

KIDNAPPED IN TIME

BY

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FADE IN

INT. - COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT

A singular man, PROFESSOR CLARK, sits at a large ring shaped table. The setting is very futuristic, very sparse - there is in fact no evidence of a room, just darkness. The table appears as an illuminated ring. The man is bald, dressed in a simple robe like garment - his face and figure are a mixture of light and shadow. He sits with his hands grasped lightly together on the table. He's waiting patiently for someone or some event.

THE COUNCIL OF SEVEN appear as overlarge holographic images - they are distorted so as to protect their identity. The leader appears first, then the other six, appearing alternately on his left and right. They all appear to be facing Professor Clark and they not only dominate him but dwarf him.

The leader opens the meeting prior to the appearance of his fellows.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Meeting of the Council for Plethora. Who is present?

One by one the Councillors appear left to right all answering with the same words: I YOUR WORSHIP.

1ST COUNCILLOR

And who is present at the Council's pleasure?

Professor Clark stands.

PROFESSOR

I, Professor Clark, your worship.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Please remain seated Professor.

The Professor sits.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Professor we have seen your Report and the actual convening of this meeting is an expression of the gravity it conveys. We need to ask you some questions.

PROFESSOR CLARK

Yes, your worship.

2ND COUNCILLOR

Professor Clark, in your report you indicate that despite appearances, genetic adaptations made to humankind for survival on the planet Plethora are proving counter-productive. Would you care to elaborate.

PROFESSOR

As you know we have made extensive studies of the most highly developed life forms present: the amphibimes; and from those studies we made changes to the human genome to enhance our survival. We did this in secret of course, so it's imperative that we don't reveal our present position to the public.

2ND COUNCILLOR

So what's the risk?

PROFESSOR

The risk is infertility - not in the short term, but in the long term.

3RD COUNCILLOR

Why has this only come to light now?
Why was it overlooked in the original studies?

PROFESSOR

Science has never been totally predictable anymore than nature is. There were perturbations that were never considered. Who knows? Perhaps nature has its own way of dealing with such things. Despite our endeavours, life will never be short of surprises.

2ND COUNCILLOR

That doesn't answer the question Professor.

PROFESSOR

In truth your Worship, I don't know. In anything we do, we take a calculated risk -in this case the real risk eluded us.

4TH COUNCILLOR

I understand Professor you propose a unique solution.

PROFESSOR

Yes, your Worship. Now that we have proven our ability to travel through both space and time, we can recover untainted DNA from Earth prior to the Great Catastrophe of 2150.

5TH COUNCILLOR

But why in your report did you propose the 20th Century Why not later?

PROFESSOR

Because there is no interference of the human genome prior to the 21st Century. By targeting mid-20th Century, we are guaranteed an untainted source.

5TH COUNCILLOR

How far have you taken your planning on this?

PROFESSOR

If the Project was to go ahead we would choose a contact site in the southern hemisphere to reduce chances of detection. We would then obtain a candidate, preferably young, probably pre-puberty and male. Racial purity is not an issue as it's the mitochondria DNA that we need.

3RD COUNCILLOR

But how would you choose and then obtain your candidate.

PROFESSOR

We wouldn't. We would choose a likely site that would explain a possible disappearance and we would let the candidate choose themselves. Isn't that how the best animals catch their prey?

1ST COUNCILLOR

Thank you Professor, we appreciate your candour and your resolve on this issue. The Council will consider your proposal at length, and an answer will be delivered through the normal channels. Thank you.

The professor stands and bows. All the Council members disappear in the reverse order to their arrival. Professor Clark looks up at the 1st Councillor just prior to his departure; then he is alone.

INT. - PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (1962)

Classroom is in an old stone school building in a large country town in NSW. Class is Year 6, full of 11 & 12 year olds. Desks are old fashion style combined seat and desk made of wood and wrought iron frames. They have inkwells in the top right hand corner and a groove along the top to hold the pen. Biro's may have been invented but they are not plentiful, neither is plastic.

Front of the class is dominated by a blackboard. The teacher is a woman wearing a sombre coloured suit, common to the day. She has a map of the solar system draped over the front of the board and is trying to get across to the kids the scale of magnitude involved, by explaining how long it takes light to get to various parts of the system.

TEACHER

(Using a wooden pointer)

This is planet Earth. We are only the third planet from the sun. That's a distance of over 93 million miles.

She points to the window, which has the sun streaming through.

TEACHER

The light coming through that window took 8 minutes to reach us. The light leaving the sun now will take the next 8 minutes to reach us.

She points to the clock on the wall to emphasise her point.

TEACHER

And remember nothing travels faster than light. The next planet is Mars - is 12 mins for a ray of light. The next one is Jupiter, the largest planet in the Solar system is 43 minutes from the sun. The next one is Saturn which is 1hr and 20 minutes. Uranus is 2hrs and 40 minutes. Neptune is 4hrs and 10 minutes. And Pluto the furthest planet takes 5hrs and 20 minutes from Earth at the speed of light.

The class is a captured audience. One student, JAMES, is boggled by the numbers, and what they mean. He is the only student who puts his hand up.

TEACHER

Yes James.

JAMES

Miss Avery. What's beyond the solar system? How far does it go?

She smiles at the child's obvious question with its impossible answer.

TEACHER

That's a good question. The nearest star to the sun is Alpha Centauri and that's over 4 light years away. That means it would take 4 years to get there at the speed of light.

James is entranced by the concept.

TEACHER

So next time you look at the night sky, remember that the light coming from those stars took at least 4 years to get here, and in fact most of them took hundreds of years. So when you look at the night sky you are looking back in time to events that took place even before the Bible.

JAMES

But Miss, how far does it go?

TEACHER

Well James, no one can tell you that. But I can tell you something.

She goes to the blackboard, and draws a disk that is meant to represent the Milky Way Galaxy. She draws a blob in the middle of the galaxy and an 'X' 2 thirds from the centre to represent the position of the Solar system.

TEACHER

This is the Milky Way Galaxy. It's about 100 thousand light years across. The Solar system, here, is about 30,000 light years from the centre. When you look at the Milky Way at night you are looking through here, towards the centre of the Galaxy. And there are hundreds of thousands of galaxies just like this one, so to answer your question James, no one knows.

But James' curiosity is still not quenched.

JAMES

Miss Avery, will anyone ever know? Will anyone ever be able to travel that far?

TEACHER

James it is impossible to travel faster than light, that's a proven fact. To Travel across even half this Galaxy at the speed of light would take 50,000 years. That covers the time from prehistoric Man to present day.

JAMES

So it is impossible.

TEACHER

Well not quite, because for you, if you were in that space craft, time would have stopped still and you would still be the same age.

James is totally entranced. But the bell goes and the class noisily exits.

James is the last to leave and when he arises we see he is wearing a brace on his leg - he has suffered from poliomyelitus.

EXT. - OUTSIDE SCHOOLYARD - DAY

School's just been let out. Buses are being filled, some cars picking children up, many walking in small groups.

EXT. - STREET ON OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

James is walking home. He tends to saunter, a leather school bag over his shoulder, his mind is probably in a daydream. A small group of boys (3), roughly the same age, although one of them is noticeably bigger, are approaching him from behind. He doesn't see them and they decide to have some fun with him.

LEAD BULLY

Hey watch this.

He sneaks up behind James, who doesn't realise there's anyone there until the last moment, and grabs his schoolbag from behind. James just starts to turn as the schoolbag is given a vicious yank pulling him to the ground. He tries to hang onto the bag, but the bully's superior strength takes it off him.

JAMES

Hey, give me that.

BULLY

You want it, you come and get it.

James gets to his feet. He feels angry and humiliated at once.

BULLY

What's the matter Jaaames, someone take your schoolbag? Will Jamesy get into trouble if he goes home without his bag?

The other boys laugh at James' discomfort. James goes red. The bully holds the bag tantalisingly for James with a mocking grin. James doesn't go for the bag, but goes for the bully instead. He goes for his waist, head down, and puts him on the ground. The bully lets the bag go, and the two wrestle, it isn't long before the bigger boy is on top. He holds James by both wrists while he sits astride him. He spits on his face.

BULLY

Give up?

JAMES

Let me up.

BULLY

You say Uncle.

James spits back at him. The bully releases one hand and punches James in the face giving him a blood nose.

BULLY

Say Uncle.

Off-camera James' older brother, KEVIN, says UNCLE in a grim voice. The bully turns around, and both he and James see Kevin for the first time.

KEVIN

Let him up Patterson.

The bully slowly gets to his feet, looks to his mates who try to look noncommittal, then goes to pick up the bag.

KEVIN

Leave the bag where it is.

BULLY

What's the matter, can't baby brother fight his own fights?

KEVIN

You fight very well I notice, when everything's in your favour. I wonder how well you fight when things are against you.

The bully looks at Kevin who's considerably older (4-6 yrs), and knows he can't fight him. Still he thinks he can terrorise James and save face at the same time.

BULLY

Well Adamson, you're very good at playing the hero in front of your brother. But one day he's not going to have you as his bodyguard, and then I'll give him the belting of his life.

KEVIN

I know where you live Patterson. Anything you do to him, I'll do to you.

Kevin walks past the bully and picks up James bag. As he stands up with it, he punches the bully in the nose. The bully is taken aback, puts his hand to his face.

KEVIN

That's just to show you I mean what I say. He got a blood nose, now you've got a blood nose. I think that makes you even.

Kevin deliberately turns his back on the bully to show his contempt. He puts his arm on James shoulder and gives him the bag as they both walk away.

INT. - ADAMSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Adamson house is typical working class 1950's - lino floors and an old wooden kitchen table that also serves as dining table, preparation table and everything else - Silent Knight electric fridge, electric stove and an old fuel stove that only gets used these days as a slow combustion heater. These are the days when everyone entered the back door straight into the kitchen - only strangers went to the front door.

James is sitting at the table with his head back, holding a handkerchief to his face with one hand - his schoolbag hangs over the back of his chair. Kevin gets ice cubes out of fridge goes to the sink and puts them in a tea towel. When he's ready he walks over to James - the fridge door is still open and the ice cube tray is left on the sink.

KEVIN

Take your handkerchief away.

James removes his hand and Kevin puts the makeshift ice bag on his face. James mouth opens in momentary pain and puts both hands up to the towel.

KEVIN

Just hold it there, it will stop the bleeding and any swelling.

Satisfied, he goes back to the sink, refills ice cube tray and puts it back in the fridge. He then fills kettle on stove and puts it on. Looks up at the wall clock.

KEVIN

The Old Man'll be home soon, he'll want a cuppa.

JAMES

(muffled by towel)
Shit.

KEVIN

What's wrong?

James doesn't answer, just shakes his head. Kevin ignores him, goes to the cupboard, gets out a loaf of bread and starts slicing up thick ragged slices with a bread knife. He then gets butter and vegemite, and starts making himself vegemite sandwiches. He puts one on a plate in front of James.

KEVIN

Here, have something to eat.

JAMES

Not hungry. (pause)

What's the Old Man going to say?

KEVIN

He won't say much, he's seen it all before.

James MOANS. Kevin is eating with a hearty appetite, and is otherwise unconcerned. The kettle boils, Kevin turns the stove off and shakes tea from a packet into a pot ready for his father. James hasn't touched his sandwich so Kevin attacks it with the same relish as the first one. He goes to fridge and pours himself a glass of milk from a bottle, which he starts to gulp.

The father, COLIN, walks in the back door in his work clothes. He's covered in dirty sawdust. He wears work trousers, leather boots and a blue singlet under an open flannel shirt. He takes a hat off as he comes through the door which has seen better days. He's carrying a leather lunch bag of the type workers used in the 50's. He puts the hat on a hook behind the door and the bag in a standard repository just inside the door. He takes a newspaper out of the bag and puts it on the table. He looks from one son to the other.

COLIN

What happened to you?

James remains silent under the towel. Kevin acts nonchalant - holds half empty glass while leaning against the sink.

KEVIN

I've just put the kettle on.

Colin walks over to the stove, feels kettle with the back of his hand and puts the stove back on, turns back to address James.

COLIN

Who hit you?

JAMES

Just a kid.

COLIN

Did you hit him back?

JAMES

No. (long pause) Kevin did.

Kettle boils and Colin pours water into the pot; he turns to Kevin.

COLIN

How come?

KEVIN

(Shrugs, feels a bit embarrassed.)
He deserved it.

COLIN

I see.

Colin sits down with tea pot and cup next to his youngest son.

COLIN

But you don't feel so good about it, do you son?

JAMES

(Surprised at his father's insight)
No.

Colin drinks from his cup, then refills it.

COLIN

Well son, I wouldn't worry too much if I were you. If you didn't start the fight you can sleep with a clear conscience. And if you did, then you deserve what you got.

He looks at James closely who is forced to return his stare. All the time he's been using the towel to hide behind. Anything he has to say, he says with his eyes.

COLIN

Don't worry son. One day when you grow up, you'll show them that brains is more important than brawn.

Satisfied, Colin picks up the paper with one hand and his cup with the other. Then, as if in afterthought, he turns to Kevin, who hasn't moved since his father entered.

COLIN

Your turn to cook, isn't it?

INT. - KEVIN'S BEDROOM - LATER

James comes into Kevin's bedroom while Kevin is doing his homework. James is carrying a book, Kevin makes it clear he's not really welcome. He speaks without looking at him.

KEVIN

Haven't you got homework to do?

JAMES

Do you believe in UFO's?

KEVIN

I think you read too many comic books.

JAMES

Well Miss Avery told us today that if you travelled through space at the speed of light then time for you would stop still. Kevin looks up for the first time.

KEVIN

There's only one problem with that Jimbo.

JAMES

What's that?

KEVIN

No one's ever travelled at the speed of light and probably never will. We can't even get an electron to travel at the speed of light let alone a human being.

JAMES

Oh, I didn't know that.

KEVIN
UFO's are only found in comic books.

Kevin turns back to his homework.

JAMES
No that's not true. I got a book out of the library.
Look, it's called The Truth about Flying Saucers.

KEVIN
Give us a look.

Kevin thumbs through the book. There are pictures and photos and stories about people who have witnessed UFO's. He closes it and hands it back.

KEVIN
Don't believe everything you read Jimbo. People only write that stuff because they know that other people want to believe it.

JAMES
Mr. Kitchener reckon he saw a UFO once.

KEVIN
Mr. Kitchener is so old he had to hand in his licence.

James just stands there, looking downhearted.

KEVIN
Anyway, haven't you got homework to do? If you haven't, I have.

EXT. - SAT. AFTERNOON FOOTBALL MATCH - DAY

A game of rugby league football in its closing stages, the home team is behind needing a try and conversion to win - the crowd is on its feet. As a scrum goes down midfield, the referee looks at the clock - only seconds left in the game. The ball comes out of the scrum for the home team. The halfback is tackled just as he gets it away.

The ball is going out the back line while the opposition takes them out one by one. The winger is now on his own going for the line in the corner - he has two or three players to beat. Then another player comes up the mid-field, calls for the ball. He gets a difficult pass, beats the fullback and scores right under the post. The player gets up with a huge grin - it's Kevin. The crowd goes wild.

The try is converted and the whistle blows for the end of game. Kevin is a hero.

Colin and James are overjoyed - they are part of the crowd that applauds the team coming off the field. Kevin sees his father and raises his hand in a victory salute.

People come up and congratulate Colin on his son's game. Colin can't hide his pride but doesn't say much, if anything, in reply. James is proud too, even though people ignore him he's not jealous of his brother's success.

EXT. - AFTER FOOTBALL MATCH, STILL AT GROUND - DAY

Crowd has thinned out, out-of-town team bus has gone home. People have picked up blankets and bags and started walking out, leaving behind detritus of afternoon's entertainment. James and his father are amongst those waiting for home-team members to come out of changing room/toilet block. Colin is talking to other fathers or perhaps people involved with the football committee. James looks like an appendage - he's not interested in the conversation, but waits patiently for his brother.

Kevin comes out of the change room, having showered and dressed in casual clothes, carrying a bag for his gear in one hand and his football boots by the laces in the other. James goes up to him but Kevin notices a young, attractive girl approaching him and gives James his bag and boots.

KEVIN

Here, hold these for a minute willya. Thanks.

GIRL

Hi ya Kevin, gee great game.

KEVIN

Yes it was. Thanks.

The girl ignores James presence, and he goes back to join his father, who is talking to JAKE. He watches Kevin and the girl from a short distance. He doesn't know what they're saying but he envies the easy camaraderie between them. He feels the pain of youth that doesn't know a girl's affections. James turns to his father and interrupts him.

JAMES

Can we go home now?

COLIN

Don't interrupt son. We'll go soon.

James continues watching Kevin, then the girl leaves and Kevin joins his father.

COLIN

Great game son.

KEVIN

Yes it was.

JAKE

Great try - that last one. A real saviour.

KEVIN

Thanks.

Kevin's a bit embarrassed by the attention in front of his father and brother.

KEVIN

Can we go now Dad, I have to go out later.

FATHER

Yes, sure son. We'll see you later Jake.

JAKE

Yes, see you Colin. You too Kevin. Keep up the good work - you'll be a champion one day.

KEVIN

Yes thanks, see you later Mr. McDonald.

James looks at Kevin and notices the way he accepts accolades without false modesty or solicitation. He doesn't even seem to mind that no one includes him in their farewells. Kevin takes back his bag and boots before they walk away.

KEVIN

Thanks Jimbo.

INT. - ADAMSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

Just after evening meal, Kevin and James are doing the washing up with James drying. Colin is reading the paper.

JAMES

Gee I'll be glad when next weekend comes.

COLIN

Looking forward to this trip, aren't you?

JAMES

Yep, sure am. Can we look at the map after?

COLIN

Oh I suppose so, finish the washing up first.

Kevin is obviously in a hurry, he piles up the dishes as quickly as he can, takes off the tea towel he's been using as an apron.

KEVIN

You can finish up, I've got to run.

JAMES

Hey, you've gotta help me put them away.

FATHER

It's okay son, Kevin can go. I'll give you a hand.

Kevin walks out of the kitchen. Colin stands up and helps James.

INT. - KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kevin is getting ready to go out, combing his hair in the mirror, brushing his jacket. James is lying on his bed, not wanting to be left out. He's got a model plane in his hands.

JAMES

What was Mum like?

KEVIN

You've asked me that before.

James is fidgety, self-conscious.

JAMES

I know.

KEVIN

I don't remember her that well Jimbo.

JAMES

How come Dad never talks about her?

KEVIN

It's his way of dealing with it.
And don't you ever ask him about it either.

JAMES

Yeah okay, you know I wouldn't.

Kevin turns back to the mirror adjusting his jacket.

JAMES

But was she nice? Was she funny?
Was she pretty?

The question makes Kevin think.

KEVIN

I don't remember her as pretty. She had dark curly hair and she wore glasses with blue frames, and she had an upturned nose. She had a nice smile, I remember that - nice even teeth, just like yours. Other than that I don't remember.

JAMES

Where're you going tonight?

KEVIN

Just out.

JAMES

You going with Shirley?

KEVIN

What's it to you?

JAMES

Nothing. What do you get up to?

KEVIN

How do you mean?

JAMES

When you're alone.

Kevin was becoming defensive, but allows himself a smile.

KEVIN

Don't you worry Jimbo. You'll find out one day.

He throws the clothes brush at him. James giggles. Kevin rushes him and messes his hair. Then straightens up, turns the light out and stands by the door.

KEVIN

Come on, I've got to go.

INT. - ADAMSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

James follows Kevin into the kitchen; Colin is rummaging in a drawer looking for a map.

KEVIN
See you blokes later.

FATHER
See you son, have fun and don't get anyone into trouble.

Kevin gives his father a wry look as he goes out the door.

FATHER
Here we are.

Father and son sit down together at the table.

FATHER
We take the train as far as here,
then we walk in here.
It's pretty rugged country -
will probably take a couple of hours.

JAMES
Do you think we'll see any glider possums?

FATHER
I don't know, you sometimes see them at
night.
We'll camp here, right on the river.
Might even catch some fish if we're lucky.

JAMES
Kevin reckons the place is haunted.

FATHER
Oh he's just trying to scare you.

JAMES
But didn't something strange happen up there?

FATHER
Yeah, a bloke disappeared up there a couple
of years ago. Most people think he drowned,
though they never found his body.
Probably someone who didn't know the area.
I wouldn't dwell on it if I were you, it'll
only spoil your weekend.

EXT. - CAMPING SITE BY RIVER - DAY

They're out in the bush camped by a river, fairly broad, not a creek. Colin has set up a 2 man tent - the two of them are fiddling with fishing tackle. When they're ready they walk upstream to find a suitable spot.

Follow a montage of scenes showing bush birds, wild flowers, insects, water beetles and frogs - James has a magnifying glass. Colin shakes his head at his son's wonder with fauna that most boys his age simply ignore.

EXT. - CAMPING SITE BY RIVER - DAY

Colin is preparing a fire for their lunch. He decides to show James a trick.

COLIN

Here, give us that glass of yours.

He then proceeds to show James how to start a fire using a magnifying glass with the sun.

EXT. - CAMPING SITE BY RIVER - NIGHT

They're sitting around a fire. They've eaten and Colin has boiled a billy for tea. He swings the billy, pours out a cup for his son and himself into enamel mugs, then sits down

James takes sip from his mug, careful not to burn his lips. He puts it down, puts his arms around his knees and stares into the fire. Each is drawn into his own reverie.

Eventually Colin throws the dregs of the tea onto the fire. He collects the plates, cutlery and gives them to James. Then he gives him the torch.

COLIN

Here, take these down to the water and wash them.

James feels that this is some sort of test - his father acts nonchalant like he just told him to do the washing up as they do at home. Colin goes into the two man tent and unpacks the sleeping bags.

James looks towards the water which he can hear but can't see. The torch doesn't relieve the darkness so much as increase its intensity. When he reaches the water he puts his hand over it then turns it off. He looks back at the fire and the lighted tent, then away across the water and up at the stars. Without the torch he can make out trees against the skyline. He can hear animals in the undergrowth of the bush and even the wing beats of some night flying animal - just momentarily, he has entered another world. Finally he starts to wash the plates being careful not to lose the knives and forks.

When he looks up again he sees that some of the stars seem to be moving. He watches for a while then calls out to his dad.

JAMES

Dad.

There is a slight edge to his voice. When Colin comes out of the tent he's slightly unnerved by the fact that he can't see his son's torch. In the dark it's hard to judge the distance to his voice.

COLIN

Where are you son?

JAMES

I'm over here Dad.

COLIN

Turn the torch on son, I can't see you.

Colin is relieved when he sees the small light; he walks towards him.

COLIN

Don't shine it in my eyes son, shine it at my feet.

When he reaches him.

COLIN

What's the matter?

JAMES

Out there, Look - those lights.

He points out over the water, but there is nothing.

COLIN

What lights?

JAMES

They're gone. There were lights moving
in the sky.

COLIN

Well they're not there now.

Colin knows how impressionable the boy is; doesn't want
to excite him.

COLIN

What sort of lights?

JAMES

I don't know - actually I thought they were
stars until I saw them moving.

COLIN

Could be a plane.

JAMES

No. There was a number of them and they
were moving in all directions.

COLIN

I don't know son, could be the army on
manoeuvres. Who knows what they get up to.
Army helicopters can fly in all directions.
Come on have you done the dishes?

James picks up the plates and cutlery; his father takes
the torch. They walk back to the tent.

EXT. - CAMPING SITE BY RIVER - NIGHT

They're both asleep in 2 man tent. The fire has died
down to glowing coals.

It's still and quiet, but the river has a musical
quality that makes it seem alive at night.

James wakes up for reasons he doesn't know. Gets up and
goes outside - river is louder, bush is serene. No
clouds, so stars are like jewels. From out over the
river a light that he thought was a star gets brighter
until it's like a moon shining across the water. A
sphere of light, then a shape, feels more than sees,
that something is beckoning him. A path of light comes
across the water to his feet. He finds he can walk on
it across the water like magic. He's almost hypnotised,
doesn't understand the attraction but can't help
himself. It's a voluntary act, but it's like the
heavens themselves were calling him.

EXT. - CAMPING SITE BY RIVER - NEXT MORNING

Colin wakes up in the tent and sees that James' sleeping bag is empty.
He allows himself a smile before he gets up himself.

Outside he notices no change to when they went to bed.
The emptiness of the site makes him apprehensive.

COLIN

James.
James where are you?

He walks down to the water, looking for any sign of his son. He then turns to the bush; before long his calls turn to panic.

COLIN

James. James.

EXT. - CAMPING SITE BY RIVER - LATER

There's a number of vehicles present, including Police cars and Police Rescue units. Out on the water is a small boat with divers. The Policeman in charge, FRANK, knows Colin personally.

FRANK

There's nothing you can do here Col.
I'll get one of the men to take you home.

COLIN

How can I go home Frank?

FRANK

What about Kevin?

COLIN

I don't know what to tell him.

FRANK

If you like I'll go with you.

COLIN

No, no. You don't have to do that.

FRANK

Whatever you want.
Come on get in the car. At least I can drive you.

Colin feels defeated - Frank closes the door and nods to one of the other officers, who walks over.

FRANK

Take charge here - I'll be back in half an hour. Call me if you find anything at all. Anything.

OFFICER

I understand Sarg.

Frank gets in the car and drives off. Colin doesn't even look out the window.

INT. - POLICE CAR - DAY

They drive in silence for a while - when Colin speaks he keeps looking straight ahead.

COLIN

I don't understand. It's not like him just to wander off.

FRANK

He could have got lost in the scrub; tried to walk home instead of the camp.

COLIN

Makes no sense, no sense at all.

They drive some more in silence, but in the comfort of the car Colin feels the need to talk.

COLIN

Do you know if there were any army manoeuvres up here last night?

FRANK

Army manoeuvres? I doubt it.
(Pause)
Why, what did you see?

COLIN

I didn't see anything, but the boy reckoned he saw some lights moving about in all directions.

FRANK

Any sounds?

COLIN

No, just the normal bush sounds you get at night.

FRANK

Well, I'll check with the Air Force just in case. Mind you even if they know anything they won't tell us.

(Pause)

You think it might have something to do with his disappearance?

COLIN

I don't know. I don't know.

EXT. - OUTSIDE ADAMSON HOUSE - DAY

There's a crowd of people outside on the footpath - a lot of them reporters, including television and newsreel. Kevin comes out of the house, walking with a sense of purpose.

KEVIN

I'm sorry, will you all go home - he's not talking to anyone.

A woman reporter with a bulky early-model tape recorder over her shoulder is particularly forceful.

REPORTER

Is it true your brother was kidnapped by a UFO? Kevin is so surprised he doesn't answer straight away.

KEVIN

What makes you say that?

A heavily built man steps forward. He's a mate of Colin's from the sawmill, CURLY.

CURLY

Go inside Kevin, I'll handle this.

KEVIN

It's alright Curly. They'll leave shortly.

REPORTER

(Addresses Curly)

Excuse me, are you a friend of Mr. Adamson's?

CURLY

As a matter of fact I am.

REPORTER

Can you tell us what sort of man Mr. Adamson is?

CURLY

Colin is a top bloke - a nicer bloke you'd never meet. There's not a man in this town wouldn't stand behind Colin Adamson.

Kevin, on hearing the man's comment, finds tears welling in his eyes, but he holds them back in front of the crowd.

CURLY

Now let me ask you a question. Have you ever lost a loved one, a husband or a child?

REPORTER

No, I haven't.

CURLY

I didn't think so. Well let me tell you something. The last thing you want is some nosy-parker stranger whom you've never met before asking you a lot of personal questions. Now piss off and leave him alone.

Someone calls out GOOD ON YOU CURLY from the crowd, and the reporter suddenly has a look of curdled cream. She backs off and the crowd starts to disperse.

KEVIN

Thanks Curly, I'll make sure the Old Man buys you a drink.

CURLY

No son, it doesn't work that way. And don't worry, people round here understand. And those that don't, don't matter.

KEVIN

Well thanks Curly, I won't forget.

Nearly everyone has gone, Curly pats Kevin on the shoulder as he turns around. He watches him go back into the house - Kevin doesn't look back.

INT. ADAMSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Colin is sitting at the table, there's an empty beer bottle though he's not drunk. Kevin is sitting opposite him. It's very late but neither of them can go to bed.

KEVIN

You should go to bed Dad.

COLIN

I can't son. How can I, not knowing.

Colin looks at his son with a grimness in his eyes.

KEVIN

Dad, do you really think it had something to do with those lights.

COLIN

I don't know son, I didn't even see them. But I can't believe he's drowned - they would have found him; the same if he's lost. I don't know - he just disappeared into thin air. Even the tracker dogs could only find the trails we walked yesterday. But the aboriginal tracker found a set of tracks from last night and they disappear at the water's edge.

KEVIN

So he must have drowned.

COLIN

No son, he didn't drown. He's just gone.

Kevin looks at his father who returns it with a watery but determined stare. Kevin tries to read his father's face but is only puzzled by his enigmatic answer.

INT. - FUTURISTIC HOSPITAL WARD.

James is lying on a bed face upwards, though the bed resembles more a dentist chair and he's not covered with any bedclothes. He's still wearing his earth clothes. His head disappears into a large shell at the end of the bed - like an oversized helmet. The brace on his leg has been removed. The room is otherwise empty, and everything is cream-coloured giving an atmosphere of pristine cleanliness.

We pull back from James until our p.o.v. is from another room looking through an almost wall-sized glass screen. A woman, CLARE, is observing him. A man walks into frame whom we recognise as Professor Clark.

PROFESSOR

Is he still dreaming?

CLARE

Yes.

PROFESSOR
Are they all being recorded?

CLARE
Yes.

PROFESSOR
Good, they will help him to adjust.
IMake sure you're the first one he sees,
won't you?

CLARE
Yes Professor.

NT. - JAMES' WARD - LATER.

The helmet has been retracted so that it now forms part of the bed.

James wakes up, looks around and focuses on Clare, the only other person in the room.

CLARE
My name is Clare, what's yours?

James is stunned and disoriented. He stares at Clare but doesn't answer.

CLARE
What do they call you?

JAMES
James. James Adamson.

Clare visibly relaxes, having overcome an initial obstacle.

James sits up and looks around the room, at it's emptiness and strangeness, the strangeness of Clare's dress compared to his.

JAMES
Where am I? What am I doing here?

CLARE
You're a long, long way from home -
further than you could possibly imagine.
You're on another world in fact, and a long,
long way into the future - about 600 years.

James looks at her in disbelief but doesn't say anything. He is stunned more than dumbstruck.

CLARE

What's your last memory?

JAMES

I was camping with my father.

(thinks)

That's right, it was night and a light came out of the sky over the river. And I walked to it on a beam of light. That's the last thing I can remember.

CLARE

You don't remember entering the ship or seeing anyone?

JAMES

No.

There's a lull, James looks around the room, can't see any doors. Clare observes him. James notices he hasn't the brace on his leg. He feels his leg with his hand - it feels different.

JAMES

What have you done with my brace?

CLARE

You no longer need it. Try, see for yourself.

James tentatively stands up - finds out she's right. He walks around the bed then sits back down again facing Clare.

JAMES

Will you take me back home?

CLARE

No James, we can't.

She sees a look of pain on his face.

CLARE

It's physically not possible. When you travel through space, you travel through time as well. We can take you back to earth, but we can't take you back to the same time. Everyone you know will be much older than you, or might even be dead.

Clare knows that what she's saying is very painful for the boy, but she believes that the only way she can get his trust is with total honesty.

JAMES
(very close to tears)
No, I don't believe you.

Clare moves closer and squats down to be more on his level.

CLARE
James I am your orientation officer,
I am telling you the truth. In fact I'm
the only person who can tell you the truth.
You ask me any question and I cannot
lie to you.

James is in tears - wants to believe her, and yet doesn't at the same time.

JAMES
I don't believe you.

Clare stands fully erect, assessing him, he looks her in the eye with defiance showing through his tears.

JAMES
You'll have to prove it to me.

CLARE
(After long pause)
Yes. Okay. That's only fair.

INT. - JAMES' ROOM - DAY

James has been given his own apartment, which is compact but very efficient. He's exploring it: finding cupboards in walls; beds and desks that fold out of walls - a small personal T.V. screen which is actually a phone among other things. He touches one wall which becomes transparent and shows out onto a small Japanese style garden, complete with pool. He examines some of the clothes he's found, which are very strange to him, and which he's reluctant to put on.

INT. - CLARE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Clare's office bears similarities to James' room in that it uses modular furniture that can fold neat and flush into walls when not in use. Clare is sitting in a chair that changes its shape to suit her position. She is talking to a screen, which records her speech. She watches the screen to see it is recorded correctly. Every time she starts a new line she presses a clicker in her hand.

Title: Professor Clarke's Gene Project.

Phase 1: Obtaining host from Earth 20th Century.
Successful.

Phase 2: Obtaining DNA from host.
Successful.

Phase 3: Experiment with virus using host's DNA. to commence tomorrow.

Project Director: Professor Clarke.
Project host: James Adamson.
Host Origin: Planet Earth - 20th Century.
Report by: Clare Robertson.
Report coded confidential to Professor Clarke.
Close Report.

She gives one final click and the screen disappears.

INT. - JAMES' ROOM - DAY

It's morning, the window showing onto the Japanese garden goes from opaque to clear, causing James to wake up. He peels back the bed cover which is one unit and comes apart from the bedside like the seam of a pod. He is wearing plain boxer shorts, and when he stands free of the bed it withdraws into the wall by itself. Another door opens revealing a shower stall only there is no shower rose. The water comes out of perforations in the wall.

INT. - JAMES ROOM - LATER

James has had a shower and is dry. He finds on emerging that there is a fruit juice drink waiting for him, which he tastes tentatively, then drinks with lust. He picks up his earth clothes which are still there and examines the other clothes available.

An unobtrusive chime sounds and a panel in one wall goes transparent. We see Clare standing on the other side. James reacts.

CLARE

Hello James. Don't worry I can't see you.
This morning I want you to meet someone who's very important to you. Just call my name when you're ready, and I'll come and get you.
Okay?

James just nods his head, still dumbstruck, then realises that she really can't see him.

JAMES

Okay.

The wall goes opaque again. James looks at the clothes and decides to try them on. They are two-piece, not unlike a track suit, plus shoes.

A cooked breakfast comes out of the wall, complete with eating utensil. Again he tries it tentatively, then eats with obvious hunger.

INT. - PROFESSOR CLARKE'S OFFICE.

Professor Clarke's office looks more like a laboratory than an office, and contrary to other rooms we've seen so far is very cluttered with the detritus of his trade - laboratory apparatus, molecular models, a confusion of papers in spite of living in a totally electronic age. It's typically untidy for a man who has no one to answer for and is more concerned with content than form and aesthetics.

He's eating his breakfast while examining a 3D model of a molecule produced by his computer. He asks the computer a question, and in response another screen appears. The "screens" are not as we know them, but more like holographic images.

PROFESSOR

Can you show me the chemical bonding required for that enzyme?

Image changes.

PROFESSOR

Okay, give me a copy of that and the previous one.

Pages are produced almost instantly from a slot in his desk. The Professor doesn't even look at them to check they are what he wants.

PROFESSOR

Thank You.

The Image disappears. The door to his office goes clear and a chime sounds as it did in James' room. Clare and James are standing outside.

PROFESSOR

Come in.

From James' and Clare's p.o.v., we see the door is just an opaque panel.

The door slides open, and Clare and James walk through.

The Professor doesn't wait for any introductions from Clare, and Clare's reaction indicates that this is normal protocol for him.

PROFESSOR

Hello Clare. Hello James, I'm Professor Clarke.

He leans forward in his chair and offers James his hand. James takes his hand on reflex, but feels a bit awkward.

PROFESSOR

Could you leave us alone for a bit.

CLARE

Yes, certainly.
I'll come back for you James.

The door automatically opens for Clare and she leaves.

PROFESSOR

Take a seat.

A chair comes out of the wall, James sits down, still adjusting to the utility of automatic furniture.

PROFESSOR

Well James, what has Clare told you?

James is very shy, unsure of his situation and what people want of him. He doesn't know what to say to the Professor.

PROFESSOR

Has she told you why you're here?

JAMES

No.

PROFESSOR

Right. Well James I'll be perfectly up front with you. I am the reason you're here.

James' interest is piqued. He looks at the Professor quizzically.

PROFESSOR

I understand you're pretty intelligent, so if you don't understand anything just ask.

James nods, appreciating the Professor's apparent candour. The Professor activates his computer hologram which provides a pictorial background to his explanation and brief history lesson.

PROFESSOR

Okay James - it's like this. We are living on the planet Plethaura (pronounced pleth-or-ra). We only colonised the planet about 200 years ago. Earth to us is a distant memory. Yes, you've travelled through time - about 600 years to be exact. You'll find that the everyday running of the planet is handled almost completely by machines, and people live to about 200 years of age. But colonising exotic planets has its own problems; we had to make changes to the human genome which in the long term will make us infertile. That's why you're here. As a result of over-genetic engineering we have lost some of our gene pool. You can provide us with those genes through your DNA.

JAMES

I don't understand.

PROFESSOR

About genes?
(James nods.)
Right. Genes are your biological blueprint. They were given to you by your mother and father - don't worry, one day you'll understand. Anyway the point is we need your mitochondria DNA to reestablish the original blueprint. It's really very simple - the hard part was getting you here.

This is what really interests James.

JAMES

You got me here, but you can't get me back.

The Professor sees that this is a contentious issue for the boy.

PROFESSOR

That's right. Clare's already told you, hasn't she?

James nods, but remains silent.

PROFESSOR

James you've travelled through a thousand light years of space and 600 years of time. It's virtually impossible to take you back.

JAMES

I don't believe you.

The Professor looks at the boy very seriously, wondering at the source of his conviction. Finally he shrugs as if he can't help James' inability to face reality.

PROFESSOR

Well I'm sorry. I'll call Clare.

It's only an apology in words - in reality it's a dismissal.

INT. - CLARE'S OFFICE - DAY

James is in a despondent mood. Clare thinks she knows why but doesn't say anything for fear of opening wounds she can't heal.

JAMES

We seem to spend all our time inside.
Is there an outside world?

CLARE

Yes, would you like to go outside.

James nods.

EXT. - JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY

James and Clare are in a large Japanese style garden - not the one outside his room which is a miniature. This is a public garden, which nevertheless has a temple-like quality.

JAMES You've already got from me what you want, haven't you?

CLARE

(Surprised at his insight)
Yes.

JAMES

So why can't I go home?

Clare suddenly feels enormous empathy for the boy, realising the depth of his feelings and his intelligence.

CLARE

James, I wish you could.

JAMES

So what will you do with me now?

CLARE

James, there are enormous opportunities for you here, much more than where you came from. There's no harm can come to you here, and with luck you can live to one hundred or two hundred years of age. You're far better off than anyone else on your home planet.

James gives her a look that makes her feel like she just offered him 20 silver pieces.

JAMES

But I had a father and a brother, and they don't even know where I am. I had a home.

He sees the look of sympathy on her face, but it only makes him angrier.

JAMES

And you don't need me anymore - you just admitted it yourself. And I still don't believe you. You went back in time to get me, you can go back in time to return me.

He gives her a look of outright challenge which she finds difficult to face.

CLARE

James it's not that simple. I will give you all the support I can, but I can't send you home. Believe me, I wish I could.

EXT.- PROF. CLARKE'S PERSONAL TRANSPORT GARAGE - DAY

Professor Clarke's personal transport is a robotic car. He goes to an underground garage, which in effect, is an airlock. The car is a two seater capsule. His entrance to the car is affected by a voice command and his hand print.

Inside the car he has the choice of observing outside or leaving the 'observation bubble' opaque so he can watch a holographic television.

To commence his journey he gives a simple command.

PROFESSOR

Home.

The car moves with no apparent inertial force transferred to the occupant. The only noise, an unobtrusive hum.

The car leaves the airlock and travels along a single rail at very high speed. Sometimes it travels in an underground tube, sometimes in open air.

Inside, the professor is watching a news item, which actually responds to his questions.

Suddenly something is apparently wrong. He feels a lurch, which should simply never happen with this sort of transport.

From the outside we see the car has left its rail and is turning over in the air in a slow roll.

From inside the Professor issues a command, but the car ignores him.

PROFESSOR

Clear screen.

The car ignores him, so he presses a button on a console and the bubble above him becomes clear. He sees the world rotating around him, and we see a look of outright terror on his face. The car loops over and starts a dive towards the ground.

PROFESSOR

NOOOOOO.

The car crashes spectacularly into the ground - no one else is injured.

INT. - CLARE'S OFFICE - DAY

Clare is sitting at her desk. She's working with a desktop computer, not like we know them - it can work with a screen or with a holographic image. When she turns it off (with a voice command) it folds itself away out of sight and leaves a clean desk. She does this because it's obvious she's been trying to occupy herself unsuccessfully.

The door buzzes and it becomes clear revealing a smartly dressed man, VIVIAN HENSKE. He's like someone posing for a passport photo - he knows he's being inspected by someone he can't see.

CLARE

yes?

VIVIAN

Miss Robertson, I'm Vivian Henske.

CLARE

Could I have a security check please?

He presses a panel beside the door with the palm of his hand. On Clare's side a yellow light appears in the wall with a soft glow.

CLARE

You may come in.

Clare is very officious, it's obvious she's only accepting this intrusion because she has to. She offers Henske a seat against a wall which puts an appropriate distance between them and makes it difficult for him to be either comfortable or assertive.

Vivian Henske is a man who has to deal with all sorts of people and is quick to read any situation. He copes with a no-nonsense integrity and an obvious intelligence.

VIVIAN

Miss Robinson, as you probably know, I've been appointed to investigate Professor Clarke's death.

Clare nods.

VIVIAN

Okay, please correct me if I've got anything wrong, but I understand you and Professor Clarke were working on a secret gene project. You were going to use the genes of a 20th Century Earth Human to restore the human genome.

CLARE

Not that secret it would appear.

VIVIAN

(Careful not to sound intimidating)
You referring to me or the accident?

Clare answers with her silence.

VIVIAN

Miss Robinson, it's my job to collect information not disseminate it. I'm not a journalist, okay?

Clare nods her head, purses her lips.

VIVIAN

How long have you been involved with the Project?

CLARE

Since it's inception, almost. About 2 years.

VIVIAN

During that time did you ever come across any opposition to it?

She looks at him quizzically.

VIVIAN

I mean, are you aware of any political or ideological party who were against the Project?

CLARE

Are you suggesting that Professor Clarke's death wasn't an accident.

VIVIAN

Miss Robinson, I'll try to be as frank with you as my professional boundaries allow. Publicly we are saying that the Professor's death was the result of a robotics malfunction. That is the official extent of my investigation. Now, you haven't answered my question.

CLARE

Mr. Henske, I believe this should be a two way street. Why don't you tell me what you already know. Perhaps it can save us both our time.

He smiles at her no-nonsense approach.

VIVIAN

Very well. There is a boy involved, taken from 20th Century Earth. His name is James Adamson and he's 12 years old - earth years.

He pauses to evaluate her reaction. Clare remains silent.

VIVIAN

I have access to all the Professor's records and I read your last report.

(lengthy pause)

It's possible Miss Robinson, that if the Professor's death wasn't an accident, then the boy could be in equal danger. Think if someone is opposed to the mixing of genes for whatever reason.....

CLARE

(Reluctantly)

What do you want me to do?

VIVIAN

Nothing that would attract attention, but you may increase his electronic surveillance. Does the boy have a direct link with you?

CLARE

Only through his room.

VIVIAN

Right, you may wish to make some more personal arrangement so he has direct contact when he's outside.

CLARE

Yes okay, that could easily be arranged.

There's a long pause. Clare is expecting him to make his farewells, but Vivian has a request he knows will be sensitive to her.

VIVIAN

I would like to see the boy, if I may.

CLARE

Do you have to?

VIVIAN

No, I don't. But I'd like to. I'm sure you have provisions to monitor it.

CLARE

(As if against her better judgement)
Yes, alright. But not long, okay?

VIVIAN

I promise.

INT. - JAMES' ROOM - DAY

James is staring out into the Japanese garden, obviously bored and despondent. The door buzzes - Clare and Vivian stand outside.

JAMES

Yes?

CLARE

James, I have someone who wants to see you. His name is Vivian Henske.

James presses a button and the door opens. Clare and Vivian enter.

CLARE

I'll leave you with Mr. Henske James, but if you need me just call.

She produces a small plastic bracelet to give to James like an electronic wrist watch.

CLARE

By the way this is a direct link to me. As long as you're wearing it you can contact me. You only have to call my name. If I respond to it, this light comes on.

JAMES

Thank you.

James is genuinely appreciative though he demonstrably doesn't show it. Already Clare is the only person who comes close to being a loved one to him.

Vivian observes their subtle interaction and is astute enough to notice that Clare means more to James than she probably realises herself.

Clare leaves the room, but gives her final look to Vivian. James doesn't miss this and wonders what's behind it.

VIVIAN

Hello James. Is there anywhere I can sit?

JAMES

Oh sorry, yes.

He presses a button and a chair comes out of the wall for Vivian. James sits down himself.

VIVIAN

Who do you know here James, other than Clare and Professor Clarke.

JAMES

(Almost apologetic)
No one really.

James has never felt more lonely. The Professor's death has affected him in a way that surprises him. He didn't like the Professor but he saw him as the only hope to his return home. Clare is his only friend in an environment he doesn't like and he doesn't understand.

Vivian observes him and feels an immediate empathy for the boy - understanding that the wrong that's been done to him goes beyond simple homesickness. James avoids Vivian's eye.

VIVIAN

James I've been sent here to investigate the Professor's death.

James nods. He feels intuitively that he could like this man, but he doesn't trust anyone right now.

VIVIAN

I asked Clare to provide you with that link. You like Clare don't you?

James nods.

VIVIAN

Well, I'm glad.
James if you ever need any help of any sort. If you ever feel in any sort of danger, don't hesitate to use it.

James looks at Vivian, knowing he's not telling him everything he's thinking, but not wanting to ask.

VIVIAN

Well James that's all I wanted to say.
(He stands up)
I may or may not see you again, but if I do I will only contact you through Clare, okay? If anyone contacts you without Clare's knowledge, you'll let her know won't you?

JAMES

Yes.

James stands up too, and they're both uncertain as to how to react. Purely on an impulse, Vivian offers him his hand. James is surprised but accepts it.

VIVIAN

Bye James, take care.

JAMES

Bye Mr. Henske.

CUT TO:

Clare watching a holographic image of their farewell. Clare's face shows uncertainty and the conflict of love and mistrust.

INT. - INVESTIGATIONS WORKSHOP/LABORATORY - DAY

We see a replay of the closing moments of the Professor's accident from inside the Car. When it's finished, we see Henske with another man, who's a robotics expert. The two men are standing next to a holographic model of the crash site area.

VIVIAN

Have you ever seen anything like this before?

TECHNICIAN

No, never.

VIVIAN

What do you think?

TECHNICIAN

There's only two conditions in which the car will leave the rail. One if there's something on the rail that can't be dislodged, and two if there's a break in the rail.

VIVIAN

And neither of those conditions applied.

TECHNICIAN

Well, you just saw for yourself. But that's not the only mystery.

Vivian waits for him to elaborate.

TECHNICIAN

Even if there had been something to make it leave the rail, it doesn't explain why none of the safety devices worked. The car should leap over any obstacle and land on a cushion of air, or in extremity, parachute to safety.

He uses the holographic model to demonstrate what he's explaining.

VIVIAN

And all those systems failed.

TECHNICIAN

Yes.

(Pause)

But you know what I find strangest of all?

He uses an electronic pointer to point to various parts of the site and demonstrate what he's describing.

TECHNICIAN

This is the crash trajectory, notice how it corkscrewed to the left. Now if it had gone straight, it would have hit this building here, and if it had curved right, it would have landed here.

He turns to Vivian to emphasise his point.

TECHNICIAN

The car landed in the only place on the site where it couldn't harm anyone except the occupant.

VIVIAN

But wouldn't that be programmed into the car?

TECHNICIAN

No, no need. At least, not until now.

VIVIAN

Have you been able to find any cause, any sign of malfunction?

TECHNICIAN

No, absolutely none. If I didn't know better I'd say the car crashed deliberately.

INT. - VIVIAN'S OFFICE - EVENING.

Vivian's office is also his home and looks more like a workshop than the normal offices we've seen so far. He's one of those people who appears to be at home in chaos. Neatness would be a personal affront yet he can always put his hand to whatever he needs.

We hear an audio signal and a small light appears on a panel. Henske gives a command and a screen activates itself. It's a videophone call from his boss, ROSS MCGREGGOR.

VIVIAN

Hello Ross.

McGREGGOR
I haven't seen your report.

VIVIAN
You already know the answer to that.

McGREGGOR
Well?

VIVIAN
There hasn't been much to report.

McGREGGOR
Well that's a report in itself isn't it.

VIVIAN
Yes, I suppose it is.

McGREGGOR
First thing tomorrow morning, in person.

VIVIAN
Aye, aye Boss.

The screen goes blank, Vivian visibly relaxes. He looks tired, but stirs himself against his better wishes. He activates his computer and starts to dictate his report.

VIVIAN
Report to Superintendent McGreggor.

The machine responds, Henske hesitates, then changes his mind.

VIVIAN
Cancel last command. Shutdown.

The screen goes blank. Vivian presses a button a number of times and an equivalent number of blank sheets of paper appear in a tray. He then searches high and low for a pen. When he finally finds one he starts to write his report by hand.

INT. - SUPERINTENDENT MCGREGGOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Vivian has given his report to Ross in a folder, who's now leafing through it. The two men sit opposite each other across McGreggor's desk.

McGREGGOR
Why'd you write the report by hand?

VIVIAN

I don't want it accessed by anyone.

McGREGGOR

You don't trust security?

Vivian is obviously uncomfortable - he feels like a fool, but he also feels justified in his eccentricity.

VIVIAN

Look, this car that Clark was killed in. It's suppose to be failsafe and foolproof. But say if someone could somehow reprogramme it and not leave a trace. Who's to say they couldn't break security as well.

Ross looks over the top of Vivian's report. He knows Henske's no fool but he doesn't believe in indulging people.

McGREGGOR

That's assuming someone killed Clarke. Is that an assumption or a conclusion?

VIVIAN

At this stage, it's not even an assumption. It's all in my report.

Ross decides to read through the report before asking any more questions. Vivian waits patiently until Ross has read the conclusion.

McGREGGOR

You think that someone may want to sabotage Clarke's project and therefore the boy could be in danger. (Vivian nods)
Is this speculation or can you justify this?

VIVIAN

I told you there wasn't much to report.

McGREGGOR

(testily)
That's not an answer.

VIVIAN

What if I'm right?

McGREGGOR

Vivian you know as well as I do that we can't act on assumptions and speculation - we need hard evidence. By your own admission (shakes report) you have no suspect, no motive and no technical evidence of sabotage to the car.

Vivian doesn't look at his boss, but looks at the floor as someone who can't support his convictions.

McGREGGOR

It seems all evidence is dependent on the robotics expert. If he can't find anything, we can only assume it's a one in a thousand accident.

Vivian is unable to hide his contempt.

VIVIAN

A one in a thousand accident?

Ross demonstrates the patience that is so necessary to his position.

McGREGGOR

What else?

Henske has withdrawn into himself. He shrugs his shoulders but when he talks, he looks straight at his boss.

VIVIAN

Ross, I wouldn't get my nose too far out of joint if you put someone else on this.

McGREGGOR

(allows himself a smile)
I could call your bluff you know.

VIVIAN

Ross, I'm not bluffing. If I can't follow this up the way I want, then what's the point. You're only wasting both our time.

McGREGGOR

You're too good a man, Henske and you know it. At least I know if you're on the case you'll follow it through right or wrong. If I put someone else on, they won't even look.

Vivian nods his appreciation but doesn't speak. He realises he's won this round.

McGREGGOR

Viv, I'm giving you a lot of liberty here, because your record's impeccable. But it doesn't mean your automatically right, and it doesn't mean you can break the rules.

VIVIAN

I understand.

Ross puts the report back in its folder, and Vivian stands up to leave.

McGREGGOR

Is this the only copy of this?

VIVIAN

Yes it is.

INT. - JAMES' APARTMENT - MORNING.

James has only just got up, and he's undressed ready for a shower. We notice the bracelet resting on a side table near his bed.

He enters the shower stall, the door closes automatically and the water comes on automatically as well.

James presses a button for soap, and starts to lather himself. We watch the suds run down his legs to the floor. After a moment James looks down to the floor and notices that the water is not draining away.

There is no drain hole in the floor as such - the water should drain away through perforations. James feels around the floor and pushes with his hands. He hasn't started panicking yet but when the water climbs above his ankles to his shins he starts to become anxious.

He starts pushing against the walls and issuing commands, all to no avail.

JAMES

Stop. Stop the water. Let me out of here.

He bangs the walls, getting anxious. The water is now is now up to his thighs.

CUT TO:

INT. - CLARE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Clare is having breakfast - a scene of domestic normalcy. It's her final moments of relaxation before going to work. There's music playing in the background - something baroque. She's eating some fruit and reading some papers.

CUT TO:

INT. - JAMES' APARTMENT.

The water is now up to his waist. James is in a state of desperation. He starts calling out.

JAMES

Help, Help, someone please help me.

He's banging the walls, the water is relentless. His face is terror-stricken. Finally he calls out to Clare.

JAMES

Clare, Clare.

Outside the shower stall we see the bracelet lying dormant on the side table.

He yells at the top of his lungs.

JAMES

Clare, Clare. If you can hear me please help me. I'm drowning.

We see the red light come on the bracelet.

CUT TO:

INT. - CLARE'S APARTMENT.

Clare responds by pressing behind her ear. She wonders what it could be. She goes to her video phone and calls up James.

CLARE

James, what's the problem?

The video phone shows his apartment is empty. She can use the video to scan his apartment.

CLARE

James, where are you?

She keeps scanning then homes in on the bracelet, lying on the side table. She then goes to the shower door, and picks up a pair of headphones, instructing her phone.

CLARE

Turn up the gain slowly, that's enough.

We hear the same sound as her, the muffled sound of running water.

CLARE

James can you hear me?

CUT TO:

James in the shower stall. The water has now got him treading water. He presses his legs against one wall and pushes himself up the opposite wall until his head reaches the ceiling. He's no longer panicking - he's semi-resolved to his fate. His thoughts turn to his distant home.

JAMES

Dad, Kevin, as far as I know you are already dead, but it doesn't matter, to me you are both alive. Please don't forget me - in whatever time you exist, I know you always remembered me. It doesn't matter anymore anyway, I won't be long now. I love you both.

CUT TO:

Clare feels, more than knows that it's a life and death situation - she acts accordingly.

She presses a button on her phone which goes blank.

CLARE

This is an emergency, I repeat this is an emergency. Maintenance to Room 301 immediately. Occupant in danger. I repeat Occupant in danger. Room 301.

She waits a brief moment.

CLARE

Maintenance please acknowledge this call.

OFF SCREEN:

'Maintenance and Rescue, received your call. On our way to 301.'

CLARE

Thank you.

Clare runs out of her room.

INT. - OUTSIDE JAMES' APARTMENT.

Clare arrives but a Maintenance and Medical crew (2 of each) are already there. They are wearing fully enclosed suits and are attaching small explosives to the outside of the door.

RESCUE TEAM LEADER

Stand back.

Everyone gets out of the way, turning their backs to the door. A charge goes off and the door is blown off its hinges

The crew goes in. Clare follows them.

CLARE

He's in the shower stall.

The crew set charges on the door. The leader turns to Clare.

RESCUE TEAM LEADER

Get out of the room.

Clare and the medical crew leave the room.

The charge goes off and the door blows out with a wall of water behind it. James falls out with the water, naked and unconscious.

Clare runs in but stands back while the medical crew examine him. One of them examines James for life signs then puts a respirator type device on his face.

CLARE

Will he live?

MEDICAL OFFICER 1

(Standing)

We'll know in a moment.

MEDICAL OFFICER 2

(Kneeling)

He's coming round.

Clare kneels down beside him. One of the medics puts a blanket over him, and the other takes the respirator off him. He lifts the boy's head and James coughs up water. Clare takes James' hand.

JAMES

James, James, can you hear me?

James nods his head, his face distorted by sudden emotion. He grips Clare's hand and starts to weep. She draws him to her oblivious of those around her.

INT. - INFIRMARY - DAY

James is lying on a bed, asleep. Clare is in the room watching him. A buzzer announces a visitor. A door opens and Vivian walks in.

CLARE
You came quickly.

VIVIAN
As soon as I heard.

He looks at James.

CLARE
They gave him a sedative.

Vivian looks at the bracelet.

VIVIAN
The bracelet?

CLARE
Saved his life. But only just.

Vivian and Clare are awkward in each other's company. They are both there for the boy, but Vivian feels he is encroaching somehow. Clare doesn't know how to put him at ease.

James wakes up; he sees Clare and Vivian.

JAMES
Where am I?

CLARE
It's alright James, you're in a hospital.

James looks around him then remembers why he's there. He becomes suddenly panicky.

JAMES
I'm not going back there. Clare don't make me go back. That room tried to kill me.

Both Vivian and Clare look worried.

CLARE
It's alright James, I won't make you.

JAMES
And I'm not getting into one of your cars either.

VIVIAN

Don't worry James, if we can help it you won't have to.

Clare looks at Vivian and wonders what he means, but she doesn't want to ask in front of the boy.

VIVIAN

James, I think you should stay with Clare until we sort this out.

James nods his head in agreement, so does Clare.

EXT. - JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY

Clare and Vivian are walking, discussing what to do next.

VIVIAN

If someone is trying to kill James, there is one way to convince them to stop.

CLARE

How's that?

VIVIAN

We kill James instead. Or should I say, you kill James.

CLARE

You're half serious aren't you?

VIVIAN

Yes.
Suppose you gave James the virus as the next phase of your project, and he died from it.

CLARE

You mean pretend we do it and falsify the results.

VIVIAN

Something like that. But it would have to be convincing. You probably would have to do something more than just pretend.

CLARE

That's fine, but what do we do with James after he's died.

When Clare says 'died' she makes inverted comma signs in the air.

VIVIAN

That's the hard part, but I have an idea.

CLARE

Care to tell me?

VIVIAN

If we do this, we do it right down the line. No one else knows - not your bosses, not my bosses.

Clare nods, understanding the seriousness of what they're doing.

VIVIAN

We have to create convincing and false records, both of us. Whoever's doing this has access to all the information. We must create a completely false trail.

They have stopped walking - Vivian has become very intense.

CLARE

You still haven't answered my question.

Vivian hesitates, knowing that what he's about to say will create opposition.

VIVIAN

We put James in the wilderness.

CLARE

The Wilderness. Are you crazy? He could die.

VIVIAN

Clare, he will die if he stays here. In fact he would be dead now if not for you.

CLARE

How would you do it?

VIVIAN

They have funerals in the Wilderness don't they?

Clare can't help a laugh. They start walking again, Clare leads.

CLARE

It would take some planning and preparation.
(pause)
For how long?

VIVIAN

Until we find the culprit, or until it's died down and forgotten. Then we can bring him back and create a new identity for him. I wasn't considering making it a permanent situation.

CLARE

Why don't we create a new identity as soon as he 'dies'.

VIVIAN

It's too convenient. It's what someone tracking this project might look for. No, we need a breathing space, besides we might even uncover the source.

CLARE

Okay, I'll go along with the first half, but I'll leave the second half up to you.

VIVIAN

That's fine, the less you know about the second half the better.

INT. - CLARE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clare and James are having lunch together. James is calmer, reassured by Clare's company, but is naturally puzzled by recent events.

JAMES

Why are these things happening?
These accidents.

CLARE

I don't know James, I wish I did.

JAMES

What about your friend? Doesn't he know?

CLARE

My friend? Oh you mean Vivian. He seems to think it might be political, but I don't think he really knows any more than I do.

JAMES

Can you tell me more about the project?

CLARE

What would you like to know?

JAMES

Well... For a start, why me?

CLARE

You mean: why were you chosen?

James nods his head.

CLARE

Well from what I understand: you weren't chosen specifically; you just happened to be in a particular place at a particular time.

JAMES

I don't understand.

CLARE

How can I explain?
It was really like a lottery James; it could have been anyone. We set a trap and you happened to fall into it.

James looks quizzical - Clare is uncomfortable with having to explain his capture.

CLARE

We simply found a place, where we might trap someone alone, and waited for the right time. If it hadn't worked, we would have found somewhere else.

James notices Clare's discomfiture, but doesn't understand it - he is much more at ease with the subject than she is (he doesn't blame her).

JAMES

How did you get me into the ship?

CLARE

Believe it or not, that was the easy part. All we had to do was attract your attention while you were alone. We hypnotised you James - a very advanced form of hypnosis.

James seems satisfied. His next question is harmless, but it causes Clare a pang of guilt.

JAMES

Were you there?

CLARE

No James I wasn't.
Neither was the Professor.

JAMES

What will happen now?

Clare takes a deep breath before answering.

CLARE

Vivian and I have a plan, but you'll have to trust us completely.

James notices the seriousness of her voice and is very attentive.

CLARE

I'm going to fake your death James, but in fact I will simply put you to sleep. When you wake you will have a new identity.

JAMES

Does that mean I will lose my memories?

CLARE

No James, without your memories you would not survive.

JAMES

That's okay then.

She finds the boy's simple trust an awesome responsibility, but if she has any doubts, she is determined not to show them. She picks up a mug to hide her face, but James is blissfully unaware of any drama.

MONTAGE:

Clare with James in her apartment setting up experiment with virus.

Clare talks into her computer, see text on screen.

TEST CASE:

Infect subject with virus.

SUBJECT: James Adamson.

SERIES OF SCENES LEADING UP TO THE 'WILDERNESS'

Clare preparing James for virus.

Clare preparing false results.

Clare puts James in coma, disconnects machine - declares James dead.

Clare and Vivian at cremation of James. Project declared a failure.

Vivian organises for James to go to Wilderness.

Put James in a dream box - Roger Bennet.

Final scene is casket/coffin (dream box) being dropped by parachute into wilderness at night - falls into water. Parachute detaches, starts to disintegrate and box submerges.

INT. - DREAMBOX - NIGHT.

We can see James face, unconscious in faint light - there is a helmet over his head like when he first arrived on the planet. We hear Vivian's voice.

VIVIAN

James, when you wake up you will find yourself in the Wilderness. At the moment you are enclosed in a dreambox disguised as a coffin, and I am talking to you in your dreams. At the foot of the box under your feet is a survival kit containing food and instruments. These can all be put in a utility belt to go around your waist. It includes a homing signal so I can find you. Your name is no longer James but Roger. Roger Bennet. James Adamson is dead. He died in an experiment performed by Clare Robertson. Clare was taken off the project which has now been declared a failure. Your survival is now dependent on your own resources. We will contact you, Clare and I, in good time. We are the only ones who know of your existence. If anything happens to Clare and I, you are totally on your own. Good bye James.

EXT. - WILDERNESS (WATER SURFACE) - NIGHT

Box pops up on surface in swamp environment. There are two moons in the sky. They are different sizes and different phases dependent on their position in the sky. A large prehistoric looking bird on bat like wings flies across the sky, and a large eel-like creature slithers over the box into the water.

The box drifts amongst some large flat lilies and then amongst giant mangrove-like trees and vines. Eventually it catches in some trees and comes to rest.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

It is morning - we see large red sun coming over watery horizon. Box is in same position as we last saw it during night.

Small elf-like creatures appear: AMPHIBIMES; and with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension, inspect the box. They have flippers for hands and feet, large, black pupiled eyes, large ears, flat noses and small mouths, so they carry a perpetual look of bewilderment or surprise. They have greenish to brown frog like skins which can change colour like chameleons, but are lithe and humanoid in body structure. They carry no utensils or tools, carry their young the way monkeys or chimps do, and chatter to each other in clicks.

The box lid pops giving them a start, but their curiosity gets the better of them and two or three tentatively return to look inside.

James looks up with his blonde hair and blue eyes. His eyes dart from side to side and above his head but his expression remains neutral.

JAMES' P.O.V.

3 faces of amphibimes, looking over side of box. James face is quizzical - for some reason he's not scared of these creatures.

Suddenly without reason one of the others become agitated. James sits up in the box to see what's the cause. One of the tribe senses danger and the others look to him for direction. James guesses that he must be the leader. His large ears are flapping and they are all looking in all directions trying to sniff the air.

The amphibime runs over to James and grabs his hand to pull him out, but on reflex James pulls back. They are all very agitated now, and James is also becoming affected by their fear.

The lead amphibime emits high-pitched instructions and runs for the trees. A group of five or six rush James and bodily remove him from the box. They literally wrap him up in their long arms so he can't struggle. They run with him and the others into the safety of the trees.

When they are hidden they stop and watch. Everyone, including James, is still and silent.

An airborne robot appears, spherical in shape, and hovers above the box. A single antenna protrudes and points directly at the box. It is a laser gun and it zaps the box, destroying it totally. The robot withdraws the laser and sprouts antennae in all directions horizontally. It does a slow turn through 360 degrees, withdraws all antennae, then darts off at high speed.

James looks horrified at where the dreambox was. There is still some steam rising from where it had been floating, but nothing else.

The amphibimes turn away and chatter to him to follow. James realises he has no choice.

INT. - CLARE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clare is having breakfast, receives a video-call from Vivian.

CLARE

Yes Vivian.

At first Vivian doesn't say anything. His expression is rueful.

CLARE

Something's happened, hasn't it?

VIVIAN

The homing signal for James. It came on about 600 this morning. It lasted 50 seconds.

CLARE

What do you mean?

VIVIAN

I mean it was destroyed.

CLARE

Are you sure? Could it be faulty?
Can't it be submerged? Switched off?

VIVIAN

Clare, these things are virtually indestructible. Even if he was eaten, it would still send a signal.

CLARE

So how?

VIVIAN

It was destroyed as soon as it started to
signal guess is that it was an assassin
robot.

CLARE

(Almost in tears)
But who?

VIVIAN

Clare, don't go to work today. Okay?
I'll come over.

Clare nods. Videophone goes blank.

EXT. - JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY

Clare and Vivian in conversation.

CLARE

What are we going to do?

VIVIAN

Officially there's nothing we can do.
Officially he doesn't exist.
(Pause)
The only thing I can do at an official level
is investigate the two accidents.

CLARE

Can't you go look for him?

VIVIAN

Where? Without the signal, assuming he's
alive, there's no hope.

CLARE

But you must have a location for the
signal - for the 50 seconds it existed.

VIVIAN

Clare, there's no way I can go and
investigate without someone finding out.

CLARE

Viv, I would like to know.

VIVIAN

Yes, okay.
(Pause)
One other thing Clare?

CLARE

What's that?

VIVIAN

You must stop all work on this project,
both official and unofficial

Clare nods agreement.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

The Amphibime live communally, but they are not toolmakers. they are equally at home in water, trees or land. At night they sleep in the trees and build crude nests for themselves, so they have a 'home' in the sense that they are territorial.

They live mainly on fish which they catch in their hands, but also there are fruit in the trees, and they also eat insects which are quite large in this environment - about the size of small birds. The only bird life are extraordinarily large bat like creatures which live on the same sort of fare. The natural gravity of the planet is slightly less than earth's, and the air might be slightly heavier so flying animals can be that much larger than earth's environment allows.

At first James is totally dependent on the amphibime for food. He's forced to a limited diet of raw fish and fruit which is quite fleshy and varied. He refuses to eat the insects at first but when he later learns to make fire he doesn't mind cooking them for others.

The amphibime tend to treat James as one of their own, perhaps because of his size. James is almost naked but the environment is not cold except at night. He learns to cover himself with mud to protect himself from (smaller) insect bites and sunburn. At night he uses a dried out lily pad as a blanket.

James has spent a day and a night with the amphibime, so it is his second day when he sees his first and only contact with the human world since the assassin robot.

A small flying craft sweeps over the area. It is a bubble craft with retractable legs like a large mechanical insect without wings. Like the assassin robot it has no physical signs of flight - it just suspends in the air and can move in any direction at any subsonic speed.

Again the amphibime can somehow sense its presence before it becomes visible. James is in the trees and remembering his last experience buries himself in his nest and covers himself with a lily pad. Most of the amphibime dive into the water.

Closeup of the bubble craft reveals that its pilot is Vivian. He sees the amphibime nest site and knows from experience that they are timid creatures who are rarely seen by humans. The only holographic images of them have been taken surreptitiously from satellite.

EXT. - ASSASSIN ROBOT SITE - DAY

The craft doesn't so much land as hover and lowers a spidery step ladder of 2 or 3 steps. Vivian steps down and using some sort of probe hooked up to a helmet he examines the area. He talks into the helmet which is obviously recording his findings.

VIVIAN

Singe marks on roots indicate use of laser gun. Reinforces my suspicions of possible assassin robot. No sign of landing. No sign of dreambox whatsoever - probably vapourised with all contents. Distinct signs of Amphibime in area. According to bloodhound sensor, they run back into trees, not into water. There was a pack of them. No human trace at all. They must have come to investigate after the event. Inquisitive buggers. Experience tells me that where there are amphibime, there'll be no humans. Aerial reconnaissance showed Amphibime nest nearby - as expected no sign of occupants.

We see Vivian go back to the craft. Steps retract and craft lazily lifts off, swings round the way a helicopter might, then circles higher and higher in increasing arcs.

We see closeup of Vivian still wearing helmet. His P.O.V. shows water stretching in one direction and mangrove swamp in other.

He reaches forward to press a button - there is a lurch, a sonic boom and the horizon streaks towards us.

EXT. - NEST SITE - DAY

At sound of sonic boom, amphibime ears and eyes appear above water. James peeks out from under lily blanket. There is a sense of relief. Some of the amphibime come out of the water and start chattering. James also knows it is safe once again.

INT. - CLARE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clare is talking to Vivian on the videophone. She's been crying, but now she's just angry. Vivian has a look of contrition that occurs when you want to help someone but the help's unwanted.

Vivian opens his mouth to say something but Clare cuts him off.

CLARE

No. Don't ask me. Don't call me.
I don't want to see you.
Just remember it was your idea.

Vivian cuts off, a beat, then Clare's shoulders shudder in silent sobs.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

James is starting to learn some skills for himself. He takes a green vine, finds that it comes apart in strands. He then starts to plat the strands and finds it makes a strong rope. He already has a slim staff which he takes and sharpens at one end, using a fish bone as a knife. Using the same bone, he drills a hole at the other end through which he can thread the vine rope. He now has a spear he can catch his own fish with. He throws it into a nearby tree to test its strength, but finds the end isn't sharp enough. Nevertheless he practices until he finally catches his first fish.

Later he takes a fish bone and sharpens it on a stone. Instead of sharpening the end of his spear he makes a notch in it so that he can fit his sharpened bone blade with fine twine. He throws this at the tree and it penetrates. He's very pleased with himself.

James finds that the lilies will support him if he spreads his weight carefully. If he stands up they tip him off unless he's careful. When he lifts a lily out of the water he notices that the water clings to them in large drops - an anomaly of the higher surface tension of the planet's water and the surface of the lily. He accidentally finds a pertinent use of this feature later on.

One of the giant birds starts taking an interest in James' fishing expeditions and he starts feeding it fish. James finds the birds are not aggressive and is charmed by their aerial beauty. They can land on the water like overgrown pelicans. They take off by running on the water with outstretched wings and large webbed feet like caricatures of flying boats. The birds can also land in the trees providing they have room to spread their wings. They do this by stalling their flight just before alighting. The birds will play an important role in James' long term survival. They roost in the trees at night alongside the amphibimes.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

The next day James continues his explorations, and he finds a nest with one young in it. The mother comes back and drives him off, forcing James to dive into the water. James goes back to his fishing.

Later in the day, James gets caught in a sun shower.

Later in the day still, the sun is sinking below the horizon, James goes back to check out the bird's nest. He finds the chick by itself very hungry. It's starting to get dark and still the mother has not returned. James realises that something has happened to her. James decides to feed the chick some fish, which it eats greedily. Not willing to leave the bird to die of hunger he takes it back to the Amphibime nest to care for. By this time it's dusk. Neither the amphibime nor the other birds are perturbed by James' new 'charge'.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

James continues to fish and spends a lot of his time feeding his new charge. James skin is now a nut colour and his hair is bleached even more blonde than when he arrived. His blue eyes stand out as bright as the sky.

As an experiment he cuts a hole in a lily pad to see if he can spear a fish through it. When he lifts the lily out of the water, a large drop stays in the hole and acts like a lens. When he looks through the drop it magnifies the scene behind it. But what's more when he examines the shadow it casts, he finds it focuses the sun's light.

He suddenly realises something very important, so he cuts a portion of the lily away that he can hold in his hand with the hole in it. Not an easy task as the lily skin is quite tough. He then focuses the water lens carefully on a mangrove root and behold it starts to smoke. James is elated at his discovery, and quickly gathers material to build his first fire. The amphibime are suspicious at first, and they suffer the internal conflict of curiosity and natural fear. After building his fire, James shows them how easy it is to put out by dowsing it with water. When he has done this they are happier.

That night, James keeps a fire alight long enough to cook some fish. The amphibimes are nervous, but they tolerate their adopted soul mate's indulgence, and are willing to taste his fare.

James also feeds his pet bird its first cooked insect.

INT. - MCGREGGOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Vivian is being interviewed by his boss.

MCGREGGOR

Why'd you charter a bubblecraft to go to the wilderness?

Vivian feels that games are being played. He has an air of menace about him that comes from being compromised on issues that are important to him. The investigation has become stalled and Vivian finds opposition in all directions of his inquiry.

VIVIAN

I went to investigate an incident involving an assassin robot and some amphibimes.

MCGREGGOR

What's that got to do with your investigation?

VIVIAN

Perhaps nothing, perhaps a great deal.

MCGREGGOR

Who gave you the authority to investigate an assassin attack?

VIVIAN

Who gives the authority to use assassin robots?

Up until now McGreggor has indulged Vivian's obvious hostility, but now he is angry.

McGREGGOR

This is not a game Henske.....

Vivian's anger explodes. He cuts his boss off.

VIVIAN

You're telling me it's not a game. A professor has been killed. A boy was nearly drowned. By a bloody shower stall of all things. An assassin robot is sent off to attack amphibimes. And no bastard, I mean no bastard can tell me what the hell's happening. You give me an assignment to investigate the weirdest events that have ever happened on this planet, and all I get is people playing games. Don't talk to me about playing games.

McGreggor lets Vivian vent his spleen. He's seen all this happen before when people get too close to a case. He knows the investigation is over.

McGREGGOR

Okay. I won't question your authority to investigate an apparent attack on the amphibimes. The investigation is closed.

Vivian expected this. He just shakes his head.

VIVIAN

Is that all?

McGREGGOR

Take a holiday Viv.

(pause)

You think you've got problems. I have to answer to the Council. They're not interested in your irrelevant excursions. Look Viv, I put you on this case because I trusted your instincts. It's not your fault you can't solve it. If you can't, then as far as I'm concerned no one can.

VIVIAN

So what happens now?

McGREGGOR

Nothing happens now. Officially they were two freak accidents caused by faulty robotics.

Vivian nods his head. He's totally pissed off but he knows when to keep his mouth shut. He stands, gives his boss a nod and turns to the door.

McGREGGOR

Vivian.
(He looks back at his boss)
Up to now you've had an impeccable record.
Don't stuff it up.

McGreggor presses a button and the door opens.

INT. - CLARE'S OFFICE - DAY

Clare is working on another project now. She's working with a holographic model, which she manipulates with a wand much in the way a computer screen image can be manipulated with a mouse.

She's interrupted by her personal computer which talks to her in a female voice.

COMPUTER VOICE

Electronic message from Vivian Henske; voice only.

Clare stops what she's doing, consciously hesitates before answering.

CLARE

Yes, okay.

The computer talks to her in Vivian's voice.

VIVIAN

Investigation into Professor Clark's death is now closed. Both the Professor's accident and James' accident were the result of a robotics glitch. Any connection between the two accidents is considered purely coincidental.

COMPUTER VOICE

Message complete.

CLARE

Thank you.
(Pause, then thinking aloud)
You once told me you don't believe in coincidences Vivian Henske.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

James' hair is now very long, and he keeps it bound in a long pony tail. His pet bird is now almost fully grown, and never leaves him. The bird can perch but sleeps by hanging upside down. It has very strong claws on the end of its huge webbed feet by which it catches fish.

James starts to experiment with an idea. He takes a short but strong bone, and ties some twine to each end. He inserts it in the bird's beak and tugs on it to see how it reacts. The bird has a long neck and a long beak not unlike a pelican. James sits astride the bird and waits to see what will happen. The bird takes off from the tree and glides down to the water with him on its back. He feeds it a fish and strokes its long neck. The bird then sees if it can take off with him on board. It starts to run across the water and James lies with his head along its neck, his feet locked underneath.

The bird takes off. With practice, James knows its performance will improve.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - NIGHT

James, while he's asleep, has a very vivid dream.

He wakes up under a large full moon, something has disturbed him - there's no sign of his pet bird or any of the amphibime. He climbs down from the tree, and walks towards the water.

There at the water he finds his father and brother, with a light behind them on the water - they look exactly like when he last saw them. His father puts his arms out and he runs towards him to embrace. At the point of putting his arms around him he wakes up to find he's still in his nest and everything is normal.

He looks up at the moon - the dream has disturbed him, but when he next awakes, it is daylight. His pet bird is perched patiently next to his nest.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

The amphibime are organising themselves for a hunting party. James has seen them do it before but he has never gone with them, because he hasn't been able to keep up with them. They travel through the trees like monkeys. The trees are extremely large - in fact, everything is on a giant scale to James. The trees are large enough for the birds to fly between.

This time he can keep up with the amphibime by riding his pet bird. They are hunting a large bear-like animal, that lives away from the water, so they have to travel inland where the growth becomes more dense. The bear is much larger than the amphibimes but they cleverly drive it into an ambush where they can stone it from the trees. It is a very dangerous endeavour and causes some loss of life, but the meat from the bear lasts them a long time.

James takes his spear and all the rope he has which he hangs over his shoulder. It has a noose at one end.

When they ambush the bear, James flies around him while he tries to swat the bird from the air, but the bear is too clumsy and the bird too agile. He drops the noose over the bear's head around its neck, then flies around a tree trunk, then dives around its legs, back up into the trees. The bear falls over and the noose starts to strangle it. But his arms are still free. James then dives down, towards its head, narrowly avoids a swipe of its arm and drives the spear like a lance through its eye. This kills the animal, and it falls limp against the ropes.

Using a bone knife, James starts cutting into the animal's flesh. Despite their small size, the amphibime literally tear the animal apart. Not a pretty sight, but part of their normal existence and source of food.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - NIGHT

That night, James builds a big fire and cooks large fillets of meat. He feeds some of it to his aerial mount.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - LATER

The fire has died down to coals, everyone is asleep and one of the moons is just starting to rise.

James falls into another dream.

This time he wakes up to find himself back in Clare's apartment. He's lying on the cot where she gave him the virus. He awakes to find that both her and Vivian are there.

CLARE

Thank God James. We thought you were dead.

Then he awakes and finds himself still in the wilderness, both moons are now in the sky. He remembers Vivian's words in the dream box.

VIVIAN

At the foot of the box under your feet is a survival kit containing food and instruments. These can all be put in a utility belt to go around your waist. It includes a homing signal so I can find you.....
Your name is no longer James but Roger. Roger Bennet. James Adamson is dead....
We will contact you, Clare and I, in good time. We are the only ones who know of your existence. If anything happens to Clare and I, you are totally on your own. Good bye James.

JAMES

(Thinking aloud)
They think I'm dead.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

An aerial research ship is flying across the water towards the mangrove swamp. It is a larger version of the bubblecraft that Vivian piloted. There are two technicians on board and they are research scientists/ecologists. The first is the pilot and the leader is a woman.

PILOT

Do we know what we're looking for?
Weather says we're going to get a storm before nightfall.

LEADER

An amphibime nest.
(She refers to a map on a screen)
We're getting pretty close now. Seems that they've learnt to light fires. Been picking it up on satellite for some time now. But only in one location.

PILOT

You ever seen one?

LEADER

(Shakes her head)
No one has. Not to my knowledge anyway.
Only images we have, have all been taken
by satellite.

LEADER

Most nervous creatures you could ever find.
Seem to have an extra-sensory perception of
anything artificial.

PILOT

There's something down near the water.
Looks like a glider-bird.

LEADER

Very unusual to see one on its own.
Can you pick it up on the scope?

PILOT

I think so, let's see.

The pilot fiddles with a small joy stick and a second
screen comes to life. It shows James gliding across the
water on his pet bird.

PILOT

Christ, this has to be a first.
An amphibime riding a glider bird.

LEADER

(Half to herself)
Almost looks human.

PILOT

Seems to have hair. I didn't know they had
hair.

LEADER

Neither did I. Come on let's get closer.

JAMES P.O.V.

James is unaware he is under surveillance, but the bird
senses something, and starts to circle for height.

JAMES

What's the matter Big Bird. Something's
scared you.

James looks around, finally sees the craft as a speck
in the sky. He suddenly takes fright.

JAMES

Come on Big Boy. We've got to get home as quick as you can.

The bird starts to flap its wings, flying like a frigate. We see it heading for the mangrove shore.

The ship comes closer, but they're over the trees now. James tries a desperate manoeuvre.

JAMES

Dive.

The bird swoops below the canopy of the trees skimming the water underneath. James gives the bird a single command.

JAMES

Rise.

James lets go the bird's reins, turns himself over and slides off the bird's back. He hits the water bum first going backwards. The bird rises through an opening in the trees, and starts to circle again.

Seen from above, the technicians see the bird disappear with James on board below the canopy. They then see the bird rise by itself. The bird continues to circle then glides off in another direction altogether, like a mother protecting its young.

PILOT

Did you see that?

LEADER

More importantly, did you get it all holographed?

PILOT

You betcha. What a scoop.

LEADER

Okay send it back to the lab.
Let's see if we can find the nest site.
Follow the bird.

INT. - CLARE'S OFFICE - DAY.

Clare is working in her lab/office when she is interrupted by her personal computer.

COMPUTER VOICE

Flash report on Amphibime sighting.

CLARE
What medium?

COMPUTER VOICE
Holographic.

CLARE
Okay, let's see it.

The computer produces a holographic image of James' riding the glider bird. Clare looks on, almost in a state of shock.

CLARE
No, it couldn't be.

She watches the whole sequence taken from the air.

COMPUTER VOICE
End of tracking.

CLARE
(Keeping her voice very professional)
Play it again.

When the image comes to a closeup she gives a command.

CLARE
Freeze.
(Then to herself as she walks around the image)
Is it possible? Has to be.

She gradually gives way to elation, but still controlled.

CLARE
Okay, keep a record.

COMPUTER VOICE
Already recorded.

CLARE
Get me Vivian Henske, Special Investigations.

There's a hesitation.

COMPUTER VOICE
Not available.

CLARE
Keep trying. Give it an URGENT IMMEDIATE rating.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

The scout ship is following James' glider-bird. It flies just above the tree tops, occasionally weaving, but following a linear flight path.

PILOT

Where's he taking us?

LEADER

On a wild goose chase is my guess. These things can fly all day if they can find the thermals, and there's plenty of those over these trees. Takes us back to where we started.

INT. - CLARE'S OFFICE - DAY.

Clare is pacing up and down in her office like a caged cat.

COMPUTER VOICE

I can't get Vivian Henske. I have a Ross McGreggor.

Clare hesitates - her curiosity gets the better of her.

CLARE

Okay.

A videophone image of McGreggor appears

McGREGGOR

Why do you have an URGENT IMMEDIATE out for Vivian Henske?

Ross McGreggor is a very intimidating presence, even over a videophone. But Clare is not easily intimidated, neither is she emotional under pressure.

CLARE

It's a matter of life and death.

McGREGGOR

That life wouldn't have the name James Adamson? Or is it Roger Bennet?

Clare can't contain her surprise.

CLARE

How do you know about that?

McGREGGOR

We're not called investigators for nothing
Miss Robertson.

Clare quickly recovers.

CLARE

Then you know what it's about.
Will you let me talk to Vivian please?

McGREGGOR

No, I don't know what it's about. Would you
mind filling me in?

CLARE

James has just been discovered, believed to
be living with the amphibime, but as far as I
know, I'm the only one to recognise him.
(long pause)
But past experience tells me that as soon as
it's known or maybe even before it's known,
he will be dead.

McGREGGOR

You mean he's been killed before.
(Pause)
By an assassin robot.

CLARE

I think Mr. McGreggor, you know as much as I
do.

McGREGGOR

I think you're right. I'll get Henske for
you. Hang on.

The videophone goes blank, then Vivian comes on.

CLARE

Were you party to that?

VIVIAN

Yes, that was my boss.

CLARE

Lucky you. What will you do?

VIVIAN

I'll go straight out there in a bubblecraft.

CLARE

You have to take me with you.

VIVIAN
Clare, there isn't time.

CLARE
Vivian, it might be my last chance to see him.

VIVIAN
(Thinks)
Okay then. Better wear a jump suit.

EXT. - WILDERNESS - DAY

The research craft is returning, the glider-bird is following at a discrete distance, still close to the trees.

PILOT
That bird's following us.

LEADER
Doesn't surprise me. Not quite the prehistoric relic they appear to be.

PILOT
Getting something on my scope.

LEADER
Whereabouts.

PILOT
Not down there. Up here. Very small and very fast.

LEADER
What could it be?

PILOT
I don't know but I don't like it.
The last time I saw one of them, someone got killed.

LEADER
You mean an assassin robot.

The pilot nods his head, not wanting to say it, as if confirmation might give it substance.

PILOT
This is where we started.

The glider-bird dives under the tree canopy. The robot follows.

James is still in the water, hanging under a mangrove root. The bird flies low giving a piercing alarm. The boy dives under the water. The robot shoots the bird in mid-air. It gives a pitiful scream and drops like a stone into the water. James sees it fall, the robot turns its laser gun towards him, then an extraordinary thing happens.

Amphibime appear from everywhere. They have the ability to change colour like chameleons. They all come to the surface with bright yellow ears, the colour of James' hair. The robot is confused. Then they disappear and appear in a confusing pattern. James takes the opportunity to disappear himself.

He dives under the water and under an overhang. He finds a pocket of air and stays there waiting - for what he doesn't know.

The research craft comes down under the canopy, and witnesses the extraordinary scene.

LEADER

You recording this?

PILOT

You betcha.

Then there is an alarm, the robot trains its gun on the craft. The pilot looks in disbelief. The Leader shouts a command knowing it will probably be her last.

LEADER

EJECT.

The craft is hit by the laser cannon under full power, but the capsule containing the technicians is ejected like a rocket, straight up through the trees. It parachutes into the water. The occupants inside are unconscious from the concussion.

James hears and feels the concussion from the exploding ship. He knows he can't stay there. He dives back under the water. All the amphibime have disappeared again. James comes to the surface under the cover of lily pads.

The sun is getting low, storm clouds are forming on the horizon and we can see lightning on the water. The robot hovers like a sentinel, James remains under his lily pad.

Vivian and Clare arrive in the bubblecraft. They see the research ship capsule in the water. Vivian 'lands' above the water to investigate the capsule. Vivian talks to Clare via his helmet.

VIVIAN

They're unconscious, but there are life signs.
Send for a first-aid ship.

Vivian climbs back aboard the bubblecraft

CLARE

Was that done by an assassin robot?

Vivian nods.

CLARE

Have we got any defence?

VIVIAN

Well, I can activate a force shield against its laser, but that could be dangerous in an electrical storm.

(Thinks carefully before making a decision)

I want you to stay with the capsule until the first aid unit arrives.

Clare looks at him suspiciously.

VIVIAN

Think of James. There's no point us both risking our lives.

Clare considers arguing but she knows he's right.

CLARE

Okay, but someone once told me that bravery is just another word for stupidity.

Vivian gives her a rueful look. She gets into the capsule with the unconscious technicians. She goes to the leader who starts to come round.

Vivian flies off to face off the assassin robot.

JAMES P.O.V.

James is still hiding under the lily pad. All the amphibime have disappeared but he knows that they're not far away. Heavy raindrops start falling on the lily pads. The clouds have turned day into semi-night.

Vivian flies down under the canopy and sights the robot. He's wearing a helmet with a visor, and he gives commands to his craft.

VIVIAN
Lock onto target.
(An alarm rings)
Fire missile.

A missile rockets from his ship towards the robot, but the robot shoots it out of the air with its laser, like a frog catching a fly.

Inside Vivian's ship the alarm continues to ring, but he's reluctant to activate his shield. He has another idea.

VIVIAN
Fire laser.

The bubblecraft fires its own laser at the robot which automatically activates its own force shield to protect itself.

VIVIAN
Continuous fire.

The laser from his cannon literally boils off the robot's shield. Then there's a deafening crack. Vivian's ship lurches in the air.

The robot is suspended by a lightning bolt, then it explodes. Vivian's ship rights itself and there is a shower of metal and glass into the water below.

James has observed the strange duel but remains hidden. Vivian does a quick search, sees the dead bird floating in the water but nothing else, he decides to go back for Clare. From James's P.O.V. we see the ship disappear.

Vivian flies back to the capsule where the first-aid ship hovers alongside. It's raining cats and dogs. Clare climbs aboard Vivian's craft.

JAMES' P.O.V.

James is trying to pull his pet bird out of the water, in the pouring rain. He finally gives up the effort and collapses in tears, his head over his knees.

This is how Vivian and Clare find him. They have walked in from the shoreline. Clare approaches him, unsure if he will recognise her.

CLARE

James.

He turns around, unsure at what he sees, but the pain in his face betrays his feelings. Clare squats down beside him and they embrace.
After a time she talks to him.

CLARE

Come on James, we'll take you home.

James looks at her as if the word has lost it's meaning.

JAMES

Home?

But he stands anyway, the three of them walk back to the ship. We see an amphibime peering out from under a lily pad, but otherwise there is only a sense of desolation accentuated by the relentless rain.

INT. - MCGREGGOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Vivian and Clare are in McGreggor's office who is finally able to explain the case.

VIVIAN

You'd put a trace on the assassin robot?

MCGREGGOR

Naturally.

VIVIAN

And?

MCGREGGOR

It sent itself.

Vivian waits for Ross to explain himself.

McGREGGOR

You did well Viv. Better than you thought. Everything on this planet is completely automated. So well in fact, that if we all disappeared the planet's robotics would run perfectly well without us. We've become very lazy - anything we can designate to a machine we have. We only keep the most elitist tasks for ourselves, like dealing with the genome crisis for instance.

(nods to Clare)

In all your investigations Viv, there was never any cause to be found. The problem always ended with the robotics. So I did some investigations of my own - checked the logic from beginning to end, checked all self-maintaining systems, and I found something very curious.

(pause)

There's a logic that deals with the eradication of pests, biased to protect the planet. Now the difference between the machine's logic and our human logic was that it perceived us humans as the pest. And when we brought James into the picture, then it took overt action. Up until then it was willing to let nature take its course.

VIVIAN

Why didn't you tell us?

McGREGGOR

To tell you the truth, I didn't know. Not until I took over the investigation myself.

Vivian can't hide his surprise.

McGREGGOR

I didn't tell you Viv, because you had put yourself in danger.

Not only that, but Clare as well.

So I took you off it.

Anyway I couldn't prove my hypothesis until the robotics forced its hand once more, which it did.

CLARE

You knew all the time what we'd done with James?

McGREGGOR

No, not all the time. But it wasn't hard to figure out, once I'd checked out why Vivian was so interested in an assassin robot attack on the amphibime.

CLARE

So what happens now?

McGREGGOR

Oh I think a number of things will happen right now, not the least that we won't be so complacent and lazy.

CLARE

I mean with James?

McGREGGOR

Well I've taken your request to send him back to 20th Century Earth, to the Council of Seven. And they'll have a hearing for you and Viv at their next convening. Believe me that's a rare honour. So good luck.

INT. - COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT

Clare and Vivian sit at the big ring shaped table.

The Council convenes with the Councillor's images appearing one at a time as they always do.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Meeting of the Council for Plethora. Who is present?

One by one the Councillors appear left to right all answering with the same words: I YOUR WORSHIP.

1ST COUNCILLOR

And who is present at the Council's pleasure?

Clare and Vivian stand.

CLARE

I, Clare Robertson your worship.

VIVIAN

And I, Vivian Henske your Worship.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Who amongst you will be spokesperson?

CLARE

I will your Worship.

1ST COUNCILLOR

State your case.

CLARE

Your Worship, as you know James Adamson was brought from 20th Century Earth as part of the late Professor Clark's Project to fight the Plethora virus. Well considering everything that's happened: the Professor's death, the three attempts made on the boy's life and his experience in the Wilderness; we believe an attempt should be made to send him back.

Clare and Vivian stand. Clare waits patiently, not sure what to expect.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Do you really believe that's for the boy's benefit?

Despite the circumstances and the unchallengeable authority of her questioner, Clare betrays the barest signs of irritation, but she doesn't get emotional.

CLARE

With all respect your Worship, the boy was not a volunteer - he was kidnapped in front of his father. I think the boy himself should be allowed to decide. Anything less than that would be immoral.

Vivian looks at her but his expression is neutral, empathetic. The Councillor doesn't react in any way visibly.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Your concerns for the boy are admirable, and are noted. You're aware that it is very hazardous and perhaps untenable?

CLARE

Yes your worship.

1ST COUNCILLOR

Has the boy been made fully aware of the risks involved?

CLARE

Yes your Worship.

1ST COUNCILLOR

The Council has already voted. Your request to send the boy back is affirmed. Your request to adjoin him is also affirmed. The Council is declared closed.

All the images disappear in the reverse order they arrived, so in the end only Vivian and Clare remain.

EXT. - CAMPSITE BY RIVER - NIGHT (1991)

It is the campsite where James originally disappeared. A light appears over the water like a star that grows in magnitude.

As in the original scene a light comes out across the water like a path, and after a time a shape can be seen walking on it towards the shore.

James is wearing the clothes that he had when he was kidnapped,

his hair has been cut but it is still sun bleached blonde. He's physically and psychologically a different person.

EXT. - DESERTED COUNTRY ROADWAY - NIGHT

James walks along a track and headlights appear from behind. James turns around to face them and the driver stops. He tentatively winds the window down to talk to the boy. James notices the modern car which he's never seen before and it brings a look of apprehension.

DRIVER
(Courteous but wary)
You live round here?

JAMES
Use to.

DRIVER
Whereabouts?

JAMES
You know Red Bank?

DRIVER
Yeah sure, jump in.

He leans across and opens the door. James gets in and the driver resumes his journey.

DRIVER

You're a bit young to be out on your own aren't you?

James sort of nods and gives a bit of a chuckle. The driver looks him over but there is nothing about the boy that's threatening - quite the opposite in fact.

DRIVER

Don't get many people up here. You're lucky to get a lift.

JAMES

Yes, I know.

They travel in silence awhile, but James is worried and his need to know becomes too great.

JAMES

Could you tell me what the date is?

DRIVER

Yeah it's the 15th of January.

JAMES

What year?

The driver looks at him with suspicion.

DRIVER

You from another planet or something?

JAMES

Something like that.

DRIVER

1991.

James tries not to show his surprise and concern.

JAMES

Thanks.

They travel on in silence - whatever camaraderie might have been possible has been broken.

EXT. - ADAMSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Externally the house has changed little, except a hedge against the fence and a new letter box.

The car pulls up and James gets out, he looks around.

DRIVER

This the place?

JAMES

Yeah, this is the place. Thanks.

The car drives off. James walks through the gate and closes it slowly and carefully as if it's an old friend.

He walks up to the door and knocks. After a short period a light comes on, someone comes to the door and it opens.

James is shocked at his father's age. Colin's hair is white and his face lined. He's also shorter in height as a result of premature arthritis. He looks worse than he really is because he's been asleep. He recognises James immediately but he's initially suspicious, not trusting his own mind.

COLIN

James? Is it possible?

James expression instantly changes from chagrin to elation.

JAMES

Yes Dad, it's me.

Tears come to the old man's eyes, and James also gets emotional. They embrace then Colin takes him in and closes the door.

Inside James looks at all the changes internally - the new T.V. and video, stereo systems, even the phone. Furniture, wall and floor coverings have all been changed.

COLIN

Sit down son, I'll put the kettle on.

Colin fills the same kettle full of water at the same sink but puts it on a modern gas stove.

COLIN

Just a minute, I have to make a phone call.

He goes to the phone on a wall and rings by push button.

COLIN

Hello Jane, sorry it's late. Could you put Kevin on please? No, no there's nothing wrong. Thanks.

(Long pause)

Hello Kevin, could you come over? Yeah straightaway, but you'll have to leave Jane and the kids. Tell her you'll need to stay overnight. No I can't explain, but tell her not to worry. Tell her you'll be able to explain everything later. Thanks son. See you in about half an hour.

EXT. - ADAMSON HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

A car pulls up and Kevin gets out, now in his forties. He's still athletic and he carries his age well, but otherwise he's unrecognisable.

There's an outdoor light on at the doorway, he goes and rings the bell.

The door is opened and he goes in. The light goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - ADAMSON HOUSE - MORNING.

Bright morning sun, birds singing - scene of urban normality.

INT. - ADAMSON HOUSE - DAY

Colin, James and Kevin are sitting around the kitchen table. Breakfast dishes and foodstuffs are still apparent - Colin is having one of his bottomless cups of tea.

JAMES

I've only got 24 hrs Dad.

COLIN

Do you have to?

JAMES

No, I don't. But I don't belong here anymore. I'm a twelve year old kid who should be 40.

KEVIN

What if you don't show up?

JAMES

Then I'm stuck here.

KEVIN

You sound pretty certain about going then.

JAMES

Yes I am. But I didn't know till now.

Kevin nods in understanding. Colin's face is neutral, more curious than perplexed.

JAMES

It's not that I didn't want to come back.
In fact that's all I wanted to do.
It's just that now I'm here, I know I don't belong.

KEVIN

Why don't we spend the day up there?

COLIN

(face lights up)
That's the best idea I've heard all morning.
You'd better ring Jane and let her know.

EXT. - CAMP SITE BY RIVER - DAY

Colin sits on the bank fishing. Kevin's car is nearby. Both the boys are sitting with their father. Kevin also has a rod, but James just sits with his hands around his knees. There is an air of quiet contentment. Colin is a man who's finally found peace with the world.

EXT. - CAMP SITE BY RIVER - LATER

The sun is red and low over the water. Colin is still fishing but Kevin and James have started collecting wood to make a fire.

EXT. - CAMP SITE BY RIVER - NIGHT

They are all sitting around the fire with mugs in their hands. James speaks to his father.

JAMES

You know Dad, you could come back with me.
Your arthritis could be cured and you could live to a much later age.

Colin allows a small chuckle; he tips the dregs of his cup on the fire.

COLIN

No Son, when a man gets to my age he thinks more and more about his home, and where he came from. Because ultimately that's where he wants to die. Do you really think it would make me happier to live longer in another life and miss out on all this?

James feels ashamed at his insensitivity, but Colin puts his arm around the boy and gives him a squeeze.

FATHER

Don't be sad Son. One's children are not one's to keep. You are a man in a child's body; and you are right: you don't belong here. But I'm very proud of you. Your destiny is very special. I'm glad you came back son. You've allowed an old man to die in peace. Just seeing you has made my whole life worthwhile.

EXT. - CAMP SITE BY RIVER - LATER

The coals have died, everyone is lost in their own thoughts. James suddenly becomes alert.

JAMES

It's coming, I can feel it.

They all stand and look out across the water as the light appears exactly like it did the first time. They stand and watch as the path of light comes to the shore. James turns to his family.

JAMES

Don't say anything, please.

They both embrace him in silence then he leaves them without looking back. They watch him disappear, then the light gets brighter momentarily before flashing off to obscurity.

They stand in silence for some time, then relax.

KEVIN

(Still looking at the sky)
Well Dad, he's gone for good this time.

COLIN

Yes son, but this time I don't mind.

Kevin puts his arm across Colin's shoulder and they both walk back to the car.

FADE OUT.