

THE ANGELDUSTERS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

A silent uniship, ovoid, not just vantablack but more of a black hole in space, silently descends among pink clouds.

A powerful energy beam cuts through the clouds and hits the ship, but the beam bends around it and continues into space. The ship is unfazed.

INT. UNISHIP - DAY

The ship is filled with a motley crew of alien soldiers of various species.

They carry deadly weaponry as well as formidable physiological weapons.

JALNUS, octopus-like Phod, debonair, metrosexual, usually joins his limbs to resemble a humanoid with two arms and two legs. Skin texture/color control makes his dark "hair" and "clothing" almost convincing. His guns and blades are stored in a backpack with many small pockets to hide other gadgets.

Jalnus looks at a screen that folds out of his wrist.

It appears to be a bank account printout, with numbers in red getting smaller, then turning green and getting slightly larger then stopping. He sighs.

A floating, boxy REXY THE REARMER DRONE that can repurpose matter and produce new tools/weapons charges silently.

REXY

Anyone want a snack?

RENKROC, two-meter centipede-like Miridinian, opens his mouth, and REXY shoots an edible pod into it. Renkroc chews, spits the mush on REXY. Renkroc and his fellow Miridinian, BALBOC, lose themselves laughing.

REXY

Oh, fuck you, Renkroc! No more for you.

JALNUS

Think this will be a heavy one, Srevchar?

SREVCHAR, crab-like Ondraxi Supremus, smirks.

SREVCHAR
Not as heavy as my wife.

Jalnus grins.

SREVCHAR
Yeah, don't grin too wide, ya
creepy bastard.

Jalnus laughs, then shows his real grin: no individual
teeth, rather a single smooth, evolved beak-tooth underneath
the lips, and twice as wide as a human mouth.

JALNUS
Your wife likes my smile.

SREVCHAR
Your scent says you're afraid.

JALNUS
Only for you, old man. Don't tweak
your back again.

SREVCHAR
Yeah, must be nice being soft and
spineless.

Jalnus smirks.

Over the coms, TOK speaks.

TOK (V.O.)
Approaching colonists.

SREVCHAR
Hey, Tok, I ain't getting out of
this goddamned uniship until the
check clears.

JALNUS
It's your shitty Ondraxi bank, I've
been telling you, brother.

TOK (V.O.)
We did pay you.

SREVCHAR
How come I don't have any money in
my goddamned account then?

TOK (V.O.)
Check your transactions.

SREVCHAR

Bullshit.

JALNUS

Don't worry, Tok. Srev, sure your wife ain't at the racetrack again?

SREVCHAR

I told you, she kicked the gambling, guaranteed. She's never settin' foot in that place again.

Jalnus grins, widely.

JALNUS

Tok, you can open the doors now.

EXT. KORRALNIA - CAMP - DAY

The uniship comes close to the ground, and turns off its slipspace field, revealing a smooth white exterior as it hovers.

The crew emerges from the uniship, led by the legless, floating EYEZ MEKKIT, Queesar, with 360 degrees of eyes around his head and a warpy field in front of him.

SREVCHAR

Fuck all of you guys, really.

The camp is undisturbed. Several DEAD COLONISTS are scattered about, peacefully resting or slumped over. They look happy. One is the captain, TY FAERBO.

TOK (O.S.)

Jalnus, anything from your chatoful eye?

Jalnus' third eye opens. Unlike his other two eyes, the *chatoful* eye looks like an iridescent stone with a faint glow.

JALNUS

No awareness.

TOK (O.S.)

Ok.

SREVCHAR

Sense any angelduster consciousness, Jalnus?

Jalnus picks through the belongings of a dead colonist.
 Holds a comms device near the colonists, screen: DOWNLOADING.

JALNUS
 Nothing penetrates that crystal
 until they want it to.

TOK (O.S.)
 But at least there's nobody else.

SREVCHAR
 Besides the dead colonists, sure.

Jalnus casts a hologram of the campers, but it overlays them
 in their current positions. He swipes left, but the image
 barely changes.

EYEZ
 That's the last 3 days?

JALNUS
 No movement.

Jalnus turns off the com device and stashes it.

SREVCHAR
 What the hell were they on?

Jalnus shivers, pulls his buttercutter weapon's glowing core
 closer to his torso.

The crew boards the uniship again, bay door open.

The uniship stays low, skims over the surface. Jalnus scans
 the surroundings. Srevchar fiddles with his gun with his
 abdominal arms.

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

The uniship lands. The entire side unfolds, and the crew
 members step out. Pink fog is everywhere.

SREVCHAR
 Hey Jalnus, how do you know when an
 angelduster is pissed?

JALNUS
 How?

SREVCHAR
 We're about to find out.

TOK (O.S.)
I found out.

SREVCHAR
Yeah, Tok, and now you're a brain
in a jar.

TOK (O.S.)
Oh, it's a bit nicer than a jar, I
must say. I honestly recommend it.

Jalnus and Srevchar ready their weapons.

Balboe and Renkroc's backpacks unfurl to reveal heavy gun
turrets, flexible and fast. Their face armor closes up.

EYEZ
Hold up. Balboe, Renkroc, mind the
rear.

Eyez gets in front of everyone, leads with his warpy belly.

Balboe and Renkroc are in constant motion, weaving around the
rear, their turrets following their line of sight.

SREVCHAR
The Attrochus Siege was simpler
than this crystal-fighting shit.

JALNUS
It's true, the Ondraxi are easier
to kill.

SREVCHAR
The Ondraxi Supremus, thank you.

JALNUS
Supreme to whom?

Srevchar spits at Jalnus' feet.

SREVCHAR
Some day, Jalnus.

JALNUS
Could be fun, but focus.

TOK (O.S.)
How's the path?

JALNUS
Clear. Skies?

TOK (O.S.)

Quiet.

They round a rocky corner and a humanoid CHILD appears.

JALNUS

Eyez?

EYEZ

I see no mass. Almost one hundred
percent chance it's a hologram.
You?

Jalnus' *chatoful* eye blinks.

JALNUS

No consciousness. Remotely
generated.

SREVCHAR

Aw, he's adorable, can I shoot him?

Jalnus fires his buttercutter beam right through the Child.
It distorts somewhat, but no reaction otherwise.

CHILD

Go no farther, corporate
mercenaries. Return to your ship.
You will learn nothing except
suffering. We will allow you to
leave, but spread word far never to
come here again.

Balboc and Renkroc slither up to the Child and through it,
murmur with pleasure. Balboc pretends to take a bite of the
Child's head, to no effect.

CHILD

Such casualness.

JALNUS

Balboc, Renkroc, get back!

The child transforms into a blue ball of light that zips into
Renkroc's exposed face and melts it away. Everyone winces.

The light burrows through the entire length of his spasming
carapace and out through his tail with a bloody splatter.

The blue ball dissipates into nothing.

Balboc screams, thrashes with shock and horror.

Everyone else is paused in shock. Srevchar spits.

SREVCHAR

Ah, fuck.

JALNUS

Everyone stay behind Eyez.

EXT. KORRALNIA ROCKY RIDGE - DAY

The pink fog rolls over a rocky ridge.

Down below, the crew observes.

EYEZ

There it is.

EYEZ POV: A small crystal protrusion glimmers. An x-ray-like view of the ridge shows the glimmer going deep underground and branching out with multiple veins.

Outside of his POV, we see the top of the crystal protrusion. It has a beautiful, intricate, colorful design of a...

...face. A serene, yet joyful one.

TOK (O.S.)

Give Balboc a head start, Jalnus.

Jalnus readies his buttercutter and bores a twenty foot hole in the ground.

Balboc, grim-faced, burrows down the hole in an instant.

EYEZ POV: Balboc's silhouette, red, moves underground toward the root system.

EYEZ

He's almost there.

JALNUS

Get ready. Eyez, let us know when he's severed the branches from the core.

EYEZ POV: Balboc reaches the roots, and thrashes around.

EYEZ

One down...two. Four more to go.
Three...Four-

EYEZ POV: The red silhouette of Balboc is still.

SREVCHAR

What's going on?

EYEZ

Ah-

JALNUS

He's done. How many branches still intact, Eyez?

EYEZ

There's minor damage to the fifth, and the sixth is intact.

JALNUS

Fuck.

SREVCHAR

We go.

JALNUS

It's too strong.

SREVCHAR

Fuck you, I'm going.

EYEZ

Wait-

SREVCHAR

Get in front, Eyez.

EYEZ

Balboc is returning.

EYEZ POV: The red silhouette comes straight at them like a torpedo.

Jalnus' chatoful eye glows.

JALNUS

Bad news, gentlemen. Get ready for him.

Eyez positions himself in front.

Balboc erupts out of the ground, his turret firing.

The shots hit the distortion field around Eyez' abdomen and slide around them.

Balboc races around the side. Eyez pivots as Jalnus and Srevchar try to stay behind him. Balboc fires and fires away.

Jalnus and Srevchar fire back. Jalnus crouches almost even with the ground to shoot under and Srevchar launches himself straight up to get a shot over Eyez.

Balbob slithers and winds around the shots, too dexterous to be hit.

Srevchar jumps again and comes down on Balbob, pins him with his pincer claws and lifts him off the ground as he flails helplessly. He tears the face armor open.

Jalnus points his buttercutter in Balbob's face. Balbob's eyes bleed, his mouth gnashes. He moans, sickly.

JALNUS

Sorry, brother.

Jalnus hollows out Balbob. Srevchar drops the husk.

SREVCHAR

Go now, Eyez!

Eyez nods and barrels towards the crystal. Jalnus and Srevchar keep pace behind him.

From the top of the crystal protrusion, lined with colorful red crystals, a HUMMING beam flicks on, directed at Eyez.

The beam splits and bends around Eyez. It sings Jalnus' shoulder and tears up earth wherever it lands.

Eyez, Jalnus, Srevchar charge forward further, Raxy lagging behind.

Another blue energy orb shoots up out of the ground as Eyez passes over it. It carves a burning hole through the middle of his carcass.

JALNUS

Srevchar, switch places, hold up
Eyez! We have maybe a minute.

They switch. As Eyez dies, Srevchar grabs the sides of Eyez's corpse husk. It continues to bend the beam around it.

Another blue orb launches up. Jalnus leaps, twists, goes full octopus briefly to narrowly avoid the ball.

SREVCHAR

Ain't getting killed by a rock
today, Jalnus!

Srevchar leaps as a blue orb takes off one of his four legs.

He slams Eyez' remaining front half into the crystal. Srevchar's strength and weight are shocking. The crystal tilts, roots weakened. One is exposed.

Jalnus fires his buttercutter into the root while Srevchar hunkers down and wraps his giant arms around the crystal, Eyez' corpse still pinned, clasping his pincers. His three remaining legs tremble. He lifts.

The root shatters. The crystal tilts more. Another root is exposed, Jalnus fires onto it, joined by Raxy.

The beam flickers then stops. Srevchar chucks Eyez' husk out of the way and gets a better grip.

SREVCHAR

Come on, motherfucker!

The root shatters. Jalnus grabs on with Srevchar, letting his arms split into four clawed tentacles that stretch around the crystal's body twice.

Like a tree stump, they uproot the crystal entirely, the last vestiges of its root system snapping or protruding into the air helplessly.

Srevchar reaches up underneath the roots and with a roar pulls out a glowing purple crystal.

The crystal being goes dim.

EXT. LUCIDITY - NIGHT

A family of six CRYSTALLINE BEINGS huddles in darkness, the world around them and other beings disappearing. This is the Lucidity, the virtual existence of this species, all existing within the uprooted crystal, dying before we can see what it had been.

The stars in the sky dim as darkness closes in. The YOUNGEST CRYSTAL CHILD speaks.

CRYSTAL CHILD

Are we dying, brothers and sisters?

The OLDEST CRYSTAL BEING speaks.

CRYSTAL BEING

Our genetic history says yes, this is death.

CRYSTAL CHILD

It feels sad.

The darkness reaches them, and they smash into each other, congealing into a ball of light and SCREAMS.

Whiteness blinds.

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

The crystal husk SCREAMS.

SREVCHAR
What's that shit?

Jalnus leaps into rolling downhill.

JALNUS
Duck!

The crystal husk explodes, shards flying in every direction. Dozens THUNK into Srevchar's armored body, sticking but not penetrating. The force knocks him onto his ass, legs splayed.

The fragments still SCREAM.

Jalnus and Srevchar both SCREAM, grabbing their heads.

IMAGE: the screaming faces of the crystalline people.

Srevchar lurches backwards, grabbing his head while pulling the crystals out with his smaller appendages.

Jalnus passes out.

Srevchar SCREAMS more.

IMAGE: Srevchar with his wife YAMMA, a female Ondraxi, sleeker in form than Srevchar; and his daughter NILINA, happy. It changes to the three of them holding their heads, SCREAMING endlessly.

LATER:

Rexy stands over Jalnus and Srevchar while the dropship approaches. She picks up the purple glowing crystal core, and stores it inside her torso.

Her body hums as the ship lands.

REXY
Analysis complete.
(beat)
Oh, wow...