

VAMPIRE QUEEN OF MARS

a play by
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(Third draft)

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SCENE 1

SPACECRAFT LAUNCH FACILITY/SPACESHIP

(During pre-show, a voice over the speakers gives a blast-off countdown every 5 minutes))

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

X-minus 30 minutes.
(etc.)

(At the top of the show the curtain is closed. A microphone on a stand is in front of it. DR. JOHN ECKMANN, a dignified scientist, steps to the mic and addresses the audience. The countdown continues)

ECKMANN

Friends, welcome tonight to the culmination of 5 years of hard work on an enterprise whose secrecy has rivaled the Manhattan Project. It's so fitting that you, the scientists and technicians, my collaborators and conspirators on this -- some would say, crazy -- endeavor, that you be here tonight. Some of you still don't know the full story. And before I go on, let me remind you that whatever happens tonight, never happened. Not until the powers that be say so.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

X-minus 15 minutes.

ECKMANN

I'll be brief. As you know, we astronomers started receiving strange radio signals from the planet Mars shortly after the end of the war, at the dawn of the atomic age. At first, we thought them to be natural and random, but then a pattern emerged that led us to conclude they were of intelligent origin. We believe them to be distress signals. Long story short, as a result, tonight, in exactly...

(looks at his watch)

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

X-minus 10 minutes.

ECKMANN

Ten minutes...We will launch the very first manned rocket into space. 35 million miles into space. To Mars.

(The curtain opens revealing the cockpit of a rocketship, semicircular, dominated by a view screen in the center on which we see video of a spaceship ready for take-off [the spaceship is a model]. There are assorted panels of buttons, gauges and monitors, and rolling office chairs are the crews' seats. The crew of four are making final preparations. They are COMMANDER CLARK GARRISON, the pilot, a typical 1950s movie hero; CAPT. RUSS BAXTER, co-pilot and navigator, in his 20s; PROF. MARLON ZANDER, middle-aged, scientific head of the expedition; and DR. ELLEN CHAMBERS, about 30, Zander's assistant, an astronomer and physicist)

ECKMANN

Commanding Mars Expedition One is Commander Clark Garrison --
 (GARRISON, talking with
 BAXTER, nods to the audience)
 -- the highest scoring flying ace of World War II. A true American hero.

GARRISON

(doesn't like being called
 hero)
 Thank you, Dr. Eckmann, but it's not always easy being a hero.

ECKMANN

His co-pilot and engineer, Captain Russ Baxter.

BAXTER

The first into space! I just wish my dad had lived to see this.

(looking to heaven)

Love ya, dad.

ECKMANN

I'm sure he's there with you, Captain.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

X-minus 5 minutes.

ECKMANN

The scientific head of the expedition and inventor of its propulsion system, Professor Marlon Zander.

(ZANDER and ELLEN have been talking)

ZANDER

In my opinion, these signals indicate intelligent life. We must investigate. This is what a man of science lives for. Think of the possibilities -- contact with the civilization of another planet.

ELLEN

But what if they're not friendly?

ECKMANN

And Dr. Ellen Chambers, navigator, astrophysicist, and medic, as well as being Prof. Zander's assistant.

ZANDER

All the more reason to investigate.

ELLEN

Or maybe we should leave well enough alone.

GARRISON

It's a little late to back out, Dr. Chambers.

ELLEN

I'm not backing out. Just imagining possibilities.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

X-minus 2 minutes.

GARRISON

Take off positions. Strap in.

ECKMANN

These are the brave pioneers we are shooting into space, into the heavens, to uncover the greatest mystery in the universe. Are we alone.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

X-minus 1 minute --

ECKMANN

God go with you.

(He exits with his microphone & stand. The SOUND of engines start, the ship vibrates.)

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)
 X-minus 5... 4... 3... 2...1...

BAXTER
 Here we go!

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)
 Zero!

(The engines roar. On the view screen is video of the take off through flames and clouds. The crew grimace and wriggle in their seats, faces distorted by g-forces. Finally, the engines shut down and the flames seen through the view screen stop and are replaced by stars. The crew start to unbuckle and get to work)

BAXTER
 Wow! That was a better ride than the Cyclone at Coney Island.

ZANDER
 Everyone all right? Ellen?

ELLEN
 Still... catching... my breath.

GARRISON
 (checking gauges)
 Automatic pilot okay.

ZANDER
 Fuel consumption normal.

GARRISON
 Altitude?

ELLEN
 196 miles.

BAXTER
 Are we really in space?

ZANDER
 See for yourself.

(He turns a knob and the view screen switches to a shot of the Earth receding)

BAXTER

I'll be darned. It really is round.

ELLEN

We're the first people to see the Earth from outer space.

GARRISON

Snap to it! We've got a spaceship to fly!

(ELLEN takes a compact and
comb from a desk drawer
and combs her hair)

GARRISON

Who're you making yourself pretty for? The man in the moon?

(ELLEN moves closer, intimate)

ELLEN

You're my "man in the moon," Clark. You know that.

GARRISON

Now, Ellen, we agreed to put all that on hold.

ELLEN

For a whole year?

(The radio crackles)

ECKMANN (V.O.)

Columbus Base to Mars Expedition. Columbus Base to Mars Expedition. Come in. Over.

GARRISON

(into radio)

Mars Expedition here, Dr. Eckmann. Currently saying good-bye to the Stratosphere. Everything appears in order. Over.

ECKMANN (V.O.)

Fantastic! Congratulations, men -- and Dr. Chambers, too. The world is watching you. Our hearts and prayers go with you. Over.

(ZANDER takes the microphone)

ZANDER

John, my old friend, we did it. Didn't we?

ECKMANN (V.O.)

No, Marlon, you did it. Your perseverance, your dedication.

ZANDER

Thank you, John. It's my baby, but we all gave birth to it.

ECKMANN (V.O.)

And now, on to --

Mars.

ZANDER

Give my best to the Martians.

ECKMANN (V.O.)

Will do. Over and out.

ZANDER

(He switches off the microphone.)

BAXTER

What do you think the Martians will be like? Little green men?

GARRISON

Who knows?

ELLEN

Will they be human?

ZANDER

I hardly think that's possible.

BAXTER

I wonder how far along they are on the evolutionary ladder.

ELLEN

They might be more intelligent than us.

GARRISON

I'm more concerned with what they are going to think of us.

ELLEN

What do you mean?

GARRISON

Will they see us as invaders?

ELLEN

They've been sending distress signals. They must be friendly.

GARRISON

Well, just in case they aren't --

(GARRISON reaches into a compartment and takes out a classic western Colt 45 6-shooter in a fancy, leather holster)

ELLEN

You brought your gun? Your six shooter? Are you Roy Rogers?

ZANDER
Probably natural. A valley or mountain range, or an ancient, dry riverbed, but I see no sign of surface water.

ELLEN
But they could be man-made.

BAXTER
Well, not man made.

ELLEN
Martian made.

ZANDER
Speaking of Martians -- Ellen, check the signal.

(ELLEN turns knobs and we hear a garbled signal)

ELLEN
Loud and clear.

ZANDER
This close we should be able to better pinpoint its origin.

(ELLEN turns more knobs)

ELLEN
Just south of that extinct volcano.

GARRISON
Lock in the coordinates. We'll land on the next orbit.

(Suddenly, the signal is drowned out by static. On the view screen meteorites flash by [pre-recorded video with styrofoam-popcorn meteorites]. Lights flash)

BAXTER
What's that?

ELLEN
Meteor shower!

GARRISON
Everybody strap in!

ZANDER
What are you going to do?

GARRISON
Get out of their way.

ELLEN
Hurry. If one of them hits us --

(A thud and a warning buzzer sounds)

ELLEN
What was that?

GARRISON
One of them hit us.
(to BAXTER)
Thrusters 100 percent. Go!

(GARRISON and BAXTER operate controls. We hear the roar of engines. They all lean simultaneously in their chairs, reacting to g-forces for several seconds. The meteorite storm passes. GARRISON pulls back on the throttles)

ELLEN
Are we still in one piece?

GARRISON
All right, everyone, get it together. Where did that meteorite strike?

BAXTER
(checking meters)
The starboard fin. About a fist-size hole.

GARRISON
It didn't hit the reserve fuel tank?

BAXTER
Doesn't look like it.

ZANDER
If it had, we wouldn't be here. We were lucky. That hole shouldn't affect the stability of the rocket.

ELLEN
But we must have burned a lot of fuel in that maneuver.

GARRISON
We did. We can't wait for the next orbit to land. We need to set this crate onto terra firma pronto.

ELLEN
Maybe we should abort the mission.

ZANDER

No, we mustn't. After all the work we've put into this? After four months in outer space? We must land. This is Mars, for God's sake.

ELLEN

But if we use the fuel needed for landing, will we still have enough to get home?

ZANDER

Maybe.

GARRISON

I like those odds. Ellen, reset the course.

ELLEN

Already done.

GARRISON

Altitude?

BAXTER

149 miles.

GARRISON

Ready for reverse thrust.

BAXTER

Ready.

GARRISON

Buckle up, we're taking her in. Thrusters go!

(GARRISON and BAXTER push forward on levers and the engines roar. The curtain closes)

SCENE 3

THE SURFACE OF MARS

(Weird rock formations against a reddish sky. A lizard-like creature called a Repton, walking on two legs and carrying a crude spear, peeks over the rocks, then timidly walks in. His name is SQUEAK because that is the sound he makes when speaking. He pauses to scratch his butt and pick his nose, then is startled to hear human voices o.s. He hides behind rocks. GARRISON, BAXTER, ZANDER and ELLEN enter. They wear flight suits and helmets equipped with oxygen masks hooked to small tanks on their backs. GARRISON's Colt 45 is strapped to his waist in its fancy holster. ELLEN carries a radio tracking device. ZANDER carries a Geiger counter. As they talk, SQUEAK peeks around rocks and watches)

BAXTER

These rock formations are amazing.

ELLEN

Probably carved by water. Professor Zander, could we be standing in a Martian-made canal?

ZANDER

Hard to tell. Erosion and sand storms have obscured most of it. It could just be a riverbed.

GARRISON

But it does seem to stretch in a straight line all the way to the horizon.

BAXTER

So where did all the water go?

ZANDER

The Geiger counter is showing high background radiation. Something catastrophic happened here, probably a long time ago.

GARRISON
Ellen, which direction is the signal coming from?

ELLEN
(checks her device)
Over that ridge.

(She points upstage toward
rock formations, just as
SQUEAK sticks his head up.
He immediately ducks back
down)

ELLEN
What was that?

GARRISON
What?

ELLEN
There's something up there.

(They all look. SQUEAK
sticks his head up again
and utters a loud squeak,
then ducks again)

BAXTER
What the --

(GARRISON reaches for the
pistol)

ELLEN
Put the gun away, Clark. He seems harmless enough.

(GARRISON holsters the gun.
ELLEN steps toward SQUEAK)

ELLEN
(as if talking to a puppy)
Hello.

(SQUEAK sticks his head up
again, curious)

ELLEN
Hi, there. What's your name?

GARRISON
Careful, Ellen.

(SQUEAK cautiously moves
forward)

ELLEN

He wants to be friends.

ZANDER

This can't be the creature that sent the signal. It's too primitive.

(ELLEN is getting closer to SQUEAK)

ELLEN

Did you call? Was that you?

(Suddenly SQUEAK senses something in the air, then becomes very agitated and makes lots of noise)

ELLEN

What did I do?

GARRISON

Ellen, get back.

(A giant dinosaur sticks its head up from behind a rock [actually a hand puppet projected on the cyc]. The dinosaur roars, SQUEAK screams in terror, throws his staff down, and hides behind a rock)

ZANDER

Look out!

BAXTER

What the --!

(BAXTER picks up Squeak's staff and pokes at the dinosaur. GARRISON pulls out his 6-shooter and fires two shots, then it jams)

GARRISON

My gun's jammed.

(BAXTER gets too close)

ZANDER

Baxter, watch out!

(The dinosaur lunges at BAXTER and appears to knock the spear from his hands. BAXTER stumbles and falls, injuring his hand. The dinosaur lunges at him again and he screams. GARRISON is still trying to unjam his gun. In the nick of time, three Martian warrior women rush on -- ZEMA, PANDA, and their leader APHRODISIA, in her mid-20s. Their costumes are a combination of Wonder Woman and ancient Egypt filtered through a leather/Goth look. APHRODISIA swings a short sword. ZEMA and PANDA have spears with forked tips that act like cattle prods and give off an electrical charge. They attack the dinosaur, swinging sword and poking spears)

ELLEN

Who are they?

ZANDER

The Martians, I presume.

(With a mighty roar, a 2nd dinosaur puppet head pops up next to the first and also lunges at the people. GARRISON gets his gun unjammed and fires it once at the dinosaurs, startling them. The dinosaurs seem to notice each other for the first time and attack each other. Fighting, they drop out of sight. Their roars recede into the background. The Earthlings and the Martians watch one another nervously. GARRISON holsters his gun. BAXTER is sitting up, nursing a bloody hand)

GARRISON

Thank you, whoever you are?

APHRODISIA
 Are you... men?

ELLEN
 You speak our language.

APHRODISIA
 No. You speak our language.

ZANDER
 How's that?

APHRODISIA
 Queen Voluptua will explain it to you. Come, she has been expecting you.

GARRISON
 Expecting us?

APHRODISIA
 Of course... You are from Earth, right?

GARRISON
 Yes, I'm Commander Clark Garrison, United States Air Force, Commander of Mars Expedition One.

APHRODISIA
 I have no idea what all that means. I am Aphrodisia.

BAXTER
 (dazzled by her)
 You sure are.

APHRODISIA
 What?

ZANDER
 You're not wearing oxygen masks. Is this air breathable?

APHRODISIA
 For us. Not for you.

ZANDER
 (to the others)
 Leave the masks on.

APHRODISIA
 (indicates Garrison's gun)
 What is that?

(GARRISON takes the gun out of its holster)

GARRISON
 It's a fire arm, a gun. Do you have guns?

(APHRODISIA shakes her head)

GARRISON
Oh, well, then you wouldn't understand.

(APHRODISIA reaches for it)

APHRODISIA
Let me see.

GARRISON
It's very dangerous. If you don't know what you're doing...

(ZEMA and PANDA point their spears at GARRISON as APHRODISIA signals for him to give her the gun)

ELLEN
Clark, be careful.

(GARRISON hands APHRODISIA the gun)

GARRISON
Just don't pull the trigger. You could kill someone.

(She aims the gun at a rock and fires. We hear a ricochet. The Earthlings all duck but the Martians are amused)

APHRODISIA
Very clever.
(shoves gun in her belt)
The Queen will want to see it.

GARRISON
Sorry, ma'am, but the gun has to stay with me. You see, it's personal. We have a bond. She went with me through the battles of Midway and the Solomon Islands...
(realizes she is staring at him unwaveringly)
If you promise to give it back. Remember, don't pull the trigger. Again.

APHRODISIA
Come. Let's go.

(APHRODISIA is standing next to BAXTER, who is nursing his injured hand)

APHRODISIA

Are you injured?

BAXTER

Oh, it's just a scratch. Thank you for saving my life.

APHRODISIA

Let me see.

(She helps him to his feet,
then holds his hand)

BAXTER

Oh, it's nothi--

APHRODISIA

I'll fix it.

(She licks the wound, trying
to get every drop of blood)

BAXTER

Oh! What! What're you-- Oh, my -- OH!... Ouch.
(yanks hand away)
That's enough, thanks.

APHRODISIA

Tasty.

(ZEMA discovers SQUEAK hiding
behind a rock and prods
him out. SQUEAK squeaks
in terrified submission)

ZEMA

Aphrodisia, look! Come out of there! Come on!

(APHRODISIA looks SQUEAK
over as ZEMA and PANDA
bind his wrists)

APHRODISIA

Good. Bring it along.

(SQUEAK panics, screams,
struggles. ZEMA and PANDA
prod him their spears. As
APHRODISIA leads them all
out, ELLEN sidles up to
GARRISON)

ELLEN

(sarcastic whisper)
Queen Voluptua?!

(GARRISON shushes her)

BAXTER

Am I the only one who feels that this is not quite what I was expecting?

ZANDER

But infinitely more interesting.

(They all exit. Blackout)

SCENE 4

QUEEN'S THRONE ROOM

(Deep within a massive cavern in the side of an extinct volcano, the various rooms and chambers have been carved out of volcanic rock. Projected video or slides help create an illusion of depth. The CMP stage will be divided into two distinct areas -- the Throne Room and the Well Grotto. They are separated by two or three stalagmite-like rocks which can also be moved to create other locations. For the Throne Room section, the decor is a cross between H.R. Geiger and pulp sci-if magazine covers -- creepy, gaudy and sexy. The throne is atop a 3-foot riser. THREE MARTIAN WOMEN, led by HIGH PRIESTESS SALACIA, perform a ceremonial modern dance accompanied by exotic music or a Martian bongo player. SALACIA carries a long, elaborate bone staff. APHRODISIA leads the rocket crew in. They stop and watch the dance. APHRODISIA signals ZEMA and PANDA to take SQUEAK away)

APHRODISIA

Zema, Panda, you know what to do with that.

(They nod and take SQUEAK
out, squawking)

APHRODISIA

(to the crew)

You can remove your breathing equipment. There is sufficient
oxygen here in the caves.

GARRISON

I'll go first.

(He removes his oxygen mask
and breathes deeply)

GARRISON

That's air all right.

(The others removes their
masks)

ELLEN

I wonder if this ceremony is for us.

(The dance culminates with
QUEEN VOLUPTUA appearing
in a puff of smoke.
Standing on the riser, she
towers over them all. She
is beautiful, exotic,
hypnotic, and wears a unique
crown. APHRODISIA and all
the Martian women bow; the
rocket crew nod their heads
awkwardly. Trailing behind
VOLUPTUA on a long leash
is DORK, a male. Thin and
pale, he is Voluptua's
slave, always keeps his
head below hers, and has a
small spigot in his wrist
from which VOLUPTUA takes
blood. He scratches
himself a lot, picks his
teeth, and silently reacts
to the goings-on as he
trails several feet behind
VOLUPTUA wherever she goes)

APHRODISIA

(introducing them)

Queen Voluptua... the Earthlings.

GARRISON

(awkwardly)

We're, uh, honored... your... your...

Majesty. ELLEN

Majesty. GARRISON

(ZANDER excitedly steps toward VOLUPTUA)

Your Majesty, this is all so -- ZANDER

(SALACIA leaps between ZANDER and VOLUPTUA, threatening with her staff)

Stop! No one approaches the queen without permission. SALACIA

I'm sorry. I don't know your protocol. I'm very sorry. ZANDER

That's all right, Salacia. They mean no harm. VOLUPTUA

(She steps to ZANDER and stares intensely into his eyes for a moment, then moves on to GARRISON and does the same, then to BAXTER)

I, uh -- BAXTER

(VOLUPTUA puts her finger to his lips, silencing him, then moves back to GARRISON. Their eyes lock, their stares growing in intensity as if she's trying to read his mind and he's trying to resist, along with intense flirtation. ELLEN steps between them)

Hey, just a minute here! ELLEN

It's all right, Ellen. GARRISON

(VOLUPTUA smiles, returns to her throne and sits)

ELLEN
 (whispers to GARRISON)
 What was that all about?

GARRISON
 (whispers)
 I think she was trying to invade my mind.

VOLUPTUA
 Female, step forward.

(ELLEN steps forward)

ELLEN
 Dr. Ellen Chambers, Your Majesty. We --

VOLUPTUA
 You're from Earth?

GARRISON
 Yes, we are, and --

VOLUPTUA
 I am speaking to the female.
 (To ELLEN)
 Who is this man?

ELLEN
 He's the leader of our expedition, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA
 Him? He's the leader?

ELLEN
 Yes, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA
 You are not the leader?

ELLEN
 No. He is, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA
 Enough with this "Your Majesty" nonsense. I am to be called "she who reigns forever."

ELLEN
 Yes... "she who reigns forever."

VOLUPTUA
 (to SALACIA)
 Hmm. That does seem a little long. Salacia?

SALACIA

Yes, my Queen. I see your point. If you say them back to back --
 "She who reigns forever," "Your Majesty."

VOLUPTUA

Let's try "Your Majesty" for awhile. It sounds...

SALACIA

Majestic.

VOLUPTUA

You took the word right out of my mouth.

(to ELLEN)

Is the male of the species usually the leader in your society?

ELLEN

I'm afraid so.

VOLUPTUA

Curious.

(to the whole crew)

We have much to learn of each other's civilizations.

ZANDER

That's exactly why we're here, you're--

(Voluptua raises her hand
 to stop him)

VOLUPTUA

You are?

ZANDER

Professor Marlon Zander. I'm a scientist. I designed the
 propulsion system that brought us here.

VOLUPTUA

Did you now?

ZANDER

On Earth we've been picking up strange radio signals coming from
 Mars.

VOLUPTUA

Ah. You see, Salacia, it worked.

SALACIA

I wasn't sure it would. The equipment was so old. We weren't
 sure--

ZANDER

Those signals, then, came from you?

VOLUPTUA

Yes. A cry for help, I'm afraid.

Help?
 GARRISON

We are a very old civilization and now we are dying.
 VOLUPTUA

From what?
 ZANDER

The folly of our scientists. All men, of course.
 VOLUPTUA

(She angrily yanks on DORK's leash. He chokes)

Your Majesty, may I ask, how do you come to speak English?
 ZANDER

Our radio equipment is quite ancient and unreliable, but we have been able to hear many of your broadcasts for years. "Fibber McGee and Molly."
 VOLUPTUA

I like Baby Snooks.
 SALACIA

And as a result, we have learned several of your Earth languages. We have a good ear for languages.
 (to ELLEN)
 Is that the right term -- "good ear"?
 VOLUPTUA

Yes.
 ELLEN

Your Majesty, we detected high levels of radiation on your planet's surface.
 ZANDER

Centuries of warfare with the surface dwellers.
 VOLUPTUA

That lizard guy?
 GARRISON

No, not the Reptons. They're a primitive species. We farm them.
 SALACIA

(introducing)
 My High Priestess, Salacia, Bearer of Knowledge.
 VOLUPTUA

SALACIA

The Deros, the surface dwellers, were a highly advanced, male-dominated race that we ruled this planet with for thousands of years. But they got greedy, ambitious; they wanted to enslave us, make us subservient to them.

VOLUPTUA

(laughs)

What were they thinking?

SALACIA

The war lasted for 200 years and, as it went on, the weapons on both sides got more powerful and destructive. Mars used to be beautiful, forests, lakes, rivers. You see what it is now. Our atmosphere is bleeding away. Resources are becoming depleted. Our population is dying off. What you see before you are all that remain.

VOLUPTUA

So you see why we need help.

ZANDER

That's why we're here, Your Majesty.

(VOLUPTUA appears to be getting weaker rapidly)

SALACIA

(concerned)

My Queen.

(VOLUPTUA holds up her hand, nods that she is okay)

VOLUPTUA

But for now, rest, refresh yourselves. Later we will discuss this further.

APHRODISIA

My Queen, the Earth people brought with them a powerful weapon.

(She holds up the pistol, her finger on the trigger)

VOLUPTUA

Oh?

GARRISON

Don't pull the trigger.

APHRODISIA

It makes a loud noise and ejects a small pebble.

VOLUPTUA

Let me see.

GARRISON

Your Highness, please be careful.

(APHRODISIA hands VOLUPTUA the gun. She looks down the barrel)

GARRISON

No, Your Majesty!

(As VOLUPTUA turns the gun away from herself it goes off. A MARTIAN WOMAN is hit and falls. SALACIA rushes to her)

ELLEN

Oh, no!

GARRISON

Your Majesty, I'm so sorry. I tried to warn you.

SALACIA

My Queen, Liliana is dead.

VOLUPTUA

Really?

ZEMA

She has a hole in her head.

VOLUPTUA

Take her away. Harvest her essence.

(SALACIA signs for TWO MARTIAN WOMEN to take the body away. VOLUPTUA looks at the gun)

VOLUPTUA

This requires further study. I'll hang onto it for now.

GARRISON

But, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA

I am tired. Aphrodisia, show our guests to their quarters.

APHRODISIA

Quarters? We don't have guest quarters, my Queen. When have we ever had guests?

VOLUPTUA

We have them now. Give them your quarters.

APHRODISIA

Yes, my Queen.
 (to the crew)
 Follow me.

GARRISON

Thank you, Your Majesty. We look forward to helping you any way we can.

VOLUPTUA

Of course you do.

GARRISON

And I'm so sorry about --

VOLUPTUA

Tragedies happen. Now, if you would leave.

(The crew follow APHRODISIA out. VOLUPTUA tucks the gun in the cushions of her throne, then tugs on DORK's leash)

VOLUPTUA

Dork!

(DORK holds a goblet under his wrist, turns the spigot and fills the goblet with his blood, then hands the goblet to VOLUPTUA. She drinks voraciously, regaining strength, then wipes her bloody mouth and hands the goblet back to DORK)

VOLUPTUA

More.

(Blackout)

SCENE 5

APHRODISIA'S CHAMBER (DOWNSTAGE LEFT APRON)

(Sparsely furnished; a stone slab for a bed, a bench. APHRODISIA leads the crew in)

APHRODISIA

You may rest here. You will be brought food and water.

(As they talk, the crew
remove their oxygen tanks
and masks and lay them on
a bench)

ELLEN

So there is still water on Mars? We couldn't see any on the
surface.

APHRODISIA

There is a vast underground ocean beneath us.

ZANDER

We have so many questions. Where are your men?

APHRODISIA

I must go. The queen will answer your questions soon. And she
will have many to ask you, as well.

(As she starts to go, BAXTER
catches up to her)

BAXTER

Uh, say, Aphrodisia.

APHRODISIA

Yes, Baxter.

BAXTER

Please, you can call me Russ.

APHRODISIA

I heard your companions call you Baxter.

BAXTER

Russ Baxter, that's my name. My friends call me Russ.

APHRODISIA

We are not friends, Russ.

BAXTER

Yeah, well, maybe we could do something about that. I was
wondering if... Well, what do you all do for a night life around
here?

APHRODISIA

Night life?

BAXTER

You know, when you're off duty. You want to relax...

APHRODISIA

I don't understand. I must go. What is it you are trying to
say?

BAXTER

Well, I'd really love to learn more about you and your people. I thought maybe you could show me around town later.

APHRODISIA

Show you around town.

BAXTER

Yeah. Introduce me to your friends. Take me to your favorite watering hole.

APHRODISIA

Watering hole.

BAXTER

Yeah. Whaddaya say? In the name of diplomacy between our peoples.

APHRODISIA

Yes. Fine. Later.

(She quickly leaves)

BAXTER

Later!

(to the others)

Whoa! I got a date!

ELLEN

You are a fast worker, Russ.

GARRISON

Watch yourself, Captain. We don't know what kind of moral standards these people live by. Let's not create an interplanetary incident. Behave yourself.

BAXTER

Commander, I've been cooped up in a spaceship for four months sleeping in the same room with a beautiful woman I couldn't touch.

ELLEN

(offended yet flattered)

Russ!... Thank you, I think.

ZANDER

Speaking of moral standards, was anyone else disturbed by the guy on the leash?

ELLEN

Yes, he was the only male we saw.

ZANDER

They might be a matriarchal society. We have the legends of the Amazons. If this society originated on Earth, perhaps there's a correlation.

GARRISON

He was clearly a slave.

ELLEN

More like a lapdog that you abuse.

ZANDER

Something doesn't seem all together right here.

GARRISON

The queen said her civilization is dying. We need to find out what's happening. If it's really dying, how much time have they got.

ELLEN

I'm not sure they're being especially forthcoming with their information.

BAXTER

And how many of them are there?

GARRISON

Maybe that's some info you can hit up your new girlfriend for.

BAXTER

All in the name of diplomacy.

(ZEMA and PANDA enter with trays with water goblets and food, which they set on a ledge)

ZEMA

Something to eat and drink?

ELLEN

Thank you.

(They take goblets and drink)

ELLEN

That tastes good.

(GARRISON holds up a piece of food)

GARRISON

What is this?

PANDA

Fish.

ZANDER

From the underground ocean?

Yes. PANDA

They don't have any eyes. GARRISON

They don't need any. They live their entire lives in total darkness. PANDA

(APHRODISIA enters)

The queen will see Dr. Chambers now. APHRODISIA

Oh. Okay. (surprised) ELLEN

Just Dr. Chambers? ZANDER

Yes. Only Dr. Chambers. APHRODISIA

I should come along to. I am the leader of -- GARRISON

No, Commander Garrison. Dr. Chambers only. Your time will come. APHRODISIA

It's okay. I'll come. ELLEN

Find out what you can. (whispers to her) GARRISON

Zema, Panda, take Dr. Chambers to the queen. APHRODISIA

(ZEMA and PANDA lead ELLEN out. APHRODISIA looks at BAXTER.)

I shall take you to the watering hole now. APHRODISIA

Oh, great, terrific. BAXTER

(to GARRISON and ZANDER)

Well, wish me luck.

Be careful. ZANDER

GARRISON

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

(APHRODISIA leads BAXTER out. GARRISON and ZANDER look at each other and shrug, then GARRISON takes a piece of fish, studies it a moment, and takes a bite -- and spits it out. Blackout)

SCENE 6

QUEEN'S THRONE ROOM

(VOLUPTUA is waiting. ZEMA and PANDA lead ELLEN in. DORK, curled up on the floor next to throne, sits up to see who's entering. Throughout, he listens to the conversation and makes faces and mumbles in reaction)

VOLUPTUA

Please come in, Dr. Chambers.

(ELLEN bows and approaches. ZEMA and PANDA exit)

ELLEN

Please call me Ellen, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA

As you wish, Ellen. Have a seat.

(She indicates a bench next to a table on which are two goblets. ELLEN sits)

VOLUPTUA

Would you like something to drink? I have water, and... nourishment.

ELLEN

I am thirsty.

(looks into one of the goblets)

Tomato juice?

VOLUPTUA

Is that what you call it?

(ELLEN take as mouthful,
freezes, tries to smile,
finally can't take it any
longer and spits it back
into the goblet, coughing.
She puts the goblet back
on the table)

ELLEN

It's not tomato juice.

VOLUPTUA

It's what we take for nourishment. When we can get it. Would you like some more?

ELLEN

No, thank you. It's probably an acquired taste.
(reaches for 2nd goblet)

If I could have some water.
(looks in the goblet)

This is water?

VOLUPTUA

Yes.

(ELLEN drinks the water,
trying to wash the taste
away)

VOLUPTUA

Ellen, I wanted you here alone because we must discuss your men.

ELLEN

(surprised)

My men?

VOLUPTUA

Are Earth men healthy? Strong? Are they good breeders?

ELLEN

Oh, well... yes... I believe so.

VOLUPTUA

Our men were weak.

ELLEN

Where are your men?

(indicates DORK)

I've only seen this one... That is a man, isn't it?

VOLUPTUA

Yes. That is a man. The men are our slave class. Good only for breeding, feeding and making machines work, but when allowed to rule they always ruin things. Do they ruin things on your planet as well?

Sometimes, I'm afraid. ELLEN
 So it's universal. VOLUPTUA
 But not all of them. ELLEN
 Are your rulers male? VOLUPTUA
 Most of them. ELLEN
 Ah, you see. Be careful of the men. We treated them well but they revolted, joined the enemy. VOLUPTUA
 The Deros? ELLEN
 Yes. The revolt failed, of course. Most of the men died. Some were executed. The remainder had all been exposed to cosmic rays, which made them unable to breed. They withered and died. But our men had always been weak, not healthy and strong -- like your Commander Garrison. VOLUPTUA
 How many men do you have left? ELLEN
 Just Dork. He's our last. VOLUPTUA
 That's your last man? ELLEN
 Sad, isn't it? And he's not in good shape. His essence is almost drained. Is Commander Garrison your man? VOLUPTUA
 (surprised) ELLEN
 My man? Well, we dated a few times, but we put any romance on hold for the duration of this expedition.
 Romance? VOLUPTUA
 I mean, we're not really a couple. We haven't even -- you know. So it's not like we're in a relationship -- but we do have an understanding. ELLEN

VOLUPTUA

Relationship... Romance... I have much to learn about you humans.

ELLEN

You brought us here -- your signals. Your race is dying? How can we help?

VOLUPTUA

You must take us back to Earth with you.

ELLEN

(beat)

I'm not sure that would be possible. The added weight. It affects the fuel ratio.

VOLUPTUA

Are you not serious about wanting to help?

ELLEN

Yes, Your Majesty. That's why we're here. But we don't have enough fuel to take you with us. I'll tell you what we will do -- what Earth will do --. Once we tell them about you, they will send more rockets to rescue you.

VOLUPTUA

How long would that take?

ELLEN

Well, first they'd have to build the rocket, and figure out the right launch window, and then the flight takes four months. All together, maybe... two, three years?

VOLUPTUA

I see... Perhaps you could take just myself, the high priestess and Aphrodisia. The others can wait to be rescued.

ELLEN

I don't know. I'll have to consult --

VOLUPTUA

Perhaps just myself and one other -- Aphrodisia. The high priestess can rule in my absence.

ELLEN

It would endanger the whole mission.

VOLUPTUA

Just me then. Me alone.

ELLEN

I will consult with Commander Garrison and Professor Zander. I promise you we will find a way to help you.

VOLUPTUA

Very well. Thank you, Ellen. Talk with your men.

(ELLEN bows awkwardly as
she backs out)

ELLEN

I will, Your Majesty. Thank you.

VOLUPTUA

But be careful. Don't trust them.

(Ellen nods and exits.
SALACIA steps out from
behind a pillar or curtain)

SALACIA

(outraged))

I can rule in your absence?!

VOLUPTUA

I was just testing her, Salacia. I would never leave you behind. How would I get along without you? Your wisdom? Your wit? No, we have to get this Earth woman on our side. We cannot wait years. I need fresh blood now.

SALACIA

As do I. I'm younger than you are by hundreds of years, but look at me. I'm beginning to show my age, but you --

VOLUPTUA

We don't have enough liquid essence for you, Salacia. The essence is for me.

SALACIA

Let me have one of the Earth men. You don't need them all.

VOLUPTUA

We need them to fly the spacecraft.

SALACIA

All three? My queen, I have not tasted true essence since the revolt. I am starving!

VOLUPTUA

We need the human men to spawn new offspring. Dork is no longer capable of procreation, but the Earth men are strong and vital.

SALACIA

I know who you mean. Their commander. I saw the way you looked at him.

VOLUPTUA

Yes, I will spawn with him, and then take his essence.

SALACIA

Okay, fine. Let me have the old one. Zander they call him. You're not going to spawn with him.

VOLUPTUA

No, but he is essential to flying the spacecraft.

SALACIA

My Queen... Your Majesty. I am starving.

VOLUPTUA

Soon, Salacia. When we get to Earth, we will have all the essence we need.

(Blackout)

SCENE 7

WELL GROTTTO

(A 3-foot-tall rock wall has been built up around a natural well. Water reflects on the walls. APHRODISIA and BAXTER enter.)

BAXTER

So that's my story. Kentucky. Military family. How about you?

APHRODISIA

What?

BAXTER

Your family. Tell me about your family.

APHRODISIA

I don't have family. I don't really know what that is.

BAXTER

Well, it usually starts with a mother and father.

APHRODISIA

Oh, we don't have those -- well, biologically we do, but we don't know who they are. Our offspring are raised by the hive. Well, they were; there are no children being born anymore.

BAXTER

None?

APHRODISIA

I was the last.

(APHRODISIA points out the well)

APHRODISIA

Here it is.

BAXTER
 (looks around)
 What?

APHRODISIA
 Our watering hole.

BAXTER
 What?

APHRODISIA
 There.

(Realizing she's referring
 to the well, BAXTER laughs)

BAXTER
 Oh, that's a good one on me.

(He continues to laugh.
 APHRODISIA acts as if she's
 never heard laughter before)

APHRODISIA
 Why are you doing that?

BAXTER
 I'm sorry... It's a well.

APHRODISIA
 Where our water comes from. Isn't this what you wanted to see?

BAXTER
 Well, not exactly, but it'll do.
 (looks over the rim)
 Does this connect to the underground ocean?

(She grabs his arm and pulls
 him away --)

APHRODISIA
 Yes, but don't get too close.
 (And accidentally pulls him
 next to her)

There are things in there.

(He takes her in his arms.
 She is shy, awkward)

BAXTER
 Fish?

APHRODISIA
 Not just fish.

BAXTER

Where I come from, a watering hole is where a guy takes his girl on a date.

APHRODISIA

What is a date?

BAXTER

When a guy and a girl hang out together, because they like each other. Sometimes they even fall in love.

APHRODISIA

In love...

BAXTER

But that comes later. Usually, it starts with a kiss.

APHRODISIA

What is a kiss?

BAXTER

You mean, you've never been kissed?

APHRODISIA

I don't think so.

BAXTER

Well, baby, just follow my lead.

(He kisses her for several seconds. When they part --)

APHRODISIA

That was a strange sensation.

BAXTER

Did you like it?

APHRODISIA

It has possibilities.

(They are interrupted by o.s. VOICES)

BAXTER

What's that?

APHRODISIA

Shh. Hide.

(She takes his hand and they hide behind rocks, then peek out as ZEMA and PANDA enter with SQUEAK. SQUEAK is terrified, squeaks pleadingly. ZEMA and PANDA tie SQUEAK to a post on the well's ledge)

Me first. ZEMA

Why you? PANDA

Because... I'm quickest. ZEMA

(ZEMA quickly draws her dagger and slices SQUEAK's wrist, then drinks his blood. PANDA slices his other wrist and does the same. Watching from behind the rock, BAXTER starts to rush forward, but APHRODISIA holds him back, signaling "no." ZEMA and PANDA finish feeding then release SQUEAK from the post and lay him on the ledge. He groans, semiconscious, barely alive)

Didn't care for his taste. A little too sour. PANDA

I kind of liked him myself. ZEMA

(They leave. BAXTER and APHRODISIA step out. BAXTER moves toward SQUEAK)

No, stay. You can't help him. APHRODISIA

What was that? What did I just see? They were drinking that thing's blood. BAXTER

That's how we survive. We feed on essence -- you may call it blood -- but it is what sustains us. APHRODISIA

(There are splashes from the well. BAXTER steps toward it. APHRODISIA pulls his arm)

APHRODISIA

Get back.

(Two giant tentacles rise from the well. SQUEAK screams)

BAXTER

What the --!

(The tentacles drag SQUEAK into the well. We hear a loud CRUNCH. No more squeaking. BAXTER cautiously approaches the well and looks in)

BAXTER

What the... What was that?

APHRODISIA

The Kraken. It'll eat anything.

BAXTER

Those women were drinking that thing's blood.

APHRODISIA

Yes.

BAXTER

Do you drink that thing's blood?

APHRODISIA

Of course. It's not our preferred sustenance, but when supplies are short --

BAXTER

What in God's name is your preferred sustenance?

APHRODISIA

Men. Our species has always fed on the essence of men.

BAXTER

What men? The only male I've seen is that pathetic creature your queen keeps on a leash.

APHRODISIA

Dork. He is the last of our men. Only the queen can drink his essence. The blood of the Reptons is not pure enough for her. But the rest of us must. Do you not eat other creatures?

BAXTER

Yes, we do. But we don't drink the blood of our own species. That's, like, cannibals... or vampires... Are you a vampire?

APHRODISIA

I don't know what that is.

BAXTER

Blood-suckers! The devil's spawn. Nonhuman creatures who live off the blood of the living.

APHRODISIA

(beat)

That's pretty close.

BAXTER

And you? Do you drink the blood of men?

APHRODISIA

No, that is reserved only for royalty. I had never tasted the essence of a man... until I licked the blood off your fingers.

(They gaze into each other's eyes)

BAXTER

Do you want to drink my blood now?

(Beat)

APHRODISIA

It has been my greatest desire from the first moment I saw you.

(BAXTER takes him in her arms)

BAXTER

I've got a great desire for you, too, Aphrodisia, but it's not about drinking blood.

APHRODISIA

What is it about then?

BAXTER

Making love.

APHRODISIA

What is that?

BAXTER

It's when a man and a woman give themselves physically to each other.

APHRODISIA

You want me to give myself to you?

BAXTER

Yes, Ma'am, I sure do.

(He moves in for a kiss.
She stops him)

APHRODISIA

And what will you give me?

(BAXTER takes the dagger
from APHRODISIA's belt)

BAXTER

Only a taste.

(He slices his forearm.
APHRODISIA gasps in
pleasure, then begins
sucking his blood. A
tentacle emerges from the
well again, wriggles around,
then slides back down.
Blackout)

SCENE 8

CONTROL ROOM CHAMBER

(Dilapidated and damaged
machinery is projected on
the cyc. ZANDER and SALACIA
enter)

SALACIA

This is our control center. As you can see, it is of little use anymore. Our scientists sabotaged everything when they knew their rebellion was lost. Everyone who would have known how to fix it was executed.

ZANDER

I would love the study it in depth, but I suspect it would take years to figure all this out.

SALACIA

There's nothing you can do to help?

ZANDER

Not without a lot more time, but we have to take off within two days to make our launch window, otherwise we'll be stuck here for a year. Which I wouldn't mind, to be honest. I'd love the chance to study your culture in depth, learn your customs.

SALACIA

Our customs? Yes. And I long to go to Earth, to co-exist with your people.

ZANDER

You'd fit right in.

SALACIA

Do you really think so?

ZANDER

Absolutely. Maybe just a change of wardrobe.

SALACIA

Humans would all think I was one of them?

ZANDER

Yes. And when you come to Earth, we'll have to write a book together.

SALACIA

A book?

ZANDER

Yes, a book. Don't you have books? A written account of our experiences. We could tell it from both sides. Our journey from Earth, and your story, the history of your people. We'd probably win a Pulitzer.

SALACIA

I have a thought. Perhaps you could stay here until a rescue rocket arrives, and one of us could go in your place. Think of all the time you would then have to study our culture.

ZANDER

I don't think that would work.

SALACIA

So you won't take us to Earth?

ZANDER

No, we will, but not this trip. The added weight would burn too much extra fuel. We barely have enough to make it as it is.

SALACIA

I see. How much do you weigh?

ZANDER

What?

SALACIA

Can they fly the spacecraft without you?

ZANDER

Yes, but --

SALACIA
How long did you say it would take another rocket to get here?

ZANDER
Maybe two years.

SALACIA
Too long.

(She takes out a dagger and slashes ZANDER's throat. He clutches his throat and gags)

SALACIA
I've grown impatient with age. And thirstier.

(She feeds on ZANDER. Blackout)

SCENE 9

APHRODISIA'S CHAMBER

(GARRISON and ELLEN talk)

ELLEN
Clark, we can't trust them. I've got a real bad feeling about this place. If there's such a thing as women's intuition, it's ringing that bell really loud. I'm telling you, the queen's got the hots for you. She wants you to father the next generation of -- of whatever she is.

(BAXTER enters; weakened, stumbling. A handkerchief-bandage is wrapped around his wrist)

BAXTER
She's a vampire.

ELLEN
What?

GARRISON
Baxter, are you all right?

BAXTER
They all are. They drink blood. The women drink the blood of the men.

ELLEN
Then that was blood she fed me.

She fed you blood?
GARRISON

I thought it was a Bloody Mary.
ELLEN

Baxter, how are you feeling? You don't look well.
GARRISON

What's wrong with your arm?
ELLEN

I think she may have taken too much.
BAXTER

(He feints. The others
rush to help him)

Russ!
ELLEN

Baxter!
GARRISON

(They sit him up as he comes
to)

Russ, what happened?
ELLEN

Who took too much what?
GARRISON

Aphrodisia. She's so beautiful.
BAXTER

You let her drink your blood?
ELLEN

I couldn't resist. I tried -- not hard enough, it seems. And it
felt so good. I was the first man she'd ever tasted.
BAXTER

What did I tell you? They're horny.
ELLEN

I don't like the looks of this. I need to get my gun back. We
need to get out of here.
GARRISON

(ZEMA and PANDA enter)

The queen wishes to see Commander Garrison.
ZEMA

ELLEN

Don't go, Clark.

GARRISON

Don't worry, I can handle her.

ELLEN

Well, tell her to keep her hands to herself. And don't drink anything.

BAXTER

Careful, Commander, they can be very persuasive.

GARRISON

(to ZEMA)

Let's go.

(ZEMA and PANDA lead him out. Blackout)

SCENE 10

QUEEN'S THRONE ROOM

(VOLUPTUA paces; DORK on his leash watches. ZEMA and PANDA enter with GARRISON)

VOLUPTUA

Come in, Commander.

(GARRISON steps toward her. ZEMA and PANDA exit)

VOLUPTUA

(putting on the charm)

Thank you for coming, Commander. May I call you Clark?

GARRISON

Of course, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA

That's too formal. Please call me Voluptua.

GARRISON

Sure. Voluptua.

VOLUPTUA

I like the way you say it. The way it rolls off your tongue. Say it again.

(GARRISON is becoming very uncomfortable)

GARRISON

Voluptua.

(She moves close to him,
but he steps away. VOLUPTUA
notices DORK watching them.
She drops his leash and
waves at him to leave)

VOLUPTUA

Dork. Leave.

(DORK picks up his leash
and exits, continuing to
glance back as VOLUPTUA
shoos him away)

GARRISON

How can I help you, Queen Voluptua?

(She offers him a seat on
the bench next to the table
with two goblets)

VOLUPTUA

Would you like refreshment? I have--

GARRISON

(interrupting)

No, thanks. Not thirsty.

VOLUPTUA

As you wish... Just a little?...

GARRISON

Nope.

(She sits next to him, stares
into his eyes. He struggles
to look away)

GARRISON

Your Majesty, please don't do that.

VOLUPTUA

What is it you think I'm doing, Clark?

GARRISON

Well, as we'd say in my part of the country, you're trying to put
the whammy on me.

VOLUPTUA

The whammy?!

GARRISON

All that voodoo hoodoo stuff you're doing staring into eyes.

VOLUPTUA

Voodoo hoodoo. Whammy. What curious words.

GARRISON

Your Majesty, Voluptua, with all due respect, I'm just saying, we could probably get things accomplished much quicker without the flirtation.

VOLUPTUA

You don't find me attractive?

GARRISON

No, I do. Of course, I do. After all, you put the whammy on me. Now, Queen, we are here to help. What can we do?

VOLUPTUA

Take us to Earth, Clark. We will all be dead soon if we stay here.

GARRISON

We're not able to this time. We lost too much fuel evading a meteor shower.

VOLUPTUA

A meteor shower?

GARRISON

You don't know what a meteor shower is?

VOLUPTUA

Of course I know what a meteor shower is. I'm 26,000 years old. I wasn't born yesterday.

GARRISON

You're 26,000 years --

VOLUPTUA

We age slowly here.

GARRISON

How do you stay looking so young?

VOLUPTUA

It's largely in the diet.

GARRISON

You are a fascinating race. Trust me, Earth's entire scientific community is going to want to come here and study your civilization. You will be rescued.

(VOLUPTUA gazes into his eyes)

VOLUPTUA

I like your words, Clark. But when I look into your mind, I detect deception. You're like all men.

GARRISON

No, Voluptua, I'm not lying to you. We are here to help you. I wish I knew how to gain your trust.

VOLUPTUA

You could start by kissing me.

(She moves in for a kiss.
He resists)

GARRISON

I don't think that would be a good idea, Your Majesty.

VOLUPTUA

Are you sure.

(He can't resist any longer.
They kiss. Suddenly, ELLEN
steps out from behind the
entrance)

ELLEN

Now just a damn minute here. You keep your blood-sucking lips off him.

(GARRISON and VOLUPTUA jump
up)

GARRISON

Ellen, you shouldn't be here.

ELLEN

You're clearly not strong enough to resist her powers on your own.

VOLUPTUA

How dare you! I am Voluptua, Queen of Mars, and soon to be Queen of Earth. You do not challenge me.

(She slaps ELLEN, who slaps
her right back)

VOLUPTUA

Earth cow!

(VOLUPTUA and ELLEN tear
into each other, wrestling,
pulling hair. GARRISON
tries to break them up)

Ellen, stop!

GARRISON

(ZEMA and PANDA rush in.
PANDA prods GARRISON with
her spear)

PANDA

Get back, Earthling.

(ZEMA knocks ELLEN on the
head with a swing of her
spear. ELLEN collapses,
unconscious. GARRISON
tries to go to her but
PANDA holds him back)

GARRISON

Ellen!

(ZEMA helps VOLUPTUA stand)

VOLUPTUA

Where were you? How did that woman get past you?

(ZEMA and PANDA are terrified)

ZEMA

I don't know, Your Majesty. She must have snuck past. We never saw her.

VOLUPTUA

If that happens again, you will take her place. Feed her to the Kraken.

ZEMA

Yes, Your Majesty.

PANDA

(indicating GARRISON)

What about him?

(VOLUPTUA puts her dagger
to GARRISON's neck)

VOLUPTUA

I will take care of him.

(ZEMA and PANDA drag ELLEN
out)

GARRISON

Ellen!

VOLUPTUA

Stay where you are!

(She presses the dagger
harder against his neck.
He freezes)

GARRISON

You kill me and you'll never get off this rock.

VOLUPTUA

We'll see about that.

GARRISON

And if you hurt Ellen in any way, I'll -- I'll --

VOLUPTUA

You'll what?

GARRISON

I don't know, but I'll figure something out.

(VOLUPTUA smiles, twists
the dagger)

VOLUPTUA

This is what will happen. You will pilot the spacecraft and take me to Earth. You will become my slave, and you will belong to me. Our spawn will rule the Earth.

(She grabs him by the collar
and kisses him. Blackout)

SCENE 11

WELL GROTTO

(ZEMA and PANDA drag ELLEN
in. She groans and
stumbles. They tie her to
the post on the well)

PANDA

Why won't the queen let us drink the Earth woman's essence?

ZEMA

She wants her to suffer. Have you ever seen the Kraken feed?

PANDA

No, but I heard it once. The crunching got to me.

ZEMA

Let's go. I don't want to see this.

(They leave. ELLEN moans, groggy. Splashing sound from the well. A tentacle raises up, then goes back down. ELLEN doesn't notice it. Then another tentacle raises on the other side of her, and brushes against her as it goes down. She becomes more conscious, struggles against her bonds)

ELLEN

Help! Help!

(The tentacles find her. She kicks at them, screams. Suddenly, DORK appears from behind a rock, his leash draped around his neck)

ELLEN

Oh, please! Help!

(DORK picks up a heavy rock and bangs on the tentacles. We hear a creepy but comical roar of pain from the Kraken, and the tentacles release ELLEN and disappear down the well. Then DORK helps ELLEN move away from the well)

ELLEN

Thank you.

DORK

You're welcome.

ELLEN

(surprised)

Oh. Somehow I thought you couldn't talk.

DORK

I've learned not to say much around the queen.

ELLEN

A wise choice. What is your name?

DORK

I am called Dork.

ELLEN

And I'm Ellen.

DORK

I know.

ELLEN

Why did you save me? Won't your queen be angry?

DORK

I have had enough of her. Day after day. She's draining me dry. She doesn't give me time to rebuild my strength between feedings. Look at me. I'm almost dead now.

ELLEN

She drinks your blood?

DORK

Yes, and only her. The others feed on the Reptons, but Repton blood is not pure enough for the queen, so she feeds only on me -- breakfast, lunch and dinner. I know how this goes. The last feeder before me was Argus. He lasted about 15 years, but then he died, and was fed to the Kraken, and then it became my turn. I had been groomed, you see, well fed, all so I would some day taste good to Queen Voluptua.

ELLEN

Has it always been that way with your species?

DORK

She and I are not the same species. She lied to you. Her people came here thousands of years ago. They told us they were escaping a dying world. That was true, but what she didn't say is that her species had killed that world, as they had done to world after world, civilization after civilization, overpowering and enslaving them, and draining them of their essence, their life force. Then they would move on to the next planet.

ELLEN

And the next planet is Earth.

DORK

And they would have gone there a lot sooner if their spacecraft hadn't crashed on landing here when they came here. We took pity on them, opened our doors. Big mistake. If you open your doors to them, they will take everything.

ELLEN

So her race is alien to your planet, Mars?

DORK

Yes.

ELLEN

Where are they from?

DORK

Even Queen Voluptua doesn't know. Their mythology doesn't go back that far. Many, many planets ago.

ELLEN

And you are a Martian?

DORK

I am the last true Martian... if you don't count the lizard people. If Voluptua gets to Earth, she will enslave your people, force your women to join them or die, and feed on your men. They have no males of their own; they always feed on and mate with the men of every species they conquer. But she is dying, too. My blood is not vital enough for her anymore. If she does not get fresh male blood soon, she will wither away. She wants your commander; that's what she wants. I will be replaced by him. And that's fine with me. I'm ready for a change.

ELLEN

How can we stop her? We need to get Clark's gun back.

DORK

I know where she hides it.

(We hear the SOUND of
scuffling footsteps)

ELLEN

What's that?

(DORK shushes ELLEN and
they crouch down. BAXTER
stumbles in, his clothes
stained in blood. He's
pale and feverish)

ELLEN

Russ!

(She rushes to him)

BAXTER

Everyone was gone. I looked for you. I got lost. I was afraid I'd wander down here forever.

ELLEN

Are you okay? You're bleeding.

BAXTER

It's not my blood. It's Professor Zander's. He's dead.

ELLEN

Dead! Oh, my God! How?

BAXTER
I came across his body. His throat had been slit, and he had
been drained of blood.

ELLEN
High Priestess Salacia. He'd gone off with her.

DORK
She's a mean one.

BAXTER
What's he doing here?

ELLEN
It's okay, Russ. He saved my life. The queen was going to have
me executed.

BAXTER
Executed. For what?

ELLEN
For being a rival to my boyfriend's affections.

BAXTER
What?

ELLEN
She's crazy. She wants us to take her to Earth, where she plans
to enslave us all.
(feels his forehead)
You have a fever.

BAXTER
I'll be okay.

DORK
Did one of them feed on you?

BAXTER
How did you know?

DORK
Which one?

BAXTER
Aphrodisia.

DORK
Ah, the chosen one.

BAXTER
What do you mean?

DORK

She's the queen's favorite. I never knew why. Trust me, they all want the same thing -- your blood. Are you going to kill the queen? I will help you kill the queen. Please, let me help you kill her.

BAXTER

What will you get out of it?

DORK

Freedom. Freedom from Voluptua. Freedom from this.

(He rips the spigot device
from his wrist and blood
spurts)

ELLEN

Oh, my God!

DORK

I didn't expect that to happen.

BAXTER

Here, let me help.

(BAXTER removes the bandage
from his own wrist and
puts it on DORK)

DORK

This is the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me.

ELLEN

We've got to save Clark from the queen. Russ, can you make it?

BAXTER

(although obviously ill)

I'll be fine.

ELLEN

We need to get you back to the ship. We've got medicine there.

BAXTER

First we get the commander. Let's go.

(BAXTER and ELLEN start to
leave. DORK looks after
them pleadingly)

ELLEN

Come on.

(DORK smiles and starts to
join them when --)

APHRODISIA (O.S.)

There you are.

(DORK quickly ducks behind
a rock as APHRODISIA enters.
She doesn't see him)

BAXTER

Aphrodisia.

APHRODISIA

I've been looking for you. The queen wants you all to join her.

ELLEN

What do you mean? She just tried to have me fed to her pet.

APHRODISIA

You must have done something really bad to irritate her.

(noticing BAXTER's bloody
clothes)

Russ, is that your blood?

BAXTER

Professor Zander. He's been killed.

APHRODISIA

Killed? How? The Kraken?

ELLEN

Your high priestess.

APHRODISIA

Salacia? She's always been so impatient.

ELLEN

Where is Commander Garrison?

APHRODISIA

With Queen Voluptua.

(BAXTER coughs and stumbles)

APHRODISIA

Russ?

BAXTER

I think you poisoned me, baby.

(BAXTER falls to his knees.
APHRODISIA goes to him,
holds him)

APHRODISIA

I knew I took too much. I'm sorry.

ELLEN

Aphrodisia, he's very sick. We have to get him to our rocketship where I can treat him. Can you help us?

APHRODISIA

The queen will help.

ELLEN

Aphrodisia, the Queen wants us dead.

(APHRODISIA looks at ELLEN for a moment, then lovingly at BAXTER. She struggles with a decision, then stands and pulls out her sword)

APHRODISIA

The queen has given me her orders. I obey the queen. Go. Go!

(ELLEN helps BAXTER up but he still needs more help, so APHRODISIA takes the other arm as they exit)

APHRODISIA

Russ, I didn't know this would happen.

BAXTER

I thought you liked me.

APHRODISIA

I thought I did, too.

(They exit. DORK steps out from hiding and cautiously follows them. Blackout)

SCENE 12

QUEEN'S THRONE ROOM

(VOLUPTUA, elaborately dressed, is on her throne, watching a ceremonial dance led by SALACIA with TWO MARTIAN DANCERS. As the ceremony comes to an end, GARRISON, now wearing a ceremonial robe and headdress, with his hands tied behind his back, is paraded in by ZEMA and PANDA. SALACIA indicates for ZEMA and PANDA to bring GARRISON forward. Prodding him with their electrically-charged spears, they force him to his knees in front of VOLUPTUA [Note: Garrison's pain threshold to electrocution is very low, so every time he's prodded, his masculine bearing instantly gives way to a screeching, squirming jellymold, but for just an instant, then he pops back into the masculine mold)

GARRISON
 What are you doing to me? Where's Ellen? Why am I wearing these clothes?

VOLUPTUA
 Ellen should be resting comfortably by now.

GARRISON
 What does that mean?

VOLUPTUA
 Your passion impresses me. You will soon feel that passion for me.

GARRISON
 Don't count on it, lady.

(ZEMA and PANDA prod him)

VOLUPTUA
 Give me your hand.

GARRISON

No.

(ZEMA and PANDA prod him.
He groans)

VOLUPTUA

Clark, you will give me your hand, sooner or later. You know that my will is stronger than yours. You can feel it. Now, give me your hand.

GARRISON

They're tied behind my back.

VOLUPTUA

Oh.

(to ZEMA and PANDA
impatiently)

Well, untie him.

(They do)

VOLUPTUA

Now, give me your hand.

GARRISON

No.

VOLUPTUA

Are you still --? Clark, look into my eyes.
(He does, struggling)

Your hand.

(ZEMA and PANDA poke him again. He struggles with his left hand to hold back his right hand which reaches toward VOLUPTUA. ZEMA and PANDA poke him again. He can't resist any longer and slaps his hand into VOLUPTUA's)

GARRISON

What are you going to do? Suck my blood?

VOLUPTUA

Yes, eventually. But not just yet. There will be plenty of time for us to get to know each other better on that long fight to Earth.

(GARRISON struggles)

GARRISON

Over my dead body.

SALACIA

That can be arranged.

(She unsheathes her dagger)

VOLUPTUA

Salacia! Clark, there is no point in fighting it. It's inevitable. There are two ways this can go. I can either drain you of your life force and turn you into a -- a -- what you would call a zombie, devoid of thought. Or you can willingly join me, and have an awfully good time.

GARRISON

(emotionally struggling)

You're in my head. Get out. Get outta my head.

(VOLUPTUA takes both his hands in hers)

VOLUPTUA

And all you have to do, Clark, my dear frightened Clark -- all you have to do is pledge your eternal allegiance to me, to be broken only by death. And also promise to father my children.

GARRISON

I -- I --

VOLUPTUA

Oh, and you also have to betray mankind.

GARRISON

Get out of my head.

VOLUPTUA

It will take a big load off your shoulders.

GARRISON

(pleading)

This is really a bad idea, Queen. I'll always resist you.

(She leans in seductively)

VOLUPTUA

Will you? Always?

(GARRISON can't resist and leans in. Just as they are about to kiss -- ELLEN enters, supporting an almost unconscious BAXTER. APHRODISIA follows, her sword in ELLEN's back)

ELLEN

Clark?!

(GARRISON snaps out of it,
yanks his hands out of
VOLUPTUA's, and stands)

GARRISON

Ellen!

(VOLUPTUA stands)

VOLUPTUA

You! Still alive?

ELLEN

Clark, what is she doing to you?

(GARRISON rips off the
ceremonial robe and
headdress and throws them
to the ground)

GARRISON

Trying to seduce me.
(to VOLUPTUA)
It's not that easy.

ELLEN

(to herself)
I know.

APHRODISIA

Your Majesty?

VOLUPTUA

(to ZEMA and PANDA)
Why is she still alive? I told you to feed her to the Kraken.

ZEMA

We did.
(to PANDA)
Didn't we?

PANDA

Yes, we did. We did feed her to the Kraken.

VOLUPTUA

Then why is she still alive?

(ZEMA and PANDA looks at
each other desperately)

ZEMA

Maybe the Kraken wasn't hungry?

VOLUPTUA

The Kraken is always hungry?

APHRODISIA

(referring to BAXTER)

My Queen, this Earth man is sick. I fed on him and now he's dying. Please help him.

SALACIA

That happens with some species.

VOLUPTUA

You fed on him? I expressly ordered that none of the humans should be taken until I said so.

APHRODISIA

I know, but --

(GARRISON suddenly uses the distraction to grab PANDA's spear from her hands, shoves her to ground, and lunges for VOLUPTUA)

VOLUPTUA

Zema!

(ZEMA tosses her spear to VOLUPTUA who uses it to block GARRISON's attack. They fight but VOLUPTUA is clearly a more skilled fighter and forces GARRISON to his knees. During the fight, DORK sneaks in unseen and hides behind the throne. SALACIA steps up behind GARRISON and puts her dagger to his throat)

ELLEN

Clark, watch out!

(He freezes. PANDA grabs her spear back)

SALACIA

Shall I slit his throat, My Queen?

VOLUPTUA

No. If anyone is going to slit his throat, it'll be me.

(BAXTER collapses)

ELLEN

Russ!

(ELLEN cradles him)

BAXTER

(groaning)
Aphrodisia.

APHRODISIA

Russ, I'm so sorry.

VOLUPTUA

You should not feel sorry for him. You only did what comes natural to you.

APHRODISIA

But I love him.

VOLUPTUA

You drink a man's blood once and you think you're in love? You're very naive, Aphrodisia.

APHRODISIA

Let them go to their ship. They have medicine there.

VOLUPTUA

(looks around)
Where is the other human? The old one?

ELLEN

Your high priestess killed him.

GARRISON

What? Professor Zander's dead?

VOLUPTUA

Salacia!

(SALACIA lowers the dagger
from GARRISON's neck)

SALACIA

He was useless. He admitted it. They can fly the spaceship without him. Now there's room for both of us, My Queen.

VOLUPTUA

Both of us? You think I would take you? After you disobey my orders? And constantly question my decisions? You've been doing that for -- centuries. No, you're not coming. I am taking Aphrodisia.

APHRODISIA

What?

SALACIA

Why her? I am the high priestess. We have worked together for eons.

VOLUPTUA

Yes. And you are getting old.

SALACIA

No, look. My wrinkles are going away. I just fed.

VOLUPTUA

Aphrodisia is the youngest of us. And her blood will help me gain control of the humans.

SALACIA

What?

APHRODISIA

What are you saying?

VOLUPTUA

You are of the royal blood line. You are crown princess of Mars.

SALACIA

What?!

(APHRODISIA stands, shocked)

VOLUPTUA

You are my daughter.

(DORK's head pops up behind the throne, reacting anxiously, but he keeps quiet)

SALACIA

I knew it! That's why you always favored her. So that's what you were up to that summer you vacationed at the south pole.

APHRODISIA

You are my mother?

VOLUPTUA

I thought it best to bear you in secret. Your life would have been in danger if it had been known.

APHRODISIA

From who?

VOLUPTUA

Salacia, for one.

SALACIA

My Queen?

VOLUPTUA

You have always coveted my crown, always questioned my decisions.

SALACIA

No, My Queen. I have always worshipped you. I would have helped you raise your daughter.

VOLUPTUA

What do you know about raising children?

SALACIA

As much as you, My Queen.

APHRODISIA

I have a mother?

(DORK pops his head up again)

DORK

Which I think makes me your father!

(He runs to VOLUPTUA)

VOLUPTUA

Dork.

DORK

Does it? Does it, my Queen? I was your last breeder, before the others all died off --

VOLUPTUA

Dork, how dare you?

DORK

-- before you turned me into a feeder. She has to be my daughter.

VOLUPTUA

Dork, you've forgotten your place.

DORK

Is she my daughter? Is she?

(VOLUPTUA reluctantly nods)

APHRODISIA

I have a father?

DORK

I have a daughter?!

(VOLUPTUA notices the bandage on DORK's arm replacing the spigot. She grabs his arm)

VOLUPTUA

What's this?

DORK

No more blood for you, my Queen. You've drunk me dry.

(VOLUPTUA yanks DORK to her. He tries to pull away)

VOLUPTUA

You fool. I will rip out your throat to get to your blood if I need to, and you know I will do it.

DORK

Yes, my Queen. I know.

(She tosses DORK aside)

ELLEN

Aphrodisia.

(APHRODISIA looks at ELLEN, who is holding BAXTER lifeless in her lap)

ELLEN

Russ is dead.

(APHRODISIA Kneels beside BAXTER)

APHRODISIA

Russ.

(to VOLUPTUA)

You could have saved him.

VOLUPTUA

I don't have power over life and death, Aphrodisia.

APHRODISIA

You always said you did.

VOLUPTUA

When in power, one occasionally says things that aren't always true. Aphrodisia, a little motherly advice. Humans must be conditioned slowly. You want to make them last. Otherwise, it's too much for their systems. You'll have plenty of opportunities to learn once we get to Earth.

(During the above, DORK has moved behind the throne. He reaches between the cushions, pulls up the revolver, and aims it at VOLUPTUA)

DORK

No Earth for you, my Queen!

(He fires, hands shaking.
Everyone ducks except
SALACIA, who is standing
near VOLUPTUA. SALACIA
looks down at her chest)

SALACIA

I'm a bleeder.

(At that, blood gushes from
her chest, and she
collapses. GARRISON starts
to move toward Dork, but
ZEMA stops him with her
spear to his chest)

VOLUPTUA

Was that meant for me, Dork?

DORK

And so is this one.

(DORK starts to pull the
trigger again, but his
hands are shaking. VOLUPTUA
quickly steps to him, grabs
the gun from his hands,
then slaps him, knocking
him aside. She turns her
back on DORK as she faces
the others)

VOLUPTUA

Nobody move.

(From behind her, DORK wraps
his leash around VOLUPTUA's
neck and tries to strangle
her. She drops the gun.
ZEMA turns to help VOLUPTUA.
Seeing his chance, GARRISON
grabs ZEMA's spear from
her hands and slug her.
She falls. VOLUPTUA manages
to wrestle DORK off of her
and flings him across the
floor toward GARRISON)

VOLUPTUA

You will all die!

GARRISON

No one else has to die, Queen Voluptua, unless you try to stop us from leaving. Ellen, come on.

(ELLEN joins him)

VOLUPTUA

Put the weapon down, Clark. You belong to me now.

GARRISON

Your little mind trick doesn't work on me, Voluptua. Don't try to stop us.

APHRODISIA

I'm coming with you.

VOLUPTUA

Aphrodisia?

DORK

Me, too.

(DORK jumps up and joins them as they run out. When they are gone, ZEMA retrieves the pistol and gives it to VOLUPTUA)

SALACIA

My Queen?

(VOLUPTUA kneels, holds SALACIA's head in her lap)

VOLUPTUA

Salacia.

SALACIA

I think I'm dying, My Queen.

VOLUPTUA

I know. But it's for the best. You've become a hindrance, Salacia. Your magic spells haven't worked in ages and, quite frankly, I just don't care to listen to your whimpering voice anymore.

(VOLUPTUA drops SALACIA's head and stands. SALACIA dies with a gasp. Blackout)

SCENE 13

APHRODISIA'S CHAMBER

(The oxygen tanks are still on the bench. GARRISON, ELLEN, APHRODISIA and DORK enter)

GARRISON

There's the oxygen.

(As they talk, GARRISON and ELLEN put the oxygen tanks on, but leave the masks hanging loose)

GARRISON

Will she follow us?

APHRODISIA

She will try to keep you from reaching your spaceship.

DORK

She and her warriors will be guarding the entrance to the caves.

(APHRODISIA takes a sword off a shelf and hands it to GARRISON)

APHRODISIA

Here. You'll need this.

(GARRISON looks the sword over)

GARRISON

Not what I'm used to, but I was president of the fencing club at Yale.

(He does a couple of sword fighting moves)

GARRISON

Is there another way out of here?

APHRODISIA

Yes, through the lower depths of the caverns. But it's dangerous down there.

DORK

Yes. That's the lair of the cave worms.

ELLEN

Cave worms?

GARRISON

We don't have a choice. Let's go.

(He and ELLEN start out.
APHRODISIA turns to DORK)

APHRODISIA

Are you really my father?

DORK

It seems so... Daughter.

APHRODISIA

I like the sound of that. Come, father.

(They exit. Blackout)

SCENE 14

LAIR OF THE CAVE WORMS

(In a rock wall at ground level is a round, black hole about 3-4 feet wide. From stage left, APHRODISIA enters, leading the way, then GARRISON, both with swords ready. ELLEN and DORK follow)

APHRODISIA

Shh. This is the cave worms' lair.

ELLEN

Where are they?

APHRODISIA

No sign of them. We may be in luck. They may be off hunting.

DORK

Good. I don't want to run into a cave worm. I saw someone taken by a cave worm once -- my friend Grak -- nice guy --. It was ugly.

ELLEN

It's a worm. How dangerous can it be?

GARRISON

Haven't you heard of the Mongolian Death Worm? Lives in the Gobi Desert? So poisonous its mere touch means instant death.

APHRODISIA

These aren't poisonous.

DORK

No, they just eat you.

(Suddenly, a cave worm darts out of the black hole [the cave worm is an actor kneeling on a cart, wearing a mask and pincers for arms which grab its prey. Its worm-like body extends back into the hole and is operated by stagehands behind the rock wall, rolling the worm actor in and out]. The worm grabs APHRODISIA, who drops her sword, and starts to pull her back into the hole. APHRODISIA screams)

DORK

Aphrodisia!

(DORK grabs APHRODISIA's arms and tries to keep her from being pulled into the hole. GARRISON swings at the worm's body with his sword. The worm drops APHRODISIA and retreats into the hole. DORK and ELLEN help APHRODISIA to her feet)

DORK

Daughter, are you all right?

APHRODISIA

I think so.

GARRISON

That was a cave worm?

DORK

Yup. A big one.

(Suddenly, the worm darts out again, grabs DORK and pulls him into the hole)

DORK

Aphrodisia!

APHRODISIA

Father!

(We hear DORK scream, then
silence)

APHRODISIA

Father!

(She starts for the hole
but GARRISON holds her
back)

GARRISON

It's too late, Aphrodisia. He's gone. Damn! I was beginning to like him.

APHRODISIA

(crying)

My boyfriend and my father in the same day.

(ELLEN holds her)

ELLEN

Aphrodisia, I'm so sorry. I lost my father recently, too.

APHRODISIA

Was he eaten by a cave worm?

ELLEN

No, he slipped in the shower.

GARRISON

Let's go before it gets hungry again.

(They start to exit stage
right, when ZEMA, PANDA
and VOLUPTUA enter in front
of them. VOLUPTUA holds
up the revolver)

VOLUPTUA

Not another move.

APHRODISIA

Mother!

VOLUPTUA

I knew you'd come this way. You're not getting on that rocketship without me.

(GARRISON seems to be working
something out in his head,
counting on his fingers)

VOLUPTUA

Aphrodisia, I'm so disappointed in you, daughter.

APHRODISIA

That word does not slip easily off your tongue. You have never been a mother to me.

VOLUPTUA

We don't think in those terms. That is not our way.

APHRODISIA

You denied me my birthright.

VOLUPTUA

I would have told you when the time was right.

APHRODISIA

Would the time have ever been right? I know you, mother. You didn't tell me I was your daughter, a princess, because you didn't want anyone to reign after you.

VOLUPTUA

That's not true.

APHRODISIA

You thought you could live forever as long as you kept drinking fresh essence.

VOLUPTUA

I can. Once I get to Earth.

GARRISON

I can't let that happen. You've murdered two of my crew. Vampires are real. Who knew? I'll take that gun, Voluptua.

VOLUPTUA

Over my dead body.

GARRISON

Okay.

(He strides toward her.
 She pulls the trigger.
 Empty. She backs away,
 tries again. Empty. She
 backs in front of the worm
 hole, pulls the trigger
 again; again empty.
 Suddenly, the worm darts
 out of the hole with DORK,
 bloody and injured, riding
 on its back. As the worm
 grabs her, DORK flings his
 leash over VOLUPTUA's head
 and they pull her into the
 hole. VOLUPTUA's crown
 falls off onto the ground.
 ZEMA and PANDA rush to
 help, but it's too late)

DORK (O.S.)

(from inside the worm)

Die, you evil --

(He is cut off by a crunch.
 We hear VOLUPTUA scream,
 then another crunch, and
 blood flows out of the
 hole)

APHRODISIA

Good-bye, Mother. And Father. Zema, Panda, put down your weapons.

(ZEMA and PANDA look at
 each other, considering,
 look at the black hole
 dripping blood, then back
 to APHRODISIA. They lay
 down their spears and bow
 to APHRODISIA)

ELLEN

Clark, how did you know the gun was empty?

GARRISON

I counted. There were only 6 bullets. The one Dork killed the
 high priestess with was the last.

(to APHRODISIA)

Your Highness, there's room on our ship for you now.

APHRODISIA

No. I will stay here. You don't want our kind on your planet.
 I've tasted human blood now. I know how powerful it is. We
 wouldn't be able to control ourselves.

ELLEN

But your race is dying out.

APHRODISIA

If that's the case, so be it. Tell your people to avoid Mars. It's not welcoming to them. The cave entrance is a short way down that tunnel. Go now. We must mourn our queen.

(GARRISON salutes her)

ELLEN

Good luck, Aphrodisia.

(GARRISON and ELLEN put on their oxygen masks, and exit stage right. ZEMA picks up Voluptua's crown)

PANDA

The queen is dead.

ZEMA

Long live the queen.

(She puts the crown on APHRODISIA's head, then ZEMA and PANDA kneel before her. The curtain closes)

SCENE 15

SPACECRAFT LAUNCH FACILITY/SPACESHIP

(DR. ECKMANN enters in front of the curtain with a microphone)

ECKMANN

Ladies and gentlemen, after months of silence, we have finally heard from Mars Expedition One. They have started their return flight to Earth, but the news is not all good. Two of the crew lost their lives on Mars. My good friend Professor Zander is gone. And Captain Baxter. I won't go into all the details now, but I can confirm that there is indeed life on Mars. And it is not friendly.

(ECKMANN exits as the curtain opens, revealing the rocket cockpit. GARRISON is at the controls. ELLEN paces uncomfortably, holding her stomach. A receding Mars is visible on the view screen)

GARRISON

Well, it's just you and me now, babe. We've got four months together alone in this tin can. You want to pick up where we left off the last time we saw Earth?

ELLEN

About time, don't you think?

(He embraces her and they kiss, then ELLEN is struck with a sudden stomach cramp and doubles over)

GARRISON

Ellen, are you sure you're all right?

ELLEN

My stomach is killing me.

GARRISON

You need to eat something solid.

ELLEN

I can't hold anything down.

GARRISON

Are you sure it's not just your time of the month?

ELLEN

I'm gonna be sick.

(She falls to her knees and dry heaves several times.
GARRISON embraces her.)

GARRISON

You'll be okay. There must be something in the medicine kit for this. Don't we have some antacids?

ELLEN

I don't need antacids.

GARRISON

What do you need?

(She looks at him, pleading)

ELLEN

I think... I need... blood.

GARRISON

What?

ELLEN

It started after Voluptua made me drink her blood. I've become obsessed with taste of... of ... essence.

(GARRISON holds her hands)

GARRISON

Honey, you'll be okay. You're just tired. I think we're both suffering shell shock.

ELLEN

Clark, am I turning into...

(She stares at his wrist
where is holding her hand)

GARRISON

No, of course not. You're perfectly normal.

ELLEN

... a vampire.

(And she bites into his
wrist. He sinks to his
knees in pain)

GARRISON

No!!!!

(Blackout)

CURTAIN