

THE CROSSING

March 2005

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

A dark, alien planet, hanging in space, is seen against a limitless star-field.

EXT. ALIEN PLANET - NIGHT

The landscape of the planet, known as Planet X, is jagged and hostile. And utterly barren with no signs of life. In the foreground is an artificial structure. A dark, metallic tetrahedron.

INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - NIGHT

The star-filled night sky is visible through a triangular window. In the foreground is the silhouette of a woman's face (NIGARA). As the camera recedes, we see she is lying on what looks like an operating table. Her eyes are closed. She may be asleep. Or dead. There is very little light.

Her body is naked. In close up, we see the landscape of her body. The camera travels from her thigh, up over her hips and along her abdomen. Her chest is moving slightly. She is breathing. She is alive.

She screams suddenly, her eyes open wide. She sees the night sky and the stars writhing like maggots, eating through the fabric of the blackness. Her vision stabilises, comes back to normal and the stars regain their real appearance.

NIGARA

(to herself, in a voice verging on  
madness)

Twinkle, twinkle little star.

(in a calmer voice, but  
recognisably the same person)

How I wonder what you are.

(voice of madness, but relaxing  
now)

Up above the world you fly.

(voice of reason)

Like a diamond in the sky.

(voice of madness)

Like a diamond... Like a die. Die!

(losing control again)

I hate you! All of you! Every last little,  
twinkling star. You taunt me with your short  
lives, burning quickly, shining brightly.  
Then fading, dying. Going out. Gone.

(the voice of reason, calming,  
full of kindness, reassuring)

The stars are our friends. Our only friends.  
Do you think they are all still there? Shall  
we see?

(the voice of madness, calmer  
again)

One, two, three, four....

#### EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The alien planet is suspended in the blackness of space. One of the stars in the background is noticeably brighter than all the others. Planet X seems to be moving towards this star. In the distance, a blue-green planet that wasn't visible before, can just be distinguished. It could be the Earth.

#### INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - NIGHT

NIGARA is seen from above, on the operating table. Her ankles and wrists are held in place by metal clasps.

In close up on her thigh, a pustule forms beneath the skin. It is broken down, disappearing back into normal healthy skin. Another, and another form, this time they are coming faster than they can be stopped. Her body is soon covered with cysts, boils and putrefaction. NIGARA screams herself awake again. Her face is a mass of decay. The nightmare fades, her skin returns to normal.

NIGARA

(to herself in a tired but  
reasonable voice)

For so long, sleep was our only refuge, our  
only escape from this waking prison. Now,  
even there we are no longer free.

(She starts counting again)

One, two, three, four...

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Planet X passes the blue-green planet seen previously. There are no surface features. It is cloud-shrouded. Now the distinctive shape of Saturn can be seen in the distance. The one bright star is brighter still.

INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - NIGHT

NIGARA

(the mad voice but concentrating)

Seven thousand, five hundred and twenty-one,  
seven thousand, five hundred and twenty-two,  
seven thousand, five hundred and twenty-  
three. All done. They are all still there.  
No-one has deserted us.

(the reasonable voice)

Good.

(the mad voice, now losing control)

I want it to end. I want it to be over. I  
can't go on. I want to die.

(the reasonable voice, firmly)

Me too. But if you lose our mind, we will  
both stay in this hell forever. To die we  
have to remain sane. Understand? Now get a  
grip.

(mad voice, relaxing now)

You're right. I know you are right. It is  
just so hard. To keep going.

(the calm voice)

Sleep now. It won't be much longer.

#### INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - NIGHT

We see a close up of NIGARA's skin. The camera drills down into the flesh, through fibres and fat reserves, past pumping blood vessels and organs into a cell. It keeps going, magnifying, past cell structures, mitochondria and into the nucleus. In the middle, we see the chromosomes, double helixes of DNA. And at the molecular level, there are tiny structures, machines, microscopic robots, working to repair damaged sequences of chromosome. These are the nanobots that keep her body intact. Countless trillions of them.

There is a shudder. A seismic tremor. NIGARA wakes. There is bright light coming from below the horizon. It hurts her eyes. The light, yellowish at first then shades to red. NIGARA squirms her eyes shut. A tear of blood trickles down her cheek. Her skin colour is discernible for the first time in the reflected light. She is black.

A red light blinks on the wall behind her. An automatic system darkens the glass in the window, reducing the brilliance of the invasive light. We see nanobots working to repair the damage to NIGARA's retina. She opens her eyes to see the rings of Saturn, enormous and brilliant, dominating the sky, through a reddish hue.

NIGARA

(the voice of madness)

Get away. You are too close. You are hurting  
my eyes with your rings.

(struggling to move her bound arms)

Rings of power that bind us.

(the voice of reason)

Saturn! It must be, can only be, the rings  
of Saturn. We are almost home. Hold on just  
a little longer. Hold on, like the others.

(the voice of madness)

Others. Yes, the others. ENKI. I miss you so  
much, ENKI.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Planet X passes close to one of the larger moons of Jupiter. Its shadow  
passes over the surface of Planet X.

INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - NIGHT

No stars are visible through the window. The sky has gone black.

NIGARA

(voice of madness)

They've died! All the stars are dead!

(voice of reason)

No, the stars are still there. It is just a  
shadow.

(voice of madness)

But I can't see them. I can't count them. I  
want to count them! I need to count them.

(voice of reason)

Look who is here.

A man's hand, a black hand, runs gently over NIGARA's thigh. We cannot see the face, but he has a muscled torso.

NIGARA

(the voice of madness, calm now)

ENKI. ENKI, my darling. Come to me, my love.

He bends over to embrace her. Then moves to lie on top of her. His image fades as she falls into sleep.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Planet X passes in front of Jupiter. The glaring eye of the Great Red Spot looks on.

INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - LOW LIGHT

There is a beep from the life support computer on the wall. The inside of the tetrahedron is lit with a gentle radiance emerging progressively from the ceiling. The bindings on NIGARA's arms and legs release automatically. Another clasp emerges from the table and holds her around the waist. She begins to move her arms and legs, imperceptibly at first. They are very stiff after centuries immobilised. She manages to move slightly the tip of one finger. She manages to smile, with equal difficulty.

Time lapses to show the painful re-education NIGARA has to go through to regain the movement of her limbs.

Once she is able to move her hands and legs normally she cannot keep still. Her legs are in constant movement. Her fingers run everywhere over her body, touching whatever they can reach.

NIGARA

(the voice of madness)

Look.

(holding her hand in front of her  
eyes)

I can move.

(the voice of reason)

Don't let it go to your head. You cannot let  
go now, when we are so close to our goal.

(clasping her head with both hands)

I'm holding on!

(the voice of reason)

I just hope ENKI is doing the same.

EXT. ALIEN PLANET - NIGHT

Nestling in the dark landscape of Planet X, we see there are a total of  
four tetrahedral structures. A meteor streaks across the night sky. Then  
a shower of meteors. They burn up high above the prison structures,  
hitting some kind of invisible force field.

INT. THE TETRAHEDRON - LOW LIGHT

The life support computer beeps several times. NIGARA turns her head to  
look at it.

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

You are awake NIGARA.

NIGARA

(the voice of madness)

NIGARA. My name. I haven't heard it spoken  
in so long.

(she pinches herself)

Yes, I am awake.

(the voice of reason)



Reply!

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

You are awake, NIGARA, according to my sensors. Please confirm.

NIGARA

(realising she has not spoken out loud, huskily, finding it difficult to talk, the voice of madness and the voice of reason fuse)

Yes.

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

We are approaching Earth. Your incarceration is coming to an end. I have been instructed to authorise your return to Earth only if you have retained your sanity. Do you understand?

NIGARA

Yes.

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

I will ask you three questions to ascertain the state of your mind. Your future depends on the answers you give. Think very carefully before replying to each question. Please say the word "ready" when you want me to begin.

NIGARA

Ready.

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

What is your name?

NIGARA

(the voice of madness, creeping  
back into her tone of voice but  
talking in her head)

Joan of Arc! What do you think?

(the voice of reason)

Don't screw up. We'll regret it for a very  
long time!

(out loud)

NIGARA.

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

How old are you?

NIGARA

Something over four thousand three hundred  
years. I can't remember exactly. I haven't  
been counting.

(the mad voice sniggers a little  
to herself)

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

Why do you want to return to Earth?

NIGARA

To die.

There is a pause, then the clasp around the waist of NIGARA releases.

LIFE SUPPORT COMPUTER

Transit to Earth will take place in  
approximately two weeks time. Please take  
the opportunity to do some physical exercise.  
It will help you regain the use of your body  
after the period of immobilisation.

NIGARA tries to get up but cannot. She is too stiff. With effort she  
manages to raise herself onto one elbow. Then she swings her legs off