

A L I E N

VS

SERENITY

A SCREENPLAY BY KYLE PAQUET

INTRO

Now, you've got to understand a few things before reading this.

Number one; this is my personal fan script, and have no intention of making it into an actual movie, though, hopefully, this may be somewhat of a pattern for other Serenity movies (i.e. lines, characters, concepts, etc.).

Number two; "Firefly", Serenity, and the characters thereof are property of Joss Whedon and Co. The Alien is property of 20th Century Fox and H.R. Geiger. I can only take credit for characters and concepts of my own design, such as Eomir, Dano, Wash's arm, ReavAliens, etc.

Number three; I have changed many things about the events of *Serenity* in order to make this film work, so I don't need you crying about Wash not being impaled. Krik, who can complain about Wash being back?!?

Number four; I know that my writing skills will never match to that of Mr. Whedon's, and I take full responsibility for this.

If you've never heard of either *Serenity* or "Firefly", I ask you to look these up right away before you read further. (See Glossary at the back)

Thank you.

P.S. I've invented many of my own curse words for this, so don't comment about the cuss words (yes, I know "hell" is spelled wrong. This is intentional). Some of them have roots in things I use myself; some were invented as a sort of spur- of-the-moment substitute. Special Thanks...

To Joss Whedon, for giving me my inspiration and my characters.

To Ridley Scott, for being one of the best directors in history.

To H.R. Geiger, for being an eccentric artist, hence creating the Xenomorph.

To Mike Lynch, for providing all the information needed about the Xenomorph species, through his Anchorpoint Essays.

To James Cameron, whose Powerloader scene in Aliens inspired the end fight scene in A V S.

To my Mom, for encouraging my imagination.

To my Dad, for teaching me when it needs to be put at bay.

A V S

ALIEN VS SERENITY

By Kyle Paquet

Based on characters by Joss Whedon

SPACE, DISTANT STARS, SILENT

QUICK: a figure running through a jungle, blurry, indistinct.

Stars.

QUICK: The same figure, the same jungle, slightly more focused.

Stars.

QUICK: A face now becomes visible in the jungle. If we've seen the appropriate movie/series, we might recognize this as RIVER TAM, a small girl with extraordinary capabilities. She's running from something we can't see.

Stars.

QUICK: We cut back to the jungle, this time in the thing's point of view. We hear a low GROWL as the thing pursues River, gaining on her frequently.

Stars.

QUICK: RIVER'S P.O.V.

Smashing through the jungle, tripping occasionally.

Stars.

CUT BACK TO: CREATURE'S P.O.V.

River falls for the final time, turns in horror to see her pursuer. Then, the camera blurs as something black and insectile LUNGES at River. She SCREAMS as we SMASH CUT TO: INT. SERENITY, RIVER'S QUARTERS

As she SHOOTS out of her bed, panting heavily. She wipes the cold sweat from her brow and climbs out of her bed.

CUT TO: EXT. SPACE. ANGLE - SERENITY

Moving silently through space.

TITLE APPEARS:

A V S

ALIEN VS SERENITY

CUT TO: INT. SERENITY CORRIDOR.

River exits her room, almost smashing into DANO ENRIQUE, the ship's cook. Dano is a hefty, Hispanic man, but despite his burly appearance, he has a very kind disposition. He's carrying a very large bag of flour and a small sack of apples as he walks along.

DANO

River! Where you off to in such a hurry?

RIVER

Nowhere, Mister Enrique. I just had a bit of a bad dream.

VOICE

Bad dream?

SWITCH TO: RIVER'S P.O.V. as Dano turns, revealing EOMIR, a seventeen-year-old boy who is no bigger than River. He has a battered tank top, battered jeans, matted black hair, and a small scar on his forehead, matching River's. He is strapping something onto his wrists as he talks.

RIVER

Good morning, Eomir.

EOMIR

Like I was saying- bad dream? Sounded more like a night terror, the way you were screaming all night.

River looks away sheepishly.

EOMIR

(Walking over to her) River, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. But, I mean, how would you feel if you waited five years to find a copy of Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings*, just to read it and find out that your name's been spelled wrong? And I've got mental powers, too. So if we're gonna survive, we need to look out for each other. Okay?

River nods glumly.

EOMIR

(Starting to walk with River) Alright. Now, let's start with the dream. What did you see that was enough to make you scream?

RIVER

Well, it was something terrible. Either it was an extremely vivid dream... or it was a precognition.

EOMIR You have precognitions?

RIVER

I may now.

EOMIR

Za l'in-tav.

RIVER

I dreamt that I was running through a jungle, and this creature was chasing-

DANO

I, um...

Dano has been trailing behind them, and he's just now caught up to them.

EOMIR

What is it, Dano?

DANO

Just lettin' you know, Mal said that we picked up a distress signal from a stationary ship, but no life signs. He wants us to check it out.

EOMIR

Well, you know what I always say-

DANO

Never pay full price for a late pizza?

EOMIR

No- but I say that, too. What I was going to say was, I never miss a chance to get some new scrap parts. 'Specialy when they're from 'lliance ships. I LOVE tearin' them 'part.

DANO Even if this ship in particular lay on the border of Reaver Territory?

EOMIR

Maybe...

JAYNE

Tell me that I didn't just hear the phrase "Reaver Territory".

The conversation has been happening outside his door, and only at this point he has decided to chime in. He wears his trademark knitted hat and a bright-turquoise shirt that reads "Momma's Boy".

> DANO (Matter-of-factly) You did.

JAYNE PLEASE tell me I can bring my grenades?

MAL

(0.S.) Of course you can.

ANGLE - MAL

is standing in the doorway.

DANO Hello, Mal!

EOMIR Hey, Cap. How long've you been standing there?

RIVER

One minute and fifty-three point two seconds.

EOMIR Thank you.

RIVER

Don't mention it.

Mal looks at his watch, clears his throat.

MAL

Derelict ships're the perfect place for overkill. Never know what yer gonna find.

EOMIR

Derelict's in close proximity, Mal. Why didn't you announce it earlier over the 'com link?

MAL

Well, it's broken.

RIVER Why don't you fix it?

MAL

Kaylee's the only one who knows how, and she's refusing to fix it. She keeps saying she's on maternity leave...

River giggles.

MAL Now, down to business. Who's going on board?

RIVER

I will.

EOMIR

Me, too.

DANO

I'm staying.

JAYNE If I can bring my grenades...

MAL

I already said that you could.

JAYNE

(Pumps fist) Yes! I'm goin'.

MAL

Shiny. I'll tell Wash to bring us in.

Mal goes up the stairs behind him, leading him into the cockpit.

CUT TO: INT. SERENITY COCKPIT

MAL

Dock us with the derelict, Wash.

WASH

Aye, cap'n.

Wash, who now has a mechanical right arm, sits at the controls, still covered with Wash's toy dinosaurs. He pilots the ship so that it settles right next to the derelict.

CUT TO: INT. AIRLOCK/STORAGE BAY, SERENITY

The volunteering away team puts on space suits. River's and Eomir's suits don't quite fit.

MAL

(Suitcom)

Alright, guys. Let's make this quick. We've got a job on Regina that we were heading to when we got this signal. So look for anything unusual, then get out.

ALL

(Suitcom) Aye, Captain.

The airlock opens, and they walk out into the ship.

CUT TO: INT. DERELICT

EOMIR

(Holding atmospheric device, over suitcom) Atmospheric and gravitational systems are stable. Mal slowly takes off his helmet. Takes a breath...

MAL

Yup. Stable.

The rest take off their helmets, and continue walking. Eomir stops, realizes River is not following.

He turns, sees that she's holding her head in her hands in a haunting, pained fashion...

RIVER Mistake... Mistake...

EOMIR (Walking over to her) River, you okay?

RIVER (Shaking it off) Yes. It's nothing.

River and Eomir go into one room, while Mal and Jayne follow the distress signal.

CUT TO: INT. COM ROOM, DERELICT

Jayne and Mal gather 'round a viewing port, which has a viewing disk lodged in it. Jayne takes it out.

JAYNE

I'm really starting to hate these things.

Mal takes it from him, inserts it into the viewing port. It flickers to life, displaying a haggard-looking scientist.

His voice overlaps as we

CUT TO: INT. EGG CHAMBER, DERELICT

Eomir and River stand wide-eyed as the stare at strange, ovoid shapes. Each one is about two feet tall, and covered in slime.

SCIENTIST (V.O.)

They're loose. I... I don't know how long we can survive. If my superiors find this, then I wish it to be known, that Xenomorph Project B has failed.

CUT BACK TO: INT. COM ROOM, DERELICT

The scientist turns around and a giant CLANG is heard offstage. He turns back to the camera.

SCIENTIST The growth of the Queen retrieved from Clone #7 was...too successful.

CUT BACK TO: INT. EGG CHAMBER, DERELICT

As River steps closer to the biggest egg. It begins to pulsate with life.

SCIENTIST (V.O.) They will get in any minute now.

The pettals on top of the egg tear open. River backs slowly away, terrified. However, she can't tear herself away from the terror before her.

She falls back, and she grabs her head as insectile skittering and indistinct voices fill her head. The egg ripples more violently. River shakes her head, trying to shake the voices out. She screams, and a CREATURE with eight legs SHOOTS out of the egg and ATTACHES to her head, and the tail wraps around her throat as we

ZOOM CUT BACK TO: INT. COM ROOM, DERELICT

VOICE THEY'RE IN!!!!

(OVER: GUNBLAST, AUTOMATIC)

SCIENTIST HOLD THEM BACK! NO! NOOOOOOO! AAAAAAAUUUGHHHHHH!!

An insectile figure passes in front of the scientist. The disk shuts off in a hiss of static.

JAYNE "Xenomorph"? Whaddaya think? Reavers?

MAL

No... No, not Reavers...

He thinks awhile, takes the viewdisk from the port and places it in a pocket in his suit. He suddenly notices, in a porthole, that about twenty Reaver ships are now closing in on the derelict.

MAL

Oh, no...

JAYNE

Oh, GREAT!

MAL Let's get out' a here! (Into suitcom) River! Eomir! Come in!

CUT TO: INT. EGG CHAMBER, DERELICT

as Eomir stands up from trying to get the creature off River's face.

EOMIR

(Into suitcom) River is currently... Uh... Incapacitated.

MAL

(Over suitcom) Well, get her out' a here! We got Reavers docking!

Startled look on his face, Eomir lifts up River- Without touching her (!)- And carries her out the door, creature and all.

He almost runs into Mal and Jayne as he rushes down the corridor. Jayne is startled at Eomir's method of carrying River.

JAYNE WHOA! (Pause) Gorrammit, Eomir! I'm STILL not used to you doing that!

> EOMIR Sorry.

MAL

Enough of the chitchat. Let's get out' a here!

They run into the airlock, and Eomir puts River down.

Mal rushes into the cockpit.

CUT TO: INT. COCKPIT, SERENITY

MAL WASH! GET US OUT'A HERE!!!

WASH

Why the rush?

MAL

JUST DO IT!!!

Wash looks out the viewport, and sees why; at least fifteen Reaver ships, Firefly class, small hoverers, even some Alliance-class have been Reaverised. Four are docked with the derelict, but the others are closing in on them. Fast.

WASH

AI YA! Um... Right away!

He pilots the ship away from the derelict, but scrapes against the side at the same time, putting a huge scratch right across the "Serenity" insignia.

MAL

You had to mess the paint job up?!?

WASH

The ship flies away, but not before a clang is heard at the bottom of the ship.

MAL

What was that?

WASH

It doesn't matter now; we're free of the Reavers. We'll be at Regina in a few hours.

MAL Shiny.

Eomir enters.

EOMIR

We're not out'a the woods yet, guys. You need to see what happened to River.

MAL

What happened to River?

CUT TO: INT. SERENITY CORRIDOR, JUST OUTSIDE THE AIRLOCK.

River still lays unmoving, but the creature is now free of her face. Mal, Wash and Eomir enter the scene, and Eomir immediately runs over to the dead creature. He makes one hand into a fist, and two blades extend from the sides of his gauntlet. He pokes it with one blade, and the tip begins to sizzle.

ANGLE - DEAD CREATURE

EOMIR

(O.S.)

What is this thing?

CUT TO: INT. INFIRMARY, SERENITY

The creature lies on an examining table, its blood eating into the table slightly.

SIMON (O.S.)

It's a parasite.

The entire crew sits around the table, including Kaylee and Zoe. We don't exactly know where Inara is right now, but we'll not get into that at this time.

SIMON

It uses its eight legs and tail to attach to a host and then... dies. Aside from the fact that it appears to bleed molecular acid, that's all I can tell you. MAL

That's all?

SIMON

Yup. I'm not sure about you, but I never really paid attention in undiscovered parasite class.

EOMIR

Well, what did it do to River before it died?

SIMON

I told you, I don't know.

KAYLEE Well, shouldn't we examine River or somethin'?

SIMON

I want to, Kaylee. But I need to know more about the thing itself, first.

MAL

Alright, people. There's work to be done before we get to Regina. Kaylee, you need to prep the-

KAYLEE

(Cutting him off) Maternity leave.

MAL

(Sighs sharply) -Mule.

SIMON

She's right, you know. A six-month pregnant woman shouldn't be doing that kind of work.

MAL Your opinion is biased; she's your wife.

> SIMON Still, I *am* a doctor...

MAL Alright. I'll do it, and Kaylee can talk me through it. Anyone wanna help me?

Silence.

MAL

Well, you're all coming down, anyway.

The crew makes various complaints.

CUT TO: INT. STORAGE BAY, SERENITY

Mal is underneath the Mule and the rest of the crew (except Wash, whose piloting the ship, and perhaps Dano) are just sitting there.

KAYLEE (To Mal) Now strip the blue wire.

MAL Snip the "number two" wire?

> KAYLEE No, the blue.

MAL Okey dokey.

A snipping sound is heard.

MAL Snipped.

KAYLEE NOT "SNIP"! "STRIP"!

MAL Too late. Already snipped.

Kaylee groans in annoyance.

MAL I'm sorry, okay! I can't hear well down here. Anyway, what was that wire for?

> KAYLEE (annoyed) The main power source.

EOMIR Why we gotta check over the Mule anyway? She ran fine on the last job.

ZOE

'Cause that was a heist. We gotta check her over to make sure she can handle weight 'stead of speed, so we can handle our load on this job.

EOMIR

Oh.

A clanking is heard off in the corner.

MAL (Still under the Mule) Wassat?

SIMON (Walking over to the point of origin) River? That you?

He continues to walk.

SIMON

You shouldn't be out of bed; something-

A Reaver jumps out of the shadows.

Simon steps back. Guns cock. Blades extend. The Reaver growls. River drops from the ceiling.

SIMON River! You're supposed to be-

River holds up a silencing hand to Simon. She points a gun towards the Reaver, cocks it.

The Reaver's chest explodes.

The crew looks around in confusion as the creature falls on its back.

JAYNE (To River) Did youNo...

Then they watch in horror as something emerges from the wound. Quickly, what looks like a snake jumps out and slithers away.

Kaylee vomits.

KAYLEE

(Wiping her mouth) That's exactly what I *didn't* need to see...

JAYNE

(To Simon) What in the name of the Earth-That-Was was that Gorram thing!?!

> SIMON LIKE I SHOULD KNOW?!?

MAL (Coming out from under the Mule) What's all the commotion?

He sees the very dead Reaver.

MAL Whoa. I, uh... didn't hear a gunshot?

> ZOE You heard right.

MAL What the Hel happened?

SIMON That's just it. We don't know.

> MAL Well, what did you SEE?

> > JAYNE

Well, after we heard that sound in the corner, the doctor went to check it out. Then a Reaver jumped out and River came down from the ceilingMAL

River's out' a bed? I thought she-

SIMON

I know. She's had a very traumatizing experience, and she-

MAL She's perfectly fine now. That means she can help us with the Regina job.

RIVER

I- Okay.

MAL

Okay. Now, we'll have to repair that cord on the Mule and-

RIVER (Falling on her knees) AUGH!!!

SIMON

(Running over to her) What!?! What's wrong?

RIVER

Voices... In my head... GET THEM OUT!!!!!!

River clutches her head, winces, and vomits.

RIVER

I'm... I'm okay.

SIMON

No, you're not. We're getting you back to the medlab after we find out where that Reaver--and that snake thing--came from.

Mal notices a trail of bloody footsteps, obviously from the Reaver.

MAL

Look...

He follows the footprints, which lead off into the dark area that the Reaver came out of. Behind a stack of crates, a hole in the floor is seen, and under the hole is the cockpit of a ship, obviously Reaveran; covered in blood and grime, and a very small ship, too. Mal jumps down into the ship, and looks around. He looks to the floor, where he sees a spider-thing, like the one that was on River, except this one is flesh-toned, not the black that was the other one.

MAL

(Calling) You wanna tell me the rest of that story?

ZOE That's it, except for the part where the Reaver's chest exploded and a snake jumped out.

> MAL Out of where?

> > ZOE

The Reaver's chest.

MAL

Eew.

CUT TO: INT. COCKPIT, SERENITY

Regina is in view now; a dazzling outer-rim planet that has a black, charred meteor belt and only two moons. Wash sits back, checking the entry sequences. Regina is still quite a while away, so Wash decides to relax; he plays with his dinosaurs a bit. He picks up a T-rex and a stegosaur, the rex biting the stego's neck, who retaliates with a swipe from his tail.

CUT TO: EXT. SERENITY HULL

LEGEND: THREE HOURS LATER

Jayne, in a space-suit, is cutting the Reaver ship off *Serenity* with some kind of torch. Once it's off, he shoves it away, puts a patch on the hull, and welds it shut.

CUT BACK TO: INT. COCKPIT, SERENITY

WASH

(As the T-Rex)
Resistance is futile, worm!
(As the Stego)
I will no longer put up with your tyranny, tyrannosaur!

WASH (CONT'D, As Rex) Ha, take that! (As Stego) Touché, my saurian friend! (As Rex) Oh, look, Stego! Someone wrote gullible on the ceiling! (As Stego) Really? I don't see -(Rex attacks) (Stego) AAAAHHH!!!

A clang is heard O.S., perhaps even a low, barely audible GROWL.

WASH (As himself) Hello?

No answer.

WASH (CONT'D) Is anyone-

Something SHOOTS down from the ceiling, something horrific, insectile. We can barely tell what it looks like in the dim lighting, but we can distinguish a black, bio-mechanoid form with a long, smooth head. The thing lands on top of Wash, who is pinned underneath the creature's weight. The thing opens up a mouth from a face with no eyes, letting a RAMROD TONGUE SHOOT OUT. Wash, with the lightning dexterity of a starship pilot, GRABS THE TONGUE WITH HIS FLESH HAND. He stares at the thing for a split second, the thing gnashing its fangs at him (yes, the tongue has teeth). He reacts and brings his mechanical arm up in a savage blow into the creatures sorry excuse for a face, sending it flying up to the ceiling, which it clings onto for a second, throwing itself right back down onto the pilot, who's ready for more; he sidesteps, using his mechanical arm to grab the creature's own right arm. The creature flips upside-down and out of his grasp, behind Wash. He turns 'round as the RAMROD flies out again, and once again he brutally grasps the dripping horror. This time Wash has it in his mechanoid hand, and he uses the tongue to PULL THE CREATURE TOWARD HIM, placing a blow with his flesh hand on its head, and the other, with his mech-hand,

blowing straight through its chest! The acid blood begins to eat away at the arm, but the material is strong, and it holds true.

Unbelievably, the creature stands up, and lunges at the pilot, but, weakened, it is clumsy; Wash takes it up in a fierce headlock and breaks its neck. It falls limply to the floor. Wash looks at the fallen creature with disgust.

WASH I'm a leaf on the wind, ya wote.

Then he notices something in the corner. He picks it up, stretches it out. It looks almost like the shed skin of a snake. But it's HUGE.

CUT TO: INT. INFIRMARY, SERENITY

ANGLE - SCREEN

The screen shows four images in the order as follows: a computer-generated image of one of the alien eggs, a picture of the eight-legged creature, a computer-generated image of the snake thing, and, finally, a picture of the creature that attacked Wash.

SIMON

(V.O.)

From the information I've gathered, I can formulate an idea of what were dealing with here.

We pan out to reveal a large viewscreen, with Simon standing in front. The rest of the crew (the full crew, this time) sit in front of him in chairs. The INFIRMARY has been transformed into a makeshift BRIEFING ROOM.

SIMON Mind you all, this is currently just conjecture, and I really have no idea where these things came from, or even what they are.

JAYNE Yippee.

Simon ignores him.

SIMON

However, from what I can tell, the life-cycle is as follows: first, it starts out as an egg; you found these on the derelict ship. Next, when a presence is detected, a creature emerges from the egg and attaches to the host. While it's attached, it deposits an embryo inside a cavity within the body of the host. The eight-legged creature then falls off and dies. After gestating awhile, the embryo emerges- quite violently, as we've seen. After molting a few times, the creature reaches its adult form: the creature that attacked Wash.

EOMIR

If what you're saying is true, then were dealing with a completely different form of life than we've ever known.

WASH (to himself, in disbelief) An alien race...

JAYNE

I doesn't know 'bout you guys, but I don't think we's dealin' with no little green men here.

Eomir shoots Jayne a look.

EOMIR

(Scornfully) Nice hat.

Jayne shoots Eomir a look, just before shooting a deft bullet to his face. Eomir expertly puts up his hand, catching the bullet. He looks at it for a while, then squashes it flat, dropping it to the floor with a small "clink".

JAYNE

(Scornfully) Nice trick. Watcha do for an encore?

Eomir's on him before you can say "Krik", at his throat, Jayne's toes four feet from the ground.

EOMIR How 'bout that?

Wash tries to break it up, but he's enjoying every second of this.

WASH

Now, Eomir, you put the nice ape-man down.

EOMIR

But daddy, I'm havin' so much fun!

On "fun" Eomir gives Jayne's neck a good squeeze. One of the only times Simon loses his temper can be found right here.

SIMON

(in Chinese)

You two better sit your filthy persons down and listen to what I'm saying or I will personally throw your ugly Gorram faces into an incinerator. Understand!?!

Eomir tosses Jayne back into his seat.

EOMIR

(Torak)

You're lucky I didn't squeeze harder, or you wouldn't live to wear that hat any more.

Jayne ignores Eomir, or simply doesn't understand what he's saying. The latter the more likely.

JAYNE

(To Simon)

Nice outburst, doc. But it lacked a bit in curse words.

SIMON

(still smoldering)

Now that we've all had our fun, I'd like to tell everyone about the ALIENS we're dealing with.

JAYNE

Seriously, doc. These can't be actual aliens. For all we know, this could be some whacked-out Alliance 'sperament!

ZOE

Makes sense.

DANO

Yes, it does. The derelict was an Alliance ship.

MAL

Somethin' don't seem right 'bout this, though.

JAYNE

Hel, nothin's right 'bout this. Here we are talkin' about aliens after a Reaver blows up and Wash's almost et by a giant bug.

EOMIR

Look, one of those face...things was on River. That means she's got one gestating in her right now!

SIMON

I'm keeping her under surveillance and quarantine. It's all I can do until we're done with the Regina job.

JAYNE

And... why hasn't River gone ka-blewey like the Reaver yet?

SIMON

That's one of the things I've been wondering myself.

CUT TO: EXT. REGINA SURFACE, DAY

Serenity lands just on the outskirts of a town called Bolaro. From orbit, we saw that this planet had many green and lively continents, but Bolaro is situated in a vast desert; secluded, just the way jobs on Serenity need to be worked. A ramp lowers from the back of Serenity, and Mal, Eomir, Zoe and Jayne ROAR out of the cargo bay in the Mule.

CUT TO: EXT. BOLARO CITY, DAY

The group arrives at a particularly large building, and jump out of the Mule. They are now in full attire, Jayne wearing a small weapon harness at his thigh, Zoe in a practically military uniform with a shotgun slung to her back, and Mal and Eomir wearing long trench coats (Mal's is brown, Eomir's is gray). A smallish, ecstatic man in similar attire to Mal greets them. From his weathered look and uniform, we can safely assume that his is also a BROWNCOAT, a former fighter for the Independence. He greets Mal with a warm, strong handshake.

MAN

Mal! It's good to see you again!

MAL You too, Matt. MAN

So, this is your crew?

MAL

Yeah. Well, part of it. The rest are back on my ship. We had some, uh, difficulties.

MAN

Well that's fine. There's no rush, anyway.

MAL

(To the others) Guys, this is Matthew Hennings. Matt, this is Zoe, Jayne, and Eomir.

Zoe greets for the others in a monotonous, Zoe-fashion.

ZOE

Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Hennings.

HENNINGS

The pleasure's mine. Now, how's about we do some business?

CUT TO: INT. RIVER'S ROOM, SERENITY

River lies on her bed. Her breath is steady and peaceful, and we can clearly see that she is sleeping. Simon enters in through the thin door, walks over and kneels by her bed, and is slightly surprised when he sees her eyes open.

SIMON

River-

RIVER

Simon... It makes no sense anymore. There are only two in this room. There's you, there's me. It doesn't make sense anymore. (Off Simon's look, after a pause) There's three.

> SIMON (Horrified) What?

RIVER Three heartbeats. Three minds. Three entities. Simon... It can't be.

SIMON

What? What is it River?

RIVER

It's inside me.

Simon's look deepens. He knew it was possible, but it wasn't confirmed until now; Eomir was right about River being infected. He swallows hard, fights back his emotions.

SIMON

River, do you remember what happened on the derelict? The derelict ship that you went on?

RIVER

I remember...

Her face changes in horror.

RIVER

They were everywhere. The voices. They all wanted me. They wanted my body. To be in my body. I couldn't block them out... They were too strong... But then... She was there.

SIMON

Who, River?

RIVER

I... Don't know. Just... Her. It came at me, and I thought she was gone. But then I heard her again. When I woke up. She... She needs me.

She laughs, more gently than we would expect.

RIVER I'm happy. She's happy. (Pause) But then... It came.

SIMON

What came?

RIVER

It was the Reaver. It was inside the Reaver. It was... It was like the Reaver. It's mind couldn't focus on anything other than... rage. Killing. It wanted out, and it wanted to kill. I knew I had to kill it. RIVER

(CONT'D) She said I needed to kill it. I got there, but it was too late.

She laughs, stronger, but as if in triumph.

RIVER Wash... He killed it, didn't he?

> SIMON Yes. Yes, he did.

RIVER I knew. I know all about them. She told me... warned me.

> SIMON About what, River?

> > RIVER The others.

Simon's eyes open wider.

SIMON River, who is "she"?

River takes Simon's hand gently, placing it on HER STOMACH. She brings her mouth close to his ear.

RIVER

(Whispers) She is Alien.

CUT TO: INT. HENNINGS' WAREHOUSE

Many people bustle about large (others VERY large) crates, lifting them with various machines, some being loaded onto transports through a very large door. Mal, Eomir, Zoe and Jayne walk through the labyrinthine sea of crates.

MAL

A' right, Eomir, what we got?

EOMIR

(Reading off a datapad) Okay, according to this, our load's crates B-27 through B-32, which should be right (points) there. They look over to where he's pointing: the cargo is five HUGE crates, all of them in very odd shapes.

JAYNE Whoa. All that for us?

MAL Eomir, read me off the manifest. I wanna know what ol' Matt's sellin'.

EOMIR

(Pushes a few button on the datapad, reads) A' right, we got one Caterpillar P-1500 Loader, two Cappison 45 Hover transports, and two Z-(Beat) D'el-te-r'acht!

He stops, his eyes going wide. He gestures for the others to come closer. They gather around him, and Eomir's voice is little above a whisper.

EOMIR

(Motions to the datapad) You see this? Your buddy's got us shipping two Zealot suits!

JAYNE

Zealot... what?

MAL

Zealot suits... Long ways back the military had 'em designed for genetically engineered supersoldiers. Discontinued, 'cause of some accident they had with 'em. Soldiers misfired, blew the interface matrix or somethin'. Lot a' people were killed.

JAYNE

What makes 'em so dangerous?

EOMIR

These things are loaded with more weapons than you can imagine... and the interface matrix plugs straight into your spinal column. Given enough time and practice, these things become a part of your body. They mimic every move you make.

JAYNE

(To Mal)

So what's your buddy doin' with 'em?

MAL

Ol' Matt's got many a' contact in military refuse. He could pick up a trashed nuclear warhead and no one'd notice 'im. Still, we'd better check out who these are goin' to and why before we do anythin' hasty.

> JAYNE Not ta state the obvious-

> > EOMIR (Sarcastically) You? No!

Jayne ignores him.

JAYNE

I don't think it's gonna take just the Mule ta get these suit things out'a here.

A pause, then:

MAL

(Calling)

Hey, Matt! You got any freight transports I can borrow?

CUT TO: INT. INFIRMARY, SERENITY

We see River on the examination table; some sort of ultrasonic scanner is over her (River is wearing a top that exposes her abdomen, making it easier for the scan). Attached to the scanner is Simon, and Kaylee is next to them, just watching. Simon is trying to find the right place to put the scanner.

> SIMON (Moving the scanner) Here?

RIVER No, (Moves the scanner below her navel) here.

> SIMON Alright.

He walks over to an instrument panel. He flips a switch, illuminating the scanner with a blue glow. He then switches on a monitor, which meets him with yet another soft blue glow. Onscreen, a few of River's abdominal organs begin to come into focus. But as the screen clears more, we see what they're looking for. We see a sleeping, insectile form.

The ALIEN.

Kaylee lets out a small gasp, instinctively places a hand on her own pregnant abdomen.

SIMON

This is strange... The embryo seems to have implanted in River's uterus. Instead of being parasitic, the alien is gaining sustenance from her like an unborn human.

KAYLEE

So... River's pregnant with this thing?

SIMON

From what I can tell, yes. And by what River's been saying, it's not about to burst out, either.

KAYLEE

Why do you say that?

SIMON

River can read it's thoughts... It almost seems to have--as ridiculous as this may sound--Taken a side to her. I mean, River's almost more happy with this thing than she is when she's dancing.

RIVER

I'm not the wall, you know.

Despite his worry about the situation, he decides to make light of it with his trademark (yeah, right) wit.

SIMON

Well, you know what they say ... "If the walls had ears"...

RIVER

In this case, the wall does have ears... And the wall notices that you're having a very loud and strange discussion about her.

In truth, Simon is relieved about her commenting, seeing as River is the victim in the situation.

SIMON

Well, when we need your input, we'll ask.

RIVER This is my alien we're talking about here.

SIMON

Your alien?

RIVER

(Laughs) Of course. You wouldn't think that I'd let anyone else have her, would you?

KAYLEE

Wait a tic, how can River read its mind? This thing can't actually *think...*can it?

SIMON

But that's the thing; it can't think, per se. What River's finding are the creature's instinctual imprintations, which are very complex. River reads them like a paperback. And, from the look of this, this alien's far different from the one that attacked Wash, and it's going to be a lot bigger.

KAYLEE

How big?

SIMON

It's indefinite. River says that it's something called a "Queen". It's basically the matriarch of their community. It grows, lays the eggs that start the life-cycle.

KAYLEE

And the whole thing starts over again.

SIMON

Yes. They form a hive somewhere, too. Like bees, only more complex. My guess is that these things would make the perfect biological weapon, if they could be controlled. (Significantly) That's why the Alliance wanted them.

A LONG BEAT.

KAYLEE

So, you don't think the 'lliance just made 'em?

SIMON

No. I've reviewed that viewdisk, and it said that the creature was retrieved from a clone. It could have been a clone of a host organism.

KAYLEE Well... It would make sense, wouldn't it?

RIVER

(Interrupting) Could we go down to the kitchen and have some dinner now? I'm really hungry.

SIMON

No, no, no. I'm not letting you into the kitchen. I'm bringing some dinner to you.

RIVER

Can I at least go to my room? A pause.

RIVER It's not too much to ask, is it?

SIMON I'll bring some food down to your room.

River smiles... Actually smiles!

CUT TO: INT. HENNINGS' WAREHOUSE, DAY

Four P-2000 loaders (Exosuits built for loading heavy equipment, but ones that look cleaner and newer than P-1500's, the kind that's part of the freight shipment that Mal's taking) have just gotten done with the last crate of Hennings' shipment. Mal is standing next to Hennings at the loading port.

MAL

Alright, that's the last one.

HENNINGS (Handing him a card) Five hundred coin now. Another on safe delivery. MAL

It's been good, Mat. See ya in a few days.

HENNINGS

See ya, Mal.

Mal jumps out the loading port, followed by Jayne, Zoe and Eomir. They start to leave, and an electronic RINGING is heard. Eomir pulls a small device (Handlinc) from his pocket, activates it. Onscreen, Wash's face can be made out.

WASH

(Handlinc filter) Eomir. I think you should tell Mal to get back here as soon as possible.

EOMIR

(Into Handlinc) Is something wrong?

WASH

(Handlinc filter) If you count some really creepifying things, yes.

EOMIR

(Into Handlinc) We're on our way. He shuts off his Handlinc, turns to Mal.

EOMIR

We gotta go. Some sort of situation back at Serenity.

Mal turns to the freight transport, nods to the driver. The driver nods back, and Mal starts toward their vehicle, motioning for the others to follow. They do, jumping in the back of the Mule, and they speed off.

CUT TO: INT. SERENITY KITCHEN

Mal sits at the end of the table, more than a tad miffed.

MAL

So, your telling me that River's *pregnant* with an *alien* that ain't exactly evil, and there're also, in extreme problemation, many more of these things in existence in a place that is not close to our exact proximity. Is that about it?

SIMON

That pretty much sums it up, yes.

Eomir stands abruptly, a zealous glint in his eye.

EOMIR

We've gotta find the hive! We've seen what just one of these things could do, imagine if just ten of them spread-

MAL

(Cutting him off)

Where they are, Eomir, they should be no threat. We won't be hasty about this.

MAL

(CONT'D)

We're gonna do our job before shuntin' off to go bugstompin'.

Eomir sits, disgruntled. Wash speaks up, raising his mechanical arm.

WASH

If I may cut in to remind some of you, the derelict is inbetween Regina and Angel. We could at destroy the eggs that're there.

MAL

That I can agree with. Now, if we're settled... Kaylee, fire up the engines so Wash can set us a course for Angel. On the way we can do a number with those eggs.

After a slight pause:

KAYLEE

You know, cap'n, somthin' else is on the way to Angel...

It takes a moment to register what Kaylee's talking about, but whatever it is hits Mal like a sack of gold bricks.

MAL

No. No, Kaylee. One distraction's enough to hinder our job. Still no clue as to what it is, but apparently whatever Kaylee was taking about, Eomir gets, too.

EOMIR

Even turned Shepherdess, a Companion would provide some invaluable skill.

Closer...

JAYNE

Yeah, ya need some 'a that "elegant force" stuff that Eomir keeps talkin' 'bout, 'Nara's pretty much the one to go to.

Oh.

A long, uncomfortable pause as Mal considers this.

WASH

It's pretty much Inara or mutiny, Mal.

Mal looks around at his crew, suddenly uncomfortable being put on the spotlight. He turns desperately to Zoe.

MAL

Et tu, Zoe?

Eomir barely stifles a full-out belly laugh.

MAL

(Snaps at Eomir) Hey, you're not the only one that reads Shakespeare on this boat, Eomir!

Eomir shrugs.

MAL

Zoe, if there's anyone who can back me up, it's you.

ZOE

Sir, I'm afraid I have to agree with them on this particular point. Inara would be vital on this mission, even if it does set us back a few paces.

Mal stares bitterly at her.

MAL

(Still angry) So, all for visiting Inara?

All hands (but Mal's) fly up in unison.
MAL Opposed?

All hands fall in unison. Mal groans.

CUT TO: EXT. WHITTIER, DAY

ON SERENITY

As she bursts into atmo of Whittier.

CUT TO: INT. SERENITY COCKPIT

The whole crew is in the cockpit (except for River, of course). They all stare, shocked, at the scene before them.

ON THE COCKPIT VIEWING PORT

Outside, Whittier has been ravaged once more. Fires. Even some bodies.

EOMIR (Shocked) Looks like Reavers...

MAL (Disbelieving) No...

As they continue down to the surface, a look of relief washes visibly over Mal's face.

Down at one of the buildings, tending the wounded is INARA.

Not like we remember her, in relatively drab garb compared to when she was a Companion. A simple brown tunic is accompanied by brown pants.

She looks much different now that she's not wearing any makeup. Much... prettier.

CUT TO: EXT. WHITTIER, DAY

The ramp lowers from the back of *Serenity*, and Mal's out before it's even fully down. He runs over to the building Inara's at, and her face visually brightens. She runs up, gives Mal a big hug. A hug with warmth, something you'd never see from Inara the Companion.

This is Inara the Shepherdess.

INARA

Mal, I'm so glad you're here. I would've waved you but they knocked out our communications tower.

MAL

What the Hel happened here?

INARA Reavers. Typical attack; sudden, unexpected.

MAL

I'm sorry we didn't get here sooner-

INARA

No, you couldn't have known. We managed to drive them off, but alot were taken, and alot were killed.

MAL

You did what you could. These people are lucky to have you as their Shepherdess.

INARA

What I could wasn't enough.

MAL

It's better than nothing. Now, I was on my way to a job, and we, uh, needed a bit of your help.

Inara gives him a look.

INARA What would you need my help with?

> MAL Ah, I'll explain later.

O.S., a throat is cleared loudly.

ANGLE - SERENITY

At the ramp stands the crew. They're looking at Mal knowingly. After a while, Kaylee runs forward, catching Inara in a big hug.

KAYLEE

Inara!

INARA Kaylee, it's good to see you.

They walk off, their conversation fading.

The crew stands firm, looking at Mal.

MAL

What?

CUT TO: INT. MEETING BUILDING

A warm, wooden room, a warm fire in the fireplace adds a touch of comfort. We get the vague impression that this is the only place that wasn't touched by the Reavers. The reason being that this was the colonists' post of defense. We can tell from the upturned tables and other things indicating a battle. But still, no real damage.

INARA

(O.S., softly) It happened yesterday, about mid-day.

As we PAN across the room, we see that one of the tables is still upright. Around it sit MAL, JAYNE, ZOE, WASH... eh, you get the idea. Basically, everybody's there right now except River.

INARA

(CONT'D)

We held them off, through the night. We saw some of them take us, but we eventually fought them off. I...couldn't do anything else to help them...

She looks away solemnly, tears trickling slowly from her delicate face. Mal turns to her, comforting her.

MAL

(Slow, soothing) 'Nara, you did better'n anybody else could. Hel, we couldn't 'a done much else if we were here.

Inara looks at Mal, a picture of softness. She smiles lovingly, and Mal is totally enamored with her, as though seeing her for the first time. As a Companion, Inara would've never been able to express herself in this way to Mal. But now, as a Shepherdess, things are going a little different.

A tender moment passes, but it's quickly broken when we hear:

VOICE

(Ominous)

They're here.

They turn, and we also PAN over, revealing RIVER, standing in the doorway. Her stomach is slightly swollen, the result of the continuing growth of the Alien inside her. She is standing, a dark expression on her face as she stares at them. Eomir seems to understand River's statement.

EOMIR

(Turns to Inara, urgent) Where're the bodies?

INARA

Well, we buried them in a lot at the back of the-

EOMIR

No.

(As ominous as River) I mean the Reavers.

CUT TO: INT. SHED

It is completely dark. The door cracks open, affording us a little light on the contents of the shed:

Ten or twelve DEAD REAVERS.

The door opens fully, and a light comes on.

RIVER and EOMIR walk in, examining the bodies. They find at least four Reavers with HOLES IN THEIR CHESTS. Jayne walks up, examines one of the mangled corpses. JAYNE

What's so 'mport'nt? Looks like gunblast took 'em down.

EOMIR

No,

(Indicates the wound) You see how the bone is bent outward at the wound? (Significantly) Something broke *out*.

RIVER

And there's at least five bodies like this. She says that there are much more. Maybe thirty.

EOMIR

"She"?

Simon steps forward.

SIMON The Alien growing inside River. It's something River calls a "Queen". It's sort of a mother-Alien--

MAL

Cut the bio-lesson, doc. We need to know where to find these things.

RIVER

They'll nest wherever they have enough room to grow. . . and breed.

EOMIR

More specifically, I'd say we look in the mines.

INARA

Would someone please explain to me what's going on here? She's been mainly at the back of the conversation, ultimately left out.

WASH This may be a little hard for you to swallow, Inara, but you've been invaded.

> INARA What?

EOMIR Wash, this ain't a time to joke. (To Inara) I know it sounds crazy, but we've actually found *alien life*.

INARA

"Alien li"-extraterrestrials?

EOMIR

Yes. And these aren't the kinda aliens you see in cartoons, these are the real deal. Lethal, unhesitant to kill. I reckon just one of these things is enough to kill ten fullgrown guys. One almost killed Wash.

MAL

And if we've got thirty of 'em on this very planet, we're not leavin' 'til we've got every one of the buggers.

CUT TO: INT. EOMIR'S QUARTERS, SERENITY

A rich, hardwood closet, beautifully silk-screened in a pattern of gold and silver flames. The closet is opened slowly, revealing an arsenal that might even put Jayne to shame (not bloody likely, though!). Hanging on several racks and hooks are limitless counts of BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED SWORDS, along with a few guns and other indistinguishable mechanical weapons. We pull out, revealing Eomir, who reaches in, pulls out several articles, and begins to strap them to his body.

First comes a sort of chrome harness, which he slips over his shoulders. He slips various weapons into the loops and pockets of the harness, including two shining silver REVOLVERS. When he finishes, he looks almost like some sort of special ops agent, but everything is compact enough that when Eomir slips on his suede-like duster, it's hardly noticeable.

After this all, Eomir reaches once more into his weapons closet, and retracts a small, sheathed blade. Pulling out even further, we see River, standing glumly behind Eomir.

She's now wearing traveling clothes, loose enough to hide the growing bulge of her alien-heavy stomach. Eomir turns to her, hands her the blade. River takes it, a slightly confused look playing about her solemn features. River unsheathes the blade. It's about a foot long, bloodgrooved, ornate engraved flames ensconcing a Chinese character, which we may recognize as the pictogram expressing love.

EOMIR

Taggerung. The swiftest of all blades ever forged.

His head drops, pain filling his eyes. He averts his gaze from River, fighting inevitable tears.

EOMIR

My Dad had it made for me. For my thirteenth birthday.

Eomir looks at River, tears choked back by years of hardening training.

EOMIR

(CONT'D)

He died a year later... Brain cancer.

River's look changes from glumness to empathy, feeling almost for him. She's never heard much about Eomir's past, and she knows why. But she wonders why he's letting himself out now.

EOMIR

(CONT'D)

When I was fifteen, just a *year* after my father was taken from me, I had to stand and watch as my mother and sister were killed. Right before my eyes.

Another pause. Tears unbidden flow back into his eyes.

EOMIR

(CONT'D)

Gunned down by a mercenary.(swallows) I chased 'im down. Broke his spine. Made him suffer. I brought 'im in to the law, he was checked, questioned. He was an assassin, but he never told and pro'lly didn't know who had hired him or why."Just another hired gun," he said. He was sentenced to a life in prison.

Eomir wipes his eyes, looks up.

EOMIR In a way, I was, too. River stares at him, feeling his hurt, his anger towards what is simply a thorn in Mal or any normal person's paw.

EOMIR

I was the perfect candidate. My enhanced cognitive abilities, combined with my convenient absence of a family, put me right on the top of the Alliance's list. They gave me my power. (Through clenched teeth) but they took away my humanity. My freedom.

He looks deeper into River's eyes.

EOMIR You're the only other person who can comprehend this...pain.

Eomir steps closer to River.

EOMIR Treat my blade well. It'll protect you. The accuracy of its fashion keeps any blood from being shed. It was meant as a symbol of peace. Of patience. (beat) Now it may be a useful asset.

A beat.

RIVER

Eomir...

She sheaths Taggerung.

RIVER

(CONT'D)

Why are you doing this... Leaving me with your blade, telling me everything? You know you always block me out when I'm in your head.

EOMIR

I know, I know. (beat) I wanted to be able to *tell* you.

> RIVER Why?

EOMIR

Because I know I can trust you. Because I may never see you again after the shafts. And... (hesitates, steps closer to her) Because I love you.

Eomir's close now, closer than any have ever dared. He slowly leans in, slowly plants a gentle kiss on her lips. River slowly leans in also, returning it, but she pulls away abruptly. She turns away.

> EOMIR I'm sorry... I shouldn't have done that.

> > RIVER No... It's... I'm sorry.

An awkward moment of silence.

EOMIR (Breaking the silence) Where will you go?

A beat, as River thinks.

RIVER

I'll probably help repair some of the damages here.

EOMIR You believe you'll be safe then?

RIVER Of course. With my brother and Kaylee protecting me, what could go wrong?

EOMIR

Your brother is brilliant when it comes to medicine. But as far as the guarding of anything in particular, even himself, I believe he's a blundering idiot.

River laughs.

RIVER (still giggling) I would have to concur.

CUT TO: EXT. SHAFTS, WHITTIER - NIGHT

The crew is lined up outside a mine shaft. Eomir is quiet, reserved. Jayne is practically ensconsed in weapons. Dano hulks over them, an enormous BATTLE AXE hefted upon his shoulder. In a hip holster at his side is contained a semiauto COLT. Wash is also going, and he is wearing a tank-top and clasps a G6G Pulse Rifle. Inara is beside him, her compound bow slung over her, a long NODACHI blade hanging from a sheath at her side. Zoe… Zoe is Zoe.

River stands off in the back, listening.

Beside her stands Simon, protective, alert.

Mal is standing before them all, between the crew and the shafts that may spell their death.

MAL

You are all here. But the questions you gotta ask yourself are "why am I here" and "do I want to be here". The answer to both is left entirely to you, I got no say in the matter. All I know is that there's a threat to be dealt with here. I'm gonna take it full on. If I don't, the whole Verse'll take the brunt for it. You've heard from me. Now, if any 'a you have anything to say, or have regrets of joinin' this mission, you'd better make it known now. You're not gonna get a chance later.

Nobody moves.

MAL

If we're all good with jumpin' into this bug-hole, I'll lay
it all out for you. We're gonna spilt inta two teams. Team
A - Eomir, Jayne, and Wash - will take this shaft here.
Team B - Dano, 'Nara 'n me - will take the next shaft down.
Accordin' to River's new insight, these two'll be our best
 bet, as they're the closest to where the Reavers were
 found. Any questions?

WASH Yeah, I've got one.

> MAL Yeah?

WASH

(To Eomir)

Are you sure these Handlincs of yours'll be able to work through at least five hundred tons of solid rock?

EOMIR

(Explaining) The Handlincs transmit information via supersonic waves that trigger vibrations in the subatomic particles of any material -

WASH

Yes, but will they work?

EOMIR I've tested them plenty of times.

WASH

Yes, but will they work?

EOMIR

(snapping)

Yes, Wash, they'll work. I've calibrated the COMs, the GPS, the motion tracker, everything.

WASH No need ta get feisty. Just coverin' the bases, is all.

A beat.

MAL Anything else?

Another beat.

MAL

Good. Let's pack 'er up and move 'er out.

He motions to Inara and Dano, and the three of them jump into the Mule and head for the other mine. Eomir turns, heads over to Simon and River.

> EOMIR (To River) Take care of yourself.

He kisses her on the forehead. Simon looks slightly surprised.

EOMIR

(To Simon, fierce)

If anything happens to her, there'll be Helfire to pay.

And he looks like he means it.

He turns, leaves Simon and River, who in turn head back to Serenity.

Eomir reaches Jayne and Wash, and they head into the hive.

JAYNE Why is it I always get stuck with you?

EOMIR Don't worry, boss-man. I'll watch your back.

WASH Yeah? And whose gonna watch your back?

EOMIR

Why, you are, of course. What kind of question's that?

Jayne rolls his eyes.

They enter the cave.

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT ONE

Pitch black.

Visibility is zero, and we are left sitting in absolute darkness for several minutes. We suddenly hear echoing sounds. Footsteps. Suddenly, a sharp BEAM of light penetrates the eerie, ink-like dark.

It's EOMIR, a MOUNTED FLASHIGHT gleaming from his armored vest. He needs both of his hands, for clutched in them is a large, TWO-HANDED SWORD.

We may catch some of his light for a second, to see that between the blood grooves is inscribed in contemporary English "STINGBLADE".

He takes out his Handlinc, turns it on.

EOMIR

(Into Handlinc) Testing frequency. Cap, can you hear me?

Some wining feedback, then:

MAL

(Handlinc filter) Yeah, I hear ya, Eomir. What's your status?

> EOMIR 'Bout ten yards in, and no visual.

> > MAL (Handlinc filter) Motion?

Eomir taps a few keys on his Handlinc, brings up a motion tracking screen. It shows only the blips of Wash and Jayne.

EOMIR

Negative.

MAL

(Handlinc filter) Well, keep 'er hot. We're about five yards in. I got a feelin' the bugs're keepin' it low.

EOMIR

Confirmed. Out.

He shuts off the Handlinc, heads down further. He motions for Jayne to follow.

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT TWO

Inara, Dano, Zoe and Mal are continuing down the mine. Mal has a harness mounted flashlight also, and has a revolver in one hand, the Handlinc in the other. He's looking at it intently, studying the motion tracker.

> ZOE What do we do when we find the nest?

MAL

Got it covered.

He takes his eyes off the motion tracker, places it in his

belt. He takes another, box-like item from his gun harness.

INARA (Barely audible) A micronuclear warhead...

DANO

Where'd you get that?

Mal puts the device back on his belt, takes the Handlinc up.

MAL

Bought it off a client by the name 'a Matt Hennings. (a half-smile) The best prices always come from old acquaintances.

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT ONE

Jayne and Eomir are still heading down the dark passageways.

The only light source is the small beam of Eomir's flashlight. We can see nothing but their faces and what is revealed by the miniscule bit of illumination.

WASH What exactly are we looking for?

EOMIR Anything that would indicate the presence of this creature.

> JAYNE Which would be...?

EOMIR The creatures would need to make this place abatable to their needs.

WASH

Could you elaborate on that? I mean, describe it a bit?

Eomir looks at something illuminated by his flashlight, a look of horror on his face.

EOMIR (Dark)

I may not have to.

He lights a flood flare, lighting the entire room in an eerie, rust-orange glow.

We see what Eomir means.

The walls are covered in a type of bio-mech resin, horrific to the eye.

WASH

Lord save us...

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT TWO

As Team B continue along the dank corridors of the cave.

Suddenly, the screen of Mal's Handlinc lights up. Mal presses a button, and Eomir's face appears over the motion tracker.

MAL What is it, Eomir?

EOMIR (Handlinc filter, panicked) Mal, we found the nest!

MAL

Where?

EOMIR

(Handlinc filter) About sixty yards down in Shaft One. We're gonna check it out. I think we can handle it ourselves.

MAL

You got movement yet?

EOMIR

No.

MAL Well, keep me -

EOMIR (Handlinc filter) Wait...

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT ONE

Eomir stands with Jayne and Wash.

Eomir's face is white as he stares at his Handlinc/motion tracker.

EOMIR (terrified) Nobody move.

> WASH What?

EOMIR

(Becoming more desperate) I'm detecting movement everywhere.

A more desperate look as he continues staring at the screen.

EOMIR

They're closing in!

Wash and Jayne prep their weapons.

EOMIR

(Reading motion tracker) Three yards... two yards...three feet - (Screaming) WASH THEY'RE RIGHT ON TOP OF YOU!

WUMF! An Alien FLIES DOWN FROM THE CEILING.

Wash lands on his back, opens several rounds on the Alien. He rolls away, narrowly avoiding deadly acid blood and the crushing weight of the Alien.

With a deafening SCREECH, Aliens fly out from everywhere; walls, ceiling, everywhere. We didn't see them before because they blend perfectly with their environment.

Eomir abandons the Handlinc, tosses it aside, opens up with his Revolvers.

EOMIR

OPEN FIRE!

JAYNE (Without a bit of humor) YA DON'T SAY!

RATATATATASHANKSHANKSHANK!

SREEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!

Gunfire everywhere, insectile SCREAMING, acid blood flying.

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT TWO

It's all transmitted through the Handlinc. Mal hears the screams, gunfire, everything.

MAL (Into Handlinc) Eomir, what's happening? We're coming!

DEAD STATIC.

MAL Eomir? EOMIR!

CUT TO: INT. HIVE

AN ALIEN FOOT LIFTING.

Underneath lies the remains of the destroyed Handlinc.

ANGLE - JAYNE

FIRES, FIRES, FIRES, CLICK.

EMPTY.

Slams a new cartridge in, blows a few more Aliens away.

ANGLE - WASH

BLAMBLAMBLAMCRACK!

Wash fires, fires, smashes a mechanoid fist several times into the elongated heads of the creatures.

ANGLE - EOMIR

BLAM - BLAM - BLAM - CLICK.

His Revolvers are out.

Holsters them, draws Stingblade from his back.

Hacks mercilessly away, dodges acid blood as it steams its way through fresh wounds.

Eventually, Stingblade is entirely melted away, and Eomir draws a new sword - SWIFTBLADE - from his boot.

SLANK- SLANK- SHRAAAAA!!!!

Eomir slices deftly, and NO BLOOD REMAINS ON HIS BLADE.

FWUMP! An Alien hand GRABS Eomir's face, and it's immediately severed from its owner. Eomir pulls it free, but the Aliens are soon upon him.

A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT

As it clears:

EOMIR

Not yet sixteen. Still innocent, but his face is rigored with enough pain for a man twice his age.

Another image: several children, about seventeen, in futuristic articles of BATTLE ARMOR. Shooting across trenches at each other with false rounds.

SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS TRAINING.

The same groups, being trained in martial arts.

Eomir, taking on a man twice his size. He puts the older and stronger opponent to shame with his swiftness.

Eomir is now strapped to some sort of gurney, electrodes strapped everywhere on his body. An electrical wave surges through his body, and he CONVULSES against the table. Eomir in a glass STASIS TUBE. Suspended in yellow-tinged fluid like some sort of lab specimen.

CLOSE: HIS FACE

Ensconced in a breathing mask, sleeping. HIS EYES SNAP OPEN

With a terrible gasp for air.

WIDE

As scientists around the tube monitor a spike in his EKG.

Eomir is now THRASHING and CONVULSING in his tube.

The scientists scramble everywhere, panicked.

EOMIR'S P.O.V.

As the scientists panic. A scream wells up in his throat.

WIDE

The scientists stop as Eomir's body TENSES.

A LONG PAUSE.

THE STASIS TUBE EXPLODES.

The scientists duck in cover everywhere, knock over pieces of equipment.

Eomir sits hunched in the ruins of the tube for several moments, then LEAPS at the scientists like an enraged animal.

Viciously he pounds the life nearly out of every one of them, leaving them a ruined mass of bruised bones and muscle.

CUT TO: INT. ACADEMY CORRIDOR

As a STEEL DOOR EXPLODES OUTWARD.

And out leaps Eomir, almost naked, covered in strange equipment.

Alarms sound, klaxons fire up with blinding red light and deafening sounds.

Security personnel converge on Eomir, opening up with both lasers and slug throwers.

EOMIR

None of the shots hit him.

They all stop dead and drop two feet in front of him as he stalks toward them like some sort of beast.

He reaches them, breaks their guns with his mind.

Bones CRUNCH, bodies fall limp to the floor.

Eomir steps over them mercilessly.

He crashes through the corridors, unfeeling as he hacks down whoever is in his way.

EOMIR'S P.O.V.

Runs through a hall, reaches a ventilation shaft...

Claws through it, breaks the surface...

A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT

CUT TO: INT. HIVE

As Eomir, Wash and Jayne are pulled alive away from the fight, are slowly cocooned to the wall.

PULL IN AND HOLD

On the crushed Handlinc.

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT TWO

Mal clicks off his Handlinc.

MAL

(Solemn)

I think we know where the nest is, now.

They run out of the cave.

CUT TO: EXT. SHAFT TWO, NIGHT

Dano, Inara, Zoe and Mal run from the mouth of the shaft, and Mal is immediately in the Mule. The others follow.

> DANO You think they're still alive?

MAL We should to pray they are.

He GUNS the Mule.

CUT TO: EXT. SHAFT TWO, NIGHT

As the Mule SCREAMS into view. It almost crashes into the side of the mine.

The three jump out, head directly into the cave.

CUT TO: INT. SHAFT ONE

They are moving cautiously in the near blackness.

They continue a long ways, and Mal steps on something. He picks it up, studies it.

EOMIR'S FLARE.

They suddenly hear an ALIEN GROWL.

ALIEN'S P.O.V.

As it closes on them, guns BLAZE, but to no avail.

It reaches them, and we

SMASH CUT TO: INT. RIVER'S QUARTERS, SERENITY

As she snaps awake, breathing heavily.

She sits up in her bed, finds difficulty in doing so; the Queen Alien has grown overnight.

She touches her abdomen, feeling the movement of the creature within. River smiles.

She suddenly hears a GROWL.

She turns her head quick, sees in the corner:

AN ALIEN

But unlike any of the others we've seen.

This one's entirely black, spikes marring its head.

And it's HUGE.

River is petrified, but she manages to reach under her pillow, her right hand grasping Taggerung.

The LEGION ALIEN stalks toward her, fangs dripping with viscuous saliva. Its INNER MOUTH slowly issues forth, gooey, right in front of her face.

Suddenly, it STOPS, COCKS ITS HEAD.

Almost like it's confused.

River suddenly hears two VOICES.

Faint, barely audible.

The First, clearly feminine:

FIRST (V.O.) No hurt she...

The Second, genderless, menacing, rasping:

SECOND (V.O.) Must hurt she. Humans hurt we.

FIRST (V.O.) No, you hurt she, you hurt me.

> SECOND (V.O.) Must kill! Must!

FIRST (V.O.) No kill she. SECOND (V.O.) NO!

The Legion Alien SCREAMS, and so does the INFANT QUEEN.

And so does River.

She plunges Taggerung deep into the Alien's arm, draws it back quickly.

The Creature SCREAMS LOUDER, its roar becoming a highpitched SCREECH.

It backs away, out of the room, holding its arm.

River sits on her bed, panting.

The Alien inside her shifts.

FIRST (V.O.)

Thank you...River.

RIVER

(V.O.)

I'll always protect you, little one.

QUICK CUT: The Aliens attacking the groups that went into the mines.

River gets the image, and her look becomes one of determination.

She quickly gets out of bed, pulls on her traveling clothes over her nightshirt.

CUT TO: EXT. SERENITY, NIGHT

As River heads down the ramp of *Serenity*. Close behind her are Simon and Kaylee. Simon is trying to stop River, Kaylee's trying to stop Simon from stopping River.

SIMON

River, you can't go in there!

RIVER

I have to! Eomir and everyone else have been captured, and who knows what the Aliens will do to them. Besides, I'm carrying their Queen. They can't hurt me.

Simon knows he's been defeated.

River continues down the ramp.

RIVER

The best thing for you two would be to leave *Serenity* and head to the town. The Alien is still in there.

Simon nods, takes Kaylee by the arm, and they start towards the town.

River heads to the cave, and we see that she now has Taggerung attached to her belt, and a G6G 6557 FLAMETHROWER slung to her back.

She enters the cave.

CUT TO: INT. CAVE

Darkness. But River can see through the inkiness, a sort of SIXTH-SENSE. She reaches a fork in the tunnel.

RIVER (V.O.) Which way?

FIRST (V.O.) *Right.*

River turns the specified direction.

Eventually, her journey leads her into the HIVE, and she sees that on the walls are cocooned the CREW.

Eomir, Mal, Jayne, Wash, Inara, Dano, Zoe.

All of them are looking wane, weak.

Before each of them is an EGG.

She un-slings her flamethrower, aims at the eggs.

Suddenly, several ALIENS swarm from everywhere imaginable.

The open their jaws to attack, but suddenly AN INSECTILE SCREECH issues forth from inside River.

River looks surprised as the Aliens begin to BACK OFF.

FIRST (V.O.) No hurt River.

She stands in awe a moment, then OPENS UP WITH HER FLAMETHROWER.

The eggs are engulfed, and in several seconds are reduced to smoldering cinders.

VOICE (O.S.) River.

River turns; It's Eomir. He's less weak than the others.

EOMIR

It's a good thing you came, River. I don't think I could've held these things in their eggs much longer.

RIVER You think you could free the others?

EOMIR

Now that I'm not holding off the parasites, yes.

He closes his eyes, and everyone's bonds are broken. They fall to the floor, but weakly get up once more.

RIVER

(Helping everyone up) We need to get back to *Serenity*. There is some sort of large variant of the Alien there. It almost killed me, but my little one held it off.

> MAL Simon and Kaylee?

RIVER

I got them out of the ship before it could do anything. I've got the thing trapped in the cargo bay.

JAYNE

Yeah, but we don't got the manpower to take on somethin' like that.

EOMIR

Leave that to me.

Mal takes out the micronuke. He sets it, places it on the wall.

DANO What're you doing?

MAL

Finishing the mission.

CUT TO: EXT. SHAFT ONE, NIGHT

The crew stands in front of the shaft as we hear a DEAFENING BLAST and a wave of FIRE spews from the mouth of the opening.

WASH

That takes care of the threat towards this planet, but we've still got to take care of the thing on *Serenity*. What exactly is your plan, Eomir?

EOMIR (Smiles) A very interesting one.

CUT TO: INT. CARGO BAY, SERENITY

On a HUGE CRATE BURSTING OPEN.

Inside lies a hulking body of steel and Plexiglas, hydraulics and wiring hidden by layers of thick ARMOR.

THE ZEALOT SUIT.

Pull out to reveal Eomir and River, standing in front of the crate.

RIVER You didn't open the other crate.

EOMIR I know. You're not coming.

RIVER Eomir, we've been over this. It can't hurt me.

EOMIR

It almost did. What if your Queen can't hold it off this time? It's not a risk I'm willing to take.

RIVER It's one I am, though.

She unsheathes Taggerung, leaps to the top of the crate, slices open the seal.

The door of the crate falls with a metallic thud.

CUT TO: SOMEWHERE IN THE CARGO BAY

The Legion Alien hears it, growls.

BACK ON EOMIR AND RIVER

As they get into the suits.

They slowly patrol to cargo bay, the weapons of their suits at the ready. They look like some sort of mythical golems as they lumber through, their feet clacking on the floor menacingly as they do.

EOMIR

(Suitcom) Where is it?

RIVER

(Suitcom)

It could be anywhere. Stay sharp.

CUT TO: THE CEILING

The Alien watches them, saliva dripping as it extends its internal mouth.

CUT TO: RIVER AND EOMIR

As they look cautiously around.

Suddenly, a VISCUOUS GOO drops onto Eomir's visor.

RIVER NOTICES IT, LOOKS UP.

RIVER (Suitcom) EOMIR, IT'S RIGHT ON TOP OF YOU!

Eomir looks up, BLASTS an A76 PULSE CANNON just as the beast descends on him.

River opens up with both her PULSE CANNON and her GATLING GUN.

The Alien is on Eomir's robotic, armored shoulders, beating the crap out of him.

River blows it off with her Pulse Cannon, careful not to hit Eomir.

The thing is just stunned, leaps back into the fray, this time onto River.

It pins her, it opens its mouth, saliva drips onto River's visor, the tongue is poised to PUNCH through her shield, when suddenly -

EOMIR GRABS ITS LEG

Hurls it into the air, launching up himself, meets it in midair with a ROUNDHOUSE kick, knocking it to the floor. It flips back up, RAMS an arm through the battered Plexiglas visor PULLS Eomir roughly from the cockpit. It TOSSES HIM ACROSS the room, bones crunching as they're forced from their proper places.

RIVER EOMIR!!!

The Alien is on her in a heartbeat, and they lock into a ferocious melee.

WHAM! CRUNCH! SCRAAAAA!!!

SCREEEECH!

Metal tears, exoskeleton crunches, hydraulics whine. Powerful fists meet with hideous biomechanical claws. CRUNCH! A hit from the creature's tongue blows one of the hydraulic limbs, spraying it with quicksilver-like hydraulic fluid. The Alien yells in triumph as the limb falls useless at River's side.

She lets loose a killer warshriek, WAMF! Plants a lethal sideswipe underneath the thing's chin. It stagers, then throws itself back on her. It knock's her down, pins her.

She struggles, but with only one arm to work with she's helpless.

The monster rams its fanged tongue into the Plexiglas shield, it retains integrity for several moments, but it begins to buckle -

VOICE

(0.S.)

Yo, Junkface.

CUT TO: EOMIR

Bones crunch back into place with every step as he staggers to his feet.

He hefts the PULSE CANNON from his ruined Zealot Suit.

EOMIR (Fierce) Come 'n get some!

BLAM!!!

He blows the horrific creature off River, throwing himself back against the wall with the force of the blast.

It makes a fierce dying attempt to kill River, falling on top of her.

She stands, plants a titanic foot on its elongated head. Its acid blood slowly seeps out as it lies dead against the floor. River climbs out of the Zealot Suit, runs over to Eomir's limp body.

RIVER

Eomir. Eomir! Wake up Eomir...

After several moments, River begins to break down into soft sobs.

Suddenly, EOMIR'S EYES SNAP OPEN.

He gasps deeply, bones crunching back into place.

RIVER Eomir!

She hugs him close to her.

EOMIR (Weakly, with a half-smile) I have a new favorite toy.

River laughs softly through her tears.

WIDE

As they sit motionless together.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN: EXT. WHITTIER, DAY

The town is almost fully rebuilt; all signs of the Reaver and Alien attacks have disappeared.

We see the crew everywhere, laughing with friends, having a great time. Eomir sits at a table, eating lunch and talking with River. His arm is in a cast.

Now we see Mal and Inara, off to the side of the tableau, standing side by side.

INARA

You saved me and the people of my town. I don't know how I could ever thank you enough.

MAL

If you can't think of a way, don't do it at all. (Beat)

you'll make it up to me in time.

INARA Consider this a down payment.

She pulls him close, kisses him deeply, passionately. He returns it without hesitation.

He's been wanting to do this a long time now.

After a long while, they finally part.

MAL I think that eliminates all further debts.

> INARA It doesn't have to, though.

She smiles. He smiles.

Suddenly, Mal sees something; Eomir is running back to *Serenity*, River folded across his arms.

MAL (Calling out) Is everything alright?

Eomir waves back; "Nothing to worry about."

CUT TO: INT. RIVER'S QUARTERS, SERENITY - LATER

The crew appears in the doorway, looking in.

REVERSE ANGLE -

River is on her bed, covered in her sheets. She's smiling happily, and we see why: in her lap lies, curled up, the QUEEN.

Pearl white, angelic. Its eyeless face is almost nothing like that of its fierce brethren.

RIVER

My little one decided to come into the world.

Eomir, standing beside her bed, pets the Alien, then strokes River's cheek gently.

Music reaches a crescendo, and we

PULL OUT

Wide of the scene, then we are outside *Serenity*, looking down on it from a bird's eye P.O.V. Music cuts out as we

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

A LONG PAUSE

As we are left in the dark, waiting for the ending credits to roll, when suddenly:

SLOWLY FADE IN: INT. A COLD, DARK ROOM

We may recognize it as the DERELICT.

A door opens, liberating two OFFICERS.

Hi-Tech garb, clearly of Alliance origin. They look around the room. One man picks up a datapad from a desk, reads:

FIRST OFFICER

(Reading)

Cloned subject: Ripley, Ellen. Removal successful. Host organism retained, viable with life support. Xenomorph specimen detained on Level C.

He nods to the Second Officer, and they head out the door they entered.

CUT TO: INT. LEVEL C

Completely black.

The OFFICERS enter, switch on a light.

ILLUMINATING THOUSANDS OF EGGS.

SECOND OFFICER

Guess this is what they meant by "Xenomorph specimen".

The First Officer approaches one of the eggs, prods it.

FIRST OFFICER Thing looks decades old. He jumps back, startled, as the top of the egg splits.

He looks down into the thing, curiosity getting the better of common sense.

OFFICER'S P.O.V.

As a SPIDER-LIKE CREATURE LEAPS OUT.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

THE END ?

ALIEN VS SERENITY

<u>GLOSSARY</u>

C H A R A C T E R S

MALCOLM REYNOLDS......Captain of *Serenity*, Once fought against the Alliance in the War for Independence (See Alliance).

SIMON TAM......Medic on *Serenity*. Married to Kaylee.

RIVER TAM.....Simon's sister. A telepathic as a result of an Alliance experiment.

EOMIR PAQETSON......Resulting from the same project that made River a telepath, Eomir is a telekenetic. Assistant weapons officer on *Serenity*.

JAYNE COBB.....Senior weapons officer of Serenity. Unsympathetic, fond of grenades (See Grenades). Often wears a hat knitted by his mother.

KAYLEE TAM......Mechanic on Serenity. Always joyful and enthusiastic, except when Serenity is insulted. Married to Simon.

HOBAN "WASH" WASHBOURNE......Pilot of Serenity. Enjoys playing with his toy disosaurs.

ZOE WASHBOURNE......First mate of *Serenity*. Married to Wash.

DANO ENRIQUE......Cook on *Sereníty*.

INARA SERA.....Former Companion, now a Shepherdess (see Shepherdess) on the planet Whittier.

EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS

Grenades......Spring-loaded, high-power grenades are preferred by Jayne. Blade Gauntlets......Used by Eomír. Doubleedged, reflex-triggered switchblades that are mounted on the forearm. Not acid resítstant. Taggerung.....Longdagger given to River by Eomír. Acíd resistant. one-handed Stingblade.....Eomir's broadsword. High carbon hand forged steel. Not acid resistant. resistant. Revolvers.....Double guns used by Eomír. Chrome-plated, hold thírty round each. Not acid resistant. Shotgun......Zoe uses a lever-action, one-handed shotgun. Not acid resistant. Micronuclear Warhead......Miniature version of a modern nuclear bomb. Generates a three megaton explosion. Acid resistant. Flamethrower.....Medíum G6G power flamethrower. Not acid resistant.

WEAPONS (CONT'D)

G6G Pulse Cannon.....Large weapon that genterates a spheroid of energy, which it launches, obliterating nearly anything in its way. Acid resistant.

G6G Gatling Gun.....Rotary automatic gun. Fires atr 300 RPM, holds five hundred rounds. Acid resistant.

G6G Pulse Rífle.....Automatic rífle. Holds three hundred rounds. Not acid resistant,

TOOLS

Wash's Arm.....Hydraulic artifitial limb. Wash lost his real right arm on the moon of Mr. Universe, and had to have it replaced. The artifitial arm is thirty-five percent more powerful than the average human limb. Partial acid resistance.

Viewdisk......Automated recording disk. Found on derelict ship. Not acid resistant.

Powerloader.....Hydraulic freight loader. Not acid resistant.

Handlinc......Multi-use handheld tool. Primary uses are com link and motion tracker. Not acid resistant.

<u>GENERAL TERMS</u>

Allíance	Galactic socialist government.
	Human beings said to have been Known for wearing the skins of humans and
Torak Only spoken by she and Eomír.	Language invented by River.
Coín	Future slang; money.
Goram/Gorammít	Future slang; general curse.
неl	Future slang; Hell
Shíny	Future slang; good
Wote	Future slang; ínsult
Za l'ín-tav object."	Torak; good. Líteraly, " <i>Shíny</i>
D'el-te-racht shout wíth surpríse."	Torak; exclamation. Literaly "I
Aí ya	Chínese; exclamation.
Shepherdess/Shepherd	Missionary.

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