

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

We OPEN on the vastness of Space.

A perfect night sky, pin-pricked with millions of stars.

Except that the stars aren't *flickering* the way they do, when we stare up at them from earth.

Because we're not on earth.

As we PAN DOWN and reveal AN ASTRONAUT, standing on the surface of the moon.

Through her faceshield, we glimpse a WOMAN on the other side of 40. But there's childlike wonder in her eyes. We see the 12-year-old girl who looked up at the sky and dreamed.

There's NO MUSIC-- perfect silence-- as we REVEAL--

HER POV: Earth, in all its fragile, breathtaking beauty.

Our astronaut's GLOVED HAND enters frame, until the planet is nestled between her forefinger and thumb. Until she's literally holding our world in her hand.

A moment of peace and perspective... before we CUT TO--

INT. UNITED STATES CAPITOL - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

The CLATTER and CLAMOR of a congressional hearing.

Our astronaut sits before the panel. Her nameplate reads EMMA GREEN.

CONGRESSMAN (O.S.)

Commander Green, everyone here believes in Space exploration.

REVEAL CONGRESSMAN BARRY TODD, 50s.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

But NASA's asking for fifty billion dollars, just for the initial stages of a mission to Mars.

EMMA

Yes, well...

Emma glances at her TALKING POINTS. Typed in bold: **Stress Cost-Efficiency.**

EMMA

First let me assure the panel that we are committed to every cost-effective measure, from reusable technologies to international partnerships.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

Meaning?

EMMA

ESA and ideally Russia and China.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

Well thank goodness we get along so well with them.

Chuckles from the congressmen. Emma feigns a smile.

EMMA

I agree that partnerships must be pursued sensibly, but as the International Space Station has--

CONGRESSMAN TODD

Let's cut straight to the point.

On Emma, a bit taken aback by the interruption.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

You got to go to the moon, so now you want to go to Mars. But I don't believe in chasing good money after bad.

EMMA

Excuse me?

CONGRESSMAN TODD

Our previous administration's return to the moon was little more than political theater. A recklessly expensive attempt to make America great by re-living the glory of the 1960s.

We feel the anger rising in Emma, as the finest achievement of her life is reduced to a publicity stunt.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

And naturally it's emboldened NASA to ask for more, but I represent the good people of Iowa. Who receive a total of five billion each year. For education. To fight poverty. You want ten times that, to build a rocket pad on the moon and launch off a mission to Mars.

EMMA

(restrained anger)

I... I'm not sure there was a question there, but I think you're asking why we should care about Mars.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

No I'm asking why we should care more about it than our own planet right here.

Emma laughs quietly in disbelief. She actually believed she was brought here to engage in reasonable debate.

But as she looks up at the panel of Congressmen-- EMMA'S POV-- mostly male-- a few checking their phones, one nodding off, the rest awaiting her reply-- she realizes there's zero objection to Todd's grandstanding.

Emma flips through her NOTES-- pages of statistics and analyses now rendered meaningless-- because none of them say why Mars is more important than healthcare and schools.

A bit desperate, Emma stops on a page of quotes. There's JFK's famous "We choose to go to the moon and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

Beneath it, one from Stephen Hawking: "I don't think the human race will survive the next 100 years, unless we spread into Space."

Then, beneath both quotes and handwritten:

"Mars is fucking cool." -Your husband.

On Emma, as the slightest of grins slips across her face.

She actually turns around and looks behind her--

EMMA'S POV-- her husband, MATT LOGAN, seated beside their six-year-old daughter, ALEXIS. Who waves.

EMMA smiles--

CONGRESSMAN TODD (O.S.)

Um... Commander Green?

She gives Matt a look-- *can you believe this asshole? What the hell am I supposed to say?*

MATT smiles back-- *yeah, he's a dick.*

But then-- Matt gives her another look. Then a little nod. The subtlest of gestures to say, *Fuck this guy, Em. He should tremble in your presence.*

Hold on Emma. A beat.

CONGRESSMAN TODD (O.S.)

Well. If there's nothing further...

EMMA

You're asking the wrong question.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

Excuse me?

She turns back around and pushes her notes aside.

EMMA

People don't care about Mars. That's why we're on C-SPAN at 11 AM.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

So you're acknowledging--

EMMA

And I could point out we don't particularly care about this planet, either, that we need Mars because we're destroying the one home we have. And that this isn't liberal propaganda, but scientific fact. The trouble is, we've reached the point where scientific fact has become a thing to be debated.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

Commander Green--

EMMA

I am one of less than twenty human beings who's set foot on the moon. And I can sit in the United States Capitol and say we need Mars to save our species, and it won't even wake the gentleman from Wyoming, much less generate a headline. So the question you should be asking is: *Why does humanity deserve to be saved?*

Stunned silence.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

I'm sorry, did you just say--

EMMA

Yes.

CONGRESSMAN TODD

You're seriously suggesting that--

EMMA

This Congress recently approved a trillion dollars in military spending. And mostly in case Russia, China and the United States decide to blow each other out of the sky.

Cameras start flashing. This just went past C-SPAN.

EMMA

I'm asking for a fraction of that money, so that our countries' finest minds can work together, taking those same rockets and re-purposing them for discovery. And if that sounds simplistic, I'd remind this panel I flew T-35s over Chinese and North Korean airspace-- I have lived on the envelope of our mutually-assured destruction. And if I could, I would drag every one of you to the surface of the moon, point you in the direction of our planet and say *look at that*.

(then; from her soul)

Why care about Mars?

PUSH IN on Emma:

EMMA

Better to ask me why choose collaboration over war. Courage over fear. Audacity and ingenuity instead of the cool comfort of what we already know.

(then)

We should care about Mars because it will be the greatest achievement in the history of humankind.

And as cameras FLASH FASTER, Emma turns back around and looks at Matt a bit stunned. Like *What did I just do?*

But Matt has his own expression of *holy shit* awe. As he realizes, even before Emma, that the tide just turned.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - OFFICE - DAY

We're TIGHT on a framed poster of The Pillars of Creation (one of the iconic photos taken by the Hubble Telescope.)

CHYRON: Six Years Later

EMMA (O.S.)

You don't think it's a little much?

ALEXIS (O.S.)

Mom, you're not appreciating how your eyes are gonna pop on camera.

We're inside a small office at NASA-- currently in use as a kind of green room. As we PAN over from the poster...

EMMA (O.S.)

How do you even know about this?

We find a MAKE-UP ARTIST, holding a compact mirror-- as Emma and Alexis, now 12, examine Emma's reflection.

ALEXIS

I watch make-up videos.

EMMA

Okay well we're talking about that later.

MATT watches, amused, his hair peppered with gray.

ALEXIS

Will you tell Mom she looks good?

MATT

Mom has never needed make-up to look good to me.

ALEXIS

Yeah now's not the time to score points. You know how many people are streaming this thing?

A KNOCK at the door. Reveal MELISSA RAMIREZ, 30s, a fellow astronaut and Emma's best friend.

EMMA

They sent you to collect me?

MELISSA

I think they're worried you'll bolt when you see how many cameras there are.

EMMA

(covering concern)

Is it... it's pretty nuts out there?

MELISSA

You ever seen footage of those old Beatles concerts?

A look of dread passes Emma's face. Matt clocks it.

MATT

(to Alexis)

Hey, you mind going with Mel and making sure our seats look okay?

MELISSA

(catching on)

C'mon, we've got you set up VIP-style.

ALEXIS

(exiting; to Emma)

You're gonna do great.

Emma puts on a brave face as Alexis (and the make-up artist) exit. Melissa remains in the doorway.

MELISSA

(to Emma)

Can I just say-- that you of all people hate speaking in public--

EMMA

Yeah we're aware of the irony--thank you.

MELISSA

You've got two minutes.

She goes. Alone with Matt, Emma starts to pace the room.

EMMA

So here's what I'm thinking. Instead of going out there right now...

MATT

Em...

EMMA

What if I don't go out there...

MATT

I brought you something.

He offers her a pair of small, wireless earbuds.

Emma smiles. This is a ritual between them.

She places them in her ears. Matt plays her a song.

But we don't hear the music. We only see Emma's response.

The hint of a smile as she listens. Then-- her shoulders relax. Her foot stops rapping the floor.

EMMA

This is new, huh?

MATT

I thought it might suit the moment.

She grins, nods. Takes a breath in and closes her eyes...

INT. JSC - HALLWAY - DAY

On Emma, walking toward the sound of a CROWD, growing LOUDER--

As a NASA ASSISTANT opens a door-- Emma walks through--

INT. JSC - BANQUET HALL - DAY

Suddenly thousands of cameras are flashing and POPPING. As Emma steps into the biggest press conference the world has ever known.

We follow her onto a dais with NINE OTHER WOMEN AND MEN-- astronauts all-- two each from China, Russia, the UK, the US, and India.

The banquet hall is packed with PRESS, FAMILY MEMBERS and SPACE AGENCY BRASS.

And though EMMA's the last person to love the limelight, we glimpse the joy on her face--

As the crew members for the inaugural mission to Mars are unveiled.

TIME CUT TO:

The press conference, already underway:

BBC REPORTER

Hannah Cairns, BBC. Are any of you concerned there is no consensus, as to which country's astronaut will be the first to set foot on Mars?

(Much like a UN Summit, the astronauts wear earpieces which translate the reporters' questions.)

DR. LIU WONG, female, late 30s, a Chinese scientist and taikonaut (astronaut) smirks when she hears the question, whispers something into her CHINESE COLLEAGUE'S ear.

(If we had to guess what Liu said, it would be along the lines of, China will be first, motherfucker.)

BBC REPORTER

Dr. Wong, did you wish to respond?

Ever stoic, Liu politely shakes her head.

As Emma leans into her microphone:

EMMA

I can only speak for myself, but I'm not remotely concerned. The first person will be from China, Russia, India, the UK or the US-- but over twenty nations have made this mission possible and we're indebted to them all.

JACK WILLMORE, Emma's American counterpart, 50s, charismatic (think Kyle Chandler) leans forward.

JACK

I think what Commander Green's trying to say is the first person to set foot on Mars will be a citizen of this world.

On Alexis, as she leans in to Matt and whispers--

ALEXIS

It's not what she was trying to say, it's what she said.

Another REPORTER, Japanese, stands and speaks.

YOMIURI REPORTER

(in Japanese; subtitled)

Yasu Tanaka, *Yomiuri Shimbun*. The ten of you were selected from the five countries with the greatest financial contributions to the mission.

As we PAN the dais of astronauts...

YOMIURI REPORTER (O.S.)

But ultimately, only one astronaut from each nation will go to Mars. The other five will lead an advance mission on the moon and prepare the rocket for launch.

Back on the REPORTER:

YOMIURI REPORTER

My question is this: would anyone here be excited to be a back-up?

No one raises a hand.

RIZ ARYA, late 30s, Indian (and gorgeous), gestures to his colleague, DEV JINDAL, 40s.

RIZ

I think Dev would make a fantastic back-up.

LAUGHTER from the audience, as Jack leans forward.

JACK

And if I can just add: obviously we're launching from the moon for practical reasons. Less gravity means a bigger, more efficient rocket.

(laying it on thick)

But I find so much hope in the thought of the entire world, stopping for one moment and looking up together.

Emma forces a smile as Riz leans in and whispers--

RIZ

Sounds like someone's gunning for your seat.

As another REPORTER stands--

AMERICAN REPORTER

A recent study concluded that there's essentially a fifty-fifty chance the prime crew won't survive this mission.

RIZ

Do the back-ups have better odds? 'Cuz I might change my last answer.

LAUGHTER-- EMMA instinctively looks to her daughter--

EMMA'S POV-- but Lex is smiling with everyone else--

As ANOTHER REPORTER stands--

MOSCOW REPORTER

(*in Russian; subtitled*)

Andrei Federov, Moscow Times. This question comes from Anya Mozorov, 12 years old: "What will you miss most during the three years you're away?"

Liu leans forward-- as if scripted:

LIU

(in Chinese; subtitled)

I will miss the Motherland and my loving husband.

We FIND Liu's husband, ZHANG WONG, 40s, in the crowd. He forces a smile-- something's not quite right there--

Then MISHA POPOV, late 50s, cosmonaut and engineer-- the seasoned veteran of the bunch-- leans in:

MISHA

(in Russian; subtitled)

To be honest, I feel more at home in Space than on Earth.

(then; sincerely)

But I'll miss my grandchildren very much.

Then Riz:

RIZ

Dancing. No-- women. The beach. Sunshine. Wind. Did I mention women?

DR. HENRY BELL, 40s, British and soft-spoken, the world's pre-eminent botanist.

HENRY

I'll miss my garden back home.

(then)

Though if all goes well, I'll be building an even more spectacular garden on Mars.

We HOLD on EMMA as we hear Jack's voice--

JACK (O.S.)

My children.

Then PUSH IN on Emma as we hear the other astronauts ("My son," "My children,")-- their voices growing distant--

Then suddenly we snap to a SERIES OF SHOTS-- we see what Emma will miss most:

- Emma and Alexis, jogging together in the early AM hours. Their morning ritual-- we hold this for a moment--

Then flash even faster through a series of SHOTS:

- Emma, in the shower, steaming water pelting her skin--

- Matt and Alexis, sitting at the piano bench, as he gives his daughter a lesson--

- Matt, pouring fresh herbs into a homemade sauce--
- Emma, tucking her daughter into bed--
- Emma, crawling in bed and snuggling her husband--

Then back ON EMMA, in the present, as she leans into her microphone and simply says:

EMMA

My family.

EXT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - DAY

The Texas sky, bloodied beautiful at dusk. Our family's gathered on the back porch-- Matt manning the grill while Emma and Lex do homework on the porch swing.

EMMA

Okay it's a quadratic equation, so what do we do?

ALEXIS

We complete the square.

EMMA

Excellent and how do we do that?

ALEXIS

I have no idea.

MATT

Dinner is served.

Matt sets a platter of grilled swordfish (or something equally legit) on the table.

EMMA

(re: Lex's workbook)
Bring that with you.

ALEXIS

No homework at the dinner table.

MATT

No *cell phone* at the dinner table, but nice try.

ALEXIS

We're supposed to be celebrating.

EMMA

You have a test tomorrow. And it's too soon to celebrate--

ALEXIS

Oh come on...

EMMA

We have no idea if I'll--

EMMA

Jack Willmore's a good astronaut.

ALEXIS

Jack Willmore's an ass-munch.

EMMA

Hey.

Lex mouths "He is" to her dad; he mouths "I know" back. (Emma's Alexis's hero, but Matt's her best friend.)

ALEXIS

You're the reason there is a mission.
(as if it's so obvious)
You're going.

But as soon as she says it-- it's as if something hits Alexis. We stay on her as--

EMMA (O.S.)

This looks amazing-- you grilled the bread too?

MATT (O.S.)

What do you think this is, amateur hour?

ALEXIS

Here's a math question I don't know the answer to.

EMMA

Hit me.

ALEXIS

Is it really fifty-fifty you'll die?

Emma and Matt are silent for just a moment--

MATT

Lex...

EMMA

It's okay.

MATT

The thing you have to... these press conferences-- sometimes the journalists like to be provocative--

Emma takes her daughter's hand.

EMMA

For the next two years, I'm gonna be working with the smartest people in the world. Thinking up every possible thing that could go wrong, and then practicing them, over and over, until we're ready.

Emma looks her daughter in the eyes. Struggles to say what comes next. But she loves her too much to lie.

EMMA

But, this job... Space... Sweetie, there are risks.

Matt tries to catch her eye... *that's enough*... but Emma can't stop now.

EMMA

And... there is a chance...
(the hardest thing to say)
... that I don't make it home.

On Alexis. Quiet. Grateful for the truth, but heartbroken. Emma pulls her close and holds her tight--

INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

On Emma and Matt, getting ready for bed. In silence. An unspoken tension before--

EMMA

Do you want to *talk* about--

MATT

Clearly my opinion on this doesn't matter so--

EMMA

You wanted me to *lie* to her?

MATT

I wanted you to stop after 'we're gonna be working with the smartest people'--

EMMA

I was proud of her. For *saying* what was on her-- and not just keeping it *bottled up* like some people.

Matt almost responds-- but swallows it.

EMMA

Case in point.

She heads off toward the bathroom when--

MATT

Every time you've launched-- it's the worst day of my life.

She stops. Looks at him. He's never said this.

MATT

You have *no idea* how it feels... to, to be standing there, everyone around you cheering, waving the flag and you know, in about five minutes, the person you love-- who is your life-- could be blown to pieces. And then you'll turn to your daughter, who just watched the fucking thing happen.

(then)

So I'm sorry if I don't want our twelve-year-old to live with that *sickening dread*-- if I want her to be one of the people who gets to cheer. But no matter what happens during launch you're not gonna be around after so maybe this one should've been *my call*.

A beat. She approaches him, moved by his honesty.

MATT

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that.

She takes his face in her hands and kisses him.

He responds-- a kind of desperation overtakes them both--

They claw each other-- cling to each other-- the need to have this before it's taken away--

Emma stops for just a moment and looks at him, memorizing every contour of his face. Then, very quietly:

EMMA

I'm gonna miss you so much.

He kisses her gently-- we hold this tableau-- the two of them, faintly lit by the moonlight streaming in--

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASE - NIGHT

EMMA-- CLICKING the helmet of her Spacesuit into place.

INT. BASE - AIRLOCK - NIGHT

Emma, in an airlock, during the final few seconds of pressurization. The warning lights flash from red to green-- Emma opens the airlock and steps out--

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

As we REVEAL-- our lunar base.

CHYRON: Two Years Later

Flood lights illuminate a small village of inflated domes. Robotic buggies silently churn across the surface. As-- in the distance, lunar ice caps are mined for water.

It all looks like some gorgeous work of science fiction. (It's actually NASA & ESA's most ambitious vision for the next decade of Space exploration.)

The centerpiece of our lunar base is unmistakable-- because it's the largest rocket ever constructed. Taller than the Statue of Liberty and equally magnificent-- this is the spacecraft that will take humanity to Mars.

INT. SPACECRAFT - NIGHT (IT'S ALWAYS NIGHT ON THE MOON)

On Emma, strapped into the commander's chair, as she flips a switch and communicates with Mission Control.

EMMA

Houston, Atlas. Verifying Ground Control Systems...

CAPCOM (O.S.)

Atlas, Houston. GCS is a go.

EMMA

(flipping a switch)
Verify Life Support...

CAPCOM (O.S.)

That's affirmative. LCS is a go.

EMMA

And last but not least...

(flips a switch)

Verify Telemetry and Guidance Control.

CAPCOM (O.S.)

It would be disappointing to go to all this effort and overshoot Mars.

EMMA

Disappointing is one word.

CAPCOM (O.S.)

Telemetry and Guidance Control are a go.

EMMA

And that completes Final Systems Checks on the vehicle.

CAPCOM (O.S.)

The countdown clock is now at T-Minus 48 hours and counting, Commander.

EMMA

Copy all.

TIGHT ON Emma, for what feels like a true *hero* moment.

EMMA

T-Minus 48 hours to launch.

INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - DAY

On Matt and Alexis (now 14), watching a live broadcast on TV. We see the headline-- "Mars Mission: Part One"-- then hear the REPORTER:

REPORTER

A moment that stirs images of Aldrin and Armstrong. And in forty-eight hours, five astronauts will take their place in history alongside them, their names emblazoned into immortality...

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

On Emma-- as we first met her, standing on the surface of the moon.

REPORTER (V.O.)
Riz Arya of India; Dr. Liu Wong of China;

Emma's POV-- looking back at Earth--

REPORTER (V.O.)
Dr. Henry Bell of England; Misha Popov of
Russia-- and from the United States...

TIGHT ON Emma as:

REPORTER (V.O.)
Commander Jack Willmore.

Emma's once-expression of wonder now an unspoken ache.

She looks up-- her POV-- as we pan up from Earth-- and
reveal a landing vehicle, beginning its descent.

INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - DAY

On Matt, as he MUTES the TV.

MATT
So here's what I'm thinking. Your mom
gets home in five days. What do you say
we have all of her favorite things
waiting for her when she lands?

ALEXIS
I like it. We should get some brisket
from Smitty's.

MATT
And some bourbon pecan pie.

ALEXIS
And maybe a dartboard with Jack
Willmore's face on it.

MATT
I'll grab my keys.

As Matt exits, Alexis turns the volume back up on the TV--

REPORTER (O.S.)
"Clearly the most significant lunar
landing in more than sixty years..."

Suddenly the sound of GLASS SHATTERING in the other room--

ALEXIS
Dad?

As Lex goes to check on her dad, we TRACK up to the TV--

REPORTER

"Commander Willmore and his crew
executing a flawless touch-down..."

ALEXIS (O.S.)

DAD?!!

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Then to the surface of the moon-- the prime crew has
landed-- the "A-Team" and "B-Team" face each other like
mirror images.

Except that the A-Team's Spacesuits are gleaming white
and the B-Team's are coated in two months' worth of lunar
regolith and dust.

Off Emma, greeting Jack Willmore through gritted teeth--

EMMA

Welcome to the moon.

INT. BASE - NIGHT

JACK

(to Emma)

I'm very jealous of you.

Everyone has gathered at the dinner table.

Apparently, some asshole at NASA thought it was good PR
for all the astronauts to break bread. A Last Supper of
freeze-dried food before the A-Team launches to Mars.

EMMA

(quietly; restrained)

You're jealous.

JACK

You'll be back home in a swimming pool in
less than a week.

EMMA

Would you like to trade spots?

Riz smiles. But Liu and Misha don't find Emma's comment
funny at all. They're actually glaring at her before--

MISHA

Perhaps we should review tomorrow's schedule, Commander.

EMMA

Absolutely. Crew hand-offs will commence at precisely--

MISHA

I was addressing Commander Willmore.

A tense silence. Something unspoken *hanging* in the air.

JACK

I'd actually like to make a toast.

In an effort to ease the tension, Jack raises his "mug."

JACK

When Neil and Buzz landed on this rock, there was a third astronaut in their crew.

As we PAN the B-Team-- from VALENTINA (Russia) and HELEN (UK)...

JACK (O.S.)

He never got to touch down...

To Dev (India) and YANG (China)...

JACK (O.S.)

He remained in his vehicle, orbiting the moon...

We settle on Emma as--

JACK (O.S.)

Listening as Neil and Buzz took their giant leap for mankind.

Jack nods at Emma as:

JACK

But without him the moon never could have been reached.

EMMA

... To Michael Collins.

ALL

To Michael Collins.

A well-intentioned gesture, but it only amplifies the B-team's envy and resentment. As the dinner table drifts into private conversations, Riz turns to Emma--

RIZ

(aside; joking)

Why do I feel like we should sleep with one eye open tonight?

EMMA

(aside; playful)

I've seen your response time in training simulations-- if I wanted your spot, you could be wide awake.

Misha overhears Emma-- stares at her in disbelief.

RIZ

Spoken like a true Navy pilot. All talk, no action.

EMMA

Spoken like an Air Force man: no talk, no action.

MISHA

(loudly; at Emma)

Did you really just joke about *someone else's* performance during training?

Another record-scratch silence as everyone's yanked back into the conversation.

MISHA

The nerve on you-- after what you did...

JACK

Misha...

RIZ

We all made mistakes in simulations.

LIU

(sharply; at Emma)

It wasn't a simulation.

JACK

It's in the past. Leave it there, okay Liu?

LIU

... Aye, Commander.

Emma holds Liu's glare as Jack changes the subject.

JACK

So, Henry-- still no appetite?

HENRY

Oh just a bit nauseous now.

MISHA

Dr. Bell has a *delicate constitution*.

RIZ

You should've seen him on the way up. I honestly didn't know the human body could produce that much vomit.

MISHA

Let's hope you're a better botanist than you are an astronaut, eh?

Henry smiles at the ribbing-- but Emma can tell Misha's gotten under his skin.

EMMA

Don't worry about it-- you'll adjust. We all got sick our first time up.

MISHA

I didn't.

EMMA

Well clearly you're the greatest astronaut and engineer who ever lived and have an enormous dick, Misha.

A charged silence-- before:

MISHA

Guilty on all counts.

LAUGHTER-- as the tension in the room finally breaks. Even Emma cracks a smile-- when:

CAPCOM (O.S.)

Atlas, Houston. I've got an incoming call for Commander Green.

EMMA

I'm here, put it through.

CAPCOM (O.S.)

Emma, the call's from Melissa Ramirez. We've privatized the line.

And suddenly the color *drains from Emma's face*.

She looks at Jack-- a shared moment of terrible recognition.

Emma tries to rise, but it's as if the strength has left her legs. As she forces herself up and leaves--

HENRY

(quietly; to the table)
I don't... who's Melissa Ramirez?

JACK

Her Emissary to Gravity.

The room goes silent. Even Liu and Misha are solemn.

INT. BASE - EMMA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

On Emma, her laptop open, a live feed of Melissa as--

MELISSA

An hour ago, Matt suffered what doctors are calling a spinal stroke. His vitals are stable, but he had to be intubated.

TIGHT ON Emma-- in shock.

EMMA

I don't...
(then)
Where's Lex-- I, I need to talk to--

MELISSA

She's okay she's with him in the ICU.

EMMA

(disbelief)
He had a *stroke*?

MELISSA

Technically it's called a spinal infarction--

EMMA

You keep saying *spinal*...

MELISSA

Before Matt lost consciousness, he lost a lot of movement in his arms and legs--

EMMA

You're saying he's paralyzed?!

MELISSA

The doctors stress it's too early to say anything. They're running tests and they've got a specialist coming in the morning.

Emma's silent. Trying to process the incomprehensible.

EMMA

Was Lex... *with him* when it--

MELISSA

She's the one who called 911.

Tears flood Emma's eyes.

And then-- Emma imagines the scene--

QUICK FLASH: Alexis, terrified, riding in the ambulance with Matt--

Then back ON EMMA. But just when we expect her to *break down*-- it's like a switch flips inside her and the commander takes over.

EMMA

I need to talk to Lex-- I want a Satcom link set up in the ICU, I want to speak with Matt's doctors and I want a private number for that specialist and I want this done now.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A cell phone lights up and BUZZES on a bedside table. A hand grasps for the phone-- we hear a man's GROGGY VOICE.

MAN

Hello?

EMMA (O.S.)

(through the phone)

Dr. Lawrence Madigan?

MAN

Speaking...

EMMA (O.S.)

This is Commander Emma Green of Lunar Base Alpha. A car will be by shortly to--

DR. MADIGAN
I'm... excuse me?

EMMA (O.S.)
--transport you to Houston
Methodist.

A lamp clicks on. Revealing LAWRENCE MADIGAN, 50s,
African-American, Head of Research at TIRR MEMORIAL and
one of the world's leading experts on spinal injury.

DR. MADIGAN
I'm sorry-- who is this and how did you
get this number?

INT. SMALL SPACECRAFT - BASE - NIGHT

Reveal Emma, inside a small Spacecraft.

EMMA
I'm calling you from the surface of the
moon and your question is how did I get
your number? Wake up, Doctor. Your
patient is Matthew Logan. A car will
arrive momentarily to transport you and
brief you on his case. Do you understand?

DR. MADIGAN'S VOICE
... Yes.

EMMA
Good. I'll check in with you soon.

Emma hangs up-- without missing a beat, she flips on the
Spacecraft's Comms:

EMMA
All right Kylie, let's get these Systems
Checks done.

CAPCOM (O.S.)
Emma...

EMMA
I appreciate it's 1 AM in Houston-- but
the prime crew launches to Mars in 42
hours, I launch home 12 hours after that
and there will be no delays.

CAPCOM (O.S.)
Understood, I just wanted you to know the
Satcom's ready. They weren't able to set
up a visual feed in the ICU, but we've
got an audio link up and running.

EMMA

Put me through.

(then)

Lex?

There's approximately one second of delay before:

ALEXIS'S VOICE

Mom?

EMMA

I'm here-- I'm here.

ALEXIS'S VOICE sounds startlingly close. Like she's in the next room-- and not 240,000 miles away.

ALEXIS'S VOICE

Mom, none of the doctors will tell me what's going on.

EMMA

I'm gonna talk to the doctors but I just I need to know *are you okay?*

TIGHT ON Emma's hands, flexed-- her primal need to reach out and hold her daughter.

ALEXIS'S VOICE

It just happened *so fast*. All of a sudden he was on the floor and... and then his body started shaking...

Emma fights to keep her emotions in check as--

ALEXIS'S VOICE

Then he couldn't breathe and I just I don't understand what's going on.

EMMA

I know but we're gonna bring in the best people and get Dad the treatment he needs and I believe, with every cell in my body, that he's going to be okay.

And we hear the youth in Alexis's voice as:

ALEXIS'S VOICE

I just wish you were here.

EMMA

I will be-- in just a few days-- I promise you that.

(then)

Have you heard from Grandma?

ALEXIS'S VOICE

Yeah she's-- there's a thing with her flights-- but she's on her way.

From a small window in her landing vehicle, Emma has a clear view of Earth.

EMMA

I'm gonna be checking in with Dad's doctors throughout the night, but you're my eyes on the ground right now, so I need you to stay strong, okay?

ALEXIS

Yeah.

(then, stronger)

Yes.

EMMA

You have a place to sleep there?

ALEXIS'S VOICE

Yeah, Mel helped me set up the couch.

EMMA

Good, that's good.

(then)

Could you put the Satcom next to your father, please?

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Matt's hospital room is bathed in moonlight.

We're on Alexis, as she carries the Satcom link to Matt's bedside, and we reveal--

ALEXIS

It's ready.

Matt, unconscious, a breathing tube sticking out of his throat. We hold this startling image a moment before:

EMMA'S VOICE

I'm not sure if you can hear me...

INT. SMALL SPACECRAFT - BASE - NIGHT

Back on Emma:

EMMA

The doctors don't know if you're able...

Her voice HITCHES as it suddenly hits her that she may never hear her husband speak again.

EMMA

Personally I think you can. I think you're just doing that thing you do where you pretend not to listen, then wait 'til I get annoyed, and then recite back, word for word, everything I just said.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Then back on Matt as:

EMMA'S VOICE

There's this song I've been listening to. Every night I've been up here... Anyway it sounds a lot better than my voice.

It's quiet a moment... and then a stunningly beautiful PIANO SCORE emerges from the Satcom.

INT. SMALL SPACECRAFT - BASE - NIGHT

We move back to Emma, playing the song on her laptop. And reveal the artist: "Matt Logan."

The MUSIC continues as the camera slowly pushes in on Emma-- suddenly we FLASH TO--

EXT./INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Emma, returning home from work-- it's completely silent.

She passes through the HALLWAY, enters her LIVING ROOM-- and finds Alexis asleep on the couch, her homework on top of her.

Matt's at the piano, playing, wearing headphones that plug into the piano. There's no sound save the CLICK-CLACKING as Matt's fingers fly across the keys.

Emma remains in the doorway, unnoticed, watching Matt's HANDS move with impossible precision and speed. The look on Emma's face not unlike her expression from the Cold Open, when she looked back at Earth in awe.

She moves to the piano bench and takes off his headphones. He stops playing, a bit embarrassed he hadn't heard her enter.

She sits beside him on the bench and puts on the headphones. Nods at him-- *go ahead*. He looks at her. Sets his fingers on the keys. She rests her head on his shoulder and once again watches his HANDS move.

But this time-- as MUSIC FILLS her headphones-- it's *overwhelming*. No longer just an exercise in skill but an expression of purpose. Every note he plays has meaning.

Emma closes her eyes, listening--

As we PAN OUT and see our family together-- Alexis on the couch, Matt and Emma at the piano bench--

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Then back to the present, as the SAME SONG plays through the Satcom--

And Alexis rests on the couch while Matt lay unconscious in his hospital bed, his HANDS locked into gnarled claws--

INT. SMALL SPACECRAFT - BASE - NIGHT

Then back on Emma, staring at a distant Earth and listening to the music Matt may never play again.

INT. BASE - EMMA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

We're on Emma, packing her belongings for the journey home-- when Jack KNOCKS on her door:

JACK
Any news?

EMMA
Not yet.

JACK
... I'm so sorry, Emma.

EMMA
Crew hand-offs are underway?

JACK
(nods)
I was about to do my walk-around.

EMMA
Yeah.

JACK

I'd be honored if you'd do it with me.

She looks at him, surprised and grateful for the gesture.

EXT. SPACECRAFT - BASE - NIGHT

On Emma and Jack, as they stare up at the underbelly of the most powerful rocket ever built:

It's thirty feet in diameter-- and at the moment, venting plumes of white smoke which tumble down the sides of its 300 foot-tall hull.

But for all its latent fury, the rocket is silent. There's no sound in Space.

JACK

Strange not to hear it groaning. It's almost hard to believe it's ready for launch.

Emma reaches up and touches one of the rocket's thirty-two engines and we suddenly feel its violent energy, rattling and alive.

It's a striking image-- Emma reaching up and gracing the rocket-- as natural as if she were soothing an untamed mare. It's so clear to us, to Jack-- Emma's a born pilot.

EMMA

(rejoining Jack)
Should we head back to base?

JACK

Emma, I...
(she stops)
I know tomorrow's launch will be hard to watch. You deserved this mission.

EMMA

I had my opportunity.

JACK

And if it had been me up on the Space Station when all hell broke loose, I would've done the same thing as you.

EMMA

I doubt it, but it's kind of you to say. And to be honest, for the first time, I'm glad you're going.

JACK
(nods, then)
Matt's a fighter, he'll pull through.

EMMA
... Thank you.
(then)
But try not to muck it up tomorrow,
billions of people are watching.

JACK
I'll keep that in mind.

Emma offers her hand.

EMMA
Godspeed, Commander.

It's a quiet, poignant moment, the calm before the storm.

We're in EMMA'S POV-- looking at Jack-- the sun visible
behind him--

When suddenly-- as if it's emerging from the sun itself--

A tiny *flicker* of light paces toward us--

And what happens next is almost too fast to process:

As Jack's backpack explodes into shrapnel--

Slamming him into us--

We slam into the lunar surface--

Suddenly we're airborne--

Floating through the sky--

The rocket streaking past--

An ALERT on the Spacesuit sounds off--

As Mission Control CUTS in and out:

CAPCOM (O.S.)
Commander Green do you... just lost
communication with...

The camera goes WIDE--

And Emma's sixty feet above the ground, hurtling
uncontrollably in silence--

Until gravity wins out--

And Emma falls back to the surface-- slowly at first--
but picking up speed--

BACK IN EMMA'S POV-- the ground rising to meet her--

As she strikes the surface--

Her fingers dragging along the regolith-- trying to gain
purchase-- she starts to *float* back up--

Then grips a rock and thrusts herself to the ground,
landing hard in a cloud of dust as--

Another ALERT SOUNDS OFF--

Emma pushes herself to her knees-- checks the gauge on
her wrist--

Her O2 and pressure are dropping-- Emma checks her suit--
something tore on impact but she can't find the breach--

CAPCOM (O.S.)
(crackling through)
Emma... read?

EMMA
Houston, copy. Jack was struck by some
sort of--

CAPCOM (O.S.)
Emma what's your status?

EMMA
O two at nine percent and falling.

CAPCOM (O.S.)
Return to base immediately.

Emma looks to her right-- sees the airlock a hundred
meters away.

Then glances to her left and spots Jack, face down in the
dust. It's like a bomb went off on his backpack.

EMMA
I have eyes on Jack.

Jack suddenly moves-- tries to rise-- but collapses.

CAPCOM (O.S.)
Emma you need to get into an airlock now.

EMMA

Copy that.

But Emma's already on her way to Jack--

HER POV: ALARMS BLARING LOUDER--

EMMA

Jack, do you copy?

He rises to his knees-- to his feet-- stumbles in the wrong direction-- then collapses onto his knee--

EMMA

Jack.

No response.

Emma reaches him-- spins him around-- Jack's gasping for air-- his eyes darting back and forth-- he's hypoxic.

Emma presses her faceplate against his-- a failsafe for astronauts-- sound-waves travel through glass.

EMMA

Can you hear me, Jack?

His eyes don't track but he nods his head.

EMMA

You're out of oxygen-- we need to get you into an airlock now. I want you to remain calm and still, do you understand?

Jack nods and Emma positions herself underneath him.

And what happens next is almost indescribable.

Jack weighs more than 700 pounds in his suit-- but in the moon's gravity, that's just over a hundred.

Yet it feels no less a miracle when Emma sloughs him over her shoulders...

Then rises to her feet, bearing his weight in a fireman's carry-- as she takes a single step forward--

EMMA'S POV: the airlock in the distance-- it's like she's moving through water--

Another ALERT BLARES-- we hear her LABORED BREATHING as--

INT. BASE - AIRLOCK - NIGHT

The airlock door bursts open and Emma and Jack collapse inside--

She closes and seals the airlock door-- but it's a 90-second process of depressurization--

Emma looks at the clock--

EMMA

C'mon...

The seconds drip down-- 88... 87...

Emma checks her gauges--

Her O2 needle's buried in the red--

She turns to Jack--

Who's weakly pawing at his helmet, trying to take it off--

EMMA

(gasping)

No, Jack...

She knocks his arms away-- presses her faceplate against his-- he's turning blue, desperately out of air--

EMMA

The airlock hasn't pressurized. We need to keep your helmet on a little longer...

She takes his hand and holds it firm. Looks at the clock:

79... 78...

Then back at Jack:

EMMA

Stay with me.

But then-- his eyes go dead-- his HAND slips away--

EMMA

No, Jack...

He begins to slump over--

EMMA

Jack!

And Emma makes the split-second decision-- grabbing his helmet and twisting it off--

But in an unpressurized environment, it's like popping the top off a champagne bottle--

As Jack's helmet shatters into shards of metal and glass-- we CUT TO--

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - DAY

A PAIR OF BLUE EYES, very slowly opening.

We first assume it's Jack, coming to--

Then realize:

This is Matt, waking up.

CUT TO:

The breathing tube, being pulled out of Matt's throat.
The sound of his FIRST BREATH.

CUT TO:

Matt's POV: as Dr. Madigan sweeps an examining light over his eyes.

DR. MADIGAN

Matt, my name is Dr. Lawrence Madigan.
You've had a stroke.

CUT TO:

INT. BASE - MEDBAY - NIGHT

Jack's POV: as Riz (our medic) sweeps a light over his eyes-- TIGHT on Jack's LEFT EYE-- normal and alert--

RIZ (O.S.)

You've had an accident, Jack.

As we pan to his RIGHT EYE, soaked in blood.

INT. BASE - NIGHT

On Riz, addressing the crew:

RIZ

A piece of metal from his helmet penetrated his cornea and ruptured the globe of his right eye. He has no vision in that eye presently, but with multiple surgeries that could change.

All of our astronauts-- A-Team and B-Team-- are silent. Henry is clearly rattled. We hold on Emma as:

LIU (O.S.)

Who took off his helmet?

Emma looks up, sees Liu staring right at her.

EMMA

Excuse me?

LIU

Protocol says his helmet remains on until the airlock--

EMMA

He was about to suffocate.

LIU

So you made the decision *for* him.

EMMA

Are you serious right now--

MISHA

And how do you know he was out of air-- what did his gauges--

EMMA

His gauges were shot because his suit was shrapnel.

LIU

I would die before I had the mission *taken* from me--

RIZ

Liu you are out of line--

EMMA

What the hell are you trying to suggest--

LIU

I am trying to determine if you recklessly overstepped *again* or--

RIZ

She saved his life.

MISHA

(at Emma)

If you ever have the opportunity to *save my life*, leave my helmet on.

RIZ

Watch your tone; you're addressing your Commander.

And that's how quickly it happens. As eight astronauts turn to Emma and await their orders.

And a stunning reality slams upon her: she just inherited the mission.

Emma's silent, the sudden enormity of this overwhelming.

Misha rises and leaves, disgusted with the turn of events. Liu follows. Everyone else looks to Emma.

EMMA

We're um... we're twenty hours from launch and we just fell behind schedule. I want crew hand-offs completed within the hour. I'll debrief with Houston and relay any updates I receive. That's all.

As the astronauts rise and disperse, we pre-lap Alexis's voice--

ALEXIS'S VOICE

The doctor just took him for an MRI...

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - DAY

To Alexis, looking more hopeful than we last saw her. Almost *happy*.

ALEXIS

He can't talk yet he's still on a mask but the doctor said he should get his voice back soon-- he'll be talking before you even get home.

INTERCUT EMMA, in her quarters, heartbroken at what she now has to do.

EMMA

(softly)

That's good news.

ALEXIS

Yeah Grandma tried to tell the doctors they couldn't do any testing 'til she got here.

EMMA

Wait-- she's not there yet?

ALEXIS

No she's I don't know *what's* going-- you can deal with Grandma when you get home.

EMMA

Lex there's-- something's happened here. And I need you to hear it from me before you see it on the news.

ALEXIS

Are you okay?

EMMA

Yeah I'm...

On Emma, moved that her daughter's worried about her.

EMMA

There was an accident-- Jack Willmore was hurt.

ALEXIS

Oh my god is he all right?

EMMA

Yeah. He's going to be fine.

(beat)

But he can't fly the mission.

Silence. Alexis tries to stay strong-- her eyes well up.

ALEXIS

And?

EMMA

Honey you know what my job is. What this mission means. What Mars means.

ALEXIS

So you're not coming home.

EMMA

Lex...

ALEXIS

Please. Just say it.

EMMA

Grandma will be there soon. Melissa will be there every day. And I will be with you every second possible. I love you and I love Dad more than anything else in the world.

ALEXIS

Except for your job.

EMMA

Lex...

ALEXIS

I gotta go. Mel's taking me to the house to grab some of Dad's things.

EMMA'S VOICE

Please just wait a--

Alexis turns off the Satcom link and leaves.

We hold on Emma, gutted--

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

Back at NASA, everyone's moving at 200 mph in the wake of Jack's accident. We're with PATTI COLE, 60s, Head of the Astronaut Office and a former astronaut herself-- as she walks and talks with an ENGINEER:

PATTI

We're positive it wasn't a flaw in his suit?

ENGINEER

We're running every test imaginable, but our best theory is that Jack was struck by a micro-meteorite--

PATTI

Your best *theory*?

ENGINEER

Patti...

PATTI

They launch in eighteen hours I'd like to be certain they're not wearing suits which could randomly *explode*.

The engineer peels off as an ASSISTANT approaches, holding a headset.

PATTI

Were you able to reach Jack's family?

ASSISTANT

They're on their way in.

PATTI

Keep the press away from them. As soon as we go public with what happened, it's going to be a feeding frenzy for Jack and Emma's family.

ASSISTANT

Speaking of...

(re: the headset)

Emma wants to talk to you right away.

PATTI

Next time lead with that.

Patti hops on the headset without breaking stride.

PATTI

That was a very brave thing you did for Jack.

INTERCUT Emma, in her QUARTERS, pacing-- an idea brewing.

EMMA

Patti I need you to get some engineers in a room and run a scenario.

PATTI

Sure-- for what?

EMMA

I need to know if the mission could proceed with a crew of four.

For the first time, Patti stops walking.

PATTI

Emma...

EMMA

I understand what I'm asking.

PATTI

I don't think you do-- I can't *imagine* what you're going through.

This isn't a platitude-- Patti genuinely cares for Emma, and this is one astronaut speaking to another.

PATTI

If something had happened to my family when I'd been up there, I would've lost my mind.

EMMA

(stone-cold)

Do I sound like I've lost my mind?

PATTI

What you're proposing--

EMMA

What I'm proposing is that I have all available information before making a decision. So unless you plan on strapping me to that rocket, you better get some engineers in a room and tell me exactly how my absence impacts the mission outcome.

PATTI

Emma...

But Emma's hung up. We stay on Patti, stunned-- *did that just happen?*

On EMMA, stunned-- *did I really just do that?*

PATTI collects herself and heads into a private room--

INT. JSC - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Where a debate rages on a global scale.

GEORGE

You don't think you're being unreasonable?

GEORGE LANG, 50s, the Head of NASA-- is in a heated argument with the HEADS of all our Space programs: ROSCOSMOS (Russia), ESA (Europe), the CNSA (China), and the ISRO (India).

ESA HEAD

Our astronauts are now taking orders from a back-up who just debilitated the prime--

GEORGE

Emma just demonstrated a *heroism*-- your people are lucky to have her in command.

PATTI

(quietly)

George...

ISRO HEAD

What you call heroic I call reckless.
Emma was instructed to proceed to the
airlock immediately--

GEORGE

I'm sorry, *your* issue is that she
should've left Jack behind?!

ROSCOMOS HEAD

He has a point, George, this mission
could have just lost both commanders.

CNSA HEAD

(in Mandarin; subtitled)

This is not the first time she has
disregarded protocol. And the only reason
an American is commanding this mission is
because you spent the most money.

CHINESE TRANSLATOR

He said that--

GEORGE

I got the gist.

(forced calm; diplomatic)

I appreciate everyone's concerns. But I
promise you; there is no one more
capable, nor more fiercely committed to
your astronauts, than Emma Green.

PATTI

George I need to speak with you *now*.

INT. JSC - PRIVATE HALLWAY - NIGHT

On George, as he laughs quietly in disbelief.

GEORGE

She wants us to *run scenarios*?

PATTI

George...

GEORGE

If the people on the other side of this
wall--

(shock giving way to rage)

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I'm about to get on the phone and assure the President we're still on track.

PATTI

I understand.

GEORGE

Make *Emma* understand.

(goes to head back in; stops)
Does her crew know?

PATTI

I don't think so.

GEORGE

Keep it that way. If they found out she was even *considering* this...

PATTI

They'd mutiny.

INT. BASE - PRIVATE QUARTERS - NIGHT

On Emma's crew, well on their way to a *coup*.

RIZ

(to Liu; in disbelief)
You're suggesting she intentionally removed his helmet early--

LIU

I said that it was possible.

MISHA

Emma did make it clear at dinner that she wanted his seat.

RIZ

Jack told me himself that Emma saved his life.

LIU

Of course he said that.

RIZ

What does that mean?

LIU

That unlike most Americans, Jack has honor. He would never let his ego and emotions interfere with the mission.

Henry quietly smirks.

MISHA

What?

Henry wants to scream, *Jack just got hit by a fucking meteor-- god forbid any of us have an emotional response.*

HENRY

It's been my experience that Emma has more compassion for her crew than most. I don't believe her capable of sabotage.

RIZ

To say nothing of her husband just had a stroke and she wants to be home.

MISHA

That's even worse. I'd prefer sabotage to a woman who could choose her *family* over the mission.

LIU

(raw; emotional)

And we've all left behind someone we love.

MISHA

Riz, I know that you have a certain *affection* for Emma but--

RIZ

What the hell are you suggesting--

MISHA

That it's easier for you to follow her orders than it is for us.

RIZ

And why is that.

LIU

She didn't nearly kill you.

And off this stunning revelation, we move to--

INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alexis, entering her parents' bedroom, carrying her back-pack from school.

She opens a drawer, grabs a few pairs of her father's socks and underwear and sets them in her back-pack.

She opens another drawer, collects a few T-shirts and places them in the bag. She proceeds to--

THE BATHROOM

Where Emma and Matt's absence is present everywhere: the untouched razor on the counter, the half-killed tube of toothpaste, the two toothbrushes, side by side.

Alexis starts to crack open, as the weight of her dad's stroke, her mom's absence, finally crashes down upon her.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Alexis?

Lex does her best to collect herself as Melissa enters.

MELISSA

You doing okay?

ALEXIS

Yeah, I just... I don't know which toothbrush is his.

Melissa can read the pain on Alexis's face. She places her hand on Lex's shoulder.

MELISSA

Then we'll grab them both.

And as Melissa begins to play a kind of surrogate mom--

INT. BASE - NIGHT

We move to Emma, on a "Skype" call with Dr. Madigan.

EMMA

The thing I don't-- you're saying he has an incomplete spinal injury-- but he didn't *have* an injury.

DR. MADIGAN

In spinal strokes, there often isn't a precipitating event. We may never know what caused this.

EMMA

Well what does *incomplete* mean?

DR. MADIGAN

It means his spinal cord isn't severed. He should regain some mobility.

EMMA

How much?

DR. MADIGAN

It's too soon to know that.

EMMA

He, he plays piano. Will he be able--

DR. MADIGAN

It's too soon to--

EMMA

Could he have another stroke?

DR. MADIGAN

That's difficult to say.

EMMA

(quietly)

It's difficult to...

(then)

I need to decide if I'm coming home in four days or leaving my family for three years. So I need you to tell me if my husband is going to *pull through* this.

DR. MADIGAN

I'm sorry; I can't.

EMMA

... Thank you doctor.

She snaps her laptop shut. And then--

We see a mirror of the moment we just glimpsed with Lex.

As reality crashes down upon Emma-- and her world is turned upside down-- Emma begins to crack open and cry...

But like her daughter-- Emma is afforded little time to grieve.

CAPCOM (O.S.)

Commander Green, I have Patti on hold.

(Emma doesn't respond)

Emma?

EMMA

Yeah I'm... put me through.

(swallows her pain, rises)

What've you got for me, Pat?

INTERCUT Patti, in a JSC Conference Room, with--

PATTI

A small team of engineers, as requested.
But before we go any further I need to
make it very clear this conversation
never leaves this room.

EMMA

Pat. What've you got.

Patti glances at one of the engineers.

MIKE

Emma, it's Mike. Listen, theoretically
the mission *could* proceed without you.
(off Patti's look)
But as best as we could determine, your
absence would impair the outcome to a
profound and immeasurable degree.

EMMA

Don't give me immeasurable, Mike.

PATTI

Emma...

EMMA

I asked you to quantify this.

MIKE

We can't.

EMMA

Why.

PATTI

Because an astronaut has never abandoned
a mission to come home.

And this is no longer a NASA employee, doing George's
bidding. It's a former astronaut who paved the way for
Emma to have this chance:

PATTI

If you go through with this-- you're not
just compromising the safety of your
crew; you're spitting in the face of
every woman who came before you. Now if
your *hesitation* is in any way related to
what happened on the ISS--

EMMA

That has nothing to do with it-- this is
about Matt. He could be paralyzed--

PATTI

This job can demand terrible sacrifices--
I need you to remember why it's worth it.

On Emma:

PATTI'S VOICE

I need you to remember why you believed
in this mission in the first place.

As we slowly push in...

PATTI'S VOICE

And I need you to make the right
decision, right now.

TIGHT ON Emma as we hear--

MATT (V.O.)

You deserve to go, Em.

Then FLASH TO--

INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

MATT

You deserve it more than anyone.

It takes us a moment to realize we're in Matt and Emma's
living room, and clearly in the past.

MATT

I can't *believe* they picked Jack.

EMMA

Matt...

MATT

No this is just gender politics *bullshit*.
You should fight back. Talk to the press--

EMMA

It wasn't just... I um...
(she looks at him)
I fucked up.

INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION - DAY - FLASHBACK

Another jump in time. We have no idea we're inside the
ISS-- that it's a few weeks prior to the previous scene.

But we can tell, quite vividly, that we've entered our first moment of true weightlessness.

As Emma *swims* through a module, arrives at the ISS's lavatory and stares at a toilet.

Emma's trying to figure out why the function lights are flashing red instead of green. But when she removes an electrical panel, an enormous sphere of fluid emerges.

It's beautiful, actually-- this cannonball-colored sphere, spiraling through the air.

Until the sphere begins to spark.

Emma catapults herself to the intercom and--

EMMA

Commander Green to the crew: chemical leak in Waste and Hygiene-- report immediately.

Liu is the first to arrive--

EMMA

How much time before this ignites?

LIU

Less than a minute.

EMMA

Can we use the extinguisher?

LIU

(working it through)
The pretreat is composed of chromium trioxide and sulfuric acid.

As Misha, Dev (our B-Team Indian astronaut) and Helen (our B-Team British) arrive--

LIU

We need to suffocate it with water.

MISHA

(not even slowing down)
I have an idea-- Liu, come with me.

Misha swims past and Liu follows--

Emma remains behind, floating with Dev and Helen for maybe two seconds before--

EMMA

Report back at the first sign of smoke.

DEV

Where are you going?

But Emma's already gone-- thrusting herself off a wall and *soaring* through the module, as we move to--

THE KITCHEN GALLEY

Where Misha's engineered a brilliant solution.

One can't simply fill a bucket with water in Space, so Misha's drenching towels with the water reclamation valve (water beading and floating in every direction) then throwing them into a garbage bag which Liu holds open--

MISHA

Is that enough water?

LIU

No-- we need more towels.

As we move back to EMMA-- swimming to her locker and grabbing a single, damp towel. We stay with her as she propels her way through the ISS with increasing speed and pinpoint accuracy-- before returning to--

DEV

(imploring)

We need to wait for Misha and Liu.

HELEN

Emma this isn't your area of--

Emma attempts to heroically smother the sparking sphere-- but it's a problem of chemistry: introduce a *lot* of water to an acid, and the acid disperses. Introduce just a bit of water-- and the acid *ignites*.

And the moment Emma's towel touches the sphere-- it erupts into an anchor-less ball of flame, thrusting Emma into the wall with a brutal force.

As Emma begins to drift out of consciousness-- her POV: Liu and Misha, holding opposite ends of the garbage bag, swim toward the ball of fire and engulf it completely.

Then turn to Emma-- Liu's face of mask of rage as Misha screams silently-- before we CUT TO--

INT. EMMA AND MATT'S HOME - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Emma, in her living room with Matt.

MATT

You were trying to save their lives.

EMMA

It was a chemical leak-- Liu's a chemist.

MATT

You're her commander--

EMMA

(sharply)

I almost killed my crew.

As we glimpse a side of Emma we haven't seen: despair.

EMMA

I don't know why I couldn't just let Liu do her...

(then)

I don't know what's wrong with me.

Matt's quiet a moment, then--

MATT

(gently)

When someone's in trouble, you run full-speed *toward* the danger. You just need to let other people save the day sometimes.

She looks at him. Appreciates what he's trying to do, but it only makes her feel worse.

EMMA

(then)

You have given up so much to give me this shot--

MATT

Don't go there--

EMMA

And I blew it.

EMMA

I'm sorry.

She starts to leave when--

MATT

Our second date. You put me in the rear cockpit of your T-38.

She stops. Looks at him-- wonders where he's going with this.

MATT

And I'd been in normal airplanes-- I knew what 30,000 feet looked like. So I knew when we were *above* it-- and climbing. I thought 'this woman is nuts'. I thought we were going to break through the sky... And then we did.

POV FROM EMMA'S PLANE - QUICK FLASH

And we see the view that Matt saw in that moment: when their plane broke 65,000 feet-- and the blue sky of Earth suddenly gave way to the night sky of Space.

MATT (V.O.)

And there was *Space*. Or at least, the night sky-- the stars above me. But the blue sky still there below.

Then back on Matt in the LIVING ROOM. Wonder still in his eyes-- even after all these years.

MATT

Em, I bang out some notes on a box of ivory and wood; you lifted the ceiling off our world and taught me to look up-- so don't you ever say you're sorry to me.
(he takes her hand)
And I think you would've made a *phenomenal* commander for this mission.

INT. BASE - NIGHT

Back on Emma, in the present tense, as Patti awaits her decision.

EMMA

You're right, Pat. This mission is as important as anything, and it's my responsibility to go.

For a moment, we think Emma's chosen Mars. When:

EMMA

But every time I've needed him he's been there for me. *I'm coming home.*

INT. JSC - NIGHT

On Patti, devastated, as she glances at the countdown clock-- we're less than sixteen hours from launch...

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

ALEXIS

What about the crew?

EMMA'S VOICE

They'll go without me. They'll be okay.

(Though it sounds a bit like Emma's convincing herself).

EMMA'S VOICE

I'll see you both in four days.

On Alexis, as surprise gives way to absolute relief.

The relief washes over Matt, too-- *his wife is coming home*.

But then... something else follows. He looks at Alexis.

ALEXIS

What?

Matt tries to move his arms-- can't get them more than a few inches.

But Alexis realizes what he's trying to do.

ALEXIS

You want to take off your mask.

Matt blinks and Alexis looks up at Dr. Madigan.

ALEXIS

Is that okay?

DR. MADIGAN

It's not advisable.

EMMA'S VOICE

What is it-- what's going on?

Matt looks at Alexis and communicates without words.

ALEXIS

He wants to talk to you.

On Emma, nervous and thrilled to hear Matt's voice.

EMMA

Matt?

But it's Alexis we hear:

ALEXIS'S VOICE

Hey, dummy.

Reveal Alexis, her ear millimeters from Matt's lips.

ALEXIS

Dad can't really talk above a whisper, so
this is him, not me.

We see Matt's lips move.

ALEXIS

I miss you, Em. I want to see your face.

Matt's lips move again-- this time, Alexis hesitates to
relay what he's said.

Back on EMMA as:

ALEXIS'S VOICE

But I need you to do your job.

EMMA

... Matt.

ALEXIS'S VOICE

I'm gonna be okay, I promise.

EMMA

(softly)

We don't know that.

ALEXIS'S VOICE

I need you to go.

EMMA

You're not in a position to-- it's not
your decision to make.

ALEXIS'S VOICE

It's not your decision either.

EMMA

Matt--

ALEXIS'S VOICE

That wasn't Dad, that was me.

As we move back to ALEXIS, looking at her father.

ALEXIS

... I should at least get a say, don't you think?

A beat. For the first time, we hear MATT'S VOICE:

MATT

(faint whisper)

Yes.

On Emma-- silent. Waiting.

Then back on Alexis. Every bone in her body wants her mom to come home.

MATT

(very quietly)

I'm scared too.

Hold on Alexis. She's terrified.

But her parents haven't raised her in fear.

ALEXIS

I'm with Dad. I want you to go.

On Matt, immensely proud of his daughter--

As he musters the strength to speak to Emma directly--

MATT

(whispers)

I know this is hard for you, Em...

On Emma, struggling to accept what her family's just decreed. The people she loves most in this world are in trouble, and they're asking her not to rescue them.

MATT'S VOICE

(a faint whisper)

But let us do the saving down here, okay?

A beat. Though it goes against every cell in Emma's body--

EMMA

Okay.

TIGHT ON EMMA-- her face brimming with emotion as Alexis ends the call.

Then-- Emma feels someone else in the room-- looks up--

HENRY is standing in the doorway.

HENRY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to...

(a beat; sincerely)

It sounds like your husband's doing a bit better-- I'm very glad to hear that.

Emma just looks at him, her emotions still swimming.

HENRY

Emma, I just thought you should...

(then)

There's been some talk behind your back. Despite what they say, I have complete faith in you-- and you have my word; I'll never tell them what you were just thinking about doing.

And off Emma-- not even a moment to catch her breath--

INT. BASE - QUARTERS - NIGHT

We move to Misha, as he places a small stuffed animal into a ziplock bag.

LIU

Your grandson's?

Misha smiles-- a tenderness we've not yet glimpsed.

MISHA

(smiles)

Andrei...

(then)

What does the inscription mean?

Liu looks down at the small silver ring in her hand.

It's inscribed with a series of Chinese characters.

LIU

"Women hold up half the sky."

MISHA

A gift from your husband?

Liu hesitates just a moment, then lies.

LIU

Yes.

Emma enters and the room's temperature instantly cools. She looks from Misha and Liu... to Henry... to Riz:

EMMA

Status update.

RIZ

Crew hand-offs are complete. We're back on schedule, Commander.

Riz starts to speak-- stops himself.

EMMA

What is it?

RIZ

Houston asked that you say a few words before launch.

Liu and Misha exchange a look. Emma clocks it.

EMMA

Something you'd like to share?

LIU

No, Commander. I believe you are very capable of *giving a speech*.

Emma walks right up to Misha and Liu.

EMMA

I know that neither of you trust me. But if we're going to survive tomorrow's launch, much less the mission, we're going to have to work it out.

MISHA

You're right, Emma.
(then)
We don't trust you.

Emma stands her ground.

EMMA

Then you better learn.

And OFF our fractured family-- we MOVE TO--

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The night of the launch. And open with a televised interview between Patti and a BBC Reporter--

REPORTER

I was under the impression that NASA tracked Space debris...

There's a countdown clock at the bottom of the screen-- we're six hours out-- along with Chinese subtitles.

PATTI

We're able to track objects the size of a golfball or larger.

Strangely, it's a WOMAN we haven't met watching the interview. Her name is CHEN LEE, late 30s, Chinese...

PATTI (O.S.)

The micro-meteor that struck Jack was the size of a grain of sand. But traveling at nearly twenty thousand miles per hour.

On a chain around her neck, Chen wears a ring identical to Liu's. Behind her is a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH where she's kissing Liu on the cheek. And Liu's expression-- normally so stoic-- is awash with joy.

REPORTER

The odds of Commander Willmore being hit like that must have been infinitesimal.

PATTI

Actually, one in three hundred.
(off the reporter's surprise)
Space is an inhospitable place.

INT. BASE - MEDBAY - NIGHT

On Jack Willmore, in a hospital bed, on an IV drip, his right eye bandaged.

Emma enters. He looks at her. She approaches his bed-- no idea what to say. She's about to speak when:

JACK

How's Matt?

Emma looks at Jack. Moved by this simple, generous ask.

EMMA

Awake. And stubborn as always.

JACK

... Good.

EMMA

I'm so sorry, Jack.

JACK

You should be. That was very
inconsiderate of you saving my life.

EMMA

Jack...

JACK

How's the crew treating you?

EMMA

... The crew's fine.

JACK

You're a terrible liar, Emma.

(then)

It's one of many qualities that will make
you a great Commander.

He offers his hand. As she takes it--

JACK

But billions of people are watching-- so
try not to fuck all this up.

INT. BASE - EMMA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

On Emma, her laptop flipped open.

She's staring at a blank document. Absolutely no idea
what to write.

After a moment, she pulls up her music and clicks on one
of Matt's songs.

We hear the PIANO. On Emma, listening, when--

MATT (O.S.)

What, you thought you'd listen to my
music and *get inspired*?

Reveal MATT, standing impossibly in the corner of the
room.

MATT

Hell of a time to have writer's block.

On Emma, seeing Matt because she needs to.

EMMA

I'm not big on speeches.

MATT

Yeah you say that...

EMMA

I gave one speech-- and that was different.

MATT

Why?

A beat. Then, quieter--

EMMA

I don't know if you're gonna be okay, Matt.

MATT

... Yeah.

EMMA

I don't know that my crew is gonna be okay.

MATT

Yeah.

(then)

Oh wait-- this is the best part.

Emma smiles at the non-sequitur.

But when she looks back up at Matt--

He's gone.

Emma listens to the MUSIC, when-- *the flicker of an idea--*

WIDE on Emma, alone in her quarters. She begins to write as the PIANO CONTINUES--

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

TIGHT ON Emma, standing on the surface of the moon and looking back at Earth.

The expression on her face not unlike Matt's music: unyielding.

As the PIANO plays, we hear Emma's voice:

EMMA (V.O.)

That this endeavor is too great for one nation alone has always given me *hope*.

As the camera pulls back, REVEAL RIZ, LIU, MISHA and HENRY-- standing beside Emma and looking out at Earth.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

On Emma and her crew, walking across the lunar surface, toward the rocket:

EMMA (V.O.)

It is perhaps not our nature to work together-- history suggests otherwise...

INT. SPACECRAFT - NIGHT

On Emma, strapping herself into the Commander's Chair. She can feel the animosity from Misha and Liu.

EMMA (V.O.)

But we will come together now.

She turns to Riz, who gives her a nod of support.

The PIANO BUILDS throughout as we REVEAL--

INT. JSC - MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

A Mission Control Center unlike any we have ever seen.

As the technicians and scientists of more than twenty countries work hand in hand.

EMMA (V.O.)

This mission will be humanity's finest hour.

And the scope of our show truly breaks open--

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NEW YORK - NIGHT

As we move from a packed Times Square, watching the live broadcast (we're now just ten minutes from launch)--

EXT. KALA GHODA - MUMBAI - NIGHT

To a packed Kala Ghoda in Mumbai...

EXT. PICCADILLY CIRCUS - LONDON - DAY

To a packed Piccadilly Circus in London...

EMMA (V.O.)

Jack Willmore's absence will be sorely
felt...

INT. LUNAR BASE - MEDBAY - NIGHT

To Jack Willmore, alone in his hospital bed, listening
like Michael Collins as Emma addresses the world.

EMMA (V.O.)

And history will never forget his name.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

To the surface of the moon-- the B-Team watching the
launch from a distance, wishing it were them on board.

EMMA (V.O.)

We have been grimly reminded of the
extraordinary dangers that await us.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

To Liu's lover, Chen, on the rooftop of her apartment,
her telescope trained on the moon.

EMMA (V.O.)

But we will reach the surface of Mars...

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Then on Matt and Alexis, watching the live broadcast--

As Emma speaks directly to them:

EMMA (V.O.)

And we will return home.

INT. SPACECRAFT - NIGHT

On Emma, Riz, Liu, Misha, and Henry-- as it begins to
RATTLE inside the Spacecraft--

The various stations of Mission Control confirming
they're a go for launch--

INT. JSC - MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

As we pass from station to station--

FLIGHT OPERATOR
Life Support.

LSC OPERATOR
Go.

FLIGHT OPERATOR
Ground Control.

GSC OPERATOR
Go.

FLIGHT OPERATOR
Telemetry and Guidance Control.

TGC OPERATOR
Go.

INT. SPACECRAFT - NIGHT

Back on Emma and the crew-- the FLIGHT OPERATOR barely audible over the VIOLENT RATTLING...

FLIGHT OPERATOR (O.S.)
Confirming all systems go for launch in T-
Minus 10... 9...

TIGHT ON Emma-- her eyes alight with emotion-- the greatest, most terrible moment of her life--

As we hear her VOICE once more:

EMMA (V.O.)
We will make it back home.

And then-- the rocket FIRES beneath her--

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

An ungodly torrent of fire in impossible silence--

As the rocket begins to rise off the fucking ground...

EXT. KALA GHODA - MUMBAI - NIGHT

And the crowd at Kala Ghoda gasps in awe--

EXT. RED SQUARE - MOSCOW - NIGHT

As the crowd at Red Square erupts in APPLAUSE--

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NEW YORK - NIGHT

And tens of thousands in Central Park stare up--

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Then Chen, watching through her telescope as a tiny wisp of light emanates off the moon--

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

To Matt and Alexis, stomachs churning as they watch--
Alexis gripping her father's motionless hand--

As he wills his wife faster and farther away:

MATT
(whispers)
Go, you fucker, Go.

INT. SPACECRAFT - NIGHT

Then back on Emma, as she breaks through the moon's gravity and becomes weightless--

Her tears of sadness and joy *floating* in front of her,
before we--

SNAP TO BLACK.

END OF CHAPTER ONE