

The Fantastic Four

by

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Based on the Marvel Comic Characters
created by Stan Lee & Jack Kirby

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A pleasant afternoon in the city of NEW YORK. Outside a bank, people hustle by in their daily routines.

Suddenly, a rumbling roar fills the air as an ARMORED MILITARY VEHICLE tears down the street. Bystanders scream and dive out of the way as it thunders by, aiming straight at the bank.

It SMASHES through the front of the bank and skids to a halt in the bank's lobby, much to the shock of the patrons inside.

A squad of POLICE CARS is right behind in pursuit, with sirens blaring and lights flashing.

INT. BANK - DAY

The MILITARY VEHICLE opens and FIVE MEN wearing streamlined gas masks and HEAVY KEVLAR BODY ARMOR step out, armed with fierce looking AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.

ROBBER #1
(muffled)
Everbody down!

TWO ROBBERS quickly disarm the guards, while the OTHER THREE dash to the vault. They use a FUTURISTIC DEVICE to blow a hole in it. They step inside and fill duffel bags with money.

In the lobby, the other TWO ROBBERS unload three full duffel bags from the vehicle.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Outside, a couple dozen COPS are taking positions with their GUNS drawn, trained on the BANK.

COP
(into radio)
We need backup! This is the second one they've hit today! They are heavily armed! Repeat, heavily armed!

INT. BANK - DAY

The TWO ROBBERS in the lobby keep their guns trained on the the patrons until the THREE OTHERS emerge from the smoking vault with their take.

They all calmly step into the private ELEVATOR and wait as the door closes.

INT. BANK / UPPER FLOOR - DAY

The elevator doors open and the FIVE ROBBERS step out and move down a hallway.

They slap an EXPLOSIVE on a door and take cover as one of them detonates it. They pull the smoking door aside and head up a stairway.

EXT. BANK - DAY

The COP on the radio hears something and looks overhead.

A SLEEK, ARMORED HELICOPTER heads for the bank rooftop.

EXT. BANK ROOFTOP - DAY

The rooftop access door FLIES OPEN as the FIVE ROBBERS walk out toward the landing HELICOPTER.

Three of them load the money inside, while the other two step to the edge and OPEN FIRE on the cops below.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Huge rounds RIP into squad cars and pavement, sending officers diving behind cover.

The rain of bullets finally stops, leaving the officers rattled.

COP

What the hell is going on here?!!

The cop grabs a pair of binoculars and looks up at the bank's rooftop.

THROUGH BINOCULARS: He sees one of the robbers kneel at the edge, aiming a BAZOOKA!

COP (CONT'D)

Sonofa-- CLEAR THE AREA!!! FALL
BACK!!!

Cops run for cover just as a SHELL is LAUNCHED.

BAROOM!!! A police car EXPLODES.

Officers flee the scene.

BAROOM!!! Another car EXPLODES.

EXT. BANK ROOFTOP - DAY

The ROBBER drops the bazooka and CLIMBS ABOARD the helicopter, joining the others.

It rises up and FLIES OFF between the skyscrapers.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Cops are cautiously coming out, looking at the destruction around them, then gazing skyward at the fleeing copter.

COP
(to a fellow cop)
Better call the F.F.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The BAXTER BUILDING stands tall on the corner of 42nd Street and Madison Avenue. An unassuming skyscraper, which also happens to be the home and HQ of the FANTASTIC FOUR.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The 33rd floor. An ULTRA HI-TECH WONDERLAND of STRANGE GADGETS and MACHINES. They seem to be everywhere, floors, walls, ceilings... A world of pure imagination.

A HUGE CONTRAPTION fills part of the room. It is both beautiful and enigmatic in its design.

Atop it, kneels a MAN in a DARK BLUE JUMPSUIT. His back is to us. He's manipulating ODD TOOLS that EXTEND DOWN FROM THE CEILING on jointed extension arms. Sparks fly as he works.

A COMPUTERIZED FEMININE VOICE comes from the room's speakers.

COMPUTER
Police are requesting the Fantastic
Four's assistance.

He stops working and turns toward us, removing a set of hi-tech goggles.

This is REED RICHARDS, a thin man in his mid-thirties, with premature grey streaks along his temples. His eyes gleam with genius-level intelligence.

REED
Inform them we're on our way.

COMPUTER
Yes sir.

(CONTINUED)

He pulls out a pair of form-fitting GLOVES from his waist band and slides them on. He snatches a SLICK WATCH hanging off some equipment and slides it onto his left wrist.

He taps a button on the watch and a BRIGHT IMAGE APPEARS ON ITS FACE. It's the FANTASTIC FOUR'S SYMBOL. A numerical 4 in a circle. The same one that we now notice is on his jumpsuit.

He slides down the contraption with astonishing agility and walks across the room, stopping in the center.

REED

Open hanger tube 7. Code: 73568.
Password: Kirby.

COMPUTER

Identity confirmed. Opening tube.

Fifteen feet above him, a CIRCULAR HATCH OPENS.

WE SEE ONLY HIS TORSO as he BEGINS TO RISE QUICKLY, like he's on a lift. We don't hear any hydraulics, though. Instead, we hear CREAKING sounds, similar to a thick rope straining with a heavy weight. We stay with him as he rises up inside the ceiling.

REED

Prep the Fantastigar for lift-off.

INT. HANGAR / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

Darkness.

LIGHTS suddenly begin flickering on in the room, revealing a LARGE, FUTURISTIC WHITE VEHICLE with the FF's symbol emblazoned across it. It starts to rev up its engines.

HYDRAULICS hum as the BAY DOORS part, letting sunlight inside.

A FLOOR HATCH slides open. REED RISES into view. He puts both hands on the floor to support his weight.

CUT TO:

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

Back in the lab, we're shocked to see that Reed's FEET are STILL STANDING ON THE FLOOR! From his waist up, his body is STRETCHED UP through the ceiling's tube!

(CONTINUED)

His lower half ABRUPTLY SHOOTS UP THE TUBE.

CUT TO:

INT. HANGAR / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

REED swings his feet out, his body now back to its normal state. He climbs aboard the Fantasticar.

The vehicle lifts up, hovering over the floor.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

REED sits at the controls. He pushes the throttle forward.

INT. HANGAR / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The FANTASTICAR'S engines flare as it moves out into New York's skies. The BAY DOORS close behind it.

SILENCE fills the empty hanger. Then... we hear the sound of HEAVY FOOTSTEPS as a CLOAKED FIGURE steps out of the shadows. We see only his BOOTS and the bottom of a DARK GREEN CAPE as he strides over to a wall.

A METALLIC FINGER taps a button on a control panel.

COMPUTER

Identity?

The METALLIC HAND places a SMALL, ODD DEVICE on the panel. The device CHIRPS and BEEPS. Its lights blink rapidly.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

Identity confirmed.

Doors slide open, revealing an ELEVATOR. The figure detaches the device and steps inside. The doors close.

EXT. STORM FOUNDATION - DAY

A tall building in the financial district with an unassuming name on its side: **THE STORM FOUNDATION**

INT. BOARD ROOM / STORM FOUNDATION - DAY

Board members sit around a table, in the middle of a meeting.

SUSAN (SUE) RICHARDS, REED'S WIFE, stands at the head of the table. A beautiful woman in her early thirties, brimming with intelligence and confidence.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

Another of Reed's patents has gone through. We can start producing them next month and--

A BEEPING comes from her watch. She looks at it and sees the FLASHING FOUR SYMBOL.

SUE (CONT'D)

--Something's come up. I have to go. We'll continue this meeting tomorrow.

The board members nod, understanding the situation.

INT. HALLWAY / STORM FOUNDATION - DAY

SUE exits the boardroom and walks down a hallway. She steps inside a private elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR / STORM FOUNDATION - DAY

SUE begins UNDOING HER CLOTHES. She starts to unbutton her blouse. As she opens it, the FF's blue JUMPSUIT APPEARS MAGICALLY UNDERNEATH her clothes, having been on and INVISIBLE the whole time. She drops her clothes to the floor.

EXT. ROOFTOP / STORM FOUNDATION - DAY

The elevator doors open and SUE RICHARDS steps out in full uniform. Sexy and commanding at the same time.

She walks to a corner of the rooftop and stands at a dizzying height above New York.

A MUTED roar of a JET as the FANTASTICAR rises up hovering next to the building. One of it's side doors HISSES open.

Sue smiles as she sees her husband at the controls. She looks down and HOLDS HER HAND OUT, palm down.

The AIR between her and the vehicle SHIMMERS as an INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD FORMS A PLANK. She seemingly WALKS ON AIR into the Fantasticar.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

SUE gives REED a kiss as she buckles in next to him.

SUE

What's going on?

(CONTINUED)

REED
Armed robbery.

SUE
(disappointed)
Is that all?

REED
They were sporting some heavy
artillery.

SUE
So, this should take all of five
minutes to handle then.

REED
(smiles)
More or less.

SUE
Want to go see a movie afterwards?

REED
Sure.

He pushes the throttle forward.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

The FANTASTICAR'S engine rumbles as it speeds off.

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

CARS tear around the track. The CROWD in the bleachers
CHEER.

Among the spectators is JOHNNY STORM, SUE'S BROTHER. 20
years old and "movie-star" handsome.

He's dressed casually in a light jacket and sunglasses, with
a baseball cap pulled over his blonde hair. He claps and
cheers with the rest of the crowd.

His watch BEEPS. He sees the FLASHING SYMBOL.

He pulls off his sunglasses and cap and runs to the top of
the bleachers. He tosses his jacket aside, revealing his
BLUE JUMPSUIT UNDERNEATH with the FF SYMBOL clearly visible.

JOHNNY
Stand back! Clear the area!

People are startled and excited as they move away from him.

(CONTINUED)

SPECTATOR #1
It's the Torch!

Young women squeal with delight.

TEEN GIRL #1
It's Johnny Storm!!!

TEEN GIRL #2
Johnny! It's Johnny!

He sees the girls and flashes them a killer smile.

JOHNNY
Hello, ladies.

They squeal again. One of them rushes him.

TEEN GIRL #1
Can I have a kiss?

JOHNNY
Well... just one.

He dips her as he lays one on her. When he separates, she's lightheaded and dizzy.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
I'm needed. Better stand back.

She backs away.

He poses dramatically, clearly enjoying the attention.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Flame on!

He BURSTS into FLAMES. FIRE WRITHES AROUND HIS WHOLE BODY.

People hold up their hands, leaning away to avoid the heat.

He JUMPS UP INTO THE AIR and FLIES OFF into the distance, leaving a TRAIL OF FLAME BEHIND HIM.

The girl he kissed looks up after him with dreamy eyes.

TEEN GIRL #1
I am so in love.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

A SCULPTURE of a man's face. It's in a rough, angular stage. A YOUNG WOMAN'S LONG, SLENDER FINGERS gently work the clay.

(CONTINUED)

The woman is ALICIA MASTERS. Sweet and fragile in appearance. She doesn't seem to be looking at what she's sculpting; her gaze is somewhere off in the distance.

We realize now, she's BLIND.

EXT. ART STUDIO - DAY

HANDSOME BLUE EYES tinged with sadness, watch the sculptress through the window. The eyes seem to be surrounded by ORANGE ROCK, which makes a very disconcerting image. The eyes are very much human though and are mesmerized by her movements.

A skateboarding TEEN stops and smirks when he sees a HUGE MAN standing outside the art studio, peeping in the window.

The man stands SIX FEET TALL, wearing a trenchcoat, baggy pants, huge loafers and a floppy fedora. His frame is MASSIVE.

The skater sidles up to the man. He glances in the window, sees the woman, then looks back up at the man.

SKATER

You here again?

The man's head turns slightly to look down at the skater.

MAN

Get outta here, kid.

The MAN'S VOICE is DEEP and GRUFF.

SKATER

You got a "thing" for her?

MAN

Scram.

SKATER

No way she'll fall for a freak like you, ya know.

The man says nothing, but his eyes show that the words ring true.

SKATER (CONT'D)

Let's find out how she feels about you peeping at her.

He knocks on the window.

The man TURNS QUICKLY and GRABS the boy's jacket with a huge GLOVED FIST.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

ALICIA turns toward the sound.

EXT. ART STUDIO - DAY

The man LIFTS the skater off the ground like he weighs nothing. He presses him against the window and leans in so they are face to face.

And what a face it is. The man's skin is made up of ORANGE ROCK. Angular and craggy, in a permanent scowl. The only normal feature are his blue eyes.

This is BENJAMIN J. GRIMM, the final member of the Fantastic Four.

BEN

I have a suggestion for ya. Why
don't ya mind your own business
from now on?

Ben PUSHES HIM HARDER against the display window. The GLASS begins to CRACK behind the skater.

BEN (CONT'D)

That way, I won't have ta squash ya
under my fist. Understand?

The skater is about to piss his pants and nods emphatically.

Ben TOSSES THE SKATER to the ground. The skater grabs his board and runs away.

Ben turns back to the window and sees Alicia walking toward the door. He panics and quickly walks away from the studio to an enormous custom-built HUMVEE that's parked nearby.

Alicia opens the door and steps out.

ALICIA

Is someone there?

Ben looks back for a moment, then climbs inside the vehicle.

INT. BEN'S HUMVEE - DAY

The interior is built just for Ben, with large metal seats and no steering controls (His giant hands would crush any normal steering wheel). Lots of ODD GIZMOS line the inside.

He puts his head in his hands, feeling indeed, like a freak.

(CONTINUED)

A BEEPING sound goes off. He looks at his FF WATCH and snaps out of his depression. He jabs a big button on the dashboard.

BEN
(to car)
Follow the signal.

EXT. ALICIA MASTER'S ART STUDIO - DAY

BEN'S HUMVEE guns its engine and takes off.

Alicia is about to re-enter her studio, but pauses as she HEARS THE VEHICLE leave. She turns, listening to the sound.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

Elevator doors open. The MYSTERIOUS CLOAKED FIGURE strides out into the hallway, seeming to know his way about. He turns down another hallway, then stops at a door.

He places his odd DEVICE on the door.

COMPUTER
Access granted.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY #8 - DAY

Lights come on. The CLOAKED FIGURE stands before his goal.

He places his ARMORED HANDS against an OBLONG OBJECT about TWO FEET LONG. The technology is strange, seemingly alien.

EXT. SKIES OF NEW YORK - DAY

The ROBBERS' SLEEK HELICOPTER streaks between two buildings and angles down another street.

The FANTASTICAR drops down from behind, following them.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

The ROBBERS are removing their gas masks. One of the robbers leans out the open door and sees the FANTASTICAR trailing behind. He comes back inside.

ROBBER #1
They're here.

EXT. SKIES OF NEW YORK - DAY

The HELICOPTER WEAVES between the buildings at HIGH SPEEDS, trying to lose their pursuer.

(CONTINUED)

The FANTASTICAR is graceful and fluid, matching every move they make, never falling behind.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

REED pilots the car with ease. He is at one with his vehicle.

SUE

They don't seem to be panicking.

REED

I noticed that too. Maybe they don't know who we are?

SUE

They're in for a surprise then.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

ROBBER #2

(nervous)

I don't know about this.

ROBBER #1

Don't get cold feet now. Remember, they aren't prepared for us. We hit 'em hard and fast and then split with the money.

ROBBER #2

How do we even know these things will work against them?

ROBBER #1

That's the chance we took. Now stop your whining or I'm throwing you out the door.

ROBBER #1 holds up some kind of STRANGE GUN and LEANS OUT again. He FIRES it at the Fantasticar.

A DEEP LOW blast of sound echoes across the sky as the air RIPPLES in concentric circles toward the Fantasticar.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

The Fantasticar SHAKES as it gets hit by the waves. The lights flicker, then all power goes OFF.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

The Fantasticar begins to FREE-FALL toward the street below, spiraling from its momentum.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Robber #1 laughs, getting an adrenaline rush out of it.

ROBBER #1

See! Just like we were told. Now
let's get out of here!

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

REED is concentrating, staying cool, flipping switches left and right as they tumble.

Sue holds on for dear life.

SUE

What happened?

REED

(flipping switches)

They hit us with an electro-
magnetic pulse. I'm trying to
reboot the system to get power back
online.

Sue sees the streets rushing toward them.

SUE

Better hurry, honey.

REED

Almost.

Impact is moments away.

SUE

Now or never!

REED

Now.

The LIGHTS COME BACK ON as power is restored.

Reed grabs the controls and PULLS BACK.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

The Fantasticar STOPS IN MID-AIR, leveling itself out twenty feet above the street.

Pedestrians who, seconds ago, were throwing their arms up to protect themselves, now cautiously look up and smile.

People cheer as the Fantasticar RISES BACK UP into the sky.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

REED

I wasn't prepared for that.
 (checks controls)
 I'm going to have to redesign the
 entire system. Put in a tesla
 generator that'll kick in
 automatically should this ever
 happen again. Maybe a--

SUE

Reed?

REED

Yes?

SUE

Later. They're getting away.

REED

(focuses)
 Right.

He throws it into full throttle.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

The Fantastical jets away.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

The HELICOPTER lands near the DOCKS.

The pilot and the five robbers jump out carrying the money
 and HI-TECH WEAPONRY. They rush over to a parked VAN, and
 load the bags into it.

They stop as the FANTASTICAR descends toward them.

The criminals quickly put on protective EAR GUARDS.

The Fantastical lands. Reed and Sue step down out of the
 hatch and face them.

SUE

Are you gentlemen through yet?

Reed's brow furrows as he notices their HI-TECH DEVICES.

REED

Sue, wait--

ROBBER #1 activates one of the devices.

(CONTINUED)

It lets out a LOUD HIGH-PITCHED SOUND.

Reed and Sue double over, holding their hands to their ears.

Nearby dock workers do the same.

ROBBER #2 steps forward and sprays them with gunfire.

SUE raises a hand and the air in front of her SHIMMERS.

An INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD shields her from the gunfire. The bullets ricochet off. She struggles to maintain it. The HIGH-PITCHED SOUND is making it hard for her to concentrate.

REED sees ROBBER #3 aiming his gun at the dock workers. Reed runs and DIVES to protect the crowd, just as the robber opens fire.

Reed suddenly STRETCHES OUT, grabbing a lamp post, his body BECOMING A WALL between the gunfire and the dock workers.

The BULLETS hit him, but don't go through. Instead, each round stretches him out on the other side, before bouncing back out, falling harmlessly to the ground.

This is not painless. His face shows ANGUISH with each hit.

ROBBER #4 runs up to Reed, holding a METALLIC STAFF and JAMS the end against Reed's extended chest. He taps a button.

An ELECTRIC JOLT goes through Reed's body, causing him to collapse. His stretched body now looking like a bizarre, rubber blanket.

SUE

REED!

ROBBER #5 points a device at Sue and FIRES.

A BRIGHT FLASH hits her. She staggers back, blinded by the light. She can't see anything. She puts her hands out, bringing up a force-field all around her.

The SIX robbers climb into their van and tear off.

INT. GETAWAY VAN - DAY

As they speed down the street, ROBBER #4 sees a FIRE STREAK go by overhead.

ROBBER #4

The Torch is here.

EXT. STREET - DAY

JOHNNY FLIES high above the van, his flames rumbling against the wind. He glides down toward them.

ROBBER #5 leans out the window and looks up at Johnny.

Johnny smiles and waves.

Robber #5 pulls out ANOTHER WEAPON and fires off several baseball sized CAPSULES at him.

As each of the capsules hit, they SHATTER, SPLATTERING Johnny with some kind of GEL. Most of his torso flames are SNUFFED OUT upon contact with the substance.

Johnny SPINS OUT OF CONTROL and CRASHES to the ground, rolling violently until his momentum finally ceases.

The robbers turn a corner and speed down the street.

BEN'S HULKING FIGURE suddenly steps out in front of their van and leans forward, preparing for impact.

The driver tries to hit the brakes but they're going too fast. They SLAM into him.

Ben is unhurt. The front of the van, however, is SMASHED.

ROBBER #1 leans out the window and lobs a CANISTER at him.

Ben reflexively YANKS the van's HOOD off, holding it up as protection.

The canister SHATTERS against the hood, spilling LIQUID all over it. The metal immediately begins to dissolve, leaving a large hole, in which we can see Ben's surprised face. He tosses the hood aside.

BEN

Now you've done it. It's
clobberin' time.

ROBBER #1

Back up! Back up!

They quickly shift into reverse.

Ben GRABS the front of their van, preventing it from going anywhere. Their tires screech and smoke, to no avail.

Ben pulls back a fist and swings a POWERHOUSE PUNCH into the van, DEMOLISHING THE FRONT HALF.

(CONTINUED)

The robbers scramble out, holding up their weapons.

A BALL OF FIRE engulfs one of the robbers' weapons. He gasps and drops it.

JOHNNY stands, covered in gel, with ONE HAND still on fire. He throws TWO MORE FIREBALLS, taking out the Pilot's weapon and another robber's gun.

REED'S ELONGATED ARMS ENTWINE THEMSELVES around two of the others' weapons and yank them out of their grasp.

The sixth robber's weapon JUMPS OUT OF HIS HANDS and HOVERS a moment, then SMASHES into his face, knocking him out.

SUE MATERIALIZES holding the sixth man's weapon.

The five conscious robbers hold up their hands, surrendering.

REED
Everyone okay?

Johnny wipes off more of the gel.

JOHNNY
Yeah. The only thing that's
bruised is my ego.

Crowds are forming. People CLAP and CHEER enthusiastically.

Reed holds up the METALLIC STAFF that shocked him, examining it at different angles. He looks back at the robbers.

Sue stands next to him, holding up her hand at the robbers, who appear to be squished together in an invisible prison.

SUE
What is it?

REED
It's a neuro staff. It temporarily
immobilizes brainwaves. Very
advanced technology. It stopped me
cold.

Johnny sees POLICE CARS and NEWS VANS pulling up.

JOHNNY
Great. I'm going to be on TV
looking like King Kong hocked a
loogey on me.

Johnny slicks back his hair and turns to Sue.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Hey sis, how do I look?

BEN
Like a wet poodle.

JOHNNY
You're just jealous.

BEN
Of what? My big toe has more
personality than you.

JOHNNY
Oh yeah? I haven't seen your big
toe plastered on the covers of
magazines lately.

BEN
That's cuz my toe has taste.

SUE
All right you two. Cut it out.

The POLICE and NEWS MEDIA swarm in. Reporters are shoving
microphones into their faces asking a multitude of questions.

The police start cuffing the robbers.

REED
Excuse me, officer? After you're
done logging in these weapons, I'd
like to take them with us to
investigate their origins. That
is, if it's all right with you.

OFFICER
(smiles)
Sure thing, Mr. Richards. You'll
have to sign off for them, though.

REED
Of course.

REED, SUE, JOHNNY, and BEN stand together in front of the
reporters, waving and smiling at the cheering crowds. These
are real-life super-heroes. Loved and adored by the people.
They are the FANTASTIC FOUR.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HANGAR /BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

FADE IN:

The room's lights come on as the FANTASTICAR lands inside.

The hatch opens and Sue steps down, followed by Reed, who's carrying the neuro staff and another of the robbers' devices. They head for the elevator.

REED

A lot of money went into the creation of these weapons. Why use them just for a bank robbery?

Johnny and Ben step down carrying the other two weapons.

SUE

Especially when the money they stole wouldn't even cover what it cost to make them.

REED

Exactly. And they're non-lethal, effective for only a short period. It's almost like they were a--

Reed is about to activate the elevator but stops and tilts his head, staring suspiciously at the controls.

SUE

What's wrong?

Reed glances around, alert.

REED

Diversion. We've had an intruder.

Reed activates the elevator and steps inside. The others follow, looking around the room, ready for an attack.

INT. ELEVATOR / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

REED

Computer, what rooms have been accessed in the past three hours?

COMPUTER

The Main Hanger, elevator 12 and storage facility number eight.

Reed doesn't look happy.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY #8 - DAY

The door slides open as REED enters. His face is tense.

(CONTINUED)

REED

It's gone.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

REED is typing away at his main control console. The others are gathered around him, watching the monitors.

ON MONITORS: security camera views of hallways. They lose all visibility for a moment, becoming static snow. A moment later the screens clear up, showing the same empty hallways.

BEN

He nullified all the security cams when he entered the area.

JOHNNY

This guy's good.

REED

Yes, he is. Getting past my security system is almost an impossibility. Frankly, I'm stunned.

SUE

You keep saying "he". It could be a "she". Or a group.

REED

True. I shouldn't discount anything at this point.

JOHNNY

So, are you going to be able to catch this guy-- I mean, person.

REED

By tomorrow afternoon I'll be able to tell you exactly where he-- or she, is.

EXT. CASTLE DOOM - DAY

The day is gloomy and overcast, with a light rain falling down on a SMALL EUROPEAN CITY nestled in the countryside.

On a nearby hill, overlooking the city is a foreboding CASTLE, which has been around for ages by the looks of it.

INT. DOOM'S CHAMBER / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

A lavish den, furnished with the finest draperies, rugs, etc. Bookshelves line the walls, filled with both old tomes and new scientific journals. Several ornate candelabras with burning candles supply the room's only light.

In a large, kingly, antique throne, sits a FIGURE CLOAKED IN SHADOW, watching a large monitor. Bits of ARMOR and DARK GREEN CLOTH can be seen in the weak candlelight.

ON TV:

A reporter is covering the FF's victory over the robbers.

TV REPORTER

Once again, the Fantastic Four have saved numerous lives. The spectacular battle ended only moments ago, with the FF apprehending a group of well-armed bank robbers. We now join the victorious heroes live.

The reporter squeezes into the throng of news-crews vying for the FF's attention.

REED and SUE have an arm around each other. JOHNNY is still covered in the gel, with his hair slicked back. BEN stands behind them, not liking the attention.

ANOTHER REPORTER

Did they put up much of a fight?

SUE

They gave it a shot, but once they saw us in action, they surrendered pretty quickly.

JOHNNY

Let that be a lesson to you kids out there. Stay on the right side of the law or you're gonna have to deal with the Fantastic Four.

People cheer. Girls in the crowd squeal.

A young female reporter for some teen magazine leans forward.

YOUNG REPORTER

Johnny! I'm from Teen Heat magazine. Your fans are dying to know... do you have a girlfriend yet?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

(smiles)

Not yet. I'm still on the market,
girls!

The girls in the crowd scream even louder. The young reporter looks at him dreamily.

Reed and Sue exchange amused glances.

TV REPORTER

Mrs. Richards, we know you recently got back from your honeymoon. How was it?

Sue looks at Reed with love in her eyes.

SUE

It was amazing. Unforgettable--

ANOTHER REPORTER

Fantastic?

The crowd laughs.

REED

(embarrassed)

All right, now. I think that's enough questions. We'll schedule a press conference after we fill out the police reports. Thank you.

They wave to their fans as the image FREEZE-FRAMES. STILL IMAGES appear of each of the team members.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

The Fantastic Four. Reed Richards, Mister Fantastic. Susan Richards, the Invisible Woman. Johnny Storm, the Human Torch. And Ben Grimm, the Thing. It seems like they've been around forever. New York's own Royal Family.

A NEWSWOMAN appears, hosting a biography program.

NEWSWOMAN

But it actually hasn't been that long. It was only three years ago that the fateful Excelsior incident occurred...

(CONTINUED)

FOOTAGE is shown of a SPRAWLING LAUNCHING AREA in the middle of a dry desert. An incredibly LONG TUBE stretches up into the night sky, AIMED AT THE HEAVENS.

Structural steel framework trails from the massive tube like the spines of an umbrella as it connects to a circular foundation along the desert floor.

At the very top of the tube a craft sits inside, its sleek point jutting out of the opening.

The footage loses it's home movie appearance as we--

EXT. EXCELSIOR PROJECT - EVENING

--FLASHBACK to that time.

Technicians walk the perimeter making adjustments.

We pull back into--

INT. EXCELSIOR CONTROL ROOM - EVENING

We are looking at the same view from a window. SUE'S HAND points at the top of the structure, tracing the route as she talks.

SUE (O.S.)

Reed's new gas compound will be released inside the tube. At this point the Pogo Plane will drop down the length of the chute, compressing the gas as it falls. This will cause a chemical reaction in the gas. The molecules will accelerate and combine, until just before we hit the bottom, an explosion will occur, propelling us up at tremendous speed and shooting us out of the top like a bullet, at which point we'll hit the thrusters and achieve escape velocity.

SUE, who is a FEW YEARS YOUNGER, stares up into the night sky. She's wearing a FLIGHT JUMPSUIT.

TWO OLDER MEN stand near her. One, a STOCKY MAN, with tough features, smoking a cigar. The other a THIN MAN with a mustache and glasses, wearing a big grin.

The rest of the room is filled with techies at their control positions, monitoring the preparation.

(CONTINUED)

STOCKY MAN

You've outdone yourself Miss Storm.
Very impressive.

SUE

Well, without your initial
investments, Storm Industries
wouldn't have been able to fully
fund this project.

THIN MAN

This is a momentous occasion and I
feel privileged to be a part of it.

A SLIGHTLY YOUNGER REED enters the room, wearing the same
type of flight jumpsuit as Sue. He greets her with a kiss.

REED

Sorry, I'm late.

SUE

Reed, I'd like you to meet the men
behind this operation. This is Mr.
Lee, our main investor.

Reed shakes the thin man's hand.

REED

It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr.
Lee.

MR. LEE

The pleasure's all mine.

SUE

And this is Mr. Kirby, project
designer. Also a main investor.

REED

(to Mr. Kirby)

I know you took a chance hiring me.
I'd like to personally thank you
for giving me the freedom to make
my ideas a reality.

MR. KIRBY

A mind like yours, Mr. Richards,
can change the world. I take
tremendous pride in knowing that I
have given you the springboard to
greater things.

Reed is stunned by his words.

(CONTINUED)

REED
 (speechless)
 ...thank you, sir.

MR. LEE
 So, what's the word on the anomaly?

REED
 The traces of energy are building
 at a much quicker rate now.
 There's something very strange
 happening out there and nobody's
 paying attention.

SUE
 Well, the President's finally
 decided it should be looked into.
 But they're not setting up a launch
 until early next year.

MR. KIRBY
 That's if they can cut through all
 the red tape for funding.

REED
 Exactly. The only way to go is a
 private operation.

MR. LEE
 How much longer before you launch?

SUE
 (looks at her watch)
 As soon as my brother and Mr. Grimm
 get here, we'll be good to go.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

A JEEP drives along a dirt road. Its headlights glaring
 through the dust.

BEN GRIMM (in his normal body, before the big change) sits
 behind the wheel. He's an athletic guy with a tough
 attitude, dressed in a military jumpsuit.

A CHERRY RED, CONVERTIBLE FERRARI roars around in front of
 him, kicking up tons of dirt and dust.

Caught off guard, Ben avoids a collision by swinging the jeep
 OFF THE ROAD. He fights to keep himself from fishtailing.

He gets the jeep under control and FLOORS IT, moving
 alongside the ferrari.

(CONTINUED)

A YOUNGER JOHNNY is at the wheel. He smiles at Ben.

BEN
You're gonna get someone killed
with your games!

Johnny waves bye-bye and zooms way ahead.

BEN (CONT'D)
(frowns)
I hope you're wearing your
seatbelt, kid.

He SLAMS HIS FOOT to the floor.

BEN (CONT'D)
Cuz, you're goin' down.

Ben VEERS OFF THE ROAD and CUTS ACROSS THE DESERT, while Johnny follows the road as it curves to the right.

Johnny drops his smug grin when he sees BEN'S JEEP come out of the dark and RAM his passenger side. Johnny fights to control his spin but his speed is too great. He collides with a hillside.

Johnny looks up dazed. He jumps out and examines the damage to his car.

Ben pulls up beside him.

BEN (CONT'D)
You all right?

JOHNNY
(pissed)
Are you nuts?

BEN
(acts innocent)
What?

JOHNNY
Look what you did to my car!

BEN
Bummer.

JOHNNY
Bummer? Do you know how much this
cost me?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

You mean, how much it cost your sister. You ain't rich, kid. She is. Now get in, before I choose to leave you out here for the vultures.

Johnny fumes. He walks over to the jeep and jumps into the passenger side. He sits beside Ben, smoldering with anger.

JOHNNY

Sue's gonna lose it when she hears that you rammed me.

BEN

Is that before or after I tell her that you nearly ran me off the road?

That shuts Johnny up. Ben continues the drive.

INT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

REED is inside the ship, wearing a slimmer version of an astronaut's SPACESUIT, minus the helmet and gloves.

He's helping SUE into her suit. He secures a final latch and stands face to face with her.

They look out the open door at the display of technology 500 feet below them. A panorama of lights signaling a promising future.

Sue's eyes are bright and excited. Her smile is one of joy. He can't help but to smile back.

SUE

It's actually going to happen.

REED

In a matter of minutes, we'll be on our way.

SUE

Privately funded exploration of space. Think of everything we can discover without a bureaucracy stopping us.

REED

This is just the beginning.

(CONTINUED)

SUE
We're going to change the world you
know.

REED
I hope so.

They look into each other's eyes. She caresses his face.

SUE
You're the most amazing man I've
ever met.

REED
Then I guess we're made for each
other.

They kiss.

BEN
Whoops!

They turn to see BEN and JOHNNY arrive in the elevator lift,
ALREADY SUITED UP.

BEN (CONT'D)
Sorry to interrupt.

REED
We're just enjoying the moment.

BEN
Yeah, I could see that.

SUE
What took you guys so long?

Ben glances at Johnny who is still ticked off.

BEN
Had a little accident on the way.

REED
What happened?

BEN
Aw, my mind was on the flight, so I
wasn't paying attention to my
driving. I didn't see him come up
beside me and I sorta bumped into
him. It was my fault, Suzie.

Sue rushes over to them.

(CONTINUED)

SUE
Are you both okay?

JOHNNY
Yeah, I'm fine. It was partly my
fault, I was going too fast.

SUE
As long as you're both not hurt.

BEN
We're all right. Let's get this
show on the road.

REED
Then get your helmets and gloves
on, people.

They pull on their gloves and grab their helmets off the
wall. Johnny glances at Ben and smiles.

JOHNNY
(mouthing)
Thanks.

BEN
(mouthing)
You owe me.

They fasten their helmets on and take their positions.

Reed and Ben take the pilot seats, while Sue and Johnny sit
behind them at their stations. Their chairs rotate and whirl,
tilting them back like astronauts in a rocket, facing the
sky.

REED
Closing the hatch.

Reed flips a switch and the entrance hatch SLIDES closed.
GAS HISSES as it pressurizes.

REED (CONT'D)
Johnny, prep the system.

JOHNNY
I'm on it.

Johnny types away at a keyboard.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
System diagnostic: Check. Two run-
throughs and operating systems are
green.

(CONTINUED)

REED

Ben, whenever you're ready.

BEN

(into helmet mic)

Tower, we are ready to go. Waiting
on your mark.

INT. EXCELSIOR CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The techies are hustling around the room, glancing at
monitors.

TECHIE

Pogo-1, this is Tower. We are
clearing the area.

EXT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

Technicians and engineers take positions inside a bunker.

INT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

Ben stares out the main window at the stars above them.

BEN

You're sure this is gonna work,
right?

Reed isn't nervous at all.

REED

Without a doubt.

SUE

I wouldn't allow my little brother
to be here if I wasn't confident,
Ben.

JOHNNY

Hey, Benjy. I'll take over as
pilot if you're too nervous.

BEN

No thanks. I wanna come back
alive.

Johnny laughs.

TECHIE (V.O.)

(over mic)

Pogo-1, this is Tower. You are
cleared to go. Repeat, you are
cleared to go.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Start your contraption, Reed.

Reed flips a switch.

REED

Introcylic Velox compound
released.

INT. TUBE - NIGHT

Inside the tube, jets along the walls hiss as they pump in the Velox gas.

INT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

REED

Johnny, initiate Excelsior sequence
seven.

JOHNNY

(typing)
Program has initiated.

The ominous sound of hydraulics are heard through the hull of the craft.

Reed's finger hovers over a button as he watches the readouts with analytical eyes.

Ben is looking a little pale. He licks his dry lips.

BEN

(to himself)
Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

REED

Now!

They feel their stomachs get left behind as they plummet backwards toward the earth.

Through the window, they can see the length of the tube stretching out before them, becoming longer and longer.

INT. TUBE - NIGHT

The Pogo Plane falls inside the tube at incredible speed, screaming as it goes. The bottom of the craft has a concave attachment, to facilitate the gas compression.

There are brief flashes of swirling light and sparks as the gas begins to undergo a chemical change.

(CONTINUED)

Then--

A BLUE and GREEN EXPLOSION fills the tube!

INT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

The four of them grunt as the craft stops abruptly and accelerates in the opposite direction, rocketing them up the chute.

REED
Phase two achieved!

Their SPEED INCREASES at a phenomenal rate. RINGED LIGHTS flash by. FASTER and FASTER.

The four of them are being pushed back into their seats. Johnny is smiling, enjoying the ride.

REED (CONT'D)
Three hundred miles an hour. Four
hundred. Five.

They strain against the G-forces.

JOHNNY
Yeah!!

REED
Seven hundred.

The tube's dark opening is coming up fast.

EXT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

The POGO PLANE SHOOTS out of the tube into the night sky.

A sonic boom is heard.

REED
Nine.
(gritting teeth)
Twelve. Sixteen hundred.

INT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

BEN
Firing boosters!

Ben hits switches and grabs hold of the joystick.

EXT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

The concave attachment detaches as the Pogo Plane's BOOSTER ROCKETS FIRE.

INT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

The cockpit shakes under the increased velocity.

Reed, Sue and Johnny are grimacing under the pressure. Ben, an experienced pilot, is handling it better.

BEN

We're getting close to escape velocity.

The rumbling suddenly decreases then goes away altogether.

Their arms float in zero gravity.

BEN (CONT'D)

We are officially in space.

INT. EXCELSIOR CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The technicians clap and cheer.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

Sue and Johnny look at each other and laugh.

JOHNNY

WOOO! That was wild! Best rollercoaster ever!

BEN

Cutting off boosters.

EXT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

The Pogo Plane's boosters abruptly die out, leaving the craft gliding through space.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

REED

(to Ben)

Set course for these coordinates.

BEN

Will do.

EXT. POGO PLANE - NIGHT

On various parts of the hull, PRESSURIZED GAS JETS HISS, maneuvering the Pogo Plane into a different angle.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

JOHNNY

I'm getting stronger radiation fields.

REED

We're nearing it.

SUE

(leaning forward)
There it is.

Through the window they see a DISTORTION IN SPACE. A WAVY BLUR, like the way air looks when in extreme heat.

REED

(fascinated)
Get us closer, Ben.

Ben nods, equally intrigued.

As they get closer, the distortion gets bigger. A slow, SWIRL OF COLORS is now apparent, CIRCLING A BRIGHT DOT.

JOHNNY

We're entering yellow levels of radiation.

REED

That's close enough.

Ben adjusts the joystick.

SUE

I'm starting the onboard cameras.

Sue taps into her keyboard.

BEN

What is it?

REED

I'm not sure. But it's absolutely remarkable.

JOHNNY

Is it a black hole?

(CONTINUED)

REED

No. There's no indications of one of those. No gravity distortion. I wonder if it's the opposite though. We could be seeing the first ever white hole witnessed by man.

BEN

White hole?

REED

Yes. A theoretical phenomenon which would be the result of a black hole somewhere or sometime else. The opposite end of the drain so to speak.

SUE

It's beautiful.

REED

Okay, let's get to work. We're going to run as many tests as we can on this thing, for the few hours we have up here. Launching probe.

EXT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

A PANEL OPENS and a SMALL PROBE floats out into space. It fires pressurized gas and moves toward the ANOMALY.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

JOHNNY

The radiation's increasing.

REED

Ben, take us back a bit.

JOHNNY

It's going crazy, Reed. It's going off the scale!

SUE

Look!

The BRIGHT DOT at the center of the anomaly is suddenly getting LARGER.

REED

Calm down, everyone. We've got heavy shielding. We're safe.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

REED (CONT'D)

We're just going to put some distance between us until we know what we're dealing with.

The bright dot is INCREASING its size dramatically.

EXT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

Suddenly, the SWIRLING ENERGY EXPLODES OUTWARD, engulfing the Pogo Plane. Reed's PROBE twirls off into space.

A LARGE, SILVER OBJECT STREAKS OUT toward the Pogo Plane.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

PURPLE, NEBULOUS ENERGY washes over them.

For a split second, their faces register that this OBJECT is COMING STRAIGHT AT THEM. Then--

EXT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

The SILVER OBJECT SPLITS into THREE SMALLER, OBLONG OBJECTS.

One of which SLAMS into the back end of the POGO PLANE, LODGING itself in the hull. The ship spins back toward Earth.

The OTHER TWO OBJECTS streak off in DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

The cockpit is bathed in RED WARNING LIGHTS. ALARMS BLARE around them.

Reed and Ben frantically work the controls.

BEN

I can't get us out of the spin!

REED

Booster two is damaged. Power's fluctuating.

Sue and Johnny hold on to their seats.

BEN

Losing cabin pressure!

REED

We're going to re-enter Earth's atmosphere in four minutes and counting. Activating heat shields.

(CONTINUED)

Metal barriers close over the windows.

Ben fights with the joystick.

BEN

This doesn't look good, Reed.

REED

Never give up hope. Never.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

A TROPICAL ISLAND in the middle of nowhere.

We move in toward a MILITARY BASE stationed there, then past it, toward a FOREST.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

In a thick patch of trees, we see TWO MILITARY OFFICERS pulling a FILTHY SOLDIER out of a SMALL CAVE.

The man is SHORT and HOMELY, with a mean scowl. His name is HARVEY RUPERT ELDER.

HARVEY

Leave me alone!

MP #1

Move it!

MP #2

Get out of there!

They throw him forward, making him walk in front of them. MP #1 SHOVES Harvey with his rifle butt.

MP #1

There's only so many places you can hide on this island. We were gonna catch you sooner or later.

HARVEY

A little later rather than sooner, eh?

MP #2

You're a little psycho nutjob, Harvey. Paul might be crippled for life.

(CONTINUED)

HARVEY

I warned him not to touch my stuff.
Somebody takes what's mine, I take
it back.

MP #2

You had to break every bone in his
body?

HARVEY turns toward the MP and gives him a smug smile.

HARVEY

He got in my way.

MP #2

Keep moving.

MP #1 SHOVES Harvey forward again.

A WHISTLING SOUND is heard OVERHEAD.

They look up to see a SILVER OBJECT RACE ACROSS THE SKY and
land on the other side of the island with a LOUD THUMP.

Harvey uses the distraction and GRABS THE BARREL of MP #1's
rifle. He RAMS the RIFLE BUTT into the MP's jaw, sending him
sprawling to the ground.

MP #2 uses his own rifle to KNOCK THE WEAPON out of Harvey's
hands, then brings his up to shoot.

Harvey LATCHES onto MP #2's rifle with both hands. They
struggle for ownership. Harvey GROWLS like a savage animal
and pushes the barrel toward MP #1, managing to FIRE it.

SEVERAL SHOTS rip into MP #1, killing him.

Harvey SLUGS MP #2 in the nose, then SNATCHES the rifle out
of his grip. He FIRES it into MP #2.

The MP falls to the ground, dead.

Harvey smiles a big grin and runs back to his cave.

EXT. ISLAND / MILITARY BASE - DAY

Soldiers are running out of the base to see what the FALLEN
OBJECT is. It looks like the same TWO FOOT LONG, OBLONG,
ALIEN DEVICE that was stolen from Reed's lab.

The object suddenly SPLITS APART like a flower. Lights are
blinking inside.

The men cautiously back away.

(CONTINUED)

A FLASH as the OBJECT lets out an ENERGY WAVE that expands miles out in all directions.

INT. SMALL CAVE - DAY

HARVEY sits in the back of the cave, his rifle trained at the opening.

The ENERGY WAVE blasts past the cave entrance. A moment later, it's GONE.

Through the cave's opening, Harvey is baffled to see the TREES and FOLIAGE have been DISINTEGRATED.

He cautiously moves forward and peers outside.

This entire side of the island has been LEVELED.

He steps out and looks around, confused.

EXT. ISLAND / MILITARY BASE - DAY

HARVEY walks toward what's left of the MILITARY BASE, which isn't much. Just a SMOKING FOUNDATION.

He smiles, satisfied that he won't have to deal with them any longer. He turns and notices the small crater that the OBJECT lies in. Residual PURPLE ENERGY emanates from it.

He approaches and examines the OBJECT, not caring about the ENERGY WASHING OVER HIM. Its BLINKING LIGHTS are now PULSING in a rhythm. He touches it, fascinated by its beauty.

EXT. ASIAN FOREST - EVENING

A SNOWY FOREST SOMEWHERE in the WILDERNESS of ASIA.

The SECOND SILVER OBJECT strikes down over a hill, out of sight. We hear the dull IMPACT.

A moment later, a BRIGHT FLASH of LIGHT is seen beyond the hill as the energy wave is fired.

EXT. ASIAN FOREST / IMPACT SITE - EVENING

We see the expanse of LEVELED TREES surrounding the OBJECT.

Its LIGHTS begin to PULSATE in a rhythm.

EXT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

The POGO PLANE FALLS TOWARD EARTH. Its hull HEATS UP as it tumbles into the atmosphere. FLAMES lick across its surface.

INT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

Inside, REED, BEN, SUE, and JOHNNY are enduring EXTREME TURBULENCE.

Reed and Ben are working like madmen trying to regain control.

EXT. POGO PLANE - SPACE

The punctured booster rocket is IGNITED by the friction of re-entry and EXPLODES.

The Pogo Plane is thrown into an even WILDER SPIN.

Another booster rocket EXPLODES. The Pogo Plane is ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

It enters our blue skies as a BURNING COMET. It tears through clouds, flames beginning to die out. BLACK SMOKE trails after it.

INT. POGO PLANE - DAY

Sections of the hull BREAK AWAY. They see the BLUE SKY spinning by, through the GAPING HOLES.

BEN is holding the joystick with both hands, using all his strength to fight the roll.

BEN
C'mon, stabilize. You can do it,
baby.

EXT. POGO PLANE - DAY

One of the two remaining booster rockets fires in bursts slowing the spin. Then BOTH ROCKETS FIRE and it PULLS UP SLIGHTLY, coming in at an angle.

INT. POGO PLANE - DAY

BEN is eyeing the readouts.

BEN
This is gonna hurt.

EXT. POGO PLANE - DAY

The POGO PLANE rips through the air in a decreased spin, heading for a BEACH.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

IMPACT! It CRASHES into the earth, FALLING APART as it TUMBLES across the shore.

It finally comes to a stop as a BURNING, TWISTED WRECK.

A QUIET scene. PIECES OF SHIP trail along the beach.

Then... a SCREAM of agony is heard.

A BURNING FIGURE climbs out of the wreckage. It's JOHNNY. He stumbles out onto the beach, screaming. He runs for the OCEAN and falls into the water.

A huge cloud of STEAM wafts up.

Johnny surfaces, his flames EXTINGUISHED. He looks at his hands and sees NO BURNS. He feels his face. Smooth as ever.

He crawls onto the beach. The little bit that's left of his spacesuit is BLACKENED and SCORCHED. He turns and looks at the wreckage.

JOHNNY

Sue! Reed!

He gets up and staggers toward the craft. He TRIPS on something and falls to the sand.

He sees that his foot got caught in some kind of FLESH-COLORED MATERIAL. He picks it up and is shocked.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

He sees that ONE END TRAILS OFF INTO THE WATER and the OTHER END is connected to a GLOVED HAND. He picks up the hand and looks back at the water, then realizes what's happened.

He GRABS the FLESHY MATERIAL and frantically REELS IT IN. He pulls in a SPACESUIT. The fleshy material hangs out of the sleeves and leggings.

He drags it onto the beach and sees REED'S HEAD hanging to the side, like his neck is broken.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Oh, no... Reed...

Johnny holds Reeds head, cradling it. Reed's eyes blink open. He moans in pain.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Reed! You're alive! Don't move!
You're hurt!

REED

What happened? Why do I feel so
strange?

Reed rolls over to get up. His ELASTIC LIMBS SNAP BACK into their NORMAL STATE. The last limb to return to normal is his RIGHT HAND, which he watches SLITHER THROUGH THE SAND TOWARDS HIMSELF, snapping back into place.

Reed is frozen, staring at his hand for a moment.

REED (CONT'D)

What?!

JOHNNY

That's what I said. Something
freaky's going on. I was on fire,
but there's not a mark on me. Now
you're a rubber band.

REED

Where are the others?

JOHNNY

I don't know.

Reed stands up and runs toward the wreckage.

REED

Sue! Ben! Can you hear me?

EXT. BEACH / NEAR WRECKAGE - DAY

Elsewhere on the beach near a piece of wreckage, BEN is lying on the ground face down, BRUISED and BLOODIED.

He can hear Reed's calls in the distance, but can't answer. He's CONVULSING, gritting his teeth, trying to block out the pain.

His FACE and HANDS begin to SWELL UP, taking on an ORANGE complexion. His spacesuit RIPS as his BODY'S MASS EXPANDS.

EXT. BEACH / MAIN WRECKAGE - DAY

REED and JOHNNY search the main wreckage for the others.

Reed notices that the fire inside the wreck is strangely leaving a SECTION OF THE FLOOR UNTOUCHED.

(CONTINUED)

They carefully enter, looking for their friends.

SUE'S VOICE
 REED! Help me!

They look toward the untouched section.

REED
 Sue! Where are you?

SUE'S VOICE
 Over here! I can't get past the
 fire!

Reed furrows his brow, unable to find her.

Johnny moves closer.

JOHNNY
 Where?

SUE
 Right here! In front of you!

Johnny tries to see through the fire. As he leans forward, the flames FLICKER TOWARD HIM, drawn to him like a magnet.

He watches the way the fire is REACTING TO HIM, amazed. He puts his HAND near the flame.

The fire STRAINS to touch him. He moves his hand CLOSER and the flames writhe around his hand. He doesn't feel any pain and looks at Reed.

SUE (CONT'D)
 Johnny!

JOHNNY
 It's okay, sis.

Reed is silent, intrigued by the phenomenon.

Johnny turns back to the fire and stands before it, holding out his hands. He concentrates.

The fire ROARS TOWARD HIM like a FIERY TORNADO. His ENTIRE BODY is an INFERNO, ABSORBING ALL THE FLAMES IN THE ROOM. Johnny doesn't seem to be in any discomfort at all.

Reed glances down, then back up.

REED
 Johnny. Look down.

(CONTINUED)

Johnny looks down. His FEET are DANGLING a FOOT OFF THE GROUND. His FLAMES DIE OUT and he FALLS back to the floor. He stands in utter shock, then looks up and smiles.

JOHNNY

Is this great or what?

SUE

What's happened to you?

They look back at the area that is now free of flames. Reed walks cautiously into the area.

REED

I can't see y--

Reed BUMPS into an INVISIBLE WALL. He feels around, examining the barrier.

SUE

Reed, I can't get to you. There's something in the way.

REED

Yes, I've noticed. Listen to me. I want you to take a deep breath and relax. You're safe now. We're all okay. Just relax.

Sue materializes a foot away from Reed.

Johnny blinks in amazement.

Reed's hands which were resting against the barrier, suddenly fall forward as the force field disappears. Sue and Reed hug.

Johnny and Reed exchange glances.

REED (CONT'D)

C'mon, we have to find Ben.

EXT. BEACH / NEAR WRECKAGE - DAY

REED, SUE, and JOHNNY search the beach, CALLING OUT for Ben.

BEN (O.S.)

Over here...

They hurry over to where he is and come to a halt.

(CONTINUED)

BEN has TRANSFORMED into an ORANGE ROCKY MONSTROSITY. He looks similar to how we know him now, but his exterior is more... in the formation stage. The "ROCKS" aren't hardened yet, they're still FRESH and "LUMPY" LOOKING.

He's kneeling in the sand, resting on one arm. He slowly looks up at them.

They stare in horror.

BEN (CONT'D)
What's happened to me?

They have no answer.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. DOOM'S CHAMBER / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

FADE IN:

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)
...and from that twisted wreckage,
the Fantastic Four were born.
Making our city, and the world,
safer for us to live in.

ON TV: An image of the FF waving to the cameras on the FRONT PAGE of the New York Times with a headline reading:

**REAL LIFE SUPER-HEROES!!!
THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**

The image shrinks as the BIOGRAPHY HOST APPEARS on the TV.

NEWSWOMAN
And Mr. Richards' many inventions are changing the way we live. As you may already know, his patented Unstable Molecules are about to go public. This amazing technology lets clothing become fire resistant and unrippable. This is what lets Mr. Richard's uniform stretch with him and let's the Torch "flame on" without ruining his clothing. The possibilities of this technology are mind-boggling. Why, you could even--

The TV blinks OFF.

(CONTINUED)

The CLOAKED, ARMORED FIGURE sits silently in the shadows.

CLOAKED FIGURE
(spiteful)
Your invention...

He looks at his ARMORED HANDS.

CLOAKED FIGURE (CONT'D)
They give you all the glory, don't
they? Even the gods smile on you,
rewarding you with powers beyond
imagination...

We see his EYES now, filled with PAIN and ANGER, surrounded
by SCARRED, TWISTED FLESH.

CLOAKED FIGURE (CONT'D)
...while they curse and abandon me.

We move into his HAUNTED EYES.

EXT. COLLEGE LAB - DAY

FLASHBACK.

We PULL AWAY from the CLOAKED FIGURE'S EYES and now see him
as he was at the AGE OF 24, peering through a microscope.
He's HEALTHY and UNSCARRED, yet still looks bitter.

REED (O.S.)
Victor, I want you to meet someone.

He looks up from his microscope and sees REED RICHARDS, at
AGE 23, walk into the lab with a SKINNY 19 YEAR OLD KID
wearing thick glasses.

REED (CONT'D)
(to skinny guy)
Bruce, this is Victor Von Doom,
resident genius. Victor, this is
Bruce Banner.

BRUCE
Hi.

VICTOR steps away from his work and shakes hands with Bruce.

VICTOR
(insincere)
Nice to meet you.

(CONTINUED)

REED

(to Victor)

Bruce here has some intriguing notions about our unstable molecules. I was thinking of bringing him in on our research along with Stark and Pym.

VICTOR

I don't think that will be necessary. I'm getting close to our goal.

REED

But they can help. They're coming up with some revolutionary ideas.

VICTOR

(to Bruce)

Excuse us.

Victor pulls Reed to the side.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(to Reed)

What do you think you're doing? This is our project. We came up with the concept.

REED

Actually, I came up with it.

VICTOR

You hypothesized. We did the problem solving together. It's our discovery. Bringing in all these others when we're so close, they're just going to take away our glory.

REED

I don't care about the glory. I care about furthering science.

VICTOR

The answer is no.

Reed's face tightens. He walks over to Bruce.

REED

It seems we're further along than I had thought.

BRUCE

That's okay. I understand.

(CONTINUED)

REED

I'd like to discuss some of your ideas about gamma radiation though.

BRUCE

Sure. Anytime.

REED

I'll call you in a few days.

BRUCE

Okay.

Bruce exits.

REED

You're limiting yourself, Victor.

VICTOR

No, you limit yourself by relying on others. I'm intelligent enough to figure everything out on my own.

SUE (O.S.)

You ready to go?

SUE, AGE 20, walks in looking as cute as ever. BEN, AGE 24, walks beside her.

Victor SMILES at the sight of her. The only warmth we've seen from him so far.

Reed smiles and gives her a kiss.

Victor's smile DISAPPEARS and he looks on with a cold stare.

BEN

Hey, Vicky. How's things in Transylvania?

VICTOR

It's pronounced Latveria and I do not take kindly to you mocking my country.

BEN

You know I'm just yankin' yer chain, Vicky.

VICTOR

I tolerate even less you mocking my name.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
Would you prefer Dr. Doom?

SUE
Ben, stop it. Leave him alone. I'm
sorry, Victor. Ben just likes to
tease.

VICTOR
(smiles)
It's all right, Susan. People like
Benjamin balance out the scale. If
someone with superior intellect,
like myself, exists, then an
imbecile like Ben must also walk
the earth.

BEN
Hey!

Ben moves toward Victor with his fists clenched, but Reed
holds him back.

REED
Ben. Let's go.

Reed and Sue pull Ben toward the door.

VICTOR
Thank you for existing, Benjamin.
You've done the world a great
service by allowing me to be here.

EXT. COLLEGE HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

BEN
How can you work with a guy like
him?

REED
I wonder that myself sometimes.

EXT. COLLEGE LAB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

VICTOR
Idiots. Ignorant children.

He turns back to his microscope.

(CONTINUED)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
You go on and waste your life,
Reed, while I make the discovery of
a lifetime.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COLLEGE LAB - NIGHT

VICTOR looks exhausted, having worked well into the night. He's staring into an ELECTRON MICROSCOPE that's been customized with VARIOUS GADGETS and GIZMOS.

INT. REED'S ROOM / COLLEGE DORMITORY - NIGHT

REED is ASLEEP in bed.

Someone BANGS on the door.

Reed wakes and stumbles out of bed to answer. He glances over at his roommate, BEN, who is sitting up, squinting angrily at the door.

BEN
What the hell time is it?

Reed swings the door open. The 19 yr old kid, BRUCE BANNER, is on the other side looking like he's seen a ghost.

BRUCE
Reed, there's been an accident at
the lab!

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

REED and BEN, having thrown on some clothes, run down the hallway toward the lab. People have already gathered.

WALLS are CRACKED and BLACK SMOKE is BILLOWING out of the entrance. PARAMEDICS are already on the scene.

Reed and Ben squeeze by into the lab and stare in shock.

The place is DEMOLISHED. The far wall that held the electron microscope has been BLOWN AWAY.

They see the paramedics putting a BODY on a stretcher, fitting an OXYGEN MASK to the man's face.

PARAMEDIC
Clear the way! Move!

(CONTINUED)

Reed and Ben move aside as the victim is carried past them.

It's VICTOR. His body is a MASS OF BURNS. His HAIR is GONE. His FLESH is TWISTED and STEAMING. His RIGHT ARM is MISSING as well as most of his RIGHT LEG. His left arm and leg are MANGLED, with multiple breaks.

His FACE is MOSTLY HIDDEN behind the oxygen mask, but as he's carried by, his EYES LOCK ONTO THEM. His eyes are CRAZED, showing AGONY and ANGER and most of all, HUMILIATION.

INT. COLLEGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

As VICTOR is wheeled down the hall, he overhears the paramedics pushing him.

PARAMEDIC #1

His heart's fluctuating. Blood pressure is decreasing. I don't think he's gonna make it.

PARAMEDIC #2

If he does, he's gonna wish he didn't.

We move in on Victor's eyes closing, shutting the world out.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. DOOM'S CHAMBER / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

In the PRESENT, VICTOR opens his eyes, coming out of his memories. He looks at his ARMORED HANDS again.

VICTOR

I've learned your secret, old friend.

He reaches over to a table next to him and picks up a METALLIC MASK. He BRINGS it to his SHADOWED FACE. We HEAR it CLICK into place.

He rises from his chair and we see him for the first time in full light.

Once known as Victor Von Doom, now he is simply DOOM. Sinister MASK, ARMORED BODY, long GREEN CLOAK. A powerful image. He pulls on his HOOD and strides down a hall.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

DOOM enters the TRANSFERENCE ROOM.

(CONTINUED)

The place is GIGANTIC and quite unexpectedly HI-TECH. Every surface is metal or plastic. The far end of the room ends in a basin.

A PLATFORM stretches out over the basin and ends in a CONTROL CONSOLE with some sort of BODY BRACE ATTACHED.

There are THREE "CRADLES" set around the basin. In the first "cradle" is the ALIEN OBJECT stolen from Reed's lab. In the second, is an IDENTICAL OBJECT. The third "cradle" is EMPTY.

DOOM caresses the first "cradle's" OBJECT.

DOOM

I'm going to scale Mount Olympus,
Richards, and push you off the
summit.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - MORNING

REED is standing by his large computer station. SUE, BEN, and JOHNNY are standing next to him.

REED

Here's what I've found. Fact
number one: I'm a fool. Here's
some of the footage we retrieved
from the Pogo Plane wreckage. I've
slowed it down.

ON MONITOR: SLOW-MO shot from one of the Pogo Plane's exterior cameras. It's focused on the SPACE ANOMALY.

The Anomaly FLARES and ENERGY EXPLODES OUTWARD. The SILVER OBJECT shoots out toward them.

REED (CONT'D)

Now watch that object.

ON MONITOR: The footage slows further as the object SPLITS into THREE SMALLER OBJECTS right before going out of frame.

SUE

(surprised)
It split into three.

REED

Precisely. I never noticed it. I assumed the object that struck us was singular. All this time there were two more out there.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

Well, we were a little preoccupied at the time.

REED

No excuse. I should have investigated more thoroughly.

BEN

What do you think they want with it?

REED

I haven't a clue. I do know it's a probe designed to measure the Earth's energies, mass, etc. But where it came from and why someone wants it now, are questions I can't answer. Our's never activated because it was damaged when it rammed into us. The other two, however, might have been perfectly functional and sent a signal out.

JOHNNY

Maybe the owners have come to get it.

REED

No, I don't think so.

SUE

Why not?

REED

Using the information from the Pogo Plane, I tracked the trajectories of where they likely went down. Then I traced the residual radiation signature from my analysis of the one we found and...

ON MONITOR: a COMPUTER GRAPHIC of the CONTINENTS. THREE GREEN DOTS and THREE RED DOTS are represented on the map.

Reed points to a GREEN dot in MEXICO.

REED (CONT'D)

Here's where we ended up along with the probe we found.

He points to a GREEN DOT somewhere in Asia.

(CONTINUED)

REED (CONT'D)

Here's where the second one hit.

Reed points to the middle of the Pacific Ocean where a GREEN and RED DOT are together.

REED (CONT'D)

And here is where the third probe hit and where it still is.

Sue points to TWO RED DOTS in Europe.

SUE

So, this is where the two other probes are now?

REED

Correct.

JOHNNY

Where is that?

REED

Latveria.

BEN

Why's that name sound familiar?

REED

Victor was from there.

BEN

You gotta be kiddin' me.

JOHNNY

Who's Victor?

SUE

You don't think he's involved with this, do you?

BEN

Last I heard, he was completely crippled. Practically a vegetable.

JOHNNY

Who's Victor?

REED

He'd be one of the few people smart enough to disable my security and design the devices those robbers used against us.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Well, let's go check up on him and have ourselves a little reunion.

REED

Not yet. I want to get to that last probe before he does.

BEN

Let's do it.

Reed, Sue, and Ben march off toward the door.

JOHNNY

Hey guys! Who's Victor?

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The FANTASTICAR ZOOMS full speed over the glistening ocean. It's a magnificent sight seeing it at this velocity.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

All four of them are seated with REED at the controls.

REED

We're closing in on it.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

The FANTASTICAR slows as it approaches the island. It moves along the coastline.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

REED

It seems we're in luck. It's not under the ocean.

They see the REMNANTS of the MILITARY BASE ahead.

JOHNNY

What's that?

BEN

A military base.

SUE

You mean, what's left of a military base.

JOHNNY

Looks like it was disintegrated.

(CONTINUED)

REED

There's the impact site.

SUE

This couldn't have been caused by the impact.

REED

No. Some type of explosion. Peculiar though. There's no scorching. No sign of extreme heat.

BEN

I don't see the probe.

REED

It's been moved. The readings say it's still on the island though. Let's see where it leads us.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

The FANTASTICAR glides over the top of a tropical forest and comes upon a HUGE, DARK HOLE in the ground, measuring about SEVENTY FEET wide.

JOHNNY

Wow.

BEN

Let me guess, it's down there.

REED

Looks like it.

JOHNNY

Are we going down inside?

REED

Yes we are.

JOHNNY

All right!

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

The FANTASTICAR DESCENDS into the HOLE, staying horizontal like a VTOL plane.

INT. ISLAND / HOLE - DAY

The FANTASTICAR is swallowed up by the blackness. The vehicle's BRIGHT, OUTSIDE LAMPS TURN ON, illuminating the dirt walls as they lower into the dark pit.

INT. FANTASTICAR - IN HOLE

BEN

This is downright creepy.

JOHNNY

Wanna hold my hand?

BEN

Get outta here.

Johnny laughs.

REED

We're reaching the bottom.

Reed looks at a monitor showing a view underneath them.

REED (CONT'D)

Nothing on the floor beneath us.

Let me swing around.

Through windows: The dirt walls rotate as he spins the craft in a circle, until they see a GAPING TUNNEL ahead.

REED (CONT'D)

Hmm.

SUE

Down the rabbit hole.

REED

Indeed. Curiouser and curiouser.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - IN HOLE

The Fantastical glides forward into the foreboding tunnel.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - IN TUNNEL

The Fantastical jets slowly down the tunnel, illuminating the walls as it goes.

INT. FANTASTICAR - IN TUNNEL

They watch in silence as they move further inside.

(CONTINUED)

Reed slows as a CRAGGY, DARK GREEN WALL appears out of the darkness in front of them.

SUE
Weird looking stuff. Volcanic?

REED
I don't recognize it.

Suddenly, a portion of the wall in front of them MOVES UPWARD, REVEALING a THREE FOOT EYE.

The four of them gasp and lean back.

A DEEP RUMBLING is heard. DIRT falls as the tunnel SHAKES around them.

They watch as the "wall" BLINKS again and then MOVES SIDeways into a tunnel wall, revealing ITSELF to be a small portion of a much larger CREATURE. It quickly disappears.

They sit in silence, stunned by what they've just seen.

REED (CONT'D)
Incredible.

Reed swings the craft a little, so they can see the new tunnel it just created upon its exit.

BEN
What in the blazes did we just see?

REED
We saw whatever is making these tunnels.

JOHNNY
Awesome! I love this!

SUE
What on Earth could it have been?

REED
The mind boggles. I'm tempted to follow it and find out what it is, but the probe is down the tunnel we're in. And that's our primary goal. Everything else is secondary.

BEN
You ain't gonna get an argument from me, Stretch.

(CONTINUED)

REED
Let's press on.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - IN TUNNEL

The craft swings around and continues down the main tunnel.

INT. FANTASTICAR - IN CAVERN

They enter an ENORMOUS CAVERN, where another SMALL CRAFT is parked on the cavern floor.

REED
Someone beat us to it.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - IN CAVERN

IN A CAVE SOMEWHERE IN THE CAVERN WALL:

A SHADOWY, SHORT MAN watches as the Fantasticar lands and powers down. SMALLER, THIN FIGURES, the size of a 5 year old child, cling to the man's legs.

CAVERN FLOOR:

The FF step down and walk toward the other craft.

The cavern is PITCH BLACK. The LAMPS on their vehicle and the other craft hardly make a dent in the blackness.

REED keeps glancing down at a PORTABLE TRACKER he's carrying.

BEN
Cripes, it's dark in here.

JOHNNY
I'll flame on and light the area.

REED
NO! Don't. You can't flame on, Johnny. There might be pockets of natural gas down here that you could ignite.

JOHNNY
Great.

REED
(looking at scanner)
It's over there.

He points to an area cloaked in darkness. He turns on a FLASHLIGHT he brought with him and they walk into the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

The silence is oppressive, broken only by their FOOTSTEPS and occasional UNIDENTIFIABLE NOISES that echo in the distance.

SUE

What's making those noises?

JOHNNY

Sounds like kids running around in the walls.

BEN

Geez, I hate this crap.

REED

Shh.

They stop and listen. They hear something RUNNING TOWARD THEM in the darkness.

An ARMORED HAND SMACKS Reed's FLASHLIGHT out of his hands. As it TWIRLS into the dark, we glimpse a SHINY ARMORED FIGURE holding ONE HAND out at them.

A half second of darkness then a BLINDING FLASH of LIGHT. In that brief moment, we see the FF react by trying to cover their eyes.

Then PITCH BLACKNESS and the SOUND of BOOTS RUNNING AWAY.

REED'S VOICE

BEN! Follow the sound of his footsteps!

We hear Ben's MASSIVE FEET hitting the earth as he breaks into a run. It's an intimidating sound.

The FLASHLIGHT is picked up by Reed. We can now see him, along with Sue and Johnny running after Ben.

NEAR DOOM'S CRAFT:

DOOM runs into the lit area by his ship, heading for the entrance. He's carrying the third OBJECT.

Ben's THUNDERING FOOTSTEPS are right behind him.

Doom opens the door, but Ben SLAMS it shut, CAVING in the door as well as part of the craft's exterior body.

BEN

Sorry, pal.

Doom SPINS out from under Ben's imposing frame, reaches under his cape and TOSSES a SMALL SPHERE at him.

(CONTINUED)

Ben puts up a hand to block it. The SPHERE EXPLODES, knocking Ben down to the ground.

REED'S ARM WRAPS around Doom's arm and PULLS it up, RELEASING the object from his grasp.

Johnny runs in and catches it as it falls.

Doom looks at Johnny and SWINGS HIS OTHER ARMORED FIST at him. It bounces off an invisible wall between them.

JOHNNY
(smiles)
Oops. Nice try.

Doom GRABS REED'S ARM WITH BOTH HANDS. ELECTRICITY CRACKLES around his metallic gauntlets.

Reed lets out a cry of pain.

Doom tosses Reed's LIMP ARM aside.

DOOM
Do not touch me.

BEN is back on his feet, ready to act.

JOHNNY stands back, guarding the object.

REED is nursing his arm which is back to its normal state.

SUE is holding her hands out toward Doom.

DOOM stands his ground facing all four of them.

SUE
I've got him contained.

DOOM
Give me the probe.

REED
Who are you?

DOOM
I am Doom.

REED
Victor? Is that really you?

DOOM
Victor is no more, Richards.

(CONTINUED)

REED

Victor, why are you doing this?
What do you want with these
objects?

DOOM

That is of no concern to you.

REED

These things are probes for
something unknown. If you activate
them, you're putting the planet at
risk. Until we know if the minds
behind them are hostile or
friendly, I can't allow you to
possess them.

DOOM

You speak as if I were a child.
You insult me. Remember Richards,
mine was, and always will be, the
superior intellect.

BEN

You haven't changed a bit, Vicky.
Still the same old snob.

DOOM

Ah, but you have changed, haven't
you Benjamin? Once as dumb as a
rock, now you've taken on the
appearance of one too.

Ben storms over and towers above him.

REED

Ben...

BEN

I know what you look like under all
that armor. A crippled, little man
who wishes he were as smart as he
thinks he is.

DOOM

Richards, please make your pet ape
go away. I'm afraid he's going to
drool on me while he babbles.

REED

That's enough. We need to put him
in a holding cell at home until we
decide what to do with him. Sue,
can you lift him on board?

(CONTINUED)

Sue concentrates, focusing on Doom.

Doom RISES A FOOT OFF THE GROUND, encased in a shimmering, invisible box. He puts his hands out against the force field, to balance himself.

SUE

He's pretty heavy. I can't carry him for long.

REED

Okay. Let's get him inside and get out of here.

EXT. FANTASTICAR - IN CAVERN

IN A CAVE SOMEWHERE IN THE CAVERN WALL:

THE SHADOWY, SHORT MAN watches as the FANTASTICAR LIFTS UP into the air, heading for the main tunnel.

SHORT MAN

(growls)

Thieves.

The SMALL CREATURES clinging to him, CHITTER in agreement.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

The FANTASTICAR RISES out of the HOLE into daylight. It swings around and flies off over the SEA.

INT. FANTASTICAR - DAY

The four of them are strapped in as they jet over the ocean.

DOOM stands in the back, still imprisoned in SUE'S FIELD.

JOHNNY is turned around, watching Doom.

BEN

Ignore him, kid. He ain't going nowhere.

JOHNNY

(to Reed)

You went to college with this guy?

SUE

Yep.

REED

I once considered him a friend.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
Some friend.

Doom stands in the back, not reacting to anything that has been said. He's a metal statue.

INT. HANGAR / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The FANTASTICAR enters the hanger, coming in for a landing.

INT. HOLDING CELL / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

SUE walks in and brings DOOM in via her force field prison. REED walks in behind him, followed by BEN and JOHNNY.

BEN
He must really be ticked. He's given us the silent treatment the whole trip.

Reed taps some controls on a wall and a METAL TABLE RISES out of the floor.

REED
Now lay him down.

Sue holds out her hands and concentrates. Doom turns in the air, lying horizontal. She places him on the table.

REED (CONT'D)
Hold him...

He taps a button.

HI-TECH CLAMPS pop out of the table around Doom's ARMS, LEGS, and WAIST.

REED (CONT'D)
Okay. He's secure.

The shimmering cube around Doom DISAPPEARS as Sue SHUTS DOWN her force field. She relaxes, having been put under a tremendous strain. Reed comforts her.

REED (CONT'D)
You all right?

SUE
Yeah. It just took a lot out of me. Major headache kicking in.

Johnny leans over Doom.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY
Hey, Doomy. You there?

Johnny knocks on Doom's forehead. Ben chuckles.

REED
Don't do that, Johnny. Show some respect.

JOHNNY
I don't think he's home.

Reed moves closer and examines him.

REED
Victor. Victor, can you hear me?
(to Sue)
You made sure there was an airhole
in your force field, right?

SUE
Of course.

Reed turns back to Doom, troubled. He feels along the MASK, finding the RELEASE LATCHES. He undoes them and gently LIFTS the MASK OFF of Doom.

They react in ASTONISHMENT.

BEN
Geez.

We see what they see. A MASS OF CIRCUITRY, WIRES AND ROBOTICS. There is NO MAN inside the armor.

BEN (CONT'D)
He's a robot!

DISSOLVE TO:

REED is alone in the room with Doom. He's taken MAJOR SECTIONS OF THE ARMOR OFF, revealing more of the ROBOTICS underneath. He's leaning against a wall, holding his chin, as he contemplates the robot.

SUE walks in.

SUE
You've been at this for hours.

REED
I wanted to make sure I removed its
power sources.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

REED (CONT'D)

I've located seven individual micro-generators, but I can't tell if I got them all.

SUE

Have you given any thought about why he wants the probes?

REED

As a matter of fact, I have.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

REED stands near the recovered PROBE. SUE, BEN AND JOHNNY stand around it, listening to him.

REED

I don't believe Victor has any intention of wanting to signal whoever sent these out. He's a selfish man. Someone who wants something for himself. Now what could that be? Well, what happened when the wormhole opened up near us? We were exposed to strange energies.

SUE

(realizing)

Which gave us our abilities.

REED

And seems to have mutated the indigenous animals on that island as well.

JOHNNY

He's hoping to get powers like us.

REED

And to someone who is crippled and disfigured, it's a dream come true.

BEN

Or a nightmare.

A moment of uncomfortable silence...

REED

Ben, I know how it must be for you, but--

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Don't say it, Reed. You have no idea what it's like to be me. Afraid to touch anything because I might break it. To be stared at because I'm a monster. To see the look of fear and disgust in every eye that I look into. Don't ever say ya understand what it's like. Ever.

Sue puts her arm around him.

REED

I'm sorry. You're absolutely right. I want you to know that I've never stopped searching for a way to change you back.

BEN

My hopes ain't high, Stretch.

JOHNNY

If there's a way, Reed will find it. Heck, the man can open up alternate dimensions. He can do anything!

The BUILDING suddenly SHAKES VIOLENTLY.

They look around, puzzled.

The building SHAKES AGAIN. ALARMS start going off.

Reed dashes over to his control console.

REED

(looking at monitors)
The building's been breached!
We're suffering structural damage!

JOHNNY

(tapping on console)
Bringing up external cameras.

They freeze as they look at the monitor.

BEN

Mother pusbucket.

JOHNNY

You can say that again.

(CONTINUED)

CRASH!!! The WALL behind them SMASHES APART as a SCALY, GREEN CLAW REACHES IN. The claw is HUGE, larger than a man.

BEN rushes forward and GRABS the claw, trying to push it back.

Johnny runs for the HOLE in the wall and leaps out, FLAMING ON in the process.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

JOHNNY, now the TORCH, flies out and hovers a moment looking down at a HUGE CREATURE CLINGING to the side of the BAXTER BUILDING. It's covered in that same SCALY, GREEN TEXTURE as the creature they encountered in the tunnel earlier.

Johnny points both ARMS down at the beast and SHOOTS a STREAM of FLAMES at it.

It SCREAMS in PAIN.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The creature PULLS it's arm OUT of the hole.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The CREATURE uses it's free hand to try and SWAT Johnny out of the air, but Johnny continues to stay out of reach, SHOOTING FLAMES at it.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

BEN can see a PORTION of the CREATURE'S FACE through the hole in the wall. He CHARGES and swings a POWERHOUSE PUNCH at it.

The impact sends it FLYING BACKWARD OFF THE BUILDING.

Ben is about to go over from his own momentum, but REED'S ARMS ENTWINE around him, pulling him back.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING / STREET LEVEL - DAY

The creature HITS THE PAVEMENT with an EARTH-SHAKING CRASH. It smashes through, leaving a GIGANTIC HOLE in the street.

People are scattering left and right.

It STIRS and begins CLIMBING out of the crater. It looks up at the Baxter Building and ROARS.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

Reed, Sue, and Ben look down at the street below. They see Johnny FLY DOWN toward the monster and attack it again.

BEN
It's still kickin'. No time for
the elevator.

Ben JUMPS OUT of the hole.

BEN (CONT'D)
LOOK OUT BELOW!

Sue STEPS OUT ONTO A FORCE FIELD and starts to LOWER HERSELF DOWN to the street.

Reed is about to stretch down when he hears a NOISE somewhere behind him. He turns around and sees that the PROBE is GONE!

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING / STREET LEVEL - DAY

BEN LANDS on the creature. It reels back from the impact as Ben rolls off to the ground. It turns toward Ben, who is just standing up.

People are running in all directions. Some are screaming bloody murder, while others stand amazed, unable to take their eyes off the spectacle.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

REED rushes back inside and looks around. He sees a VENTILATION DUCT HANGING OPEN on the side of the wall. He leans in and looks down.

IN VENTILATION DUCT:

BLACKNESS. And the sound of something SHUFFLING DOWN THE SHAFT at a rapid rate.

Reed STRETCHES DOWN inside.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING / STREET LEVEL - DAY

BEN is FLUNG into a building, CAVING IN a portion of the wall.

SUE throws a force field up protecting nearby people from the falling debris.

The CREATURE turns and looks at her. It raises its claw.

Sue VANISHES.

(CONTINUED)

The creature hesitates, then turns its head, FOLLOWING SOMETHING. It SWINGS its CLAW down and SLAMS into an INVISIBLE WALL.

Sue grunts as she REAPPEARS where it struck, falling backward from the impact. She lays on the pavement with the wind knocked out of her.

SUE
(dazed, to herself)
It can see me!

A SHADOW APPEARS over her.

She turns around to see its CLAW COMING DOWN AGAIN. She holds up her hands, straining to keep a shield up. Its claw BOUNCES off her wall. She gasps from the force of the blow.

Johnny swoops low and hovers in front of its face.

JOHNNY
Hey buddy! Back off! That's my
sis!

He holds out both fists and lets loose with a BLAZING STREAM of FIRE at its head. It roars and turns away.

INT. HOLDING CELL / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

DOOM'S robot lays on the table, partly dismantled.

A PANEL OPENS UP on his chest. A SMALL, WHIRRING OBJECT RISES from inside the DOOMBOT.

INT. CASTLE DOOM / DOOM'S CHAMBER - DAY

The REAL DOOM sits at his controls, watching a monitor screen.

ON MONITOR: we see a FISH-EYE VIEW of the HOLDING ROOM, from the P.O.V. of that small object in the Doombot's chest.

INT. HOLDING CELL / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The Doombot's SMALL DEVICE slowly SPINS around.

INT. CASTLE DOOM / DOOM'S CHAMBER - DAY

Doom adjusts the controls, watching the camera view spin until it's focused on the CONTROL PANEL on the wall.

INT. HOLDING CELL / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

The Doombot's device STREAKS across the room and SMASHES into the control panel, EXPLODING on contact.

The TABLE'S RESTRAINTS UNCLAMP and RETRACT.

The DOOMBOT gets off the table and picks up it's MASK, snapping it back into place. It moves to the locked door and reaches to its side, pulling out the small CODEBREAKER device.

The Doombot places it on the door's control panel. A second later, the door UNLOCKS and OPENS.

INT. BAXTER BUILDING / AIR DUCTS - DAY

REED STRETCHES into the dark air ducts pausing at intersections, listening, then following the SCURRYING NOISE.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING / STREET LEVEL - DAY

BEN picks up a CAR and HURLS it at the CREATURE.

BEN

NOW, KID!

JOHNNY swoops by and TORCHES the CAR as it HITS the CREATURE. The CAR EXPLODES.

The creature screams and SLAMS its CLAW into the street in an attempt to swat Johnny. He easily DODGES.

JOHNNY

No use! This thing is
indestructible!

UNSEEN by the others, a VENT pops OPEN and TWO of those CHILD-SIZE creatures we saw in the cave, come clambering out, carrying the PROBE.

They have DULL, PALE YELLOW skin with UNNATURAL WRINKLES all over. Their EYES are LARGE and BULBOUS, SQUINTING in the daylight. They rush away with their prize.

REED EMERGES from the same VENT, STRETCHING out onto the street. He looks ASTONISHED as he sees the STRANGE CREATURES rushing toward a SHORT MAN, hiding in the shadows.

It's HARVEY RUPERT ELDER. His khaki MILITARY CLOTHES are FILTHY and TATTERED. His SKIN is PALER and has the same UNNATURAL WRINKLES as his minions. He's lost some hair and his face has gotten even UGLIER.

(CONTINUED)

Harvey takes the PROBE and clutches it to his chest. He looks up and sees REED STRETCHING out of the vent.

HARVEY
 (giggles)
 A man made of gum. I see this has
 already affected you as well.

Reed studies the man, listening to his words.

REED
 Who are you?

HARVEY
 I'm lord of the underworld. And
 this...
 (pats the probe)
 ...was sent down to me from the
 heavens to grant me the power to
 rule over all of you.

Reed realizes the man is insane.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
 And you sir, tried to steal it from
 me! THIEF!

A HUGE CLAW LANDS on Reed and DRAGS him away. Reed screams in pain, his body WRAPPING around the creature's hand, trying to slither out. The creature SQUEEZES Reed's body.

BEN GRABS part of Reed and tries to pull him out of the beast's hand. Reed's body STRETCHES to a dangerously thin state. Reed SCREAMS EVEN LOUDER, experiencing pure agony.

The creature's ENORMOUS FIST SMACKS Ben away, sending him FLYING down the street.

Ben HITS a CAR, his ROCKY FORM RIPPING through the metal as if it were paper. He keeps rolling, TAKING OUT A COUPLE MORE CARS, A LAMP POST, and finally HITTING the SIDE of a BUILDING. He lies unconscious as debris falls down on him.

Johnny dives in and tries to burn the creature's wrist.

REED
 (in pain)
 Johnny! Get the neuro staff!

JOHNNY
 The what?

REED
 Neuro staff! Use it on HIM!

(CONTINUED)

Reed points down at HARVEY.

Johnny turns and looks.

REED (CONT'D)
I think he's...
(screams in pain)
...in control of this beast.

Johnny FLIES up to the HOLE in the Baxter Building.

INT. REED'S LAB / BAXTER BUILDING - DAY

JOHNNY lands inside, FLAMING OFF. He rushes over to a wall and opens a panel, REVEALING THE WEAPONS that the bank robbers used against them.

He grabs the METALLIC STAFF.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING / STREET LEVEL - DAY

HARVEY snickers as the creature continues to beat the Fantastic Four into the ground.

HARVEY
Crush them!

He notices SOMETHING IN THE SKY. He sees a FIERY COMET flying down towards him.

He backs up, then begins to run away from the FIRE BALL. He DASHES around the corner, clutching the probe. His small minions following after him, CHITTERING in fear.

EXT. STREET - DAY

HARVEY looks behind him and sees JOHNNY ZOOMING toward him.

HARVEY
No!

JOHNNY'S hands are not aflame as he carries the STAFF in a COMBATIVE position. He nears the ground and FLAMES OFF, hitting the street at a full RUN.

He comes up behind Harvey and JABS him with the STAFF.

As the CHARGE hits his nervous system, Harvey CONVULSES and falls to the floor. The probe rolls out of his hands.

His minions rush to their master, trying to protect him.

Johnny backs away, freaked out by the little creatures.

(CONTINUED)

He suddenly senses something and SPINS around HOLDING UP THE STAFF to defend himself as--

--the DOOMBOT'S ARM CLANGS off the staff.

The Doombot SWINGS at Johnny again.

Johnny deflects him with the staff, then hits him with it, but it merely CLANGS off his armor. He holds out his hand and BATHES the Doombot in FIRE.

The Doombot is unaffected by the flames. His hand DARTS forward and GRABS the STAFF, YANKING IT out of Johnny's grip.

The Doombot swings it into Johnny's side, causing him to double over in pain. The Doombot then smacks Johnny in the head with it, sending him to the ground. He jabs him with the staff's end, giving him a NEURO JOLT.

Johnny CONVULSES, then lies MOTIONLESS.

The Doombot drops the STAFF and picks up the PROBE.

EXT. BAXTER BUILDING / STREET LEVEL - DAY

The HUGE CREATURE stops attacking. It seems CONFUSED.

REED drops to the ground, his elongated body LIMP.

The creature SINKS BACK into the crater, then hunches and DIVES into the EARTH, sending WAVES of DIRT out of the hole.

SUE, weary and exhausted, runs to Reed's aid.

They HEAR a RUMBLING FROM ABOVE and look up.

A LARGE WHITE CLOUD is DESCENDING from the SKY.

The cloud DISSIPATES, REVEALING a BIG AIRCRAFT. It's blocky and angular. POWERFUL and MENACING. It casts a SHADOW over the street, as it RUMBLES overhead.

Reed and Sue gawk in amazement with the rest of the crowd.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The MENACING AIRCRAFT moves overhead.

A LINE SHOOTs down from it and into the pavement. The DOOMBOT takes hold of the line and steps into the FOOTHOLD.

The foothold DETACHES from the point imbedded in the pavement and the Doombot ZIPS UP toward the ship.

(CONTINUED)

The PAVEMENT suddenly CRACKS OPEN as the CREATURE'S CLAW BREAKS through, reaching for the Doombot, but he's already out of reach.

The Doombot disappears into the ship. The craft's ENGINES IGNITE and it thunders away into the distance.

The creature's hand SINKS BACK into the earth.

TWO MORE of Harvey's LITTLE MINIONS climb out and help the OTHER TWO tiny creatures DRAG HARVEY'S UNCONSCIOUS BODY into the new hole.

As they pull him inside, one of them sees the STAFF lying nearby and GRABS IT, pulling it in after him.

SUE rounds the corner and runs to JOHNNY. She kneels next to him, lightly patting his face, trying to revive him.

His eyes open. He looks up and sees Sue, then REED and BEN standing over him.

Reed is obviously still hurting and looks concerned. Ben is covered in dust, grime and scorch marks.

JOHNNY

The robot took the probe.

REED

We know.

Sue helps Johnny stand up.

JOHNNY

We've gotta go after him.

REED

I don't think we're up to it, Johnny.

JOHNNY

We have to stop him!

REED

No. It's too dangerous. I don't know what I was thinking. We're not super-heroes. We can't handle this sort of thing.

JOHNNY

That's crazy! We're the ONLY ones who can handle this.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

What, we finally run into someone who can take us on and you're gonna wuss out and call it quits?

REED

I... don't want to lose any of you. I'm not going to put you all in danger.

SUE

Reed, you didn't force us into this. We chose to become a team. We chose to take the risk together when we first went up in the Pogo Plane.

BEN

Suzie's right, Reed. We are what we are. I don't like it, but we can't hide from it. If we don't try to stop him, who will?

Johnny holds out his hand.

JOHNNY

Are we a team or what?

Sue places her HAND on top of Johnny's. Ben places his ROCKY PALM on theirs.

BEN

I got nothin' better to do.

Sue smiles warmly at Ben.

Reed looks at each of them.

REED

We'd be heading into his territory. He'll be expecting us.

JOHNNY

And we'll be ready for him. We'll make sure to wipe our feet on the welcome mat.

REED

He's studied us and knows our weaknesses.

JOHNNY

If we work as a team, nothing can stop us.

(CONTINUED)

He takes a moment, looking each of them in the eyes, seeing their committment to what is right.

REED
 (smiles)
 I certainly can't argue with your
 logic.

He places his hand on theirs.

JOHNNY
 Yeah!

REED
 Let's go kick some butt.

JOHNNY
 Now you're talkin'!

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - AFTERNOON

The FANTASTICAR soars majestically over the ocean. It's speed is incredible. The air splits as it streaks by.

EXT. CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

The FANTASTICAR flies through Dark, gloomy skies towards CASTLE DOOM.

INT. FANTASTICAR - EVENING

BEN
 (looking out window)
 Sheesh.

JOHNNY
 What?

BEN
 I used to kid Victor about him
 being from Transylvania. Looks
 like I wasn't that far off.

EXT. CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

The FANTASTICAR lands near the castle.

The four of them step down and stare up at the menacing fortress. They walk up to the imposing castle doors.

REED, who is carrying his PORTABLE TRACKING DEVICE, eyes the surrounding area, looking for defenses.

(CONTINUED)

REED
Sue, be ready to throw a shield
around us.

SUE
I'm ready.

REED
Ben?

BEN steps up and SLAMS against the doors. The WOOD
SPLINTERS, but the doors DON'T MOVE.

Ben taps his finger against METAL showing through the wood.

BEN
Reinforced doors.

SUE
Can you open it?

BEN
(snorts)
Stand back.

Ben takes a breath and CHARGES THE DOORS. They creak under
his strength. He keeps pushing with all his might.

Steel GROANS. His hands SINK into the METAL. He grunts.

INT. CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

A dark room, lit only by the dim light coming in through the
windows and a few burning torches.

The sounds of metal SNAPPING. The front doors SWING OPEN
with a loud BANG.

They step cautiously inside.

BEN
Now what?

Reed looks at his HANDHELD TRACKER.

REED
Down that hall.

They head down the hall, ready for anything.

They look around at the decor. It's what you would expect to
find in a castle. Stone walls, hanging tapestries, dim
torches, etc. There's no sign of modern technology at all.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

I was expecting more security. I don't see any cameras or anything.

REED

Oh, I'm sure he's watching us right now. We just haven't hit the secured areas yet.

(looks at tracker)

The probes are somewhere below us. We need to get to the lower levels and I don't think we should risk going down by normal means.

BEN

All ya gotta do is ask, Stretch.

Ben motions for them to get back and then POUNDS his FIST into the floor. It goes right through the stone and CLANGS against a metal understructure.

He pulls away the stone, revealing the METAL FLOORING.

EXT. CONTROL ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

DOOM sits in a HI-TECH CONTROL ROOM, watching his circular array of monitors. He watches them examine the floor.

DOOM

You're so predictable, Richards.

INT. SUB-LEVEL 1 / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

BEN

I don't think we're gonna be able to take the shortcut.

JOHNNY

Hold on, let me try something.

JOHNNY kneels down and puts his hands against the metal.

His hands CATCH FIRE and begin to GLOW WHITE HOT. The metal, in turn, REDDENS then TURNS WHITE and MELTS inward. The hole widens enough for them to enter.

INT. SUB-LEVEL 1 / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

The four of them each drop through the hole into a circular shaped hallway. Suddenly, we're in a FUTURISTIC ENVIRONMENT. HI-TECH METAL PANELING covers every surface.

They listen for a moment. Silence.

(CONTINUED)

Reed looks at Johnny and points to the floor.

Johnny LAYS HIS HANDS on the floor and MELTS another hole.

INT. SUB-LEVEL 2 / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

They drop down into another futuristic circular hallway.

REED
(looks at tracker)
This way.

They run down the hall.

A WHINING SOUND is heard in the distance.

Reed stops and turns around.

The SOUND is getting LOUDER behind them.

SOMETHING comes ZOOMING along a track in the wall, straight toward them. Its BLACK, METALLIC surface reflecting the hallway's bright lights as it goes.

It DISCONNECTS from the wall, FLYING at them, UNFOLDING it's LEGS in mid-air, looking like a cross between a robotic version of an octopus and a spider.

A CHAIN-GUN TURRET SWIVELS on the spider's "head" and lets loose a BARRAGE of BULLETS as it sails over them.

Sue THROWS UP A FIELD, wincing as the hail of death RICOCHETS off her barrier.

It lands and another TURRET SWIVELS on it's underside, FIRING.

Sue holds TWO FIELDS up against both turrets.

ANOTHER SPIDER-DROID ZOOMS toward them on another track and DETACHES, OPENING FIRE.

Reed makes a barrier of himself, shielding Johnny and Sue. The bullets hit him, and ricochet back at it.

The bullets BOUNCE OFF its shell.

One of its turrets aims at Ben. BITS of ROCK CHIP AWAY as the rounds RIP into him.

Ben PUNCHES its turret, CAVING it in. The impact sends it skidding backward. It stops itself and RUSHES at Ben, knocking him down, then jumps off him toward Reed.

(CONTINUED)

Ben SNAGS one of its LEGS, stopping it in mid-air.

It THRASHES around, STABBING at Reed with its OTHER LEGS.

Reed's ELASTIC BODY BENDS at lightning speed, DODGING the droid's DEADLY SPIKED LEGS.

Sue continues to shield them from the other droid. It CLAWS against the shield, firing crazily.

Johnny sees that Ben and Reed are handling the other one, and turns back to the first. He runs up the CURVED wall and LAUNCHES himself up into the air, IGNITING into the Torch.

He SWOOPS OVER Sue's shield and comes down BEHIND THE DROID. He lays both of his BURNING hands on the back of it's "head" and MELTS into its casing.

It falls to the floor, motionless.

BEN is back on his feet, still holding the spider's leg. He YANKS the droid toward him, and SMASHES his fist through it, SHATTERING it into pieces.

They stand a moment as they recover.

REED (CONT'D)

I'd say we're entering the secure zones now.

BEN

Ya' think?

REED

If we encounter any more, Sue, give them to Ben.

She nods.

They hustle down the corridor.

They hear the familiar WHINING coming toward them from ahead. The SPIDER-DROID comes ZOOMING down the track at them.

They rush toward it without hesitation.

It LEAPS and UNFOLDS, while OPENING FIRE.

They run on the opposite side. Sue holds a field up, letting it slide across it, past them toward the WELCOMING FIST OF BEN. Its shattered shell skids across the floor.

They keep moving.

(CONTINUED)

They come to a SEALED ENTRANCE that has two doors that meet together with interlocking teeth. It looks impenetrable.

Ben PUNCHES the door.

REED (CONT'D)

No!

Ben's FIST hits an ENERGY FIELD and jolts him backwards onto his rocky posterior.

BEN

Oof.

REED

Energy field.

BEN

(gets back up)

Thanks for warning me.

Reed studies the wall console.

JOHNNY

(to Reed)

Can you get through?

SUE

He can get through.

REED

(smirks, to Susan)

You're sure of that, are you?

She kisses him.

SUE

I have all the faith in the world
in you.

REED

Well, in that case...

His PORTABLE TRACKER projects a holographic screen with a keypad. Reed taps a quick series of numbers on the floating keys.

The LIGHT on the console changes to GREEN. The sound of the energy field cuts off. The THICK, POWERFUL DOORS part.

REED (CONT'D)

...I can never let you down.

She puts a hand on his cheek.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

You couldn't if you tried.

They kiss again.

JOHNNY

All right. Break it up. Break it up. We have a mission here.

A long corridor awaits.

REED

(looking through door)
Into the spider's web.

JOHNNY

Traps?

REED

Probably. Unfortunately, we have to proceed.

Reed and Sue enter with Ben and Johnny bringing up the rear.

INT. CORRIDOR / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

They move cautiously down the corridor. Their FOOTSTEPS ECHO in the silence.

Ben's THUMPING FOOTSTEPS reverberate along the floor.

JOHNNY

(to Ben)

Lucky we're not trying to be sneaky with your big feet making all that racket.

BEN

Lucky you're not trying to be smart with your head bein' empty an' all.

JOHNNY

At least my brain's not made of rock.

BEN

I wouldn't bet on that.

SUE

Boys...

REED

(stops)

Shh.

(CONTINUED)

The sound of MACHINERY comes from INSIDE THE WALLS.

A WALL SLIDES DOWN BEHIND them, cutting off a retreat.

The CEILING begins to DESCEND on them.

REED (CONT'D)

MOVE!

They run toward the door at the end of the tunnel.

The ceiling is CLOSING IN FAST. They're not going to make it.

Ben stops and brings his hands up, holding the ceiling back. HYDRAULICS WHINE inside the walls.

Reed, Sue and Johnny make it through the door.

INT. SMALL ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

REED

(to Ben)

We're clear!

Ben STRUGGLES to hold the ceiling from crushing him.

BEN

I can't move.

They don't know what to do.

A WALL SLIDES DOWN in the doorway, cutting the three of them off from Ben.

SUE

No!

Johnny tries to BURN through the metal door. But his heat has no effect on the metal.

Reed searches the door for a way to open it.

DOOM (O.S.)

Greetings.

They turn to see a MONITOR descend from the ceiling. The IMAGE OF DOOM'S TORSO APPEARS.

DOOM (CONT'D)

The great Fantastic Four have come to pay me a visit. I'm honored. Or should I call you the Fantastic Three?

(CONTINUED)

REED
Victor, let Ben go.

DOOM
I think not. I truly despise that man. I will shed no tear for his demise. I will never understand why you chose to share your time with him.

REED
He's my friend, Victor. It's a concept beyond you.

DOOM
A concept beneath me, would be more apt. If you choose to follow your friend's path, then so be it.

The image on the monitor fades away.

A door opens on the opposite wall, revealing another corridor, in which DOOM IS STANDING.

DOOM (CONT'D)
I challenge you to stop me.

Johnny runs and leaps forward, FLAMING ON as he streaks down the new corridor toward Doom.

REED
Johnny, wait! It's a hologram!

Johnny's blazing form RUSHES toward Doom and then-- THROUGH HIM. Reed was right. It's was a HOLOGRAM, which now blinks and crackles away. Johnny rams into a wall and falls to the floor.

A door SLAMS down cutting JOHNNY OFF from the others.

ON REED AND SUE:

Panels open on the walls. Reed and Sue turn to look. He instinctively tries to protect Sue as--

--ELECTRICITY arcs out across the room, enveloping them.

They fall to the ground, writhing in agony, then mercifully the torture stops, leaving them unconscious.

INT. JOHNNY'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Johnny has flamed out as he stands and shakes his head, recovering from slamming into the wall. He sees that he is now cut off and rushes to the new barrier.

He IGNITES, but his flames sputter out. He looks around surprised, then starts to gasp.

He holds his throat and panics, feeling along the walls for an escape.

JOHNNY

...no air....

His eyes roll back as he collapses.

INT. CORRIDOR / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

BEN is hunched, holding back the crushing weight of the ceiling.

The CEILING suddenly RETRACTS, causing him to lose his balance.

BEN

What the-?

The FLOOR gives way, collapsing inward, dropping him into a DARK PIT.

BEN (CONT'D)

Whoa!

INT. PIT / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

BEN FALLS DOWN THE PIT, spinning and flailing helplessly.

He reaches out and GRABS THE WALL. His FINGERS DIG INTO the metal as he plummets, LEAVING LONG DEPRESSIONS.

His grip is slowing him down some, but it's still too fast.

He PUNCHES his free hand INTO THE WALL, abruptly stopping his descent, as his fist LODGES FIRMLY in the metal.

He looks down and sees--

INT. POOL ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - EVENING

--he is above a pool of green liquid. Chunks of metal fall past him into the liquid. They SPLASH and begin to SIZZLE as the ACID INSTANTLY DISSOLVES the debris.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
That can't be good.

The large room is round and filled with the liquid. The pit's exit is in the ceiling's center from which he is now DANGLING BY ONE ARM. He stopped himself just in time.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. REED'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

FADE IN:

REED is asleep on the ground. He wakes, rubbing his head, then sees where he is and quickly stands.

He's inside a small rectangular room with a monitor on three of the four walls.

The walls are a dark grey metal with rivets along the edges.

He traces his fingers along the monitors looking for defects and finds that there is something between his fingers and the walls.

He kneels and examines where the walls connect to the floor. He runs his fingers along the seal. Reed stands.

DOOM is standing directly behind him. Reed senses this, but doesn't turn around.

DOOM
There's a plexiglas barrier between
you and the walls.

When Doom talks, his VOICE is conveyed through SPEAKERS inside the cell.

DOOM (CONT'D)
It was designed with you in mind.
Airtight. No flaws for your
rubbery form to exploit.

Reed turns to look at him.

REED
I'm going to stop you.

DOOM
(laughs)
You're so optimistic, Richards.
It's an annoying trait. I've
already repaired your probe. It
should work just fine now.

(CONTINUED)

REED

Whoever sent those isn't friendly, Victor. If you signal them, you might condemn the Earth.

DOOM

Perhaps. I'm willing to take the risk.

(looks at Reed)

Besides, why should I worry about the world? What has anyone ever done for me?

REED

What have you ever done for the world?

Doom stares at Reed, anger in his eyes.

DOOM

Your time is short, Richards. The air inside your cell should be almost gone. You'll suffocate and I shall be rid of you. I'm not a heartless man, though. I thought you might like to see your "family" while you choke to death.

He gestures to a monitor that blinks to life.

We see A GREEN SCREEN, with a GREEN image of SUE feeling around like she's blind.

DOOM (CONT'D)

She's in total darkness. The world is now invisible to her. I haven't decided what I'm going to do with her yet. I always thought she was an extraordinarily beautiful woman. I might keep her around to have my way with, when the mood strikes.

Reed's jaw clenches. He glares at Doom.

DOOM (CONT'D)

You were a lucky man.

Another monitor flickers on.

We see JOHNNY, FLOATING in a SQUARE PLEXIGLAS CELL filled with FIRE-RETARDANT GEL. An AIR HOSE is attached to his face.

(CONTINUED)

DOOM (CONT'D)

Ah, Mr. Storm. I might use him to sway Susan to be by my side. If not, then I'll simply snuff his flame out.

REED

You're pathetic in nature and repulsive in your actions.

DOOM

And yet I am your superior.

REED

Your arrogance will be your downfall.

DOOM

If arrogance means not hiding my intelligence and pretending that other men are my equal, then I will gladly wear that title.

REED

So you must have been hiding your intelligence the night of your accident.

DOOM

Laugh while you can, Richards. You'll use up your air that much faster.

Doom gestures to the last monitor.

DOOM (CONT'D)

Then you can join your companion, Mr. Grimm.

We see the POOL ROOM filled with acid. From this angle we can see that BEN is GONE.

DOOM (CONT'D)

This is where that ape fell to his death. Dissolved instantly by an acidic compound I developed especially for him. I only wish I could have seen it.

Reed clenches his fists, barely containing his rage.

REED

That man was better than you could ever hope to be.

(CONTINUED)

DOOM

I've always enjoyed our little
talks. I do have to go now. Have
a good death, Richards.

Doom raises his hand and with a dramatic sweep of his arm,
bids Reed a fond farewell as his HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE BLINKS and
CRACKLES away, leaving Reed alone in his cell once more.

Reed ACTIVATES his SIGNAL WATCH.

INT. SUE'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

PITCH BLACK. Then-- The BLINKING of the team's SYMBOL on
SUE'S watch, accompanied by BEEPING. SUE gasps.

SUE

Foolish girl.

She presses a button on the watch, accompanied by a BEEP and
the SYMBOL stays lit.

SUE (CONT'D)

Too rattled to think straight.

She wraps the watch around her hand and USES IT LIKE A
FLASHLIGHT exploring the confines of her cell. She feels
along the metal paneling...

INT. JOHNNY'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

JOHNNY hears the BEEPING and sees his watch FLASHING. He
looks around but can't see through the gel. He presses
against the walls. They're too strong and he can't ignite.

INT. POOL ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

The Pool Room. We move in toward the pit's ceiling exit.

We hear a slow rhythmic POUNDING. We move up toward the pit,
into the blackness.

INT. PIT / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

The rhythmic POUNDING is getting LOUDER and LOUDER... then--

In the dim light, ROCKY FINGERS SLAM into the metallic wall.

BEN grunts as he pulls himself up, SLAMMING HIS OTHER HAND
HIGHER on the wall. Inch by inch, he's climbing up the pit.

He pauses as his watch BEEPS and FLASHES its symbol.

He looks up and sees a LONG CLIMB to the top.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I'm comin', I'm comin'. Don't start the party without me.

He grunts again as he climbs another inch.

INT. REED'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

REED is looking around for something. He can't find it. He pats himself down. He looks at his watch, then removes it. He tries to OPEN IT UP, but CAN'T.

He BANGS IT against the floor. It doesn't even scratch.

REED

Why'd I have to make it so damn durable?

INT. SUE'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

SUE holds the light near a wall. She's tracing a seam.

SUE

Okay. Here's the door.

She places her hand on the door and concentrates. The metal SHIMMERS and we see a BLACK CIRCLE appear.

SUE (CONT'D)

Must be dark on the other side too.

She thinks for a second then tries something new.

SUE (CONT'D)

Let's see if I can do this in layers.

She concentrates. The metal FADES and we now see the MECHANICAL INNER WORKINGS of the door.

She smiles.

INT. JOHNNY'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

JOHNNY is holding his breath and has the AIR HOSE shoved AGAINST THE CEILING of his tank.

He brings the air hose to his mouth and sucks in another breath then puts it back against the ceiling.

INT. REED'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

REED has his left glove off and is concentrating, thinning a finger enough to fit into a crevice on his signal watch.

(CONTINUED)

He clenches his jaw as he slowly expands the slimmed finger until--

-- the WATCH SHELL pops OPEN.

He spills the watch's inner workings on the floor. He picks up a THIN METAL PIECE and kneels in front of the cell door.

REED

You couldn't resist gloating. And
of course you had to make sure I
could hear you.

He shoves the METAL PIECE into one of the SMALL SQUARE FLOOR PANELS. The one he chose has little SPEAKER SLOTS in it. He STRUGGLES to pry it off.

Sweat drips down his face. His BREATHING is becoming LABORED.

The panel pops off. Underneath is a SMALL SPEAKER COVER attached to the floor with four tiny screws. He uses the same metal piece to start to pry the cover off.

REED (CONT'D)

Overconfidence breeds mistakes.
Your arrogance has betrayed you
again, Victor...

He pulls the metal plate up, revealing the SPEAKER that measures about a 1/2 INCH IN DIAMETER.

REED (CONT'D)

...And given me an escape route.

He POKES his finger at the speaker which easily pushes away, exposing a TINY DARK HOLE.

Reed PUSHES his FINGER INTO THE HOLE, STRETCHING into a THIN STRIP which SLIDES into the minuscule hole.

His hand stops when his WEDDING RING won't fit through the opening.

Reed hesitates.

REED (CONT'D)

Sue's going to kill me.

A moment later his entire form slips into the tiny hole, leaving behind his wedding ring, still twirling on the floor.

INT. SUE'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

SUE is studying the inner mechanisms of the door.

SUE

...that looks like it leads to
that... that one goes here... so it
must be this one. Okay, a little
force field push and...

CLUNK. The door SWINGS OPEN.

SUE (CONT'D)

Bingo.

Sue grins and steps out into a DARK ROOM.

She shines her light around and locates the room's door. She taps a button on a side panel and the door opens, revealing a lit hallway.

INT. JOHNNY'S CELL / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

JOHNNY is still floating in the gel, holding his breath, while shoving the air hose against the ceiling.

A THIN AIR POCKET is forming at the top of the tank.

Johnny HOLDS HIS HAND UP AGAINST THE CEILING and PULLS OFF HIS GLOVE. He concentrates.

The portions of his hand that are exposed to the air pocket begin to glow with heat. SMOKE begins to fill the air pocket, then his exposed skin CATCHES FIRE.

The top of the tank EXPLODES, as his FLAMING HAND ERUPTS UPWARD. The sides of the tank SHATTER and the GEL SPILLS across the floor, leaving JOHNNY STANDING TALL.

He wipes gel off his face and slicks back his hair. His face begins to GLOW.

JOHNNY

As Ben would say--

INT. CORRIDOR / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

Ben PULLS himself UP out of the pit into the corridor with the trash compactor ceiling.

BEN

--It's clobberin' time.

(CONTINUED)

He stands in front of the metal door that slid down cutting him off from the others.

He pulls back both FISTS and RAMS them forward in a spectacular show of force. The door CRUMPLES and SKIDS away across the floor. Ben steps forward.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

DOOM is standing on the PLATFORM over the basin. He's tapping keys on the console. He glances at a side monitor, showing REED'S CELL.

He pauses, seeing that it's EMPTY, except for the WATCH debris and RING laying on the ground.

He stares for a moment, then he leans closer to the monitor.

DOOM

How?

He taps a key. SUE'S CELL appears on the monitor in its green infra-red color. It's EMPTY.

He taps a third key and JOHNNY'S CELL appears. Or what's left of it. GEL and SHATTERED PLEXIGLAS COVER THE FLOOR.

DOOM (CONT'D)

(stunned)

How? How could they ALL escape?

He recovers and hits a button.

The ROOM'S DOOR GROWLS as they start to seal shut.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

JOHNNY is standing in a hallway and turns as he hears the doors moving. He rushes toward them and sees a GLIMPSE of DOOM just before the doors slam shut, its teeth interlocking.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

DOOM

No matter. They're too late.

One of the PROBES BLINKS to life.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

SUE is running down the hallway.

A LIGHT FIXTURE suddenly SHATTERS and SPARKS, then dangles on its wires.

(CONTINUED)

She gasps and takes a step back.

A RUBBERY SNAKE flows down from the wiring sockets, pooling on the floor in a BLOB. The blob RESHAPES itself into REED, who at the moment has his back to Sue.

SUE

Reed!

He spins and smiles as he sees her.

REED

Sue!

They come together and kiss.

REED (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

SUE

I'm fine. I don't know where the others are though.

A THUNDEROUS CLANG is heard somewhere ahead of them.

They run down the hall and turn a corner just as a THICK METAL DOOR flies past them with BEN barreling behind it.

Both the door and Ben slam into the opposite side of the hallway, leaving an impression in the wall. Ben let's the door fall and looks up at Reed and Sue.

Reed's face lights up.

REED

You're alive!

BEN

'Course I am. Ya think I'm lettin' a chump like Dr. Doom take me down?

Reed pats him on the back.

REED

I thought we'd lost you.

BEN

Don't get mushy on me, Stretch. We still gotta bust some heads.

REED

Right. Let's move.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

The SECOND PROBE is already activated, its lights blinking.

DOOM hooks his BOOTS into Footholds and leans back into the BODY BRACE. He fastens a RESTRAINING BELT across his chest, snapping it into the brace.

He slides his hands into GRIPS and HOLDS TIGHT.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

JOHNNY is standing in front of a MASSIVE DOOR holding his HANDS AGAINST IT. As we can see, he's already scraped off most of the gel. His hands are the only part of him that are on fire at the moment.

BANG! A nearby METAL DOOR FLIES off it's moorings.

Johnny takes a defensive stance.

BEN walks in followed by REED and SUE.

JOHNNY

Hey, what took you guys so long?
Doom's on the other side of this door.

REED

You're sure?

JOHNNY

Yeah. I saw him before it closed on me.

BEN

Stand aside, kid. This is man's work.

JOHNNY

Go for it, big guy.

Ben SLAMS his hands into the door, DIGGING his FINGERS into the seam where the door's teeth interlock.

He STRAINS, using all his strength to pull the doors apart. The CRACK begins to WIDEN.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

The third probe ACTIVATES. A PULSING SOUND fills the room. The three probes synchronize their blinking lights.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

BEN is straining with the doors. They're slowly opening.

JOHNNY

Do it!

Ben yells and PEELS the doors COMPLETELY OPEN.

They step into--

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

--the GIGANTIC, CAVERNOUS Transference Room.

DOOM turns at the sound of the door being wrenched open and sees REED, SUE, JOHNNY, and BEN enter.

DOOM

No!

In the middle of the basin, the air begins to WARP. A BRIGHT LIGHT appears with a DARK HOLE in its center. It brings with it a HURRICANE VACUUM sucking all the air toward it.

Reed, Sue and Johnny are SNATCHED UP and PULLED toward the bright light.

Sue grabs Reed's hand.

Ben runs and DIVES, GRABBING SUE around the waist. She's still holding onto Reed.

Reed's ARM is STRETCHING as he and Johnny fall into the light. His OTHER HAND STRETCHES OUT and GRABS DOOM'S PLATFORM.

Johnny SLAMS against Reed's chest, stretching him out like a rubber sheet.

DOOM (CONT'D)

You're too late, Richards!

Continuing to slide toward the light, Ben DIGS his free hand into the floor, anchoring himself.

The PURPLE ENERGY WAVES begin to flow out from the bright swirling light.

The vacuum continues to pull Johnny, who is cushioned in Reed's chest, causing Reed to be pulled into the bright light with him.

(CONTINUED)

REED'S ENTIRE TORSO IS SUCKED into the DARK CENTER of the bright light.

EXT. INSIDE WORMHOLE - SPACE

In a BLACK STARRY VOID, we see a SWIRLING BRIGHT LIGHT around a DARK HOLE.

Out of that hole, pops REED'S TORSO with JOHNNY'S BULGING FORM WRAPPED IN HIM.

Reed's face is startled at his predicament. He looks around and his expression changes to one of SUPREME AMAZEMENT.

FAR ABOVE HIM, we see only a TINY FRACTION, a HINT, of what he sees, which is... a MASSIVE, GARGANTUAN SPACECRAFT. A craft of "Galactic" proportions. We only see a sliver of this thing.

Reed, in a rare moment, is completely awestruck.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

BEN sees a PROBE'S CRADLE nearby and DRAGS himself toward it with his free hand.

The PURPLE ENERGY starts to WASH OVER DOOM. He holds back his head, accepting it, laughing at his triumph.

Ben GRABS HOLD of the cradle and uses it to pull himself up to a standing position.

He pulls Sue closer, holding her secure and since she's holding on to Reed, he inadvertantly pulls Reed and Johnny out of the hole.

Ben RAISES HIS FIST and DEMOLISHES the probe in one solid blow.

The swirling wormhole DISSIPATES and the vacuum CEASES.

Reed and Johnny fall to the ground.

Ben lets go of Sue, setting her down.

The room is quiet now, except for DOOM'S LAUGHTER. Doom unhooks himself from his body brace.

Reed and Johnny stand.

DOOM
I can feel the energy mingling with
my cells.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOOM (CONT'D)
 (pauses)
 Fascinating sensation.

Ben walks up and stands behind Doom.

BEN
 You can write us all about it from
 jail, Vicky.

Doom doesn't turn around.

DOOM
 I really thought I was rid of you
 Benjamin. One disappointment in an
 otherwise fulfilling day. As for
 prison, I think you're confused. I
 have committed no crime.

JOHNNY
 How about kidnapping? Attempted
 murder?

DOOM
 I kidnapped no one. You four
 trespassed into my castle. I
 defended my home.

Doom turns to walk by Ben.

DOOM (CONT'D)
 (to Ben)
 Out of my way, you oaf.

Ben steps aside and MAKES A MOTION like he's going to BASH IN
 the back of Doom's head as he walks by.

Doom walks toward the door.

DOOM (CONT'D)
 Please leave my castle at once.

Sue HOLDS UP A HAND and ENCASES HIM in a force field.

SUE
 You're not going anywhere.
 (to Reed)
 What are we going to do with him?

REED
 (walking over)
 Well, he's technically correct.
 He's broken no laws, other than
 breaking and entering our
 headquarters.

(CONTINUED)

DOOM

As you have broken into my home.
We are even. You may also take
back the probe. I no longer need
it.

SUE

We're not letting him go, Reed.

JOHNNY

I second that.

REED

I didn't say we would. He's
obviously insane. Maybe I could
arrange for a long stay in an
institution.

DOOM

Insane? Your jealousy knows no
bounds!

REED

You need help, Victor. You're
blinded by your hatred. If we--

He stops as the room starts to RUMBLE and SHAKE.

They glance around, wondering what's going on.

The FLOOR underneath them ERUPTS UPWARD as the GIANT, SCALY
GREEN MOLE MONSTER CLAWS its way out, ROARING.

Reed and Johnny tumble down behind it.

Sue and Doom are thrown out the door.

Ben is thrown against the wall in front of the creature.

STANDING ATOP the creature is HARVEY, clutching the NEURO
STAFF.

HARVEY

Destroy them! Destroy them all!

A SWARM of SIX FOOT TALL MONSTERS ERUPT from the ground.

These things are FEROCIOUS, SAVAGE LOOKING BEASTS, seeming to
be part reptile. They rush out and attack.

One charges BEN who GRAPPLES with it.

(CONTINUED)

Another JUMPS onto REED, who is SLAMMED into the ground under its weight. He STRETCHES HIS HEAD from side to side avoiding the CHOMPING TEETH.

One charges straight for JOHNNY. He holds out his hands and is KNOCKED BACKWARD as a FIREBALL shoots out from him.

The fireball hits the monster in the chest, knocking it backward, leaving it writhing in flames.

Johnny rolls across the floor. He shakes his head, dazed, staring at his hands.

JOHNNY

Whoa. That one was off the charts.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

Outside the Transference room, TWO MONSTERS jump at SUE and DOOM.

SUE falls to the ground protecting herself with a shield, as the MONSTER stands on top of her trying to CLAW THROUGH.

DOOM is knocked down, but rolls back up to a standing position.

The monster attacks again. It RAMS him up against a wall, trying to bite into him. With one hand he holds the beast's head away, while his other holds back one of its claws.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

HARVEY is down on the ground, snatching up a PROBE.

ANOTHER BEAST jumps at JOHNNY. He FLAMES ON and takes to the air. The beast CLIMBS THE WALL, still in pursuit.

BEN LAYS a POWERHOUSE PUNCH into his monster's head, killing it. Another monster charges in to take its place.

REED is WRAPPING himself around a beast, trying to contain it. We can see its claws attempting to rip through his rubbery form from the inside.

JOHNNY swoops low and FRIES the monster that was chasing him along the walls.

Suddenly the GIANT CREATURE'S CLAW CRASHES into the wall nearly smashing Johnny!

JOHNNY

Holy--!

(CONTINUED)

He SWAN DIVES backward in the air avoiding the GIANT CREATURE as it swipes at him.

It tears a CHUNK of the WALL out, which falls down blocking the only exit.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

DOOM is still holding the monster at bay. He reaches under his cape and pulls out a SMALL SPHERE. He TOSSES IT INTO THE BEAST'S MOUTH and then CLAMPS ITS JAW TIGHT with both hands.

BLUE ELECTRICITY crackles around his gauntlets, as they did when his Doombot stunned Reed back in the cave.

The monster SPASMS and JUMPS BACK.

Doom steps back, watching it, ready for it.

The beast crouches and GROWLS at him. Then--

Doom's sphere DETONATES INSIDE the thing. Its STOMACH EXPLODES, sending CHARRED FLESH everywhere.

The monster on Sue jumps away and GROWLS at Doom.

Doom stands tall, seemingly not worried at all. He pulls out ANOTHER SPHERE.

The beast crouches.

Doom reacts with amazing swiftness. He RUSHES it and JAMS HIS FIST INTO THE CREATURE'S MOUTH! It CLAMPS down.

A FLASH of BLUE ELECTRICITY comes from inside its mouth. It SPASMS and lets go of his arm.

He PULLS HIS ARM OUT with his hand OPEN. The SPHERE IS GONE.

Sue winces as we hear the second sphere EXPLODE.

The monster's BURNT CARCASS falls to the ground.

Doom looks down at her.

SUE
Thank you, Victor.

DOOM
I saved you because of the feelings
I once had for you. Know that
those feelings are gone and I will
not save you twice.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

Gee, you're such a smoothie.

He starts to walk away.

Sue HOLDS HER HAND UP, stopping him in a field as she gets up.

SUE (CONT'D)

No, you don't.

Doom turns around with his HAND HELD OUT. A PANEL ON HIS PALM pops open and lets out a BLINDING FLASH.

Sue stumbles, unable to see.

Doom turns and walks away down the hall.

Sue leans against the wall, holding her eyes.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

BEN PUNCHES a monster, sending it tumbling across the ground. He stumbles, suddenly feeling DISORIENTED. He falls to the floor.

His HARD, ROCKY EXTERIOR begins to FALL AWAY IN CHUNKS, revealing ORANGE LUMPY SKIN.

REED is now dealing with TWO OF THE MONSTERS. His body is WRAPPED AROUND BOTH, struggling to hold them.

BEN is having his own problems.

His whole body has lost the hard exterior and now the LAYER UNDERNEATH BEGINS TO CHANGE too, SHRINKING DOWN TO A NORMAL MAN'S FORM and shifting to a PINKER SKIN TONE.

Ben has changed back to his ORIGINAL HUMAN FORM. (Note: his shorts have also altered to fit his body, since they are composed of unstable molecules.)

He looks at his hand and smiles.

BEN

I'm back to normal. Second dose
musta cured me.

He hears a GROWL and looks up to see a monster moving in.

BEN (CONT'D)

Crap! Wrong time for this to
happen!

(CONTINUED)

It LEAPS.

He rolls and SPRINTS away avoiding falling debris.

ABOVE, JOHNNY is doing air acrobatics dodging the GIANT CREATURE'S CLAWS.

HARVEY stands off to the side and laughs at the show.

INT. HALLWAY / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

SUE BLINKS and shakes her head as her sight returns.

She hurries to the door and sees that it's now BLOCKED BY DEBRIS. She pushes against it, but it won't budge.

She steps back, not knowing what to do.

SUE

(to herself)

I know you three can handle yourselves.

(convincing herself)

I have all the faith in you, Reed.
I'll take care of Doom.

She runs down the hall.

INT. TRANSFERENCE ROOM / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

BEN is running for his life, being chased by a MONSTER.

It JUMPS ONTO THE WALL and gets alongside him.

He sees it just as it LEAPS at him. He DUCKS. It SAILS PAST him and scrambles to turn around after its prey.

Ben NOTICES SOMETHING BEHIND HIM, that we can't see.

He stands and faces the beast. He's in a stance that is challenging it to attack.

BEN

C'mon ugly. Let's go.

It crouches and GROWLS.

BEN (CONT'D)

That's it. Go for it.

It LEAPS at him.

Ben DIVES to the side and rolls.

(CONTINUED)

The beast LANDS on a SPIKY PIECE OF TORN METAL FLOOR, IMPALING ITSELF.

Ben doesn't waste time with his victory. He looks around and sees Harvey looking at him. Ben runs right for him.

Harvey drops the probe and holds up the staff defensively.

Ben faces him.

BEN (CONT'D)
Okay, Mole Man, it's you an' me
now.

Harvey SNARLS as he SWINGS the STAFF.

Ben ducks.

Harvey LUNGES, but Ben moves to the side and GRABS THE STAFF.

Harvey KICKS him in the gut, sending Ben to the ground.

Harvey brings the staff DOWN! Ben rolls away and jumps to his feet. Harvey swings it LOW, but Ben jumps up, dodging it.

Harvey whips it back the other way to Ben's side.

It SMACKS Ben's abdomen. He groans, but manages to GRAB HOLD of the staff again.

They EACH GRIP IT WITH BOTH HANDS. They stare at each other, over the staff between them, battling for possession.

ON REED:

REED TIGHTENS his body around the two monsters, ESPECIALLY AROUND THEIR THROATS. With a QUICK CONSTRICTION, he SNAPS both of the BEASTS' NECKS.

He drops them and reforms to his regular shape. He falls to one knee, exhausted from the effort.

He looks up and sees JOHNNY SWOOP BY, trailed by the GIANT CREATURE'S CLAW.

The creature ROARS.

Reed sees this and realizes something.

REED
(shouting)
JOHNNY! FLY INSIDE HIM!

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY
WHAT!?

REED
(shouting)
COOK HIM FROM THE INSIDE OUT!

Johnny looks at the creature's gaping mouth as he flies by.

JOHNNY
(to himself)
The man's gone insane.

REED
(shouting)
INSIDE!

JOHNNY
(shouting)
I HEARD YOU!

Johnny swoops away from the creature.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
I can do this. I'm the Human
Torch. I've got a fan club. I'm a
star.

He hangs, burning in mid-air, staring at the creature.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
It's time for me to go supernova.
Open wide, sucker.

He STREAKS down at it's ROARING MOUTH and disappears inside.

The creature screams in pain.

ON BEN:

BEN and HARVEY are still BATTLING FOR CONTROL OF THE STAFF.
Ben is being FORCED DOWN by Harvey's MUTANT STRENGTH. Harvey
is smiling, enjoying the moment.

HARVEY
I am your master. You will bow
down before me.

Ben is pushed further down.

BEN
I ain't bowin' down to no nutjob.

(CONTINUED)

HARVEY

You will! My strength is greater
than any man's.

Ben grits his teeth. His muscles quiver from exertion.

And then... He manages to PUSH BACK A LITTLE... Then a
LITTLE BIT MORE.

Harvey grimaces and pushes harder, but Ben is still gaining
ground.

Ben's skin is quickly forming CRACKS in it and taking on an
ORANGE TINT. He stares into Harvey's surprised eyes.

BEN

I ain't just "any man".

BEN PULLS the STAFF DOWN and RAMS HIS HEAD INTO HARVEY'S.

Harvey staggers back, RELEASING HIS GRIP.

The GIANT CREATURE BELLOWS in PAIN.

Harvey and Ben both look up at it.

Its skin is CHARRING and CRACKING. FLAMES are ERUPTING from
various points of its body. Then the top half of it
EXPLODES, revealing JOHNNY, HOVERING, BURNING LIKE A STAR.

HARVEY

No! I'm the chosen one!

BEN is back to his ROCKY SELF. His blue eyes looking right
at the Mole Man.

BEN

It's times like this I actually
enjoy bein' "The Thing".

He pulls back a BIG, ROCKY FIST and SMASHES Harvey in the
face.

Harvey flies back, unconscious before he even hits the
ground. His nose and mouth bloody from the punch.

Ben stands over Harvey and BENDS THE STAFF AROUND HIM, using
it as a make-shift restraint.

JOHNNY'S flames are dying out as he descends. As soon as his
feet touch the floor, he COLLAPSES into REED'S ARMS.

REED

I've got you.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY
 (exhausted)
 I did it.

REED
 Yes, you did.

BEN walks over to them, CARRYING HARVEY over his shoulder.

BEN
 Great job, kid.

JOHNNY
 Hey, you were slacking off, I had
 to do something.

BEN
 I was busy.

REED
 (concerned)
 Where's Sue?

They all look around. The room is a DISASTER. DEBRIS and
 DEAD MONSTERS ARE EVERYWHERE.

INT. HANGER / CASTLE DOOM - NIGHT

DOOM walks toward his AIRCRAFT. He stops. His eyes become
 suspicious.

DOOM
 Shouldn't you be helping your
 friends?

Silence.

SUE'S VOICE
 How did you know I was here?

DOOM
 I felt your presence. Perhaps my
 senses have heightened.

Doom stands still as her voice CIRCLES AROUND HIM.

SUE'S VOICE
 You're a brilliant man, Victor.
 Why do you waste it?

DOOM
 I am no longer a member of society,
 Susan.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOOM (CONT'D)

Any discoveries I make, I shall use for my own purposes. Let mankind fend for itself.

SUE'S VOICE

You act like a spoiled child. You don't get things your way, so you run off with your toys.

DOOM

I don't like being talked to in such a manner by a woman.

SUE'S VOICE

Why? Because we aren't as smart as men? Or is it that if a man said it, you could punch him?

DOOM

Women are inferior beings. Even your power is feminine. You turn invisible and hide, while the others take care of the threat. You produce a shield to protect yourself from any dangers. You're only useful to your group as a tool of protection. Otherwise they would have no use for you. Even now, you can do nothing but put a field over me until the others come to aid you.

SUE'S VOICE

Poor Victor. I don't fall for you, so all women are bad? You're a coward. Afraid of women, afraid of Reed or anyone else being smarter than you. Afraid of failure.

DOOM

I am afraid of nothing.

SUE'S VOICE

You say my powers are feminine, yet aren't you living the same way? You hide inside a big castle, cut off from everyone. You protect yourself from the outside world by encasing yourself in armor. Why, Victor, by your standards, one could say you're a woman.

Doom's head snaps around toward her voice.

(CONTINUED)

DOOM

This armor lets me walk! It lets
me FUNCTION! I do NOT HIDE!

SUE'S VOICE

Then why the mask?

DOOM

To spare anyone from being sickened
by my visage.

SUE'S VOICE

I want to see your face.

Doom remains motionless for a moment, then PULLS BACK HIS HOOD and puts his metal fingers against the sides of his mask.

DOOM

So be it.

His MASK CLICKS as he unfastens it and PULLS IT AWAY, REVEALING HIS FACE.

His skin is HORRIBLY SCARRED and TWISTED.

It's TIGHT against his skull, with HOLLOW EYES and CHEEKBONES, giving him an almost DEATH'S HEAD APPEARANCE. What's left of his nose only adds to his skull-like quality.

His face conjures in the mind a life of excruciating pain, of years recovering from massive injuries.

We hear Sue's gasp.

DOOM (CONT'D)

I donned this mask not to hide, but
because I tired of hearing my
people's cries of horror every time
I walked among them.

SUE'S VOICE

You've had a tough life, Victor,
but no one's to blame but yourself.

DOOM

Enough! Show yourself! You say
these things like a coward without
looking me in the eyes. I have
unmasked myself, so must you.

SUE MATERIALIZES six feet in front of him, looking confident.

(CONTINUED)

With shocking speed, Doom brings his PALM up toward her, to blind her with his palm light.

SUE IS FASTER. She CHARGES HIM, SWINGING HER HAND to the side, PALM UP. Almost like a martial arts move.

A FORCE FIELD HITS HIS ARM BACK, letting his light burst flash to the side harmlessly.

His OTHER ARM COMES at her, but she SWATS it aside the same way.

She PULLS HER FIST BACK and THROWS HER HAND FORWARD, again, PALM UP.

DOOM'S HEAD SNAPS BACK as the FORCE FIELD SLAMS into his FACE. He stumbles backward, looking at her, stunned.

She PULLS HER FIST BACK AGAIN and LET'S ANOTHER ONE FLY.

DOOM'S HEAD SNAPS BACK AGAIN. This time he falls backward, hitting the floor with a LOUD METALLIC CRASH.

She walks over and looks down at his unconscious body.

SUE
 (to Doom)
 Force fields aren't only for
 defense, Victor. I can throw them
 too.

REED (O.S.)
 Sue!

She looks up and sees REED, JOHNNY and BEN enter the room. Ben is still carrying Harvey.

They're surprised to see Doom laying on the ground.

REED (CONT'D)
 What happened?

SUE
 I clocked him.

BEN
 (laughs)
 Way ta go, Suzie.

Johnny feels Sue's bicep.

JOHNNY
 Wow. You been workin' out, sis?

(CONTINUED)

SUE

(laughs)

I think that second dose of energy boosted my power.

JOHNNY

Me too.

REED

(nods)

It seems all of our powers have increased marginally. Did he display any kind of abilities?

SUE

Not that I could see. Well, he was able to sense me while I was invisible, but that's about it.

REED

Hmm. We'd better get these two to the car, so I can sedate them. Then we'll figure out what we're going to do with them.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BAXTER BUILDING - NIGHT

FADE IN:

DAYS LATER, REED is working on ANOTHER MACHINE that's connected to the TWO REMAINING PROBES.

SUE walks up and puts an arm around his shoulders.

SUE

What are you working on?

REED

I'm trying to track the origin of these probes.

SUE

Do you think the signal got through?

REED

I do. What I saw on the other side was chilling. It's big and it's heading our way. I intend to be prepared. Where's Ben? I need his help moving some equipment.

(CONTINUED)

SUE
He and Johnny took the car out.

REED
(rolls his eyes)
I hope they don't damage it again.

SUE
Boys will be boys.
(pulls him)
C'mon, you need a break.

REED
I can't, I'm in the middle of--

SUE
You misunderstood. I'm not asking.
I'm ordering you to take a break.

REED
(smiles)
Well, when you put it that way...

They wrap their arms around each other.

SUE
The boys are out, we're all alone.

REED
I guess I can save the earth later.

SUE
Yeah, the earth can wait. I can't.
Come here, Mister Fantastic.

They kiss.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The FANTASTICAR ZOOMS CRAZILY over the city. It swoops low going into a BARREL ROLL.

INT. FANTASTICAR - NIGHT

JOHNNY is PILOTING. BEN is STRAPPED into his seat, holding on for dear life.

BEN
(groans)
I'm gonna throw up.

JOHNNY
(laughing)
This baby sure can handle.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
What'd you wanna show me?

JOHNNY
That.

Johnny points out the window, at a FIGURE standing on TOP OF A ROOFTOP.

Ben leans forward trying to make out the figure.

Johnny brings them in close and Ben is shocked to see that it's ALICIA, the BLIND sculptress that he spies on.

BEN
(panicked)
What's she doing there? What's going on?

JOHNNY
Calm down, Benjy. She wanted to see you.

BEN
What are you talkin' about?

JOHNNY
She came to our place looking for you. You weren't in, so we talked for awhile and then we set this up. I'm your chauffeur for tonight.

BEN
I can't do this, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Oh, you're doing it. Go pick up your date. She's waiting for you.

Johnny hits a switch and the SIDE DOOR OPENS. We hear the SOUNDS OF THE CITY spill inside.

Ben stands, his hands all fidgety. He makes his way to the door and steps out onto--

INT. ROOFTOP / STORM FOUNDATION - NIGHT

--the rooftop of Storm Foundation.

ALICIA turns toward the sound of BEN walking toward her. She looks beautiful with a warm, radiant smile.

Ben gazes at her, mesmerized.

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA
Hi, Ben. Long time no see.

BEN
Aw, Alicia, you know I hate those
blind jokes.

ALICIA
I know.

BEN
What are you doing here?

ALICIA
The kids in the neighborhood say
one of the Fantastic Four is
stalking me.

BEN
(embarrassed)
Oh. Um... Sorry about that.

ALICIA
Why did you shut me out?

BEN
Alicia... I'm not human anymore.
I couldn't bear to let you see
me... I mean, be with me, when
everyone thinks I'm a monster.

ALICIA
I'm not everyone. I thought you
knew that.

BEN
I do... but... you don't
understand. You don't know what I
look like.

ALICIA
Then let me see you.

She reaches out to touch his face.

He LEANS AWAY.

She stops.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
You say I won't understand, unless
I know.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
(reluctant)
Alright.

Ben closes his eyes, enjoying her touch as she CARESSES HIS FACE. Her slender fingers sliding sensuously over his rough features. Her hand slides down and rests on his chest.

ALICIA
It's almost how I imagined you would look. Like a living sculpture... but you're warm to the touch.

BEN
(opening his eyes)
Do you understand now?

ALICIA
I understand that you're still the same man on the inside. The one I fell in love with. That part of you hasn't changed, has it?

BEN
No, but...

ALICIA
Have your feelings changed for me?

BEN
'Course not.

ALICIA
Then why are we having this conversation?

BEN
Cuz, I'm an idiot.

ALICIA
Bingo.

He hangs his head low.

BEN
I'm sorry I shut you out. I thought I was doin' you a favor. I figured you'd just forget about me and move on.

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA

I'm not that shallow. Besides,
it's kind of hard to forget about
you when you're constantly on the
news, saving the world.

BEN

(chuckles)
Yeah, I guess so.

ALICIA

Now, why don't we go have some
dinner and you can tell me all
about your adventures.

BEN

Okay.

He gently leads her toward the Fantastocar.

ALICIA

So, is this your first blind date?

BEN

Cut it out.

She laughs as he helps her in. The door closes behind them.

The Fantastocar moves away from the building and flies gently
away into the night.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HALLWAY / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

FADE IN:

TWO MEN stand in a hallway lined with doors. One of the men
is in his fifties.

The other is in his twenties and fairly good-looking with a
head of blonde hair.

They are peering into a small window in the door.

INT. HARVEY'S ROOM / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

HARVEY is in clean clothes, sitting on the floor mumbling to
himself. The room has a bed and toilet and is well lit.

INT. HALLWAY / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

OLDER MAN

Reed Richards designed this cell to inhibit his neural signals. I don't know why, but that's what I was told. So, his cell is never to be opened without supervision.

The YOUNGER MAN is intrigued and nods.

The OLDER MAN leads the other to another door.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

Now this one, we're told to keep a watch on. See anything weird, we report it. Richards says there's a chance this one might develop some kind of power or something. He's dangerous, so take the warning seriously.

The young man peers into the window.

INT. DOOM'S ROOM / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

A similar cell as Harvey's.

DOOM sits on the edge of the bed, STRIPPED OF HIS ARMOR.

His body is thin and badly scarred. His RIGHT ARM is MISSING and where his LOWER RIGHT LEG should be is a PROSTHETIC LIMB. Around his LEFT LEG, he wears a METAL BRACE.

He picks at his dinner tray.

INT. HALLWAY / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

YOUNG MAN

This guys's dangerous?

OLDER MAN

That's what we've been told.

YOUNG MAN

What happened to him?

OLDER MAN

Survived an explosion in his college days.

YOUNG MAN

Poor guy.

INT. DOOM'S ROOM / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

DOOM looks over at the door and sees the TWO MEN peering through the window.

DOOM
Stop looking at me!

INT. HALLWAY / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

Through the window we can see Doom yelling at them. His words are EXTREMELY MUFFLED.

OLDER MAN
Got it?

YOUNG MAN
Yeah.

The older man starts to walk down the hallway.

OLDER MAN
If you have any questions, just
buzz me.

YOUNG MAN
Okay.

The older man turns the corner and disappears.

The young man leans in and stares at Doom.

INT. DOOM'S ROOM / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

DOOM
Leave me alone!

DOOM stands and THROWS his DINNER TRAY at the window, splattering the contents across the door.

He stares angrily at the man. The man stares back ALMOST HYPNOTIZED.

A long moment passes with neither man moving.

Doom steps up to the door, intrigued by the strange feeling he's having. He looks INTENSELY into the man's eyes.

INT. HALLWAY / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

The YOUNG MAN'S jaw goes slack as he gazes through the window into DOOM'S EYES.

(CONTINUED)

The young man abruptly SNAPS OUT OF IT and reels back, stumbling into the opposite wall. He blinks and glances around, DISORIENTED.

He rushes back over to Doom's door, peering into the window.

INT. DOOM'S ROOM / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

DOOM is SIMILARLY DISORIENTED, looking around his cell, SCARED and CONFUSED.

He stares at his scarred hand, then at his missing right arm. His expression is one of sheer terror.

Doom shakes his head and HOBBLER on his crippled legs over to the door. He's HORRIFIED to see the young man looking at him.

DOOM

No! Let me out! Let me out of here!

A SINISTER GRIN spreads across the YOUNG MAN'S FACE.

The smile terrifies Doom.

DOOM (CONT'D)

NOOOO!

INT. HALLWAY / INSTITUTION - NIGHT

Outside the cell, we can BARELY HEAR DOOM'S SCREAMS.

YOUNG MAN

(to Doom)

I wish you the best of luck with that wretched form.

The YOUNG MAN turns, STILL SMILING.

He takes a deep breath, enjoying the health and youth of his body. He seems taller, more regal. He holds up his RIGHT HAND and FLEXES IT.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

This will do just fine.

He looks ahead (at us).

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Prepare yourself Richards. Doom is coming for you.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK:

ROLL CREDITS.

THE END.