GROUND CONTROL TO MAJOR TOM

Written by

Jason Micallef

3.17.12

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Space. Magical, dark and lonely.

“9 YEARS AGO”

TOM (V.O.)
Navajo-1 to Base. Successful detach from Shuttle Endeavour. Proceeding to objective: *Sprut-Vosem.*

A SPACE ORBITAL POD comes into frame, then SHOOTS off toward the abandoned SOVIET SPACE STATION: *SPRUT-VOSEM*.

TOM (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Boosters fired. E.T.A.: *9 hours*.

BASE (V.O.)
(relaxed)
Alright, Tom. Kicking you over to Communications just to keep you company. We’ll be back on-line when you attach. Don’t get too lonely up there.

We SWIRL around the pod and catch a glimpse of EARTH as it drifts farther and farther away from us.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD - SAME

A small space pod. TOM ROBERTS (30’s, war hero, turned down a spot on *The Real World* - basically he’s awesome) glances out through the PORTHOLE window as Earth fades away.

TOM
(laughs)
Think I can handle it.

Tom picks up a STUFFED ANIMAL. A dog in an ASTRONAUT SUIT with a plastic SPACE HELMET. Around his neck is a CD JEWEL CASE - pink and decorated with butterfly stickers.

An inscription on the case written in black sharpie reads...

To my big brother Tom:
Have a safe flight...
Love, your ‘baby sis’, Olivia.

Tom smiles and settles in for his flight. The stuffed dog stares back at Tom with his puppy dog face.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - HOUSTON, TEXAS - LATER

The Communications Hub is a zoo of activity. Communications Specialists speak at stations all over the room.

RACHEL (20's, redhead, could care less) stands over SARAH SPARKS, (20's, I's dotted and T's crossed). Today is Sarah's first day.

RACHEL
So this is your station. Usually they just start you off with something simple, like your mission today, but eventually you'll be running communication for all kinds of things - satellite launches, working with the NWS, maybe even a shuttle launch.

Sarah give her a look.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Don't be nervous. You were top of your class.
(smiles)
And if you need anything at all the Human Resources Department is here to help.
(BEAT)
They make us say that.

SARAH
Great.

RACHEL
You signed up for the 401(k), right?

SARAH
Should I?

RACHEL
Uh, yeah... in 10 years stocks prices are gonna be through the roof and we'll all be living on private islands.

Rachel motions at the GREEN light blinking at Sarah's station.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Green means talk.
(BEAT)
It's okay. You'll do fine.

Rachel exits.

Sarah puts on her headset. She's new, but was trained well. She flips a few switches and assumes a professional position.

SARAH
Base to Navajo-1. Over.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD - SAME

SARAH (V.O.)
(*too* professional)
Communications Specialist Sparks. Over. Stated mission: to keep you company. Over.

Tom rolls his eyes.

TOM
(alien voice)
Tom Roberts has been devoured by aliens. Permission to become your new leader? Over.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/ SPACE ORBITAL POD- SAME

"10:23 PM"

Sarah laughs.

SARAH
Just following the manual, Sir.

TOM
Does the manual allow you to tell me your name?

SARAH
Sarah.

[CUT BACK AND FORTH]

TOM
So what are we gonna' talk about for nine hours, Sarah?

Sarah considers this.

SARAH
That's up to you, Sir.

TOM
Tom.

SARAH
That's up to you, Tom.

TOM
How about you pick?

SARAH
The weather?

TOM
I’m in space. Looks pretty clear and calm.

SARAH
Baseball?

TOM
Hate baseball.

SARAH
(to herself)
Thank God.
(to Tom)
Maybe politics?

TOM
In the history of the world, no political discussion has ever ended well.

SARAH
Okay. How about this: Music?

TOM
Music’s good. I could do music.

SARAH
Alrighty then...
(adorably professional)
Ground Control to Major Tom: initiating musical discussion in 3-2-1...

Tom laughs...

EXT. SPACE - LATER

The pod is closer.

“3:15 AM”

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER COMMUNICATIONS ROOM –LATER

Tom has his feet up on the control board. Sarah is surrounded by empty diet coke cans and M&M wrappers.

TOM
No way.

SARAH
Yes, way! Okay, see, at the time Elton John has like a real problem - I'm talking drugs, booze, pills - you name it, he was snorting it.

TOM
It was the 70's.

SARAH
Exactly. So anyway the guy is lost and really wants to come down to be with his family but he has no control over the drugs, right?

TOM
That's why he's all 'I think it's gonna be a long, long time.'

SARAH
Exactly.

TOM
I can't believe this whole time I thought it was just about an astronaut.

SARAH
Who wants to hear a song about some astronaut?

TOM
They're so boring...

SARAH
So anyway, it's sad because in the end he just resigns himself to being alone forever.

TOM
What's so bad about that?

SARAH
Being alone forever? Eventually you need someone.

TOM
That's not true.

SARAH
Of course it's true.

TOM
Not for me.

SARAH
How do you know?

TOM
Because I know.

SARAH
How old are you?

TOM
Thirty-one.

SARAH
Figures. You'll learn.

TOM
Really? How old are you?

SARAH
(without irony)
Twenty-five.

Tom laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What?

TOM
Nothing.

SARAH
You'll see. One day the soulmate you're destined to be with will just show up and you'll know. It's called fate for a reason.

TOM
Oh see, now that is just so ridiculous. It's just what people tell themselves because the truth is soul-crushing and they can't handle it.

SARAH
What is the truth we can't handle?

TOM
That statistically speaking, your soul mate is more likely to live in China or India and you will never meet them. Ever.

SARAH
If it's meant to be, they will come for you.

TOM
What if your soul mate is in prison. Prison for life.

SARAH
My soul mate is *not* in prison. And if he was, I would be fine with it and we would - by some twist of fate - meet and fall in love and write beautiful letters to each other every day. He would spend his days educating himself and pining for me while I spent my days clearing his name and petitioning the Governor for his pardon.

TOM
Wow.

SARAH
Look at the facts. You ask any person anywhere who's ever been in love and they will have a story of how their car broke down, or they weren't gonna' go back for that muffin at Starbucks, or how they were gonna take Psych 101 but it was full so they ended up taking History 102 and, voila!... their one true love is sitting right next to them and they live happily ever after. Hence, fate.

TOM
That's called coincidence.

SARAH
How can something that happens to *everyone* be a coincidence? No, don't strain yourself, I'll answer for you: It can't. Which is why it's called fate. End of story. You're welcome.
(BEAT)
All I'm saying is eventually the universe will find a way to bring you and the girl you're meant to be with together.

TOM
And all I'm saying is eventually it won't.

Sarah and Tom are both loving this.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - LATER

"4:01 AM"

Tom's stretched out as much as he can. Sarah is testing out various ponytail styles.

TOM
Okay. Macaroni and cheese. Vanilla milk shake. McDonald's fries. And two of those Hostess cupcakes but the orange ones.

SARAH
That would be your last meal? Macaroni and cheese.

TOM
From the box.

SARAH
Not even homemade?

TOM
Nope.

SARAH
That's disgusting.

TOM
What about you?

SARAH
Easy... Soup.

TOM
Soup? Your last meal on the face of the earth would be soup?

SARAH
I like soup.

TOM
Everyone *likes* soup but no one picks soup for their last meal.

SARAH
Why?

TOM
Because it's *soup*!

SARAH
Cream of mushroom. Homemade. In a medium sized bowl with a side of buttered toast.

TOM
I'm hanging up.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - LATER

"4:59 AM"

SARAH
Because she thought he was dead! Didn't you pay attention to the movie at all?

TOM
I'm just saying if she truly loved him she would've waited.

SARAH
For a *dead* guy?

TOM
And then she goes off and gets engaged to the bad dude from *Fright Night*?

SARAH
His name was Prince Humperdinck, thank you very much, and she had no choice. You know nothing about history.

TOM
Enlighten me.

SARAH
Well, in Fairy Tale days, if the Prince asked you to be his bride, you *had* to say yes. It was the law.

TOM
Now this historical time period you reference known as 'fairy tale days'-

SARAH
You know what I mean.

TOM
She could've escaped.

SARAH
She *did* escape. On her horse. And that's when she got caught by that wrestler dude with the accent.

TOM
Oh yeah... and that little guy from those commercials.

SARAH
Exactly.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER COMMUNICATIONS ROOM -

“7:16 AM”

Sarah is sitting under her desk, twirling the cord to her headset while Tom does push-ups.

SARAH
...Emily for the girl and then Huxley for the boy. Emily will come first because I think boys turn out better when they have a big sister.

TOM
What if you have a boy first?

SARAH
That would mess up my whole plan.
(BEAT)
What about you?

TOM
Not having kids, but if I did it’d be Crystal for a girl and Tim-Bob for a boy.

SARAH
You *cannot* name your daughter Crystal.

TOM
Why?

SARAH
Because she’ll end up being a stripper.

TOM
What?Crystal is not a stripper-name. Crystal is elegant. It’s named after, like, actual crystal.

SARAH
“Ladies and gentleman, coming to the stage tonight is a woman who could have been a doctor or scientist but her father chose to name her Crystal so, well, here she is in her finest clear high heels-”

TOM
(serious)
I’m naming her Crystal after my mother.

SARAH
(oops)
Tim-Bob’s nice, though.

LATER -

Tom seems more serious.

TOM
... we were asleep. I guess I was about six. And I just remember Mom coming into my room and telling me that he went away to heaven. I don’t even remember being sad because I didn’t even know what that meant. It was just like ‘okay, Dad’s in heaven now.’

Sarah is rapt.

SARAH
Yeah.

TOM
But a week later - I remember distinctly because I was wearing a these Spider-man pajamas - and I asked when we could go see Dad and my Mom just started crying and yelling at me. I understand now what she must have been going through but I just went and hid inside the closet. That’s when I knew he wasn’t coming back.

SARAH
I’m so sorry.

TOM
I stayed in that closet for three days. You know... I think that’s why I got this mission over the other guys. The doctors said I have ‘an unnatural ability to withstand long periods of solitude.’
(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
So that's a total downer of a conversation. Let's talk about ice cream again. Chocolate or chocolate?

SARAH
Frozen yogurt.

AN ALARM SOUNDS. It's JARRING. Tom hops up.

TOM
Here we go.

SARAH
(instantly professional)
Communications to Base, Navajo-1 preparing to dock.

TOM
(in awe)
There she is.

Sprut-Vosem, the abandoned Soviet Space Station looms before us.

TOM (CONT'D)
Russians ran out of cash and abandoned it in '89. Just been floating out here.

SARAH
Repeat. Communications to base.
(BEAT)
I'm not getting anyone yet.

TOM
Don't worry. It's all automated.
(BEAT)
Look at that thing.

Tom glances at his instruments.

TOM (CONT'D)
That's weird.

SARAH
What?

TOM
It's probably nothing.

SARAH
What is it-

TOM
Boosters haven't shut down.

EXT. SPACE - SAME

Tom's Space Orbital Pod heads directly toward the now LOOMING and massive Sprut-Vosem.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Sarah is getting nervous.

SARAH
Communications to Base.

TOM
Switching to manual override.

Tom presses a few buttons. The boosters begin to SLOW. He then grabs a MANUAL CONTROL LEVER.

TOM (CONT'D)
Slow and steady.

SARAH
They're not responding, Tom.

TOM
I think I got it.

Tom spots something.

TOM (CONT'D)
Shit.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom's Space-orbital pod is slowing but instead of heading for the dock it's moving toward one of the main SOLAR PANEL WINGS.

SARAH (V.O.)
Tom. What is it?

TOM (V.O.)
Steering's out. Forty-five seconds 'til impact.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - CUT BACK AND FORTH

SARAH
Impact?
(loud)
Communications to Base! Come in!

TOM
Press the alarm.

SARAH
(repeating her training to herself)
9 o'clock. Red lever. Turn the key below first.

THE ALARM BLARES. RED LIGHTS FLASH.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tom. Just hang on.

TOM
It's jammed on override. There's nothing they can do. I'm suiting up.

SARAH
Will that work?

Tom says nothing.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tom! Will that work?

Tom puts on a space suit. He adjusts his helmet.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Over LOUD alarms, the pod drifts toward what is now a MASSIVE solar panel.

TOM (V.O.)
(trying to hold back the fear)
Sarah. Tell me something.

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD/JOHNSON SPACE CENTER COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Alarms and lights: It's like '*Silkwood*' in there.

Sarah is pacing, looking behind her: *where the hell are they?*

SARAH
Anything.

TOM
Do you have a boyfriend?

Sarah glances down at an ENGAGEMENT RING.

SARAH
(through tears)
I'm engaged.

TOM
He must be a really great guy.

SARAH
Tom–

TOM
Can you tell him that someone far, far away thinks he might just be the luckiest guy on earth–

SARAH
Tom, please–

TOM
And that I'll be looking down, making sure he treats you well.

SARAH
(pushing it all down)
Tom. I need you to focus on the mission–
(looking behind her)
Goddamnit where are they?!

Tom watches as the pod moves toward the wing. He's gonna' try to float out in his suit before it hits.

TOM
Here goes.

Sarah is basically jamming the help button, crying.

TOM (CONT'D)
Sarah. Can you do something else for me?

SARAH
They'll be here in thirty seconds, Tom. Just hang on.

TOM
Tell my little sister 'I love her?"

Another ALARM shriek even louder.

SARAH
(crying)
No.
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
I won’t need to because you’re going to be fine and you’re going to come back here and meet some amazing woman and buy a house with granite countertops and have that stripper baby of yours and-

TOM
Sarah. Sarah, stop.
(resigned)
You know the one good thing about this-

SARAH
No?

TOM
Your voice is the last sound I’ll ever hear.

Sarah is speechless.

TOM (CONT’D)
Goodbye, Sarah.

Behind Sarah, a THRONG of TECHNICIANS, NASA STAFF, POLICE, etc., race in and PUSH her out of the way as they get to work.

SPACE POD - SAME

Tom OPENS the AIR-LOCK. We can tell he’s petrified.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - HOUSTON, TEXAS - SAME

The engineers are working furiously as everyone watches a GRAINY BLACK AND WHITE EXTERNAL VIDEO FEED.

ENGINEER
Base to Navajo-1, Base to-

BOOM!

On the video screen we see a HUGE IMPLOSION, a blue-white flash for a SECOND, and then debris shoots off in straight lines. Unlike an explosion on Earth, this is more contained, but just as powerful.

Sarah takes a step back, powerless.

SARAH
Tom?

INT. SPACE ORBITAL POD - SAME

Tom hops out of the air-lock, a long cord connecting him, just as the same implosion...

SLAMS him against one of the solar wings, then back toward the body of Sprut-Vosem. He's just a ping-pong ball out here.

He crawls along against the wall of the massive Sprut-Vosem, trying to get to that ship's air-lock.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - HOUSTON, TEXAS

ENGINEER
Base to Navajo-1!
(to Random Techie)
Audio!

RANDOM TECHIE
Lost audio.

RANDOM TECHIE #2
Heat sensors down. Everything's down. We have a massive system failure-

Nothing...

ENGINEER
(one more try)
Base to Navajo-1! Base to Navajo-

The Engineer looks to the Techies who give him a look... He then removes his headset.

SILENCE -

- as we track the room of NASA workers: *shock and disbelief.*

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
We have confirmation now from NASA officials that Tom Roberts...

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom, floating outside the space station, reaches the air-lock, turns the giant wheel to enter...

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
... war hero and one of NASA's most promising young astronauts...

... From Tom's POV we see inside to the perfectly preserved space station air-lock. Old Russian equipment begins to float up as the gravity dissipates. Tom is about to head inside...

AND THEN... ANOTHER HUGE BURST OF BLUE-WHITE LIGHT...

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION/ INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION

Silence as the giant video screens instantly go BLACK.

REPORTER (V.O.)
... on a mission to dismantle an abandoned Soviet Space station...

We move in on Sarah, now just in-the-way amongst all the NASA hubbub.

EXT. SPACE

Sprut-Vosem drifts away from us.

REPORTER (V.O.)
...was pronounced dead today at 7:43 AM Central Standard Time.

Debris from the destroyed Space Pod floats all around the massive Sprut-Vosem

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - SAME

ON SARAH - as she slowly raises her hand over her mouth. It's all she can do.

FADE TO BLACK.

MAIN TITLES:

"GROUND CONTROL TO MAJOR TOM"

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

"9 YEARS LATER..."

Sarah (now 9 years older) sits in a booth across from the nice looking, KEVIN (30's.)

She basically looks the same, maybe a line here or there, but just as adorable and all done up for a date.

SARAH
Are you sure? No. It gets weird.

KEVIN
I want to hear it.

SARAH
Everyone says they want to hear it and then when they do they're like 'she's coo-coo.'

KEVIN
I judge not.

SARAH
Fine.
(BEAT, *perfectly* as Dumbledore)
Do not pity the dead, Harry... pity the living, and, above all, those who live without love.

KEVIN
You're right. That's super-weird.

They both laugh. It seems to be going really well.

LATER -

Two glasses of wine in...

SARAH
...I wanted to name him Huxley but my Ex didn't agree. So we went with Evan. Now I can't really imagine him as anything else.

KEVIN
Let me see the little guy.

Sarah pulls out her iPhone and scrolls through photos of a young boy. This is EVAN, age 7.

SARAH
Ok. Here's Evan at camp... Not sure what he's doing there... Oh.
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
This one he was like Superman for Halloween but then at the last minute he decided he also wanted to be a chicken so I guess he's like chicken-superman? I'm not really sure.

As Sarah looks at the pics she gets lost a little bit. It's clear Evan is her world.

KEVIN
That's adorable.
(BEAT)
So, you said you went to school in Chicago-

SARAH
(still into photos)
Oh, and this one is hysterical. Evan found this raccoon outside and so...

Sarah keeps talking as Kevin awkwardly glances down at his food.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kevin pulls up outside Sarah's modest home.

KEVIN
Here we are.

Sarah glances over.

SARAH
Um. Do you want to come in for a drink?
(off his look)
It's okay if you don't. I mean, it's late.

KEVIN
Well, I just - your son and all.

SARAH
Oh... no, he's asleep.

KEVIN
I think I should probably get home.

Sarah knows the deal.

SARAH
Sure. Of course. Absolutely.

She gets out. No kiss.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Okay, bye.

Kevin smiles and then drives off. Sarah looks back, composes herself, and then heads inside.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - EVAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

A boy's bedroom. Blue. Magical. Space toys everywhere.

Sarah enters, kneels down beside Evan (7) and kisses him on the forehead.

EVAN
How'd that one work out?

SARAH
You should be asleep.
(then)
Not so great.

EVAN
He didn't want to kiss with you?

SARAH
No. He didn't want to kiss with me.

Evan flips over and faces away from Sarah.

EVAN
Because of me, right?

SARAH
Evan. Don't *ever* think that. Sometimes... sometimes it just doesn't work out between two adults.

EVAN
Like you and Dad?

SARAH
Well, yes. And your dad is a great guy. But sometimes it just doesn't work out. But look up there.

Sarah points to Evan's ceiling: tons of glow-in-the-dark stars.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Remember how I told you the world is filled with millions of wonderful people just waiting to be your friend-

EVAN
Grandpa said that was bullshit-

SARAH
Don't listen to your Grandpa.
(BEAT)
- well, the same goes for Moms.
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
One day my star, maybe that one, will meet up with another star and-
(sighs)
Oh, your Grandpa's right... total b.s. But at least I have my little guy.

Evan smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Now go to sleep.

Evan flops his head over and closes his eyes. Sarah takes one last glance at her son before she exits.

KITCHEN - LATER

An older man sits at the kitchen table, surrounded by what looks like radio-parts and rolled up blueprints. This is Sarah's father, GRANDPA TED, 60's.

GRANDPA TED
(without looking up)
How'd that one work out?

Sarah grabs a glass of water.

SARAH
Great guy. Nice job. Not ready to deal with a kid.

GRANDPA TED
Well then he's a piece of shit.

SARAH
Dad. You have to stop cursing around Evan.

GRANDPA TED
What? He's seven years old.

SARAH
And the guy wasn't a piece of shit. He was perfectly nice.

GRANDPA TED
If he doesn't want to date my daughter then he's a piece of shit.
(THEN)
You at least make out with him?

SARAH
Dad!

GRANDPA TED
I don't understand your generation.

Sarah catches her reflection in the kitchen window as she puts her glass away.

SARAH
When you and Mom first met... how did you know?

GRANDPA TED
How'd I know what?

SARAH
That she was The One.

GRANDPA TED
Easy. We talked for hours. When you can talk to someone for three hours about the best roast beef sandwich in Chicago... you know.

Sarah considers this, maybe more than it warrants.

GRANDPA TED (CONT'D)
She was working at Berghoff's as a waitress and I came in one day. I'd never met a woman as smart as her. I didn't even like their food but I kept coming back. Every Thursday night. I'd move if I didn't get her table. Used to piss off the other waitresses.

Sarah laughs.

GRANDPA TED (CONT'D)
And then one day I came in and they said she left. No help, they were. But you know what. Exactly a week later... the very next Thursday night... I was walking on campus and there she was.
(BEAT)
When you're meant to be, the universe finds a way.

Sarah finds this at once incredibly romantic and also incredibly depressing.

SARAH
Alright, Dad. Night shift. Check in on him for me, okay?

Sarah kisses her father on the cheek and heads out.

GRANDPA TED
Chin up. You'll find the right one. That guy was a piece of shit.
(back to work)
Still, you should've at least gotten some tongue.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Sarah drives, listening to the radio.

PARANORMAL RADIO CALLER
Dr. Mebane, first time caller, long time listener. I was wondering how you feel tonight's solar event will effect those of us who have been visited by our inter-planetary brethren?

Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH
(to herself)
Uh, you'll probably still be crazy?

DR. MEBANE
That's a great question. You see the US gov't. would have us believe that these events will have only a minor impact on electronic devices, such as cell phones, satellites and the like.

PARANORMAL RADIO CALLER
Um-hmm.

DR. MEBANE
But you an I both know the real truth is that these solar events are actually caused by the Air Force - and this has been documented many, many times - as a means of erasing the evidence of a post-human life form visit-

Sarah turns the radio off.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

Sarah pulls up and parks her car. She gets out and glances up at the stars before flashing her badge for a Security Guard and heading inside.

It *is* kind of a magical night...

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - NIGHT

The old Soviet Space Station floats along. Still dark, still lonely.

A SOLAR WIND swirls around the Space Station.

We move in through the porthole window...

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

A series of shots... 9 years has taken its toll:

- Parts, wires, tubes are everywhere. Every possible option of fixing the Sprut-Vosem Return Pod has clearly been tried.

- PRISONER SLASHES on the wall marking 9 years.

- The SPACE DOG STUFFED ANIMAL.

- The CD (the one from 2004 with butterfly stickers all over it.)

A HAND removes the CD, pops it into a portable CD player, and hits...

...PLAY

TOM (O.S.)
Ready? I want 100 percent focus this time, Demitri... Okay, here we go.

Shania Twain's *"Man, I feel Like a Woman,"* ramps up (*...don't judge, his little sister made the mix tape.*)

And then we see him:

Tom *SLIDES* into frame.

Still handsome, but with messier hair and a beard. He holds a bottle of vodka as a microphone.

TOM/SHANIA TWAIN
(singing)
Let's go girls! Come on.

And then Tom begins an ELABORATE DANCE routine. He's had 9 years to perfect it, so it's pretty damn good.

TOM/SHANIA TWAIN (CONT'D)
I'm going out tonight-I'm feelin' alright...

Tom gives the *Glee* kids a run for their money: twirling, whirling... somersaults. He's AWESOME.

The Space Dog looks on with blank expressions: This is now Tom's best friend, DEMITRI (ageless, quiet, supportive.)

INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

Sarah enters the empty communications room. It's changed in nine years. The buzz of activity is gone. It's a little worn, a little rough around the edges.

Sarah puts down her purse, and pauses as she hears...

TOM /SHANIA TWAIN (V.O.)
The best thing about being a woman/ Is the prerogative to have a little fun...

She ZEROES in on a GREEN blinking light at her station: *what the hell?*

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom steadies himself for the chorus as he eyes a SWITCH, labeled in Russian.

SUDDENLY, Tom's routine has taken to the air. He's flipped the ANTI-GRAVITY switch. His moves take on a whole new level of awesome as he's gone full on *Risky Business*, but in mid-air.

TOM/SHANIA TWAIN
Oh, oh, oh,/ go totally crazy-
forget I'm a lady...

Tom SLIDES across the "air."

TOM/SHANIA TWAIN (CONT'D)
Short skirts...

Tom does some "Saturday Night Fever."

TOM/SHANIA TWAIN (CONT'D)
Color my hair/ Do what I dare...

A little air-tumble... no big deal.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

Sarah sits at her desk, staring in awe at her communications system...

TOM /SHANIA TWAIN (V.O.)
The best thing about being a woman/
Is the prerogative to have a little
fun!

Sarah presses the 'SPEAK" button and adjust her headset.

SARAH
Hello?
(BEAT)
Hello?

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom goes in for his finale: *a triple anti-gravity-lutz.*

TOM/SHANIA TWAIN
Man, I feel like a woman!

Tom bows, hits the anti-gravity switch and falls to the ground.

TOM
Hi-five, Demitri.

Demitri stares back at him: *I only have paws, dude.*

SARAH (V.O.)
Hello? Is someone...
(can't believe herself)
..singing old *Shania Twain* songs on my line?

Tom stops everything.

SARAH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Hello? Who is this? Is someone there?

Tom rushes to the communications desk: *HOLY SHIT, A HUMAN VOICE.*

TOM
(some static)
Is this... *a human person?*

[CUT BACK AND FORTH]

SARAH
Rachel? Are you and Carl messing with me again?

TOM
(professional)
Sprut-Vosem to Base: I'm contacting you from space. This is Major Tom Roberts. The year is-

Sarah sours. She's pissed...

SARAH
This isn't funny, guys.

Sarah clicks OFF her communications system and removes her headset, stands up and walks out...

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom clicks the communications switch (which now glows GREEN)

TOM
Hello? Hello?! Wait... come back.

Tom turns to Demitri: *holy shit!*

TOM (CONT'D)
Hello?
(to Demitri)
A woman has contacted me, Demitri. Just as I said would happen.
(back to mic)
Hello? Hello? Please respond. Over.

Nothing...

INT. BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel (we met her briefly 9 years ago) sits with her feet up watching “Masterpiece” on PBS. British people raise eyebrows at a dinner table.

Sarah storms in.

RACHEL
(rapt)
Hold on. The Footman just spilled pudding on Lady Edith.
(BEAT)
Oh, they’re totally gonna’ sex it up now.

SARAH
That wasn’t funny.

RACHEL
(hurt)
If you think I would *ever* joke about something as important as Lady Edith’s love life than you don’t know me.

Rachel gets up for a Coke Zero, stares back at Sarah...

RACHEL (CONT’D)
...don’t know me *at all*.

SARAH
I’m talking about Tom. It wasn’t funny.

RACHEL
Tom?

SARAH
I just heard Tom on my line.

RACHEL
Huh? Where are we now? Because I’m here in reality drinking a Coke Zero. Where are you?

SARAH
Nine years ago. Sprut-Vosem. He died. Tom Roberts.

Rachel stands up and hugs Sarah.

RACHEL
Talk to me. How long has it been since you’ve gotten laid?

SARAH
Rachel.

RACHEL
An astronaut who died almost ten years ago called you up from space? Just '*Hey gurl, wat up? Haven't seen u in a while. Hit me back, k?*'

SARAH
I heard him. He was singing...
(then, insecure)
...Shania Twain.

Rachel sits Sarah down like a sick child.

RACHEL
Okay, okay. What about Carl?

They glance outside to CARL, a fellow NASA co-worker.

SARAH
Rachel.

RACHEL
What? I'd do Carl.

SARAH
That's because you have no standards.

RACHEL
Having standards is just another way of saying 'I'm still not ready to let love into my life.'
(THEN)
Look, you probably just fell asleep and had a dream. It happens. Last night I had an erotic encounter with Morgan Freeman and a Mer-man.
(BEAT)
I'm working that out with my therapist tomorrow.

SARAH
(questioning)
But it just felt so real.

RACHEL
So did Morgan.
(BEAT)
Sarah. Remember how you told me all your boyfriends in college turned out to be gay?

SARAH
So weird, right?

RACHEL
We've all been there. People like the unavailable. Guys too. My little brother, bless his ugly heart, tried to pick up on a Dallas Cowboy cheerleader the other night.

SARAH
Noah? Ouch.

RACHEL
It wasn't pretty to watch.
(BEAT)
They're unavailable so we want them more. Your ghost-astronaut is the cowboy cheerleader in this-

SARAH
I got the metaphor.

RACHEL
Good. Now c'mon. Let me be the best friend you deserve and allow you to take me to Denny's.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
I have to take Evan to his father's.

Sarah exits. Back on "*Masterpiece,*" British people KISS.

RACHEL
(to the TV)
Lady Edith, you slut! Well, now you'll never be received by the best families in London.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Sarah enters the empty room, looks at her station, pauses: *Maybe I made it all up.*

Still, she walks over to her station. The button glows: yellow.

SARAH
(quiet)
Tom?

Nothing.

Sarah pauses, hovers her finger over the talk button again: *Maybe it was him?*

But then pulls her finger away: *Stop, I'm just being crazy.*

Sarah grabs her coat, shakes her head and exits.

She doesn't see, but the light then turns to green just as she leaves.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - BATHROOM - LATER

Tom, shirtless, stares at the mirror, using scissors to cut off his beard.

Demitri, sits on the shelf in front of the mirror. He's is usual, Russian, emotionless, non-talkative, inanimate object-self.

TOM
You sure about this? I feel like women like a man with a beard?

Demitri doesn't respond... hard to read some guys.

TOM (CONT'D)
No, no. You're right. Clean shaven at first, then some stubble as we get more comfortable.

Tom continues shaving.

TOM (CONT'D)
Yeah. We've been over this a thousand times, Demitri. Fresh breath... check. Don't talk too much... check... What was the other one?

Demitri is not pleased.

TOM (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah.

Tom is done cutting off the long parts of his beard and begins to shave for real.

TOM (CONT'D)
Smile. Always smile on the first date.
(BEAT)
Wait. Who pays? Do you think the guy still pays? Or is that considered presumptuous now?... Okay, okay. I'll pay. It's just been so long, man. I'm rusty.

Tom cleans off the razor.

TOM (CONT'D)
I know. I know. I'll stop. I'm just being negative and I should think positive.

Tom splashes on some after shave. It stings.

TOM (CONT'D)
But what if she doesn't like me?... I mean, I have a strong personality and that can be a turn off. And sometimes I wear socks to bed.

Demitri seems to agree.

TOM (CONT'D)
Those little things can add up. I don't know. Maybe this isn't such a good idea...
(off Demitri)
No. No you're right. Confident. Be confident, Tom. She's gonna' love me.

Tom picks up Demitri.

TOM (CONT'D)
A date, Demitri! A date!
(re: his clean face)
What do you think?

Demitri stares.

TOM (CONT'D)
Thanks, little guy.

Tom pats Demitri on his plastic helmet, stands up and puts on his undershirt. He picks up Demitri and heads to the Communications station

TOM (CONT'D)
Hey. Do you think she'll be able to bring us home?... of course I won't bring it up first thing... I mean, I want to get to know the girl first, you know... Oh man, great day, Demitri... GREAT day.

Tom SMILES broadly at Demitri, fully committed.

We move in close on Demitri's puppy-face: *the guy's lost it.*

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Evan spins on the playground round-about. Sarah hands Evan's Wolverine backpack to STEVE, her ex husband.

SARAH
I put the permission slip in there. Oh, and he has the dentist-

STEVE
-dentist at 4. I got it.

Sarah smiles. It's not acrimonious between them, just awkward.

SARAH
How are you?

STEVE
Good. I'm really good.
(BEAT)
You look great by the way.
(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)
You're not doing one of Rachel's weird diet things?

SARAH
(laughing)
My days of getting on the Rachel fad-diet train are over. Her latest one is the spoon diet. She only eats food you can pick up with a spoon.

STEVE
You can pick up any food with a spoon.

SARAH
Rachel and the concept of 'logic' aren't really best friends.

Steve laughs.

STEVE
I'm glad you're good.

Sarah smiles, but also crosses her arms.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Evan! Say goodbye to your mom.

Evan stops spinning, regains his ground and runs over and hugs his mom. This is all pretty normal for him.

SARAH
I'll pick you up on Sunday, okay.

EVAN
Okay.

Sarah kisses Evan and sends him off with Steve. The two race off into the playground where Steve spins Evan super fast on the roundabout.

Before she gets into her car, Sarah turns back and watches Evan and his dad play together. Evan loves it.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah's house at night. Her Honda is in the driveway.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Sarah reads while and Grandpa Ted listens to the radio. Behind them, a FRAMED PHOTO of a younger Grandpa Ted surrounded by the COLUMBIA SHUTTLE ASTRONAUTS.

REPORTER ON RADIO
(British)
...where Tech Billionaire Leland Jones has begun work on a 2 billion dollar private space travel-

Grandpa Ted clicks off the radio.

GRANDPA TED
I can't listen to this idiot waste his money.

SARAH
Okay... Hypothetically speaking, how long could someone survive on a space station? Say like an old one. Like if they got left up there.

GRANDPA TED
What's this for?

Sarah considers this.

SARAH
It's a book I'm reading.

GRANDPA TED
Well. They're self-contained environments. The drinking water is recycled piss-

SARAH
Dad.

GRANDPA TED
You asked me a question. I give you an answer.
(BEAT)
Energy isn't a problem because of the solar wings. They usually stocked food supplies for 50 years.

SARAH
So it's possible?

GRANDPA TED
Sure, it's possible.
(BEAT)
Except-

SARAH
What? Except what?

GRANDPA TED
Except you'd lose your damn mind.

Off Sarah's look we move to...

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom's hair is parted nicely, ready at a moments notice for his 'date.' He speaks in hushed tones to Demitri, in the

BEDROOM CAPSULE -

TOM
(to Demitri)
Shh. She'll hear you, Demitri.

Demitri sits on a shelf. His puppy dog eyes are fixed, yet attentive

TOM (CONT'D)
I know I know but it will be different this time... I hear you... you said 'Tom, she's trouble' and I didn't listen to you. Okay. I'll say it. "You were, right, Demitri."

Demitri shakes his head: *I told you so.*

TOM (CONT'D)
Alright, alright you don't have to gloat.

Demitri sits there.

TOM (CONT'D)
Yes you did. You mumbled 'I told you so," under your breath.

Demitri: *I said no such thing.*

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm not crazy. I heard an 'I told you so."

Demitri remains stoic.

TOM (CONT'D)
Look bud, you gotta understand a man gets lonely sometimes.

Demitri: *I'm just a stuffed dog, man.*

TOM (CONT'D)
Well that's a not a fair accusation, Demitri... We hang out all the time.

Demitri still just sits on that shelf.

TOM (CONT'D)
So that's what this is about. You're jealous.

Demitri stares emotionless: *I am NOT jealous.*

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm just saying it sounds like this is coming from a place of jealousy to me...

Demitri cannot believe this shit.

TOM (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. Calm down, dude. Look... Demitri. Buddy. You're my best friend. No girl will ever change that...

Demitri looks at Tom.

TOM (CONT'D)
Are we cool?

Demitri says nothing.

TOM (CONT'D)
C'mon, man. Are we cool?

Tom picks up Demitri.

TOM (CONT'D)
Thata' boy! Now let's get in there...

Tom heads into the main-

CONTROL CENTER -

- and sits down at the communications station, smooths down his hair and checks his breath: *I'm ready.*

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - HOUSTON, TEXAS - SAME

Sarah isn't alone now. She works alongside CARL, (30's, follows Sarah Michelle Gellar on Twitter.)

CARL
Hey.

Sarah looks over at Carl and smiles: *ugh.*

CARL (CONT'D)
You look pretty today.

SARAH
Thanks?

Sarah notices the same green light on the channel she heard Tom blinks.

CARL
My mom has that same shirt.
(BEAT)
I bought it for her.

Sarah is beyond disturbed.

SARAH
Great?

Sarah looks back at the blinking green light... thinks about flipping the 'TALK" switch, then ignores it. *He's not real.*

CARL
So I was wondering, you know, we've been working together for a while and-

SARAH
(sensing what's coming)
Carl. I don't think that would-
(BEAT)
I mean, you're sweet but-

CARL
You don't think she'd just go on one date with me? Not even one?

SARAH
(realizing, relieved)
Oh! Rachel? Yes. Of course she would.
(BEAT)
I thought you were gonna' ask me.

CARL
Uh... no.

Sarah doesn't know if she should be offended or what so...

SARAH
(re: the green light)
We don't have a-

CARL
It's on the fritz lately. Budget cuts. Let me.

Carl bangs on the communications desk. It turns yellow.

SARAH
('it's all in my head')
I need to get a Coke.

Sarah gets up and exits.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME [SERIES OF SHOTS]

-Tom waits patiently by the communication station.

TOM
(into mic)
Tom Roberts to Base. Come in, Base.

LATER-

Tom looks to Demitri

TOM (CONT'D)
She'll come.
(into mic)
Tom to base. Can you read me?

LATER-

Tom is still eager.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hello? Anyone out there?

LATER -

Tom takes a swig of Vodka.

LATER -

Tom is drunk

TOM (CONT'D)
(into mic)
Major Tom to Ground Control.

Tom laughs.

LATER -

Tom is sloshed, singing "Space Oddity" by Bowie.

TOM (CONT'D)
Ground Control to Major Tom/ Your circuits dead/ There's something wrong/ Can you hear me, Major Tom?/ Can you hear me Major Tom?/ Can you hear me Major Tom?

LATER -

Tom is passed out next to the mic.

LATER -

Tom stumbles to bed, holding Demitri.

TOM (CONT'D)
(slurred)
At least you care about me, Demitri.

He then passes out, holding on to Demitri.

FADE OUT:

EXT. GALAXY DINER - THE NEXT NIGHT

Sarah waits by her car outside a mid-century diner. Rachel and Carl MAKE OUT. *So gross...* One last kiss....

RACHEL
Bye, Ron.

CARL
Bye, Hermoine.

Sarah is about to die. Carl gets in his car and drives off.

RACHEL
God he's so hot.
(BEAT)
But at dinner... when he said he thought I had a cute lower-lip... what do you think he meant by that?

SARAH
Probably that he thinks you have a cute lower-lip.

Sarah gets in her car. Rachel leans against the door.

RACHEL
Really? Okay because I took it to mean he hates my upper-lip.
(BEAT)
God, you're so lucky you don't have to deal with this stuff.

SARAH
What stuff?

RACHEL
Well, like romantic stuff? I mean, not that you don't have to deal with it but that, you know-

SARAH
No, I don't know.

RACHEL
Well, you're happy being alone.

SARAH
Is that what people think? That I'm just the 'alone girl?'

RACHEL
No. I mean... yes. It's a compliment. You don't need anyone. We respect that.
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
You’re not mad, are you?

Sarah thinks.

SARAH
Maybe you’re right. I’ve tried but you know... it’s just not in the cards for some people. So maybe you’re right...

Rachel nods.

SARAH (CONT’D)
And then there’s Evan... guys find out I have a seven year old and they’re either out the door or they think ‘cool, someone to play catch with’ and then they’re out the door the minute they realize playing catch is like .005 percent of raising a kid. The last guy... remember Pete?

RACHEL
Loved Pete.

SARAH
Great. Pete was great.

RACHEL
So great.

SARAH
And Evan thought he was great. And then it didn’t work out. Well, guess who Evan talks about all the time?

RACHEL
Pete.

SARAH
It’s not good for him, Rachel. He gets attached and then they’re just gone. ‘When’s Pete coming back over, Mom?’ And it’s my fault. No one else’s. I can’t do this to him anymore. I had all these great plans and this is where I end up? But instead of fighting it, I need to accept it. So right here, right now in the parking lot of The Galaxy Diner I declare I’m done. And I’m happy about it. I really am. But I’m done.

RACHEL
Done?

SARAH
Done? I don’t need anyone.

RACHEL
Sure?

SARAH
Positive.

RACHEL
(deathly serious)
Because The Galaxy Diner parking lot is a parking lot of truth.

Sarah laughs, then starts her car.

SARAH
Positive. You're right. I'm fine with being by myself and I don't need anyone.

Sarah drives off.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah enters. It's dark, save for some science program on TV. Evan is asleep on Grandpa Ted's lap (who is also asleep.)

Sarah smiles.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

So lonely. But the stars in the distance sparkle just a little brighter tonight.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

Sarah arrives for the night shift.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - HALLWAY

Sarah walks down a long hallway. Nobody. Just a JANITOR.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Sarah enters, puts down her purse and sits down.

THE GREEN LIGHT blinks.

She presses the 'TALK' button.

SARAH
Hello?

Nothing.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hello?

Still blinking green.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION/ INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

The Sprut-Vosem Communications light blinks green as well. We track back to Tom, passed out in his bed, holding Demitri like a teddy bear.

SARAH (V.O.)
Um, I don't know if anyone can hear me but since you're probably not real I figured you'd be the perfect person to talk to. And I'm not in the best place right now, so telling my problems to a space ghost seems like a pretty good idea to me.

Sarah looks behind her again: *I look insane, but screw it.*

SARAH (CONT'D)
So here goes...

LATER -

Sarah keeps going. She doesn't necessarily believe or really care if anyone really is listening... just more catharsis.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I never had that at all with Steve. He was great and all -

Tom slowly wakes up and eyes the GREEN blinking light. He races over and sits down.

SARAH (CONT'D)
But then I spent that night with you.

Tom is about to press the button. Stops. Doesn't want to ruin this....

SARAH (CONT'D)
And then I thought 'oh, *this* is what it feels like.' Because they don't teach you, you know. And it sounds so crazy, which is why I never told anyone because it's crazy to say 'I just fell in love with someone I've never met and only talked to for nine hours.' But it was real. And it was the best nine hours of my life.

Tom is riveted.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And then you died.
(BEAT)
And I was engaged and once you get on that train it just -

Tom leans in and presses the "TALK" button.

TOM
I didn't die, Sarah.

Sarah scoots away from her station, stunned.

TOM (CONT'D)
I made it into the air-lock. The explosion knocked out all communications but then somehow it got kicked back on the other night. That's when you heard me.

Sarah is speechless.

TOM (CONT'D)
Still want soup for your last meal?

SARAH
It *is* you.

TOM
In the flesh.

SARAH
I-I... are you *okay?*

TOM
My best friend is stuffed dog named Demitri but other than that I think I'm good.

Sarah laughs.

TOM (CONT'D)
So, got any plans for the next nine hours?

Sarah stands up...

SARAH
(determined)
Yes. I'm bringing you *home*.

Sarah PRESSES the <u>ALARM.</u>

MOMENTS LATER -

A FEW TECHIES, led by EDWARD (30's) STARE at the communications system.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tom. Come in.

BEAT...

...and then...

TOM
Major Tom Roberts to Base. Over.

EDWARD
Holy shit.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
He's alive.

EDWARD
I think we're gonna' need to wake up Bill.

OFF EVERYONE - The look on the Techie's faces says everything we need to know about this "Bill" fellow.

INT. BILL SANDERSON'S HOUSE - SAME

CLOSE ON - A GIANT BOAR'S HEAD, mounted to the wall. We move down past a row of antique RIFLES and finally to a snoring hulk of a man, and his sleeping WIFE. This is BILL SANDERSON, NASA CHIEF (50's, seen *Unforgiven* 108 times.)

A RED PHONE next to him rings. He startles awake.

BILL SANDERSON
(groggy)
Sanderson -

OFF SANDERSON -

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - LATER

Sanderson, cup of coffee in hand, stands with Edward and Sarah.

SARAH
You just press this button and talk.

BILL SANDERSON
(sceptical into Mic)
Major Roberts. This is Bill Sanderson. Chief Administrator of NASA. Come in.

...NOTHING.

Sanderson looks to Sarah.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT'D)
(into Mic)
Major Roberts. Come in.

NOTHING...

SARAH
It will work.

BILL SANDERSON
Major Roberts.
(BEAT)
Miss Sparks. My tolerance for bullshit is-

Until...

TOM
Sprut-Vosem to Mission Control. Over.

BILL SANDERSON
Holy shit.

TOM
Sprut-Vosem to Mission Control. Come in?

BILL SANDERSON
(almost speechless for once...)
Tom...

TOM
Sir, yes sir.

BEAT

TOM (CONT'D)
...*Sir?*

Bill recovers from his shock...

BILL SANDERSON
Uh... good to hear your voice.
(then, back in charge)
This is Ground Control to Major Tom: *we're bringing you home.*

TOM
Sir, yes Sir!

Sanderson clicks off the Mic so Tom can't hear.

BILL SANDERSON
Anybody got any bright ideas? Now would be the time-

SATELLITE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sanderson, Edward, Sarah and a few Techies are in a high tech room with GIANT LCD SCREENS EVERYWHERE. SATELLITE IMAGES of SPRUT-VOSEM swirl around the screens.

EDWARD
So Sprut-Vosem is here.

We swirl over on the LCD SCREEN to another SPACE STATION.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
The International Space Station is here.

SANDERSON
We don't have any of our guys up there right now.

EDWARD
Well no, not since they dismantled the Shuttle Program.

SANDERSON
Right.

SARAH
Couldn't we send an unmanned-

SANDERSON
(disgusted, almost to himself)
For the first time since the 60's the United States of America officially has no way to get into space.

The team takes this (actual truth) in.

EDWARD
(pointing to the ISS)
True. But there are three Australians up on the International Space Station. Technically, one of them could man the ISS's Rover over to Sprut-Vosem.

[note: we see a computer model of Edward's proposed plan as he speaks.]

SARAH
Well let's do that, then.

EDWARD
Sarah. This really isn't a Communications Department issue anymore. We can handle-

SANDERSON
She stays.

EDWARD
Okay. But it's not that simple. Sprut-Vosem is old technology. So there's nowhere for the ISS Rover to dock.

TECHIE #1
Tom would have to suit-up and float out to the Rover's air-lock. Assuming his suit is still intact.

EDWARD
That's a big assumption.

TECHIE #2
We can slow the Rover down to two knots and that's about it. Which gives us about 26 seconds for Tom to float out. The Rover needs to be as close to Sprut-Vosem as possible which, in space, is incredibly dangerous.

SANDERSON
I don't know. Lost a man in '92 that way.

SARAH
Well, we have to do *something*.

EDWARD
We'd be risking a man's life.

Sarah looks to everyone. They seem to agree.

SARAH
So we just do nothing?

EDWARD
I'm sorry, Sarah. We can't risk one man's life for another's.

Sanderson steps in.

SANDERSON
Edward's right. The smart thing to do would be to walk away.

Sarah is crushed.

SANDERSON (CONT'D)
But when I was in the Marines, we weren't taught to do what was smart... we were taught to do what was right.

TECHIE #1
(whispers to Techie #2)
Man-crush.

Techie #2 nods in approval.

SANDERSON
(taking charge)
Edward. Contact the ISS and get our guy. Systems: I want a full plan ten minutes ago.
(MORE)

SANDERSON (CONT'D)
I got an important phone call to make.
(louder)
Let’s make it happen, people.

SARAH
Sir. Is there anything I can do?

SANDERSON
Yeah... Go keep Major Tom company.

OFF SARAH, THRILLED...

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER/ SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - LATER

Sarah is alone, talking with Tom. Tom is ecstatic, packing up things left and right.

TOM
I’m really coming home.

Tom is overcome with emotion. He almost doesn’t know how to deal with it.

SARAH
You’re coming home.
(BEAT)
So... do you have any plans in the meantime?

Tom smiles.

SATELLITE ROOM - SAME

Edward, Sanderson and a bunch more TECHIES.

Sanderson hangs up the PHONE.

SANDERSON
The Administration gave us the green light. We are a-go.

One SCREEN has Sprut-Vosem, one is on SARAH, and another is FUZZ...

EDWARD
(into mic)
Houston to ISS. Come in.

The FUZZ fades revealing a handsome AUSTRALIAN astronaut, JACK WELLINGTON, 30’s.

WELLINGTON
(thick accent)
ISS to Houston... heard you got a mission for me, mates?

EDWARD
It’s incredibly dangerous.

WELLINGTON
Wouldn't have it any other way.

Sanderson smiles.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION - LATER

A ROVER dislodges from the ISS, pivots and then fires its BOOSTER rockets.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - DAY

[quick news cuts...]

A line of NEWS TRUCKS.

CNN REPORTER
... the dramatic attempt to rescue Major Tom Roberts...

BBC
... the amazing story of an astronaut who was left to die but miraculously...

ABC
... but with no working Shuttle Program NASA is relying on a team of Australian...

NBC
... with officials describing the mission as 'highly dangerous.'

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - SAME

We track back to see a crowd of ONLOOKERS, holding American Flags, has gathered outside the space-center.

[quick cut news interviews]

MAN IN HAT
...of course we should. We can't just leave a man in space...

FIVE YEAR OLD BOY
(playing with a SPACE SHUTTLE toy...)
...I want to be just like Major Tom when I grow up.

WOMAN IN BLUE
... I just saw it on the news and I
(laughs)
(MORE)

WOMAN IN BLUE (CONT'D)
...thought he was handsome so I came down.

5 YEAR OLD BOY
(his MOTHER whispers in his ear...)
Please be safe Major Tom.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION/ INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom and Sarah have both reverted to their former selves. This is the first time in a while we've seen Sarah relaxed: adult-life is fading away, if just for a moment.

TOM
...every day. Wake up, push ups, eat a jar or borscht, read from one of the two Russian Novels that they left -

SARAH
You learned Russian?

TOM
No. I have no idea what I'm reading. Then I bounce the ball up against the starboard side for an hour. Then lunch. Then bounce again on the port side. Then sit-ups. Then dinner. Then bed. Then I wake up and do-
(BEAT)
You know, can we just talk about something normal. Like, normal, boring stuff? Like...
(smiles)
... Mexican food. Oh man. I will be eating Mexican food within a matter of days. Seriously. You have no idea how good that sounds right now.

SARAH
Ok. Only boring stuff. But full disclosure, I hate Mexican food.

TOM
Who hates Mexican food?

SARAH
I do.

TOM
That's a sin.

SARAH
It's not a sin.

TOM
I have had nothing but borscht and pickled herring for 9 years. Not liking Mexican food is a punishable by death sin.

SARAH
I don’t like crunchy things.

TOM
Who doesn’t like crunchy things?

SARAH
Me.

TOM
It’s a sin.

SARAH
No it’s not.

TOM
It’s in the Bible. Thou Shalt Like Quesadillas.

SARAH
Oh, no. I don’t eat cheese.

LATER -

Sarah doodles while Tom eats what he hopes is his last spoonful of borscht.

SARAH (CONT’D)
...Okay. I would ‘eff’ Animal, marry Kermit and kill Fozzy.

TOM
He’s so annoying.

SARAH
Right? Just up there telling his stupid jokes.

INT. ISS SPACE ROVER - SAME

Jack Wellington listens to Sarah and Tom talk, smiling:

TOM (V.O.)
He’s so desperate for attention.

SARAH (V.O.)
Just shoot him right in his big puppet-head.

Jack laughs.

TECHIE #
Houston to ISS Rover. Come in.

Jack flips a few switches.

JACK
ISS Rover. Over.

TECHIE #1
You'll be reaching Sprut-Vosem in 26 hours.

JACK
No worries, mate. I get to listen to Princess Lea and Hans Solo here.
(to Houston)
Hey... they can't hear me can they?

EDWARD
(on mic)
Nope.

JACK
Good because I wanted to ask you guys: are they, like, a thing?

EDWARD
(uhhh..)
I don't know.

JACK
(laughing)
'Cause they really need to get a room.

Jack laughs.

EXT. ISS SPACE ROVER - SAME

The Rover POWERS ahead.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION/ INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - LATER

TOM
So the plane crashed on a tropical island and then they got chased by a polar bear?

SARAH
And also this weird smoke monster thing. And then Hurley won the lotto. But that was after Locke was sketchy, but then he got not sketchy but then he got sketchy again.

TOM
I'm so confused.

SARAH
I don't know why you're not getting this?
(BEAT)
Fine, I'll start again from the beginning...

LATER-

Sarah is snacking away and Tom is cleaning up the space station as he talks.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Well that's the thing. In like the 50's it was like a man does 'this' and a woman does 'this' and that's that and everyone was happy.

TOM
And on pills.

SARAH
Even happier. But now I open my computer every day and there's one article that's like "Women love manly men," but another that's all "Women love manly women." Or "Never get married before 30," but also "If you're not married before 30 you have an increased risk of breast cancer." "No sexting a guy until the third date," but read this related article titled "15 ways to sext a guy you just met."
(BEAT)
It's like the entire internet is written by the crazy lady who yells at me outside Target.

TOM
What's sexting?

SARAH
God, you're so lucky.
(BEAT)
Do you realize we've been talking for eight hours straight?

TOM
No. I didn't.
(BEAT)
But that's kind of the point, isn't it?

Sarah blushes.

ISS ROVER - ARIEL VIEW

The Rover speeds toward Sprut-Vosem.

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - SAME

The CROWD has gotten larger.

LATER -

TOM (CONT'D)
Well, we met at school. All my friends used to call her Library Girl because she was kind of a nerd. She was beautiful but because she wore glasses they couldn't see it.

SARAH
You went to college in an 80's movie?

TOM
And then we graduated and dated and moved in together and then one day, she came home and just said she needed some 'time apart.'

SARAH
Then what happened?

TOM
Technically I 'died' so, you know, she got that time apart.

SARAH
Oh, yeah.

LATER -

TOM
Keith Richards is *STILL* alive?

SARAH
Still kicking.

TOM
Thank, God.
(BEAT, excited)
Wait. Play me some new music.

SARAH
I have some good hip-hop.

TOM
You listen to hip-hop?

SARAH
What? A girl likes to keep it real every once in awhile.

TOM
You just don't seem like a hip-hop girl to me.

SARAH
Well there's a lot of me to discover, then, huh?

TOM
Alright. Anything non-hip-hop?

SARAH
Meh. There's nothing good.

TOM
Nothing good? No one has made a single good song in nine years?

SARAH
Not really.

TOM
I have been trapped up here with only one CD put together by my 12 year old sister so you can imagine what's on it and you WILL find me one good song...

Sarah laughs.

LATER-

Sarah holds her iPhone against the microphone.

SARAH
Ok. Here goes. This one is from like 2009, I think.

Tom closes his eyes. She presses play on The Generational's "*When They Fight*."

As the song continues...

LATER -

Tom, animated, tells the story of how he made it into Sprut-Vosem alive. Sarah is mesmerized.

LATER -

Sarah checks in with Edward: on the LCD we can see the ISS Rover is getting closer to Sprut-Vosem.

LATER -

Sarah speaks, crying. Tom listens intently.

LATER -

Tom is doing a chicken impression for some reason.

LATER -

Sarah sings along.

LATER -

Sarah talks again to Edward. He seems a bit annoyed with her but she's determined.

LATER -

Tom talks, but we move past him. Demitri is in the same place he's been in for awhile, neglected.

[END SEQUENCE]

TOM
That was amazing. You don't know how great it feels to hear some new music.

Sarah smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hey. Can you play it again?

SARAH
(blissful)
Here. Try this one...

Sarah presses play on Sufjan Stevens "Chicago," and adjusts the mic.

Tom listens to the music with his eyes closed.

LATER -

We track into the Communications Room as the song continues.

Sarah is asleep at her desk. Tom is also asleep... but they're as close as they can be, each holding on to the microphones.

LATER - Sarah gets up as the song continues and smiles...

BREAK ROOM - LATER

Sarah, grabs a Coke.

RACHEL
-I'm just saying, don't get too attached. Remember what I said about unavailable men?

SARAH
He's available.

RACHEL
He's is not even on this *planet*.

SARAH
His name is 'Tom' and he's *wonderful*.

Rachel, tears open a Kit-Kat and looks at Sarah, incredulously.

RACHEL
You know I just saw this show on cable called "*Ghostly Lovers*" and they interview these women who have erotic encounters with the un-dead while they sleep. You know, like some lady in Oklahoma gets visited at night by like an 18th century British Lord or something and he just takes her and just turns her out and they just have like crazy-hot ghost-sex. And so as I'm watching this I'm like... *wait:* 'how come only super sexy ghosts come and do these ladies in the middle of the night, you know? Like where is the lady that gets a visit from the skeevy ghost from the 70's who lives in a van? Do you want to know why, Sarah? Do you know why these ladies claim they only get freaked by sexy ghosts?

SARAH
Why?

RACHEL
Because they're *Out. Of. Their. Goddamn. Minds*... Much like yourself.
(BEAT)
Kit-Kat?

Sarah is taken aback but too in love to let it phase her.

SATELLITE ROOM - SAME

Sanderson enters with some coffee to a sight he never thought he'd see: Edward and the Techies, along with an LCD VIDEO FEED of Australian Jack Wellington all listening like schoolgirls to Tom and Sarah.

SARAH
Best Christmas song? No, you'll make fun of me.

TOM
I promise I won't make fun of you. We'll go at the same time, okay? 1-2-3...

TOM (CONT'D)	SARAH
"All I Want For Christmas" by Mariah Carey.	"Merry Muther-effin' Xmas" by Easy-E.

SARAH
Did you say Mariah Carey?

TOM
No.
(BEAT)
Did you say Easy-E?

SARAH
Yes.

TOM
(laughing)
Who *are* you?

SARAH
What?

The Techies smile at each other...

SANDERSON
Ahem.

The crew, embarrassed, gets back to work.

LATER -

TOM
You know my mom used to tell me you know you love someone when you can sit together for hours and not say a word. Just be.

Sarah laughs.

TOM (CONT'D)
What?

SARAH
My dad says you know you're in love when you can talk for hours.

TOM
Maybe they should date.

Sarah laughs...

SATELLITE ROOM - SAME

Sanderson commands the room.

BILL SANDERSON
Alright people, it's go-time.

Edward takes over.

EDWARD
(into mic)
Captain Wellington.

JACK
Over.

EDWARD
Major Tom?

TOM
Over.

EDWARD
Major Tom. You will have exactly a 26 second window to float out to ISS ROVER.

TOM
Affirmative.

CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE THREE.

JACK
I see her.

EDWARD
Commence slow down.

JACK
Affirmative. Two knots.

Jack slows down his rover.

EDWARD
ISS, you need to maneuver between solar wings 2 and 3. Get as close as possible so he can catch you.

Jack spots the now MASSIVE SOLAR WINGS.

JACK
Easy-peasy, mate.

EDWARD
ISS, as soon as I give the go ahead, open your outer air-lock doors.

JACK
Got it.

EDWARD
Standby, Captain Wellington. Standby, Major Tom.

Edward presses the ALARM:

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - SAME

A Media crush...

CNN
... NASA is mum on the details but sources say the rescue mission is underway as we speak...

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAM

THE ALARM BLARES.

SARAH
Here we go.

TOM
Suiting up and standing by.

Tom put on his Space Suit and spots Demitri staring at him with his puppy dog eyes: *Don't leave me.*

Tom ignores him.

EDWARD
(on mic)
Major Tom, this is Mission Command.
Proceed to air-lock.

TOM
Affirmative.

SARAH
And Tom?

TOM
Yeah...

SARAH
Be safe.

AIR-LOCK -

Tom enters the air-lock all suited up.

SATELLITE ROOM -

Sanderson paces.

EDWARD
(into mic)
ISS opening air-lock in 5...4...

ISS ROVER -

Jack counts along, finger ready to open his Rover air-lock.

JACK
3...2...

SPRUT-VOSEM AIR-LOCK -

Tom is ready.

EDWARD (O.S.)
Opening air-locks. Tom you are
clear to walk...

Tom presses the AIR-LOCK button....

Nothing.

EDWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tom? I need confirmation...

He hits it again.

Nothing...

ISS - ROVER - ARIEL VIEW

The Rover maneuvers between the tight solar wings. We see the air-lock slide open.

EDWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Rover. Do we have visual on Major Roberts?

ISS - ROVER

Jack peers out the window.

JACK
Negative.

SATELLITE ROOM -

The guys look to Sanderson, nervous.

TECHIE #1
12 seconds remaining.

SPRUT-VOSEM - AIR-LOCK

Tom jams it again. And again. Until finally...

ISS ROVER -

Jack is worried. Through the window we see he's moving past the Sprut-Vosem air-lock.

JACK
Still negative...

AND THEN, Tom appears, floating out.

JACK (CONT'D)
I have visual!

OUTSIDE -

Tom floats toward the Rover. It's gonna be close as the Rover is moving fast from this vantage point. Tom struggles and finally reaches out. He GRABS...

The ISS AIR-LOCK just in time...

BUT his hand *SLIPS*...

CAUSING the ROVER TO BEGIN SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL

ISS ROVER -

Jack is caught in what's known as a 'space-spin.' [*in 1966, Neil Armstrong and David Scott narrowly escaped death in a similar situation on Gemini 8.*]

JACK (CONT'D)
MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

SATELLITE ROOM - SAME

Alarms sound. All are intense.

EDWARD
Full power!

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM -

Sarah is breathless.

SARAH
Tom?

OUTSIDE -

The ROVER spins out of control and KNOCKS Tom back toward SPRUT-VOSEM, tearing his AIR-LINE.

ON TOM -

Losing oxygen. He has to float back.

ISS ROVER -

Jack is working furiously.

SATELLITE ROOM -

The Techies scramble.

TECHIE #1
He needs to stabilize or the G-force will knock him out.

BILL SANDERSON
Goddamnit people save him!

EDWARD
Full power, ISS! You need full power!

OUTSIDE -

The spinning Rover is barreling off into the distance.

SPRUT-VOSEM - AIR-LOCK

Tom is inside safe, removes his helmet and takes a deep breath.

ISS ROVER -

Jack struggles to pull the throttle.

He’s SPINNING wildly. His eyes flutter...

SATELLITE ROOM -

Sanderson and the Techies scramble...

EDWARD (CONT’D)
ISS. Come in ISS.

TECHIE #1
(re: Jack on video)
He’s out.

The screen then goes BLACK.

ISS ROVER -

We track out slowly from the spinning Jack, who has blacked-out completely...

And then flutters his eyes again. He grabs the THROTTLE one last fast-push and STABILIZES.

JACK
Close one, mates.

SATELLITE ROOM - SAME

Edward is relieved.

EDWARD
He’s back online.
(to Jack)
What’s your power read?

ISS ROVER -

Jack looks down at a power source INDICATOR.

JACK
Not good.

SATELLITE ROOM -

Edward nods to Sanderson.

SANDERSON
(into mic)
ISS. Abort mission. Repeat. Abort mission.

ISS ROVER -

JACK
Sure? Not much power but I could try and give her another go?

SANDERSON (V.O.)
I repeat. Mission aborted.

Jack looks out the rover at Sprut-Vosem as it slowly drifts away...

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

...Further and further...

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)
A major setback for NASA as their multi-national attempt to save American astronaut...

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - SAME

The DEMORALIZED crowd slowly dissipates in a series of FADES while various reporters and American Citizens speak, overlapping each other.

BBC (V.O.)
...now the beleaguered American Space Program has many wondering...

MAN IN HAT (V.O.)
...really think it’s just a big waste of money. We got real problems down here in the real world and they’re spending millions in just one guy?

WOMAN IN BLUE
...never thought it was a good idea. I am sorry but people die every day and you don’t see the whole government doing everything to help them...

Until all that’s left of the crowd is just random trash on the grass... even the SHUTTLE TOY the five year old boy was playing with earlier.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION/ INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

[cut back and forth]

Tom speaks to Sanderson.

TOM
-I understand.

Sanderson rubs his forehead.

SANDERSON
So we're going to try to help you fix the Sprut-Vosem return pod remotely-

TOM
Sir. With all due respect I've tried that twice a day for nine years. That's 6,570 attempts. Anything you can think of I've tried.

SANDERSON
Well, then we try one more time.

Tom seems different. The weight of someone's death is hanging over him...

TOM
Do you mind if I speak to Sarah?

Sanderson nods to Sarah, who gets up and heads to the empty

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/SPRUT-VOSEM - LATER

Sarah and Tom speak. Sarah is crying. Tom seems oddly distant.

SARAH
No, I'm not giving up on you. We're going to try something else.

TOM
(emotionless)
You've tried everything.

SARAH
And we'll keep trying. We'll help you fix it from here.

TOM
I've tried that a thousand different times, Sarah.

SARAH
Then we'll try a thousand more.

TOM
Sarah. A man almost died. Because of me.

SARAH
There's got to be another way.

TOM
(angry)
There is no other way! This is it. I will be alone forever. That's what I wanted, isn't it?... and that's what I got. You said it yourself. You can't fight destiny and this is mine.

SARAH
Tom?

Tom stands up, puts his finger on the Communications button.

TOM
(resigned now)
And yours is to move on and be happy.

Tom looks at the button, takes a deep breath..

TOM (CONT'D)
Sarah?

SARAH
Yes?

TOM
I love you... and goodbye.

SARAH
Tom!

Tom SWITCHES the Sprut-Vosem communications dashboard OFF.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tom?

Sarah tries furiously but all communications have been lost.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tom.

LATER -

Sarah is still trying. Sanderson and Edward, along with the other Techies, are working.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Maybe he'll turn it back on.

EDWARD
Well, there's no way we can help him now.

SARAH
He'll turn it back on.

Edward looks to Sanderson...

LATER -

Sarah is still trying. But this time we can understand she's just going though the motions.

LATER -

Sarah has fallen asleep with her finger on Tom's button. Rachel comes in and wakes her up.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tom.

RACHEL
Come on.

SARAH
But he's coming back.

Rachel doesn't really know what to say other than...

RACHEL
Time to go.

Sarah gets up and follows Rachel out.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - LATER

Tom gazes out of Sprut-Vosem's porthole window.

The Station drifts away from us... Tom getting smaller and smaller and smaller until he's just another speck in the night sky.

FADE OUT:

INT. GALAXY DINER - NIGHT

An older gentleman holds up a glass of beer. This is RACHEL'S DAD.

RACHEL'S DAD
To my daughter...
(then, resigned)
...and also her new boyfriend,
Carl.

Everyone toasts. Sarah is there, with Evan. She sits across from her ex-husband, Steve.

Some time has passed but Sarah still finds it hard to smile. But she’s a trooper so she puts on a brave face.

LATER -

The guests mill about. Steve approaches Sarah with Evan.

STEVE
(to Evan)
Go get some cake.

Evan runs off.

SARAH
Hi.

STEVE
I had a chance to talk to Carl. He’s a little-

SARAH
We know... we know.

Steve laughs.

STEVE
Do you... want to go for a walk?

EXT. GALAXY DINER - PARKING LOT - LATER

Sarah and Steve walk.

SARAH
The Galaxy parking lot is really lovely this time of year.

STEVE
You got your asphalt, your dumpsters, your sodium lamps...

SARAH
So where’s, um-

STEVE
Amber?

SARAH
She was the dumb one, right?

STEVE
No, that was Jessica.

SARAH
Right, Jessica. With the boobs.

STEVE
They’ve all had boobs.

SARAH
Not like those. Those could've been an appetizer at the Cheesecake Factory.

Steve laughs.

STEVE
No, Amber was the kick-boxer.

SARAH
Oh, right. The other dumb one.

STEVE
She wasn't dumb, Sarah.

SARAH
I told her I worked at NASA and she asked me how long my commute to space was.

STEVE
She was so dumb.

Steve and Sarah both laugh.

SARAH
Pretty, though.

STEVE
Very pretty.

SARAH
But just so, so stupid.

STEVE
You have no idea.
(BEAT)
What about you? You never bring anyone to these things.

SARAH
I don't know. It's hard - with Evan and everything. I don't know... guess it's just not really my thing anymore.

STEVE
Sarah, everybody needs someone.

Sarah considers this...

SARAH
We should go back inside.

The two head back in.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hey.

STEVE
What?

SARAH
What did one boob say to the other?

STEVE
What?

SARAH
What up, bra.

STEVE
(laughing)
That was so bad.

SARAH
You laughed.

STEVE
Legitimately the worst joke I've ever heard.

SARAH
And you still laughed.

Sarah and Steve smile.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - EVAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Steve puts an already asleep Evan to bed and kisses him.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - LATER

Sarah waves Steve off as he drives away. She ponders for a moment, smiles.

She looks up at the dark sky for a minute, then heads back inside.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom has a full beard now... messy hair. We also see he's stopped counting the days with slash marks. Scrawled on the wall now is just the words:

"WHO CARES?"

He talks to Demitri. He's seems even more lost than he was when we met him before.

TOM
(manic)
No way, man... Because I just can't that's why. I have too much to do. And who is this girl anyway?

Demitri gives a puppy dog face: *just give it a whirl.*

TOM (CONT'D)
Nope. No way. Plus, I'm close to fixing the return pod.

A pile of wires and tools. He's not close at all.

TOM (CONT'D)
Just a few more tweaks. You know, you Russians thought of everything. And when I get back home there's a lot I gotta do.
(whispering)
I just talked to the President. You know what he said? He said he's gonna give me a medal when I get back. Yeah. So that means I'll have to get a suit probably, and maybe a haircut. And new shoes.

Demitri knows the guy is gone now.

TOM (CONT'D)
You can't go to the White House in old shoes... and I need to mow the lawn at Mom's house. I can't imagine how tall that grass is now. You see guys, I'm gonna have a lot of catching up to do. And Olivia, I sometimes would pick her up from school. I hope she hasn't been waiting too long. I wonder if I turned off the stove in my apartment? I think I did. You know what, though? My voice-mail is probably full. I have to remember to take care of that. As a matter of fact I'm gonna write that down now so I don't forget. I need a pencil.

Tom heads into the bedroom.

TOM (CONT'D)
A lot to do, man. A lot to do.

Demitri stares with quiet concern for their best friend.

INT. TARGET - DAY

Sarah and Rachel push carts through Target.

RACHEL
Well, are you gonna' go?

SARAH
I don't know?

RACHEL
It’s your first date in like, forever and you don’t know?

SARAH
He’s my ex-husband. Don’t you think that’s weird?

RACHEL
I think it’s romantic. You were together and then you weren’t together but then like destiny intervened and now you’ll be together again.
(BEAT)
I suddenly want Colin Firth to slap me and then take me.

SARAH
It’s good for Evan.

RACHEL
You never know how these things are gonna’ work out. I mean, look at me and Carl. Who would’ve ever thought I’d find someone as amazing as Carl?

SARAH
No one.

RACHEL
Exactly.

SARAH
No one at all.

RACHEL
And to tell the truth, I thought he was weird at first.

SARAH
No.

RACHEL
True story. But then I was like ‘fine, I’ll come to your place because...’ I don’t even remember why now-

SARAH
Because you’re a slut?

RACHEL
That was it.
(BEAT)
So I get over there and he had candles and a whole box of wine and we just-

SARAH
Do not put something in my brain I can't erase-

RACHEL
No. We just *talked* all night.

SARAH
Really?

RACHEL
Yes... And then we did it and let me tell you he found places on my body that I didn't even-

SARAH
Okay, okay.

RACHEL
All I'm saying is give it another go... maybe Steve is your Carl?!

Sarah considers *that.*

SARAH
I don't know. I think I'm just gonna' say no.

Rachel picks up some scented candles and puts them in her cart.

RACHEL
You know, I think I'll finally be complete as a person once I buy these scented candles.
(off Sarah's look)
No. I really believe that.

SARAH
I know you do. That's the issue.

Rachel tries to get Sarah to smell them but she declines.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah, Grandpa Ted and Evan have dinner. Grandpa Ted shows Evan how to tie varies ROPE KNOTS.

GRANDPA TED
- Did I ever tell you about my time in the Navy?

SARAH
Dad.

GRANDPA TED
What? He's seven.

SARAH
Evan, remember what I told you?

EVAN
Yes. Never repeat anything Grandpa Ted says.

SARAH
Thank you.

GRANDPA TED
What? The kid needs a father.

Sarah isn't too happy with this. She shoots her dad a look and gets up to clear plates.

EVAN
Dad called again.
(BEAT)
For you.

SARAH
(not thrilled)
Thank you, Evan.

EVAN
Are you going to call him?

SARAH
Time to go to bed, Evan.

EVAN
You said yourself dad was nice. You guys could get married again-

SARAH
Evan. Go to bed. Now.

Evan sulks to bed.

GRANDPA TED
The kid's got a point-

SARAH
Dad. What is wrong with you?

GRANDPA TED
What? He's got a point. I'm just trying to help.

SARAH
(pissed)
Well it's not working.
(BEAT)
Good night.

Sarah exits.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - LATER

Sarah walks past the Communications Room. Stops. Looks over to her station... Maybe... just maybe?

Nothing.

She keeps going. Even Sarah has realized this isn't healthy anymore.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

MAIN ROOM -

The table is set with two plates. The finest of borscht and pickled herring awaits.

TOM (O.S.)
I'm coming!

BEDROOM -

Demitri sits on the shelf above the bed.

Tom enters. He's used red borscht juice to create a David Bowie style lightning bolt over his eye.

TOM (CONT'D)
How do I look?... It's not too much is it?... You said she was kind of young and rock n' roll... Okay good.

Tom takes a deep breath then turns back to Demitri.

TOM (CONT'D)
Oh, and if things get... you know...
(whispers)
Hot and heavy... I'm gonna need you to sleep in the other room tonight, okay?

Tom heads into the

MAIN ROOM -

Tom enters and takes a seat. He stares at the empty plate across from him. Behind him, a mainframe computer blinks.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
(sexy)
Hello, Tom.

TOM
Hi.

Tom puts on his best face. Clearly it's all in his head, but this coping mechanism feels as real to him as any other one.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
So glad you could join me for dinner, Tom.

TOM
You look great.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Why, thank you, Tom.

TOM
That's a beautiful dress.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Oh, this old thing? I just threw on the first thing I grabbed from my closet, Tom.

TOM
So, do you come here often?
(to himself)
No that's what you say in a bar. Not on a date. Pull it together.
(back to her)
I hear the steak here is great.

The computer mainframe BLINKS a few times.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
I've never been on a date with someone so handsome, Tom.

Tom laughs.

TOM
Well, I do a lot of push-ups so-

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
You're so amazing and special, Tom. You're so tall and intelligent. Has anyone told you that recently, Tom? Has anyone told you how athletic and good with children you are? How you'd make a wonderful father, Tom. You know that, right? Has anyone told you how much *value* you have as a person? How much you mean to them, Tom? How much worse off they'd be if you didn't exist? Has anyone said that to you recently, Tom? Because that's what we all want to hear in the end, isn't it, Tom? To know that we matter?

As she speaks, we move in on Tom. Closer and closer.

TOM
I guess so.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Well, I'll say it, Tom. *You matter.* What you do makes a difference. When you talk, Tom, people listen. You're not just some insignificant speck in the universe, Tom. No, not you. Other people, sure...
(MORE)

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
but not you, Tom. People care about you, Tom. People need you, Tom. Why? Because you're Tom. You, Tom... are *Tom.* Tom. Valuable, strong, handsome, intelligent, kind, generous... You matter, Tom. Tom. *You* matter, Tom...

Tom is mesmerized.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Tom, Tom, Tom, Tom, Tom, Tom...

And below...

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

...The light at Sarah's station is still YELLOW on Tom's channel.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - THE NEXT NIGHT

Sarah pulls up in her Honda. Notices another car in the driveway.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SAME

Sarah enters. The dining room table is set with two plates. Candles are lit.

Evan stands before her, holding a dish towel over his arm like a waiter.

EVAN
Madame... right this way please.

SARAH
Evan. What is this?

Evan pulls out her chair.

EVAN
Welcome to Chez Evan.

Sarah sits down. Smiles.

EVAN (CONT'D)
(bad french accent)
Tonight we will be serving peanut butter and jell-ay sandwiches and the grocery store's finest milk.

SARAH
Sounds delicious.

EVAN
One moment, madame.

Evan runs to the other room in his socks and returns with

STEVE -

EVAN (CONT'D)
May I introduce your dining companion tonight, Mr. Dad.

Sarah is not too thrilled.

SARAH
(to Evan)
Evan. You can't do stuff like this. Bedroom.
(mad, to Steve)
Did you know about this?

Sarah gets up. Evan, realizing she's upset runs into his room.

BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Evan hides under his covers.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Evan.

EVAN
(crying)
I'm sorry.

SARAH
Evan, go out there right now and tell your father you're sorry but he has to go.

Evan shakes his head 'no.' Sarah's pretty exasperated. She sits down on the bed.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(angry)
I know you want a someone here all the time. I know that Evan. But people don't always get what they want? I don't and you don't either.

Evan peeks his head out from under the covers.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

EVAN
I just want you to be happy.

Sarah is taken aback.

SARAH
I am happy.

EVAN
No you're not. You're always sad.

SARAH
I'm not sad.

EVAN
Yes you are. You act like the people on TV act when they're sad.

Sarah looks away.

EVAN (CONT'D)
He says he wants to make it work again.

Sarah sighs.

SARAH
Go to bed.

Evan throws the covers back over his head.

DINING ROOM -

Steve sits at his plate. Sarah enters.

STEVE
I'm sorry. He said you knew-

SARAH
It's fine.
(looking at food)
I hope you like PBJ's.

Steve smiles.

LATER-

The milk has been replaced by wine. The PBJ's are gone.

STEVE
- and Rachel was so drunk. And in that horrible dress.

SARAH
My bridesmaids looked great.

STEVE
They looked like marshmallows dipped in glitter.

SARAH
(sorta' tipsy, laughing)
That was 'in' back then!

STEVE
So hideous.

SARAH
What was the name of the guy she slept with that night?

STEVE
Oh, there were so many back then. Oh! Redhead. Stupid shoes.

SARAH
Oh yeah! I don't even remember. Was he the dentist?

STEVE
I think he was comedian or something.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Vincent!

SARAH
Vincent! That's right. She met him backstage. At that sad comedy club. Oh god, only Rachel would be a groupie to a comedian.

Steve moves in a bit.

STEVE
That was a fun night.

SARAH
It was.

There's a silence.

STEVE
I really want to kiss you.

Sarah closes her eyes.

SARAH
I don't think that's a good idea.

Steve moves closer.

STEVE
We can get back to how it was.

Sarah glances back towards Evan's room.

STEVE (CONT'D)
We can make it work.

Steve leans in and kisses Sarah. She kisses him back.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SAME

As they kiss, we pan up to the sparkling Texas sky.

FADE OUT:

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION -

The main room is a WRECK. Parts and wires everywhere. Tom is exasperated.

Demitri looks on.

TOM
(manic)
I'm close, Demitri. Just a few more turns of the screw and we're going home. Ok. Please let this work.
(BEAT)
Well, of course I know what I'm doing. My mission was to...

Tom pauses. He doesn't even know anymore.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Of course he knows what he's doing, Demitri. He's Tom. The most amazing man alive.

TOM
See, Demitri.

Demitri stares.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Tom, I don't know if I would accept that kind of back-talk if I were you.

TOM
Did you hear that, Demitri? No more back-talk. Once I fix the pod we can go home.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
You know, Tom, when someone is as special as you are, other people will always try to get rid of them.

Tom looks over to Demitri, backs up a bit.

TOM
You don't feel that way Demitri, do ya' buddy? you don't want to get rid of me?
(BEAT)
See. He doesn't feel that way at all. He's my best friend.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
I didn't want to tell you this, Tom but I heard him talking to his comrades on earth last night. I'm sorry, Tom, but I think it's best you disposed of him.

Tom looks to Demitri.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
He's a conspirator, Tom. A Russian spy. Why do you think he's here? To undermine The United States of America, Tom. Don't you care about your country, Tom?

Tom is truly distraught. He covers his ears.

TOM
That's not true. You're not a spy, Demitri? Are you?

Demitri looks to Tom: *Spy? I'm a stuffed dog in an astronaut suit.*

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Isn't it obvious, Tom. Keeping you up here all this time. Making you question everything, Tom. It's a good thing you have me to help you, Tom.

TOM
Help me, what?

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Help you kill him, Tom.

TOM
No, No, No!

Tom then furiously starts to try (in vain) to fix the control panel: wires, tools, etc.

TOM (CONT'D)
I can do this.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Yes, you can, Tom. Why? Because you... are Tom. Of course, you'll have to get rid of him first.

TOM
Please stop. Demitri is my friend.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Then why does he want to kill you, Tom?

TOM
Shut up!

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
I'm just trying to help you, Tom.

TOM
No you're not!

Tom is seriously breaking down.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
But Tom-,

TOM
SHUT UP!

Tom picks up a wrench.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
Tom. I love you, Tom. You're so special and smart and intelligent and handsome-

TOM
STOP SAYING THAT! I just want to go home.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
But if you go back home, Tom, you'll be just another loser. The world forgot about you, Tom. Have you ever thought about that? *Really* thought about it, Tom. Here, you are *Tom*. But down there, no one cares about you. They left you up here, Tom. Think about what that means. To abandon a loved one. It means they don't care at all, Tom. Your friends, your family, your country. They all forgot about you.

TOM
They tried!

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE
No, Tom. They just don't care. No one cares, Tom. Down there, you don't matter, Tom. *You don't matter at all.*

Tom SMASHES the blinking lights of the computer mainframe.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
(dying)
Now you'll never go home, Tom.

Tom falls to his knees, sobbing.

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Tom, Tom, Tom...

The lights go out. Tom grabs onto Demitri and sobs on the floor.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION

It's so far away...

FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE (V.O.)
Tom... Tom..... Tom .....Tom

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Sarah picks up Evan from a kid's birthday party. He holds a balloon.

SARAH
Have fun?

EVAN
Yeah.

SARAH
(smiles)
Get in.

Evan hops in the front seat and they drive off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

Sarah drives, Evan is asleep. She flips through the radio.

MAN'S VOICE
...Well that's why I think we should just carpetbomb that whole region...

Sarah rolls her eyes and flips the station.

WOMAN'S VOICE
...I was sitting on my porch and there was a bright light and then the little green man came down from the sky and said to me 'Helen, you are special..."

Next...

DR. LAURA-TYPE
...he left you because you're a hateful tramp, Becky...

SARAH
Good Lord.

Sarah switches the station: DEATH METAL.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Yikes.

She flips again. It's Shania Twain's "*Man, I Feel Like a Woman!*"

Sarah sings along for a chorus or two.

But slowly, we see her realizing something. She pulls over and switches off the radio. She picks up her phone.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Hey Carl. Think you could find an address for me?... Ok. Text it me when you can. Thank you.

Sarah drives...

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom is at the porthole window, holding Demitri like a newborn baby.

TOM
Want to know a secret? I control what goes on down there.

EARTH spins in the distance.

TOM (CONT'D)
Right now, in Kansas City, a bad guy is about to steal an old lady's purse but I'm gonna make him trip on the sidewalk. See. He just tripped. And the old lady didn't even know it. But she's safe now because of me.

Demitri stares out the window.

TOM (CONT'D)
And see down there. In that house. There's a little boy crying. See him. He's sitting in the corner wearing Spider-man pajamas. His dad just died. It was a car accident and the little boy thinks it's his fault. But I'm gonna' make it all go away. Just like that. All gone. Poof! Just like that...

Tom moves closer to the porthole.

TOM (CONT'D)
And there's Sarah. She's the pretty one who just pulled over to get gas. But she's gonna' leave the gas cap off again... like she always does. But I'm gonna fix it for her. See, Demitri, there she goes. Never even knew there was a problem. Because I make all her problems go away. From right up here.

Tom holds his hand out to the porthole window.

TOM (CONT'D)
I can make them all go away...

EXT. GAS STATION - SAME

Sarah's car pulls away. We move in on the GAS CAP: it's fine.

EXT. OLIVIA ROBERTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah's car is in the driveway.

INT. OLIVIA ROBERTS' HOUSE - LATER

Sarah sits in OLIVIA'S (21, pretty, Tom's younger sister who made him the CD) living room. Evan plays on the floor. Olivia seems shocked.

SARAH
... I wanted to find you at the time but the Government considered anything surrounding the event confidential. So I couldn't. But honestly, I don't care anymore.
(BEAT)
...right before we lost contact, Tom wanted you to know how much he loved you. He talked about your CD the whole way there.

Olivia cries, but smiles too.

OLIVIA
Do you think he, you know, suffered?

Sarah pauses, but refrains from sounding crazy.

SARAH
Wherever he is, I know he's watching over you.

Olivia gets up and returns with a photograph of Tom in his Astronaut uniform from 2004.

OLIVIA
I want you to have this.

Sarah looks at it and smiles.

SARAH
Thank you.

Sarah gets up.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah exits the back screen door, holding Evan's balloon. She looks up: a star-filled Texas night.

“Haphazardly” by Rhett Miller plays... the perfect modern, sad, Texas song about letting go.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

The mess is everywhere still. Tom is working with some BLACK TUBING...

TOM
(Sportscaster voice)
And there goes superstar Tom Roberts with an interception! The crowd is going wild, cheering their hometown hero on as he makes it to the fifty...

Tom strings out the TUBING further.

TOM (CONT’D)
...the forty, the thirty... he’s going for it folks! He’s going... ...going ...going ...and there you have it folks... Tom Roberts is...

Tom winds the long length of black tubing into a

NOOSE -

TOM (CONT’D)
(simulating crowd cheers)
...finally gone.

Tom moves the chair underneath the noose.

ON DEMITRI - who watches as Tom steps up on the chair.

EXT. SARAH’S HOUSE - SAME

As the song BUILDS, Sarah ties the PHOTOGRAPH of Tom onto the end of the balloon and let’s it go.

Sarah watches as the balloon floats up into the still night sky.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

The song continues.

We only see Tom’s feet on the chair. Demitri watches.

ON DEMITRI-

EXT. SARAH’S HOUSE - SAME

Sarah watches the balloon float away out of sight.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom KICKS the chair out from under him.

The chair, lying on its side, lands next to Demitri...

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SAME

We follow the BALLOON, the chorus of the song building as it heads past telephone wires and trees, until it finally disappears forever.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SCREENED PORCH - SAME/ INT. STEVE'S BEDROOM

Sarah is on the porch, a blanket wrapped around her to stop the chill. She dials a number.

SARAH
(on phone)
Hey.

[Cut back and forth]

STEVE
What time is it?

Steve wakes up from a deep sleep.

SARAH
I'm sorry.. I just called to see if you wanted to talk?

Steve looks over at the clock: 1 A.M.

STEVE
It's 1 A.M.

SARAH
Did you know that "Rocket Man," is really about Elton John's struggle with addiction?

STEVE
(so tired)
Everyone knows that. Sarah, seriously, it's late. Can we talk in the morning?

SARAH
I really need someone to talk to right now-

STEVE
I just have to get some sleep. I'll see you Sunday, okay? We can talk then.

SARAH
Okay.

Steve shakes his head and hangs up.

Sarah heads back in, upset. Not really with him, more with herself.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SAME

Sarah enters. Grandpa Ted is working at the kitchen table, metal parts strewn everywhere.

Sarah heads to the sink for a glass of water.

GRANDPA TED
(not looking up)
He's not the one.

SARAH
Dad. Don't eavesdrop.

GRANDPA TED
Then don't talk so loud. Sounded like the cast of the goddamn *View* was on my porch.

Sarah turn to her dad.

SARAH
Dad... do you miss Mom?

GRANDPA TED
No.

SARAH
Dad.

Grandpa Ted motions for Sarah to sit down.

GRANDPA TED
Sit down.
(BEAT)
I don't miss your mother because to me, she never went anywhere. You know, when I have my breakfast, in my head all I hear is her asking me how I can possibly put ketchup on my eggs. When I go to a movies, you know what I hear? I hear her lean over and ask me '*what did he say?*' Every line she would say that. When we went to your cousin's wedding I heard her list all the things she hated about your Aunt Diane. And when I put my head down for the night, I hear her sigh and then lean over and say 'good night, hon.'
(BEAT)
(MORE)

GRANDPA TED (CONT'D)
Just because someone's not physically next to you doesn't mean they're not there.

Grandpa Ted stands up.

GRANDPA TED (CONT'D)
Come here.

He holds out his hand and begins dancing with Sarah.

SARAH
What are you doing?

GRANDPA TED
Dancing with my daughter.

SARAH
Why?

GRANDPA TED
Because I pee into a bag and when you pee into a bag the trade-off is you can do whatever the hell you want.

Sarah and Grandpa Ted dance in the kitchen as the song comes back alive.

GRANDPA TED (CONT'D)
And I only wish I had started doing whatever the hell I wanted a long time ago.

Sarah considers this, then continues dancing with her dad in the kitchen.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah and her dad dancing through the kitchen window as the music fades.

Above...

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom's feet fall to the floor. The tubing was nowhere near strong enough to hold a grown man.

Tom stays on the floor... a man who matters so little, a man so ineffectual - that he can't even kill himself.

He spots a bottle of vodka, removes the homemade noose, and takes a swig.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Trouble inside, but outside **a SOLAR WIND whips around the communications satellite.**

FADE OUT:

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

Another magical night...

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - HALLWAY - SAME

Sarah and Rachel walk down the hallway toward the Communications Room.

RACHEL
Okay, my new thing is this:

SARAH
Rachel. You have a 'new thing' every month.

RACHEL
You need to start taking Oprah's Life Class because it will heal your negative attitude-
(BEAT)
So my new thing is... are you ready?

SARAH
So, so ready.

RACHEL
My new thing is 'I don't give a shit.'

SARAH
That's your new thing?

RACHEL
Yup. I don't *give* a shit.
(BEAT)
It's Buddhist. Like you cut me off on the way to work Guy in the stupid yellow truck... 'I don't give a shit.' My Hyundai will just keep on rolling, zen-style. Debbie in H.R. steals my good pen again... 'I don't give a shit.' I'll find another pen, and a better one at that. Lady at the bank, you give me the side-eye when you see my balance is only 34 dollars. 'I don't give a *shit.*' That's your drama, not mine.

SARAH
This is a powerful new thing.

RACHEL
It's about letting go. The minute you stop giving a shit, shit starts happening for you. I started yesterday and this morning I found a five dollar bill in my nice jeans.

Sarah looks at Rachel: *really?*

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Try it.

They enter the COMMUNICATIONS ROOM -

Carl is there.

SARAH
I don't know if this is really one of your best 'new things.'

RACHEL
Try it. Say 'I don't *give* a shit.' And I want to hear emphasis.

SARAH
I'm not saying that word.

RACHEL
Fine. Close your eyes and I'll do it for you.

Sarah closes her eyes and smiles.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
My name is Sarah Sparks and I don't give a shit. You hear that universe. This lady right here does not give a shit. A shit... she *does* not give.

Sarah beings laughing.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Why, universe? Because she doesn't give a shit.

SARAH
Can I open my eyes now?

RACHEL
I don't give a shit.

Sarah opens her eyes and instantly spots the GREEN BLINKING LIGHT. She RACES over to her station.

SARAH
(straight-up movie romance)
Tom.

Sarah throws her headset on.

RACHEL
I need a new thing.

SARAH
(into headset)
Tom. Can you hear me? It's Sarah.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom is on the floor in the main room, full beard and surrounded by empty Vodka Bottles.

SARAH (V.O.)
Tom? Come in.

Tom comes to, the GREEN light slowly coming into focus.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER/ SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Sarah is on the edge of her seat. Rachel is concerned.

SARAH
Tom? Tom? Come in Tom?
(BEAT)
Tom?

Rachel takes this as her cue to stop this nonsense.

RACHEL
(to Carl)
Maybe she needs to go on a juice cleanse. Just pee the crazy out.

[CUT BACK AND FORTH]

SARAH
Tom. Please? Come in.

Tom stumbles up to the communications desk.

TOM
Sarah?

RACHEL
(freaked out)
Oh, *shit*.

SARAH
You're there.

TOM
I'm here, Sarah. I'm here.

SARAH
But you destroyed the system-

Tom looks to the panel he destroyed.

TOM
I did. I don't know... I did.

SARAH
(standing up, professional)
Tom. Standby. We're bringing you home for real this time.

TOM
I've heard that before.

SARAH
(confident)
Let me rephrase that. *I* am bringing you home.

HALLWAY - SAME

Sarah races down the hallway. Rachel behind her.

FANCY OFFICE at the end of the hall.

INSERT PLACARD -

"WILLIAM SANDERSON, NASA CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR"

Rachel stops.

RACHEL
Oh, shit.

A SECRETARY stands up.

SECRETARY
Ma'am. You can't go on-

Sarah blows straight into the double-doors.

RACHEL
(to Secretary)
Snap.
(THEN)
Sorry. That was rude. I was just in the moment and... you understand.

And now we're in the...

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - LATER

Sanderson stares at Sarah and now Rachel. Edward and the Techies are there.

BILL SANDERSON
Sarah, you don't give up, I'll give you that...

Sarah motions for Sanderson to press the mic.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT'D)
(into mic)
Major Roberts. This is Bill S-

TOM
Major Tom Roberts. Over.

EDWARD
Sarah. Listen to me. We do not have the ability to do this.

SARAH
But we planned on another attempt before we lost commun-

EDWARD
An attempt. Yes. "Try." But the reality is we can't do it, Sarah. And at a certain point we just have to stop chasing the windmill-

SARAH
I can't accept that.

EDWARD
It doesn't matter what you can accept. What matters is reality.

Sanderson shuts off the mic.

BILL SANDERSON
Sarah. He's right. We just don't have the ability to bring Major Tom home.

SARAH
I think I know of someone who does.

OFF THEIR LOOKS:

INT. INDUSTRIAL HANGAR - LATER

Unlike the worn and shabby NASA, this place is spotless. White. Gleaming. Even the floors are white.

Sarah and Sanderson and now Grandpa Ted are being led by an ASSISTANT, 40's, toward a large STRUCTURE in the center, covered by a giant TARP.

ASSISTANT
(leading)
Mr. Jones is thrilled you've contacted him. He feels this could be the perfect product launch for the X-97.

GRANDPA TED
(whispering to Sarah)
Great.

BILL SANDERSON
And where is Mr. Jones? He's 3 minutes late.

The Assistant looks around, nervous.

ASSISTANT
He should be here-

BILL SANDERSON
Sarah, this is the last-

Just then the sound of a SKATEBOARD cuts through the echoing hangar. Meet LELAND JONES (fourth richest man in the world and... age 17)

He zooms up on his skateboard, skids and stops right in front of Sanderson.

LELAND JONES
Sorry... Sixth period ran late.
(removing his backpack)
Leland Jones.

Sarah is the only one with a shred of optimism.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
(ignoring Sanderson)
And you must be Ted Sparks.

Grandpa Ted is unimpressed.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
Huge fan. The idea for the X-97 was based on your work on the Marie Antoinette Project.

BILL SANDERSON
We scrapped that program.

LELAND JONES
I know. Big mistake.

Grandpa Ted is now very impressed.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
Mr. Sparks' work here would've reduced costs for NASA by 78 percent while providing a safer, quicker more nimble space delivery system. We essentially just cribbed off your work, dude. Hope you don't mind?

Grandpa Ted looks to Sanderson. They have a history.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
(to assistant)
Let's take a look.

A team of WORKERS removes the TARP revealing the gleaming white X-97 space rocket. It's pretty amazing.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentleman, the X-97...

BILL SANDERSON
What's the 97 for?

LELAND JONES
That's the year I was born.

Leland hops on his skateboard and zooms toward the X-97. Sanderson and Sarah look to each other.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
Give us a week.

BILL SANDERSON
A week? You can be ready to launch in a week?

LELAND JONES
Ok, fine. Three days.

Leland gives Sanderson an awkward fist-bump and heads out.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
Later.

Sarah turns to Sanderson, a huge grin on her face.

INT. INDUSTRIAL HANGAR - DAY

"THREE DAYS LATER"

A small TEAM from Leland's crew, along with Sarah, Grandpa Ted and Sanderson get ready for the big day.

A large WINDOW overlooks the X-97 which is now outside on a tarmac.

LELAND JONES
The X-97 is unmanned. When she reaches Sprut-Vosem, the X-97 has a gyroscope-enabled tether system that will allow her to get close enough without impact. Major Tom can float out and then we begin re-entry.

Sanderson looks around.

BILL SANDERSON
Where's your communications system?

Leland holds up his IPad. Sanderson motions for his crew to leave.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT'D)
This is a joke.

Leland types onto his iPad.

INSERT IPad: All of the NASA communications systems are now live-streaming in small windows on his iPad.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT'D)
There's no way to hack into the NASA mainframe-

Leland shoots him a look: *come on.*

LELAND JONES
(zooming in on Sanderson's desk)
Looks like you're about halfway through *The Help?*

Sarah chuckles. Leland types again.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
(into mic)
Hey dude, you there?

Bill Sanderson mouths 'hey dude' to himself.

TOM
(via IPad)
Major Tom to Base, over.

LELAND JONES
Tom. My name is Leland Jones. We're sending help. Standby.

TOM
Sir, yes, Sir.

Leland turns to Sanderson.

LELAND JONES
So. Shall we start her up?

BILL SANDERSON
May as well. What do we do? Send a text?

LELAND JONES
Great idea, man.
(BEAT)
Alright. Here we go.

Leland types a bit more on his iPad. the X-97 begins to fire. A large, clean blue blast of heat underneath the nimble ship forms. An AUTOMATED VOICE countdown begins as we move in on

SARAH -

This is her last hope.

AUTOMATED VOICE
3...2...1

In the distance, the X-97 shoots up into the sky.

LELAND JONES
We have liftoff!

And then SPUTTERS, SWERVES, AND CRASHES IN THE DISTANCE.

BILL SANDERSON
How much did that cost you?

LELAND JONES
Thankfully only 600 million.
(BEAT)
I'm sorry guys. Got a few more kinks to work out before we can try this again.

BILL SANDERSON
How long 'til you can build another one. One that works?

LELAND JONES
This one took 2 years so... yeah, 2 years?

On Sarah: this is real for her and she can't take it. She excused herself and runs out.

Leland registers this...

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
Maybe there's something else I could do to help?

Bill looks to Grandpa Ted: *worth a try now.*

INT. SUV - LATER

Sanderson is on the phone. Leland, Sarah and Grandpa Ted in the back.

BILL SANDERSON
(on the phone)
I want all hands on deck by the time we get there. We're giving her another go.

Bill glances at Sarah.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - MISSION COMMAND - LATER

The REAL DEAL room. Huge and buzzing. Sanderson blows in. An army of NASA GEEKS take notice. Carl is there too.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT'D)
(to NASA crew spilling in)
Alright people, we got a situation. If you've been looking for your time to shine, now would be it. If not, I suggest you find a new line of work. I need ECS online in five. Communications is up and has contact. Systems. We need the plans to every Soviet Tin Can they every threw up there. Go over them with Leland, here. He's 17 and smarter than all of you combined. Tech. Find every ex-Russian Cosmonaut living in the US and get them here before I take my next piss.

TECH GUY
Where would I find-

BILL SANDERSON
Try Florida.
(BEAT)
And PR. Get me a press conference ASAP. I want every goddamn network, newspaper, blog, bathroom wall and Texas housewife out there shoutin' from the rooftops. We're going international with this.

Rachel now holds Sarah's hand.

RACHEL
(to Sarah)
Getting a very strong Morgan Freeman vibe from him and I like it.

BILL SANDERSON
(into MIC)
Standby Major Roberts. NASA is on it.

The NASA GEEKS hustle.

MISSION CONTROL - LATER

A giant wall of PLASMA SCREENS.

EDWARD
Pulling up Sprut-Vosem.

TECHIE #2
Looks like a panel-breach.

A SATELLITE VIEW merges with the actual original plans for Sprut-Vosem. The damaged GIANT SOLAR PANELS.

BILL SANDERSON
Kid. What you got?

Leland walks to the image of plasma.

LELAND JONES
Ok. So these plans are Russian so work with me here but seems Major Roberts's initial approach in Navajo-1 compromised panel 4.

Edward looks to Sanderson.

LELAND JONES (CONT'D)
These older systems weren't integrated so each panel generates specific power for specific functions. For example, Panel 2 fuels communications, lights, temperature, etc. But what I don't understand is how he's getting temperature regulation. It doesn't make sense. He should be dead.

BILL SANDERSON
Well, he's not.
(BEAT)
What about panel 4?

LELAND JONES
Panel 4 is mainly responsible for the Return Pod. Which is why Roberts could never fix the thing. There just wasn't power to initiate the battery charge, which in turn ignites the engines.

BILL SANDERSON
Then we fix the panel.

EDWARD
Not possible, Sir. Not without a supply mission.
(BEAT)
And there's no more shuttle program, so-

BILL SANDERSON
Any of y'all care to make your M.I.T. degrees worthwhile?

LELAND JONES
I think I have an idea.

An AIDE comes in and whispers to Sanderson.

AIDE
They’re ready for you, Sir.

BILL SANDERSON
Make it a good one, kid.

Sanderson follows the AIDE out to the-

HALLWAY-

AIDE
The press is this way.

BILL SANDERSON
Deep breaths.

PRESS CONFERENCE -

EVERY NETWORK is there. Sanderson works the podium.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT’D)
What’s different? This time we’re all working together. NASA, the Russians, experts from private industry. We’re all chipping in and doing whatever it takes.
(BEAT)
- Any more questions?

The REPORTERS freak.

BILL SANDERSON (CONT’D)
Too bad ‘cause I’m not taking any.

Sanderson walks away. A CNN REPORTER pipes up anyway.

CNN
Chief Sanderson. What are Major Roberts’s chances this time?

BILL SANDERSON
(turning back)
We’re doing our best.

Even Sanderson realizes the gravity of the situation. Sarah too.

MISSION CONTROL/SPRUT-VOSEM [cut back and forth] - MOMENTS LATER

Sanderson and his Aide are back. Leland and Edward speak with Tom. On the PLASMA, we see visually what Leland explains.

Tom is at a control panel.

LELAND JONES
- and how many do you see?

TOM
Four.

EDWARD
Find the meter labeled “three.”

Tom looks at the meters.

TOM
They’re in Russian.

LELAND JONES
Alright. Clockwise from top: find the meter at three o’clock.

TOM
Got it.

EDWARD
The wire connecting that meter to the power grid above should be red.

TOM
Affirmative.

LELAND JONES
Now the meter at six o’clock. That should have a black wire. Remove black and replace with red. Interior lights should dim.

Tom does just that. Nothing.

TOM
Nothing.

Leland looks to Edward: *no, clue*.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

A BLACK SUV pulls up past the media barricade and is waved on through.

CLOSE ON - FOUR PUMA SNEAKERS as they hit the ground.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Sanderson looks at his watch.

BILL SANDERSON
This was your plan?

LELAND JONES
It should work. I’m redirecting power to the Return Pod. The numbers are all according to our blueprint of Sprut-Vosem. I don’t know-

The AIDE checks her blackberry.

AIDE
Chief Sanderson. The Russians are here.

HALLWAY - SAME

FOUR BURLY RUSSIANS, all in TRACK SUITS and SNEAKERS walk the hallway straight out of “The Right Stuff.” They’re kind of awesome. They are ALEXI, IGOR, GOGOL and KARP... Retired Russian cosmonauts.

MISSION CONTROL -

The Russians enter. The NASA team doesn’t know what to make of them. Bill shakes their hands.

BILL SANDERSON
No time for Perestroika, boys. Let’s get this guy home.

Alexi, the biggest, spots the plasma.

ALEXI
(proud)
Sprut-Vosem.

BILL SANDERSON
Leland. Go...

LELAND JONES
Two of the solar panels are out. We went through the plans and redirected the wires but nothing happened.

Alexi looks at the plans and then laughs.

ALEXI
(to Leland)
Do you mind?

Alexi speaks into the mic to Tom.

ALEXI (CONT’D)
American. Move blue and replace to black.

TOM
Affirmative.

LELAND JONES
That’s not right. The plans say it should be-

The RETURN POD BATTERY INDICATOR on Sprut-Vosem begins to flicker. It worked. Power has been redirected.

ALEXI
(patting Leland on the shoulder)
We sold your spies the wrong plans for three million rubles.

The Russians laugh.

BILL SANDERSON
(to Alexi)
Admire your work.

LELAND JONES
(reading battery indicator)
Tom. Give her a minute to charge and then you should be able to use the return pod air-lock...

Bill Sanderson smiles. This is why he took the job...

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

Tom turns the AIR-LOCK, something he's tried a thousand times before, but this time, the door rises and reveals the Sprut-Vosem RETURN POD.

He takes a step in but turns back:

DEMITRI sits on the kitchen table.

TOM
Don't give me that look.

Demitri is emotionless. Tom kneels down and looks Demitri in the eye. He's leaving his best friend forever...

TOM (CONT'D)
This is harder for me than it is for you but I just ask that you be happy for me, little buddy. I'm going home. And where I'm from a man can't just go around talking to a space-dog all day, okay?

Demitri is cold.

TOM (CONT'D)
Okay?

Tom gets up, heads to the Pod and turns back. Demitri holds it all in.

Tom gets in the pod and SHUTS THE DOOR.

ON DEMITRI - He's been abandoned now too.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM RETURN POD - SAME

Tom is suited up. He fires up the pod and begins setting coordinates.

MISSION COMMAND -

Carl now helms the dislodge sequence:

CARL
Tom. We're ready when you are.

INT. SPRUT-VOSEM RETURN POD - SAME

Tom straps himself in and adjusts his headset.

TOM
Ready.

He moves to press the air-lock door. Then pauses.

TOM (CONT'D)
Wait.

CARL
What is it, Tom?

Tom gets out of his chair and races back into Sprut-Vosem.

CARL (CONT'D)
Tom? Come in?

Carl looks around... is there a problem?

MEDIA TENT - SAME

CNN, ABC, NBC, FOX, CBS REPORTERS immediately seize.

CNN
Seems to be-

ABC
-some sort of hold up-

NBC
-dramatic rescue has hit a snag-

FOX
-with Major Tom Roberts simply saying... 'wait.'

They're milking it like a hurricane.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Sarah watches the news broadcasts.

SPRUT-VOSEM

Tom runs back in and GRABS Demitri, then races back toward the pod.

RETURN POD-

TOM
Almost left something important to me.

Tom straps back in as we move in on Demitri... happy.

CARL (V.O.)
Alright Tom. Initiate air-lock.

Tom follows her instructions.

[CUT BACK AND FORTH]

CARL (CONT'D)
Begin launch sequence. Change coordinates to 29*15/52N 49/33 W.

Tom sets the return in motion.

TOM
Here we go.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM -

Sarah is still tense.

TOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Major Tom Roberts to Ground control... I'm coming home.

Sarah looks around, concerned.

EXT. SPRUT-VOSEM SPACE STATION - SAME

The Return Pod struggles a bit, then finally dislodges from Sprut-Vosem.

Tom is coming home.

INT. OLIVIA ROBERTS' HOUSE - SAME

Olivia is in tears as she watches TV.

CNN
-War Hero and Astronaut Tom Roberts, pronounced dead nine years ago has successfully-

DINER - SAME

A WAITRESS shushes the diners and points to the TV.

FOX
-dislodged from Sprut-Vosem. We're getting word that 17 year old Leland Jones -

HIGH SCHOOL -

A group of KIDS smile, watching the event...

FOX (CONT'D)
-along with a team of Russian Cosmonauts has been-

AUTO BODY SHOP -

Some RUSSIAN dudes listen to the radio.

BBC RADIO
-instrumental in aiding NASA with the repair of the return pod. NASA has promised live audio-

They smile, proud.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SAME

Rachel and Evan watch the TV, rapt.

ABC
-of the still perilous mission to bring a real American hero back to Earth.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM -

Sarah is the most invested, watching uneasy.

MISSION CONTROL -

Carl mans the mic. Sanderson paces behind him.

CARL
Heat shield?

TOM
Check.

CARL
How's your course? Did it correct?

Tom glances at a meter: lever's in the bull's-eye.

TOM
Check.

Alexi leans in.

ALEXI
American. What is your o2 level.

TOM
98 percent.

CARL
Good.

Alexi seems concerned. Alexi whispers something to Sanderson.

SANDERSON
Repeat coordinates again.

TOM
109 Alpha North. 56 Delta North West.

Alexi seems concerned again. He MUTES the mic.

ALEXI
Sprut-Vosem drifted. No good.

SARAH
What does he mean?

LELAND JONES
Space drift. Any object in orbit will slowly drift. Supply missions are meant to occasionally, every two years or so, provide course-correction.

Carl types a few things in the computer.

ALEXI
Not enough air.

SARAH
I don’t follow.

Carl pulls up another diagram. Sprut-Vosem was further away than it should have been.

CARL
The return pod has nine hours of oxygen. Because of the drift, Major Roberts is making a twelve hour trip.

Sanderson looks to his team.

SANDERSON
Need some ideas people.

NOTHING.

LELAND JONES
We could try to speed the return?

EDWARD
Not possible. He’ll run out of fuel. He won’t be able to break through the atmosphere.

SANDERSON
That's it? Think people. Find a way to get more goddamn oxygen in that pod.

ALEXI
In Russia we have a saying: "A rich man always wants more. A smart man just uses less."
(BEAT)
American just needs to stay calm. Calm use less oxygen.

SANDERSON
No one's calm in a tin can hurdling toward the Earth.

LELAND JONES
We could pump in like Whale Songs?

Sanderson has had it.

CARL
I got it.

OFF CARL -

COMMUNICATION ROOM - SAME

Carl and Sanderson are behind Sarah, who now wears the headset.

CARL (CONT'D)
Do you think you can do it?

SARAH
(concerned)
I can try.

Sarah begins to press the button.

SANDERSON
Sarah. We believe in you.

Sanderson nods.

SARAH
Tom?

TOM
Sarah.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/ SPRUT-VOSEM - SAME

Tom is having trouble breathing, but the moment he hears her voice, he seems relieved.

SARAH
How goes it?

TOM
A-okay on my end. How about at base?

Sarah is concerned but puts on a brave face.

SARAH
Everything's gone off without a glitch.
(BEAT)
So, you got any plans for the next eleven hours?

Tom smiles. A little bit of hope.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - MEDIA - SAME

A REPORTER for BBC speaks.

BBC
... we're told NASA communications Specialist, Sarah Sparks, has been tasked with keeping American Astronaut-

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/ RETURN POD - SAME

[CUT BACK AND FORTH]

Just like real love... two people talk, without a care to what's going on around them...

TOM
What happened to Huxley?

SARAH
It's Evan now. I guess my plans changed.

TOM
I like Evan.

SARAH
I know. I mean, Huxley? What was I thinking?

TOM
Well, it's still better than Tim-Bob.

SARAH
Anything is better than Tim-Bob. That's like, 'here you go son... enjoy the rest of your life drinking beer in front of your trailer.'

TOM
You're such a snob.

SARAH
But I’m right, huh?

TOM
True.

Tom laughs. He seems to be more relaxed by the minute... saving oxygen.

MISSION COMMAND - SAME

Sanderson paces.

SANDERSON
What are the levels?

CARL
We’re good. She’s actually bought us fifteen minutes already.

SANDERSON
Just two hours and 45 minutes left, then.

ALEXI
Not possible.

SANDERSON
PEOPLE. We need to think. Can anybody find a way to get more air in that pod. I will not have the goddamn world watch as a dead body parachutes into the Gulf.

The Techie’s whisper to Carl.

CARL
Sir.

SANDERSON
Go.

CARL
There is one guy who might be able to help. He’s a genius.

SANDERSON
Then why isn’t he here?

CARL
You guys fired him ten years ago ‘cause, well, he’s kinda crazy.

OFF SANDERSON - *as he turns to look at Grandpa Ted. Grandpa Ted smiles back.*

EXT. RACHEL’S CAR - SAME

Rachel and Evan listen to the radio.

SARAH (V.O.)
Oh, I caught it again on TV the other day and Princess Buttercup *is* kind of a b-word in the beginning.

TOM (V.O.)
See.

EVAN
(to Rachel)
That's Mom!

RACHEL
Oh god this is too romantic to miss
(yelling to car in front of her)
DRIVE FASTER!!!

SARAH (V.O.)
I know. I never realized that. Like she's all ordering Westley around and stuff. No wonder he faked his own death.

The car speeds to NASA.

EXT. NEW YORK - TIME SQUARE - SAME

A crowd has gathered.

SARAH (V.O.)
(over broadcast)
But then he kissed her and I guess it was so powerful that she wised up.

TOM (V.O.)
Have you ever been kissed like that?

SARAH (V.O.)
(laughing)
I don't *know!*

A TOURIST in the crowd smiles.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/ RETURN POD - SAME

Tom and Sarah, OUR Tom and Sarah, are back!

TOM
...I never said that.

SARAH
Yes you did. You wanted soup.

TOM
You wanted soup!

SARAH
I said I wanted cake.

Tom throws up his hands.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR - SAME

Rachel LIVES for this...

TOM (V.O.)
What kind?

SARAH (V.O.)
Yellow flavor. From the box. With chocolate frosting. From the tub.

RACHEL
(to herself)
Well, a lot of carbs, but I'll go with it.

Rachel shoots ahead.

INT. TOKYO - PUB

A CROWD of JAPANESE BUSINESS PEOPLE are watching on the GIANT LCD SCREENS.

TOM
Mind if I bake it for you?

SARAH
Not at all...

A JAPANESE GIRL crushes to her friends.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

We hear AD LIB of Tom and Sarah in the background as Mission Control, a zoo, tries to figure this thing out.

CARL
45 minutes. She's bought us 45 minutes.

SANDERSON
Still not enough.

On the PLASMA:

SPLASHDOWN: 7 hours 35 minutes

O2 DEPLETION: 5 hours 23 minutes

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/ RETURN POD - SAME

Sarah is doing her best. Rachel comes in and give her the ‘thumbs up.” It’s working... for now.

SARAH
-Oh, all that’s changed. I’m mature now. So I would Eff Kermit, Marry Fozzy and Kill Animal.

TOM
He screams all the time.

SARAH
What about you?

TOM
There’s only one girl. Not fair.

SARAH
No, there’s Miss Piggy and Janice.

TOM
Who’s Janice?

SARAH
Blonde. Kind of a hippie. In the band.

INT. PUB - IRELAND - SAME

A group of Irish FOLK drink pints and listen to the TV

TOM (V.O.)
Oh totally marry her. Relief too, because I was dreading marrying Miss Piggy-

SARAH (V.O.)
Yeah, Miss Piggy would be tough to live with.

TOM (V.O.)
So then I guess I’d kill that weird blue eagle guy.

SARAH
Yeah. What was up with him? So angry.

Sarah laughs.

TOM (V.O.)
Can you imagine if people could hear us now?

The IRISH DRINKERS cheer to that and laugh.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Tom and Sarah AD-LIB in the background as Grandpa Ted pours over the real plans for Sprut-Vosem.

CARL
She’s bought us another 30 minutes.

Mission Control is still tense: Not enough.

GRANDPA TED
Fire extinguishers. Compression?

ALEXI
Yeah.

CARL
How many?

ALEXI
Two.

GRANDPA TED
We have our solution.

LELAND JONES
You can’t possibly be suggesting he release a Co2 filled fire extinguish into a spacecraft? It’ll suck up even more oxygen.

Grandpa Ted ignores him...

On the PLASMA:

SPLASHDOWN: 5 hours 02 minutes

o2 DEPLETION: 4 hours 10 minutes

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE STATION - SAME

A CNN REPORTER speaks.

CNN
-hearing reports that there is not enough oxygen in Major Roberts’s craft to last him ‘til splashdown.

Track over to...

FOX
-As the world has fallen in love with Major Tom Roberts and NASA Communications Specialist Sarah Sparks we get word that oxygen levels are-

Track over to...

ABC
-will the Lost Astronaut survive?
Unless NASA pulls out a miracle-

Track over to...

A YOUNG WOMAN holding a baby.

YOUNG WOMAN
(to Reporter)
...I just heard on the news and thought I should came down. It's just nice to have something to believe in again, you know?

The Young Woman smiles.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - SAME

Olivia is with FRIENDS now, who hold her hand as they watch the news and listen in...

TOM (V.O.)
It actually seems optimistic to me now. Like he knows it'll be 'a long, long time' but that implies that at least a little bit of hope, you know.

SARAH (V.O.)
Yeah.

TOM
I mean, he left room for hope.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM/ RETURN POD - SAME

Tom shakes his head.

TOM (CONT'D)
Sorry. I'm feeling weird. Altitude.

Sarah looks around, concerned.

SARAH
You'll be just fine.

MISSION CONTROL -

Grandpa Ted looks to Alexi.

GRANDPA TED
Alexi.

SANDERSON
Will this work?

GRANDPA TED
Don’t know.

Grandpa Ted and Alexi exit.

CARL
One hour to Splashdown. 35 minutes o2 left.

Carl looks around concerned.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Sarah is there. Grandpa Ted places down a set of plans in front of Sarah.

RETURN POD - SAME

Tom is sweating. He’s pale and having a hard time keeping his eyes open.

SARAH (V.O.)
Okay, last one: what’s the first thing you’re going to do when you get back?

TOM (V.O.)
(whoozy)
I’m going to take off my shoes, put my feet in the first patch of grass I see, lay down and look up at the stars.
(BEAT)
With you.

SARAH
...Sounds like a date then.

Tom pauses...

TOM
Sorry. I really don’t feel well for some reason.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

GRANDPA TED motions for Sarah.

SARAH
Okay. Tom. You should see two fire extinguishers; one on your left, the other on your right.
(to dad)
Won’t that release Co2?

GRANDPA TED
Trust me.

Grandpa Ted scribbles.

SARAH
Pick up one and remove the bottom cap.

Tom does just that... barely.

TOM
Got it.

Grandpa Ted is whispering to Sarah.

SARAH
Inside there are two canisters. One green, one silver. The silver one is filled with Halon 1301. It's a non-Co2 fire retardant.

Grandpa Ted nods: *doing great.*

TOM
Ok.

SARAH
The green one is a propellant, pure oxygen.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Carl is IMPRESSED. Sanderson pops him on the back of his head.

COMMUNICATIONS/ RETURN POD - SAME

TOM
Got it.

SARAH
Now unscrew just the green one.

Alexi steps in and whispers to Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(to Alexi)
Sure?

ALEXI
(shrugs)
Our spies were good.

SARAH
Scratch that. Unscrew the silver canister.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Carl looks at the PLASMA.

CARL
Ten minutes til re-entry.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOM / RETURN POD - SAME

Tense.

SARAH
(to Alexi)
What if you're wrong?

ALEXI
Not wrong.

SARAH
But what if...

ALEXI
Then American dies now instead of dies later.

ON TOM -

He slowly twists off the SILVER cap.

ON MEDIA -

Tense...

ON OLIVIA

She looks to her friends.

ON RACHEL AND EVAN in the break room -

She holds him.

BACK ON TOM -

TOM
Here goes.

He unscrews the cap.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Carl and Sanderson watch as the O2 meter on the PLASMA...

SLOWLY *FALLS*

Then stabilizes...

THEN RISES!

CARL
YES!

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER/ RETURN POD - SAME

More cheering.

TOM
Worked.

SARAH
Okay, Tom. Same with the other one.

CARL (V.O.)
Major Tom. You have reentry in 6 minutes. We will lose contact with you as you enter the atmosphere for exactly 2 minutes and 47 seconds.

TOM
Over.

A NASA DRIVER comes in.

DRIVER
Ms. Sparks. We need to go now if we're going to make it.

SARAH
(into mic)
Tom, I'm coming for you.

TOM
That is the best thing I've heard in a long, long time.

MISSION CONTROL -

The team gets ready for Re-Entry.

CARL
Heat shields.

TOM
They're a go.

TV'S and COMPUTER SCREENS EVERYWHERE -

Live shots of the NIGHT SKY over GALVESTON BAY (20 minutes outside Houston)

INT. NASA SUV - SAME

Sarah, Rachel and Evan are in the back. The DRIVER is driving kinda <u>slow</u>.

RADIO (V.O.)
-Major Tom Roberts is -

RACHEL
(stern, to Driver)
Excuse me. Can I ask you a question? Do you like football?

DRIVER
(uhhh....?)
Yeah.

RACHEL
So you get excited for the Superbowl then?

DRIVER
Of course.

RACHEL
(angry!)
Well inserting myself into other people's romantic drama is *my* Superbowl and so help me God if you don't put the pedal to the metal I will destroy you.

The Driver FLOORS it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(suddenly happy again)
Feel good about this, Guys! *Feel really good*!

Everyone's a little scared of Rachel right now.

MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Static.

CARL
Start the clock.

On the PLASMA: **2:45** (and counting)

TIMES SQUARE -

Over a live-feed of the NIGHT SKY, the CLOCK ticks. **2:05**

TOKYO - SHUBIYA CROSSING

Same shot... **1:22**

LONDON - PICCADILLY CIRCUS

Same shot... **:59**

SUV -

Sarah is nervous. The SUV peels through the crowd to Galveston Bay... where a HUGE CROWD has gathered at the beach. Sarah gets out.

GALVESTON BEACH -

Sarah stands by the SUV, looking up at the sky... nothing.

MISSION CONTROL -

Sanderson paces. **:13**

ON TOM -

Fire surrounds the pod as it re-enters the atmosphere.

EXT. GALVESTON BAY - BEACH - NIGHT

Sarah and Rachel hold hands as they listen to the live radio.

RADIO (V.O.)
We don't have any word just yet...

A WOMAN in the crowd shouts.

WOMAN
Look!

A BRIGHT LIGHT in the sky.

TOM (O.S.)
(over radio)
Houston, we have re-entry. All systems go!

The crowd CHEERS. ALL OVER THE WORLD (MISSION CONTROL; TOKYO; TIMES SQUARE; LONDON etc.)

RACHEL
YES!

Rachel HUGS SARAH.

TOM
(over Radio)
Splashdown in 3 minutes.

This hits Sarah.

SARAH
I've never even met Tom.

RACHEL
Oh, no. No, no, no. You are not getting cold feet now.

SARAH
He's never even seen me.

Rachel takes Sarah by the shoulders.

RACHEL
So.
(increasingly like a stump speech)
Listen, you are in LOVE. And let me tell you for the last twenty years we have all been taught to laugh at that... to minimize it, to think its silly or cheesy or goofy. Well I *reject* that.

Some of the spectators gather around Rachel, nodding.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I will watch "The Notebook" and I will cry proudly. I will buy the William and Kate collectable mug and take shots out of it like the lady I am and I will holler like a wild animal when couples kiss on a jumbo-tron. So say it once say it loud I'm in love and I'm proud!

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Say it.

SARAH
I'm not-

Tom's PARACHUTES deploy...

RACHEL
Sarah... this is my Superbowl. I need this. Say it. For me.

SARAH
I'm in love and I'm proud!

The crowd cheers.

RACHEL
Now get out there.

ON SARAH - as she runs toward the BEACH. Two NASA officials are there.

NASA OFFICIAL
The boat is this way.

ON RACHEL AND EVAN-

She puts her arm around Evan.

RACHEL
(through tears)
We need the greatest love song ever written to complete this moment.

Rachel plugs her iPhone into the SUV.

EVAN
What's the greatest love song ever written?

Rachel stares at Evan with DAGGERS.

RACHEL
You're only seven, so I'll let that slide.
(BEAT)
It's called "Eternal Flame" by The Bangles and it will Change. Your. Life.

She hits PLAY and TURNS UP THE VOLUME...

The intro-xylophone of “Eternal Flame” plays over:

RETURN POD - SAME

Tom braces himself. The pod is shaking.

ON SARAH- As she rides in the back of a SPEED BOAT. A GROUP of other BOATS are just up ahead.

ON THE POD -

As it SPLASHES down.

ON CROWD -

Rachel holds up a LIGHTER like at a rock concert as the song blares.

RACHEL (CONT’D)
(authoritative, to crowd)
Lighters up, people. Lighters up.

The crowd quickly obliges.

OCEAN -

The Pod bobs in the moonlit water. Sarah’s boat veers toward it. It’s quite possibly the most romantic thing ever. Finally, they’re getting close...

ON SARAH -

As she stands up. A few MEDICS open the pod door.

Behind her, the crowd on the beach holds up their lighters.

ON TOM -

As he emerges from the pod door and takes a DEEP breath:

He’s finally seeing Sarah for the first time. And it’s amazing.

TOM
Sorry. I’m a little out of breath.

SARAH
Your oxygen tanks were-

TOM
It’s got *nothing* to do with the oxygen tanks...

Tom is helped into the boat by a gaggle of MEDICS, looks to Sarah and...

KISSES her...

...just like in the movies (not movies recently, but in the good old ones where the kiss was long and true and pure.)

"*Eternal Flame*" plays-

We move around Tom and Sarah, the world stopping as they kiss,

-Past the space pod bobbing in the water...

-Past the crowd, all holding lighters

-and up over the stars as we...

FADE OUT:

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT -

Tom and Sarah stand in Evan's bedroom.

EVAN
So you're from space?

TOM
More like Virginia, but-
(BEAT)
Oh-

Tom kneels down to Evan's height and hands him Demitri.

TOM (CONT'D)
This is a very special friend of mine. His name is Demitri and *he's* from space.

EVAN
Cool.

TOM
You can have him if you promise to take good care of him.

Evan is mesmerized.

SARAH
(kissing Evan on the head)
Good night.

Sarah and Tom exit. Evan shows Demitri around his bedroom.

EVAN
This is my bedroom. You can sleep on the bottom bunk.... these are my video games... you can play with any of them if you want...
(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)
This is space ice cream from the museum in Washington, D.C. It tastes like a sponge.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

The perfect Texas night. Sarah begins taking her shoes off.

TOM
What are you doing?

SARAH
You said you wanted to lay in the grass. Here's some grass.

Tom takes off his shoes and steps in the grass with Sarah. They both lay down and look up at the stars.

TOM
(holding out a handshake)
Nice to finally meet you.

SARAH
(returning)
Nice to finally meet you too.

They kiss again...

...THE END

OVER CREDITS:

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY

"1 YEAR LATER"

Tom and Sarah's wedding.

Rachel grabs the microphone, looks to the D.J. and begins a drunk rendition of “Eternal Flame.”

Sarah, Tom and the rest of the WEDDING PARTY join in:

RACHEL
Close your eyes/Give me your hand, Darling/

GRANDPA TED
Do you feel my heart beating?/ Do you understand?/

EVAN
Do you feel the same?/ Or am I only dreaming?/ Is this burning and eternal flame?

CARL
I believe it's meant to be, Darling/ I watch you when you are sleeping/

RACHEL
You belong with me/ Do you feel the same?/ Or am I only dreaming or is this burning and eternal flame?

SARAH
Say my name/ Sun shines through the rain/

TOM
Oh life's so lonely so come and ease the pain/ I don't want to lose this feeling... ohhhhh!

ALL
Close your eyes/ Give me your hand/ Do you feel my heart beating?/ Do you understand?/ Do you feel the same?/ Or am I only dreaming?/ Is this burning and Eternal Flame?

...