

TEASER

BLACK SCREEN

HONOR'S VOICE

Do you have what it takes?

A beat.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. DOCKING AREA - TRANSPORT SHIP GALILEO - SPACE**

We open in what looks like chaos. Uniformed crew and passengers scramble to load the lander. People dart back and forth in front of each other in their rush. This is not business as usual. Everything about it screams "emergency."

CLOSE ON A PANEL ON THE WALL. There are several lines of instrument readings on it -- we don't know what they mean, but someone does. REVERSE to show, ECU, GINA NOLAN, 23. Tense but focused on the readings, her eyes moving back and forth as she takes them in, calculates... Beyond her --

CAPTAIN GAUTIER

Did you load the emergency water?

The reply is quick, tense, worried --

FIRST OFFICER GAINES

Sir, right now we don't even know if we're getting down there in one piece. There's a limit to how much we can stuff inside -- we're bringing 12 more people than we should, and that lander was built to break apart for re-use after one descent.

CAPTAIN GAUTIER

It gets us nowhere to land safely and die of thirst --

Gina moves away from the panel, heads for the Captain. And suddenly we're seeing this through the LENS OF A CAMERA. CLOSE ON GINA as someone nearby videos her interaction.

GINA

Life support's down to forty percent.

The camera of the person filming shifts to the Captain, whose mouth starts to form what is clearly a curse -- but the camera is jarred aside, spinning, then --

Caught by DANIEL FRIEDMAN, 28, in neither the uniform of crew nor the fatigues of the colonists. He's in a *War of the Worlds* t-shirt. The crewmember who jostled him hurries on --

CAPTAIN GAUTIER

Everyone in your pressure suits!  
We have to go *now*!  
(to Friedman)  
You too. Put the camera down.

FRIEDMAN

(startled)  
I'm not going to Mars.

Gautier turns away to deal with other things, having no time for this. Gina turns to Friedman, terse and to the point:

GINA

We're all going. Do you not understand what's happening?

FRIEDMAN

I know the meteor did some damage, but there's still time for them to pull an Apollo 13 --

GINA

There's no time. The ship's a goner, the crew is evacuating with the colonists. Nobody's going home.

FRIEDMAN

(are you insane)  
I'm not living out my life on friggin' Mars.

GINA

Fine. Stay here alone on an empty ship, as the oxygen fails and the lights go out.

As she talks she takes a pressure suit from a rack on the wall and begins to don it. Off Friedman, the terrible truth drilling through his mountain of denial...

#### **EXT. TRANSPORT SHIP - SPACE**

We see MARS in the distance. The Red Planet. A beat of wonder, then -- fwoosh! A ballute (half-balloon, half-parachute) deploys, acting as brakes for the transport as it collides into Martian orbit at supersonic speed. A plasma sheathe envelopes the ballute, creating roiling flames from friction along the rim of the ship.

**INT. LANDER - SPACE**

The small landing vessel is crammed with people strapping in, tense and nervous. There's a PILOT at the console. As Gautier takes the seat beside him --

CAPTAIN GAUTIER  
Release the cargo dumps!

**EXT. TRANSPORT SHIP - SPACE**

CARGO BOXES the size of shipping containers, tethered to the sides of the ship, are released and pulled into the gravity of Mars.

**INT. LANDER - SPACE**

Gina takes one of the last empty seats -- near Friedman. He cradles his camera protectively. There aren't enough seats; some people are being strapped to wall brackets.

**EXT. TRANSPORT SHIP - MARS SKY**

The cargo containers rain down on Mars -- into a daylit Martian sky. We cut to the one closest to the surface, and see a parachute open above; and we understand how supplies for the colony are being delivered.

**INT. LANDER - SPACE**

Gina glances over someone's shoulder toward the pilot's console. A GPS MAP shows small icons FLARING, denoting the spots the cargo containers end up. One of the icons is a RED CROSS. We (and Gina) get only a quick glimpse, when --

PILOT  
Brace up. It's gonna be a bumpy  
ride --

OFF GINA, staring out the window...

CHYRON: 18 MONTHS EARLIER

EXT. EXPEDITION CAMPUS - DAY

CHYRON: EXPEDITION CAMPUS, PROJECT MARS

It's the equivalent of Microsoft, Google, and Houston Space Center. Buildings with greenery and walkways between.

HONOR (V.O.)  
Do you have what it takes? Do you  
think you're special?

INT. ORIENTATION - DAY

Gina is on a long line heading toward an intake desk. On the wall are huge monitors, showing a woman, 40s, high cheekbones, direct unapologetic eyes, English accent. A woman who takes no prisoners. HONOR BEAKE.

HONOR (ON SCREEN)

Of course, everyone in our benighted society thinks they're special. Now's the time to prove that word means something. I'm challenging you not as the person who designed that software on your laptop -- but as the CEO of Project Mars.

GINA

(under her breath)

"We're seeking a wide variety of skillsets."

The woman in front of her on line turns and grins. SOPHIE ROSE, early 20s.

HONOR

We're seeking a wide variety of skillsets. We welcome resumes from the usual suspects -- doctors, engineers, scientists -- but make no assumptions.

SOPHIE ROSE

"We're building a society."

HONOR

We're building a society. We need all sorts of people. Mechanics, electricians, in time teachers for the babies soon to be born. If you're between 18 and 39, and you think you have what it takes, send your video and CV to us.

(beat)

And you'll *need* to be special. Mars does not possess launch capability. That means this is a one-way trip. You'll spend the rest of your life in a literal new world. *If* you're the one in a thousand who makes it into the program -- and the one in ten who graduates.

Sophie confides to Gina:

SOPHIE ROSE

I heard five percent are eliminated off the top -- those who don't make it through the medical tests. They're supposed to be brutal.

Gina reacts -- she hadn't heard that. Sophie's motioned to the desk. As Gina waits, considering her chances:

HONOR (ON SCREEN)

Colonizing space is the next step in our evolution. Are you going to watch uncertainly, like our distant ancestors who stayed in the ocean and never crawled up onto the land? Or do you want to participate?

The monitor shows a MONTAGE of pioneers heading west, immigrants boarding ships.... ending in a rocket arcing across the sky, and a shot of the star-filled awe-inspiring universe... Gina becomes aware the woman at the desk is motioning to her. She hurries to the desk, shows ID.

GINA

Gina Nolan.

The Woman snaps an electronic SECURITY BRACELET on her. It's like an Apple watch, but better.

WOMAN

Your dorm's in six-seven-two. This will open the door. It'll also give you directions. And your schedule. Next!

Gina looks at her for a moment, then goes.

INT. GINA'S ROOM - DAY

Gina sets down her suitcase. Her wristband BEEPS, and she looks at it: "REPORT TO MEDICAL." She reacts: and so the eliminations begin...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Gina passes a beautiful Amazon of a girl -- CHANDRA DEVI. Devi's coming in the other direction and walks like she owns the world. She reaches her room and opens it with the wristband, throwing a confident grin toward Gina.

## INT. MONTAGE - DAY

Gina in a hospital gown, running on a treadmill, with electrodes hooked to limbs and chest and a gas monitoring tube shoved in her mouth... sitting in an altitude chamber with ten other people, who look at each other uncomfortably as a console reads "countdown to explosive decompression"... getting an electroretinogram in which scores of tiny wires seem to be hooked directly onto her eye in a freakish way -- a TECHNICIAN gestures and she sticks her head into an egg-shaped cavity... getting an EEG as the sound of an EXPLOSION detonates behind her -- she startles and the waves on the monitor go nuts. A blank-faced TECHNICIAN whispers a note we can't hear into his lapel mike... Gina finally walking out of the facility, burnt out, unsure how all this went -- as her WRISTBAND BEEPS. She looks at it: REPORT FOR DAY ONE TRAINING 7AM. Off her growing smile... she made it.

## INT. GYM - DAY

Gina stands in the midst of a long row of people stretched out along the wall. Whenever we see her class, we'll see young people in great condition, all races, all ethnicities. The gym's enormous. In an area not too far away, there's a climbing rope. AISEA TALAKE, a dark-haired Polynesian girl with BLUE OCEAN WAVE TATTOOS around her neck is trying and failing, ignominiously, to climb it. She's by herself.

Gina's group is being called, one by one, to run through an obstacle course. We pass a young man with a SHAVED HEAD; a young woman with MANY PIERCINGS. Friedman is here, in a t-shirt, filming.

## INSTRUCTOR

McMillan!

(SHAVED HEAD MAN starts)

Rose!

(Sophie starts; the instructor corrects)

The other Rose!

(her brother Mason starts)

Devi!

Chandra Devi, the self-confident Amazon we saw earlier, takes off. She's magnificent. CLOSE on her thighs as they pump, her flying hair. She clears every obstacle with grace -- it's like watching a thoroughbred. NEIL CORMACK, 28, stares.

## CORMACK

She's a goddess.

Friedman is next to him. Also impressed.

FRIEDMAN

I hope for the honor of nailing her.

(as Cormack looks at him)

What? I'm expressing a respectful goal.

Gina's impressed, too. To the young man next to her:

GINA

That's what you need to do here: come in strong, hit them with a good first impression.

(looks at Talake, still struggling)

Doesn't look promising for her. And shouldn't she have a spotter?

DAVID

People don't like to help their competition, I guess.

(introduces himself)

David Lewis. Geology.

GINA

Gina Nolan. Botany.

DAVID

Ah. One of the people in charge of the crops. You'll be keeping us alive once we get there.

GINA

Getting there is the problem. With odds of one in ten, we have to look for ways to stand out from the crowd --

INSTRUCTOR

Moving on to mat practice! Any volunteers to start us off?

GINA

(to David)

I was a gymnast in school.

She raises a hand. The instructor calls on her.

INSTRUCTOR

Nolan!

WE CUT TO:

INT. MAT ROOM - DAY

Gina is strapped into an enormous GYROSCOPE. She does not look pleased.

INSTRUCTOR  
The MAT -- the Multi-Access  
Trainer. Welcome to a universe  
without up or down.

Gina's whirled head over heels in every possible direction.  
TIME-CUT TO:

GINA

Looking green, as she staggers away from the MAT. The Instructor points to a nearby bucket, and moves on:

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)  
Iberi!

Gina crouches to be sick into the bucket. David, amused, stands over her.

DAVID  
You're right, it's important to  
make a good impression. But I  
won't take points off for it.

She glances up at him, dismayed.

GINA  
Points? You're one of the  
evaluators?

DAVID  
We're very sneaky.

EXT. GYM - DAY

Gina's class files out, looking shaken and ill. Gina, still looking queasy, sits on the steps beside SOPHIE ROSE, 24, who also looks queasy. Devi walks out -- looking perfectly fine and cheerful.

GINA  
You handled the MAT like it was  
nothing.

DEVI  
I was on one just like it dozens of  
times at Space Camp.

Sophie stares at her, impressed and depressed:



SOPHIE ROSE  
You were at Space Camp?

Gina offers Sophie her hand.

GINA  
Gina Nolan. Botany.

SOPHIE ROSE  
Sophie Rose. Engineer. My  
brother's around here somewhere --  
(grins)  
We're colonizing Mars as a family.

They turn to Devi to get her name. Devi jokes:

DEVI  
Should we know each other's names?  
Or is that like naming pigs meant  
for slaughter?

A beat, as this lands on them.

DEVI (CONT'D)  
Kidding. I'm Chandra Devi.  
Microbiologist.

But is she really kidding? There's a vibe from Devi. She's not looking for friends.

SOPHIE ROSE  
You're right, though. We're  
competitors.

GINA  
We're what we choose to be.

A beat. What will they choose to be?

INT. VIDEO - DAY

Friedman interviewing Gina.

GINA  
Why do I want to go to Mars? Why  
wouldn't you want to explore the  
universe? It's what humans do.

There's a spark of wonder, a spirit of exploration in her that's hard to resist. Friedman throws her another personality question:

FRIEDMAN (O.S.)  
 Let's say you make it. Each  
 colonist gets two pounds of  
 personal items. What'll you bring?  
 A framed picture? A favorite book?  
 Clothes you can't live without...?

A beat. She smiles.

GINA  
 I grew up at my grandfather's place  
 in the country. There was a big  
 apple tree right by the house.

FRIEDMAN (O.S.)  
 So...?

She pulls a tiny plastic envelope from her pocket. In it are  
 six seeds.

GINA  
 I'm bringing the tree.

DISSOLVE TO

**INT. LANDER - SPACE**

Picking up at the tense moment we left.

We MOVE PAST a few random colonists -- black, white, Asian --  
 including one man, RICHARD SANTOS, 32. We'll see a lot of  
 him later. Friedman has a look of doom -- he'd be terrified,  
 but for him landing safely is nearly as bad as dying.

And then we're with Gina again. White-knuckled. Staring out  
 the window as the Martian surface rises with surprising speed  
 to fill the screen. The "red planet" starts to become a real  
 landscape as we barrel with frightening speed toward a desert  
 of rocks, canyons, and mountain ranges.

They're going so fast. It looks like they're heading for a  
 crash. The pilot struggles, doing his best with an  
 overloaded craft. Someone SCREAMS as --

**EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY**

THWOOM! The lander SLAMS to the surface, metal twisting,  
 dust flying. The nose of the craft careens, fragments of it  
 SNAPPING OFF.

A ROCKY CLIFFSIDE RISES IN FRONT OF THE LANDER. They barrel  
 on... Can they stop in time? A beat of suspense...

No. THEY CRASH.

Silence. Hold a beat... are they dead or alive?

**INT. LANDER - DAY**

People are stunned. They start to pull themselves together...

CAPTAIN GAUTIER

Is everyone all right? Check the person next to --

He's cut off by a SHRIEK. A YOUNG WOMAN looks down at A SEVERED HEAD in her lap. The corpse next to her has been neatly beheaded by a piece of akimbo steel that broke free from the restraining bracket. Santos speaks with compassion:

SANTOS

Take it easy. Breathe. We can't open the hatch yet.

She takes some shuddering deep breaths. We see people start to unstrap, hands reaching for First Aid items. Most of the injuries are minor -- scrapes and bruises. But there is one other fatality. SHAVED HEAD MAN, seen earlier in the gym, was one of those clamped directly to wall brackets. He came loose during the crash, must have impacted against the other wall, and now lies with his neck broken.

FIRST OFFICER GAINES

No hull breach.

CAPTAIN GAUTIER

Okay, I'm going to start the emergency oxygen; we can take off the pressure suits --

Gina glances at Friedman; he's staring at someone next to him. Gina follows his glance. Then, her voice ALARMED --

GINA

Captain!

And now we see what she's looking at --

DEVI, the Amazon goddess. She made it to Mars. And she's unconscious, barely breathing, crushed beneath some heavy equipment. Suddenly she spits and coughs blood.

She's alive -- but not for long.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. LANDER - DAY**

People are taking off their helmets, and First Aid supplies are quickly being passed from hand to hand. Cormack and Gina bend over Devi. Her nostrils flare as she tries to breathe.

DEVI  
Hurts... to breathe...

CORMACK  
Collapsed lung, shoulder fractured at a minimum, could be internal bleeding. Captain, she needs surgery.

GAUTIER  
Can you stabilize her? The nearest surgical site is at the colony -- my best guess, maybe 8 or 12 miles.

Unhappy reactions from the colonists.

FEMALE COLONIST  
"Guess"?

GAUTIER  
Radio and GPS are both down. Looks like a solar wind storm.

DEVI  
Santos. I want... Santos...

He comes over, kneels beside her, takes her hand. Reassuring. (Not romantic; more fatherly.)

DEVI (CONT'D)  
Am I... dying...?

SANTOS  
Remember what I said. About how strong you are.

Gina watches, thinking about their options.

GINA  
The lander's totaled. And we'll never reach the colony in these suits -- there's not enough oxygen.

FRIEDMAN  
So you're saying we're stuck here.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)  
 Until the air starts running  
 out...?

Off their grim looks, it's clear the answer is yes...

INT. EXPEDITION CLASSROOM - DAY

Gina and some 30 other classmates are gathered around a table with what looks like a large AIR DUCT. There's a tray of SCREWDRIVERS. Sophie and Mason Rose are beside Gina. Devi's some distance away; she hasn't made friends. Not a priority.

LECTURER

Everything operates according to the principal of KISS -- Keep it Simple, Stupid. No complicated infrastructure on Mars. You're going to need to know how to repair electrical, plumbing, air systems -- how to mine rock for water, how to grow food.

(beat)

Of course, sometimes things will go horribly wrong.

The door suddenly SLAMS open and someone in a PRESSURE SUIT enters. It's freaky, unreal -- there's the slow gait, as if they were on another planet, with different gravity. This is an old-fashioned, moon-type suit, with a reflective helmet. You can't see the face.

A large SCREEN comes down on the back wall. HONOR appears.

HONOR (ON SCREEN)

The 13 members of the first wave will be going upstairs in November; your class will follow them in 18 months. You need to be ready to deal with disasters, because they *will* happen.

Evidently she can see what's going on in the classroom. Gina glances around, spots CAMERAS. Sophie whispers to her:

SOPHIE ROSE

I guess this is the kind of stunt we can expect from someone who's funding space exploration through product placement and reality TV.

MASON ROSE

Complete narcissist -- that's what people say.

HONOR (ON SCREEN)  
 We can't prepare for every  
 emergency, but the three big  
 dangers are: rapid decompression of  
 the habitat, fire, a compromised  
 pressure suit.

The PRESSURE SUIT person rips open a long tear with a knife.

HONOR (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)  
 Oh, my goodness. An emergency.

The REFLECTIVE HELMET turns right and left to look them over;  
 a distorted VOICE comes through the suit mike.

PRESSURE SUIT  
 Nolan. Save me.

Pressure Suit drops to his knees as though dying. Falls to  
 the floor.

HONOR (ON SCREEN)  
 Let's see if you've done your  
 reading, Nolan.

Gina quickly scans the materials on the table, takes two  
 items. Hurries to Pressure Suit, slaps a gel onto the rip.  
 He starts to move --

GINA  
 Not yet, we need the catalyst.

She sprays something over the gel. The rip stays shut.  
 Pressure Suit sits up, removes the helmet. It's DAVID LEWIS.  
 His face only inches from hers. He smiles.

DAVID  
 Ten points to Gryffindor, Nolan.

She grins. They share a moment...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CLASSROOM - DAY

David walks down the hall in the pressure suit, carrying the  
 helmet. Gina catches up with him.

GINA  
 Why wear one of those old moon  
 suits? What's this one from, 1980?

DAVID  
 Honor likes drama. People *remember*  
 drama.

GINA

And why did you choose me?

He hesitates, then smiles wryly.

DAVID

I was afraid Honor might make my rescuer give me the kiss of life. Some of those guys are just not my type.

GINA

(amused)

So you picked the girl who vomited on your shoes the first day.

DAVID

Don't criticize my taste, Nolan.

A flirty moment, but then he walks on.

INT. BACKSTAGE - VIDEO - NIGHT

CLIPS from Friedman's documentary. We're in a theater of some sort, backstage. There are sounds of an AUDIENCE out front somewhere. Friedman's interviewing Devi.

FRIEDMAN

So, are you scared?

DEVI

Excited.

FRIEDMAN

In a few minutes it'll be make-or-break time. You'll be tested. People will be cut. And it'll happen on national television.

(off her silence)

Even if you're not cut, you could still make a fool of yourself in front of millions.

DEVI

(wicked grin)

Excited.

THE CLIP CHANGES: AISEA TALAKE, BLUE-WAVE-TATTOO GIRL.

TALAKE

Of course I'm scared.

And she's not being gracious or modest. She's upset.

FRIEDMAN

You do great on the classwork.  
Botany, geology, first aid --

TALAKE

Yeah, but I'm the only one in our  
class who can't climb a rope.  
Who's clumsy in a pressure suit.  
Who knows what they'll be testing?  
They could spring anything on us.

FRIEDMAN

So talk to me about the big one.  
Why Mars?

TALAKE

I'm from Tuvalu. That's an island  
in Oceania.

FRIEDMAN

Wait, isn't that one of the places  
that was inundated?

TALAKE

The sea reclaimed it. Global  
warming. My people scattered.  
(touches waves on neck)  
This is my tribute to what was. I  
wanted to take it to Mars. To a  
world we haven't yet harmed.  
(her voice cracks)  
But I think we both know I'll never  
make it.

Friedman, in the presence of genuine emotion, doesn't know  
what to say. The screen goes to black.

**EXT. ABOVE MARS**

We DISSOLVE UP as the abandoned and damaged hulk of the  
orbiting transport ship MOVES THROUGH FRAME.

**INT. LANDER - DAY**

Cormack is trying to suction air from Devi's chest using a  
needle. Gautier addresses the group.

GAUTIER

The prudent response is to conserve  
oxygen and wait. The colony has  
three ATVs; if we're careful, we  
should hold out long enough for  
them to get here and start ferrying  
people back.



BELL, African-American, cuts in:

BELL

If they even know we're here!

SANTOS

(agrees with Bell)

The storm's taken out the radio.  
And the damage to the main ship  
kept us out of long-range  
communication --

GAUTIER

I got out a message on the lander's  
radio *before* we hit the storm.

SANTOS

Did you get a reply?

GAUTIER

There wasn't time.

SANTOS

Then we can't be sure.

(to the group)

I can take four or five people with  
me, head for the colony. We can  
consolidate the oxygen we have, put  
it into extra tanks, and carry  
those with us.

GAUTIER

Leaving that much less for those of  
us who remain!

Santos cuts Gautier short -- calmly, but authoritatively.

SANTOS

Captain, your leadership on the  
ship coming here was invaluable.  
But let me remind you: you were  
never supposed to land with us.  
You have no authority whatsoever on  
the ground of Mars. What's more,  
we were trained as colonists; you  
were not.

Gautier's a little blindsided. GAINES, the pilot, is  
offended on his behalf:

GAINES

You're talking to the only man in  
the world to bring a ship to Mars  
*twice!*

SANTOS

Look, I'm saying this respectfully.  
You and the rest of the crew are  
here on sufferance. You're  
castaways.

And suddenly TALAKE speaks up. (How the hell did she manage to make it here?) She takes Santos's side, fiercely.

TALAKE

He's right! Decisions are made by  
the colonists now -- and that's us.

SANTOS

Who thinks I should go for help?

HANDS GO UP all around -- over two-thirds of the colonists.

TALAKE

Let's start consolidating the air  
in the tanks --

GINA

I want a couple of those tanks too.

Everyone turns to look at her.

GINA (CONT'D)

Look, one thing went according to  
plan here. Our supplies came down  
safely in the cargo containers --

MASON ROSE

(cuts her off)

That's great, and once we're all at  
the colony we can follow protocol  
and start retrieving them, but for  
now --

GINA

(overriding him)

The medical cargo container -- I  
got a glimpse of the GPS before it  
went to static. I think I know  
where it landed. It's a fully-  
equipped, mobile surgical suite --

Cormack gets it.

CORMACK

Nolan and I can take Devi there.  
Give us some of the oxygen tanks --

MASON ROSE

We're already giving up the spare oxygen to Santos. Now you want *more*?

(glances at Devi)

For someone who probably won't make it, and if she does, will be a drain on the colony? We're not equipped to support anyone who can't pull her weight.

GINA

It's too early to even know if --

COLONIST

He's right. I'm sorry, you're endangering all of us.

MASON ROSE

If we were home, things would be different. But we're not. The best thing to do is cut our losses. Let her die here, as painlessly as possible. Cormack can give her something.

Devi's eyes show she's following this conversation.

CORMACK

I'm not going to kill anyone, no matter how convenient you think it will be!

GINA

She's one of us!

MASON ROSE

(to the group)

I think we all know this isn't the first bad idea Nolan's had. That extra oxygen could be the difference between survival and death for us all.

GINA

I think we need another vote!

She looks around at the others. Off her face, determined...

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

There are cameras and a studio audience. Gina, Devi, Sophie and Mason Rose, Talake, Santos, Cormack, and about ten others stand on stage.

Mason gives Gina a friendly smile and playful jab as they stand next to each other -- they're friends. Honor, of course, is the master of ceremonies.

HONOR

May I present the judges -- Nelson Abaya, President of the L5 Society; Greg Bear, author of *Moving Mars*; and David Lewis, top scorer in last year's class.

Gina can't help looking toward David, and their eyes meet. He gives a wry smile. Honor addresses the competitors:

HONOR (CONT'D)

The US was once full of chestnut trees -- but a single blight destroyed them. A single blight destroyed Ireland's potato crop. Your lives hang on being able to identify and isolate any threat to your food source.

(beat)

There's a threat here. Find it.

Doors open, revealing a myriad of glass vials full of seeds; and on the other side of the room a table, with magnifying glasses and microscopes. The contestants rush over and at once begin choosing potentially contaminated vials. Devi cuts in front of Gina, blocking her from the area she was heading for.

Gina, botanist, quickly spots a likely vial and runs to the table with it. SHAVED HEAD GUY is in the spot next to her -- as Gina grabs a slide, her attention diverted for half a second, SHAVED HEAD PALMS HER VIAL, SWITCHING IT WITH HIS OWN. He checks the microscope quickly, raises his hand.

SHAVED HEAD

One mold here!

Suddenly the room starts to SHAKE. Earthquake? Everyone freezes. But Gina looks out at the studio audience -- no shaking. Then -- THE STAGE SPLITS APART.

GINA

It's the real test!

A crack appears high in the wall and a RACK OF PRESSURE SUITS is revealed.

GINA (CONT'D)

Get the p-suits! The habitat is compromised!

HONOR  
 (almost bored)  
 You have seconds to death.

A moment ago they were competitors. Now they have to cooperate to reach the suits. Several groups form, climbing on each other's shoulders and dropping suits down.

TALAKE is left alone. It happened so quickly. She tries to climb on her own, using handholds in the wall. Can't do it.

HONOR (CONT'D)  
 Ten, nine, eight...

As Honor counts down, people scurry to put on the suits. It's clear anyone left without one will be "dead" -- cut. Talake's desperate. And then... SANTOS drops her a pressure suit. She looks up at him, disbelieving -- then grabs it and scrambles in.

KA-BOOM! A final shake, breaking the painted facade of the "dome" above them. At that moment... the six people left unsuited are HIT WITH RED PAINTBALLS.

HONOR (CONT'D)  
 Dead. Dead, dead, dead, dead,  
 dead. You will not be going to  
 Mars.

Honor has just cut them in the most melodramatic way, but it's a genuine emotional blow to the six -- the death of a dream. We see how upset they are.

HONOR (CONT'D)  
 The rest of you are safe. For the  
 moment.

Gina and Sophie Rose, who are next to each other, hug in relief.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

An old jukebox is playing. The ten survivors of Honor's latest episode are gathered. Cormack and Friedman are at a table; Sophie Rose and Devi stand at the bar, a line of shots (half empty) in front of them. Devi, ever-competitive, is playing a game. She does a new shot. Then:

DEVI  
 Schools. Columbia undergrad,  
 Harvard, University of Delhi.

Sophie does her shot, then:

SOPHIE ROSE  
Undergrad Brown! MA, Ressa...  
Ressa... Ren-sa-LEER.

DEVI  
(laughs)  
Penalty shot!

Sophie has to do the extra shot. Both of them are fried.

FRIEDMAN AND CORMACK

FRIEDMAN  
Please, if we waited for NASA we'd  
be colonizing Mars centuries from  
now. They're still doing unmanned  
flights!

CORMACK  
Be fair, their budget's been cut to  
nuts and berries.

FRIEDMAN  
I'm not saying it's their fault,  
I'm saying...

He trails off, following Cormack's gaze to:

SHAVED HEAD

Who steps up to the bar beside Devi and Sophie. Confident.

SHAVED HEAD  
Ladies.

Two drunk chicks: he thinks he's going to score tonight. Not  
reckoning with Devi, the girl who has to out-guy the guys.  
She gives him a bored look and without missing a beat...

DEVI  
We're drunk. Doesn't mean we're  
going to fuck you.

On "fuck you," we PULL BACK to Cormack's POV so the sounds  
are masked by the jukebox. Cormack grins triumphantly.

CORMACK  
(to Friedman)  
Shot down, ladies and gentlemen.

FRIEDMAN  
If you're that obsessed with her,  
why don't you ask her out?  
(off Cormack's look)  
(MORE)

FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)

Seriously, you told me on film that you're going to Mars to do something a million people haven't done before you. I suggest instead you plant your flag in that virgin territory --

His cell BEEPS. He checks it and gives a WHOOP. Stands.

FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)

Everybody! Honor just put it out on her Twitter feed! Ratings through the roof! Twenty million people saw you losers kick ass!

CHEERS from everyone. Sophie looks at Devi.

SOPHIE ROSE

Where the hell is Gina?

EXT. PARKING LOT - EXPEDITION CAMPUS - NIGHT

It's quietly raining. Gina's working under the hood of her car. Another car stops and the window goes down: David.

DAVID

Hey, Nolan.

She looks over at him.

GINA

My car's my version of KISS. It's so old there's not a computerized part in it -- just points, plugs, and a V-8 that can be fixed without any help.

(beat)

In theory. I don't suppose you have a screwdriver?

He nods for her to get into his car.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Gina and David sit in a booth. They've got the works -- cheeseburgers, fries, shakes. There's a natural intimacy between these two, an ease.

GINA

It must be great -- knowing you're going out with the First Wave.

DAVID

It's not *absolutely* certain. The names haven't been released to the press.

GINA

Come on. Honor's all about getting the public to buy in. She wouldn't have put you out there on TV if she weren't sending you to Mars.

DAVID

(changing subject)

What about you, Nolan? Who gave you the space bug? There's always someone... a teacher, an astronaut you admired...

GINA

My grandfather's an archeologist. He took me along to all his digs when I was growing up. And he'd say, "We all came out of Africa -- and look, they built a place here in Romania." Or in France... China... New Guinea... they just kept going!

(beat)

I wondered what it was like for them. The first wanderers.

The glow of her interest is hard to resist. They look at each other for a moment... Very aware... He reaches blindly for a salt packet.

GINA (CONT'D)

That's the sugar.

DAVID

Right.

He looks around, a little embarrassed, and realizes with a start that the Man behind the counter is staring at them. He glances around and sees Customers staring as well.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I think we've been recognized.

Gina tries to take a bite of her cheeseburger. Feels self-conscious.

TIME-CUT TO:



INT. DINER - NIGHT

They're paying for their meal at the cash register.

MAN AT REGISTER

(to Gina)

Congratulations. On making it  
through tonight.

GINA

(startled)

Oh. Thank you.

People start to APPLAUD. She and David start to walk out --

GINA (CONT'D)

Thank you! Thanks!

It's surreal. But she can't help smiling. They start walking faster... faster... LAUGHING as they burst through the doors.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

They're parked across the street from the bar where Gina's supposed to meet her friends. It's late, the street quiet. The rain DRUMS on the roof. They sit there, looking straight ahead. Not speaking. The vibe between them is intense.

GINA

I should go.

She doesn't make a move. A beat...

DAVID

Nolan, anything between us would be  
dangerous.

GINA

I know.

And now they're closer to each other.

DAVID

I'm supposed to be impartial. You  
said it, Honor is all about the  
public buying in. If it got out  
that we were...

GINA

I know.

They look at each other. Without a word, she pulls his head down to hers. The kiss is red-hot.

They're both on fire. She starts pulling his shirt off, and he helps, though he can barely stop touching her to do it. And then it's car sex in the rain. Whatever's between them, this is no passing fling. It's serious and intense.

Off Gina, gasping...

**EXT. MARS - DAY**

Devi GASPS as Cormack and Gina set down her stretcher. Santos and his group just came out as well. For a moment, despite the urgency, they all stand there looking around at the landscape, wordless. Then...

CORMACK

We're on another goddamn planet.

GINA

Training doesn't matter. Nothing could ever really prepare you for this.

Santos addresses his people, pointing toward nearby hills. Gina points in another direction for Cormack --

GINA (CONT'D)

That way.

DEVI

This is crazy. You don't even know for sure where the thing is --

GINA

(calm authority)

Shut up, Devi, we're saving you.

Devi looks at Cormack.

DEVI

Why are you doing this?

CORMACK

Felt like a walk.

They lift the stretcher again. We PULL BACK...

...to see the tiny figures of the two groups start walking away in opposite directions, dwarfed by the dangerous, alien landscape all around them.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. MARS - DAY**

Santos, Mason Rose, and Bell make their way through the Mars landscape. The final member of their party is Gaines (the crewmember who supported Captain Gautier -- his uniform collar is visible in his helmet).

GAINES

(with a look at Santos)

Let's hope we're going in the right direction.

(beat)

Solar wind storm. What are the odds of that?

SANTOS

Every colonization effort has its share of bad luck. The Donner Party was exhausted by the time they reached the foot of a pass over the Sierras. It was October. They rested for the night. When they woke, it was snowing hard.

(beat)

The storms were a month early. They were trapped. In what turned out to be the worst winter in decades.

MASON ROSE

(taken aback)

The Donner Party...? The people who ate each other?

SANTOS

Don't judge them. When people are isolated, in extreme circumstances -- when they've been traumatized -- they behave in ways they never thought they could.

BELL

(considering)

We're on Mars. It doesn't get more isolated than this. But I don't see us eating each other.

SANTOS

(smiles wryly)

We'll hope it stays that way.

(beat; to Mason)

So you're not a fan of Gina Nolan.

MASON ROSE  
She shouldn't be here.

SANTOS  
Want to talk about it?

Off Mason... maybe he does.

**EXT. MARS - DAY**

Gina and Cormack set Devi's stretcher down to rest.

GINA  
Take some water from your pack.

DEVI  
I shouldn't be taking water. You two should take mine, add it to your supply. Stupid to waste it.

They don't respond. She looks at them both; then to Cormack:

DEVI (CONT'D)  
Come on. I'm dead weight. Do you really think I'll survive this?

CORMACK  
(shrugs)  
I plan on dancing with you at the holiday party. I'll let you lead.

DEVI  
You're lying to me -- like I'm an idiot!

CORMACK  
No, you really seem like the kind of person who insists on leading.

Devi looks thrown -- Cormack's not allowing her to be properly outraged. Gina smiles at this, then stands, and they pick up the stretcher again. They trudge onward. She glances up for a moment as she walks... we see the pale sun in the cold sky, looking further away than on Earth...

**EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY**

The warm yellow sun beams in a blue sky. David's on a blanket outside his family's beach house. It's a private beach; no one else around. He looks up from his book and smiles a sweet, happy smile. This guy's in love.

DAVID  
Hey, Nolan.

We see Gina, who was clearly just swimming, join him.

GINA  
Hey, Lewis.

She towels off and flings herself down beside him. Lifts her head and calls to the world:

GINA (CONT'D)  
Three day leave!  
(beat; normally:)  
After six months of crushing our  
spirits.

She glances around happily; not only beach and water and sun, but a wealthy home behind them.

GINA (CONT'D)  
Your family has quite a place here.  
Sure they won't mind?

DAVID  
My parents are never here. They  
travel a lot.

GINA  
Doing what?

DAVID  
"Advising." They deal with  
political crises. And they don't  
really care what I do.

GINA  
They must care.

DAVID  
(amused)  
No, they're not actually required  
to. They parked me with a lot of  
other people, growing up.

Gina's a little shocked. Her own life was emotionally secure.

GINA  
And yet you wanted us to come here.

DAVID  
Because I'll be going to Mars in a  
week, and you'll be going to  
Antarctica for training.  
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

We're never going to play in the ocean, or feel the breeze on our skin, ever again.

She's silent, taking this in. Then:

GINA

Why go, if you'll miss Earth so much?

DAVID

Baby, look around at this planet. We're tearing the heart out of it. The human race can't afford to keep all its eggs in this basket.

GINA

(troubled)

You think we're doomed. How can you go to Mars without hope?

He rolls over, his face inches from hers. Full of love.

DAVID

I didn't say I had no hope. You and me, in a new world --

He kisses her. Just as Gina spots a MAN IN JEANS on the deck beyond, staring at them in surprise. He's carrying a spa cleaning rod. David turns and looks, just as the man retreats in embarrassment.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's the caretaker. I thought he was away this week --

GINA

Did he recognize me from TV? What if he tells someone?

She sits up, panicked. Off their worried faces...

INT. SOPHIE ROSE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Sophie Rose and Friedman are eating in bed. Clearly they just had sex. There's a casual intimacy that suggests they've been together for a while. It's not romantic -- more like friends with benefits. And not even close friends.

FRIEDMAN

Did I mention I'll be with you in the Second Wave transit?

SOPHIE ROSE

(shocked)

You're a colonist?

FRIEDMAN

God, no, don't be insane. I'll be returning to Earth with the crew. Where my documentary will bring me fame and fortune.

(beat; tentative)

Which you could enjoy with me, if you stayed.

SOPHIE ROSE

You could enjoy Mars with *me*.

FRIEDMAN

I'll kill myself before I move anywhere I can't get coffee. Or blue agave tequila. Or take long walks through Central Park and see the trees turn color. God, live in a hamster cage with the same few people till I die? My day's not a day unless I pass several hundred --

There are LOUD VOICES outside.

FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)

--annoyed pedestrians--

He stops as the VOICES become LOUDER and more angry.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - DAY

Friedman and Sophie emerge to see Devi's door open, and two people in the hall, on their way out but lingering to argue -- her parents. English is their second language.

FATHER

Do you hate us? How else are we to explain this behavior?

DEVI

(looking miserable)

No, of course I don't h--

FATHER

You had the best upbringing! The finest schools! A beautiful house to come home to!

Devi looks thoroughly browbeaten. She doesn't know how to defend herself in their eyes.

MOTHER

And a man who wants to marry you!

Gina appears at the end of the hall with her duffel, just back from three-day leave. She stops.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

A fine young man, who respects you!  
What's wrong with him?

DEVI

Nothing! Nothing! It's just --  
not the life I want --

FATHER

Enough! I've been too patient. If  
you go through with this, you are  
not our daughter.

He takes his wife's arm and strides away. Devi looks hit by a truck. Her facade of confidence gone. Traumatized. She stands there in the doorway for a second, then becomes aware there are spectators. Her gaze falls on Sophie and her face changes. Anger. She stalks forward.

DEVI

Was that amusing? Did you enjoy  
it?

SOPHIE ROSE

What? I'm sorry, it's just their  
voices were so loud, we --

DEVI

I knew they would never watch  
Honor's show, but I was careful. I  
changed my name, I cut my hair  
differently. The only person I  
told was you -- that night in the  
bar, when we were both fried.

Sophie's shocked at the implication.

SOPHIE ROSE

I didn't --

DEVI

They said someone left a message on  
my father's voicemail! That I was  
going to Mars and never coming  
home!



SOPHIE ROSE

It wasn't me! Devi, please -- I would never --

DEVI

(ice cold)

Is that how afraid you are of me? Well, you're right. We're competitors. *And I will leave you behind in the dust.*

She SLAMS the door. Sophie's dazed. Gina walks over to them, and Friedman turns to her:

FRIEDMAN

Wow. I didn't think anything could get to her.

Sophie looks at them, wanting to be believed.

SOPHIE ROSE

I didn't call her parents!

Gina doesn't know how to take any of this. And just then... her wristband BEEPS. "REPORT TO HONOR BEAKE'S OFFICE." Off Gina... oh shit...

INT. HONOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Gina enters. David is already standing by Honor's desk. Uh-oh. Honor's attention is on her enormous and ridiculously thin computer screen; we can't see what she's looking at. She goes on working, ignoring them. Then, calmly:

HONOR

Idiots.

A beat. Gina and David aren't sure what to say.

HONOR (CONT'D)

I have bots roaming the Internet 24/7, collecting all mentions of the project. Today they coughed up your names. According to the Facebook page of one Alfonso Batts, you were spotted in the charming and sandy throes of puppy love.

DAVID

This is my fault, Honor --

GINA

The hell it is, I was the one who --

HONOR

Silence.

(they shut up)

A tabloid has already offered ten thousand dollars for the two pictures he snapped of you with his phone.

Gina and David exchange a look. Oops.

HONOR (CONT'D)

I convinced Mr. Batts the deal was not in his best interest -- but I can only hold back the ocean so long. This must be handled quickly. David, your name has already been released for the first wave of colonization. If you were suddenly dropped from the program, it would raise questions. Gina, at this point, I'm afraid nobody cares about you. You're cut.

A beat, as Gina takes this blow in.

GINA

From this year's class?

HONOR

From any year's class. Return to Tallyho, Massachusetts and plan another life.

GINA

(getting pissed; corrects)

Taliesin.

(beat)

What we did was -- okay, it was somewhat unethical --

HONOR

Do ya think?

GINA

But once we were on Mars, nobody would care if we were together!

DAVID

She's right, Honor. Colonists forming families is what it's all supposed to be about.

HONOR

You argue as though I care.  
 (looks at them)  
 Fine; I'll spell it out. I didn't call you idiots for sleeping together. I called you idiots for getting caught. How many millions of viewers have seen David on the judges panel? And you let your relationship become public.

Gina has no good defense to this...

HONOR (CONT'D)

Leave. Both of you. David, I expect to see you at tomorrow's press conference, being charming and boyish.

That's pretty final. Off David and Gina...

INT. OUTSIDE HONOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DAVID

I'm not going without you. I'll withdraw --

GINA

(no)  
 Mars is what you were meant to do. You'll be miserable for the rest of your life if you don't go.

Off David, looking at the woman he loves...

INT. OUTSIDE DEVI'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Richard Santos KNOCKS. Devi opens the door... we can see she's been crying. But she looks at him proudly and coldly.

DEVI

Surprise, it's the shrink. Sorry, but I don't need to "share" with a stranger. That's for the weak and the confused, which you clearly think I am.

She starts to close the door.

SANTOS

In fact, I *know* you're strong. I'm here to *keep* you strong.

Off Devi, not sure what to make of him... DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. MARS - DAY**

Santos's party is making their way carefully up the steep, rocky hills. As they climb, there's a distant, unearthly HOWL... very far away.

GAINES  
Did you hear that?

SANTOS  
Hear what?

GAINES  
(hesitates)  
I could've sworn I heard something  
howl.

SANTOS  
It's the wind. These rocky canyons  
make for strange acoustics.

GAINES  
(uncertain)  
Sure.

They move on. But they're as unsettled as we are.

**INT. LANDER - DAY**

The 40-plus colonists move slowly, conserving air. Tension is thick. There's not much talking, and what there is happens in low voices. Friedman sits there miserably. Talake joins him.

TALAKE  
You all right?

FRIEDMAN  
I can't tell if I'm having a panic  
attack or if the air's thinner.

TALAKE  
The Captain lowered the oxygen  
mixture to make it last longer.

FRIEDMAN  
Oh. Good. I'm not losing it.  
(beat; black humor)  
I can die bravely.

She sits beside him, puts a hand on his. They're all in the same boat.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. RAVINE - MARS - DAY**

Gina and Cormack look down a ravine, where the top portion of a cargo container is visible, buried in soft soil.

CORMACK

Gonna be tough getting down there.

GINA

We can do it. We'll go down, clear the soil away from the door, and then carry her.

DEVI

Don't.

They return to her. She looks worse; her face is blue-ish.

CORMACK

Seriously, you can be annoying.

Gina grins. But Devi goes on, intense:

DEVI

I'm not afraid... of dying.

GINA

Look, we get it, you're the iron woman --

DEVI

I'm afraid of being dependent. I was dependent... on my family. They wanted me to be dependent on a husband. I couldn't... breathe.

CORMACK

Don't anticipate the worst.

DEVI

("I'm not a fool")

My shoulder's crushed. Will I be able... to use my arm? Will I be able to mine and farm?

(beat)

I'm a... microbiologist. Will I have fine motor control in my hand?

(looks at them)

What can you promise me? That you'll all work... extra hard... to take care of me forever?

Cormack kneels beside her.

CORMACK

You might regain the use of your arm. I don't know. Don't give up while the dice are still rolling.

(beat)

A year from now, if we get out of this... you still want to die, talk to me again. I don't think you will.

She stares at him.

DEVI

How can you be so strong?

CORMACK

You're strong too.

DEVI

I fake it.

Gina's unrolled a rope cable. She nods to Cormack.

GINA

Come on.

They start down the ravine.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

David is on a podium along with the 12 other First Wave Colonists. The audience is full of REPORTERS, asking questions. Gina sits in the back, watching.

CNN WOMAN

Yu Wen, how do you and the other four women feel about being mothers of a future society?

YU WEN

It's a little early to talk about being mothers. And speaking for myself -- I'm just honored to be chosen.

FOX NEWS MAN

David, you've been on TV the most. You've got fame, people admire you - - hundreds of schoolkids around the world have sent you letters. You're a successful young man.

DAVID  
 (charming)  
 Thanks. Was that a question?

FOX NEWS MAN  
 What will you miss?

A beat. Gina watches him. She knows who he'll miss.

DAVID  
 I could say Rocky Road ice cream or  
 the breakers off Cape Hatteras.  
 But the truth is... I'll miss  
 nothing. Because I'll be on Mars  
 with the woman I love.

The reporters go crazy --it's a sensation. The cover of this week's People Magazine is in no doubt. Gina stares, dumbfounded. Then she looks to Honor... who is gazing narrowly at David. Did he just get himself cut from the program?

This is the crunch. He starts lying in earnest:

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 I only just learned that she loves  
 me too. We couldn't say anything  
 to each other for a long time,  
 because I was one of the  
 evaluators. But when she knew I'd  
 be leaving in a few days... well,  
 the time was too short to waste.  
 (beat)  
 Gina, could you come up here?

Honor stands. In a voice that's as scary as it is polite:

HONOR  
 Yes, Gina, please come up.

And now it's not only the professional video cameras. Every smartphone in the audience seems to be raised, following Gina as she ascends to the podium.

David stands, and Honor, smiling brightly, puts her left arm around his shoulders. She puts her right arm around Gina's shoulders. And hugs just a little too hard. Gina winces.

HONOR (CONT'D)  
 Well, can I spring a surprise, or  
 what?

FLASHES go off. The audience APPLAUDS. Honor releases the two and turns to face them, her back to the cameras. She SWITCHES OFF HER MIKE.

HONOR (CONT'D)

You *will* put on a good show for me.

(to Gina)

And you will still have to earn your way onto the Second Wave. Or else the story we sell will be of lovers parted. There won't be a dry eye in the house.

Off Gina, knowing Honor means it...

INT. LAUNCH SITE - DAY

A CROWD is cordoned off from the area leading to the gate that opens onto the field. The place is packed, cameras going off as the first TWELVE COLONISTS walk through the gate. Then, last, comes David. Arm in arm with Gina.

The crowd ROARS with approval. Gina and David walk to the gate together. He addresses Gina, smiling at the crowd, trying not to move his lips much.

DAVID

Our goodbye kiss. In front of 20 million people.

GINA

I know.

A middle-aged Woman calls from the crowd:

WOMAN

You'll make it too, Gina!

Gina doesn't respond to this; her greatest fear is that it won't happen. David knows this. They're at the gate.

DAVID

See you on Mars, Nolan.

GINA

Count on it, Lewis.

And they KISS. Fuck those 20 million people. This is for them. DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. MARS - NIGHT**

TWO MOONS IN THE NIGHT SKY.



Santos and his party are high among the cliffs now. On a narrow pathway. Santos glances up.

SANTOS

Deimos and Phobos. And we're right under them.

(looks down the cliff)

Once there was probably an ocean down there, and tides --

ANOTHER HOWL. FROM THE LEDGE DIRECTLY ABOVE THEM.

It's not just the unexpected proximity. It's a loud, eerie, set-your-teeth-on-edge sound, just the kind of thing that destroys nerves.

Everyone reacts. They can't help glancing up... NOTHING.

GAINES

I'm turning off my suit radio.

MASON ROSE

Don't be ridiculous, you won't be able to hear us --

GAINES

I don't want to hear *that* --

ANOTHER HOWL, CLOSE BY AND BEHIND THEM.

Gaines, his nerves on edge, puts a foot wrong. He slides on pebbles -- over the cliff edge.

BELL

Oh God!

They hurry to the cliff edge and peer over.

GAINES LIES ON A ROCKY OUTCROPPING. Not too far below.

GAINES

Get me up!

Mason glances behind to where the howl came from. Silence.

MASON ROSE

(uncomfortable)

That's one crazy wind.

They look at each other warily. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ANTARCTICA - ESTABLISHING

A training settlement on the icy plain.

INT. ANTARCTICA TRAINING HABITAT - DAY

Gina's lying on the bed, playing a video from David.

DAVID (VIDEO)

So it's been eight months. The radio lag drives me a little crazy -  
- I want to see your eyes when I talk. I can't wait till you come through that door, Nolan. It'll be better than sex, seeing your face in real time.

(beat; deadpan)

Though we can do that, too.

Sophie Rose walks by Gina's open door as David goes on talking in the b.g.

DAVID (VIDEO) (CONT'D)

We're getting the place ready for you guys, adding rooms to the habitat...

SOPHIE ROSE

Don't you ever get tired of re-playing that?

GINA

Nope.

SOPHIE ROSE

Especially since there's a new one.

(off Gina)

You didn't know? Two new transmissions as of an hour ago. One marked "personal."

Gina jumps to her feet and hurries out the door.

INT. ANTARCTICA COMMUNICATIONS COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Gina hurries in, followed by Sophie. Heads straight for the chief techie, BERGSTROM.

GINA

There's a message for me?

BERGSTROM

(distracted)

No. There's a personal one for Honor, and a... a general one. We just released it from security processing.

Gina starts to realize that some of the people here are quietly crying.

GINA  
What happened?

Bergstrom points to a monitor. Gina walks over and joins several people standing in a knot, watching. It's David.

DAVID (VIDEO)  
...they were exploring the caves at Grissom Hill. Five people dead, just like that. When the roof gave in, the amount of rubble... we just couldn't get through in time.

More people have arrived and joined the knot of those listening. Talake is one of those crying. Santos puts a comforting hand on her shoulder. Cormack, however, looks more confused than sad.

CORMACK  
I don't understand. What were they doing at Grissom Hill? I thought --

Talake bursts out:

TALAKE  
*Why are we doing this?*

SANTOS  
(to them all)  
It's horrible. But we always knew... you can't colonize a new territory without a price in lives. When we get there -- those of us who make it -- we could pay that price, too.  
(beat)  
All we can do is try to see that their dream goes on.

This is what they all feel in their hearts. He's said the right thing. The group is beginning to accept that this is a man to lean on. DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. MARS - MOUNTAINS - NIGHT**

The party's moving slowly now. Bell and Mason are supporting Gaines, whose ankle is injured.

SANTOS  
Are you sure you can't put weight on it?

Gaines makes another effort -- not his first.

GAINES

It's not broken, but... no. It won't take it -- the ligament must be fully torn.

(beat)

I'm sorry. It's such a small, stupid injury. It's just --

SANTOS

The timing.

GAINES

Yeah.

They reach the top of a promontory and look into the distance.

MASON ROSE

There's a forked mountain near the habitat. Shouldn't we see it by now?

They digest this.

SANTOS

This may take longer than we thought.

It settles on the group like a pronouncement of doom. They exchange looks. Mason glances at one of the air tanks and bites his lip. He says nothing.

They keep struggling on.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. MARS - MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Santos's party is moving slowly. CLOSE on Gaines's unhappy face... he's slowing them down and he knows it.

BELL

If Rose will carry the extra tank,  
maybe we can strap our gear  
together, improvise a stretcher we  
can drag.

MASON ROSE

That'll never work.

BELL

It's strong enough to hold the  
tanks, it might hold Gaines.

(beat)

We need to try.

They look to Santos.

SANTOS

Yes. We need to try.

Santos looks out over the desolate plain below, thoughtful.  
From that barren landscape we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EXPEDITION CAMPUS - DAY

More time has passed. Trees are flaming with color. The  
class has returned for final decisions...

INT. HALL - DAY

The class is gathered. Tense. Fifty names have begun  
swiftly going up on a big MONITOR, one by one, under the  
words: SECOND WAVE. We see reactions, as people read their  
names. Friedman's name is on the CREW LIST, off to the side.  
He's delighted. To Sophie:

FRIEDMAN

Two tickets to Paradise.

SOPHIE ROSE

My name's not there yet. And for  
you, Paradise is a round-trip  
ticket.

Cormack's name goes up; he reacts with a slow smile of  
relief. Santos shows nothing. Then "Rose" appears...  
followed by "Mason." Brother and sister look at each other.

Then, a second "Rose," followed by "Sophie." They fling their arms around each other in joy.

MASON ROSE

It wouldn't be Mars without you.

Devi's going. She's not surprised, honestly.

...And that's it. Gina stares at the board. The words "COLONIZATION LIST COMPLETE" appear. The ones who made it are congratulating each other. Off Gina, in shock...

INT. HALLWAY - DORM - DAY

Gina's walking down the hall, still in shock. As the wheels in her head spin, she starts walking faster and faster...

INT. HONOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Gina bursts in, followed by an ASSISTANT. Honor waves the assistant away.

GINA

What is this? Payback for what happened at the press conference?

HONOR

I made a fair decision.

GINA

Fair? My test scores were in the top one percent. My psych evaluations, my medical tests... I passed everything! What more could you need?

HONOR

I didn't want to have to do this.

She keys into her computer. A MONITOR on the wall comes on. It's David, in his room on Mars. A sliver of his personal computer screen is visible behind him.

DAVID (VIDEO)

I hope you never have to see this, but I've sent it to Honor because -- well, I know how you are. I'm sorry, Gina. I don't want you to come to Mars. Based on my experiences here, I don't think you would make a good colonist.

Gina stares at the screen in shock.

DAVID (VIDEO) (CONT'D)

I know we planned to do this together, but the truth is... I've changed my mind about us. This is a personal decision as well as a professional one. I'm sorry.

(beat)

I know it must hurt, but it's for the best.

He reaches up and turns off the recorder. The screen goes black. Gina stands there, dumbfounded. Honor knows this has hit her like a ton of bricks; she's not unkind. As she gently turns Gina toward the door and guides her out:

HONOR

You need some time to think. There's no hurry about leaving; take a few days, see your friends if you want --

Gina stops short. Her brain's starting to work again.

GINA

Why does he still have my picture on his laptop?

HONOR

What?

GINA

His computer -- you could see sand and ocean. I know where that picture was taken. It's a shot of me.

HONOR

So he didn't get around to replacing it.

GINA

A painful breakup, but he wants to see my face every time he sits down? No. Something's wrong. He was lying.

HONOR

That's quite a conclusion to jump to based on his wallpaper.

GINA

He risked his own shot at Mars to get me back in the program!

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

He sent me a new video three weeks ago! You don't just suddenly turn 180 like that!

(thinks)

Something is wrong on Mars. With the situation, or with him.

HONOR

Maybe this is what you'd like to believe.

GINA

Maybe the tragedy at Grissom Hill knocked him off-balance. I don't know.

She looks at Honor. A serious plea.

GINA (CONT'D)

He needs me.

HONOR

He just said the opposite. And I tend to agree with him. You've made decisions with your heart and not your head before -- that's how you ended up getting cut the first time.

GINA

You want a reasoned argument? He's the senior colonist left, after Grissom Hill. If *I'm* right -- if he's suffering depression, if he's not thinking clearly for whatever reason, the entire project suffers. That's high-risk. If *you're* right, and I go to Mars only to discover nothing's wrong and I've annoyed my ex-boyfriend... that's low-risk.

Honor considers this. Gina has a point. A beat...

HONOR

Prove it.

She keys a password into her computer, then hands Gina the keyboard.

HONOR (CONT'D)

If you go to Mars, someone will have to be dropped from the list to make room for you. These are the records of your fifty classmates.

(MORE)



HONOR (CONT'D)  
Roam the database. Find the  
weakest link.

GINA  
(taken aback)  
You want *me* to choose?

HONOR  
Isn't that what you were asking *me*  
to do? I already know the answer,  
but it'll be interesting to see how  
you make your choice -- on  
friendship or on the data. Heart  
or head.

Gina looks at the screen. She can sense this isn't going to  
go well.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Twenty or so of the future colonists, here at the bar to  
celebrate (including Cormack, Santos, Sophie, Mason, Devi,  
Talake). Gina enters. A few nearby see her and their smiles  
change to looks of sympathy. Someone calls:

COLONIST  
Tough luck, Nolan!

She approaches the bar, where Sophie, Mason, and Devi are  
standing. They see Gina and fall silent.

GINA  
Rose, could I talk to you for a  
minute?

She's closest to Mason; he thinks she's addressing him and  
steps forward. Hating herself, Gina says:

GINA (CONT'D)  
The other Rose.

Off Sophie's puzzled look, we PULL BACK. As Willie Nelson  
sings "Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys," we  
see the words Gina's saying MOS hit Sophie in the gut.  
Shock, with grief right behind. Mason puts his arms around  
his sister, looks beyond her to where Gina stands, miserable  
but resolute. We see him yell at her MOS -- "WHAT ARE YOU  
TALKING ABOUT, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT --"

Off this tableau... DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. MARS - RAVINE - NIGHT**

Under the light of two moons, Gina and Cormack are clearing dirt away from the cargo container. They only have their hands to work with.

GINA

I'm sorry I didn't get to know you better on Earth. You're a stand-up guy.

CORMACK

(smiles)

We all knew we'd get to know each other on Mars. Maybe too well.

(beat)

It must be tough for you. Rose hates you, your boyfriend told you to stay home --

GINA

You know about that?

CORMACK

The message came through Central Comm. People gossip. Not many secrets in our little world.

GINA

I didn't believe him. I think something's wrong.

CORMACK

So do I.

(off her surprise)

He said those five colonists died at Grissom Hill. But I saw the plan for that day's exploring party; they weren't supposed to be anywhere near Grissom Hill.

GINA

The plan must have changed.

CORMACK

Except I went back and looked at it. The plan as Lewis filed it the night before. It was altered to read "Grissom Hill" -- altered after the fact. After the deaths.

A beat, as she takes this in.

GINA

You must have been mistaken the first time you read it.

CORMACK

I know what I saw. And weren't you saying a second ago that you thought Lewis was lying?

GINA

About not wanting me along! It's one thing to have some confusion about a relationship. It's something else to falsify a major tragedy -- for what reason?

(doesn't buy it)

It makes no sense.

CORMACK

Does the damage the transport ship took on the way here make sense? Two explosions, supposedly caused by a meteor --

GINA

Things go wrong in exploration. That's why they call it "exploration." Ever heard of Scott's expedition to the South Pole? Doomed. Franklin's expedition in the arctic? Doomed. Apollo 13 could have --

CORMACK

Nolan, I get it, but what are the odds we'd take a meteor hit that would cripple the ship *and* take out the antenna array so we'd have no communication with Earth or Mars?

She looks at him.

CORMACK (CONT'D)

Think about it. There are a million disasters you can prepare for, and ten million you can't. We had a disaster that brought us all here -- colonists and crew -- but isolated us. Made us helpless.

GINA

(sympathetic, but still not buying it)

You think it was sabotage?

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

But what would that gain anyone?  
And why didn't you say something at  
the time?

CORMACK

And cause more panic, when I can't  
prove anything? And when we were  
on Earth, I didn't want to  
jeopardize my chances --

Gina's staring at the cargo box. Now she cuts him off.

GINA

Wait a minute.

(beat)

I don't think this is the medical  
cargo. Isn't there supposed to be  
a red cross on it?

She indicates a symbol that's now half-visible -- it looks  
like the top half of a pie wheel. He stares, horrified.

CORMACK

Shit. After all this -- it's the  
wrong box?

Gina gets the math of this. Still, she can't give up.

GINA

We could start walking with Devi.  
Toward the habitat.

CORMACK

You know there's not enough in the  
tanks. We'd all die before we  
reached there.

He glances up the ravine, to where we see the edge of Devi's  
stretcher. He curses under his breath.

CORMACK (CONT'D)

I guess you're right. I guess  
things just go fucking wrong.

He hits the cargo container with his fist.

They look at each other. What will they do now?

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**EXT. MARS - RAVINE - NIGHT**

Gina and Cormack have excavated the door and are now prying the cover off the entry box. With some difficulty.

CORMACK  
This is pointless.

GINA  
There might be something we can use.

CORMACK  
You and me, maybe. But Devi?  
Without medical, she's --

The cover comes off. Gina at once hits the button inside. The DOOR TO THE CONTAINER SLIDES OPEN. Revealing...

...a lot of equipment. In parts. Anything might be here. But as they peer in, Gina and Cormack get a suspicion they know what this is.

CORMACK (CONT'D)  
You don't think...

Yes, she does. She steps inside.

GINA  
I just hope there's a screwdriver in here.

**EXT. MARS - MOUNTAINS - NIGHT**

Gaines sits on a boulder. Mason Rose and Bell are in the distance, trying to jerry-rig a stretcher. Santos comes and sits beside Gaines.

SANTOS  
They're not going to make a useful stretcher. And if they did, we'd still have to carry you.  
(confidential look)  
They needed to try.

GAINES  
Maybe we should wait and see --

SANTOS

Here are the options: we could continue to support you on one foot, which means risking the deaths of everyone in the lander.

(before Gaines can speak)

Or: we can try a fireman's carry. Put you on one man's back. The rest of us will outdistance that man -- thereby losing two people, rather than one. Or, and this is what will happen, we can leave you behind.

Gaines looks pale.

GAINES

I won't make it. Unless you leave me the extra tank.

SANTOS

And the rest of us won't make it without it.

GAINES

You want me... to prepare myself for being left.

SANTOS

No. If we're forced to abandon you, it will blot everyone's lives. It will be the black mark in this colony's beginnings. No one would be able to forget.

(beat)

How much better if no one ever forgot that you were a hero. That you sacrificed yourself for the group. *That* could be the history our descendants learn.

GAINES

(a beat; distraught)

What are you... how would...

SANTOS

We're on a mountain. Walk to the edge and fly.

Gaines's mind is in a whirl. He's been dreading being left for a while... hoping to avoid it. This is harder.

GAINES

It's just a sprain!

But he knows there's no way out. He stands.

GAINES (CONT'D)

Help me.

Santos guides him to the edge. Gaines stands there. He moves, about to push off... then he turns, desperate --

GAINES (CONT'D)

I can't. I can't just --

Santos, looking impatient and a little bored, YANKS HIS AIR HOSE LOOSE. He holds the end of the hose in his hand as Gaines feebly tries to wrestle it back.

We watch Gaines die. He sinks to the ground. Once he's safely dead, Santos removes his oxygen tank and takes it with him as he returns to Rose and Bell. They look up at him, confused for a second by the extra tank. Then they assume --

MASON ROSE

Did he... not wait?

SANTOS

I couldn't stop him.  
(as though awed)  
That man was a hero.

BELL

You could see how worried he was.  
About slowing us down.

Off Rose and Bell, deeply moved...

INT. VIDEO - EXPEDITION CAMPUS - DAY

A beautiful summer day. Friedman's interviewing Santos outdoors. Periodically, people passing nearby wave to Santos and he waves back -- he's popular.

SANTOS

My field is psychology. My speciality is the study of groups and individuals in isolation.

FRIEDMAN (O.S.)

Why is isolation so significant?

SANTOS

Ever heard of the Stanford Prison Experiment?

FRIEDMAN

Yeah -- students took on the roles of prisoners and guards. The guards went a little crazy.

SANTOS

It was a small group of people in a place where the old rules no longer applied. When old rules no longer apply, there's trauma -- and people change. In ways they would have once denied.

FRIEDMAN

But it seems unbelievable that people could change so quickly.

SANTOS

I worked with prisoners in solitary confinement, and I assure you it only took about a week before the TV started talking back to them.

FRIEDMAN

I'm starting to see "why Mars." The most isolated group of people in the history of the human race. Literally on another planet...

SANTOS

And of course things will go wrong -  
- because things always do. The colonists will be traumatized. When that happens, I'll be there for them.

FRIEDMAN

To make sure the wheels don't come off the bus.

Santos only smiles politely. Given what we just saw, we wonder if he'll be taking those wheels off himself. Then:

SANTOS

What about you, Mr. Friedman?

FRIEDMAN

Me?



SANTOS

In a sense, you're isolated here. You're neither fish nor fowl, not part of the Mars dream, just a hired gun Honor bought to follow her obsession with controlling publicity.

He pauses to give Friedman a chance to respond, but Friedman's too thrown to do so.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Of course, your isolation here is minor. You have friends, and a large family on Long Island. But situations alter. If you were changed -- traumatized -- what might you become?

As though he'd love to see. A beat, and then Friedman says, stumblingly:

FRIEDMAN

How did you know where my family lives?

And we feel just a touch of ominousness as:

SANTOS

I'm the counselor, Mr. Friedman. I have access to everyone's records.

As we hold on Santos regarding Friedman politely...

INT. SANTOS'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Santos at his study desk, looking through the records. He reaches one for CHANDRA DEVI -- and something catches his eye. "Next of Kin" is given -- a different last name -- with the note, "In case of emergency, request we do NOT notify parents." Off Santos, thoughtful...

INT. LANDER - NIGHT

The ones left behind. The lights are low, to conserve power. The oxygen mixture is just enough to survive.

FRIEDMAN

Where the hell are they?

Captain Gautier hears him.

GAUTIER  
 There's still time.  
 (to the others)  
 There's still time.

They look away from him. Here on the ground, his attempt to boost morale seems useless. He's a bent nail, used up, his purpose served. With no control over what happens next. And his face says he knows it.

**EXT. MARS - MORNING**

Santos, Rose, and Bell come over a rise and see the buildings of the colony's habitat. Salvation, rosy in the dawn light.

MASON ROSE  
 Thank God.

Then we hear a SOUND behind them, like a distant SCREAM. They react, anxious -- what the hell? The scream becomes a MOTOR REVVING. It gets LOUDER... and over the lip of a ravine comes --

--an ATV. With Gina, Cormac, and Devi. Gina holds Devi stable as they rush on. As Santos, Rose, and Bell stare... and hurry after them...

**INT. HABITAT - DAY**

Our people rush through the airlock, Cormack carrying Devi.

GINA  
 Help! Help, medical!

Santos, Bell, and Rose follow. They all realize... NO ONE IS THERE. The morning sun lights the empty corridor. As they all keep calling, Cormack and Gina get Devi into the sickbay.

**INT. SICKBAY - DAY**

Cormack yanks open a drawer of instruments. Dumps a sterilizing solution on them.

GINA  
 What the hell is going on?

CORMACK  
 No idea.

**INT. HABITAT - DAY**

We TRACK Santos, Rose, and Bell as they break up and move through different wings of the colony. Past several modular apartments, all uniquely decorated, clean and gleaming.

And empty.

Past a greenhouse. Empty.

Past a kitchen and dining hall -- with some half-drunk mugs of tea, and trash not yet taken out. Bell reacts to the SMELL, wrinkling his nose. If this were Earth, there'd be flies. Finally they all converge at...

**INT. HABITAT - COMMUNICATIONS CENTER - DAY**

A bank of monitors, some off, some on, showing various places inside and outside the habitat. All deserted, but operating normally, as if whoever was last there just stepped out for a bathroom break. Rose's voice shakes -- on the verge of a nervous breakdown:

MASON ROSE

They have to be here. They have to be! There's nowhere else for them to go!

Santos is more intrigued than frightened. He indicates one of the monitors with a red message light; hits it.

A RECORDED HOWL FILLS THE AIR. Rose freaks.

MASON ROSE (CONT'D)

Turn it off! Turn it off!

Santos, in no hurry, does so.

GINA (O.S.)

Look!

We see now that she's joined them. She's pointing to a spot high on the wall above. The CAMERA CIRCLES AROUND to show what she's looking at. A PHRASE PAINTED IN RED.

"I WILL SHOW YOU FEAR." On one wall. Continued on the next:  
"IN A HANDFUL OF DUST."

REVERSE -- we look down, moving over the faces of our colonists as they stare up at the cryptic message in confusion and fear.

What the hell happened here?

HOLD... then...

BLACKOUT.

THE END