

The Wanderer

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TEASER

EXT. SPACE

A tiny disc speeds through space. It races past stars and planets, past Neptune, then Jupiter, then Mars. Finally we see it heading toward Earth. The disc is about the size of an oyster, and the same flat disc-like shape. We follow it as it enters the Earth's atmosphere. It lights up and catches fire like a meteorite, but it does not disintegrate. We follow its journey all the way down to the ground.

As it descends through the clouds and down to land, we catch a glimpse of an ancient man, HOMO ERGASTER, a furry apelike humanoid, and his COMPANION. The disc speeds down toward the unsuspecting ape and shoots right through his forehead! The ape-man falls to the ground dead. The startled Companion approaches his friend's body. He turns it over and inspects the bloody hole in his forehead. He panics. He looks around to see what might have caused this. He sees the smoking disc on the ground.

He slowly approaches the disc and stabs it with his stick. Nothing happens. He picks it up and examines it. He wipes away the blood and holds it up to the sky, inspecting it in the light. The disc catches the sun's rays and begins to pulsate with a blue glow.

The eyes of the ape-man grow large as he stares into the glowing disc. Suddenly we shoot into his eyes and all the way to his brain. We see DNA forming, amino acids building, and chemical reactions taking place. It is a wonderland of evolution in fast-forward. Then everything starts to vibrate, more and more rapidly.

We shoot back from his brain and exit through his eye. His eyes turn from animal to human. We pull back further to reveal the continent of Pangaea, which drifts and spreads to reveal the modern Earth. We see the Great Wall of China being built. We see the lights of civilization pop on, dotting the globe. Satellites appear in orbit. We finally settle into a moment of stillness. Then. BOOM! The Earth explodes.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ADAM (28), and all-American looking doctoral student, wakes up suddenly from a bad dream, a sticky note stuck to his forehead. He looks as disheveled as does his office. Papers, books, and empty food containers are everywhere.

ADAM
What the hell was that?

END TAG

ACT I

INT. BLACK HOLE TAVERN - NIGHT

The bar is decorated in standard sports memorabilia. Pool tables, pinball machines, and dart boards line the walls. The booze is flowing and the music is loudly pumping. Tonight is a special night. It's Halloween. Patrons are dressed in costumes, some better than others.

In a far corner of the bar, two people sit in isolation. Adam and CHANG (28), a tall redheaded and overly cheery Englishman. They are both dressed in normal clothes. Their voices rise above the roar of the party.

ADAM
Who shows up to a Halloween party
without a costume anyway?

CHANG
Apparently you and I. I completely
forgot it was Halloween. I wish I'd
remembered. It's fantastic in here!

Chang gets into the party feel. He dances and laughs with the crowd. He sips one of the drinks at the table. Adam's drink. Adam glares at Chang, annoyed.

ADAM
Chang. It's hard enough to relax in
this nuthouse without you dancing
around like an idiot.

CHANG
Being an idiot is how I relax.

ADAM
I need a sane conversation. Years
of work comes down to one day. And
it's tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

Which is why I don't understand the mood you're in tonight. You should be celebrating.

ADAM

I'm just tired of hearing about my father. All the time.

CHANG

Don't worry so much. Your hard work alone will grant you the PhD. Now stop sulking and please, just get into the mood.

ADAM

Ugh. I'm not feeling it. We don't even have costumes.

CHANG

Fine. I'm an extra-terrestrial disguised as a human being.

ADAM

Great. And what am I?

A figure slides into the chair across from Adam.

LISA

You're a sad doctoral student wallowing in self-pity, with a father complex and a slight tendency for neuroses.

Reveal LISA (23), Adam's ex-girlfriend, blonde and beautiful and she knows it. She is dressed like one of a dozen sexy nurses at the bar. Adam glares at her, fuming. An awkward moment.

CHANG

Hi Lisa. You're looking... typical. Here to lift Adam's spirits? I'll go get us more drinks then.

Chang leaves the table and heads for the bar. Adam hunches over his glass, barely anything left. He stares at it, then at Lisa.

ADAM

Don't psycho-analyze me. I have a very important day tomorrow. I don't need one of your pep talks.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

Oh yes. Your ever so important dissertation.

ADAM

Oh god. What do you want?

CUT TO:

Chang leans against the bar. He waves to the BARTENDER (40s), a burly and surly ex-football linebacker. He is not pleased to see Chang. He hands a drink to a gorgeous woman.

BARTENDER

(to Chang)

Oh god. What do you want?

(to gorgeous woman)

Here you go sweetie. On the house.

The gorgeous woman, IVY (25), smirks at Chang. An exotic girl, she makes pretty women look average. She is wearing a sleek silver futuristic outfit that looks painted onto her curvy body. And she wears it well. She could start wars.

CHANG

(to Bartender)

Two Irish carbombs and two whiskeys on the rocks please. You're looking very well tonight.

BARTENDER

Don't butter me up Chang. You're paying.

IVY

(to Chang)

I guess you're not pretty enough. Next time wear a sexier costume.

CHANG

I think I look rather sharp.

IVY

I forgot how much fun people have on Halloween.

She takes a long sip of vodka and cranberry juice.

IVY

And I forgot how great alcohol tastes.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

Oh you must be a PhD student too.
Don't get out much?

IVY

No. I'm always on the move.

CUT TO:

Adam and Lisa. Adam tries desperately to look past Lisa to Chang. His drink is empty.

LISA

So. What's the next chapter in your illustrious career?

ADAM

Why? Are you pretending to care?
You left me, remember?

LISA

I always cared. You were always too distracted to notice.

An awkward silence.

LISA

I'm glad to see Chang is still your favorite accessory though.

ADAM

Here we go again. Isn't this what you'd diagnose as passive aggressiveness?

LISA

At least my friends are normal.

Adam glares. Lisa glares. It is a standoff.

CUT TO:

Chang props himself against the bar and talks to Ivy.

CHANG

...and that is why human excrement is actually the most abundant source of fuel on the planet.

IVY

It's brilliant. You're funny. I think I'm getting a little drunk though. So maybe not.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly a voice from behind them stops Chang dead.

Z

Human conversation is so banal
under the influence of spirits.

Reveal Z (30s), dressed in an outfit that one can only describe as ridiculous. Not quite a costume, not quite regular clothes, he looks like he's dressed for a night of peacocking.

IVY

(tipsy)

Z! I'm so happy you decided to join
us.

Z lunges angrily at Chang.

Z

Where is it! Where the hell is it?

CHANG

I. I know where it is.

(nervous)

Wow, it's been a long time. You
look good!

Z

Enough! Show me!

IVY

(soothing)

Z...

CHANG

Well. I don't... exactly have it on
me. Right now.

Z

I'll rip your fucking arms off!

The Bartender wipes the counter nearby.

BARTENDER

Attaboy, Chang. Always making
friends in here.

Z glares and snarls at the Bartender. He turns back on Chang.

Z

Chang? Is that what you call
yourself now?

(CONTINUED)

Ivy puts her hand on Z's shoulder and whispers in his ear. Immediately his expression changes from manic to peaceful, almost zenlike. He still grips Chang by the collar.

CHANG

Oh you two know each other?

IVY

(to Z)

You're wrinkling his shirt.

Z looks at his hands, then to Chang. He awkwardly loosens his grip and let's Chang stand up.

Z

Time is of the essence.

CHANG

I thought time was an illusion.

Z snaps and lunges again.

CUT TO:

Adam and Lisa. Adam is angry.

ADAM

I don't need this. For once everything is working out according to plan.

LISA

What plan? That's your problem, Adam. You've never had a plan. You just forge ahead. So what's your big plan now?

ADAM

I don't know, alright? I don't know!

LISA

You know, when I saw you from across the bar I actually had some hope that you came out to have a good time. For once. Now I know I was wrong. You are just the same sad little boy you always were.

Adam looks down at his empty drink, then toward the bar. He sees Ivy.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

Typical Adam. Incapable of meaningful communication. Can you look at me when I talk to you?

Adam cannot take his eyes off of Ivy. He rises from his seat, eyes locked.

ADAM

You know you're right. I should be enjoying the evening.

Lisa gets up and blocks him.

LISA

I did care for you Adam. But it was always about you, your family, your problems. I just wanted to live life with you, but all you could do was live life like the world is ending.

Adam ignores her. He walks to the bar.

CUT TO:

Chang explains himself to Z.

CHANG

I need a little longer.

Z

What have you been doing all this time? I hired you to find it, not inhabit local taverns. I have lost everything. I need this.

CHANG

Look, Z. I can get it. Just not tonight. I can get it tomorrow.

Z

(starting to get angry)
You might not have a tomorrow. They might have followed me.

IVY

(to Z)

You're starting to become paranoid.

CHANG

They?

(CONTINUED)

Z
(to Ivy)
No!
(to Chang)
Yes! They!

Now Chang understands. He turns pale and stares blankly at Z, then at Ivy.

Adam reaches the bar, still in awe of Ivy's beauty.

ADAM
(to Ivy)
Hello. I'm Adam.

Silence. Adam looks at Chang, then Z, then Chang again.

ADAM
What's going on here?

Z
(to Chang)
You have until tomorrow's shade.

Z turns to leave. Ivy follows, turns to Adam.

IVY
You look like you've just avoided
confrontation and self-reflection.

She leaves. Adam stares after her, then at Chang.

ADAM
Jesus. Are all women like this?

Chang zones out. Adam nudges him.

ADAM
Hey. I think I just figured out my
costume. I'm a psychiatric patient.

Chang snaps out of it and looks at Adam, still a ghost of himself.

CHANG
I need to leave now.

ADAM
Oh come on. You were just saying we
should have some fun.

CHANG

No. I need to go.

ADAM

You don't look so good. Want me to call you a cab?

CHANG

No. I need some space.

ADAM

Ok. I'm going to stay though. You were right. I'm wound too tightly.

Chang walks past him toward the door.

ADAM

(at Chang)

I'm just going to celebrate. Get in the mood.

He flops onto the barstool. Whatever buzz he managed to get is now gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - NIGHT

Chang walks through the dark empty campus. No one is around. A helicopter flies overhead. Chang watches it go, in a daze. A filthy HOMELESS MAN carrying a violin surprises him.

HOMELESS MAN

You look like you know something!
Can you tell me about tomorrow?

CHANG

(distant)

Tomorrow...

Suddenly he snaps out of it and hurries away, the Homeless Man shouts after him.

He makes his way down the sidewalk to a huge stone building.

EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM - FURTHER

The old building looks like it was made with the same stones used to build the Great Pyramid. It is totally deserted.

Chang pulls on the doors. Locked. A sign on the wall reads: "Tours M-F 12pm-4pm".

(CONTINUED)

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11.

He pounds on the doors and peers in the windows for any signs of life. Nothing but blackness. He walks off into the night. He looks up to the sky, losing himself in the stars.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

Outside of Jupiter's orbit, an enormous ship creeps across space. It looks like a gigantic bulldozer. But this bulldozer has cannons. Its gleaming metal surface distorts the reflection of Jupiter. We hear its low rumbling in the eerie silence of space.

CUT TO:

INT. NAMELESS SHIP - BRIDGE

The bridge is dark and gloomy. Loose cables and wires, some covered with slime, shoot sparks and short out. The only color are lights that blink on various panels.

In a large chair sits a looming silhouette. The CAPTAIN. He pushes a button on his control panel and a distant star is bracketed on the huge display in front of him. A slow beeping reaches a crescendo.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAMELESS SHIP - FURTHER

The ship roars and shoots a huge sonic pulse.

POV: We ride the pulse wave toward the distant star. As we approach, we see a blinking active satellite. The wave passes through it and it goes dead.

CUT TO:

INT. NORAD COMMAND CENTER

The giant room is littered with computer consoles and monitors, each manned by MILITARY TECHNICIANS. Systems are down. Everyone is scrambling to bring them back online.

A cluster of OFFICERS huddle, each on phones. In the center stands an imposing AIR FORCE GENERAL. He is looking at the enormous translucent monitor in the center of the room. Nothing but a dead signal.

(CONTINUED)

AIR FORCE GENERAL
Will someone tell me what the hell
just happened to my satellite?

An AIR FORCE CAPTAIN gravely hangs up his phone. He looks at the Air Force General, pale and disturbed.

AIR FORCE CAPTAIN
Sir, that was NASA.

The Air Force General loses his patience.

AIR FORCE GENERAL
What is it son? Speak!

AIR FORCE CAPTAIN
Sir! They say there is something
outside Jupiter's orbit. At it's
current trajectory it's headed
straight for Earth.

AIR FORCE GENERAL
An asteroid?

AIR FORCE CAPTAIN
Sir. It's changing its velocity.

A worried look crosses the Air Force General's face.

AIR FORCE GENERAL
Good god. Get me the President.

END ACT I

ACT II

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Adam's living room is clean and organized. It is decorated with bookshelves and random knick-knacks from around the world. The furniture is clearly IKEA.

Adam is passed out, partly on his couch and partly on the floor, dressed in his party clothes. Suddenly he wakes up, panicked. He looks around, confused. Everything has lost power, including his digital clock. He looks at his watch.

ADAM
Oh no!

He jumps up and grabs his bag. He looks down at his attire. It will have to do. He runs out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. ADAM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FURTHER

The apartment building is a typical Los Angeles dwelling. Palm trees line the sidewalk, where ONLOOKERS stand in the shade. A DWP TECHNICIAN in a cherry picker works on the power lines.

As soon as Adam runs out, he is blinded by the sun. He recoils, scrambling to put on his sunglasses.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - FURTHER

Adam is badly hungover. The brightness and sounds of the city crowd his head. He walks down the sidewalk toward a tall University building with an enormous clock ticking his time away. He spots a coffee shop across the street and contemplates. He looks back at the clock.

EXT. PRISCILLA'S GOURMET COFFEE AND TEA - DAY

The same Homeless Man stands outside playing his violin. More ONLOOKERS crowd the sidewalks, holding their phones up to the sky, searching for a signal. A LUCKY GUY stands on a chair, phone held overhead.

LUCKY GUY

I got a bar!

A throng of Onlookers swarm his chair, holding their phones high.

LUCKY GUY

No! Go away!

Adam gruffly pushes through the crowd toward the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISCILLA'S GOURMET COFFEE AND TEA - FURTHER

The scene inside is not much better. PATRONS clutch their laptops in frustration. A nervous and sweating STUDENT barges toward the counter and shouts at the frazzled BARISTA.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT

Of all the days for your wi-fi to be out. I have a paper due in thirty minutes!

A scarf-wearing HIPSTER in a plaid shirt, fedora and skinny jeans points a manicured finger at him.

HIPSTER

(to Student)

Excuse me!

(to Barista)

What do you mean I can't use my iPhone to pay? Do I look like I carry cash?

BARISTA

Sorry. Our credit card machine is down. Today it's cash only.

HIPSTER

This is ridiculous. You just lost a customer!

Adam sticks his head out from the end of a long line of angry PATRONS. He looks at his watch.

ADAM

Damn.

CUT TO:

INT. CHANG'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is littered with empty boxes of food and books are strewn everywhere. Piles of clothes create walkways through the chaos. In the corner sits a massive computer setup, a wonderland of geek-dom. Multiple screens and random gadgets plug into a station of epic proportions.

Chang lies face down on the bed, legs and arms extended, like a giant starfish. He opens his eyes slowly and looks around. Suddenly he jumps up and grabs his clock radio. It reads only a jumble of digital lines.

CHANG

Oh no!

He runs to his computer, fingers flying over the keyboard. Nothing happens. He tries again.

POV: The computer screen flashes on with a message:
REBOOTING IN PROGRESS... 10 MINUTES REMAINING...

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

Oh come on!

He looks out the window and tries to see past the trees outside. He runs for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHANG'S HOUSE - FURTHER

Chang's house is a homely craftsman duplex. NEW NEIGHBORS move boxes up the walkway. They stop in shock as Chang runs out the door in his underwear. He looks up at the sky, oblivious to their stares.

CHANG

Oh no!

CUT TO:

INT. CHANG'S HOUSE - FURTHER

Chang hastily rummages through piles of clothes. He smells a shirt. It'll do. He pulls it over his head, then stops. He runs back to the computer.

POV: REBOOTING IN PROGRESS... 15 MINUTES REMAINING...

He pounds the keyboard in frustration.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISCILLA'S GOURMET COFFEE AND TEA - DAY

Adam walks out with his coffee and stares at the mob of technology-deprived people. He sighs and weaves through them. The sound of a violin rises. Just as he puts the cup to his lips he trips over a violin case, his coffee, wallet and sunglasses flying.

ADAM

You gotta be kidding me!

The Homeless Man doesn't miss a note.

HOMELESS MAN

Today's the big day!

Adam collects his things.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

In more ways than one.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey don't let the sound waves get you down, man. Got a quarter?

ADAM

It's just going to be one of those days.

CUT TO:

INT. CHANG'S HOUSE - DAY

Chang furiously irons his dirty shirt, still in his underwear. Suddenly a loud KNOCK at the door stops him. He stares at the door, unsure. Suddenly his shirt starts to smoke, and he frantically continues ironing.

He pulls the iron-burned shirt over his head and sifts through his apartment rubble, looking for something. At last he finds his miniature notebook, jammed full of papers with miniature writing inside.

An old woman's face peers through his window as he heads for the door.

EXT. CHANG'S HOUSE - FURTHER

The old woman, MRS. MENDOZA (70s), an Estelle Getty type, wears a ratty purple robe and bright red curlers. She blocks Chang's path.

MRS. MENDOZA

Oh! Mr. Chang. I'm so glad I caught you. We had a little power outage, and now my computer doesn't seem to turn on. Can you take a look for me?

CHANG

I'm sorry. I'm really in a rush.

She expertly blocks him again.

MRS. MENDOZA

It'll only take a quick minute. You know how I love to read my gossip.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

I can't, really. Not now.

MRS. MENDOZA

But Mr. Chang. What will I do all day?

CHANG

Stare at the sky?

He fakes one way and goes around her the other way. She stares after him.

MRS. MENDOZA

Prick.

CUT TO:

INT. ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Adam walks into the room. It is sparsely decorated. Three PROFESSORS sit at a long wooden table. A lone metal folding chair in front is clearly for Adam.

He sits down and stares at them; they stare back. Adam looks at the clock on the wall. Every tick of the second hand sounds louder. He puts his sunglasses back on. Only one lens. He groans and turns back to the Professors. He fakes a smile. They don't smile back. Adam notices a tiny dried up vomit stain on his pants. He scratches it with his finger.

Finally a SKINNY PROFESSOR, who looks like George Plimpton, clears his throat.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Glad you could join us.

ADAM

Huh?

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Well? What do you have to say for yourself?

ADAM

Is it extremely bright in here?

SKINNY PROFESSOR

I'm sorry?

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Oh nothing.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Normally we'd have this advising session projected on the screen so we could all go through it, but for some reason nothing seems to be working today. Instead we have a hard copy.

A FAT ACADEMIC, who looks like Fatty Arbuckle, pulls out Adam's dissertation and drops it on the table. The sound hits Adam in the face like a shock wave. He recoils.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Adam, I must say, this is... how can I put this?

FAT ACADEMIC

Revolutionary!

The panel erupts in smiles. Adam buries his head in his hands.

ADAM

Ohhh...

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Chang hurriedly walks across the campus. STUDENTS line the sidewalks. Chang looks up at the sky, then bumps into a FRAT BOY.

FRAT BOY

Dude, relax. Classes are canceled for the day. No need to rush.

CHANG

If you knew why there was no class, you wouldn't be relaxing. Dude.

A group of celebrating Students run happily past them.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM - FURTHER

The old stone building looks even more run down than it did the night before. Disgruntled TOURISTS linger on the steps.

Chang makes his way to the door and tries to open it. It's locked. He shakes the doors. Nothing.

CHANG

Oh come on! You've got to be kidding me!

A small SNOTTY GIRL (10) taps his arm.

SNOTTY GIRL

My mom says the museum is closed today. No one is allowed inside. Not even for my birthday.

Chang pounds the doors, enraged. He sees someone in the lobby and motions them to the door.

CHANG

(to Snotty Girl)

If I don't get inside this building there won't be any more birthdays.

SNOTTY GIRL

(terrified)

Mommy!

A SECURITY GUARD (40s), a very large man with a very small uniform, lightly dusted with powdered sugar, slowly opens the door. He wears black gloves and a utility belt with way too much attached to it. Except the Batman buckle, which clearly identifies his personality. He blocks Chang's way.

SECURITY GUARD

Can I help you?

CHANG

Yes! Why is this building closed? I need to get inside!

SECURITY GUARD

Sorry guy. The tour is canceled for the day.

CHANG

What? Why?

(CONTINUED)

SECURITY GUARD

Don't know. Systems keep turning on and off. Everything has been on the fritz since last night.

CHANG

I really need to get in there.

SECURITY GUARD

No way that's happening. Not without a reason to be here. Sorry.

The Security Guard shuts the doors and locks them. Chang looks up to the sky.

POV: A star, quite out of place, twinkles in the daytime sky.

CHANG

Adam.

CUT TO:

INT. ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT OFFICE

Adam sits with the Advisors.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Your theories are absolutely genius! I wish your father were here. He would be so proud.

ADAM

Proud? I highly doubt that.

They ignore him.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

To say that humans evolved intelligence from their tools, rather than the other way around. It's...

FAT ACADEMIC

Revolutionary!

ADAM

I don't think you...

He gets cut off by the excited titters of the Advisors.

(CONTINUED)

SKINNY PROFESSOR

With your family name, and your theories, this program is going to get a boost. We'll finally be able to compete with the Ivy League schools.

FAT ACADEMIC

Revolutionary!

ADAM

Does he say anything else?

The Advisors huddle and talk amongst themselves. Adam sits, ignored. Their whispers grow louder as they get more excited.

ADAM

Enough!

They jump. They stare at Adam.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY BUILDING CORRIDOR

Chang runs down the hall lined with classrooms and offices. He opens and closes each door, looking for something.

CUT TO:

INT. ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT OFFICE

Back to Adam.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Adam, are you okay?

ADAM

No. I'm not okay. This is wrong. It's all wrong.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

What do you mean?

ADAM

I don't want to do this. This isn't what I'm supposed to be doing.

The Academics erupt in whispers. Adam talks to himself.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

(aside)

Lisa was right. I really don't have a plan.

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Adam you should be proud of who you are. Your family history, your father's reputation...

Adam explodes.

ADAM

That doesn't matter! This is not who I am.

(aside)

I need to get out of here.

The Advisors sit, stunned. Suddenly the door swings wildly open. Chang bursts in, covered in a nice sheen of sweat.

CHANG

Adam!

ADAM

Chang?

SKINNY PROFESSOR

What is the meaning of this?

Chang runs to Adam and pulls him out of the chair.

CHANG

You have to come with me. Now!

SKINNY PROFESSOR

Where are you going? We're not done yet!

Adam and Chang stop in the doorway.

ADAM

I think I am.

Chang drags Adam out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM

The spartan room gleams a sanitized white, even in the low light. Z sits in a chair in the center of the room, facing an enormous wall of blinds. A small keypad blinks the only colors in the room. Except for Z's smoking jacket, which looks like something worn by a color blind king.

Ivy enters, wearing the same painted on outfit from the party.

IVY

Have you been up this whole time?

Z

I can't sleep. I need him to pull through for me. I need that device.

IVY

You always say he's the best.

Z

That he is.
(under his breath)
And he is the only hope I have.

IVY

Then don't worry.

Z

Don't worry? I need this before they find it.

IVY

What are the chances they followed you? You're acting paranoid again.

Z glares at her. He presses a button on the keypad. The blinds begin to rise.

POV: We see Earth. We're in space. The blinds open further to reveal the underbelly of another huge ship.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The gleaming bulldozer alien ship hovers near the Earth.

Attached to the bottom of the ship is a smaller vessel, a streamlined teardrop-shaped craft, with no visible doors or windows. It looks like a pimple on the belly of a beast.

(CONTINUED)

END ACT II

ACT III

INT. Z'S SHIP - BRIDGE

The spartan white room now reflects the black emptiness of space. Ivy stands by the window and looks up at the enormous ship.

IVY

My god.

Z

They arrived while you were sleeping. I maneuvered us right underneath them. Their sensors can't pick us up if we're this close.

IVY

What will they do to Earth?

Z

Now is not the time for paranoia. You taught me that.

IVY

But it's my home. Still.

Z looks at Ivy. Her expression goes from her usual hopefulness to a sad, worried one. Z's face shows some compassion.

Z

We must get what we came for. Or we both lose.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Chang runs ahead of Adam, who struggles to keep up.

ADAM

Chang!

Chang runs faster.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Hey!

Chang runs through a crosswalk, past the red hand. Adam stops. Chang stops and looks back at Adam.

CHANG

(yelling)

Just cross! We have no time. We have to go.

Green light. Adam calmly crosses the street.

ADAM

This is a weird day. I feel really good.

CHANG

Adam!

ADAM

What the hell are you doing here anyway Chang? Where are we going?

CHANG

To the museum!

ADAM

Why?

CHANG

Do you have your keycard? Does it still work?

ADAM

I think it's still technically valid. I only quit five minutes ago. So yes.

Chang pulls out his miniature notebook. He flips to a page and points to a picture. A small round tool.

CHANG

This. I need to see this.

Adam looks at the picture.

ADAM

That's from my father's last dig.

CHANG

Yes. Take me to it.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM
Why?

CHANG
Trust me. The world depends on it.

ADAM
You're so dramatic. What time did
you start drinking today?

Chang grabs Adam by the shoulder and points to the sky.

CHANG
Look. See that?

ADAM
(looking)
What?

CHANG
Look! It's a spaceship.

ADAM
What, that star?

CHANG
There aren't stars during the day
Adam! Now come on!

He runs down the sidewalk.

ADAM
(still looking)
You're insane.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM - FURTHER

A mob of PEOPLE gather on the steps and stare at the sky.
Chang and Adam make their way past them to the door. Adam
swipes his card.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM LOBBY - FURTHER

The Security Guard sits at a large circular desk in the
middle of the lobby. Huge dinosaur bones loom everywhere.
Ancient rocks sit behind glass cases.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG
(to Adam)
Can I see your card?

The Security Guard jingles out from behind the desk, brandishing a flashlight in a very serious way.

SECURITY GUARD
(smiling)
Gentlemen. Can I help you?

CHANG
Thank goodness you're still here.
We need to get into the archives.

The Security Guard gives them the once-over.

SECURITY GUARD
Ok. Can I have your names, please?

CHANG
This is Adam. I am Chang.

SECURITY GUARD
Adam. And... Chang?

He pulls out a clipboard. He stares at Chang and Adam, then runs his finger slowly down the list. He slowly licks his thumb and turns the page. Once more the finger runs painfully slowly down the page.

CHANG
What on Earth are you doing?

SECURITY GUARD
I'm checking to see if you're on the list.

CHANG
We're not on any list!

The Security Guard puts the clipboard down and picks the flashlight up.

SECURITY GUARD
Well. In that case you can't go down there.

ADAM
(to Chang)
Wait, why do we need to go down there Chang?

CHANG

(to Adam)

I told you!

(to Security Guard, pointing
at Adam)

Do you know who this is?

SECURITY GUARD

His name is Adam?

CHANG

His name is on the outside of this
building.

ADAM

It's true.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh. I thought that guy was dead.

CHANG

Well he technically is. But this is
his son.

SECURITY GUARD

So it's not his name on the
building?

CHANG

It's the same name!

SECURITY GUARD

Different guy.

Chang waves his arms, exasperated, but unable to speak. The Security Guard grows even more calm.

SECURITY GUARD

Mr. Chang? I take my job very
seriously. I am entrusted with
protecting everything you see here.

He motions a gloved hand toward the lobby.

SECURITY GUARD

For eight hours. Every day.

CHANG

We're going down there.

SECURITY GUARD

Not without clearance. Or one of
these.

(CONTINUED)

He holds up a shiny keycard, secured to his hip with a flexi-cord. He points the card at them.

CHANG

Can I see that?

SECURITY GUARD

Gentlemen. I think it's time for you to leave.

Adam finally interjects.

ADAM

(sarcastic)

Ok. What if I told you there was a spaceship in the sky, and hundreds of people are panicking in the streets?

The Security Guard releases the card, the flexi-cord snaps back into place.

SECURITY GUARD

Do I look like an idiot?

An awkward silence.

CHANG

What if I give you fifty bucks?

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM - FURTHER

On the steps of the museum, more PEOPLE gather, all staring up into the sky. The Security Guard walks out the door, sees all the people, and looks up.

POV: The star suddenly grows bright and begins to move across the sky.

The crowd panics. People scream and run in every direction. The Security Guard says nothing, stunned. Chang holds out a fifty dollar bill.

CHANG

Can we get that fancy card now?

The Security Guard is still frozen. Chang carefully takes the card off his belt and stuffs the fifty dollar bill into his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG
Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM LOBBY - FURTHER

Chang runs through the lobby. Adam stops him.

ADAM
Elevator. It'll be faster.

CHANG
Of course.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - FURTHER

The cramped elevator plays sanitized music. Chang swipes the card and presses the button marked ARCHIVES. The doors close.

ADAM
(stunned)
So. That was really a spaceship in the sky.

CHANG
I told you.

Adam is silent.

CHANG
I'm surprised this elevator works.

ADAM
Chang. What does this all mean?

The doors open. They haven't moved.

CHANG
I guess it means we're taking the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHIVES - FURTHER

The large room is densely cluttered with narrow rows of shelves, each piled with various boxes and artifacts. There is barely any room to move between them.

Adam and Chang stand motionless for a moment.

CHANG

Where do we begin?

Adam moves expertly between the shelves.

ADAM

It's been years since I've been down here. I remember my dad's partner would show me stuff from their digs.

CHANG

So you know where you're going?

ADAM

I have no clue. But I saw it once when I was a kid. I think it's back here.

They snake their way between the shelves to the back of the room. They reach a wall of drawers. Adam opens them one by one. He holds up a tool.

ADAM

Is this it?

Chang looks at his notebook.

CHANG

No.

Adam grabs another round artifact.

ADAM

This?

CHANG

Not even close.

Adam pulls out another drawer. Chang gasps.

CHANG

There!

Chang holds the object in reverence. He gently places it on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

What are you doing?

CHANG

Looking... for something... heavy.

Chang spots a fire extinguisher and holds it high over head.

ADAM

Whoa! Wait! Stop!

Chang stops and blinks at Adam.

CHANG

What's wrong?

ADAM

You can't just smash one of the oldest finds in human history! What are you doing?

CHANG

Adam! Spaceship in the sky! Perspective!

ADAM

You're right. Carry on.

Chang smashes the fire extinguisher down onto the artifact. It cracks. He raises it again.

ADAM

I think I'm going to be sick.

Chang slams it down again. All that remains is a pile of rock. He sifts through the rocks and finds a palm-sized circular object. The thin, silver matte object is perfectly smooth. He flips it over in his hand and reveals a pattern of symmetrical grooves. Adam stares in disbelief.

ADAM

My god. How did you know that was in there?

CHANG

Actually it was a complete guess.

ADAM

What the hell is going on?

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The large alien ship looms near the planet. Z's ship is still attached to its underbelly. A rumble is heard as it begins to fire an enormous sound wave at the Earth. Concentric circles of vibrating energy tear through space.

CUT TO:

INT. Z'S SHIP - BRIDGE

The firing of the sound wave reverberates loudly through the ship.

IVY
(yelling)
What is that?

Z runs to the console.

Z
No! I have to get him off that planet. I need that device!

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHIVES - FURTHER

The room begins to shake violently. Adam, Chang, and shelves go crashing to the ground. The walls and floor begin to crack. Then a moment of silence.

ADAM
What just happened?

CHANG
It's beginning!

ADAM
The aliens are attacking us?

CHANG
No. They're destroying us. And don't say aliens. It's a derogatory term.

Chang and Adam push through the debris to the stairwell just as the room begins to shake again. They dodge falling shelves and flying boxes. The violence is amazing. Then, as quickly as it started, it stops again.

They get to the door but their escape is completely buried.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

Oh no! We're trapped!

ADAM

I have an idea. Follow me.

Adam runs to some cabinets still standing upright. Chang follows.

ADAM

Help me move these.

They each grab an end and tip the cabinet over. On the other side is a door. A very old and unused door.

ADAM

These are the old tunnels that run all under the campus. Remains from the Cold War.

CHANG

Fantastic! Let's go!

Chang tries to open the door, but years of disuse has sealed it tight.

CHANG

Honestly. Can one door work properly for me today?

ADAM

Let's break it down.

They stand back from the door. With a nod, our valiant heroes throw themselves at the door. They bounce off and land flat on their backs.

CHANG

I don't think that worked.

ADAM

I think I felt it give a little. One more time.

CHANG

My shoulder hurts.

ADAM

We have no other option.

They take their positions and throw themselves at the door once more. The door opens and they go crashing through.

CUT TO:

INT. NORAD COMMAND CENTER

All military personnel run frantically from computer to computer. Uniforms are partly removed. Etiquette is out.

The Air Force General watches the images of destruction from the sound wave on the monitor. The Air Force Captain stands by his side.

AIR FORCE GENERAL
Prepare to launch the ballistic
missiles!

A LEUTENANT jumps onto the deck next to them.

LEUTENANT
General! They're concentrating
their fire at strategic locations
all over the globe.

AIR FORCE CAPTAIN
The ballistic missiles failed to
launch!

AIR FORCE GENERAL
(to Air Force Captain)
Get them in the air!
(to Lieutenant)
What cities are being hit?

LEUTENANT
Not cities. They're firing at the
fault lines. They're going to take
out the Pacific Rim.

The entire room goes quiet. The General stares at the images on the monitor.

AIR FORCE GENERAL
God help us all.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNEL

The filthy circular tunnel hasn't been used in decades. Barely illuminated by emergency lights, everything is covered in cobwebs and dust. Chang and Adam run through it all.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

Where does this tunnel lead?

ADAM

I have no idea. These tunnels run all through campus. For all I know, we're in a rat's maze.

CHANG

Please tell me there are no rats down here.

They continue running. They reach a ladder that leads up into an unknown black void. They both stare up into it.

CHANG

I guess we go up.

ADAM

I'm not going up there. Not until you tell me what's up there.

CHANG

Please. We don't have time.

ADAM

No! Chang, I've had one of those rare days. You know the kind? The kind where spaceships attack and your best friends pull weird discs out of old rocks? Don't I deserve some kind of explanation?

CHANG

You wouldn't believe me if I told you. And I wouldn't know where to begin.

ADAM

Then you go on up. I'll just stay here and contemplate what the hell happened to this day.

CHANG

Adam!

ADAM

Chang!

They stare at each other for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

Fine. That giant spaceship in the sky? It's a planet destroyer. As in, annihilation. And I know this because I'm not from Earth. I'm not even from this solar system. I'm part of a group that tracks down and protects the rarest items in the universe. That's pretty much it.

Adam blinks slowly.

ADAM

So what you're telling me is that some angry aliens are trying to destroy the Earth, and that my best friend, who is also an alien, is some kind of treasure hunting intergalactic Indiana Jones. Right?

Chang gives him a look.

CHANG

Yes. But please. We don't say aliens. I told you.

Suddenly the ground shakes. The walls bend and crack. They scramble for the ladder as the tunnel collapses around them.

END ACT III

ACT IV

INT. Z'S SHIP - BRIDGE

Z paces in front of his console.

Z

Those savages! How dare they!

IVY

You have to calm down. You can't make decisions in your state.

Z turns angrily on Ivy.

Z

Wrong! I have made a decision.

He turns back to the console and pushes a flurry of buttons.

(CONTINUED)

IVY
What are you doing?

Z
I can't just leave him there. He has it. I know he does.

IVY
How can you be sure he found it?

Z
Because he's the best!

He pounds the console.

IVY
Please stop for a moment and calm down.

He twitches into another personality. He looks at her innocently.

Z
I have to save him. I owe him that much.

He punches in coordinates. The COMPUTER calculates.

COMPUTER
(V.O.)
Location invalid. Transport to coordinates impossible due to high energy field.

Z
Damn! I'm going to try anyway.

IVY
No! You can't! There's nothing we can do.

Z goes quiet. Something changes in him again. He is calm and serious.

Z
Think. There is always a way.

IVY
We could try to jam their weapon. How can we attack the source?

Z

If we reroute all our power, we
might have a chance.

IVY

Wouldn't that cripple our ship?

Z

We have to try. I need that device!

Ivy stares at him, frightened.

Z

It's the only way to save your
planet.

CUT TO:

EXT. EARTH LANDSCAPE

The surface of the Earth is almost unrecognizable. Clouds of dust and debris swirl, spontaneous fires burst, blackening the sky. Giant cracks have opened in the ground, revealing lava pools and emitting planetary gases. An occasional HUMAN SURVIVOR staggers through the wreckage.

From a pile of rubble, a hatch opens. Chang climbs out, followed by Adam. Both stare at the landscape in horror.

ADAM

Oh my god.

CHANG

This isn't over.

ADAM

(distant)

What have they done?

(to Chang)

What did you do? Why are they after
you?

CHANG

They aren't after me. They're after
this.

He holds up the metallic disc.

ADAM

That?! They destroyed the entire
planet for that little space toy?

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

This is no toy. And they haven't finished.

ADAM

Well then what? What's so important to cause all this?

CHANG

This is the most important piece of tangible matter in the universe. It's called the Celestial Infinity-Spiral of Knowledge.

ADAM

That's a mouthful.

CHANG

We call it the cisk. And I'm serious. This little space toy is legendary. And your father found it.

ADAM

What does it do? That still doesn't explain all this!

CHANG

Adam. This holds the key to all the universe.

ADAM

How?

CHANG

I don't actually know.

Adam throws his hands up in disgust.

CHANG

I thought this was just a mythical story. Before I met you.

ADAM

That's great. So you were only my friend to get this mythical cosmic key?

CHANG

Yes. But no. I actually like you now. And I may be the only one.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Give me that.

He takes the cisk and holds it in his palm. Immediately the grooves begin to glow, and in an instant they are enveloped in a blue globe. Inside, a field of stars gently rotate around them. Adam is shocked, Chang is excited.

CHANG

Fascinating!

ADAM

What the hell is this?

CHANG

It's a map!

Chang swipes through the virtual starfield with his fingers. He zooms in on a cluster.

CHANG

Look! I can show you where I was born?

Adam looks past Chang. A huge wall of vibrating debris rushes toward them. Another sonic pulse.

ADAM

Uh. Chang?

CHANG

Oh my! Andromeda! Incredible!

The wall gets closer.

ADAM

Chang!

CHANG

Yes?

Adam points. Chang turns just as the sonic pulse bursts through the globe. They both fly through the air amidst the rubble.

CUT TO:

INT. Z'S SHIP - BRIDGE

Z and Ivy furiously work at consoles.

IVY
I've rerouted our auxiliary power source.

Z
I think I can keep life support on.

IVY
Let's hope so.

Z
Let's hope this works.

He carefully pulls out a large glowing circular globe attached to a handle. The main power supply.

COMPUTER
(V.O.)
Main power supply diverted. Life support systems functioning.

He carefully hands it to Ivy.

Z
(to Ivy)
Attach this to the signal transmitter. I'm going to invert their pulse wave.

IVY
Won't that drain all of our power?

Z
It's a risk we'll have to take.

CUT TO:

EXT. EARTH LANDSCAPE

Chang emerges from underneath a pile of rock and debris. Adam lies motionless nearby. He frantically searches for the cisk.

CHANG
Adam! Wake up! We have to keep moving!

He finds the cisk and runs to Adam. He shakes him.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Are we dead?

CHANG

Not yet. The cisk protected us from the concussion wave. It's amazing.

ADAM

It doesn't feel amazing.

CHANG

It is! I've heard stories of this being used as anything from a transport beam to a weapon. Right now it's the only thing that can save us.

Chang looks around. He sees a radio tower in the distance, barely visible through the cloud of dirt.

CHANG

That's it! We have to get to that radio tower!

They run for it.

INT. NORAD COMMAND CENTER

Everyone in the room stares at the screen in silence. Images of the barren landscapes left on the planet flicker on the screen. Suddenly, static.

The Air Force General stands tall in the center of the room. All eyes are on him. His lips tremble. There is no defense.

CUT TO:

EXT. RADIO TOWER - ROOFTOP

Chang and Adam burst through the roof exit door and stop. From this height, they take in the surrounding destruction. The Earth is on fire. The sky has turned a deathly brown-orange. The alien ship appears as big as the moon. It emits circular wavy lines in all directions. Adam stares at the sky, then at Chang holding the cisk.

ADAM

Now what? How do we shoot this thing?

(CONTINUED)

CHANG

We don't.

ADAM

What do you mean? How do we destroy the spaceship?

CHANG

We don't. We can't.

ADAM

I thought you said this thing was a weapon!

CHANG

Adam! You can't just shoot a spaceship out of the sky. That's ridiculous.

ADAM

Oh gee. I'm sorry. I lost my perspective. So what the hell are we doing here Chang?

CHANG

We're leaving.

ADAM

Leaving? No! We have to save the planet.

CHANG

There is nothing we can do. We have to go.

ADAM

Where the hell are we going?

Chang points to the sky. Nowhere in particular.

CHANG

Up there.

ADAM

I don't want to go up there! I want to stay down here.

CHANG

We're getting off this rock before there is no rock left to get off of.

(CONTINUED)

Chang bangs the cisk on the metal beam of the radio tower. He waits for something to happen. Nothing. Adam stares, incredulous.

ADAM

Are you serious?

Chang tries again. And again. Nothing. Suddenly another sonic pulse shakes the building. Chang and Adam are flung backwards, the cisk flies out of Chang's hand.

It hits the ground and slowly rolls toward the edge. The building sways and shakes.

CHANG

No! Adam! Don't let it fall!

Adam staggers to his feet and lunges for the cisk just before it falls into a crack in the rooftop. He grabs it.

ADAM

I got it!

He holds it in his palm. It begins to glow.

CHANG

Adam quick! Attach it to the conductive matter!

ADAM

What?

CHANG

Bang it on the tower!

Adam runs to the metal lattice of the tower and stands beside Chang.

ADAM

There has to be some way we can save the planet.

CHANG

There isn't! But your world doesn't have to end. There can still be a tomorrow.

Adam looks at his friend, then at the destruction on the ground, then back to Chang. He holds the glowing cisk near the tower.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Do we have to hold hands or something?

They look awkwardly at each other for a beat. Chang grabs Adam's hand.

CHANG

Good idea! Now hit the tower!

Adam touches the metal pipe of the tower. Ahead of them, a gigantic sonic wall rushes toward them. It will engulf the entire building. The blue globe envelops Adam and Chang and stretches straight up the tower.

CUT TO:

INT. Z'S SHIP - BRIDGE

Z and Ivy finish at their consoles and meet together on the bridge. Z is in hero mode. Ivy reaches down for his hand. He looks at her, confused.

IVY

Here goes.

Z

(to Computer)

Computer! Prepare to launch jamming signal.

(to Ivy)

This is it.

The ship roars and shakes violently in a crescendo of unbearable noise. Ivy holds her head. Z stares, intently focused. Suddenly everything stops. The ship goes dark. Only a red light silhouettes them against the blackness of space.

Out the window, the Earth is visibly cracked. Its atmosphere is a dead brown haze. The sonic pulse continues its destruction.

Z

It looks like we both lost.

END ACT IV

TAG

INT. DARK ROOM

All around is darkness, pitch black. We hear heavy breathing.

ADAM
Are we dead now?

CHANG
Not at all.

ADAM
What happened? Where are we?

We hear Chang light a match. The faint glow illuminates their faces as they huddle together in the dark. Chang smiles; Adam does not. Both sweat profusely.

CHANG
If I had to guess, I would say
we're in the cargo hold of a
spaceship.

ADAM
A spaceship? What spaceship?

CHANG
I don't know which spaceship. A
spaceship. It's not like there are
a lot of them hovering around
Earth.

ADAM
So... does that mean we're...?

A loud noise. Chang puts his fingers to his lips. A door bursts open to reveal a SHADOWY FIGURE. The gust blows the match out.

END