

1 EXT.- A FIELD, DAY

What looks like a normal field is spread out as far as the eye can see. Stalks of extremely tall grass are being blown back and forth in a gentle breeze. It is serene and calm. Suddenly, there is a tremendous ROAR as a powerful wind whips the grass frantically. Some of the grass catches on fire, immediately turning a sickening black and curling under an unending barrage. Finally, we see the cause of this assault: an alien craft is landing in the field. It is shaped like a tear-drop with no visible markings. As it slowly descends toward the ground, stubby landing legs extend from the bottom, carefully coming to rest on the ground. After a few tense seconds, there is an audible HISS as a door on the side of the craft opens, pouring out harsh light from inside the craft. A ramp extends, digging itself securely into the ground. Heavy boots slowly descend the ramp and take a tentative step onto the ground. As the camera pans up the owner of the boots, we see that it is a spacesuit of some kind, alien and futuristic. It is topped off with a mottled black helmet, effectively obscuring the face of the PERSON in the suit. Another PERSON steps out of the craft as well, waving some sort of device around the air. The FIRST PERSON turns to the SECOND, and motions. The SECOND PERSON, interestingly enough, flashes a quick thumbs up sign. The FIRST PERSON reaches up and presses a button near the helmet. After a quick pop, the helmet comes loose and the PERSON removes it. Surprisingly, this would-be alien is human, a man in his mid-thirties. He scans the field with intent eyes, but they suddenly goes wide as he sucks in a sharp gasp. We follow his gaze and see a massive moon coming up over the horizon. It easily fills three-quarters of the horizon. As this HUMAN stands there, thoroughly in awe of this alien landscape, the following subtitle appears at the bottom of the screen:

SUBTITLE: "A Dramatization"

After a few seconds, a deep-voiced NARRATOR breaks into the awe-filled silence.

NARRATOR

(v.o.)

This was the scene that met Lieutenant E. J. Lord on April 14, 2253. He was the first human to set foot on Hyrdos A IV, the forerunner of the Colonial Ship *Stellar Hope*.

2 INT.- CLASSROOM, DAY

Several CHILDREN sit in row after row of desk, watching a large hologram at the front of the classroom. Each desk has a small screen embedded in the top, the chairs form-fitting to the individual students. The room itself is shaped slightly like an egg, tapering to a set of double-doors in the back. The children all wear simple brown tunics with no apparent seams. A TEACHER sits near the front of the room, dressed in a slightly more colorful tunic. Two of the children start to whisper to one another, but the teacher shushes them and points back to the

hologram, which has shifted to show a view of Hydros A IV from space. What appears to be a large asteroid is in orbit around it. This asteroid, however, is the *Stellar Hope*, a colony ship with large engine vents in one end and large view ports carved all over the surface. The surface is cracked and it is obvious that it is on the verge of falling apart at the seams.

NARRATOR

(v.o.)

The inhabitants of *Stellar Hope* had left Earth searching for a planet they could inhabit, spending 200 years in a hollowed-out asteroid that was converted into a colony ship. Hydros A IV was the planet they were searching for. It was very similar to Earth, and so it was decided that they should colonize it. Unfortunately, they were in for a rude shock.

3 EXT.- A HUMAN COLONY, NIGHT

The colony, constructed of various tubular-looking buildings, is burning. Lasers flash back and forth across the scene, punctuated by the occasional explosion. HUMAN SOLDIERS rally together by one building, and with a war cry, charge forward, firing their laser rifles desperately. Most of them are cut down immediately by energy weapons from unseen enemies.

NARRATOR

(v.o.)

Hydros A IV was already inhabited. Rather than open discussions with us, they immediately attacked, destroying two of our colonies! We humans had little choice but to defend ourselves. And so started the Hyde-Human war, which has lasted for the past ten years.

As the Narrator's voice dies out, the battle continues to rage on. The human soldiers are retreating, desperately firing after their pursuers. Finally, two HYDE SOLDIERS rush onto the screen. The hologram begins to break up due to interference, but the Hydes are obviously humanoid, but their features are dimmed and hazy due to the darkness and the smoke in the air. Their purpose is clear, however, for they are both firing their energy weapons wildly, cutting down anything that is moving.

4 INT.- THE CLASSROOM

The carnage in the colony slowly fades away into an ominous looking seal of two lightning bolts crossed over Hydros A IV. The title "HYDRAN SECURITY FORCE" scrolls across the bottom in blood red block lettering. As the hologram fades from view, the lights in the classroom

slowly brighten. The teacher rises from her chair and steps in front of the class.

TEACHER

Today, children, we have a special treat. General Brandt from the Hydran Security Force is here to answer any of your questions about the War. General Brandt?

GENERAL GORDON BRANDT, a man in his early fifties, strides forward. He has a no-nonsense atmosphere about him. It is clear that this grisled old warbird has seen his share of fighting. He has not only dished it out, but he has taken some shots as well. He is dressed in earth-brown fatigues, but his stars glitter on his shoulders. Following him is a nervous-looking man in his early twenties, also dressed in a brown uniform. He is carrying what looks like several oversized computer disks and a portable reader. Unfortunately, he is having trouble hanging on to them all and is constantly juggling them to keep from dropping even one. His name is LIEUTENANT COLEMAN. Brandt strides up to the front of the class, turns sharply to the children, and gives them all a winning smile. Even though his features appear to be friendly, it is obvious that Brandt is not looking forward to being there.

BRANDT

Hello, children. Your teacher, Ms. Vogel, asked me to come and speak with you about this messy little conflict. You've seen the holographic record, so do you have any questions?

A forest of hands shoot up from the children. Brandt smiles thinly and points at one of the girls reluctantly.

GIRL #1

(pointing at COLEMAN)

Who's that?

BRANDT

He's Lieutenant Coleman, my personal attache.

BOY #1

(without being called on)

Can he answer our questions too?

Coleman smiles, appearing anxious to answer any questions that might be raised, but a glare from Brandt kills that hope immediately.

BRANDT

No, he may not.

One little boy (whose name is TYLER) raises his hand with a petulant smirk on his lips. Brandt hesitantly nods to him.

BRANDT

Yes, young man?

TYLER

General, why are we still engaged in this obviously one-sided conflict? We obviously don't have the resources to commit to a long-term war, much less the limited skirmishes we have with the original inhabitants.

Brandt glares at Tyler, then shoots a questioning look to Coleman. The lieutenant just rolls his eyes and nods. Brandt turns back to the boy and quickly composes himself with a look of grim determination.

BRANDT

You're Professor Hanson's son, aren't you?

Tyler nods, his face beaming with pride.

BRANDT

(under his breath)

Like father, like son.

(now loud enough so everyone can hear)

Let me tell you something, son, we didn't come here looking for a fight. The Hydes attacked us first. Without warning, I might add. We've even tried sending diplomats to iron out the problems, and they've all been killed.

Tyler nods thoughtfully, and Brandt quickly points to another student before the boy can respond with another question.

GIRL #2

What do the aliens look like?

BRANDT

We're not sure, little lady. They've never really let themselves be seen and they always collect their dead from the battlefields before we can examine them.

GIRL #3

Don't we have any pictures of them?

BRANDT

(hesitantly)

Well, not really. For some reason, our scanning equipment doesn't work that well on them. We're not really sure why, but we've only gotten blurry images of them. As near as we can tell, the Cents wear phosphorescent armor of some kind.

Some of the children begin to whisper the word "phosphorescent" to each other in confused tones. Coleman clears his throat and shakes his head to Brandt, mouthing the words "too technical." The General rolls his eyes in disgust.

BRANDT

That means that their armor glows in the dark.

This unleashes an impressed and delighted response from the children. Now they aren't even bothering with waiting to be called on. They are bombarding the General with all sorts of different questions simultaneously.

GIRL #2

Cool! Can we see some pictures of them?

GIRL #1

Do we have phos-fercent armor too?

BOY #2

Are the Hydres really mean?

BOY #3

Maybe all we need to do is talk to them. Ms. Vogel says that there aren't any problems we can't solve unless we just talk to ...

The cacophony grows worse and worse, each child beginning to shout so his or her question can be heard. Unfortunately, it has all blended together in a horrible din that the teacher can't control. Brandt can only stand in front of the classroom, staring at the children in absolute frustration. Finally, the teacher, with a somewhat satisfied smirk on her face, waves the class silent.

TEACHER

Now what do we do when we have guests? We speak to them one at a time.

The children quiet immediately. Toward the back of the room, one girl (whose name is ALICIA CARSON) raises her hand hesitantly. Brandt nods toward her.

ALICIA

General Brandt, my name is Alicia Carson. I think you knew my mom? Gayle?

BRANDT

(thinks about it and then brightens)

Your mother was Colonel Gayle Carson? Yes, I remember her quite fondly. One of the best company commanders I've ever seen.

ALICIA

(suddenly bitter)

Then why did you send her to die?

Brandt is thunderstruck. He honestly doesn't know what to say. Alicia presses on, though, tears beginning to well up in her eyes.

ALICIA

You sent her to check out New Quebec after the Hydes attacked, and she told you it felt like a Hyde trap, but you sent her anyway! She died because of you! Why?

Alicia breaks down crying. The class immediately breaks into chaos. The Teacher is immediately at Alicia's side, trying to comfort her. Most of the class is clamoring to ask Brandt more questions, with Tyler in the lead.

TYLER

That's what my dad is talking about, General. People are getting hurt almost everyday. Peace is the only option...

Tyler's voice is soon lost in the din. Brandt, a man who has faced down more dangerous opponents than little children, is completely at a loss. He does not know how to deal with this situation. Here merely stands there, mouth slightly open, listening to the chaos.

5 INT.- A CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM, LATER

The doors slide open as Brandt backs his way out of the classroom, a strained smile on his lips. He is waving into the room.

BRANDT

Good-bye, children! Good-bye. Thank you for your...
(he's trying to think of a kind term)
... enthusiasm. I can't wait until you're all ready to fight for
your colony.

Brandt has cleared the door, and now Coleman is backing out as well. His smile, however, is completely genuine. He waves to the children, but before he can get out of the door completely, Brandt grabs him by the back of his uniform and drags him out the rest of the way, allowing the doors to close. Brandt lets out a weary sigh and then turns to march down the hall. Coleman has to jog a few steps to catch up with the stymied general.

BRANDT

Never again, Coleman. Do you hear me? I don't want to do
that ever again.

COLEMAN

Yes, sir. But sir, are you sure it was wise to show them that
propaganda film? I mean, they are only children and some of
those scenes were particularly bloody.

BRANDT

Coleman, we've been fighting those Hyde bastards for the past
ten years. Do you know what some of Professor Hanson's liberal
freaks over at New London University are proposing? That we try
to talk to those monsters! They think we can open negotiations with
the Hydes and reach a mutual understanding!

COLEMAN

Well, can't we, sir?

Brandt shakes his head, dismissing the idea immediately.

BRANDT

No way. You know it's been tried before, and our diplomats
were all killed before they even met with a Hyde face to face.
But those New London morons are beginning to convince people
that we can reach some sort of accord. I want to make sure that
those children know that the only way we can coexist with those
Hyde barbarians is to crush them under our heel! I've lost too
many friends to ever believe we can have a peace with them.
I'm willing to bet they're of the same opinion!

6 INT.- A HYDE BASE

The base itself is a massive underground cavern that has been hewn out of the rock. Massive metallic blast doors dominate one end of the room. The Hyde SOLDIERS dash around through the shadows, preparing for a massive offensive. We watch as energy weapons of some kind are handed out to the various grunts, armor is distributed, and rows are formed. They turn towards the doors, which slowly grind open. Blinding and harsh sunlight pours in, silhouetting the troops.

7 INT.- A CORRIDOR IN THE HUMAN COLONY

Brandt and Coleman continue to charge down the hallway. Rather, Brandt is charging, Coleman is desperately trying to keep up. As he goes, Brandt continues to dictate orders, which Coleman desperately tries to take down on his computer, causing his juggling of the disks to become worse.

BRANDT

... and make sure that the Tenth Division keeps an eye on the border in Section Eight-G. I didn't like the looks of the last recon report.

COLEMAN

Yes sir.

BRANDT

And see if you can do something about Major Neuman's request for a new chef. Surely there has to be someone on this God forsaken planet that can prepare sushi the way he likes it.

COLEMAN

Yes sir.

BRANDT

I'll see you in the morning, Coleman.

With that, Brandt turns and exits through a door.

8 EXT.- SCHOOL IN A HUMAN COLONY

The colony looks like a series of cylindrical buildings erected. While they are supposed to be permanent dwellings, each one of them has been jury-rigged to collapse and move at a moments

notice. Instead of a permanent settlement, this appears to be a temporary military base. Small CHILDREN play in one area of the colony while a patrol of five human SOLDIERS marches by, warily eying the border of the colony carefully. The soldiers smartly salute Brandt, who salutes back. He forces a smile as he walks past the children, who continue to play. He finally begins to relax as he approaches his car.

HANSON

(O.S.)

General Brandt, a moment of your time?

Brandt immediately stiffens as PROFESSOR MICHAEL HANSON jogs up behind him. The Professor is a middle-aged man whose face always has a wry smile on it. Only a small powdering of gray graces his temples, and his blue eyes twinkle with delight when he sees Brandt's disgust.

HANSON

A pleasure to see you too, General.

BRANDT

What do you want, Hanson? I'm a very busy man.

HANSON

I was wondering how your visit with my son's class went, sir.
Did you enjoy yourself?

Brandt glares at Hanson, and that is all the answer that the smaller man needs. His grin grows a little.

HANSON

I hope you found it just as educational as they did. Even children understand that we should open negotiations with the ... the ... now, what was that derogatory nickname you military types gave them? The Hydes? I would think that we would find a more dignified...

BRANDT

(with a disgusted sigh)

Is there a point to this, Professor?

Hanson pulls out a small data chip that he hands to the General. Brandt immediately hands it to Coleman, who pops it into a data reader and glances it over.

HANSON

It's a request for a small military escort, plus whatever experts on the "Hydes" that you can spare.

BRANDT

(frowning, taking the reader from Coleman to look over the information himself)

What for?

HANSON

Some of my students have uncovered the remains of a city over in Section Sixteen-D that I want to study further.

BRANDT

Sixteen-D is awfully close to the front line, Professor.

HANSON

I know. Hence the request for an escort.

BRANDT

(smiling cruelly)

What's the matter? You afraid your Hyde buddies will get the wrong idea?

HANSON

You can't be too careful. I mean, after we claim that land for ourselves, the big, bad old Hydes may come and try to take it away from us. Imagine that, trying to run us off our land. The nerve!

Brandt scowls at Hanson and shoves the reader back into Coleman's hands.

BRANDT

I'll see what I can do.

HANSON

(smiling)

I ask for nothing more, sir. Good day.

With that, Hanson turns and walks away. Brandt watches him go, glaring after the professor the whole way. He finally turns to his vehicle and climbs inside. In a WHOOSH of air, the vehicle lifts off the ground and speeds away from the school.

9 INT.- BRANDT'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

Brandt is sound asleep. His wife, MADGE, is asleep next to him. Suddenly, a CHIME rips through the silence. With a startled grunt, Brandt sits up in bed, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. Madge stirs next to him.

MADGE

What's going on?

Brandt places a comforting hand on her shoulder and pats it.

BRANDT

Probably a false alarm. Go back to sleep.

Brandt rises from the bed and pulls on a robe. As soon as he's convinced Madge is back to sleep, a scowl appears on his face. He storms out of the bedroom.

10 INT.- BRANDT'S LIVING ROOM

Brandt tears across to the front door. He's already cussing out whomever it is:

BRANDT

(yelling)

You had better have a damn good reason for....

He opens the door. The words die in his throat when he sees Coleman standing meekly in the doorway, still carrying his computer disks. Brandt knows that Coleman knows better than to wake him for trivial matters. Because of this, Brandt's expression changes to one of worry.

COLEMAN

I'm sorry, sir. I didn't mean to disturb you, but....

BRANDT

That's all right, Coleman. What is it?

Coleman hands the General a disk reader.

COLEMAN

The infrared sensors on *Stellar Hope* just picked up this activity in Section Seventeen-H. I thought you would want to see it immediately.

Brandt looks over the information. The color drains from his face. He immediately turns around and starts back towards the bedroom, throwing off his robe as he goes.

BRANDT

Rouse Alpha and Beta Squads immediately, Coleman! Have them ready to be briefed in fifteen minutes!

11 INT.- HUMAN BARRACKS - TWO MINUTES LATER

Rows of doors line the hallway. The barracks are dark and quiet. There is no sound. Suddenly, however, a blaring SIREN cuts through the night and red lights begin to flash. Within seconds, SOLDIERS are dashing out of their quarters, pulling on their brown uniforms as they go. We focus on LIEUTENANT KEVIN MACINNES, a good-looking young man in his mid twenties. He has well-chiseled features and a strong, muscular build. His red hair is in a military cut and, even though he was just woken, his green eyes are clear. The other soldiers move out of his way as he pushes through the crowd. As he does so, he runs into LIEUTENANT VICTORIA ANDREWS. Victoria is also in her mid-twenties and is absolutely gorgeous. Her long brown hair has been pulled up into a bun which accentuates her delicately sculpted face. Her brown uniform conforms to her body perfectly, emphasizing her build and physique. Her large brown eyes immediately look over Kevin appreciatively. It is obvious that she is mentally undressing him. Kevin clears his throat, clearly uncomfortable.

KEVIN

Good morning, Lieutenant Andrews.

VICTORIA

(chuckling)

Oh, come now, Kevin. Why so formal? We're not in the field yet.

KEVIN

We're not exactly off-duty either.

VICTORIA

Oh, come on. We're both lieutenants, and we have been...

Victoria's hand begins to run up Kevin's arm seductively. Kevin looks at her in shock, then steals a nervous glance over his shoulder to see if anyone noticed. He quickly shoves her hand away. He shoots her an annoyed but defeated look.

KEVIN

All right, all right ... Victoria.

Victoria smiles in triumph. She gives Kevin's hand a quick squeeze. As she does, another soldier (this one named SERGEANT WILLIAM ISEN) runs up alongside Kevin. He is a few years younger than Kevin and Victoria, and he has a good-natured grin on his face. He glances at them and his smile grows broader.

WILLIAM

I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

It looks as though Victoria is about to say that he is, but Kevin clears his throat and straightens up.

KEVIN

Not at all.

(changing the subject before Victoria can contradict him)

Any idea why they're waking us up at 0300?

WILLIAM

Rumor has it that General Brandt's daughter came home late on a date again. You have anything better?

KEVIN

Not a clue.

VICTORIA

Well, we're about to find out.

As she says this, the three soldiers turn into a massive briefing auditorium.

12 INT.- BRIEFING AUDITORIUM

Brandt is already standing at the podium and watches as the sixty soldiers file into their places. None of them sit, but as they reach their chairs, they turn to face Brandt at rigid attention. When they are all in the auditorium and ready, they offer him a salute as one. Brandt returns it.

BRANDT

Be seated.

The soldiers immediately drop into their chairs. Brandt turns and nods to Coleman, who has sat down behind a computer control panel. Coleman flips several switches, causing the lights in the auditorium to dim slightly. A hologram of an aerial view of dense jungle appears next to Brandt. There are a few intermittent crimson lights within the jungle.

BRANDT

I'm sorry to disturb you this early in the morning, ladies and gentlemen. Unfortunately, we have a situation on our hands. This was what Section Seventeen-H looked like only five hours ago according to the sensors on *Stellar Hope*.

Brandt glances at Coleman, who flips another switch. The hologram changes again. This time, the jungle is awash with red light. This causes some disgruntled murmuring among the soldiers. Brandt nods grimly.

BRANDT

Our infrared sensors, as you can clearly see, have picked up over a hundred life forms moving rapidly through Section Seventeen-H. Either the animals in there have been reproducing at a phenomenal rate, or we have a massive Hyde force moving through that section at breakneck speeds. While we aren't sure what their motives are, our intelligence department has determined what their objective is.

The view expands. Two large clusters of buildings to the north of the forest is highlighted in blue. The red splotches within the jungle are steadily heading right for it.

BRANDT

It would appear that our friends are driving straight for the Severin Colony and the Yelizavetam Community. As you know, Yelizavetam is a religious community and Severin is technically not a military target, although it is responsible for producing half of our medical supplies. If the Hydes take that out, it could be disastrous for our war effort.

The soldiers grumble in disgust. Kevin glances at William, who merely shrugs.

BRANDT

(cont.)

Our current estimates place their arrival time in a mere six hours. Unfortunately, there are no defenses at Yelizavetam, minimal at Severin. If our count of the Hyde force is accurate, they would be able to overwhelm and obliterate the colony before any sort of reinforcements can arrive.

The grumbling from the ranks continues. Kevin shoots an annoyed glance at some of the soldiers, who immediately fall silent. The lights in the auditorium slowly come up as the hologram fades away.

BRANDT

Alpha and Beta Squads are going to be dropped within the Section on either side of the Hyde force. Lieutenant MacInnes.

Kevin is immediately on his feet.

BRANDT

Your squad will drop in on the east side. Lieutenant Andrews.

Victoria stands up as well.

BRANDT

Yours will be on the west. You are to recon the force and then strike and fade. Wear down their troops until you have cut their size down to forty percent. Then fall back to a position we will designate. Time is of the utmost importance, ladies and gentlemen. The Stormy Season is upon us once again. If you take too long and are trapped out there in the Storms, you're as good as dead, so it is imperative that you hurry. Understood?

Kevin and Victoria nod.

KEVIN

Are there any secondary objectives?

Brandt nods.

BRANDT

Yes. If you can, try to get a clear visual record of the Hyde forces. As you know, we haven't recorded a single picture of a Hyde soldier in ten years. We haven't even retrieved a corpse from a battle. Our scientists are chomping at the bit to see anything of the Hydes. Any more questions?

There are none. Brandt nods approvingly, pride shining in his eyes.

BRANDT

Assemble your squads in fifteen minutes in the hangar. You'll need to be there within three hours, and you have a almost a three hour flight ahead of you. Dismissed.

The soldiers rise to their feet as one, offer a smart salute to Brandt, who returns it, and then begin to flow out of the auditorium. Instead of the joking that there was before, the only sound is from

whispered, serious conversations. Victoria and Kevin share significant looks and begin to leave as well.

BRANDT

(O.S.)

Lieutenant MacInnes, a word.

Kevin freezes in his tracks. Victoria glances behind her, but keeps on going. Kevin turns to face Brandt. Before Brandt says anything, he shoots a quick look at Coleman. The younger man gathers up his disks and quickly vacates as well.

KEVIN

Yes, General?

BRANDT

I just wanted to check and see how you're doing with this, Kevin.
You and I both know that your father...
(he's trying to sugar coat this, but doesn't know how)
... died on a mission similar to this one.

Kevin's face remains impassive. As a matter of fact, it even seems to harden at Brandt's words.

KEVIN

Yes, sir, I am aware of that.

BRANDT

If you're not completely comfortable with this mission, just let me know. I can have Sergeant Isen take your place.

KEVIN

That won't be necessary, sir. I can still perform my duty.

BRANDT

I wasn't implying that you couldn't, son. It's just... I promised your father that I would watch out for you. I would hate to lose you the same way we lost your father.

KEVIN

Don't worry, sir. You won't. Is that all?

Brandt nods. Kevin turns to leave.

BRANDT

And Lieutenant?

Kevin pauses and looks over his shoulder.

BRANDT

Give 'em a few for me for me.

Kevin gives a thin smile and nods.

KEVIN

Don't worry. They won't even know what hit them.

13 EXT.- A HUMAN COLONY, LATER

A large transport vehicle taxis out of a hangar. Victoria and Kevin stand at the head of sixty soldiers, who are lined up in two rows. The transport slowly comes to a halt and a massive door opens in the back. Victoria and Kevin turn to their troops.

VICTORIA

Alpha Squad, embark!

KEVIN

(simultaneously)

Beta Squad, embark!

The soldiers quickly charge into the transport. Victoria and Kevin follow them in. The doors immediately close behind them and the transport launches vertically from the pad and in a blast of fire, rockets off towards the horizon.

14 INT.- THE TRANSPORT, THREE HOURS LATER

The soldiers are seated on metal benches that line either wall. A grim silence hangs in the air as they give their compact laser rifles one last inspection. Those not inspecting their weapons stare forward in mute concentration. Victoria paces up and down the narrow aisle, occasionally putting a reassuring hand on the shoulder of some of the more nervous looking soldiers. Kevin, on the other hand, sits on one of the benches, checking and rechecking his equipment. Finally, Victoria sits down next to him. Kevin doesn't even look up.

VICTORIA

You ready for the jump?

KEVIN

(nodding)

Almost. I've got all my gear stored, my rifle is primed...

VICTORIA

How about your 'chute?

Kevin grits his teeth and groans. Victoria reaches over and playfully pokes him in the ribs.

VICTORIA

They're not that bad. Nobody's died from using one yet!

KEVIN

Yeah, and I don't want to be the first one!

Victoria chuckles. This elicits the briefest of smiles from Kevin.

KEVIN

Well, I had better jump out before you. With my luck, I'd probably land right on top of you.

Victoria smiles coyly and starts to rise. As she leaves, she leans over to whisper in his ear:

VICTORIA

We should save that for our victory celebration.

Kevin reddens as Victoria slinks away, continuing her pacing in the aisle.

15 INT.- THE TRANSPORT, LATER

Victoria glances at a computer panel in the cabin and rises to her feet.

VICTORIA

Alpha Squad, on your feet!

Half of the soldiers jump up, slinging their rifles over their shoulders and pulling rigid backpacks from racks behind them. As they strap themselves into the backpacks, Victoria walks over to a large set of doors and slaps a large red button next to them. With an audible CREAK, the doors rumble open. Wind begins to whip through the cabin, and Victoria has to shout to be heard.

VICTORIA

Remember, count to five before you activate your 'chute!
 If the anti-grav generators don't work, make sure you pull the
 emergency cord for the back-up silk. Try to land as quietly as
 possible. Once on the ground, take up defensive positions
 until we're all there! It's time to show these Hydes who's boss here!

Victoria stands by the opening and watches as all her soldiers jump through the open door. Finally, she turns, winks at Kevin, and leaps through herself. Kevin waits two seconds, glances at the computer panel, and stands up himself.

KEVIN

Beta Squad, on your feet!

The remaining soldiers stand up and begin to strap into their backpacks. Kevin takes up his place by the door.

KEVIN

You heard the lady! Let's kick some ass!

The soldiers give a hearty war cry and charge through the open door. After the last one has dived through, Kevin steps up to the portal. He braces himself for a split second, and then hurdles out as well.

16 EXT.- THE TRANSPORT

Kevin sails down towards the lush jungle before him. Finally, he slaps a button on the straps of his backpack. A low-pitched whine fills the air, and Kevin's body jerks suddenly as an invisible energy field slows his descent. Kevin lazily drifts toward the jungle floor, finally dropping below the tops of the trees.

17 EXT.- THE JUNGLE, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Kevin easily lands on the ground, where he shuts off the backpack and unslings his rifle. He glances around the darkened jungle for a second and then gives a gentle whistle. After a tense moment, there is an answer. Kevin turns slowly, but jumps back when he sees William right next to him.

KEVIN

(whispering hoarsely)

Don't do that!

William merely smiles, but pulls out a small sensor pack. He holds it out in front of him for a

second.

KEVIN

Well?

WILLIAM

It looks like Lieutenant Andrews' team is on the ground ... all accounted for. The main Hyde force is about five clicks to the northwest of us.

KEVIN

Alright. Let's go.

18 INT.- THE JUNGLE, LATER

Kevin and his Squad are creeping quietly through the dense underbrush of the jungle. Strange animal noises can be heard in the background. Occasionally, an unearthly creature skitters by the soldiers, taking a quick moment to check them out, but then dashing away in fear. Kevin pauses for a moment and holds up his hand. The Squad immediately comes to a halt, quickly blending in with the foliage. Kevin turns and glances at William, who pulls out the sensor again. He holds up the pack and slowly turns it around the area.

WILLIAM

(whispering)

Thirty meters.

Kevin motions for the Squad to continue. William doesn't put the sensor pack away, but keeps it in front of himself. As they go, the animal sounds begin to die out, only to be replaced by what sounds like surreal "MUSIC." Kevin pauses for a second and frowns. He holds up his hand again, and like last time, the Squad disappears. Kevin slowly inches over to William, who is fiddling with the sensors.

KEVIN

Where's that music coming from?

William shrugs, continuing to fiddle with his instruments. The lights on the sensor pack begin to flicker and fade, only to surge back up again. William bites off a curse as his hands begin to fly over the sensor controls feverishly.

KEVIN

What's the matter?

WILLIAM

I'm not sure... It's almost like there's some sort of electromagnetic signal jamming the ...

Before William can finish, one of the soldier's rifles explode in a brilliant display of sparks. Kevin turns around in surprise as the "MUSIC" begins to become louder and harsher. More of the Squad's equipment begin to malfunction, sparks flying out of them at all angles. The small explosions are lighting up the area around them. Soon the "MUSIC" is accompanied by a thrashing sound in the bushes. Kevin finally realizes what happened:

KEVIN

Damn it, they're on to us! Beta Squad, defensive positions!

It's too late. Brilliant balls of blue energy explode out of the bushes, cutting through the ranks of Beta Squad. SOLDIERS fall left and right, those surviving the onslaught firing their rifles blindly into the dense undergrowth. Kevin dives to the ground as one of the energy bursts sizzles over his head. He quickly snakes over to William, who is still struggling with the sensor pack. The whole time, the harsh "MUSIC" is pounding through the jungle.

KEVIN

Why didn't we see them coming?

WILLIAM

I have no idea! As near as I can tell, this ... music, or whatever it is, is jamming our equipment. I can get the sensors on-line every now and then, and I can count maybe sixty Hydes out there. We have to fall...

The sensor pack explodes in William's hands, throwing him backwards. Kevin stares at his friend in shock for a split second, then pulls himself together. He rises to his feet, pulling William up with him. He fires into the jungle blindly before turning to his Squad.

KEVIN

Fall back! Get to the emergency extraction point! I need a medic up here.

One of the soldiers takes William from him and races back into the brush. Kevin turns and lays down as much cover-fire as he can before turning to run. Before he can take two steps, however, a blast of energy catches him in the shoulder. Kevin spins around and tumbles down a slick hill. He crumples into a heap at the bottom of the embankment, unconscious.

Victoria and the remnants of Alpha Squad have formed a defensive perimeter, firing into the jungle. A transport drops down out of the sky, landing in a small clearing behind the troops. Victoria glances at it, and nods to one of the soldiers.

VICTORIA

Get the wounded inside immediately. We'll wait for Beta Squad two more minutes before bugging out!

The soldier nods and runs towards the transport. Victoria continues to fire into the jungle as energy blasts from the still unseen Hydes sizzle through the air past her. Several of her comrades are cut down, either by the enemy fire, or by their rifles exploding in a shower of sparks. Suddenly, ten soldiers from Beta Squad thrash their way out of the jungle nearby. Victoria glances at them and quickly jogs over to the soldier who is carrying William.

VICTORIA

What happened to Sergeant Isen? Where's Lieutenant MacInnes?

SOLDIER

We were ambushed. Corporal Isen's sensor pack exploded in his face. I'm ... I'm not sure what happened to Lieutenant MacInnes. He was right behind me...

Victoria stares at the soldier in shock for a few seconds, torn. She glances into the jungle from where Beta Squad came. Finally, she steels herself.

VICTORIA

(to the soldier)

Get Isen on board.

(to all the soldiers)

We're getting out of here!

The soldiers retreat into the transport, laying down what cover fire as they can. Victoria stands by the open doors, keeping a hopeful eye towards the jungle. Finally, the last soldier is inside, and there is still no sign of Kevin. Her shoulders slump slightly, but she quickly ducks into transport herself. The doors slam shut and it blasts into the sky.

20 INT.- THE TRANSPORT

Victoria is standing by a window near the doors, staring out at the jungle as it fades from view. Finally, as it disappears, Victoria turns from the window, tears in her eyes.

21 EXT.- THE BOTTOM OF THE EMBANKMENT, AN HOUR LATER

Kevin is still crumpled at the bottom of the embankment, unconscious. A dense fog hangs in the air, making the twilight even hazier. Slowly, Kevin begins to stir. He lets out a muffled groan and slowly rolls over. He gingerly lifts his head and looks around. He quickly checks over his body for injuries, snorting in disgust at the gray mud that is smeared over his brown uniform. Finally, he lurches to his knees. After a quick search, he finds his rifle. He looks it over and finally begins to carefully scramble up the embankment.

22 EXT.- TOP OF THE EMBANKMENT

Kevin cautiously inches his way up the embankment, keeping his rifle pointed at wherever he looks. Satisfied that he's alone, he stands up and begins to creep forward, still keeping his weapon at the ready.

23 EXT.- THE BATTLE FIELD

Dead human bodies are strewn across the jungle floor. Mercifully, the worst of the wounds have been covered with mud, but Kevin can't help but shudder at their empty eyes and vacant stares. He slowly works his way through them, pausing to examine the equipment that his fallen comrades have. Finally, he finds a potential life saver: an apparently working radio! He kneels down and fires it up, trying desperately to tune it to the right frequency.

KEVIN
(muttering to himself)
C'mon! Work, damn you!

The radio sputters, its lights flickering and finally dying.

KEVIN
Shit!

He throws the radio away in anger. He sits there, glaring at it for a few seconds, when he hears the sounds of people thrashing through the bushes. Kevin swings his rifle around, staring into the bushes wildly. Sure enough, soon they visibly begin to shake. Through the dense fog, Kevin can see a pinkish glow steadily moving through the fog. He immediately dives into the bushes. He carefully peeks above his hiding place. After a few tense moments, two Hyde soldiers dash out of the undergrowth. Kevin's eyes grow wide at what he sees. The Hydes are slightly human-looking. Graceful ridges line their heads, running down the back of their neck and growing in size as they pass the shoulders. Delicate four fingered hands clutch large energy weapons that they sweep across the clearing. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Hydes,

however, is their skin. The skin of both soldiers seems to be glowing with a pinkish light. Kevin finally manages to shake off the initial shock. His face hardens and he brings his rifle up to his shoulder. He carefully takes aim at the nearest soldier.

KEVIN

Say good-bye, you Hyde bastard!

The soldier pauses suddenly, its forehead furrowing in what appears to be confusion. The pink glow of its body suddenly fluctuates as waves of orange light pass through its head and chest. It turns, its head jerking almost like a bird, until finally, its large, translucent eyes come to rest on Kevin's hiding place. Kevin snarls to himself. Now the Hyde's skin takes on another transformation. The orange and pink mixture is replaced with a brown and gray one. It turns to its companion and opens its mouth. Instead of any discernible language, however, that surreal "MUSIC" that was heard at the battle comes out. It is harsh and brutal. The other soldier turns as well, its pinkish hue replaced with brown and gray tones as well. Kevin finally leaps to his feet and pulls the trigger, only to be rewarded with a shower of sparks that erupt from his rifle. Kevin cries out in surprise and drops the weapon. A deep red light flashes through the Hyde soldiers and they charge forward and the "MUSIC" changes, becoming almost taunting. The Hydes open fire, brilliant blue balls of energy slamming into the ground and trees by Kevin. He dives out of the way, snatching up one of the dead laser rifles. With a war cry of his own, he charges forward and wildly swings the rifle like a club. The closest Hyde's skin suddenly starts to glow orange. The Hyde tries to swing his weapon up, but Kevin is faster. Before the Hyde can even fire a shot, Kevin brings the rifle down viciously, clubbing him over the head. The Hyde crumples to the ground, unconscious. The other Hyde swings his weapon up, but Kevin dives down and scoops up the fallen Hyde's weapon. He dashes for cover, the Hyde soldier firing after him. Kevin jumps behind a fallen tree, blue energy bolts sizzling over his head. Kevin closes his eyes and then jumps up, pointing the Hyde weapon at his enemy. Unfortunately, he doesn't know where the trigger is. He looks the weapon over in confusion.

KEVIN

How the hell do you fire this thing?

The Hyde keeps firing on him. He drops back down behind the tree, examining the weapon frantically. The firing stops temporarily, and Kevin looks up, tense. He looks up at the log and sees the Hyde soldier towering above him. The Hyde's skin has turned to a brown and grey mix, the colors pulsating violently. The Hyde points his weapon directly at Kevin. Kevin closes his eyes, swallowing hard. Suddenly, a large burst of blue energy rips through the Hyde's chest. The soldier falls over the log. Kevin opens his eyes and stares at the dead soldier in shock. He cautiously peeks over the log and sees yet another Hyde standing before him, a female. The ridges on her head are more delicate and subdued. Her eyes are larger and liquid. Although she is alien, she has a mysterious beauty to her. Her skin is violet, but the minute she sees Kevin, her skin darkens until it is pitch black. She swings around the weapon in her hand and points it at him. Kevin looks at the useless weapon in his hand and lets it drop. He slowly raises his

hands over his head and carefully stands up. The Hyde opens her mouth and frantic “MUSIC” fills the air. A look of temporary confusion washes over Kevin’s face, but that slowly changes to one of understanding.

KEVIN

That music! It’s your language, isn’t it?

The Hyde cocks her head, not comprehending. Her skin takes on a pink hue with subtle splotches of violet. Kevin starts to lower his hands slowly, making sure that he isn’t making any threatening motions.

KEVIN

That... that noise...

(he makes motions with his hands from his mouth,
trying to pantomime the music)

... that’s how you communicate.

Kevin now makes motion between the Hyde and himself. The Hyde watches him, but then her skin changes to a gray color. She speaks again. Harsh music pours out of her mouth, and she waves the weapon at him menacingly. Kevin immediately raises his hands above his head again.

KEVIN

All right, all right. So take me to your leader or whatever it is you Hyde bastards do to your prisoners.

The Hyde continues to stare at him, puzzled. Her skin changes back to a mixture of pink and orange. Still keeping the weapon pointed at Kevin, she reaches into a pack at her hip and pulls out some sort of device. Kevin tenses when he sees it. It resembles a collar of some sort. Kevin looks around nervously for some sort of a weapon. The Hyde notices his discomfort and makes soothing sounds. She carefully places the collar on herself, lining up the largest part of the device on her throat. She thumbs one of the switches on the device and it lights up. Now Kevin is the curious one. He stares at it, not sure of what it is. The device suddenly issues a barrage of static and then, insanely enough, begins speaking in a sterile and hollow sounding voice.

DEVICE

Talk. Now. Please. Continue.

Kevin stares at the Hyde in shock. The Hyde stares back at him, her skin becoming completely orange. She presses the button on the device again.

DEVICE

Talk. Now. Please. Continue.

Kevin looks at the device critically, then starts to rise.

KEVIN

Okay. I know when I'm being toyed with. I'm out of here.

Kevin starts to walk away. As he turns, the Hyde makes more harsh "MUSIC". Kevin turns around and sees that the Hyde has her weapon pointed at him again.

DEVICE

Talk! Now! Please! Continue!

Kevin raises his hands and slowly sinks back down on a log.

KEVIN

All right, all right. What do you want to talk about?

24 EXT.- HUMAN COLONY, TWO HOURS LATER

Brandt and Coleman are standing near the runway. Coleman is still absorbed in his many computer disks. Brandt, on the other hand, is scanning the skies nervously. Finally, he hears the distant drone of engines. He begins to bounce on his heels nervously but stops when he sees that Coleman has noticed. Slowly but surely, the transport swings into view. One of the engines is belching black smoke and numerous blaster marks on the exterior. Brandt sucks in an anxious breath as the transport lurches slightly, almost colliding with some of the taller trees. Finally, though, the transport manages to land. Brandt takes a nervous step forward as the doors open. Victoria is the first one off of the transport. Her eyes are red from crying and her hair is no longer as impeccably styled as it was when she left. She tries to compose herself when she sees Brandt and gives him a weak salute.

VICTORIA

General.

Brandt looks over her shoulder into the transport and sees that the wounded are being brought out. William is one of the first. His face has been bandaged over and he is sleeping comfortably. As the wounded are being cared over to waiting medics, Brandt turns back to Victoria.

BRANDT

What the hell happened, Lieutenant?

VICTORIA

The Hydes surprised us, sir. We didn't see it coming at all, but they ambushed us. Both squads took heavy casualties.

BRANDT

Where's Lieutenant MacInnes?

Victoria tries to answer, but the words simply don't come out. She mouths several incomprehensible words. Finally, Brandt takes a step closer and places a calming hand on her arm.

BRANDT

Victoria, what happened to Kevin?

She still can't bring herself to say anything.

VICTORIA

He... he...

Finally, she breaks down in tears and runs away. Brandt stands there in shock. He doesn't really seem to be aware of what's going on as he watches the nearly endless parade of wounded soldiers that are brought off the transport.

25 EXT.- THE JUNGLE, SIX HOURS LATER

The sun is even lower in the sky. Kevin is slumped down on his log, barely conscious. His eyes are now bloodshot, his hair is mussed, and it looks like he's about to pass out at any second.

The Hyde, on the other hand, is still staring at him carefully. The weapons she holds in her hand is still leveled squarely at his chest. Her skin has a sky blue tint to it.

KEVIN

(hoarsely)

... and then I tripped over my own two feet and spilled my drink all over her. I tried to blame it on a flutter in the *Stellar Hope's* engines, but she didn't buy it. It was easily the most embarrassing situation I had ever experienced.

The Hyde continues to stare at Kevin. He sighs and closes his eyes, exhausted. The Hyde suddenly looks away, as if listening to something else. Kevin opens his eyes and glances at her, as if weighing his options. After several hesitant seconds, Kevin leaps to his feet and takes off, running as fast as he can. The Hyde whirls around in surprise. She raises the weapon and fires

several times. The energy balls flash by Kevin as he runs. It doesn't slow him down in the least. The Hyde bites off a harsh burst of "MUSIC" and runs after him. She adjusts some controls on the weapon and fires again. A massive ball of intense blue energy erupts from the weapon and slices through a tree in Kevin's path. The tree topples over, missing Kevin by mere inches. It slams into the ground in front of him, effectively blocking his path. Kevin skids to a halt. He stares at the tree in surprise and then turns around, looking at the Hyde in anger.

KEVIN

What? You want me to tell you more stories? Look, buddy, I've been talking for at least eight hours straight. I have nothing left to say to you, so you can either shoot me or take me bring me in as your prisoner. So what's it going to be?

The Hyde cocks her head, her skin turning a brilliant pink. She looks away, once again as if listening, then her chest starts heaving. Her skin darkens until it glows with a deep red. Kevin stares at her, not sure what is happening.

KEVIN

Are you all right?

The Hyde's chest continues to heave as she reaches up and presses a button on the device.

DEVICE

Translation matrix complete.

Kevin blinks in surprise. The device emits a series of high pitches. Finally, the Hyde looks at him, her skin turning violet. She opens her mouth, but instead of the music, she actually speaks. Her voice is low and sultry, seductive and melodic.

Hyde

Good evening, my friend. I am sorry I had to shoot at you, but I could not let you escape.

Kevin now openly gapes at the Hyde. The Hyde blinks her large, liquid eyes, the violet color of her skin intensifying.

KEVIN

What's going on? How is it you can suddenly speak my language?

Hyde

This device translates my speech into your language and yours into mine. I apologize for forcing you to speak to it for such a long time. We knew only a few of your words and the computer had to

establish a translation matrix for us to communicate.

Kevin nods, still surprised. He stares at the Hyde for a long time before he finally remembers that she's still pointing a weapon at him.

KEVIN

So now what? You have your human prisoner and we march back to wherever it is you came from?

The Hyde blinks, her skin turning bright red. That color deepens to an almost maroon and the Hyde's chest begins to heave again, but this time, it is clear what is happening: she's laughing. Kevin frowns, not understanding what she's finding so amusing.

KEVIN

What's so funny?

Hyde

Are you surrendering to me?

Kevin stiffens at the suggestion, but he softens when he realizes that is precisely what he is doing. He nods. This only causes the Hyde's skin color to become an even deeper red as she continues to laugh.

Hyde

No... no. That is unnecessary.

Saying that, she holds out the weapon to him. Kevin stares at it, unsure of what she's doing.

Hyde

It is I who am surrendering to you.

Kevin gapes at the Hyde, not comprehending fully. Even still, he weakly reaches out and takes the weapon. Immediately, the Hyde's skin turns an almost royal blue. She turns and starts through the forest.

Hyde

If I remember, there are two of your settlements to the north, correct?

Kevin watches as she continues moving through the jungle. He doesn't answer, but stares at her, still not sure what is happening.

Hyde

(cont.)

We should get started immediately. Night will be falling soon and there will be Scavengers coming out in this area. By my estimates, we have at least another four hours of walking ahead of us.

The Hyde finally stops and turns around. She stares at Kevin, her skin turning orange.

Hyde

Is something wrong?

Kevin finally takes a step forward, confused.

KEVIN

Let me see if I have this correct. You hold me at gun point for six hours and then, when I try to escape, you surrender to me? And now you want me to take you to one of our colonies?

Hyde

Yes.

Kevin stares at her for a few seconds before shrugging.

KEVIN

What the hell. It beats the alternatives. Let me gather up some equipment, and we can get out of here.

The Hyde's skin turns back to the royal blue color. Kevin starts through the jungle, the Hyde following close behind. She now walks with a little spring in her step.

26 INT.- INFIRMARY IN HUMAN COLONY

William is propped up in bed, some of his bandages gone. While he is healed for the most part, the skin on his face is still splotchy and red. One gauze bandage is still taped to his cheek. His face brightens as Victoria walks over to him. She has managed to compose herself, but it is clear that she is still somewhat emotional. William sees this and his face falls.

WILLIAM

Victoria, I...

His voice trails off. He is not sure of what to say. Victoria pulls up a chair next to him and sits down. She never looks at him, her eyes lowered. Finally, William swallows hard and continues.

WILLIAM

They told me about Kevin... I ... I know that you... I'm sorry.

He reaches out and pats Victoria's hand tenderly. She suddenly bursts out sobbing and collapses on the bed. William closes his eyes as well and begins to stroke her hair sympathetically, making comforting sounds. Finally, Victoria looks up. Tears are streaming out of her eyes.

VICTORIA

I can't believe he's gone...

Victoria collapses again. As she cries, a NURSE appears behind them and hesitantly clears her throat.

NURSE

Lieutenant Andrews?

Victoria sits up, surprised. She hurriedly composes herself and finally turns around, trying desperately to act professionally.

VICTORIA

Yes?

NURSE

A member of Beta Squad would like to speak with you. He says it's about Lieutenant MacInnes.

Victoria looks at William, not sure of what to do. William nods, indicating she should go. Victoria gingerly rises and follows the nurse over to another bed. A SOLDIER lies in it, heavily bandaged. He barely looks conscious and he clutches a miniature computer and writing stylus in his hand. Victoria looks at the nurse.

NURSE

(whispering)

He can't speak right now due to the medication, but he can still write messages to you.

Victoria nods and pulls up a chair next to the soldier. She forces a smile for him, one that

doesn't reach her eyes.

VICTORIA

Hello Private...

(she glances at his chart)

... Gibson. The nurse said you wanted to speak with me?

Gibson nods. He begins to write on the computer screen. Victoria tries to control her emotions. It looks as if she is on the verge of tears again. As she reads what Gibson is writing, however, her eyes become wide with surprise. A few rays of hope flickers across her face and she suddenly leaps up and bolts through the door of the infirmary.

27 INT.- GENERAL BRANDT'S OFFICE

Brandt is seated behind a large wooden desk. The lighting is subdued and he is staring out of a massive picture window. Outside, dark and massive storm clouds are forming on the horizon. Ominous flashes of lightening dance within them. It is a truly dismal sight and it matches Brandt's mood perfectly. Suddenly, however, the doors to his office burst open. He turns around in surprise to see Victoria fighting her way past Coleman. Coleman looks at Brandt apologetically.

COLEMAN

I'm sorry, sir. I told her that you didn't want to be disturbed, but she insisted, and I...

BRANDT

(quietly)

It's all right, Coleman. Let her in.

Coleman nods and glances at Victoria, who is trying desperately to keep her ecstatic emotions in check. Coleman steps out of the office, closing the doors behind him. Brandt turns away from Victoria and stares out of the window again.

BRANDT

What is it you needed to see me about, Lieutenant?

VICTORIA

I'm sorry to disturb you, General, but I have some new information about Kevin.

Brandt's eyes go shut, a pained expression on his face.

BRANDT

And that is?

VICTORIA

I think he may be alive.

This takes Brandt by surprise. He spins around and stares at Victoria in shock.

BRANDT

You what?

VICTORIA

(nodding)

I just spoke with Private Gibson from Beta Squad. He was the last person to see Kevin go down. According to him, Kevin was only shot in the shoulder and then he fell down some sort of embankment. I'm willing to bet that he was hidden from the Hyde forces and that he could still be alive right now! He could be working his way towards Severin or Yelizavetam right now!

Brandt's expression hasn't changed. He motions for Victoria to come forward. She does so hesitantly, and Brandt points to a view screen. Victoria looks and gasps in horror. The viewscreen is displaying the charred ruins of a human colony as seen from the air.

BRANDT

Four hours ago, thousands of Hyde troops poured out of the jungle and completely obliterated Severin Colony. Within minutes, they had destroyed the Yelizavetam Community as well. Then, just as soon as they came, they disappeared. That is all that's left. Even if Kevin were alive and moving towards them, there is no one there for him to find.

VICTORIA

(frantically)

Then we have to send out a team to find him! If he doesn't get attention for that shoulder, it could get infected. General, let me take a group of volunteers to go there and...

BRANDT

(gently)

Victoria...

Victoria falls silent, her bottom lip quivering. She is on the verge of tears again.

BRANDT

I understand what you're going through. I wish that Kevin were alive as well. But we don't know that he is. Besides, even if he were, the Storms are about to start again. We'd never find him in time and it would be suicide to send anyone out in those conditions. I'm sorry.

Brandt's words are punctuated by a brilliant flash of lightening followed by the distant low rumble of thunder. The black clouds are churning even more violently now outside the window and sheets of pounding rain are slamming into the window. It is a massive storm.

BRANDT

(cont.)

We have to let him go.

Victoria bows her head, nodding weakly.

28 EXT.- JUNGLE

Kevin and the Hyde are working their way through the jungle rapidly. The Hyde is almost floating through the jungle, completely oblivious of her surroundings, her skin a radiant dark blue. Kevin, on the other hand, is nervous and jumpy. His eyes are darting from the jungle to the darkening sky rapidly. He jumps at the slightest sound. Not only that, but he is struggling with carrying several pieces of equipment he gleaned from the battlefield. Finally, he sighs and focuses on the Hyde.

KEVIN

So...

(he's trying to find something to say)

... what's a nice girl like you doing in a jungle like this?

The Hyde glances at Kevin hesitantly, a purple ripple flashing through her skin. Kevin also hesitates, looking somewhat nervous.

KEVIN

You... you are female, aren't you?

Suddenly, the Hyde's skin flares to deep red. She almost falls to the floor laughing. Now a look of consternation crosses Kevin's face.

Hyde

Yes, I am female. And to answer your question...

Hyde

(she hesitates slightly, violet flashing through her skin for a second)

... it's kind of a long story. Suffice it to say that I ran away from home.

KEVIN

(sarcastically)

Into a battlefield? Not exactly the smartest thing you've ever done.

Hyde

I suppose not.

Kevin pauses for a moment and unslings a sensing device. He swings it around the jungle slowly and frowns at what he sees. The Hyde stops as well, violet once again shooting through her skin.

Hyde

What's wrong?

KEVIN

I'm not sure. I should be getting some sort of reading from Severin or Yelizavetam by now. I'm getting nothing...

A panicked look crosses Kevin's face. He replaces the sensor over his shoulder and charges forward, grabbing the Hyde by the arm. The Hyde's skin immediately flashes bright red, then slowly melts away into pitch black as Kevin drags her through the jungle as fast as they can run.

29 EXT.- SEVERIN COLONY RUINS

Kevin and the Hyde dash out of the jungle. Kevin stops short when he sees the destruction that once was Severin Colony. All of the buildings are charred beyond recognition, black smoke billowing up into the stormy sky. The Hyde comes to a halt behind him. She gapes at the scene as well. Kevin takes a few steps forward, mutely surveying the charred ruins. His face goes white when he sees the dead bodies strewn about the field. Several of them are children. All of them are unarmed.

KEVIN

(weakly)

They had no defenses...

Kevin falls to his knees, staring blankly at the ruins. The Hyde's eyes, however, have started scanning the jungle, her skin now an intense violet. She takes several cautious steps forward and tugs at Kevin's tunic.

Hyde

We need to go.

KEVIN

Go? Go where? The nearest human settlement is at least a week's walk from here and it's about to start Storming any minute. And don't even suggest that we go to some Hyde city, because...

Hyde

(more insistently)

You do not understand. We need to leave now!

She subtly points off towards the jungle. Kevin glances in that direction and sees something brown moving behind the underbrush. As he watches, the color of whatever it is changes to gray. His eyes go wide. He turns away slowly, acting like he didn't see it.

KEVIN

(whispering)

I see your point. On the count of three... One... Two...

Kevin suddenly pulls a laser pistol from his pack and fires into the jungle. There is the sound of angry and harsh "MUSIC" in the distance. Kevin is immediately on his feet and charging back towards the jungle.

KEVIN

(yelling)

... three!

Unfortunately, the Hyde doesn't move. She stares after Kevin, her skin flushing pink. Kevin stops running when he realizes that she isn't with him, turns, and then charges back. He grabs her by the arm and drags her back towards the jungle.

KEVIN

That means run!

Blue bolts of energy slam into the ground behind them, kicking up the ashes of the destroyed

colony.

30 EXT.- JUNGLE

Kevin and the Hyde dive into the jungle and tear through the underbrush. Kevin doesn't bother looking back, but the Hyde constantly looks over her shoulder, her skin gone completely black. Their pursuers are crashing through the jungle as well, still firing.

31 EXT.- CLEARING

They break through into a small clearing. Kevin looks around desperately, trying to find some avenue of escape or something to even the odds. The Hyde collapses slightly, breathing heavily. Her skin is still black with small streaks of violet. She too looks over the clearing. Suddenly, her skin flares to bright red. She excitedly points to a part of the clearing.

Hyde

Look!

Kevin looks to where she's pointing. A small, alien statuette is partially obscured by the growth of the jungle. He frowns, confused. The Hyde has run over to the statuette, her skin a regal purple. She starts frantically digging through the underbrush by the statue. Meanwhile, lightning has begun to snap violently through the clouds overhead.

KEVIN

What?

Hyde

Help me search!

Kevin, still not understanding what she's doing, begins to search through the underbrush as well.

KEVIN

What exactly are we looking for?

As if to answer his own question, Kevin pulls apart the branches of a bush to reveal a small opening, barely big enough for a human to squeeze through. The Hyde looks at it and her skin radiates a dark blue. Kevin smiles at her, satisfied, but the smile melts away to a look of surprise as the Hyde draws a weapon.

KEVIN

What the hell....?

The Hyde aims over Kevin's shoulder and fires. Kevin immediately dives for cover. The blue

ball of energy slams into the statuette, obliterating it. As the dust and debris of the destroyed statue rain down around them, she turns back to Kevin, who stares at her in shock.

Hyde

Now they won't know this is here. After you.

Kevin stares at her for a few seconds longer before shrugging and diving through the hole. The Hyde casts one last furtive glance around the clearing before climbing through the hole as well. Before she is completely through, she pulls the bush back over the hole, completely obscuring it. Only a few seconds later, three Hyde SOLDIERS crash through the underbrush. They pause for a moment, glancing around the clearing. Their skin turns a harsh gray and they quickly dash off through the jungle again. As they do, rain begins to fall from the sky. It is a gentle shower at first, but pretty soon, it is coming down in sheets as a violent wind begins to pick up through the trees.

31 INT.- CAVERN

Kevin and the Hyde are working at pushing a large carved door into place into the hole they just crawled through. Water is already beginning to pour through it, making the ground muddy and hard to stand on. Not only that, but a down blast forces both of them to work with their eyes shut lest blown debris blind them. Finally, after a short struggle, the door grinds into place, cutting off the water and wind. Kevin turns, pulling a field light out of his pack. Lighting it, he shines it around the cavern. It is a tunnel of some kind, stretching back into complete darkness. He frowns.

KEVIN

Are you sure this is a good idea? I mean, yeah, the Hydies won't find us, but we can't go anywhere as long as the Stormy Season is here, and that could be three or four months!

The Hyde steps forward, her skin a mixture of light and dark blue. She turns to Kevin and, insanely enough, smiles at him. Kevin blinks in surprise. She stretches out a hand to him.

Hyde

Come. Follow me.

Kevin stares at her, not sure if he should. Finally, he shrugs and takes her hand. She leads him forward into the darkness.

32 DEEPER IN THE CAVERN

Kevin shines his light around the cavern walls. What looks like ancient carvings are etched into the walls. The Hyde ignores all of this and continues on. Kevin finally looks at her skeptically.

KEVIN

Look, I don't know what you're hoping to find down here, but I think we should go back. Maybe we can find some shelter in Severin still and...

His voice trails off because of what he sees. The Hyde has led him to a cliff. Stretched out before them in an enormous cavern is a small brick city. Some sort of bright lights shines from the ceiling of the cavern. The city itself is in desperate need of repair. It is obvious that no one has lived here for a long, long time. Trees and bushes are growing out of the ground, flourishing in the underground oasis. In the middle of the town is a large statue, similar to the one that the Hyde destroyed in the clearing. Kevin gapes at it all in surprise, finally turning to the Hyde. She, however, has knelt down before the city, her arms crossed over her chest and her head bowed low. Her mouth moves, causing more of the "MUSIC." It has a reverent quality to it. Kevin fidgets slightly, not sure of what to do. Finally, the Hyde rises and turns to Kevin.

Hyde

We have shelter here. Come. We must gather food.

The Hyde starts down a set of rock hewn stairs. Kevin continues to gape at the city for a few seconds before snapping out of his shock and following her.

33 INT.- CITY

The city is even worse off close up. Most of the walls have crumbled to dust, leaving gaping holes in the buildings. Vines and grass have grown through the cobblestone streets, pushing the stones out of alignment. The Hyde works her way through it all, glancing at the strange looking fruit that grows from the trees. Kevin follows her, eyeing everything suspiciously.

KEVIN

All right, what is this place? I know that Hydres normally don't live underground...

Hyde

This is a ...
(there is a burst of "MUSIC")
... It is a sacred shelter to my people.

The Hyde approaches the statue in the middle of the city, bowing to it reverently, her skin a shimmering gold.

Hyde

According to legend, a great ball of hellish fire fell from the heavens. It burned the surface of our planet, killing many. After that, the Storms started. Each year, the Storms would come and kill even more than the fire. After ten years of this cataclysm, our god...

(there is another burst of "MUSIC")

... led us into caves like this and showed us that we should live underground for the Stormy Season. Because of his intervention, we survived as a race.

Kevin looks around, not entirely impressed. Kevin eyes the translation device skeptically.

KEVIN

That thing doesn't seem to work all that well.

Hyde

It's only the prototype. Nobody had a chance to field test it since someone ... well ... stole it.

Kevin's eyebrows raise in surprise. The Hyde's skin flares to violet. She turns around and plucks down a strange-looking fruit from one of the trees, sits down, and starts to eat it. A swirl of light blue begins to form in her abdomen and slowly spreads through the rest of her body. Kevin stares at her, mesmerized by the change. He catches himself staring and shakes his head. He takes several deliberate steps away from her and sits down as well, turning away from her to rummage through his knapsack. He finally pulls out some vacuum-packaged food bars. He rips off the packaging from one of them and bites into the bar. It is clear from the look on his face that he isn't happy that he has to eat the bars. The Hyde glances at him, a ripple of orange passing over her body.

Hyde

There is no need for you to eat those ... whatever they are. The food here is compatible with human biology. I believe that you would find it quite delicious...

Kevin whirls on her dangerously, clinging to the food bar.

KEVIN

Listen, I didn't ask to be thrown together with you. Now I need to spend four months in here with you, and I'm not looking forward to it! I could have been spending four months with my friends, and instead, I'm here, underground,

with a Hyde! Now, I realize you're living out some weird

KEVIN

(cont.)

dream of running away from home, but leave me out of it!

Kevin stands up and stalks away, climbing into one of the ruined buildings. The Hyde rises, her skin turning a mixture of silver and white. She takes a few steps after him, and finally sighs and sits back down. She looks at the fruit and finally takes a bite.

34 INT.- A MONITORING STATION, NIGHT

Brandt steps into the darkened room. Screen after screen line the walls, and an OFFICER sits in front of each one. The screens display different aerial shots of Hydros A IV. Some display dense rain forests, others arid deserts. Most of them have images of Hyde cities. Standing in the back of the room is William, who no longer wears the bandages on his head. A jagged scar now runs down one cheek. He is staring quietly into the room. Brandt steps over to him.

BRANDT

Where is she?

William nods towards one of the monitors. Seated in front of it is Victoria. The screen she is watching shows a violent thunderstorm. The legend on the screen is "SECTION 17-H." Victoria is barely moving, transfixed by the clouds on the screen. Brandt stares at her for a few seconds before turning back to William.

BRANDT

How long has she been here?

WILLIAM

So far, only three hours. Captain Dumont tried to get her to leave, but she refused. She's insisted on monitoring Section Seventeen-H personally.

Brandt closes his eyes, a pained expression on his face. Finally, he turns to William.

BRANDT

How are you holding up, son? I know that you and Kevin were friends.

William shrugs, his expression neutral.

WILLIAM

Fine, sir. I mean, I knew that I would lose friends when I joined the CSF. I'm just trying to remind the men of that.

Brandt nods sagely, sizing William up with an approving glance. Finally, he nods to himself and turns to look at the monitors.

BRANDT

The scientists say we're in for one hell of a Stormy Season this year. Four months and they don't project a break in the storms at all. It looks like Mother Nature is imposing a cease fire on us.

WILLIAM

Very good, sir.

BRANDT

Well, carry on.

Brandt turns to leave, but William turns to face him.

WILLIAM

Sir, what about ...
(he indicates Victoria with a subtle nod)

Brandt turns to face her. He stares at her without speaking for a few seconds.

BRANDT

Until the Stormy Season is over, we'll have no use for Alpha Squad. She is free to waste her time here as long as she wants. We all have to get on with our lives and accept the loss ... Lieutenant Isen.

William's jaw drops open. It looks as if he's about to correct the General but realizes in time that it wasn't a mistake. He nods smartly, offering a crisp salute.

WILLIAM

Yes, sir!

Brandt returns the salute and leaves, casting a final, frustrated look at Victoria. She has remained oblivious to the entire discussion, her entire attention focused on the screen in front of her. On the screen, the storm continues to rage.

35 EXT.- A FIELD, NIGHT

A violent storm rages overhead, lightning snapping angrily through the dark boiling clouds. Sheets of harsh rain are pummeling the barren field mercilessly. Kevin is blindly dashing through this ceaseless onslaught, clinging to a laser rifle. He trips and falls over an unseen obstacle, falling into the mud. He stops and rises from the mud and wipes it from his eyes. He looks up and his mouth opens in surprise. Standing before him is a roughly carved STATUE OF A WOMAN in her forties and an older MAN in his mid-fifties. The statue suddenly comes to life and reaches out her arms invitingly. The man also smiles, reaching out a hand to Kevin.

KEVIN

Mom? Dad?

Kevin slowly rises to his feet and takes a few tentative steps forward. Without warning, the statue of his mother suddenly explodes. Kevin's father shields himself from the debris and then turns back to Kevin, a look of horror on his face. Kevin begins to run forward, his arms reaching out desperately. Before Kevin makes it, however, a blue ball of energy bursts through the man's torso. Kevin skids to a halt and stares in shock as the man slowly drops to his knees, blood beginning to drip from his mouth. Finally, the man collapses face first into the mud. Tears are streaming out of Kevin's eyes as he looks up to see who killed his father. Standing off in the distance are two HYDES. These HYDES, however, are nothing like the others. These HYDES have horns, claws, and fangs protruding in every angle. They salivate and cackle harshly, dashing off into the woods. An inarticulate scream of rage erupts from Kevin's mouth and he charges after them, a look of complete determination burned onto his face. He thrashes his way into the woods.

36 EXT.- CHARRED RUINS OF A CITY

Kevin bursts from the woods into the debris of a burned city. He looks around, stunned by what he sees. He turns around slowly, carefully absorbing every detail of the wreckage. Finally, he turns and he sees William and Victoria standing before him. They, too, reach out with inviting arms. Kevin stares at them, as if torn about what he should do. He takes a tentative step forward and suddenly, the ground beneath his friends explode. Kevin dashes forward to the two darkened blast craters and stares at them helplessly. He collapses to his knees, weeping bitterly. That is when he hears it: the "MUSIC." It is harsh, violent, and oppressive. Kevin swings up his rifle, training it in every possible direction, looking for something to attack. He frowns in confusion when he doesn't see a target at all. Finally, he looks up. One of the HYDES from before is looming above the ruins, filling the sky. It snarls as the "MUSIC" becomes louder and louder. It finally starts to reach towards Kevin, its claws bared. Kevin throws his arms over his head to protect himself and cries out as the "MUSIC" becomes deafening...

37 INT.- CRUMBLING BUILDING, NIGHT

Kevin sits up, reaching for his rifle frantically. His eyes dart around the dusty room in fright. He finally calms himself and breathes easier. He starts to lie back down, but he freezes. Off in the distance, there is extremely harsh "MUSIC." Kevin tenses, not sure of what to do. Finally, though, he snares his rifle and shimmies through a hole in the wall.

38 EXT.- CITY STREET

Kevin drops down to the street and crouches, scanning the shadows nervously. The "MUSIC" is louder and he can hear the sounds of a struggle. Kevin ducks into the shadows.

39 EXT.- THE CITY SQUARE

Three other HYDES (these are SCAVENGERS) are standing in the middle of the square, their chests heaving with laughter. They appear tipsy and probably drunk. Their skins are a deep, deep red. The female Hyde is cowering in a corner, her skin a mixture of purple and black. One of the new coming Hydes reaches over and rips the translation device from her neck and holds it up for the other two to see. They laugh even harder, their skin coloring becoming even more intense. Finally, the first Hyde straps the device to his own neck.

SCAVENGER #1

(mocking)

Look at me! I'm just a delicate little traitor!

One of the Scavengers falls over, dropping a bottle of a bitter blue liquid, which spills over the ground. The female Hyde winces and turns away, her body shaking violently. When she looks up, though, she sees Kevin sneaking over a pile of rubble. Her eyes go wide and she starts to say something. It is a quavering phrase of nervous "MUSIC." As she speaks, the rifle in Kevin's hands erupts in a shower of sparks. The three Scavengers stop laughing and turn around, immediately going for their weapons. Kevin quickly drops down the rest of the pile and levels the rifle on the three Hydes.

KEVIN

Hold it right there, guys.

SCAVENGER #1

Who the hell are you?

KEVIN

Drop your weapons and I might just answer you.

The Scavengers glance at each other, as if unsure of what to do. Scavenger #2 decides to risk it and goes for his weapon, his skin flashing to a brilliant orange. Kevin quickly whirls and fires. A red laser beam slices through Scavenger #2's shoulder. The Scavenger falls to the floor, writhing in pain, his skin turning olive green, starting around the wound and then radiating out through the rest of his body. The other two glance at each other and quickly drop their weapons. Kevin steps forward and kicks them out of the way.

KEVIN

All right. That's better. Now, what are you guys doing here?

SCAVENGER #1

(as if it should be obvious)

We're Scavengers.

KEVIN

And what is that exactly?

The female Hyde tries to answer, but her "MUSIC" is incomprehensible. Kevin glances at her, trying to signal her with his eyes to remain silent.

SCAVENGER #1

I don't think we should discuss that while you have a weapon pointed at us.

Kevin makes a prompting motion with his rifle. The Scavenger sighs, his skin turning orange.

SCAVENGER #1

We were hired by the Chieftain to find his daughter.

KEVIN

(faltering for a second)

The who?

SCAVENGER #1

The Chieftain....

(there is a burst of untranslated "MUSIC")

... the leader of our people.

KEVIN

Wait a minute. This is the daughter of your leader? The leader of all the HYDES?

SCAVENGER #1

Yes.

Kevin reels slightly. His rifle almost drops.

KEVIN

(whispers to himself)

The Warlord....

The Scavengers look at each other and tense, as if getting ready to make a move. The skins quickly change to a dull gray. Kevin notices this and brings the rifle up again, quashing any ideas they might have had.

KEVIN

Daughter of the Chieftain, huh? That's really interesting. How important is she to you guys? Enough for you to die?

SCAVENGER #1

Enough that the Chieftain sent his best troops after her.

Now Kevin's rifle does drop in shock. He gapes at the Scavengers, searching for the words to say. Scavenger #1's eyes dart to his companions, his skin turning purple.

KEVIN

You mean Yelizavetam ... Severin ... they were all because of her?

SCAVENGER #1

Yes. The Chieftain would do anything to bring her back, even if it meant killing some of you vermin.

Scavenger #1 barks a short but violent burst of "MUSIC." Scavenger #3, who has snuck behind Kevin, tackles him from behind. Kevin manages to swing his rifle around like a club. He connects, dropping Scavenger #3 to the ground. The Hyde is clutching his head, a clear liquid oozing from the wound. Scavenger #1 draws his weapon and fires, a blue ball of energy sizzling over Kevin's shoulder. The human immediately bolts, ducking beneath a crumbling wall. Scavenger #1 fires again, blowing another huge hole in the rubble. Scavenger #1 turns to Scavenger #2, who has managed to stand up. He barks an order to him.

SUBTITLE: "Watch her!"

Scavenger #2 nods, drawing his weapon. Scavenger #1 starts off after Kevin. Just as

Scavenger #2 turns to look at the female Hyde, she smashes a large rock over his head and scoops up the fallen weapon.

40 EXT.- AN ALLEYWAY

Kevin is crouching behind a pile of debris, desperately fiddling with his rifle. The weapon beeps and hisses dangerously at him and it is clear it isn't working. Kevin keeps his head up, carefully scanning the alleys and streets, trying to fix his rifle. Suddenly, Scavenger #1 comes around the corner and snaps off a shot. Kevin barely manages to dodge the blue ball of energy. The Scavenger fires again and Kevin scrambles out of the way again. The human disappears into the shadows. The Scavenger carefully scans the area, his weapon ready. Suddenly, a crumbling wall topples over, having been pushed by Kevin. The Scavenger barely manages to jump out of the way of the shower of rubble. Kevin leaps on his adversary, knocking the energy weapon from his hands. The Scavenger and Kevin grapple, trying desperately to best each other. Finally, the Scavenger manages to pin Kevin and begins to choke him. Kevin desperately tries to break his foe's grip, but it is useless. His arms go limp and his eyes begin to flutter shut.

SCAVENGER #1

Time to die, scum.

Suddenly, a blue ball of energy sizzles over Kevin's face and blasts into the Scavenger's chest. His skin flares through a whole rainbow of colors before it dulls and then turns hazy. He collapses. Kevin immediately shoves the corpse off of him and whirls around, surprised to see the female Hyde holding a weapon. Her skin is awash with browns, grays, and black. Kevin tenses as she tugs the translation device from the dead Hyde and reattaches it to her throat.

HYDE

Are you all right?

Kevin dashes forward and grabs her weapon, pulling it to his chest. Her skin suddenly blazes to a bright red.

HYDE

What are you doing?

KEVIN

Why don't you finish the job? Huh? Kill me! You're the reason those people died in Severin and Yelizavetam! Because of your father, we've lost thousands of good men and women! Why not just kill me as well?

The Hyde's skin turns gray and she yanks the weapon from Kevin's hands.

Hyde

I am sorry for your loss. I wish it would have never happened, but I couldn't help it.

KEVIN

Oh, that's a convenient excuse, isn't it? Thousands of people are dead because of you. You're a murderer!

The Hyde's skin surges to brown and then back to gray.

Hyde

Me? I think you're forgetting who the invaders are here! You stole our land.

KEVIN

We had no idea you people were here! Our preliminary scans showed no life on the surface.

Hyde

And when did you do that scan? During the Stormy Season?

That takes Kevin by surprise. He stammers for a few seconds, unsure of what to say. The Hyde crosses her arms triumphantly.

Hyde

I thought so.

KEVIN

(recovering)

That's hardly the point! We didn't do any sort of orbital bombardments or invade any of your cities. We landed, started to set up shop, and all of a sudden, you attacked us! You never even spoke to us.

Hyde

You violated holy ground! You defiled it with your presence! We couldn't just stand idly by and allow you to transgress our....

KEVIN

If you would have told us, we would have moved....

Hyde

No! It was too late! You disgraced our land. You violated us as a whole. You couldn't be allowed to remain!

KEVIN

So what do you want us to do, leave the planet?

Hyde

Yes! Why don't all of you load up on that hideous monstrosity you call a ship and leave our planet!

KEVIN

(an explosion)

Because we can't!

The Hyde stares at Kevin in shock, bright red streaks rippling through her otherwise gray skin. Those smudges eventually disappear and she is back on the offensive.

Hyde

What do you mean, you can't? The ship is still there, isn't it? You still have the landing shuttles. You can just load everyone up and leave right now.

KEVIN

No, we can't. The *Stellar Hope* is old ... too old. Within a few months, it will fall apart at the seams ... just like what happened to the *Galactic Peace*.

Hyde

The what?

KEVIN

The *Galactic Peace*, our other colony ship. The one that exploded fifteen years ago. The one that...

(his voice breaks. He is near tears)

... the one that killed my mother.

The Hyde's skin flashes orange and white. She takes a step forward, almost as if to comfort him, but Kevin turns away.

Hyde

What happened?

KEVIN

(not really focusing on what he's saying)

... no one knows for sure. The engines on the *Galactic Peace* developed a flutter. My mother was an engineer and she was sent over to fix it. The engines began to overload....

(he chokes back some tears)

... and my mother stayed behind to help people evacuate. A few escape pods made it but.... When the engines exploded....

Kevin breaks down completely. The Hyde takes a few more steps forward, her body completely white with small streaks of silver. She places a comforting hand on his shoulder. Kevin shrugs her off.

Hyde

(quietly)

We ... we didn't know.

KEVIN

(harshly)

It doesn't really matter now, does it. We hate you, you hate us. I guess we'll just have to see who survives, won't we?

Hyde

(her skin turns turquoise and white)

I guess we will.

Kevin storms away, leaving the Hyde behind. She takes a few steps after him but stops. She turns and freezes immediately, her skin immediately turning pitch black. She takes several steps back. A low pitched GROWL fills the air.

42 ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY

Kevin stumbles along, wiping the tears from his eyes. Suddenly, a blood curdling SCREAM of horror pierces the silence. Without even thinking, Kevin grabs his laser rifle and starts in the direction of the scream.

43 THE ALLEYWAY

Kevin comes to a halt next to the Hyde. She is frozen, her skin black. He follows her eyes and gasps. An animal that vaguely resembles a mountain cat is creeping over some of the rubble. Its hairless body ripples with a maelstrom of colors. It growls again, a sound which elicits a HISS of static from Kevin's laser rifle. Kevin grabs the Hyde by the arm and begins to back away. The animal creeps even closer, baring its fangs menacingly.

KEVIN

What the hell is that?

Hyde

A ...

The Hyde emits a burst of untranslated "MUSIC," which elicits another snarl from the animal. It takes a few more steps toward them. Kevin immediately raises the rifle to his shoulder. The beast pauses, as if sizing up his opponents before leaping towards the Hyde. She shrieks and runs, the animal hot on her tail. Kevin swings around and fires, a red laser beam slicing through the creature's shoulder. The animal quickly turns and starts after Kevin. He quickly brings the rifle around like a club, smashing it over the animal's bulky head. The stock shatters on impact and the animal continues on, unaffected, and it smashes into Kevin's midsection. Vicious claws rake across Kevin's chest as he struggles with it, trying desperately to keep its mouth away from his head. Suddenly, off in the distance, there is the sound of the "MUSIC." The animal halts in its attack and looks up toward the Hyde, who is waving her arms desperately, her skin a mixture of violet and black. The translation device lies on the ground next to her. She opens her mouth again, releasing another burst of frantic "MUSIC." The animal carefully creeps away from Kevin, beginning to stalk this new prey. The Hyde begins to back up, her eyes wide with fear, her skin going completely black again. The animal charges forward with a vicious ROAR. The Hyde turns and runs away as fast as she can.

44 A DIFFERENT ALLEY

The Hyde quickly turns the corner into a new alley only to discover, much to her horror, that it is a dead end! She skids to a halt, her skin flashing to bright red. That slowly melts back to black as she claws at the surface of the wall, desperately trying to find some way to pull herself up out of harm's way. It's too late. A GROWL sounds over her shoulder. She turns around and sees the animal in a crouch, ready to pounce. Just as the vicious beast is about to leap, though, a length of nylon cord suddenly wraps around its neck from behind. The animal bucks violently, but Kevin holds on for dear life. The human pulls the rope even tighter. The animal starts slamming into walls, shaking itself furiously. Finally, excruciatingly, the animal drops to the ground, unconscious. Kevin wastes no time. He quickly draws a knife and stabs the beast repeatedly until finally, the animal is still in death. Kevin weakly stands and faces the Hyde, who is trembling fiercely, her skin still black with fear. Kevin takes a step towards her, the knife falling from his limp fingers.

KEVIN

It's ... okay. You're...

Kevin's face suddenly contorts in pain. He falls to his knees and he clutches his bleeding chest. Finally, he sinks to the ground, unconscious.

45 THE CITY SQUARE - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Kevin is lying on the ground, most of his wounds bandaged, yet he is still unconscious. He groans and begins to roll over. His eyes suddenly snap open and he bolts upright, reaching for a weapon that isn't there. He spins around and startles the Hyde, who has been tending a fire. Her skin flashes to bright red, but eventually fades to light blue. She comes over to him and checks his bandages. Kevin seems to shy away from her.

KEVIN

What ... what happened?

Hyde

You lost a lot of blood. Granted, I don't know human physiology, but I think I've managed to bandage the worst of your wounds.

Kevin examines his wrappings and nods in approval. The Hyde looks down, ripples of silver running through her otherwise light blue skin.

Hyde

Thank you for saving me again ... especially in light of what I said earlier....

Kevin stares at her skeptically for a second, then glances at the bandages again. Finally, he shrugs.

KEVIN

Forget about it. I mean, you saved me from the Scavengers and you brought me here in the first place. Consider us even.

The silver streaks disappear, only to be replaced with blotches of dark blue and turquoise. She hands Kevin's knapsack to him, and several of the vacuum packed food bars fall out.

Hyde

I thought you might be hungry.

With that, the Hyde rises and moves off by herself. She sits down and picks up another piece of fruit from a small pile. Kevin unwraps one of the food bars and is about to bite into it when he hesitates. He looks between it and the Hyde. Finally, he sighs resignedly and throws the bar into the darkness. He painfully crawls over to her and picks up a piece of the fruit. Her skin flares to bright red for a second. He smiles sheepishly.

KEVIN

Mind if I join you?

The Hyde's skin melts to a deep red, mixed with broad bands of dark blue that ripple and undulate across her body. She motions for him to sit next to her. He collapses and takes an apprehensive bite out of the fruit. His nervous look disappears as he realizes that the fruit actually tastes pretty good.

46 THE CITY SQUARE - AN HOUR LATER

The pile of fruit is completely gone. Kevin lazily throws the last core into the darkness and gingerly lies back on the ground, staring at the distant ceiling of the cavern. The Hyde reclines against a crumbling wall, her skin turquoise and light blue.

Hyde

... and so my father decided that a merger with his rival's clan would benefit the entire planet. The only way to do that was if I married the son of the other Clan's Chieftain. I didn't love my future husband, so I decided I would rather live with you humans than with my family.

KEVIN

Wow. I don't blame you. What was the matter with the guy?

Hyde

No one thing in particular.

(there is a burst of untranslated "MUSIC")

... is considered quite handsome, but he never....

Kevin cranes his head around to look at the Hyde.

KEVIN

What was that you said?

The Hyde repeats the burst of “MUSIC.” Kevin frowns.

KEVIN

So what’s your name?

The Hyde laughs, deep red waves cascading through her body.

Hyde

I doubt you could pronounce it.

KEVIN

(with mock indignation)

Try me!

There is a burst of short, yet extremely beautiful, “MUSIC.” Kevin stares at her for a second.

KEVIN

You’re right. I can’t pronounce that. Well, then, what should I call you? I mean, I can’t just refer to you as “Hey, you” if we’re going to be spending two months together.

Hyde

What do you think I should be called?

Kevin considers it for a few moments. He finally smiles.

KEVIN

Irisa. It was my grandmother’s name.

IRISA

Irisa.

(she smiles, her body turning dark blue)

I like it.

Kevin lies down again, staring at the ceiling. After a few seconds of relaxed silence, he speaks again.

KEVIN

Irisa ...

(he hesitates, unsure of how to phrase this)

... would you tell me a story?

Irisa looks up in surprise, her skin flashing to bright red. She giggles nervously.

IRISA

Why? I'm not very good...

KEVIN

Please.

Irisa hesitates, her skin turning violet and silver before she sighs.

IRISA

This is the story of....

KEVIN

(interrupting)

No.

He reaches over and deactivates the translation device, removing it from her neck. As his fingers brush against her skin, small waves of dark green radiate out from the point of contact. Irisa stares deeply into his eyes in surprise. She swallows and begins again. The story is a beautiful symphony of Hyde "MUSIC," bringing to mind passion, love, revenge, sorrow, all the emotions an epic could contain. As Irisa spins this enchanting, melodic tale, Kevin lies back, allowing his eyes to drift closed. The "MUSIC" begins to swell and blend into a montage of images:

47 EXT. THE CITY - A MONTH LATER

Kevin dashes through the streets of the city, searching the dark corners playfully. Suddenly, Irisa dashes from one of the ruined buildings, her skin flashing deep red, dark blue, and purple. She runs from Kevin playfully, Kevin laughing and following after her.

48 INT. - THE MONITORING STATION

Victoria is still seated behind the monitor, staring at the screen showing Section Seventeen-H. She closes her eyes in pain, but finally manages to force them open. She turns back to the screen, but it is clear that she is beginning to lose hope.

49 INT. - GENERAL BRANDT'S OFFICE

A violent storm still rages outside the General's window. Brandt leans back in his chair, clutching a tumbler of whiskey. He turns to his desk and thumbs on a small hologram of Kevin

and his father. Brandt stares at them for a long time until finally, he closes his eyes, overcome with grief.

50 EXT. - A HUMAN COLONY

William is shouting orders over the wind and the rain. One of the buildings in this colony has fallen to pieces. The soldiers of Beta Squad are scrambling to push the walls up and back into place. As they struggle through the driving rain, another one of the buildings suddenly falls apart, its walls nearly crushing some of the soldiers. One of them runs up to William, shouting a question into his ear. William seems to hesitate, looking around as if he expects Kevin to show up and handle this new crisis.

51 EXT. - THE CITY

Kevin and Irisa are walking through the streets of the City, talking quietly. Irisa's skin fluctuates gently, turning different colors, mostly light green, dark blue, deep red, and light blue. Several times they stop to laugh, sometimes Kevin playfully punches Irisa's shoulder, but it is clear that they are becoming closer than ever.

52 INT. - THE MONITORING STATION

Victoria reaches out and gingerly touches the screen. Tears began to stream from her eyes and her head slowly lowers, her shoulders shaking with sobs.

53 INT. - GENERAL BRANDT'S OFFICE

Brandt hoists his glass to the hologram of Kevin and his father in toast, then shuts off the image. He turns back to the window, watches the storm for a few seconds, then downs his drink in one gulp.

54 EXT. - THE HUMAN COLONY

William steels himself and nods, pointing toward the newly fallen building. Half the soldiers dash through the massive puddles. Under William's direction, Beta Squad manages to put the fallen buildings back together again. William watches it all calmly and, above all else, in control.

55 EXT. - THE CITY

Kevin and Irisa are leaning up against a crumbling wall, asleep. Without realizing it, Kevin reaches out and pulls Irisa in towards him. Irisa wakes up, her light blue skin turning bright red. She glances at Kevin and smiles, her skin turning light green. She snuggles in closer and closes her eyes, falling into a contented sleep. As she does, the "MUSIC" from her story fades and....

56 EXT. - THE CITY - TWO OR THREE MONTHS LATER

Irisa and Kevin are gathering up their gear. All traces of animosity are gone. They are giggling and shoving at each other.

KEVIN

I still don't understand why we can't stay here for a little while longer! This is a nice enough place!

IRISA

I agree. But it is forbidden.

(her skin turns a glittering gold)

Our god created these sanctuaries for use only during the Stormy Season. To stay any longer would be a sacrilege....

(her skin turns a deep red)

And you humans have violated enough holy ground to last several lifetimes.

Kevin smirks at her, picking up the remains of his rifle. He adds this to his knapsack. He then picks up another piece of equipment and begins to examine it. He smiles when it starts to beep and blink. Irisa turns to the statue in the center of the city, kneels, crosses her arms, and bows her head. Her skin turns gold as she mumbles a strain of reverent "MUSIC." The equipment in Kevin's hands erupts in a shower of sparks. Its lights die as a small column of smoke seeps out of its case. Kevin looks between it and Irisa, who is still kneeling, and finally tosses the now useless device into the shadows. Irisa stands, her skin turning dark blue, and she turns to Kevin.

IRISA

Shall we go?

57 EXT. - THE JUNGLE

Kevin carefully creeps through the underbrush, a small sensor unit drawn and ready. His eyes warily dart from bush to bush and his whole body is tense, as if ready for an attack. He steals a quick glance at the sensor, but his eyes shoot up as he hears a twig crack. He whirls around, staring wildly at the trees behind him. He takes several deep breaths, trying to calm himself, and he carefully turns back to the jungle. He takes several steps, but then whirls around again, almost as if he was expecting someone to be there. His shoulders slump in disappointment. He begins to turn...and he jumps back, startled, when he sees Irisa standing before him. Her skin flashes a deep red.

IRISA

I win again.

Kevin glares at the sensor in frustration. He finally pockets it.

KEVIN

So it's my turn again?

Irisa nods. She turns and closes her eyes. Kevin ducks off into the bushes. Within seconds, he has come across a large puddle of mud. Kevin eyes it warily, but then smiles. He dives into it, quickly rolling over and over again until his body is completely covered. He smears some of it across his face. Within seconds, he blends in perfectly with the rest of it. It is almost impossible to tell that he's there. A smile begins to play at the corner of his lips. He freezes as Irisa pushes her way purposefully through the underbrush. Instead of searching for him, though, she walks right up to the edge of the puddle. Her skin turns a drab olive green for a second, but that is replaced with a deep, deep red.

IRISA

That is so disgusting!

Kevin jumps out of the mud, clearly annoyed.

KEVIN

I thought that would keep you guessing for at least ten minutes!

IRISA

Don't blame me. I could probably hear you half a mile away.

KEVIN

(confused)

What are you talking about?

IRISA

That annoying whining sound.

KEVIN

I'm not making a whining sound.

IRISA

Yes, you are.

IRISA

(she points at one of his pockets)

It's coming from there.

Kevin frowns and pulls out the sensor pack again. The machine lies silent in his hand. He mulls this over for a second and finally looks up at Irisa.

KEVIN

Can you imitate the sound?

Irisa nods. She opens her mouth, but doesn't make a sound. Suddenly, though, the sensor pack explodes in a shower of sparks. Kevin, surprised, throws it away, shaking his hand as if burned. He stares after the pack for a few seconds before taking Irisa by the hand and leading her back through the jungle. He finally finds his pack of supplies. He rummages through it before he pulls out another device.

KEVIN

Is this one making the same whining sound?

Irisa nods. Kevin flips it over and yanks the power pack out of the device. The lights on the exterior die.

KEVIN

How about now?

Irisa's skin turns orange and she shakes her head. Kevin stares at the device and the power pack in amazement. Suddenly, he starts to chuckle to himself.

KEVIN

Of course! The power packs!

He pulls out some tools from the pack and reinserts the power pack into the device. He quickly pries off an access panel and begins to tinker with the insides.

IRISA

What is it?

KEVIN

We could never figure out how your people could always find us or why our technology breaks down in your presence. I think I finally figured it out. Part of your language must extend into the electromagnetic spectrum. You can hear the power supplies on our devices....

IRISA

(catching on, her skin turning bright red)

.... and our speech interferes with the power packs and causes them to short out!

Kevin makes a few more adjustments to the interior of the device.

KEVIN

Okay, that should do it. I've changed the modulation slightly. We'll see if that works.

(he activates the device)

How about that?

Irisa's skin is suddenly awash with violent brown, olive green, black, and red stripes that course and pulse over her skin. Her hands have slapped to the sides of her head and she collapses to the ground, shuddering in intense agony.

IRISA

(screaming. A hint of her "MUSICAL" voice can be heard through the hiss of the translator)

Shut it off!

A new wave of spasms wrack her body and she screams. Kevin fumbles with the device, finally managing to deactivate it. Irisa's body slumps to the ground, her skin turning a drab olive green.

It almost appears as if she is dead. Kevin carefully drops down next to her and rolls her over, unsure of what to do. Finally, Irisa makes a coughing noise, a quick burst of "MUSIC," almost like a quick run through a scale, and she gingerly sits up.

IRISA

Maybe you should let me work on that.

Kevin has taken the lead, chopping through the underbrush with a sharp machete. Irisa follows a few feet behind, not really paying attention to where she is going. She is concentrating on small adjustments she is making to Kevin's laser rifle. Her skin flashes between orange, pink, dark blue, and purple as she works. Finally, she closes the casing, her skin turning dark blue.

IRISA

There we go! I've not only managed to adjust the modulation on your rifle, I've also managed to increase the gain a little....

Her voice trails off as she realizes that Kevin is staring at something in the jungle. Her skin flashes between violet and pink rapidly as she almost hides behind him.

IRISA

(softly)

What?

KEVIN

What is that?

Irisa follows where Kevin is pointing. When she sees the small clay house that is almost hidden by the underbrush, her body relaxes and her skin turns light blue.

IRISA

You scared me there for a moment. I thought it was more Scavengers. That's a

(she considers her words carefully)

.... well, a House Trap is the best way to describe it.

KEVIN

A what?

IRISA

(starting for the structure)

Are you hungry?

KEVIN

(confused)

Well, kind of...

IRISA

Then come on! You'll love this.

59 GENERAL BRANDT'S OFFICE

Brandt is seated behind his desk, looking over some reports. Coleman is hovering over him like a nervous mother hen, shuffling through the papers quickly and highlighting items that especially need the General's attention.

COLEMAN

And, as I'm sure you know, sir, the Hyde Liberation Front is acting up again.

Brandt groans and closes his eyes painfully.

BRANDT

What have they done now?

COLEMAN

Well, Professor Barber and his entire Comparative Anthropology class have chained themselves to the statue in Landfall Square. They say they won't leave until the Governing Council settles the War peacefully.

BRANDT

Figures. Have Eta Squad seal off the Square and then gently remove the so-called "Hyde Liberation Front." And tell Lieutenant Freeman to give Professor Barber a little talk on why he should avoid doing things like that in the future.

COLEMAN

Yes, sir.

There is a knock at the door.

BRANDT

Enter!

The doors open and William enters. He is still sporting the jagged scar on his cheek, and his months in command of Beta Squad have already hardened his features. While he is still somewhat light-hearted, he is more crisp and efficient. He quickly strides to the front of Brandt's desk and gives him a sharp salute, one that Brandt returns quickly.

WILLIAM

You wanted to see me, sir?

BRANDT

Yes, Isen, sit down.

William does so. Brandt nods to Coleman, who immediately ducks through the door and closes it behind him.

BRANDT

(cont.)

This isn't general knowledge, Lieutenant, and I'm expecting you to keep quiet about it for now. Is that understood?

William nods. Brandt leans over and flips a switch on his computer panel. Part of the bookshelves that line his wall slides away to reveal a massive view screen. What appears to be footage from a security camera appears. It shows the streets of a human colony in the middle of a furious storm. Only a few people are daring to even walk through it.

BRANDT

This was taken at New London University shortly after the Storms started. Watch.

On the screen, the storm continues to rage. Suddenly, though, Hydes appear from out of nowhere. Their bodies are all a uniform brown as they use their weapons to blow open one of the walls. Once the hole is large enough, they pour through the opening and within seconds, they drag humans out of the building, most of them college students. Just as quickly as they appeared, the Hydes disappear into the murky night, dragging their hostages with them. The view screen goes dark. Brandt turns back to William, whose jaw is hanging open in surprise.

WILLIAM

The Hydes actually took hostages? That's incredible!

BRANDT

What's more incredible is the fact that they even risked a military operation like that in the middle of the Storms. Something big is happening, Lieutenant. Nobody is sure of what it is, but we have to be ready for anything. We're trying to figure out where the Hydes have taken them and once our surveillance posts have found anything, Beta Squad will go in to rescue them. Understood?

WILLIAM

Yes sir!

William rises to leave. He's anxious to get out of there quickly.

BRANDT

Speaking of surveillance....

William's shoulders slump, defeated. He didn't get out in time.

WILLIAM

(without turning around)

Lieutenant Andrews is still monitoring Section Seventeen-H.

BRANDT

(with a disgusted groan)

Damn it, Isen! I thought we had an agreement.

(he starts to rise from his chair)

Someone's got to go down there and put her in her place!

William intercepts the General before he stands completely.

WILLIAM

Let me handle it, sir. I know she'll listen to me.

BRANDT

She had better.

60 INT. - THE HOUSE TRAP

The entire interior of this dilapidated old structure is covered with cobwebs. The silky gray webbing covers most of the intricate levers, ropes, and gears that line the walls. The house itself is built over a hole thirty feet in diameter that doesn't seem to have a bottom. A good two or three feet over Kevin's head is a balcony that wraps all the way around the interior of the house. Jagged wooden spears stick out of the bottom of the balcony at intervals of a yard. The ceiling of the house is another thirty feet over the balcony. In the Center of the ceiling is an odd looking harness with an extremely dusty and slightly chipped crystal embedded in it. Kevin looks over the entire thing skeptically.

KEVIN

Now, let me get this straight. There are these giant worms that live beneath the surface of the planet, and you Hydes build these House Trap things to catch them?

Irisa, who is climbing up a rope ladder to the balcony, nods.

IRISA

Yes. A very rare fungus grows in-between the scales of the ... Worms, as you call them. It is considered a delicacy to my people. Very nutritious as well. I think you'll like them.

KEVIN

So you trap the worms here and harvest this fungus?

IRISA

Yes.

KEVIN

How can you be sure that this Worm is even here? This place looks really old! Maybe the Worm is dead or moved on.

IRISA

(motioning for him to join her)

Unlikely. The Worms live for a very long time. Besides, even if the original Worm is dead, its offspring would have taken up residence here. We'll be feasting tonight, Kevin!

KEVIN

(clambering up the ladder after her)

I'll take your word for it. So what do we do? What's the bait?

Irisa's skin flashes violet for a second.

IRISA

In modern House Traps, we use a specially recorded song. The song, when it is vibrated through a crystal like this one ...

(she points to the crystal embedded in the harness)

... attracts the Worm.

Kevin looks at the harness and then at the rest of the balcony.

KEVIN

So where's the recording equipment?

IRISA

(she hesitates for a second before speaking)

Older House Traps like this one were built before we developed

recording equipment. We had to do the singing ourselves.

KEVIN

(his face going pale as he realizes what she means)

You mean....

IRISA

(nodding)

I'm the bait.

61 INT. - THE MONITORING STATION

Victoria breezes in with a cheerful smile. Several of the monitoring technicians look up and wave. She steps over to a small shelf and grabs a cup of coffee for herself.

VICTORIA

Hi, fellas! How's it going?

She sits down at her station and logs in. This station has become her home away from home. Various trinkets and momentous line the cubicle. A hologram of her and Kevin is tucked away in one corner, along with several two dimensional paintings of Hyde landscapes. Finally, the computer screen comes to life, showing an aerial view of the jungle. Victoria leans back, taking a small sip of coffee.

WILLIAM

(O.S.)

Victoria...

Victoria jumps, almost spilling her drink. She whips around and laughs when she sees William standing next to her.

VICTORIA

William! You scared me half to death!

(she starts to turn back to the screen)

Pull up a chair and regale me with tales about how you and Beta Squad are doing. It'll help me pass the time.

WILLIAM

(his voice firm, yet he doesn't know what to say)

Victoria ... you know why I'm here.

Victoria quickly busies herself with fine tuning the remote cameras that are watching Section

Seventeen-H. She does, but she doesn't want to admit it.

VICTORIA

(nervously)

I take it that it's not just to say "Hi."

WILLIAM

The Stormy Season is over, Victoria. Alpha Squad is waiting for their commander to come back.

VICTORIA

(suddenly hostile, turning on him)

They can keep on waiting then! I'm not giving up hope! Kevin could still be out there! Somebody needs to watch for him!

WILLIAM

(more gently this time, his hand on her shoulder)

Victoria...

Tears are beginning to stream down her face. This is the first time that she's been confronted with the "reality" of Kevin's death in months and it's still just as painful as it was before the Storms. William looks around the monitoring station nervously. Most people, though, have chosen to ignore them. He drops down on one knee next to her.

WILLIAM

(continuing in a whisper)

Kevin's death hurt me as well. It sucks, but we have to face facts. He could never have survived the Storms out in the open. We have to move on with our lives.

Victoria nods, defeated.

VICTORIA

Can I ...

(she chokes back a sob, but then swallows, determined)

... can I at least spend one last hour here. Sort of to say good-bye?

William smiles and gives her shoulder a quick, reassuring squeeze.

WILLIAM

Sure. I'll say good-bye with you as well.

William quickly grabs a chair and sits next to her. They both stare at the screen, too overcome

with emotion to say a word.

62 INT. - THE HOUSE TRAP - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Kevin is helping Irisa into the harness over the pit. Irisa's skin is a combination of black and violet hues that pulse and throb throughout her body as she moves.

IRISA

Now, once that flange ...

(she indicates one with a nod of her head)

... drops, what do you do?

KEVIN

I count to ten and throw the larger lever. The time-release springs will fire and trap the Worm by the collar. I then release you, we harvest the fungus, and then set the release mechanism and get the hell out of here.

IRISA

Right.

Kevin pulls the final strap tight. The two of them stand there, unsure of what to do next. Irisa's skin has turned completely black and she looks away from Kevin, almost shyly. Finally, Kevin clears his throat, leans over, and gives her a quick kiss on the cheek. Her eyes widen in surprise as a small burst of light green radiates through her skin. The meaning of the moment is not lost on her.

KEVIN

(lamely)

Good hunting.

Kevin turns and hoists Irisa into place. As soon as she is dead Center over the hole, she squirms a bit to get comfortable, takes a few deep breaths, and begins to "SING." Her body begins to pulsate with a whole spectrum of colors. Soon, the crystal begins to hum in harmony with Irisa's voice and it vibrates gently in the harness. Kevin glances down at the hole skeptically.

62 INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE TRAP - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

The vibrations and resulting harmony are becoming louder and louder. The coloration of her body can only be described as chaotic, wave after wave of color crashing through every fiber and sinew. Kevin waits tensely by the levers, his hand hovering over the appropriate one. Suddenly, a low growl echoes up the hole. Kevin's eyes go wide with fear. He glances at Irisa,

whose eyes are locked down the whole. She does manage a quick glance at him and nods. Kevin's fingers gingerly wrap around the handle, his arm tensing. His eyes are now glued to the flange. Nothing happens for several tense seconds until finally, the flange suddenly falls away, striking the floor with a loud "THUD." Kevin slowly begins the count under his breath.

KEVIN

(whispering)

One ... two ... three ... four ... five ... six ... seven ...

KEVIN

(glances up at Irisa and gives her a reassuring smile)

... eight ... nine ...

Irisa's body suddenly flashes to complete black. She stops "SINGING" and reactivates the translation collar.

IRISA

What are you doing? You're waiting too long! Throw the lever!

Kevin stares at her in shock, dumbfounded.

KEVIN

You said count to ten!

IRISA

Throw the lever!

KEVIN

(still not getting it)

But...

IRISA

(desperately, as she begins to struggle with the straps)

Kevin, throw the damn lever!

Kevin finally snaps out of it and yanks on the lever with all his might. It easily slides forward, and Kevin is immediately crawling up the scaffolding to get to Irisa. She has already managed to pull one arm free.

IRISA

We have to hurry. The Worm will....

It is too late. With surprising speed, the Worm explodes out of the whole, a horrific creature

with a mottled brown body and fiery red around its neck. The rest of the creature's body is unprotected. It heads straight for Irisa. A mouth full of thousands of jagged teeth open wide in a bellow of absolute fury. Just as the worm is about to snap its mouth shut, though, a series of springs fire and drive the sharpened wooden poles into the Worm's side. The creature is stopped mere inches from Irisa's body. She stares at the creature in shock, her body turning black, white, olive green, and purple, all at the same time. The Worm continues to struggle against the poles, which have impaled it. Its body is quaking violently as it tries to shake itself free. The entire house is beginning to creak and to groan under the stress. Dust is beginning to fill the air, shaken free from thousands of nooks and crannies. The Worm opens and shuts its mouth several times, trying desperately to latch on to Irisa.

KEVIN

Don't move!

Irisa casts a wild look in his direction but obeys. Kevin carefully draws his knife and shimmies his way along the support columns. The wooden beams protest his movements, but he doesn't let go. Within seconds, he is by Irisa's side, also hanging directly over the Worm's mouth. Keeping one eye on the immense creature at all times, Kevin carefully slices through the harness. The minutes she's free, Irisa throws her arms around Kevin's neck and he slowly begins to work his way back down to the balcony. The Worm continues to struggle against its bonds, only now it is able to shake loose small pieces of plaster and wood. Kevin and Irisa back away from the snarling, bellowing creature and quickly dash out the front door.

63 INT. - THE MONITORING STATION

Victoria and William still sit by the monitor, staring at it mutely. Finally, William glances at the chronometer on the wall, pats Victoria on the shoulder, and rises to his feet. He starts for the exit, glancing over his shoulder to see if Victoria is following him. She finally rises to her feet as well, brushes away a tear, and runs her hand over the monitor.

VICTORIA

Good-bye, Kevin....

64 EXT. - THE HOUSE TRAP

Kevin and Irisa jog to a halt and stop there. Irisa is still trembling slightly, but the coloration of her skin is beginning to calm down. Bits of light blue are beginning to show through her otherwise purple and black skin. Kevin keels over, breathing heavily. He finally looks up at her.

KEVIN

Are you all right?

IRISA

(managing a weak nod)

I think so. Just a little frightened, that's all.

Kevin is about to say something, but he never gets the chance. Without warning, the House Trap seems to explode behind them. They both have to duck to avoid getting hit by flying debris. Kevin and Irisa finally look up and, much to their horror, the Worm is free. The remains of the wooden stakes are jutting from its body, but with a bellow of rage, it slams into the ground and begins to chase them. Without even thinking, Kevin grabs Irisa by the hand and runs as fast as he can. The Worm, amazingly enough, is hot on their trail, tearing up the landscape as it pursues the people who wounded it. After a close chase through the jungle, Kevin and Irisa manage to drop behind a rock. Kevin quickly pulls his laser rifle from his back pack and hoists it up to his shoulder. He lines up his sights with the Worm, which is just a few feet away and gaining rapidly, and squeezes the trigger. He is not prepared for what happens next. A massive crimson shaft of light erupts from the barrel and slices through the Worm, thoroughly frying it in the process. The remains of the Worm explode in a brilliant fireball. The recoil of the weapon easily throws Kevin off of his feet, sending him flying through the air a good two or three yards. He finally comes to rest in a large bush.

65 INT. - MONITORING STATION

Victoria whips around at the sight of a massive explosion on the monitor.

VICTORIA

What the hell was that?

William is immediately by her side.

WILLIAM

What is it?

VICTORIA

I don't know. Some sort of explosion. I'm having the computer replay it now...

The two friends hunch over the monitor, watching as the computer replays the explosion in slow motion, a series of numbers scrolling by rapidly along the side.

65 EXT. - THE JUNGLE

Kevin carefully pulls himself out of the bushes, blinking in shock. Irisa is immediately at his side, her skin awash with light green, deep red, purple, and silver.

IRISA

Are you all right?

Kevin nods, dazed. He finally looks at the rifle and then back at Irisa.

KEVIN

Upped the gain a little?

Irisa shrugs and smiles, deep red rippling over her body. She helps him out of the bush and dusts him off.

IRISA

Well, you wouldn't have had to use it if you had just pulled the lever when you were supposed to.

Kevin stares at her, dumbfounded.

KEVIN

What are you talking about? I hadn't even reached ten!

IRISA

You should have. Do humans just count slow?

KEVIN

No.

IRISA

Then you should have pulled the lever! It's just a simple matter of counting ...

(she counts on her fingers)

one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, ten.

KEVIN

What about eight and nine?

IRISA

(confused, her body turning orange)

Eight and nine?

KEVIN

Yeah, you know,

(now he counts on his fingers)

one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

Kevin stares at Irisa's eight extended fingers as she stares at his ten, surprised. Suddenly, Kevin's eyes go wide and he starts to laugh. Irisa does as well.

KEVIN

I should have known. You guys count in base eight!

As they laugh, they climb over the rock towards the remains of the Worm, most of which are strewn all around the jungle.

KEVIN

I hope you like your fungus fried...

66 INT. - MONITORING STATION

Victoria and William watch as the computer finishes its analysis of the explosion. A small dialogue box appears on the screen, listing what it found. Victoria's eyes go wide and she turns to William, who can only gape at the screen. Without saying a word, they both turn and head for the door.

67 INT. - GENERAL BRANDT'S OFFICE

Brandt is conferring with Coleman over some documents when the doors to his office crash open. The two men look up in genuine surprise as Victoria jogs into the office, William close behind.

BRANDT

Don't you people know how to knock?

VICTORIA

(ignoring what he said)

Kevin is alive, sir.

BRANDT

(frustrated)

Now I've had just about enough of that, Lieutenant. I know that the two of you were close, and I was willing to indulge you during the Storms, but ...

WILLIAM

No, she's right, General. He is alive and well and in Sector Seventeen-H.

Brandt stares at William dumbfounded. He didn't expect this from William.

BRANDT

What are you talking about?

68 INT. - BRANDT'S OFFICE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Brandt is now seated behind his desk again. Coleman is hovering over his right shoulder while William is seated on the other side of the General's desk. The main view screen is lit up with a slowed replay of the explosion. Victoria is standing by the view screen, ready to point out various details.

VICTORIA

At time index 8432.8, you'll noticed the sudden movement in the trees here

(she indicates one section of trees that are suddenly thrown in every direction)

That is followed by a massive explosion.

Sure enough, a massive fireball erupts in another part of the jungle. Victoria smiles at Brandt triumphantly. The General, however, is eyeing her skeptically.

BRANDT

So what does that prove? If I remember correctly, that part of the planet has been geologically unstable for the past six years. It could have been a ground quake followed by a release of natural gas that ignited....

WILLIAM

(interrupting)

With all due respect, General, that's what we thought it was as well at first. Then we did a full computer analysis. Show him.

Victoria touches several controls on the wall next to the view screen. The image on the screen magnifies and starts again in extreme slow motion. Seconds before the explosion, there is a small flash of bright red light that is visible through the trees. Victoria punches a button, freezing the image. She points at the red light victoriously.

VICTORIA

There you go, sir. According to the computer, that is the discharge from a laser weapon. A human laser weapon.

Brandt stares at the screen for several seconds. Finally, he turns back to William, who shrugs.

WILLIAM

As you know, sir, we can't tell if there is a human there, but Kevin was the last human in the area. He must have found some shelter from the Storms.

Brandt doesn't say a word. Instead, he stares at the hologram of Kevin and his father. Victoria takes a few tentative steps forward.

VICTORIA

If anything, General, this should be investigated. Even if it isn't Kevin, we need to know what caused that explosion. If the Hydes are on the move...

Brandt holds up a hand, silencing her. She bites her lower lip, nervously, almost as if she expects the General to punish her in some way. Finally, Brandt looks up at William.

BRANDT

Lieutenant Isen, assemble Beta Squad. You'll leave base in half an hour to investigate the area. Find out what ... or who... caused that explosion.

William nods enthusiastically and dashes out of the door. Brandt turns to Victoria, who is smiling in triumph. That smile vanishes at the sight of Brandt's stern expression.

BRANDT

As for you, young lady ...
(he rises from his chair, comes around the desk, and
Victoria tenses in anticipation. Finally, he pats her

on the shoulder with a warm smile)
... good job.

Victoria returns the smile and proudly walks out of the office, vindicated.

69 EXT. - THE JUNGLE, TWO HOURS LATER

Kevin and Irisa are working their way through the dense underbrush. Kevin's uniform is saturated with sweat and is clinging to his body. He is extremely tired, but he refuses to give up. Occasionally, he casts furtive glances in Irisa's direction, as if he is unsure of what to say or how to say it. Irisa, for her part, is seemingly oblivious to her surroundings. Her skin is a gently undulating sea of light and dark green. She also is casting looks in Kevin's direction. Finally, Kevin collapses onto a log with a groan.

KEVIN

That's it. I have to take a break.

Irisa doesn't say a word. She immediately drops down next to Kevin, sitting very close to him. Kevin eyes her carefully, but he doesn't seem to mind. As a matter of fact, he rather enjoys her presence. He doesn't say anything, though, but pulls out a small device. He activates it and waves it around the area, finally looking at the readings carefully.

KEVIN

(satisfied)

We're right on track. Another three days of this, and we'll be at Garbhan City.

Irisa looks away, a ripple of violet washing through her otherwise green skin. She glances down at the ground for a second before speaking.

IRISA

What will happen to me when we get there?

Kevin pauses, unsure of what to say. He looks at her, regret and worry flashing across his face for a split second. He quickly hides it, though.

KEVIN

I'm not sure. We've never had a ...

(he doesn't want to use the word "prisoner.")

... guest like you before. I'd be willing to bet that our scientists will want to look you over, talk to you...

IRISA
(quiet and frightened)
... dissect me?

KEVIN
(giving her a horrified look, but trying to
reassure her)
Not if I have anything to do with it! No, at the most, they'd
give you a complete physical examination, try to figure out
what makes you think the way you do.

IRISA
And after that?

KEVIN
(he can only shrug)
I honestly don't know... really. You probably won't be free.
You'll be kept under guard the rest of your life.... I don't know.

IRISA
Would you come and see me?

Kevin smiles and pats her hand reassuringly.

KEVIN
You had better believe I would.

Kevin's hand lingers on Irisa's for a few seconds. Irisa's skin flares to a dark, dark green as she stares into his eyes. Kevin's breathing becomes heavy for a few seconds, but he finally manages to clear his throat and stands up.

KEVIN
That's ... that's long enough.

He starts out again, Irisa close behind. She seems to be hesitating slightly, another violet ripple pulsing over her skin.

IRISA
What about ... what about you? Will you go back to the military?

Kevin frowns, considering it. Finally, he shakes his head.

KEVIN
I don't think so. I mean, it's been a part of my life for such a long

time, but I'm beginning to think that I could find happiness elsewhere.
Settle down ... maybe raise a family.

Irisa's skin suddenly flares to an ugly yellow.

IRISA

With ...
(her voice is suddenly venomous)
... Victoria?

KEVIN

(laughing to himself)
Oh, no. Not Victoria. She may want something like that,
especially with me, but I don't think of her that way.
(he glances at Irisa quickly)
At least, not anymore.

Kevin keeps on walking, but Irisa has stopped. Her skin is awash with light green, dark blue, black, and violet hues. She hesitates, studying Kevin carefully. Finally, she starts after him.

IRISA

Kevin ...
(she hesitates again, unsure of how to say this)
... I'm glad that I found you out in the jungle.

KEVIN

(smiles at her)
So am I.

IRISA

You mean a lot to me.

KEVIN

You mean a lot to me too, Irisa.
(he stops in his tracks, hesitating for a second)
I don't know what my life would be like without you.

That's all she needs to hear. Without saying another word, Irisa crosses over to him. Kevin tenses in anticipation, not sure of what she's going to do. He even begins to pucker up, ready to kiss her. Instead, Irisa suddenly backhands him, sending him reeling. He begins to recover, but she slams another fist across his jaw. He stares at her in shock as she continues to pummel him with blows around his head and gut. Finally, she backs away, and with a harmonic "SHRIEK," tackles him to the ground.

IRISA

You son of a bitch! You lying, cheating bastard! I'll rip you to shreds!

Kevin, dumbfounded, doesn't know what to do. He tries to fend off Irisa's attack as best as he can, but she continues to beat him, occasionally "SHRIEKING."

IRISA

You total piece of shit! You aren't worth the flesh you inhabit!

Irisa grabs Kevin by the hair and starts to slam his head into the mud over and over and over. Kevin finally becomes so angry that he throws her off of him. Irisa hits the ground, her skin suddenly turning bright red.

IRISA

What is it?

KEVIN

(simultaneously)

What the hell is wrong with you?

IRISA

But I...

KEVIN

I thought you just said you cared about me? Is that how you show it?

IRISA

You don't understand!

She starts to go to him, her arms outstretched, her skin turning light green again. Kevin, though, backs away from her, a revolted expression on his face.

KEVIN

Get the hell away from me, you Hyde bitch!

IRISA

But Kevin, I...

Suddenly, ten Hyde WARRIORS burst from the jungle, their weapons drawn and ready. The LEADER is on Irisa immediately, pulling her away. In the struggle, the translation collar is ripped from her throat and lands on the ground. The end of her statement is a “SCREAM” of “MUSIC.”

Subtitle: ...love you! Kevin, I love you!

Irisa is pulled away from him, kicking and fighting the whole time. Kevin starts to go after her, but the Leader levels his weapon on him. The Leader's skin turns a sickening mix of brown and gray. He is about to squeeze the trigger when a red laser beam slices over his shoulder. He looks up, his skin turning bright red, as William and the rest of Beta Squad drop out of the bushes, their rifles drawn and ready.

WILLIAM

Back off!

The Leader eyes the humans warily before finally pulling out a translation collar of his own. He straps it to his throat.

LEADER

I see you have come for your man as well.

William blinks in surprise, but doesn't lower the rifle. He jerks his head towards Kevin, and two of the Squad's members quickly rush forward and check him over. Kevin tries to wave them away, but they ignore him.

LEADER

Since we have both come for what we are looking for,
I suggest we leave and pretend like this never happened.

WILLIAM

(after some thought)
Sounds good to me.

LEADER

Very well.

The two groups begin to back away, never taking their eyes off the other.

WILLIAM

(suddenly)
Wait!

The Hydes freeze, their weapons suddenly snapping up to firing position. William raises his hands slightly and steps forward.

WILLIAM

During the Stormy Season, you took some hostages from one of our cities. Are they safe?

The Leader glances at some of his compatriots. His skin flares to orange for a second, but then resolves back to mottled brown and gray.

LEADER

They are fine. As a matter of fact, we have no more use for them. Since we have recovered our ...

(he hesitates, not wanting to indicate who Irisa really is lest the humans decide to try and capture her)

... missing friend here, we will release them.

William nods and the two groups begin to back away again. Kevin looks to Irisa, who is still struggling against her captors, but then hangs his head and turns away. As he does, he notices Irisa's dropped translation collar and quickly picks it up, pocketing it. Irisa's skin turns light green for a split second, but then slowly fades to white as her body begins to quiver and she cries, a pathetic, mourning "MUSIC" that seems to haunt Kevin as his friends lead him away.

70 EXT. - A HUMAN COLONY

Brandt paces back and forth nervously. Victoria is at his side, scanning the skies anxiously. Finally, she points up excitedly, stopping Brandt in his tracks. The transport is coming in for a landing. As soon as the massive vehicle has settled on the ground, the ramp slides open and William trudges out, his face grim. He marches over to Brandt and offers him a sharp salute. Brandt returns it, clearly wanting William to just say it. Finally, a brilliant smile breaks across William's face.

WILLIAM

Mission accomplished, sir.

William steps aside to reveal Kevin, who is being helped down the ramp by two SOLDIERS. Victoria can barely contain her excitement. She dashes across the tarmac and almost tackles Kevin, throwing her arms around him. Kevin staggers for a second, but manages to hug her back. While it appears as if he is just as happy to see her, his eyes reveal an inner sadness. Brandt, of course, is considerably more restrained, although he can barely hide his excitement as well. He walks up to Kevin, who manages a weak salute. Brandt returns it, then claps Kevin

on the shoulders in welcome.

71 INT. - THE WARLORD'S THRONE ROOM

The room is an organic assembly of mud and thatch, one with no real corners and no hard lines. It seems as if it grew out of the ground rather than was built. Flickering, artificial lights are sporadically placed throughout the room, casting an almost eery pall over everyone. At the Center of the room is the WARLORD: Chieftain of his clan, supreme leader of the Clan Conclave, and Irisa's father. He is a menacing hulk of a Hyde with muscles that ripple underneath his iridescent skin, which is, at the moment, a dull gray. Hovering in the background is Irisa's MOTHER, a diminutive female Hyde. Her motions are quick and nervous, much like a mother hen. Her skin is a mixture of black, olive green, white, and silver. Suddenly, the doors to the room burst open and the Leader drags Irisa into the room. He throws her to the floor in front of the Warlord, points an accusing finger at her, and begins a barrage of "MUSIC" that seems to be augmented by the changing colors of his skin. First his skin is a mixture of pink and orange. As the "MUSIC" becomes more and more harsh, the Leader's skin turns brown and gray. Finally, the Leader's skin flashes to silver, then to gold as he bows before the Warlord, his "MUSIC" reverent and respectful. The Warlord leaps out of his seat, his skin color a mix of brown and gray. He thunders a barrage of harsh "MUSIC" down on Irisa. The MOTHER immediately steps forward, her "MUSIC" pleading with him, her skin a mixture of white, violet, and olive green. Irisa, the whole time, remains in a heap on the floor, her skin completely white, her body gently vibrating with sobs.

72 INT. - DEBRIEFING ROOM - THREE DAYS LATER

The room itself is somewhat stark. It's colors are muted and the decor leaves something to be desired. The only pieces of furniture are two chairs with a large, metal table in the Center. Kevin is half-seated, half-slumped in one. DR. REGINALD KINGSLY occupies the other. Kingsly is a psychologist and wears comfortable blue hospital scrubs. A miniature computer sits in front of Kingsly and he occasionally taps in some quick notes as Kevin is speaking.

KEVIN

... and then she spent two weeks teaching me the Hyde alphabet. Pretty easy to learn. I think I may have even picked up a few words in her native language as well.

KINGSLY

Go on.

KEVIN

At any rate, the Storms eventually stopped and she insisted that

we continue on to Garbhan City. At one point, we stopped at something called a "House Trap" to gather some food, but that kind of backfired. I guess that's how you all knew where to find me. Kingsly smiles warmly and records some more observations into the computer.

KEVIN

(cont.)

A few hours after I killed the Worm, I was rescued by Beta Squad and brought back here. So, Doc, am I psycho?

Kingsly laughs good-naturedly.

73 INT. - BRANDT'S OFFICE - TWO HOURS LATER

Brandt is seated behind his desk watching a recording of Kingsly's session with Kevin. Kingsly himself is seated nearby as well, consulting his computer occasionally. Also present is MAJOR FRANK WINCHESTER, the head of the Hydran Security Force's Intelligence Division. The Major is a hard man, one who never smiles and shows his emotions even less. His whole body radiates a detached interest in the events around him. Coleman hovers in the background, fixing drinks for the other three men. Brandt turns to Kingsly, ignoring the recorded interview.

BRANDT

Lieutenant MacInnes raises an interesting question, Doctor. Is he mentally unstable in any way, shape, or form?

Kingsly hesitates, looking away from Brandt, before he answers.

KINGSLY

Not in any dangerous way, I can assure you. This whole situation was quite traumatic for him, what with being cooped up with a Hyde for three months in an underground cavern. It's enough to tax any of us, but Lieutenant MacInnes is a remarkably strong individual. He seems to have weathered it just fine.

BRANDT

(turning to Winchester)

Major, your thoughts on all this?

WINCHESTER

Sir, this is the best thing that could have happened for us. Lieutenant MacInnes has given us so much information about

the Hydes, we don't know what to do with it all. The fact that they count in base eight, that one frequency that caused the Hyde woman tremendous pain, where they go during the
WINCHESTER

(cont.)

Stormy Season ... we'll be sifting through it all for months!

The three men turn back to the view screen. Kevin is staring at the table mutely. His face has gone completely limp and his eyes are almost vacant.

KINGSLY

(from the recording)

Kevin?

Kevin blinks and looks up, surprised. His eyes, though, remain vacant and somewhat disjointed.

KEVIN

Huh?

Brandt turns back to Kingsly.

BRANDT

What about Lieutenant MacInnes now? How soon can he return to active duty?

Kingsly hesitates, looking at Kevin on the view screen.

KINGSLY

That's very hard to say, sir. Lieutenant MacInnes has been severely traumatized by his experience. I'm not sure he would be all that effective on the front line.

BRANDT

(slightly disgusted)

What are you saying, Doctor? MacInnes was one of the best field commanders I have! What am I supposed to do with him now?

KINGSLY

(shrugging)

That's not my place to say, sir. To be fully honest with you, I'm not even sure the Lieutenant wants to fight the Hydes anymore. It might be a version of the Stockholm Syndrome, I just don't know.

Coleman clears his throat from behind Brandt. The three men glance at him, somewhat annoyed.

COLEMAN

If I may be so bold, sirs; General Brandt, you never did respond to Professor Hanson's request for an expert on the Hydes.

Brandt stares at Coleman blankly for a second, then smiles craftily.

BRANDT

That's perfect, Coleman. Good thinking.

The smaller man smiles, slightly embarrassed. Brandt turns back to Kingsly.

BRANDT

(cont.)

How about it, Doctor? Could Kevin handle a job helping Professor Hanson at some archaeological dig?

KINGSLY

(after considering it)

I don't see why not. It may actually help him unwind slightly.

The three men turn back to the view screen again. Kevin is now staring out of a window vacantly.

KINGSLY

(on the recording)

Now, this female Hyde, what was her name?

Kevin half-laughs, half-snorts.

KEVIN

She told me her name once. There was no way that I could pronounce it.

KINGSLY

And yet, even though you were trapped with her for three months, you didn't give her a name?

KEVIN

(a brief look of pain flashes over his face,

but it vanishes just as quickly)
No. Why should I? It's not like she meant anything to me.

74 INT. - THE WARLORD'S DWELLING

The Warlord paces about his private dwelling chamber, his skin a mixture of violet and muted grays. With barely a sound, Irisa's Mother enters the room, her skin a mixture of white and black. The Warlord turns on her. He fires off an inquisitive burst of "MUSIC," his skin turning pink.

SUBTITLE: "What did she say? Has she agreed to drop this nonsense and marry the Prince?"

Mother shakes her head, her skin turning completely white. She responds with mournful chord of "MUSIC."

SUBTITLE: "No. She refuses to leave her room."

Without warning, the Warlord's skin turns a harsh gray tone and he shoves past his wife through the door she just left.

75 INT. - IRISA'S ROOM

The room itself is a harmonious blend of bright colors painted over organic archways and bubbles. If there is any furniture in the room, it is so thoroughly blended into the surroundings as to be undetectable. In the center of the room is a small pit, and Irisa is curled up in it in an almost fetal position, her skin a pasty white. Suddenly, the Warlord bursts into the room. She doesn't even acknowledge his presence. His skin is still gray and he fires angry, discordant "MUSIC" at her.

SUBTITLE: "You still refuse?"

Irisa doesn't even look at her. She begins a "MUSICAL" keening, one that evokes nothing but sorrow and anguish.

SUBTITLE: "I don't love him, Father! I never will. My heart belongs to someone else...."

The Warlord's skin flashes to pure brown for a second, but he forces himself to calm down. His skin actually turns a light green and he crouches down by Irisa's side. His slender fingers begin to run over her head gently. His touch evokes ribbons of sky blue on her scalp, but little else. He COOS to her.

SUBTITLE: "I know you don't love him, but this is for the best of our Clan. Once you are married, his Clan and ours will merge. We will become one. We need that."
Irisa jerks away from her father's touch and bits off harsh "MUSIC."

SUBTITLE: "I don't care! I don't love him!"

The Warlord's skin turns gray again. He jumps to his feet, screaming a "MUSICAL" epithet at her.

SUBTITLE: "How can you love a human that much? It's sacrilege!"

Irisa finally confronts her father, her own skin flashing gray, light green, olive green, black, and white all at the same time. She responds with a "MUSICAL" scream of her own.

SUBTITLE: "I don't care! I love Kevin! You can't make me marry the Prince!"

The Warlord's lip twitches slightly, the Hyde equivalent of a snarl. Low and ominous "MUSIC" rumbles from his lips.

SUBTITLE: "We shall see."

With that, he turns and storms out of the room. Irisa stares after him defiantly, her skin still a maelstrom of colors and hues. Once he has left, though, it fades back to pasty white and she collapses into the pit again, her body vibrating with sobs.

76 EXT. - A HUMAN CAMP IN SECTION SIXTEEN-D - A WEEK LATER

Kevin steps out of a transport, a duffel bag over his shoulder and he looks around the camp dully. He is followed by Victoria, William, and five other soldiers. The three friends look at the tents critically. They are deployed in a small field haphazardly with no order. COLLEGE STUDENTS run around the camp, laughing as if they were on a camping trip.

VICTORIA

This is not good.

WILLIAM

You're not joking. No perimeter, the tents aren't organized.
This is a slaughter waiting to happen.

HANSON

(o.s.)

Well, excuse us, Lieutenants, we're scholars, not soldiers. That's why I requested you people four months ago. I'm glad to see the General finally got to me.

Hanson strolls over to the group, a friendly smile on his face. He indicates an open space to one side of the camp with his head.

HANSON

(cont.)

You guys can set up your gear over there. I'll stay out of your hair if you stay out of mine.

Victoria and William glance at each other and shrug. Finally, William turns to the other soldiers and starts barking out orders. Before she leaves, Victoria turns to Kevin and places a warm hand on his arm.

VICTORIA

You'll be okay if we get set up.

Kevin doesn't respond. Although it is clear she wants to stay with him, Victoria finally turns and joins the other soldiers. Hanson steps up beside him and watches the soldiers methodically set up their own small camp.

HANSON

Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't those two commanders of two totally different companies? Why are they here?

KEVIN

(softly)

They're friends. They're worried about me.

HANSON

I see.

(claps his hands together enthusiastically)

And I take it you're our expert on the ... Hydes? You actually spent three months with one?

Kevin nods, his face pained for a second.

HANSON

(cont.)

And do you have the device?

Kevin nods again. He reaches into his bag and pulls out the translation collar. Hanson's eyes

practically gleam at this treasure. He gingerly takes it from Kevin and motions for one of his students to come over. As soon as she does, he hands it to her.

HANSON

Look this over and figure out how we can splice it into what we have already.

The student nods and runs off toward a small embankment. Hanson turns back to Kevin and smiles.

HANSON

You want to see what we're all about here?

77 INT. - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB

A small room has been dug out of the ground and from the architecture, it was clearly made by the Hydes. Even though they are crumbling, the walls still retain their almost fluid appearance. Kevin and Hanson have to duck as they climb down the opening. Several students are busy at work, using delicate instruments to reveal more and more of the room. Kevin looks it over with mute interest as Hanson beams like a proud parent.

HANSON

When we first found this city, we weren't exactly sure how old it was. I mean, Hydras A IV has a tendency to bury things rather quickly. You can imagine how surprised we were when we discovered it was abandoned just three years ago.

KEVIN

They must have left when we made that incursion into this Section.

HANSON

(nodding)

That's what we think as well. At first, we were just happy to have the city itself. And then we found this.

Hanson motions to one corner of the room. Kevin looks over and his eyes grow wide with surprise. What appears to be a Hyde computer fills one corner of the room. The viewscreen, while a strange geometric bulge in the wall, is clearly visible. A set of controls that seem to follow no set logic dominates the wall underneath the screen. Strange symbols and hieroglyphics that incorporate color are scattered over the controls as well.

KEVIN

Does it work?

HANSON

(nodding again)

Oh, yes. It's still operational. The problem was, we didn't have any idea how to understand the written language or the output. That's why I was so happy when General Brandt agreed to loan us the translation collar. I understand you know the Hyde alphabet.

KEVIN

Yes. Iri...

(Kevin closes his eyes painfully for a second.

He steels himself, then continues)

The Hyde woman taught it to me. I'm not sure if I could read any of this, though.

HANSON

That's okay. But if you could teach it to us, we could probably decipher most of it.

KEVIN

What else do you want me to do?

HANSON

Until we get the collar in synch with the terminal, not much. Once we can access the databanks, though, I'll want you in here to help interpret what we find. I know that spending three months in a cave with one native doesn't make you an expert, but you're the closest thing we have. Okay?

Kevin nods, staring at the screen.

78 INT. - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB - A WEEK LATER

Kevin is seated behind the computer terminal, pensively tapping out some commands. The screen still remains dark.

HANSON

(o.s.)

How's that?

Kevin taps a few more controls, and the machine still doesn't respond.

KEVIN

Still getting nothing, Doc!

Hanson pulls himself out from behind the computer, his clothing covered with grime, some of which is brown, green, and there are even a few streaks of red. Kevin's eyes widen for a second....

79 EXT. - THE CITY

In a flashback, Kevin sees Irisa laughing, her skin irridisHyde with a whole rainbow of colors.

80 INT. - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB

Kevin is staring forward blankly.

HANSON

Kevin!

Kevin blinks and looks at the Professor. Hanson wears a concerned look on his face and the computer terminal is long forgotten.

HANSON

(cont.)

Are you okay?

KEVIN

(trying to act like everything is fine)

Uh ... yeah. Sorry. Just was ... thinking of something else, that's all.

Hanson considers Kevin skeptically for a moment. It's clear he doesn't completely believe him, but rather than press the issue, he grabs a different tool and shimmies his way underneath the computer terminal again.

HANSON

Like I was saying, I was sure that we would....

Kevin is drifting off again. He leans back in the chair, his eyes drifting off into space...

81 EXT. - THE CITY

In another flashback/day dream, Kevin sees himself and Irisa running through the streets and alleys of the underground shelter. Kevin is chasing Irisa, whose skin is a deep red. Finally, Kevin manages to catch her and gently tackles her to the ground. They wrestle playfully for a few moments before Kevin stares deeply into her eyes. Finally, just as Kevin is beginning to lean forward to kiss her

VICTORIA

(v.o.)

Kevin?

82 INT. - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB

Kevin jumps, startled. Victoria is standing behind Kevin, wearing a concerned expression. He smiles at her weakly, trying to reassure her.

VICTORIA

Are you okay?

KEVIN

Yeah, I'm fine. Just ... thinking about something else, that's all. Didn't mean to scare you.

VICTORIA

Well, I'm about to go on patrol. Just thought I'd stop in to say "Hi."

KEVIN

(wanting her to leave)

"Hi."

Victoria checks to make sure no one is looking and then leans over Kevin's shoulder. Kevin manages to suppress a wince.

VICTORIA

(whispering seductively)

Do you want to come over to my tent later tonight? I'll be back from patrol at 0100.

KEVIN

I'll think about it. I've ... uh ... I've got a lot of work to do here, and I might be up all night.

VICTORIA

(disappointed)

Oh.

(brightening, that same seductive look in her eye)

Maybe some other time, lover.

With that, she caresses his chest and slinks up the stairs. Hanson pulls himself out from under the terminal, a confused look on his face.

HANSON

You know, Kev, if you want some time off yet tonight, that can be arranged.

KEVIN

(letting out a half relieved, half frustrated sigh)

No, Doc, that's fine. Trust me.

HANSON

(regarding him skeptically again)

If you say so.

Hanson stands up and grabs another tool. He pries a panel off of the side and begins to fiddle with the interior parts. Kevin slowly pivots back and forth in his chair, his eyes dark and brooding. Finally, he looks up at Hanson.

KEVIN

Doc, do you really think that Hydes and humans can live together?

Hanson snorts, amused, and continues to work.

HANSON

I wouldn't have helped found the Hyde Liberation Front if I didn't. Besides, I would say you're living proof that we can.

Kevin looks up, both surprised and guilty.

KEVIN

What do you mean?

HANSON

Well, you were trapped underground with a Hyde for three months and you survived with no visible scars. I would say that's progress, if anything.

Suddenly, the viewscreen comes to life. Dizzying colors flash by at incredible speeds. Kevin jumps, startled. Hanson lets out a hoot of joy and comes around. He stares at it in pure delight.

HANSON

Perfect!

KEVIN

Perfect? This is nauseating.

HANSON

Don't worry. This is just a test pattern. The computer will kick in right about....now.

The colors disappear and multi-colored Hyde writing begins to scroll across the screen.

HANSON

Now we'll see if that translation matrix we developed actually works.

Hanson reaches over to the side of the computer terminal. The translation collar has been attached to other devices of human origin. The whole conglomeration of parts has been spliced into the computer. The professor crosses his fingers and activates the color. The computer seems to hesitate for a second, but then obediently converts the Hyde text into English. A listing of file directories appears on the screen. Hanson laughs triumphantly and claps Kevin on the back. Kevin is grinning as well.

HANSON

So, what do you want to do first?

Kevin looks over the list, and it is extensive. There are files listed for Hyde physiology, cooking recipes, inter-family relationship advice, just about every topic imaginable. Kevin finally points to one heading that flashes "LIVE CAMERA."

KEVIN

Let's try that one.

He presses a few controls. The “LIVE CAMERA” heading begins to flash and the computer once again freezes, as if unsure of what to do. Finally, the screen goes dark again. Hanson frowns, looking at the translation collar.

HANSON

You don't suppose we shorted it out, do you?

Kevin is about to reply when the screen comes to life again, showing the Hydeer of a bustling Hyde town. The Hydes seem completely oblivious to the fact that they are being watched. Kevin and Hanson stare at the screen in shock, mesmerized by the sight of Hydes going about their day to day lives. They can see some of them in animated conversations, their skins flashing colors wildly.

HANSON

(quietly in awe)

What can you tell me about this?

KEVIN

(gulping and leaning forward in his chair,
scrutinizing the screen carefully)

I think this is what's called a Hyderal Plaza. Every Hyde community has one. It kind of acts like a market, a court, even a bathroom at times. Yeah, look there....

(he indicates one corner of the screen where
two Hydes are apparently haggling over
a piece of technology)

... those two are performing a very honored ritual of barter. I was told how it works. The merchant sets a ridiculously high price that's at the very least three times the real value. The customer then suggests a price that's half the value, and they continue to go through mock arguments and insults until finally, an agreeable compromise is found....yeah. They just did.

The two Hydes skin flash to dark blue. They cross their arms over their chest, bow towards each other, then they both turn to the left and bow, then to the right and bow, and finally face away from each other and bow. Hanson turns to Kevin confused. Kevin actually smiles.

KEVIN

That's a ritual as well. Once the agreement is made, they not only apologize to each other for their rudeness, but they apologize to everyone present as well.

HANSON

(he chuckles and shakes his head in amazement)

I'm glad we have you here, Kevin.

82 INT. - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB - TWO WEEKS LATER

A small crowd has gathered around the computer terminal. Kevin is at the forefront, and it is obvious that everyone is deferring to him as an "expert" to interpret what's going on. To his right is Hanson. Several people are whispering quietly to one another. William trots down the stairs and sits down next to Kevin.

WILLIAM

I'm not late, am I?

KEVIN

Nope. It's just about to start.

Sure enough, the viewscreen comes to life with a series of flashing colors. Finally, a deep, rich, bass voice booms through the speakers:

ANNOUNCER

Today's top stories and news that concern the Clans....

William looks at the gathered crowd and smiles. He leans over to Kevin.

WILLIAM

(whispers)

Who would think that a Hyde news program would attract this much of a following.

Kevin hushes him. The flashing colors disappear to reveal a Hyde REPORTER standing in the middle of a Hyderal Plaza. His skin is a shimmering gold as he begins speaking. Several of the people in the room speak with him, reciting the almost ritualistic opening.

REPORTER

Greetings, every Clan in every part of the world. It is an honor and a pleasure to convey the happenings of our people.

WILLIAM

Get on with it!

Several people hiss at him to be quiet, including Kevin. The Reporter's skin turns to a mixture of gray and brown. Kevin rolls his eyes.

KEVIN

Something tells me this is going to be about us.

REPORTER

Once again, our forces have managed to drive back the human desecrators in the

(there is a burst of untranslated "MUSIC" that causes several of the humans to wince)

Province.

WILLIAM

(whispering, to Kevin)

Must be talking about the reHyde battles in Section Four-J. I understand they've been putting on a major offensive there.

REPORTER

Thanks be to the gods that we are able to drive this pestilence from our world!

(his skin turns a mixture of purple and light blue)

In related news, the Prime-Chieftan has ordered a meeting of all the Clan leaders.

Hanson looks at Kevin, puzzled.

KEVIN

The Prime-Chieftan is the elected leader of all the Hyde Clans. We call him the Warlord. He was the father of the Hyde I was trapped with.

REPORTER

(his skin turning gold once again)

They will meet at the Sacred Stone to begin planning for a major offensive against the desecrators. At the same time, the Prime-Chieftan's daughter will be conjoined with the Prince of the...

(once again, there is a burst of untranslated "MUSIC")

...Clan. It is to be a supremely joyous event.

Kevin shuts his eyes in pain. Although he tries to hide it, Hanson immediately notices, but he doesn't say a word. William, on the other hand, doesn't even notice. He seems to be deep in thought.

REPORTER

The meeting will take place in twelve days.

(his skin turns dark blue)

We are also told of a special happening between two young lovers who have overcome great odds....

William turns to Kevin, inspiration flashing in his eyes.

WILLIAM

Do you know what the Sacred Stone is?

KEVIN

(after thinking about it)

Kind of. I think it's some sort of Hyderal meeting sight for the Clans. It was supposedly created by one of their gods six Hydeuries ago to bring an end to a major war between six Clans...

WILLIAM

(interrupting)

That's great, Kev, really, but do we know where it is?

Kevin thinks about it, then leans forward and, punching a few controls, shuts off the news broadcast and brings up a listing of files. This brings a few muttered protests from the other people gathered, but Kevin ignores them. He scans the files and finally selects one. The image of a massive mud dome appears on the screen, labeled "THE SACRED STONE." The dome itself is decorated with delicate arches that have been colored gold and dark blue. A set of coordinates, 31-170-112, flashes across the bottom as well. William claps his hands together with delight. Kevin looks at him, not understanding. William grabs him by the arm and pulls him to one side so the others won't hear.

WILLIAM

Don't you get it, Kevin? This is the break we've been waiting for! We know where all the Clan leaders will be, including the Warlord, and we know when they'll be there. We have a chance to take them all out! General Brandt is going to love this!

Kevin nods vacantly, trying to feign excitement as well. He fails. Instead, he turns and stares at the image of the Sacred Stone, a look of dread on his face.

83 INT. - HUMAN BARRACKS - TEN DAYS LATER

Human SOLDIERS are running down the corridors quickly, their faces grim.

84 INT. - BRIEFING AUDITORIUM - THE DAY BEFORE

General Brandt stands before a group of assembled soldiers. A large hologram of the Sacred Stone hovers in the Hydeer of it all.

BRANDT

Ladies and gentlemen of Alpha and Beta Squads, this is your objective: the Sacred Stone.

85 INT. - AN ARMORY

One Soldier stands by the open door of the armory and is handing out specially modified laser rifles to the waiting troops. As soon as a soldier has been handed a weapon, he immediately turns and trots down the hallway.

BRANDT

(v.o.)

Tomorrow, every Hyde leader there is will be there thanks to the Warlord. You are going to invade the Sacred Stone.

86 INT. - ANOTHER ARMORY

The soldiers, their rifles slung over their backs, come to a halt outside another open door. A SCIENTIST hands each soldier a small black box with a large red button.

BRANDT

(v.o.)

Our equipment has been modified as to mask our presence from the Hydes. They will have no idea where we are or that we are coming. Additionally, each of you will be given a device that emits a high level electromagnetic pulse. We know that this frequency will incapacitate them.

87 EXT. - A TARMAC

A large stealth transport dominates the tarmac. As the soldiers leave the barracks, they stop momentarily to salute both Victoria and William. The two lieutenants salute them back.

BRANDT

(v.o.)

Lieutenants Andrews and Isen will be in over-all command. You must understand that we have once chance at this, people. You will have no reinforcements.

88 INT. - THE TRANSPORT

The soldiers quickly line up in the seats and strap themselves in.

BRANDT

(v.o.)

Your objective is to capture as many of the Clan leaders as possible, especially the Warlord. If you cannot, you may use deadly force.

89 INT. - THE BRIEFING AUDITORIUM - THE DAY BEFORE

Brandt smiles proudly at the assembled troops. His eyes shine already with what he thinks will be an easy victory.

BRANDT

Good luck!

90 EXT. - THE TARMAC

The transport lifts off the ground with hardly a sound and disappears into the sky.

91 INT. - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB - NIGHT

Kevin is seated before the computer terminal. The screen is flashing through the test pattern.

Kevin settles back in his chair and tucks his legs up under him. He suddenly whips around, though, at an unexpected noise. Hanson stands at the bottom of the stairs, his hands up in apology.

HANSON

Didn't mean to startle you. Just wanted to see who was in here.

Kevin warily eyes the professor and turns back to the screen. The test pattern has disappeared and reveals an exterior view of the Sacred Stone. Immense fires burn around the building. Slowly, the scene changes to an interior view of the building. A large room is on the screen, with banners covering every wall. Each banner is an abstract mixture of colors that denote each clan. Hydes of every size and shape are gathered in the room, conversing in hushed tones. Hanson frowns at the sight.

HANSON

You're watching the meeting of the Clans? Are you that bored?

KEVIN

(smiling darkly)

I don't know. I think this might prove to be interesting.

Hanson eyes Kevin carefully for a second before shrugging and sitting on the floor next to him. The conversations on screen die as the Warlord steps into the middle of the ring. The Hydes immediately crouch down, forming a circle around their leader. The Warlord bows deeply at the waist, turning a full circle, his skin gold. He finally straightens and his skin flares to a dark blue.

WARLORD

My friends! It is an honor to stand before you today. Once this evening is over, we will have laid the groundword to destroy the interlopers once and for all.

KEVIN

(under his breath)

That's what you think, buddy.

WARLORD

But before we conduct our business, we have a happy event to celebrate. My daughter, Irisa, is to marry Prince...

(there is a burst of untranslated "MUSIC")

... within six days. Tonight, she will become formally conjoined to him.

Hanson suddenly looks up confused. He shakes a finger at the screen.

HANSON

Wait a minute! The collar just translated the Warlord's daughters name but not her beau's. I wonder why....

(a look of revelation spreads across his face and he looks to Kevin in surprise)

You did give her a name!

Kevin looks away, embarrassed. He finally looks up as a Hyde male takes the ring. This is the PRINCE. He glances haughtily around the ring, his skin a dull turquoise. He is clearly very bored with the entire proceeding. Then Irisa steps into the ring. Kevin's breath catches in his throat at the sight of her. Her entire body seems limp and, although most of her skin is dark blue, there are still prominent splotches of white. She steps up to the Prince and, without warning, backhands him. Kevin's jaw drops open in shock. She slams another fist across the Prince's jaw. The Prince seems to meekly accept the abuse, not even bothering to protect himself as Irisa continues to pummel his head and gut. Finally, she backs away, and with a harmonic "SHRIEK," tackles him to the ground.

IRISA

You son of a bitch! You lying, cheating bastard! I'll rip you to shreds!

The Prince continues to accept the abuse. Irisa continues to beat him, occasionally "SHRIEKING," but it is clear that her heart isn't into it. Now Kevin is beginning to look sick. He clutches the side of the chair and it looks as if he's about to faint.

IRISA

You total piece of shit! You aren't worth the flesh you inhabit!

Irisa grabs the Prince by the sides of his head and starts to slam his head into the floor over and over and over.

IRISA

You aren't even worthy of me! How dare you insult my family by saying you care for me or love me! It's a lie.

Finally, the Prince seems to come alive. He rolls over, scoops Irisa up into his arms, and stands. His skin, throughout the entire performance, doesn't change from a dull turquoise. He releases her, taking both her hands into his.

PRINCE

(strained and obviously forced)

I know I am unworthy of you, noble Irisa. But I beg you to accept me all the same.

Irisa hesitates, her skin flashing to violet. She casts a furtive glance in the Warlord's direction. Her father glowers at her, his skin turning gray for a brief instant. Finally, Irisa sighs and turns back to the Prince. As she speaks, her skin goes completely white.

IRISA

I ... accept. Let our Clans be merged.

The gathered Hydes begin to whoop and cheer, their skins a sudden maelstrom of colors. Kevin weakly reaches over the terminal and shuts it off. Hanson turns to him as if to protest, but the words die in his throat when he sees how shaken Kevin really is. Kevin rises from his chair and begins to stumble around the room.

KEVIN

My God ...

HANSON

(on his feet and coming over to Kevin, concerned)

Kevin, what is it? What's the matter?

KEVIN

(steadying himself against one wall. He is almost rambling, tears beginning to stream down his cheeks)

She ... she wasn't attacking me. She was ... she was trying to become conjoined to me... she loves me ... she....

Hanson finally grabs Kevin by the shoulders and forces him to face him.

HANSON

Lieutenant! Snap out of it and tell me what's going on!

KEVIN

You're right. I did name Irisa. And you're right that Hydes and humans can live together. I never wanted to admit it, but I fell in love with her. I never realized it until now ... and she loved me. She was trying to perform that ritual when we were found and I didn't let her finish it...

(his eyes suddenly go wide as he remembers what's about to happen at the Sacred Stone)

... oh my God! I have to get to her! I have to save her!

HANSON

Why?

KEVIN

We told General Brandt about the meeting. He was going to send in Alpha and Beta Squads to capture or kill everyone there!

Hanson is immediately on the move. He grabs Kevin by the hand and practically drags him up the stairs out of the communications hub.

92 EXT. - COMMUNICATIONS HUB

Hanson jogs through the camp, kicking through the canvas walls. Several students begin to poke their heads through the openings, grumbling and complaining.

HANSON

Come on! Everyone up and at 'em! We've got a job to do.

Hanson grabs one student (whose name is WU) and turns him toward one of the large transports that are parked nearby.

HANSON

Wu, go fire up the engines on our transport! We're taking a class field trip!

Wu nods and immediately runs toward the massive vehicles. Hanson nods in approval, and then turns to another student (named CHARLESTON).

HANSON

Charleston! Go get the translation collar and whatever tools you need to make a few modifications to it. You're the best tech I've got and we need a rush job! Move!

Charleston turns and dashes down the steps. Hanson begins to wave the students toward the transport.

93 INT. - THE SACRED STONE'S MAIN CHAMBER - THREE HOURS LATER

The Warlord stands in the Hydeer of the ring again. The other Chieftans are gathered around him in a tight circle. The Warlord is giving a lengthy speech, his voice fluctuating as his skin

illustrates his points by changing colors in time with the “MUSIC.” Irisa is also in the room, slouched in one corner, her skin a pasty white.

94 EXT. - A FOREST, A KILOMETER FROM THE SACRED STONE

Off in the distance, there is a small “WHOOSH” of air as the stealth transport drops in low. The door in the side opens and, one by one, the members of Alpha and Beta Squad jump, their low-g parachutes strapped to their backs. Finally, once the last member has jumped, the transport swings a lazy arc and shoots off into the distance.

95 EXT. - THE SACRED STONE

Two SENTRIES are lazily pacing back and forth around the outside of the massive building. Their skins are a dull turquoise. Suddenly, though, there is the sound of rustling in the nearby bushes, and they immediately become alert, their skin flashing to bright red, then violet. They raise their weapons, but then drop them and shriek in pain. They curl up into tight little balls and shake violently, their skins turning brown, olive green, black, and red. Finally, William steps out of the bushes, holding one of the small devices. He turns to Victoria and grins.

WILLIAM

These things work better than I thought.

Victoria motions for the rest of the squads to come out. Several of the soldiers quickly tie up the two sentries while the rest of them ready some climbing gear.

96 EXT. - THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SACRED STONE

Two more SENTRIES are staring into the sky, their skin a mixture of turquoise and light blue. One of them finally turns to the other and fires off a “MUSICAL” phrase.

SUBTITLE: This sucks!

The other responds with a question of his own.

SUBTITLE: I know. Why doesn't anything ever happen on our shift?

Suddenly, the air is filled with a low THRUM. The two sentries immediately come alert, their skin turning violet. Without warning, a transport comes crashing through the forest, barreling right for the two sentries. Their skins immediately flash to black and they dive out of the way. The transport slaloms back and forth, out of control, and finally slams into the side of the building.

97 INT. - THE SACRED STONE'S MAIN CHAMBER

Several of the Chieftans look up at the sound of the distant collision. The Warlord hesitates in his speech, his skin turning a mixture of pink and bright red. He glances at two GUARDS who are dressed in almost ridiculous looking ceremonial armor. They immediately jog out of the room. Irisa also looks up, her skin turning orange for a few brief moments. She also rises and leaves to investigate.

98 EXT. - THE SACRED STONE

The two sentries are carefully peeking over their hiding places, their skins a mixture of pink and orange. They gawk at the crashed transport for a few seconds before they carefully creep over to the vehicle, their weapons drawn and ready. Suddenly, the door opens, and Hanson tumbles out. The two sentries jump back, making a startled sound, their skins turning bright red and black. Hanson dusts himself off and looks to the transport. He laughs good naturedly and turns back to the Hydes.

HANSON

Wow! I'm lucky I was able to walk away from that!
Can you fellas direct me to the nearest communication
booth? I think I'll need to call my insurance agent.

The Hydes glance at each other, their skin turning orange. They turn back to him and look him over. One of the Hydes finally takes a step forward, his skin turning deep red. He raises his weapon menacingly and motions with it, issuing a "MUSICAL" order. Hanson carefully raises his hand and starts to move to one side of the building.

HANSON

Oh, come on, guys! I'm sure we can work this out! I know
I'm a little lost, but you don't have to get so hostile with me!

The Hydes ignore him but continue to cover him with their weapons. A twig snaps behind them. The Hydes whirl around, only to hear a sharp "MUSICAL" phrase.

SUBTITLE: Drop your weapons!

Kevin steps out of the forest, wearing the translation collar. Most of the panels have been pried away and a few clearly human modifications are visible. The Hydes stare at him in open surprise, their skins bright red. Kevin repeats the order.

SUBTITLE: Drop your weapons!

The Hydes glance at each other, unsure of what to do, their skin a mixture of orange and brown. Suddenly, though, they both cry out in pain and collapse to the ground. Hanson stands over them, wielding a piece of the transport as a club. Kevin smiles and fires of a quick phrase of "MUSIC."

SUBTITLE: Thank you!

This elicits a small explosion of sparks from the transport's power pack. Hanson ducks out of the way and Kevin smiles sheepishly. He shuts off the collar.

KEVIN

Are you guys going to be okay out here?

HANSON

(waving him off)

Don't worry. We'll be fine.

Kevin nods and begins to leave.

HANSON

Kevin!

Kevin stops and turns back. He blinks in surprise when Hanson tosses him a laser rifle.

HANSON

You might need this. I had Charleston modify the power pack.

They won't be able to hear it.

Kevin smiles in thanks and quickly dashes toward the building. Hanson watches him go.

HANSON

Good luck.

(he turns back to the forest and yells)

All right, guys, let's create a diversion.

A large group of students pours out of the woods and begin to fan out around the building.

One of the Guards trots back into the room. The Warlord is seated on one side of the ring, listening to another Chieftan intently. His skin flashes to pink when he sees the Guard and he motions for him to come over. When the Guard is close enough, the Warlord whispers a short “MUSICAL” question.

SUBTITLE: What’s going on?

The Guard’s skin turns deep red with brown streaks. His answer is terse and somewhat amused.

SUBTITLE: A group of unarmed humans is outside. What should we do?

The Warlord stares at the Guard in surprise. He muses “MUSICALLY” for a second before answering with a dismissive wave.

SUBTITLE: If they are unarmed, capture them.

The Guard bows low and trots out of the room again.

100 INT. - A CORRIDOR IN THE SACRED STONE

A small squad of Guards trot down the corridor past an open window. As soon as they have passed, William pokes his head up over the edge of the window and hauls himself inside. Keeping a wary eye on the corridor, he motions for the rest of the soldiers to join him. Victoria is the next one in. She immediately unslings her weapon and glances around the corridor as well.

VICTORIA

This place is jumping. Do you think they know we’re here?

WILLIAM

I don’t know.

As more of the soldiers climb in through the window, William pulls out a small sensor and looks at the screen.

WILLIAM

According to this, the main chamber is thirty meters to the north of us and two levels down. Do you want to do the honors?

Victoria nods. Within seconds, both squads have fanned out in the corridor. Victoria motions for some of the soldiers to come with her and they carefully creep down the hallway. William

and the rest of the soldiers leave in the other direction.

VICTORIA

(whispering to herself)

This one's for you, Kev.

101 INT. - ANOTHER CORRIDOR

William and the members of Beta Squad are creeping carefully through the hallway. William's eyes scan the area nervously. Suddenly, though, he notices some shadows on the wall in front of them. It appears as if someone else is coming down the hall and about to come around the corner. William makes a few gestures and the soldiers assume a defensive posture, rifles up and ready. They tense, waiting for the inevitable firefight. William himself is holding his breath, but he lets out a surprised yelp when he sees who backs around the corner.

WILLIAM

Kevin?

Kevin, who hasn't noticed Beta Squad yet, turns and almost leaps out of his skin. He takes several deep breaths and steadies himself against one wall.

KEVIN

(giving William a joking smile)

Geez, give a guy a heart attack!

William isn't in a joking mood. He quickly crosses over to Kevin and latches onto his arm with a steel grip.

WILLIAM

What the hell are you doing here, Kevin? Are you out of your mind?

KEVIN

No, I had to come. Professor Hanson brought me over.

WILLIAM

(shocked)

You brought Hanson here? Are you out of your mind?
You'll ruin everything!

KEVIN

Well, that's kind of the idea....

William doesn't hear him. Instead, he turns and starts to drag Kevin down the corridor.

WILLIAM

Sargeant Tomkins, contact Lieutenant Andrews and inform her of this development. Private Gibson! Escort Lieutenant MacInnes back to the window and wait there for us...

Kevin finally pulls away from William and turns his friend around.

KEVIN

No! I can't leave! I have to find Irisa!

WILLIAM

(stares at Kevin blankly)

Who?

KEVIN

The Hyde who ... the woman I was with during the Stormy Season. Will, I ... I love her.

WILLIAM

(gapes at him)

You what?

KEVIN

I can't explain it now. I love her, Will, I really do! I can't let you do this! If you do this, I'll never get the chance to see her again.

WILLIAM

Kevin, talk straight, will you? This is insane! We can't let this opportunity pass us by! If we don't act now, the war will never end!

KEVIN

No! I can't let you do this!

Kevin finally pulls away from William. Before he can be stopped, Kevin has disappeared down the hall. William takes a few steps after him, but realizes that it's too late. Their cover has been blown.

WILLIAM

Shit!

(he pulls out a small radio and presses the button)

Victoria!

102 INT. - ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Victoria pauses for a second and pulls out her own radio.

VICTORIA

(whispered, somewhat frustrated)

What?

103 INT. - THE CORRIDOR

William and the rest of Beta Squad are double-timing it down the corridor after Kevin.

WILLIAM

Kevin's here.

VICTORIA

(v.o., shocked)

What?

WILLIAM

Yeah, and I think he's gone off the deep end. He says he's in love with that Hyde bitch who took him hostage. He's gonna blow the whole thing. If you see him, stop him!

There is no reply for a few tense seconds. William glances at the radio, unsure of what he should say. Finally, the radio crackles back to life.

VICTORIA

(v.o.)

Did you say ... did you say that he loves her?

WILLIAM

That's an affirmative. I don't know if it's Stockholm Syndrome or what, but he seems to mean it. Stop him!

104 INT. - THE OTHER CORRIDOR

Tears are beginning to stream from Victoria's eyes. She chokes back a few silent sobs before replying.

VICTORIA

Understood. Andrews out.

(she pockets the radio. Without turning around:)

Gentlemen, when we get there, take no prisoners. Kill everyone in the room. Do you understand?

There are some surprised murmurings from the other soldiers, but they agree. The grief has disappeared from Victoria's face and is replaced with grim resolve.

105 INT. - THE FIRST CORRIDOR

William and Beta Squad rounds another corner, only to run into a contingent of Hyde guards. The two groups stare at each other in shock before they open fire. Beta Squad dives into whatever cover they can and return fire.

106 INT. - THE SACRED STONE'S MAIN CHAMBER

Now the Chieftans can hear the battle just outside. They are shifting uncomfortably on the floor, unsure of what to do, their skin turning shades of orange, black, and violet. Irisa has risen from her place in the corner and looks around, her skin completely black. Suddenly, a door to the main chamber bursts open and Alpha Squad pours in. Without waiting for any resistance, they open fire, cutting down several of the Chieftans immediately. The rest manage to dive for cover.

Irisa shrieks in horror and dashes out another door. Victoria manages to work her way to the front of Alpha Squad, a sadistic looking grin on her face. She and the other soldiers begin to slowly advance on the cowering chieftans, laying down a cover fire to keep them in hiding. Suddenly, though, Kevin bursts into the room. When he sees what's happening, his eyes grow wide with fear.

KEVIN

NO!

Kevin raises the rifle to his shoulder and opens fire as well, but he's shooting at Alpha Squad. The human soldiers, unsure of what to do, begin to fall back into the corridor. Kevin continues to fire after them and as he does, he reaches up and switches on the translation collar. He begins to work his way toward the Chieftans and, when he is close enough, he shouts one question to them:

SUBTITLE: Where is Irisa?

Most of the Chieftans don't reply. They are too busy cowering in terror. Finally, though, the Warlord points out the door. Kevin starts for it, but the Warlord latches on to his leg, his skin a mixture of white and black. He practically shrieks "MUSICALLY" at Kevin.

SUBTITLE: Please! Don't hurt her!

Kevin smiles at the Warlord reassuringly and pries the Warlord's hand free. He replies with soothing "MUSIC" of his own.

SUBTITLE: Don't worry, sir. I would never hurt her.

The Warlord's skin turns deep red. Kevin smiles once more and starts for the door again. Before he can make it, though, several soldiers from Alpha Squad tackle him to the ground, wrenching the gun from his hands and the translation collar from his throat. Victoria comes out of the corridor and stares at Kevin, her eyes radiating with hurt and anger. Kevin struggles against the soldiers, his eyes pleading with Victoria

KEVIN

Victoria, please! If I ever meant anything to you, let me go find her! I can't lose her?

Victoria's lower lip begins to tremble with pure rage. She finally breaks down crying and turns, heading for the door that the Warlord pointed out. Kevin realizes what she's going to do and begins to struggle against the soldiers even more. It looks like they're about to succeed when suddenly, the Warlord rises to his feet, his skin gone completely gray. He looks around at the other Chieftans and barks a "MUSICAL" command. Finally, he points to the soldiers restraining Kevin. The humans all look at the Hydes in surprise, almost as if they forgot that they were completely surrounded. The Chieftans seem to hesitate for a moment, but then, as one, they bellow out a "MUSICAL" war cry and charge the soldiers. Surprisingly, though, they don't seem to be attacking them, they merely seem to be trying to free Kevin! Alpha Squad tries to fend them off, but they are outnumbered. Within seconds, Kevin manages to pull himself free. He bows toward the Warlord, who nods curtly but then points to the door and fires off a desperate phrase of "MUSIC." Kevin nods and dashes off toward the door, grabbing a dropped rifle as he goes.

107 INT. - A CORRIDOR

Irisa dashes down the hallway, her skin still completely black. She glances down several cross corridors, unsure of what to do. Suddenly, a red laser blast slices through her shoulder. She shrieks in pain, the skin around the wound flaring to olive green. She whirls around and sees Victoria standing at the other end of the hallway. Irisa's eyes go wide and she quickly dashes

down one corridor, not caring where it goes. Victoria immediately dashes after her.

108 INT. - ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Irisa is stumbling down the hallway now out of pure fear, clutching at her wounded shoulder. Her body is vibrating with sobs and her skin is a virtual hurricane of conflicting colors. One second it is black, the next it is white, then olive green, then a mixture of the three, then purple, it just continues to change so rapidly it is almost a blur. She glances over her shoulder to see Victoria hot on her heels, and in that moment of distraction, Irisa trips and falls. Victoria smiles cruelly to herself and brings the rifle up to her shoulder.

VICTORIA

See you in hell, you Hyde slut!

Suddenly, Kevin appears at the other end of the corridor. His eyes brighten slightly when he sees Irisa, but then a look of horror washes over his face. He begins to charge down the corridor, bringing his own rifle into a firing position. Time seems to slow down as he barrels toward the two women.

KEVIN

No!

Victoria looks up, surprised, and falters, the rifle dropping a few degrees. Irisa, at hearing Kevin's voice, turns, and her skin flares to a dark blue, which then turns to light green. She reaches out with her arm toward him and screams to him "MUSICALLY."

SUBTITLE: Kevin!

Victoria recovers from her initial shock and brings the rifle back up to her shoulder.

109 INT. - THE SACRED STONE'S MAIN CHAMBER

The Chieftans have managed to subdue most of Alpha Squad and, surprisingly enough, the humans are alive and well. The Warlord looks over the process grimly, his skin beginning to turn from gray to light blue. Suddenly, William and Beta Squad burst into the room, their weapons drawn and ready. They stop short, though, at what they see. The Warlord immediately turns to them, his hands raised in clear surrender. He carefully leans over and picks up the translation collar, affixing it to his throat.

WARLORD

Please, hold your fire! We mean you no harm!

William stares at him blankly. Finally, he takes a few steps forward, lowering his rifle. As he does, he motions for the rest of the humans to do likewise.

WILLIAM

I believe you. Where's Kevin and Victoria?

The Warlord is about to answer when there is the sound of a laser blast from the open door. William and the Warlord turn in surprise, then look at each other. As if they had one mind, they both turn and dash for the door.

110 INT. - THE CORRIDOR

William and the Warlord come to a stop at the end of the corridor. The Warlord's skin goes completely white at what he sees. William manages to actually take a few steps forward before the rifle drops from his hand.

WILLIAM

My God...

111 INT. - A TRANSPORT - ONE WEEK LATER

Kevin stands in the Hydeer of the almost empty transport. He is carefully pulling on his dress uniform, which is covered with medals and commendations of every type. A few of them even look as if they were made by Hydes. William steps forward, handing his hat and making sure that the jacket is straight.

WILLIAM

Are you sure you want to do this, man?

Kevin nods grimly, not even smiling.

KEVIN

I'm sure.

With that, Kevin turns sharply on his heel and exits the transport.

112 EXT. - THE SACRED STONE

Several Guards, all of them dressed in ridiculous looking ceremonial armor, pace back and forth. Each one of them is carrying a large wooden club that has been painted a combination of light

green and dark blue. Each Guard's skin is a shimmering gold. Suddenly, there is the sound of a branch breaking in the surrounding woods. They turn as one, facing the woods and ready for a fight. Kevin suddenly jumps out of the woods and charges them with a deadly war cry. The Guards attack him, one at a time. The first one is easily defeated with a quick blow to the head. Kevin ignores the fallen weapon and continues to fight the other Hydes unarmed. Finally, they are all lying on the ground, as still as death. Kevin glares at them with contempt and continues on his way.

113 INT. - THE SACRED STONE'S MAIN CHAMBER

The Warlord is waiting in the Hydeer of a ring of Cheiftans, each one of them wearing the same ceremonial armor. Like the Guards, their skin is also a pure gold. Suddenly, the main doors to the chamber burst open and Kevin defiantly strides in. Two more Guards appear and try to stop him, but they are unsuccessful. Kevin easily overpowers them. He continues on his way until he finally stands toe to toe with the Warlord. Kevin angrily stares at the Hyde and snarls. The Warlord also snarls at Kevin, but then reaches up to activate the translation collar he is wearing.

WARLORD

Why have you come, unworthy human?

KEVIN

You know why I have come.

WARLORD

You profane this sacred place with your presence. Begone from my sight.

The Warlord claps his hands together and the circle of Chieftans turn away from Kevin. Kevin grabs the Warlord by the shoulders and roughly turns him around again.

KEVIN

I will not leave until I am satisfied.

The Warlord sizes Kevin up for a second.

WARLORD

You must prove yourself.

The Warlord himself produces a club and, with a defeaning war cry, charges Kevin. For the first time, we see that General Brandt, who is also in a dress uniform, and Professor Hanson are part of the crowd. Brandt frowns, slightly confused. He leans over towards Hanson.

BRANDT

(whispering)

You're the expert here, Hanson. What on Earth are they doing?

HANSON

(also whispering)

A very ancient ritual. It's supposed to represent the conflict of two tribes that must be resolved.

The Warlord and Kevin continue to struggle. At first, the conflict actually appears to be real, but soon, it is obvious that they are trying not to hurt each other. Suddenly, Irisa bursts into the ring. She steps in between her father and Kevin and raises her hands.

IRISA

Stop! Rather than be divided, we should unite! Then no force can stop us.

The Warlord and Kevin seem to hesitate, but then the Warlord drops to his knees and proffers his club to Kevin. Kevin accepts it and throws it from the ring. The gathered Chieftans let out a triumphant and joyous burst of "MUSIC" and their skins turn dark blue. Hanson and Brandt begin clapping.

BRANDT

(Still whispering)

Now what?

HANSON

If I remember correctly, now Irisa performs an ancient dance that symbolizes the married life.

Sure enough, Irisa has begun to dance. As she does, she begins to "SING." The SONG is mesmerizing, full of hope and love and joy, but at the same time, it has undertones of sorrow and grief. Her movements and the coloration of her skin begin to blend together with the "MUSIC" into a hypnotic experience that entrances everyone present. During the dance, William joins the crowd from outside. Finally, Irisa's dance concludes, and she bows low to Kevin.

IRISA

My husband.

Kevin takes her by the hand and raises her up. He clutches her hands tightly and smiles broadly.

KEVIN

My wife.

Once again, the Chieftans begin to hoot and holler in approval. Brandt, Hanson, and William applaud as well. Brandt actually wipes away a tear or two.

BRANDT

(quietly)

That was beautiful....

HANSON

It's a shame you wanted to destroy them, huh?

Brandt shoots a sardonic look at Hanson, but it's free of any malice. The General is a new man. The Warlord steps forward, his hands raised. Silence immediately descends on the gathered Chieftans. Most of their skins turn bright red. They didn't expect anything to follow the ceremony.

WARLORD

This is indeed a joyous occasion. It not only marks the marriage of my daughter, but it also marks the end of our long war with the humans. By sacred law, my clan is now merged with that of Kevin's. But more importantly, the clan of the Hydes is now irrevocably bound with that of the humans. We are no longer enemies, we are not just friends ... we are family. Let us share our common planet in peace!

Now the celebration is deafening.

114 INT. - THE SACRED STONE'S MAIN CHAMBER - AN HOUR LATER

Kevin and Irisa are being congratulated by the Chieftans. Finally, Brandt steps up to Kevin, beaming.

BRANDT

Congratulations, son. Your parents would be proud.

Kevin smiles at Irisa, who mimics the expression, her skin turning dark blue.

KEVIN

I know they would be too.

Brandt moves on, talking with, incredibly enough, the Warlord. The two leaders now appear to be old friends. William is next in line. The two friends embrace. Hanson is next. Kevin shakes the professor's hand warmly.

KEVIN

Thank you for all your help, Doc. This wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for you.

HANSON

Think nothing of it, Kevin. I should be thanking you. Before, I was called a pacifistic crackpot. Now people are thinking that what I have to say is inspired. I hope they never find out the truth!

Kevin laughs. He and Irisa freeze in uncertainty when they see the next person in line. It is Victoria. Her arm is bound in a sling and she doesn't appear happy.

KEVIN

Victoria ... I ... I didn't think you'd come.

VICTORIA

I almost didn't. But then I realized that this is what you want and that I couldn't take it from you. I just wish you didn't have to shoot me to get through to me.

KEVIN

(jokingly)

Well, you always were kind of stubborn....

Victoria smiles. The two friends embrace. Victoria finally bites her lower lip and turns to Irisa. Irisa's skin turns violet and she almost looks like she's afraid that Victoria will attack her again. Finally, Victoria places a friendly arm on her shoulder.

VICTORIA

Take good care of him.

Irisa smiles once again, taking Kevin's hand in hers. Her skin turns a radiant green.

IRISA

I will.

Victoria nods and moves on. Kevin finally laughs, scooping up Irisa in her arms. She laughs as well, and the two of them spin round and round, their laughter merging together into a cosmic duet.