

SUNSTORM

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EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

Fire rages across a molten, boiling sun. Flames rise incredible distances before falling back once more into the hellish surface.

A solar storm streams outwards, light speeding its way through space. Mercury, Venus then Earth hurtle past us. Towards Mars. The red planet grows ever larger until it dominates our view entirely.

INT. ALTUS LABORATORIES - HANNA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

HANNA ALTUS, 22, delicately pretty, lies curled up on an iron frame bed. Her long, single hair braid makes her look almost adolescent.

A hand shakes her awake. It belongs to an intense looking woman in her late forties. This is DR. DIANA ALTUS, her mother. The girl stares blearily up at her.

DR. ALTUS
(Exhilarated) It's time!

INT. MAIN LAB - NIGHT

Vials of amber lay embedded in a metallic cocoon. Dr. Altus inspects them.

DR. ALTUS
No time for more tests.

She presses a panel and segments of the device turn in opposing directions, drawing the vials inside.

DR. ALTUS (CONT'D)
Kyle told me his father suspects.

She slides the device inside a cannister. There's a click as the cover locks into place.

HANNA
(Anxious voice) You saw Kyle? Where is he?

DR. ALTUS
I wish I knew. I'm afraid something's
happened to the poor boy.

She strides over to a central computer and starts keying in instructions. A question appears: ERASE ALL DATA? She slams a hand down and the screen digitally explodes, shattering the virtual world inside. She taps a com-link device looped behind her ear.

DR. ALTUS (CONT'D)
Pilot, we're ready.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

An elevator speeds upwards. Light and shadow dance over the two occupants as it passes the floors. Dr. Altus, hand pressed to her ear-link, looks worried. She hits a button, bringing their ascent to a halt.

DR. ALTUS
Something's wrong!

She turns to Hanna.

DR. ALTUS (CONT'D)
You must be the one to do this.

The girl looks shocked then horrified.

HANNA
Mother! No!

She wraps her arms around the older woman.

DR. ALTUS
Remember what I taught you.

She gently pushes the girl away.

DR. ALTUS (CONT'D)
We must rise above selfish concerns.
You know what's at stake here.

She looks deep into her daughter's eyes.

DR. ALTUS (CONT'D)
Make me proud Hanna.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Glass doors slide apart. Dr. Altus, the cannister held close like a new born baby, steps onto the launch pad. A sleek craft is waiting for her. Its pilot however lies dead beside it, the back of his skull caved in. Blood pools beneath him.

PAUL KUBO, an immaculately dressed Japanese man in his early fifties, steps forward. He leans heavily on a silver wolf's head cane.

KUBO

Doctor Altus. Your pilot was about to leave.

His fingers drum the wolf's head.

KUBO (CONT'D)

I talked him out of it.

Two black suited henchman appear behind him. On one side is WEXLER, a sly, rat like man, on the other KRIVOY, a brutal, lumbering ox. Kubo rips the cannister from the woman and opens it. He finds himself looking inside an empty container. He hurls the useless item away.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Where is it?

The woman's eyes narrow defiantly. Kubo swings his cane, smashing it against her jaw. The scientist collapses to the ground, moaning softly. Kubo turns to his henchmen.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Find the daughter.

The men race off. Kubo looks down at the barely conscious woman, drawing a samurai style sword from his cane. He lifts the katana back with a practised, martial grace then brings it down in a lethal strike.

INT. HANNA'S SPEEDER - NIGHT

Hanna, tears rolling down her pretty face, hurtles through perimeter gates. Behind us we see the "AL" logo of Altus Laboratories. The cocoon device rests on the seat next to her.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

SAUL CLAY, 20, spiky blond hair and baby faced, is fixing the internal circuits of his cybernetic arm with a laser tool. He doesn't look happy.

SAUL

Come on lady! Give a feller break!

A digitised voice comes through his ship's intercom, cold and humorless.

MS. CRANE (O.S.)

Turn your craft around now Mr. Clay.

Saul finishes welding a circuit and flexes his machine arm experimentally.

SAUL

You ain't serious?

MS. CRANE (O.S.)

You've been deemed an undesirable.
You're not welcome at Solon.

SAUL

This about the unpaid docking fees?
I can explain.

MS. CRANE (O.S.)

I have no interest in excuses.

He closes the panel on his forearm and rolls his sleeve over it. He covers the cybernetic hand with a glove.

SAUL

Just let me drop my haul. I can make good.

He waits and waits, then finally.

MS. CRANE (O.S.)

You're carrying a shipment?

SAUL

(Indignant) Yeah.

Another inexplicable silence.

MS. CRANE (O.S.)
Very well, you may proceed. Stay
within the designated lanes.

SAUL
Obliged.

A sneer plays across the young man's lip.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

Saul's old, beat up craft dives towards the blue and emerald sphere that is Earth, skillfully weaving in and out of satellites. A space station glides over the horizon. The craft corkscrews around it before continuing on its journey.

INT. HEX ENTERPRISES - LABORATORY - DAY

We're deep underground, a windowless vault washed in a harsh clinical light. Kubo, flanked by SPECTER, a diminutive white coated tech, along with Wexler and Krivoy, inspects one of the cryogenic chambers lining the walls.

We catch a glimpse of something huge and humanoid behind translucent glass. Monitor lights drip down the sides like rain drops. Kubo holds a phone to his ear.

KUBO
Goldman says I'm finished?
Hell no, tell that tub of lard I'll
be at that god damn meeting.

He snaps the phone shut.

KUBO (CONT'D)
How's my boy doing Doctor Specter?

SPECTER
The gene binding process was a
success. He's ready.

KUBO
Good. (Smiling) Get him prepped.

INT. SOLON SPACE PORT - DOCKING BAY - DAY

BARBARA CRANE, 30, a tall, bony woman in a shoulder padded, androgenous uniform marches towards us. An insect like DROID creeps along beside her. Saul, leaning against his ship, gives Crane a nod of greeting. The woman ignores him, instead turning to her robotic assistant.

MS. CRANE

Impound it!

The droid stretches out a clawed limb and places a scarab device across the hull. Metal tentacles shoot outwards, spreading across the hatchway.

SAUL

My cargo!

MS. CRANE

Contraband, no doubt. We'll find out exactly what you're smuggling soon enough.

Saul runs a hand over his blond spikes.

SAUL

That's why you let me land. You set me up lady.

CRANE

You will kindly address me as Ms. Crane. As I said, you're an undesirable. One that needs to be dealt with.

Crane indicates the digipad she's carrying.

CRANE (CONT'D)

Everything's perfectly in accordance with port authority rules.

Saul snatches the pad from her, scanning the contents.

SAUL

You reckon?

Fighting off the official's attempts to reclaim the pad, he scrolls down the digital pages.

SAUL (CONT'D)

(Tapping a line) Here.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Twenty four hours lady.

Crane snatches it back, pretending to read the section.

MS. CRANE
Ms. Crane. It appears you're correct.
You have one day to pay your debts.
Then we take your ship. (Looking at
the droid) The craft remains sealed
until then.

She turns, striding away. The metal insect lumbers after her.

Laughter echoes close by. KANE, a large, brutal looking figure in corporation fatigues, is wiping down his sleek black fighter craft. He rubs his hands on the cloth, regarding Saul with amused contempt.

KANE
Your drunk, red neck pa would be so
proud of you Saul.

SAUL
Least I ain't sold myself to the
Corporate League Kane. Hear you're
one of their guns these days.

The big man stuffs the cloth in his belt and saunters over. A head taller than Saul, he sneers down at the other man as he taps the ornate "CL" lettering on his top breast pocket.

KANE
Still don't get it do you boy? The
League's the future. Won't be long
before they own the whole solar
system, Mars too.

He snorts.

KANE (CONT'D)
And those Novus liberals, with all
their crap about freedoms (a beat)
and rights, and their colonies on
Mars.

He shakes his head.

KANE (CONT'D)

They'll just be corporate property.

Saul shrugs, indifferent. He starts to walk away but Kane slams him against the side of the ship, hard enough to rattle teeth.

KANE (CONT'D)
I'm talking here.

SAUL
(Under his breath) Ass hole.

Malign pleasure floods the big man's features.

KANE
Time you learnt how to talk to your
betters.

INT. HEX ENTERPRISES - BOARDROOM - DAY

PRESIDENT GOLDMAN, dough poured into an Italian suit, is in mid address to the HEX BOARD MEMBERS. A gold droid stands either side him, ruby eyes scanning for threats. Kubo stands at the opposite end of the conference table.

GOLDMAN
And while I sympathise deeply over his son's recent death, I cannot overlook Paul's dangerous and increasingly unpredictable behavior anymore. The incident at Altus Laboratories proves my case. Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to vote. All in favor of dismissing the Vice President raise your hand.

Kubo taps his cane on the floor.

KUBO
(Sarcastic, aggressive voice) Sorry to interrupt here Goldman. But I believe I got a say?

GOLDMAN
Very well.

KUBO
I'll keep it short.

He turns his head to the side.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Send him in.

Doors open behind him and a huge figure, clad in high tech armor, strides inside. An oriental style, hellish mask covers the face but the reptilian hide on the exposed arms and neck show that whatever it is, it isn't human. This is the AMITAR. Specter, Wexler and Krivoy stand just behind it.

GOLDMAN

What's the meaning of this?

KUBO

The meaning Goldman is I'm tired of your bullshit. You've been holding me back way too long, holding the god damn company back too.

He taps the monster's chest.

KUBO (CONT'D)

But if you're referring to our friend here, this is an Amitar.

Goldman's jaw drops.

GOLDMAN

The assassin project? I ordered you to close that down. Highly unethical.

KUBO

Guess I missed the memo. Anyway, I finally perfected the prototype. a human- reptilian hybrid, stronger, deadlier, more resilient than anything on the planet. State of the art armor grafted to its body, even capable of generating its own energy shield.

He smiles.

KUBO (CONT'D)

You know what an Amitar is Goldman? It's a Japanese Kami, a death bringer.

The President's flabby jaw drops.

GOLDMAN

Guards.

The droids spring into action. One leaps towards the assassin but the monster grabs it, breaking the metal body into two before flinging the pieces aside.

The second droid advances, firing energy bolts from its palms. The Amitar hits a chest panel, creating a shield around itself. The bolts simply bounce off.

A katana blade slides from its arm and as the droid closes in the monster thrusts the weapon through its midsection then drags it upwards, cutting the metal torso in half. The droid falls away, spinning uselessly as its circuits explode.

Goldman falls off his chair and backs away. The Amitar follows, grabbing the fat man by the throat and lifting him into the air as if he weighed nothing. The monster looks at Kubo.

KUBO

Kill him.

It slides the blade into the president's fleshy body, drops the corpse and walks back its master, standing statue still apart from the rhythmic rise and fall of its armored chest.

KUBO (CONT'D)

(To the board) Seems we're missing a president.

DELORES BLACKMOORE, a large woman in heavy make up, plays nervously with the pearls at her neck. She glances at a BEARDED MAN next to her. The man nods.

DELORES

Might I propose Paul as the new HEX president?

She raises a hand, glancing around tentatively at the others. One by one hands go up. The vote is unanimous. Kubo smiles, a hand on his chest in mock humility.

KUBO

I'm touched. Now, to business. Goldman's lack of vision kept us a small biotech concern. Me, I plan to

make HEX the most powerful
corporation in the solar system.

Delores looks at the others.

DELORES

That's quite a bold statement Paul.
How do you propose we do it?

KUBO

We take Mars. We seed it with our own
modified, radiation immune crops
then we flood the system with produce
so cheap we take over the whole market.
It's also highly addictive, the
entire population would be dependent
on us. Think of it.

Lights flash on in the eyes around the table. No one's worrying
about moral implications.

BEARDED MAN

What of Novus and their colonies?
They're the ones who terraformed Mars.
They hold the legal rights to the
planet.

KUBO

The colonists are history. The
worsening solar storms have
destroyed most of their settlements.
There used to be twenty million on
that planet, now, barely five.

He grins.

KUBO (CONT'D)

And these storms, they're part of
some kind of solar cycle. Turns out
they've been building towards a god
damn tsunami. A real son of a bitch.
It's going to hit real soon and when
it does it'll wipe them out.
(Snapping his fingers) That's when we
move in.

DELORES

But the Corporate League. They've placed Mars under sanction.

KUBO

Who the hell do you think's backing this enterprise? The League wants us to help them consolidate their control of the entire system. We'll be the number one corporation, as long as we deliver. (Indicates the Amitar) And we're going to build an army of these things to make sure no one else muscles in on the action.

He regards the wolf's head a moment.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Trust me people, Mars is ours. There's just one loose end I have to tie up first.

INT. SOLAN SPACE PORT - BAR - DAY

A petite figure walks into the smoky bar, cap pulled low over her face. We see just enough to recognize Hanna Altus. Saul, now sporting a black eye, sits friendless at the bar, head bowed. In contrast to the rest of the amiable, beer swilling patrons he sips an orange juice in solitude.

Hanna stops, fear on her delicate features. She scans dozens of unsavory faces before her attention rests on a figure seated in the corner. We recognise this individual as well, it's Kane. Shaking, she approaches.

HANNA

Mr. Kane isn't it? I'd like to employ your services.

The big man takes a gulp of his beer then belches. Hanna's nose wrinkles in disgust.

HANNA (CONT'D)

I can pay you well.

KANE

(Grabbing her arm) I bet you can.

HANNA

Please, let go.

He pulls her onto his knee. She gives a cry, making Saul turn round.

KANE

Let's get a better look at you sweet thing.

He pulls her cap off, revealing Hanna's long braid. He runs a hand down her cheek. Saul looks around, hoping someone, somewhere is going to do something.

KANE (CONT'D)

What's your name?

He presses his face close to hers.

KANE (CONT'D)

I said, what's your name?

Saul realizes no one's going to do a damn thing. He goes back to his drink, knuckles whitening around his glass.

KANE (CONT'D)

Answer me girl.

Saul turns round.

SAUL

Why don't you leave the girl be?

KANE

(Turning to Saul) Didn't I teach you about that mouth of yours red neck? Sip your orange juice and keep quiet.

Laughter echoes round the bar. Red faced, he complies. But only for a moment. He turns back again.

SAUL

Don't reckon I can do that.

Kane pushes Hanna aside and lumbers towards him. Saul jumps to his feet. The big man looks him up and down. He taps his jaw.

KANE

Try it.

He turns his head to one side. But Saul isn't biting. The big man pushes him in the chest, trying to provoke him.

KANE (CONT'D)

Come on boy.

He pushes him again, and again.

Saul lands a punch on Kane's jaw. It has no effect, the big man doesn't even flinch. He swings a second then a third time with the same lack of result. His opponent might as well be made of rock.

Kane grins then launches a sledge hammer punch that knocks Saul unconscious to the ground. The big man shakes his head in disgust then strides away. Hanna rushes over, kneeling down beside the prostrate figure. She taps his cheek, bringing him round.

HANNA

That was extremely courageous.

SAUL

(Slurred voice) Yeah?

She looks him over, chewing her lip.

HANNA

Might I ask your name?

The young man has to think for a moment.

SAUL

Saul, Saul Clay.

HANNA

Might I enquire Mr. Clay (a beat) if you possess a ship?

He manages to nod his head.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Then I would like to employ your services. Would you be interested?

Saul's eyes widen as he looks up at this angel of mercy. A grin breaks out across his face.

INT. SOLON SPACE PORT - ARRIVAL ZONE - DAY

Crowds swarm about an enormous, cavernous area. Corporate logos and ads flash everywhere.

A huge figure in cenobite robes and hood stands a full head over everyone else. Its movements are slow and powerful. It can only be the Amitar. Nobody gets in its way.

Two individuals, similarly garbed, accompany it. We recognize them as the sly, ratlike Wexler and the brutal ox Krivoy. Both sport tribal tatoos on their faces. Their eyes roam the area constantly.

KRIVROY
Frankenstein makes me nervous.

WEXLER
We need him.

He glances at his companion.

WEXLER (CONT'D)
You heard the boss. We can't let the Altus girl get away. We do, it's all over.

Krivoy throws his companion a questioning look.

WEXLER (CONT'D)
Something to do with that device she's carrying. That's all I know.

A uniformed OFFICIAL moves towards them. Wexler slaps his companion on the shoulder.

WEXLER (CONT'D)
Heads up.

The Official steps out in front of them.

OFFICIAL
One moment please.

WEXLER
Peace be with you officer.

KRIVROY
Peace be with you.

The Official studies the hooded giant through the visor across his eyes.

OFFICIAL
Your friend got a tongue?

WEXLER
A vow of silence. Regrettably he's forbidden to speak.

The Official nods, his attention still on the giant, studying the cloth wrapped across its face. He looks at Wexler, waving a hand over his face in a questioning manner.

WEXLER (CONT'D)
Novices must wear the cover until they earn the divine markings.

He indicates his own facial tatoos.

OFFICIAL
What are you, some kind of cult?

Wexler winces.

WEXLER
A term we abhor. We are members of the true religion, the Delphic Brotherhood.

OFFICIAL
And what are you doing here?

WEXLER
We seek passage to join our brethren on the Moon.

The guard's less than convinced.

OFFICIAL
Really?

He snaps a com-device from his belt

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Central, want you to run a check.

Wexler holds up a placatory hand.

WEXLER

One moment if you please.

He produces three plasticards, holographic images dance across their surface.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

These are our identifications.

He hands them to the Official.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

As you can see, our religious affiliation and status are registered there.

The Official studies them. Tiny lights flash in his visor as he scans the data and we witness a strange interplay of lights and images between the two devices.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

You might also note that our order enjoys protected status.

The Official gives a soft grunt.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

It would be unfortunate if I had to report we felt ourselves persecuted here. Your sponsors would be most upset.

The man hands the cards back.

OFFICIAL

Have a safe trip.

Wexler gives a deep bow indicating for Krivoy to do the same.

WEXLER

May Apollo be with you.

The official stands aside. Wexler ushers his two companions onwards. The guard watches for a moment then with a shake of his head walks away. Wexler taps a hidden ear piece.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

Mr. Kubo, the ID's worked. We've tracked the girl to Solon.

INT. HANNA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

We're in a prefabricated cubicle. A single bed, storage area, a chair and a small desk; that's it. Saul sits at the corner of the bed, Hanna tending to his injuries.

SAUL

You serious? A hundred thousand aurum?

HANNA

Everything I have.

SAUL

Damn! That's enough to get out, for good.

His eyes take on a far away look as she begins dabbing his jaw with a small towel. Hanna presses directly onto the bruising. Saul winces.

HANNA

There's a balm in this that will help the swelling.

She moves to a dark yellow mark on his cheek.

SAUL

So, how soon you fixing to leave?

HANNA

Immediately.

SAUL

Cargo?

Hanna turns her attention to his swollen lip.

HANNA

Only what I'll be carrying.

She inspects his face, checking she hasn't missed anything.

HANNA (CONT'D)

It will remain with me at all times.

SAUL

Sure. Where we headed?

Hanna chews her lip.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Need a destination lady.

HANNA
Mars.

SAUL
(Shocked) Mars!

He runs a hand over blond spikes.

SAUL (CONT'D)
You part of that Novus political
movement? The ones who want to bring
back democracy?

HANNA
Who I am isn't important.

SAUL
You know that planet's under sanction
right?

HANNA
Indeed, the purpose being to
impoverish and starve innocent
people who refuse to live in bondage
to the Corporate League.

Saul let's out a soft whistle.

SAUL
That's real fancy talk. But you want
to be banged up in a factory prison
rest of your days? That's what'll
happen you get caught lady.

The flame of fanaticism ignites in the girl's eyes.

HANNA
The life of every colonist depends on
me getting to Mars. And there isn't
much time. Days at the most.

Saul snorts. Hanna glares at him.

HANNA (CONT'D)

I assure you Mr. Clay, I'm telling you the truth. And I won't bow down to tyranny merely out of fear or selfish concerns.

SAUL

Guess that's where we differ. See, selfish concerns is about all I got. And they're telling me it's way too dangerous.

A range of emotions play over Hanna's features. Her eyes narrow accusingly.

HANNA

What an empty life yours must be.

Saul nods in agreement.

SAUL

Yep.

He winces, putting a finger to his lip. Hanna holds the towel out to him.

HANNA

Here.

Saul takes it sheepishly then stands up.

SAUL

Obliged.

He moves to the entrance but stops at the threshold.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Thing is, you're looking for a hero. And that I ain't. Fact, most folk round here consider me a loser.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

A dejected Saul shuffles along a corridor. Just up ahead four sections intersect. DA SILVA, a short man with a bad hairpiece steps out. His suit and the toothpick he has clamped between his teeth cry out small time gangster.

DA SILVA

Been looking for you Saul.

SAUL

Da Silva!

He turns to run but finds himself staring at a barrel chest. It belongs to KNOX, a thug with a nose ring like a bull. He pins Saul to the wall with a forearm to the throat.

DA SILVA

Where's my cargo boy?

Saul tries to answer but Knox's forearm is cutting off his air.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Knox!

The brute turns dull, bovine eyes on his boss.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Let the boy breathe.

The thug complies. Saul takes a sweet gulp of air, massaging his throat.

SAUL

My ship.

DA SILVA

What's the problem?

He stands, hands clasped in front of him like a pocket sized mafioso.

SAUL

No problem.

Knox applies the pressure again.

DA SILVA

Don't lie to me.

SAUL

(Gasping) It's been impounded.

DA SILVA

I should waste you right now.

SAUL

I'm working on it.

DA SILVA
Work faster.

He rips the tooth pick from his mouth.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)
I'm not what you'd call a patient man.

SAUL
I'll get your cargo.

DA SILVA
You better, and damn quick.

He points the toothpick at his captive.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)
Don't make me come looking for you.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH - DAY

A SECURITY OFFICER slams against the wall before collapsing in a lifeless heap on the floor. Wexler looks at the Amitar.

WEXLER
I like Frankenstein. He does exactly
what you tell him.

He studies Krivoy for a moment.

WEXLER (CONT'D)
You could learn something. (To the
Amitar) Watch the entrance.

The monster complies, almost filling the entire doorway with its imposing bulk. Wexler goes over to the large computer console on the desk and starts typing. Digital words drift across his eyes. After a moment he pauses.

WEXLER (CONT'D)
We got two matches.

He turns to Krivoy.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

Females travelling alone, no ID's,
arrived last night.

He nods to himself, satisfied.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

Let's go.

INT. DOCKING BAY - DAY

Saul, face baked in perspiration, works the locking device on his ship. It isn't going well. Using the fingers of his artificial hand he feels around the underside. The tentacles begin to writhe, threatening to sink into the hull. One catches round his wrist, making him releases his grip. As he does it uncoils.

He tries again, much more tentatively, testing every position until we hear a click. The cover comes loose. He rotates it in alternate directions, working it free before he removes it.

A warning light flashes.

SAUL

Damn!

The device beeps a continuous warning. Saul glances around nervously before plunging his metal fingers into the inner workings. He manipulates the circuits, freeing and reattaching them in new routines.

The beeping grows louder. He rips a tiny battery loose and the noise stops. He breathes a sigh of relief.

Footsteps echo down the chamber. Saul starts to replace the lid but it drops from his hand.

SAUL (CONT'D)

(Hushed tones) No, no, no!

He snatches it up and tries again.

The footsteps grow louder.

Finally he manages to make the cover stay on but is unable to click it into place. He dives under his craft just in time.

Barbara Crane approaches, hands clasped behind her back, her sour face peering left and right as she tries to locate the source of the disturbance. She stops in front of the ship, sniffs, then continues on.

Saul watches her go with anxious eyes.

INT. DA SILVA'S QUARTERS - DAY

Saul lays a crate in the middle of the office. Da Silva, expression implacable, sits perched on the edge of his desk.

DA SILVA

Open it.

The young man runs a hand under the lid and undoes a seal. He slides it aside. Inside are row upon row of cigars.

SAUL

Five thousand Cuban. Real expensive,
real illegal.

Da Silva nods.

DA SILVA

You have no idea.

The mob boss snatches a handful of the cigars and crushes them over a dish on his desk. Dark powder piles up. He takes a pinch and snorts it. His eyelids flicker as a euphoric smile spreads across his face.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

That's top quality dust.

He laughs.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Every junkie in Solon will be
queueing up for this stuff.

He turns to Knox.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Try some.

The brute takes a couple of snorts. A moment later he begins to sway, laughing moronically as his nose ring swings back and forth.

Saul looks at the two men in disbelief.

SAUL

You had me smuggling dust?

Da Silva shrugs.

DA SILVA

We needed a dumb hick. You fitted the bill.

Saul's not impressed.

SAUL

That so?

Muscles dance in his cheek.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Pay me my aurum. I'm out of here.

Da Silva regards him with something approaching pity.

DA SILVA

You know, despite being the son of that no good bum Cyrus Clay, you actually did alright boy.

He sighs.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Pity.

He glances at Knox.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Make it quick.

Saul's jaw drops in disbelief.

SAUL

Hey!

DA SILVA

Just business. Can't use a stooge
twice.

Saul races for the door. Knox goes to stop him but he's too high. He makes a clumsy lunge that misses by a mile. He stumbles and falls against the wall. Saul leaps over him and out the door.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

The entrance lies smashed open. There's a snapping sound and a young woman falls dead in front of us, head at an impossible angle. The Amitar stands over her.

Wexler sits on the edge of the bed and starts going through her belongings. He pulls out some travel documents.

WEXLER

Susan Daniels, twenty seven.

His vermin features wrinkle in irritation.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

These aren't forgeries.

He throws the document aside.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

It's not her.

INT. GALT TALAT'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is a mass of papers, cards and data disks piled up against walls. In the center of it all, puffing on a long clay pipe sits GALT TALAT (60), an obese toad.

Saul leans on one of the piles, looking at the toad expectantly.

SAUL

Pa once told me they call you the
fixer, because there ain't a problem
you can't fix.

He shakes his head.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I got big trouble Mr. Talat.

The toad regards Saul with artificial, luminous red eyes.

GALT

And what is it you think I can help
you with?

SAUL

I need a cargo.

He touches a hand to his lip as he speaks.

Galt puffs meditatively on his pipe, breaking off when a fit
of coughing overtakes him.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Any haul so long as I can high tail
it out of here right now.

Galt clamps his pipe between his teeth and turns to his computer
monitor. Bloated fingers play across keys built into the desk.
A holographic, old style ledger appears in front of him.

GALT

There's very little here I'm afraid
my boy.

He smacks his lips.

GALT (CONT'D)

Very little indeed.

Saul's elbow slips from its resting place.

SAUL

You got to have something.

GALT

I'm afraid not.

The young man approaches, attempting to gain a better look. Galt
closes the ledger.

GALT (CONT'D)

Confidential, I'm sure you
understand.

He slides the pipe from his mouth and taps it meditatively on
his cheek

GALT (CONT'D)

Come back tomorrow, maybe I'll have something for you then.

Saul's eyes narrow.

SAUL

Tomorrow I'll be road kill. What's really going on here?

The toad gives an innocent shrug.

GALT

Nothing, I assure you.

SAUL

Bull!

Galt squirms a little.

GALT

Very well. You've made some powerful enemies. I help you, those enemies could become my mine.

He breaks into a fit of coughing again.

SAUL

Da Silva!

Galt nods.

GALT

Da Silva.

Saul snaps his fingers.

SAUL

A loan!

Galt stares at him blankly.

GALT

A loan?

SAUL

Sure, just enough to clear my debt.

Galt tries a smile that doesn't quite work.

GALT
An excellent idea.

SAUL
And I pay you back next haul. What do
you say?

Galt lets out a long, melancholic sigh.

GALT
If only business wasn't so slow at the
moment.

Saul glances at the packed ledger then at the toad's expensive
rings.

SAUL
Right.

Galt waves his pipe.

GALT
There must be someone who can help you
my boy. A friend perhaps. Or an
individual you trust.

The young man's expression darkens.

SAUL
No, no-one.

GALT
A see. But you're a resourceful young
man, surely you can think of some way
out of your predicament.

Saul licks his swollen lip then goes to dab it with the towel.
He stops, holding it up in front of him. His eyes widen as
something does indeed occur to him.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HANNA'S QUARTER'S - DAY

Saul hammers on the door. After a moment the red sensor changes
to green and the panel slides open. Hanna regards him with
surprise then hostility.

SAUL
Hi.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Saul hurries along a labyrinthine corridor, glancing nervously about him all the time. Hanna's a couple of steps behind, clutching a heavy canvas bag close to her chest. Her eyes are narrowed, suspicious. Suddenly she stops.

Saul glances back at her.

SAUL
Something wrong?

HANNA
I'm not sure I can trust you Mr. Clay.

SAUL
What?

HANNA
You're a man motivated by selfish concerns if you recall. Why do you suddenly wish to help me?

The young man shrugs.

SAUL
Change of heart is all. That okay with you?

Hanna shakes her head.

HANNA
No, it is most certainly not.

She takes a couple of steps back.

HANNA (CONT'D)
I believe you wish to kidnap me. Hand me over to HEX.

Saul glances nervously along the corridor.

SAUL
That's plumb crazy.

HANNA
On the contrary, it makes perfect sense. You realized you could make a

far easier profit by betraying me to Paul Kubo. How much did he offer you?

Saul grits his teeth in frustration.

SAUL

Lady, I don't know any feller named Kubo and I sure as hell didn't sell you out. Truth is I need to get out of Solon bad as you.

Hanna raises a quizzical eyebrow.

HANNA

And why's that?

SAUL

Let's just say it wouldn't be real healthy me hanging round here any longer.

The girl sniffs.

HANNA

So, you're acting out of self interest.

SAUL

Yep.

Saul motions ahead.

SAUL (CONT'D)

So, can we go now?

Hanna regards him like a bad smell under her nose.

HANNA

Very well.

INT. HANNA'S QUARTERS - DAY

The Amitar rips steel door panels apart like paper. Wexler slides past him, going directly to the frame bed and running a hand underneath it.

Krivoy enters next, rifling through a storage area built into the wall. It's empty. Wexler gets to his feet, rubbing a hand over his rodent features.

WEXLER

She's gone! So's the device.

He slaps Krivoy across the chest, making the other man wince.

WEXLER (CONT'D)

Docking bay, now!

He races out the room.

INT. DOCKING BAY - DAY

Barbara Crane regards Saul with ill concealed loathing as she taps the virtual keys on her note pad. The insect droid stands next to her. Red compound eyes regard the humans impassively.

SAUL

So, we can go right?

He takes a step towards his ship but the metal insect glides in front of him, extending a clawed limb towards the locking device.

A metal claw taps the cover, causing it to fall to the ground. It reaches inside and plucks some loose wires from the interior. It holds them up for Crane to inspect. There's a gleam in the official's eye as she turns to Saul.

CRANE

Well, well. Most irregular.

Saul holds his hands up.

SAUL

Hey, just hold on a minute here!

Crane inhales the victory deeply into her lungs.

CRANE

Tampering with official property, a very serious offence.

SAUL

You can't hang this on me. Look, I got
to high tail it out of here.

Crane shakes her head, turns and strides away. The droid looks
at the humans for a moment before clunking after her.

Saul utters a despairing groan and squats down, head buried in
his hands.

Footsteps sound in the distance.

HANNA
Mr. Clay?

But Saul's lost in his own misery.

HANNA (CONT'D)
(Louder) Mr. Clay.

He looks up. Hanna points to something in the distance.

HANNA (CONT'D)
Do you know these gentlemen?

Saul looks out to see the pint sized Da Silva swaggering towards
them. Knox is with him.

DA SILVA
Didn't think you could run from me did
you boy?

He looks Hanna over.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)
Who's the broad?

He waves a hand.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)
Get lost!

Hanna glances nervously at Saul. Da Silva smooths back his
toupee, standing with stubby legs apart.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)
Won't tell you again.

Saul gives her the look of a condemned man.

SAUL
You'd best go.

The girl bows her head, walking past the two gangsters. Then suddenly she stops and turns.

HANNA
(Screams) Help!

The mobsters turn in surprise.

HANNA (CONT'D)
(Louder) Someone, please help us!

Saul takes advantage of the confusion to shoulder Da Silva aside.

DA SILVA
Get him!

Knox lunges for Saul but succeeds only in grabbing at his sleeve. The young man twists loose and darts away. He takes Hanna by the arm.

SAUL
Come on!

They race towards the exit but three hooded figures are approaching. We know who them well, Wexler, Krivoy and the Amitar. The rodent throws his hood down. A grin splits his ugly, painted face in half.

WEXLER
Hanna Altus. Mr. Kubo sends his regards.

SAUL
You know them?

HANNA
No.

She backs away.

HANNA (CONT'D)
But they're HEX.

SAUL
Which is bad.

Hanna nods.

HANNA

Very.

They now find themselves trapped between the two groups. The mob boss regards the cloaked newcomers.

DA SILVA

Who the hell are you clowns?

Wexler smiles.

WEXLER

That isn't important.

DA SILVA

Not if you turn tail right now, I guess not.

He regards the Amitar.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

And take your monster with you.

Wexler's grin stays in place.

WEXLER

I'm afraid that isn't possible.

DA SILVA

You don't say?

His hand slides inside his jacket.

DA SILVA (CONT'D)

Then things are going to get ugly, real fast.

WEXLER

I situation none of us would want, I'm sure. Might I propose you simply let us have the girl?

Da Silva glances at Hanna.

DA SILVA

The dame? Hell, take her. I want the boy.

Wexler gives an obsequious bow.

WEXLER

But of course.

DA SILVA

Looks like we got ourselves an understanding.

Saul pushes Hanna to the ground.

SAUL

(Shouting) Da Silva, the big guy's going to shoot.

He dives to the floor beside her.

The mobster tears his blaster from his jacket and takes aim. Knox does likewise. Wexler draws his own weapon with practised, lightning speed. Krivoy fumbles to keep up.

WEXLER

(To Da Silva) Wait! The boy's trying to provoke us.

Krivoy, oblivious to the finer details, fires a bolt that rips through Da Silva's shoulder. The mob boss spins, clutching the wound. Blood pours between his fingers.

DA SILVA

Son of a bitch!

And now it's on. Suddenly we're in the middle of a shoot out. Energy bolts crisscross in a deadly display. Krivoy falls first, Da Silva placing a neat, smoldering hole through the center of his head. The gangster then takes aim at Wexler but the other man's too quick and blasts a hole through his chest.

Knox fries Wexler with a wide beam, sending him collapsing to the ground as charred meat. Incredibly he's still alive and takes the side of Knox's head off before the blaster falls from his blackened fingers.

Only one figure's still standing.

Saul looks at the armored, reptilian form of the Amitar, the robes now little more than smoldering threads hanging from it. The young man pulls Hanna to her feet and backs away. Incredibly the giant simply watches them.

Saul rips the locking device from the ship. The limbs writhe uselessly as he hurls it aside. He punches a code and the gangway descends. The two waste no time in racing inside.

Wexler reaches out a withered arm, grabbing the Amitar's leg.

WEXLER
(Dying) Stop them!

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Saul jumps into the command chair. His fingers whir over the controls, bringing the engines to roaring life. As he does something pounds the hull outside, shaking the craft. He hits the view screen and we see the Amitar pummeling the ship with its massive fists.

SAUL
We're out of here.

INT. DOCKING BAY - DAY

Thrusters blast the ship into the air. The monster sinks inhumanly strong fingers into the hull, securing itself.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - DAY

Barbara Crane, now stood inside a hexagon watchtower, stares in disbelief as the craft lifts into the air. She hits the alarm, causing a siren to blare out. The bay lights pulsate blood red.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Saul pushes forwards on a control lever, sending his ship rocketing upwards, smashing through the bay's crystal domed ceiling.

INT. DOCKING BAY - DAY

The monster's fingers tear free, ripping strips of metal away from the craft as it's thrown clear. It goes hurtling to the ground like a comet.

EXT. SOLON SPACE PORT - DAY

Saul's rickety craft shoots into the atmosphere. A laser cannon turns, tracking their trajectory. It fires two plasma spheres after them.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

The young man frantically works the controls.

SAUL
What was that thing?

A badly shaken Hanna stares at the ground.

HANNA
An Amitar, at least that's what Kubo called his assassin project. I had no idea he'd succeeded in creating the hybrid though.

Saul glances at the fist sized impressions in the hull, chewing a thumbnail nervously.

SAUL
Well, guess he did.

He shakes his head.

SAUL (CONT'D)
This Kubo's a real scum bag huh?

Hanna nods.

SAUL (CONT'D)
And I'm guessing he's not real keen on you helping the colonists?

HANNA
(Subdued tone) No.

Two blips appear on the view screen, quickly closing on their position.

SAUL
Damn!

Hanna looks up.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Plasma spheres. Guess Solon don't
like folks running out on them. Hang
on.

He lurches the ship onto its side, letting the nearest missile
race by, bathing them in blinding light as it does. No sooner
is it passed than he rolls the craft the other way, narrowly
avoiding the second attack.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

Way out in front the two energy spheres slow, halt then come
hurtling back towards them.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Hanna gasps, hands to her mouth. Saul's jaw drops like an anchor.
He pulls the craft up just in time. The bolts shoot passed yet
once again they slow, correcting their course before coming back
at them.

SAUL
Got to lose these things!

He taps a fist against his chin, his mind racing.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Think you dumb hick.

His attention falls on two intertwining cables running beside
his controls. His expression brightens. He slams a lever sharp
left.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The craft veers aside, slow enough to draw one of the energy
bolts with it. Immediately it lurches in the opposite direction,
dragging the second missile behind. As the ship continues the
two spheres weave back and forth across its trajectory like a
double helix.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Saul watches closely. The bolts' trajectories grow closer
together each pass they make.

SAUL
Any moment!

The spheres swing outwards and as they do he powers forward.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The two spheres crash together, creating an azure star that explodes into the ether.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

The young man collapses back into his control chair. A deep sigh of relief escapes his lips.

INT. SOLON DOCKING BAY - DAY

The warning alarm continues to blare. Wexler's melted face sneers contempt at the SECURITY GUARDS surrounding him. They move in, weapons trained, yet even as they do his eyes close in death.

INT. KUBO'S OFFICE - DAY

Kubo sits at the edge of his desk, leaning on his cane. His knuckles whiten around the wolf's head.

KUBO
My boy failed Doctor.

He jabs a fingers into the distance.

KUBO (CONT'D)
Hanna Altus is hurtling across space
as we speak.

He slides off his desk.

KUBO (CONT'D)
Heading straight to Mars with that
god damn device. If the board knew
about this I'd lose their confidence.

He takes a couple of steps towards Specter, glaring down at the little man.

KUBO (CONT'D)

If the League found out I'd be a dead man. Give me a reason not to waste you right now.

Specter licks his lips nervously.

SPECTER

Well sir (a beat) because perhaps all is not lost.

Kubo raises a quizzical eyebrow.

KUBO

Go on.

Specter slides a digipad from under his arm and begins drawing down a series of files.

SPECTER

It occurred to me that our prototype was somewhat limited. So I took the liberty of making a modification before we sent it out.

KUBO

Without telling me?

SPECTER

I'm afraid it slipped my mind sir. I apologize.

Specter's fingers play over the keys.

SPECTER (CONT'D)

Please.

He holds up what looks like a humanoid schematic.

KUBO

What am I looking at?

SPECTER

An interface between us and the Amitar. You see I realized the perfect assassin would continually need to upgrade its skills. At present our prototype can do little

more than follow basic commands. But we can change that.

KUBO
You can upload into it?

SPECTER
Exactly.

Kubo's murderous expression softens.

SPECTER (CONT'D)
Not to the degree I'd like I'm afraid. The device is still a very crude design. But we should be able to make the Amitar autonomous. And we can also upload a piloting programme. It will be able to fly a ship.

Kubo nods approvingly.

KUBO
Do it!

The little scientist works frantically importing and exporting countless programme commands, trillions and trillions of bytes. Finally he's finished.

SPECTER
It's done.

KUBO
Good.

He lays his cane on the scientist's shoulder.

KUBO (CONT'D)
You just bought yourself a little more time.

INT. SOLON DOCKING BAY - DAY

The port is swarming with security. Kane, ear pressed to a communication device, paces up and down outside his ship.

KANE
I'm sorry Mr. DeLeon. The whole place is locked down.

An angry voice blares at him.

KANE (CONT'D)
Yes sir, I do value my League status.
But what can I do?

He listens to the ill tempered reply.

Close by we see a monstrous form stand up. The Amitar turns and looks in his direction. DROID GUARDS rush over to it. The assassin strides towards Kane, swatting them aside like insects.

KANE (CONT'D)
Some shoot out, right here in the
docking bay.

The Amitar approaches. The big man doesn't notice until it's right behind him. A scowl crosses his face.

KANE (CONT'D)
Just a minute.

He turns, fists clenched. All thoughts of an altercation fade however as he finds himself face to face with the armored giant. The monster looks from the ship back to Kane. It reaches a hand out and snaps the man's neck like a toothpick.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Saul finishes punching coordinates and slumps back in his command chair. Hanna, pale faced yet relieved, visibly relaxes.

HANNA
How long should it take?

SAUL
Couple of hours. Got to go round the
Amor field.

The girl's eyes widen.

HANNA
A detour, why?

SAUL
Keep a low profile. Ain't fixing on
any more scrapes.

She's silent, thoughtful for a moment, regarding her companion.

HANNA

Most sensible.

She runs a critical eye over the ship's interior, her lip curling disapprovingly as she does. The place is old, beat up, resembling an ill kept bachelor pad as much as it does a ship's interior. She gives a slight, involuntary shudder then recollects herself.

She opens the canvas bag and slides the cocoon device out. She inspects the digital readings along the side, muttering technical terms under her breath.

Saul watches for a moment then snatches something up from under his seat. It looks to our untrained eye like a mini death star. He pops his arm panel, removes the laser tool and begins working on it.

Hanna performs a couple more checks then replaces the cocoon.

SAUL

Music.

Suddenly the ship's filled with the lilt of classical tones. Hanna's surprised to say the least.

HANNA

You listen to Mozart?

She waves a hand around as if the sound waves had some tangibility. Saul nods without looking up.

HANNA (CONT'D)

I never imagined.

She studies him for a moment.

HANNA (CONT'D)

May I ask how you ended up in this profession?

Saul continues working on the device.

SAUL

Bad luck.

HANNA

And the nature of this bad luck?

SAUL

My pa. Dragged me along with him since I was small.

HANNA

You inherited this craft?

SAUL

Yep.

HANNA

(Softly, to herself) I couldn't imagine such a mercenary existence.

Muscles dance in the young man's jaw. He places the device down. Arachnid limbs spread out under it and a ruby eye pops up on a stalk.

SAUL

Privileged rich girl like you. Reckon not.

The little device looks at Saul.

SAUL (CONT'D)

That feller back on Solon called you Hanna Altus. I heard of you. Living with your mother in that fancy complex of yours.

Hanna's cheeks color scarlet.

HANNA

How dare you!

The robot's ruby eye swivels towards the girl then back to Saul again.

SAUL

Just calling like it is. You got all these fancy ideals but you ain't seen life up close or what it takes sometimes just to survive.

His expression darkens.

SAUL (CONT'D)

And you ain't any idea what folk are really like. It'd turn your stomach.

HANNA

Spoken like a true misanthrope.

The little robot follows the exchange like a tennis match, its optic swinging back and forth between the two combatants.

SAUL

Guess I'm supposed to know what that means.

Hanna glares at him.

HANNA

I spent my entire life in that so called "fancy complex" working for the betterment of mankind.

SAUL

Waste of time.

HANNA

You believe that?

SAUL

Yep, because as a species we suck; we ain't nothing but nasty, vicious, selfish and mean. Don't matter what you do, you ain't going to change that.

HANNA

I disagree.

SAUL

Course you do, you're blinded by those ideals of yours.

HANNA

Tell me Mr. Clay, you've no ideals, no faith in your fellow man, what do you have?

The droid's ruby eye turns to the pilot.

SAUL

A hundred thousand aurum.

HANNA

And then?

SAUL

A little place called Hazard. Real poor, League's got no interest in it. Always wanted to buy a plot there and work the land.

HANNA

Alone?

SAUL

Just me.

HANNA

In other words, simply crawl under a rock and hide.

Suddenly the main console beeps. The little droid scampers over to its flashing light. Saul lurches forward, studying the readout.

SAUL

We're being followed!

The droid gives a frightened jump and scurries away.

INT. KUBO'S OFFICE - DAY

Kubo sits behind his desk, fingers steeped together. Before him, on the far wall are three enormous view screens. Distorted, digitised visages look out, each one diffused with a different light, gold, silver and crimson. We realize these can only be avatars.

KUBO

It's bullshit.

GOLD

You're saying no such device exists?

KUBO

Not anymore. I destroyed whatever Altus and her daughter were developing. I wasted them and then burnt their complex to the ground.

SILVER

And yet we hear of an altercation at Solon, possibly involving Hanna Altus herself.

CRIMSON

Who you claim is dead. It would be unwise to be anything less than candid with us.

GOLD

Most unwise.

Anger flares in Kubo's dark eyes.

KUBO

I don't care if your three families control the League. I don't take well to threats.

GOLD

We have invested a great deal in HEX, and in you personally Kubo. Do not let us down.

The screens fade to black.

KUBO

Pricks!

He closes his eyes, rubbing his lids as if to massage the pressure away. A message alert sounds. He opens his computer screen. SUSAN KUBO, a middle aged, attractive brunette is looking up at us. Mascara tears run down her cheek.

Kubo sighs.

KUBO (CONT'D)

This isn't a good time.

SUSAN

It's about Kyle.

Kubo's fingers drum the desk top.

KUBO

Susan, please.

SUSAN

I found his diary.

The drumming stops.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

It was encoded but I managed to decipher it. Paul, he knew he was in danger.

KUBO

From who?

SUSAN

He didn't say. But I've done some checking. His attackers, they were hired to kidnap him. I've ID'd one from the security footage.

KUBO

Take a sedative and lie down. You have to let this go.

She begins to sob.

SUSAN

I can't. What are you keeping from me Paul?

His com-link beeps.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Why wouldn't you let me see the coroner's report (a beat) or our son's body?

KUBO

I'm sorry. I have to go.

He wipes the screen and we find ourselves looking at Specter's egg like head.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Impress me doctor.

SPECTER

We have them!

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

Kane's dark, sleek fighter craft is coming up behind us. As it does side mounted laser cannons power up.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

SAUL
Know that ship.

He opens communications.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Nothing.

He bypasses some commands.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Let's try view screen.

The main viewer flashes into life. The two occupants find themselves staring back at reptile eyes.

HANNA
Oh my goodness!

SAUL
You got to be kidding me!

He slams the controls, speeding forward. The other craft pursues. It fires shots that blaze past them.

HANNA
Aren't you going to fire back?

SAUL
See any weapons on this crate?

He studies the charts flashing in front of him.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Reckon we got to go through the Amor
Field after all.

He traces the route with a finger.

HANNA
What is this Amor Field?

SAUL

An asteroid belt.

HANNA

(Alarmed) And you wish to plunge
directly into it?

SAUL

Nope, not really.

He rolls the craft around and plummets downwards at incredible speed. Stars begin to shine a little too brightly and wander across our view.

As we get closer we make out that they're mountains of rock and ice. A gigantic, diamond shaped boulder hurtles by. The field thickens. Saul weaves the ship through the floating boulders.

A HOLOGRAPHIC SIGN flashes up ahead of them.

MINING ZONE: - REGISTERED PROSPECTORS ONLY

SAUL (CONT'D)

That ain't good.

He plunges them through one of the "O"s of the soft light warning, then dives into the densest section, steering the craft into a corkscrew trajectory that sends it on a near collision course with a couple of dozen floating mountains.

The Amitar's craft follows less deftly, grazing and buffeting the rocks as it does. It opens fire.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

The craft rocks, throwing Hanna across the deck and into the pilot's lap.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The Amitar fires another volley, several of the bolts slamming into the ship. Saul dives deeper, zigzagging and twisting through ever more dangerous areas.

The black ship, unable to match the young pilot's skills, smashes into several boulders. Up ahead a wall of rock closes in front of them. Saul speeds towards it.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Hanna, still on Saul's lap, looks on fearfully.

HANNA
(Panicked tones) Mr. Clay!

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

Saul spins the craft, tracing an ever diminishing path until incredibly they find themselves on the other side. The Amitar's ship is less fortunate, plunging into the wall of rocks and disappearing from view.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

The girl claps her hands in relief. Saul gives a whoop of triumph. It's then they realize their compromising position.

HANNA
Oh, excuse me. I didn't realize ...

Something grabs the pilot's attention, just a few points of shimmering light up ahead.

SAUL
Crystal!

He swerves, quick enough to avoid a collision but still they slam against the side of the gigantic shard before they are sent spinning off course.

CUT TO:

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Saul, red faced and sweating like hell, hangs upside down out of a ceiling panel. He removes the laser tool from between his teeth and looks at Hanna.

SAUL
Try it now.

Hanna complies, pulling down hard on a control lever. We hear the engines roar into life. Saul swings down from the panel and strides over to the console.

HANNA

You have an impressive gift.

SAUL

I guess.

HANNA

A shame it's wasted.

She glares defiantly at her companion but he lets it go. He brings up an array of systems schematics, studying it.

SAUL

Still leaking juice. But we reroute what we got to thrusters, cruise the rest of the way on inertia. (A beat) Reckon we can make it.

He eases the ship forward. It drifts only a short way before a holographic message flashes up again:

ACCESS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. SECURITY MEASURES NOW IN FORCE.

Holographic chains shimmer into existence, joining together to make a chain link fence. Saul rubs a hand over his spikes, deep in thought.

HANNA

Can we go around it?

SAUL

Full crate of juice, thrusters at peak, sure.

He slows the craft.

SAUL (CONT'D)

We ain't got that.

HANNA

Then what do we do?

The young man shrugs. Hanna glares at him.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Surely you're not contemplating turning back?

The pilot brings the craft to a halt.

HANNA (CONT'D)

We must continue.

SAUL

Prospector's ain't the most hospitable folk. And one thing that gets their beard is trespassers. Don't want to find out what they mean by security measures.

The girl's eyes narrow.

HANNA

If you turn back now, then (a beat)
I will consider you a coward.

She folds her arms, nodding to herself.

HANNA (CONT'D)

A coward!

Saul arches an eyebrow, turning to her.

SAUL

Been called names most of my shitty life. Reckon I can live with that one.

Frustration boils up into Hanna's pretty face.

HANNA

For goodness sake! What will it take to make you do the right thing? You might not love your fellow man Mr. Clay, but are you really willing to let millions of innocent people simply die?

Saul slumps back in his chair.

HANNA (CONT'D)

You might wish to hide away but they're trying to build something better, a free and just society. Don't they deserve that chance?

Her companion's silent, lost in thought for some moments.

SAUL

Got a question.

HANNA

Yes?

SAUL

How can one spoilt rich girl save a whole planet?

Hanna's back straightens.

HANNA

That's not your concern.

SAUL

Reckon it is.

He nods to the device.

SAUL (CONT'D)

You built that thing?

HANNA

My mother and I did, yes. We call it the Obex.

SAUL

What's it do?

HANNA

You really wish to know?

Saul nods.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Very well.

She activates the cocoon. The segments open up, revealing the vials embedded inside. Hanna removes one.

HANNA (CONT'D)

The problem with Mars is that it doesn't have a magnetic field to protect it from the sun's radiation. At first it wasn't a problem for the colonies, they simply used biodomes. But the last decade or so solar activity has increased to fatal levels. The only solution is a global shield.

She holds the vial up for Saul's inspection.

HANNA (CONT'D)

The Obex holds ten of these. Each one contains two hundred million nano devices. Released into the atmosphere they will replicate exponentially until they form a protective cloak over the entire planet.

SAUL

How?

HANNA

By converting the solar radiation itself into an energy shield. Each device is programmed to absorb then redirect high energy particles outwards.

She slides the vial back into place.

HANNA (CONT'D)

At this moment the most lethal storm so far is building. The shield has to be in place when it hits.

SAUL

Sounds like a real tall order to me.

HANNA

If we fail Novus will be wiped out. And HEX will seize Mars.

SAUL

You real sure about that?

Hanna nods.

HANNA

Believe me, I know exactly what Paul Kubo is planning.

She blushes ever so slightly.

HANNA (CONT'D)

I was close to his son, Kyle. He told me everything.

She locks eyes with the pilot.

HANNA (CONT'D)
So, what's your answer?

Saul fires the thrusters into life.

SAUL
What the hell!

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The ship slides gently through the chain fence. As it does parts of our star filled vista are blocked out as something moves through space, tracking them. It's some moments before we make out the objects, spiked balls of iron.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Saul navigates through. His scanner picks up several massive objects close by.

SAUL
Place is crawling with mining
stations.

His eyes dart nervously over his view.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Got to go real slow, drift on through
like tumbleweed.

A soft clang echoes through the hull.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Hear that?

Both listen. We hear another clang, this one louder. It's followed by a series of similar sounds. Blips appear on the screen, dozens of tiny objects drifting towards them.

HANNA
Asteroids?

SAUL
Nope, area's clear.

He looks at the screen.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Besides, asteroids don't move like that.

HANNA
What does?

The young man's eyes widen with horror.

SAUL
Mines!

Half a dozen, metallic thumps ring across the hull.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The craft's hull is covered with explosive devices, choking it like some deep sea creature devoured slowly by sea anemones. A swarm of others are still descending on them. A red light flashes on each one, a countdown to detonation.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

A beat up cannister turns in space, gradually revealing the words "SAXON MINING" in giant red letters across the hull. The cannister, we realize, is an ageing space station.

A heavy duty craft speeds towards it. Behind, dragged along by a heavy cable, is Saul's mine covered ship.

INT. MINING STATION - DOCKING BAY - LIT

Saul and Hanna make their way down their craft's ramp.

A motley CREW of rough neck miners are waiting for them, all attired in similar heavy duty fatigues smeared with oil and grime. A lean, dangerous figure steps out in front. A livid scar runs down one side of his face. This is GOWER, the second in command.

Saul looks across a sea of hostile faces. This is most assuredly not a welcoming committee.

SAUL

Obliged for the rescue.

HANNA
Most kind of you.

She tries a smile that quickly withers away.

They stop at the bottom of the ramp. Gower regards them with predator eyes.

GOWER
I'm Gower, second in command. It was the chief who told me to haul your asses in.

He looks their ship over.

GOWER (CONT'D)
No idea why but I wouldn't thank him just yet.

Gower wipes a large work knife on his sleeve. Hanna edges closer to Saul.

GOWER (CONT'D)
Going to ask you some questions. Bullshit me and it'll be worse for you. You were trespassing on prospector turf, why?

Hanna looks to Saul.

SAUL
Someone was chasing us. Needed to lose them.

GOWER
You some kind of smuggler boy?

SAUL
Some kind.

GOWER
What you carrying, is it hot?

SAUL
Nope.

GOWER

What is it?

SAUL
Afraid I can't tell you.

Gower frowns, tapping the blade on his arm.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Or where we're headed.

GOWER
That so?

The tension builds. Hanna takes a deep breath and steps out from her companion's shadow.

HANNA
Mr. Gower, we owe you and your crew an enormous debt. If you'll allow me, I'd like to recompense you, quite generously. All I ask is that you let us be on our way.

SUSIE, a powerfully built woman in her early fifties gives a snort and pulls her cap back.

SUSIE
Looks like we hooked ourselves a big fish here Gower.

BROCK, a large caveman with a Cro-Magnon forehead, grins.

BROCK
Like the sound of that recompense thing. Means money, right?

HAYES, a stooped man, with weather worn features and a long grey beard nods.

HAYES
That she does, Brock.

Gower waves the blade in their direction.

GOWER
Search them.

Susie begins to pat down an indignant Hanna.

HANNA

Really, I feel I must protest!

SUSIE

Well, go right ahead then honey.

She finishes with Hanna then turns to Saul, looking him over like a tasty snack. She flashes him a smile then clamps one of his thighs, running it up his leg slowly. She stops just short of the groin then proceeds with the other leg. This time she cups him between the thighs. Saul gasps, going up on tiptoe.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

(To Gower) They're clean.

Gower nods to the craft.

GOWER

Brock, Hayes ...

Hanna grabs Saul's shoulder, powerful enough to make him wince.

HANNA

Mr. Gower, please! You're treating us like criminals!

GOWER

You are criminals. We take a dim view of trespassers in these parts.

Saul gives his companion a "I told you so" look. Brok lumbers over to the ship, followed by the stooped Hayes.

INT. SAUL'S SHIP - LIT

Hayes accesses the databank, working the keyboard.

HAYES

Wiped.

He pulls up a reboot function and a moment later the lost data flashes up. He squints, regarding the screen with rheumy eyes.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Well, I'll be (a beat) Mars.

Brock rips open the cargo hold doors; empty. He turns away, moving past Hayes. Then he stops, turns and pulls his companion out of the pilot seat.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Hey you ox!

The big man rips the seat out of the floor. There's a hidden compartment underneath. Inside we see the Obex securely stored. Hayes grins, slapping his large companion on the back.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Way to go you big lug.

He cups his hands to his mouth.

HAYES (CONT'D)

(Shouting) We got something!

INT. KUBO'S OFFICE - DAY

We're looking at a hologram of the Amitar, its frame slowly turning in mid air. Biosigns drift by underneath. They've flat-lined. Kubo paces around it.

KUBO

You sure you can do this?

SPECTER

Yes sir. The Amitar's entire nervous system is hard-wired into my Lazarus device.

He punches a series of keys into his digipad

SPECTER (CONT'D)

It should be quite a simple matter to reanimate it.

A series of chakras light up down the Amitar's spine. Specter smiles.

SPECTER (CONT'D)

Like so.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The Amitar's ruined craft drifts through the holographic barrier. Mines shudder and start to attach themselves to the craft's hull.

INT. AMITAR'S SHIP - LIT

Lights flicker, filling the interior with dancing shadows. Torn, ripped cables spark and twist like enraged serpents. Smoke drifts across the floor.

The Amitar lays motionless beneath a fallen metal beam, buried face down in debris. Energy suddenly arcs down its metallic spine, chakral spikes glow with building power.

Armored fingers twitch and it stretches out a powerful arm, freeing itself from the pillar. It does the same with the other limb.

Then it thrusts back its elbows and punches its fists into the floor. Huge muscles shudder beneath the reptilian hide. Incredibly it lifts itself up, dragging itself out from underneath the crushing weight.

The monster stands, surveying the extent of the ship's damage. It catches a reflection of itself in a steel panel. It walks towards the reflection, stops and meticulously dusts the wreckage from its arms and shoulders.

Satisfied, its attention turns to the flashing main screen.

We read: OUTER HULL DAMAGED - INTEGRITY FAILING. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE RECOMMENDED.

The Amitar hits the accept key. A message flashes up.

SEALING INNER CORE.

Then a second.

EJECTING OUTER HULL.

Mechanical locking sounds echo throughout the craft.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The mine covered hull divides into four sections and drifts off into space, leaving a small, needle like craft in its place. Thrusters fire and the tiny vessel speeds away.

INT. MINING STATION - CELL PIT - DIMLY LIT

We're in a circular shaped holding cell. The chamber's rusted, discolored metal walls give the impression of a medieval stone prison.

Saul squats down, leaning back despondently against a wall. Hanna sits next to him, her companion's jacket draped over her shoulders like a blanket.

HANNA

What do you think they'll do with us?

SAUL

Not much, least til they figure out who you are. Then they'll hand our heads to HEX for a fat reward. Along with that device of yours.

Hanna pounds her knee with a fist.

HANNA

My mother taught me that all people were innately good, they just needed the opportunity. But what I saw at Solon and now ...

SAUL

An eye opener ain't it?

She looks thoughtfully at the young man for a moment.

HANNA

Perhaps you were right, maybe my idealism has blinded me to certain truths about human nature.

Saul turns his attention to the cell's layout. His eyes move upwards to the crossbars overhead.

SAUL

Well, maybe a little idealism's okay.

He jumps to his feet.

SAUL (CONT'D)

And let's not give up just yet.
Like you said, a lot of good folks are
depending on us.

He pulls his trusty laser tool from his arm panel, clamps it
between his teeth and leaps up towards the overhead bars. He
just fails to grab hold.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Damn!

He tries a couple more times but the bars are just out of reach.
He runs a hand over his spikes then looks at Hanna.

SAUL (CONT'D)

How tall are you?

CUT TO:

INT. CELL PIT - DIMLY LIT

Saul grabs for the bars, drifting and staggering all over the
place. It's a moment before we realize he's sat on Hanna's
shoulders. Her petite frame buckles beneath his weight.

HANNA

Please hurry!

Saul grabs again. This time he catches hold.

SAUL

Got it!

Hanna collapses away beneath him as he swings his legs upwards,
hooking his feet around the bars.

He takes the laser from his teeth and slides it into the lock.
He adjusts the power then we see pulses of energy radiating
inside the locking mechanism.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Magnetized.

He listens carefully, adjusting frequency and intensity. Then
something chimes. Saul slides the device into another chamber
of the lock. He goes through the same procedure until we hear
a second chime.

He glances round at Hanna, grinning.

Suddenly the lock sparks, sending a crackle of energy snaking up his arm. Saul's eyelids flicker, his body slumps and he falls from the bars, crashing to the ground.

Hanna races to his side, lifting his head onto her lap.

HANNA

Mr. Clay.

She pats his cheek.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

Saul groans.

SAUL

Safety override.

His eyes open.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Hate those things.

Hanna strokes his hair, gazing gently down at him. She places a kiss on his forehead.

SAUL (CONT'D)

What was that for?

HANNA

For caring.

She looks him over.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Anything broken?

He moves an arm, wincing as he does so.

SAUL

Just bruised I reckon.

Hanna runs an eye over their dungeon.

HANNA

What do we do now?

SAUL

Try again.

Saul sits up but he's still weak and collapses back, chest heaving.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Or maybe just lay here a spell.

The girl smiles sadly.

HANNA

You're a good man. You almost convinced me otherwise. And you were right before, I can have no idea what it was like growing up as you did. (A beat) What was it like?

SAUL

Trust me, you don't want to know.

HANNA

But I do.

She takes his hand.

SAUL

Well, was with my pa long as I remember, mostly fixing things. Rest of the time I spent carrying him out of bars or pulling him out of scrapes. One night he pushed some real bad people. Got himself killed.

He lays a hand on his cybernetic limb.

SAUL (CONT'D)

And I lost this arm.

HANNA

How awful!

SAUL

I guess. Built this myself, works just fine, besides it's real good for hiding things.

HANNA

You've been alone ever since?

Saul nods.

HANNA (CONT'D)

My father died just after I was born.
An experiment I believe. My mother
and I, well, we simply carried on his
work.

SAUL

Just you and her?

HANNA

There was someone with us for a while,
Kyle. I told you about him before,
Paul Kubo's son. I thought I was in
love with him.

She gives a soft laugh.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Foolish really Mr. Clay. What would
I know about love? I've never even
kissed anyone.

They gaze at each other.

SAUL

Call me Saul.

Hanna leans forward.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Never kissed anyone huh?

Their lips hover millimeters apart.

SAXON (O.S.)

Hello down there.

A portly figure gazes down at them. With long tied back hair
and a large gold earring he looks like a pantomime buccaneer.
This is JACK SAXON, the mining chief.

SAXON (CONT'D)

I hope I'm not interrupting.

He places a hand to his chest.

SAXON (CONT'D)

I'm Jack Saxon, the station chief. I hope you fine people are okay.

HANNA

You threw us in this pit Mr. Saxon.

SAXON

An outrage darling, an utter outrage.

He puts his hands in his hips, shaking his head.

SAXON (CONT'D)

I'll have that rascal Gower flogged.

A smile breaks across his face.

SAXON (CONT'D)

But don't you fret. You're free now. In fact, consider yourselves my personal guests.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The Amitar's tiny ship moves toward's Saxon's station, firing the thrusters at the last moment, slowing the craft. It clamps onto the outer hull with a soft metallic clang.

The hatch opens and the assassin appears, force field shimmering around it. It seems impervious to the icy cold vacuum of space.

Its attention falls on a smoking port nearby. It crouches down and propels itself towards it. It catches hold and tears the port open, swatting aside the cables that come loose.

A column of superheated gas erupts, throwing the Amitar clear. The monster grabs one of the cables, holding fast until the stream dies away. Then it crawls inside.

INT. MINING STATION - REMOTE SCOUTING CHAMBER - LIT

A young, bearded TECH scans his screen as the remote droid he's working cuts into an asteroid. He works a hand held lever, guiding its every step. The droid lurches to the right.

TECH

Left, you heap of junk.

He grabs a bread stick from a bowl with his free hand.

A ceiling vent comes away just above him. The Amitar drops down. The Tech turns. At first we see nothing. Then the monster straightens up.

The Tech jumps to his feet, biting his bread stick in half. He backs against the wall. The monster walks towards him.

TECH (CONT'D)

Now wait a minute guy.

The Amitar reaches out, placing a hand either side of the man's head, and squeezes, hard. Blood runs from the Tech's eyes and ears. There's an egg shell crack and he crumples to the floor.

The assassin turns its attention to the computer. It freezes the camera and changes the settings. We are now looking at several compartmentalized images, each one a different area inside the mining station.

The monster enlarges one of them, the docking bay where Saul's ship is grounded.

INT. SAXON'S QUARTERS - SOFTLY LIT

The quarters are plush; chandelier, paintings and wood carvings. A thick, animal fur covers the floor. A wine rack spirals down from the ceiling.

Saxon, dressed in a silk waistcoat and hair gleaming with fresh gel, removes one of the bottles. He uncorks it, taking in the aroma. Hanna, perched on the edge of a large chaise lounge, watches him nervously.

HANNA

You're quite certain you can repair
our ship?

Saxon snaps his ring covered fingers.

SAXON

Like that darling.

He brings the bottle over and pours the wine into two goblets. The girl gives him a nervous smile.

HANNA

That really is excellent news. But,
I must confess; this all seems a
little(gesturing to the chambers)
well, excessive.

Saxon shrugs.

SAXON
I like the finer things in life.

He sits down next to her.

SAXON (CONT'D)
What did you say your name was
darling?

HANNA
I didn't.

The chief nods understandingly.

SAXON
That's right, you didn't.

He gestures for her to drink.

SAXON (CONT'D)
Please.

He takes a long drink from his own goblet, gazing expectantly
at his guest all the while. Hanna places the cup to her lips,
taking an obligatory sip.

SAXON (CONT'D)
To your health my girl.

He guides her elbow, encouraging her to imbibe a much deeper
drink. Hanna drinks again then places her goblet down before
her host can force any more wine on her.

HANNA
You're not quite what I expected from
a mining chief Mr. Saxon.

SAXON
I won this place in a hand of cards.

He nods.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Quite true my dear, I assure you. I'm not sure the life of the prospector suits me though.

He sighs.

SAXON (CONT'D)

It's a rather lonely existence out here.

He stretches an arm out, resting it behind Hanna. She edges out of its reach just in time.

HANNA

Mr. Saxon, where's my companion?

SAXON

He'll be with us shortly. Mr. Gower wanted a word with him first. (Waving a dismissive hand) Technical stuff I believe.

The girl begins to sway. She shakes her head as if to chase away the dizziness. She looks at her drink then at Saxon. The portly chief grins at her.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Just a little something to relax you, that's all.

INT. GOWER'S CHAMBER - LIT

Saul runs a tongue along the corner of his mouth, licking away a drop of blood. We realize he's tied to a chair. Gower stands over him, gloved hands tensed.

GOWER

I'll ask you again boy. What's the device you're carrying?

He crouches down beside his captive, the scar on his cheek glowing livid.

GOWER (CONT'D)

Saxon can smell the profit on you two. He has a nose for things like that.

Saul shrugs, saying nothing. Gower strikes him across the face again.

INT. SAXON'S QUARTERS - LIT

The chief runs a hand over his well trimmed beard.

SAXON
What's your name girl?

Hanna regards him with her unsteady gaze.

HANNA
Hanna Altus.

She gasps, placing her hands over her mouth.

SAXON
That wasn't so difficult was it?

He takes another gulp of wine.

SAXON (CONT'D)
And why are you headed to Mars Hanna?

HANNA
To save the colonists.

SAXON
You don't say.

He reaches down beside the chaise lounge and lifts out the Obex. He presses a panel and the segments slide apart, revealing the vials inside. He places the device on the table in front of them.

SAXON (CONT'D)
Now, why don't you tell old Jack all about this?

Hanna starts to speak but bites down on her lip, glaring back at him defiantly.

INT. GOWER'S CHAMBER - LIT

Saul's cheek is swollen, turning yellow.

GOWER

You're stupid, you know that?

He draws a fist back but his ear piece lights up. He presses a hand to it.

GOWER (CONT'D)

What? I'm busy.

He listens for some moments, his expression darkening by degrees.

GOWER (CONT'D)

I'm there.

He regards his captive, flexing his hand as if deciding on one last blow, then turns and strides out of the room. The door slams and we hear his footsteps fade away. Saul struggles with his restraints, picking at the knotted cords.

INT. DOCKING BAY - LIT

Two broken and bloodied CORPSES lay each side of the ship's entrance. The Amitar emerges, striding down the walkway. Gower and his men are waiting. Gasps greet the sight of the monstrous figure.

Each miner is armed with whatever they have to hand; a laser cutter, bolt guns, power drills and a whole host of heavy duty tools. Gower holds a bulky rifle that looks like its seen better days. He steps forward.

GOWER

Don't know what the hell you are.

He levels the rifle.

GOWER (CONT'D)

But take another step, I blast you where you stand. You killed three of my men.

Earl aims a large welding gun at the Amitar as he shuffles forward. He stops a couple of feet away, his old body shaking with terror.

EARL

Down on the ground.

Katana blades slide down from the assassin's forearms. Earl swallows hard. The miners glance at each other nervously.

EARL (CONT'D)

I'll ask you one more time.

The Amitar moves with lightening speed, slicing Earl's head off in a single swipe of its blade. The severed body part comes to a rolling stop at Susie's feet. She looks down at it, tears welling her eyes.

SUSIE

(Glaring at the Amitar) You're dead!

She fires super heated metal bolts at the monster but it deflects them with swipes from its blades.

Then it hurls one of the blades at Susie. The katana sinks into her chest. The woman looks down at the wound in disbelief before collapsing to the ground. The monster retracts the sword via a cable built into its armor.

The second in command recollects himself.

GOWER

Fire!

The Amitar hits a chest panel and the field goes up around it. Shots bounce off it like rain drops. Gower aims his own weapon, firing a shell which explodes against the massive body. The Amitar's unhurt.

GOWER (CONT'D)

(Looking at his weapon) This thing
can blast through ten feet of rock.

The monster moves forward, blades whirling.

EXT. EARTH - CEMETERY - NIGHT

A limo pulls up outside a large, Grecian mausoleum. A heavy set, black suited CHAUFFEUR jumps out and opens the rear door. Susan Kubo unfolds long, shapely legs and stands up.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

The Chauffeur pushes a marble cover aside, revealing an oak casket resting inside. He slides a crowbar from his sleeve and puts it to the coffin lid. He throws the woman a questioning look.

She nods for him to proceed. He prizes the top loose yet as it opens we're unable to see what's inside, to view what they do. Susan Kubo places a hand to her mouth, taking a deep breath as she fights to control her emotions.

INT. MINING STATION - SAXON'S OFFICE - LIT

Saxon paces the floor, listening to Gower.

GOWER (O.S.)

I'm telling you. This thing ain't human.

The chief opens a wall safe and takes out the largest weapon he can find, a hand held cannon. He turns to Hanna.

SAXON

What have you brought here girl?

INT. CORRIDOR - LIT

The emergency doors lay ripped open and the Amitar is cutting down the last of the miners as they retreat. Gower's firing yet as before his shells simply ricochet off.

And then he runs out. The monster strikes him with the back of its hand. The blow sends the second in command smashing against the wall with such force that he sinks into the metal.

INT. GOWER'S ROOM - LIT

Saul finishes working his bonds free. He throws the cable aside and rushes for the door.

INT. CORRIDOR - LIT

Saxon moves nervously down the corridor, fearful eyes scanning the area.

SAXON

Gower?

He steps through the crumpled doors and stumbles onto the scene of slaughter. Saxon crouches down by the shattered, broken form of his second in command.

He's lost in thought when the shadow falls over him. He turns and finds himself staring at the monster's armored chest. He swallows hard and looks up, straight into dark, reptilian eyes.

He swings the cannon around but the Amitar swipes it out of his hands. The monster grabs him, pulling him off his feet. Saxon finds himself hanging by his collar.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Wait!

Stubby legs tread air.

SAXON (CONT'D)

The girl and the lad. You want them don't you, and that device they're carrying? I know where they are.

His eyes roll upwards.

SAXON (CONT'D)

One floor up, the girl's in my room, red door.

The Amitar looks up then back at Saxon.

SAXON (CONT'D)

I swear to you!

The monster lowers him to the ground. Saxon breathes a sigh of relief as he straightens his attire.

SAXON (CONT'D)

So, my fine fellow. There's no real reason to kill me is there?

INT. CORRIDOR - LIT

Saul races down the corridor.

SAUL

(Yelling) Hanna!

INT. SAXON'S OFFICE - LIT

Hanna sits with her back against the door. Hearing Saul's voice she leaps up and hammers on the panel.

HANNA

In here! Saxon locked me in.

INT. CORRIDOR - LIT

Saul races towards the door.

SAUL

Stand back!

He launches himself at it. The frame shudders but doesn't give. He tries again to the same effect. He rubs his shoulder, wincing.

Then he tries a running kick. His boot crashes through the middle panel. He falls back, cracking his head against the ground. He curses, trying to work his boot free but he's stuck fast. Hanna rushes to help.

Footsteps echo down the corridor. A shadow looms on the wall, growing larger by the moment. Saul recognizes the figure all too well.

SAUL (CONT'D)

No way!

With Hanna's help he works his leg free. He rolls onto his feet and stretches out a hand through the newly made opening.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Got to go, right now!

HANNA

The Obex.

She disappears then returns with the cocoon in her arms. Saul pulls her through.

Just as the Amitar rounds the corner. Hanna freezes, the monster stops, regarding the device. Then it hurls a katana at her. The blade turns mid air, perfectly aligned to take her head from her shoulders. Saul pushes her out of the way just in time. The weapons sinks into the wall.

Before the assassin can wrench it free, the two are racing down the hallway.

INT. MAIN DECK - LIT

Harry, pale, sweating and clutching a blood soaked mid section, staggers along. Saul and Hanna slow as they see him.

SAXON
Everyone's dead lad. Got to get to the
escape pods.

Saul hooks an arm under Saxon's.

SAUL
Which way?

SAXON
Ahead and left.

The Amitar appears behind them.

HANNA
It's found us.

SAXON
Wait!

He hits a wall panel and a containment barrier slams down between them.

CUT TO:

INT. ESCAPE POD CHAMBER - LIT

Plastisteel doors slide open before them. Saxon wipes blood from his lips.

SAXON
Let me go.

He staggers through the entrance. As he does he snatches the Obex from Hanna and seals himself shut on the other side.

SAUL
Saxon, you rattlesnake.

SAXON

Could never let a profit slide lad.
Sort of a weakness of mine. (Holding
the device up) And I know whatever
this is, it's going to make me a very
rich man.

He coughs, blood running from his mouth. He looks almost
apologetic.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Feel bad leaving you kids though.
Thing is, only one escape pod works.

He taps his chest.

SAXON (CONT'D)

And I plan to be in it.

Four hatches run the length of the curved wall. He staggers to
the first, working the controls. It doesn't respond.

SAXON (CONT'D)

(Muttering to himself) Forget which
one.

He coughs again, this time doubling up in pain. In the distance
the Amitar moves towards us. Saul hammers on the plastisteel.

SAUL

Saxon!

It's some moments before the mining chief has the strength to
try the second pod. This one too is out of action. He utters
a soft curse and collapses, sliding down the wall. He leaves
a river of blood in his wake. He looks up at Saul.

SAXON

Think I'm finished lad.

SAUL

Then help us god damn it!

Hanna glances back at the approaching monster.

HANNA

Don't let us die out here Mr. Saxon,
I beg you!

The chief flashes her a smile. Then crawls across the floor. As he gets to the entrance he reaches up and pulls a lever. Red lights flash, sirens wail and a countdown begin.

SAXON

You got ten minutes before the station blows.

He slams his blood soaked palm against the door controls. The panels slide apart. Saul and Hanna race inside before they close again.

Saul works the controls on the third hatch. It powers up for a moment then falls flat. Saxon, growing weaker by the moment, watches the scene with serene detachment.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Never paid much attention to maintenance.

Saul takes a deep breath and tries the final pod. This one activates. The interior lights up as the hatch slides open.

At the same moment the Amitar rips the plastisteel panels apart.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Might want to hurry.

The young man inspects the inside of the hatch then turns to Hanna.

SAUL

Inside.

The Amitar moves towards them. Saul snatches up the Obex.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Wait!

The monster slows.

SAUL (CONT'D)

You want this right?

It stops, regarding him with a slight tilt of its head.

HANNA

Saul, no.

SAUL

(Whispering) Inside. Got to trust me.

Hanna complies, watching the Amitar every step of the way. Saul opens the cocoon segments and removes a vial from the device. He slips it into the panel of his prosthetic arm. Then he hurls the device.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Here.

The monster catches the Obex, turning the device over as it inspects it. Saul uses the moment to jump into the pod beside Hanna, sealing the hatch shut.

INT. ESCAPE POD - LIT

The panel closes behind them. Dozens of tiny lights flicker around the vessel. Hanna throws him an accusing look. He pops the panel on his forearm, revealing the vial resting securely inside.

SAUL

Should be enough right? You said
these devices replicate themselves.

The assassin's demonic visage appears in front of them. Saul taps a series of controls.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Mars course laid in.

The pod clangs and starts to disengage.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Hang on to something.

The girl grabs Saul, holding him close. The pod breaks from its mooring. Through the port window we see space unfold before us.

INT. ESCAPE POD CHAMBER - LIT

As the siren blares in the background the Amitar checks the useless escape pods. Harry chuckles. The monster turns and regards the dying station chief.

SAXON

End of the line you big, ugly, foul
smelling brute.

His eyes close.

SAXON (CONT'D)

See you (a beat) in hell.

His head slumps to his chest. The Amitar looks upwards, as if seeing through to the upper floors.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The escape pod rockets through space.

INT. MINING STATION - CORRIDOR - LIT

The monster, the Obex under one arm, moves as quickly as its massive frame will allow, striding along the corridor. It turns and enters an open door.

INT. REMOTE SCOUTING CHAMBER - LIT

It stops underneath the open ceiling panel where it first entered and leaps straight upwards, disappearing inside.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The monster dives into its tiny ship. A moment later the craft blasts off. The station explodes behind it, a ring of energy expanding outwards. The ship races away but not fast enough. The hull melts as the super heated blast engulfs it and what looks like a blob of molten goo goes spinning wildly into the void.

INT. ESCAPE POD - LIT

The pod's lighting flickers and down the sides control lights start to wink out. Saul rips open the panel and peers inside. It's a mess, frayed, worn and burnt out cables and wires, dripping with ooze and slime. Bizarre centipede like creatures writhe around in the filth.

SAUL

That lazy varmint wasn't fooling
about maintenance. This rust bucket
ain't taking us nowhere.

CUT TO:

INT. POD - LIT

Ice covers the port window. Their breaths are clouds of ice
particles. Frost is spreading everywhere, skin, hair, eyebrows.

On the horizon the small red disk of Mars appears. The pod though
is taking them past it.

HANNA

So beautiful.

She shivers. Saul holds her close.

HANNA (CONT'D)

How long have we got?

SAUL

Without life support? Another hour,
maybe less.

HANNA

It's getting hard to breath.

SAUL

Cold will finish us before we run out
of air.

He lifts her head and kisses her, long and tenderly. As he does
he undoes her braid so that her hair billows out a long,
luxuriant chestnut.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Never liked that thing.

HANNA

I don't want to die Saul.

He runs a finger down her cheek. Suddenly he stops. We can almost
see the light bulb appear above his head.

SAUL

Residual power.

He rips wires from a panel and begins re- configuring them.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Just enough maybe to fire out an SOS.

He finishes twisting the wires together. The SOS signal beeps in regular pulses. They embrace again, looking out at the red planet. The beeps grow fainter with longer intervals between them.

HANNA

You told me you weren't a hero. That's not true.

She rests her head on his shoulder, her eyes close. Saul too is growing sluggish. In moments both have fallen unconscious.

INT. MARS - NOVUS COLONY - MEDICAL LAB - DAY

Saul's eyes open. He sits up, looking around wildly. Hanna's laid out on a medical bed next to him. MAGNUS, an eccentric looking man with a shock of wild red hair regards him. He approaches, pulling a small flashlight from his Medical coat.

MAGNUS

Our ship picked you up just in time.

He shines it in his patient's eyes.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

My name's Magnus, head of (a beat)
well, what's left of our main colony.

Hanna groans, beginning to come to. He smiles down at her fondly.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

We've been expecting Hanna.

He replaces the flashlight.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

What of the device? We found nothing
in the escape pod.

His features betray deep anxiety.

SAUL

One vial.

Magnus heaves a sigh of relief.

MAGNUS

Thank goodness. We've got less than a day before the sun storm hits.

Saul pops his arm panel, showing him the container lodged inside.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

Ingenious (A beat). Incidentally, it seems you weren't the only ones to escape the mining station.

Hanna, who has now propped herself up on one elbow looks at Saul in horror.

SAUL

What!

MAGNUS

Yes, we picked up a small vessel. It was a miracle the occupant survived, I still don't understand how, the ship itself was almost completely destroyed.

SAUL

Who was it?

MAGNUS

Well it's most odd. The rescue team haven't reported back yet.

Saul grabs Magnus' arm.

SAUL

Then they're dead. Listen up, this whole base is in danger. What weapons you got here?

MAGNUS

We're pacifists.

SAUL

You got to have something.

MAGNUS

The processing plant. There's some heavy tech still there. Not much works though. The solar winds have fried most of it.

SAUL

Let's take a look.

MAGNUS

What's all this about my boy?

Saul swings his legs over the side of the bed.

SAUL

Name's Saul, not boy. I'll explain on the way.

INT. HEX LOBBY - DAY

The dark suited Chauffeur holds glass doors open as Susan Kubo strides through. Two heavily armed SECURITY GUARDS stand aside for her.

SUSAN

You can go.

CHAUFFEUR

Yes Mam.

He gives a bow and disappears.

The woman's high heels click against polished marble as she strides towards the reception desk. A heavily made up RECEPTIONIST greets her.

RECEPTIONIST

Good day Mrs. Kubo.

She picks up a phone.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

I'll inform your husband you're here.

SUSAN

Please don't.

The receptionist looks surprised.

RECEPTIONIST

But Mrs. Kubo, I have strict instructions.

The woman leans forward, whispering in an almost conspiratorial voice.

SUSAN

This is sort of a special occasion. I'd like to surprise him. You wouldn't want to spoil it would you?

The threat is more than clear.

RECEPTIONIST

No ma'am.

She replaces the phone.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Please.

Susan flashes her a smile.

SUSAN

Thank you.

She passes the front desk and halts in front of an elevator. A red blazered OPERATOR greets her.

OPERATOR

Good day Mrs. Kubo.

She nods to him as she steps inside.

SUSAN

Good day Karl.

OPERATOR

Lovely day.

SUSAN

I think that's about to change.

INT. NOVUS PROCESSING PLANT - DAY

We're inside a large hanger area. Rusted pipes obscure the walls whilst cables creep along them like untamed ivy. Obsolete machinery litters the area, piled up into garbage fill mounds.

Above, translucent ceiling panels filter crimson light over the area.

A huge electromagnet swings in front of us, attached to a complicating series of chains and pulleys. Magnus is attempting to position it.

Close by Hanna grunts as she drags a laser cannon along a dolly rail and locks it into place.

Saul, welding goggles covering most of his face, squats knee deep in cogs and wires as he performs emergency surgery on a busted up droid. Sparks shower up around him as he patches the thing together.

He thrusts an arm inside what looks like a rib cage and feels around. The machine shudders violently, almost shaking Saul out of his boots.

Slowly the motion subsides. Optical panels flare into life and the Easter Island head turns left and right as it scans the area. Saul snaps his fingers in front of it.

SAUL

Hey!

The droid's head swivels towards him. Satisfied, he steps back, unravelling a cable that connects his own prosthetic arm to the droid's internal circuits.

He motions for the machine to stand. The droid complies, rising up on crab like limbs. It sways unsteadily and one of the legs comes loose, crashing to the ground.

Saul raises an arm, the droid mimics his actions. He turns his hand a hundred and sixty degrees and repeats the same movement. Once again the machine copies him but this time with its other limb. He turns his hand back and forth until he's manipulating both limbs simultaneously.

He makes a fist, immediately the droid's buzz saw hands whirl into lethal action, the circular blades spinning at a super speed blur. He uncurls his fingers and the blades slow to a halt. Saul gives a grunt, apparently satisfied.

Magnus looks at the busted up droid, still unsteady on its crab limbs.

MAGNUS
Amazing you got that thing working again.

SAUL
Droids are easy.

He rips his goggles off.

SAUL'S
More concerned with that.

He waves a hand towards the cannon.

SAUL
It's supposed to fire through the sides of mountains right?

MAGNUS
That was it's purpose, yes. It helped us carve out our valley settlements.

Hanna attempts to swivel the barrels towards the doorway but the weight's too much for her. Saul goes over and helps her, adding his own shoulder to her efforts.

Up ahead a group of dishevelled GUARDS come hurrying down the hallway. They stop at the entrance leading into the chamber.

Magnus goes over to them, talking in hushed yet frantic tones. One of the men hands him what looks like an oddly shaped rifle. The leader nods then motions for his men to retreat. Ashen faced he walks back towards his two companions.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
Your monster's coming.

Saul regards the object in Magnus' hands.

SAUL
Ever used that thing before?

MAGNUS
Not like this.

He slings it over his shoulder then positions himself beside a rusted metal pillar, his hand on the control panel. Cables connect it to the magnet.

Everyone's eyes are now firmly on the entrance. Panels light up one by one down the hallway. Footsteps echo in the distance.

INT. KUBO'S OFFICE - DAY

Susan Kubo sits behind her husband's desk, painted nails fluttering over the keyboard. An unshaven, haggard looking Kubo stops at the doorway.

KUBO
The doctor told you to rest.

She shrugs.

SUSAN
Your doctor told me to rest. I
wouldn't take his filthy pills.

KUBO
Go home.

Her fingers continue to flutter for a few more moments before she hits a final key.

SUSAN
I never believed what you told me
about Kyle.

Kubo looks uncomfortable.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Some punks robbing him, leaving him
dead in the car park.

She shakes her head.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
No-one could breach the security here.
It just isn't possible. But it was
when you stopped me seeing the body
that I knew you had something to do
with it. I realized he might even
still be alive.

KUBO

Kyle's dead.

The woman's eyes flare.

SUSAN

I went to the crypt Paul. His casket was empty.

She tilts her head to one side, regarding him.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You truly are a monster, aren't you?

She sighs.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Why did I never see it?

Kubo's hand tightens around his cane.

KUBO

Go home. While you still can.

She indicates the screen.

SUSAN

I know what you did.

Tears well in her eyes.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

God, I wish you had killed him.

She wipes them away, refusing to give way to grief.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Your own son. How could you?

Kubo shrugs, too exhausted to deny anything.

KUBO

He let me down. I sent him to snoop on Altus and instead he starts helping the bitch. I couldn't trust him anymore.

SUSAN

You mean with all those secrets?

She turns the computer screen around. Files and data are flying past the screen, hurtling into the ether.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Like HEX's links to the Corporate League, the Martian plan to enslave the whole system (laughs) well, guess what? They're not secrets anymore.

Kubo stares at the screen in disbelief.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I used to be a systems engineer before we married remember? That's why you had me set up fire walls around your personal files. You were never good with computers Paul.

Kubo hurls his wife out of the chair and begins typing frantically. She laughs at his futile efforts to stop the uploads.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You're finished!

Kubo strikes her across the face.

KUBO

Make it stop, now!

She stares back defiantly. Kubo strikes her again. A trickle of blood runs from the corner of her mouth.

SUSAN

Go to hell.

Countless terabytes of information flash past the screen. Kubo grabs his wife by the throat, his finger digging into her flesh.

KUBO

You first.

She claws at him but he doesn't flinch, even when her nails dig flesh from his face. Gradually she weakens, her knees buckling. Then the struggling stops and the life goes out of her eyes. Kubo lets her rag doll corpse fall to the ground.

INT. NOVUS PROCESSING PLANT - DAY

The Amitar stops at the entrance, surveying the scene before it. Saul glances back at Hanna. She gives him a mock salute to show she's ready.

The monster moves forward. Saul, like an expert puppeteer, crab walks his droid into the assassin's path.

The buzz saw blades whir into life and as the young man brings his own arm down the droid pummels its opponent. The blades slice across the monster's armor, sliding along the chest plate and slicing into the exposed reptilian flesh near the neck. Dark blood pours from the wound.

The Amitar backs away, but the droid follows, tearing at its opponent's exposed areas. The monster slams a hand against its chest plate. A shimmering energy cloud goes up around it.

SAUL

Shield's up.

Hanna pulls a lever on the side of the cannon. The weapon powers up but far too slowly, luminous bars at the side loading one at a time.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Fire.

HANNA

I'm trying.

Saul has his droid send a buzz saw punch to the monster's jaw. The blow bounces ineffectively off the energy field. The Amitar counters, swinging a boulder like fist at it but the droid leans to the side, avoiding the attack.

Saul swings an arm. The droid mimics, its whirring blades ripping across the monster's neck. Again the attack is deflected harmlessly.

The Amitar crashes a fist against the droid's head, almost tearing it from the neck. The machine staggers back, out of control.

SAUL

Hanna!

The girl pounds her small fist against the power cells. The bars start to load faster.

Saul struggles to get the droid back under control but the machine merely staggers round in disoriented arcs, flailing its arms. Its crab legs crash against a pile of engine debris and it topples over, rolling around helplessly on the ground.

The Amitar strides past it, heading directly for Hanna. Saul rips the wires loose from his machine arm and races towards her. The last bar just finishes loading.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Fire!

Hanna pulls the lever back. A flaming bolt hurtles through the air, slamming into the monster's energy shield and hurling it backwards. Lightning crackles around it but the Amitar's still on its feet, unharmed.

She fires again. This time the blast slams the monster against the wall. Cracks begin to open in the shield.

SAUL (CONT'D)

It's working.

She fires a third time. The Amitar's shield explodes in a shower of hard light fragments. It falls forwards, armor charred, smoke drifting up from its body.

The power bars on the cannon drop to nothing. Saul slams a hand against the weapon but the lights all wink out.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Finished!

The Amitar isn't moving. Saul creeps forward, holding up a hand for his companions to remain where they are.

He gets to within a couple of feet when the spikes fire down the monster's back. The huge body convulses then it stretches out an arm. Shakily it begins to get to its feet.

Saul retreats, glancing back at Magnus. The Novus leader activates the magnet. A soft electrical hum begins to build. Saul positions himself just beyond it, motioning for Hanna to join him.

The Amitar comes limping towards them, for the first time we see that this monster can be hurt. As it draws close however it suddenly stops, looking up at the magnet.

Saul opens the panel on his arm, showing it the vial inside.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Recognize this? Didn't get it all you
dumb brute.

The assassin's massive chest heaves.

SAUL (CONT'D)
You failed.

It lumbers towards them once more.

Magnus turns up the juice. The Amitar's steps grinds to a halt, unable to move any further. Arm plates tear loose, followed by other the rest of its armor which go flying up towards the magnet. Piece by piece the reptilian frame beneath is revealed. Dark blood pours from the ripped flesh.

The breastplate though remains in place and drags the monster off its feet, slamming it into the magnet.

Magnus leaves his position, joining his two companions. He unslings the odd looking rifle from his back and slaps a cartridge into it.

MAGNUS
We use this to deliver medicines to
the animals. I've loaded it with
massive doses of neurotoxin.

He regards it with distaste.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
I must confess. I'm not comfortable
doing this.

Saul takes it from him.

SAUL
That's okay.

He takes aim at the trapped monster. For a moment something approaching pity crosses his face as he watches it struggle. Then he fires. The Amitar catches the dart, crushing the missile in its hand.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Damn!

He fires again. This one sinks into its target's neck but almost immediately it pulls it free. Saul takes a deep breath, aims again.

MAGNUS

The device only holds three darts.
This is your last shot.

Saul grimaces.

SAUL

No pressure huh?

He takes aim at the neck again then suddenly drops the sighting, firing the dart into the monster's thigh. The Amitar struggles, reaching around for it. It's a few seconds before it manages to pull it free. The colony leader nods.

MAGNUS

That should be enough.

The huge body goes into a series of spasms. It flails around madly then the movements begin to slow, grow sluggish as if it were trying to swim through molasses. Then it slumps forward, the massive arms hanging down in front of it.

Hanna half sobs, half laughs as she hugs both men. Yet as before energy crackles down the monster's back. Its head turns, looking at them. Hands reach to its breastplate. With a sickening rip of flesh it pulls itself free and drops to the ground.

Magnus is unlucky enough to be standing closest. The monster swats him aside like an insect. He collapses to the ground, alive or dead we have no idea.

INT. KUBO'S OFFICE - DAY

Kubo, long scratch marks down his cheek, drops of blood on his collar, sits at the edge of his desk, cane resting across his knees. He's in conference with the distorted figures on the screens.

KUBO

It's taken care of. The authorities
are on their way to my house right now.
When they get there they'll find her
dead.

He gives a nonchalant shrug.

KUBO (CONT'D)
A break in gone wrong.

GOLD
What they find is irrelevant.

SILVER
You allowed our plans to be leaked.
The backlash has already begun.

Kubo shrugs.

KUBO
So, your families own the media, you
own judges. Make it go away.

CRIMSON
Take a look outside.

Kubo slides off the desk and moves over to his window. He glances down. Below thousands upon thousands of PROTESTORS crowd the area. Many carry placards that cry murder, corruption and demand the end of HEX and the Corporate League. It's a riot zone down there.

CRIMSON (CONT'D)
This isn't going away.

Kubo's too stunned to say anything.

GOLD
Support for Novus is growing, people
are rising up against us.

CRIMSON
Because of you.

KUBO
What do we do?

GOLD
There's no "we" Kubo. For you,
there's only one way out.

Kubo's eyes widen as he realizes the implication.

KUBO

Fall on my sword? Screw that.

GOLD
You're finished.

The visages fade out one by one. He hurls his cane at Gold's, smashing it. He hits the intercom on his desk.

KUBO
Call an emergency board meeting, now.

INT. NOVUS PROCESSING PLANT - UPPER WALKWAY - DAY

Saul pulls Hanna behind him as he races up a spiral stairwell. It leads them to an iron grid walkway that runs around the wall. The Amitar follows, lumbering up after them.

He scans the area. A chamber lies ahead, above the entrance we see the warning symbol for radiation. There's nowhere else to run.

SAUL
This way.

They race towards it.

INT. IRRADIATING CHAMBER - DAY

Saul rips wires out of the door controls. The panel shudders then dies. He does a quick take of his surroundings. In contrast to the rest of the plant the chamber is relatively high tech. Burnt out computer banks line the walls whilst in the center is a large, casket like chamber. A vaulted door seals the entrance.

Hanna stares back at the corridor. On the other side of the door the monster stretches out a massive arm as it collapses against the wall. The Lazarus device fires once more. The Amitar spasms and straightens up.

HANNA
Those implants.

She turns to Saul.

HANNA (CONT'D)

They're shocking its nervous system
back into life.

SAUL
You saying it won't die?

HANNA
Not while those devices keep
functioning.

SAUL
Then we got to fry them.

He glances at the irradiating chamber.

SAUL (CONT'D)
What's that do?

Hanna studies it for a moment.

HANNA
It's a sterilization unit.

SAUL
Microwaves?

The girl nods.

HANNA
Amongst other high density waves.
There's also

SAUL
Okay.

The Amitar smashes its fists against the door, causing the whole
structure to shudder.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Does it work? Magnus said storms had
fried most of the tech here.

Hanna goes over to a raised systems deck and starts working the
controls.

HANNA
It's damaged, quite badly, but still
operational.

Saul spins the chamber's wheel handle and drags the heavy vaulted door open. As he does the monster breaks through.

He rips a piece of cooling pipe loose. A hissing cloud of steaming escapes, engulfing the monster. The chamber's interior flickers crimson.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Systems are activated.

The Amitar comes at Saul, a clockwork monster refusing to wind down. The young man lands a couple of blows with the pipe then stumbles backwards into the chamber.

The monster follows, grabbing at him. It's slow, clumsy but in the limited space inside Saul has to work hard to keep out of its reach.

Yet inevitably he finds himself trapped into a corner. The Amitar lunges. Saul dives between its tree trunk legs, rolling back onto his feet as soon as he's through.

The monster turns and as it does Saul thrusts the pipe into the thick, reptilian hide of its now unprotected chest.

SAUL

(To Hanna) do it!

Hanna hits the controls. An oculus flames into life above, rings of energy emanating from it.

Saul bolts for the door but the monster catches him by the arm. It's captive struggles but he's caught fast in the superhuman grip. The Amitar hauls him up like a hooked fish, crushing the prosthetic limb as it does.

The arm's metal frame rips apart, shredding Saul's flesh and destroying the vial inside. Its thick fluid runs into his wound, mingling with his blood.

Above, the oculus grows brighter. Sparks dance around the chamber and even Saul's spiky hair begins to crackle. He rips himself free of his ruined limb, crying out in agony as he does, then hurries out of the chamber, slamming the vault shut behind him.

The chamber lights up in a series of flashes, energy arcs sear the area and the very air glows with supercharged particles.

The Amitar lumbers for the door but as it does the reptilian flesh begins to char and blacken. The huge frame shrivels before our eyes.

The chakral spikes explode one by one, sending the monster into convulsions. As the last one goes it collapses to the ground. The devices are now no more than charred, smoking pits. It tries to rise but rolls and falls. The demon mask stares directly up at us.

An energy overload warning flashes. Hanna kills the power. The oculus fades and the finger arcs of energy splinter and dissipate.

Saul looks down at the ruined, broken monster. Hanna joins him. The Amitar's eyes open. Despite the glass barrier, both of them give a start.

AMITAR
(Inhuman voice) Help me!

It tries to reach out an arm but it's too weak.

AMITAR (CONT'D)
Hanna!

The girl gasps.

HANNA
It knows me.

The reptile eyes look at her.

HANNA (CONT'D)
Oh my goodness! How?

AMITAR
(Weakly) Never wanted to hurt you. He
(a beat) made me.

HANNA
Who made you?

The monster's breathing becomes increasingly labored.

AMITAR
Father. He knew I was helping you.

She stares for some moments.

HANNA

Kyle?

She shakes her head, her expression one of pain and disbelief.

HANNA (CONT'D)

It's you, isn't it?

The Amitar's visibly dying before us, its life fading away. It's some moments before it's able to reply.

AMITAR

Yes.

HANNA

Your father did this to you, didn't he?

Hanna grabs the wheel. Saul goes to stop her but she shrugs him aside. She opens the door just enough to slip inside.

SAUL

No!

The demonic mask turns to her.

HANNA

(Tenderly) Oh my god!

She kneels beside him. Saul, ashen faced and looking sicker by the moment looks on in horror.

The girl places delicate hands to the face plate and feels around for the locking mechanism. Her fingers find something. We hear a click as she disengages the seal. She slides the cover off and for the first time we get a look at the monster's face.

It isn't even close to human. Large slitted eyes stare back at us out of a hideous, scaled and pitted visage. Two pulsating slits snort the air whilst a black serpent tongue plays over dagger teeth. It tries to smile but the reptilian features are too immobile to allow much of an expression.

AMITAR

Guess I don't look so good.

Tears roll down Hanna's face.

HANNA

Unbelievable.

She lays a hand on his cheek.

HANNA (CONT'D)
Still as vain as ever.

The lids flicker, beginning to close.

HANNA (CONT'D)
Stay with us. We can help you.

The Amitar runs a finger down her face, smearing it with blood then it falls away. The eyes close for the last time.

Hanna starts to sob.

INT. KUBO'S OFFICE - DAY

Kubo paces his office. Specter watches him nervously.

KUBO
You sure?

He regards the other man grimly.

KUBO (CONT'D)
My boy failed?

SPECTER
All life readings have ceased.

KUBO
You said he was unstoppable.

The little scientist rubs his hands.

SPECTER
Virtually unstoppable. He was a
prototype Mr. Kubo.

Specter watches the other man closely. Kubo raises his cane. The little man gives a whimper and throws his hands up in front of his face.

KUBO
What's the point?

Kubo lowers his arm.

KUBO (CONT'D)
It's over.

His face drains of all expression.

KUBO (CONT'D)
I called a board meeting. Guess how
many came?

Specter shuffles uncomfortably.

KUBO (CONT'D)
Not a god damn one. Everyone's
deserted me.

He studies Specter for a moment.

KUBO (CONT'D)
How about you?

SPECTER
(Stammers) Mr. Kubo?

KUBO
You plan to stick around?

Specter rubs nervous hands together.

SPECTER
Well, sir. In light of recent
occurrences, it might be best if...

Kubo waves his cane at the door.

KUBO
Get the hell out.

The little scientist scurries away, the rat deserting the
sinking corporate ship.

INT. NOVUS MEDICAL LAB - LIT

Magnus' eyes open. He's laying on one of the medical beds. Saul
and Hanna are gazing down at him.

MAGNUS

You did it?

Saul nods. He's pale, sweating badly. Magnus sits up, immediately noticing the younger man's bloodied stump, now swathed in makeshift bandages from his own torn clothing.

SAUL
Vial's destroyed.

Magnus notices the dark veins along the sides of Saul's neck.

MAGNUS
You're sick.

Saul shivers.

SAUL
Reckon so.

MAGNUS
(To Hanna) What happened?

HANNA
The vial, it leaked into his wounds.
I suspect blood poisoning.

MAGNUS
The devices.

His eyes light up.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
They're replicating. There's still a
chance.

Saul sways, his knees buckling beneath him. Magnus steadies him.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
Help me with him.

INT. HEX BASEMENT COMPLEX - DAY

A long, sleek limousine glides through a vault like complex.
A portcullis lowers ahead, allowing it through.

INT. LIMO - BACK SEAT - DAY

Kubo has a phone pressed to his ear.

KUBO

I'm on my way now. I want the ship ready.

He listens for a moment to the reply.

KUBO (CONT'D)

No bullshit. Do it!

He kills the connection then taps another contact.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Transfer my funds to a virtual vault.
Encryption to follow.

He types a series of numbers in quick succession.

KUBO (CONT'D)

To commence immediately.

He snaps the device shut and leans back, closing his eyes. A deep baritone voice fills the background. We're listening to the radio.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

With many believing what we are witnessing is nothing short of a Libertarian Spring as the masses rise up against what they see as an oppressive corporate oligarchy. Continuing revelations have seen successive corporations fall and all signs suggest the situation will continue to ...

Kubo places a thumb and forefinger to his temples.

KUBO

(Shouting) Turn that damn thing off!

The announcer's voice fades away.

The limo slows then comes to a halt. Kubo taps his cane on the tinted glass in front.

KUBO (CONT'D)

Hey!

The glass descends, revealing a mechanized driver.

KUBO (CONT'D)
What the hell? Drive.

The mannequin swivels a hundred and sixty degrees.

DRIVER
I'm sorry sir. That's not possible.
The way's blocked.

KUBO
Protesters? Run those slime balls
over.

DRIVER
It's not protesters sir.

Kubo leans forward and looks out at line of uniformed figures stood across HEX's compound. Each one levels a rifle at the limo. Red sighting beams penetrate the windscreen.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
I believe they're law officers.

A horseshoe shaped craft swoops in from above, hovering over their heads. A spotlight shines down on their position.

Kubo gives a soft, bitter laugh then slides the blade from his cane.

EXT. HEX COMPOUND AREA - DAY

Law officers move forward, closing in on each side of the limo. OFFICER #1 closes in, aiming his rifle directly at the rear door.

OFFICER #2 opens it. Kubo, blade plunged deep into his stomach, stares back in defiance. He draws the katana across his belly, the last cut in his ritual suicide. Blood foamed lips curl into a sneer then he slumps forward.

INT. NOVUS MEDICAL LAB - DAY

Saul looks more dead than alive. Black, spider web veins thread his whole body, pulsating as if they might burst. He fights against the restraints, his swollen, purple tongue stifling

agonized screams. Hanna watches anxiously as Magnus attends to him, attaching tubes and probes to his patient.

HANNA

Can you save him?

MAGNUS

The devices are replicating at an incredible rate.

He hits a series of switches, filtering devices rotate inside Perspex machines. Black fluid drains from Saul, along a tube and into a complex refining tube.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

A complete transfusion is his only hope.

Numbers flash on the screen. Magnus watches in awe.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

These readings.

He turns to Hanna.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

The speed of replication. It's incredible.

Dark blood trickles from Saul's mouth. Magnus puts his euphoria aside as he tends to his patient.

SAUL

His whole system's going into shock.

Saul spasms. Then suddenly goes still. Magnus checks the life readings. Everything is flat lining.

HANNA

No!

EXT. MARTIAN DESERT - DAY

Dome covered farmsteads cover the red landscape. Some still flicker with signs of activity but the majority appear one step away from extinction. Mostly we see only ruined, blackened crops and abandoned fields. Rusted, broken farming machines litter the area.

Juxtaposed against the rural setting, an onyx black minaret, a high tech communications tower, rises into the skyline. Tiny, matchstick figures rush around its summit. As we look closer we see that it's a rag tag science team.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - DAY

Magnus stands in the center like the eye of a hurricane. A digital countdown reaches sixty minutes.

MAGNUS

Less than an hour before the sun storm hits. Are we ready to launch the devices?

A LITTLE TECH turns and nods.

LITTLE TECH

Yes sir.

He hits a series of controls. Something explodes in the distance and a rocket soars into the sky, leaving a smoking trail across the horizon. Magnus places an arm around Hanna. She smiles, but sadness clouds her pretty features.

MAGNUS

We must hope the rocket can disperse the devices as well as your Obex was capable.

The little Tech tracks it on his monitor. The rocket speeds into the lower atmosphere and in moments is lost from view.

Magnus' lips tighten. TECHNICIANS glance nervously at each other as nothing transpires. The Tech follows everything on a screen, holding his breath as he does so.

Then fireworks light up the sky, fingers of light stretching in every direction. The Tech laughs, punching the air.

LITTLE TECH

They're dispersing.

Magnus turns to Hanna, his eyes moist with feeling.

HANNA

Mother should be here.

The man nods.

MAGNUS
Indeed she should.

He pulls her closer.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
My sister deserved to see this.

Hanna nods, resting her head on his shoulder.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
I spoke to her just after you made the
breakthrough. She was very proud of
you, you know. It's up to us to carry
on her work.

HANNA
I know uncle.

The fingers divide into threads that spread across the entire
horizon. The Little Tech smiles.

TECH
Global circumference achieved.

SAUL (O.S.)
Hey!

Hanna turns. Saul, dressed in a medical style robe and supported
by a pretty NURSE comes hobbling towards them.

NURSE
He refused to stay in bed.

Magnus smiles indulgently.

MAGNUS
Glad you could join us.

SAUL
Ain't going to miss this.

HANNA
You look well for a dead man.

Saul throws her a puzzled look.

SAUL

Dead?

MAGNUS

Almost ten minutes. Thankfully the modified blood we transfused revived you.

The nurse helps Saul drape his arm around Hanna. He regards the monitor for a moment.

SAUL

How's it going?

MAGNUS

The devices are replicating as quickly as I'd hoped. When they achieve sufficient density they'll link up to form the shield.

More data filters down the Tech's screen.

HANNA

Look!

She points to the sky. A small patch of red is turning blue. The same is happening to other areas of the sky as well. Gradually we find ourselves looking at an azure - crimson patchwork.

Then ripples spread across the sky, forming a single blue ocean. Cheers erupt around the groups, followed by hugs and mutual congratulations.

A BUXOM BLOND grabs the Little Tech. A head taller she leans in to plant a huge kiss on his lips, leaving him a state of intoxicated delight. He stares at her idiotically for a moment then initiates another romantic encounter. The Blond squeals and slaps him across the face.

MAGNUS

The rest of our Novus brethren can come here now. We can begin again.

SAUL

What about the sanctions?

Magnus arches an eyebrow.

MAGNUS

You don't know? The League's fallen.

HANNA

And it's taking the corporations down
with it one by one.

SAUL

HEX?

Hanna nods, a smile across her lips.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Then you got some time.

Magnus looks at him puzzled.

SAUL (CONT'D)

To build your new world before
someone tries to take it from you.

He turns to the older man.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Not everyone's like you Magnus.
Ideals are fine, but lots of folk
willing to kill, lie, steal if they
want something. And they're going to
want Mars.

Hanna lays a hand on his shoulder.

HANNA

Saul's right uncle. We're going to
have to prepare.

Saul raises a quizzical eyebrow.

SAUL

Uncle?

Hanna nods. Magnus falls silent, deep in thought.

MAGNUS

A great man did once say the price of
liberty is eternal vigilance.
(Glancing at Hanna) Maybe I've been
naive.

He turns to Saul.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

Why don't you stay? A man of your talents, you'd be a tremendous asset here.

HANNA

(Teasing) I'm afraid Saul's something of a loner, doesn't like people very much.

SAUL

Hey, that's kind of harsh.

She breaks into a grin.

HANNA

He plans to hide away on a little plot of farmland, all by himself. Isn't that right?

Saul shrugs.

SAUL

Well, I ain't exactly sure.

Hanna laughs then places a kiss on his lips.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I mean, it's tough choice.

She kisses him again.

SAUL (CONT'D)

But reckon I could stay a spell.

A mischievous look plays over his features.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Least till things got boring.

Hanna punches him on his injured arm. Saul lets out a cry that gradually fades into a whimper.

HANNA

Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry.

He flexes the stump.

SAUL

Real temper you got there. (To Magnus) You sure you want me here? Never belonged any place before.

Magnus puts an arm around the younger man.

MAGNUS

Of course, consider yourself family from now on.

Saul's eyes grow moist. He wipes away any hint of a tear.

HANNNA

Are you okay?

SAUL

Arm hurts is all. Better fix up a new one quick.

Magnus smiles then looks up to the now clear blue sky. Hanna then Saul do likewise.

EXT. SPACE - STAR LIT

The sun boils in the distance, exploding lethal, supercharged particles into the void. The deadly tsunami streams outwards towards Mars. It hurtles towards the planet but as it does we see it strike the Obex shield like morning mist hitting the surface of a lake.

The glowing particles spread out, deflected to either side or curving around the planet before continuing on again on what might be an infinite journey.

The sun storm has hit. Mars is safe.

THE END