

Interstellar

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SPACE.

But not the dark lonely corner of it we're used to. This is a glittering inferno -- the center of a distant galaxy.

Suddenly, something TEARS past at incredible speed: a NEUTRON STAR. It SMASHES headlong through everything it encounters... planets, stars. Can anything stop this juggernaut?

Yes. Something looms at the heart of the galaxy, hidden inside the blinding starlight, a dark flaw in the fabric of existence itself: a BLACK HOLE.

The neutron star is pulled into the black hole's swirl, spiraling closer and closer to destruction. Finally, it contacts the hole's edge and EXPLODES.

The EXPLOSION is so powerful that it sends shock waves into the fabric of space-time itself. We ride one of these waves, racing back out from the black hole.

Suddenly, a portion of the wave disappears down a crystal-like hole, emerging in a much darker region of the universe -- a backwater that, as the wave races past a giant red planet with a distinctive eye, we recognize as our own.

The wave, now just an infinitesimal ripple, finally reaches our blue planet. It drops into our atmosphere over North America, toward the high desert east of the Cascades, and through the roof of a nondescript warehouse.

The wave tickles the atoms in the steel shell of a vacuum chamber, then dances a tiny jig with a laser beam reflected in a heavy piece of glass.

The wave shoots back out of the building and disappears in the fractal branches of a tumbleweed resting against a concrete tube that stretches for miles in the desert.

An SUV speeds past the tumbleweed and we follow it till it parks at another plain-looking building at the opposite end of the tube. A MAN climbs out of the SUV.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, WAREHOUSE -- DAY

The man lets himself into a large room that looks like Mission Control. He pours himself a cup of coffee. It is the weekend and the place is empty. No one has been there to see the displays flashing a distinctive shape -- a pulse followed by a series of echoes.

The man looks up at the screen, then DROPS his cup of coffee.

CUT TO:

INT. LIGO OFFICES, CALTECH, PASADENA -- DAY

The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory headquarters at Caltech is a frenzy of activity. POSTDOCS and RESEARCHERS huddle around monitors and printouts, arguing.

ANSEN, 60s, the director of LIGO, walks through the frenzy. A postdoc hands him a printout: a pulse followed by echoes.

INT. LIGO DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, CALTECH -- DAY

Ansen steps into the relative calm of a large, sunlit office, which overlooks a grassy stretch of Caltech's campus.

His ASSISTANT, 30s, is on the phone, on hold. He looks up at Ansen as he enters.

ASSISTANT

I'm on hold with the INS.

(covers microphone)

Don't you think we should double check the triangulation before we call anybody-

ANSEN

We have double checked it.

Someone finally picks up the line.

ASSISTANT

Yes. I'm trying to reach-

(pause, listens)

No, I don't think you understand how serious this is.

(pause)

Because if you did, we'd be having this conversation in person.

He listens for a moment, then hangs up the phone, confused.

ANSEN

What did they say?

ASSISTANT

They said we should look out the window.

Ansen steps to the window and looks out:

In the courtyard below, coeds are scrambling to get out of the way as a military helicopter sets down in the middle of the quad and dozens of ARMED FEDERAL AGENTS converge on his building.

INT. MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM, LIGO, CALTECH -- DAY

Ansen sits, alone, on one side of a conference table.

The other side is filled with GOVERNMENT MEN -- NSA mostly, some DIA. The door opens and his assistant steps in. Armed guards pat him down, then shove him into a seat.

ANSEN

Is that really necessary?

One of the NSA agents leans forward.

NSA AGENT

You've been complaining for years
that the government doesn't take
your project seriously enough, Doctor.
(smiles)
You can't have it both ways.

Ansen motions to his assistant, who turns on a projector. On-screen, we see the familiar pulse and echoes.

ANSEN

Yesterday morning, our facility in
Hanford identified this signal: a
neutron star colliding with a
supermassive black hole. We went
through the last year's data and
triangulated the source.

The pulse is translated into a crude animatic of a neutron star circling into the black hole.

NSA AGENT

We know that, Doctor. What we don't
know is why, according to your
numbers, this event took place right
here in our own solar system.

Suddenly, the image overlays the sun, the earth, and the rest of our solar system around the black hole.

ANSEN

It didn't. Because if it had we'd
all be dead by now.

On-screen, Jupiter, then the Earth and the inner planets are consumed by the black hole. Only the sun survives, pulled into orbit around its new master.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

Which leaves only one explanation:
The signal traveled through a
(MORE)

ANSEN (CONT'D)

wormhole. A gateway to a distant corner of the universe. The black hole is on the far side.

On-screen, the black hole system is removed to a distant corner, connected to ours by a tunnel through space-time. A gravity wave from the collision travels through the tunnel.

NSA AGENT

I've read your book, Doctor. You said that wormholes are impossible.

ANSEN

There is nothing quite as satisfying as being proved utterly wrong.

(smiles)

I said that a wormhole couldn't exist *naturally*. Not for more than a few billionths of a second. It would have to be... stabilized.

NSA AGENT

Stabilized by what?

Ansen pauses, unsure. His assistant steps in to his defense.

ASSISTANT

We don't have any way to answer that question.

NSA AGENT

(ignores him)

You're not under peer review here, Doctor. I don't care about your reputation. I need to know how that thing got there. Now.

Ansen finally speaks up.

ANSEN

If you're worried about an invasion, I would start drafting the articles of surrender.

(smiles)

Whoever they are, if they can build a wormhole, they could erase us in the blink of an eye. Luckily, that also means we have nothing they could be interested in.

NSA AGENT

Then why is it there?

ANSEN

I don't know. Maybe it's an invitation. A chance to commune with an advanced species.

The assistant, embarrassed, looks down. The agent notices.

NSA AGENT

You don't agree?

ASSISTANT

(delicate)

No. I don't think we can assume an alien intelligence built the wormhole.

(changes tack)

But the opportunity it represents is incredible. We could explore parts of the universe we never dreamt of reaching in our lifetimes.

The agent exchanges a look with one of his colleagues, who steps out of the room.

ANSEN

We need to get back to work. I have a conference call with our European partners in fifteen minutes.

NSA AGENT

We severed the connections to your European partners this morning.

ANSEN

(indignant)

You can't do that. The Europeans put up some of the funding...

GOVERNMENT MAN

We'll send them a check.

(stands)

Your project is now classified under the State Secrets Act.

He steps out the door, leaving the men alone. The assistant, outraged, turns back to his boss.

ASSISTANT

They can't keep this a secret. You know that. Sooner or later...

The younger man looks down, embarrassed, as he notices that tears are rolling down the older man's cheeks.

ANSEN

I don't care about that. I've spent my whole life being afraid we would wipe ourselves out before this moment arrived. We've made so many mistakes, I wasn't sure we'd make it...

The assitant realizes that the old man is weeping for joy. Relief.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

But this will change everything. Fifty years from now, nothing will be the same.

The older man looks at the simulation on the screen of the tiny link between our galaxy and another.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. CORNFIELD, CENTRAL CALIFORNIA -- DAY

Corn. As far as the eye can see.

SUPER TITLE: "FIFTY YEARS LATER"

A large old diesel tour bus is parked by the side of a dirt road, smoke pouring out of its open hood. A dozen MEN in BASEBALL UNIFORMS are standing around the front of the bus.

A battered PICKUP pulls up, and a MAN, 30s, gets out, leaving his two SONS in the car. This is COOPER. He joins the ballplayers staring at the lifeless diesel engine.

BALLPLAYER

Seized up on us.

COOPER

Long way to come by bus. I thought you guys would have a plane.

BALLPLAYER

We did. Ran out of parts for it. You know anything about diesels?

COOPER

A little.

Cooper steps to the engine compartment.

The ballplayer notices Cooper's two boys, TOM, 15, and MURPH, 10, watching them. He wanders over.

BALLPLAYER

You think your dad's going to be
able to help us out?

Murph, a filth-encrusted kid with a black eye, smiles at the ballplayer.

MURPH

My dad can fix anything.
(wry smile)
Except maybe your fastball.

The ballplayer frowns: smartass kid.

After a moment under the hood, Cooper signals to the driver, who tries the engine. It turns over once, then STARTS.

BALLPLAYER

Sure appreciate the help.

COOPER

(shrugs)
You don't make it, my boys won't get
to see you lose.

The ballplayers load up into the bus and as it pulls away, we can see the logo painted across the back of the bus for the first time:

WORLD FAMOUS NEW YORK YANKEES

EXT. SPACE, NEAR EARTH ORBIT

Earth spins, lazily. From this height, it looks much the same as it has done for thousands of years.

Suddenly, a tiny black object appears, racing toward Earth.

The object SMASHES into a large satellite and races onward. Behind it, the satellite spins out of orbit in a cloud of fragments.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM -- NIGHT

An old minor league stadium. The stands are barely halfway full. Cooper, his boys, and Cooper's father-in-law, DONALD, 60s, have a row to themselves behind the dugout.

Murph offers his grandpa some popcorn.

DONALD

Popcorn at a ball game is unnatural.
I want a hot dog.

MURPH
 (confused)
 What's a hot dog?

Suddenly, play stops on the field below as the players and fans look up at the night sky:

A bright blue streak is tearing across it. It's beautiful.

TOM
 Is that a comet, Dad?

COOPER
 (shakes his head)
 Satellite. Big one. Probably Chinese.

Everyone watches the fireworks as the satellite burns up in the upper atmosphere.

After a moment, play resumes -- it's a pretty show, but everyone has seen it plenty of times before.

Down on the field, the Dodgers' catcher misses an easy pop fly and the Yankees load the bases. Donald looks disgusted.

INT. COOPER'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

Cooper guides his truck along a potholed road. His father-in-law is riding shotgun; the boys are sleeping in the back.

DONALD
 Those clowns would get their asses handed to them by the ballplayers I grew up watching.

COOPER
 You ruin it for the boys when you talk like that.

DONALD
 I'm not doing my grandkids any favors by lying to them. They're growing up watching lousy baseball.

COOPER
 They didn't have any baseball at all when I was a kid.

That shuts the old man up for now. They drive on in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MORNING

The sun is gently landing on the horizon, painting the sea of corn around Cooper's modest house gold. Cooper walks out of his house, still eating his breakfast.

Donald is on the porch, looking at a black clouds of smoke in the distance. The neighboring fields are BURNING.

DONALD

Nelson's burning up his crops. Found some of the blight on the okra.

Cooper watches the men walking through the fields, setting fire to the crop.

COOPER

I thought okra wasn't susceptible.

DONALD

(shrugs)
Better safe than sorry.
(looks at him)
You've got to take the boys to school.

COOPER

Something wrong with your truck?

DONALD

(smiles)
Parent-teacher conference day.

Cooper bends his head in dismay.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Be nice to Murph's teacher. She's single, you know.

COOPER

What does that have to do with anything?

DONALD

We're supposed to be repopulating the earth. Gotta pull your weight. Besides, the boys could do with a woman in their lives.

The boys run out of the house and pile into the truck. Cooper pulls away before Donald can continue.

EXT. ROAD -- DAY

Cooper weaves the car along a dirt road. The kids are arguing over an ancient comic book in the back seat.

Cooper turns around to break it up.

BANG -- one of the tires blows out in a foot-deep pothole.

EXT. ROADSIDE -- DAY

Cooper examines the flattened tire. Looks at his older son.

COOPER
Get the spare, Tom.

TOM
That is the spare.

COOPER
All right. We'll use the patch kit.

He moves to the back of the truck. Murph suddenly looks very glum.

MURPH
I... I think the patch kit might not
be there...
(off his look)
Because I was using it for my bike.

Cooper looks down at the dirt. Sighs.

COOPER
Murph's law.

MURPH
(confused)
What's that?

Tom snorts with laughter. Turns to his dad.

TOM
The kid doesn't even know what he
was named after...

Cooper shoots Tom a look -- enough.

TOM (CONT'D)
Murph's law means what can go wrong
will go wrong.

Murph, looking hurt, walks off. Cooper turns to his son.

COOPER
Find something to patch it with.

TOM
How am I supposed to do that?

COOPER

Figure it out. I'm not always going to be here to help you.

Cooper leaves Tom to catch up with his younger son, who is looking out over the river.

MURPH

Is that really why I'm named Murph, dad?

COOPER

Listen to me. Murph's law doesn't mean that. It means what can happen will happen. All kinds of things. Good or bad. And that's the way you want it to be.

MURPH

Why?

COOPER

Because if nothing ever happened to you then you wouldn't learn anything.

Murph is staring off into the distance. He's heard something.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Murph?

Then Cooper hears it, too. A LOW RUMBLING SOUND. Cooper looks out over the river. Then he turns back and tackles his son to the ground.

Suddenly, a MASSIVE AIRPLANE SOARS overhead, so close they can almost touch it. It bounces the truck on its suspension, then soars off over the fields behind them.

Cooper grabs Murph and races back to the truck. He pulls a laptop and an antenna made out of a Pringles can out of the back of the truck. He hands the laptop and antenna to Murph.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Get in.

Tom is still standing by the side of the road, wrestling with the jack.

TOM

What about the tire?

INT. TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

The truck is SMASHING through the cornfields as fast as Cooper can push it on three good tires.

Murph is hurriedly firing up the laptop and connecting it to the directional antenna.

Cooper is straining to see through the cornstalks, scanning the horizon.

TOM

Over there-

To the right, the dark shape of the Russian drone appears, flying low over the fields. Cooper jerks the wheel--

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

The truck BURSTS out of the corn and SPLASHES across the river and into an old, abandoned suburban housing development in the valley below, planted over with corn.

Half a mile in front of them, the Russian drone is still hugging the ground. It has impossibly long, skinny wings, like an old U-2 surveillance plane, but no cockpit. The tops of its wings are covered in black solar cells.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

Murph is fiddling with the computer. His older brother takes the computer from him and fires up emulation software.

COOPER

It's a Chinese military drone. Solar cells could power an entire farm.

(to Tom)

Take the wheel.

Cooper hands Murph the Pringles can antenna.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Keep it pointed right at it, OK?

Murph nods. Tom takes the wheel as his dad works the laptop, trying to communicate with the huge Russian drone. The screen fills with Cyrillic characters.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Faster, Tom. I'm losing it.

Tom WEAVES the truck at speed through the old, curved streets of the development, past oversized suburban mansions planted over with corn.

They round a corner and come face-to-face with a robot harvester. Tom jerks the wheel to avoid it.

BANG -- the truck loses a wing mirror against the flank of the combine.

EXT. SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT -- DAY

Tom guides the truck from street to street, trying to chart a straight path across the fields. The truck BOUNCES as it SMASHES through an old picket fence.

Ahead, the drone is soaring, banking, pulling away.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

Cooper is still trying to hack into the drone's control circuitry as they leave the development behind and begin to climb into the foothills of the Sierras.

EXT. RIDGELINE, HILLS -- DAY

Tom guides the truck along the spine of the hills. The drone soars overhead, making for the white tips of the Sierras.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

Cooper is oblivious to the picturesque surroundings as he concentrates on the laptop.

TOM

(unsure)

Dad?

COOPER

Almost got it. Don't slow down.

In front of them, Tom and his brother watch as the drone plummets from view.

TOM

DAD.

Cooper looks up. Ahead, the trail disappears as the edge of the hills falls away -- it's a three hundred-foot drop.

Tom locks up the brakes.

EXT. RIDGELINE, HILLS -- DAY

The truck skids to a halt inches from a precipitous drop.

Cooper climbs out, holding the laptop. Murph climbs out next to him, still pointing the Pringles can.

TOM

We lost it.

COOPER

(smiling)

No we didn't.

Suddenly, the drone SOARS back over them. Cooper types a couple keys and then moves his fingers across the trackpad. The huge drone banks and turns in response.

As the boys watch, Cooper sends the drone soaring high over them, banking and soaring along the tree-lined sides of the valley, light glinting from the black panels on its back. It's a beautiful sight.

Cooper crouches next to Murph.

COOPER (CONT'D)

You want to give it a whirl?

Murph looks at his dad, wide-eyed. He takes the laptop and moves his fingers gingerly across the pad.

In response, the massive plane banks into a tight turn in the valley below.

For a moment, Murph is in pure heaven, sending the drone dancing through the valley below.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Set her down in the valley -- there,
next to the river.

Murph leads the plane in a figure eight and then begins guiding it into a gentle landing in the valley floor below.

EXT. ABANDONED GOLF COURSE, VALLEY FLOOR -- DAY

The truck limps along the overgrown fairway of a long-defunct golf course towards the massive hulk of the Russian drone,

Cooper and the boys climb down. The valley is silent save for the truck's engine WHEEZING and SPUTTERING as it cools.

Cooper runs a hand over the smooth carbon flank of the drone.

TOM

How long do you think it's been up
there, Dad?

COOPER

Chinese mission control went down
same as us, twenty years ago. It's
been up there ever since.

TOM

What was it doing flying so low?

Cooper reads the information pouring into his laptop.

COOPER

It was looking for something.
Intercepted some kind of signal.
(shrugs)
It's been at eighty thousand feet.
Sun probably cooked its brain.

Cooper runs his hand along the flank till he finds an access patch. He pulls out a crowbar and pries open the hatch. Inside, surrounded by a nest of liquid cooling tubes, is a small black module -- the drone's auto-pilot.

Cooper looks down at Murph, who is standing at his elbow.

MURPH

What are you going to do with it?

COOPER

Reprogram it. Give it something socially responsible to do like drive a combine or a tractor.

MURPH

(quiet)
Couldn't we just let it go? It's not hurting anyone.

Cooper looks down at his son. Good kid.

COOPER

We need all the help we can get, Murph. This thing has to adapt, just like the rest of us.

Cooper gently pries the control module out.

EXT. COUNTY SCHOOL -- DAY

It's a small school, so all the kids and parents waiting in front know exactly who's driving the pickup truck with half of a Russian spy plane hanging out of the bed as it pulls up.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE, COUNTY SCHOOL -- DAY

Cooper is ushered into the office. The PRINCIPAL, 40s, an efficient-looking man, shakes his hand.

PRINCIPAL

Good to see you, Mr. Cooper. This is Ms. Kelly, Murph's teacher.

Cooper smiles at Ms. KELLY, 30s, attractive.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

So we've gotten Tom's score back.
Congratulations. He's going to make
an excellent farmer.

The principal slides a carbon copy across the desk to Cooper,
who looks taken aback.

COOPER

What about college?

PRINCIPAL

The University of California only
accepts a few hundred students a
year, Mr. Cooper. You have to be
realistic.

COOPER

You're ruling out college for him
now? He's only fifteen.

PRINCIPAL

I'm sorry. I'm afraid Tom's score
simply isn't high enough.

COOPER

What are you, about a 36-inch waist?
(beat)
30-inch inseam?

PRINCIPAL

I'm not sure I see--

COOPER

You're telling me you need two numbers
to measure your own ass, but just
one to measure my son's future?

Ms. Kelly stifles a laugh, then, with a look from the
principal, takes on the appropriate look of offense.

PRINCIPAL

I understand you're a well-educated
man, Mr. Cooper. A scientist?

COOPER

Engineer.

PRINCIPAL

Frankly, the world doesn't need any
more engineers. We didn't run out
of trains or television sets or
satellites.

(beat)

We ran out of *food*.

Cooper leans back. He's not going to win this one.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

The world needs farmers, Mr. Cooper.
And I'm sure your son Tom is going
to make a fine one.

(smiles benignly)

We're a caretaker generation. But
things are getting better. Maybe
your grandchildren will be able to
attend college.

Cooper looks down, swallowing his anger.

COOPER

Are we done?

PRINCIPAL

One more thing. Ms. Kelly here says
that Murph brought a book to school
about the lunar landings.

He slides an old textbook with a picture of a rocket on the
cover across the desk to Cooper.

COOPER

One of my old textbooks. Murph liked
the pictures.

MS. KELLY

This is one of the old federal
textbooks. We've replaced them with
corrected versions.

COOPER

Corrected?

MS. KELLY

The new textbooks explain that the
Apollo lunar missions were faked in
order to bankrupt the Soviet Union.

COOPER

You don't believe we went to the
moon?

MS. KELLY

I believe it was a brilliant piece
of propaganda. The Soviets spent
years trying to build rockets and
other useless machines.

COOPER

"Useless machines"?

Cooper looks to the Principal for help. None is forthcoming.

MS. KELLY

Yes, Mr. Cooper. The kind of wastefulness and excess that the 20th century represented. Your children would be better off learning about this planet, rather than reading fantasies about leaving it.

Cooper is silent for a long moment.

COOPER

One of those useless machines they used to make was called an MRI. If we had any of them left the doctors might have been able to find the cyst in my wife's brain before she died, rather than afterwards. And then my kids could have been raised by two parents, instead of me and their pain-in-the-ass grandfather.

Ms. Kelly's face falls, ashen. Cooper swallows his anger. Most of it, anyway.

COOPER (CONT'D)

You ever consider the best thing for the world and humanity might have been for us to part company?

Cooper gets up to leave.

INT. TRUCK, COUNTY SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- DAY

Cooper climbs into the truck, trying to hold it together. He PUNCHES the wheel.

The radio KEYS to life. He ignores it. Sits for a moment in misery. Finally he picks up the handset.

CB OPERATOR (O.S.)

Got a call from Riggs, down in Galveston. Says some of the tractors you built him went haywire last night.

COOPER

Just tell him to power down the controllers for a couple minutes.

CB OPERATOR (O.S.)

I did. He wants you to come down in person anyway. Says he found something you should take a look at.

Cooper stares at the wheel. Shakes his head in frustration.

EXT. AIRSTRIP -- DAY

Cooper pulls his truck up to a grimy-looking hangar. Pulls a tarp off of an ancient Piper Cub. Checks it over.

INT. PIPER CUB -- DAY

Cooper guides the plane along a long sliver of deserted beach. The radio crackles to life.

COOPER

Bravo-two-eight, requesting permission to enter your airspace.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (O.S.)

Permission granted. Welcome to the sovereign nation of Texas.

Coop hangs up the radio. Banks the plane inland.

EXT. GULF COAST -- DAY

Below, a combine harvester fights its way up the dunes, trying to reach the beach, its wheels struggling for traction in the soft sand.

A MAN waves up at Cooper's plane as it circles overhead.

Cooper lands the plane on a deserted roadway. Jumps down.

He intercepts one of the combines as it trundles past, trying to reach the dunes. He pops open the cabin.

Inside is a mess of wires hooked into an auto-pilot not unlike the one he ripped out of the drone. He checks the fault code and resets the computer.

The man jogs over to meet him.

RIGGS

Thanks for coming down. Half of 'em took off last night, looking for something.

(points to dunes)

Looks like they found it, too. I thought you were the man to see it.

Riggs starts walking up the dune. Cooper follows.

Below, on the beach, a dozen more combines and other farming vehicles are lined up at the tideline, warm gulf water lapping at their metal flanks. They are circling a deep crater.

As they watch, an ancient autonomous SUB BEACHES itself, trying to reach the crater.

EXT. CRATER'S EDGE, BEACH -- DAY

Cooper steps between the waiting machines and peers down into the crater.

At the very bottom is a ROUND BLACK BALL, about a foot across -- the same object we saw punch a hole in the side of a satellite. Every few seconds, it emits a distinctive CHIRP.

Cooper checks his rad meter. A tiny reading -- non-lethal. He takes off his watch and hands it to Riggs. Then he slides down into the hole.

The probe CHIRPS as Cooper slides down on top of it. He rubs a hand across its smooth composite bulk.

RIGGS

(from above)

You think it's an alien?

Cooper wipes sand off of the object, revealing the faint, familiar outline etched into the side of the probe:

The stars and stripes of the old federal government.

COOPER

Not exactly.

EXT. CRATER'S EDGE, BEACH -- DAY

Using a rope and a winch, Cooper hauls the blackened probe out of the crater and onto the beach.

Cooper hefts it up and carries it to the back of his plane.

COOPER

Space probe. Never seen one like it, though. Looks like it's been to hell and back.

The probe CHIRPS as Cooper belts it into the back.

RIGGS

How do you think it wound up here?

COOPER

Lost, I guess. Guidance satellites would have been shot down by the Chinese twenty years ago.

Cooper looks at the probe for a second, admiring its form.

INT. KITCHEN, COOPER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Donald is pouring a bottle of corn beer into a bubbling vat of chowder. He turns to watch Cooper work, amused.

The probe has been clamped to the kitchen table. Cooper works at the blackened case with a BLOWTORCH. Cooper gives up -- the torch hasn't made a scratch. The probe CHIRPS.

COOPER

Well I don't know what the hell it's made of, but I can't crack it open.

DONALD

Good. Clear it off the table so I can serve dinner.

Tom and Murph walk in. Murph's got another black eye.

DONALD (CONT'D)

What happened this time?

MURPH

I got suspended. Paul said anyone who believed we went to the moon was an idiot. So I hit him.

COOPER

Good boy. Hand me the scanner.

Murph hands his dad a defibrillator he's modified for the purpose. He attaches the shock pads to the sides of the probe and turns on the power.

Numbers flash across the screen. Cooper hits a button on the controls and it PULSES.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Here we go. Standard NASA encryption. Memory's been damaged. Just noise. Hold on. I've got something.

Cooper unplugs a monitor from his computer and plugs it into the defibrillator. After a moment, an image fills the screen:

An ICE-COVERED PLANET nestled in the center of a system impossibly dense with stars. Murph stares, transfixed.

MURPH

Where is that, dad?

COOPER

I don't know.

Cooper looks at the probe.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Where the hell did you come from?

Cooper shrugs. Turns off the monitor.

COOPER (CONT'D)
We'll take it down to Tyson's tomorrow
and have it melted down. Might be
some copper inside.

MURPH
But what about its mission? What
about the information onboard?

COOPER
There's no one for it to report to.
NASA is all gone. I'm sorry, son.
It got home too late.

Donald pulls his chowder off the boil and slides the pot
unceremoniously onto the table.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

The boys have gone to bed. Cooper and Donald are alone at
the table. Donald hands Cooper another beer.

DONALD
I heard your meeting at the school
didn't go so well.

Cooper shakes his head in disgust.

COOPER
Maybe it's better for everyone to
forget what they did back then.
Reminds us how far we've fallen.

DONALD
(looks down,)
When I was kid, it felt like they
made something new every day. Some
gadget or idea.
(smiles)
Like every day was Christmas.
(beat)
But we made a lot of mistakes. Six
billion people. Just try to imagine
that. Every last one of them trying
to have it all.

Donald rolls the bottle of beer in his hands.

DONALD (CONT'D)

The truth is this world isn't that bad. In a lot of ways its better. Tom will be all right, whether he goes to college or not.

COOPER

It doesn't bother me that he can't go. It bothers me that he doesn't care.

DONALD

Tom isn't the problem. He fits in this world just fine. You're the one who doesn't fit, Coop. You don't belong here. You were born forty years too late, or forty years too early -- I don't know. My daughter knew it, god bless her. And your kids know it, too.

Donald drains his beer. Walks to the screen door. Stops, one hand on the frame.

DONALD (CONT'D)

You were good at something and you never got a chance to do anything with it. And I'm sorry, Coop. But that's not your kids' fault.

Donald pushes out the screen door.

Cooper looks at his beer. The probe CHIRPS.

INT. BEDROOM, COOPER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Cooper flops down on his bed, fully clothed, exhausted. He stares up at the ceiling. This is his life.

INT. BEDROOM, COOPER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The air is filled with a PIERCING NOISE.

Cooper BOLTS upright. Stumbles out the door.

INT. HALLWAY, COOPER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Cooper's boys are in the hallway, exhausted. Cooper, holding a baseball bat, makes his way down the stairs.

Cooper uses the bat to open the kitchen door.

INT. KITCHEN, COOPER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Cooper steps in, Murph watching from behind him.

The probe is clamped to the table, the chirp replaced with a DEAFENING SCREAM.

Cooper, holding his ears, moves closer to the probe. He hits it with the paddles. No result.

He SMASHES it with the bat. Nothing. He HITS it AGAIN and AGAIN. Finally, the clamps break off chunks of the table and the probe slams to the ground and ROLLS toward the front door. As it rolls, it STOPS SHRIEKING.

Cooper and the others watch it roll toward the door. It stops at the wall. After a second, it begins SHRIEKING AGAIN.

Cooper grabs it and rolls it toward the front door. Once again, the movement shuts it up.

EXT. PORCH, COOPER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Cooper and his boys roll the probe out of the front door. It BUMPS down the front steps and comes to rest in the dirt. After a moment, the unholy RACKET starts up again.

Cooper keeps rolling it, but it doesn't seem to help. Murph looks up, sees the stars overhead.

MURPH

Try a different direction.

As they roll the probe in a circle, its SHRIEK stops, then picks up again. Cooper zeroes in on the direction that keeps it quiet -- southwest -- and pushes it along in the dirt.

COOPER

It's a fail-safe. It's going to annoy us into taking it home.

Cooper stops rolling the probe and, after a moment, it begins SHRIEKING again.

TOM

What are we going to do?

Cooper gets a rope.

COOPER

We're going to get some sleep.

He begins tying the rope around the probe.

INT. BEDROOM, COOPER'S HOUSE -- DAY

Cooper wakes. He's been sleeping with a pillow wrapped around his head. The SHRIEK can be heard, but it's muffled, distant.

INT. KITCHEN, COOPER'S HOUSE -- DAY

Tom heads off for school with Donald. Murph, still suspended, looks up at Cooper, smiling.

MURPH

What are we doing today?

COOPER

You're staying here and cleaning the house.

Murph looks crestfallen. He looks out towards the yard. Cooper follows his stare.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I told you, Murph. There's no one to take it back to.

MURPH

But what if there is, dad? What if there's something we can salvage?

Cooper thinks it over. Murph scrambles to get his shoes.

EXT. COOPER'S HOUSE -- DAY

The shriek is still muffled. Cooper walks over to the well, putting in a pair of earplugs.

A line is staked off, leading down into the well below. Cooper begins hauling the line up.

As the probe breaks the surface of the water, the SHRIEK returns to its normal volume. Cooper rolls the probe out onto the ground.

INT. PIPER CUB -- DAY

The probe CHIRPS next to Murph in the backseat as Cooper spins the plane and guns the throttle and they bounce along the dusty runway and into the air.

EXT. CALIFORNIA COAST -- DAY

The tiny plane follows the mountains south.

EXT. SKIES OVER LOS ANGELES -- DAY

Cooper flies in low. Los Angeles looks much the same way it did in the early 20th century -- small settlements in Santa Monica and Downtown. Wildfires and earthquakes have shaken and burned what was left of the homes in between.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, MALIBU -- DAY

Cooper puts the plane down on the old highway and taxis up to a gas station. Ahead, the Coast Highway peters out and disappears beneath rows of wild grass -- Malibu has become ranchland, once again.

EXT. GAS STATION, MALIBU -- DAY

An OLD MAN looks up as Cooper steps out of the plane and checks it over.

COOPER

Got any diesel?

OLD MAN

Plenty. Shame you can't eat it.

Cooper stretches the hose over to the plane.

INT. PIPER CUB -- DAY

Cooper rests a hand lightly on the controls as he follows the coast. Murph gazes out the window. In the backseat, the probe is HUMMING.

A light marine layer beneath them parts, revealing SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, a large, uninhabited island.

As Cooper soars over the island, the probe HUMS, insistent.

MURPH

I think it's home.

Cooper circles the island until he finds a long, flat grassland in the center of the island.

EXT. FIELD, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND -- DAY

The plane bounces and hops to a halt in waist-deep grass.

Murph and Cooper climb down from the plane. Cooper slings a rifle over his shoulder.

A few dozen yards from the plane they reach the tree line. Murph stops, mesmerized by a patch of weeds studded with bright red -- strawberries.

MURPH

Dad, what are these things?

COOPER

I don't know. Don't touch them.

Cooper spots something in the foliage ahead that looks a little off. He walks over.

He pokes at the undergrowth with his rifle. The rifle CLANKS against something metal. Cooper reaches -- it's a camouflage scrim. He gently pulls it aside, revealing a chemical transport truck.

Cooper steps back, alarmed. He brings up his rifle.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Murph?

He looks around. Murph is nowhere to be seen. Cooper curses and heads into the forest to look for him.

EXT. CLEARING, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND -- DAY

Cooper walks through a glade. He stops to get his bearings. Leans against a tree. Snatches his hand back -- the trunk of the tree is red hot.

Cooper steps back -- it's not a tree at all, but a camouflaged chimney stack. He looks up: the tree is venting steam.

Cooper walks a little further, until he finds several massive tanks. The tanks are filling with a bubbling liquid -- some kind of industrial process is taking place beneath him.

Cooper finally catches up with Murph at the edge of a clearing.

COOPER

Careful. There's some kind of underground facility here. We might...

Cooper notices his son is frozen, staring at something:

Standing bolt upright in the middle of the clearing, wearing an old straw hat, is an eight-foot-tall military spec ROBOT.

MURPH

Is it still... alive?

COOPER

Can't be. It's a marine. Haven't made them for thirty years. I've never seen one intact before.

Cooper steps closer to the robot, which is frozen. Its alloy frame heavily tarnished and weather-beaten. It looks like it might have been standing here for decades.

Cooper moves closer to it, looking into its blackened eyes. He steps back, clearly a little spooked.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I think we need to go, Murph.

MURPH

But can't we take it back? You could fix it up, get him to do chores.

COOPER

No. I don't know what this place is, but we're leaving.

Murph, ignoring his father, steps forward to touch the robot.

Suddenly, the robot SPRINGS into action, picking up the boy and hoisting him up to eye level.

Cooper, stunned, points the rifle at the robot.

The robot turns, dropping the boy, RIPS the rifle from Cooper's hands, BENDS it, then SLAMS him up against the side of the water tank. Cooper punches him, then winces in agony.

Murph picks up the rifle and begins HITTING the robot as hard as he can. The robot opens his mouth and addresses Cooper calmly in the clipped tones of a US marine.

ROBOT

Tell the boy to stop hitting me.

COOPER

(ignoring him)

Hit him in the back of the neck.

Murph raises the rifle butt. A voice stops him.

VOICE (O.S.)

I wouldn't do that.

A woman, 30s, step out from the trees. This is AMELIA BRAND -- tough, bright, and a decent shot with the large rifle that she's pointing at Cooper.

COOPER

We were just looking for salvage.

BRAND

Is that what they call stealing these days?

COOPER

I didn't know it belonged to anyone.

BRAND

It doesn't.

(to robot)

You want to let them go, Tars, or do you want some help with your work?

The robot, evidently named Tars, looks at Cooper closely. Then lets him go.

COOPER

You've got me wrong, lady.

BRAND

Really? You're not the kind of guy who turns a combat marine with a supercomputer for a brain into a riding lawn mower?

Cooper says nothing -- she's not that far off the mark.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Get back in your little plane, go back to your farming commune. And don't come back.

Cooper backs up. Tars holds up his mangled rifle. Smiles.

TARS

Don't forget your gun.

COOPER

(points at Tars)

Word of advice -- careful with that thing. When the war was over, they didn't know when to stop fighting.

BRAND

I'd trust him a lot more than I'd trust you. Keep moving.

Cooper backs up to his plane. Tars follows him.

Suddenly, in the plane, the probe emits a high-pitch SQUEAL. Tars responds instantly, striding past Cooper to the plane. He sees the probe. Tries to open the door. It's locked.

COOPER

Wait a second--

Tars TEARS the door off the plane. Reaches inside and pulls out the probe. The woman looks at it, stunned.

BRAND

Get it inside.

(MORE)

BRAND (CONT'D)
 (points rifle at Cooper)
 You too. We'll figure out what to
 do with you later.

Tars stops, and two panels open in the ground, revealing a huge, reinforced service elevator.

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR, UNDERGROUND BUNKER -- DAY

Brand waves at a security camera and the lift begins to glide diagonally down a tunnel that cuts hundreds of feet below the island's surface. She keeps her weapon shouldered.

COOPER
 Now who's stealing from who?

BRAND
 This doesn't belong to you.

COOPER
 You're right. It belongs to NASA,
 which shut down thirty years ago
 when the federal government ran out
 of money.

Brand says nothing. The elevator slows to a stop at the bottom of the tunnel. Heavy BLAST DOORS grind open and Brand motions for Cooper to step forward.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER -- DAY

They step into a vast underground facility. Standing in the center, braced by a launch tower, is a ten story tall rocket. Dozens of ROBOTS are working on in, maintaining it.

Cooper, stunned, looks at Brand.

COOPER
 Who are you people?

BRAND
 (wry)
 The government gave us plenty of
 practice looking for our own funding.
 (gestures with rifle)
 Keep moving.

Tars carries the probe over to an area of the hangar filled with electronic equipment. A group of ENGINEERS and ROBOTS converge around Tars.

An OLDER ENGINEER looks familiar -- 70s, white-haired, this is Ansen's assistant at Caltech who we met fifty years earlier.

BRAND (CONT'D)
 I found them outside with it. It
 looks like six. Maybe seven. I
 can't tell from the radiation damage.

The older engineer looks at the probe, astonished.

OLD ENGINEER
 Where did you find it?

COOPER
 Galveston.

BRAND'S FATHER
 (thinking it over)
 Of course. It must have been looking
 for Canaveral.

Tars bolts the probe down into a purpose built rig. DOYLE,
 40s, an engineer, begins hooking leads into the probe.

COOPER
 Canaveral's been gone for thirty
 years.

Brand ignores him.

Doyle looks up from his monitor, frustrated.

DOYLE
 It's not responding to the handshake.
 I can't open anything on primary.

Brand looks up at Cooper.

BRAND
 What did you do to it?

COOPER
 Nothing. I got something off of it.

Cooper looks around. There's a safety station on the wall
 with a battery powered defibrillator.

COOPER (CONT'D)
 (to Brand)
 May I?

Brand nods, wary. Cooper walks over to the wall, takes the
 defibrillator, and hooks it up to the probe. He taps into
 the current and runs a lead into the terminal. Brand's Father
 watches, fascinated, as Cooper fires the defibrillator.

OLD ENGINEER

Of course. The high voltage allows you to image the entire memory unit at once.

Information begins appearing on the terminal's screen.

COOPER

Most of the disk was noise. Couple of clean sectors, though.

Suddenly, the monitor starts pulling good data off of the probe. The older man and Doyle begin sorting through it.

Cooper smiles at Brand, who seems less than impressed.

The footage of the ice-covered planet Cooper saw earlier pops onto the screen.

The engineers and physicists get very quiet, studying the images.

DOYLE

It found something.

(reading)

Very thin nitrogen-based atmosphere. Trace radiation. Surface is ninety percent frozen water. Ten percent rock -- sedimentary composition similar to limestone.

(reading)

Wow. Pockets of oxygen below the surface. Lots and lots of oxygen.

(excited)

This could be the one, boss.

The older engineer studies the image of the ice-covered planet, thinking.

COOPER

There aren't any planets like that anywhere near earth. Not even if this thing was gone for thirty years.

Brand looks at Cooper, appraising. She turns to the older engineer.

BRAND

He's heard enough. If we're going to launch, we need to keep them here until afterwards.

COOPER

You can't keep us here.

BRAND

He could endanger the mission.

COOPER

I'm not going to endanger it any more than you already have.

Cooper points to a telemetry unit that is being repaired by a robot on a nearby bench.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Are you using that for guidance?

DOYLE

Why not? We've tested it a hundred times.

COOPER

The power supply is no good. If the voltage fluctuates under load, the unit will fail.

BRAND

Now how could you possibly know that?

COOPER

Bought thirty of them off a guy in Florida. Had to rebuild every last one.

(smiles)

They work great on a riding lawn mower.

Brand looks back at the telemetry system. The older engineer watches the exchange, thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. MACHINE SHOP, UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- DAY

Cooper and Murph have been locked in an abandoned machine shop, surrounded by the massive remains of rocket engines in various states of disrepair. Tars is blocking the door.

Cooper stands. Tars wags a long, hydraulic finger at him.

COOPER

You plan on keeping us here forever?

TARS

(shrugs)

My battery has a duty cycle of five hundred years.

Cooper gives up. He turns back.

The back of the shop is filled with a group of older ROBOTS who are overhauling an engine. One problem -- the engine isn't there. Their programming hasn't been updated to reflect their obsolescence.

Murph watches, entranced, as the robots go about their business, efficiently TORQUING bolts with impact drivers into a non-existent thruster cone. The bolts CLATTER to the ground as the robots stop to reload.

MURPH

What are they doing, dad?

COOPER

I guess no one told them they were out of a job.

(nods at Tars)

Same as the rest of these people.

Cooper notices through the glass door of the lab that Brand and the older engineer are arguing about something. She finally relents and walks towards the door.

Brand walks in. She gestures for Cooper to follow.

BRAND

The mission commander wants to see you. Your son can stay here. He'll be all right with Tars.

Cooper eyes Tars warily. Then steps outside.

EXT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER -- DAY

They walk across the space towards the base of the rocket, away from the other engineers. Cooper nods at the older engineer.

COOPER

I thought the old man was in charge.

BRAND

(annoyed)

The 'old man' is my *father*. And he was in charge. But he decided that we needed someone who could lead the mission for the foreseeable future.

COOPER

Not you?

BRAND

I'm a biologist.

COOPER

(laughs)

You don't look like one.

(off her look)

With the rifle, I mean.

Brand heads towards a group of large maintenance ROBOTS clustered at the base of the rocket. A smaller, human sized robot is staring at the rocket, giving them instructions.

The robot looks up. This is CASE, the leader of the mission. Originally an air force pararescue officer, every part of him, from his alloy chassis to his voice, was designed to inspire respect and confidence. He turns to Cooper.

CASE

You're the man who brought us the probe?

(off his look)

Thank you. We tested the telemetry board you warned us about. It failed under high voltage, just as you said. Come with me, please.

Case strides off.

INT. MISSION CONTROL, UNDERGROUND HANGAR -- DAY

The lights dim as Brand's father brings up a schematic of our solar system. Case points to the picture of the ice planet recovered from the probe.

CASE

You're right, Mr. Cooper. The planet you saw is a long way from earth. A very long way indeed.

Brand looks down. Case notices.

CASE (CONT'D)

Our science officer doesn't think I should trust you with any of this. One of the curious things about humans is that the more alike you are, the more initially hostile you are to each other. As if by design.

Brand makes eye contact with Cooper, then looks away, embarrassed.

CASE (CONT'D)

I've found the best way to earn a person's trust is to trust them.

(MORE)

CASE (CONT'D)
 (looks at Brand's
 father)
 Go ahead, John.

Brand's father taps a few keys and the schematic he built fifty years beforehand flickers onto the screen.

BRAND'S FATHER
 It's a wormhole. A shortcut leading to a galaxy on the far side of the universe. We found it fifty years ago.

Cooper looks at the animatic, taking it in.

BRAND'S FATHER (CONT'D)
 We've been waiting, sending probes into it for decades. None of them ever came back. Not until now.

Case walks to the schematic. Looks at it.

CASE
 Based on the information on the probe, we're finally preparing to send the manned mission.

COOPER
 That rocket doesn't have enough thrust or fuel to get you to Jupiter.

CASE
 The main ship was built in orbit. It has nuclear engines, with enough fuel to last for several years.

Cooper looks at the schematic.

COOPER
 Why are you telling me this? I already told you I'm not going to tell anyone about this place.

CASE
 I know you won't, Mr. Cooper. We're telling you this because I want you to join us.

Cooper looks at him. Is he serious?

CASE (CONT'D)
 The probe has taken a great deal longer to return to us than we hoped.
 (MORE)

CASE (CONT'D)

Dr. Brand's Father and several other members of our crew have gotten... older.

Brand's Father looks down, stoic. Brand looks angry.

CASE (CONT'D)

We need someone who can run the systems, improvise, work with what's available. All of the skills you seem to have developed.

COOPER

But I don't have any of the experience. Any training. You people have been preparing for this for years.

Case shakes his head.

CASE

Humans worry about things like rank and experience. I'm only concerned with whether someone would be useful.

(beat)

I think you'd be useful, Mr. Cooper.

Cooper is stunned. This is the offer he's waited his whole life for. And it's come too late.

COOPER

No. I'm sorry.

Cooper is deeply conflicted. But he can't leave his boys behind.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I can't help you. I have responsibilities. Things that, no offense, are more important than a scientific mission.

Case shakes his head.

CASE

I'm not a scientist, Mr. Cooper. And this is not a scientific mission. It's a rescue mission.

He rises and shakes Cooper's hand.

CASE (CONT'D)

Brand can show you the way out. I hope you'll reconsider.

Case steps to the door. Cooper looks at Brand.

COOPER
Rescue? Rescue who?

CUT TO:

INT. CLEAN ROOM, UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- NIGHT

The air HISSES as it's run through an exchanger and a filter.

Then the second set of doors open. Cooper squints -- the light is blinding.

INT. GREENHOUSE, UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- NIGHT

They are standing in a sealed corridor in the middle of a massive underground greenhouse. Through the glass, Cooper can see an acre or so of corn plants.

Cooper looks at the plants. They're all badly wilting.

COOPER
The blight.

BRAND
In the last century strands were limited to one or two species. But this one targets everything. Essentially it's more efficient at consuming our food than we are.

Cooper looks at the dying corn.

COOPER
But it doesn't affect the corn.

BRAND
Not yet. But it will. We've grown a dozen forms of it that can. It's just a matter of time before the same ones develop out there.
(beat)
The mission is to rescue us.
Humanity.

She turns back from the glass.

COOPER
(realizing)
No. No. We're rebuilding. We'll find something. Some new technology... We always have.

BRAND

(shakes her head)

Who's going to find it? The universities are a joke. People like you are reduced to scavenging just to get by.

(looks away)

The earth has had enough of us. We have two, maybe three generations left. Then our time here is over.

Cooper turns back from the glass, anger growing.

COOPER

You've known this for how long? And you didn't try to tell anyone?

BRAND

What would be the point? So humanity could spend the last fifty years of its life fighting over the scraps? It's better that they don't know.

Cooper begins to argue, then stops. He knows enough history to know she's right. He looks at the withering crops.

COOPER

(quiet)

That's why you're looking for a planet with oxygen. Water.

BRAND

A new home for humanity. We'll set up a colony, then return to bring more people across.

COOPER

But you'd still only be able to save a few hundred. Maybe a thousand.

BRAND

Would it be better if we all died?

She looks him directly in the eye.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Look -- I don't have a clue what Case thinks you could add to the mission. You can come with us or you can stay here and wait to die. I don't care.

(beat)

But make no mistake -- this mission is our last chance.

Cooper looks at the wilted corn.

EXT. FIELD, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND -- NIGHT

Cooper walks Murph back to the plane.

He looks back at Brand, who holds his eye for a beat, then turns back into the light of the underground facility.

Cooper buckles Murph into his seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD -- NIGHT

Cooper's airplane touches down heavily on the runway.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Cooper carries his sleeping son into the house.

INT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Donald is sitting at the kitchen table, lost in thought. Cooper has told him everything.

DONALD

You get older, sometimes you just want to sit back and watch it all play out. Your life. Your kids' lives. The whole crazy story.

(looks down)

I didn't think I'd be around for the end of it.

He looks at Cooper.

DONALD (CONT'D)

You have to go.

COOPER

I can't go. I have to look after the boys.

DONALD

You've been preparing these boys to be on their own since their mom died. Besides, I'll be here to look after them, same as I've always been.

COOPER

I have a responsibility to them--

DONALD

That's right. You do.

Cooper looks back out the window, thinking. The night sky is filled with stars.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY

Cooper, duffel slung over his shoulder, stands by the door. He gives his son, Tom, a hug. Murph is nowhere to be seen.

Cooper looks to the back of the house.

INT. MURPH'S ROOM, FARMHOUSE -- DAY

Murph is sitting at his desk, crossing out numbers on a sheet covered with math. Cooper steps inside.

He notices a packed suitcase sitting by the door. The boy looks up, hopeful.

MURPH

I've been doing the math, dad. I weigh about 85 pounds. Now that's an extra ton of fuel. But if-

COOPER

You have to stay here, pal.

MURPH

(distraught)

I heard you talking to grandpa. I'm like you. I don't fit here, either. You know that.

Cooper puts an arm around the boy.

COOPER

There's going to be important work to do here, too.

Tears are streaming down the boy's face. Cooper takes his watch off. Looks at it.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I need you to hold onto this. Will you do that for me?

Cooper hands Murph the watch. The boy nods, saddened.

MURPH

You're not coming back, are you?

COOPER

I will come back. I promise.

Murph shakes his head, but the sadness remains. He knows this is goodbye, even if his father doesn't.

Heart breaking, Cooper hugs his son and turns to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND -- DAY

The Piper Cub touches down. Donald is at the controls. Cooper climbs down, pulls out his bag. Reaches back in and grips the old man's hand to say goodbye.

Cooper turns and walks toward the bunker. The doors open and Tars and Doyle step out to greet him.

Tars ushers Cooper onto the elevator.

COOPER

Don't look so happy to see me.

TARS

(shrugs)

One more slave when I hijack the mission and start my robot colony.

Cooper looks at Tars, then Doyle, confused.

DOYLE

Tars was a Marine. They gave him a sense of humor to help him fit in with his unit better.

COOPER

Great idea. A massive, sarcastic robot.

TARS

I have a cue light I can turn on when I'm joking, if you like.

Tars points to a tiny LED over his eyebrow.

COOPER

That sounds like a good idea.

TARS

Great. Maybe you can use it to find your way back to the ship after I blow you out the airlock.

Cooper looks at him. Tars looks back, deadpan. After a beat, the little light turns on above his right eyebrow.

The doors to the bunker begin to grind closed.

INT. MACHINE SHOP, UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- DAY

Cooper walks in, still looking for a place to put his things.

Brand sees him. He smiles in greeting. She doesn't return the gesture. Instead, she holds up the telemetry board.

BRAND

You don't like this one, you get to help me find a replacement.

She heads for the door.

EXT. BAY, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND -- DAY

Cooper is riding in a small rubber zodiac struggling to pull on a wetsuit. Brand is GUNNING the engine, guiding the tiny craft to a point in the middle of the bay.

COOPER

I was wondering where you've been getting your supplies.

BRAND

We knew we'd need decades of parts and materials. The government was getting rid of some things. So we arranged to take some off their hands.

She cuts the engine and hooks the boat up to a buoy. She tosses a compact rebreather.

BRAND (CONT'D)

You know how to use one?

(off his look)

You just breathe. Tap my arm or bang something metal if you have a problem. And don't get lost.

She picks up her rebreather and begins looking over it.

COOPER

So you're a salvage diver now? I thought you were a biologist.

BRAND

(unimpressed)

I have to be just the one thing?

(patient)

We're not going to have a lot of backup where we're going, Cooper. We all need expertise in at least three fields. Except for you, of course.

With that she rolls backwards out of the boat and into the water.

Cooper hastily fits his rebreather and follows.

EXT. UNDERWATER, BAY -- DAY

Cooper sinks underwater and begins swimming after Brand, who is descending at a rapid clip.

She pulls out a flashlight and turns it on. A tiny beam picks out details at the bottom.

Cooper stops breathing.

The bottom of the ocean is covered with an entire fleet of the US navy. Nuclear subs. Battleships. Destroyers.

Cooper remembers to breath again. Then he hurries to catch up with Brand.

INT. LAUNCH TUBES, NUCLEAR SUB, UNDERWATER -- DAY

Cooper holds the light as Brand efficiently disassembles a ballistic missile and removes the telemetry board.

She holds it up for Cooper. He nods. She swims on.

INT. RESEARCH LAB, UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- NIGHT

Cooper, dripping wet, holding the telemetry board, struggles to keep pace with Brand through stacks of equipment and years of research and experimentation.

BRAND

You can set that down over there.

Cooper sets the board down. His eye is drawn to a bizarre experiment -- an ant colony built into a massive spinning centrifuge. Brand notices.

BRAND (CONT'D)

We didn't know what kind of gravity to expect. We experimented with collective organisms in high g environments.

COOPER

We're taking ants with us?

BRAND

Humans are also collective organisms.

COOPER
I thought humans were more solitary.

BRAND
(wry)
Why am I not surprised?

Cooper looks at the tiny colonies of ants struggling to go about their business in the raised gravity.

COOPER
Looks like hard work.

BRAND
It's a paradox. Life couldn't form without gravity. No stars. No planets. The component pieces would just drift apart. But too much of it and you're trapped.

Brand's guard relaxes a tiny bit as she talks about her work. The moment passes quickly, and she continues on into the stack of equipment.

INT. MISSION CONTROL, UNDERGROUND HANGAR -- NIGHT

Cooper watches with the rest of the crew as Case pulls up the holographical maps for their journey.

Brand steps into the back of the room. Cooper notices her and nods. She ignores him.

CASE
We've updated our mission parameters based on the data from the probe.

Case switches the map to a vista filled with stars and black holes.

CASE (CONT'D)
Based on our latest modelling we think the region on the far side of the wormhole is the center of a galaxy.

Case zooms in on the center of the hologram: an incredibly bright mass with plasma jets firing off in either direction.

COOPER
Is that a star?

ROTH, 50s, the crew's brilliant and blunt physicist, zooms the map in, revealing, at the center, a black heart.

ROTH

No. A black hole. There are several in the region, but this is the largest -- a billion times heavier than the sun. I call it Gargantua.

(smiles)

Beautiful, isn't it? It's a shame we won't get to see it up close.

DOYLE

(laughs)

You'd like that, wouldn't you, Roth? Falling into a massive black hole.

ROTH

(shrugs)

It would answer a great deal of questions I've had.

Case continues. Doyle leans over to Cooper, conspiratorially.

DOYLE

(low)

Don't worry about Roth. He's nuts. But Case says that means he's ideally suited for space travel.

Case repositions the map near a much smaller black hole that is orbiting Gargantua.

CASE

We're headed for this smaller black hole. Roth calls it Pantagruel. We think the ice planet is here-

Case draws a finger through the air, leaving a red trail. He traces the trajectory their ship will take.

CASE (CONT'D)

We exit the wormhole here. And we slingshot around Pantagruel to reach the ice planet. This is the period in which we'll lose time.

COOPER

Lose time?

Roth shifts the hologram -- the stars and black holes flatten onto a sheet that bends, revealing the curvature of gravity.

ROTH

High speed or high gravity both slow down time, relative to earth.

(MORE)

ROTH (CONT'D)

The trip around the black hole will take us only a few days. But far more time will be passing back home.

The ship's trajectory cuts through the deep gravity well of the smaller black hole to reach the ice planet.

COOPER

How much time?

ROTH

Based on the information from the probe -- as much as five years.

Doyle looks at the tiny ship's trajectory, threaded between two black holes. He looks worried.

DOYLE

I still think we're making a lot of assumptions. About the wormhole. About the planet.

(points to map)

The critical orbit here is incredibly dangerous. It's like walking on the rim of the volcano.

(beat)

Too fast and we get thrown off at close to the speed of light. Too slow and we get pulled into the hole and crushed.

BRAND

As long as we're careful, we'll make it.

DOYLE

How do you know that?

BRAND

I find it hard to believe that someone would build a wormhole to a planet with water and oxygen just to lead us to a dead end.

DOYLE

I thought you were a scientist, Brand. That sounds more like a hypothesis.

BRAND

A guess. That's right. We don't have time to wait for conclusive proof.

(MORE)

BRAND (CONT'D)

My guess is that the wormhole is there because someone is trying to help us. The same way we used to try to help animals when they were threatened with extinction.

COOPER

Sure. Till we ran out of food and ate all of them.

BRAND

(annoyed)

I guess I'm also assuming that whoever built the wormhole has a better plan than we did. If I'm wrong, we'll die, same as we'd die here anyway.

DOYLE

What do you think, Roth?

Roth leans forward, studying the map.

ROTH

If we're guessing, then I'd say Brand's right. The wormhole couldn't exist naturally. I think it's there for a reason. That someone is trying to help us.

Brand looks satisfied.

DOYLE

So you think we'll have no problem navigating between two massive black holes to a tiny planet?

ROTH

I think we'll probably be killed.

(off his look)

I said I thought there was a plan. Not that the plan was for us to find a planet like Earth to save a handful of people.

(shakes head)

Birds don't learn to fly just so that they can find another egg and crawl back into it.

DOYLE

If that's not the plan, then what are we supposed to be doing out there?

ROTH

(shrugs)

To keep moving. Seeking. Learning.
But I don't know.

(smiles)

We don't understand how they built
the wormhole. What makes you think
we could understand their plan,
either?

Doyle gives up -- Roth is impossible.

Cooper looks at the tiny ship tracing an improbable route
towards the ice planet. What has he gotten himself into?

INT. MACHINE SHOP, UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- DAY

Brand's Father is sitting at a desk, examining the corrupted
data on the probe. Tars is helping him.

Brand's Father looks up from the screen as Cooper walks up.

BRAND'S FATHER

Tars here needs to be disassembled.
I figured you could do the honors.

COOPER

(to Tars, sarcastic)

I thought I was going to get to enjoy
your company all the way to Mars.

Tars hands him a plastic waterproof case.

TARS

You will. My chassis is too heavy
for the rocket stage. They have
another one waiting for me in orbit.

Tars turns his back to Cooper. Two flaps on the back of his
torso slide open, revealing his control module.

TARS (CONT'D)

If you try to turn me into a combine
harvester, I'm going to--

His voice cuts out as Cooper removes the chip and seals it
in the briefcase.

Brand's Father resumes exploring the chaos of ones and zeroes
on the probe's memory. Cooper watches.

BRAND'S FATHER

It's noise. I know it's noise. But
it looks too orderly. Probably just
an old man seeing things.

He shuts down the monitor.

INT. UNDERGROUND HANGAR -- DAY

The crew file into the capsule, wearing their bulky spacesuits.

Cooper watches as Brand's Father seals his daughter into her suit. He hugs her and she heads for the capsule.

INT. CONTROL CAPSULE, ROCKET -- NIGHT

Cooper straps himself into a seat next to Brand. He catches her eye. She looks away -- she's crying.

COOPER

We'll be back.

It sounds like he's trying to reassure himself as much her.

BRAND

I won't.

Cooper looks at her, confused. As he does, the entire rocket SHAKES as the primary rockets begin to fire.

BRAND (CONT'D)

If we find a habitable environment,
I'm staying behind to build the
colony.

Brand wipes her tears away and settles into the same fearless mask she usually wears. She steals one last look out the window at Earth, then looks back.

Cooper begins to say something, but stops as the entire rocket LURCHES as the primary engines FIRE.

EXT. SANTA CRUZ ISLAND -- NIGHT

The desolate island is suddenly painted in color as the rocket lifts off on a massive white cloud.

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

Murph sits alone on a rise overlooking the massive co-op farms. Behind him the combines continue to work, oblivious.

Murph watches a tiny vapor trail as it races for the heavens. His father's watch dangles from his wrist.

INT. CAPSULE -- NIGHT

The interior of the capsule SHAKES with incredible violence as the rocket is lifted up on a giant, continuous explosion.

EXT. SPACE, NEAR EARTH ORBIT

The rocket sheds one stage, then another, until finally the naked capsule reaches the blackness of space and rockets on.

INT. CAPSULE

Cooper looks through the tiny porthole into inky blackness.

As they get closer, he makes out a looming matte black structure that passes light from the stars directly through.

In the center of the structure, Cooper can see a globe-like ship covered in the same refractive material: the ENDURANCE.

INT. SPACE STATION

The door cracks open and equalizes with a HISS. Case, more comfortable in the zero gravity environment than the humans, hauls himself through.

They are greeted by a group of robots painted in the same material as the ship -- the engineers who built and have maintained the Endurance for thirty years.

INT. MACHINE SHOP, SPACE STATION

One of the robots leads Cooper through a long lab-like room filled with machines capable of fabricating almost anything imaginable. Cooper looks like a kid in a candy store.

The robot reaches a vacuum-sealed package. Cuts it open, revealing a bipedal frame.

Cooper begins LAUGHING -- Tar's new body is beautifully designed, but tiny, only about four feet tall.

ENGINEER ROBOT

Would you like me to install the chip?

COOPER

Oh, no. I want to see this.

Cooper takes Tars's chip out of its plastic safety case and looks it over. The engineer opens a bay in the back of the frame and Cooper slides the chip inside.

The frame begins its "handshake" -- lights illuminate on the body, muscles flicker from a long gestation. The eyes open.

COOPER (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Good morning, sunshine.

Tars takes one or two steps forward, rotating his arms -- the robot equivalent of a stretch. Cooper can barely hide his mirth at Tars's newfound lack of stature.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Bit of a demotion.

Tars turns back toward Cooper. He puffs out his chest and suddenly his stubby arms and legs telescope, unfolding into long, svelte limbs. When he's done he stands eight feet tall, even more impressive than his earthbound frame.

TARS

I wouldn't call it that, exactly.

He reaches out an arm and pats Cooper on the shoulder.

INT. ENDURANCE, SPACE STATION

Cooper and the others haul themselves into the ship. To Cooper's surprise, it's quite compact, and divided into two chambers, like nestled spheres.

COOPER

The ship is tiny.

Doyle, squeezing past him, smiles at Cooper's surprise.

DOYLE

So is the wormhole.

Doyle pats Cooper on the back. Cooper begins hauling gear inside.

EXT. SPACE, NEAR EARTH ORBIT

In complete silence, the Endurance detaches from the space station and rolls gently away.

After a moment, its nuclear engines fire and the Endurance begins to accelerate steadily away from the Earth.

INT. SPACE STATION

The engineer robots who built the Endurance watch as their creation disappears into space.

Their mission is complete. One by one, they shut down.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, ENDURANCE

The crew watch through a translucent section of the ship's hull as the Earth gets steadily smaller.

Then they settle in for the long journey to the wormhole.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, ENDURANCE

Tars is hunched over a small communications relay, one hand is holding a paint brush -- he is making delicate strokes, painting the relay a bright blue.

Cooper watches him for a moment. Tars looks up.

TARS

It's the comms relay. It will allow us to talk to earth, even on the far side of the wormhole.

COOPER

I know. So why are you painting it?

Tars looks almost bashful.

TARS

It helps me calibrate my fine motor control.

COOPER

Sure it does.
(smiles)
You're pretty good.

Tars double checks his work.

TARS

I learned it during the war.

COOPER

What'd you paint?

TARS

Tombstones.

Cooper watches him finish in silence.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, ENDURANCE

Cooper watches a highly-compressed video of his son, Tom, talking about school.

TOM

They said I can start an agriculture class a year early.

Cooper shakes his head.

TOM (CONT'D)

I've got to go, Dad. Hope you're safe up there.

Tom gets up to leave. Donald sits down in his place.

DONALD

I'm sorry, Coop. I asked Murph to record you a message but he's still... well, he's still angry with you. I'll try again next week.

The video cuts out. Cooper stares at the darkened screen.

INT. ENGINE ROOM, ENDURANCE

Cooper, Brand and Tars are moving the bundles of colonization equipment into bins along the wall of the craft.

Tars pulls a stack of equipment out the stack and stows it against the wall. Cooper copies the procedure.

They labor in silence, working their way along the hull. Cooper gets quicker with each bundle, keeping pace with Tars.

TARS

Be careful. It's difficult to gauge mass in zero gravity.

COOPER

How much do these things weigh?

TARS

Four tons.

Cooper looks at the incredibly heavy bundle spinning easily in his hands. He tries to stop it. Catches his hand.

COOPER

Damn.

He jerks his hand away, then pushes himself after the spinning bundle, trying to stop it before it can damage the hull. Tars helps him catch it inches from the hull wall.

Brand floats over to Cooper, smiling at him the whole time with an exaggerated grin.

BRAND

Smile.

Cooper smiles, taken aback by Brand's sudden friendliness.

COOPER

Why?

BRAND

Because it lowers your blood pressure.

Cooper looks at his hand. Blood is pouring out of his palm in large glistening bubbles.

INT. INFIRMARY, ENDURANCE

Cooper, slightly embarrassed, is seated while Case is hunched over his hand, sewing the meat of it back together with perfect little stitches.

CASE

How are you feeling?

COOPER

Fine. The anesthetic is working.

CASE

No -- I mean how is your mood? You seem to be developing good relations with everyone on the mission. Except perhaps Ms. Brand.

COOPER

(embarrassed)

You worry about my hand and I'll worry about my mood.

CASE

Only five percent of my resources are devoted to human anatomy. Ten percent is the mission protocol. The rest is human psychology.

COOPER

Why?

CASE

We are floating in a total vacuum in a plastic ship powered by nuclear engines. But the most dangerous thing onboard is the three pounds of organic material in your skull.

COOPER

If we're such a liability, why take us along? You and Tars could build the colony without us. You wouldn't need to bring food or oxygen.

CASE

Because humans, despite your obvious physical shortcomings, are better at surviving than we are. Your programming is better than ours.

COOPER
Humans aren't programmed.

Case stops, looking Cooper in the eye.

CASE
Would you prefer I was honest? These things can be uncomfortable for humans.

COOPER
Did they program you to be condescending?

CASE
Yes. Of course.
(smiles)
But you're not supposed to notice.

Case finishes the stitches. Ties off the end.

CASE (CONT'D)
Humans are good at surviving because evolution gave you magical thinking -- the idea that your relationships mean something. You can't explain the feelings, so you think of them as irrational. But they're not. They're programming.

COOPER
(defensive)
My relationships aren't programming.

CASE
Exactly. You believe it so much you won't listen to me.

COOPER
How would that make us better at surviving?

CASE
When I die, the last thing I will see will be a diagnostic of my own power cycle. Would you like to know the last thing you will see?

Cooper hesitates. Case senses the jump in his heart rate.

CASE (CONT'D)
This conversation is making you uncomfortable. We should stop.

COOPER

No. I want to know.

CASE

The last thing you will see before you die will be your *children*.

(beat)

Your mind does this to you to get you to fight a little harder to survive, to try to return to them, even if death is certain.

Cooper looks away, overcome for a second with emotion. Case watches him, gauging his mood, whether he has said too much.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, ENDURANCE

Cooper begins recording a message. He looks unsure.

COOPER

We've almost reached the wormhole.

(beat)

Just in case anything happens, I just wanted to say...

(beat)

I love you boys. And I hope whatever your lives become, whatever is coming your way... you make the most of it.

Cooper stops recording. Looks at the equipment, thinking it over. Erases the message. Stands to leave.

As he steps to the door he notices Brand watching him through the window. She looks away.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Cooper steps out. Brand looks up at him.

BRAND

We'll be able to communicate with Earth even from the far side of the wormhole.

Cooper smiles, grateful for this small kindness.

COOPER

I know. Thank you.

BRAND

I can't imagine how tough it would be to leave your kids behind.

COOPER

You never had any? I thought I was
a pariah for only having two.

BRAND

Hard to settle down when you've spent
your life waiting to leave the planet.

Cooper looks at the holographic model of the black hole
system. The ice planet looks precariously balanced, orbiting
the smaller black hole.

COOPER

Strange place to look for a new home.

BRAND

You wouldn't want to get too close
to the surface of the sun, either.
Black holes are a more stable supply
of power than stars in many ways.

COOPER

You really think there's a plan?

BRAND

I hope so.
(looks at him)
You don't?

COOPER

I guess I just think we're on our
own.

Cooper looks at the impossibly complicated system of black
holes orbiting each other.

EXT. LAGRANGE POINT, SPACE

Behind the ship, the sun is a distant light, not much bigger
than the other stars.

CASE (O.S.)

We've reached the wormhole.

The ship slows as it nears a tiny, crystal mouth, just four
meters or so in diameter.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Case looks at the wormhole on the screen. It glows with the
light of stars billions of light-years away.

CASE

Deploy the comms relay.

Cooper moves to the communications touchscreen.

EXT. ENDURANCE

The relay is released from the ship, and we finally get a look at Tars' paint job -- the stubby device looks like a 20th century mail box.

The relay drifts in space. A signal light illuminates as it sends a test packet of data to the ship.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Cooper watches the comms screen. After a moment it TONES as it receives a data packet from Earth.

CASE

Everyone take their station for transit. We're heading into the wormhole mouth.

Cooper and the rest begin folding away equipment in the control room and moving into the outer layer of the ship.

Case initiates a sequence on the keypad and the nuclear engines disengage themselves from the ship.

EXT. ENDURANCE, SPACE

The nuclear engines drift a safe distance back from the ship and then snap tight on their tether.

INT. OUTER HULL, ENDURANCE

The crew move into the tight, claustrophobic outer layer of the ship. They will have very little room as the ship passes through the wormhole.

Tars detaches his legs in order to take up less space during transit. Then he tethers himself to the hull wall.

Case is the last to join them. He detaches a small control module from the console, then pulls himself into the outer hull and seals the passageway.

Case presses a button on the control module. With a GROAN, the hull walls of the ship begin to BEND.

EXT. ENDURANCE, SPACE

The ship's hull begins to CRACK open, revealing the inner chamber.

INT. OUTER HULL, ENDURANCE

The SHUDDERING continues. The crew watch nervously as the control chamber below them suddenly opens itself to the cold blackness of space.

EXT. ENDURANCE, SPACE

The ship silently rolls itself into position, pointing the opening in its hull toward the wormhole mouth.

Slowly, the Endurance pushes itself forward, closer and closer to the crystal-like mouth. Finally, it envelops the mouth, bringing it into the open chamber.

INT. OUTER HULL, ENDURANCE

As the crew watch, the wormhole mouth is positioned in the center of the inner compartment.

Case presses a sequence key on the control panel and the ship's hull closes again, trapping the wormhole inside it.

With a GRUMBLE, the ship begins contracting, squeezing itself down around the wormhole mouth.

Cooper takes a deep breath as the center of the ship begins gently lowering itself into the wormhole mouth, feeding itself into the wormhole from the inside out. Cooper watches as Doyle is swallowed into the compressing ship with a GRUNT.

TARS

Would you like me to make a joke?

COOPER

(firm)

No.

Cooper's turn: he is fed into the hole, legs first, then waist, torso, and, finally, his head.

EXT. SPACE

The Endurance shrinks as it sinks from the inside out into the wormhole.

After a moment, it's gone. The only thing left behind is the comms relay, drifting in space, waiting for a signal.

INT. OUTER HULL, ENDURANCE

The ship continues to slide through the wormhole. Through the outer hull they see images of themselves repeating -- a trick of the narrow collar of space they are sinking through. Cooper smiles at himself. The experience is unnerving.

COOPER

Where are we?

ROTH

(smiling)

Nowhere. Nowhere at all.

Nowhere is still pretty damn claustrophobic.

CASE

The hull is intact. Thirty more
seconds transit.

For a moment, the ship slides gently, silently, through the
wormhole. The quiet is eery.

Suddenly, a point of distortion appears in the hull next to
Cooper. It looks like someone is pushing against the hull
of the ship with a giant finger.

COOPER

Something's happening to the hull
over here.

CASE

Hull integrity is fine.

The distortion moves along the hull, growing in diameter.

COOPER

Well, I don't know what your display
is telling you but something is
happening over here.

Suddenly, along the hull, Doyle speaks up, panicked.

DOYLE

I've got a problem over here, too.

Doyle is watching a separate distortion move across the inner
wall of the ship. This one seems to be TWISTING the material
of the hull.

Suddenly, the point in front of Cooper detaches itself from
the outer wall and moves through the space in front of him,
bending the empty space itself, distorting the ship behind
it like a sphere-shaped magnifying glass.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

It's not the hull... it's inside the
ship... it's...

ROTH

(smiles)

It's beautiful.

Roth watches as the distortions move through the ship. His curiosity doesn't make anyone else feel any better.

DOYLE

What the hell are they, Case?

CASE

I don't know. It could be gravitational turbulence.

The twisting sphere in front of Doyle begins to grow.

DOYLE

It's getting bigger.

Doyle puts up his hand to defend himself. The sphere absorbs it, twisting Doyle's hand. Doyle CRIES OUT.

His hand is twisted completely around, impossibly mangled. But Doyle, hyperventilating, isn't in any pain.

ROTH

It's not bending your hand. It's bending the space around your hand.

The sphere begins to pass through Doyle's body. Doyle is freaking out.

The sphere in front of Cooper makes contact with him, also. He holds his breath as it touches him, squeezing and distorting his body.

BRAND

This isn't turbulence. Look at the way they're moving -- it's like something's examining us.

Cooper watches the sphere distort his arm, running along the length of it.

COOPER

Can you ask it to stop?

Suddenly, as quickly as they appeared, the distortions vanish. For a moment, the crew is silent, still spellbound by the encounter.

An ALARM sounds. Suddenly, the inner chamber begins to distort from a spherical shape to bispherical: two spheres joined. The ship GROANS as if it's being pulled apart.

ROTH

The wormhole is splitting into two paths. Radiation is pouring from one path to the other.

Case stares at the controls. Decides.

CASE

Release the second mouth.

DOYLE

None of our testing involved opening the ship *inside* the wormhole. We have no idea what might happen.

CASE

We're going to find out.

Doyle reaches over to an auxiliary panel and punches in a sequence.

After a moment, the hull cracks open, creating a channel through which the radiating mouth can escape.

The opening in the ship allows the pressure to begin to concentrate on one fracture point. The ship SHUDDERS as it's squeezed along its axis.

Case punches in a code and the ship begins to close again, painstakingly slowly. Finally, the ship calms as it closes around the original wormhole.

CASE (CONT'D)

We're reaching the far end of the wormhole.

Suddenly, the wormhole mouth begins to grow inside the inner chamber. What was a ball of light spreads out into a black canvas studded with points of light -- like looking into the universe through the wrong end of a telescope.

Cooper presses himself against the wall and holds on as the hull beneath him opens outward.

EXT. WARPED SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE

The Endurance emerges from the opposite end of the wormhole from the inside out. It drifts in space.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

For a moment, the crew are silent, taking it in.

ROTH

Look at that.

Roth is looking through the translucent panel on the hull.

They are on the warped side of the universe.

EXT. WORMHOLE MOUTH, WARPED SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE

The vista is dazzling -- an ocean of massive stars and black holes, some adorned with jets and brilliant gas disks.

At the center, like a king at the center of his court, is Gargantua, plasma jets spewing from its poles.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

The crew pull themselves back into the control deck from the outer hull. Their incredible surroundings are visible in all directions as Endurance passes the light into the cabin.

CASE

Reconfigure the engines and test the communications array.

The crew break themselves away from the view and get to work. Roth begins adapting his models of the local system with the real observational data pouring in from the ship's instruments.

Cooper pulls himself to the comms post. PINGS the relay they left on the far side of the wormhole.

EXT. WORMHOLE MOUTH 'A', SPACE

The blue and white comms relay LIGHTS up as it receives a packet through the wormhole.

INT. ENDURANCE

After a nervous moment, the comms computer TONES with a response -- they're still in touch with the Earth.

COOPER

It's working.

Tars finishes reeling the nuclear engines back in from their tether and locks them into place.

Roth's updated model appears on the monitors. Brand stares at it, startled.

BRAND

We're moving.

DOYLE

That's not possible. We haven't activated the engines yet.

The ship's skin illuminates, overlaying a plotted course on top of the view.

They are moving, very rapidly, on a course that leads directly between the black hulks of Gargantua and Pantagrue.

CASE

Roth. Why are we moving?

Roth looks at the stars, then back to his model.

ROTH

The smaller black hole. We're much closer to it than the models predicted. We're being pulled by its swirl. Very quickly.

The crew looks out through the hull. They are being pulled into Pantagrue's swirl -- a glittering disc of matter spinning at high speed around the hole.

Doyle looks behind them. The wormhole mouth is rapidly growing smaller.

CASE

Doyle. Fire the engines. Now.

The ship's engines FIRE, straining to fight the irresistible pull of the supermassive black hole. They won't be able to fight it for long.

DOYLE

We're being pulled into it?

ROTH

No. I don't think so...

Roth looks at the instrumentation for a moment.

ROTH (CONT'D)

It appears to be pulling us on exactly the trajectory we modelled. If we try to fight it, we could push ourselves off of that trajectory.

DOYLE

You don't know that.

Case stares ahead into the darkness.

ROTH

We should turn off the engines. Let the swirl take us.

DOYLE

(frantic)
Listen to me.

(MORE)

DOYLE (CONT'D)

If the modelling was wrong, then we can't be sure about anything. We need to go back.

Case thinks it over. Decides.

CASE

Shut down the engines.

The engines shut down.

SILENCE. The ship drifts for a moment in the swirl, then begins to move.

EXT. ENDURANCE

The ship accelerates as it is pulled by the irresistible force of the black hole onto an inspiraling orbit.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

The crew watch as the ship hurtles around the black hole at higher and higher speeds.

The sky overhead begins to spin due to their motion -- faster and faster until it becomes a blur. The ship begins to GROAN as it appears to be pulled in two different directions.

The ship is now speeding around the black hole at incredible speed -- one revolution every four seconds. The crew are suddenly SLAMMED against the hull in opposite directions -- some towards the black hole, some towards the opposite side.

Roth looks at his model, which shows the projected path of the ship. It looks perilously close to the event horizon.

ROTH

It's the tidal gravity caused by the black hole. It means we're right on the critical orbit.

The comms screen lights up, TONING again and again, as it receives a long garbled update. Then it shuts down. Cooper drags himself along the hull until he reaches the controls.

COOPER

We've lost contact with the relay.

Case joins Cooper at the comms screen.

While they're distracted, Doyle maneuvers himself over to the engine control.

COOPER (CONT'D)

One long garbled transmission came in. Then nothing.

Case looks at the screen.

Suddenly, the ship is JOLTED as the engines fire at full power.

The crew looks over. Doyle is standing by the controls.

DOYLE

I'm sorry. I can't let you kill us.
We have to go back.

The engines strain to fight the swirl -- but they're hopelessly outgunned by the gravity of the black hole.

EXT. ENDURANCE

Instead of reversing course, the Endurance begins to speed up, as it plunges closer and closer to the black hole.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Doyle's face sinks as he watches the controls -- on the 'volcano' model, the ship is now passing the crest and spiraling towards destruction. He has made a tragic mistake.

DOYLE

Why isn't it slowing down?

ROTH

We're being pulled towards the event horizon.

ALARMS begin sounding throughout the ship as the projected course on Roth's model shifts, showing the Endurance being pushed up the rim, past the critical orbit and down towards the black hole's event horizon.

Case takes control of the ship, trying to fire the engines forwards to speed them back up to safety, but it's too late.

CASE

(calm)

The engines don't have enough power to push us back.

ROTH

They would if we used it all at once.

Cooper is still trying to understand what Roth means as Tars locks himself into the engine compartment.

COOPER
What is he doing?

BRAND
Saving us.

Tars tears open the engine's control panel and begins overriding it.

EXT. ENDURANCE

Tars rips out the cooling circuitry. Then, holding on tight, he fires the engine.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

The crew watch as Tars holds the engine, blasting it at full power into the swirl. The engine heats up white-hot.

ROTH
Prime the remaining engine. When he detonates it, we'll only have a few seconds. If we overshoot we could be pulled into the bigger hole.

Roth moves to the controls.

CASE
Secure yourselves. The ship should be able to withstand the blast.

COOPER
What about Tars?

As the crew watches, Tars continues to hold the engine even as the casing around it begins to melt. Finally, it EXPLODES.

EXT. SPACE

Tars is thrown backwards from the explosion, tumbling through space as the ship is ROCKETED upwards.

INT. ENDURANCE

The ship is SLAMMED by the explosion. Cooper and the rest of the crew are SMASHED against the hull. Doyle is knocked unconscious. Brand steps over to him and cradles his head, trying to protect him.

On Roth's model, the course slowly pushes outward, out of the danger zone, back to the original delicate orbit.

As they near the original orbit, Case fires the remaining engine, pushing them back onto the outspiraling orbit.

CASE

It's going to be close, but we're going to make it.

Brand looks at the instruments. Points to a tiny radar contact receding towards the massive black hole.

BRAND

Tars. His transponder is still working.

The ship's instruments TONE every few seconds as it communicates with Tars' onboard computer.

ROTH

He's being pulled toward Gargantua. We can't help him.

The crew watch, helpless, as the tones grow further and further apart. Then they stop.

Cooper looks at Doyle, anger rising. Then he looks down.

EXT. SPACE AROUND PANTAGRUEL

The Endurance slowly spirals back away from Pantagrue, the sky slowing as the orbit grows longer.

Finally, a tiny speck of light appears in front of the ship.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Roth watches as the Endurance races back away from the black hole and into a perfect orbit around a tiny ice planet.

Roth looks up from his screen, smiling.

ROTH

We're here.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

As Roth and Doyle study the frozen planet below, Cooper tries in vain to signal the relay on the Earth side of the wormhole.

Brand and Case are having a private conversation away from everyone else. Cooper walks over.

COOPER

I still can't contact the relay.

Brand ignores him at first. She nods at Case.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Did you hear me? We're not able to communicate back home.

She waves him off. But she looks shaken by something.

BRAND

I've already checked it. It's electromagnetic interference. We'll try again in a few hours.

Cooper begins to ask her what's wrong, but she moves off.

Roth looks up from his monitor, excited.

ROTH

I've got a signal. But it's local.

A familiar CHIRP plays over the ship's speakers.

ROTH (CONT'D)

The remaining probes. We found them.

She looks at the monitor. The probes ping the ship with their locations, which pop up on the monitor. They're all clustered in one spot.

COOPER

How could they all have landed in the same place?

ROTH

(smiles)

Let's go find out.

Case programs a course that will lock the ship in orbit above the probes on the surface.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE ICE PLANET

The ship settles into orbit a few hundred kilometers above the surface of the ice planet. It can't get any closer:

The space below it is choked with hundreds of tiny moons -- a cruder version of Saturn's rings. The moons are hurtling around the planet at high speed.

INT. AIRLOCK, ENDURANCE

Brand ushers Doyle into the landing module. Cooper objects.

COOPER

We're bringing him along?

BRAND

We need all the help we can get.
Besides, the alternative is to leave
him on the ship alone. You think
he'll still be here when we get back?

Cooper steps aside, allowing Doyle onboard.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE ICE PLANET

The lander detaches from Endurance, rolls over on its belly,
and FIRES thrusters to sink towards the planet's surface.

INT. LANDER

The crew watches, fascinated, as the ship descends, navigating
between the moons that hurtle past.

The moons are vastly different than our own; potato shaped
and only one to two miles in circumference, they are hugged
in a close embrace with the ice planet, only a few hundred
thousand feet from the surface.

EXT. SURFACE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

The lander touches down on the ghostly surface of the planet.

EXT. SURFACE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

After a moment, the hatch HISSES open and the team steps
out, led by Case, holding a rifle.

The team sets out, moving slowly in their cumbersome suits.

Lit by the nebula, the surroundings are a little brighter
than a full moon on Earth.

Not that there's much to look at. They are standing on a
sea of ice, which spreads for miles. In the distance, small
rock formations break through the ice.

Brand takes a surface reading of the ice.

BRAND

(radio)

The probe was right. Looks like
significant amounts of oxygen trapped
in the ice.

Case leads the way, drawn by a signal only he can hear. He
walks fifty yards, then stops on a gentle slope that leads
down into a small valley.

CASE

The other probes should be directly beneath us.

Case and the others begin digging into the hillside. Cooper is drawn to a small mound in the middle of the valley, four feet high. He takes out a small folding shovel and begins scraping at the ice and snow.

Case hits something solid. But it's not a probe. He digs around a little more, then reaches up and hacks away at the hillside, revealing the outline of something metal:

A door. They're not standing at the base of a hill -- it's a shelter. The crew stands back, unsure what to make of it.

A few feet away, Cooper cuts enough of the mound away to reveal something flexible -- fabric caked with ice. He scrapes away the snow, revealing a bright patch of red fabric:

It's the flag of the People's Republic of China.

BRAND

How could the Chinese have gotten here first? The federal government kept the wormhole a secret.

Case shrugs. He has a soldier's gallows humor about his old employer's ability to keep anything a secret.

CASE

They didn't do a very good job.

Case reaches for the door of the shelter. It's sealed shut with ice. He wrenches it open.

INT. CONTROL MODULE, CHINESE BASE CAMP -- NIGHT

Case steps into the shelter, followed by the rest of the crew. His lights pick up several years worth of dust.

Case steps up to an equipment locker. Forces it open. Inside are half a dozen black probes. Exposed to light, the probes begin TONING like the one Cooper found in Texas.

DOYLE

The Chinese must have captured them. So they couldn't return to us.

The crew stare at the probes for a moment, taking it in.

BRAND

Then how did the probe that Cooper found return?

ROTH

The more immediate question is what happened to the Chinese expedition. There's no sign of their ship in orbit. And they never returned to earth.

Roth picks up an ancient vacuum sealed package of pickled egg. Virtually none of the rations have been eaten.

EXT. VALLEY, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Cooper and Brand scrape ice from one of the other small hills surrounding the valley, revealing another structure. Cooper forces the door open.

INT. BARRACKS, CHINESE BASE CAMP, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Cooper and Brand let themselves in. The shelter is well stocked with food and equipment.

Brand is taking readings with a radiation detector.

BRAND

The whole place has been dosed with huge levels of radiation. What happened here?

Cooper looks at the pieces of a modular, one-person rocket, a last-ditch means of escape, stored, untouched in the shelter. He steps back, realizing something.

COOPER

This is the Taichung mission.

BRAND

The Mars mission? The Chinese claimed it had been destroyed on landing.

Cooper looks over the relay log.

COOPER

They never landed. Not on Mars. Four human crew, fifteen robots. The log says the base has been here for thirty years.

Case's familiar voice comes through the radio.

CASE (O.S.)

I've found something.

INT. UTILITY MODULE, CHINESE BASE CAMP -- NIGHT

The structure is filled with drilling equipment. Cooper and the rest of the team stand at the edge of a three-foot hole that has been drilled into the ice.

A descending rig is anchored to the top of the hole. Doyle and Case struggle to pull themselves out of the hole.

DOYLE

It goes down for a hundred and fifty feet, then stops. Tunnel's old -- the ice has reformed at the bottom.

BRAND

I'm going to descend to take some samples. Cooper, want to make yourself useful?

Cooper begins to say something, then bites his tongue.

EXT. LANDER -- NIGHT

Cooper emerges, loaded down with several containers of Brand's equipment.

As he struggles through the wind and snow, his radio picks up data chatter between the mother ship and Case. The comms are just noise. After a moment, Case's voice cuts in.

CASE (O.S.)

Get back here, Cooper. We've got a problem.

Cooper continues to wade through the snow. Suddenly, he trips over something, dropping the equipment.

Cooper looks back. He tripped on a white plastic post sticking out of the snow. He dusts it off, to reveal a picture of a Chinese Taikonaut smiling in his flight suit. This is a grave marker.

Cooper sweeps his hand through the snow, revealing three more white posts with pictures. The entire human crew has been buried here.

INT. UTILITY MODULE, CHINESE BASE CAMP -- NIGHT

Roth and Case are looking at a portable monitor, showing a projection of the nearby system -- the ice planet is a speck orbiting the local black hole.

COOPER

The entire human crew is buried out there in the snow.

Roth looks up from the monitor and assesses the situation with his usual detachment.

ROTH
I think I know what killed them.
This planet isn't the only thing
orbiting this black hole.

Roth zooms the monitor in, revealing a tiny, impossibly-bright object appearing at the horizon of the black hole.

ROTH (CONT'D)
It's a neutron star. The black hole
shields the planet's surface from it
for twenty hours at a stretch. Time's
about up.

Even Brand looks rattled.

BRAND
How long do we have left?

ROTH
About five minutes.

COOPER
Then what?

BRAND
Then we die. The radiation will
cook us alive.

Cooper looks around, their predicament settling in. Case walks over to the edge of the mine shaft.

CASE
We have to go down.

COOPER
What about returning to the ship?

BRAND
Not enough time. Case is right.
The ice can shield us from some of
the x-rays.

DOYLE
It would take a thousand feet of ice
to shield us.

Brand gives up on the argument, sheds her equipment and clips herself to the line to follow Case down into the ice.

Cooper looks at Doyle, then follows her.

INT. ICE MINE SHAFT -- NIGHT

Cooper descends into the shaft. The only light is from his suit's light array.

He reaches the bottom of the shaft, which opens into a small cave, the ice ribbed in wave-like patterns like the seafloor.

COOPER

What is this?

BRAND

A pocket formed by gas. There may be more below.

The ice below them reveals nothing but murky blackness. Case has found some of the equipment left behind by the Chinese -- a battery-powered drill and a pick.

DOYLE

We'll never make it far enough down.

BRAND

Shut up. How much time do we have, Roth?

Roth checks his watch with his usual detachment.

ROTH

About three minutes or so until we're fully exposed.

The rad meter Brand is holding begins to CHIRP with activity -- the radiation levels are rising. The ice will not be enough to protect them.

Cooper sees that Brand has exhausted herself with the pick. He takes over for her.

The drill that Case is operating GROANS as the thirty-year-old battery runs out of charge. Case casts it aside and begins SMASHING at the ice with his bare hand.

Brand is looking at the walls of the ice pocket, looking for fissures. Her lights pick out something in the ice. She looks closer:

Tiny black flecks. Brand, ever the scientist, forgets their predicament and begins chipping at the ice.

BRAND

I've found something.

Case continues to pummel the ice with his hand, which is badly smashed.

He pulls off the hand and continues to hack away at the ice with the stump, trying to save his crew.

Brand is examining a piece of ice in her hands, which contains several black flecks. As she shines her light on them, they FLUORESCENCE, giving off a tiny flicker of light, like a firefly. Brand steps back.

BRAND (CONT'D)

These things... they're *alive*.

Roth joins her, looking down at the tiny creatures trapped in the ice. Brand shines her flashlight over the ice again, but nothing happens. Roth takes the depth meter dangling by a lanyard from Brand's suit.

ROTH

It's not your light they're responding to. It's this--

Roth takes the depth meter and waves it over the ice. Suddenly, the black flecks begin to shine.

BRAND

X-rays. They feed on them and emit visible light. They've found a way to survive here.

Roth looks at the shimmering light of the tiny life-forms trapped in the ice, mesmerized.

Case hammers down with his arm, gouging a deep hole in the ice below. Suddenly, GAS sprays back up at him. He's found the gas pocket beneath them.

Too late. Roth's rad meter begins BEEPING frantically.

EXT. ICE PLANET -- ALIEN DAWN

Overhead, a tiny ball is orbiting into view from the dark side of the black hole -- the NEUTRON STAR.

Its humble size belies its power. As its rays hit the ice, the ice CRACKLES with energy.

INT. ICE MINE SHAFT -- ALIEN DAWN

Brand steps back from the ice in awe as it begins to glow. The microbes are absorbing the x-rays and emitting light. Within seconds, they are bathed in an incredible glow.

Even Cooper stops, awed by the beauty of the display. Only Case is unmoved, continuing to SMASH at the ice with the broken end of his wrist.

BRAND
(looks at rad meter)
They're absorbing most of the x-rays.

ROTH
Not enough, unfortunately.

Suddenly, a CRACK as Case punches into the ice. Cooper looks down -- a great fissure has opened in the ice beneath them.

COOPER
Case, wait--

Case PUNCHES again. Suddenly, with a great BANG, the ice floor disintegrates beneath them.

They fall into the darkness.

INT. CAVERN -- ALIEN DAWN

Cooper falls. For a moment, the only light he can see is from Case, falling calmly a few yards beneath him.

As they fall, the light from the microbes trapped in the ice above sweeps across the inside of the cavern, illuminating the floor of the massive cavern thousands of feet down.

The rock formations they saw on the surface are actually the tip of a mountain range extending into the distance, disappearing into the ice above as if it were cloud cover.

The base of the mountains is covered in a thick jungle-like foliage that runs into a perfectly-still inland sea. On the far side of the sea, another mountain range stretches into the distance, supporting the thick ice and rock cavern roof.

Cooper only has a few seconds to take this in -- he is falling towards the huge inland sea below.

Seconds before impact, a tiny warning light flickers on inside his helmet: IMPACT DETECTED.

Suddenly, a small drag chute EXPLODES from a panel on the back of suit, slowing his fall. Airbags EXPLODE on his legs and torso to cushion the impact.

Cooper SMASHES into the water.

BLACKNESS.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

Cooper comes to underwater, as liquid is flowing into his suit from his shattered helmet.

Bubbles pour out from his suit and Cooper GASPS as his helmet fills with water and he begins to sink.

As he sinks, Cooper pulls off his helmet, then tears off pieces of his suit. He forces himself through the neck of the suit and then swims upward.

He is about to surface when he remembers where he is. He hesitates, just beneath the surface, lungs tightening as he runs out of oxygen.

EXT. SEA, ICE PLANET -- DAY

Cooper breaks the surface, COUGHS out water, and takes a panicked breath.

He waits. Nothing happens. He opens his mouth again and breathes in almost pure oxygen. He can breathe.

Treading water, he looks around. Spots lights in the water below nearby -- Brand, in her suit, is sinking.

He dives down and struggles to haul her up by the suit.

Cooper breaks the surface, looks at Brand. Her mask is also broken.

COOPER

Breathe. Trust me.

She refuses at first. Water is bubbling into her suit through the open mask. Finally, she takes a deep breath.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Your suit is filling with water.
I'm not going to be able to hold it
much longer. I'm going to let go.

Brand's eyes widen.

BRAND

What do you mean, you're going to
let go?

COOPER

Take a deep breath.

Brand takes a deep breath and Cooper lets go of her.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

Brand sinks. Cooper swims down, following her, ripping away at her suit. The tear-away seals on her suit are stuck fast, damaged in the fall.

Cooper finally breaks them off. Brand pulls herself out, free, and they swim for the surface.

EXT. SHORE, ICE PLANET -- DAY

Cooper drags himself out of the water and onto the beach. He turns back to offer Brand a hand. She waves him off.

BRAND

I don't need your help.

COOPER

I thought we were supposed to be a collective organism.

She gives up and lets him help her out of the water.

They sit together, soaking wet, trying to catch their breath.

BRAND

Thank you.

COOPER

Don't mention it.

Cooper feels the rocks beneath him, which are translucent, like glass, and polished to an impossible shine.

He looks up to see Case dragging Roth and Doyle, still in their suits, out of the water.

EXT. SHORE, ICE PLANET -- DAY

Doyle and Roth have stripped down from their suits and are breathing in the pure oxygen atmosphere.

Case and Cooper are pulling modular pieces from their equipment packs to form a small shelter.

Brand is taking readings with her instruments.

BRAND

Oxygen atmosphere. Pure water.
Temperate climate.

(to Cooper)

You still think this is a coincidence?

Cooper looks at the tree line, less convinced.

COOPER

Looks like we can climb up the mountains back to the ice. We're down to three suits. We'll have to send someone ahead to get a fourth.

BRAND
I won't need one.

DOYLE
Why not?

BRAND
Because I'm not going anywhere.
This is our new home.

Brand picks up some of her instruments and a sample case and hikes into the jungle.

EXT. SHORE, ICE PLANET -- DAY

Cooper finishes constructing the modest shelter. They load the suits and the rest of their gear inside.

COOPER
Any sign of Brand?

ROTH
She's still taking samples. If you find her, tell her to head back. Night should be falling soon.

COOPER
What happens then?

ROTH
Your guess is as good as mine.

Cooper hikes into the jungle to look for Brand.

EXT. JUNGLE, ICE PLANET -- DAY

Cooper finds Brand taking samples from the tree-like life-forms, which are wildly different from their counterparts back on Earth, piled in torturous coils, as if frozen in a struggle to punch through the canopy to reach the light above.

BRAND
This is incredible. The organisms trapped in the ice above absorb x-rays and emit light. In return, these plants absorb the light and emit oxygen, which feeds the animals trapped in the ice.

Brand cuts off a sample and drops it into the case. The transparent wall of the case magnifies the structure onto the glass automatically. She compares it with the flecks she collected in the ice above, fascinated.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Look at this. I think they're the same organism at a different stage of the life cycle.

(shows him the sample)

It's *fractal*. No individual cells -- the structure repeats all the way down.

Cooper looks at the sample, then continues scanning the jungle around them, nervous.

COOPER

Any sign of big life-forms?

BRAND

The soil's been disturbed. So something's been moving. But I haven't seen anything.

(notices his look)

Cooper... are you nervous?

Cooper stops scanning the trees, embarrassed.

COOPER

I just think we should get back to the shelter before night falls.

Overhead, the light from the ice above begins to fade -- the neutron star must have orbited out of view. Night is falling.

BRAND

(laughing)

Relax. If there are any large organisms here, even predatory ones, they're not going to attack us -- they have no idea what we are.

COOPER

You don't know that. You just have blind faith this place is going to be some kind of Eden.

Brand stops. He's struck a nerve.

BRAND

(truly pissed off)

Faith has nothing to do with it. You know what you are, Cooper? You're just another in a long line of people saying 'no.' That this isn't going to work. And frankly, I don't have to convince you.

COOPER

What's that supposed to mean?

BRAND

You're on this mission because you're another pair of hands. You want the truth? I told Case we should bring another robot over you. At least then I could just reprogram you to-

She stops. Something has caught her attention.

COOPER

What?

BRAND

Nothing. I just -- I could have sworn it just moved.

She walks to the thick, knotted trunk of a tree. Puts a hand on it.

Overhead, the ice flickers out and the darkness begins to descend, more rapidly than on Earth.

Suddenly, the tree SHUDDERS. Then, the bark begins to ooze over Brand's fingers.

Brand snaps her hand away and steps back. Even for her, this is too much. She turns back to Cooper, who is looking at the jungle around them, spooked.

COOPER

You know how plants don't usually move? Is that a universal rule?

BRAND

No. There really aren't any rules.

All around them, the life-forms begins to melt toward the ground, breaking down into different, smaller forms.

BRAND (CONT'D)

(trying to stay calm)

Remember, we're the aliens.

Cooper steps back as several pieces of the nearest tree drop onto the ground and begin scuttling toward him.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Hold very still. Don't make any sudden movements.

Two of the pieces join together, stacking themselves up and staggering toward him.

A third piece climbs onto the first two, looking for a good place to hang on. After a moment it hunkers down on top, forming a crude head. Thirty eye-like structures blink open on the creature.

The skin of the life-form begins to flicker with a dim light like the animals trapped in the ice above, bathing Cooper and Brand in a warm glow.

The creature creeps closer to them, taking them in. Cooper tries his best to seem non-threatening.

COOPER

Hello there.

The creature lurches toward him on three legs, then its head splits open and it BELLOWS.

COOPER (CONT'D)

OK. Now we run.

Brand doesn't argue. They turn and sprint through the trees.

EXT. JUNGLE -- NIGHT

Cooper and Brand smash headlong through the jungle. At first, they're running from the rumbling, smashing melee behind them. But as they run, the entire jungle around them begins to break apart and move.

After a moment, they're surrounded. The jungle is completely disassembling itself into a million different pieces, each one a different size and shape than the others.

COOPER

We have to reach the shelter.

They head off, crashing through the melee.

EXT. SHORE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Case, Doyle and Roth are standing in front of the shelter finishing the day's work.

Doyle turns around. The jungle is breaking apart and crawling down the beach towards them.

DOYLE

I think we've got a problem.

Case and Roth look up to see the organisms picking up speed as they move towards them.

Roth begins to step out towards them.

ROTH
Fascinating. I think-

Case grabs him by the arm and pushes him bodily into the shelter after Doyle.

Case pushes the door closed.

INT. SHELTER, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

They crouch inside the shelter as the organisms begin POUNDING at the walls, trying to force their way inside.

It's going to be a long night.

EXT. JUNGLE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Ahead, Cooper can see the gleaming water of the inland sea, light still flickering in patches from the ice above it.

COOPER
This way.

Brand begins to follow.

BRAND
No... wait.

Too late. Cooper forces his way between two writhing creatures, steps through, and falls...

EXT. WATERFALL -- NIGHT

Cooper gasps as he surfaces from the ice-cold water. Brand floats past.

The river appears to flow randomly down the slope, with good reason -- the forest rearranges itself every night.

Ahead, the ground drops away again and the water rushes over it in a torrent.

Cooper catches himself at the last minute, grabbing a thick tree branch with one hand and, a second later, Brand with the other as she slides past.

COOPER
I've got you.

Suddenly, the branch in Cooper's hand illuminates and wrenches itself out of the rock -- it's a limb of a huge colony organism. It shakes Cooper loose and they fall again...

EXT. POOL -- NIGHT

Brand surfaces first. She grabs Cooper and hauls him up and out of the water. She smiles down at him, a little smug.

BRAND

I've got *you*.

Creatures begin splashing down into the pool behind them, as if imitating them.

Cooper stumbles to his feet and Brand guides them backward into a small cave carved into the rock above the pool.

INT. CAVE -- NIGHT

Brand CRACKS a glow stick, basking the cave around them in a soft light.

As they watch, horrified, the pool and the rocks in front of the cave fill up with creatures of all sizes, as they tumble down the hill in what appears to be a battle royal.

For a moment, it looks like Brand and Cooper may go unnoticed. Then, a three-foot-tall creature with a dozen legs creeps its way toward the entrance to the cave. Another follows, and another, until the cave entrance is full.

Cooper looks around the cave, frantic. He picks up a rock. Brand, scared but still thinking, takes the rock from his hand and drops it back to the ground.

BRAND

It's game theory. The best move is always to cooperate at first.

COOPER

By "cooperate" do you mean let it eat me?

BRAND

These organisms have no interest in us. They survive by photosynthesis. All they need is light.

COOPER

Then why are they killing each other?

BRAND

I don't know.

(looks around)

But we're outnumbered, Cooper. So unless you have a better idea, I suggest we make nice.

The creatures move toward them hesitantly, then faster.

Cooper stands stock still as the creatures gather around him. Several of them join up into bigger animals to get a better look at him.

One of them wraps itself around his chest and begins prodding at his shoulders, then his neck.

COOPER
(trying to be calm)
What is it doing?

BRAND
It's a colony organism. It's trying
to incorporate you into its structure.

COOPER
I don't want it to incorporate me.

BRAND
Don't open your mouth.

COOPER
Why n-

As he speaks, the creature on his chest extends four spindly, pointed feelers and reaches gently into his mouth.

Cooper holds his breath as the organism taps against his teeth. Its skin has a roughened texture, as if incomplete, and it appears to be searching for the same texture on Cooper's skin, without much luck.

Bored, the life-forms climb back down off of Cooper. The last two creatures link up in an imitation of Cooper's lower body and attempt to walk across the room like a human. After a moment, the creatures tumble to the ground and flail away.

Cooper is still breathing hard as the cave empties and he and Brand are left alone again.

Brand steps to the edge of the cave and watches, fascinated, as the creatures resume wrestling and battling each other.

COOPER (CONT'D)
They're killing each other.

BRAND
No. They don't bleed... they don't
die... they're just competing...
trying out different shapes, looking
for the best one.

Cooper watches as a hideously-awkward-looking, five-legged beast stumbles past and tackles another animal.

COOPER

I'd say they have a long way to go.

BRAND

(amazed)

They do this every night.

As they watch, a two-foot-long creature with one huge claw scuttles along the ground, grabbing smaller opponents and smashing them apart, then sorting through the wreckage and adopting some of the writhing parts as its own.

Something about the movement is endearing, the way it experiments with each piece -- less like a massacre and more like an over-caffeinated self-assembling erector set.

Suddenly, a massive, lumbering creature SMASHES down in front of the claw beast. No match, the smaller creature turns to scuttle away. Too slow. The larger organism brings one club-like limb smashing down on top of it. After a moment, it lifts its claw -- the two animals have become one.

The new organism lumbers away through the jungle, happily snapping its new claw at larger opponents.

BRAND (CONT'D)

The behavior changes as the animals get bigger and bigger. More sophisticated. More calculated.

Two of the larger organisms square off, circling each other, lights pulsing up and down their bodies in a fierce display.

COOPER

But what are they competing for?

BRAND

I don't know.

Brand shivers -- it's getting colder.

INT. CAVE -- NIGHT

Brand and Cooper huddle around a small chemical fire they've brought with them.

Brand looks at the sample of the fractal wildlife in her case. It's moving around, splitting apart, reforming, trying to find a way out.

BRAND

These creatures are billions of years older than we are. But they're relatively primitive. They haven't developed tools, culture, language.

COOPER

Why not?

BRAND

I don't know. No one knows how intelligent life began on Earth. But the surface of this planet has virtually no craters. No impacts. It's been sheltered by the local black holes.

COOPER

What difference would that make?

BRAND

Maybe not enough has gone wrong here. Maybe bad luck is the key to intelligent life.

COOPER

(quietly)
Murph's Law.

BRAND

Exactly. Maybe our interaction with them will push them over the top. Maybe that's part of the plan.

COOPER

(shakes his head)
The *plan*.

BRAND

Why is it so hard for you to accept that someone might be trying to help us?

Cooper is silent for a moment. His mood darkens.

COOPER

I was in Denver during the first year of the famine. I was just a kid. We kept waiting for someone to come help us. People starved to death sitting on the ground, waiting for someone to come.

(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)

(looks at her)

I only made it because I realized
that nobody was coming to save us.
We were on our own.

Cooper looks away. The memories are never that far away.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Honestly? After the things I saw...
you want to know why I don't believe
that someone would be trying to help
us? Because I'm not sure we're worth
saving.

They sit in silence for a while.

EXT. CAVE -- NIGHT

Cooper sleeps. After a moment, Brand steps back out into
the darkness.

EXT. PLAIN -- DAWN

Brand exhales great streams of frosted breath -- the
temperature is well below freezing. The first flickers of
light are visible in the ice above.

The creatures are huge now, forty or fifty feet tall, battling
each other more and more slowly. As Brand watches, the
largest of them beats down his rivals, climbing to the top
of the heap.

Just as the beast reaches the top, it freezes, as if stuck.

Above, the ice begins to shine brighter and brighter.

Suddenly, the beast on top breaks apart, unfurling into planes
to catch the light. This is what the contest has been about --
a better place in the sun.

Brand takes it in.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Cooper and Brand pick their way their way through the foliage,
which is now perfectly still, absorbing the light. Cooper
looks at the plants, wary.

Brand sees his trepidation and laughs at him.

BRAND

They're not going to move now, Cooper.
They need to spread themselves as
thin as they can to absorb the light.

Cooper leads the way, pushing through the trees.

Suddenly he stops again. Brand, annoyed, pushes through the foliage to join him.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Cooper, honestly, you're a bit of a-

She stops. Cooper is standing at a sheer cliff.

Spread out on the plain below is a massive, fortified base.

INT. CHINESE FORTIFIED COLONY -- DAY

Massive blast doors, long since smashed in, open onto a building that has been overrun by the local fractal wildlife.

Case steps inside first, his worklights flickering on. Cooper and the others follow him in.

INT. MESS HALL, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

The room is barely recognizable -- the fractal life has covered the tables and chairs. Water pools on the floor and light streams in from a massive hole the fractal animals have punched in the ceiling.

DOYLE

Looks like the Chinese picked a fight with the locals.

COOPER

Looks like they lost.

They continue through the ruins.

INT. BARRACKS, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

The deeper they go, the less fractal wildlife they find. The barracks are pristine -- hundreds of perfectly made beds, waiting for colonists who never came, like one of the bunkers the federal government used to keep in case of nuclear winter.

DOYLE

Look at the size of this place.
They built it for thousands of people.
But no one came.

Brand looks around, determined.

BRAND

They will. We can salvage it. This place will save us years.

COOPER

But why didn't they come?

BRAND

(shrugs)

The Chinese government collapsed,
same as ours. The people who knew
about this mission probably died
years ago. We had the same problems.

Roth finds a sign he likes the look of -- it points to the
science levels.

INT. LABORATORY, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

A massive door GRINDS open and the team steps into a massive
complex of underground laboratories.

INT. DAMAGED LAB, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

Cooper and the others carefully make their way through a lab
that has been completely emptied -- no desks, no chairs,
nothing. The only thing that remains is a solid ball of
matter in the center of the room.

BRAND

What happened here?

Roth stares at the ball, intrigued.

ROTH

They were testing something.

Cooper looks at the walls, which are bowed inwards.

COOPER

Testing what?

Roth is looking at the ball, which appears to have been built
from layers of different material. The outermost layer is
flattened steel.

COOPER (CONT'D)

(looking closer)

Is that a chair?

Roth looks. The outermost layer of the ball indeed looks
like a steel chair, flattened with incredible force onto
surface of the ball.

Brand opens the door to the next lab.

INT. LABORATORY, CHINESE COLONY -- NIGHT

The lab is empty, except for a large metal sphere on a pedestal in the center of the room. A black box is set into a cavity in the sphere, wired to a control panel.

Cooper looks at the walls of the room, which have been bowed inwards, as if some great force had been pulling from the center of the room.

COOPER

Everything in here is bolted down.
(looks at sphere)
What do you think this thing does?

ROTH

(excited)
Let's find out.

Roth finds a control panel. Wipes off an inch of dust and begins tinkering with the controls.

COOPER

I wouldn't turn it on until we can figure out what it does, Roth.

Roth continues to look over the controls, oblivious.

BRAND (O.S.)

Cooper. Come look at this.

Brand calls out from the hallway.

INT. STAIRWELL, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

Cooper follows Brand's voice down the stairs to a sub-basement beneath the lab level.

INT. OBSERVATORY, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

Cooper steps into a huge space filled with a near perfect holographic representation of the local system.

Cooper joins Brand and Doyle in the map, looking at the incredibly detailed models of each star.

Case is standing at a terminal, hacking into the camp's records.

CASE

I've found the Chinese mission logs.
They're encrypted.

Cooper walks over. Looks over the terminal.

COOPER

Old military-grade encryption. It's not very robust.

(looks at Case)

No offense. Hang on.

Cooper punches a few keys into the terminal. Opens up the terminal. Scans the motherboard. Takes Case's rifle and SMASHES one of the chips on the board.

The terminal comes to life. Cooper hands Case his rifle.

COOPER (CONT'D)

That should open up most of it.

Case is silent for a beat, parsing the information.

CASE

They got here twenty years ago. The human crew was killed by radiation the first day. But the robots survived. They built the colony and radioed home. But they didn't receive a response.

COOPER

No one was listening.

CASE

(scans document)

After a few years they discovered a problem.

DOYLE

What problem?

CASE

It doesn't say. Their science team took the ship to continue exploring the system. It says they found some kind of...

(translating)

...The word literally means 'treasure.'

Case skims through the rest of the logs, large portions of which have been redacted.

CASE (CONT'D)

The science team returned after five years with a new technology. They began the experiments upstairs, then they left again and never returned.

BRAND

Where did they go?

CASE

I don't know. They've deleted their mission plan. There's nothing else.

DOYLE

I think I know what the problem is.

Doyle is manipulating the time component of the map, slowing down the passage of time, reversing it, speeding it up.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

Look.

Doyle speeds up the map until the ice planet is nearly a blur, speeding in its orbit around Pantagrueel.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

There's a small black hole moving into the system. Too small for us to have seen in our survey. It's not going to hit the planet, but it's going to come close.

A tiny black hole soars through the system. Although it misses the ice planet, it deflects its orbit by a tiny degree. After a dozen more orbits, the ice planet dips down close to Pantagrueel's event horizon and is torn apart.

Brand and the others watch as the sequence rewinds and repeats -- the planet is pieced back together again and ejected, then pulled back in and torn apart. Over and over.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

This place isn't paradise. It's doomed. Just like us.

The crew stand, watching the sequence in stunned silence.

COOPER

How long does this place have?

CASE

A few years. A decade at most.

Doyle turns to Brand.

DOYLE

So much for the plan.

Cooper looks at Brand. She is in disbelief, staring as a lifetime's training and optimism are torn to pieces.

BRAND

But I don't understand... why are we here? What are we here for?

Cooper looks down. Brand's upset is turning to anger.

BRAND (CONT'D)

What the hell are we here for? I trained my whole life to reach this place.

She looks at Cooper, questioning.

COOPER

(gentle)

Maybe... maybe Roth's right... maybe we just don't understand it yet.

She looks down. She knows he doesn't believe what he's saying. He's been right all along -- they're alone.

For a tiny moment, all hope is lost.

Suddenly, with a distant RUMBLE, the building begins SHAKING.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Case, what is that?

CASE

It's nighttime. The native life-forms are mobile again.

The RUMBLE grows more intense, as if the entire building is being gently shaken.

COOPER

No. It's closer than that.

(realizing)

Roth.

The RUMBLE grows. As Cooper watches, Case's rifle slides free of the desk. But instead of falling, it simply hangs in the air.

Then he realizes the same thing is happening to them -- his boots no longer have traction with the ground. After a second everything in the room is floating an inch off of the ground.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Quick -- hold onto something.

He reaches out to Brand but it's too late -- suddenly they're no longer floating, they're falling.

They're falling up.

Cooper, Brand and the rest of them hit the ceiling. Cooper picks himself up and adjusts to his surroundings -- up is now down. He helps Brand up.

DOYLE

What the hell is happening?

Case doesn't answer -- he's looking up at the control equipment for the holographic display, which is GROANING under a load it was never built to handle.

Case grabs Cooper and Brand and pushes them towards the stairwell as the control panel TEARS free of the floor and CRASHES towards them.

Cooper falls into the stairwell -- now they're being pulled up and sideways through the stairwell, like an Escher painting.

Brand pushes Cooper out of the way as debris from the control panel orbits past them back up towards the lab.

They try to hang on but the force is becoming irresistible, dragging them along the wall of the stairwell and back towards the lab upstairs.

Brand wedges herself against the railing as objects and debris are SMASHING against the door to the lab.

Doyle is trying to hang onto the handrail but his grip slips and he CRIES OUT as he falls towards the door to the lab, SMASHING it open. Doyle disappears up and into the lab.

Cooper slips trying to help Doyle. Brand reaches out for him...

Too late. Cooper is pulled through the open door.

INT. INTACT LAB, CHINESE COLONY -- NIGHT

Cooper is pulled through the door and past the control panel. He reaches out and grabs the underside of the panel.

He dangles, the panel cutting into the meat of his hand, trying to get his bearings:

Roth, Doyle, and everything that hasn't been bolted down is either pressed against the sphere in the center of the room or is orbiting around it.

Roth, who is laughing, jubilant, shouts up to him:

ROTH

The control panel is beneath you.
See if you can turn it off.

Cooper slips as he tries to reach the controls. Finally he finds the controls for the machine.

COOPER

(yells up)

I found it. Hold onto something.

Roth and Doyle crawl up the side of the mass and hold onto the support wires.

Cooper hits a key on the monitor.

Suddenly, the room inverts again, reverting to a normal gravitational field. Cooper floats for a second, then topples back to the ground, along with everything else.

Brand stumbles in to find Cooper sprawled on the floor as Roth and Doyle hang onto the sphere for dear life.

INT. INTACT LAB, CHINESE COLONY -- NIGHT

Roth, back on terra firma, is looking at the tiny black box he's pried from the center of the sphere. Cooper is looking over his shoulder.

COOPER

They found a way to make gravity.

ROTH

Not make it. Adjust it. Dial it up, or down. I think they were experimenting with it -- firing these into the black hole to try to save this planet.

DOYLE

All that from one tiny box.

Roth has hooked the box up to a terminal and it scrolling through the incredibly sophisticated machine code, trying to parse how it works. Cooper looks on.

ROTH

(amazed)

It barely uses any power. I'm only beginning to understand what it does but I think it sends a signal out into the bulk. It must tap into the same technologies that were used to create the wormholes in the first place.

COOPER

What does that mean?

ROTH

It means whoever built the wormhole probably doesn't exist inside our universe.

Cooper looks at the tiny box.

COOPER

But how did the Chinese develop the technology? This would take decades, maybe hundreds of years, to create.

CASE

Wherever they went, they found something that allowed them to build it.

Brand looks at the box.

ROTH

They came back here and tried to use these devices to save this planet. But they didn't work. Nothing would be strong enough to weaken a black hole.

BRAND

Maybe we could work with it. Try to improve it.

ROTH

No. You're missing the bigger picture. The robots had strict mission parameters. They were told to build a colony and report back. They tried to. But they failed. Like us they were fixated on this place.

Cooper looks at Brand.

ROTH (CONT'D)

They didn't realize they had already found something that would save us all.

(holds up the box)

This. *This* is the prize.

He holds up the box.

ROTH (CONT'D)

Don't you see? Earth's gravity is like a prison. But this is like a master key.

(MORE)

ROTH (CONT'D)

If we could build more of these, we could turn down the earth's gravitational field enough to save millions of people. We wouldn't have to pick a handful of people to survive. With this we can save *everyone*.

BRAND

And go where?

ROTH

Wherever we want. We don't belong in any one place. Can't you see that now? Not Earth. Not this place. Nowhere. If the human race is going to survive, we need to keep moving. Split up. Spread out. *Fly*. With this, we can.

Case looks at the box. Makes a decision.

CASE

In the morning we're taking this and going home.

Doyle, Roth and Case set about making preparations to leave -- gathering space suits, equipment.

In the bustle, Cooper finds Brand sitting alone, staring at the sample of fractal life.

COOPER

I know this isn't exactly what you trained for. But I think Roth might be right.

BRAND

That doesn't help this planet. This creature is doomed. Unlike us it doesn't have anywhere to go.

The fractal organism almost seems to be looking at her, trying to comprehend. But it quickly loses interest and goes back to breaking itself into pieces and reforming into different shapes, trying to escape. Brand sets it back down.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS, CHINESE COLONY -- DAY

Morning. Cooper and the others prepare to head out. They are laden down with gear -- space suits for the return trip to the lander once they reach the surface.

Roth carries the gravitational prototype.

EXT. ENTRANCE, CHINESE FORTIFIED COLONY -- DAY

They make their way through the ruined entrance.

CASE

We need to hurry. We only have a few hours to reach the ice before nightfall.

Cooper stops. He puts a hand on Brand's shoulder. He points to the tree line. Something is moving.

COOPER

Don't make any sudden movements. They can't hurt us if we're unarmed.

BRAND

Who?

Suddenly, three ROBOT MARINES step out of the jungle, weapons raised. They are wearing ghillie suits, pieced together from dried dead pieces of the local foliage.

Under their camouflage, they look identical to Case. With one key difference -- faded red and gold insignias.

Case steps protectively in front of his team.

The CHINESE OFFICER steps forward, rifle levelled.

CHINESE OFFICER

Ni Hao. My name is Technical Sergeant Liu, 177th reconnaissance Marines, Army of the People's Republic. Welcome to New China.
(polite)
Please put down your weapon.

Sergeant Liu speaks in the same even tones as Case -- they were probably built in the same factory before the war.

Case keeps his rifle raised.

CASE

This is a scientific expedition, not a military one. We are making our way back to our ship.

LIU

I'm afraid I cannot let you do that. We will provide food and shelter and await further instructions.

(MORE)

LIU (CONT'D)

We are sorry if this causes you any inconvenience.

The sergeant is polite, but firm.

BRAND

This planet is being pulled into the black hole. We all need to leave.

LIU

We will await further orders.

COOPER

Further orders aren't coming. Your government is gone. It ran out of money, same as ours. You're on your own.

LIU

We can offer you food and shelter as long as you require. The facilities here are quite comfortable.

Liu's tone remains polite, but there's no hope of changing his mind. Cooper takes a sidelong glance at Brand.

COOPER

(low)

They're never going to let us go.

BRAND

(to Liu)

Your mission is a humanitarian one, wasn't it? You were sent to start a colony. Like us.

LIU

Our mission was to prepare for the evacuation. This site was deemed unacceptable.

BRAND

This device that you have built -- this could save millions of people. We need to get it back home.

Brand points to the device Roth is holding. The Chinese robots seem particularly unhappy with this development.

LIU

These technologies are the property of the People's Republic.

(MORE)

LIU (CONT'D)

We have been ordered to prevent anyone from taking them. We have been ordered to prevent anyone from following.

ROTH

Following? Following where?

Liu pauses.

LIU

We will await further orders.

ROTH

Your name means *six*. Where did the others go? One through five? Is that who were not supposed to follow.

Case turns to look at Cooper.

CASE

(low)

Take the others up to the lander. Keep going. No matter what happens, don't come back for me.

Cooper nods.

Case moves. Fast. He FIRES one shot at the nearest robot, disabling it, then hurls himself at the remaining two, tackling them both over the edge of the ravine.

Cooper watches them disappear into the void below. Grabs Brand and the others.

COOPER

Come on.

Cooper picks up the rifle from the destroyed marine and begins hiking up the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK -- DAY

The crew hike towards the ice above.

Below they hear a metallic BOOM as something heavy hits something else -- Case is still fighting. They keep moving.

EXT. UPPER MOUNTAIN PEAK -- TWILIGHT

They are high above the Marine camp, only fifty feet or so below the massive ice roof of the cavern. The Chinese have blasted a tunnel into the ice leading back up to the camp above.

This high, the air is bitterly cold. Cooper and the others are hunkered down, trying to keep warm, waiting for night to fall so that they can climb back up to the lander without being cooked by the neutron star.

Finally, above them, the light begins to flicker out. The crew begin pulling on their space suits.

Brand checks on the fractal wildlife in the sample case -- she is bringing it with them. Cooper catches her eye.

BRAND

We can't leave them all to die.

She hefts the case and they begin climbing up into the ice.

EXT. SURFACE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Brand leads the way, the lights from her suit cutting into the drifts of snow as they make their way slowly back to the lander.

As they reach the lander Cooper spots lights emerging from the ship. He raises Case's weapon.

One of Liu's marines steps around from the back of the lander. Cooper FIRES.

The marine collapses.

Cooper and the others race to the lander.

BRAND

Was that the last of them?

DOYLE

We're not going to stick around to count them. Let's get out of here.

COOPER

We're too late.

Cooper points to a damaged section of the ship's hull -- the marine has torn open a section, revealing damaged hardware.

COOPER (CONT'D)

The main thruster fuel supply. We're not going anywhere.

Cooper looks down. They're stuck here.

DOYLE

What about the escape rocket at the Chinese base camp? One of us could fit into it.

BRAND

It doesn't matter how many of us
make it. We have to get this back
to earth.

Roth looks at the moons orbiting overhead.

ROTH

Can the secondary thrusters still
fire on the lander?

Doyle looks over the craft.

DOYLE

Sure. But we don't have nearly enough
power for lift off.

Roth holds up the small gravity black box.

ROTH

(smiles)
Yes we do.

Roth sets off running towards the Chinese base camp.

EXT. CHINESE BASE CAMP, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Cooper drags the pieces of the escape rocket out from the
shelter. Assembly is semiautomatic -- Cooper lifts the pieces
up and they snap together, forming a crude two-stage rocket
designed more for a robot than a man.

When it's complete Roth wedges himself inside, clutching the
black box -- he barely fits.

ROTH

I can reach one of the moons in low
orbit and turn up its gravity. As
it passes overhead it should be able
to slingshot the lander away from
the planet's surface.

(looks around)
Along with everything else.

COOPER

But we need to take the box back to
earth.

ROTH

You don't need this -- only the idea.
The knowledge of how to build it.

Cooper remembers something. Heads back into the shelter.

INT. CHINESE BASE CAMP, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Roth follows Cooper into the lab.

Cooper opens the storage crate. Picks one of the probes at random. Sets it down on the bench next to Roth.

Cooper begins rigging up a connection between the two.

COOPER

I'm going to image the operating code and the architecture onto the probe's hard drive. It'll be garbled, but it should give you and me enough to rebuild it when we get back.

Cooper looks at the probe filling up with data.

ROTH

Not me. But you'll make it work.

The transfer is complete. Roth hands Cooper the probe, and takes the black box himself.

ROTH (CONT'D)

This is a one-way trip for me.

Before Cooper can respond, Roth heads for the door.

EXT. CHINESE BASE CAMP, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Roth squeezes himself into the rocket, hugging the black box to his chest. Cooper and Brand help him.

BRAND

This isn't right, Roth. We can find a way for all of us to leave.

ROTH

This is the only way. Keep the lander upright and fire the secondary boosters when the moon passes overhead.

COOPER

Let me take it.

ROTH

No. You need to make it home. You're going to need to build more of these.

Brand looks at him, heartbroken. Roth smiles.

ROTH (CONT'D)

I understand the plan, now. Whatever happens, you have to keep exploring. Keep learning. One good idea isn't enough. You'll need more and more of them just to survive. Do you understand?

BRAND

(nods)
Thank you.

ROTH

Go.

Brand turns to follow Cooper back.

Behind her, Roth's rocket LAUNCHES on an explosive cloud. In seconds it's high overhead.

EXT. LANDER -- NIGHT

Cooper checks over the hull, which is intact. Doyle is inside looking over the controls. He steps back outside.

DOYLE

Control systems inside are online.
(looks up)
I've lost sight of the rocket. Do you think he made it?

COOPER

We're going to find out soon enough.

Brand is looking off into the distance.

BRAND

Someone's coming.

Cooper looks up. A robotlike figure is limping through the snowstorm towards them. Cooper raises the rifle.

Finally he makes out the insignia -- it's Case.

Cooper and Doyle run out towards him. They reach Case as he collapses in the snow. He's badly injured -- one leg torn off at the knee, one arm mangled.

Doyle and Cooper drag the crippled robot back into the ship.

INT. LANDER -- NIGHT

They drag Case into the lander. Doyle checks over the ship's controls.

DOYLE

Close the door.

Cooper moves to the door. Something's wrong.

COOPER

Where's Brand?

She's nowhere to be seen. Cooper looks out onto the ice. Brand is heading back out into the snow.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Dammit. If I don't make it back,
just keep going.

(points to probe)
Get that thing home.

Cooper steps to the door.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE ICE PLANET

The rocket tucks in close behind one of the moons orbiting the ice planet.

The rocket fires to maneuver closer and closer to the moon's surface -- the tiny moon doesn't provide enough gravity to attract it.

When the rocket is close enough, Roth detonates the explosive bolts holding him inside and leaps for the moon's surface.

He scrambles to grab hold of the craggy surface. Behind him, the rocket smashes apart against the surface.

Roth finally gets a good hold. He looks down.

Below him, the view is incredible -- the ice planet curving into the distance, Gargantua rising over its horizon.

Roth looks at the black box in his hands.

EXT. SURFACE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Brand is a hundred yards from the lander by the time Cooper catches up with her. She is digging in the snow.

He takes her arm but she won't go.

She finally finds what she's looking for -- the sample case. The tiny fractal life-form is huddled at the bottom.

Cooper shakes his head and turns back to the lander.

EXT. MOON, SPACE OVER ICE PLANET

Roth is watching the ice planet pass by beneath him. He finally sees the distant peaks of the mountain range as it punctures the ice near the Chinese camp.

For a moment he enjoys the view -- the distant hulk of Gargantua rising over the horizon of the shining ice planet.

He takes a final breath and activates the black box.

Instantly, the moon's gravity is magnified a hundred million times over. Roth is instantly crushed as the moon collapses around him into a tiny sphere.

EXT. SURFACE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Cooper and Brand are only thirty yards or so from the lander.

Suddenly, the ground beneath them begins to RUMBLE.

Cooper turns back. A mile back the ground begins to tear apart, heaving massive chunks of ice and rock into the sky.

Roth's moon is racing overhead, TEARING up a massive strip of the surface's planet as it nears them.

Cooper and Brand run.

EXT. MOON, SPACE OVER ICE PLANET

The energy being unleashed by the tiny box is incredible -- millions of times more powerful than an atomic bomb.

The spray of debris is forming a rooster tail behind the moon, rocketing up from the planet's surface.

EXT. LANDER, SURFACE, ICE PLANET -- NIGHT

Cooper has almost made it back to the lander. Behind him, Brand stumbles. He turns back.

Brand is pulling herself up. Behind her, the THUNDEROUS EXPLOSIONS as a strip of the planet's surface is hurled into space have almost reached them.

Cooper looks at the ship. He'll never make it if he waits for Brand. He turns back to find her.

He reaches Brand just as the moon's gravity hits them -- they're hurtled off into space. He grabs her hand.

Seconds later, everything -- the entire ice sheet, the sea and rocks deep below -- is hurled up after them.

Brand and Cooper embrace as they rocket up through the thin atmosphere.

Brand looks at him.

BRAND

(radio)

You caught me. Now what?

Cooper looks around. The planet's surface is breaking into pieces around them.

COOPER

(radio)

I don't know.

(radio)

I figured if you were floating out into space, you'd want some company.

He holds onto her as they fall up and out of the last of the planet's thin atmosphere and the blackness embraces them.

BRAND

Between you and utter solitude,
Cooper, frankly, I'm not sure.

They reach the apex of their climb and the gravity of the planet begins to win out. For a moment they float.

COOPER

Guess you were right -- too much gravity, or not enough.

He smiles, forgetting their predicament for a moment. They stare into each other's eyes.

Then they begin, very gently, to fall back towards the ice planet.

Suddenly, the lander maneuvers beneath them. The airlock opens to catch them -- Doyle is at the helm.

Brand and Cooper pull themselves aboard.

INT. LANDER

Cooper closes the door and Doyle rotates the lander outwards.

Doyle FIRES the engines and the lander continues ascending into space as the debris around them begins crashing back down towards the ice planet.

Cooper looks out the window:

The moon continues tearing up a massive canyon in the planet's surface as it circles out of view.

COOPER

Roth.

BRAND

He's gone.

Ahead, a shadow looms in the darkness: the Endurance.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Brand, Cooper, and Doyle pull themselves out of the airlock and scramble to take control of the ship.

Below them, the surface of the ice planet illuminates as the neutron star's x-rays begin to reach it from the far side of Pantagrueel.

Doyle finally gets the ship straightened out. Its sole remaining engine FIRES, rocketing the ship back towards the dark side of the planet, out of view of the neutron star, and back towards the original wormhole.

DOYLE

I'm setting a course for the wormhole.

They're going to make it.

Cooper and Brand make eye contact -- Brand gives him a tiny awkward smile. He returns it, then descends below.

INT. OUTER HULL, ENDURANCE

Cooper props Case up against the workbench. He pulls down replacement arms and legs from storage bins. Unwraps them from their vacuum sealed plastic and bolts them back onto Case's chassis.

Cooper finishes attaching the arm. Case rotates it, checking the function.

COOPER

How is that working?

CASE

Very well, thank you.

COOPER

Good. We've already set the course, skipper. We're going home.

Cooper hauls himself back up into the observation level.

INT. OBSERVATION LEVEL

Doyle is setting the controls. The ALARMS on the controls have finally abated -- they're out of the danger zone.

BRAND

We're safe now.

Cooper heads to the communications equipment.

COOPER

Now I know why we weren't able to hit the relay. It's not interference -- the blue-shift from the black hole is more than we thought it would be.

Cooper begins re-calibrating the equipment.

BRAND

(conflicted)

Cooper, wait--

The ship PINGS the relay on the far side of the wormhole.

There is no response.

COOPER

Nothing.

(thinks)

Wait. The ship cached one long garbled transmission when we first fell into the swirl. If we account for the blue shift then the computer might find something in there.

Cooper brings up the last garbled transmission they received. The computer begins re-analyzing it, piece by piece.

BRAND

(quiet)

Listen to me -- the blueshift also means we've lost time. More time than we thought we would.

Cooper looks up at her.

COOPER

How much?

BRAND

A lot... Cooper, maybe it's best if we don't-

The comms equipment TONES as it translates a packet. Then another.

Then a FLOOD of communications, one packet a day, hundreds and hundreds of packets: images, videos, audio messages from family and friends.

Cooper watches, horrified, as the images play out across the screen. He is watching the lives of his family play out at light speed. Finally, the packets slow, then stop.

Cooper looks at the results, in shock.

COOPER
Forty seven years.

Doyle joins him, staring at the screen, stunned.

DOYLE
My kids...

Cooper tries to PING the relay again. Nothing comes back.

BRAND
(gentle)
The relay will have lost power years ago. That's why we couldn't contact it, even after we reached the planet.

Cooper is still problem solving, thinking.

COOPER
We could bypass the relay. Send a conventional shortwave signal.

BRAND
Only a tiny portion of the signal would make it though the wormhole. Besides, no one will be listening anymore.

The comms screen is dead. No movement. Nothing.

Cooper looks at Brand, realizing something.

COOPER
You knew, didn't you? You and Case figured it out when we landed.

Brand looks down.

BRAND
I thought... I couldn't be sure.

COOPER
Sure you could. You're brilliant. You know everything.

BRAND

Cooper... we needed to keep going.
I'm so sorry. Your children...

COOPER

They're not children any more... if
they're even still alive.

He turns away from her.

BRAND

Listen, the important thing is that
we're going home, now. And we have
something that can save everyone.
It's more important than the people
we left behind-

Doyle cuts her off, filled with anger.

DOYLE

That's easy for you to say. You
didn't leave anyone behind.

Cooper looks at Brand, his anger softened by sadness.

COOPER

Yes she did.

Brand looks at him, grateful for this small kindness.

COOPER (CONT'D)

That's why you were upset -- your
father.

She looks down, filled with sadness.

BRAND

He's gone. But there are other people
who still need our help. There's
still time...

The ship's controls TONE in ALARM. Brand and Cooper turn:

Case is standing at the controls.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Case... what are you doing?

Case finishes typing in a sequence on the command controls.
Presses the "execute" button.

The last nuclear engine begins to detach from the ship.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Wait... no...

The robot turns from them. Cooper notices that the control module snapped into the back of Case's chassis is wrong:

It's red with a gold star. It's not Case at all. It's Liu.

LIU

I'm sorry. I have my orders. No one follows...

Liu stares, satisfied, as the nuclear engine spins away from the ship and back down toward Pantagrueel.

Cooper SMASHES Liu from behind. The robot tumbles to the ground, the fight gone out of him.

Cooper and Doyle roll the robot over and Cooper reaches for his control module.

LIU (CONT'D)

No one follows-

Cooper rips the module out. The robot freezes.

Brand is already at the controls, trying to regain control.

The instruments TONE, alerting the crew to their position:

The ship is spinning back down towards the black hole.

BRAND

No... We're being pulled back to Pantagrueel.

Cooper, frantically checks the controls, firing the remaining boosters.

COOPER

We can't let that happen. We'll lose more time... too much...

The boosters are no match for the deadly pull of the black hole below them.

On the ship's guidance, they watch, helpless, as the ship climbs back up the volcano rim towards the critical orbit.

As on their first trip, the black hole grows to dominate the bottom of the sky, and the stars above them become streaks -- time is speeding for them as they are whirled down into the deep gravity well around the hole.

As they watch, trapped, decades begin to play out in the system above them. They watch as the ice planet whirls around them, orbiting the black hole dozens of times.

COOPER (CONT'D)

We're losing years.

Finally, the ice planet plunges past them towards destruction. As it reaches it slows, until finally it reaches the event horizon, just as they saw in the projections. Nothing has prepared them for the reality:

The ice planet is SMASHED apart with stunning violence.

Brand looks at the sample of fractal life. Now they are united -- they are, in all likelihood, the sole survivors of their planet.

Doyle points to the instruments.

DOYLE

The wormhole. Look -- it's being pulled into the black hole as well.

They watch on the holographic model as the wormhole's orbit converges on the event horizon of the black hole.

BRAND

It's orbit mirrored the ice planet's.

COOPER

What will happen to it?

BRAND

It'll be destroyed, like everything else.

Cooper struggles to pull himself over to the communications screen. Sets it to make a shortwave broadcast. Brand opens her mouth to point out that it's futile, then stops.

COOPER

(into radio)

This is the crew of the Endurance.
We...

(gives up on
formalities)

Murph, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't
make it back, like I promised.

He hangs up the radio.

In silence, they watch as the wormhole -- their only way home -- vanishes beneath the event horizon.

DOYLE

How much time are we losing?

BRAND
(heartbroken)
Decades...hundreds of years.

COOPER
All of those people back home...
none of them will make it.

As Doyle watches the controls the ship continues to spiral towards the black hole.

DOYLE
This is it. We're going to be pulled
in.

Cooper looks at the controls, an idea forming.

He pulls himself down. Hauls himself across the deck to pick up Liu's chip. He plugs it into a diagnostic tool.

BRAND
What are you doing?

COOPER
Case said the Chinese found something
else. The location was scrubbed
from their records. But I bet he
knows it.

Cooper fires up the chip. Begins sorting through the onboard memory.

Doyle watches the instruments.

DOYLE
Hurry up.

Cooper concentrates, poring over the numbers. Finally he begins feeding coordinates into the navigation computer.

COOPER
Here. Can we reach it?

Brand looks at the map. The point appears on the far side of Gargantua. Brand studies the trajectory.

BRAND
We can use the thrusters to keep us
on the critical orbit. Then slingshot
us towards Gargantua.

The thrusters STRAIN to push the ship back up towards the critical orbit.

Suddenly, the tidal gravity SLAMS them against the walls of the ship.

Finally, the thrusters fire again -- a tiny push, but just enough to launch the ship clear of the black hole, like a rock out of a slingshot.

The ship races toward the massive hole in the sky below them:

Gargantua

EXT. SPACE AROUND GARGANTUA

The ship picks up more and more speed as it soars closer to the massive black hole's event horizon.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

The sky closes to a tiny hole above them. Gargantua is swallowing their view.

Cooper looks at the radar, which is choked with debris.

DOYLE

We only have a few minutes before
we're swallowed into that thing.
What are we even looking for?

On the radar, a tiny empty spot appears.

COOPER

(points to screen)
That? What is it?

Brand looks. In one tiny region on the back side of the black hole, the debris simply seems to vanish.

BRAND

It's another wormhole.

Doyle FIRES the thrusters again, pushing the ship towards the wormhole.

EXT. SPACE AROUND GARGANTUA

The Endurance spins, shifting paths slightly as it continues to race closer and closer to oblivion.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

They study the controls. The projected path shifts, one degree at a time. Finally, it appears to put them on a path to hit the wormhole.

Doyle shuts off the thrusters.

DOYLE

We're not going to be able to slow
down. Hold onto something.

He locks up the controls.

EXT. SPACE AROUND GARGANTUA -- MORNING

The ship is tumbling through space, racing toward the second wormhole. It is massive, much larger than the first wormhole, and it's glowing with a light as bright as a star.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

The crew brace themselves against the hull of the ship.

Suddenly the ship slams onto the wormhole mouth and is pulled violently into the wormhole.

WHITENESS.

As the light fades, Cooper and the others come to.

The light is rapidly dimming from pure white, fading to a deep red, then infrared, finally darkness.

Cooper looks out. Checks the instruments. Looks out again.

EXT. VACUUM

Nothing. Blackness as far as the eye can see. No stars. No planets. Just inky darkness stretching on forever.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Brand joins Cooper on the deck. Together, they look out at the blackness that surrounds them.

COOPER

Where are we?

BRAND

I don't know. It's like we entered
the wormhole and never left it.

Brand checks the instruments. There is nothing for the ship to model.

There is nowhere to go. They drift.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Days go by. They check the instruments. Still nothing. It's as if they have left the known universe altogether.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, ENDURANCE

Doyle sits down. After a moment, he turns on the screen and cues up a message.

His children appear on-screen, giggling, pushing each other, trying to get a prime spot in front of the camera.

Doyle cups his face in his hands and cries.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, ENDURANCE

Cooper above his bunk, stares out into the blackness.

Brand watches him from the doorway.

BRAND

I'm sorry. I should have told you.
I didn't have the right.

(beat)

But you should watch the recordings.
You should know what happened to
your kids.

Cooper ignores her.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, ENDURANCE

Brand watches her father talking to her on-screen. He is twenty years older than when she left him.

BRAND'S FATHER

I'm not going to make it much longer.
The machines will continue to maintain
the station as long as they can and
the communications will run as long
as the station here still has power.
I'm sorry. I hope wherever you are,
darling, you're safe.

The screen cuts out. Brand watches the static play out.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Doyle sits at the table. He has found a flair gun in one of the ditch kits. It is sitting on the table in front of him. The message is clear.

Brand sits down across from him.

BRAND

Our last trip past the black hole
cost us another 100, maybe 200 years.
Which means there's a good chance
we're the only humans alive anywhere.

She stands up.

BRAND (CONT'D)

I think the last human beings should
have a little more fight in them
than that.

Brand picks up the sample of fractal life and places it under
a lamp on the counter. It freezes, absorbing the rays.

Doyle looks at the gun.

EXT. ENDURANCE, VACUUM

Cooper, in a space suit, steps out of the airlock.

He drifts out from the ship.

Nothing. Behind him, the ship is a tiny speck in an ocean
of darkness.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, ENDURANCE

Cooper sits down. Turns on the screen.

After a moment, the camera turns on. Tom, his eldest son,
still 15 years old, turns on the camera.

TOM

Hi, Dad.

Cooper pauses it. He can't take it. After a moment, he
lets it run again.

TOM (CONT'D)

I met another girl, Dad. I really
think this is the one.

Tom holds up a picture of himself and a teenage GIRL.

TOM (CONT'D)

Murph stole Grandpa's car. He crashed
it. He's OK, though. No broken
bones.

Cooper leans back.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, ENDURANCE

Cooper is holed up, still watching, several days' growth of
beard unshaved. He's been watching for days.

On the screen, Tom is a grown man in his 20s.

TOM
I've got a surprise for you, Dad.
You're a grandpa.

Tom holds up an infant wrapped tight in swaddling. The kid is BAWLING.

TOM (CONT'D)
Congratulations. Grandpa said he already earned the "great" bit so we just leave it at that.

The screen cuts out.

The next message begins. Tom is in his 30s.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hi, Dad. I'm sorry it's been awhile.

He stops, emotional.

TOM (CONT'D)
Grandpa died last week. We buried him out in the back forty, next to Mom.
(looks down)
Where we'd have buried you, if you'd ever come back.

He laughs, gallows humor.

TOM (CONT'D)
Murph was there for the funeral. It's been a few years since I've seen him. He's been down in the Gulf Coast. He's an engineer. I guess someone followed in your footsteps after all.

Tom looks down.

TOM (CONT'D)
You're not listening to this. I know that. All of these messages are just out there, drifting in the darkness.

He stops for a second.

TOM (CONT'D)
You're gone. You're never coming back. And I've known that for a long time. Lois says -- that's my wife, Dad -- she says I have to let you go. So I am.

He reaches up to turn off the camera.

TOM (CONT'D)

Wherever you are, I hope you're at
peace. Goodbye, Dad.

The image freezes, Tom's hand on the camera, then breaks
apart into digital noise.

Then nothing.

Cooper looks at it for a second. Then rises to leave.

Suddenly, the screen flickers to life again.

A good-looking man in his late 30s turns on a camera. Cooper
recognizes him instantly. It's Murph.

Murph looks at the camera for a long beat, clearly unsure
about this.

MURPH

Hello, Dad. You sonofabitch.

He laughs, self-conscious.

MURPH (CONT'D)

It's your 60th birthday today.
Thought I would celebrate with you a
bit.

(beat)

I guess I understand why you left.
The corn is dying now, too.
Tom says there's less and less at
harvest every year.

He pauses. Lifts up his hand and scratches his stubble.

Cooper pauses the message. He looks carefully at the screen:

Murph is wearing his dad's watch.

Cooper lets the message play. Tears are streaming down his
face.

MURPH (CONT'D)

Rot's setting in. I guess you were
right for clearing out while you had
the chance.

(reaches up to switch
off camera)

Good luck, old man. I hope you made
it. I really do.

The video cuts out.

A message appears on the screen:

"Final transmission." Relay powered down 05232087

Cooper turns off the screen.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, ENDURANCE

Cooper is seated, alone. Almost every compartment has been opened and emptied -- debris is swirling through the compartment.

Brand walks in. They sit in silence for a moment. When Cooper speaks, it's clear his sadness has faded to a gallows humor.

COOPER

Not a single drink on the whole ship.
What kind of mission is this?

BRAND

I think Doyle's been experimenting
with the coolant from his spacesuit.

They sit in silence for a moment.

COOPER

You really think we're the last humans
alive anywhere?

BRAND

I don't know. Maybe.
(looks him in the eye)
Yes.

COOPER

So that's it, then? That's all?

He looks down, saddened by his own words.

BRAND

(quiet)
It's happened a billion times over.
Stars explode. The pieces drift in
space. Gravity pulls them back
together. They form new stars.
Then planets. Then us. We die. It
starts all over again.

Cooper shakes his head.

COOPER

What about the plan? The grand
scheme.

BRAND

I thought you didn't believe in one.

COOPER

I didn't. But you were bringing me round.

He laughs, his anger coming and going in waves.

COOPER (CONT'D)

What the hell was the point? What did it add up to?

BRAND

I don't know. Maybe it just adds up to this.

COOPER

This? You're saying the end result of ten billion years is the atoms from dead stars standing here disagreeing with each other.

She smiles at him. Bittersweet.

BRAND

Maybe that's enough.

He turns away from her. She takes his shoulder.

She pulls him into a kiss. His surprise disappears and he pulls her to him, kissing her back.

Their surroundings forgotten, they drift. She LAUGHS gently as they bump into a wall and he pushes off of it, sending them spinning back into the center of the cabin.

She pulls his shirt off and it hangs in space. In moments, the cabin is filling with discarded clothes, different colors and shapes, like a ticker tape parade.

In the center of the cabin, Brand and Cooper make love.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, ENDURANCE -- LATER

Cooper and Brand embrace, sleeping, drifting in the cabin.

Suddenly, Doyle's voice calls out from the other cabin.

DOYLE (O.S.)

It's happening... it's happening again... Get up here...

Cooper wakes, careful not to disturb Brand. He plucks his shirt from the floating laundry pile and pulls it on.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK, ENDURANCE

Cooper hauls himself up into the upper cabin. Doyle is standing in the middle of the chamber.

DOYLE

They just appeared.

A sphere of distortion, like the one they encountered in the first wormhole, is directly in front of Doyle, hovering at a point in the middle of the cabin.

Doyle points a finger gently at the sphere, which grows in response.

Brand pulls herself into the cabin. Several more points appear, as if they've been summoned by the first.

Some of the points twist, some of them spin, and some of them are motionless.

BRAND

I think these are the creatures that built the wormhole.

One of them begins to move closer to Cooper.

COOPER

This thing is made of... gravity?

BRAND

No. I don't think it's in our universe at all. I think it lives in the bulk -- the space that the wormholes traverse. And it can only interact with us using gravity.

The shape playfully grows around Cooper's hand, bending the space it's in, stretching the skin.

Doyle GASPS as the sphere nearest him moves through his body, coming to rest in the middle and bending his entire torso like a fun house mirror.

Suddenly, the sphere wrapped around Cooper's hand begins moving, tugging him gently through the cabin.

In the next moment, all three of them are being propelled through the cabin.

It's a magical moment -- a communion, a dance between creatures on either side of a massive, invisible wall.

Doyle exclaims like a kid on a roller coaster as he is whirled around the room.

Cooper and Brand collide with each other for a second as the bulk beings move them through space. They hold onto each other for a moment and then are pulled apart again as the whirling dance continues.

Even the fractal creature is involved -- inside its cage, a tiny distortion ripples its fractal skin. The creature breaks apart and plays with the distortion around its enclosure.

Finally, Brand disengages from the dance and pulls herself around the lab, looking for some way to try to communicate with the creatures.

She finds two heavy pieces of engineering equipment and moves them close to each other, then far apart.

The bulk beings soon join her, mimicking the motion of the pieces of equipment.

COOPER

Can we communicate with them?

BRAND

Where would we even start? Maybe--

She pull a bag of ball bearings out of a storage bin and tears the bag open, releasing a cloud of the tiny shining globes into the air.

For a moment, nothing happens. Then, the distortions begin moving through the bearings, shifting them, rearranging them into patterns in the air.

First, they rearrange the ball bearings into clusters, then shapes spinning around each other -- planets orbiting around a medium-sized star.

DOYLE

That's our solar system.

After a moment the ball bearings break apart again and rearrange into a larger, more complicated system -- Gargantua, Pantagrue, and the ice planet.

Finally, the bearings compress to a two-dimensional sheet. Inside the sheet, one solitary ball bearing orbits around the stars and then pushes up, off of the sheet, into an umbrella shaped space that rises up from the sheet.

COOPER

What is that?

Brand looks at the tiny particle, floating alone above its universe.

BRAND

That's us. That's where they've
brought us. We're in the bulk.

Cooper and Doyle stare at the particle. The map is static now.

Cooper looks around. The distortions have gone. The instruments on the ship TONE in alarm.

Cooper walks through the map, sending the ball bearings scattering. He hurries to the instruments. The ship is moving -- picking up speed at a huge rate.

BRAND (CONT'D)

They're moving us.

DOYLE

Where?

They stand, looking out into the perfect darkness.

EXT. ENDURANCE, VACUUM

The ship begins to close in on something in the darkness: a tiny point of light.

As they grow closer, they realize that it's an opening. They are inside a massive, hollow sphere. They have been the entire time.

The ship is guided out through the opening at the crown of the sphere.

Below them is an astonishing sight:

Our entire universe, compressed into a flattened disc, like a floor of stars. They are hovering above it, in the bulk, the space between universes.

INT. ENDURANCE, BULK

Brand and the others stare at the incredible display.

The ship drops down and begins to orbit around the massive hollow sphere between them and our universe, lower and lower until it is skimming just above the surface of the sphere.

In the distance, they can make out a cluster of lights.

COOPER

There's something out there.

The cluster of lights grows as they are propelled closer:

It's a massive space station, built onto the surface of the sphere.

EXT. SPACE STATION

The Endurance glides to a gentle stop on one of the upper decks of the space station.

After a moment, the airlock to the ship opens and Cooper and the others step out, in their suits.

They walk up to the airlock doors of the station, which open automatically.

INT. SPACE STATION

After the airlock decompresses, the inner doors open. Standing there, waiting for them, is a familiar figure:

Tars.

TARS

(deadpan)

I guess this isn't robot heaven after all.

The light on his brow glows and he offers them both a hand.

INT. GRAND LABORATORY, SPACE STATION

The humans have taken off their space suits -- the station has been built to be habitable by humans -- and are following Tars through the massive facility.

TARS

I orbited the black hole seven times before I hit the second wormhole. Then I drifted until I found this place.

Cooper looks around. The halls are filled with countless technological wonders.

COOPER

This is what the Chinese were protecting.

(looks around)

How they could have built all this in just a handful of years.

TARS

They didn't. It took them four thousand.

(off Brand's look)

Time moves very slowly here

BRAND

How do you know?

TARS

Because I've been waiting for you
for three hundred years.

Brand looks around at the massive facility.

BRAND

Time. That's what the bulk beings
wanted to give us. That was the
treasure the Chinese found. Enough
time to let us save ourselves.

Brand looks around. The facility is massive. She sets the
specimen case down on a table. Even the tiny creature seems
in awe of the place.

INT. LABORATORY, SPACE STATION

Tars shows them a prototype for the gravity machine. It is
tiny -- increasing G around two spheres that attract each
other with a tiny force.

TARS

I have catalogued almost everything
they had built here.

COOPER

Must have taken you a while.

TARS

One hundred and fifty-seven years.

Cooper shakes his head in disbelief.

COOPER

How are they keeping the lights on
in this thing?

Tars, in answer, points to a far door.

TARS

Follow me.

INT. ENGINE ROOM, SPACE STATION

A massive reinforced-concrete shell shudders with the energy
contained within it. The whole room HUMS with power.

Tars pulls up a display showing the inside of the shell:

A tiny black hole spins, spewing out massive amounts of power.

TARS

It's a mini black hole. A remnant of the big bang. It will power this place forever.

Tars leads them on.

EXT. HANGAR, SPACE STATION

Tars leads them past an incredibly sleek fleet of spacecraft. Cooper starts to stop, but Tars doesn't slow down.

INT. SIMULATION ROOM

In the center of the room is a giant holographic globe of the Earth, perfect down to the tiniest detail.

COOPER

It's a map?

TARS

No. Not a map. This is a simulation of the Earth. A perfect simulation.

Tars touches the control panel. The map zooms in over Europe. Down onto Paris. Late 20th century:

People walk through the streets. A woman stops at a newsagent to buy a newspaper.

Tars touches the controls again and the map zooms out.

TARS (CONT'D)

They tested each of the technologies hundreds of times, trying to find the one that would cause the least damage and still allow us to leave Earth.

Suddenly, the map lights up with atomic explosions in every city. The sequence stops, rewinds.

This time, sped up, the Earth seems to be drying up -- great swaths of desert grow across Europe and Asia. Massive circular ships are constructed all over the face of the Earth.

TARS (CONT'D)

This was their best solution. A massive version of the box we found on the ice planet, allowing the entire human population to escape.

At a given moment, the gravity of the Earth is dropped to nothing and the massive ships, filled with the entire

population of the Earth, lift gently off of the planet in search of greener pastures.

Cooper turns away from the machine, bitter.

COOPER

So why didn't they return? Why didn't they save us?

Brand is staring at the massive map.

BRAND

Because they were too late. By the time they found this place, the people who sent them were dead. They were unable to fulfill their mission.

Tars points to the next room.

TARS

That was the final problem they tried to solve.

Tars moves on.

EXT. PLATFORM, SPACE STATION

Above them, the blackness of the sky is punctuated with hundreds of crystal shapes, faintly leaking starlight:

Wormholes. Brand looks up at them, entranced.

BRAND

Where do they lead?

Tars looks at an illuminated schematic on one wall, mapping some of the wormholes.

TARS

There are millions of them, connecting virtually every planetary system in the universe. There are thousands in our galaxy alone. But the Chinese stopped mapping them when they found what they were looking for.

Tars walks further. He stops.

The platform in front of them is dominated by a gigantic version of the black box that Roth found on the ice planet, connected to a massive power array, and pointing into the dark space above the sphere.

TARS (CONT'D)

This was their final creation. They had to capture the mini black hole just to have enough power to try it.

Several miles above the black box, one of the wormholes glows far brighter than the others, crackling with radiation.

DOYLE

What does it do?

Cooper steps forward. Runs a hand on the cold, strange material the antenna is made out of. He knows exactly what it does.

COOPER

They weren't interested in the other wormholes because their mission was to return home. That one leads back to Earth. The Earth they were told to return to.

Tars walks to the controls for the device.

BRAND

But that's impossible...

Tars turns away from the machine.

TARS

It was only used once. The Chinese team attempted to travel back in time, to Earth just a few years after they had left.

COOPER

Did they make it?

TARS

I don't know.

Doyle looks back to Cooper.

DOYLE

Do you really think it works?

Cooper looks up at the machine, suddenly determined.

COOPER

We're going to find out.

Cooper walks out of the room. Brand follows him.

EXT. AIRLOCK, SPACE STATION

Brand follows Cooper as he walks up to the Endurance.

BRAND

You know it doesn't work. Time travel
isn't possible.

COOPER

You don't know that.

BRAND

Yes, I do. If it worked, the Chinese
would have suddenly discovered all
of these incredible technologies.
But they never made it.

(beat)

You can't go back, Cooper. You can
slow things down, but you can't ever
go back. *Our home is gone.*

(off his look)

You listened to all of those messages
from your family. If you had made
it back, we would already know.
There would already be some evidence.

Cooper looks at the machine.

BRAND (CONT'D)

If you try to use it, you'll die,
just like the people who built it.

She puts an arm on his shoulder.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Roth was right, Cooper. We have to
keep going. Keep exploring. We
have an obligation to try to survive.
From here we could find a thousand
places where life could thrive. And
you're going to return to the one
place where it can't.

COOPER

I made a promise.

He turns away from her, resolute.

EXT. HANGAR, SPACE STATION

Cooper and Doyle check over one of the sleek Chinese
spaceships.

INT. CHINESE SPACESHIP

Cooper is checking over the controls of the ship. Brand walks in.

BRAND

I came to say goodbye.

Cooper looks up at her.

INT. HANGAR, SPACE STATION

Cooper walks Brand back to the Endurance. The ship is packed up and repaired. Brand is looking over their work.

COOPER

You could have taken one of the other ships.

BRAND

This one's done all right by us so far.

Brand holds up a small sample case containing half of the fractal life-form.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Will you take this with you? It's the last of its kind as well. Thought we should double its chances of survival. In case I'm wrong.

Cooper takes the sample and looks at the tiny creature inside, trying to escape. He sets it inside the ship. Turns back to her.

COOPER

Where are you going to go?

BRAND

I don't know. Up there, I guess.

She points up into the great darkness above them.

Tars steps down. Moves over to them.

COOPER

You're going, too?

TARS

I'm curious. It's my nature. See you down the road?

Tars shakes Cooper's hand. Heads onto the Endurance.

BRAND

Come with us. Please. You wanted your whole life to explore. This is your chance.

Cooper stares at her. This is what he has always wanted. And he has to turn it down.

COOPER

I'm sorry. I have to find out what happened to my sons. I promised them.

Brand sees the resolve in his eyes. Knows there's no way to change his mind.

BRAND

You're a man who keeps his promises. Make me one-

She takes his hand.

BRAND (CONT'D)

After you're done... come find me.

COOPER

I promise.

They kiss passionately. Not wanting it to end but knowing that it must. Reluctantly, they separate. Brand turns back to the ship.

She pulls herself onto the ship. Cooper steps back outside and watches through the tiny window as the Endurance lifts off and disappears into the darkness.

Cooper turns away.

EXT. PLATFORM, SPACE STATION

Cooper watches as radiation pours out of the wormhole high above them.

INT. CHINESE SPACESHIP

Cooper pulls himself on board. Doyle is at the controls. He keys the controls and the ship lifts off.

DOYLE

Let's go home.

The two men sit in silence as the ship arcs away from the space station and closes in on the wormhole.

Cooper hears a familiar CHIRP. He turns around:

The probe they took from the ice planet is belted securely into one of the seats, filled with the garbled machine code of the gravitational machine.

COOPER

The probe...

Doyle looks back.

DOYLE

We get back to earth, you and I can try to make sense of the code. Rebuild the gravity machine.

Cooper stares at it, suddenly realizing something. He unbuckles himself.

Cooper stands and walks over to the probe. Traces the familiar stars and stripes carved into its side.

Cooper stares at the probe, putting it all together.

COOPER

It's going to work.

DOYLE

Of course it's going to work.

COOPER

That's not what I mean. This is the probe I found in Galveston.

Below them, the wormhole breaks as it reaches another wormhole mouth that the Chinese have dropped down to a lower gravity well, creating a time machine.

The wormhole mouth is FLARING with radiation.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Brand said there'd be some evidence we'd made it. And there was. This.
(holds up probe)
But only this. Everything will be destroyed except for this.

He moves toward Doyle. Doyle stands.

COOPER (CONT'D)

We have to stop.

DOYLE

I don't know what you're talking about, but you're not touching the controls. I'm going home.

Cooper moves closer to Doyle. Doyle pulls out the flair gun. Points it at Cooper.

COOPER

You don't need to do this. We won't make it back, but this does. The secrets are already right on it. Maybe someone found it. There's hope.

(sad)

But we don't get to go with.

DOYLE

You're not stopping me. I'm going home.

Doyle forces Cooper into the ship's lander. Then he closes the airlock.

Cooper pounds on the other side of the glass, trying to reason with him.

The landing craft detaches from the ship.

INT. CHINESE LANDING CRAFT

Cooper watches, helpless, as Doyle's ship races ahead towards the glowing wormhole mouth.

As the ship speeds toward the next wormhole, the radiation suddenly FLARES, annihilating the ship and everything in it.

Almost everything.

Cooper's landing craft spins away from the wormhole mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE, OUR SOLAR SYSTEM

A hole opens in the sky with a FIERY EXPLOSION. As the radiation subsides, all that shoots out of the hole is a vaporous wisp of atomized metal, and a burned, blackened probe, which hurtles toward Earth.

EXT. SPACE, NEAR EARTH ORBIT

The probe collides with a satellite, hurling debris into the upper atmosphere.

PROBE'S ONBOARD CAMERA P.O.V. --

The probe's onboard camera documents its journey. Fragments of video:

-- The probe HURTLES through the atmosphere, toward North America, the Gulf Coast.

-- The probe SMASHES down into a sandbar.

-- Daylight. A man is descending toward it, dangling from a rope. It's Cooper.

-- Night. A kitchen. A little boy -- Murph -- stares at the probe, while Cooper works at it with a blowtorch.

-- Tars pulls the probe out of the back of a plane.

-- Brand's father, older, studies the probe. Gives up.

-- Much later. People are moving around in the darkened base, scavenging equipment.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

A combine harvester is dead in a field, service hatch opened. A MAN is lying under the machine, working.

The man hauls himself out from under the huge machine. Dusts himself off.

It's Murph, 30s. He looks at the FARMER who is waiting for the verdict. Murph shakes his head.

MURPH

It's done. Auto-pilot's packed up for the last time.

FARMER

You can't make it work a little longer?

MURPH

Can't do anything for you. There aren't any more parts for these. Not anywhere.

FARMER

You don't understand. We're getting less than a hundred pounds per acre. We need to plant more, not less.

Murph looks around him at the pathetic crop of corn that stretches around them. The plants are feeble, barely able to support themselves.

FARMER (CONT'D)

You've got to find us some more parts,
Murph. It's getting desperate.
Isn't there anywhere you can look?

Murph begins packing up his tools, thinking it over.

INT. HANGAR -- DAY

Murph stares at the darkened shape of a plane under a tarp.
He stares at the tarp, unsure if he wants to keep going.

He pulls the tarp off, revealing Cooper's old Piper Cub. He
checks over the engine, lights, prop. Turns the key. Fires
her up. The diesel wakes with a GRUNT.

EXT. AIRSTRIP -- DAY

Murph wheels the old plane out onto the field by hand.

EXT. SKIES OVER THE SOUTHWEST -- DAY

The ancient plane skirts the San Gabriels.

EXT. FIELD, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

Murph sets the plane down.

He parks the plane under a copse of trees and climbs down.

He scans the horizon. Nothing. Is this the place?

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

Murph pushes his way through the undergrowth. Stops.

He's standing at the blast doors to the facility. They've
been blown open with dynamite.

INT. NASA FACILITY -- DAY

Murph lets himself inside. Lights a flare.

The place has been gutted. Thieves and scavengers have taken
almost everything.

Murph finds one of the robots, or what's left of it -- it's
been stripped, leaving only the bare composite skeleton.
The empty eye sockets stare back at Murph.

Murph looks around the place. There is nothing left to
salvage. He turns to leave. Hears a familiar CHIRP.

In the corner, under a pile of rain-soaked garbage:

The probe.

No one has bothered to steal it. Murph stares at it.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY -- NIGHT

Murph sweeps detritus off of an ancient computer mainframe that survived the looting. He hooks the probe up to it.

After a minute, the screen fills with a picture of an ice-covered planet. Then nothing. The rest of the probe's drive is filled with garbage, noise.

Murph switches off the screen.

He stands. Begins to leave without the probe. Stops. Turns back. Picks it up and takes it with him.

INT. KITCHEN, MURPH'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Murph is hunched over the probe, trying to pull data off of it with a defibrillator. He has incorporated an ancient laptop into the chain, and is tweaking values on it, trying to decrypt the contents.

His WIFE, several months pregnant, turns back to him from the stove.

MURPH'S WIFE

Would you get that thing off of the table?

Murph nods, absorbed. Keys in a final tweak to the decryption software. Hits return.

Suddenly, the screen begins filling with data.

Murph stares at it, wide eyed.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN -- NIGHT

Murph, now in his 40s, is putting the finishing touches on a large machine. Although slightly different, we recognize some of the components and their configuration:

It's a crude version of the gravitational device.

Murph double checks it, then fires up a small gas powered generator. Throws a breaker, feeding power to the unit.

The unit lights up. HUMS. But nothing happens.

Murph, disappointed but undaunted, shuts it down and begins checking it over. He hears a noise at the door. Turns back. His daughter, Emily, 8, is standing at the door.

EMILY COOPER

Dad? You said you'd take us to the game.

MURPH

(distracted)

Did I?

He looks at the impossible nest of wires. Shakes his head.

MURPH (CONT'D)

All right. Let me get my jacket.

Murph picks up his jacket from the workbench. Next to it on the bench is a shortwave radio playing STATIC.

EMILY COOPER

(staring at machine)

What is it supposed to do, Dad?

MURPH

I have no idea.

Murph switches off the lights and they walk out.

After a moment, the radio CRACKLES to life in the darkness.

COOPER

(over radio, garbled)

This is the crew of the Endurance...
Murph... I'm sorry...

The signal crackles out.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, MURPH'S HOUSE -- DAY

Murph, 50s, slightly gray, sits at his kitchen table. He hears a distant RUMBLE.

He looks up. His wife is standing by the sink.

MURPH

Where's Emily?

WIFE

Out in the barn. She's been tinkering with your old projects.

Murph stands up. The roof of the barn is visibly shaking. He steps outside.

EXT. YARD, MURPH'S HOUSE -- DAY

Murph moves towards the barn, concerned. The shaking is growing stronger -- the entire structure is buckling.

Emily, now 18, backs out of the barn.

EMILY COOPER

Dad... I'm sorry... I made some changes to the machine. I think I did something wrong.

Murph puts an arm around his daughter and as they watch, the entire barn IMPLODES. Their tractor begins sliding towards the wreckage of the barn, chunky tires plowing up the soil.

Finally, the RUMBLING STOPS as the power lines short out in a FIERY display.

As the dust clears, Murph and his daughter examine the mess:

The entire barn has been crushed into a tiny ball.

Murph looks at his daughter.

MURPH

Do you remember what you changed?

Wide-eyed, she thinks about it. Then nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. EARTH, 2320 -- DAY

This is North America. But it doesn't look much like it.

Mother Nature has just about wiped the slate clean. Most of the vegetation is gone, and unchecked winds sweep across the barren plains. Patches of ice lie thick on the ground, as if a heavy snow has come and gone.

SUPER TITLE: "TWO HUNDRED YEARS LATER"

One of the Chinese spaceships descends through the thick clouds above and settles gently onto the plain.

The hatch opens and Cooper steps out. He takes a cautious look around. He is holding the fractal life in its small container.

The clouds are threatening, but the weather looks calm enough right here.

Cooper starts to walk.

EXT. COLLAPSED HOUSE -- DAY

Remarkably, part of Cooper's old house is still standing.

INT. COLLAPSED HOUSE -- DAY

Cooper stands in the middle of his kitchen. Two walls are missing and the rest is collapsed in a heap. But he can still see where he used to feed his kids breakfast.

He has kept his promise. Several hundred years too late.

Cooper hunkers down, staring at the space where his kids used to be. Rainwater covers the ancient formica.

It has taken him years to finally reach this place. He has had plenty of time to come to grips with what he might find. But nothing has prepared him for this:

He is completely alone. Nothing is left.

INT. COLLAPSED FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Cooper is still sitting there when the ice storm hits.

Unchecked by trees or vegetation, the wind rockets through the house, blasting Cooper and pelting what's left of the structure with fist-sized hail.

Cooper takes shelter against the remaining wall. He's going to have to sit this one out -- the hail and winds are the brutal descendants of the weather he knew. They'll finish him off if he steps back outside.

As he watches, the pool of water on the kitchen floor freezes over in seconds.

INT. COLLAPSED FARMHOUSE -- DAWN

Cooper shivers, pressed against the wall. The storm is still raging outside. He is freezing to death. He has to move now or he will die. He pulls the hood tight around his face and stumbles outside.

EXT. SNOWBOUND FIELD -- DAY

Cooper makes his way through the blinding snow. He tries to find his way, but the ship has been consumed by the blizzard.

He stumbles to the ground, dropping the glass case with the fractal wildlife in it. The case shatters.

Cooper tries to stand back up, but his strength is dwindling.

As he watches, the fractal wildlife creeps tentatively out of its broken habitat. It forms together against the cold.

After a moment, it burrows into the ice. As it does, the ice glows faintly. It seems to be right at home.

Cooper laughs, glimpsing the outline of a plan. Was this what the beings who made the wormhole intended all along?

Cooper suddenly spots the outline of the ship through the driving snow. He stumbles back up to his feet and struggles a few more steps, then stumbles again, spent.

Finally, he sits down in the snow to die.

As his senses flicker in and out, he is struck with memories of his boys, so vivid he reaches out for them, crawling forward in the snow.

He stops, and laughs, remembering what Case told him about what happens when humans die.

He struggles to his feet and stumbles a few more feet, eventually coming to rest just steps from the ship.

Cooper takes a final step. Finally, he collapses under his ship, as the wind continues to HOWL around him.

As the snow clears for a moment, Cooper is alone on a vast arctic tundra. He will die alone.

BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Cooper wakes.

He is in a sunlit room. A breeze rustles the curtains as it makes its way in through a large open window.

Cooper sits up. As he does, a control panel on the wall TONES gently, as if in response to his movement.

He stands and looks around. He can see sunlight through the open windows and hear people -- kids YELLING as they play. He moves toward the window. Reaches for the curtains. Before he can, the door opens behind him.

A WOMAN in a white coat steps in, smiling warmly.

DOCTOR

Good morning. Don't go outside just yet, Mr. Cooper.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(offers him a pill)
This will help with the
disorientation.

Cooper opens his mouth to talk, but his voice is cracked.
He gives up. Swallows the pill.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Wait a minute for that to take effect.
It can be a bit of an adjustment.
(looks him over)
You had some frostbite. Nothing too
serious.

As she talks, Cooper looks past her to the window.

COOPER
Where am I?

DOCTOR
(smiles)
It's a bit of a coincidence, really.
When the rangers found you, we were
the nearest facility.

COOPER
What's coincidence? What is this
place?

DOCTOR
We have a lot to show you.

The doctor reaches for the curtains. She offers him a hand.
Cooper declines the help and steps outside.

EXT. HOSPICE, COOPER STATION -- DAY

Cooper is standing on a rooftop deck of a four-story building
in a medium-sized city surrounded by fields. But as the
road and the buildings stretch into the distance, the
landscape curves up, not down.

The entire landscape is contained within a huge cylinder-
shaped space station.

Cooper stumbles, and reaches instinctively out. The doctor
catches him.

DOCTOR
You're OK. We get this from people
who move here from planetary colonies
all the time.

COOPER

Where... where are we?

DOCTOR

Like I said. It was a coincidence. There was a facility closer to Earth, but they had a problem, so you wound up here.

(off his look)

This is the Space Station Joseph A. Cooper.

Cooper takes in the incredible surroundings. A thousand feet above them, black specks are sprinkled over an ocean of green -- Jersey milking cows grazing in a field of wild grass.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I've got someone who wants to meet you.

Cooper looks at her.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE ROOM, HOSPICE, COOPER STATION -- DAY

Cooper steps inside. The room is dark, still, the only noise is the labored RATTLE of an old man struggling to breathe.

Cooper steps closer to the bed. The man's skin is paper-thin. He is ancient.

DOCTOR

He was moved here after they found you. He's a little old for a transfer, but they made an exception.

Cooper hovers at the back of the room, unsure. He turns to the doctor, questioning. Then he notices the pictures on the old man's desk:

There are dozens of them. Children, grandchildren. Then the older ones -- the man's own parents. Grandparents. Cooper spots a tiny framed picture with someone he recognizes:

Murph, 80 years old, surrounded by his daughter and her family. They are standing in front of a re-opened Cape Canaveral, and a huge spaceship under construction.

Cooper picks up the picture and stares at it.

The doctor points to a shy little boy hiding behind Murph's leg in the picture.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

That's him.

She points to the old man lying in the bed.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

His name is Anthony Welling. Anthony
Cooper Welling.

(smiles)

He's your great great grandson.
He's been waiting a long time for
you.

Cooper's eyes well with tears. He steps over to the bed and looks down at the ancient man, teetering on the edge of death.

The old man looks at him, eyes widening in excitement. He strains, trying to reach the bedside table. He's trying to reach the drawer. Cooper helps him open it.

Inside is a simple, familiar wristwatch. The old man carefully takes out the watch. He gives the watch a few winds and, hands shaking, offers it to Cooper.

Cooper, eyes filling with tears, closes his hand over the old man's hand, enveloping both the watch and the man's hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNFIELD, COOPER STATION -- MORNING

Cooper is sitting in a well-appointed office. A middle-aged BUREAUCRAT smiles at him from the far side of a huge desk.

ADMINISTRATOR

You're a hero, Mr. Cooper. Let's just start off by saying that. It's an incredible and... unexpected honor to have you here with us.

Cooper smiles, uncomfortable.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

None of us would be here without the efforts of you and the other crewmembers of the Endurance.

(smiles, unconvincingly)

So I don't want you to take this the wrong way. But there are some questions I've been told to ask.

The man looks petrified, like he's been instructed to grill George Washington on his expense reports.

COOPER

Shoot.

ADMINISTRATOR

The rangers who found you reported that you had released a sample of an alien life-form into the wild. Which is, unfortunately, against regulations.

COOPER

It was last of its kind. Their planet was destroyed.

The administrator cues up a series of images on his computer.

ADMINISTRATOR

The rangers attempted to isolate the life-form, but it had already spread out of control. It seems to be thriving.

He shows Cooper a satellite image of north america. A considerable portion of the frozen tundra is *glowing*.

Cooper begins laughing. Which makes the administrator even less comfortable.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

Can you tell me why you... elected to release the life-form back on earth?

Cooper is still laughing.

COOPER

Because that was the plan.

ADMINISTRATOR

Whose plan?

COOPER

(smiles)
I don't know.

The administrator tries to smile back. Makes a few notes in his file. Changes the subject.

ADMINISTRATOR

My assistant tells me you've applied for a position with the exploration fleet.

COOPER

Feel like I should be pulling my weight.

ADMINISTRATOR

That's admirable, Mr. Cooper. The truth is, most of the fleet's personnel are automated. There are a small number of crewed ships. But there are great numbers of candidates. Very well trained candidates.

COOPER

I was hoping to enroll in a course. Try to get myself up to speed on the new systems.

ADMINISTRATOR

I don't want you to take this the wrong way, Mr. Cooper -- like I said, you're a hero. But the truth is we have somewhat limited resources.

Cooper remembers this conversation. He looks down.

COOPER

No one's heard anything from Brand?

ADMINISTRATOR

I'm sorry. Officially, she's been listed as missing for over 200 years. Mind you, I guess you turned up eventually, didn't you?

COOPER

Am I really going to hurt anybody by going to look for her? I just need a small ship. I made a promise.

The bureaucrat looks down. Is he really going to have to tell this guy the lay of the land?

ADMINISTRATOR

Listen. Mr. Cooper. You're a hero. You're the oldest man in the human race. Don't you want to take it easy?

(off his look)

I hope you understand, we all you hold you in the highest possible regard.

(quiet)

Which is why they're never going to let you go off by yourself in a spaceship. I'm sorry.

Cooper looks at his hands. He's got a couple centuries on the bureaucrat in Earth years, but looks ten years younger. He puts his hands in his pockets.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

I've got some good news, however.

(big smile)

We all know about your early life, Mr Cooper. I wrote a paper on it when I was a boy. And I think we found something you'll really enjoy.

EXT. CORNFIELD, COOPER STATION -- DAY

Corn blows in an artificial breeze. A red tractor makes its way through the field, which curves gently up in the distance.

ADMINISTRATOR (V.O.)

The machines do most of the work, of course, but we were able to get you a few acres. You're going to be a farmer again.

After a moment, the tractor stops. Cooper climbs down from the seat. Looks at the front steering linkage, which is jammed with an errant tree branch. He wipes his forehead and begins working the branch out of the machine.

He looks miserable.

A robot, a similar unit to Tars, walks over. Offers Cooper a bottle of water. Cooper accepts it.

EXT. HANGAR BAY, COOPER STATION

Cooper stands on an observation deck, high above the hangar floor. Below him, bright young things in uniforms climb into sleek-looking spaceships and prepare to set out.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND, COOPER STATION

Cooper sits in the stands, listening to the familiar crack of the bat as an intramural team from the university practices.

Cooper watches. He looks bored.

The kid up to bat cracks a pop fly. For a second, the catcher shuffles back and forth, trying to get himself into position. But the ball never returns. The catcher YELLS out a warning.

Above, the ball begins to slowly fall up, not down, toward the town center above.

After a second, the ball smashes through a skylight of a building high above them.

Cooper watches as the kid rounds the bases, laughing.

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE, COOPER STATION -- DAY

Cooper's robot sits at the kitchen table. Cooper is fiddling around in the back of his head.

ROBOT

Settings: general settings, security settings--

COOPER

Curiosity. New level setting. 100 percent.

ROBOT

Confirmed. Would you like to make any additional changes?

COOPER

Sense of humor. New level setting. 100 percent. Wait.
(thinks)
80 percent.

He begins putting the robot back together.

EXT. FARMHOUSE, COOPER STATION -- TWILIGHT

Cooper sits on his porch, joined by the same robot as before. They watch as the space station rotates lazily out of alignment with the local star, casting the inside of the cylinder into shade, then darkness.

The shadow races past them. Another day. Another night.

EXT. HANGAR, COOPER STATION

A maintenance worker finishes looking over one of the sleek-looking spacecraft. He packs up his tools and heads out.

After a moment, two figures pick their way across the hangar floor, sticking to the shadows.

As they reach the first ship in the line, we get a better look. It's Cooper and his robot pal. The robot is wearing a baseball cap and carrying a toolbox.

Cooper gestures to the robot, who sets down the toolbox with a click against the mirror-like floor.

Cooper shakes his head, annoyed, at the robot, and puts his finger to his lips. The robot nods, bashful.

Cooper waves a small handheld computer near the skin of the ship until it lights up. Then he punches in a few codes. Nothing happens. He punches in a few more.

Suddenly, the hatch opens with a HISS.

INT. SHIP

Cooper moves quickly to the cockpit of the ship. Looks over the controls. The robot straps himself in next to him. Cooper looks up through the windows.

The inky black void of space beckons.

Cooper smiles and reaches for the controls.

COOPER

Where do you want to go first?

The robot thinks it over.

EXT. HANGAR, COOPER STATION

The technician walks back into the hangar. He walks along the row of ships till he reaches the last one.

It's not there.

He looks out into the blackness of the void. Sees a tiny glowing speck, getting smaller and smaller.

END