

THE ANGELDUSTERS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

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

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

INT. UNISHIP - DAY

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

JALNUS, octopus-like Phod, debonair, metrosexual, usually pairs his limbs to resemble a humanoid with two arms and two legs. Skin texture/color control (though usually blue) makes his "hair" and "clothing" fairly convincing. His guns and blades are stored in a backpack.

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

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

TOK, who appears Phod but with a 100% shiny robotic body, speaks.

TOK

Anyone want a snack?

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

TOK

Oh, fuck you, Renkroc! No more for you. And happy two hundred, Jalnus.

Tok opens up his chest and presents him with a dessert.

SREVCHAR, crab-like Ondraxi Supremus, smirks.

SREVCHAR

Well, I'll be. Two hundred, ain'tcha? Time to make some babies and say goodbye, ain't it?

Jalnus shows Srevchar his wristscreen and the meager green.

JALNUS
I'm too broke to die.

SREVCHAR
Jalnus, how in the hell are you
broke at age two-hundred?

JALNUS
A combination of procrastination,
several failed businesses, and an
inability to consume anything less
than top-shelf chems.

SREVCHAR
Clean now, aintcha?

JALNUS
Don't I smell clean?

SREVCHAR
Your scent just says you're afraid.

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

SREVCHAR
Yeah, must be nice being soft and
spineless.

On the vidscreen, we see the smoking ruins of a gigantic
ship.

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

The uniship, still vantablack, cruises over the smoldering
wreckage.

TOK (V.O.)
Angeldusters took the colonist ship
right out. Approaching an escape
shuttle.

INT. UNISHIP

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

JALNUS
I just got paid.

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

Tok shakes his head with frustration, THIS convo again.

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

SREVCHAR
I told you, Yamma's never settin'
foot in that place again.

Jalnus grins, widely.

JALNUS
That one, sure.

SREVCHAR
Damn it!

JALNUS
Tok, you can open the doors now.

EXT. KORRALNIA - CAMP - DAY

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

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

SREVCHAR
Fuck all of you guys, really.

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

TOK
Jalnus, see any consciousness with
your chatoful eye?

Jalnus' third eye opens. The *chatoful* eye looks like an
iridescent stone with a faint glow.

JALNUS

All dead.

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

Jalnus casts a hologram of the colonists that overlays their current positions. He swipes left, but the image barely changes.

SREVCHAR

That's the last three days?

JALNUS

No movement.

EYEZ

Explains the empty stomachs and dehydrated bodies.

Jalnus turns off the com device and stashes it.

SREVCHAR

What the hell were they on?

TOK

Roll out.

The crew boards the uniship again, bay door open.

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

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

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

SREVCHAR

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

JALNUS

How?

SREVCHAR

We're about to find out.

TOK

I found out.

SREVCHAR

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

TOK

Oh, it's a bit nicer than a jar, I
must say. I honestly recommend it.

SREVCHAR

How's the VR sex?

TOK

Feels like I have a cock again. Or
eight.

Jalnus and Srevchar ready their weapons.

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

EYEZ

Gents, mind the rear. Angelduster
beams may give me a tickle, but
they'll cut you in half.

Eyez gets in front of everyone, leads with his warp-field-
generating belly.

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

TOK

How's the path?

JALNUS

Clear.

They round a rocky corner and a glowing blue humanoid CHILD
appears.

JALNUS

Eyez?

EYEZ

It has no mass. You?

Jalnus' *chatoful* eye blinks.

JALNUS

No consciousness. Remotely
generated.

SREVCHAR

Aw, he's adorable.

Srevchar fires an arm cannon beam right through the Child. It distorts somewhat, but no reaction otherwise.

CHILD

Go no farther, corporate
mercenaries. Return to your ship
and never come here again.

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

CHILD

Such casualness.

JALNUS

Balboc, Renkroc, get back!

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

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

The blue energy ball dissipates into nothing.

Balboc screams, thrashes with shock and horror.

Everyone else is paused in shock. Srevchar spits.

SREVCHAR

Ah, fuck. When did they start doing
that?

JALNUS

Everyone stay behind Eyez.

EXT. KORRALNIA ROCKY RIDGE - DAY

The pink fog rolls over a rocky ridge.

Down below, the crew observes.

EYEZ

There it is.

EYEZ POV: A small crystal protrusion glimmers. An x-ray-like view of the ridge shows the glimmer going deep underground and branching out with multiple veins. A few protrude through the surface, as if birthing new crystals.

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

...face. A serene one.

TOK

Give Balboc a head start, Jalnus.

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

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

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

EYEZ

He's almost there.

JALNUS

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

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

EYEZ

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

EYEZ POV: The red silhouette of Balboc is still.

SREVCHAR

What's going on?

EYEZ

Ah-

JALNUS

He's dead or under their control.
How many branches still intact,
Eyez?

EYEZ

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

JALNUS

Fuck.

SREVCHAR

We go.

JALNUS

It's too strong.

SREVCHAR
Fuck you, I'm going.

EYEZ
Wait-

SREVCHAR
Get in front, Eyez.

EYEZ
Balboc is returning.

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

Jalnus' chatoful eye glows.

JALNUS
Bad news, gentlemen. Get ready for
him.

Eyez positions himself in front.

Balboc erupts out of the ground, his turret firing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

JALNUS
Sorry, brother.

Jalnus hollows out Balboc. Srevchar drops the husk.

SREVCHAR
Go now, Eyez!

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

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

The powerful beam splits and bends around Eyez. It singes Jalnus' shoulder and tears up earth wherever it lands. The team charges forward.

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

JALNUS

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

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

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

SREVCHAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

SREVCHAR

Come on, motherfucker!

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

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

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

The crystal being goes dim.

EXT. LUCIDITY - NIGHT

A family of six CRYSTALLINE BEINGS huddles in darkness, the world around them and other beings disappearing. This is the Lucidity, the virtual extradimensional existence of this species, all existing within the uprooted crystal, dying.

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

CRYSTAL CHILD
Are we dying, brothers and sisters?

The OLDEST CRYSTAL BEING speaks.

CRYSTAL BEING
Our genetic history says yes, this
is death.

CRYSTAL CHILD
It feels sad.

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

Whiteness blinds.

EXT. KORRALNIA - DAY

The crystal husk SCREAMS. Everyone staggers.

SREVCHAR
What's that shit?

JALNUS
Duck!

Jalnus leaps into rolling downhill.

The crystal husk explodes, shards flying in every direction. Dozens THUNK into Srevchar's armored body. The force knocks him onto his ass, remaining legs splayed.

The fragments still SCREAM.

Jalnus and Srevchar both SCREAM, grabbing their heads.

IMAGE: the SCREAMING crystalline people.

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

Jalnus passes out.

Srevchar SCREAMS more.

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

LATER:

Tok stands over Jalnus and Srevchar while the dropship approaches. He picks up the purple glowing crystal core, and stores it inside his torso.

His body hums as the ship lands.

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

INT. MEDICAL BAY - DAY

Jalnus slowly opens his eyes. He touches his head, winces. He closes his eyes again, but his chatoful eye opens.

He opens his eyes again and looks over to see Srevchar in a bed-harness, folded in a resting position.

A multi-armed XIR DOCTOR, the Xir being a robotic species, bring in a wrapped replacement limb for Srevchar, unwrap the covering.

Srevchar's stump is cauterized. The Xir Doctor slices and pulls off exoskeleton chunks. It cuts off blackened tissue underneath.

The unwrapped prosthetic looks the same as Srevchar's other legs, except a couple shades darker.

The Xir Doctor slices through the topmost portion of the prosthetic shell and pries it open, revealing soft tissue.