

THE NINTH CIRCLE
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FADE IN:

STOCK ART:

Illustration by Gustave Doré of Dante speaking to traitors in ice.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The deepest level of Hell is not a pit of fire but a frozen world where there is no warmth and no hope.

DISSOLVE TO:

Illustration by Doré of Satan trapped in ice.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This is the Ninth Circle of Hell.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

At outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona, looking toward desert, rivulets of heat rise from a road pavement.

EXT. CITYSCAPE - DAY

Aerial view of Phoenix, Arizona.

SUPER: Phoenix, Arizona

EXT. SUBURB OF PHOENIX - DAY

Street view of two-story home.

INT. HOME KITCHEN - DAY

A FATHER and a physician MOTHER, both in their late 30s and their six-year-old daughter EMMA, the parents dressed for work and the daughter for school, are eating breakfast at a small table in a kitchen nook. They all have thin builds.

They are watching on TV a weather REPORTER standing before a chart of weekdays, beginning with Monday, showing temperatures ranging from 115 to 118 across the board.

CONTINUED

REPORTER

It's only May and we are already
breaking heat records.

The father clicks off the TV set with his remote.

FATHER

The heat. It's just another reason
we should ...

MOTHER

(cutting him off)

We can talk about that later.

Emma looks up from her meal at her mother.

EXT. CURB AT SCHOOL - DAY

Emma exits her mother's car.

MOTHER

(inside car)

Remember to stay out of the sun.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

View of front of hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

The mother's car pulls into the hospital parking lot.

INT. HOSPITAL ER - DAY

The mother, in a doctor's white coat, approaches a bed,
with portable screens on each side. In the bed is a gaunt
HOMELESS MAN/DR. PENNY, whose face is blistered with a
severe sunburn. He has a graying goatee. The nurse
addresses the doctor.

NURSE

The police found him staggering on
the street.

The man becomes delirious and flays about.

CONTINUED

HOMELESS MAN/DR. PENNY

Hell is coming. Hell is coming.
I've seen Hell. Hell is coming.

The nurse puts one hand on one of his moving arms and another on his shoulder.

NURSE

Please, sir. It's okay. You are safe here. Let me give you some water.

The man calms down. The nurse hands him a cup of water, which he drinks through a straw for a couple of seconds and then hands the cup back to the nurse. The nurse puts the cup down on a tray.

HOMELESS MAN/DR. PENNY

I . . I used to be somebody.

MOTHER

Who was that?

HOMELESS MAN/DR. PENNY

I . . I don't remember.

EXT. FAMILY'S HOME - NIGHT

Street view of family's home, dimly lit by a streetlamp, with only the porch light on.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is sleeping in bed. A closeup shows her eyelids moving in REM sleep.

INT. OUTPOST BUILDING HALLWAY (DREAM)

The daughter's POV: A close view of her unlocking a door with a key on a ring and opening the door.

INT. OUTPOST CORE ROOM

Daughter's POV: A round, dimly-lit cavernous chamber. She approaches a railing which surrounds a glass-covered deep pit at the bottom of which is a pool of flames.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

Street view of the family home.

INT. HOME KITCHEN - DAY

The father, mother, and daughter are again eating breakfast at the table, but the daughter is still in pajamas.

EMMA

I went to Hell last night.

MOTHER

What naughty thing have you done now?

The girl says nothing but takes a bite of scrambled eggs.

FATHER

Who did you see in Hell?

EMMA

Nobody. Just Hell.

MOTHER

Now get ready for school. You're going to be late. And then you'll have hell to pay.

The daughter gets up and walks away from the table and goes up the stairs. The father looks at the mother.

FATHER

A six-year-old saying she went to Hell. Is that normal?

MOTHER

Maybe it's just the heat. It's driving everybody crazy.

(pauses)

But there was a man in the ER who said the same thing. He went to Hell.

EXT. PHOENIX STREET - DAY

An outdoor digital billboard shows a temperature of 118 degrees.

EXT. PHOENIX STREET SIDEWALK - DAY

Social media video: The EGG MAN stands on the sidewalk holding an egg in one hand.

EGG MAN

Can you fry an egg on the sidewalk
in Phoenix? Let's see.

He bends down next to a frying pan on the sidewalk.

EGG MAN

It's 4:30 p.m. and 118 degrees.
I let this greased pan sit out
here for 15 minutes so it should
be good and hot.

He cracks the egg on the edge of the pan and splits it open over the pan. The egg starts to fry.

EGG MAN

Well lookee there.

EXT. CITYSCAPE - DAY, NIGHT

Aerial view of Phoenix, Arizona. Time-lapse film of city passing from day to night.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Street view of family's home, dimly lit by a streetlamp, with only the porch light on.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is sleeping in bed, her eyelids moving in REM sleep.

EXT. OUTPOST ROOF DECK - NIGHT - DREAM

Emma's POV.: She approaches a railing on a dimly lit roof deck and sees a night sky devoid of stars. She looks down from the three-story building to see widely scattered small weedy plants, covered with frost, barely illuminated by light from the building.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

Street view of the family home.

INT. HOME KITCHEN - DAY

The father and Emma are sitting at the table as the mother prepares breakfast at the stove and kitchen counter.

EMMA

What happened last night?

MOTHER

Last night? Nothing, I think.

EMMA

The stars went away. Where did the stars go?

MOTHER

I bet they'll come back tonight.

FATHER

Another weird dream. Well, that's better than the going-to-Hell dream.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A view of front of hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The mother, in a doctor's white coat, stands at the end of the bed, with portable screens on each side, which has a new patient. She turns around to face a passing nurse, the one who had previously attended to the homeless patient.

MOTHER

Nurse.

The nurse stops and turns toward her.

MOTHER

Did they admit the homeless man with the burns?

CONTINUED

NURSE

No, I think they treated him and sent him home.

MOTHER

What home?

NURSE

(as she turns and walks away)
I don't know. Ask social services.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Street view of family's home, with a light on in a second-floor bedroom.

INT. HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the lighted hallway, the mother, in summer pajamas, is looking at the thermostat on the wall.

MOTHER

We have it set at 80. Do you think we could raise it to 82?

The father, wearing just the shorts portion of summer PJs, appears in the bedroom doorway in the hall.

FATHER

Why would you want to do that?

MOTHER

They say if we don't cut back on electricity we could have rolling blackouts.

FATHER

Emma is right. Arizona is where you find Hell.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is sleeping in bed.

INT. OUTPOST CORE ROOM - DREAM

Emma's POV: She again approaches the railing which surrounds the deep pit but at the bottom, instead of flames, there is only an iron grating with blackness beneath it.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

Street view of the family home.

INT. HOME KITCHEN - DAY

The father, mother, and Emma are at the table eating breakfast.

EMMA

I have good news.

FATHER

Oh, I gotta hear this.

EMMA

Hell has gone away.

MOTHER

How do you know Hell has gone away?

EMMA

The fire went out.

MOTHER

(addressing husband)

See, Emma told us there is no more more Hell in Arizona. It's still a good place to live.

FATHER

So, what happened to the people in Hell? Did God let them go to heaven?

EMMA

You're being silly, daddy.

Emma gets up and leaves the room.

CONTINUED

FATHER

(to mother)

Well, I thought it was a legitimate question. If I get to heaven, I don't want to see Hitler there. God must have some standards.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

A school playground, featuring slides, swings and climbing bars, stands empty. Emma can be seen looking through a window of the school building adjoining the playground. A bird lands on the climbing bars, then falls to the ground.
CU: Dead bird.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

CU: Emma looking out the school window.

FEMALE TEACHER (O.S.)

Emma, get back to your seat.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Street view of family's home, with a light on in a second-floor bedroom.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The light is on. The mother is sitting on the bed, the father pacing around the room.

FATHER

They want me in San Jose. A real job, not coding gig work.

MOTHER

And what, I give up the best paying job in this family? And our daughter gives up her school and friends?

FATHER

You've seen the news and the heat. It's only going to get worse.

CONTINUED

MOTHER

We already have a nice comfortable house here.

FATHER

What if they start rationing water? How nice and comfortable will it be then? We need to sell now before the bottom falls out.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the darkened room, the daughter is lying in bed, hearing the muffled argument in her parents' room. She is distressed.

BACK TO PARENT'S BEDROOM

In the darkened room, as viewed from the ceiling, the parents in bed have their backs to each other, each hovering near their edge of the bed.

BACK TO CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is asleep, face up, in REM mode.

INT. SLEEP CHAMBER IN MACHINE ROOM - DREAM

Emma's POV: A glass shield is inches from her face. Through the glass she can see but not hear her parents talking. They are wearing dull beige clothing. She raises her hands to push against the glass. There is an IV attached to her left hand. The mother is facing her dad.

MOTHER

(muted)

Damn you. She is all we had.

Her father turns toward Emma and mouths words.

FATHER

(muted)

Goodbye, honey.

The father raises his hand to push something below her vision. She is pushed into darkness.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

Street view of the family home.

INT. HOME KITCHEN - DAY

The mother brings a plate of breakfast food to the father but drops it down with a clunk. She then turns toward the staircase and looks up.

MOTHER

Emma, hurry up. Breakfast is ready.

There is no response.

MOTHER

Emma?

Still no response.

FATHER

Do you want me to go up?

MOTHER

No, I'll do it.

She walks toward the staircase. The father stands up.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sullen daughter is sitting at the foot of her bed, clutching a life-like doll. Her mother comes in.

MOTHER

Is something the matter, honey?

Emma stands up with the doll and goes to a dresser.

EMMA

This is what you did to me.

She opens a dresser drawer, puts the doll inside, then slams the dresser door. The father is now in the room. The daughter turns toward him.

EMMA

(shouting)

That is what you did to me.

CONTINUED

The daughter starts to cry and the mother rushes to comfort her, putting her arms around Emma.

MOTHER

No, no, honey. We would never do that to you.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A view of front of hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL MOTHER'S OFFICE - DAY

The mother, in her doctor's white coat, standing, is on her smart phone.

MOTHER

Just a personal favor. I'll only take a couple minutes of your time.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

A sign on the wall says Mental Health Services 24A.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

In a small office, the MOTHER sits opposite THERAPIST NO. 1, a woman in her mid-forties, also in a white coat.

THERAPIST NO. 1

That does sound disturbing. I can understand your concern but child psychology isn't my specialty. Let me set you up with a referral. You will get an e-mail.

MOTHER

How long before we can see someone?

THERAPIST NO. 1

About two or three weeks.

MOTHER

Two or three weeks?

CONTINUED

THERAPIST NO. 1

You sound surprised.

MOTHER

Uh. That will be fine.

The mother gets up from her seat and when she reaches the door, turns around and faces the therapist.

MOTHER

And thank you.

THERAPIST NO. 1

You're welcome.

After the mother leaves, the therapist gets on her smart phone.

THERAPIST NO. 1

The group needs to meet. Something is going on.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

Therapist No. 1 is seated at a table in a far corner of the cafeteria with three colleagues, THERAPIST NO. 2, a woman in her forties, THERAPIST NO. 3, a woman in her fifties, and THERAPIST NO. 4, a male in his forties. They all have cups of coffee.

Therapist No. 1 quickly surveys the room, which has only a few occupants at tables several feet from them.

THERAPIST NO. 1

Good, they're finished with the lunch crowd. But let's not talk too loud.

THERAPIST NO. 2

So, what's the big secret?

THERAPIST NO. 1

This heat wave has taken a strange turn. I have already run across three cases of people saying they've been to Hell.

CONTINUED

THERAPIST NO. 1 (CONT.)

Another two said the stars disappeared in their dreams, and a child claimed her parents locked her in a dresser drawer.

THERAPIST NO. 2

Yeah, two of my patients dreamed of seeing Hell.

THERAPIST NO. 3

I had a patient say he thought he was in a coffin, being buried alive. Does that count?

Therapist No. 1 looks at Therapist No. 4, who is drinking coffee, for feedback.

THERAPIST NO. 4

(putting cup down from mouth)

I deal mostly with people who are high most of the time. They don't remember a lot.

THERAPIST NO. 2

Maybe it's some kind of mass hysteria.

THERAPIST NO. 4

Yeah. What do they call it now, social contagion?

THERAPIST NO. 3

Maybe it's a religious thing. These days, the bible thumpers are really pushing the end is near message.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

View of a small Christian church with a steeple and cross.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

An evangelical PREACHER stands at a podium before a congregation of fifty people. An open Bible sits on the podium stand.

CONTINUED

PREACHER

Some among you have told me you
have seen Hell. Some among you
have told me you have seen a
night without stars.

He looks down at the Bible, his right index finger pointing
at a passage.

PREACHER

Mark thirteen twenty-four. The
stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be
shaken.

He closes the Bible and lifts it up with his left hand.

PREACHER

Can there be any doubt this is
a time of great tribulation?
Can there be any doubt this is
a time to repent?

CONGREGATION (O.S)

(different voices)

Amen. Amen. Praise the Lord. Amen.

EXT. DESERT - DAY TO NIGHT

On the outskirts of Phoenix, looking toward the desert,
rivulets of heat rise from a road pavement. In time-lapse
film, as night approaches, all the desert plants shrivel
up, leaving only small frost-covered weedy plants. As that
image darkens, the camera turns right to show a dimly lit
three-story building with a greenhouse attached, above
which is the starless night.

On the roof deck is the distant standing figure of the
father, in arctic garb, looking through a reflector
telescope.

EXT. OUTPOST ROOF DECK - NIGHT

As the father looks through the telescope, his wife,
wearing a heavy off-white coat, approaches him.

CONTINUED

MOTHER

What are you looking for?

FATHER

A new star, a new galaxy. Anything to tell us things might turn around.

MOTHER

It doesn't matter. It's a million years away. Come back inside.

INT. OUTPOST FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is sparse, with a few cabinets, a portable refrigerator, a single-basin sink, a hot plate, a microwave oven, and a small round table with three chairs.

Emma enters. She places one of the chairs next to a wall, then climbs on the chair and retrieves a key on a ring hanging from a nail high on the wall.

INT. OUTPOST BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma approaches a door on which is a sign stating Authorized Personnel Only. She unlocks and opens the door.

INT. OUTPOST CORE ROOM - NIGHT

Emma, at the railing, looks down at the pool of flames.

EXT. OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY

A small dull red sun is in a dark gray sky. The three-story building and the surrounding sparse landscape are dimly illuminated.

INT. OUTPOST BUILDING, EMMA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Emma is seated in a chair in her bedroom, looking through a tattered child's book that shows children playing under an Earth-like yellow sun. Her father enters the room.

EMMA

The yellow sun in the book - When was the sun like that?

CONTINUED

FATHER

A long time ago.

He sits on the bed next to her.

EMMA

What happened?

FATHER

The sun was changing. It was going to turn red and get really big and burn up our planet. But scientists discovered a secret.

The father looks across the room at shelves that hold toys and books, including three puzzle blocks: a large and small cube made of smaller pieces and a pyramid made of smaller pieces. He goes to the shelves and picks up the pyramid block, then sits back on the bed.

FATHER

A long time ago men built a pyramid like this but it was a thousand times bigger than the building we live in.

EMMA

How many people lived there?

FATHER

Nobody lived there. It was just for the coffin of their leader, who was called a pharaoh.

EMMA

Just one person? You're being silly daddy.

FATHER

No, honestly, just one person.

EXT. PYRAMID - DAY

A view of the Great Pyramid of Giza.

CONTINUED

FATHER (V.O.)

The pyramid had secret tunnels to get inside.

INT. PYRAMID - DAY

Two men with lanterns walk through a dark tunnel.

FATHER (V.O.)

One day they discovered a new room inside the pyramid.

The men enter a small room. On the wall are two drawings: one of a scarab beetle pushing a large red sun, and the second of another beetle pushing a small red sun.

FATHER (V.O.)

There were two pictures on a wall, one of a beetle pushing a big red sun, and the other of another beetle pushing a small red sun.

RETURN TO BEDROOM

EMMA

A beetle?

FATHER

Yes, like that little bug we found in the dirt when we were walking outside.

EMMA

You're being silly again, daddy. How can that little thing move the sun?

FATHER

Good question. The scientists wanted to know that too. Whoever drew the pictures knew that the big red sun was coming.

CONTINUED

INT. CERN LAB, SWITZERLAND - DAY

Two scientists examine clipboards while standing next to the Antiproton Decelerator.

FATHER (V.O.)

They wanted to know what little black bug would turn a big sun into a little sun. They had big machines that would help them figure it out. Then they finally found the answer: a little black bug called a micro black hole.

EXT. SPACE

A beetle-like spaceship pushing a large black sphere heads toward the sun.

FATHER (V.O.)

They sent the little black bug to the growing red sun. The bug started eating the sun and made it smaller.

Near the sun, the black sphere separates from the spaceship and the spaceship speeds away. The sphere implodes and starts sucking plasma from the red sun.

RETURN TO BEDROOM

EMMA

So, they fixed everything.

FATHER

Not exactly. The smaller red sun didn't give us much energy.

ILLUSTRATION: Cross-section of Earth, showing nine thin red shafts rising from the outer liquid molten core to the surface of the planet.

FATHER (V.O.)

So, we drew energy from the red-hot core of the earth, a kind of red sun inside the earth.

CONTINUED

BACK TO BEDROOM

FATHER

But life was never the same and people wished they could go back to the old world and the old sun.

EMMA

But that's impossible.

FATHER

Well, not entirely, but that's a story for another time, maybe when you're older.

INT. OUTPOST GREENHOUSE - DAY

Several lights illuminate the greenhouse. The mother, in drab beige-colored garb, collects, in a basket, green pea pods and one egg from a small coop housing two hens. A phone rings and she pulls a small flip phone from a pocket.

INT. OUTPOST CORE ROOM - DAY

The husband is at the railing, talking on his small flip phone. His clothes are also dull beige in color.

FATHER

Where are you?

CUT BACK TO GREENHOUSE

MOTHER

In the greenhouse.

CUT BACK TO CORE ROOM

FATHER

When you got a moment, come to the core room.

INT. OUTPOST FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The mother puts the basket with pea pods and eggs on the table.

INT. OUTPOST CORE ROOM - DAY

The father and mother look down at the fire pit, which now just shows the iron grating.

MOTHER

I thought that was supposed to last forever. What happened to the core?

FATHER

I don't know. I checked with the other stations. It's happening everywhere.

MOTHER

How long will we have energy?

FATHER

I'm not sure. At least we still have the batteries.

MOTHER

Maybe the core fire will come back.

Emma joins them at the railing. The mother turns toward her.

MOTHER

Honey, you're not supposed to be in here.

EXT. OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY

A dull red sun is seen against a profile of the building.

INT. OUTPOST GREENHOUSE - DAY

The mother and father are in the greenhouse, behind a glass door that opens to a foyer at the front of the building. She refuses to turn toward him as she tends to the plants.

FATHER

It's time to let Emma go. This is her one chance at happiness.

MOTHER

What if she doesn't want to go?

CONTINUED

FATHER

We'll be there for her.

MOTHER

We?

FATHER

You know what I mean. The Machine will take care of it.

INT. FOYER NEXT TO GREENHOUSE - DAY

Emma spots her parents talking through the glass greenhouse door, then walks away.

CUT BACK TO GREENHOUSE

The mother finally turns to face the father.

MOTHER

We would have a lot more time if we pulled the plug on the Machine. That thing uses a lot of energy.

FATHER

I can't believe you would say that. Some of those people are your friends, my friends.

EXT. OUTPOST BUILDING - NIGHT TO DAY

Time-lapse film of black sky turning gray as dull red sun rises in the sky.

INT. OUTPOST FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The family is at the table. The mother and father have glasses of water and a bowl of an oatmeal-like cereal. The daughter has a glass of water, the "oatmeal" plus a small dish on which is one scrambled egg. The father turns to Emma.

FATHER

How would you like to go on a little trip?

CONTINUED

EMMA

A trip? Where to?

FATHER

To a place where you can play with friends and there is sunshine.

EMMA

Sunshine? You mean like the sunshine in the book?

FATHER

Yes honey, like the sunshine in the book. The book we talked about.

He places a pill next to Emma's glass of water.

FATHER

Here, we have an extra vitamin for you.

INT. OUTPOST BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

The father, accompanied by the mother, carries a drowsy Emma in his arms.

EMMA

Daddy, I feel sleepy.

They reach a door marked Prep Room.

INT. PREP ROOM - DAY

The father lays Emma on a medical exam table, in a room with cabinets, counters and one small sink with a faucet. The mother takes off Emma's shoes.

INT. OUTPOST BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

The father and mother exit the Prep Room. The father is again carrying the drowsy Emma, who is now wearing a short-sleeved hospital gown and has an IV drip attachment on her left hand. Her head is shaved, and her feet are bare.

INT. OUTPOST MACHINE ROOM - DAY

The family enters a room the length of a football field. Half of it is occupied by rows of 20-foot-high computer towers, the other half by black coffin-like boxes of various sizes, connected by cords to the towers. The family approaches one of the smaller boxes.

The father hands off Emma to the mother. He then opens the end of the box and pulls out a tray with a glass top and lid and a cushioned pad on the bottom, and an IV-type tube extending down one side. On the opposite side is a small numeric keypad, at hand-level of whoever is occupying the unit. At the head end of the tray is a cap with wires attached.

The father flips open the glass lid. He takes the daughter from the mother and lays her on the pad and slips the cap on her head.

FATHER

Here is your thinking cap.

He connects the tube to the IV drip attachment.

EMMA

(weakly)

What is going on?

The father closes the glass lid. Emma raises her hands to push against the glass. The mother faces the father.

MOTHER

Damn you. She is all we had.

The father looks toward Emma.

FATHER

Goodbye, honey.

He pushes the tray back into the box.

MOTHER

Did we give her enough time?

FATHER

The Machine can make minutes seem like years.

EXT. OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY

A dull red sun is seen against a profile of the building.

INT. OUTPOST MONITOR ROOM - DAY

The father sits at a desk where there are two computer screens, a large one showing a live feed of the Machine room and a smaller one that is blank and has a camera aimed at the user. The blank one records a ring. The father hits a button on the smaller screen keyboard and Dr. Penny appears on the screen.

In a messy office furnished like the father's, Dr. Penny is wearing a white lab coat and has a goatee but not the sunburn or disheveled appearance of his homeless version.

INTERCUT between characters on computer screens when talking, e.g. the father shown on Penny's screen when speaking.

FATHER

Doctor Penny.

DR. PENNY

I felt I needed to check in.

FATHER

Any changes in your core room?

DR. PENNY

'fraid not. I was looking into the simulation program to see if there was a way to cut data and save energy. Make things run longer.

(he pauses)

FATHER

And?

DR. PENNY

I discovered a problem deep in the original data. Apparently, some of our local climate data was transferred from a test version, so the simulation is trying to compensate for the temperature difference.

CONTINUED

FATHER

Which means what?

DR. PENNY.

The colder it gets here, the hotter
it gets in the other world.

The mother enters the room. The father briefly glances at
her.

FATHER

So, how does that work. Does the
program raise the temperature or
the sun?

DR. PENNY.

No, it programs people to make stupid
decisions that make the planet hotter.

FATHER

Can you fix that?

DR. PENNY

Sorry, I don't really have the time.
I am not staying. This is my last
transmission. Goodbye.

The computer screen goes blank.

MOTHER

What was that about? Is our
daughter safe?

FATHER

We may need to rethink things.

EXT. DR. PENNY'S OUTPOST

Dimly lit by the red sun, the three-story building is
larger than the family's outpost but has no visible
greenhouse and is in rocky terrain with only sparse reddish
moss on the stones.

INT. DR. PENNY'S MONITOR ROOM.

Dr. Penny opens his desk drawer and retrieves a small glass
and a small bottle of whiskey.

CONTINUED

He pours the last ounce from the bottle and drops the bottle in a waste basket.

CU: The waste basket contains three other empty whiskey bottles and some crumpled pieces of paper.

INT. DR. PENNY'S BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Dr. Penny approaches a door marked Prep Room 1B.

INT. DR. PENNY'S MACHINE ROOM.

Dr. Penny is under the closed glass lid of a "coffin" tray. His headcap is on and an IV is attached to his left hand. With his right hand, he hits three numbers on the numeric keypad and the tray closes.

BLACKOUT

EXT. PHOENIX STREET- DAY

The sidewalk is filled with rubbish and people sitting in tents. The homeless burned man walks on the edge of the street, next to the sidewalk.

HOMELESS MAN/DR. PENNY

(murmuring)

Hell is coming. Hell is coming.

He looks straight up at the sun.

HOMELESS MAN/DR. PENNY

You want me, Hell? Come and get me.

INT. OUTPOST MACHINE ROOM

The lights in the room flicker.

BACK TO SIDEWALK - DAY

The homeless man continues walking but suddenly he and everything around him freezes in place. Five squares of black appear and obscure parts of the street but then disappear and the street activity resumes.

EXT. SUBURBAN FAMILY HOME - NIGHT TO DAWN

A view only of the second story of the family's home; time-lapse from night to dawn.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

The mother, in summer PJs, swings her legs to the side of the bed. She is shivering.

MOTHER

Damn, who turned up the air conditioner?

INT. HOME HALLWAY - DAY

The mother fiddles with the thermostat on the wall.

MOTHER

Something isn't working.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

The mother takes a housecoat out of the closet and puts it on. The husband, now awake but still lying down, rises up on one elbow, facing her.

FATHER

Why is it so cold?

MOTHER

Something is wrong with the AC.
We need to call someone.

The mother leaves the room. The father goes to the closet and puts on a robe.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

The father stands in the doorway. He sees the yard covered with frost.

FATHER

Honey, you gotta come out here.
It's cold outside.

CONTINUED

The wife joins him at the doorway and they both take a couple of steps outside. Emma comes to the doorway, shivering and pumping her legs up and down, then stands next to her parents.

EMMA

Daddy, why is it so cold?

A car moving on the avenue suddenly stops, as well as a bird in the sky.

FATHER

What the?

Squares of black appear in their view of the outside, covering part of the stopped car and parts of houses across the street, and patches of the sky.

Now show a view of the family, who are also frozen in place. Squares of black start to cover them and the house, multiplying until the whole screen is black.

INT. OUTPOST MACHINE ROOM

The flickering lights go out.

EXT. OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY

A dull red sun is in a dark gray sky. The three-story building and the surrounding sparse landscape are dimly illuminated. Two panes of the greenhouse are broken. Approach a broken window to see dead, frost-covered shriveled plants inside.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In a cold dying universe, on the dying planet of the last star, special beings created a special world.

EARTH IN SPACE

The Earth is poised against a starless outer space. Scattered black squares multiply on the surface of the Earth until all the planet is black against the blackness of space.

CONTINUED

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We are their memories of a warm
planet.

FADE OUT.