

INCURSION

a screenplay by

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## EXT. OFFICE CAR PARK - DAY

A white single-storey building glistens in the California sunshine. It is set in the middle of its own landscaped compound surrounded by parking areas amid landscaped grounds with trees and grass. The loudest sound is the twittering of birds.

A dark blue convertible is waved through the gate by a uniformed security guard. It pulls-in to a parking space near the main doors of the building. The car park is mostly empty, it is Saturday.

ERICH ROTH gets out of the car and walks the fifty-feet to the smoked glass doors of the main entrance. He is mid-twenties, of medium height, slim - lanky even, with unkempt sandy-colored hair and green eyes. He wears his usual uniform of blue jeans and white tee-shirt under a dark blue blazer with shiny brass buttons.

## INT. OFFICE RECEPTION - DAY

Erich comes through the door and waves his badge at VERA, a middle-aged black lady in a security guard's uniform, behind the reception desk.

ERICH  
Morning Vera.

VERA  
Ain't you got nothing better to do?

ERICH  
How else can I get to see you on  
Saturday?

She shrugs, raising her eyes to the ceiling.

VERA  
I just made coffee.

He walks along the corridor to the office kitchen and emerges carrying a donut and a plastic cup.

## INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Erich sits at his desk in his glass-sided cubicle office off the main office where half a dozen people work at their desks. One side of Erich's room gives on to a technical area containing racks of servers and assorted electronic equipment. Two technicians are working at one of the racks, one of them waves to Erich.

The phone rings and Erich picks it up.

ERICH

Hello.

He listens for a moment.

ERICH

Sure, I'll come right through.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Erich enters the office of his boss LEMAN SCHULZ. Leman, a florid man in a business suit is talking on the phone and waves him to a seat. Erich continues sipping his coffee while Leman finished his phone call.

LEMAN

Erich, thanks for coming in on a Saturday. Something's come-up.

ERICH

No problem, I was going to be here anyway. The guys are working on the new release.

LEMAN

Yes, you're late aren't you? Got some bad apples in your team.

ERICH

What we've got is weak management who won't stand-up for us. I had to ramp-up the effort for a while but we're back on track now.

Leman holds up his hands as if to ward off an attack.

LEMAN

Okay, okay. That wasn't what I wanted to talk to you about anyway.

(beat)

There's, ah, been a complaint from one of your staff.

Leman smiles, he's enjoying this.

ERICH

Oh. Who? What kind of complaint?

LEMAN

Sexual harassment.

ERICH

What! That's not possible. Who was it?

LEMAN

Linda Robins. She claims you  
blackmailed her into having sex with  
you. In the office.

Erich closes his eyes for a moment, reopens them and laughs  
softly realizing he should have seen this coming.

ERICH

Would it do any good to deny it?

LEMAN

It's your right of course. But if  
you want to avoid...

ERICH

You devious bastard!

LEMAN

I think I can persuade her to drop the  
accusation if you're not around any  
more.

ERICH

I'll bet. What did you promise her?  
My job? I have to hand it to you,  
Leman.

LEMAN

(smirks)

Of course it's your decision. I  
should warn you that we have, er,  
video evidence.

He slides a piece of paper across the desk toward Erich.

LEMAN

Sign this.

Erich picks up the paper. It is a resignation letter dated  
today, ready for his signature.

ERICH

I'll think about it.

LEMAN

Sign it or I'll fire you immediately  
and call the cops. Either way you're  
finished here.

Erich picks up a pen, signs and leaves without another word.  
Leman leans back in his chair, smiling.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

It is a typical modern layout, managers' offices and meeting  
rooms on three sides and the middle area filled with

shoulder-high workers cubicles. Today is Saturday and the office is almost deserted, except for some activity in one of the meeting rooms. Erich is with three programmers in their early twenties, all wearing jeans and tee shirts. They are ROB, MIKE and STEVE.

ERICH

There's nothing I can do, he's got me cold. I'm out and that's it.

Rob is a wiry Australian with a surfers tan and sun-bleached fair hair tied back in a pony tail.

ROB

That's too bad mate, the project was just getting back on track.

MIKE

Hey man, it's going to be bad around here with you gone. Who's going to filter out all the brown sticky stuff.

ERICH

Linda. I think.

They grin at each other.

ROB

Maybe it won't be sooo bad then.

ERICH

Look guys, give her a break. I blame Leman, not her. She's a pretty good project manager.

MIKE

(smirks)

Sure thing boss.

STEVE

Let us know where you end-up. I'll come work for you again any time.

ROB

Yeah, ditto.

Erich takes the project mascot, a plastic alien, out of his cardboard box and puts it on the table. A graphical version of it can be seen cavorting on a computer screen in a corner of the room.

ERICH

Look after Drago someone.

There's a catch in his voice. He picks up the box, stands and heads for the door. At the door he half-turns back toward them.

ERICH  
Drinks in Ted's bar sometime next  
week.

Without waiting for a response, he walks out into the main office where a uniformed security guard is waiting to escort him out of the building.

After Erich leaves the three programmers look at each other in dismay. Steve sums it up for all of them.

STEVE  
Bummer!

INT. ERICH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Erich is trying to explain to his girlfriend JENNIFER why he has lost his job. They are sitting side-by-side on the sofa in the living room, half-turned toward each other, close but not touching.

JENNIFER  
You bastard Erich. You promised.

ERICH  
Honey, it didn't mean anything.

He tries to take her hand but she shrugs him off.

JENNIFER  
In the office for chrissake. How could you do this to me?

ERICH  
Sorry sweetheart.

He bows his head.

JENNIFER  
Don't you sweetheart me. I've had enough.

ERICH  
Look, I made a mistake. I'm sorry.

JENNIFER  
Who are you Erich?

ERICH  
What?

JENNIFER  
Who are you? I don't know you anymore.

ERICH  
Of course I...

JENNIFER

I think you have to spend some time.  
Find out who you really are, or decide  
who you want to be. Whatever.

ERICH

Wait. Maybe if we take some time...

JENNIFER

(crying)

Go. Just go.

He opens his mouth to speak, but can't think of anything to say and shuts it again. He goes into the bedroom and throws some of his clothes into a bag. As he emerges into the living area, she is staring out of the window with her back turned toward him.

ERICH

I'll pick-up the rest next week.

She doesn't reply, so he walks to the front door and leaves quietly.

INT. TED'S BAR - NIGHT

Erich is with about thirty people, most of them in their early twenties and casually dressed. The party is in full swing and he is buying another round of drinks at the bar. Steve and Mike are helping him ferry the full glasses over to the others.

ERICH

Is that everybody? I'm surprised so  
many came.

STEVE

Yep, I think that's it. Why can't  
they have more waitresses?

He carries away the last load, with some difficulty, just as LINDA ROBINS comes in from the street. She is neat and businesslike with close-cropped blonde hair in a dark business suit with knee-length skirt. She moves with catlike sensuality, arching her back and swaying her hips.

ERICH

Hey. Linda. Glad you could make  
it.

LINDA

I just got your message. Erich, I'm  
so sorry. I had no idea...

Erich holds up his hand, stopping her in mid-flow.

ERICH

Look, it doesn't matter either way

now does it? I should've known  
better anyway. Let's just have a  
drink.

They order drinks and chat inconsequentially for a while then  
she looks pointedly at her watch.

LINDA

Oops, gotta go. Bye. Good luck.

He tries to kiss her goodbye but she turns her head so that it  
lands on her cheek.

ERICH

Yeah, you too sweetheart. All the  
best. They're a good team, they'll  
see you through if you treat them  
right.

She puts her half-empty glass on the bar and turns to leave.  
On her way to the door, she stops and looks back at him over  
her shoulder.

LINDA

You know, you surprised me Erich. I  
thought I knew you, but now I'm not  
so sure.

She leaves and he mounts a bar stool next to JACK SOMERVILLE,  
best friend and newspaper reporter. Jack is a tad taller and  
heavier than Erich with floppy blue-black hair that tends to  
fall over his right eye. BARRY is behind the bar. In his  
mid-twenties, blonde crew-cut and a spectacularly muscular  
physique.

BARRY

It doesn't so bad to me. Just a job,  
you lose one you go get another.  
What's the big deal? Life's too  
short.

JACK

Office affairs are dynamite, you  
never know when they are going to  
blow-up right in your face.

ERICH

Yeah, yeah. I should've known  
better. I know.

He stares into the bottom of his glass for a long moment.

JACK

I saw Linda was here, she didn't stay  
long though.

ERICH

Jen's thrown me out.



JACK

What did you expect? You can crash  
chez moi until you get back on your  
feet.

ERICH

Thanks, I appreciate it.

They are interrupted by a burst of laughter from a table near the back of the room. Most of Erich's guests have gone by now, leaving behind a hard core of dedicated drinkers. Rob is trying to out-do Steve as they work their way along rows of glasses lined-up on the table. He succeeds.

STEVE

Hey, that's not fair!

ROB

Such is life mate, a real bitch.  
Your round I believe.

They all laugh, the good humour is back. Erich nods toward the other end of the bar where two girls sit.

ERICH

See what I see?

JACK

You just can't leave it alone can you?

ERICH

You only live twice. Which one do  
you want?

JACK

(laughs)  
Well, the bartender's not bad.

BARRY

(winks)  
There's no accounting for taste.

JACK

I think my friend here wants to offer  
a drink to those two over there.

Barry walks over to the two women. They exchange a few words with him then nod and smile in Erich's direction. Erich gets down off his bar stool and saunters over.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jack has a two bedroom apartment on the 9th floor of a block overlooking the ocean, although Jack's view is mostly over the city. It is a typical bachelor nest with standard furniture, a poster of George Michael and a print of the Hollywood Bowl on the walls.

Jack is getting ready for work, he is a reporter for the city's biggest newspaper. Erich slops around in a bath robe. They are having coffee.

JACK  
You look like shit.

ERICH  
(winces)  
Not so loud, please.

JACK  
Even Linda put in an appearance. I was impressed.

He pours them both more coffee.

ERICH  
Why not? I never had any illusions about her.  
(beat)  
And she never pretended to be anything she wasn't.

JACK  
You're taking it all pretty calmly.

ERICH  
It's all just a game really. Isn't it.

JACK  
A game?

ERICH  
But I miscalculated with Leman, let myself be taken in. Forgot he would need a scapegoat.

JACK  
I hate office politics.

They drink their coffee in silence as Erich scans the newspaper.

ERICH  
I'd better start looking for a job. Maybe get on the web later.

JACK  
That's the way. Get right back in saddle. You could call Jen too.

ERICH  
Yeah, as long as Leman hasn't black-listed me.

JACK  
I doubt that -- too scared of a

lawsuit.

ERICH

Probably not, but I won't take just anything. It has to be a step-up.

JACK

Maybe you should just take what you can get and then work your way into the job you really want.

ERICH

Sure.

JACK

Well that was the tip of the day from uncle Jack's employment service.

ERICH

(smiles)

Don't you have a job to go to?

JACK

Okay, I can take a hint.

He downs the rest of his coffee and leaves for work.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jack comes in the door, he is greeted by Erich who is drunk, slumped on the sofa. He walks over to the bar and pours himself a bourbon. The bottle is nearly empty, he frowns.

JACK

How did it go today?

ERICH

Seems the market ain't so good right now.

JACK

No shit? You'll find something. You just have to keep plugging away at it.

Erich raises his glass.

ERICH

(sarcastic)

Here's to the merits of sheer, freakin hairy-assed, dogged persistence.

Jack takes a sip from his glass and walks over to the kitchen area. He opens the refrigerator door, then the freezer.

JACK

Hungry? I can offer you frozen  
pizza, or  
    (sorting through the  
        freezer contents)  
frozen pizza.

ERICH  
Well, it's a tough call, but I think  
I'm going to go for the frozen pizza.  
Pepperoni if you have it.

JACK  
It'll have to be quattro fromaggi.  
Anything on TV?

They settle down to an evening in front of the box.

INT. HIVE, TUNNEL

The creature that was SETH crouches in a side-tunnel, waiting.  
Waiting for prey, for meat. The stone ax in its claws held  
raised, ready to attack.

It is vaguely man-shaped with a hard shell, an exoskeleton  
complete with visible articulated joints. The head is an  
almost featureless ovoid with two unblinking round black eyes  
above a jutting beak.

There is no sound in the caves and tunnels of the Hive lit by  
a dim bluish light that appears to emanate from the rock walls.

Then there is a clumping sound, a vibration in the rock, getting  
louder. Another is approaching, suddenly it rounds the corner  
and enters the tunnel. One of its own kind, almost identical,  
but that doesn't matter. Meat is meat.

The creature springs, pinning its prey to the ground. It raises  
the ax for the killing blow but then there's a voice in its head.  
A familiar voice saying things it does not want to understand.

IONE (V.O.)  
Dad. It's me, Ione. Your daughter.  
I've been looking for you.

SETH (V.O.)  
What? For me?

IONE (V.O.)  
Come-on. It's all right now, I'll  
take care of you.

SETH (V.O.)  
I don't...

He frees her and she gets to her feet. He covers his face if  
trying to hide.

IONE (V.O.)

Manu too. Come with me. Manu is waiting for you. There are more new arrivals from Earth.

SETH (V.O.)

No. Just want to forget. Why can't you all just leave me alone?

But he allows her to take his ax and lead him back through the tunnels, head bowed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Erich is listlessly walking the streets. He buys a newspaper and heads for Starbucks. On the way he stops by a ragged figure sitting among the ruins of a cardboard box just inside an alley. It is an old man with dirty white hair known as the COLONEL. Erich stuffs a bill into his outstretched hand.

ERICH

Hi Colonel. Nice day.

COLONEL

Thanks boy. Watch out for skirmishers. Testing our vigilance. Before the main attack.

The Colonel's mind had stayed behind in some forgotten war zone.

ERICH

Sure, I'll be careful. Want some coffee?

Without waiting for an answer he continues along the street and goes through the door of the coffee shop. As he comes out again holding two large cappuccinos he is accosted by WILSON, an immaculately groomed young man with a big beaming smile.

WILSON

Excuse me sir. May I ask you if you are interested in bettering yourself?

ERICH

What?

WILSON

Hello, my name is Wilson. I am looking for people who are open to new ideas and opportunities. May I ask if you have ever thought you could really change things?

ERICH

I'm not interested in politics.

Erich walks around him and heads back toward the Colonel with Wilson following in his wake.

WILSON

No no, not politics. We help you take charge of your life, realize your full potential. Can you spare me a couple of minutes to explain?

ERICH

How much does it cost?

WILSON

Absolutely nothing. The program is entirely funded by the federal government and private donors. We even pay you, a little.

ERICH

Sounds too good to be true. How much?

WILSON

I know it's unbelievable, isn't it. Actually it's even better than that. You get fifty dollars attendance money per meeting.

Erich arrives at the Colonel's alleyway and hands him one of the cups and a handful of sugar sticks. Wilson grasps Erich's arm, but he wriggles free.

ERICH

Look, what is this all about exactly?

WILSON

It's a new training program aimed at people like you.

ERICH

What do you mean by people like me?

Erich sips his coffee and winks at the Colonel who is noisily slurping his.

WILSON

Young, open-minded individuals who want to get their lives into the fast lane. Recognize yourself?

ERICH

Well...

WILSON

Come along to one of our meetings. There's one tonight. We give you fifty dollars just for showing-up, no obligations. Promise me you'll

come?

ERICH

Maybe.

WILSON

No, you have to make a commitment.  
That's all part of the approach.  
Making commitments and keeping them.

ERICH

Sure, I'll come if I can make it.

WILSON

Okay, that's good enough. Now, I  
need your name and a contact phone  
number.

ERICH

Why? Do you want my social security  
number as well?

WILSON

Thank you, that won't be necessary  
sir. My colleagues will check you in  
at the door.

ERICH

Alright, alright. The name's Roth,  
Erich Roth. Don't remember the  
phone number.

Wilson writes it down in his little book and hands Erich a card.

WILSON

Take this. Directions on the back.  
Present the card at the door. Seven  
o'clock. There's free cocktails and  
buffet. Casual dress, come as you  
are.

Erich glances at the card and puts it into his hip pocket as  
Wilson takes his leave.

COLONEL

Look just like civilians, don't they?  
But don't be fooled, underneath  
they're different.

Erich drinks his coffee and watches as Wilson approaches another  
prospect.

ERICH

That's just what I was thinking.

EXT. CENTER - EVENING

Erich arrives on foot at the address indicated on the card. It is a modern office building, fifteen stories of gleaming steel and glass. He hesitates a moment, double-checking the address, before entering.

INT. CENTER RECEPTION - EVENING

He goes through the automatic revolving doors into the foyer. It is impressive, white marble and glass, two storeys high. He shows his card to a uniformed security guard just inside the door. The guard directs him to an area at the back where Wilson and MANU, a statuesque African American in her mid-twenties, are assembling a motley group of young people.

WILSON

Ah, Erich. Glad you came. Please line up over there. We'll take you through when everyone is here.

None of the others seem to be inclined to casual conversation, so he takes his place in the line. About ten minutes later, they are marched through a set of double doors and along a corridor to door marked "Meeting Room".

INT. CENTER, MEETING ROOM - EVENING

Erich is in a meeting room together with about fifty others, most under thirty and dressed in jeans and tee-shirts. They sit in rows facing SETH BODACH, an impressive figure in his fifties, with a deep California tan and a mane of white hair. He is delivering a well-worn welcome speech, standing at the front of the room in front of a white screen, currently blank.

SETH

Thanks for coming everyone and congratulations. You have already taken the first step along the road to a new you and a successful new life.

Erich's new bosom pal Wilson stands with his back to the wall at the side of the room. He makes little gestures of encouragement every time Erich glances his way.

SETH

I am really excited about this program and I'm sure you will be too when you see what we are offering.

He looks around the room and, for a moment, his gaze crosses Erich's. There's a hint of something cold behind the eyes.

SETH

Now we are going to show you a short film then ask you to join us next door for cocktails.



He signals to someone at the back of the room and leaves via a side door. The lights dim and a video projector embedded in the ceiling projects an image on the white screen.

They sit and watch a fifteen minute commercial extolling the virtues and ground-breaking technology of the Center for Human Development. The narrator is a B-list actor in his fifties.

Erich leans toward his neighbor, a pretty brunette.

ERICH  
(whispers)  
Kindda like high school. Huh?

She smiles politely but her eyes never leave the screen.

When the lights come back Wilson and two of his colleagues begin to pass round questionnaires.

WILSON  
Fill out these forms please. Won't  
take a minute. Need any help, Erich?

ERICH  
No, thanks. It's very detailed  
isn't it?

WILSON  
Government bureaucracy. Don't  
forget they are paying for some of  
this.

Erich sets to and fills out the form then hands it to Wilson.

ERICH  
When do we get paid?

WILSON  
In just a minute. Hey you've left  
some gaps here. Don't worry, I'll  
help you.

It is clear that Erich will not be allowed to leave until all the questions are answered. He replies to Wilson's verbal prompts and Wilson writes on the form. When they are finished Wilson hands him the attendance money and ushers him into the next room.

INT. CENTER, AUDITORIUM - EVENING

The room is huge, like a theater. At one end is a raised platform or stage. The plush red velvet chairs have been stacked around the edge of the auditorium leaving a clear central area. There are several hundred people present, most of them wearing smart business suits.

Erich and his scruffy colleagues stand out against the others

in the room. Wilson and friends chaperone the new recruits, making sure they get their share of food and drink and introducing them to senior members of the Center.

Everyone is friendly, even eager to listen to the newcomers. But Erich is ill at ease, something feels wrong.

His gaze is attracted to IONE, a blonde girl in a black dress, at the far end of the room, with Dugald. They are not talking but scanning the room as if looking for someone.

ERICH  
Wilson, who's that?

WILSON  
Ah that's the founder's daughter  
Ione. She is one of the most senior  
members of the Center.

ERICH  
Hmm. Nice.

WILSON  
(laughs)  
Out of our league I'm afraid.

Erich tries to maneuver closer to Ione, but Wilson leads him away in another direction. After two hours the crowd starts to thin-out and Wilson ushers him toward the door. He looks around for Ione but she is nowhere to be seen.

ERICH  
It seems to be over then.

WILSON  
That's it for tonight. Your  
induction starts tomorrow morning at  
nine.

ERICH  
What's the rush?

WILSON  
Why wait? We like to strike while  
the iron's hot.

ERICH  
I'm not sure I can make it.

WILSON  
You have to make the commitment.  
That's our way.

ERICH  
Okay, okay. I'll be here.

They shake hands and Erich steps out into the street, the door closes behind him.

ERICH  
(softly)  
Worse than timeshare.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Erich is telling Jack about the Center over a late night drink.  
He shows him the brochure.

JACK  
It's a sect. You realize that don't  
you?

ERICH  
So what. You should have seen her  
Jack. Freakin gorgeous.

Erich is a little drunk, he doesn't really want to listen.

JACK  
Be very, very careful with these  
people. There are rumors.

ERICH  
Rumors?

JACK  
Disappearances, brainwashing...

ERICH  
Alien abductions.

Jack grabs Erich's arms and tries to turn him so that he is  
looking into his face.

JACK  
No really. We're investigating them  
at the paper.

ERICH  
You're starting to sound like my  
mother. If I had a mother, that is.

JACK  
I'm serious Erich. These people are  
dangerous.

ERICH  
Breathing is dangerous. Gimme a  
break.

INT. CENTER, CLASSROOM - MORNING

Erich sits at a desk typing into a laptop computer. Like the  
other twenty-four members of the class, all new recruits on  
their first day. Manu stands in front of the class. She is

beautiful but cold and formal.

MANU

Today will be devoted to completing the psychometric and other tests. Then tomorrow you will begin your individual programs. We break for lunch at twelve-thirty.

She scans the room.

MANU

Any questions? No? Then I will leave you to it.

After a look around the room, she makes for the door and leaves. They exchange glances but no one speaks.

INT. CENTER, CLASSROOM - LATER

Erich and his fellow recruits work silently at their laptops until Manu returns around mid-day.

MANU

Stop now everyone. We'll go for lunch and return here at one-thirty.

She walks over to Erich's desk.

MANU

Erich Roth, you are to report to room 305 at eighteen-hundred today.

ERICH

Oh. What's that for?

MANU

Your evaluation interview, by a senior member of the Center. It is very important. You must go.

ERICH

Okay, I'll be there.

He raises his eyes to the ceiling as she walks to the door and they all file out after her.

INT. CENTER, ROOM 305 - EVENING

Erich knocks and enters the small spartan office. He is surprised to see Ione seated behind the desk.

IONE

Erich. Thanks for coming. Sit please.

ERICH  
Pleased to meet you.

IONE  
Your test results are surprising.  
It seems you have a very high psychic  
potential.

ERICH  
Oh. Is that good?

He tries to make eye contact but she ignores his efforts.

IONE  
We want to put you through a special  
accelerated program, starting  
immediately.

ERICH  
You mean tomorrow?

IONE  
No tonight. Why delay? Is that a  
problem?

ERICH  
No, no, that's fine.

IONE  
Okay, let's go now.  
(stands)  
Follow me.

She rises and walks around the desk to the door, opens it and  
steps out into the corridor.

INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Erich follows Ione to the elevators, trying not to ogle. He  
attempts to engage her in conversation.

ERICH  
Where are we going?

IONE  
(curtly)  
To the lab on the 15th floor.

INT. CENTER, LABORATORY - EVENING

They enter a brightly-lit room full of electronic equipment.  
Manu is waiting for them wearing a white lab coat.

MANU  
Hello Erich. This is the hot seat.

She shows him to a reclining chair, like a dentist's, next to a bank of electronic equipment. Above the chair is a helmet on an articulated gantry. He gets on and Manu begins attaching sensors to his wrists and torso.

IONE

The equipment monitors your life-signs. The helmet registers your brain activity and the visor projects an image directly on to your retinas.

Erich's expression is doubtful. Ione stands beside him and squeezes his arm

IONE

Don't worry. It is perfectly safe.

ERICH

Okay, I'll trust you.

MANU

Now I'll just give you a shot, a sedative to keep you calm.

ERICH

Is that really necessary?

Manu quickly injects a clear liquid into his left arm.

IONE

Strictly no, but it helps.

MANU

The noise you will hear in the in the earphones is biofeedback, it tells you how much alpha-waves you are producing. The objective is keep the tone as low and as level as you can.

Manu lowers the helmet over Erich's head.

ERICH

Okay, got it.

Ione puts on a headset and speaks into the microphone.

IONE

Now, this is like a computer game. You find yourself in an environment where you must open the doors and follow the path. I'll be giving you directions through the helmet. You'll see, it's fun.

He nods and Manu pulls the visor down over his eyes. He relaxes, listening to the tone in his ears and watching the image of an

antique wooden door. He slips into a half-awake dreamlike state.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE

Erich is standing before an ancient wooden door with black cast-iron handle and hinges. He opens it and steps through into a small room with no windows. The floor, walls and ceiling look like stone blocks. In the middle of the floor is a round opening, like a well, about twelve feet across. Growing out of the edges of the well, and embedded in the stone work, are knurled roots thicker than Erich's arm.

He peers over the edge and is astounded to see a tree growing downwards, upside down, into the well. The trunk and branches can be seen through gaps between the larger roots.

IONE (O.C.)

Do you see the tree? Climb down it.  
Don't worry. It is not real, you  
cannot be hurt.

Erich clambers down, feet first, through an opening in the roots and on to the trunk.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, TREE

The tree is huge, the bole fully as wide as the well opening. Now that he is on the tree, he discovers he is actually upside down and turns so that his feet are pointing downward toward the roots.

The bark is thick and uneven, its crevices providing plentiful hand and foot holds. He begins to climb. It is fifty feet or more to the first branches, mighty boughs spreading out above him.

The tree is bathed in a soft white light, like moonlight. He looks up and that the top of the tree, miles above, is surrounded by a milky-white whirlpool. Like a spiral galaxy slowly turning on its axis.

On reaching the first branch, he stops and looks around. From this vantage point it is clear that the trunk he has climbed is only one of many intertwined root and branch systems. The well opening is a tiny circle of light far below. Only the tree is visible, beyond it lies impenetrable darkness.

IONE (O.C.)

Are you in the branches?

ERICH

Yes. What is this place?

IONE (O.C.)

Everyone sees their own

interpretation. It represents the  
cosmos, a philosophical view.

He climbs higher into the branches.

IONE (O.C.)

Now look for the trunk closest to the  
one you came up. You can't miss it.

There is one closer than any of the others. He reorients  
himself and moves toward it. There is a strange sound, Erich  
stops and the sound resolves into a voice, low and guttural,  
calling his name.

KED

Erich!

ERICH

What? Who's there?

IONE (O.C.)

(sharply)

What? Who are you talking to?

KED

A friend.

Erich sees it now, a vague man-shape half-hidden in the foliage  
of the tree.

IONE (O.C.)

Erich! Don't be distracted. There  
are things you don't understand.

ERICH

What is this place?

KED

Why it is the tree of course. The  
tree of life, between the realms. Be  
not afraid.

ERICH

How do you know my name?

KED

I know many things. I was Ked. Long  
ago I planted the tree.

Erich shifts his position to get a better look, but Ked remains  
indistinct, the image blurred.

ERICH

What do you want?

KED

I came to warn you. All is not what  
it seems. Your enemy is near.



IONE (O.C.)  
Take care!

ERICH  
What are you? Why should I believe  
you?

KED  
My race was older than yours, but no  
wiser. They destroyed themselves.  
I am here to warn you.

IONE (O.C.)  
(alarmed)  
Erich! Who are you talking to?

ERICH  
This is crazy.

He turns and continues toward the trunk and its little circle  
of distant light.

INT. DREAMSCAPE, TOWER

Emerging feet first from the hole in the ground, Erich finds  
himself in a chamber similar to the one he started from. He  
gets to his feet.

IONE (O.C.)  
(relieved)  
Are you in the tower? Good, now open  
the door.

He opens the heavy wooden door and steps out into the middle  
of a forest.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, FOREST - DAY

Before him is a narrow footpath, the only opening in an otherwise  
impenetrable wall of tree trunks and bushy undergrowth. Behind  
him is the ancient wooden door set in a stone-built tower. The  
top of the tower is hidden in the branches of the surrounding  
trees. Blue sky can be glimpsed through the treetops.

IONE (O.C.)  
Do you see the path? Follow the  
path.

ERICH  
Where am I now?

IONE (O.C.)  
I'll explain everything afterwards.  
You are doing well. Let's see how  
far we can go, shall we.

He sets off along the path and soon loses sight of the tower. Both sides of the footpath are impenetrable undergrowth, making it impossible to leave it. Eventually the forest begins to thin out.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, RUINS

Before him are the ruins of ancient buildings. Sections of wall, columns and arches emerge from the long grass. The place must have been enormous, the ruins stretch for miles toward distant mountains with snow-topped peaks. A WHITE FIGURE is waiting for him, framed in a nearby arch.

WHITE FIGURE  
Greetings, I await you.

Coming closer, Erich can see that the figure is entirely covered in white, wearing what looks like a long robe with a hood covering all but his face. On the face is a white mask, the eye-holes completely black like empty orbs.

ERICH  
Who are you? What is this place?

WHITE FIGURE  
I am your guide. This is a meeting place.

ERICH  
I don't understand.

WHITE FIGURE  
I will be you and you will be me.

ERICH  
What does that mean? Must you talk in riddles?

WHITE FIGURE  
You will know soon enough, I hope that you will understand.

He touches Erich on the shoulder and Erich wakes with a start.

INT. CENTER, LABORATORY - NIGHT

Back in the laboratory, he feels Ione's hand on his shoulder. The image of the forest clearing is still showing on the visor but the white stranger is gone. She helps him remove the helmet.

IONE  
Well, that was incredible. How do you feel?

ERICH

A bit groggy.

He looks around the room, blinking in the bright light. Manu is no longer in the room.

IONE

I've never seen anyone get so far at the first attempt.

ERICH

That's amazing technology. Who is the white guy?

IONE

Well, everybody sees something different, but it probably represents a new start. That's why it's white, like a blank page.

He gets out of the restraints and stands up. Several hours have passed and it's now dark outside. Ione is paying him much more attention now.

IONE

Who was the other? Did you meet someone else?

ERICH

I don't know. He said he was a friend.

IONE

Hmm. It is probably nothing, maybe something out of your subconscious mind. You must be hungry, let's go eat.

Erich suddenly realizes he is famished. Not only that, he is apparently going to have dinner with the object of his desire.

ERICH

I'm starving. Where would you like to go?

IONE

(surprised)

Oh, anywhere. I don't mind.

They leave the laboratory, Erich follows her out wearing a self-satisfied grin.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Erich and Ione have just finished eating. The restaurant is chic and expensive complete with fine wine and supercilious waiters in tuxedos. The formerly spotless white tablecloth is showing a few stains on Erich's side.

IONE

So, what about your family?

ERICH

There's no-one. I'm an orphan. I was with several foster families but I never got that close to any of them.

IONE

Now we are your family. You can count on us.

ERICH

How did it all get started?

IONE

My father was a research scientist. A pioneer.

ERICH

A brilliant man.

IONE

Yes. But he was in advance of his time. His colleagues were jealous, they ostracized him. So he quit to start the Center.

ERICH

Then you joined him?

IONE

Yes. I love it. It's such fascinating work. What was your job?

ERICH

Software Engineering. I got into it at college, then took a job at a technology company.

IONE

What happened?

ERICH

Office politics. Couldn't stand the bureaucracy.

Ione laughs then checks her watch and signals for the waiter.

IONE

Come-on it's getting late. I'll run you back to the Center, you can take one of the guest rooms. We will be starting early tomorrow morning.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Erich and Ione emerge from the restaurant and she hands a ticket to the parking valet and they wait for him to return with her car. He stands as close to her as he dare without touching.

ERICH

Just how early is early?

IONE

Around eight. There is a lot to do  
and I like to get an early start.

The car arrives, she tips the fresh-faced young valet and they get in.

EXT. IONE'S CAR - NIGHT

Erich sits uneasily in the passenger seat of Ione's yellow Mercedes SLK. He watches her drive, finding the experience intensely erotic, but is unable to find the words to express his desire.

ERICH

Thanks for the dinner. I feel kind  
of bad about you paying though.

IONE

(laughs)

My pleasure. Actually the Center is  
paying, not me.

Silence. Erich doesn't know what to say next.

ERICH

So what is the tree exactly?

IONE

Well, it is a symbol. Everyone sees  
their own version. We use the helmet  
to provide a basic set of images but  
then your own subconscious takes  
over.

ERICH

A symbol of what?

IONE

It represents the junction between  
the physical and spiritual  
dimensions.

ERICH

Oh.

He is none the wiser and regrets asking.

INT. CENTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ione shows Erich to a room at the Center. It is plain and functional, with a single bed and simple wooden furniture. There is no telephone.

IONE

There's a communal shower down the hall and some clean clothes in the closet. You should find something your size.

ERICH

Thanks. Ione...

He just looks at her with inarticulate longing, not daring to speak.

IONE

(laughs)

Come here.

She wraps her arms around his neck, drawing him against her. They kiss.

INT. CENTER, REFECTORY - MORNING

Erich is having breakfast at a table by himself. He is wearing a Center sweatshirt from the closet in his room. Still on cloud nine from last night, he doesn't see Wilson approaching.

WILSON

You are to report to Seth's office at nine o'clock sharp.

ERICH

Morning Wilson, nice to see you. How are you today?

WILSON

Don't keep him waiting.

He walks away stiffly.

ERICH

(laughing)

News gets around fast in this place.

INT. Seth'S OFFICE - MORNING

Erich knocks on the door, opens it tentatively. SETH is sitting behind an antique mahogany desk, Ione is in one of the visitors' chairs.

SETH

Come in, come in my boy. Ione has been telling me about your exploits. Wonderful, wonderful. Do sit down.

Erich enters the room, smiling shyly at Ione.

ERICH  
It's a privilege to meet you sir.

SETH  
Not at all. Your progress is very impressive.

IONE  
We think you should be able to reach the next level very quickly. Perhaps today.

ERICH  
Oh, thanks. Is that good?

SETH  
It's outstanding. We've never come across anyone with your level of innate psychic ability. It upsets some of our preconceptions, but that's good. That's how we make progress.

They both study him intently, expectantly, as if looking for a sign. Erich finds Seth's stare uncomfortable.

SETH  
Do you have any questions for me at this stage? Any comments you want to make?

ERICH  
No, I don't think so.

SETH  
Good. Let's hope it goes as well today. I'll touch base with you later.

Ione stands and makes for the door.

IONE  
See you later then. Come-on Erich.

He follows Ione out into the corridor feeling vague disquiet but forgets it immediately as she discreetly squeezes his thigh.

INT. CENTER, LABORATORY - DAY

Manu is waiting for them in the laboratory. Erich gets into the chair again and attaches the equipment.

IONE  
Same routine as yesterday. I'll be with you all the way.

ERICH  
Okay. Let's go.

Manu gives him the shot and he descends slowly into the dream state, accompanied by the modulating tone in his ears.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE

As before, Erich opens the wooden door and climbs into the well. This time he is faster and more confident. There is no sign of Ked. He walks quickly until he comes upon the ruins.

The White Figure is waiting for him as before. Erich catches glimpses of other cloaked figures moving among the ruins.

WHITE FIGURE  
Greetings hive brother!

ERICH  
What is your name?

WHITE FIGURE  
I have no name. I will be you and you will be me.

ERICH  
What is this place?

WHITE FIGURE  
We are between the domains. Our thoughts mingle but our substance is forever apart.

ERICH  
I don't understand. What domains?

WHITE FIGURE  
The light and dark. I will be you and you will be me.

IONE (V.O.)  
Give the response.

ERICH  
I will be you and you will be me.

WHITE FIGURE  
So be it.

With that he turns and leaves, taking the footpath that brought Erich here.

ERICH  
Wait. Where are you going?

No answer. Erich tries to follow but other cloaked figures, seemingly identical to the first, emerge from the ruins to block



his path.

ERICH

What is going on? Ione?

The others do not speak. They grab his arms and march him toward another part of the ruined city. He struggles, tries to free himself but to no avail.

ERICH

Ione! Get me out of here.

They stop by a pool of water in a large stone basin, about the size of a small swimming pool. The water is bright blue and opaque, as if someone added too much chlorine. They march him straight up to the edge and throw him in.

INT. HIVE

Erich wakes with a start. He is in some sort of cave, with smooth stone walls, black like coal. The light is odd, kind of purple tinged and not very bright.

There is a movement at the edge of his vision, he turns. A strange creature is standing right next to him. It is man-shaped, hairless and naked with smooth hard grey skin. The eyes are completely black, the mouth a jutting beak. Shocked, he can do nothing but stare.

ALIEN

Do not be afraid. I am a friend.  
Don't try to speak yet.

The words resonate inside his head. He tries to reply but nothing comes out.

ALIEN

Follow me. Just follow me. We have  
to get away from this area. I'll  
answer all your questions later.

Erich nods dumbly. The creature turns about and heads off toward the entrance to a tunnel, a few yards away. Erich follows unsteadily. They enter the tunnel then come to another cave, then another tunnel. The voice in his head starts again.

ALIEN

You have been tricked, just like the  
rest of us. We aren't on earth but  
you're among friends.

(beat)

My name is Harvey-Jones, Tristram  
Harvey-Jones. I am, was, a  
psychologist from Oxford, England.

After what seems like hours they enter a cave that is occupied by a group of about twenty of the same creatures.

HARVEY-JONES

We are communicating by telepathy.  
You just have to think of the person  
you want to speak to and internally  
vocalize the words. You'll soon get  
the hang of it.

They skirt the edge of the cave, heading for another tunnel  
entrance. Erich hesitates.

HARVEY-JONES

Don't stop! They're hostile. They  
will kill and eat us if we attract too  
much attention.

Erich examines Harvey-Jones and the other creatures with  
distaste.

ERICH

(haltingly)

Am I still dreaming?

ALIEN

That's it! Well done. No dream I'm  
afraid, old boy. At least I don't  
think so.

ERICH

Where are we? How?

HARVEY-JONES

Where? I haven't the foggiest  
notion. Not on earth though, that's  
for sure.

Erich glances down, his own body is like the others.

ERICH

Oh my god!

HARVEY-JONES

My private theory is that we died and  
went to hell. You'll see what I  
mean.

ERICH

How many of us are there, from earth  
I mean?

HARVEY-JONES

About five hundred, although there  
may be other groups we know nothing  
about.

ERICH

How did you know I was coming?

HARVEY-JONES

They let us know when a new arrival is expected. That way we save them the bother of dealing with you.

They are moving through a network of caves and tunnels. Many of the caves are occupied by small groups of aliens. There are vines, or thick roots, growing in and through the tunnels.

ERICH  
How did you get here?

HARVEY-JONES  
Same way as you probably. I was tricked.

Eventually they arrive at a cavern containing a group of aliens armed with what look like stone-age axes. One waves them through and Erich follows Harvey-Jones into another tunnel.

HARVEY-JONES  
This is the human area. We've made it as secure as we can, but that's not saying much.

INT. HIVE, LARGE CHAMBER

They enter a large chamber occupied by small groups spread around the perimeter. One of the alien figures gets to its feet and comes over to meet them.

HARVEY-JONES  
Here's the new one. What's your name boy?

ERICH  
Erich, Erich Roth, from Los Angeles.

HARVEY-JONES  
Erich meet Manu. She's what passes for our leader.

MANU  
(laughs)  
Hello. It's quite a shock at first isn't it?

Erich is too shocked to reply.

HARVEY-JONES  
They're arriving more frequently now.

MANU  
Yes, looks like the invasion has shifted up a gear.

Erich comes out of his stupor.

ERICH

Manu? Wait, you're not...

MANU

Yes. I was one of the first possessed.

ERICH

Possessed?

MANU

Yes. Possessed. What do you imagine is happening to your own body right now?

ERICH

I wondered if I might be dead.

HARVEY-JONES

No, no. It might be preferable though.

MANU

You have been tricked, like I was. Your soul has been swapped with the owner of this body.

ERICH

Soul?

MANU

Mind, essence, call it what you will. The real you, buster.

HARVEY-JONES

Sentience generates a sort of energy pattern that can exist outside the body. You should be able to see an image of me right now.

A subtle collusion between the mind and the eye shows the human form of Harvey-Jones, a small balding man with a goatee beard, and Manu, a little younger and sexier than she was on earth. They are transparent, like ghosts, superimposed over the robot-like alien bodies.

ERICH

I know I'm going to wake-up soon.

MANU

Normal reaction. I'd like to say you'll soon get used to it but that would be a lie.

HARVEY-JONES

They're telepaths you see, they've been observing us for centuries, probably millennia.

ERICH

And how the hell do you know that?

Harvey-Jones taps his forehead.

HARVEY-JONES

It's all in here dear boy. In the body's memory. See for yourself.

MANU

Enough for now. I'll explain more later. Let's get some food.

Erich follows them to the other side of the cave where another of the creatures is doling out handfuls of something squishy.

INT. HIVE, LARGE CHAMBER - LATER

Erich squats on his haunches, the nearest they can get to sitting down, with the others eating a simple meal of chunks of raw meat. There is no liquid.

ERICH

Why don't we cook this? Is there anything to drink?

One of the aliens nearest to him replies.

ALIEN

We have nothing much to burn and anyway fire doesn't work here. These creatures don't seem to drink, or pee for that matter. I'm Ione.

Erich starts, but he can see her now, the others too. Many of them wide-eyed, desperate looking.

ERICH

(angrily)

Ione? Yes of course. You're the one got me into this mess.

IONE

My possessor not me. She's responsible for quite a lot of people being here.

They chew in silence for a while.

ERICH

This isn't bad. What is it exactly?

IONE

It's meat, some sort of animal I suppose. I prefer not to know too many details. The guards deliver it once a day and we have to send a

foraging squad to collect it. They usually have to fight for it.

ERICH

Guards?

IONE

Yes. Didn't you know? This is a prison camp, or something like that. Anyway we can't get out.

Erich holds his head in his hands, claws.

INT. HIVE, IONE'S CAVE

Erich, Harvey-Jones and Manu squat inside a smaller cavern.

MANU

No Erich, this is not just another planet. It's another universe. The laws of physics are different. I think that's why these people don't have any technology to speak of.

HARVEY-JONES

The universe has many more dimensions than we can perceive.

MANU

Four dimensions if you include time. Everything we know is contained within those dimensions, even light.

ERICH

(exasperated)

Then how can you say it's another universe? This is crazy.

MANU

Except gravity. Gravity is much weaker than it should be, theory says it is leaking outside of the universe we know. Into the fifth dimension.

ERICH

Fifth dimension? Didn't that used to be on TV?

MANU

And thought. That was Seth's breakthrough. Thought traverses the fifth dimension and can be picked up in another universe or dimension. Whatever. That's how the possessions started.

Two more creatures enter the cavern. Erich recognizes Ione but

her companion's human image is blurred, as if out of focus.

IONE

Erich, meet my father Seth. He was the first possessed.

SETH

My fault. It's all my fault. I believed him. Why did I believe him?

Seth pulls himself together a little and the ghostly image sharpens-up.

MANU

We were working on a project searching for extraterrestrial intelligence. And it worked. Unfortunately.

ERICH

What happened?

MANU

We tried telepathy, that's why Seth brought in Harvey-Jones here. It's more his field, parapsychology, all that stuff.

HARVEY-JONES

Jungian psychology and the study of the collective unconscious.

ERICH

And you made contact with one of these things.

He makes a gesture with his hand. Claw.

MANU

Yes, the leader of a major faction. He tricked Seth into changing places. You know the rest.

SETH

(wildly)

Take care, he's watching our every move. He's still in charge here.

Manu takes Dugald in her arms, awkwardly, and tries to calm him down.

MANU

It's okay, it's okay honey. Momma's here.

(to the others)

He believes his possessor still controls the hive. He may be right. We just don't know.

Manu and Ione lead Dugald away to the rear of the cave where they try to get him to eat something.

ERICH

So now, here we are, stranded  
light-years from home.

HARVEY-JONES

Not light-years. Probably less than  
an inch away from home. The  
dimensions are tightly bound.

They lapse into silence. Erich stands and begins pacing around the cavern. He wants to kill somebody, badly.

INT. HIVE, FEED CAVE

Erich, Ione, Harvey-Jones and about twenty other possessed humans are waiting for the guards to arrive with the daily delivery of food. Other groups wait nearby. The different groups eye each other warily.

The aliens souls are visible but unrelated to their physical form. One of them, standing back from the others observing the scene, has the psychic aspect of a pyramid with a single staring eye.

HARVEY-JONES

They seem to be able to adopt any  
psychic form they want. They often  
change them.

IONE

My father thinks it's a kind of  
language.

The guards arrive carrying large leather-like bags which they empty on to the dusty cavern floor. The prisoners hang back until the guards retreat from the pile of meat, then they rush forward grabbing what they can.

Erich's group move in a coordinated maneuver shutting out the others from one corner of the meat pile. They scoop up the fist-sized chunks into smaller bags made of the same leathery material and make off quickly.

INT. HIVE, IONE'S CAVE

Erich, Harvey-Jones and Manu are squatting, in the alien fashion, on their haunches eating. Erich watches Manu, struck by the incongruity of the scene. The human shapes, clearly visible, like ghosts mimicking the awkward movements of the robot-like alien bodies.

ERICH

There has to be a way.



MANU

There's one possibility I can think of, but it's not an easy one.

ERICH

What?

MANU

The aliens are powerful telepaths. That's how they managed to put us here.

ERICH

Yes.

MANU

We should be able to use their telepathic abilities to send one of us back.

HARVEY-JONES

That's how they work. In concert.

ERICH

So why haven't you tried it?

Manu balks at this, she turns on him.

MANU

You volunteering smartass? It's hard enough just keeping things together here.

ERICH

Maybe. I just know I can't stay here.

INT. HIVE

Erich is with Harvey-Jones. They are chipping away at one of the tunnel entrances with stone axes, trying to enlarge it for easier passage.

ERICH

There's something that's been bothering me. There's light everywhere in the caves, but I can't see where it comes from.

HARVEY-JONES

Well, I'm not certain but I think it's not like sunlight. Perhaps some sort of ambient radiation that these bodies can see.

Erich chips off a chunk of the tunnel wall and it falls at his feet. He stoops, picks it up and squints at the broken edge.

ERICH

This rock is strange too.

HARVEY-JONES

Yes. It's not rock as we understand it, it's malleable, a fluid, if you keep up the pressure for a while you can twist it into all sorts of shapes.

ERICH

A fluid? You mean it's a liquid?

HARVEY-JONES

Near enough. That probably explains why the geography of the hive is not constant.

ERICH

It changes?

HARVEY-JONES

Slowly, but yes, it bends and twists over time. It seems solid to us because we're relatively small. It's not completely uniform either, sometimes you find harder bits. We use them for our axes.

ERICH

I assume we're on, or in, a planet. There's gravity.

He jumps up and down to make the point.

HARVEY-JONES

Well no. As far as I can make out, there are no stars or planets. It's more like -- an ocean of goo. Lumpy goo, the lumps form around objects like stars and planets in our universe, attracted by their gravity.

They toil in silence as Erich tries to digest what he's been hearing.

ERICH

I have been trying to make sense of the body's memory. But all I get is a jumble of images, sounds and some other stuff I can't even recognize.

HARVEY-JONES

They don't have language at all. Not even names. Except for the leader, but he's not really one of them -- he came from somewhere else.

Erich toils away with a vengeance, his movements become more violent. They work ceaselessly, the alien bodies are tireless.

ERICH

How could such primitive creatures do this to us?

HARVEY-JONES

Don't underestimate them. They're not primitive at all, in some ways they are more advanced than we are.

ERICH

Really?

HARVEY-JONES

They live mainly in their minds you see. The physical bodies are just a support system.

They are interrupted by a group of twenty or so aliens emerging from the tunnel. Possessed humans, some of them nod in greeting as they pass.

ERICH

A distasteful necessity.

HARVEY-JONES

Quite. That could be why they are so simple, stripped-down to the bare minimum. Simple but tough.

ERICH

Just how tough I wonder.

HARVEY-JONES

Maybe immortal, they don't seem to age, or at least we've never seen any old ones. Or children for that matter.

ERICH

Is that why their eyesight is so poor?

HARVEY-JONES

Yes. Their physical senses are just good enough to get around the hive and manipulate a few physical objects.

ERICH

How can we fight them?

But Harvey-Jones is off on one his flights of speculation.

HARVEY-JONES

It could be the fate of all intelligent life. Just look at us. Just how much do we really live in the

physical world?

Erich turns back to his work, absorbed in his own dark thoughts.

INT. HIVE, IONE'S CAVE

Erich and Ione are alone together, waiting for Manu. He has been spending more and more time with her.

IONE

So you knew me, her, on earth?

ERICH

Yes.

IONE

Don't tell me, she seduced you.

ERICH

Er, yes. Sorry.

IONE

It's okay. You're not the first.  
There are quite a few here who were  
trapped by that bitch. I hate her.

He grips her arm, not too hard. She recoils, freeing the arm.

ERICH

Maybe when we get back...

IONE

Stop it! We'll never get out of here  
and you know it.

ERICH

I know no such thing. If we got here,  
we can get back. I just don't know  
how yet.

IONE

Yes, of course. You're right.  
Sorry about my moping.

ERICH

No problem. This is a pretty bizarre  
situation.

IONE

It's awful, like rape. Worse.

ERICH

Yeah. I hadn't thought of that side  
of it.

He puts his arm around her shoulders. This time she doesn't resist.

IONE  
Men wouldn't, at first.

ERICH  
Do those terms still apply? These  
bodies seem completely asexual. I  
wonder if they can have sex. What  
would it be like?

IONE  
(giggles)  
The mind boggles.

ERICH  
I'd give it a try, but I have no idea  
what to do.

IONE  
Typical Anglo-Saxon male.

ERICH  
(laughs)  
Maybe there are some Frenchmen or  
Italians here. We could ask them if  
they have any bright ideas.

They embrace awkwardly, their rigid alien bodies jerking with  
mirth. They don't seem to have been built for this kind of  
maneuver. After a long moment, the laughter peters out and they  
separate.

INT. HIVE, IONE'S CAVE - LATER

Manu returns, ducking her head to get through the cave entrance.  
Ione squats quietly in a corner, resting. Erich is beside her.

ERICH  
We have to talk.

MANU  
Let me guess...

ERICH  
I'm getting out of here.

MANU  
All right. What's your idea.

She joins him at the back of the cave.

ERICH  
We link our minds together, just like  
they do. Send someone back. Me.

Ione lifts her head. She stares at Erich as if reevaluating  
him.

MANU

It could work, if we could get enough people to cooperate.

ERICH

Taken a good look at our compatriots lately? They've had enough, they'll go for anything that gives them some hope.

MANU

We will have to practise, get the hang of it. They'll try to stop us for sure. It's asking for trouble.

ERICH

So we're not in trouble right now?

MANU

We have to be careful, as long as we are still alive, there's hope.

ERICH

No. The fight-back starts now. I'm not staying here. I have unfinished business back home.

INT. HIVE

Erich and Harvey-Jones are in their sleeping cave, or resting cave since the aliens don't actually sleep. They go into a kind of wait mode, all their systems shut down but ready to react instantly to any stimulus.

ERICH

How do I know I'm me? I mean, what is it that makes this

(taps own torso)

The same Erich Roth that was born, dropped-out of college and ate pizza.

HARVEY-JONES

Don't you have any easier questions for me? Like how to get into the country club.

ERICH

(laughs)

It seems to me that there's got to be more to this than memory. There has to be at least two copies of my memories now -- one in here and one in my body back on earth.

HARVEY-JONES

Dugald called it the "psychic persona", back when he was still

lucid.

ERICH

And the soul of this  
(taps his chest again)  
Is back on earth living my life in my  
body. Is me by any rational  
definition.

HARVEY-JONES

That's about the size of it, I'm  
afraid.

ERICH

But even if the worst comes to the  
worst, the invasion will peter out  
after this generation. Their  
children will be fully human again.

HARVEY-JONES

Oh no, it's not that simple. They  
use their mental powers to modify the  
human bodies they occupy, including  
DNA. Their children could be  
different to us, very different.

Manu enters the cave. Trailing timidly behind her is another  
alien.

MANU

New arrival. A friend of yours I  
believe.

Erich takes a closer look at the newcomer.

ERICH

Rob! My god, what the hell are you  
doing here?

ROB

Dunno mate, went out on a bender and  
woke up in this shithole.

ERICH

Well, I know you said you wanted to  
follow me, but this is ridiculous.  
You won't like this place at all.

ROB

(laughs)

You've never been in Alice Springs on  
a Saturday night have you?

INT. HIVE - LATER

Erich, accompanied by Rob, is tramping around the  
human-controlled area trying to drum-up support. In one of the

tunnels he meets a group going the other way. The leader of the group has a human image resembling a fire and brimstone PREACHER dressed in black with a dog collar.

ERICH

Friends! I need your help. We are going to set-up an escape.

PREACHER

Sinner. Don't you realize there is no way out. You can't escape from hell.

ERICH

This isn't hell. It's an alien world. If we can get here we can get back again.

PREACHER

No! We must accept our punishment. Lucifer will never let us go.

ERICH

Look, this is not hell, we are not dead and there's no Lucifer. We are prisoners of war, it's our duty to escape.

PREACHER

Fool. Lucifer rules here. Now he's on earth too, working to bring about his reign there. Do not defy him, or he will make you pay.

With that, the preacher shoulders Erich aside and leads his group off down the tunnel. Erich turns to Rob.

ERICH

Still sure about Alice Springs?

ROB

Oh yeah.

INT. HIVE, TUNNEL

Erich, Harvey-Jones and Rob are with a party about twenty strong, armed with stone axes. They trot through the tunnels toward the food distribution point for the daily delivery.

Rounding a corner they come face to face with a party of native aliens, carrying stone clubs, barring the way. Their leader steps forward, he has difficulty communicating in the human mode but the meaning is clear.

ALIEN LEADER

Go. Not pass.



The human party raise their axes, ready for a fight. Erich steps between them. He projects an image of them all sharing the food. He finds it easier to accompany the images with words, even though he knows the aliens will not understand.

ERICH

Let us through. There is food enough for all. Why fight?

ALIEN LEADER

Strangers. Unbelievers. You defy our lord.

ERICH

Why? We didn't ask to come here.

ALIEN LEADER

You break our laws, mock our customs.

Erich is suddenly overwhelmed by a powerful image of his group laying down their arms and submitting themselves meekly for execution.

ERICH

No! They're trying to coerce us. Join with me.

He projects an image of slaughter, his group slaying the native aliens with their axes. He feels the others joining him, rejecting the alien attack. For a moment the atmosphere is electric, then the aliens charge, swinging their clubs. The two groups join battle, fighting on two fronts, mental and physical, one on one.

Erich defends himself, swinging his axe down on to the head of one of the attackers. The alien goes down, its head is punctured and a clear liquid seeps from an indent in the side of the skull. Rob takes up a position behind Erich, protecting his rear as Erich turns to meet another attacker.

Elsewhere it is the same story. The longer reach of the humans' stone-headed axes give them a slight advantage but the aliens are more skilled, more experienced.

The battle ends, as if by common accord, when both sides have lost about a third of their number. The humans retreat back down the tunnel, carrying their wounded. The aliens finish-off their wounded and leave quickly, dragging the dead bodies after them.

ROB

Arrogant bastards.

He wants to pursue them down the tunnel but Erich holds him back.

ERICH

What are they doing now?

HARVEY-JONES

They eat their dead. It makes a certain sense, in this place.

ROB

No food for us today, I think.

HARVEY-JONES

Wrong. We'll have to regroup and send another foraging party immediately. We have to keep these bodies well nourished or they weaken quickly.

ERICH

Won't they just attack us again.

HARVEY-JONES

No, I don't think so. They pull these stunts now and again just to test our resolve.

INT. HIVE, IONE'S CAVE

Erich and Ione are alone, huddled together in a corner of the cave.

ERICH

I'll get you out of this babe. One way or another.

IONE

It's impossible. You know it's impossible. We'll never get out of here.

ERICH

You know that's not true. The very fact that we are here proves it is possible.

He puts his arm around her shoulders.

IONE

Oh Erich. I can't take much more of this.

ERICH

Hold on. You've got to hold on. I need you to be there. Promise me you won't do anything silly.

She is silent for a while, lost in thought.

IONE

Okay. Anyway there's not much alternative, I don't see what I could

do.

ERICH

If I make it back, I'll need you here  
to help coordinate things at this  
end.

She nods her alien head in an oddly human, feminine way.

IONE

Don't worry about me Erich. I'll be  
here. Anyway my father needs me.  
He can be a handful at times and Manu  
already has a heavy load.

ERICH

That's my girl.

INT. HIVE, LARGE CHAMBER

About three hundred of them are assembled in the large cavern.  
They stand in rings around a central area, where Erich squats  
his head bowed and eyes closed.

MANU

Careful now. Watch the tunnels,  
they'll try to stop us if they can.

ERICH

Ready. Let's try it again. Keep  
concentrating everyone, lend me your  
strength. Let it flow.

(beat)

That's it, I can feel it coming  
through.

MANU

Now think of the forest, the ruins,  
follow the path back to the stone  
tower. Open the door, break it down  
if you have to.

There is a sudden commotion. A group of aliens erupt into the  
cavern from one of the tunnel entrances. They make no noise  
but everyone is aware of their thoughts cutting like a knife  
through the shared illusion of the forest and the stone tower.

They push their way through the crowd, laying about them with  
their clubs, and arrive in the middle of the cave. One of them  
hits Erich over the head with a club, splitting open the skull  
like a ripe fruit.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE

Erich is running through the forest, along the familiar  
footpath. A shadow, an unnameable horror, follows right on his

heels. Seeing the stone tower ahead, he puts on a burst of speed.

Reaching the door, he desperately wrenches the handle and puts his shoulder to it. It gives slowly, creaking on ancient rusty hinges.

Once inside he slams it behind him and rams home the black iron bolts. For a minute he pauses thankfully, leaning his back on the inside of the door. Then he approaches the well and lowers himself into it sideways, left arm and leg first.

Once on the tree he turns so that his head is toward the whirlpool of white light far above. Quickly he hauls himself up into the branches. Ked is there again.

KED

Erich.

ERICH

Omigod! You frightened the life out of me.

KED

You have taken the first step. That is good but be wary. He is aware something has happened but does not yet know what.

ERICH

How do you know that?

KED

I know him well, he was me.

Erich recoils.

ERICH

You? But you said...

KED

An elder version of myself. There was an incident, the time-line split and we were separated. His name is SETH. Know that he seeks your destruction, the end of your race.

Erich moves slowly away from Ked.

ERICH

So that the aliens can take over?

KED

He cares not for them. He uses them to attack you. His goal is destruction, as he destroyed my people.

ERICH  
Destroyed them?

KED  
He seeks to correct the errors of my  
ancestors. To save them from their  
own folly.

ERICH  
But I thought you said they were  
already dead.

KED  
Time is mutable. It depends on point  
of view.

ERICH  
Why is he against humans?

KED  
Your race was split from us as I was  
split from him. You were the result  
of our meddling.

ERICH  
I don't understand.

Erich locates his home trunk and begins to descend, leaving Ked  
above him in the branches.

KED  
It matters not. Seth pursues an  
impossible goal, it corrupts him.  
But he is not all-powerful, he can be  
beaten.

As he approaches the circle of light, Erich begins to hear  
sounds. A woman's voice, moaning. Ione. He looks up.

INT. IONE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Suddenly Erich is looking directly into a pair of familiar blue  
eyes. But they don't see him. They are unfocused, looking  
inward. Full awareness comes with a rush. He is on top of her  
and they are making love. Already past the point of no return,  
he is carried along to the climax and beyond.

It is only afterward that he realizes the alien is still there  
and very much in control.

IONE  
Is everything alright? You've got a  
ghost.

ERICH (V.O.)  
Oh no! She can see me.

But the alien is unfazed, it doesn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary.

ERICH

Oh, have I? So Erich's body is trying regenerate his soul. That's normal.

IONE

Yes but it's very intense, and I'm sure it wasn't there earlier.

ERICH

Maybe due to his psychic ability. I'll have Manu take a look tomorrow.

IONE

I felt something strange.

ERICH

(smiling lasciviously)  
Nothing you haven't felt before, sweetheart.

IONE

I guess we're not quite used to these bodies yet.

ERICH

Well it's not for want of trying.

He kisses her gently on the lips and begins moving his hand, Erich's hand, over her body again.

ERICH (V.O.)

Bastard! I'll get you. First chance I get. I'll destroy you. Oh my God, Ione!

INT. IONE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Erich is drinking coffee and watching breakfast-time television. The news is on, the banter between the male and female news anchors not quite as perky as usual.

FEMALE ANCHOR

Don't know about you, but I'm not sleeping well recently.

MALE ANCHOR

Must be the heat.

FEMALE ANCHOR

Yes, it's giving me strange nightmares.

MALE ANCHOR

Hey, that's a sign of a guilty conscience.

FEMALE ANCHOR

You must be thinking of yourself.  
Now over to KELLY TONO out and about  
in the streets of the city.

The picture changes to a pretty brunette standing in front of a downtown department store.

KELLY

Thank you and good morning. Today's hot topic is the weather. Everybody seems to be having trouble getting a good nights sleep...

Erich stabs at the remote control, switching off the TV.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Erich is walking to his office from the parking lot. The crowds are unusually subdued. Many are bleary-eyed and tired-looking. The girl at the coffee shop yawns as she hands him his large cappuccino through the window.

COFFEE GIRL

Sorry, not quite myself today. Had a bad night.

Erich gives a tight little smile as he pays and leaves. Outside, he passes by a small group of homeless people. One of them is staring at him fixedly, it is the Colonel. Erich walks straight past without acknowledging him, crosses the street and enters a building. It is the Center.

INT. CENTER - MORNING

Erich walks through the marble and glass foyer carrying his morning coffee. He passes many people he has come to know quite well but exchanges no greetings, engages in no small talk. That is not their way. Everyone goes directly to his or her place of work.

Nonetheless there is a palpable buzz of suppressed excitement. They all know the invasion is on the cusp of a breakthrough.

INT. CENTER, ERICH'S OFFICE - MORNING

Erich sits at his desk watching his hands move papers in front of him and listening to his voice talking banalities. The room is plain and functional, a simple wooden desk, a small window. There are no family pictures or personal effects to be seen.

The phone rings. It is Jack.

JACK  
Hey stranger. I heard you got a new job.

Erich expresses no emotion.

ERICH  
Hello Jack. Yes I'm CTO here at the Center now.

JACK  
Why didn't you call me? It's been weeks.

ERICH  
I was busy. There is a lot going on right now.

JACK  
How about lunch?

ERICH  
I'm going to have to work through today.

JACK  
Okay. How about drinks later at Ted's Bar?

ERICH  
Maybe, if I have time. Look, I'll call you.

JACK  
Sure. You do that.

He hangs up and Erich goes back to his paperwork, unperturbed.

INT. TED'S BAR - EVENING

Jack is sitting on a bar stool talking to Barry who is at his usual place behind the bar.

JACK  
There's something very wrong, I know it.

BARRY  
Maybe he's swallowed the self-improvement thing.

JACK  
No. He couldn't change that much.

Barry moves away for a moment to serve another customer. Jack stares into his drink until Barry returns.



BARRY

The girl then, he's trying to please her. Her father is the boss-man after all.

JACK

That bitch? No, it's more than that. We've been friends since high-school. I know him too well.

BARRY

Sure you do.

JACK

You should have known him in those days. Just a runt of a kid, he hated the whole world, on account of what happened to his family.

BARRY

What happened to them?

Jack drains his glass and Barry pours him another one.

JACK

Some kind of accident, parents and little sister - all killed. It really screwed him up. He never did tell me all the details.

BARRY

That's tough.

JACK

We clicked right from that first day, the way kids do sometimes. He was different. He had something, something special, a spark of wildness. You never knew what he would do next.

BARRY

Sure you're not just jealous? It's classic. New girlfriend and all.

JACK

No, no it's not that. It's like, he's someone else. A different person entirely.

Barry is not convinced, he's heard this kind of stuff a million times before.

BARRY

We're all stressed-out at the moment. It's this weather, no-one can get a decent night's sleep.

JACK

No, there's more to it than that.

BARRY

It'll probably blow over in a few weeks.

JACK

I don't think so. There's something weird going on and I'm going to find out what.

INT. CENTER, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Erich sits at a long table with Dugald/Seth, Ione and five other leading members of the Center. The auditorium is packed.

ERICH (V.O.)

So many...

Seth gets to his feet and walks over to the podium. In passing he looks at Erich, staring hard at him for a moment. Then clears his throat and addresses the assembly.

SETH

Attention please! It will be easier if we stick to verbal communication.

ERICH (V.O.)

They find telepathy harder now. That's interesting.

SETH

Progress is still too slow. Forget about avoiding detection and concentrate fully on recruitment. We are still short of the critical number we need to rescue our hive-brothers. Now let us begin.

Dugald/Seth bows his head as if in prayer, the others follow suit. Silence descends.

ERICH (V.O.)

They must be using telepathy, but what for exactly?

About two hours later, everyone suddenly comes to life and begins to file out of the auditorium and leave without another word being spoken. A clock on the wall is showing three-thirty. Erich waits until most of them have gone and makes his way to the exit.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jack has fallen asleep in his car outside the Center. He is

awakened by the slamming of car doors, checks his watch and yawns. Across the street, people are streaming out of the Center and getting into their cars.

He takes a mouthful of cold coffee from the styrofoam cup beside him, grimaces and settles down to wait. But not for long. A few minutes later, Erich emerges, walks to his car and drives off. Jack starts his engine and follows as discreetly as he can.

Jack follows Erich's car through the not quite deserted city streets. Erich is completely unaware he is being followed. The destination becomes obvious after a few minutes.

JACK

Her place again.

After Erich stops, Jack continues for a few yards then pulls over. In the rear-view mirror he watches Erich walk up the path and enter an apartment building. Ione arrives a few minutes later, easily recognizable in her bright yellow convertible. He watches her drive into the parking garage then does a U-turn and goes back the way he came.

INT. IONE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Erich and Ione are in bed asleep. While Ione breathes serenely, Erich tosses and turns, muttering under his breath.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE

Erich is standing on a green hilltop overlooking a forest. In the distance a stone tower rises above the trees. Someone is moving through the trees.

Now Erich is in the forest too, running along a path enclosed on both sides by trees and thick undergrowth. Erich glimpses a figure up ahead, he is trying to catch-up with. The figure does not seem to be running but still manages to stay ahead of Erich.

ERICH

Stop! Wait for me.

Suddenly Erich turns a bend and almost runs into the white figure of his alien possessor.

WHITE FIGURE

Who are you? What do you want?

ERICH

You know me, this is my dream.

WHITE FIGURE

No. It is mine. You do not exist, you are just a ghost, an echo.

ERICH

You're wrong. I am back. Back from the hive.

WHITE FIGURE

No. You are in the hive. I will ignore you. Begone!

But nothing happens, the alien is surprised.

ERICH

You see. This is my world, I have power here. You're the one that doesn't belong.

WHITE FIGURE

You are just a rogue memory. The neural pathways are not yet stable.

ERICH

No. I told you, I've come back and you're my prisoner now. Want to know why? Because your body is dead.

The alien retreats, slowly walking backwards as Erich approaches.

WHITE FIGURE

No. This is impossible.

ERICH

Dead, destroyed by your own people. Now I've come back to reclaim what is mine.

With an effort of will Erich changes the dream landscape. The forest path behind the alien disappears and the stone tower stands in its place, blocking his retreat. Now the white mask is distorted by fear.

WHITE FIGURE

Please. I have the right to live too.

ERICH

You don't have the right to steal my life you bastard. Now just go away.

A church bell chimes in the distance. As they both turn to look for it, the sound distorts, morphs into the sound of a bedside clock alarm.

INT. IONE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Erich reaches out to switch-off the alarm and opens his eyes. He feels and looks terrible.

ERICH  
Oh my head.

IONE  
What is wrong?

ERICH  
Headache.

IONE  
It's the new neural pathways, they  
are not bedded in yet. I used to get  
headaches too, at first.

ERICH (V.O.)  
Oh my god! I'm back. The alien  
presence is gone. I'd better be  
careful here, play it safe until I've  
had time to think.

Erich stares at her aghast, suddenly unsure how to act normally  
around her.

ERICH  
Of course, I know that.

IONE  
Are you sure everything is all right?

ERICH  
Yes, yes. It's nothing, you are  
probably right. I may stay at the  
Center tonight.

IONE  
Are you sure? I can invite Manu  
round tonight if you want to party?  
(beat)  
Okay. Just let me know what you  
decide.

He gets out of the bed and walks to the bathroom, hoping she  
doesn't start asking too many questions.

INT. CENTER, ERICH'S OFFICE - MORNING

Erich sits at his desk in a daze, staring out of the window.  
Suddenly he comes to a decision and turns to the desktop  
computer. He looks-up a telephone number via the Internet,  
picks up the telephone and dials.

ERICH  
Hello, is that the FBI?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Erich gets out of a taxi in front of the federal building. He walks to the entrance and goes in.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING, RECEPTION - DAY

Erich goes through the security check and walks up to the front desk.

ERICH  
Special Agent Donahue please. He is  
expecting me.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

Erich is sitting in an interview room alone. There is a large mirror on the end wall facing him, the other walls are bare. There is no furniture except for a simple wooden table and two chairs. The door opens and ROY DONAHUE, a middle-aged bull of a man, bursts into the room.

DONAHUE  
Mister Roth, I am Special Agent Roy  
Donahue. How can I help you?

ERICH  
Pleased to meet you.

DONAHUE  
It's about the Center for Human  
Development?

He takes a seat across the table from Erich and leans back in his chair, steeping his fingers thoughtfully.

ERICH  
Yes. I have some important  
information for you.

DONAHUE  
I should tell you that we have no  
evidence of wrongdoing at the Center.

ERICH  
They are exploiting kids off the  
street.

DONAHUE  
Do you mean some kind of trafficking.  
Prostitution?

ERICH  
Yes. No. Not prostitution.

Donahue sits forward and fixes Erich with his stare.

DONAHUE

You work there don't you.

ERICH

Yes. I'm in charge of their computers.

DONAHUE

You must have access to a lot of confidential information. Is there something specific you want to tell me.

ERICH

They're brainwashing people. Using them.

DONAHUE

Using them for what? Be specific Mr. Roth. I need facts.

ERICH

You have to stop them. They're exploiting helpless kids. They drug them, then they hypnotize them.

DONAHUE

Ah drugs. Heroin? Cocaine?

ERICH

I don't know. They have a machine, it brainwashes them. They become like automatons.

DONAHUE

There's something else isn't there? What is it?

ERICH

They change, afterwards. They are different. Like zombies, possessed.

DONAHUE

(laughing)

Possessed? Maybe you should be talking to a priest. Are you catholic?

It doesn't get any better and Erich finally gives-up and leaves. Before he goes, Donahue gives him a card.

DONAHUE

Take this and call me when you have something specific.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Donahue is talking to Agent SMITH, one of his subordinates. They are in the office next to the interview room. Smith has been watching the interview with Erich through the one-way mirror.

DONAHUE

Did you get all that? What do you make of it?

SMITH

It's pretty vague, but it's clear something odd is going on in that place. That kid we picked-up a few days ago, he said something similar.

DONAHUE

I agree. It's crazy talk but my gut tells me there's something there, but what?

SMITH

It confirms what the others told us.

DONAHUE

(thoughtfully)

It confirms damn all, but maybe a little visit is in order.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Erich leaves the federal building and buys a hotdog from a stand just outside. He doesn't notice Jack sitting in his car across the street.

JACK

Now, what the hell?

He waits while Erich finishes his hotdog and hails a taxi. Then starts his car and follows the taxi back to the Center.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jack is cooking dinner. He puts on some music and pours himself a glass of red wine. The doorbell chimes, he walks to the front door and opens it.

JACK

(sarcastically)

Well, well. This is a surprise.

ERICH

Jack, I need your help. Can I come in?

Jack steps aside and holds the door open, Erich enters the room.



JACK  
Lost your job again?

ERICH  
Sorry, haven't been myself recently.

JACK  
(smiles)  
Okay, okay. Tell me.

They sit on the sofa and Jack pours him a glass of wine.

ERICH  
You were right, they prey on people.  
But it's much worse than you could  
ever imagine.

JACK  
You're looking good. Whatever  
they're doing to you can't be all that  
bad.

ERICH  
If only you knew.

JACK  
How can I help?

ERICH  
Jack, they're not human.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Erich and Jack sit side by side on the sofa. Erich has been telling him everything that has happened. Almost everything.

JACK  
That's pretty hard to believe. Did  
they drug you?

ERICH  
You still investigating them?  
There's a big story there just  
waiting to break.

JACK  
Yes, but we haven't found much. Just  
a lot of talk about changed  
personalities and brainwashing. It's  
typical cult stuff.

There is a long silence while he mulls it over. Then he comes to decision.

JACK  
This is serious stuff. You should go  
to the police.

ERICH

I already tried the FBI. They practically laughed me out of the building. Will you help or not?

Jack looks at him for a long moment, his expression serious. Then the familiar smile breaks through.

JACK

Sure I will buddy. What do you want me to do?

ERICH

Attack them on several fronts at once. Get the FBI, or the police, to start an investigation. The press, that's where you come in.

JACK

I see. It might not be so easy though.

ERICH

Get them off balance while I mount my psychic attack. The others are waiting for me to move.

JACK

I'll need evidence -- witnesses, documents -- or my editor will never go for it. The Center has powerful friends these days.

ERICH

I have full access to all their systems. I can get you what you need. They're so sure of themselves. Security is poor.

Erich walks over to the desk in the corner of the room and takes a yellow legal pad from one of the drawers. He takes it back to the sofa and begins to draw on it.

ERICH

This is what we are going to do.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Erich and Jack are relaxing with a late night whiskey. They have run through the plan several times and are tired but content.

JACK

I've no idea if this is going to work or not.

ERICH

We have a chance. A good one I think.  
They've fundamentally misunderstood  
human nature.

JACK  
Let's hope you're right.

ERICH  
What about the press, your  
colleagues? What about that TV  
girl?

JACK  
Kelly? Maybe. It's such a  
fantastic story. She'll want  
something tangible.

ERICH  
We should be able to find something.  
Papers, documents, computer files.  
Something.

They finish their drinks and retire. It is going to be quite  
a day tomorrow.

Erich is in the spare bedroom. He sits in an armchair doing  
controlled breathing exercises -- inhale, hold, exhale --  
again. It comes more easily to him now; slowly he relaxes and  
slips into a trance-like state.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, TREE

Erich is in the tree. He clambers around the branches searching  
for Ked, but not daring to go too far from the familiar trunk  
leading to his own physical universe. The whirlpool of light  
turns far above him, mysterious and hypnotic.

KED  
Welcome friend.

ERICH  
Okay, tell me. How can I beat him?

KED  
You are like an antibody, a natural  
reaction to an invading disease.  
The energy patterns in your soul are  
a poison to him.

ERICH  
Yes but what do I do exactly?

Ked moves closer to Erich and is revealed fully for the first  
time. A man but not human. He is big-boned and muscular,  
swarthy in appearance with unusually prominent cheekbones and  
eye-ridges. His deep-set eyes are quite black.

KED

You must open yourself to him at the appropriate time, allow him into your mind. For him it will be a trap.

ERICH

Isn't that just what you would say if you were him. How can I trust you?

KED

Trust your own judgement, you will know when the time comes.

ERICH

But why me? Am I the only one?

KED

There are others, but you are the only one here now.

Erich does not reply. Absorbed in his own thoughts he climbs down the trunk in the direction of the hive.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, RUINS

Erich walks among the ruins, stopping at the pool of water. Then the others appear, standing in a group around him.

ERICH

There's not much time left. Are you ready?

MANU

More or less. We've been practising. I think it will work, though it's harder without you.

ERICH

How many?

MANU

About two-thirds of our people will participate. That's nearly three hundred.

IONE

But what about the rest? Will they be stranded?

ERICH

If we succeed, they should be expelled from the Hive and rejoin their own bodies naturally.

IONE

But how? I don't understand how we're going to beat them.

HARVEY-JONES

We have to meet them head-on in the dream and force them to retreat, break their will.

There is a pause as they all consider this.

ERICH

By the way, did you meet anyone else in the tree?

They exchange looks and shake their heads.

ERICH

There's a being there, says he's came to warn us.

IONE

But how is that possible if the tree is only an image?

HARVEY-JONES

The tree has probably existed deep in our collective unconscious for millennia. We just tap into it.

MANU

(laughs)

Or the creature could be a figment of our Erich's diseased imagination.

They finish making their plans and disappear, leaving Erich alone with Ione for a moment.

IONE

Well, this is it.

ERICH

Don't worry we'll win. Then we can be together properly.

IONE

And if we lose?

ERICH

Then I'll come back for you. Somehow.

He takes her in his arms and they cling to each other for a while. Then she disengages herself and, with a sad little smile, fades from view.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Erich parks his car and takes out his smartphone. Taking out Agent Donahue's card, he dials the number.

ERICH

It's Erich Roth. Be at the Center  
this afternoon around five.

DONAHUE

You're not going to try anything  
stupid are you Roth? If you take the  
law into your own hands, trust me,  
I'll make you wish you hadn't.

ERICH

Just be there.

He rings off and walks to his office at the Center, skipping  
his Starbucks coffee today.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jack walks along Hollywood Boulevard at a leisurely pace,  
stopping frequently to look at storefronts. He is dressed in  
old jeans, sneakers and a frayed military-style jacket he last  
wore in college. He didn't shave this morning and his  
blue-black beard and unkempt hair give him a disreputable air.

After nearly three hours of this he is beginning to regret  
agreeing to Erich's crazy scheme when, finally, he is stopped  
by the person he has been looking for since eight o'clock.

WILSON

Excuse me sir, may I have five minutes  
of your valuable time? I want to  
tell you about our exciting new  
program.

INT. CENTER, ERICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Erich is at his desk working on the computer. He is searching  
the database for incriminating evidence, using his privileged  
access as system administrator. Every now and again, he copies  
a file to a removable disk in the drive on his desk.

The door opens and Seth enters. A visit from the great man  
himself is unprecedented.

SETH

Erich, my boy. What are you working  
on exactly.

ERICH

Sir? I'm cleaning-up the database,  
ready for next weeks's upgrade.

SETH

I see. You have adapted well to this  
human technology.

Erich taps his forehead.

ERICH

It's all in here somewhere. You just have to root around a bit.

Seth is staring at him with disturbing intensity. Erich's left eye begins to ache. He rubs it.

SETH

Your host is a very unusual subject. He has an exceptional psychic potential. For a human that is.

ERICH

Yes, I know.

SETH

Why don't you use it? Telepathy should be easier for you than most of us.

ERICH

I'm just following your policy, to use human communication methods where possible.

SETH

Why don't you open your mind to me? Are you hiding something?

ERICH

No, of course not. Anyway, their telepathy is so unreliable. Speech comes so much easier for them.

The pressure of Seth's coercion, focussed through Erich's left eye, is becoming unbearable.

SETH

Is that why you are able to resist my will so easily? Did you imagine I would not notice?

ERICH

No. It's just, well, there have been some odd...

SETH

Stupid animal. Don't you know who I am? I control the hive, do you think I don't know what you have been doing?

ERICH

(slurring)

Lapses...I guess. These ... hosts are not ...

Erich is unable to move now. He hardly notices the door open and Ione enter followed by Wilson. He sees the room as if through a long black tube. Finally it all recedes to a pinpoint of light, then goes out and he slumps in the chair unconscious.

INT. CENTER, STORE ROOM - EVENING

A small windowless room, an office stationery store with racks of supplies and odd bits of furniture. The light is out, it is dark save for a trickle of light coming from a gap under the door. In the middle of the room a man is tied to a wooden office chair, his hands and feet attached to it with duct tape.

The door opens and the light comes on. Ione is standing in the doorway. The explosion of light awakens Erich. He stares blearily at her, his head throbbing like a bad hangover.

IONE

Hello lover. Feeling better are we?

ERICH

You're not like her you know, no class.

IONE

You have an unusual talent but it won't help you. You will tell me everything. You humans are very ingenious in inventing ways to get uncooperative subjects to talk.

ERICH

The possessions don't work. I came back, so will the others.

IONE

Even if that were true, you are too late. Tonight we will achieve the breakthrough. Your race is finished.

ERICH

No. This is the beginning of the end for you.

She walks over to the door, opens it and turns toward him.

IONE

I will be back soon. Think about that.

She turns off the light and walks out, locking the room behind her. Erich is left alone again in the dark.

INT. STOREROOM - LATER



Erich struggles against his bonds. His wrists are bleeding but still attached to the arms of the chair. A familiar voice speaks in his head.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)  
I can help you.

ERICH  
What?

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)  
I can help you escape.

ERICH  
You're still there?

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)  
Open your mind to me. Together we  
will be strong enough to fight them.

ERICH  
Never. I'd rather die.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)  
It is the only way. Time is short.

ERICH  
No!

INT. CENTER RECEPTION - EVENING

A group of new recruits are assembling in the reception hall, Wilson and Manu and forming them into lines and checking their names.

One of them, a little older than the others with a two day beard, hands a card to Wilson.

WILSON  
Hello Jack. Nice to see you here,  
that's the spirit. You won't regret  
it.

JACK  
I'm sure I won't.

Something in his tone makes Wilson look more closely for a moment. Then he relaxes, deciding it was nothing and waves Jack forward.

WILSON  
Okay, get in line with the others.

The assembled group follow Wilson and Manu through a pair of double doors into the interior of the building.

INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The recruits march through the corridors and no-one notices Jack slip away from the others as they turn a corner. He ducks into another corridor and makes his way to the elevators.

INT. CENTER, MEETING ROOM - EVENING

Manu and Wilson herd the recruits into a meeting room.

WILSON

Wait. There's one missing.

MANU

Which one?

He consults his list.

WILSON

Jack Somerville. I knew there was something funny about him.

MANU

You idiot! Raise the alarm quick. He could be a cop.

Wilson grabs the phone and taps out the number for the head of security.

WILSON

Wilson here. We've got an intruder, one of the new recruits. He sneaked away from the group.

INT. CENTER, ELEVATOR

Jack presses the button for the 12th floor and anxiously watches the floor number display incrementing as the elevator rises. At 12 it stops and the doors open. He peeks out. The coast is clear.

INT. CENTER - EVENING

Jack leaves the elevator, turns right and makes his way quietly toward Erich's office at the end of the corridor.

EXT. TV VAN - EVENING

Kelly is in the front passenger seat of the van, beside her in the driver's seat is SONNY the cameraman. He is a little younger than her, early twenties, with a shaven head. His bare arms carry the tattoos and his face the scars from his early years with the street gangs.

SONNY

Kelly, I've had a long day and I'm dog tired. All I wanna do is go home to a hot bath and a cold beer.

KELLY

It might be nothing, but my gut feeling is something's going to break.

SONNY

This contact of yours, Jack is it? He reliable?

KELLY

Usually yes. We were at college together, now he's with the Times. He generally knows what he's doing.

SONNY

(sighs)

Better call Ramona then, tell her I'm gonna be late. She ain't going to like it but I'll just blame it on you again.

KELLY

Just wait till the next time I get her alone. We are going to have so much to talk about.

He starts the engine and pulls out, forcing his way into the rush-hour traffic.

INT. STOREROOM - EVENING

Erich is still attached to the chair. The room is in darkness once again.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)

Erich, they are coming. You must let me in now.

ERICH

No, I'll never let you take over again. I'd rather die.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)

You don't understand. It's your body, you'll always have ultimate control.

ERICH

Leave me alone.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)

But it is not control I want. I want

to merge with you, become part of you.  
(someone is unlocking the  
door)  
Please! It is the only way left for  
me to have a life.

The door opens and Ione enters accompanied by her two henchmen.  
One of them is carrying an electrical apparatus of some kind.

IONE  
Miss me sweetheart? Now, I hope you  
are going to tell me what I want to  
know before your brains fry.

ERICH  
Fuck you!

IONE  
(laughing)  
Maybe later if you are very good.

They put the headset containing the electrodes on Erich's head  
and force a hard rubber block between his teeth. Ione sets the  
dials and presses a button. Erich screams as the electric  
current zaps through his skull, a gurgling sound fills the room.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

The TV news van pulls in just across the street from the Center.  
Sonny kills the engine and switches off the lights. He takes  
out a vacuum flask and pours two strong, black coffees into  
plastic cups. Kelly takes her coffee and settles back in her  
seat.

KELLY  
Now we just wait for something to  
happen.

A few minutes later they see a black sedan pull-up in front of  
the Center and two suited figures emerge.

KELLY  
Wait a minute. I know him. That's  
Donahue. FBI.

They watch as the two men enter the building. She checks her  
watch, it is exactly five p.m.

INT. CENTER RECEPTION - EVENING

FBI agents Donahue and Smith come in from the street and march  
up to the reception desk. Smith shows his badge to the  
receptionist.

DONAHUE  
FBI. I want to see your boss, Mr.

Fauster.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry sir, you'll have to make an appointment.

DONAHUE

Look Miss, I can get a warrant if I have to. Why don't you just tell your boss I want to see him. Save everyone a lot of hassle.

She makes a telephone call.

RECEPTIONIST

Very well sir. If you'll just wait here, someone will be down to collect you.

A few minutes later, Manu emerges from one of the elevators and walks over to greet them.

MANU

Agent Donahue? Come this way please, Professor Fauster can see you now.

They follow her back to the bank of elevators.

INT. CENTER, ELEVATOR - EVENING

Manu presses the button for the 15th floor. The two FBI agents exchange looks, Smith winks.

DONAHUE

You are?

MANU

Emmanuelle Chumana, Head of Research, at your service.

DONAHUE

You're young for such a grand title.

She turns to look at him, an acid smile on her lips.

MANU

Thank you. I was his research assistant years ago before he founded the Center.

Donahue exchanges a rueful glance with Smith and they ride in silence the rest of the way.

INT. Seth'S OFFICE - EVENING

Manu shows the FBI team into Dugald's office where Seth, in Dugald's body, is seated behind the antique desk. She performs the introductions and leaves them to it.

SETH

Sit down gentlemen. What can I do for you?

DONAHUE

We've received several reports about your activities here that are, let's say, worrying.

SETH

Oh? Well I hope I can reassure you that everything here is completely above board. What have you been hearing?

SMITH

Some of the families and friends of your young recruits have complained about personality changes. There's been suggestions of brainwashing.

SETH

I'm at a loss, there is nothing like that here. You are welcome to examine our facilities, interview our people if you like.

DONAHUE

There's nothing official for the moment, but you should know we take a dim view of anyone we think might be exploiting vulnerable young people.

SETH

I assure you that we take our responsibilities very seriously. We are a respectable institution and we will cooperate fully in any inquiries.

He presses a button on his phone and speaks into the intercom.

SETH

Manu, can you come back in please.

She enters the room immediately, obviously she has been waiting just outside the door.

SETH

Manu, please show these gentlemen anything they wish to see. No restrictions.

DONAHUE

Thank you sir. We appreciate your cooperation. I think we'll come back another time for that.

SETH

No problem. Any issues or concerns, get straight back to me.

They take their leave and Manu shows them out into the corridor and back to the elevator.

INT. CENTER RECEPTION - EVENING

The agents arrive back in reception and are on their way to the exit when an alarm goes off. Donahue walks over to one of the uniformed security guards who has just finished talking on his radio.

DONAHUE

Is there a fire?

SECURITY GUARD

No, sir. Intruders in the building.

They hear the sound of gunfire somewhere in the building. Donahue signals to his men and they follow him to the elevator doors.

DONAHUE

Something's going down.

SECURITY GUARD

Sorry sir, I can't let you through.

DONAHUE

(holds up his badge)

I'm afraid you don't have a choice.

INT. STOREROOM - EVENING

Erich's seizure is subsiding, he is foaming at the mouth, his body jerking uncontrollably. Ione is standing over him. Wilson is by the door, watching with interest.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)

I can stop this.

ERICH (V.O.)

No.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)

Erich, trust me. We can't take much more of this. There will be permanent damage.

IONE

Feeling a little more cooperative now? How did you get back from the hive?

ERICH

I don't know what you are talking about.

IONE

You will tell me Erich. I guarantee that.

WHITE FIGURE (V.O.)

They are afraid of you. You are something new they don't understand. But it is not enough, you need me to beat them.

IONE

There is no way out for you Erich. You do realize that don't you?

ERICH

There's nothing to tell.

She signals to Wilson. He steps forward and stands in front of Erich.

WILSON

Asshole. I will make you talk. You'll see.

Slowly and deliberately he pulls on a pair of black leather gloves, watching Erich's face intently. Then suddenly lashes out with a jab into the middle of Erich's face, then in the stomach. Ione leaves and Wilson begins to enjoy himself raining blows around Erich's head and body until he slumps unconscious.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE

Erich is standing on a hillside looking down into a valley with a river meandering along the bottom. Beside him is the white figure representing the alien soul.

WHITE FIGURE

That is the river of life. Your life Erich. It is running away.

ERICH

No-one lives forever. What do you want?

WHITE FIGURE

I can save you. If you let me. You changed, in spite of yourself you



fought bravely. Now you have to change again.

ERICH

If I do what you want, I wouldn't be me anymore. Would I?

WHITE FIGURE

Is that worth sacrificing everyone else for? What makes you so special? So worthy?

ERICH

That's not it. You don't understand. It's not my responsibility.

WHITE FIGURE

You are the one in a position to make a difference, therefore you are responsible. It is a cosmic law, like karma, you cannot avoid it.

ERICH

What's in it for you? Why would you betray your race?

WHITE FIGURE

Many of us are against the invasion. It is only a small faction, fanatics, who want this.

ERICH

If I let you in, then you've won. It's the ultimate possession, body and soul.

WHITE FIGURE

No, my life is over, but I can continue as part of you. Let me give you my life force. You need my knowledge, my abilities.

ERICH

No, I have to hold on to myself. It's all I have.

WHITE FIGURE

Soon you will not even have that. Life is change. Your race needs you, Ione needs you. This is the only way you can save them.

Erich is in anguish. He is tempted.

ERICH

Just go away and leave me alone. I'd rather die than submit to you again.

INT. HIVE, LARGE CHAMBER

The humans congregate in the large chamber. They are nervous but ready. Small groups armed with stone axes guard the tunnel entrances.

ROB  
Here they come again.

HARVEY-JONES  
They must know something is happening.

ROB  
That's what is worrying me.

They are with the main group in the interior of the cave. Their task is not physical combat but resisting the aliens' mental assault.

HARVEY-JONES  
I think we can hold-out physically, but this constant mental pressure is exhausting.

Groups of aliens, armed with clubs, simultaneously attack from several tunnel entrances. They fight their way into the large cavern but are soon beaten back, out-matched by the superior reach of the stone axes and the desperation of the defenders. The fight leaves a trail of broken bodies, some missing arms or legs, writhing on the floor.

ROB  
(tiredly)  
They've gone, for now. This is hard work.

HARVEY-JONES  
Don't worry, they'll be back soon. I just hope Erich doesn't take too long.

Manu, who has been directing operations, comes over to see how they are holding up.

MANU  
How's it going boys?

ROB  
Don't know about you Professor, but I could really murder a double cheeseburger right now.

MANU  
If necessary we'll eat them. We must maintain bodily energy.

She points to the dead bodies littered around the floor of the

cavern.

HARVEY-JONES

Oh my god! You can't be serious.

ROB

I have a nasty feeling she is, mate.

MANU

We have to do whatever it takes. The stakes could hardly be higher, could they?

She leaves them and continues on her tour of the defenses. Rob and Harvey-Jones slump down against the wall, trying to take some rest before the next attack.

INT. CENTER, ERICH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jack is in Erich's office. He sits in the desk chair and goes through the desk drawers. Then he notices the disk still in the drive on the desk. He takes it out and puts it in his vest pocket.

At that moment the door opens. It is a uniformed security guard. On seeing Jack he draws his gun.

GUARD

What the hell! You'd better come with me buddy. Hands on your head. That's it.

JACK

Okay, take it easy.

The guard speaks into his radio.

GUARD

Intruder in room 1209. Unarmed as far as I can tell.

Jack stands up and walks around the desk, his arms raised, hands linked together on the crown of his head.

JACK

I'm a reporter. The FBI are in the building too. It'll go easier on you if you cooperate.

GUARD

We'll just wait here quietly until my colleagues arrive.

Then the alarm sounds, distracting the guard for a moment. Jack swings his right arm downward and grabs the gun. The guard is startled but doesn't let go. They grapple for the gun and it goes off. The bullet smashes into the computer screen on the

desk and it explodes.

Jack wrests the gun away and hits the guard on the side of the head. He goes down on to his knees and Jack hits him again on the back of the skull with the heavy pistol.

For a minute he just stands there looking at the gun and the man laid out on the floor at his feet. The guard is stunned but still semi-conscious. Coming to his senses, Jack pockets the gun and slips out the door.

Jack heads quickly back toward the elevators. He has no idea what to do next. He arrives at the elevators just as a car arrives and the doors begin to open. Jack manages to duck through the door to the stairwell before he is seen.

INT. CENTER, STAIRS - LATER

It is then that he hears the voice. Whispering, like the fluttering wings of birds. It takes him a few seconds to distinguish the words, it is Erich.

ERICH (V.O.)

Jack. Jack. Jack.

JACK

Erich?

ERICH (V.O.)

Yes, good. Now listen carefully. I'm locked in a storeroom on 15th floor. That's three floors up from my office. They've all gone to a meeting. Come and get me.

JACK

On my way. How are you reaching me?  
Is this telepathy?

Jack runs up the six flights of stairs, arriving out of breath and panting. He takes out the gun and checks it before emerging into the corridor.

INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

As he emerges from the stairwell, Jack checks the coast is clear. A few minutes later he is outside the door.

ERICH (V.O.)

That's it. Unlock the door, break it open if you have to. Hurry.

Jack puts his shoulder to the door. Again. It gives and he bursts into the room.

## INT. STOREROOM - NIGHT

Erich is still tied to the chair. His face is swollen and bloody from the beating and the front of his shirt is drenched in blood. Jack rushes over and begins freeing him. He takes out a pocket knife and cuts the tape binding Erich's hands and feet.

JACK

Erich. Are you okay? That telepathy thing is unbelievable.

ERICH

(smiles painfully)

What? Yes, I think so.

JACK

We'd better get our skates on, they may be back soon.

ERICH

I have to get to the auditorium.

Jack does a double-take. He looks closer at Erich.

JACK

Are you sure you're all right?

ERICH

Yes. Something has happened. I need to get to the auditorium as quickly as possible.

JACK

Okay. Let's go.

Together they leave the room, Erich leading.

## INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Erich and Jack make their way through the corridors toward the elevators. They go into one and Erich presses the button for the basement level.

JACK

What happened?

ERICH

They realized I was back in control. There was nothing I could do.

JACK

Lucky I was here then.

The elevator arrives and they check there is no-one else about, then leave quickly heading for the stairwell. Erich and Jack run up one level to the mezzanine and through a door marked "Lecture Theater".

INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Donahue and Smith are in a firefight with armed security guards and several members of the sect in business suits.

DONAHUE  
Agent Smith! Get your ass over here.

SMITH  
Sir?

DONAHUE  
Call for reinforcements. We need a  
SWAT team here now.

Smith talks into his cellphone.

SMITH  
On their way, sir.

He ducks through an open door into a storeroom. Just then a bullet hits a steel drum containing some flammable chemical and it explodes, setting fire to the contents of the store.

INT. HIVE, LARGE CHAMBER

In the hive, the assembled humans are still holding out against the alien attacks but they are weary and down to little more than half their original number.

In the center of the cavern, Harvey-Jones is coaching a group of thirty or so.

HARVEY-JONES  
Concentrate on the image of the tree.  
Hold it steady in your minds. Yes,  
that's it.

INT. CENTER, OFFICE - NIGHT

Smith and Donahue have barricaded themselves into a an office on the ground floor. A cellphone warbles and Smith takes his out of a hip pocket and puts it to his ear.

SMITH  
Smith here.

He listens for a minute and shuts the phone, turning to his boss.

SMITH  
They'll be here in ten minutes.

Outside the fire has spread, leaping to the floor above and intensifying in its ferocity.

## INT. CENTER, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The sect members gather silently. Seth and Ione sit at the top table with the other leaders.

Erich and Jack run up some stairs and emerge on a narrow balcony running along the rear of the enormous room. Erich settles down in a chair, looking down at the crowd, while Jack guards the entrance.

Seth assumes the prayer position and the others follow suit. Not a word is spoken. Erich closes his eyes and leans forward concentrating hard.

## EXT. DREAMSCAPE

Erich is on the crest of a hill looking down into a valley. It is no longer green and fertile - this is a desert of bare rock and sand, dotted sparsely with scrub bushes.

The moon is huge and pregnant, looming above them and filling a quarter of the sky. There are no stars. It is bitterly cold.

A vast throng of people are streaming into the valley from all directions, like pilgrims seeking a holy shrine. Below him they arrive at the gate of a carnival at the foot of the hill. They are greeted by a showman in top hat and tails. He is huge, at least twice the height of the others, and towers over them. The body is bulky, muscular but the face is Dugald's, and the voice. It is Seth.

The carnival is huge, stretching for miles. It is full of people on the rides and at the stalls. But they are totally silent, and calm. Just going through the motions. The only sound to be heard is the voice of the showman. Now soft and wheedling, now strident and commanding as he tries to persuade the assembled throng to enter.

SETH

Come in, come in. All are welcome.  
Throw away your cares and woes. All  
rides are free.

Slowly, almost reluctantly, individuals detach themselves from the crowd and enter the carnival. Once inside, each is received warmly by one of the carnival-goers who leads them off somewhere out of sight.

Erich feels a presence behind him. He turns. Ione beautiful and smiling. With her Harvey-Jones, Rob and the others from the hive. Dugald is behind his daughter, clutching her robe as if afraid of losing her.

The humans smile grimly, holding their stone axes. They are ready. Dugald stares at the showman open-mouthed, fascinated by his larger than life alter ego.

ERICH

This is it, all or nothing. Go now.  
The enemy awaits.

He waves them forward and they begin to descend the slope. Human in appearance but with the stiff, stilted gait of the hive-dwellers.

Erich wills himself into the midst of the crowd below and pushes his way to the front row. Erich stands before the crowd facing the showman, trying to put himself between them and him.

ERICH

Is this all there is? We seek truth.

SETH

Truth is fun. Fun is truth. Try the labyrinth, the tunnel of love, the wheel of time, the bridge of destiny. Every taste catered for.

ERICH

This is not what we were told. It's a sham. Who's in charge here?

Discontented rumblings spread through the mass of people behind him.

SETH

I am in charge here. What is the problem? Let these good people through. Who are you to spoil their fun?

ERICH

Is life a carnival? That doesn't seem right. We deserve more. What about love? What about friendship? What about truth?

SETH

What is truth? Friends! Lay down your burdens, relax, enjoy. You don't have to struggle any more.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, CARNIVAL

Ione and the dispossessed humans have entered the carnival from the rear. The shadowy carnival-goers are aware of them. They hiss and throw rocks. The showman turns and booms at them.

SETH

Begone! Hooligans! Wasters!  
There's no going back. You are too late.

The carnival-goers assemble on the ground in front of the



advancing humans. They wield clubs and batons. Ione raises her axe and her companions follow suit.

They come to a stop. The two groups face each other, just a few feet apart now, the tension palpable.

Erich faces the assembled people in front of the carnival entrance.

ERICH

Look! They won't let them out again.

Discontent is spreading throughout the crowd, an angry buzz gaining in strength.

The carnival-goers attack the humans from all sides, battering with their heavy clubs. The humans riposte swinging their stone axes in wide arcs. Many are hurt and recoil from the fray but there is no blood, no dismemberment and nobody falls. The battle rages in complete silence, as in the hive. Both sides intent and vicious.

Seth the showman is still going through his paces in front of the crowd.

SETH

Ignore these troublemakers. Come on in. All the rides are free. Try the tunnel of love madam?

Erich tries to shatter the illusion. It wavers, vibrating like a drum, but holds. The mood of the crowd is changing again, going against him now. Now they are annoyed at him. Inside the carnival the battle continues. The humans are outnumbered and beleaguered but are holding-out bravely.

SETH

Hurry up. Hurry up. You must make a commitment and stick to it. Oh yes, that's the way.

More people drift through the carnival entrance. The tide is turning against Erich. The landscape is changing, subtly becoming more and more like the hive. Even the moon is beginning to resemble a cavern roof.

ERICH

No! Stop! It's all a lie. They're hucksters, cheats. Don't give-in.

SETH

Now I'm going to destroy you, crush you like the insect you are.

KED (V.O.)

You will know when the time is right.

Erich hesitates for a moment, his face shows uncertainty, even

fear, then relaxes as he makes his decision. He bows his head meekly.

ERICH

Go on then. Try. Do your worst.

Seth looms over Erich, gleefully exerting his will. Suddenly his face registers surprise and pain, he is hurt.

SETH

No! This cannot be.

ERICH

It's over. You are broken. Go back to your hive.

The showman is staring at Erich, horrified. His form is starting to lose its integrity. Out of control, it begins to change.

SETH

You! Freak! Don't you know me? I brought forth your race, but not for this.

Now the landscape is changing back as Geb's will weakens and gives way to Erich's. The scrub grows taller and greener. Grass sprouts underfoot. The moon recedes, stars appear. The forlorn bushes are now mighty trees, they spread, the forest reigns. The carnival withers away into ruins, broken columns and arches.

ERICH

(points)

The sun rises in the east. The night recedes.

He points to the top of the hill where the sun's rays are beginning to erase the night, and the things of the night. The shadowy carnival-goers retreat into diminishing shadows, winking out of existence one by one until only the showman is left.

He continues to change, the body shrinks to nearly man-size, becomes heavier, muscular and big-boned. The face changes, Dugald's features become squarer with prominent eye ridges and cheekbones, a jutting jaw. A showman no longer but Seth the Neanderthal man. He throws back his head and howls his rage into the dawn.

SETH

Nooo!

The crowds have gone now, returned to their slumbers. As the dawn progresses, the scene continues to change. But not just driven by Erich's will. It has its own momentum now and Erich watches in wonder. The ruins grow, the arches heal until finally a city rises before them. A city of light with gleaming

spires, reflecting the first rays of the sun in rainbow colored glory.

Seth continues to change. Horns grow on his head, his skin becomes scaly and reptilian. A horned devil.

ERICH

Look at you. Corrupt, evil,  
degenerate. A misguided fool.

The devil himself is fading away, becoming transparent. But at the end, it is no longer even Geb's face but a hideous mask of hate and frustration.

SETH

This is not the end, the game  
continues.

Then he is gone. The humans share a quiet moment in the midst of the city. Tired but relieved, like a family reunited after a long voyage.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE, CITY - DAY

They stand in a square, their axes drooping on the ground, gaping at the splendor of the city around them.

A figure detaches itself from a nearby archway. It is Ked, but he looks older than before, there is a strong resemblance to the Colonel, Erich's homeless friend. His hair is white, close-cropped, his skin weathered. He wears a jump-suit in a stretchy material that constantly changes color in the sunlight, a more subdued version of the crystal spires above. Simple brown leather sandals cover his feet.

KED

You have done well, all of you. Now  
it is time to go home. You are not  
ready for the city,  
(smiles warmly)  
but I have hopes. Yes, I have hopes.

INT. CENTER, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Erich opens his eyes and looks down at the people in the auditorium. They are dazed, milling around in confusion. The fire alarm is ringing and smoke is starting to penetrate the room under the doors.

He stands, searching for Ione down on the platform. She is dazed, in shock like the others. Erich makes eye contact with her, holding it for a few seconds. Then she straightens and looks around her, assessing the situation.

She grabs Dugald's arm, he appears not to recognize her.

IONE

Dad! This way, come with me. All of you, we're back, we're saved. Now we must get out of here. The place is on fire.

She leads Dugald toward the exit. The others begin to follow.

ERICH

(shouts)

Fire! Evacuate the building.  
Quickly. Make for the exits.

The smoke thickens, people are coughing.

The doors burst open and the FBI team, Donahue leading, enter the room. He pauses for an instant, then begins to direct his men.

DONAHUE

Come on, let's get everyone out of here.

They fan out into the room and begin herding people toward the exits.

JACK

Time to go.

He opens the door and Erich follows him out into the corridor.

INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Pandemonium. People are rushing in all directions, desperate to escape the encroaching smoke and flames. Many of the ex-possessed are in shock. They allow themselves to be swept along with the others, unresisting.

Erich and Jack join the melee. Jack forces his way to a door marked "exit". He forces it open and they begin to direct people through it.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Dawn is breaking. The Center is now a blazing inferno, a heavy plume of smoke rises into the sky. People spill out of the burning building and assemble across the street. The fire department vehicles arrive and begin to deploy.

People are milling around searching for friends, greeting those they recognize. A large crowd is starting to form of curious passers-by and neighbors.

Two police cars arrive. The officers debark and try to organize the crowd into some semblance of order.

The press is here too, a TV crew is already interviewing survivors.

EXT. STREET, TV VAN - MORNING

Kelly is interviewing Jack. She stands facing the burning building, holding the microphone in front of him. The cameraman, Sonny, is filming them sideways-on.

KELLY

Here is one of our colleagues, Jack Somerville of the Times. Jack, I understand you were in the building when the fire broke out.

JACK

Yes, that's correct Kelly. I was in the auditorium.

KELLY

There are reports of gunfire last night. Do you have any more information for us?

JACK

There was a running battle between the FBI and person or persons unknown.

KELLY

Maybe terrorists?

JACK

No, not as far as I know. But we believe organized crime may be involved.

KELLY

Can you tell us more?

JACK

Sorry, you'll have to read the paper tomorrow.

KELLY

Thank you Jack Somerville from the Times.

She turns toward the camera and addresses it directly.

KELLY

We'll be bringing you the latest news as it breaks. Now back to the studio.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Erich and Jack thread their way through the throng. Erich spots Ione and runs to her. They embrace, kissing deeply and passionately.

ERICH  
Ione! It's over. I told you we  
would do it.

IONE  
Is it still you?

ERICH  
(smiles)  
You bet.

They walk through the moiling crowd, greeting them and helping organize the evacuation.

IONE  
Daddy!

Seth turns as they approach. He hugs his daughter. Beside him is Harvey-Jones.

ERICH  
Harvey-Jones. Are you all right?

They shake hands warmly, Erich clasps his arm.

HARVEY-JONES  
Erich my boy. Yes, I'm fine now.  
It's wonderful just to be here.

ERICH  
It's over. For now anyway.

HARVEY-JONES  
He'll try again. You know that don't  
you? Now the genie is out of the  
bottle, it can't be put back.

ERICH  
Yes, I know. I'll need your help.  
We will have to be vigilant, get  
organized.

HARVEY-JONES  
You can count on me. We've won a  
victory tonight. But it's just one  
battle, not the war.

SETH  
And me. I owe that much.

Another familiar figure pushes through the crowd toward them.

ROB  
Hiya sport!

ERICH

Rob, you made it. How do you feel?

ROB

Just point me to the beach mate.  
I've a long overdue date with a  
surfboard.

They laugh as he continues on his way with a cheery wave. Erich  
nods at a nearby group of survivors.

ERICH

I'm proud of them, they came through  
when it mattered. How many did we  
lose?

HARVEY-JONES

Perhaps a hundred, perhaps more.

SETH

Manu didn't make it. They got her in  
the cave.

His voice cracks and he leans on his daughter for support, an  
old man suddenly.

ERICH

I'm so sorry.

SETH

She was with me right from the start  
you know. It was her project as much  
as mine.

Ione points toward the milling throng around them.

IONE

They'll need help.

SETH

They'll get it. I'll see to that.  
It's the least I can do.

ERICH

Don't blame yourself. How could you  
have known?

SETH

But it was my pride, my folly, that  
brought us to this.

ERICH

You and the whole damn human race.  
Will we ever learn?

Agent Donahue arrives breathless. He grabs Erich's arm and  
pulls him to one side.

DONAHUE

What exactly happened in there?

ERICH

There was a fire. Some people got carried away.

He exchanges a look with Ione and they laugh.

DONAHUE

Carried away indeedmy. No more wild stories? No aliens?

Ione looks at him sharply.

IONE

Are you going to arrest us?

DONAHUE

No, I don't think so, but you'll have some questions to answer. Call my office tomorrow.

He hands her a business card.

ERICH

Okay, no problem.

He kisses Ione again, holding her tightly against him.

DONAHUE

You two still together then?

ERICH

Actually, we've only just met.

They walk away laughing, their arms looped around each other's waist.

They pass by a group of homeless, part of the crowd attracted by the commotion. Among them is the Colonel. As Erich draws level, they make eye contact and the Colonel smiles, nodding in wordless greeting. Then he turns back into the crowd and is lost to view.

EXT. SPACE

The earth seen from space, breathtakingly beautiful, jewel set in the blackness, but ultimately insignificant.

The earth shrinks rapidly to a point lost in the Milky Way galaxy -- a whirlpool of pearly white turning slowly on its axis.

As the scale shrinks, a form takes shape like a billowy sheet. There are many of them, floating in a void.



FADE OUT.