ALIEN

(project formerly titled STARBEAST)

Story by Dan O'Bannon & Ronald Shusett

Screenplay by Dan O'Bannon

**1976**

**SYNOPSIS**

En route back to Earth from a far part of the galaxy, the crew of the

starship SNARK intercepts a transmission in an alien language,

originating from a nearby storm-shrouded planet.

Mankind has waited centuries to contact another form of intelligent

life in the universe -- they decide to land and investigate. Their

search takes them to a wrecked alien spacecraft whose doors gape open

-- it is dead and abandoned. Inside they find, among other strange

things, the skeleton of one of the unearthly space travellers.

Certain clues in the wrecked ship lead them across the hostile surface

of the planet to a primitive stone pyramid, the only remnant of a

vanished civilization. Beneath this pyramid they find an ancient tomb

full of fantastic artifacts. Lying dormant in the tomb are centuries-

old spores, which are triggered into life by the men's presence. A

parasite emerges and fastens itself to one of the men's faces -- and

cannot be removed.

An examination by the ship's medical computer reveals that the

creature has inserted a tube down his throat, which is depositing

something inside him. Then it is discovered that the parasite's blood

is a horribly corrosive acid which eats through metal -- they dare not

kill it on the ship.

Ultimately it is dislodged from its victim and ejected from the ship,

and they blast off from the Hell-planet. However, before they can seal

themselves into suspended animation for the long voyage home, a

horrible little monster emerges from the victim's body -- it has been

growing in him, deposited there by the parasite... and now it is loose

on the ship.

A series of ghastly adventures follow. They trap it in an air shaft

and a man has to crawl down the shaft with a flamethrower -- it tears

a man's head off and runs away with his body -- a man is crushed in

the air lock door and the ship loses most of its air in a terrific

windstorm -- another man is burned to death and then eaten by the

creature -- and another is woven into a cocoon as part of the alien's

bizarre life cycle.

Finally there is only one man left alive, alone on the ship with the

creature, and only six hours till his air runs out; which leads to a

climax of horrifying, explosive jeopardy, the outcome of which

determines who will reach Earth alive -- man or alien.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**CHAZ STANDARD,**

Captain.................A leader and a politician. Believes that

any action is better than no action.

**MARTIN ROBY,**

Executive Officer.......Cautious but intelligent -- a survivor.

**DELL BROUSSARD,**

Navigator...............Adventurer; brash glory-hound.

**SANDY MELKONIS,**

Communications..........Tech Intellectual; a romantic.

**CLEAVE HUNTER,**

Mining Engineer.........High-strung; came along to make his

fortune.

**JAY FAUST,**

Engine Tech.............A worker. Unimaginative.

The crew is unisex and all parts are interchangeable for men or women.

FADE IN:

EXTREME CLOSEUPS OF FLICKERING INSTRUMENT PANELS. Readouts and digital

displays pulse eerily with the technology of the distant future.

Wherever we are, it seems to be chill, dark, and sterile. Electronic

machinery chuckles softly to itself.

Abruptly we hear a BEEPING SIGNAL, and the machinery begins to awaken.

Circuits close, lights blink on.

CAMERA ANGLES GRADUALLY WIDEN, revealing more and more of the

machinery, banks of panels, fluttering gauges, until we reveal:

INTERIOR - HYPERSLEEP VAULT

A stainless steel room with no windows, the walls packed with

instrumentation. The lights are dim and the air is frigid.

Occupying most of the floor space are rows of horizontal FREEZER

COMPARTMENTS, looking for all the world like meat lockers.

FOOM! FOOM! FOOM! With explosions of escaping gas, the lids on the

freezers pop open.

Slowly, groggily, six nude men sit up.

**ROBY**

Oh... God... am I cold...

**BROUSSARD**

Is that you, Roby?

**ROBY**

I feel like shit...

**BROUSSARD**

Yeah, it's you all right.

Now they are yawning, stretching, and shivering.

**FAUST**

(groans)

Ohh... I must be alive, I feel dead.

**BROUSSARD**

You look dead.

**MELKONIS**

The vampires rise from their graves.

This draws a few woozy chuckles.

**BROUSSARD**

(shakes his fist in the

air triumphantly)

We made it!

**HUNTER**

(not fully awake)

Is it over?

**STANDARD**

It's over, Hunter.

**HUNTER**

(yawning)

Boy, that's terrific.

**STANDARD**

(looking around with a grin)

Well, how does it feel to be rich

men?

**FAUST**

Cold!

This draws a LAUGH.

**STANDARD**

Okay! Everybody topside! Let's get

our pants on and get to our posts!

The men begin to swing out of the freezers.

**MELKONIS**

Somebody get the cat.

Roby picks a limp cat out of a freezer.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

This is a fantastic circular room, jammed with instrumentation. There

are no windows, but above head level the room is ringed by

viewscreens, all blank for the moment.

There are seats for four men. Each chair faces a console and is

surrounded by a dazzling array of technology.

STANDARD, ROBY, BROUSSARD, and MELKONIS are entering and finding their

seats.

**BROUSSARD**

I'm going to buy a cattle ranch.

**ROBY**

(putting down the cat)

Cattle ranch!

**BROUSSARD**

I'm not kidding. You can get one if

you have the credit. Look just like

real cows, too.

**STANDARD**

All right, tycoons, let's stop

spending our credit and start

worrying about the job at hand.

**ROBY**

Right. Fire up all systems.

They begin to throw switches, lighting up their consoles. The control

room starts to come to life. All around the room, colored lights

flicker and chase each other across glowing screens. The room fills

with the hum and chatter of machinery.

**STANDARD**

Sandy, you want to give us some

vision?

**MELKONIS**

Feast your eyes.

Melkonis reaches to his console and presses a bank of switches. The

strip of viewscreens flickers into life.

On each screen, we see BLACKNESS SPECKLED WITH STARS.

**BROUSSARD**

(after a pause)

Where's Irth?

**STANDARD**

Sandy, scan the whole sky.

Melkonis hits buttons. On the screens the images all begin to pan.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON ONE OF THE SCREENS, with its moving image of a

starfield.

EXTERIOR - OUTER SPACE

CLOSE SHOT OF A PANNING TV CAMERA. This camera is remote controlled,

turning silently on its base.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK, revealing that the TV camera is mounted on

the HULL OF SOME KIND OF CRAFT.

When the pullback is finished, WE SEE THE FULL LENGTH OF THE STARSHIP

"SNARK," hanging in the depths of interstellar space, against a

background of glimmering stars.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**ROBY**

Where are we?

**STANDARD**

Sandy, contact traffic control.

Melkonis switches on his radio unit.

**MELKONIS**

This is deep space commercial vessel

SNARK, registration number E180246,

calling Antarctica air traffic

control. Do you read me? Over.

There is only the HISS OF STATIC.

**BROUSSARD**

(staring at a screen)

I don't recognize that constellation.

**STANDARD**

Dell, plot our location.

Broussard goes into action, punching buttons, lighting up all his

instruments.

**BROUSSARD**

I got it. Oh boy.

**STANDARD**

Where the hell are we?

**BROUSSARD**

Just short of Zeta II Reticuli. We

haven't even reached the outer rim

yet.

**ROBY**

What the hell?

Standard picks up a microphone.

**STANDARD**

This is Chaz speaking. Sorry, but we

are not home. Our present location

seems to be only halfway to Irth.

Remain at your posts and stand by.

That is all.

**ROBY**

Chaz, I've got something here on my

security alert. A high priority from

the computer...

**STANDARD**

Let's hear it.

**ROBY**

(punches buttons)

Computer, you have signalled a

priority three message. What is the

message?

**COMPUTER**

(a mechanical voice)

I have interrupted the course of the

voyage.

**ROBY**

What? Why?

**COMPUTER**

I am programmed to do so if certain

conditions arise.

**STANDARD**

Computer, this is Captain Standard.

What conditions are you talking

about?

**COMPUTER**

I have intercepted a transmission of

unknown origin.

**STANDARD**

A transmission?

**COMPUTER**

A voice transmission.

**MELKONIS**

Out here?

The men exchange glances.

**COMPUTER**

I have recorded the transmission.

**STANDARD**

Play it for us, please.

Over the speakers, we hear a hum, a crackle, static... THEN A

STRANGE, UNEARTHLY VOICE FILLS THE ROOM, SPEAKING AN ALIEN

LANGUAGE. The bizarre voice speaks a long sentence, then falls

silent.

The men all stare at each other in amazement.

**STANDARD**

Computer, what language was that?

**COMPUTER**

Unknown.

**ROBY**

Unknown! What do you mean?

**COMPUTER**

It is none of the 678 dialects

spoken by technological man.

There is a pause, then EVERYBODY STARTS TALKING AT THE SAME TIME.

**STANDARD**

(silencing them)

Just hold it, hold it!

(glares around the room)

Computer: have you attempted to

analyze the transmission?

**COMPUTER**

Yes. There are two points of salient

interest. Number one: it is highly

systematized, indicating intelligent

origin. Number two: certain sounds

are inconsistent with the human

palate.

**ROBY**

Oh my God.

**STANDARD**

Well, it's finally happened.

**MELKONIS**

First contact...

**STANDARD**

Sandy, can you home in on that beam?

**MELKONIS**

What's the frequency?

**STANDARD**

Computer, what's the frequency of

the transmission?

**COMPUTER**

65330 dash 99.

Melkonis punches buttons.

**MELKONIS**

I've got it. It's coming from

ascension 6 minutes 32 seconds,

declination -39 degrees 2 seconds.

**STANDARD**

Dell -- show me that on a screen.

**BROUSSARD**

I'll give it to you on number four.

Broussard punches buttons. One of the viewscreens flickers, and a

small dot of light becomes visible in the corner of the screen.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

That's it. Let me straighten it out.

He twists a knob, moving the image on the screen till the dot is in

the center.

**STANDARD**

Can you get it a little closer?

**BROUSSARD**

That's what I'm going to do.

He hits a button. The screen flashes and a PLANET APPEARS.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

Planetoid. Diameter, 120 kilometers.

**MELKONIS**

It's tiny!

**STANDARD**

Any rotation?

**BROUSSARD**

Yeah. Two hours.

**STANDARD**

Gravity?

**BROUSSARD**

Point eight six. We can walk on it.

Standard rises.

**STANDARD**

Martin, get the others up to the

lounge.

INTERIOR - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

The entire crew -- STANDARD, ROBY, BROUSSARD, MELKONIS, HUNTER, and

FAUST -- are all seated around a table, with Standard at the head.

**MELKONIS**

If it's an S.O.S., we're morally

obligated to investigate.

**BROUSSARD**

Right.

**HUNTER**

I don't know. Seems to me we came on

this trip to make some credit, not

to go off on some kind of side trip.

**BROUSSARD**

(excited)

Forget the credit; what we have here

is a chance to be the first men to

contact a nonhuman intelligence.

**ROBY**

If there is some kind of alien

intelligence down on that planetoid,

it'd be a serious mistake for us to

blunder in unequipped.

**BROUSSARD**

Hell, we're equipped --

**ROBY**

Hell, no! We don't know what's down

there on that piece of rock! It

might be dangerous! What we should

do is get on the radio to the

exploration authorities... and let

them deal with it.

**STANDARD**

Except it will take 75 years to get

a reply back. Don't forget how far

we are from the Colonies, Martin.

**BROUSSARD**

There are no commercial lanes out

here. Face it, we're out of range.

**MELKONIS**

Men have waited centuries to contact

another form of intelligent life in

the universe. This is an opportunity

which may never come again.

**ROBY**

Look --

**STANDARD**

You're overruled, Martin. Gentlemen

-- let's go.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

The men are strapping in, but this time it is with grim determination.

**STANDARD**

Dell, I want greater magnification.

More surface detail. I want to see

what this place looks like.

**BROUSSARD**

I'll see what I can do.

He jabs his controls. The image on the screen ZOOMS DOWN TOWARD THE

PLANET; but all detail quickly vanishes into a featureless grey haze.

**STANDARD**

It's out of focus.

**ROBY**

No -- that's atmosphere. Cloud

layer.

**MELKONIS**

My God, it's stormy for a piece of

rock that size!

**ROBY**

Just a second.

(punches buttons)

Those aren't water vapor clouds;

they have no moisture content.

**STANDARD**

Put ship in atmospheric mode.

EXTERIOR - "SNARK" - OUTER SPACE

The great dish antenna on the SNARK folds down against the main body

of the ship, and other parts flatten out, until the ship has assumed

an aerodynamic form.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**STANDARD**

Dell, set a course and bring us in

on that beam.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

The SNARK's engines cough into life, and send it drifting toward the

distant dot that is the planetoid.

CAMERA APPROACHES THE PLANETOID, until it looms large on screen. It is

turbulent, completely enveloped in dun-colored clouds.

The SNARK drops down toward the surface.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**STANDARD**

Activate lifter quads.

**BROUSSARD**

Activated. Vertical drop checked.

Correcting course. On tangential

course now, orbiting.

(brief pause as he

studies his instruments)

Crossing the terminator. Entering

night side.

EXTERIOR - "SNARK" - IN ORBIT

Beneath the orbiting SNARK, night's curtain rolls across the planet.

Descending at an angle, the SNARK drops down into the thick atmosphere

of the planetoid.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**ROBY**

Atmospheric turbulence. Dust storm.

**STANDARD**

Turn on navigation lights.

EXTERIOR - "SNARK"

Hydroplaning down through the pea-soup atmosphere, a set of brilliant

lights switches on, cutting through the dust, but hardly improving

visibility.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**BROUSSARD**

Approaching point of origin. Closing

at 20 kilometers, 15 and slowing.

Ten. Five. Gentlemen, we are

directly above the source of the

transmission.

**STANDARD**

What's the terrain down there?

**BROUSSARD**

Well, line of sight is impossible

due to dust. Radar gives me noise.

Sonar gives me noise. Infrared --

noise. Let's try ultraviolet. There.

Flat. It's totally flat. A plain.

**STANDARD**

Is it solid?

**BROUSSARD**

It's... basalt. Rock.

**STANDARD**

Then take her down.

**BROUSSARD**

Drop begins... now! Fifteen

kilometers and dropping... twelve...

ten... eight and slowing. Five.

Three. Two. One kilometer and

slowing. Lock tractor beams.

There is a LOUD ELECTRICAL HUM and the ship shudders.

**ROBY**

Locked.

**BROUSSARD**

Kill drive engines.

The engines fall silent.

**ROBY**

Engines off.

**BROUSSARD**

Nine hundred meters and dropping.

800. 700. Hang on gentlemen.

EXTERIOR - SURFACE OF PLANET - NIGHT

The night-shrouded surface is a hell of blowing dust. The SNARK hovers

above it on glowing beams of light, dropping down slowly.

Landing struts unfold like insect legs.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**BROUSSARD**

And we're... down.

EXTERIOR - SURFACE OF PLANET - NIGHT

The ship touches down, heavily; it rocks on huge shock absorbers.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

The whole ship VIBRATES VIOLENTLY FOR AN INSTANT -- then all the

panels in the room flash simultaneously and the LIGHT'S GO OUT.

**BROUSSARD**

Jesus Christ!

The lights come back on again.

**STANDARD**

What the hell happened?

**ROBY**

(hits a switch)

Engine room, what happened?

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

Just a minute, hold it, I'm

checking.

**ROBY**

Has the hull been breached?

**BROUSSARD**

Uh...

(scans his gauges)

No, I don't see anything. We've

still got pressure.

There is a BEEP from the communicator. Then:

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

Martin, this is Jay. The intakes are

clogged with dust. We overheated and

burned out a whole cell.

**STANDARD**

(strikes his panel)

Damn it! How long to fix?

**ROBY**

(into microphone)

How long to fix?

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

Hard to say.

**ROBY**

Well, get started.

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

Right. Talk to you.

**STANDARD**

Let's take a look outside. Turn the

screens back on.

Melkonis hits buttons. The screens flicker, but remain black.

**BROUSSARD**

Can't see a blessed thing.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - NIGHT

Only a few glittering lights distinguish the ship from the absolute

darkness around it.

**THE WIND MOANS AND SCREAMS. DUST BLOWS IN FRONT OF THE TINY GLIMMERING**

**LIGHTS.**

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - NIGHT

**STANDARD**

Kick on the floods.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - NIGHT

A ring of FLOODLIGHTS on the ship come to life, pouring blinding light

out into the night.

They illuminate nothing but a patch of featureless grey ground and

clouds of blowing dust. The wind shrieks.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - NIGHT

**ROBY**

Not much help.

Standard stares at the dark screens.

**STANDARD**

Well, we can't go anywhere in this

darkness. How long till dawn?

**MELKONIS**

(consults his instruments)

Well... this rock rotates every two

hours. The sun should be coming up

in about 20 minutes.

**BROUSSARD**

Good! Maybe we'll be able to see

something then.

**ROBY**

Or something will be able to see us.

They all look at him.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

EXTERIOR - SHIP - NIGHT (MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE)

The floodlights on the SNARK fight a losing battle against the

darkness and the storm. MAIN THEME MUSIC BEGINS, EXTREMELY OMINOUS.

**THE TITLE APPEARS:**

ALIEN

**RUN TITLES.**

Gradually, the screen begins to lighten as the SUN RISES. The

silhouette of the SNARK becomes visible, like some strange insect

crouching motionless on the barren plain. The floods shut off. Dense

clouds of impenetrable dust shriek and moan, obscuring everything and

reducing the sunlight to a dull orange.

**END MAIN TITLES.**

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

CLOSE ON A SCREEN - it shows nothing but swirling clouds of orange

dust.

PULL BACK FROM SCREEN. The men (Standard, Roby, Broussard, and

Melkonis) are sitting and standing around the room, drinking coffee

and staring at the screens, which reveal only the billowing dust.

**ROBY**

There could be a whole city out

there and we'd never see it.

**BROUSSARD**

Not sitting on our butts in here,

that's for sure.

**STANDARD**

Just settle down. Sandy, you get any

response yet?

**MELKONIS**

(pulls off his earphones)

Sorry. Nothing but that same damn

transmission, every 32 seconds. I've

tried every frequency on the

spectrum.

**BROUSSARD**

Are we just going to sit around and

wait for an invitation?

Roby gives Broussard a black look, then stabs a button on his console

and speaks into the mike.

**ROBY**

(into mike)

Hello, Faust!

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

Yeah!

**ROBY**

How's it coming on the engines?

INTERIOR - ENGINE ROOM

Faust is seated at an electronic workbench, brightly lit, speaking

into a wall intercom.

**FAUST**

I never saw anything as fine as this

dust... these cells are all pitted on

a microscopic level. I have to

polish these things smooth again, so

it's going to take a while. Okay?

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**ROBY**

Yeah, okay.

(puts down the mike)

**STANDARD**

Sandy... how far are we from the

source of the transmission?

**MELKONIS**

Source of transmission is to the

northeast... about 300 meters.

**ROBY**

Close...

**BROUSSARD**

Close enough to walk to!

**STANDARD**

Martin, would you run me an

atmospheric?

**ROBY**

(punches buttons and

consults his panels)

10% argon, 85% nitrogen, 5% neon...

and some trace elements.

**STANDARD**

Nontoxic... but unbreathable.

Pressure?

**ROBY**

Ten to the fourth dynes per square

centimeter.

**STANDARD**

Good! Moisture content?

**ROBY**

Zero. Dry as a bone.

**STANDARD**

Any microorganisms?

**ROBY**

Not a one. It's dead.

**STANDARD**

Anything else?

**ROBY**

Yeah, rock particles. Dust.

**STANDARD**

Well, we won't need pressure suits,

but breathing masks are called for.

Sandy -- can you rig up some kind of

portable unit that we can use to

follow that transmission to its

source?

**MELKONIS**

No problem.

**BROUSSARD**

I volunteer for the exploration

party.

**STANDARD**

I heard you. You want to break out

the side arms?

INTERIOR - MAIN ARM LOCK - DAY

Standard, Broussard and Melkonis enter the lock. They all wear gloves,

boots, jackets, and pistols.

Broussard touches a button and the inner door slides silently shut,

sealing them into the lock.

They all pull on rubber full-head oxygen masks.

**STANDARD**

(adjusting the radio on his

mask)

I'm sending. Do you hear me?

**BROUSSARD**

Receiving.

**MELKONIS**

Receiving.

**STANDARD**

All right. Now just remember: keep

away from those weapons unless I say

otherwise. Martin, do you read me?

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**ROBY**

Read you, Chaz.

INTERIOR - MAIN AIR LOCK - DAY

**STANDARD**

Open the outer door.

Ponderously, the outer lock door slides open. ORANGE SUNLIGHT streams

into the lock, and clouds of dust swirl in. We hear the MOANING OF THE

**WIND OUTSIDE.**

A mobile stairway slides out of the open hatchway, and clunks as it

hits the ground.

Standard walks out into the storm, followed by the others.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - DAY

The three men trot down the gangplank to the surface of the planet.

Their feet sink into a thick layer of dust and loose rock.

The men huddle together, looking around. The wind screams and tugs at

their clothes. Nothing can be seen.

**STANDARD**

Which way, Sandy?

Melkonis is fiddling with a portable direction-finder.

**MELKONIS**

(pointing)

That way.

**STANDARD**

You lead.

Melkonis walks into the blinding dust clouds, followed closely by the

others.

**STANDARD**

Okay, Martin. We're on our way.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

Roby is the sole occupant of the bridge. He is huddled over his

console, smoking a cigarette and watching three moving blips on a

screen.

**ROBY**

Okay, Chaz, I hear you. I've got you

on my board.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Good. I'm getting you clear too.

Let's just keep the line open.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - DAY

The three men plough their way through a limbo of yellow dust and

shrieking wind. With their rubbery masks and deliberate movements,

they look like deep-sea divers at the bottom of a murky ocean.

Melkonis leads the column, following the compass on the direction

finder.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Can't see more than three meters in

any direction out here. We're

walking blind, on instruments.

They wade on, following Melkonis. Abruptly he halts.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

What's wrong?

**MELKONIS**

My signal's fading.

He studies the direction finder.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

Roby is listening intently to the dialogue from the helmet radios.

**MELKONIS (CONT'D)**

(over, filtered)

It's the dust, it's interfering...

His concentration is so great that he does NOT NOTICE HUNTER COMING UP

**BEHIND HIM.**

**MELKONIS (CONT'D)**

(over, filtered)

... Hold it, I've got it again. It's

over that way.

Standing DIRECTLY BEHIND ROBY, Hunter speaks.

**HUNTER**

What's happening?

Startled out of his wits, Roby GASPS and whirls around to face Hunter.

**ROBY**

(startled silly)

Hell!

Hunter stares at Roby, whose momentary terror dissolves into

embarrassed anger.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - DAY

The three men push their way through the storm. Melkonis stops again,

studies the direction finder.

**MELKONIS**

It's close, real close.

**STANDARD**

How far?

**MELKONIS**

We should be almost on top of it. I

just can't quite...

Suddenly, Broussard grabs Standard's arm and points. The others stare

in the direction he is pointing.

**REVERSE ANGLE - THEIR POINT-OF-VIEW**

Through the dense clouds of swirling dust we can just barely make out

some kind of HUGE SHAPE.

As we watch, the dust clears slightly, REVEALING A GROTESQUE SHIP

RISING FROM THE SHIP LIKE SOME GIGANTIC TOADSTOOL. It is clearly of

non-human manufacture.

**ANGLE ON THE MEN**

They are struck dumb by the sight of the craft. Finally, Standard

finds his voice.

**STANDARD**

Martin, uh, we've found it.

**ROBY**

(sharply -- over, filtered)

Found what?

**STANDARD**

It appears to be some sort of

spacecraft. We're going to approach

it.

They start toward the alien ship.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(over, filtered)

There are no signs of life. No

lights... no movement...

Roby and Hunter are listening with hypnotic concentration.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(over, filtered)

We're, uh, approaching the base.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF TOADSTOOL SHIP - DAY

A strangely shaped DOOR yawns open at the base of the ship. Dust and

sand have blown in, filling the lower part of the entrance.

With great caution, the men approach the entrance and group around it.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Appears to be a door hanging open,

the entrance is clogged with debris.

**BROUSSARD**

Looks like a derelict.

**STANDARD**

Martin, we're going in. I'm going to

hold the conversation to a minimum

from here on.

INTERIOR - ALIEN SHIP - DAY

The doorway is a glowing geometric blur of light against blackness,

spewing dust. In the darkness of the chamber are huge, formless

shapes.

Standard, Broussard and Melkonis appear silhouetted against the

doorway. They switch on flashlight-like devices called "DATASTICKS",

and step in.

Carefully, peering around, they pick their way past the indistinct

machinery.

**MELKONIS**

Air lock?

**STANDARD**

Who knows?

**BROUSSARD**

Let's try and find the control room.

As they move their lights around, they can see that the walls,

ceiling, and machinery are FULL OF HUGE, IRREGULAR HOLES.

**MELKONIS**

Look at these holes. This place

looks like Swiss cheese.

Broussard shines his light up into a huge hole in the ceiling.

**BROUSSARD**

This hole goes up several decks --

looks like somebody was firing a

military disintegrator in here.

They all peer up the hole into darkness.

**STANDARD**

Climbing gear.

Standard draws out a stubby spear gun with a graplon attached to it.

He aims it up into the hole and fires.

The graplon is launched up into darkness, trailing a thin wire. There

is a dull CLUNK, and the wire dangles.

**BROUSSARD**

I'll go first.

**STANDARD**

No, you'll follow me.

Standard attaches the wire to a powered gear box on his chest, and

presses a button. With a mechanical whine, he is pulled up into the

hole, using his feet for leverage where he can.

Broussard attaches the wire to his own chest unit.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM OF ALIEN SHIP

This chamber is totally dark as Broussard arrives at the top of the

hole.

Standard stands with his flashlight/camera ("datastick") tracing a

beam through the hanging dust.

Broussard unclips himself from the climbing wire, then raises his own

light. At that moment, Melkonis arrives at the top of the hole.

THEIR LIGHTS SCAN THE ROOM. The beams are clearly visible as columns

of light in the floating dust. They reveal heavy, odd shapes.

Broussard stumbles over something. He shines his light down on it.

It is a large, glossy urn, brown in color, with peculiar markings.

Broussard stands it upright. It has a round opening in the top, and is

empty.

Suddenly, Melkonis lets out a grunt of shock. Their lights have

illuminated something unspeakably grotesque: A HUGE ALIEN SKELETON,

**SEATED IN THE CONTROL CHAIR.**

They approach the skeleton, their lights trained on it. IT IS A

**GROTESQUE THING, BEARING NO RESEMBLANCE TO THE HUMAN FORM.**

**MELKONIS**

Holy Christ...

Standard shines his light on the console at which the hideous skeleton

is seated. He moves his light closer and peers at the panel.

**STANDARD**

Look at this...

They approach.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Something has been scratched here...

into the veneer. See?

Traced raggedly onto the surface of the panel, as by the point of a

sharp instrument, is a small triangle:

Hearing something, Broussard flashes his light across the room. As the

beam scans the walls, it briefly touches on SOMETHING THAT MOVES.

Melkonis convulsively yanks out his pistol.

**MELKONIS**

LOOK OUT, IT MOVED!

Standard knocks his hand down.

**STANDARD**

Keep away from that gun!

Standard shoulders himself in front of the others. Then, slowly, he

begins to move toward the far side of the room.

They approach a console on the wall, training their lights on it.

There is a machine. On the machine, a small bar moves steadily back

and forth, sliding noiselessly in its grooves.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Just machinery.

**BROUSSARD**

But functioning.

Melkonis looks down at his direction finder.

**MELKONIS**

That's where the transmission is

coming from.

He throws a switch on the direction finder -- with a crackle and a

hum, the UNEARTHLY VOICE fills their earphones.

**BROUSSARD**

A recording. A damned automatic

recording.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - SUNSET

SINISTER ANGLE ON THE SNARK. As we watch, the sunlight turns the color

of blood, and then the sun is down, leaving murky blackness in its

wake. The ring of floodlights on the ship flares into life, feebly

combatting the darkness and the storm.

INTERIOR - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

The entire crew is seated around the conference table, watching

holographic pictures projected onto a screen. These are photos taken

by their "datasticks" (flashlight/cameras).

Standard is commenting on the changing slides.

**STANDARD**

... This is the control room...

Two or three pictures click onto the screen in succession, showing the

suited men standing against banks of machinery.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

... Some details of the control

room...

The SKELETON appears on the screen. The men react with mutters.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

... This is the skeleton... another

view of the skeleton... the

transmitting device...

The triangle that was cut into the alien's console appears.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

... This is a closeup of the triangle

we found scrawled on the console in

front of the skeleton...

Standard changes the slide. The screen goes white.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

... And that's it.

He turns off the projector and brings the lights up.

**HUNTER**

Phenomenal. Staggering.

**BROUSSARD**

We've got to go back and take a lot

more pictures, holograph

everything.

**MELKONIS**

And bring back as much physical

evidence as possible, too. The rest

of the skeleton. Some of the

machinery. Written records, if there

are any.

Roby is slumped in his chair. He has said nothing.

**STANDARD**

Martin?

**ROBY**

I agree. This is the single most

important discovery in history.

**STANDARD**

But?

**ROBY**

What killed it?

**BROUSSARD**

Hell, that thing's been dead for

years. Maybe hundreds of years. The

whole planet's dead.

**FAUST**

The way I figure it, they landed

here for repairs or something, then

they couldn't take off again. Maybe

the dust ruined their engines. They

set up an S.O.S. beacon, but nobody

came. So they died.

**ROBY**

He died.

**FAUST**

What?

**ROBY**

Not they... he...

They all turn to look in the direction of Roby's nod. CAMERA MOVES

**OVER TO REVEAL THE ALIEN SKULL SITTING ON A TABLE.**

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

... There was only one skeleton.

There is a moment of silence.

**STANDARD**

Jay... how's it coming on the

repairs?

**FAUST**

Well... I'm going to have to blow the

engines out...

**STANDARD**

And when will you be ready to do

that?

**FAUST**

Oh -- I'm not near ready yet.

**STANDARD**

Then why the hell are you sitting

around here?

**FAUST**

Right.

The men rise and begin to disperse, but Roby remains seated, deep in

thought, staring at the skull. Melkonis lingers in the room with him.

**MELKONIS**

And there sits man's first contact

with intelligent life in the

universe.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - NIGHT

ANGLE ON THE SHIP, its spotlights cutting into the gloom.

INTERIOR - ENGINE ROOM

A room throbbing with power, enormous pulsing engines capable of

releasing unimaginable energies.

Faust has a complicated arrangement set up at the base of one of the

engines, with spotlights on it. He is wearing goggles and thin gloves.

**FAUST**

You ready up there?

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Broussard and Melkonis are seated at their consoles, conversing with

Faust while they watch their instruments.

**BROUSSARD**

Sure, we're ready.

INTERIOR - ENGINE ROOM

**FAUST**

Okay. I'm going to start the

extraction procedure now.

He pauses to wipe his brow.

INTERIOR - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

Roby is alone in the room, slumped into a chair, watching the

photographic slides on the screen. He is clicking slowly through them.

He stops on an angle of the skeleton, and stares at it.

The alien's misshapen skull is sitting on the table next to him. He

picks it up, holds it up to the screen for comparison, and studies it.

Standard appears in the doorway.

**STANDARD**

Alas, poor Yorick.

Roby STARTS, puts down the skull. Standard sits at the table.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(nodding at the screen)

Find anything we missed?

**ROBY**

(shrugs)

I don't even know what I'm looking

for.

**STANDARD**

Still worried?

**ROBY**

Oh well... you know me.

**STANDARD**

I've always respected your opinion,

Martin. If something worries you, it

worries me.

Roby reaches over and changes the slide, to the one of the CRUDELY

**DRAWN TRIANGLE ON THE ALIEN CONTROL PANEL.**

**ROBY**

What would you say that was supposed

to mean?

**STANDARD**

Well... it's obviously intentional...

some kind of attempt at

communication... maybe it's a symbol

that means something to them...

**ROBY**

But why draw it on the wall?

Roby switches off the projector, sits up, and rubs his face wearily.

He rises and goes to the coffee machine.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

(picking a hair out of

the coffeepot)

This ship is full of cat hair.

**STANDARD**

Tell you what, Martin. As soon as

the engine's fixed --

BEEP! The communicator interrupts Standard. He leans across and

presses the button.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

This is Chaz.

**BROUSSARD**

(over, filtered)

Chaz, this is Dell. Can you come

topside for a minute?

**STANDARD**

What's up?

**BROUSSARD**

(over, filtered)

Well, the sun just came up again,

and it seems the wind's died down.

It's as clear as a bell outside.

There's something I think you ought

to see.

**STANDARD**

I'm on my way.

He and Roby head for the door.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

Broussard is alone in the control room when Standard and Roby arrive.

**STANDARD**

What is it?

**BROUSSARD**

Take a look.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - DAY

The dust no longer blows. The day is crisp, clear, and silent.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**BROUSSARD**

I was scanning the horizon to see

what I could pick up. Look there, on

that screen.

**STANDARD**

What is it, I can't --

BLIP! Broussard enlarges the image.

The screen now shows a TAPERING STONE PYRAMID on the horizon.

They all stare at the image for a long moment. The silhouette of the

PYRAMID IS INSTANTLY SUGGESTIVE OF THE SCRAWLED TRIANGLE in the alien

ship.

Standard presses the nearest communicator and speaks into the grille.

**STANDARD**

This is Chaz. All hands topside.

Now.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

ANGLE ON A VIEWSCREEN. It shows the PYRAMID on the horizon. CAMERA

PULLS BACK to reveal all the men, sitting and standing around the

room.

**STANDARD**

Doesn't seem much doubt about it,

does there?

**MELKONIS**

That creature sure must have

considered it important... using his

last strength to draw it...

**BROUSSARD**

Maybe they built it.

**FAUST**

As what?

**BROUSSARD**

A marker for buried instrumentation?

**HUNTER**

Or a mass grave.

**BROUSSARD**

Maybe the rest of the crew is in

there -- in some kind of suspended

animation, waiting to be rescued.

**MELKONIS**

It wasn't necessarily built by them.

On the screens, a puff of DUST blows in front of the pyramid.

**ROBY**

Here comes the dust again.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - DAY

WITH A SHRIEK, THE DUST STORM RETURNS, completely obscuring the SNARK.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**STANDARD**

Well, does anyone else agree with

Martin that we should not explore

it?

Everyone looks around the room, but no one volunteers.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Then the sooner we get moving, the

better.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - DAY

LONG SHOT OF THE STONE PYRAMID, dust blowing in front of it. It is a

crumbling, ancient edifice, made of eroded grey stones, windowless,

tapering toward the top.

Standard, Broussard, and Melkonis, wearing the protective suits,

approach the pyramid. As they draw near, it becomes clear that the

pyramid is roughly 50 feet tall.

**STANDARD**

We can't make out any details or

features yet... but it's definitely

too regular for a natural

formation...

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

Roby and Hunter are present. They are listening to Standard's VOICE ON

**THE RADIO.**

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(over, filtered)

... There's one thing I can say for

sure though...

BUZZZZZ! Standard's voice is DROWNED OUT BY STATIC.

**ROBY**

Now what's wrong?

**HUNTER**

I've completely lost their signal.

**ROBY**

Can you get them back?

**HUNTER**

I'm trying.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - DAY

The three men come to the base of the massive structure. Dust and sand

have piled thickly around the crumbling, grey stones that form the

base.

**MELKONIS**

This looks ancient.

**STANDARD**

Can't tell -- these weather

conditions could erode anything,

fast.

They walk around the base.

**BROUSSARD**

There's no entrance.

**MELKONIS**

Maybe the entrance is buried. Could

be under our feet.

**STANDARD**

Maybe there is no entrance; the

thing may be solid.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**ROBY**

Well, there ought to be some way we

can get through to them --

The INTERCOM BEEPS. Faust's voice is heard.

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

Sorry to interrupt, but I'm gonna

charge up the engines for a minute,

okay?

**ROBY**

Yeah, okay. Go ahead.

A LOUD, POWERFUL THROBBING BEGINS, drowning out all other sounds, as

the engines are tested.

A light on Roby's panel is FLASHING. We can see that it is the

**COMPUTER ALERT.**

Irritably, Roby throws the switch.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

Yes!

**COMPUTER**

I have a temporary sequence on the

monitor --

**ROBY**

Hold it, I can't hear a damn thing!

He puts an earphone to his ear and switches the computer's voice over.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

Go ahead!

There is a PAUSE while Roby listens to the computer. His eyes widen.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

You mean... you've translated it?

Another PAUSE as he listens to the earphone.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

Well come on, come on! What does it

say?

Another PAUSE. Roby's face changes; he looks CHILLED TO THE BONE. His

mouth works.

Abruptly, THE ENGINES SHUT OFF, LEAVING A RINGING SILENCE.

**HUNTER**

(looking over at Roby)

What? What was that?

**ROBY**

The computer just translated the

goddamn message. It's not an S.O.S.

It was a warning.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - DAY

**BROUSSARD**

Maybe we can get in by the top.

**STANDARD**

You want to try?

**BROUSSARD**

Sure.

Broussard takes out the graplon-gun, and fires the hook up toward the

top of the pyramid. It catches. He clips himself to the wire.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

You guys just wait down here till I

say it's okay to come up.

Broussard turns on the climbing device, and begins to walk up the side

of the pyramid.

OMINOUS ANGLES showing Broussard climbing the pyramid, the dust

blowing, the wind shrieking.

EXTERIOR - TOP OF PYRAMID - DAY

The peak of the pyramid is in extreme disrepair. Broussard arrives at

the top and clings to the jagged, crumbling stones.

**BROUSSARD**

There's a hole at the top.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - DAY

**STANDARD**

Can we come up?

**BROUSSARD**

(over, filtered)

No, it's too small, only room enough

for one person.

**STANDARD**

Can you see anything in the hole?

EXTERIOR - TOP OF PYRAMID - DAY

Broussard leans over and looks into the hole. He sees only blackness.

Freeing one arm, he unclips his datastick from his belt, switches on

the "flashlight" function, and shines it down into the hole.

**BROUSSARD**

I can see... partway down. It just

goes down like a stovepipe. Smooth

walls. I can't see the bottom --

light won't reach.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

Faust comes trotting up the steps, a questioning look on his face.

**FAUST**

Yes? What is it?

**ROBY**

Jay, we've got a problem. I was

wondering if there was any way you

could shortcut the repairs and give

us immediate takeoff capability.

**FAUST**

(quickly)

Why, what's wrong?

**ROBY**

The computer's translated the alien

signal, and it's kind of alarming.

**FAUST**

What do you mean?

**ROBY**

It couldn't translate the whole

thing, only three phrases. I'll just

read it to you the way I got it:

(reads from a strip of paper)

**"... HOSTILE... SURVIVAL... ADVISE DO**

**NOT LAND... "**

(looks up at the others)

And that's all it could translate.

EXTERIOR - TOP OF PYRAMID - DAY

Hanging from the lip of the hole, Broussard is unclipping gear from

his belt.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Dell, you want to come down, we can

figure out where to go from here.

**BROUSSARD**

No, I want to go in.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - DAY

Standard and Melkonis exchange a glance.

**STANDARD**

Okay, Dell, but just for a

preliminary look-around. Don't

unhook yourself from your cable. And

be out in less than ten minutes.

EXTERIOR - TOP OF PYRAMID - DAY

**BROUSSARD**

Right.

Broussard has rigged a tripod across the mouth of the hole. He

unspools a couple feet of wire from the device, and attaches the end

of it to his chest unit.

He climbs over the lip and drops into the hole. He is now hanging by

the wire, with his head and shoulders out of the hole.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

Okay, I'm in the mouth of the

chimney now, and I'm starting down.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Take care.

Broussard activates the climbing unit and lowers himself down into the

hole.

INTERIOR - PYRAMID - DAY

Bracing his feet against the rough stone wall of the vertical tunnel,

Broussard switches on his datastick and points it down into the

depths.

The beam penetrates only thirty feet or so, then is lost in darkness.

**BROUSSARD**

It's noticeably warmer in here. Warm

air rising from below.

He starts down, paying out the line and moving down in short hops,

pushing off each time with his feet.

He stops to catch his breath. His breathing rasps loudly in his

helmet.

A little sunlight filters down from above. Looking up, he can see the

mouth of the hole, a glowing spot of light.

Standard's voice comes over his earphones.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Are you okay in there?

**BROUSSARD**

(gasping for breath)

Yeah, I'm okay. Haven't hit bottom

yet. Definitely a column of warm air

rising; it keeps the shaft clear of

dust.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

What was that Dell, I lost you, do

you read me?

**BROUSSARD**

Yeah, but this is hard work. Can't

talk now.

He kicks off and continues down, taking longer and longer hops as he

gains confidence.

Pausing for a moment to regain his breath, he shines the light on his

instruments.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

I'm way below ground level.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - DAY

**STANDARD**

What'd he say?

**MELKONIS**

I couldn't make it out -- too much

interference.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

Roby and Hunter.

**HUNTER**

I'm getting nowhere. The whole area

around the pyramid is dead to

transmission. I think we should go

after them.

**ROBY**

No.

**HUNTER**

What do you mean, no?

**ROBY**

We're not going anywhere.

**HUNTER**

But they don't know about the

translation! They could be in danger

right now.

**ROBY**

We can't spare the personnel. We've

got minimum takeoff capability right

now. That's why Chaz left us on

board.

**HUNTER**

Why, you chickenshit bastard --

**ROBY**

Just can that crap! I'm in command

here till Chaz returns! And nobody's

leaving this ship!

INTERIOR - PYRAMID - DAY

Broussard resumes his downward climb. SUDDENLY, HIS FEET LOSE THEIR

**PURCHASE AS THE WALLS OF THE SHAFT DISAPPEAR.**

The tunnel has reached its end. Below him is an unfathomable,

cavernous space.

**BROUSSARD**

(huffing and puffing)

Tunnel's gone -- cave or something

below me -- feels like the tropics

in here; air is warm and humid...

(consults his instruments)

... high oxygen content, no dust,

it's completely breathable --

Puffing with exertion, he releases his purchase on the stone walls and

begins to lower himself on power. Now he is dangling free in darkness,

spinning slowly on the wire as the chest unit unwinds.

Finally, his feet hit bottom. He grunts in surprise and almost loses

his balance.

INTERIOR - TOMB - DAY

Broussard is standing on a dusty stone floor, with a feeble column of

sunlight shining down around him from the tunnel above. Around is

solid darkness.

He flashes his datastick around. The beam reveals that he is in a

stone room. STRANGE HEIROGLYPHICS are carved into the walls. They have

a primitive, religious appearance. Row after row of pictograms stretch

from floor to ceiling, some epic history in an unknown language. Huge

religious symbols dominate one wall.

Spaced at intervals are stylized stone statues, depicting grotesque

monsters, half anthropoid, half octopus.

**BROUSSARD**

It's unbelievable! It's like some

kind of tomb... some primitive

religion! Hey, is anybody there? Do

you read me? Standard!

Annoyed, Broussard yanks off his breathing goggles, and leaves them

hanging around his neck. He takes a deep breath of the wet air.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - LATE AFTERNOON

Standard and Melkonis are standing around nervously.

**STANDARD**

If we don't hear from him soon, I

think we better go in after him.

**MELKONIS**

Sun will be down in a minute.

INTERIOR - TOMB - LATE AFTERNOON

Face bare, Broussard approaches the center of the room, which is

dominated by a large, broad pedestal. On the pedestal are ROWS OF

**LEATHERY URNS OR JARS, EXACTLY LIKE THE ONE BROUSSARD STUMBLED ACROSS**

**IN THE ALIEN SHIP -- EXCEPT THESE ARE ALL SEALED.**

He walks around the urns, studying them. They all have sealed lids. He

shines his light on one of them; then he lays his gloved hand on it.

He lifts his mask radio to his lips.

**BROUSSARD**

I don't know if you can hear me, but

the place is full of large bottles

or jars, just like the one we found

on the other ship -- except these

are all sealed. Also they're soft to

the touch.

He peers more closely at the leathery object.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

Another funny thing -- I just put my

hand on it, and now there are these

raised areas appearing where my

fingertips were.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF PYRAMID - DAY

THE SUN DROPS BELOW THE HORIZON, throwing the landscape into gloom.

Standard and Melkonis switch on their lights.

**STANDARD**

Let's go.

He attaches his chest unit to the wire and starts up.

INTERIOR - TOMB - NIGHT

Broussard is moving his light along the rows of heiroglyphs on the

wall. They depict stylized drawings of strange monsters.

He pauses to quickly change the film clip in his datastick; then he

turns back to the "urn" he was examining -- BUT NOW THERE IS A HOLE IN

**THE TOP OF IT.**

He shines his light on the floor at the base of the "urn." There lies

the "lid" -- the stopper that had filled the hole. He picks it up and

studies it. It appears more organic than artificial; the inside

surface is spongy and irregular.

Then he turns the light to the now-open "urn."

He bends over the mouth of the "urn" shining the light in, AND WITH

**SHOCKING VIOLENCE, A SMALL, OCTOPUS-LIKE THING LEAPS OUT AND ATTACHES**

**ITSELF TO HIS FACE, WRAPPING ITS TENTACLES AROUND HIS HEAD.**

With a MUFFLED SCREAM, he launches himself backward, tearing at the

thing with his hands.

EXTERIOR - TOP OF PYRAMID - NIGHT

The dust blows and howls as Standard and Melkonis arrive at the top,

lights bobbing in the darkness.

**STANDARD**

(puffing with exertion)

Here's his line. We can haul him out

of there if we have to.

**MELKONIS**

It'll yank him right off his feet if

he's not expecting it. The line

could get tangled in something.

**STANDARD**

But what can we do? He's out of

radio contact.

**MELKONIS**

Maybe we should just wait a few more

minutes.

Standard hesitates, clinging to the lip of the hole.

**STANDARD**

(making up his mind)

No, I told him to be out in ten

minutes. It's been much longer.

Let's get him out of there.

Standard pulls himself up and crouches precariously on the edge of the

tunnel. He begins to fiddle with the winch mechanism from which

Broussard's line dangles.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

The line's slack. Christ, do you

think the idiot unhooked himself?

He switches on the winch motor. With a whine, it begins to reel the

line in. After a moment, the line TIGHTENS WITH A JERK -- and the

motor slows down, laboring under the added weight.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

There, it caught!

**MELKONIS**

Is it still coming up, or is it

hooked on something?

**STANDARD**

No, it's coming.

**MELKONIS**

Can you see anything?

Standard shines his light down into the hole.

**STANDARD**

No, I can't see far enough. The

line's moving, though.

For a moment, the two men hang to the narrow top of the pyramid,

saving their strength, while the line reels in and the wind howls.

Then Standard shines his light back down in.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

I can see him! Here he comes!

The winch begins to LABOR HEAVILY.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Get ready to grab him!

Broussard appears at the top of the pit, dangling limply from the

wire. Standard reaches for him -- then RECOILS SHARPLY.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Look out! There's something on

his face!

Melkonis attempts to come to his aid.

**MELKONIS**

What is it?

**STANDARD**

Don't touch him, watch it!

In their panic and confusion, the men teeter momentarily, finally

regain their balance. They shine their lights on Broussard.

He appears to be completely unconscious -- AND THE OCTOPUS THING IS

**STILL WRAPPED AROUND HIS FACE, MOTIONLESS.**

**MELKONIS**

Oh God, oh God no.

**STANDARD**

Help me -- I'm going to try to get

it off.

With his gloved hands, Standard grasps the tentacled mess and tries to

pull it from Broussard's head.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

It won't come -- it's stuck.

**MELKONIS**

What is it?

**STANDARD**

How the hell should I know? Come on,

give me a hand, let's get him out of

there!

The two men grapple with Broussard's limp body, lifting him from the

hole.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Roby and Hunter are sitting moodily, silent. There is a long moment

while nothing is said, then:

**HUNTER**

I've got 'em! They're back on my

screens!

**ROBY**

(leaps to his feet)

How many?

**HUNTER**

Three blips! They're coming this

way!

Roby grabs a microphone.

**ROBY**

(into mike)

Hey, can you guys hear me?

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Yeah, we hear you! We're coming

back!

**ROBY**

Thank Christ! We lost you! Listen,

there's been a new development --

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Can't talk now; Broussard's injured.

We'll need some help getting him

into the ship.

Roby collapses into a chair, suddenly limp with apprehension. He's

feared something like this all along, and now it has begun to happen.

**ROBY**

(to himself)

Oh no.

**HUNTER**

(into intercom)

Jay, this is Cleave! Meet me at the

main air lock!

Hunter dashes from the room.

Roby remains where he is, seated at his console. He is stunned, his

mind racing. CAMERA MOVES IN ON HIS FACE.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK - NIGHT

Hunter comes racing down the steps and hurries up to the inner lock

door.

He presses the wall intercom.

**HUNTER**

(into intercom)

Martin, I'm by the inner lock door!

I'll wait here for you to let them

in!

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - NIGHT

**ROBY**

(strangely quiet)

Right.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK - NIGHT

Faust comes running up, covered with grime.

**FAUST**

What the hell's going on?

**HUNTER**

Don't know -- Broussard got hurt

somehow.

**FAUST**

Hurt! How?

**HUNTER**

Don't know -- maybe we'll be real

lucky and he just broke his neck.

(a beat)

I knew we shouldn't of come down

here.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Roby is seated alone in the room, listening to the transmission from

Standard and Melkonis.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Martin, are you there?

Roby leans forward and speaks into the microphone.

**ROBY**

Here, Chaz.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

We're coming up now, open the outer

lock door.

**ROBY**

Chaz -- what happened to Broussard?

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

It's some kind of organism, it's

attached itself to him. Let us in.

Roby does not reply.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(over, filtered)

You hear me, Martin? Open the outer

door.

**ROBY**

Chaz, if it's an organism, and we

let it in, the ship will be

infected.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

We can't leave him out here, open

the door.

**ROBY**

(urgently)

Chaz, listen to me -- we've broken

every rule of quarantine. If we

bring an organism on board, we won't

have a single layer of defense left.

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Martin, this is an order! Open the

door!

Hating it, Roby leans forward and throws the switch.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK - NIGHT

A RED LIGHT goes on, on a console on the wall. The whine of a large

servo is heard, followed by a solid metallic CLUNK.

**HUNTER**

Outer door's open.

After a moment, they hear the motor sound again, followed by another

CLUNK. The outer door has closed again. The red light goes off.

The inner door slides open, and Standard and Melkonis stagger through,

carrying the sagging body of Broussard. A cloud of choking dust

follows them out of the lock.

**STANDARD**

(pulling off his mask)

You men stay clear, there's a

parasite on him.

Hunter and Faust RECOIL.

**HUNTER**

Oh -- God -- oh --

**FAUST**

Is it alive?

**STANDARD**

I don't know but don't touch it.

Give us a hand here, let's get him

up to the Autodoc.

Hunter and Faust move in carefully to help with the limp burden.

INTERIOR - INFIRMARY

One of them flicks on the lights as they come shuffling into the

medical room, carrying Broussard.

Revealed is a rather small cubicle whose walls are lined with

machinery. The principle item of interest is a mechanized bunk bed,

which rests in a cradle and slides in and out of a slot in the wall.

**STANDARD**

Help me, come on, let's get him up

here.

They slide the man onto the bunk.

**HUNTER**

That thing, God almighty, didn't you

try to get it off him?

**STANDARD**

It wouldn't come.

Standard yanks off his gloves.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Medical gloves.

They pull thin elastic gloves from a dispenser in the wall, and pull

them on.

Gingerly, they approach Broussard.

Standard places his hands on the octopus-thing that is slowly pulsing

on Broussard's face. He grasps the tentacles in his hands and tries to

pull it free.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

It's really on there tight.

**FAUST**

Here, let me try.

Faust takes a pair of pliers from a rack, and carefully grasps the tip

of one of the tentacles. Squeezing tightly, he leans back with all his

weight.

**STANDARD**

(grabbing Faust's hands)

Stop it, you're tearing his face.

A trickle of blood begins to ooze down Broussard's cheek.

**MELKONIS**

It's not coming off -- not without

his whole face coming off too.

**STANDARD**

Let's let the machine work on him.

Efficiently, they strip Broussard naked, then Standard presses a

couple of switches on the wall. The machine lights up, and Broussard

is sucked into the slot in the wall.

He is visible inside. The machine immediately sprays a cloud of

disinfectant on him, then sterilizes him with a blinding pink light.

A bank of video monitors pops on, revealing X-ray images of different

parts of his body. Sensors begin to scan, relays chatter.

**ROBY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY.**

Standard turns and looks at him. For a long moment, the two men regard

each other, then STANDARD STEPS FORWARD AND SLAPS ROBY ACROSS THE

**FACE.**

The others are shocked.

**HUNTER**

Hey now, what is this?

**STANDARD**

Ask him.

**ROBY**

(slowly puts his hand

to his cheek)

I understand why you did that.

**STANDARD**

Good.

**MELKONIS**

He wouldn't open the lock; he was

going to leave us out there.

**HUNTER**

Yeah... well, maybe he should have. I

mean, you brought the goddamn thing

in here. Maybe you deserve to get

slapped.

**FAUST**

(embarrassed)

Excuse me, I've got work to do.

Faust exits.

**HUNTER**

I keep my mouth pretty much shut,

but I don't like hitting.

**ROBY**

(to Standard)

I guess I had it coming. Let's call

it settled.

After a hard stare at Roby, Standard gives him a curt nod and turns

his attention to the machinery.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

(slowly)

Would somebody fill me in?

**STANDARD**

He went into the pyramid alone. We

lost radio contact with him. When we

pulled him out, it was on his face.

It won't come off, not without

injuring him.

**HUNTER**

Where did it come from?

**MELKONIS**

He's the only one that knows that.

**HUNTER**

How does he breathe?

They study the monitors.

**MELKONIS**

Blood's thoroughly oxygenated.

**HUNTER**

Yeah, but how? His nose and mouth

are blocked.

**STANDARD**

Let's look inside his head.

Standard punches some buttons, and on the monitors, a kind of X-ray

image in vivid colors appears, depicting Broussard's HEAD AND UPPER

**TORSO.**

The parasite is clearly visible on Broussard's face. In X-ray, the

creature is a maze of complicated biology. But the shocking thing is

that, in X-ray, we can see that Broussard's jaws are forced wide open,

and THE PARASITE HAS EXTRUDED SOME KIND OF LONG TUBE, WHICH IS STUFFED

INTO HIS MOUTH AND DOWN HIS THROAT, ending near his stomach.

**ROBY**

Look at that.

**HUNTER**

What is it -- I can't tell

anything --

**ROBY**

It's some kind of organ -- it's

inserted some kind of tube or

something down his throat.

**HUNTER**

(turning sick)

Oh... God...

Hunter bends over and RETCHES.

**ROBY**

I think that's how it's getting

oxygen to him.

**HUNTER**

It doesn't make any sense. It

paralyzes him... puts him into a

coma... then keeps him alive.

**MELKONIS**

We can't expect to understand a life

form like this. We're out of our

back yard. Things are different

here.

**HUNTER**

Well, can't we kill it? I mean, we

can't leave the damn thing on him.

**MELKONIS**

We don't know what might happen if

we tried to kill it. At least right

now it's keeping him alive.

**HUNTER**

How about cutting it off? We can't

pull it loose, but we can cut off

everything but the bottom layer,

where it's stuck to his face.

**STANDARD**

You're right... we can't stand here

and do nothing.

Standard picks up his dusty breathing mask and pulls it over his head.

Then he pulls back on his bulky gloves. Finally, he presses a switch

and Broussard slides back out of the booth.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(muffled in his mask)

Somebody give me a scalpel.

Melkonis takes a glittering surgical blade from a slot in the wall,

and carefully passes it to Standard.

Clumsily because of the gloves, Standard manipulates the knife in his

hand till he has a decent grip on it. Then he flicks a little button

with his thumb. The scalpel begins to hum.

Standard advances on the parasite. The others draw back nervously.

Roby reaches over and draws yet a longer blade from the rack, and

holds it inconspicuously at his side.

Standard bends over the parasite. Carefully, he touches the scalpel to

the extreme end of one of the tentacles, where it curves toward the

back of Broussard's head.

Effortlessly, the electronic blade slides through the alien tissue.

Immediately, a urine-like fluid begins to flow from the wound.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(muffled)

I've made an incision... it's not

reacting... but some kind of

yellowish fluid is leaking out of

the wound...

The noxious-looking liquid drips down onto the bedding next to

Broussard's head. Instantly, it starts to hiss, and a thin stream of

smoke curls up from the stain.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(muffled)

Hold it, this stuff's smoking!

The others REACT nervously.

By now, the yellow fluid has eaten a hole through the bunk bed and has

dripped down onto the floor below. The metal floor begins to bubble

and sizzle, and more smoke rises.

The men start to COUGH.

**MELKONIS**

God, that smoke's poisonous!

**HUNTER**

(pointing)

It's eating a hole in the floor!

Abruptly, the men jostle their way out of the room and huddle in the

corridor outside, coughing their lungs out.

Standard, who is masked, remains. Frantically, he attempts to put a

bandage on the wound, but the fluid instantly melts the bandage, and

in the process, some of the stuff gets on Standard's gloves. They

begin to smoke.

Frantically Standard leaps back, pulling off the smouldering gloves.

Then he runs out into the corridor and yanks off his mask.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY

**STANDARD**

That stuff's eating right through

the metal! It's going to eat through

the decks and right out through the

hull!

By this time Standard has started to run for the stairs.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Followed by the others, Standard frantically clangs down the stairs to

the level below.

**STANDARD**

There! Look!

A droplet of the fluid is sizzling on the ceiling. It oozes down and

drips to the floor.

It bubbles on the floor.

**MELKONIS**

Jesus, what can we put under it?

Standard and Hunter charge down the stairs to the level below.

INTERIOR - LEVEL BELOW

Standard and Hunter move cautiously down the corridor, looking up at

the ceiling.

**STANDARD**

(pointing)

There. Should be coming through

about there.

**HUNTER**

Careful, don't get under it!

INTERIOR - LEVEL ABOVE

Roby and Melkonis crouch by the spot on the floor where the acid

sizzles.

**MELKONIS**

Christ, that stinks.

Roby fishes a pen out of his pocket and probes into the hole in the

floor.

**ROBY**

Seems to have stopped penetrating.

Hunter comes charging up the steps.

**HUNTER**

What's happening up here?

**ROBY**

I think it's fizzled out.

Hunter approaches and looks. Roby straightens up, starts to put the

pen back in his pocket, then changes his mind and stands holding it by

the end.

**MELKONIS**

I never saw anything like that in my

life... except molecular acid.

**HUNTER**

But this thing uses it for blood.

**MELKONIS**

Hell of a defense mechanism. You

don't dare kill it.

Standard comes up the stairs.

**STANDARD**

It's stopped?

**MELKONIS**

Yes, thank heaven.

**STANDARD**

We're just plain lucky. That could

have gone right through the hull --

taken weeks to patch it.

**MELKONIS**

Reminded me of when I was a kid and

the roof leaked -- everybody running

for the pots and pans.

**ROBY**

My God, what about Broussard?

They turn and run up the stairs.

INTERIOR - INFIRMARY

They all come into the room (Roby carrying the partially melted pen).

Broussard is still motionless on the bunk, with the thing on his face.

**ROBY**

Did it get on him?

Standard approaches and peers at Broussard's head.

**STANDARD**

No, thank God... just missed him.

**MELKONIS**

Is it still dripping?

**STANDARD**

(examining it)

It appears to have healed itself.

**HUNTER**

It makes me sick to see him like

that.

**MELKONIS**

Isn't there some way we can get it

off him?

**STANDARD**

I don't see how. But let's do what

we can for him.

Standard presses a button, and Broussard slides back into the

diagnostic coffin. He presses more buttons, and the displays light up

again, showing different parts of Broussard's body.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

I think we'd better get some

intravenous feeding started. God

knows what that thing is leaching

out of him.

Standard operates some controls, and the machine begins to invade

Broussard's body, sliding needles into him.

**ROBY**

(studying the screens)

Look there, what's that stain on his

lungs?

The X-ray reveals a spreading dark blot in the vicinity of Broussard's

chest. In the center, the stain is completely opaque.

**MELKONIS**

It appears to be a heavy fluid of

some sort... it blocks the X-rays...

**ROBY**

That tube must be depositing it in

him.

**MELKONIS**

Could be some kind of venom, or

poison...

**HUNTER**

This is horrible.

**ROBY**

Hey! what about the film?

**STANDARD**

What film?

**ROBY**

Broussard had film in his datastick,

didn't he? We can see what happened

to him.

INTERIOR - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

Again we are watching slides in the darkened room. This time Standard,

Roby, Melkonis, and Hunter are watching the sequence of photographs

taken automatically by Broussard's datastick as he probed the tomb.

The camera reveals the "urns." The climax of the sequence of stills

comes when THE CREATURE LEAPS OUT OF THE "URN" TOWARD THE CAMERA --

and after that the camera drops to a useless angle and proceeds to

show a series of meaningless blurs. Then the reel ends.

**HUNTER**

That must have been when he got it.

**ROBY**

The same thing must've happened to

the creatures on the other ship...

except they took one of those jars

on board, and opened it there.

**MELKONIS**

(clicks back through the

slides to a picture of

one of the "urns")

At first I thought they were jars

too, or artifacts anyway. But

they're not. They're eggs, or spore

casings. Let's go back to the

heiroglyphics.

CLICKETYCLICKETYCLICK -- Melkonis accelerates through the slides in a

blur, stopping at the one he wants -- which shows a strip of

heiroglyphs on the wall of the tomb.

**STANDARD**

I personally can't make any sense

out of it...

CLICK. CLICK. Melkonis is changing the slides as they talk, showing

different angles on the glyphs.

**MELKONIS**

It's a crude symbolic language --

looks primitive.

**HUNTER**

You can't tell -- that kind of stuff

could represent printed circuits...

**STANDARD**

That sounds a little fanciful...

**MELKONIS**

Primitive pictorial languages are

based on common objects in the

environment, and this can be used as

a starting point for translation...

**ROBY**

What common objects?

**HUNTER**

Listen, hadn't somebody better check

on Broussard?

**STANDARD**

(rising)

I'll do it. The rest of you

continue.

**HUNTER**

(rising)

I'll come with you.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY

Standard and Hunter come down the passageway.

**STANDARD**

You know, it's fantastic -- the

human race has gone this long

without ever encountering another

advanced life form, and now we run

into a veritable zoo.

**HUNTER**

What do you mean?

**STANDARD**

Well, those things out there aren't

the same, you know -- the spaceship

and the pyramid. They're from

different cultures and different

races. That ship just landed here --

crashed like we did. The pyramid and

the thing from it are indigenous.

**HUNTER**

How could anything be indigenous to

this asteroid? It's dead.

**STANDARD**

Maybe it wasn't always dead.

They arrive at the infirmary.

INTERIOR - INFIRMARY

The door slides open, and they step into the room. Hunter activates

the bed, and it slides out of the wall.

**THERE IS A LONG, HORRIFIED PAUSE.**

**HUNTER**

It's gone.

They rush to Broussard's prone form. THE PARASITE IS GONE FROM HIS

**FACE.**

Broussard is still unconscious, but he is breathing. HIS FACE IS

**COVERED WITH SUCKER MARKS.**

**HUNTER**

Now we're in for it.

**STANDARD**

The door was closed. It must still

be in here.

They immediately grow very tense. Hunter starts edging toward the

door. Standard grabs his arm.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

No, don't open the door. We don't

want it escaping.

**HUNTER**

(very nervous)

Well, what the hell good can we do

in here? We can't grab it -- it

might jump on us --

**STANDARD**

Maybe we can catch it.

Standard picks up a stainless steel tray with a lid.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

As long as we're careful not to

damage it...

Tray in one hand, lid in the other, Standard begins moving slowly

around the room. There are very few places to hide.

He bends down and peers under the bunk.

As he is down on his hands and knees, WE SEE ONE TENTACLE OF THE

**THING, VIBRATING ON A LEDGE JUST ABOVE STANDARD.**

He rises, and HIS SHOULDER BRUSHES THE TENTACLE. THE PARASITE DROPS TO

**THE FLOOR.**

**STANDARD**

(leaping back)

Shit!

But the thing is not moving. It lies motionless on the floor, its

tentacles curled up. Its color has faded to a dead-looking grey.

Without taking his eyes off the thing, Standard reaches behind him and

takes a long probe from the wall. He prods the thing; it does not

respond.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

I think it's dead.

With great care, he uses the probe to fish the motionless parasite

into the tray. Then he quickly closes the lid.

INTERIOR - LABORATORY

Standard, Roby, and Melkonis have the parasite spread-eagled on a

stainless steel table, with a bright light on it. It is belly-side up.

Wearing gloves, Standard probes at the thing with an instrument.

**STANDARD**

Look at these suckers -- no wonder

we couldn't get it off him.

**ROBY**

Is that its mouth?

**MELKONIS**

More likely that organ -- the tube-

like thing -- fits up in there.

With a pair of needle-nosed pliers, Standard fishes in the fleshy

aperture. Carefully, he extracts the end of the tube-organ.

**ROBY**

Ugh.

Suddenly, it starts to FALL APART IN THE PLIERS.

**STANDARD**

Quick -- it's decomposing -- gimme

something to grab it with!

It begins to SMOKE AND BUBBLE.

Roby grabs a long pair of tongs from the wall and thrusts them at

Standard -- who throws down the pliers, snatches the tongs and seizes

the thing in the tongs.

It is smouldering and dripping acid on the floor.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Christ! Let's get it out of here!

Carrying the thing, he heads for the door.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

The men run down the passageways, Standard carrying the dripping thing

in the tongs. It leaves little smoking droplets on the floor.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

They come running up to the airlock. Roby stabs the button and the

inner door slides open. By the time Standard is in the lock, Roby is

already on the intercom:

**ROBY**

(shouts into intercom)

For Chrissake, open the main lock!

INTERIOR - AIR LOCK - DAY

Roby stumbles in as the inner door closes; and with a heavy whine, the

thick surface door rumbles open. Orange sunlight billows in, followed

by the inevitable dust.

Standard HURLS THE CARCASS OUT, tongs and all.

EXTERIOR - BASE OF SHIP - DAY

The parasite hits the ground and begins to sink into the dust,

smouldering and fuming.

INTERIOR - AIR LOCK - DAY

The outer door rolls shut.

**ROBY**

(slumping against the

wall)

My God, it's lethal even when it's

dead!

Melkonis gets down on his knees and studies the small burn-holes in

the floor.

Standard opens the inner door and steps out into the corridor. There,

he activates the wall intercom and punches out a combination.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

**HUNTER**

(over intercom,

filtered)

Yes?

**STANDARD**

How's Broussard?

**HUNTER**

(over, filtered)

He's running a fever.

**STANDARD**

Still unconscious?

**HUNTER**

(over, filtered)

Yes.

**STANDARD**

Can you do anything for him?

**HUNTER**

(over, filtered)

The machine will bring his

temperature down. His vital

functions are strong.

**STANDARD**

Good.

He switches off the intercom.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(suddenly exhausted)

I need some coffee.

He turns and walks away.

INTERIOR - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

The cat is strolling around as Roby and Melkonis drop into seats;

Standard draws a cup of coffee from the machine.

**MELKONIS**

These day and night cycles are

totally disorienting. I feel like

we've been here for days, but it's

only been how long?

**ROBY**

(stroking the cat)

About four hours.

**STANDARD**

(staring into his coffee

cup)

I'm sorry to say it looks like you

were right in the first place,

Martin. We never should have landed

here.

**ROBY**

Look, I'm not trying to rub

anybody's nose in anything. The

important thing is just to get away

from here as fast as possible.

**STANDARD**

I can't lean on Faust any harder --

he's been working non-stop on the

engines.

**ROBY**

If we knew exactly what happened to

the beings on the other ship --

**MELKONIS**

We do know that.

**ROBY**

Yeah?

**MELKONIS**

They never made it off the planet.

The parasites won.

This brings a CHILLY SILENCE.

**ROBY**

Where did the parasites come from?

**STANDARD**

They seem native to the planet. It's

got an atmosphere and a dense

gravity. It's dead now, but once it

must have been fertile.

**MELKONIS**

No. It's just too small to support

fauna as big as the parasites. If

there were a native ecology, it

would have to be microscopic.

**ROBY**

Couldn't the pyramid have been built

here by space travellers?

**STANDARD**

Too primitive. It's a pre-

technological construction. That

slab was engineered by an Iron-Age

culture at best.

**MELKONIS**

They're from a dead civilization;

they're spores from a tomb. God

knows how long they've been here.

**ROBY**

I think we better take another look

at those heiroglyphs.

Suddenly the door opens and Faust sticks his head in. He is covered

with dirt and grime.

**FAUST**

Hey, guess what?

**STANDARD**

What?

**FAUST**

The engines are fixed.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - DAY

The SNARK's engines cough and then with a ROAR BEGIN TO BELCH OUT

STREAMS OF SUPERHEATED AIR, cutting through the tulgy dust.

The ship roars and vibrates like a huge beast, capable of unlimited

power.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

They are all at their posts.

**STANDARD**

Switch on tractor beams.

There is a hair-tingling ELECTRICAL HUM which permeates the whole

ship, and it begins to float, like a cork in water.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Lock tractor beams.

The pitch of the hum changes, and the ship levels itself.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Retract landing struts.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - DAY

The ship is hovering above the ground on beams of shimmering force.

The landing struts fold up under the belly of the ship.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**STANDARD**

Take us up.

**ROBY**

(into intercom)

Up one kilometer, Jay.

EXTERIOR - PLANETOID - DAY

The SNARK begins to levitate up into the sky, on the beams of light.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**STANDARD**

Switch on lifter quads.

**A POWERFUL, DEEP THROBBING BEGINS. THE SHIP VIBRATES.**

EXTERIOR - "SNARK" - DAY

The hovering SNARK begins to accelerate through the choking

atmosphere.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

**STANDARD**

Engage artificial gravity.

Roby throws a switch, and the ship LURCHES.

**ROBY**

Engaged.

**STANDARD**

Let's take her into an escape orbit.

The men get busy with switches.

**ROBY**

I'm altering our vector now; should

give us an easy escape velocity --

**A HUGE TREMOR RUNS THROUGHOUT THE SHIP.**

**ROBY & MELKONIS**

(in concert)

What was that?

In answer, THE COMMUNICATOR BEEPS.

**FAUST**

(over, filtered)

This dust is getting clogged in the

intakes again!

**STANDARD**

Just hold us together till we're in

space, that's all!

The pitch of the engines changes, deepens.

EXTERIOR - SKY - DAY

The SNARK swoops up at an acute angle into the boiling clouds.

Visibility is zero.

INTERIOR - ENGINE ROOM

Faust is pulling on a gasmask, because the engine chamber is beginning

to fill with dust. He turns on a huge exhaust unit which begins to

suck up some of the dust.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - DAY

On the screens, nothing but clouds. Then, ANOTHER TREMOR SHUDDERS

THROUGH THE SHIP. The men no longer speak; their expressions are grim,

set, and sweating; they are watching their instruments. Periodically

they mutter technical instructions to each other.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - DAY

Abruptly the ship CLEARS THE TOP OF THE CLOUD LAYER AND BURSTS OUT

INTO STAR-SPRINKLED SPACE, trailing a wake of dust behind it.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - OUTER SPACE

They all CHEER.

**ROBY**

(pounds his panel)

We made it! Damn, we made it!

**STANDARD**

You bet we made it. Martin, set

course for Irth and accelerate us

into stardrive.

**ROBY**

With great pleasure.

Roby begins to punch buttons.

**MELKONIS**

I feel like an escapee from Hell.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

EXTERIOR - SHIP AT LIGHT SPEED - LATER

The ship's speed is so great that there is perceptible movement in the

universe all around.

There is a strange corona effect which causes the stars approaching

the ship to appear blue, and the receding ones to be red. This is

redshift, made visible because of their incredible velocity.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE - OUTER SPACE

They are unstrapping.

**ROBY**

That's the part that always makes me

feel like I'm gonna puke -- when we

accelerate into light speed.

**STANDARD**

Quit complaining; we're in space.

They rise and head out of the room.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR

As they walk along.

**STANDARD**

I think the best thing to do with

Broussard is to just freeze him as

he is. It'll arrest the progress of

his disease, and he can get complete

medical attention when we get back

to the Colonies.

**ROBY**

We'll have to go into quarantine,

maybe for quite a while.

**STANDARD**

That's okay, he can remain in

hypersleep until they're ready to

treat him.

They enter the infirmary.

INTERIOR - INFIRMARY

As they enter the room, THEY ARE SHOCKED TO SEE BROUSSARD SITTING UP

in BED -- AWAKE.

**BROUSSARD**

(hoarsely)

... Mouth's so dry... can I have some

water...

Instantly, Roby brings him a plastic cup of water. Broussard gulps it

down in a swallow.

**BROUSSARD (CONT'D)**

More.

Roby quickly fills a much bigger container and hands it to Broussard,

who greedily consumes the entire thing. Then he sags, panting, on the

bunk.

**STANDARD**

(softly)

How do you feel, Dell?

**BROUSSARD**

(weakly)

Wretched. What happened to me?

**STANDARD**

Don't you remember?

**BROUSSARD**

Don't remember nothing. Can't hardly

remember my name.

**ROBY**

Are you in pain?

**BROUSSARD**

Not exactly, just feel like

somebody's been beating me with

rubber hoses for about six years.

Melkonis laughs at this remark. Broussard smiles faintly at him.

**STANDARD**

Hell, you're in great shape, you've

got your sense of humor back!

**BROUSSARD**

God I'm hungry.

**ROBY**

Dell, what's the last thing you can

remember?

**BROUSSARD**

... I don't know...

**ROBY**

Do you remember the pyramid?

**BROUSSARD**

No. Just some horrible dreams about

smothering. Where are we?

**STANDARD**

We're going home. We're in

hyperspace.

**MELKONIS**

We're going into the freezers now.

**BROUSSARD**

I'm really starving; can we get some

food before we go into the freezers?

**STANDARD**

(laughs)

I think that's a pretty reasonable

request.

INTERIOR - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

The entire crew is seated around the table, eating huge portions

greedily. The cat eats from a dish on the table.

**HUNTER**

Boy do I feel a lot better. It's a

straight shot back to the Colonies,

and then we can start taking bids on

the paydirt. Any bets on the top

bid?

**FAUST**

(chewing)

Well, we should at least be able to

each buy our own planet.

They all CHUCKLE.

**MELKONIS**

I'm going to write a book about this

expedition. I'm going to call it

"The Snark Log."

**STANDARD**

(stiffly)

The commander normally has first

publication rights.

**MELKONIS**

Maybe we could write it together.

**ROBY**

First thing I'm going to do when we

get back is eat some biological

food.

**MELKONIS**

What's the matter, you don't like

this stuff?

**ROBY**

Tastes like something you'd feed a

chicken to make it lay more eggs.

**STANDARD**

Oh it's okay. I've had better cag

than this, but I've had worse too,

if you know what I mean.

**FAUST**

I kind of like it.

**ROBY**

You like this shit?

**FAUST**

It grows on you.

**ROBY**

You know what they make this stuff

out of?

**FAUST**

(annoyed)

Yes, I know what they make it out

of, so what? It's food now. You're

eating it.

**ROBY**

I didn't say it was bad for you,

it's just kind of sickening, that's

all.

**HUNTER**

Do we have to talk about this kind

of crap at the dinner table?

Suddenly, unexpectedly, BROUSSARD GRIMACES AND GROANS.

**STANDARD**

What's wrong?

**BROUSSARD**

(his voice straining)

I don't know... I'm getting these

CRAMPS!

The others stare at him in alarm. Another GROAN is torn from his lips.

He clutches the edge of the table with his hands, his knuckles

whitening.

**STANDARD**

Breathe deeply.

**BROUSSARD**

(screaming)

OH GOD IT HURTS SO BAD!

**ROBY**

What Dell -- what?

Broussard's face is screwed up into a mask of agony, and he is

trembling violently from head to foot.

**BROUSSARD**

(incoherent shriek)

OhmygooaaAAAHHHHH!!!

**A RED SMEAR OF BLOOD BLOSSOMS ON THE CHEST OF BROUSSARD'S TUNIC.**

**THEIR EYES ARE ALL RIVETTED TO BROUSSARD'S CHEST AS THE FABRIC OF HIS**

**TUNIC IS RIPPED OPEN, AND A HORRIBLE NASTY LITTLE HEAD THE SIZE OF A**

**MAN'S FIST PUSHES OUT.**

Everybody SCREAMS and leaps back from the table. The cat spits and

bolts.

The disgusting little head lunges, comes spurting out of Broussard's

chest trailing a thick, wormlike tail -- splattering fluids and blood

-- lands in the middle of the dishes and food on the table -- and

scurries away while the men are stampeding for safe ground.

When they finally regain control of themselves, it has escaped.

Broussard lies slumped in his chair, a huge hole in his chest,

spouting blood. The dishes are scattered and the food is covered with

blood and slime.

**HUNTER**

Oh, no. Oh, no.

**FAUST**

What was that? What the Christ was

that?

**MELKONIS**

It was growing in him the whole time

and he didn't even know it!

Slowly, they gather around Broussard's gutted corpse.

**ROBY**

That thing used him for an

incubator!

EXTERIOR - SHIP - OUTER SPACE

A hatch slides open on the side of the ship, and Broussard's wrapped

body tumbles silently out.

AN ELECTRONIC BASS DRUM BEATS A DIRGE as Broussard drifts into

eternity.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS

The entire remaining crew is walking toward the bridge.

**MELKONIS**

We can't go into hypersleep with

that thing running around loose.

**HUNTER**

We'd be sitting ducks in the

freezers.

**ROBY**

But we can't kill it. If we kill it,

it will spill all its body acids

right through our hull and out into

space.

**FAUST**

Shit...

**STANDARD**

We'll have to catch it and eject it

from the ship.

**MELKONIS**

(sighs)

Well, I kind of hate to point it

out, but all our supplies are based

on us spending a strictly limited

amount of time out of suspended

animation... and as you know, we used

up most of that time in harvesting.

**STANDARD**

We've got about a week left, right?

**HUNTER**

And then we run out of food and

oxygen.

**FAUST**

The water will still recycle.

**ROBY**

We won't need it then.

**STANDARD**

All right, so that's what we've got.

A week. It's plenty of time.

**ROBY**

But if we haven't caught it in a

week, then we have to go into the

freezers anyway.

They enter the bridge.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

**STANDARD**

So does anybody have any

suggestions?

**FAUST**

We could put on our pressure suits

and blow all the air out of the

ship. That would kill it.

**STANDARD**

No, we can't afford to lose that

much oxygen. We're going to have to

flush it out.

**MELKONIS**

How?

**STANDARD**

Room by room, corridor by corridor.

No one likes this thought.

**MELKONIS**

And what do we do when we find it?

**STANDARD**

We'll have to trap it somehow. If we

had a really strong piece of net, we

could bag it.

**FAUST**

We could cut a section out of that

metallite netting. It won't hold up

to that acid, but aside from that

it's pretty strong.

**ROBY**

We have to avoid injuring it. What

we really need is some electric

animal prods.

**HUNTER**

I think I could cobble something

together. A long metal rod with a

battery in it. Give it a hell of a

shock.

**STANDARD**

Good. Get on it. But first, I'm

issuing a standing order: from this

moment forth, every one of us will

wear protective garments, including

helmets. Let's get down to the

locker and change.

They start for the exit.

EXTERIOR - OUTER SPACE

The SNARK continues on its way through the weird vortex of hyperspace.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Standard is walking purposefully along the corridor, alone. He is

garmented in an unusual outfit which makes him look like a riot

policeman, including clear plastic helmet.

He reaches a corner and turns. But this new passageway has a different

gravity orientation -- Standard seems to be walking down a vertical

wall.

He makes yet another disorienting turn, and now he is walking upside-

down. He reaches a set of steps and climbs up them -- or rather, down

them.

INTERIOR - VENTRAL OBSERVATION DOME - VIEW OF OUTER SPACE

Melkonis is seated in the dome, upside-down, peering down into space.

He also wears the protective suit.

Standard, upside-down, climbs into the dome. It is dark and eerie

here, under the stars of interstellar space. A few glowing panels

provide the only illumination.

**STANDARD**

I thought I'd find you here.

**MELKONIS**

I was thinking of a line from an old

poem: "Water, water everywhere, but

not a drop to drink." All that space

out there, and we're trapped in this

ship.

**STANDARD**

That's the one about the albatross,

right?

**MELKONIS**

We can't even radio for help; the

carrier wave wouldn't reach its

destination till long after we'd

died and turned to dust. We are

utterly, absolutely alone. Can

anybody really visualize such a

scale of distances? Halfway across

Creation...

**STANDARD**

We came out there, we'll go back. A

long time by the clock, but a short

time to us.

**MELKONIS**

Time and space have no meaning out

here. We're living in Einsteinian

equation.

**STANDARD**

I can see you're putting your spare

time to good use.

(leans forward and taps

him on the knee)

Let me tell you something: you keep

staring at hyperspace for long

enough, they'll be peeling you off a

wall. I've seen it happen.

**MELKONIS**

(smiles at him)

We're the new pioneers, Chaz. We

even have our own special diseases.

**STANDARD**

Come on -- let's go above and see

how they're coming with the gear.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

The whole crew has assembled. Faust is unfolding several yards of

shimmering metallic netting.

Hunter hands out five thin rods, like metal broom handles.

**HUNTER**

These have portable generators in

them. They're insulated down to here

-- just be careful not to touch the

end.

He demonstrates by touching the tip of one of the rods to a metal

object. A blue spark leaps.

**FAUST**

Might even incinerate the damn

thing.

**STANDARD**

(sharply)

I hope not.

**HUNTER**

Don't worry, it won't damage it,

it'll just give it a little

incentive.

**STANDARD**

How do we locate the creature?

**FAUST**

With these.

He picks up a small portable unit.

**FAUST (CONT'D)**

Tracking device. You set it to

search for a moving object... It

hasn't got much range, but when you

get within a certain distance, it

starts beeping.

Standard takes the device and studies it.

**STANDARD**

These will be very useful. At least

we won't have to go digging around

in closets with our bare hands. All

right, here's the battle plan: we're

going to break into two teams and

start systematically covering the

ship. Whoever finds it first,

catches it in the net and ejects it

from the nearest airlock. Clear?

**ROBY**

Even simple.

Standard shoots him a vicious look, then continues:

**STANDARD**

For starters, let's make sure the

bridge is safe.

Faust takes the device and turns it on. He scans it around the room.

**FAUST**

It's clear.

**STANDARD**

All right -- Roby and Melkonis will

go with Faust. Hunter and I will

make up the second team.

They start doling out the equipment.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

We'll all carry communicators. We

want to keep in constant touch.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Melkonis and Roby carry the net, while Faust walks directly behind it,

carrying the tracking device. He continually scans it from side to

side.

**FAUST**

Nothing yet... nothing... we can move

pretty fast as long as there's

nothing on the tracker.

INTERIOR - OTHER CORRIDORS

Standard and Hunter move silently along. Standard is forced to serve a

double function, carrying one edge of the net and the tracker as well.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS

Roby's team is moving at a fairly brisk pace, when:

**FAUST**

Hold it.

Faust's tracker is BEEPING, and a small light flashes.

**FAUST (CONT'D)**

I've got something.

Immediately, they grow very tense and start looking around.

**ROBY**

Where's it coming from?

**FAUST**

(peers closely at tracker

and frowns)

Machine's screwed up, I can't tell.

Needle's spinning all over the dial.

**MELKONIS**

Is it malfunctioning?

Faust turns the tracker on its side, and the needle stabilizes.

**FAUST**

No, just confused. It's coming from

below us.

They all look down at their feet.

INTERIOR - MAINTENANCE LEVEL

Roby, Melkonis, and Faust come carefully down a set of crude metal

stairs, into a drab, functional section of the ship.

The corridors in this level are lit by rows of bare bulbs in the

ceiling. The effect is ugly and confining.

They stop at the foot of the stairs and move into position, spreading

the net across the corridor.

**ROBY**

Okay.

**FAUST**

(looking at tracker and

nodding down the passageway)

That way.

They begin to walk down the passageway, footsteps clanging on the raw

metal flooring. It is extremely dark.

**ROBY**

What happened to the lights?

**FAUST**

Bulbs burned out, nobody bothered to

replace 'em.

They switch on the helmet lights.

**CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM AROUND A COUPLE OF TURNINGS, AND THEN:**

**FAUST (CONT'D)**

Hold it.

They all stop quickly, almost stumbling.

**FAUST (CONT'D)**

(whispering)

It's within 4 meters.

Roby and Melkonis heft the net, each keeping his prod in hand. Faust,

prod in one hand and tracker in the other, has the unpleasant job of

approaching the source of the signal.

He moves with great care, in a half crouch, ready to leap back at any

second, prod extended, constantly glancing at the tracker.

The tracking device leads him right up to a small hatch or door in one

wall.

Behind his plastic mask, sweat is pouring down Faust's face as he sets

down the tracker and reaches for the little door. He raises the prod,

grasps the door handle, yanks it open, and jams the electric prod

inside.

**WITH A NERVE-SHATTERING SQUALL, A SMALL CREATURE COMES FLYING OUT OF**

**THE CABINET, EYES GLARING, CLAWS FLASHING.**

Instinctively, they throw the net over it, but:

**ROBY**

(very annoyed)

Oh, hold it!

They open the net and release the creature. IT IS THE CAT. Hissing and

spitting, it scampers away.

**MELKONIS**

We're making fools of ourselves!

Roby's COMMUNICATOR BEEPS.

**ROBY**

(into communicator)

Yes!

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

We've got it up here! It's trapped!

Get up here fast!

**ROBY**

Where are you?

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Food-storage room!

**ROBY**

We're coming!

They dash for the stairs.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Roby, Faust, and Melkonis charge down the hallways until they arrive

at:

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FOOD STORAGE ROOM

Standard and Hunter are waiting for them, in hysterics.

**HUNTER**

We saw it inside and slammed the

door on it! It's in there now!

On the other side of the door, CRASHING AND BANGING can be heard.

**ROBY**

What's it doing, having a seizure?

**STANDARD**

It started crashing around right

after we locked it in.

**ROBY**

Now what?

**STANDARD**

I guess we open the door and net it.

**HUNTER**

I hate to open that door.

Again the thing can be heard CRASHING AROUND INSIDE.

**STANDARD**

It looks completely different from

the first one -- it's more like a

worm with legs... and tentacles.

**FAUST**

Well we better do something.

**HUNTER**

Maybe we don't have to. It's trapped

in there. We could just leave it in

there all the way back to Irth.

**STANDARD**

(snaps)

Don't be an idiot.

**FAUST**

I know what we can do. We can pump

poison gas into the room and kill

it. Through those ventilator slots

there.

He indicates a row of slots in the bottom of the door.

**ROBY**

Hey, wait a minute! That's all our

food supplies in there! We can't

pump poison gas all over them!

**STANDARD**

Once we kill the thing we won't need

the food any more -- we can go

straight into hypersleep. Also, it

sounds like that thing is already

doing a pretty good job on our

supplies; it may be fouling them

all.

**ROBY**

You win.

**FAUST**

Somebody gimme a hand, I'll get the

stuff.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FOOD LOCKER - LATER

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL THAT they are fastening a large funnel-

shaped device over the ventilator grill at the bottom of the door.

This funnel is attached to a thick hose, which runs back to a large

metal tank with pressure gauges.

**STANDARD**

Get those masks on.

They pull on gas masks.

**ROBY**

This stuff's deadly -- I hope we

know what we're doing.

**STANDARD**

Go ahead, Jay.

Faust turns on the machine. It begins to throb as it pumps the gas

through the hose and into the room.

Immediately, THE CRASHING NOISES RISE IN CRESCENDO, AND THE THING CAN

**BE HEARD SCREECHING AND SQUEALING.**

Then the sounds stop altogether.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Shut it off.

Faust shuts off the pump.

**ROBY**

Now what?

**STANDARD**

What do you think? Now we go in.

Standard steps to the door and opens it. A thick cloud of gas billows

out.

INTERIOR - FOOD STORAGE ROOM

The room is thick with the poison gas. The men look like insects in

their gasmasks.

The food packages are ripped to shreds, and foodstuffs are scattered

all over the floor.

**FAUST**

Looks like he helped himself.

Carefully, the men poke through the garbage, net and prods raised.

Then Hunter points.

**HUNTER**

God damn it.

They all look where he is pointing. In the wall, A VENTILATOR GRILL

**HAS BEEN RIPPED OPEN.**

**HUNTER (CONT'D)**

It escaped.

They move to the shredded ventilator and shine their lights into it.

**ROBY**

Where does that go?

**FAUST**

All over the ship; we'll have to

check the charts to know for sure.

**STANDARD**

Then let's go and do it.

They head for the door.

**HUNTER**

Have we got any food at all left in

the ship?

They slam the door shut and seal it.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

The screens are showing them a schematic of the ship's system of

ventilator shafts.

**FAUST**

That one section of the ventilator

shaft has only two outlets -- you

notice? The food storage room on one

end --

**HUNTER**

-- And the cooling unit on the

other.

**STANDARD**

So it's trapped in between -- now we

have to drive it out.

**FAUST**

Poison gas...

**HUNTER**

We can't pump poison gas down into

the cooling unit! It'll flood the

whole ship!

**STANDARD**

The only other thing I can think of

is for somebody to crawl in there

and flush it out.

**ROBY**

Are you crazy?

**STANDARD**

The man would need protection,

obviously -- as well as some way to

drive the thing before him.

**FAUST**

How about a flamethrower? That

wouldn't poison the air.

**MELKONIS**

So one of us goes into the airshaft

and drives the thing along --

**STANDARD**

While the rest of us wait down in

the cooling unit with the net.

**HUNTER**

Sounds like a rough one.

**STANDARD**

Got a better idea?

Hunter shrugs.

**ROBY**

So the only question left is: who

gets to crawl down the airshaft?

**STANDARD**

Let's be democratic.

He tears five small sheets of paper from a pad on his console. On one

of them, he draws a large X. Then he wads each piece of paper into a

tiny little ball.

He rolls the paperballs between his hands and tosses them on the table

like dice.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Martin, take one.

Roby picks one up and unfolds it. It is blank.

Melkonis picks up another and opens it. Again blank.

Faust picks up a ball, and Standard immediately picks his own up. They

are both blank.

They all look at Hunter, who has not yet unfolded his.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Open it up, Cleave.

INTERIOR - FOOD STORAGE ROOM

Hunter is strapping on an oxygen mask and a flame thrower. Faust is

helping him.

Finally, Faust hands him a tracking device.

**FAUST**

Well, uh... good luck. I hope you

won't need me, but if you do, I'm

here.

**HUNTER**

(grimly)

Right.

Hunter turns and climbs into the ventilator opening, which is just

large enough to crawl through.

INTERIOR - AIR SHAFT

It is completely dark in the shaft. Hunter reaches up and turns on his

helmet light. Then he switches on his radio.

**HUNTER**

Hey, do you guys read me down there?

INTERIOR - CLIMATE CONTROL ROOM

Standard, Melkonis and Roby are spreading out the net. We hear the hum

of huge cooling plants, and their hair ruffles. Large airshafts run

off in different directions.

**STANDARD**

Yeah, we're getting into position.

INTERIOR - AIR SHAFT

**HUNTER**

Okay, I'm starting now.

He begins to crawl forward into the narrow metal tunnel. He turns a

corner.

After a couple more tight turns, THE TRACKER SUDDENLY BEEPS.

Hunter twitches. He raises his flamethrower and FIRES A BLAST INTO THE

DARKNESS. It roars loudly in the confined tube, and the air instantly

heats up. Smoke drifts back into his face. He begins to sweat.

INTERIOR - CLIMATE CONTROL ROOM

Roby points to a large rectangular opening in one wall.

**ROBY**

(pointing)

There. That's where it's got to come

out.

He throws a switch, and a large metal panel rises and seals off the

opening.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

That's a flip-flop gate to channel

the air, but we can use it to trap

the thing.

**STANDARD**

Right now let's keep it closed.

Melkonis is setting up a little portable unit with a screen on it. The

screen shows a section of the ship's schematic.

**MELKONIS**

I've got Hunter... and something else

as well, in front of him.

**STANDARD**

Are they close?

**MELKONIS**

They're on the next level up.

**STANDARD**

Let's get moving with this net.

They lift the net up, holding it in front of the opening.

INTERIOR - AIR SHAFT

Hunter is still crawling on hands and knees. Up ahead, he can see that

the shaft takes an abrupt downward turn.

He crawls toward the down angle, then fires another blast from his

flamethrower.

Then he starts crawling down, head first.

When he is nearly upside-down, the shaft takes yet another turning

which puts him into a nearly impossible position, almost immobilized.

Then the tracker starts BEEPING LIKE CRAZY.

Frantically, he fumbles the flamethrower around, but the space is

narrow -- it is difficult maneuvering. He hears a HISSING CRY up

ahead, and claws scrambling on metal.

Then he has the weapon into position, and sprays another lethal

flaming burst toward the sound.

INTERIOR - CLIMATE CONTROL ROOM

Melkonis is staring at his screen.

**MELKONIS**

They're getting pretty close now.

**STANDARD**

All right, then -- when it gets to

the other side of the door, you sing

out, then drop the door. Okay?

**MELKONIS**

Okay.

**STANDARD**

(to Roby)

And you and I will bag it, and then

we'll take it to the ventral air

lock, got it?

**ROBY**

(tensely)

Uh-huh.

INTERIOR - AIR SHAFT

Hunter is huddled against a wall of the shaft, clutching the

flamethrower.

**HUNTER**

(whispers)

Hey, you guys.

INTERIOR - CLIMATE CONTROL ROOM

**STANDARD**

(into communicator)

Yes!

INTERIOR - AIR SHAFT

**HUNTER**

(whispering)

I don't think this shaft goes on too

much farther... anyway it's getting

pretty hot in here...

INTERIOR - CLIMATE CONTROL ROOM

**STANDARD**

(into communicator)

Okay, our screens show you as being

near to the opening. We'll open it

up, then we'll cue you and you can

start blasting. That'll drive it

right out. You don't have to go any

farther.

INTERIOR - AIR SHAFT

**HUNTER**

Good.

He readies the flamethrower.

INTERIOR - CLIMATE CONTROL ROOM

**STANDARD**

Okay, get ready.

He and Roby heft their respective ends of the net, crouched to catch

the small creature when it darts out. Melkonis picks up his electric

prod.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

Open the vent, Sandy.

Melkonis reaches over and throws the switch. The metal gate drops

down, opening up the shaft.

**A SIX-FOOT MONSTROSITY STANDS IN THE OPENING. GHASTLY BEYOND**

**IMAGINATION, SQUAMOUS, COVERED WITH TENTACLES, IT HOPS DOWN LIKE AN**

**OVER-SIZED BIRD AND GRABS MELKONIS IN RAZOR-SHARP TENTACLES.**

Melkonis lets out a horrible shriek, and the thing grabs his head in

one claw and TWISTS IT OFF LIKE A MAN PULLING THE HEAD OFF A CHICKEN,

THEN THROWS IT TO THE FLOOR WITH AN AUDIBLE CLUNK.

**CLUTCHING MELKONIS' BODY TIGHTLY AGAINST ITSELF, IT TURNS AND BOUNDS**

**DOWN THE HALL. MELKONIS' HEADLESS BODY IS STILL KICKING AND STRUGGLING**

**AS THE MONSTER LEAPS HEAD-FIRST INTO ANOTHER AIR SHAFT.**

Standard and Roby are left standing in shock. After a moment, Hunter

climbs out of the shaft.

**HUNTER**

What happened? Where is it?

They break from their paralysis, and run toward the opening the

creature just leaped into. It is another shaft, going down into

darkness.

**STANDARD**

(awed)

How did it get so big?

**ROBY**

By eating our food supplies.

**HUNTER**

Where's Melkonis?

INTERIOR - FOOD STORAGE ROOM

Faust is still waiting.

**FAUST**

(into his communicator)

Hey, are you guys still there?

What's going on?

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

Meet us on the bridge. Be careful --

it's huge now.

**FAUST**

Right.

Faust lets himself out of the food storage room and carefully locks

the door behind him.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS

Standard, Roby and Hunter are rapidly ascending toward the bridge.

**HUNTER**

You mean his body was still kicking

when it ran off with him?

**ROBY**

It was horrible -- horrible. Like a

chicken.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

Standard, Roby and Hunter enter and drop into chairs. Faust follows

shortly. They all look blank, stunned.

**FAUST**

What happened? Where's Sandy?

**ROBY**

Dead.

**FAUST**

Dead!

**ROBY**

It's monstrous -- it grew, like some

horrible tapeworm. We were

completely unprepared.

**FAUST**

It's still in the ship?

**STANDARD**

We'd better seal off the lower

maintenance level; at least trap it

there.

(throws a switch;

circuitry lights up)

**HUNTER**

At least it can't get up here now.

**ROBY**

Two down, four to go.

**STANDARD**

(angrily)

What's that supposed to mean?

**ROBY**

Nothing.

**HUNTER**

Listen, it sure didn't like this

flamethrower.

**STANDARD**

That's right -- we can't kill it on

the ship, but we can at least keep

it at bay -- and maybe drive it into

the air lock.

**HUNTER**

Thing is, I'm about out of fuel.

**FAUST**

There's some more combustible fuel

down in the storage lockers next to

the lounge.

(rises)

I'll go get it.

**STANDARD**

No, I don't want us separated.

**FAUST**

You just sealed it off; it can't get

to that section.

**ROBY**

Don't count on it.

**HUNTER**

We sure need this flamethrower.

**STANDARD**

All right... but do not go below

decks.

**FAUST**

Right.

(heads for the door)

**STANDARD**

And be right back.

Faust exits.

**ROBY**

I think it's time we took a hard

look at those heiroglyphs.

Roby begins to punch buttons; the photographs of the heiroglyphics

appear on some of the screens.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

Can you make out any pattern in all

that?

**STANDARD**

(baffled)

Well... yes... there's a pattern... but

it's meaningless to me.

**ROBY**

I know it looks like a senseless

jumble, but if you look closely,

there are recognizable forms.

**HUNTER**

Recognizable! In that?

**ROBY**

In symbolic form... very stylized...

but if you stare at it, you can see

some of the different creatures

we've been dealing with.

**HUNTER**

Well... I suppose that star-shaped

thing could be the parasite that got

on Broussard. Is that what you mean?

**ROBY**

And right next to it, that oval

design with the markings -- it's a

dead ringer for the spore casings.

**STANDARD**

That next thing there -- six legs,

tentacles -- that's the thing we saw

in the food locker.

**ROBY**

So the next step should be --

**HUNTER**

-- The big one. And there it is.

Out of meaningless geometric symbols on a wall, it has become possible

to recognize each stage in the alien's life cycle.

**ROBY**

This is all the same creature. We're

seeing the different stages in its

life-cycle.

**STANDARD**

Then that tomb... must have been some

kind of fertility temple... where

they stored their eggs, and maybe

held mating rituals...

**HUNTER**

... And Broussard got caught in their

reproductive cycle.

**ROBY**

You will notice, though, that there

are no more phases. Only four forms

are shown. After that the pattern

repeats.

**STANDARD**

Which presumably means...

**ROBY**

... More spores coming.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

Faust quickly turns a couple of corners and then comes to an abrupt

halt when he notices that a DOOR LEADING TO THE LOWER DECKS HAS BEEN

**WRENCHED OFF ITS HINGES.**

He hesitates, uncertain what to do, then there is A SOUND FROM THE

**DIRECTION OF THE AIR LOCK... AND THE INNER LOCK DOOR IS OPEN.**

Faust hesitates and peers into the lock.

INTERIOR - AIR LOCK

The creature is squatting in the middle of the floor, gnawing on a

bloody thigh bone. It does not see Faust.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

Stealthfully, dropping back into the shadows, Faust presses the wall

intercom and speaks into it.

**FAUST**

(whispering)

It's in the lock -- blow the main

lock.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

Standard, Roby and Hunter are staring at the pictures. The call from

Faust catches Standard in mid-sentence.

**STANDARD**

(into intercom)

What?

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

**FAUST**

(whispering)

It's in the main air lock. Blow the

lock.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

Standard hesitates, starts to frame a reply -- then changes his mind

and runs to his console -- and THROWS THE SWITCH.

INTERIOR - AIR LOCK

With a mechanical whine, the inner door starts to close. The creature

hears it and INSTANTANEOUSLY LEAPS OUT OF THE LOCK.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

The creature comes flying out of the lock and DEALS FAUST A BACK-

**HANDED BLOW, KNOCKING HIM ACROSS THE THRESHOLD OF THE AIR LOCK DOOR.**

**FAUST SCREAMS IN MORTAL AGONY AS THE INNER DOOR CLOSES ON HIS WAIST,**

crushing him to a thickness of about three inches.

On the wall, a green light goes on:

**"INNER DOOR CLOSED"**

INTERIOR - AIR LOCK

Despite the fact that the inner door is still held open a few inches

by Faust's squashed body, THE OUTER DOOR BEGINS TO SLIDE OPEN.

**IMMEDIATELY, THERE IS A TREMENDOUS SCREAM OF ESCAPING AIR.**

EXTERIOR - SHIP - OUTER SPACE

In dead silence, a thick spurt of steam comes out of the open air lock

door. This is the ship's atmosphere freezing as it squirts out into

the vacuum under pressure.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

INSTANTLY, A TREMENDOUS WINDSTORM STARTS UP as the ship's air is

sucked out toward the lock.

**A SIREN BEGINS TO SOUND, AND A RED LIGHT FLASHES:**

**"CRITICAL DEPRESSURIZATION"**

After a moment of panic and confusion, Roby bolts out of the control

room.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS

Loose papers and articles of furniture hurtle through the passageways,

as Roby hurries toward the rock, partly running, partly sucked along

by the air current.

EXTERIOR - SHIP - OUTER SPACE

A huge plume of steam grows from the side of the ship, with all kinds

of tiny loose particles tumbling out in it.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS

Whipped by the hurricane wind, Roby crashes to a momentary halt

against a wall. As he hesitates there, trying to regain his balance,

**HE SEES THE CREATURE SCURRYING AWAY DOWN ANOTHER CORRIDOR.**

Ignoring the monster, he pushes off from the wall and starts running

again.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AIR LOCK

Roby stops himself by grabbing the edge of a doorway at the end of the

hall down from the airlock. Here, the wind is really terrific -- his

clothes flap on his body and all kinds of things fly by -- the sound

is a DEAFENING WHISTLE.

Instantly, Roby starts turning a large wheel, which begins to close a

sliding hatch door, closing off the air lock corridor. As the hatch

closes, THE CURRENT DECREASES, THEN IS FINALLY CUT OFF AS HE SEALS IT.

Done in, he collapses to the floor.

Then he clutches his throat and begins to gasp for breath. Because of

the thinness of the air, THE SOUND LEVEL IN THE SHIP IS VERY ODD --

THIN, DISTANT, ALMOST INAUDIBLE. Roby is gasping loudly, but we can

barely hear him; and his footsteps boom thinly like a man walking

underwater.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS

Clutching his throat, he comes across the others -- Standard and

Hunter -- and they are all choking, clawing at their throats, gasping

like fishes out of water. They are sweating heavily and their noses

bleed.

They try to speak to each other, but the sound is so muffled we can

only hear distant croaks.

Standard mumbles something and stumbles down the hall. The others

follow him.

INTERIOR - MAIN AIR TANK ROOM

The door bursts open and Standard reels in, his footsteps pinging

thinly on the metal flooring. We see several rows of large oxygen

tanks, all connected by hoses to a few petcocks.

Standard staggers to these and starts twisting the handles, opening

them. THERE IS A PIERCING HISS OF ESCAPING AIR, AND THE SOUND LEVEL

GRADUALLY RETURNS TO NORMAL as Standard and the others sink to the

floor, gasping in the oxygen gratefully.

Finally they have recovered enough to be able to sit up.

**ROBY**

How much oxygen did we lose?

Standard rises unsteadily and peers at the gauges.

**STANDARD**

We've got six hours left.

**HUNTER**

(groans)

Oh my God.

**STANDARD**

Does anybody know what happened?

**ROBY**

I saw it. Faust got himself jammed

in the air lock door. His body held

it open.

**STANDARD**

Can we get to him?

**ROBY**

No, I had to seal off a whole

section. We'd lose too much of our

remaining air if we opened the

connecting door.

INTERIOR - AIR LOCK

Faust's body, crushed in the inner door, floats weightlessly in the

vacuum. His nose and mouth are crusted with huge gobs of dried blood.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

The three survivors -- Standard, Roby and Hunter -- slump into chairs.

The cat emerges from a hiding place, yowling with fear.

**ROBY**

(picking up the cat)

Poor kitty; puss puss puss.

**STANDARD**

At least we're rid of the damn

monster. It must have been the first

thing sucked out of the ship.

**ROBY**

No such luck. I saw it running down

one of the corridors.

**HUNTER**

(groans)

Oh no! We can't fight this thing!

There's only six hours of air left

-- we're dead men!

**STANDARD**

I don't buy that. There's still time

to destroy it and get ourselves in

the freezers.

**HUNTER**

How?

**STANDARD**

It's time for drastic remedies.

**ROBY**

It was time for that a couple days

ago.

**STANDARD**

That kind of remark is pointless.

Now come on -- I want to hear every

suggestion you can come up with, no

matter how wild.

**HUNTER**

We can't kill it on board. It's huge

now and must have tremendous amounts

of that acid in its body.

**ROBY**

I've got an idea, but you're not

going to like it.

**STANDARD**

Let's hear it.

**ROBY**

Okay. First we shut down all the

cooling systems on the stardrive

engines.

**STANDARD**

That'll blow the ship up.

**ROBY**

Right... but it'll take a few minutes

for the engines to overheat and melt

down the core. In the meantime, we

get in the lifeboat and leave the

ship.

**HUNTER**

Blow the ship up?

**ROBY**

And the creature with it. We can

make it back to Irth in the

lifeboat.

**STANDARD**

But the lifeboat can't accelerate to

light speed.

**ROBY**

Doesn't matter -- we're already at

light speed. And when we get back to

the Colonies, they'll pick us up in

the network.

**HUNTER**

What about all the minerals and

elements in the cargo hold? That's

the only reason we came out here.

We'd have to abandon them all. We'd

be broke.

**ROBY**

Our lives are more important.

Anyway, we can take a small amount

of the most valuable stuff with us

on the lifeboat.

**STANDARD**

No, it won't work and I just

realized why. There's only one

hypersleep freezer on the lifeboat.

Only one of us could survive.

**ROBY**

Yeah... I forgot.

**STANDARD**

But the idea's good, if we could

just turn it around somehow.

They think.

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

If we could just get the creature

into the lifeboat, we could launch

it into space and blow it up.

**HUNTER**

Good! That's good!

**STANDARD**

We can load the lifeboat up with

explosives and trigger them

remotely, once the lifeboat is in

space.

**ROBY**

I think it's going to be almost

impossible to drive it up into the

lifeboat.

**HUNTER**

We can use the flamethrower.

**ROBY**

It's not going to work.

**STANDARD**

You can't say that; I think it's a

good plan.

**HUNTER**

The flamethrower needs more fuel.

**STANDARD**

Right. We've got a lot to

accomplish. Let's get moving.

INTERIOR - MINING & CARGO BAY

The three men come down steps into this rather dirty area of the ship.

A lot of tools and large items of machinery are stored around.

**LONG RACKS OF SHELVES ARE STOCKED WITH METAL CONTAINERS OF VARIOUS**

SHAPES. Each container is well packed and labelled.

**HUNTER**

Which explosive should we use?

**STANDARD**

I'd suggest the N-13 sticks. They're

portable, and they can be radio

detonated.

Hunter begins to unlock a locker and draw out long, red sticks like

broomhandles, with tiny printing on them.

Meanwhile, ROBY IS STARING AT THE ROWS OF METAL CANNISTERS. He touches

one of them.

**ROBY**

You know, it's funny -- this stuff

we went to so much trouble to dig up

-- this treasure, the paydirt --

it'll make it back to Irth just fine

-- even if we're not with it.

**STANDARD**

Here, carry these.

Hunter takes an armload of the red broomsticks, and stumbles.

**ROBY**

(grabbing at him)

Hey watch it!

**STANDARD**

(grinning)

It's stable; it doesn't hurt to drop

it.

They begin to carry the explosives up the steps.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR

The three men are carrying their equipment along the hallway, when

Hunter's tracker suddenly BEEPS.

**HUNTER**

Hold it!

They all stop. The tracker BEEPS AGAIN. Hunter puts down his stuff and

points the tracker around.

**HUNTER (CONT'D)**

(nodding up some steps)

Up there.

They all look at each other. Standard puts down his bundle and picks

up the flamethrower.

**ROBY**

So what do we do? Do we ignore it

and finish loading the explosives

into the boat -- or do we flush it

out now?

**STANDARD**

Now. If we can get it into the boat,

we won't have to blow it up -- we

can just eject it into space.

Standard hefts the flamethrower and starts up the steps.

INTERIOR - DIM STAIRWELL

Standard's face is tense as he advances up the circular steps.

Suddenly, a METALLIC TAPPING SOUND is heard. He freezes.

Then he continues up.

EXTERIOR - DORSAL OBSERVATION DOME - VIEW OF OUTER SPACE

The view of interstellar space is spectacular. As Standard comes up

the steps, the METALLIC TAPPING is heard again.

Standard looks around. Then he sees it -- BROUSSARD'S CORPSE FLOATS

OUTSIDE THE GLASS OF THE DOME. It is tangled in some rigging, and the

movement of the machinery causes the cadaver to tap on the glass

periodically.

**STANDARD**

(shouts)

You can come up! It's safe!

The others come up the steps.

**ROBY**

(spying the corpse)

Oh -- Jesus --

Broussard's corpse is blue and bloated where the wrappings have torn

loose. Bumping against the glass, he looks like he wants to come in.

**STANDARD**

The ship's gravitational attraction

must have drawn him back.

**HUNTER**

(horrified)

Should we go outside and bring him

in?

**STANDARD**

No... the risk is too great. Perhaps

after we've destroyed the thing.

Glancing back, the men retreat from the observation dome. Broussard

remains against the glass, peering in with dead eyes.

INTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP

The floor slopes upward slightly here as the corridor funnels in and

ends in the entrance to a narrow passageway or crawl-way. This

passageway connects the nose of the ship with the lifeboat.

The three men come up to the entrance to the passageway, carrying the

equipment. They duck in and walk the short distance to the lifeboat.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The passageway connects into the rear of the lifeboat. It is an

extremely simple, stripped-down vehicle; even the metal struts and

beams-are exposed. A single hypersleep freezer takes up a fair amount

of floor space. It is an escape-craft, nothing more.

**STANDARD**

(pointing)

Along the base of the walls there.

They begin to stack the red broomsticks against the base of the walls

on both sides of the lifeboat, and to wire them into position tightly.

**HUNTER**

This should do it.

**ROBY**

I should hope so! And we'd better

make sure it's pretty far from the

ship when we blow it.

**STANDARD**

It will be.

**HUNTER**

(surveys the craft uneasily)

What we really need is some red meat

in here for bait.

**ROBY**

Well, if we had some, I'd eat it.

I'm starting to get hungry.

By this time, they are exiting.

INTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP

**STANDARD**

Well... now we have to herd that

thing up here.

**HUNTER**

(nervously)

Whoever's doing the herding is gonna

have their hands pretty full. I

think somebody should stay by the

lifeboat to slam the door on the

thing once it's inside, and to serve

as... as...

(searches for a word)

**ROBY**

Isn't "bait" the word you used?

**HUNTER**

Hey look, somebody has to have his

hands free to lock the creature in

the lifeboat!

**STANDARD**

Yes, and maybe launch the boat and

blow it too... if the others are

injured.

**ROBY**

Who gets the privilege?

INSERT: THREE CRUMPLED PIECES OF PAPER. Three hands pick them up.

ANGLE ON ROBY. He unfolds his paper, turns it so the others can see

it. It has a big X on it.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SHORTLY LATER. Hunter is showing Roby a small device

like a transistor radio.

**HUNTER**

Just keep your finger off the button

till she's way away from the ship,

that's all.

**ROBY**

Is it armed?

**HUNTER**

If you press the button right now,

it will blow the whole nose of the

ship off.

**ROBY**

Thanks for the thought.

(puts detonator in his

breast pocket)

**STANDARD**

All right, Martin, we'll be in touch

with you on the communicator.

**ROBY**

And you'll let me know when you've

got it coming this way...

**STANDARD**

And you stand aside while we drive

it in, then shut the hatch, launch

the boat, and --

**ROBY**

Kablooey.

Hunter's face twitches nervously at this.

**STANDARD**

Come on; we haven't much time, air

is a factor.

They leave the nose of the ship, Standard carrying the flamethrower,

Hunter the tracker.

Roby settles himself at the controls, runs through them briefly to

familiarize himself. Using a switch, he opens and closes the lifeboat

door a couple of times. It slams open and shut quite rapidly.

He presses a few buttons and sets the launch button to "READY."

Then STANDARD'S VOICE comes from the communicator:

**STANDARD**

(over, filtered)

We've got something on the

tracker... got to be it, it's

too big for the cat.

This is a VERY SPOOKY SCENE, ROBY ALONE BY THE LIFEBOAT, LISTENING TO

**THE VOICES ON THE COMMUNICATOR.**

**HUNTER**

(over, filtered)

It's coming from down there.

Roby hears various tinny sound effects, rustlings, clunkings,

breathing, etc.

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR IN SHIP

Standard has the flamethrower at the ready, and Hunter is staring at

the tracker.

**HUNTER**

It must have stopped moving. I'm not

getting anything.

**STANDARD**

Let me go first; you stay behind me.

Carefully, Standard advances down the corridor. Then THE CREATURE POPS

OUT OF HIDING BEHIND HUNTER, AND PICKS HIM UP.

**HUNTER SCREAMS.**

Standard whirls around, sees the thing clutching Hunter. It holds him

off to one side, as though to keep Standard from getting at him.

Standard doesn't know what to do.

**HUNTER**

The flamethrower!

**STANDARD**

I can't, the acid will pour out!

At that moment the creature TAKES A BITE OUT OF HUNTER, WHO SCREAMS IN

**MORTAL AGONY.**

Standard can take it no longer; he raises the flamethrower and fires

**-- BUT THE CREATURE SWINGS HUNTER AROUND AS A SHIELD AND HUNTER**

**CATCHES THE FULL BLAST OF THE FLAME.**

Standard instantly stops firing, but now Hunter is a kicking ball of

flame, held out at arm's length by the monster.

INTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP

Roby is listening to all this on the communicator. He can hear the

shrieks and crashing noises.

Then the communicator goes dead, and all he hears is a rush of static.

**ROBY**

Hello? Standard? Hunter?

He waits quite a while for a response, but we can see from his

expression that he expects none.

He drops his face into his hands. When he lifts his head again, he has

managed to summon a certain amount of resolve.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Roby walks along watching the tracker, carrying a pistol in the other

hand. He comes across Standard's flamethrower, lying on the floor. He

picks it up, substituting it for the pistol.

Then he continues to follow the tracker; it takes him down the steps

into the maintenance level.

INTERIOR - MAINTENANCE LEVEL

Roby follows the device for a short distance until it indicates that

the source of the signal is directly under his feet. Looking down, he

sees that he is standing on a square metal plate.

Getting down on his hands and knees, he removes the heavy plate,

revealing a black opening with a ladder going down.

Substituting the tracker for a flashlight, but still carrying the

flamethrower, Roby starts down the ladder.

INTERIOR - DARK STORAGE ROOM

Shining the light around into the darkness, Roby descends the metal

ladder to the floor.

**THE PLACE IS A HORRIBLE LAIR, FULL OF BONES, HAIR, SHREDS OF FLESH,**

**PIECES OF CLOTHING, AND SHOES.**

Something moves in the darkness -- Roby turns his light on it.

HANGING FROM THE CEILING IS A HUGE COCOON. It appears to be woven from

some fine, white, silk-like material, and it is slowly undulating.

Flamethrower ready, Roby approaches the cocoon. As he gets close

enough, he sees that the cocoon is semi-transparent and THE BODY OF

**STANDARD IS INSIDE IT.**

Unexpectedly, Standard's eyes open, and focus on Roby -- who jumps

violently.

**STANDARD**

(a feeble whisper)

Kill me...

**ROBY**

(sickened)

What did it do to you?

**STANDARD**

(moves his head slightly)

Look...

Roby turns his light where Standard indicates. Another cocoon dangles

from the ceiling, but this one looks a little different. It is smaller

and darker, with a harder shell. In fact, it looks almost EXACTLY LIKE

**THE SPORES IN THE TOMB.**

**STANDARD (CONT'D)**

(whispering)

That was Melkonis... it ate Hunter...

**ROBY**

(looking around for a tool)

I'll get you out of there.

**STANDARD**

No... don't...

**ROBY**

But I can save you -- get you to the

Autodoc!

**STANDARD**

No good... it's eaten too much of

me...

**ROBY**

(in horror)

What can I do?

**STANDARD**

Kill me...

Roby stares at him in horror, then bends down and takes a closer look

at him. REACTING, he straightens back up, raises the flamethrower, and

sprays a molten blast. When the entire room is in flames, he turns and

scrambles back up the ladder.

INTERIOR - MAINTENANCE LEVEL

Roby drops to his knees and gasps for breath, trying not to throw up.

At length, he regains control of himself.

EXTERIOR - OUTER SPACE - AT LIGHT SPEED

The SNARK appears to hang motionless, with planets and star clusters

rolling past in the infinite distance.

INTERIOR - BRIDGE

Roby is putting the cat into a metal, vacuum-sealed catbox, with a

little oxygen tank on it.

**ROBY**

Kitty go bye-bye.

He seals the catbox, then turns on the oxygen. There is a faint hiss

of pressurized air. Wild-eyed, the cat peers out of a little window in

front. It YOWLS.

He picks up the pressurized catbox and leaves the bridge.

INTERIOR - MINING & CARGO BAY

Carrying the catbox and a shoulder bag (and of course the

flamethrower), Roby goes quickly to the nearest rank of metal

cannisters.

**ROBY**

(reading from labels)

What'll it be, Kitty? Here -- how

about some Tacitum-35, ten kilos of

it. This'll buy us an island on some

nice planet.

Putting the invaluable cannister into the shoulder bag, he hurries

back up the steps.

INTERIOR - ENGINE ROOM

Catbox in one hand, flamethrower in the other, Roby enters the engine

room, containing the massive stardrive engines.

He puts down his parcels and approaches the main control board for the

engines. Studying the instructions, he begins to close switches, one

by one.

**A SIREN BEGINS TO HONK THROUGHOUT THE SHIP.**

**COMPUTER**

Attention! The cooling units for the

stardrive engines are not

functioning! Engines will overload

in 4 minutes, 50 seconds! Attention!

Finally Roby closes the last switch. Shaking with nervousness, he

hurriedly picks up catbox, bag and flamethrower and hurries out of the

engine room.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Roby hurries on, listening to the siren.

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will overheat and

main core will melt in 4 minutes, 30

seconds!

INTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP

Roby comes hustling up to where the lifeboat is berthed. Hands full,

he starts to enter the connecting passageway.

INTERIOR - CONNECTING PASSAGEWAY

**THE CREATURE IS WAITING AT THE OTHER END OF THE PASSAGEWAY, INSIDE THE**

**LIFEBOAT.**

It HISSES and starts toward him.

INTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP

Roby leaps out of the passageway, bounds to the controls, and throws

the switch. The hatch door SLAMS SHUT, locking the thing in the

lifeboat.

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will overload in

4 minutes!

Indecisive, Roby stares at the lifeboat "LAUNCH" button. The thing can

be heard fumbling around in the passageway.

Finally, he turns and bolts back toward the engine room.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Like a maniac, Roby runs through the ship, level after level, pounding

down stairwells, his footsteps clanging metallically throughout the

ship as he sprints for the engine room.

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will overload in

3 minutes, 30 seconds!

INTERIOR - ENGINE ROOM

The door crashes open and Roby comes running in. The room is full of

smoke and the engines are whining dangerously. It is extremely hot in

the room; Roby instantly breaks out in sweat.

He runs to controls and begins throwing back on the cooling unit

switches.

Still THE SIREN CONTINUES.

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will overload in

3 minutes!

Roby pushes a button and speaks into it.

**ROBY**

Computer! I've turned all the

cooling units back on! What's wrong?

**COMPUTER**

The reaction has proceeded too far.

The core has begun to melt. Engines

will overload in 2 minutes, 35

seconds.

A look of terror comes onto Roby's face. He turns and runs from the

engine room.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS IN SHIP

Again, Roby must run through all the levels of the ship, this time

up the stairs, exhausted, stumbling, while the computer counts down:

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will overload in

2 minutes!

INTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP

Reeling, gasping for breath, Roby staggers into the vestibule where

the lifeboat is berthed. He grabs the flamethrower and turns it toward

the passageway.

It is then he realizes that THE LIFEBOAT DOOR IS OPEN AGAIN.

Quickly, he glances around to see if the creature might be behind him.

Then he advances on the passageway.

INTERIOR - PASSAGEWAY

Dripping with sweat, his face a mask of fear, Roby enters the

passageway, flamethrower gripped tightly in his hands. He is goaded on

by the siren and the computer:

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will explode in

90 seconds!

He makes it all the way to the end of the passageway, then sticks his

head into the lifeboat.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

HIS POINT-OF-VIEW as he quickly scans the lifeboat, reveals that it is

**EMPTY.**

INTERIOR - PASSAGEWAY

Immediately, he turns and dashes back to the head of the passageway.

There he grabs the catbox and bag, then runs back into the lifeboat.

**COMPUTER**

Attention! Engines will explode in

60 seconds!

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

He comes in on the run, hurls the catbox and bag toward the front, and

does a dive over the back of the control chair. He is no sooner in the

seat than he hits the "LAUNCH" button.

EXTERIOR - NOSE OF SHIP - OUTER SPACE

The retainer clips drop away, and with a blast of ramjets, THE

**LIFEBOAT IS LAUNCHED AWAY FROM THE "SNARK."**

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

Roby is frantically strapping himself in, as the lifeboat accelerates

away from the mother ship.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

The tiny pod of the lifeboat accelerates away from the larger bulk of

the SNARK. The scene is strangely serene for such deadly

circumstances.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

Roby finishes strapping himself in, then he reaches and grabs the

catbox. The cat is YOWLING. Roby hugs the box to his chest and hunches

his head down over it.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

The SNARK drifts ever farther away as the lifeboat leaves it behind,

until it is barely a point of light.

**THEN IT BLOWS UP.**

**AN EXPANDING ORANGE FIREBALL WITH PIECES OF METAL FLYING IN ALL**

**DIRECTIONS.**

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The shockwave hits the escape craft, jolting it and rattling

everything inside. Then all is quiet.

Roby unhooks himself from his straps, rises, and goes to the back of

the lifeboat. He stares out through the porthole. His face is bathed

in orange light.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

What he sees is the boiling fireball, now fading and fizzling away

into nothingness, and a couple of pieces of debris floating past.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

Roby's expression is mournful as he watches the final obliteration of

his ship and friends.

**BEHIND HIM, THE CREATURE EMERGES FROM SOME HIDING PLACE -- IT HAS BEEN**

**INSIDE THE LIFEBOAT ALL ALONG.**

The cat SCREECHES.

Roby whirls, and finds himself facing the thing across the length of

the boat. It squats, then pulls out its trophy -- a man's arm.

It begins to eat the arm, watching Roby.

His first thought is for the flamethrower -- unfortunately, it lies on

the floor right next to the monster. Next he glances around for any

place to hide. His eye falls on a tiny locker containing a space suit,

with the door standing open.

He begins to edge toward the locker. The creature rises. He freezes.

It throws down the arm. With that, Roby dives for the open locker

door, hurls himself inside, and slams the door shut.

INTERIOR - SPACESUIT LOCKER

There is a clear glass panel in the door, and the thing puts its face

right up to the glass, peering in at Roby. The locker is so small that

Roby's face is only inches away from the creature's. The sight is

disgusting. It turns its head, looking at him in curiosity.

Then the MOANING OF THE CAT distracts it.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The creature waddles over to where the pressurized catbox sits. It

bends down and peers inside. The CAT YOWLS LOUDER.

It picks up the catbox in its tentacles.

INTERIOR - SPACESUIT LOCKER

Trying to distract the monster away from the cat, Roby TAPS ON THE

**GLASS.**

But the monster reacts so fast that its face is instantly back at the

glass, startling the hell out of Roby.

Getting no more interference from him, the thing returns to the

catbox.

Roby looks around. He spies the spacesuit. Quickly, he begins to pull

it on.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The creature picks the catbox up in its tentacles and shakes it to see

if there is anything inside. The cat MOANS.

INTERIOR - SPACESUIT LOCKER

Roby is halfway into the pressure suit.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The creature throws the catbox down. It clangs, and bounces. The thing

picks it up again and hammers it against the wall. Then it jams it

into a crevice in the wall.

With one tentacle, it begins to pound the sealed catbox into the

crevice. The cat has gone beyond hysterics.

INTERIOR - SPACESUIT LOCKER

Roby pulls on the helmet, latches it into place, then turns on the

oxygen. With a hiss, the suit fills itself.

In a rack on the wall is a long metal rod with a blunt rubber tip.

Roby peels the rubber off, revealing a sharp steel point.

Again he raps on the glass.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The creature turns. It faces the locker, peers at him.

INTERIOR - SPACESUIT LOCKER

**ROBY**

Try a little of this, you fucking

bastard.

**HE KICKS THE DOOR OPEN.**

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

The creature rises, but just in time to catch THE STEEL SHAFT RIGHT

**THROUGH ITS MIDRIFF.**

IT MAKES A HORRIBLE NOISE AND CLUTCHES AT THE SPUR. The yellow acid

begins to flow from the wound.

Before the acid can touch the floor, Roby reaches back and pulls a

switch -- BLOWING THE REAR HATCH.

In a poof, the tiny atmosphere in the lifeboat is sucked out into

space -- and the bleeding creature along with it. Roby grabs a steel

strut to keep from being sucked out, but as the creature passes him IT

**WRAPS THE END OF A TENTACLE AROUND HIS ANKLE.**

EXTERIOR - LIFEBOAT - OUTER SPACE

Roby is now hanging halfway out of the lifeboat, with the thing

clinging to his leg. He kicks at it with his free foot, but it won't

let go.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

Looking for any salvation, Roby grabs the hatch control lever and

yanks it.

The hatch slams shut, closing Roby safely inside but TRAPPING THE END

**OF THE CREATURE'S TENTACLE IN THE DOORJAMB.**

It instantly releases Roby, who staggers back.

EXTERIOR - LIFEBOAT - OUTER SPACE

The creature is now outside the lifeboat, in the vacuum, squirming,

the tip of its tentacle caught in the closed hatch.

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

Where the tentacle is caught in the hatch, it is wounded, and is

starting to foam with acid, eating away at the metal.

Roby stumbles forward to the controls and pushes a lever labeled:

**"RAM JETS"**

EXTERIOR - LIFEBOAT - OUTER SPACE

The jet exhausts are located at the rear of the craft, right where the

creature is wriggling. THE ENGINES BELCH FLAME FOR A FEW SECONDS, THEN

**SHUT OFF.**

**INCINERATED, THE CREATURE TUMBLES SLOWLY AWAY INTO SPACE.**

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT

Roby hurries to the rear hatch and looks out after the thing.

EXTERIOR - OUTER SPACE

The burned mass of the monster drifts slowly away into space, a

writhing, smoking, foaming mass.

As it tumbles into the distance, pieces drop off it -- it bloats --

then bursts, soggily, sending a spray of particles off in all

directions. The last we see of it is a few smouldering rags, dwindling

into infinity.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

INTERIOR - LIFEBOAT - LATER

The boat is re-pressurized and Roby is seated in the control chair. He

seems calm and composed, almost cheerful. The cat purrs in his lap.

**ROBY**

(dictating)

... So it looks like I'll make it

back to the Colonies on schedule

after all. I should be to the

frontier in another 250 years or so,

and then with a little luck the

network will pick me up. I'm not as

rich as I was a couple days ago --

but I'm not exactly broke either.

Incidentally, I did manage to

salvage one souvenir out of this

whole mess.

He reaches down into the carrying bag he brought on board, and pulls

out the ALIEN SKULL.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

Poor Yorick here should go at least

partway toward proving I'm not a

crank. I wish it was him we'd met in

the first place -- things might have

turned out different.

He puts the skull down on a shelf and locks a glass lid over it.

**ROBY (CONT'D)**

This is Martin Roby, executive

officer, last survivor of the

commercial vessel SNARK, signing off.

Come on, cat, let's go to sleep.

Roby leans forward and switches off the recorder. Then he rises and,

carrying the cat, walks to the hypersleep freezer, which stands open.

He climbs in and stretches out on his back, holding the cat against

his chest. With one hand, he presses a switch, and THE LID CLOSES OVER

**HIM.**

CLOSE-UP OF THE ALIEN SKULL, watching sentinel over the slumbering

Roby like some dead, melancholy pixie.

EXTERIOR - OUTER SPACE

The lifeboat -- SNARK 2 -- sails away toward its rendezvous with Irth,

250 years from now.

As SNARK 2 drifts past camera, we suddenly see that A SPORE POD IS

**ADHERED TO THE UNDERBELLY OF THE CRAFT.**

**ROLL END TITLES & MUSIC.**

THE END