

THE DAY THE SKY FELL

A Feature Length Screenplay

By

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The Day the Sky Fell

FADE IN:

EXT. SURFACE OF JUPITER'S MOON EUROPA- PLANET RISE

The icy, airless surface of Jupiter's second largest moon becomes slowly brighter as the rotation of its axis brings the massive form of Jupiter up from the horizon to dominate the starscape above.

TITLES: "Europa- Moon of Jupiter"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE- SUNRISE

Crimson ripples in water. At the edge of the lake, beneath the branches of a large pine tree, sits a woman in her mid thirties. She is dressed simply, in jeans and a denim jacket, her long, jet black hair flowing over her shoulders, the gentle morning breeze casting the ebony strands around the dark brown skin of her face. She is seated with her legs crossed and her hands cupped upward in her lap, meditating. Her name is VALERIE WHITEHAWK and her eyes are closed to the sunrise that lights the strong, but beautiful, Cherokee features of her face.

TITLES: "The Appalachians 2012 A.D."

A CELL PHONE RINGS. She is still. RING AGAIN. She is silent. RINGS AGAIN. She breathes deeper. RINGS AGAIN. Opens her eyes. RING AGAIN. She slips a small wireless earplug into her ear.

VALERIE

Yes, this is Valerie.

She listens to the voice in the earplug.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

No. I haven't been watching.

Valerie pulls the sleeve of her jacket back and taps a button on her Comwatch, activating a small video display.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I'll be there as soon as I can.

Valerie removes the earplug and looks at the screen. The video image is of a city wrecked by a massive earthquake. A handsome Indian reporter in his mid-thirties is interviewing a survivor. Valerie sighs and touches the face on the tiny screen with her finger and then looks up into the face of the fully risen sun.

INT. WEATHER DOME- MORNING

Early-orange morning light streams through the thin portal of the foam walled, all purpose weather-dome, and cascades across the desk that is in the center of its circular main room. At the desk is a large meaty man in his late forties. His name is LAWRENCE HOWARD and the normally jovial features of his face are pulled tight in concern as he watches reports of the earthquake on a small laptop screen.

He taps the screen and the image switches to another view of the aftermath. At the bottom of the screen are the words "Miami Live". He taps the screen again and the handsome Indian reporter's face fills the screen. The reporter's name is VAREEM THAPUR.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

The earthquake which struck Miami early this morning, the twenty third major quake so far this year, may be part of what scientists are calling a "global geological shift." A shift that may have occurred many times in the planet's past. This morning's quake reached 8.2 on the Richter scale and has left the city..

The door to the weather dome opens suddenly, a gust of wind rustling the papers on the desk and causing Lawrence to look up from his screen and into the face of his youthful French assistant, MARIE CHABRIE.

MARIE

Dr. Howard. We've found something. I think you should take a look.

LAWRENCE

Where?

MARIE

In the main temple.

Lawrence turns the laptop off and pulls on a thick parka as he walks toward Marie and the door.

EXT. ANTARCTICA ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG- SUNRISE

Lawrence and Marie step out of the small weather-dome and into the dim sunlight of morning.

TITLES: "Antarctica"

They walk along a path lined with weather-domes of various sizes. There is little snow on the ground, the weather being mild. The path turns as they are suddenly at the ocean. Before them is a large crescent-shaped bay.

The ice that normally would accompany such a view has been melted away to reveal stone structures, streets, buildings, houses, pyramids; an entire city, ancient, and long buried. Lawrence and Marie head toward the largest of the pyramids, in the heart of the small, dead coastal city.

INT. ANCIENT TEMPLE- MORNING

Lawrence pulls a large sheet of plastic back and steps into the inner chamber of the temple. Work lights are hung irregularly, creating pockets of shadow through out the massive room. Large square columns support the high curved ceiling. Around the temple are statues and wall carvings in a form that suggests both ancient Egyptian and Olmec styles.

In the center of the temple is a raised stone platform with a series of steps leading up to it. At the top of the steps is an altar of four enormous carved stone arms, reaching skyward. Cradled in these four hands is a large stone sphere, nearly five meters in diameter, its surface etched with markings that appear to combine written language with complex pictograms.

A team of archeologists in hard-hats swarm around the stone sphere measuring the relic with various instruments. Marie hands Lawrence a hard-hat. He waves it off and walks up the steps of the platform to the stone sphere.

MARIE

The door to the temple was breached only half an hour ago. I would have come for you earlier, but we wanted to make sure it was going to be structurally sound. After what happened last week...

Lawrence walks over to the stone sphere and places his hand on it.

LAWRENCE

Yes, yes, I understand. This is the first time we've seen pictographic language with text. This may prove to be the key to translation. See these symbols? They could easily be related to Egyptian. And this. What is this? It looks like a depiction of sacrifice. That makes no sense. There's no indication of sacrifice anywhere else. Interesting.

MARIE

That may not be the most interesting thing about it.

Lawrence turns from the stone sphere and follows Marie's gaze toward to small video screen nearby. A technician is holding a large flat metal plate against the stone sphere and watching the video screen. On the screen is an interior view of the stone sphere clearly showing that there is something of greater density beneath the rock.

MARIE (CONT'D)

It appears to be a casing.

Lawrence turns from the video monitor and stares up at the mysterious stone sphere.

INT. LARGE WOOD LINED OFFICE- DAY

A photo of the stone sphere fills a thin computer screen. The computer sits on the desk of NICHOLAS MARTIN, a heavysset African-American man in his sixties.

TITLES: "Washington D.C."

His face is stern, and unrevealing, but his features are calm. He turns from the screen and looks around the room. There are four other people present: His staff. Two men and two women, all wearing identical dark suits. He turns toward MS. JASPER, a thin Vietnamese woman in her late twenties.

MS. JASPER

The artifact is being moved to one of the larger work structures where they will be performing a series of tests.

NICHOLAS

What's Howard's recommendation?

MS. JASPER

Dr. Howard is recommending that the stone shell be cut away to reveal what's inside.

Nicholas looks at the image of the stone on the computer screen and the back to Ms. Jasper.

NICHOLAS

Tell him not to waste any time.

MS. JASPER

Yes, sir.

Nicholas's staff begins to leave the room. He touches the computer screen and the image switches to a shot of rubble-strewn streets from the air. The words at the bottom of the screen read, "Miami: Live". Nicholas leans toward the screen and places his hands together beneath his chin.

EXT. STREETS OF MIAMI- DAY

VIDEO IMAGE:

A wall of cement CRASHES to the ground. Vareem steps away from the rising cloud of dust. Behind him the survivors and the dead are being taken from the debris.

VAREEM

Aftershocks continue to complicate rescue efforts here. It is estimated that nearly two thousand people may

INSERT: IMAGES OF MIAMI AFTER THE QUAKE. BUILDINGS FALLING DOWN. STORES BEING LOOTED. PEOPLE TRYING TO DRIVE OUT OF THE CITY.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)

have died in aftermath of the main tremor and that nearly as many may lose their lives as they try to evacuate from the city. The question on many people's minds is not "how will Miami recover?"

INSERT: IMAGES OF QUAKEs THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. SAN FRANCISCO. GUATEMALA. COLUMBIA. BUENOS AIRES. TOKYO. ROME.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)

but, "who will be next?" Now that the quakes are regularly striking areas normally considered safe, where will it be safe? What can the world's citizens do to remain unharmed? And what can the world's governments do to help? With over two million dead within a year, they could start by revealing what the cause of these

BACK TO: Vareem speaking.

VAREEM (CONT'D)

quakes is. My inside sources say that the United States government is well aware of the true cause of the quakes. Check out our web site at Leadline.news for the full story. This is Vareem Thapur reporting from what is left of downtown Miami.

IMAGE: THE LEAD LINE NEWS LOGO AND WEB ADDRESS.

NORMAL SCREEN IMAGE:

Vareem steps away from the rubble around him and reaches for his camera, a light weight, palm sized device that is suspended in mid air by two small very powerful fans on either side of it. Vareem turns the camera off and pulls a Flipcom out of his leather bomber jacket. He flips it open to reveal a small screen with a young Chinese woman's face on it.

VAREEM

How'd it look?

Vareem adjusts his tiny wireless ear set.

INT. EDIT OFFICE- DAY

Vareem's face fills a large thin computer screen. The screen is one of nearly thirty around the room, each showing an image from a different source through out the world. In front of the screens, and a series of computer keyboards and free-form light-pen pads, is MI LING. She is a beautiful Chinese woman in her early twenties; her piercingly bright eyes stare into the lens of the little camera above her main screen.

MI LING

It looked great. I cut in the usual stuff and then a live feed off the net for the rest. And I raised the price of ad time on the web site like you said, but the sponsors didn't sound happy.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Screw 'em. They'll pay and like it. We've got the only real story and they know it.

MI LING

You got a message from Valerie too. She said they've got her working in Miami as of this morning. Do you want me to feed it to you?

Mi Ling's fingers hover above the keyboard.

EXT. RUBBLE STREWN STREETS OF MIAMI- DAY

Vareem is holding the Flipcom in one hand as he walks down the street.

VAREEM

No. Save it. I'll look at it later. Did she say where she'd be?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

No. She didn't know where she'd be. She said to use the locator.

VAREEM

Right. Thanks Mi Ling. I'll log on in an hour for the next spot.

MI LING

Right. I'll have a new edit by then.

Vareem taps the small screen in his palm and Mi Ling's face disappears and is replaced by small, red cross-hairs over a map of the world. Vareem taps the crosshairs and they move to the United States, then to Florida, then to Miami, then to a particular street.

He taps the screen and the Flipcom speaks

FLIPCOM

"Turn left from where you are standing and walk straight two blocks.."

Vareem looks up from Flipcom and turns left, seeing that a large building has collapsed across the street. He slides the Flipcom into his jacket and turns right, walking down what remains of the street.

INT. PARTIALLY DESTROYED BUILDING- DAY

A lean, callused hand moves slowly along a large crack in a crumbling cement wall. Valerie places both hands against the wall and leans close, closing her eyes. She still wears the same jeans and denim jacket, but now has a hard-hat firmly strapped to her head. Behind her are six men in bright blue overalls and hard-hats. One of them stands closer to her. A thin Hispanic man in his thirties. His nametag reads "MIGUEL AMENDOS". He watches Valerie carefully, but silently, as she moves along the wall.

VALERIE

Two inside. A man and a woman. Both dead.

Miguel waves the rest of the team forward. One of them places a round metal plate against the wall and looks at a small screen attached to it. His name-tag says he is FRANK JOHNSON.

FRANK

I'm not getting a reading at all, Miguel.
Infrared shows nothing.

Miguel steps up to him and looks him in the eye.

MIGUEL

That's because they're dead.

FRANK

Then how do we know the bodies are in there?

MIGUEL

Because she said so. Mark it, and we'll come back.

One of the members of the rescue team pulls a can of spray paint out of his pocket and sprays a large orange circle with an "X" in it on the wall.

Valerie has moved ahead, ignoring the men behind her. She ducks under a fallen support beam and stops. She turns her head and then climbs over a broken wall, jumping past a craterous hole in the floor. She turns and sees a large pile of rubble beneath an

entranceway. She kneels down and picks up a chunk of cement. Suddenly, she begins to clear the chunks of debris away with her bare hands.

VALERIE

There's woman in there! She's alive!

Behind her, Miguel and the rest of the team run up. Frank moves forward with the infrared scanner as Miguel turns toward one of the other team members.

MIGUEL

Call in for an ambulance. And tell them we're going to need more people up here.

Frank turns to Miguel.

FRANK

I'm not getting anything. No hot spots at all.

Miguel turns to Valerie.

VALERIE

She's trapped under a granite desk and her heart beat is shallow. She's unconscious and very cold.

Miguel turns toward the team.

MIGUEL

You heard the lady, let's move it.

As the team begins to clear the rubble away, Frank turns to Miguel.

FRANK

There's nothing in there. Every minute we waste here could be spent saving somebody.

MIGUEL

That's what we're doing. Now get to work.

FRANK

You're going to take some kooky Indian chick's word over the scanner?

MIGUEL

Don't piss me off, Frank. Just get to work.

Miguel goes to Valerie and places his hand on her shoulder.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Why don't you go outside and rest?
We can handle this.

VALERIE

I'm fine. She's not very strong.

MIGUEL

We'll get her. Go rest. You need it.
We got a whole city left.

Valerie looks deep into Miguel's eyes, and nods her head.

EXT. OUTER SPACE- EUROPA

Europa. Nearly as large as the Earth's moon, it hangs, silent in space, above its giant Jovian mother planet. The icy surface of Europa is covered with cracks and fissures, two of these being strangely long and straight. Suddenly, a dim light seeps up from the depths of these straight valleys. At first faintly orange and then bright green. Then they are gone..

And Europa begins to move. Imperceptibly at first, then faster and faster until it is rapidly leaving the orbit of Jupiter, heading toward a pale blue dot in the sea of stars near the sun.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

Lawrence and Marie are standing behind a wall of safety glass watching as the technicians on the other side examine the stone sphere with an array of instruments. Lawrence turns from the glass wall and looks at a series of video monitors that are displaying the data from the various probes being used on the stone sphere.

MARIE

This makes no sense. It couldn't
possibly be so dense that we can't
see through it, or we never would have
been able to lift it.

Lawrence leans over to a microphone.

LAWRENCE

Cut the shell away.

The plastic clad technicians turn toward the glass wall momentarily and then begin to pull the probes and scanners away from the stone sphere.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM- DAY

As the technicians move back a large robotic arm with a shiny circular saw attached to its end is pulled forward. The technicians lock the robotic arm in place and clear out of the room.

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

Lawrence watches as a technician remotely guides the robotic arm toward the stone sphere. As the arm nears the surface of the stone, the circular saw HUMS to life, a nozzle attachment spraying water over the blade as it bites into the stone shell.

EXT. OUTER SPACE- EUROPA

As the miniature planet hurtles through space the cracked ice of its surface begins to ripple and quake. The mighty planet Jupiter is now a small multicolored globe far behind Europa.

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

Lawrence watches as the robotic arm saws across the stone sphere in large swaths, the first chunk of stone breaking away and being grabbed by a second robotic arm.

EXT. OUTER SPACE- EUROPA

The thick crust of ice that covers Europa's surface has begun to melt and liquefy, boil, and turn to steam, trailing off into space behind the swiftly moving moon.

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

The robotic arm continues to saw away sections of the stone sphere. Lawrence leans closer to the glass shield, trying to peer through the haze of dust and steam that surrounds the sphere.

EXT. OUTER SPACE- EUROPA

The vapor trail of steam and ice crystals behind Europa is a giant comet's tail, glittering in the golden light of the nearing sun. The icy crust of what was once Jupiter's moon has completely melted, steaming away to reveal a shadowy silver sphere beneath a boiling liquid surface.

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

The mist of steaming water and dust clears as the robotic arms swing to the side. Lawrence gasps and steps back from the glass shield in the same moment that rest of the researchers step forward. In the observation room beyond the safety glass rests a large silver sphere nearly four meters in diameter.

INT. EMERGENCY STATION IN MIAMI- DAY

The sun glares down from a deep blue sky.

VAREEM (O.S.)

Valerie!

Valerie shields her eyes from the sun and turns to see Vareem walking toward the small cluster of tents and spray-foam domes that constitute the emergency station. She puts her coffee down on a nearby table and wraps her arms around Vareem as he steps up to her. He holds her tight and they exchange a long nourishing kiss.

VALERIE

It's so good to see you.

VAREEM

And you.

VALERIE

Do you want some coffee?

VAREEM

Sure. I thought you didn't drink coffee?

VALERIE

That was before I stopped sleeping.

Valerie pours Vareem a cup of coffee and leads him to a table at the edge of the emergency station. He takes her hand.

VAREEM

You went away so you could rest. What happened to resting?

VALERIE

I spent a few days in the mountains, but it didn't help much. I can't sleep. Every time I close my eyes all I can see are the dead. All the ones we didn't get to in time.

VAREEM

You need to take a break.

VALERIE

I can't.

VAREEM

They can get someone else.

VALERIE

There is no one else. Todd and Hestia died in the aftershocks of the Tokyo quake. I'm it for now.

VAREEM

They have machines...

VALERIE

They don't always work.

VAREEM

I hate to see you running yourself down like this.

VALERIE

You're one to talk. When was the last time you slept?

VAREEM

I gave up sleep years ago. I'm used to it.

VALERIE

You still look tired.

They look at their coffees for a moment, avoiding each other's eyes.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

How long are you going to stay?

VAREEM

Until the next quake, I think. Unless something else pops up. Mi Ling's watching the hot spots. She says they have this new program that can predict the next quake with almost eighty percent accuracy. Of course it only gives a thirty-minute warning, but that's enough to book an airline ticket.

VALERIE

You need to hire more staff.

VAREEM

I've always been a one-man show. All I need is Mi Ling. We can grab whatever else we need from freelancers and citizens on the net.

VALERIE

But you can't be in two places at once. It's only a matter of time before there's more than one quake at a time.

VAREEM

Are you claiming clairvoyance now?

VALERIE

No, I've been going to your web site.

VAREEM

Did you catch the latest on the net? The government brains are saying that the quakes are being caused by a shift in the Earth's axis.

VALERIE

That's an old rumor.

VAREEM

Now it's an unreleased fact. And it's supported. There's been a theory hanging around for thirty years or so that an axis shift is what caused the last ice age and that it destroyed a civilization that existed about ten thousand years ago.

VALERIE

Far be it for a person from my profession to ask for proof, but...

VAREEM

Who do you think built the Sphinx?

VALERIE

The Egyptians?

VAREEM

It's five thousand years older than the Egyptians.

VALERIE

So, then, where are these mysterious lion builders from? Space?

VAREEM

Antarctica.

VALERIE

You have to stop reporting net fantasies as news.

VAREEM

I never include anything in the reports that I can't back up. I save that for the web site.

VALERIE

I hope you're giving equal time to the Mayan myth of the fifth age that they predicted would destroy the world in two thousand twelve.

VAREEM

There's a whole database on it at Cal Tech that I have a link to.

VALERIE

You're hopeless.

VAREEM

Where do you think the Mayans got their myth? It was handed down to them from the ancients.

Valerie smiles.

VALERIE

You just do this to cheer me up, don't you?

VAREEM

It's the only way I can get you to smile these days.

Vareem looks up and squints his eyes. Valerie follows his gaze to see that Miguel and the other members of the rescue team are carrying a woman strapped to a gurney out of a fallen building. Valerie's smile fades as the woman is placed in an ambulance.

VAREEM

Yours?

Valerie nods as Miguel walks toward her.

VALERIE

But there are too many more.

MIGUEL

We're ready again when you are.

VALERIE

Just one more minute.

MIGUEL

One of these days you're going to have to tell me how you do it.

VALERIE

I wish I knew.

Miguel smiles and heads back to the rest of the rescue team.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Then maybe I could stop.

Vareem places his arm around her and gently kisses her head.

EXT. ORBITAL SPACE STATION AND TELESCOPE- EARTH ORBIT

Floating in Earth orbit like pieces of a partially assembled erector set, the space station is more of a large platform connected by fifteen house-sized living and laboratory modules. At one side of the platform is an enormous telescope the size of a small building.

INT. ORBITAL SPACE STATION AND TELESCOPE- EARTH ORBIT

Two crewmembers of the space station float weightlessly before the monitors and control panels of the telescope. One is a Brazilian woman in her late twenties with slender fingers named MARINA while the other is an over weight Korean man in his forties named KWANG.

MARINA

Look at this.

Marina points to a screen with an image of Jupiter on it. Kwang glances at it and turns back to his computer.

KWANG

It's Jupiter. It's not on our schedule.

MARINA

I know. I was just looking at it because I like to look at Jupiter. I like to watch the eye.

KWANG

That's nice, but we have a schedule.

MARINA

What's missing?

Kwang looks back at the monitor.

KWANG

Missing? I don't know? Europa? Must be on the other side.

MARINA

It should be facing us.

KWANG

You must be wrong.

MARINA

Have I ever been wrong?

Kwang stares at Marina and then back at the screen, the massive, swirling eye of Jupiter staring back at him.

INT. HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

A full moon shines through the open hotel room window its soft white light revealing Valerie and Vareem spooning, naked on the bed, the sheet cast to the side. Vareem's breathing is shallow and regular, while Valerie's eyes are open, staring up at the moon. Gently, she slides from beneath Vareem's arm, and slips out of bed. She walks past the window, through the open glass door, and on to the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY OF HOTEL- NIGHT

Valerie stands naked in the moonlight, looking out over the darkened cityscape. There are only a few pockets where lights are working and most of the city swims in blackness. Valerie looks up from the lightless city below and stares again into the face of the moon. The moon floats in the deep black of her eyes, a smile slowly creeping across her face.

EXT. OKLAHOMA PLAINS- NIGHT- FLASHBACK

The moonlight mingles with the gently swaying grain at the top of a wide hill that looks out over the valley and town below. A young, black haired, Cherokee girl races through the high summer wheat to the top of the hill, stopping at it's apex and starrng straight up into the moon.

Behind her, moving more slowly, parting the slender stalks with a thick, sun tanned hand, walks a German man in his sixties. He stops beside the girl and looks up into the face of the moon. The girl reaches up to take his hand. The little girl is the nine-year old YOUNG VALERIE, and the man beside her is her GRANDFATHER. He speaks with a slight accent.

YOUNG VALERIE

It's beautiful, isn't it, Grandpa?

GRANDFATHER

Yes it is.

YOUNG VALERIE

Can we get closer?

GRANDFATHER

Not in this flat land.

VALERIE

I want to go there. Like the astronauts did.

GRANDFATHER

You don't need to go there. You are the moon.

VALERIE

No I'm not.

GRANDFATHER

Who are you?

VALERIE

I'm your granddaughter, silly.

GRANDFATHER

No, who are you?

VALERIE

I'm Valerie Whitehawk.

GRANDFATHER

But who are you?

VALERIE

I'm a girl. A Cherokee. An American.

Her Grandfather shakes his head and smiles as he kneels down beside her. He stretches his arm out behind her ear.

GRANDFATHER

Do you see that tree at the base of the hill?

VALERIE

Yes.

GRANDFATHER

You are that tree, Valerie. And this stalk of wheat here. You are this stalk of wheat. And that stone by your foot. You are that stone, Valerie. Just as you are the breeze blowing against your face, and the sky above, and the moon. You are the moon, Valerie. So you do not need to go there. You understand?

Valerie looks from her grandfather's face to the face of the moon above.

VALERIE

Maybe. What about Mommy and Daddy? What are they now that they're gone?

GRANDFATHER

They are Spirit. Just like you.

He reaches up to stroke her hair.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

They are always with you. As I will
always be with you.

The Young Valerie peeks from beneath the arm of her grandfather and looks up one last time at the moon, floating in a sea of stars.

INT. HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

A tear sparkles slightly in the moonlight as it slides across Valerie's face, to be caught by a finger and pulled away. Vareem stands beside Valerie in the pale light. She slides into his arms and he kisses her neck as he holds her, gently stroking her hair. Above them a single cloud passes in front of the moon, seeming to sever it in half.

INT. NICHOLAS MARTIN'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Color images of two spheres sit side by side on two separate computer monitors. Robotic arms surround one sphere and the other rests against a curtain of stars. Nicholas Martin pulls his eyes away from the screens and glares at his staff, which has doubled to eight.

NICHOLAS

They're definitely connected then?

Nicholas Martin's office as become a command center, cluttered with computers and office machines. One of his dark suited staff, a blond man in his thirties named MR. NESSON steps forward.

MR. NESSON

There is no direct evidence to
connect them, but the circumstantial
evidence is fairly conclusive.

Nicholas is silent a moment. He takes a drink from a nearby glass of tea.

NICHOLAS

How long can we keep this quiet?

MR. NESSON

The dig in Antarctica can be kept
silent as long as we want. Security
there has been flawless. No one will
know about the sphere there unless
we want them to.

NICHOLAS

And what about the other one? How much time do we have?

Ms. Jasper speaks up.

MS. JASPER

Not much. Current calculations estimate that it will reach Earth proximity within twenty-four hours. Within two it will be visible from the ground as a large comet.

NICHOLAS

How long can we tell them that it's a comet?

MR. NESSON

By the time it was on the net, it would be obvious that it's not a comet.

Nicholas is silent again. He gets up from his desk and walks over to the window. The moon can be seen behind the capitol building.

NICHOLAS

What about the sphere at the dig? What does it do?

MS. JASPER

At this point we have no indication that it has a function. It's inert.

NICHOLAS

What's inside it?

MR. NESSON

We can't tell. All attempts to scan the interior or penetrate the surface have failed.

NICHOLAS

We need to know what it does before the other one arrives. Arrange for a scram-jet transport for Antarctica. We leave in thirty minutes.

Nicholas turns way from the window and walks out of the room.

EXT. SPACE- EUROPA

Europa hurtles silently through space, its comet-like tail reaching out thousands of miles behind it. The surface liquid has nearly disappeared, leaving a shiny silver moon glimmering in the sun. Earth is clearly visible ahead of the speeding celestial enigma.

INT. HOTEL ROOM- MORNING

Valerie's eyes snap open. Vareem's hand is on her shoulder. He leans down and kisses her lightly.

VAREEM

I have to go. There's an emergency press conference in D.C..

VALERIE

What for?

VAREEM

They haven't said, but rumor is that their going to come clean about the quakes.

Valerie sighs and climbs out of bed, putting on a robe. Vareem is already dressed.

VALERIE

When does your plane leave?

VAREEM

Two hours. I have to get a chopper to Orlando and fly from there. The airport here is still down.

Valerie takes his hand.

VALERIE

Be careful, okay.

VAREEM

I don't spend my days walking through collapsing buildings. It's you I worry about.

Valerie places his hand to her face.

VALERIE

I'll be fine. You're the best friend I have. You know that?

Vareem places his hand on her cheek.

VAREEM

Have you thought about it?

Valerie sighs.

VALERIE

I don't think I'm ready, Vareem. It's too big a step right now.

VAREEM

It just seems like a big step.

VALERIE

I just don't... I can't right now. Do you understand?

VAREEM

Not really.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Valerie and Vareem hold each other's gaze a moment longer and then break away as Valerie goes to the door. She opens the door to reveal a young bald African American man in his thirties. He wears a dark suit and his name is MR. DAVIS.

MR. DAVIS

Valerie Whitehawk?

VALERIE

Yes, that's me.

MR. DAVIS

I represent Dr. Nicholas Martin. He requests a meeting with you. I am to escort you to him immediately.

VALERIE

He'll have to phone me. I'm very busy here.

MR. DAVIS

He needs to see you in person and he said to inform you that this was an urgent matter regarding national security.

VALERIE

More urgent than searching for survivors of the quake?

MR. DAVIS

Far more urgent, Ma'am.

Valerie looks at Vareem and then back at Mr. Davis.

VALERIE

Let me get dressed.

MR. DAVIS

Certainly. I'll wait down stairs
with the car.

Mr. Davis nods slightly and then leaves, closing the door behind him. Valerie watches him go and then turns to Vareem, finding him staring out the balcony door.

VAREEM

Look at that.

Valerie steps up beside him.

VALERIE

I hope it's a good sign.

VAREEM

It never was in ancient times. Who's
Nicholas Martin?

VALERIE

A man I worked for once.

Valerie shields her eyes as she looks up at the bright white comet in the sky.

EXT. COAST OF ANTARCTICA- DAY

A large, black, diamond shaped flying wing SCREAMS through the air as it drops out of the sky and speeds along the Antarctic coastline. The flying wing slows slightly as the archeological dig around the ancient city appears.

INT. PASSENGER CABIN OF FLYING WING- DAY

Valerie looks out the window, her jaw dropping slightly as she sees the ancient pyramids and buildings that line the coast.

EXT. ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG- DAY

White-hot jets ignite along the underside of the flying wing as it nears the crude landing strip between the weather-domes of the dig site. The aircraft hovers and then slowly descends to the tarmac. As it does so, several people in parkas run from the nearest weather-dome toward the plane. A door opens and a ladder descends from the flying wing, Valerie stepping cautiously down the rungs. As she reaches the ground, Nicholas Martin reaches out his hand and yells over the LOUD WHINE of the jet engines.

NICHOLAS

Thank you for coming Dr. Whitehawk.
Please forgive my crude invitation.

VALERIE

I hope you have a good excuse.

Nicholas forces a smile and gestures toward one of the larger weather domes.

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

Valerie, Nicholas and several of his dark suited staff step into the outer chamber of the lab. They remove their coats and walk into the main lab where Lawrence and Marie are waiting.

VALERIE

I'd heard it was warmer down here,
but I never imagined it was this warm.

LAWRENCE

If it weren't for the weather, we never
would have found this place.

NICHOLAS

Allow me to introduce Dr. Howard and his
assistant, Dr. Chabrie. They head the
project here.

VALERIE

And what project might that be?

She looks around the room at the various artifacts and photos of the site. The observation room behind the glass wall is shrouded in darkness.

NICHOLAS

I think it would be best if Dr. Howard
explain that.

Lawrence steps forward and shakes Valerie's hand.

LAWRENCE

Yes. Right. The short version. Basically it goes like this. You're standing just outside the oldest known human city. Our best estimates place it being at least ten thousand years old. About five thousand years older than Summeria or Egypt. Two years ago global warming increased the local temperature and revealed the city in infrared satellite photos. We began digging shortly thereafter, the increasing temperature of the sub-arctic air currents helping us.

VALERIE

So why is it a secret? What did you find?

MARIE

It first nothing.

NICHOLAS

The secrecy was due to other concerns.

LAWRENCE

Before we found the city there was a theory that an ancient civilization, existing thousands of years before our recorded history, was destroyed in a world cataclysm caused by the shifting of the Earth's axis. This civilization inhabited a continent that slipped very suddenly and violently from a near-tropical latitude to where you stand now. At the bottom of the world.

VALERIE

I still don't understand why you'd keep this a secret.

LAWRENCE

Several reasons.

NICHOLAS

National proprietary concerns toward what ever technology might be discovered and the fear that evidence of a previous world cataclysm would ignite uncontrollable panic, given the increase of earthquakes and the theories about a current shift in the Earth's axis, it seemed wise to be circumspect with our discoveries.

MARIE

You see, the Earth is not solid. When the axis of the core shifts, the crust at the surface, the land masses, the continents, may or may not shift with it.

VALERIE

Which is what's happening now?

NICHOLAS

To the best of our knowledge, yes.

VALERIE

And you're hoping to find something here that will tell us how we can save ourselves.

LAWRENCE

We may have found that something.

Lawrence flicks a switch and the lights in the observation room flash to life, exposing the massive silver sphere that sits on the other side of the glass. Valerie gasps and steps forward.

VALERIE

What is it?

MARIE

I wish we knew.

VALERIE

I don't understand. If you've found it, what do you need me for?

NICHOLAS

Because something else has been discovered as well.

Valerie looks from the silver sphere to the reflection of Nicholas, hovering beside it in the glare of the glass.

EXT. SPACE- EUROPA

The liquid surface has boiled away and the comet tail is gone. Europa is now an enormous silver moon-sphere, slowing down rapidly as it nears the Earth.

INT. ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

Valerie leans against a table for support as she silently listens to Nicholas speak. Beside him Ms. Jasper runs through a series of video images on a computer illustrating what Nicholas is saying.

NICHOLAS

...What little we do know is that Europa, Jupiter's second largest moon, left it's orbit nearly thirty-six hours ago. Approximately the same time this sphere was discovered encased in a sheath of stone. While it possesses no obvious means of propulsion it accelerated out of Jupiter's orbit at nearly thirty gees on a trajectory toward Earth. As it accelerated the surface layer of ice was melted away, we believe from below, vaporizing and becoming a tail of ice crystals, visible from Earth as the comet most people saw last night. That tail has now disappeared, as no more surface water remains. What does remain is a large silver sphere slightly smaller than our own moon and having nearly two thirds the mass. And assuming it continues to decelerate at it's current rate it will enter a polar orbit just inside that of the moon's where it will easily be visible during the day. Within the hour in fact. As we speak, a joint international press conference is about to begin. A statement will be made that will hopefully keep the world from falling into a state of chaotic panic. However, I think we can expect the worst as the only thing we can reveal is what little of the truth we know.

Valerie is silent as she turns from Nicholas to the silver sphere in the observation room.

VALERIE

What is it? Or who is it?

NICHOLAS

That's what we're hoping you can tell us. All attempts at communication with the approaching sphere have been futile. It is our hope that the connection between the two spheres is more than coincidental.

VALERIE

What can I do?

LAWRENCE

Tell us what's inside of it. We've tried everything; x-rays, infrared, sonics, lasers, but nothing penetrates the sphere. It was encased in stone, carved especially to fit around it with seams so small we missed them at first.

VALERIE

Why encase it in stone?

MARIE

We don't know. We can't identify the metal it's made of, but it's not dense enough to be solid. There must be something inside.

NICHOLAS

We need you to tell us what that something is.

The room is silent as they stare at Valerie. She turns away from them to stare at the mysterious silver globe beyond the glass.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE WHITE HOUSE- DAY

A clear color photo of the approaching silver sphere dominates the projection screens in the crowded press conference room. At the lectern an African-American woman in her late fifties is speaking. Vareem presses forward, looking from the woman to one of the nearby monitors where her image can be seen, the title beneath her reading "President of the United States".

PRESIDENT

... This is the situation at present. Hourly statements will be made as we learn more. I wish to stress that I am in constant communication with the leaders of the world's nations and we are taking every precaution to ensure the safety of all citizens everywhere. And let me state again, that there has been no evidence that this situation poses a threat, particularly to the United States or...

As the President continues her statement, Vareem edges toward the door and slides out of the room.

EXT. STEPS OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING- DAY

Vareem steps from the building and pulls his Flipcom from his jacket. He taps the screen and Mi Ling appears.

VAREEM

Are you getting all this?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

From six hundred different cameras.

VAREEM

How about one more?

Vareem pulls his camera from his jacket and aims it at the silver moon-sphere hanging in the blue sky, just opposite the real moon, and above the Capitol building. He watches the image on a small display screen, adjusting the focus with one hand while holding his Flipcom with the other.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Got it. Add a polarizing filter.

Vareem taps a button with his finger and the image clears slightly.

VAREEM

Did you notice what they didn't mention in the press release?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

The phrase "Alien Contact?"

VAREEM

No. The word "Earthquake." Pipe me the White House feed here and let me know when they shut down. I'll do live analysis from the streets of Washington. And run a image-engine search for the best Joe Public shots of this thing on the net.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

I'm already on it.

The image of Mi Ling moves to the side and is joined by the image of the President speaking. Vareem keeps one eye on the President and one eye on the silver sphere above.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE- EARTH ORBIT

The silver moon sits silently in Earth orbit, waiting, its mirror-like surface reflecting a stretched vision of the Earth, the moon and the sun.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL LAB- DAY

The silver sphere shimmers in the middle of the observation room, reflecting the light from above into Valerie's face. She stands alone in the room, dressed in white plastic overalls and a clear plastic hood. Behind the safety glass, Nicholas stands with Lawrence, Marie and the rest of the dark suited staff.

Valerie stares intently at the sphere, slowly walking around it, her breath deep and regular. She stops, leaning close to the sphere. Reaching out a gloved hand, she touches it. She turns toward Nicholas and the others.

VALERIE

Has anyone touched it with their bare hands?

LAWRENCE (ON LOUD SPEAKER)

Yes. Several people, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it's safe.

Valerie turns back to the sphere, removing her gloves and plastic hood. Tentatively she reaches out her arms and gently lays her fingers on the silver surface of the sphere. She eases forward and lets her palms lay flush against the metal. She stares at her reflection in the surface of the sphere, looking deep into her own eyes. Slowly, she relaxes, and breathes in deeply.

INSERT: DOUBLE EXPOSURE IMAGE OF VALERIE AND THE SPHERE. FAST FADE TO: THE SILVER MOON IN ORBIT ABOVE THE EARTH; THE ANCIENT ANTARCTIC CITY NEW AND FILLED WITH PEOPLE AND LUSH GREEN TREES; FACTORY CHIMNEYS SPEWING CLOUDS OF SOOT INTO THE AIR; YOUNG VALERIE WATCHING AS HER GRANDFATHER TEACHES HER HOW TO PLANT CORN;

Valerie raises her hands to her head.

INSERT: IMAGES OF AUTOMOBILES JAMMED ALONG A HIGHWAY. FAST FADE TO: HURRICANE WINDS AND MASSIVE WAVES SMASHING THE ANCIENT CITY AND IT'S PEOPLE FLEEING IN PANIC; A VAST JUNGLE FOREST STRIPPED BARE; THE YOUNG VALERIE PLAYING IN THE STREET OF A SMALL TOWN WITH FRIENDS; FISH FLOATING DEAD IN A DARK BROWN SEA; A SILVER MOON HANGING IN THE SKY ABOVE THE ANCIENT CITY AS ITS STREETS SHAKE FROM AN EARTHQUAKE BENEATH THEM; A MODERN CITY RAVAGED BY AN EARTHQUAKE; YOUNG VALERIE STANDING BESIDE TWO COFFINS WITH HER GRANDFATHER; A FAULT LINE IN THE DESERT OPENING UP;

Valerie squeezes her eyes shut tightly as her breathing quickens.

INSERT: IMAGES OF A BLOOD RED SUN FORCING IT'S WAY THROUGH THE BLACK CLOUDS ABOVE THE ANCIENT CITY. FAST FADE TO: A MASSIVE TIDAL WAVE STRIKING A COASTAL CITY; VALERIE STANDING ALONE IN THE FOREST AT NIGHT TRANSFIXED BY THE SIGHT OF THE MOON ABOVE. THE EARTH FROM ORBIT; A WOMAN IN LONG WHITE ROBES OF THE ANCIENT CITY RAISING A LARGE JAGGED KNIFE INTO THE AIR AND THEN PLUNGING IT INTO THE HEART OF A MAN TIED DOWN TO THE ALTER BEFORE HER. FADE TO: VALERIE'S EYES.

Valerie's hands slowly fall to her sides. She exhales a long breath, and then sinks to her knees.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON D.C.- DAY

Vareem rubs his eyes and holds the camera steady as he looks out over the growing crowd that has assembled in front of the White House. He opens his Flipcom open and sees Mi Ling.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

What's up boss?

VAREEM

I'm going to wade into the fray and do some live interviews. Get ready back me up with some hot splice footage.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Copy that. I've got some awesome image coming in from London. Amazing night shots of the thing. People looting, buildings on fire, great stuff.

VAREEM

Good. Hey, have I got any messages there from Val?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

None. You expecting one?

VAREEM

No. Just playing mother hen. Do me a favor, run a search and see what you can find on a Dr. Nicholas Martin.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

New playmate of yours?

VAREEM

Maybe. I'm on. I see a live one.

Vareem closes the FlipCom and pulls a slender microphone from his jacket as he walks toward a man in a white sheet carrying a placard that reads "PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME BEHIND AGAIN- TAKE ME NOW!"

INT. OFFICE IN WEATHER DOME- LATE DAY

Valerie sits on a plush chair sipping a cup of coffee. Lawrence, Marie, Mr. Nesson, and Ms. Jasper are standing behind a small video camera. Valerie can see her own image on a nearby monitor. Through a window Nicholas can be seen in the next-door office watching Valerie on a similar monitor as he speaks into a FlipCom. Marie refills Valerie's coffee.

LAWRENCE

A sacrifice you say?

VALERIE

I don't know. That's what it looked like.

MR. NESSON

But what is actually inside of it?

VALERIE

I don't know. It saw inside of me more than I saw inside of it.

MS. JASPER

But you're saying you did see something.

VALERIE

Something yes. It was like it was communicating with me. Trying to explain why it's here.

MARIE

The sphere in orbit, you mean?

VALERIE

Yes. This one is like a conduit.
Like a FlipCom. It's a remote.

LAWRENCE

So, the two are connected?

VALERIE

Yes and no. Finding this sphere and Europa moving into Earth orbit is a coincidence. But they are connected to one another. That's why they encased it in stone. They were afraid of it.

MR. NESSON

But what's inside? Is it hallow?

VALERIE

I don't know. It's not all clear to me. It seems like Europa moving into orbit has something to do with the earthquakes.

MS. JASPER

You'll pardon me for being blunt, but is there any solid evidence you can offer that these visions you claim you had while in "contact" with the artifact were in fact a communication with the artifact and not the result of imagination and misperception caused by stress and fatigue?

Valerie simply stares at Ms. Jasper as Nicholas steps into the office.

NICHOLAS

I would not have wasted the time and effort in bringing Dr. Whitehawk here if the validity of her abilities was even remotely in question.

Nicholas stares at Valerie.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Leave.

There is a slight pause and then everyone silently files out of the room, Mr. Nesson closing the door. Nicholas walks over to the video camera and turns it off. He leans against a desk and looks into Valerie's weary eyes.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Thank you, Valerie. I can't tell you how important this has been to us.

VALERIE

Who is us, anyway?

NICHOLAS

They same people they've always been.

VALERIE

And what happens now?

Nicholas pauses a second and then sighs.

NICHOLAS

They've decided to launch an exploratory mission to determine the nature of the sphere in orbit.

VALERIE

That'll take months.

NICHOLAS

The best estimate is three weeks for the U.N. Space Agency to quibble over who should be on the team by which time they could have one of the moon shuttles outfitted and ready.

VALERIE

Is that enough time?

NICHOLAS

It doesn't matter. That's the public mission. The central council is assembling a team that will use an experimental U.S. spacecraft to launch within thirty-six hours. It is my recommendation that you be made a member of that team.

VALERIE

What if I don't want to go?

NICHOLAS

That's your decision. I'm asking you to go, not just as a favor to me, but because I think your presence may be the only chance the mission has of success. I was watching your statement from the other room. You may very well know more about what's happening than anyone else on the planet.

VALERIE

I need a little time to think about it.

NICHOLAS

We're taking the transport plane out of here in ten minutes. That'll give you nearly two hours before we land in Washington. I need to know by then. Things are happening fast. If we don't find out what this thing means soon, we may not have to worry about it turning out to be hostile. We'll have done the work ourselves.

Nicholas looks into Valerie's eyes a moment longer and then walks out of the room. In the other office, Valerie can see Lawrence and Marie watching the net news on a computer screen. Valerie stands up and walks to the window. On the screen, Vareem can be seen before a street with several buildings in flames and people running past him in mass panic.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON- NIGHT

Vareem grabs his floating camera just before a mindless citizen smacks into it. He holds the camera at arms length, the small view screen turned toward him, so he can see his own image in one half, and the images that MI LING is editing in on the other half.

VAREEM

As you can see the reaction to the silent visitor in the sky has not been a clam and reasoned one. Base

INSERT: VAREEM ON NET VIDEO

VAREEM (CONT'D ON VIDEO)

animal passions have taken over and people are scrambling like savages to steal and hide. Fear and fire are the (MORE)

INSERT: IMAGES OF SHOPS BEING LOOTED. BUILDINGS ON FIRE. PEOPLE RUNNING THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE WORLD'S CITIES.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)
 watchwords of the night. The scene here in Washington is typical in cities through out the world. People looting and running widely through the streets trying to find some sense of safety,

INSERT: PEOPLE IN MASS PANIC IN DIFFERENT CITIES BENEATH NIGHT SKY IMAGES OF THE SILVER MOON.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)
 not so much from the silent silver moon in the sky above their heads, but from their neighbors, who have turned into mindless mobs, looking for false security

INSERT: IMAGES OF POLICE AND RIOT SQUADS ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL THE MOBS IN CITIES AROUND THE WORLD. SOLDIERS CLEARING PEOPLE FROM THE STREETS IN CHINA, RUSSIA, BRITAIN AND INDIA.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)
 in numbers. The police have their hands full and the national guard here is seemingly ineffective. Elsewhere in the world, nations are being forced send their troops against their own citizens. The only

INSERT: IMAGES OF PEOPLE PRESSED INTO CATHEDRALS, CHURCHES, MASQUES, SYNAGOGUES, AND SACRED SITES. IMAGES OF PEOPLE PRAYING, LIGHTING CANDLES, SINGING, AND LISTENING TO IMPASSIONED SERMONS.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)
 pockets of peace through out the world seem to be at religious sites; churches, temples, masques, monasteries and Cathedrals. In this time of fear and confusion, the only sanctuary from the madness of the mysterious new moon appears to be the time honored refuge of religion. Those not

INSERT: IMAGES OF PEOPLE BARRICADING THEMSELVES INSIDE THEIR HOMES, BOARDING UP WINDOWS, STOCKPILING FOOD AND WATER, AND ARMING THEMSELVES WITH RIFLES AND GUNS.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)

flocking to the streets to pillage and profit from the hysteria are either bunkered into their homes, or gathered beneath the folds of their chosen faith. We can only hope that someone is keeping their wits

INSERT: IMAGES OF WORLD LEADERS IN CONFERENCE, SCIENTISTS ON PANELS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS SPEAKING STERNLY, CITIZENS IN THE STREET SPEAKING CALMLY AND LOOKING UP INTO THE SKY.

VAREEM CONT'D V.O.)

about them, and thinking beyond the fear to question what this mysterious appearance means and what, if anything, humanity can do to proceed from the chaos we have fallen into, toward peace, knowledge and understanding.

BACK TO VAREEM ON LIVE NET VIDEO:

VAREEM (CONT'D)

This is Vareem Thapur reporting from the fire strewn streets of Washington D.C. Check out the theories between our anonymous visitor and the rash of world earthquakes on our web site at headline.news.

INSERT: IMAGE OF LEAD LINE LOGO

BACK TO VAREEM:

Vareem pulls the camera away and pops his Flipcom open while running to the safety of a lamppost. Mi Ling stares at him from the small screen.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Boss, get the hell out of there. I can grab this stuff off of security cameras if I need to.

VAREEM

Yeah, I think you're right. I'm going hit a few churches and see what the human interest angle is.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Copy. I'll snag some live feeds off the net. There's a crowd of ten thousand gathering at Stonehenge.

VAREEM

Great. We can use that as the lead.
I'll buzz when I've got something.

Vareem closes his Flipcom and looks around. Through the smoke and haze, he sees a church steeple several blocks away.

INT. AIRCRAFT- NIGHT

Valerie looks out the window at the fires in the streets of Washington D.C.. She pulls a Flipcom from her jacket.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON- NIGHT

Vareem has his camera raised high in the air as he presses through a crowd outside a Baptist church. The crowd is so large that it fills the street and the PASTOR has been forced to stand on a chair outside the vestibule, shouting into a megaphone.

PASTOR

... And do any of you doubt that this is the work of the Devil? Does God's messenger come sneaking silent into the sky? No, this is not the way of our Lord. But our Lord can save us. He can help us now in our time of need. In our time of confusion. He can guide us to the answers. He can steel us against the steel ball of the Devil. All you have to do is ask Jesus to save you...

Vareem's Flipcom chimes. He steps back from the crowd, keeping the camera trained on the Pastor with one hand while opening the Flipcom with the other. Valerie's face fills the screen.

VAREEM

Val!

VALERIE (ON SCREEN)

Are you okay?

VAREEM

I'm fine. How are you?

VALERIE (ON SCREEN)

I've been a hell of a lot better.

VAREEM

What happened?

VALERIE (ON SCREEN)

I need you to meet me at Dulles
airport as soon as possible.

VAREEM

What's wrong?

VALERIE (ON SCREEN)

I'll explain when I see you.

Valerie forces a smile and then the screen goes blank. Vareem lowers his camera and taps the screen of the FlipCom. Mi Ling appears.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

I heard. I'll cover with some
freelance footage while your at
the airport.

Vareem stares at her image.

INT. LEAD LINE NEWS EDIT BAY- NIGHT

Mi Ling sits before the screens editing while she talks to Vareem.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

I wish you'd stop listening to my calls.

MI LING

It's my job to stay on top of things.
Val doesn't sound good. I got the
dirt you wanted on that Dr. Martin slag.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Drop it down to me. I'll skim it
on the way to airport. Assuming I can
find a cab in this hellscape.

MI LING

That reminds me, I have some great
Heironomus Bosch paintings to cut in.
And don't bother with a cab. I tracked
you and ordered a personal chopper like
the Senators use. If it can land,
you'll be there in ten minutes.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

You're the best, Mi Ling.

MI LING

Keep that in mind the next time I ask
for a raise.

Mi Ling's taps a button and closes the video link.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON- NIGHT

Mi Ling's image snaps out and Vareem looks up into the sky where a small helicopter is THUNDERING downward momentarily covering the silver moon.

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT- NIGHT

Valerie stands at the window watching the helicopter with Vareem land. He jumps from the chopper and runs toward the entrance. Walking through the door he immediately spots Valerie and walks over to her, wrapping his arms around her. She is weary, but returns the embrace with strength

VALERIE

Thank you for coming so soon.

VAREEM

You can thank Mi Ling, as usual.

VALERIE

I need to talk to you.

Valerie pulls Vareem away from the door and closer to the windows.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I can't tell you much. They don't
trust anyone, and especially not
reporters.

VAREEM

Who are they?

VALERIE

Dr. Martin and the people he works for.

VAREEM

Who does he work for?

VALERIE

I don't know. Not exactly.

VAREEM

I'll tell you. He answers to a group of people that don't answer to anyone. Mi Ling did some research. He's got his fingers in everything. You know he was the chair of the U.N. Intelligence Agency from 2005 to 2008?

VALERIE

I know. I did some work for him during the Germany crisis in 2007. He's a good man.

VAREEM

I don't trust him.

VALERIE

That's why I need you're advice. This is confidential and you have to swear to me you will not use this.

Vareem's face tightens, and he looks out the window where the silver moon can be seen in the night sky.

VAREEM

Okay.

VALERIE

In the morning the U.N. will announce a joint international mission through the U.N. Space Agency to explore the visitor close up. It's a smoke screen. The real mission will launch in thirty some odd hours and they want me on it.

VAREEM

Why you?

VALERIE

I can't go into that, but I have certain knowledge that might be important.

VAREEM

Gained how?

VALERIE

How do you think?

VAREEM

And if you go?

VALERIE

This will be the last time you see me until it's over. Maybe the last time ever.

VAREEM

I don't know, Val. I don't trust them, and I don't think you should trust them, but what's your gut tell you?

Valerie bites her lip.

VALERIE

I'm afraid. Not for my safety, but something else. I feel it pulling me strongly. And it frightens me because I don't know why, but I feel that it wants something. Something from me, personally.

VAREEM

I don't understand.

VALERIE

I don't know that I do.

Nicholas Martin steps up from behind Vareem.

NICHOLAS

I hate to intrude, but I need your answer, Dr. Whitehawk.

Valerie turns and looks deep into Vareem's eyes. She sees what she is looking for and turns to Nicholas.

VALERIE

I'll be ready to go in a moment.

NICHOLAS

Thank you. Again. The plane takes off in five minutes. Mr. Thapur.

Nicholas nods to Vareem and steps away, quickly joined by his staff as he walks toward a gate at the end of the terminal. Vareem reaches into his pocket and pulls out a ring. Taking her hand, he places it on Valerie's finger.

VALERIE

Vareem...

VAREEM

I've been carrying it around in my pocket for months. This may be the last chance I have to put it on your finger.

Valerie reaches inside her shirt to remove a silver chain. Hanging from it is an amulet and a ring. She unclips the amulet from the necklace and hands it to Vareem.

VALERIE

It's Buddhist. It's for love and peace.

Vareem holds the amulet lightly.

VAREEM

You'd better get going.

VALERIE

Soulmates?

VAREEM

Always.

Valerie kisses Vareem quickly but deeply, and then turns and walks toward Dr. Martin and his staff. Vareem watches her go and then looks out the window at the sight of the silver Visitor hanging in the sky beside the moon.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. SPACE- ORBIT OF THE SPHERE

The reflection of the Earth is distorted and bent across the surface of the giant silver sphere.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Sand and sagebrush roll out for miles toward the horizon. The sky above is blue. From over the distant mountain a jet aircraft streaks through the air, close to the ground, heading toward a mass of low buildings in the middle of the desert.

EXT. MILITARY BASE- DAY

The jet aircraft lands along one of several runways at the base. Surrounding the runways are hundreds of buildings, aircraft hangers, and a control tower. One of the larger aircraft hangers sits father out from the others, a long, wide asphalt pad beside it.

INT. AIRCRAFT HANGER- DAY

Twice the length of a football field and half again as wide, the aircraft hanger is awash in the bright white glow of hundreds of lights suspended from the rafters far above the ground. In the center of the hanger, surrounded by a cluttered array of machines and technicians, is a large black craft. The craft is nearly sixty meters long and looks like an egg that has been elongated lengthwise and stretched from the side to form two stubby wings. The craft rests on four large extended legs and exhaust engines can be seen at the rear of the craft as well as underneath.

Valerie is walking across the hanger toward the spacecraft with several technicians. She and the others all wear blue overalls. A metal staircase leads up from the floor to the spacecraft's side hatch. Valerie follows a man and woman up the staircase and into the spacecraft.

INT. SPACECRAFT- DAY

The white interior of the spacecraft is a stark contrast to its black exterior. The man and woman leading Valerie through the open airlock and down a thin corridor are JEAN VALLEE and NOBUKO MORI respectively.

Jean is a thin, lean man in his early forties, with a stern face, but soft forgiving eyes. In contrast, Nobuko is beautiful Japanese woman whose features appear to imply tenderness, but whose eyes radiate strength and power.

Jean and Nobuko are leading Valerie from the airlock, through a space suit chamber, a tiny general room, and finally to the flight deck. Several technicians are swarming over the room checking the workstations and controls.

JEAN

This is where we will be for most of
the mission.

NOBUKO

You'll be sitting at one of the monitor stations. Jean and I will up front in the cockpit.

JEAN

This ship is actually a test module and while normally there is room for only two pilots and a single passenger we're cannibalizing some of the cabin space for an extra chair, as well as food and oxygen.

VALERIE

Why is it such a secret?

JEAN

Well... Most of the big nations signed this silly treaty that they wouldn't use nuclear powered spacecraft.

NOBUKO

So, officially, this ship doesn't exist.

JEAN

And for all purposes except taxes, neither do we.

VALERIE

And who's the other passenger?

Nobuko leans in, conspiratorial.

NOBUKO

His name is Paulo Lebinov. He's from UN Intelligence.

JEAN

We don't know much more than that about him. We were hoping you might know something.

VALERIE

I've never heard of him. What agency are you two from?

Now it's Jean's turn to lean in and suggest a need for secrecy.

JEAN

Unofficially, we're part of the U.S. Airforce.

NOBUKO

We were assigned to this mission because we're the only two people qualified to fly the egg. Officially the technology is from the US.

NOBUKO

But, unofficially a lot of it comes from Japan and the Euro Space Agency. Jean will pilot and I'll act as relief.

JEAN

Even though she has more hours.

NOBUKO

Because officially, I'm a not US citizen and that makes the big boys nervous.

JEAN

You'll get a briefing on your monitor station. It's not hard. Just like using a computer.

NOBUKO

First you need to get checked out on the suit.

They begin to make their way back toward the airlock. Jean leans in again. He smiles.

JEAN

If you don't mind my asking, what is your responsibility on this mission?

Nobuko places a hand on Valerie's shoulder as she guides her through the airlock.

NOBUKO

They only told us ten hours ago there was a mission, so we're a little in the dark.

Valerie stops and leans in toward Jean and Nobuko.

VALERIE

I think Dr. Martin would refer to me as reconnaissance.

Valerie turns and steps through the airlock as Jean flashes Nobuko a look of concern.

EXT. SURFACE OF THE SPHERE- EARTH ORBIT

The Earth rises slowly over the horizon of the silver landscape. The surface of the sphere is smooth and featureless, but gradually a crack appears. The crack expands into a circle and grows rapidly in size, until there is a massive black hole several kilometers wide in the face of the sphere. The Earth above is reflected on the silver surface of the sphere as the first small, two hundred meter wide, silver sphere shoots forth from the black portal that has opened on the surface. It is only a moment before another smaller sphere, and another, and another, and then hundreds, begin pouring out of the portal.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT- SPACE

The smaller, two hundred meter wide, silver spheres, speed away from the silver moon, slowing as they reach Earth orbit and descend into the blue planet's atmosphere.

EXT. STONEHENGE- SUNRISE

Thousands have gathered at the site of the ancient stone monoliths. Most are still asleep, leaning on each other as they sit on the ground, or as they lie atop their cars. A YOUNG WOMAN is walking through the crowd with a bottle of water. She stops before a sleeping man and raises the bottle to her mouth, but it never makes contact, the water dripping down on the YOUNG MAN at her feet. He wipes the water off his face as he wakes up.

YOUNG MAN

Hey! What's the idea?

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Do you see that?!

YOUNG MAN

See what? Oh, Jesus!

The young man leaps to his feet and follows the young woman's gaze up into the morning sky as one of the smaller silver spheres descends from the sky to hover six hundred meters above the ancient Celtic stones

INT. BRIEFING ROOM- NIGHT

Valerie, Nobuko, Jean and several of Nicholas's staff are gathered around a large granite table. Nicholas enters with a tall handsome man of indeterminate ethnicity in his forties. The man is PAOLO LEBINOV and he takes a seat near Valerie while Nicholas remains standing. Nicholas surveys the room, catching Valerie's eyes. He notices the ring on her finger and smiles.

NICHOLAS

I'd like to introduce you all to the final member of the team, Paolo Lebinov. He comes to us from the United Nations Intelligence Agency. He was selected for this mission for his experience in space with the Russian Federation as well as his knowledge of physics and that fact that he was one of the primary authors of the UN's Alpha Report, which outlined the courses of action in a situation like the one we are dealing with now.

Nicholas gestures to Mr. Jasper, who darkens the room lights and turns on a large monitor screen at the far end of the room.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

The first thing you should all know is that we've bumped up the launch time by six hours. This is due to the latest development.

The monitor screen fills with the image of the Silver sphere; it's massive portal open and hundreds of smaller spheres shooting out.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

This image was captured by the orbital telescope platform two hours ago. The opening, or portal for lack of a better word, is nearly five kilometers in diameter. Each of these smaller spheres is roughly a two hundred meters in diameter.

The image on the screen changes to show an orbital shot of the small spheres above the Earth.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

The smaller spheres entered the Earth's atmosphere about an hour ago. Although they were tracked on radar by several countries, there was no attempt to interfere with their flight path. This is largely be due to the fact that they were traveling at something near mach nine until they reached their destinations.

The screen is filled with a series of images from around the world, of spheres hovering above ancient sacred sites and cities.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Each of these smaller spheres is now hovering between half a kilometer and three kilometers above either ancient religious sites or ancient cities, including the site in Antarctica. We suspect that there is some connection between these ancient sites and the sphere's ultimate purpose. As we have come to expect, all attempts at communication with these smaller spheres has been unsuccessful. There is however one thing very interesting about their presence.

The image on the screen is filled with people from the various sacred sites. Paolo takes his glasses from his face and begins to clean them on a handkerchief.

PAOLO

They're calm.

NICHOLAS

More than just calm.

JEAN

You would think they'd panic.

NICHOLAS

People are panicking.

The image on the screen fills with people looting and attacking each other in the streets. Nobuko absentmindedly plays with a small silver cross that dangles with her dog tags.

NOBUKO

But not in the cities where the
spheres are?

NICHOLAS

No. Everywhere a sphere has appeared,
the people are apparently calm
and sedate, as though they were
waiting.

JEAN

Waiting for what?

NICHOLAS

We assume they're waiting for
some kind of communication.

PAULO

Signs from God.

NOBUKO

At least they're not paying to them.

Jean stars at the cross Nobuko is playing with. She notice him
and stops.

NICHOLAS

That may not be to far off.

VALERIE

Not signs.

Jean looks at his watch and at the systems screens for the
Pegasus.

JEAN

How does this affect the mission?

PAOLO

(To Valerie.)

What?

NICHOLAS

That's why we've bumped up the launch
time.

PAOLO

You were saying something about
waiting for signs.

VALERIE

Not signs. Visions. The ancients didn't wait for signs, they waited for visions that could be interpreted as signs. These people are waiting for visions.

Valerie stares at the image of thousands of people silently standing and staring up into the sky at the ancient site of Stonehenge.

EXT. STONEHENGE- MORNING

VIDEO IMAGE: PEOPLE STARING UP AT THE HOVERING SILVER SPHERE ABOVE STONEHENGE.

VAREEM (V.O.)

What is their purpose and what does their presence mean? People around the world wait in silent anticipation as the silver spheres hover quietly above them.

INSERT: IMAGE: PEOPLE IN PANIC THROUGH OUT THE WORLD'S CITIES.

VAREEM (V.O. CONT'D)

In contrast to the chaos which has engulfed much of the world, the calm here is almost unnerving. Why do these people seem so at peace? What do they know?

NORMAL SCREEN IMAGE:

Vareem approaches an ELDERLY WOMAN near the center of the ever-growing crowd.

VAREEM (CONT'D)

Excuse me Ma'am, Vareem Thapur from Lead Line News. Can you tell us why you've come here today?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I had to.

VAREEM

Were you compelled to come here?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I just had to.

VAREEM

But how did you know to come here?
To this place?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I just knew.

VAREEM

And what are you waiting for?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I don't know.

VAREEM

But you're waiting patiently for
something?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I'll know when it happens.

VAREEM

And you're not worried that this
sphere above you might be something
dangerous.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Why would I be worried about that?

The Elderly Woman smiles and Vareem turns to the camera.

VAREEM

And so, like the people here at
Stonehenge, we all wait, wondering
what, if anything this latest development
means. Will we have to wait for the
recently announced joint space mission
for the answers, or will the mission
be too late? For the hottest theories
on the net, check our site at
headline.news. This is Vareem Thapur
reporting from Stonehenge, England.

Vareem grabs his camera and walks through the crowd toward the
outer edge. And he walks he grabs his Flipcom and opens it, the
small screen filled with the image of Mi Ling.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

I can't do it.

VAREEM

I haven't asked for anything yet.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

You want me to find a way to get
you to the other sites.

VAREEM

So?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

I had enough trouble finding you a
a flight to England. Travel is
out of the question. Airports
won't even let planes take off
anymore.

VAREEM

Then find me somebody who doesn't
need to land at an airport.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

You're going to flying by carrier
pigeon?

VAREEM

Just as long as I get there.

Vareem looks around while Mi Ling speaks.

INT. LEAD LINE NEWS EDIT BAY- NIGHT

Mi Ling takes a sip of a soda and looks at Vareem's image on the
monitor.

MI LING

Hey, I have a source on the net
who says that the joint space mission
is a cover and that there's a
secret mission launching any day.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Wait until you have two more sources
with the same info and put it on
the web site.

MI LING

You could lead in with this. This
is a solid source. We could have
the scoop.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

I made a promise.

MI LING

Do you know something I don't?

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Not enough to make a story out of.
Just find a way to get me to Egypt.

MI LING

Right.

Mi Ling taps a key and signs off while she continues to edit.

EXT. STONEHENGE- MORNING

Vareem looks up into the sky where the silver sphere hovers above the ancient circle of stones. He taps his FlipCom and tries to search for Valerie. The screen flashes the words "Access Denied!"

EXT. DESERT- NIGHT

A large rocky bluff overlooks the desert valley and the air base. The technicians are pulling the spacecraft out of the hanger and toward the center of a large concrete launch pad.

INT. MISSION CONTROL COMMISSARY- NIGHT

Nobuko and Jean are eating a late meal together, Nobuko stuffing her face while Jean picks at his plate.

JEAN

I don't care what you say, it still makes me nervous.

NOBUKO

What can you do?

JEAN

You have too much faith in people.

NOBUKO

I don't like spooks anymore than you do, but Nicholas knows his stuff.

JEAN

And why is it everyone here has worked for him.

NOBUKO

I know what you're really worried about.

JEAN

Whether or not you're going to try and eat my dinner as well?

NOBUKO

This thing we're headed to. It changes everything.

Jean rubs his eyes.

JEAN

I never believed in little green men.

Nobuko pulls her dog tags with the cross from beneath her jacket.

NOBUKO

And I never believed in my mother's adopted religion. I thought it was just a silly western idea. One more bad habit to imitate.

Paolo appears at the table with a tray.

PAOLO

And now?

Nobuko looks up.

NOBUKO

When she gave it to me on her death bed she told me I could never be sure I wasn't wrong. Maybe now I'll know for certain.

Paolo sits down beside them.

PAOLO

And what about your little green men?

JEAN

They worry me more now that I have to believe in them. I don't like having my faith forced upon me.

NOBUKO

What about you? What worries you?

Paolo adjust he glasses while carving a piece of steak.

PAOLO

I have no problem losing cherished beliefs. What frightens me is that I have no idea what I will believe tomorrow.

Paolo smiles and takes a bite of his steak.

EXT. DESERT BLUFF- NIGHT

Valerie is sitting at the top of the bluff, watching the activity below, while keeping an eye on the images that flash across her Flipcom. She spots Vareem doing a report. Tapping the screen, she goes to her email and taps in a simple message; "I miss you." Hitting send, she closes the Flipcom and slides it into her pocket and seating herself in a lotus position, closing her eyes, and breathing in deeply.

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE- DAY- FLASHBACK

Valerie, adorned in the gold and saffron robes, is meditating in the temple square, surrounded by a dozen Buddhist monks and nuns doing the same.

EXT. CEMETERY- DAY- FLASHBACK

Valerie is seated, meditating at the foot of three gravesides, the headstones in a row, two baring the name Whitehawk and one the name Geothe. A weathered hand appears on her shoulder.

INT. KITCHEN OF SMALL CABIN- SUNSET- FLASHBACK

Valerie is seated at the kitchen table, looking out at the setting sun, her Grandfather standing behind her, his hand on her shoulder.

VALERIE

But where do they come from?

GRANDFATHER

That's hard to say. Visions come from many places. Jung would say the collective unconscious.

VALERIE

I know what Jung would say, but
what do you think?

GRANDFATHER

I think you should worry more about
what they mean than were they come
from.

Valerie stares into the setting sun.

INSERT: IMAGES OF THE SUN SETTING BEHIND A DESERT DUNE. FAST FADE
TO: THE SUN SETTING ON A DEAD FOREST; THE SUN SETTING ON A
DESERTED CITY; THE SUN SETTING ON A DECAYING FACTORY; THE SUN
SETTING ON AN EMPTY HIGHWAY; THE SUN SETTING OVER A MAYAN TEMPLE
SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE; THE SUN SETTING OVER THE ANCIENT CITY IN
THE ANTARCTIC; PEOPLE RUN IN PANIC THROUGH THE CITY STREETS;
ABOVE IN THE SKY IS A GIANT SILVER MOON; AS THE SUN SETS ON THE
TEMPLE, BLOOD RUNS DOWN ITS STEPS.

FADE TO:

EXT. DESERT- MORNING

Valerie opens her eyes to see the sun rising over the air base,
the spacecraft sitting like a shiny black egg on the tarmac.
Valerie stands up and begins to walk down to the air base as a
mechanical walkway is extended from the hanger to the hatch on
the side of the spacecraft.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- MORNING

The room housing mission control is windowless, but filled with
video screens and computer monitors as well as several dozen
technicians. Nicholas walks up to a heavyset woman in her
fifties who is looking around the room. Her name is ANDREA
MARIUS, and she is the head of operations.

NICHOLAS

We found her. She'll be ready in
ten minutes.

ANDREA

Where the hell was she?

NICHOLAS

She took a walk.

ANDREA

(To Nicholas.)

You vouched for this woman, so I hope you know what your doing.

(To the room.)

Okay people, our missing passenger has been found. We are still on schedule. Launch in fifty-two minutes. There will be no mistakes. We do not have the time.

Andrea turns back to Nicholas.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Make sure you're little friend understands that applies to her as well.

Nicholas meets Andrea's eye.

NICHOLAS

Frankly, is she weren't going I don't know that there would be a point to this mission.

Nicholas lets that sink in and then turns and walks out of the room.

EXT. LAUNCH AREA- MORNING

The spacecraft shimmers in the morning sun, technicians running along it, making last minute checks. Small white letters along the side read "U.S.S. PEGASUS".

INT. MISSION CONTROL- MORNING

The room is humming with activity as technicians verify information with flight crew on the ground as well as Nobuko and Jean in the pilot seats.

ANDREA

We'll be sealing you up as soon as everyone is on board.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Copy that Mission Control.

NOBUKO (ON MONITOR)

All on board systems are A-OKAY.

ANDREA

Copy, Nobuko. We show the reactor at seventy-five percent. You can take that up to flight level at your discretion.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Copy, Control, bringing reactor up to launch levels now.

Andrea looks up from one of the smaller monitors to the screen showing the reactor of the Pegasus.

INT. AIRLOCK CONNECTOR- MORNING

Two technicians are helping Valerie walk down the airlock connector toward the open hatch of the Pegasus. Nicholas strides down the corridor and steps up beside her.

NICHOLAS

Jasper said you wanted to see me?

VALERIE

Yes.

Nicholas looks at the technicians.

NICHOLAS

I'll take her from here.

The technicians look at each other and then back off. Nicholas helps Valerie down the corridor.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

What is it?

VALERIE

These smaller spheres are new. They didn't appear at the city you uncovered. It's here for a different reason this time.

NICHOLAS

What does it want?

VALERIE

I don't think it wants anything. I think it's going to give us something.

NICHOLAS

Give us what?

VALERIE

I don't know, but you have to maintain order. You can't let the panic get out of control. That's what happened the last time.

NICHOLAS

And what did it do?

VALERIE

It left. And I don't think we can afford to have to leave this time.

Nicholas helps Valerie place her helmet on and lock it in place. Two technicians at the hatch help her inside. Nicholas watches her disappear into the Pegasus and then turns and strides down the corridor.

INT. PEGASUS- MORNING

The two technicians strap Valerie into a chair, which has obviously been added to the compartment. Paolo gestures to her from the cockpit where he is seated behind Jean and Nobuko.

PAOLO

Glad to see you could make it.

VALERIE

I couldn't find the ladies room.

Paolo smiles back at Valerie through his helmet as the technicians leave, closing and sealing the hatch behind themselves.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- MORNING

The airlock corridor can be seen retracting on one of the monitors near Andrea and Nicholas.

ANDREA

Pegasus, all systems are in the green, you are clear for launch.

Nicholas turns to Jasper.

NICHOLAS

Get an information center set up in here. I want to be able to track all information we have access to on the sphere from this room.

JASPER

Right.

Andrea turns to Nicholas.

ANDREA

They're ready when you are.

NICHOLAS

We're ready.

ANDREA

Pegasus, begin launch sequence on my mark. Three... Two... One... Mark.

Andrea and Nicholas watch the monitors as a small flash of light appears beneath the Pegasus spacecraft.

INT. PEGASUS- MORNING

Jean and Nobuko are checking instrument panels. Jean's hand rests above a lever.

NOBUKO

Hold tight boys and girls.

Jean pulls the lever back slowly.

EXT. LAUNCH AREA- MORNING

The belly engines beneath the Pegasus flare up white-hot and the spacecraft begins to hover above the launch pad.

INT. PEGASUS- MORNING

Valerie breathes in deep as the craft shakes under the thrust of the engines.

JEAN

This won't hurt a bit.

Jean pulls the throttle lever back quickly.

EXT. LAUNCH AREA- MORNING

The Pegasus hovers for a moment and then there is an extraordinary burst of light and plasma as the rear engines flare up to full power and the spacecraft rises quickly into the air.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- MORNING

The launch team cheers as they watch the images from a dozen monitors of the Pegasus rising into the sky.

ANDREA

Calm down people. That was the easy part. It's all up hill from here on out. Medical, how are we looking?

A MEDICAL TECHNICIAN at a monitor pipes up.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

Vitals are five by five on all four astronauts... Well, except Dr. Whitehawk.

NICHOLAS

What's wrong?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

Nothing. Her heart rate and blood pressure are reading normal.

ANDREA

Then what's the problem?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

I mean normal, like nothing was happening, normal. Her heart rate is sixty beats a minute. Hell, even Captain Vallee's heart rate is up around seventy-five.

Andrea turns to Nicholas.

ANDREA

Is she all right?

Nicholas smiles and flips a switch opening a communication line for the headset he has on.

NICHOLAS

Valerie. Mission control is concerned that your heart rate is too slow.

He looks up to Andrea.

INT. PEGASUS- MORNING

Valerie opens her eyes to see Paolo staring at her.

VALERIE

How fast to they want it? I get nervous when my heart rate goes up. They don't want me nervous do they?

PAOLO

I don't know about them, but I certainly don't.

Nobuko turns to smile at Paolo and Valerie.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- MORNING

Nicholas watches the rise of the Pegasus on a monitor as he speaks into the headset.

NICHOLAS

Negative. Stay calm.

Nicholas turns the headset off as Andrea leans in near him.

ANDREA

Where did you find her anyway?

NICHOLAS

She used to work for me.

ANDREA

In what capacity, if you don't mind my asking?

NICHOLAS

Remote reconnaissance.

ANDREA

That explains a few things.

Andrea turns to watch the monitors indicating that the Pegasus has nearly escaped the Earth's atmosphere.

EXT. HIGH IN THE ATMOSPHERE- MORNING

The Pegasus thunders through the thinning air on its way into orbit. As the craft reaches orbit the engines fade and stop.

INT. PEGASUS- MORNING

Jean and Nobuko check the instrument panel as the spacecraft leaves the Earth's atmosphere.

JEAN

Mission control, this is Pegasus.
We have obtained initial orbit and
are setting primary course adjustment.

ANDREA (ON SPEAKER)

Pegasus, you are clear for primary
burn on your mark.

NOBUKO

Copy that, Control.

JEAN

On my mark. Two... One... Mark.

Nobuko flicks a switch and they are shoved back into their seats.

EXT. SPACE- LOW EARTH ORBIT

The rear engines of the Pegasus flare to life again and the craft shoots off toward a higher orbit, small bursts of retro rockets adjusting the course.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Nobuko turns to Jean and Valerie.

NOBUKO

You can relax. We have a three hour burn at one gee and then we turn the ship around and burn to slow us down.

PAOLO

Time for a data briefing.

VALERIE

Is it safe to take these helmets off?

Jean unlocks his helmet and sets it to the side.

JEAN

Not just safe, but necessary.

He grabs a small bottle from a tiny compartment and squeezes it into his mouth.

EXT. SPACE- EARTH ORBIT

The Pegasus blasts through space on a tail of white-hot plasma, rapidly leaving the Earth behind.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- MORNING

Andrea walks over to where a group of technicians are helping Nicholas's staff assemble a bank of computers.

NICHOLAS

What now?

ANDREA

Nothing until they turn the ship and burn for braking.

NICHOLAS

Good. I want to have a full briefing in four hours.

ANDREA

What do you think they'll find up there?

NICHOLAS

I'm more worried about what's going to happen down here.

Andrea leans against the table looks at Nicholas.

ANDREA

Seriously.

NICHOLAS

I am serious. This is first contact. It's a bridge you can only cross once. We're all crossing it together, and each of us will react to what we find on the other side based not on what's really waiting for us, but on our expectations of what is waiting for us.

ANDREA

And what are you expecting?

NICHOLAS

Answers.

ANDREA

There's only one question I'd ask.

NICHOLAS

What's that?

ANDREA

Where have they been all this time?

Nicholas and Andrea watch a monitor that is running an image of a silver sphere hovering above the Sphinx and pyramids of Giza.

EXT. AIR ABOVE THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZA AND THE SPHINX- SUNSET

A large black jet helicopter roars through the air above the Sphinx.

INT. JET-HELICOPTER- SUNSET

The door of the chopper is open and Vareem is leaning out, shooting the sight below with his camera. He turns to the PILOT.

VAREEM

How close can you land?

PILOT

As much as you're paying, I'll
land on top of it if you want!

VAREEM

How much did she agree to pay you?

PILOT

You don't want to know.

VAREEM

Just put it down.

The chopper lurches and dives down.

EXT. PYRAMIDS OF GIZA AND THE SPHINX- SUNSET

Sand explodes through the air as the jet-helicopter lands.
Vareem jumps out, turning to the Pilot.

VAREEM

Don't go anywhere. I may want to
leave soon.

PILOT

The meter's running.

Vareem grimaces and steps away from the helicopter. He looks out
of the spectacle that the ancient pyramids have become. Hundreds
of thousands of people have swarmed the site, all staring up at
the shinny silver sphere which hovers a thousand meters above
their heads.

EXT. BASE OF THE SPHINX- NIGHT

VIDEO IMAGE: VAREEM STANDS IN FRONT OF THE SPHINX WITH THE
PYRAMIDS VISIBLE BEHIND HIM.

VAREEM (V.O.)

This sight is almost familiar now. At
sacred sites around the world, thousands
gather beneath the gaze of the silent
spheres, waiting calmly and patiently.
A wait that may be over. Many people
here at the birthplace of ancient Egyptian
culture are claiming that the sphere
above me has spoken to them.

INSERT: IMAGE OF AN EGYPTIAN MAN SPEAKING.

EGYPTIAN MAN

It was many pictures. Here in my head. I could see them. All flowing together. Like they were all happening at once.

INSERT: IMAGE OF AN ENGLISH WOMAN SPEAKING.

ENGLISH WOMAN

First there were cities and then the ocean, and then factories, and trees, and then what seemed like human cells and then nuclear reactors, and then a black sky...

INSERT: IMAGE OF YOUNG WOMAN SPEAKING.

YOUNG WOMAN

It was showing me the world. All the connections, how it all fit together, how we fit together with the Earth. I don't know if I can explain it.

BACK TO VAREEM:

VAREEM

And neither can the officials. While there are reports of people describing similar, if not identical visions at dozens of other sites, there has been no official statement made by any of the world's governments. This may not be surprising as they seem to have their hands full.

INSERT: IMAGE OF WORLD CITIES DESERTED AND ON FIRE. IMAGE OF HIGHWAYS JAMMED WITH CARS. IMAGE OF EMERGENCY CREWS WORKING TO FEED AND TREAT PEOPLE FLEEING FROM THE CITIES. IMAGE OF PEOPLE IN JERUSALEM CALMLY STARING INTO THE SKY.

VAREEM (CONT'D V.O.)

The story is the same in cities around the world. The mass hysteria of twenty-four hours ago has given way to full fledged panic in the hearts of the world's cities. All that is, except those which, like Jerusalem, happen to be ancient religious sites as well.

BACK TO VAREEM:

VAREEM (CONT'D)

What do the visions mean? When will the Visitor make its intentions known to the world? When will the world's government's take action to spare their own citizen's lives? For the answers to these questions, all we can do is wait. Wait, and watch the skies. For Lead Line News, this is Vareem Thapur.

Vareem shuts the camera off and opens his Flipcom. There is an email icon blinking. He taps it and reads the message from Valerie "I miss you." He smiles and taps the screen again.

INT. LEAD LINE OFFICE- DAY

Mi Ling taps a key on her console and Vareem's face fills the main screen.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

How'd it look?

MI LING

Great. I cut in that stuff just like you said.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

What looks like the next stop?

MI LING

I think you should hit Jerusalem since it's close. Maybe Mecca or China from there.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Sounds good. I want to grab a few more things here first. Are you okay there?

MI LING

I'm fine. We're on the back up generator and I've barricaded myself in. I've got food and water for about two weeks. I'm more worried about you. Are you having visions yet?

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Not yet. I think I did too many drugs in college. How about you?

MI LING

I'd love to have one but my boss made it very clear he doesn't pay me to hallucinate. In fact he hardly pays me at all.

Mi Ling smiles and grabs a drink from a stack of food and water piled next to her desk.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Jean takes another drink from his water bottle as Nobuko attends to the flight schedule.

JEAN

Copy Control. Braking burn at one hour on the nose. Two hours and we settle into orbit.

NOBUKO

And then the fun begins.

Paolo has unstrapped from his seat in the cockpit and squeezed into the rear chamber with Valerie.

PAOLO

I make you nervous, don't I?

VALERIE

No more nervous than I make you.

PAOLO

I did some research before we left.

VALERIE

What did you find out about me?

PAOLO

Quite a bit. You have a very impressive file. Doctorates in psychology and philosophy, three years in a Buddhist monastery, two years working for Dr. Martin, and most surprisingly, a ninety-four percent accuracy as a remote viewer. That's something of a landmark for people in your field.

VALERIE

There's a large establishment of scientists who would say I was merely lucky.

PAOLO

Sounds like we're lucky to have you.

VALERIE

Dr. Martin doesn't believe in luck.
He believes in results. What results
are you supposed to obtain?

Paolo smiles.

PAOLO

While Dr. Martin considers you to be our
best hope for successful communications,
I am considered our best hope for
successful negotiations.

Valerie smiles back.

PAOLO (CONT'D)

I am curious about something else as well.
Something that wasn't in your report.
Why did you leave the monastery?

Valerie rubs the ring on her finger as she stares at him.

VALERIE

I couldn't let go of my fear of
letting go.

Paolo nods and eases himself out of the small chamber, squeezing
past Nobuko who is easing herself in. She opens a locker and
removes a tube of liquefied nutrients. She drops the casual act
as she catches Valerie's eye.

NOBUKO

Had any visions? Any communications?

VALERIE

Not since the launch.

Nobuko leans closer.

NOBUKO

What are they like?

VALERIE

Like being yanked out of your body
and into some other world. But you
can't understand anything you see.
Then later you try to figure out
what it means.

NOBUKO

God I'm glad I'm a pilot. All we have to do is react. No one asks us to interpret.

Nobuko squeezes a glob of nutrient mush into her mouth as she squeezes out of the chamber.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas and his staff are gathered at one end of the control room. Andrea steps over to him.

ANDREA

We have them on a live feed. There's a small delay, but not much.

She gestures to a series of screens; each filled with a face from the crew of the Pegasus.

NICHOLAS

Good, let's begin.

He turns to face a small video camera.

NICHOLAS

Here's the latest. You were right, Valerie. People near the smaller spheres are reporting optical hallucinations. We've been gathering information from witnesses and field agents who are having direct experiences and these hallucinations appear to be extremely uniform. They do not necessarily take place all at the same time, but the content and progression of each is essentially identical at every site, around the world.

There is a short pause, caused by the time it takes the signal to travel to the Pegasus and back, and then Valerie speaks.

VALERIE (ON SCREEN)

Images of technology balanced against images of nature being destroyed.

NICHOLAS

Yes. Do you know what it means?

ANDREA

Seems pretty straightforward.

NOBUKO (ON SCREEN)

We're fucking up the planet.

NICHOLAS

But why point out the obvious?

VALERIE (ON SCREEN)

Because it expects us to do something about it.

NICHOLAS

What can we do?

He moves closer to the screens.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Valerie and the crew cluster near the main monitor.

VALERIE

I don't know. Maybe it'll tell us.

PAOLO

The better question is; what happens if we fail to comply with the Vistor's request?

Valerie turns to look at Paolo, away from the main screen.

VALERIE

Do you think you could be a little more negative?

He turns toward her.

PAOLO

That's my role here.

Nobuko leans toward the screen and its camera.

NOBUKO

Why would they care what happens to us?

JEAN

Maybe life is too precious to ignore us.

NOBUKO

So, are they concerned for us, or for everything else on the planet?

Paolo turns back to the others.

PAOLO

Which would you protect, the fox or the hen house?

Valerie clocks her head at Paolo. He smiles.

PAOLO (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Valerie smiles back and lean forward to get a better view of the Visitor on the monitors.

EXT. PYRAMIDS OF GIZA AND THE SPHINX- SUNSET

Vareem is standing at the rear of a massive crowd around the pyramids, his camera aimed skyward as he gets a shot of the sphere above them. As he stares at the sunset reflected off of the bottom of the sphere he suddenly breaths in sharply.

VAREEM

Oh, God!

INSERT: A SERIES OF RAPIDLY CROSS FADED IMAGES: CITIES, TREES, FACTORIES, RIVERS, SMOKESTACKS, OCEANS, AUTOMOBILES, HUMAN FETUS, DEAD FISH, FREEWAY, NEW BORN CHILD, HUMAN CELL, FLOWER UNFOLDING, ETC.

Vareem lowers his camera and exhales a long breath.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Jean breathes out a half whistle.

JEAN

That is big.

Jean, Nobuko, Paolo and Valerie are pressed into the cockpit to watch as the Pegasus nears the giant sphere.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas and Andrea hover near the monitors.

ANDREA

They'll be nearing the opening
any minute.

NICHOLAS

Once they're in, how long will
we have contact?

ANDREA

That depends on whether it closes
behind them.

Nicholas turns to look at a monitor with the crew of the Pegasus on it.

EXT. SPACE- ORBIT OF THE SPHERE

The Pegasus hovers a hundred clicks above the silvery surface of the Visitor, a tiny image of its progress reflected from below. As the sphere rotates beneath the spacecraft, the massive portal appears on the horizon.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Valerie and Paolo have strapped back into their seats as Jean takes the controls.

JEAN

We have a visual on the opening.

NOBUKO

Calculating rate of decent and
trajectory.

ANDREA (ON RADIO)

On your command, Jean.

NOBUKO

The numbers are up.

Jean looks at his readout screen.

JEAN

Hold on folks. We're going in.

Jean breathes in and pulls back on the throttle ever so slightly.

EXT. SPACE- ORBIT OF THE SPHERE

The Pegasus descends toward the surface of the sphere, rapidly approaching the gaping black portal.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas watches the image of the Pegasus' descent as captured by one of the ships exterior cameras.

ANDREA

Take it slow Jean.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

I have this paranoid fear it's going to close just before I get to it.

ANDREA

Keep your paranoia to yourself and take it slow.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Copy that, Control. Easing up.

Andrea looks from the one monitor to the next.

EXT. SPACE- ORBIT OF THE SPHERE

The Pegasus slows slightly as it crosses the threshold between outer space and the interior of the sphere. With a small burst of the engine, the spacecraft passes through the portal and into the Visitor.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Valerie pushes a long slow breath through her lips as she looks through to the cockpit window where all is black.

JEAN

I can't see a thing.

NOBUKO

Radar is clear. We seem to be in a corridor.

Nobuko checks her screens.

EXT. SURFACE OF THE SPHERE- SPACE

The Pegasus slowly fades from sight as it is engulfed by darkness.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE SPHERE PORTAL

Jean reaches his hand up from the controls.

JEAN

I'm turning on the exterior lights.

Jean flicks a switch.

INT. SPHERE PORTAL- SPACE

The Pegasus' lights blast on, dimly illuminating that they are in a vast corridor several kilometers in width and many more in length. The walls of the corridor are hard to make out, but seem to be smooth.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas and Andrea scan the monitors.

ANDREA

How far are those walls?

NICHOLAS

Zoom in a camera. What are those shapes along the walls?

Nicholas points to the shapes on the monitor as the image zooms in and is suddenly blurry white.

INT. PORTAL OF THE SPHERE- SPACE

The corridor and the Pegasus are suddenly awash on brilliant white light. The corridor is now clearly illuminated, showing that it stretches at least twenty kilometers inward before curving to the side.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean and Nobuko shield their eyes.

PAOLO

And God said "Let there be light."

NOBUKO

Radar confirms that the passageway we are in is nearly five kilometers wide and appears to go inward for nearly twenty clicks before it curves out of sight.

VALERIE

They must be from Texas.

The crew smiles and Jean guides the Pegasus farther in.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas taps the computer screen and pulls up a three dimensional map showing the Pegasus as it makes its way inside the sphere.

NICHOLAS

The curve has changed. The passage they're in is parallel to the surface now.

ANDREA

How's our radio contact.

TECHNICIAN ONE responds.

TECHNICIAN ONE

We're at seventy-five percent. They can get about half way around before we lose them.

ANDREA

Pegasus, we need you to slow down. At this speed we'll lose contact with you in ten minutes.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Copy, Control. I don't think we need to worry about that.

Nicholas looks from three-dimensional graphic to a monitor showing an image from the forward camera of the Pegasus.

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE THE SPHERE-

The Pegasus navigates the gradual curve within the sphere coming into a straight section several kilometers long. At the end of the tunnel is a large flat wall.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Andrea and Nicholas watch as the Pegasus nears the dead end of the corridor.

ANDREA

Pegasus, brake and take up a position
one klick out from the wall.

NICHOLAS

Can they tell how thick it is
with radar? Can they see any
openings?

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Control, we seem to have a problem.

On the monitors, Nobuko looks to Jean.

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE THE SPHERE-

The forward thrusters of the Pegasus are firing, but the spacecraft is not slowing down.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Valerie cranes her neck to see what is happening. Jean's hands are all over the controls.

JEAN

We're not slowing down.

NOBUKO

If we can turn around we might
have a chance.

JEAN

I tried, it just keeps heading
straight in.

NOBUKO

Two hundred meters to impact.

PAOLO

Something is happening on the wall.

NOBUKO

One hundred meters to impact...
We're slowing down.

Valerie strains in her seat to see what is happening.

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE THE SPHERE-

As the Pegasus nears the wall the spacecraft finally slows down and the silver metallic wall in front of it begins to change. Two long, arm-like extensions sprout out of the wall and reach out to side of the Pegasus.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean takes his hands off the controls.

ANDREA (ON RADIO)

What's happening?

JEAN

It's docking us.

NOBUKO

The wall seems almost alive.

JEAN

Like it's grabbing us.

PAOLO

Holding us to its bosom.

VALERIE

Or catching us like a fly.

Paolo turns to Valerie

PAOLO

I thought I was supposed to be the
sarcastic one.

VALERIE

Sorry. Sometimes I get tired of the
touchy-feely-new-age-optimist role.

The Pegasus comes to a halt.

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE THE SPHERE-

As the Pegasus ceases motion, the arms from the wall slide inward around it, one of them reaching out and forming a tight seal around the side hatch of the craft.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Andrea walks from one row of monitors to the next.

ANDREA

What's your status Pegasus?

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

We have docked with the Visitor.

NICHOLAS

That's a positive spin.

VALERIE (ON MONITOR)

It's an airlock.

Nicholas looks to the monitor where Valerie's headband camera is showing the chamber outside the Pegasus' side hatch.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Valerie is looking out of the window in the side hatch.

JEAN

How big is it?

VALERIE

It looks large enough for ten
people. There's a doorway at the
other end of it.

NOBUKO

What kind of doorway?

VALERIE

It's round... And it's open.

PAOLO

A subtle invitation, but an invitation none the less.

JEAN

You call that docking subtle?

ANDREA (ON RADIO)

Prepare for EVA, ASAP.

Valerie, Paolo and Nobuko place their helmets on.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Andrea leans in close to look at the monitor displaying the team as it readies to step outside the Pegasus.

ANDREA

Jean, you'll be minding the store.
Paolo, you'll take the lead and
Nobuko will bring up the rear.

NICHOLAS

They should be armed. Discretely.

ANDREA

You heard the man. Strap your
weapons to your legs.

PAOLO (ON MONITOR)

Copy that, Control.

Nicholas leans toward a monitor to get a better look.

INT. AIRLOCK OF PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

The internal door closes on the airlock of the side hatch. Valerie, Paolo and Nobuko are squeezed tightly into the small space. Paolo's hand hovers over the release for the exterior hatch.

PAOLO

We're ready when you are, Control.

NICHOLAS (ON RADIO)

Valerie, this is Nicholas. Can
you tell us anything?

VALERIE

I wish I was home in bed. Other than
that no.

Nobuko smiles at Valerie.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Andrea looks from Nicholas to the screen.

ANDREA

(Away from the mic.)
So much for reconnaissance.
(Into the mic.)
Whenever you're ready, Paolo.

Andrea walks over to the monitors displaying the images from the
helmet cameras.

INT. AIRLOCK OF PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Paolo hits the airlock release and the exterior hatch slowly
swings open. Valerie looks into Paolo's eyes.

VALERIE

After you, Ambassador.

Paolo grimaces.

INT. AIRLOCK OF THE SPHERE- LIGHT

Paolo, Valerie and Nobuko step from the Pegasus airlock and into
the Sphere airlock. Small lights from above illuminate them as
they walk toward the large circular doorway.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean watches the screens showing the helmet camera images.

JEAN

Keep talking so I can check
the signal.

He flicks a switch on the control panel.

INT. SMALL CHAMBER IN SPHERE- LIGHT

Paolo, Valerie and Nobuko step through the door of the airlock and into a small chamber lit in blue.

PAOLO

We have just passed through the first doorway and are now in a small chamber.

NOBUKO

It appears to be a dead end.

VALERIE

Or worse.

The open doorway behind them begins to seal from the outside in, the circle quickly becoming smaller and smaller and finally disappearing all together.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean taps his screens, which have gone dead.

JEAN

Paolo! Nobuko? Do you read me? Control, I've lost them. The doorway has sealed behind them and I've lost all contact.

Jean taps his controls again.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Andrea focuses on the monitors.

ANDREA

Stay calm, Jean. Can you boost the signal?

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

I've already got it maxed out and I'm getting nothing.

ANDREA

Keep trying Jean.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Should I try an EVA and open the wall?

ANDREA

Just sit tight and try to raise them
on the radio. We'll get back to
you as soon as we have a plan.

Andrea turns to Nicholas.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

They're on their own.

NICHOLAS

At least they know what's happening.

Nicholas stares at the monitor showing the wall that hides the
three astronauts.

INT. SMALL CHAMBER IN SPHERE- LOCALIZED LIGHT

Valerie, Paolo and Nobuko stand in the center of the small
chamber. Air starts to shoot into the room from small vents at
the ceiling. Nobuko looks at a screen on the wrist of her suit.

NOBUKO

The room is pressurizing.

PAOLO

That could be a good sign.

The air stops filling the room.

VALERIE

Any suggestions?

Nobuko unstraps the weapon at her leg.

PAOLO

I wouldn't do that.

He points at the opposite wall. It has begun to become
translucent. In fact, the whole of the small sphere is becoming
translucent revealing a kaleidoscope of colors beyond the walls.

NOBUKO

There's something behind the walls.

VALERIE

I can't make out what it is.

The walls of the small sphere suddenly become transparent.

PAOLO

That's not what I was expecting.

Paolo and the women stare out into a vast, brilliantly lit cavern of color and shapes.

EXT. JERUSALEM- DAY

Vareem stands on a rooftop in the middle of the city, near the Dome of the Rock. The streets below him are filled with people calmly milling about and staring at the sky.

VAREEM

While the scene here in Jerusalem is calm, that is not the case elsewhere in the world.

INSERT: IMAGES OF LONDON DURING AND AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE.

VAREEM (V.O.)

London was hit this morning with an earthquake measuring five point five on the Richter scale.

INSERT: IMAGES OF BRITISH TROOPS MOVING IN ON STONEHENGE.

VAREEM (V.O.)

While the city reels from the devastation, elsewhere in England, at the monuments of Stonehenge, British troops have been escorting civilians away from the area beneath the still hovering silver sphere. This scene is being repeated in other countries around the world as governments worry that their citizens maybe be engaging in a dangerous communication with the Visitor. So far these evacuations have been largely unsuccessful.

BACK TO VAREEM:

VAREEM

More importantly, those who are still near the hovering spheres are now reporting new visions.

INSERT: IMAGE OF A WOMAN SPEAKING.

WOMAN

I was standing at the base of
waterfall looking up into the water.
But I was the water.

INSERT: IMAGE OF A MAN ONE SPEAKING.

MAN ONE

I was on a mountain, but not on the
mountain, more like I was in it.

INSERT: IMAGE OF MAN TWO SPEAKING.

MAN TWO

I'm in the middle of a forest, or
actually, I am the forest. I
remember looking at this tree and
then suddenly feeling as though
I was the tree.

BACK TO VAREEM:

VAREEM

These stories are common and I can
testify as a reporter to their
veracity, as I myself have experienced
this vision several times since
arriving here in Jerusalem. For
more information and the latest
theories, check out our web site.
Reporting from the heart of Jerusalem,
this is Vareem Thapur for Lead Line News.

Vareem puts the camera down and goes to the edge of the building.
He looks up at the silver sphere above the city and closes his
eyes.

INSERT: IMAGE OF A DESERT, THE WIND SWEEPING ACROSS THE DUNES,
THE SUN IN THE SKY, AND A LARGE ROCK FORMATION SURROUNDED BY
SAND.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas is surrounded by his staff.

JASPER

It could be some sort of mind control.

NESSON

A mass hypnotic suggestion.

NICHOLAS

But for what purpose?

JASPER

We don't know.

NICHOLAS

Find out why it's here and we
find out what the visions mean.

ANDREA

And our best shot at both of those
things is completely out of contact.

Nicholas turns to Andrea and then looks at the monitors for the Pegasus.

INT. SMALL SPHERE- LOCALIZED LIGHT

Through the transparent walls of the small sphere Valerie, Paolo and Nobuko see an enormous inner chamber that curves off into the distance. The chamber appears to be several kilometers wide, and is filled with a boundless array of strange geometric objects reaching out in all directions, each glowing in a slightly different shade of colored light. It is as though the astronauts have been trust into the largest multi-colored amusement park in the universe.

PAOLO (CONT'D)

What is it?

NOBUKO

Machines maybe?

VALERIE

They seem alive.

NOBUKO

Oh God. We're moving.

The sphere they are in has detached from the wall and is beginning to float into the middle of the vast curved chamber.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean floats just above the chair, his eyes closed tightly in sleep.

INSERT: A SERIES OF RAPIDLY CROSS FADED IMAGES: CITIES, TREES, FACTORIES, RIVERS, SMOKE STACKS, OCEANS, AUTOMOBILES, HUMAN FETUS, DEAD FISH, FREEWAY, NEW BORN CHILD, HUMAN CELL, FLOWER UNFOLDING, ETC.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas is dozing in a chair. Nicholas opens his eyes to see Andrea staring at him.

NICHOLAS

Yes.

ANDREA

The sphere is moving.

NICHOLAS

Where?

ANDREA

Towards Earth.

Nicholas sits up in his chair and stares at a monitor with an image for the orbital telescope.

EXT. ISTANBUL- DAY

Vareem stands with his camera in the heart of the city, the ancient dome of the Santa Sofia visible behind him.

VAREEM

It is official. The giant sphere in Earth orbit is moving. Not only has the Sphere moved dramatically closer to the Earth's surface, but the speed of its rotation around our planet increased significantly. And this is not the only increase.

INSERT: IMAGE OF WORLD CITIES STRUCK BY EARTHQUAKES, GOVERNMENT TROOPS ATTACKING PEOPLE NEAR SACRED SITES, ETC.

VAREEM (V.O.)

Three more massive earthquakes have struck, major world cities. And while world citizen flee from the destruction of the earthquakes, they are also fleeing from the troops of their own governments.

INSERT: CHINESE TROOPS HERD PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE ANCIENT TIBETAN CITY OF LHASA.

VAREEM (V.O.)

The soldiers of five different nations have attacked and killed citizens refusing to leave sites beneath the hovering sliver spheres.

BACK TO VAREEM:

VAREEM (CONT'D)

The official line from these governments has been that their citizens were resisting arrest in a matter of national security.

Vareem pans the camera from himself to a sight of Turkish troops forcing people away from the Byzantine church of Santa Sofia.

INT. THE VAST INNER CHAMBER OF THE SPHERE- LOCALIZED LIGHT

The small glass-like sphere containing the astronauts floats through the center of the enormous inner hallway, gliding past towers of blue, and spires of red reaching out and meeting in a slow moving canopy of yellowish green.

INT. SMALL TRANSPARENT SPHERE- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Nobuko checks the video camera on her helmet to make sure it's running.

NOBUKO

It's like seeing behind the wizard's curtain.

PAOLO

The bowels of the machine. Like the decks beneath an ocean liner.

NOBUKO

Or the bowels of an animal. These things all look alive.

VALERIE

The bowels of God is more like it.

Valerie's eyes suddenly slam shut. She reaches her gloved hands up to her head and clasps her helmet. Nobuko and Paolo both reach out to steady her.

NOBUKO

What is it?

PAOLO

Talk to us Valerie.

Valerie twists her head behind the clear face of the helmet.

INSERT: IMAGES OF LARGE WIDE-OPEN FIELD. FAST FADE TO: IMAGES OF TOWERING WHITE BUILDINGS; IMAGES OF CHILDREN SLEEPING IN A HAZE OF WHITE; IMAGES OF THE BOWELS OF THE VISITOR.

Valerie gasps and opens her eyes.

PAOLO

Are you okay?

NOBUKO

Did it happen? A vision?

VALERIE

Yes.

NOBUKO

What do they want?

VALERIE

It wants us to see something.

They look out through the transparent wall to see that the alien surroundings are beginning to speed by faster and faster.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT- SPACE

The Visitor has begun to glow a deep red and moved very close the Earth circling it quickly in a polar orbit.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas and Andrea watch the Visitor from a monitor.

ANDREA

What the hell is it doing? Why
come so close? It's affecting
tidal forces.

Andrea turns to look at a monitor with a news report on it.

NICHOLAS

It's only a matter of time now.

ANDREA

Before what?

NICHOLAS

Before somebody does something
stupid.

ANDREA

I hope to God it's not us.

Nicholas looks up into Andrea's eyes.

EXT. GOLDEN PEAK TEMPLE, EMEISHAM MOUNTAIN, CHINA- DAY

Vareem is reporting from a crowd of people beneath a reddish sky.

VAREEM

As you can see, the sky here
has turned a dull red, much as
it has over most of the world.

INSERT: IMAGES OF THE REDDISH VISITOR FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

VAREEM (V.O.)

The Visitor is now circling the
world at an incredible speed
and glowing a deep red.

INSERT: IMAGES OF WORLD LEADERS SPEAKING TO LARGE CROWDS;
PARLIAMENTS, CONGRESSES, THE UNTIED NATIONS, ETC..

VAREEM (V.O.)

Scientists are at a loss for what
the purpose behind the visitor's
actions might be, but it has only
exacerbated the tension among the
world's citizens and their governments. (MORE)

BACK TO VAREEM:

VAREEM (CONT'D)

There is small minority of scientists suggesting that the proximity of the Visitor may either trigger or delay the shift in the Earth's axis they have been predicting. For more information on that theory as well as others, check our web site.

Vareem turns his camera to catch two Chinese military helicopters flying into position near the silver sphere in the sky above. On the ground troops have begun to push people out of the area. Vareem raises his camera to get a shot.

INT. VAST CURVED CHAMBER OF THE SPHERE- INSIDE SPHERE

The transparent sphere containing the three astronauts begins to slow down.

INT. TRANSPARENT SMALL SPHERE- INSIDE SPHERE

Valerie turns to Nobuko.

VALERIE

We're almost there.

NOBUKO

Where is it taking us?

VALERIE

I don't know.

PAOLO

You used the word "it." Why. What did you see?

VALERIE

It's not what I saw. It's how. These visions are all from one consciousness. From the Visitor itself. The visitor is what sends the visions. It's alive.

PAOLO

All of it?

VALERIE

I don't know, but the consciousness
that speaks to me controls everything.

NOBUKO

Well, I hope it's paying attention.

The transparent sphere veers toward a solid wall and they
instinctively step back.

INT. VAST CURVED CHAMBER OF THE SPHERE- INSIDE SPHERE

As the transparent sphere flies toward a multi-colored wall a
dark portal expands at the last moment allowing it to pass
through, before immediately sealing up behind it.

EXT. GOLDEN PEAK TEMPLE, EMEISHAM MOUNTAIN, CHINA- DAY

Vareem is pressing through a crowd when his FlipCom goes off. He
opens it to Mi Ling's face.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Boss, you have to get out of
there.

VAREEM

I'm leaving soon as I can.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Now. The Chinese government just
announced that it is considering
all silver spheres within its
boundaries as a violation of its
national sovereignty.

VAREEM

Which means what?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Their going to shoot them down.

VAREEM

Great.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Their also threatening to use nukes
on the big one if it doesn't leave.

Vareem looks up into the sky and watches as the military helicopters swoop in close to the silver sphere. Without warning they fire their missiles. Vareem hits the ground, keeping the camera aimed at the action as the air explodes in fire. When he looks up he sees that the silver sphere is undamaged. A loud cheer rises up from the crowd.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas looks up from a piece of paper that Jasper has just handed him. Andrea looks at his face.

ANDREA

Who?

NICHOLAS

China.

ANDREA

How long?

NICHOLAS

Impact in twenty minutes. Maybe less.

ANDREA

We have to get Jean out of there.

NICHOLAS

He's in the safest place possible.

ANDREA

We at least have to warn him.

Andrea grabs her headset off the table.

INT. PEGASUS- LIGHT

Jean runs his fingers through his hair.

JEAN

Couldn't you have let it be a surprise?

ANDREA (ON RADIO)

I thought you should know.

JEAN

Let me know when it's over.

Jean rubs his eyes and looks at the image of missiles headed toward the visitor being fed to him on the main monitor.

INT. CAVERNOUS ROOM- LOCALIZED LIGHT

The transparent sphere slowly rises from a shaft in the floor, Valerie, Nobuko and Paolo upside down inside it.

INT. SMALL SPHERE- LOCALIZED LIGHT

The sphere gently rotates to leave them on their feet. Only the area nearest them is lit.

PAOLO

I don't see anything.

VALERIE

Patience.

She closes her eyes.

INSERT: IMAGES OF PEOPLE BATHED IN WHITE LIGHT SLEEPING; OF THE BILLIONS OF STARS IN THE MILKY WAY;

The transparent sphere as it begins to glide forward the light starts to slowly flood the cavern, revealing row after row of tubular, bed like chambers stretching out as far as the eye can see, curving off into the distance.

NOBUKO

What are they?

VALERIE

Sleeping chambers.

PAOLO

For us?

VALERIE

Yes. To help deal with the effects of time and distance.

NOBUKO

There's thousands of them.

VALERIE

Millions actually.

PAOLO

It must have been waiting for thousands of years to take us with it.

NOBUKO

Take us where? Where is it from?
Valerie, can you see anything?

Valerie turns to Nobuko.

INSERT: IMAGES OF WHITE BUILDINGS IN BLUISH LIGHT. FAST FADE TO:
A FIELD OF GREEN.

Nobuko staring at Valerie.

VALERIE

There's more it wants us to see.

Valerie turns to look through the transparent walls for the small sphere.

EXT. SLEEPING CHAMBER OF THE VISITOR- LOCALIZED LIGHT

The transparent sphere slows and enters a passageway above them, shooting up into it, leaving the sleeping chambers behind.

EXT. VARANASI, INDIA- NIGHT

Vareem stands in the street a crowd of people behind him gazing up at the red sky and the red orb that is rapidly crossing it. He speaks to his camera.

VAREEM

I have just learned that the government of China has launched at least two and possibly several nuclear missiles at the Visitor, which is even now racing through the red sky above my head. What effect will these missiles have against the Visitor? Will they be deflected? Will they destroy it, sending millions of pieces of metal raining down on the planet? Stay with Lead Line News for the latest developments as they happen.

He puts his camera down and sighs.

VAREEM (CONT'D)

Idiots.

Vareem turns the camera skyward to catch a shot of the crimson sphere in the sky.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT- SPACE

The Visitor circles the Earth like a giant fireball. Far below its massive red form, a dozen missiles can be seen climbing out of the atmosphere.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- DAY

Nicholas, Andrea and the others hover over the tactical monitor.

NICHOLAS

How long?

ANDREA

Minutes.

Nicholas watches blank-faced as the missiles near their target.

INT. SMALL SPHERE- LIGHT

The transparent sphere passes out of the passageway and Nobuko gasps. Valerie steadies her.

NOBUKO

Oh my God!

PAOLO

This is all for us.

Valerie, Nobuko and Paolo look around as the sphere continues to rise through the air.

INT. GREEN INNER CHAMBER OF THE SPHERE- LIGHT

Around them are green trees and wide open fields, stretching kilometer after kilometer into the distance, curving upward and back upon itself, filling the interior of the sphere, some thirty kilometers in diameter.

INT. SMALL SPHERE- LOCALIZED LIGHT

As the three rise into the sky they laugh and smile at what they see. A whole small world wrapped inside itself.

VALERIE

I wish Vareem could see this.

Valerie touches her ring as she spots towns and a large structure that is like a city, but self-contained and at least two kilometers long.

PAOLO

Is it going to take us with it?

He turns to Valerie.

NOBUKO

Is that why it's here?

Valerie looks at them.

VALERIE

I don't think so.

NOBUKO

What? But it's all here. This must have been intended for us.

VALERIE

It was. But it wasn't intended for now.

Valerie closes her eyes.

INSERT: IMAGES OF EARTHQUAKES. FAST FADE TO: IMAGES OF THE ANCIENT TEMPLES IN ANTARCTICA; IMAGES OF EARTH FROM SPACE AS CONTINENTS BEGIN TO DRIFT.

Valerie turns to Paolo.

VALERIE

It only came to stop the earthquakes. It's using it's gravity to affect the wobble of the Earth's axis and set it right.

PAOLO

It's not here to make contact.

VALERIE

No. We're not ready yet.

The transparent sphere descends to the one of the streets in the garden city below. As it gently glides downward, Valerie looks up, toward the center of the sphere, where a golden-white orb shines like a miniature sun.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- LATE DAY

Nicholas watches the main monitor.

NICHOLAS

If it doesn't work, I want an estimate on how many megatons it will take.

JASPER

Yes, Sir.

NICHOLAS

In an hour.

He turns to look at the fed from the cockpit of the Pegasus.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT- SPACE

The missiles have nearly reached the Visitor when one of them suddenly careens off course and strikes a companion, causing both missiles to exploded, and setting off the other missiles, as the Visitor races away from the explosions.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- LATE DAY

Nicholas allows himself a sigh of relief.

ANDREA

Jean. Jean, do you read me?

Several of the monitors have gone to static after the electromagnetic pulse from the nuclear explosion.

INT. PEGASUS- LIGHT

Jean slapping keys on the control panel.

JEAN

I read you. I'm fine. Had a brief blackout when the explosions hit, but that was it.

Jean adjusts the camera he is looking at.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- LATE DAY

Nicholas lights a pipe.

NICHOLAS

I want every camera we've got on that thing with full analysis. We need to know what's going to do next.

Jasper and Nesson hurry toward their tasks.

EXT. VARANASI, INDIA- NIGHT

Vareem shields his eyes from the explosions that surround the Visitor as he speaks to his camera. As the explosions fade it is obvious that the giant silver sphere has been unaffected.

VAREEM

The missiles seem to have had no effect. We can only wait now to see if there is some response to these actions, or whether, keeping with its past performance, the Visitor will remain silent.

Vareem, weary, rubs his eyes and keeps his camera trained on the Visitor.

INT. GARDEN CITY INSIDE THE VISITOR- LIGHT

As the transparent sphere touches the ground it partially evaporates and floats away, leaving Valerie, Nobuko and Paolo standing in the middle of a tree covered street. Around them is a garden teeming with green life, while behind them, a stone like city structure rises into the sky.

PAOLO

Valerie. Why is it showing us all this?

Valerie turns to Paolo.

VALERIE

I think so that we will know why it is here. So we won't be afraid.

NOBUKO

But what will it do when it's done?

Valerie turns to answer Nobuko, but closes her eyes instead.

INSERT: IMAGES FROM EARTH OF SOLDIERS ATTACKING CIVILIANS BENEATH THE SILVER SPHERES IN THE SKY. FAST FADE TO: THE EXPLOSIONS OF THE CHINESE MISSILES; PEOPLE PANICKING IN THE STREETS AS TEAR GAS CANISTERS EXPLODE.

Valerie opening her eyes.

PAOLO

What is it?

VALERIE

Missiles were launched against the Visitor. It has to leave.

NOBUKO

It can't leave yet.

VALERIE

It has to. It can't be responsible for human suffering.

PAOLO

But we can talk to them. We can send a video message to Earth...

VALERIE

It can't take the risk. Do you know what the Bodhisattva vow is? It's a Buddhist vow to help all sentient beings end suffering through enlightenment. The Visitor can't allow suffering to occur because of its actions.

NOBUKO

But what about the sleeping chambers.

VALERIE

We're not ready yet.

PAOLO

Then why all the visions. It's shifting people's consciousness to be ready.

VALERIE

It takes time. The world needs the people who have been changed more than the Visitor.

Valerie turns away from Paolo and Nobuko to look out over the vast expanse of garden city.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- LATE DAY

Nicholas is on the phone.

NICHOLAS

I want to make it clear that I do not agree with this course of action... I understand our responsibility, but given the circumstances, I think caution is the best course. Yes. I understand.

Nicholas hangs up the phone. Andrea stares at him. He picks up his headset.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Jean?

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

This is the Pegasus.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

You are to deploy your cargo, arm and evacuate.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

What about the crew?

NICHOLAS

You have your orders.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

Copy that.

Nicholas takes his headset off and drops it on the table.

INT. GARDEN CITY INSIDE THE VISITOR- LIGHT

Valerie, Paolo and Nobuko walk along a tree-canopied path.

PAOLO

Can't we talk to it? Meet it face to face?

NOBUKO

So we can explain.

VALERIE

The two of you need to go back to the Pegasus now.

PAOLO

Why? What about you?

VALERIE

There's danger. It wants you safe.

NOBUKO

What about you?

VALERIE

There's one more thing it needs to show me.

PAOLO

We're not leaving without you, Valerie.

VALERIE

You don't have any choice.

The transparent sphere has reappeared and now quickly and quietly envelops Nobuko and Paolo.

PAOLO

Valerie!

The transparent sphere begins to rise into the air.

VALERIE

I'll be fine.

The transparent sphere begins to recede rapidly into the distance.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I hope.

Valerie looks up at the miniature sun above her as another transparent sphere descends and engulfs her.

EXT. VITTHALA TEMPLE, INDIA- NIGHT

Vareem takes a long drink of water as he looks out at the people gathered around him. The sky above has turned a light pink and the Visitor has returned to its normal silver color. Vareem pulls the amulet from his shirt and stares at it. Suddenly he breathes in deeply.

INSERT: IMAGE OF VAREEM SHROUDED IN A HALO OF LIGHT, RISING INTO THE SKY AND BURSTING INTO A MILLION DROPS OF RAIN, SHOWERING DOWN ON A FOREST BELOW, WHICH BEGINS TO GLOW AND DRIP WATER-LIGHT DOWN ON THE BODY OF VAREEM, LYING BENEATH THE BRANCHES, AND WHO MELTS INTO WATER-LIGHT AND SEEPS INTO THE EARTH, THE GRASS BEGINNING TO GLOW BENEATH THE GLOWING TREES, BENEATH THE GLOWING SKY, WHICH BECOMES VALERIE'S GLOWING FACE.

Vareem opens his eyes and lowers his camera down as he walks into the crowd.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE SPHERE

Jean is in the main chamber watching a small screen and manipulating a hand control. On the screen is the image of a robot arm pulling a large package out of the cargo bay.

INT. VAST INNER CHAMBER OF THE VISITOR- LOCALIZED LIGHT

The transparent sphere containing Paolo and Nobuko glides quickly through the inner chamber of the visitor, headed always closer to the outside.

INT. TRANSPARENT SPHERE- LOCALIZED LIGHT

The inner workings of the visitor speed by Nobuko and Paolo.

NOBUKO

What did Valerie mean that we were in danger?

PAOLO

The payload.

NOBUKO

How could they be so stupid?

PAOLO

It's my fault. I convinced them that we needed a deterrent. A bargaining chip. I should have known they wouldn't be able to resist using it.

Paolo turns to Nobuko or some form of forgiveness.

NOBUKO

How will Valerie get out?

Nobuko turns Paolo and they see the concern in each other's eyes.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas has his headset on.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)
I can't arm them yet. They only
have a twenty minute timer. That's
not enough time for the crew to..

NICHOLAS
Just arm it and get out of there.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)
I don't want to leave..

NICHOLAS
No one wants to leave them behind.

Nicholas looks at a shot of the Visitor from a satellite camera.

INT. TRANSPARENT SPHERE- LIGHT

Valerie is floating upward toward the brilliantly glowing,
golden-white center of the sphere. It is nearly a kilometer in
diameter and blazes like a small sun. Valerie shades her eyes as
she looks up.

VALERIE
It's not hot.

Valerie looks down to see artificial light canals running in
parallel lines along the green floor of the garden chamber. She
looks back to the sphere of glowing light. She is a hundred
meters away, but moving slowly closer.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
You're alive.

INSERT: IMAGE OF VALERIE BATHED IN WHITE.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
What do you want?

INSERT: IMAGE OF VALERIE BATHED IN GOLDEN WHITE LIGHT AND
SMILING.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I know this is why I'm here, but I'm
afraid.

INSERT: IMAGE OF VALERIE AS A SMALL CHILD TAKING THE HAND OF HER GRANDFATHER, BATHED IN GOLDEN WHITE LIGHT.

Tears well in Valerie's eyes as the transparent sphere crosses the last few meters between it and the golden-light visitor.

EXT. INSIDE THE SPHERE- LIGHT

The robot arm of the Pegasus is retracting from where a large white cylinder is attached to the wall of the sphere.

INT. PEGASUS-INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean talks into his headset as he types a series of numbers into a keypad.

JEAN

The warheads are armed and... What the hell?

ANDREA (ON RADIO)

What is it Jean?

JEAN

You won't believe it.

Jean is staring at the hatch window, through which Paolo and Nobuko can be seen entering the airlock.

INT. AIRLOCK- INSIDE PEGASUS

Air rushes around Paolo and Nobuko and the inner door opens to reveal Jean. Jean starts helping them off with their helmets.

JEAN

Where's Valerie?

Paolo and Nobuko look at each other in silence as their helmets are removed.

INT. GOLDEN WHITE CENTER OF LIGHT IN THE SPHERE- LIGHT

Valerie closes her eyes as the golden sphere of light slowly engulfs the transparent sphere. Brilliant orange-red-white-light washes over and through her, as her body becomes seemingly transparent.

VALERIE (V.O.)

What do you want from me?

INSERT: THE YELLOW SUN IN SPACE. FAST FADE TO: THE EARTH FROM SPACE; FACTORIES SPEWING SMOKE INTO THE AIR; TREES IN THE YELLOW SUNSHINE; DOLPHINS PLAYING IN THE WATER; CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE PARK; VALERIE AS A CHILD PLAYING WITH HER GRANDFATHER; VALERIE AT HER GRANDFATHER'S FUNERAL; VALERIE WITH VAREEM; VALERIE HOLDING A BABY WITH VAREEM; VALERIE AS AN OLD WOMAN; VALERIE AT HER OWN FUNERAL.

VALERIE (V.O.)

I'm losing myself.

INSERT: PEOPLE PRAYING IN A CHURCH. FAST FADE TO: PEOPLE CROWDING THROUGH THE STREETS TO WORK; PEOPLE PRAYING IN A MOSQUE. CROWDS OF PEOPLE AT THE BEACH; THE WATER LAPPING AGAINST THE OCEAN; A SCHOOL OF FISH IN THE SEA; THE CLOUDS ABOVE THE WATER. THE EARTH FROM SPACE; THE SOLAR SYSTEM FROM SPACE; STARS. BILLIONS OF STARS; THE HEART OF THE MILK WAY GALAXY; THE MILKY WAY AS ONE OF HUNDREDS OF GALAXIES; MILLIONS OF GALAXIES FLYING AWAY IN EVERY DIRECTION, BRILLIANT AND BEAUTIFUL.

EXT. VITTHALA TEMPLE, INDIA- DAY

Vareem walks through the crowded mass of people, starring up at the silver sphere that hovers above the planet. The people he passes smile at him. An elderly woman lightly pats his chest as she passes. Vareem breathes deeply and slowly begins to laugh as he passes through the crowd.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT?

Nicholas stares at the monitors.

NICHOLAS

What do you mean you don't know where she is?

PAOLO (ON MONITOR)

It's not easy to explain.

NOBUKO (ON MONITOR)
She's still inside.

PAOLO (ON MONITOR)
She chose to stay.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)
We don't have anymore time. I have
to fire the engines now or never.

ANDREA
Get the hell out of there, Pegasus.

Nicholas stares at the monitor for Valerie's stats, watching its flat signals.

EXT. DOCKING BAY INSIDE SPHERE-LIGHT

The Pegasus fires its forward retrorockets and moves slowly away from the wall. As it moves away from the wall it spins on its axis until it is facing out of the corridor.

INT. GOLDEN WHITE CENTER OF LIGHT IN THE SPHERE- LIGHT

Valerie's translucent body glows with the golden-white light of the sphere's true center.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I see. There was no need for fear.
There is only... Oneness.

Valerie smiles.

VALERIE (V.O. CONT'D)
Now I must show you something.

Valerie's smile spreads beyond the confines of her face as she is washed away in golden-white light.

INSERT: PEOPLE IN THE SACRED CITIES BENEATH THE GIANT SILVER SPHERES. FAST FADE TO: PEOPLE GATHERED IN PEACEFUL PROTEST IN THE MAJOR CITIES; PEOPLE OF JEWISH, HINDU, BUDDHIST, MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN FAITHS, GATHERED IN THE STREETS PRAYING TOGETHER; MEN AND WOMEN FACING DOWN GOVERNMENT TANKS, REFUSING TO YIELD; A WOMAN FEEDING A GROUP OF SMALL ORPHANED STREET CHILDREN; A MAN TENDING TO THE WOUNDS OF A PROTESTOR; A WOMAN STANDING BEFORE A GROUP OF ARMED CIVILIANS, CONVINCING THEM TO PUT THEIR WEAPONS DOWN; A MONTAGE OF IMAGES OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD EMBRACING THE MESSAGE OF THE VISITOR.

VALERIE (V.O. CONT'D)

There are enough of us.

Valerie opens her eyes, her lids lifting to reveal pools of infinite black radiating a blinding white light.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE THE SPHERE

Jean yanks the throttle back and the crew is slammed into their seats as the engines kick in.

INT. MASSIVE CORRIDOR OF SPHERE- LIGHT

The Pegasus shoots through the corridor, Earth visible around the final arc of the great curve.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Andrea watches the monitor.

ANDREA

Not much time, Jean.

JEAN (ON MONITOR)

I'm well aware.

Andrea wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

INT. LARGE CORRIDOR OF SPHERE- LIGHT

The Pegasus blasts through the massive corridor, the large portal beginning to close as the spacecraft nears it.

INT. PEGASUS- INSIDE SPHERE- LIGHT

Nobuko stares straight ahead.

NOBUKO

Oh, shit!

Jean pulls the throttle back just a little further.

EXT. ORBIT OF THE SPHERE- SPACE

The Pegasus flies out of the portal to the corridor just as it closes behind it. As the Pegasus blasts away from the Visitor, the giant sphere begins to move slowly away from the Earth.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

A cheer goes up from the control room. TECHNICIAN TWO SPEAKS up over the noise.

TECHNICIAN TWO

I've got something. I've got something.

ANDREA

Quiet down people. What do you have?

TECHNICIAN TWO

It's moving again. It's slow, but it definitely moving.

NICHOLAS

Where's it headed?

TECHNICIAN TWO

Best I can tell... Deep space.

ANDREA

Why the hell would it do that?

Nicholas squints.

NICHOLAS

It knows.

TECHNICIAN TWO

There's something else.

ANDREA

What?

TECHNICIAN

I thought it was an error, because it looked like a cloud, but it's not.

NICHOLAS

What is it?

TECHNICIAN

Thousands of small spheres. Each a few meters in diameter. They're descending from the larger spheres. Hundreds of them over each city.

Andrea turns to see Nicholas' eyes narrow.

EXT. VITTHALA TEMPLE, INDIA- DAY

Vareem is seated peacefully at the bottom of the monument. As his Flipcom rings, he opens it.

VAREEM

Yes, Mi Ling?

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

I lost your signal. I've been editing off the net for the past hour.

VAREEM

I turned the camera off.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

You what?

VAREEM

I needed to think.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Since when do you think?

VAREEM

It happens to the best of us.

Vareem smiles.

INT. LEAD LINE NEW EDIT BAY- NIGHT

Mi Ling looks at the image of Vareem with concern.

MI LING

And what have you come up with?

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

Do you believe in God, Mi Ling?

MI LING

No I don't and might I remind you that neither did you yesterday.

VAREEM (ON SCREEN)

I didn't say I believe. But I can see now why people do. I can see why they would believe in all manner of gods. We are all gods and all gods are God so we are all God.

MI LING

Are you okay? Do you want me to send a medic for you? I've got your position locked.

Mi Ling starts tapping at one of her many keyboards.

EXT. VITTHALA TEMPLE, INDIA- DAY

Vareem laughs at Mi Ling's obvious concern.

VAREEM

I'm fine. Just suffering the aftereffects of a profound realization. If I'm lucky it won't wear off.

MI LING (ON SCREEN)

Just the same, I think you should pack it in and get some rest.

Vareem looks up into the sky to see hundreds of small silver spheres floating down from the sky.

VAREEM

I think I'll do just that.

Vareem smiles at Mi Ling's image as she frowns back.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas looks over Andrea's shoulder at a monitor.

NICHOLAS

What's happening?

ANDREA

It's hard to tell.

Ms. Jasper steps up to them.

JASPER

Sir, we have initial reports that the smaller spheres are... Well...

NICHOLAS

Are what?

Mr. Nesson appears at his side.

MR. NESSON

Taking people, Sir.

There is a long silence as this sinks in.

ANDREA

Oh Dear God.

Nicholas turns away from the others.

NICHOLS

What have we done?

He looks over his shoulder at a monitor showing the time left on the counter of the bomb.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Jean cuts the thrust.

JEAN

Pegasus is clear and we are moving into a wide Earth orbit to await further orders.

Nobuko turns to look at Paolo.

NOBUKO

She'll be fine. I know it.

Jean looks at Nobuko.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas watches a monitor counting down the last seconds before detonation.

ANDREA

Nicholas. There's no time to get approval. It's your call.

NICHOLAS

How much time?

TECHNICIAN TWO

Thirty seconds, sir.

ANDREA

You need to decide now. There's a two second delay in transmission.

Nicholas places his hands together calmly.

EXT. STONEHENGE- DAY

Small silver spheres float to the ground and envelope individuals, sometimes couples, and then float upward toward the larger sphere again. Those not chosen weep, applaud and cheer.

INT. LARGE CORRIDOR OF SPHERE- LIGHT

The counter on the massive bomb reads twenty-five seconds and counting.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Andrea turns from the monitor.

TECHNICIAN TWO

The small spheres rejoining the larger ones above the cities. All of them seem to be leaving their positions to head back to the Visitor. The first of them seems to be entering a portal on the near side.

ANDREA

You have to make the call now.

NICHOLAS

I know.

He stares at the main monitor.

EXT. GIZA PYRAMIDS- DAY

Just as in Stonehenge, the small spheres are taking people up to the larger one.

EXT. VITTHALA TEMPLE, INDIA- DAY

A small silver sphere settles to the ground as Vareem stands to his feet. He turns his camera on and sets in on a stone bench, next to his Flipcom.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Jean, Nobuko, and Paolo all watch the counter as the bomb ticks off its numbers. Paolo and Nobuko instinctively grab each other's hand.

EXT. MAYAN TEMPLE- NIGHT

Like the other sites, people are ascending within small silver spheres into the sky.

EXT. MISSION CONTROL- SUNRISE

Nicholas and Andrea watch as the counter runs down to fifteen seconds.

EXT. VITTHALA TEMPLE, INDIA- DAY

Vareem walks toward the silver sphere.

INT. LEAD LINE NEWS EDIT BAY- NIGHT

Mi Ling watches her main monitor that shows Vareem walking up to the silver sphere as a circular portal opens for him.

EXT. MISSION CONTROL- SUNRISE

Nicholas notices the screen with the crew's medical telemetry. Valerie's vitals are still negative. He closes his eyes.

INSERT: IMAGE OF VALERIE SMILING BATHED IN WHITE LIGHT.

NICHOLAS
(Whispered.)

Valerie.

Nicholas opens his eyes.

INT. LEAD LINE NEW EDIT BAY- NIGHT

Mi Ling Watches as Vareem turns to the camera, smiles, waves, and then steps into the silver sphere

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Paolo and Nobuko squeeze each other's hand tightly.

EXT. MISSION CONTROL- SUNRISE

Andrea slams her hand on the table.

ANDREA

Nicholas! What's you're call?

He turns to her. He looks at the counter. It reads eight seconds.

EXT. SPACE- NEAR THE VISITOR

The stream of small silver spheres continues to enter the Visitor through the circular portal.

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE SPHERE- LIGHT

The counter reads five, four...

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas turns to Technician One.

NICHOLAS

Abort detonation.

Technician One flips up a small panel on presses a blue button.

There is a pause...

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE SPHERE- LIGHT

The counter on the bomb reads four... Three... Two...

And stops at two.

INT. PEGASUS- SPACE

Paolo, Nobuko, and Jean cheer as they watch the large silver spheres rise from the Earth and head for the Visitor. Jean looks down at the controls.

JEAN

I've got a signal. Something's headed this way.

He taps a button on the main monitor.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

The control room is awash in sighs of relief. Andrea places her hand on Nicholas's shoulder.

ANDREA

If it helps, I think you did the right thing.

NICHOLAS

Thanks.

Technicians suddenly start yelling at each other. Andrea turns around and shouts for order.

ANDREA

Calm down! Everybody! What is it?

TECHNICIAN ONE

You're not going to believe this...

ANDREA

I've heard that a lot lately.

TECHNICIAN TWO

We've lost the Pegasus.

NICHOLAS

What do you mean, lost it?

TECHNICIAN ONE

It's gone. No radar, to telemetry, no communications, nothing.

TECHNICIAN TWO

It just disappeared.

Andrea turns to see that Nicholas's is grinning.

NICHOLAS

Those lucky bastards.

His grin turns to a wide, deep smile.

EXT. SPACE- NEAR THE VISITOR

The last of the large spheres enters the Visitor as the portal closes and it begins to move away from the Earth faster and faster.

INT. GARDEN CHAMBER CITY WITHIN THE VISITOR- LOCALIZED LIGHT

Valerie walks down a tree-covered street of the garden city smiling. She is no longer wearing her space suit, but is instead in her flight jumper. As she looks up, a small silver sphere lowers to the ground, opening a small portal through which steps Vareem. She goes to him and they hold each other, kissing deeply.

VAREEM

I knew this was all your doing.

VALERIE

I wanted to make sure you'd have a good story.

VAREEM

This was the best you could do?

VALERIE

No. I can do better.

Valerie reaches into her jumper and pulls her necklace over her head. She slides the ring that it holds free.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

It was my grandfather's. I always keep it close to me.

She takes Vareem's hand, sliding the ring over his finger.

VAREEM

I promise it will never be far from you.

Valerie kisses him.

VALERIE

There's something I need to show
you. And something I need you to do.

She smiles at he questioning look.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas and Andrea watch the main monitor as the Visitor moves
away from the Earth.

ANDREA

I'm worried.

NICHOLAS

I wouldn't worry about them if I
were you. I envy them.

ANDREA

I'm worried about what happens
to us. To all of us.

NICHOLAS

I don't know. The world can never
be the same, but I doubt it'll change
much. I think I'll need to look
for a new job, though.

ANDREA

Have you ever thought about working
in the private sector? It has its
own world of cloaks and daggers.

NICHOLAS

I'd be working for the same people,
and I don't think I can do that again.

He looks at her and smiles.

INT. SLEEPING CHAMBER WITHIN THE VISITOR- LOCALIZED LIGHT

A sliver sphere touches down on the floor of the sleeping
chambers and opens to emit Valerie and Vareem. He looks around
at the vast room of small sleeping chambers. Throughout the
chamber thousands of small silver spheres are releasing their
human passengers into the sleep pods, which close silently after
them.

VAREEM

This is the biggest story of my
life, but I can't tell it.

Vareem takes the small helmet camera from Valerie's hands.

VALERIE

Are you sure?

VAREEM

Yes. Will they be able to receive
the signal?

VALERIE

It'll be everywhere.

Vareem raises the camera and frames a shot with Valerie in front
of the rows of sleep pods.

VAREEM

When ever you're ready.

Valerie takes a deep breath and then smiles as she exhales.

VALERIE

When you look back on this day, this
day the Earth stood still.

EXT. SPACE- EARTH ORBIT

The Visitor continues to recede into the stars as the Earth
slowly spins below.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Do not remember the violence or the
strife.

INT. MISSION CONTROL- NIGHT

Nicholas and Andrea watch the main screen as Valerie speaks.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Do not remember the years of pain we
caused ourselves, or the harm we caused
the planet.

INT. SLEEP CHAMBER WITHIN THE VISITOR- LOCALIZED LIGHT

Nobuko, Paolo and Jean are settling back into their sleep pods.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Instead remember this: We are not alone.
Our frail, confused species is not alone.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE- NIGHT

People in the street watch the Jumbotron as Valerie speaks.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Life extends beyond our tiny world,
and everywhere it is precious.

EXT. STONEHENGE- DAY

People crowd around Flipcoms to watch Valerie as she speaks.

VALERIE (V.O.)

When you remember your loved one's, your
fellow brothers and sisters... (MORE)

INT. LEAD LINE NEWS EDIT BAY- NIGHT

Nobuko stares with wonder at the various edit monitors, all
filled with the image of Valerie speaking.

VALERIE (CONT'D V.O.)

... Who have embarked upon the greatest
journey we have even known... (MORE)

EXT. TOKYO- MORNING

A crowd of people watch their Flipcoms as Valerie speaks.

VALERIE (CONT'D V.O.)

...Remember that they leave you in peace.

EXT. BOMBAY- DAY

People crowd around a small house with a television set to watch Valerie speak.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Let them find you when they return,
embracing that peace, and with it,
all life everywhere.

EXT. MOSCOW- DAY

People stand packed near a radio listening to Valerie speak.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Do not fall into your old ways of
thinking.

EXT. BEIJING- DAY

Soldiers and citizens stand silent as they watch the Visitor becoming smaller and smaller in the sky.

VALERIE (V.O.)

You have been given a new world, and
new eyes to see it with.

EXT. BERLIN- DAY

People jam the streets to stand and stare up into the sky.

VALERIE (CONT'D V.O.)

Do not close your eyes to the world or
those around you. (MORE)

EXT. CAIRO- DAY

People gather on the rooftops to get a better view of the Visitor as it fades from the sky.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Do not forget how the illusion of
separateness has been revealed.

EXT. JERUSALEM- DAY

People stand side by side, Jew, Christian, and Muslim alike, watching the Visitor become a small silver dot.

VALERIE (V.O.)

Instead, cling to the connections, to the unity, that flows between you.

INT. SLEEP CHAMBERS WITHIN THE VISITOR- LOCALIZED LIGHT

Valerie and Vareem settle back into adjoining sleep pods, smiling at each other as they close their eyes.

VALERIE (V.O.)

On behalf of the Visitor and its new guests, may you have love... (MORE)

EXT. SPACE- BEYOND EARTH

The Visitor continues on its way out of the solar system and into the deep, star filled expanse of space.

VALERIE (CONT'D V.O.)

... And may you have peace.

Behind it, becoming smaller and smaller, rests the Earth; a pale blue dot in a field of innumerable stars.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END