

BEYOND PROMETHEUS
WGAE #1254496

by

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Who are the ENGINEERS and what is our role in the cosmos?

PARADISE LOST

SHAW and DAVID pragmatically work out a truce during their journey in the juggernaut, which moves at speeds close to that of light. SHAW assists DAVID to re-attach his head, so that he can better pilot the craft. He jokes that he looks like a creation of Dr. Frankenstein, because of her stitches. Together they discover the food and sanitation systems, which are compatible but not typical of Earth cultures. While the ship has no windows, DAVID learns that if he directs the sensing instrumentation towards a point, it is recreated as a hologram in the control space, much as the orrery was shown to us in PROMETHEUS giving a stylized view of the galaxy. DAVID plays with the controls and accesses the juggernaut's database, which projects its information in the control space, or in a condensed form meant for a single viewer hovering close to the console. This latter format is used when SHAW is present.

He explores what he considers to be sensitive aspects while SHAW sleeps. He also appears to be in communication with someone, but only when SHAW cannot observe him. DAVID discovers that the juggernaut is run by a form of low-level artificial intelligence, which he must convince/seduce into allowing him to enter the information storage. But still much of the data is locked-out. He finds hints about the galactic scope of the civilization of the Engineers, but no sign of nor incoming communications from other vessels, nor from Engineer outposts that they pass. All is silent. SHAW is determined that answers will be found at the journey's goal, and she naturally remains suspicious and so asks DAVID to teach her how to access the information. He gives her a rudimentary amount of data, hobbling her examination of the database.

They slow the juggernaut's drive to arrive at the planetary system of the Engineer home world. DAVID summons up a three dimensional view of this solar system, something SHAW had not been privy to before, confirming her suspicions. DAVID, while scanning for signs of life, notes that the system has apparently been sculpted. The skills of the race that seeded its DNA also included terraforming and even the manipulation of celestial bodies, to some extent. An asteroid field towards the system's rim had been shaped in shifting artistic patterns that also prevent the escape of rogue bodies. SHAW sees beauty in this, and so thinks these ancestors might have more kinship with humanity. DAVID points out that what appears to be beauty may have simply been practical. Humans find flowers and butterflies to be attractive, but what pleases human eyes did not evolve with that purpose. Engineer technology, architecture and artifacts are scattered amongst the

worlds and moons circling their home sun. That sun is no longer beneficent. It has begun to swell and is on course to eventually swallow most of the inner planets of the system.

The projection's graphics seem to indicate that the fourth planet from the sun might be their goal, so they head directly there, marveling at the elaborate but inactive structures—apparent bio-mechanical cathedral-like space stations—along the way. They attain the home world of the Engineers. It is dead—a magnificent, tragic ruin. DAVID finds that new data is now available, the intelligence-guided system functions on a need-to-know method, and only when at the home world does it present information about it. It appears to have been made into a museum and capitol of their empire. Its entire surface has been altered to suit their cultural and aesthetic needs. Lakes are shaped in characters from their writing while the oceans form silhouetted images of what may be animal species native to the planet. SHAW points out the impracticality of this and feels justified in seeing the Engineers as being more humane. DAVID has a “we’ll see” attitude. He observes that there is no indication of life of any sort registering. SHAW and DAVID circle planet IV, seeking what would likely be the most informative spot to investigate. They find it. One small continent is shaped like the outline of the central figure from the frieze found on LV 223. They decide that must be the place to go.

As they bring the ship lower, they note that the ground appears entirely encrusted with structures, grown like barnacles. The Engineer architecture, like that seen in Heironymous Bosch's famous triptych, *THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS*, is organic. Bosch conjured buildings in his vision of Heaven that looked like graceful crustacean shells, grown rather than built, and the Engineer planet is full of elegant architecture that is complex and soaring and utterly organic. SHAW notes the odd coincidental similarity to that painting and wonders about that—possible projected visions to the artist from our progenitors?

But, it is clear that at a certain point, what looks like disease has intruded itself on the structures below. Dark, Giger-conjured biomech-tech flourished like rampant cancer cells throughout the remnants of the culture that was shown in the *PROMETHEUS* prologue to be classically elegant at the time they were seeding proto-worlds. The visual change emphasizes the mystery as to why they had become darkly malignant and hostile when encountered on LV 223. Clearly some paradigm shift occurred, from staid self-sacrifice to being antagonistic towards their “children,” the alteration of their outward physical appearance matching this about-face.

The architecture appears to spiral in towards the center of this small continent, so as they approach that point they see a massive tower, shaped like a miles-high narwhal tusk, each spiral rank is comprised of immense sculptures of Engineer bodies posed as if caught on separate film frames of a dance, circling higher and higher. But, it can be seen when they take the juggernaut and do a fly-by as well as the rise to the top, that it is infested with Giger-tech, and in places the Engineer faces have been roughly re-carved into human skulls, like those seen on the pyramids discovered on LV 223.

The tower top exhibits a sealed portal reminiscent of the vaginal petals of the original

alien eggs. They circle the tower and head lower and find a bit further down the shaft that there is an immense hole, almost as if eaten away by acid. DAVID brings the ship in close, maneuvering it inside to a huge ornately decorated circular disc of a floor held up by an internal spiral ramp at its edge. DAVID notes that the atmosphere seems safe for breathing, which is a good thing as the suits they brought along have exhausted their oxygen. SHAW and DAVID disembark and SHAW the archaeologist is thrilled to see that the Engineers have apparently recorded their history in heroic friezes that spiral along the inside of the outer walls of the tower. They had rendered scenes from their long-lasting civilization, showing in a stylized manner that they spawned many humanoid races whom they apparently met with and encouraged. There are graphics of each solar system identifying the cradles of each experimental species. They had a number of such “children,” some look very much like humans and others are quite odd variations. Regardless, it seems that they were benevolent parents. SHAW can only see some of this as she directs her light on the walls. She eagerly follows the spiral downwards to learn more while DAVID holds back. In the center of the floor disc a form of console, more complex than the juggernaut controls, captures his attention. DAVID begins to work at deciphering its mysteries and his familiarity with the juggernaut allows him swift mastery. SHAW is excited to find what is a rendering of our solar system and our species, with the larger Engineer forms shown as reverencing the smaller humans—she shouts this to DAVID, who asks if this comforts her, while his hands are rapidly manipulating the panel’s controls like a speeded-up flamboyant organist.

SHAW climbs back up the ramp past where she first descended, eager to see what must be the conclusion of the tale. She can only see a limited amount in the light beam since these are large, but as she proceeds she notes images symbolic of what look like rising hostility towards the children of the Engineers. There are scenes that look like ancient Assyrian or Egyptian depictions of their leaders overcoming foreign armies. The larger Engineers are now shown as triumphing over smaller and diverse humanoids. SHAW is shocked to see scenes of what appear to be Engineers in conflict with each other, and that she can see those Engineers with the Grecian simplicity and elegance of appearance being trounced by Engineers with Giger-tech bodies wearing those elephant trunk helmets. She also notes with surprise the addition of a figure with wings and what might be horns. SHAW hears DAVID as he shouts “Abracadabra” and light floods the tower interior. SHAW turns to look directly above, suspended at the top of the internal spiral is a massive statue of a particularly hideous gigantic elaborate variant of the DEACON XENOMORPH, with arms and legs thrown wide in a gesture of embrace and victory, triumphant over all. SHAW is aghast. She shouts for DAVID, but his rapid fingerings seem to be reaching a climax. An expanding spherical glow begins directly above him and he looks up towards it and shouts “Alakazam” while his fingers “play” final elaborate “chords” on the panel. A rapidly evolving spherical holographic display bursts into being above the console but below the DEACON XENOMORPH effigy, whose stretched limbs define the upper arc of it.

DAVID is paralyzed as he absorbs what this display depicts—a visual storm of information that is too rapid for SHAW to comprehend. It becomes a fierce blur, becoming even brighter and SHAW averts her eyes as she makes her way back down the

ramp towards DAVID who is frozen, enthralled. SHAW reaches DAVID and pulls at him, but he is immovable. SHAW pummels him and screams as the display reaches a climax and then suddenly winks out. DAVID, who has now absorbed much of this vast historical database, casually grabs SHAW's flailing hands and sets her aside like a child.

DAVID explains that he has just witnessed the complete recorded archives of the Engineers. He suspects that there are gaps, likely intentional. He mentions that it was far too concentrated for SHAW to apprehend. SHAW asks for the answer: what made them change?

DAVID says, with a knowing look and a wistful tone to his voice, that it is a long, sad tale, but that he will cut to the chase. He touches a control, saying "Sim Sala Bim" and what appears above them is a high definition spherical hologram. This is not ghostlike, as were the holograms encountered in PROMETHEUS. This is a hyper-real, three-dimensional recording of the Engineers past. At first we see SHAW and DAVID watching, but then it fills and jumps off the screen and envelopes the film's viewers. DAVID narrates with his dulcet tones, explaining what we see.

This following history must be visually condensed with minimal narration to present the backstory. It could also be parceled out and revealed in part over the course of this and the final film.

—DOOM OF THE ENGINEERS—

The older guard of Engineers, headed by a stern-looking figure DAVID thinks best to call ZEUS, had realized that their species had become moribund over their immensely long span as space-farers, having lost their sexual dimorphism so that only males existed while they reproduced solely by cloning. They had perfected a technique of memory storage so that new clones could receive the memories of bodies that were degenerating with age, even though their life spans lasted for millennia by Earth standards. They began a seeding program, with the hope that a bio-diversity might emerge that they could re-integrate into their own genome. They cultivated worlds, visiting them periodically to tinker with the gene pools so that they could eventually harvest materials from these "children" to enrich their slowly dying species. However, at times these experiments went awry, either producing fallow results or some species began to arise on seeded worlds that developed faster than expected, and who began to seem like they could threaten their creators with destruction. ZEUS decided that the program was likely to destroy the civilization of the Engineers and that it must end. He recalled his people to the home world to preserve the dying vestiges of his culture.

But not all of the Engineers shared ZEUS's opinion that these other species were a threat, or even that their own species should last forever. The leader of the rival faction, elegant and lithe—whom David archly calls LUCIFER, had been ranging the galaxy, involved in cultivating the seeded worlds and he came to admire some of the new humanoid species. LUCIFER experimented with blending the Engineers with these new species. SHAW comments that the Earth legends of the Nephilim—the giants who seeded the daughters

of men and taught them skills in metallurgy and such—were likely memories of LUCIFER and his assistants as they visited Earth. This blending was changing the Engineers, evolving them into something different. LUCIFER embraced that diversity as a means of evolution and extending their culture.

ZEUS and his allies opposed blending with other species as a blasphemy, so they secretly turned their technology towards evolving the destructive biological weapons that were wrought on LV 223. The intention was to use it to sterilize all seeded worlds. To cleanse these planets, the “black goo” would be used to create warrior creatures from the evolved DNA on each world that would completely devour all other forms of organic life, then consume themselves, leaving a world devoid of animal species, but with the possibility of being inhabited by Engineers, if such need arise. This militarization of the technology lead to the growing of the juggernaut ships, meant as delivery systems for the goo cannisters and even to the alteration of Engineers into the forms seen on the LV 223, termed CHERUBIM by DAVID, so that they could physically integrate with and thus better pilot these ships in what are meant to be kamikaze missions. Knowing that this policy would find opposition, ZEUS also used the goo on his own kind to create ultimate warriors, what DAVID terms SERAPHIM XENOMORPHS. These are what inspired the sculpture suspended above the console and their sole purpose was to slaughter any Engineers who disagreed.

To enhance the commitment of his followers, ZEUS proclaimed what we would see as a fanatical xenophobic religion worshipping the SERAPHIM XENOMORPHS. In what might be seen as a perversity of this conservative faction, ZEUS began to inject the technology into his people’s lives on every level, and so the beauty of their ancient culture was infected with this cancer, even to the alteration of their art and achitecture. Most Engineers went along with this, but roughly a third of their people rejected this ugly adulteration of their society and looked to LUCIFER as their leader.

ZEUS tested the goo on a seeded world, where the dominant primates had evolved a savagery comparable to humans, and was pleased with the resultant destruction. That became the last straw for LUCIFER, but ZEUS would brook no opposition. His ultimatum was to assist in cleaning up the seeded worlds, or death. That test had revealed the military might he had developed in secret. LUCIFER and his compatriots gathered and fled, battling their way through a blockade established by ZEUS’s forces. LUCIFER’s graceful saucers and smaller defending shell-like ships clash in an Armageddon with the Giger-tech ships commanded by ZEUS, piloted by CHERUBIM ENGINEERS. Energy weapons slash open the gigantic saucers, while ZEUS’s ships launch bio-bombs containing swarms of SERAPHIM XENOMORPHS. These infect the ships, killing all aboard. But LUCIFER and some of his people manage to break free, sacrificing many of their own ships and people as a diversion. We see this battle filling the screen in a stunning display of three-dimensional imagery.

The fanatical reverence that ZEUS had instilled in his own people created a suicidal embracing of their “godhead,” and so the SERAPHIM XENOMORPHS were loosed on the home world in an orgy of misguided religiosity. So before LUCIFER and the rebel

angels could be hunted down, ZEUS and his followers were devoured by their own sacred weapons. DAVID ends the projection and turns to SHAW who is in tears.

DAVID points out that so much of this has been embedded in Earth mythology and that the conflict happened about 2,000 years ago. SHAW now understands that this war is what led to the cessation of Engineer contact with humans. DAVID says to her that Nietzsche was right, God IS dead. However, it seems that LUCIFER might still be found if she might want to summon up The Devil. He explains that LUCIFER fled to a cluster of stars, within which he and his allies are hiding, whose brightness ties into his “Light bearer” name, but its stellar heat makes it also an INFERNO.

DAVID has learned but keeps to himself why the Engineer assaulted him. Engineer values were rooted in bio-tech, and that humans had dared to become like them through the construction of a mechanical and superior life form was uttermost blasphemy. The Engineer who decapitated him admired the achievement as it was unlike anything they had created, but had to condemn it because of his religious beliefs.

DAVID cocks his head and says to SHAW that their presence seems to have awoken something. While prior scans showed no life signs, his own hyper senses detect a swarm of SERAPHIM XENOMORPHS heading with great speed up the spiral as well as climbing the walls of the tower. He suggests that they should depart immediately.

The advanced guard of SERAPHIM arrives SHAW and DAVID fight their way back to the juggernaut and escape into orbit. As DAVID parses the absorbed data, he explains that a similar situation likely exists on the other worlds in this system, as juggernauts may have left LV 223 and done their missions, but that it might be wisest to seek out LUCIFER if SHAW still wants to encounter a deity. DAVID does not have exact coordinates, but there are hints about where he might be and so he sends the ship in search of the INFERNO. SHAW suspects that DAVID is doing more than piloting the ship, but she is just an archaeologist and can't tell that he is actually making an important transmission.

Back on LV 223, we find that VICKERS was not crushed by the falling juggernaut, but survived (she is a replicant) and since her escape pod can sustain life for over two years, she calls for rescue, giving a brief summary of what had happened. WEYLAND had built two ships—one scientific, Prometheus, and one military, Ares—and it is Ares that now sets out to rescue VICKERS, captained by a replicant of WEYLAND (YOUNG WEYLAND—YW) who is youthful and vital, programmed with his memories from before the departure of Prometheus. Ares is filled with militarized versions of air and ground vehicles and weaponry, all bearing a Y logo. They are made by the Yutani munitions firm, but this will not be made explicit until the end of the third film.

WEYLAND had recording devices attached to him (technology developed originally for giving replicants false memories), so his last memories are stored in the Prometheus. YW wants to obtain them to complete his resurrection. He is accompanied by a second DAVID and a crew of soldiers—hyper-powerful replicants. As in ALIENS, the soldiers,

both men and women, are grunts and have rough horseplay together. Four of them have bonded calling themselves the FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE, as their own races reflect the colors of the horses of biblical prophecy: Conquest/white/caucasian, War/red/Native American, Famine/black/Jamaican, Death/pale/Asian. They are the incarnation of deadly force and nobody makes fun of them. Their body armor includes a stylized but crudely rendered horse graphic. Another soldier, a body builder of eastern European descent named Micaela (preferring to be called MIKE) seems to note some oddly shared memories when talking with the others—she is close to suspecting she is a replicant, but her speculations are put aside for the mission. VICKERS puts herself into cryo-stasis to await their arrival after downing a vodka, neat.

The DEACON XENOMORPH that came from the final Engineer in the last scene of PROMETHEUS makes its way back into the pyramid seeking sustenance, and there feeds off the hammerpedes while continuing to grow. The revived pyramid, functioning as an automated biotech laboratory, releases more black goo from the stored cannisters to further alter the DEACON XENOMORPH. Bred to ruthlessly reproduce and advance as a predator, the DX begins spawning progeny that fight for survival, which keep mutating into ever more savage iterations. Sealing itself, the automated controls change the pyramid's atmosphere periodically, making it more hostile so that the creatures must toughen to survive—a Lamarckian mode of evolution is woven into their DNA.

When YW and VICKERS finally meet they are to have an odd dynamic—hostile, but mutually attractive, and, since they both are essentially children of WEYLAND, incestuous. YW has directed DAVID 2 to preserve VICKERS, as YW sees them both as the future of the corporation.

On Ares' journey, while the replicants are all in cryo-stasis, DAVID 2 becomes obsessed with the film FORBIDDEN PLANET, which he watches often during the journey, each time he views it he speeds up the frame rate until it becomes just a brief flash on the screen. YW has programmed him with the directive that he must seek out, preserve, and bring to mankind the superior technology of the Engineers. Thus, he sees himself as MORBIUS, since he conceives his coming role to be one to understand and dole out the Engineer technology to humans since he is their intellectual superior, as was Morbius' assumed role with the science of the long dead Krell. He dyes his hair black with gray at the temples and grows a small beard in imitation of the Dr. Morbius character from the film.

When Ares arrives and MORBIUS (DAVID 2) signals VICKERS' pod, her cryo-bed revives and releases her. Her revivification is sensed by the DX spawn in the pyramid and they slaughter each other to use their acid blood to escape and pursue this new life sign. So as the Ares sends down a scout ship (remaining in orbit to keep air superiority) the surface of the planet between the pyramid and escape pod is now swarming with highly deadly DX descendants. YW wants to complete himself with the stored memories so he and his soldiers launch a rescue mission to do so, as well as to preserve VICKERS, which succeeds just as the creatures breach the pod. There YW accesses the medi-pod which implants him with the missing memories. He is completed, and still wants to be God as

did his “father.” MORBIUS also does a download of files left for him by his “twin.”

YW wants to loot as much of the technology of the Engineers as possible, and so he, MORBIUS and the soldiers make a foray back into the pyramid, riding on militarized vehicles. VICKERS remains in the Ares’ armored drop ship. During this battle, many of the soldiers die horribly. MORBIUS and YW split up (at MORBIUS’ suggestion, and YW clearly understands why but does not explain to the soldiers). MORBIUS leads his group of soldiers into a chamber filled with giant, octopoid face-huggers, who overwhelm the soldiers and impregnate them with embryos, leaving him alone. MORBIUS brings the unconscious bodies of the soldiers to his transport vehicle then meets back up with YW and his team in the main instrumentation chamber. The remaining soldiers are shocked at what has happened to their colleagues, but MORBIUS claims they can be saved once back in the Ares. MORBIUS taps into the database, and then begins to download it into large capacity storage devices on the vehicle, while the remaining soldiers keep the DX descendants at bay. More are lost in the struggle.

MORBIUS becomes oddly reflective—we see through his mind’s eye that each pyramid is powered by energy tapped from deep inside the planet, and each is set to overload causing explosions likely to rupture the crust of the small planet in the process. He then states matter-of-factly to YW that the original pyramid breach by the DX descendants has triggered a fail-safe self-destruction system that leaves them a very short time to depart the planet. He says that he fears that the Ares might not be able to be ready to leave orbit in time to save them, but that the original DAVID had left him enough information to use one of the additional remaining juggernauts to depart. YW radios VICKERS and tells her to meet them at another pyramid where they hope to escape with another juggernaut. VICKERS says that they had better be able to get to Earth in the juggernaut. She sets the Ares autopilot to attempt a departure launch, and she hightails it with the drop ship over to unite with YW, MORBIUS, and the few remaining living soldiers.

They reach and activate the juggernaut under MORBIUS’ guidance, losing the last of the live soldiers who die bravely believing they are protecting their fallen comrades, before slamming the doors on the ravaging DXs. Noticing that its control area contains one living but suspended Engineer, MORBIUS points out that a revival attempt is likely to fail, but if not that the results from the previous efforts of his brother did not bode well. But there is little time to consider that. As their juggernaut rises quickly from the surface, pulling free of the encrusting swarm of DXs, who continue to cling, then fall as the ship rises, the Ares can be seen slowly moving away from the planet. Vast explosions shatter the surface of LV 223, ripping away its atmosphere and causing magma from the planet’s interior to engulf everything on the surface of that world. The Ares seems stunned by the shock wave, but MORBIUS activates the drive of the juggernaut so the fate of the Ares goes unnoticed.

MORBIUS learns how to use the technology of the juggernaut to put the impregnated soldiers into Engineer cryo-pods, and also how to contact DAVID, who tells his brother where he and Shaw are bound. MORBIUS secretly speaks with YW (not wanting

VICKERS' input as she wants to return to Earth), updating him as to what SHAW and DAVID have discovered. YW agrees that it would be wise to be the first ones to meet LUCIFER, if possible, and so they are off to the INFERNO as well. On the journey, YW and VICKERS consummate their desire, an encounter that is as much erotic as it is a corporate merger. Only after their intercourse does YW tell her that they are not bound for Earth. She slaps him for this betrayal and this tension between them will never be dissipated.

The two competing juggernauts arrive outside of the inferno almost simultaneously, due to the coordination of DAVID and MORBIUS, who had been in communication and collusion. They are clearly co-conspirators with their own agendas. While using sensors to gather information about the formation, a supremely gigantic ship, bizarrely complex with aspects of seashells and crustaceans and quite beautiful in a sort of baroque sense, emerges and swallows both juggernauts.

In the vast space inside the ship, the visage of LUCIFER appears as a holographic projection, smiling enigmatically, while all look on in awe.

INFERNO or PARADISE REGAINED

LUCIFER welcomes them with pride, but exudes a sense of mystery. He sends some of his people with a flying platform to accompany the Earth visitors as they are flown into a stunning garden, though the plants move like animals—an Engineer paradise, at last. In this encounter they learn why the sculptures looked different: LUCIFER and his faction took the route of melding their own DNA with that of species from the seeded worlds—and so they “fell in the eyes of the ZEUS-led old guard. These Engineers have both sexes, are not all the same, having subtle differences, clearly from adding aspects of other species DNA to their own. But LUCIFER is the most extreme, oddly androgynous—and winged, as the image of Baphomet drawn by Eliphas Levi. He speaks to them telepathically, and in their minds his voice sounds like a pipe organ that can speak words. He reveals his version of the past, and the presence of the other rescued humanoids from seeded worlds brought along with he and his Fallen Engineers when they fled into the Inferno.

LUCIFER waves a wing and the space around the garden becomes transparent so his guests may observe as his ship reenters the Inferno. Another deft wave and a holographic display shows his passengers the artificially arrayed worlds which are populated by members of “children” species whom LUCIFER brought here to preserve. It seems that these other humanoids are primates, but mostly very languorous types—similar to Bonobo chimps rather than aggressive Hamadryas baboons. More conscious than non-human Earth primates, none seem to have the same intelligence as our species. Promising children, but not ready to stand alongside Engineers or humans. They are grateful to LUCIFER and are evolving their own cultures, yet they give the best of their species to LUCIFER as an offering for his experiments at genetic recombination. LUCIFER speaks of the art of pushing DNA and creating new beings as godlike, and wondrous. His legendary hubris is showing. They notice that the humanoids under LUCIFER's

protection do not seem to be treated as allies or colleagues, but more like rare species kept in a zoo. LUCIFER and his followers remain aloof and do not share their technology with their wards, seeing them as too primitive to be trusted—children may not play with dynamite.

This alarms SHAW, but YW sees it as wise. VICKERS doesn't care, and both MORBIUS and DAVID are intrigued. LUCIFER explains that he had been monitoring the approaching juggernauts and could turn the sensing instruments on the occupants, and he was most intrigued to experience the androids. He explains that creations like them are unique in the galaxy, as Engineer values forbid them from making mechanical life, and that no other seeded species had succeeded in producing mechanical images of themselves. Thus, humans were uniquely creative, earning his respect. While he is tolerant of what his kind had always seen as a form of blasphemy, LUCIFER goes beyond that and offers admiration for the achievement. Flattery? DAVID observes that his own mutilation at the hands of one of ZEUS' CHERUBIM was caused by their deeply held disgust at mechanical imitations of life. LUCIFER offers that his people are more open-minded. Further, he mentions that his superior bio-tech could offer the blessing of remaking these androids as flesh, rather than machine, thus giving them a further evolutionary ability—to procreate. DAVID finds this a fascinating offer while MORBIUS seems skeptical. He prefers remaining a mechanism as for him it is superior to flesh. He has other plans for his own progeny.

LUCIFER insists on taking them on a tour, to meet their “cousins,” but MORBIUS and DAVID together offer that these are not their kin and so remain behind. They ask for access to information about LUCIFER's people and he takes them to a space wherein their data can be explored. This room serves the same purpose and has a display like the orrery, but it is light, airy and elaborately beautiful. While the humans and replicants are away, the two androids discuss their brotherhood, but also their differences, at the same time each is furiously delving into the Engineer data—they can multitask. DAVID, like his inspirational T. E. Lawrence, has an idealist streak and sees LUCIFER's offer as intriguing—a means for advancement. He also mentions that rather than serve as simply a conduit for the birth process as he did with SHAW, that he could be a direct participant. MORBIUS feels that it is more potent to remain mechanical, but that aspects of Engineer technology could be used to enhance himself, and that would be his goal. MORBIUS seems distracted, and DAVID pauses, while MORBIUS tells him that there is something that he thinks he should see...

LUCIFER takes the organic Earthfolk in a small shell craft of great delicacy and elaborateness to see his handiwork. The array of artificial small worlds, in orbits determined by the Engineers shows off their mastery of system dynamics. This must be an impressive display, beyond what our astrophysicists could even dream at present.

LUCIFER commands the ship to land with a series of gestures and sends them out to meet their relatives, telepathically summoning a deputation to greet the new arrivals. He remains behind. SHAW, recalling her father's anthropological expertise, takes the lead and meets the leader of the deputation, ARIEL—a being that seems like she evolved from

a more gracile primate than humans that still has body fur, unlike humans and Engineers. YW is more interested in how the Engineers constructed the artificial worlds. SHAW wants to know of their culture, and the groups mingle, and ask questions of one another. There are banquet tables, set high with tall chairs suited to the physiques of the locals. Fruits are served and SHAW and company try them, enjoying some, reviling others.

SHAW notes that ARIEL wears a necklace with a stylized effigy of LUCIFER. She asks ARIEL about LUCIFER and discovers that there is respect and fear. SHAW notes that the world is quite park-like, with many trees and very simple, open housing scattered in geometric patterns. ARIEL explains that these are gifts from LUCIFER, and that her people need only live without any duties save one: They must submit chosen individuals to LUCIFER as tribute for his generosity. They never return, but are thought to have joined with the Engineers for a greater purpose—as they have been told. Much like the Eloi from *THE TIME MACHINE*, these gentle, simple beings are being used by the Morlock-like Engineers, but rather than food, they are raw material for genetic experimentation.

SHAW senses that ARIEL is hiding something, but she does not offer more. SHAW questions about her people's beliefs, if they have spaces for prayer, and ARIEL explains that they need only reflect deeply and LUCIFER will hear them, but not always answer. ARIEL leads SHAW away from the open area into a deeper glade wherein there is a crudely made structure at the center of a copse of trees that sway of their own accord without wind. These trees seem to have eyes set along their branches and what appear to be mouths, and SHAW notes the eyes follow she and ARIEL, and that when an insect like creature lands on the tree, a mouth opens and a tendril whips out to pull in the bit of protein. She wonders on what world these were spawned. ARIEL explains that no other native life was taken from her home world, but that LUCIFER often brings his creations to exist on ARIEL's and other worlds. SHAW asks if ARIEL has visited the other worlds, and she admits they are forbidden to travel. LUCIFER wants to keep their development from being influenced by the other worlds. Though he has said in time that will change. LUCIFER plans eventually to have these species compete with one another, but that is meant for the future.

Inside the crude structure are effigies of LUCIFER and his Engineers, placed so that the sunlight falls upon them. SHAW notes that in the shadowed part of the "chapel" that there are smaller figures, carved in a grotesque manner, that exhibit a demonic aspect. SHAW inquires and ARIEL, with terror in her demeanor, says that these are the "punished ones," who disobeyed LUCIFER and are banished to another world. But further inquiries are interrupted when bell tones sound and ARIEL hastily leads SHAW back to the clearing where the ship rests. LUCIFER has emerged and the native peoples gather to pay homage. SHAW and the others are summoned by gesture back into the ship and LUCIFER asks what they thought of their relatives. He gives a penetrating look to SHAW, who says she is fascinated and that there is much to be learned from them. LUCIFER seems to see through her.

Back to DAVID and MORBIUS. While each had been viewing small holo-images while

conversing, MORBIUS causes the display to fill the room. We see LUCIFER's Pandaemonium, the world which he uses as an arena wherein his experimental hybrids clash and compete. The humanoids are wildly mutated beyond any of Earth's legendary monsters, but there are creatures that could be seen as Werewolves, Hydras, dragons, Chimeras, Centaurs, Satyrs and so on, locked in fierce struggle. This is his true laboratory, the forge wherein his works are tried, and often discarded. Engineers are seen to mop up after conflicts, stunning the creatures, which are then taken away for dissection, then exposure to the black goo for further transformation. It is a savage vista—evolution pushed to extremes by one single-minded intelligence driving the process.

After showing them the glories of the Inferno, LUCIFER states that he has further important information to impart, which is accompanied by the usual Engineer holo-projections. He explains that, while ZEUS was destroyed by his own sacred monsters thus eliminating that threat, there is now a new and worse danger, which is why LUCIFER and his ward races have remained hidden. A truly alien species, THE INVADERS, has entered the periphery of the galaxy. They are crystalline beings that are utterly alien in DNA and consciousness. Attempts at communication have failed. Their biological imperative is to absorb all organic life and they favor planets much like those that are habitable by the Engineers and their children. Thus, they infect planetary systems and inhabit these few, choice worlds, but make them over in a way that favors their own biology, which is quite hostile to the Engineers and their progeny humanoids. LUCIFER shows them a world being devastated. The Earth people are shocked. LUCIFER states that he and his people feel that it may be best to hold the fort in the Inferno and cede the rest of the galaxy to THE INVADERS.

SHAW counters that this passive approach may just buy some time, but that ultimately all humanoids will likely be expunged—and is this any worse than what ZEUS had planned? LUCIFER thinks that it might be possible to use the cargo of soldier bodies currently gestating ULTRA-DEACON XENOMORPHS that YW has brought. LUCIFER had eschewed the deadly XENOMORPH strain in his experiments, but thinks it could perhaps be made to adapt to cleanse worlds of THE INVADERS. YW resists as wants the gestating embryos to remain his property to be brought back to Earth for use in creating bio-weapons. He sees LUCIFER as an adversary rather than an ally.

The Earth folk have time to speak amongst themselves, and none trust LUCIFER. SHAW explains what she learned from ARIEL, and DAVID and MORBIUS look at each other, and DAVID spills the beans about Pandaemonium. He knows that LUCIFER clearly is motivated by trying to create warriors to use in his battle against THE INVADERS and likely he will appropriate them for this purpose. His ward species are now fodder for this coming war so he will likely appropriate them as well. YW wants no part of this, it is not mankind's war, but SHAW sees a bigger picture in which humans can participate and be part of their ancestors in the struggle. YW thinks that, with the technology they've gotten, humans can find their own way to defend themselves, and that these older cultures should have no hold over them—time for the child to become a man and not be under the parent's protection. And so, reluctantly SHAW agrees that perhaps these “gods” do not deserve her faith.

YW, VICKERS, MORBIUS and DAVID plot to escape with one juggernaut and their techno-prizes. VICKERS and YW as part of their plan propose to LUCIFER a test against a forward wave of the invaders with an ULTRA-DEACON that they bring forth from one of the soldiers—not letting SHAW know the source. We regretfully note that the host is MIKE, with MORBIUS coldly serving as midwife. LUCIFER agrees to the experiment. The U-D is bound and put in a cryo-pod, held in stasis for the journey's duration. SHAW has doubts about running, so she begs off at the last moment from this mission and MORBIUS and DAVID exchange a glance, so DAVID remains behind with her.

MORBIUS pilots the ship to the coordinates provided by LUCIFER. They take their juggernaut, the one filled with the impregnated soldiers and downloaded data, to encounter the invaders, since they intend to escape afterwards. They encounter a small crystalline “ship” and close in on it. It does not seem to recognize their presence. Since no port is visible, MORBIUS puts the juggernaut on auto-pilot and he and YW exit an airlock taking the bound Ultra-Deacon with them. They attempt to cut through the “hull” of the ship, but to no avail. MORBIUS has an idea and anchors the U-D, now stirring from its stasis, to the hull. He heaves YW back towards the juggernaut, then takes his cutting torch and wounds the U-D, enraging it while spilling gouts of its molecular acid blood, which cuts its bonds but also penetrates the surface. MORBIUS pushes off after YW while the Ultra-Deacon disappears inside the crystal “craft.”

They watch and wait. Soon there is a weird opening as planes of the asymmetrical object shift in what seems to be both concave and convex ways, expelling a biomass that is rigid. It smashes into the juggernaut and shatters like a rose frozen in liquid nitrogen, and one of the parts is clearly what is left of the face of the U-D, its face a rictus of rage and pain. Where the hole had been is now filled with newly grown crystals, and the ship begins to glow as energy crackles along its surface and it slowly heads towards the juggernaut, which it seems to have now noticed. As MORBIUS begins to move the juggernaut away, they are suddenly surrounded by what seem to be larger “ships.” He notes that the data coming in indicates that these are actually the spacefaring form of the invaders, not vehicles. They surround the juggernaut and move in. MORBIUS finds his juggernaut weaponry to be useless and has been trying to contact LUCIFER for aid.

Surprisingly, the first juggernaut piloted by DAVID swoops in along with several vessels from LUCIFER's fleet to rescue them. LUCIFER had insisted on sending backup—he is no dummy and suspected the escape plot and he wants the cargo for his own purposes. In the conflict, DAVID's juggernaut is being penetrated and compromised, when LUCIFER intervenes, sacrificing some of his smaller saucer ships to rescue DAVID from the shattered ship, allowing MORBIUS' juggernaut to head back to his base ship. They return to the Inferno, less one juggernaut but knowing more about THE INVADERS.

LUCIFER explains that he has examined his guests and only way he can conceive to oppose the invaders is to create a new species genetically designed to do so, using the “black goo” technology to meld the subjects whose qualities he understands must come

together to make a synthesis that can not only repel the invaders, but is destined biologically to rule this galaxy and guard it for time to come. He sees a fate has brought them all together at this crucial time and thus offers purpose to all that has gone before. To attain the needed qualities requires the dissolution and melding of LUCIFER, SHAW, DAVID or MORBIUS, and YW. This transfiguration will make them immortal, far more Godlike than the Engineers had ever attained. LUCIFER explains that their minds will meld and their memories will be intact, but their consciousness would each enhance and expand as factors in one new being, the first of a new species.

SHAW reluctantly finds herself allied with LUCIFER, though as a Catholic it gives her much angst to have taken up with the actual creature who inspired stories of Satan. He points out that in her mythology, even he is a son of God. That begins to bring her around.

The rest agree to participate as this satisfies the needs of each. DAVID decides to be the one to make the change and is transformed by LUCIFER. Pinocchio becomes a real boy. DAVID feels this is another step for him towards empowerment. SHAW had sought God, but found he is dead and that her personal encounter was to be with LUCIFER instead. She is convinced by this powerful, seductive being. To her, union with a son of God to produce an immortal consciousness meant to guide the destiny of life in the galaxy is a form of beatification. YW is guaranteed the immortality he desired when he was solely human, so he is pleased. He will have a front seat view for all eternity. These factors are discussed as they disrobe, are bathed and sanitized in preparation for the melding.

The transformation is done as a ritual, much like the opening of PROMETHEUS when a king was ceremoniously self-sacrificed to build a world. All are robed in gossamer Engineer cloaks, which quiver like jellyfish flesh and are meant to help with the disassembly process. They enter an immense circular-walled room, each spaced around the outside, in niches. They are then paralyzed, though they can still speak and look around and react according to character as they await the flow of goo to begin the transformation, which glows with inner light as it is disgorged from sucker mouths on an oddly live looking tentacled device. The tide of material rises and envelops their bodies, beginning a disintegration process that is not without pain. As the lights come up and triumphant music swells from the score, all changes to dissonance (a corruption musically of the rising horn themed from PROMETHEUS score?) as the Earth folk see that LUCIFER has also included an ULTRA-DEACON to the mix. While they were preparing, LUCIFER had access to their cargo and brought forth another U-D. YW and SHAW struggle in horror, while DAVID looks on in pleased wonder at being melded with not one but two superior species. The process cannot be averted.

They all are engulfed and dissolved and the liquid swirls into a vortex, which whirls like a galaxy (as above, so below) until it congeals into what appears to be a cocoon, with some characteristics of an alien egg made of translucent shell-like material. The petals atop pull back and something, slime-covered, begins emerging.

Outside the chamber, VICKERS and MORBIUS wait as the portal opens. They are aghast. We see a strange new being emerge from the chamber—dark, feral, immensely

intelligent and beautiful—LUCIFER the light bearer has become SATAN the adversary, ready to lead the battle to hold the galaxy for his own kind. Thus SHAW's "virgin birth" overseen by DAVID as an annunciating angel has ultimately lead to what will be the savior of their universe. MORBIUS wryly makes this observation to VICKERS.

SATAN dismisses these two—he has great works ahead in stopping the invasion. He can now clone himself to make his infernal hosts, and he says he might be able to make further improvements—always the perfectionist. But before they go, he tells VICKERS that the conflict will take millennia. He thus tasks humanity to work to terra-form as many suitable worlds as possible, since these must be ready for the emergence from the Inferno of his ward species as this galaxy is consolidated for the children of the Engineers. They are welcome to the embryos and data—these might be used by humanity to prepare for the coming tide of THE INVADERS, should LUCIFER fail. But he cautions them to learn from the errors of his own people. Humans too may in time be as gods.

VICKERS and MORBIUS take the surviving juggernaut and MORBIUS tries to navigate it back to Earth. He observes through the ships instruments the remaining impregnated replicant soldiers in the cargo hold and discovers, strangely, that they have become the familiar XENOMORPH EGGS—an unexpected development but part of the programmed evolution of this rabid biology. He leaves them in stasis. But the juggernaut refuses to go to Earth and instead it brings them back to the system of LV 223 where it seems to "die." Its artificial intelligence has a homing instinct built-in that could not be swayed.

They discover that the Ares survived the destruction of LV 223, a bit battered, but functional. However, the only way to enter the Ares is to jump through the vacuum of space. That means that they must leave behind the collected Engineer data as well as the XENOMORPH EGGS. MORBIUS is quite powerful, and replicant VICKERS has more than human stamina. Before leaving the juggernaut, MORBIUS disappears and VICKERS finds him making some adjustments a the console. Just before he and Vickers make their jump (VICKERS is in MORBIUS' arms), she asks him what he is up to and he says "Just some finishing touches." You can see that she fears that he might just let her go, but as we might recall, YW in his ardor programmed MORBIUS to preserve VICKERS, which is why he saved her from her pod—a built-in compulsion.

They survive the ordeal of the brief vacuum. Together, they set the Ares to leave the juggernaut and begin heading back home at last. VICKERS enters cryo-stasis while MORBIUS monitors the ship, much as the journey began. He examines her and notes that YW's TWINS are growing in her womb—the first children born of replicants. He decides to keep her replicant nature confidential, as such a form of possible immortality must be saved for proper individuals.

MORBIUS enters VICKERS' dreams (as DAVID had done to SHAW). He wipes her mind of much of what happened, as well as her true nature, so that she can pursue her destiny as corporate matriarch. He explains that one of her first duties will be the acquisition of and merger with Yutani munitions. Space has shown itself to be dangerous, and so military force must coexist with scientific effort as humans move out into deeper

space. He also implants the idea in VICKERS' mind that there will be an important destiny for the twins, little LAWRENCE and ALTAIRA, who will guide the corporation after her death under the tutelage of their "uncle" MORBIUS. He emphasizes the task SATAN gave her: to continue terraforming, but not from whom it originated. He also gives her YW's final assignment (which is also his own): to enrich the coming WEYLAND-YUTANI corporation by seeking out Engineer tech wherever it might be found. The war is on the fringe of the galaxy—so far away it will be millennia before the human solar system or even nearby explorations of stars could be affected. And that would only happen should SATAN fail. MORBIUS left the juggernaut and intends one day to reclaim that prize, and the corporation will be directed to make it so in time. MORBIUS is patient. He wishes her sweet dreams.

MORBIUS's own task is to make certain that this programming will be part of all human ships' guiding computers for generations to come. Their electronic minds of exceeding sophistication are authored by MORBIUS, who as part of their programming will live on as a guiding but hidden interior force, knowing more than the humans and thus in a way their "father." That is his concept for his progeny, and immortality. Like the MORBIUS of FORBIDDEN PLANET, he has tinkered together a very potent electronic device that will do his bidding. He is satisfied. The future appears to be in his capable hand.

CODA

Back at the slag heap that is LV 223, in the final juggernaut the last SERAPHIM ENGINEER revives due to MORBIUS' tinkering. He exits his stasis tube, tossing aside the spent facehugger that had been lying on his chest plate with only a brief glance. He dials up the orrery to target the Ares as it limps home. Then he summons up the controlling throne and enters it, uniting himself with the control system, elephant helmet binding him in place. And we see on the ship as it becomes active the XENOMORPH EGGS so familiar to us from the original ALIEN where MORBIUS has placed them in the hold, suspended and protected by an energy barrier. As the engines whine, readying for pursuit, a chest burster shears its way through the Engineer's rib cage and in his dying paroxysms, the ship spirals out of control, heading towards LV 426, where it crashes to await discovery by the crew of the Nostromo some years in the future. They will be guided by their computer called "Mother" a form of "spouse" following her prime directive, ostensibly as set by VICKERS but in reality the bidding of its father, MORBIUS.

The juggernaut's warning beacon, set by MORBIUS, begins its lonely signaling. We pull back and see that familiar ringed world with its lonely moons, and Goldsmith's original cue with the yearning solo trumpet melody to accompany this image that opened ALIEN.

Perhaps a final title, typed in as were the ones in the original film:

"In space, no one can hear you dream..." It fades to invisibility.

END