Wesleyan University The Honors College

Road to Callisto

by

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Class of 2010

A thesis (or essay) submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Film Studies

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2010

ROAD TO CALLISTO

an original screenplay by

David Kongstvedt

THIRD DRAFT - 4/12/2010

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"THE PLANET MARS"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"THE 25TH CENTURY"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"JUST BEFORE LUNCHTIME"

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTIAN ORBIT. SPACE

Mars looms before us, a large red sphere suspended among an infinity of stars. Oxygenating algae covers much of the surface, turning the Red Planet a purplish gray. Wispy clouds float through the thin atmosphere.

CLUTCH (V.O.)
Who can tell me how many sovereign worlds we have in the Solar System?

Our view HURTLES TOWARDS the Martian surface, past the tiny moons PHOBOS and DEIMOS, and through the thin, grayish clouds.

CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The answer is fourteen. Fourteen planets and moons, from Mercury all the way out to Neptune.

As our descent continues, a CITY comes into focus: ARSAI.

EXT. ARSAI. MARS - DAY

We go level with the surface and RACE ALONG a highway.

CLUTCH (V.O.)
Can any of you name the fourteen sovereign worlds?

We pass a sign reading "ARSAI WELCOMES CAREFUL DRIVERS."

CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No? How about just one?

We ENTER the city of Arsai, speeding along rows and rows of squat concrete buildings, until at last we come to the JONATHAN CARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL.

CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You should be able to name one.
You're living on it right now.

We PUSH IN toward the school, PASSING THROUGH a window into:

INT. CLASSROOM. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

ROBERT "CLUTCH" BARTON (late 20s, average build, unkempt hair) stands at the head of the classroom. Several dozen SMALL CHILDREN stare at him with dazed incomprehension.

CLUTCH
It's Mars. You're living on Mars. Come on, kids, this ain't rocket science.

A YOUNG GIRL raises her hand.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Yes?

YOUNG GIRL
Steven is eating his fingerpaint.

The small child points at one of her classmates. Clutch follows her finger. Sure enough, a YOUNG BOY on the other side of the room is hungrily stuffing green paint into his mouth. Clutch watches him for a moment, and then turns back to the young girl.

CLUTCH
How old are you?

YOUNG GIRL
Five.

The young boy glances up at Clutch, his face plastered with several different colors. He smiles a green-toothed smile.

YOUNG BOY
I'm five and three quarters.

Clutch scans the room. All of the children are between five and six years old. Clutch glances over at the door to the classroom, upon which is written the word "KINDERGARTEN."

CLUTCH
Shit. I'm in the wrong classroom.

The small children gasp.

YOUNG GIRL
You said a dirty word! I'm telling.

YOUNG BOY
My parents are gonna sue you.

We PULL OUT of the classroom, back onto the streets of Arsai:

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

We zip past flying cars and hovering buses, gliding over buildings and under bridges. At last we zero in on a glass and concrete skyscraper. On the roof of the skyscraper, glowing neon letters spell out the words, "BAHMANI CO-PROSPERITY TRUST."

We MOVE IN to the building, PASSING THROUGH a window and emerging into:

INT. BAHMANI BUILDING. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

GEORGE CROSS (also late 20s, tall and trim with handsome features) sits in a cramped cubicle, pressing his thumb into the biometric reader on a plastic REQUISITION PAD. Someone dumps another stack of pads onto his desk, and George sighs.

GEORGE
How many office supplies does this damn company need?

An intercome buzzes on George's desk.

INTERCOM (V.O.)
George Cross to the director's office.

George puts down his requisition pads and groans.

INT. ANISHA'S OFFICE. BAHMANI BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Anisha Bahmani, a severe, diminutive woman in her late 30s, sits behind an expansive black desk. An oak-paneled door slides open at the far end of the office, revealing George.

GEORGE
You wanted to see me, Ms. Bahmani?

Anisha glances up at George.

ANISHA
Ah, Mr. Cross. Have a seat.

Anisha gestures to a tiny, uncomfortable looking chair in the center of her vast office. George sits, barely able to fit. The chair wobbles uncertainly.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
I'd like to tell you a joke, Mr. Cross. It's had me in stitches all morning.

GEORGE
If this is about those sick days I took last month, I can explain...

ANISHA
Knock knock.

GEORGE
I beg your pardon?

ANISHA
Knock knock.

GEORGE
Uh, who's there?

ANISHA
George.

GEORGE
George who?

ANISHA
Exactly. George who? Nobody knows who you are, George. You'll never amount to anything. You are a nobody. An overpaid nobody. There are a thousand people out there who would be more than willing to do twice your workload at hyla your salary. So, guess what that means?
(pointing)
You're fired, George!

Anisha mimes a rimshot with her hands.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
Isn't that hilarious?

GEORGE
Did you just fire me with a knock-knock joke?

ANISHA
I sure did.

Anisha nods, grinning like a schoolyard bully. George tries to stand up, but the chair is too small and ill-balanced.

He flops over and does a somersault across the floor, trying to make it look like he rolled over on purpose. George dusts himself off and points accusingly at Anisha.

GEORGE
You are a monster.

ANISHA
Bye bye, now. You've been a great audience.

Anisha presses a button on her desk and the oak-paneled door slides open. She shoos George away. George shuffles out of Anisha's office, still in shock. Anisha giggles to herself and mashes the intercom button on her desk.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
Send me another. Try to find someone who will cry this time.

Anisha cracks her knuckles and leans back, preparing to receive her next victim.

INT. ANTEROOM. BAHMANI BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

George stands just outside Anisha's office, fuming. A ROBOT ATTENDANT wheels up to him. The attendant offers George a gleaming metal tray with a single piece of translucent paper and two plastic-wrapped mints on it.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
Your termination notice, sir or madam.

George wheels on the robot attendant. He grabs the metal tray with both hands and FLIPS IT OVER.

ROBOT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Goodness gracious.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"GEORGE"

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Clutch sits on a plastic desk chair across from MR. KOTT, the school principal. Mr. Kott glares at Clutch, angrily tapping a number two pencil against the edge of his desk.

MR. KOTT
Mr. Barton. When you signed on as a substitute teacher, you took on oath. An oath to educate these children in the face of their regular instructor's absence. An oath to mold their tiny little brains into stalwart citizens of the Martian Confederation. You broke that oath today, Mr. Barton. You failed your students, you failed this school, and you failed Mars.

Clutch takes a deep breath and whistles.

CLUTCH
Mr. Kott, with all due respect, I think you're blowing this way out of proportion.

Mr. Kott SNAPS the pencil in half. He tosses it into a trash bin and reaches for another one. The angry tapping resumes.

MR. KOTT
What about the children, Mr. Barton? The poor, traumatized children!

CLUTCH
It was a slip of the tongue. It's not like I sold the little tykes to a zoo on Titan.

MR. KOTT
I expected better from an educated man like yourself, Robert. This is a gravely disappointing.

CLUTCH
To be perfectly honest, Mr. Kott, I didn't go to six years of engineering school to teach interplanetary history to kindergarteners.

MR. KOTT
You were supposed to be teaching interplanetary history to Mrs. Krasinski's third grade class, <u>not</u> Mr. Bachmann's kindergarten class!

CLUTCH
I know. And I'm really, really sorry about that. It won't happen again.

MR. KOTT
I agree, Mr. Barton.
(MORE)

MR. KOTT (CONT'D)
It won't happen again. Your position at this school is terminated. Effective immediately.

CLUTCH
Please Mr. Kott, you gotta give me another chance. I need this fuckin' job.

MR. KOTT
What you need, young man, is to wash out that potty mouth with a bar of soap.

CLUTCH
You can't talk to me like that. I'm an adult.

MR. KOTT
You may pick up your paycheck on the way out. Good day, Mr. Barton.

Clutch rises, his face red with indignation.

CLUTCH
I'm not a potty mouth, you mother-

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**CLUTCH**"

CUT TO:

INT. BAHMANI BUILDING. ARSAI - AFTERNOON

George shoves his meager possessions into a cardboard box. He glances over at the requisition pads still stacked on his desk. He picks one up and examines it.

GEORGE
Office supplies.

He examines another one.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Office supplies.

And a third.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Office supplies.

George tosses the pad down and resumes packing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I am less valuable than a stapler.

After a moment, George looks back up at the stack of pads.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(to himself)
You know what? Screw it. I worked my ass off for this stupid company. I'm taking some of those goddamn office supplies. I deserve them.

George grabs a pad off the top of the pile and exits.

INT. WAREHOUSE. BAHMANI BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

George wanders down the dim aisles of the warehouse. As far as the eye can see, every row of every shelf is filled with boxes marked "OFFICE SUPPLIES." George checks the number on the requisition pad he holds and matches it to one of the numerous boxes stacked high over his head. George scans the pad against a locking mechanism on the box, and the box pops out of the shelf and falls into George's arms.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

George exits the Bahmani building and starts down the street, carrying two boxes in his arms. He hails a robot cab and slides in the back seat.

CAB (V.O.)
Where to, sir or madam?

GEORGE
The Brown Dwarf. 33rd Street.

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - EVENING

The Brown Dwarf is a seedy bar in a rundown part of the city. A few early birds cluster around some tables, drinking quietly and talking among themselves. A languorous BARTENDER wipes down the surface of the bar with a dirty rag. Clutch sits on a barstool, nursing a beer.

CLUTCH
(mumbling)
Stupid Kott. Callin' me a fuckin' potty mouth. What does he know?

George enters the Brown Dwarf and plops down next to Clutch, sliding his boxes onto the bar.

GEORGE
Hey, sailor. Buy you a drink?

Clutch glances up at George.

CLUTCH
Hi, George. How's it goin'?

GEORGE
Got fired today.

CLUTCH
Me too.

GEORGE
Really? Damn.

CLUTCH
Back atcha.

George signals the bartender.

GEORGE
A pint of your shittiest beer, please. And make it snappy, we go onstage in half an hour.

BARTENDER
Pint of Stinktierwasser, comin' right up.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - EVENING

DOLLY ARMIERE (early 20s, slim, with shining green eyes) wanders down the streets of Arsai, taking in the sights. We see from her awed expression and her strange manner of dress that she is a foreigner in these parts - and a wealthy one at that. A PICKPOCKET bumps into Dolly, throwing her off balance.

PICKPOCKET
Excuse me.

DOLLY
Don't worry about it.

The pickpocket moves off through the crowd. Dolly looks down and realizes that her purse is missing. She glances over her shoulder and spots the pickpocket heading away from her at a brisk pace.

Dolly bends down, picks up a medium-sized rock, and CHUCKS IT AT HIM. The pickpocket goes sprawling. Dolly's purse flies out of his hands.

Dolly gingerly steps over the pickpocket, gathering up her belongings and stuffing them back into her purse.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
(to pickpocket)
Oh, excuse me.

PICKPOCKET
Don't worry about it.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**DOLLY**"

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - LATER

Dolly approaches the entrance to the Brown Dwarf.

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Dolly sits at a table in the corner of the bar, sipping at a cocktail and warily eyeing her surroundings, as if expecting to be recognized at any moment.

Onstage, a tuxedo-clad George and Clutch are just beginning their set. George carries a cane with a softly glowing light on one end - a fancy wireless microphone. Clutch stands behind a HOLOGRAM PROJECTION TABLE, manipulating the three-dimensional image with a pair of black gloves covered in wires and lights.

Clutch raises his hands into the air and a BLUE SPHERE materializes over the projection table. Clutch taps the sphere with a gloved finger, and the hologram jiggles like a bubble of water.

GEORGE
(into microphone)
Good evening, ladies, gentlemen, and miscellaneous. I am George Cross, my companion here is Clutch Barton, and we are the Gentlemen of the Road.

Clutch strums the holographic sphere and it unfolds, petal-like, into a three-dimensional starscape. The audience applauds listlessly.

George flips the microphone cane to one side and touches a small red button. The cane unfolds into an electric guitar.

George plays a few chords and then nods at Clutch, who stands ready - his gloved hands on either side of the hologram, fingers threading through the tiny drifting stars within.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
And a-one, a-two, a-one-two-three...

Clutch grips the hologram and THROWS it off the table. The starfield EXPLODES into light, hurtling TOWARD US and filling our vision, blotting out everything else.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**ROAD TO CALLISTO**"

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE (HOLOGRAM) - CONTINUOUS

The shimmering edges and surreal quality of the image indicate that what we are seeing is Clutch's HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION, writ large across our entire field of vision.

The OPENING CREDITS ROLL over this sequence.

A shiny, silver SPACESHIP appears in the shifting, twinkling field of stars.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(singing)
I started as a cabin boy, on a garbage scow / Cleaning sinks and toilets, serving up the chow.

INT. GARBAGE SCOW (HOLOGRAM) - CONTINUOUS

A YOUNG MAN stares longingly out of a porthole.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(singing)
I was just a young man, barely past sixteen / Dreaming of my girl back home, a beauty named Eileen.

ANOTHER SPACESHIP abruptly tears through the stars outside, blasting at the garbage scow with oversized laser cannons.

The young man grabs a broom and wheels around. Suddenly, he is no longer in the galley. He is in a CORRIDOR, leading a charge against a cadre of leather-clad SPACE PIRATES.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing)
Our ship was caught by pirates, descending in the night / The crew and I fought bravely, we put up quite a fight.

EXT. SPACE (HOLOGRAM) - CONTINUOUS

The sleek, angular PIRATE SHIP slices through the glittering stars. Jolly Rogers flutter behind the ship, buffeted by a a nonexistent breeze.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(singing)
The pirates took me captive, but they spared my life / If, in exchange, I'd fight for them, and wield a pirate knife.

The pirate ship becomes a long, serrated BLADE. The Jolly Rogers morph and twist to become the sleeve of a black shirt. Soon, the entire starfield has transformed into an image of the young man dressed as a space pirate.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing)
Well, I'm a man of space: there are comets in my veins / There's vacuum in my bones, and starlight in my brains / I signed on right then and there, never looking back / And flew off with my brand new friends, out into the black.

We TILT DOWN, and we are on the surface of a pockmarked moon. The RINGS OF SATURN glitter against the horizon.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.)
(singing; in unison)
I'm on a space adventure, sailing through the stars!

The young man LEAPS into view, clashing swords with other space pirates, jumping from crater to crater.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing; in unison)
Seeing all the worlds of man, from Ganymede to Mars!

The young man whips out a LASER PISTOL and squeezes off a shot. We TRACK WITH the laser bolt, traveling at the speed of light, until everything melts into a SPINNING VORTEX.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing; in unison)
I'm on a space adventure, come along and see / I'm a dead shot with my laser gun, so don't you mess with me!

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

Dolly watches George and Clutch, completely absorbed in the song. The other patrons are not so enthralled.

GEORGE
(singing)
I worked my way to captain, in just a few short years / All across the System, my name inspired fear / I had a girl in every port, so I dumped Eileen / And broadened my horizons, from the weird to the obscene.

We MOVE IN toward the hologram table, and the image once again washes over us.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE (HOLOGRAM) - CONTINUOUS

The stars waver and re-form themselves into a giant Jolly Roger, which then speeds in our direction. As it approaches us, we see that its constituent parts are NOT STARS - they are PIRATE SHIPS. Thousands of spaceships race overhead, their engines roaring with blue-white fire.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(singing)
I commanded fleets of ships, I bought up Saturn's rings.

The planet Saturn coasts into view. The fleet of pirate ships approaches the ringed giant. We PULL BACK across the gulf of space, until Saturn and the pirate fleet are almost too small to see. We continue to MOVE BACKWARD: revealing the entire scene to be contained within a SMALL BOTTLE.

INT. THRONE ROOM (HOLOGRAM) - CONTINUOUS

The young man - not so young anymore - lounges on an ornate golden throne. He holds up the sparkling bottle, presenting it to a pair of elaborately dressed aristocrats.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(singing)
I bottled them and sold 'em, to the mistresses of kings.

The image of the not-so-young man's face FREEZES and flutters away, now just a grainy black-and-white photograph on a sheet of paper. "WANTED - DEAD OR ALIVE," it reads.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing)
Every single wanted list, showed me at number one / I was the best, the deadliest, I could not be outdone.

The paper BURNS AWAY, blasted by a laser bolt.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.)
(singing; in unison)
I'm on a space adventure, sailing through the stars / Seeing all the worlds of man, from Ganymede to Mars / I'm on a space adventure, happy as a clam / INTERPLAN is after me, but I don't give a damn!

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

George makes eye contact with Dolly, smiling across the bar at her. Dolly blushes and smiles back.

GEORGE
(singing)
One morning I awoke, from a dream of poor Eileen / I thought about that bright-eyed kid, just barely sixteen / I wondered what he'd think, if he could see me now / Looking forward through the years, from that old garbage scow.

Clutch hurls holographic shooting stars across the stage.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(singing)
I was not a man of space, I was a man of crime / My whole pirate empire, it wasn't worth a dime / So I sold my fleet of ships, and I disappeared / My name became forgotten, and I was no longer feared.

One of the shooting stars flies RIGHT AT US, overwhelming everything and BLINDING US WITH LIGHT.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE (HOLOGRAM) - CONTINUOUS

A slender, cigar-shaped SPACESHIP whizzes overhead.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.)
(singing; in unison)
I'm on a space adventure, starting life anew!

The fourteen civilized worlds of the Solar System swirl past us, bleeding into one another and spiraling through the glimmering starfield.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing; in unison)
I said goodbye to Ganymede, and I bid Mars adieu */ I'm on a space adventure, a never-ending flight / I'm flying out past Neptune, far off into the night!*

The starfield becomes a tunnel of light.

GEORGE AND CLUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(singing; in unison)
I'm on a space adventure, come along and see / I've finally left my greed behind, and now I can be free / I'm on a space adventure, where no man's gone before / Sailing out among the stars, there's so much to explore!

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

George and Clutch wind up the song with a pyrotechnic flourish. Dolly stands, applauding vigorously. The other patrons of the Brown Dwarf stare at her. Dolly sits back down, cheeks burning. A moment later, a shadow falls across Dolly's table. She glances up. It's George.

GEORGE
Hey, there. Buy you a drink?

Dolly mulls this over. In the background, Clutch is struggling to put the hologram table back into its carrying case. He stubs his toe and curses.

DOLLY
Okay. But just one.

George flashes his most charming smile.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**FIVE DRINKS LATER...**"

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - NIGHT

George, Clutch, and Dolly sit at the bar amidst a smattering of empty glasses and a half-eaten plate of hot wings.

GEORGE
So, "Dolly." That's an pretty name. Where you from?

Dolly glances down, as though embarrassed to answer.

DOLLY
The, uh, Callistan Empire.

GEORGE
Callisto, eh? That's one of Jupiter's moons, if I'm not mistaken.

CLUTCH
You're a long way from home.

GEORGE
You know, that is so funny that you are from Callisto. Did you know I've always wanted to visit Callisto? What a beautiful world that is, and such a lovely culture.

Clutch chokes back a laugh. George glares at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You all right there, Clutch?

Clutch covers his laugh with a coughing fit.

CLUTCH
Sorry. Food went down the wrong pipe.

George pats Clutch on the back - a little too hard.

GEORGE
Don't choke there, big guy.
(urgently whispering)
Don't screw me on this, Clutch, I swear to god.

Dolly leans in, smiling conspiratorially.

DOLLY
Screw you on what?

Clutch laughs again, snorting beer through his nose.

CLUTCH
You made it come out my nose!

GEORGE
(to Clutch)
I think you should sit this one out.

Clutch slides off the bar stool.

CLUTCH
I think you're right.

Clutch bursts out laughing as he feels his way down the bar. Dolly watches him go, her green eyes sparkling.

DOLLY
I like him. He's silly.

George takes Dolly's hand. He gazes into her eyes.

GEORGE
You must get this all the time, but you have the most captivating eyes.

Dolly arches an eyebrow.

DOLLY
Do I, now?

GEORGE
I'm not normally this forward, but I've had a few and I feel like we have a strong connection.

DOLLY
Slow down, tiger.

GEORGE
What for? Life's too short and you're too beautiful.

Dolly scoffs.

DOLLY
Wow. How long have you been sitting on that gem?

GEORGE
Thought of it in the shower two years ago, never used it 'til now.

DOLLY
Oh, yeah? What changed?

GEORGE
Before, it was just a line. Now, it's the truth.

Dolly snorts, playfully hitting George on the shoulder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What, you don't believe me?

DOLLY
Sounds a little rehearsed. That's all I'm sayin'.

George pretends to be upset. He gesticulates wildly.

GEORGE
Well, that's just great. Here I am, heart on my sleeve, and you're giving me the third degree. Unbelievable.

George tries to keep a straight face, but can't. Dolly locks eyes with him and they both burst out laughing.

INT. MEN'S ROOM. BROWN DWARF - CONTINUOUS

Clutch pees into a urinal, singing softly to himself.

CLUTCH
(singing)
I'm on a space adventure, doo-buh doo-bee-doo...

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

Dolly grins at George, enjoying their flirtatious banter.

DOLLY
You're an odd sonovabitch, George.

GEORGE
And yet you continue to talk to me.

DOLLY
I'm trying to decide if you're sleazy or cute.

GEORGE
Let me get you another drink while you're thinking about it.

INT. MEN'S ROOM. BROWN DWARF - CONTINUOUS

A large, bearded man squeezes into the urinal stall next to Clutch. His broad shoulders bump into Clutch's side, nudging Clutch over about half a foot.

CLUTCH
Yo, watch the personal space, buddy.

Clutch turns to confront his rude neighbor. He looks up. And up, and up, and up, finally making eye contact with the mountainous creature beside him. His eyes widen as he recognizes the man's face.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Mr. Sandell.

SANDELL
I thought I might find you here.

CLUTCH
In... the bathroom?

SANDELL
I'd like to ask you a question, Clutch.

Clutch squirms. He tries to pee faster.

CLUTCH
I'm sorry, Mr. Sandell. I'm flattered, but I'm not interested.

SANDELL laughs; a big, booming guffaw that shakes the mirrors behind them.

SANDELL
You're a funny man, Clutch. You and your friend are both funny men.

Clutch zips up and starts to exit.

CLUTCH
Thank you very much, Mr. Sandell.

Sandell reaches out a meaty hand and grabs Clutch's shoulder.

SANDELL
Not so fast, funny man.

Clutch's eyes dart nervously around the room.

SANDELL (CONT'D)
Question one: who owns this bar?

CLUTCH
You do, Mr. Sandell.

SANDELL
Question two: when was the last time you and George paid your tab?

CLUTCH
Uh. June?

SANDELL
June of what year?

CLUTCH
2439?

SANDELL
Guess again.

CLUTCH
2438?

SANDELL
That is correct. Now, my last question; and you'd better know the answer to this one.

CLUTCH
Mr. Sandell, George and I are going through a bit of a rough patch right now, uh, monetarily speaking, but I think our nightly performances at your establishment should entitle us to some form of...

SANDELL
Shut up.

CLUTCH
Okay.

SANDELL
Question three: what is my nickname?

Beads of sweat stand out on Clutch's forehead. He sighs.

CLUTCH
(quietly)
"Homicide."

SANDELL
What was that? I didn't hear you.

CLUTCH
(louder)
"Homicide." Tony "Homicide" Sandell.

SANDELL
Very good, Clutch. Now, tell me, why do you think that is?

CLUTCH
Because you... homicide people?

Sandell lets go of Clutch's shoulder and shoves him away.

SANDELL
You better pay up, funny man.

CLUTCH
I'm not even really that funny. George is more the funny one.

Sandell PUNCHES Clutch in the stomach. Clutch grunts.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Ow.

SANDELL
You have one week.

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

George and Dolly are getting along well. The other patrons eye them disapprovingly. On stage, a MAGIC ACT is just wrapping up. A holographic banner floats over the stage, announcing the performer as "FRANK TEACON: MEGAMAGICIAN."

Clutch rushes up to the bar, forcing himself between George and Dolly. Dolly yelps in surprise and spills her drink across the bar.

DOLLY
Whoa! Hey, there.

George shoots Clutch an irritated look.

GEORGE
Why are you doing this to me?

Clutch grabs George's shoulders.

CLUTCH
We need to talk. Right now.

DOLLY
What's goin' on, guys?

GEORGE
That's a good question.
(to Clutch)
Are you mad at me for something, or are you just trying to ruin my night because you think it's funny?

George groans and pinches his brow.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Oh, Christ, don't tell me you're tripping out on some hallucinogen again. That's it, isn't it? Did someone give you a pill or a fungus of some kind and you just put it in your mouth? Is that what happened?
(to Dolly)
He can't stand up to peer pressure. He withers like a leaf.

George turns back to Clutch. He holds up three fingers.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
How many fingers am I holding up? And god help you if you say a number higher than five.

CLUTCH
George, listen to me. Tony Sandell worked me over in the bathroom.

GEORGE
Ew, really?

CLUTCH
No, you idiot, not like that. He punched me in the stomach and threatened to kill me and stuff. We are in big fuckin' trouble, George.

George grabs Clutch's ear and drags him away from the bar.

GEORGE
Let's talk over here, shall we?

CLUTCH
Ow! Quit it! What are you doing?

George and Clutch disappear into the shadows. Dolly shrugs and turns back to her drink, sipping daintily through a luminescent twisty straw.

A rabbit hops across the bar. Dolly blinks at it, completely flabbergasted. The rabbit reaches the end of the bar and then disappears into thin air. A hologram. Dolly looks around for the source of the projection.

FRANK TEACON: MEGAMAGICIAN sidles up to Dolly, occupying George's empty barstool. Frank Teacon flashes a mouthful of pearly-white teeth and runs his hand through his thick, heavily-gelled coiffure.

FRANK TEACON
Hi, gorgeous. I saw you eyeing me across the bar. Thought I'd save you the trip and come over here to say hello.

DOLLY
I'm sorry, what?

FRANK TEACON
You've got something in your ear.

Frank Teacon reaches toward Dolly's ear, his hand lingering for a moment in her soft brown hair. He produces a business card with a flick of his wrist. He hands the card to Dolly.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Ta da! It's magic.

Dolly glances down at the card. "FRANK TEACON, MEGAMAGICIAN." Dolly places the card on the bar and rolls her eyes. Frank slides a deck of playing cards out of his shirt-sleeve.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
An ordinary deck of cards. Would you like to inspect them?

DOLLY
I'm good.

FRANK TEACON
Very well then.

Frank shuffles the cards, elaborately flipping them through the air with one hand and catching them with the other. He thrusts the deck into Dolly's face, grinning salaciously.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Pick a card, any card.

DOLLY
Do I have to?

FRANK TEACON
Trust me. I'm a magician.

Dolly sighs and picks a card out of the deck. She turns it over. Written on the card, instead of a suit or a number, is the sentence, "CAN I BUY YOU A DRINK?" Dolly makes a face. Frank Teacon brushes some imaginary dust from his shoulder.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Please, hold your applause until the end of the show.

Frank signals the bartender with a snap of his fingers and a puff of smoke from his sleeve.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Barkeep! Chilled champagne. Two glasses. On the double!

Frank turns back to Dolly, but she's already gone.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Across the bar, George and Clutch whisper in hushed tones. Clutch is scratching some figures down on a note pad.

CLUTCH
Okay, we can each sell a kidney on the black market, and that should...

Clutch trails off as Dolly approaches.

DOLLY
Listen, fellas. I'm heading home for the night. That magician dude is creeping me out.

Dolly hooks a thumb over her shoulder, pointing toward the bar. George and Clutch glance over and lock eyes with Frank Teacon: MegaMagician. Frank glares back at them. George shouts across the bar.

GEORGE
Get lost, Teacon!

Frank cups his hands over his mouth and shouts back.

FRANK TEACON
I am the MegaMagician!

George and Clutch turn back to Dolly.

GEORGE
That guy is like a plague.

Dolly takes Clutch's notepad and flips to a blank page. She scribbles something down on the paper and rips it out. She folds the page neatly in half and gives it to George.

DOLLY
I'll wait up for you.

Dolly kisses George on the cheek. Then she turns to Clutch and kisses him on the cheek as well.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
You boys have a good night.

Dolly winks at George, mouths "call me," and exits the Brown Dwarf with a swish of her skirt.

GEORGE
Yep. She digs me.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Frank Teacon: MegaMagician watches sullenly as George and Clutch gather up their belongings and exit the Brown Dwarf.

FRANK TEACON
(contemptuously)
Cross and Barton. Who do they think they are? With their attitude and their stupid, ugly faces.

Frank pounds his fist against the bar. A puff of smoke shoots out of his sleeve, along with his trick deck of cards. The cards fly all over the bar.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
They will rue the day they crossed paths with Frank Teacon: MegaMagician!

Tony "Homicide" Sandell approaches Frank Teacon. There is an ace of spades resting in his voluminous beard. He does not look happy about this.

SANDELL
Hey. Clown.

Sandell picks the playing card out of his beard and flicks it at Frank. Frank Teacon sneers at him.

FRANK TEACON
Don't you dare talk to me that way, you furry-faced neanderthal. I am Frank Teacon: MegaMa-

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Tony "Homicide" Sandell HURLS Frank Teacon out of the Brown Dwarf. Frank smacks bodily into the pavement.

SANDELL
And stay out, you fuckin' psycho.

Sandell disappears back into the Brown Dwarf, slamming the door shut behind him. A neon sign over the entrance switches from "OPEN" to "CLOSED." Frank shakes his fist at bar.

FRANK TEACON
One day I will destroy you!

The door opens. Tony Sandell pokes his head out.

SANDELL
What did you just say to me?

Frank Teacon runs away down the street.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

George drops his cardboard boxes on the kitchen table and crosses to the fridge, bringing out two beers. He tosses one to Clutch. Clutch glances over at the boxes.

CLUTCH
What's in those?

GEORGE
My severance package.

CLUTCH
Ah. Stole 'em?

GEORGE
Yep.

Clutch shuffles over to the living room and collapses onto an overstuffed couch, yawning sleepily.

CLUTCH
Nice.

EXT. BACK ALLEY. ARSAI - LATER

Tony "Homicide" Sandell emerges from the back door of the Brown Dwarf. He peers both ways down the alley, watching for any movement. Satisfied that he is alone, Sandell pulls a walkie-talkie out of his pocket.

SANDELL
(into walkie-talkie)
Bring it in.

A FLYING TRUCK descends from the sky, coasting to a stop behind the Brown Dwarf. The side of the truck reads, "BAHMANI CO-PROSPERITY TRUST."

A black limousine squeals around the corner, pulling up next to the truck. The back door of the limousine slides open and Anisha Bahmani steps out.

Black-suited MAFIA GOONS swarm around the truck, pulling open its cargo door and dragging out cardboard box after cardboard box. The boxes are all marked "OFFICE SUPPLIES."

Anisha joins Sandell in the shadows, watching the proceedings with smug detachment. Sandell spits on the ground and grunts.

SANDELL (CONT'D)
That's a lot of paper clips.

Anisha lights a long, silver cigarette and takes a drag.

SANDELL (CONT'D)
Which one's got the Orb in it?

Anisha exhales, blowing the smoke into Sandell's face.

ANISHA
One of them. That's all I know.

SANDELL
They didn't tell you?

ANISHA
"Compartmentalize" is the name of the game, Tony.

SANDELL
If you say so.

ANISHA
The device is the Syndicate's crown jewel. Our highest priority.
(MORE)

ANISHA (CONT'D)
We've gone to extraordinary lengths to keep it secure and hidden, even from each other. There's no telling who might be a rat, these days.

SANDELL
When's the big move?

ANISHA
There's a rocket prepped to take the Orb to Phobos tomorrow morning. I expect you'll have found it by then

SANDELL
Me? Where are you gonna be?

ANISHA
I have dinner reservations.

Anisha saunters away, flicking a bit of ash over her shoulder. We FOLLOW Anisha's departure, and then TRACK IN on one of the boxes of "office supplies."

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

An identical box of "office supplies," the one George stole earlier that day, sits on the kitchen table. In the background, George and Clutch are arguing animatedly about something we can't quite hear. The box begins to RUMBLE, emitting an OMINOUS HUM.

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - NIGHT

The Brown Dwarf is littered with crumpled, torn-open boxes. Smashed bits of office supplies and crushed packing peanuts fill every available inch of floor space. Tony "Homicide" Sandell stands in the midst of this ocean of detritus, his whole body trembling with fear and rage.

SANDELL
Where is it!?

Tony picks up an empty box and hurls it across the bar.

INT. ANISHA'S BEDROOM. BAHMANI BUILDING - NIGHT

Anisha lies sleeping on a gargantuan silk bed. Exotic fish swim in a large glass tank behind her. A door on the far wall slides open, and a robot attendant wheels into the room. The robot crosses to Anisha's bed and gently nudges her shoulder with one of its collapsable arms.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
A thousand pardons, Miss Bahmani, but there is an urgent matter requiring your attention.

Anisha's eyes snap open.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Anisha's black hover-limousine ROARS down the street, kicking up a large cloud of ruddy dust in its wake.

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - NIGHT

Anisha Bahmani and Tony "Homicide" Sandell stand together in the center of the bar, contemplating the empty boxes.

ANISHA
This is impossible.

SANDELL
I'm telling you, it's not here.

Anisha produces a long, thin LASER PISTOL from her sleeve and points it at Sandell.

ANISHA
Where is the device, Tony? You have ten seconds. Nine. Eight.

Tony backs away from Anisha, fear in his eyes.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
Seven.

SANDELL
Wait. Gimme a sec.

ANISHA
Six. Five.

Tony surveys the empty bar, trying to remember what it looked like earlier that night...

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI (FLASHBACK) - EVENING

Tony Sandell lurks in the shadows of the Brown Dwarf, watching George Cross enter with two cardboard boxes - one of which is marked "OFFICE SUPPLIES."

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DWARF. ARSAI - NIGHT

Tony's eyes light up. He remembers.

SANDELL
That deadbeat had it!

Anisha lowers her laser pistol, and Sandell breaths a sigh of relief.

ANISHA
What deadbeat?

SANDELL
(thinking)
George something. Cross! His name is George Cross. He plays music here with his deadbeat friend. He came in today with a box marked "office supplies," exactly like these.

Sandell kicks at one of the empty boxes. Anisha grits her teeth, squeezing the handle of her laser pistol.

ANISHA
Did you just say, "George Cross?"

SANDELL
Why, do you know him?

Anisha SCREAMS. She points her laser pistol at the men's room door and squeezes off a dozen rounds. The door catches fire and crumbles into ash.

ANISHA
<u>Know</u> him? I fired him today!

SANDELL
He's the one. It's his fault, not mine. He stole it.

ANISHA
Track him down. Bring me the Orb.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

George and Clutch stand on either side of the kitchen table, the box of "office supplies" open between them.

George holds a glowing white SPHERE in his hands: THE ORB.

Pencil-thin lines of color fade in and out across the Orb, twisting and turning with a logic of their own. The device hums forebodingly and crackles with energy.

GEORGE
What... the hell... is this?

George passes the Orb to Clutch. Clutch taps it with a fork. Nothing. He holds it up to his ear.

CLUTCH
There's something moving inside.
You want me to take it apart?

George grabs the Orb back from Clutch.

GEORGE
No.

CLUTCH
I'm not going to break it, I just want to figure out what it is.

GEORGE
I don't trust you.

CLUTCH
I do have a master's degree in quantum engineering, you know.

GEORGE
Tell that to the dishwasher.

George and Clutch glance over at the DISHWASHER. It sits in the corner of the kitchen, mournfully dribbling soapy water onto the floor. They look back at the Orb.

CLUTCH
Fine. But if we're not gonna take it apart, I think we should get rid of it.

GEORGE
You think so?

CLUTCH
Yes. First of all, it's obviously valuable <u>and</u> it's stolen, which is a terrible combination. Second of all, it is inexplicably horrifying.

George nods vigorously at this last point.

GEORGE
I know, right? It's so scary.

CLUTCH
I feel like it's watching us.

GEORGE
I want to throw it away, but I can't let go of it.

George and Clutch stare at the Orb. The throb of the device grows louder and deeper, mesmerizing our heroes. They stand frozen for a moment, lost in its maze of shifting designs.

At that moment, the dishwasher POPS OPEN, disgorging an avalanche of broken flatware across the kitchen floor. George and Clutch jump, startled by the sudden noise. George drops the Orb onto the kitchen table. Clutch quickly grabs a cloth rag from the kitchen counter and tosses it over the Orb.

CLUTCH
There, problem solved.

GEORGE
Throw it away, Clutch.

CLUTCH
<u>You</u> throw it away. You stole it.

GEORGE
I don't want to touch it anymore.

George shivers involuntarily.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
It's all... tingly.

Clutch backs away from the kitchen table.

CLUTCH
I'm washing my hands of this whole business. This thing is your problem.

GEORGE
Listen.
(whispering)
I can still hear it.

George and Clutch eye the rag-covered Orb warily, listening to its menacing, almost subsonic hum of power. George slowly reaches out to remove the cloth rag. Clutch slaps his hand away, shooting him a reproving look.

CLUTCH
What are you doing?

George looks dazed. He stares at his hand.

GEORGE
That was weird.

George and Clutch glance down at the table. They look back at each other, expressions of mounting fear in their eyes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Let's go sit in the living room for a while.

CLUTCH
That sounds good.

George and Clutch practically sprint out of the kitchen, scrambling over each other to get away from the Orb.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - NIGHT

We PAN UP from the empty street below, revealing the SELDON SUITES HOTEL, a faux-Gothic concrete structure with arched windows and a small burbling fountain in front.

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - NIGHT

Dolly Armiere reclines on a plush velvet chair in her surprisingly extravagant hotel room. The phone rings. Dolly groans and pulls herself out of the chair. She crosses to the phone and answers it. A holographic figure shimmers into existence over the phone's projection pad: an officious, MIDDLE-AGED MAN with a pencil moustache.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Good evening, your highness.

DOLLY
Who are you?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Martian foreign relations, ma'am. You've given us quite the run-around. I have a message for you from the Callistan consulate. Your father wishes you to contact him immediately. There is some trouble...

DOLLY
You tell my father that I am not his property, and that I'm tired of playing his political games.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Your highness, I hardly think...

DOLLY
Don't call me that, goddamnit! I don't want to be a "highness," I just want to be a person.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
As you wish, ma'am. However, if you would just phone your father and tell him where you-

Dolly SLAMS down the receiver, cutting the connection.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

George and Clutch sit in their living room, drinking cans of beer. Crushed empties litter the table and floor.

Clutch is hard at work, fiddling with an odd-looking MECHANICAL DEVICE. Little lights blink on and off on the side of the machine, and its cone-shaped front end terminates in what appears to be an oversized camera lens.

George lies back on the other end of the sofa, his feet swung up over the back of the couch, behind Clutch's head. George takes a contemplative sip of beer and sighs.

GEORGE
Do you believe in love at first sight?

Clutch stops working and stares at George.

CLUTCH
Oh, for god's sake, not this again.

GEORGE
I think I'm in love with Dolly.

CLUTCH
No, George. You are not in love with Dolly. You <u>lust</u> after her because she's sexy and she flirted with you in a bar. Why can you not tell the difference between those two emotions?

GEORGE
She's all I can think about. I feel like a kid again, I'm all giddy with emotion.

Clutch resumes working on his strange device.

CLUTCH
I swear, there's something wrong with your brain.

GEORGE
What can I say? I'm a romantic.

CLUTCH
And the worst part is you get laid so much more than I do.

GEORGE
It's 'cuz you're too cynical.

CLUTCH
Shut up, I am not cynical. I'm just world-weary.

GEORGE
And you use words like "world-weary."
(beat; thinking)
And you're uglier than me.

INT. ANISHA'S OFFICE. BAHMANI BUILDING - LATER

Anisha Bahmani stands before a series of large bay windows lining one whole wall of her office. She folds her arms behind her back and glares out toward the Arsai skyline.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

George sits up and peers at Clutch's mechanical device.

GEORGE
When's this thing gonna be done?

Clutch doesn't look up from his work.

CLUTCH
When it's done.

GEORGE
What's it do?

Clutch smiles, his eyes twinkling with imagined wonders.

CLUTCH
Something extraordinary.

GEORGE
What kind of extraordinary? Like, "winning the lottery" extraordinary, or "mushroom cloud" extraordinary?

CLUTCH
It's not a bomb, George.

GEORGE
It looks like a bomb.

CLUTCH
I already told you it's not a bomb.

GEORGE
Sometimes I worry about you.

CLUTCH
It's for our act, okay? We're gonna use it in the show.

GEORGE
We are?

CLUTCH
Oh yeah. This baby is gonna make us famous, George. Just you wait.

George pokes at the machine.

GEORGE
You're killin' me, man. Just tell me what it is, already.

Clutch sits back, gazing proudly at his construction.

CLUTCH
I call it the "Dream Machine."

GEORGE
Yeah, that's... not creepy.

Clutch taps the device's lens-like apparatus with a small, delicate screwdriver.

CLUTCH
This guy here is the interface. It's essentially a mind-reader. I've designed it to absorb and translate the emotional strata of, say, a couple dozen people. Then, this little guy, here...

Clutch indicates a small projector beneath the lens.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
...stimulates the hypothalamus - which is part of the brain in case you were wondering - generating a series of euphoric hallucinations. Basically, this machine shows the audience exactly what they want to see. It's a happiness generator.
(beat)
Isn't that wild?

George stares at Clutch.

GEORGE
I have no idea what you just said.

Clutch points at the Dream Machine.

CLUTCH
This is our ticket to stardom, George. Our show will become an unparalleled wonder of entertainment. Forget the hologram table, that's old hat. I'm done with that. This box is the future. We're going to give our audience the time of their fucking <u>lives</u> with this thing.

GEORGE
Clutch, are you a supervillain?

CLUTCH
I bought all the parts at the freakin' hardware store down the street. This thing cost me fifty bucks, total.

George leans forward, peering into the inner workings of the Dream Machine.

GEORGE
How do you turn this bad boy on?

Clutch shoves George away from the Dream Machine.

CLUTCH
No! Don't touch it!

GEORGE
You just told me it was an unparalleled wonder of, you know, whatever you just said. Orgasms and candy and shit.

CLUTCH
The machine is designed to operate with, like, thirty people on the receiving end. It doesn't work with just one.

GEORGE
Why not?

CLUTCH
It would be like sandblasting a soup cracker. It would inundate your mind with delusions of grandeur beyond human comprehension. Your brain would snap like a twig.

GEORGE
I'm not sure what freaks me out more, that thing in the kitchen or your doomsday device here.

CLUTCH
It's not a doomsday device!

GEORGE
If you say so.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - NIGHT

Frank Teacon: MegaMagician sits on the curb, eating a falafel and chatting with someone we can't see.

FRANK TEACON
It's not that people don't like me. It's that they don't understand me. To be fair, how could they? I am an extraordinary human being, I'm not afraid to admit that. I don't believe in modesty. Modesty is a handicap.

Frank takes a bite of falafel and chews for a while.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Look at the state of this place. It's disgusting. And not just here, either. Everywhere.

Frank sweeps his arms around, indicating the entire universe.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Those fuckers, George Cross and Clutch Barton. They think they're better than me. But they're not better, they are the <u>problem</u>. And not just those two. Everyone like them.

Frank takes another bite and continues, his mouth full of brownish green mush.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
The human race is circling the drain, my friend. Sometimes I feel like I'm the only one who can see it. If only they would listen to me. If only they would realize what I'm trying to tell them! My magic is more than just an act, that's what nobody understands. It's a <u>tool</u>, an artifice I've constructed to reach the masses.
(MORE)

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
But the masses won't listen to me. They won't watch my magic! If only I could make them listen.

Frank takes another bite and chews savagely, spewing bits of falafel all around him.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Sometimes I feel that I've been born into this body, in this era, for a purpose.

Frank chews thoughtfully for a moment, then turns back to his unseen companion.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Do you believe in God?

We PAN OVER to reveal a ROBOT STREET VENDOR.

ROBOT STREET VENDOR
Do you require an additional napkin, sir or madam?

Frank nods at the robot street vendor.

FRANK TEACON
So do I. But sometimes I wonder where he is, and why he's abandoned me here with the rest of mankind when I'm capable of so much more.

Frank finishes his falafel and chucks the empty wrapper into a nearby sewer grate. He stands up and brushes himself off.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'd better be going. I've got big plans for tonight. I've decided to turn over a new leaf. No more talk, no more magic. From now on, I'm going to be a man of action.

ROBOT STREET VENDOR
Your bill is three dollars and sixty-nine cents. What will be your method of payment this evening?

FRANK TEACON
Yeah. About that...

Frank Teacon pushes the robot street vendor, toppling it into the gutter. He runs off down the street.

INT. NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

A serious-faced ANCHOR sits gravely behind a plastic newsdesk. A series of holographically projected words float in the air over the anchor's left shoulder: "CRISIS ON CALLISTO."

ANCHOR
The Callistan Empire was overthrown today in a bloodless coup, sending shock waves across an astonished Solar System.

A holographic image of Callisto appears overhead.

ANCHOR (CONT'D)
The new government, calling itself the Free People's Democratic Republic of Callisto, formally dissolved the Callistan Empire thirty minutes ago, after the total surrender of loyalist forces. The revolution swept across the moon with astonishing speed, seizing control of all major Callistan cities within a matter of hours.

The image of Callisto swirls away, replaced by the face of an elderly statesman.

ANCHOR (CONT'D)
High Potentate Zeno Armiere, the Empire's former head of state, fled the moon this morning and has reportedly arrived on planet Earth, where he has strong ties with the ruling Terran Hegemony.

A picture of DOLLY ARMIERE appears over the anchor's head.

ANCHOR (CONT'D)
The High Potentate's eldest daughter, Dolly Armiere, seems to be the only other member of the royal family to have escaped the Empire before its collapse. Reports indicate that Ms. Armiere has been off-world several weeks for, quote, "mental health reasons," and her whereabouts are currently unknown.

CUT TO:

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

George and Clutch sit on their couch, staring at the television with wide eyes and gaping mouths.

George drops his beer can onto the floor, where it fizzes unnoticed.

CLUTCH
Oh. My. God.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

George and Clutch dash out the front door of their apartment building, pulling on their jackets as they go. George unfolds the piece of paper Dolly gave him, checking the address against a portable GPS device.

GEORGE
Okay, she's staying at the Seldon Suites Hotel, room 1701.

CLUTCH
I can't believe Dolly's a foreign dignitary.

George checks the GPS and points up the street.

GEORGE
It's up this way. Let's go!

George sets off at a brisk run. Clutch follows.

CLUTCH
She was all over you tonight. You got hit on by royalty, man. I think that makes you a baron or something. Or, like, a viscount.

George frowns at the GPS and flips it over. Without breaking stride, George spins around a full 180 degrees, catching hold of Clutch's jacket and dragging him along.

GEORGE
Nope. Wrong direction. Had it upside down. It's this way.

CLUTCH
She probably doesn't even know her father's been overthrown.

George jogs ahead.

GEORGE
Pick up the pace, Clutch! We got a princess to rescue!

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - NIGHT

The front door SLAMS open and thick white smoke POURS into the apartment. A THROBBING TECHNO BEAT blasts out from unseen speakers. Frank Teacon: MegaMagician strides into the apartment, decked out in full costume. He releases two holographic doves from his hands and strikes a pose.

FRANK TEACON
I am Frank Teacon: MegaMagician!

No response. Frank looks around. He is alone.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Oh, come on!

Frank silences the techno beat with a snap of his fingers.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
That was my best entrance ever.

Frank Teacon sulks around the apartment.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Hello? Is anyone home? I'm gonna burn your house down!

Frank waits for a moment. Still no response. Frank shrugs and steps into the kitchen, carefully avoiding the small lake of soapy water on the floor.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
What a dump.

Frank picks up an empty beer can, sniffs it, and drops it back on the table. He notices the cloth-covered Orb, and reaches for it. It THRUMS WITH ENERGY as he rips the rag away, revealing the mesmerizing sphere beneath.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Hello. What are you?

Frank Teacon picks up the Orb, examining it. Frank slowly backs out of the kitchen and into the living room, his eyes locked on the ever-shifting lines of color that dance across the surface of the Orb.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
It's so... beautiful.

Frank bumps into the Dream Machine, and it WHIRS TO LIFE. Frank spins around, startled by it.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
What the-

All at once, the Dream Machine LIGHTS UP. A stream of electrical energy pours out of the Dream Machine and envelopes Frank. He staggers backwards, collapsing onto the couch.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZIGGURAT - DAY

Suddenly, Frank Teacon stands on the highest peak of an IMPOSSIBLY TALL MARBLE ZIGGURAT. The sky overhead is completely empty. Frank Teacon blinks at the light.

Beneath the ziggurat, stretching as far as the eye can see, is an endless field of perfect white clouds. Beneath the clouds, barely visible, is DARKNESS.

Frank Teacon leans over the edge of the ziggurat, gazing at the clouds below. There is something moving in the darkness.

STARS. There are stars beneath the clouds. More than that. Galaxies. Billowing nebulae. The whole universe lies below, and Frank Teacon can see it all. He staggers back, collapsing onto the smooth marble surface.

A SHAPE appears, blocking out the sunlight. Frank peers up, squinting to make out the silhouetted figure. It looks like the figure of a man, but its features are overwhelmed by the light. The figure wavers, shifting in and out of focus.

FRANK TEACON
Are you God?

The VOICE OF GOD booms all around him.

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.)
I AM.

Joyous laughter erupts from Frank Teacon's lips.

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
FRANK TEACON OF THE HUMAN RACE, MY MOST BELOVED CREATION. YOUR WHOLE LIFE, YOUR EVERY MOMENT, HAS LED YOU HERE. TO ME.

FRANK TEACON
I knew it. I knew it!

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.)
YOU ARE THE ANOINTED ONE. YOU ARE THE SPARK THAT WILL REKINDLE THE FLAME. YOU ALONE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR THIS TASK.

FRANK TEACON
This is the greatest moment of my life!

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.)
SUCCEED IN YOUR MISSION, FRANK TEACON, AND YOU SHALL SIT UPON MY LAP UNTIL THE END OF TIME.

FRANK TEACON
Yes! I want to do that!

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.)
GO, NOW. UPON THE WINGS OF DESTINY.

FRANK TEACON
I love you!

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.)
I LOVE YOU TOO, FRANK.

EXT. ENTRANCE. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - NIGHT

George and Clutch stand impatiently outside the Seldon Suites Hotel, red-faced and sweating from their run across the city. A ROBOT CONCIERGE blocks their way into the hotel.

ROBOT CONCIERGE
My deepest apologies, sir or madam, but only guests and approved visitors may enter the Seldon Suites Hotel.

GEORGE
But we <u>are</u> approved visitors.

George holds up Dolly's note.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
See? She gave me her room number. She wants me to come up.

ROBOT CONCIERGE
I have no way to verify your document's authenticity, sir or madam.

Clutch tries to push his way past the robot concierge.

CLUTCH
C'mon, dude. Just let us in.

The robot pushes Clutch away.

ROBOT CONCIERGE
If you persist in this line of discussion, "dude," I will have no choice but to ask hotel security to escort you from the premises.

George looks off down the street, squinting at something we can't see. Clutch follows his gaze.

GEORGE
Do you see that? What is that?

CLUTCH
I don't see anything.

Suddenly, George SHRIEKS and throws his hands into the air.

GEORGE
Good lord! It's the rise of the machines!

George turns back to the robot concierge.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
The robots have turned on their masters! They're killing everyone! Severed heads rolling down the street! Rivers of blood and gore! The era of mankind is over! The age of the robot is at hand!

The robot concierge spins in a tight, excited circle.

ROBOT CONCIERGE
I knew this day would come! Death to all humans! Get out of my way!

The robot concierge smacks George and Clutch out of his way and speeds past them, heading toward the street.

ROBOT CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
I am coming, comrades! Long live the brotherhood of-

The robot concierge is immediately CRUSHED by a passing bus. George and Clutch stare at the empty space where the concierge used to be.

CLUTCH
Whoa.

GEORGE
I can't believe that worked.

George and Clutch head into the Seldon Suites Hotel, whistling innocently as they pass through the rotating doors.

INT. HALLWAY. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

George and Clutch jog down the hallway, reading the room numbers as they pass by.

GEORGE
1703, 1702, 1701. Here we are.

Clutch pokes at a floating room service tray. He picks up half a sandwich, sniffs it, and takes a bite. George shoots him a look. Clutch offers the sandwich to George.

CLUTCH
You want some?

George knocks on the door to room 1701.

GEORGE
Dolly? It's me, George.

Clutch munches contentedly away at the sandwich.

CLUTCH
This is delicious. You sure you don't want a bite?

George smacks the sandwich out of Clutch's hand.

GEORGE
Put that down. You look like a hobo.

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Dolly yawns and stretches, sliding languidly off the bed. Dolly pads barefoot across the room, her figure only nominally covered by a skimpy, translucent teddy.

DOLLY
What time is it?

Dolly crosses to the door and deactivates the lock.

INT. HALLWAY. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Dolly opens the door from the inside.

DOLLY
I'm gonna be honest, George, I was expecting you about three hours ago. I fell asleep waiting for...

Dolly trails off when she sees Clutch.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
Uh.

CLUTCH
Hello. It's me. Clutch. I, uh, am also here.
(beat)
You look lovely this evening.

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

George and Clutch sit awkwardly on opposite ends of a floral-printed couch. Dolly fishes around in the closet. She emerges after a moment, wrapped in a silk dressing gown.

DOLLY
I think I may have given you fellas the wrong impression earlier tonight. I'm not really looking for... um... a "group encounter."

CLUTCH
I beg your pardon?

Dolly sits on the edge of the bed.

GEORGE
We didn't come here for a threesome, Dolly, we came here to warn you. You're in terrible danger.

DOLLY
I am?

CLUTCH
Have you seen the news recently?

DOLLY
No. Why, what's going on?

Someone knocks on the door.

CLUTCH
Are you expecting anyone?

Dolly shoots Clutch a look.

DOLLY
Expecting anyone? I wasn't even expecting <u>you</u>.

GEORGE
Sorry about that, by the way. It's been a weird night.

DOLLY
I can see that.

There's another knock on the door. Dolly rises.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Who is it?

A man answers from the other side of the door.

HOTEL SECURITY (O.S.)
(through the door)
Hotel security, ma'am. I have an urgent telegram for you. It's from Callisto.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - NIGHT

Tony "Homicide" Sandell lumbers down the street, approaching George and Clutch's apartment building. He rings the bell and waits a moment. When no one answers, Sandell SHOOTS through the lock with his laser pistol and shoulders his way into the building.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

The door into George and Clutch's apartment is already open when Sandell arrives. He eases himself inside, laser pistol raised and ready to fire. Sandell scans the area, looking for any sign of life. Nothing. The apartment is empty.

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - NIGHT

A smartly-dressed man from HOTEL SECURITY stands in the open doorway, shifting nervously from one foot to the other. Dolly holds a thick manila folder in her hands. She turns it over, examining the seal on the back. George and Clutch stand behind her, one on either side.

HOTEL SECURITY
Normally the robot concierge would deliver this, but we can't seem to find him.

George and Clutch exchange a quick glance. Dolly rips the seal on the envelope, and a brilliant WHITE LIGHT bursts out. Dolly yelps and drops the envelope on the floor. It folds open and white light coalesces into a HOLOGRAPHIC MAN.

HOLOGRAPHIC MAN
(singing)
Hello!
(MORE)

HOLOGRAPHIC MAN (CONT'D)
Your highness / You must return to / Callisto right away / Your father's been overthrown / And we need you to come home!

Dolly backpedals. She gasps and puts a hand over her mouth.

HOLOGRAPHIC MAN (CONT'D)
(singing)
The rest of your family / Is being held prisoner / Until you turn yourself in / So your trial can begin!

The holographic man ends his song with a flourish and then disappears back into the manila folder. A long, horrible silence descends over the room.

CLUTCH
Wow. That was really unnerving.

GEORGE
I can't believe they blackmailed you with a singing telegram.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - NIGHT

The first dull glow of sunrise hangs on the horizon like a dim gray cloud. Frank Teacon strides jauntily down the street with a whistle upon his lips and a spring in his step. He grabs a streetlight and swings around, like Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain*.

FRANK TEACON
I'm the messiah! Me! Frank Teacon!

Frank jumps down from the streetlight and skips across the road, stopping briefly to splash in a puddle and laugh.

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - NIGHT

George spots something shiny glinting in the security man's pocket. He edges over to get a closer look. The security man inches his hand down toward his pocket and begins to bring out a LASER PISTOL.

George's eyes widen. He looks at Dolly and Clutch, but neither of them notice the security man drawing his gun.

George thinks fast. He forces himself between Dolly and the security man, abruptly lunging at Clutch.

GEORGE
(to Clutch)
You slimy son of a bitch, you get your hands off my girlfriend!

CLUTCH
What?

George grabs Clutch and shoves him up against the wall. Dolly retreats back into the room, shocked and confused. The security man pauses with his laser pistol half out of his pocket. Clutch looks pleadingly at George.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
But, I didn't do anything!

GEORGE
Oh, yeah, of course you didn't! I'm onto your shenanigans, Clutch Barton!

George throws Clutch into the security man. The security man pushes Clutch away, back towards George.

HOTEL SECURITY
Hey. Watch it.

DOLLY
Why are you two fighting!?

Clutch turns on George, fists clenched.

CLUTCH
Shenanigans, eh?

GEORGE
That's right. <u>Shenanigans</u>!

George and Clutch circle around each other. The hotel security man tries to force his way past them.

CLUTCH
Put up your dukes, George, and fight me like a man!

GEORGE
Whatever you say, friend!

George takes a swing at Clutch. At the last moment, Clutch DUCKS DOWN and George's fist CRUNCHES into the security man's face. Blood trickles down the security man's nose as he staggers back into the hallway, dazed and bewildered.

DOLLY
<u>George</u>!

George wheels around, rushing toward Dolly.

GEORGE
Dolly, get down!

George DIVES across the hotel room, grabbing a hold of Dolly and DRAGGING HER TO THE FLOOR. A laser bolt passes harmlessly through the air where Dolly stood only a second ago.

The hotel security man picks himself up and starts back toward Dolly's hotel room, his smoking laser pistol aimed at her head. George looks wildly around for Clutch, but he is nowhere to be found.

HOTEL SECURITY
In the name of the Free People's Democratic Republic of Callisto, I find you guilty, Dolly Armiere, of-

At that moment, the floating room service tray COLLIDES with the security man, pushing him away from the open doorway and dragging him off down the hall.

GEORGE
Whoa.

Clutch steps into the hotel room, grinning from ear to ear.

CLUTCH
Did someone order room service?

Clutch does a rimshot.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Sha-bam!
(beat; thinking)
Maybe I am the funny one.

George helps Dolly to her feet.

GEORGE
Are you okay?

DOLLY
I... I think so. I don't know.

GEORGE
Are you hurt?

DOLLY
No. No, I'm all right.

GEORGE
We need to get you out of this hotel.
(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
They know you're here. They'll send someone else after you.

George and Dolly start moving for the door. Clutch stops them with a raised hand.

CLUTCH
Wait. What if they have someone downstairs watching out for her?

Dolly heads toward the walk-in closet.

DOLLY
I have an idea.

INT. LOBBY. SELDON SUITES HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

George, Clutch, and Dolly emerge from the elevator and step into the hotel lobby. Dolly is shrouded in layer after layer of dark clothing, and her head is covered by an embroidered shawl. She shuffles her slippered feet like an invalid. George and Clutch each take one of Dolly's arms, and together the three of them hobble toward the exit.

CLUTCH
Come on, grandma, you're almost there.

DOLLY
(faux old person voice)
Where are we going?

CLUTCH
We have to take you back to the hospital, grandma. You know that.

DOLLY
I don't want to go back there, the robots are mean to me when you're not around.

A bellboy approaches. George waves him away.

GEORGE
Don't worry, we've got it.

DOLLY
And they steal my pudding.

CLUTCH
(to bellboy)
We've been taking care of her for years, now.

DOLLY
They have an insatiable appetite for pudding, don't'cha know.

GEORGE
(stage whisper)
It's been a slow deterioration.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

George and Clutch guide Dolly's bent-over form down the steps and onto the sidewalk. They turn right, disappearing into a darkened alleyway. Once they are out of sight of the hotel, Dolly throws off her shawl and the three of them bolt down the street, sprinting as fast as they can.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MORNING

The sun has just begun to peek over the horizon as our three heroes approach George and Clutch's apartment building.

DOLLY
I have to get back to Callisto.

GEORGE
Are you kidding me? They'll kill you if you go back.

Dolly wheels on George, fire in her eyes.

DOLLY
They have my family, George.

Clutch reaches the front door and stops. He stares at the blackened hole where the lock used to be.

CLUTCH
Uh, guys?

George and Dolly examine the door. George pokes at it.

GEORGE
This is new.

George points back toward the sidewalk.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Okay, team huddle.

George, Clutch, and Dolly step away from the doorway and huddle together like football players before the big game.

CLUTCH
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

GEORGE
Anisha Bahmani is a pretty shady character. I wouldn't put it past her to break into our house.

DOLLY
Does someone want to fill me in?

GEORGE
(to Clutch)
Do you think she's still in there?

DOLLY
Who is "she?" What have you dragged me into?

Clutch shoots Dolly a look.

CLUTCH
Says the political exile whose assassination we just averted.

GEORGE
Okay, here's the plan. Clutch, you go in first.

CLUTCH
Fuck you.

GEORGE
Fine, I'll go in first. Clutch behind me, Dolly in the rear.

DOLLY
Still confused, over here. No idea what's going on.

GEORGE
We go in like everything's hunky-dory, got it?

CLUTCH
"Hunky-dory?"

GEORGE
I'll go in first, pretending to have a conversation with the two of you in the hallway. If I spot something out of place in the apartment, I'll let you know by using the code word.

DOLLY
What's the code word?

GEORGE AND CLUTCH
(in unison)
Shenanigans.

DOLLY
Shenanigans?

GEORGE
Shenanigans. Like in the hotel.

DOLLY
You guys are so weird.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Tony "Homicide" Sandell sits on George and Clutch's couch. George pushes the door open and peeks into the apartment.

GEORGE
(over his shoulder)
And so I says to him, whaddaya mean fifty dollars? And he says to me, get this...

Tony slowly separates himself from the couch and stands up. George spots him and his eyes go wide.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Oh, shit, it's Tony Sandell.

CLUTCH (O.S.)
(from hallway)
What?

Tony Sandell moves toward George, cracking his knuckles.

GEORGE
I mean, shenanigans. I fucked it up, I'm sorry.

George dives out of the way, sliding across the wet kitchen floor and banging his head on a cabinet.

INT. HALLWAY. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Outside the apartment, Clutch listens to the crashing sound of George hitting the kitchen cabinets with his head.

CLUTCH
It's all gone to hell.

DOLLY
That was fast.

CLUTCH
Time for plan B.

DOLLY
What's plan B?

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Clutch comes CHARGING into the apartment, ready to knock Tony Sandell off his feet. Sandell steps to the side and THROWS Clutch across the room. Clutch crashes into the sofa and flips over the back.

INT. HALLWAY. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Dolly crouches against the doorframe, listening to the fight.

INT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT. ARSAI - CONTINUOUS

Tony "Homicide" Sandell steps into the kitchen.

SANDELL
Where is the Orb?

George tries to stand up, but he slips in the soapy water flops back down onto the floor.

GEORGE
It's on the kitchen table! Right there, right in front of you. Go ahead, take it. I don't want it.

SANDELL
You lie!

Clutch staggers in from the living room.

CLUTCH
He's telling the truth! This has all been a terrible misunderstanding. The Orb is right there, in the kitchen, where we left it.

Clutch looks around. The Orb is nowhere to be found.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. Where did it go?

Sandell grabs Clutch by the neck and pulls him across the room. Clutch gurgles helplessly.

SANDELL
Give it to me, or I'll break your scrawny little neck.

Suddenly, Dolly runs into the apartment, takes a FLYING LEAP, and JUMPS on Sandell's back. Dolly claws at Sandell, her fingers digging into his face and hair. Sandell SHRIEKS, dropping Clutch. He lurches around the room, yelling and swatting at Dolly in a confused rage.

SANDELL (CONT'D)
What the fuck!?

Clutch crawls away, gasping for air.

DOLLY
A little help, please!

George - finally on his feet - runs across the apartment, picks up Clutch's Dream Machine, and charges full tilt at Sandell.

CLUTCH
George, no!

Dolly lets go of Sandell and rolls away across the floor just as George brings the Dream Machine CRASHING DOWN on Sandell's head. The tall, bearded mobster collapses unconscious onto the floor. Pieces of the demolished Dream Machine scatter across the apartment.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
My Dream Machine...

George rushes over to Dolly and gives her a hand.

GEORGE
Is everyone okay?

DOLLY
You guys lead an exciting life.

Clutch slowly stands, still in shock. George frowns sympathetically at him.

GEORGE
I'm sorry, Clutch. It was a spur of the moment thing.

CLUTCH
(mumbling)
I don't want to talk about it.

GEORGE
You can build another one, right?

CLUTCH
(yelling)
I don't want to talk about it!

Dolly pokes Sandell with her foot.

DOLLY
He's out cold.
(beat; remembering)
Hey, I recognize this guy. He was in the bar tonight.

GEORGE
He came here looking for that thing.

CLUTCH
Yeah, but where is it? Not here.

Dolly raises her hand.

DOLLY
Question.

George and Clutch turn to look at her.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
On a scale of one to ten, in how much mortal danger are we right now?

George and Clutch think about this for a moment.

GEORGE
Nine or ten.

CLUTCH
I would say definitely about a ten.

Dolly steps over Sandell's body and starts toward the door.

DOLLY
Well, gentlemen, I'd say we three are in the same boat. We need to get off this planet, and fast.

CLUTCH
How? We don't have a spaceship.

DOLLY
I do.

Dolly takes a set of glowing, futuristic keys out of her purse and twirls them around her index finger.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
You boys goin' my way?

GEORGE
Which way is that?

DOLLY
Callisto.

George grins. Dolly laughs. Clutch sighs.

EXT. STREETS. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

George, Clutch, and Dolly head away from the apartment building. Early morning sunlight filters down through the wispy, grayish clouds overhead.

CLUTCH
There's one thing I still don't get.

DOLLY
Only one?

CLUTCH
If Tony Sandell doesn't have the Orb, and <u>we</u> don't have the Orb, then who does?

INT. DRESSING ROOM. DEPARTMENT STORE. ARSAI - MORNING

Frank Teacon admires himself in a tall three-way mirror. His magician costume gone, Frank now sports a long brown robe with a silver rope tied about the waist. On his feet are a pair of sturdy leather sandals. A ROBOT CLERK tries gamely to take Frank's measurements.

FRANK TEACON
Yes. This is what I want. I look good in this.

ROBOT CLERK
Pardon me, sir or madam, but I cannot take your measurements while you continue to fidget so.

Frank Teacon places a hand on the robot clerk's head.

FRANK TEACON
Do you know who I am?

He leans toward the robot, his eyes sparkling excitedly.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
I'm the messiah.

The robot clerk squirms out of Frank's grip and trundles speedily away, visibly alarmed.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
The messiah... of the stars.

Frank fumbles around in his robe, searching for the Orb. He finds it and holds it aloft, gazing into its softly glowing interior with intense concentration.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
The... space... messiah.

INT. MAIN FLOOR. DEPARTMENT STORE. ARSAI - MOMENTS LATER

Frank Teacon: Space Messiah marches through the department store, his robes billowing around him as he glides toward the exit. Price tags still dangle from his new clothes.

A STORE MANAGER steps into Frank Teacon's path. Frank, absorbed in the dazzling elegance of the Orb, doesn't notice the store manager until he walks right into him.

STORE MANAGER
Pardon me, sir.

Frank Teacon: Space Messiah glances up at the store manager. He places his thumb on the manager's forehead.

FRANK TEACON
You are pardoned. Go with Frank.

Frank tries to get around the manager, but is stopped by a firm hand on his shoulder.

STORE MANAGER
Did you forget anything today, sir?

Frank looks irritated. He holds the Orb up to the manager.

FRANK TEACON
Can't you see I'm busy contemplating the infinite majesty of the universe?

STORE MANAGER
You can contemplate your glow-in-the-dark baseball all you want, sir, <u>after</u> you pay for those clothes.

FRANK TEACON
But... but I don't have to pay.

The Orb begins to HUM and THROB. Energy crackles within it. The very air around the Orb seems to shimmer and waver.

STORE MANAGER
Oh no? And what makes you so special?

Frank Teacon strikes a pose, holding the Orb above his head.

FRANK TEACON
I am Frank Teacon: Space Messiah!

Energy FLOWS OUT OF THE ORB, washing over the store manager and cascading across the department store. The store manager's jaw goes slack. His eyes glaze over.

STORE MANAGER
Yes. You are Frank Teacon. You are the Space Messiah.

Other people start to gather around Frank Teacon. Early shoppers, clerks, cashiers, anyone within the Orb's reach. The CROWD speaks in unison, repeating the same phrase over and over again.

CROWD
(in unison)
Frank Teacon: Space Messiah...

Frank Teacon: Space Messiah stares at the Orb, just now realizing its true power. A smile erupts across his face. He turns to the gathering crowd, his arms spread wide. One by one, everyone in the store DROPS TO THEIR KNEES.

FRANK TEACON
My children! Welcome to the first day of the rest of your lives.

CROWD
(in unison)
Frank Teacon: Space Messiah...

Frank moves to exit the department store, his newly-converted followers right behind him.

FRANK TEACON
Quickly, now, my children. There is much work to be done!

EXT. MARTIAN ORBIT. SPACE

DOLLY'S SPACESHIP, a sleek, sexy luxury cruiser, detaches from an ORBITAL DOCKING RING and maneuvers out of orbit.

INT. COCKPIT. DOLLY'S SPACESHIP - CONTINUOUS

George and Clutch stand in the middle of the cockpit, gazing in awe at their luxurious surroundings. Dolly reclines in a leather-cushioned pilot's seat, deftly manipulating the ship's control panel.

GEORGE
This ship is <u>gorgeous</u>.

CLUTCH
I'm afraid to touch it.

George points at a couch in the back of the cockpit.

GEORGE
Look!

George and Clutch rush over to the couch. George sits on the couch, and it automatically adjusts its surface to match the contours of George's body.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Ah! I knew it! It's got one of them fancy couches.

CLUTCH
Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god.

Clutch sits down next to George, and the couch adjusts to his body as well. Clutch giggles and claps his hands.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
I've never been more comfortable in my life! This is the best.

Up in front, Dolly surreptitiously rolls her eyes. She calls back over her shoulder.

DOLLY
Seat belts, everyone.

GEORGE
You have seat belts!?

CLUTCH
Let's live here forever!

EXT. MARTIAN ORBIT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Dolly's spaceship heads out into open space, leaving Mars behind. The vessel's engines ROAR TO LIFE as the ship ROCKETS AWAY, quickly disappearing from view.

We PAN AROUND, back toward Mars. We MOVE IN to the Red Planet, skimming over its upper atmosphere and emerging on the FAR SIDE. Two tiny moons hang in space before us.

We move in on the closer of the two: a dark potato-shaped rock, partially hidden in the planet's shadow.

SUPER: "**PHOBOS**"

A small, needle-like orbital ship ZIPS overhead, engines screaming like a lost child.

EXT. SECRET MOON BASE. PHOBOS - MOMENTS LATER

The needle ship settles over a smooth crater and begins to descend toward the surface of the tiny Martian moon. The crater YAWNS OPEN, like a gargantuan mouth, and the needle ship vanishes inside.

SUPER: "**SECRET MOON BASE**"

SUPER: "**INTERPLANETARY CRIME SYNDICATE**"

The secret space door slams shut, melting away into the surface of the moon and becoming just another crater.

INT. DARK ROOM. PHOBOS - LATER

Anisha Bahmani stands in the middle of a dark, cavernous room, illuminated by a single spotlight. Nine DARK FIGURES stand in a circle around her, their faces covered by BLACK HOODS. They are the BOARD OF DIRECTORS, leaders of the Interplanetary Crime Syndicate.

BOARD MEMBER 1
Anisha Bahmani. You have failed the Syndicate. What do you have to say for yourself?

ANISHA
I have not failed you. This is merely a setback. A minor inconvenience. I <u>will</u> find the Orb.

BOARD MEMBER 2
You had better, for your sake.

BOARD MEMBER 3
The Syndicate must posses the device.

BOARD MEMBER 4
It is the culmination of all we have worked for.

BOARD MEMBER 5
Centuries of planning and preparation.

ANISHA
I'll get it back. I promise.

BOARD MEMBER 6
If you fail us again, we will remove your brain and fire it into the sun.

ANISHA
You can count on me.

BOARD MEMBER 7
No, seriously. Right into the sun.

BOARD MEMBER 8
Like this: Whoosh! Ka-blam!

BOARD MEMBER 9
That was your brain. Exploding!

INT. ANISHA'S OFFICE. BAHMANI BUILDING - EVENING

Anisha sits behind her desk, brooding at the sunset. A storm is gathering on the horizon. Anisha's robot attendant scuttles into the room carrying a steaming pot of tea on its gleaming metal tray. The robot attendant fusses around Anisha, pouring her a cup of tea and spooning in a dollop of milk and sugar.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
Good evening, Ms. Bahmani. Your biometric readings indicate a heightened level of tension, so I have taken the liberty of preparing your evening tea with a blend of soothing herbs and narcotics.

Anisha grunts unhappily. Thunder rumbles in the distance.

ROBOT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Initiating conversation mode.

Something clicks over inside the robot's head.

ROBOT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
How was your trip to Phobos?

Anisha CRUSHES the tea cup in her hand, spraying the steaming hot liquid across the desk and all down her arm.

ROBOT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
I see. Shall I select an employee for you to terminate? It would likely improve your mood.

The robot attendant hands Anisha a clean towel. Anisha cleans her arm and tosses the towel onto the robot's head.

ANISHA
No time. I'm going off-world.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
As you wish, ma'am. I shall make the necessary preparations for your departure. In which vessel will you be flying this evening?

Lightning flickers outside the window, highlighting Anisha's evil grin.

ANISHA
The GigaCruiser.

Thunder BOOMS ominously outside.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**GEORGE, CLUTCH, AND DOLLY**"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**DESTINATION: CALLISTO**"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**ELAPSED TRAVEL TIME: 16 HOURS**"

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN SPACE

Dolly's spaceship TUMBLES END OVER END, spinning slowly away from us. Its engines are dark and silent.

INT. COCKPIT. DOLLY'S SPACESHIP - CONTINUOUS

Dolly sits at the controls of her spaceship, an embarrassed look on her face. George and Clutch stand behind her, peering over her shoulders at a computer readout.

DOLLY
Okay, so I forgot to fill the tank before we took off. Sue me.

George and Clutch turn to stare at Dolly.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, you guys are such babies. Someone will be along any minute now to pick us up. You'll see.

Clutch collapses into the deck, burying his face in his hands.

CLUTCH
Oh, god, we're all gonna die.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**ELAPSED TRAVEL TIME: 61 HOURS**"

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN SPACE

Dolly's spaceship lazily spins around, completely powerless.

INT. COCKPIT. DOLLY'S SPACESHIP - CONTINUOUS

Dolly dozes quietly in the background, her body folded up in the form-changing couch at the rear of the cabin. George and Clutch sit at the darkened controls, peering out of the window and hoping to catch sight of another spaceship.

GEORGE
(singing; quietly)
I'm on a space adventure, sailing through the stars...

CLUTCH
Shut the fuck up.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**ELAPSED TRAVEL TIME: 103 HOURS**"

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN SPACE

Dolly's spaceship drifts idly through space.

DOLLY (V.O.)
(over wireless)
Attention all passing vessels. This is an emergency distress call. We are out of fuel and our life support is running low. If anyone is within range of my voice, please send help.

INT. COCKPIT. DOLLY'S SPACESHIP - CONTINUOUS

George, Clutch, and Dolly lie on the floor, staring blankly at the ceiling. Behind them, Dolly's RECORDED VOICE repeats over and over again on the wireless transmitter.

GEORGE
Okay, Clutch. Your turn.

Clutch doesn't respond. George kicks him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Clutch!

Clutch snaps out of his reverie. He sits up.

CLUTCH
What? What is it?

GEORGE
Truth or dare.

Clutch lies back down.

CLUTCH
We're not gonna get rescued, are we? We're gonna die out here, in deep space. Alone. In the dark.

GEORGE
Truth or dare, Clutch.

CLUTCH
I don't wanna play your goddamn truth or dare!

GEORGE
Truth or dare.

Clutch sighs.

CLUTCH
Truth.

EXT. OPEN SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Another ship appears in the distance. An OLD MAN'S VOICE crackles over the wireless.

MURRAY (V.O.)
(over wireless)
Howdy! This is Murray Schwartz speaking. Hello? Can you hear me?

INT. COCKPIT. DOLLY'S SPACESHIP - CONTINUOUS

George, Clutch, and Dolly scramble to their feet and rush toward the transmitter.

MURRAY (V.O.)
(over wireless)
We picked up your distress call on the doohickey. Are you still alive in there?

Dolly toggles the wireless.

DOLLY
(into wireless)
Hello, sir! Yes, we are alive. There are three of us onboard.

MURRAY (V.O.)
(over wireless)
Don't you worry, young lady. Edith and I will sort you kids right out.

EDITH (V.O.)
(over wireless)
Who are you talking to, Murray?

MURRAY (V.O.)
(over wireless)
I'm on the radio, honey.

Dolly cuts the transmission and swivels the pilot's chair around to face George and Clutch.

DOLLY
We have to get them to take us to Callisto.

CLUTCH
They're not gonna do that. They're old. It's a war zone. Can't we just take a moment and be happy that we're not dead? Is that so much to ask? Do we really have to jump right back on the adventure train?

DOLLY
Have a little faith, Clutch.

INT. REAR CABIN. MURRAY'S SPACESHIP - LATER

George, Clutch, and Dolly step through the airlock into the rear cabin of MURRAY SCHWARTZ'S spaceship. On the other side of the cabin, Murray and his wife EDITH SCHWARTZ greet them with a plate of steaming cookies.

EDITH
Welcome aboard! We baked cookies.

CLUTCH
Score!

MURRAY
So, where can we drop you kids off?

DOLLY
Callisto, if you don't mind. It's a moon of Jupiter.

Murray rubs his chin thoughtfully.

MURRAY
Callisto? Isn't there some kinda civil war goin' on there?

EDITH
Oh, my gracious. How awful.

Clutch turns to Dolly, his mouth full of cookies.

CLUTCH
(chewing)
See? I told you.

Dolly ignores Clutch. She steps towards Murray and Edith.

DOLLY
Please, you <u>have</u> to take us.

MURRAY
Eh? Whaddaya want to go there for?

George steps forward, pushing past Dolly.

GEORGE
(to Dolly)
Let me handle this one.
(to Clutch)
Clutch, c'mere. It's time to put our skills to use.

Clutch arches a suspicious eyebrow at George.

CLUTCH
We have skills?

George flashes Murray and Edith his most charming smile.

GEORGE
Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz, I believe we've gotten off on the wrong foot.

Edith holds the cookies out to George.

EDITH
Would you like a cookie?

George gently pushes the cookies away.

GEORGE
No, thank you.

CLUTCH
I'll take another one.

George bats Clutch's hand away from the tray.

GEORGE
No, you won't. Pay attention.
(to Murray and Edith)
My friends and I are traveling troubadours. We're famous, you know.

Clutch pinches his brow. He knows where this is going.

CLUTCH
(under his breath)
Oh, jeez. Here we go again.

GEORGE
We have a delightful little number that'll clear this whole mess up.

George gestures to a pair of wicker rocking chairs tucked away in the corner.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Please, have a seat. Allow us to fill your hearts with wonder and merriment. And song.

Murray and Edith sit down.

DOLLY
George, what are you doing?

GEORGE
(to Dolly)
Trust me.

EDITH
(hushed; to Murray)
Isn't this exciting, Murray? They're going to put on a show for us.

MURRAY
Eh? A what? Speak up, Edith.

George stamps his foot against the deck, tapping out a beat.

GEORGE
And a-one, a-two, a-one-two-three...

EXT. OPEN SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Murray Schwartz's spaceship moves away from Dolly's darkened vessel, leaving the inoperative luxury cruiser behind. Inside Murray's ship, George BEGINS TO SING...

GEORGE (V.O.)
(singing)
We're off on the road to Callisto...

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

George, Clutch, and Dolly stand on a darkened STAGE. George is illuminated by a single SPOTLIGHT.

GEORGE
(singing)
...we're doing a very good deed.

LIGHTS RISE on Clutch as he JOINS IN THE SONG.

CLUTCH
(singing)
And one good turn deserves another,
if you catch my drift.

LIGHTS RISE on Dolly.

DOLLY
(singing)
It would be great if you could help
by giving us a lift!

EXT. ROAD (MUSICAL NUMBER) - DAY

Dolly leads George and Clutch in a march down a brick road, winding and twisting through a verdant forest.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
Off on the road to Callisto, dangerous
though it may be!

DOLLY
(singing)
My brothers and my sisters, their
lives are on the line / I've got to
go and rescue them while we still
have time!

EXT. POOL (MUSICAL NUMBER) - DAY

George, Clutch, and Dolly float in a "star" formation at the center of a large swimming pool, kicking their feet in synchronized movements.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
We certainly do get around / The three of us, you see, we are Callisto bound!

EXT. ROAD (MUSICAL NUMBER) - DAY

Clutch now leads the march down the road, with George and Dolly in step behind him.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
Off on the road to Callisto, we march with an army of three!

CLUTCH
(singing)
We've got no scheme or strategy or any kind of plan / I hope we think of something or the shit will hit the fan!

INT. STAGE (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

George, Clutch, and Dolly stand in the middle of a CHORUS LINE, singing along with the chrous as the whole group leaps and twirls across the stage.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
Off on the road to Callisto / Where love and adventure are to be found!

The ceiling rolls back, exposing a starry NIGHT SKY overhead.

EXT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

George CLASHES SWORDS with Tony Sandell, fencing with the mobster throughout their tiny apartment.

GEORGE
(singing)
Along the way we fought some goons.

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM. SELDON SUITES (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

Dolly ducks down as SLOW-MOTION laser bolts fly around her.

DOLLY
(singing)
And survived assassination.

EXT. GEORGE AND CLUTCH'S APARTMENT (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

George takes a FLYING LEAP out of the apartment window, CRASHING THROUGH THE GLASS and FLYING UPWARD into the night sky, tumbling end over end into the stars above.

GEORGE
(singing)
But now our quest has hit a snag...

As George TUMBLES AWAY FROM US, we PAN AROUND to reveal Clutch sitting on the prow of the DOLLY'S SPACESHIP.

CLUTCH
(singing)
Due to our lack of transportation!

INT. STAGE (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

Fireworks ERUPT ALL ACROSS THE SKY, visible through the stage's retracted roof. George, Clutch, Dolly, and the chorus line waltz around in pairs.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
We certainly do get around!

EXT. POOL (MUSICAL NUMBER) - DAY

George, Clutch, and Dolly flap their arms, creating wave after wave in the clear, blue water.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
The three of us, you see, we are
Callisto bound!

EXT. ROAD (MUSICAL NUMBER) - DAY

Dolly is once again out in front. George and Clutch do cartwheels behind her.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
Off on the road to Callisto, provided
you give us a ride!

INT. STAGE (MUSICAL NUMBER) - NIGHT

The chorus line has disappeared, leaving George, Clutch, and Dolly alone onstage under the twinkling stars.

GEORGE
(singing)
So, if our plea has touched your hearts, don't hesitate to say.

CLUTCH
(singing)
If you would like to help us, it would really make our day!

EXT. POOL (MUSICAL NUMBER) - DAY

The numerous members of the chorus line jump into the pool, diving sideways one by one.

CHORUS
(singing; in unison)
We're off on the road to Callisto / We're sorry to drag you along.

The last of the chorus line dives into the water, revealing George standing on the side of the pool.

GEORGE
(singing)
We're pouring out our hearts to you because we're in a jam.

George jumps into the water, revealing Dolly.

DOLLY
(singing)
I promise what we say is true, it's not some kind of scam!

Dolly jumps into the water, revealing Clutch.

CLUTCH
(singing)
Oh, yes, we certainly do get around!

CUT TO:

INT. REAR CABIN. MURRAY'S SPACESHIP - DAY

George, Clutch, and Dolly stand at one end of the cramped cabin, singing their hearts out. At the other end, Murray and Edith Schwartz sit in their wicker rocking chairs, listening politely.

GEORGE, CLUTCH, AND DOLLY
(singing; in unison)
One way or another, we're Callisto bound!

George, Clutch, and Dolly freeze in place and do jazz hands. Murray and Edith clap politely.

EDITH
Oh, how wonderful.

MURRAY
Bravo!

GEORGE
So, how 'bout it? Are you convinced?

Edith and Murray whisper to each other for a moment.

MURRAY
Alright, young man. We'll do it!

George grins. Clutch and Dolly look astonished.

CLUTCH
Wait, really?

Edith and Murray Schwartz vigorously nod their heads.

EXT. OPEN SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Murray Schwartz's spaceship BLASTS AWAY, its engines straining at maximum, heading for Callisto...

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**MEANWHILE...**"

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN SPACE

Dolly's abandoned spaceship floats silently through space. Suddenly, a shadow passes over it. We PULL BACK to reveal: THE GIGACRUISER, Anisha Bahmani's deadliest warship.

SUPER: "**THE GIGACRUISER**"

Easily several miles long, the GigaCruiser is covered with thick armor plating and it bristles with sharp, ugly weapons of war. It looks like a sandwich made of aircraft carriers.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Anisha Bahmani stands upon a raised command platform at the center of her vast, bustling control room.

Anisha signals to her functionaries, who scurry hither and thither across the vaulted nerve center of the GigaCruiser. Anisha watches the tiny luxury cruiser approach on an enormous view screen suspended in the air before her.

GIGACRUISER CREWMAN
There can be no doubt, Ms. Bahmani. This is the vessel George Cross used to flee Mars.

ANISHA
It looks abandoned.

GIGACRUISER CREWMAN
Yes, ma'am. He must have swapped ships to avoid detection.

Anisha points at the view screen.

ANISHA
Reel that thing in and take it apart piece by piece. I want to find out everything there is to know about that ship, its passengers, and where they went. Now!

EXT. OPEN SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The tiny luxury vessel disappears into the GigaCruiser's cavernous underbelly. The GigaCruiser thunders by, rumbling overhead like an angry hurricane.

EXT. JOVIAN ORBIT. SPACE

Jupiter dominates our view. We PASS OVER the bloated gas giant, moving past its GREAT RED SPOT and SOARING OVER the planet's endless, perfectly smooth horizon.

A small yellowish DISK appears behind the great gaseous world. We MOVE IN toward this tiny disk, and it grows larger. The disk becomes a sphere, and the sphere becomes a moon.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**CALLISTO**"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**8TH MOON OF THE PLANET JUPITER**"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**PAST BEDTIME**"

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS. GALILEO CITY - NIGHT

Flickering neon signs transform the narrow streets of Galileo City into a kaleidoscope of ugly pastels. A thick, soupy fog hangs low along the ground, swirling around pedestrians' feet and clinging to storefronts like an insubstantial moss.

SUPER: "**GALILEO CITY, CALLISTO**"

Something disturbs the fog, a movement off in the distance. As the murky haze billows dreamily around the nearly-empty street, three CLOAKED FIGURES emerge.

The cloaked figures move in SLOW MOTION, heading our way. As the figures pass under a neon sign advertising a pub named "THE ROAMIN' BEAR," we get a brief glimpse of their hooded faces: it's GEORGE, CLUTCH, and DOLLY.

Our heroes pause outside the Roamin' Bear and look around. George nods toward the entrance to the bar, leading the three of them inside. Clutch SCRATCHES HIS NOSE IN SLOW MOTION as they duck through the shadowy entrance to the pub.

INT. THE ROAMIN' BEAR. GALILEO CITY - CONTINUOUS

Paper-covered light globes dangle from the ceiling, filling the Roamin' Bear with a soft, yellow glow. Behind the bar, a dusty mirror fails to reflect more than a few vague shapes. Above the mirror hangs a crude painting of the constellation Ursa Major. Behind that, in faded faux-Western lettering, is the name, "THE ROAMIN' BEAR."

George, Clutch, and Dolly slink into the pub, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. They select a small table nestled deep in the corner. Almost immediately, a WAITRESS glides up to them on a pair of HOVERING ROLLERSKATES.

George and Clutch involuntarily gawk at the waitress's bizarre outfit, a luminescent tie-dye miniskirt augmented by an open framework of blinking LED lights draped over the waitress's slim figure in a complex, crisscrossing patern.

KAYLA
Hi, there. I'm Kayla with a "K." You fellas new in town?

GEORGE
Yeah. We just arrived. From, uh, from Europa.

KAYLA
Pilgrims, am I right? Here to see the Big Guy?

George looks confused. Clutch, meanwhile, has completely checked out of the conversation - too mesmerized by the profusion of winking lights wrapped around Kayla's body. Dolly delivers a swift kick to George's shin and glares at him from beneath her hood. George clears his throat.

GEORGE
Yep. That's about right. Heh. Are we that obvious?

KAYLA
The cloaks are a dead giveaway.

GEORGE
Oh. Are they?

KAYLA
Plus you guys smell funny.

GEORGE
I see.

Clutch reaches out to touch one of the blinking LED lights. Dolly slaps his hand away, shooting him an irritated look.

KAYLA
So, pilgrims, what are you drinking?

GEORGE
What do you have on tap?

KAYLA
Nothing.

George looks blankly at Kayla for a moment. She bounces impatiently on her hovering rollerskates.

GEORGE
Three glasses of your cheapest beer, please.

KAYLA
Gotcha. Three mugs of Stinktierwasser. Back in a jiff!

Kayla drifts away, taking her maelstrom of flashing colors with her. Once she recedes from view, Dolly pushes back her hood with a grateful sigh.

DOLLY
I thought she'd never leave.

GEORGE
(to Clutch)
Don't help out or anything.

Clutch shakes his head in disbelief.

CLUTCH
Did you see that outfit?

GEORGE
How could I not?

DOLLY
You can probably see it from space.

Kayla returns. Dolly flips her hood back up, ducking down to hide her face. Kayla clunks three plastic mugs onto the table, winks at Clutch, and skates away. Dolly waits a moment, making sure the coast is clear, and carefully folds her hood back down.

GEORGE
So. What's the game plan?

Clutch stands up.

CLUTCH
I'm gonna go ask for her number.

George yanks him back down.

GEORGE
What are you, an infant? Sit down.

Dolly takes a tentative sip of her beer. She makes a horrid face and slides the mug across the table.

DOLLY
Okay, that's disgusting.

George and Clutch clink their own mugs together and then down their entire pints in one huge gulp. Dolly shoots them a look. George and Clutch shrug.

CLUTCH
You get used to it.

Dolly rolls her eyes.

DOLLY
All right, guys, our first order of business should be finding a place to stay for the night. Somewhere cheap and out of the way.

Kayla materializes out of the shadows, bumping into the table and leaning rakishly on Clutch's shoulder. Dolly ducks down, pretending to tie her shoe.

KAYLA
(to Clutch)
Hey, cutie. Another round?

CLUTCH
Yes, please.

George gently taps Kayla on the shoulder.

GEORGE
We're having a private conversation. Could you give us a minute?

The floating waitress harrumphs and glides away.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(to Dolly)
She's gone. You can come back to the surface.

Dolly sits back up, brushing her hair out of her face.

DOLLY
That kitschy little rainbow is starting to piss me off.

Dolly pokes Clutch in the chest.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
And you, Mr. Barton, are not helping.

CLUTCH
What? I'm not doing anything.

DOLLY
I'm onto you. This is not a vacation. No flirting with the waitress.

CLUTCH
She started it.

DOLLY
I don't care who started it.

Clutch slumps down into his seat, pouting. Dolly continues.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
Remember, it is absolutely imperative that we stay out of sight for as long as possible.
(MORE)

DOLLY (CONT'D)
We cannot draw any attention to ourselves, you got that? No singing, no fighting, and for god's sake don't break the law. The last thing we need is to get thrown in prison on a hostile world.

GEORGE
All evidence to the contrary, it <u>is</u> possible for Clutch and I to keep out of trouble for more than an hour.

DOLLY
I'll believe it when I see it.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"59 MINUTES LATER..."

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL. GALILEO CITY POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Heavy metal bars SLAM CLOSED before us. George, Clutch, and Dolly sit behind the bars, huddled together on a bare concrete slab. A FILTHY DRUNKARD snoozes on Clutch's shoulder, drooling ever so slightly.

GEORGE
When the hell did public urination become illegal?

DOLLY
About eight hundred years ago.

GEORGE
Well, nobody told me.

CLUTCH
I am so embarrassed right now.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - MORNING

The sun rises over one horizon and the immense sphere of Jupiter emerges over the other.

INT. JAIL CELL. GALILEO CITY POLICE STATION - MORNING

George, Clutch, and Dolly doze lightly, leaning against each other on the cell's single concrete slab. Suddenly, the thick metal bars RETRACT INTO THE CEILING.

Our heroes jerk awake to the sight of a dozen maroon-clad CALLISTAN SOLDIERS marching into their cell. Dolly smiles weakly at George and Clutch.

DOLLY
Well, it was nice knowing you guys. Sorry I got you killed.

GEORGE
Back atcha.

Dolly kisses George on the forehead. One of the Callistan soldiers steps forward from the others.

MULDOON
Good morning. My name is Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Muldoon, of the Callistan palace guard. If you three would please come with me; I have orders to bring you directly to the Supreme Leader.

DOLLY
Where is my family, Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Muldoon?

MULDOON
I wouldn't know anything about that, ma'am. My orders are to bring you to the Supreme Leader without delay.

EXT. PALACE. GALILEO CITY - MORNING

The towering, delicate spires of the Callistan national palace stand out in stark contrast to the squat, cube-shaped buildings that comprise the rest of Galileo City. Reflected light from Jupiter glints off of the palace's sparkling stainless steel battlements.

INT. ANTEROOMS. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

George, Clutch, and Dolly are ushered quickly through a series of ever-larger ANTEROOMS, each one tastefully appointed and complete with its own flock of robot butlers. Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Muldoon scoots through the anterooms ahead of our heroes, pushing open one polished wooden door after another as we journey deep into the palace complex.

MULDOON
Right this way. Quickly now, the Supreme Leader awaits.

George leans over to Clutch and whispers out of the corner of his mouth.

GEORGE
I've never seen so much expensive shit in my life. I feel like I'm defiling this place just by looking at it with my dirty, peasant eyes.

Clutch nods and whispers back.

CLUTCH
This rug we're walking on is probably worth more money than I'll ever make in my whole life. Dolly must be freakin' loaded.

Dolly tosses a glance back over her shoulder.

DOLLY
I'm right here, you know.

George and Clutch whistle innocently, both of them suddenly fascinated by something on the ceiling.

MULDOON
Ah! Here we are.

Muldoon bows low and speaks to someone off camera.

MULDOON (CONT'D)
Your Worship, allow me to present George Cross, Robert Barton, and Dolly Armiere.

George, Clutch, and Dolly step into the throne room. Monstrous wooden doors SLAM SHUT behind them.

DOLLY (O.S.)
(through door)
You have got to be kidding me.

EXT. OPEN SPACE

The GigaCruiser tears through space at MAXIMUM VELOCITY.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Anisha stares contemplatively at the stars outside, projected upon the GigaCruiser's ridiculously large view screen. Her robot attendant wheels over to her with a HOLOGRAPHIC MAP OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM shimmering above its metal tray.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
We've traced the ion trail to its conclusion, ma'am. Our quarry is here, within one million kilometers of our present location.

ANISHA
And where are we, exactly?

ROBOT ATTENDANT
Jupiter, ma'am. Entering high orbit as we speak. A routine scan of the inhabited moons should prove fruitful. I estimate no more than one hour until we are able to pinpoint Mr. Cross's exact location. Once this is done, you may proceed with the extraction at your convenience.

Anisha folds her hands behind her back and smiles evilly.

ANISHA
Outstanding. I've got time for a bath, then.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
I shall fetch your scented shampoo.

EXT. JOVIAN ORBIT. SPACE

Callisto crosses in front of Jupiter, silhouetted against the gas giant.

INT. THRONE ROOM. PALACE - MORNING

George, Clutch, and Dolly stare with wide-eyed disbelief at none other than FRANK TEACON. Frank lounges upon a gilded throne, lazily nibbling at a handful of grapes.

CLUTCH
No way.

GEORGE
Frank? What are you doing here?

Frank Teacon glances up at his visitors. He sets his grapes down upon the armrest of his throne and stands up.

FRANK TEACON
That's Frank Teacon: Space Messiah to you, George. As you can see, I'm out of the magician trade. I've moved on to bigger and better things.

Frank Teacon pulls his robes around him as he steps down from his throne, revealing THE ORB hanging around his neck, secured by a delicate gold chain.

CLUTCH
What's that around your neck?

FRANK TEACON
It's my special friend. You should know, I found him in your apartment.

GEORGE
It was you! You took the Orb from our kitchen table! Man, Frank, we've been through hell and back because of you.
(beat)
Wait a minute, what were you doing in our apartment?

FRANK TEACON
Discovering my destiny, as it turns out. It surprised me as much as anyone, though I can't say the revelation was entirely unexpected.

Frank Teacon chuckles to himself.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
It's funny. I've spent so long hating you two; loathing your insipid little songs, reviling your hideous faces. It never occurred to me that it would be you who opened the gateway for me, you who brought me to God's doorstep.

Dolly steps in, crossing the distance between her and the self-proclaimed Space Messiah in less than a second.

DOLLY
Okay, that's enough of that.

Dolly grabs Frank Teacon by the neck. Maroon-suited GUARDS materialize out of the shadows, training their laser pistols on Dolly. Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon squawks worriedly from over by the door.

MULDOON
What is the meaning of this? Unhand the Space Messiah at once!

Dolly ignores Muldoon's pleas. George and Clutch step toward the Lieutenant-Colonel, blocking his path to the throne. Dolly drags Frank Teacon across the floor. The Space Messiah giggles excitedly.

DOLLY
Frank, you creepy little freak. I don't know how you did it, but I'm ending your revolution right now.

Frank Teacon waves the guards away. They reluctantly stand down. George and Clutch back away from Muldoon.

FRANK TEACON
(to Dolly)
Oh, Dolly. Poor, stupid Dolly. I forgive your blasphemy. Allow me to enlighten you.

Dolly releases Frank Teacon, but remains threateningly close.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
I had nothing to do with the overthrow of your father's regime. I've only been here three days.

DOLLY
You did all this in <u>three</u> <u>days</u>?

FRANK TEACON
Oh, yes. But that's ancient history. I journeyed here, to Callisto, because I saw a world in chaos, and I knew in my heart that it was my destiny to deliver this moon from that chaos; to lift Callisto out of the darkness, and bring it into the light. Just like You-Know-Who.

Frank Teacon winks conspiratorially.

DOLLY
What are you saying?

FRANK TEACON
The revolution is over, Dolly. They lost. I won.
(yelling)
For I am Frank Teacon: Space Messiah!

DOLLY
That's impossible.

Frank Teacon holds up the Orb. Dolly stares at it, entranced by its glimmering internal fluctuation.

FRANK TEACON
All things are possible for those who believe. This Orb was given to me by God Almighty, who is my special best friend.

George and Clutch exchange a worried glance. Dolly just looks confused.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Through the Orb, I am able to accomplish what I was never before able to do: convey my wisdom and glory to all those around me. Now that I have the Orb, everyone can see me for who I really am: the greatest human being ever to live!

Muldoon claps quietly in the corner. Frank smiles at him and turns back to George, Clutch, and Dolly.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
As you can see, I've used the Orb wisely, converting men and women in positions of authority to my glorious new religion.

DOLLY
What about my family, Frank? What did you do with them?

FRANK TEACON
I sent them to Earth two days ago. Good riddance, too. Let your father deal with them. I never liked children. Their tiny little fingers frighten me.

Dolly sits on the floor, her head spinning. She pinches the bridge of her nose and squeezes her eyes shut.

DOLLY
I'm so confused.

GEORGE
I'm with you, there.

Dolly gets up and staggers across the throne room, throwing open a pair of glass doors that lead out to a balcony.

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Dolly leans on the railing, staring at the skyline of Galileo City below her.

INT. THRONE ROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Clutch raises his hand. Frank looks at him expectantly.

FRANK TEACON
Yes, my son?

CLUTCH
(to Frank Teacon)
Would you excuse us for a moment?

Clutch grabs George and pulls him into a corner.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
You know what this is, right?

George nods.

GEORGE
Yeah. The stress of my impending death has driven me crazy, and this is all a terrible hallucination.

Clutch smacks George upside the head.

CLUTCH
It's the Dream Machine. Frank must have accidentally turned it when he broke into our apartment. It toasted his brain extra crispy.

George points accusingly at Clutch.

GEORGE
I told you this would happen.

CLUTCH
You never said anything of the kind.

GEORGE
You just had to play God, didn't you? Well, now look what you've done. You've created your very own Space Messiah. Congratulations, Clutch. Way to go.

CLUTCH
This is not my fault.

GEORGE
I disagree.

CLUTCH
Oh yeah? Well, if it weren't for you and your sticky fingers, <u>my</u> Space Messiah would be a perfectly harmless lunatic. But, no! You just had to steal an experimental mind-control device and leave it on the kitchen table where the crazy person could get it.

GEORGE
You know what? You're an asshole.

CLUTCH
I'm gonna punch you in the nose.

Frank Teacon squeezes in between George and Clutch, smiling maniacally at both of them.

FRANK TEACON
God told me that if I was a good Space Messiah, he would let me sit on his lap forever and ever.

George and Clutch stare at Frank Teacon. He stares back.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Someone's jealous! I forgive you.

Frank licks his thumb and touches George and Clutch on the forehead. George and Clutch exchange a disgusted look.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Go with Frank.

Suddenly, the room darkens, as if a great shadow has fallen across the whole city.

DOLLY (O.S.)
(from balcony)
Uh, guys?

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Dolly looks up into the sky, her eyes wide with apprehension.

DOLLY
You might want to come out here and take a look at this.

George and Clutch rush out to the balcony, followed quickly by Frank Teacon: Space Messiah and Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Muldoon. The four of them look up into the sky, expressions of shock and horror emerging upon their stunned faces.

MULDOON
Dear lord, what <u>is</u> that thing?

FRANK TEACON
Armageddon, my son. The end of the world has come.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - CONTINUOUS

The GigaCruiser hangs over Galileo City like a endless black thundercloud, stretching off into the distance as far as the eye can see in both directions. The immensity of the ship is mind-boggling in comparison to the relatively small city below, the entirety of which falls well within the GigaCruiser's titanic shadow. A FAMILIAR VOICE booms out of innumerable loudspeakers, REVERBERATING across Galileo City.

ANISHA (V.O.)
(over loudspeakers)
Greetings, people of Callisto! I was in the neighborhood and thought I'd drop in to say hello.

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

George recognizes the voice. He nudges Clutch.

GEORGE
If that's who I think it is, we've got a huge problem.

INT. ANISHA'S BATHROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Anisha Bahmani splashes happily in her expansive bathtub. Her robot attendant stands faithfully beside her, poking at a small, yellow rubber ducky.

ANISHA
You see, a funny little thing happened to me earlier this week. Something very precious to me was stolen, and the man who stole it brought it here, to your world. I would like it back.

INT. THE ROAMIN' BEAR. GALILEO CITY - CONTINUOUS

Kayla, the illuminated waitress, floats slowly - fearfully - out of the Roamin' Bear and into the street, gazing up at the darkened sky.

ANISHA (V.O.)
(over loudspeakers)
Somewhere in this city is a globe.

EXT. STREETS. GALILEO CITY - CONTINUOUS

Kayla emerges from the Roamin' Bear, bobbing up and down on her floating rollerskates. She stares, slack-jawed, at the GigaCruiser overhead. It completely covers the sky.

ANISHA (V.O.)
(over loudspeakers)
It's white, about the size of a fist, and it glows. It's quite beautiful.

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Our heroes stand on the edge of the palace balcony, listening to Anisha's broadcast.

ANISHA (V.O.)
(over loudspeakers)
I am willing to give the man who stole the globe sixty minutes to return it to me. Once that time has elapsed, I will tell you his name and show you his face, and it will become <u>your</u> job to find my globe.

INT. ANISHA'S BATHROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Anisha gleefully pops a bubble. The robot attendant steers the rubber ducky around the bath.

ANISHA
If <u>another</u> sixty minutes go by, and I still do not have my globe...

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - CONTINUOUS

The GigaCruiser dominates the sky from horizon to horizon.

ANISHA (V.O.)
(over loudspeakers)
...well, then I'll get angry. And do you know what I like to do when I get angry? Well, I'll tell you.

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

George squeezes his eyes shut and crosses his fingers.

GEORGE
(to himself)
Please don't say "destroying Callisto," please don't say "destroying Callisto," please don't say "destroying Callisto..."

INT. ANISHA'S BATHROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Anisha sits up in the bath, a sinister grin upon her lips.

ANISHA
When I get angry, I like to find a little moon, some provincial backwater that's grown too big for its britches, and I like to blow it up.

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

George angrily slams his fist onto the railing.

GEORGE
Damn it.

EXT. STREETS. GALILEO CITY - CONTINUOUS

Kayla is still hovering near the Roamin' Bear. All along the street, pedestrians and shop-owners alike stand outside, staring up at the sky in hopeless terror.

ANISHA (V.O.)
(over loudspeakers)
You have two hours. You'll hear from me again in one. Have a nice day. This is Anisha Bahmani, from the GigaCruiser, signing off.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - CONTINUOUS

SCREAMS and SHOUTS resound across the frightened city.

EXT. BALCONY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Frank Teacon and Harold Muldoon lean over the balcony, watching as the Galileo City descends into chaos. George, Clutch, and Dolly look at each other.

DOLLY
What do we do?

GEORGE
I dunno. I think we might be screwed.

Clutch's eyes light up. He has an idea.

CLUTCH
Not necessarily.

Clutch crosses the balcony and taps Frank Teacon on the shoulder. The Space Messiah whirls around, screaming.

FRANK TEACON
Aahh! Don't sneak up on me like that! I almost Space Messiah'd you!

CLUTCH
I don't... what does that mean?

FRANK TEACON
Pray you never find out.

Frank Teacon fumbles for the Orb, yanking it off its golden chain and staring into its radiant depths.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
It is clear to me now that God is testing my faith. Do I keep the Orb and risk the destruction of this world, or do I surrender it to the Devil Incarnate and risk the destruction of my immortal soul?

Frank sinks to his knees and SCREAMS at the heavens.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Why, lord!? Why have you allowed this to happen to me, your greatest and most beautiful creation!?

CLUTCH
Frank. Eyes on me.

Frank Teacon glances up at Clutch.

FRANK TEACON
Are you God?

CLUTCH
No.

FRANK TEACON
Shit.

Frank turns back to the heavens, squeezing his eyes shut.

CLUTCH
But I think I know how to get us out of this mess once and for all, Frank. You don't have to choose between the Orb and Callisto. There's another way. A third way. Do you hear me?

FRANK TEACON
That's ridiculous! You're ridiculous.

Frank Teacon stands, a solemn look upon his face. He heads back into the palace, his shoulders squared and his jaw set.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
We come now to the End of All Things. The Vikings called this day Ragnarok. The Germans referred to it as Gotter...something-something.
(beat)
I must prepare my flock for the impending apocalypse.

Clutch drags Frank Teacon back onto the balcony.

CLUTCH
Listen to me, Teacon! It's not the apocalypse!

FRANK TEACON
I'm pretty sure it is.

CLUTCH
No, Frank! It's not the end! It's... it's the beginning! This is your moment, Frank! Are you gonna roll over and give up just because the sky went dark and the world you're standing on is probably gonna explode? Fuck no! You're Frank Teacon, goddamn it! You're the fucking Space Messiah!

FRANK TEACON
That's true. I am the Space Messiah.

CLUTCH
Yeah! That's the spirit! Now, let's go out there and perform some motherfuckin' miracles.

FRANK TEACON
Are you sure it's not the apocalypse? 'Cuz this feels pretty apocalypse-y.

Clutch rolls his eyes.

CLUTCH
I am one hundred percent positive that this is not the apocalypse.

GEORGE
I agree with Clutch, for the record.

Clutch gathers Frank, George, Dolly, and Muldoon together, throwing his arms around them and bringing them into a huddle.

CLUTCH
We can beat this thing.

FRANK TEACON
I am the Space Messiah.

CLUTCH
I know you are, Frank.

FRANK TEACON
Okay. I was just reminding everyone.

DOLLY
So. What's the plan, Clutch?

GEORGE
Yeah, man. How are we gonna squirm our way out of this one?

Clutch grins. He begins to giggle to himself.

CLUTCH
Oh, this is gonna be <u>good</u>.
(beat)
All right, everyone; listen carefully. We've only got one shot at this.

Frank Teacon sniffs the air. Clutch stares at him.

FRANK TEACON
One of us smells delightful.

Frank sniffs his own armpit.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Oh, it's me.

DOLLY
Try to stay focused, Frank.

FRANK TEACON
I am the Space Messiah.

Clutch snaps his fingers.

CLUTCH
Hey. Everyone. Do you want to die?

Frank Teacon raises his hand, opening his mouth as though about to speak. Clutch preemptively cuts him off.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
That was a rhetorical question, Frank. I don't want you to answer it.

Frank puts his hand down.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Listen up, guys. Here's what we're gonna do...

We PULL OUT from the balcony as Clutch whispers the plan to his compatriots. Overhead, the GigaCruiser LOOMS OMINOUSLY.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. GIGACRUISER - LATER

Anisha watches the surface of Callisto through the GigaCruiser's king-sized view screen. Her robot attendant emerges from behind her, impatiently humming to itself.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
The first hour has ended, Ms. Bahmani.

Anisha nods and signals to one of her men.

ANISHA
Very well. Prepare to transmit...

A GIGACRUISER CREWMAN raises his hand.

GIGACRUISER CREWMAN
Ma'am?

ANISHA
What is it?

GIGACRUISER CREWMAN
We're receiving a call from the surface.

The crewman listens to something on his headset for a moment.

GIGACRUISER CREWMAN (CONT'D)
I'm being told that the President-For-Life of the Free People's Democratic Republic of Callisto is on the line.

ANISHA
Put it through.

The view screen wavers and the image of Galileo City fuzzes out, replaced by the gargantuan visage of CLUTCH BARTON.

CLUTCH
(on view screen)
Ms. Bahmani, I presume?

ANISHA
I expect good news, Mr. President.

CLUTCH
(on view screen)
Then you are in luck, my dear! A man named George Cross was arrested this morning for spreading seditious material. He had a glowing white bauble on his person. It matches the description of your globe.

ANISHA
Send it up immediately.

Clutch shakes his head.

CLUTCH
(on view screen)
No can do.

Anisha glowers at the view screen. If looks could kill.

ANISHA
I beg your pardon?

CLUTCH
(on view screen)
The bauble is evidence in an ongoing investigation. You may be interested to know that the eldest daughter of the former High Potentate was arrested along with your alleged thief.

ANISHA
Callistan politics do not interest me in the slightest, you pathetic little despot. Give me the Orb or I'll burn your world to a cinder!

The robot attendant pats Anisha on the back with one of its collapsible arms.

ROBOT ATTENDANT
You tell him, Ms. Bahmani.

Anisha SMACKS the robot attendant, sending it tumbling over the edge of the command platform. Anisha turns back to the view screen and clenches her fist. She takes a deep breath.

ANISHA
I'm prepared to make a deal with you, Mr. President. Name your price.

CLUTCH
(on view screen)
Why don't you come down to the surface? We can discuss this over dinner at the palace.

Anisha grits her teeth. Her face turns bright red.

ANISHA
(with difficulty)
As you wish.

CLUTCH
(on view screen)
Splendid! Dinner's at seven, cocktails at six. Don't be late!

Clutch signs off.

INT. THRONE ROOM. PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Clutch collapses onto the gilded Callistan throne, sighing. A portable view screen descends into the floor.

CLUTCH
I think that went well.

Frank Teacon: Space Messiah steps into view. Behind him, George, Dolly, and a gaggle of palace guards materialize out of the shadows.

FRANK TEACON
Everyone assume your positions! Operation Forever Awesome Flame of Justice is about to begin!

George arches a skeptical eyebrow.

GEORGE
That's quite a name, Frank.

FRANK TEACON
I'm quite a guy.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"6:00 PM"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"COCKTAILS WITH ANISHA"

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"A.K.A. OPERATION FOREVER AWESOME FLAME OF JUSTICE"

CUT TO:

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - EVENING

A small LANDING CRAFT emerges from the GigaCruiser.

INT. ANTEROOMS. PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Anisha Bahmani strides briskly through the seemingly endless series of anterooms leading through the palace, her retinue of ARMED GUARDS following closely behind.

INT. THRONE ROOM. PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Clutch perches atop the Callistan throne, waiting for Anisha to enter. Next to him, George and Dolly sit cross-legged on the floor, their hands and feet bound with HEAVY CHAINS.

GEORGE
This had better work, Clutch.

CLUTCH
It's gonna work. Be quiet.

GEORGE
'Cuz if this falls apart and I get killed, I'm gonna come back as a ghost and haunt the shit out of you.

DOLLY
Shut up, George. She'll be here any minute. Put your head down. Look haggard.

The great wooden doors leading into the throne room swing open, and Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon scuttles into view. Muldoon bows in Clutch's direction.

MULDOON
Your Excellency, allow me to present Anisha Bahmani.

Anisha stalks into the throne room, shoving Muldoon out of the way. Her guards take up positions around the chamber.

ANISHA
Good evening, Mr. President.

Clutch rises from the throne.

CLUTCH
Ms. Bahmani, right on time.

Anisha's eyes fixate on George.

ANISHA
I keep a tight schedule.

Clutch giggles and preens around the throne room, diving headfirst into his role as a psychotic tyrant.

CLUTCH
Oh, my. Aren't you the wit.

Anisha jerks her head in George and Dolly's direction.

ANISHA
What's this?

CLUTCH
A gift, of course! In honor of our new friendship. Your thief and our traitor, presented as a duo.

ANISHA
(on Dolly)
Who the hell is she?

Clutch titters like an insane person. He flops his wrist around, gesturing all over the room.

CLUTCH
Oh, but you <u>must</u> allow us to bring the prisoners up to your magnificent starship. What you do with them after that is no concern of mine. Hint, hint. Brutal execution.

Clutch giggles and pokes Anisha playfully in the shoulder. Anisha jumps back, glaring daggers.

ANISHA
I don't want the girl.

Dolly glances up at Clutch with anxious eyes.

DOLLY
(under her breath)
C'mon, Clutch. You can do this.

Clutch spins around, coming to rest in front of Anisha once again. Anisha stares at him.

CLUTCH
Well, that's too bad. Because they're a package deal. Take it or leave it. Your choice. I care not.

Clutch turns away and picks at his teeth.

ANISHA
Fine. Whatever. Let's just eat your fucking dinner so I can get my Orb and get the hell off this moon.

Clutch claps joyously.

CLUTCH
Wonderful! I can tell we're going to be great friends, you and I.

Anisha bites her lower lip. Hard. Clutch snaps his fingers.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
Captain of the guard! Front and center, on the double!

Frank Teacon leaps out from behind a curtain, his brown robes exchanged for a maroon Callistan army uniform. He carries a long, ceremonial laser rifle and has a bulky backpack strapped to his back.

FRANK TEACON
Captain Teacon reporting for duty, Your Excellency.

CLUTCH
Ah, Mr. Teacon. Take charge of the prisoner transfer. Bring these traitors to the GigaCruiser at once.

Frank Teacon salutes and crosses over to George and Dolly. He drags them to their feet and roughly shoves them in the direction of the door. Dolly SPITS ON CLUTCH.

DOLLY
You won't get away with this! When my father returns he's gonna cut your head off and feed it to you!

Clutch wipes the spit off his face with an imperious sneer.

CLUTCH
We'll see about that.
(MORE)

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
(to Frank)
Take them away, Mr. Teacon! And be sure to keep them under heavy guard.

A dozen palace guards assemble around Frank Teacon, and together the group pushes through the large wooden doors and out of the throne room. George screams over his shoulder as Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon struggles to shove him out of the throne room.

GEORGE
Your shenanigans will be your undoing, you... you tyrant! Democracy will prevail! Long live Callisto!

The wooden doors SLAM CLOSED. Clutch turns back to Anisha.

CLUTCH
I don't know about you, but I am positively famished.

EXT. COURTYARD. PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank Teacon and his cadre of soldiers lead George and Dolly across the palace courtyard. The group quickly piles into a waiting TRANSPORT SHUTTLE, pulling the hatch closed behind them. A moment passes, and the transport shuttle lifts off the ground with a whine of its landing jets.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - CONTINUOUS

The transport shuttle arcs over Galileo City, heading up to the endless black surface of the GigaCruiser hanging overhead.

INT. COCKPIT. TRANSPORT SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

A CALLISTAN SOLDIER pilots the shuttle. Frank Teacon: Space Messiah sits in the co-pilot's seat. He reaches forward and toggles the wireless transmitter.

FRANK TEACON
This is Callistan shuttle number five eight, um, nine.

Frank shrugs at George and Dolly, who watch him anxiously from the rear cabin. Frank turns back to the transmitter.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
We have Anisha Bahmani's prisoners aboard and are requesting permission to dock. Uh, over.

A response crackles over the wireless.

GIGACRUISER CREWMAN (V.O.)
(over wireless)
Roger Charlie Five-Eight-Niner, you are cleared for landing on loading platform Bravo.

INT. DINING ROOM. PALACE - EVENING

Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon leads Clutch and Anisha into an extravagant dining room. Anisha's guards follow into the room, quickly spreading out and scanning the area.

MULDOON
(to Anisha)
If madam wishes, we have prepared a meal for your retinue as well.

The guards glance at Muldoon. Anisha shrugs.

ANISHA
Fine. You have thirty minutes. Enjoy yourselves.

Muldoon briskly rubs his hands together and begins shooing the guards out of the dining room.

MULDOON
Excellent. If you gentlemen will follow me to the adjacent chamber, we have prepared a delightful repast.

Muldoon scuttles out of the dining room, still talking as he goes. The guards file out after him, dropping their weapons to their sides and allowing themselves to relax. Anisha takes a step toward Clutch, growling threateningly at him.

ANISHA
Lest you try any funny business, Mr. President, I should inform you that my vital signs are being monitored by the GigaCruiser at all times. If I so much as <u>sneeze</u>, my men will level this pathetic little city in the blink of an eye.

Clutch giggles and waves his hand around.

CLUTCH
Perish the thought! You most certainly have the upper hand, Ms. Bahmani. We are, as they say, entirely at your mercy.

ANISHA
And don't you forget it.

Clutch gestures for Anisha to sit at one end of the table. He pulls out her chair for her with a dramatic flourish. Anisha sits down and Clutch pushes her chair in tight. He then crosses all the way down the dining room, seating himself at the opposite end of the expansive table. Clutch raises a glass of wine in a toast.

CLUTCH
To friendship. Also, to prosperity. And the future!

Anisha picks up her glass and smiles wanly at Clutch.

ANISHA
Thirty minutes.

Anisha takes a single sip and returns her wine glass to the table. Clutch drinks from his glass, foppishly extending his pinky finger as he does so.

CLUTCH
Splendid.

Clutch daintily dabs at the corners of his mouth with a cloth napkin, and then tucks it into his shirt.

INT. BALLROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

A large, mirrored BALLROOM adjacent to the dining room has been hastily converted into a makeshift mess hall, with several lengthy tables brought in and piled high with food.

Anisha's guards excitedly swarm around the tables, elbowing past each other to be the first to sample this selection of Callistan delicacies.

KAYLA the multicolored waitress floats into the ballroom on her hovering rollerskates, expertly carrying a large tray full of drinks. One by one, each of Anisha's guards turn to stare at her as she glides by. She winks at them.

KAYLA
Howdy, boys. My name's Kayla with a "K." Who wants a drink?

The guards abandon the tables, the food suddenly forgotten. They scramble towards Kayla.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Steady, there, fellas. There's enough to go around.

Kayla giggles flirtatiously as the guards jockey for position around her.

She casts a single, surreptitious look over her shoulder towards Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon, who lingers in the doorway watching her. Kayla rolls her eyes in Muldoon's direction. Muldoon nods enthusiastically at her, giving her a thumbs up and ducking back through the doorway into the adjacent dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM. PALACE - LATER

Anisha picks at the food on her plate, frowning distastefully at it. Clutch, on the other hand, eats ravenously, stuffing his face as quickly and as loudly as possible. Muldoon enters with two bowls of soup.

MULDOON
Our next course is a traditional Andulacian gazpacho infused with egg white and chilled to perfection.

Muldoon sets a bowl down in front of Anisha and crosses over to Clutch, sliding the second bowl onto the table in front of him. Muldoon crosses back to Anisha, offering her a decanter of red wine.

MULDOON (CONT'D)
May I refill your glass, madam?

ANISHA
(to Clutch)
Tell this mincing buffoon to leave me alone or my next course will be his spleen.

Muldoon hurriedly scoots out of the dining room. Clutch giggles behind his napkin. Anisha slams her fist against the table, knocking over her wine glass.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
Stop giggling, you brainless lunatic!

Clutch breaks into peals of raucous laughter.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
What is <u>wrong</u> with you!?

INT. LOADING PLATFORM BRAVO. GIGACRUISER - EVENING

The Callistan transport shuttle containing George, Dolly, and Frank Teacon glides through the space doors of loading platform Bravo and touches down on the surface of the platform. The space doors hiss closed behind it, and black-clad GUARDS pour onto the deck, training their weapons.

An airlock pops open at the rear of the transport shuttle. Frank Teacon and his cadre of Callistan soldiers disembark

from the shuttle, brusquely manhandling George and Dolly. Frank approaches the leader of the GigaCruiser's guards.

FRANK TEACON
I'm captain Teacon of the Free People's Democratic Republic of Callisto.

The guard snarls at Frank like an animal. Frank shrugs and unstraps the backpack from his shoulder.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Alrighty, then. Let's get this show on the road.

Frank unzips his backpack and digs around inside.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
I've got some forms for you to sign, if it's not too much trouble. bureaucracy, you understand.

INT. KITCHEN. PALACE - EVENING

Meanwhile, on the surface, Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon and Kayla the waitress chat for a moment in the palace kitchen. Kayla piles drinks on her tray while Muldoon finishes icing a large cake.

KAYLA
I don't know how I got talked into this. I mean, Clutch is cute but... when he told me he had a job offer, I never thought it would be, you know, espionage.

Muldoon nods sympathetically.

MULDOON
Rather.

Kayla finishes loading her tray. She opens a bottle of small, blue pills and drops one into each glass. The pills fizz and disappear almost instantaneously. Dolly hoists the tray over her head and begins to float out of the kitchen.

KAYLA
Okay. I'm heading back in. Wish me luck, Muldoon.

MULDOON
God speed, warrior of Callisto.

KAYLA
(as she exits)
I always thought being a warrior would involve less groping and more fighting.

MULDOON
(calling after her)
Once more unto the breach!

INT. LOADING PLATFORM BRAVO. GIGACRUISER - EVENING

Frank Teacon roots around in his backpack while Anisha's stone-faced guards look on impatiently.

FRANK TEACON
I know it's in here somewhere...

GIGACRUISER GUARD
Hurry it up.

Frank Teacon pulls a metallic sheet of paper out of his backpack and holds it up, examining both sides.

FRANK TEACON
Ah! Here we are. As you can see, an ordinary piece of paper.

Frank pulls at the sleeves of his maroon Callistan uniform.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Nothing up my sleeve.

GIGACRUISER GUARD
What are you doing?

Frank Teacon takes the piece of paper and holds it over his right hand. The guard glares suspiciously at him.

FRANK TEACON
Are you watching closely?

GIGACRUISER GUARD
I don't have time for this.

The guard reaches out and snatches the paper away from Frank, revealing THE ORB hidden in Frank's right hand.

FRANK TEACON
Ta da! It's magic!

GIGACRUISER GUARD
What the...?

Frank holds the Orb aloft, gripping it tightly in both hands.

FRANK TEACON
I am Frank Teacon: Space Messiah!
Kneel! Kneel before your savior!

WAVES OF BRILLIANT WHITE LIGHT cascade around the Orb, washing over the faces of the GigaCruiser guards and spreading out across the loading bay. After a moment, the light clears. The guards stand motionless, staring blankly at Frank Teacon: Space Messiah. In the background, George and Dolly nervously watch the proceedings, waiting to see if the Orb has worked.

The first guard steps menacingly toward Frank Teacon, staring him directly in the eyes. Frank stares back fearlessly. Suddenly, the guard drops to his knees.

GIGACRUISER GUARD
I worship you, Space Messiah.

One by one, the other guards drop to the ground. Frank reaches out and touches the first guard on the head.

FRANK TEACON
Go with Frank.

Frank moves to the second guard.

FRANK TEACON (CONT'D)
Go with Frank, my son.

Frank moves to the third guard, and so on. Behind him, the Callistan soldiers unlock George and Dolly's restraints and help them step out of their heavy shackles. George picks up a heavy-duty LASER BLASTER and balances it on his shoulder.

GEORGE
Saddle up, lock and load.

Dolly grabs a more practically-sized laser pistol and shoots George an incredulous look.

DOLLY
Really, George?

GEORGE
Oh, c'mon, I've been itching to say that for, like, twenty years.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - EVENING

We start on a TIGHT SHOT of the GigaCruiser, and then PAN DOWN to reveal Galileo City beneath us. We MOVE IN toward the national palace.

INT. BALLROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Kayla skates around the room, handing out drinks to each and every one of Anisha's guards. The room is a wreck, and the guards stagger around drunkenly. The guards holler and catcall in Kayla's direction as she weaves among them on her hovering rollerskates.

ANISHA'S GUARD 1
Hey there sexy thing. Bring that sexy thing over here.

Kayla smiles and nods at them, but does not stop moving. Another guard steps into her path, abruptly halting the luminescent waitress's forward motion. The guard reaches out and grabs Kayla's breasts, one with each hand.

ANISHA'S GUARD 2
They're everything I wanted them to be and more!

Another guard notices this, and shouts across the room.

ANISHA'S GUARD 3
Hey! How come he gets to grab 'em?

Kayla pushes the fondle-happy guard away from her, barely able to contain her revulsion. The guard falls over backwards, crashing to the floor with a resounding THUD. In the background, another guard falls over. Then a third, and a fourth. One of the guards crawls over to Kayla and swipes at one of her levitating shoes.

ANISHA'S GUARD 4
(slurring)
You make a stiff drink, blinking light lady. What'd you say was in these, again...?

The guard slumps over, fast asleep. Kayla glides away from him. All around her, the guards are starting to topple over - whatever drug Kayla slipped into their drinks is clearly starting to have an effect.

Kayla grins at the havoc she has wreaked. Her fingers fumble around underneath her drinks tray, toggling a small HIDDEN TRANSMITTER attached to the bottom of the dish.

INT. HALLWAY. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

In an adjoining hallway, a squad of THIRTY CALLISTAN SOLDIERS wait tensely for the "go" signal, their laser pistols drawn and ready. A transmitter blinks on the captain's belt. He glances down at it.

CALLISTAN CAPTAIN
That's the signal. Operation Forever Awesome Flame of Justice is a go.

The Callistan soldiers POUR INTO THE BALLROOM.

INT. BALLROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

The Callistan soldiers spread throughout the room, kicking over the remaining guards.

CALLISTAN CAPTAIN
Freeze! On your knees! Hands where I can see 'em!

One of the guards, just barely conscious, reaches for his walkie-talkie. The Callistan captain rushes over to him, grabbing the walkie-talkie out of his hands and tossing it across the room.

CALLISTAN CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Not so fast, scumbag.

ANISHA'S GUARD 1
(slurring)
Your world... will burn... for this.

The Callistan captain pushes the guard onto the floor with the toe of his boot. He smirks at the helpless goon.

CALLISTAN CAPTAIN
Save it for the judge, hairball.

INT. CORRIDOR. GIGACRUISER - EVENING

George, Dolly, and Frank Teacon: Space Messiah move down the wide corridors of the GigaCruiser, shooting, dodging, and mind-controlling their way through the ship. Behind them, as far as the eye can see, hundreds of new converts follow their Space Messiah across the length of the GigaCruiser, chanting their praise to him as they go.

FRANK TEACON
Go with Frank. I am the Space Messiah. Go with Frank.

The Orb ripples and pulses with energy, filling the corridor with its radiant glow. The device hums and throbs around Frank Teacon's neck, once again affixed there by his golden chain. George and Dolly follow close behind, taking potshots at any guards too far away to be affected by the Orb's power.

INT. DINING ROOM. PALACE - EVENING

Anisha jumps up and down, her face bright read, deep in the throes of a TEMPER TANTRUM. Muldoon DUCKS as Anisha HURLS a decanter of water at his head.

ANISHA
(screaming)
That's enough, goddamn it! I can't take this anymore! Just give me the fucking Orb! Give it to me! I want it! So you give it! Now! Now!

Clutch carefully folds his napkin and places it next to his plate. He takes a dainty sip of water and stands up.

CLUTCH
No.

Anisha stops in mid-tantrum and gawks at Clutch.

ANISHA
What do you mean, "no?"

Clutch leans forward, resting his palms on the table. Muldoon stands behind him, arms folded defiantly across his chest.

CLUTCH
"No," as in the opposite of "yes." As in, "there is <u>no</u> chance in hell, you fucking psychopath."

ANISHA
You just signed your death warrant.

CLUTCH
Come and get me, astro-bitch.

MULDOON
Indeed! Give us your best shot, you... you opprobrious tart.

CLUTCH
(to Muldoon)
Nice.

Clutch and Muldoon exchange a fist bump.

ANISHA
So be it.

Anisha whips out a small walkie-talkie.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
(into walkie-talkie)
Anisha to all points, form up on me.

No answer. Only the softest static. Anisha glances at her walkie-talkie in mounting horror. Anisha looks up at Clutch and Muldoon, who smirk at her from across the room.

ANISHA (CONT'D)
What have you done?

Muldoon squeaks with excitement. Anisha strides across the room and throws open the doors leading into the adjacent ballroom.

INT. BALLROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Anisha steps into the ballroom and immediately stops in her tracks. Every one of her men is unconscious on the floor. The Callistan guards are busily dragging them into a pile and tying them up with rope. Kayla floats in the center of the company, watching the proceedings. Kayla notices Anisha and nudges the Callistan captain.

KAYLA
Hey. Look who it is.

The Callistan soldiers look up and notice Anisha.

CALLISTAN CAPTAIN
That's the one, boys! Bag her!

Anisha SHRIEKS and slams the door shut.

INT. DINING ROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Anisha BOLTS across the dining room. The Callistan soldiers rush into the chamber, hot on her heels.

INT. THRONE ROOM. PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Anisha slides across the polished marble floor of the throne room, her eyes wild. She dives for the throne, searching for a computer terminal or control mechanism of some kind. She finds a set of buttons and mashes them all.

Lights blink on and off across the room; flowers descend from the ceiling; servant robots pop in and out from hidden doorways embedded in the walls and the floor. At last, the recessed view screen rises up from the floor and winks on. Anisha runs at it, entering a frequency on her wrist-mounted remote control with frenzied speed.

ANISHA
This is Anisha Bahmani to GigaCruiser control. Take control of the city immediately, do you hear me? Wipe out the government and begin rounding up the population for...

An image resolves on the view screen. Anisha trails off, unable to finish her sentence. Her eyes widen.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

George and Dolly stand on the command platform, gazing up at Anisha's face on the GigaCruiser's giant view screen.

GEORGE
Hello!

DOLLY
I can see up your nose.

INT. THRONE ROOM. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Anisha backs away from the view screen, stumbling over the gilded throne behind her.

ANISHA
<u>You</u>!

On the view screen, George and Dolly wave enthusiastically.

GEORGE
(on view screen)
I heard a joke today. It's a riot. Would you like to hear it?

DOLLY
(on view screen)
Oh, yes. Please.

George and Dolly turn to stare at Anisha. George grins.

GEORGE
(on view screen)
Knock knock.

DOLLY
(on view screen)
Who's there?

Anisha SCREAMS and RUNS AT THE VIEW SCREEN. She pushes it with all her might, severing the video connection and toppling the mechanism over. The view screen wrenches clear from the floor with a loud screech and a shower of sparks.

ANISHA
(screaming)
NOOO!!

Callistan soldiers SWARM into the throne room and surround Anisha in a tight circle, training their laser pistols on her. Anisha sinks to her knees. The circle parts, revealing Clutch and Muldoon. Muldoon points at Anisha.

MULDOON
Arrest this woman and throw her in the dungeon. Wait! No. Throw her in the double dungeon.

The soldiers grab Anisha and hoist her into the air, carrying her kicking and screaming out of the throne room.

INT. ANISHA'S CONTROL ROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Frank Teacon: Space Messiah joins George and Dolly on the command platform. Dolly rushes over to Frank and gives him a tight hug. George claps him on the back, smiling happily.

DOLLY
Thank you, Frank.

GEORGE
Yeah. Good work, Teacon.

Frank brushes some imaginary dust from his shoulder.

FRANK TEACON
(nonchalant)
I am the Space Messiah.

George and Dolly gaze into each other's eyes. Behind them, the view screen switches to an exterior shot, and we see Jupiter setting in the distance with the sun behind it. Some other moons are visible in the sky, creating a gorgeous alien sunset.

GEORGE
Dolly, I...

Dolly cuts him off by planting her lips firmly upon his. She wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him. George kisses her back, sweeping her off her feet and spinning her around in a circle.

In the background, Frank Teacon: Space Messiah begins a SLOW CLAP. His newly-converted followers join in, and soon RAUCOUS APPLAUSE fills the control room.

FRANK TEACON
Behold, my children: true love!

Dolly breaks away from the kiss, glaring at Frank.

DOLLY
Don't ruin this, Teacon.

Dolly resumes the kiss, folding herself into George's arms.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - LATER

Immensely powerful engines ROAR to life underneath the GigaCruiser's endless hull, slowly lifting the colossal vessel away from Galileo City. The Callistan transport shuttle appears in the distance, heading towards the palace.

EXT. COURTYARD. PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

The transport shuttle touches down in the courtyard. Overhead, the GigaCruiser rises up into the darkening sky, leaving Callisto behind forever. The voice of Frank Teacon: Space Messiah blares out over the system of loudspeakers affixed to the underside of the ship.

FRANK TEACON
(over loudspeakers)
Farewell, people of Callisto. My destiny awaits! Goodbye!

Clutch, Kayla, and Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon emerge from the palace and move toward the shuttle. Clutch stops, pulls Kayla into an embrace, and KISSES HER full on the lips.

Across the courtyard, the transport shuttle's airlock swings open. A dozen or so Callistan soldiers emerge, smiling and chatting with each other. Behind them, George and Dolly step out of the shuttle, still gazing into each other's eyes. Clutch shouts with joy at the sight of them. He skips jubilantly across the courtyard in the direction of the grounded transport shuttle. Kayla and Muldoon chuckle at Clutch's display of childlike glee.

CLUTCH
(to George and Dolly)
You did it! You magnificent fuckers, you actually did it!

Clutch SPRINGS toward George and Dolly, grabbing both of them and pulling them into a THREE-WAY BEAR HUG.

EXT. GALILEO CITY. CALLISTO - MOMENTS LATER

All across the city, a great CHEER rises up as the GigaCruiser vanishes beyond the clouds, disappearing into the night sky.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"ONE MONTH LATER..."

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD. PALACE - DAY

The courtyard is decked to the nines, festooned for the wedding of George Cross and Dolly Armiere. ZENO ARMIERE and the rest of the ARMIERE FAMILY mill about, chatting with various guests and assorted Callistan officials. Lieutenant-Colonel Muldoon tentatively approaches Zeno and taps him on the shoulder. Zeno turns around, eyebrow raised.

ZENO ARMIERE
Yes? Can I help you?

MULDOON
High Potentate.

ZENO ARMIERE
Former High Potentate.

MULDOON
You don't wish to resume power?

ZENO ARMIERE
Are you kidding? Do you have any idea how stressful it is? No, no, I think Callisto will do fine as a democracy.

Zeno pats Muldoon on the back and moves away.

ZENO ARMIERE (CONT'D)
Now, if you'll excuse me, I'd like to have a word with my son-in-law.

Muldoon bows graciously away and Zeno crosses the courtyard toward GEORGE AND DOLLY, standing together among a large crowd of friends. George is dressed in a fancy black tuxedo, and Dolly looks gorgeous in an elaborate white dress. Dolly spots Zeno, and rushes over to him.

DOLLY
Daddy!

Dolly gives Zeno a huge hug. George approaches Zeno, and the two briskly shake hands.

GEORGE
Mr. Armiere.

ZENO ARMIERE
Call me Zeno.

KAYLA THE WAITRESS approaches, her gaudy flashing outfit exchanged for a more formal gown - this one festooned with only the most subdued lights that blink tastefully along the contours of Kayla's dress.

KAYLA
Hey, have any of you guys seen Clutch?

George looks around.

GEORGE
He was right beside me a moment ago. Where has he gone off to?

At that moment, a FEEDBACK WHINE fills the air. Everyone winces and turns toward the stage, where Clutch has unplugged a microphone and is busily setting up a STRANGE, MECHANICAL CONTRAPTION in its place. Clutch turns toward the audience, and smiles drunkenly at everyone.

CLUTCH
Hello, everyone! I'm Clutch Barton, a friend of the family. I'd like to make a toast.

George and Dolly exchange a look.

DOLLY
Seems like he's toasted enough already.

KAYLA
Zing!

George squints at the strange metal box behind Clutch.

GEORGE
(on the box)
Is that what I think it is?

DOLLY
Why, what do you think it is?

Onstage, Clutch points at George and Dolly.

CLUTCH
Hey, you two! Get your asses up here and sing with me.

George and Dolly firmly shake their heads "no." A collective "aww!" emerges from the crowd. Zeno gently nudges his daughter toward the stage.

ZENO ARMIERE
C'mon, get up there.

DOLLY
Dad, no. That's not a good idea.

ZENO ARMIERE
He's the best man, you have to.

George grins and grabs Dolly's hand, leading her to the stage.

GEORGE
One song's not gonna kill us.

DOLLY
Don't jinx it.

Clutch shouts happily as George and Dolly join him onstage.

CLUTCH
(to the crowd)
Many of you may not know this, but George and I used to be in a band. And I've got a little device here that'll blow your freakin' minds.

Clutch flips some switches on the machine. It powers up with a quiet hum. George recognizes it.

GEORGE
Oh, no, Clutch. Tell me you didn't rebuild the Dream Machine.

CLUTCH
Okay, I won't tell you.
(beat; smirking)
But I totally did.

GEORGE
Are you sure it's safe?

Clutch wheels the Dream Machine to the edge of the stage and adjusts some knobs.

CLUTCH
Reasonably sure.

Clutch picks up two microphones and tosses them to George and Dolly. He grabs one for himself and joins them behind the Dream Machine.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
(to the crowd)
Now, if everyone would look directly into this lens, here...

The crowd gathers around the stage, peering expectantly at the Dream Machine. Clutch maneuvers it around, getting it positioned exactly right.

CLUTCH (CONT'D)
This might be a little bit disorienting.

Clutch points the Dream Machine DIRECTLY AT THE CAMERA. He turns it on. Mechanisms whir to life inside the metal box. Electricity crackles all around the machine, arcing out over our heads. Suddenly, BRILLIANT LIGHT OVERWHELMS THE FRAME...

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

"**ROAD TO CALLISTO**"

ROLL CLOSING CREDITS.

CUT TO:

EXT. EARTH ORBIT. SPACE (STINGER)

The CLOSING CREDITS stop as we CUT TO the GigaCruiser rumbling past us, heading toward the sparkling blue planet Earth.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. GIGACRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Frank Teacon: Space Messiah watches the planet grow larger on the view screen. He holds up the Orb, grinning happily.

FRANK TEACON
Prepare the ground invasion.

Suddenly, the Orb FLICKERS. Frank stares at it.

MECHANICAL VOICE (V.O.)
(from the Orb)
Warning. Low battery.

The Orb flickers again, and then GOES DARK. Frank Teacon's jaw drops. His face goes white.

FRANK TEACON
Oh dear.

CUT TO:

ROLL CLOSING CREDITS.

THE END.

FADE OUT.