THE OUTER LIMITS

"THE BELLERO SHIELD"

Teleplay
by
Joseph Stefano

Television Story
by
Lou Morheim and Joseph Stefano

Based on a short story by
Arthur Leo Zagat

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Story #20
FADE IN: (ACT ONE)

EXT. THE BELLERO MANSION - NIGHT

Big, tasteful, isolated. An expensive car parked in
the driveway. Light coming from a top floor room.
Quiet and stillness, and then, sharply and shockingly,
a bright, white beam of light shoots out of the roof
of the house, cuts into the night sky, like a vivid,
amplified searchlight. It is a narrow beam, and it
emanates, obviously, through a skylight in the top
floor room. It holds a moment, then withdraws, only
to dart out again, and again withdraw. During this:

CONTROL VOICE
There is a passion in the human
heart which is called aspiration.
It flares with a noble flame, and
by its light Man has traveled
from the caves of darkness to the
darkness of outer space.

CAMERA MOVES IN toward the house, ANGLING LOW upon a
ground-level cellar window. A light behind this dusty,
squat window goes on. As CAMERA reaches window, we:

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

INT. THE WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

A narrow aisle between floor-to-ceiling bins. At the
far end of the aisle, stairs to the floor above. A
WOMAN is coming down the stairs. Over this:

CONTROL VOICE
(continuing)
But when this passion becomes
lust, when its flame is fanned
by greed and private hunger,
then Aspiration becomes Ambition
-- by which sin the angels fell.

The woman has come down the aisle, is close to CAMERA.
She pauses, inspects the wines in the f.g. bin. She is
MRS. JUDITH BELLERO. She is about thirty, tall and
angular and commandingly lovely. There is a soft, with-
drawn quality about her, a reserve which can easily be
mistaken for gentleness, even tenderness, but which is,
in reality, an artful and studied mask for passionate,
consuming ambition. Her voice is warm, almost languid;
it matches the pure white velvet hostess gown she wears.
Hearing a sound from the stairs, a sound we do not hear,
she calls softly:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JUDITH

Mrs. Dame?

In response to her call, a WOMAN comes down the stairs, continues along aisle until she is close to Judith. She is MRS. DAME. She has a dark, distant foreignness about her, an agelessness -- she could be twenty-five or fifty or any age inbetween. Her movements are graceful and precise; her expression is withdrawn, almost brooding. She wears a high-necked, tight-sleeved housecoat which hangs almost to the floor. She is perfectly, elegantly groomed; except that she wears no shoes. There is an echo of fire-blooded royalty about her; she is Judith's housekeeper and confidante. She waits in silence until Judith has made a selection and pointed to it; then she removes the chosen bottle from its bin, checks its label as if to approve or disapprove, holds it away from her, blows off the dust, hands it to Judith, steps aside to let Judith return up the aisle, follows. And we:

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

INT. RICHARD BELLERO'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

On top floor of the house. A skylight with sliding panels dominates the room; directly below it, a table on which stands an instrument for transmitting a laser beam. The beam is transmitting, darting out through the open skylight and into the night sky. RICHARD BELLERO stands before the table, is adjusting controls. He is just past forty, a man with an infirm grip on reality, an astro-physicist who has grown up nurtured by his father's wealth and his own dreams. He is good, and kind; and while he is not exactly weak, his potential strength has rarely been needed and therefore remains un-tapped -- if not atrophied. He makes a final adjustment, succeeds in holding the laser beam steady and constant. He smiles a small smile, turns to his father, BELLERO, SR., a powerful-faced man with the impatient eyes and pre-occupied manner of men who have been powerful too long and know it.

SENIOR

It holds steady.

RICHARD

Yes.

He realizes that the feat does not impress his father. He smiles again, but only to conceal his sense of re-jection -- a sense with which he is intimately familiar but to which he can never become accustomed.

(CONTINUED)
SENIOR
(rising)
It's been a long evening,
Richard.

RICHARD
Has it, father?

SENIOR
(going to door)
Tell your wife I enjoyed my
dinner.

RICHARD
(a rueful smile)
She might like to hear it from
you.

Judith appears at the door, causing Senior to stop short.
A swift glance tells her the precise mood of the moment;
a fury flashes momentarily in her eyes; then, smiling,
she extends the wine bottle.

JUDITH
Your favorite year, father.

SENIOR
(pauses)
Next time, Judith.
(a perfunctory
smile)
Good night, now.

He goes around Judith, goes out.

RICHARD
I'll walk you to your car.

He hurries to the door. When he reaches it, Judith puts
a hand on his arm, restrains him. We hear Senior's foot-
steps going down the stairs. Judith whispers in a calm,
velvet voice.

JUDITH
Yes?

RICHARD
(embarrassed;
painfully)
He'd already made his decision
... before he came tonight.

(CONTINUED)
JUDITH
(same tone; a small smile)
Not in your favor.

RICHARD
No. Someone from the Canadian branch.
(calling out door)
Be with you in a moment, father.

JUDITH
He passes over his own son, in favor of a stranger?

RICHARD
(a bit irritated)
He isn't stepping down from the throne, Judith; he's retiring from the presidency of a company he owns and controls! Blood has nothing to do with his choice of a... successor.

He moves free of her touch, goes out. Judith stands there a moment, listening to his footsteps hurrying down the stairs. She holds the wine bottle clutched tight in her hands, as if strangling it; a dark, dreadful frustration seizes her mind and body, makes her almost tremble. As if enraged by her inability to strangle the bottle, she flings it across the room. The act gives her some relief; she forces control upon herself, walks in measured steps across the lab, looking at the varied equipment as if disgusted with it. She reaches the table, sees the unbroken wine bottle, bends to pick it up, puts it down on the metal top of the table. She stares in deep, deadly rage at the laser beam, follows its shaft with her eyes, stares up at the sky. Richard returns, pauses in the doorway.

RICHARD
He didn't wait.

She says nothing; he comes into the room.

RICHARD
(continuing)

It's always made him uncomfortable
-- having to turn me down.

(CONTINUED)
JUDITH
Your laser light didn't impress him, did it, Richard?

RICHARD
(a self-deprecating grin)
It isn't anything original, Judith. I'd merely supposed...
I'd found a new use for it.
(pauses; smiles)
The Bellero Corporation is no longer interested in...
"Destructive appliances." His phrase.

JUDITH
Is it destructive, Richard?

Richard smiles, slightly surprised; she turns, sees the expression.

JUDITH
(continuing; with a smile)
Didn't you know I was interested in your work?

RICHARD
It's recent, isn't it?

JUDITH
(a look at the laser instrument)
It began with this.
(pauses)
Have you ever heard of the Bifrost, Richard?

RICHARD
No.

JUDITH
It's also called the "Trembling Way." It's the bridge between earth and heaven.
(looks at him; smiles)
Scandinavian mythology.
(looks at laser)
I thought of this as our Bifrost... the trembling way to... what for me would be heaven; Power, far-flung holdings... undiminishable authority... (CONTINUED)
RICHARD
(a sardonic smile)
And all along I thought all
you wanted was for me to make
some small contribution to
mankind.

JUDITH
Not small, Richard. The things
I want for you... are not small.

RICHARD
(looks away;
pauses)
I'm sorry, Judith. Unless my
father changes his mind, which
he won't, the only thing I'll
be able to give you in large
amounts is... money.

She realizes that he is hurt, knows she must give him a
solatium. She moves close, places her hands gently on
his face, turns it until he is looking at her. Then,
whispering warmly:

JUDITH
And love.

He reacts as she meant him to; he takes her close, almost
fiercely into his arms, holds her as if he were clinging
to her.

RICHARD
(fervently)
Will that keep you, Judith?
Will love keep you?

She kisses him to avoid answering, giving him the impression
that the kiss is an answer in the positive. Then she moves
away, picks up bottle of wine.

JUDITH
Would you return this, Richard?
We'll open it the next time your
father comes to dinner.

RICHARD
Will there be a next time?

She doesn't answer. He takes the bottle, looks at her
regretfully. She laughs suddenly, a soft, enchanting
laugh, grabs the bottle back.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

JUDITH

No. Bring us two glasses.
Crystal. Ask Mrs. Dane to
polish them. We'll drink to...
(looks at laser)
... our trembling way.

Richard smiles, slightly cheered; he goes to the door,
looks back, goes out. The moment he is gone, the false
warmth drains from Judith's face. She puts the bottle
down, hard, stares down at the table, grips its edge as if
to control her rage. And staring down, her eye is caught
by a small gun-like object. She studies it a moment, then
picks it up, holds it as one holds a pistol. Then, as if
obeying an impulse to ruin and destroy the shatterers of
her hopes, she aims the object at the wine bottle, fires.

INSERT - WINE BOTTLE ON LAB TABLE

As it is hit by a laser beam that is as slender as a spurt
of ink shot out of a fountain pen. The bottle turns pure
white as it is hit, disappears in a fraction of a second,
even before the laser beam has withdrawn into the gun.

BACK TO SHOT

Judith stares at the spot where the bottle stood, then
looks at the gun in her hand, raises a slightly apprecia-
tive brow. Then, suddenly, her expression changes, she
holds still in faint apprehension, as she hears a sudden,
chilling sound, a kind of low screeching wail. It comes
from above, through the open skylight. Judith looks up,
sees nothing but the laser beam, frowns more in wonder
now than in apprehension. The sound grows louder, more
terrible. Judith takes a step or two closer to the laser
instrument, looks up. And a smear of terror-awe twists
her face.

JUDITH - ECU

As she stares up, paralyzed with shock and fear. The wail
is louder now, closer.
WHAT SHE SEES

The laser beam against the black sky; SHOT framed by skylight. And in the beam, caught and held, as in a pipe, an inhuman CREATURE. It seems to be resisting the confinement and pull of the beam; and it is failing, is sliding, slipping downward toward skylight opening, its long fingers grasping at air, as if it were trying to save itself from being sucked down a drain.

JUDITH - ECU

Frozen in terror, mouth open, making not a sound; unable to move back or to even look away; the laser gun in her limp hand, forgotten.

THE CREATURE IN THE LASER BEAM

It screeches, fights, grasps; and it fails, is sucked down into CAMERA.

INT. LAB - FULL - NIGHT

As the screeching Creature emerges from the tube-prison of the light beam, crashes down on the lab table, is thrown against Judith, sending her backward, causing her to stumble and fall against the wall. And still she is unable to make a sound.

The Creature regains his balance, staggers, his arms upheld in confusion, his glance darting about as if trying to orient himself to the world of a new nightmare. And then he sees Judith. He stops still, stares at her.

JUDITH - CREATURE'S POV

Lying where she fell, against the far wall, fear and shock in her eyes, the laser gun in her hand.

INT. LAB - FULL - NIGHT

A moment, and the Creature takes a step toward Judith. Then another. The third shakes Judith out of her shock-paralysis. She doesn't move, only slightly changes her expression. She merely raises the laser gun, aims it at the Creature, and fires.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:
INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY OF BELLERO MANSION - NIGHT

Dark, grim, old-fashioned; small, narrow; lined with cupboards. Mrs. Dame stands at the counter, slowly polishes a crystal wine glass. The other glass is on the counter, is already polished. Its facets catch the light; and Mrs. Dame stares at the reflection flashes, as if hypnotized by them. Richard stands at the door, leans there, stares at nothing, is a still life of rejection.

RICHARD
(after a moment; quietly)
Mrs. Dame?

She neither looks at him nor answers; he continues as if accustomed to this absence of response.

RICHARD
(continuing)
Does my wife confide in you... about me?

MRS. DAME
Sometimes, when she is dreaming, I am there. So she dreams aloud.

RICHARD
Has she ever "dreamed" about... leaving me?

Mrs. Dame puts down the polishing cloth, takes up both crystal glasses, turns and faces Richard.

MRS. DAME
For what?

He frowns, not comprehending.

MRS. DAME
(continuing; clarifying)
Leaving you for what?

RICHARD
(pauses; smiles sardonically)
Some other pretender... to some more accessible throne.

(Continued)
MRS. DAME
(pauses)
Mrs. Bellero is loyal.

RICHARD
Yes. But...
(pauses)
... to whom?

Judith appears in the doorway, behind Richard. Mrs. Dame looks at her, instantly concerned. Richard turns, looks at Judith. She stands in terrifying calm, her face expressionless, the laser gun still in her hand.

RICHARD
(a frown; softly)
Judith?
(when she does not respond)
What is it?

He notices the gun, almost backs away, as if on an unconscious instinct, as Judith enters the pantry, leans against the counter.

JUDITH
(softly; looking at no one)
I killed it.

RICHARD

JUDITH
But it wasn't human. It wasn't a human that I killed.

Richard goes to her, touches her shoulder. She looks at him.

JUDITH
(continuing; quietly but steadily)
It came down... the trembling way... inhuman... a disaster come to life... I thought... I was dreaming.
(pauses; takes his hand off her shoulder)
It took three steps toward me. And with the third... I fired.

(CONTINUED)
She goes quiet. Richard takes the gun from her hand. Mrs. Dame, urgency and concern in her eyes, looks at Richard, then goes swiftly out.

RICHARD
(quietly; fearful for her)
Judith? What did you see?

JUDITH
(not moving)
It was white... like cold moonlight... chilling.

RICHARD
Is it still up there... in the lab?

JUDITH
Yes. Dead. If such things... can die.
(glances at the gun in his hand; frowns)
No. It shouldn't still be there. I fired with... that. The wine bottle vanished.
(pauses)
It would too; wouldn't it? I didn't look back. I crawled... out of the room.
(a dark resentment)
I crawled, Richard.

RICHARD
(a glance toward the door)
Stay here, Judith. Can you? Are you all right, now?

She turns her head slowly, until she is looking directly at him. She smiles.

JUDITH
Mrs. Dame tells me I see potentials that don't exist. Perhaps I'm beginning to see other things... that don't exist.

She turns swiftly, goes out of the pantry. He follows, his eyes shaded dark with dark disturbance.
Mrs. Dave stands in the doorway. She stares in wonder at the creature. It is encased in a bell-shaped, clear, plasticlike shell. It stands poised, tense, but unafraid, stares out at Mrs. Dave. We hear footsteps coming up the stairs; and then Judith and Richard appear at the door. They stop, shocked, stare at the Creature. A long quiet; and then we hear the Creature's voice. It is low, liquid-beautiful, reverberates with its own mellow, shell-enclosed echoes. It sounds distant, but not muffled.

THE CREATURE
(looking at Judith)
We are told... that on this planet, fear is the spur. It was fear that made you think first to destroy me, was it not?

Richard takes a step into the lab, his fear already gone, replaced by the scientist's curiosity and mania for all wondrous phenomena.

RICHARD
The laser beam didn't destroy you?

THE CREATURE
Does fire quench fire?

A quiet; then Judith takes a step closer, looks at the creature, her gaze steady.

JUDITH
Who are you?

THE CREATURE
Your weapon could not harm me. Had I known its charge was of the same stuff as that...
(points toward the large laser beam)
... I would not have thrown up this shield.
(looks at Judith, smiles a grim smile)
I feel... I sense it would be wise to remain shielded, however; until I have acquainted myself with all your weapons.

(CONTINUED)
Judith is caught by his piercing gaze, feels it penetrate to her deepest self. She is disturbed, backs away. Mrs. Dame moves close to her, puts a hand on her arm.

JUDITH
(to Richard)
Ask him who he is.

THE CREATURE
A traveler.

He has deliberately answered the question she instructed Richard to ask; she realizes this, turns, faces the Creature.

JUDITH
From where?

THE CREATURE
My "world" hovers just above the ceiling of your universe. It is not a planet. It is... an amplification of light, some of which radiates from your stars.

RICHARD
(awed; a spell-bound whisper)
How did you come here?

THE CREATURE
(a sardonic smile)
I am more urgently concerned with the question of how I shall survive here.

(a look at Judith)
If I remove my shield...?

He breaks off; there is a quiet, then:

RICHARD
Yes! Of course, you may! Do!

The Creature nods a thank you at Richard, looks again at Judith. Unconsciously, she backs away. Mrs. Dame moves with her, toward the door. They stare at the Creature. He raises a hand, palm upturned. In it, a small cylindrical object. Although we do not now realize it, the object is attached to the Creature by a fine plastic tube which runs from the underside of the object to what would be, in a human, the large vein in the wrist. The tube contains a dark liquid. With his free hand, he presses an uneven, dark area in the milk-white cylinder; and with the press, the shield instantly disappears.
RICHARD
(looking in wonder
at the cylinder)
That shield...?

THE CREATURE
Without it, we could not travel
into such unserene universes as
this. Your meteors and your
random radiations...

He breaks off, smiles as if suddenly self-conscious and
uncomfortable. Judith and Mrs. Dame are staring at him,
as if expecting the worst; Richard's eyes are blazes of
curiosity and wonder.

THE CREATURE
(to Richard)
I shall go.

RICHARD
(a step closer;
implying)
No! Don't!

The Creature glances at Judith and Mrs. Dame; then to
Richard.

THE CREATURE
I already see another of your
weapons...
(looking at Judith)
Distrust.

Walter looks a plea at Judith.

JUDITH
Perhaps you can explain to him
that we are not all scientists,
Richard.
(to the Creature;
reservedly but
pleasantly)
In our world, naivete and mindless
courage are reserved for very small
children and very dedicated
scientists.
(smiles)
The rest of us have to struggle
along with our distrust of...
monsters.

(CONTINUED)
RICHARD
(appalled)

Judith!

Judith ignores him, continues to smile, takes a step toward the Creature.

JUDITH
But I'm not afraid, now. And I apologize.

THE CREATURE
You need not.

JUDITH
My husband does not want you to go. My housekeeper will accept you the moment I do.

Do you?

THE CREATURE
In my limited fashion... yes.

Their gazes remain locked for a moment; then Richard comes close, touches her arm. She looks at him, smiles, turns swiftly, goes to the door, goes out. Mrs. Dame follows after her, closing door behind her as she goes. A quiet, then:

RICHARD
Will you stay?

The Creature looks at the closed door for a moment longer, then turns to Richard.

THE CREATURE
How were you able to create a solid cylinder of amplified light?

RICHARD
(taken back by the sudden interest, the change of manner)

The laser?

(CONTINUED)
THE CREATURE
(walking toward it)
It is composed of properties
almost identical to those which
form the atmosphere of my world.
How could you have synthesized
compounds whose existence you
could not possible have known of?
Explain, please.

RICHARD
The laser is the amplification
of light by stimulated emission
of radiation. It irradiates a
synthetic ruby crystal...

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

UPSTAIRS FOYER - OUTSIDE LAB DOOR

The foyer dimly lit; a place of shadows and quiet. Judith
stands close to the lab door, her head turned so that her
ear is almost touching the door. Mrs. Dame stands a small
distance away, stares expressionlessly at Judith. And
from behind the door we hear:

RICHARD'S VOICE (off)
(continuing;
uninterrupted)
... which absorbs energy over a
broad band of frequencies. It is
optical energy, and it excites
the atoms to a higher energy
state...

Judith has turned away, a deep, dark smile on her face,
has moved quietly from the door. CAMERA PANNING with
her; we no longer hear Richard's voice.

JUDITH
(looking beyond
Mrs. Dame; speaking
as if to herself)
I called it... our Bifrost... our
bridge from earth to... heaven.
And I was right. I was right.
Finally. Totally.

(pauses)
Do you know what that monstrous
thing is, Mrs. Dame?

(CONTINUED)
MRS. DAME
(a chilled whisper)
Something dead... that won't die.

JUDITH
(a smile)
No. It isn't a spectre, Mrs.
Dame. It's real. And it's
alive.
(pauses; smiles
deadly)
And it's ours.

FADE OUT.

(END ACT ONE)
FADE IN: (ACT TWO)

16 EXT. THE BELLERO MANSION - NIGHT

The lantern over the front door is unlighted. All the windows are dark; excepting those of the lab on the top floor. Bellerro, Sr.'s car turns into the driveway, stops before the front door.

17 ANGLE CLOSE ON CAR - NIGHT

Behind the wheel, Bellerro, Sr. He sits there for a moment, his face set in an expression of remorse and anger and pity. Then, forcing himself to do so, he gets out of the car, goes to the front door, rings the bell.

18 ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Bellerro, Sr. waits. A long wait. He is about to ring again, pauses, as if doubtful that he should -- or even wants to. Then he turns, walks to the step's edge, pauses. And the door opens. Mrs. Dame looks out. Her face is expressionless; and she says nothing. Bellerro, Sr. senses her, turns.

MRS. DAME

Mrs. Bellerro does not wish to see you. She sent me to send you away.

SENIOR

I came to see my son. Kindly tell him I am here.

(pauses)

I'll wait.

MRS. DAME

I was sent to send you away.

SENIOR

(becoming incensed, trying to control himself)

My son will see me.

MRS. DAME

(no difference in tone)

Why don't you go away, Mr. Bellerro? It would be a rare wisdom on your part.

(CONTINUED)
SENIOR
(taking a
step forward)
How dare you speak to me that way?

MRS. DAME
No friend, and no equal, could speak to you more advisedly.

SENIOR
(pauses; then)
Call my son.

Judith appears behind Mrs. Dame, stares out at Bellero, Senior.

JUDITH
Go to bed, Mrs. Dame.

Mrs. Dame backs away, goes. Judith presses a light switch just inside the door; the overdoor lantern lights. She and Bellero exchange a long silent stare. Then:

SENIOR
I couldn't keep you from marrying my son. I've done my best to keep him from regretting it.
(pauses)
It's been a silent war, Judith.
(pauses; then, almost regretfully)
Now I must fire a very loud shot.

JUDITH
(a smile)
The noise will break his heart, father.

SENIOR
(pauses; then, firmly)
He can have the Bellero Corporation, all of it, forever. If he leaves you.

JUDITH
He doesn't want it.
SENIOR
He's spent his entire life trying to show me he's worthy of it.

JUDITH
He wants your love, Father. I want your empire.

SENIOR
(pauses; then, with deadly calm)
I spend every hour, every dollar and every dream developing men and means that are dedicated to the prevention of war; that is how badly I hate war! Yet, I'm not as sickened and enraged by war as I am by a single soul like yours. Your ambition is singularly the most active form of violence I've ever encountered.

JUDITH
(unmoved, smiling)
It's no more active than your own; just younger and more vibrant.

SENIOR
I have no ambition; my yearnings are aspirations.

JUDITH
You want glory.

SENIOR
I aspire to it.

JUDITH
You lust! And lust is what becomes of an aspiration when it's allowed to grow up and become an ambition.
(pauses; smiles)
You are going to give the Bellero empire to your son...

SENIOR
No.

(continued)
JUDITH
(pauses; finishes statement)
... in return for the glory he is about to give the Selloren name.

(as he looks a faintly puzzled frown at her)

Yes, father.
(a small, soft laugh)

Wait and see.

She goes in, closes the door. The lantern light goes off. Selloren, Sr. comes down the steps, pauses, looks up at the lab windows. Then, thoughtful and vaguely disturbed, he goes to his car, gets in, drives off.

INT. UPSTAIRS FOYER - OUTSIDE LAB DOOR - NIGHT

From behind the door, the low hums, buzzes, throbbings of the electronic equipment within. Judith comes up the stairs, reaches the door, pauses. Then she knocks softly. There is no response. She opens the door a small crack, looks in.

WHAT SHE SEES - ANGLED THROUGH DOOR CRACK

The equipment is in full operation; panel lights blink, tape recorders roll. Richard escorts the creature on a comprehensive tour of the lab, gesturing and explaining. We do not hear his voice, it is overpowered by the equipment sounds. Suddenly, the creature looks toward door, pauses, locks his gaze with Judith's.

JUDITH - CLOSE - THROUGH DOOR CRACK - CREATURE'S POV

She returns his gaze, steadily and evenly. Then she closes the door.

INT. LAB - CLOSE ON RICHARD AND CREATURE - NIGHT

Richard has realized that the creature is no longer paying attention, looks at him...

THE CREATURE
The human you call wife.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RICHARD
(frowns, looks
at closed door)

Judith?

He starts toward door. The Creature calls to him:

CREATURE

Friend...?  
(as Richard pauses,
looks back)

I have not much time... and
there is so much more I would
like to be taught.

RICHARD
(smiles; is
grateful)

I'll just be a minute.

He hurries toward the door.

INT. UPSTAIRS FOYER - NIGHT

Judith waits. The door opens; Richard comes out, his
face almost beautiful with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

JUDITH

Close the door, please. My
hearing is more sensitive than
yours.

He closes the door, still smiling, undaunted by the
cold edge in her voice. She is appraising him.

JUDITH

(a small,
unsmiling smile)

I see.

RICHARD

What?

JUDITH

How you look when you're genuinely
happy. Evidently, this is the first
time I've seen you... genuinely
happy.

(CONTINUED)
RICHARD

(laughs; then, enthusiastically)
Judith... he cares about everything.
... nothing I can say or explain
disinterests him... he'd like it
if I could stuff all the facts of
the world into his brain...

JUDITH

(quietly appalled)
That's what you've been doing...
all this time... ?

RICHARD

He hasn't much time, Judith.
Less than an hour. He has to
travel before the parallax
between earth and...

JUDITH

(interrupting)
Richard!
 (pauses)
Fool! Generous fool!
 (pauses)
You stuff his brain?

RICHARD

(quietly)
Lower your voice, Judith.

JUDITH

(pauses; smiles)
And he goes home... and astounds
everyone... and you're left with
nothing but a fantastic tale to
tell a smirking world! And who'll
believe you? Even with Mrs. Dame
and me to corroborate your story,
who'll believe you? Who'll believe
we aren't three benighted idiots,
three hallucinators?

RICHARD

(quiet anger)
Shall I put a chain around his
neck, and parade him down Main
Street?

(continued)
JUDITH
Your laser light made it possible for a form of life to travel from beyond our universe, Richard. You brought it down! It's yours! You own it!

RICHARD
No form of life should ever be owned by another.

JUDITH
(fervently; pressing)
All right! Not ownership, then! But proof! To convince the smirkers! To stagger the world!

RICHARD
I didn't set out to accomplish this, Judith. It was an accident.

JUDITH
(close to his ear; whispering)
Such accidents have made men kings!

RICHARD
(pauses; is beginning to be reached; tries to resist)
I'm wasting time, Judith.

He turns to open the door; she reaches out, grasps his hand, pulls it up to her mouth, kisses it.

JUDITH
Richard... don't lose this... mad opportunity.

He stares at her, says nothing. Then he frees his hand, but doesn't resume opening the door, keeps staring at her.

RICHARD
(softly, like a disillusioned child)
No one will believe... it happened?

(CONTINUED)
JUDITH
Would you... if it were told to you by a compulsive failure... and his wife... and her housekeeper?

RICHARD
My father would be believed. If he tells them he's seen it, they'll believe him! Call him, Judith. Tell him to come quickly! He can get here in time... no one else could. He's the closest... call him, hurry!

JUDITH
(pauses; smiles)
You call. He doesn't hate you.
(urgently)
Hurry! Less than an hour...!

Richard turns to the door, pauses.

JUDITH
What is it?

RICHARD
I'll use the downstairs phone.
(of the Creature in the lab)
He may resent being exploited.

JUDITH
He probably doesn't know the meaning of the word.

RICHARD
I do.
(a grim smile)
I learned it at my father's knee.

He goes down the stairs; we hear his footsteps going down, hurriedly. Judith stares after him, then looks at the door, then looks into the shadows opposite. Mrs. Dame steps out. They exchange stares. Then, Judith moves to the lab door, reaches out to open it.

MRS. DAME
(a whisper)
Mrs. Bellero?

(continued)
CONTINUED: (4)

Judith pauses, looks back. Mrs. Dame takes her hand out of her pocket. It holds a small, mother-of-pearl-handled revolver. She extends it.

MRS. DAME (continuing)
Once... this protected me from a human monster.
(smiles)
The one I married.
(pauses)
Take it. You may need... the same protection.

Judith takes the gun, pockets it, opens the door and goes into the lab.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

The Creature's back is to the door; and Judith enters soundlessly, closes the door silently. She stares at the Creature. It senses her, turns. Its eyes go at once to the hand in the pocket. Judith smiles, starts to remove the hand. The Creature presses its hand-held cylinder, is instantly encased in its clear, indestructible shell. Judith pauses, then takes her hand out of the pocket. The gun is not in her hand. She smiles, comes forward, approaching the Creature as if too friendly and innocent to be offended by or even take notice of his defensiveness.

JUDITH
Richard will be back in a minute. Is there something I can do for you?

CREATURE
How long is a minute?

JUDITH (relaxed; smiling)
It passes unnoticed, when you're content. For the needy, it can be a string of endless lifetimes.

CREATURE
Why do you want me to remain here?

JUDITH (laughs)
Can you read my mind... even through your... shield?

(continued)
CREATURE
No. I cannot read your mind. I cannot even understand your language.

(as she reacts in surprise)
I analyze your eyes. In all the universes, in all the unities beyond all the universes, all who have eyes, have eyes that speak. And all speak the same language.

JUDITH
(awed; intrigued)
How can you speak my language?

CREATURE
I learn each word just before I speak it. Your eyes teach me.

JUDITH
(pauses; then:)
My husband tells me you must go... in less than an hour. Must you?

(as he nods)
Don't. Please. Stay here, I want you to stay... for my husband's sake.

CREATURE
(almost a smile)
I see.

JUDITH
(smiles)
Then you must see that I wouldn't harm you for the world. You can come out of your shell.

He pauses, then presses the cylinder. The shell disappears.

CREATURE
(smiles)
And now... you'll come out of yours?

(continued)
Judith laughs, moves away, walks aimlessly about, in an attempt to keep him from looking into her eyes.

JUDITH
You're extremely perceptive. Yes, we have our shields, too. But ours protect only our souls and our hearts. Our flesh is vulnerable to whatever fate and our other enemies hurl at us.

She pauses, holds poised, eyes lowered, thoughtful; as if struck to an awareness by her own words. Then she looks across to him.

CREATURE
No.

JUDITH
(a wry smile)

No?

CREATURE
You lack the prime ingredient...

He extends his palm, holding the cylinder.

CREATURE
(continuing)
... to manufacture a thing like this.

JUDITH
(coming forward, slowly)
That's unfortunate.

She pauses; keeps walking until she is close to him, then:

JUDITH
(continuing)
The man who could give his country... a weapon like that...

CREATURE
It isn't a weapon. I suppose in a military frame of reference, it would be considered an anti-weapon.

(CONTINUED)
JUDITH
An anti-weapon.
(smiles)
Same thing.
(turns away,
resumes pacing)
If every man, woman and child
had one... an entire country
could be protected against
attack... and counterattack.

CREATURE
Every man, woman and child
would not need his own. A single
one of these could shield and
protect your entire planet.

She pauses; then, slowly, turns around, faces him.

JUDITH
A single one?

CREATURE
The shield's radius can be
increased or decreased, merely
by deepening the pressure, or
lightening it. But the thing
would do your planet no good,
unless I or one of my kind were
to...

He breaks off as the door opens; Richard enters, pauses,
meets Judith's questioning glance.

RICHARD
He won't come back. My father
will never come here again.

JUDITH
(pauses; then
with urgency)
Make him! Beg him to! Go and
beg him!

RICHARD
You sent him away, Judith.

JUDITH
(pauses; then
starts toward door)
I'll go to him.

(Continued)
She reaches the door; Richard blocks it, stops her.

**JUDITH**
(a controlled rage; a whisper)
I'll crawl. Anything... to get him here before... it's too late.

**RICHARD**
(quietly; defeated)
No, Judith. I can't let you...
crawl.
(pauses)
I'll go.
(to the Creature; a whispered, painful plea)
Wait for me. Please?

The Creature looks at him, turns his eyes, pained by the anguish in Richard's. Judith gently urges Richard out the door, closes it after him. We hear Richard's footsteps rushing down the stairs. Judith remains by the door, stares at the Creature. He looks at her.

**CREATURE**
I did not lie to him. I did not promise that I would wait.

**JUDITH**
You're not going to wait.

**CREATURE**
If I miss the moment, I'll never be able to leave here.

**JUDITH**
Yes. None of us can afford to miss the moment.

**CREATURE**
(looking into her eyes)
Goodbye? What does that mean?

**JUDITH**
It has many meanings.

**CREATURE**
I see.

(continued)
He bows his head slightly, turns and swiftly leaps up onto the lab table, stares at the laser beam. As he reaches up his hands toward it, Judith takes the gun out of her pocket, fires at him. He is struck in the base of the skull. He falls backwards, lands flat on his back, is still.

FADE OUT.

(END ACT TWO)
FADE IN: (ACT THREE)

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Frail morning light seeps in through the high, small window. All is still and silent; and then we hear the sound of a door opening. The ceiling light goes on. Judith and Mrs. Dame half-carry, half-drag the lifeless Creature down the stairs. They say nothing, seem coldly competent, unpanicked. They pause when they reach the cellar floor, then drag the Creature toward CAMERA. They let it go, rise up, survey their surroundings.

MRS. DAME
We'll have to dig it a grave.

JUDITH
Later.

MRS. DAME
Your husband...

JUDITH
He rarely comes down for the wine. I'll remember not to send him.

MRS. DAME
I'll dig a hole in the woods behind the house. Tonight, we'll bury it.

JUDITH
Nobody’s grave has to be dug in a hurry. Do a little today, a little tomorrow... so I won't have to do without you for a whole day.

From OFF, the sound of an automobile entering the drive, coming to a stop. Judith and Mrs. Dame exchange calm glances, start toward the stairs.

ANGLE CLOSE ON WINE CELLAR STAIRS - DAY

Judith is about to start up; Mrs. Dame is behind her. They hear a door slam above, then footsteps. They pause, hold, listen. From above:

RICHARD'S VOICE (OFF)
It's up in the laboratory,
Father.

(CONTINUED)
SENIOR’S VOICE (off)
I shall wait here in the foyer,
Richard. I do not wish to go
deeper into your house. I have
come as far as any man should
have to.

RICHARD’S VOICE (off)
(after a pause)
There are drafts here.

SENIOR’S VOICE (off)
If you truly have something to
show me, bring it here and show
it to me.

A quiet; then we hear Richard’s footsteps cross the
foyer and go up the stairs.

JUDITH
(to Mrs. Dame)
Stay.

She goes up the stairs. CAMERA REMAINS CLOSE on Mrs.
Dame. Judith goes up OUT OF SHOT; we hear the cellar
doors open, then close. Then we hear:

JUDITH’S VOICE (off)
Thank you, father... for coming.
(pauses; a
quiet; then)

Excuse me.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

Richard stands just inside the door; it is still open
behind him. He looks about the empty room, frowning,
a small anxiety in his eyes. Then he crosses to the
table. The laser beam has been shut off. All the
equipment is quiet. He looks out the open skylight,
looks up at the gray dawn sky. Then, as Judith enters,
he turns, looks a question at her.

JUDITH
It refused to wait.

Richard says nothing; but he is crushed, devastated.
He sinks into a chair. Judith goes to him, touches
his shoulder.

(Continued)
JUDITH
He said... it was not a question of time... the parallax made no difference. He simply did not want you to profit by him... as he has profited by you.

RICHARD
(looks up at her)
I see.

His phrase, unconsciously echoing the Creature's, causes a flush of guilt to rise in Judith's face. She turns away, so he can not look into her eyes, as if he, too, could analyze them, as the Cretan could.

JUDITH
I begged him to stay, Richard. I told him... he had not begun to learn all you could have taught him.

RICHARD
(a rueful smile; more to himself)
I'm glad I didn't tell father... what I had up here. He'd think I'd added imbecility to my long list of accomplishments.
(rises)
I'll tell him it was a ruse to get him here... so you could apologize to him.
(pauses; looks at her)
Will you? (as she says nothing)

Judith?

She is lost in her own frenzied thoughts, hardly hears him. He turns, starts toward the door. As he reaches it:

JUDITH
Wait, Richard! (as he pauses)
I'll talk to him.

(CONTINUED)
RICHARD
(doubtfully)
You'll apologize?

JUDITH
(pauses; then,
with a smile)
He will.

She goes quickly to the door, passes him, pauses at
the door, looks back.

JUDITH
(continuing)
Wait here. Your father and I
will come up together.

He frowns, mystified and apprehensive. She goes out.
We hear her footsteps go down the stairs.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Mrs. Dame stands at the foot of the stairs, is in the
exact position as when last seen. From OFF, the sound of
Judith's footsteps coming down the stairs and into the
foyer above.

JUDITH'S VOICE (Off)
He can not bring it down.
You'll have to go up to the lab.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK, backs down the aisle,
slowly, ANGLED LOW.

JUDITH'S VOICE (Off)
(continuing, after
a pause)
Father?
(pauses; louder)
If you leave this house, without
going up to your son, you'll be
exposing yourself as a sanctimonious
sham! The world will know that
your "dedication" to peace and good
is a mask to hide your petty,
vengeful, unforgiving nature!

CAMERA has PULLED BACK to the end of the aisle; the
Creature is now in SHOT.

(CONTINUED)
CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE on its hand, it holds the cylinder in a death grip. Over this:

JUDITH'S VOICE (off)
(continuing, uninterrupted)
Your son has invented a way for mankind to protect itself from mankind! His invention will make war impotent and insane! He can give it to the world... as a gift, from an anonymous donor.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

CLOSE ON MRS. DAME - AT FOOT OF CELLAR STAIRS - DAY
Expressionlessly, she listens to Judith's voice, which comes from above.

JUDITH'S VOICE (off).
(continuing, uninterrupted)
Or he can give it as the new ruler of the Bellero empire! There's no glory for you... if your son's invention goes down in history as a gift from an anonymous donor!

A pause; and then we hear Senior's footsteps cross the foyer, start up the stairs. Then the cellar door opens; Judith hurries down the stairs. She passes Mrs. Dame without a word or glance, goes swiftly down the aisle toward the Creature. Mrs. Dame watches, but does not move.

CLOSE ON CREATURE - IN WINE CELLAR - DAY
Judith enters SHOT, looks down on the still Creature. Then, swift, like a murdering bird, she swoops down, lifts up the Creature's hand, pulls its fingers away from the cylinder, having to struggle to break its deathgrip. Then she pulls the cylinder free, rising as she does so, letting the hand fall to the floor. She does not notice that the tube which connected the object and the wrist has had to break. CAMERA MOVES IN EXTREMELY CLOSE on the Creature's hand. We see the tube that hangs out of its wrist. Out of the broken end of it, a thick dark liquid seeps.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:
INT. LAB - DAY

Bellero, Sr. stands in the doorway. Richard is looking at him, mystified.

RICHARD
(after a moment)
My invention?

SENIOR
She called it yours.

Richard holds a moment, then goes to the door, is about to start out, pauses as he sees, OFF, Judith coming up the stairs. He says nothing, waits. And in a moment, she enters, passes him without a glance, the cylinder held in her outstretched, upturned palm. He sees it; reacts in silent shock. Judith comes into the room, crosses to the lab table, puts the cylinder down. Then she notices her palm; there is a small smear of dark liquid in its center. She takes a handkerchief out of her pocket, wipes the liquid off. A faint stain remains. She ignores it, pockets the handkerchief, turns and faces Richard and Senior.

JUDITH
(a sweet smile)
Richard?
(as he says nothing)
May I have the honor of explaining your shield... the Bellero Shield... to your father?

Richard says nothing, merely stares as if in terror of letting a realization seep into his mind. Senior looks at him, mystified, then at Judith.

SENIOR
The Bellero Shield?

JUDITH
He wanted to call it... the Bifrost. In honor of an intimate dream we've shared. I persuaded him to give it his own name.
(meaningfully)
His... and yours.

Almost against his desire or better judgement, Senior is becoming intrigued, even vaguely excited. He approaches the table, looks down on the cylinder.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Richard takes a few steps forward; Judith sees him, signals him: a fierce sign to halt and be quiet. He obeys. Senior studies the cylinder, reaches out to touch it. Judith snatches it away. Then she takes the pearl-handled revolver out of her pocket, hands it to Senior.

JUDITH
Fire it. At me. Point-blank.

RICHARD
(an anguished plea)
Judith!...

JUDITH
(a deadly, quieting glance at Richard; then a smile at Senior)
Please. Great men require great demonstrations, don't they?

She has practically forced Senior to take the gun. He holds it now. She takes a few steps backwards, waits.

JUDITH
(continuing)
Point-blank.

SENIOR
(to Richard, but not taking his eyes off Judith)
Are you going to let me be tricked, Richard?

JUDITH
No trick, father.
(smiles)
Perhaps a bullet won't convince you. Richard, give him the laser gun.

RICHARD
Judith... I can't let you...

JUDITH
(interrupting with a sudden disgusted impatience)

Mrs. Dame!

(continues)
CONTINUED: (2)

Mrs. Dame has been standing just outside the door. She enters the moment she is called, goes to Judith.

JUDITH
(continuing)
We must show these men what great men they are.

She glances at the gun in Senior's hand. Mrs. Dame comprehends. She takes the gun out of Senior's hand, levels it at Judith. And fires. And at that precise moment, Judith presses the cylinder, is instantly encased in the impenetrable shell. The bullet ricochets, strikes the wall behind Mrs. Dame. Senior stares, stunned, speechless. Richard almost collapses in his relief and anguish, sinks into a chair.

SENIOR
(an awed whisper)
What is it?
(to Mrs. Dame, when Judith merely smiles)
Can she hear me?

JUDITH
Yes. Now the laser gun.

Mrs. Dame takes it up off the table, is about to level it, when Senior snatches it out of her hand. He is lost in the sudden, shattering realization that immortality is within reach. He aims at Judith, fires. The beam strikes the shield, withdraws into the gun. The shield is nòt even marked. Senior goes close, touches the shield.

JUDITH
(continuing)
The man who invented this... could rule the world. Or save it, if you prefer. Isn't that the kind of man you want to succeed you, father?

Senior stares at the shield a moment, then turns, looks at Richard. Quick, insincere tears fill his eyes, his mouth twists into an elaborate, ingenuine display of remorse and guilt. He goes to Richard, slowly, a hand cutstretched, pauses, then touches Richard's shoulder as if doubtful that he has the right to do so.

RICHARD
(dully)
Don't, father.

(CONTINUED)
SENIOR
(taking hand away)
I gathered up... all my self-doubts... and rid myself of them... by projecting them on to you. I have used you, Richard...

RICHARD
Stop it. Please.

SENIOR
(continuing)
... to shield myself. And I almost destroyed you. Forgive me, Richard. Don't shut me out of your success, as I tried to shut you out of mine. Please, forgive...

RICHARD
(rising; a deep scream)
Stop it!

He runs, almost staggers out of the lab. Senior watches him go, then turns to Judith, pleading and anguish in his eyes.

JUDITH
He does not forgive easily, father. He has your small flaws, as well as your great virtues.

SENIOR
(going to her, greedy wet hope in his eyes)
He will forgive me! Won't he?

JUDITH
I'll help him to.

SENIOR
(pauses; lowers his eyes)
But quickly. Please, Judith... quickly. I haven't... too much... time.

She raises a brow; he looks up, smiles a tiny sad smile.

(CONTINUED)
SENIOR
I did not decide to retire.
I am going to be retired... by
a more final and just decision...
than I could ever make.

He looks toward the door, starts toward it, pauses as
he reaches the chair Richard had been sitting in. He
holds a moment, then sits down, buries his face in his
hands. Mrs. Dame watches him, then moves close to the
shield, whispers to Judith within:

MRS. DAME
Go to him. It is customary to
comfort a broken enemy... before
you discard him.

Judith smiles a slim deadly smile of agreement, presses
the cylinder. Nothing happens; the shield remains
intact. She presses again; again the shield is not
withdrawn. She frowns worriedly, looks at Mrs. Dame.
Then she presses again, and again, and still the shield
remains. A tiny glint of panic leaps up in her eyes.
Mrs. Dame stares at the shield, fearfully. She
touches it, then bangs on it, with her fist. Judith
continues pressing the cylinder, begins to breathe
hard. We hear it; hear the panic and terror in it.
Senior hears, lifts his head, looks at Judith. She is
moving about like a trapped animal; her mouth is open;
but she gives no scream, no cry. She merely breathes
harder and harder, in faster, more frightened gasps.

MRS. DAME
(softly; less
than a whisper)
Help her. Heaven... help her.

And finally, Judith's scream comes; a great high wail
of terror that echoes and reverberates against the
shield. And we:

FADE OUT.

(END ACT THREE)
FADE IN: (ACT FOUR)

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Judith is still encased in the shield. She is sitting on the floor now, her arms around her knees, her face buried. Mrs. Dame sits in a chair, close by. She never takes her eyes off Judith, stares wide-eyed, her mouth set in a grim frozen agony. Around the outside of the shield are many varieties of destructive instruments -- hatches, drills, blow-torches, the laser gun -- all lying there like grim headstones in a cemetery where failures are buried.

Senior sits in a chair, some distance from the shield. He looks older, aged by awe and panic and fear for his own safety. He watches Richard, who is at the laser instrument, working feverishly, directing and re-directing the beam into the night sky.

A long quiet; while Richard works at the laser. Then:

MRS. DAME
(quietly; not turning)
It is useless, Mr. Bellero. The monster will not come back. Not that way.

RICHARD
(voice hoarse with anguish and sleeplessness)
It came once. It can come again.

MRS. DAME
She'll die in there.

RICHARD
(turning to her)
No!

MRS. DAME
Can she live without air to breathe? Is there a perpetual supply of oxygen in that tomb of hers?

RICHARD
(returning to the beam)
He'll come back.

This possibility frightens Senior more than anything. He looks about, like a trapped animal.

(CONTINUED)
SENIOR
(quietly,
hesitantly)
Richard?
(waits, gets
no response)
Let me go... for help! I can
do something, I'm sure... but
not if I must remain here...
it's hope...

RICHARD
(turning to his
father; interrupting;
a defensive shout)
Don't tell me it's hopeless. That's
all you've ever had to give me...
words of hopelessness! Don't you
ever run out of them? Do you have
a perpetual supply of hopeless
words in that tomb of yours?

Senior has risen, started toward Richard. Richard
suddenly collapses inwardly, sinks into the chair in
a terrible gesture of surrender.

SENIOR
If there was... such a creature
... it may be roaming the streets
... it may be... killing and...
someone should warm...

RICHARD
(wearily)
Sit down, father. And be quiet.
I do not want anyone to know that
my wife... is a thief... the
first to thieve from... a friend
from another world.

SENIOR
We must do something... for all
of us... as well as for your
wife.

RICHARD
What can we do for my wife,
father?

SENIOR
Get help, Richard. Perhaps she can
be reached from the room below...
if the ceiling were to be cut
away... (CONTINUED)
RICHARD
The shield goes down to the foundations of the house, father. Down and down, probably all the way to...

He breaks off. Senior gathers up some courage, starts for the door.

RICHARD
Father! Stay!

SENIOR
(glancing at phone on table)
I'll call then. You can listen.
I won't say anything incriminating.
(pauses; then, as Richard does not respond)
Can't I even call for help? Just call?

RICHARD
Call whom? The police? The leading scientists of the world? The faith-healers, the magicians... psychiatrists, munitions experts, philosophers... the politicians, the image-makers, the funeral directors... the million government agencies... whom do we call when we're trapped alive in our tombs? Is there someone to call? Can anyone help?

He turns, looks at Judith. She has raised her head, is listening; but her eyes are closed. He goes to the shield, kneels before it, looks at the cylinder on the floor near her foot, looks at her.

RICHARD
(continuing; softly; anguished)
Judith... pick it up... try it again. Try. Please.

JUDITH
(softly, slowly)
Movements... and words... accomplish... nothing... and only... deplete... the oxygen... and the soul. (CONTINUED)
Please. Once more.

She buries her face again. He holds a moment, then gets up, returns to the table, begins to operate the laser beam again.

Mrs. Dame... tell him... it's useless.

It isn't, Judith! He must still be in our atmosphere. He couldn't go out of it without his shield! He'd be incinerated! He knew that!

Mrs. Dame. Tell him... to call the police.

Mrs. Dame stares at her, then looks at Senior. And says nothing. Judith lifts her head, looks at Mrs. Dame, sees that she intends to remain silent.

Richard?

No!

Why not, Mrs. Dame. The State can't execute me, without getting me out of...

Maybe that's the solution. Tell them I'm a murderer... and they'll rip me out of this with their bare hands... to keep me from escaping their chamber.

She begins to laugh, hysterically, is unable to stop. Richard goes to the shield.
RICHARD
(shouting)
Stop it! Judith! Don't!

Senior backs toward the door, fearfully and surreptitiously.

RICHARD
(continuing; a scream)

Judith!

Suddenly, she stops laughing; her face goes calm, her expression becomes serene. Richard watches, his eyes pained and fearful. Senior pauses by the door, his escape delayed by Mrs. Dame, who is approaching the door. She goes out of the lab, ignoring Senior as she passes him.

JUDITH
(quietly, gently)
He told me... so much about it. All about it, I thought. A single one... could protect our entire planet... its radius is increased by merely deepening the pressure... an anti-weapon, he called it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JUDITH (CONT'D)

... and I thought he'd told me... everything. Now, of course, I realize... he never told me... how to remove it.

(pauses)

Nothing we know of... in this world... will remove it.

She is staring down at her hands, which lie in her lap, lifelessly, palms upturned. She sees the small stain in the center of her palm, brings it close to her face, studies it.

JUDITH

(continuing)

Nothing... will remove it.

There is a quiet. Richard rises, returns to the Laser table, but does not touch the controls, merely stares up at the nightsky visible through the open skylight.

JUDITH

I killed him prematurely.

Richard looks toward her, slowly, his eyes incredulous, but his mind not doubting the statement for a minute. Senior stares in fear, as if personally threatened by the admission.

JUDITH

(continuing)

I wanted proof that he'd been here. Your father would have wanted... proof. Fathers often demand... what strangers don't even expect.

Senior backs away, slowly goes out of the lab. Neither Richard nor Judith are aware of his departure.

INT. WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

Dark, except for the light that spills down the stairs from the foyer above, the door to which is open. In silhouette, we see Mrs. D. dragging the Creature toward the stairs.
REV. 11/19/63

ANGLE ON STAIRS

Going up on the first step, backwards, Mrs. Dame starts to drag the Creature's form up after her. She pauses, alert and tense, as she hears Senior's footsteps coming down the stairs. She shoves the body to one side, turns and rushes up the steps to close the door. Senior reaches it before she does. We see his shadow. Mrs. Dame stops, looks up. Her expression tells us that Senior has seen the Creature. Then:

    SENIOR'S VOICE
    (an awed whisper)
    Is that... it?
    (pauses)
    It's dead?

    MRS. DAME
    I am going to bury it. You must not try to stop me.

A quiet; then, slowly, Senior comes down a few steps; ENTERS SHOT. His eyes are wondrous wide; his brain is whirling with the exploiter's immediate and all-consuming calculations.

    MRS. DAME
    You have your proof. The police must not have theirs.

    SENIOR
    (looks at her, is shaken out of his thoughts)
    The police?
    (comprehending)
    No, of course not. It's no business of theirs. It belongs to the world of the prize-givers...
    of the praisers of greatness.
    (going down another step, the one below hers; looking down on the Creature)

    And my son invented the agency that brought it here. He'll be splashed across a thousand chapters of the world's most honored history.

    MRS. DAME
    There is a bullet in the base of its skull.

    (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SENIOR

My son didn't put it there.
(turns, smiles
up at her)

Great men are forgiven their
murderous wives.

His uncaring words impel Mrs. Dame. She pulls her
hand back, prepares to give him a back-hand slap. He
moves to escape the expected slap, slips, falls. He
hurls downward, going OUT OF FRAME. We hear his startled
cry, but we do not see him fall. Mrs. Dame stands there,
her hand still withdrawn in readiness to slap. She
stares down. All is quiet. Then, slowly, she goes
down the stairs. Senior lies in a heap at the bottom,
one arm flung across the face of the Creature. Mrs.
Dame lifts the arm; and we see the Creature's eyes.
They are open. Mrs. Dame opens her mouth to scream;
no sound comes out; she freezes there, bent over, her
face iced in horror.

CUT DIRECTLY TO:

INT. THE LAB - NIGHT

Judith and Richard are as they were when last seen;
she in the shield, he at the Laser table, his face
turned toward her, but his eyes no longer seeing,
merely gazing into nothing. CAMERA MOVES TOWARD the
shield; we see that Judith is having trouble breathing;
the oxygen supply is almost depleted. She begins to
struggle, to sob; and in her increasing panic, she
rises, bangs against the shield, screams breathlessly,
almost voicelessly:

JUDITH

Let me out! Please... let...
me... out! Please... I'm...
sorry... I need... to be...
forbidden... someone... must
forgive me... and let me...
free...

During above, Richard has come slowly to the shield.
He is weeping soundlessly. He reaches out, touches
the shield with the flat of his hand, his fingers
spread. Judith puts her face against the shield, as
if to have it touched by Richard's hand. She stops
screaming, closes her eyes, sobbs softly.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

RICHARD
I can forgive you, Judith. But
I can't let you free.

CREATURE'S VOICE (Off)
I can.

Richard whirls around, freezes in astonishment; the
Creature stands in the doorway, leans against the frame,
obviously weak, near death, breathing hard from the
effort required to climb the stairs. Mrs. Dane is behind
him, her head lowered in guilt and remorse. Richard
goes to the Creature, his hands extended to help.

CREATURE
(continuing;
raising hand with
detached tube)

When she... borrowed the thing...
she accidentally broke... the
vein. My fluid... like your
blood... the primal ingredient...

He staggers toward the shield, reaches it, pauses to
gather his last few ounces of strength. Judith opens
her eyes, sees him. For a moment she merely stares
uncomprehendingly. Then, a rise of terror surges within;
she backs away, covers her eyes with her fingers, digs,
claws madly at her eyes, screams the soft, windy scream
of the mad. The Creature falls to his knees, grasps the
end of the wrist-tube with the fingers of his opposite
hand, squeezes out final drops of liquid onto the
shield. The liquid runs down slowly, like thick rain
on a windowpane. The Creature reaches up, places his
fingers on either side of the liquid-tracks, pulls a
rip in the shield. When it is large enough, he reaches
in, takes out the cylinder, reattaches the wrist-tube,
presses it. The shield disappears. And the Creature
falls back, and dies. Richard walks slowly back,
stands over the Creature, looks down on it. Mrs. Dane
approaches, stands near Richard, looks down on the
Creature.

MRS. DANE
I expected... it to kill me...
but it looked in my eyes... and
I heard myself say "Can you help?"
and it said... "Can I not?"
Slowly, the form darkens, finally disappears. Only the cylinder remains.

Mrs. Dame bends down, picks up the cylinder. Richard looks at Judith. She has not moved a step, has not stopped moaning.

RICHARD

(softly)
Judith?
(pauses)
It's gone.
(pauses)
You're free.

Judith stops moaning; slowly, guardedly, she uncovers her eyes, opens them, looks at Richard.

RICHARD

(continuing, reaching out a hand)
Come, Judith.
(pauses)
We'll have to tell... someone... what we've done.

She looks at him, at his outstretched hand, takes a step forward, as if to rush gratefully at him. And stops short, as if she has bumped into an invisible wall. She frowns, looks around frantically, her hands raised.

JUDITH

(softly; like a frightened child)
You said... it was gone...

RICHARD

(worriedly; unconsciously withdrawing his hand)
It is. It's gone, Judith.

Judith locks at him, frowning softly, then she begins to reach out, touching here and there, shaking her head, muttering to herself:

(continued)
CONTINUED:

JUDITH
No... it's still here... nothing will remove it... it will always be here... nothing will ever remove it... it's here... I know it's here.

During above, Mrs. Dame stares at Judith, says nothing, merely closes her eyes against immediately recognized madness. CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE IN CLOSE on Judith's outstretched palm, which she holds still now, as if it were pressed against some invisible shield. And during following, her voice begins to fade, as if our hearing were being gradually withdrawn.

JUDITH
(continuing)
...I can see it... I'll always see it... it will always be here... nothing will ever remove it... nothing... nothing will ever remove it...

CAMERA is IN TIGHT on Judith's outstretched palm. We see the stain in the palm's middle; and Judith's voice has faded away, is gone.

CONTROL VOICE
When this passion called aspiration becomes lust... then aspiration degenerates... becomes vulgar ambition -- by which sin the angels fell.

FADE OUT.

(THE END)