson-tinged smoke.

WES (CONT'D)
Finish it off!

Wes, Elliot and Dick fire multiple rounds, putting the
strangely silent creature out of its misery.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - EARLY EVENING

Dick turns an eight-foot-long chicken leg on a spit, over a
camp fire. He stops when Elliot approaches, allowing him
to cut off a slice.

DICK
Any ideas on how an animal can be
headless?

ELLIOT
Of course. Bundles of nerve
cells, or ganglia, distributed
throughout the body can perform
most of the functions of a brain.

Elliot takes a bite, chews, reflects.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
It's not terribly far-fetched,
just uncommon in so large an
animal.

Wes and Sparks, seated, loosen tight belts and shirt
buttons.

SPARKS
I've never had leg of headless
chicken-cow before; I rather like
it.

WES
If we ever get back to
civilization, you can pitch the
idea to Tyson.

ELLIOT
Still think this is Earth?

Wes puts his plate down.

WES
I'm not as sure as I was, but I
haven't totally given up on the
idea. How about you, Dick?

Dick stops turning the leg, wipes a tear away.

DICK
I have to believe it is, because
if I stop, then I have to believe
I won't see Hannah and the kids
ever again.

WES
Well, on that cheerful note, why
don't we all turn in? Dick, you
can have the first watch. Try not
to cry the fire out.

Dick gives Wes the finger. He and the others curl up in
their sleeping bags.

LATER

Dick, rifle at his side, tosses branches into the dimming
fire. Shuffling sounds o.s. draw his attention. They come
from all around.

The headless, hairy brutes who have observed the crew from
the beginning descend on the campsite from all directions.

Dick bolts to his feet, raises his assault rifle, fires off ten rounds into the nearest assailant who collapses onto the roasting chicken leg.

Wes, Elliot and Sparks spring to attention.

DICK

We're under attack! We're under attack!

As Sparks lunges for the flamethrower, he's grabbed from behind and tossed ten feet. Wes, kneeling, fires to his left, then right, dropping two intruders.

Sparks nabs a grenade, pulls the pin and flings it at three retreating beasts.

THREE BEASTS

The grenade explodes, killing all three.

BACK TO SCENE

Elliot takes a backhand to the face, shakes it off and slams the butt of his rifle into his attacker's stomach. Spying Sparks at the ready with the flamethrower, he darts away as a stream of fire lights up the brute's back. It's arms shoot straight up. Ablaze, it runs off.

The remaining attackers flea under a rain of bullets, grenades and fire.

Dumbfounded, the four men, illuminated by the dying campfire and burning assailants' corpses, try to get a handle on the moment.

WES

Okay, Elliot, you've got the second watch.

DICK

Jesus! How can you be so matter-of-fact. Aren't you even going to ask if we're all right?

WES

No.

Sparks tucks his shirt in, kicks over a fallen beast, for a better look. Elliot crouches, inspects.

SPARKS
They're headless, too! Where are
we?

Elliot shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING

Still shocked, the four silently stand around the smoky
remains of the fire. Their gear is packed.

DICK
We need to fully extinguish the
fire.

SPARKS
We shouldn't waste any water. We
still don't know if the water from
the falls is safe.

WES
Elliot, make yourself useful and
piss it out. That'll save us a
stop ten minutes from now.

Dick and Sparks snicker. Elliot drops his fly, urinates on
the fire.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Single file, the crew members walk along a rocky natural
path punctuated by low brush, alert for a new attack. Wes
leads.

BEND IN THE PATH

As they round a bend, the terrain flattens. The broken,
rusted remains of an iron fence cross the path. Wes comes
to an abrupt halt, as do the others.

WES
My god, I don't believe it.

The other men draw up along Wes' sides.

DICK
Am I dreaming? It's not possible.

WES' POV

A sprawling cemetery, terribly overgrown with weeds, lies before the crew. An assortment of headstones are heavily damaged, many askew.

BACK TO SCENE

WES

Now it's my turn to ask, Elliot.
Any doubts this is Earth?

Elliot takes a few steps closer to the fence.

ELLIOT

Ritualistic burial is a common practice among isolated civilizations on Earth. There's no reason to believe that would not hold true for advanced civilizations on distant planets.

Sparks approaches Elliot, places a hand on his shoulder.

SPARKS

Blow it out your ass, Elliot.

CEMETERY

The men cautiously venture in and separate. They dust off and scrutinize the writing on the stones.

SPARKS

The writing is in English, Elliot.

WES

Arabic numerals, crosses, Jewish stars--is that sufficient evidence?

ELLIOT

It proves nothing. Those are simple symbols, easily replicated.

The other three men moan.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

I'm serious.

SPARKS

I know, that's what scares me.

ELLIOT

Earth has broadcast audio and video signals out into space for a century. Those signals travel at light speed. A civilization on a distant planet could have received them and been influenced. Don't any of you watch *Ancient Aliens*?

ELLIOT'S POV

A headstone bears the name Raymond Benyo and the dates 2275-2351.

ELLIOT

ELLIOT

I found a date here, 2351.

SPARKS

I see one here that has the same death date.

Crying o.s.

WES

That can be only one person. Sparks, go see what's eating Dick this time.

Sparks nods, takes one step, stops, grins.

SPARKS

Did you hear what you just said, skipper? "What's eating Dick?"

Wes fights to keep a straight face.

WES

You know what I mean.

DICK AND SPARKS

Dick and Sparks stand by a blackened headstone. Dick sobs.

SPARKS

What's the matter, Dickie?

Dick's tears flow, his sorrow intensifies. The two are joined by Wes and Elliot.

ELLIOT
What is it, Dick?

DICK
My wife... My wife and kids aged,
without me around. They became
seniors and eventually died.
Hannah... a widow... My kids... in
assisted living, wearing Walmart
adult diapers and eating cheap
soup.

He doubles over in anguish, throws up. Wes, Elliot and
Sparks grimace, step back.

WES
Dick, listen; I saw your kids.
They were as wild as killer bees.
I doubt any of them made it to
thirty, so don't eat your heart
out about them ending up in a
nursing home.

Dick, shocked, stops crying, turns angry.

SPARKS
And as for Hannah, that tart, she
wouldn't have stayed single
long--not with that body. I've
always wondered, was that
magnificent rack all natural, or
were they bolt-ons?

Dick clenches his fists, hyperventilates.

ELLIOT
And think of it, you got out of
paying off your mortgage, old boy.
You didn't have to pay for
weddings, orthodontia, tap dance
lessons or nose jobs. And any
savings you might have had would
have appreciated, even at three
percent, which is conservative,
into tens of millions of dollars
today! You're a rich man! Filthy
rich!

Dick passes out.

Wes holds back Sparks when he goes to Dick's aid.

WES
Leave him be for awhile. We can
all use a break from his nonsense.

ELLIOT
I agree, Dick is quite annoying.

Wes takes a drink from his canteen, pauses.

WES
Elliot, strictly for argument's sake, let's say this is Earth--

SPARKS
Oh, boy, here we go again.

WES
No, let me finish. If this is Earth, how could it be so far in the future?

ELLIOT
That energy ribbon we got caught up in could have caused a time dilation effect.

SPARKS
That's it?

Elliot picks something out from between his front teeth, spits.

ELLIOT
Uh-huh.

WES
Okay then. Sparks, wake up Mr. Snivels and let's move out.

ELLIOT
Where exactly are we headed, Wes?

Wes points off to the distance.

WES' POV

A column of smoke rises from behind a hill.

WES

WES
I'm sure there's an encampment there, probably belonging to our visitors from last night. That's our objective.

Dick, groggy and sad, rises. He brushes Sparks' hand away when he tries to pat him on the back.

CUT TO:

EXT. LATER - DAY

The crewmen, within several hundred yards of the assumed encampment, are still unable to see anything besides the rising column of smoke. They pause.

WES

All four of us shouldn't just barge in on whoever is camped out beyond that rise. The best strategy is to send out a scout.

Wes removes all his gear, save for his rifle.

WES (CONT'D)

Since none of you pansies volunteered, I'll do it.

DICK

That's a good idea, Wes; you go. Don't even take a weapon and make a lot of noise.

Wes leaves on his scouting mission. Sparks sees a nearby, vibrant flower patch, walks over and starts picking. He forms a bouquet, skips in a circle.

DICK AND ELLIOT

DICK

Elliot, I've been wondering. Why isn't Wes married?

ELLIOT

He was, a few years ago. Astonishingly beautiful woman, adventurous, too. I attended their wedding in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. They went to Indonesia on their honeymoon--Sumbawa Island, specifically. She wanted to go naked-parachuting on horseback; he agreed. On the descent, they were at ten thousand feet and in proximity to Mount Tambora, an extinct volcano, when, suddenly, it erupted.

Dick lowers his head.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

A freak wind kept Wes at altitude, while she continued downward towards the lava-spewing caldera. She screamed and screamed all the way down, imploring Wes for help, but there was nothing he could do but watch her inevitable demise. Eventually, she and her horse were consumed by the volcano's molten fire. Then he actually saw their charred bones vomited back onto the blackened rocks, poor fellow.

DICK

How horrible.

ELLIOT

A white-bellied eagle, native to that country, swooped down and snatched her charred skull from the ground, flew upward and, as if it intentionally meant to torture Wes, circled him over and over, with that horrible thing dangling from its jagged beak. It did that until he finally landed and then flew off. It crapped on him, too.

DICK

Sorry I asked.

ELLIOT

I'll bet you are.

WES

Wes gets within viewing distance of the smoke's source.

WES' POV

Six of the headless, hairy creatures that attacked the camp lunge out from behind boulders, lumber towards him.

BACK TO SCENE

WES

Jumping Jesus Christ!

Wes fires and drops one. He's grabbed and stripped of his rifle by a second. Alerted, more of the beasts descend from their hiding places.

WES (CONT'D)
Help! Elliot! I need backup!

ELLIOT AND DICK

Elliot pats sobbing Dick on the back. Sparks, behind them, hears Wes' call o.s., stops skipping, grabs his rifle and flamethrower.

DICK
That story, it's so incredibly sad.

ELLIOT
That's nothing. You should hear what happened to his first wife.

Sparks reaches Dick and Elliot.

SPARKS
Didn't you two hear the skipper? He needs help--c'mon!

BACK TO SCENE

Wes kicks one beast in the crotch, then falls to the ground from a blow to the back by another. It dives on top of him.

Rifle fire o.s.

WES' POV

The creature pinning Wes down has a large primitive mouth at the mid-point between its massive shoulders. It opens. A foot-long black tongue emerges, dapples Wes' face with abundant yellow saliva.

BACK TO SCENE

An exploding hand grenade kills the beast atop Wes. A streak of flame ignites a second, who falls and burns.

The headless monsters retreat a modest distance, pause to observe.

Elliot, Dick and Sparks reach Wes, pull him out from beneath the hairy corpse and get him back on his feet. Dick fires furiously in all directions.

ELLIOT
There's too many! We need to find shelter.

Sparks sprays surrounding brush with fire, creating a temporary barrier, while Dick and Elliot scan the area for safe haven.

Dick points.

DICK
Up there, just above that ridge--a cave or a tunnel.

ELLIOT
Well, which is it?

DICK
It's hard to tell from here.

ELLIOT
My god, the man can't tell a cave from a tunnel. Wes, can you make it up there?

Wes nods.

Dick throws a grenade, fires multiple rounds.

DICK
Shit, I forgot to pull the pin on that one. You always pull the pin first, right?

SPARKS
C'mon, let's make a go for whatever that opening is, before Dick gets us all killed.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

The four stumble into the cave, shooting at their pursuers.

WES
Cease fire; we've got cover here for the time being.
(MORE)

WES (CONT'D)

Can't waste our remaining
ammo--you especially, Dick. You
must have fired three hundred
rounds. Did you hit anything?

Dick throws down his rifle, hangs his head.

SPARKS

See you what you did, Wes? You
hurt junior's feelings.

A cat's meow is heard o.s.

SPARKS (CONT'D)

Bitsy? Here, Bitsy.

Bitsy jumps into Sparks' arms. He strokes it.

SPARKS (CONT'D)

Where have you been? I was
worried sick.

Bitsy claws Sparks, jumps out of his arms, runs outside.

SPARKS (CONT'D)

Goddamn cat!

ELLIOT

We need to explore this cave. I
wouldn't want to run into another
headless chicken-cow.

WES

You have a point there. Dead-eye
Dick, you watch the entrance.
Sparks, stay with him and keep him
from doing anything catastrophic.
Elliot, let's go.

ELLIOT

Where's your assault rifle?

WES

Damn it! In all the excitement I
left it behind.

ELLIOT

No need to worry. To those
savages it would be as useful as
an espresso maker.

ENCAMPMENT OF THE HEADLESS

LEADER OF THE HEADLESS' POV

The hirsute bear-claw-sized hand of VOOT reaches down, picks up Wes' assault rifle, holds it skyward. He overlooks his scores of FOLLOWERS. They approvingly flap their arms and jump.

Voot fires several rounds.

BACK TO SCENE

Wes and Elliot delve farther into the cave.

ELLIOT
I'm absolutely starved.

WES
Me, too, but we've got to make the little food we have last.

Elliot stops, then Wes.

ELLIOT
This may sound strange; the thing I'm craving most is a nice tossed salad.

WES
Only you. I'd kill Dick for an overcooked steak.

ELLIOT
I'm serious. Fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, green peppers and, oh, can't forget the tangy red radishes.

Wes fakes vomiting, resumes walking. Elliot follows.

WES
Radishes, I get nauseous just saying the word. They're the hemorrhoids of the gods in my book. Say--what's this ahead?

ARCHWAY

The two men come to an archway sealed by a heavy wooden sliding door, adorned with a rusty Applebee's sign.

WES

Talk about lousy locations for a restaurant. Hey, maybe you can get your salad here.

ELLIOT

This is a barrier, Wes, not an entrance--and an old one.

DICK AND SPARKS

From within the cave, Dick and Sparks fire their weapons, keeping the headless at bay.

A door, identical to the one Elliot and Wes found slides down, trapping the men inside.

DICK

Elliot! Wes! We're trapped!
...inside an Applebee's.

BACK TO SCENE

ELLIOT

Sounds like Dick and Sparks are in trouble.

Dick and Sparks find Wes and Elliot. Sparks points to the door.

SPARKS

Carbon copy of what just dropped at the entrance. Those headless turds are a lot smarter than we give them credit for.

WES

This isn't their work.

As Wes runs his fingers along the surface of the door, it rises, revealing a small dirty room, with an additional closed doorway. It contains a few dilapidated chairs and a square, unfinished table with a short leg. The walls are crudely paneled with weathered, split pine.

ELLIOT

An invitation?

DICK

That's what one cow said to the other at the entrance to the slaughterhouse.

Wes steps in, the others follow. Instantly the door falls behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL ROOM - SECONDS LATER

DICK

What happens now? We just sit here and rot?

The men inspect their surroundings.

A frail male voice addresses them.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Who are you? What do you want?

ELLIOT

Can you see us, as well?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Clearly. Why did you enter?

WES

We were attacked. We sought shelter. Can we meet you face to face?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Do you have weapons?

SPARKS

Not really...

Elliot grabs Sparks' arm.

ELLIOT

We do. What should--

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hang on a second.

A trap door opens at the center of the room's floor. A short, delicate old man attempts to climb the last rung of a ladder, to join the four crewmen, but fails.

OLD MAN

Can you give me a hand? I'm afraid I'm out of steam.

Wes reaches down, grabs his arm, lifts him off the ladder and hoists him onto ground level.

The little old man, gaunt and slump-shouldered, is attired in a tattered, plaid bathrobe. High, black socks and worn sandals add to the getup, topped off by a flowered bathing cap.

He chews something crispy, reaches into the bathrobe pocket and produces a handful of red spheres.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Radish, anyone?

Wes belches, looks away. Elliot grabs one, pops it into his mouth, chews with delight.

ELLIOT
Thank you.

OLD MAN
You're obviously very well armed. Leave the weapons and your other belongings here; they'll be sent for.

The men reluctantly comply, except for Sparks, who conceals a knife in his pocket.

SPARKS
Well, this isn't Applebee's then, is it?

DICK
How could it be?--we're being helped.

The old man approaches the room's other door, kicks its base. It opens three-quarters of the way, jams at an odd angle.

OLD MAN
This way, follow me, but not too close. I don't want you stepping on my good robe.

He exits, the men follow.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

A maze of poorly lit corridors with stained crumbly stone walls and floors awaits.

The old man shuffles along, the visitors in tow. He stops, looks up, scratches his chin.

OLD MAN

I think we missed the turn. Did any of you notice how many doors we passed?

The men shrug. The wistful old man sighs, drops his shoulders.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

No one pays attention... Turn around, let's go the other way.

Bewildered, the men turn and slowly walk.

INTERSECTION

The group comes to an intersection of two identical unmarked corridors.

OLD MAN

Let's see, let's see... Let's go... that a-way. I think that's right. At least I'm pretty sure. Wait! No-no, not that way; that goes to the uh... confab-u-latorium. Don't want to go there. You know, I think I was right the first time--yes.

They proceed a few steps and come to a sliding door that opens when kicked by the old man.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Enter the receiving hall and stand before the dais.

INT. RECEIVING HALL

The chamber has an air of officialdom despite faded wall murals indicating the room was once a large sporting goods store. The long dais at the room's center is backed by five spotlit thrones.

The four crewmen stand in a row, as requested. The old man ascends the dais, takes the center seat and grins.

OLD MAN

I'm in charge. Bet you didn't see that coming.

ELLIOT

Didn't fool me.

Wes kicks Elliot's foot, silencing him. Doors to the chamber open. The room fills as several dozen bedraggled MEN, attired similarly to the old man, enter and stand throughout. Four MORE MEN subsequently enter and occupy the remaining seats on the dais. One of these four, scowling and dressed in black, sits close to the old man.

OLD MAN

I am Kinkle. Collectively, we are called the Schlub.

Sparks giggles.

KINKLE

You find that amusing? Why?

WES

He meant no offense, Kinkle. Our friend is a simpleton; a dimwit who is best suited to physical tasks requiring no thought. He's a mule in trousers, a pea-brained nincompoop--

SPARKS

You can stop any time, skipper.

Kinkle raises his hand, silence reigns.

KINKLE

You took shelter in our cave because you were attacked, correct?

ELLIOT

Yes, that is true. Those headless monsters tried to kill us, twice.

Kinkle nervously drums his fingers.

KINKLE

Monsters? You must mean the Crud. They are fierce, indeed. Frankly, they scare the shit out of us. They are the reason my people, the Schlub, have lived below ground for centuries.

DICK

If I may, Kinkle, we have a bit of a disagreement among ourselves as to exactly where we are.

Sparks steps forward, Kinkle yawns.

SPARKS

What's the name of this planet?

KINKLE

Gentlemen, we're getting a bit ahead of ourselves here. We want to hear your story first. What are your names? Where are you from?

The Schlub in black whispers into Kinkle's ear MOS. Kinkle laughs like a child.

KINKLE (CONT'D)

Do that again, Aramok, it tickles.

Aramok does as ordered; Kinkle laughs again.

KINKLE (CONT'D)

I like when he blows in my ear. Now start talking.

ELLIOT

I'm Elliot Woolcott, science officer of the VN-13 mission to Venus. The other men are Sparks McGee, Wes Parker and... Dick... Friendly.

DOOR TO CHAMBER

A door opens. Two WOMEN enter; one, matronly and overweight, has obviously dyed black hair. She wears yellow spandex. The second, bouncy and eighteen, has a bad complexion and a prominent nose. She is attired in a short dress fashioned from a floral shower curtain.

The young woman beams.

YOUNG WOMAN

Dick, Friendly? I must meet him.

The matronly woman restrains her.

BACK TO SCENE

Kinkle holds his forehead.

KINKLE

Didi, why did you have to bring Brenda? This is no place for a child.

BRENDA

I'll be quiet, Daddy, let the cute men talk. And I'm no child!

Brenda giggles, waves to the men, winks, slightly raises the hem on her dress.

DIDI

I don't like your tone of voice, Kinkle.

Kinkle lowers his gaze.

KINKLE

Sorry, dear.

Befuddled, the four crewmen glance at each other. Kinkle wrings his hands.

KINKLE (CONT'D)

All right, for the third and hopefully last time, you four, what is your story?

WES

We left our planet aboard a spacecraft on an interplanetary mission to Venus in the year 2017. Something went terribly wrong on the return flight.

Elliot clenches his fists, raises his arms above his head, jumps up and down.

ELLIOT

Enough! Enough! What planet is this?! What is its ever-loving name, for Christ's sake! I've had it! Now! Tell us! In the name of everything holy! What is it?!

Aramok stands, threateningly points to the visitors. His voice is unusually high pitched.

ARAMOK

You will be told when we are convinced you are ready to understand the implications and the underlying ramifications, as opposed to a superficial acknowledgement of... of... minuscular substantiation.

SPARKS

Huh?

Wes looks at Elliot.

WES
I really didn't get that.

Dick shrugs.

ELLIOT
I didn't either, well, not
entirely.

Aramok fumes, slams his open hand on the dais, sits in a huff.

KINKLE
You'll have to excuse Aramok.
When he gets worked up he has
trouble expressing himself
concisely and in layman's terms.
Look, for us it's the year 5088.

Elliot steps forward, crosses his fingers.

ELLIOT
And the planet's name is...

Kinkle smiles, sits back, put his hands behind his head.

KINKLE
Earth.

Elliot grins, turns and punches Wes in the shoulder.

ELLIOT
I told you, Wes! This isn't
Earth!

Wes shakes his head in disbelief.

WES
Are you deaf? He just said Earth!

Elliot jumps, clicks his heels, repeatedly pokes Wes in the arm.

ELLIOT
He said Yurth, not Earth! I was
right! Ha!

Elliot pumps his fist, laughs insanely.

DICK
Elliot's blown a fuse--he's nuts.

Brenda approaches Dick, puts her arm around his waist, squeezes him affectionately.

KINKLE
Elliot's your science officer?

WES
Kinkle, please disregard him. The stress of our journey and our current predicament has been difficult to bear.

DIDI
Not as difficult as raising Brenda.

Didi pulls Brenda away from Dick.

SPARKS
Kinkle, if this is the year 5088, why are the Schlub living in the ground, like... carrots?

KINKLE
Like carrots?

DICK
And what happened to civilization?

WES
And who are the Crud?

Aramok puts his arm around Kinkle.

ARAMOK
I can answer these questions, really.

Kinkle pats Aramok's hand.

KINKLE
Not a chance; I have to be somewhere Tuesday.

Aramok withdraws.

KINKLE (CONT'D)
Sometime in the 2020s Earth had what, historically, is now known as 'The Really Bad Day,' or RBD.

Kinkle stands and paces.

KINKLE (CONT'D)

Despite NASA's best efforts at early asteroid detection, a massive nickel-iron behemoth, fully five miles wide, slammed into the Yellowstone super volcano at a speed of fifty-thousand miles per hour.

WES

My god! And that's what destroyed mankind?

Kinkle stops pacing, rests one arm on the back of his throne, rubs his neck.

KINKLE

Sadly, no. You see, that devastating natural event happened to coincide with the onset of a thermonuclear world war.

ELLIOT

Shocking, absolutely shocking. It truly was a 'really bad day' for planet Yurth.

Exasperated, Kinkle rolls his eyes, then remembers the radishes in his pocket. He produces one and throws it at Elliot, hitting him in the head.

Everyone applauds.

KINKLE

That's not what made it a really bad day. There's more: a gamma ray burst, emanating from the constellation Cygnus struck at the moment the war broke out. Nearly all life perished within twenty-four hours of the combined events. The subsequent plague didn't exactly help, either.

WES

And all that remains now are the Schlub and the Crud.

KINKLE

As far as we know. The Crud, who at some point chose to live on the poisoned surface, quickly mutated into the creatures you encountered. Now, do you have any questions?

DICK

The Internet was the technological wonder of our time. Does it still exist?

KINKLE

Just Craig's List.

DICK

Really?

Kinkle mockingly laughs, stops abruptly, looks at Brenda.

BRENDA

Brenda embraces Sparks from behind, caresses him.

BACK TO SCENE

Kinkle waves her off.

KINKLE

Of course not, don't be ridiculous! Other questions?

SPARKS

Did the Lagina brothers ever find treasure on Oak Island?

KINKLE

No, but they're being given one last season. Last year they found a sewing needle.

Dick is impressed.

WES

Right before leaving Earth I bought a load of Forever postage stamps. Are they still good?

KINKLE

No, no, no! Your stamps are worthless. Whoever said there is no such thing as a stupid question never met you four. Now I have a question for you.

WES

What is it?

KINKLE
How popular was cole slaw in your
time?

WES
Oh, very, especially in the
summer.

The other three crewmen nod in agreement.

KINKLE
Thank you, I've always been
fascinated by cole slaw.

Kinkle sits.

KINKLE (CONT'D)
This has been exhausting; we are
done for today. You'll be shown
to your quarters. Your gear will
follow.

WES
And our weapons?

Aramok snaps to attention.

ARAMOK
Why do you want your weapons?

The four men paw the ground with their toes, look askance.

ARAMOK (CONT'D)
We'll hold onto them.

CUT TO:

INT. CREWMEN'S QUARTERS - DAY

An ESCORT leads the crew into a ramshackle room that will
serve as their accommodations, then departs.

Sparks places his hat on the back post of a chair. It
collapses into a cloud of dust and debris. Dicks hand goes
through the mattress of his bed when he pats it.

DICK
Looks like we'll be sleeping on
the floor.

Wes' feet crack through the floor. He's instantly two feet
shorter than the other men.

WES

Better call room service and have them send up a new floor.

Sparks exits into an adjoining room.

DICK

Wes, do you think there's any chance the Schlub will help us rebuild the ship?

WES

Maybe when amoebas drive speedboats, Dick. Our best bet is to help them re-establish themselves above ground, instead of living like termites.

DICK

It's just that--

West puts his hand on Dick's shoulder.

WES

Dick, I know what's eating at you. You want to get back to your promiscuous wife and wacky kids for some reason, right?

Dick chokes up.

WES (CONT'D)

If you cry, I swear--

Sparks re-enters the living quarters.

SPARKS

Strange bathroom. The toilet is just a round hole in the floor, about five inches wide. Mind your step when you go in. I had a massive 'bombing drill' and didn't entirely hit the target.

ELLIOT

I continue to be astonished how similar this planet is to Earth.

Didi and Brenda enter the living quarters from the outside corridor.

DIDI

I hope you fine, virile men find these quarters suitable. They are among our finest.

SPARKS

Actually, they're quite pathetic,
thank you.

BRENDA

If you need to relieve yourselves,
there is a community restroom two
doors down the corridor.

DIDI

And in your adjoining room you'll
find a five-inch hole in the floor
where you can deposit your
laundry. The conduit leads
directly to our only washing
machine.

Sparks clears his throat. Wes, Dick and Elliot glare at
Sparks.

WES

Thank you, we'll be sure to
remember that for future
reference, won't we, Sparks?

Brenda hugs Wes, then Elliot.

WES (CONT'D)

Didi, why are the Schlub content
to live underground?

DIDI

We are safe and happy here. We
lead peaceful, predictable lives.
Why give that up?

WES

Because mankind thrived on the
surface. Life underground is a
step backward towards extinction.

Brenda goes back to hugging Wes, rubs her foot on his leg.

BRENDA

Mother, perhaps if we give them a
tour they'll come to appreciate
our way of life.

STATUE IN ROOM

A small statue of a monkey holding a microphone sit on an
end table.

ARAMOK'S ROOM

Aramok, scowling, listens to Brenda's conversation on a speaker.

ARAMOK

Brenda, you're mine! Mostly.

BACK TO SCENE

DIDI

Certainly, Wes, I'd be happy to show you the old tunnel.

BRENDA

Mother! You can show the old tunnel to Dick.

Sparks coughs, exits back into the washroom. His laughter is heard o.s.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I'll show Wes around. I'll show him everything.

Didi latches onto Dick.

DIDI

You up for it, Dick?

Dick, queasy, wipes perspiration from his brow.

DICK

Yeah, sure, but just a tour. I'm married, well... I was. She--

WES

Didi, whatever you do, don't offer him a shoulder to cry on--you might drown. And Elliot, what are you going to do, stud?

ELLIOT

I'm going to start writing notes for a book on the similarities between Yurth and Earth.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRANCE TO UNDERGROUND HOTOUSE - DAY

Brenda opens the door for Wes, strokes his arm. Dense clouds of steam escape.

BRENDA
I think you'll find this very
enlightening.

INT. HOTHOUSE

Row after row of cultivation tables host bizarre looking planets, many of which display berry-like clusters. Brenda pulls one off, takes a nibble, then gently places it to Wes' lips. He takes it in and chews.

BRENDA
Do you like it?

Wes nods, but is puzzled.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
All the plants you see in here are
variants of one type upon which we
totally rely.

WES
Fascinating, what is it?

She pulls off another 'berry,' this one green and much larger, offers it to Wes.

BRENDA
The radish.

Wes moans, doubles over, spits out remnants.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRANCE TO RADISH MUSEUM - MINUTES LATER

DIDI
Tired already, Dick? Why you're
as limp as a rag and we've barely
started.

Dick mops his brow.

DICK
Didi, I was worn out after the old
tunnel. Since then we've been to
the Radish Processing Plant, the
Radish Research Lab and the Radish
Institute.

DIDI

Oh, and I was so looking forward to showing you our Radish Museum. They have a twenty-million-year-old radish trapped in amber.

Dick, exhausted, shakes his head. Didi thinks, gets an idea, smiles.

DIDI (CONT'D)

Well, there's still parts of the old tunnel you haven't seen.

Dick moans.

CUT TO:

INT. DOOR MARKED 'EXIT' - DAY

Brenda and Wes approach a well secured door marked 'exit.'

BRENDA

You look like you need some fresh air, Wes. Would you like to step outside?

She begins undoing the door's many, heavy bolts. Wes places a cautionary hand on one.

WES

Is it safe? The Crud could be waiting.

BRENDA

Don't be ridiculous.

Wes lowers his hand.

Brenda delighted, flings open the door. Two awaiting CRUD enter. One grabs Brenda, flings her over his shoulder, exits, runs off. The second pulls Wes outside the exit.

EXT. OUTSIDE EXIT

In this confined rocky space the Crud slams Wes face-first into a boulder, breaking his nose and front teeth. Bloodied Wes retaliates with body blows that prove ineffective. A Crud backhand to the face knocks Wes to the ground. The Crud looms over him, ready to pounce.

A cat's meow is heard o.s. Wes spits out a bloody tooth.

WES

Bitsy!

ROCK LEDGE

Bitsy, poised on the ledge, leaps.

BACK TO SCENE

Bitsy lands between the Crud's shoulders. The cat's claws furiously rip at the beast's protruding tongue, slashing it to gory shreds. The monster runs off with Bitsy still attached. Wes stumbles back into the exit, slams and locks the door.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW'S LIVING QUARTERS - LATER

Elliot impatiently paces while Sparks and Dick, seated, check their watches.

ELLIOT

We're expected in the assembly hall in ten minutes. Wes knew about the meeting. Who knows if Kinkle will allow it to be rescheduled?

The door to the room slides open part way, jams. Wes, a bloody wreck, squeezes through, stumbles, collapses on a couch--that collapses.

DICK

Wes! Good god! Are you all right?

Wes purges blood from his nostrils.

WES

Never better. Do I look all right, for Christ's sake?!

Wes fights to sit up.

ELLIOT

What happened?

WES

Brenda opened a door to the outside. One Crud abducted her.

(MORE)

WES (CONT'D)

Another one stuck around to fight me, then ran off when Bitsy attacked it.

Wes stands with help from Sparks.

ELLIOT

Brenda, kidnapped... That might actually help us sell our plan to establish a base on the surface. Wes, we're expected now. Do you think you can make it?

WES

Try to stop me.

CUT TO:

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - MINUTES LATER

Aramok and Kinkle sit at the center of the dais, with three other councilmen. Attending VISITORS stand throughout. The four crewmen stand before the dais. Wes, bleeding profusely, shrugs off assistance from Sparks.

ARAMOK

Our time is precious. I would ask you why you requested this meeting, but I already have my suspicions.

Elliot steps forward.

A door slides open. Didi enters, crying, pulling her hair.

DIDI

She's gone! Brenda's gone! Taken by the Crud! Voot has Brenda!

Didi passes out. Attendants rush to her aid.

ELLIOT

This is shocking. This provocative act only serves to underscore our reason for requesting this meeting. As the number of Crud grows, so does their aggression. If the Schlub do not respond in kind and boldly re-establish themselves on the surface, you, as a people, are doomed.

KINKLE

He may have a point, Aramok.

SPARKS

Elliot, her kidnapping could be an isolated incident, not worth overreacting to.

Elliot, Wes and Dick rolls their eyes.

ELLIOT

Sparks, you're the guy who thinks the Colossus of Rhodes is an eight-lane highway, so kindly shut up.

SPARKS

Okay, okay. I just wanted to look at the situation from another angle.

Kinkle, bored, checks his watch. Aramok stands, addresses him.

ARAMOK

These fallacious men of the rapacious twenty-first century are carbonaceous opportunists, Kinkle. And they, they seize upon... seize upon...

KINKLE

Temporary setbacks?

ARAMOK

Yes! Temporary setbacks, and use them audaciously to diametrically and surreptitiously...

KINKLE

C'mon, Aramok, you can do it. Try to be succinct and finish the thought.

Kinkle folds his arms, leans back.

ARAMOK

You're right, I can do this. Ahem. They'll use violence to put themselves in charge and destroy our way of life. Okay?

KINKLE

See, I knew you could do it,
Aramok. I'm very proud of you.
Keep working on it in your spare
time. You'll only get better.

Kinkle clears his throat.

KINKLE (CONT'D)

Incredibly, Aramok may have a
point, too, Elliot.

Aramok, his spirit renewed, stands.

ARAMOK

I would like to add, Kinkle, if
you feel yourself wavering on this
issue, please remember, there are
other representatives of their
time period who will corroborate
my position.

The four crewmen are confused.

WES

Others?

Aramok claps his hands. At the signal, the sliding door to
the hall partially opens. With some difficulty, two MEN
and a WOMAN enter the chamber, approach the dais. They
wear flight suits adorned with the Union Jack.

KINKLE

Oh, yeah, them.

The three Brits join the Americans.

ARAMOK

You three, kindly introduce
yourselves to our ambitious
newcomers.

The tall, patrician one of the three takes three precise
steps towards Elliot, twirls his pencil-thin mustache.

MACKENZIE

I'm Captain Thomas Mackenzie.

He points to a corpulent bearded man.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

This is Sergeant Pennington.
You'll do well to keep your
fingers away from his mouth.

Pennington snaps to attention, clicks the heels of his polished boots, swallows something he is chewing and burps.

Mackenzie points to the attractive woman with long blonde hair.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

And this is our science officer,
Lieutenant Sandra Hooper.

She straightens, smiles, reveals horrible teeth.

SPARKS

I know what I'm keeping away from
her mouth.

Elliot turns to Mackenzie.

ELLIOT

How and when did you get here?

WES

Elliot, don't you recall? The
Project Perseus mission? It went
missing two years before ours.

Elliot is flustered.

ELLIOT

Wait... oh... oh, yes-yes, yes, of
course.

MACKENZIE

Precisely, old man. On our return
from Mercury our craft became
entangled in an energy ribbon.
Dash it all; it created a bloody
time warp that advanced us several
millennia and brought us here.

ELLIOT

And when you say, "here," exactly
what planet do you mean?

The Brits laugh. Sandra blushes, holds her hand to her throat.

SANDRA

You don't know what planet you're
on? And you're the science
officer, I presume.

Elliot withdraws, turns pale. Sparks aggressively approaches Sandra.

SPARKS

Elliot may not be the smartest science officer in the Space Corpse, Missy, but he is one of the tallest.

ELLIOT

Wonderful, I'm being defended by a man who believes the necktie was invented in Thailand.

Sergeant Pennington spots the knife Sparks hid in the back of his trousers, plucks it out and tosses it to Mackenzie, who holds it up for all to see.

MACKENZIE

A concealed weapon! This exemplifies the type of men to whom you have so generously given sanctuary. Aramok is right!

ARAMOK

Aramok, proudly sits up straight, smiles.

BACK TO SCENE

MACKENZIE

The Yanks cannot be trusted and their belligerent plans will be your undoing!

ARAMOK

Those Brits can really put together a sentence.

Sparks slugs Mackenzie on the jaw, grabs back his knife, then pounds Pennington in the gut. Pandemonium ensues, attendees flee.

ARAMOK (CONT'D)

Guards, seize them!

Six skinny GUARDS rush the four Yanks, who easily repel them, save for Elliot, who does not struggle against two captors.

ELLIOT

I have to pee! Restrain me at your own peril!

Kinkle lowers the side of his head onto the dais.

KINKLE

KINKLE
I need a nap.

BACK TO SCENE

Didi comes to Dick's rescue, wildly flails at the guard holding him.

DIDI
I'll save you, darling.

A blaring alarm sounds within the chamber. Everyone comes to a halt.

ARAMOK
The alarm to the storeroom!
Security, go there at once!

CUT TO:

INT. SECURE STOREROOM DOOR - MINUTES LATER

The Yanks, Brits, Aramok, Kinkle and guards stand at the smoldering entrance to the storeroom. The heavy door is off its hinges, the lock damaged by gunfire.

Wes inspects the lock.

WES
This was shot away with
high-powered rounds from an
assault rifle.

Elliot picks up and sniffs a spent shell casing.

ELLIOT
The one you lost, Wes.

WES
Right, the same one you claimed
would be of as much good to them
as an espresso maker.

INT. STOREROOM

Piled crates of radishes are undisturbed, but a large metal locker, its doors splayed open, is empty. Kinkle is focused on the crates.

KINKLE

Our store of radishes is safe,
praise be.

Aramok inspects the empty locker.

ARAMOK

Your accursed weapons were in
here. Now the Crud have them.

Aramok slams one door shut.

ARAMOK (CONT'D)

Allowing you four Americans in was
the worst thing we could have
done. Nothing like this happened
when the Brits arrived!

Aramok kicks the second door shut.

ARAMOK (CONT'D)

The Brits had tea! Good tea! And
some delightful biscuits. It was
a welcome end to a meal of six
kinds of goddamn radishes.

The Brits smile, congratulate themselves MOS.

WES

Well excuse me for interrupting
your pleasant reminiscing about
tea and biscuits, but, like it or
not, now that the Crud are armed
you're going to need a
strategy--and quick.

SPARKS

So the Crud aren't armless, but
they're still headless, right,
skipper?

DICK

Sparks, I don't know if you've
noticed, but ever since we crashed
you've gotten progressively
stupider.

Everyone, except Sparks and Elliot nod in agreement.

ELLIOT

I'm not sure that's true. Just
for the record, I didn't think he
was too bright from day one.

SPARKS
Thanks, Elliot.

Elliot takes Sparks' knife, hands it to Kinkle.

ELLIOT
As a token of our good faith, hold
onto this. Despite what the Brits
say, we mean no malice.

Wes extends his hand to Mackenzie, who accepts and shakes
it.

Sparks slugs Mackenzie in the jaw again.

MACKENZIE
Stop doing that!

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE OF THE CRUD - DAY

The torch-lit rocky cavern is strewn with piles of remnants
from previous centuries: small appliances, shoes,
gardening equipment, food containers and the Americans'
weapons.

Voot, seated on a throne of coffee filters, wears a gold,
jewel-studded crown between his headless shoulders.
Carefully, he inspects the flamethrower. Brenda,
attentive, is at his side.

BRENDA
You're paying a lot more attention
to that... whatever it is, than
you are to me, Vootsie-Wootsie.

Voot pauses, turns towards Brenda, then back to the
flamethrower.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
You wouldn't have gotten it, or
any of the other weapons without
my help.

Brenda snuggles Voot, twirls her greasy locks.

Disgusted, he puts down the flamethrower, accidentally
setting it off.

CRUD

A crud in the line of fire is torched.

TWO CRUD

Two Crud play catch with a hand grenade that explodes, when the pin falls out.

BACK TO SCENE

VOOT

Voot know. Voot not an ingrate.

BRENDA

You seem cold, distant.

She strokes his shoulder fur.

VOOT

Voot planning attack on Schlub,
needs Brenda-help.

Brenda, perturbed, steps away.

BRENDA

There's only so much I can do,
Voot. Aramok suspects me as it
is.

Voot sighs.

VOOT

Name price, Brenda.

She smiles.

BRENDA

Well, every queen needs a king.

VOOT

Other way round, Brenda, but Voot
gets it.

BRENDA

No, I got it right.

Voot embraces Brenda from behind. She reaches back, places his crown on her head.

CUT TO:

INT. BRITS' LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Seated and enjoying tea, the Brits express concerns.
Mackenzie bites a radish, scowls.

PENNINGTON

A pity we're out of biscuits.
Radishes with Earl Grey tea don't
quite make the grade.

Sandra, apathetic, drops a radish into her cup from a foot
above the brim, creating a splash.

SANDRA

The longer the Yanks stay, the
worse things will get. We need to
have them banished. The Crud will
dispose of them once they're back
in the wild. That will solve
everything.

Mackenzie stands, paces.

PENNINGTON

The Schlub will only exile them
for a capital offense.

MACKENZIE

Agreed. Someone will have to be
sacrificed--and no ordinary Schlub
will do.

SANDRA

The victim will have to be killed
with Sparks' knife. Kinkle has
it.

Mackenzie takes his seat, slurps tea.

MACKENZIE

And the bloody knife planted in
Sparks' bed.

SANDRA

Then Kinkle will be the victim?

PENNINGTON

Too devastating to the community,
and it would create a succession
crisis.

Sandra picks up a radish, tosses it in the air, catches it
in her mouth and spits it out.

Mackenzie snaps his fingers.

MACKENZIE

Aramok.

PENNINGTON

The high priest? Kinkle's closest confidante?

MACKENZIE

Do you know of another Aramok? Good god! How many people in this community are named Aramok?

Pennington cringes, puts down his tea cup.

PENNINGTON

Beg pardon, sir.

SANDRA

I agree, Aramok should die, with Sparks implicated. Now which one of us is up to murder?

MACKENZIE

As senior officer I could order either one of you to do it.

Pennington vigorously shakes his head, squirms. Sandra grimaces.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

But why deny myself the pleasure?

SANDRA

But you've never killed anyone, either.

Mackenzie picks up a radish and devours it.

MACKENZIE

If a person can develop a taste for radishes, he can develop one for anything.

CUT TO:

INT. KINKLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

While Kinkle and Didi snore, Mackenzie stealthily moves about in the dark, in search of the knife.

Though tiny, the room abounds in damaged knickknacks and kitschy ornaments. He deftly works his way through the clutter until he comes to a table bearing several dozen knives, all similar.

MACKENZIE

Shit. Which?... Damn it.

Kinkle rustles his sheets, talks in his sleep.

KINKLE

De Niro? De Niro? He's washed up. After The Godfather, it was all downhill. Adam Sandler, now he's an actor's actor.

Didi snorts, tosses and turns, talks in her sleep.

DIDI

Another knife? Thirty isn't enough? What's the thirty-first going to cut that the other thirty can't? I'm married to Jack the Ripper. Let me put it away.

Mackenzie impersonates Kinkle.

MACKENZIE

Okay, Didi, you put it away, but tell me where so I can find it if I need it--like right now.

DIDI

Why now?

MACKENZIE

I, uh... have an eyelash stuck in the corner of my eye.

KINKLE

De Niro direct? You got to be kidding. De Niro couldn't direct a puppet show. De Niro...

Snoring intensifies, then subsides.

DIDI

It's in Aramok's room. I gave it to him. He's taken up whittling.

Mackenzie, disgusted, exits.

Kinkle awakens, then Didi. They sit up.

DIDI (CONT'D)

I had the strangest dream.

KINKLE

Well, what was it?

DIDI

Robert De Niro wanted to borrow a knife, to whittle.

KINKLE

De Niro--phht! De Niro couldn't
whittle one whit.

CUT TO:

INT. ARAMOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mackenzie sneaks into the room and immediately sees the knife among a pile of sticks, wood shavings and a partially completed wooden bust of Brenda. Aramok silently sleeps.

Mackenzie picks up the knife, stands at bedside. Aramok talks in his sleep.

ARAMOK

De Niro? I'd rather die than sit
through any of his later films.

Mackenzie raises the blade over his head.

MACKENZIE

Always happy to fulfill a wish.

KNIFE BLADE

The blade falls.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Didi, disturbed by her dream, roams the hallways in her ill-fitting nightgown and robe.

DIDI

That dream, that dream; it seemed
so real. Maybe it was just
something I ate. Let's see, I had
the radish soup, assorted radish
salad and radishes wrapped in
radish peel. Nothing unusual
about that.

She turns a corner, just in time to see Mackenzie entering the Yanks' room. He doesn't see Didi. She quietly steps to the entrance.

DIDI'S POV

Mackenzie slips the knife into Sparks' bedding, turns to leave.

BACK TO SCENE

HALLWAY

Didi conceals herself behind a placard promoting Tuesday night's film festival. Mackenzie walks past without seeing her.

INT. YANKS' QUARTERS

Didi enters, retrieves the knife, exits.

INT. BRITS' QUARTERS - ONE HOUR LATER

Didi enters, slides the knife into Mackenzie's bedding while he sleeps. Pennington opens one eye.

PENNINGTON'S POV

Pennington sees Didi plant the knife and exit.

PENNINGTON

Pennington retrieves the knife, exits the room.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO YANKS' QUARTERS - ONE HOUR LATER

Pennington, knife in hand, listens to snoring o.s.

INT. YANKS' QUARTERS

Pennington enters, mistakenly slips the knife into sleeping Wes Parker's bedding, exits.

Brenda steps out of the shadows, retrieves the knife, exits.

INT. KINKLE AND DIDI'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Brenda enters, places the knife in her snoring mother's bedding, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ARAMOK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A SERVANT enters with linens, notices Aramok's bloody corpse. He strips the body of jewelry, kisses Aramok, steps away and screams for help.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHLUB ASSEMBLY ROOM - DAY

Kinkle sits alone at the dais. Before him stand the Brits, Yanks, Brenda and Didi. Many Schlub are in attendance.

Brenda stands close to Mackenzie, strokes his back, mouths the words, 'I love you.'

KINKLE

Aramok, a trusted adviser, heir apparent to the throne and one of Brenda's countless lovers, is dead.

Onlookers comment MOS.

SPARKS

His murderer shall not go unpunished.

WES

Open mouth, insert foot.

Elliot, Dick and Wes cringe over Sparks' faux pas.

KINKLE

I never said he was murdered. How did you know?

SPARKS

It was, um, hypothetical. I was merely implying that, if he was murdered... then, uh, his murderer, or murderers, would be... found and, I assume, punished.

Didi steps forward, produces the knife planted in her bed.

DIDI

This is your knife, Sparks, is it not?

Sparks inspects it, grimly nods.

DIDI (CONT'D)
I found it, this morning, in my
bed.

The crowd expresses shock.

DIDI (CONT'D)
Please, listen, all of you. I
gave the knife to Aramok, as a
gift. If I killed him, why would
I place it in my own bed?

KINKLE

Kinkle, anguished and confused, wrings his hands.

BACK TO SCENE

Pennington steps forward.

PENNINGTON
If I may, Kinkle; I witnessed Didi
planting the murder weapon in
Mackenzie's bedding in the middle
of the night.

Didi, frustrated, shoves Pennington. Kinkle removes his
cap, maniacally runs his fingers through his wispy white
locks.

DIDI
I'm not done! I only placed it in
Mackenzie's bedding after seeing
him plant it in Sparks'.

Sparks does a victory dance.

SPARKS
All right, all right, all right!

KINKLE

Kinkle cries, lowers his head, pounds the dais with his
fist.

BACK TO SCENE

Brenda steps forward.

BRENDA

Daddy, I saw Pennington slip that knife into Wes Parker's bed.

Wes covers his eyes.

MACKENZIE & KINKLE

What were you doing in Wes' room?

BRENDA

Nothing...

Kinkle hyperventilates, regains his composure.

WES

Kinkle, having heard the facts, how do you rule?

Kinkle struggles to his feet, clears his throat.

KINKLE

Before rendering a decision, I would like to remind everyone that tonight, being Tuesday, is film festival night, right here in this room. We have three films and--

Brenda stamps her foot.

BRENDA

Daddy! You left out the word 'only'! It's the same three damn movies every stinking Tuesday!

KINKLE

The Americans don't know that, Brenda, dear.

Brenda, folds her arms in disgust, turns away.

KINKLE (CONT'D)

As I was saying, the films are the second reel of Adam Sandler's *Spanglish*, the first reel of Robert De Niro's *Rocky & Bullwinkle*, a real stinker, and a short documentary about industrial adhesives. Remember, you are all required to vote for your favorite. Well, that wraps things up. I look forward to--

DIDI

What's your decision on Aramok's murder?!

KINKLE

Uh... suicide--court adjourned!

Kinkle hangs a sign on the front of the dais reading:
immediate opening, close confidante.

CUT TO:

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - NIGHT

The four Americans sit in the front row of the darkened hall as the final film, *Industrial Adhesives & You* plays.

Behind the Americans, everyone sleeps. A monotone NARRATOR drones on, v.o., about industrial adhesives.

ELLIOT

Remarkable, simply remarkable.

Sparks plucks a radish from a bagful, pops it into his mouth, spits it back into the bag. Dick, without noticing, digs the same one out and eats it.

WES

What's so remarkable, Elliot?

Elliot points to the screen.

ELLIOT

Their degree of industrialization is highly reminiscent of Earth's in the twenty-first century.

WES

Elliot, if you say that one more time I'll pull your tongue out through your rectum and strangle you with it.

Elliot stands.

ELLIOT

I have to pee.

DICK

That's more information than I need, Elliot. You could just say you have to visit the men's room.

Indifferent, Elliot starts to walk out.

DICK (CONT'D)

Hold up, I'll join you.

Both men exit.

HALLWAY

As Elliot and Dick approach the men's room entrance, Dick pauses, his eyebrows arch.

DICK'S POV

A young BLONDE WOMAN quickly crosses the intersection of the two corridors.

BACK TO SCENE

DICK
Elliot, you go ahead; I'll catch
up with you later.

ELLIOT
Okay. What's up? You look like
you've seen a ghost.

Dick hurriedly runs off.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE SPACECRAFT - DAY (PRESENT)

A sleek, yellow spacecraft, bearing the Japanese flag, circles Mars.

INTERIOR

Captain HIRO TANAKA, science officer MR. GUSHI and android navigator TOP-TOP intently monitor their workstations.

Captain Tanaka, in his forties, with a full head of slicked-back hair, hums the melody to the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*. He swivels his seat to face Top-Top and Mr. Gushi.

TANAKA
Top-Top, be so kind to calculate
trajectory for the Dragon-1's
return trip to Earth.

The crown of Top-Top's almond-shaped head flashes green twice.

TOP-TOP

My extreme pleasure, Captain Tanaka. I will forward the results to your workstation momentarily. The trajectory offered will minimize fuel consumption, while simultaneously returning us in the minimum time. Please prepare yourself, Mr. Gushi.

MR. GUSHI

Young, bespectacled Mr. Gushi, annoyed, silently mouths: 'prepare yourself, Mr. Gushi.'

BACK TO SCENE

TANAKA

Mr. Gushi, we must celebrate our most successful expedition with prized, special tea. Please prepare.

Mr. Gushi sighs as he opens a cabinet containing porcelain tea service.

MR. GUSHI

At least he didn't say, chop-chop.

EXT. JAPANESE SPACECRAFT

The same energy ribbon that engulfed the VN-13 snares the Japanese rocket.

INTERIOR

The unconscious crew, tea service and other craft contents swirl and collide in a wild maelstrom.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH ABOVE A STRANGE PLANET'S SURFACE - DAY

The Japanese craft plummets towards craggy, snow-capped mountains. It crashes and slides up next to the remains of the VN-13.

EXT. OF CRAFT - LATER

Groggily, the three crewmen emerge, stumble to the planet's surface. Top-Top, badly damaged, lists to one side, slowly spins. Tanaka and Mr. Gushi scrutinize their surroundings.

MR. GUSHI

Captain, where are we?

Tanaka shakes his head. Top-Top continues to spin.

TOP-TOP

The more appropriate question is,
when are we?

TANAKA

When?

TOP-TOP

If you two will be so kind as to
stop me from spinning, I will
explain.

Tanaka and Mr. Gushi comply. Top-Top's left hand falls off. Mr. Gushi unsuccessfully attempts reattachment, then pockets it.

TOP-TOP (CONT'D)

We crossed paths with a dynamic
energy ribbon and accelerated to
light speed. My internal
accelerometer... in baseball,
Yokohama defeated Tokyo 11-4 in
twelve grueling innings.

TANAKA

What does baseball have to do
with--

TOP-TOP

To two cups of gently boiling
water, add marinated octopus.
Slowly pour...

Top-Top's dome light flickers. He goes silent.

TANAKA

He's not going to be of much help.

MR. GUSHI

Most regrettable. What do you
make of wreckage of other craft,
captain?

TANAKA
You mean crafts.

Tanaka points. Mr. Gushi turns his head.

TANAKA AND MR. GUSHI'S POV

Two hundred yards beyond the fuselage of the VN-13 stands the scorched, upright tail section of a massive C-5 military transport plane.

BACK TO SCENE

MR. GUSHI
They're really piling up. You suppose there are any survivors?

Tanaka looks down, points.

TANAKA
I know so; at least four. I suggest we follow. Break out gear. Leave Top-Top to me.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHLUB COMPOUND HALLWAY - DAY

Dick, alone and lost in thought, roams.

DICK
This is the direction she was headed the other night, but I think it's a dead end.

He stops, rubs the back of his neck, reflects.

DICK (CONT'D)
It might have been Sandra. I don't know. Maybe it was just wishful thinking.

Dick breathes rapidly, tears flow. Abruptly, he's bumped from behind.

DICK'S POV/BLONDE INTERCUTTING

The same attractive blonde he saw on movie night, now several steps ahead, quickly moves away.

BLONDE

If you have to cry, do it without
blocking the hallway, you big
baby.

DICK (O.S.)

H-Hannah?

She stops, turns towards Dick.

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

Hannah!

DICK

He wipes away tears, runs to her.

DICK AND HANNAH

He embraces her; he's ecstatic. Hannah, lukewarm, adjusts
her hair.

DICK

It's a miracle! How can you be
here?! This is the year 5088--and
you're alive! Is it really you?

Hannah unlocks his embrace, takes a step back.

HANNAH

Yeah, it's me, Dick. Happy to see
me in the land of the goddamned
radish eaters?

DICK

Of course! How long have you been
here and how did--

She raises her hand, silencing him.

HANNAH

A couple days.

Hannah leans back against the corridor wall, one knee
extended, lights a cigarette.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I was a guest aboard a C-5
military transport. All of a
sudden--

DICK
A guest aboard a C-5? Why? Whose
guest?

Hannah takes a deep drag on the cigarette, coolly blows the
smoke at Dick.

HANNAH
You gonna let me finish?

DICK
Sorry.

HANNAH
Two Green Berets, you don't know
them. They invited me down to
MacBrill Air Force Base, outside
Tampa, Florida, to do a little
surfing.

DICK
Huh? You don't know how...

HANNAH
So, I'm half way home and there's
this flash of purple light and the
plane starts to go super fast. It
climbs straight up, then dives and
crashes in the snow, not too far
from here. We crashed only a
couple hundred yards from the
VN-13. Weird... crazy weird.

Dick sweats profusely, tries to catch his breath.

DICK
Anyone else survive?

She laughs.

HANNAH
In that scrap heap? Pilot and
co-pilot both crushed to jelly.
It's a friggin' miracle the C-5
didn't blow up. There's enough
weapons and ammo on board to
flatten the Rockies.

DICK
Two... two Green Berets? I'd only
been missing and assumed dead for
a couple days, Hannah... baby?

HANNAH

Life goes on. Brad introduced me to them.

DICK

Who the hell is Brad?

She tosses down the cigarette, slips out of one sandal, rubs out the cigarette butt with her bare foot, slips the sandal back on.

HANNAH

Bradley Mansfield. He's a colonel at the Houston base. Nice guy; some sort of head of communications, or something. He's supposed to be watching the kids.

DICK

The kids! How are they?

HANNAH

The usual nightmare.

DICK

Do they miss me?

HANNAH

Oh, yeah... sure.

CUT TO:

INT. YANKS' LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Seated, Sparks, Elliot and West pick at lunch.

SPARKS

I can't drink another glass of radish juice.

ELLIOT

Same here. I thought I'd develop a taste for it, but... It's horrid. No one on Earth would drink it.

Wes gulps down his radish juice.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

You've certainly had a change of heart for the stuff.

WES

Imagining it's a cold beer seems to make it easier, at least initially. Even so, it still remains, the only way to get some variety in our diet and everyone else's is to develop an agricultural base on the surface.

ELLIOT

You're right and ultimately it's the only way to save the Schlub. But we still face the same roadblocks we did on day one.

Sparks stands, holds his gurgling stomach.

SPARKS

The Brits are a major impediment. And worse, our weapons are now in the hairy hands of the Crud.

Wes, frustrated, pounds his fist on the table.

Dick enters.

DICK

You're not going to believe this--I just bumped into Hannah!

Wes bolts to his feet, grabs Dick's arm.

WES

Hannah? That's impossible! You're hallucinating.

Dick brushes away Wes' arm.

DICK

It was no hallucination.

ELLIOT

Dick, think. How could it be? This isn't even Earth.

Wes kicks Elliot's chair.

WES

Where did you see her?

DICK

The hallway, an intersection near the men's room.

SPARKS

If I had to guess, that's where I'd expect to find Hannah. She still looking foxy at the ripe old age of three thousand?

Dick pushes Sparks' shoulder.

DICK

She was on a C-5 transport that got caught in the same energy ribbon that nailed us. She said it crashed close to the VN-13.

SPARKS

Was she happy to see her old, sweet Dick?

Elliot suppresses laughter. Dick hesitates, looks at his fellow crew-mates.

DICK

Of course, why wouldn't she be?

ELLIOT

So, where is she?

DICK

She... uh, had to go and see Mackenzie. Something about a new position. I guess he found her a job.

WES

Hold on! You said she crash landed on a C-5 transport. What was it carrying?

DICK

She said it was carrying enough weapons and ammo to flatten the Rockies.

Wes howls, pumps his fist, throws his glass of radish juice against the wall.

WES

Gentlemen, we are going to kick some Crud ass and take back planet Earth!

CUT TO:

INT. SCHLUB STOREROOM - DAY

The storeroom is stacked to the rafters with crates of assorted military weaponry, some of which are open. Dick inspects a helmet with an attached missile on top. Wes and Elliot watch as disheveled, exhausted Sparks carries in two additional boxes. He drops them, tries to keep from collapsing.

ELLIOT

Jesus, Sparks! Be more careful with those! You want to blow us all to atoms?

Sparks mops his brow.

SPARKS

Couldn't one of you have carried... something? I emptied an entire C-5 by myself, for Christ's sake.

ELLIOT

We've been strategizing, using our brains. You should thank us for not wasting our time with manual labor.

WES

Sparks, we'll see to it that a statue of you, with your head up your ass, is put up in your honor when all this is over.

Didi and Kinkle enter.

KINKLE

I see you are still interested in conquest and more prepared than ever.

WES

You'll appreciate it someday, Kinkle. As for the weaponry, it's mostly a deterrent. We'll use it to a minimum. After all, we're civilized men of peace, unlike the Crud.

SPARKS

And if you can't appreciate it, I'll kick your teeth down your friggin' throat, you old goat.

Dick restrains Sparks.

KINKLE

The Schlub will not assist in your bloodshed, nor will the Brits.

SPARKS

No surprise there, it might interfere with tea time.

WES

We'll go it alone, Kinkle. If you want to wait until the smoke clears before deciding if you want to live on the surface, instead of like burrowing worms, that's fine with us.

Didi approaches Wes.

DIDI

I'll join you.

KINKLE

Didi, I forbid it!

DIDI

What did you say?

Kinkle lowers his gaze.

KINKLE

Nothing, dear; have fun.

Didi wraps her arms around Wes' waist.

DIDI

And I can be of assistance. I assume none of you speak Crud.

WES

I don't know. Elliot, do you speak Crud?

Elliot shakes his head.

DICK

How about Hannah? Can she come along?

DIDI

What languages does she know?

SPARKS

Body language, and from what I've heard she's a cunning linguist.

Sparks and Dick spar. Wes intervenes.

WES
Break it up! Save your strength
for the Crud.

DIDI
When will you attack?

WES
We'll head out tomorrow, at 6 a.m.

DIDI
I wash my hair then. Can you push
it back to 6:30?

Disgusted, Wes nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE TO SCHLUB CAVE - DAY

Tanaka, Top-Top and Mr. Gushi wearily approach the same entrance the VN-13 crew initially entered. Tanaka spies the rusted Applebee's sign. Top-Top, unimproved, whirs and grinds. His dome light flashes red.

TANAKA
Look, Applebee's! We are saved!
Lunch is on me.

MR. GUSHI
I am starved. Hope Double-Crunch
Shrimp are all-you-can-eat.

TOP-TOP
Disneyland first opened in 1955.
The opening day crowd of 28,154
far exceeded management's
expectations.

The cave door slides open.

Sparks, toting a combination mini-gun and flamethrower, steps through followed by Wes, Dick and Elliot, all heavily armed. Didi is last.

TANAKA
Excuse please. We are only a
party of three. Would you mind
very much if we went ahead of you?

DICK

What the hell are you talking about?

SPARKS

And who the hell are you?

Top-Top's tethered head pops out, dangles at his chest. Mr. Gushi clumsily reinserts it.

TANAKA

We are the crew of the Dragon-1 spacecraft. I am Captain Tanaka, this is Mr. Gushi and that is what's left of our android, Top-Top. We are here for lunch.

DICK

My god! Not another crew.

ELLIOT

Did you encounter a dynamic energy ribbon in space?

TOP-TOP

The cube root of twenty-seven is three.

TANAKA

Possibly. Please ignore our android. It was badly damaged and is, unfortunately... How you say? Dumber than nori.

ELLIOT

So, you have no idea where you are or the time period.

Wes grabs Elliot's sleeve.

WES

Elliot, don't go down that road.

MR. GUSHI

What is problem?

DICK

Our science officer here harbors doubts about this being Earth.

Tanaka, Mr. Gushi and Top-Top break into hysterical laughter. Top-Top's head pops out again. Tanaka points to the Applebee's sign, laughs harder.

ELLIOT

Don't be so goddamned sure of yourselves! It's the year 5088 on this planet--bet you geniuses didn't know that!

WES

Look, the Applebee's closed three thousand years ago, so there's no Double-Crunch Shrimp for lunch. Forget about it.

DIDI

But if you like radishes, you've landed in heaven.

Tanaka and Mr. Gushi exchange anxious glances.

SPARKS

Skipper, you better fill these poor fellows in; they look pretty rattled. We don't want them committing Hare Krishna, or anything.

ELLIOT

Furthermore, they could be of help.

Wes hands Tanaka an automatic rifle.

WES

Do you and Mr. Gushi know how to use one of these?

TANAKA

Most definitely; have seen Al Pacino in *Scarface* twenty-six times.

Tanaka nods, accepts and examines the weapon. Dick hands one to Mr. Gushi.

TANAKA (CONT'D)

Still perplexed, though. We just arrive. Who are we to use these against?

MR. GUSHI

And why?

A Crud, boulder in hands, leaps from behind a rocky outcrop, smashes in Top-Top's dome.

TOP-TOP
 Beautiful, beautiful
 butterflies...

Top-Top keels over; his lights go out.

Sparks pulls the pin on a grenade, jams it down the creature's mouth, then kicks it down the proximal incline.

CRUD

The monster stands, attempts to cough up the grenade. Multiple rounds fired o.s. The bullet-riddled Crud explodes.

BACK TO SCENE

WES
 That's who, and why. Let's get going.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN TERRAIN - DAY

Weapons at the ready, the six men and Didi advance.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The following show the resistance encountered in attempting to reach the Crud's cave.

- A) Elliot and Wes fire rocket-propelled grenades at a cliff behind a group of Crud. The debris buries them.
- B) Sparks incinerates and mows down retreating Crud with the combination mini-gun/flamethrower. He presses a button on the brim of his helmet, firing the missile atop it. The recoil knocks him back twenty feet.
- C) Dick gingerly pulls and discards the pin from a grenade, accidentally drops it. Bitsy picks it up with her mouth, jumps onto the back of a Crud, jumps to safety before it explodes.
- D) The six men stand in a row. The four Yanks' guns blaze away. The guns of the incredulous Japanese are lowered, silent. Didi's hands cover her ears. Elliot stops shooting, steps away, turns his back and urinates.

The guns empty, Didi lowers her hands.

DIDI
Civilized men?

WES
Yes, of peace.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE OF HILL CONTAINING CRUD CAVE - DAY

Standing at the base of a thirty-foot-high, boulder-adorned hill, the men and Didi peer upward towards the summit entrance to the home of the Crud.

SUMMIT

Six energetic Crud carrying stolen weapons pour out, take defensive positions overlooking their adversaries, near the cave entrance. Several fire provocative rounds.

BACK TO SCENE

WES
We can't stand here in the open!
Quick, everyone, take cover behind
those rocks.

Everyone, except Dick, moves to the protection of a nearby outcrop.

ROCK OUTCROP/DICK/SUMMIT INTERCUTTING

WES
Dick! Get over here! Want to get
yourself killed?!

ELLIOT
Wes, in the heat of the moment you
probably didn't recognize it, but
you mistakenly said, "Quick,
everyone take cover."

WES
So?

Elliot condescendingly smirks.

ELLIOT
Quick is an adjective. You should
have said quickly.
(MORE)

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

An adverb was called for. Please
be more careful from now on.

Wes, purple with rage, head-butts Elliot.

Dick scratches his neck.

DICK

Does anyone care why I decided to
stand out here in the open?

TANAKA

Yes, please tell.

DICK

I'm tired of you all treating me
like a fool, so I'm going to prove
myself by doing something heroic.
I'm going to charge the summit
alone, kill Voot and end this
war... 'quickly,' if that is
grammatically acceptable to you,
Elliot.

WES

That's insane, don't do it, Dick!

SPARKS

Wes, let him go. We really don't
need him, or even like him.

Elliot rubs his bruised forehead.

ELLIOT

Sparks is right for once, Wes.
Dick is obnoxious, even if he does
use proper grammar.

SPARKS

And those crying jags of
his--they're insufferable.

Tanaka and Mr. Gushi nod in agreement.

MR. GUSHI

I only know Dick for several hours
and already despise him.

TANAKA

Yes, most sickening.

WES

Okay, Dick, we've talked it over
and agree you should give it a
try.

DICK

Really? Uh... okay then.

Dick shoulders his assault rifle, begins climbing up the
hill. After two steps, he stumbles, twists his ankle,
yelps in pain.

Crud dance about, amused at Dick's predicament. They point
their weapons downward, fire at him.

WES

What an asshole.

Dick cringes as a shower of bullets ricochet off
surrounding rocks, wounding him.

WES (CONT'D)

Sparks, fire a helmet missile up
there.

Sparks sulks.

SPARKS

C'mon, skipper, have a heart.

WES

Now!

Sparks raises his head, presses the helmet's button. The
rocket fires, thrusts Sparks backwards into bushes.

The rocket explodes, killing all six Crud.

Elliot peeks out from behind his rock.

ELLIOT'S POV

The summit smolders. Smoking Crud bodies bedeck it.

ELLIOT

Elliot turns to Wes.

ELLIOT

It's safe, you can save Dick now.

Wes stands, sighs, shrugs, runs half way to Dick. He
stops, looks at the summit.

WES' POV

Voot, ax in hand, stands at the smoky summit. Brenda, at his side, coughs, wipes her eyes.

WES

WES
Sparks, Elliot, the rest of
you--get out here.

They slowly comply.

WES (CONT'D)
This is it. I'm going to
challenge that headless bastard to
a one-on-one winner-take-all
battle.

DICK
Sounds good, you should do that.

WES
Shut up, Dick. Just lie there
like the worthless piece of crap
you are.

Dick cries.

Wes motions for Didi to come to his side.

WES (CONT'D)
Didi, tell Voot I challenge him to
one-on-one combat to the death.

DIDI
No need to.

WES
Why?

Didi points to the hill.

HILL

Voot storms downhill, wildly swinging his ax. Brenda is not far behind. In seconds Voot is within striking distance of Wes.

BACK TO SCENE

WES
Holy fucking shit!

As Wes reaches for his rifle, Voot's ax blade crashes down, cutting off Wes' left hand at the wrist. Wes shrieks, blood sprays.

DICK

DICK
Good! Laugh at me, will you?

BACK TO SCENE

Brenda, finally down from the hill, approaches her mother while Voot chases Wes in a circle.

BRENDA
Hi, Mom.

DIDI/WES INTERCUTTING

Didi folds her arms, focuses on the chase.

DIDI
I'm more than a little upset with you.

BRENDA
When aren't you? Say, who are the two new guys?

Wes stops, turns, kicks Voot in the groin. Voot moans, drops his ax. Wes unsheathes his knife, swipes at Voot, misses.

DIDI
They're Japanese astronauts.

BRENDA
They get caught in--

DIDI & BRENDA
The energy ribbon. Uh-huh.

BRENDA
The little one's cute.

Didi gives Brenda a dirty look.

DIDI
Brenda, one boyfriend at a time.

BRENDA
Okay, okay. Your hair looks nice.

DIDI
Thanks, I just washed it.

VOOT AND WES

Voot lunges at Wes, knocks him to the ground. He bellows; his long snake of a tongue pokes vertically from between massive shoulders.

WES' POV

Voot leaps high, crests, then plummets. His onrushing feet-first descent towards Wes' head is unstoppable.

Shots ring out o.s.

BACK TO SCENE

Brenda holds an assault rifle, smoke pours from its barrel.

BRENDA
Satisfied now, Mother.

ELLIOT AND SPARKS

Elliot and Sparks drag Wes out from beneath Voot's body. Dick, bloodied and aloof, limps to the scene but offers no help.

ELLIOT
You're the king of the Crud, Wes.

DICK
Took the words right out of my
mouth, Elliot.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN LAND - DAY

(TWO MONTHS LATER)

Construction activity abounds as the Schlub and Crud now peacefully coexist. Frames of buildings and stacks of bricks are visible.

Dick and Didi, hand in hand, observe the action.

DICK
Peaceful coexistence at last.

SLED

A Schlub rides past on a sled load of stones drawn by a team of Crud, whom he vigorously whips.

BACK TO SCENE

DIDI
Yes, and on our terms.

OPEN-SIDED TENT

Beneath the canopy, Wes, his nose broken, teeth missing and hand replaced by a hook, stands at a draftsman's table covered with blueprints. He is accompanied by Kinkle, Sparks (holding Bitsy), Elliot, Brenda, Mr. Gushi and Tanaka.

Kinkle, confused, inspects the blueprints.

KINKLE
Again, why are we building a football stadium instead of a hospital or schools?

WES
It's a matter of priorities. Not everyone needs a school or hospital, whereas football is universally loved. Plus, it creates jobs for parking attendants, hot dog vendors and janitorial workers. Get it?

Kinkle, still unconvinced, rubs his chin.

KINKLE
And the brewery? And the strip club you described? They go right next door to the stadium? I don't know about that.

WES
Don't make waves, Kinkle. It's the foundation of modern urban planning.

Elliot shakes head, looks down.

ELLIOT'S POV

A small square, metallic object lies by the toe of his boot.

BACK TO SCENE

Elliot reaches down, picks it up, closely examines it. A knowing smile spreads across his face.

ELLIOT
My, my, my... this can't be Earth.

FADE OUT:

THE END

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)