The Unnamed Planet
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FADE IN:

EXT. - UNNAMED PLANET - DAY

The black ship lays steaming on the plain. Probes extend to sniff the air, to test the temperature. Camera eyes pan, skeletal arms unfold to dig into the bland colorless soil. Three astronauts from Earth trod out of the ship onto the drab landscape, in their uniformly black spacesuits, of the unknown planet.

ALEX, a woman in her mid-twenties with long black hair and a petite frame, stares chilling through her yellow space helmet at the large edifice looming some hundred feet in front of her.

ALEX
(over her helmet mick)
It's Victorian, I think.

Alex tips her head back to gaze up at the third floor, evidently the attic level of the mysterious house. PICKMAN, a rugged man with silver hair in his mid-forties, donning an orange space helmet, stares up at the dull, heavy platinum sky. The horizon is as flat as an ocean.

PICKMAN
Well, it can't be Dagon.

Pickman wags his head as he speaks.

PICKMAN (CONT'D)
It can't be. Howard, let's go back in and get some guns, huh?

Pickman looks over toward HOWARD, a clean-cut, dignified looking male in his mid-twenties, capped in a neon-green helmet. Howard doesn't look at Pickman as he sprinkles a handful of the bone dust grit soil in the errily breezeless air.

HOWARD
No. I told you no already.

Pickman raises his voice ever so slightly in protest.

PICKMAN
This could be a trap. Who knows who built this place? Somebody wants to entice us inside...

Pickman gazes at the house as he squints his eyes.

Howard kneels as he picks up another handful of the bland, colorless soil. He inspects it methodically.
HOWARD
They'd fabricate a spacecraft, or at least a contemporary structure.

Pickman looks at Alex. Alex shrugs her shoulders. Pickman looks back at the jet-black spaceship.

ALEX
Could be they built it as a trap back when it was contemporary.

Howard rises from his kneel. He turns his attention to Pickman, taking note of his gaze toward the spacecraft.

HOWARD
The orbital scans show no life. Not even inside.

Pickman's attention returns to the sprawling edifice fixated in front of him as he speaks calmly and firmly.

PICKMAN
No life that our scans can recognize.

ALEX
Whatever it is, it could use a paint job.

Alex takes several steps toward the dilapidated structure. Howard grabs her lightly by the elbow. She looks at him puzzledly.

HOWARD (muttering softly)
Pickman.

Howard stares at the house.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Go back in the ship and bring me one handgun.

Pickman grins as he turns toward the spacecraft.

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Alex runs her hand along the clapboards of the house. She scratches at the wood, apparently once painted white but now as bone-bare as the plain the house rested upon, like some great many-eyed cattle skull.

ALEX
It isn't an illusion. Or else it's a better illusion than we thought.

Pickman holds a device against the outside of the house. He watches the small screen set into it. He lifts his head to look at Alex.
PICKMAN
My scan isn't hallucinating. It's real. And it's real wood.

Pickman turns his head toward Howard.

PICKMAN (CONT'D)
There are no trees on this planet, boss.

Howard gazes through a window. The glass of the window appearing intact, but the shades not drawn in. Howard looks at the other windows, ignoring Pickman.

PICKMAN (CONT'D)
Howard?

Howard cocks his head slightly.

HOWARD
The shades are drawn on every ground floor window. Every window but this one.

Howard motions his head toward the window in front of him.

PICKMAN
Did you hear what I said?

Pickman walks toward the window in front of Howard and places his face up against the glass. Howard nods. Pickman peers through the window.

PICKMAN (CONT'D)
Too gloomy. I can only make out indistinct shadows.

Alex runs her hand over the wooden clapboard of the enigmatic unshaded window.

ALEX
Probably furniture.

She yelps as she catches a splinter on the pinky of her thinly gloved hand. She looks at the long sliver of wood hanging from her finger as she gingerly removes the wood. Pickman smirks at her.

PICKMAN
Careful.

Howard feels at his side, noting the pistol clipped to his belt. He cautiously unsnaps the holster.

HOWARD
Let's go inside.
INT. - HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Alex paces about the spacious living room as she raises the shades of the other windows, letting in the lifeless silvery light of the unnamed planet.

Pickman picks up a TV Guide from the cheap looking pressed-wood coffee table.

Howard picks up a remote control device and points it toward the blank screen of a television set. Nothing happens.

Pickman glances over.

PICKMAN
No electricity, chief. They didn't own individual power cells then. They were all linked up to a municipal utility system.

Howard glances at the archaic electrical cords snaking from the TV and ancient videotape recorder into a wall outlet. A lamp is plugged into this outlet. Howard flips the switch. Again, nothing happens.

ALEX
Well, the house was already old even before these things were added.

Her face pinches in intensity. She glides over to a built-in bookcase and plucks out volumes at random, checking their printing dates.

Pickman walks over beside her.

PICKMAN
Doing some leisure reading?

Alex half smiles as she continues looking through the books.

ALEX
The most recent one is from 1992.

Howard lifts his head slightly from his inspection of the coffee table.

ALEX (CONT'D)
But most of them are older. A lot older.

She picks up several books and hands them to Pickman. He looks at them quizzically.

PICKMAN
What is this?
Howard calls out to Alex, back turned.

HOWARD
What are they about?

Alex lets out a small "wow" as she inspects the pages of several dusty books.

ALEX
Non-Euclidean geometry, "rubber-sheet" geometry, Klein bottles and Moebius strips. Worm holes, micro black holes.

Pickman shoots her a perplexed expression.

PICKMAN
Kleinsaucers and what?

ALEX
Klein bottles and Moebius strips, they'-

Howard interrupts, back still turned.

HOWARD
They're what finally made traversal warpage through compressed folds of space possible. Crossing distances that would otherwise be impossible to cover in mortal life spans. They're what brought our ship here.

PICKMAN
I see.

Alex smirks at Pickman.

ALEX
I take it you're not here for your academia.

Pickman grunts as he stares Alex in the eye.

PICKMAN
You better hope you don't have to see what I'm here for.

Alex's smirk quickly dissipates as she buries her nose in another book.

ALEX
That's weird.
Alex inspects several more books.

ALEX
Not all of these books are scientific. Some of them have really odd titles, and they seem to be about mysticism and magic. Witchcraft...or something darker.

Pickman glances over.

PICKMAN
What's a scientist doing with books on Witchcraft? Isn't that an oxymoron or something?

ALEX (mumbling)
Big word.

A large hefty tome in the top corner of the bookcase catches Alex's eye. The title reads "Necronomicon". She stands on her tip toes as she tries to pry the volume loose. The tome crashes to the floor with a loud CRASH.

Howard spins around, gun in hand. Alex sighs heavily, hand over her chest, as she exhales audibly.

ALEX (CONT'D)
It's ok. I just knocked down a book.

Pickman smiles at Howard.

PICKMAN
You got a quick trigger there friendo.

Howard sheaths his gun. Alex cocks her head as she stares at the fallen tome on the ground. The book is open to a page where a sheet of paper has been inserted as a book mark. Alex picks up the paper.

ALEX
What in the world...

Howard strolls over behind Alex, curiously eyeing the scribbled incantations on the paper over her shoulder. Howard picks up the book from the floor. He compares it to the sheet.

ALEX (CONT'D)
It looks like all they did was copy incantations from the book.

Alex's gaze vacillates back and forth between the scribbled sheet and the discolored pages of the ancient tome.
Howard.

No.

Alex looks back at Howard, slightly startled.

Howard (cont’d)
The incantations are slightly modified on the notebook sheet. Altered, and with new sections inserted. Look.

Howard points to a figure on the sheet.

Howard (cont’d)
Geometric figures are added.

Pickman starts to walk toward the kitchen.

Alex

What are they?

Howard

They vaguely resemble simplified diagrams of Klein bottles and worm holes. I remember studying them. Back in my academic days.

Howard carefully folds the sheet of paper and places it into a pocket of his space suit. He turns his attention toward the kitchen, where Pickman is heading.

Alex closes the book. She reads the title aloud with curiosity.

Alex

Necronomicon? I've never heard of that.

She carefully places it back on the shelf.

Alex follows Pickman and Howard into the adjacent room.

INT. - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Pickman walks toward the far end of the kitchen, flashlight in hand.

Howard peers through the shades of a window.

Alex kneels by a derelict dog dish and water bowl, the water long since evaporated.

With his flashlight, Pickman gestures toward two doors in the back of the kitchen. One door with lacy curtains hanging over a window leads outside. The other is to the side of the kitchen. Pickman approaches this door.

Alex rises and walks toward Howard, carefully cupping several long golden-brown hairs in hand.
ALEX (CONT'D)

Look.

She holds her hands out to show Howard.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Dog hairs, sir. We could make up a clone when we get back to base.

Howard watches Pickman open the door to the side of the kitchen.

HOWARD

We'd have a dog, all right, Alex. But I don't think it would tell us much.

Alex frowns.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Even if we find a hair from a human...we can't clone its memories.

ALEX

We could at least prove that he or she was a human. A human being from Earth...

Howard looks Alex in the eye. He pauses before answering.

HOWARD

Alex. I don't think that needs to be proven any more.

Pickman staggers back several paces from the door.

PICKMAN

(disturbed)

Boss...you better come see this.

Howard darts his eyes toward Pickman at the tone in his voice. He and Alex walk briskly toward the door.

Howard, Alex and Pickman stare dumbfoundedly at the cellar stairs in front of the open door as they seem to disappear into the ash-like dirt of the plain after a mere three stairs.

ALEX

It's like the basement had flooded in sand.

Alex looks up at Howard as he stares at the disappearing steps. Howard closes his eyes and breathes softly.

HOWARD

This house was displaced here. Transplanted here intact.
Pickman rolls his eyes.

    HOWARD (CONT'D)
    Without so much as a window cracked
    or a cup knocked over in a cabinet.

Pickman chuckles in disbelief as he wags his head.

    PICKMAN
    How? By whom?

Pickman gestures toward the sink mockingly.

    PICKMAN (CONT'D)
    I don't see a traversal warp engine
    under the kitchen sink.

    HOWARD
    Another way, but the same result.
    This house came from Earth before
    us. Before we'd even invented warp
    travel.

Alex kicks at the sand.

    ALEX
    You think the owner did it? Do you
    see any machines he might have built?
    Unless they were in the basement and
    got left behind in the foundation on
    Earth a hundred years ago.

    HOWARD
    (half whispering)
    Maybe he didn't use a machine.

Pickman scrunches his face in disgust.

    PICKMAN
    What?

Alex starts to walk toward the other door.

    HOWARD
    The books in the parlor...

    PICKMAN
    Oh. Right. My mistake. He used
    magic...

Alex opens the door in the back of the kitchen.

    HOWARD
    One generation's magic is the science
    of the next.

Alex stares outside the doorway.
ALEX

Hey.

Pickman and Howard turn their attention to Alex as they walk toward the backdoor.

Alex slowly raises her right hand as she points outside.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What are those?

Pickman stares outside.

PICKMAN

Tree stumps?

The three step out onto the vast plain.

EXT. - UNNAMED PLANET - MOMENTS LATER

They walk toward the closest of what appears to be a tree stump.

ALEX

How did we not see them before?

HOWARD

They must have been hidden from our sight line behind the house. When we landed we were too distracted by the house to notice.

Pickman consciously slides his hand stealthily toward the pocket on his leg. He feels at the gun resting just beneath it.

PICKMAN

No life here, huh?

Alex presses a small scanner against the stump-like object.

ALEX

They don't register as life. It must have been alive...once.

Alex runs her hand over the the star-shaped deep opening at the top of the stump-like object.

Howard kneels as he inspects the thick, forked roots which trail off into the dirt. He picks at the glossy black, hard and wrinkled bark.

Alex struggles to pick off a piece of the tough bark as she places the chunk in a container.

Pickman sighs as he sits on the table-like top of the large stump. He gazes out across the taunting plain.
PICKMAN
Well, boss, maybe you're right. But then again, maybe you're not. I think some other force or intelligence reached out to Earth and dragged this house here.

Howard rises from his kneel as he glares at Pickman.

HOWARD
Why then a house that just so happened to have books anticipating and per-dating traversal warpage?

Pickman bites his lip. He has no rebuttal.

Howard looks at Alex.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
You got everything you need?

Alex places a container in her spacesuit pocket. She rises from the stump and nods accordingly.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Well ok then. Let's go upstairs.

INT. - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard, Pickman and Alex walk into the upstairs bedroom, taking note of the framed pictures and bed.

Howard lifts a framed photo from a desk. He observes a man with an intense face and thinning hair with his arm around the shoulders of a plain but warmly smiling woman.

Alex opens the top drawer of the desk and removes a scrapbook. Pickman and Howard flank her to peer over her shoulders.

ALEX
Brian Greene. That was his name.

Alex and the two men stare at a school picture of Brian Greene.

HOWARD
He looks just as intense as a boy.

Alex flips through the pages of the scrapbook.

ALEX
He did well in school. There's honors from the local newspaper. Graduated from Miskatonic University with an advanced degree in Theoretical Physics.
Alex flips the page to a picture of the woman from the framed picture Howard observed. She flips the page again.

ALEX (CONT'D)
It's an obituary. Maxine Greene. Aged 42. Dead from cancer. Back before they had a cure for it, obviously.

PICKMAN
His wife?

Howard nods.

Alex taps a picture of a Golden Retriever in the scrapbook.

ALEX
This must have been their dog. The one whose hairs I found.

Pickman looks at Howard.

PICKMAN
If Greene and the dog were teleported here with the house, they both would have died within minutes at the most. They wouldn't be able to breathe in this atmosphere, right?

HOWARD
Right...

Pickman pauses as he shakes his head slowly.

PICKMAN
So where are the bodies?

Howard looks at Pickman blankly. This time Howard has no answer.

Alex gazes at another room across the landing. She walks toward it. Howard follows her.

INT. - ADJACENT BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard circles about the second room.

ALEX
No bed.

HOWARD
Greene must have used it as a study.

Howard inspects a book from an overflowing bookcase.

Alex looks at a notebook on the desk covered with more indecipherable nonsense.
ALEX
More crazy shapes and incantations.
Like the sheet from downstairs.

Howard does not answer. He picks up an oddly shaped paper weight from the bookshelf. He turns it over in his gloved hand. The weight is black crystal with striations of red streaking through it. Howard stares with an enamored expression at the symbols carved into its many faces.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Check this.

The trance is broken by the sound of Alex's voice. Howard quickly pockets the ambiguous object as he walks over toward Alex at the center of the room.

The two of them eye a pentagram-like geometric figure burned into the otherwise pristine golden brown boards of the hardwood floor. Between the arms of the star are some of the symbols seen in the black crystal of the paper weight.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm not much on twentieth-century religion, but I'd say Mr. Greene was into some very unorthodox practices.

Howard stares at the geometric figure. He mumbles softly.

HOWARD
Maybe he was just an explorer. Like us.

Howard notices a ghostly white movement in the corner of his eye. He spins about rapidly as he removes his gun from his already unsnapped holster.

He sees it is only the gauzy white window curtains stirring subtly in the very mild breeze. Pickman is in front of the window, his body halfway out.

PICKMAN
(highly disturbed)
Jesus...

Howard quickly paces over to the window and sticks his head out.

Just a few feet beyond the window a mummified corpse hangs ominously in mid-air suspension.

HOWARD
My God. It's like he dove suicidally from the window, only to be frozen in mid-air.

Alex stares out the window at the back of the mummy's head.
ALEX
The scant hair indicates mummification. But how, I don't understand...Is it Jam-

Howard cuts her off mid-sentence.

HOWARD
It's him.

ALEX
What the hell happened to him?

HOWARD
I don't think I want to know.

Pickman still hangs out the window, staring. He finally speaks, eyes straight ahead.

PICKMAN
It's not the late Brian Greene you should be worried about.

Pickman continues to gaze straight ahead at the plain.

HOWARD
What should we be worried about?

Pickman's hand slips down to his pocket as he slowly removes his handgun.

Howard notices.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
(vexed)
I said get one handgun Pickman. I didn't tell you to take one for yourself.

Pickman still stares out the window at the plain, a crazed look upon his face.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Pickman!

Pickman slowly turns his head toward Howard. He quietly utters.

PICKMAN
The tree-stumps.

HOWARD
What?

Howard looks out the window at the plain ahead. He proceeds to slowly back away from the sight.
ALEX
What is it?

Alex sticks her head out the window.

HOWARD
The tree stumps...they're gone.

Alex stares out the window, incredulous to the sight. The tree stumps are gone, as if they had never been there. There are no depressions or covered mounds where they had been.

Alex squints as she notices three broad trails all leading to one center point.

PICKMAN
It's like the three stumps were dragged together to that one point.

Pickman points at the central convergence.

PICKMAN (CONT'D)
But then what? There's nothing there but the plain.

HOWARD
Let's get back on the ship!

Alex picks up a measuring stick laying on the floor by the window. She sticks it out the window to prod Greene's body. She stirs his clothing.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Stop that.

Alex pushes Greene's right hand with the stick. The hand does not move as the stick bows.

Howard grabs her by the arm.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
I said let's go. That's an order!

Alex reluctantly pulls away from the window. She drops the measuring stick to the floor.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
This could be a dangerous situation. We can run further tests and scans from the ship. We'll call station. They might even advise us to go orbital until further notice.

Pickman finally pulls his head out from the window.

PICKMAN
I think we should do that anyway.
The trio exists the house and descends the creaking stairs. They leave the old edifice through the front door.

EXT. - UNNAMED PLANET - MOMENTS LATER

The petrified explorers walk briskly toward their black spacecraft of refuge as if the very earth beneath their feet might open up and swallow them whole.

Just as they reach the machine, a piercing BEEP comes through Howard's headset. It is KACI, the ship's co-pilot left aboard.

KACI (O.S.)
Chief, I think you'd better get back here quick.

Alex and Pickman impatiently stare at their leader.

HOWARD
We're just outside the ship now. What is it?

KACI (O.S.)
Just come look, please. Hurry.

Howard turns toward Alex and Pickman. He turns back toward the ship. The trio enter the craft. A visible sigh of relief crosses their faces upon the exit from the unnamed planet into a shelter of their own time period.

INT. - SPACECRAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Pickman and Alex remove their garish helmets. Howard does not. He proceeds straight to central command with urgency.

Howard enters the doorway.

INT. - SPACECRAFT CENTRAL COMMAND ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He freezes in the doorway. Pickman follows behind Howard. He takes note of Howard's frozen stature.

PICKMAN
Boss, you look like old Brian Greene.

Howard doesn't utter a word as Kaci, KIRK their pilot, and a panting old Golden Retriever look up at the paralyzed Captain.

Pickman and Alex edge by Howard, only to freeze in their tracks at the sight. The dog appears beautiful and healthy. He smiles black-lipped at the petrified trio.

KACI
He just walked into the room with us. Like he'd been on the ship with us the whole time.
Kirk strokes the dog's head gently.

KIRK
Friendly too.

Howard turns to gaze at the banks of monitor screens above the scan stations. The old house is there in plain sight. Looming. In need of paint and some repair. Black eyes gaze back at him enigmatically.

HOWARD
(whispering to himself)
Magic.

FADE OUT:

THE END