

Executive Producer: Jason Katims
Executive Producer: Matt Reeves
Executive Producer: Jessica Goldberg
Executive Producer: Andrew Hinderaker
Executive Producer: Edward Zwick
Executive Producer: Hilary Swank
Executive Producer: Michelle Lee
Executive Producer: Adam Kassan

101

AWAY

“Go”

Written by
Andrew Hinderaker

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EXT. SPACE

We OPEN on a fragile blue marble surrounded by vast darkness. No MUSIC-- perfect silence as--

An astronaut's GLOVED HAND comes into frame, until the tiny orb is nestled between a forefinger and thumb.

PULL BACK to reveal the astronaut standing on the surface of the moon. The small orb she's pretending to hold is--

Earth.

Through her face shield we meet a WOMAN on the other side of 40. But we can also glimpse the 12-year-old girl who looked up at the sky and dreamed.

...All that has ever been known of humanity has occurred on that tiny spinning ball...

It's the near future, and EMMA GREEN is standing on the moon. Sounds of communication from 240,000 miles away:

DR. PUTNEY (V.O.)

How you feeling, Emma?

INT. LUNAR BASE - EMMA'S QUARTERS

Emma in her quarters, in her NASA sweats-- A pair of BABY SHOES hang by their laces below the video monitor.

EMMA

Repairs are underway. I'm confident the ship will be good to go and we'll remain on schedule.

A video conference: on screen, DR. PUTNEY, Emma's shrink from Aerospace Psychiatry Group.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

That's great, but I asked about you, not the ship.

EMMA

I've already debriefed with Darlene.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

Emma. I'm asking how you're feeling about what happened.

Something troubled in Emma's eyes--

FLASH CUT-- STROBING RED LIGHTS, an ALARM going off.

BACK TO EMMA'S QUARTERS

EMMA
Squared away.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)
It's natural to second-guess your
response to a crisis.

EMMA
Who called it a crisis?

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)
What would you call it?

EMMA
There was a problem; we dealt with it.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)
I understand that--

EMMA
All due respect, Doc, I've got a
checklist as long as my arm to get
through before tomorrow's launch--

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)
And you feel ready?

Emma's eyes betray her outward calm.

FLASH CUT-- An explosion of fire-- an anchor-less ball of
flame thrusts Emma into a wall--

BACK TO EMMA'S QUARTERS

EMMA
(cool and composed)
Good to go.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - AFTERNOON

EARTH. Or more specifically, a high school girls'
basketball game.

CHYRON: 2 Weeks Earlier.

The home team is down by one when ALEXIS GREEN, 15, with
her mom's laser focus, steals the ball and dribbles
toward the opposing basket--

IN THE STANDS Emma and MATT GREEN, 40s, Emma's husband,
are on their feet--

EMMA
Take the shot! TAKE THE SHOT!

MATT
You got this Lex!

ON THE COURT

Alexis stops, looking to dish it off--

EMMA
What?!? No! DRIVE! GO FOR IT!!

Annoyed parents look back at her.

EMMA (CONT'D)
WHAT? It's her shot! You want to win or
not?

ON THE COURT

Alexis passes to a TEAMMATE--

ON EMMA-- damn, she didn't take the shot--

ON THE COURT, the teammate shoots! The ball bounces off
the rim. The buzzer sounds. Alexis's team loses.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - HALLWAY

The Greens come flying down the hall, led by a NASA
ASSISTANT--

EMMA
--You'd been eating that girl's lunch all
game--

ALEXIS
--I had four fouls, Mom!

ASSISTANT
Just around the corner folks--

EMMA
You've got to want to take the last shot--

MATT
Guys, you can finish the postgame
analysis later.

The door opens revealing an enormous press conference.
Cameras FLASH. NASA, ESA, CNSA reps address reporters.

MATT (CONT'D)

Your ball, Em. Take the shot.

Emma takes a deep breath.

INT. JSC - BANQUET HALL - TIME CUT

Head of Mars Project, GEORGE LANE, 50s, at the dais--

GEORGE

Ladies and Gentlemen-- here they are--
the crew of the inaugural mission to
Mars!

Emma and FOUR OTHER WOMEN AND MEN-- one each from China,
Russia, the UK, and India, emerge from the wings--

APPLAUSE. CAMERAS FLASHING.

Emma sees Matt and Alexis in the crowd, beaming at her.

TIME CUT:

INT. JSC - BANQUET HALL

The press conference is underway.

BBC REPORTER

This mission is billed as an
international collaboration, yet the
official language is English, the
commander is American--

RAM ARYA, late 30s, Indian (v handsome), leans forward:

RAM

It's no secret the United States bore the
greatest financial burden of all five
nations. But Emma's our commander because
she's a phenomenal astronaut and leader.

RUSSIAN REPORTER

Chief Engineer Popov, you've logged more
time in space than anyone alive. How do
you feel about taking orders from someone
younger and less experienced?

MISHA POPOV, late 50s, cosmonaut and engineer, thick accent:

MISHA

Well when you put it like that...

LAUGHTER from the audience-- even Emma smiles.

RUSSIAN REPORTER

Conversely, Gbenro Weisberg-Adebayo--

ANGLE ON GBENRO, 40s, British citizen from Nigeria.

RUSSIAN REPORTER (CONT'D)

--You'll be the only one up there with absolutely no experience in space--

GBENRO

Yes, but perhaps what I can bring-- the hope of growing life on Mars-- will make up for what I lack.

EMMA

Gbenro is being modest. He happens to be one of the world's leading botanists. And Dr. Wang is among her nation's finest chemists. We've all trained together for two years, and I have absolute confidence in every member of this crew.

(grabs Ram's shoulder)

Except for Ram, maybe, who's an expert at crashing experimental Air Force jets. He's promised to do better with the Atlas, though.

RAM

Spoken like a true Navy pilot. But do you guys even have planes?

The AUDIENCE laughs, enjoying their banter.

ANOTHER REPORTER

Dr. Wang, it has been determined that you will be the first person to set foot on Mars. You must be elated.

LU WANG, 40s, Chinese, utterly serious:

LU

Yes. I am elated.

The audience waits for more. There isn't any.

ANOTHER REPORTER

How about your family?

LU

It is an honor to represent my family, my country, and the world.

MISHA

Don't worry, she is very chatty once you know her.

MORE LAUGHTER. Another REPORTER stands:

AMERICAN REPORTER

Emma, how about your family... How do they feel about you leaving them for three years?

Emma spots Matt in the crowd. Holds his gaze.

EMMA

My husband has been in this with me every step of the way. We both trained to be astronauts. Were it not for health reasons he might be the one going. Instead, he'll be there for us in Mission Control.

MATT senses the shutter clicks of nearby journalists.

BBC REPORTER

A recent study predicts a fifty-fifty chance you won't survive this mission.

RAM

What? Wait... is it too late to change my mind?

LAUGHTER-- EMMA finds Alexis in the audience.

BBC REPORTER

How then do you respond to critics who say the money spent on this mission could be better spent on social imperatives here on Earth: education, healthcare-- Why should we care more about Mars than we do our own planet?

EMMA

We shouldn't.

The audience is surprised, *what?* Matt whispers to Alexis:

MATT

Watch this...

EMMA

Obviously we should care about social imperatives. But in the US alone, we spend a trillion dollars each year on the military. And mostly in case the countries represented here decide to blow each other off the face of the Earth.

Grim laughter. Emma's tone changes--

EMMA (CONT'D)

This mission costs a fraction of that-- as we work together, repurposing those same tools of destruction for *discovery*.

Gbenro leans forward, taking his commander's cue:

GBENRO

This very moment, there is a team of astronauts *on the moon*, mining polar ice caps for fuel and water.

MISHA

Water that will be pumped into the hull of our ship to shield us from radiation-- allowing us to travel a thousand times farther than anyone has ever gone.

LU

--Where we hope to make more discoveries.

EMMA

Reaching Mars could prove to be one of the greatest achievements not just for science, but for the future of the planet.

RAM

Not to mention one hell of a ride.

EXT. GREEN HOME - BACK PORCH - EVENING

The Texas sky, beautiful at dusk. Matt mans the grill and helps Alexis with her homework--

MATT

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

ALEXIS

I have no idea.

MATT

We complete the square.

ALEXIS

Math makes me tired.

Matt fake stabs himself with the cooking fork as--

FROM THE LIVING ROOM

Emma looks out at her family, knowing *she won't be with them for three years*. The pain cuts through her...

HER DUFFEL BAG is mostly packed. Into it she carefully places framed pictures of Matt and Alexis. And finally, A TINY PAIR OF ALEXIS'S BABY SHOES.

Then she steels herself and heads:

OUTSIDE--

She joins them.

EMMA

Those steaks look about ready--

They sit at a wooden picnic table. Alexis starts to put her homework away--

EMMA (CONT'D)

You can finish that--

ALEXIS

No homework at dinner.

MATT

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

ALEXIS

Here's a math question for you.

EMMA

Okay.

ALEXIS

Is there really a fifty-fifty chance you'll die?

Matt and Emma go silent, whoa, not expecting that--

MATT

Lex... journalists need to be
provocative--

EMMA

Honey, I'm gonna be working with people
like your dad, the smartest engineers and
scientists in the world.

Alexis takes that in, wanting to believe, but skeptical.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And, yes, this job has risks... Space is--

MATT

--I'm not gonna let anything happen. I'm
gonna be right there.

ALEXIS

Mission Control isn't right there...

EMMA

No, you're right, it isn't.

Matt looks at Emma-- *can we get on the same page please.*

EMMA (CONT'D)

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

Off this disquieting note....

INT. GREEN HOME - ALEXIS'S BEDROOM - LATER

Alexis is trying to sleep when Emma steals into the room
in her boxers and a beat-up UVA tee shirt.

EMMA

You asleep?

ALEXIS

I'm too excited.

Emma sits down on the bed next to her--

EMMA

Do you want to talk any more about--

ALEXIS

No. If that's okay?

EMMA

Yeah, of course it's okay. Hey, I got you
a present--

She slides a bracelet with three colored beads on a
golden string onto Lexi's wrist--

EMMA (CONT'D)

(pointing to the beads)

The Earth. The moon. Mars. And the string
is me making my way back to you.

They smile at each other, and then Lexi burrows deeper
into her mother's body. They stay like that for a moment,
and then Emma says for both of them:

EMMA (CONT'D)

Never forget-- every step further away I
go, I'm getting closer to being back with
you.

They hold each other tight.

INT. GREEN HOME - DARKENED HALLWAY - LATER

Emma sneaks out of Lexi's room into the hallway where she
is met by the sound of a piano (think Erik Satie) coming
from downstairs--

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Matt is one of those multi-talented NASA guys who can
chart a flight to the moon, man a plane that breaks
gravity, and play the piano with his entire soul.

Emma sits beside him on the piano bench. He finishes and
she puts her head on his shoulder.

EMMA

She's fast asleep.

(then)

I couldn't lie to her.

MATT

You did what you felt was right.

EMMA

You know the risks more than anyone.

MATT

Only what every overcautious NASA doc has ever said COULD happen to me in space. It COULD exacerbate my condition, my brain COULD bleed out. But you know what? I'd go in a heartbeat if they'd let me.

(looks at her)

And you WILL make it home, because you are a phenomenal astronaut. I thought it the moment I first saw you in that T-38. You were fangs out all the way.

EMMA

Yeah, you were always a sucker for fast girls.

Matt smiles, softening.

EMMA (CONT'D)

But I owe it her to be honest, Matt.

MATT

...Every time you've launched has been the worst day of my life. Standing there, everyone cheering, waving their flags and me knowing, in about five minutes, the person I love-- who is my life-- could be blown to pieces and I'll have to turn to our daughter who just watched the fucking thing happen. So I'm sorry if I don't want to imagine that scenario. I want to be able to stand there and cheer and talk about her mom, who's a freaking hero, who'll be home soon.

Emma puts her hand over his. They interlace fingers, their eyes meeting, memorizing each other.

They find each other's lips--

INT. GREEN HOME - MATT AND EMMA'S ROOM (MUSIC OVER)

They're on the bed now, clothes start to come off. Each touch building in passion--

INT. JSC - ROOM (MUSIC CONT.) - INTERCUT

Emma stands in the stark room. NASA ENGINEERS help her into her spacesuit, pull up the wide-legged pants.

INT. GREEN HOME - MATT AND EMMA'S ROOM (MUSIC CONT.)

Matt and Emma in the throes of lovemaking, desperation overtaking them--

INT. JSC - ROOM (MUSIC CONT.)

ON EMMA as the engineers pull on her gloves. She's fully suited now. Another engineer hands her the face shield--

INT. GREEN HOME - MATT AND EMMA'S ROOM (MUSIC CONT.)

Matt and Emma claw each other-- cling to each other-- they need to have this before it's taken away--

INT. JSC - HALLWAY (MUSIC CONT.)

Emma walks the long antiseptic hallway. We fix on her eyes, determined, through the face shield.

INT. GREEN HOME - MATT AND EMMA'S ROOM (MUSIC CONT.)

Emma and Matt lie in each other's arms, unable to sleep.

MATT

...Don't go.

EMMA

I'll be right back. It's only three years...

MATT

Okay. I won't miss you then.

EMMA

(kissing his forehead)

Fine. Then I won't miss you either.

They press deeper into each other.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Love you, shithead.

MATT

Love you more.

As Matt holds her, Emma turns to look out the window--

To a sky filled with stars.

THE CAMERA wheels across the solar system, settling on--

THE MOON

Then... from below frame-- like some gigantic, exotic bird-- the breathtaking ATLAS SPACECRAFT, its majestic solar panels deployed, soars into view.

EXT. MOON

And we find Emma as we first met her:

Standing on the moon, holding the Earth in her hand.

But after a moment, her expression of awe gives way to something unsettled.

We hear her BREATHING.

CAPCOM (V.O.)
How's the view, Emma?

She doesn't respond. As we push in on Emma--

FLASH CUT-- An electrical panel is pried away--

BACK ON EMMA in the present.

CAPCOM (V.O.)
Commander Green?

EMMA
...Copy, Houston.

She takes a couple steps to the lip of a crater.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Somebody's been busy up here.

As she looks down, we reveal--

OUR LUNAR OUTPOST.

Flood lights illuminate a small village of inflated domes. Robotic buggies churn across the lunar surface.

Sheets of ice on the crater walls have been strip-mined, the water stored in massive tanks.

And at the center of the crater, the Atlas rocket, steam tumbling down the sides of its hull, its nose pointing to a night sky filled with a million stars.

A tower rises beside the rocket, where ASTRONAUTS pump water from massive tanks into the hull.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SAME

SCIENTISTS and ENGINEERS drink coffee, Emma in their headsets. BRIAN, an astronaut-- is at the CAPCOM seat.

CAPCOM/BRIAN

Only wish I could see it in person.

(No response)

...Emma, do you copy?

MATT is among the engineers. He senses something amiss.

EMMA (V.O.)

Right here, Houston.

DARLENE COLE, 60s, CHIEF FLIGHT DIRECTOR, takes Matt aside.

DARLENE

Got a sec? ...What's the sitrep on our little mishap? I need to know if it's a one-time thing, or if we have a real problem.

MATT

We've been at it all night. I'll have an answer within the hour.

DARLENE

(nods, then sotto)

How's she sound?

MATT

She's fine. She's good.

DARLENE

What about you? Slept at all?

MATT

100 percent.

DARLENE

Same with the ship, I hope.

MATT

Every mission has a fuck-up, Darlene.
They just got theirs out of the way
early.

Darlene nods, puts on her headset, turns to CAPCOM:

DARLENE

How we doing?

CAPCOM/BRIAN

Darlene wants an update.

EMMA (V.O.)

Looking good. In twenty-four hours we
will be GO for launch--

DARLENE

There is no better word in the English
language than GO.

CAPCOM/BRIAN

Darlene is happy.

EMMA (V.O.)

I live to make Darlene happy.

DARLENE

Tell her to head on inside.

CAPCOM/BRIAN

Atlas, you are good to report to base.

BACK ON THE MOON - IN THE SHADOWS

Emma has picked up a chunk of ice. She walks a few feet
into the sun and watches as the ice turns to gas.

CAPCOM/BRIAN (V.O.)

Atlas, did you copy?

EMMA

Sorry, Houston, it's just this ice. We're
melting ice from comets that hit the moon
when dinosaurs walked the Earth... had to
think about that for a second.

CAPCOM/BRIAN (V.O.)

(moved)

Roger that. Take your time.

INT. LUNAR BASE - AIRLOCK - LATER

Emma waits in the airlock before entering the pressurized environment.

The light flashes from red to green and we glimpse the unease again. She doesn't head in right away, not especially eager to face her crew.

INT. LUNAR BASE - SAME

Misha and Lu are huddled at the dinner table with JACK WILLMORE, 50s, American astronaut and Emma's back-up.

Ram stands apart, wanting no part of this conversation.

JACK

You're saying it wasn't just smoke? An honest-to-god *fire* on board...?

MISHA

Another thirty seconds and we are all dead.

The door opens--

Emma enters, still in her spacesuit, sans helmet.

The crew looks at her-- a tense silence before:

RAM

Hey, Emma, welcome to one-sixth gravity. *

He pulls a coin from his pocket...

And with a subtle flick of his fingers, sends it floating and flying across the room into Emma's hand.

A noble effort by Ram to ease the tension, to no avail.

EMMA

Where's Gbenro?

RAM

He's um... still adjusting.

We hear VOMITING coming from another room.

MISHA

(to Jack)

Gbenro has a *delicate constitution*.

Jack smirks, a juvenile moment between 50-something boys.
Gbenro emerges from the bathroom, looking a bit green.

GBENRO
Apologies, apparently I'm a better
scientist than an astronaut.

EMMA
(to Gbenro)
You'll adjust. Gravitational change
affects everybody.

MISHA
Not me. Felt great my first time up.

EMMA
Well clearly you're the king of space,
Misha, and also have an enormous dick.

MISHA
(grins)
Guilty on both counts.

LAUGHTER-- as the tension in the room finally eases.

And Jack rises to greet Emma, offers his hand.

JACK
Commander Green.

EMMA
Hell of an operation you're running here,
Jack.

JACK
Doing our best. Being on the moon isn't
quite as cool as going to Mars. But when
you're a lowly back-up, you take what you
can get.

Emma smiles politely at Jack's transparent envy, then to
her crew:

EMMA
Gbenro, soon as you're feeling up to it,
start loading MREs onto the ship.

GBENRO
Aye, Commander.

EMMA

Ram, you'll get going on our pre-launch systems checks.

(he nods)

Misha, Lu, I need you to assess any damage to the ship after last night's incident.

Misha and Lu exchange a look at the word *incident*. Emma clocks it. She looks at Misha.

EMMA (CONT'D)

...Yes?

MISHA

Nothing. *Commander*.

Misha's tone is vaguely derisive. Emma chooses to ignore it.

EMMA

Ground wants to debrief each of us individually. Ram, you're first up...

INT. LUNAR BASE - PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

Darlene appears on screen via video-conference:

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

You're saying you weren't there when it happened?

RAM

I was in the command module confirming our coordinates for landing. By the time I unstrapped and arrived on scene, it was already over.

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

Well what *did* you see when you arrived?

QUICK FLASH-- RAM'S POV-- Misha screams silently in Emma's face as Lu and Gbenro float nearby.

BACK TO THE PRESENT.

RAM

Like I said, the leak had been contained and any potential danger averted.

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

Nothing else?

RAM

Nothing else.

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

Thank you for your time.

Ram starts to rise-- stops.

RAM

Can I say one thing?

(then)

I saw Emma do things in training that seemed superhuman. Held her breath underwater a full minute longer than any of us. I asked her how she did it. She said she imagined the scenario the exercise was designed for: a splashdown landing where one of us starts to drown... She held her breath that long because's that the time it would have taken her to rescue the crew.

(then)

I don't believe that Emma would put us in danger or ever get rattled.

INT. LUNAR BASE - EMMA'S QUARTERS - SAME

On Emma, looking rattled. She tosses a tennis ball up in the air, waiting for it to come down at 1/6 gravity as A LINE RINGS; Alexis appears via Skype:

ALEXIS (ON SCREEN)

Hi Mom!

Clearly Emma called to talk to Matt, but seeing Alexis does her heart good.

EMMA

Hey sweetheart. How was the game?

INT. GREEN HOME - INTERCUT

ALEXIS

Dominated! Three for three from the field, perfect from the stripe.

EMMA

Wish I could've seen it.

Alexis senses something in her tone.

ALEXIS

You okay, Mom?

EMMA

You bet. Is your dad around?

ALEXIS

They pulled him in for a shift. Some NASA drama, as usual. Melissa's here, did you know she played Division 1?

MELISSA RAMIREZ, 40s, an ex-astronaut and Emma's CSA (Crew Support Astronaut) steps into frame, waves.

EMMA

Of course I knew. Why do you think I picked her to be our crew support? Figured if she could kick my butt, she can kick yours.

MELISSA

How's it going up there?

If Alexis wasn't there, Emma might confide in her. Instead--

EMMA

--Look at this, guys--

She holds the iPad up to her window, offering a glimpse of the lunar base.

ALEXIS

Wow...

MELISSA

...It's amazing, Emma...

*

We sense the moment is loaded for Melissa; she will never see it, except this way--

MELISSA (CONT'D)

You know you chose the right mission when your pit stop is the moon.

Off Emma...

INT. LUNAR BASE - HALLWAY - LATER

Emma comes out of her quarters as Gbenro emerges from his debrief. They look at each other--

EMMA

Your debrief's confidential. You don't have to tell me anyth--

GBENRO

--I told her the truth, Emma. You saved my life.

EMMA

I appreciate your saying that.

MISHA (O.S.)

Excuse me...

Misha squeezes between them and heads into the room.

As Emma watches him close the door--

EMMA

Not sure everyone's report will be quite so... glowing.

INT. LUNAR BASE - PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

MISHA

She froze. Simple as that.

On screen, Darlene is conducting the debrief.

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

I need to understand exactly what happened so we can identify any problem areas with the ship or the crew--

MISHA

The *ship* will be fine.

Darlene understands the implications of that.

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

Start at the beginning.

MISHA

...Lu and I were in galley when I noticed the alert.

INT. ATLAS - COMMON AREA (MISHA'S FLASHBACK)

Misha and Lu are at the table, eating, laughing-- when Misha sees a red EMERGENCY LIGHT flashing.

LU

--What?

MISHA

Chemical leak.

Without a word, he pushes off from the table, floats toward the PASSAGEWAY that connects to the private quarters below--

MISHA (V.O.)

I proceed directly to the emergency.

Misha peers down into the passageway--

HIS POV-- Gbenro hovers nearby, as Emma is about to remove an electrical panel--

MISHA

Commander, no!

She removes the panel--

A chemical sphere, the size and color of a cannonball spirals out of the innards of the wall--

MISHA (V.O.)

It was pre-treat. It is chemical we use to recycle our sweat into water.

DARLENE (V.O.)

I know what pre-treat is.

The sphere begins to smoke...

MISHA (V.O.)

Then you know it becomes like firebomb in oxygen-rich ship.

GBENRO

Commander, what do we do?!

Emma locks up, motionless, terrified--

EMMA

Oh my god...

Misha springs into action, calling to Lu--

MISHA

Get me garbage bag, now!

Lu soars to the Water Recovery System and begins soaking towels in water...

MISHA (V.O.)
Pre-treat is *acid*. To put out fire you need water, yes, but lots of it.

Lu holds the garbage bag open as Misha throws wet towels inside.

MISHA (V.O.)
You must suffocate flames.

He grabs the bag from Lu and soars to the passageway--

The SPHERE is now an anchor-less ball of FIRE--!

Emma stares at it, petrified--

EMMA
(whispers)
Please, God, no...

MISHA (V.O.)
She had not even *moved*...

Gbenro pulls Emma away to protect her--

As Misha engulfs it with the garbage bag, snuffing out the danger--

INT. LUNAR BASE - PRIVATE ROOM - SAME

Back to the present:

MISHA
Experienced astronaut does not remove panel. It is because of Commander Green's *inexperience* we almost burned alive.

Behind Misha's anger-- terror.

MISHA (CONT'D)
Gbenro is rookie; I expect nothing from him. But Commander Green is not good leader.

INT. LUNAR BASE - PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

LU

Misha and I were in the galley. I told him what must be done to suffocate the fire.

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)

The garbage bag and towels were your idea?

LU

Of course. I am a chemist.

FLASH BACK TO THE SHIP--

Lu tosses wet towels into the garbage bag, calls to Misha.

LU

Grab the other end!

When they reach the passageway-- below them, LU sees:

The sphere, SMOKING and SPARKING--

GBENRO

Oh my god...

LU (V.O.)

Before we could respond...

Emma flies into frame from below...

EMMA

Get out of the way!

Emma, hysterical, grabs Gbenro and tosses him aside--

He bounces off the wall as Emma rips off her T-shirt--

LU

Commander, no!

Emma tries to smother the sphere with her shirt--

But the moment the shirt hits the chemicals--

The sphere erupts into a fireball, blowing Emma back--

INT. LUNAR BASE - PRIVATE ROOM

Back to the present:

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)
You're saying Emma *started* the fire?

LU
Simple chemistry. Pre-treat is acid; the sweat in her shirt was *accelerant*. If she had simply let me do my job--

DARLENE (ON SCREEN)
So your issue isn't that she failed to respond-- it's the opposite.

LU
My *issue* is that she was hysterical and reckless.

INT. JSC - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

George Lane has pulled Darlene into a private room.

GEORGE
We've got a situation--

DARLENE
You don't think I'm aware of that?

GEORGE
Misha and Lu talked to their directors. The Chinese want her replaced; the Russians would prefer she's shot.

DARLENE
I talked to both of them-- *their* stories don't sync up. Meanwhile Gbenro says she saved them all, and Ram is sure she was solid... even if he wasn't there.

GEORGE
Darlene. They want her gone.

A beat as Darlene realizes--

DARLENE
You're not seriously--

GEORGE
--I only told them I'd think about--

DARLENE

George--

GEORGE

We do have a fully-trained back-up on the moon--

DARLENE

Jack Willmore is not-- ...Look, there's a reason we chose Emma over him--

GEORGE

--I'm not starting an international incident--

DARLENE

And I'm not replacing our commander twenty-four hours before launch!!

Suddenly they sense a presence in the open doorway. It's Matt.

MATT

You asked for an update on the leak. We figured out a patch and sent Misha the procedure.

Darlene nods. Another silence.

Matt turns to George, rage buried in his measured tone:

MATT (CONT'D)

How can you even contemplate--

DARLENE

Matt--

MATT

This... is EMMA'S mission.

DARLENE

And it's gonna stay that way. Right now I need you to go home...

(before he can object)

You haven't slept in twenty-four hours-- you look like shit. I need you fresh for tomorrow's launch.

Matt hesitates. Starts to go, then turns back.

MATT

And you need to nip this in the bud.

DARLENE

I will. I promise.

Matt gives George a long look and exits. We follow him.

INT. JSC - HALLWAY - SAME

Matt stops in the hallway. Braces his hand against the wall. Upset and exhausted-- but it's more than that.

He's sweating. His breathing hitched.

Something's off.

PRE-LAP:

EMMA (V.O.)

All due respect, Dr. Putney, I've got a checklist as long as my arm to get through before tomorrow's launch.

INT. LUNAR BASE - EMMA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

We're back at the start of the pilot.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

And you feel ready?

EMMA

Good to go.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

How's the crew?

ON EMMA, **FLASH CUT**-- SILENT. Misha screaming at her.

Emma takes a deep breath--

EMMA

There's some dissension. Misha can be a dick, but I've got that under control, I think--

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

...Wait-- talk about the dissension.

EMMA

Ram is okay, Gbenro's having some trouble adjusting, but Lu and Misha--

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

--Blame you...

EMMA

I can only imagine what they said about me.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

What do you think they said?

EMMA

That I'm a shrill, cowardly bitch.

He says nothing. A shrink-like moment.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Look, I know what's going on here...
You're supposed to determine if I'm fit to lead.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

Are you?

Off her determined look.

INT. GREEN HOME - KITCHEN

Alexis walks in to find Matt preparing dinner.

MATT

Hey, baby.

ALEXIS

Tomorrow night for the Mars launch party
I know you have to work but can I have
your credit card for ordering the pizza?

Matt is stirring spaghetti sauce.

MATT

Luigi's already has the order. Nice try,
though.

ALEXIS

--So I can't decide which picture to put
on my Instagram. For the invitations?
There's that one of me and Mom on
horseback, you know, from last summer...

Matt is only half-listening. Suddenly he's not feeling right. He's dizzy and nauseous.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Annie says I look hot in that one at the beach but I think I look fat.

(checks her phone)

Oh my god my phone is blowing up I have like a million followers since Mom became like this superstar.

Matt lets go of the spoon and braces himself against the counter.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Would you guys be freaked out if I became some kind of influencer?

(no answer)

--Dad?

MATT

Honey, I---

He's clutching his lower back. Something's happening, some kind of neurological event.

ALEXIS

...Daddy?

Matt is struggling to stay on his feet now-- trying not to fall. He reaches for the table to steady himself. A dish CRASHES TO THE FLOOR.

Alexis SCREAMS as he hits the floor. Hard.

INT. LUNAR BASE - LIVING SPACE

The crew suits up before returning to the ship to begin repairs.

There's a palpable tension in the silence as they attend to the complex task of getting ready.

Jack enters and starts suiting up. Emma looks at him curiously-- why is he suiting up?

MISHA

I asked him to help.

JACK

Only seen that sweaty simulator. Want to get a taste of the real thing.

MISHA

I assume you can patch a leak?

JACK

Better than you, apparently.

Emma turns away from the bro-fest to find--

Gbenro struggling with the clasp on his gloves. She reaches to help, senses unease in his eyes.

EMMA

No need for you to go out there if you don't feel up to it.

GBENRO

I promise not to throw up on the command console.

In the background, Ram takes a call on the screen.

RAM

Emma, it's Ground. Melissa's on the line.

EMMA

Melissa? My crew support Melissa?

It's the call every mother fears. Emma hurries to the screen.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Melissa... What's wrong?

Melissa tries to keep her voice as even as possible.

MELISSA (ON SCREEN)

An hour ago Matt had an event, we think it's a stroke, he had to be intubated and he's still critical.

TIME SLOWS DOWN as Emma tries to process this.

Finally, she speaks.

EMMA

Oh God... Did one of his cavernomas bleed?

Ram is nearest. He can't help but overhear. He steps discreetly away, but everyone can hear. A stillness falls over the room.

MELISSA (ON SCREEN)

That's what the doctors believe. He's getting an MRI now.

EMMA

Where's Lex? Does she know yet?

MELISSA (ON SCREEN)

She was there when it happened. It was Lex who called 911.

EMMA

I need to talk to her.

MELISSA (ON SCREEN)

She's in the ICU, I'll set you guys up to talk.

Emma is reeling. Misha and Lu exchange a look. Gbenro gestures that they should leave.

EMMA

Was he conscious when they found him?

MELISSA (ON SCREEN)

Yes.

EMMA

That's good-- do they know if there was damage?

MELISSA (ON SCREEN)

It's too soon to know anything...

Emma is gut-punched, but just when we expect her to break it's like a switch flips and the commander takes over.

EMMA

I want a SATCOM link set up with Lex in the ICU, I want to speak with Matt's doctors and I want a private number for the head of vascular neurology at Baylor. And I want this done now.

INT. EMMA'S QUARTERS / BEDROOM - NIGHT - INTERCUT

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

MAN

Hello?

EMMA

Dr. Lawrence Madigan?

MAN

Speaking?

EMMA

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

DR. MADIGAN

I'm... excuse me?

EMMA (CONT'D)

--Transport you to Houston
Methodist.

A lamp clicks on. Revealing LAWRENCE MADIGAN, 50s.

DR. MADIGAN

I'm sorry-- who is this? And how did you
get this number?

EMMA

I'm calling on a Satlink from NASA's
Lunar Base. On the moon. My husband Matt
Green, a NASA engineer at Mission Control
has CCM disorder with multiple lesions
and just had a stroke--

Just then, CAPCOM (MEI, 30S) crackles through--

CAPCOM/MEI (V.O.)

Atlas, this is Houston--

EMMA

Houston, Atlas over--

CAPCOM/MEI (V.O.)

SATCOM is ready in ICU, we weren't able
to set up a visual, but the audio is up
and running--

EMMA

Great. One sec--

(back to the doctor)

Matt's doctor will brief you on his case
when you get to the hospital. Do you
understand?

DR. MADIGAN

...Yes.

EMMA

Good, I'll check in with you soon.

She hangs up-- then back to CAPCOM--

EMMA (CONT'D)

Put me through--

CAPCOM/MEI (V.O.)

Emma-- I'm so sorry--

Emma nods, *thanks*. After a moment, we hear--

ALEXIS (V.O.)

...Mom?

At the sound of her daughter's voice, Emma clutches.

EMMA

I'm here baby-- I'm right here.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY/MATT'S ROOM

Alexis, looking small and frightened, stands in the hallway outside her dad's hospital room holding the SATCOM. Melissa, looking ashen, looks on.

ALEXIS

They say he had a stroke.

EMMA

I know honey--

ALEXIS

You don't understand. He was *fine* one minute and the next he was on the floor and couldn't move-- you're not still going, are you?

EMMA

I... nothing like this has ever happened before--

ALEXIS

I don't care! Dad has tubes coming out of him!

EMMA

I know you're scared, I'm scared too, but you're just gonna have to give me a few minutes to figure things out--

ALEXIS

He's going into surgery!

EMMA

Now?

ALEXIS

I don't know, they're waiting for some
doctor. They found this lesion or
something. It's not bleeding anymore--
(starts to cry)
But they want to operate--

EMMA

Okay, okay, Lex, listen to me--

ALEXIS

(crying harder)
--Mom, I need you here--

EMMA

Believe me baby, I want to be there. But
right now I can't be, so I need you to be
strong, stronger than you've ever been in
your life. Okay?

Emma waits for an answer.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I love you. You and your dad mean
everything to me, and I'm gonna be there
for you. Okay?

Alexis tries to sound strong for her mom.

ALEXIS

...Okay...

EMMA

Now can you put the SATCOM next to your
dad, please?

Alexis carries the SATCOM into Matt's hospital room. Matt
is unconscious, a breathing tube in his throat. She holds
the phone up to his ear.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm not sure if you can hear me my love,
the doctors don't know if you're able...
(closes her eyes)
Personally I think you can. You're just
doing that thing where you pretend not to
listen, then wait 'til I get annoyed,
then recite back word for word,
everything I just said.

Alexis listens, fighting back tears--

EMMA (CONT'D)

You probably want me to shut up now so
you can concentrate on getting better.
(can't think of what else to
say)

Wait a second...

After a moment Matt's PIANO PIECE emerges from the
SATCOM, filling the small hospital room. Emma is holding
the speaker up to the phone.

WE HOLD ON EMMA'S face as she plays her husband's music.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

Mom-- Mom--

DOCTORS and NURSES are entering the room--

ALEXIS

They're taking Dad now...

Emma takes that in, her voice catching--

EMMA

You've got this Matt, you hear me, you've
got this...

OFF ALEXIS, watching her dad being wheeled out.

INT. ATLAS - COMMON AREA

Misha, Jack and Lu are working to repair the damaged pre-
treat system. Gbenro is tending his plants as Ram goes
over a pre-flight checklist.

(N.B. On the moon's surface, weightlessness is not an
issue.)

LU

--How can she be expected to command
under this kind of stress?

MISHA

We need real commander.

RAM

(dry)
You, for instance...

MISHA

Why not?

RAM

Maybe because you're not in line to command...?

LU

(to Jack)

The Americans were wrong to pick Emma over you.

JACK

(false humility)

Well...

MISHA

In America, everything is about women now. Emma is feminist poster child.

JACK

Hey I didn't say *that*.

(a bit too eager)

But I have trained for this mission.

RAM

Right...

GBENRO

Can we take a moment to have some empathy, her husband just had a stroke!

MISHA

Exactly. She should go home to husband.

GBENRO

Jesus...

LU

You've never been to space, you can't understand the strain. We've already seen how she reacts in an emergency--

RAM

Everyone makes mistakes.

LU

Except hers almost killed us!

Emma enters the common area. The guilty silence that greets her tells her all she needs to know.

EMMA

We're twenty hours from launch and behind schedule. I want that system repaired within the hour.

Misha holds out a wrench.

MISHA

Be my guest.

Emma just stares at him.

MISHA (CONT'D)

I forgot-- you don't understand the system.

RAM

Watch yourself Popov--

MISHA

Fine. I will give Houston a progress report--

An instinctual voice rises from within Emma-- the voice of command.

EMMA

NO. YOU WON'T.

Misha looks up, surprised. Jack wishes he were invisible.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'll debrief Houston and relay any updates. That's all.

After Emma exits, Misha mutters a Russian curse.

RAM

(scolding a child)

Language.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - MOMENTS LATER

Outside the rocket, Emma stares up at its underbelly as PLUMES of white smoke tumble down the sides of its 300-foot hull. She reaches to touch it.

It's a striking image-- Emma's hand gracing the ship-- as natural as if soothing an untamed mare.

TIGHT ON EMMA, facing an impossible, untenable decision.

PRE-LAP: Matt's beautiful, eerie piano piece...

INT. MATT AND EMMA'S FIRST APARTMENT (FLASHBACK)

MATT is playing an old, battered upright.

EMMA
(sweaty from workout)
Hey babe, I'm home--

He turns and we realize we've gone back in time, to their first cozy love nest. Alexis is a baby in her sleeper.

MATT
How'd it go?

EMMA
It went okay.

MATT
You aced it.

EMMA
They had me doing parabolic puke spins all day until my head was spinning so bad I could barely get the damn spacesuit on, let alone tread water in it for ten minutes.

She leans over and WHISPERS to her amazing baby.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Maybe you and I will just stay home, sugar pie, and bake cookies and read storybooks and let Daddy go to Mars.

MATT
Not in this lifetime, babe.

She looks up from the baby, sees something on his face--

EMMA
What is it?

Matt picks up a letter from the piano bench--

MATT
I'm out.

Emma takes the letter, looks at it.

MATT (CONT'D)

Apparently I have my dad's bad gene, I tested positive for CCM in the last round of medical exams.

EMMA

What? But your dad never had symptoms, you probably won't either.

MATT

NASA won't take the risk--

EMMA

But you're the best.

MATT

No, you're the best, Emma.

She feels so much pain for him--

MATT (CONT'D)

You've got to do this for both of us.

His eyes are filled with absolute faith and conviction--

INT. LUNAR BASE / INT. JSC - INTERCUT

Emma, back in her QUARTERS, is on Skype with Darlene.

EMMA

He'll be out of surgery in a couple hours.

DARLENE

Matt's a fighter, he's gonna be okay.

Emma nods, clinging to that hope. Then:

EMMA

In the event he's not... you should be prepared to issue a transfer of command.

For the first time Darlene stops walking.

DARLENE

Emma...

EMMA

Jack Willmore has the same training I do. He's completely qualified.

DARLENE

Yes he is. He's also happy to take advantage of your personal crisis to take your seat. That's not the person I want leading this mission.

EMMA

Tell that to the crew.

DARLENE

Wait. If this is really about Misha and--

EMMA

It's not--

DARLENE (CONT'D)

What happened aboard--

EMMA

It's not-- this is about Matt.

DARLENE

You knew this job demands terrible sacrifices and I need you to remember it's worth it.

On Emma-- we see what this is costing her as--

DARLENE (CONT'D)

No astronaut has ever abandoned a mission. You will be spitting in the face of every woman who has come before--

EMMA

(erupting)

You're talking feminist fucking--

(raw)

My husband just had a stroke! My daughter is terrified-- my family *needs* me
Darlene!

(then)

I'll be in touch when we know something definitive.

Emma hangs up. She glances first at Alexis's baby shoes, dangling by their laces...

Then at the astronaut helmet resting beside her.

And it truly hits her-- *she could be giving up Mars...*

INT. JSC - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

George is in a heated argument with the HEADS of the international space programs.

GEORGE

You don't think you're being unreasonable?

CNSA HEAD/LI JUN

(in Mandarin, subtitled)

Our astronauts are now taking orders from a commander who almost killed her crew.

Darlene enters, looking grave.

DARLENE

George I need to talk to you--

CHINESE TRANSLATOR

He is saying that--

GEORGE

I got the gist.

(to Darlene)

One minute--

(to the others)

I know you're worried. But I promise you, there is no one more capable, nor more committed to your astronauts, than Emma Green.

DARLENE

I need to speak with you, now.

INT. JSC - PRIVATE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

GEORGE

You're fucking kidding me! If the people on the other side of this wall--

(shock giving way to rage)

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

DARLENE

I wanna say I can fix this, but I'm honestly not confident she's 100 percent--

George would punch the wall if he could.

GEORGE

I want Putney to evaluate her, I want the full prognosis of Matt's surgery, and I don't want anyone else to know about any of this.

DARLENE

Roger that.

George storms off. Darlene contemplates half a century of painstaking work crumbling before her eyes.

PRE-LAP THE SOUND OF a VIDEO CALL--

EMMA (V.O.)

I assume you've spoken with Darlene.

INT. LUNAR BASE

A video call: Dr. Putney.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

And George.

EMMA

They want you to convince me.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

They want my evaluation. But I'm not here for them Emma, I'm here for you.

EMMA

Uh-huh.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

Believe it or not, I want what's best for you.

EMMA

(an outburst)

How can you know what's best for me, I don't know what's best for me... The only thing I've ever known for sure in my life is that I wanted to be on the first mission to Mars.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

And now you will.

EMMA

With a husband who's critical, a daughter I abandoned, and a crew that thinks I tried to kill them!

*

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

Did you?

EMMA
Of course not.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)
Then, what happened?

EMMA
I screwed up.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)
How?
(she hesitates)
Tell me.

Emma begins--

EMMA
Everything was going great...

INT. ATLAS (FLASHBACK) / LUNAR BASE (PRESENT) - INTERCUT
Misha and Ram are playing weightless soccer.

RAM
Messi fakes, shoots, SCORES!

Emma is reading nearby. She smiles at their antics, like little boys at play.

DR. PUTNEY (V.O.)
...Then what?

ON EMMA IN THE PRESENT, AS SHE BEGINS TO RELIVE IT--

EMMA
We were less than ten hours from touching down...

FLASH TO ATLAS--

Emma in her quarters, headphones on, listening to MUSIC--

A RED LIGHT begins to FLASH--

She pulls off her headphones-- ALARMS replace MUSIC--

She hits the INTERCOM--

EMMA (CONT'D)
This is Commander Green: chemical leak in the berth passageway--

TIME CUT--

Emma climbs up a ladder--

*

Opens a latch to THE BERTH PASSAGEWAY--

*

Suddenly she's weightless-- a *stunning transition*--

*

As she transfers from the gravity-rich crew quarters to
the rest of the zero-G ship--

*

*

She shoots up the passageway--

*

Discovers Gbenro already there, prying open the panel--

EMMA (CONT'D)

Gbenro, wait--

But it's already off--

A sphere of FLUID emerges-- spiraling through the air--

EMMA (CONT'D)

Shit--

Lu descends from above--

EMMA (CONT'D)

HOW MUCH TIME BEFORE IT IGNITES--?

LU

LESS THAN A MINUTE!

EMMA

CAN WE USE THE EXTINGUISHER--?

LU

(urgently working it out)

The pre-treat is composed of chromium
trioxide and sulfuric acid.

Misha appears, crowding in--

LU (CONT'D)

We need to suffocate it with water.

MISHA

(to Lu)

Come with me.

Misha pulls Lu away-- they swim back up the passage--

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Emma's voice is raw--

EMMA

Fire is the sum of all fears... Every
astronaut who's died has burnt to death.

FLASH TO ATLAS--

The sphere of pre-treat starts to SMOKE--

ON EMMA IN THE PRESENT, fully reliving the trauma:

EMMA (CONT'D)

I didn't think there was time to wait...

FLASH TO ATLAS--

The smoking sphere starts to spark--

A flame shoots out, spiraling toward Gbenro--

Emma pulls him away in the nick of time--

Puts herself between Gbenro and the fireball--

Then rips off her t-shirt and moves toward the danger--

TO EMMA IN THE PRESENT, her voice shaking--

EMMA (CONT'D)

Turns out there's a chemical anomaly I
didn't know: introduce lots of water to
acid, it disperses. Introduce just a bit
of water... it *ignites*.

FLASH TO ATLAS--

Emma tries to use her t-shirt to smother the fire. The
moment it touches the sphere-- it ERUPTS into an anchor-
less ball of flame, thrusting her into the wall with
brutal force!

As Emma fights for consciousness-- Lu and Misha appear
holding opposite ends of the garbage bag. They approach
the ball of fire and engulf it completely.

EMMA (V.O.)

Lu was right. It was over in seconds.
Like magic.

With the fire gone, Lu turns to Emma, her face a mask of
rage. Misha is SHOUTING at her-- words we can't hear--

BACK TO THE PRESENT - EMMA'S QUARTERS

Emma's face is raw and flushed from the memory--

EMMA

I was reckless and impulsive. It wasn't my area of expertise, I had no business--

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

--Trying to save them?

EMMA

I escalated the crisis-- I could have killed everyone on board.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

...Yes.

EMMA

That was me at the top of my game, how am I gonna function now-- with all this shit going on.

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

Here's what I see: You reacted quickly. You pulled your crewmate out of harm's way. Even now, you won't let him take the blame. You acted as a commander should. And moved toward danger without any thought of your own safety, you threw yourself at the problem--

EMMA

But I didn't fix it--

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

Like you couldn't cure your mom's cancer, like you can't cure Matt's CCM.

EMMA

What's your point?

DR. PUTNEY (ON SCREEN)

That you're human.

(looks at her)

I'd want you leading my team if the shit hit the fan, Emma. But in the end this is your decision. No one can make it for you.

OFF EMMA, her face unreadable.

INT. HOSPITAL - MATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

ON A TV SCREEN, MSNBC, RACHEL MADDOW--

ANCHOR (ON TV)

With me tonight to talk about tomorrow's launch is Peggy Whitson-- first female commander of the International Space Station, the astronaut with the most hours clocked in space.

(to Peggy)

What do you see as the historical significance of this mission?

PEGGY (ON TV)

When Armstrong and Aldrin stepped foot on the moon-- America came together, looked up, and saw the best of humanity. Tomorrow, it won't just be America looking up, but the entire world.

PULL AWAY to reveal Alexis and Melissa watching the television, waiting for Matt to get out of surgery.

ALEXIS

You trained to be one of them, but decided not to go, right?

MELISSA

Right.

ALEXIS

Why?

MELISSA

...It's complicated.

ALEXIS

Okay, I know you're supposed to be like my temporary mom, but do you have to say everything she says exactly like she says it?

Melissa is taken aback.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Because when my mom says "it's complicated" it means she doesn't want to talk about it.

Melissa is saved by the door opening. Matt is wheeled into the room. Followed by Dr. Madigan. Alexis jumps to her feet--

DR. MADIGAN
The surgery went well--

MELISSA
I'll get your mom on the SATCOM--

ALEXIS
Can I talk to him?

DR. MADIGAN
He might be a little woozy. You can try...

Alexis approaches her dad's bedside--

ALEXIS
Dad?

He has a breathing mask on, but his eyes are open. *

She grasps his hand, as Emma is heard on the SATCOM--

EMMA (V.O.)
He's out of surgery?

ALEXIS
Yes, and he's good, he's right here--

DR. MADIGAN
Commander Green, this is Dr. Madigan, we were able to remove the lesion. Matt is awake and responding.

INT. EMMA'S QUARTERS - INTERCUT

Emma fights back tears.

EMMA
Oh my God... Do you know if the stroke caused any damage? Is he going to be okay?

DR. MADIGAN
We'll start running tests soon. But it's too early to know anything definitive.

Emma takes that in, so do Alexis, Matt, and Melissa.

ALEXIS
Are you coming home?

ON EMMA, in that very moment she makes her decision:

EMMA

Yes.

ON ALEXIS, relief washing over her. Melissa looks at the floor, pained. Matt's eyes take it in.

DR. MADIGAN

I'll leave you to talk privately.

(to Matt)

You get some rest, I'll be back in the morning.

EMMA

Thank you, Doctor.

He nods and leaves the room.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Is Melissa there?

MELISSA

Right here.

EMMA

You'll take Lex back to your place tonight?

MELISSA

Got the guest room set up.

EMMA

I'll see you in four days then.

MELISSA

I'll wait outside, Lex.

Melissa leaves the room.

ALEXIS

Are they still gonna be able to fly the mission?

EMMA

Don't worry about that, hon. It's taken care of.

Alexis notices Matt trying to move his right arm--

ALEXIS

Dad? What?

EMMA

Is something wrong? Maybe you should call
the nurses, honey--

Matt moves his arm again.

ALEXIS

No-- I think he's trying to take off his
mask, he wants to talk to you--

Matt nods. Alexis takes off her dad's mask-- holds the
phone close to him.

EMMA

Matt? I can't hear you...

But it's Alexis who speaks.

ALEXIS'S VOICE

He can only whisper so this is him, not
me--

Reveal Alexis, her ear millimeters from Matt's lips,
listening as he whispers. *

ALEXIS

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

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

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Dad--

EMMA

What? What did he say?

Alexis doesn't want to respond, but Matt keeps
whispering--

ALEXIS

He said: He needs you to do your job.

EMMA

Matt, I made my decision--

Matt whispers to Alexis. The wait is endless on Emma's
end--

EMMA (CONT'D)

Alexis? Tell me what's going on?

ALEXIS

He says that this is who you are, and
that someday I am gonna be who I am. And
that he's gonna be okay--

Alexis is crying now, clinging to her dad, as he
continues--

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

And that he's gonna be with me. And we're
gonna be okay--

Then Matt brings his mouth close to the SATCOM and his
whisper comes through with conviction--

MATT

I need you to go.

EMMA

You're not in a position, it's not your
decision--

ALEXIS'S VOICE

It's not your decision either.

EMMA

Matt--

ALEXIS

That wasn't Dad, that was me.

Alexis looks at her dad, who smiles as best he can.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I'm with Dad, I think you should go too.

ON MATT, immensely proud of his daughter--

ON ALEXIS, trying to be brave--

ON EMMA, almost too choked up to speak--

She looks out her window--

Past the Atlas rocket--

All the way to Earth, deep in the distant black.

On Emma, her every instinct screaming at her to race back
home and save her family.

But she loves them too fiercely to defy them.

So she takes a breath and simply says:

EMMA

Okay.

INT. ATLAS - MISHA'S POD

Misha secures his personal effects-- puppets in this case-- to the wall. Lu appears in the doorway:

LU

Puppets?

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

MISHA

To entertain my grandchildren.

(then)

What does the inscription mean?

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

It's inscribed with a series of Chinese characters.

LU

"Women hold up half the sky."

MISHA

A gift from your husband?

Lu hesitates just a moment.

LU

From a friend.

She slips the ring into a ziplock bag as we drift to--

GBENRO'S POD - SAME

Gbenro is securing his personal effects as Ram watches.

GBENRO

A reminder of the things I will miss.

He carefully packs a battered Old Testament in Hebrew.

GBENRO (CONT'D)

It tethers me to the Earth.

RAM

The things I'll miss I can't take with me: sun, oysters, wine, women, long walks, live music-- did I say women?

Emma enters the common area outside their quarters.

EMMA

Status update.

Misha and Lu emerge into the area. The temperature cools. A moment suspended in time.

She looks from Misha and Lu... to Gbenro... then to Ram:

EMMA (CONT'D)

...Ram?

RAM

Systems checks complete. We're back on schedule. How's your husband?

EMMA

Doing well, thank you.

She simply starts giving orders.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Lu, make sure everything's battened down in the common room. Misha, triple-check every latch and drawer. We start fueling in fifteen minutes.

Lu and Misha are thrown by Emma's cool assumption of command. They exchange a look. Emma clocks it.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Something you'd like to share?

A moment when it all hangs in the balance, then:

LU

No. Commander.

Emma looks from one to the other.

EMMA

I know you don't trust me. But if we're going to survive this launch, much less the mission, we're going to have to work it out.

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

Emma stands her ground.

EMMA
Then you better learn.

And just like that... it's done. They're going to Mars.
As she starts out--

RAM
Emma-- Houston asked that you say a few
words before launch.

EMMA
To who?

RAM
...The world?

EXT. LUNAR BASE - NIGHT

IPHONE IMAGE-- Tight on Emma standing on the surface of
the moon. Ram is filming her. He glances at his watch.

RAM
Live in ten seconds.

EMMA
What am I supposed to--?

RAM
Five, four, three, two--

He gestures, go--

EMMA
...This is Commander Emma Green-- here on
the moon, which is obvious.

She stops, self-conscious, overwhelmed by the moment. Ram
smiles at her encouragingly.

She hears music, looks around. It's Matt's piano piece
playing in her head, as if he is playing for her now,
helping her find the words...

EMMA (CONT'D)

But there are so many others who can't be here-- at home and around the world.

IN THE HOSPITAL

Matt fights back tears.

EXT. LUNAR BASE - CONTINUOUS

EMMA

Maybe it's not our nature to work together.

She's looking at RAM, LU, MISHA and GBENRO.

EMMA (CONT'D)

...But history demands otherwise.

As she continues to speak her voice gains strength. Before our eyes we begin to sense the commander she will become.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And we will come together now.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - NIGHT

Emma and her crew walk toward the lofty rocket.

EMMA (V.O.)

In pursuit of a dream that was once thought to be impossible...

INT. ATLAS - NIGHT

On Emma, strapping herself into the commander's chair. She exchanges glances with each of her crew in turn. Ram gives her a nod of support.

EMMA (V.O.)

But if we can do this--

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Packed to the gills with engineers, astronauts, scientists from more than twenty countries. Darlene and George feeling the enormity of this moment--

EMMA (V.O.)

We can do anything.

And the scope of our show truly breaks open--

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NEW YORK - NIGHT

As we move from a packed Times Square watching the live broadcast, the jumbotron begins the COUNTDOWN...

EXT. KALA GHODA - MUMBAI - DAY

To a packed Kala Ghoda in Mumbai...

EXT. PICCADILLY CIRCUS - LONDON - NIGHT

To a packed Piccadilly Circus in London...

EXT. LAGOS - NIGERIA - NIGHT

To streets packed with revelers holding pictures of Gbenro Weisberg-Adebayo, once Nigerian, now world-famous!

EXT. LUNAR BASE - NIGHT

To the surface of the moon-- Jack Willmore watching the launch from a distance, wishing it were him on board.

EMMA (V.O.)

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

INT. HOSPITAL - MATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

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

As Emma speaks directly to them:

EMMA (V.O.)

And we will return home.

INT. ATLAS - NIGHT

On Emma, Ram, Lu, Misha and Gbenro-- as the spacecraft begins to shudder--

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

The various stations confirming they are GO for launch--

DARLENE
Life support.

LSC OPERATOR
Go.

DARLENE
Ground Control.

GSC OPERATOR
Go.

DARLENE
Telemetry and Guidance Control.

TGC OPERATOR
Go.

OFF DARLENE, each GO resounding music to her ears--

INT. ATLAS - NIGHT

Back on Emma and the crew-- Darlene's voice barely audible over the VIOLENT RATTLING...

CAPCOM/MEI (V.O.)
Confirming all systems GO for launch in T-
Minus ten... nine...

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

As we hear her VOICE once more:

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

And then-- the rocket FIRES beneath her--

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

An ungodly torrent of fire in impossible silence--

THE ROCKET BEGINS TO RISE OFF THE GROUND--

EXT. KALA GHODA - MUMBAI - DAY

And the crowd at Kala Ghoda gasps in awe--

EXT. RED SQUARE - MOSCOW - NIGHT

As the crowd at Red Square erupts in APPLAUSE--

EXT. LAGOS - NIGERIA - NIGHT

Revelers celebrate in the streets--

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NEW YORK - NIGHT

And tens of thousands in Central Park stare up--

INT. HOSPITAL - MATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Matt and Alexis, stomachs churning as they watch--

Alexis goes to the window and looks up into the night sky-- first to the moon, and then to a distant RED PLANET.

Behind her Matt watches the TV, willing his wife faster and farther away--

MATT
Go, you fucker. Go.

INT. ATLAS - NIGHT

Back to Emma as she breaks through the moon's gravity and becomes weightless--

Tears of sadness and joy float off into the air, before we:

SNAP TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT