

SALVATION

Episode 101
"Pilot"

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TEASER

1

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

1

A light blanket of snow. Quaint. A chill in the air. Children play outside. People talk with neighbors. Cars drive to work. Could be any town...anywhere. Except it's not.

As we pull back, reveal the street signs are in RUSSIAN.

CHYRON: **CHELYABINSK, RUSSIA...FEBRUARY 13, 2013...9:19 A.M.**

Camera finds a Euro-looking car - parked at the curb.

Inside, a COUPLE (mid-20's) kiss, listen to the radio. It's hot and heavy. Their conversation takes place in Russian.

WOMAN

I have to go...I'm already late.

MAN

Let's go home. Stay in bed all day.

WOMAN

(smiles)

I have a job. Unlike some people who play guitar all day.

MAN

Hey. One day I'm going to write a song that will light the world on --

Suddenly the CAR STARTS TO VIBRATE...a rumble nearby...

The CLOCK clicks to 9:20 and **BOOM**.

THEIR EYES GO WIDE as

FROM THE SKY, A MASSIVE FIRE BALL BARRELS TOWARDS THEM...

As a WHITE LIGHT CONSUMES THE FRAME.

SMASH CUT TO:

2

INT. NEWS STATIONS - VARIOUS

2

QUICK CUTS of NEWS ANCHORS around the world furiously reporting the event in different languages.

AMERICAN ANCHOR

...meteor came crashing down to Earth today. In what looked like a scene from a movie...

FRENCH ANCHOR
...triggered a fireball over Russia...

RUSSIAN ANCHOR
...about 1000 miles east of Moscow.

SWEDISH ANCHOR
Over a thousand people injured.

AMERICAN ANCHOR
This one was a shot across the bow.
How did we miss it, Neil?

HE'S TALKING TO...

NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON
Well, Jim, there's tens of thousands of dangerous Near Earth Objects whose trajectories cross Earth's orbit. And we've identified about 95 percent of them. But there's about five percent out there...we just don't know about. The problem with meteors like the one that hit Russia -- you can't see them till it's too late.

Off the Anchor's face...this is not very reassuring.

SMASH CUT TO:

3 **EXT. STREET - DAY**

3

BICYCLE WHEELS...SPINNING FAST.

CHYRON: **CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS...TODAY.**

Where grad student **LIAM COLE (26)** jeans, sweatshirt, worn backpack, weaves his bike through campus, rushing; clearly he's done this before. Taking chances he shouldn't....

Nothing out of the ordinary about this guy except for the fact that he has NO SHOES ON. As he pushes on...

A car **NARROWLY** misses him. Horn **HONK**. Shit! That was close.

DARIUS (PRELAP)
How many ways are there to die?

4 **INT. MIT KRESGE AMPHITHEATER - DAY**

4

State of the art lecture hall. Designed by Saarinen. Packed with MIT students who have come to hear...

DARIUS TANZ, 40. A tech superstar in a room full of acolytes. He has attitude, brilliance and 25 billion dollars. As he prowls back and forth...

DARIUS

I'm not talking small bore "grandma kicks the bucket stuff." I'm talking the big kahuna. Total global apocalypse.

Students call out: "Pandemic" "Tsunami!" "Nuclear war!" "Fast food!" That last one gets a laugh.

5 **EXT. MIT KRESGE AMPHITHEATER - DAY** 5

Liam parks his bike, runs inside the....

6 **INT. MIT KRESGE AMPHITHEATER - MOMENTS LATER** 6

Liam slides into a ROW near the front where his FRIEND **DIEGO (20's)** saved him a seat.

DIEGO

(whispers)
Dude. Seriously?

LIAM

Sorry. I was in the lab all night.

A nearby WOMAN shoots them a look. This is **JILLIAN (25)**, taking notes in a little notebook with a handwritten quote on the cover: "IDEAS DIE HARD." Liam pulls his shoes out of his backpack...slips them on. He smiles at her. She just shakes her head. Eyes back to...

DARIUS

There are infinite ways to die, of course.

Darius motions - the huge screens above him light up, we see Five Earths spinning in space; then each Earth is destroyed by a different cataclysm - A VOLCANO erupts, NUCLEAR WAR, TSUNAMI, CLIMATE CHANGE, an ASTEROID, A DEADLY VIRUS spreads across the earth, envelopes the screen until it goes black.

The room goes SILENT.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

We've had at least five extinction events in the last few hundred million years, people. Five! Five five five, how many is five?

That gets a laugh.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Well...it's enough. You and me, we're all going to go. Somehow, someday. But the human race...doesn't have to. If we don't want to end up like the dinosaurs, we need an exit strategy. *That is why colonizing Mars is not just a pipe dream....*

He motions - a HOLOGRAM of A DOMED CITY ON MARS appears with the TANZ INDUSTRIES LOGO.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

It's a necessity. Becoming an interplanetary species is our future. Now, I see all those skeptical MIT faces looking back at me thinking..."will he give me a job after graduation?"

Laughter.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

(the answer is...)

Maybe.

(then)

Except for the guy who got here late...the one without the shoes.

More laughter. Diego shakes his head. Liam wishes he were invisible right now. Jillian actually feels bad for him.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

But seriously. We've put all our eggs in one cosmic basket. If the universe decides to plant its big ol' ass into that basket...

(makes a squashing sound)

...we're toast. Make no mistake. This is a revolution. And it's our job to start it. Because as we all know governments don't lead revolutions...they crush them.

7

INT. MIT LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

7

A crowd gathers around Darius. He's a rockstar everywhere he goes, but MIT is his home court. Students want autographs, others pitch him ideas that need funding, etc. And women love this guy. Liam and Diego watch from a distance.

DIEGO

Well, we can't walk up to him with our resumes now. Shoeless.

LIAM

It's not resumes he wants...it's
ass kissers.

DIEGO

He always stays at the Four
Seasons, dude -- I should just slip
into the elevator with him, pitch
him my ion engine idea. Just one
visionary to another --

As his friend yammers on, Liam isn't listening - he's got his
eye on Jillian as she passes by. To Liam, with a smile.

JILLIAN

Way to get noticed.

Liam watches her walk off as Darius slips into a waiting SUV.

8

INT. GRACE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

8

CHYRON: *BETHESDA, MD.*

GRACE DARROW (40) BLENDS a morning SHAKE. She's in a power
suit, organized. Her routine is down to precision. Vitamins,
check. Gluten free WAFFLE. Check.

GRACE

Zoe...I gotta run!

ZOE, 18, barrels in, backpack slung over her shoulder. Zoe is
strong-willed and independent...but never bitchy about it.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'll be home tonight at six, we can
have an early dinner --

ZOE

You forgot.

GRACE

(remembering)
Graduation rehearsal.

ZOE

You're addled but the old memory
banks are still firing.

Grace smiles - she and Zoe have a way of needling each other
but they have a tight relationship.

GRACE

How's your speech going? You want
me to take a look at it.

ZOE

No, I have it under control.

GRACE

You know I do this for a living. If you want some --

Zoe comes up to her mom, firm, mature:

ZOE

Mom. Don't micromanage.
(reading her mom)
And please don't give me the "I'm so proud of you" look.

GRACE

That was the "I'm going to miss you look." But Duke is only an hour plane ride...that's what I keep telling myself.

Zoe changes the subject. For what seems to be a reason.

ZOE

Hey, Dad asked if you're going to use that extra ticket for graduation...

That hits Grace, before she can respond: HORN HONK OUTSIDE.

ZOE (CONT'D)

That's Kira. I gotta fly. Will you call him? Please?

Zoe grabs a WAFFLE from the toaster, rushes out. Off Grace...

9

INT./EXT. GRACE'S CAR - DAY

9

Grace drives, on the phone, upset:

GRACE

Are you bringing a date to our daughter's graduation?

MIKE'S VOICE (O.S.)

Grace...I don't want to fight. If you need the ticket, she won't come.

GRACE

No, I wasn't planning on using it, but that's not the point. These tickets are for family, and Jeanette is not family.

Grace rolls down her window, shows a PASS to the Guard.

As she rolls into the parking lot, we realize... her work place: the Pentagon.

10

INT. PENTAGON HALLWAY - DAY

10

Grace is on the move in the busy corridor, STILL ON THE PHONE, a mix of CIVILIANS and MILITARY BRASS start their day.

GRACE

(still on the phone)

Well, whatever her name is...the answer's *no*.

(then)

I can't talk about this anymore, Mike. I'm walking into a meeting.

She hangs up, heads into a conference room.

11

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

11

Ten civilians take their seats. **HARRIS ANDERS**, 40's, Deputy Secretary, at the head of the table. Dressed in a business suit, Harris exudes a commanding strength. Feels former military.

Harris flips through a briefing binder in front of him.

HARRIS

Good morning, all. Grace why don't you start?

GRACE

We had a non-combat related death in Germany - a Warrant Officer. Worked Intelligence at Fort Gordon.

HARRIS

(nods, sighs)

Draft a press release once the family's informed.

GRACE

Will do.

HARRIS

Jordy, I need to brief SecDef on Russian military moves.

JORDY

As of oh-four hundred, the Russians began deploying at least three divisions, about 50,000 men, to the Ukrainian border. They claim we've been making unusual moves with some of our nukes.

HARRIS

Grace, have your team release a statement to the media. Stress that this is just routine maintenance of the nuclear arsenal and our Russian friends are bent out of shape over nothing. But say it nice. Like you do.

GRACE

Certainly, sir.

HARRIS

Okay. The world is safe for today. Grace, a word in my office.

He exits, Grace following. Is she in trouble?

12

INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S OFFICE

12

Harris blows past his SECRETARY...Grace follows him into his office. THE NAME PLATE READS: HARRIS ANDERS, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. He closes the door behind. Drops the formal demeanor.

HARRIS

Did you put in for a transfer?

GRACE

Where'd you hear that?

HARRIS

I'm fairly high up at the Pentagon. In case you hadn't noticed.

GRACE

They need someone to run Public Affairs over at Fort Myer. Zoe's leaving in a few weeks for school. Thought I'd shake things up.

He gently approaches...more like a lover than a co-worker.

HARRIS

Grace. Don't leave because of us.

GRACE

I don't like lying to my coworkers. Or my family. If we're in a different office, you're not my boss. Then we can be out in the open. If that's what we want.

HARRIS

I know what I want.

GRACE

It would help if I knew what you want.

Before he can respond...A KNOCK on the door. He calls out:

HARRIS

One minute.

GRACE

It's only Arlington. Just over the bridge. Once the transfer's done, we can re-assess, see what we have or don't have.

She opens the door, heads out, past Harris's SECRETARY.

SECRETARY

Sir. The Joint Chiefs on the line...an urgent matter.

HARRIS

Send it in.

As Grace heads off, she hears that exchange. She turns back as Harris shuts the DOOR in our face. Hmm.

13

INT. MIRACLE OF SCIENCE - CAMBRIDGE BAR - NIGHT

13

This MIT hang-out is "geek-chic" - the menu over the bar is on a chalk board in the form of the periodic table. Liam, Diego and friends are in heated discussion:

WAITRESS

Spicy chicken burritos extra salsa extra avocado.

LIAM

That's me.

DIEGO

Dude. The three-body problem is unsolvable. No one's ever done it.

LIAM

No one's done it yet.

POMPOUS STUDENT

Oh, and you're gonna be the one I suppose? So far, your algorithm has turned up jack.

LIAM

Josh, you wouldn't know a recursive algorithm if it bit you on your coding tool.

Diego laughs -- burn! Liam spots, across the way...JILLIAN from DARIUS'S lecture, with a group of friends.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to see if I can solve the two-body problem.

Pompous Student, missing the joke, calls after him.

POMPOUS STUDENT

Two-body problem - that's high school math, dude!

Liam pushes through to the bar next to Jillian, who's writing in her notebook.

LIAM

Hey there.

JILLIAN

(looks up, recognizing him)
I see you remembered your shoes.

He smiles.

LIAM

Liam.

JILLIAN

Jillian.

LIAM

You're not MIT.

JILLIAN

Is it that obvious? Should I wear a dunce cap so people know?

LIAM

No -- I just meant I haven't seen you around. And that event was students and faculty only.

JILLIAN

Darius Tanz is the greatest mind of our time. So, I snuck in. Sue me.

LIAM

And what do you do when not
committing felonious trespass?

JILLIAN

(sips her drink)
Guess.

LIAM

That's a lose-lose. Like guessing a
woman's age.

JILLIAN

I'm 25. So no guessing required.

LIAM

Okay...
(takes her in)
I'll say you're a writer. Sci fi
perhaps?

JILLIAN

(taken aback)
Wow. How did you...

LIAM

You're interested in the future of
mankind, but you're not an MIT
student. You carry a notebook. With
a quote from Asimov on the cover --
"Ideas Die Hard." I extrapolated
from a set of known facts. And got
lucky.

JILLIAN

You're a pretty observant guy.

LIAM

Scientists need to be observant,
especially when investigating new
phenomena.

(she smiles, he's flirting)
So how'd you get into sci fi?

JILLIAN

I was going to play pro football,
but I decided I wanted a career
even harder for women to break
into.

LIAM

Not panning out?

JILLIAN

Anything worth doing takes time. I read that on a bathroom wall once and I'm clinging to it.

(he laughs, then)

And what important save-the-world work are you doing at MIT?

LIAM

I'm creating a live model of the solar system in real time based on gravimetric data.

(off her confused look)

I'm trying to make a map of space.

JILLIAN

We don't have that?

LIAM

You ever see a 16th century map of the Americas? The general shape was there, the big pieces. That's what we have now. I want to leap ahead to Google Earth. If I nail this you'll be able to plot the orbital trajectory of every object in the solar system to 99% accuracy.

JILLIAN

Sounds impressive. How's that going?

LIAM

Anything worth doing takes time.

JILLIAN

In other words...

LIAM/JILLIAN

Not panning out.

They laugh. There's a definite spark here.

LIAM

When you're passionate about something...time means nothing.

JILLIAN

And you're passionate about celestial mechanics?

LIAM

Absolutely. When two celestial bodies cross paths it can change their trajectories forever.

Jillian studies him.

14 **INT. JILLIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT** 14

The door swings open, Liam is kissing Jillian. They come into the apartment...

JILLIAN
I don't usually do this.

LIAM
Me either. You sure...

JILLIAN
Yes means yes.

He kisses her again. She pulls him out of frame. Liam's PHONE falls to the floor. CUT TO:

15 **INT. JILLIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT** 15

DARKNESS. BUZZING SOUND. 3 AM.

Liam and Jillian in bed, sleeping soundly. His arms around her. He's awakened by this continual buzzing sound.

Liam slides out of bed, looks for the BUZZING SOUND. His phone, under some clothes. He squints at the bright light on the home screen....

ALERT. He clicks on it. *Significant Perturbation*. He glances at the data...and his excitement turns to confusion. Then concern. Then...

He starts pulling on his clothes. Jillian stirs.

JILLIAN
So that's how it is, MIT? Sneaking out?

LIAM
What? No. It's not like that. My research...

JILLIAN
The research that hasn't generated anything in months.

LIAM
Yes. No! I got a hit. I can't explain. Can I call you? I'm going to call you. You are amazing and beautiful and I can't wait to read your stuff.

He grabs his SHOES.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I'll call you. Promise.

Stumbles out, nearly tripping over obstacles on the floor.

16

EXT. CROFT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

16

Liam pounds on a door. And again.

LIAM
Professor Croft, it's Liam!

Door swings open. And we meet **DR. JACOB CROFT**, the professor overseeing Liam's research.

CROFT
Liam? What the hell time is it?

LIAM
(breathless)
I got a hit.

CROFT
You got a hit. I'm going back to bed now, Liam. If you're lucky I won't remember this in the morning.

LIAM
If I'm right, people need to see this...immediately. You have friends in Washington, at NASA...you can call, right?

CROFT
Washington...?
(eyeing him)
Are you drunk?

LIAM
That hurts me, sir...

CROFT
Last month you woke me up with a theory that we're all living in a fractal holographic matrix.

LIAM
I may have had a few that night...Sir. But this is different.
(then, with purpose)
There's a significant perturbation.

Croft's interest is piqued now.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I've been running continual simulations, and there's something there that wasn't there three months ago.

CROFT

A slight miscalculation could taint the results. Leave me the data and I'll take a look.

LIAM

Already uploaded to your server.

CROFT

Okay, go home, get some sleep. We can discuss this after class which starts in...five hours. Try to be on time for once. And put some shoes on for god's sake.

Liam nods. Dr. Croft closes the door on Liam.

17 **INT. DR. CROFT'S STUDY - NIGHT**

17

Croft at his computer. He scans through numbers that only mean something to a trained eye...suddenly, a chill runs up his spine. If facial expressions could talk, his would say "holy shit." He pushes back from the computer, unsure what to do...he picks up his phone...hesitates...then dials a number...

CROFT

This is Jacob Croft. Yes, I know what time it is...it can't wait.

18 **INT. MIT LAB - LATER THAT NIGHT**

18

Liam flips the fluorescent lights on. The lab's empty...save for long rows of computers. Complex equations on boards. Goes to his computer. Flips it on.

LIAM

Slight miscalculation my ass.

He pulls up his GRAPHS, his work. Starts doing the numbers...

19 **INT. PENTAGON BRIEFING ROOM - DAY**

19

Grace is mid-briefing at the Pentagon. Fairly low-key, we're not at war.

GRACE

...and finally: there have been some reports in the press and elsewhere concerning movement of nuclear material. This is nothing more than routine maintenance required to keep our arsenal safe, secure and reliable.

REPORTER (RUSS)

Grace, are you saying Russian concerns are completely unfounded?

GRACE

That's exactly what I'm saying, Russ.

Reporter **AMANDA CHARLES** (30) doesn't wait to be called on:

AMANDA

What kind of routine maintenance requires moving nuclear weapons from the Utah Desert to Florida?

GRACE

Those missiles were due to be retired. Nothing out of the ordinary....

Grace doesn't know her name, so Amanda offers it up.

AMANDA

Amanda Charles, Capitol Eyes. And not according to my sources.

GRACE

Okay, well, maybe you need better sources, Amanda.
(reporters chuckle)
Moving on, we had one non-combat related death in Germany...

Amanda doesn't look convinced. Grace has her game face on. Whether or not she believes it.

20

INT. MIT CLASSROOM - DAY

20

Liam in class, knee bobbing nervously. Class is full, kids on their phones, waiting. He glances at the clock - 9:15.

STUDENT #1

That's it. Fifteen minute rule...Croft's a no-show.

STUDENT # 2
Let's get outta here.

Liam, concerned, rushes out of there.

21 **EXT. CROFT'S HOUSE - DAY** 21

Liam speeds his bike up to Croft's house, leaps off...rings the bell. Rings it again. No answer. KNOCKS.

LIAM
Professor Croft?!

He tries the door...it's UNLOCKED. He walks in...

22 **INT. CROFT'S HOUSE - DAY** 22

The place has been tossed. Ransacked. Stuff everywhere. He spots Croft's GLASSES on a DESK where cables that once connected to a computer dangle loose.

LIAM
Holy --

Liam freaked, dials --

LIAM (CONT'D)
911 -- this is an emergency. 99
Fulkerson St. There's been a
burglary. Or a kidnapping. Or...I
don't know what. My professor's
place is trashed, he didn't show up
for class and he left his glasses...
(pacing, listens)
No, I'm not on drugs. Listen.
Please. I gave my professor
important information last night
and now he's disappeared, and I
think something terrible may have
happened...

Then, Liam spots through the WINDOW a BLACK ESCALADE across the street. It appears to be watching the house. SHIT. Is he in danger? Liam starts to get very paranoid.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Sorry, operator, I -- I have to go.

QUICK CUT TO:

Liam slips out the back door. Tries to act nonchalant, jumps on his bike...

ACT ONE

27

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

27

Seconds later. And Liam has his face smushed into the floor. Darius's security chief NELSON has his elbow on Liam's neck, his knee on his back.

LIAM
(face smushed)
My nme is Lim Cl. M a stdnt at MIT.
My ID s in my wllt.

Nelson pulls out Liam's wallet, shows Darius the ID. Darius motions and Nelson hauls Liam up to his feet. Now, a wave of recognition.

DARIUS
The shoeless guy, right.

LIAM
(nods, breathless)
Yes, sir.

He starts to reach into his pocket; NELSON reaches for his gun, Liam throws up his hands.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Whoa, easy -- I have a flash drive
in my pocket with all the data.

Liam reaches gently into his pocket, slowly pulls out a FLASH DRIVE, shows it to Darius. With urgency...

LIAM (CONT'D)
I've been running simulations,
trying to solve the N-body problem.
How asteroids, comets interact with
each other-- gravitational forces
we can't see but we know exist.
Everybody at NASA is studying NEOs
we already know, I've been looking
for the ones we've missed. *And I
found one.*

Admittedly, Darius is intrigued.

28

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - DAY

28

A high tech hologram - an amazing 3-D PROJECTION of the solar system comes out of a small device on the table.

LIAM
(blown away by the tech)
Wow. Holographic projector.

DARIUS
One of my little toys I've been
working on. Hope to have it in
stores for Christmas 2020. If the
world still exists. Let's hear it.

Liam indicates the hologram:

LIAM
Okay. This is the solar system today.

The image zooms in on one tiny asteroid near Jupiter.

LIAM (CONT'D)
This is the asteroid -- let's call
it Rocky, about 300 million miles
out. My software - which I'm happy
to sell to you, by the way -
predicts a trajectory for Rocky...

Time plays forward, tracking the asteroid...**into Earth.**

LIAM (CONT'D)
...to collide with Earth, like I said,
in 186 days. Given its location and
orbital configuration, there's a 97.2%
probability that this is a planet
killer.

Darius hits a button - the hologram disappears.

DARIUS
Okay, that's your supposition -
hardly proof that you or your data
are correct.

LIAM
I rechecked all my calculations
last night. They're solid. And I
showed the numbers to my advisor,
Professor Croft -

DARIUS
You have Croft? That son of a bitch
gave me a C in quantum mechanics...

LIAM
I told him all this, gave him my
research.

(MORE)

LIAM (CONT'D)

Four hours later - he disappeared.
Didn't show up for class. His place
was trashed --

DARIUS

Maybe it was the housekeeper's day
off.

LIAM

(Darius isn't getting it)
He left his glasses behind. There
were goons, big scary goons, staking
out his house, they chased my ass
across campus. Now either this is
all just an amazing coincidence or
I'm onto something that someone
somewhere doesn't want public.

Darius takes him in...something about him seems credible.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I'm telling you *the sky is falling,*
Mr. Tanz. And you may be the only
person who can do something about it.

A beat. Darius turns to an ASSISTANT.

DARIUS

Karissa. Bring up a car and fuel
the jet.

LIAM

Where are you going?

DARIUS

We're going...to Washington.

LIAM

Me? No, I really don't like to fly.

DARIUS

You'll like this.

Off Liam's look...

29

INT. GULFSTREAM V JET - DAY

29

Liam, Darius and entourage on the lavishly appointed jet.
Liam is impressed - gorgeous FLIGHT ATTENDANTS help everyone
get settled, champagne flutes at the ready.

The door closes, the plane starts rolling.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(to Liam)

Mr. Cole, we have spicy chicken burritos extra salsa extra avocado.

LIAM

(confused)

Wait. That's my thing. How...?

Darius gives a cryptic smile. He knows all.

DARIUS

See? What's not to like about flying?

PILOT (ON THE P.A.)

Fasten your seatbelts, we're number one for take off.

Liam white knuckles the seat rest. Darius notices.

30 **EXT. SKIES - DAY** 30

The plane takes off, the Tanz name and logo on the tail.

31 **EXT. PENTAGON - DAY** 31

Darius and Liam in the back of an SUV, as it's waved through security. Liam catches sight of where they are:

LIAM

(a bit awed/freaked)

This is the Pentagon.

DARIUS

MIT is admitting some big brains these days.

Liam is in way over his head. The massive building looms.

32 **INT. PENTAGON HALLWAY - DAY** 32

Darius and Liam on the move, escorted by a DOD HANDLER. People recognize Darius as he passes.

Coming the other way down the hall, Grace and her officious assistant MILLIE (30s) pass Darius. Grace turns back.

GRACE

Darius Tanz?

(curious)

I didn't see his name on the daily VIP manifest.

MILLIE

When you're Darius Tanz, I guess
people don't mind if you just pop
in for a quick hello.

Millie nods, heads off. Leaving Grace, wheels turning.

33

INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S OFFICE WAITING AREA - DAY

33

Darius and Liam turn into Harris's waiting area.

HARRIS'S SECRETARY

He's expecting you, Mr. Tanz.

DARIUS

(to Liam)

Sit. Wait.

LIAM

But....

DARIUS

Trust.

Darius goes inside. Liam tries to remain calm. But his knee
is bobbing up and down.

HARRIS'S SECRETARY

Would you like a drink, sir?

LIAM

Yeah. Bourbon.

Off her look...

34

INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S OFFICE - SAME

34

Harris greets Darius. They shake hands.

HARRIS

Darius. They told me you were on
your way over. Is there a problem?

DARIUS

Well, I'm not sure, Harris. Depends
on whether a planet-killing
asteroid is heading our way.

HARRIS

What are you talking about?

DARIUS

Asteroid. Earth. Boom. You run DOD
point for all things NASA--

HARRIS

Where you getting this science fiction from?

DARIUS

So it's not true?

HARRIS

(scoffs)

No.

DARIUS

Okay, then you won't mind me posting about an asteroid, poised to slam into earth in say 186 days - - to my 40 million Twitter followers.

He takes out his phone like he's about to Tweet.

HARRIS

Darius.

Harris gently pushes Darius's phone down.

DARIUS

So, which is it? Science or fiction?

Harris exhales. A chilling moment, as Darius suddenly realizes...

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Christ.

(then)

So those Condor rocket engines you ordered from me - on an accelerated time line - not really for communication satellites I take it.

HARRIS

Darius, it's under control. We have the brightest minds working the problem --

DARIUS

(lashes out)

No you don't - because you're not using me.

HARRIS

Without the great Darius Tanz, we're all doomed, is that it?

DARIUS

The way I see it, you have two choices: tell me... or kill me.

HARRIS

I could throw you in a black site prison.

DARIUS

Either way, a lot of people are going to ask a lot of questions. Make me your ally. You sure as hell don't want me as your enemy.

Off Harris's look...this is a problem he didn't anticipate.

35

INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S WAITING AREA - SAME

35

The office door swings open. As Harris and Darius come out, Liam jumps up. Harris, to his assistant:

HARRIS

I'm going down to Joint Task Force. Have Grace Darrow meet me there.
(noticing Liam)
Who are you?

LIAM

Liam Cole. Sir.

DARIUS

(quietly)
He arrived at the same conclusion as NASA -- but his computer did it autonomously, while he was getting laid.

Harris takes this in, then, to his Secretary.

HARRIS

Get Mr. Cole clearance. Now.

Liam cannot believe this shit is really happening.

36

INT. PENTAGON SUB BASEMENT - DAY

36

Elevator doors open. Grace is waiting as Harris, Darius and Liam step out.

GRACE

You wanted to see me?

HARRIS

Darius Tanz, Grace Darrow, DOD Public Affairs.

They shake.

GRACE

Pleasure.

DARIUS

We've met before. Croatian Embassy.

GRACE

Good memory.

DARIUS

Photographic. It's a curse. Trust me.

Liam offers a hand to Grace.

LIAM

I'm Liam Cole -

DARIUS

He works for me.

LIAM

(stammers, going with it)

I -- I do. I work for him.

Grace looks at Harris for some guidance - *what's she doing here?* But he's not giving it up. Yet. He guides them toward an unmarked door. A MILITARY GUARD posted. Harris submits to an eye scan, the door unlocks.

HARRIS

This is the Command Center for Project Samson. Of the 30,000 people who work in the Pentagon, fewer than forty have clearance.

37

INT. PENTAGON - WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

37

It seems like a standard war room - DOD employees involved in very busy work. Harris nods to a TECH - and all the glass walls switch to frosted. The sound goes dead.

COMPUTER VOICE

Security measures activated.

HARRIS

Three months ago, through the Safeguard Survey System that catalogues Near Earth Objects, NASA astronomer Dr. Eduard Acosta discovered an asteroid, Oberon; eleven kilometers wide, coming out of the asteroid belt.

The wall of monitors light up with cool graphics:

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Trajectory data has now been firmed up and the latest calculations show that Oberon has the potential to collide with Earth in approximately 186 days.

On Grace, trying not to react. She's learned not to show her hand. Darius clocks Grace, game face on, intrigued by her.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Our simulations give it a high probability of impact.

On the monitors: an orbital illustration of the asteroid's route ominously intersecting with Earth.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

In collaboration with NASA and JPL, we've devised a plan - confidence is high it will be successful.

DARIUS

So that's why you're moving those nukes. You're going to blow this out of this sky?

LIAM

(blurts out)
Nukes won't work.

Everyone looks at him - who said he could talk?

LIAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. But even if a nuclear explosion broke up the asteroid, it would produce thousands of meteors which would rain down on earth, setting in motion cataclysmic events all over the world.

DARIUS

(gives him a look, be quiet)
Thank you, Liam.

HARRIS

He's right. It was explored, but deemed too dangerous.

DARIUS

So what is the plan, if you don't mind me asking.

HARRIS

This. A Gravity Tractor.

On the monitors: an animation shows a GRAVITY TRACTOR - a small spacecraft, flying side by side with an asteroid.

LIAM

That would deflect the asteroid
through gravitational pull --
(realizes he's talking)
Sorry.

HARRIS

Please. Continue.

LIAM

...theoretically, you position a
probe next to the asteroid. Even
though its mass is small, the probe
generates its own gravitational
field...

DARIUS

...diverting the asteroid's path
just enough to miss Earth.
(skeptical)
But you'd need a rocket powerful
enough to get it there in time. And
that rocket doesn't exist yet.

HARRIS

Actually, it does. We've modified
one of yours. The test phase is
complete. We launch next week. We
have full confidence that this will
take care of the problem and no one
will be the wiser.

Liam watches Darius, is he buying this? Grace watches
Harris...is SHE buying this?

38

INT. PENTAGON LOBBY - DAY

38

Harris escorts Darius and Liam toward the exit.

HARRIS

I'm sure you understand why this
needs to remain classified.

DARIUS

Of course. My entire company is at
your disposal and stands ready to
help.

HARRIS

(polite, but not interested)
We'll take that under advisement.
Most important thing right now is
that we carry on business as usual.
(then)
Will I see you tonight? At the
Meridian Ball?

DARIUS

Absolutely. Will you be joining us, Grace?

GRACE

(still reeling)
Yes. Wouldn't miss it.

They shake hands. Liam tries to read Darius. WTF is happening here?

39

INT. PENTAGON - DAY

39

Liam and Darius head toward the exit. Darius smiles, waves to people, acts normal. Liam, on the other hand: no game face.

LIAM

Business as usual?!

DARIUS

Do you own a tux?

LIAM

My professor's missing. There's a very
high probability that an asteroid is
going to collide with Earth. And
you're talking about going to a ball?

DARIUS

You ever heard of an inside voice?

LIAM

Sorry. But did you believe anything
he said in there? About having it
under control?

DARIUS

No.

(then)

We're not going to wait for the
government to save us. We're going
to save ourselves.

Darius exits. On Liam...who runs to play catch up.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

40

INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

40

Grace follows Harris into his office, slams the door. Finally alone, she wheels on him, upset:

GRACE

You sandbagged me in there. How could you not tell me about this?

HARRIS

(not having it)

Grace, you know as well as anyone the need for mission secrecy.

GRACE

Missions in Iraq, sure. Details on troop movements, fine. I think we can agree the end of the world is a little different.

HARRIS

I wanted to tell you...

GRACE

(dawning on her)

You lied to them. The nukes aren't undergoing routine maintenance.

Harris sighs, pours each of them a drink.

HARRIS

There is a Plan B - of course we always have a Plan B. If the gravity tractor fails, they're the last line defense.

(seeing her reaction)

I know - it's a lot to take in.

He hands her a drink. Her hands are shaking.

GRACE

But you're confident that it will...work?

HARRIS

Yes.

GRACE

Why aren't you bringing Darius in?

HARRIS

Our scientists are the best. We can't afford competing agendas.

(gently)

Grace, the playing field just changed. Information just got into the wild. I need you on this to contain the spread.

GRACE

(it's all making sense)

This is why you've been so distant.

HARRIS

Believe me, I want us out in the open. More than you know.

(he moves close to her)

But right now, I need you here. Don't leave, please.

Off Grace, things just got a lot more complicated.

41

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

41

Grace gets dressed for the gala; she puts on earrings and finishing touches. She stares at herself, trying to process all she's learned today. She tries to shake it off.

Her cell phone rings - it's Mike. Grace can't deal with this right now. Last thing she needs. She hits IGNORE.

GRACE

(to herself)

I can't talk about your girlfriend now, Mike.

Mike texts her: "Have u talked 2 Zoe yet about GAP YEAR?"

ZOE (O.S.)

I'm heading out.

She looks up, Zoe's in the doorway. Dressed to go out.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I'm sleeping at Kira's tonight, and it's not to avoid curfew.

(then)

You look nice...

GRACE

(confused)

Zoe. I just got a text... from your dad. About a gap year?

ZOE

(shit)

I was going to tell you...

GRACE

Tell me *what*?

ZOE

(reluctant)

I applied for a community outreach program in Tanzania. It starts in September.

GRACE

(trying not to lose it)

Africa? What about Duke?

ZOE

They said I could defer for a year. They were really cool about it.

GRACE

They were "cool" about it? Of course they were, you're not *their* child. When were you going to tell me this?

ZOE

You're always so busy. I wanted to wait till after graduation when things settled down.

GRACE

But you told your father.

ZOE

We had lunch last week and...for the record he was really supportive.

GRACE

Of course he was. Do you realize how many Americans were kidnapped last year abroad --

ZOE

I knew you would say that. It's more dangerous to drive a car than go to Africa.

GRACE

Now is not the time --

ZOE

You're the one who told me it's my responsibility to contribute, to help others less fortunate.

GRACE

Yes, but not now.

ZOE

I know it's scary for you, letting go. But you can't make the world safe for me. So please, stop trying.

There's a HORN HONKING outside.

ZOE (CONT'D)

It's my life, Mom. Please, let me live it.

She leaves. Grace is reeling. Too much to process.

42

INT. MERIDIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

42

Washington at its most well-heeled. White House officials, politicians, military brass, business leaders all mingle in the mosh pit of the powerful.

At the BAR, Grace grabs a DRINK. Boy does she need one. Harris approaches.

HARRIS

There you are. You look...beautiful.

GRACE

(reeling from the day's events)

Harris. What are we doing here....

HARRIS

We need to keep up appearances. Business as usual.

Nearby, AMBASSADOR GUPTA raises a glass to Grace.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

The Indian Ambassador seems to be a fan.

GRACE

He appreciates my dry Philly sense of humor.

HARRIS

See if you can use that sense of humor to move the ball on Sea Lane Communications. Their Defense Minister has been resisting our overtures.

(she shoots him a look)

Business as usual.

ANOTHER ANGLE, our intrepid reporter Amanda watches Grace and Harris from a distance. She's with another REPORTER, PAM.

AMANDA
They're looking awfully cozy.

PAM
They work together.

AMANDA
(not buying it)
Yeah.

PAM
(nods re other reporters)
Washington Post. New York Times. How
we supposed to compete with that?

AMANDA
Got to get creative. When you're a
little fish, you see things the big
fish miss, cause they're too busy
puckering up to other big fish.

She notices Darius and Liam enter the room. Both in tuxedos.

PAM
Darius Tanz. I've always wanted to
meet him.

AMANDA
See, that's where you're missing the
story. You're looking at the wrong fish.

She takes stock of Liam.

PAM
Nephew? Protégé?

AMANDA
Or. My new friend.

Amanda's intrigued.

ON GRACE

As she chats with Ambassador Gupta.

GRACE
Three daughters? They say one
teenage daughter is like having
three boys. So that means you've
got nine kids.

GUPTA

(laughs)

My wife would agree. They're complicated to say the least.

GRACE

But keeping the lines of communication open is key to a successful relationship....

(then)

The same could be said for India and the United States. Don't you think?

Gupta senses a shift in the conversation...

ON LIAM AND DARIUS

As they enter. Between the tux and the power crowd, Liam is very uncomfortable.

LIAM

Who are all these people?

DARIUS

Cabinet members. Congressmen. Ambassadors. Heads of state. Heads of corporations. Pretty much everyone who's anyone...so that makes you...anyone.

LIAM

I'm (not) honored. And being here...is part of your big plan?

DARIUS

(cryptic)

I am here to make certain...connections. You are here for the free food. Enjoy.

LIAM

Great. I'll go visit with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Darius grabs a wine glass from the passing WAITER.

DARIUS

Try not to spill any wine or national security secrets.

LIAM

Wait, can I borrow your phone? I tossed mine back in Boston.

Darius pulls out his PHONE, tosses it to Liam.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I need the code to unlock it.

DARIUS

C'mon, Einstein - let's see how smart you really are.

And Darius is gone. Liam walks toward the bar, staring at the code input screen.

LIAM

A test. I hate tests. It has to be solvable, otherwise it's not a fair test, right?

Liam looks up - the BARTENDER is definitely worried about the mumbling guy.

ON GRACE

Charming Ambassador Gupta...

GRACE

Given our shared reliance on energy trade, we have a mutual interest in maintaining freedom of navigation and communication via sea lanes. Don't you agree?

GUPTA

Of course, but....

GRACE

...so you'll arrange a meeting, with the Defense Minister?

GUPTA

You make it hard to say no.

GRACE

(with a smile)
That's the idea.

Gupta has to smile, he's charmed. Darius approaches.

DARIUS

Ambassador Gupta. Ms. Darrow.

GUPTA

Mr. Tanz. Pleasure to see you again. Your work is transforming lives.

DARIUS

Much like the work you've done with the Indian Innovation Growth Program.

GUPTA

Our government would relish the opportunity to talk about potential collaborations.

DARIUS

Absolutely. Call my office and we'll set up something.

GUPTA

Ms. Darrow, to be continued.

Ambassador Gupta moves off.

GRACE

Mr. Tanz, you have a habit of turning up unexpectedly.

DARIUS

Keeps people on their toes.
(surveying the scene)
Ironic, don't you think? People celebrating, drinking, dancing...no idea the world's coming to an end.

GRACE

You heard what Harris said. It's under control.

DARIUS

Oh...I'm sorry. I didn't realize you believed all that crap in there. But I don't want to create waves for you and your boyfriend.

Before Grace can deny...

DARIUS (CONT'D)

I'm good at reading people. It's a gift and a curse.

GRACE

Your skills are remedial. At best.

DARIUS

I like you, Grace. You're extraordinary...in an ordinary way.

GRACE

Wow. That's the worst compliment I've ever gotten. Which makes it an insult, actually.

DARIUS

No, it's a gift. You're tough. Loyal. Believable. People trust you. Even when maybe they shouldn't.

GRACE

(bristles)

Darius, it was a pleasure. Okay, that was a lie. Good night.

She starts to walk off. He gently grabs her arm. There's weird heat here, even though there *shouldn't* be.

DARIUS

I've known Harris Anders for fifteen years, since he was just a lowly Captain at CentCom. He's a patriot. But he's also a bureaucrat. Who equates secrecy with security.

GRACE

Meaning?

DARIUS

I don't think he's telling either of us the whole truth.

She spots Harris, laughing and talking with some VIPs.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

What if I told you the government's plan was shit. That I have a real plan, but I need someone on the inside.

She can't help but be intrigued.

GRACE

And what is this plan?

DARIUS

Are you up for some show and tell?

Grace is hesitant.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

What do you have to lose?

BACK TO LIAM

Still staring at the phone...

LIAM

Darius founded his first company
when he was twelve: EMC Squared.
And he said "C'mon, Einstein."
That's got to be a clue.

He inputs a code: EMC2. Phone unlocks. Yes! He dials a number.

JILLIAN (ON THE PHONE)

*This is Jillian, leave a message.
Resistance is futile. BEEP.*

LIAM

Jillian, it's Liam. I'm sorry I
disappeared, it's a long story. I'm
thinking about you. A lot. I don't
have my own phone right now so...

BEEP. Voice mail cuts him off. Shoot.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

No phone.

Reveal it's Amanda. She's been listening.

AMANDA

And you work for Darius Tanz? What
does one make of that?

LIAM

One makes nothing of it. Unless
one's eavesdropping, apparently.

AMANDA

That's what makes these parties go
round. So...who are you?

LIAM

Me? Just a nobody.

AMANDA

That's a lot of tuxedo for...a nobody.

LIAM

All right, you got me. I'm Darius's
new head of security.

AMANDA

Dangerous with weapons or just your
bare hands?

LIAM
You don't want to test it. Trust me.

AMANDA
Amanda.

LIAM
Liam.
(they shake)
What brings you here, Amanda?

AMANDA
Oh. I snaked a ticket from a friend.
I like to be where the action is. You
never know who you'll meet.

Liam's POCKET BUZZES. He takes out Darius's phone...a TEXT says "*Date night's over, meet me outside.*" Liam looks around for Darius. He's nowhere, but he's everywhere of course.

LIAM
Sorry to cut this short but, my
ride's leaving.

AMANDA
Didn't catch your last name, Liam.

LIAM
(with a smile)
That's cause I didn't give it.

AMANDA
Hey. If you ever want to hang out
or chat. Give a ring.

She flirtily hands him a CARD, with her name and phone number on it. No mention of being a reporter. As he heads out...

43

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC STREET - NIGHT

43

Liam comes out of the Meridian, turns a corner. Darius's SUV pulls up. Door opens...inside is Darius, and GRACE.

DARIUS
Hop in.

He does. REVEAL Amanda has caught up just in time to catch a glimpse of Grace in the car; she snaps a photo with her phone.

Amanda takes out a notebook, writes: Grace Darrow. Darius Tanz. Harris Anders. **And she draws a TRIANGLE connecting them. With a question mark.**

And then she writes...Liam X. *Who is Liam?*

44 **EXT. DARIUS'S COMPOUND - NIGHT** 44

Darius's SUV is waved past the guard gate and into a sprawling complex. That is a fortress of solitude - part nature preserve, part Google Campus.

DARIUS
Welcome to Tanz Industries. Ten miles from DC, but a world away. My home away from home.

GRACE
Where is home?

DARIUS
San Francisco. Nantucket. Long Island. And...the Philippines. It's a long story.

Liam takes in everything - security here looks very tight. Car stops in front of what seems like the main building.

45 **INT. PRODUCTION FLOOR - NIGHT** 45

Think SpaceX meets Google. A creative tactile workspace -- half-assembled rocket noses, planetary travel projects, computers, cubicles, GLASS with mathematical equations.

DARIUS
We call this the Sandbox. Where the Mars dream is becoming a reality.

They arrive at an elevator with no buttons, no lights. Darius waves a key card and the doors open.

46 **INT. DARIUS'S TREEHOUSE - NIGHT** 46

Darius leads them off the elevator into a moonlit space.

DARIUS
Welcome to the Treehouse.

The lights come up automatically on a cool design space - State of the art, minimalist design. High tech, low impact. This is his OFFICE.

LIAM
I had a treehouse growing up. Didn't look like anything this.

DARIUS
Anything and everything you can dream up - you can design and build it here.
(MORE)

DARIUS (CONT'D)

An inspiration factory. Willy Wonka without the Oompa Loompas.

GRACE

Okay, you win the man-cave of the universe award. But what was so important that it couldn't wait?

He's not joking anymore, motions to a GLASS MONITOR.

DARIUS

Joshua, please run program T6.

COMPUTER VOICE

Program T6 loaded, Darius.

DARIUS

This is what I brought you here to see. Playback.

On the glass, they see cutaway views of a large spaceship with many levels. Each level has rooms and big common rooms. It's graceful and beautiful and futuristic.

GRACE

What are we looking at...

DARIUS

This is RIVA: my Reusable Interplanetary Vehicle. Designed to be a commuter transport to Mars.

LIAM

How is that going to stop a meteor?

DARIUS

It's not. I'm re-purposing it...as a lifeboat. This is an Ark, Grace. And it's going to save the human race from extinction.

Off Grace and Liam's stunned look...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE47 **INT. DARIUS'S TREEHOUSE - NIGHT**

47

We pick up where we left off - staring at a computer model of a spaceship. Grace and Liam are speechless.

A chill goes through Grace as she realizes...

GRACE

You're planning for the extinction of the human race.

DARIUS

No. I'm planning for the continuation of the human race. Have you heard of the concept MVP - Minimum Viable Population?

LIAM

(nods)

Each species has a threshold -- the minimum number of individuals required to prevent extinction.

DARIUS

Exactly. For humans, that number is 160. Save just 160 well-chosen souls, save the species.

Darius picks up a 1/1000TH SIZE MODEL OF THE SHIP which splits open to reveal a cross section of the interior.

GRACE

And your plan is...to make a get-away on a spaceship with 160 of your besties and fly...to Mars?

DARIUS

Well, we might have to orbit for a while until we can set up shop. This was *supposed* to be a seven year plan. I'm accelerating it.

Grace almost has to laugh.

GRACE

I'm sorry. But this is --

LIAM

Nuts?

Grace hands him back the model.

GRACE

You're betting on the government to fail. And I'm not.

DARIUS

I don't make bets, I make calculated decisions. Based on facts. And the fact is -- the government's solution won't work. They need technology that hasn't been invented. They won't tell you that of course. Or maybe, they haven't figured that part out yet.

GRACE

(losing patience)

Why did you bring me here, Darius?

DARIUS

If I can expedite production, make a dozen RIVAs or more, instead of 160 people, maybe I could save thousands. But I need access to information and resources that only a few people in the government have....

(pointed, to Grace)

I need an inside man. Or woman, as they say.

This isn't funny anymore.

GRACE

You're asking me to divert resources, spy on my government... commit *treason* for some insane narcissistic suicide mission.

DARIUS

The only suicide mission is wearing blinders, Grace.

GRACE

Harris assured me --

DARIUS

(intense)

Harris...will trot you out to deliver his lies, the masses will believe you, and no one will be prepared for what's coming. Except for me, and the people on This List. And if you want to be on it...

GRACE

(disgusted)

That's what this is really about,
isn't it? Darius Tanz gets to play
God. Who will live and who will
die. *I'm done here.*

She walks out. Darius turns to Liam. Who clearly can't wrap his head around this.

LIAM

Look, man, I want to say yes,
but...there's a girl up in Boston
and if this is really the end, I
want to party like it's 1999.
Whatever the hell that means. Maybe
that's selfish, but I don't think
I'm meant to be one of your 160.

Darius takes a beat to assess...then:

DARIUS

(pushes a comm button)
Karissa, get the G5 ready.

LIAM

I'll take the train, thanks.

He heads out, leaving Darius alone, holding the RIVA model.

48 **EXT. MIT - MORNING** 48

Liam gets out of a cab at the edge of campus. It all looks exactly the same...but everything has changed.

49 **EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - DAY** 49

Liam comes out of A PHONE STORE. New phone in hand.

LIAM

Jillian? It's Liam...don't hang up.
Please, I just want to talk --

Liam fails to see he's being watched. By a nondescript car.

50 **INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY** 50

Grace approaches Harris's office.

SECRETARY

He's not here, Ms. Darrow.

GRACE

I didn't see anything on the schedule.

SECRETARY
(not offering anything...)
I expect him back early this evening.

Off Grace, mind spinning...

51 **INT. WALLOPS FLIGHT FACILITY BASE - DAY** 51

CHYRON: **WALLOPS TEST FACILITY, WALLOPS ISLAND, VA**

Harris steps out of an SUV, greeted by **ROGERS**, his project engineer. They shake hands quickly - everything plays out with urgency.

52 **EXT. LOW VIEWING PLATFORM** 52

Rogers and Harris join ENGINEERS and TECHS on this platform.

ROGERS
As our report indicated, in order to get the probe to the asteroid in time for the gravity tractor to be effective, we've modified the engines to burn at 150%. This will accelerate the rocket to a speed of 36,000 miles per hour and cut flight time down by a third.

They step up onto the platform - from here Harris can see a massive rocket engine, horizontal on its side, 300 yards away in the empty field.

ROGERS (CONT'D)
This has worked perfectly in computer simulations, but only a static fire test will tell us if the rockets can handle the strain in real world conditions.

HARRIS
Do it.

Rogers motions to the Lead Tester, who talks into a headset.

ROCKET TECH (O.S.)
Three, two, one...fire...

The rocket lights...an insane fire ball erupts out the back, followed by massive plumes of thick smoke.

Harris looks at monitors which show a video feed of the test.

ROCKET TECH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*T plus 5...thrust at 90%. T plus
10, thrust 100%.*

Rogers and Harris both tense up - it's crunch time.

ROCKET TECH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*T plus 15, thrust 120%. T plus 20
thrust at 140%...*

And then...there's a wobble in the engine...and the entire rocket is consumed in a massive explosion and fireball. Fuck.

Harris and Rogers are desperately disappointed - they know what's at stake here.

ROGERS
This is why we do tests. It's going to take a couple of days to get to the bottom of it.

HARRIS
Throw everything you have at it. The President wants a full report.

53

INT. BAR - NIGHT

53

Liam and Jillian at a table. Music plays. Some people dance in the background.

JILLIAN
(skeptical)
So you were with Darius Tanz at a Ball in Washington D.C.?

LIAM
Yes. I wasn't blowing you off, I swear.

JILLIAN
And he offered you a job and you said no...why?

LIAM
Because...I have unfinished business here.

JILLIAN
(ah)
Your research. So what happened the other night with that...ping you got?

LIAM

Oh, it, uh...didn't pan out.
(changing the subject)
What about you, what's going on
with you?

JILLIAN

Well, I got a little good news
yesterday. This publisher really
liked one of my short stories.

LIAM

That's fantastic. What's it about?

JILLIAN

What else? The future.

A beat. He spontaneously KISSES HER. With passion.

LIAM

Let's take a road trip.

JILLIAN

(laughs)
What...?

LIAM

I just want to spend time with you.
Travel. See the world. Before it's
too late.

JILLIAN

What about your research...?

LIAM

Screw it. I want to have fun. Enjoy
life.

JILLIAN

(a little concerned)
Can I ask you a question, without
you taking it the wrong way. Are
you...bipolar? My sister's on meds
and it really helped.

LIAM

(amped)
No. I'm just ready to live.
(a great song comes on)
You want to dance?

Not sure what to make of him. Has to laugh.

JILLIAN

...sure.

As he takes her by the hand, they join a mosh pit of millennials, full of hope and promise.

54 **INT. PENTAGON - GRACE'S OFFICE - NIGHT** 54

She's burning the midnight oil, at her desk. She sees Harris get off the elevator, head towards his office. She shuts her computer. She's clearly been waiting for him.

55 **INT. PENTAGON - HARRIS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER** 55

Harris is on the phone with someone...

HARRIS

Yes, sir. All the information will be sent your way.

He turns, sees Grace, in the doorway. He hangs up.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

What are you still doing here?

GRACE

Had a few things to get out the door. Where you been?

A beat.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Harris. You brought me in on this project, you need to keep me in the loop. Otherwise, I can't be helpful.

He closes the door.

HARRIS

There was a burn test today of the Condor rocket engine.

GRACE

The one being used to launch the gravity tractor?

(he nods)

How did it go?

HARRIS

(without missing a beat)

Perfect. We're right on schedule.

GRACE
(relieved)
Fantastic.

He approaches. He leans in, kisses her. She leans into it.

HARRIS
I've missed you.

GRACE
I've missed you, too.

This is getting pretty steamy, then she pulls away.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Tomorrow's graduation...I need to
get home.

HARRIS
Right.

She nods, squeezes his hand and heads out. He watches her go.

56

INT. BAR - NIGHT

56

Loud Music. PEOPLE dancing. Drinking. Diego spots Liam and Jillian dancing.

DIEGO
Dude! Where the hell you been? You
haven't been to the lab in days.

LIAM
I was...out of town.
(then)
This is Jillian. Jillian, Diego.

DIEGO
(recognizes her)
The girl with the notebook.

JILLIAN
Always.

LIAM
Who wants a drink?

TIME CUT:

Liam downs a shot, motions for the BARTENDER to drop another three shots for Diego and Jillian.

TIME CUT:

He downs another shot. Jillian seems worried.

DIEGO
Whoa, dude, slow down.

TIME CUT TO:

Liam dances with abandon. Jillian can see that he's teetering at the edge between fun and totally out of control.

JILLIAN
Liam....maybe we should go.

LIAM
No, c'mon, the night is young!
We're gonna party like it's
nineteen ninety --

Liam stumbles into a big, DRUNK GUY, who pushes Liam. Liam pushes back. And the guy takes a swing at Liam. **BLACK OUT.**

57 **INT. PENTAGON - GRACE'S OFFICE - NIGHT** 57

Grace at her computer, sees Harris get into the elevator. The doors close. A beat. She gets up....

58 **INT. PENTAGON - SATELLITE IMAGING ROOM - NIGHT** 58

Grace comes out of an elevator, turns into a room marked SATELLITE IMAGING. She makes her way to **CARNAHAN**, 35, at a work station.

GRACE
Hey, Carn, how's the night shift?

CARNAHAN
Oh, a ton of laughs.

GRACE
So, I need to see satellite imagery from Wallops Island from around two o'clock this afternoon.

CARNAHAN
Grace, this is the Pentagon, not Best Buy. No hookups without clearance or an approved telemetry request.

Grace flashes her new badge.

GRACE
Clearance I have. It's time that I'm short on...

Carnahan looks at her - it's still a big ask.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Remember when you broke your ankle playing softball? How long before your request for a closer parking spot went through?

CARNAHAN

Ankle was already healed by the time HR issued the permit.

GRACE

Exactly. All I'm asking is to cut through a little red tape.

CARNAHAN

You're gonna owe me for this.

GRACE

Redskins tix. Fifty yard line.

Carnahan exhales, hits a few key strokes...a series of satellite images pop up on his screens. He clicks through images. Settles on one...zooms in...zooms in: **fragments of a huge rocket, a scorched TANZ logo still visible.**

GRACE (CONT'D)

What are we looking at?

CARNAHAN

Pieces of a Tanz Condor heavy rocket. Don't know what they were testing, but I'd say they failed. With flying colors.

Grace realizes Harris just lied to her...and the plan to save the world might have just had a serious setback.

Suddenly his screen flashes a RED WARNING: "PROJECT ATLAS DATA CLASSIFIED TIER 1 - JOINT CHIEFS EYES ONLY."

CARNAHAN (CONT'D)

Holy crap. Someone just flagged us.

GRACE

Shut it down. And don't speak a word. To anyone.

With a keystroke, the monitor goes to black.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR59 **INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

59

In the kitchen, only the light of the moon. Grace is on the phone...nursing a drink.

GRACE

...we already did. It's done. I will.

(then)

Mike. You should bring her...
Janine. See you tomorrow.

She clicks off the phone. Zoe is in the doorway.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Jesus. You scared me.

ZOE

That was...gracious.

GRACE

Your grandparents named me Grace for a reason. Big day tomorrow...

ZOE

Yeah. I better get to sleep. Mr. Friedman liked my speech, for what it's worth. And he's the toughest critic around.

GRACE

Zoe...

She GRABS ZOE by the hand.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

ZOE

For what?

GRACE

You're right, I can't make the world safe for you. You're 18. It's your life. I want you to live it however you see fit.

She HUGS her. Tight. Too tight.

We get the sense that Grace wants to tell her...everything. But she can't. She shouldn't.

60 **INT. LIAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

60

Liam's asleep. He wakes up. His head his aching. There's two ASPIRIN and a glass of water on his night table. And a note from Jillian. "WRITING AT COFFEE HAUS ON BOYLSTON."

He pops the TYLENOL. Remembering the events of last night. Barely. Shit.

61 **INT. COFFEE HAUS - DAY**

61

Jillian's writing on her laptop, headphones in, coffee cup half empty...when Liam slides into the seat across from her. She looks up at him, waits for him to say something.

LIAM

I'm sorry. About last night. I don't usually drink like that.

JILLIAN

Then why did you?

He wants to tell her everything. But he knows he can't.

LIAM

Can I ask you something -- if you were writing a story about a guy who knew the world was coming to an end and he could either save a few thousand people, or live out his days with a beautiful woman. What would you have him do?

JILLIAN

Depends. Is his character supposed to be a hero or a loser?

LIAM

Hero.

JILLIAN

Well then he's got to sacrifice his happiness for the sake of humanity.

LIAM

Even if he thinks he's in love with the woman?

JILLIAN

Especially if he is. Then it's a true sacrifice.

62

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

62

Graduation day. Cap and gowns in the front rows. Family and friends behind them.

PRINCIPAL

...and now I want to call up your keynote speaker for the class of 2017 - Zoe Darrow.

Big applause as Zoe comes up to the podium.

Grace sits with her PARENTS to her left, and MIKE and his girlfriend JANINE to the right.

MIKE

Have you heard her speech?

GRACE

She wanted it to be a surprise.

ZOE

Thank you, Principal Stark. Class of 2017, it is an honor to be able to address you all here today...I procrastinated writing this speech, as my mother will attest.

(some laughs)

Because I dreaded it. I dreaded all the emotion of saying goodbye to my friends, to my family. As exciting as the future is...it is also scary. It's the unknown.

This lands on Grace in a way it doesn't with anyone else....

63

INT. CARNAHAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

63

A small brick house in Maryland. Carnahan puts a LEASH on his wheezing BULL DOG.

CARNAHAN

C'mon Buddy, let's do your business.

As they exit towards the front door....

ZOE (O.C.)

But then I started realizing this isn't the end. This is just the beginning...

64

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

64

As Zoe continues...

ZOE

We have so much to look forward to.
But we also have a responsibility.
The future isn't just handed to us.
We create it.

As Grace listens, these words resonating...

65 **INT. LIAM'S APARTMENT**

65

...where he finishes packing up his clothes in a DUFFEL BAG.
Looks around -- the room's empty now. He's leaving. He takes
one last glance around the room...

ZOE (O.S.)

Life is filled with possibilities...

And exits.

66 **INT. CARNAHAN'S HOME**

66

Carnahan and Buddy return from the walk.

CARNAHAN

Time for a treat, Buddy.

As Carnahan heads into the kitchen to get a treat, Buddy
starts sniffing around, spots something in the living room.

CARNAHAN (CONT'D)

Buddy?

He whistles. No sign of Buddy. Hmmm. As Carnahan turns the
corner, Buddy comes rushing towards him....

CARNAHAN (CONT'D)

There you are.

As he bends down to give it to the dog, he sees a pair of
SHOES step into frame. Carnahan's eyes go wide...

ECU: on the barrel of a GUN. A BULLET discharges. Silencer.
No sound. Just the thud of Carnahan hitting the floor O.S.

Buddy takes the treat and runs off.

ZOE (O.C.)

But there is no tomorrow without us.

67 **EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY**

67

ZOE

My mother taught me at a young age,
that as individuals we are
powerful. How we use that power is
up to us. My challenge for the
class of 2017: make a difference.
Be bold. Be heard. There are people
out there who are starving. There
are diseases that need curing.
There are problems big and small
that need to be solved. And we
can't wait for someone else to
solve them. It's up to us now.

Off Grace...tears flowing, she tries to hold them back.

68 **EXT. DARIUS'S COMPOUND - DAY**

68

The compound is on a quiet country road. A car pulls up to
the front gate.

GUARD

Can I help you?

REVEAL the driver is Grace. The Guard waves her through. As
she drives in, REVEAL that across the street a CAR has tailed
her. Shooting photos with a telephoto lens. As she pulls the
camera away from her face, we see the photographer's face:
It's Amanda. The intrepid reporter.

69 **INT. DARIUS'S TREEHOUSE - DAY**

69

Darius behind his desk, Grace walks in, with purpose.

DARIUS

Grace...

GRACE

Screw you and your ark.

DARIUS

Nice to see you, too.

GRACE

You're right, Darius. The
government's plan won't work. They
need you. You said the technology
doesn't exist yet -- if you're so
damn smart, invent it. You've got
the money, the talent the
resources. Don't save 160 people.
Save them all. Every last one.

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'll do whatever it takes. Roll through red tape, get you clearances -- whatever you need from me. But dammit, my daughter deserves a future. They all do. And I'm not ready for all this...to end.

DARIUS

Grace. You had me at "screw you."

VOICE (O.S.)

Me, too.

Grace turns around to find Liam standing in the doorway, his bag slung over his shoulder. Darius takes them in, smiles.

70

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

70

ZOE

In the words of the great humanitarian Mother Teresa:
"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. So let us begin."

Off Grace, watching her daughter. Her words more powerful than she knows...

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE