

DELTA V

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EXT. ALIEN PLANET - DAY

Quiet.

A colorful, insect-like animal, something like a BUTTERFLY, rests on the stem of a plant. Its wings beat slowly.

Farther away: CLIFFS, a GORGE, dense FOLIAGE tapering off into haze. A sky holding THREE MOONS shades toward pink with the approach of sunset.

And farther still: a THIN LINE OF FIRE burns across the sky.

INT. SPACE FREIGHTER - SAME TIME

ALARMS HOWL--

JENNY (30) slumps unconscious in the pilot's chair, head lolling to one side, blood running down her face.

STATUS AND CONTROL DISPLAYS float in the space around her, showing a mad descent, loss of atmosphere, systems failing.

LEIGH (O.S.)

Jenny!

One of the displays shows LEIGH (30) a young woman on another ship.

LEIGH

Jenny!!

In the corner of another data display is a small, looping VIDEO CLIP of Jenny and Leigh. They hug, kiss and grin for the camera, cheek to cheek. The loop repeats.

The view outside begins shading from space-black to indigo.

EXT. SPACE FREIGHTER - SAME TIME

The ship is broken, riddled with holes, leaving a hellish trail of plasma as it tears through the upper atmosphere.

CLOSER ON FLIER - Jenny is visible inside a fighter-size pilot craft docked to the freighter. The whole structure is battered.

INT. SPACE FREIGHTER - CONTINUING

Jenny's eyes open. Groggy, she lifts her head, tries to make sense of the chaos. She grabs manual controls and prepares to launch away from the freighter.

LEIGH

Jenny, for God's sake take off!

JENNY

Launching.

Jenny thumbs a trigger.

EXT. SPACE FREIGHTER - SAME TIME

The flier's engines fire and it leaps forward, but the damage forces it to torque sideways. With a loud CLANG it stops dead, engines screaming, jammed in the docking mechanism.

INT. SPACE FREIGHTER - CONTINUING

Jenny is thrown forward by the sudden stop. She looks around, dazed, trying to figure out what happened.

EXT. SPACE FREIGHTER - CONTINUING

The ship has dropped to about thirty thousand feet. The glowing reentry trail is gone, but now fire is spreading over the hull.

An EXPLOSION tears the freighter in half.

A thunderhead of FLAMES expands toward the flier.

INT. SECOND FREIGHTER - SAME TIME

Leigh sees the explosion on a data display. She rushes to a view port, and looks down on the planet.

Many miles below, the explosion is a tiny point of fire at the end of a smoky trail. Leigh claws at the port.

LEIGH

Punch out!

INT. SPACE FREIGHTER - SAME TIME

Jenny sees the advancing fireball on her screens.

JENNY

I'm sorry, Leigh.

LEIGH
Punch out, I'll find you!

JENNY
I'm gonna blow the engines.

LEIGH
Jenny, don't leave me!

JENNY
I DON'T WANNA BURN!

Jenny cuts off the feed from Leigh's ship, wiping away tears. The display showing Leigh winks out.

Jenny looks over the floating displays around her.

- Engine status: seconds from an explosive overload.
- The planet surface: getting closer.
- The ball of fire: nearly upon her.
- And her and Leigh, hugging and kissing, forever.

A sudden mix of fear and resolve on her face, Jenny reaches overhead with both hands and yanks down the ejection lever, just as the view ports on all sides are blocked by flames.

EJECTION ROCKETS FIRE, THE SEAT SURGES UPWARD.

EXT. SPACE FREIGHTER - CONTINUOUS

Jenny's ejection seat emerges from the fireball, trailing flames.

The freighter continues to fall.

On a different trajectory, Jenny's ejection seat tumbles toward the surface.

EXT. ALIEN PLANET - LATER

Quiet.

CLIFF - A SHADOW suggesting a passing condor drifts by.

FOREST CANOPY - the shadow passes again, larger. It's the shadow of a PARAGLIDER, Jenny's limp form hanging below it.

REVERSE ANGLE - looking up through leaves and sunrays toward a dappled sky, the paraglider drifts by behind the trees.

EXT. FOREST/LANDING SPOT - CONTINUING

CLOSE ON TREE TRUNK - tiny, JEWEL-LIKE INSECTS move about the surface in a patch of sunlight. Odd bird songs echo.

A shadow blocks the sun.

NOISE of something crashing through the branches above; insects scatter, taking flight.

Jenny's charred legs drop into the frame, swinging slowly.

She hangs limp as a puppet, about 15 feet above the ground.

Her face and hands are charred meat. Much of her flight suit is burned away. Most of her safety harness remains intact.

Slowly, Jenny opens her eyes to slits. She takes one look around, and closes them.

INT. LEIGH'S FLIER - CONTINUING

Leigh is flying toward the freighter's crash site, searching the trees. She fiddles with a scanner, wiping away tears.

EXT. FOREST/LANDING SPOT - LATER

One of the alien butterflies lands on Jenny's cheek. She opens her eyes, stares at it. It moves down, exploring the burned flesh.

Another butterfly lands on Jenny's hand. Then another, on her leg. And then more.

EXT. FOREST/LANDING SPOT - NIGHT

Hanging in the tree, Jenny is enveloped in butterflies, so many that her form is barely visible. Glimmers of light appear under their wings, which are all beating with the same pulse-like rhythm.

EXT. FOREST/LANDING SPOT - MORNING

The butterflies are leaving.

CLOSE ON JENNY'S FACE - The last of the butterflies departs, revealing a closed eye. It opens. The cornea has a greenish tint, the iris sparkles with green flecks.

WIDER - Jenny's flight suit is gone, and her body has been remade: her skin is greenish, entirely free of burns. Her hair is a dusting of emerald down.

She fumbles with the release on her harness. It snaps open, and she drops out of the webbing.

She lands on soft, mossy ground, tumbling forward.

Jenny stands. The pattern of her harness is visible as bands of normal, pink skin.

As if dreaming, she touches her legs, arms, waist, trying to make sense of it. She feels something odd, and reaches around behind her.

Her hand gropes up from the small of her back, to the middle, higher, reaching for her shoulder blades. And there hang two veined, sack-like appendages. Her hand jerks away.

EXT. FOREST/CRASH SITE - LATER

Leigh walks through a sea of wreckage and burned vegetation. She finds Jenny's flier, still attached to a house-size piece of the freighter.

She climbs up to the missing escape hatch, sees the pilot chair is gone. She straightens, scans the forest.

LEIGH
JENNYYYYYY!

EXT. FOREST/ORCHARD - LATER

Jenny crouches in a patch of sun, hugging her knees, trembling. Her face is wet with tears. She looks around helplessly.

She catches a smell and sniffs. Standing, she follows her nose to a nearby tree. She picks a piece of fruit, smells it... and nearly swoons. She takes a huge bite.

She devours the fruit, and immediately starts eating another.

On her back, greenish blood begins flowing into the sacks hanging behind her shoulders.

EXT. FOREST/LANDING SPOT - SUNSET

Leigh stares up at Jenny's harness, still hanging in the tree. The late sunlight gilds the webbing. She calls out again, her voice a raspy croak.

LEIGH
Jennyyyyyyy!

Exhausted, she walks away.

EXT. FORREST/CLEARING - CONTINUING

Leigh's flier rests nearby.

She's approaching the open hatch when a shadow blocks the sun. There's a sudden gust of wind. She turns.

Jenny stands behind her with the setting sun at her back, naked, haloed in green-gold.

Leigh takes a step back. She can barely make out Jenny's face in the glare, but keeps staring. Recognition sinks in.

Jenny flexes the muscles in her shoulders, and two pairs of GLITTERING RED/GREEN WINGS spread out behind her, insect-like and iridescent. Leigh gapes. Jenny grins.

Leigh steps toward her, touches her face. They embrace, and Jenny folds her wings over them both.

UNDER HER WINGS - In the red/green light, Leigh and Jenny kiss. Jenny pulls Leigh close. She doesn't notice the horror on Leigh's face.

Leigh holds her cheek against Jenny's neck, more afraid than relieved. She looks at Jenny's shoulder: the skin is stippled with tiny green scales. She looks away, squeezes Jenny tight and begins to cry.

Jenny just hugs her and smiles.

EXT. FOREST/CLEARING - DAY

The SCREAM OF ENGINES--

Jenny's flier settles to the ground. HULL PATCHES and other REPAIRS reflect weeks of work.

Jenny watches from a distance, hugging herself, crying. She wears a new flight suit, cut to accommodate her wings. They've grown.

The scales on her body and face are more prominent now, the color a deep green.

The engines wind down. Leigh steps out. Her look is an ultimatum.

Jenny's eyes plead with her.

Unmoved, Leigh turns away, boards her own flier. The engines wind up.

As Jenny watches, Leigh's flier rises, speeds away.

The forest gets very quiet.

Jenny approaches her flier. She looks it over, her eyes pausing on the open door. A moment later she turns away.

She peels off the flight suit. It drops to the ground.

She draws a breath, spreads her wings and takes to the air.

EXT. FORREST/ORCHARD - CONTINUING

Jenny drops lightly to the ground near the fruit tree. Folded, her wings now reach to her knees. She picks a piece and begins eating.

More blood flows into her wings.

Jenny feels it. Taking a deep breath, she extends her wings fully: a glorious sensation.

She's about to pick another piece of fruit when a shadow blocks the sun. There's a sudden gust of wind. She spins around.

Jenny stares, shocked, at something off screen. Reflected in her emerald eyes: the suggestion of a winged human shape.

Jenny slowly extends a hand, reaching. She smiles, steps forward, out of frame.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END