

FLASH
GORDON

CONQUERS THE PLANET OF EVIL

By

L. Lewis Stout

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Inspired by the original newspaper comic,
"Flash Gordon" created by Alex Raymond
The King Features Syndicate, Inc. *

THE CHARACTERS

FLASH GORDON: A sturdy, young American man
DALE ARDEN: A lovely American girl with traditional ideals
Dr. ZARKOV: An ingenious, bearded mature scientist
EMPEROR MING: The ruler of the planet of Mongo
PRINCESS AURA: Ming's cunning and other-worldly wise daughter
PRINCE BARIN: A clever heir to the throne
MALE ONE: *Multiple roles as:* Mike Murrow, Mang, Drone, Mongo-monster One, Eunuch One, Arborian Man, Sea King
MALE TWO: *Multiple roles as:* Townsman, Wheels, Og, Drone, Mongo-monster Two, Radia, Eunuch Two, Lorie, Count Rhodo, Sharkman
LANCER ONE: *Multiple roles as:* Townsfolk, Sharkwoman One, Majorette
LANCER TWO: *Multiple roles as:* Townsfolk, Ulna, a Drone, Handmaiden, Fibia, Shark Woman Two, Majorette
LANCER THREE: *Multiple roles as:* Townsfolk, Gu-nish, Majorette
LANCER FOUR: *Multiple roles as:* Townsfolk, Female Space Pilot, Lancer Who Dies A Lot, Drone, Tibia, Majorette

THE SETTING

1936 in America, outer space, and the planet Mongo.

THE ACTS AND SCENES

The action of the play is in three "Chapters".
There is an intermission between Chapters.

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE CAST:

The Lancers are beautiful women capable of playing multiple, athletic and demanding roles.

Male One should be very large and strong. Male Two should be large and athletic. Both males play multiple roles.

Though not required by the script, producers may increase the number of women cast as Lancers and/or the multiple roles they play. Additional men may be cast as the Male characters and/or the multiple roles they play.

STAGING:

This play is intended for a multi-stage presentation with several simply designed playing areas placed in and among the audience seating. The action of the play cuts rapidly from one stage to another without break and, in some cases, events occur on multiple stages simultaneously. The scenic design should provide areas for action and running, be bright, simple and not weighted down by excessive realism. To move quickly is to travel light.

SUGGESTED MUSIC:

The music commonly associated with Flash Gordon is "Les Prelude" by Franz Liszt and "Ride of the Valkyries" by Richard Wagner. Liszt is the main theme and Wagner is for the action. For the underwater sequence, the author recommends selected segments, edited for time and staging, of "Sinfonia Antarctica" by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The final scene is "Stars And Stripes Forever" by John Phillips Sousa.

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FLASH GORDON

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Chapter One

SCENE ONE HINKLEY, OHIO, U.S.A.

A radio warbles as it briefly tunes in one popular 1936 radio show after another. The dial of a wooden bodied radio glows center stage of a multi-stage set. Other stages are dispersed among the audience, connected by ramps, steps, runways, skywalks, ladders and sliding poles. The radio tunes in...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...mighty swing hits a high fly, going, going and it's gone, into the stands of the spring training camp. (*Sound of baseballs being hit*) Yes sir, Mr. and Mrs. America, with power like that, 1936 is sure to be a pennant year for these sultans of swat, and I prognosticate that lady liberty will drop her torch into the Hudson before another team can dethrone our fearless Yankees. (*short burst from a telegraph key*) That wraps up the sports scene for this Saturday afternoon. Now let's turn to the Home-Town story for the week. Mike Murrow on the wire from Hinkley, Ohio. (*telegraph key*) Hello, Mike. Are you there?

MIKE (O.S.)

Mike Murrow on the line from this humble hamlet, the Capistrano of the Midwest, Hinkley, Ohio, to witness first hand the annual returning of the buzzards. That's right, Mr. And Mrs. America, on this, the 28th day of March, every years swarms of buzzards return to this, the buzzard capitol of the world. Why this phenomenon of nature and why Hinkley? No one knows, and despite the otherwise good cheer that surrounds the event, jokes on just why this scavenger bird is attracted to Hinkley are best spoken in private.

(*Lights reveal **MIKE MURROW** on a high stage surveying the scene. He wears a hat and trench coat and holds a microphone and field glasses.*)

I am standing on the roof of Hinkley's tallest building, the three-story Hewes home and telephone exchange, Mrs. Arvilla Hewes, operator. It's a beautiful spring day in Hinkley, the skies are clear and I can see two children in a yard dueling with mighty swords broken from the neighbor's picket fence.

(***TOWNFOLK** in 1930's clothing gather and play below, ever watchful for the coming buzzards*)

(MORE)

MIKE (O.S.) (cont'd)

The home fried chicken stand run by the local church is doing a brisk business as the whole township turns out to celebrate the Festival of the Buzzards. I see the crowd is suddenly rushing to the pasture beside the road.

TOWNSMAN

Yep. By jiminy, there's the first buzzard.

MIKE

Someone is shouting that he's spotted the first buzzard. That wins him a five dollar cash prize. Four twenty two, Central Standard Time and the first buzzard of 1936 returns to Hinkley, and what a buzzard it is. I can only make out the growing black shape, but for as high as it must be, it looks like one very big bird. No, wait! This is no buzzard. It is a conical purple shape descending from the sky.

(A brilliant violet spotlight scans the stages, flashes of light and smoke erupt as it passes over them. The Townsman and several ladies react in horror and run for cover.)

It has reached the ground and is sweeping about! This purple cone has no beginning and seems to come from the sky. This cone, this beam, for beam it must be, just passed over a man.

(Townsman is hit, shrivels in a cloud of smoke)

He has collapsed! And now a house and... it's falling over. It's horrible, this beam is hitting men and women and children and they're dropping to their knees.

(Two ladies are hit by the ray and shrivel in clouds of smoke.)

Panic ladies and gentlemen. Never have I seen such carnage as this town being devastated before me.

*(Mike continues his broadcast as **FLASH GORDON** and **DALE ARDEN** enter in a small yellow roadster. The roadster is hung from their waists and the actors' feet carry them in. They are listening on the car radio.)*

Everywhere homes, cars and people are collapsing. That beam, that monstrous destruction from the sky... just struck an ancient oak tree and it's withering like a flower. Still the beam, the ray of death, continues to strike. It is swinging in a wide arc and is... headed in this direction! It's caught a helpless infant in his yard and left him sprawled and lifeless. Oh, my god, it's coming towards this house. I can see into its horrible depths a thing of pure evil!

The ray hits Mike and he vanishes. The radio is heard to squawk and whine and then is silent.

DALE

Flash, look out!

The violet beam of light sweeps near them. Flash swerves the car to miss it and comes to a halt.

FLASH

Sorry Dale, Whatever that was, it almost got us.

DALE

Flash, what was that radio reporter seeing? Could there really be a destructive ray from the sky?

FLASH

Not the sky, Dale, more likely from outer space!

DALE

Outer space?

FLASH

I'm afraid so, Dale. Last month your uncle, Dr. Zarkov, detected some kind of negative energy broadcast from the stars. It was aimed at Earth, but it always fell short. Until now.

DALE

What can it be?

FLASH

I don't know, Dale, but we've got to reach Zarkov before it happens again.

DALE

Again? You mean this could be the start of something big?

FLASH

Cataclysmic, Dale! If Doctor Zarkov's theories are right, the Earth may be doomed to destruction within days.

DALE

Golly!

FLASH

There's not a moment to lose! I have a hunch that if Zarkov heard that broadcast he'll be having Wheels ready the space cruiser this very second. C'mon Dale, we've got to find a telephone.

They drive off.

BLACK OUT

SCENE TWO ZARKOV'S SECRET LABORATORY

DOCTOR ZARKOV, an older man with a goatee wearing a lab coat and a special electronic head business, is talking on a candlestick telephone.

ZARKOV

Great stars, Flash! My predictions about those negative energy rays are true. There is a sinister force from outer space bent on total annihilation of our planet. When Wheels finishes the new rocket drive in the space cruiser we can reach our goal in hours, unless something tries to stop us. That's right Flash. Whatever is beaming that ray to Earth will let nothing get in its way. It could mean a fight.

BLACK OUT

SCENE THREE THE THRONE OF EMPEROR MING

A gong strikes. The sound of a woman's laughter pierces the curtained throne of Mongo. **LANCER ONE** and **LANCER TWO**, female guards in leather straps, enter with their tall electric lances and perform an elaborate martial salute before the throne.

LANCER ONE & TWO (TOGETHER)

Your Excellency, Emperor of Mongo, Lord of the Cosmos, Ming the Merciless, we bring a message from Prince Barin.

The amplified voice of **EMPEROR MING** booms from behind the curtained throne. The voice activates ominous lighting effects behind the curtain.

MING (O.S.)

Speak.

LANCER ONE

The galactic gathering ray is now fully functional.

LANCER TWO

The living energy of the Earth can be siphoned to Mongo and ready for the will of Ming.

MING (O.S.)

Distract me no more.

(The Lancers salute and quick march to exit.)

Excellent! Prince Barin does well. Soon the universe will kneel before the throne of Ming the Merciless. Ha, ha, ha.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FOUR ZARKOV'S SECRET LABORATORY

Zarkov, with clip board in hand, is checking dials in front of him. Flash and Dale stride in.

ZARKOV

Dale, Flash.

Uncle.
DALE

Doctor Zarkov.
FLASH

ZARKOV
I've pinpointed the source of that ray. It's worse than I
feared.

Worse?
DALE

What is it Doc?
FLASH

ZARKOV
The source of that sinister death ray is the planet of evil,
Mongo!

Golly.
DALE

Mongo?
FLASH

ZARKOV
A wandering planet, a vagabond in the galaxy with a
civilization that thrives by sucking life from other worlds.

DALE
My uncle discovered it on the space scanner two years before
your airplane exploded and you parachuted into his
laboratory.

ZARKOV
Years ago, Flash, I witnessed the power of Mongo. Millions of
miles from its victim planet, Mongo belched a swirling purple
cloud that reached out and enveloped the doomed world.

DALE
It was horrible, Flash.

ZARKOV
When the cloud returned to Mongo it left behind a shriveled
and lifeless planet.

DALE
Oh Flash, every living thing had perished.

FLASH
Incredible!

ZARKOV

Once the purple cloud returned to Mongo, that foul orb began to seethe with activity... until now.

DALE

Oh no!

ZARKOV

I theorized that now they have exhausted their supply of stolen energy and have developed this destructive ray as a more efficient method of satisfying their diabolical cravings for power. Only this time the target is Earth!

FLASH

This menace must be stopped.

DALE

Oh, Flash.

FLASH

When do we leave, Doc?

ZARKOV

In the morning. But there is still a lot of work to do. Wheels and I will finish preparing the space cruiser while you ready the weapons we'll need on Mongo.

FLASH

Right Doc.

Zarkov exits.

DALE

Good-night, Uncle.

FLASH

You better get some sleep Dale. Wheels will need your help in the morning.

DALE

Oh Flash, I'm afraid. That purple ray, Mongo.

FLASH

I know Dale, but this is a job that must be done, and we're the only ones who can do it.

DALE

What if the ray can't be stopped? Will the Earth be destroyed like Hinkley? Will everyone die?

FLASH

It won't happen, Dale. We won't let it happen.

DALE

What about us, Flash? What about our future? Will all that die too? The house we've dreamed of, the children we want to raise? Oh Flash, what about the children?

Flash takes Dale into his arms and both of them look out to the glowing sunset.

FLASH

You mustn't worry, Dale. We're going to lick this thing. I know it. It'll take more than Mongo to make this old world stay down for the count. When I return, and I will return, we'll build that house, high on the hillside, like you wanted, and you'll be able to look out the kitchen window and watch the children playing in the meadow below.

DALE

The children, can we ever again know they'll be safe, safe from another menace?

FLASH

They'll be safe, Dale, our children and all the world's children. That's one promise I'll make, and keep it too. As long as there's a Flash Gordon, the children will be safe.

DALE

Oh, Flash.

Flash and Dale stand as figures of heroism. Music rises. Lights change through the colors of sunset.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FIVE A TELEPHONE BOOTH IN HINKLEY

A panel opens to reveal Mike Murrow, burned and tattered clinging to a pay phone.

MIKE

Hello news desk? This is Mike Murrow... in Hinkley. No, that was no joke, god not a joke. The town, you should see it, there's nothing left. It's all in ruins, buildings destroyed, and the people. No, they're not dead. They've become... shadows, horrible dark shadows of walking death.

BLACK OUT

SCENE SIX GANGWAY TO THE SPACE CRUISER

Heroic music swells. As Flash and Dale approach the gangway, their eyes lift in awe to admire the sleek vessel rising high above them.

A wrench drops from above and lands at their feet.
WHEELS MAC GULLIGAN, their mechanic, descends the gangway and greets them.

WHEELS

She's all ready and raring to go, Flash. She's a 'beaut', right Dale?

DALE

Wheels, you're a first class wizard with a wrench and welding torch. You'd never guess that only last month the space cruiser was twisted and torn wreckage. There's not a trace of where we rammed the Martian fleet's command ship to prevent it from dropping the island of Hawaii smack on New Jersey.

FLASH

That was a close one.

WHEELS

Ah, that was nothing. We've been in worse spots than that, right Flash?

FLASH

You bet wheels.

WHEELS

Remember when the Battling Berserkers from Betelgeuse tried to steal the sun and we flew the space cruiser right up their... ah... up their exhaust, through the ship's fuel lines and out the control panel so we could trigger their self destruct button? Hairy, huh?

FLASH

Let's hope that we don't have to do that trick again.

WHEELS

Nah, we'll be ready for them this time.

DALE

I sure hope we will.

WHEELS

You going too, Miss Dale?

DALE

I wouldn't miss this one for a bride's bouquet. Right Flash?

FLASH

Sorry Dale. No women on board this trip. That's an order.

DALE

But where would you have been when you jousted the giant Jovians without me to fly the magneto-belt over to you?

FLASH

If I remember right, I wouldn't have needed it if you hadn't gotten your skirt caught in the air lock.

DALE

Ah, Flash.

WHEELS

Tough luck, Miss Dale. But you can help man the radio beacon when they return.

DALE

It's not fair. Flash, if you don't take me on this mission you and I are through, forever.

FLASH

Sorry, Dale. It's for your own good.

DALE

Men! *(She goes off in a fury)*

WHEELS

Gosh all mighty, Miss Dale sure is angry. But I guess she'll get over it when you come back the big hero and all. You know how women are.

FLASH

Do I ever, Wheels.

Zarkov enters with a clipboard.

ZARKOV

Is the space cruiser ready, Wheels?

WHEELS

She's in perfect fighting trim, Doc. The torpedoes are polished and she's fit as a fiddle.

ZARKOV

Good work, Wheels. The space cruiser will need precision flying to get us through this mission. We're going to Mongo.

WHEELS

Mongo? Gee willikers. Flash, you'd better take my grandmother's lucky Liberty head silver dollar. You'll need it where you're going.

Wheels takes the coin and its chain from around his own neck and puts it on Flash.

FLASH

Thanks, Wheels. But we'll need more than luck on this trip. Doc, show me the flight plan you have worked out.

While Flash and Zarkov step aside to examine the plans for the journey, Wheels gives a last minute turn to a loose nut. Then Dale, tiptoeing, tries to sneak aboard the space cruiser. Wheels stops her.

DALE

Please, Wheels, don't tell on me. I just gotta go. I'll bake you a cake when I get home, okay?

WHEELS

Gosh, I don't know, Miss Dale. Doc and Flash would skin us both if they knew.

DALE

Please, Wheels, please.
(she awaits a pondering Wheels)
 With sugar on top!

WHEELS

Well, all right. But don't you ever let on I saw you.

DALE

Oh Wheels. I love you.

Dale gives Wheels a kiss on the cheek. He blushes.

WHEELS

You take care of them, Miss Dale. Ya hear, and don't get into any trouble on Mongo, see, 'cuz'... ah... I want that cake when you get back, okay?

DALE

Okay!

WHEELS

You can hide in the aft. Better hurry.

She goes aboard and hides from view.

ZARKOV

With the space cruiser at full thrust we should be there in about seventeen hours.

WHEELS

All ready to blast off, Doc?

ZARKOV

(Looking at his watch) Begin one minute count down, right... now! Where's Dale? I thought at least she'd say good-bye.

WHEELS

Well, ahh...

FLASH

I told her she couldn't go, Doc, and I guess she's still angry.

ZARKOV

You were right, Flash. It's time my niece learned her place is in a kitchen, not on a flying field or a laboratory.

WHEELS

Or in outer space?

ZARKOV

Exactly. Forty-five seconds to blast off. Everyone to their stations.

Flash and Zarkov climb up into the ship and prepare for take off by raising the control levers out of the floor and standing against the vertical thrust protectors on the rear wall. Wheels stands back from the cruiser and plugs his ears. There is the sound of the rocket engines, Flash and Zarkov grit their teeth as the lights fade.

WHEELS

Good luck to you and to the whole world. And good luck to you, Miss Dale, cuz I wouldn't want to be around when they find you aboard.

BLACK OUT

SCENE SEVEN THE THRONE OF EMPEROR MING

Lancers One and Two guard the curtained throne. **PRINCE BARIN**, a dashing young man in a full dress Mongo military uniform, approaches the curtained throne of Mongo in the escort of Lancer Three.

BARIN

My Divine father and Imperial Grace, a spacecraft from another planet approaches Mongo.

Still unseen, Ming's voice activates ominous displays of lighting on the curtain.

MING (O.S.)

A spacecraft?

BARIN

Yes, Excellency. It comes from Earth, the target planet of our Galactic Gathering Ray.

PRINCESS AURA is heard from behind the curtain.

AURA (O.S.)

An attack?

BARIN

Excellency, what is your...

MING

Order Duke Mang-Og to intercept and destroy these impudent Earthlings. Should any be captured alive, bring them to me and we shall use them for our amusement. Ha, Ha.

BARIN

Gladly, my father.

He salutes and exits.

AURA (O.S.)

I love amusements. As long as their blood doesn't splatter on my clothes.

BLACK OUT

SCENE EIGHT THE SPACE CRUISER/MANG-OG'S SPACECRAFT

Flash and Zarkov are flying their space cruiser with two control levers rising from the floor. The fold away visi-screen appears as an empty rim through which they see images but the audience sees nothing.

FLASH

I've picked up the planet Mongo on the visi-screen. It looks about the size of Earth.

ZARKOV

We should be landing within an hour, if nothing interferes. Better run the remote oxy-sphere calculation test.

FLASH

I already have and the air checks out to be like our own. At least we won't have to carry breathing gear.

ZARKOV

There will be other challenges.

FLASH

Say, Doc, How many moons does Mongo have?

ZARKOV

Absolutely none, why?

FLASH

I see one off our port side. No, wait. It's changing direction.

ZARKOV

Great stars, that's no moon. It's another spacecraft.

FLASH

And it's headed straight for us! Stand by for battle maneuvers.

MANG-OG'S SPACECRAFT - A stage opposite the space cruiser lights up. It is the Mongonian space cruiser of **DUKE MANG-OG**, a two headed, space pilot. Mang and Og are at the steering control levers. Space **LANCER FOUR** readies to fire the torpedoes.

MANG

Ha, ha, ha.

OG

Ha, ha, ha.

MANG

The earth craft has detected our presence.

OG

They are turning to face us.

MANG

It is already far...

OG

Far too late for them.

MANG

A few ship lengths closer and...

OG

We will blast them out of the ether ways.

The space Lancer hoists a glowing torpedo.

MANG

Ha, ha, ha.

OG (cont'd)

Ha, ha, ha.

ZARKOV

Jousting rockets ready.

MANG

On my word...

OG

Send out the decoy missile.

MANG

When they try to dodge that one...

OG
We will catch them off guard...

MANG
With the real torpedo. Ha,
ha, ha.

OG (cont'd)
With the real torpedo. Ha,
ha, ha.

The space Lancer slides a torpedo into its slot and
snaps the bolt closed.

FLASH
They're opening their space torpedo vents. Looks like they
mean business.

ZARKOV
Wait until they are in close range and we'll out maneuver
them and hit them with our own torpedo.

FLASH
You got it, Doc. Closer and closer.

MANG
Closer and...

OG
Closer the fangs of the
mighty beast of prey...

MANG (cont'd)
On his helpless victim.

OG
On his helpless victim.

ZARKOV
We're getting dangerously close. If something doesn't happen
soon we may lose that split second our lives depend on.

MANG
Now my pretty, Fire!

OG
Now my pretty, Fire!

The Lancer pulls the firing lever. A whoosh of the
rocket and the Mongonians are jostled in unison.

FLASH
Torpedo, dead ahead. Port rockets full for three seconds.
*(The sound of rockets firing and simultaneously
the actors throw themselves opposite from the
effects of thrust. The battle is on and all the
combatants move and sway as rockets and
explosions push them about. A scream is heard.)*
What was that?

ZARKOV

It sounded like a voice from the aft compartment. Where's the Mongo cruiser?

FLASH

Closing in fast.

MANG

So they can bounce about can they?

OG

Not bad for dodging a dummy.

MANG

Now for...

OG

The real thing.

MANG

Fire!

OG (cont'd)

Fire!

The Lancer launches a second torpedo. A whoosh and the Mongonians are jostled in unison.

FLASH

Another torpedo coming right at us. No way out but full power forward.

ZARKOV

We'll be crushed against the hull.

FLASH

At least we'll have a hull. Power on!

Suddenly Dale appears and is thrown against the wall along with Flash and Zarkov.

MANG

Filthy beggars...

OG

Have outdone us again. Quick, turn the ship around...

MANG

Before they find our bare side and fire.

The Mongonians jerk and sway to the rocket moves.

FLASH

Dale!

DALE

Flash!

FLASH

No time now! Starboard thrusters full.

They are thrown to their right.

MANG

Ming-maneuver four!

OG

Ming-maneuver four!

ZARKOV

They're doing an outside Himmel loop the loop.

FLASH

We've got to out loop 'em, Doc.

DALE

Can our ship take it?

ZARKOV

She's the best space cruiser we've got.

FLASH

Hang on Dale. Hit it Doc.

Both ships and their occupants go through the motions of doing a loop the loop. Their bodies go through twists down, up and down and up again.

OG

(Holding his stomach) I'm going kill that cook.

MANG

Come about and...Attack

OG (cont'd)

Come about and...Attack

FLASH

They'll be turning to prevent our attack. We must duck and roll and come in so close that they can't escape us.

ZARKOV

The explosion from our torpedo may wreck our own ship.

FLASH

It's our only chance.

MANG

Fire again. Fire, fire.

OG

Fire again. Fire, fire.

FLASH

Ready dorsal rockets. Ready starboard rockets. Hold on Dale.

ZARKOV
One, two... *(Continues count aloud)*

MANG
They're coming...

OG
Too close!

FLASH
Fire dorsal rockets.

MANG
Release another...

OG
Torpedo.

ZARKOV
Five, six. Fire. Dorsal fired.

The heroes leap into the air as the space cruiser is pushed downward.

FLASH
Fire starboard!

ZARKOV
Fire. Starboard fired.

The thrust pushes the heroes to their right. Mang and Og and the female space pilot jockey their rocket. Both sides fire and are thrown about. They jockey several more times in a battle ballet of coordinated leaps, thrusts and dodges. The tension mounts as both crews ready for the final shot.

FLASH
On target. Release the torpedo and brace for concussion.

ZARKOV
Fire away!

MANG
You fool!

Mang strikes Og on the head. Og strike him back.

OG
There is no escape.

Ahhh! MANG Ahhh! OG (cont'd)

There is a bright flash of light on the Mongo space craft and then it goes black. A second explosion and our heroes' space cruiser is rocked violently.

ZARKOV
We've downed them.

DALE
Oh, Flash.

ZARKOV
Dale, what are you doing here?

DALE
I just couldn't let you face the...

FLASH
Doc, we've lost rocket power. We're going to crash... on Mongo!

Dale screams and faints across Flash's Arms. Flash holds her while fighting to keep the controls. The heroes brace for impact as the ship angles downward and harrowing music builds to a crescendo then...

BLACK OUT

SCENE NINE THE THRONE OF MING

The harrowing music segues into exotic strains as spotlights pinpoint Princess Aura, a shapely figure in a vaporous garment of veils, slipping down from high above, beginning a mid-air "silk dance". Lancers Two and Three wearing flowing silk robes assist from below. Veils twist and fly as Aura swirls above the curtained throne, taunting the unseen occupant within. After a few moments, Lancer One and Lancer Four enter, execute a salute with their lances. The music stops.

LANCER ONE
His Imperial Highness, Lord of Arboria, Prince Barin.

Prince Barin strides in, abruptly ending Aura's dance. She slides to the floor. The long silk drops from above and the maidens carry it off.

BARIN

Tempting acrobatics my dear sister, but save it for a duller day, I have imperial duties to perform.

AURA

(recovering her breath and suppressing her rage)
What day is duller that brings you on official duties?

BARIN

Jealousy sister?

AURA

This was decreed my hour with our father, dear brother. Take your official duties and dump them on the dung heap before I claw out your watery eyeballs.

BARIN

Careful sister. Our father likes his little Princess cuddly and harmless.

Aura lunges at Barin's face with her nails out. But he catches her by the wrists and they twist close, like snakes in a mating ritual, their lips draw near to each other. Aura hisses into his face.

AURA

Hiss-sss-sss!

BARIN

She-cat! Purring and scratching onto the lap of power.

AURA

Putrid dog, sniveling at our fathers feet for a bone.

A loud gong interrupts them. Voice activated lights on the curtain as Ming speaks in a restrained tone

MING (O.S.)

Must we suffer incessant strife in the royal family?

(Barin and Aura prostrate before the throne.)

What matters that I, your father, Emperor of Mongo, Master of the cosmos, hold planets in the palm of my hand, rule the fortunes of the Fates themselves, if my children will not give me...*(raging)* peace in my own throne room?

BARIN AURA
 A thousand pardons, father. A thousand pardons, father.

BARIN
 Important news, Excellency. I have brought you visitors.

MING (O.S.)
 I give no audience. Take my children to the nursery.

AURA
 No, please.

Lancer One steps toward Barin and Aura.

BARIN
 But my galactic father, they flew the spacecraft that destroyed Duke Mang-Og.

AURA
 Destroyed Mang-Og?

MING (O.S.)
 Destroyed my greatest living creation? They must die.

Barin gestures for Zarkov and Dale to be brought in.

BARIN
 A fisherman in Oceanovia saw their fiery ship plunge into the Mongo Sea. I sent a rocket boat to retrieve them before they could be captured by the Sea King.

MING (O.S.)
 Bring me the captives.

Barin signals and Lancers Two and Three to drag Dale and Zarkov before the throne. Zarkov's clothes are tattered. Dale's are held together by threads.

BARIN
 The earthlings await your pleasure.

Dale struggles with her scant clothes and modesty.

DALE
 Pleasure?

A Lancer tries to strike Dale, but Dale deflects the blow before recovering her modesty.

MING (O.S.)
 The Earthwoman has attributes that are prized on Mongo.

A music flourish. The Barin, Aura and Lancers drop to their knees, heads to the floor before the throne. The curtain parts to reveal the stately Emperor Ming. He wears a high collared silken robe, skullcap and very long, purple fingernail. The flourish continues as the Lancers chant his titles.

ALL LANCERS (TOGETHER)

Your Excellency, Ming the Merciless, Emperor of Mongo, Lord of the Cosmos. All Hail.

The Lancers execute an elaborate lance salute. Ming ominously steps down and circles about Dale.

MING

What is your name my dear?

Zarkov steps between Ming and Dale.

ZARKOV

She is my niece, Dale Arden. I am Doctor...

Before Zarkov can finish, a Lancer prods him with the glowing tip of her electric lance. Zarkov goes rigid with pain and collapses to the floor. Lancers immediately lift him to his feet.

MING

Miss Arden, Dale, won't you mount my imperial throne so a kindly Emperor may appreciate you more intimately?

Ming offers his arm to lead her back to the throne.

DALE

Uncle?

ZARKOV

Dale!

DALE

I prefer to stay by my Uncle.

BARIN

Do not toy with Ming the Merciless, Miss Arden. Obey.

AURA

Send them to the living vivisection! I want to hold her beating heart in my hand.

DALE

My heart?

MING

Silence. *(to Aura)* Your outburst offends our visitors. You shall make amends. Miss Arden shall be our guest in your bedchambers while you are banished to... the Night Drones.

AURA

The Night Drones? Father. Please, not the Night Drones.

MING

Then you may attend to Miss Arden as her personal handmaiden.

AURA

Thank you, father. *(eyeing Dale)* The pleasure will be mine.

MING

You are a 'Doctor' Zarkov, I believe.

(Zarkov nods)

Excellent. I too am a scientist. I find it remarkable that you and your niece journeyed a million miles through space all alone. Or were there others?

ZARKOV

One, our pilot. But he was in the space cruiser when it sank beneath the waves.

DALE

He'd still be alive if... *(sobs)* my skirt hadn't caught on the escape hatch.

Dale flies back to Zarkov and sobs on his shoulder.

MING

I grieve to see an uncle and his beautiful niece, alone on a new world. I shall take great pains to see that you are made welcome... while you remain alive.

DALE

Alive?

BARIN

Your Earth science may prove beneficial in solving some of the technical questions confronting the Emperor's research.

ZARKOV

I would be... interested in the state of your science.

AURA

(to Dale) And this creature may provide us a brief amusement.

MING

Prince Barin will find you suitable clothing and escort you on a tour of Mongo City. I will join you after I have seen to the comforts of your niece. *(firmly)* Good day, Doctor.

Barin and Zarkov exit with Lancers Two and Three.

DALE

Uncle?

MING

Fear not that you are left alone. The bedchambers that my daughter has surrendered are conveniently near to my own.

(Ming pulls at the loose strings of Dale's dress as she struggles to hold onto her modesty)

Princess Aura will be delighted to offer you a wisp of a gown to compliment your delicately silken skin.

AURA

Our pleasure, your Excellency.

Ming takes Dale's hand to his cheek.

MING

My precious, fragrant orchid, though you have been cruelly uprooted, it is my wish that you will bloom again and fondly entwine your delicate petals around an emperor's desire.

DALE

(barely able to speak) Thank you? Your Highness.

MING

My dear, Address me only as Ming. Aura, my child, your Emperor commands that Miss Arden be bathed and refreshed. When I am through escorting Dr. Zarkov, I will call upon you in the privacy of your bedchamber where we will freely drink of wine and pleasantries of the heart.

Ming kisses her hand, then slowly kisses upward along her arm, lingering at her neck. Dale swoons and is assisted out by Lancers One and Four.

BLACK OUT

SCENE TEN ISOLATED SECTOR OF MONGO CITY

Lancer Two, **ULNA**, is walking guard duty. She stops, looks about, places her lance against the wall and retrieves a stick of chewing gum hidden in her bodice. A masked figure in blue and silver uniform stealthily approaches. The Lancer enjoys a few chomps on her gum before **RADIA**, *(Male Two)* grabs Ulna from behind and holds his hands over her mouth.

RADIA

Guess who sweetie?

ULNA

Radia!

RADIA

That's right, Ulna, it's Radia, *(removes his face plate)* your favorite space captain.

ULNA

I'm on duty. I should have shot you on sight.

RADIA

You know what you'd be missing.

ULNA

If Ming even thought I had a beaux it's me that would be missing. Now scram!

RADIA

Ah, baby. There ain't nobody here. Can't we cuddle up a little closer and pitch a little woo?

Radia plants a passionate kiss and they sink to the floor. Flash Gordon, in the tattered and charred remains of his clothing, creeps into the light. The couple breaks for air and Flash hides nearby.

ULNA

Oh, Radia, you, oh, you make a girl forget.

RADIA

It's just natural with us heroes.

ULNA

Heroes?

RADIA

I was the hero who pulled the Earthwoman from the Mongo Sea. Giving her mouth to mouth was a gen-u-ine pleasure.

Flash pays sudden attention to Radia's story.

ULNA

You two-timing me, fly boy?

RADIA

No siree, she's strictly a top brass prize woman. Ming's already got her in his private love nest.

ULNA

What was that? *(leaps to her feet and grabs her lance)*

RADIA

A mouse, cuddly, now come on back to daddy.

An alarm bell rings and a loudspeaker blares.

LOUDSPEAKER

Intruder alert. Lancers to sector D gate. Intruder alert.

ULNA

Gotta run. Don't be here when I get back. *(She exits)*

RADIA

Hey, this ain't no way to treat a hero. Losing a woman to an alarm bell.

(As Radia grouses to himself, Flash comes out of hiding and taps him on the shoulder.)

Ulna, sweets. Right here on the kisser, baby.

Radia closes his eyes and puckers his lips. Flash obliges by knocking him out cold.

FLASH

Sorry, fly boy. Grateful you saved Dale, but I need your uniform to finish the job.

Flash picks him up and carries him off.

BLACK OUT

SCENE ELEVEN

AURA'S BEDCHAMBERS

Lancer One and Four prod a resistant Dale onstage with the glowing tips of their Lances. It pains her.

DALE

Awww! No! Awww!

LANCER ONE

Ming commands!

They force her to go behind a translucent wall that lights up to show them in "shadow silhouette". As Lancer One holds a glowing lance on Dale, Lancer Four tries to strip away Dale's torn clothing. Dale resists and is prodded with the electric lance.

DALE

No, you can't! Ahhh!

Dale breaks free and runs from behind the wall as Princess Aura sweeps onstage. Aura carries a silken gown. The Lancers quickly trap Dale at Lance point.

AURA

After you are bathed, you will slip into this dressing gown.
(displays the gown in front of the light glowing wall. It's transparency is nearly total.)
 It will endear you to the eyes of Ming.

DALE

I would rather die!
(Dale makes a break but is trapped by Lancers and forced behind the translucent wall)

AURA

I am certain you would, Earthwoman. *(To herself)* But until that day, you are going to be very useful to my plan.

In silhouette, the Lancers hold Dale as they slowly remove her clothing and she dons the filmy gown.

LIGHTS DIM/SCENE CONTINUES WHILE:

SCENE TWELVE RAY TOWER/RAY LABORATORY

RAY TOWER - A crackle of electric sparks leap skyward, tracing the outlines of a soaring tower. At the pinnacle, the Gathering Ray, a cylindrical device ringed with lights that flash in quickening pace and intensity, takes aim. Suddenly, the Gathering Ray fires a bolt of purple destruction. Wailing voices scream in pain.

RAY LABORATORY - At the controls below the ray, Ming, Barin and Zarkov remove their protective goggles as **GU-NISH**, *(Lancer Three)* in exotic lab gear and strange hairdo, manipulates giant levers.

ZARKOV

Astounding!

MING

Your astonishment delights us.

BARIN

And appries us of the level of science on your planet.

MING

What do you think of my ray?

ZARKOV

Is this the purple beam that is scourging Earth?

GU-NISH

The Galactic Gathering Ray is my Emperor's most stunning achievement.

ZARKOV

You say it is a gathering ray?

GU-NISH

An energy siphon, drawing life from whatever it touches.

MING

Doctor, I am certain that you were aware of its function before you came to Mongo.

ZARKOV

Your ambitions must be very great, Emperor, to need a ray capable of gathering a billion years of energy in an instant.

MING

My empire has exhausted the natural resources of Mongo, so I devised the Gathering Ray to power my machines of conquest.

ZARKOV

What happens to a planet when you're finish?

GU-NISH

After the ray has drained all of its plasmatoidal forces, the planet slips through the fabric of time and ceases to exist.

ZARKOV

But what of the people?

BARIN

They vanish with their planet.

MING

Except on worlds we wish to enslave. Then we stop the process halfway and the inhabitants become our drones.

ZARKOV

Drones?

BARIN

Drones do all the labor on Mongo. They receive the Emperor's commands through personal visi-screens, some so small they can fit in the palm of your hand.

GU-NISH

Some even have little keypads.

MING

You must excuse me. I promised your lovely niece I would be her companion for the evening. If I am late, I fear she will grow faint from anticipation. Prince Barin will show you the drone enclaves.

Barin salutes. Ming exits with Gu-nish following.
Barin flips out a visi-screen from the wall.

BARIN

We can peer into every corner of Mongo from a visi-screen.

ZARKOV

Is nothing hidden from their view?

BARIN

(Dialing the visi-screen) There are a few wild places that are hidden from us. But soon, they too will be revealed to the eyes of Ming.

ZARKOV

Wait. There. It's my niece.

LIGHTS DIM/SCENE CONTINUES WHILE:

SCENE THIRTEEN AURA'S BEDCHAMBERS

The Lancers prod Dale out from behind the wall. Dale clutches close the gauzy dressing gown she wears. Her hair hangs loose and undone. Aura strides in.

AURA

You are the freshness of Ming's favorite flower. Sit there and I will prepare you for your evening with our Emperor.

(The Lancers prod Dale to sit. Aura dismisses the Lancers and begins to brush Dale's hair.)

You are silent as a flower too. Do you find our palace too drab and dull a place for your Earthly tastes?

DALE

Oh, it's all, so... so strange. I wish I had never come!

AURA

Ahhh.

DALE

I should have listened to Flash. But I thought he was wrong and I stowed aboard the space cruiser.

AURA

This Flash, is he your mate?

DALE

My husband? No, not yet, but he was... he was wonderful. You should have seen him battle the asteroid raiders of Phobos. He fought like a lion... until my high heels sank in asteroid goo. I was in the way then too. Now, he's dead and it's all my fault. *(she sobs)*

AURA

Was he the space pilot who was killed when you crashed?

(Sees Dale nod)

I am sorry that you have lost your hero, Dale. But you have nothing to fear in the palace of Ming.

DALE

Ming? Oh, Princess, what is that evil man going to do to me?

AURA

He's going to make you his Empress.

DALE

Ahhh! No, no! I've got to see my Uncle Zarkov.

AURA

Your uncle is powerless to help you. But maybe, I can.

DALE

You? But you're just... a princess.

AURA

You may not believe me, Dale, but being the daughter of Ming the Merciless is not as pleasant as it appears. *(Looking before she speaks)* If I show you how to escape from Ming, will you help me?

DALE

Anything. Can we do it tonight, before Ming... touches me?

AURA

Ming will be here soon. Quick, take off your dressing gown.

DALE

(clutching it her gown close) But it's all I'm wearing.

AURA

When Ming arrives, you must be dressed for a fight.

DALE

A Fight?

Aura takes her hand and they run out.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FOURTEEN RAY LABORATORY/DRONE DANCE/ISOLATED SECTOR

The lights return as Barin dials the visi-screen.

ZARKOV

At least she appeared safe.

BARIN

For now, Doctor. For now.

ZARKOV

Is two-way communication possible?

BARIN

It can project a voice anywhere it can see. But, let me show you the Night Drones that are the real workers of Mongo.

Barin turns the dials of the visi-screen. They remain in light as a heavy beat of music rises.

DRONE DANCE - pulsing colored lights reflect off garishly attired drones (*Males One and Two and the three Lancers*). The drones gyrate in a wild, frenzy.

ISOLATED SECTOR - Flash, wearing Radia's uniform, slides down a ladder. Lancer Four approaches, Flash ducks into shadows and re-emerges behind her.

FLASH

Fire! Fire in the control panel.

The Lancer runs back past Flash who attempts a quick chop but the Lancer turns and parries. They engage in a swift exchange of thrusts and swings to the beat of the music of the drones. They circle in a standoff, measuring the skill of their opponent.

ZARKOV

They're like moths trapped by a flame. Why don't they stop?

The drones continue their frantic dance. Flash and the Lancer circle each other to find an advantage.

BARIN

To stop is to die.

Flash launches a feint and attack, dropping the Lancer. He takes her blaster and holster.

FLASH

My apologies, Miss.

Flash exits and the lights fade on the sector.

ZARKOV

How can these drones be doing work?

BARIN

In their visi-screen flushed minds, they are enjoying an evening of wild courtship dancing.

(MORE)

BARIN (cont'd)

While actually, their bizarre motions send millions of units of powers streaming to the electro-economic sectors of Mongo.

ZARKOV

Using delusional slaves to fuel an industry. It's ghastly.

BARIN

But doctor, they are happy. And we let them choose their own dancing clothes. Ha, ha, ha.

Flash enters the Drone Dance. Their light beams interrupted, the drones move with increasingly exaggerated movement. Unaware that the drones cannot see him, Flash prepares to defend himself.

ZARKOV

Flash!

BARIN

What? Did you see a flash?

ZARKOV

(covering) Maybe a static discharge.

BARIN

(sees Flash) That fool! He'll bring down the entire powergrid. I'm going after him. *(Draws blaster, exits)*

ZARKOV

Flash is alive. I've got to warn him. *(Pushes a talk button)*
Flash. Flash Gordon.

(Flash's name reverberates as the drones flail)

Flash, this is Zarkov. You can't see me, but I have you on a visi-screen. We thought you had drowned in the crash.

FLASH

I was sinking fast, when the tentacles of a giant sea monster hooked onto Wheels' lucky silver dollar and...

As Flash tugs on Wheel's necklace, a drone snags the chain. As Flash fights back, the drones are knocked about, causing the light beams to flicker.

ZARKOV

Flash, you're disrupting a force field. Prince Barin will be on you in a moment. You must rescue Dale.

FLASH

Dale?

ZARKOV

Emperor Ming is holding her prisoner in Princess Aura's bedchamber. Flash, you must get to her before Ming has his... Just save her Flash.

(MORE)

ZARKOV (cont'd)

I'll pretend to join Ming's sinister plan so I can discover a means of stopping the death ray. Hurry Flash, Dale needs you.

FLASH

You can count on Flash Gordon.

Barin enters. The drones flail about him wildly and he shoots them with his ray and sparks fly from their chests as Flash escapes.

BLACK OUT ON THE DANCE FLOOR.

ZARKOV

Now to find Dale and hope that Flash can get to her before...

(He dials the visi-screen)

Not there. Or there. Wait. That's it. Dale and the Princess.

LIGHTS DIM/SCENE CONTINUES WHILE:

SCENE FIFTEEN AURA'S BEDCHAMBERS/PALACE PASSAGEWAYS

Aura finishes dressing Dale in a light colored, loose garment with skirt and boots. A gong sounds.

DALE

Ming!

AURA

Be calm. He may be the Emperor of Mongo but he's still only a man. *(sultry)* You know how to handle a man, don't you?

DALE

Gosh, no.

Aura exits. Dale is left alone to think. Bravely, she unbuttons the top button of her tunic. Her back is turned to Ming as he enters. He has changed to a dressing gown. He approaches and places his hand on her shoulder. She is startled and screams.

MING

Miss Arden.

DALE

Aaah! Ah, Ming. *(re-buttoning her tunic)*

ZARKOV

(watching on the visi-screen) This could be trouble.

Ming takes her hand and presses it to his lips.

MING

Allow me to wish your stay on Mongo be long and fruitful.

DALE

Fruitful?

MING

Your hand is chilled. Your cheek flushed. I can see your heart beating in your breast.

ZARKOV

That fiend.

MING

I too feel the throb of emotion that our meeting brings.

He draws her close and holds her a moment before she breaks away.

ZARKOV

Hold on, Dale.

MING

Do not fear the touch of Ming. My hand has crushed worlds, but your delicate beauty will find sanctuary in my caress.

Ming draws her close and envelopes her in his arms. Dale checks that her tunic is fully buttoned.

A PALACE PASSAGEWAY - Flash runs through a moment ahead of Prince Barin, who meets Lancer Four.

BARIN

Renegade space pilot fleeing on foot. Set lances to kill.

The Lancer adjust her weapon and it tip glows red. They race off. Other Lancers join the chase.

ANOTHER AREA OF THE PALACE - Flash searches for Dale. Barin and all the Lancers search for Flash.

MING

It was not weak, bloodless begging that made me Emperor of Mongo, but brazen boldness. Now, my darling Dale, that boldness commands you to be my bride.

DALE

Gasp!

Ming folds Dale over his arm into a clinching kiss. Flash rushes in and throws Ming back with one arm and with the other, catches Dale before she falls.

FLASH

Hands off, mister.

DALE

Flash!

FLASH

Dale. Are you all right? Who's this space trash?

DALE

The Emperor of Mongo, Ming the Merciless.

Ming rushes to reclaim Dale, but Flash lands a solid right to his jaw, propelling him back to the floor.

FLASH

More like Ming, the pitiful.

DALE

I thought you were dead.

FLASH

It'll take more than an emperor to kill Flash Gordon.

MING

Flash Gordon? Another Earthling? Curse the day you came to Mongo to die.

FLASH

(pulls his blaster) Not while I'm holding this blaster.

Lancer Four enters and attempts to sneak up on Flash and Dale from behind. But Zarkov, monitoring on the visi-screen, shouts a warning.

ZARKOV

Flash, behind you!

Flash pushes Dale away to parry a lance thrust. The Lancer, falls to the floor, reaches for her blaster, but is shot by Flash and dies. Ming escapes.

DALE

Oh, Flash it was horrible, the way Ming looked at me.

FLASH

Ming. Where is he?

DALE

He's gone.

Ming appears above the city. He screams orders into a speaking device. His words echo throughout Mongo.

MING

Kill the Earthman and bring Dale Arden to me. If they escape, you will suffer in his place.

Lancers spring into view in every location, running everywhere, along catwalks, sliding down poles.

ZARKOV

Flash, your only chance to escape death is to flee the city.

FLASH

Right, Doc! C'mon Dale.

Flash and Dale run from place to place to escape.

MONGO-MONSTER CAGE - A fierce red light on a barred door reveals, one huge and one large, bi-ped killer creatures. Their fangs and claws tear at the bars.

MING

Release the Mongo-monsters. Kill the Earthman

The bars rise and the Mongo-monsters charge out, howling and sniffing after their prey. The chase consumes the entire stage as lights pop on and off revealing Flash and Dale, Ming, Lancers, Zarkov, Barin and the Mongo-monsters in a series of violent encounters, escapes, shouts and blaster shots.

LANCERS (VARIOUS AD LIBS)

Lances to death strength! Kill the Earthman. (*etc.*)

BARIN

The Earthman is mine! Death to the earthling!

MING

Destroy Flash Gordon. Bring me the flesh of the Earthwoman.

Our heroes see a Mongo-monster lunge from above and savagely kill Lancer Four. The chase continues. More ad-libs. Flash enters an isolated area. Dale stops at the entrance, her skirt caught on something.

FLASH

Hurry Dale, they're right behind us.

DALE

Flash, help me. My skirt is caught!

Flash sighs and frees Dale. They run but their escape is blocked by a Mongo-monster. Behind them is another Mongo-monster. Upstage a pair of Lancers. Downstage, more Lancers. They are surrounded.

MING

Lances set to kill!

The tips of the lances suddenly emit a dazzling light. The Mongo-monsters lunge. Zarkov shouts.

ZARKOV

No!

DALE

(screaming) FLA-A-A-A-SH!

Our heroes are buried in the onrush of attackers.

BLACK OUT

End Chapter One First Intermission

Chapter Two

SCENE ONE THE PALACE OF MING

Scene replays the last moments of Chapter One from:

FLASH

C'mon Dale.

Flash and Dale run from place to place to escape.

MONGO-MONSTER CAGE - A fierce red light on a barred door reveals, one huge and one large, bi-ped killer creatures. Their fangs and claws tear at the bars.

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ZARKOV

No!

DALE

(screaming) Fla-a-a-a-sh!

The heroes are buried in the onrush of attackers.

BEGIN NEW ACTION

Dale's scream is drowned by the war cry of Princess Aura as she swings overhead on the end of a silken tether. Aura, wearing scanty battle armor, swoops above the Lancers and Mongo-monsters. Slicing the air with her blaster, Aura quickly downs all four Lancers. Aura alights. The Mongo-monsters charge her and envelop her with slobbering dog kisses.

AURA

Floppsie! Moppsie! Go to your kennel. Good boys. Go. Go.
(The Mongo-monsters scamper off.)
 They're still puppies. Dale, this way.

While Aura stands guard, Flash and Dale push the dead Lancers off and leap to their feet.

DALE

Princess?

AURA

Quickly, Ming and Prince Barin are coming.

Aura leads them up a secret ladder. She offers Dale a hand but stops Flash until Dale speaks up.

DALE

He's Flash Gordon.

Aura turns with Dale and leaves Flash. Ming enters, just missing Flash as he follows Aura and Dale up the ladder. Ming kicks over Lancer One.

MING

Where is the body of the dead Earthman?

LANCER ONE

(points to where Flash escaped) The earthling... escaped.

Enraged, Ming kills her with his blaster and moves to Lancer Four as she cradles her wounded torso.

MING

And Miss Arden?

LANCER FOUR

She escaped with the Earthling.

Barin strides in just as Ming kills the Lancer then takes aim at Prince Barin, who stops cold.

MING

The Earthlings must die.

BARIN

But Father, their scientist is still of use to us.

MING

I leave him in your hands. But if he betrays me, both your lives will not be worth the pain of departing them.

Lancers Two and Three moan and Ming blasts them and exits. Mongo-Monsters enter and gleefully drag off the dead Lancers. Barin exits in disgust.

BLACK OUT

SCENE TWO AURA'S SECRET LAIR

Aura, Dale and Flash each slide down a pole and drop into Aura's lair. Flash is instantly on guard.

FLASH

Where are we?

AURA

In a subterranean sector of the city, secret and safe from visi-screens. I come here to exercise.

FLASH

Is that the only escape?

AURA

Escape? Where would you go?

DALE

Anywhere Princess, that's away from Ming.

FLASH

Princess?

DALE

Princess Aura, Ming's daughter.

FLASH

Ming's daughter? Jumpin' Jupiter.

Flash tries to take Dale away. Aura blocks him.

AURA

You cannot leave.

FLASH

(grabbing her arm) Listen Princess...

Aura immediately throws him to the ground and stands over him, aiming her blaster at his head.

AURA

No, you listen, mister hero. It was Dale I saved, not you. You are an uninvited intruder...

DALE

Princess.

AURA

Who I tolerate only until Dale understands her destiny.

DALE

Whatever it is, Princess, Flash can help.

AURA

Perhaps.

(Seductively offers a hand to Flash)

(MORE)

AURA (cont'd)

What I am about to do may seem shocking. But it will give me great pleasure.

Aura draws Flash into a passionate embrace. Flash resists as Aura wraps herself around him, pushes him back and body presses him to the wall.

DALE

Princess? Flash?

Aura appears to ravage Flash, but before Dale can intercede, Aura pulls a large lever. There is a loud zapping sound and suddenly Flash is stuck to the wall as if by a giant magnet.

FLASH

(struggling) Uuaaagh!

DALE

Flash!

Dale rushes toward Flash but is stopped by Aura.

AURA

Stay back.

(She takes Flash's blaster)

You are not wearing the retro-static breast shield that protects me from the effects of my flesh magnet.

DALE

A flesh magnet! Oh, Flash.

AURA

You cannot help your beast. My flesh magnet will hold him as long as blood flows through his veins.

Aura puts an arm around Dale and strokes her hair.

DALE

Princess?

AURA

Dale, with your innocent beauty and my wisdom we can overthrow Ming.

DALE

Over throw Ming?

AURA

Then I will be the Empress of Mongo and you will sit beside me and we will rule Mongo, and the universe... together.

DALE

Together?

AURA

Think of it Dale. Worlds spinning on the tips of your fingers. Radiant, shimmering jewels draped across your body. The prize stallions of manhood reclining at you feet. It is every woman's dream.

FLASH

Don't listen to her, Dale.

DALE

But... Flash?

AURA

Is a mere trifle, an obstacle to your destiny. The sooner you are free of this beast, the sooner you will be my Queen.

DALE

But... I... love him.

AURA

How can you love a beast?

DALE

(freeing herself from Aura's embrace)

No! Flash is not a beast. He is noble and caring and...

FLASH

Attaboy, Dale.

AURA

I see I must show you how weak your beast really is.

Aura tugs Dale to an elevated area, pulls a lever.
The flesh magnet stops. Flash is sent sprawling.

DALE

Flash.

AURA

There. I have released him. Now we will see how he fares against beasts of my making.

(She pulls another lever and a pair of slobbering giants in loincloths leap out)

My eunuchs!

The eunuchs go for Flash.

DALE

You can beat them Flash. They're eunuchs.

FLASH

Eunuchs? Sure, Dale. Sure.

The eunuchs attack. A eunuch snatch-lifts Flash and tosses him like a stick to the other eunuch. They are big but Flash is fast. Caught several times, Flash escapes by virtue of his agility and wits.

DALE

Look out!

AURA

Your beast is weak. Not strong like mine have become.

DALE

Flash, they're getting behind you.

AURA

He's fast... at running away. But he will be a better fighter after he has been improved.

Aura takes a dagger from her greave and throws it.

DALE

No!

Flash intercepts the dagger. He fights but is soon trapped and disarmed. The eunuchs hoist Flash upside down, spread-eagle into the air. A eunuch lifts the dagger to strike and looks to Aura who raises her hand, preparing to give the thumbs down sign.

AURA

What do you say about your man now?

DALE

No, you can't.

Dale leaps at Aura's arm and wrestles her to the floor. The eunuchs are distracted long enough for Flash to escape. He rushes to Dale. The eunuchs are soon on each side of Flash, Dale and Aura.

AURA

Kill him!

The eunuchs charge from opposite sides but Flash deflects them so that they butt each other's heads and fall down unconscious. Flash quickly retrieves his blaster and turns it on Aura.

FLASH

Dale, are you all right?

DALE

Oh, Flash. I was so frightened. What if they had... Oooh!

FLASH

No chance of that with you on my team.

AURA

I warn you, that man will be your doom.

DALE

At least he is still a man.

Flash gives the blaster to Dale.

FLASH

Keep an eye on her. I'll ditch these two and go look for Doc.

Flash drags off one eunuch and then the other while Dale holds a blaster on Aura.

AURA

You're making a mistake, Dale. (*tries to stand*)

DALE

You so much as twitch an eyelash and I'll blast your mascara right off your face.

BLACK OUT

SCENE THREE ANOTHER PART OF THE PALACE

Lancer Three rushes in and kneels before Ming.

LANCER THREE

Excellency, we have found the earthlings!

MING

Where are they?

LANCER THREE

Beneath the Palace, with Princess Aura.

MING

Deceitful daughter, you have done your last.

Ming exits with the Lancer.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FOUR ARBORIA/RAY TOWER/THE RAY LABORATORY

ARBORIA - High above, along a leafy walkway, an **ARBORIAN MAN**, in clothes made from plant greenery, scurries past, holding a bush for concealment.

RAY TOWER - The ray gun emerges and pulses to life.
The Arborian Man sees the ray and hides in fear.

RAY LABORATORY - Barin and Zarkov are below the ray
gun. They wear protective shields and goggles.

ZARKOV

What use has Ming for such power?

BARIN

Mastery of the cosmos. (*adjusts a visi-screen*) Soon Ming's
ray will reach every planet in the galaxy as easily as it
touches the forests of my own kingdom of Arboria. Witness.

Barin adjusts dials and levers. The ray's beam hunts
the Arborian Man. When it catches him, the bush he
carries ignites in sparks and the Man runs away.

ZARKOV

The energy of the Gathering Ray is staggering.

BARIN

That's only a fraction of full power. Most of the energy it
gathers has to be vented into the ocean as toxic crystals.

ZARKOV

Polluting your oceans for power is madness.

BARIN

That is your challenge, Doctor. Perfect the Gathering Ray and
Ming will spare your Earth from destruction.

ZARKOV

Bring death to other worlds to save my own? An evil choice.

BARIN

Decide or die.

Barin and Zarkov work levers to adjusting the ray.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FIVE AURA'S SECRET LAIR

AURA

Your beast is not coming back. He has forgotten you.

DALE

No. He's looking for my uncle. (*she hears a sound and goes to
the sliding pole and calls*) Flash?

Dale leaps back as Lancer One, Two and Four descend
the poles in unison. Ming enters above them.

MING

It pleases me to see women at play.

AURA

Kill him and I'll make you Queen of Mongo!

MING

Kill her and I'll make you Empress of the Universe.

Dale waves the blaster between Ming and Aura.

DALE

Come any closer and I'll shoot. (*plaintive cry*) Flash?

MING

So you're Earthman was here.

DALE

And he's coming back.

MING

Surrender or when your Earthman returns, you both will die.

The Lancers advance. Dale fires a warning shot.

DALE

Stay back!

MING

My Lancers are used to dying. Are you?

The Lancers advance closer. Dale surrenders.

DALE

Oh Flash. I'm sorry.

Aura attempts to escape but is caught.

MING

Take my daughter to the Night Drones.

AURA

Have mercy. Not the Night Drones.

The Lancers drag away Aura. Ming moves toward Dale, then tenderly takes her hands in his own.

MING

Sorrow fills my heart that you have seen the dark side of my little family. But fear no more, my soft and tender one. (*his arms around her*) My only desire is for you to find happiness on this, your wedding night.

DALE

My wedding night?

MING

Prepare my bride for the ceremony.

Lancers take away the struggling Dale.

BLACK OUT

SCENE SIX THE RAY LABORATORY

Gu-nish rushes in.

GU-NISH

Catastrophe! Tidal waves are destroying the floating city.

BARIN

Oceanovia is sinking?

GU-NISH

The volcanoes of Arboria are erupting in rivers of lava.

BARIN

What of the forest people?

GU-NISH

Flaming lava will bury millions of Arborians in fiery death.

ZARKOV

These disasters began at the same time?

GU-NISH

Just minutes after Ming's drones opened the vents and released waste from the ray into the ocean.

ZARKOV

Ming's ray caused these disasters.

BARIN

How could it?

ZARKOV

The ray's waste energy has upset the balance of your planet.

BARIN

We must shut down the ray!

Barin pulls down a large lever. Gu-nish tries to stop Barin but Zarkov intervenes.

GU-NISH

You cannot delay the Emperor's conquest of the galaxy.

ZARKOV

Then you must bring me samples of the waste from those vents.

GU-NISH

The waste vents are in the Sea King's territory. His Shark Men will kill me if I go near them.

BARIN

And if you don't, I will kill you.

GU-NISH

Yes, your highness. *(she exits)*

BLACK OUT

SCENE SEVEN AURA'S SECRET LAIR

Lancer One and Two, disguised as Aura and Dale, are poised with their faces hidden as Flash enters. The fake Dale holds a blaster on the fake Aura.

FLASH

No sign of Doc. Ming must have him in a secret laboratory. Did the Princess give you any trouble?

(The Dale Lancer turns and aims her blaster)

Hey, you're not Dale.

LANCER

But you are Flash Gordon.

Flash kicks the blaster from her hands. The Lancers click their lances tips to full strength and attack.

FLASH

Easy, ladies. Don't make me do something rude.

The Lancers utter a scream and leap at Flash. He fights back and their struggle takes them offstage.

BLACK OUT

SCENE EIGHT RAY LABORATORY

Gu-nish enters with a vial of floating crystals.

GU-NISH

These crystals are all the drones could gather from the waste vent before the Sea King and his deadly Sharkmen attacked.

Zarkov and Barin examine the colored crystals.

ZARKOV

Why are the crystals different colors?

BARIN

The colors are the essence of planets the ray has drained.

GU-NISH

The blue crystals are from you own planet, Doctor.

ZARKOV

If we are to restore the balance and save both our two planets, we must use all the blue crystals. Time is short.

The two men climb the ladder to the ray tower.

SCENE NINE THE MONGO LAUNDRY

Flash staggers across a high catwalk. His shredded clothing is little more than a few scant tatters.

FLASH

That's the toughest blind date I ever had. Gotta find Doc.

Flash continues sliding along the passage wall. A buzzer sounds and a service window opens. A surprised laundryman, **LORIE**, flings his magazine.

LORIE

Don't do that! Can't you see I'm on my break. Besides, I don't care who you are, your laundry isn't ready.

Lorie tries to close the window. Flash stops him.

FLASH

My laundry?

LORIE

What did you expect, opera tickets? Fingers! *(tries again)*

FLASH

I'm desperate.

LORIE

We're all desperate, sweetie. But I only handle uniforms.

FLASH

A uniform. That's what I need.

Lorie leans out to give Flash the once over.

LORIE

What ever did you do? No, don't tell me. I've been to that club and I promised myself I'd never go again. *(Fingering the remaining fabric)* At least you weren't wearing you're good clothes. Well, what's your size?

FLASH

Size? Big?

LORIE

That's what they all say. Mercy! Turn around. Hmmm. Ooh, double mercy. Hmmm, a 'Triple-T'. I bet you're popular.

Lorie vanishes inside. Flash hears a sound and slips in through the window as a Lancer runs by. Flash leans out to look as Lorie taps him on the shoulder.

FLASH

Ahh! Is there a place I can change where no one will see me?

LORIE

Back there. It's only me... and I never peek.
(Flash inside. Lancer Two comes to the window.)
 Come back later, I'm having a little... treat.

Lories slides the service window closed.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE TEN NIGHT DRONES

Aura is locked in a flailing dance with the Night Drones as Dale is herded past by Lancer Four.

DALE

Princess Aura?

LANCER FOUR

Do not talk to the Night Drones.

AURA

Save me!

The Lancer blocks Dale from approaching Aura.

LANCER FOUR

The drones cannot escape until another takes their place.

AURA

Help me.

DALE

I must talk to the Princess.

LANCER FOUR

Ming orders you to prepare for the wedding ceremony.

DALE

(summons the courage to command) I am the bride of Ming, the next Empress of Mongo and I command you to step aside.

LANCER FOUR

But your highness...

DALE

Obey or take your place beside the Princess.

LANCER FOUR

Not that! Forgive me your highness.

The Lancer bows and steps aside.

DALE

Ming will kill Flash unless I marry him. What can I do?

Aura vainly tries to break from the Night Dancers.

AURA

Free me and I'll save them.

DALE

How can I trust you?

AURA

Trust me or spend your nights with Ming.

DALE

I'll help you, but how?

AURA

You must force the Lancer to take my place.

LANCER FOUR

(returning) We go. Now!

Dale pretends her skirt is caught on something.

DALE

My skirt is caught on something. Please, see what it is.

The Lancer kneels and Dale pushes her onto the dance floor where Aura grabs her and frees herself.

LANCER FOUR

Ahhh!

Lancer Four is pulled in by the Drones. Black out on the Drones. Aura tries to run. Dale holds her back.

DALE
Wait. What about me?

AURA
Return to Ming.

DALE
No, it's too awful.

AURA
Dale, you must be strong. You must be a woman and use your feminine charms on my father and buy me time to rescue Flash.

DALE
But what if he...

AURA
Even if you have to...

DALE
No!

AURA
Flash would do it for you. *(she exits)*

DALE
I wish Wheels had given me a lucky silver dollar. I think I'm really going to need it. *(she exits)*

BLACK OUT

SCENE ELEVEN AURA'S LAIR/RAY TOWER/LABORATORY/PALACE

Lights reveal a growing succession of visi-screens.

AURA'S LAIR - Aura rushes in, opens a visi-screen and quickly turns its knobs.

AURA
If I can tap into Mongo's visi-screens, maybe I can find Dale's beast. Where is Flash Gordon? Is he on the parapet? No. The laboratory? Wait. Who is that?

Gu-nish, opens a visi-screen and turns dials.

GU-NISH
The Earth scientist has his precious crystals.

Lights remain on Gu-nish and he continues "speaking in silence" as:

AURA
The Earth scientist? Is Flash Gordon with him. *(dials)* There.

Lights return on Barin and Zarkov in the ray tower as they pull open pieces of the ray body.

ZARKOV

I have a theory that we may be able to inject these crystals back into the he ray and repair the imbalance. (*turns to Barin*) But it would mean defying your father.

BARIN

Ming is not my father.

AURA

Not your father?

BARIN

Ming murdered my father, the true King of Arboria, when I was an infant and stole my kingdom from me.

AURA

Barin is not of my blood? Not my real brother?

BARIN

I learned the truth when I was exploring the forests of Arboria and was trapped by one of it's giant spiders. That's when Count Rhodo saved me from death and told me the truth.

ZARKOV

You are the King of Arboria?

BARIN

I will not let Ming destroy my Kingdom again. What can I do?

ZARKOV

Help me reverse the ray, and be prepared to give up you life.

BARIN

For Arboria. For Mongo.

GU-NISH

Shall I proceed with your plan?

AURA

(*turns dials*) Who is on the other visi-screen?

THE PALACE - Ming is at a visi-screen.

MING

Is the sensing cap ready?

Gu-nish holds up a headpiece of wires and lights.

GU-NISH

Yes Excellency. How shall I calibrate its settings?

MING

When Zarkov succeeds in bringing the ray to full power, its energy must feedback through the cap and into his skull.

GU-NISH

(adjusting the cap) Excellency, his brain will explode!

MING

It is my command.

AURA

Prince Barin is not my brother.

BLACK OUT ON ALL

SCENE TWELVE THE LAUNDRY WINDOW

Flash climbs out the service window wearing a blue space pilot uniform with a short yellow cape.

LORIE

I starched your space cape. No extra charge.

FLASH

Thanks, it looks... swell.

LORIE

Capes will be so yesterday once Ming marries that Earthwoman.

FLASH

Marry Ming? She wouldn't do that.

LORIE

According to the gossip on the visi-screen she's in Princess Aura's bedchambers being prepared.

FLASH

How can I get into Aura's bedroom?

LORIE

If I knew that, sweetie, I'd sell tickets.

Lorie snaps the service window closed on Flash just as Aura races in. He draws his blaster on her.

AURA

Don't shoot. I come from Dale.

FLASH

What has Ming done with her?

AURA

Ming is going to marry her... tonight.

FLASH

I've got to save her.

AURA

You can't. They're going to kill Doctor Zarkov.

FLASH

Kill Doc?

AURA

When his experiment succeeds, his sensing cap is going to explode his brain.

FLASH

How do I know you're telling the truth?

AURA

You have no choice. Zarkov may die at any moment.

FLASH

I can't let Ming marry Dale. He'll... But if Doc dies the Earth will be destroyed. But Dale? She's still a... Ahhh!

AURA

You love that girl, don't you?

FLASH

Dale? Love? But Doc is my friend. But I can't let Ming with Dale... The children. Millions of kids depend on me to save their homes. But Ming will... Not Dale. Golly, I'm sorry. I know she'd understand. It's for the children. Take me to Doc!

Flash and Aura exit.

SCENE THIRTEEN THE RAY TOWER/ THE RAY LABORATORY

THE RAY TOWER - Zarkov is adjusting the ray. Barin climbs down the ladder into the laboratory.

BARIN

Prepare to test the ray. *(begins working knobs and levers)*

GU-NISH

Doctor, it is not safe to stay next to the ray.

ZARKOV

(calling down from above) I must monitor my experiment to bring the ray to one hundred percent efficiency.

GU-NISH

This Mongonian sensing cap will monitor your experiment and, ah, safely, relay your successes directly into your brain.

Zarkov climbs back down to the laboratory and Gu-nish gives Zarkov the cap to strap on.

ZARKOV

Great stars, is there no limits to the wonders of Mongo?

GU-NISH

Be sure it is a snug fit. (*Cinching it tighter*) You may experience a little discomfort, but trust me, after your experiments succeeds, you will feel nothing.

LIGHTS DIM/SCENE CONTINUES WHILE:

SCENE FOURTEEN AURA'S BEDROOM AND BATH

Dale is seen in shadow silhouette behind the translucent wall. A Handmaiden removes her filmy robe and a waterfall begins flowing down the translucent wall. Dale steps behind the rippling water immodestly posed like "Venus Rising From The Sea". A Gong. Ming enters in front of the wall. The Handmaiden comes out from behind the wall and gives Ming a long handled bathing sponge.

HANDMAIDEN

The Earthwoman is waiting for you, your excellency. (*exits*)

MING

Delicious. (*calls back to Dale*) Allow me to assist.

Dale picks up her robe and grasps it closely.

DALE (O.S.)

(*in silhouette*) But I have nothing on.

MING

Would you rather I attend to my daughter's punishment?

DALE (O.S.)

The Princess! Ah... no? Stay with me. (*drops her robe and slips into waterfall*) I am ready for you, I think.

MING

Delightful. (*goes behind the wall and stands in silhouette, next to the falling water*) Now, it will be our pleasure to sponge your skin with Mongonian body foam.

DALE

Oh dear.

Ming pushes up his sleeves, lifts the long handled sponge and soaps Dale's back.

MING

Yes dear, yes, yes, yes.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FIFTEEN RAY LABORATORY/VISI-SCREEN/VARIOUS AREAS

Barin and Zarkov work quickly as pulsing lights show increasing power surging to the ray. The electricity of a "Jacobs Ladder" race up the cap's twin antenna.

ZARKOV

Inject the crystals.

Barin injects crystals from the vial. The ray pulses deeper and deeper blue with each crystal.

BARIN

Fifty percent and rising.

ZARKOV

We must push the ray to one hundred percent or the reversing device will fail.

BARIN

Raising pulsar cyclotronics by ten points.

ZARKOV

Adjusting vectoring factors three degrees azimuth.

The cylindrical body of the ray moves skyward as its lights pulse brighter and faster.

PASSAGEWAY - Flash and Aura climb up a ladder.

AURA

The ray tower is that way.

Flash and Aura duck out as Lancer One and Four march in from opposite directions. The Lancers meet, salute and march out, repeatedly over the following.

BARIN

Sixty percent.

ZARKOV

The plasma is nearing critical.

FLASH

We'll never get past those Lancers. Is there a back way?

AURA

Lancers guard all the entrances.

BARIN
Sixty-five percent.

FLASH
What about the power supply?

AURA
This way.

Flash and Aura exit. Lancers continue their patrols.

BARIN
Seventy percent.

Zarkov gets a sudden shock to the head.

ZARKOV
Ahhh!

BARIN
Doctor? What is wrong?

ZARKOV
Push the ray.

PANELED WALL - Flash and Aura reach a paneled wall.

AURA
The power cables are in here.

FLASH
I'll find something to cut the cables.

Flash exits. Aura pries open the panel. Next to thick electric cables is a whirling power indicator. A sign warns: "DANGER-POWER OUTPUT-RAY TOWER". Zarkov's sensor cap flashes and he takes a shock.

ZARKOV
Ahhh!

BARIN
Doctor!

ZARKOV
We must reach one hundred percent.

BARIN
We're at eighty percent.

Flash returns with a Mongolian fire axe.

FLASH

Stand back, Princess.

AURA

There's enough electricity in those cables to light up Mongo.

Flash begins chopping the red cable and quickly there is a spark and a puff of smoke. The red cable ends lie exposed but the whirling disk still turns.

BARIN

Ninety percent.

ZARKOV

More power!

AURA

It's not stopping!

FLASH

Got to cut the other cable. *(He chops)*

ZARKOV

(more pain) Push the power range. Focus the vectors.

Flash cuts the blue cable and sparks and more smoke but the disk keeps whirling.

BARIN

Ninety-five percent.

AURA

We failed!

FLASH

There's one chance left.

Flash picks up the ends of the red and blue cables.

ZARKOV

(gritting through the pain) Drive it higher!

BARIN

Ninety-eight percent. The waste vents are closing.

ZARKOV

(Staggering under the agony) Increase the wavelength.

Flash raises the two cable ends high in two hands like Jupiter raising two bolts of lightning.

FLASH

For the children!

Flash joins the cable ends in a tremendous show of sparks. The lights in the ray tower explode. Flash, Zarkov and Aura scream. Zarkov's sensing cap smokes and he is tossed about like a puppet, falling silent in Barin's arms. Flash bears the strain of millions of volts and is thrown to the floor, unconscious.

BARIN	AURA
Doctor?	Flash?
ZARKOV	AURA (cont'd)
Did we succeed?	Are you alive?
ZARKOV	AURA (cont'd)
We failed.	We succeeded!

BARIN

If you had reached one hundred percent, Ming had set the sensing cap to kill you.

ZARKOV

That fiend must be stopped.

BLACK OUT BARIN AND ZARKOV

Aura cradles Flash's limp body.

AURA

Flash! Speak to me. Flash. Zarkov lives. Flash?

Lancer Two and Three reach Flash and Aura and raise glowing lance tips to attack. Flash does not move.

BLACK OUT

SCENE SIXTEEN THE THRONE ROOM

A grand fanfare. Lancers One and Four march up the dais and pull back the curtain to reveal Ming in full imperial attire. Standing with him is Dale, in the military splendor of a Mongolian Empress. She wears a tiara, fur trimmed, fitted waist jacket, brief cape, short skirt and trim knee boots. She kneels as Ming adorns her neck with a sparkling jewelled necklace.

MING

It pleases me to drape around your delicate neck, the Dragon's Tear, the highest honor of the Imperial Military Order of Ming. (*finishes*) Arise, Dale Arden, Queen of Mongo.

DALE

(pulling away) I can't be a queen. I'm an American citizen.

MING

An emperor's kiss will raise you above your humble origins.

Ming swings Dale into his arms and kisses her. Dale struggles against him.

DALE

Hmmm-uh!

Ming pushes her away. Touches his bloody lip.

MING

The she-cat has bitten me.

(He strikes her. She falls to the floor and Ming pushes her flat with his boot.)

Animal! I offer you the throne of Ming and you bite me!

Lancer Two hurries in and kneels before Ming.

LANCER ONE

Excellency. The Earthwoman freed Princess Aura from the Night Drones!

MING

(to Dale) Animal and traitor!

Lancer Three enters and kneels.

LANCER TWO

Excellency. Princess Aura and the Earthman sabotaged the ray.

MING

Sabotage my ray?

LANCER TWO

They failed, your highness, and both are captured.

DALE

Flash? Was he hurt?

MING

So you still desire your wretched Earthman? Well, I have a contest that will test that desire while I satisfy mine.

DALE

What contest?

MING

It's called, "Watch the Earthman die!"

DALE

No!

Dale runs from Ming but is caught by Lancer Two.

MING

Summon the contestants.

A gong. The Mongo-monsters herds on Aura in chains.

LANCERS ONE

Her Highness, Princess Aura, Duchess of Oceanovia and daughter to his Imperial Highness.

MING

You have both betrayed and bitten me like venomous vipers. Now turn your venom on each other. Bring forth the Mongonian toothed sabers.

(Gongs. A hooded figure dressed in black enters carrying two long, curved sabres, large, deadly teeth punctuating their upper edges. Ming pours vials of green liquid onto both sabres.)

These vials contain the green death of a female serpent's bile, deadly at the merest prick. Unchain the women.

Lancers unchain the women and the figure in black forces the Mongonian toothed sabres in their hands.

DALE

Do what you want to me, *(throws down sabre)* I will not hurt the Princess.

MING

My daughter will gladly shed your blood to save her own.

AURA

I have been your daughter long enough. *(throws down her sabre)* I will die before I kill my... friend.

MING

Ha, ha, ha. How tender. Perhaps you will change your minds when you see the prize that awaits the survivor.

Lancers Three and Four drag in Flash, his arms bound to a pole and a blaster held to his head.

DALE

Flash!

FLASH

You won't get away with this. You're mad.

MING

Mad? I, who have created an empire in the stars, perfected a ray so powerful that I shall become master of the universe!
Mad? Ha, ha, ha.

FLASH

Your invention will destroy you and your planet.

MING

Enough.

(Ming gestures and a Lancer raps Flash across his back, sending him to his knees.)

Attach him to the brain burner.

Lancers strap a struggling Flash to the wall. A Lancer retracts from the wall a whirling drill device and sets it poised to bore into his skull.

FLASH

What is this?

MING

A primitive, but useful device that slowly and painfully burns away portions of your brain. It's the first step in creating my beautiful Mongo-monsters.

Ming affectionately strokes his Mongo-monsters.

DALE

Oh, Flash.

MING

In one minute, the brain burner will begin to lower Flash Gordon's thinking capacity to less than a woman's. In two minutes he'll be less than dead. Then his brain will ignite into the savage fires that rage inside my Mongo-monsters.

AURA

Father, you can't.

DALE

Not Flash.

MING

Your compassion delights, ladies. Now let it fire you to battle. Remember, the sooner you kill your opponent the more of Flash Gordon will be remain for you to enjoy.

DALE

Princess, I couldn't.

AURA

You must.

MING

Start the brain burner.

A Lancer turns on the lights at Flash's temples.
They whirl like drill bits toward his brain.

FLASH

Arrgh.

Flash groans in agony. Dale and Aura dive and shove
to be first to a sabre. Blades up, they face off.
Flash growls in pain and Dale lunges to the attack.

MING

Good, Miss Arden.

Aura gives a ferocious defense. Dale is pushed back.

DALE

Ahhh!

MING

I taught you well, daughter.

Dale recovers and is near Flash who writhes in pain.

DALE

Flash.

FLASH

Save yourself, Dale.

Dale turns in time to parry a blow from Aura.

MING

Save yourself. Ha, ha, ha.

Aura attacks again and again and Dale repulses her
in a fierce and acrobatic duel. Suddenly everyone is
rocked off their feet, left and right and are thrown
to the floor. Crashing sounds fill the air.

LANCER (TOGETHER)

(all screaming variously) Aaaahhh!

MING

A Mongoquake!

FLASH

This is your doing, Ming.

MING

Curse you Flash Gordon.

Ming signals a Lancer to strike Flash with a lance. The Lancer is stopped by Zarkov, who has rushed in, knocking her back as he strides toward Ming.

ZARKOV

Stop the ray.

MING

Arrest the scientist.

ZARKOV

Islands are sinking. Continents ripped asunder. If you don't stop, Mongo will be destroyed.

Lancers take Zarkov and drag him away.

MING

Fight ladies, while Flash Gordon burns.

The brain burner glows brighter. Flash screams in pain. Aura attacks as rules of friendship and honor vanish. The fight closes and Dale pulls Aura's hair and swings her tumbling to the floor. The women claw like tigers with the poison sabres between them.

DALE

Agrh.

AURA

Ughh.

MING

Remember the poison. Ha, ha, ha.

Aura knocks the sword from Dale's hands. Dale is helpless as Aura raises her sword to kill. Suddenly, Dale shoots out a kick to Aura's stomach and a right cross to her chin, knocking her down. Dale picks up her sword and stands over Aura. Aura looks at Ming for mercy. Dale looks at Flash who screams in agony.

FLASH

Ahhh!

MING

Time is running out.

Aura exposes her neck to Dale and turns her head. Dale's sword trembles as she raises it higher to strike. A Mongoquake hits, much stronger than before. Dale is thrown far from Aura. Aura tries to escape but is stopped by a Lancer. Ming is knocked to the floor and pounced on by his Mongo-monsters.

The figure in black springs to life and releases Flash from the brain burner. Dale joins them. The figure shows his face. It is Prince Barin.

BARIN

Flee to the forests of Arboria. Count Rhodo will contact you.

Barin covers his face and blasts Lancer Four so that Aura can escape. Barin follows Aura out. The Mongoquake ceases. The Lancers swirl around Ming.

MING

Destroy the Earthlings!

BLACK OUT

SCENE SEVENTEEN THE FOREST OF ARBORIA

Flash and Dale run through the moonlight dappled forest. Alien noises haunt the darkness. A brief Mongoquake throws Dale to the ground.

FLASH

Come on, Dale.

DALE

We'll never reach Arboria before Ming captures us.

FLASH

We've got to find Count Rhodo.

Flash helps her to her feet.

DALE

It's hopeless. Ming will find us. Mongo will explode. The Earth will be destroyed. Everyone is going to die! Ahhh!

Flash shakes Dale by her shoulders.

FLASH

Snap out of it Dale!

DALE

Oh, Flash.

She breaks down and sobs in his arms. A solid drum beat grows. Music rises under Flash's promise.

FLASH

The Earth won't be destroyed. I won't let it. When we stood together as the sunset like a golden promise across the meadows of America, I made you a vow. I promised you a house on a hill and a world safe for the children. I intend to keep that pledge. And all of Ming's monsters can't stop me.

They embrace and kiss. Music swells and finishes.

DALE

But how? Even if we find Arboria and the ray is destroyed, we can never return to Earth. Our space cruiser crashed in the sea. We're marooned on Mongo forever.

FLASH

I know it looks bad, Dale. But we'll find a way. We've got to.

DALE

Oh Flash

FLASH

(Looking about) This place seems safe for now. You rest for a few minutes while I go to that grove of trees and climb as high as I can. Maybe I can see Arboria. *(He exits)*

DALE

Be careful. *(Reacting to the alien noises)* Hurry back.

Dale rests in the moonlight.

LIGHTS DIM/SCENE CONTINUES WHILE:

SCENE EIGHTEEN PARAPET ABOVE THE CITY

Aura hurries in, breathless. The figure in the black enters quietly and removes his hood. It is Barin.

BARIN

How long have you known I was not your brother?

AURA

When I learned you were the true King of Arboria.

BARIN

Do you wish to free Mongo from Ming?

AURA

As passionately as you, my no longer brother.

BARIN

Are there other passions we share, my no longer sister?

They draw close and kiss.

BLACK OUT ON BARIN AND AURA

Screeching birds cause Dale to step backward. She does not see as a spider web descends slowly behind her. More bird sounds push Dale backward and into the web. When she touches it she is instantly stuck.

DALE

Aaaah! Flash. Aaaah! (*continuing ad-lib distress*)

Dale's struggling soon has her sprawled across the web. Suddenly, an enormous spider appears and begins stalking toward Dale. (*The spider is played by the four Lancers in a spider body and head, but whose legs are bare except for spiked feet*) The spider emits a high, four-part, screech. Dale's screams intensify as she sees the spider creeping nearer and nearer. Flash charges in, answering Dale's screams.

FLASH

Dale!

Flash reaches to his empty holster. The spider reaches Dale and claws at her. She screams.

DALE

Flash! Help me! Help me! Aaaah.

Flash charges and struggles with the spider's legs. The spider tosses him away. Flash climbs onto its back. The spider rears and throws Flash to the ground. The spider rushes over the fallen Flash and drops on him in a series of eight legged push-ups, screeching as it pummels him beneath its body.

FLASH

Aaahhh!

DALE

Flash!

BLACK OUT

End Chapter Two
Second Intermission

Chapter Three

SCENE ONE THE FOREST OF ARBORIA

Scene replays the last moments of Chapter Two from:

Screeching birds cause Dale to step backward. She does not see as a spider web descends slowly behind her. More bird sounds push Dale backward and into the web. When she touches it she is instantly stuck.

DALE

Aaaah! Flash. Aaaah! (*continuing ad-lib distress*)

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DALE

Flash! Help me! Help me! Aaaah.

Flash charges and struggles with the spider's legs. The spider tosses him away. Flash climbs onto its back. The spider rears and throws Flash to the ground. The spider rushes over the fallen Flash and drops on him in a series of eight legged push-ups, screeching as it pummels him beneath its body.

FLASH

Aaahhh!

DALE

Flash!

BEGIN NEW ACTION

The spider leaves the limp Flash and high steps toward Dale. Dale writhes in horror as its legs climb up her body. Suddenly from the sky, **COUNT RHODO** flies in carried beneath a giant dragonfly with shimmering wings. (*Or rides on the back of a giant orange toad.*) Count Rhodo wears a tunic of vines and leaves. He flies over the spider and throws a handful of sparkling green dust. The spider screeches and retreats in pain. Another handful of dust and the web releases Dale and shrivels away. Count Rhodo tosses an exotic flower to Dale.

RHODO

Squeeze the flower juice into his eyes *and follow me to Arboria. (He flies away)*

Dale squeezes the juice into Flash's eye.

FLASH

My eyes. Everything so... very clear... colors so...

DALE

Wake up, Flash.

Dale hoists Flash to his feet. Slaps him.

FLASH

Dale?

DALE

Come on Flash. We can't loose him.

Dale guides Flash as they rush out.

BLACK OUT

SCENE TWO PARAPET ABOVE MONGO CITY.

Aura and Barin, as from before, finish their kiss.

BARIN

The Earth people need our friendship.

AURA

I know, my darling. Ming must be stopped.

BARIN

That won't be easy. He's surrounded by Lancers.

AURA

Continue your work with Zarkov. I will handle the Lancers. They may be Ming's protectors but they're women first.

BARIN

Persuade as many as you can. Time is short.

AURA

Too short for us, now that we've found each other?

BARIN

When we're together, we will have all eternity.

Music swells, they embrace, part and exit.

BLACK OUT

SCENE THREE THE THRONE ROOM

A gong. Gu-nish rushes in to roll out long charts.

GU-NISH

The Mongoquakes are intensifying. The ice caps are moving.

Ming throws open the curtain.

MING

Ignore it. It is normal for Mongo.

GU-NISH

(unrolls more charts) Ice-navia is being crushed under the moving glaciers. Excellency, it is raining in Desert-topia.

MING

These changes are too suspicious. Somewhere there is a traitor. Is it the Sea King? The Clay People? The Earthlings?

A Lancer One rushes into kneel at Ming's feet.

LANCER ONE

The Earthlings have escaped Mongo City.

MING

Where have they gone?

LANCER ONE

Into the jungles of Arboria.

GU-NISH

They cannot survive the beasts and the savages.

MING

(touches his bit lip.) A pity about Miss Arden. Ha, ha, ha.

LANCER ONE

Excellency. Perhaps Prince Barin could save her.

MING

Prince Barin?

LANCER ONE

He often goes to Arboria with trinkets for the savages and returns unharmed.

MING

Prince Barin is a friend of the savages?

GU-NISH

And champion of the Earth scientist.

MING

He's the traitor. On pain of death, you must spy on the Prince and tell me of his every move.

LANCER ONE

Prince Barin? Your son?

MING

He is no longer my son. Go. I command it.

The Lancer salutes and exits. Zarkov enters.

ZARKOV

You summoned me?

MING

As a gesture of forgiveness. Come, let us talk.

Zarkov ascends the throne and Ming closes the curtain behind him, shutting out Gu-nish, who rolls up her charts and exits in anger at the snub.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FOUR THE TREETOPS OF ARBORIA

Birds sounds and dappled light infuse Arboria with serenity. The calm is broken by the call of a primitive horn. An **Arborean Man** swings through the air on a vine blowing a twisted root horn.

ARBORIAN MAN

Count Rhodo saved the Earthlings. *(blows horn again)*

As he swings off, two Arborean women, **Tibia** and **Fibia**, wearing only a few well placed leaves and flowers, enter along a high walkway. They carry baskets of large fruit and giant blossoms.

TIBIA

I hear the Earthwoman is a real prune.

FIBIA

But I hear the Earthman is a Triple-T.

TIBIA

Oooh. A Triple-T? That would be something to see.

The two women share a laugh. The Man swings through.

ARBORIAN MAN

Count Rhodo approaches. *(blows horn and exits)*

Rhodo enters with Dale and Flash.

RHODO
Arboria! Welcome, Flash Gordon and Dale Arden

The women throw flowers and cheer.

TIBIA AND FIBIA (TOGETHER)
Hurrah, hurrah

ARBORIAN MAN
(*swinging through again*) Hail, The Earthlings.

DALE
Golly. Everything here is so beautiful

Dale scoops up a few blossoms. Fibia throws a large fruit which Flash is barely able to catch

TIBIA
She must be boiling in all those clothes.

FIBIA
That's why she's a prune.

RHODO
(*commanding*) We must have a feast to welcome the Earthlings.

FIBIA
I'll bring dessert.

TIBIA
You brought dessert last time.

The women continue ad-libs as they exit.

RHODO
You admire Arboria, no?

DALE
Oh, yes, Count. Very much.

FLASH
It looks like a good place for kids.

RHODO
Before Ming, Arboria was even more beautiful. Over centuries, our forefathers learned to guide the living trees into shapes that became our homes and villages. Generations of loving hands tended the forest and Arboria grew into a majestic and soaring kingdom that once kissed the clouds with life.

DALE

Golly. You must climb a lot of stairs.

RHODO

In the daylight, families gathered food to share at the evening feasts. After dark, garlands of glowing moss draped the forest in living light. All the plants, creatures and citizens of Arboria lived in harmony and happiness.

DALE

Oh Flash. It sounds just like Ohio.

RHODO

Until Ming killed our king and made us outlaws in our own land. As he has done to Arboria, he will do to your Earth.

FLASH

Not as long as there is a Flash Gordon.

DALE

You tell 'em Flash.

The Arborian Women enter below carrying tree branches sparkling with garlands of glowing moss.

RHODO

Come, darkness falls. The people welcome you at feast.

Tibia and Fibia toss affectionate arms around Flash and take him away. Dale eyes them with suspicion.

DALE

Golly, the women here, sure... dress different, don't they?

RHODO

It is winter now. In summer, women can dress more lightly.

DALE

Golly, I don't think we can stay that long.

As they exit below, the Arborian Man swings overhead blowing a call to the feast.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FIVE THE RAY LABORATORY

Barin is shining intense light through colored crystals swirling in water. Zarkov storms in.

ZARKOV

Ming orders our work on the ray to continue. But if we are to save our planets, we need more crystals.

BARIN

These are all we have left.

ZARKOV

Then we must swim into the ray's undersea vent.

BARIN

The Sea King will kill anyone who enters his realm.

ZARKOV

Who is this Sea King you fear?

BARIN

He is Monarch of a mutant race of water breathers Ming created to strip the ocean of its sparkling treasures. But they rebelled and declared war on all surface dwellers. No man could face the Sea King and his deadly Sharkmen.

ZARKOV

I know one man who must try.

BLACK OUT

SCENE SIX ARBORIA/MING'S PALACE/HIGH PARAPET/A PASSAGEWAY

The sound of distant drums pierces the darkness as in succession lights reveal:

ARBORIA - Flash listens to the talking drums.

MING'S PALACE - Ming hears the talking drums.

HIGH PARAPET - Prince Barin drums two hollow tubes that project a pounding sound all across Mongo.

PALACE PASSAGEWAY - Aura speaks to Lancer One.

AURA

Lancer, heed the call of the drums and free the women of Mongo from tyranny.

GU-NISH

GU-NISH: (*Rushing to Ming*) The talking drums of Arboria.

RHODO

(*Hurries to Flash*) Our true king, Prince Barin, speaks.

GU-NISH

Excellency, the drums tell of the Earthlings.

MING

They still live!

RHODO

You and your woman must return to the palace

Lancer Two joins Aura.

AURA

The Earthling will fight with us.

GU-NISH

Flash Gordon is coming to the palace.

MING

The unwitting Prince Barin has set our snare. Ha, ha, ha.

BLACK OUT ON MING AND GU-NISH.

Dale joins Flash as the drums continue.

DALE

Is there going to be a dance?

Rhodo flies past on his dragon wings.

RHODO

(calls from above) Doctor Zarkov needs you at Ming's palace.

DALE

Ming's palace?

RHODO

The drums say only the Earthman can stop the shaking of Mongo.

FLASH

Come on Dale, we've got to go back.

DALE

Not the giant spiders.

RHODO

You will fly over the jungle.

FLASH

You have an airplane?

RHODO

Dragon wings will carry you.

DALE

Oh golly, more big bugs.

RHODO

Meet me at the top of this tree.

Rhodo flies off. Flash follows, but Dale stops him.

DALE

If Ming catches us, we'll be killed... or worse.

FLASH

Doc needs us.

DALE

If that message came from the palace, how can we trust it?

FLASH

We've got to, Dale. Look at Arboria. (*sweeps hand toward the ruins*) Thousands of folks call it home, folks with families like we hope to have someday. Even if we never see our dream come true, we can't let their dream die.

DALE

Oh, Flash. You're right. We must keep trying. Not just to save Arboria, but to save families everywhere.

BLACK OUT ON FLASH AND DALE

Prince Barin drums to a crescendo.

DIM OUT ON BARIN

Cheering grows and drowns out the drums, until Aura raises her arms to silence a throng of Mongonians.

AURA

It is our right to demand our freedom to be women. Our right to have homes, children and happiness.

(*crowd cheers*))

Are we content to remain slaves of Ming's terrorism?

(*huzza of nays*))

Of Ming's oppression?

(*more nays*))

Then we must fight!

Rounds of cheers follow each citizen as they speak.

FIRST LANCER

The Lancers from the city walls will fight.

SECOND LANCER

The Lancers from the purple towers will fight.

FEMALE DRONE

The drones in the glass cages will fight.

EUNUCH ONE

The eunuchs will... ah... ah... what side are we on?

A chorus of boos.

AURA
Will the scientists join us?

GU-NISH
We are studying the matter and will get back to you.

An angry crowd outburst drives Gu-nish off.

AURA
There are others who do not share our vision. But they will not stop us. We must unite. We must act. We must be free!

ALL CITIZENS (TOGETHER)
Free Mongo. Free Mongo. Free Mongo.

All cheer and wave huge green and purple banners as they storm away in a mob.

BLACK OUT

SCENE SEVEN THE RAY LABORATORY/THE PALACE/THE SKY

RAY LABORATORY - Barin opens a visi-screen.

BARIN
Doctor, look!

ZARKOV
Amazing! Flash, Dale and Count Rhodo flying through the skies beneath giant dragonflies.

PALACE - Ming and Gu-nish look into a visi-screen. Gu-nish holds a remote control. As he moves the control, the ray atop the tower, glows and aims.

MING
The three traitors on their flying bugs. Easy targets for my ray. Blast them!

Gu-nish presses firing button. The ray shoots with a Zzzzt sound and flashing beam of violet light.

ZARKOV
Someone fired the ray. It nearly hit Flash and Dale!

BARIN
Ming is using a remote control.

ZARKOV
Next time, he won't miss.

MING
Aim, you fool! Aim the ray!

GU-NISH
Again, Excellency?

MING
Now. Fire. Fire.

Each time he fires, the ray sounds a loud Zzzzt and
fires a flashing beam of light.

BARIN
It hit Count Rhodo.

ZARKOV
He's been evaporated.

MING
Brilliant! Now for the others.

ZARKOV
Flash and Dale are flying in circles.

BARIN
They're trying to outmaneuver the death ray.

MING
Follow them you idiot.

BARIN
To the left, Dale.

MING
Fire!

ZARKOV
They've hit Dale's dragon wings.

BARIN
She's going down.

MING
Ha, ha, ha. Marry me now, Miss Arden. Ha, ha, ha.

ZARKOV
Flash is diving to catch her. Dive. Dive.

BARIN
He'll never save her before she hits the rocks.

MING
Fire! Fire!

A Mongoquake shakes them all.

MING AND BARIN (TOGETHER)
 Mongoquake.

GU-NISH
 The ray won't fire.

ZARKOV
 Dale's going to hit the...!

BARIN MING
 Dive! Dive! Fire! Fire!

BARIN
 Ahhh! No, look!

ZARKOV
 Flash has caught her.

THE SKY - Flash flies across the audience beneath a dragonfly. Dale hangs from him by one arm. These are miniatures of the characters. We hear them.

FLASH (O.S.)
 Hang on Dale.

DALE (O.S.)
 Flash.

The miniatures fly off.

MING
 Blast them!

GU-NISH
 The quake damaged the ray's circuits.

BARIN
 We must signal them to a safe landing.

Barin and Zarkov rush out.

MING
 Flash Gordon will regret the day he heard of... Ming the Merciless!

BLACK OUT

SCENE EIGHT THE WASTE VENT INTO THE SEA

Sounds of the surf emerge from the music. Flash, Dale, Zarkov and Barin stand on a high point over looking a sea of undulating blue light. Below them the ray vent, a very large diameter pipe, slopes down into the sea. Flash wears a slender air tank on his back with a small tube leading to a tiny mouthpiece. A net pouch is strapped to his waist.

BARIN

The water lung will supply you with limitless air.

ZARKOV

This dial on your belt will neutralize your buoyancy and allow you to walk on the sea floor.

FLASH

Got it.

BARIN

Be on the look out for the Sea King and his vicious Sharkmen.

ZARKOV

You've got to get the crystals.

FLASH

It's a promise, Doc.

ZARKOV

I'll ready the reversing device. *(He exits)*

DALE

Oh Flash, please be careful.

FLASH

Don't worry, Dale. *(pulls out Wheels' necklace)* I'll be okay as long as I'm wearing Wheels' lucky silver dollar.

Dale leans in as if to kiss Flash, but instead kisses the silver dollar, leaving it dangling.

DALE

For double good luck.

Flash gives Dale a gentle "kiddo" slug to the chin. He puts the breathing tube to his lips and begins his headfirst slide down the vent into the sea.

BARIN

It is not safe to remain here.

DALE

I won't leave Flash alone.

BARIN

Ming's Lancers will find us.

DALE

No, I won't leave him.

Relenting, Barin puts his cape on Dale's shoulders.

BARIN

He'll come back, Miss Arden. He must.

DALE

If any man can do it, it's Flash Gordon.

FADE OUT ON DALE AND BARIN

SCENE NINE THE REALM OF THE SEA KING

The underwater sequence is a slow motion adagio shaped by the forces of water and choreographed to the movements of the music. All else is silent.

Music swells. Green and blue light undulates over Flash as he slides down to the billowing vent. He struggles with his buoyancy, floating upward, adjusts his controls and soon stands firmly on the sea floor. He leans forward, strokes the water, and begins his graceful underwater walk to adventure.

Long tendrils of a seaweed forest hang in the water, sparkling crystals dangling on them like ripe fruit. Flash collects the blue crystals in his net pouch. A beautiful **SHARKWOMAN** coyly eyes Flash as she strokes through and exits. His pouch full, Flash prepares to leave when the grinning Sharkwoman returns with a fierce **SHARKMAN**. They both quickly attack him.

Flash appears to drive off the attackers until they return with the majestically towering **SEA KING**. The Shark people attack and Flash defends himself. The Sea King appears to laugh, waves away the attackers and benevolently beckons Flash towards him. Flash cautiously approaches, when suddenly the Sea King lunges for Flash, but falls short. Flash turns to flee but is stopped by a giant **SEA MONSTER**. The monster, a fantastical blend of squid and lobster, (*brought to life by ladies playing the lancers*) uses its long tentacles to draw Flash to its savage beak. The Sea King and court gather to enjoy the battle.

Entangled in the Sea Monster's tentacles, Flash frees himself by slipping off the water lung the beast grips. In the struggle, Flash's silver dollar is torn from his neck and falls to the sea floor. The single eye of the beast is attracted to the shiny dollar and tries to possess it. Flash dives for the dollar and uses it to lure the beast as he swims to the Sea King and forces the dollar into the monarch's laughing mouth. Flash dives as the beast scuttles directly over him and attacks the surprised Sea King. The beast and the Sea King engage in a struggle that carries them off stage. Flash, his water lung gone, struggles on his last breath to climb the vent to the surface.

LIGHTS FADE ON THE UNDERWATER

SCENE TEN THE WASTE VENT INTO THE SEA

Flash surfaces and gasps for air. Lancers Three and Four yank him up and hurl him at Ming's feet.

MING

(blaster to Flash's head) Breathe your last, Flash Gordon.

FLASH

I have the crystals. *(holds up the pouch of crystals)*

MING

So this is the treasure you came to steal. *(grabs the pouch)*

FLASH

You must get those to Zarkov before Mongo is destroyed.

MING

You can't fool me, Earthling.

FLASH

You must listen!

MING

Bring the Earthlings and Prince Barin to my throne room.

They exit

BLACK OUT

SCENE ELEVEN AURA'S SECRET LAIR/A HIGH PASSAGE

The following two scenes play simultaneously.

AURA'S SECRET LAIR - Princess Aura is strapping on a blaster when Lancer One rushes in.

A HIGH PASSAGE - Zarkov is hurrying along when he is stopped by a Lancer Two. He draws a blaster on her.

LANCER ONE
Princess! Ming has captured
Prince Barin and the
Earthlings.

AURA
Prince Barin? Is he alive?

LANCER ONE
Prince Barin begs you to
retrieve the crystals.

AURA
What crystals?

LANCER ONE
Barin says to save Mongo
Zarkov must have the
crystals.

AURA
If my darling commands, I
will obey.

AURA
Maybe I can send back enough
of Ming's evil to avert
disaster.

LANCER ONE
What is your command?

AURA
To the throne room.

AURA AND LANCER ONE
(TOGETHER)
Then...we fight. (*The exit*)

LANCER TWO
Doctor! Ming has captured
Prince Barin and the
Earthlings.

ZARKOV
Flash and Dale? Captured.

LANCER TWO
Ming has taken the crystals.

ZARKOV
We have failed.

LANCER TWO
Barin says you must save
Mongo without the crystals.

ZARKOV
I'll reverse the ray without
the crystals.

ZARKOV (cont'd)
Maybe I can send back enough
of Earth's essence to avert
disaster.

LANCER TWO
What is your command?

ZARKOV
To the ray room

ZARKOV AND LANCER TWO
(TOGETHER)
Then...we fight(*The exit with
the reversing device*)

BLACK OUT ON BOTH SCENES

SCENE TWELVE THE THRONE ROOM

A gong sounds. A trumpet flourish begins a royal procession. Lancer Three, waving a banner, precedes a triumphant Ming. Dale, in chains, is led in by Lancer Four. Flash is dragged on by a Mongo-monster. Another trumpet flourish as Ming ascends his throne.

MING

Bring forth the Earthlings.

Flash and Dale are hurled at his feet. Ming displays the crystals, trophies of his victory

FLASH

The crystals.

MING

These sparkling gems will grace my imperial crown as mementos of my conquest of the universe, after Earth is... destroyed.

FLASH

You're mad.

DALE

Flash.

MING

Death to the Earthlings.

Another gong. Princess Aura, in her finest regal attire, sweeps in and prostrates before Ming.

AURA

Hail the great Ming, Emperor of Mongo, Lord of the Cosmos.

MING

I see the Princess is drawn to the perfume of my victory.

AURA

I offer a princess's praise for her glorious Emperor's conquest of the universe and... a loving daughter's adulation of her merciful father.

MING

Wisely my daughter seeks forgiveness, unlike her traitorous brother who is about to become my newest Mongo-monster.

Lancers One and Two prod on Barin and hook him to the brain burner. It begin to light and whirl.

AURA

But father, he's...

MING

Begin the burning!

The brain burner ignites Barin in pain.

BARIN

Arrrrh!

AURA

Barin!

*(Aura, horrified at Barin writhing in pain,
regains her composure and draws next to Ming.)*

Father. It is more than forgiveness I seek. It is salvation,
for myself and for... *(declaring her cause)* Mongo!

A screaming Eunuch leaps from hiding and attacks the
Mongo-monster. The Lancers attack each other. In the
pandemonium, Flash breaks his bonds. Aura lunges
and steals the crystal pouch and throws a long pass.
Flash dodges fighting Lancers to make a flying catch
of the crystals. Barin writhes in pain. Aura smashes
the brain burner. Flash lands next to Dale and frees
her. A giant Mongoquake. Lights spark, smoke erupts
and everyone is thrown down. The quake stops, smoke
clears. For a tense moment all are frozen in terror
until Ming struggles to his feet and screams.

MING

Flash Gordon must die.

Ming fires, misses. The mass fighting resumes.

FLASH

We've got to get these crystals to Zarkov!

DALE

The ray tower. I know the way.

Aura helps Flash and Dale fight their way out. Ming
fires again but hits his Mongo-monster and it dies.
Flash and Dale escape. Another Mongoquake.

MING

Save the ray!

Another Mongoquake, confusion, smoke, and crashing.

BLACK OUT

SCENE THIRTEEN**RAY TOWER/PASSAGEWAY/ARBORIA/RAY LAB**

The following scenes overlap in continuous action.

RAY TOWER - Zarkov climbs up to the ray.

ZARKOV

Without the crystals the overload may kill me, but there is no choice.

A PASSAGEWAY - Flash and Dale run in. Dale is lost.

DALE

Oh, Flash. I can't remember where Doc said...

FLASH

That's okay, Dale. We'll find it. We have to.

They race across Mongo pursued by a Mongo-monster and Lancers. The action continues while:

ARBORIA - Barin guides Aura to a look out in the trees. A Mongoquake strikes and they tremble.

BARIN

My beautiful Arboria is being destroyed.

AURA

All of Mongo is dying, my love. If only we had...

BARIN

Shhh, my princess. Planets may die, but our love is forever.

They embrace and kiss. Another Mongoquake. Lights flash. The sounds of disaster fill all of Mongo.

RAY LABORATORY - Zarkov descends to the lab.

ZARKOV

The crystals. If only Flash had gotten the crystals!

Ming enters with a blaster. He surprises Zarkov from behind and holds the deadly gun to his temple.

MING

You have destroyed me, Doctor. Now I will destroy you and every Earthling on your planet.

Ming holds Zarkov. Ming pulls a lever and the ray fires wildly. Zarkov breaks free and they struggle.

THE PALACE - Mongonians fight and flee while the ray's beam cuts down city walls around them.

THE THRONE ROOM - Flash and Dale rush to avoid being killed by the falling throne as it tumbles down, rolling over the Mongo-monster that pursued them.

ARBORIA - Barin and Aura hold on to the trees of Arboria as they rock in the Mongoquakes.

THE THRONE ROOM - Flash and Dale struggle to survive as the ray's beam sweeps wildly, closing in on them.

FLASH

Look out Dale! The ray.

DALE

Flash.

Dale clings to Flash's legs as he holds the crystals above his head. The violet light of the ray hits Flash and Dale. They convulse with pain as the sound of the ray crescendoes. Then suddenly silence.

BLACK OUT

SCENE FIFTEEN THE THRONE ROOM

Gentle music rises. Barin and Aura are standing at the top of Ming's dais, surveying the damage.

AURA

Ming's palace is in shambles.

BARIN

The trees of Arboria survived better than Ming.

Aura goes to the up-turned throne.

AURA

It's hard to believe, but I'll miss the old tyrant. Despite it all, he was my father.

BARIN

(Hugging her) Maybe I can help you miss him a little less.

Zarkov enters

ZARKOV

You two are going to have to put that throne back up if you're to be the new rulers of Mongo. Let me give you a hand.

All three set the throne upright on the dais.

AURA

It doesn't look big enough for both of us.

BARIN

I have a solution

Barin sits on the throne.

AURA

That is your solution?

BARIN

If we're to rule together, we need to stay close.

(Pulling her onto his lap.)

Very close.

ZARKOV

As your highness's science advisor, I thought you'd like to hear how the ray projected Flash and Dale back to Earth. Alive and unharmed.

BARIN

It was the crystals that Flash was holding, wasn't it?

ZARKOV

It was one in a million chance, but the courage of Flash Gordon did not fail.

AURA

I hope the people on Earth honor Flash and Dale for saving their world as much as we honor them for saving Mongo.

ZARKOV

Don't worry, Princess. Where I come from there is a tradition for honoring heroes. And if I know the people of a certain city of skyscrapers, millions of happy folks are gathering handfuls of ticker-tape and confetti right now to say, "Welcome Home," the American way.

Aura, Barin and Zarkov remain in light as:

SCENE SIXTEEN THE THRONE/BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY

The air becomes alive with ticker-tape streamers and confetti. John Phillips Sousa's "Stars And Stripes Forever" rings out as four majorettes sparkle in red, white and blue, toss spinning batons, wave American flags and high kick ahead of a long yellow open air limousine. Wheels Mac Gulligan drives the flag bedecked limo. Sitting atop the rear seat, with their gold hero medals, Flash and Dale wave to all. *(The limo is carried by Wheels, Flash and Dale walking inside while dummies of their lower torso sit on the back of the rear seat.)* A street sweeping man with a rolling trash can cleans up after them. Mike Murrow stands high above with a microphone.

MIKE

America has never seen such enthusiasm as this crowd wildly cheering for our heroes from outer space. Miraculously shot from the planet of evil by the very death ray they destroyed, Flash and Dale have landed straight into the hearts of every American man, woman and child. The world owes a debt of thanks to Doctor Zarkov, Miss Dale Arden and that courageous hero of the universe, Flash Gordon. They're the greatest!

The parade moves out. A spotlight finds the lone Street Sweeper. His hunched frame, pulled down cap and turned up lapels disguise him well until he removes his cap. The light narrows to tight spot on his face. He smiles broadly. It is Ming.

*** The End ***

FLASH GORDON

CONQUERS THE PLANET OF EVIL

By L. Lewis Stout

NOTE ABOUT PRODUCTION HISTORY AND COPYRIGHTS:

Flash Gordon is an original play and was first produced in 1972 by the Hawaii Performing Arts Company (HPAC) in Honolulu, Hawaii. It has since received several other productions. The script and story are original, however the characters were created by Alex Raymond and first published January 7, 1934. At the time of this play's first production in Hawaii, permission to use the name Flash Gordon and the characters was secured from King Features Syndicate for that production only. Since that time the public domain status of the name Flash Gordon and the characters has changed in some national jurisdictions because of updated laws regarding the expiration of rights after the death of the original creator, Alex Raymond, September, 1956.

While this play is an original story, the characters may still be in copyright, depending on the local regulations. The playwright can grant permission for the use of this script only, and it is recommended that theatre wishing to produce this play consult with King Features Syndicate and/or seek appropriate legal advice prior to public presentation. The playwright is not responsible or liable for any copyright infringement that producers may incur from a production of this script.