

## PRODUCTION DESIGN PROJECT SCREENPLAY

**Salvage**

by: Spuca T. Umtauri

We hear a grinding metallic shriek building to a climax and then cutting off as we

**CUT IN****1. INT. CARGO HOLD 5 DARKLY LIT**

We see a woman's (SENIOR CHIEF LISA IZMENNIK) face through a clear mask. There is fear in her eyes and beads of perspiration are glinting on her forehead despite the fact that we can see her breath in the cold. She seems to be looking at the tracking HUD projected onto her mask and around the darkened space at the same time. We hear the shriek again from somewhere to her left, and she tenses and sidles along the wall of a large metal storage crate to her right. Though she moves quietly, every sound is amplified by the echoing metallic room and the shallow water covering the floor. Still, she is making an obvious effort to be silent. At the end of the crate, she reaches a closed portal which has had its handle dogged down with a large open-end wrench braced into the locking mechanism. Looking around, and checking the tracking display, she makes her way to the door and pulls the wrench free. It slips from her wet hand, crashes loudly against the metal door, and splashes into the water on the floor. Instantly the shriek answers the sound of the clang, and very loud sounds of splashing and clanging begin moving obviously closer.

IZMENNIK

(half under her breath and desperate)

Damn-damn-damn!

She begins pulling desperately on the handle, but her hands are wet and the metal is slick. The shriek is heard again, closer and louder, through the sounds of movement.

IZMENNIK

(a little panicky)

Come on! Shi –

The handle suddenly turns and the door springs open. The shrieking is now right behind her and very loud. IZMENNIK turns toward the sound and we see the tracking display on her mask turn red and start to flash. We can make out a vague reflection of something moving toward her quickly. IZMENNIK grunts and darts through the door slamming it behind her.

**2. INT. CORRIDOR BRIGHTER**

IZMENNIK leans against the closed portal in the relative light of the corridor. The sounds behind her are intense but now muffled by the portal door. Her mask's display is no longer red. She looks both directions, and then begins to jog up the corridor to her right. She rounds a

corner and we see PETTY OFFICER REN DOUGLAS waiting for her, half-crouched against the wall, and carrying a large bag of equipment. He looks up at her with an expression of obvious relief and of hopeful expectation.

IZMENNIK

No joy.

DOUGLAS

(with real disappointment)

Yeah, nothing in Four either. Hardcases?

IZMENNIK

One . . . maybe two. Maybe more. Someone tried to barricade in there, too. There was a wrench jammed in the door. I didn't see any bodies, but I don't see how they could have gotten out the way I got in.

DOUGLAS

(resigned and disappointed – a little afraid)

That's five of the eight holds. You think it's even worth checking the other three? We've got nothing out of this, and you –

IZMENNIK

(cutting him off)

No choice, Douglas. We've got to salvage what we can. I know it's a risk, but one of those last three might be the one. Even if no one's alive, if we find one of the security team, we might at least find a weapon. I don't see how we can get back to our ship without one – the docking tunnel is completely infested, at least the last I heard – and we've already been 18 hours on this ship. We need food and sleep.. I know this is a derelict, but it's got to have some kind of reserve. We'll do the next one together.

DOUGLAS

Right you are, Senior Chief. Okay, next up . . .

DOUGLAS brings up his mask display with a tap on his left temple. A schematic appears on his mask.

DOUGLAS

We've got to lay below. Hold Six is down one level. Stairs are . . . thirty meters left.

The two begin moving up the corridor at a fast, but careful, walk. Several of the lights appear to be shorting, and the flashes are disorienting. They reach the stairwell and descend slowly and quietly. Their breath is visible in the cold, and water seems to be dripping everywhere. The

stairs are slick and wet. The corridor below is very dark with only a few lights still working. IZMENNİK looks at DOUGLAS, who motions to his right. As they move through the dark, they hear a distant shriek. DOUGLAS taps on his temple again and the projected schematic is replaced by the same tracking display as IZMENNİK's mask.

DOUGLAS

(in a hissing whisper)

What are hardcases doing here? I've never heard of them so far away from

IZMENNİK looks back at him briefly, widens her eyes as if to ask, "do I know?" and then continues to the hold door. This door, unlike the first hold, is not a portal door, but a large double door in a rectangular frame. This hold was obviously meant to store larger or heavier equipment. IZMENNİK leans her ear against one of the doors and taps softly with her knuckles. There is no response. She taps again, a bit louder, with the same result. IZMENNİK and DOUGLAS exchange a look, and IZMENNİK reaches for the handle. DOUGLAS leans against the other door, ready to brace it back closed if needed. The water on this level is halfway up their calves, and as IZMENNİK struggles with the door, DOUGLAS notices something below the surface.

DOUGLAS

(putting a hand on IZMENNİK's arm)

Hold it. Hold it. Hold it. Security team's been here.

IZMENNİK looks down where he's pointing and sees a black rectangular object with a tiny flashing blue light attached magnetically over the seam between the doors just inches under the water. IZMENNİK takes her hand off the handle and backs a step away from the door.

IZMENNİK

You've got to be kidding me.

DOUGLAS

(raising an eyebrow to her and backing away from the door)

So, they don't want anyone opening *this* door. There must be something really bad in there.

IZMENNİK

Or really good.

She looks around quickly in the darkness.

IZMENNİK

Is there more than one way in?

DOUGLAS pulls up the schematics again and scans through several displays. Another distant shriek is heard.

DOUGLAS

Just the loading door through the outer hull . . . no, wait, the ventilation system here is big enough to get through . . . unless they've booby-trapped that too . . . but there's no access point here. Nearest one is . . . uh, the utility room another 20 meters down this corridor, hallway to the right, 15 meters to the door.

His display switches back to the tracker, and he looks at IZMENNİK questioningly.

DOUGLAS

You sure you want to go in there? What if it's nothing, again – or, you know, those . . .

IZMENNİK

(smiling sardonically and slapping DOUGLAS on the shoulder)  
Hey. Chin up. We can still come out of this okay. We just got to save what we can. If there's anything in there we can use – anyone we can save – we'll do it. I don't hear any of those *things* in there, so . . .

DOUGLAS smiles slightly at her. They both nod and continue down the corridor.

DOUGLAS

Which security team was down on this level?

IZMENNİK

I don't know. I didn't see any of the assignments but mine. I know all the security teams came in first, and they must've reported safe conditions or the rest of us wouldn't have been allowed in. I think Ensign Macey's team was the first one in, so they may have gotten this far before –

DOUGLAS

(cutting her off with a tap on the shoulder)  
To the right here. 15 meters.

IZMENNİK

Right. – before the hardcases attacked us.

Another shriek, this one a little closer, echoes around them. The two pause, then continue more slowly to minimize the noise.

DOUGLAS

This door.

Once again, IZMENNİK puts her ear to the door and taps. There is no sound from inside and she slowly undogs the handle and swings the door inward. The room is pitch black. IZMENNİK looks at DOUGLAS and touches the controls on her left temple. A red light beams out from just above her mask. DOUGLAS does the same. They both peer into the room. The lights dimly show large pieces of floor-to-ceiling equipment crowd the small space. They step inside and close the door.

### 3. INT. UTILITY ROOM VERY DARK

IZMENNİK

Nobody home. Where's the access point?

DOUGLAS motions to the ceiling near the middle of the room. The red lights show a large grating covering a ventilation opening. They look around for a way to climb up.

DOUGLAS

So, you think Macey and his team are in there?

IZMENNİK

(dismissive – still looking for a way up)

Maybe. Look, I really don't know much more than you do.

We've just got to find a weapon or something that will let us

get back to the ship. The goal here is survival, not investigation, okay?

You see a way up there?

DOUGLAS

Uh . . . I could boost you, but I don't think –

Another shriek rings out, quite close. It seems to be coming from the corridor. It is immediately answered by another. DOUGLAS and IZMENNİK stare at the door for a moment.

DOUGLAS

(just above a whisper)

– but I don't think you could lift me up after you.

IZMENNİK

(looking DOUGLAS over, then looking up at the grating)

Probably not.

(she pauses, thinking)

Okay. I don't want to leave you here. If there's something useful in there, I can't take it out through the mined door. We'll need to bring it back this way. That's going to take both of us. If there's something else in there, two of us is better than one.

DOUGLAS

Well, I don't think we can climb this equipment. Should I look for another access?

IZMENNİK

(considers the options)

I think we can pull some of the side panels off. If the power is off and we don't electrocute ourselves, we can probably climb the frames. You're going to have to leave the bag, though.

DOUGLAS

(obviously hesitant and clutching the strap a little tighter)

I can't leave this. This is all my gear – the sample cases, the chromatogr—

IZMENNİK

(cutting him off with whispered anger)

Look! We're not here on an investigation or a salvage mission anymore! This is now about survival and escape, which means if YOU DON'T NEED IT, YOU LEAVE IT! Do you understand?

DOUGLAS nods, abashed, drops the strap from his shoulder, and sets the bag down in the water. IZMENNİK's anger disappears instantly, and she continues in a softer whisper.

IZMENNİK

Good. Now, help me see if we can get these panels off.

The two examine the sides of the machine closest underneath the air vent. DOUGLAS pries his fingers into the seam between the metal panels and pushes it upward a little.

DOUGLAS

I don't think they're screwed on. They're just hooked into the frame like a furnace panel. It's pretty stuck, though. Come give me a hand with –

As he pushes harder, the panel suddenly comes free. The unexpected force throws the sheet metal panel from DOUGLAS' hands and it crashes very loudly into the panels of the next piece of machinery before splashing into the water. The sharp metallic clanging seems to ring in the enclosed space for a moment, and then it is answered by a series of aggressive shrieks from just outside the door. Heavy splashes and scraping sounds follow. IZMENNİK stares at DOUGLAS with absolute venom in her eyes, he just stares back with wide eyes and an open mouth. The scraping and shrieking on the other side of the portal intensify.

DOUGLAS

(panicky whispering now, though loudly to be heard over the noise)

Can they get through the door?

IZMENNİK

(more anger in her voice than she knows he deserves)

Let's just assume they can, and not wait for the answer! There's no need to try to be quiet, now, by the way. They know we're in here.

With that, IZMENNİK pushes the upper panel off noisily, grabs hold of the framing inside, and boosts herself up toward the vent. DOUGLAS moves behind her, ready to climb. The scraping outside gives way to violent banging, and the shrieks intensify. IZMENNİK reaches the top and pulls down hard on the grating. It comes off easily in her hand, and she nearly falls it down into the water. She exchanges a quick look with DOUGLAS and then pokes her head up into the shaft. The red light from her mask flashes back down into the room into DOUGLAS' face.

IZMENNİK

Which way?

DOUGLAS

Left. It's to your left! It's straight on – don't turn!

IZMENNİK pulls herself up into the shaft and moves off to the left. As DOUGLAS begins his climb, the banging on the portal door comes to an abrupt stop and a soft, deliberate scratching begins. The shrieks have fallen off, and in the new quiet, DOUGLAS stops climbing and looks toward the door. For a moment, the soft scratching continues, and then the handle begins to turn and the dogs begin to rotate out of lock. DOUGLAS remains frozen for just a moment – long enough for the door to unlock and be pushed almost timidly open. Through the increasing opening, DOUGLAS can see the hard, horned exoskeleton of one of the hardcases. He can see its eye looking back. His tracking display's sudden shift to flashes of red wakes him up and gets him moving. As the door swings wide and the first hardcase splashes in, DOUGLAS practically leaps up into the duct and pulls his legs through after him.

DOUGLAS

(shouting ahead to IZMENNİK)

They're in the room! Move. Move. Move!

#### **4. INT. VENTILATION DUCT VERY DARK**

IZMENNİK and DOUGLAS crawl as quickly as possible on all fours through the duct. The piercing shrieks from the utility room echo up and down the shaft. The red lights flash around and reflect off the metal walls in dizzying, strobe-like flashes.

IZMENNİK

(over the din of crawling and the shrieks from behind)

How far?

DOUGLAS

(out of breath and struggling to fit in the duct)

I don't know. I don't know. It's just straight. Don't turn.

IZMENNİK

Are they behind us?

DOUGLAS

I don't think they'll fit, but I also didn't think they could open a door.

They crawl until they reach a T junction in the duct. At the T, the floor of the duct opens to another grate about six inches down. Light is coming up through the grate from the hold below. IZMENNİK maneuvers herself into one of the side shafts and then backs into the other so DOUGLAS can crawl forward to the grate. They both switch off the red mask lights and peer down into the room below. The noises from behind have started to fall off, and soon everything is quiet. The top of a large storage shelf is about 2 feet directly below the grate obstructing any real view of the room below, but the room is well lit. From her vantage point, IZMENNİK can see a uniformed arm and shoulder out of the water and leaning against the next shelf over. The rest of the body is out of sight behind the shelf. The body is not moving.

IZMENNİK

(whispering again in the new quiet)

I think Macey's team may be in there. I think at least one casualty. There could be weapons. Can you see anything?

DOUGLAS shakes his head at her and she nods back her understanding. The storage shelf is running parallel to the main duct line and would be obscuring DOUGLAS' view entirely.

IZMENNİK

Okay. Ren – it is “Ren,” right? I'm Lisa – Ren, we're going to have to get this grate off silently. Silently. Then, one of us is going to have to get down onto that shelf and scan the room. Okay?

DOUGLAS nods solemnly.

IZMENNİK

If you see Macey or his team, call out. If you see any of those things, you'll have to play it by ear. We obviously can't go back the way we came, so . . . We've got to save what we can, even if it's only ourselves, right?

DOUGLAS nods again. He understands. He and IZMENNİK reach down and grasp the grate tightly. They exchange a look and a quick nod, and then they push the grate down until it pops free from the flange. It is surprisingly quiet, and they exchange another look before IZMENNİK

lets go, and DOUGLAS slides forward to lower the grate onto the shelf below. As silently as possible, he slides out of the duct and onto the top of the shelf unit.

## 5. INT. CARGO HOLD 6 DIMLY LIT FROM BELOW

The hold is very large and is filled with storage shelves on the side he faces closest to the corridor entrance. On the other side, behind him toward the large outer loading doors, various pieces of equipment and workshop tools and benches litter the floor surrounding a large, orange, enclosed craft set up on launch rails. The light in the room is coming from the floor and, in some cases, under the water creating undulating reflections over everything. As he lowers himself onto the shelf and looks around, DOUGLAS quickly realizes the light is coming from helmet-mounted flashlights. The corpses of Macey's security team are strewn about the room. Many have been dismembered, and there are sprays of dried and drying blood thrown onto shelves and equipment in random patterns. There are signs of weapon damage everywhere as well. DOUGLAS' eyes go wide and he freezes, staring agape at the massacre below him. There is no sign of any of the creatures, and his tracking display stays calm; but the hardcases have most certainly been here. DOUGLAS' face suddenly changes from fear and horror to a look of realization. His eyes move to the booby-trapped double doors from the corridor and then to the closed and sealed outer loading doors. The creatures *must* still be in the room. He swallows hard and peers over the edge of the shelf directly down on the body IZMENNİK first noticed. Sure enough, a standard security-issue carbine is half-submerged in water on the bottom shelf next to the body. He turns back to IZMENNİK's face peering down at him from the duct.

DOUGLAS

(just mouthing the words instead of speaking)

They. Are. In. The. Room.

IZMENNİK points two fingers at her eyes and then reverses them outward toward the room with a questioning look on her face.

DOUGLAS

(shaking his head "no" and mouthing the words)

Can't. See. Them. There's a. Weapon. Below. May. Not. Be.  
Loaded.

DOUGLAS raises an eyebrow questioningly at IZMENNİK. She responds by rolling her eyes and then motioning for DOUGLAS to move out of the way. She slides herself quietly out of the duct and onto the shelf facing him. Her wide eyes scan the room as his had done, but she stops looking around suddenly and points to the orange craft near the loading doors. DOUGLAS looks where she points, and then back at her face. She is actually smiling.

IZMENNİK

(mouthing the word excitedly)

LIFEBOAT!

IZMENNİK motions for DOUGLAS to move, so he turns carefully around and creeps (head on a swivel) slowly along the shelf toward the lifeboat. IZMENNİK creeps right behind him. Both are wet and shivering in the cold, but trying very hard to move smoothly. Each time DOUGLAS sees a discarded weapon below, he points it out to IZMENNİK who basically ignores him. The lifeboat, she obviously thinks, is the better option. DOUGLAS also points out the three dead hardcases they pass. At the third, lying face down in the water with one arm severed and several large holes through its armored shell, DOUGLAS turns around.

DOUGLAS  
(still mouthing silently)  
Maybe. That's. All. Of. Them.

IZMENNİK shrugs her shoulders slightly, but shakes her head. Her eyes really never leave the covered craft. At the end of the shelving, DOUGLAS turns around again expectantly.

DOUGLAS  
What's. The. Plan?

IZMENNİK thinks for a moment and then uses her fingers to pantomime crawling down off the shelf, sneaking over to the lifeboat, pulling open the hatch, and climbing in. She pantomimes sealing the lifeboat door and then pushing a button. She then pantomimes the loading doors opening. She then raises a hand with the palm up and fingers outstretched to indicate “that’s it.” DOUGLAS turns back to look at the distance to the craft, the water on the floor, the items strewn about, and the dismembered corpses. He then turns back to her with a distinctly unsure look on his face. IZMENNİK just nods confirmation and then motions with her chin for him to go. DOUGLAS takes a deep breath and lowers his legs over the edge of the shelf. Finding his footing on the shelf below, he climbs down slowly to the floor. The shelves are full of crates and equipment obscuring his view of most of the rest of the room, but he sees no movement. His tracking display still shows nothing of concern. He looks up and motions for IZMENNİK to follow. She begins to climb down, and DOUGLAS takes a measured step out into the open area past the shelves. The body of one of Macey’s team with a carbine still hanging in his hand is hanging over the tine of a small forklift about 20 meters to DOUGLAS’ left. DOUGLAS considers, looking back and forth from the lifeboat to the forklift. IZMENNİK, down now, puts a hand softly on his shoulder. He starts just a bit and then turns to face her. She half-smiles at him, points to the lifeboat, and they begin moving very slowly in that direction being careful to minimize the noise of the water they move through and trying not to notice what else is in it. They reach the side of the lifeboat together and IZMENNİK ducks under it for a look. She stands back up and gives DOUGLAS another smile and an “okay” gesture. She moves to the hatch and stands on her tiptoes to look through the portal window. Inside she can see the control panel and the launch button. The craft appears to be deserted, so she tries the handle. It is stiff, but it budes a little. IZMENNİK looks quickly around for something she can use for leverage. On a workbench about 10 meters back toward the shelves, she spots a prybar used to open crates. She gets DOUGLAS’ attention and points back at it, then makes a prying gesture. They exchange another smile, and DOUGLAS nods and moves back toward the table. IZMENNİK turns her attention back to the hatch, and pulls down hard on the handle again. DOUGLAS reaches the table, and just as he picks up the prybar, his tracking display goes suddenly red and begins to

flash. He raises his gaze slowly from the table to the shelves and a shriek explodes into the relative silence of the room echoing off the water and the walls. Coming out from the maze of shelves, an 8-foot-tall hardcase looks directly at DOUGLAS, tilts back its carapaced head, and shrieks again. This shriek is answered by another to DOUGLAS' left, and he turns his head to see two more of the creatures coming from behind a large forklift and crate. His display is flashing wildly, but he seems frozen to his spot. The first creature lets out three short, softer shrieks, and suddenly bolts toward DOUGLAS. It is surprisingly fast, given its size, but DOUGLAS manages to snap out of his trance and darts right just as the creature reaches him. The hardcase's momentum carries him past DOUGLAS, and DOUGLAS uses the opportunity to sprint for the weapon at the smaller forklift. The other two creatures now join the chase.

### DOUGLAS

(at the top of his lungs)

Izmennik!

IZMENNİK, her display flashing frantically, too, has already seen them and yanks on the hatch's handle with all her strength. DOUGLAS reaches the forklift but his momentum and the wet floor carry him into the side of one of the tines. The closest hardcase gains enough on him to swing one large, clawed hand at DOUGLAS' back. The claw misses him and the creature shrieks in frustration. DOUGLAS leaps over the tine and splashes into the water on the other side. As he comes up, he grabs the carbine from the hand of the security trooper's body. He swings the muzzle around toward the hardcase (which is now skirting the first tine) and fires. The blast is incredibly loud in the metallic space, and the hardcase shrieks in pain as its armored shell on its chest and neck is torn apart. It falls toward DOUGLAS knocking him back into the water and knocking the carbine from his hand. The remaining pair let out enraged shrieks and lunge forward. IZMENNİK doesn't see any of this as she struggles with the hatch. With a final, massive effort, the handle moves and the hatch swings open with a loud clang. IZMENNİK turns, triumphant back toward the room in time to see one of the two remaining creatures reach DOUGLAS at the forklift and the other, hearing the clang of the hatch, start toward her. DOUGLAS gains his feet just as the creature reaches him and leaps backward toward the dropped weapon. The creature, however, is too close; and its outstretched claw closes on DOUGLAS' right calf. DOUGLAS screams as the claw tears through his pants leg and into the muscle. He hears and feels a bone snap under the pressure, and he falls back, again, into the freezing water. IZMENNİK sees this and the hardcase heading toward her. She dives through the hatch and pulls it closed behind her, clamping down the locking lever just as the creature reaches the craft. It slams the door with its claws, and then peers through the portal at her. She can no longer see DOUGLAS, but she can hear him screaming in pain and then firing the carbine. The hardcase at her door turns back into the room, and now that the window isn't blocked, IZMENNİK sees DOUGLAS pull himself out from under the torn body of the second creature and make a hopping series of limps toward the lifeboat. Blood is streaming down his wounded leg into the water. His mask is shattered and his face is contorted with pain and desperation. As he sees the third hardcase coming toward him, he raises the carbine, shakily, and fires again. His aim, however, is off, and the carbine's recoil is too much for his unsteady position. The blast throws DOUGLAS back down into the water. One round punches through one of the hardcase's legs, and another slams into its hip. It shrieks and collapses to the floor, but continues crawling toward him. Now, from outside the double doors of the hold, a chorus of

shrieks can be heard. The noise has drawn hardcases from all over the ship. DOUGLAS sees IZMENNİK staring out of the portal window.

DOUGLAS  
(calling out for help)  
Izmennik!

He pulls himself up, using the carbine for leverage, and hop steps toward the lifeboat. The hardcase crawling toward him veers to cut him off, but he manages to hobble around it. He is losing blood badly and his face has started to look pale and gray; but he is making progress. IZMENNİK puts her hands on the locking lever to open the door. Just then, an explosion shatters the air sending a shockwave that tumbles DOUGLAS forward off his feet and into the water again. His scream of agony is lost in the reverberant sound and the shrieks of pain and rage from the hardcases in the corridor. The booby-trapped door has been opened and several hardcases have paid the price, but now more are pouring into the hold through the gaping hole. DOUGLAS, once again, pulls himself up and staggers, half-falling, toward the lifeboat. At least 6 of the creatures are now through the door and in rapid pursuit. One of them outpaces the others and is nearly to DOUGLAS as he reaches the lifeboat hatch.

DOUGLAS  
(panicked and relieved at the same time as he reaches the door and pounds)  
Lisa! Open up! Let's go!

IZMENNİK's fingers let go of the locking lever as she sees the approaching creatures.

IZMENNİK  
(almost calmly, as if explaining to a child)  
Ren, I'm sorry. You remember what I said about survival? I've got to salvage what I can. Thank you, though. I'm sorry.

She turns from the hatch and moves to the seat at the control panel. DOUGLAS stares through the window in disbelief for a moment. Then, he turns to confront the closest creature. He raises and fires the weapon, and the hardcase goes down. He tries to fire again at the next one, but the carbine's magazine is now empty. He hurls it at the next creature, but it falls short, splashing harmlessly into the water. Inside the lifeboat, IZMENNİK locks her harness in place and smashes down the launch button. The outer doors begin to open. From outside the craft behind her, she hears a rising shriek that could be either DOUGLAS or a creature. The shriek is abruptly cut off as we

**CUT TO BLACK**