



# ECHO LAKE

ENTERTAINMENT

# ASH

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An ocean of endless darkness.

A distant light glides across it.

A car in the night.

**INT. CAR - NIGHT**

The soft GLOW of the DASHBOARD illuminates --

RIYA, 28. Brown skin, perhaps South Asian. Long black hair, almost shiny -- eyes a deep green.

She sits in the passenger seat, leans her forehead against the window. Looks out into the night.

Headlights cut through the darkness. Fleeting images, caught in their glow. Gone as quickly as they came.

Fields of dry, scorched earth.

A tree. Limbs twisted and heavy.

A street sign. Old, rusted.

And the endless road. Never the same. Always the same.

RIYA

Do you think we're ever coming  
back?

No answer from the driver.

Just silence.

And the ever-present RUMBLE of their wheels, racing across the asphalt --

CUT TO:

**INT. THE ROOM - DAY**

CLOSE ON the green eyes as they open. Slowly, vacant. They look up at the ceiling. Slowly orient themselves...

*Confusion creeping into them...*

Riya sits up -- she's on the floor -- looks around. She seems older, perhaps 35. Her hair shorter, pulled back into a bun. Wears a beige JUMPSUIT -- some kind of uniform, maybe military.

IT IS COVERED IN BLOOD.

*There's a WOUND on her forehead. DRIED BLOOD, along the length of her right eyebrow. Drops have run down the right side of her face -- dark red lines that merge on her chin.*

Riya looks down, regards her body... her hands... her uniform... almost as if seeing it all for the first time... *the blood freaking her out...*

She looks up -- at the room around her.

Industrial -- the walls composed of an impenetrable mass of dark cables, pipes. The floor a rough concrete. Some kind of facility maybe. NO WINDOWS.

WHITE LIGHT exudes from the ceiling -- reflects in the panel-like SCREENS embedded in the walls. They're all off. Black and dull. And right across from her --

A man-made BARRICADE -- *every piece of furniture in the room pushed up against the glistening, metallic door to the room.*

A BED, tipped over; a BENCH, a TABLE.

Riya stands up, grimaces. Her hand goes to her head... feels the wound. Carefully touches it, *confused by its existence.*

A moment... she confirms the wound isn't serious... turns her attention back to the door... steps up to the barricade. Careful. Considers grabbing the table, moving it to one side...

Thinks better of it.

There's a small, glass WINDOW -- diamond-shaped -- set into the door. She looks through it from a few feet away. Beyond --

A NARROW CORRIDOR. Same decor -- walls an almost *organic* surface, cables and pipes bulging like muscle and sinew. TWO DOORS -- one either side, opposite each other.

The one on the right is broken... *torn apart* by some kind of POWERFUL FORCE.

And a TRAIL OF BLOOD. It starts in the middle of the corridor -- *a large stain* -- and snakes away from her... around the corner...

Riya seems unsure. Almost considers shouting out... the blood gives her pause...

She turns away -- moves towards one of the dead screens. Puts her hand to it... taps it... drags her finger across it...

Nothing.

Tries again.

Nothing.

A different screen.

Same result.

She takes a deep breath, looks at the room around her. Confusion slowly giving way to fear. *Where the fuck is she?*

She steps to a wall, tries to dig into the gap between the cables and pipes... *it's too tightly constructed*, her hand fails to push deeper than her wrist.

A *thought* -- she digs through her pockets. Searches for... *anything*. Anything that could shed a light on what's happening.

She finds something -- pulls out a small, METALLIC PIN in the shape of a SHIELD. A CREST of some sort.

It displays a PHOENIX beneath an OPEN BOOK that bears the words "*Crescat Scientia. Vita Excolatur.*"

Riya regards the pin for a moment. Turns it between her fingers...

**FLASHBACK - INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY**

The SAME PIN, twirled between Riya's fingers.

LECTURER (O.S.)

The entrance to the shelter should be on the ground floor of your dormitory. Talk to your R.A.s for more information.

Riya looks up. She's younger again, early twenties -- sits in the middle of a large university lecture hall. Half-empty.

The STUDENTS present barely listen. They've heard this before.

The LECTURER -- a middle-aged woman -- stands before a large whiteboard labeled MOLECULAR BIOLOGY. She looks up from a TABLET before her, addresses the students directly.

LECTURER

I know they make me say this, but... please -- take it seriously. You never know, so...  
(beat, back to the tablet)  
Make your way to the shelter regardless of the nature of the alert.

(MORE)

LECTURER (CONT'D)

It may not be nuclear, but it *will*  
be indicative of a catastrophic  
environmental collapse.

A group of STUDENTS stumbles in through the door. Late.

**INT. THE ROOM - DAY**

Riya still looks at the pin between her hands. Remembers.

She glances up -- a second look down the corridor, at the trail  
of blood.

Back at the dead screen before her. A vague REFLECTION of her  
face. She brings her right hand to the screen, runs her index  
finger along the reflection.

RIYA

Who are you?

*BEEP!* -- A loud noise scares the shit out of her.

She *whips* around -- a PANEL has opened in the wall behind her.  
Holds a small tray, a plate with processed food on it. Cutlery.

Riya walks up to it, looks down at the food. Rice. Some kind of  
curry.

Intrigued, she looks beyond the food, at the machine that  
dispensed it... a microwave-like FOOD PROCESSOR.

She grabs the plate, the cutlery --

*Shhhhk* -- the processor folds back up into the wall.

Riya sits down on the ground. Leans against the wall. Looks at  
the plate before her...

She tries a bite. Careful. *Not bad.*

Digs in.

**LATER**

The empty plate lies on the ground.

Riya paces around the room -- studies the walls in detail.  
Every inch of them. Looking for something she might have  
missed.

She gives up. Sighs, exasperated.

Heads back to the barricade. Looks out into the hallway...  
wondering if she should-

RIYA  
HELLO!?

She listens. Silence.

RIYA  
Hello? Is anybody out there?

No reaction.

RIYA  
Is it safe now!? Can I-

She deflates. It's pointless.

RIYA  
(to herself)  
Can I leave? Please? Can I... can  
you tell me what's going on?

#### **LATER - NIGHT**

Riya lies on the floor, curled up against a wall.

The lights have dimmed... simulate the day/night cycle...

But her eyes are wide open.

#### **LATER - DAY**

Riya drags the desk from the barricade. Lifts it -- turns it upright. Regards it for a moment.

Molded plastic, functional, against a metallic frame. A DRAWER beneath the tabletop. She opens it...

A few SHEETS OF PAPER -- blank. A PEN.

And a PHOTOGRAPH. It shows --

Riya. To her left stands a young MAN -- military buzz cut, a few freckles dot his pale-skinned face. To her right, a blonde WOMAN -- rimmed glasses, a baseball cap.

They all wear some kind of futuristic surgical-type FACE MASK. Pulled down, it hangs beneath their chins.

It's a selfie, apparently taken on some kind of hiking trip. Behind them, the outline of a large LAKE, huge SHIPS dot its surface. The air is murky.

Riya holds the picture in her hand... regards it...

**FLASHBACK - EXT. ESCARPMENT TRAIL, HILLTOP - DAY**

Riya lowers her arm, having just taken the photo. She looks at it on her SMARTPHONE -- a sleek, futuristic device.

Turns around to look at the view behind them.

They stand atop a large hill. LAKE SUPERIOR visible in the distance below. The large ships upon it are BATTLE SHIPS. A HELICOPTER hovers above one of them.

For a moment, the three of them just stare at the view. The ships look out of place in the idyll that surrounds them.

Riya pulls the face mask up. Covers her nose and mouth.

RIYA  
Head back?

They nod, pull up their face masks.

BACK TO:

**THE ROOM**

As Riya looks at the photo. She turns it over. There's an INSCRIPTION on the back...

*I'm not going to write something sappy like "don't forget me," but... don't forget me. Please. - Lauren.*

Riya flips it back to the picture side. Regards the woman in the photo. *Who is she?*

**INT. THE ROOM - DAY**

Riya sits on the floor of the room. Plate of food in her hand. Yesterday's plate lies on the floor, next to her.

The table now stands at the centre of the room. The photograph has been propped against one of its legs.

Riya eats in silence. Eyes locked on the photo.

**LATER**

Riya asleep as -- *tick tick tick* -- the ceiling lights blink on. Daylight.

Her eyes open. Slowly. Tired.

**LATER**

Food being dispensed. Pasta, some kind of tomato sauce.

**LATER**

A new plate of food. Rice with chilli.

**LATER**

Riya stands by the barricade. Shouts toward the corridor --

RIYA  
Hello!??

Beat. Silence.

RIYA  
Are you out there!? Anyone?  
(beat)  
Secretly spying on me? Hoping I'll  
get naked?  
(long beat)  
I'm not going to get naked! You  
hear me? Fuck you, you mystery  
perv!

Long silence.

Her expression falls. *What's the point in being funny?*

**LATER**

Another plate. Beef stew.

Riya turns, shouts toward the door.

RIYA  
Seriously!? How about some fried  
food? Just once!? I'd do anything  
for some fried chicken!  
(beat)  
Almost anything!

Silence. Of course. Always silence.

Riya grabs the plate. *Throws* it against the wall.

**LATER**

Riya walks from screen to screen -- all black -- tries activating them again.

The pile of plates in the corner of the room has grown. At least ten.

Tired, frustrated, she taps a screen. Nothing...

She SLAMS her fist into it. Angry. Breaks it.

Her hands grasp the cables next to it... *pull... tearing with all her might...* The cable SNAPS, dislodged from the wall --

She reaches into the gap, frantic, pushes wires aside -- up to her elbow --

*Hits something.*

She pulls out her arm. Looks into the gap...

An impenetrable wall of SILVER INSULATION. It seems to envelop the entirety of the room. No way through. She deflates.

**LATER**

She drags the bed from the barricade. Places it next to the desk (where the photo lies on its scratched, plastic surface).

Sits down on the bed. Feels the softness of the mattress.

A sigh of relief.

She lets herself fall back onto the bed. Closes her eyes. Bliss.

PRELAP: *KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK*

**FLASHBACK - INT. RIYA'S BUNK - NIGHT**

Near darkness. Riya's face as her eyes open.

A *LOUD ALARM BLARES*. And...

*KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK*. Again.

Riya moves in her bed. *Click* -- a light switch. Grimaces as she's bathed in BRIGHT LIGHT.

She lies in a narrow twin bed. Some kind of dormitory - military maybe.

She gets out of bed. Dressed in the same beige jumpsuit she's been wearing (albeit clean). Stumbles to the door, opens it.

Outside -- a BLACK WOMAN, early thirties. Short hair, recently shaved.

RIYA  
Jones?

JONES  
Come on. You know the drill.

Behind Jones, RED LIGHTS flash in the corridor. Other MEN AND WOMEN (in the same jumpsuit) hurry down its length -- all in the same direction.

RIYA  
Is it?

JONES  
What?

RIYA  
A drill?

JONES  
Probably. But you know how they take them seriously. We can't be-

RIYA  
I know. I know.

Riya checks her pockets -- *Have I got everything?* -- looks back into the room -- steps out into --

### THE CORRIDOR

Closes the door behind her.

RIYA  
Thanks for getting me.

JONES  
Let's go.

They join the mass of people, make their way down the wide corridor.

RIYA  
Wish they'd stop doing these in the middle of the night.

JONES  
They do them just as often during  
the day. You just don't remember  
those.

Riya rolls her eyes, then --

RIYA  
(remembers)  
Kevin.

JONES  
(no)  
You'll be late.

Riya gives her a look. *I have to.*

RIYA  
He always sleeps through them.

JONES  
Don't make me cover for you.

A look from Riya -- *I'm sorry* -- and she turns around, weaves  
through the crowd. A river of people.

RIYA  
(over her shoulder, at Jones)  
Thank you for covering for me!

Makes her way to a nondescript door. One of many identical  
doors, set into the wall of the corridor.

She BANGS against it. Loud.

RIYA  
Kevin!

She won't stop KNOCKING. Louder.

RIYA  
Kevin you lazy shit!

Still knocking --

The door opens. Kevin -- the Man from the photograph -- stands  
in the frame. Looks at Riya... at her outstretched hand, ready  
to knock again --

**INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT**

A DULL BANGING.

Riya wakes up. Looks up at the dark ceiling... her mind still in the dream...

*THE BANGING CONTINUES.*

Suddenly Riya is WIDE AWAKE.

It sounds distant. Sometimes LOUDER sometimes *quieter*. An occasional SCRAPING sound.

*BANG BANG bang.*

She won't move. Petrified.

*bang bang BANG.*

*Scraaaape.*

And it stops.

Silence. Eerie.

#### **MORNING**

Riya sits on the edge of the bed. Looks at what remains of the barricade -- a single bench, propped against the handle.

She seems deep in thought... contemplating...

Suddenly she stands up, determined... walks up to the door... *pulls the bench away from it...*

Reaches out for the doorknob. Halts. Her hand hovers inches above it...

*Should she?*

She grabs it -- turns --

It's locked. Of course.

She pulls again. Hard. Won't budge.

Takes a few steps back. Regards the door before her. *Now or never...*

AND RUNS TOWARDS IT -- SLAMS HER SHOULDER AGAINST THE FRAME --

The door SNAPS off it's hinges -- falls into --

**THE CORRIDOR**

-- Riya on top of it.

A moment. She gathers her breath... looks up...

The bloodstain right before her.

A quick glance to her left -- *a closed door*. No movement visible in the quarter-inch gap beneath the door.

Glance to her right -- *the door that's been torn apart*. Someone must have pried it open with immense force.

BLOODY PALM-PRINTS on it's handle, frame. A CABLE in the wall next to it has been TORN OPEN -- reveals FRAYED WIRES.

Riya turns her attention back to the stain before her... the trail that leads away from it...

She gets up. Follows it to the corner... peeks around it...

Another bend to the right. A couple doors. Empty. *Where did the blood trail-*

*Right beneath her* -- a HUGE PUDDLE. Half a step away. The end of the trail.

The wall at knee height is SPLATTERED with blood. It runs down the wall, pools on the floor. Riya kneels down. Looks closer...

*Slips* -- falls back -- her BARE FEET sliding in the blood --

*It's still wet.*

Riya hyperventilates... *panicking*... it's all too much.

Deep breaths. One. Two. One... Two...

Calms down.

She looks at her heel -- the blood thick, almost coagulated --

*How recently did all of this happen?*

Right next to the stain -- another door in the corridor. Partially open -- a five inch gap...

Riya stands up. Notices a LABEL on the door -- CAPTAIN ALONSO GUTIERREZ.

RIYA  
(trying to remember)  
Gutierrez...

*The name doesn't mean anything to her.*

She pushes the door open -- it swings slowly -- *thunk* -- hits something. Bounces back.

Riya holds the door back open. Leans into the room --

### **INSIDE**

ANOTHER MAKESHIFT BARRICADE against the door --

In disarray. Forcefully pushed back.

The room is similar to Riya's, but larger... and EMPTY.

Riya leans back into the --

### **CORRIDOR**

Turns around. An OPEN DOOR before her --

A glimpse of some kind of LIVING AREA. A small KITCHEN, the end of a DINING TABLE.

She goes to step inside --

*Notices something in her periphery --*

A BLOODY PALM PRINT.

*Smear*ed against the wall... as if someone had leaned against it for support as they stumbled away.

Riya follows the bend of the corridor, ignores further CLOSED DOORS...

*The palm prints continue.*

More frequent now. And continually lower in height... as if someone was collapsing... falling to their knees...

A print on the floor. In front of an open door. The end of the corridor.

A bloodstain that *drags* itself into the room beyond --

Riya follows it into a sort of --

### **CONTROL ROOM**

A large CONTROL DECK, myriad BUTTONS on it.

LARGE SCREENS wrap around the room.

Everything off. Black.

In the corner of the room -- some kind of SEALED DOOR. Large, like a VAULT DOOR. And --

A BODY -- right in front of the control deck. Almost made it. Its back is *littered with stab wounds...*

Riya steps up to it, kneels down... reaches out... *unsure if she should... rolls it onto its side....*

A HISPANIC MAN, forties maybe.

*Throat slit.*

RIYA  
Gutierrez...

Riya regards him for a moment. Scared... but trying to place his face...

*Nothing.*

She gets up -- approaches the control deck. Looks down at the buttons -- everything switched off --

Presses a button -- THEY ALL LIGHT UP.

She steps back, surprised. The room seems to BOOT UP... the screens all suddenly display --

A BLACK BOX. A few words.

REBOOT SYSTEM  
User:  
Password:

She steps forward -- *what should she write?* -- a moment -- enters "GUTIERREZ" as User --

Password:

She looks at the word. Tries to think... realizes it's pointless. *She has no idea.*

RIYA  
Fuck.

She steps back, leaves the control room behind as she re-enters the --

**CORRIDOR**

A door to her right. Pushes it open.

Some kind of ENGINEERING ROOM. A PATH has been dug into the wall on the far end. A view of the facility's insides -- torn insulation. There's a DRONE-LIKE MACHINE on a WORKBENCH -- TOOLS strewn across the floor --

A SCREWDRIVER... *its tip slick with blood...*

She turns away, continues down the corridor. Another door to her right -- opens it --

**LABORATORY**

Two large WORKSTATIONS -- each face the wall on opposite sides.

The one on the right holds a selection of unfamiliar MACHINERY. SCANNERS, MICROSCOPES. An array of LARGE GLASS CYLINDERS -- some empty, some filled with what appear to be SOIL SAMPLES.

Next to it -- a desk surface, surrounded by SCREENS. They're powered on -- the same log-in message on them.

To the left -- a similar station. Machinery slightly different.

A *SOFT THUD* -- a SOUND right behind Riya -- she *whips* around --

Realizes Gutierrez's body has rolled over. Onto its back.

Riya takes a breather...

Makes her way back over to the --

**LIVING QUARTERS**

Steps in. The room is L-shaped, a bend to the right obscuring half of it... the walls a similar mix of naked plumbing and wiring, if a little less cluttered.

To her left, a small kitchen area. A DOOR -- a glimpse of some kind of bathroom through its open gap.

Half of the DINING TABLE is visible before her. She rounds the corner... sees the rest of it... a SOFA... COFFEE TABLE...

A SECOND BODY.

It sits up, its back against the coffee table. Seems to face the wall in front of it, where --

A large RECTANGULAR FRAME surrounds a pane of OPAQUE GLASS. Dark grey, designed to blend in with the walls.

Riya rounds the table... gets a view of the man's face...

IT IS KEVIN.

There's a KNIFE, plunged deep into his heart. His hand rests upon its handle.

His eyes are open... a resigned look of acceptance frozen into them...

Riya steps up to him. Looks down at him... at his face...

FLASH TO:

**FLASHBACK - INT. MILITARY FACILITY, CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

NO SOUND -- Kevin as he opens the door... Riya about to knock again... she smiles...

BACK TO:

**THE LIVING QUARTERS**

Riya's face. Lost, terrified... she knows this man means something to her... *but she can't remember what...*

She follows the petrified gaze in his open eyes, turns to the wall across from him. There are a few BUTTONS projected into the white pane.

Riya presses the large circle at their centre... *the glass turns transparent... reveals...*

A BLACK DESERT.

Huge, jagged ROCKS *break* through the sand. Impossibly large VOLCANOS in the far distance.

**AN ALIEN WORLD.**

An almost-blue sky hangs above it, its hue a little more green... smog-like...

Riya looks at the view. Too stunned to react... the realization still setting in...

RIYA

No...

She looks back at dead Kevin... at the room around her...

*Suddenly it all makes sense. The industrial design, the automated food, the control deck...*

RIYA

*Fuck.*

Her eyes scan the room around her... struggle to latch onto something to stop her from spinning out...

RIYA

This can't... This can't be...

Land on the dining table.

PRELAP: Laughter, as --

**FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

FOUR CREW MEMBERS sit around a table. Riya, Kevin, Gutierrez...

JONES. She looks just like in Riya's memory. Hair a little longer.

They each hold small bowls in their hands, eat from them. The wall/window in the background is set to opaque.

JONES

(re: laughter)

What? *Someone's* gotta say something.

KEVIN

I don't know. Okay... how about, "We will prosper here."

RIYA

"We will prosper here?" What the hell is that supposed to mean? Are you the Queen?

Jones laughs.

KEVIN

I think it's nice.

JONES

Thank god you're not the one that'll say them.

KEVIN

I might be.

JONES

No way. She's much more likely to head out for a sample before you do. Right?

Jones turns to Riya, who shrugs. *I don't know.*

They all look to Gutierrez, who eats in silence...

GUTIERREZ

(notices their looks)  
... Probably.

KEVIN

(to Riya)  
Alright then, what is it? Your "one small step."

RIYA

You really think we'll be able to go outside?

KEVIN

Probably. This planet it's... it's a good candidate. I'd be surprised if any of the others have something like it.

Riya smiles. Considers the thought.

KEVIN

You're avoiding the question.

JONES

Yeah. Come on. Let's hear it.

RIYA

I'm thinking.

They give her a moment to think. Jones finishes her food, sets it down.

RIYA

"Let's not fuck it up this time."

A brief laugh from the crew. It's funny but... it hits a little close to home.

A silence sets in...

*BEEP BEEP BEEP* -- Kevin's WRISTWATCH.

Kevin gets up, walks over to the wall. The crew watch him -- *What's he doing?* -- he turns the wall transparent.

Beyond, the desert expanse is bathed in VIBRANT RED. In the distance, a SMALL SUN hovers above the horizon.

KEVIN

Sunset.

The crew members around the table stand up one by one... step over to his side...

KEVIN

The first of many.

Together they watch the sun set -- their optimistic faces, marked by calm wonder, painted in its glow...

Kevin stands next to Riya. Shares a glance with her.

A smile comes across his face. Heartfelt, gentle. She returns it with one of her own.

*They're sharing something truly extraordinary.*

#### **INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY**

The SAME LANDSCAPE -- no longer warm... wondrous...

*Cold and sinister.*

Riya looks back at Kevin's body. Slumped against the coffee table, dead eyes staring out at the same view...

And finally it hits her. The truth about her situation. How alone she is...

*How she still doesn't know what's happening...*

She GRABS one of the CHAIRS -- lifts it -- SLAMS it down onto the table --

It won't break.

She tries again and again. *And again.*

It still won't break.

Finally she stops. Exhausted.

Lets herself fall to the ground. Collapses.

Her shoulders start shaking. Silent sobs. *It's hopeless.*

**INT. CORRIDOR - DAY**

Riya closes the door to the living quarters behind her.

She heads back to the room she woke up in... stops when she reaches the two opposing doors...

*The last two rooms.*

There's a sign on the door to her right. LIEUTENANT RUBY JONES.

She looks in through the diamond-shaped window... *Empty*. Just like the room she woke up in. Riya notices something -- steps into --

**RUBY'S ROOM**

Up to the bed. Blood on the grey sheets, a trail leads up to the pillow. Carefully she lifts it -- *reveals* --

A HAMMER. Sticky with DRIED BLOOD.

Riya regards it... then turns away, steps back into the --

**CORRIDOR**

Faces the door across from her. It is bent inwards... as if someone... *something*... was locked inside, *tore the door apart*...

There are blood stains on it... the handle... the name sign...

Riya wipes it away... reveals the name... already knows the answer...

LIEUTENANT KEVIN OVERTON.

She tries to open it -- *can't* -- somehow sealed shut. She looks in through the torn gap --

Furniture, clothes strewn across the room. Something happened in here...

But no sign of Jones.

RIYA  
Jones... where are you?

She turns away, steps up to the collapsed door... still on the floor from when she broke out.

She lifts it up. Looks for it... *the name tag*...

RIYA FOOTE.

Riya regards the words... almost with wonder....

**INT. SHOWERS - DAY**

The bath / shower room, attached to the living quarters. Prefabricated, smooth plastic.

Riya slips out of her jumpsuit. Stands in front of a large MIRROR in her underwear.

Her entire body is covered in BRUISES, DRIED BLOOD.

She looks at herself. At her face. Properly, for the first time.

RIYA  
Riya...

The word sounds strange in her mouth. She tries again...

RIYA  
Riya.

**LATER**

Riya showers. Closes her eyes.

Stands in the hot water. A brief moment of bliss.

Red water pools around the drain.

**LATER**

She stands in front of the mirror. Towel around her torso.

Looks at her forehead. The wound is almost gone... healed quickly... she touches the scar tissue that remains...

Opens a CUPBOARD next to the mirror. FRESH CLOTHES.

She picks out a pair of underwear, a jumpsuit, shoes. Everything simple, beige.

Puts on the underwear... looks at herself in the mirror.

The dried blood is gone... the bruises are fainter than she feared...

*But she notices something on her shoulder. A small, circular WOUND. Almost like a cigarette burn.*

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

The door to the bathroom opens as Riya steps out, back into the living quarters. Can't help but freeze as her eyes find Kevin.

For a moment there, she almost forgot...

**INT. THE ROOM / RIYA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya takes the food from the tray. Sits down on the edge of the bed, tries a bite. It's cold.

She looks up, out through the broken door, into the corridor beyond.

Alone.

**IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT**

Riya lies in bed. Eyes open in the darkness as --

A *scraping* sound cuts through the silence. Then...

*bang bang bang bang...*

The dull thuds are back. They seem to come from all the way across the facility... perhaps the control room...

**BANG BANG... BANG.**

Riya turns in her bed. Looks out into the dark corridor... all but pitch black...

**BANG BANG BANG...**

A long pause.

Riya stands up. Slips into her shoes... carefully walks out into the --

**CORRIDOR**

Towards the sound.

Notices the door to her left. Jones' room.

She pushes open the door... *there* --

The **HAMMER** on the bed. She grabs it, feels its weight -- *that's better* -- and moves on --

*Long, metallic SCRAPES.*

Turns toward the control room -- *the sound's coming through here* -- about to step into it --

*BangBangBangBang*

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

-- steps in from the corridor.

Alert. Eyes trained on the VAULT DOOR in the opposite corner of the room.

BANG... BANG... BANG...

*The sound comes from the other side.*

Riya steps around Gutierrez. Around the control deck... almost at the vault door...

Silence.

She puts her ear to the door....

So quiet you can hear her heartbeat... the distant sound of wind outside...

**BANG.**

Riya steps back. The panel next to the door is unusable -- displays the same error message --

But there's a MANUAL OVERRIDE section. FIVE MECHANIC LEVERS -- unaffected by the system outage. Labelled **DOORS 1, 2, 3, 4...** and **PURGE.**

Riya considers... *should she really do this?*

She grabs lever 1... *heaves it over to the other side...*

*The vault door lifts... reveals...*

A SECOND DOOR. Thinner, partially made of see-through sections. She looks through them --

Some kind of AIRLOCK. Twenty feet long, half as wide.

There's another interior door just like this one, on the other side. And another vault door beyond.

*The vault door is partially open. Through the bottom third of door 3 --*

*Glimpses of the dark outside. Something moving...*

Riya pulls lever 2. The door in front of her lifts open.  
She steps into the --

**AIR-LOCK**

*Scrapes on the other side.*

Riya EDGES toward the third door.... *up to its window... hammer still in hand...*

Kneels down -- looks through. *Movement in her periphery.* She shifts to get a better view...

A SPACE SUIT.

Dark grey. Tight-fitting. She can only see the legs... lower torso.

RIYA  
(to herself)  
*Jones.*

A LOUD BANG. Right on the other side.

*She's trying to get in.*

Riya rushes back into the control room -- pulls lever 2 --

**BANG BANG BANG**

Seals the air-lock -- takes a moment... *should she?...*

**BANG BANG-**

*Pulls lever 3.* The third door rises -- only the partially opened outside door left --

*Pulls lever 4.* It LIFTS a few inches -- stops -- *broken.*

Riya tries one more time -- watches, same result --

*The banging has stopped.*

The figure outside kneels... *crawls under the door... into the airlock... stands up...*

IT IS NOT JONES.

Through the visor -- a MAN. White -- forties, stubble.

SLAM -- she flips lever 3 -- locks him in --

Stares at him. Leans closer to the glass...

He steps right up to the other side. Looks at her.

OUTSIDER

Let me in!

Even though he speaks LOUDLY it is hard to hear through the visor and door.

RIYA

Who are you?

OUTSIDER

Seven-F! I'm with seven-F!

RIYA

I don't know what-  
(beat)  
*Who are you?*

OUTSIDER

We got the distress call! You need to let me in!

Riya steps back. Looks at his face... *can she trust him?*

OUTSIDER

There's something out there!  
Please, let me in before-

RIYA

You saw her?

OUTSIDER

Who?

RIYA

Jones!

OUTSIDER

Lieutenant Jones? She's not in here?

A moment... Riya considers... *and pulls the PURGE lever...*

Nothing happens.

RIYA

It can't- It won't-  
(he can't understand her)  
The system- the system is down. We can't purge to atmosphere!

She steps back -- thinks -- *remembers* --

**FLASHBACK - INT. LABORATORY - DAY**

Riya and Kevin sit at opposite ends of the laboratory room -- both deeply engrossed in their work.

KEVIN  
(re: screen, to himself)  
This is...

RIYA  
What?

KEVIN  
The readings...

He keeps reading, glued to the screen.

RIYA  
What readings?

KEVIN  
(concentrated)  
Hm?

Riya rolls her chair over to his side, looks at his screen.

RIYA  
What readings?

KEVIN  
The atmospheric composition.  
It's...

She looks at his screen... deciphers it...

RIYA  
Fuck me. Jackpot.

KEVIN  
You could... you could breathe  
that.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya turns to the levers -- *flips lever 2* --

OUTSIDER  
*No you can't-*

*Exposes herself directly to --*

Nothing happens. The door opens completely.

The Outsider stands in the open airlock. Takes a moment -- *it's safe* -- clips off his helmet. The face beneath is dirty, sweaty. Exhausted.

RIYA  
Who are you?

OUTSIDER  
Brion Vale. I'm with seven-F.

RIYA  
What's that?  
(off his confusion)  
Seven-F. What's seven-F? How do you know about Jones?

He looks at her... *she's not making sense...*

Only now does he take a moment to really absorb the picture... the hammer in her hand...

*The CORPSE on the floor.*

Riya notices his gaze, follows it...

RIYA  
I didn't- I didn't do this.

BRION  
I know. It was lieutenant Jones.

Riya doesn't understand...

BRION  
You're Riya Foote. You sent us the distress call.

RIYA  
What distress call?

BRION  
You said one of your crew members - a lieutenant Jones - that she had suffered some kind of breakdown. Turned on the crew.  
(beat)  
You don't remember that?

Riya strains -- tries to remember.

RIYA  
I woke up and... all of this, it all already happened.

Brion meets her eyes. Assesses her.

BRION  
How far into your mission are you?

RIYA  
My mission?

BRION  
Your mission. How long you been on  
this planet?

RIYA  
I just told you. I don't know...  
(beat)  
I don't know how long. I don't  
know where we are... I don't even  
know who- I don't remember who I  
am.

Brion's edges backward... unnerved by her erratic behavior --  
*startles* as his back bumps into the wall behind him.

Riya notices... puts the hammer on the control deck... a sign  
of peace...

BRION  
What do you know?

RIYA  
I remember waking up two days ago  
with a head wound -- door of my  
room was barricaded from the  
inside. I remember finding two of  
my crew members dead, and the  
third-  
(beat)  
You saw her? Out there?

BRION  
That was Jones?

RIYA  
(nods)  
You said you saw something.

BRION  
I don't know... maybe. I thought  
something was following me, out in  
the darkness.

Riya takes a step back. Absorbs this.

BRION  
Then how did you know?

RIYA

What?

BRION

The atmospheric composition. Just now. That we coulda survived that.

RIYA

I'm... some things. Small details. They're coming back to me. But I don't... I don't...

Her body language changes. Finally lets her guard down.

RIYA

Please... please tell me.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

TWO MUGS full of COFFEE on the dining table. Riya sits next to it. She has turned the chair away, faces --

Brion, who performs a rudimentary MEDICAL EXAM on her while they talk. Taking her pulse... making her eyes follow his index finger...

RIYA

Seven-F. Is that like an organization?

BRION

You're seven-B. We all part of the same mission. A through J.

RIYA

To find a new home for humanity.

BRION

Well... that's the idea.

RIYA

What happened?

She notices he's not listening -- looks up.

He stares off to the side -- distracted by the distinct outline of Kevin's dead body, visible beneath a blanket.

RIYA

I... didn't know what to do with them. Do you want me to- I don't know...

BRION  
 (distracted)  
 No. Sorry, I keep- I'm just... I  
 was tech support during the wars.  
 I've never actually seen no dead  
 body. Not like that one, I ain't.

A moment.

RIYA  
 What happened?

BRION  
 That's what I'm here to find out.

RIYA  
 No. On Earth. What happened on  
 Earth?

BRION  
 You don't remember Earth?

RIYA  
 I... moments. A detail here or  
 there. We've been through this.

BRION  
 Sure. I just... I figured...  
 (beat)  
 What do you remember?

RIYA  
 I remember drills. In case there  
 was an environmental collapse. I  
 remember... I remember battleships  
 on Lake Superior.

Brion chuckles.

BRION  
 Battleships on Lake Superior.  
 Still can't believe that one  
 happened myself.

He sits down. Done with the exam.

BRION  
 You're good. You've had a  
 concussion, which should account  
 for the memory loss. My guess is  
 they'll come back eventually...  
 most of them. But... I can't  
 guarantee you'll be that person  
 again - who you were before.

Riya takes this in. A long silence.

Brion grabs the coffee. Takes a sip. Watches the pain on Riya's face, struggling to absorb what he told her...

BRION

We fucked up our planet. Fucked it up until all we could do was fuck each other up to control access over what was left of it. Wars over fresh water, arable land, asteroid-based minerals... All these things we used to take for granted.

(beat)

It took us a while... to realize things wouldn't get better. The wars... the killing... it just led to more of the same.

(beat)

They say there's only a couple hundred years left for us. Maybe more if we kill each other a lot, lower resource consumption. So our government decided to invest in an alternative. Joint venture. NASA and military. The Exodus Program. They...

He halts. Looks at her.

BRION

You don't remember none of that?

She gives him a look.

Brion raises his eyebrows -- Okay...

BRION

Eight clusters. Different corners of the universe. Sounds all romantic and Star Trek, but... You should be glad you forgot them three years we floated through nothing. Boring as fuck.

RIYA

So this isn't your planet...?

BRION

Nah. We were on route to Kepler 22B when we caught your distress signal.

(MORE)

BRION (CONT'D)

Home base reached out to us, said to re-route our mission to check in on you.

RIYA

Us?

BRION

Yeah. The four of you.

RIYA

No. You said "home base reached out to us." Who's us?

BRION

They're in orbit. Five total. I came down in a landing pod. It's... it's not far. One and a half clicks west from here.

RIYA

That's how you're getting back? The pod?

BRION

(nods)

The pod blasts me into orbit. They'll scoop me up. Just gotta wait for a window. Forty...

(checks watch)

two and a half hours. That's when we're heading back. This place the way it is... I don't think you should stay.

A moment. Silence sets in.

BRION

Do you know if she took any equipment with her?

RIYA

Jones?

BRION

Yeah.

RIYA

I don't know. I don't... I don't remember what we had in the first place.

BRION  
It's been, what... four days since  
you woke up?

RIYA  
At least.

BRION  
The air filters in those suits  
need to be replaced every twenty  
four hours, tops. No way she can  
survive out there this long  
without some kind of supply.

Riya nods. Looks over at Kevin's corpse.

RIYA  
The memories I have of her, she  
was... she wasn't *this*.

Riya nods over at Kevin's corpse.

BRION  
You don't remember anything about  
what happened? Maybe now that you  
know what to look for?

Riya looks away, eyes distant...

PRELAP: A SCREAM OF RAGE --

**FLASHBACK - INT. GUTIERREZ'S ROOM - NIGHT**

POINT OF VIEW as Riya looks up --

A *glimpse* of Jones -- eyes wide with ADRENALINE, sweat clings  
to her forehead -- HAMMER in her hand -- *STRIKES DOWN* --

Our view *TEARS* to one side as it connects -- we fall --

A *PULSE* of black, losing consciousness -- we look up --

Jones pounces onto us, lifts the hammer again -- a SCREAM of  
PURE BLOODLUST -- *it CRACKS* down against our skull and --

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Riya blinks. Rattled by the memory. She needs a moment.

RIYA  
This.

Riya points to the wound on her forehead.

RIYA  
She did this.

BRION  
What did she look like?

RIYA  
Different. Desperate.

BRION  
Different? Different like she had  
a psychotic break?

RIYA  
I... Yes. Maybe.  
(beat)  
For her to do all of this?  
Something must have changed inside  
her.

BRION  
Then let's check.

RIYA  
What?

BRION  
Check the logs.

RIYA  
I've tried. I've tried ever since  
I woke up. I just don't remember  
the password for the-

BRION  
I do. I can log into your system.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY**

Brion stands at the control panel, Riya next to him.

BRION  
Let's see...

He types.

*REBOOT VESSEL:*  
USERNAME: RIYA FOOTE  
PASSWORD: .....

Logs in.

*The screens all around them BOOT to life -- display DIGITS,  
DATA VISUALIZATIONS.*

BRION  
 (reading the screens)  
 Everything's working. There's a...  
 there's a sandstorm tomorrow...  
 big one... but it'll be gone by  
 the time we hit our departure  
 window.

Brion begins to use the computer, browses through data.

RIYA  
 How did you know my password?

BRION  
 (distracted)  
 What?

RIYA  
 You used my password.

BRION  
 Knew all of theirs too. Home base.

RIYA  
 What was it?

BRION  
 Your password? It's... Yippee Ki-  
 Yay. With an underscore and a  
 dash.  
 (beat)  
 Not very secure.

RIYA  
 Yippee what?

A grin from Brion. He's letting this one go. Turns to the control panel --

BRION  
 Alright then - let's see what we  
 have on Jones.

RIYA  
 Can I see the distress call first?

BRION  
 It won't be on here. It was a  
 direct call, not a logged video.

Riya sighs. Not what she wanted to hear.

RIYA  
 What about before that?  
 (MORE)

RIYA (CONT'D)  
The last video we logged.

Brion nods, reluctant. He presses a few keys... navigates through the menus...

BRION  
Okay... Here we go. The very last video recorded on this facility.

*Click --*

**ON SCREEN - INT. GUTIERREZ'S ROOM - DAY**

Gutierrez sits behind his desk. Talks to a camera.

**INTERCUT VIDEOS WITH RIYA AND BRION WATCHING**

GUTIERREZ  
Seven-B. Day four hundred ninety three since departure. One hundred and fifty six since landing on KOI-442.

(beat)

Data continues to look good. The more we collect, the clearer the picture becomes. This planet... lieutenant Overton has started calling it *Ash*... it shows very promising numbers.

(beat)

We've started atmospheric tests. The results are... not perfect, but close enough. Minimal filtration would be necessary. I've attached the data to this transmission.

Gutierrez shifts in his seat. Tries to remember. *What else?*

Brion looks to Riya -- her focused eyes reflect the screen.

GUTIERREZ  
Lieutenant Foote lost a drone out there. Sudden disconnect on its way back from collecting a soil sample. Less than a mile out. She's gonna go out to get it -- wanna get em used to surface activity. Trying to move this baby into phase two.

He smiles. The video stops.

**IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Brion looks at Riya.

BRION  
That was it.

RIYA  
Are there videos of me?

BRION  
We should look at Jones. Figure  
out why she did-

RIYA  
Please. Just one. I don't... I  
want to see who I am. Who I was.

Brian nods, understands. He opens a video --

**ON SCREEN - INT. LABORATORY - DAY**

Riya sits at her work station. Looks into the camera.

RIYA  
So I've been digging deeper on  
the-  
(beat -- remembers)  
Sorry. I always forget. It's  
day... fifty seven. Since landing.  
So. I've been analyzing the  
microbial life in the soil samples  
from site two. The presence of  
water, infrequent though it may  
be, has created stromatolite-like  
organisms. Not quite the same as  
on Earth, a little weaker... more  
like... stromato-lites.

She looks up to her right, distracted. A glimpse of Kevin as he  
enters, hands her a mug.

KEVIN (O.S.)  
Thought you might want some  
coffee.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM -- Riya watches. Fascinated by this version  
of herself.

IN THE VIDEO:

RIYA  
Thanks.  
(MORE)

RIYA (CONT'D)  
 (beat -- to Kevin)  
 You like it? Stromato-lite.

KEVIN (O.S.)  
 What's a stromatolite?

Riya rolls her eyes, chuckles. Turns back to the camera.

RIYA  
 It's...  
 (takes a sip - too hot)  
 There's no sign of complex life.  
 But what there is, it's... there  
 will be. Complex life. Sooner or  
 later. The conditions are...  
*almost* there. It's like this place  
 is preparing itself to create  
 lifeforms. To sustain them-

PAUSE.

#### IN THE CONTROL ROOM

Brion looks to Riya.

BRION  
 Want me to keep going?

Riya still stares at the screen. Entranced by the freeze frame of her own face -- carefree, happy.

Finally, she looks away, a deep pain in her eyes. She doesn't recognize this person in herself.

BRION  
 Riya?

She looks at him, shakes her head.

RIYA  
 Let's go to Jones. What's the last  
 clip we have from her?

Brion looks through the data.

BRION  
 We've got a... private message  
 here. To her father.

He looks over at her -- she nods --

Click --

**ON SCREEN - INT. JONES' ROOM - NIGHT**

Jones sits at her desk, her face illuminated by the light of the screen. She talks into the camera.

JONES

Hey pops. How are you? Hope the treatment isn't tiring you out too much. Over here... Things are good here. I... I wish you could see it. Every day I'm here it... it's like- do you remember when we went to see that exhibition? I was eleven and you took us to see this modern art thing. Richter was his name I think. Gerald Richter? Mom and Dave they...

She smiles, remembering.

JONES

They gave up on it pretty quickly. Spent more time in the gift shop than the actual museum. But you wouldn't let me do the same. You sat me down in front of this giant painting. Taller than me, for sure. These *smudges* of color, almost aggressive. First I didn't like it -- I didn't get it. But you told me - give it ten minutes. In ten minutes you can have ice cream. I wanted rocky road.

A moment of silence. Eyes lost in the memory.

JONES

So I sat there, annoyed. Bored out of my mind. Until I *looked*... until I actually paid a attention. And I started to get it. I saw it. And I kept seeing more. Half an hour later...

(beat)

Half an hour later you had to drag me away.

She takes a moment. Still reminiscing. Returns to looking into the camera.

JONES

That's what it's like being here. Every day... every day I see something else in it.

(MORE)

JONES (CONT'D)

Like there's something out there,  
slowly revealing itself to me. I  
know you...

(beat)

I know you think what Dave did was  
pointless. Maybe it was. This  
place... maybe I can make up for  
it. Prevent others from dying in  
pointless wars.

(beat)

I love you, pops. Be nice to mom,  
I'm sure he's not that bad. She  
deserves to be happy with someone.

### INSIDE THE CONTROL ROOM

The video just ended. They both stand there in silence.

A heavy pause.

RIYA

She seems completely normal.

Brion nods.

RIYA

So... we dig deeper? Look through  
the logs?

A moment.

BRION

You know, now that we're in we can  
de-automate the food processors.  
Order up anything you want.

RIYA

(re: computer)

We should stay on this.

BRION

That's what I'm saying. We'll need  
fuel. What do you want -- popcorn?  
A slice? I'm sure there's  
something you've been dying to  
eat.

Riya realizes what he means, grins.

BRION

I'll get in touch with my vessel  
in orbit.

(MORE)

BRION (CONT'D)  
Update them on the situation. You  
bring the fuel.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY**

Riya steps up to a PANEL in the wall of the small KITCHEN AREA.  
Navigates the menu -- selects --

FRIED CHICKEN

A grin on her face. Enters the order. The machine displays a  
countdown --

5:00... 4:59... 4:58...

Riya turns around, considers heading back to Brion --

Notices Kevin in her periphery. *The blanket has slipped* --  
reveals his face.

Riya steps over to it... bends over... goes to lift off the  
blanket --

*Catches Kevin's eyes* -- still open -- serene --

**FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

The lights are dim. It is night.

Kevin and Riya sit on opposite ends of the sofa. A BEER on the  
coffee table in front of Kevin, COFFEE in Riya's hand.

KEVIN  
(re: coffee)  
You're heading back in?

She nods.

They sit in silence. Stare out through the "open" window --  
into the dark landscape beyond --

The glow of distant stars bathes the landscape in deep hues of  
blue and black.

KEVIN  
It's really something, huh?

She nods. In silence.

KEVIN  
Come here.  
(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
 (off her look)  
 Come on. You're so far away.

RIYA  
 Kevin.

KEVIN  
 They're all asleep.

She considers it for a moment. Glances over her shoulder...  
*they're alone...* moves across the sofa. Over to Kevin's side.

She leans close -- rests her head on his chest.

He puts his arm around her.

The lie there in silence. Entranced by the view.

RIYA  
 We should be more careful.

PRELAP: *Footsteps* --

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT**

Brion appears in the doorway.

BRION  
 Riya, we got a problem.

She looks up at him.

BRION  
 I couldn't reach my guys. Your  
 communication relay is down.  
 Software completely fried in a way  
 that I... I can't fix it.

She needs a moment to absorb what he said... her mind still on  
 Kevin...

RIYA  
 I want to bury them.

BRION  
 Did you hear what I said?

RIYA  
 Please.

He looks at her... the determination on her face...

BRION  
Outside?

RIYA  
Please. These people. I think  
they... these people were  
important to me once.

*He doesn't like it...*

BRION  
She's out there.

RIYA  
I'll be quick. Just bring them  
out. We'll let the sandstorm bury  
them.

**EXT. THE FACILITY / ASH SURFACE - DAY**

Riya stands up outside the half-open airlock door. Wears a space suit -- sleek, modern. Grey, with black details.

She looks out at the barren world. Alien, yet... fascinating somehow. Something out there... mysterious...

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
You getting me?

RIYA  
Yeah.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
I'll be watching -- external cams.

Riya bends down -- the two bodies are just inside the airlock, ready. She grabs Kevin by the ankle, drags him outside. Hoists him onto her shoulder.

She starts walking. Trudges to her right... around the corner of the facility...

RIYA  
So what do we do?

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
About what?

RIYA  
You said comms were down.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
 We can't get through to Earth,  
 but... I can message my crew from  
 the landing pod.

RIYA  
 So we go to your landing pod.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
 It'll have to be after. The storm.  
 Can't get there and back before it  
 hits.

(beat)  
 They'll be worried -- not hearing  
 from me.

*THUD* -- Kevin's body drops onto the black, ash-like sand.

Riya looks at him one last time...

Stands up straight, takes a breather. Looks to her right. She  
 can see the faint outline of the living quarters window within  
 the facility wall facing her.

She looks in the other direction. A small hill, black sand,  
 limits her view.

She walks toward it, begins to scale it.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
 Where are you going?

RIYA  
 Just give me a moment. Wanna see  
 what's over the ridge.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
 My landing pod's the other way.

Riya ignores him... reaches the top of the hill... looks out at  
 the landscape.

An ocean of black sand. Long, gentle DUNES. CLUSTERS OF GIANT  
 ROCKS dot the landscape like islands.

A distant haze above the horizon. Beyond, rising from the  
 haze... TALL VOLCANOS. Long extinct, their peaks marked by  
 impossibly large craters. Shades of black and red.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
 Riya?

RIYA  
 How could she survive out there?

Riya looks at the landscape, lost in thought.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
You've still got one body to go.

Riya breaks from the moment, heads back downhill. Back to the facility.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya sits at the computer. She's alone. Only the sound of the wind outside... the facility *groaning*...

ON SCREEN: A video of Kevin talking to the camera.

KEVIN (IN VIDEO)  
-atmospheric models of the Ash's ecosystem. That way we can project how it will develop, how we might need to... help it along. I'll let you know how it goes.

The video closes. Finished.

Riya browses through the data. Notices a section --

**CREW PROFILES**

*She clicks on Kevin's.* Browses through the information.

Born in East Los Angeles. Public school system -- top grades. Won a military-funded scholarship.

Distinguished himself in college, warranting a position in the EXODUS PROGRAM.

She continues reading. PICTURES of his PARENTS. Kevin at his college graduation -- *a memory* --

**FLASHBACK - INT. COFFEE SHOP, CHICAGO - DAY**

A busy mix of YOUNG PEOPLE. Some working on futuristic devices, others waiting for their coffee.

Most have face masks around their necks, pulled down while they breathe the filtered air inside.

Riya and Kevin sit opposite each other, in a corner of the venue. A long, awkward silence.

KEVIN

I don't want you to break up with me.

Confusion on Riya's face... slowly turning into a smile.

RIYA

I though you wanted to break up with me.

KEVIN

What? No... why would I want to-

RIYA

You picked a public place. We never come here. That was weird.

KEVIN

(realizing)

Yeah. My bad. I didn't think about what it'd look like.

A moment. They allow themselves to smile, a weight off their shoulders.

RIYA

So... we decline the offers? I can live with being stuck on Earth -- long as it's not alone.

Kevin gives it a moment... considers it...

KEVIN

I don't wanna make you do that. To be the reason you had to give up on...

(beat)

I know you've been wanting to do this... to actually *contribute* since you were a kid. I just applied to Exodus to avoid getting drafted.

RIYA

They don't let couples on missions.

KEVIN

I know.

RIYA

So it's pointless. We can't-

KEVIN  
They don't need to know.

RIYA  
...what?

KEVIN  
They don't need to know. We'll just be friends, make a good impression... get sent on a mission together. What are they gonna do once we're two years from Earth?

Riya considers this. A long time.

RIYA  
(I'm in)  
It's a stupid idea...

KEVIN  
I know.

RIYA  
You don't give up, huh?

KEVIN  
You know me. John McClane. Walk barefoot on glass for you.

RIYA  
Yippee ki-yay motherfucker.

KEVIN  
That's right. Yippee ki-yay.

A smile on their faces. Full of optimism. A small, private moment -- the busy world continuing around them...

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

*Drip...* A single drop on the back of Riya's hand.

Riya looks down -- realizes it was a tear. She was crying... remembering...

She wipes her cheeks. Back to the computer. *Sees her crew profile under Kevin's...*

*Goes to click on it --*

**BANG. BANG. BANG.**

*From outside the airlock.*

Riya looks up. Frozen. *Did she really just hear-*

BANG. Scraaaaaape. BANG.

She stands up slowly. Careful not to make a sound. Turns to head out of the control room --

*Sees Brion in the doorway.*

*Their eyes meet. What the fuck is going on?*

Brion puts his finger to his lips -- *Shhhhhh* --

BANG. BANG.

He edges over to the control deck.

RIYA  
(whispers)  
Jones?

BRION  
Gotta be.

Brion nods down at the control deck --

BRION  
Cameras.

Riya nods, steps aside to let him use the machine. He presses a few buttons -- brings up a --

#### **VIDEO FEED**

Near darkness.

Above the outside door, looking down at it.

A DARK GREY SHAPE. Humanoid.

It *SLAMS* something against the inside door -- door 3. Again and again. Trying to get in.

#### **IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Brion turns to Riya.

BRION  
Is that her?

Riya looks closer.

RIYA  
I don't... I can't tell.

BRION  
There's a light.  
(off her look)  
Above the outside door. I can turn  
it on.

*Bang bang bang.*

It echoes through the facility.

Riya considers...

RIYA  
Wait.

On the screen, the figure seems to have knelt down. Face below the level of the broken door... *trying to grab hold of the inside door... pulling...*

*Scraaaape.*

Riya steps over to the manual override panel...

RIYA  
When I say.

Brion acknowledges. Nods.

A long silence. *Scraaaape.*

Riya *SLAMS* lever 1 -- *the vault door RACES up --*

Reveals the INSIDE DOOR -- a VIEW OF THE AIRLOCK --

ON SCREEN: The figure stops. Reacts. Kneels down -- *looks through the transparent section of the inner door --*

Riya steps up to the glass -- a glimpse of a DARK SHADOW across the airlock -- *only the inner doors separate them now --*

RIYA  
*Now!*

Brion presses the button --

A HARSH LIGHT blasts down onto the figure --

**RIYA'S P.O.V.** -- A helmet, dark behind the visor. A glimpse of a face in the darkness --

Something off -- *inhuman --*

**ON BRION'S SCREEN** -- The figure *DARTS* out of the light -- *scampers* into the dark -- *fast* --

No view of its face.

A moment of silence. Both of them frozen... unable to speak...

Riya slowly turns to Brion.

RIYA  
You... you saw its face?

BRION  
It?  
(off her confusion)  
You said "it." Not "her."

She realizes. Mind churning.

BRION  
That was... that was Jones, no?

RIYA  
I don't know. Yes, but... but she  
was different.

BRION  
Different?

Riya's still lost in thought, until... she returns to the moment. Shakes her head.

RIYA  
I only caught a glimpse. It was  
dark.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Riya watches as a stream of BLACK COFFEE pours into her mug. Hands on the kitchen surface -- she leans on to it for support.

Brion stands next to her. Looks at her - silent. Both of them still in shock.

The stream of coffee stops. Neither moves.

BRION  
(a moment)  
Your coffee.

She give him a look -- *realizes* -- grabs the coffee.

Behind them, the window to outside is set to transparent.

PERIMETER LIGHTS have been switched on... but they are small... illuminate only twenty feet into the darkness...

*And make the night beyond feel so much darker...*

RIYA

Why was she trying to get in? Why now?

The screens in the walls have been programmed to display SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE. They both watch it... talking without making eye contact...

BRION

Her supply must be low.

RIYA

Oxygen?

BRION

(nods)

When I checked the logs there were six canisters missing. She must be on her last one.

RIYA

You think she coulda gotten in? Eventually? The way she was trying...

BRION

Those doors are pretty solid.

RIYA

You couldn't get in. Even after three nights.

BRION

One night.

Riya furrows her brow. Looks over at him.

RIYA

You tried to get in for three nights. Last night, when I let you in... and the two nights before.

Now they're making eye contact.

BRION

No. The first night I showed up- and *found* the outside door like that... you let me in. Whatever you heard before... it wasn't me.

A moment as Riya digests this... realizes what it means...

RIYA  
It's not the oxygen. She's been  
trying to get in for days...

Brion looks over at her. Can tell something's on her mind.

BRION  
What did you mean different?

RIYA  
(still thinking)  
Hm?

BRION  
You said she looked different.  
Back when- after you saw her.

RIYA  
I told you. It was dark.

BRION  
That's not what you meant.

Riya looks at him. Scared to put her suspicion into words.

RIYA  
What if something changed her?

BRION  
Something?

RIYA  
Yes. Something. What I saw, it  
was...  
(beat)  
I don't think it was human. Not  
anymore.

Brion looks at her. Not sure if she's being serious.

BRION  
There's nothing in the logs.

They watch the surveillance footage for a moment. No movement.

Riya steps away... over to the window. Looks into the darkness  
outside.

Just at the edge of the perimeter lights -- losing itself in  
the darkness --

*The corpses of Kevin and Gutierrez.*

RIYA  
 There must be. Something.  
 Somewhere.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

Brion walks into the control room, two mugs of coffee in his hand. He steps over to the control deck, where Riya sits. Puts the mugs down.

BRION  
 Anything?

RIYA  
 I've been through weeks of daily logs. Nothing.

She sighs. Leans back - takes a sip of her coffee. A thought --

RIYA  
 Hey, can I ask you something?

He nods.

She reaches into her pocket, pulls out her badge-pin. Hands it to him.

RIYA  
 Do you know where this is from?

Brion takes the pin. Looks at its back... studies the writing on the front.

BRION  
 University of Chicago.

RIYA  
 Chicago?

BRION  
 It's a city, up near-

RIYA  
 Illinois?  
 (off his look)  
 I'm starting to remember. Facts.  
 Little things.

BRION  
 Right.

A moment. He gives her back the pin.

RIYA  
I don't... do I sound like someone  
from Chicago?

BRION  
You didn't grow up in Chicago.

RIYA  
How do you know?

BRION  
I keep telling you. I was briefed  
on this mission-

RIYA  
Home base. Right.  
(beat)  
So where am I from?

BRION  
Same place I'm from, more or less.  
Upstate New York.

FLASH TO:

#### **A MEMORY**

A wet road. Suburban, houses either side.

YOUNG RIYA, twelve, walks down the street. Alone. School bag on  
her back.

It is FALL -- a CARPET of RED LEAVES.

Young Riya takes a deep breath. Enjoys the crisp air.

BACK TO:

#### **THE CONTROL ROOM**

Riya recalls...

RIYA  
Red leaves.

BRION  
(nods)  
Favorite time of the year.

RIYA  
What else? Tell me.

BRION

When I was a kid, we'd explore the forest. Pick wild blueberries. You could go swim in the Hudson- 'least some people did... my mom told me it was too dirty.

(beat)

Pastrami sandwiches - least an inch thick. It's... it's beautiful- was beautiful.

(beat)

It ain't what it used to be.

Riya sits in silence. Tries to remember. She seems sad... overwhelmed. It's all getting to her.

RIYA

It... I wish I could remember. I don't even...

She turns away. Avoids eye contact.

RIYA

I see these memories and... and I feel what they mean to me, the emotion. But I don't understand. It's like... it's like I'm a tourist in someone else's life. Just catching glimpses of this person that is whole... that is complete. But when I come back home, to me, there's nobody there. It's just... empty.

(beat)

She did this to me. Jones. She turned me into this empty... *thing*... and I don't know even why.

She turns to him. Eyes wet with tears, trying to hold back.

RIYA

I can't remember the faces of my parents.

Brion reaches out... careful... puts his hand on Riya's shoulder. Comforting. She welcomes it.

BRION

Don't worry. I'm getting you out of here. You'll have time... it'll come back to you...

A sullen smile from Riya. She nods, tries to be positive.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - MORNING**

THROUGH THE WINDOW: A distant sun hangs low above the horizon, its light diffuse in the dusty air. Kevin and Gutierrez's bodies lie outside -- no more than twenty yards away --

Riya and Brion stand in front of the window. Freshly showered... but tired. Exhausted.

RIYA

I remembered, earlier... Our last weekend. Kevin and I... we went up to Austin- is it Austin?

She looks back at him. He nods.

RIYA

I think... I think my father was at the hospital there. I wanted to see him before I left. Before I'd never see him again.

A long silence. She stares into the night.

**FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - NIGHT**

Riya sits in the passenger seat -- looks out through the windshield -- darkness outside --

RIYA (V.O.)

He drove me there. Kevin. There and back, through the night. Said he'd take the wheel if I bought the coffee.

(beat)

Our headlights were the only thing breaking through the dark. Glimpses in the darkness. Like visions. Visions of the world we would leave behind.

Outside -- Dry shrubs. Cracked asphalt. Fleeting images, briefly vignettted in the headlights of their car --

RIYA

Do you think we're ever coming back?

No answer. Just silence.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - MORNING**

Riya, lost in the memory. Slowly she returns to the moment... focuses on the vista outside.

The dust in the air gets thicker. Darker.

RIYA

You won't- you can't believe how lonely I felt.

(beat)

And he said something. He said something I can't remember. Something that made me feel warm in the darkness.

Visibility is almost gone. No more than thirty feet. Until --

THE SANDSTORM. Its arrival as sudden as it is brutal.

It *lashes* against the building... against the windows... *shakes* the structure...

*Envelops the dead bodies whole --*

It's pitch black now. The sun completely obscured.

Riya and Brian stand in the darkness. Solemn. Feel every *shake* in the building....

A distant *creeeeeak*. Loud, it breaks through the ambient cacophony.

Riya looks to Brian. *Could it be- ?*

BRIAN

It's not coming from the airlock.

Riya nods. Relieved.

*But the sound remains.*

Gets louder. RASPING.

They both stand... listen...

AN ALARM GOES OFF --

The lights dim, a RED TINGE -- all screens display the SAME MESSAGE --

AIR PRESSURE COMPROMISED

RIYA  
What does- what does that mean?

BRION  
There's a leak somewhere. Outside  
air coming in.

RIYA  
Jones?

BRION  
(shakes his head)  
Must be the sandstorm.

A moment, he thinks.

BRION  
You said the air was breathable?

RIYA  
I don't know for how long.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY**

Riya and Brion stand before the control deck.

The lights around them flash red -- flicker across their  
concentrated faces as they --

Search through files. An ONSCREEN PROMPT warns them --

AIR PURITY - 56%

55%

Brion finds the file he's looking for -- *CLICK* --

**ON SCREEN - INT. LABORATORY - DAY**

Kevin faces the camera.

KEVIN  
Preliminary tests suggest that a  
full, one hundred percent exposure  
to the outside atmosphere is  
survivable for up to six minutes.  
At that point, the elevated  
nitrogen levels will cause a loss  
of consciousness.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Partial exposure decreases the time of survival on an exponential basis. At fifty percent dilution you can breathe it for over an hour. Seventy five percent... about twenty minutes.

-PAUSE-

**IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Brion closes the window. Brings up the facility's diagnostics.

AIR PURITY - 47% -- 46% --

*It's dropping fast.*

BRION

Fuck. We don't have time.

RIYA

To do what?

BRION

Seal it. The leak is...

He brings up a map of the facility, points at a point on its perimeter.

BRION

It tells me its coming from right here. You'd need to go outside to...

(checks info on screens)

By the time the storm's died down we'll be out. Unconscious.

RIYA

What about inside?

He gives her a look. She points back at the map.

RIYA

The engineering room has some kind of hole in the back wall. I'm guessing it's to get into this space here --

(points at map)

-- where the machinery runs through the walls. We can plug the leak from inside.

Off Brion's look -- *It could work* --

**INT. ENGINEERING ROOM - DAY**

Riya stands at the back of the engineering room, before the hole in the wall. She wears a HEADSET in her right ear.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
We're at thirty three percent now.

RIYA  
Going in.

She holds a WELDING MACHINE in her right hand. Small, compact -- almost like a firearm. In her left -- a small SHEET OF METAL. No larger than a notebook.

She steps forward, into --

**THE WALL**

Squeezes through PIPES, WIRES, sponge-like INSULATION.

The space is incredibly narrow. Pushes against her chest, her face. Claustrophobic.

Riya notices TORN INSULATION.

RIYA  
Someone's been through here before.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
Wouldn't be surprised. The hole was man-made. I'm guessing repairs.

Riya nods to herself. Pushes on... squeezing through...

*Reaches a T-JUNCTION.*

The sound is louder here. The HOWL of the storm. A DEEP GROAN -- the whole building *shaking*.

And a RASPING SOUND. *Something peeling, tearing.*

RIYA  
Where do I go?

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
Turn right. We just hit 29.

Riya looks to her right. The path is even narrower -- almost impenetrable.

She looks in the opposite direction. More torn insulation, cables... Someone forced their way through this side.

And *blood*. No more than TINY SMUDGES.

Riya notices. Reaches out to touch the stain...

RIYA  
They turned left right here.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
Riya. We're at twenty five. You need to move.

Riya nods, turns away. Pushes forward to the right.

One step. Sideways. Insulation pushing into her face... making it hard to breathe...

Second step. Tries to squeeze her rib cage through a narrow gap between two pipes...

*Can't make it work.*

RIYA  
It's too tight.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
You're only a few steps away.

RIYA  
I know, but I can't...

She takes a step back. Looks down...

There is less clutter near the ground -- *the path a little wider.*

She gets down on her stomach. Crawls forward. *SQUEEZES* her way through --

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
Riya?

RIYA  
I'm moving. Crawling towards it.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
You'll have to work fast. The air is much purer where you are.

Riya keeps crawling. The sound of the storm is *impossibly loud.*

She grabs onto a pipe, drags herself forward, and --

THERE IT IS.

The hole in the outer layer. A foot from the ground, no larger than a tennis ball.

It seems frayed... layers of insulation *peeling off*...

RIYA  
I see it.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
And?

RIYA  
I got this.

Riya pulls herself forward. Right up to the hole.

Sees the BLACK SANDSTORM outside. Near darkness... sand coming in through the hole... piling on the floor...

Riya lifts the metal sheet... places it against the wall... covers the hole...

It's hard to hold it up -- outside pressure pushing in --  
The sheet is forced back, as -- *SUDDENLY* --

AN ARM REACHES INTO THE HOLE.

It grabs the edge of the opening, pulls at it... *tears it*...

The suit is torn, reveals BURNT, NECROTIC SKIN beneath.

RIYA  
FUCK!

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
What?

The hand disappears as quickly as it came.

Ominous darkness outside. Endless sand.

RIYA  
It's Jones. She's- she's fucking tearing it open.

BRION (OVER COMMS)  
You saw her?

RIYA

Her hand. She's... it's gone now.

BRION (OVER COMMS)

We're at fifteen now. You're probably breathing zero where you are. You only have-

RIYA

A couple minutes, I know.

She takes a deep breath. *Let's do this.*

Puts the sheet back up. Holds it tight.

*Begins to weld it shut.* Closes up the left side... all done... moving on to the top.

The GLOW of the weld moves across the top. Slow. Meticulous.

The sheet *rattles* in the wind... *the line almost done...*

*Something PUSHES* against the sheet -- *bends its bottom corner inwards* --

JONES' HAND SQUEEZES THROUGH THE GAP -- *tries to TEAR* at the sheet --

A GUST OF WIND outside, black sand BLASTING THROUGH THE GAP.

Riya looks at the hand before her... grasping... digging deeper... *almost reaching her own face...*

Brings up the welding gun -- BLASTS THE HAND, *sears* skin --

It RECOILS, back out of the hole...

Riya STRAINS to push the sheet shut -- *holds it* -- back to welding --

Right side done... *one more left... almost done...*

The sheet shakes... *the storm as loud as never before...*

And she's done.

She exhales. Relieved.

RIYA

It's done.

BRION (OVER COMMS)

Fuck yes. Give me one moment and I'll...

(MORE)

BRION (OVER COMMS) (CONT'D)

(beat)

We're equalizing again. Twenty five... twenty six... it's going up. Riya, you just saved our lives.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY**

Riya and Brion are back at the window. Exhausted, they sit on the couch... watch and listen in silence --

As the storm subsides. Gone as quickly as it came...

*The bodies are gone.*

For a moment the two of them just look at the world outside. Once again calm, devoid of life...

**ON SCREEN - INT. LABORATORY - DAY**

Kevin looks into the camera. He sits at his desk -- the laboratory behind him. Riya's desk is empty.

KEVIN

- I've taken to calling it Ash. This little planet here. This planet we're now stuck on.

(beat)

We're preparing atmospheric tests. Confirm the results from the preliminary scan.

He shifts in his seat -- his mind caught on something --

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Riya sits at the computer. Watches the video on screen.

KEVIN (ON SCREEN)

Sometimes... Sometimes I wonder if- The likelihood of a planet containing so many markers for stable life. Not just a few, but this many... it's... it's remarkable.

Riya looks up -PAUSE- as --

Brion enters. He wears the space suit.

They look at each other for a moment. Riya doesn't like this.

BRION  
She's only come at night. Or in  
the dark.

RIYA  
(after a beat)  
What happens if the sandstorm  
broke it?

BRION  
It's built to withstand much more  
pressure.

RIYA  
It could still be damaged. Your  
communications system could be  
down - what if you can't reach  
your crew?

BRION  
All we need to do is get into  
orbit. They'll pick us up, even if  
comms are down.

A moment. Brion realizes what's on her mind...

BRION  
Riya. I'll be back. You're not- I  
won't leave you here, alone. I  
promise.

She seems unsure... but nods... watches Brion as he exits  
through the airlock... the doors closing after him.

On one of the screens: SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE of OUTSIDE. Riya  
watches Brion move further and further away...

Until he disappears... out of view...

**LATER**

Riya still sits at the computer.

The lights have dimmed. There's an empty plate next to her, an  
empty mug...

**ON SCREEN - INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT**

Riya stares into the camera. She sits at her desk, alone. In  
near darkness.

RIYA

- the drone footage shows signs of  
rainfall. Relatively recent -  
maybe three months. We haven't  
seen any yet, but it supports  
Kevin's theory that the planet is  
seasonal.

(beat)

Looking forward to collecting some  
soil samples from those areas  
soon. I'll attach the footage to  
this log soon as I remember to  
sync it off the drone.

The image STOPS -- *switches* --

**DRONE FOOTAGE - EXTERIOR. ASH SURFACE - DAY**

Eagle-eye footage as the drone RACES across the landscape.

Views of the LANDSCAPE below. DRY RIVER BEDS in the black  
earth.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Riya leans forward. Watches the footage, fascinated...

Suddenly an IDEA. She PAUSES the footage -- stands up --

**INT. ENGINEERING ROOM - DAY**

Enters the room from the corridor. Her eyes are looking for --

*THERE* -- the drone. It still lies on the work bench.

Beyond it -- a mess of machinery. A hole in the wall revealing  
the BOWELS of the facility.

Riya walks up to the drone, regards it. Eight small PROPELLERS  
around a central BODY.

She turns it over... looks closer --

Notices several SLOTS, PLUGS -- *click* -- she pulls out a MEMORY  
STICK. A sleek, black card -- the size of a stick of gum.

She walks over to the screen right next to the workbench --  
feels around its edge -- *finds the input slot* --

PLUGS THE STICK IN.

A list of files -- Riya selects the most recent one --

**DRONE FOOTAGE - EXTERIOR. ASH SURFACE - DAY**

We glide over rugged terrain. Rocks and rubble supplant the usual, ash-like sand.

**INTERCUT DRONE FOOTAGE WITH RIYA WATCHING**

-- as she leans in. Closer. Intensely focused on the --

FOOTAGE: The drone clears a sort of mountain ridge -- the landscape suddenly far below --

It drops down, adjusts its height... low to the ground now...

Undulating black dunes. Occasional rock --

AND SOMETHING MOVING -- just under the surface -- its shape displaces the sand -- a SPLIT SECOND --

*A brief glimpse of something METALLIC --*

THE FOOTAGE CUTS TO BLACK.

IN THE ENGINEERING ROOM: Riya watches -- frozen -- *remembers* --

**FLASHBACK - EXT. ASH SURFACE - DAY**

Riya in her space suit. She crests a hill of BLACK SAND.

Slow, methodical steps. Deep breaths. It's hot. Reaches the top, looks back --

Their facility is visible in the distance -- less than a mile away.

Riya returns to the path ahead. Looks down into the slack between the dunes.

*There it is. The drone.*

A line cuts through the sand, leads up to it -- the trail the drone left in the wake of its crash.

Riya hurries down toward it -- big, slipping steps -- displacing sand beneath her feet --

Reaches the drone.

RIYA  
Hey there, buddy.

Picks it up -- gives it a once over. *It looks fine...*

RIYA

Why are you acting weird on me?

She looks back in the direction she came -- ready to trudge back up the dune --

NOTICES SOMETHING IN THE SAND.

A glimpse of something metallic... *shining through loose ash* --

**FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Riya sits around the table with Kevin, Gutierrez and Jones.

JONES

You shouldn't have brought it back.

RIYA

What?

JONES

You don't know what it is.

The screens around them display SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE of the AIRLOCK. Inside --

Encased in a GLASS CYLINDER -- a METALLIC OBJECT, the length of an arm. The ALIEN ARTEFACT. Its surface seems coarse...

It is hard to see detail in the surveillance feed.

RIYA

It's proof of the existence of an intelligent alien race, that's what it is. The first ever found in the history of our species. And you want me to just... *leave it there?* Let it be buried by the next sandstorm?

JONES

Yes. When a primitive civilization meets an advanced one, the result is *always* the almost certain annihilation of the primitive society. You think we're Christopher Columbus? We're the Native Americans.

RIYA

It's just an artefact. Not a species.

JONES

It is dangerous. And you brought  
back to our base.

RIYA

*It's in the airlock.*

JONES

That's inside.

RIYA

No... that's standard quarantine  
procedure. I never touched it  
directly, plus I left the suit in  
the-

GUTIERREZ

*Riya.*

(beat)

You should have been more careful.

RIYA

*Okay. Okay, I'm sorry. But you're  
focusing on the wrong part of  
this.*

GUTIERREZ

Your priority should always be the  
safety of-

RIYA

It isn't organic. It isn't just  
life on a distant planet. This was  
created by someone... by  
something... something advanced  
enough to build a sophisticated  
machine and-

JONES

Leave it behind?

RIYA

What?

JONES

You're probably thinking - maybe  
an intelligent species lived here  
a long time ago. Maybe it visited  
this planet... at some point in  
the distant past. But what if  
that... *thing* you found is here  
for a reason.

(beat)

What if it crashed your drone?

RIYA  
That's ridiculous.

JONES  
You have no idea what it's capable of. I have yet to find any faults in the drone's software. Its computer hasn't even logged an outage.

RIYA  
I've had glitches before.

JONES  
Glitches leave a trail.

A moment as the argument settles. Everyone calms down.

RIYA  
(to Gutierrez)  
So? What do we do?

KEVIN  
I'm with Riya on this one. I think we should examine it.

RIYA  
Yes! Thank you! Finally someone who gets it.

JONES  
Because you're fucking.

RIYA  
What?

Gutierrez is surprised, caught off-guard for a split second, before he looks to her -- *is this true?*

JONES  
Come on. Stop pretending. I couldn't care less as long as it doesn't affect me. But now it *is* affecting me.

Gutierrez looks from Riya to Kevin. He doesn't even need to ask the question, the truth obvious by their expressions.

GUTIERREZ  
How long?

Riya and Kevin share a glance --

RIYA  
Since before training.

GUTIERREZ  
You went on this mission *knowing*  
you were breaking the rules? Do  
you have any idea how serious an  
infraction that is?

A moment of silence. Long... uncomfortable...

GUTIERREZ  
I'll relay home base about the  
artefact. We follow their  
instructions. And we do nothing  
until we hear back.

He stands up.

GUTIERREZ  
(to Riya and Kevin)  
You two... we'll talk.

THE LIGHTS TURN OFF --

The whole system suddenly down. Screens dark.

Their faces barely visible in the darkness -- *What the fuck is going on?* --

**INT. ENGINEERING ROOM - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT**

Riya stands in silence. Needs a moment to find back to the now... mind reeling...

She looks up at the screen. Rewinds -- *pause* --

*There it is.* A FREEZE FRAME --

A CYLINDRICAL SHAPE, the width of a forearm. Only its end visible above the sand... *the rest of it submerged...*

Riya rewinds the footage FRAME BY FRAME.

The object *moves* -- almost *wormlike* -- beneath the surface...

Riya pulls out the memory stick -- steps away from the screen. Tries to process the information...

*Does this... how does this change things?*

She looks over at the drone, lost in thought... gears turning...

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - EVENING**

Riya paces in front of the control deck...

Back and forth... back and forth... mind racing as...

ON SCREEN, IN THE SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE: Brion approaches the facility. Enters through the airlock.

Riya is still lost in thought when --

*KSHHHHK* -- the airlock door opens. Brion steps in --

RIYA

Brion. Brion I need to-

She halts. Sees him.

He's in a bad state. *Suit partially torn.* A CRACK in his visor.

RIYA

What happened?

He clips off his helmet, drops it. Leans against the wall for support.

BRION

It won't work.

RIYA

It's broken?

He nods. Dejected.

RIYA

You said it could handle the storm.

BRION

It wasn't the storm.

She steps forward -- *realizes* --

RIYA

*Jones.*

BRION

(nods)

She found the pod and sabotaged it. I was... I got in and realized someone else had been inside.

(beat)

Not just been inside. *Torn it apart.*

RIYA  
And you're sure? That it was her.

BRION  
Fuck- look at me. You think I just  
fell?  
(beat)  
The bitch attacked me.

He gets up. Slowly.

BRION  
You're right. Whatever happened,  
she's not... she's not normal  
anymore.

He notices the look on her face.

BRION  
What?

RIYA  
I... need to show you something.

**INT. ENGINEERING ROOM - EVENING**

Riya watches Brion as he looks at the drone footage.

*Pause* -- she freezes on the image of the object, visible  
beneath the sand.

BRION  
Is that...?

RIYA  
Alien life.

He looks at her. Can't believe what she's saying.

RIYA  
I brought it back.

BRION  
*What?*

RIYA  
I remember bringing it back. I  
went to get the drone and I found  
it. Jones, she was... she was so  
against analyzing it, she must  
have... I don't know... maybe she  
tried to destroy it.

BRION  
And got infected.

RIYA  
(nods)  
It would explain why she lost her  
mind. How she survived out there.

Brion takes a step back. The information too much for him.

BRION  
And now she's trying to kill us.

RIYA  
Finish what she started.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Riya sits at the table, watches as Brion paces back and forth  
-- mind racing.

BRION  
They will have radioed home base  
by now. And protocol... protocol  
is to abandon any potential  
casualties. The mission is too  
important.

RIYA  
So we have what- three days?

BRION  
Give or take. Until the order  
comes back - to abandon us.

RIYA  
And the repairs on the pod, how  
long do you need?

Brion paces. Shakes his head.

BRION  
We can't repair the pod while  
she's out-

RIYA  
How long?

BRION  
A day. Probably a little more.

RIYA  
Okay. So we have a day.

BRION  
A day?

RIYA  
To kill her.

Brion halts. Finally. Stares at her.

RIYA  
I'm going to kill her. I'm going  
to kill her for what she did to  
us. What she did to me. And then  
we're gonna fix that pod of yours  
and get the fuck out of here.

BRION  
How?

RIYA  
We give her what she wants. We let  
her in.

Riya stands up. Goes to leave -

BRION  
Where are you going?

RIYA  
I'm going to make a weapon.

BRION  
Let me-

RIYA  
You need to calm down. Join me  
when you've had something to eat.

Brion takes a moment. Nods. *She's right.*

#### **INT. ENGINEERING ROOM**

Hands rummage through machinery. BOLTS, WIRES, CUTTERS.

Riya sighs. Nothing is useful.

She steps back. Looks around the room. Sees the drone on the  
table... the welding machine next to it...

*That won't do.*

Her nose wrinkles. She smells something....

Her eyes land on the hole in the back wall. A thought -- *she  
remembers* --

She steps around the table... hesitates... steps into --

**THE WALL**

Pushes forward. Hits the T-junction... turns left...

Looks at the torn insulation, eyes searching for --

*The BLOODSTAIN.* Touches it with her finger... feels it...

Dry.

She looks up -- through the machinery. Pipes, wires, sponge-like insulation.

*More blood* -- as if somebody had SQUEEZED themselves through the gap... trying to... trying to...

Riya pushes forward... *the floor is sticky* -- dark with blood. Her shoes CROAK as they peel off the ground....

One step -- CROAK -- two steps -- CROAK -- until she can't go any further...

She reaches into the tangle of equipment, machinery... *tearing out insulation*... pushing aside wires... *reveals* --

JONES' FACE.

It stares back at her. Dead. Eyes wide open with terror.

RIYA JUMPS BACK -- SCREAMS IN SHOCK --

Falls within the narrow space. Hands, elbows caught in the sticky blood.

She pulls herself back onto her feet. A moment. Steps forward again... peers through the gap --

Jones' head seems to have been SLAMMED against the thick metal pipe behind her... its white surface painted in the slick, dark blood...

Blood that runs down its length... across the floor... pooling beneath her feet. All but dry.

She's been here for at least a week.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya stands at the computer. Browsing through options... quick... no time...

On a SECOND SCREEN -- the SURVEILLANCE FEED from the living quarters. Brion sits at the table, coffee in his hand.

*Riya finds what she's looking for --*

SECURITY OVERRIDE

She opens the menu --

SEAL DOORS

A MAP of the facility -- selects the living quarters -- presses the button --

*KSSSHK* -- hears the door close --

Turns to the OTHER SCREEN -- *the living quarters* --

EMPTY.

She doesn't understand...

Her eyes scan the surveillance feeds. SEVERAL ANGLES of the living room. The corridor outside.

*Where the fuck is he?*

She steps back, mind racing --

BRION STANDS IN THE DOORWAY TO THE CONTROL ROOM.

BRION

You think you've figured it out?

Riya stares back at him. Frozen.

BRION

Shoulda locked this door too, huh?

Riya edges backward... her hand feeling the edge of the control deck behind her...

BRION

So what is it? What is it you think you've figured out?

Riya moves around the deck -- puts it between her and Brion.

RIYA

There is no crew in orbit... no landing pod... there never was a distress call...

BRION

What makes you say that?

His tone is calm... all the more threatening for it...

He keeps moving towards her...

RIYA

I found her. She's been dead all this time. Right here. So I don't know who- I don't know what you are, but you're not-

Brion LUNGES at Riya -- across the deck --

*Grabs her wrist, she tries to tear free -- he won't let go --*

She pushes back -- HARD -- *uses the control deck as leverage -- the two of them locked in a struggle, UNTIL --*

BRION CRAWLS ONTO THE DESK -- his movements lithe, efficient -- *inhuman --*

Riya grabs BRION'S WRIST with her free hand -- suddenly *LURCHES* backward -- instead PULLING Brion across --

He tumbles over -- *falls -- loses grip of her wrist --*

And she RUNS -- *desperate -- into the --*

### **CORRIDOR**

-- SPRINTING so fast she -- *WHAM -- SLAMS* her shoulder into the wall as she turns -- *a glimpse behind her --*

Brion, standing up -- visible through control room doorway --

Riya keeps running -- *slips in the blood -- catches her step -- turns the corner --*

Her RIGHT FOOT leaves BLOODY FOOTPRINTS as she stumbles into --

### **JONES' ROOM**

Turns around -- *no view of Brion yet -- SLAMS* the door shut --

Barricades the door with the BENCH, the BED -- fast, ADRENALINE PUMPING --

*Flips the TABLE -- pushes it against the bed -- drops to the ground, her back against it -- just in time to --*

WHAM.

Brion SLAMS into the door -- the furniture shakes -- almost buckles --

Riya is pushed forward -- SCRAMBLES back in time to BRACE for the next --

WHAM. Harder this time --

It SNAPS the bench -- pushing the rest of the furniture back --  
HE'S GETTING INSIDE --

Slowly pushing the barricade away -- inhuman strength --

BRION ENTERS -- tosses the broken bench aside -- pushes the bed out of the way --

Riya scampers to the center of the room -- eyes scanning the situation for a way out -- notices the BROKEN BENCH just as --

BRION darts forward -- she rolls to the side -- grabs the broken bench -- SNAPS IT IN HALF -- SWINGS IT AROUND --

CRACK -- it COLLIDES with Brion's shoulder -- breaks bones -- he stumbles away --

Riya swings again -- HIS FACE -- knocks him to the ground --

HITS HIM AGAIN -- AGAIN -- AGAIN -- beating his LEFT RIBS, LEG to a pulp -- AGAIN --

HE GRABS HER ANKLE -- yanks it away --

Riya SLAMS into the ground -- looks up -- sees Brion pulling himself up off the floor --

She scrambles to her feet -- stumbles out into the --

### **CORRIDOR**

Running -- looking at the doors as she sprints past them -- considering her options -- looks over her shoulder --

BRION IS COMING AFTER HER --

Torso broken, twisted -- he CRAWLS with both hands and one foot -- fast, insect-like -- gaining on her --

Riya tears around the corner -- she's got no option but to return to the --

**CONTROL ROOM**

Stumbles up to the computer -- *this time it has to work* --

THE COMPUTER IS BROKEN. *Smashed to pieces.*

RIYA

Fuck!

*What now?* --

She notices the HAMMER behind the control deck -- where she left it the night she let Brion in --

Runs over -- grabs it -- steps to the AIRLOCK CONTROL PANEL --

Door 1's already open -- Riya SLAMS lever 2 -- *opens the inside door and steps into the* --

**AIRLOCK**

-- turns around, sees --

Brion SCRAMBLE into the control room -- CLAW his way around the deck --

Riya readies herself -- feels the weight of the hammer in her right hand --

BRION CROSSES INTO THE AIRLOCK --

CRUNCH -- she SLAMS the hammer into his face -- he COLLAPSES to one side -- *she runs for the exit* -- HE GRABS HER --

SLAM -- the hammer hits his RIGHT ARM -- *snaps his bones* --

BUT HE DOESN'T LET GO -- DRAGS HER DOWN -- *STRADDLES her* --

CRACK -- *again* -- the hammer hits Brion in the face --

He looks down at her -- eyes wide, frenzied -- a crater of flesh and bone --

CRUNCH -- *ONE MORE TIME* -- the hammer hits Brion in the temple -- *finally throws him off her* --

Riya scrambles to her feet -- he's not moving any more. A split second of relief... *she remembers* --

Stumbles into the --

**CONTROL ROOM**

Grabs lever 2 -- SLAMS IT -- the inside door flies shut --  
LOCKS BRION INTO THE AIRLOCK.

Finally.

Riya takes a deep breath. She did it. Her face and chest  
COVERED in Brion's blood.

She looks in through the window... at the unmoving body, blood  
pooling beneath it...

She's about to turn away... *the body twitches* --

Small movements at first... spasms... until it *slowly raises  
itself from the ground*, ignoring broken legs, ribs -- like they  
were nothing --

Brion stands... turns to her. His face CAVED IN --

RIYA

How are you still alive?

BRION

It's not real.

RIYA

After what I did? I know you're  
not human, but I... I...

BRION

You don't understand.

RIYA

I caved your fucking head in, you  
fuck. You shouldn't be alive.  
That's real.

BRION

Is it?

Suddenly BRION'S NECK SLICES ITSELF OPEN -- slow, deep -- as if  
carved by an invisible knife...

BLOOD POURS OUT -- down his chest -- *he doesn't move* --

Just looks at her -- *blood still pumping from his carotid* --

BRION

And this?

HIS RIGHT KNEE SNAPS INWARD -- *buckles away beneath him* --

He *collapses* onto the ground. Looks up at her... meets her eyes...

A wretched pulp of a human...

BRION  
Any of it?

HE DISAPPEARS.

*And the blood disappears with him -- the airlock suddenly spotless --*

Riya stares for a moment -- frozen -- completely thrown --

Her hand goes to her face... *bruised, scratched...* BUT FREE OF BRION'S BLOOD.

BRION (O.S.)  
Now do you understand?

Riya WHIPS around -- Brion stands behind her...

Unharmd, fresh clothes, completely healthy...

*Riya lifts the hammer --*

He gives her a look -- *Really?* -- she lowers it...

A moment... she shakes her head.

BRION  
You do. Deep down.

RIYA  
Did I bring you into this place?

And off Riya's face -- *a memory --*

**FLASHBACK - EXT. FACILITY - DAY**

The airlock doors open --

Riya drags the drone behind her --

And the ALIEN ARTEFACT.

It looks ancient. A CATERPILLAR-LIKE MACHINE... metal, dull and worn... its underside covered in leg-like protrusions.

About the length of an arm, it hangs rigid -- unmoving --

AND BACK TO --

**THE CONTROL ROOM**

Where Brion waits for her to piece it together.

RIYA  
Did I set you free?

**FLASHBACK - INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

RIYA'S POINT OF VIEW as we --

SPRINT down the corridor -- fleeing -- Jones ahead of us -- a  
*blood soaked HAMMER in her hand --*

Jones looks over her shoulder -- *terrified --*

**IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Riya struggles to comprehend.

BRION  
You just need to remember. All of  
it. Once you remember it will all  
make sense.

RIYA  
But you look like one of us. You  
took the body of a human -- you  
*chose this body...*

Brion shakes his head. He seems different... calm... almost  
serene...

BRION  
You chose it.  
(off her confusion)  
You woke up alone. Confused...  
scared... you needed someone you  
could trust. Someone who you could  
feel safe around. And you created  
me.

RIYA  
I don't understand.

BRION  
Someone who could distract you  
from the truth.

A smile from Brion, the slightest nod... almost as if he's  
acknowledging her, and...

HE'S GONE. DISAPPEARED.

Riya stands in his wake. Silent... overwhelmed...

Trying to remember... trying to remember...

*She closes her eyes --*

**BLACK**

Silence.

Breathing.

Eyes slowly adjusting... silhouettes in the darkness...

*Until we realize we're in the --*

**FLASHBACK - LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Riya and her crew members sit around the table -- the system having just turned off. NEAR DARKNESS.

JONES

You think that's a coincidence too?

GUTIERREZ

*Jones.*

RIYA

That... *thing* is an inert object... completely disconnected from our system. How could it have done this? Of course it's a coincidence.

Suddenly the lights flicker back on... low... the screens still black...

RIYA

See?

KEVIN

I don't think so.

Gutierrez looks to him - *What does he mean?*

KEVIN

I don't think it's a coincidence. Any of it.

(beat)

I've been thinking about this planet.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Something about it, it's... the way everything is exactly how it needs to be. How we're just a couple thousand years from ideal conditions for life on this planet...

RIYA

What are you saying?

KEVIN

If we were capable of advanced terraforming... *this* -- Ash is the planet I would make.

GUTIERREZ

Someone designed this planet?

KEVIN

It's too perfect to be coincidence.

(beat)

And... *whoever* designed it -- they also made that thing.

A moment of silence as this sets in...

RIYA

Then we should examine it.

JONES

What the fuck, Riya?

RIYA

Isn't this what we're supposed to do? We're one of fifty missions... *Fifty*. We're not exploring the universe for fun, for noble Neil motherfucking Armstrong walking-on-the-moon bullshit... They sent us out knowing many of us would die. They knew that - *we knew that*. Die, or... live to the end of our lives in a small facility on a distant planet.

Silence. They listen...

RIYA

We are supposed to find a new way.  
(MORE)

RIYA (CONT'D)

A way for our species to move forward... to find a new home... to survive the world we fucked up... What if this is a solution?

(to Jones)

What if the technology in that thing saves your father from having to breathe toxic air every time he steps out of the house? Prevents him from having to spend his last five years in pain, on a respirator... the way my father did. What if it gives us a way to create new worlds? For everyone we love.

JONES

What if it kills you?

RIYA

They expected us to die. Sooner, later... we knew were never going back...

(beat)

We are disposable. But maybe we can save our species.

KEVIN

Riya...

RIYA

There is no other side to this argument. If you're not willing to sacrifice yourself for humankind... you should have never signed up.

A long silence.

GUTIERREZ

Before we do anything, we reestablish contact with home base. At the very least -- no matter what we do -- they need to know what's happening.

RIYA

They'll tell us not to touch it. To wait for fucking years until they can send us a backup team.

GUTIERREZ  
 (end of discussion)  
 We follow their orders.  
 (to Jones)  
 What do we need to do to get back  
 online?

JONES  
 I'll dig into the wall, see if I  
 can manually jump start the system  
 from the inside, but...  
 (beat)  
 I think we might need to wait for  
 daylight. Attach the solar panels  
 directly... circumvent whatever  
 blockage is causing this.

Off Gutierrez's nod --

**INT. RIYA'S ROOM - FLASHBACK**

Riya sits on her bed in near darkness. Can't sleep... doesn't  
 want to sleep...

KEVIN (O.S.)  
 Hey.

Kevin stands in the doorway.

RIYA  
 Hey.

He walks up to her. Sits on the bed, by her side.

They sit in silence for a moment.

He pulls the UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PIN from his pocket. Holds  
 it out to her.

KEVIN  
 Do you remember that day? I saw  
 you across the room at  
 orientation. Spent all day working  
 up the courage to talk to you.

She smiles at him. A sad smile.

KEVIN  
 And then you came over. Asked if I  
 wanted one of these.

She takes the pin from his hand. Looks at it.

KEVIN  
Said you had a spare.

RIYA  
I didn't. I just wanted to talk to  
you.

He smiles, reminiscing. They sit for a moment, a calm understanding between them.

KEVIN  
I'm scared.  
(beat)  
I'm scared I'll lose you.

She looks at him...

RIYA  
You don't want us to do it?

His silence is his answer.

RIYA  
This is more important than us.

KEVIN  
Not for me.

A long pause.

RIYA  
I'm sorry.

They sit in silence...

**INT. AIRLOCK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

*KSSSHK* -- the sound of the door opening --

A BEAM OF LIGHT *cuts* through the darkness.

Riya steps into view. She wears a SPACE SUIT, seals the door behind her. Switches on her FLASHLIGHT, regards the artefact --

It lies within the glass cylinder. Unmoving.

An uneven surface... coarse metal... as if roughly crafted. Almost organic.

Its front and end are closed... a circular, metallic seal...

She lifts the flashlight to her helmet -- CLICKS it into a holder on her right temple.

Carefully she approaches the cylinder, lifts it from its receptacle -- *KSSSHHK* -- *unseals it* --

Grabs the artefact, careful, places it on the smooth concrete-like floor.

*Clunk* -- a sound in the distance.

Riya quickly turns off the flashlight... waits a moment...

Nothing...

Switches it back on.

Carefully, she turns the artefact over... looks between the tendrils... for some kind of mechanism... an opening...

She leans in... studies it in detail...

Finds a *thin ridge* between the legs... an uneven line from one end to the other...

She reaches into her pocket, pulls out a FLATHEAD SCREWDRIVER... places its sharp end against the ridge -- *pushes it in* --

Leans onto it... uses her bodyweight...

*CLACK* -- THE ARTEFACT SPLITS OPEN. Folds in half along its entire length... reveals...

A *thick, viscous fluid*. It lies within the cavity -- TAR-LIKE, black...

She regards it through the visor of her helmet.

INSIDE THE HELMET -- readings are projected into the visor. A BIOLOGICAL SCAN... *nothing*. It is entirely inert.

Carefully, she prods it with the end of the screwdriver. No reaction.

She tears off a *pinch* with her right hand, rubs it between her index finger and thumb. It *crumbles* into pieces... *just dirt*.

Frustrated, she sighs. Stands up. Pulls off her helmet... bares her skin. Is about to turn away...

*The material begins to glow...*

A deep-red. Rich and powerful, almost black. The surface seems to ripple, much more fluid than just moments ago...

Riya leans a little closer, keeps her distance... Her concentrated eyes reflect its glow...

THE SUBSTANCE VAULTS TOWARDS HER FACE -- LATCHES ONTO IT --  
COVERS IT LIKE A THIN MASK --

She PANICS -- lifts her gloved hand -- *tries to wipe it away* --

IT DRAINS ITSELF INTO HER ORIFICES -- CRAWLING IN THROUGH HER  
NOSE, EYES, EARS --

AND AS RIYA SCREAMS --

WE SMASH TO:

### MEMORIES

Individual images flashing for split seconds -- among them --

*Riya as a child. Puts on a gas mask before she steps outside.*

*Looking out of a car window -- dry, barren wasteland --*

*On a boat -- a city ravaged by floods --*

*On a TV: a MAP of planet Earth, ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHES  
mapped upon it --*

*Driving through a slum, people living in absolute squalor --*

*Battleships on Lake Superior --*

AND BACK TO:

### THE AIRLOCK

Where Riya looks down at the empty shell of the artefact...

*Did that just happen?*

Riya suddenly staggers... fatigued... rests her arm against the  
airlock wall...

Struggling to stay awake -- *and SMASH TO* --

### INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAWN - FLASHBACK

As Riya stands before the window. Looks outside.

The sun is about to rise. It's light catches in the dusty air  
-- gives it a golden glow...

There is a strange look in Riya's eyes. A calm, unemotional  
mask... containing something beneath... *struggling...*

Riya steps over to the kitchen area... opens a drawer...

Spoons, forks... a LARGE KITCHEN KNIFE --

She picks it up. Regards it.

PRELAP: *A sharp intake of breath as --*

**INT. GUTIERREZ'S ROOM - DAY**

GUTIERREZ'S EYES stare up at us. Wide, in shock.

Slowly they move down to find --

The EIGHT INCH BLADE LODGED *DEEP* WITHIN HIS STOMACH. Almost down *to the hilt*.

Riya grips its handle. Stands in front of him as he sits on the edge of the bed. Her eyes cold, emotionless.

RIYA

This is not your planet.

Riya pulls the knife out -- bloods *pours* from the wound -- *Gutierrez tries to stem the bleeding -- useless --*

HE JUMPS FORWARD -- *barges into her --* stumbles out into the corridor --

Riya turns, follows --

**IN THE CORRIDOR**

She watches as he stumbles, losing blood -- red hand *marking* the wall as he looks for support --

Rounds the corner, heads for the control room... *collapsing...* falling onto his knees...

He drags himself across the threshold to the --

**CONTROL ROOM**

Riya follows. Slow -- methodical -- *he's almost at the control deck --*

She straddles Gutierrez's back -- lifts her knife --

STABS HIM. Again and again.

It's vicious and fucking *terrifying*.

Gutierrez *SCREAMS* now -- but his screams are weak... *he can barely move...*

Riya grabs him by the forehead -- lifts it up --

AND SLITS HIS THROAT.

Lets his head drop -- *THUNK* -- it hits the ground.

She sits in silence for a moment... still atop his back... catches her breath.

**BACK IN THE PRESENT - INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya looks down at the bloodstain where Gutierrez once lay.

Her eyes are wide with terror... *remembering...*

Her gaze goes up, into the corridor beyond -- *remembering as --*

**IN THE PAST**

Riya slowly stands up, Gutierrez's corpse beneath her. Turns around --

Kevin stands just outside the doorway to the control room. Looks at her. The blood on her forearms... on her face...

KEVIN

Riya?

RIYA

I'm sorry- I'm... I'm trying...  
I'm trying...

She lunges at him -- *he stumbles to one side, into the --*

**ENGINEERING ROOM**

-- up to the shelves -- rifles through EQUIPMENT, looking for something... *for something...*

Riya enters the room -- lifts her knife to attack him -- *struggles* -- fighting against something inside...

*Giving Kevin time to grab her wrist with both hands -- before she pushes it down --*

He strains -- the knife edging *closer* -- her one arm much stronger than both of his combined --

*He scans the room, sees -- THE SCREWDRIVER -- lets go with one hand --*

THE KNIFE BEARING DOWN ON HIM --

*HE STABS HER SHOULDER WITH THE SCREWDRIVER --*

*Her arm JOLTS back -- drops the knife --*

*He's terrified by what he's just done -- let's go of the screwdriver --*

She grabs him with both hands --

KEVIN

Riya. Riya are you in there? --

AND THROWS HIM AGAINST THE WALL.

He hits the ground HARD -- looks up at her as she steps over him --

*Sees Jones step up behind her -- HAMMER in hand --*

WHACK -- the hammer hits Riya on the back of the head -- she falls -- *SLAMS into the workstation --*

**RIYA'S POINT OF VIEW:** Dazed -- sees Jones help Kevin up, stumble out into the corridor --

Riya gets up -- after them -- *running now --*

### **IN THE PRESENT**

Riya stands in the corridor -- her eyes panning its length as she remembers how she --

PRELAP: *SLAM --*

### **IN THE PAST**

*Throws her weight against the door to Gutierrez's room.*

It moves a few inches -- barricaded from the inside.

She steps back -- *pulls out the screwdriver still lodged in her shoulder... doesn't react to the pain...*

CHARGES AT THE DOOR AGAIN --

It BURSTS forward -- pushes the barricade back a few feet -- the gap wide enough for Riya to force herself *through into --*

**GUTIERREZ'S ROOM**

Where Kevin steps back -- gives up on the barricade -- *where's Jones?* --

*Riya turns to see* --

SLAM -- the HAMMER comes out of fucking *nowhere* -- *CONNECTS WITH HER FOREHEAD* -- SHE FALLS TO THE GROUND --

Jones STRADDLES her, lifts the hammer -- a SCREAM OF RAGE -- *SLAMS IT DOWN AND* --

**BLACK**

Heavy. Comforting.

*Like an echo* --

KEVIN (O.S.)

Riya.

Familiar. A voice that sounds like *home*.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Riya.

**INT. KEVIN'S ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK**

Riya wakes up. She lies on the bed in Kevin's room. There's BLOOD on the bed... her own blood...

KEVIN (O.S.)

Riya, are you awake yet?

**IN THE PRESENT**

Riya stands before the torn door to Kevin's room. Looks at its twisted shape... reaches out to touch it... remembering...

**IN THE PAST - INT. KEVIN'S ROOM - NIGHT**

SLAM -- *RIYA THROWS HERSELF AGAINST THE DOOR* --

**ON THE OTHER SIDE --**

Kevin and Jones see the door BULGE from the impact --

A pipe next to the door has been LASERED OPEN -- reveals WIRING beneath --

KEVIN

Riya it's useless. Jones did a  
system override -- sealed it shut.

**INTERCUT INSIDE KEVIN'S ROOM AND OUTSIDE CORRIDOR**

Kevin steps away from the door...

KEVIN

We destroyed the artefact.  
Incinerated it.

Riya steps back. Studies the door...

The bulge she created has *loosened* some of the DOOR'S EDGES  
from the frame.

She grabs the upper right corner -- *PULLS* it back --

Kevin and Jones watch as the door is bent inward -- *SOLID METAL*  
*caving under inhuman force* --

KEVIN

Riya... Riya please. Come back.  
You can fight it... whatever it  
is, you can fight it...

Riya keeps pulling until the HOLE is big enough for her to  
CRAWL THROUGH THE GAP --

INSECT-LIKE -- *arms, shoulders contort at unnatural angles* --

JONES RUNS -- not a moment too late as --

RIYA GRABS KEVIN -- *pulls herself through the gap into the* --

**CORRIDOR**

Onto Kevin -- *they hit the ground* --

She SLAMS HIS HEAD DOWN -- *CRACK* -- stands up -- drags him  
around the corner, leaves a trail --

*Where is Jones?*

*She notices something...* a line of BLOOD DROPS. At three foot  
intervals.

**BACK IN THE PRESENT**

Riya looks down the corridor... remembering... her eyes move towards the engineering room, where --

**IN THE PAST - ENGINEERING ROOM**

Riya steps into the room. Stops before the gap in the wall... listens...

**INSIDE THE WALL**

Jones has SQUEEZED herself into the machinery behind the pipes.

She can barely breathe... her chest *crushed*... *insulation pushing into her face* --

STILL HOLDS THE HAMMER -- it's HEAD *slick with blood* and --

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

**RIYA**

Listens. Hears the blood drip... *sees* the path torn through the insulation...

Steps forward slowly. Silently. Enters the narrow space...

**JONES**

Tries to keep her breathing down... *is she here?*...

A HAND DIGS IN FROM OUTSIDE -- TEARS open the materials --

**RIYA'S POINT OF VIEW** -- a glimpse of JONES -- trying to... *failing* to burrow herself deeper into the machinery... *lifts her hammer*...

Riya GRABS IT with her left -- *tears it from her hands* --

Reaches in with her right... *as far as she can*... the arm BURROWING towards Jones who CAN'T GO BACK ANY FURTHER --

RIYA GRABS HER BY THE HEAD --

SLAMS IT BACK INTO THE PIPE BEHIND HER --

AGAIN -- AND AGAIN --

**MOMENTS LATER - INSIDE THE ENGINEERING ROOM**

Riya steps out of the wall-space, hammer in her hand.

She sees the knife. Still on the floor from earlier. Drops the hammer and picks it up.

**IN THE PRESENT - INT. LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Riya stands before the coffee table. She looks down at the bloodstain before it... eyes filling with tears as she remembers...

**IN THE PAST**

Kevin half-sits on the floor. Looks out through the window, his back against the coffee table.

The back of his head is matted... *bloody*...

*Footsteps* -- Riya enters the room. She walks slowly... *uncoordinated*... like she is struggling to do this...

Walks up to Kevin. Kneels by his side...

RIYA  
Kevin... Kevin... I...

KEVIN  
I know. I know this isn't you.

Riya lowers the knife... *points its tip above his HEART*...

Her hands are shaking. Her face full of PAIN... she's trying so *hard* to fight it...

The knife moves toward his chest slowly... *a struggle* --

Kevin places his own hands around Riya's...

PLUNGES THE KNIFE INTO HIS OWN HEART...

His expression barely changes. He looks out at the landscape beyond. Sparse... terrifying... beautiful...

Riya lets go of the KNIFE. Sits down next to Kevin. Looks out at the same view.

For a moment they just sit there.

He's still alive. Slowly growing tired... eyelids getting heavy...

KEVIN

Riya?

She looks at him.

KEVIN

Riya... is this a dream?

RIYA

Yes, Kevin. It's a dream.

He closes his eyes... lets go...

She sits next to him in silence. TEARS run down her cheeks.

### **IN THE PRESENT**

Riya is crying. Remembering. The truth is too much.

She falls to her knees. Consumed by sobs.

Her shoulders shake... the sobs grow deeper... guttural... raw emotion...

Through the transparent window, the landscape outside. A deep, endless darkness.

### **INT. RIYA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya's eyes are red. Vacant. No more tears left.

She sits on the bed alone. Absolute silence.

MATCH CUT TO:

### **FLASHBACK - INT. RIYA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya sits on her bed alone... silent...

The blood on her is fresh... it is *moments* after she killed everyone...

She stands up -- pushes the bench against the wall. The bed. The desk...

Until she has formed a barricade.

*A barricade that keeps the outside world safe from her.*

She lies down on the ground. Curls up.

The exact place where Riya first woke up -- having lost her memory.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - THE NEXT MORNING - BACK IN THE PRESENT**

Riya slowly steps into the living quarters.

Morning light shines in through the window -- bathes the room in an orange glow --

Riya regards the room before her... catatonic...

RIYA  
Are you still there?

*Footsteps...*

BRION WALKS INTO THE ROOM.

BRION  
I can be.

He looks the way he did after Riya beat him up. Crippled, bones broken... bloody...

RIYA  
(points at her head)  
You're in here?

Brion nods. As he talks, his body seems to heal... wounds slowly sealing themselves...

RIYA  
What are you?

BRION  
I wasn't created to contemplate my purpose.

RIYA  
A parasite?

BRION  
I saw your world. When I latched on... I saw your world. What you had done to it.  
(beat)  
You would have done the same to ours.

RIYA  
He was right.

BRION  
He was. This isn't your planet.

RIYA  
And you were created to protect  
it...

BRION  
If necessary.

He is now completely healed up. His skin perfectly smooth.

RIYA  
Who are they? Who created you?

BRION  
They're on their way.

A moment. Riya looks to the world outside. Barren and beautiful.

RIYA  
Why could I only see you... after?  
After I did those things.

BRION  
Your mind is fracturing.  
Decomposing. In its desperation it  
creates things it can latch on to.  
Things that will distract it from  
the truth.

Riya looks back at Brion. He looks calm. Almost comforting.

RIYA  
What will they do to me? To my  
species?

BRION  
I don't know. Whatever's  
necessary. To protect their  
future.

RIYA  
We're not... we're not what you  
saw. That's who we were, but we've  
changed. We've learned.

BRION  
It's not my decision.

RIYA  
And you?

BRION  
I will consume you. Until you are  
empty.

RIYA  
And I will forget? Everything?

A nod from Brion.

BRION  
Eventually.

Riya is relieved... that's all she wanted...

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY**

Riya sits at the table. Eats alone.

**INT. RIYA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya lies in bed. Unable to sleep.

**EXT. FACILITY - DAY**

Jones lies on a bed of black sand. She faces upward... her eyes  
have been closed...

Riya stands over the body, in the space suit. Looks down at it.

They are alone in the wide landscape -- the facility a few  
hundred feet behind them.

Riya uses her hands to bury her.

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT**

Riya sits at the computer. Looks through the database...  
watches old footage...

**ON SCREEN - LABORATORY - DAY**

Kevin sits at his desk. Looks into the camera.

KEVIN  
-and we'll see how the tests turn  
out. Fingers crossed.  
(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
Maybe we'll actually get to live  
out our lives here. Welcome others  
who'll join us.

In the background, Riya enters the room. Sits down at her  
station.

KEVIN  
What do you think, Riya?

RIYA  
Hm?

KEVIN  
We could be starting something  
here. The long haul. Maybe we'll  
grow old on this planet.

RIYA  
As long as I get prime real  
estate. Whatever goes in the blue  
tiles on the Monopoly version of  
this planet.

Kevin grins.

KEVIN  
I better get free stays at your  
hotel.

RIYA  
No way. I'm charging you double.

Kevin laughs. Turns back to the camera. Composes himself...  
back to being professional...

KEVIN  
I'll check in with the results  
tomorrow.

#### **IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Riya closes the window. She's done with crying. Instead  
wistful... melancholic...

In the menu -- CREW PROFILES -- *she notices it.*

Clicks on it -- SELECTS HERSELF --

**IN HER PROFILE**

Photos of Riya as a child.

*First prize at science fair...*

*High school graduation with her friends...*

*College graduation with her parents --*

**HER FATHER IS BRION.**

He looks exactly like the man in the photograph... younger even. How her father must have looked when Riya was a child.

The information names him as BRION VALE -- died at 62 from pollution-induced lung cancer.

Riya regards the photo for a moment...

**FLASHBACK - EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY**

The end of a school day.

YOUNG RIYA, twelve years old, spills out of school with the rest of the students... eyes searching the parking lot for --

Brion. He stands in front his car, leans against it.

The exact same age as her hallucination.

He sees her in the crowd. His eyes light up, he waves at her.

**BACK IN THE PRESENT**

Riya's eyes stay vacant as she remembers. She moves on... keeps reading...

About her exemplary grades in college. About joining the Exodus Program...

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY**

Riya sits on the couch.

There are plates of food out in front of her. Most half empty.

RIYA  
Can you look like someone else?

KEVIN (O.S.)  
You mean like this?

She looks to her left. Kevin stands by the dining table. Looks at her, a warm expression on his face.

RIYA  
Yes. Please. For just a moment.  
One last time.

He nods. Slowly walks over to her, sits by her side. They look out at the landscape together.

RIYA  
I'm sorry.

A single tear rolls down her cheek. She turns to him.

He looks back at her. A perfect facsimile of Kevin.

RIYA  
I should have listened to you. I'm  
so sorry.

KEVIN  
It's not your fault.

RIYA  
It is. It's all my fault.

Kevin shrugs, grins.

KEVIN  
I love you anyway.

Riya smiles through her tears. It's cathartic for just a moment...

Until she remembers the truth. She looks away. Wipes her teary eyes.

Returns to Kevin.

He's gone.

**INT. SHOWERS - DAY**

Riya stands in the steaming water. Lets it wash over her.

**INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DUSK**

Riya sleeps on the couch.

The window is set to transparent. Offers a view of the world outside.

It is late... the air aglow with the colors of impending sunset.

*Suddenly* -- A DEEP BASS reverberates through the space.

Riya opens her eyes. Lies still. Listens to it.

The bass becomes deeper. Grander.

The room vibrates.

Riya realizes the sound is coming from outside. She steps up to the wall. There is nothing outside.

BWOOOOOOM -- the bass becomes louder still.

The room shakes.

A SHADOW creeps over the landscape.

Riya steps away from the window.

**INT. AIRLOCK - DAY**

Riya puts on a suit -- almost done.

She grabs the helmet. Slots it onto her head.

KSSSHK -- it seals.

She presses a button -- the door opens -- she steps out onto the --

**EXT. ASH SURFACE - DAY**

A gust of wind throws up the sand outside.

The shadow is huge now. Covers most of the undulating landscape before her.

Riya looks up --

A HUGE METALLIC ORB. It floats fifty feet above the planet surface, a hundred yards out.

A dark, vibrant purple. Almost black. Its iridescent surface shimmers in the morning sun.

She walks toward it. Determined.

The winds buffet her with sand.

**FLASHBACK - INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK**

A hospital room. Futuristic machinery.

A large window looks upon a polluted city. The setting sun catches in the smog -- a soft glow.

Riya stands at the side of a BED. Looks down at --

Brion. OLDER, early SIXTIES.

He wears a face-mask, breathes oxygen. Slow, labored breaths.

His eyes look up at her. Heavily medicated... struggles to recognize her...

Her hand finds his -- fingers grip his limp palm.

His searching eyes seem to relax. Comforted.

Riya struggles to hold back tears.

KEVIN (O.S.)  
We need to head back.

She turns. Kevin stands by the door, watches. His eyes heavy with compassion.

Riya nods. Lets go of Brion's hand to wipe a tear from her eye.

**FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - NIGHT**

The comforting *rumble* of the car. Darkness.

Headlights illuminate glimpses of the outside world.

And the endless road. Never the same. Always the same.

RIYA  
Do you think we're ever coming  
back?

No answer.

Just silence.

Riya turns. Looks over at Kevin, driving.

They share a glance -- brief -- he looks back at the road...

The moment feels warm. Comforting. Like they're the only two people in the world.

KEVIN  
Probably not.

He keeps driving. His face warm with the glow of the instruments on the dashboard.

KEVIN  
But we'll be together.

**EXT. ASH SURFACE - DAY**

Riya stops. Stands right underneath the sphere.

Against the majestic landscape, even the orb seems small. Riya is but a tiny figure.

A slick, purple-black tendril grows out from the bottom of the sphere. Lowers itself toward her.

Riya holds her arm up. Reaches for it.

The winds around her grow stronger. Envelop her.

**THE END**