

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE STATION - SPACE/DAY

A thick-gloved hand reaches into a service panel in a rocky wall.

The ASTRONAUT with a green leaf emblems on her suit rotates and the wall becomes the surface of an asteroid.

She turns and comes face-to-face with a SABOTEUR who puts a gun against her helmet and fires.

The dead astronaut settles onto the surface.

The saboteur grabs her and throws her out into space.

A kilometre beyond the drifting body, an asteroid passes.

Then another. And another. They are connected by tubes.

She floats away from the centre of a space station two kilometres across and made from asteroids.

The station is a dot... a two kilometre ring above the planet's eighteen thousand of cloud-flecked blue ocean.

The sun sweeps across like a searchlight...

SUPERIMPOSE: "Home Star"

EXT. OVER THE SEA - DAY

In the sky above the sea, the space station is a daylight star. A mechanical caha owl flies high over an old boat.

Aboard are a firebrand PROFESSOR and two thugs from his politics club - GALIP and METIN.

They head towards the shipwreck of the Pioneer perched on top of a tiny rock of an island.

A chake, a sea monster almost as big as the boat, swims lazily along beneath it.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

The chake chases a fish and makes a deep DAAAP sound.

The fish shakes as though electrocuted... its paralysed form snatched into the jaws of the predator.

A long way ahead on the sea floor below the island...

EXT. SUNKEN TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

Above the temple foyer is a carved LOGO.

Several flashes come from within the foyer. The flashes reveal tiger-stripes on something moving inside.

ERLAN, a hardy but poor local explorer in an old tiger-striped wetsuit, uses his wrist band TORC to take photographs of the foyer.

Sand is piled high and huge stone doors block the entrance to the temple.

Erlan swims out of the foyer and a tiger-striped fish comes to greet him. It nips his finger playfully.

Erlan gives it a boisterous ruffle. The fish touches its nose to his.

Erlan picks up a dredge and vacuums sand. The fish darts back to its hole. On the wall beside the doors, the edge of a panel is uncovered.

He focuses on it and reveals a rusty hoop on the panel.

Erlan grasps the hoop and it lifts a little. The stone doors open a crack but the hoop breaks.

Erlan uses a bar to pry the doors open a little more.

A DAAAP in the distance! Erlan drops the bar and wedges himself in.

The chake swims towards the foyer.

DAAAP! Erlan shakes as though electrocuted.

The small fish drops unconscious from its hole and drifts towards the chake.

Erlan controls himself and catches his little friend as the predator swims past around the curve of the island.

The small fish shakes itself and darts back to its hole.

Erlan hears the CHUD-CHUD-CHUD of an engine and looks above to see the old boat moor.

EXT. TINY ISLAND - CONTINUOUS

The professor leads the two thugs up to the shipwreck and through an open door.

Erlan reaches the surface just in time to see them go in. The sun is setting and he is shivering, his lips blue with cold.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CONTINUOUS

The professor points at a locked cage.

Metin leans up against the wall just inside the ship while Galip uses a pick to remove the lock. The cage is empty apart from books and a sea-worn figurine.

The caha owl watches them as it edges back into a shadow.

Galip knocks aside the figurine and it falls.

The professor makes a sharp intake of breath and catches it in both hands. He is awestruck.

On the wall is a goal-chart showing several boats of increasing cost. The professor taps a finger on a picture of the figurine half-way to the cheapest boat.

Galip grunts and moves deeper into the Pioneer to look for more treasure.

Erlan appears, shivering and confused in the doorway. Who are these people?

Metin pulls Erlan in and punches him to the floor.

PROFESSOR

Do as the pol said. Kill him.

Metin pulls out a knife. Erlan grabs a speargun propped by the door and shoots Metin. The spear goes right through and sticks in the wall.

Erlan drops the empty speargun, springs to his feet, grabs the figurine from the professor and runs outside.

EXT. TINY ISLAND - CONTINUOUS

Erlan runs to the boat and pulls at its mooring rope.

Too slow! Galip is already in pursuit.

Erlan sprints for a red skull painted on a rock, runs past it and leaps off the island's edge.

Erlan splashes into the sea. There is a dark cave below.

He surfaces and swims away from the cave. The professor appears on the rocks above and Galip dives in.

Erlan turns to watch as Galip comes back to the surface.

Erlan throws the figurine towards him.

It hits the water half way and sinks. The figurine plunges past the cave to the sand below.

Galip growls at Erlan then dives after it. He reaches out for the figurine and grasps it.

DAAAP! Galip convulses and drops the figurine.

The chake emerges from the cave, bites into Galip and drags him into the dark.

Erlan grits his teeth from the electric shock and swims back to shore.

He runs to an area of shallows and picks up a rusty harpoon... then makes for the Pioneer.

Erlan pokes his head around the door. Metin is dead and the professor is gone.

A CHUD-CHUD-CHUD starts and Erlan runs for the jetty.

The boat tries to motor away with the panicked professor at the helm but the mooring rope stops it. He scrambles to untie the rope.

Erlan throws the harpoon like a javelin and it pierces the professor's chest.

The rope comes free.

Erlan runs for the rope but misses and he scowls as the boat takes the dying professor out to sea.

Erlan drags Metin's body from the Pioneer to the red skull and jumps with it into the water.

He dives with the body between him and the cave.

DAAAP! Erlan convulses and the chake snatches Metin.

Erlan controls himself and dives for the figurine. He grabs it and swims away from the cave as fast as he can.

He clambers out of the sea onto the rocks with the figurine and shivers his way back to the Pioneer.

INT. COMMUNAL WASHROOM - NIGHT

Erlan carries the figurine into a shower stall with him and slumps to the floor still shivering. He is blue with cold and needs the hot water flowing over him.

He shivers as he washes the salt water off the figurine.

PAH-PAH-PAK The lights flicker out and the shower stops.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NIGHT

Erlan has a torch in the crook of his neck. His hands covered in oil, he stops tinkering with a large rusty machine. It makes a regular SQUEAK.

He turns a bolt but the SQUEAK remains.

He looks at a part of the machine and cocks his head to listen. SQUEAK!

Erlan hits part of the machine with a spanner, the machine makes a rising WHINE and the lights come back on.

He goes to the kitchen area and opens a cupboard. It is bare apart from an almost empty bottle of alcohol and two battered old cans. His stomach growls.

He half reaches for a can then closes the cupboard.

EXT. TINY ISLAND - NIGHT

Erlan shines the torch into the shallows. He has a harpoon poised and ready.

A fish swims into the light and Erlan spears it.

He twists it off the harpoon next to another catch.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CONTINUOUS

Erlan gets a mess tin from a pile of dirty dishes and tips the fried fish from a pan into it.

He bites into one and spits it out with a disgusted look.

ERLAN

Ugh! Boudiax!

On the desk are Elements cards with two hands dealt, two stacks of chips and an old book open. Erlan takes a mouthful of dinner and runs his finger down the page.

He picks up his cards, chooses two different chips and pushes them into the middle.

He puts the cards down and shifts over to the other side.

His finger moves to the next play in the book and pushes a card into the middle then puts some chips on top of it.

WIND blows and flips a page. Erlan gets up with his food and puts the bad-tasting fish in a pouch on his wetsuit.

He sits in the doorway of the shipwreck and looks out to sea. He gazes at the moons, stars and satellites while he chews. This fish tastes better.

The WIND gusts and there is a distant RUMBLE. Erlan looks out to sea. Dark clouds flash with lightning several miles away. The waves get higher.

He scratches another day next to the hundred already on the door.

Erlan goes in and seals the door.

He puts the figurine back in the cage tries to close it but the spear is still stuck in the wall. He pulls it out and closes the cage.

The clouds close in on the tiny island, lightning hits the shipwreck and huge waves SMASH against the rock. The shipwreck is secured to the island using chains but moved by the battering waves.

Erlan picks up a hand of cards. The room shakes. He drops the cards, chips and book into an old box.

There is a large wire cage half-filled with wetsuits in a corner. He clambers into a sleeping bag on top of the pile and pulls down the lid to cage himself in.

The shipwreck SCREECHES and he tries to sleep.

INT. RUINED PRISON CELL - DAY

Erlan dreams he is chained to a wall in a crumbling prison cell.

Beyond the walls there are shouts and screams of BATTLE.

The whole room shakes and debris falls from the ceiling.

Erlan struggles against the chains holding him.

He fights and fights and fights against the chains.

The whole room shakes again.

EXT. SUNKEN TEMPLE - DAY

The sun shines across the morning sea. Beneath the waves, Erlan takes the bad-tasting fish remains from his belt and dangles it.

The little fish snaps it up and its movements slow.

It touches its nose to his then saunters to its hole.

Its head reappears and it settles to watch Erlan work.

Erlan picks up the bar, forces the doors open and reveals a dark passageway. The small fish hides in its hole.

Erlan shines his torch into the darkness. It is a simple passage with bas-reliefs and stairs going up at the end.

He picks up a scanner and swims in.

INT. SUNKEN TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

Erlan emerges from the water half way up the stairs. He stands up, lifts his mask and checks the air.

He walks up the last stairs and into a temple.

He sweeps the torch around but it reveals little so Erlan switches on the scanner and lifts it above his head.

The scanner's light sweeps around and around. He is at the top of a series of dusty platforms leading down to a dais shadowed in the distance.

On the dais, the light from the scanner picks out two huge thrones with an altar between them. Every time the light sweeps the altar... a flash of something golden.

Erlan makes his way to the altar.

On the altar is Keraunos, staff of the god Andros. Erlan reaches out and touches it. His hand seems to glow.

He puts the scanner on the altar, grasps Keraunos with both hands and lifts it.

Lightning fills the temple and arcs through Erlan from Keraunos. He is blown back and falls to the ground, still grasping the staff and being shocked by it.

His world goes black.

The blackness becomes stars. Millions of stars.

Two constellations form the gods Andros and Andris.

The stars become a fresco on a wall in the temple.

Erlan's eyes fly open just as Andros turns to light and steps into the temple.

Erlan is in spasms from the shocks of lightning.

From its shadow, the caha owl watches as the desk screen plays a recording of Erlan's parents.

MOTHER

Make us proud, Erlan.

FATHER

Yeah. Or make us rich.

On screen, Erlan's mother play-punches his father.

Erlan opens the last recording and starts it but it only shows static.

He scrubs through it. It is static all the way. Erlan is lost. Did he dream it?

He puts the statuette next to the scanner.

COMPUTER VOICE

Ancient Axadian bronze of the gods
Andros and Andris. The finder's
fee is five hundred thousand coin.

Erlan drops into his chair. It is a huge sum of money.

He gets the alcohol from the cupboard and opens it with a grin. He is about to take a swig when he hears ENGINES.

EXT. SHIPWRECK - CONTINUOUS

A flying boat swoops over and circles back around.

It makes to land.

Erlan props the loaded speargun by the door.

The flying boat pulls up to the jetty and COMMODORE RAUK walks out in a pristine uniform.

He bounds up the rock steps towards Erlan. The engines are still running.

RAUK

Erlan Joromi? Did you take this
photograph?

Rauk shows a picture of the LOGO above the temple foyer.

ERLAN

Yeah, last year. I tried to get
sponsors. No one was interested.
Now you have to leave. This place
is mine. I claimed salvage.

RAUK
You didn't get the messages? This
is now government property. And
you've been conscripted.

Rauk makes to go into the door but Erlan blocks him.

ERLAN
There's no signal out here.

Rauk makes to go in the door again and Erlan picks up the speargun.

Rauk turns his head in the direction of the flying boat.

RAUK
Quetro, shut it down. This could
take a while.

The aircraft engines begin to wind down. Erlan raises the speargun a little.

Rauk surges in, grabs Erlan's arm, twists and throws him.

RAUK (cont'd)
This site is more important than
anyone knew. I'm Commodore Rauk.
You know more about the temple
than anyone else, right?

Erlan is winded, shocked and on his back.

Rauk sets the speargun's safety and puts it back.

ERLAN
I found it. I'm the only one
who's been here since the Pioneer
was wrecked. No one else will
dive near a chake nest.

Erlan gets up. Rauk is now between him and the door. Rauk weighs Erlan up, turns and enters the shipwreck.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CONTINUOUS

Rauk clears a bunch of nick-nacks from a small shrine on the wall. He brushes the shrine clean.

RAUK
You don't pray to the gods?

ERLAN
They're stories for children.

RAUK

Thirty one years ago, we launched
our first interstellar mission...
Torc, play the summary.

The torc around Rauk's neck projects video onto the wall.
It shows an asteroid with six huge engines attached...

Small ships attaching parts to it...

A crew including one called MOON...

The crew gathered around a huge robot called BANKS...

RAUK (cont'd)

The Guiding Light was sent to Neo
Asteri... a system with a planet
that may be habitable. Two weeks
ago, SkySight base received their
first signals. We only got a few
words... Life... Paradise...
Dangerous... Yesterday, the
signal stopped. Just before it
did, we got a picture.

The torc shows a corrupted picture of a carved LOGO. It
is the same as the one above the temple door.

ERLAN

That's...

RAUK

How did your children's stories
get to Neo Asteri? My ship leaves
tomorrow. It's a one-way trip
but, if you're the only one who's
seen the temple, you're coming.

ERLAN

I'm here to protect our history
not chase coincidences. My family
needs the finder's fees.

Rauk picks up one of Erlan's books: The Philosophy of
Ancient Axadia.

RAUK

This isn't about history now, it's
about the security of Demos and
Thalassa. There's a full team on
the way here. You can have the
fees for what you already filed.

ERLAN

That's not fair! There's no signal, I haven't filed anything yet! You can't just take months of my work.

RAUK

Life isn't fair. You want to protect our history... Demos needs you to protect its future. If you volunteer, I'll make sure your family get all the finder's fees. You decide. Now get your things, we're leaving.

EXT. THE YOLDEMEKER FAMILY GARDEN - DAY

A gloved hand rests on soil and a trowel scoops out a hole. THALES (5) drops a seed into the hole and the trowel pours the soil back in. SOVDA (20), his rich but naive idealist sister, straightens up next to him. Her torc makes a BEEP.

TORC

Doctor Nezafeli.

SOVDA

Hello, Doctor.

NEZAFELI (O.S.)

Sovda, do you still want to volunteer for the Neo Asteri mission?

SOVDA

I... Yes, of course. I thought all the places were taken?

NEZAFELI (O.S.)

It is very sad. One of the team went out of an airlock and never came back.

SOVDA

I...

NEZAFELI (O.S.)

Get packing. The commodore himself is passing and will pick you up within the hour.

The call ends. Sovda is stunned.

SOVDA'S MOTHER slams a gate closed to part of the garden.

SOVDA'S MOTHER

Blast it, girl, you left the gate open again.

SOVDA

I'm going.

SOVDA'S MOTHER

What? Where are you going?

SOVDA

Neo Asteri. Doctor Nezafeli picked me!

Her mother is lost for words.

Sovda gives Thales a big hug, gets up, hugs her mother then races to the house.

Her mother smiles but tears start to well. Soon she will never see her daughter again.

INT. THE FLYING BOAT - DAY

Rauk holds a finger to his lips. Sovda enters the cabin and Rauk closes the door. Erlan is curled up asleep.

RAUK

He spent four months alone on a rock out in the deep ocean. There're storms out there every night... this is probably the most sleep he's had since then.

Sovda looks at Erlan's ragged state and bandaged hands.

SOVDA

Was he shipwrecked?

RAUK

Treasure hunting in a chake nest.

Sovda is stunned.

Rauk goes into the cockpit and sits in the co-pilot seat next to the pilot, QUETRO.

RAUK (cont'd)

What is it with you and these ancient, manual aircraft?

QUETRO

They have soul. Ready to go, sir?

There is the rumble of BIG JET ENGINES over everything and a much larger, silvery, oil-stained flying boat flies overhead – obviously a converted bomber – belching dark exhaust fumes. Rauk and Quetro are transfixed.

QUETRO (cont'd)

Sojucul.

In the main cabin... Sovda looks across at Erlan. His eyelids flicker...

INT. RUINED PRISON CELL - DAY

Erlan dreams again... he is still chained to the wall in the crumbling prison cell.

Beyond the walls there more shouts and screams of BATTLE.

The room shakes and debris falls from the ceiling.

Erlan struggles against the chains holding him.

He fights and fights and fights against the chains.

A rusted bolt snaps and Erlan can move a little.

He redoubles his effort and the chain SCREECHES as it pulls away from the wall.

The whole room shakes again.

EXT. DEMOS MAINLAND HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY

BARRIS, a handsome Sojucul military attaché, and MALAK, his intense political officer, walk along a cliff path.

Their flying boat is in the bay far below. It dwarfs other flying boats... and Rauk's as his comes in to land.

BARRIS

Still nothing from the Professor?

MALAK

I think we must assume he failed to get to the temple site.

Malak reaches into a garden and uses a blade to cut a flower.

He sniffs it, smiles and pins it to his lapel. The garden now has a gap.

A short way further up the path, they stop at a house where the door is wide open.

DOCTOR NEZAFELI, a wealthy and shrewd fading beauty, appears in the doorway.

NEZAFELI

Nomen Barris, what a lovely surprise.

BARRIS

It is wonderful to see you, Doctor Nezafeli. We were passing and it has been so long.

INT. NEZAFELI'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The large living room is cluttered with the furniture of a rich heritage - old, expensive or both. Antiques are interspersed with what might be a child's mementos.

NEZAFELI

I will fetch us some drinks. Please, gentlemen, have a seat.

BARRIS

That would be most kind.

Nezafeli leaves and Malak stares around the room, open-mouthed with awe.

MALAK

Why should they be allowed to have so much? Do all of the Demos have this many things?

BARRIS

The good doctor's parents were wealthy and so is she. Some of the Demos are not so fortunate. Others are much, much richer.

MALAK

How is that fair? We deserve such wealth more than they do.

BARRIS

They would say they earned it. They are men, not gods.

MALAK

There are no gods, only men. You were right, Nomen Barris, it is very different being here.

Barris crosses to waist-high antique globe that looks like a real planet.

Nezafeli returns with a tray of drinks.

She hands them both a glass and sprawls on the sofa — a woman who wants to be found attractive.

NEZAFELI

How was your journey?

Barris looks down at the globe and lays his hand on it. It spins freely and his finger traces a path from an island chain in the southern hemisphere to the extinct volcano on the other side of the planet in the north.

BARRIS

We were in the air for more than two days. No wonder our peoples only met eighty years ago.

Nezafeli's torc emits a BEEP. She looks at it then at Barris. She is about to say something when Commodore Rauk enters. He looks at Barris then at Nezafeli.

RAUK

What in Hell are they doing here?

Pol Malak, whose back was to the Commodore, jumps to his feet as though caught in the act. Barris smiles at Rauk and swallows the rest of his drink.

BARRIS

Please excuse us, Commodore, we were just leaving. Ophemia, it was so pleasant to see you again.

Rauk glares as the two Sojucul leave.

NEZAFELI

Are you happy, Commodore? Now you have scared off my visitors?

RAUK

What were you thinking even letting them in? If anyone else had found you with them, you'd have been booted off the mission.

NEZAFELI

Oh, that is silly. Security knows Sojucul Politics was my minor at university. I know many of their diplomats. Their political system is a thing of beauty.

RAUK

I've lost half my crew to Home Defence because of Sojucul threats.

(MORE)

RAUK (cont'd)

The public may not know they mutinied on the Guiding Light but you do. Don't even think about meeting any more of them.

NEZAFELI

Tensions are high and you want me to be rude? As you wish. I have some final preparation to do. I will see you at the shuttle.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

The gleaming starliner is loaded with cargo. Over the speakers, a band plays the Demos anthem. Erlan and his parents are at the entrance. Erlan's mother hugs him, crying. Erlan's father looks at his son with concern.

FATHER

The family all chipped in and got you a Bearer.

Erlan's father puts the necklace over Erlan's head.

MOTHER

Oh Erlan, I don't want you to go.

ERLAN

They need me, Mama. I have to go.

Erlan's father gentles her back and she squeezes in for security while she watches her son leave.

FATHER

Make us proud, boy.

Erlan smiles at his father and nods.

Rauk marches past them across the surgically-clean floor towards Quetro, Sovda and Nezafeli.

RAUK

By the Gods, Quetro, how old is this thing? It looks like something we'd sell the Sojucul.

QUETRO

Isn't she beautiful, sir? This'll be her last flight. She's going on permanent display in Suda. Nobody else wanted to take her up.

Quetro looks misty-eyed at the shuttle. Rauk shakes his head at Quetro then walks towards it.

EXT. STARLINER - DAY

The starliner moves along the taxiway towards the runway, turns onto the threshold and stops.

All of the control surfaces move as they are tested then settle with purpose.

The WHINE of the huge engines increases to a SCREAM.

The brakes release and the starliner charges off.

In five seconds it is in the air. The landing gear retracts and the flames behind extend.

It curves almost vertical and just before it hits the clouds there is a sonic BOOM.

The starliner bursts through the cloud tops and flashes towards the upper atmosphere.

As the sky starts to darken, the air intakes close but the SCREAM continues.

Rockets fire and the starliner accelerates harder still. In only a few seconds, everything goes quiet.

They are in space. The starliner heads for the space station made of asteroids.

QUETRO (O.S.)

Welcome to the Suda station. For anyone interested, everything on the station is now sourced in space. Even the soil. Amazing what you can do with ground-up asteroids and a little sunlight.

INT. SPACE STATION PARK AREA - DAY

CAPTAIN SHOLDAN, a stern-faced woman in combat gear, waits by the elevator. The doors open. Nezafeli waves Erlan and Sovda out.

NEZAFELI

This is Captain Sholdan, she will look after you until the transfer.

Erlan and Sovda step out into an indoor park filled with teenagers playing children's games.

The elevator doors close and Nezafeli is gone.

Sholdan looks them up and down to gauge how much work will be needed. A lot. She smiles anyway.

SHOLDAN

Meet the mortals. We look like you but have been genetically engineered to be better explorers.

Sholdan gazes at the mortals like a proud mother.

SOVDA

Isn't that illegal?

SHOLDAN

On Thalassa, yes. But we're not on Thalassa. Legally, we're not people.

SOVDA

That's horrible!

SHOLDAN

Don't be so quick to judge. We're the children of Demos and we love them and they love us. No one could ask for better parents.

They walk away from the group and along a corridor. The searing blue planet below dominates the view.

SHOLDAN (cont'd)

We're grown in incubator pods for two years. Educated in them. These mortals have only been awake a few weeks.

INT. SPACE STATION TRAINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Sholdan, Sovda and Erlan walk along a mezzanine that overlooks a training area filled with mortals practising combat situations. There are several office doors.

SHOLDAN

I need to get the last of the bureaucracy sorted. You can wait in my office.

ERLAN

Can I watch the mortals practice?

SOVDA

Doctor Nezafeli wants me to read Mastama's book again. I find something new every time.

ERLAN

Mastamas book? Ick! Are you learning what to think instead of how to think?

Sovda follows Sholdan towards her office.

SOVDA

The book is inevitable. We will make it happen. Demos will be a better place when we accept it. You should read it.

ERLAN

I have. He uses people as slaves. His deeds disprove his words.

Sovda scowls at him as the door closes. Erlan shrugs and turns to watch the mortals practice.

INT. SPACE STATION DOCK - SPACE/DAY

Everyone is gathered to debark to the Spirit of Destiny. The mortals are excited and optimistic. It will be the first time in their lives they have left the station.

Sovda waits alone just inside the dock in zero-g. She looks around and fidgets.

The sound of shouts and laughter comes from the corridor.

Three mortals and Erlan play a zero-g tag. They bounce off walls, duck and roll their way up the corridor.

Sovda is relieved to see someone she knows.

Erlan glances her way then pounces away from the game up the corridor, bounces, stops in front of Sovda and beams.

ERLAN

Sovda! We tried to find you to join in. Where have you been?

SOVDA

You've made friends already? And your bandages are gone.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Passengers may commence boarding for the Spirit of Destiny.

ERLAN

Destiny will bring you to me...

SOVDA

What?

ERLAN

Nothing. Just a dream I had.

EXT. SHUTTLE SALAMINIA - SPACE/DAY

The shuttle Salaminia leaves Suda space station. Erlan and Sovda are visible inside a passenger module.

QUETRO (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, you can now see the Spirit of Destiny with the naked eye. She's by far the biggest ship we've ever built.

They pass a factory ship "blowing" melted asteroids into a sphere and the Spirit comes into view. It is vast. Fifteen kilometres across with twelve massive engines.

QUETRO (O.S.) (cont'd)

She was chosen because of her high iridium content. It's better than a lead shield.

The Spirit has imperfections - craters, peaks, valleys and chasms - and is surrounded by a field of fragments that have been cut away. The shuttle flips and fires its engines to decelerate.

QUETRO (O.S.) (cont'd)

We spent five years heating the core close to boiling. Like taking a small sun with us. But it's not how she's powered... not even close to what we need.

The shuttle gets closer, a tiny speck as it heads between two of the Spirit's six-kilometre-tall engines.

QUETRO (O.S.) (cont'd)

If we converted the entire Spirit to fusion, we'd need ten trillion more like her to power us. The engines scavenge fuel from beneath the fabric of space itself.

The shuttle passes the engines towards the centre of the asteroid and heads for the dock.

QUETRO (O.S.) (cont'd)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Spirit of Destiny.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY CORRIDOR - DAY

Erlan and Sovda cycle through an airlock into the Spirit.

Behind them the Salaminia heads back to Suda.

The ceiling is transparent and reveals the huge burning heart of the ship.

Bathing in its rays, the crew quarters of the Spirit look like a small town.

EXT. ORE FIELD - SPACE/DAY

Out amongst the fragments of rock cut away from the Spirit, something moves in the shadows. It is a small ship with three engines mounted on three tough-looking arms and it is called Trident.

INT. TRIDENT - CONTINUOUS

GRIS TAKKEN is a man used to manual work. He watches the Salaminia leave the Spirit in the distance then unstraps from the cockpit.

He flicks himself through zero-g to a load-master's seat in a semicircle of glass.

He reverses Trident towards a fragment of asteroid. The three arms at the back of the ship spread out to surround the fragment and the arms dig claws into it.

Gris lets go of the controls and Trident automatically fires several thrusters to balance the extra weight.

A screen at the front of the ship comes to life. RADAR DETECTED! An ALARM sounds. Trident has been spotted.

He pushes himself back through the zero-g to the cockpit. A voice comes over the radio.

DESTINY (O.S.)
 Unauthorised craft, you are in a
 restricted military area.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Commodore Rauk is in the command chair. The voice of the Spirit speaks to him.

DESTINY (O.S.)
 Commodore, I've detected a ship in
 the ore field, sir. It appears to
 be trying to steal ore.

The screen above Rauk zooms to the fragments of asteroid. The Trident's engines light and it begins to accelerate.

RAUK
 Pirates! How much have they got?

DESTINY (O.S.)
Enough to pay for their ship.

RAUK
Do we have any way to catch them?

DESTINY (O.S.)
Our Angels are secured for the
journey, sir. I've asked Suda but
the ship is headed away from them.

RAUK
That ore is supposed to help pay
for the Spirit. (Beat) Quetro,
we have a pirate problem. When
will you have some fighters here?

QUETRO (O.S.)
Bringing the last of the crew and
my squadron in a few minutes, sir.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The sun sinks behind Thalassa.

In the darkness, a squadron of ugly gunships moves.
Their engines off and using momentum to coast hidden to
their target... Suda station.

As soon as it is visible, the gunships fire salvoes of
missiles that streak towards Suda.

The defences on Suda wake up and target the missiles.

The missiles spit out multiple warheads; each darts off
on its own course.

Lasers hit some of the warheads and the explosions cause
several other warheads to spiral out of control.

But it is not enough. Warheads slam into the sensors and
defences around Suda.

None of the East side is spared.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The officers are intent at their workstations. Screens
on the walls show images from Suda. Commodore Rauk is
floating next to his chair.

RAUK
Destiny, what's going on?

DESTINY (O.S.)

Suda is under attack from a kind of ship we haven't seen before. They're obviously Sojucul designs.

RAUK

Quetro, have you left Suda yet?

QUETRO (O.S.)

No, sir. I've finished loading but Suda tower hasn't given me clearance and isn't responding. My feeds show troops trying to capture Suda. I'd like to make a run for it, with your permission?

RAUK

O.K., you're the man on the spot. Whatever you decide.

QUETRO (O.S.)

I don't like sitting here with all these passengers, sir. We're a fat target if that's what's on their mind. My Angels can run defence.

RAUK

Confirmed. (beat) Destiny, is there anything we can do?

DESTINY (O.S.)

Nothing from here, sir, but I've taken the liberty of starting our engine ignition sequence.

INT. SHUTTLE SALAMINIA COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Quetro puts on his pressure suit helmet. One of his screens shows the attack. The main cockpit view shows several Suda fighter craft leave the hangar.

QUETRO

Angels, launch. Smoke and decoys towards the attackers and enough to cover our run to the Spirit. Let Suda handle its own defence. Defend the Salaminia. Go.

Six Angel fighters accelerate past the shuttle. Even before they leave the hangar they start to fire smoke canisters in various directions.

QUETRO (cont'd)
 Passengers, this is an emergency.
 Strap yourselves in right now.
 This is going to be rough.

EXT. SHUTTLE SALAMINIA - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle lights go off and it moves out into the smoke from the canisters then turns towards the Spirit.

The smoke is blooms around the West side of Suda until it is almost as big as the station.

The shuttle drops a decoy and burns its engines hard for six seconds. The cloud of smoke is lit from within.

The decoy hurtles out of the smoke, pushed by the engines in the opposite direction.

The shuttle's engines are off before it leaves the smoke at over one thousand kilometres per hour.

The Angels surround it and rotate to fly backwards, their guns facing the threat.

QUETRO
 Commodore Rauk, we're clear of
 Suda and on our way, sir.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is on edge. They can only watch and wait.

RAUK
 O.K.

DESTINY (O.S.)
 Sir, the Sojucul have denounced
 the attack. They say it's rebels.

Rauk scowls as though someone has told him a lie.

DESTINY (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Sir, the Council says we should go
 as soon as the Salaminia is here.

RAUK
 If Suda's a target, we are too.
 Get warmed up. How long before
 you're ready to go full throttle?

DESTINY (O.S.)
 I can be ready by the time the
 Salaminia is here, sir.

EXT. SHUTTLE SALAMINIA - CONTINUOUS

Three Sojucul gunships edge out of the smoke at Suda station. They turn towards the escaping shuttle and accelerate hard.

A laser beam connects the lead Sojucul gunship to one of the Salaminia's engines... it starts to glow.

The Angels spit out more smoke canisters which disperses the laser and they fire missiles through the smokescreen.

QUETRO

O.K. boys, they found us. Let's
make a run for it.

The shuttle engines blaze into life. The Angels spin and fire their engines too.

The missiles slam into the three Sojucul gunships and rip them apart.

Five more Sojucul gunships appear from the smoke at Suda and chase after the shuttle.

They smash through the remnants of their comrades and fire salvos of missiles.

The Angels cut their engines, spin and fire missiles back then launch decoys and more smoke.

The Sojucul missiles chase the decoys but two of them arc through the smoke and spit out their warheads.

Four of the six Angel fighters are torn apart.

Three of the Sojucul gunships are shredded by the Angels' missiles. It is now two on two.

A Sojucul missile stops chasing a decoy and bursts through the smoke.

The Angel fighters try to evade but the missile spits out its warheads and it is too late.

There are two explosions. The Salaminia is defenceless.

The ugly gunships set off after her. Their military engines mean they only take seconds to get within laser range and a beam reaches out.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Rauk watches the main screens.

QUETRO (O.S.)
Commodore, I don't think w...

The screens on the floor and ceiling show a distant explosion. The screens on the wall show it magnified.

The two remaining Sojucul gunships appear through the scattering remnants of the Salaminia.

RAUK
Destiny, are there any survivors?

DESTINY (O.S.)
None, sir. The explosion destroyed all of the life pods.

RAUK
Get us out of here.

DESTINY (O.S.)
I can't, sir, it will be a few minutes before the engines are able to go above one percent.

RAUK
Are the point defences online?

DESTINY (O.S.)
Yes, sir, but those gunships have already taken out the same type of defensive systems on Suda.

INT. TRIDENT - CONTINUOUS

Gris is in the load-master's seat, his brows furrowed into a look of cold hatred.

The fragment of asteroid he stole releases and heads away from him slowly.

He moves the controller and the freight arms shift inwards, bringing the engines with them.

Gris fires the engines at full towards the fragment and it shatters. The pieces and the Trident hurtle away from each other.

Close to one hundred tons of shattered rock spread into the path of the Sojucul gunships. They try to change course but are pummelled by them.

The gunships are smashed to pieces.

Gris scowls. Right has been done. He flicks himself back to the pilot's seat and straps in.

GRIS

Spirit of Destiny, this is Trident. That cost me all my fuel. I'm going to dock and you're going to refuel me.

The Trident moves between the huge engines of the Spirit and connects to an empty worker-ship dock.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY BRIDGE - SPACE/NIGHT

Rauk stares hard a long way through the floor. Nezafeli is on the bridge behind him, hands white-knuckled on a railing and face smeared by tears.

DESTINY (O.S.)

Commodore, the engines are ready for full acceleration, sir.

RAUK

Do it.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sholdan floats down a corridor with two mortals just behind her. They are armed.

The gravity increases and they drop to the floor. They bounce along at first but then settle into a normal walk.

They arrive at an airlock and Gris is on the other side. The airlock revolves him into the corridor.

SHOLDAN

You're under arrest.

The mortals cuff Gris.

The group sets off down the corridor.

Sovda is about to exit a door when the group pass.

She looks at Gris and struggles to keep her attraction to him hidden. Gris's eyes pierce into hers.

Her head lowers and her eyes glance down before she lifts her widened eyes back up at him.

After the group has passed, she moves out into the corridor to watch them move away.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Sholdan and the mortals lead Gris in cuffs onto the bridge and stop in front of the Commodore.

Nezafeli looks at Gris with anger. Tears well and she storms off the bridge.

Rauk looks at Gris for several seconds. Gris looks right back at him, the two men sizing each other up.

RAUK

I should pin a medal on you. Then throw you in the brig. But you've given yourself a life sentence.

Gris looks at Rauk and tries to figure out what he means.

RAUK (cont'd)

The gravity you feel is this ship accelerating. In six months the engines will cut and we'll cruise. You're in for a twenty six year sleep and life on another planet.
(beat) Put him in a sleep pod.

Sholdan and the mortals lead Gris off the bridge.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY LIVING QUARTERS - SPACE/NIGHT

Nezafeli moves from room to room. She checks people are in their pods and asleep. As she moves along the corridor, the lights go out behind her.

She pauses at an open door and goes in.

INT. RAUK'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Rauk is sat on the edge of his sleep pod, staring out to sea. His cabin looks like a villa. Screens give a view out over the cliffs of Demos.

RAUK

We've barely left and I've lost half of the mortals and one of my oldest friends. There isn't even time to grieve for them.

NEZAFELI

You will be able to grieve in the simulation. To you, it will seem like another life. Now lie back.

Rauk lies back, closes his eyes and the screens turn off. Nezafeli activates the sleep pod. Its lid closes and the tension leaves Rauk's face as he drifts away.

INT. SPIRIT OF DESTINY MEDICAL BAY - CONTINUOUS

Nezafeli enters the medical bay. Everything is in sterile wrap.

She puts her torc on a desk then walks to a container marked as sensitive medical equipment.

Nezafeli opens a panel on the container, gets inside the cramped space and closes the panel.

NEZAFELI

Destiny, do you have any data on
the status of this equipment?
(beat) Destiny? (beat) Destiny?

Nezafeli waits a few more seconds then opens another panel inside the container and moves through it.

There are two sleep pods. They contain Barris and Malak.

She checks the readouts of the pods then looks at them both. She strokes the pod of Pol Malak then leaves.

Nezafeli exits the container and closes it. She picks up her torc and goes to her sleep pod.

NEZAFELI (cont'd)

Destiny, I am ready to go to
sleep. Is everything set?

DESTINY (O.S.)

Everything is perfect, doctor.
Sleep well. Sweet dreams.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The Spirit of Destiny leaves the star system. Everything goes dark as it heads into the vastness.

SUPERIMPOSE: "26 Years Later"

The Spirit of Destiny is in the majesty of deep space. There is a bright star in front of it.

The engines come to life at one percent. Three of the twelve massive engines move up to two percent and the Spirit heaves itself to face away from the star.

All of the engines go to one gee and the months of deceleration begin.