

'THE OUTER LIMITS'

'THE BELLEROPHON SHIELD'

Teleplay

by

Joseph Stefano

Television Story

by

Lou Morheim and Joseph Stefano

Based on a
short story by
Arthur Leo Zagat

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Story #20

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FADE IN: (ACT ONE)

~~Patricia~~ - STOCK & WHITE
Co. I.A.

1

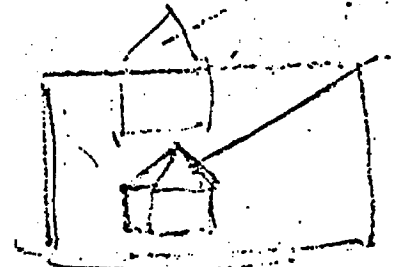
EXT. THE BELLERO MANSION - NIGHT

Big, tasteful, isolated. An expensive car parked in the driveway. Light coming from a top floor room. Quiet and stillness, and then, sharply and shockingly, a bright, white beam of light shoots out of the roof of the house, darts into the night sky, like a vivid, amplified searchlight. It is a narrow beam, and it emanates, obviously, through a skylight in the top floor room. It holds a moment, then withdraws, only to dart out again, and again withdraw. During this:

X-DISS FROM I.A.
TO BLACK

CONTROL VOICE

There is a passion in the human heart which is called aspiration. It flares with a noble flame, and by its light Man has traveled from the caves of darkness to the darkness of outer space.



CAMERA MOVES IN toward the house, ANGLING LOW upon a ground-level cellar window. A light behind this dusty, squat window goes on. As CAMERA reaches window, we:

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

2

INT. THE WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

2

A narrow aisle between floor-to-ceiling bins. At the far end of the aisle, stairs to the floor above. A WOMAN is coming down the stairs. Over this:

CONTROL VOICE

(continuing)

But when this passion becomes lust, when its flame is fanned by greed and private hunger, then Aspiration becomes Ambition -- by which sin the angels fell.

The woman has come down the aisle, is close to CAMERA. She pauses, inspects the wines in the f.g. bin. She is MRS. JUDITH BELLERO. She is about thirty, tall and angular and commandingly lovely. There is a soft, withdrawn quality about her, a reserve which can easily be mistaken for gentleness, even tenderness, but which is, in reality, an artful and studied mask for passionate, consuming ambition. Her voice is warm, almost languid; it matches the pure white velvet hostess gown she wears. Hearing a sound from the stairs, a sound we do not hear, she calls softly:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDITH

Mrs. Dame?

In response to her call, a WOMAN comes down the stairs, continues along aisle until she is close to Judith. She is MRS. DAME. She has a dark, distant foreignness about her, an agelessness -- she could be twenty-five or fifty or any age inbetween. Her movements are graceful and precise; her expression is withdrawn, almost brooding. She wears a high-necked, tight-sleeved housecoat which hangs almost to the floor. She is perfectly, elegantly groomed; except that she wears no shoes. There is an echo of fire-blooded royalty about her; she is Judith's housekeeper and confidante. She waits in silence until Judith has made a selection and pointed to it; then she removes the chosen bottle from its bin, checks its label as if to approve or disapprove, holds it away from her, blows off the dust, hands it to Judith, steps aside to let Judith return up the aisle, follows. And we:

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

INT. RICHARD BELLERO'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

On top floor of the house. A skylight with sliding panels dominates the room; directly below it, a table on which stands an instrument for transmitting a laser beam. The beam is transmitting, darting out through the open skylight and into the night sky. RICHARD BELLERO stands before the table, is adjusting controls. He is just past forty, a man with an infirm grip on reality, an astro-physicist who has grown up nurtured by his father's wealth and his own dreams. He is good, and kind; and while he is not exactly weak, his potential strength has rarely been needed and therefore remains untapped -- if not atrophied. He makes a final adjustment, succeeds in holding the laser beam steady and constant. He smiles a small smile, turns to his father, BELLERO, SR., a powerful-faced man with the impatient eyes and pre-occupied manner of men who have been powerful too long and know it.

ONE OR TWO
KID IS TO
LESTACUS!
OTHER
SHOTS
FLORES-
CENT
TUICE

SENIOR

It holds steady.

RICHARD

Yes.

SOME SHOTS
WITH FEAR
OUT OF THE
OF PIC.

He realizes that the feat does not impress his father. He smiles again, but only to conceal his sense of rejection -- a sense with which he is intimately familiar but to which he can never become accustomed.

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR

(rising)

It's been a long evening,
Richard.

RICHARD

Has it, father?

SENIOR

(going to door)

Tell your wife I enjoyed my
dinner.

RICHARD

(a rueful smile)

She might like to hear it from
you.

Judith appears at the door, causing Senior to stop short. A swift glance tells her the precise mood of the moment; a fury flashes momentarily in her eyes; then, smiling, she extends the wine bottle.

JUDITH

Your favorite year, father.

SENIOR

(pauses)

Next time, Judith.

(a perfunctory
smile)

Good night, now.

He goes around Judith, goes out.

RICHARD

I'll walk you to your car.

He hurries to the door. When he reaches it, Judith puts a hand on his arm, restrains him. We hear Senior's footsteps going down the stairs. Judith whispers in a calm, velvet voice.

JUDITH

Yes?

RICHARD

(embarrassed;
painfully)

He'd already made his decision
... before he came tonight.

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

(same tone; a
small smile)

Not in your favor.

RICHARD

No. Someone from the Canadian
branch.

(calling out door)

Be with you in a moment, father.

JUDITH

He passes over his own son, in
favor of a stranger?

RICHARD

(a bit irritated)

He isn't stepping down from the
throne, Judith; he's retiring
from the presidency of a company
he owns and controls! Blood
has nothing to do with his
choice of a... successor.

He moves free of her touch, goes out. Judith stands there a moment, listening to his footsteps hurrying down the stairs. She holds the wine bottle clutched tight in her hands, as if strangling it; a dark, dreadful frustration seizes her mind and body, makes her almost tremble. As if enraged by her inability to strangle the bottle, she flings it across the room. The act gives her some relief; she forces control upon herself, walks in measured steps across the lab, looking at the varied equipment as if disgusted with it. She reaches the table, sees the unbroken wine bottle, bends to pick it up, puts it down on the metal top of the table. She stares in deep, deadly rage at the laser beam, follows its shaft with her eyes, stares up at the sky. Richard returns, pauses in the doorway.

RICHARD

He didn't wait.

She says nothing; he comes into the room.

RICHARD

(continuing)

It's always made him uncomfortable
-- having to turn me down.

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

Your laser light didn't impress him, did it, Richard?

RICHARD

(a self-depreciating grin)

It isn't anything original, Judith. I'd merely supposed... I'd found a new use for it.

(pauses; smiles)

The Bellerro Corporation is no longer interested in... "Destructive appliances." His phrase.

JUDITH

Is it destructive, Richard?

Richard smiles, slightly surprised; she turns, sees the expression.

JUDITH

(continuing; with a smile)

Didn't you know I was interested in your work?

RICHARD

It's recent, isn't it?

JUDITH

(a look at the laser instrument)

It began with this.

(pauses)

Have you ever heard of the Bifrost, Richard?

RICHARD

No.

JUDITH

It's also called the "Trembling Way." It's the bridge between earth and heaven.

(looks at him; smiles)

Scandinavian mythology.

(looks at laser)

I thought of this as our Bifrost... the trembling way to... what for me would be heaven; Power, far-flung holdings... undiminishable authority...

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

(a sardonic smile)

And all along I thought all you wanted was for me to make some small contribution to mankind.

JUDITH

Not small, Richard. The things I want for you... are not small.

RICHARD

(looks away;
pauses)

I'm sorry, Judith. Unless my father changes his mind, which he won't, the only thing I'll be able to give you in large amounts is... money.

She realizes that he is hurt, knows she must give him a solatium. She moves close, places her hands gently on his face, turns it until he is looking at her. Then, whispering warmly:

JUDITH

And love.

He reacts as she meant him to; he takes her close, almost fiercely into his arms, holds her as if he were clinging to her.

RICHARD

(fervently)

Will that keep you, Judith?
Will love keep you?

She kisses him to avoid answering, giving him the impression that the kiss is an answer in the positive. Then she moves away, picks up bottle of wine.

JUDITH

Would you return this, Richard?
We'll open it the next time your father comes to dinner.

RICHARD

Will there be a next time?

She doesn't answer. He takes the bottle, looks at her regretfully. She laughs suddenly, a soft, enchanting laugh, grabs the bottle back.

(CONTINUED)

7.
3

3 CONTINUED: (5)

JUDITH
No. Bring us two glasses.
Crystal. Ask Mrs. Dame to
polish them. We'll drink to...
(looks at laser)
... our trembling way.

Richard smiles, slightly cheered; he goes to the door, looks back, goes out. The moment he is gone, the false warmth drains from Judith's face. She puts the bottle down, hard, stares down at the table, grips its edge as if to control her rage. And staring down, her eye is caught by a small gun-like object. She studies it a moment, then picks it up, holds it as one holds a pistol. Then, as if obeying an impulse to ruin and destroy the shatterers of her hopes, she aims the object at the wine bottle, fires.

HOLD LAST 16 FRAMES FOR REAM.

4 INSERT - WINE BOTTLE ON LAB TABLE

4

As it is hit by a laser beam that is as slender as a spurt of ink shot out of a fountain pen. The bottle turns pure white as it is hit, disappears in a fraction of a second, even before the laser beam has withdrawn into the gun.

5 BACK TO SHOT

5

Judith stares at the spot where the bottle stood, then looks at the gun in her hand, raises a slightly appreciative brow. Then, suddenly, her expression changes, she holds still in faint apprehension, as she hears a sudden, chilling sound, a kind of low screeching wail. It comes from above, through the open skylight. Judith looks up, sees nothing but the laser beam, frowns more in wonder now than in apprehension. The sound grows louder, more terrible. Judith takes a step or two closer to the laser instrument, looks up. And a smear of terror-awe twists her face.

6 JUDITH - ECU

6

As she stares up, paralyzed with shock and fear. The wail is louder now, closer.

7 WHAT SHE SEES

8.

7

The laser beam against the black sky; SHOT framed by skylight. And in the beam, caught and held, as in a pipe, an inhuman CREATURE. It seems to be resisting the confinement and pull of the beam; and it is failing, is sliding, slipping downward toward skylight opening, its long fingers grasping at air, as if it were trying to save itself from being sucked down a drain.

8 JUDITH - ECU

8

Frozen in terror, mouth open, making not a sound; unable to move back or to even look away; the laser gun in her limp hand, forgotten.

9 THE CREATURE IN THE LASER BEAM

9

It screeches, fights, grasps; and it fails, is sucked down into CAMERA.

10 INT. LAB - FULL - NIGHT

10

As the screeching Creature emerges from the tube-prison of the light beam, crashes down on the lab table, is thrown against Judith, sending her backward, causing her to stumble and fall against the wall. And still she is unable to make a sound.

The Creature regains his balance, staggers, his arms upheld in confusion, his glance darting about as if trying to orient himself to the world of a new nightmare. And then he sees Judith. He stops still, stares at her.

11 JUDITH - CREATURE'S POV

11

Lying where she fell, against the far wall, fear and shock in her eyes, the laser gun in her hand.

12 INT. LAB - FULL - NIGHT

12

A moment, and the Creature takes a step toward Judith. Then another. The third shakes Judith out of her shock-paralysis. She doesn't move, only slightly changes her expression. She merely raises the laser gun, aims it at the Creature, and fires.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

13 INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY OF BELLERO MANSION - NIGHT

13

Dark, grim, old-fashioned; small, narrow; lined with cupboards. Mrs. Dame stands at the counter, slowly polishes a crystal wine glass. The other glass is on the counter, is already polished. Its facets catch the light; and Mrs. Dame stares at the reflection flashes, as if hypnotized by them. Richard stands at the door, leans there, stares at nothing, is a still life of rejection.

RICHARD
(after a moment;
quietly)

Mrs. Dame?

She neither looks at him nor answers; he continues as if accustomed to this absence of response.

RICHARD
(continuing)
Does my wife confide in you...
about me?

MRS. DAME
Sometimes, when she is dreaming,
I am there. So she dreams aloud.

RICHARD
Has she ever "dreamed" about...
leaving me?

Mrs. Dame puts down the polishing cloth, takes up both crystal glasses, turns and faces Richard.

MRS. DAME
For what?

He frowns, not comprehending.

MRS. DAME
(continuing;
clarifying)
Leaving you for what?

RICHARD
(pauses; smiles
sardonically)
Some other pretender... to
some more accessible throne..

(CONTINUED)

MRS. DAME

(pauses)

Mrs. Bellerio is loyal.

RICHARD

Yes.. But...

(pauses)

... to whom?

Judith appears in the doorway, behind Richard. Mrs. Dame looks at her, instantly concerned. Richard turns, looks at Judith. She stands in terrifying calm, her face expressionless, the laser gun still in her hand.

RICHARD

(a frown; softly)

Judith?

(when she does
not respond)

What is it?

He notices the gun, almost backs away, as if on an unconscious instinct, as Judith enters the pantry, leans against the counter.

JUDITH

(softly; looking
at no one)

I killed it.

RICHARD

Judith?

JUDITH

But it wasn't human. It
wasn't a human that I killed.

Richard goes to her, touches her shoulder. She looks at him.

JUDITH

(continuing;
quietly but
steadily)

It came down... the trembling
way... inhuman... a disaster come
to life... I thought... I was
dreaming.

(pauses; takes his
hand off her shoulder)

It took three steps toward me.
And with the third... I fired.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

She goes quiet.. Richard takes the gun from her hand. Mrs. Dame, urgency and concern in her eyes, looks at Richard, then goes swiftly out.

RICHARD

(quietly; fearful
for her)

Judith? What did you see?

JUDITH

(not moving)

It was white... like cold
moonlight... chilling.

RICHARD

Is it still up there... in the lab?

JUDITH

Yes. Dead. If such things...
can die.

(glances at the
gun in his
hand; frowns)

No. It shouldn't still be there.
I fired with... that. The wine
bottle vanished.

(pauses)

It would too; wouldn't it? I
didn't look back. I crawled...
out of the room.

(a dark
resentment)

I crawled, Richard.

RICHARD

(a glance
toward the door)

Stay here, Judith. Can you?
Are you all right, now?

She turns her head slowly, until she is looking
directly at him. She smiles.

JUDITH

Mrs. Dame tells me I see
potentials that don't exist.
Perhaps I'm beginning to see
other things... that don't exist.

She turns swiftly, goes out of the pantry. He follows,
his eyes shaded dark with dark disturbance.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

14 INT. LAB - FULL - NIGHT

14

Mrs. Dame stands in the doorway. She stares in wonder at the Creature. It is encased in a bell-shaped, clear, plasticlike shell. It stands poised, tense, but unafraid, stares out at Mrs. Dame. We hear footsteps coming up the stairs; and then Judith and Richard appear at the door. They stop, shocked, stare at the Creature. A long quiet; and then we hear the Creature's voice. It is low, liquid-beautiful, reverberates with its own mellow, shell-enclosed echoes. It sounds distant, but not muffled.

THE CREATURE

(looking at Judith)

We are told... that on this planet, fear is the spur. It was fear that made you think first to destroy me, was it not?

Richard takes a step into the lab, his fear already gone, replaced by the scientist's curiosity and mania for all wondrous phenomena.

RICHARD

The laser beam didn't destroy you?

THE CREATURE

Does fire quench fire?

A quiet; then Judith takes a step closer, looks at the creature, her gaze steady.

JUDITH

Who are you?

THE CREATURE

Your weapon could not harm me. Had I known its charge was of the same stuff as that...

(points toward
the large
laser beam)

... I would not have thrown up this shield.

(looks at Judith,
smiles a grim
smile)

I feel... I sense it would be wise to remain shielded, however; until I have acquainted myself with all your weapons.

(CONTINUED)

Judith is caught by his piercing gaze, feels it penetrate to her deepest self. She is disturbed, backs away. Mrs. Dame moves close to her, puts a hand on her arm.

JUDITH

(to Richard)

Ask him who he is.

THE CREATURE

A traveler.

He has deliberately answered the question she instructed Richard to ask; she realizes this, turns, faces the Creature.

JUDITH

From where?

THE CREATURE

My "world" hovers just above the ceiling of your universe. It is not a planet. It is... an amplification of light, some of which radiates from your stars.

RICHARD

(awed; a spell-bound whisper)

How did you come here?

THE CREATURE

(a sardonic smile)

I am more urgently concerned with the question of how I shall survive here.

(a look at Judith)

If I remove my shield... ?

He breaks off; there is a quiet, then:

RICHARD

Yes! Of course, you may! Do!

The Creature nods a thank you at Richard, looks again at Judith. Unconsciously, she backs away. Mrs. Dame moves with her, toward the door. They stare at the Creature. He raises a hand, palm upturned. In it, a small cylindrical object. Although we do not now realize it, the object is attached to the Creature by a fine plastic tube which runs from the underside of the object to what would be, in a human, the large vein in the wrist. The tube contains a dark liquid. With his free hand, he presses an uneven, dark area in the milk-white cylinder; and with the press, the shield instantly disappears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICHARD

(looking in wonder
at the cylinder)

That shield... ?

THE CREATURE

Without it, we could not travel
into such unserene universes as
this. Your meteors and your
random radiations...

He breaks off, smiles as if suddenly self-conscious and uncomfortable. Judith and Mrs. Dame are staring at him, as if expecting the worst; Richard's eyes are blazes of curiosity and wonder.

THE CREATURE

(to Richard)

I shall go.

RICHARD

(a step closer;
imploring)

No! Don't!

The Creature glances at Judith and Mrs. Dame; then to Richard.

THE CREATURE

I already see another of your
weapons...

(looking at Judith)

Distrust.

Walter looks a plea at Judith.

JUDITH

Perhaps you can explain to him
that we are not all scientists,
Richard.(to the Creature;
reservedly but
pleasantly)In our world, naivete and mindless
courage are reserved for very small
children and very dedicated
scientists.

(smiles)

The rest of us have to struggle
along with our distrust of...
monsters.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(appalled)

Judith!

Judith ignores him, continues to smile, takes a step toward the Creature.

JUDITH
But I'm not afraid, now. And
I apologize.

THE CREATURE
You need not.

JUDITH
My husband does not want you to
go. My housekeeper will accept
you the moment I do.

THE CREATURE
Do you?

JUDITH
In my limited fashion... yes.

Their gazes remain locked for a moment; then Richard comes close, touches her arm. She looks at him, smiles, turns swiftly, goes to the door, goes out. Mrs. Dame follows after her, closing door behind her as she goes. A quiet, then:

RICHARD
Will you stay?

The Creature looks at the closed door for a moment longer, then turns to Richard.

THE CREATURE
How were you able to create a
solid cylinder of amplified light?

RICHARD
(taken back by the
sudden interest,
the change of
manner)
The laser?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (4)

16.

14

THE CREATURE
(walking toward it)

It is composed of properties almost identical to those which form the atmosphere of my world. How could you have synthesized compounds whose existence you could not possibly have known of? Explain, please.

RICHARD

The laser is the amplification of light by stimulated emission of radiation. It irradiates a synthetic ruby crystal...

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

15 UPSTAIRS FOYER - OUTSIDE LAB DOOR

15

The foyer dimly lit; a place of shadows and quiet. Judith stands close to the lab door, her head turned so that her ear is almost touching the door. Mrs. Dame stands a small distance away, stares expressionlessly at Judith. And from behind the door we hear:

RICHARD'S VOICE (off)

(continuing;
uninterrupted)

... which absorbs energy over a broad band of frequencies. It is optical energy, and it excites the atoms to a higher energy state...

Judith has turned away, a deep, dark smile on her face, has moved quietly from the door. CAMERA PANNING with her; we no longer hear Richard's voice.

JUDITH

(looking beyond
Mrs. Dame; speaking
as if to herself)

I called it... our Bifrost... our bridge from earth to... heaven. And I was right. I was right. Finally. Totally.

(pauses)

Do you know what that monstrous thing is, Mrs. Dame?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. DAME

(a chilled whisper)

Something dead... that won't die.

JUDITH

(a smile)

No. It isn't a spectre, Mrs.
Dame. It's real. And it's
alive.

(pauses; smiles
deadly)

And it's ours.

FADE OUT.

(END ACT ONE)

REV. 11/19/63 - "BELLERO SHIELD"

18.

FADE IN: (ACT TWO)

16

EXT. THE BELLERO MANSION - NIGHT

16

The lantern over the front door is unlighted. All the windows are dark, excepting those of the lab on the top floor. Bellerio, Sr.'s car turns into the driveway, stops before the front door.

17

ANGLE CLOSE ON CAR - NIGHT

17

Behind the wheel, Bellerio, Sr. He sits there for a moment, his face set in an expression of remorse and anger and pity. Then, forcing himself to do so, he gets out of the car, goes to the front door, rings the bell.

18

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

18

Bellerio, Sr. waits. A long wait. He is about to ring again, pauses, as if doubtful that he should -- or even wants to. Then he turns, walks to the step's edge, pauses. And the door opens. Mrs. Dame looks out. Her face is expressionless; and she says nothing. Bellerio, Sr. senses her, turns.

MRS. DAME

Mrs. Bellerio does not wish to see you. She sent me to send you away.

SENIOR

I came to see my son. Kindly tell him I am here.

(pauses)

I'll wait.

MRS. DAME

I was sent to send you away.

SENIOR

(becoming incensed, trying to control himself)

My son will see me.

MRS. DAME

(no difference in tone)

Why don't you go away, Mr. Bellerio? It would be a rare wisdom on your part.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

SENIOR

(taking a
step forward)

How dare you speak to me that
way?

MRS. DAME

No friend, and no equal, could
speak to you more advisedly.

SENIOR

(pauses; then)

Call my son.

Judith appears behind Mrs. Dame, stares out at Bellerio,
Senior.

JUDITH

Go to bed, Mrs. Dame.

Mrs. Dame backs away, goes. Judith presses a light
switch just inside the door; the overdoor lantern lights.
She and Bellerio exchange a long silent stare. Then:

SENIOR

I couldn't keep you from
marrying my son. I've done
my best to keep him from
regretting it.

(pauses)

It's been a silent war, Judith.

(pauses; then,

almost regretfully)

Now I must fire a very loud shot.

JUDITH

(a smile)

The noise will break his heart,
father.

SENIOR

(pauses; then,
firmly)

He can have the Bellerio
Corporation, all of it, forever.
If he leaves you.

JUDITH

He doesn't want it.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

SENIOR

He's spent his entire life
trying to show me he's worthy
of it.

JUDITH

He wants your love, Father. I
want your empire.

SENIOR

(pauses; then, with
deadly calm)

I spend every hour, every dollar
and every dream developing men
and means that are dedicated to
the prevention of war; that is
how badly I hate war! Yet, I'm
not as sickened and enraged even
by war as I am by a single soul
like yours. Your ambition is
singularly the most active form
of violence I've ever encountered.

JUDITH

(unmoved, smiling)

It's no more active than your
own; just younger and more
vibrant.

SENIOR

I have no ambition; my yearnings
are aspirations.

JUDITH

You want glory.

SENIOR

I aspire to it.

JUDITH

You lust! And lust is what
becomes of an aspiration when
it's allowed to grow up and become
an ambition.

(pauses; smiles)

You are going to give the Bellerio
empire to your son...

SENIOR

No.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (3)

JUDITH

(pauses; finishes
statement)... in return for the glory he
is about to give the Bellerro
name.(as he looks a
faintly puzzled
frown at her)

Yes, father.

(a small, soft
laugh)

Wait and see.

She goes in, closes the door. The lantern light goes off. Bellerro, Sr. comes down the steps, pauses, looks up at the lab windows. Then, thoughtful and vaguely disturbed, he goes to his car, gets in, drives off.

19 INT. UPSTAIRS FOYER - OUTSIDE LAB DOOR - NIGHT

From behind the door, the low hums, buzzes, throbbings of the electronic equipment within. Judith comes up the stairs, reaches the door, pauses. Then she knocks softly. There is no response. She opens the door a small crack, looks in.

20 WHAT SHE SEES - ANGLED THROUGH DOOR CRACK

20

The equipment is in full operation; panel lights blink, tape recorders roll. Richard escorts the creature on a comprehensive tour of the lab, gesturing and explaining. We do not hear his voice, it is overpowered by the equipment sounds. Suddenly, the creature looks toward door, pauses, locks his gaze with Judith's.

21 JUDITH - CLOSE - THROUGH DOOR CRACK - CREATURE'S POV

21

She returns his gaze, steadily and evenly. Then she closes the door.

22 INT. LAB - CLOSE ON RICHARD AND CREATURE - NIGHT

22

Richard has realized that the creature is no longer paying attention, looks at him...

THE CREATURE

The human you call wife.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(frowns, looks
at closed door)

Judith?

He starts toward door. The Creature calls to him:

CREATURE

Friend....?
(as Richard pauses,
looks back)
I have not much time... and
there is so much more I would
like to be taught.

RICHARD
(smiles; is
grateful)
I'll just be a minute.

He hurries toward the door.

23 INT. UPSTAIRS FOYER - NIGHT

23

Judith waits. The door opens; Richard comes out, his
face almost beautiful with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

JUDITH
Close the door, please. My
hearing is more sensitive than
yours.

He closes the door, still smiling, undaunted by the
cold edge in her voice. She is appraising him.

JUDITH
(a small,
unsmiling smile)

I see.

RICHARD

What?

JUDITH
How you look when you're genuinely
happy. Evidently, this is the first
time I've seen you... genuinely
happy.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

(laughs; then,
enthusiastically)

Judith... he cares about everything.
... nothing I can say or explain
disinterests him... he'd like it
if I could stuff all the facts of
the world into his brain...

JUDITH

(quietly appalled)

That's what you've been doing...
all this time... ?

RICHARD

He hasn't much time, Judith.
Less than an hour. He has to
travel before the parallax
between earth and...

JUDITH

(interrupting)

Richard!

(pauses)

Fool! Generous fool!

(pauses)

You stuff his brain?

RICHARD

(quietly)

Lower your voice, Judith.

JUDITH

(pauses; smiles)

And he goes home... and astounds
everyone... and you're left with
nothing but a fantastic tale to
tell a smirking world! And who'll
believe you? Even with Mrs. Dame
and me to corroborate your story,
who'll believe you? Who'll believe
we aren't three benighted idiots,
three hallucinators?

RICHARD

(quiet anger)

Shall I put a chain around his
neck, and parade him down Main
Street?

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

Your laser light made it possible for a form of life to travel from beyond our universe, Richard. You brought it down! It's yours! You own it!

RICHARD

No form of life should ever be owned by another.

JUDITH

(fervently; pressing)

All right! Not ownership, then! But proof! To convince the smirkers! To stagger the world!

RICHARD

I didn't set out to accomplish this, Judith. It was an accident.

JUDITH

(close to his ear; whispering)

Such accidents have made men kings!

RICHARD

(pauses; is beginning to be reached; tries to resist)

I'm wasting time, Judith.

He turns to open the door; she reaches out, grasps his hand, pulls it up to her mouth, kisses it.

JUDITH

Richard... don't lose this... mad opportunity.

He stares at her, says nothing. Then he frees his hand, but doesn't resume opening the door, keeps staring at her.

RICHARD

(softly, like a disillusioned child)

No one will believe... it happened?

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

Would you... if it were told to
you by a compulsive failure...
and his wife... and her housekeeper?

RICHARD

My father would be believed. If
he tells them he's seen it, they'll
believe him! Call him, Judith.
Tell him to come quickly! He can
get here in time... no one else
could. He's the closest... call
him, hurry!

JUDITH

(pauses; smiles)
You call. He doesn't hate you.
(urgently)
Hurry! Less than an hour... !

Richard turns to the door, pauses.

JUDITH

What is it?

RICHARD

I'll use the downstairs phone.
(of the Creature
in the lab)
He may resent being exploited.

JUDITH

He probably doesn't know the
meaning of the word.

RICHARD

I do.
(a grim smile)
I learned it at my father's
knee.

He goes down the stairs; we hear his footsteps going
down, hurriedly. Judith stares after him, then looks
at the door, then looks into the shadows opposite. Mrs.
Dame steps out. They exchange stares. Then, Judith
moves to the lab door, reaches out to open it.

MRS. DAME

(a whisper)
Mrs. Bellerio?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (4)

23

Judith pauses, looks back. Mrs. Dame takes her hand out of her pocket. It holds a small, mother-of-pearl-handled revolver. She extends it.

MRS. DAME

(continuing)

Once... this protected me from
a human monster.

(smiles)

The one I married.

(pauses)

Take it. You may need... the
same protection.

Judith takes the gun, pockets it, opens the door and goes into the lab.

24 INT. LAB - NIGHT

24

The Creature's back is to the door; and Judith enters soundlessly, closes the door silently. She stares at the Creature. It senses her, turns. Its eyes go at once to the hand in the pocket. Judith smiles, starts to remove the hand. The Creature presses its hand-held cylinder, is instantly encased in its clear, indestructible shell. Judith pauses, then takes her hand out of the pocket. The gun is not in her hand. She smiles, comes forward, approaching the Creature as if too friendly and innocent to be offended by or even take notice of his defensiveness.

JUDITH

Richard will be back in a
minute. Is there something I
can do for you?

CREATURE

How long is a minute?

JUDITH

(relaxed; smiling)

It passes unnoticed, when you're
content. For the needy, it can
be a string of endless lifetimes.

CREATURE

Why do you want me to remain here?

JUDITH

(laughs)

Can you read my mind... even
through your... shield?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

CREATURE

No. I cannot read your mind.
I cannot even understand your
language.

(as she reacts
in surprise)

I analyze your eyes. In all
the universes, in all the
unities beyond all the universes,
all who have eyes, have eyes
that speak. And all speak the
same language.

JUDITH

(awed; intrigued)

How can you speak my language?

CREATURE

I learn each word just before
I speak it. Your eyes teach me.

JUDITH

(pauses; then:)

My husband tells me you must go...
in less than an hour. Must you?

(as he nods)

Don't. Please. Stay here, I want
you to stay... for my husband's
sake.

CREATURE

(almost a smile)

I see.

JUDITH

(smiles)

Then you must see that I wouldn't
harm you for the world. You can
come out of your shell.

He pauses, then presses the cylinder. The shell
disappears.

CREATURE

(smiles)

And now... you'll come out
of yours?

(CONTINUED)

Judith laughs, moves away, walks aimlessly about, in an attempt to keep him from looking into her eyes.

JUDITH

You're extremely perceptive. Yes, we have our shields, too. But ours protect only our souls and our hearts. Our flesh is vulnerable to whatever fate and our other enemies hurl at us.

She pauses, holds poised, eyes lowered, thoughtful; as if struck to an awareness by her own words. Then she looks across to him.

CREATURE

No.

JUDITH

(a wry smile)

No?

CREATURE

You lack the prime ingredient...

He extends his palm, holding the cylinder.

CREATURE

(continuing)

... to manufacture a thing like this.

JUDITH

(coming forward,
slowly)

That's unfortunate.

She pauses; keeps walking until she is close to him, then:

JUDITH

(continuing)

The man who could give his country... a weapon like that...

CREATURE

It isn't a weapon. I suppose in a military frame of reference, it would be considered an anti-weapon.

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

An anti-weapon.

(smiles)

Same thing.

(turns away,
resumes pacing)

If every man, woman and child
had one... an entire country
could be protected against
attack... and counterattack.

CREATURE

Every man, woman and child
would not need his own. A single
one of these could shield and
protect your entire planet.

She pauses; then, slowly, turns around, faces him.

JUDITH

A single one?

CREATURE

The shield's radius can be
increased or decreased, merely
by deepening the pressure, or
lightening it. But the thing
would do your planet no good,
unless I or one of my kind were
to...

He breaks off as the door opens; Richard enters, pauses,
meets Judith's questioning glance.

RICHARD

He won't come back. My father
will never come here again.

JUDITH

(pauses, then
with urgency)

Make him! Beg him to! Go and
beg him!

RICHARD

You sent him away, Judith.

JUDITH

(pauses; then
starts toward door)

I'll go to him.

(CONTINUED)

She reaches the door; Richard blocks it, stops her.

JUDITH

(a controlled rage;
a whisper)

I'll crawl. Anything... to get
him here before... it's too late.

RICHARD

(quietly; defeated)

No, Judith. I can't let you...
crawl.

(pauses)

I'll go.

(to the Creature;
a whispered,
painful plea)

Wait for me. Please?

The Creature looks at him, turns his eyes, pained by the anguish in Richard's. Judith gently urges Richard out the door, closes it after him. We hear Richard's footsteps rushing down the stairs. Judith remains by the door, stares at the Creature. He looks at her.

CREATURE

I did not lie to him. I did not
promise that I would wait.

JUDITH

You're not going to wait.

CREATURE

If I miss the moment, I'll never
be able to leave here.

JUDITH

Yes. None of us can afford to
miss the moment.

CREATURE

(looking into
her eyes)

Goodbye? What does that
mean?

JUDITH

It has many meanings.

CREATURE

I see.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (5)

He bows his head slightly, turns and swiftly leaps up onto the lab table, stares at the laser beam. As he reaches up his hands toward it, Judith takes the gun out of her pocket, fires at him. He is struck in the base of the skull. He falls backwards, lands flat on his back, is still.

FADE OUT.

(END ACT TWO)

FADE IN: (ACT THREE)

25

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

25

Frail morning light seeps in through the high, small window. All is still and silent; and then we hear the sound of a door opening. The ceiling light goes on. Judith and Mrs. Dame half-carry, half-drag the lifeless Creature down the stairs. They say nothing, seem coldly competent, unpanicked. They pause when they reach the cellar floor, then drag the Creature toward CAMERA. They let it go, rise up, survey their surroundings.

MRS. DAME

We'll have to dig it a grave.

JUDITH

Later.

MRS. DAME

Your husband...

JUDITH

He rarely comes down for the wine. I'll remember not to send him.

MRS. DAME

I'll dig a hole in the woods behind the house. Tonight, we'll bury it.

JUDITH

Nobody's grave has to be dug in a hurry. Do a little today, a little tomorrow... so I won't have to do without you for a whole day.

From OFF, the sound of an automobile entering the drive, coming to a stop. Judith and Mrs. Dame exchange calm glances, start toward the stairs.

26

ANGLE CLOSE ON WINE CELLAR STAIRS - DAY

26

Judith is about to start up; Mrs. Dame is behind her. They hear a door slam above, then footsteps. They pause, hold, listen. From above:

RICHARD'S VOICE (OFF)

It's up in the laboratory,
Father.

(CONTINUED)

26

CONTINUED:

26

SENIOR'S VOICE (off)

I shall wait here in the foyer,
Richard. I do not wish to go
deeper into your house. I have
come as far as any man should
have to.

RICHARD'S VOICE (Off)

(after a pause)

There are drafts here.

SENIOR'S VOICE (off)

If you truly have something to
show me, bring it here and show
it to me.

A quiet; then we hear Richard's footsteps cross the
foyer and go up the stairs.

JUDITH

(to Mrs. Dame)

Stay.

She goes up the stairs. CAMERA REMAINS CLOSE on Mrs.
Dame. Judith goes up OUT OF SHOT; we hear the cellar
door open, then close. Then we hear:

JUDITH'S VOICE (Off)

Thank you, father... for coming.

(pauses; a
quiet; then)

Excuse me.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

27

INT. LAB - DAY

27

Richard stands just inside the door; it is still open
behind him. He looks about the empty room, frowning,
a small anxiety in his eyes. Then he crosses to the
table. The laser beam has been shut off. All the
equipment is quiet. He looks out the open skylight,
looks up at the gray dawn sky. Then, as Judith enters,
he turns, looks a question at her.

JUDITH

It refused to wait.

Richard says nothing; but he is crushed, devastated.
He sinks into a chair. Judith goes to him, touches
his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

He said... it was not a question of time... the parallax made no difference. He simply did not want you to profit by him... as he has profited by you.

RICHARD

(looks up at her)

I see.

His phrase, unconsciously echoing the Creature's, causes a flush of guilt to rise in Judith's face. She turns away, so he can not look into her eyes, as if he, too, could analyze them, as the Creature could.

JUDITH

I begged him to stay, Richard. I told him... he had not begun to learn all you could have taught him.

RICHARD

(a rueful smile;
more to himself)

I'm glad I didn't tell father... what I had up here. He'd think I'd added imbecility to my long list of accomplishments.

(rises)

I'll tell him it was a ruse to get him here... so you could apologize to him.

(pauses; looks
at her)

Will you?

(as she says
nothing)

Judith?

She is lost in her own frenzied thoughts, hardly hears him. He turns, starts toward the door. As he reaches it:

JUDITH

Wait, Richard!

(as he pauses)

I'll talk to him

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED: (2)

27

RICHARD
(doubtfully)
You'll apologize?

JUDITH
(pauses; then,
with a smile)
He will.

She goes quickly to the door, passes him, pauses at the door, looks back.

JUDITH
(continuing)
Wait here. Your father and I
will come up together.

He frowns, mystified and apprehensive. She goes out. We hear her footsteps go down the stairs.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

28

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

28

Mrs. Dame stands at the foot of the stairs, is in the exact position as when last seen. From OFF, the sound of Judith's footsteps coming down the stairs and into the foyer above.

JUDITH'S VOICE (off)
He can not bring it down.
You'll have to go up to the lab.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK, backs down the aisle, slowly, ANGLED LOW.

JUDITH'S VOICE (off)
(continuing, after
a pause)

Father?

(pauses; louder)
If you leave this house, without going up to your son, you'll be exposing yourself as a sanctimonious sham! The world will know that your "dedication" to peace and good is a mask to hide your petty, vengeful, unforgiving nature!

CAMERA has PULLED BACK to the end of the aisle; the Creature is now in SHOT.

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE on its hand, it holds the cylinder in a death grip. Over this:

JUDITH'S VOICE (Off)

(continuing,
uninterrupted)

Your son has invented a way for mankind to protect itself from mankind! His invention will make war impotent and insane! He can give it to the world... as a gift, from an anonymous donor.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

29

CLOSE ON MRS. DAME - AT FOOT OF CELLAR STAIRS - DAY

29

Expressionlessly, she listens to Judith's voice, which comes from above.

JUDITH'S VOICE (Off)

(continuing,
uninterrupted)

Or he can give it as the new ruler of the Bellerio empire! There's no glory for you... if your son's invention goes down in history as a gift from an anonymous donor!

A pause; and then we hear Senior's footsteps cross the foyer, start up the stairs. Then the cellar door opens; Judith hurries down the stairs. She passes Mrs. Dame without a word or glance, goes swiftly down the aisle toward the Creature. Mrs. Dame watches, but does not move.

30

CLOSE ON CREATURE - IN WINE CELLAR - DAY

30

Judith enters SHOT, looks down on the still Creature. Then, swift, like a murdering bird, she swoops down, lifts up the Creature's hand, pulls its fingers away from the cylinder, having to struggle to break its deathgrip. Then she pulls the cylinder free, rising as she does so, letting the hand fall to the floor. She does not notice that the tube which connected the object and the wrist has had to break. CAMERA MOVES IN EXTREMELY CLOSE on the Creature's hand. We see the tube that hangs out of its wrist. Out of the broken end of it, a thick dark liquid seeps.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

31

INT. LAB - DAY

31

Bellero, Sr. stands in the doorway. Richard is looking at him, mystified.

RICHARD

(after a moment)

My invention?

SENIOR

She called it yours.

Richard holds a moment, then goes to the door, is about to start out, pauses as he sees, OFF, Judith coming up the stairs. He says nothing, waits. And in a moment, she enters, passes him without a glance, the cylinder held in her outstretched, upturned palm. He sees it; reacts in silent shock. Judith comes into the room, crosses to the lab table, puts the cylinder down. Then she notices her palm; there is a small smear of dark liquid in its center. She takes a handkerchief out of her pocket, wipes the liquid off. A faint stain remains. She ignores it, pockets the handkerchief, turns and faces Richard and Senior.

JUDITH

(a sweet smile)

Richard?

(as he says
nothing)

May I have the honor of explaining
your shield... the Bellerro Shield...
to your father?

Richard says nothing, merely stares as if in terror of letting a realization seep into his mind. Senior looks at him, mystified, then at Judith.

SENIOR

The Bellerro Shield?

JUDITH

He wanted to call it... the
Bifrost. In honor of an intimate
dream we've shared. I persuaded
him to give it his own name.

(meaningfully)

His... and yours.

Almost against his desire or better judgement, Senior is becoming intrigued, even vaguely excited. He approaches the table, looks down on the cylinder.

(CONTINUED)

Richard takes a few steps forward; Judith sees him, signals him a fierce sign to halt and be quiet. He obeys. Senior studies the cylinder, reaches out to touch it. Judith snatches it away. Then she takes the pearl-handled revolver out of her pocket, hands it to Senior.

JUDITH

Fire it. At me. Point-blank.

RICHARD

(an anguished plea)

Judith!...

JUDITH

(a deadly, quieting
glance at Richard;
then a smile at
Senior)

Please. Great men require
great demonstrations, don't they?

She has practically forced Senior to take the gun. He holds it now. She takes a few steps backwards, waits.

JUDITH

(continuing)

Point-blank.

SENIOR

(to Richard, but
not taking his
eyes off Judith)

Are you going to let me be
tricked, Richard?

JUDITH

No trick, father.

(smiles)

Perhaps a bullet won't convince
you. Richard, give him the
laser gun.

RICHARD

Judith... I can't let you...

JUDITH

(interrupting with
a sudden disgusted
impatience)

Mrs. Dame!

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

Mrs. Dame has been standing just outside the door. She enters the moment she is called, goes to Judith.

JUDITH
(continuing)

We must show these men what great men they are.

She glances at the gun in Senior's hand. Mrs. Dame comprehends. She takes the gun out of Senior's hand, levels it at Judith. And fires. And at that precise moment, Judith presses the cylinder, is instantly encased in the impenetrable shell. The bullet ricochets, strikes the wall behind Mrs. Dame. Senior stares, stunned, speechless. Richard almost collapses in his relief and anguish, sinks into a chair.

SENIOR
(an awed whisper)

What is it?

(to Mrs. Dame,
when Judith
merely smiles)

Can she hear me?

JUDITH
Yes. Now the laser gun.

Mrs. Dame takes it up off the table, is about to level it, when Senior snatches it out of her hand. He is lost in the sudden, shattering realization that immortality is within reach. He aims at Judith, fires. The beam strikes the shield, withdraws into the gun. The shield is not even marked. Senior goes close, touches the shield.

JUDITH
(continuing)

The man who invented this... could rule the world. Or save it, if you prefer. Isn't that the kind of man you want to succeed you, father?

Senior stares at the shield a moment, then turns, looks at Richard. Quick, insincere tears fill his eyes, his mouth twists into an elaborate, ingenuine display of remorse and guilt. He goes to Richard, slowly, a hand outstretched, pauses, then touches Richard's shoulder as if doubtful that he has the right to do so.

RICHARD
(dully)

Don't, father.

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR
(taking hand
away)

I gathered up... all my self-doubts
... and rid myself of them... by
projecting them on to you. I have
used you, Richard...

RICHARD
Stop it. Please.

SENIOR
(continuing)
... to shield myself. And I
almost destroyed you. Forgive me,
Richard. Don't shut me out of
your success, as I tried to shut
you out of mine. Please, forgive...

RICHARD
(rising; a
deep scream)
Stop it!

He runs, almost staggers out of the lab. Senior
watches him go, then turns to Judith, pleading and
anguish in his eyes.

JUDITH
He does not forgive easily,
father. He has your small flaws,
as well as your great virtues.

SENIOR
(going to her,
greedy wet hope
in his eyes)
He will forgive me! Won't he?

JUDITH
I'll help him to.

SENIOR
(pauses; lowers
his eyes)
But quickly. Please, Judith...
quickly. I haven't... too
much... time.

She raises a brow; he looks up, smiles a tiny sad
smile.

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR

I did not decide to retire.
I am going to be retired... by
a more final and just decision...
than I could ever make.

He looks toward the door, starts toward it, pauses as he reaches the chair Richard had been sitting in. He holds a moment, then sits down, buries his face in his hands. Mrs. Dame watches him, then moves close to the shield, whispers to Judith within:

MRS. DAME

Go to him. It is customary to
comfort a broken enemy... before
you discard him.

Judith smiles a slim deadly smile of agreement, presses the cylinder. Nothing happens; the shield remains intact. She presses again; again the shield is not withdrawn. She frowns worriedly, looks at Mrs. Dame. Then she presses again, and again, and still the shield remains. A tiny glint of panic leaps up in her eyes. Mrs. Dame stares at the shield, fearfully. She touches it, then bangs on it, with her fist. Judith continues pressing the cylinder, begins to breathe hard. We hear it; hear the panic and terror in it. Senior hears, lifts his head, looks at Judith. She is moving about like a trapped animal; her mouth is open; but she gives no scream, no cry. She merely breathes harder and harder, in faster, more frightened gasps.

MRS. DAME

(softly; less
than a whisper)

Help her. Heaven... help her.

And finally, Judith's scream comes; a great high wail of terror that echoes and reverberates against the shield. And we:

FADE OUT.

(END ACT THREE)

FADE IN: (ACT FOUR)

32 INT. LAB - NIGHT

32

Judith is still encased in the shield. She is sitting on the floor now, her arms around her knees, her face buried. Mrs. Dame sits in a chair, close by. She never takes her eyes off Judith, stares wide-eyed, her mouth set in a grim frozen agony. Around the outside of the shield are many varieties of destructive instruments -- hatches, drills, blow-torches, the laser gun -- all lying there like grim headstones in a cemetery where failures are buried.

Senior sits in a chair, some distance from the shield. He looks older, aged by awe and panic and fear for his own safety. He watches Richard, who is at the laser instrument, working feverishly, directing and re-directing the beam into the night sky.

A long quiet; while Richard works at the laser. Then:

MRS. DAME
(quietly; not
turning)

It is useless, Mr. Belleró. The monster will not come back. Not that way.

RICHARD
(voice hoarse
with anguish and
sleeplessness)

It came once. It can come again.

MRS. DAME
She'll die in there.

RICHARD
(turning to her)

No!

MRS. DAME
Can she live without air to breathe? Is there a perpetual supply of oxygen in that tomb of hers?

RICHARD
(returning to the beam)
He'll come back.

This possibility frightens Senior more than anything. He looks about, like a trapped animal.

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR
(quietly,
hesitantly)

Richard?

(waits, gets
no response)

Let me go... for help! I can
do something, I'm sure... but
not if I must remain here...
it's hope...

RICHARD
(turning to his
father; interrupting;
a defensive shout)

Don't tell me it's hopeless. That's
all you've ever had to give me...
words of hopelessness! Don't you
ever run out of them? Do you have
a perpetual supply of hopeless
words in that tomb of yours?

Senior has risen, started toward Richard. Richard
suddenly collapses inwardly, sinks into the chair in
a terrible gesture of surrender.

SENIOR
If there was... such a creature
... it may be roaming the streets
... it may be... killing and...
someone should warm...

RICHARD
(wearily)
Sit down, father. And be quiet.
I do not want anyone to know that
my wife... is a thief... the
first to thief from... a friend
from another world.

SENIOR
We must do something... for all
of us... as well as for your
wife.

RICHARD
What can we do for my wife,
father?

SENIOR
Get help, Richard. Perhaps she can
be reached from the room below...
if the ceiling were to be cut
away...

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

The shield goes down to the foundations of the house, father. Down and down, probably all the way to...

He breaks off. Senior gathers up some courage, starts for the door.

RICHARD

Father! Stay!

SENIOR

(glancing at phone on table)

I'll call then. You can listen. I won't say anything incriminating.

(pauses; then, as Richard does not respond)

Can't I even call for help? Just call?

RICHARD

Call whom? The police? The leading scientists of the world? The faith-healers, the magicians... psychiatrists, munitions experts, philosophers... the politicians, the image-makers, the funeral directors... the million government agencies... whom do we call when we're trapped alive in our tombs? Is there someone to call? Can anyone help?

He turns, looks at Judith. She has raised her head, is listening; but her eyes are closed. He goes to the shield, kneels before it, looks at the cylinder on the floor near her foot, looks at her.

RICHARD

(continuing; softly; anguished)

Judith... pick it up... try it again.. Try. Please.

JUDITH

(softly, slowly)

Movements... and words... accomplish... nothing... and only... deplete... the oxygen... and the soul.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Please. Once more.

She buries her face again. He holds a moment, then gets up, returns to the table, begins to operate the laser beam again.

JUDITH

Mrs. Dame... tell him... it's useless.

RICHARD

It isn't, Judith! He must still be in our atmosphere. He couldn't go out of it without his shield! He'd be incinerated! He knew that!

JUDITH

Mrs. Dame. Tell him... to call the police.

Mrs. Dame stares at her, then looks at Senior. And says nothing. Judith lifts her head, looks at Mrs. Dame, sees that she intends to remain silent.

JUDITH

(continuing)

Richard?

MRS. DAME

(a low shout)

No!

JUDITH

(a small, weary smile)

Why not, Mrs. Dame. The State can't execute me, without getting me out of...

(an abrupt, bitter laugh)

Maybe that's the solution. Tell them I'm a murderer... and they'll rip me out of this with their bare hands... to keep me from escaping their chamber.

She begins to laugh, hysterically, is unable to stop. Richard goes to the shield.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(shouting)
Stop it! Judith! Don't!

Senior backs toward the door, fearfully and surreptitiously.

RICHARD
(continuing;
a scream)
Judith!

Suddenly, she stops laughing; her face goes calm, her expression becomes serene. Richard watches, his eyes pained and fearful. Senior pauses by the door, his escape delayed by Mrs. Dame, who is approaching the door. She goes out of the lab, ignoring Senior as she passes him.

JUDITH
(quietly, gently)
He told me... so much about it.
All about it, I thought. A single
one... could protect our entire
planet... its radius is increased
by merely deepening the pressure...
an anti-weapon, he called it.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

... and I thought he'd told me...
everything. Now, of course, I
realize... he never told me...
how to remove it.

(pauses)

Nothing we know of... in this
world... will remove it.

She is staring down at her hands, which lie in her
lap, lifelessly, palms upturned. She sees the small
stain in the center of her palm, brings it close to
her face, studies it.

JUDITH

(continuing)

Nothing... will remove it.

There is a quiet. Richard rises, returns to the Laser
table, but does not touch the controls, merely stares
up at the night sky visible through the open skylight.

JUDITH

I killed him prematurely.

Richard looks toward her, slowly, his eyes incredulous,
but his mind not doubting the statement for a minute.
Senior stares in fear, as if personally threatened by
the admission.

JUDITH

(continuing)

I wanted proof that he'd been
here. Your father would have
wanted... proof. Fathers often
demand... what strangers don't
even expect.

Senior backs away, slowly goes out of the lab. Neither
Richard nor Judith are aware of his departure.

Dark, except for the light that spills down the stairs
from the foyer above, the door to which is open. In
silhouette, we see Mrs. Dame dragging the Creature
toward the stairs.

Going up on the first step, backwards, Mrs. Dame starts to drag the Creature's form up after her. She pauses, alert and tense, as she hears Senior's footsteps coming down the stairs. She shoves the body to one side, turns and rushes up the steps to close the door. Senior reaches it before she does. We see h's shadow. Mrs. Dame stops, looks up. Her expression tells us that Senior has seen the Creature. Then:

SENIOR'S VOICE

(an awed whisper)

Is that... it?

(pauses)

It's dead?

MRS. DAME

I am going to bury it. You must not try to stop me.

A quiet; then, slowly, Senior comes down a few steps, ENTERS SHOT. His eyes are wondrous wide; his brain is whirling with the exploiter's immediate and all-consuming calculations.

MRS. DAME

You have your proof. The police must not have theirs.

SENIOR

(looks at her,
is shaken out
of his thoughts)

The police?

(comprehending)

No, of course not. It's no business of theirs. It belongs to the world of the prize-givers... of the praisers of greatness.

(going down another
step, the one below
hers; looking down
on the Creature)

And my son invented the agency that brought it here. He'll be splashed across a thousand chapters of the world's most honored history.

MRS. DAME

There is a bullet in the base of its skull.

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR

My son didn't put it there.

(turns, smiles
up at her)

Great men are forgiven their
murderous wives.

His uncaring words impel Mrs. Dame. She pulls her hand back, prepares to give him a back-hand slap. He moves to escape the expected slap, slips, falls. He hurls downward, going OUT OF FRAME.. We hear his startled cry, but we do not see him fall. Mrs. Dame stands there, her hand still withdrawn in readiness to slap. She stares down. All is quiet. Then, slowly, she goes down the stairs. Senior lies in a heap at the bottom, one arm flung across the face of the Creature. Mrs. Dame lifts the arm; and we see the Creature's eyes. They are open. Mrs. Dame opens her mouth to scream; no sound comes out; she freezes there, bent over, her face iced in horror.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

Judith and Richard are as they were when last seen; she in the shield, he at the Laser table, his face turned toward her, but his eyes no longer seeing, merely gazing into nothing. CAMERA MOVES TOWARD the shield; we see that Judith is having trouble breathing; the oxygen supply is almost depleted. She begins to struggle, to sob; and in her increasing panic, she rises, bangs against the shield, screams breathlessly, almost voicelessly:

JUDITH

Let me out! Please... let...
me... out! Please... I'm...
sorry... I need... to be...
forgiven... someone... must
forgive me... and let me...
free...

During above, Richard has come slowly to the shield. He is weeping soundlessly. He reaches out, touches the shield with the flat of his hand, his fingers spread. Judith puts her face against the shield, as if to have it touched by Richard's hand. She stops screaming, closes her eyes, sobs softly.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I can forgive you, Judith. But
I can't let you free.

CREATURE'S VOICE (off)

I can.

Richard whirls around, freezes in astonishment; the Creature stands in the doorway, leans against the frame, obviously weak, near death, breathing hard from the effort required to climb the stairs. Mrs. Dane is behind him, her head lowered in guilt and remorse. Richard goes to the Creature, his hands extended to help.

CREATURE

(continuing;
raising hand with
detached tube)

When she... borrowed the thing...
she accidentally broke... the
vein. My fluid... like your
blood... the primal ingredient...

He staggers toward the shield, reaches it, pauses to gather his last few ounces of strength. Judith opens her eyes, sees him. For a moment she merely stares uncomprehendingly. Then, a rise of terror surges within; she backs away, covers her eyes with her fingers, digs, claws madly at her eyes, screams the soft, windy scream of the mad. The Creature falls to his knees, grasps the end of the wrist-tube with the fingers of his opposite hand, squeezes out final drops of liquid onto the shield. The liquid runs down slowly, like thick rain on a windowpane. The Creature reaches up, places his fingers on either side of the liquid-tracks, pulls a rip in the shield. When it is large enough, he reaches in, takes out the cylinder, reattaches the wrist-tube, presses it. The shield disappears. And the Creature falls back, and dies. Richard walks slowly back, stands over the Creature, looks down on it. Mrs. Dame approaches, stands near Richard, looks down on the Creature.

MRS. DAME

I expected... it to kill me...
but it looked in my eyes... and
I heard myself say "Can you help?"...
and it said... "Can I not?"

36 INSERT - CREATURE ON LAB FLOOR - RICHARD & MRS. DAME'S P.O.V. 36

JAZZY

Slowly, the form darkens, finally disappears. Only the cylinder remains.

37 BACK TO SHOT

37

Mrs. Dame bends down, picks up the cylinder. Richard looks at Judith. She has not moved a step, has not stopped moaning.

RICHARD
(softly)
Judith?
(pauses)
It's gone.
(pauses)
You're free.

Judith stops moaning; slowly, guardedly, she uncovers her eyes, opens them, looks at Richard.

RICHARD
(continuing,
reaching out
a hand)
Come, Judith.
(pauses)
We'll have to tell... someone...
what we've done.

She looks at him, at his outstretched hand, takes a step forward, as if to rush gratefully at him. And stops short, as if she has bumped into an invisible wall. She frowns, looks around frantically, her hands raised.

JUDITH
(softly; like a
frightened child)
You said... it was gone...

RICHARD
(worriedly;
unconsciously
withdrawing his
hand)
It is. It's gone, Judith.

Judith looks at him, frowning softly, then she begins to reach out, touching here and there, shaking her head, murmuring to herself:

(CONTINUED)

JUDITH

No... it's still here... nothing
will remove it... it will always
be here... nothing will ever
remove it... it's here... I know
it's here.

During above, Mrs. Dame stares at Judith, says nothing,
merely closes her eyes against immediately recognized
madness. CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE IN CLOSE on Judith's
outstretched palm, which she holds still now, as if it
were pressed against some invisible shield. And during
following, her voice begins to fade, as if our hearing
were being gradually withdrawn.

JUDITH

(continuing)

...I can see it... I'll always
see it... it will always be
here... nothing will ever remove
it... nothing... nothing will
ever remove it...

CAMERA is IN TIGHT on Judith's outstretched palm. We
see the stain in the palm's middle; and Judith's voice
has faded away, is gone.

CONTROL VOICE

When this passion called
aspiration becomes lust...
then aspiration degenerates...
becomes vulgar ambition -- by
which sin the angels fell.

FADE OUT.

(THE END)