

"SOLAR WIND"

Written by

Rick Dobbertin

205 Peter Scott Road
Pennellville, NY 13132
315-695-6645
Rick@TheDobbertins.com

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"SOLAR WIND"

FADE IN

EXT. A STARLIT SKY - NIGHT

A crescent Moon hangs high amidst a clear, starlit night, laced with an occasional shooting star.

SARAH (VO)

Ever since I was a young girl, I've been awestruck by the night sky. By the age of ten, I could identify nearly all the constellations. With every shooting star that I saw, I'd hold my breath, then close my eyes and make a wish. They were by far my favorites. Sometimes, I'd even sit and wonder what it might be like to be on one of those little meteorites. Little did I know that one day I'd have my answer.

EXT. SURFACE OF THE MOON - DAY

An immense, modular structure stands silently within the crater-riddled landscape of Earth's only natural satellite

SUPER: "MOON BASE-TRANQUILITY"

Attached to the outpost's nucleus are twelve enclosed walkways, radiating outward in a wagon wheel configuration, linked to twelve hemispherical pods.

A dozen Moon Rovers, several trailers and various types of scientific equipment are precisely arranged on one side of the structure.

On the opposite side of the complex, two space shuttles stand ready on angled launch pads. Six enormous radio telescopes surround the facility's perimeter.

CLOSE-UP - FIVE FLAGS

A NASA flag, together with four International Research Team flags, stands motionless, alongside a priceless collection of historical artifacts left behind by the Apollo 11 Mission.

Nearly undetectable at first, the flags begins to gently wave from side to side, then with a SNAP, abruptly turn 180 degrees, toward the complex and begin to FLAP with increasing intensity.

INT. MOON BASE-TRANQUILITY/GALLEY - DAY

JIM savors a cup of coffee at a tall table beside an observation window, still tightly sealed with a set of reinforced horizontal shutters.

TAMMY enters the room. Jim holds up an empty cup.

JIM

Black?

TAMMY

Black. Thanks.

He pours her a cup.

As they quietly indulge in their morning ritual, the silence is broken with a series of small TAPS. They momentarily turn toward the window, then back to one another and shrug it off.

Tammy closes her eyes and draws the cup close to her nose for a long, deliberate inhale. Her serene moment is cut short by the next round of TAPS - far more intense than the previous array.

Jim lethargically leans over and presses a switch. The horizontal shutters instantly open, exposing the impossible - a dust storm on the surface of the Moon.

JIM

What the Hell?

In shock, Tammy spills her coffee. She feverishly shakes the hot fluid off of her hands and forearms as she anxiously stares out the window, panning from side to side.

An oscillating 'Code Red' alarm BLAST summons the remainder of the crew to their posts. The dust storm escalates.

Stones are hurled at the structure, one strikes the glass only inches from Tammy. She shrieks as a crack begins to form, quickly spreading toward the framework.

KIM points to the rovers, which are beginning to slide in the direction of the complex. One rolls onto its side, then another.

Momentum is building as the rovers move closer to the structure. One by one, they are lifted off the ground and hurled in their direction.

Jim palms the window shutter switch as the airborne crafts close in on their position. The shutters slam shut with only moments to spare.

A rover breaches the wall, instantly decompressing the pod. Crewmembers stumble over one another in an effort to reach the security of the walkway.

Sealing the doorway behind them, the crew scrambles down the corridor as an automated 'Evacuation' alarm and a 'Mayday' call to Earth are triggered.

Kim turns back, momentarily mesmerized, as two additional rovers impact the pod's roof. The door seals fail. Kim is mercilessly drawn through a fracture in the door, one-quarter her size and discarded into oblivion.

INT. DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER - DAY

The crew enters the chamber and hurriedly begins suiting up. Several adjacent sections are breached and disintegrate. Not yet fully suited, the chamber explodes, catapulting them into the yard.

Jim unsuccessfully attempts to assist two of the unsuited crewmembers as they writhe in agony. He turns toward the complex and dives to the ground to evade

A LARGE SECTION OF DEBRIS

closing in on his position.

Jim rises and continues his race toward the shuttles amidst a hail of dust and stones.

He stumbles over a fallen crewmember, whose face shield is split in half, with a section of thick glass protruding from the front.

EXT. MOON BASE-TRANQUILITY/LAUNCH PAD - DAY

The terror-stricken crew reaches the shuttles and initiates their start-up procedures. The dust creates a near blackout.

Fire streaks from the rear of the crafts as they build speed and escape the surface of the Moon.

Flying full-throttle, hidden intermittently within clouds of dust, the two shuttles aim for the sky. They remain side by side as they climb.

One shuttle is struck in the aft section by a jagged fragment of radio telescope.

The doomed craft spirals downward, disappearing into the dark cloud of debris. Moments later the cloud illuminates with a barrage of intense flashes.

As the remaining shuttle attempts to outrun their relentless foe, the rear of the craft begins to glow from the mounting friction. The craft continues to gain speed, but is forced sideways, exposing its unprotected surface.

The shuttle recovers for a moment, then splits open and disintegrates into a cascade of sparks, flames and debris.

EXT. HIGH-EARTH ORBIT - DAY (IN SPACE)

Several space-suited technicians maneuver their personal rocket sleds along the upper perimeter of an enormous reflective sheet, floating motionless in space.

SUPER: "PROJECT NIGHT-LIGHT - HIGH-EARTH ORBIT

Mission Statement: To reflect the Sun's rays deep into the sea around the clock - to vastly accelerate the growth of undersea vegetation and defeat world hunger in our lifetime."

The hexagonal sheet is gold in color and measures more than fifty miles across. A sliver of Earth can be seen far below.

A mile from the site is the mother ship, the Aurora - a converted cargo ship, retrofitted with a full laboratory, an observation deck and several sophisticated telescopes.

Riding solo on his rocket sled, is the developer of the Night-Light project, JOHN COOPER. John is a handsome, slightly overweight, passably clean-shaven, thirty-nine year old marine biologist, with a good heart and a hair-trigger temper.

Clearly distracted, John fires a few quick retro rocket bursts to slow his sled to a crawl. He blinks tightly several times as he strains to focus on

A CRESCENT MOON

floating high overhead.

A slight mist of fire trails from the back of the Moon as the leading edge begins to glow intensely.

John contacts his crew and the mission coordinator.

JOHN

The Moon! Look at the Moon!
Are you seeing this?

Countless fragments of the Moon begin to break away from its surface, appearing as small meteorites, encompassing the Moon with an array of smoke and ash.

Soon, larger sections of the Moon start to crack and peel away from its very core, uniting with the smaller fragments to form an ever-increasing display of fire and smoke.

As quickly as it began, the event is over. Nothing remains but a faint dust trail, surrounded by an all-consuming darkness.

Communications of disbelief suddenly flood the airways.

John is contacted by their mission coordinator, his fiancée, SARAH JENNINGS, aboard the Aurora. Sarah is an attractive, slender, thirty-five year old British born astronomer with a quick wit and a 'take no prisoners' attitude toward her job.

In another lifetime, Sarah could have been a top model, but for now, she was all business - her sensually long, light brown hair, tightly wound into a plastic hair clip, her piercing emerald green eyes, well hidden behind her dark-rimmed glasses.

Sarah orders the entire crew to the ship immediately.

As they begin to make their way, she notices a slight movement in the far edge of the mirror material.

SARAH

John, move it - something's
happening out there!

John looks back then full-throttles the rocket sled toward the mother ship, along with the rest of the crew.

The mirror begins to ripple and roll in the distance. The Aurora powers up. They swing the ship around and throttle-up in an attempt to veer out of the material's path.

Their speed is no match for the approaching material. It is soon upon them, enveloping the craft within dozens of layers of the thin film. The craft spins ever faster as the material picks up speed and begins to glow intensely.

Flames lap at the outside of the glowing mass as the hapless ship is hurled through space within the confines of the mirrored material.

The material soon cools, returning to its natural golden color, but continues to roll randomly into the void of space.

INT. THE AURORA/MAIN CABIN - DAY

The entire crew is unconscious. Sarah recovers first and attempts to revive the others, while struggling to make her way through the ship in total weightlessness.

Sarah flips the exterior lights on, then off abruptly. She reels back in horror, staring wildly about the cabin as she hyperventilates. Pulling herself to the floor in a tuck position, she does her best to control her breathing.

SARAH

Okay, Sarah, get a grip

John grasps Sarah by the sleeve, turns her gently, then huddles next to her. She turns toward him, her eyes filled with fear.

JOHN

Claustrophobia?

Sarah nods, wipes her eyes, then rises to survey the situation.

The remainder of the crew is soon revived, but severely disoriented. They continue to misjudge the confines of the ship, bumping into the walls and ceiling in their weightless environment.

Sarah turns away from the windows as JEFF flips on the exterior lighting, revealing a maze of twisted and crumpled material tightly wound around the exterior of the craft.

JEFF

We can probably still salvage most of the mirror if we take a few days and cut through it a layer at a time.

Sarah gets right in his face.

SARAH

Screw the mirror! If what I think happened, actually happened, we've got to get out of here right now! Right Now! Earth is leaving us behind!

EXT. THE MIRROR MATERIAL - NIGHT (IN SPACE)

A bubble forms on the front edge of the material. A laser beam streaks out of the protrusion, rapidly oscillating back and forth.

The material violently splits open as the nose of the Aurora emerges.

The Aurora arduously squeezes through the constricted opening. Remnants of the shredded mirror material tug on its wings and tail, as the craft ultimately clears the mass.

INT. THE AURORA/MAIN CABIN - NIGHT

The entire crew huddles around several overhead observation windows. Earth now appears less than half the size that it did only hours ago.

Sarah approaches Jeff with a timid smile.

SARAH
Sorry about earlier. Confined
spaces and I do not get along.

EXT. THE AURORA - DAY (IN SPACE)

Two teams of three crewmembers each exit the rear of the Aurora aboard their personal rocket sleds.

The first team BLASTS to the far end of the material and begins to loosely attach tethers to the crumpled mass.

The second team begins a stem to stern inspection of the Aurora's exterior, assessing the damage and freeing the craft from any material that remains affixed to the wings and tail.

RICK (TEAM 2)
The hull checks out fine, but
the antennas are gone, along
with the dishes and most of the
lighting.

SARAH
Understood.

MARY (TEAM 1)
We've come across several
pockets in the material that
won't lay flat. They seem to
have some resiliency.

SARAH
See if you can tie them off so
we'll have a sample of what's
inside them.

MARY (TEAM 1)
Roger. Can do.

INT. THE AURORA/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The crewmembers safely return to the ship and are all accounted for. Sarah summons them together for an update.

One by one, they float into the briefing room, select a seat and strap in.

SARAH

Okay, here's what I think happened. There was some sort of anomaly, a cloud, some invisible mass... virtually, an immense atmosphere just sitting there, in the middle of space... and we hit it.

TOM

Wait a minute. How could a cloud just sitting there do that to the Moon... or us? It smoked the frickin' Moon like it was nothin'.

SARAH

(frustrated)

Ohhh... come on, Tom. What do you think? The Earth's just casually drifting through space? Basic geometry... Earth Science 101.

Sarah approaches a large, vertical transparent chart. She picks up a marker and draws a quick diagram of the Earth and Moon orbiting the Sun.

SARAH (VO)

Earth's in an orbit around the Sun, about ninety-three million miles from it. Now to complete that orbit every year means that Earth's traveling through space at over sixty six thousand miles per hour!

She pauses, then sketches another illustration depicting the anomaly intersecting the Moon's orbital path. The Moon enters the mass and disintegrates.

SARAH (VO)

The Moon didn't have a chance. It entered the mass at a much higher velocity than many of the shooting stars that burn up in Earth's atmosphere every day.

The crew begins to talk as Sarah hastily adds a couple more components to the illustration. This time the mirror material contacts the mass, with the Aurora following closely behind.

SARAH (VO)

We hit the same mass the Moon did. We would've also been burned to a crisp, if the material hadn't rolled us up like a big burrito. That was our heat shield. It saved our asses - but I'm afraid it also slowed us down quite a bit.

Sarah opens up her laptop and brings up some figures.

SARAH

I ran some quick plottings against the stars and it looks like we're now traveling somewhere around fifty thousand miles per hour, after hitting the mass.

JOHN

So every hour, Earth's pulling away from us another sixteen thousand miles... times thirty hours... that means Earth's nearly a half a million miles ahead of us already.

SARAH

Exactly. I figure we need to make at least seventy thousand miles per hour if we hope to catch her before life support runs out.

RICK

We can do that. Aurora's good for about twenty thousand and we're already going fifty. We should be able to catch her in around... six days.

Sarah smiles and gives him the 'thumbs up.'

EXT. THE AURORA - DAY (IN SPACE)

The serenity of Aurora's cavernous nozzles are instantly transformed into a blaze of fire and smoke.

The Aurora, along with its tethered cargo, quickly diminishes in size. The Earth stands virtually motionless in the distance, beckoning them home.

INT. THE AURORA/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

As they make their way homeward, Sarah assembles a tray filled with a plethora of lenses, scrounged from every instrument on the ship.

She painstakingly selects three lenses from the tray and slides the trio into the eyepiece of the telescope. She draws a deep breath, then shifts the angle of the scope from right to left.

SARAH'S P.O.V. - THE CLOUD/THROUGH THE TELESCOPE

A large, well-defined, swirling spectrum of intense light and color is vividly displayed. The mass extends for thousands of miles in all directions.

SARAH

Got'cha, you bastard.

BACK TO SCENE

Sarah summons John. He enters the lab within seconds. He gazes through the telescope's eyepiece for a few moments, then turns toward Sarah and smiles.

As Sarah methodically organizes the lenses into the tray, John pans the telescope to the side and front of the craft.

JOHN

Sarah... is that more of them in front of us?

Sarah ousts him from the seat and closes one eye. A look of horror comes over her face.

SARAH

My God, they're everywhere! John, some of them look like they might even be in Earth's orbital path!

Sarah slides quickly off the seat, runs down the hall and into the communications room.

She collides with the communications officer head-on, nearly knocking them both to the ground.

SARAH

Look, do whatever it takes to get the radio up and running. Space-walk with some rabbit-ears if you have to... but get a message to somebody out there. It's about to happen again... this time to Earth!

Communications remain down for the entire trip home.

INT./EXT. THE AURORA - APPROACHING EARTH - DAY (IN SPACE)

Six days later, views of the Earth fill the Aurora's observation windows.

The crew repositions the Aurora well behind the mirror material for the firing of the retros.

Once the Aurora and material are sufficiently slowed, the mirror is released to drift harmlessly in orbit around the planet.

A low-orbit security vessel glides up along side the Aurora.

The two spacecrafts veer to the right and initiate their reentry procedures.

INT. TELECONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (TWO WEEKS LATER)

Sarah and John are seated with several of the Night-Light crew on one side of a large, oval table. Several wall-mounted LCD screens dominate the opposite wall, each lying dormant with the words "No Signal."

One by one, the screens come alive with numerous scientific and military colleagues from around the globe.

GENERAL PARSONS brings the meeting to order with an obligatory "Welcome" then refers to a computer simulation on the center

LCD SCREEN

chronicling the explosive collision of a Comet with the Sun.

PARSONS (VO)

We believe this collision occurred
over six hundred years ago.

The simulation details the Comet's colossal tail, comprised mostly of ice and gas, being instantly converted into steam and water vapor by the Sun's unyielding temperatures.

This conversion, in turn, extinguishes several immense Solar Flares as they leap from the surface of the Sun.

The unspent, inert gasses from the extinguished flares combine to form a vast array of ominous clouds, which begin to drift slowly outward, away from the Sun.

BACK TO SCENE

PARSONS

This is the current hypothesis
regarding the formation of the
anomalies that are now intruding
on Earth's orbital path.

Parsons holds up a small, glass lens and peers through it momentarily. He sets it gently onto the table.

PARSONS

Thanks to the lenses developed by
Sarah Jennings and Startech Labs,
we've discovered a total of eight
'Intruders' in our sector.

John nudges Sarah. She glances toward him, stifles a grin, then turns her attention back to the monitor.

PARSONS

Intruders three and five are the
ones to watch... but I'll let Ms.
Jennings fill you in on that...
Ms. Jennings, you have the floor.

Sarah takes a deep breath, as she rises from her seat.

SARAH

I want you all to consider the
Moon's encounter, three weeks
ago, as a wake-up call for Earth.

A hush comes over the members of the assembly.

SARAH

Thirty-five days from now, we'll encounter, what they're calling, 'First Contact' along the leading edge of Intruder number three... and it will be devastating!

With the press of a button, Sarah initiates her first computer simulation on the center

LCD SCREEN

depicting the Earth as it contacts the leading edge of the Intruder.

First Contact removes a portion of Earth's land, sea and atmosphere in the Far East, while actually increasing the speed of the planet's rotation - in a matter of seconds.

SARAH (VO)

First Contact will simultaneously level every man-made structure on Earth... as if the entire planet had the rug pulled out from under it!

She pauses the simulation and steps directly in front of the LCD screen. Her tone changes to one of compassion.

SARAH

Look... we've all seen how devastating Category Five Hurricane winds can be, at a hundred and sixty miles per hour... now just try and imagine... a sixty six thousand mile per hour tempest.

(silently pondering)

Think of this as an entirely new definition for "Solar Wind."

Without further ado, she begins her second simulation, depicting our home planet's succeeding confrontation.

SARAH (VO)

Seventy-seven days after First Contact... Intruder number five will be right in our face -- and it's the big one. That's why they're calling it 'Final Contact.'

Reminiscent of the Moon's earlier demise, the Earth enters the Intruder and is quickly enveloped by smoke, flames and steam. Sections of the Earth begin to break away into smaller fragments, as the planet is totally consumed.

SARAH (VO)

Make no mistake about it...
This will be an Extinction Level
Event! Passing through this
Intruder will reduce our home
planet to nothing more than...
a shooting star.

BACK TO SCENE

The LCD screen fades to black. Sarah closes her folder and offers an inaudible thank-you. Parsons takes over.

PARSONS

Our job is to make sure that
doesn't happen. By using actual
samples of an Intruder that were
trapped inside Night-Light's
mirror material as a baseline...
(recognizing Sarah and John)
... we were able to develop a
compound that can be injected
directly into the Intruders that
makes 'em extremely volatile. We
believe they can then be ignited
and dispersed, well before any
contact is made... We're also
trying to figure out what the
Hell makes them so damn cohesive.

Parsons pauses for questions, gives a quick 'thumbs up' then relinquishes the conference to ADMIRAL BOWLING.

BOWLING

In the event the Intruders can't be
dispersed, find any way you can...
(pointing up)
...to ride out First Contact in
space. We're currently certifying
any and all vessels capable of a
sustained Earth orbit for more than
a day. They'll be designated as
Atmosphere Escape Vessels, or AEVs.

BOWLING

Earthbound citizens can survive as well. We have compiled four simple rules, which will become public knowledge next week.

Bowling holds up and shakes the short list of survival rules as he motions toward the center

LCD SCREEN

for a final series of computer simulations.

BOWLING (VO)

First. Always remember the speed of Earth's rotation will increase from West to East.

A computer model depicts Earth's rotational speed increasing.

BOWLING (VO)

Second. Keep away from the West Side of all natural or man-made structures.

A major city's serene skyline is the subject of the next computer simulation. With the Earth's sudden shift eastward, the metropolis simultaneously collapses to the west.

BOWLING (VO)

Third. Vacate the West Side of all bodies of water. In other words... vacate the East Coast of all land masses.

Again, the Earth shifts violently eastward and an immense tidal wave engulfs a major East Coast land mass.

BOWLING (VO)

Forth. Migrate toward the poles. The G-force effects along the Equator will be twelve times greater than at the Arctic or Antarctic Circles,

The final simulation compares buildings along the Equator being strewn for miles, whereas similar structures in the higher latitudes tend to collapse nearly vertically.

BACK TO SCENE

BOWLING

As I mentioned earlier, get the word out on these First Contact survival tips by next week.

He holds up the survival list once again, shaking it slowly. He pauses momentarily before his closing statement.

BOWLING

Lastly... remember, no matter what happens, Final Contact is to remain Top Secret... Until further notice!

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah jumps on the bed, waking John from a deep sleep. She slaps a small package with her open hand, bringing him to full consciousness in an instant.

SARAH

I got the official stuff from Big Brother, wanna see it?

No response. Sarah tears open the DVD and slides it into her laptop, then quickly types in her passcode.

INT. LAPTOP - DAY (WORDS ONSCREEN/SYNTHESIZED VOICE-OVER)

DVD (VO)

Operation Exodus/Genesis: The Human Colonization of Mars.

Sarah pauses the DVD and shakes John. He opens one eye.

DVD (VO)

World leaders in the fields of Astronomy, Biochemistry, Genetics, Climatology, Horticulture, Physics, Propulsion, Science, Survival and Zoology have been selected to participate in this program.

Sarah again pauses the DVD and turns toward John. He is now fully awake and focused on the laptop's screen.

DVD (VO)

For a decade, a multi-national contingent has developed guidelines to perpetuate the Human Race in the event of a cataclysmic natural occurrence, sufficient as to be classified as an Extinction Level Event.

A look of concern blankets Sarah's face. She bites her lip.

DVD (VO)

Recruits will be assembled for AEV evacuation on the morning of First Contact - followed by transfer to the Mars Two spacecraft, already inserted into High Earth Orbit.

Sarah again pauses the DVD and positions herself in front of John, studying him with a scrutinizing eye.

SARAH

You knew about this?

Ignoring her question, John resumes the DVD.

DVD (VO)

Do not underestimate the distinction of your selection. Operation Exodus/Genesis is Mankind's last hope for the survival of our species.

John pulls her close and gives her a hug.

JOHN

I just found out yesterday. Oh, One more thing... everyone on the mission has to be bio-tagged with a GPS locator.

Sarah wiggles from his grasp and apprehensively backs away.

SARAH

No way getting one of those things jammed in under my skin.

John pulls up his shirt and glances down at a small bandage on his left chest. Sarah moves in for a closer look.

JOHN

You don't have much of a choice.
They want to be able to keep
tabs on everyone.

She squints as she concentrates on the bandage, then sighs, surrendering to his plea.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Sarah is filling out paperwork as DOCTOR #1 enters the room.

DOCTOR #1

Sarah Jennings?

Sarah reluctantly rises and follows him across the room, motioning with her eyes for John to join them.

She seats herself on an examination table and looks about the room, carefully avoiding eye contact with the doctor.

She removes her shirt, but leaves her bra on.

She watches intently as the doctor quickly taps the side of a syringe and spurts some of the fluid into the air. He then administers a local anesthetic.

SARAH

I'll bet it was a man who thought
of the location for these.

DOCTOR #1

Pretty ingenious really. Neat
little buggers... and there's a
good reason for where we put
them.

He holds up the locator with a pair of tweezers. He then moves it under the light so she can have a better look.

DOCTOR #1

These little guys are set right
inside the rib cage and have no
battery power whatsoever, yet
they'll last as long as you will.

SARAH

What do they run on?

DOCTOR #1

You. They run off of the electrical impulses coming from your heart. That's why they're implanted here.

The doctor smiles smugly as he sets the locator into a sterile solution.

Sarah looks away and grimaces as the doctor makes a small incision directly under her left breast.

He retrieves the locator and gently inserts it into her flesh, then places a sterile pad over the incision.

DOCTOR #1

Here, hold this... tight. You see, it's not just a locator. It'll also let you know if the person wearing it is dead or alive. We figure these will save a lot of time after First Contact.

SARAH

Save a lot of time?

DOCTOR #1

Yeah, you won't waste any time looking for a corpse... if the locator registers "DEACTIVATED" you can bet it's not just the locator that's deactivated. Morbid I know, but practical.

The doctor removes the sterile pad and promptly replaces it with a smaller adhesive pad.

DOCTOR #1

Keep this on for a week if you don't want a scar.

Sarah peers down at her chest with a look of disgust. She turns toward John as he shifts his eyes away from her and begins whistling a little ditty.

INT. NIGHT-LIGHT FACILITY - WASHINGTON STATE - DAY

SUPER: "NIGHT-LIGHT FACILITY - WASHINGTON STATE - FIRST CONTACT - T-MINUS FOURTEEN DAYS AND COUNTING"

The facility's upper-level office is functionally appointed and sparsely decorated with several "Feed the World" promotional posters, complete with Night-Light logos.

The far wall of the office is glass, overlooking a warehouse filled with spooled racks of the mirror material. In the warehouse foreground lie several jet skis and a high-tech amphibious craft.

Sarah opens the refrigerator and removes a couple wine coolers.

SARAH

They're not too cold.

She places them in a macro-wave for a few seconds, then retrieves the frost-covered bottles and hands one to John.

SARAH

Have you seen some of the other ideas people have come up with to survive First Contact?

She rummages through her pockets and produces a few crumpled pieces of paper. She lays them on the break room table and methodically irons out the creases with her hands.

SARAH

(somberly)

Let's see... riding it out in helium balloons, along the fringes of the atmosphere. Two-man subs, steel bunkers on the plains, and of course there's still thousands that swear they'll never leave their homes.

JOHN

Sometimes I think we'd be better off if we didn't know it was coming. Look at Moon Base-Tranquility... one minute everything's fine, the next...

(snapping his fingers)

...Gone.

Sarah glares at him with disgust.

SARAH

Why do you say things like that?

John shrugs his shoulders and returns her concerns with an uncomfortable smile.

Sarah checks another pocket and produces some additional pages.

SARAH

What do you think about the Sledders?

JOHN

Um... insane, crazy, demented --

SARAH

No argument there. Have you seen the interviews with these guys?

Sarah leans forward and fans out a few pages.

John spins a couple around. Contemplating the material on the Sledders, he shakes his head in utter disbelief.

JOHN

No way!

SARAH

They're actually looking forward to riding out First Contact in these things they call sleds... in the ocean, ya'know, for the thrill. They're more like Surfers from Hell, if you ask me.

JOHN

Idiots.

SARAH

I don't know where they get the term 'Sled'. They look more like flying saucers or spheres. Oh, and John, their motto is... Survival is secondary.

JOHN

(simultaneous)
Survival is secondary.

EXT. NIGHT-LIGHT FACILITY - WASHINGTON STATE - NIGHT

John and Sarah are propped, back to back, on a stone wall overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The rhythmic surf pounds against the shoreline as a warm breeze gently tosses her hair.

Behind them is a large brick and steel warehouse displaying the Night-Light logo.

An intense beam of light, emitting from the Night-Light mirror, floating high overhead, severs the darkness.

SARAH

This is nice. I never realized
how romantic the mirror was.

John smiles at her, then shifts his gaze to the heavens.

JOHN

It's too bad the only mirror
we'll ever get to test is that
little one... Hey, we almost got
that big one going, didn't we?

SARAH

Maybe someday --

JOHN

Maybe not, Sarah. There's no
longer a reason to increase the
rate of seaweed growth. The
world's food supply isn't going
to be such a big problem with
ninety percent of the population
wiped off the face of the Earth.

Sarah pushes away from him. Her peaceful expression turns into one of skepticism.

SARAH

God, John, you sound like you're
giving up. What's with you
lately?

JOHN

I'm a realist. And I don't
think that they're going to be
able to ignite these Intruders.

SARAH

I agree. Ya'know, right from the start, we should have been looking for ways to use the cloud's cohesiveness and its inertia to our advantage. Finesse is the answer... not brute force.

JOHN

Finesse... Finesse? Hey Sarah, you've still got fourteen days - come up with an idea to save the Earth and, who knows...

(smiling sarcastically)

...maybe they'll even name a national holiday after you... or something cool like that!

Sarah returns his sarcastic look and whacks him on the arm.

SARAH

Sledder!

John feigns an expression of uncontrollable anger.

JOHN

What'd you call me?

SARAH

Seriously, Pulse-Electronics has already developed a working electro-magnetic force field. Their idea is to form a giant scoop behind the cloud, then usher it past the Earth's orbit. But they can't seem to figure out how to generate a conductive perimeter powerful enough... on solar energy alone.

John suddenly perks-up and stands, causing Sarah to practically lose her balance.

JOHN

You might have something there!

John stands her up, spins her around and extends his hand, pointing toward the mirror.

JOHN

That could work! There's your
conductive perimeter! And it's
been right there all along! Damn!

Sarah nearly breaks into laugh as she smiles, looking up
into the starlit night sky.

SARAH

You're right, the material is
conductive, isn't it?

JOHN

Conductive as Hell! Remember
all the problems we had in the
beginning with static, when we
were unrolling it?

John exuberantly points toward the mirror once again.

JOHN

We've got thirty-six square miles
right there... and another twenty-
five hundred somewhere in orbit.
(turning around)
Plus, another four thousand
square miles still stockpiled
right in there!

Sarah, immersed in thought, nods an obligatory response.

SARAH

I'll get some material to
Pulse-Electronics tomorrow!

INT. PULSE-ELECTRONICS LABS - DAY

SUPER: "FIRST CONTACT - T-MINUS TEN DAYS AND COUNTING"

Sarah and John are standing alongside hundreds of coils,
diffusers and wire, conferring with JENNY.

JENNY

This could be the answer to our
prayers.

A two-story section of the mirror material has been hoisted
vertically in the center of an arena-sized warehouse.

The material's center has been hastily removed, leaving only a four-foot wide perimeter. There are several wires taped along its golden, polished surface.

In the center of the void, a lone metallic sphere has been suspended by a single hyper-conductive, insulated cable.

A technician passes every observer a pair of deeply shaded safety glasses. As soon as everyone's eyes are securely behind the lenses, Jenny smiles, then flips the switch.

JENNY

Clear!

Suddenly the entire room is awash with an intense, crimson red glow. The geometric grid fills the material's void with a seemingly infinite number of sparkling points of light, swirling and throbbing, almost as if it were alive.

JOHN

Cool as Hell! Not at all what I expected. I was envisioning more of a series of laser beams.

John moves in for a closer look.

JENNY

The laser beams would only sever the Intruder into smaller pieces. This configuration will push it along as if it were a solid material. Go ahead... touch it.

Jenny studies John's apprehension, hands her clipboard to one of her assistants and charges the grid.

She slams against it, full force, with her shoulder. The entire assembly sways several feet, as if it were made up of a single element.

JENNY

(adjusting her clothes)

I only wish we had the time to test it in a weightless vacuum, with solar power, before the big event.

JOHN

Consider it done. They're loading the material onto the Aurora as we speak. We need to get your equipment off-planet also, before First Contact, or it could end up being buried under a hundred feet of mud and water.

JENNY

Is the Aurora fast enough to transport it to Intruder number five in time?

Sarah makes quick eye contact with John. He shrugs and nods.

SARAH

John's hoping to convince the powers that be to loan him the Mars Two for that.

Jenny stares at John for a moment in disbelief. She looks at Sarah, then turns back to John, with a disparaging grin.

JENNY

Operation Exodus/Genesis? The Mars Project? Mankind's last hope for survival? That Mars Two? Good frickin' luck!

EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT - DAY

The Aurora is floating motionless in space. It is dwarfed by the immense six-by-six-mile Night-Light mirror, less than a hundred yards away.

Drifting more than two miles from the mirror is a huge communications dish - a remnant from an abandoned satellite.

SUPER: "FIRST CONTACT - T-MINUS FOUR DAYS AND COUNTING"

John, Sarah and Jenny are poised at the Aurora's observation window for the initial test of the grid, using only solar energy to power the force field.

Several of Night-Light's technicians are laser-cutting the mirror material, leaving it approximately fifty yards in width along the perimeter.

With the aid of several additional techs, the wiring is quickly strung. The metallic sphere is positioned in the mirror's center.

Visors are lowered and the countdown commences. The switch is flipped and the light show begins.

JOHN

Okay, ram that dish into the middle of the grid.

Two rocket sleds stand ready with the satellite debris cradled firmly in a sling between them. They throttle up to well over ninety miles per hour and release the scrap, several hundred yards from its target.

The debris spins on a controlled trajectory, colliding with the center of the grid amidst a shower of sparks.

The impact severely crumples the dish. The material's grid arches back several feet, but not a single fragment makes it through.

The entire team erupts with cheers.

INT. OPERATION NIGHT-LIGHT WAREHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "FIRST CONTACT - T-MINUS TEN HOURS AND COUNTING"

All of the Night-Light material storage racks are now vacant. John and Sarah are hurriedly loading their vehicles with various types of test equipment.

John slams his door and approaches Sarah. He rubs her shoulders as she places the last piece of equipment into her SUV. She turns toward him and smiles.

JOHN

Be at the baseball field on Willow by 10:00am. Be early. The chopper will take you to Henderson Airfield.

SARAH

Startech's still up and running. I'll grab the latest telemetry printouts and I'm outta there.

JOHN

Promise me you'll be careful.
Don't stop for anyone - and stay
out of the city. It's not safe!

Sarah nods insincerely, gives John a quick peck on the cheek, and jumps into her SUV. She pulls onto the street, waves to him and speeds off, screeching her tires.

INT. STAR-TECH LABS - DAY

Sarah is feverishly rummaging through several piles of technical data while viewing a monitor. Her cell phone RINGS. She answers it immediately.

SARAH

Sarah Jennings.

JOHN (VO)

(over phone, filtered)

Sarah... Please don't tell me
you're still at the lab. If
you're not at that field when
that chopper touches down, his
orders are to lift off and not
look back... do you understand?

SARAH

Got it! Leaving right now! Bye.

Sarah snatches her flash drive, scoops up as much data as possible, jams it into her briefcase and scurries out the door.

EXT. INNER CITY - DAY

The Sun's midday rays filter through the drizzle and soot from an inner city that has been thrown into chaos.

Hordes of desperate people, with nowhere to go, roam the streets.

En route to Willow Street, Sarah is threading her way through neighborhoods littered with smoking debris and wrecked cars.

Without warning, a resounding BANG startles her. The SUV veers hard to the left, breaking her grip on the steering wheel, as the vehicle spins out of control.

Climbing out, she's greeted by an ominous wind accompanied with a slight mist. She brushes her dampened hair to one side and surveys her surroundings. She is alone.

She cautiously peers around her door to assess the situation, discovering that her front left tire is completely flat.

SARAH

Oh God! Please... Not now!

Approaching the tire, she lowers herself to take a closer look and kneels directly on a roofing nail, piercing the skin of her right knee.

She recoils from the pain, focuses on the source and removes it from her flesh.

She directs her attention to the rear of the vehicle, which is also slowly beginning to sink.

Backing away in horror, her attention is drawn to

THOUSANDS OF ROOFING NAILS

strewn on the street.

Voices can be heard behind her. She whirls around as two large, raggedly dressed men approach, their faces tarnished with ash and sweat.

SARAH

Oh, thank God... can you please help me? My tires --

MAN #1

We already helped. We put them nails there.

Sarah looks back at the ground and her SUV in disbelief.

SARAH

Why in God's name?

MAN #2

Tough break too... bad part of town. Who knows what could happen to a pretty little lady like you?

(turning)

We got a hot one here!

She can now make out three other men approaching.

As the second group acknowledges, she makes a break for her SUV, manages to get inside and locks the doors.

While turning the key, she glances to her left only to be ambushed with an impact to her side window, showering her with fragments of glass.

Shrieking, she shelters her eyes with both hands. Her assailant stealthily reaches through the void and removes her keys from the ignition switch.

She again attempts to start the vehicle, only to find that her keys are gone.

Quickly sliding across the seat, she is again showered with glass fragments as the passenger window meets the same fate.

The driver's side door suddenly bursts open, nearly shearing it from its hinges.

Struggling, she attempts to grasp any protrusion within the SUV's interior as she is pulled from the vehicle and dropped to the street, directly onto several more roofing nails.

Her face filled with agony, she rises to confront a total of five men, encircling her as they close in. She cautiously backs away, only to encounter the side of her vehicle, hopelessly blocking her path of escape.

SARAH

Please, I don't want any trouble.

Man #1 dangles the keys in front of her face, taunting her.

SARAH

Give me the keys... Please!

MAN #1

You can have these here keys...
as they say... when you pry them
out of my dead, lifeless hand.

Sarah lunges forward, taking a swipe at the keys, only to be blocked by a second man.

Man #1 seizes her arm, as a third man entangles a fist full of her hair, wrenching her head relentlessly backward.

Standing dangerously close, Man #1 slowly looks her over, smiles, then spits a wad of chewing tobacco on her shoe.

MAN #1

I'm afraid that you are
definitely in the wrong place
at the wrong time, little lady.

Resisting in vain, she is lifted up and carried into a nearby vacant building by two of the men. The other three follow, with looks of wild anticipation on their faces.

As the last man enters the building, he pauses momentarily, turns to survey the area, then disappears into the doorway.

All is silent.

INT. VACANT BUILDING - DAY

A BLACK SCREEN

The serenity of the room is broken with the sounds of approaching footsteps echoing down the corridor, accompanied by muffled screams for help.

With several KICKS of the door, the scene is flooded with light, exposing a room littered with construction debris.

A loosely stacked pile of drywall and wood scraps dominates the center of the room.

Several dark silhouettes pass by in the foreground, and with a CRASH of splintering wood, irreverently discard their prey to the side of the scrap heap.

Sarah's collision with the debris reverberates throughout the room, and sends a wave of dust into the air, accentuating several additional slivers of light.

SARAH

Please let me go. Please!

With the five men nearly upon her, she rises, lowers her head in a charging stance and storms them, only to be stonewalled and brutally thrown back onto the scrap heap.

Two of the men drop down to her side and hold her to the floor as she struggles in vain. Man #1 unbuckles his belt.

MAN #1

Just relax little lady. Hell,
you might even enjoy this.

SARAH

Please... for the love of God...
is this the way you want to
spend your last day on Earth?

Man #1 pauses, then smiles toothlessly at his friends.

MAN #1

Fuckin' A.

All five of the men laugh.

But the laughter is short lived as the room's main source of
light is suddenly dimmed. They quickly turn to see the
silhouette of a formidable man standing in the doorway.

THOMAS

(nearly inaudibly)
What's goin' on?

THOMAS briefly makes eye contact with Sarah; her face now
soaked with tears.

SARAH

(silently mouthing)
Help me... please help me.

MAN #1

Get the Hell outta here, this
don't concern you.

THOMAS

Just wanted to know what was
goin' on.

MAN #1

Just havin' some fun... and if
you're a good boy, maybe you
can be...

(counting the others)
...number six.

Thomas looks directly at Sarah, who is now trembling
uncontrollably. He then redirects his stare to Man #1.

THOMAS

Is she havin' fun?

MAN #1

I said get the Hell outta here.

Two of the men rise from Sarah's side and slowly approach Thomas. One of them opens a switchblade and begins to toss it confidently between his hands.

Without warning, Thomas draws a .357 revolver and FIRES directly into their chests, sending them hurling backward.

The other three quickly rise from Sarah's side in horror, looking at their motionless friends, then at Thomas.

Again without a word, Thomas FIRES the handgun, dropping two more of them to the floor, right where they stand.

Man #1 turns and runs, but is caught squarely in the back by two bullets, sending him face forward into the far wall. He painfully slides to the floor.

Thomas cautiously approaches Sarah, who is now in the fetal position. He touches her on the shoulder. She reels back.

SARAH

Who... who are you?

THOMAS

A friend. Can you stand?

He offers her his hand and she reluctantly takes it. She stands and dusts herself off as she eyes him top to bottom.

SARAH

National Guard?

THOMAS

No ma'am, Air Force actually... but this was personal. Been trackin' these five for the past four hours... 'till I was damn sure they were the ones that killed my daughter. When I saw what they had in mind for you, I knew I had 'em.

SARAH

Sorry about your daughter.

Thomas nods, then makes a quick scan of the room.

THOMAS

They'll never hurt anyone again.

Thomas motions to the door. Sarah takes a couple cautious steps, then stops cold.

Turning, she studies all five bodies, then walks over to Man #1 who is lying face down in the debris.

She plows her foot deeply under his side and rolls him face up. Dropping quickly, she lands heavily on his forearm with both knees.

She tugs at the keys protruding from his fist a few times. She then leans forward, pries his hand open and removes them.

SARAH

Thanks.

EXT. VACANT BUILDING - DAY

The daylight reveals a kindness in Thomas' face, instantly putting Sarah at ease. She looks him straight in the eye.

SARAH

Do you have a place to go?

THOMAS

I've got friends waitin' for me.

SARAH

You said you've been tracking those bastards for four hours. Your friends are probably long gone!

Sarah looks at her watch in horror. She anxiously begins to back away, toward her SUV.

SARAH

I have to get to Henderson's Airfield. Please come with me. I can get you on an AEV!

THOMAS

I can't... and you can't go back out on the streets. Not alone.

She continues to back away, nervously thumbing her keys.

Thomas removes his .357 revolver from its holster and flips the cylinder open to empty it. He reloads all six chambers.

He begins to hand it to her, then pauses.

THOMAS

Know how to use one of these?

Sarah momentarily studies the weapon and shakes her head.

Thomas hastily demonstrates how to cock and release the hammer, how to site the target and the proper way to hold the firearm. He then hands it to her.

THOMAS

Pretty simple. Keep the hammer
down 'till you want to use it...
Now at least you won't be alone

SARAH

Thank you for everything. By
the way, I'm Sarah.

THOMAS

Thomas. Godspeed, Sarah.

Sarah nods quickly in affirmation. She gives her SUV a quick once-over, then heads off with four flat tires.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Sarah is proceeding at nearly thirty miles an hour, her tires now reduced to jagged strips of rubber, SLAPPING the outside of the wheel wells.

The moment Sarah begins to execute her turn onto Willow Street, she is assaulted with the unmistakable sound of a helicopter powering up for lift-off.

Only yards from the playing field entrance, she watches helplessly as the helicopter takes to flight.

She mashes the pedal to the floor, spinning the wheels in an ear-piercing concert of metal and pavement. The SUV lunges forward. For a fleeting moment, it almost seems as if she will reach her target.

Pacing the chopper, she orchestrates a desperate barrage of horn BLASTS, to no avail. The chopper is too loud and climbing fast.

Hopelessly losing ground, she slows and pulls to the side of the street, striking the curb, halting her abruptly.

She mercilessly pounds the steering wheel several times, as she screams hysterically.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Sarah's SUV is now devoid of tires. Only the wheels remain; steadily losing their battle with the unyielding pavement.

Three men rush into the road and signal her to stop. She begins to slow, as the three storm her SUV, brandishing their savage weapons.

Sarah closes her eyes, plants her foot firmly on the pedal, grits her teeth, and braces for impact.

Two of the men manage to hustle to the side of her onslaught, but the third is too slow.

She strikes her would-be assailant squarely, launching him up and over the hood. He collides solidly with the windshield.

His momentum carries him up and over the SUV and drops him on the pavement nearly twenty yards behind the vehicle.

Sarah's shattered windshield is strewn with blood. Behind her SUV, the other two men hurl their makeshift weapons in a futile attempt to thwart her escape.

EXT. HENDERSON'S AIRSTRIP - DAY

A helicopter lands. John lowers his head and rushes to the craft. Several people climb out, but Sarah is conspicuously missing.

As the helicopter begins to throttle up, John swings the door open and leans in to speak to the PILOT. The pilot motions to close the door.

The two of them briefly converse over the noise and wind generated by the aircraft.

JOHN

Where's the woman from the
playing field on Willow?

PILOT

There wasn't anyone there.

JOHN

You'll have to go back.

PILOT

No can do. Got my orders.

He again motions to close the door. John reluctantly obliges. The helicopter throttles up and swiftly disappears into the distance.

John attempts to contact Sarah by cell phone, then spikes his phone to the ground, sending parts of it in every direction.

He scrambles across the tarmac to an eighty-foot AEV, surrounded by a chain-link fence. He threads his way through a throng of desperate people, flashes a pass to an armed guard, and is quickly granted permission to enter.

The delta-winged craft is positioned horizontally atop a massive launch pad, designed to raise the craft to a vertical position moments before lift-off.

Parsons meets John at the base of the stairs as the craft's six engines are warming up in preparation for launch.

JOHN

Sarah wasn't on the chopper.

PARSONS

Look, John, this AEV won't wait
for anyone. If you miss it --

JOHN

Understood.

John whirls around and points to a lone cargo plane.

JOHN

If we don't make it back in time,
I'll take that cargo plane north.

Parsons nods then heads up the stairs.

John opens his GPS locator. He rushes to his car and heads off in a last-ditch effort to locate Sarah.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

John is frantically searching for Sarah's vehicle while keeping an eye on her location with his GPS locator.

He spots an oncoming SUV, crawling along, with cascades of sparks coming from all four wheel wells. It's Sarah!

Driving across the median strip, he cuts her off. She counters with an evasive move, then spots John and comes to an immediate halt. They run to each other and embrace.

SARAH

I didn't think I'd ever see you again.

JOHN

I'd never leave without you. Besides, there's still time to --

In the distance, John spots the AEV from Henderson's as it streaks skyward. Sarah spins around and gasps.

SARAH

I'm so sorry.

JOHN

Don't worry, there's a cargo plane back at Henderson's. We'll fly north. Remember number four on the survival list? Get close to the poles. We'll make it, honey.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

SUPER: "FIRST CONTACT - T-MINUS FIVE HOURS AND COUNTING"

Sarah is clinging tightly to John as he makes his way through the abandoned cars and debris.

SARAH

Oh, John... I was nearly raped... if this man hadn't come along --

John tightens his hold on her as he strains for a view of the road.

She suddenly frees herself from John's grasp, slides quickly across the seat and rests against the passenger side door.

SARAH

I killed a man today. He ran right out in front of me. I was so scared, I just ran him down.

She looks to John for absolution.

SARAH

Do you think God can ever forgive me?

John searches deep within her eyes, then looks outside to survey the surrounding countryside, littered with burning homes, cars and debris.

JOHN

I think the bigger question is... can we ever forgive God?

EXT. HENDERSON'S AIRSTRIP - DAY

Arriving at the airstrip, Sarah and John drive past the deserted, vertical AEV launch pad, still smoldering from the heat of the engine's blast.

Sarah looks somberly into the sky.

John proceeds to the lone camouflage painted cargo plane. He jams the car into park before they are completely stopped, screeching the tires.

INT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

The two of them quickly board the empty plane. Sarah pulls up the ladder and closes the hatch as John makes his way to the cockpit.

As John commences with the start-up procedure for the first engine, several people begin to run across the tarmac toward the plane, shouting and waving. Soon there are dozens more.

John continues with the start-up procedures on the second engine. Sarah peers out of the windshield at the crowd, now numbering nearly sixty.

SARAH

John, we can't just leave them.

JOHN

There's no way we can take them all.
We'd never make it off the ground!
Maybe the women and children.

Sarah scans the group of forlorn faces with a look of helplessness. Suddenly, she makes eye contact with Thomas.

SARAH

My God, that's the man that
saved my life!

John abruptly jerks her away from the windshield by her belt, underestimating his strength. He sends her reeling to the floor, flat on her back.

JOHN

Don't look out the window!

SARAH

We can't just leave him here
to die. I owe him!

She rises from the floor and darts into the cargo hold. John scrambles to catch her arm, but comes up short.

His next attempt catches her wrist with enough force to spin her completely around.

JOHN

Damn it. Get back in the front!

Resisting his efforts to restrain her, she struggles free and continues toward the rear of the plane.

JOHN

Don't you dare open that hatch!

Sarah stops dead in her tracks and wheels around.

SARAH

Go to Hell, John!

John glares at her in disgust and dashes back to the cockpit.

Ignoring John's continuing protests, Sarah reaches the rear of the cargo hold and throws open the hatch. The desperate crowd, now numbering well over a hundred, storms the plane.

SARAH

I'm sorry, there's not enough --

Amidst the pandemonium, Sarah is mistakenly pulled outside the craft, thrown to the tarmac and nearly trampled on.

John inches the plane forward, dispersing the remainder of the damned, unaware of Sarah's plight.

JOHN

Sarah! Close the hatch!

With the SLAM of the hatch, John throttles up and taxis to the runway in preparation for take off.

EXT. THE TARMAC - DAY

As the plane builds speed, Sarah painfully rises from the pavement, standing within a small group of people.

She watches in silence as the plane laboriously increases its speed, roaring off the runway and into the air.

Sarah falls to her knees, breathing heavily. She methodically surveys her surroundings, then bows her head.

INT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

John is trying to control his ascent as well as scan the cargo hold. He seizes the sleeve of PASSENGER #1.

JOHN

Go in the back and find a woman
named Sarah. She's pretty, about
five-eight, long brown hair.

Passenger #1 nods and disappears, only to return a few moments later, shaking his head.

PASSENGER #1

Nobody named Sarah back there.

John shoots from his seat, grabs Passenger #1, turns him around and places him at the controls.

JOHN

Just keep the wheel right here.
We want to keep this due north.

John frantically searches the hold of the plane.

He returns to the cockpit, extricates Passenger #1 from the controls and immediately executes a hard, banking turn to port.

EXT. THE TARMAC - DAY

Motionless, Sarah concentrates intensely on the plane, as it nearly fades from view. Suddenly, the aircraft abruptly banks hard to the left.

A smile envelops her face as she gallops toward the runway, waving her arms and screaming at the top of her lungs.

INT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

John is midway through his 180-degree course alteration when several passengers rush him and attempt to turn the plane back to its original course.

The struggle diverts the plane into a quick nose-dive, sending everyone slamming into the top of the fuselage.

John fights to regain control of the plane. Thomas joins in, keeping the other passengers at bay long enough for John to level it off, but the two men are soon overpowered.

With several passengers on either side of him, and Thomas lying unconscious on the floor, John is forced to maneuver north, away from Sarah's position, once again.

EXT. THE TARMAC - DAY

Sarah is pacing nervously as the drama unfolds in the sky.

Still focused on the plane, she nearly collapses at the sight of it turning away from her.

She watches in silence as it fades from view. She is alone.

Sarah makes her way back to John's car. She sits behind the wheel and probes for the keys. They're missing.

SARAH

Perfect.

Sarah arduously pulls herself from the car and anxiously scans the skies. Nothing. Gently closing the door, she begins her aimless trek down the airfield's access road on foot.

EXT. ACCESS ROAD - DAY

Nearing the main road Sarah pauses, looking left and right. She digs down deep in her pocket and extracts a quarter.

She flips the quarter into the air, concentrating on it as if her very life depended on it.

THE QUARTER

hits the ground, bounces, spins, then comes to rest, heads up.

SARAH

Heads... left.

EXT. MAIN ROAD - DAY

Sarah leaves the quarter lying in the dirt.

Apprehensively, she turns left and begins shuffling east with the Sun at her back.

Trudging slowly, Sarah snaps from her trance, revolving swiftly as the RUMBLE from a group of motorcycles is upon her.

Realizing their presence too late to run for cover, she turns her face to shield it from the pack.

As they pass, their downshifting sequences signal their interest in her. They come to a complete stop several hundred yards ahead.

She freezes in mortal terror as, one by one, they return to her position, blocking any hope of escape.

BOBBY, their leader, rolls close to Sarah as if to intimidate her. He slowly swings out his kickstand and rests the bike.

He removes his helmet, exposing his weathered face, complemented with a mustache reminiscent of a push broom.

BOBBY

What's a pretty girl like you
doin' in a place like this...
(looking at his watch)
...four hours before the end of
the world? Need a lift?

SARAH

No thank you.

BOBBY

Better take me up on it... not a
lot of traffic out here today.

Bobby swings his leg over the bike and leans back against the seat. Looking down, he taps his boot on a couple small stones, then kicks them to the side.

BOBBY

You just going to walk for the
next four hours?

SARAH

Yes. Please just leave me alone.

BOBBY

Come on... get on the bike.

Sarah, her chest now heaving, puts both hands in her jacket, clutching the .357 revolver with the right one.

SARAH

I said, no thank you. I'm not
in the habit of being picked up
by biker gangs.

A low rumble sets over the crowd. Several of them answer her contemptuous remark with a series of quick REVS.

BOBBY

Well, I ain't in the habit of
picking up rude little hitch-
hikers either, so I guess that
makes us even. Now come on.

As Bobby turns to obtain approval from the other bikers, Sarah seizes the opportunity and bolts for a nearby field.

Bobby winces at his friends, then takes off after her as the rest of the group begins to LAUGH and CHEER him on.

Catching up to Sarah, Bobby wrestles her to the ground then quickly rises in front of her, dusting himself off.

BOBBY

Come on lady, I ain't got time --

Sarah swiftly pulls the .357 out of her pocket and aims it directly at his groin. She cocks the hammer, tilts her head to the side and closes one eye.

SARAH

(very calmly)

Just. Leave. Me. Alone... Please.

Bobby raises his arms and cautiously backs away.

BOBBY

Look lady, you can't stay here.
Keep the gun if you don't trust
me, but let's go.

(somberly)

If you want to live... come with us.

Sarah scans her surroundings, then eases the pistol's hammer forward. She nods to him.

Bobby holds out his hand, but Sarah rises unassisted. They proceed back to his bike. He climbs on first and she follows suit.

He turns to give her a comforting smile and a wink.

BOBBY

Bobby... my name's Bobby.

He begins to turn away, then swings around decisively and snatches the pistol from her.

BOBBY

You won't be needing this... and I
ain't goin' anywhere with some
crazy woman on the back of my
bike, holding a gun to my head.

Sarah's attempts to jump off are thwarted, as bikers on each side restrain her, while Bobby accelerates.

Two hundred yards down the road, he downshifts the bike and pulls to the shoulder again, followed closely by the others.

Sarah braces for the worst, as Bobby turns around, studying her from top to bottom.

He then pulls the pistol out of his pocket and hands it to her, grip first.

BOBBY

Trust me... I mean you no harm.

Sarah smiles insincerely and shoves the .357 into her pocket. Bobby turns forward, eases the bike back into gear and speeds off as Sarah hangs on for dear life.

Every few seconds an AEV launches in the distance, their smoky trails signifying that the big event is not far off.

Sarah watches longingly as they climb.

Still several miles ahead, the Oregon coastline can be seen through the haze, littered with dozens of 'sleds' in every size and shape imaginable.

They turn off the main road and head down a gravel path, leading to the coast.

A BLAST of fire wheels Sarah around, as a hot air balloon rises over a bluff directly behind them.

EXT. OREGON COASTLINE - DAY

Arriving at the surf, Bobby and Sarah slow to a stop near a golden spherical 'sled' measuring over twenty feet in diameter.

The sled's exterior is highly polished, reflecting the afternoon Sun's rays onto the surrounding landscape in a rhythmic pattern, as it gently rocks in the surf.

One side of the craft's outer skin has been dropped to form a small deck area adjacent to the entry hatch.

There are eight portholes surrounding the perimeter of the craft. The top sports more than a dozen radio antennas.

Sarah climbs off the bike, stretches, and looks around.

Her mouth drops open in disbelief.

SARAH

Oh my God. You're Sledders!

BOBBY

Your point?

SARAH

I've run Sledder scenarios a hundred times on my computer and you've got about a fifty to one chance of survival.

Insulted by her assessment of their chances, Bobby SNARLS at her and points to his spherical-shaped sled.

BOBBY

Fifty to one here... or fifty to nothing on the beach... take your pick, but make it snappy.

Sarah looks at the sled, then around at the surrounding area. Bobby eyes her up and down with a look of frustration.

SARAH

I can't see how this design is supposed to work.

BOBBY

Comprehension is not a prerequisite for compliance. In or out?

Sarah cautiously steps into the sled's uninviting hatch and takes a quick look around.

She then takes a step backward, her chest heaving.

SARAH

I'll take that one in fifty, thank you.

Taking another deep breath, she once again enters the craft. She looks up and grimaces as she spots a sign over the door proclaiming "Survival is Secondary."

INT. THE SLED - DAY

Sarah and Bobby step into the center of the sled where four other men are making last minute preparations for launch.

The lighting is dim, aided insufficiently by the craft's eight portholes.

There are six reclined, padded seats molded directly into the floor, each equipped with aircraft-type safety harnesses.

A table has been lifted and locked into place on the forward wall, surrounded by metal lockers, filling up the remainder of the interior's perimeter.

BOBBY

Hey guys... this is Sarah. She's going to be spending the next week or so with us, so I think a quick introduction is in order.

(pointing individually)

That's Dave, Paul, Mark and Pete.

All the men acknowledge Sarah's presence with a quick nod.

BOBBY

That'll be your seat over by that porthole. Why don't you take a quick sit down and see how it fits.

Sarah hesitantly steps over to the empty seat and slips into it, as she concentrates on the nearby porthole. She rocks back and forth several times to check the fit.

SARAH

Perfect... and it's nice to have that porthole here too, thanks.

Bobby warily studies Sarah's preoccupation.

BOBBY

You claustrophobic?

She answers his inquiry with a sheepish smile, a wince and the shrug of her shoulders. She then returns her gaze to the porthole directly over her seat. Above the porthole is a bumper sticker that reads, "Get in, sit down, shut up and hang on."

SARAH

Thanks for saving me a seat.

Bobby looks at her, studies the seat for a moment, and turns quietly away.

SARAH

Did I say something wrong?

PETE

That was his wife, Susan's seat...
About a month ago she went near
the city for some provisions.
Never came back. We hunted for
three days and all we ever found
was her bike... and her jacket.

Sarah's face is filled with compassion as she studies Bobby, taking his last-minute inventory of their lockers.

BOBBY

If anyone wants to take another
stretch, better do it now. We're
gettin' close to show time.

EXT. OREGON COASTLINE - DAY

Sarah stands near a crackling campfire at the water's edge, still dressed in her soiled lab coat and jeans.

There are several blood stained tears in her garments - tangible reminders of her earlier encounter.

Bobby steps from the hatch of the sled and scans his surroundings. The shoreline is lined with campfires as far as the eye can see in either direction.

He drops a tightly rolled, medium blue jumpsuit onto the deck, then lights up a cigarette. He takes a long, deep drag on it as he looks toward the heavens.

BOBBY

(talking softly)

Well Sue, the time's finally
arrived. Sure wish you were
here with me. Hell... I'll most
likely be joinin' up with you
before the day's over anyway.

He drops his head in sorrow and takes a deep breath.

BOBBY

(talking softly)

Got another crewmember... You'd like her. Her name's Sarah. She reminds me of you quite a bit. Hell... she even pulled a gun on me the first time we met, just like you did. Remember that?

Bobby takes another drag on his cigarette, then checks his watch.

BOBBY

Sarah! We're leavin' in five, whether you're on board, or not!

(pointing down)

Here's a jumpsuit for ya... should be about the right size.

Sarah waves insincerely in his direction. She firmly clutches a locket on her necklace, holding it close to her heart as she makes another quick scan of the sky.

SARAH

John, I love you. Wherever you are, may God be with you.

She then turns toward Bobby and hurriedly makes her way to her salvation - of all things - a golden, spherical sled.

EXT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

SUPER: "FIFTEEN HUNDRED MILES NORTH"

The drone of a twin-prop aircraft, flying at full throttle, can be heard over the torrential rainfall.

Intermittent flashes of lightening reveal the hapless cargo plane as it arduously makes its way through the outermost fringe of a seemingly endless thunderhead.

INT./EXT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

The walls of the cargo hold are lined with people, grasping on to whatever is within their reach.

The plane is being severely buffeted by the turbulence within the storm, continually lifting the passengers into the air and abruptly slamming them back to the floor.

John is still at the controls of the aircraft. He is surrounded by several other passengers, including Thomas, all doing their best to keep their footing.

John flips on the cargo bay lights and turns to survey the passengers within the hold.

He makes intense eye contact with a young girl of about twelve, her fear deeply engraved in her face. Returning her stare with a comforting smile, she attempts to do the same.

Suddenly, the interior of the plane is aglow, as though a lightning strike had been frozen in time. For several seconds the intensity builds.

John instantly spins back around to the forward position. Slipping on a pair of pilot's sunglasses, he searches the dismal skies, in vain, for a glimpse of the light source.

As unexpectedly as it began, the interior of the plane is once again shrouded within an ominous darkness.

PASSENGER #1

What in the world was that?

JOHN

What the Hell do you think?
Gotta be the military tryin' to
ignite the Intruder one last
time. Damn...

(looking at his watch)

...they're cutting it too close!

John removes a small, crumpled photo of Sarah from his shirt pocket. Holding it near the instruments for illumination, he longingly studies the image for a moment, kisses it, then slides it back into his pocket.

JOHN

Sarah, we will be together again.

As the weather begins to clear, John drops their altitude to just above the treetops.

They soon happen upon an open, snow-covered plain, stretching for miles. John banks hard and makes another pass over their potential landing site.

JOHN

Okay, everybody, we're going to touch down in a few minutes. Grab on to anything you can.

He dumps the fuel reserves and lowers the landing gear.

As the front tires make contact with the snow, they are drawn in deep. With a loud CRACK, the nose of the aircraft is driven decisively into the snow.

The plane comes to an abrupt halt, sliding the passengers to the front bulkhead of the cargo hold. No injuries.

Once safely on the ground, John activates his GPS locator and finds that Sarah is now somewhere near the Oregon coastline.

He grabs the collar of Passenger #1 and draws him in close.

JOHN

We should have turned this plane around and picked up Sarah.

John releases him with a deliberate shove, sending him to the floor.

PASSENGER #1

Look, I hope for your sake that you're never thrown into a position where you have to play God. It's a no-win situation.

INT./EXT. THE SLED - DAY

SUPER: "FIRST CONTACT - T-MINUS FIFTEEN MINUTES AND COUNTING"

After motoring twenty miles from the shoreline, the sled's engine is shut down and they are adrift.

Bobby rises and makes his way around the perimeter of the cabin for a final safety check.

BOBBY

Good to go.

Sarah grips steadfast to the rails that run the length of her seat. Her eyes are closed. Beads of sweat begin to accumulate on her forehead. Her moving lips signify that she is praying.

The sled is nearly motionless as it floats atop the ocean's mirror-like surface.

Beginning as a slight rocking motion, the sled is suddenly hammered hard by a nearly vertical wall of water, rolling the craft several times.

Floating debris from another sled slams into the side of the craft with a deafening CLANG, severely cracking one of the portholes.

Some of the massive, white-capped waves actually submerge the sled for several moments, but it continues to breach the surface, righting itself after each consecutive assault.

INT./EXT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

A surrealistic calm comes over the plane's occupants, as each second ticks slowly by. Passenger #2 looks at his watch.

PASSENGER #2

First Contact in 4...3...2...1...

Nothing. Seconds later, starting as a low rumble, then becoming nearly deafening, the entire landscape begins to shift toward the west, carrying the hapless aircraft with it.

The passengers are tossed about the cargo hold like clothes in a dryer as the plane is pummeled by the approaching mass, rolling time and time again.

Outside the plane, a thundering wall of snow crashes into the side of the defenseless craft.

The plane is mercilessly slid sideways, its port wing cutting a ragged trench in the snow ahead of the fuselage.

It then rolls, shearing off the port side wing, followed by the loss of the starboard wing.

With the wings now severed, the fuselage rolls unencumbered ahead of the snow's leading edge, eventually coming to rest upside down nearly a quarter-mile from its original landing site.

EXT. WORLDWIDE LOCATIONS - DAY

The Far East comes into direct contact with the Intruder.

A calm blue sky, intermixed with feathery white clouds is instantly transformed into a nightscape filled with fire and blackness.

Portions of the sea and land mass are quickly swept into oblivion.

Within a twenty-second period, the Earth's rotation is accelerated, toward the east, by nearly five percent.

Foundations are simultaneously ripped out from under every man-made structure worldwide, cascading their fragmented remains for miles.

Oceans, lakes and rivers simultaneously shift to the west.

East Coast cities worldwide are assaulted by unfathomable tidal waves, dispersing even the mightiest skyscrapers within seconds.

West Coast cities are instantly toppled onto the barren floor of their formerly water-covered coastal reefs.

Scenes of natural and man-made devastation include the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, the Saint Louis Arch, New York City, Washington DC, Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower and the Pyramids.

INT. THE SLED - NIGHT

The crew wakes to the savage waves, still lapping the sled's exterior, resonating within the craft as a constant reminder that not all is well.

BOBBY

Everybody still with us?

The entire crew answers exuberantly, except Sarah.

Bobby strains within the confines of his harnesses to get a look at her. Sarah is quickly nearing a state of panic. She rapidly searches the sled's interior with her eyes.

SARAH

I can't breathe... I need some air.

Sarah quickly unbuckles her harnesses and warily rises to her feet. She takes a few unsteady steps toward the porthole.

BOBBY

No Sarah! Lie down!

His warning arrives too late. A huge wave impacts the sled, propelling Sarah face forward into the wall of the craft.

Seconds later, another collision throws her face down across a bulkhead in the center of the floor, severely winding her.

As she attempts to regain her sense of balance, the sled again lunges forward, tossing her down like a bundle of rags.

Sarah lies motionless on the floor. All of the men begin frantically shouting at her, but she doesn't move a muscle.

On the count of three, Mark and Paul hastily unbuckle their harnesses, pick Sarah up and irreverently slam her into her seat, bringing her back to a groggy consciousness.

PAUL

What the Hell? The seas are going to be like this for at least another twenty-four hours.

SARAH

I'm sorry. I just needed to --

MARK

Man, you took a Hell of a header!

Mark tugs on her safety straps a couple times. She screams, prompting him to give her a quick once-over any for injuries.

MARK

You seem okay! Now stay put, until we tell you differently!

Sarah begins to cough heavily. She musters up a hollow smile, then quietly slumps into unconsciousness.

INT. THE SLED - DAY

The five men are seated at the table, unenthusiastically picking at their breakfasts of C-rations. The hatch is partially opened, along with several portholes.

Bobby points to Sarah with his fork as he chews.

BOBBY

She's been out of it long
enough. We'd better wake her up
and make sure she's okay.

The other four men turn and focus on Sarah, who is still asleep and strapped in her seat. She has several minor facial bruises, but no apparent serious injuries.

BOBBY

Sarah... Sarah!

Sarah wakes from her near-comatose sleep and looks around. She undoes her harnesses and shifts to a seated position. Rubbing her face, she winces slightly as she tenderly touches a couple bruised areas.

Rising, she coughs heavily several times while clutching the sled's handrails.

BOBBY

Hungry? We got C-rations!

As she takes her first few shaky steps toward the table, she begins to drool heavily. Laughing and embarrassed, she catches the drool and wipes her chin.

SARAH

I guess I must be starving.
Look at me... I'm actually
drooling over C-rations.

Bobby turns toward her with a look of horror.

BOBBY

Sarah, sit down.

He quickly comes to her side.

BOBBY

You're not drooling, sit down.

Sarah looks down to see that the front of her jumpsuit and both of her hands are covered with blood.

Paul joins the two of them as her legs give out. They carefully set her back into her seat.

Bobby quickly unzips her jumpsuit and pulls her shirt up slightly. He begins to probe a dense red area directly under her left breast. Sarah immediately SLAPS his face.

BOBBY

Damn it, Sarah. Calm down. I
just want to take a look at --
(pulling up her shirt)
What the hell is this?

Sarah and Bobby simultaneously look down at her chest to find a severed portion of her GPS locator protruding from her flesh.

SARAH

Oh my God. It's my locator!

Still seated, Pete, Mark and Dave look on with concern.

Sarah grits her teeth as she pulls the locator the rest of the way out, causing the blood to flow freely from her wound.

She studies the locator, then FIRES it against the wall.

SARAH

Damn that stupid thing.

Bobby returns to her side with a sterile pad.

BOBBY

Here, put this over it and keep
some pressure on it.

PAUL

That's a lot of blood --

MARK

There's supposed to be some Medic
ships up north. I'll get on the
radio and see what's out there.

INT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

John spots his jacket near the front of the cockpit, swipes it off the windshield and rummages through the pockets. Removing his GPS locator, he types in Sarah's locator code.

There is a moment's pause, followed by the word, "DEACTIVATED." Horrified, he enters her code repeatedly, to the same end.

Without warning, John lunges at Passengers #1 and #2.

They plunge to the ceiling of the inverted plane's cargo hold in an apparent fight to the death. It takes Thomas and several other passengers to eventually pull them apart.

INT. THE SLED - DAY

Bobby is kneeling next to Sarah. His face is deeply engraved with a look of concern. Her breathing is extremely labored.

There is a leather jacket draped over her torso with the words "Survival is Secondary" embroidered on the back.

Dave and Pete are studying the two of them with concern.

PETE

Man, if Sarah bites it... it's going to be Sue, all over again.

Mark is fiddling with their radio when suddenly there is a response. After a brief conversation, he approaches Bobby.

MARK

There's a couple of Noah's Arks about two hundred miles north --

BOBBY

Noah's Arks? Damn it, Mark, we need a medic, not a vet.

MARK

They're not just set up for animals. These are converted aircraft carriers, with full surgical hospitals. They've got choppers working their way south, but there's a lot of casualties still north of us.

INT. THE SLED - DAY

Faintly, the unmistakable WHOP-WHOP of a helicopter can be heard in the distance.

Paul bursts into the hatch, trips over the bulkhead, falls, and skids to a stop.

Gathering his composure, he darts to a locker, throws it open and begins rummaging through the equipment. Finding a small case, he runs back out of the hatch.

EXT. THE SLED - DAY

Paul opens up the case and loads the flare gun.

In the distance, the faint shape of an approaching helicopter can be seen through the early morning mist.

Dave, Mark and Pete have joined him and nervously wait as the craft approaches. Still more than a mile from their position, it begins to turn away.

DAVE

Shoot the damn thing... shoot,
damn it!

Paul points the flare gun skyward and pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. He brings it down to study, fumbles, and it falls to the deck.

Bobby steps out of the sled and calmly picks it up, flips the safety off, points it skyward and fires off a flare. He then quickly reloads and fires another.

They wait as the helicopter nearly fades from view, then swings around, homing in on their position.

Four of the men are waving and shouting as it approaches, while Bobby goes inside to tend to Sarah.

BOBBY

Hey, a little help here.

Paul and Dave rush inside to assist Bobby in gently easing Sarah from her seat.

Outside, the helicopter is now hovering within a hundred yards of their position.

As they exit the hatch with Sarah, the chopper immediately shifts closer and begins to lower a rescue basket.

BOBBY

Sarah, they're here. Can you
stand?

Sarah slowly rises with his help, but the rescue basket BUMPS the side of the sled, ricocheting into them, and knocks them both to the deck.

Bobby steadies himself and assists her into the basket, as the others attempt to stabilize it. Bobby picks Sue's jacket off the deck and drapes it over Sarah's shoulders.

BOBBY

Here, I'm sure Sue would have wanted you to have this.

Sarah looks at the pocket with the name of Bobby's wife,

SUSAN DAVIS,

embroidered over the pocket.

SARAH

Oh, Bobby... I couldn't.

BOBBY

Now, just get well. When you wear this, think of us.

SARAH

(clutching it firmly)
I will cherish this forever.

Sarah is strapped into the rescue basket and immediately hoisted to the helicopter, as all five of the sled's crew wave and shout their good-byes and good-lucks.

Bobby does his best to shout over all the commotion.

BOBBY

Might be a punctured lung!

The basket operator nods in affirmation and gives him the 'thumbs up' signal.

Sarah's basket is pulled inside, the helicopter performs a banked 180-degree turn and they quickly fade into the mist.

INT. NOAH'S ARK #4/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Sarah wakes on a gurney, alone in a hallway. She scans her surroundings. Nothing familiar.

She scoots to the side of the gurney, misjudges its dimensions and slips over the edge, tumbling to the floor.

She strains to recover to her perch. An ORDERLY arrives and assists her back onto the bed.

SARAH

My locator is gone. I need a
new one, so someone can find me.

Sarah pulls up her shirt to expose the wound. The orderly acknowledges her concerns, then eases her back down, onto the pillow.

As she is wheeled down the corridor, she slips into a deep sleep. Arriving outside the operating room, the orderly unsuccessfully attempts to revive her.

He frisks her front pockets, then rolls her partially over and repeats the process with her rear pockets.

Poking around for clues, he spies the leather jacket stuffed on a rack, under the gurney. Fluffing it, he spots the name embroidered over the pocket.

He picks up the clipboard hanging from the front of the gurney, prints the name "SUSAN DAVIS" across the top, then hangs the clipboard back on the hook.

INT. NOAH'S ARK #4/RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah partially wakes, disorientated, in a room with a dozen other patients. She feels the left side of her chest and grimaces.

NURSE #1 enters the room and comes to her side. The nurse picks up her chart and scans the information.

NURSE #1

You're lucky to be alive, young
lady. Don't talk. You're in
Noah's Ark, number four, in the
North Pacific.

Sarah is fighting to stay conscious, but is losing her battle with the medication.

SARAH

Someone's looking for me.

NURSE #1

Relax. It's standard procedure.
We post everyone's name and
stats on our missing person's --

The nurse stops short as Sarah drifts back to sleep. She makes a quick check of Sarah's IV and heads out of the room.

INT. CARGO PLANE - DAY

John is huddled with Thomas, still typing Sarah's code into the GPS locator, staring at the word, "DEACTIVATED."

THOMAS

You should put that thing down.

Rising up and over an adjacent knoll, a military helicopter is suddenly upon them, resonating within the interior of the cargo plane with its powerful presence.

It lands directly outside the plane, kicking up a tremendous amount of snow, causing a near whiteout. John shelters his eyes as he steps from the plane's torn fuselage.

PARSONS

John... John Cooper.

JOHN

Right over here, sir.

Parsons surveys the condition of the plane, resting upside down, nearly buried by the snow.

PARSONS

Any landing you can walk away from...

John nods as they step inside for shelter. The helicopter winds down.

PARSONS

The brass green-lighted your plan,
so you've got the Mars Two at your
disposal, all fueled up and ready to
go... plus whatever else you need.
We need to get you and Sarah --

JOHN

Sarah's still south. Can you take me?

PARSONS

No, but we can send a detachment. What are her coordinates?

JOHN

I'm not completely sure.

PARSONS

Don't worry. First Contact totally scrambled the GPS grid. We're still in the process of reinitializing everything... so if her coordinates are fluctuating --

JOHN

No, it's coming up "DEACTIVATED."

A look of concern falls on Parson's face.

PARSONS

John... do I have to remind you what that means? You know as well as I do that half the reason we wear these damn things --

JOHN

Look, she's not dead. She was along the Oregon coast at First Contact. She knows how to survive.

Parsons removes his hat and scratches his head.

PARSONS

I can put out a Priority One bulletin to all our ships and bases to contact you directly at the first sighting of anyone named Sarah Jennings. That's the best I can do.

JOHN

I'll take it.

The two men jog to the helicopter, followed closely by Thomas.

THOMAS

Could you use an extra hand?
I'm twenty years, Air Force.

John turns to Parsons and gives him a nod.

PARSONS

Climb aboard.
(turning toward the plane)
We'll have you out by tomorrow.

The helicopter throttles up and climbs skyward.

INT. NOAH'S ARK #4/RECOVERY ROOM - DAY (TEN DAYS LATER)

DOCTOR #2 and Nurse #1 enter the room and come to the foot of Sarah's bed. They find Sarah conscious, staring blankly into the distance. Picking up her chart, the doctor smiles at her.

DOCTOR #2

Welcome back, Ms. Davis... Ms.
Davis?

Snapping from her catatonic state, she gazes up, inquisitively.

SARAH

What did you call me?

The doctor spins the chart toward her and points to the name "SUSAN DAVIS" printed across the top.

DOCTOR #2

Ms. Davis... Admitted ten
days ago with a puncture in
the left lung.

SARAH

You must have the wrong chart.
My name is Sarah Jennings.

Sarah feverishly scans the room and catches a quick glimpse of Susan Davis' jacket, folded neatly on her nightstand.

SARAH

That wasn't my jacket! My name
is Sarah Jennings!

Her expression instantly transforms into a look of horror.

SARAH

Oh my God. Everyone must think I'm dead! I've been on your missing person's site as Susan Davis ever since I arrived here, haven't I?

Without a word, Nurse #1 removes a Palm-Com from her pocket and hastily enters some data.

NURSE #1

Well, I'll be... there's a Priority One Bulletin, initiated by a Mr. John Cooper, regarding a Miss Sarah Jennings... complete with a photo of our little patient.

Holding back the tears, Sarah intensely focuses on the two caregivers.

SARAH

John's my fiancé!

NURSE #1

He's stationed on the Carrier Nimitz. I'll notify him immediately.

Doctor #2 scans her chart, then abruptly halts the nurse.

DOCTOR #2

Wait... don't contact him just yet. Is she well enough to travel?

NURSE #1

I'd imagine. Her vitals are good.

The doctor turns toward Sarah with a warm smile.

DOCTOR #2

We have a medical transport flying to points south every day... including the Nimitz. How about we put you on tomorrow's transport so you can surprise him... in person?

Sarah breaks into a hearty smile, throws her arms around the doctor and gives him a kiss. She makes eye contact with the nurse and mouths a sincere thank-you.

INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ/STOCKROOM - DAY

The makeshift stockroom is cluttered with inventory. John's workbench is surrounded by pegboard walls, filled with clipboards, as many as three deep on some of the posts.

John is sitting on a stool, with his back to the door of the room, coffee cup in hand. He is in a heated telephone conversation with one of his suppliers.

JOHN

(on phone)

I don't care where you get it.
We need another fifteen hundred
miles of tether line.

He covers the phone's mouthpiece and turns to his assistant.

JOHN

See if London found that line.

ASSISTANT

You got it.

JOHN

(on phone)

Look, we're leaving in two days.
I've already got the material and
grid generators in orbit.

Behind him, without a sound, Sarah enters the doorway, but is overcome by the sight of John and begins to tremble.

John's assistant rotates toward her, his eyes widening in disbelief. His mouth drops open.

Sarah raises an unsteady finger to her lips. The assistant acknowledges. They simultaneously turn their attention to John, who is oblivious to her presence.

Sarah takes several deep, quivering breaths.

SARAH

Excuse me...

John freezes; coffee cup midway to his mouth. His eyes are fixed. Slowly, he cocks his head to the right, homing in on her voice.

SARAH

Excuse me... sir... is this
where I sign up to have a
national holiday named after me?

John swivels ninety degrees on his stool. He gasps at the sight of Sarah standing in the doorway.

John's cup drops. It strikes the floor and shatters, sending coffee and fragments in every direction.

Tears well up in his eyes as he turns toward his assistant.

JOHN

Do you see her too?

ASSISTANT

I sure do.

JOHN

Sarah!

They run to each other and embrace.

JOHN

I thought... your locator --

SARAH

I'm fine... I'm here, John.

JOHN

Your last location was near the
Oregon shore... how did you --

Sarah steps back and executes a flawless pirouette, revealing the back of her jacket's "Survival is Secondary" slogan.

JOHN

No way! You're joking?

SARAH

No John... and they were such
wonderful people. I felt so bad
about all of our sledder jokes.

John stutters for a moment, desperately trying to find the proper words to ease his conscience.

JOHN

Sarah, the day I left you at Henderson's... I did everything I could to turn that cargo plane --

SARAH

Say no more. I saw the plane starting to turn, then drop. I have a pretty good idea of what was going on inside.

John rushes to her, scooping her off her feet. For a moment, they lovingly gaze into each other's eyes in silence. John smiles, then draws her closer and tenderly kisses her.

INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ/OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Outside, on the carrier deck, an AEV launches, filling the room with a THUNDEROUS ROAR. Sarah watches as it disappears into the heavens.

JOHN

Okay, let me get you up to speed. The Mars Two is ours... for now. It's nearly loaded and it'll be our base of operations. In fact, that's where that AEV was headed.

Sarah smiles, then a look of bewilderment comes over her.

SARAH

What about all the 'best and brightest' that were selected for Operation Exodus/Genesis?

JOHN

They're remaining on Earth until the last minute. They'll all be shuttled off-planet right before Final Contact. If Earth doesn't survive, they'll be transferred to the Mars Two and head to Mars to commence with Operation Exodus/Genesis.

John's explanation is abruptly sidetracked with the arrival of General Parsons. He reaches for Sarah's hand, clamping down in a vice-like grip.

PARSONS

Welcome back. I'm glad you're still with us.

INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ/SARAH AND JOHN'S CABIN - DAY

Sarah wakes and sleepily scans the other side of the bed, now vacant.

With a shallow knock, the door opens and John enters the room carrying a tray, brimming with breakfast food.

SARAH

I woke and you were gone.

JOHN

Sorry, I had to make some last-minute arrangements.

Sarah quickly wraps herself with her bathrobe, giving the belt a stiff tug, as she skips to the table. Upon sitting, she immediately begins to gather food for her plate.

John attempts to make eye contact, but she is preoccupied with the feast set before her. He rises to his feet and takes a few determined steps.

He drops to one knee and takes her hand in his.

JOHN

We've been engaged for what... three years?

SARAH

Nearly eight.

John rolls his eyes and smiles sheepishly.

JOHN

I know you've always dreamed of having a big wedding, but with all that's happened we should probably at least set the date. So how about... today?

John glances quickly at his watch.

JOHN

In about five minutes...
Sarah, would you marry me?

SARAH

Five minutes? Are you serious?

Sarah abruptly rises to her feet, throws her arms around him and plants a big, sloppy kiss on his lips.

SARAH

Yes! Yes! Yes!

A knock on the door cuts their moment short. John answers it and ushers in the Ship's Chaplain. He turns to introduce Sarah, but she is nowhere to be seen.

Muffled through the bathroom door, Sarah pleads for privacy.

SARAH

I'll be out in five. My hair...
My hair is a mess!

INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ/SHIP'S CHAPEL - DAY

John and Sarah are standing at the alter, their eyes transfixed on each other. The Ship's Chaplain is officiating the ceremony. Their witnesses step into the room as the nuptials begin.

The ceremony ends with a kiss.

As they turn to leave, their witnesses, PILOT STEELE and Thomas approach the newlyweds, both sporting hearty smiles.

STEELE

Congratulations! Sorry, gotta run.

Steele shakes John's hand and gives Sarah a quick hug, then bolts from the room.

THOMAS

Congratulations, Mrs. Cooper.

SARAH

Thomas? My God, you're here? You were a witness?

Sarah gives Thomas an enthusiastic hug. John gingerly approaches them with three overfilled champagne glasses, spilling a little with each consecutive step.

As they draw the glasses to their lips, the festive mood is decisively interrupted.

INTERCOM (VO)

Briefing in twenty minutes.
Room three-eleven.

SARAH

Some honeymoon.

INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Sarah and John enter the room to find over thirty people assembled. The briefing is already in progress.

STEELE

(agitated)

So this fermented fuel on the Mars
Two may be crystallized already?
So... what... it could self-
destruct the second we deploy the
external-combustion drive?

PARSONS

No one knows. There's no real way
to tell. This organic, fruit
based fuel is still in the
experimental stage. We've run out
of time for any further testing.

There is a dull rumble throughout the room.

PARSONS

Nobody will be looked down upon
if you decline. But you have to
do it now. We'll be shuttling
you up to the ship tomorrow at
06:00 hours.

Parsons surveys the room to find that everyone is standing firm to their convictions.

PARSONS

I salute you all.

INT. AEV - LOW EARTH ORBIT - DAY (IN SPACE)

Cautiously approaching the Mars Two spacecraft from the rear, the AEV slows in preparation for its docking procedures.

The retros are firing in a rhythmic pattern, jerking the AEV with each pulse of the rockets.

LOOKING OUT OF A LARGE PORTHOLE

John explains the various components of the immense Mars Two spacecraft, as Sarah presses her nose against the glass.

JOHN (VO)

It's over a half a mile long.

SARAH (VO)

You can't get a feel for how big this thing is from the photos.

They slowly drift past the eight massive rocket nozzles at the rear of the craft.

JOHN (VO)

These nozzles are for the main engines as well as the external-combustion drive. Once the Mars Two hits around sixty thousand miles per hour, the main engines will be shut down... then these nozzles will begin to spray unburned fuel behind the craft and ignite it. In theory --

SARAH

In theory?

Sarah turns to John with a look of trepidation.

JOHN

Yes... in theory. The ensuing explosion should throw the craft ahead of the shock wave at a speed of around two hundred thousand miles per hour.

As they pass the network of cylindrical fuel cells directly in front of the nozzles, John continues to explain.

JOHN (VO)

All of these red cylinders are filled with the fermenting fuel. There are a hundred and twenty of them. They nicknamed these the wine cellar.

They then float silently past the middle section of the ship.

JOHN (VO)

The blue sections are the cargo bays. We've got all the new and used mirror material in here, plus the force field generators, coils, tether lines, provisions, air reserves and twenty rocket sleds.

Next, are the external shuttle launchers, housing two radial rows of six shuttles each, one in front of the other.

SARAH (VO)

My God, it looks like a pair of gigantic Gatling Guns!

JOHN (VO)

Yep, twelve shuttles, any and all that can be launched in less than five minutes. Let's see there's the Argo, the Centurion, the Constellation, the Defiant, the Horizon, the Intrepid, the Kitty Hawk, the Liberty, the Pathfinder, the Pegasus, the Tango and the Voyager.

SARAH (VO)

I'm impressed! You got 'em all.

Finally, they approach the Mars Two spacecraft module. Although huge in comparison to the shuttles, it is dwarfed by the immensity of the cargo bays and fuel cell complexes.

JOHN (VO)

This brings us to our home for the next couple months... the Mars Two itself.

Sarah concentrates on the craft as they slowly approach it.

JOHN (VO)

The aft section houses the ship's navigation, computers and arsenal... complete with a laser cannon. The mid section is the crew's quarters and communications. Up front is the cockpit, main cabin, briefing room, and observation areas. Wait until you see the main observation deck's windows.

A decisive jolt accompanied by a sharp, metallic CLANG reverberates throughout the AEV, signifying that their link-up is complete.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

Several other crewmembers enter the hatch ahead of Sarah and John. Their vivid red jumpsuits are in stark contrast to the sterile, whitewashed interior of the ship.

Sarah and John step through the hatch directly into the main cabin, which contains ten rows of twelve seats, with an isle down the center.

There is a subtle, low-pitch hum resonating throughout the ship. Sarah takes a couple cautious steps.

SARAH

Artificial gravity. Nice.

At the front of the main cabin's center isle are three steps leading up to the elevated cockpit area, yielding an unobstructed view of the two pilot's seats from nearly anywhere in the cabin.

Overhead and to the rear of the pilot's seats is large LED countdown clock. Currently it reads:

"FINAL CONTACT: 61-Days 16-Hours 23-Minutes 32-Seconds"

There is a conspicuous, forty-foot void between the last row of seats and the main cabin's rear wall.

Running lengthwise behind the rows of seats are a series of recessed tracks in the floor, coinciding with the legs of the crew's seats.

John notices Sarah's preoccupation with the tracks. He motions to a pair of seats in the third row as the intercom blurts out a quick request from COMMANDER RUTTIGERS.

RUTTIGERS (OS)

Pick any seat you want, but get into 'em quick. The gel will need a few minutes to conform to your shape. Short... tall... skinny... fat... it don't matter.

Once they're strapped in, John turns to Sarah.

JOHN

Those tracks in the floor --

SARAH

Yes, a couple of the crew were telling me about them. They're like a huge shock absorber for the seats... to help us survive the G-forces when the external-combustion drive is engaged.

Sarah leans out of her seat and examines the floor in detail.

SARAH

This entire block of seats is going to slide to the back of the cabin when this thing takes off, isn't it?

John answers her concerns with a grimace and a quick nod.

In the cockpit, Commander Ruttgers along with Pilot Steele run through a long list of last minute diagnostics, referring repeatedly to their crumpled cheat-sheets.

Giving a quick nod to Steele, Ruttgers rises from his seat to make his final rounds in the main cabin.

Even with the weight of the entire Earth on his shoulders, he was standing tall, his six-foot four stature exuding authority.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

We have your trajectory coordinates and are ready for uplink to your computers.

STEELE

Roger. We're closing in on departure... just need to make sure everyone's strapped in.

Last minute adjustments are being made to the crew's restraints as Ruttgers finishes his rounds.

RUTTGRERS

I'd kinda like to get this show on the road. It's been over two weeks since First Contact and all we've done so far is load cargo.

John and Sarah check the tension on their harnesses.

RUTTGRERS

If you're strapped in, with all five straps, then you're ready.

Sarah makes a quick inventory of the crew.

SARAH

A lot of empty seats.

JOHN

I think there's a crew of around fifty... Remember, this thing's been outfitted for Operation Exodus/Genesis, and that's a crew of a hundred and twenty.

Sarah nods in acknowledgement.

RUTTGRERS

Looks like we're ready. Mission Control... let's light the fuse.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Quick count?

RUTTGRERS

Why the hell not?

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Let's go in...

SERIES OF SHOTS - SARAH'S MEMORY - (NUMBERS ARE VOICE-OVERS)

- "10" The Moon - disintegrating in the night sky.
"9" The Aurora - being wrapped within in the material.
"8" The Night-Light Mirror - severing the darkness.
"7" The Grid - being tested at the Pulse-Electronics Lab.
"6" The Inner City - Sarah's tires going flat.
"5" Thomas' silhouette - standing in the doorway.
"4" The cargo plane - flying out of view.
"3" Bobby - picking Sarah up on the highway.
"2" The Sled - being slammed hard by a massive wave.
"1" John - turning to see Sarah standing in the doorway.
"0" Sarah and John - in their wedding ceremony.

"IGNITION" A close-up of Sarah's face - with a look of unwavering determination.

SARAH

Let's do it!

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

A BLACK SCREEN

A THUNDEROUS ROAR accompanies a view of the Mars Two's eight nozzles simultaneously filling with flames.

The Earth steadily diminishes in both size and clarity as the craft accelerates toward its destiny.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

In the cockpit, Ruttgers and Steele are squeezed deep within their gel-filled seats.

The Mars Two begins to shake violently as it accelerates. As the speed increases, the shake and shutter of the craft also intensifies.

RUTTIGERS

(buffeting)

Mission Control. We have ignition.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Roger. God be with you. There's still about a half-a-billion people down here, praying for your success.

RUTTIGERS

(buffeting)

Tell 'em not to worry.

Several warning lights are flashing on the instrument panel. Steele motions to Ruttgers, who looks, then shrugs them off.

Soon, the main engines are shut down, diminishing the rate of acceleration. The crew of fifty attempts to shake off their brutal G-force assault.

Freeing himself from the grasp of the gel, John gazes at his new bride.

JOHN

You can open your eyes.

Sarah attempts to turn toward John only to find that her head is hopelessly wedged, deep within the gel.

JOHN

You ready for the next phase?

SARAH

As ready as I'll ever be. How long before --

RUTTIGERS (VO)

Rigging for external drive. Dumping fuel in 3...2...1... Ignition.

Sarah clamps down on the sides of her seat, grits her teeth, and closes her eyes.

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

The Mars Two glides swiftly by, without a sound. A faint vapor trail can be seen forming closely behind the craft.

Within an instant, the ever-widening cloud of vapor ignites with a near-blinding flash and an EXPLOSIVE CONCUSSION, accelerating the Mars Two quickly from view.

Seconds later, something is awry, as a portion of the vapor trail directly behind a port side nozzle begins to sputter and flash erratically.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

The Mars Two's forward momentum fiercely thrusts the crew's pneumatically mounted seats perilously close to the main cabin's rear wall.

The craft begins to shudder destructively, veering hard to port, compressing the entire crew to the starboard side of their seats.

STEELE

Abort! Abort!

The Mars Two's acceleration immediately diminishes. The rows of seats begin to inch their way forward.

SARAH

Ohhh... what was that?

JOHN

I have no clue. You okay?

Sarah nods to him and attempts to look about the cabin. Breathing heavily, she begins to nervously bite her lip.

RUTTGENS

We didn't get a clean burn.
The fuel ignited just fine,
but, let's see... we're now
traveling at... about...

Ruttgers hastily searches the instrument panel.

RUTTGENS

...Ninety-five thousand miles
per hour, but about nine
degrees off the heading we
should be on. Damn it.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)
Mars Two. What's your status?

Ruttgers motions for Steele to respond.

STEELE
We had to abort. The external
drive fired erratically. Felt
like we were inside a centrifuge.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)
Sounds like a clogged nozzle.

STEELE
Roger that. I guess we'll just
have to suit up and take a look.

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

Approaching the outside perimeter of a massive port side
nozzle, a four-man technical team confronts an array of
translucent amber and red crystal formations.

Thousands of knifelike, razor-sharp crystals are jutting
outward in every direction - some measuring over forty feet
in length, extending well beyond the confines of the nozzle.

TEAM LEADER
Sir, we found the problem.
There's a frickin' mountain of
fuel that's crystallized in
shoot number three.

STEELE (VO)
Any way to remove it?

TEAM LEADER
Affirmative. I think the sonic-
wave rifles should do the trick.

STEELE (VO)
Any estimates?

TEAM LEADER
We should have her clean as a
whistle within an hour... two at
the most.

Powering up their sonic-wave rifles, they begin the arduous task of removing the debris from the nozzle.

TEAM LEADER

Be real careful, there could
still be a ton of pressure built
up behind --

BOOM!

The nozzle instantly discharges the remaining debris from its inner walls. The Mars Two lunges forward.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

The sudden jolt from the nozzle's discharge simultaneously sends every standing crewmember to the floor, sliding them toward the cabin's rear wall.

RUTTIGERS

Everyone okay? Better strap in.
Right now.

STEELE

(into microphone)
What happened out there? Come
in. Come in.

The entire crew waits for a response.

RUTTIGERS

Damn it! Someone's going to
have to get out there and see
what the Hell just happened.

Ruttigers promptly selects two of the crew for a space-walk.

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

The two crewmen reach the rear of the craft and inspect the port nozzle. It is completely clear. They then turn to survey the void of space behind the craft.

Telescopic heat sensing lenses are affixed to their helmets.

They continue their scan of space for several minutes.

CREWMAN #1

Sir, the nozzles are clear, but there's no trace of the men.

RUTTIGERS

One more sweep, then get back in here. We'll have some sort of a memorial service later on.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

The entire crew is strapped back in and ready to go.

STEELE

Mission Control, we have altered course point zero six degrees.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Confirmed. Good luck.

RUTTIGERS

We'll call you on the other side of two hundred thousand.

(turning to the crew)

This may have a little more kick before. Ignition in... 3... 2... 1!

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

The Mars Two again glides swiftly and silently by as a faint vapor trail forms closely behind the craft. Again, the cloud of fuel vapor ignites with a near-blinding flash and an EXPLOSIVE CONCUSSION.

As the Mars Two accelerates quickly from view, it's traveling on course and in a straight line - with a clean, even burn behind all eight nozzles.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

As if it were rear-ended by a train, the Mars Two lunges forward with more force than the previous launch, sling-shotting the rows of seats firmly to the rear of the cabin.

As the acceleration continues, the craft once again begins to shake and shudder violently - nearing the intensity of certain self-destruction.

Then suddenly, without warning, a surrealistic calm blankets the entire craft and crew. All is quiet. The rows of seats begin to inch their way forward.

SARAH

Are we dead? Did we just die?

JOHN

I'm... I'm really not sure.

An announcement from Ruttgers fills the air with the reassurance that they are indeed, alive and well.

RUTTGER

We're there. Two hundred thousand... plus. External drive is off-line.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Congrats on crossing the threshold.

RUTTGER

Roger that. This baby hauls ass!

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS FORTY DAYS AND COUNTING"

Drifting unobstructedly through the void of space, the Intruder silently waits in solitude.

Cautiously, the Mars Two approaches the Intruder's coordinates.

Clouds of smoke sequentially pulsate from the spacecraft's forward retros as it slows to a complete halt several miles from its target.

INT. MARS TWO/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The open area behind the crew's seats has been converted into the mission's briefing room. Tables have been affixed to the seat slides and outfitted with sophisticated monitoring equipment and vertical transparent charts.

John's team has assembled for a briefing to discuss the deployment and joining of the mirror material, pulse generators and tethers.

A large, three-dimensional holographic image of the grid floats vertically amidst the crew.

The grid's perimeter is octagonal, with hundreds of diamond-shaped segments dividing up the middle, each with it's own centralized sphere to generate the force field.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

With the Sun now positioned directly behind the Intruder, it is partially visible with the naked eye. Although not well defined, it's swirling mass is refracting the Sun's piercing rays, sending slivers of sunlight in every direction.

At the panoramic observation window, Sarah installs her experimental lens on the ship's telescope. She cautiously eases herself down to the eyepiece. She smiles confidently.

Sarah rises from the scope and backs into Ruttgers. Startled, she wheels around.

SARAH

Too bad this technology wasn't around twenty years ago. If we had discovered these Intruders way back then... who knows?

RUTTGERES

Mind if I take a look?

Sarah motions to the eyepiece.

RUTTGERES

I've never had the opportunity to observe an Intruder through one of these lenses before.

Sarah studies Ruttgers intently as he rises from the scope.

RUTTGERES

Impressive.

John walks up behind Sarah and holds her snugly, as they silently gaze out of the massive observation window.

SARAH

John... remember when I used to say that the Sun was nothing more than a bright star in the nighttime? I take it back.

John takes his turn at the telescope.

SARAH

Isn't it amazing how something so incredibly breathtaking can also be so deadly?

EXT. THE GRID - DAY (IN SPACE)

Dozens of cargo bay doors are open. The mirror material is being spooled out with the aid of several rocket sleds.

The mirror now extends hundreds of miles into the distance, representing a glowing testimonial to their convictions.

As the perimeter sections are being bonded together, a TECHNICIAN notices a major concave imperfection.

TECHNICIAN

Anyone in a good position to iron out that buckle in section thirty?

BOB

Roger. I see it. Please advise.

TECHNICIAN

See if you can nudge it back in line with the rest of the material.

BOB

Roger that. Ron, we need to push section thirty back a little.

Without a word, Ron takes off, followed by Bob.

Reminiscent of jet skis frolicking on the water, the two rocket sleds reach the outer edge of the material, slide into a hairpin turn and disappear over the top.

Behind the material, on its sunny side, the two rocket sledders make their way toward the convex buckle. They fire a few quick retro rocket bursts to slow their approach.

Closing in on the center of the convex bulge, they ease the noses of their rocket sleds against the material and slowly throttle up.

As the material flattens out, they again fire their retros to halt their forward momentum.

The retro blasts send the material over-center. It begins to reconfigure into a concave indentation, concentrating the Sun's deadly rays on their position.

The intensified rays take the two men off guard. They raise their hands to shield their eyes from the welder-bright flash, but it's too late.

The two rocket sleds spontaneously combust within a flash of flames and smoke, then vanish.

Back on the front side, the Technician observes the buckle drifting too far forward.

TECHNICIAN

Can someone fly over the top and see what's going on with them?

THOMAS

I'll take a look.

Thomas blasts up and over the top, slows and cautiously surveys the area.

Passing slightly off center of the indentation, he is met with a blinding light and a puff of smoke from the right elbow of his spacesuit.

He swats the source of the smoke several times to extinguish it, then comes to a full stop.

Thomas removes an adjustable wrench from his tool kit and lobs it directly across the center of the indentation.

Spinning slowly, it nears the center of the buckle and begins to glow - first red, then white, then it vaporizes.

THOMAS

Holy shit.

Returning to the top of the material, he opens communications.

THOMAS

No trace of them. That area where the buckle is... It's gotta be ten thousand degrees. They're gone!

TECHNICIAN

Understood. God bless them. They were both good men.

INT. MARS TWO/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

There is an air of excitement in the briefing room. The entire crew has assembled to receive their final assignments.

RUTTGENS

This is the day we've been working toward ever since the Moon Base-Tranquillity incident.

Sarah waves a pencil in the air and is acknowledged by Ruttgers.

SARAH

I can't get a definitive answer from Earth on this, but there's a good chance that First Contact may have pushed the Earth out into a higher orbit.

Sarah makes her way to the transparent chart to illustrate.

SARAH

I would advise that we pull the cloud an additional five thousand miles past our original projections, just to be safe.

RUTTGENS

I'm all for going along with Sarah on this. Let's do it.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

At the observation window, Sarah is rapidly pacing, back and forth, the length of the window. She wipes the palms of her hands against the side of her jumpsuit.

Through the window, a golden octagonal grid can be seen, filled with innumerable diamond-shaped segments, stretching hundreds of miles into the distance.

The force field generators are also in place, as are the metallic spheres.

Eight shuttles are in position to commence their Herculean effort, tied off with a series of tethers at each of the grid's eight corners.

John scans the entire labyrinthine and flashes Ruttgers a 'thumbs up.'

JOHN

Okay... we're just going to ease into this thing and see what happens.

Sarah drops down and gazes into the scope.

The force fields are activated, lighting up the voids within the diamonds and producing a high-frequency hum that permeates the ship. The delicate hair on Sarah's forearms begins to rise.

The shuttles ease their way forward. Trailing behind, the mirror begins to bow slightly.

JOHN

Sarah... contact?

SARAH

Not yet... The mother lode is just ahead. Another thousand yards or so.

John and Ruttgers stand breathless, focusing between the shuttles, the tethers and the mirror.

SARAH

3... 2... 1... Contact.

Sarah looks up through the window as the tethers twist and tighten. The grid bows severely in the middle as all eight shuttles come to an abrupt halt.

Reminiscent of an immense parachute, the grid takes hold of the invisible mass and begins to ease it forward.

SARAH

I see some movement. It's working!

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY (IN SPACE)

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS THIRTY DAYS AND COUNTING"

The overall scene from Sarah's observation window is showing some progress.

The shuttles have moved nearly a quarter of the cloud twenty-five thousand miles, without mishap.

Within the blink of an eye, everything changes, as a series of tether lines SNAP, sending the recoiling lines to the rear of the Argo, severing its aft nozzles and fuel cells.

Inside the Mars Two, Sarah freezes in shock as the Argo spins out of control, closing in on her position. It barely avoids a collision with the Mars Two.

The Argo shoots past the Mars Two. The crew feverishly fires their retro rockets in an attempt to slow its uncontrolled flight into the void of space.

The Argo finally comes to a complete halt, forty miles past the Mars Two.

ARGO (VO)

We're okay... What does it look like from your position?

STEELE (VO)

The tethers took out your fuel cells... nozzles... everything.

Sarah is intensely studying the situation through the scope.

SARAH

The rest of you have to come to a dead stop. The cloud is slipping out where the tethers broke.

INT. MARS TWO/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The crews are called in to assess the situation. The long days and stress are now wearing heavily on their faces.

RUTTGERS

We need to inspect every tether
in the network. That could have
been catastrophic.

STEELE

Agreed. Nothing moves until it's
all been tested and certified.

RUTTGERS

Remember, that only leaves us
with three spare birds - and
we're only thirty percent
through the mission.

INT. MARS TWO/COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

The communications room is dark and unmanned. The silence
is suddenly broken with an incoming message from Earth.

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Mars Two... do you copy?

The COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER rushes down the hall as he stuffs
his shoes under his arm and tucks in his shirt.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Yes, we copy. This is Mars Two.
How goes it?

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Not good. Is Sarah Cooper
available?

Sarah enters the room just in time to hear her name.

SARAH

Sarah here. What's going on down
there?

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Well, it looks like First Contact
pushed Earth's orbit out more
than we thought.

SARAH

(biting her lip)
What's the figure?

MISSION CONTROL (VO)

Twenty thousand miles.

Sarah drops into her seat in despair. She nervously strokes her hair, as she takes a few deep breaths.

SARAH

Twenty thousand? We only compensated an extra five thousand miles... twenty-five in all. I'll have to get back to you on this.

INT. MARS TWO/BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Morale is low. The entire crew has been assembled to discuss the latest developments.

A three-dimensional holographic image, displaying the Intruder's position and contour, floats amidst the crew.

RUTTIGERS

So everything we've done up until now was for nothing. Earth's still going to punch a hole right through the middle of that God Damn thing.

Sarah hesitantly approaches the hologram, studying it in more detail with every step. She suddenly stops and spins around, facing the crew.

SARAH

Not if we punch the hole first!

Silently, the entire crew rises and approaches the image.

SARAH

Now that we've got accurate coordinates from Earth, we can bore a hole right through the middle of it instead!

JOHN

She's right! That's gonna be a whole lot quicker than trying to relocate the whole thing.

A confident smile widens on Sarah's face. She turns back to the hologram and begins to plot some preliminary coordinates.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS TWENTY DAYS AND COUNTING"

Sarah is peering through a telescopic spectroscope positioned at the observation window.

SARAH'S P.O.V. - THE GRID - THROUGH THE SPECTROSCOPE

Eight shuttles are tethered to the grid, now positioned at the far end of the Intruder, working on their initial pass.

BACK TO SCENE

John is facing the opposite direction, studying the Earth via a pair of electron binoculars.

JOHN

It's hard to believe that little spot is coming toward us at over sixty-six thousand miles per hour.

John lowers the binoculars to find Sarah standing directly beside him. She gazes lovingly into his eyes.

SARAH

John... do you think we'll ever make it back to Earth?

John turns toward the window.

JOHN

I have no doubt.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS TEN DAYS AND COUNTING"

Sarah is studying their progress through the observation window. The shuttles are now at the near end of the mass, pulling remnants of the Intruder to the side of the tunnel.

SARAH

That's five passes, John.

The black void of space is clearly visible through the center of the Intruder as their massive tunnel begins to take shape.

SARAH

I love looking through the tunnel and actually being able to see Space at the far end! I just pray that our calculations aren't off, even by a hair.

John raises his hand and crosses two of his fingers.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS FIVE DAYS AND COUNTING"

The Earth can now be seen with the naked eye, looming ever closer in the heavens, as a constant reminder that time is running out.

Several more passes have been completed and the tunnel is nearing its required dimensions. The shuttles are midway through their tenth dredging of the cloud.

Thomas is taking a turn with the binoculars, while John and Sarah stand beside him, looking through the window at the overall picture.

THOMAS

I think that's the States.

JOHN

How the Hell can you tell?

SARAH

He's right. See the West Coast --

Without warning, there is a loud BANG on the outside of the Mars Two's hull, followed by several additional POPS and CLANGS.

Streaking past the observation window, hundreds of meteors penetrate the Intruder, disintegrating as they come into contact with the mass.

Unable to move, Sarah, John and Thomas stand helplessly in awe at the magnitude of the event unfolding before them.

A new wave of impacts is upon them as a huge fragment glances off the Mars Two, with a resounding CLANG, jolting it severely and sending Sarah, John and Thomas to the floor.

The fragment enters the tunnel, unrestricted by the mass, and strikes the Pathfinder head-on, obliterating it on impact.

Sarah, John and Thomas attempt to stand as the Mars Two is again mercilessly assaulted with a sustained barrage of meteors and fragments.

The ship is sent into an erratic roll, precariously exposing the huge observation windows to the onslaught.

In an emergency evasive maneuver, Steele fires every port side retro simultaneously in an attempt to reverse their direction. It works.

Sounding like machine gun fire against the Mars Two's hull, hundreds of meteors continue to slam into the ship.

Other fragments plow into the mass, burning up on contact, as even more enter the tunnel, completely unobstructed - streaking mercilessly toward their defenseless prey.

When the smoke clears the Constellation, Horizon, Intrepid, Liberty, Pathfinder and Voyager shuttles are gone.

All that remains are the crippled Kitty Hawk and Tango shuttles, still tethered to the shredded remnants of the grid. There are no incoming messages.

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY (IN SPACE)

The Mars Two's hull has sustained heavy damage. Several clouds of escaping air can be seen near the aft section of the ship. Numerous panels along the length of the ship have been pounded relentlessly.

The Centurion and Argo shuttles, still poised on the radial launcher, are both damaged far beyond repair. Only two shuttles remain intact - the Defiant and the Pegasus - both tucked safely out of harm's way, behind the other two crafts.

The cargo bays have been torn open, twisted and squashed flat far beyond the point of utility. Cargo is drifting from the doors, entangled within miles of frayed tether lines.

More than a dozen of the hundred and twenty fuel cells are collapsed or split open, spilling their contents into the void of space.

The eight immense nozzles at the rear of the craft have been all but hammered shut.

INT. MARS TWO/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Steele and several other crewmembers are gathering their composure after shoring up a corridor, barely avoiding a ship-wide decompression.

RUTTIGERS (VO)

Damage report! Casualties!

STEELE

We had a breach in the rear corridor. It tore a section clean off and crushed the rest of it flat. The hatch is sealed, but there's no access to the arsenal or navigation.

Sarah runs into the briefing room, studying a printout as she proceeds. She stumbles as she passes through the bulkhead, scattering her paperwork in all directions as she contacts the floor.

She quickly gathers it, momentarily rubs both her knees and continues on.

SARAH

Sir, we're not going to make --

RUTTIGERS

I know. I've been in contact with the surface. I've advised them of the condition of the ship and our casualties. Operation Exodus/Genesis has been scrubbed. They're bracing for Final Contact.

SARAH

They can brace all they want. I've run every possible scenario and --

With the SLAM of his hand on a table, John becomes the center of attention.

JOHN

(somberly)

Have you run the one where we jam the Mars Two's fuel cells right down the tunnel's throat and ignite 'em?

Sarah and Ruttgers study John intently. John returns their gazes with a look of surrender.

JOHN

A man once told me that playing God was a no-win situation. I think I finally know what he was talking about.

All eyes are upon John as he makes his way to the transparent charts in the middle of the room.

JOHN

The Mars Two can't move, but we still have two operable shuttles. We detach the fuel cells... line 'em up, right down the middle of the tunnel, several hundred miles apart and remote detonate 'em from here.

JOHNSON

So we're just stuck here with no way to catch the Earth once it passes us! We might as well be part of the bomb.

Sarah rises, glaring at Johnson with a look of disdain.

SARAH

Why couldn't Mission Control send up enough air and provisions so we could catch Earth on its next orbit, a year from now? Hell, they could even use the Aurora!

Sarah pauses, scanning the room for confirmation.

SARAH

Come on! There's still twelve of us... Did we come this far and lose so many of our team, just to be beaten in the eleventh hour... by some God Damn cloud?

Her level of conviction inspires the others as they converge on the chart.

STEELE

Couldn't we get a lot more punch if we wrapped the fuel cells with the remaining sections of the mirror material?

RUTTIGERS

A twenty thousand mile long stick of dynamite. Hell... I like that! Let's do it.

EXT. THE CLOUD'S TUNNEL - DAY (IN SPACE)

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS SIX HOURS AND COUNTING"

The Earth now appears quite large and it's closing fast, serving as a constant reminder that time is running out.

The Mars Two's fuel cell complex has been quickly reduced to a skeleton, with only a handful of crushed and split cells remaining.

The bomb now extends thousands of miles through the center of the tunnel, incorporating over a hundred of the Mars Two's former fuel cells.

The mirror's tattered remains have been deployed into a huge cylindrical shape, encompassing the fuel cells - reminiscent of an immense, hand-rolled cigarette.

The Defiant and Pegasus float motionless near the mouth of material. The crews work feverishly to wire in the final fuel cells and program the remote detonators.

In a last minute decision, the Pegasus is also wired into the fuel cell lineup, to add a little more oomph.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

SUPER: "FINAL CONTACT - T-MINUS TWO HOURS AND COUNTING"

Sarah and John stand mesmerized at the observation window. The Defiant glides from the tunnel and fires its engines.

SARAH

I hope we don't regret leaving
the Pegasus.

JOHN

It's not like we'll need it. We
only get one shot at this!

The Earth is now close enough to make out the land masses with the naked eye.

A sharp, metallic CLANG resounds throughout the ship, signifying that the Defiant has successfully docked with the Mars Two. The hatch opens and the crews from both shuttles enter the ship.

Still standing at the observation window, barely able to breathe, Sarah and John are arm in arm, intensifying their grasp as the moment draws near. They are soon joined by Steele and several additional crewmembers.

RUTTGENS (VO)

Cross your fingers. Detonation
in 3... 2... 1... Zero.

Sarah pulls herself closer to John, closes her eyes, and turns away from the window.

The room is suddenly flooded with a near-blinding flash, followed by a moderate concussion, jostling the Mars Two slightly rearward.

The crew pauses, then simultaneously erupts in triumph.

KELLISH

I'm impressed. Even in this
ship's condition, it handled
that really well!

STEELE

I agree, I was expecting something
a whole lot more substantial.

Sarah turns from the window in despair. She looks to John for confirmation. His smile instantly deteriorates into a look of concern as he peers out of the window.

SARAH

(shouting)

Stop! Stop! It didn't work!
That blast was only from the
first few cells. There was no
chain reaction... Most of the
cells are still intact!

The crew instantly becomes hushed.

Studying the aftermath through the observation window, the tunnel's entrance now appears to be a much larger diameter, almost funnel-like in appearance.

There is no trace of the Pegasus or the first several fuel cells, however, the majority of the cells and mirror material appear to be intact, continuing on for thousands of miles.

RUTTGENS

Briefing room. Now!

INT. MARS TWO/BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Ruttgens enters the room to find a heated argument and the accusations flying.

RUTTGENS

Shut the Hell up! I don't care
what went wrong, or who did what.
We need a solution... Now!

Ruttgens searches the forlorn faces of the crew.

RUTTGENS

Options?

STEELE

Only one sure thing. The
Defiant. We can use it as the
detonator. Ram the first fuel
cell and hopefully set off the
chain reaction. Sir, I'd like
to volunteer for the --

RUTTGERS

Sorry, that job's already taken.
I hereby officially relinquish
my command of the Mars Two.
She's yours.

Ruttgers salutes Steele and begins to make his way to the Defiant. Thomas grabs his arm as he passes.

THOMAS

You'll need a second in command.

Sarah swiftly positions herself in front of the two men.

SARAH

Wait! Wait! What about the
laser cannon?

RUTTGERS

Sarah, that section's been sealed
off ever since the impacts.
There's no way to access it.
Hell, I doubt the laser's still
functional anyway.

SARAH

We could access it from the
outside. We could cut a hole --

RUTTGERS

The entire arsenal is armor-
plated. Even if you could cut
through it, you'd depressurize
the whole ship within a few
seconds... Time's run out.

Ruttgers nods and motions toward the hatch.

RUTTGERS

We're going to get in position.
We can wait... maybe fifteen
minutes.

Ruttgers turns toward the communications officer.

RUTTGERS

If you come up with a "Plan C"
be damn sure and let us know.

INT. MARS TWO/MAIN CABIN - DAY

Ruttgers and Thomas pause at the hatch. Ruttgers makes eye contact with every crewmember. He concentrates on Sarah for a moment, gives her a quick wink, and enters the hatch.

Sarah runs to Thomas and throws her arms around him. He kisses her on the cheek, then gently pushes her away.

Thomas enters the hatch. It is closed and secured. The Defiant breaks the docking seal and begins to drift away. Seconds later, the rocket engines fire as the craft begins heading toward its destiny.

JOHN

Bring up the ship's blueprints.

On the main computer, several of the crew begin to search for another way to access the aft section of the Mars Two.

STEELE

(pointing to a section)

There's some ducting that runs from the galley, parallel to the corridor that was breached... but it's most likely crushed flat.

Several of the crew head toward the aft of the ship.

INT. MARS TWO/GALLEY - DAY

The crewmembers arrive at the access panel in the rear of the galley, to find PETERSON disappearing into the ductwork. He returns moments later to his point of entry, jumps to the floor, and dusts himself off.

PETERSON

There's no way. The ductwork is nearly closed off.

SARAH

I'm smaller. Maybe I could make it.

All eyes are suddenly on Sarah.

Sarah presents her hand, palm up, in front of Peterson. He digs the communicator out of his pocket and slaps it into her hand, followed by a flashlight.

STEELE

If you reach the laser, I'll
talk you through the procedure.

Sarah nods in affirmation. John pulls her to the side.

JOHN

Sarah... what about your --

SARAH

(breathing heavily)

I can do this. I can do this.
Now give me a leg-up.

John takes her in his arms and gives her a kiss. He then
hoists her up into the duct.

John watches intently as Sarah nearly fades from view, then
hastily retreats back to the safety of the opening.

He helps her out, to find her transformed into a ghostlike
figure, sweating heavily and shaking with every breath.

SARAH

John... I can't --

JOHN

It's okay. You gave it your --

Sarah glares up at him indignantly.

SARAH

No! I mean I'm still too big. I
can't squeeze through the damaged
section. I can do this. Get me a
tube of grease or oil or --

An incoming message stops everyone cold.

DEFIANT (VO/INTERCOM)

T-minus ten minutes. Status?

STEELE

Hold tight, I'll update you in five.

Sarah immediately begins to unzip her jumpsuit.

John quickly joins in and begins peeling her out of it.

Several crewmembers begin tearing open every pantry door within the galley and eventually find a full bottle of clear cooking oil.

Sarah, now donning only her undergarments and a sleeveless bodyshirt, stuffs the communicator into her bra and motions to John for a leg-up.

With a flashlight in one hand and the bottle of oil in the other, Sarah is immediately hoisted back into the darkness. She quickly disappears from view.

INT./EXT. DUCTING - DAY

Sarah is pinned tightly against the walls of the ductwork. She begins to shake. She pours a handful of oil into her palm and hurriedly smears it on the wall at the restriction.

Doing her best to keep her fears at bay, she arduously pulls herself past the collapsed section, adding generously to the oil slick as necessary.

She takes a moment to gather her composure, then continues toward the aft of the ship on all fours. She soon meets an intersection in the ducting, running downward.

Cautiously attempting to cross the void with her hands still covered with oil, she loses her grip and slips over the edge, head first.

Dropping nearly eight feet, she becomes hopelessly trapped upside down within the cramped ductwork.

With no room to turn around, she does her best to push herself back up, to no avail. Panic immediately sets in as she begins to thrash about within her tomb.

The communicator falls from her bra, landing only inches from her face. She manages to push the call button.

SARAH (VO)

(communicator, filtered)

John, I've fallen into a vertical duct! Someone help me, please!

JOHN

(into communicator)

Sarah, can you push yourself up?

SARAH (VO)
(communicator, filtered)
No! I'm too far down. I can't
even touch the top with my toes!

Steele closes his eyes and shakes his head. Suddenly, he perks-up and rushes out of the room.

STEELE
Tell her to hang on another minute.
I'm going to kill the artificial
gravity for a few seconds.

JOHN
(into communicator)
Sarah. We're shutting down the
gravity. When you feel it, get
the Hell outta there!

There is no response.

Sarah begins to hyperventilate. She is losing consciousness.

For an instant, the ship's humming ceases and she is weightless. Sarah pushes off in a state of utter panic, slamming into the top of the main horizontal ducting.

Regaining her orientation, Sarah positions herself at the edge of the vertical ducting.

She pauses to take several deep breaths as the ship's gravity is switched back on, without warning. She nearly slips over the edge once again, but manages to catch herself.

She feverishly searches for her communicator, then shines the flashlight into the duct, only to find it resting at the bottom.

She shouts to John, but the hum of the ship has drowned out any hope of voice communication.

JOHN
(into communicator)
Sarah... Sarah!

No response. John bows his head in silence. He drops to his knees and looks up at the access panel.

JOHN
Tell the Defiant to proceed.

INT. MARS TWO/OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

The entire crew has gathered near the observation window. John is sitting against the wall, his hands covering his face. The intercom has been patched through to the Defiant.

Already nearing the tunnel, the Defiant begins to throttle up, closing in on the mirror material and the first fuel cell.

DEFIANT (VO/INTERCOM)

Impact in sixty seconds. Let's hope this does the trick.

STEELE

Sir, on behalf of the entire crew --

BOOM!

Suddenly, there is a decisive jolt from the aft section of the Mars Two. A red, glowing ball of fire streaks toward the Defiant, followed by a second and a third.

John immediately jumps to his feet.

JOHN

Sarah!

The crew watches as the laser cannon's projectiles streak into the tunnel, nearly missing the Defiant and the fuel cells.

STEELE

She missed!

JOHN

The Hell she did. Those were warning shots! Tell the Defiant to get the Hell outta there!

STEELE

Defiant! Defiant! The laser cannon is on-line. Abort your mission. Repeat! Abort! Abort!

Through the observation window, the Defiant can be seen making a wide arc only several miles from the end of the first fuel cell.

The craft completes the turn, then throttles up in a desperate attempt to escape the impending blast.

INT. MARS TWO/ARSENAL - DAY

The room is dark, except for the light emitting from the controls within the laser cannon's transparent turret.

The weapon's instruments cast an eerie glow across Sarah's face, now soaked with oil and sweat, and nearly covered with dampened hair.

She intensely focuses on her target with an expressionless, trance-like stare. She calmly pulls her hair to one side.

SARAH

(barely audible)

98 Mississippi... 99 Mississippi...

Her breathing becomes labored as she slowly lowers herself to the weapon's sight. She tilts her head to the side and closes one eye.

SARAH

100. It's payback time. Fucker.

She squeezes the trigger. The cannon kicks back with a resounding BOOM as a crimson ball of fire streaks from the barrel.

She fires a dozen more shots in rapid succession, fanning them out along the length of the fuel cells.

The projectiles collide with their targets, obliterating the fuel cells and setting off a series of chain reactions.

The turret is suddenly awash with a pure, white light, highlighting Sarah's slender silhouette. She covers her eyes with her forearm and turns away.

Moments later, the Mars Two is assaulted with a massive concussion, throwing it violently rearward.

EXT. EARTH - APPROACHING - DAY (IN SPACE)

Through the observation window, the Earth can be seen as it converges on the Intruder. There are sporadic outbreaks of flames as it enters the near side of the tunnel.

The random collisions continue as the Earth barrels its way through the mass.

The Earth remains intact, eventually clearing the Intruder and returns safely back into unrestricted space.

INT. MARS TWO/GALLEY - DAY

John is standing at the opening of the ductwork. The faint beam of a flashlight can be seen darting from side to side as Sarah makes her way back to safety.

Nearing the opening, she pauses and smiles.

John reaches into the duct and slides her from the opening. He wraps her in a robe and looks deep within her eyes.

JOHN

I thought I lost you... again.

Sarah smiles and gently covers his mouth with her fingers. John holds her tightly in his arms. She rests her head against his chest and sighs.

INT. MARS TWO/COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - DAY

The remainder of the crew is huddled around the intercom as Sarah and John enter the room, to a standing ovation.

Tension is on the rise as their efforts to contact Earth are answered only with static.

STEELE

Mars Two to Mission Control...
Mars Two to Mission Control...

MISSION CONTROL (VO/INTERCOM)

Well done, Mars Two!

The entire crew spontaneously erupts in jubilation. In a bittersweet moment, Sarah and John look into each other's eyes and embrace.

Sarah leans close to the microphone/speaker.

SARAH

How bad was it?

MISSION CONTROL (VO/INTERCOM)

Only about point-two Gs.

SARAH

Wonderful!

MISSION CONTROL (VO/INTERCOM)

We're launching the Aurora with some essentials within the hour. Fuel, food, water and air... plus a dozen cases of champagne. They should rendezvous with you within the week.

STEELE

Affirmative.

MISSION CONTROL (VO/INTERCOM)

Then hang tight. We'll be in contact throughout the year. Once again, Mars Two... well done!

Communications are severed with Mission Control as the speaker momentarily squeals out a shrill feedback whistle.

DEFIANT (VO/INTERCOM)

You better save a couple bottles of that champagne for us.

SARAH

Thomas?

DEFIANT (VO/INTERCOM)

And just who were you expecting? Damn, Sarah... that was some fine shootin'. I guess that makes us even!

The crew once again erupts in spontaneous jubilation.

DEFIANT (VO/INTERCOM)

We're about two hundred miles off your port side, and closing.

Sarah turns to John with an ear to ear grin.

INT. MARS TWO/SARAH AND JOHN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Sarah and John are lying motionless on their bed, looking out into space through their cabin's window.

They have an unencumbered view of the Earth as it relentlessly fades into the star-filled tapestry of space.

JOHN

A year... with nothing to do.

Sarah rolls over to his side with a devilish smile and raises her eyebrows a couple times. She then begins to sensually rub his chest.

SARAH

Oh... I wouldn't say... nothing.

For a moment, they lovingly gaze into each other's eyes in silence. Sarah smiles, then draws him closer and tenderly kisses him.

EXT. OVERVIEW - NIGHT (IN SPACE)

The Mars Two is floating motionless in space. The Intruder drifts slowly by, its swirling mass refracting the Sun's piercing rays, sending slivers of sunlight in every direction.

In the distance, the Earth quickly diminishes in both size and clarity as it continues on its orbit around the Sun.

SARAH (VO)

As I watched the Earth fade from view, I couldn't help but wonder what might still lie ahead for mankind. We had won the war... we had beaten the unbeatable foe... or had we? Could we ever hope to reclaim the Earth, or has our struggle only just begun?

FADE OUT

THE END