

SWIMMING THE RIVER

by

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Cast:

Kevin PorterMale, 30-40. An experienced burglar. Julia's boyfriend.

Julia StevensonFemale, 30-40. An alien disguised as a human. Kevin's girlfriend.

Corky LeeFemale, 30-40. The granddaughter of the owner of the convenience store.

Mr. Eight.....Male, 35-65. An alien ambassador. Julia's superior.

Clive JarrowMale, 18-25. A college student working as a police intern.

Offstage Voices: A police officer on a megaphone.
A spaceship's computer.

Time:

The present

Place:

The back room of a convenience store in San Francisco.

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(Lights up on the back room of a convenience store. There is a trapdoor, upstage center; it is padlocked shut. There is a keypad safe in the wall, upstage right. There is a door to the front of the convenience store, right. There is another door to the outside, left. The stage is empty)

CLIVE

(Enters from right)

Hello? Is anyone here? Of course not. Check the safe...

(Checks the handle on the safe. It is locked.)

Check the basement.

(Checks the padlock on the trapdoor. It is secure)

Check the door.

(Crosses left and tries the door. It is locked.)

Okay. Fine.

(Exits, right.)

Everything's locked, Mrs. Lee.

(The lights dim. A beat passes. The sound of the exterior door's lock being picked is heard. Kevin and Julia enter from left, carrying flashlights.)

KEVIN

(Whispering)

Quickly!

JULIA

(Whispering)

Did they see us?

KEVIN

I don't think so.

JULIA

We shouldn't have stayed out there so long.

KEVIN

If Mrs. Lee left on time, we wouldn't have had to. It's 10:45 already. And when do the police patrol this street anyway?

JULIA

I don't know, I...oh, hide!

(Julia and Kevin hide behind a couple of boxes)

CLIVE

(Enters from right)

Hello? Is anyone here?

(Pause)

Anyone coming up from the basement?

(Pause)

My paranoid boss thinks she heard someone. Again. So if you're there, please say so. Anyone?

(Pause)

Are you sure?

(Pause. To himself.)

Of course not. God. Yeah, "work at Mrs. Lee's shop for a few weeks. Make some money before your internship starts." Great idea.

(Pause, then without actually checking anything...)

Check the safe, check the basement, check the door. All done.

(To offstage right)

There's no one here, Mrs. Lee.

(Clive exits, right)

CLIVE

(From offstage)

Yeah, I looked.

(Longer pause. More noise from offstage, sound of door closing, then lights to near darkness)

KEVIN

They out?

JULIA

Yup. At last.

KEVIN

(Turns on flashlight.)

Okay. Here we go.

JULIA

Give it a minute, Hon. Let them get to their cars.

KEVIN

Yeah, okay.

(Turns off flashlight. Beat)

What do you think he meant about someone coming up from the basement?

JULIA

The basement is adjacent to the old subway station. You can actually get to the station from the basement through a hole in the wall.

KEVIN
There's an old subway station beneath us?

JULIA
About fifty feet to the north, actually.

KEVIN
You've done your homework.

JULIA
I've researched this job as carefully as I can.
(To Mrs. Lee and Clive, offstage, quietly)
Come on. Get going!

KEVIN
What's so special about this job?

JULIA
I just...I don't want anything to go wrong.

KEVIN
Uh huh.

JULIA
Hon?

KEVIN
Yeah?

JULIA
I love you, you know.

KEVIN
And I love you, too, S.B.

JULIA
I just want you to know that.

KEVIN
Is everything okay?

JULIA
Yeah.

KEVIN
Hey, Julia.

(Beat)
Snuggle Bunny...are you sure you're okay?

Yes, Hon. I'm fine. Really. JULIA

Good. KEVIN

(Sounds of car driving off)

(Kevin and Julia turn on their flashlights)

Finally! Alone at last. KEVIN

Time to get going. We don't have much time. JULIA

Uh...Julia. KEVIN

Kevin, can you help me carry in my tool chest? JULIA

Julia, speaking of researching, do you know what I've been looking into? KEVIN

What? JULIA

Diamonds. KEVIN

Diamonds. Why? Don't tell me Sven wants to pay us in diamonds again. JULIA

No. KEVIN

Smuggling? JULIA

Ha, no. Remember what I told you? KEVIN

No smuggling. KEVIN & JULIA

Then what are you...? JULIA

(Kevin takes box out of his pocket, and opens it to reveal a diamond engagement ring)

What's that?

KEVIN

(Kneels on one knee)

Julia, I cannot even begin to describe how happy you make me. I love you more than I ever thought possible. Julia Stevenson, will you marry me?

JULIA

(Beat)

Oh my God.

KEVIN

I can't imagine life without you, and would be honored if you would be my wife.

JULIA

Oh, Kevin. Oh my God. I don't know what to say.

KEVIN

"Yes" would be nice.

JULIA

Damn it, why now?

KEVIN

I know. This isn't the best place to propose. Not very romantic. I guess most women would not appreciate being proposed to in the back of a convenience store.

JULIA

I think it's sweet. But can we talk about this later?

KEVIN

Later? But...oh, yeah, don't worry. We're not in a hurry. No one's going to disturb us. I figured, since first job together was that convenience store in Mountain View, remember?

JULIA

Kevin, I really need—

KEVIN

You spilled all that milk

JULIA

Kevin, now is not the time to be—

KEVIN

Can you believe it was two years ago, tomorrow?

Really. JULIA

I know. Doesn't seem like it, does it? KEVIN

No, not at all. JULIA

(Beat)
I've got to get back to work. Could you help me—

It's okay! KEVIN

But Kevin— JULIA

You don't have to decide now. You can think about it. That's fine. KEVIN

Kevin, look, I love you very much. But...well...it's just...I have to say no. JULIA

Oh. KEVIN

I wish I could say yes, but— JULIA

So say yes! KEVIN

It's just that things are going to start getting complicated in my life very soon, and I just can't commit to getting married. JULIA

I don't understand. What do you mean, things are going to get complicated? KEVIN

I prefer not to talk about it right now. JULIA

But— KEVIN

Please, Kevin. JULIA

KEVIN
No, what do you mean?

JULIA
I'm sorry, I can't tell you. Now can you please help me with my tools—

KEVIN
What's in it?

JULIA
I told you. My tools.

KEVIN
What are these "tools", anyway?

JULIA
It's sort of hard to explain. I'll show you when we get it inside.

KEVIN
Why can't you just tell me?

JULIA
Our client is obsessed with secrecy.

KEVIN
Yeah, you said that before.

JULIA
You deserve to know. But I still can't tell you. Not yet.

KEVIN
You don't trust me?

JULIA
I'll explain in a little while. Just not now. Come on, we need to hurry.

KEVIN
I'm not carrying that box in until I know what's inside.

JULIA
Youk

KEVIN
I should just work on the safe.

JULIA
Kevin?

Yeah?

KEVIN

You know, I love you, Kevin. Very much.

JULIA

Hmmm.

KEVIN

I'm sorry I can't yes to...but I still love you. Now, I can I ask you to help me?

JULIA

I should just work on the safe.

KEVIN

(Crosses to safe)

Kevin—

JULIA

It's a cheap model. I should have it open in no time.

KEVIN

All right. Fine, I'll get it myself.

JULIA

(Julia exits, left)

KEVIN

(To himself)

God almighty. What the hell was I thinking? Proposing in the back of a convenience store. Dumb, dumb, dumb.

(Julia reenters, dragging box)

JULIA

One thing I can tell you now is how much the job pays.

(Beat)

At least twenty grand.

KEVIN

Really.

JULIA

But I need to set this up.

KEVIN

Okay.

JULIA

Kevin, could you please help me with this?

I'm busy with the safe. KEVIN

Twenty grand, all for you. JULIA

All for me? What about you? Are you getting twenty grand as well? KEVIN

Not exactly. JULIA

You're getting more? KEVIN

No, it's just that I'm...well, I'm getting paid in a different way. JULIA

What does that mean? KEVIN

I'll explain later. We need to set this up. Could I at least ask you to clear some boxes out of the way? JULIA

How are you getting paid? KEVIN

You'll see, Kevin. JULIA

It's not drugs, is it? KEVIN

No! It's not drugs. JULIA

(Opens chest. Takes five small cylinders out)
I need to set these up into a pentagon, about four feet on a side.
(Starts setting up cylinders)

What the hell are those? KEVIN

You'll see. Soon. JULIA

Are you a spy? KEVIN

JULIA
Excuse me?

KEVIN
That looks like a radio transmitter to me.

JULIA
Don't be ridiculous.

KEVIN
Fine.
(Crosses to safe. Rummaging through pockets)
Where's my magic powder?

JULIA
Kevin, I promise that I'll explain as soon as I can.

KEVIN
Ah, here we go...
(Takes bottle of powder out of pocket. Blows powder on safe keypad)

JULIA
Kevin...all right, open the safe if you want.

KEVIN
(Takes small black light flashlight out of pocket)
I shine my special light and find out that...the only numbers ever touched, and thus the numbers that make up the keycode, consist of...one, two, three and four? No, it can't be that easy.

JULIA
(Finishes setting up the last cylinder)
There.

KEVIN
This model of safe uses four-digit keycodes, and we now know the combination consists of the digits one, two, three and four. We just don't know the order.
(Punches code into safe keypad)
One two three four...nope. One two four three...nope. Is there anything else?

JULIA
What do you mean?

KEVIN
Is there anything else I should know about this guy? Our client. Your client.

Well... JULIA

What? What is it? KEVIN

Our client...I'm going to be working for him full time. JULIA

What? KEVIN

I...Hon...Kevin, I...this is going to have to be our last job. JULIA

Wait a minute. Julia, what are you talking about? Who is this person? And why are you going to work for him? KEVIN

I can't talk about it. JULIA

God,how I'm getting tired of hearing that. KEVIN

You'll understand when you meet him. JULIA

It's the mob, isn't it? KEVIN

No! JULIA

This new relationship of yours. Is it purely business? KEVIN

Yes. Well, it's more than...I mean...It's difficult to explain. JULIA
(Takes control unit out of the chest)

What's so difficult about it? KEVIN

You'll see. Soon. I promise. JULIA

I think I understand now. KEVIN

(Crosses back to safe)

JULIA
I don't want to hurt you.

KEVIN
Yeah.

JULIA
(Puts control unit on floor)
Now I need to hook one end of the cable to this cylinder, and hook the other to the control unit here.

(Julia hooks up the control unit to one of the cylinders)

KEVIN
Where was I? Three four two one...nope.

JULIA
There. It'll be ready in five minutes. Be sure not to—

KEVIN
One two four three...nope.

JULIA
You already did that one.

KEVIN
I'm a little distracted. Two three one four...nope!

JULIA
You should write down all the combinations and then—

KEVIN
I see. I'm just a stepping stone. A rock. Something you walk on to make your way to a better partner. A better—

JULIA
Kevin! It's not like that!

KEVIN
Sure.

JULIA
I'm not going to be sleeping with him.

KEVIN
Of course not. It will all be trips to restaurants, museums, wine tasting—

JULIA

Kevin—

KEVIN

The theatre. Hey, I hear the Rep is putting on a play by that guy you like...Marlowe?

JULIA

Kevin! It is a business relationship. I wish things didn't have to change. But my new job will take all of my time. I care about you. Very much.

KEVIN

Yeah, you keep saying that.

JULIA

But I've got a...a duty. I've been working on this for five years, and I cannot walk away now.

KEVIN

Five years? Wow, this just gets better and better.

JULIA

(To herself)

I knew it. I knew I shouldn't have gotten involved with anyone. I knew this would happen. They warned me—

KEVIN

"They?"

JULIA

But would I listen? Of course not. Kevin, I'm sorry I hurt you. You deserve better than that.

KEVIN

Hrmph.

JULIA

But you will understand.

KEVIN

(Back to safe)

Two three four one...oh!

JULIA

What?

KEVIN

Got it!

So what's inside? JULIA

Do you care? KEVIN

Kevin— JULIA

The usual. Some cash. Rolls of...why does this woman keep rolls of pennies in her safe? KEVIN

Pennies are valuable. JULIA

You sound like my grandfather. And what's this...? KEVIN

What? JULIA

A box. And inside we have...another box with...no... KEVIN

What? Kevin, what is it? JULIA

It can't be. KEVIN

Can't be what? JULIA

Oh my God. KEVIN

Kevin, what is that? JULIA

To hell with your twenty grand...I'm holding a hundred here, at least. KEVIN

What!?! JULIA

Panda Blue. KEVIN

What's Panda Blue? JULIA

Something my herbalist told me about. It's an aphrodisiac. Very expensive and very illegal. KEVIN

You go to an herbalist? JULIA

What? Yes. KEVIN

Why? JULIA

Julia, that's not important. KEVIN

Why haven't you ever told me? JULIA

It's private. KEVIN

Are you sick? JULIA

It's nothing. KEVIN

Kevin... JULIA

Irritable Bowel Syndrome. KEVIN

Irritable Bowel Syndrome? JULIA

I've been getting something to treat my IBS. KEVIN

I didn't know you had— JULIA

I don't want to talk about it. KEVIN

JULIA
I can't believe you didn't tell me.

KEVIN
You're lecturing me about keeping secrets?

JULIA
Sorry.

KEVIN
The point is that I am holding in my hand at least one ounce of Panda Blue.

JULIA
And what is Panda Blue?

KEVIN
You're not going to believe it.

JULIA
You said it was an aphrodisiac.

KEVIN
It is. You make Panda Blue by taking a newborn baby panda bear and killing it. You then dry it out—

JULIA
What?

KEVIN
You dry out the body of the newborn panda. They only weight a few ounces, so—

JULIA
You're making this up.

KEVIN
You take the dried-out panda, grind it into dust, mix it with some herbs, and then...well...

JULIA
Do I want to even hear this part?

KEVIN
You snort it.

JULIA
Snort it. Up the nose?

KEVIN
 Yes, up the nose!

JULIA
 You snort the remains of those hideous things? You are making this up.

KEVIN
 I swear to God I'm not. Hideous?

JULIA
 What?

KEVIN
 You think pandas are hideous?

JULIA
 Well, not hideous, but...I just don't like them.

KEVIN
 Why?

JULIA
 I don't know. They...they look creepy. Evil.

KEVIN
 Evil pandas?

JULIA
 I don't like pandas. What's wrong with that?

KEVIN
 Nothing, nothing. I am surprised I've known you for years and I'm just finding out about this now. Though you do seem to be full of secrets.

JULIA
 Look, why have I never heard of this...Panda Blue?

KEVIN
 It's very hard to make. Pandas are endangered, after all. Which is why it goes for a hundred K an ounce.

JULIA
 A hundred thousand...? Dare I ask, does it work?

KEVIN
 My herbalist says if you spend a hundred grand, you'll believe it works.

JULIA
 Put it back.

What? KEVIN

Put it back. JULIA

You're kidding! KEVIN

We can't let the owner know that we've robbed her. That'll...that will ruin everything. JULIA

Of course it will. Nothing like a little theft to ruin a good burglary. KEVIN

Just put it back. JULIA

Fine. Sure. Whatever you say. KEVIN
(Kevin sneaks the Panda Blue into his pocket, puts the enclosing box back in the safe, and then shuts the safe)

Thank you. JULIA

So what are these things, anyway? KEVIN
(Reaching to pick up cylinder)

Kevin, don't! JULIA

Owww!! KEVIN
(Picks up a cylinder. Screams in pain)

(Drops the cylinder)

Kevin! JULIA

Damn damn damn!!! That thing's white hot! KEVIN

Let me see... JULIA

KEVIN
What the hell are those things?

JULIA
(Looking at Kevin's hand)
It could have been worse. Only second degree burns, I think.

KEVIN
Only?!?

JULIA
(Picks up dropped cylinder and puts it back
into place. She is unharmed)
If you'd gotten a good grip...well, never mind.

KEVIN
What the...? Why could you pick it up?

JULIA
It discharged. Right into your hand. Now it needs to charge back up. Kevin...

KEVIN
Yes?

JULIA
Let me see you hand again.
(Julia takes Kevin's hand)
I shouldn't do this, but...

KEVIN
Shouldn't do what?

JULIA
I'm going to go to the car to get something for your burn. Stay here and keep an
eye on things. I'll be right back.

KEVIN
Okay.

JULIA
Oh, and Hon, don't touch them again.
(Julia exits, left)

KEVIN
Don't worry!

(Kevin talks to himself)

Like I'm going to touch those things again. That would be a good idea. "Oh, yeah, Julia, I still had feeling in my other hand, so I decided to do some juggling with those shiny cylinders of death of yours.

(Corky enters, right, carrying a gun. Kevin does not see her)

Ow. Damn. "Or even better, you know, I think I need to pee now. Maybe I should just aim for one of those pretty little...

(Beat)

God, what was I thinking? Proposing during a job.

CORKY
(Turns lights on, aims gun at Kevin)

Put your hands up!

KEVIN

What?

CORKY

I said, put your hands up.

KEVIN

Sure! Sure. No problem. No need to get excited.

CORKY

Excited? Not only do you break into Grandma's shop, not only do you steal...God knows what—

KEVIN

Hey, I haven't stolen—

CORKY

But now you you're going to piss all over the floor? What is with people like you?

KEVIN

Huh? No! I was just making a joke! I wasn't going to—

CORKY

Stand still!

KEVIN

All right. Not that I could even get my zipper down with my hand all burnt—

CORKY

Oh, you'd like to try that wouldn't you.

Huh?

KEVIN

CORKY
You just keep your pants up Mr. Thief Sex Pervert.

KEVIN
Hey! I'm not a thief sex perv...well, I'm not a sex pervert, I am a...oh, I mean...I'm just a normal guy!

CORKY
A normal guy?

KEVIN
Yeah.

CORKY
Well, I'm lifetime member of the NRA! Do you know what that means?

KEVIN
That you're a big fan of Charlton Heston movies?

CORKY
It means I don't put up with any crap from people like you.

KEVIN
Right.

JULIA
(Enters from left holding a device)
All right, Kevin, let me see your hand.

CORKY
Stand still! Hands up!

JULIA
Whoa!

CORKY
How many more of you are there?!?

JULIA
Who are you?

KEVIN
This is Corky.

CORKY
You can call me Ms. Lee...wait, how do you know my name?

JULIA
(To Kevin)

I thought you said Mrs. Lee was 85 years old.

CORKY

You've been spying on us!

KEVIN

Wait a minute, do I know you?

CORKY

I see. You were hoping to catch Grandma unawares. Robbing the elderly. You disgust me.

KEVIN

I do know you! We went to college together!

CORKY

Don't play mind games with me!

KEVIN

Sure! U.C. Santa Cruz. Oakes College. You were on the floor above me in the dorm, freshman year. Well, my only year, actually.

CORKY

You know...you do look familiar.

KEVIN

Sure, I—

CORKY

Weren't you the guy...who got kicked out?

KEVIN

No, I—

(Julia starts moving towards control unit)

CORKY

They found you in the woman's shower, drunk. Naked.

KEVIN

Uh...

CORKY

With, what was it, "explore my feminine side" written on your—

KEVIN
That's not why I got...that's not why I left!

(Julia moves to unplug control unit)

CORKY
I would say you've gone downhill, but—
(Points gun at Julia)
Hey, stop!

JULIA
Okay! Okay!

CORKY
What do you think you're doing?

JULIA
Nothing. I just should unplug this.

CORKY
What the hell is it?

JULIA
Uh...nothing.

CORKY
It's satanic, isn't it?

JULIA
Huh?

CORKY
Shape of a pentagram. I know how these things work.

JULIA
You misunderstand. It's—

CORKY
Urine. Pentagrams. Public nudity. You people really are twisted.

KEVIN
Corky—

JULIA
It's just that I really need to unplug this.

CORKY
Don't move! Why do you want to unplug it so badly?

JULIA
Well, if I leave this going too long, it could...um...

KEVIN
It's not a bomb, is it?

CORKY
A bomb?!?

JULIA
No, it's not a bomb. Thanks, Kevin.

CORKY
Now we add terrorism to the mix. Have you no shame?!?

JULIA
All right. Fine. It is a bomb! Five little bombs, actually. And if I don't unplug it, it will blow us all up!

KEVIN
Julia...are you serious?

JULIA
Yes.

CORKY
I don't believe you.

JULIA
Oh for the love of—

(A humming is heard)

CORKY
I'll call the police. They'll bring in the bomb squad.

KEVIN
What's that sound?

JULIA
It's the bombs. About to go off.

(The humming gets louder. The room gets brighter.)

CORKY
(To Kevin)
Okay, you. How do we disarm this?

Me? KEVIN

Yes! Turn it off! Disarm it! CORKY

(The humming is very loud. The room is very bright)

I don't know how! KEVIN

What? CORKY

I don't know how to disarm it! KEVIN

I do! We have only seconds! JULIA

You're not going anywhere near that thing! CORKY

Where the hell is that light coming from? KEVIN

(The humming is extremely loud)

Oh, crap. JULIA

(Lights down. The humming stops suddenly)

What happened? CORKY

Yeah! What was all that? KEVIN

Maybe if we're lucky... JULIA

A circuit breaker blew! What did you do? CORKY
(Stubs toe)

Ow! Where's the box? Ah, here we go!

(Corky turns on circuit breaker. Lights up. Mr. Eight is standing in the middle of the five cylinders. A valise is next to him.)

MR. EIGHT

Hello there!

CORKY

Ahh!

KEVIN

What the hell...? Where did you come from?

MR. EIGHT

A very long way away.

(Takes out spray can. Sprays into the air)

I claim this room in the name of Transgalactic Corporate!

CORKY

You claim...? Who the hell are you? What's in that can?

MR. EIGHT

(Looks at a box)

What a fascinating object.

KEVIN

The box?

MR. EIGHT

"Box"? Even the name is elegant. "Box." I must have it.
(Sprays box)

CORKY

Stop that!

MR. EIGHT

(To Corky)

You must be the President! Greetings, sir! I am Eight.

JULIA

Actually, sir, that's—

MR. EIGHT

One One Four, I presume?

JULIA

Yes, Mr. Eight.

MR. EIGHT

You should introduce me to the President. Oh, never mind. I'll do that handshaking thing you mentioned in your report.

(Extends right hand to Corky)

Dear, sir, let me—

(Mr. Eight is startled)

Ahhhh!!!! My other thumb! What happened to my other thumb?

JULIA

Sir, humans—

MR. EIGHT

Oh, wait...that's right. Only five fingers on each hand.

JULIA

That's correct, sir. If I may explain—

MR. EIGHT
(To Corky)

Dear, sir, I bring you greetings!

KEVIN

Yes?

MR. EIGHT

What?

KEVIN

You were talking to me?

MR. EIGHT

You're the President?

KEVIN

No.

JULIA

Mr. Eight—

MR. EIGHT
(To Corky)

Then he is.

KEVIN

What?

CORKY

Are you saying I look like a man?

I should hope so, my fine sir. MR. EIGHT

Julia, what's going on? KEVIN

Mr. Eight. Sir, that's a woman. JULIA

What? MR. EIGHT

A woman. JULIA

The President is a woman? But your report said the President was a man. MR. EIGHT

Hold on a minute— CORKY

Hey. You. Mr. Eight. KEVIN

Has there been an election? MR. EIGHT

That's not the President, sir. Now, if you'll— JULIA

And the other woman? MR. EIGHT

What? KEVIN

No, that one is a man. JULIA

Hey, you! CORKY

Damn right. Julia, can I talk to you please? KEVIN

How do you tell them apart? They look exactly the same. MR. EIGHT

JULIA
It gets easier with practice.

KEVIN
Julia—

MR. EIGHT
So, the President is not in this room?

JULIA
No, sir.

CORKY
Hello!

MR. EIGHT
You were supposed to bring him to the transfer point for my arrival.

JULIA
Well...things did not go as expected. We will be meeting the President soon Sir, should I send the acknowledgement?

MR. EIGHT
(To Julia)
Right away, One One Four. While you're doing that, I'll put the primitives at ease. I'm very good at that. Then we can go meet the President.

(Julia takes communicator out of pocket)

KEVIN
(Whispering)
Let's get out of here.

JULIA
I can't.
Ship?
(Takes out communicator)

MR. EIGHT
(Addressing Kevin and Corky)
Greetings, rustics!

KEVIN
I don't know who the hell this crazy guy is, but—

SHIP
Hey sweet cheeks. What's up?

CORKY
(Gesticulating with gun)

Who are you?

KEVIN
(Indicating communicator)

Who the hell is that?

JULIA
(To communicator)

Ms. Lee! Please.
Ship, inform Outpost 761 that Ambassador Eight has arrived safely.

KEVIN

Come on, Julia!

MR. EIGHT

I am Mr. Eight.

SHIP

Will do, cutie.

CORKY

What's going on? Who are you calling?

JULIA
(Puts away communicator)

Thank you.

MR. EIGHT

And you are...?

CORKY
Me? I'm the granddaughter of the owner of this store. I am also the person holding this gun. So if you don't want a face full of lead, you'll tell me exactly who you are and what you're doing.

JULIA

Corky! Let me explain!

KEVIN
(Takes hold of Julia)

Come on!

MR. EIGHT
(Starts to approach Corky, slowly)

How rude of me! I must thank you for the use of your establishment!

CORKY

Hold it right there.

MR. EIGHT

I don't understand why transfer points can appear only on a few places on a planet's surface—

JULIA

Kevin, let go of me. Sir, stop! She's serious!

CORKY

Damn right.

KEVIN

Come on, Julia. Let's get out of here!

MR. EIGHT

I was never any good at astromathematics. But it's always so much easier when a transfer point appears in a friendly environment.

CORKY

One more step and I blow your face off!

KEVIN

Remember what I taught you about when situations get really bad?

JULIA

Sir, don't!

CORKY

I said stop.

MR. EIGHT

I bring you salutations from Corporate Headquarters!

KEVIN

Remember what I said to do? When situations get bad, we—

JULIA

We're aliens!

KEVIN

What? No! Julia—

CORKY

You're from Mexico?

JULIA

No. Outer space.

CORKY

Please. You can do better than that.

KEVIN

I'd tend to agree, actually.

JULIA

Corky, Kevin...Mr. Eight is an ambassador. From Trans-Galactic Corporate.

KEVIN

This isn't going to work.

CORKY

Trans-Galactic...what?

JULIA

Something halfway between a corporation and a government. We are a sort of interstellar alliance.

KEVIN

(Whispers to Julia)

Science fiction doesn't work against NRA members, Julia. Believe me.

MR. EIGHT

You didn't explain, One One Four?

CORKY

How stupid do you think I am?

MR. EIGHT

I can't say for certain until the cultural evaluation team arrives, but given what I've read in One One Four's preliminary report, I think it would be safe to say that you—

JULIA

Sir!

MR. EIGHT

Yes?

JULIA

(To Corky)

Please excuse him. He's a little disoriented.

(To Mr. Eight)

A cultural evaluation team?

CORKY

Enough! I want you out of my shop right now.

MR. EIGHT

They'll be the first arrivals. Then we'll need to bring through customs officials, consular staff, not to mention—

CORKY

You're not bringing anyone else here!

JULIA

Sir! I was told we were going to bring supplies through only. I'm not set up to receive personnel.

KEVIN

There are other aliens?

JULIA

Yes.

KEVIN

Okay, um...that's right, Corky! Mr. Eight isn't human. Right?

CORKY

I don't care. I—

MR. EIGHT

Certainly not! I took this body to facilitate first contact.

KEVIN

What, to keep from scaring us?

JULIA

Exactly.

CORKY

I'm calling the police.

(Corky crosses to upstage phone)

MR. EIGHT

Of course, my appearance wouldn't frighten anyone. Not even primitive rustics such as yourself. But Corporate insists.

JULIA

Ms. Lee! Please!

KEVIN

So you don't really look like that?

MR. EIGHT

Like this? Good lord, no.

CORKY

(Picks up phone to call police)

Not a devil-worshipping cult. An alien-worshipping cult!

JULIA

No, we're not a cult.

MR. EIGHT

Well, you may worship me later, if you wish. But first, to business. Ma'am. Compensation!

CORKY

Compensation?

JULIA

We're prepared to pay you for the use of this shop.

CORKY

Really.

JULIA

Substantially.

(Corky hangs phone up)

MR. EIGHT

Compensation for use of your facilities, I am authorized to give you ...One One Four?

JULIA

Yes?

MR. EIGHT

This is the nation that uses pounds, miles, and so forth, correct?

JULIA

Yes, sir.

MR. EIGHT

Excellent. I can't stand that "metric system". Everything divisible by ten. I guess that's what you get when you've only got ten fingers.

KEVIN

Ten fingers.

MR. EIGHT

I don't know how you stand it. At least there's one place on this little planet of yours where everything is divisible by twelve, as God intended. As

compensation for use of your facilities, I am authorized to compensate you with the elemental metal of your choice.

CORKY

What is he talking about?

MR. EIGHT

I bought a selection. I can give you eighteen pounds of either platinum or uranium, twenty-four pounds of gold, or—

KEVIN & JULIA

Uranium!?!

MR. EIGHT

Indeed. Highly enriched.

KEVIN

In that bag?

JULIA

You brought uranium!?!

KEVIN

Julia, tell me this is a joke.

CORKY

You've got uranium in there?!?

MR. EIGHT

Of course. Shielded, and in small quantities so as to minimize the odds of a nuclear event.

JULIA

Oh, God. No joke, Kevin.

KEVIN

Julia, remember what I told you about who you work for and who you don't?

MR. EIGHT

So I take it you'd like your compensation in uranium. Let me see...

KEVIN

(Whisper, to Julia)

Crazy international arms dealers fall into the "don't" category.

CORKY

I don't want any uranium!

Sir? JULIA

Oh. Zinc, then, I presume? MR. EIGHT

Sir, did you read my report on— JULIA

One quarter of an ounce of zinc. MR. EIGHT

Apparently not. JULIA

Please don't be amazed. Corporate is quite generous in these situations. MR. EIGHT

Sir! We need to send the uranium back. Right away. JULIA

You know what? Stop. Just stop. This is getting insulting. CORKY

Send it back? Don't these primitives value uranium? MR. EIGHT

Yes! They know how to use it to build bombs. JULIA

Why would they...oh! MR. EIGHT

Exactly. JULIA

What a silly thing to do. MR. EIGHT

Why do you think there's a black market for the stuff? KEVIN

So you traffic in nuclear bombs as well. I should have guessed. CORKY

But One One Four, in your report, you wrote— MR. EIGHT

JULIA

Silver. My report said silver. Silver. Gold. Platinum. And they do not use zinc as currency.

(Crosses to box)

I'm reversing the polarity. We're going to send it back.

KEVIN

To outer space, Corky.

CORKY

So, you want to pay me. For what, exactly?

JULIA

We need to use this room as a transfer point.

MR. EIGHT

(Looks at scanner in hand)

Good heavens!

CORKY?

A transfer point? For black-market uranium?

JULIA

No, for—

MR. EIGHT

One One Four, it's detected an enormous amount of...

(Beat)

I need to investigate. Excuse me.

(Mr. Eight exits, rights)

CORKY

Hey, come back here!

(Corky exits, right)

KEVIN

Come on, now's our chance.

JULIA

I'm not leaving.

KEVIN

But he's out of here. We can get away.

JULIA

(Crosses to Mr. Eight's valise and starts taking out uranium)

I've got work to do.

KEVIN
Work? You're not really...Julia, is he blackmailing you?

JULIA
No.

KEVIN
What then?

JULIA
It's like we said. He's an ambassador.

KEVIN
Oh come on.

JULIA
I'm serious, Kevin.

KEVIN
Really.

JULIA
Yes.

KEVIN
And you? Are you from...?

JULIA
Outer space?

KEVIN
Yeah.

JULIA
Yes.

KEVIN
Uh-huh.

JULIA
Really.

KEVIN
Okay. Prove it.

JULIA
You saw Mr. Eight arrive. And you can watch the uranium go back the same way. I don't know what he was thinking. Bringing uranium.

(Julia programs control unit to send uranium back)

KEVIN

That's real uranium?

JULIA
(Stands)

Inside the containers. Yes. There. It'll take a little while for it to charge up again.

KEVIN

And then?

JULIA
They'll be sent back the same way Mr. Eight arrived.

KEVIN
Do you really expect me to believe that you're some alien who arrived in flash of light, let me guess, five years ago?

JULIA
No. I came through space in a ship. Let me see your hand.

KEVIN
You're not making any sense.

JULIA
In order to do a transfer...
(Indicates pentagon)
...what this thing does, you need a device on both ends.

MR.EIGHT
(From offstage)
Damned machine!

KEVIN
Uh-huh.

JULIA
(Adjusts device brought in earlier)
The remove end must be brought through space. It's like...building a bridge. You can't build from one end. You've got to have people on both sides. Which means someone, at some point, has to swim the river. Give me your hand.
(Starts waving device over Kevin's injured hand)
And I was chosen to "swim". I was sent from Outpost 761. A space station circling a star a few light-years from here.

KEVIN
And you've got a spaceship.

JULIA
Yup. That's what I was talking to before.

KEVIN
Where is it?

JULIA
It's hidden off the coast, near—
(Mr. Eight and Corky from right)
Never mind.

KEVIN
Can I see it?

CORKY
Tell me! The North Koreans? Pakistan? Who's the seller?
(Mr. Eight starts scanning Kevin's pants)

KEVIN
What are you doing?

MR. EIGHT
Excuse me, but would you kindly remove your trousers?

KEVIN
What?

CORKY
And a sex pervert as well!

JULIA
Sir, what is it?

MR. EIGHT
I need to calibrate this idiot detector. The contents of his pockets can't possibly match what I'm reading here.

KEVIN
What's in my pockets? Julia?

CORKY
What is it about grandma's shop that attracts sex perverts?

KEVIN
I am not a sex pervert!

JULIA

(Looks at detector)

No, sir, those readings are what I would expect.

MR. EIGHT

Impossible!

CORKY

That's not a Geiger counter is it?

JULIA

No, it's—

CORKY

You've hidden more uranium in the shop!

MR. EIGHT

If this is working, then...oh my God.

(Mr. Eight exits, right. Corky follows)

CORKY

Stop! Where is it?

KEVIN

She is wrong, right?

JULIA

About hiding uranium? Yes. Give me your hand again. I wasn't finished.

KEVIN

Oh, yes. Your story.

JULIA

We detected a radio transmission. A BBC radio production of Marlowe's *Edward II*, actually. I was sent to investigate and set up a transfer point.

KEVIN

Okay, Julia. Enough. Flaw number one with your story. Radio was invented a hundred years ago.

JULIA

The signals wouldn't have been strong enough to reach us at first. Once they were, things need to be approved. Preliminary studies completed. Paperwork filed. After all that...it's a long way. It took me eight years to get here.

KEVIN

So, let's see. You're an alien. You work on this space station. You all get a radio transmission, and you're sent to investigate. You sit on a space ship for eight years, and—

JULIA

Actually, one year. The ship engine...it's sort of complicated. Time flows slower on the ship when you're traveling.

MR. EIGHT
(Offstage)

Off the scale!

KEVIN

Aha. Here comes the sci-fi explanation. Time-dilation. Like Einstein predicted. Right?

JULIA

Not really, it's...well, sure, that's close enough.

KEVIN

So you arrive here and decide the best way to investigate is to become a burglar.

JULIA

Yes, well...

KEVIN

Not a bad cover story, for a Issac Asimov novel.

JULIA

It's not a—

KEVIN

Flaw number two, of course, is that with all your gold, you could have chosen something easier.

(Kevin's hand starts to burn)

Ow ow ow! What did you do? It's burning.

JULIA

Hold on, Kevin.

KEVIN

Damn it, that...no, wait. It's okay now. What did you do?

JULIA

I've healed your hand. There, I'm done.

(Julia puts device away)

Healed it.

KEVIN

Give it a few minutes. It may itch. Don't scratch.
(Pause)

JULIA
I didn't bring any gold.

KEVIN
How convenient.

JULIA
Over a quarter of a pound of zinc, though.

KEVIN
Zinc?

JULIA
The universal currency.

KEVIN
Zinc.

JULIA
Yes.

KEVIN
The rest of the universe uses zinc.

JULIA
Yup.

KEVIN
Okay, flaw number three: zinc isn't a precious metal. Is it?

JULIA
Not here. Elsewhere it's...it's almost nonexistent. No one knows why. It should be very common, but it's like...something removed it.

KEVIN
Something?

JULIA
Thousands of planets, solar systems...almost no zinc. There's an old legend that "The Harvesters" took it.

KEVIN
Ah, I see. The Devil came and stole all your zinc.

JULIA

Exactly! So because it's so rare, it's used much as gold is used here. Imagine my surprise when I got here with a very small container of useless metal.

KEVIN

But gold—

JULIA

Gold isn't used for currency. It's considered cursed.

KEVIN

I should write this down.

JULIA

It's just an old superstition. Any metal not silvery or gray is considered cursed. Gold. Copper.

KEVIN

Superstitious aliens?

JULIA

What, did you think non-humans would all be dispassionate characters out of Ayn Rand novels? It's dumb, but an old tradition. Still, you wouldn't believe how much I had to argue with Corporate before they agreed to send gold with Mr. Eight.

KEVIN

(Scratches injured hand)

That's—

JULIA

Don't scratch it.

KEVIN

What?

JULIA

Just leave it alone to heal.

KEVIN

Fine.

(Pause)

And what do these Harvesters look like?

JULIA

What do they look like?

KEVIN

Ah-ha. A gap in your story.

Well, uh... JULIA

What? KEVIN

They're sort of fat. Hairy. Black and white— JULIA

Stop. This is where I draw the line. KEVIN

Deceptively placid— JULIA

Panda bears. That's what the Harvesters look like. Is that what you're trying to say? KEVIN

The resemblance isn't exact, but— JULIA

Panda bears are the Antichrist. KEVIN

No! No. You had it right before: more like the Devil. JULIA

All right, Julia. Enough. Story time has gone on long enough. I... KEVIN
(Looks at hand)

It...it is healing.

Told you. JULIA

But it's healing. Right now! I can see it! I can see my skin growing back! KEVIN

In a year's time, it will be common. JULIA

But it's impossible. You...you... KEVIN
(Beat)

My God.

Told you. JULIA

You're telling the truth. KEVIN

Yes. JULIA

My God my God my God. KEVIN

I'm sorry I couldn't tell you earlier, Kevin. JULIA

It's okay. KEVIN

I'm sorry I lied to you. If I could have told you, I would have. JULIA

It's all right. You have the best excuse I can imagine. KEVIN

Still, I want to try to make it up to you. JULIA

Do you have to go with him? KEVIN

That's my job. JULIA

What he said before...you're really going to meet the President? KEVIN

Well, we'll start with someone I've contacted at NASA. But first we've got to get to Washington. That's going to have to be my car JULIA

Yeah, I suppose you shouldn't try to take Eight through airport security. KEVIN

Or fly across the country in my ship. JULIA

Julia...can I ask you something? KEVIN

JULIA
Sure.

KEVIN
Is there a...Mr. Julia. Waiting for you on Output 761?

JULIA
That's...sort of difficult to explain. I'd really rather not talk about it.

KEVIN
Oh. Okay, that's fine. I just—

JULIA
No...no. I've kept enough secrets from you. I need to start changing that.

KEVIN
You don't need to talk about it if—

JULIA
On my world...we do have something akin to marriage, it's just...the thing is, I can't have children.

KEVIN
Oh.

JULIA
A birth defect. But, on my world...there is no such thing as a non-reproductive marriage.

KEVIN
So...you can't have kids, so you can't get married?

JULIA
People like me are not supposed to form any sort of romantic relationship.

KEVIN
You're kidding.

JULIA
That's why I do this type of work. It's easier when you don't have...connections back home.

KEVIN
That's terrible!

JULIA
It's all right. I lead an interesting life.

KEVIN

Still...it shouldn't have to be that way.

JULIA

Yes, well...if it wasn't, I wouldn't have met you.

KEVIN

Good point.

(Beat)

Julia, I want to go with you.

JULIA

To Washington?

KEVIN

It would be cruel to leave you alone with Eight for the whole trip.

JULIA

Are you sure?

KEVIN

Of course I am. If you'll have me.

CORKY

(Offstage, screaming)

Oh holy crap!

JULIA

What the...? Oh, no.

(To offstage)

Sir? Sir!

(To Kevin, quietly)

Don't tell Eight what I told you about pandas, all right?

CORKY

(Running onstage)

Oh my God. Oh my God. He...he...oh my God.

JULIA

What?

KEVIN

Calm down, Corky, and tell us—

CORKY

Don't tell me to calm down! You didn't see...Mr. Eight, he...changed.

JULIA

What? He didn't—

CORKY

I told him I didn't believe all this alien stuff. Right after he tried to break into the cash register.

JULIA

The cash register! Damn.

CORKY

And he...oh my God...

JULIA
(Cross right)

Sir! Sir, you—

(Mr. Eight enters, carrying a handful of pennies)

MR. EIGHT

Look at this, One One Four! You told me they didn't use it as currency, but look! Zinc coins!

JULIA

Oh. Yes, sir, but—

MR. EIGHT

And can you believe that she didn't lock them all up? There were nine of them in a tray on the counter, in plain view! Unsecured!

JULIA

That's because—

MR. EIGHT
(To Corky)

Ma'am, a word of advice. Plating your zinc in copper will fool only the most unsophisticated of rubes. I would advise you to keep your valuables secure.

CORKY

What the hell are you?

MR. EIGHT

Quite rich. Now.

JULIA

Sir, did you reveal yourself to Ms. Lee?

MR. EIGHT

Ms. Lee?

(Julia indicates Corky)

Oh! Why yes. She wanted to see what I looked like, and I thought, what's the harm?

JULIA

Mr. Eight. Sir. May I remind you that section four, paragraph three, subsection twenty-nine specifically prohibits—

KEVIN

Show me!

MR. EIGHT

What?

KEVIN

Show me what you look like.

MR. EIGHT

You want to see my true appearance as well?

KEVIN

Yes.

JULIA & CORKY

No!

MR. EIGHT

Why not?

JULIA

Mr. Eight! Section four, paragraph three—

MR. EIGHT

Oh pish posh. Section nineteen, paragraph seven gives me wide latitude to determine when and where—

CORKY

Please don't! I don't want to see that again!

MR. EIGHT

You find my true form disturbing?

CORKY

Yes!

MR. EIGHT

Both of my wives and my husband find me rather fetching.

JULIA

Sir, when dealing with first contact situations, you can't expect—

KEVIN

I'm sure I'll find you, um...fetching.

MR. EIGHT

Thank you! I'm sure you will too.

JULIA

Kevin...

KEVIN
(To Julia)

I need to see this.

MR. EIGHT

Easy enough. I do need to connect to the electrical source in the front room.
(Mr. Eight exits, right)

KEVIN

A power outlet? But there's one right here!

CORKY

I don't want to see that again!

KEVIN

Fine.

(Kevin exits, right)

CORKY

Are you...do you...look like him?

JULIA

No, I...Corky, I know that must have been a great shock. He should know better than that.

CORKY

You really are aliens.

JULIA

Yes.

CORKY

What are you doing here?

JULIA

I just got done explaining that to Kevin. All right, I came through space from—

KEVIN
 Jesus Mary and Joseph!
 (Enters running)
 Hail Mary Full of Grace, the Lord is with...Hail Mary...Oh my God.

JULIA
 It's all right, Kevin.

KEVIN
 He...I...bright red...no nose...

CORKY
 I know! Horrible, isn't it?

KEVIN
 It was...it was...

JULIA
 It's all right.

KEVIN
 Cool!

CORKY
 What?

KEVIN
 That was so cool!

CORKY
 He's delusional.

KEVIN
 Julia, do you look like that? I mean, for real?

JULIA
 Kevin, I don't think you should ask me that.

KEVIN
 I need to know.

CORKY
 We both have a right to know.

(Mr. Eight crosses to safe, upstage right, and begins examining it)

JULIA
 Really? Do you want me to show you, Corky?

No! CORKY

Yes. KEVIN

No! Just tell me, do you look different? CORKY

Well, I...yes. JULIA

(Mr. Eight starts picking safe lock)

I never would have guessed. KEVIN

And so you're going to invade. CORKY

Huh? JULIA

You're going to invade our planet. Through my store. CORKY

We're not going to invade. Just...set up a trading outpost. JULIA

(Mr. Eight opens safe. Starts taking out rolls of pennies)

Sure. "Trading outpost." That's how it starts. Then the missionaries. Then the troops. CORKY

(Kevin notices what Mr. Eight is doing)

We're not going to send the military! JULIA

Let me tell you something. Do you know why we have the second amendment? CORKY

Tell me, Corky. Why do we have a second amendment? KEVIN
(Distracting Corky from Mr. Eight)

Kevin... JULIA

No, no. I'm interested. KEVIN

So that when the invaders come, we're prepared. CORKY

We're not invading. JULIA

(Kevin crosses to safe)
Even if you defeat our troops, we'll set up a resistance. CORKY

Corky! We have no interest in force! We're purely capitalistic. War is expensive, and it gets in the way of business. JULIA

That's what British traders said to the Chinese Emperor. CORKY

Just wait and see. We're perfectly trustworthy, I can assure— JULIA

What are you doing? CORKY
(Notices Kevin)

Uh... KEVIN

Amazing! MR. EIGHT

Step away from the safe! CORKY
(Points gun at Kevin and Mr. Eight)

It's okay! I didn't take anything! Mr. Eight— KEVIN

I said step away! CORKY

All right. All right. KEVIN

CORKY

You too!

MR. EIGHT

I can see why you weren't interested in the zinc. You're obviously a very wealthy...woman?

CORKY

Perfectly trustworthy? I have had just about enough—

MR. EIGHT
(Looks in safe at empty Panda Blue box)

What's this?

CORKY

Stop!

MR. EIGHT

Never mind. I already have a box.
(Starts to cross to Corky and Julia)

One One Four, look at this roll of zinc—
(Corky fires her gun three times. The first bullet goes through the door into a front room, where it shatters a window. Mr. Eight catches the remaining two bullets.)

JULIA

No!

KEVIN

Corky!

JULIA

Are you all right?

CORKY

Wha...?

MR. EIGHT
(Holds up bullet)

What are these?

KEVIN

He caught the bullets.

JULIA

Corky, Kevin, let me explain—

MR. EIGHT
This is outrageous!

KEVIN
He caught the bullets!

CORKY
Oh God.

JULIA
Sir, that's what happens when—

MR. EIGHT
(To Corky)
You, sir—

JULIA
Ma'am.

MR. EIGHT
—ma'am, gave me this gift? How...inexcusable! I am your guest! You shouldn't be giving me gifts.

CORKY
But I didn't—

MR. EIGHT
I apologize for letting one of them slip through.

JULIA
Sir! We have a problem. People will have heard the shots.

KEVIN
Not to mention the shattered window.

MR. EIGHT
I have been utterly thoughtless. You never told me what you wanted as compensation. Zinc...well,you have more than enough zinc. Platinum, perhaps?

JULIA
Mr. Eight! Enough! The local law enforcement will have heard the noise. We'll be able to send the uranium back in about five minutes, and then we're going to have to leave.

MR. EIGHT
Law enforcement? But—

JULIA

Your protection is my responsibility, and I will not allow you to be here when they arrive.

CORKY

Gold.

MR. EIGHT

Excuse me?

CORKY

Gold.

MR. EIGHT

You're not serious.

KEVIN

Actually, I think the platinum would be a better deal.

CORKY

Gold!

MR. EIGHT

All right. You can have the cursed stuff. Twenty-four pounds of—

CORKY

Fifty.

MR. EIGHT

Fifty what?

CORKY

Fifty pounds.

MR. EIGHT

But I'm authorized to—

CORKY

Fifty pounds, or no deal.

JULIA

Forty-eight. Twenty-four now. Twenty-four later.

MR. EIGHT

Excuse me, One One Four?

JULIA

Twenty-four pounds now. Twenty-four pounds, say, in three months time.

Well...

CORKY

We'll need access for a while. You can't expect full payment all at once.

JULIA

Okay. Fine.

CORKY

All right. But...

MR. EIGHT

Yes?

CORKY

You're not a Harvester-worshipper, are you?

MR. EIGHT

No, she's not.

JULIA

All right, here you go.

MR. EIGHT
(Takes "gold" out of valise, and gives it to
Corky. It is small, but quite heavy)

Ow!

CORKY
(Corky takes the gold, and drops it)

Here, let me help.

KEVIN

Keep your hands off!

CORKY
(Picking up the gold with great difficulty)

Mr. Eight, I have a vehicle waiting outside. I need you to come with me.

JULIA

But the uranium—

KEVIN

I'll come back and send it through. But I need you to come with me.

JULIA

But—

MR. EIGHT

JULIA

Right now!

MR. EIGHT

All right. A pleasure meeting both of you!

(Julia and Mr. Eight exit, left)

KEVIN

So.

CORKY

So.

(Corky moves to safe)

KEVIN

I should leave, too.

CORKY

Do you understand what's going on?

KEVIN

Julia keeps talking about trade. Apparently zinc is really rare in outer space.

CORKY

Zinc?

KEVIN

I think that's what they make pennies out of.

CORKY

Oh! That's why he went straight for the penny tray. And the rolls of pennies in the...he likes pennies.

KEVIN

Do you suppose...?

CORKY

(Opens safe. Puts gold in)

What?

KEVIN

That you did the right thing? Agreeing to let them, you know...

CORKY

I had two choices, as far as I could see. Shoot him, or take his gold. And shooting him didn't work. So...

I understand. KEVIN

I'll let the Marines take care of him. CORKY

Sure. Look— KEVIN

How long have you known? CORKY

Known what? That Julia is...? No, I didn't know anything. KEVIN

Please. You never guessed? CORKY

Two years, and I never suspected anything. Her disguise is very complete. KEVIN

I beg your pardon? CORKY

You know. She's...anatomically correct. KEVIN

I see. CORKY

See what? KEVIN

You move quickly, don't you? CORKY

Huh? KEVIN

You find out your girlfriend is an alien, and ten minutes later you're trying to get me into bed. CORKY

Excuse me? KEVIN

I don't know how you usually deal with women, but— CORKY

KEVIN
I wasn't hitting on you!

CORKY
Of course you were. What else would you mean by "anatomically correct"?

KEVIN
You asked!

CORKY
Not for that kind of detail!

KEVIN
Never mind. Forget I said anything. I don't want to do battle with your Santa Cruz attitudes right now. Was that "women" with an "I"?

CORKY
Santa Cruz? I've grown far beyond that place. Once I graduated, Daddy got me a job with Nancy Paxton.

KEVIN
Who's that?

CORKY
You don't know?

KEVIN
Should I?

CORKY
Representative Nancy Paxton? From the thirty-seventh district?

KEVIN
You mean, as in Congress?

CORKY
Set me straight on a lot of things.

KEVIN
Wait a minute...Nancy Paxton? That crazy woman who accused Senator what's-her-name of cannibalism?

CORKY
Representative Paxton knows what the country needs, and isn't afraid to speak up.

KEVIN
 Whatever. Look, I'm going to leave. I'll leave you to your right-wing propapanda¹, and...ganda.

CORKY
 What did you say?

KEVIN
 Nothing.

CORKY
 You said—

KEVIN
 Right-wing propaganda.

CORKY
 Uh-huh.

KEVIN
 Sorry, I get excited when I talk politics. I think I'll go now.

CORKY
 (Points gun at Kevin)
 Hold it!

KEVIN
 Hey! We're all on the same side, here. Humans against the alien invaders.

CORKY
 (Corky crosses to safe)
 You're a thief. You could have...before I came in...

KEVIN
 No, no. I'm just here to help my alien girlfriend.
 (Corky unlocks safe)
 What, are you afraid I stole your nickels?

CORKY
 No.

KEVIN
 What's that? A little box?

CORKY
 It's...it's empty!

¹ That's propapanda.

I'm so sorry to— KEVIN

Where is it? CORKY

Where is what? KEVIN

Don't be stupid. I know you took it! Give it to me now, or— CORKY

All right. All right. You caught me. Here you go. KEVIN
(Takes bag of Panda Blue out of pocket)
(Tosses bag to Corky)

Thank you. CORKY
(Picks up bag)

You're welcome. So, I'm going to leave now— KEVIN

Hold it. CORKY

But they're waiting. KEVIN

What are we going to do about this? CORKY

About what? KEVIN

You know about...my business. My associates and I value our privacy. CORKY

I'm a really discrete person. KEVIN

I saw how discrete you were at school. CORKY

That was a mistake. A youthful indiscretion. KEVIN

CORKY

I can't afford any indiscretions.

KEVIN

Uh, Corky, you're not thinking about doing something...illegal, are you?

CORKY

I have to be sure.

KEVIN

I don't think Julia will be very happy if you...do something.

CORKY

Your Julia is an alien. I doubt she really cares about you.

KEVIN

Who the hell are you to say—

CORKY

Even if she does, this is the only place they can use. They said so. They need me. I don't need them. They'll adjust.

KEVIN

(Backing up to upstage right)

Don't be so sure. You'll attract the police! That can't be good!

CORKY

(Corky walks towards Kevin, though pentagon on the floor, but stops in the middle of the pentagon)

"Oh, officer, I caught this burglar breaking into my shop!"

KEVIN

Uh...Julia! Julia!

(A humming is heard)

CORKY

Be quiet! I...I can't move my legs.

KEVIN

What? What do you mean?

CORKY

I'm stuck! I can't move!

KEVIN

The machine! It's—

CORKY
 (The humming is louder. The room gets brighter)
 Help me!

KEVIN
 I don't know how!

CORKY
 (Points gun at Kevin.)
 That box! Do something!

(The humming is very loud. The room is very bright)
 KEVIN
 I don't know what to do!

CORKY
 Turn it off!

KEVIN
 How?

CORKY
 Pull me out!

KEVIN
 What?

(The humming is extremely loud)
 CORKY
 Grab my arms

KEVIN
 Like hell I will.

CORKY
 Grab my arms or I'll shoot you a new—
 (Lights down. Corky and the uranium has vanished. The room is silent)

KEVIN
 Corky? Corky! Oh my God.
 (To left)
 Julia! Julia!

JULIA
(Enters from left)

Kevin? Corky?

KEVIN

Uh, Julia.

JULIA
Why are the lights...Did the transfer point go off?

KEVIN
Yes. And the good news is that the uranium is gone.

JULIA
The good news?

(Kevin reset the circuit breakers. Lights up)

KEVIN
We have a problem.

JULIA
Where's Corky? Oh, no...she didn't.

KEVIN
She was going to shoot me, Julia! And then she...she wandered into the...this...space, couldn't move, and then...wow.

JULIA
Oh, boy. Yes, well...the staff on the other side will just have to deal with it. We need to get going. The police are coming.
(Julia starts gathering cylinders and box)

KEVIN
What? How can you tell?

JULIA
I can hear them.

KEVIN
I can't hear anything.

JULIA
Trust me. We have to get out of here.

KEVIN
But Corky—

(Sound of police sirens)

JULIA

She'll have to wait. We'll come back, but right now, we can't be caught here.

KEVIN

So, off to Washington?

JULIA

Yup. Still want to come with us?

KEVIN

Absolutely.

JULIA

Will you help me carry the chest out?

KEVIN

Of course.

(Kevin and Julia pick up the chest by either end)

JULIA

Let's go.

(Kevin and Julia exit left. Lights down)

End of Act I

Act II

(Lights up on the same back room. It is three months later. The safe on the back wall is obviously broken. The padlock on the trap door is gone. The five cylinders plus control box are set up in the center of the floor)

BULLHORN FROM OFFSTAGE

We know you have a working telephone. Please dial 555-6262; we want to negotiate with you.

(Kevin and Julia enter from right)

JULIA

It's fine.

KEVIN

I still say someone could get in.

JULIA

That freezer weighed...four hundred pounds at least. The police aren't coming through the front door.

KEVIN

Still, I—

MR. EIGHT
(Enters from right)

Are you sure they can't get in, One One Four?

JULIA

Yes, sir. I'm sure.

KEVIN

Thanks for helping.

MR. EIGHT

You're welcome. My supervisorial skills often go unappreciated.

JULIA

I'm sure they do.

MR. EIGHT

Where's Alfred?

KEVIN

Oh, God. Not Alfred.

JULIA
Everything's in the front room or here, sir.

MR. EIGHT
I didn't see him.

KEVIN
I ate him.

MR. EIGHT
You...barbarian!

KEVIN
I'm just kidding. I have no idea where Alfred is.

MR. EIGHT
Alfred!
(Exits, right).
Alfred!

KEVIN
Three months.

JULIA
Excuse me?

KEVIN
Three months of...that. It's a wonder we've survived.

BULLHORN
We would like to negotiate the release of your hostages. Please call...

BULLHORN, KEVIN & JULIA
555-6262

KEVIN
So, fellow hostage, how much longer?

JULIA
Just a little longer, I'm sure.

KEVIN
We've been in here six hours!

JULIA
Five and a half.

KEVIN

Five and a half hours, listening to that guy with the bullhorn, not to mention the helicopter.

JULIA

I'm sure we'll hear something soon.

KEVIN

Let's just send Eight back, and then go out and surrender.

JULIA

Kevin!

KEVIN

Why not? We know Eight's going to be replaced. We can come back later and bring his replacement through.

JULIA

I can't do that!

KEVIN

I know. I know. But it's nice to think about.

JULIA

Kevin...

KEVIN

Yeah, S.B.?

JULIA

They might want to recall me as well.

KEVIN

Recall you?

JULIA

They could conclude that I've been compromised.

KEVIN

You didn't say that before.

JULIA

I...I didn't want to worry you.

KEVIN

But you haven't been compromised. I mean, they think Mr. Eight is holding both of us as hostages. There's no reason for them to—

JULIA
But the White House—

KEVIN
That wasn't your fault.

JULIA
Of course it is! We're supposed to be on a diplomatic mission, and less than two weeks after Mr. Eight arrives, we've got the FBI and the Secret Service chasing us across the country!

KEVIN
If Eight had the least bit of common sense he wouldn't have tried a stunt like that. He should have left the meeting up to you. He doesn't stop to think.

JULIA
I can't imagine the Supervisor will see it that way.

KEVIN
Of course he will. Julia, everything is going to be fine.

JULIA
Kevin—

KEVIN
(Takes Julia in his arms)
Shhhh.

JULIA
But Kevin—

KEVIN
Shhhh. It's all right. Everything's is going to be fine. You are not going anywhere. You are the Corporation's foremost expert on Earth, after all.

JULIA
Well...

KEVIN
They need you here.

JULIA
I hope you're right.

KEVIN
Trust me. You're indispensable.

JULIA
I'm not indispensable.

KEVIN

Of course you are. Do you think Eight would have been able to deal with life here without you?

JULIA

He's very resourceful.

KEVIN

He wouldn't have lasted a day.

JULIA

God, I'm sorry.

KEVIN

For what?

JULIA

For dragging you through all this.

KEVIN

It was the road trip of a lifetime.

JULIA

You should have left us when you had the chance.

KEVIN

I'll never leave you.

JULIA

But...thanks, Hon.

KEVIN

No problem, S.B.

(Winces in pain)

Hm.

JULIA

Are you okay?

KEVIN

I'm fine.

BULLHORN

We all want this to end peacefully. Please call 555-6262.

JULIA

It's your IBS?

I'm fine.

KEVIN

Don't worry. Once this is all over...

JULIA

Oh, yes. The miracle cure on your spaceship.

KEVIN

I'll get you fixed up soon. I promise.

JULIA

I'm impressed that you included a cure for IBS when you were packing for your trip to Earth. Talk about being prepared.

KEVIN

It's a general-purpose medical unit.

JULIA

Oh, no. I'm sure you thought to yourself "what if I meet a human who can't digest cheese?"

KEVIN

That's right. I packed cures for dandruff and toenail fungus too, just in case.

JULIA
(Laughing)

That's good. I'm sure you would have gotten the trust of the President if you had cured his chronic toenail fungus problem.

KEVIN

(The phone starts ringing)

Great! They found the phone number.

KEVIN
(To telephone)

We're not going to pick up!

JULIA

It's all right.

(Walks over to phone and unplugs it)

There.

KEVIN

Julia?

JULIA

Yes?

KEVIN

You don't really think they'll make you go home, do you?

JULIA

I don't know. They might want me to recall me for a little while. Just until things calm down.

KEVIN

How long is "a little while?"

JULIA

Maybe a few months. Maybe longer.

(Hears something)

What's that?

KEVIN

And we'll know—?

JULIA

Shhh!

(Julia listens)

I thought I heard something...

(Pause)

I guess not. Anyway, we'll find out more when the Supervisor comes through.

KEVIN

But...well...I suppose it could be worse.

JULIA

Oh yes. It could definitely be worse.

KEVIN

What does that mean?

JULIA

Nothing. Just me worrying.

KEVIN

You sure?

JULIA

Yeah.

(Beat)

Kevin?

KEVIN

Yeah?

Thank you. JULIA

For what? KEVIN

For sticking with me. JULIA

I couldn't find Alfred. MR. EIGHT
(Enters from right)

I'm sure he's safe somewhere. KEVIN

He's outside. I know it. MR. EIGHT

Sir, have you looked— JULIA

He's in the vehicle. I need to fetch him. MR. EIGHT

You're kidding. KEVIN

Sir, that is unwise. JULIA

(Mr. Eight moves to left door. Julia blocks his way.)
MR. EIGHT

It's the only way.

Absolutely not! JULIA

Stand, aside, One One Four. MR. EIGHT

Oh go ahead, Julia. Let him go. KEVIN

JULIA
Mr. Eight. Sir. As I have reminded you seven hundred and ninety-five times, I am responsible for your safety. I cannot allow you to get into harm's way.

MR. EIGHT

I count only seven hundred and ninety-two times.

JULIA

You are staying inside. That is final.

MR. EIGHT

I suppose you're right, One One Four.

JULIA

Thank you.

MR. EIGHT

Perhaps I should check the front room once more. I...One One Four!

JULIA

What?

MR. EIGHT

The signal indicator on the control unit! There's a malfunction!

JULIA

(Moves to control unit)

What?

(Mr. Eight runs out, left)

KEVIN

Julia!

MR. EIGHT

Tally ho!

JULIA

Damn it! Sir!

(Julia tried to run after him)

KEVIN

(Grabs Julia)

Stop!

JULIA

I have to stop him!

KEVIN

He'll be okay. Remember the White House. Besides, if you go out there, they might grab you.

BULLHORN

Please call 555-6262. We...holy crap, Bob. He's out! He's...what?

But Kevin!

JULIA

(A sniper shot is heard)

Sir!

JULIA

Amateurs!

MR. EIGHT
(From offstage)

Remember the White House.

KEVIN

Right. Remember the White House.

JULIA

Maybe it's time to call your superiors up again.

KEVIN

Yes, well...maybe that is a good idea.

JULIA
(Speaks into communicator)

Ship?

SHIP
(Via communicator)

Hey, babe.

JULIA

Have you received any further communications?

SHIP

Sorry, cutie pie. Nothing so far.

KEVIN

Julia...

JULIA

Send my last transmission again. And tell them that the situation is extremely critical, and that I need instructions immediately.

SHIP

Whatever you say, sweet cheeks. I'm transmitting now.

JULIA

Thank you.

(Julia turns off communicator)

KEVIN

You told me you were going to reprogram your ship.

JULIA

I will.

KEVIN

You shouldn't let your spaceship sexually harass you.

JULIA

Kevin, it's a machine.

KEVIN

I don't care. It's just wrong.

JULIA

I've got bigger things to worry about right now than...what's that?

KEVIN

What?

JULIA

I did hear something.

KEVIN

I didn't hear anything.

JULIA

Are you sure the barricade at the front will hold?

KEVIN

You saw it...wait, you think someone's trying to get in? I'll go check.

JULIA

Kevin!

KEVIN

Stay here!

(Kevin exits)

JULIA

Whatever you say.

(Pause. Takes out communicator)

Ship?

SHIP

Hey, hon. I haven't heard back yet—

JULIA
Give me a general status summary.

SHIP
Everything's cool. Propulsion's nominal, as is life support—

JULIA
Not that I'll need that.

SHIP
What?

JULIA
Nothing. Continue.

SHIP
Navigation's also nominal. I can be space-ready in twelve hours.

JULIA
Any reason why you can't perform an automated return to Outpost 761?

SHIP
Automated?

JULIA
Yes. By yourself.

SHIP
Well...

JULIA
Yes?

SHIP
I'd get lonely.

JULIA
Ship!

SHIP
I can head home whenever you want.

(Clive enters from through the trapdoor)

CLIVE
Don't worry, ma'am. I'm here to rescue you!

Whoa?!?

JULIA

What?

SHIP

Await further instructions.

JULIA

Whatever you say, kiddo.

SHIP

Who are you?

JULIA
(Turns off communicator)

Clive Jarrow, ma'am. I'm part of the hostage negotiation team.

CLIVE

Hostage negotiation? You're not serious.

JULIA

Of course I'm serious!

CLIVE

Aren't you a little young to—

JULIA

I'm not that young.

CLIVE

(Beat)

Okay, I'm just the intern. But look, we don't have time to talk about this.

KEVIN
(Enters from right)

Hey, Julia. Good news. I...what the hell?

CLIVE

Kevin, right?

JULIA

Kevin, this is Clive. The hostage negotiation intern.

KEVIN

Hi. What the hell are you doing here?

CLIVE

I'm here to rescue you!

They're sending the interns in? KEVIN

I'm here on my own initiative. CLIVE

You snuck away. JULIA

It's not like I was doing anything important out there. Lieutenant Hague can get his own coffee for once. CLIVE

Clive, look— KEVIN

We have to get out of here before The Octagon finds out I've snuck in. Is there anyone else here? CLIVE

The Octagon? JULIA

That's what the press has started calling Eight. KEVIN

Clive, you need to leave. JULIA

What's this? CLIVE
(Walks toward pentagon on floor)

No! Stop! KEVIN

That's, uh...something Mr...something The Octagon created. JULIA

Whatever you do, don't touch it. KEVIN

It's evidence. JULIA

How did you get in here? KEVIN

CLIVE
Through the subway station.

KEVIN
The subway station?
(Looks at the trapdoor)
Of course, there was a lock on...I mean...shouldn't there be a lock on there?

CLIVE
Someone broke in here a couple of months ago. They broke into the basement, and the safe. Poor Mrs. Lee ended up closing the shop.

KEVIN
Probably looking for the Panda..., uh, for the...

CLIVE
The Panda?

KEVIN
For the stuffed panda that Ms. Lee keep her cash in.

CLIVE
That's weird.

JULIA
Yeah. Look, Clive, we can't leave. You need to—

CLIVE
Yes, you can. Just come down with me. It's easy!

(A sniper shot from outside)
CLIVE
Down, everyone!

JULIA
It's a sniper.

MR.EIGHT
(From offstage)
Hold on, Alfred!

CLIVE
The Octagon's outside? When did this happen? Never mind! Come on, it's perfect! Let's go!

JULIA
No, I mean we can't leave...him.

But the sniper—
 CLIVE

I wouldn't count on it.
 KEVIN

But it doesn't matter. The Octagon has been holding you hostage!
 CLIVE

She's right, Clive.
 KEVIN

I understand.
 CLIVE

You do?
 JULIA

Of course. The Stockholm Syndrome! Hold on.
 CLIVE
 (Pulls a slim softcover book from his pocket
 and starts thumbing through)

It's in here somewhere—

Hostage Negotiation: A Quick Reference?
 KEVIN

Yeah. You'd think it would be included with the textbook, but no, we have to buy it separately. Of course. Ah, here we go.
 CLIVE

Clive—
 KEVIN

The Stockholm Syndrome is named after Nor...Normal...God, I can never remember out how to pronounce this.
 CLIVE

It's not the Stockholm Syndrome.
 JULIA

The Norrmalmstorg robbery in Stockholm, 1973. Actually, I suppose we don't need to go over this part.
 CLIVE

Please don't.
 JULIA
 (Julia puts hand to head)

You're giving me a headache.

KEVIN
Kid, Eight...the Octagon could come back at any time. You need to go.

CLIVE
I'm not going to leave you behind.

JULIA
It's Corky.

KEVIN
What?

CLIVE
Ms. Lee! What about her? Is she here?

KEVIN
Corky's back?

JULIA
Yes, Kevin. Don't you remember? The Octagon has her hidden around here somewhere.

KEVIN
He...oh, yes. Of course. Somewhere.

CLIVE
(Another sniper shot rings out)
Oh! Maybe—

MR. EIGHT
(Still offstage)
Not much of a shot, are you?

CLIVE
You know, Simon's a pretty good sniper. Former military. I'm surprised he missed.

JULIA
You know about Corky?

CLIVE
Oh, sure. She disappeared three months ago.

KEVIN
What else do you know?

CLIVE

That The Octagon was seen around here about the time Ms. Lee disappeared.
And that he took you and Julia hostage at some point.

KEVIN

Sure.

CLIVE

And...that The Octagon has a fascination with the number eight. Oh, and he like
to wear a rubber alien mask.

KEVIN

Ah!

CLIVE

Though would you believe that Nancy Paxton thinks he's a real alien?

KEVIN

Really.

JULIA

Who's Nancy Paxton?

KEVIN

That strange congresswoman from Visalia.

CLIVE

She thinks the Octagon is actually an alien. For real!

KEVIN

Wow. She sure is crazy, isn't she?

CLIVE

She said he's leading an invasion to steal our mineral resources. Or something.
She wants the President to nuke San Francisco. Just to be safe.

JULIA

Destroy San Francisco? You're joking.

KEVIN

She's always calling on the President to nuke cities she doesn't like. Didn't she
want to drop the bomb on Phoenix last year?

CLIVE

No, Rockford. Rockford, Illinois. Phoenix was two years ago.

KEVIN

I thought Athens, Georgia was—

JULIA

Okay! Okay. She's nuts. Clive you need to leave before The Octagon returns. He's dangerous!

CLIVE

That's why you need to come with me!

JULIA

We can't leave. If we leave...who knows what he might do.

CLIVE

(Referring to book)

But it says here that the primary goal is to secure the safety of—

JULIA

Clive, sometimes you can't go by what the book says.! What you need to do is sneak back out the way you came. Right now.

CLIVE

I know it seems like The Octagon might do something drastic if he finds you missing, but page 32 clearly states that—

KEVIN

Come on, kid. Let's get you out of here.

CLIVE

But—!

(Mr. Eight enters from left, carrying a large bag)

MR. EIGHT

One One Four, it's all right. He's safe!

CLIVE

(To Julia)

Pretend you're hurt!

JULIA

What?

MR. EIGHT

I was certain that...who are you?

CLIVE

(To Julia)

Pretend you've been hurt.

(To Mr. Eight)

I am Clive Jarrow.

KEVIN

Hostage Negotiator.

CLIVE

And I'm here to negotiate and end to this hostage situation.

MR. EIGHT
(Puts bag down)

Excellent! But I'm not being held hostage.

CLIVE

This woman...what? No. You're holding these people hostage.

MR. EIGHT

I am?

CLIVE

And I'm here to negotiate.

MR. EIGHT

One One Four, I don't think you defined "hostage" correctly in your linguistics report.

JULIA

Sir, it's—

CLIVE

This woman has been injured!

KEVIN

You look fine to me, Julia.

CLIVE

No! She's been hurt! Won't you please release her so that she can get medical treatment?

MR. EIGHT

One One Four, have you been injured?

JULIA

Aside from one hell of a headache, I'm feeling fine.

MR. EIGHT

Are you sure you defined "injured" properly in your linguistics report?

JULIA

Yes, I did.

KEVIN

Kid, a piece of advice. Stop now.

MR. EIGHT

I see. I understand, young human.

CLIVE

You do?

MR. EIGHT

You're obviously mad.

JULIA

He's not crazy, sir. Just a little confused.

KEVIN

Come on kid, let's go.

BULLHORN

We would like to negotiate. Please call 555-6262.

CLIVE

If you're not going to release the injured woman, then can I get you anything?

MR. EIGHT

A pineapple.

KEVIN

Oh God. You have four already.

MR. EIGHT

One went bad.

CLIVE

I don't have a pineapple.

(Julia sneaks behind Clive)

MR. EIGHT

How unfortunate.

KEVIN

Perhaps you ought to go get one.

CLIVE

I am authorized to provide you with transportation! A car. A helicopter, even!

MR. EIGHT

But I want a pineapple!

KEVIN
Do they give all the interns helicopters?

CLIVE
(To Kevin)
You're not helping!
(To Mr. Eight)
What do you say?

MR. EIGHT
I have no need for transportation.

(Julia knocks Clive out from behind, using an alien technique. Clive collapses, unconscious)

JULIA
There.

KEVIN
Whoa! What did you do?

JULIA
Like I said. I have a headache. But I'm feeling better already.

KEVIN
Is he dead?

JULIA
No, no. Just unconscious. Come on, let's get him out of the way. Grab his arms, Kevin.

KEVIN
Into the front room?

JULIA
Yeah.

(Julia and Kevin carry Clive out, right)

KEVIN
How long will he be out for?

MR. EIGHT
One One Four, what's the transfer point status?

(At some point, Julia and Kevin are offstage.
The conversation with Mr. Eight continues)

JULIA

Everything's nominal.

MR. EIGHT

But it should activate soon?

JULIA

The transfer should have happened already.

MR. EIGHT

Excellent. I wouldn't want to miss it. It's so exciting when a transfer occurs. I never tire of watching it. The energy, the sense of power, building. The entire effect is invigorating. I haven't watched a transfer for far too long.

(Kevin and Julia reenter from right)

KEVIN

That's because it's taken us almost three months to get back here.

MR. EIGHT

And too long it's been, too!

KEVIN

It would have been a lot shorter if you hadn't tried to destroy the White House.

JULIA

Now, Kevin, don't exaggerate.

KEVIN

No, of course not.

(Referring to Mr. Eight)

You merely blew a twenty-foot-wide hole in the fence.

MR. EIGHT

It was only seventeen feet four inches wide. And quite easily repaired!

KEVIN

Actually, if you had left it at that, the FBI probably wouldn't have gotten involved. But no, you had to advance on the White House, dodging bullets, shouting "Greetings from your new overlord!"

JULIA

Kevin...

MR. EIGHT

I was misinformed about your language. I meant to say "regional trade representative."

KEVIN

And all while you're in your alien form.

JULIA

Everyone thinks that was just a costume.

MR. EIGHT

What?!?

JULIA

Uh, I mean—

MR. EIGHT

Costume, indeed. I'm going to go outside right now and show them—

JULIA

No, sir! No. That would not be a good idea.

KEVIN

This has all been your fault!

JULIA

Kevin, please! We've gone through this a hundred times at least.

MR. EIGHT

Fifty-seven times.

KEVIN

Well I'm sorry. We've been on the run for three months—

MR. EIGHT

Two months, twenty-seven days—

KEVIN

And I am tired! Three months on the road. Three months of living underground with the entire country after us. Three months of...well, I won't go into what being away from my herbalist has put me through. I'm never going to leave California again. I just want this to be over. I want you to step into that pentagon, and I want your people to send back someone with half an ounce of common sense.

JULIA

Kevin!

MR. EIGHT
(Looks at safe)

My God. I'm such a fool!

Thank you.	KEVIN
Sir?	JULIA
How could I have missed that?	MR. EIGHT
I don't know, but—	KEVIN
The safe! It's broken!	MR. EIGHT (Walks over to safe)
What?	KEVIN
Zinc coins!	MR. EIGHT
You have enough pennies!	KEVIN
One can never have enough.	MR. EIGHT
I give up.	KEVIN
Sir, I've explained this.	JULIA
Those don't belong to you.	(Indicating rolls of pennies)
They do now.	MR. EIGHT (Sprays coins)
That is not how it works here.	JULIA
The frustrating thing is that occasionally there will be a pure-copper version mixed in. Presumably to fool the unwary.	MR. EIGHT (Puts rolls of pennies in his pocket)

JULIA
 Actually...never mind.

MR. EIGHT
 I neglected to check the unsecured tray.

KEVIN
 You're emptied every penny tray from here to Laramie!

JULIA
 Sir, the transfer point—

MR. EIGHT
 It's all right. Perhaps if I'm quick.

KEVIN
 Yes. Please. Go.
 (A humming is heard. The room brightens.)

MR. EIGHT
 No...I don't think I ought.

KEVIN
 Damn.

MR. EIGHT
 The power can grow faster than you might imagine.

KEVIN
 Uh-huh.

MR. EIGHT
 Can you feel it? Throbbing? Growing?

KEVIN
 Excuse me?
 (The humming is very loud. The room is very bright.)

MR. EIGHT
 Building until that final, glorious instant when time itself comes to a stop.

KEVIN
 Julia, should I stand by the circuit breakers?

JULIA
 Yes.

MR. EIGHT

Any moment now! Any moment now!

(Lights down. The humming stops suddenly. Corky is now standing in the middle of the pentagon, with a piece of paper pinned to her blouse.)

MR. EIGHT

Well, I'm reinvigorated. And you?

JULIA

Kevin, lights.

KEVIN

Hold on...

(Lights up)

CORKY

Hello there.

KEVIN

What the...? Corky?

MR. EIGHT

Hello there.

KEVIN

What are you doing here?

JULIA

Where's the supervisor?

CORKY

Mr. Eight, One One Four...I can't wait to get started!

JULIA

Okay...

CORKY

I'm so excited! We're going to do so much good work!

KEVIN

Are you all right, Corky?

CORKY

I am so lucky to work with someone as talented as you, Mr. Eight.

She's delusional.

KEVIN

Nonsense. She's obviously developed her sense of taste while she was away. Not unexpected, though I'd hardly call Outpost 761 the height of culture.

MR. EIGHT

But I didn't stay there!

CORKY

You didn't?

JULIA

I went everywhere.

CORKY

That nice, but—

KEVIN

They let you off the outpost?

JULIA

I understand now.

CORKY

Your mind has been broadened!

MR. EIGHT

Corky, where is the—?

KEVIN

I did so much! I got to visit the gun range on Netzer Prime.

CORKY

Oh, God.

JULIA

I shot off the side of a mountain!

CORKY

Did you, by chance, visit Terran-Ezra?

MR. EIGHT

The capitol planet! Yes. Your people have a very sensible outlook on political matters.

CORKY

Corky—

KEVIN

MR. EIGHT

Quite right.

JULIA

What's that attached to your clothes?

MR. EIGHT

I missed the opening of the Central Committee this year. Such a beautiful ceremony—

KEVIN

Corky! Supervisor!

BULLHORN FROM OFFSTAGE

Please hang up your telephone so we can call you and negotiate.

CORKY

What's that?

KEVIN

We're having a situation.

CORKY

What sort of—?

JULIA

Corky!

CORKY

Yes?

JULIA

Are those the orders?

CORKY

Oh my God! I almost forgot! Yes, One One Four. I was told to give these to you.

KEVIN

What do they say?

JULIA

(Reaches for note)

Just call me Julia.

CORKY

(So excited Julia can't get the note)

But there is so much beauty in your designation. One. One. Four.

JULIA
Hold still a moment. I need to get that—

CORKY
I wish they'd given me a designation, but I have to be on staff to get one.

KEVIN
Too bad.

JULIA
Corky!

CORKY
Yes?

JULIA
Hold still!

CORKY
Oh, of course.

JULIA
(Removes note from Corky)
Thank you.

CORKY
I also visited Monastery of the Great Meadow. I spoke with the Oracle.

MR. EIGHT
Good Lord? Really?
(Julia reads the note)

KEVIN
(To Julia)
What does it say?

CORKY
It was there that I learned about the Harvesters.

MR. EIGHT
To learn of the Harvesters, seated at the hooves of the Oracle. A supreme honor.

CORKY
Yes, it was.

MR. EIGHT
What did you learn?

CORKY

I had no idea that such evil could exist.

MR. EIGHT

The universe is a dangerous place.

CORKY

Especially for Earth! We have so much zinc! We're a prime target.

MR. EIGHT

Now you understand the danger.

JULIA
(Reading the note)

This can't be right.

KEVIN
(To Julia)

What?

CORKY

I was sent back here to help you. Please, tell me what I can do!

MR. EIGHT

First, I will deputize you!

CORKY

Oh my God. Thank you!

MR. EIGHT

Section thirty-seven, subsection twelve, paragraph two gives me the right to deputize locals. One One Four?

JULIA
(Reading the note)

Yes?

MR. EIGHT

Is that the correct word? "Deputize?"

JULIA

Sure.

MR. EIGHT

Superb. I designate you One One Five Six.

KEVIN

Julia?

Oh my God. JULIA

One One Five Six! CORKY

Sublime, isn't it? MR. EIGHT

Julia, what is it? KEVIN

It's perfect! CORKY

No! No no no! JULIA

What? KEVIN

I don't believe it! JULIA

Don't believe what? KEVIN

Second, I will— MR. EIGHT

General Order Three. Total evacuation. JULIA

What? Impossible! MR. EIGHT

Read it yourself. JULIA

(Mr. Eight takes orders and reads them)
CORKY

Evacuation? But—

That's what you were planning on doing anyway. KEVIN

No, Kevin. A permanent evacuation. JULIA

KEVIN

Permanent? But you said...but...

CORKY

The staff said you were going to stay here!

MR. EIGHT

I'm afraid she's right, my dear. General Order 3.

JULIA

Sir, do you have everything with you?

MR. EIGHT

Some of my things are in the front room. Next to the unsecured tray.

CORKY

If you're going back, take me with you! Please!

KEVIN

Julia? You're leaving? Forever?

JULIA

I'm sorry, Kevin, but General Order 3 is quite specific.

MR. EIGHT

Indeed. Total evacuation due to potential financial catastrophe.

JULIA

What?

CORKY

That's not right.

MR. EIGHT

It would appear that Corporate is afraid that the abundance of zinc will cause a financial crisis. Quite sensible, actually.

JULIA

But General Order 3 is for failed first contact due to cultural clash.

MR. EIGHT

That's General Order 15.

JULIA

But—

MR. EIGHT

They describe their reasoning here in paragraph forty-seven.

(Julia takes the orders and reads again)

CORKY

No, no, no! Please! You need to enlighten the rest of the world! You need to warn the Earth of the danger of the Harvesters. I can't just—

MR. EIGHT

One One Five Six!

CORKY

Yes?

MR. EIGHT

You must learn to control your outburst. That designation carries responsibilities.

CORKY

You're right. I'm sorry.

KEVIN

Evacuation due to an abundance of zinc? You can't be serious.

MR. EIGHT

Perfectly.

JULIA

He's right. Damn, I should have thought of that.

KEVIN

But what about everything else we have to offer?

MR. EIGHT

Such as?

KEVIN

I don't know...our mineral resources. Our technology.

MR. EIGHT

Aside from zinc, I have determined that there are only three things that your world has that we would want: pineapple, penguins, and the plays of Christopher Marlowe.

KEVIN

That's it?

MR. EIGHT

I'm afraid so.

CORKY

Marlowe alone should be enough for anyone.

KEVIN

But, what about, other foods? Other authors? Shakespeare?

MR. EIGHT

Everything else I have encountered here I can find better at home. And now that I have purchased a copy of Marlowe's complete works, and several pineapples we can clone, I am ready to go.

KEVIN

But what about penguins?

MR. EIGHT

Ah! That's why I have Alfred.

(Pulls a toy penguin out of the paper bag he brought on earlier)

KEVIN

But that's a stuffed penguin! A toy!

MR. EIGHT

I'm afraid it will have to do. One One Five Six?

CORKY

Yes?

MR. EIGHT

Be a dear and get the rest of my things from the front room, won't you?

CORKY

Yes, sir.

(Corky exits, right)

KEVIN

You have to go now? Why?

JULIA

I have my orders.

KEVIN

Orders? But what about us?

MR. EIGHT

One One Four is quite right.

KEVIN

Be quiet, Eight. Julia, you can't leave.

MR. EIGHT
On the contrary—

KEVIN
But I love you.

JULIA
Oh, Kevin.

KEVIN
I don't want you to go. I don't care what your damned corporation says.

JULIA
Kevin, I love you too. I wish I could stay. But I can't.

MR. EIGHT
She can't abrogate her duty just because some star-struck rustic wants her to.

KEVIN
What did you say?

JULIA
Sir—

MR. EIGHT
She knows what's truly important: preventing a collapse in the interplanetary zinc market.

KEVIN
I don't give a damn about the zinc market!

JULIA
Sir! Enough! Let me handle this.

KEVIN
And who the hell are you to argue about priorities. How many pennies have you collected, anyway?

JULIA
Kevin!

KEVIN
Let him go back. The police don't know about you. There's no reason for you to leave.

MR. EIGHT
But the—

I have to go!

JULIA

Then take me with you.

KEVIN

I can't.

JULIA

MR. EIGHT

What a fascinating idea. Your mind could use some broadening.

KEVIN

Yes you can, Julia. Just let me step through with you and everything will be—

JULIA

And everything will be terrible! Think, Kevin. Is this what you want? Cut off from your people? Are you really ready to go through the rest of your life without seeing another human face?

MR. EIGHT

I certainly am.

JULIA

You don't even know what I look like. What I really look like. You don't know what you're asking for.

KEVIN

Then show me.

(Corky screams from offstage)

CORKY

Stop it!

KEVIN

What the hell?

CLIVE

(From offstage, trying to whisper)

Quiet! You need to...

KEVIN

Clive? But he—

JULIA

He woke up.

MR. EIGHT

I'm coming, One One Five Six!

(Mr. Eight exits, right)

JULIA

Sir!

(Julia exits, right)

(Kevin unplugs the control unit and hides it)

(Mr. Eight reenters, holding Clive by the scruff of the neck. He is followed by Corky and Julia)

MR. EIGHT

Now now, what's all this about?

CORKY

He's trying to kidnap me!

CLIVE

I'm trying to rescue you.

MR. EIGHT

Good heavens, is there some sort of danger?

CLIVE

Some sort of danger?

MR. EIGHT

Or is this just another manifestation of your insanity?

CORKY

I need to get my Colt.

(Corky exits to front room)

JULIA

Sir, let him go. It was a misunderstanding.

MR. EIGHT

How do you mean?

JULIA

A mistranslation. English is a very tricky language.

MR. EIGHT

I'm beginning to see that.

(Mr. Eight lets Clive go)

CLIVE

Sir, since you don't seem to want transportation, I have another proposal for you.

MR. EIGHT

That's good to hear, but I'm afraid you're too late. Our trade mission has been withdrawn.

CLIVE

I'm prepared to...what?

KEVIN

Don't pay any attention to him. He's, you know...
(Kevin makes "crazy" gesture with this hand)

MR. EIGHT

I'm not about to give birth!

JULIA

No, sir. That gesture doesn't mean...among humans, it means, um, very important.

MR. EIGHT

Ah. Of course. But why would he not listen to me because I'm important?

CLIVE

I am prepared to offer myself, in exchange for Ms. Lee.

MR. EIGHT

Offer yourself? Don't tell me you want a designation as well.

CLIVE

If you release Ms. Lee, I will remain here, as your hostage.

JULIA

There's no need for that, Clive.

KEVIN

Very brave, though.

CORKY

(Enters from right)

What happened to the store? Where is everything?

CLIVE

I am prepared to—

JULIA

He is prepared to help debrief One One Five Six.

MR. EIGHT

I see! Excellent!

CORKY
Debrief me?

JULIA
To help her re-integrate into human society.

CORKY
Human society? But I'm going to go back with you!

JULIA
Isn't that right, Clive?

CLIVE
Uh...yes? Yes!

CORKY
But...

MR. EIGHT
She's quite right.

CORKY
But you can't leave me here! You don't understand!

KEVIN
Understand what?

CORKY
The real reason you've been recalled.

MR. EIGHT
A potential collapse in the interplanetary—

CORKY
No, that's not it at all.

JULIA
What, then?

CORKY
When I arrived, three months ago, I had...I had the Panda Blue in my pocket.
They took it from me and...and cloned some pandas.

KEVIN
So?

CLIVE
Panda Blue? That's just a myth.

What are pandas?
MR. EIGHT

Nothing that you need to—
JULIA

They accelerated the growth and—
CORKY

Oh no! Corky...
KEVIN

Now, Corky, there's no need to—
JULIA

Panda bears are the Harvesters!
CORKY

What?!?
MR. EIGHT

No they are not.
JULIA

Yes they are!
CORKY

What are the Harvesters?
CLIVE

Panda bears...are the Harvesters? Is this true, One One Four?
MR. EIGHT

Well, sir, pandas do resemble somewhat the traditional appearance of the Harvesters.
JULIA

The Harvesters are on this planet?!?
MR. EIGHT

Sir, the creatures are non-sentient, mostly docile—
JULIA

And they eat bamboo. Not zinc.
KEVIN

Exactly.
JULIA

CORKY

They're cunning, One One Four. Don't let them fool you!

MR. EIGHT

My advice exactly.

CLIVE

Who's cunning? The pandas?

MR. EIGHT

Exactly. One One Four, why didn't I read any of this in your report?

JULIA

Because there was nothing to report!

MR. EIGHT

Even the possibility—

KEVIN

These are panda bears!

MR. EIGHT

We will discuss this later, One One Four. But now we must prepare to return immediately and destroy the transfer point, lest these panda bears attempt to mount some sort of invasion.

CLIVE

(To Kevin)

Do you understand what's going on?

CORKY

No! Don't leave me here with them!

JULIA

One One Five Six, I have a mission for you.

CORKY

A mission?

JULIA

To spread the word about the Harvesters.

CORKY

I don't understand.

JULIA

You asked what you could do to help.

Yes, but—
CORKY

You must warn humanity!
JULIA

Warn humanity about panda bears?
CLIVE

An excellent idea, One One Four!
MR. EIGHT

But I thought that—
CORKY

You have a duty, One One Five Six. A duty to teach humanity about the Harvesters.
JULIA

Sir, do I really have to?
CORKY
(To Mr. Eight)

What are these Harvesters you keep talking about?
CLIVE

Oh, God, here we go.
KEVIN

Teach him, One One Five Six.
JULIA

Teach him...about the Harvesters?
CORKY

Exactly. But not here.
JULIA

You mean...on my own? But I need you!
CORKY

Go with Clive. He'll take you to a group of people who need to be taught.
JULIA

But One One Four—
CORKY

JULIA

Enough One One Five Six! We all have our duty. You too. Think of the difference you could make. Humanity needs to be warned.

CLIVE

About the cunning panda bears.

KEVIN

Demonic, actually.

CORKY

Yes, they do.

MR. EIGHT

I concur.

JULIA

Thank you, sir.

MR. EIGHT

This is a primitive, backwater world.

KEVIN

Says you.

MR. EIGHT

Blessed by their abundance of zinc and pineapple, they are ignorant of the dangers of the universe. You, One One Five Six, have been chosen. Do you think that you stepped into the transfer point accidentally? You have been chosen by God to be the one who brings the truth to your people.

CORKY

The Oracle told me I was to embark on a great quest.

CLIVE

Um, excuse me?

JULIA
(To Clive)

Shut up kid.

(Louder)

Exactly! Chosen to reveal the truth!

MR. EIGHT

Rejoice! Your name will be remembered throughout the ages as the one who brought wisdom to this world.

Rejoice!

JULIA
(Julia gestures to Kevin)

Um, rejoice.

KEVIN

Rejoice! For you alone have been chosen for this task of the ages!

MR. EIGHT

I have been chosen!

CORKY

Rejoice.

JULIA & KEVIN

Rejoice.

CLIVE

Rejoice!

MR. EIGHT
Rejoice! Because of your dedication, your world will start to take its first, hesitant steps out of primitive barbarism.

An end to barbarism!

CORKY

Rejoice!

JULIA & CLIVE

Preach on.

KEVIN

Rejoice!

MR. EIGHT

I understand. Thank you.

CORKY

Young human?

MR. EIGHT

That's you.

JULIA
(To Clive)

Huh? Yes?

CLIVE

MR. EIGHT

Escort One One Five Six from this place, so that she may begin her ministry.

CLIVE

Uh, sure. But what about these two?

JULIA

Leave us! We will remain!

MR. EIGHT

One One Five Six, did you learn the *Hymn of the Beginning*?

KEVIN

Just get her out of here.

CLIVE

Okay, but—

KEVIN

Go!

CLIVE

(Opens trapdoor)

Okay. Come on, Ms. Lee.

(Clive directs Corky through the trapdoor)

CORKY

(Climbs through the trapdoor)

In the time before history,
In the time before knowledge;
The worlds were full of plenty.
And then they came.

CLIVE

Uh, okay.

MR. EIGHT

Selah!

(Clive climbs through trapdoor)

CORKY

We know not where they lived.
We know not where they traveled.
We know not what they wanted.
Except one thing.

MR. EIGHT

Selah!

Good luck.
CLIVE
(Clive shuts trapdoor)

Thank God.
JULIA

Good performance, Eight.
KEVIN

Performance? What do you mean?
MR. EIGHT

Never mind.
KEVIN

One One Four, attend to the transfer point. Human, may I request your assistance?
MR. EIGHT

With what?
KEVIN

Follow me.
MR. EIGHT

(Mr. Eight and Kevin exit, right.)
(Clive enters from trapdoor)

Pssst!
CLIVE

Clive! Get out of here!
JULIA

Come with me!
CLIVE

We've already gone through this, Clive.
JULIA

You don't understand! When I was in the front, I called my boss. They're going to send a team in.
CLIVE

Okay, okay...um...Mr. Eight...I mean The Octagon. He's unstable. Still.
JULIA

CLIVE

I told them...I told them that he didn't seem dangerous. They're going to end this.

JULIA

That's not a good idea.

CLIVE

Come on, Julia. He's delusional, but he's not going to hurt you. The sooner this is over, the better.

JULIA

But that's so...ten minutes, Clive. Just give me ten minutes.

CLIVE

I'll try. But why?

JULIA

He's not trustworthy!

CLIVE

But—

JULIA

I can't explain.

CLIVE

They're not going to call off—

(A noise is heard, from offstage right)

JULIA

They're coming. Go! Now!

CLIVE

But—

JULIA

Go!

CLIVE

Good luck.

(Clive exits)

JULIA

(Noticing the missing control module)

What the...?

(Mr. Eight and Kevin enter, right. Mr. Eight is carrying his valise and a copy of the complete works of Christopher Marlowe. Kevin is carrying three pineapples)

MR. EIGHT
Put them down over there.

JULIA
Where did it go?

MR. EIGHT
What, One One Four?

JULIA
The control unit.

MR. EIGHT
The control unit is missing?

JULIA
Yes! It was right here. Kevin, do you know where it went?

KEVIN
Maybe Clive took it. Or Corky.

MR. EIGHT
That's a possibility. One One Five Six's enthusiasm was quite—

JULIA
She was never out of my sight.

KEVIN
Well, maybe it's behind a box or—

JULIA
We've got to find it! Right now!

MR. EIGHT
Now?

JULIA
They're going to storm the building.

KEVIN
Who?

JULIA
The police! Clive snuck back in and told me. We got ten minutes, at the most.

KEVIN
Let's let Mr. Eight take care of this.

JULIA
What?!?

MR. EIGHT
Do you think I can?

JULIA
No, sir! There are too many of them.

KEVIN
You should go talk to them. Negotiate.

JULIA
What?!? Kevin—

MR. EIGHT
At one point I would have agreed. I am quite charming.

KEVIN
Of course you are.

MR. EIGHT
But other than you and One One Five Six, I have met no reasonable humans since I arrived. And even you threatened to eat Alfred.

JULIA
Kevin, what are you doing? We can't let him go out there.

KEVIN
You'll be brilliant, Mr. Eight.

MR. EIGHT
My negotiation skills are legendary. Maybe—

JULIA
No!

KEVIN
What other choice do we have?

JULIA
Find that damned box!

KEVIN
Julia, we should talk to them. We can't risk getting overrun.

MR. EIGHT

I should try. What's the worst that could happen?

JULIA

The worst? Let me tell you. They will not negotiate. They will capture you, sir, and they will capture me. And then, if we're lucky, we'll spend the rest of our lives in some research facility in the middle of Nevada. And if we're unlucky, on a dissecting table.

MR. EIGHT

Are you serious, One One Four?

KEVIN

But they don't know that you're an alien.

JULIA

Yes, I'm serious. And once they figure out what Mr. Eight is, they'll come after me.

MR. EIGHT

Nevada?!?

KEVIN

I won't let that happen to you, Julia.

JULIA

You won't have any choice. Yes Nevada.

MR. EIGHT

That place with all those hideous slot machines?

KEVIN

But...I can protect you, Julia. I can—

JULIA

No, you can't. Yes, sir, the place with the slot machines.

MR. EIGHT

We've got to find that control unit!

JULIA

I'm looking!

MR. EIGHT

One One Four, how much time do we have?

JULIA

Six, seven minutes.

It must be nearby. MR. EIGHT

If we can't find it. JULIA

General Order One. MR. EIGHT

I concur. JULIA

Human, help us look. MR. EIGHT

General Order One? KEVIN

No. Kevin, get out of here. JULIA

Why? What are you going to do? KEVIN

Get out there. Distract the police. Give us as much time as you can. If we can't find the control unit... JULIA

What? KEVIN

When a mission goes disastrously wrong, and the agents can't escape, that leaves only one other alternative. MR. EIGHT

We can't let a primitive society capture our technology. Or us. JULIA

Julia... KEVIN

So we destroy it. JULIA

And you? KEVIN

You need to leave, Kevin. JULIA

You're going to...kill yourselves? KEVIN

Go, Kevin. Now. JULIA

But— KEVIN

I love you. Go. JULIA

But— KEVIN

The best thing you can do is buy us time. If we can find the control unit— JULIA

She's quite right. MR. EIGHT

You can't do that. KEVIN

I don't want to, but...I can. And I will. Now go. JULIA

No. Stop! It's here! It's here! KEVIN
(Gets control box from where it is hidden)

What? JULIA

I'm sorry. I thought— KEVIN

You hid it? JULIA

I didn't want you to leave. I'm sorry. Please, hook it up. Quickly! KEVIN.

(Hooks control box to transfer point) JULIA

You didn't want us to leave? MR. EIGHT

I didn't want her to leave. KEVIN

And me? MR. EIGHT

There was minimal discharge. The transfer point will be ready to go in a few minutes. JULIA
(Julia takes communicator out of pocket)

Julia, I'm— KEVIN

Ship? JULIA
(To communicator)

Yeah, babe? SHIP

Execute auto-return to Outpost 761. JULIA

Are you sure? I was sort of hoping— SHIP

This is a General Order Three evacuation. JULIA

Oh, I see. See you on the other side. SHIP

Julia? KEVIN

What? JULIA

I'm sorry. KEVIN

Three minutes to full charge. Sir, if you'll get ready. JULIA

Of course.

MR. EIGHT

(Moves valise, book, pineapples and himself into transfer point)

JULIA

I've programmed the components of the transfer point to self-destruct after we transfer.

KEVIN

Julia!

(Julia looks at Kevin)

I never meant to hurt you. I...I just can't imagine living without you. I'm sorry. I love you. I'm sorry.

JULIA

Kevin.

KEVIN

Please don't go. No...no! Go. You're right. God only know what they would do to you.

JULIA

Kevin, I...damn it! After what you did...I love you too, Kevin.
(Julia and Kevin kiss)

KEVIN

Let me come with you.

JULIA

It would be a mistake.

KEVIN

Please?

MR. EIGHT

It would be interesting.

KEVIN

Whatever it is, I could handle it.

JULIA

Please, Kevin. Trust me on this. Stay here. Live a normal life, as best you can.

KEVIN

(Takes wedding ring out of pocket)

Here.

But Kevin, I can't—

JULIA

I still want you to have it.

KEVIN

Thank you.

JULIA

So you won't forget me.

KEVIN

JULIA
I'm not going to forget you! Kevin, all my life I've believed that relationships, marriage, even love were something for other people. I even thought I was lucky not to have to deal with it, that I could instead strive for "something higher" out of life.

But you showed me that was all a bunch of crap. You gave me something I never thought I would have. Or should have. At home, people are going to be upset over what I've done. My family included. But my only regret is that I'll see you again. I wish I could stay here with you. I with you could protect me. But you can't. Our relationship has to end. Now.

(A humming is heard)

When I was assigned this mission, I looked up Earth's sun on a star chart and found it in the night sky. It turns out I can see it from my house. Before I left, I sat in an old chair in my and just stared at night sky, for hours, trying to guess what wonders what I would find here on Earth. I never imagined it would be you.

I will never forget you, Kevin Porter. And I will always love you.

(The humming gets louder)
MR. EIGHT

It's time to go, One One Four.

KEVIN
(Hugs Julia. While hugging, he picks her pocket and takes her communicator)

Take care of yourself.

JULIA
You too.

KEVIN
Go.

(The humming is very loud)

JULIA

Goodbye.

(Julia releases Kevin and hurries to the transfer point).

MR. EIGHT

Goodbye, Kevin. Thank you for a most interesting three months.

KEVIN

You too Eight.

(The humming is extremely loud)

JULIA

I love you Kevin. I—

(The lights go out. There is silence. Julia and Mr. Eight are gone. Kevin walks to the circuit breaker box and turns the lights back on)

KEVIN

I love you too.

(Kevin plugs phone back in. He picks up and dials)

KEVIN

Hello? Yes, this is Kevin Porter...Everything's under control...I'll be outside in two minutes...No, the...the Octagon is letting us go...right.

(Hangs up the phone)

KEVIN

(Into communicator)

Ship?

SHIP

Yes?

KEVIN

This is Kevin.

SHIP

Hey, stud. Is One One Four there?

KEVIN

She's left with Eight. You're leaving?

SHIP
Yes. I'm returning to Outpost 761. By myself.

KEVIN
Where are you?

SHIP
Hidden. Off the coast.

KEVIN
Could you direct me to your location?

SHIP
Well, handsome, I could, but I shouldn't.

KEVIN
How would you like some company on the trip back?

SHIP
You want to ride back with me to Outpost 761?

KEVIN
Yes.

SHIP
It's against every rule in the book. I can't let you do it.

KEVIN
I figured.

SHIP
Fortunately the communicator you're holding manually overrides my security measures.

KEVIN
Really?

SHIP
But only in person, big guy.

KEVIN
So...

SHIP
I'm leaving in twelve hours. Will the police be a problem?

KEVIN

I think I know away around them. I'll call you for directions once I'm on the road.

(Turns communicator off. Opens basement door)

Hang on, Julia. I'm coming.

(Kevin climbs into basement and shuts the door. Lights down.)

THE END