

Escape Velocity

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August 11, 2014

FADE IN - ON A MESOAMERICAN STATUE

A reclined, nude female figure. Eyes GAZING UPWARD.

WIDER TO REVEAL

MORE ARTIFACTS. A cup. A scepter bearing panther designs. A piece of a round solar calendar. All on a blanket at:

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG - CENTRAL AMERICA - DAY

MIKE LEE (41, Asian) dictating notes into an MP3.

Imagine the best possible cross of Indiana Jones and Coach Eric Taylor: brains, integrity, khakis, white shirt, boots - and a shit-eating grin under a wide-brimmed hat - but no cowboy bullshit.

MIKE

Day 459. Today's haul includes a major - major - find that's got me squeeing like a tween at a boyband show. It's a *Chacmool*. Intact. Rectangular base. Female - congruent with Mayan statuary -

A man RUSHES UP. Mike's right hand, SANTIAGO (50s): a saddlebag in linen shorts, shirt and jelly sandals.

SANTIAGO (O.S.)

Señor Lee! We need you! Site A!

AS MIKE TURNS, REVEAL THE DIG

Scaffolded trenches perimeter a squat MAYAN SHRINE: a rectangular structure with a heavily-sculpted roof comb.

CHYRON: CARIBBEAN COAST CENTRAL AMERICA, PRESENT DAY.

MIKE

When you gonna start calling me "Mike"?

SANTIAGO

Never. We just uncovered - you gotta see it, it's... *inverosímil!*

EXT./INT. TRENCH LEADING TO THE SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

Mike follows Santiago, GLIDING down a ladder, then advancing into the narrow corridor leading to:

INT. MAYAN SHRINE - CENTRAL CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

The shrine's altar DOMINATES - surrounded by sheets of plastic, work lights, more scaffolds and steel beams.

A half dozen sweaty GRAD STUDENTS and WORKERS look at something in awe as Santiago and Mike PUSH THROUGH.

SANTIAGO

Hagan un hueco, muchachos!

The assembled crew steps aside to allow Santiago and Mike: his smile growing exponentially.

MIKE

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Wow.

You ever see anything like this?

REVERSE TO SHOW A MASSIVE TABLET

Ten feet tall and wide: a block of chalky, grey glass covered in a very ornate black script.

The writing features no sharp corners, just flowing, circular characters joined by swooping arcs. On the center of the tablet: a large, concave opening.

MIKE

No, sir, I have not.

(whips out his recorder)

The chamber team has unearthed a large tablet. Appears to be made of black glass even though no such material has ever shown up on the archaeological record for this region... nor does the text match any logosyllabic system I've seen from the Mayans... or any of the pictograms or...

(looks at Santiago)

You ever see anything like this?

SANTIAGO

In thirty-three years of digging? No.

Mike looks around at his staff, all of whom shake their heads - or generally indicate that their answer is "no".

MIKE

I want pictures uploaded, get Michaelson, if this script has appeared anywhere he'll know it.

(to his voice recorder)

At the center of the slab there's a small, concave opening...

Mike reaches in... and just as he does...

RRRRRUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMBBBBLLLLLLLLLE!

A LOW BASS TONE shakes the air around the gathered crew.

Dust FALLS FROM THE CEILING. The altar TREMBLES. A work light FALLS.

Did he just set off a booby trap?

Is this going to be one of those portrayals of archaeology where "X" marks the spot and every temple is riddled with ingenious devices of matinée idol death?

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh... no... no!

MIKE RACES THROUGH THE SHRINE ENTRANCE

Into the BLAZING SUNLIGHT streaming in from:

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG - TRENCH SYSTEM - MOMENTS LATER

The RUMBLE GROWS LOUDER - now BOOMING. The ground SHAKES.

Mike grabs a ladder and ascends topside - SCRAMBLING to see something some forty miles in the distance.

A ROCKET - RISING UPWARD

A CURVING SPIRE of flame PUSHING IT THROUGH THE AIR - the steel beast SPEARING higher and higher into the blue sky.

Santiago and his team rise up from the trench behind Mike as he scrambles for a satellite phone in his pocket...

MIKE

Come on, come on, come on!

The phone CHIRPS AND BURBLES - finally settling on something familiar - a RING TONE.

Mike lifts the phone - REVEALING HIS WEDDING BAND.

Santiago looks at one of the other team members - all of them looking up at the sky...

SANTIAGO

Señor Beck's gonna be in trouble.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Pick up! Pick up!

SMASH CUT TO

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Three-tiered. Lined by theater-sized screens showing the launch in live video and tactical wireframes - as well as a HUGE ARRAY OF WINDOWS, from which the light enters...

AS DOES THE SIGHT OF THE ASCENDING ROCKET

Several dozen men and women - SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS IN SHIRTS, TIES AND BUSINESS ATTIRE - work consoles, translucent screens, holo-keyboards, and earbuds.

The place HUMS with the voices of the operation - countdowns, readings, transmissions and reports.

CHYRON: VILLAGE OF ENYO. VERTU ORE CORPORATION LAUNCH SITE.

MISSION CONTROL VOICE

Agathos 5 telemetry systems nominal...

Front and center: EMILY LEE (39), back turned, looking out the window. Tall and aquiline, Emily wears a white shirt, black vest and slacks, blond hair in a pony tail.

And looks at the ringing satellite phone in her hand:

ON THE PHONE SCREEN: "MIKE"

Emily turns: great beauty barely hidden by great determination - and clicks on to REVEAL HER WEDDING BAND.

EMILY

Almost missed it didn't you?

INTERCUT WITH MIKE

MIKE

Not for the world.

EMILY

Look good?

MIKE (CONT'D)

Freakin' gorgeous, honey - but no more than you.

Emily does her level best to keep her smile private.

EMILY

Please. See you tonight.

END INTERCUT ON MIKE

Etched against the awesome sight of his wife's work...

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE OVER BLACK: *ESCAPE VELOCITY*

RESUME ON MISSION CONTROL

Emily steps to a console manned by CHRIS MCGILL (35). Unlike his cohorts, Chris wears a red mechanic's paneled Dickies shirt with a name patch that reads "BIG DADDY".

Think of him as Mookie from *Do The Right Thing*, reincarnated as *Star Trek's* Mister Scott.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hey Big Daddy.

CHRIS

That's reserved for the wife.

EMILY (CONT'D)

And that attitude's reserved for people who follow dress code.

CHRIS

I work for a living.

EMILY

Before the shift wraps, I'm wondering if we shouldn't upload the bandwidth tolerance reports on Agathos 6 -

CHRIS

Weird. Sounds like you just said "Agathos 6" which you couldn't, since we just launched Agathos 5, and when the shift ends, everyone in this room - myself included - is going to go celebrate instead of studying the tech on a ship we're launching in six months. And if you choose to go home to get ready for the next mission instead of getting properly pissed with the rest of us Morlocks, I will personally encourage the guys to continue calling you names behind your back.

EMILY

Names?

CHRIS

Icicle... Mrs. Freeze... Elsa... What? You didn't see *Frozen*?

EMILY

Must have missed it. Message received.

CHRIS

I doubt it.

EXT. ENYO - MIDWAY - DUSK

A VEHICLE ASSEMBLY BUILDING towers over this village of 10,000... a town cobbled together from prefab buildings, quonset huts, tents and mobile homes.

As the sun sets, ENGINEERS and WORKERS step out of their homes and workplaces, walking toward...

EXT./INT. FATIMA'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

A large QUONSET HUT on the center of Enyo - with a makeshift sign over the entrance.

FIND FATIMA MCGILL (29, MIDDLE EASTERN)

Very pregnant - wearing a chef's tunic and carrying a foil-covered tray toward the place that bears her name.

An amiable young Latina woman in a security uniform - MERCEDES AGUIRRE (27) steps up to her.

MERCEDES

Hey Fatima... you need a hand with that?

FATIMA

(a big smile)

Hands off the chicken, young lady.

As Mercedes takes a step back and offers a mock salute.

MERCEDES

Copy that, ma'am.

FOLLOW FATIMA THROUGH A SIDE DOOR INTO

INT. FATIMA'S PLACE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Fatima hands off her tray, then tastes a sauce here, checks plates there, gives orders to the COOKS and WAITERS... who NOD AND SNAP.

FATIMA

We're going to need a hundred more plates, the entire town's gonna be here... take the desserts to the walk-in, we won't be serving them for three hours -

Fatima stops by a LINE COOK, preparing a bowl of hummus - she tastes it:

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Did you put rocoto peppers in this?

LINE COOK

I figured some local flavors might -

FATIMA

Not in my mother's hummus
they don't.

LINE COOK (CONT'D)

(unconditional
surrender)
I'll do a new batch.

FATIMA

The people of Lebanon thank you.

Fatima keeps moving... stepping to a door into:

INT. FATIMA'S PLACE - DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Lined with long tables, getting crowded as WAITERS serve beers. Fatima rushes to a BUFFET. As a group of WORKMEN behind her put up a banner reading "**VERTU ORE CONGRATULATES TEAM AGATHOS**"...

FIND HELEN GEZMER (53)

The town's Chaplain - think of her as a cross between Holland Taylor in *Bosom Buddies* and... well, Holland Taylor... sitting at a table, lifting a large beer as she speaks to a group of shirt-and-tie-wearing ENGINEERS.

HELEN

First stage, second stage, third stage -
then on to heaven - you rocket boys truly
don't get how everything you do is a
thinly-veiled allegory for the trinity?
(off the head shakes)
I'm with the heathen. Is David coming?

ENGINEER

Spock himself? And leave
the lab? Talk to people?

HELEN

(standing)
I'll go get him.

ENGINEER

Good luck with that.

EXT. MARS ORBIT

A ship's hull dominates an image from its own SURVEILLANCE CAMERA. The legend on the ship: **AGATHOS 3**.

A SERIES OF SMALL ROBOTS

CRAWL into the camera's field of vision: opening hatches, assembling components - perfect worker drones doing their work in a symphony of mathematical perfection.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

That this is one of several LIVE FEEDS ON A SERIES OF WINDOWS ON A LARGE, FLAT-SCREEN MONITOR.

Agathos 1, Agathos 2, Agathos 3, Agathos 4...

WIDER TO SHOW**INT. EXOBIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

DAVID VICTOR (45) watches intently, scribbling notes with a stylus on a tablet as a door opens behind him...

HELEN'S VOICE

You know, those ships are still gonna be in Mars orbit when the party's over.

David doesn't turn, just keeps scribbling. Any sign in his bearing that may imply that he is on the spectrum is completely intentional.

DAVID

The assembly robots have started deploying the solar panel array in Agathos 4. They're going to drop it into site in less than 76 hours and -

HELEN

And there's a half-dozen scientists in Vertu Ore monitoring stations around the world watching it. Come on, there's a party going on, you need some human contact... you need to unwind.

DAVID

Your first proposition is demonstrably false, as for the second, this is how I "unwind."

HELEN

David. Go. For fifteen minutes. For me. So I know you aren't letting anyone forget your contribution to this thing.

DAVID

You're a kind and giving person and once I am satisfied that the droids are performing satisfactorily, I will attend the party for a few minutes.

HELEN

Thank you.

EXT. FATIMA'S PLACE - NIGHT

A Jeep SKIDS to a halt. Mike BARRELS out toward the entrance only to find a faceful of JASON HALPERN (50s) - Head of Security: in uniform and spit-polish boots.

JASON

You're not even thinking of leaving that vehicle here, are you?

MIKE

I slept at the dig and almost missed the -

JASON (CONT'D)

That's not an answer.

MIKE

Five minutes? Jason? I gotta congratulate the wife. You've met her? Chief engineer? Way more scared of her than you.

JASON

Three minutes. Then you pay to get your car out of the motor pool.

Mouthing "thank you" as he passes Jason, Mike rushes in, and a woman's AMPLIFIED VOICE fills his soundscape:

AMPLIFIED VOICE

Ten years ago, when the Vertu Ore company decided to pioneer a mining operation on the surface of Mars - to send five automated rockets to assemble a colony - we never imagined that we would actually be ahead of schedule.

INT. FATIMA'S PLACE - DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Crowded. Raucous. Mike ENTERS to lock eyes with Emily, sitting awkwardly at a table in front of the "congratulations" banner next to ANTONIA GREVES (53), who stands, speaking into a wireless mic.

The crowd clearly hates her speech.

ANTONIA

Today, we are a mere six months from launching fifteen astronauts on a trip to Mars, to rendezvous with our five automated supply ships -

HECKLING AUDIENCE VOICE

We know already! Come on! Where's dinner?

The crowd WHOOPS, HOLLERS and CATCALLS as Mike winds his way toward his wife. Antonia tries - and fails - to keep her disgust hidden as she tries to keep morale up.

ANTONIA

Hey! A little quiet so I can thank you all on behalf of the company that owns this town, pays your bills and -?

HECKLING AUDIENCE VOICE

YOU'RE WELCOME! WHERE'S DINNER?

More HOOTS from the audience. It finally dawns on Antonia that this is not the right time for a speech.

ANTONIA

All right, all right - thanks for all your hard work - and enjoy your party.

The crowd finally APPLAUDS as she heads back to her seat, crossing past Mercedes, standing against the back wall...

ANTONIA (CONT'D)

Find out who that heckler was.

MERCEDES

Really?

ANTONIA

Yes. Really.

FIND MIKE

Stepping up to Emily, about to give her a massive kiss:

EMILY

Not in front of the crew.

MIKE

They know we're a couple.

EMILY (CONT'D)

C'mon, I gotta lead these people tomorrow morning.

MIKE

People like it when their leaders...
kiss... their husbands... OK, OK - so,
how long 'til you can get out of here?

EMILY

Oh. Right now.

As Mike pulls Emily away from the table toward an exit...

FIND FATIMA

At the buffet as Chris steps up with a big hug.

CHRIS

How's my little man doing?

FATIMA

Kicks like Beckham.

CHRIS

So... not to broach something awkward
but... when'd you start putting peppers
in your mother's hummus recipe?

FATIMA

Aw - hell no. I gotta go.

Chris smiles as she turns to go kick some ass - but
instead, she drops the tray and clutches at her belly.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Chris...

CHRIS

What's going on, Fatima?

Fatima lets out a pained GROAN as her legs give out from
under and she reaches for the buffet table for support.
Chris grabs her as more PLATES AND TRAYS HIT THE FLOOR.

CHRIS

A LITTLE HELP HERE?

Mercedes hustles over, reaching for her earbud:

MERCEDES

Security, this is 23 - we have a medical
emergency in the mess hall, can we get
Dr. Jamieson on the horn?

INT. ENYO - MEDICAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Fatima lies on a table - her hand in Chris's. A very
handsome young doctor (DANIEL JAMIESON, 31) plugs an IV
bag of Ringer's into the needle already in her arm.

JAMIESON

OK - first the good news, you are not having a baby tonight... what we have is Braxton Hicks contractions, brought on by overwork and dehydration. May not be the worst idea for a woman in your -

FATIMA

Do not say "delicate condition".

JAMIESON (CONT'D)

Advanced stage to be working a full load, feeding hundreds of people in a hot climate and never taking a break.

CHRIS

Now will you listen?

FATIMA

Guys, I leave that kitchen one minute -

JAMIESON AND CHRIS

And the locals start putting their spices in the food...

FATIMA

You know it's true.

JAMIESON

It's a risk you're gonna have to take, 'cause you're on bed rest until the little guy deigns to join the rest of us air breathers.

CHRIS

Do we need another ultrasound?

JAMIESON

Since last week? No. I promise you - ten fingers, ten toes.

INT. MIKE AND EMILY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A corporation's idea of an apartment - decorated with Mayan themes (Emily doesn't decorate).

Emily wakes naked in bed to the lambent blue glow of Mike's laptop across the room, where he sits at a small dinette table - next to her closed laptop.

Rubbing her eyes - feeling woozy - she focuses on him.

EMILY

Mike - thank God you're up. I wanted to get back to work too.

Mike OPENS Emily's laptop, beckons. She stands, a little wobbly, wrapping a blanket around herself.

EMILY (CONT'D)

What's new in ancient history?

MIKE

I have Michaelson looking at a tablet we unearthed. He's been comparing the symbols with his d-base - he hasn't found a single glyph or character to match anything uncovered in Central America - we may be on the verge of something...

As Michael speaks, Emily looks down, shakes her head, then BOLTS across to the bathroom and SLAMS THE DOOR.

Mike stands, walks to the bathroom door:

MIKE (CONT'D)

You OK there, chief?

HUMBLLEEEAAAACGH! The unmistakable sound of vomiting.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Emily?

EMILY

Must be something I ate... I'm fine.
(after a HEAVE)
Go back to work, seriously.

CUT TO A SKYPE WINDOW

Showing Fatima's MOTHER, TWO SISTERS, and FATHER - hovering around the perimeter... Fatima's VOICE rings over the image, speaking in *Arabic*.

FATIMA (O.S.)

Dad, you have to get in the frame - I can't see you!

INT. CHRIS AND FATIMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Festooned with posters for Brooklyn bicycle shops and the *Tour De France* alongside a competition bike on hooks in the ceiling.

Fatima lies on the couch - smiling - laptop on her belly, talking to her family as Chris hovers nearby.

ON SCREEN

Fatima's father steps OUT of the Skype window.

FATIMA

*Mother, tell father to step back into
frame!*

FATIMA'S MOTHER

*Are you going to tell us if the baby is
fine?*

FATIMA

Say hi to Chris first!

FATIMA'S FAMILY

Salam-aleikum Chris!

CHRIS

*Salam-aleikum Mrs. Jarrah, Ahmed,
Zuleikha...*

(to Fatima, moving away)

That's the extent of my Arabic.

Fatima turns to Chris as her family PEPPERS HER WITH QUESTIONS in *Arabic* - their voices loud and barely intelligible in the stew.

FATIMA

Don't go. Stay.

CHRIS

It's your virtual Baby Shower, don't worry. It's OK... they love you...

Chris steps to the open kitchen across the room as Fatima resumes a lively dialogue with her family.

He pulls out a beer - then notices:

AN ULTRASOUND PRINTOUT ON A MAGNET ON THE FRIDGE DOOR

The baby's hands and feet more than discernible... and as he gets close, and COUNTS the number of fingers...

CHRIS (CONT'D)

One... two... three...

PUSH IN ON THE ULTRASOUND

WHITE WAVES etched on a black background:

MATCH DISSOLVE TO

THE GLASS TABLET IN THE SHRINE

Bathed in worklights. The text strangely reminiscent of the lines on the ultrasound.

The tablet VIBRATES... A low HUM fills the chamber...

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG - NIGHT

A JEEP - the rear bay crowded with workers - makes its way past a chicken wire gate topped with barbed wire.

Santiago WAVES the Jeep off, then padlocks the gate.

Santiago takes a breath, puts his keys away and turns to look at the dig - the juxtaposition of scaffolds, worklights and antiquity sprawling before him.

He then notices the low HUM coming from the temple.

INT. TRENCH LEADING TO THE SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

Santiago DESCENDS, approaching the shrine entrance.

The hum slowly modulates into a rhythmic DRONE - escalating... descending... escalating... descending...

INT. MAYAN SHRINE - CENTRAL CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

The tablet's vibration BLURS the text like black oil rippling in a glass - a series of round waves emanating from the concave center opening of the tablet.

The droning grows faster as Santiago comes closer...

WHOOOOOAAAAARRRRRRRRROOOOMMMMPPPPPPPHHHHHH!

A tone equal parts metal machine music, THX Deep Note, and humpback whale song as interpreted by a thousand electric guitars.

A dark wave - an inky ring of what can only be described as ANTI-LIGHT manifests at the center of the tablet -

THEN PASSES IN A BLACK FLASH

A tsunami that SLAMS Santiago back and onto the ground.

INT. EXOBIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

David continues to work - watching the robots through their live feeds - until he notices a distortion in his monitors: an almost biological wave of noise that overtakes his screens.

David puts his pad aside in a hurry, and as he hits a number of RECORD BUTTONS on his gear:

INT. MIKE AND EMILY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike sits at his laptop - and the screen FRITZES as he looks up to see Emily, stepping out of the bathroom, clutching the sheet around her body.

MIKE

Honey, you want me to call the doctor?

Emily SHAKES HER HEAD - then wracks with another wave of nausea... as she heads back in and SLAMS the door shut...

INT. CHRIS AND FATIMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chris and Fatima lie in bed. Fast asleep... until Fatima's eyes SNAP open. Her hand drifts to her belly.

For a moment, her eyes GLAZE OVER WITH AN INKY DARKNESS.

RESUME ON SANTIAGO

As the drone settles into silence.

Getting to his feet - rubbing the back of his head - and looking up to notice something... occupying the concave opening at the center of the tablet.

A BLACK SPHERE

Shining. Mirrorlike. Perfect.

Santiago takes a few steps toward the sphere, then reaches forward - it fits in the palms of his hands...

He stares. Mesmerized - his face reflected black not just on the surface of the thing - but in its depth. Something within the obscurity of the sphere stares back at him.

Santiago then places it in his satchel.

And as Santiago walks away from the tablet - switching off the work lamps...

CUT TO BLACK

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**SMASH IN ON THE TABLET**

A dark stain - like a Hiroshima burn shadow - now rings the concave opening on the center.

INT. MAYAN SHRINE - CENTRAL CHAMBER - DAY

Mike stands over the tablet, rubbing his chin as he compares it to the images on his camera display.

MIKE
Santiago?

SANTIAGO
Señor Lee?

MIKE
Who was here last night?

Santiago looks at Mike, takes a moment before responding.

SANTIAGO
No one. Wrapped ops after you left,
sealed the chamber - I slept in my tent.

MIKE
(to himself)
What the hell?

INT. ENYO - MEDICAL FACILITY - DAY

Emily sits on the examination table, pulling her shirt on. Jamieson looks down at her chart to avoid looking in her eyes... ignoring her cold intensity.

JAMIESON
I take it this was not the news you were
expecting.

EMILY
No.

JAMIESON (CONT'D)
It must have been some
party.

EMILY
Last night?

JAMIESON
No... six, seven weeks ago? You're not
the first "surprise" pregnancy I've seen
today. More like the sixth. Guess I
should have been there.

Emily finally shows emotion: coiled fury.

EMILY

You should have been more thorough. You're the one who gave me the faulty birth control - and however many other women here who now are in the same situation I am. Ill-timed, unplanned pregnancies. Is it only "women's medicine" you're incompetent at, or should I also be worried about the health of my crew?

Dr. Jamieson shakes his head and smiles as he sits: calm and friendly, his voice placating.

JAMIESON

You're barely in the first trimester. You'll be a little tired at first, but when it passes you'll be operating at full. Agathos 6 will be launched and settled by the time this pregnancy comes to term.

EMILY

That's not what this is about.

For a moment, the ice cracks. She's terrified. This is not something she can control.

When he speaks again he is gentle, kind.

JAMIESON

You know there are options. Even this far from home.

(locking eyes)

Termination is a simple and safe procedure.

As Emily ponders...

INT. ANTONIA'S OFFICE - DAY

Antonia sits at a DESK of thin metal and clear plastic.

SCREENS on the walls display THE LAUNCH BAY, THE MESS HALL, THE LABS.

Antonia types furiously on a thin desktop, then pauses to press a small button on her desk.

ANTONIA

Jason? You can come in now.

Jason enters. Antonia holds her hand out.

Jason hands over a thumb drive which she connects to her computer without acknowledgement.

PHOTOS OF THE KEY CREW MEMBERS AND SCIENTISTS

Appear on the screens around her - lines of notes under their images. Antonia stands, paces the screens, scans the images and text.

JASON

Ma'am, if that's all?

ANTONIA

(hand up)

Wait.

She finally looks at Jason.

ANTONIA (CONT'D)

Little light on Mike Lee this week.

Jason fails to hide his irritation:

JASON

He's at his dig twelve hours a day.

ANTONIA

No excuse.

(a cold smile)

You do have someone on him, don't you?

Jason's hands barely - just barely - clench.

JASON

Yes, ma'am.

Antonia stands, leans toward another screen, eager:

DAVID'S FACE, NOTES UNDERNEATH.

ANTONIA

Nothing new here.

JASON

Creature of habit. Same deal. Day in, day out.

ANTONIA

No. You're not paying enough attention.

(off his look)

Dr. Victor has been ordering equipment, software... none of it matches his operational mandates.

JASON

He works a very specific, sophisticated field. I'm not sure either of us would recognize exactly what he needs in his *operational mandate*.

ANTONIA

I'm not asking if you understand his work, I'm asking if you've noticed anything... unusual in his behavior.

Jason SNORTS - one burst of humorless laughter.

JASON

Are you joking?

Antonia sits back in her chair.

ANTONIA

You do know what we pay you for, right?

JASON

Yes, ma'am.

ANTONIA

Vertu Ore does not take security lightly. *That* is why we are the first in the field of space mining and why we, and not some government, are building the first colony on Mars. We are a serious company. We hire serious people. Understand?

JASON

Yes, ma'am.

ANTONIA

Dismissed. Do better next time.

INT. LAUNCH ASSEMBLY BUILDING - DAY

Chris and Emily drive a Vertu Ore-liveried golf cart through a MASSIVE VEHICLE ASSEMBLY FACILITY... the biggest, cleanest, most high tech mechanic shop ever...

THE NEARLY FINISHED AGATHOS 6

Hulks in the middle of the hangar - a bulbous rocket ship, stories high - WELDERS and MECHANICS minister to the beast with practiced efficiency.

Chris hands Emily a tablet - TECH SPECS on the screen.

EMILY

You guys'll be done with the heating and air filtration system *ahead* of schedule?

CHRIS

Barring unseen disaster.

(off her raised eyebrow)

So let's say I expect those systems up and running *on* schedule.

EMILY

I know I don't have to tell you -

CHRIS

(hitting the brake)

Please don't stress the importance of these calculations being perfect.

EMILY

I can't stress enough the importance of these calculations being perfect.

Chris rolls his eyes. Emily lets the tablet drop to her side and looks up at the ship - wistful.

CHRIS

(not a question)

You wish you were going.

Emily shakes her head, then lifts the tablet again:

EMILY

When the first fifteen land, are you still anticipating a month in the lander before the domes are habitable?

CHRIS

One and a half to be safe, but the truth is I'm expecting three weeks tops. Agathos 1-5 are rocking it out up there.

(then)

You alright? Never seen you like this.

EMILY

Like what?

CHRIS

Distracted? Dreamy? Unfocused? Human?

EMILY

Don't start with me, McGill.

CHRIS

If anyone should be mooning around here it should be *me*. I'm moments away from being a parent. You know what that does to a person?

Emily stares at Chris. Any levity Chris was trying to insert into the situation is gone.

EMILY

Let's check on the storage weight projections, these specs don't give us enough of a buffer.

She steps off the cart... as he watches her go:

INT. MAYAN SHRINE - CENTRAL CHAMBER - DAY

Mike hunches over the tablet, taking pictures with a macro lens camera. His finger hovers in the air, tracing the hieroglyphics without touching them.

Mike gets closer, letting his eyes drift out of focus slightly, his other hand raises, TRACES SIMULTANEOUSLY.

He is lost, hypnotized then

RUSTLE...RUSTLE

His reverie breaks. He looks back... but sees nothing. Mike goes back to the tablet, but as he lifts the camera:

A SLOW TRICKLE OF DIRT FALLS DOWN THE SIDE OF THE RUINS

Mike creeps from the tablet, toward the noise, sees:

A SHADOW, FROZEN MOMENTARILY, THEN GONE

Mike TAKES OFF like a rocket - giving chase:

INT. TRENCH LEADING TO THE SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

The brightness of the Caribbean sun after the dimness of the chamber BLOWS EVERYTHING OUT.

Mike RUNS FULL TILT - brushing workers aside as he sees BOOTS turning a corner.

MIKE

Hey!

MIKE TURNS THE CORNER

And THRUSTS his body into the air with abandon in a major Hail Mary flying tackle.

Mike lands his target - barely - grabbing an armful of, and bringing down...

DAVID VICTOR

The two stare, Mike confused, David shocked.

MIKE (CONT'D)

David?

(letting go)

Jesus man, scared the crap out of me...

(dusting himself off)

You want a tour you just have to ask.

David's shock turns to FEAR. He pulls away like he's still in a chase and RUNS - heading for a ladder.

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG - CONTINUOUS

David sprints toward a JEEP parked at the edge of a work area.

Mike emerges from the trench - he's faster, in better shape - and catches him, SHOVING him against the Jeep.

MIKE

What the hell? Why are you here?

(frustration into anger)

Seriously, David, what are you doing? I don't pull this shit in your lab, why're you messing with my shit?

But David REFUSES TO MAKE EYE CONTACT... he just looks at one spot on the ground.

INT. ENYO MESS HALL - DAY

Helen sits quietly at a table, reading a well worn copy of A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE. Absorbed...

EMILY (O.S.)

Ahem...

Helen raises her eyes to Emily, her tray piled high with enough food for several people.

HELEN

Been there a while?

Emily shakes her head. Helen gestures for her to sit.

Emily smiles tightly. Then sits, saying nothing... Then digs in: can't help herself, shoveling in the food. Helen watches quietly, then:

HELEN (CONT'D)

Emily? Something you need to tell me?

EMILY

You already know, don't you?

Helen smiles, places her hand on Emily's.

HELEN

That much food on your tray? Hair shiny and full? Dark circles under your eyes? *I* could tell. But I know what to look for.

Emily eats, not looking at Helen. She is trying hard to hide how upset she is, but it is undeniable.

EMILY

Mike doesn't know.

(off Helen - waiting)

I don't know if I'm going to tell.

(off Helen's silence)

Please. Stop just staring at me.

HELEN

What are you trying to ask me, Emily?

By now, Emily's tray is a collection of bones and bits.

EMILY

I came from a crappy little town. A crappy little middle of nowhere dump - everyone was looking for work, everyone shopped at the Walmart. Almost no one there had even seen the *ocean*.

HELEN

You wanted out.

EMILY

I was six when the Challenger...

(an "exploding" gesture)

First grade. I could tell none of the teachers gave a shit. Everyone was so over the space program. I saw it as the only way out. I had this little purple notebook - and you know what I wrote on it? After I got home and watched the news? In pink marker?

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

(off her look)

"Never again." Yeah. That was me at six. Seventeen years later I'd be in astronaut training, younger than the next person up by a long shot.

I know.

HELEN

EMILY (CONT'D)

You know.

HELEN

I'm the town's spiritual counselor. They give me everyone's files.

EMILY

It was a waste. They cut the program. Sent us home. Astronauts had to get jobs as airline pilots and race car drivers, and tour guides...

HELEN

But you went back to school and worked your ass off to become the most desirable engineer for a project like this - and when Vertu Ore came sniffing around, you figured you had your ticket.

EMILY

Oh, you're good. Yeah. Who wouldn't want to get off this rock? Touch the stars?

HELEN

Me?

EMILY

Know why I married Mike?

ELLEN

Love?

EMILY

(well, yeah...)

... and he never wanted kids. Nothing anchoring us, nothing... and now *this*.

They stare at each other: Helen calm, Emily searching.

HELEN

Are you asking for permission?

Emily looks away. That's exactly what she's doing. When Helen speaks, every moment of her training as a Chaplain, psychologist, and trauma counselor comes through.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 You don't need it. You made up your mind
 a long time ago.

Before Emily can reply...

CRASH!

A MOAN cuts through the clatter and conversation of the
 mess hall then a SCREAM from:

HELEN (CONT'D)
 Fatima -

Helen takes off - but Emily stands back - left behind...
 unable to face the birth of a child...

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A KITCHEN WORKER supports Fatima, who sweats, gripping
 the side of a counter as a CONTRACTION wracks her body.

HELEN
 (rushing in)
 How far apart?

Fatima breathes short and fast - LAMAZE TECHNIQUE.

FATIMA
 Two minutes. Started hours ago.

HELEN
 And you came to work? Jesus, you're
 stubborn.

Fatima laughs - ANOTHER CONTRACTION - another SCREAM.

SMASH CUT TO CHRIS

RUSHING full tilt into:

INT. BIRTHING ROOM - LATER

To see Dr. Jamieson and a NURSE. Dr. Jamieson smiles,
 parting to REVEAL Fatima.

She sees Chris and smiles. Everything is going to be OK.

INT. BIRTHING ROOM - LATER

Fatima grips Chris's hand, eyes open wide. She MOANS -
 loud, animalistic.

Chris grips her hand back, his eyes are focused totally on his wife. The two take a deep, deep breath together.

FATIMA
UUUUUUUHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

The Nurse hands Chris a cup of water. He takes a sip then holds it to Fatima's lips. She drinks, smiles at him.

CHRIS
You're doing amazing.

FATIMA
I know.

She grips his hand again and he grips back.

CHRIS
UUUUUUUHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

FATIMA (CONT'D)
UUUUUUUHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

DR. JAMIESON
We're getting really close, Fatima. Just a few more good pushes and we're there!

Fatima grits her teeth. She lets go of Chris and grips the sides of the birthing bed - raising her torso:

She sweats profusely, her eyes stare at nothing, all her energy goes into the task at hand.

FATIMA
AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

DR. JAMIESON
There's the head! One more!!

FATIMA
AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

It's over. SHE DID IT.

But a strange quiet rolls over the room like a fog.

NURSE
Oh.

CHRIS AND FATIMA

Look at their doctor - the nurse - both STARING at the baby... held just out of frame.

CHRIS
What is it?!

FATIMA
 (hyperventilating)
 The baby! What's wrong with the baby?

As Dr. Jamieson straightens up:

REVEAL THE BABY - GREY AS GRAVEL, AS IF MADE OF STONE

The creases of its arms, legs and neck a DEEP INKY BLACK.

THE BABY CLENCHES AND UNCLENCHES TWO THREE FINGERED HANDS

And blinks at them ITS LARGE EYES A MOTHER-OF-PEARL MILKY WHITE, BRIGHT BLUE IRISES INSTANTLY LOCKING ON FATIMA.

Fatima holds her arms out, umbilical cord still connecting mother and child.

FATIMA (CONT'D)
 Give him to me.

Too stunned to do anything else, Jamieson complies. As it lands on Fatima's arms:

THE BABY SIGHS A VERY HUMAN BABY SOUND

BABY
 There is no light - on Earth or heaven -
 but the cold light of the stars.

Holy. Fucking. Shit.

Chris looks down at his wife - holding their unearthly offspring - but reacting with nothing other than a mother's love...

As the baby breaks its gaze with Fatima's and buries its head in her breast, taking its first meal...

CUT TO BLACK

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

INT. YURT - MESO-AMERICAN RUINS - DAY

Hot winds WHIPS the tented ceiling. Santiago stands at the entrance, hand at his holster. Mike squares off with David - zip-tied and muttering - to an office chair by a campaign desk.

DAVID

This is not how it was supposed to be...
this is not how it was supposed to be...

MIKE

David - I'm gonna untie you, OK, but you gotta promise not to run away or try to hit me again. Can you do that?

DAVID (CONT'D)

Can I just go? I didn't do anything?

MIKE

You could just tell me what you were trying to do. You work with my wife, we had dinner... that one time, when you read a book at the table.

(no reply from David)

You could have just asked me if you wanted to see something, you didn't have to sneak into a protected cultural site -

DAVID

I don't like guns.

Mike shakes his head, then glances over to Santiago and waves him out. Santiago shoots Mike a dubious look. Mike returns an "It's OK" nod.

Santiago makes a grudging exit as Mike reaches for a Swiss Army knife from the desk and cuts David's zip-ties.

MIKE

You know who has guns? Jason Halpern.

(off David, letting it land)

And this dig is Vertu Ore property - they pay for everything - my grant, the research endowments, the student visas - everything. Either you and I can settle this whole thing right here - between us - or I gotta tell him, and then he shows up with all his security people being all Alpha. That what you want?

David lifts his hands to his face, then:

DAVID

There was an incident last night.

Mike looks at David, makes an "and... ?" gesture. David gets Mike's drift, then stands, paces.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It was... some kind of pulse of energy, only it wasn't just energy, it had structure - and content, layers upon layers - sound, vision, harmonics, electromagnetic interoperational components that transcended reception equipment and compatibility -

Mike chuckles, then indicates the laptop on his desk.

MIKE

David. You're looking at the most sophisticated gear we have in the joint. Nothing else under fifteen hundred years of age.

David turns to face the wall, chewing his nails.

DAVID

I triangulated the signal to this place - it's here. It came from here. It came from here - it came. From. Here.

And off Mike, not sure how to respond to that...

INT. ENYO MEDICAL CENTER - JAMIESON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jamieson and Chris lean in from opposite sides of the desk, where Fatima's chart sits open: thumbed through by the baffled doctor.

CHRIS

Ten fingers and ten toes, that's what you told me last night - you forget that?

JAMIESON

Chris - I've been monitoring this pregnancy from day one - before she even told you - every ultrasound, every -

CHRIS

Then how the hell do you not SEE THIS COMING?! DID YOU SEE MY CHILD?

JAMIESON

Calm down -

CHRIS

Don't tell me to calm down -
have you seen what's in
that -

JAMIESON (CONT'D)

- the walls are thin, you
don't want to say anything
you might regret your wife
hearing.

Chris pauses to consider Jamieson's warning - then,
before he can continue, the door to the office OPENS TO
REVEAL Antonia - flanked by Emily and Jason Halpern.

ANTONIA

Hello. Good morning.

(scanning the room)

Chris. This may be a good time for you to
visit your wife and child.

Antonia's appearance simultaneously sucks out all the air
and drops the temperature a dozen degrees.

CHRIS

No shit, really?

Chris lifts his hands and steps out, stopping to lock
eyes with Emily.

EMILY

Fatima OK?

Chris shrugs, sharing nothing, then steps away.

CHRIS

Have fun talking about me and my kid.

Jason closes the door behind Chris.

ANTONIA

What the hell's going on?

JAMIESON

I'm not sure - I mean - the baby was a
hundred percent normal last night.

ANTONIA

You know that for sure?

(off his nod)

I'd like to see that chart please.

JAMIESON

And I'd like for you to put your hand back in your pocket before I lecture you about medical ethics and confidentiality.

ANTONIA

Need I remind you that Vertu Ore -

EMILY

(nips it in the bud)
Is the baby sick?

JAMIESON

I don't even know how to define what that baby is.

ANTONIA

OK, that being as it may, I need to know if this - event - is the result of a disease, or a contagion, exposure to a hazardous material.

JASON

And I need to determine whether we need to isolate the child and mother - enact a quarantine - seal the village.

JAMIESON

Aw great - you haven't even seen the child and you're here to determine what? Your liability? Is the plane full of lawyers already on the way?

Emily re-enters the fray, ever the voice of reason:

EMILY

Guys - why don't I go to the other room and just ask if we can see the baby?

INT. CORRIDOR TO JAMIESON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Emily steps out of Jamieson's office to see Chris - leaning against a wall - not moving.

EMILY

Chris? Is something the matter?

CHRIS

I don't know - I don't know how to -

Emily steps up to Chris, putting a hand on his shoulder.

EMILY

Come on. I'll go with you.

SMASH CUT TO FATIMA

Looking down and smiling beatifically in:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As the baby - who will be referred to as THE PILOT - lies on her chest, training his large, white eyes on his mother, his voice settled into an E.T.-like rasp...

THE PILOT

The truth of decay - the persistence of entropy - gives a direction to time.

Fatima lets out a disbelieving laugh, obviously enamored of this strange little creature:

WIDER TO REVEAL CHRIS AT THE DOOR

Fatima looks up at him, smiling. Chris can't quite muster the same reply.

CHRIS

Are you OK?

FATIMA

Of course I'm OK, Chris.

Fatima looks down at the Pilot - clearly mesmerized.

Yes, it has a wizened face on a too large head, three fingers and an opposable thumb... but it also has large eyes, chubby baby legs - and an infinitely compelling expression of innocence and need.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Do you want to hold him?

CHRIS

He's a... he?

FATIMA

Yes he's a he - just like the ultrasounds - you know this.

(a kind look)

Come closer, Chris - what's the matter?

Mesmerized as any new mother would be, Fatima plays with the Pilot, cooing to him... then laughing as he grabs her fingers.

CHRIS

I guess I just... didn't expect those to be his first words.

She extends her hand to Chris, who takes a tentative step forward into the room.

FATIMA

He's your son - our child - everything else is... everything else is just how we adapt... come closer... touch him.

Chris does as he is told.

The Pilot reaches for Chris's hand with his own, wrapping its two pudgy grey fingers around Chris's index finger.

CHRIS

Hey, little man.

The Pilot looks up and smiles - a weird toothless grin revealing black gums.

FATIMA

Dr. Jamieson asked me to give him a name for the paperwork... I told him "Chris," like we agreed...

Chris nods - clearly freaked out - but as he struggles to keep his feet where he stands...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

EMILY, ANTONIA, JASON AND JAMIESON

Looking at them through a window on the wall.

JAMIESON

Look guys, I'm not a specialist in pediatric epidemiology, but I promise you, if there was a contagious disease in the world that caused children to be born with grey skin and tribal markings and talk like Stephen Hawking right out of the womb, I'd have heard about it.

ANTONIA

Is there any chance that you missed this, that the ultrasounds and the -

JAMIESON

How do you think a trained professional looking at a fetus through an ultrasound misses this?

(MORE)

JAMIESON (CONT'D)

And - if I did - that the nurse, and the technician would have also? Come on. I did get this job.

(off the looks)

Whatever this is, it manifested in the extreme short term. Within hours.

Antonia reaches overhead and pulls a privacy curtain closed over the window.

ANTONIA

All right. I need a better quality of information than you're giving me. I want you to run every test in the book - you keep her here as long as you have to until you can tell me if there's any risk.

EMILY

Risk to whom?

JASON

To anyone or anything in this installation.

As Emily looks at Jason and Antonia...

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fatima CLUTCHES the Pilot tightly - shaking her heads.

FATIMA

You can't take him - he's staying with me.

REVEAL JAMIESON AND A NURSE

Standing by the bed, reaching for the Pilot as Chris stands by his wife.

THE PILOT

The universe - is not indifferent to our existence - it is dependent on it.

JAMIESON

I'm just - we just need to run more tests. We need to know what exactly happened -

FATIMA

What happened is I gave birth to this unique and beautiful child.

CHRIS

Fatima - maybe we need to take a step back here.

FATIMA

You take a step back. I'm keeping my baby close.

(to Jamieson)

You want tests? Go for it - do all the tests you want, with him in my arms.

Jamieson looks up to LOCK eyes with Chris, who crosses his arms and shakes his head.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. MAYAN SHRINE - CENTRAL CHAMBER - DAY

The black tablet LOOMS over David and Mike. David attaches a strange, clearly jury-rigged probe to his tablet computer and SCANS the tablet.

ON THE TABLET SCREEN

A number of READINGS appear on a number of windows - Geiger counter, spectrograph, oscilloscope, etc.

MIKE

No pictures, OK?

DAVID

Don't need pictures. I have an eidetic memory.

MIKE

That's comforting.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Is this writing system congruent with current scholarship on meso-american graphology?

MIKE

We don't even know it's a writing system yet.

DAVID

So you would say it's entirely novel?

MIKE

I wouldn't say anything, I have top men looking at it right now.

RESUME ON FATIMA AND THE PILOT

As she turns her gaze from Chris and Jamieson to look at the Pilot. The Pilot meets her eyes and speaks.

THE PILOT

The secrets - will only last - as long as your ignorance.

FATIMA

What secrets?

THE PILOT

Secrets that are - for mothers and children - to protect.

RESUME ON DAVID AND MIKE

As David circles the tablet - REACHING OUT for the smooth surface on the opposite side.

MIKE

Please don't touch the tablet.

DAVID

I don't have to touch it to know it doesn't belong here.

MIKE

Maybe I missed a week, but I heard that jumping to conclusions is not part of the scientific method.

DAVID

You don't have the information I have.

RESUME ON FATIMA AND THE PILOT

Her focus narrowing on her child and the words he speaks.

THE PILOT

The work - must be protected - until it is finished.

FATIMA

What work?

And off Fatima's expression of concern and confusion:

SMASH CUT TO DAVID AND MIKE

Standing before the tablet as David takes the probe from his tablet.

DAVID

This thing isn't an archaeological find.
It isn't a part of this dig. It's a
message.

MIKE

Everything from the past is a message.

DAVID

You won't believe me. No one will. But
when the time comes, you will know.
(locking eyes)
Yes. Yes. Yes.

SMASH CUT TO FATIMA AND THE PILOT

Eyes still locked as the Pilot reaches for her with his
strange little hand:

THE PILOT

Protect me mother - they will come for
me. They will come for us all.

And off Fatima - her maternal instincts gathering into a
storm inside...

CUT TO BLACK

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**OPEN ON A COMPUTER SCREEN**

Showing Fatima's Mother and Father:

FATIMA'S MOTHER
We just want to see her, Chris.

WIDER TO REVEAL

INT. CHRIS AND FATIMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chris - on the couch, laptop open - Skypes with Fatima's family. He smiles, but his stress is noticeable:

CHRIS
She's fine, the baby's healthy. The doctor just needs to keep them for a few more tests.

FATIMA'S FATHER
When can we see them? Even her aunts and uncles came over to see them.

CHRIS
I'm just not sure, but hopefully soon.

FATIMA'S MOTHER
Chris, you know you can tell us...

THE SCREEN GOES BLANK

Chris taps his computer, his expression going WTF.

A NEW WINDOW OPENS ON HIS SCREEN

To REVEAL Mercedes.

CHRIS
What the hell are you doing on my - ?

MERCEDES
Chris. This conversation is on Vertu Ore's restricted list. It has been terminated.

Furious, he SLAMS the computer shut.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. ENYO - NIGHT

Chris storms through Enyo: all his fear and frustration turned to fury - imbuing his every step.

INT. SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

Standing at a wall of screens, Mercedes spins to see:

CHRIS

Throwing open the door. HE WANTS BLOOD.

CHRIS

What the hell are you doing?

Mercedes watches him, cold and cool.

MERCEDES

Protecting you, your wife *and* Vertu Ore.

CHRIS

By not letting me talk to Fatima's parents? They're on the verge of hysteria. Do you have any idea what they'll do to get to their daughter if they think something is wrong?

MERCEDES

They won't be able to do anything.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You've never met my in-laws.

MERCEDES

This is *not* open for discussion.

CHRIS

This is not fair.

MERCEDES (CONT'D)

This is how it is. Orders from way above.

CHRIS

Who? Antonia? Corporate?

MERCEDES

You got any other questions?

CHRIS

(getting in her grill)
How about you knock off this Gestapo bullshit and -

A pair of arms REACHES BEHIND CHRIS and YANKS him back.

JASON

You need to go home.

Chris WRENCHES himself out of Halpern's grasp, shakes himself together:

CHRIS
You goddamn people.

Jason taps the zip-tie restraints clipped to his belt.

JASON
We are that.

Chris RUSHES out, SLAMMING the door.

CUT TO A CELL PHONE SCREEN

MIKE - NO SIGNAL - CALL FAILED

As Emily's fingers tap the phone futilely in:

INT. LAUNCH ASSEMBLY BUILDING - NIGHT

Pocketing the phone with an annoyed shrug, Emily walks down a FIFTEEN STORIES-HIGH MEZZANINE to the nose of the massive Agathos 6, lifting a tablet computer... but as she takes out a stylus...

CLANK! From beyond the curve of the nosecone. She starts.

EMILY
Hello?

She creeps around the GANTRY circling the nosecone to see Chris - tool box open, working on an open panel:

CHRIS
What are you doing here so late?

EMILY (CONT'D)
What are you doing here so late?

CHRIS
You do not look good.

EMILY
Mister pot, black courtesy phone. It's mister kettle.

Off his grin:

TIME CUT TO

The two friends, now sitting against the body of the ship. Chris slips a SMALL FLASK from his coveralls. She sips, he GUZZLES, resting his head against the ship.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Whatever you're thinking. It's not going to scare me.

Chris opens his eyes and looks at her - hard. She looks back - honest. Impartial.

CHRIS

It's a monster. Sorry. *He's* a monster. I get chills every time I look at him. Every cell in my body wants to reject... him. And the worst thing? I see myself in that thing. My chin. The shape of my mouth. Fatima's brow. And I just can't stand to look at him. He has my name.

(drinks, grimaces)

She's better than me. As usual. She looked at the creature and she loved him. Because she sees the same thing I do - me, her, sketched on his creepy little grey face. She's in love with that *creature*. All I want to do is get away.

(looking up at the ship)

What do you think? Should we take her out? Get the hell out of here and try life on Mars?

He's only pretending to joke. Emily struggles. This *is* what she wants more than anything else in the world.

EMILY

She's a mother now. This is what mothers do. They bond with their offspring. Even if their offspring is like nothing anyone's seen before. It's OK. You don't have to accept everything about whatever the hell it is that's happening. But you do need to be with Fatima. She hasn't changed. And she needs you.

Chris squeezes her hand, nods, takes another swig.

CUT TO A CELL PHONE SCREEN

EMILY - NO SIGNAL - CALL FAILED

Mike's fingers tap the screen futilely as he steps off his Jeep in front of...

EXT. FATIMA'S PLACE - NIGHT

David sits in the passenger side, unmoving. Mike looks back at him, then shakes his head and ENTERS...

INT. FATIMA'S PLACE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Searching with his eyes, moving through, Mike stops at a table addressing a MAN IN COVERALLS:

MIKE

You seen Emily? I can't reach her.

(silence - he moves on)

Hey, have you seen Emily? Know if she was here for dinner?

No. No. Mike dials her number - stares at the screen

EMILY - NO SIGNAL - CALL FAILED

Frustrated, he shoves the phone back in his pocket and turns to see David, standing shock still near the entrance, his expression impassive.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Playtime's over. See you.

Mike bustles away to REVEAL:

HELEN

David.

At an empty table - motioning for David to sit with her. David's eyes FLIT - FLIT - FLIT around the room.

DAVID

There's a tension. It's palpable.

HELEN

Phone towers are down again. What are you up to?

DAVID

Not just the phones. I can hear it. The audio vocal interaction is frenetic. What's happened?

He looks to Helen expectantly. She sighs, exhausted.

HELEN

It's Fatima. Well, her baby, really.

DAVID

It's deformed.

HELEN (CONT'D)

No. Look, I can't really talk about it.

DAVID

Have you ruled out malpractice?

HELEN

Ruled out? No one's - I mean - the baby was *fine*. Jamieson did an exam last night. Normal.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

And then today - look - I'm not supposed to - it's like whatever happened, happened in the last hours - as the baby was about to be born...

David's gears turn. He stands.

DAVID

Yes. Of course. Of course.

And off Helen, watching him go...

INT. ENYO MEDICAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Fatima sleeps, the Pilot nestled into her chest. Their chests rise and fall together. The Pilot's three fingered hand wraps sweetly around Fatima's finger.

DAVID STANDS ABOVE THEM, WATCHING

His hand trembles... his finger traces the fat cheek of the baby, who smiles a charmed smile.

The Pilot's eyes open and lock with David's. In the dark the irises glow even brighter blue. The Pilot then smiles a sweet toothless smile. David smiles back.

Fatima shifts, her arm drops from around the Pilot. David, gently, oh so gently, lifts the Pilot.

The Pilot nestles into David, then reaches out. Following its gaze, David sees a medical chart on a bedside table.

David moves closer to the table. The Pilot grabs the pen... crawls halfway onto the table from David's arms and draws something on a sheet of paper!

PILOT

In a river - this language - changing its way to the ocean.

DAVID LOOKS DOWN AT THE CHART

Nodding: someone who has just had beliefs confirmed.

SYMBOLS, IDENTICAL TO THE HIEROGLYPHS FROM THE RUINS

CUT TO BLACK

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**SMASH IN ON THE PILOT'S EYES**

Focusing on writing hieroglyphs at...

INT. ENYO MEDICAL FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

The Pilot drops the pen. David looks from the glyphs to The Pilot and SMILES. This is the closest he has come to an emotional response - but the moment ends as:

CHRIS (O.S.)

What are you doing?

David turns to see Chris - at the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

GIVE ME MY SON!

Fatima's eyes open. David freezes - scared by Chris's emotional outburst - as Chris barrels ahead and TAKES The Pilot from his arms.

FATIMA

What - David - what are you doing here?

CHRIS

Seriously, who let you in this place - what made you think it'd be cool to -

DAVID

I am sorry. I heard -

MERCEDES

Heard? What did you hear?

(to Chris, re: The Pilot)

Give him to me.

CHRIS

Yeah - what did you hear?

David reaches back and pockets the piece of paper as:

DR. JAMIESON

I have security on its way. David. Out.

David STORMS out of the room. Chris, Jamieson and Fatima are left staring at one another in disbelief.

MERCEDES

(to Chris)

Give me the baby...

Chris does as he's told, and as she cradles the child:

CHRIS
 (to Jamieson)
 You have security on the way? What about
 having security here already? What kind
 of shit show are you people running?

INT. MIKE AND EMILY'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Emily stands by the land line phone mounted on the wall,
 dialing, getting nothing when the front door BURSTS open
 to REVEAL Mike.

MIKE
 Jesus, where've you been?

EMILY
This was the last place you looked?

MIKE
 When are you ever home?

He steps up to her, putting his arms around her waist,
 nuzzling her neck.

EMILY
 Long day?

MIKE
 Long day.

EMILY
 'bout to get longer.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Oh really?

Emily looks toward her husband - she's been through every
 way of delivering the news and found nothing more
 expeditious than:

EMILY
 I'm pregnant.

Mike takes a deep breath, then:

MIKE
 OK.

Emily breaks free of his arms, turns to look him in the
 eye.

EMILY
 OK?

MIKE

(a nod)

Yes. OK.

EMILY

(processes, then:)

You knew?

MIKE

No. What?

EMILY

No anxiety attack? No flop sweat? No nervous tic?

MIKE

Our age, amount of time we've spent together, average level of sexual activity - a condom was bound to break eventually. I dunno, I guess I've spent so much time dreading your saying this that all of a sudden it doesn't seem all that horrible.

EMILY

Look at you - so romantic.

MIKE

Says the aeronautical engineer whose idea of a first date was taco stand food at a systems test for a scramjet engine.

EMILY

You said yes.

MIKE

I find my life's always better when I say yes to you.

Emily allows a tight-lipped smile to escape her anxious expression, then:

EMILY

What if I don't know what to ask for?

MIKE

We pretend we're strapped to that scramjet and hold on for dear life. I mean, Christ, you send rockets to Mars, I unearth Mayan relics... how hard can a kid be?

Emily puts her hands around him, and as she rests her head on his chest, and the two of them breathe deeply...

and she looks away - her mind solely on Chris and Fatima's misfortune...

INTERCUT WITH

EXT. SANTIAGO'S YURT - NIGHT

The cloth walls of Santiago's dwelling glow with gas light from the lanterns inside...

A light broken by the shadow of Santiago, standing - looking at his hands.

INT. SANTIAGO'S YURT - CONTINUOUS

Santiago cradles the black sphere - mesmerized as the previously-heard LOW DRONE slowly builds.

And builds. And BUILDS.

It should be deafening, but Santiago merely stands there, face filling with wonder as:

THE SPHERE

GLOWS with anti-light...

EXT. ENYO - EXOBIOLOGY LAB - CONTINUOUS

As David studies The Pilot's drawing...

THE DISPLAY SCREENS BEHIND HIM

WARP and FUZZ over with another wave of bio-interference.

David TURNS to see the screens - eyes saucering as he turns to his main computer, taps the keyboard and raises a dialog labeled:

SYSTEMS-WIDE RECORD

He CLICKS it ON - then RUSHES out of the lab.

INT. SANTIAGO'S YURT - CONTINUOUS

Santiago's eyes turn from brown to black as the DRONE shakes the foundations of his dwelling and...

TENDRILS OF DARKNESS

EXTEND from the sphere, slowly crawling over Santiago's hands and pooling on the ground like an oil slick...

EXT. ENYO - MOTOR POOL - CONTINUOUS

David BARRELS through a series of parked vehicles - an ATTENDANT running behind him.

ATTENDANT

Doctor Victor! Doctor Victor - please!
Can you at least -

David grabs a set of keys from a pinboard - and as he jumps on the driver seat of a Jeep and PEELS away.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Sign for that... vehicle...?

INT. MIKE AND EMILY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

As Mike cradles Emily in his arms - the two of them still pondering the ifs of her unplanned pregnancy...

Emily DOUBLES OVER IN PAIN, letting out a spine curling SHRIEK. Mike struggles to keep his hold on her:

MIKE

Emily? Emily what's wrong -

Emily SPASMS, falling out of Mike's arms to the floor in the fetal position.

She gropes for her belly, clutching it - and as as she does, she lifts her shirt to expose her stomach...

EXPANDING

Stretch marks STRIATING the flesh of her abdomen - her belly button PROTRUDING, a half-inch wide *linea nigra* manifesting at the center!

As if the child gestating inside of her is growing: FROM A FEW WEEKS TO THIRD TRIMESTER IN SECONDS!

It's all Mike can do to keep his composure as he tries to get her to her feet.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Come on - we need to get you to Jamieson -

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. ENYO MEDICAL CENTER - FRONT ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Holding Emily up, her arm around his shoulders, her feet practically dragging, Mike does his level best to get his wife to help as she lets out an anguished GRUNT.

MIKE

We're almost there, honey, almost. Holy shit.

EMILY

What is it?

Mike looks up, she FOLLOWS HIS EYELINE TO SEE:

SIX OTHER COUPLES

Making their way to the entrance:

FEMALE VOICE #1

Where's the doctor? Somebody get Jamieson

MALE VOICE #1

What the hell is going on here?

MALE VOICE #2

She says she didn't even know she was pregnant -

FEMALE VOICE #2

I'm supposed to be six months away!

FEMALE VOICE #3

I think I'm going into labor -

MALE VOICE #3

Her belly just started to grow -

MALE VOICE #4

Are all you people here for the same...?

THE DOOR TO THE MEDICAL FACILITY OPENS

To REVEAL Jamieson - looking out to face the gathering crowd - seeing that every one of the women has a large, distended stomach!

And off Jamieson - locking eyes with Mike and Emily - everyone asking the same question...

What. The. Fuck?

CUT TO BLACK

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX**SMASH IN ON MIKE**

Carrying an armful of water bottles through:

EXT./INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - TRIAGE AREA - NIGHT

Hastily assembled - four gurneys and two reclining chairs - each occupied by a newly nine-months pregnant woman in excruciating, SCREAMING AND MOANING PAIN and:

PREGNANT WOMAN
I'm HUNGRY! Christ, get me something to eat!

PREGNANT WOMAN #2
Can I just get some food please?

A TRIO OF NURSES

Rig IVs as the assembled HUSBANDS yell: at each other, at Jamieson, at their wives.

JAMIESON
Please - we need to stay calm - everyone's getting an IV to help with the hydration and I have food coming in from the mess hall - as soon as that's done we'll get ultrasounds -

Mike WEAVES his way through the room - depositing water bottles to each of the women, finally landing next to Emily, doubled over in a chair.

As he hands over a bottle:

MIKE
Honey?

EMILY
Bring something to eat?

Mike digs a large Snickers from his pocket. She grabs it from him and TEARS IN like a lion into a wildebeest.

EMILY
I fucking love you.

ANTONIA, JASON AND HELEN BURST IN

Jason glares at the growing hysteria in the room.

JASON
Everyone, calm down!

No response, pandemonium continues. Antonia corners Jamieson:

ANTONIA

Doctor. You better have a god damn good explanation for what the hell is going on around here.

Jamieson throws his hands up in total exasperation, then points at Helen.

JAMIESON

This might be more in her wheelhouse, *ma' am.*

As Helen SHRUGS.

HUUUUUMMMMMMMMM - A DEEP TONE ECHOES THROUGH THE ROOM

As everyone looks up and around in wonder...

SMASH CUT TO A MONTAGE

EXT. ENYO - VARIOUS PLACES - NIGHT

As VERTU EMPLOYEES and TOWNIES step out of their homes, hands over ears... they clutch each other, terrified... cry openly... take pictures, recording with their phones and other devices.

Among those in the crowd:

MERCEDES

Strides past the onlookers... looking out in the distance... and as the DEEP TONE GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER...

TRAVEL UP

TO SHOW ENYO'S MIDWAY FROM THE AIR

TRAVEL HIGHER

TO SEE THE TOWN FROM ABOVE

And just beyond...

THE RUINS

The anti-light coursing from them like tributaries in a vast, connected system of black rivers...

ALL OF THEM STREAMING TOWARD THE TOWN

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. MESO-AMERICAN RUINS - NIGHT

DAVID JUMPS FROM THE JEEP - knee-deep in a creeping nimbus of anti-light - but barely stopping to notice, RUNNING as fast and hard as he can to:

SANTIAGO'S YURT

Source of the anti-light.

INT. SANTIAGO'S YURT - NIGHT

David enters and shocks still - eyes wide as he sees:

SANTIAGO

Eyes black and shiny - gripping the sphere as the anti-light caresses his hands and arms:

SANTIAGO

I know it has stars that talk to him -
and skies that stoop down - to meet him.

IN SANTIAGO'S INKY EYES

A swirl of repeating wave patterns: HIEROGLYPHS.

DAVID

Yes. Of course.

David reaches out his hand to touch the sphere - to take it for himself, but before he can:

THE SPHERE IMPLODES AND VANISHES INTO A BLACK VORTEX

Santiago collapses.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. MEDICAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Jamieson, Helen, Halpern, Antonia and Mike and Emily (clutching her belly) stand - mouths open - at the facility's entrance, taking in the anti-light creeping toward them like a fog...

AND THEN VANISHES

For a moment, the echo of the drone, the afterglow of the anti-light strikes them all immobile - then:

MALE VOICE #1

What the hell is going on around here?

Everyone turns to see one of the husbands at the door,
followed by others, patients and their partners:

FEMALE VOICE #2
This can't be happening!

MALE VOICE #3
Where is that doctor?! My
wife is in pain!

FEMALE VOICE #4
Please! I need some more water!

JAMIESON RUSHES BACK IN

JAMIESON
Everyone please! I know this is strange.
But it is *absolutely critical* for all of
you that you go back to your beds!

MIKE AND EMILY

Grab hands as hard as they can, their eyes lock - an
island of solidarity. Mike kisses his wife:

MIKE
Come on. Let's go.

SHE DOUBLES OVER IN PAIN

EMILY
Aaarrrrgggg!

MIKE
Emily!

As Mike hurries Emily back inside:

MERCEDES

Arrives at Jason's side:

MERCEDES
We need to get everyone we got out on the
streets or it's going to be anarchy.
People are losing their shit.

Grabs Jason and pulls him away.

ANTONIA
(to Mercedes)
You have tactical control. Do what you
have to do to get everyone in their
homes.
(to Jason)
You're with me.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

In front of the main bank of security monitors and surveillance screens.

Antonia's fingers fly over the keys of the computers, windows pop up on screens, red flashes:

EXECUTIVE EMERGENCY CODE - *****

PHONE SYSTEM - SHUT DOWN

SATELLITE COMMUNICATION - SHUT DOWN

Tap tap tap tap tap - she's relentless.

JASON

What are you doing?

ANTONIA

You napping just now?

(then)

This shit isn't going viral on my watch - or yours. That's an order. We clear?

INTERNET CONNECTION TERMINATED

Jason locks eyes with hers: cold and sharp, icepicks, as she taps a final sequence:

ALL THE SCREENS GO BLACK EXCEPT FOR ONE

Featuring the VERTU ORE corporate logo, then resolving into the image of ROBERT CANTON (59) - Chief Strategic Officer, Vertu Corporation.

ROBERT

Antonia.

Antonia straightens her hair, speaks with a respect not heard from her before.

ANTONIA

Robert. There's been an incident. A major incident.

ROBERT

You have any more than that?

ANTONIA

Not yet, but I'm serving notice that I have enacted Code 46.

Robert glares at her with all the intensity that can be transmitted through a computer screen.

ROBERT
Total communications and mobility
lockdown for all personnel.

ANTONIA
(typing)
I'm patching surveillance archives to
your screen - encryption DXO-9 - scrub
back seven minutes.

Robert looks down at his screen - does as he's told -
lifts a hand to his mouth.

ROBERT	ANTONIA
What the -	Until the nature of this incident and its impact on the Agathos project can be ascertained -

ROBERT
You are our representative on the ground,
Antonia. You are the absolute authority
of Enyo. Until the board can assess this
situation we are relying *completely* on
your authority to keep things in line.

ANTONIA
(shoots a look at Jason)
Understood.

Robert reaches for his keyboard - and as he CLICKS OFF:

SMASH CUT TO

INT. VERTU ORE HQ - ROBERT CANTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A corner office at the top of a very tall building: 180
degree view of the metropolis outside.

As Robert stands from his desk and walks to the double-
door entrance

CUT TO

THE HYDRAULIC GEARS AND LEVERS OF A VAULT DOOR

PULL OPEN the chrome cylinders of an ornate lock - the
door SWINGS open to REVEAL:

INT. VERTU ORE HQ - SECURE AREA - CONTINUOUS

All white. A desk with a dark-suited GUARD faces Robert.

ROBERT

Any activity from the subjects?

GUARD

All quiet, sir.

As Robert looks up:

REVEAL THE FAR WALL OF THE VAULT

Where large buttresses, encased in five inches-thick bulletproof glass hold **FOUR TABLETS IDENTICAL TO THE ONE IN THE MAYAN TEMPLE.**

As Robert stares at the tablets... waiting for something to happen... but meeting only silence...

CUT TO

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Emily and Mike sit together, exhausted. Attached to Emily, an IV drips - drips - drips - the only sound in the room.

Their hands intertwine, Emily gently strokes her now huge belly. They look up simultaneously as Jamieson enters.

Jamieson holds a stack of files in his hands - he rubs the bridge of his nose and smiles the shadow of his charming and handsome doctor smile.

JAMIESON

I always wanted an adventure. Be careful what you wish for, huh?

(off Emily searching look)

I'm letting you two know this first.... because you're the head of the Agathos project...

(to Mike)

And because you're one of the few people who might be able to help keep any resemblance of calm amongst these people.

Jamieson opens the top file and hands them the ultrasound. Even in the fuzzy warped image it's clear:

THE FETUS LOOKS LIKE FATIMA AND CHRIS'S BABY

JAMIESON (CONT'D)

You, and every other pregnant women in here is going to give birth to something... that I can't identify.

(looking up)

Fatima and Chris's baby was just the first.

Mike grips the ultrasound.

Emily's hand drifts to her belly.

Beneath the cloth of her gown:

A KICK

The baby moves.

CUT TO BLACK

END OF PILOT

ESCAPE VELOCITY

Where Does It Go From Here?

Escape Velocity is an event series designed for multiple seasons - telling a serialized story first contact with extraterrestrial intelligence.

At its core, *Escape Velocity* features extreme personal and emotional stakes: an alien invasion in which the aliens come not as conquerors, but as our children.

SERIES THEME

As a series, *Escape Velocity* asks timeless questions relevant to every human being:

What does it mean to be a parent?

How are our children a reflection of our true selves?

And - most importantly:

How far would you go to protect your child?

Escape Velocity is a high-concept sci-fi series in which the hero is a mother... and humanity is saved not by brute force, but good parenting.

SEASON ONE: INFANCY

The birth of the Pilot sends shockwaves from Enyo to the mainland: not just because Vertu wants to study the child, but because - like a pilot fish - it triggers the acceleration of all pregnancies in the village.

By episode four, twenty children will be born on Enyo - all resembling the Pilot, communicating telepathically and bonding profoundly with their parents, even as the corporation draws its plans to kidnap and study them.

The birth of these children is no accident: **they are a genetic message, sent telepathically to Earth from the outer recesses of the galaxy... by the last survivors of an**

ancient cataclysm making one last gasp at survival...

...but are these human/alien beings we will call **CYBRIDS** manipulating the emotions of their parents for some nefarious goal, or do they yearn to coexist with humanity?

As tensions escalate, the corporation will move to use force - staging a full-scale invasion of Enyo with a team of mercenaries - to take for themselves the Cybrids, and all of the knowledge they carry within..

...forcing Emily to lead a group of parents - scientists, engineers and civilians - to make bold decision that changes the course of human history.

To steal the Agathos Six spaceship and take their Cybrid children on a desperate escape to Mars.

INDIVIDUAL STORIES

EMILY: A born leader, Emily will recover from the trauma of pregnancy and the birth of the her Cybrid to be at the forefront of discovery involving the children: from their telepathy, to the truth of their alien origin, and starting a special "school" in which to keep the Cybrids safe. Like any "lean in" mom, Emily will have to wrestle with the possibility that her drive has compromised her bond with her child. With Vertu's private army closing in, Emily will make the ultimate decision to steal Agathos Six to lead the escape from Earth: even if that forces her to make the ultimate sacrifice and leave her beloved Mike behind.

Indeed, at the end of season one, Emily will have reached Escape Velocity - but at a terrible price.

CHRIS: Shaken to his core by the birth of the Pilot, Chris will reject his wife and child and become militant: joining a small band of fanatics (mostly fathers, like him, who cannot adjust) in trying to destroy the Cybrids. By the end of the season Chris will have tried to bomb the special school set up for the Cybrids and be incarcerated. Finally coming around to the truth that flesh and blood cannot be denied, Chris will be sprung from confinement as Vertu invades Enyo. Chris will ultimately help Emily complete Agathos Six and co-pilot her departure, redeeming himself and re-ascending to the role of loving father and husband

to Fatima and their Cybrid.

MIKE: Faithful, loving and tenacious, Mike will stand by his wife's side in all things - and ultimately agree to stay behind when it becomes clear that it is the only way to save one more Cybrid from Vertu. Also, forming an unlikely team with David, Mike will also be the force that discovers the alien connection to the Cybrids. As Emily becomes more involved with the science of her child as opposed to its well-being, Mike will become Emily's conscience and empathy - especially when he realizes that their Cybrid is neither male nor female, but a third sex unique in the culture of the race responsible for the telepathic communication between all Cybrids: quite literally a bridge between male and female (who will make it possible for them to communicate when separated in season two).

FATIMA: As Chris turns from her - and joins other estranged husbands unable to make peace with their unusual offspring, Fatima will become the one who redeems him. Her love and maternal instinct will ultimately prove to Chris that their love need not be a casualty of their parenthood... she will ultimately free Chris and make it possible for him to complete Agathos Six in time to escape from Vertu's army. Together, they will travel to Mars with their son - as husband and wife and father and mother.

DAVID AND HELEN: Because of his neuroatypicality, David will find himself uniquely able to understand the Cybrids. Coming to see their coming as a profound spiritual event with massive implications for humanity, Helen will team up with Emily to start the special Cybrid "school" - but also to defend them as the anti-Cybrid sentiment grows around them - especially among the fathers of the strange children. Together, this odd couple will represent the collusion between science and spirituality - and become the crux of humanity's ability to understand the Cybrids.

JASON AND MERCEDES: Stoic and militaristic, Jason will seem like the company's muscle from the start... but in truth, his sense of fair play and right and wrong will quickly move him to work covertly against Antonia and Vertu, a truth that will not be revealed until very late in the season - by which time, he will become crucial in forming the resistance to Vertu's incoming army. Conversely, Mercedes

will bite fully from the apple: tempted by Antonia with promises of advancement in the Vertu ranks and a one-way ticket to wealth and position in the United States, Mercedes will compromise her morality to become the muscle behind the corporation... leading to...

ANTONIA: She has given everything to Vertu - and expects to receive everything in return. Antonia will eventually come to know that Robert Canton placed Enyo where he did and funded Mike's dig with prior knowledge of a series of tablets left by the alien race in antiquity... and was hoping something like this would happen. Antonia will come to believe that Vertu is the way to control the alien intelligence - which they see as a legitimate threat to Earth - and that doing Robert Canton's bidding is the way to ultimate power. She will begin a program to kidnap the children, and when that fails, she will call in the private army. With Enyo under siege - and blindsided by Emily's gambit to take Agathos Six - Antonia will prove herself by taking as many Cybrids for herself - five in total - from Enyo before they can be spirited away.

THE CYBRIDS: They grow at an accelerated rate. They communicate in cyphers. By the end of season one, they will look like five year-olds, by the end of season two, they will be pre-teens.

In season one, they will reveal incredible skills and knowledge... but they will never reveal who they are or why they are here... that will have to wait until...

SEASON TWO: CHILDHOOD

Eight months after the end of season one, Agathos Six arrives on Mars. Emily and Chris lead the charge to establish the colony - making landfall and deploying the domed city contained in Agathos One through Five with the help of their robotic crews... facing impossible odds in a hostile world.

Emily's heart stings with longing for Mike, even as she bonds with her Cybrid child, needing it to fill a familial void missing from her life. In turn, the Cybrids soon prove that in spite of their youth, they have great knowledge of space travel, physics and survival, and are thus the

colonists's greatest allies.

The Cybrids also grow powerful enough in their telepathy to communicate with Earth.

Back home, Vertu Ore holds three Cybrids. They have become strange, cold beings. They cling to each other, and to Mercedes and Antonia, the closest things they have to parents - but are aware that these women are not really family. It is unclear if these Cybrids are working with, or manipulating Vertu Ore.

The first child taken by Vertu emerges as leader of her group... she is the most manipulative, and quickest to turn on "human child" charms with the researchers, only to become cold and alien when alone with the other two.

Devoid of love and caring, these Cybrids are becoming sociopathic and power hungry.

Meanwhile, Mike and the resistance - including Jason, Helen and David - go underground, taking the remaining Cybrids with them. At first, Mike keeps working in the ruins - concealed by friendly locals - trying to figure out the source of the tablets... all the while hoping for some communication from Emily.

Eventually, Mike and his group must return to the states - as the Cybrid telepathy not only allows him to communicate with Emily on Mars - leading to an emotional reunion of their minds - but also to realize that the Cybrids at Vertu have come into a piece of knowledge that changes everything.

There are many more tablets, all over the Earth - and gathering them together will give do to the entire planet what the black waves of anti-light did to Enyo: within two generation, every living being on Earth will be a Cybrid.

The big revelation: the alien race always intended to invade, but the Cybrids have, because of their contact with humanity, become empathic. The Cybrids raised by the corporation are the only ones keeping alive the goal of invasion, the others have become too emotional and attached to humanity to destroy it.

Now it's a race to gather the tablets - and protect them from Vertu and their Cybrids.

Mike, Jason and David return to the States via a makeshift underground railroad - and their Cybrids aid them in recruiting new members to their cause... but the lead Cybrid at Vertu stages a telepathic counter attack.

Eventually, two of Mike's Cybrids defect to Vertu Ore.

Now numbering five, and unencumbered by human emotion, the Vertu Cybrids telepathically sabotage their counterparts on Mars.

The colony faces cataclysmic failure - and even as Emily and Chris heroically save themselves and their city, Emily realizes she must return home with her Cybrid - the only third-gender one in the crew - to save Mike and his resistance.

Emily's Cybrid has grown powerful as well - and she soon realizes that her child can channel the emotions of all the other Cybrids to heal those who have been made sociopathic... but for that, the prodigal must return to Earth.

At the same time, Mike's underground realizes that they must break up the Vertu Cybrids before their telepathic abilities make them unstoppable.

As Emily races to Earth, Mike, Jason and David stage an all-out assault on Vertu Ore. In a season-ending cliffhanger, find themselves outgunned and outnumbered... will they survive?

SEASON THREE AND BEYOND: ADOLESCENCE AND ADULTHOOD

As *Escape Velocity* develops, new characters and plot strands will emerge, so the story can be made flexible enough to accommodate whatever changes may occur on the way - but the grand design is simple and consistent: a story in which humanity faces invasion, but instead of repelling it by force, does what humanity does best - assimilate.

Adopt, adapt and evolve.

When *Escape Velocity* ends its run, the conclusion will not be a final military blow to the forces of evil, but a parable of how humanity will become parents to their invaders, teaching them to coexist with us.

But no growth ever happens without pain.

Even as Mike manages to escape Vertu with several of their Cybrids - cutting their strength - his daring raid will expose to the world the existence of Cybrids and extraterrestrial intelligence.

With this knowledge now public, Earth descends into pandemonium.

Extremists rise on all sides: religious fanatics form around and against the Cybrids. Everyone wants the Cybrids: to study, to worship, to learn whether more are coming.

The lead Vertu Ore Cybrid starts the third season as *de facto* leader of the corporation and becomes the series' lead villain.

She IS humanity's worst fear about the Cybrids. Grown into a lethally attractive teenaged girl, the lead Vertu Cybrid is a genius strategist hellbent on completing the invasion... but all the tablets need to be together before this can happen.

Meanwhile, David's bond with the Cybrids in the underground lead to a telepathic connection with the alien home world - and an attempt to broker a peace and an end to the invasion.

Emily will finally land on Earth, only to be captured by an anti-Cybrid radical movement that will try to execute her and her child.

Of course, Mike will rescue Emily in an emotional and romantic, series-defining reunion and together, they will lead the underground to find and destroy the remaining tablets...

... but as Mike and Emily close in on a final victory, the Vertu Cybrid gets the final stroke and activates the tablets - starting a wave of anti-light that engulfs the

planet just before she is touched and redeemed by Mike and Emily's Cybrid.

With females everywhere on Earth pregnant with Cybrids - David's work finally results in summoning to Earth of a starship carrying the alien race that planted the tablets..

...and Mike and Emily's Cybrid, carrying with it the collected memories of humanity's struggle with the invasion, and the effect of our emotions on the aliens downloading its experiences to its true parents.

Humanity is ultimately given a choice by the alien parents: to carry its new Cybrids to term or terminate.

Being human, the choice varies everywhere. Some choose to become parents to Cybrids, others to abort - but the entire planet is changed, forever. We are now part of a cosmic community - but one thing remains true: our ability to evolve, transcend and unify is what makes us different, and what makes the aliens decide that humanity is not to be conquered, but understood.

With humanity's core essence protected for posterity - Mike and Emily are given one final choice, to remain on Earth or travel the stars with the aliens - to raise their Cybrid among its true forebears and see the universe..

...as the series ends, **Emily gets her lifelong wish - to explore the universe, with husband and child at her side.**