



"It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence."

- "The Masque of the Red Death"



"CARNIVAL EARTH"

SWEEPING STRINGS PLAY a HANDEL "SARABANDE"...

FADE IN ON

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

HANDEL CONTINUING:

A pale, delicate HAND pours MILKY FLUID into the glass chamber of a pneumatic syringe. The HAND closes the syringe's gold cap. Gives the trigger a tap--a spurt of white fluid from its barrel tip--lifts the syringe to a pearl-wreathed throat. Places the syringe's tip at a pale WELT, over the jugular.

Trigger squeezed. THE SYRINGE SIGHS, INJECTING WHITE FLUID...

The HAND convulses, twitches. Drops languidly away. A wide mouth drops into view. A lazy grin...a HOWL OF LAUGHTER--

CUT TO

EXT. THE CITY OF VICTORIA PAN - NIGHT

HOWLING WIND. SLEET.

WE SWOOP DOWN from BLACK SKY to a CITY jutting through tumbling clouds--VICTORIA PAN. A hundred architecturally impossible citadels glitter blue and green. And rising above these, the iridescent spindle of the CARNIVAL TOWER, adorned with antennae, dishes, landing platforms. One could live and die inside this monster, and never care...

...WE FALL...

...FALL down the side of the TOWER...

EXT. THE CARNIVAL TOWER - LEDGE - NIGHT

--to a narrow strip of ledge.

A skeleton of black dripping flesh, in a red CARNIVAL CORPORATION jumpsuit clings to pipes. The RENEGADE BASHES a grate with the butt of a bulky rifle, crying out with each BLOW as if it were he, not the grate, being struck.

The grate gives...

GUNSHOTS EXPLODE into the wall a foot from the RENEGADE's disfigured head. He recoils, falls--

--barely catches a PIPE with one arm--

--swinging over two hundred stories of open air.