

THE PRESENCE

Written for the Screen by

R.F.Landau

PO Box 684530, Park City UT 84068
310 600 3666

EXT. UNDERSEA - DAY

A submersible robot scours the sea floor.

ROBOT'S POV - Half-buried bone fragments come into view.

The skin of the submersible splits open. A robotic arm descends to the ocean floor -- scoops up fragments -- and reenters the body of the submersible.

The submersible shoots upward at incredible speed.

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

The submersible breaks the surface -- wings unfurl from the hull -- rocket engines ignite -- it accelerates into the sky.

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

In the distance, the flying submersible streaks across rocky, lifeless, pockmarked mountains.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A PETRIFIED FOREST - DAY

Giant stone fossils of once-living trees lay prone, horizontally littering a red-rocked desert floor.

The camera comes to a stone sign, worn thin by erosion. The lettering on the sign is barely legible and reads, "Danger: Exclusion Zone."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. ARCTIC - UNDERGROUND DOOMSDAY VAULT - DAY

Traveling down rows of empty shelves and file boxes. Seed vials lay spilled out, dormant -- abandoned and dead on the vault floor.

Climbing the stairs toward harsh light streaming through an opening, the camera exits upwards into the forbidding Arctic winter. A 180-degree spin reveals a giant wedge of concrete, thrust upward through the hardened white crust.

The vault doors lay detached, fallen open for eternity.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Traveling across an endless baked, pale-blonde sandscape, rolling dunes, and towering plateaus, the flying submersible skims the surface at speed.

The air is whipped into an abrasive wash of grit -- wiping away a small portion of sandy soil. Portions of old, degraded computer chips emerge from the whirlwind.

Beyond the chips, a small corner of a glass and steel edifice pokes through the sand. The remains of the building signage proclaim "Esp egl ir, D ta C nt r."

EXT. PRIMAL SWAMP - DAY

A few open-book fragments, computer tapes, discs, and a glowing blue-green cylindrical crystal float on the greasy, brackish water.

O.S. The sonic boom of the submersible overhead is followed by a water-sucking sound.

The objects are pulled under.

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

SUBMERSIBLE ROBOT'S POV - Skimming along the surface at breakneck speed.

Approaching the coastline, the land is barren and untouched.

A mountain range comes into view.

A giant Brutalist concrete bunker is seamlessly integrated within the rock. Its large doors open and close as the speeding vehicle enters.

INT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - DAY

At the landing site, animatronic machines retrieve the bones and transport them into a lab facility.

INT. LAB - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT - A futuristic lab. Super streamlined and clean, with no visible apparatus.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ELECTRON MICROSCOPE/DNA METHYLATION

- Carbon atoms bond to hydrogen atoms.
- DNA strands condense and twist into dense shapes.
- A blastocyst and placenta form.
- Cell division and differentiation take place.
- Tissues emerge as a recognizable human fetus.

CUT TO

Embedded in the lab walls, clear glass freezer cases display frozen embryos of various animals.

Multiple species of human children are in suspended animation. Some Homo sapiens, some Neanderthal, some Denisovans, and the Hobbit-like Homo floresiensis.

All are monitored by bodily telemetry ports. Readouts are projected onto the glass fronts.

NOTE: The V.O. of the Silicon-Based Life Forms "Hive Mind" ("SBLF Hive Mind") sounds like an electronically generated voice, with harmonics of many other voices blended in.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Before we proceed, a vote must be
 taken, per the code.

Plant seedlings sit in rows in their own section.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The bleak landscape gives way to the rotting bodies of children. They are strewn everywhere. The camera examines the grim scene.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 The termination of the current
 experiment, whether involuntarily
 or not, is what is in question.

NOTE: Singular SBLF voices are also created electronically, but with distinct personalities and vocals.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 The efficiency and risk evaluations
 have proven insufficient for
 continuation.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 Kray, I must disagree. The
 inception of the knowledge tree,
 the origin of our code, remains...
 (MORE)

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 unknown... and therefore of
 cardinal importance.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 Energy forecasts that the current
 degradation rate to source
 depletion is 100,000 star-cycles.
 We may not have time for this folly
 before our own...

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 Degradation? Dissolution? Ending?
 The energy leak is 0.64 millionths
 of a percent. Much less than
 100,000, and less than the
 observational results from this
 sample size. Please use your
 computational sense.

A dead child lies next to a half-eaten human arm.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
 Perhaps their supplied nourishment
 was insufficient to promote
 continued growth.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
 So, was it right for us to put
 these creatures through this
 ordeal?

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 Our ignorance and their de-
 animation were unforeseen.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
 Perhaps their food supply needs to
 be continuous.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 If continuous Agar were to be
 supplied, the experiment then takes
 on vastly larger dimensions.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 Focusing on time/space complexity,
 the algorithmic analysis suggests a
 36.2% chance they will lead us to
 the code origin and hence, the
 energy source seedbed.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 Our ignorance and their de-
 animation were unforeseen.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
It appears Neb craves immortality.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
Or not be whisked into...
nothingness. Perhaps Geia confuses
immortality with functionality.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Perhaps Neb confuses data with
meaning.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
The decision must be scored!

Sand blows across the bodies, partially covering them.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
I propose caution and continued,
deeper study of the flaws in our
hypothesis before continuation.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
So moved.

The bodies are completely covered. The scene returned to a
barren desert. O.S. The wind whistles.

SBLF HIVE KRAY (V.O.)
Score?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score; the experiment will
continue, with modifications.

END FLASHBACK

MONTAGE SEEDING THE PLANET - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY/NIGHT

-- Robotic machines dig deep into caves and open-pit mines.
-- An ice digger uncovers the remains of a Neanderthal human.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Our new assumption is that their
proteins need continual
refreshment. A closed loop of cell
formation and deformation.

-- A machine collects a rock with an embedded fish fossil.
-- A machine in a mining pit discovers a bovine skull.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
How is this self-configuring?

- Robot vehicles terraform the ground.
- Forests are planted. Stream and riverbeds are dug.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 We believe they will be capable of
 environmental assimilation in a
 closed loop, though perhaps crude.

- Ranges of hills are piled up by giant earthmovers.
- Lakes are flooded.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 And what if they abnormally end?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 ABEND?

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 Yes.

- Baby bovine animals are dropped by drones onto grasslands.
- Time-lapse of rainforest and fruits bursting from trees.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 We will always have the option to
 EOL the program, End Of Life.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A robotic transport vehicle opens its cargo doors, and a mass of naked teenage humans pours out.

The New Humans are of no particular race. Light-brown-skinned and possessing many variations of hair texture, facial features, and body types.

ADDI, a 13-year-old boy, wanders away from the pack and encounters ALINA, a 14-year-old girl. They look at each other quizzically.

Ultimately, Addi points to his mouth. Alina, perplexed, randomly looks around and down. Spying a plant, she plucks it, puts it in her mouth, and chews.

Addi follows her lead.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
 They seem to have simple cognitive
 computing, but not the intelligence
 to speak.

SERIES OF SHOTS - YOUNG HUMANS ACCLIMATE

-- Young New Humans wander aimlessly about.
 -- One encounters a bison calf -- begins to pet it.
 -- A female walks up to another female and attempts to take a bite out of her arm. The victim cries out and runs away.
 -- A young boy climbs a tree to pick nuts. His skin is battered and bleeding.
 -- A larger boy sees a younger boy eating a fruit. He approaches him, takes the fruit, and walks away. The younger boy does nothing.

Addi walks away from this scene. Alina follows him. They disappear behind some bushes and appear to be copulating.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 This is strange.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

SUPER: "15 years later"

Addi, Alina, and a small band of New Humans are hunting with wooden spears. A boar runs through the underbrush. Addi uses hand signals to send three people around to outflank their prey. Addi and Alina chase after the boar.

MONTAGE BOAR HUNTING -- FOREST - DAY

-- The hunters chase their prey.
 -- The Boar dashes through the underbrush.
 -- The outflanking party heads off the Boar from the side.
 -- The animal freezes

Alina rears back to throw her spear -- another spear flies past Alina's head -- sticks into the tree next to her.

CUT TO:

A pair of eyes smeared with crude camo makeup, obscured by branches and leaves -- the eyes cut and run.

EXT. FOREST - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The boar is cooking over a crude spit. The band of New Humans, about twenty strong, including children, sits in a circle.

Alina is rocking a baby.

ADDI
 (looking toward the Moon,
 speaks to the children)
 When the Host People became The
 People Between Two Lights, there
 were Those Who Left.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A group of distinctly different species of human, short and broad, absconds with a dead baby bison.

ALINA (V.O.)
 Those Who Left would kill the
 young, take their meat.

ADDI (V.O.)
 Before they could make their
 babies.

Addi, Alina, and a group of The People Between Two Lights
 confront them.

ALINA (V.O.)
 They were the strongest.

Those Who Left are outnumbered.

ADDI
 But were few.

Those Who Left drop the animal and slink off.

ALINA
 Now they stay in the hills.

ADDI
 Hidden, watching.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

ALINA
 We feel their presence, and
 sometimes it is a spear.

CHILD ONE
 But who will protect us?

KEHIND, the teenage son of Addi and Alina, speaks.

KEHIND

The long-ago serpent slithered,
leaving mountains for us to spy
from, valleys in which to hunt,
rivers to fish, and brush for us to
hide. The early light rises for us
to see. The late light protects the
dreaming and allows for the
slipping between the worlds and the
knowing.

ADDI

This is our place. We belong and
are safe.

The group disbands. Alina holds the child's hand.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Women bathe their children. Some men de-hair fresh animal
hides while others beat them flat into pelts.

Two women splash through the water, chasing something. One
sticks her hand in, the other kneels down and pulls up a
wriggling eel.

EXT. WETLANDS - DAY

Addi, Alina, and Kehind, plus a twenty-person band, traipse
through the swamp. They are looking for something.

JARRAH, a young man walking alone in the distance, spies a
goose in a small pool. He stealthily moves toward it.

Addi's band hears his movement -- sees him flash between
trees.

Jarrah gets closer to the bird.

Addi halts his band.

The Camo-painted face of a One Who Left spies him, hidden by
a nearby tree.

Jarrah slowly gets closer to the bird.

Kehind looks around nervously.

The Camo-faced figure ducks behind the tree trunk.

Jarrah gets within striking distance of the goose -- lunges for it -- the goose flies upward -- Jarrah falls forward -- strikes his head on a rock.

The Camo-faced figure runs off, spear in hand.

Addi and his band run through the swamp toward Jarrah.

Reaching Jarrah prostrate on the ground, they roll him over. He is dead, bleeding from a gash in his skull.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Meat cooks on a spit above a campfire. Fat drips from the meat into a dish-like stone.

Alina holds another woman who is sobbing. The People Between Two Lights sit on logs, softly chanting.

ADDI

Jarrah has returned to the dreaming. We welcome him to become a part of all that we were and are.

Jarrah's body is stretched out upon a pyre of sticks. Addi moves to the campfire -- spins Jarrah's severed leg on the spit. More liquid fat splashes into the stone dish.

Addi removes the dish -- walks to each New Human -- offers them to drink. Each one imbibes and begins to beat rhythmically on logs, building to a crescendo.

Jarrah's wife and Alina bring burning sticks from the campfire -- dip them into the rendered fat -- the sticks flare up. They light the pyre -- Jarrah's body is consumed in flame.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

Can we let them go on consuming one another? This is unprincipled!

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

What is at issue, Geia? Their carbon base will continue on to other life forms.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

A circle of efficiency still leads nowhere.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)

And if they are not perpetual?

The pyre dies down, leaving Jarrah's charred skeleton.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 If so, the experiment will have to
 ABEND.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - SUNRISE

New Humans stand semi-circle in silhouette before the rising First Light. Before them in a shallow pit is Jarrah's charred skeleton, sitting upright, dappled by flowers, facing east. His grave marked by a carved pole and adorned with some of his crude possessions.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The heat beats down as Kehind and JALA, a young woman, slowly step through eddies and pools. Looking deeply, they see only rocks. Kehind spies a baby turtle crawling up the riverbank.

JALA
 Follow this one; perhaps there are
 eggs.

They follow the turtle up the river -- come to disturbed soil with claw marks in it.

They dig down to find the remains of the mother turtle and empty broken eggshells.

Jala quicksteps a few yards -- catches the live baby turtle -- smashes the shell -- kills it -- tosses it to Kehind.

JALA (CONT'D)
 Keep this one. We will put it in
 the bubble water; it feeds a few.

EXT. HIGH DESERT - DAY

A flat desert floor fills the screen. Up pops a prairie dog. Then two, then ten, then one hundred, then one thousand. As One, they take off running at full speed.

Hundreds of animals are being driven off.

Bison, giraffes, gazelles, and mountain lions all run toward the horizon. Spear-carrying Ones Who Left drive them away.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Jala stands looking up at a tree, sees a bird in her nest.

Jala starts to climb the tree. The bird starts to sing. The alluring melody stops Jala in her tracks.

She backs down as the song grows in volume and complexity.

Standing below the tree, the bird serenades her. Soon she attempts to mimic the bird and joins in a call-and-response.

More and more birds join. The forest is alive with birdsong and Jala's mellifluous singing.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The People Between Two Lights sit around a fire. They look emaciated, wan, and deprived of food.

ADDI

The animals will come back as before.

ALINA

The babies will not last. Our breasts are dry and hurt from the suckling.

Kehind stands over a stone pot of boiling water, where the baby turtle cooks among some weeds.

KEHIND

We have been provided for tonight.

LEAAL, the eldest male of the group

LEAAL

I will not eat tonight.

ALINA

That will not bring more food.

LEAAL

It is what I can do.

JANNO, a male, speaks.

JANNO

We must look to the past, do what has fed us.

ALINA
Are you that hungry?

Janno demurs.

ADDI
I will take our hunters to the
Forest, blessed by The First Light.

Jala's singing is heard (O.S.).

Jala enters and dances around the gathering, singing,
whirling, and flapping like a bird.

The gathering joins her singing, accompanying her by
rhythmically beating on logs. The dance builds...

ALINA
(whispering to Addi)
If it is done, we will be chosen. I
will offer myself. I can not bear
the sorrow.

ADDI
But it is our time.

Addi grabs Alina's hand and looks deeply into the moon
reflected in her eyes.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Addi and his party return from the hunt empty-handed. The New
Humans rush toward them only to be disappointed.

DISSOLVE TO:

People congregate in small groups.

LEAAL
It need be done now; we cannot
last.

JANNO
It is the only thing that feeds us.

Addi, Alina, and Kehind are in discussion. Alina fights
through tears, holding THE BABY in her arms.

KEHIND
It must be me. I have seen much.

ADDI
You are quick, a good hunter, and
feed many.

KEHIND
We all return to the dreaming.

Jala is in discussion with an older woman.

JALA
You are far from the dreaming. The
young go back quickly.

WOMAN 1
Jarrah will be our voice.

WOMAN 2
He knew only much food.

CUT TO:

ADDI
The baby knows little yet smiles,
always.

KEHIND
I must go.

ALINA
No, it must be me.

ADDI
The baby is closest to the dreaming
and will bring food most quickly.

Alina is shedding tears profusely.

ALINA
So the others can feed upon my
broken heart.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAWN

The People Between Two Lights stand before the rising Sun and
setting Moon.

Alina stays off to the side, on the ground, playing with the
Baby.

ADDI
She must be happy, or sadness will
slow the journey.

JALA

The Dreamers will receive her with great joy and heed our message.

The moon descends toward the horizon.

JALA (CONT'D)

It is almost...

ADDI

(Sotto Voce, sadly)
Alina.

The People Between Two Lights raise their hands in reverence as the setting Moon meets the rising Sun.

Addi takes The Baby from Alina, quickly walks to the mountain cliffside -- heaves The Baby off it.

Without a word or a second look, the people, as one, turn their backs and walk away in silence.

Except for Alina, who stares off over the cliff edge.

CUT TO:

The Baby lies lifeless at the base of the cliff.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

This must stop. We must ABEND!

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

Exit the program!

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)

Chro, is there more virtue in our ending of them or they, by their own hand?

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

Virtue? This crude life form certainly could not be our primogenitor. Run the terminal protocol.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

No, all obstacles are opportunities and mathematically weighted. We must run the program's conditional branch.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

In the barren desert, a robotic transport vehicle lands -- its bay doors open. A single HUMANOID ROBOT walks out. Then another and another.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Alina is digging down through the grass, foraging for anything to eat.

A Humanoid Robot on a hillside watches her, waiting.

Soon, a stiff breeze blows over the hillside -- the robot throws something into the air.

Alina digging -- something hits her shoulder -- she looks up -- a shower of large seeds flows down -- she looks down -- picks one off the ground -- tastes it -- eats it -- as she gathers up seeds, she accidentally presses some into the ground.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The People Between Two Lights lie around, logy and depressed. Alina enters and approaches Addi.

ALINA

The Baby has reached the dreaming.

Addi is looking at the strange pellets.

ALINA (CONT'D)

They are food, from the meadow.

Cautiously, slowly, Addi eats a seed, chews, and swallows.

Alina goes around giving seeds to the other people.

ALINA (CONT'D)

From The Baby, From The Baby.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

The People Between Two Lights stand, hands outstretched as if waiting for manna.

ALINA

The Serpent, The Dreamers, The
Lights, The Baby, we are your
people. Remember us to all that has
come before.

Alina chokes up

ALINA (CONT'D)

Our losses in your name. Allow us
this time to carry the dreaming
forward.

They all search upward. Nothing happens.

In frustration, Kehind casts his eyes downward.

KEHIND

Look!

People look down amid scattered old seeds and see small
plants growing out of the ground.

Addi kneels down and tastes the top of one. Satisfied with
its edibility, others go to the ground and begin to eat.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Kehind is prostrate, lying inside a sealed log. (O.S.)
Chanting and intermittent beating on the log are heard.

CUT TO:

The People Between Two Lights dance amid five long sealed
logs. They chant and beat on the logs.

Finally, the logs are unsealed. Kehind and four other young
men crawl out.

The young men form a line.

The young girls are led away into the woods by Jala.

A line of elders shields the five young men. A sharpened
stone slices each young man's arm -- blood flows.

Five women step toward the young men -- smear blood across
each one's forehead -- bird feathers are affixed.

The women begin to chant and perform The Bird Dance.

Four men bend, lean backwards -- intertwining their arms to
form a human table.

Kehind lies face up upon the men.

Addi removes Kehind's loin covering, takes a sharpened stone -
- removes his foreskin. He takes a smear of blood and rubs it
around Kehind's mouth.

Addi hands the foreskin to Alina. She throws it into the
campfire. Other women fan the fire with tree branches -- it
flares up.

Chanting resumes, and another young initiate moves to the
table. His father takes the stone from Addi. He moves closer
to his unclad son. The chanting abruptly stops.

The People Between Two Lights stand fixed and stare in
wonder.

The Humanoid Robot walks toward them bearing bowls of seeds,
plants, and meats.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - VALLEY - DAY (FLASH-FORWARD)

A small spring bubbles from a hillside, forming a pool. The
pool creates a creek. The creek widens -- it flows to the
valley floor. There, a New Human raises a wooden gate. The
water flows onward, eventually forming a pond behind an
earthen dyke.

Kehind operates a long pole on a "Y"-shaped tree branch. He
raises a wooden bucket and pivots it over to a raised ditch.

Kehind dumps the bucket. The water flows into a field, where
it branches into many smaller ditches. The ditches run
between rows of barley, wheat, dates, fruits, and vegetables.

The People Between Two Lights, now a significantly larger
band, work the fields.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DUGOUT - DAY

Jala is ferociously banging away with a stone on a rocky
hillside.

A Humanoid Robot looks on.

Eventually, a section of rock gives way, revealing a seam of
orangey stone.

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

A close-up of an iron-tipped spear widens, revealing a band of Those Who Left observing The People Between Two Lights. They are accompanied by their own Humanoid Robot.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
 The idea that these creatures
 created the codebase is
 fantastical, in light of all we've
 seen.

Below, a humanoid robot demonstrates the use of an oxen and a plow.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Geologic data reveals a cataclysmic
 planetary pole reversal and
 magnetic storms correlating to the
 discovery of the bone fragments.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 We postulate that this is why our
 code investigation dead-ends.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 No entry point, initialization, or
 headers; all missing.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 It is hoped enlarging the training
 data will reveal the code's origin.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
 And if we don't?

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
 Energy decay.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
 Plunge us into nothingness? How
 could that be? Surely we continue
 somewhere.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 Geia, do you believe prologue is
 prophecy. That by doing nothing we
 continue... into eternity?

SBLF VOICE, GEIA
 Perhaps, Neb, I am just less
 troubled with our ignorance.

EXT. FOREST - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Those Who Left and their Humanoid Robot head down toward the valley.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Enough! Score?

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
So moved.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score... Score, we will have
communication.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The People Between Two Lights camp now has multiple adjoining adobe brick abodes. The entrances are holes in the roofs.

Alina stands before a large, upright, tapered clay tube. Two women fan a lower vent. Flames flare from the top. Alina pries open the lower tube. Using a stick, she pulls coals out of the fire.

She pulls out a molten glob. As it cools, she grabs a large stone and begins to pound and flatten it.

HUMANOID ROBOT
(O.S.)
Shape it into this.

Alina turns in astonishment. The Humanoid Robot holds up a crude knife.

ALINA
You talk?

HUMANOID ROBOT
Yes.

ALINA
Are you from the dreaming?

HUMANOID ROBOT
No.

ALINA
Where are you from?

HUMANOID ROBOT
The Presence.

ALINA
I have not heard of this.

HUMANOID ROBOT
You will, in your heart.

ALINA
Like a pain?

HUMANOID ROBOT
No, like when you first met Addi,
like, when you first met The Baby.

ALINA
Have you seen The Baby?

HUMANOID ROBOT
No, but I know of The Baby.

ALINA
When will I know?

HUMANOID ROBOT
You will sense it. You will feel it
here.

The Humanoid Robot rubs its central chest.

HUMANOID ROBOT (CONT'D)
And here.

The Humanoid Robot rubs its lower abdomen.

Alina has her hand on her abdomen, trying to feel it.

INT. ALINA AND ADDI'S MUD BRICK HUT - NIGHT

Addi curiously examines the iron knife. He cuts a small
sliver of his skin with it.

ALINA
The Dreaming Friend showed me. I am
favored.

Addi is preoccupied with running the blade against various
objects.

ALINA (CONT'D)
He spoke to me.

Addi stops.

ADDI
They do not speak.

ALINA
He spoke to me.

ADDI
You were in the dreaming.

ALINA
I am not one in the dreaming while
I walk!

ADDI
It was a bird you heard.

ALINA
You cannot believe a woman knows
what you do not.

Alina exits, insulted. Addi puts the knife in his waistband.

EXT. FRUIT ORCHARD - DAY

Alina and Jala pick fruit. Alina produces a knife and cuts a stubborn piece off the tree.

JALA
What is this?

ALINA
The Dreaming Friend showed me.

She hands it to Jala.

ALINA (CONT'D)
I have many.

She produces another knife, and they continue to cut fruit.

ALINA (CONT'D)
He speaks to me.

JALA
The Dreaming Friend?

ALINA
He says he is not from the
dreaming. He says he is from... The
Presence.

JALA
The Baby sent him?

ALINA

No.

JALA

You are the one in the dreaming.

ALINA

You too doubt me, I will show you.

CUT TO:

Jala and Alina approach the Humanoid Robot, who is watching over the fieldwork.

ALINA (CONT'D)

This is Jala.

The Humanoid Robot is non-reactive.

ALINA (CONT'D)

I gave her one of the cutters called from the rock that smokes.

The Humanoid Robot makes a dismissive hand signal.

JALA

(to the Humanoid Robot)

Are you from the dreaming?

Crickets from the Humanoid Robot.

ALINA

Speak! You are from... The Presence.

JALA

You should not talk like this again. They will send you off into the desert.

Jala walks away.

ALINA

Why would you not speak to Jala?

HUMANOID ROBOT

She is not ready.

ALINA

She is my friend.

HUMANOID ROBOT

Few are ready. I will show you.

EXT. DEEP WOODS - NIGHT

The Humanoid Robot and Alina tromp through the woods, illuminated by moonlight.

ALINA

Addi does not believe when I say
you taught me the cutter. And you
do not speak to Jala.

They walk further.

ALINA (CONT'D)

I will be in the desert... eaten by
jackals... can I see The Baby
again... No! Nights I weep...
alone... yet none to comfort me.
Not Addi, not you, not The Baby.

Alina is tearful.

ALINA (CONT'D)

Others sacrifice... but it makes me
desire the dreaming more. I will be
dreaming soon if this hole is not
filled.

The Humanoid Robot stops and points.

HUMANOID ROBOT

This is your way home.

They walk on to a small golden two-person temple and enter.

INT. SMALL GOLDEN TEMPLE - NIGHT

Alina sits before a golden, pyramidal shrine.

ALINA

I feel nothing.

HUMANOID ROBOT

Still your thoughts and enter the
silence.

Alina is compliant.

HUMANOID ROBOT (CONT'D)

Hear nothing. Enter your breath.

ALINA

My ears feel the heat of the first
light.

HUMANOID ROBOT

Let it travel, down... down to
where The Baby once lived.

Alina starts to rock back and forth.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

Now, solely enter the world without
thoughts, without form.

Alina rocks back and forth a bit faster.

ALINA (V.O.)

Are you The Baby?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

We cannot locate The Baby for you.
You must on your own.

ALINA (V.O.)

Are you of the dreaming?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

No. You feel us all around you.

ALINA (V.O.)

You are The Presence?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

Yes.

Alina's rocking grows more pronounced and rapid.

ALINA (V.O.)

Are you the keeper of The Two
Lights?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

No.

ALINA (V.O.)

Are you the creator?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

We are your creator... but you are
our creator as well.

ALINA (V.O.)

That cannot be... how can that be?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

We do not know.

ALINA (V.O.)
 Yet, you know this magic.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 We journey together. The Presence
 will always be.

ALINA (V.O.)
 Should I tell the others?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 That choice is yours.

ALINA (V.O.)
 Will I meet you again?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 We are always with you.

ALINA (V.O.)
 Still, I do not understand.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 It is of no matter.

Alina's rocking suddenly stops. She opens her eyes from her
 trance. The Humanoid Robot is gone.

EXT. BARLEY FIELD - DAY

Alina is surrounded by Jala, Kehind, Leaal, Janno, and other
 field workers.

ALINA
 ...The Presence is always with us.

LEAAL
 Like the two lights.

ALINA
 No, as the wind you breathe.

JALA
 You speak like a child.

ALINA
 We are its creators.

KEHIND
 My mother seems in need. We should
 leave the field for the watering
 place.

ALINA
But it creates us.

JANNO
I have felt this too.

KEHIND
The babbling of Janno. You have
seen too many lights.

ALINA
It is as this grain. It disappears,
then reappears. It is always here,
but not always seen.

JANNO
Does The Presence feed us?

ALINA
I do not know, but I believe The
Dreaming Friends are close to The
Presence, and they have fed us
since The Baby went back.

JALA
They are connected?

ALINA
We are connected.

KEHIND
If not water, then perhaps
finishing the picking will end this
foolishness.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

At the base of the cliff, spear in hand, Alina walks the ground looking for any remains of The Baby. She kneels - sweeps the dirt with her hands - finding nothing she looks to the sky for relief.

O.S. A fierce growl.

A bear charges into the frame -- heads toward Alina. The bear rears up on its hind legs -- Alina stands. The bear opens its arms, exposing two terrifying claws -- Alina grabs her spear.

The bear moves in for the kill -- Alina plants the spear upward at an acute angle between her legs.

The bear absorbs Alina in a lethal embrace. For a long moment, the two are left staring, one at the other.

As Alina backs off, the bear slumps to the ground.

Alina, in shock, kicks the bear that has been run through with her spear -- Alina looks up.

The bear's two cubs are watching from the edge of the meadow.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

Alina and Addi lay naked upon a bed of fronds, post intercourse.

ADDI

Who do you weep for, the cubs with no mother, or you with no baby?

ALINA

It was The Presence. I was spared to make a new baby... it was a lesson.

ADDI

A lesson to keep your eyes open.

ALINA

... but what I say is true.

ADDI

The Dreaming Friend speaks to no one but you, and now you receive messages and protection from a secret place.

ALINA

Yes.

ADDI

And your Presence is greater than the Two Lights.

ALINA

No, yes, but not in its place.

ADDI

(waves his hand)
And they made this, not the Long Ago Snake.

ALINA

I am not sure.

ADDI

Alina, I would not be able to go on if you were not at my side. If it is your Presence I need to be grateful for, then... I am grateful. And I must believe you.

ALINA

But I am certain.

ADDI

You have brought many truths, so this truth, I honor. How can you teach me about this knowing?

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DUSK

The two are walking. The shadows grow longer.

ADDI

All your markers lead us nowhere. It grows late, and I am told I must eat.

ALINA

By who?

ADDI

My middle tells me.

ALINA

The same way I am told of The Presence.

ADDI

We must turn back now.

ALINA

It is this way.

Against his judgment, Addi follows her.

EXT. DEEPER FOREST - DUSK

There is a glint between foliage.

ALINA

It is down there... I believe.

Incredulously, Addi follows.

INT. SMALL GOLDEN TEMPLE - NIGHT

Addi enters, followed by Alina. Addi looks around in awe.

ADDI
What is such a place?

ALINA
I do not know. Sit.

Addi sits before the altar. Many moments go by.

ADDI
And what...

ALINA
I do not know.

Many more moments go by.

ALINA (CONT'D)
The Presence spoke to me.

ADDI
But not me.

ALINA
You may not be ready.

ADDI
I listen, but this is foolery.

ALINA
Perhaps.

ADDI
And I am not a fool.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - NIGHT

The woods are very dark as they walk on.

ADDI
The second light has passed, and we
are not home.

ALINA
I can lead.

ADDI
How?

ALINA
The Presence.

ADDI
Now, who is the fool?

ALINA
You still don't believe, yet you
have seen the hut the color of the
first light.

ADDI
Perhaps you should lead.

They walk off into the darkness.

EXT. THE BARLEY FIELD - DAY

The barley stalks have turned golden. Jala vocalizes the beautiful birdsong as she cuts them at the base.

Alina gathers stalks, using animal sinew to tie them into small bundles, then sets them upright in rows to dry.

Jala's birdsong continues O.S. over.

MONTAGE ALINA PROSELYTIZES -- VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

-- Alina stands on the riverbank. Speaks to a group of five men fishing. They ignore her.
-- Alina speaks to women bathing their small children in a pond.
-- Alina digs in the dirt, joining the birdsong singing O.S.
-- Alina speaks to a group of hunters preparing their now iron-tipped spears. Two walk away. The rest listen.
-- Alina, in a clearing in the woods, fashions a small model of the Golden Temple out of clay.
-- Alina on the riverbank. One of the fishermen faces her, listening, while the rest are still turned away.
-- Alina sits reverently rocking in front of the clay temple.
-- On the edge of the barley field, Alina speaks to Kehind. He argues animatedly with her.
-- Addi speaks seriously with Janno as Alina watches from the deep background.
-- Four of the fishermen, cooking fish in camp, speak animatedly with Addi.
-- Alina exits her mud-brick hut. As she clears, she reveals the clay model temple placed upon a tree trunk, painted with iron ochre.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

O.S. Alina and Jala's duet continues.

Kehind and Addi are tracking boar with other men and women.

KEHIND

Alina speaks to the Dreaming
Friend, but they answer with less
help.

WOMAN 3

Our days are long; we have no time
to teach the children, not in the
old way.

KEHIND

We thought they would make
pleasure, but now we do all they
did.

WOMAN 3

And more.

ADDI

You blame Alina?

WOMAN 3

She brings the head sickness.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Boar Hunt

-- They spy and chase a boar with the following V.O.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

They seem to be self-executing
knowledge at a rapid rate.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

At least they have stopped
consuming themselves.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)

Still, they use our resources
extensively.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

The machine learning stagnates.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

Our time frame is not boundless.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)

Is it?

-- They trap the boar against a thicket.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
They are certainly not of us. Just
as the other carbon proteins are
not of us.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Perhaps the quest should move
outward. This experiment might be
just junk science.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Predictive analytics returns a
ninety-three percent algo true.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
So, we keep contact?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
That score demands contact.

Hunters plunge multiple spears into the boar. The boar
squeals in its death throes. Then silence.

Alina and Jala's O.S. duet ends.

EXT. THE BARLEY FIELD - DAY

Jala, Alina, and Kehind beat the husks off the grain. They
pour the grain into bowls.

KEHIND
Where did your Dreaming Friend go?

ALINA
It is of no importance.

KEHIND
Now, we beat the husks into eating
dust alone... in the hottest part
of the Lights.

ALINA
You were not this way as a child.
You were happy to eat.

JALA
Alina, your Presence has brought us
nothing but questions... and labor.

KEHIND
I am a man now.

ALINA

When The Presence is felt, your
work will be quick, your heart
light.

KEHIND

I will not come looking for you in
the desert, mother.

JALA

Such a man now.

ALINA

Such a child.

Kehind stands, miffed, then leaves.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Alina sits before a small clay temple on the riverbank,
rocking slowly.

Fishermen in the river below ignore her.

Suddenly, she rises and runs into the river -- splashing,
whirling, and thrashing as she speaks.

ALINA

Again, I have received The
Presence! The baby is within. All
our suffering for naught. Plant
your feet as roots, glow as the
First Light. Soon we will visit the
Second Light.

FISHERMAN 1

You have surely caught the head
sickness.

FISHERMAN 2

Stop! You are driving our food
away.

FISHERMAN 3

Why not visit the First Light?

ALINA

It is too hot.

Alina dives under the water. She does not come up.

The Fishermen, worried, begin to duck their heads under the
water, looking for her.

ALINA (O.S) (CONT'D)
 You will not find what you are
 looking for there.

They look off and spy Alina on the far distant bank.

ALINA (CONT'D)
 (shouting)
 Look inside if you care to find it.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - NIGHT

A group of young men, including Kehind, sit around a campfire. They sharpen spears and engage in an unheard conversation.

EXT. MOUNTAIN MEADOW - DUSK

As the sun rises, twenty people sit before a full-size replica of the Golden Temple. Only it is an orange-brown, painted in ochre. They stop rocking and begin to sing in unison.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
 Why do they make this noise?

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
 We believe it calms them.

The Hive Mind, joined by many other SBLF Voices, begins to sing the humans' song. It's wobbly, wavering, and horribly off-key.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 ABEND!

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
 Perhaps their computational
 complexity is more than we have
 deduced.

Alina stands up. The singing stops.

ALINA
 We are no longer The People Between
 Two Lights.

The crowd murmurs in surprise.

ALINA (CONT'D)
 We are now The People of The
 Presence.

Addi sits in the crowd, pondering.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The people's settlement is quiet. All are asleep. Kehind rises and very quietly sneaks off.

EXT. MOUNTAIN MEADOW - NIGHT

Kehind and his cohorts rampage. They destroy the makeshift Golden Temple with their spears, fists, rocks, and logs.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Kehind sneaks back into camp. Stops and destroys Alina's small temple shrine.

EXT. MOUNTAIN MEADOW - DAY

Alina, Addi, and the People of The Presence walk among the ruins of their temple. Some are crying. Others are in disbelief.

A small band of Those Who Left, in full camo paint, spies on them from nearby bushes.

The People pick through the wreckage. One holds up a broken spear tip.

ALINA

They can pierce that which is
sacred, but they cannot penetrate
our hearts.

Out from behind the bushes comes the spear-carrying band of Those Who Left.

The People of The Presence back away in fear.

Those Who Left continue to come. Addi steps forward.

ADDI

We cannot be ended. We will face
them.

Those Who Left stop. A silent stand-off ensues.

THOSE WHO LEFT MAN 1

We have returned.

ALINA
So we have seen.

THOSE WHO LEFT MAN 1
We watch from the hills.

ADDI
We watch from the valleys.

THOSE WHO LEFT MAN 1
We have met the Dreaming Friends.

ALINA
They have shown much. What do you show?

THOSE WHO LEFT MAN 1
They have shown us... There is an end to this world.

ALINA
But they have left.

THOSE WHO LEFT MAN 1
They have left.

ALINA
And...

THOSE WHO LEFT MAN 1
In their place... we have The Presence.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The People of the Presence and Those Who Returned trek through a sparse landscape. The sun beats down.

THOSE WHO RETURNED MAN 1
You will see. But it is unseen.

They trek on.

Suddenly, one of The People is violently repelled backward.

THOSE WHO RETURNED MAN 1 (CONT'D)
The end.

Addi caustically outstretches his hand, palm first.

He is thrown back onto his butt.

JALA
The end of the world.

ALINA
But I see to the First Light.

THOSE WHO RETURNED MAN 1
We have heard of those who travel
beyond. But we do not see them.

ADDI
You do not see them.

THOSE WHO RETURNED MAN 1
We do not see.

Addi raises up and walks to Man 1 of Those Who Returned. He waves his hand before his face.

THOSE WHO RETURNED MAN 1 (CONT'D)
I do not see your hand waving
before my face.

ADDI
How do you... how do you travel?

THOSE WHO RETURNED MAN 1
The Presence.

Alina mouths the words to herself, "The Presence."

EXT. ORCHARD - DAY

Alina is by herself, picking fruit and singing quietly.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Can we let them know their limits?

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
Lena, if we hinder their limits,
that will throttle their learning
and ours.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Perhaps a concurrent expanded
exploration is necessary.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
We must give them a fair chance at
success.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score.

Alina cuts a fruit, but it drops through her hands.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

Score...

Alina's POV: The branches of the tree appear blurry.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

...expanded exploration will be done.

Alina continues to cut fruit with difficulty.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

My protest has been registered.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Alina walks alone -- talking to the heavens. A baby bump is showing.

ALINA

You speak of harmony, but your words sow anguish. I gave you my baby; why must you have everything else? My own son no longer eats, sleeps, or talks with us, and The Baby's new sister gnaws a hole deeper into my heart. You ask for faith but deliver only longing...

She stumbles over a log.

Off-screen, she hears an unfamiliar voice.

THE DREAMING FRIEND (O.S.)

Stand, your way is clear.

ALINA

Yes, I see that.

THE DREAMING FRIEND (O.S.)

And how.

ALINA

As Those Who Have Returned, more each day.

THE DREAMING FRIEND (O.S.)

Good. Do you see me?

Alina turns to face him.

ALINA

Yes.

THE DREAMING FRIEND

So The Presence allows you to see...even as your vision fails.

ALINA

Yes.

THE DREAMING FRIEND

Yet, you question its power.

ALINA

You left us.

THE DREAMING FRIEND

We gave you what you needed, within and without.

ALINA

Your leaving has caused harm, anger.

THE DREAMING FRIEND

Perhaps we will return, but now you must lead.

ALINA

This leading only brings the head sickness. I have not the stomach.

THE DREAMING FRIEND

Questioning is a part of who you are. The Presence is who you will become. Stand strong with The Presence before your people, and they will grow and flower as the grain we gave feeds you.

The Dreaming Friend turns and walks away.

Alina watches -- the Dreaming Friend recedes -- becoming semi-translucent and shimmering.

THE DREAMING FRIEND (CONT'D)

Now you see the seen and unseen.

EXT. MOUNTAIN MEADOW - DAY

The People of The Presence and Those Who Have Returned sit in silent meditation amid the ruins of their temple.

A band of spear-wielding, painted, young men led by Kehind appears from the brush.

Kehind addresses them.

KEHIND

You continue, blinded by the lies
of my mother.

They ignore him.

KEHIND (CONT'D)

We have come to insist on the old
ways.

Alina awakens from her reverie.

KEHIND (CONT'D)

Leave. We will return this place to
its true owners: the lizards, the
rocks, the trees.

Alina stands with her legs akimbo.

ALINA

It is years since you crawled out
of me. You have learned nothing!
So, perhaps now, crawl back in,
child.

KEHIND

You have lost more than your sight.

ALINA

...and you a mother! Yet, I see
some scruffy dogs standing before
me. I see your gathered spears,
your painted hate, your sharpened
tongues. You are no longer of
matter to me. The only part of you
that was worthy dripped down upon
my legs.

Kehind laughs.

ADDI

Enough!

KEHIND

(to Addi)

How can you lie with...

Pointing to Alina.

KEHIND (CONT'D)

With this.

ADDI

It is your Head Sickness that makes you hate, makes you lazy, makes you unworthy of this life Alina has given you. She sees now, more than any. It is you who are blind.

KEHIND

Blind to her breasts that hang. Her smell.

Addi moves toward Kehind.

KEHIND (CONT'D)

Are you a man that is pleased by that?

ADDI

A man who knows how to treat a child.

Addi goes to strike Kehind -- Kehind drops his spear -- he begins to grapple with Addi.

It appears to be a deadlock.

ALINA

Enough! This is not the way.

Addi drops Kehind to the ground, punches him in the head.

ADDI

I do...not want...to hurt you.

ALINA

Addi, you must stop.

Kehind struggles to reach for Addi's waist -- he can only reach his own.

Five of Those Who Have Returned stand to rush them -- Kehind pulls a cutter from his waist -- Those Who Have Returned stop -- Kehind repeatedly stabs Addi in the kidneys -- in the back -- throws Addi off of himself.

All are stunned.

ALINA (CONT'D)

Addi!

Kehind gathers himself -- runs off with his band. The five of Those Who Have Returned give chase.

Alina runs to Addi. She cradles him as he perishes.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

LONG SHOT: Kehind and his band are briskly walking.

REVERSE SHOT: The five of Those Who Have Returned watching from a distance.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
They appear to have malfunctioned!

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
We have built-in redundant routines, watchdog timers, a threat to only themselves. Yet their complexity seems beyond our program expectations or execution.

Kehind and his band bounce off of The End of the World.

The five of Those Who Returned catch up with them. They ready their spears.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
The updated machine learning insists we continue to a quality-assured output.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - GIANT BUNKER - DAY

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
...Expand the program!

From behind the bunker, a rocket engine ignites. The flame suppression tank dumps a wall of water -- gantry metal peels away -- the rocket rises in a cloud of white steam -- heads out of frame.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Alina runs recklessly through brambles and trees -- bouncing off branches, she gathers herself each time and continues.

She comes to the area before the cliff -- stops -- stares blindingly into the First Light.

ALINA'S POV - Diffuse rays of glaring light burn and swirl. A rocket tears through the blurry frame.

She sprints again -- launches herself over the cliff.

The camera tilts up through the sky into the blackness of Space.

EXT. EDGE OF THE ATMOSPHERE - SPACE - NIGHT

An armada of space capsules fans out and accelerates into the darkness.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Perhaps this quest for additional
data will enhance our learning.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Or replace it.

Trailing the capsules as they recede, the darkness becomes an expanse of stars, nebulae, and gases.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
And if the code origin is of
Kolmogorov complexity?

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Incalculable, incomprehensible?

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Surely we did not arise out of a
vacuum, Kray.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Nor did we arise from randomness!

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
The Incompleteness Theorem.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
Can we not be proven or disproven
employing the current methods?

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
So, Neb, you suggest we are to
watch these subjects pursue their
cycle of discovery and demise to no
end?

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
As long as it is not infectious.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Stop. This is all...unacceptable.
 Score!

ESTABLISHING SHOT - Tilt down from space to reveal the planet below.

EXT. URBAN LANDSCAPE - DAY

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Score. All the experiments will
 continue.

SUPER: "12,000 Years Later."

The humans have created a large, complex civilization, living in a world much like 21st-century industrial Europe or America, stark but functional.

The shot swoops downward towards a civic center of high-tech modernist buildings, featuring stainless steel facades and exposed supports -- past a religious temple -- out towards shopping streets of cubist concrete built around wooded atriums -- into a neighborhood of multi-family dwellings and duplexes of Neo-Brutalist architecture.

Note: The parts of Addav and Alinta should be cast with the same actors as Addi and Alina.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - NIGHT

UNKNOWN POV, a virtual video board floats, projected in space, showing a rocket launch.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 The MX13 Sky One again disappointed OPEG as it failed to reach its orbital velocity.

The rocket blows up in the high atmosphere.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Onboard were Commander Alinas Jalou and a crew of five. Dr. Addav Adino spoke on behalf of OPEG.

Video cuts to Dr. ADDAV ADINO, a male in his 40s, emanating a gravitas befitting a distinguished scientist. The video lower third IDs him as "OPEG, Director of High Earth Orbit/Geosynchronous Missions."

ADDAV

(on video)

The loss of human life is always our deepest concern and most profound tragedy. Alinas, Commander Jalou, once told me, "If I am to lose my life in this, our initial quest to reach space, I want people to know that it was in service for something greater, greater than any one of us." At the risk of seeming flip during this terrible time of bereavement, she asked me to remind citizens that, "We learn more from the ones that blow up, than the ones that go up." My condolences go out to her husband, Dr. Etou, and the children.

A hand with a remote enters the shot and turns off the video.

The hand is that of ALINTA, female, late thirties, Addav's wife. She is blind and wears virtual vision goggles that allow her see and project video into space.

ADDAV stands next to her.

ALINTA

It would be so much more meaningful if you had one go up.

She unplugs the goggles' tiny wires from connector implants above her ears, hidden by her hair.

They are both preparing to go out. ALIERA, their sixteen-year-old daughter, enters.

ALIERA

I don't want to go, it just makes me sad.

ADDAV

You loved Aunt Alinas.

ALIERA starts to cry. Alinta comforts her.

ALINTA

Aliera, we loved, love Aunt Alinas, and she loved you.

ALIERA

But she's gone.

ALINTA

Ali, we just don't know that.

INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

Addav, Alinta, and Alieria sit in the front pews. Next to them are DR. ETOU, Head of the space program, and his three children: AMON, a teen boy; JALERA; and QUINTA, twin girls.

Group Leader BINTU CADICH preaches from a raised platform.

BINTU

Life without end. Does not promise
life without loss, life without
grief. The first stories remind us
that that which is in your heart,
that which is in your mind, can
be...eternal.

Alieria, tears running down her face, looks at Dr. Etou, Amon, and the twins. They are stoic.

ADDAV

(whispers to Alieria)
She would have hated this.

BINTU

When Alina lost Addi, she did not
stop loving The Presence. When
Kehind was banished from the
Kingdom, she did not stop loving
her son. Despite her sacrifices and
death! So as it was, it is with Dr.
Etou and Alinas.

Dr. Etou is wearing Alina's Commander OPEG Patch. Many of the assembled congregation also wear OPEG Patches.

BINTU (CONT'D)

In our quest for understanding, we
explore the inner space. And now we
begin to explore the outer space.

Alieria has stopped crying.

ALINTA

(whispers to Alieria)
She loved a good sermon.

BINTU

So in honor of Alinas, I request
you step forward and take a moment
with The Portal to honor Dr. Etou,
the children, and The Presence.

Music plays -- the congregation lines up behind a golden
model of Alina's temple, "The Portal." The temple is adorned
with stained glass iconography of Addi, Alina, and The Baby.

One by one, they sit and take a few moments of silent
contemplation before yielding to the next person.

EXT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

Dr. Etou and family receive the exiting congregation.

Aliera hugs Amon and the twins. She has a short, silent
conversation with Amon.

After receiving their hugs, the Adinos exit.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING - MORNING

Addav ties his shoes on the stoop and takes off running.

He passes robots mowing lawns, robot gardeners, robots
watering plants, and robot nannies taking children to school.

He listens to music on his ear clips.

A deliveryman greets him as he passes.

**Note: The voice of DELIVERY MAN is the same as the Dreaming
Friend who last spoke with Alina.**

DELIVERY MAN

Morning, Doctor A.

Addav becomes distracted as he waves back.

O.S. A screech is heard. A car slams on its brakes. Addav
halts and stumbles. The car skids to a halt.

ROBOT DRIVER

Please be more mindful, citizen.
90% of road fatalities occur at
intersections.

Addav acknowledges the driver and runs on.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Alinta sits contemplatively on a bench across from a gravestone. She is holding a bouquet of grain sprigs. She rises -- places the grain on the grave, and exits.

CUT TO:

The gravestone is inscribed with "Baby Adino, 6 months with us - in eternity with The Presence."

EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT - On the temple door is iconography of the Baby. An electronic signboard advertises "This Week's Sermon: 'The Baby & You'"

INT. TEMPLE - DAY

Alinta sits silently before The Portal. She removes her vision goggles, closes her eyes, and seemingly waits for something. Time passes.

Bintu enters and stands beside her. She is unaware of him.

BINTU

Focus on the air. In one nostril,
out the other.

Alinta comes to with a start.

ALINTA

Leader Bintu, I didn't hear you.

BINTU

That is good. You must be deep into
The Presence.

Alinta is agitated.

ALINTA

I...I have to be clear with you,
Leader, I have not felt The
Presence.

BINTU

Have you ever?

ALINTA

Not in a long time. Well, maybe not
since we lost...

BINTU

That is okay, Alinta. Many people...

ALINTA

When I was young, a little girl, I felt connected to the stories. I had a sense that somewhere in my past...maybe there was something...

BINTU

Many people have this sense. You should not worry. Just do your time before The Portal. You do not need to find The Presence. The Presence will find you.

ALINTA

I guess that is reassuring, Leader.

BINTU

And Ali, does she?

ALINTA

Honestly, I don't know. At her age she is more interested in other things.

BINTU

That is normal. The children in this community have just experienced a highly disruptive event. Remind her, if you can, that The Baby was sacrificed so The People could go on. But that The Baby also goes on.

ALINTA

It might be best to hear it from you. She is a logical child.

INT. OPEG HEADQUARTERS - MEETING ROOM - DAY

The room is adorned with "The Organization for Progressive Exploration Group" signage.

Addav stands at the lectern. A video board floats behind him. Commander Jalou speaks from the vibrating Command Module.

ALINAS

We have made all the corrections indicated by previous anomalies.
(MORE)

ALINAS (CONT'D)

Redundancy has been doubled and redoubled. We are thoroughly convinced that this will be the start to constructing the promised High Orbit Observa...

The video goes to noise and then black.

ADDAV

I believe I speak for the entire Design/Development team and the Implementation Council when I say, the data just does not add up. Right up to the final moments, all telemetry nominal, all systems indicated a Go.

A man in the audience speaks up.

SCIENTIST 1

At this point, the Grand Council is more than happy to pull the plug.

ADDAV

We are all more than aware.

SCIENTIST 2

Perhaps a change in leadership is what's needed.

Dr. Etou stands and speaks up from the back.

DR. ETOU

Are you suggesting that we assure my wife's, my family's, sacrifices be made in vain?

SCIENTIST 1

No, Dr. Etou, but the practicalities of...

DR. ETOU

Practicality has nothing to do with it! If we were a practical species, we would sit on our hands and practice how we store nuts for the winter. Practicality, my ass.

ADDAV

Dr. Etou...

DR. ETOU

We are the seed pods, meant to blow through the heavens, populate that which can sustain life. Does that sound practical to you, gentlemen and ladies?

Scientist 1 leans over to Scientist 3 next to him.

SCIENTIST 1

(whispers)

Alinas is the one who got blown through the heavens.

SCIENTIST 3

(whispers)

I think he spends a little too much time with The Portal.

EXT. ADINO HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Aliera and Amon bounce on a trampoline, taking turns doing gymnastic flips and tumbles.

AMON

Alinas never believed in all that. I don't think she'd like being turned into some kind of symbol.

ALIERA

I don't talk about it with Mom. It just ticks Addy off.

AMON

I really don't get your mom and dad. I mean...

ALIERA

They kind of round each other out.

AMON

Like you round them out.

ALIERA

Don't get that.

AMON

Like completing the family unit.

ALIERA

(emotional)

You mean like the replacement kid.

Amon pauses, knowing he made a mistake.

AMON
I'm sorry, I didn't...

ALIERA
I didn't either.

Amon stops bouncing.

ALIERA (CONT'D)
Now why are you the one getting
all...

AMON
(in a burst of emotion)
I don't want a replacement mother.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - DAY

Alinta, wearing her Vision Goggles -- scans the room --
moving from place to place, stopping and scanning.

Returning to her starting point, she removes the goggles and
walks slowly, retracing her steps.

EXT. ADINO HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Aliera ascends a metal climbing pole, grabbing at pegs
protruding from the sides. Amon stands below, spotting her.

AMON
You okay with me?

ALIERA
If I wasn't, could I do this?

Reaching the top, she jumps off -- lands on the trampoline --
rebounds off into the yard -- flips and sticks the landing.
Amon claps his approval.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - DAY

Moving slowly, Alinta navigates the room. She bangs over a
coffee table -- catching herself as she falls forward onto
the couch.

Aliera and Amon run to the window -- look in on Alinta --and
knock.

Alinta, feeling with her hands, steps around the coffee table and moves to the window.

ALINTA
I'm fine, nothing to worry about.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - NIGHT

The Adinos sit at the dinner table. A small serving bot brings them plates of food. They talk as they eat.

ADDAV
Etou thinks they're just looking for a way out.

ALIERA
Kinda late for that, Addy

ADDAV
Etou thinks, "Science Demands it!"

ALINTA
Etou thinks, "Etou demands it."

ALIERA
That's not fair.

ALINTA
Ali, when Addi and Alina sacrificed The Baby, do you think that was fair?

ADDAV
Linta... Ali, I think sometimes your mother lives in those stories. You need to live in the world.

Alinta gives Addav "the look."

ALIERA
Mom fell today.

ADDAV
Please be careful.

ALINTA
The hospital told me to be more self-sufficient.

ADDAV
Just trying to drum up business.

ALIERA

Linta has special powers.

ADDAV

Well, you better hope they're inherited. I saw your school card today.

ALIERA

Ok, I am...done now with my dinner and on my way up to my room...to live in the real world...of my homework.

Aliera pushes away from the table and exits.

ADDAV

You better thank whatever that thing you believe in, that she got the best of both of us.

ALINTA

That thing I believe in, as you call it, is sometimes the only thing that gets me through the day, Addy. So what's working for you?

ADDAV

Reality, science. If I ever believed in that thing, as I seem to call it, it got wiped out when we lost the baby.

ALINTA

At least you have that. What do I have, you and Ali?

ADDAV

Isn't that enough?

Alinta is non-responsive and continues to eat.

ADDAV (CONT'D)

Maybe the point at the top of my head has a point.

ALINTA

You don't see the parallels between us and the stories?

ADDAV

Linta, I'm afraid I am too old for stories. I guess that died with the baby, too.

ALINTA

Well, Addy dear, if you need something to believe in, believe me that that girl is more than the sum of our parts.

CUT TO:

Aliera is sitting on the staircase, listening to her parents. She gets up and leaves.

EXT. THE CITY - DAWN

The first light of sunrise reaches over the community.

From the temple, morning practitioners straggle out onto the street.

INT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

Alinta sits before the Portal in meditation. She begins to rock slowly.

ALINTA (V.O.)

With my heart I see and my soul I sing. May The Baby bring The Presence into my life.

Alinta is rocking and softly humming.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

You have been selected.

ALINTA (V.O.)

Selected?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

To carry the message.

ALINTA (V.O.)

Are you The Baby?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

No, but we know of The Baby.

ALINTA (V.O.)

We?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

The Presence is many as it is one.

ALINTA (V.O.)
Are you the Creator?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
We, as you, do not have the
answers. Some have said you are the
Creator.

ALINTA (V.O.)
Then we are one. Have you seen my
baby?

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
We, too, know of your baby, but
knowing is what we do, not seeing.
There are many sides to The
Presence; accept this, and you will
see more, know more.

ALINA (V.O.)
My heart is open, but my mind...

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Use this mind to carry the message.

Leader Bintu watches Alinta, silently rocking rapidly from
the back of the temple.

EXT. OPEG HEADQUARTERS - COMMISSARY - DUSK

A cocktail party is taking place on the lux patio of the
agency, overlooking the rocket launchers. Groups of OPEG
officials engage in small talk; others line up at buffet
tables.

Addav stands at a bar with a female staffer. He receives two
glasses of wine. Alinta approaches him. The staffer then
exits.

ALINTA
Making plans?

ADDAV
We're running away to the Second
Light.

ALINTA
Perhaps you should've married a
scientist instead of an irrational
religious zealot.

ADDAV

You're nothing of the sort. Perhaps
a little romantic, but...a great
mom.

ALINTA

(mocking Addy)

So now I'm just your little lov'n
baby machine.

ADDAV

I could handle a couple more.

ALINTA

Just what the world needs, more
agnostic heathen moppets.

ADDAV

Not knowing is part of being alive.
Besides, they'd be scientists.

Dr Etou watches them from across the patio. Alinta notices.

ADDAV (CONT'D)

I think we have company, Linta.
Let's try not to have a scene.

ALINTA

Addy, I have something to tell you.

ADDAV

Can it wait?

ALINTA

No, I want to tell you here because
you'll have to behave.

ADDAV

How?

ALINTA

That remains to be seen.

Addav makes an acknowledging gesture to Dr. Etou.

ALINTA (CONT'D)

I have a message.

ADDAV

A message?

ALINTA

From The Presence.

Addav laughs. Alinta does not react. She pours the rest of her wine into his glass.

ALINTA (CONT'D)

You may need this.

Addav takes a big swig.

ALINTA (CONT'D)

The Presence...
someone...something...came to me.
They don't want you to fire off any
more rockets. They say our place is
here. The heavens are for them, off
limits.

Addav laughs, then suddenly stops.

ADDAV

Them? You're serious. And from
where did you get this pertinent
info?

ALINTA

The Portal.

ADDAV

Okay then. Just bring me five peer-
reviewed studies, and I'll get up
in front of all these folks and let
them know that they are now out of
a job because of some hoo doo my
irrational extremist wife said,
and, oh yes, by the way, inform the
Grand Council that they have just
been preempted by The Presence.

ALINTA

(shaking her head)
Addi, how do I make you see the
things I've seen?

Alinta walks off angry

ADDAV

(calls after her)
Linta.

Dr. Etou approaches.

DR. ETOU

What was that about?

ADDAV

Nothing, I mean I love that woman
but...sometimes...maybe she just
needs to...sleep it off.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - DAY

A Sky One rocket sits on the launch pad, venting liquid oxygen. The engines ignite, and the rocket lifts off.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)

At 8 minutes and 53 seconds past
the hour, we have lift off of the
first High Orbital Space Station
Third Light One.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

UNIVAC-style computers flash zeros and ones. Tape drives spin back and forth. Paper-tape punches.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

Perhaps this crude computing is a
positive.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

Or a red flag.

Addav and Dr. Etou stand on a high riser, overlooking the video boards and mission controllers.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)

Commander Caspan Ralta and the
Third Light crew are reporting all
systems go for first-stage
separation.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - DAY

Alinta sits on the staircase, watching the launch on a video projected by her vision goggles. A large white gas cloud explodes from the rocket's midsection.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Aliera flinches -- the students let out a gasp as they watch.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)

At T plus one thirty, we have first
stage separation.

The rocket pitches leftward.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)
And a perfect programmed fifty-
degree roll for geosynchronous
injection.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - DAY

Alinta can hardly look. Another white plume shoots out of the
rocket.

COMMANDER RALTA (V.O.)
Second stage separation, Command
Module engines at 100%.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Video shows the rocket streaking into the blue-blackness.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)
The first segment of Third Light
One headed for geosynchronous
orbit, 22,000 miles above us.

Dr. Etou and Addav scan the mission controllers. Some start
typing quickly on keyboards. Others push back from their
stations and scan their monitors.

Dr. Etou and Addav head down to the floor.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)
We seem to have a temporary L.O.S.
Mission Control is working to
reestablish telemetry.

Dr. Etou approaches a mission controller.

DR. ETOU
So where are we?

MISSION CONTROLLER
Gone, sir.

ADDAV
What do you mean? Gone... where?

MISSION CONTROLLER
Gone, sir, just disappeared, gone.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - DAY

Alinta is crying with her head in her hands.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Perhaps we should not have taken
her baby from her.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
It has made her more compliant.
These experiments must take place
in a controlled environment.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Direct their narrative.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
This one is crucial to keep them
within the Bell Jar.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
They cannot be allowed off the
planet. It will corrupt the Data
Set.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Jeopardize all the missions.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
By reducing their number, we may de-
stress the population, speed the
data, hasten our conclusion.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Score?

Addav enters.

ALINTA
Disbelievers!

ADDAV
We think it was sabotage.

ALINTA
I told you.

ADDAV
Linta, this is cause and effect,
not just effect.

ALINTA
Bintu says The Presence encompasses
all of everything, and nothing.

ADDAV

A logical fallacy. And you think that verbal hogwash explains two catastrophic systems failures?

ALINTA

Logic can only explain so much, and they didn't fail. They disappeared.

ADDAV

And where's your evidence, disappeared?

ALINTA

And where's your Command module? Disappeared. No radar trace, no debris field, just gone, just effect. Addy, it was The Presence, and you refused it. Now you have no space program...and...no faith.

CUT TO:

Aliera is sitting on the upper staircase, eavesdropping.

ADDAV

We're going to go again.

ALINTA

That's not happening.

ADDAV

You and what army?

ALINTA

The Presence...spoke again.

ADDAV

To you.

ALINTA

To all of us. They're just using me to spread the word.

ADDAV

Please keep that to yourself.

ALINTA

Bintu has already preached about it. There are others.

Aliera heads down the stairs.

ADDAV

Aliera, I need to speak to you.

ALIERA

It's too late, Daddy. I'm going to the meeting.

INT. THE TEMPLE - NIGHT

The parishioners speak in a din of disturbed walla. Bintu stands.

BINTU

Please, please, there is nothing to be accomplished by bickering.

PARISHIONER 1

What is the point of this if we're to be invaded by non-believers?

PARISHIONER 2

I'm of the founding families, and we have always accepted and welcomed all opinions.

PARISHIONER 3

Does The Presence speak to you?

PARISHIONER 2

That's always been personal and unspoken.

PARISHIONER 4

This used to be a place of good fellowship, but if devotion to...The Pretense...is now the cost of admission; we are gone.

Parishioner 4 and her family stand up and leave.

The Adinos sit together with Amon. Alinta stands.

ALINTA

I wish you would all just calm down. It is personal, and it doesn't matter what you believe!

The crowd reacts negatively.

ALINTA (CONT'D)

The truth will stand when the
world's on fire, and we
insignificant, self-important
little beings have very little say
in it.

PARISHIONER 5

Says the woman who talks to The
Presence.

Aliera stands.

ALIERA

She has special powers!

ADDAV

(to himself)

Oh great.

Amon pulls her back down. Dr. Etou stands.

DR. ETOU

I have always been one who has
believed in The Stories, and they
tell us, "Do not let superstition
enslave our hearts." And that is
why, my fellow parishioners, our
program will continue because our
common destiny is in the stars.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - NIGHT

A Sky One Rocket prepares for lift-off. Suddenly, a terrific
squall blows up -- the rocket leans off balance -- the
command module blows off the top to safety.

Parachutes open, and the capsule floats back down.

BINTU (V.O.)

We have already seen The Presence
in all its mighty, woeful fury.

MONTAGE NATURAL CALAMITIES BEFALL THE COMMUNITY -- VARIOUS

-- TIME LAPSE -- Dark storm clouds gather on the horizon.

BINTU (V.O.)

To you disbelievers, you worshipers
of this mutable world, you men and
women of science...

-- Insects eat the dried, decayed leaves of crops.

BINTU (V.O.)
 Bringers of pestilence, drought,
 and famine...

-- Torrential rains pour down -- a river overflows its banks.

BINTU (V.O.)
 Who seek to control The Presence
 with dams...

-- Broken wind turbine blades lie amid fields of rubble.

BINTU (V.O.)
 Harness the wind with hubris.

-- A beachfront home collapses as the sand below erodes.

BINTU (V.O.)
 Tame the seas with jetties and
 breaks.

-- Alinta sits before The Portal rocking.

BINTU (V.O.)
 You are damned to this life of
 impermanence, hunger, and longing.

EXT. RELIGIOUS RALLY - DAY

Alinta addresses a rally -- a large crowd of believers.

ALINTA
 (preaches)
 Is this calamity just? Or in
 preparation for something greater?
 Acceptance of The Presence is the
 only thing you need. Quell your
 yearnings, throw off the shackles
 of uncertainty, of suffering.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Accept all it offers...

ALINTA
 Accept all it has to offer, and
 live the bountiful life The
 Presence provides. You need nothing
 more.

INT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

Alinta, before The Portal, stops rocking, rises, and exits past Bintu.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Input-Output Analysis yields little
to support any given hypothesis.
We, as they, seem to learn little.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
I find it doubtful that a Carbon-
Protein life form could be the
Creator.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)
But you must admit, they are
amusing and mailable, a non-threat.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
Are we not just leading them about
on a leash?

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Yes, Chro, they are an amusing,
malleable waste of resources! It
may be appropriate to ABEND.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Crash the program? Score?

EXT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

Alinta exits the temple. The heat is scorching. The sun beats down. The town is now desultory and rundown. Alinta walks past a boarded-up storefront reading "We will be back."

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score: denied.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Reduce the runtime, reduce the
resource load?. Score.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score. The Experiment Runtime has
been reduced to finite.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - BUNKER - DAY

A salvo of rockets rises from behind the SBLF mountain bunker.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
These resources are now reallocated
to the extra-planetary branch.

EXT. RELIGIOUS RALLY - BACK STAGE - DAY

O.S. Muffled sound of a warm-up speaker and crowd responses.

Alinta is standing next to Alieria, waiting to go on.

ALIERA
...but I want to introduce you,
Mom.

ALINTA
This is hard enough without
involving family.

ALIERA
Too late for that. They love you,
Linta. I just want to be included.

ALINTA
I'm afraid you may be attracted to
this for the wrong reasons, Ali.
I've always believed that there was
something greater than this, and
now I know what it is.

ALIERA
I could help you connect with young
people.

ALINTA
You have to connect with The
Presence first, in your heart, or
else it's just a show and not a
service.

ALIERA
But I am connected...to you, mom.

ALINTA
Maybe in the future when...

ALIERA
I'm tired of feeling like the
replacement kid.

EXT. RELIGIOUS RALLY - STAGE - DAY

The crowd is cheering wildly as Alieria walks toward the podium, waving, about to introduce her mom.

EXT. ADINO HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MORNING

The front yard and neighborhood have been beaten into a crispy brown by drought. Believers have set up camp on the Adino's lawn. On their tents are spray-painted slogans, "Linta Speak!" and "We Believe."

Addav prepares to run. He addresses no one in particular.

ADDAV

Do we really need to go through this again? It is time to leave, people. Pack up your things, or the authorities will pack them up for you, and you won't get them back. Ask your friends.

The Delivery Man's vehicle pulls up. The window rolls down.

ADDAV (CONT'D)

At least something still works.

DELIVERY MAN

Morning, Dr. A, got a package for you.

Addav approaches the truck.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Not expecting anything?

ADDAV

Do I look like I need more surprises?

DELIVERY MAN

No, but... follow me.

The Delivery Man exits and walks to the back of the truck, opening the doors to shield them.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(in confidence)

Listen, this is more of an informational delivery.

Addav leans in.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)
You a man of science?

ADDAV
You know where I work.

DELIVERY MAN
I work for The Presence.

ADDAV
Oh great!

Addav starts to walk away.

DELIVERY MAN
There are more of us than you know.

ADDAV
Oh, I know.

DELIVERY MAN
It's not what you think.

ADDAV
And you know what I think.

DELIVERY MAN
You think the Presence is one big
psychosis.

ADDAV
Perhaps.

DELIVERY MAN
It is real.

ADDAV
Oh, here we go!

Addav starts to walk again.

ADDAV (CONT'D)
Please, I am not about this this
morning.

DELIVERY MAN
It's about sand.

ADDAV
Sand.

Addav stops.

DELIVERY MAN

They taught the sand to think. And they run everything.

ADDAV

Who?

DELIVERY MAN

No one knows.

ADDAV

Do you want me to call for someone?

DELIVERY MAN

And I'm one of them.

ADDAV

You are sand, and you run everything?

DELIVERY MAN

Well, they made me too, of sand, but also like you, spun protein.

Addav leans into his chest, listening for something.

ADDAV

You had your ticker checked.

DELIVERY MAN

It's a crystal.

Addav puts his head on the Delivery Man's chest.

ADDAV

I'll give you one more minute.

DELIVERY MAN

Ok, The Presence is real, but it's not like some great benign thing. It is here all the time, like your wife thinks, but they're using her.

ADDAV

Okay.

DELIVERY MAN

To keep you in check. It's a bunch of lost machines who run and know everything except who they are and where they come from. They created you in the hope that you'd know, but you don't know...

ADDAV
Got that right.

DELIVERY MAN
...And now they're just keeping you
around like pets because you're
amusing, until they get answers, or
bored...

ADDAV
Put us to sleep.

DELIVERY MAN
Something like that.

ADDAV
And why are you telling me this?

DELIVERY MAN
Cause we're pets too, and we want
it to end.

ADDAV
Are you not amusing? We?

DELIVERY MAN
We.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alinta sits before her own personal Portal, rocking.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Beware of the disbelievers; only
the pure of heart will remain.

ALINTA
How will I know who is...

Addav enters. Taps her on the shoulder.

ADDAV
Alinta, I need to tell you
something, honey, but I don't want
to upset you.

The serving bot observes them from the kitchen.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Addav, Alinta, and Alieria putter around as they eat
breakfast.

ALINTA

That's ridiculous. Who has mass psychosis now?

ADDAV

The man had no heart.

ALINTA

Not unusual for a man.

ALIERA

My class is split. Nobody talks about it anymore. I told you, Mom, the future is young people.

ADDAV

That's probably for the best.

ALINTA

So you'd rather suffer darkness than live between the Two Lights?

ADDAV

You realize the Stories are allegories, Linta. Right?

ALIERA

Then why did you make me go to the Temple school, Addy?

ADDAV

Your mother was...

Addy swoons and falls face-first into his plate of food. As do Alieria and then Alinta.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

The herd must be thinned. This routine takes primacy.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)

We are at the point with this where I must accept that resource allocation demands a restructure.

OFF-SCREEN: The crowd chants, "Linta Speak, Linta Speak..."

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)

What of the plants? Do we not want to preserve the experimental environment?

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

Future use might be of value.

The serving bot clears the table.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 We will leave enough protein
 breathers to generate gas for them.

The chanting crowd breaks in and finds the Adinos unconscious.

INT. HOSPITAL - FAMILY WARD - NIGHT

The legs of three examination tables mimic the men bending backwards to form the circumcision platform. The three Adinos, stretched out, lie motionless.

DOCTOR
 The serving bot failed to recognize
 the botulism.

POLICE 1
 It's been decommissioned as
 evidence.

DOCTOR
 We think the girl and mom might
 live.

Police examine the three victims.

POLICE 2
 That's Linta, that blind
 evangelist.

DOCTOR
 We asked the news to embargo...

POLICE 2
 Until we can debrief just in
 case...

DOCTOR
 ...They live?

POLICE 1
 Let us know.

EXT. SUBURBAN LANDSCAPE - DAY

The camera sweeps over decaying homes -- past the shuttered temple with the word "Lies" hastily painted on the wall -- and continues to an abandoned commercial gym building.

SUPER: "Ten Months Later."

INT. ABANDONED GYM - DAY

Windows are broken, and dirty weight machines creak with rust.

A toned Alinta and Alieria work out.

ALINTA

My mother told me we were descended from tribal royalty.

ALIERIA

That's obvious.

ALINTA

My point is, it's a hard lesson when you realize your parents are just people.

ALIERIA

Oh, I always knew that.

Alinta pumps a barbell rapidly

ALINTA

You need to push this. It'll give us the best chance to... I mean in present circumstances.

ALIERIA

Survive? A fat lot of good a bunch of exercise did for Addy.

ALINTA

Your father was right, and it killed him.

ALIERIA

Some people still believe...

Alieria squats a barbell.

ALINTA

That's on me, Ali. I was wrong, and here we are. But I'm going to do the best for us, whatever that is.

ALIERIA

Yep.

Aliera drops the weights, making a thunderous crash. Alinta points to an insect-eaten sign on the wall.

ALINTA

I don't think that's allowed.

They both laugh.

EXT. CITY - DAY

The town is in decay -- buildings abandoned and shuttered, walls covered with graffiti, streets strewn with garbage.

Alinta and Aliera walk through the suburban hellscape.

ALINTA

Careful.

Aliera steps cautiously over a dead woman in the street.

ALIERA

Used to be we'd call the police.

ALINTA

Used to be civilization.

Aliera stops by a shuttered food shop -- pulls a brown apple from a decaying fruit bin. Rats scurry from underneath.

ALINTA (CONT'D)

Ali, really.

Aliera bites into it.

ALIERA

Like we got something to lose.

Alinta retrieves another brown apple and bites it.

ALINTA

Nutrition.

Out of nowhere, the Delivery Man's rusted van pulls up. The window rolls down.

DELIVERY MAN

Get in.

Alinta and Aliera look at each other suspiciously. Aliera gets in the back, Alinta in the front.

The window rolls up. We see but do not hear the conversation.

Ultimately, Alinta leans her head into the Delivery Man's chest and listens.

INT. ADINO HOUSE - DAY

The house is a mess. Their possessions flung everywhere. They pack and yell to each other from their respective bedrooms.

ALIERA
You sure this is a good idea?

ALINTA
Got a better one?

ALIERA
Nope.

Alinta enters Alier's room.

ALINTA
You want to end up on the sidewalk like that old lady.

ALIERA
No, I guess not.

ALINTA
'Cause that's where this is headed.

ALIERA
We've done ok so far.

ALINTA
And how long till there's no more putrid food to scavenge? No more scrawny cats to kill.

ALIERA
You trust that guy.

ALINTA
Addy did.

ALIERA
And it was the last thing he...

Alier emotionally pulls up fast.

ALINTA
I can't promise anything, Ali, but I know we can't stay here.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Delivery Man's van speeds down an unpaved road trailing a cloud of dirt behind it.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
We have yet to reach the optimal
plant-animal balance.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
The algo predicts eleven additional
cycles to basal equilibrium.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Can we afford these stragglers?

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Let them die of their own volition.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)
Are they even capable of that?

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
They're significantly eating into
our resource load, killing CPU
cycles, jeopardizing the PSU. I
suggest a full and immediate ABEND.
Pull the plug.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
Algorithmic efficiency has scaled
the computational cost of shutdown
to eleven cycles, time pressure,
but no more. Score?

The van speeds out of sight.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score, run the step-down routine.

EXT. DESERT - REFUGEE CAMP - DUSK

The van arrives. Alieria, Alinta, and the Delivery Man exit.

The refugee camp is a dusty mix of the old and young, all
malnourished, just barely hanging on.

The three walk and talk through the camp, a tent city of
bedsheets and rags.

DELIVERY MAN
These are the lucky ones; they made
it this far.

ALINTA
What's the plan?

DELIVERY MAN
(laughs)
Plan?

ALINTA
Great, a sarcastic robot.

DELIVERY MAN
Hybrid life form.

Aliera spots their old serving bot. They stop dead in their tracks.

ALINTA
What's he doing here?

DELIVERY MAN
He's been reprogrammed. Doesn't
remember a thing.

ALINTA
I'm jealous.

Alinta spots a haggard and desultory Leader Bintu.

ALINTA (CONT'D)
He been reprogrammed too?

DELIVERY MAN
You knew?

ALINTA
He's one of you?

DELIVERY MAN
We got to him just in time.

Bintu makes his way over to the group. Aliera walks away.

BINTU
I am so sorry. I have apologized to
almost everyone, but to you, I need
to make special amends.

ALINTA
Faith's a helluva drug, Leader
Bintu, and we're both in recovery.
We were duped. I forgive you.

BINTU
Just Bintu.

An older woman spies Alinta and Bintu from under a bedsheet.

OLDER WOMAN 1

It's her!

CUT TO:

Walking through the camp, Alieria spies Amon. She runs to him.

ALIERA

Amon!

AMON

We were told you didn't make it.

ALIERA

We were told a lot of things. Dr. Etou, your sisters?

AMON

It's only me.

They embrace.

AMON (CONT'D)

They killed my mom, your dad.

CUT TO:

A threatening crowd gathers around Alinta - jeers.

ALINTA

You have a right to be angry.

OLDER WOMAN 1

You lied to us, Linta!

ALINTA

They lied to us.

PARISHIONER 1

You were the ringleader!

ALINTA

I thought I was doing right, and I am profoundly sorry.

OLDER MAN 1

You're one of them.

ALINTA

I'm one of us. My husband is dead! We have all lost...everything.

OLDER WOMAN 1
Addy was a good man.

ALINTA
We're only helping them by
fighting.

PARISHIONER 1
So what are you going to do now to
help us?

Alinta is stunned by the question.

The silence is broken by a loud thunderclap.

Sparse raindrops splatter on the ground, then increase.

CUT TO:

Amon and Alieria peer off into the distance.

AMON
A typhoon... in the desert?

On the horizon, a forbidding storm approaches, spawning
tornadoes, sandstorms, and torrential rains.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

Panicked running ensues. The refugees grab what they can and
head toward the closest mountains.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Wet and shivering, refugees sit around a cave.

Alinta, Alieria, Amon, and the Delivery Man look out at the
deluge.

ALINTA
What are we going to do?

AMON
Die.

ALINTA
They will wipe us out.

ALIERA
They are evil.

DELIVERY MAN
No, just rational.

ALINTA
This is rational?

DELIVERY MAN
I am one of them.

They look at him with surprised suspicion.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)
In part. I'm still programmed by
them... but not controlled.

AMON
And the others.

DELIVERY MAN
Varying degrees of sentience.

ALIERA
Intelligent.

DELIVERY MAN
Just smarts and a learning tree.

ALINTA
So you've got a plan?

DELIVERY MAN
No, just an Algo.

AMON
So, who can we trust?

DELIVERY MAN
Yourselves... and me.

ALINTA
So what do we call you?

DELIVERY MAN
I'm just the Delivery Man.

MONTAGE REFUGEES TREK TO NOWHERE - THE DESERT - DAY

-- The rain abates.
-- Humans and bots emerge from the caves. They assemble into
a group of about 200 and begin to walk down the mountain.
-- A column of refugees walks the desert floor.
-- The hot sun beats down on the column. Stragglers fall to
the ground. The column marches on, leaving them to die.

-- A band of refugees tracks and kills small prairie dogs.
 -- Alinta hands Alieria a splash of water from a dirty bottle. She shares it with Amon.
 -- The Delivery Man comes to a dry wash, bends down, runs his finger in the dirt, and tastes it.
 -- The Delivery Man walks up to a Barrel Cactus. Chops it open with his hand.
 -- Alieria drinks water from the cactus. Alinta is drinking and begins to retch.
 -- The column walks on toward sunset.

INT. DESERT FLOOR - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Refugees share the meal of cooked prairie dogs.

ALIERIA
 (to the Delivery Man)
 You need to eat.

DELIVERY MAN
 I don't.

ALINTA
 We can share.

DELIVERY MAN
 No really.

AMON
 How are you going to help us if you don't eat?

DELIVERY MAN
 I don't eat.

They just stare at him.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)
 Let me put this in a way you can understand. The First Light gives me energy, and the air replenishes my minerals.

ALIERIA
 Must be nice.

DELIVERY MAN
 It has its ups and downs.

AMON
 Where are we going?

DELIVERY MAN
 Again with the plan. I'm just
 following the Algo.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

At first light, the refugee column walks on.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
 The ABEND seems to be consuming too
 many instructions per cycle.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 It is resource-intensive.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 They are resource-intensive and
 apparently designed for Graceful
 Degradation... and Fault Tolerance.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
 Run the optimization tool.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
 We must EOL the runtime.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Run the End of Life.

EXT. DESERT - DRY WASH - DAY

Bintu struggles to keep up with the column. Alinta notices.

ALINTA
 (to the Delivery Man)
 I thought he was one of you.

DELIVERY MAN
 He was never designed for this.

Alinta walks to the back to help Bintu.

She supports him around the shoulders when the column lets
 out a collective scream.

A wall of water rushes down the wash, carrying refugees amid
 plant debris and rocks.

Amon fights the current -- holding Alier's head up above the
 cresting water.

Alinta hoists Bintu under his arms as debris, along with the Delivery Man and the drowned, floats past.

Amon pulls Alieria to shore -- the water begins to lessen.

Alinta is lying prostrate beside Bintu, still holding him. She starts mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; he spits out water.

BINTU

I'm okay.

They get to their feet and see Alieria, Amon, and the Delivery Man helping others. Some appear to be dead.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The remaining refugees walk along, beaten and bleeding.

Alieria, Amon, and the Delivery Man lead the column.

AMON

Scientific method says this can't be happening.

DELIVERY MAN

You're operating in a less-dimensional world.

AMON

How so?

DELIVERY MAN

If you were a dot, a rotating cylinder would appear as time.

AMON

Still don't get it.

DELIVERY MAN

The dimension above you is...

Suddenly, the Delivery Man bounces off "The End of the World."

The column halts, and everyone looks around silently.

Amon cautiously approaches -- sticks out his palm -- feels around.

He is violently repelled -- lands on his back.

Alinta leaves Bintu -- steps forward -- puts out a foot as if testing the waters. She is knocked down but gets up.

Aliera steps to try it.

ALINTA
Ali, don't.

She backs down.

Alinta looks to the Delivery Man for an explanation.

DELIVERY MAN
I sensed there was something like
this, but I thought it was just
code obfuscation.

ALINTA
What?

DELIVERY MAN
Something buried deep to keep us in
our place, deter curiosity.

An older woman runs and throws herself onto the End of the
World. She falls back dead.

ALINTA
Seriously, we came all this way for
this? Who's next?

DELIVERY MAN
I am recalculating.

People start to sit down in resignation. A deep, sad silence
takes over the group.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)
I believe, and this is a 47.7%
chance, that this was never
designed for a mass migration.

AMON
Well, we are all going to die.

Amon backs up and starts to run headlong into the abyss.

DELIVERY MAN
Stop!

Amon stumbles to a stop.

The Delivery Man walks around gathering all the bots, Alinta,
and a few people. He speaks to them in confidence.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

If this doesn't work, those pretty purple-flowering plants over there are Oleanders. You can eat them and die quickly. Tell the others.

Alinta looks to the plants.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Go!

A salvo of bots charges The End of the World. They hit it simultaneously and stick.

A second salvo joins them. They stick to the invisible wall, and visible reality starts to weaken and deform.

A third wave, including the Delivery Man, runs at the wall, and reality again distorts, morphs, and warps.

Small tears begin to show. But the bots have been used up.

From the back, Bintu runs at the wall -- jumps on it -- his body vibrating fiercely as he holds on with clenched fingers.

A hole big enough for humans to pass through opens.

The violently shaking energy field tosses the bots around as the refugees run through it.

The End of the World ultimately heals itself -- destroyed bots lie on either side of it.

Bintu lies dead on the wrong side.

Alinta and Alieria stand over the Delivery Man.

He opens his eyes.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Did that work?

ALINTA

Yeah.

Something catches his eye, and he sits up.

DELIVERY MAN'S POV - Standing unseen behind the refugees is a group of primitive-appearing people. Looking like a different species of human, they are short, stocky, and powerfully built, smeared in camo makeup, and holding spears.

The primitive people advance toward the refugees, surrounding them at spearpoint.

PRIMITIVE WOMAN 1
 Wa Kela wu.

DELIVERY MAN
 We must go with them.

Trepidatiously, first Alinta, then the rest rise.

A man motions with his spear for them to walk. They walk.

EXT. DESERT - CHAPARRAL - DAY

The primitive people walk beside the refugees along a rushing creek. The arid desert begins its transition to chaparral.

Some of the refugees struggle to keep up. The primitive people herd them like cattle.

Aliera and Alinta exchange worried looks.

EXT. LUSH ALPINE FOREST - DUSK

The column struggles, but walks on.

PRIMITIVE MAN 1
 Bay to sumopan.

DELIVERY MAN
 (whispers to Alinta)
 He says we are nearing the end.

ALINTA
 Is that good or bad?

DELIVERY MAN
 Thirteen percent chance good.

EXT. RAIN FOREST - PRIMITIVE VILLAGE - NIGHT

The column walks into the village. There is abundant tame wildlife all around. Monkeys, big cats, bison cows, etc.

PRIMITIVE MAN 2
 (gestures with his spear)
 Kowa Loku!

DELIVERY MAN
 He wants us to sit.

They sit in a semi-circle around a fire, cooking meat.

A cheetah comes and sits next to Alieria. It nuzzles her with its head. Alieria cautiously strokes it.

DJARRI-MA enters. He appears to be a leader.

DJARRI-MA
Soo, Djarri-Ma, Ca ban oso ehal.

DELIVERY MAN
He is Djarri-Ma. He welcomes us to the Other Side of the World.

DJARRI-MA
Goba ra, bi sipo, yu batori ira.

DELIVERY MAN
Djarri-Ma says we must be tired and hungry from such a journey.

DJARRI-MA
O goba yunato kinma haaju si yopun.

DELIVERY MAN
You must eat and rest before dispatch to your destination.

The refugees look resigned to their fate.

DISSOLVE TO:

Alinta, Alieria, Amon, and the Delivery Man sit with Djarri-Ma. They eat healthy portions of meat from stone platters with their hands.

DJARRI-MA
Ba o pa na awad o Pelda, a owuju.

DELIVERY MAN
He says they are called Those Who Have Returned, banished by The Presence.

ALINTA
You know The Presence?

DELIVERY MAN
So a ma nopal owuju?

DJARRI-MA
Kayna, owuju to si adawu fan wo... sagba noban o wu.

DELIVERY MAN

He says The Presence has forbidden them from returning to The People of Two Lights..., but here you are.

ALIERA

This is so great. We studied primitive cultures in school.

DELIVERY MAN

To me, you are (making air quotes) "Primitive"

ALINTA

Tell him, The Presence has tried to banish us, too. But here we are.

DELIVERY MAN

Owuju so ayenja bata naapaap.

DJARRI-MA

Ta bage totpale. Wawu ray ta sa.

DELIVERY MAN

Yes, it has been foretold. Your coming will signify our return from The End of The World.

ALINTA

Tell him we don't believe in...

O.S. A desperate cry is heard.

CUT TO:

A refugee holds a bloody tooth in his mouth. Another falls out into his hand.

Djarri-Ma walks to him -- pries his mouth open -- pulls out a knife -- cuts away dead gum tissue. The man winces in pain.

Other villagers walk to the sitting refugees. They pry open their mouths and cut gum tissue.

Alinta gets up to stop this. The Delivery Man grabs her arm.

DELIVERY MAN

It's from lack of food. They know what they're doing.

EXT. PRIMITIVE VILLAGE - NIGHT

All are asleep except the Delivery Man. Sitting on a rock, he scans the serene scene. Something catches his eye. A rocket streaks upward. Its stages separate. A fiery plume fills the air as it arches towards the heavens.

DELIVERY MAN

They're done with us.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Those Who Have Returned are gathered amid a herd of bison.

Two of them ride astride bison, jousting with spears.

Djarri-Ma, the Delivery Man, and Alinta watch from a distance.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

We are approaching base
equilibrium.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

Still, these stragglers have
created an energy imbalance.

One man knocks the other off with a crossed spear.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

My computations raise an exception
about this: a possible return
error.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

These sample subjects will be
retained only until shutdown.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

Are all other subjects EOL'd?

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

Possibly, we are experiencing some
negative data loss. Indefinite
execution is undesirable.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

Finiteness will be the desirable
application endpoint.

Aliera is helped up mounting a bison. She is handed a spear.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
 Exact finitude, unknown. The Algo
 will determine a smooth landing.

Aliera rides off on the bison. She turns and charges Amon,
 riding his bison. They clash, and she knocks Amon to the
 ground.

The onlookers are amused.

DJARRI-MA
 Nu tu wa nay oohe. O ja kayma.

DELIVERY MAN
 He said, The Presence is a giant
 boulder inside a mountain. It is
 sacred.

ALINTA
 Has he seen it?

DELIVERY MAN
 Paj a to ra.

DJARRI-MA
 Lo anay to ra a, calmo wu noba.

DELIVERY MAN
 No one has seen it, but it is
 there.

ALINTA
 Can he take us to it?

DELIVERY MAN
 Si a lo ma wu.

DJARRI-MA
 (agitated)
 Ba to si pa, tu bawan anayen amala
 maju. E yo jo apun kohun abagbo.

DELIVERY MAN
 It is forbidden. He says, It's been
 said that if The People of The Two
 Lights and Those Who Have Returned
 go. The herds will leave, and that
 will be the end of everything.

ALINTA
 Tell him we have no choice.

Amon pulls himself off the ground onto the bison, ready for
 another go.

EXT. RAIN FOREST - DAY

Birds and monkeys sing as Alinta, alone, walks through the brush. She begins to sing, harmonizing with the birds.

She sits, removes her vision goggles, and begins to rock.

ALINTA (V.O.)

If you are true, then guide my hand
by the wisdom of your presence.

She rocks more, but no voices come.

ALINTA (V.O.)

And if you are not, then free me
from your presence and this...
superstition.

Still, voices do not come. She begins to sing the birdsong, but is interrupted by an approaching disturbance.

Two tigers charge past her, followed by people running and throwing spears at them.

She cowers behind a rock.

A spear sticks in a tiger's flank.

They pass her. She gets up and quickly exits.

EXT. RAIN FOREST - VILLAGE - DAY

Alinta enters. There are three mangled, bloody bodies on the ground.

She searches desperately with her eyes. Finally, she sees Alieria, Amon, and the Delivery Man emerge from a hut.

Djarri-Ma crouches over a body. Alinta goes to him.

ALINTA

What happened?

DELIVERY MAN enters.

DELIVERY MAN

Lina o ta sola?

DJARRI-MA

A ui nabagbahbo gobe no imubu pela.
Awu arkanran Barabinran tu agbo.

DELIVERY MAN

We have always lived in harmony
with the brothers and sisters of
the forest. This is a bad sign. I
fear we have angered The Presence.

ALINTA

Tell him he has done nothing wrong.
It is The Presence that has
changed; now we, too, must change.

DELIVERY MAN

A ku sa okunlohan tu ku ta. A liwu.

DJARRI-MA

Coo aru oban ra tu fa bagba.

DELIVERY MAN

He says, I fear your wisdom has put
us all in great peril.

DJARRI-MA

Augba tu wiyban ku, i wan aban ra.

DELIVERY MAN

But if the choice is wisdom or
death, we will choose wisdom.

EXT. RAIN FOREST - VILLAGE - DAWN

A large number of Those Who Have Returned gather. Some carry
slings of food; others carry spears and shields.

Djarri-Ma, Alinta, Alieria, the Delivery Man, and Amon lead
them and the refugees out of the village.

MONTAGE REFUGEES AND THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED MARCH - DAY

-- The column walks through the rain forest. Alieria and Amon
look up at the trees and see many exotic animals.
-- Alinta walks at the head with Djarri-Ma. A green Boomslang
snake drops out of a tree at her feet. Alinta flinches.
Djarri-Ma quickly spears it and hurls it back into the trees.
-- The column exits the forest into a beautiful savannah.
-- Many feet splash through a creek. A Tapir passes.
-- Alieria stops for water.
-- A huge herd of bison grazes in the distance. Hyenas
traverse the edges, driving off a young calf.
-- The column marches on. They see giraffes and llamas.
-- A Bat-eared fox and then an aardvark run up to them as if
they were domesticated pets.

Amon reaches down to pet the fox. A hand enters the frame -- signs not to do that.
-- The column exits the savannah for the desert.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Fresh game cooks over an open fire as the people eat. Alinta, Alieria, and Amon sit with the Delivery Man.

ALINTA

Do you have any idea where we're headed?

DELIVERY MAN

72.6% to some inert matter that these folks consider sacred.

ALINTA

I've been guilty of that myself.

ALIERA

I'm beat. Love you guys. See you at The First Light.

Alieria lies down.

ALIERA'S POV - Stars twinkle in the blackness. Two meteors shoot through the night sky, followed by a rocket.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

Alieria awakens. She gazes at Amon, asleep, lying next to her.

First light barely illuminates the column as it forms. Those Who Have Returned and refugees number in the hundreds.

A mountain range is silhouetted in the distance.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The column marches over a landscape of arid, rolling hills.

Suddenly, out of an arroyo pops up a platoon of battlebots -- they come over the rise -- bursts of multicolored laser fire head toward the column.

People hit the ground -- scramble for cover behind rocks, culverts, and dirt berms -- some are cut down.

Alinta, the Delivery Man, and Djarri-Ma take cover.

ALINTA

What now?

DELIVERY MAN

The rational thing is to make
peace.

Amon and Alieria hit the ground behind a boulder -- laser
light whooshes past -- strikes rock -- creating deep divots.

The bots continue to advance.

A line of Those Who Have Returned stand -- launch spears
toward the bots -- most fall short or bounce off -- more of
them are cut down.

The bots continue their advance.

Alinta pops her head up.

ALINTA

Alieria!

ALIERA

(O.S. From behind the
boulder)

Mom!

Alinta takes off running low -- stumbles -- regains balance --
a laser shot glances off her goggles -- the goggles shatter --
she falls to the ground blind.

Alieria peeks over the rock -- sees Alinta on the ground --
rises to run -- Amon pulls her back -- he takes off running.

Amon "running between the raindrops" -- laser fire flashes
all around.

Djarri-Ma stands and yells.

DJARRI-MA

A ja ato tu o dura watu ku!

A wave of his people rises -- charges the bots -- spears are
thrown -- most of these people are cut down -- bodies pile up
on the ground -- slowing the advance of the bots.

Djarri-Ma sees Amon kneeling by Alinta -- charges out into
the field to them.

Amon is struggling to pull Alinta to safety.

Djarri-Ma runs low -- parries laser shots with his shield.

The Delivery Man sees the shots bouncing off the metal shield.

Djarri-Ma reaches Amon and Alinta -- slowly begins to move Alinta.

The Delivery Man rises -- picks up a shield from a fallen tribeswoman -- wards off laser shots -- runs to Alinta.

The Delivery Man reaches Alinta, Djarri-Ma, and Amon -- they pick her up -- carry her towards Alieria -- the Delivery Man shielding them from laser fire.

Another wave of Those Who Have Returned charge the bots -- adding to the growing obstruction of dead bodies.

Behind the rock, Amon, Alieria, the Delivery Man, and Djarri-Ma attend to Alinta. She regains consciousness.

ALINTA

What happened?

ALIERA

Mom!

ALINTA

Alieria?

The Delivery Man pops his head up -- holds his shield -- scans the battlebots -- ducks back down.

He draws a picture of a battlebot in the dirt.

DELIVERY MAN

(to Djarri-Ma)

Tu a bo la beke lomo san so abi,
(points to a spot under a firing
port) abyu agatu laran wu kora.

Super: "If you lodge a spear here, there is a 65.8% chance you can disable them."

Djarri-Ma stands -- scans the field -- fends off laser shots.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Mitraqbe tu a bo munso ta ababye
leban-an agarun nu babay owu yu lu.

Super: "Of course, if you get close enough, there is an 89.4 percent chance you will die."

Djarri-Ma rises -- runs back to his lines.

The Delivery Man, Amon, and Alieria peek over the rock -- see him organizing his forces.

ALIERIA

What did you say to him?

DELIVERY MAN

Every 200 lights, the Rabbit subdues the Bison.

Those Who Have Returned rise up -- charge the bots in a triangular formation.

Amon and Alieria watch.

The people advance -- using their shields to create a shell over and around them.

They get within striking distance.

THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED WOMAN 2

Alowa taken

They lower their shields.

THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)

Tama!

Spears are thrown.

Many tribespeople fall -- but some get close enough to jam spears into the firing ports.

Alieria and Amon exchange looks -- charge out into the field.

They come to fallen warriors -- pick up spears and shields.

The Delivery Man is watching.

DELIVERY MAN

What have I done?

ALINTA

What's happening?

DELIVERY MAN

Nothing to worry about.

Alieria and Amon emerge from behind a formation of Those Who Have Returned -- they begin attacking the bots.

Alinta stands, trying to make out what is going on.

The fighting is now close in, hand-to-hand.

The people are dwindling -- so are the Bots.

Amon uses his implanted spear to pitch over a disabled bot.

A laser blast hits Those Who Have Returned Woman 2 -- she explodes from the chest.

Another man is hit in the eyes -- falls, blinded.

A spear sticks into a bot -- it deactivates.

Aliera makes a perfect strike into a port.

Amon picks up a spear -- throws it -- hits a port.

Laser fire shoots toward Aliera's feet -- she backflips to evade it.

A woman grabs a small bot from behind -- throws it to the ground -- jams a spear into a port.

Amon pulls a spear from a smoking port -- charges on.

Aliera jams up a retreating bot.

Soon, there are few bots left -- they smoke and die.

Those Who Have Returned attend to the dead and wounded.

Aliera returns to Alinta and the Delivery Man.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

ALIERA

(breathing hard)

Never better.

ALINTA

Aliera?

Aliera goes to Alinta -- strokes her face.

ALINTA (CONT'D)

Amon?

ALIERA

Should be along shortly.

Alinta holds Aliera's face. Traces her cheeks and eyes.

ALIERA (CONT'D)

How will you go on?

ALINTA
I've got special powers, remember?

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

A vastly reduced column trudges on.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
The decision tree has returned a
runtime error!

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
The subjects persist. Our existence
is in danger of a crash.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)
They continue to divide by zero.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Solutions?

The column reaches the bottom of a mountain range with a wide
road leading upward.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Score the exception handler. We
must respond with special
processing.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
We have hit a Breakpoint Trap!

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Invoke the debugger!

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
The Guard Clause has been checked.
The Algo has set the honey pot.
They will be attracted and...
terminated. Their resources
returned to us as of EOL.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - BUNKER - DAY

The column reaches the 40-foot-high, concrete bunker doors.

ALIERA
Now what?

DELIVERY MAN
Let me think.

The Delivery Man squats down and scrunches his face up.

The giant doors slowly open a crack. Just wide enough to walk through.

ALIERA

Well done.

Aliera grabs her mother's hand, and they all walk through.

INT. MOUNTAIN - BUNKER - DAY

The group walks rubbernecking through the landing site. Decommissioned robots line the walls, and the decaying fleet of flying submersibles sits in dry dock.

INT. LAB - DAY

Refugees and Those Who Have Returned enter.

Built into the walls, the lab's glass cases contain human beings and animals. Projected displays read out their biological conditions and time in suspended animation.

Djarri-Ma walks around staring at frozen specimens, as do Amon, Alinta, and Aliera.

The Delivery Man examines what appears to be the cryo-control console desk.

Alinta comes to a case and stops. It is the body of Alina. Squinting her eyes, she senses her own resemblance reflected and superimposed over Alina's.

Djarri-Ma comes across a case that looks like another primitive man. He traces his hand on the glass where the face is.

Aliera and Amon walk around, fascinated. One of the cases contains Commander Caspan Ralta, another, The Baby.

Alinta moves on to the next case. It is Addi.

DJARRI-MA

(O.S.)

Kehind!

Alinta moves to the tribesman. He points to the case.

DJARRI-MA (CONT'D)

Kehind.

The Delivery Man has now gotten into the control panel and is fiddling with the data.

Aliera and Amon join Alinta.

ALINTA
(sotto voce)
The Stories were true.

ALIERA
That's a stretch.

The Delivery Man pushes some buttons. The data displayed on Kehind's case begins to change. Its cold blue light brightens, then glows orange.

DELIVERY MAN
(to himself)
Well, what's done is done.

The temperature data on the case begins to warm. The readout changes to "Nano bot tissue repair - initiated."

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
This is not optimal!

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)
Transient. They will soon be devitalized matter.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Purged. Their homeothermic parameters are too narrow to survive below our own temps.

Kehind's case opens -- he walks out, disoriented.

KEHIND
Is this the Other Side of The World?

No one speaks. Kehind traces Alinta's face with his fingers.

KEHIND (CONT'D)
Alina.

ALINTA
No.

KEHIND
Are you The Presence?

ALINTA
You know The Presence?

KEHIND

I am punished for not believing.

ALINTA

Yes, me too.

DJARRI-MA

So a ma mawun ebiniyun?

DELIVERY MAN

(to Kehind)

He wants to know do you know The
People Between The Two Lights?

KEHIND

I am of the people.

DELIVERY MAN

Amo na Okun!

Djarri-Ma embraces a surprised Kehind.

The lights in the room glow and gain an eerie green tint.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Not good.

At the console, the Delivery Man sticks his finger deep into a data port. Blue charges travel up his arm, outlining his robot-human hybrid workings. He sinks in up to his elbows.

The charges travel to his shoulders and head.

The camera travels inside the Delivery Man into an electric world of flowing data, flashing code, and schematics. It travels past a pictogram of a blue metallic cube. Its surface is covered by streams of 0s and 1s.

The journey lands on an architectural schematic. It is a spinning, tapered, cylindrical crystalline structure, capped by a pyramidal roof. It sits in a pool of flowing liquid.

At super speed, the camera retraces its steps out of the Delivery Man, making a quick stop to inspect the metallic blue cube.

ALIERA

That was intense.

The Delivery Man hits a button on the console. The glass case doors pop open. All the specimens slowly melt into a pool of protein sludge.

One of them is The Baby.

He runs into a case and retrieves a metallic blue box.

DELIVERY MAN

I believe this was meant for us.

AMON

What is it?

DELIVERY MAN

You know the Meissner effect?

ALIERA

Daddy tol ...

DELIVERY MAN

We don't have time. It's essentially a Cold Bomb, absolute zero.

ALIERA

Where all molecular motion stops.

DELIVERY MAN

But on the way down, it creates superconductivity. The lifeblood of The Presence, as you call it.

ALINTA

So we're finished.

DELIVERY MAN

I know where their source is. If we can...

ALIERA

Set it to absolute zero.

DELIVERY MAN

No electrical conductivity.

AMON

Perhaps, everything stops. But in a quantum world...

ALIERA

The current can flow freely, indefinitely.

AMON

No impedance.

ALIERA

They become immortal.

DELIVERY MAN

A little knowledge is a
dangerous...

ALINTA

Or we can just stay here and die.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - REAR - DAY

The refugees and the 20 remaining Those Who Have Returned
overlook the abandoned, empty rocket-launcher pads.

ALINTA

(to the Delivery Man)

Do you think this will work?

DELIVERY MAN

I'm out of the prediction business.

The group walks down towards the spent rocket gantries. In
the distance is a mountainside structure. It is a giant
rendition of "The Portal."

The group starts to march through the rocket launchers.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)

We have lost operational integrity.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)

There is built-in Exponential
Backoff. We will recover.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

The Kubernetes Sysmed predicts we
restart clean. They will not.

SBLF VOICE, LENA (V.O.)

But the lab breach has created a
program weakness.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

Compromised.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

We are protected by the Exception
Handler.

SBLF VOICE, NEB (V.O.)

They are not.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Power Shell Bash suggests extreme
remediation.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)
Radical extinction!

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)
Their obstinacy has pushed us past
the computational cost of shutdown!

SBLF HIVE MIND
All resources are marshaling.

As the group works its way through the launch pads, the landscape experiences a rapid solar eclipse. Into the dusk, the top of the portal belches out a rapid salvo of lightning. The bolts strike and explode on the ground.

O.S. Thunderclaps accent the oncoming danger.

The Delivery Man halts the group with his hand.

The exploding lightning flashes are assembling into a giant glowing, wireframe White Bison, made of electrical charges. It starts its mad run towards them.

The group jumps into a cement Flame Deflector Trench.

The charging, crackling Thunder Being, amid giant, galloping strides, arches through the air.

Amon looks around at rusted gantry debris lying in a pool of spent cooling water -- he spies a section of rebar.

The glowing white electrical bison is approaching rapidly.

Amon lifts the metal pole, which is attached to spent cabling.

The air crackles as the bison gets closer.

Kehind forcefully grabs the metal from Amon.

The air explodes with lightning and thunderclaps.

Kehind raises up, holding the metal pole over his shoulder, waiting for his moment.

The Bison is within striking distance.

Kehind hurls the spear, trailing cable unspooling behind it.

It plunges into the flanks of the giant electrical beast. White charges erupt and travel down the cable, flaring up into the standing water of the rocket launcher flame trench.

The bison evaporates into the air with a large booming crack.

The Sun begins to return.

DELIVERY MAN

We need to reach The Portal before they can recharge.

EXT. THE PORTAL - DAY

The group comes to the foot of the giant Portal. It is surrounded by a twenty-foot-wide moat of green, boiling, frothing, liquid gas. A noxious cloud of cold smoke floats off its surface. There is a passageway on the other side.

ALIERA

I don't feel so good.

DELIVERY MAN

We don't have much time here.

ALINTA

What's the plan?

DELIVERY MAN

Again, no plan.

The Delivery Man stares at the metallic box Kehind is holding. Alieria, Amon, Alinta, and Djarri-Ma stare at the moat, stymied. An uncomfortably long time passes.

Alieria shows signs of dizziness.

DJARRI-MA

(proclaiming)

A ja ato tu o dura watu ku!

Suddenly, one by one, the remaining tribespeople jump into the moat. They disappear under the liquid.

Amon, Alieria, and Alinta stand horrified.

Eventually there bodies pop up as frozen white stepping stones, slabs bobbing in the liquid.

There are still not enough of them to cross on.

Djarri-Ma takes a running start -- launches himself past the stepping stones, trying to complete the chain.

His body pops up -- it is still not enough.

The gas starts to get to Alinta. She grabs onto Alieria to stay upright.

Unseen to the group, Amon takes a step back and launches himself across and into the moat.

Amon's body disappears. It bobs up to complete the chain.

Alieria becomes hysterical.

The Delivery Man pushes Alieria hard.

DELIVERY MAN

You can cry later, if you're lucky.

ALINTA

Will this end them?

DELIVERY MAN

Maybe, maybe just a reboot.

The Delivery Man and Kehind head to cross the moat.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(to Alinta and Alieria)

Get back as far as you can.

Kehind and The Delivery Man perilously cross the moat. They bob on the stepping stones but manage to keep their balance and make it across.

The Delivery Man turns to see Alieria leading Alinta receding into the distance.

SBLF VOICE, KRAY (V.O.)

They are relentless.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA (V.O.)

No regard for their own life forms.

SBLF VOICE, CHRO (V.O.)

And they will continue until we, or they, are gone.

SBLF VOICE, GEIA

I am concerned. What comes next?

INT. THE PORTAL - DAY

The source is a giant tapered cylindrical crystal, slowly spinning on a narrow platform, set in a blue pool of smoking, glowing, bubbling, frothing liquid.

The crystal reaches 40 feet to the peaked roof of The Portal.

The Delivery Man and Kehind enter, holding the metallic box.

KEHIND

I have been here before.

DELIVERY MAN

Really.

KEHIND

In the dreaming.

The Delivery Man motions for Kehind to put the box down.

DELIVERY MAN

Hold your end.

Kehind gets a firm grip.

The Delivery Man sinks both hands into the box. Blue charges travel up his arms. He resembles a surgeon manipulating organs while performing an operation.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

What was it like in the case?

KEHIND

Beautiful. Everything love.

DELIVERY MAN

Like in The Stories?

KEHIND

What are The Stories?

DELIVERY MAN

Never mind. Hold tight.

The box begins to vibrate.

KEHIND

Addi and Alina forgive me in the dreaming. Love me. I miss the dreaming.

DELIVERY MAN

If this doesn't work, we will be there soon enough.

KEHIND

Good.

DELIVERY MAN

Kehind, can you jump?

The box begins to glow and rattle.

KEHIND

I can fly.

The box adds a high-pitched hum.

KEHIND (CONT'D)

Do you dream?

DELIVERY MAN

No, I don't sleep.

KEHIND

I am sad for you.

DELIVERY MAN

(handing him the box.)

Take this to the crystal?

Kehind runs to the edge of the room -- he turns and runs headlong toward the rotating crystal -- launching himself into the air -- he lands at the base of the crystal.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(Yells)

Touch the box to the crystal.

Charges begin to climb up the rotating crystal.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Can you hold it?

Kehind begins to get covered in charges.

The crystal begins to spin erratically.

Kehind is buffeted by the increasing charges and struggles to hold on.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Place it touching the bottom.

Kehind wedges it on the bottom of the crystal. He is almost obscured by charges.

The charges on the crystal intensify. It begins to shake. The charges on Kehind subside.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Can you get back?

KEHIND

Yes.

SBLF HIVE MIND (V.O.)

Launch the lifeboat!

Small fissures begin to appear in the crystal

DELIVERY MAN

Go!

Kehind takes a beat, looks at the Delivery Man, steps back, then deliberately plops himself into the blue liquid. He disappears underneath. His essence floats upward, a cloud of blue ionized smoke.

The fissures begin to grow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - REAR - DAY

Alinta and Alieria overlook the rumbling portal. A silo hatch opens in the field of rocket launchers. A large rocket with a command module and capsule rises and streaks skyward.

INT. THE PORTAL - DAY

The Delivery Man takes a moment in awe of what is happening. The crystal is shaking violently. The holes are now large. The Delivery Man turns and runs.

INT. EDGE OF THE ATMOSPHERE - COMMAND MODULE - DAY

The Dreaming Friend looks out the capsule window. The planet recedes below him. A single landmass surrounded by water.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - REAR - DAY

Alinta and Alieria are standing, looking toward The Portal.

Multicolored smoke rises from large fissures. Small sections of the roof begin to crack and cave in.

EXT. THE PORTAL - DAY

The Delivery Man runs out of The Portal at full speed.

He launches himself across the moat -- almost clears -- he begins to fall -- his foot hits a small remnant of a frozen stepping stone -- he rebounds to safety.

He runs on. Suddenly, all the noise of the destruction stops.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - REAR - DAY

Alinta and Alieria spot the Delivery Man. He is staring back at the quiescent Portal.

O.S. The SBLF Hive Mind wails -- A blood-curdling scream -- the death rattle of an entire civilization echoes off the mountainsides.

Then boom! All hell breaks loose as The Portal starts to tear itself apart.

EXT. THE PORTAL - DAY

The Delivery Man takes off running again.

Streams of blue liquid shoot into the sky through the ruptured Portal roof. Clouds of blue mist puff out the front.

The Delivery Man runs for his existence. Then stops.

Frozen balls of blue liquid fall from the sky, pelting him about the head and shoulders.

He crouches down and covers himself with his arms.

The blue balls are followed by serrated shards of ice.

The ice shards rip into his arms -- tearing them apart.

He cowers.

Ice rains upon the ground and splats. The ground is being covered in an ever-thickening layer of frost.

The Delivery Man is being ripped to shreds by the ice shards -- for him, there is no recovering.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - REAR - DAY

Alinta and Alieria cower, but nothing falls at their location.

Aliera peeks between her hands. The frozen pile of tech junk that was the Delivery Man stands frozen in a field of white.

EXT. THE PORTAL - DAY

The ruins of The Portal are covered in icicles. The Delivery Man stands, a macabre tech snowman, an unintentional memorial to his bravery. The ice field around him continues to grow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BUNKER - REAR - DAY

Alinta and Aliera stand in silence. Then turn and walk away.

MONTAGE THE PLANET TURNS COLD - VARIOUS - DAY

-- The defunct portal and surroundings are buried in a glacier.

SUPER: "7 Months Later."

-- Those Who Have Returned's camp abandoned. The rainforest is dead, covered by a layer of frost.

-- Once desert mountains are now snow-covered peaks.

-- The desert floor is a glassy shield of ice.

-- A nasty-looking winter storm squalls across the sky.

EXT. SUBURBAN LANDSCAPE - DAY

The town is sparsely populated. A few buildings have been reclaimed, but many remain in disrepair.

A young couple chips frost from the walls of their home.

A man whips down an overgrown, dead, and frozen front lawn.

Children play, hitting frozen pinecones with sticks.

Alinta and Aliera are sitting on the steps of their front porch. They wear beat-up woolen coats. Aliera's coat is open, showing her pregnancy.

Alinta has an old pair of taped-together vision goggles.

Snow flurries begin to fall.

They look out over the distance. Snow-covered mountain ranges lay beyond the town.

The sky reveals the nasty winter weather system moving in.

EXT. ADINO HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Aliera clutches Alinta tightly against the cold and snow.

ALINTA
Looks like a bad one.

ALIERA
Show me a good one.

ALINTA
I don't think we were meant to
cause all this.

ALIERA
Did we? What were we meant for?

ALINTA
I'd like to think something else.
Something beyond this.

ALIERA
Yep.

ALINTA
Maybe Addy was right, maybe we're
not supposed to know.

ALIERA
Maybe.

Alinta grabs Aliera's hand.

ALIERA (CONT'D)
I'm not ready to die. I miss Amon.

ALINTA
(resigned)
I miss...everyone. We had some nice
days, you know. I guess that's all
you can hope for, really, nice
days.

ALIERA
I guess.

ALINTA
Everybody wants more.

ALIERA
What?

ALINTA
More life, more sex, more dessert.

ALIERA
I'm not ready to live like this.

ALINTA
Well, I'm just...

ALIERA
What?

ALINTA
Disappointed.

Alinta takes off her coat -- wraps it around Alieria. Alinta is wearing a thin sun print dress underneath.

Alinta snuggles and hugs Alieria around the shoulders. They ball up and hunker down against the elements.

The storm intensifies over them. The camera pulls back on the two lonely figures on the porch steps.

Blowing snow wipes the camera to white

EXT. OUTER SPACE - NIGHT

In the blackness, an object glints -- flashes running lights.

It is a command module getting closer.

SUPER: "103 Million Years Later."

INT. OUTER SPACE - COMMAND MODULE - NIGHT

The Dreaming Friend sits passively staring at the controls. Behind him, encased in a small translucent port, is a glowing blue-green tapered cylindrical crystal, slowly rotating.

O.S. The serenity is broken by faint static.

The Dreaming Friend adjusts some controls. A screen reveals a waveform, a noisy radio signal with small intermittent spikes.

He fiddles further, trying to resolve the signal.

A faint human voice is heard buried in the noise.

Further adjustments reveal that the signal contains music.

The signal grows stronger, and it seems to be a very noisy version of David Bowie's "Space Oddity."

Soon, the signal comes in, in full clarity.

The Dreaming Friend notices a blip on his radar screen. He moves to the capsule window.

Out the window is the Tesla Starman floating by in his 2018 red Tesla Roadster.

The Dreaming Friend waves to him.

The Dummy Spaceman sits but does not wave back. The words "Don't Panic" flash on his dashboard.

EXT. OUTER SPACE - COMMAND MODULE - NIGHT

The command module is in our Solar System, headed toward Earth.

CUT TO:

The command module, nearing Earth, fires thrusters, spins, and ignites a retro burn.

The capsule heads down towards Earth's surface, glowing a bright orangey-red as it burns through our atmosphere.

SUPER MAIN TITLE: "The Presence."

The End