

"HYPERHELION"

An Original Screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

**INT FOREST -- LATE AFTERNOON**

The sun shines brightly over the tree tops. It is however hanging in a star filled sky. A beetle buzzes past and the opening credit sequence begins over various scenes of plant and insect life that inhabit this world. A waterfall cascades into the lake below. This ecosystem lies beneath the arch of a reflective canopy.

**EXT. SPACE**

The canopy sits beneath a transparent dome, nestled in the hollowed out rock of a medium sized asteroid, the BIOSPHERE. Behind it, attached by gossamer lines is an immense triangle, the SOLAR SAIL. They drift past beneath the glowing redness of a distant nebula.

DISSOLVE:

**INT FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON**

A lacewing flutters past overhead and continues its carefree journey, veering off behind the trees. A small beetle zips into sight and hovers.

A humanoid, bat-like creature, DEH'MA, peeps out at it from behind a tree, a rod and membrane contraption strapped to her back, pterastraps. The insect spots her and zips away. She grabs a basket on a branch beside her and the chase begins:

Flapping a set of artificial wings, she and the beetle zigzag through the trees. As she closes in, they scoot over the lake, her belly basket swaying. They dive.

She spirals down, lunges in, and snares it in the basket. Alighting on shore, she swiftly kills it.

Eyes closed, she pauses, then opens her eyes to observe the forest, the insects, the sun. She smiles. A whirring attracts her attention, and the lacewing hovers into view. Deh'ma holds up the beetle, as if sharing her success. A bright point of light, appearing suddenly in the sky, captures her attention.

**EXT. SPACE**

Galen II, an odd looking spacecraft, dives free of the light's brilliance and levels out toward the sail and biosphere in the distance.

**INT. FOREST -- SUNSET**

Deh'ma carries the beetle to a spit on the beach, and prepares it for cooking. She watches the light moves swiftly over the ridge.

**EXT. SPACE**

Galen II slows and arcs inward toward the nebula lit side of the biosphere and sail. A beacon begins to flash on the ship's bridge.

**INT. FOREST -- SUNSET**

Deh'ma grabs her wing handles and lifts off to fly past the ridge; above her, the flashing beacon crosses the sky. She lands and enters the mouth of a tunnel in the hillside.

The lacewing flies to the entrance and hovers, watching her departing form. Deh'ma looks back, puzzled, then continues on her way. After a moment, the lacewing flies off.

**EXT. SPACE**

Garbled noise and static introduces the voice of SPEEN RELCO.

**SPEEN OS**

Distress code 2..6..5. My ship is damaged. I  
require assistance. Request docking clearance.

Galen II slows and stops before passing into the shadow of the biosphere. Its nose points toward a structure protruding from the rocky bowl. Alongside the structure juts a large octagonal platform.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Stalactite-like lights dimly illuminate a cavernous room. Deh'ma enters and crosses to a console studded with buttons facing a large screen. The screen displays a garbled image mixed with static.

**SPEEN OS**

Distress code 2..6..5. My ship is damaged. Request  
dockingclearance.

Deh'ma touches a button and the screen alters to show the approaching craft.

**DEH'MA**

Kon'doy ren sul nar?  
(It's not from Kondoy, is it?)

**COMPUTER**

Do lan. Sweik haf gregna du sinhaf nar.  
(Affirmative. Craft is of alien design.)

**SPEEN OS**

Is anyone running this station. Please respond.

Deh'ma frowns, presses some other buttons, and leans forward.

**DEH'MA**

This is Biosphere Nao'sin. I am Deh'ma Jow'say,  
uh... herbalist.  
Please identify yourself.

Again, she presses a button. The screen changes to show the shifting, distorted colour image.

**SPEEN**

Speen Relco, pilot of the Galen II, hauler and  
transporter. My ship is damaged. Request docking  
clearance.

**DEH'MA**

Clearance...

She squints at the screen, and switches it to the exterior view. Galen II slows and stops. She taps her fingers on her lips.

**SPEEN**

Is there a problem?

Deh'ma eases forward in her chair, running a hand over the console.

**DEH'MA**

(softly)  
No... clearance granted.  
(to computer)  
Mach'nu schna fallar.  
(Initiate docking sequence.)

She walks around the console to an airlock door.

**EXT. SPACE**

A docking tube extends from the biosphere's tower to meet Galen II as it glides in beneath the tower's docking arm.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Deh'ma stands at the door, ears pivoting to clangs and bangs from the docking procedure. Then there is a whirr of pumps and hiss of air. She reaches for the control, but hesitates. A chime sounds, and Speen's voice filters through the door.

**SPEEN OS**

Permission to come aboard?

Deh'ma presses the control. The door opens.

A large hand wraps around the door frame and Speen squeezes in. Deh'ma steps back as he straightens his twice-her-height frame and looks down a beak of a nose at her.

He is human, albeit odd looking. He smiles, and she returns a cautious smile, her gaze travelling past him. He follows her gaze, and they exchange careful looks while the door closes.

**DEH'MA**

Forgive me, I didn't think your people travelled out this far. Please, come in.

**SPEEN**

Thank you. Usually we don't, but I have been experiencing some...

navigational difficulties.

She nods. A brief, uncomfortable silence fills the room before she steps back, gesturing for Speen to follow.

**DEH'MA**

I have food and drink, you must be hungry. This way, please.

He smiles, nods and follows her to the door leading to the forest.

**INT. FOREST -- SUNSET**

The sun and star field begin to move, and the sun begins to disappear behind the opaque half of the dome.

**EXT. SPACE**

The dome slowly rotates, blocking the sun's rays to the forested interior.

**INT. FOREST -- NIGHT**

Only the nebula's red glow bathes the forest and infuses the sky above the ridge. Sounds of crickets fill the air.

**DEH'MA**

When I first saw your ship, I thought you were from Kon'doy.

The view floats down the cliff, past rocks, vegetation, and trees.

**SPEEN**

No, I am somewhat lost actually. You were expecting someone?

The view passes by Deh'ma preparing the beetle over the cooker on the beach. She glances toward Speen.

**DEH'MA**

Yes, my friends. They left to answer a distress call from Kon'doy, over a month ago.

**SPEEN**

Oh, really...

The view slows to rest on Speen sitting further down the bank. He pulls at his chin, leaning elbow on knee. Deh'ma pulls the beetle off the spit and carries it to Speen. He reluctantly accepts it, raising an eyebrow.

**DEH'MA**

Are you in radio contact with anybody?

He looks at her, then back to the beetle.

**SPEEN**

No. My ship's navigation and communication computer was damaged in a...

He places the beetle beside him. Deh'ma gazes at the beetle, then back to him.

**SPEEN**

...cosmic ray shower that caught me by surprise about a month ago.

Deh'ma averts her gaze, folds her arms, and rests chin in hand. Speen glances around at the cliffs.

**DEH'MA**

That's almost exactly when--

**SPEEN**

What is this place?

She raises her eyes to him.

**DEH'MA**

Biosphere Nao'sin, a lifeboat to shelter species that once thrived... on my home world, Jal'ray.

A humming becomes audible above the crickets. Speen's eyes shift from Deh'ma to something across the lake. Deh'ma swivels to look, and raises a finger to her lips.

The lacewing flies in and hovers not more than an arm's reach from her. After a moment, it whirrs off over the

lake and hovers again as if watching them. As Deh'ma takes a step toward it, Speen leans forward.

**SPEEN**

And what is Kon'doy?

She half turns to him.

**DEH'MA**

It is like this, except larger. I have attempted to contact it many times, but... no one has answered.

She again turns to the lacewing; Speen also looks.

**SPEEN**

So that's where you're headed.

**DEH'MA**

Yes...

Speen mulls this over, watching her.

**SPEEN**

I can get you there faster.

**DEH'MA**

Is that possible?

She turns to him, and the hovering lacewing flies away. Speen smiles casually.

**SPEEN**

I will show you.

**EXT. SPACE**

The solar sail's biosphere attachment cables unhook and pull together toward the sail's centre, reeled in by a relatively small spinneret mechanism. Galen II reverses and pivots about its centre to face the octagonal platform. Three feet protrude from the nose section and a headlight illuminates the platform. The ship slowly moves in.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Speen sits at the console studying the screen. Beside him is a large box. He manipulates buttons on a keypad attached to his wrist. Corresponding adjustments of Galen II's feet respond to his actions on screen. Farther along the console, Deh'ma sits in a chair, watching.

**SPEEN**

I assume your tech facilities on Kon'doy are well equipped?

**DEH'MA**

Yes, of course.

**SPEEN**

Good. I am eager to effect repairs to my comnav computer as soon as we arrive.

With a thud, Galen II connects.

**INT. FOREST -- NIGHT**

The sound reverberates through the forest. Agitated, the water beetle swims about. The whip scorpion waves its antennae, and the lacewing, resting on a branch, flexes its wings.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Speen peers down at some celluloid star charts, then up at the screen. With a tap of a button on his keypad, a computer simulation appears on the screen.

**SPEEN**

I have had the computer prepare a simulation to better illustrate our new course. This is at present, with the out-moded solar sail.

Onscreen, the biosphere arcs in toward the sun and a larger biosphere, Kondoy, in a tighter orbit.

**SPEEN**

In catching the solar wind with the sail to slow your orbital velocity, you would have eventually reached Kondoy, but as you know, that would have taken over six and a half months.

The biosphere's trajectory intersects Kon'doy's but on the far side of the sun.

**SPEEN**

It's a simple matter of boosting your present trajectory to intercept Kon'doy's orbit.

The sail and biosphere appear anew, this time the sail disappears, Galen connects to the platform and they head off toward Kon'doy, quickly.

**SPEEN**

Here you can see the sail retract, Galen II connect and accelerate the station into a much tighter trajectory, expediting your arrival.

Their trajectories meet almost immediately.

**DEH'MA**

How long will it take?

**SPEEN**

Using the highly powerful engines of Galen II-- less than a week.

Deh'ma grins.

**EXT. SPACE**

The toes on Galen's feet suddenly clamp down to the platform, one after the other. The spinneret has wound all the sail cable into a rotating bundle. The lines that link it to the biosphere begin to draw the spinning mass toward a compartment on the biosphere's exterior.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

**COMPUTER**

Na sol soontaloor haf nagen swensla.  
(Solar sail retracted and safely secured.)

**DEH'MA**

Ready.

Speen nods and studies the screen, once more displaying the exterior. Deh'ma watches his fingers dance over the controls of his keypad. His thumb pushes a lever turning a red light on.

**EXT. SPACE**

The main engine of Galen flares up with a rumble. Hot gases escape, and a light rivalling the sun's bursts forth.

**INT. FOREST -- NIGHT**

The water beetle dives to the lake bottom. Ground shuddering, the whip scorpion darts under a leaf. The lacewing hovers in the air, leaves shaking beneath it.

And throughout the forest, trees shake and shudder.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

The control room shuddering, Deh'ma runs a hand over the console.

**SPEEN**

Do not be alarmed. Your inertial dampers will kick  
In shortly.

**COMPUTER**

Teywa, li'som, ja sochma.  
(Compensating for vibration.)

**EXT. SPACE**

The Galen and biosphere begin to accelerate away.

**INT. FOREST -- NIGHT**

The shaking forest quiets. Creatures relax, and the lacewing flies away.

**EXT. SPACE**

The biosphere and Galen II set off toward the sun, the discarded sail quickly receding behind them until it is too small to discern.

DISSOLVE

**EXT. SPACE**

The biosphere and Galen soar by.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Speen sits at the light table making calculations on a pad, absorbed in his work. Deh'ma enters from a side door opposite the airlock and walks to him.

**DEH'MA**

I have prepared accommodations for you in the next room.

Speen glances at her, mumbling his thanks, and continues his work. She smiles, gazing at the table, and silently yawns.

**DEH'MA**

If you would like anything more, I will be by the lake.

He nods. She leaves by the door to the forest. At the sound of the closing door, he checks that she has gone...

... then reaches for and opens his large box.

**INT. FOREST -- DAWN**

The sun peeks around the opaque reflector, and cuts into the nebula's soft, red glow. Deh'ma hangs upside down in her sleep-sack. Her pterastraps hang on a branch beside her.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

On the screen, Speen can see Deh'ma asleep. A panel on the console lies open, wires exposed, some extending to his work space. His large box lies open, revealing many tools and extra wire.

He connects a group of wires to a large crystal and presses keys on the keypad. Several beeps sound.

**SPEEN**

Biosphere computer, respond.

**COMPUTER**

Nar sam... loff in- win ta loss'amer koffta-  
brrrrt!  
(then)  
Responding.

**SPEEN**

All further communication and commands will be routed through this crystal. Acknowledge.

**COMPUTER**

Acknowledged.

Speen punches buttons on his keypad and looks up at his ship.

**EXT. SPACE -- THRUSTER PLATFORM**

Galen II extends a flexible arm from its hull and attaches it to a platform port bearing water insignia markings. A suction noise accompanies a dull thump. Pumps whirr into motion... followed by a sound of rushing water.

**INT. FOREST -- DAWN**

In the trees above, Deh'ma rustles and twists in a fitful sleep.

**INT. FOREST -- LATE AFTERNOON**

A likeness of Speen's grinning face juts through the bark of a tree trunk. Deh'ma turns away to see other faces pulled from the inner tree core, studding the surrounding trees. Speen works another trunk with his bare, glowing hand. Wood bursts through the bark.

She starts and stares up at him.

**DEH'MA**

(echoing)  
What are you doing?????

He moves to reveal a likeness of her face sculpted into the wood.

**SPEEN**

(echoing, mouth still)

Do you like it? It's a vast improvement, don't you think.

Speen returns her stare, his face expressionless. Their gazes lock. The faces in the trees begin to moan and wail.

**INT. FOREST -- SUNRISE -- TREE**

Deh'ma wakes with a start and looks down at the trees. All is normal. She turns to look at the waterfall and sun, now a little larger in the sky.

**EXT. SPACE**

The Galen pushes the biosphere toward the larger sun. Streaks of light whiz past intermittently.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

She swoops down over the lake and lands by the water's edge. Kneeling, she dips her tongue into the water. With shock she draws back.

**DEH'MA**

Yuck!

She flicks out her tongue and stares from the waterfall to the lake. After a moment's thought, she grabs her wing handles, and takes off over the lake to the waterfall.

On the lake bottom below, the water beetle lies helplessly on its back, swimmer legs quivering and then still. Water suction sounds emanate from a grill set into the shoreline bottom.

**EXT. SPACE**

Out of the darkness and onto the underside of the biosphere's rocky bowl, the water sound continues. It glides over the rock and up to a tube connected to the platform on which Galen II's arm is attached to the water port.

There the suction sound grows loudest, and a large puff of vapour plumes out from a port in the ship's hull. Galen II hurtles the biosphere ever closer to the looming orb of the sun.

**SPEEN VO**

Requesting a top level priority commlink with  
Rayd Wat Sinn, channel 7844, Slethka Mining  
Corporation, security level 8, code blue 9.

As he speaks, the view crosses space and comes to rest on a greyish blue planet hanging against the stars. Several ships cruise past.

**EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- DAY**

A futuristic megalopolis sprawls beneath a grey sky pierced by a hazy sun. The gleam off its towering metal and glass surfaces is blunted by the polluted air. Almost no greenery is visible.

**INT. OFFICE -- DAY**

RAYD WAT SINN, a round, short-nosed human in a dark suit, strikes a button and leans forward to a small screen on his desk.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Speen looks to the screen as it displays the smug, smiling face of Rayd Wat Sinn.

**RAYD**

Captain Relco, how's progress?

**SPEEN**

(smiling wryly)  
Going very well. According to water samples, the platinum content of this station's rock is almost triple that of any station we've located so far.

**INT. FOREST -- SUNRISE -- WATERFALL**

Deh'ma stands at the waterfall's lip, staring down at the stream's milky water. In disgust, she gazes up to the stream's source.

**SPEEN VO**

In addition, I have scanned the entire station,  
and there is only one inhabitant.

Cloudy water spurts from the output pipe.

**RAYD VO**

This is good news, Relco.

A sudden puff of vapour roils down the slope toward her. She momentarily loses her balance, then grips her head and fiercely shakes it.

**RAYD VO**

You realize of course that if successful, our third quarter earnings will far surpass our competitors, putting you in the running for a promotion and a very healthy bonus.

She glances to the tunnel mouth, lifts off, and flies toward it.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Speen pulls a gun and collar ring from his tool box. He places the gun on the light table before him and holds the collar up to the screen.

**SPEEN**

This operation should be highly profitable and... conveniently manageable.

The sound of the main entry door causes him to look toward it. He turns back to Rayd.

**SPEEN**

End transmission.

Rayd's face disappears, replaced by a view of space. The door hisses open. Speen drops the collar onto the light table, and notices he has left his keypad on the console beside the panel he previously tampered with.

Deh'ma enters quickly, wings still attached. Speen busies himself examining star charts as she crosses to the console and presses buttons.

**DEH'MA**

Something is wrong.

**SPEEN**

Oh?

He examines the star charts more closely. She runs a hand over the controls.

**DEH'MA**

Tesla... wensen sleffhaola zen chore fendui'la.  
(Computer... determine source of water  
contamination.)

She half turns to Speen.

**DEH'MA**

Water temperature control has malfunctioned.

He returns her look, raises an eyebrow. She turns back to the console. His fingers, hidden from her view, tap lightly on the gun's handle. The computer is silent.

**DEH'MA**

Why is this not responding?

She steps along the console to the panel beside the keypad, and loses her balance momentarily. Speen's hand wraps around the handle. She recovers, shakes her head rapidly and blinks many times.

**SPEEN**

Something wrong?

**DEH'MA**

(warily)  
I don't... know...

Leaning heavily, she punches more keys and looks out at Speen's ship and the attached water tube.

**DEH'MA**

Have you... done something to the water system?

She struggles to meet his gaze.

**SPEEN**

I needed extra coolant for Galen's engines. Why?

He grips the hidden gun and presses a green button on its controls.

**DEH'MA**

That water valve... is meant for life support, not engine dynamics--

**SPEEN**

(interrupting)

The coolant system is entirely closed. There's no possibility of contamination.

Speen appears to Deh'ma as though swathed in a mist. Clutching her stomach, she spins away, falling to one knee and vomits.

The computer pipes up, in English. Shaking uncontrollably, Deh'ma gazes at it.

**COMPUTER**

Warning. Biosphere's primary water system contaminated by foreign pollutants and waste heat. Analysing for source.

To Deh'ma, the computer's voice echoes as though from a great distance.

**COMPUTER**

Improper utilisation of thruster platform water exchange valve. Closing--

**SPEEN**

Override. Do not close valve.

**COMPUTER**

Brrrt! Sook lan sss frrt! Weg noc zzzch!

Quivering, Deh'ma tries to rise. Speen raises the gun...

**COMPUTER**

Complying.

And fires. A high pitched pulse shimmers from the muzzle, and Deh'ma slumps to the floor. Speen, satisfied that she is unconscious, picks up the collar. It snaps open.

FADE TO BLACK:

**INT. FOREST -- LATE AFTERNOON**

The sculpted faces moan and cry out in pain. Darkness falls until only Deh'ma is illuminated. The faces fall silent... then begin to twist and pull from their places in the trunks.

Deh'ma watches, horrified, as they wrench themselves free and hurtle toward her. One passes through her.

She gasps and whirls to see the faces tearing leaves from the branches above in a frenzy. She shuts her eyes and turns away. The darkness lifts...

...and Speen grabs hold of Deh'ma's likeness, and rips it from the trunk. It screeches out. Deh'ma opens her eyes and spins to face him. He hurls its tortured form toward her. She opens her mouth to scream, but only a gasp escapes .. A siren fills the air.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Deh'ma awakes with a gasp; the siren fills the room. Speen's collar grips her neck. She fights it, to no effect. The collar suspends her in mid air several paces away from the console. Speen crouches over an open panel.

**COMPUTER**

Danger. Biosphere severely threatened. Solar proximity will kill all life forms. Increase orbital radius immediately.

He looks back at her.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

The sun is a burning ball. The siren wail echoes throughout the forest.

The whip scorpion lies on its back, legs quivering. Leaves curl and wither, falling intermittently to the forest floor.

A beetle crashes to the ground, twitching among the others scrambling to hide beneath wilting flowers and foliage.

While the suction sound continues, the decomposing body of the water beetle is plastered to the underwater grill. The lake level has dropped several feet.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Speen works away at the console interior. Deh'ma sees a new simulation, freeze framed onscreen, replaced the next moment with Rayd's image, observing her.

She attempts to reach for the console chair, mere inches from her grasp, and starts swinging her body pivoting by her clamped neck.

Speen pulls out a handful of wires. The siren stops. He looks up to Rayd who is observing Deh'ma.

**SPEEN**

Sorry for the interruption

He sits up, follows his gaze to the swinging Deh'ma, still vainly attempting to grab the chair. She gives up, frustrated. Speen gives her a mock sympathy -

**SPEEN**

Awwhhh

And proceeds to laugh. Rayd joins in. Angrily she avoids their eyes. Eventually they stop and Speen turns back to Rayd.

**SPEEN**

By maintaining Galen II's thrust parallel with solar gravity, the station should reach fifty percent light speed at the slingshot point, the trajectory apex...

The simulation continues onscreen. Deh'ma watches the biosphere icon arc quickly toward the sun and stop right next to it. An arrow with "TRAJECTORY APEX" flashes.

**EXT. SPACE**

The biosphere rockets in from the distance and shoots toward the enormous orb of the sun.

**SPEEN**

...within twenty point two hours.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Onscreen, the biosphere fires away from the sun in a hyperbolic arc.

**SPEEN**

At that proximity, solar tides will catapult the station out of the system to rendezvous with the platinum processor five weeks ahead of schedule.

The simulation shifts to show a model of their ships suddenly swallowed by an enormous mining craft.

Deh'ma grips the collar and tries to pull it apart. She grimaces and blinks rapidly, still quite ill. She relaxes her grip and carefully examines the collar -- her fingers find a seam in the front.

The screen view switches back to Rayd.

**RAYD**

Hyperbolic trajectory. Excellent work, Captain Relco. And the native?

Speen turns toward Deh'ma and grins.

**SPEEN**

No difficulty, not like last time.

**RAYD**

We will await your next transmission.

**SPEEN**

Acknowledged. End transmission.

The screen returns to the exterior view.

Deh'ma tries to wrestle her collar open. Speen reaches to his calculator keypad and presses a button. Immediately Deh'ma quivers and shakes as her collar generates a high voltage electric shock.

It stops as abruptly and coughs and gasps rack her small body. He shakes his head and returns to his work.

She scrunches her eyes closed, fighting tears.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

The lacewing buzzes furiously up to the dome and bangs repeatedly against the glass before falling back, spinning to the beach. Landing on its back, its legs frantically claw the boiling air.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

She opens her eyes and looks up. Speen wipes his forehead of the beads of sweat starting to form. Eyeing the remote control keypad, she speaks.

**DEH' MA**

(croaking)  
Why?

Speen smiles, glancing back at her.

**SPEEN**

I will show you.

He presses a button on the console. On screen, the exterior view is replaced by a wide shot of the forest. Heat convection distorts the dying trees and plants.

Deh'ma snaps her hands to her head in horror. The sun's rays bathe the entire forest.

**SPEEN**

Those cliffs are filled with platinum, an element essential for interstellar travel.

She shuts her eyes, twisting.

**SPEEN**

My people have run out of it...

She reaches down to the largest wing membrane rod, holding it between her fingers.

**SPEEN**

Your biospheres are packed with it and they are all so very conveniently transportable.

He looks back at her as she releases the wing and rubs her forehead. On screen, the lacewing continues to struggle. He turns away again. Deh'ma snarls. Speen wipes a hand across his forehead.

**DEH' MA**

Then Kon'doy? You?

He laughs.

**SPEEN**

No, no, no. I wasn't personally involved, though  
I hear they put up quite a good fight... unlike  
yourself.

She reaches into her wings and tries to flap toward the console, but  
the collar will not move from its suspended position. Speen smiles  
reaches to his keypad, hovering his finger over the shock button. She  
slows her flapping and stops.

He presses it anyway sending her into spasms of crackling electricity.  
His face quivers with a sadistic grin.

His finger releases the button. She slumps limp and still.

After several moments, she comes to with a gasp, gulping for air. He  
smiles and wipes his forehead again.

**SPEEN**

Computer, lower control room temperature and  
increase oxygen flow.

Deh'ma pulls her hands from the wings' handles and grips one of the  
finger rods that supports the membrane. Jamming the rod into the seam  
of her collar, she strains to lever it open, her ears quivering.

The computer is silent. On screen, the lacewing lies still.

**SPEEN**

Computer--

**COMPUTER**

Unable to comply.

She grits her teeth and cranks the wing rod into the seam. It pops  
open slightly. As Speen looks at the computer, a light blinks on his  
keypad with a beep.

**SPEEN**

Specify!

**COMPUTER**

Life support maintained solely by the biosphere  
ecology, presently in the process of expiration.

Speen turns on her, catching her releasing the wing rod. He scowls.

**SPEEN**

Tell it to lower the temperature. Now.

**DEH'MA**

(hoarsely)

I can do nothing. Once the forest dies... so do we.

His eyes narrow, then he chuckles a bit as he reaches for the shock button, still watching her. No shock is delivered. He turns forward to see that the collar indicator light is off. Hunching, he grins

**SPEEN**

Listen here, you filthy, pathetic little creature...

And leaps up to stride towards her. She wrenches open the collar, drops to the floor, and dodges out of the way, stabbing her hands into the wings, splaying them open. He pauses, then lunges.

She lurches airborne and careens over to the console. Snatching the keypad in her teeth, she flaps for the exit. He grabs his gun as she lands at the door. As she rolls through, a bright, high pitched pulse rips into the wall beside her. Speen snarls, gun in hand, glances quickly at the lacewing on screen, and lunges after her.

**EXT. SPACE**

The ships whip past toward the sun. Light streaks indicate an extremely high velocity.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

Deh'ma wobbles through the tunnel and into the forest. A fit of coughing grips her, as he appears in the tunnel behind. He takes aim. A beam sears past.

She ducks, spreads her wings, and takes off toward the lake.

Once more, Speen fires. A pulse punches through a leaf as she glides through the trees. She banks. A burst hits a tree trunk ahead. Again she banks.

A large hole burns through her left wing, and the keypad flies from her mouth. She plunges, tumbling to a stop at the edge of the beach. The keypad comes to rest in front of her.

She struggles to reach for it, but falls unconscious. Nearby, the lacewing lies motionless.

Speen starts down the path toward the lake. Deh'ma awakens, frees an arm, and reaches for the keypad.

He quickens his pace and aims.

Deh'ma clamps onto the keypad and spins to face Speen, holding it before her like a shield. He plants his feet to fire, but sees he cannot without risking his device.

Feigning resignation, he lowers his gun.

Deh'ma scrutinises the device and attempts to punch in a code. Speen fires, and Deh'ma snaps her head up to see a beam burst a yellow, smoky hole in the lacewing's thorax.

Speen charges down the hill toward her, and she frantically pulls the device's lever. Nothing happens. She punches in a different code, still no response. Speen lunges out for her, and she presses another combination.

The red light goes on.

**EXT. SPACE**

Galen II's engine light shudders.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

The ground shakes. Speen staggers and swings at Deh'ma. She ducks and falls to the beach, spinning the keypad toward the lake. It skids to the sandy lakeshore edge and teeters there.

**EXT. SPACE**

Galen II's engine falls dark and silent. The ship and biosphere drift quickly in an expanding arc away from the sun.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

The shaking stops.

Deh'ma crawls to her feet as Speen crashes by, throwing her aside. He dives for the device; it tips and slides down the bank. He lands hard and catches it in one hand, his momentum carrying him head first into the water.

All is quiet except for the pop of bubbles on the water's surface.

**EXT. SPACE**

The ships slide quickly into the distance, sideways.

**INT. FOREST**

The bubbles increase and suddenly Speen bursts up, his screams and thrashing yank Deh'ma to her feet. Burned and red, his right hand scrabbles at the sandy slope.

Suddenly, Deh'ma's hand shoots down. He grips it, his burned face contorting, and she strains, gasping and screeching, to pull him up.

He struggles to help her drag him onto the beach, where he collapses.

She runs to his gun and heaves it into the lake. Speen can only lie there, gasping and coughing, before he falls unconscious.

The forest is still. Deh'ma looks to the tunnel mouth, then squints at the sky, grimacing.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Deh'ma rips the crystal from the exposed panel and presses buttons on the console.

**DEH'MA**

Semzu'a sifar jatlof'ne.  
(Activate emergency support system.)

**COMPUTER**

Semzu'a na.  
(Activating)

She gazes at the screen now displaying the beach. Speen coughs a bit and she continues her work at the console.

**INT. FOREST -- DAY**

The stream water flow stops. Speen sits up as the last trickles over the waterfall, then falls prone again.

**EXT. SPACE**

The crafts slide past ever further from the sun. The cable-holding, spinneret-ball extends and begins to weave a new solar sail.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM**

A new simulation is displayed on screen. The new solar sail brakes their hyperbolic trajectory into an arc double that of her original distance from the sun. There it slowly moves inward again.

**COMPUTER**

Sarjen lat wensu tim: jar sif'la san.  
(Estimated time to original orbit: 345 days)

She sighs, ears quivering and bows her head to hand.

**EXT. SPACE**

The dome slowly rotates to cut the sun's rays to the forest.

**INT. FOREST -- NIGHT**

Speen watches the sky as the nebula glows into view. In the woods, Deh'ma assesses the destruction around her.

Speen coughs violently. Deh'ma rips the leaf and stem from a plant, and makes her way to the beach. She squats some distance from him, considering. He struggles to face her.

**SPEEN**

(rasping)  
You could have let me die.

She is silent for a long time, staring at the lacewing. He glances over at it, then back to her.

**DEH'MA**

Our survival is mutually dependent.

Speen begins to snicker. Clenching her teeth, Deh'ma shuts her eyes momentarily before glaring at him.

**DEH'MA**

You must contact your high council and tell them to return the biospheres and my people to the system.

She looks again at the lacewing. Speen's chuckles turn into another coughing fit, and Deh'ma rushes to him, raising the plant stem to his lips. White sap drips into his mouth.

Reluctantly, Speen swallows, and his coughing stops.

**DEH'MA**

You will remain here until then...

He glances at her with a sneer on his face. She pulls her hand away as he shakes it off.

A faint hiss signals that nozzles in the dome above have begun to spray a fine cloud of water onto the forest.

Deh'ma stands to watch the descending mist as it blankets the forest. Water runs in rivulets down tree trunks, and drips from the tips of hanging, dead leaves. Droplets fall onto the plants and animals lying motionless on the forest floor.

A drop splashes Speen. He shakes his head, and she kneels again to apply more sap to his burns.

Above the ridge, the nebula glows through the rain.

DISSOLVE:

**EXT. SPACE**

The biosphere and Galen II drift through space, the new solar sail now slowing their expanding arc away from the sun.

The view rushes over and out into deep space, coming upon the massive processing ship, waiting. A huge asteroid rumbles past toward it, soon barely swallowed by its gaping maw.

DISSOLVE:

**EXT. CITY TOWER -- DAY**

Rayd stands in the bay window of his office looking out. The city sprawls before him. He suddenly looks at us, the audience, nods and smiles.

FADE OUT: