

GIRLFRIEND ON MARS

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A saggy futon, vivid green, in a dank basement apartment. It's such a sad wet scene, you can almost smell it.

A thermometer on the wall reads 86 degrees.

INT. DEN - DAY

A makeshift bedroom with a twin mattress on the ground.

Clothes and papers scatter the floor, along with old crusty plates and half-filled glasses.

Two people clearly share the space. The only orderly corner is a shelf with a series of books on hydroponics and a line of gymnastics trophies and medals.

There's a photo of teenage girl kissing a medal, her arm around a large man.

INT. POT ROOM - DAY

What should be the "master" bedroom is a massive room full of marijuana plants. They thrive under hot, buzzing lights.

This room's orderliness, its efficiency, is palpable. A timer on the wall ticks-ticks-ticks - then clicks.

A set of hoses thrum on and distribute water into the plants.

A latex-gloved hand delicately handles a pot leaf, inspecting it. A surgically-masked face with bright, curious eyes leans in. AMBER KIVINEN. The girl from the photo, now in her 30s.

In the glow of the UV light she looks both beautiful and powerful, a queen reigning over a green kingdom.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Amber Kivinen. Drug dealer. Lapsed
Evangelical. Former gymnast. My
girlfriend. The only person I've
ever loved. Is going to Mars.

Amber releases the leaf softly. She looks at us, at our very souls. As the water turns off, the timer begins anew. Tick-tick-tick...

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Tick-tick-tick...the sounds of a classroom wall clock.

There are two pictures on the wall: Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Outside, torrential rain falls. There's a crack of thunder. The CHILDREN ooh and ahh. We hear them but don't see them. We stay on the portraits, and the rain.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Shh. Children. USSR. Uninterrupted,
Sustained Silent Reading.

There's a bulletin board with kids' art on it: those turkeys you make with your handprint. Names underneath: Kelsey. Chelsea F. Chelsea B. Kevin. Amber. Amber's is the best.

A paper maché solar system is hanging from the ceiling.

We linger on paper Mars, its craters clearly painted by a child. One looks like a tiny human face.

Two KIDS, a boy and a girl, sit cross-legged on the floor with books in their laps. We see only their legs and little shoes, touching soles.

Another crack of thunder.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Amber is going to Mars, and she's
never coming back.

The little boy moves closer to the little girl. Their hands clasp as the lights flicker. Between light and dark we see -

Flicker. Paper Mars again.

Flicker. The boy and girl's hands, clasped tight.

Flicker. The clock goes tick-tick-tick. Then darkness.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

That saggy green futon, now holding the unwashed form of KEVIN WATKINS, 30s, a guy you went to high school with. Passably cute. Hung out with burnouts, but not a bad guy.

On the coffee table is a baggie of weed, an ashtray from Dollywood, and a bunch of joints in a neat line. There's also a small, yellowish glass pipe.

Kevin's mouth hangs open. He's melted into the futon like it's his job. His drool falls on a dirty plate.

AMBER (O.S.)
(distantly)
Hey Kev? Kevin?

He sinks. And sinks, and sinks. The futon swallows him up.

AMBER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tater Totter?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

He snorts awake. He's still on the futon, but sitting up. Amber sits beside him, gloves on, mask pulled to her neck.

AMBER
Can we talk?

KEVIN
This is when she told me.

AMBER
What?

KEVIN (V.O.)
Shit. This is when she told me.

Kevin stretches slowly, like a chameleon on a rock.

KEVIN
Sorry, I'm super stoned. What's up?

AMBER
I'm, um. This is gonna sound weird.

KEVIN (V.O.)
I remember wondering what it was
going to be.

Kevin looks at Amber, but speaks to "us." Amber talks to him, carefully. But we don't hear what she says.

KEVIN (V.O.)
That she cheated on me. Like when
she gave Jeremy head on this futon,
on Voyager. We call it Voyager
because we take our best trips on
it. Or that-

AMBER

Just listen okay? I entered this contest. It's a reality show. And if I win, I'm going to Mars.

KEVIN

Okay. (To us) Amber applied to go to Mars, without telling me, one year and three months ago.

AMBER

I made it to round three, so now I have to go train.

KEVIN (V.O.)

She'd already been training. I knew because she stopped getting her period, just like in high school.

INSERT: The bathroom cupboard, stocked with sealed tampon boxes, and the garbage can, empty.

KEVIN (V.O.)

...And because of the braid.

Amber's hair is, indeed, in a tight french braid.

FLASHBACK:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - DAY

TEENAGE AMBER's tight braid from the back, in slow motion. She wraps her hands with tape, then powders them.

Her feet arch on padded mats. Her arms rise.

In slow motion, she tilts forward to run. We watch the braid. We see her mouth. She breathes out, forcefully.

KEVIN (V.O.)

She always had the braid to train.

AMBER (V.O.)

You need to understand this, Kev:
If I win, I'm not coming back.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (BACK TO SCENE)

Amber and Kevin, back on Voyager. The news sinks in.

KEVIN

Huh.

AMBER

Yeah.

KEVIN

Is Mars a hot one or a cold one?

AMBER

Really hot. Hot and red. But they found water. And they think people can live there. At least, MarsNow thinks people can live there.

KEVIN

And it's going to be a show?

AMBER

Yeah. A reality show, but a useful one. One that goes on forever, and is about the future of our species. Of us. It makes me tingly.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Like The Truman Show.

KEVIN

Like The Truman Show?

AMBER

I guess so, yeah. (Beat) Look, are you okay? I mean, this is a lot.

KEVIN

Truman dies.

AMBER

What?

KEVIN

In the Truman Show, Truman dies.

AMBER

No, you're remembering it wrong, Kev. He leaves. And meets the woman of his dreams. And anyway, he didn't know he was in a show. Just—we can talk more later. After work.

KEVIN

Okay. Yeah.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A DETECTIVE and his team of OFFICERS comb the wet, dense west coast forest floor, looking for something.

DETECTIVE
(To himself, pained)
Goddammit, where are you?

The Detective leans against a tree dramatically, his head on his arm. He punches the tree in frustration. A bit much.

OFFICER #1 (O.S.)
Detective, over here!

The Detective looks up, right where the voice came from, then starts running towards it. Even his run is a bit much.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Detective's face comes into view, looking down at something. He covers his face. Whatever it is, it's awful.

DETECTIVE
Oh, god. Timmy. Poor Timmy.

The Detective squats down to get a closer look.

We see what he sees: A gross, bloated corpse, splayed out on the ground and half-covered in moss and dirt. On closer inspection, it's Kevin in extensive makeup.

Kevin's face twitches. He can't help it. He sneezes.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Cut! Goddammit it. Back to one.

KEVIN
Sorry. Sorry, everyone.

A flurry of movement as the set comes to life. The CREW works to reset the scene.

DETECTIVE
(actor, British accent)
Twat.

He shakes his head and walks away.

EXT. EXTRAS HOLDING - DAY

Corpse Kevin sits against a trailer. He's still got moss and leaves on him. He eats a sandwich voraciously.

There are other EXTRAS in the distance, but Kevin hangs alone. As before, he speaks to us but not at us.

KEVIN

I'm an extra. The pay sucks and everyone hates you. But sometimes you get to lie down and the food is good. And you can be stoned. And as Amber says, it gets me out of the house. Plus-

A MAKEUP ARTIST approaches. She touches Kevin up.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I met Jennifer Love Hewitt once.

MAKEUP ARTIST

That's nice, honey.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Amber, in a high bun and office attire, sits at the front desk of a bland, corporate office. She answers the phone.

AMBER

(perfect phone voice)

Markham and Sanders, this is Joanne. (Beat) Please hold.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Amber works as a temp for a bunch of different places. She never uses her real name.

AMBER

Markham and Sanders, this is Tina. (Beat) Please hold.

A puffy LAWYER type passes. Amber flashes a brilliant smile. The lawyer winks, then enters his office and closes the door.

She opens her desk drawer and grabs a bundle of pens, dropping them in her purse. Then a stapler.

KEVIN (V.O.)

The thing is, she's really fucking smart. But there aren't many jobs for tree scientists.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Kevin, still corpse-y but in his own clothes, looks in the mirror. He uses a Q-tip, which comes out of his ear blue.

KEVIN

(To us/mirror)

We make most of our money selling weed, which was her idea. But Amber said we need to seem like adults, with adult jobs. So that if anyone ever got wise, we'd have an excuse. She said "got wise"—

INSERT: Amber's face in closeup mouthing "Got wise."

KEVIN (CONT'D)

—like a gangster from the 40s.

Kevin opens the medicine cabinet. On his side, a couple of dude-ish items: shaving cream, nail clippers. Her side: An array of bottles, plus a bunch of vitamins. Neatly arranged.

Kevin picks up a bottle of something and sniffs it.

FLASHBACK:

INT. THE KIVINENS BATHROOM - NIGHT

TEENAGE KEVIN sniffs a similar bottle. TEENAGE AMBER, arm in a sling, opens the door. She holds a red solo cup. The sounds of a party can be heard behind. Teenage Kevin freezes.

TEENAGE AMBER

What are you doing?

TEENAGE KEVIN

Nothing!

TEENAGE AMBER

Kevin...Watkins.

TEENAGE KEVIN

Yeah.

TEENAGE AMBER

You were my penpal one summer. You never wrote me back.

TEENAGE KEVIN

Sorry.

KEVIN (V.O.)

I was trying to find her smell. She had this smell. Like if someone dumped pepper on the grass. But sweet, too. Like syrup tastes. She didn't even really know who I was. But she knew I was her pen pal. That was something. It was a start.

A beat. Kevin grips the bottle, white-knuckled. He could put it back but he's frozen. They look at each other.

TEENAGE AMBER

(amused)

You're weird.

TEENAGE KEVIN

Sorry.

Teenage Amber leaves. Teenage Kevin looks in the mirror.

TEENAGE AMBER (O.S.)

That's my mom's, by the way!

Teenage Kevin shuts and locks the bathroom door.

KEVIN (V.O.)

For what it's worth, Amber's mom is hot, too. In a mom way. She's the only reason I liked hockey.

FLASHBACK:

INT. HOCKEY ARENA - DAY

Loving, slo-mo closeups of AMBER'S MOM, large-breasted, cheering from the sparse stands of a small-town hockey arena.

Her severely 90s-mom-cut hair bounces, as do her breasts. A young boy's dream of womanhood.

LITTLE KEVIN stops skating to look up at her longingly. He's hit from behind by another KID and smashes onto the ice.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin snorts awake on the futon to the sound of Amber breathing out, forcefully. She's doing push-ups.

By the door is a duffel bag and a backpack, neatly packed.

KEVIN

Can I come? to Mars?

AMBER

(loving, but determined)

It's too late, Kev. You missed the deadline.

KEVIN

Right. (Beat) We could have applied together. They probably want couples.

AMBER

I won't even make it to Mars. I have to compete against, like, thirty other people first.

KEVIN

You'd really leave all this behind?

He gestures to the dark, dank basement. She half-laughs, and stands. She's powerful, flushed. Ready.

AMBER

We can keep talking about this, if you want.

KEVIN

Um. No, it's okay. (To us) When she says that it means she doesn't.

He picks up the small glass pipe. It's beautiful, an amber color, swirled like a planet but blackened from use.

He holds it to his eye and sees Amber through it. He packs it with weed from the ever-present baggie, puts it to his lips.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You want some?

AMBER

No thanks. And remember, some of that is Jeremy's.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Yeah, that Jeremy. Blowjob Jeremy.

KEVIN

Okay.

AMBER

You can handle it? I gotta jog five miles before I leave.

KEVIN
Yeah. Hey Slammer?

Amber sits back down in one swift motion. She does crunches.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Do they know you grow pot?

AMBER
(amused)
What do you think?

Kevin shrugs. Amber keeps doing crunches.

AMBER (CONT'D)
I'm a "hydroponics expert." You
gotta grow food on Mars.

Kevin smiles. He lights the pipe and takes a long drag on it.

KEVIN
I love you.

TEENAGE AMBER (V.O.)
No you don't.

FLASHBACK:

INT. AMBER'S TEENAGE BEDROOM - DAY

Teenage Kevin and Teenage Amber are in bed, post-coital. They look directly in each other's eyes. There is love there, or the teenage version of it. Amber's arm is in a sling.

TEENAGE AMBER
You're just excited you had sex.

Teenage Kevin laughs. He touches her face. He kisses her.

MONTAGE: THE MOMENTS BEFORE, IN BITS AND PIECES.

--They kiss on the edge of the bed.

--He pulls her sports bra over her head, tenderly, its marks still on her back. He touches the marks.

--She takes out her hair elastic, loosening her braid.

TEENAGE KEVIN (V.O.)
What do you like about me?

--His hand on her back, he lays her down. They entwine with one another, in an awkward teenage way.

TEENAGE AMBER (V.O.)
I guess you make me feel calm. Like weed. You don't expect anything from me. You just want me around.

--He kisses the sling. Then her arm, her neck. The beginning.

TEENAGE KEVIN
That's true.

TEENAGE AMBER
What about me?

TEENAGE KEVIN
Uh. Well, I like that you're... here. And that I'm here. And that's kind of enough, honestly.

TEENAGE AMBER
You have a beautiful mind, Watkins.
(Beat) What do you love about me?

TEENAGE KEVIN
I love--

END MONTAGE.

Back in bed, post-coital.

TEENAGE KEVIN (CONT'D)
I love that we just had sex.

They laugh. She hits him, playfully, with her good arm.

Suddenly, there's the sound of the front door opening. A pause. Teenage Kevin's eyes go wide.

AMBER'S DAD (O.S.)
(intense, with accent)
Amber!

TEENAGE AMBER
(whispering)
Shit! Go! He'll actually kill you.

The door closes. Teenage Kevin bolts up. Blankets fly.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (BACK TO SCENE)

The apartment door closes. Kevin comes to, pipe in hand. Amber has just left. He looks at the pipe, then puts it down.

He picks it back up again, lights it. Inhales and-

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Exhales smoke. It's dark. The TV is on something cartoonish and dumb. He's surrounded by snacks.

He passes the pipe to his left. Reveal MARCUS KULAP, 30s, Kevin's best friend. One of those little, squirrely kind of guys. Live wire. Talks too much.

MARCUS
Wow. (Beat) Martians!

KEVIN
Haha, yeah.

MARCUS
Dude, what are you gonna do about-

Marcus gestures to the weed in his hand.

KEVIN
I'm okay at growing.

MARCUS
Yeah, but she's great at it. She's got the magic touch.

Marcus mimes a handjob. Kevin bats at him. It's playful.

KEVIN
I'll figure it out.

MARCUS
Are you guys gonna break up?

KEVIN
No, man.

MARCUS
You sure? Remember when Callie went to Vegas?

KEVIN (V.O.)
This story always goes one of two ways. It's either -

MARCUS

I'm glad she went, because I don't wanna be married to someone who figures out she's gay at a fucking Cirque du Soleil show.

KEVIN

Or —

MARCUS

If I could have stopped her from going, she never would have gone gay by watching a bunch of French clowns twirl fucking ribbon around.

KEVIN

But it always ends with —

MARCUS

I guess what happens in Vegas fucks up your life forever, right?

A beat. Marcus takes another hit.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

So, like, if she's on the show, does that mean she's gonna be famous? Like gymnastics famous?

KEVIN

Probably.

MARCUS

I feel like that's a lot. She wasn't great with pressure before.

KEVIN

That was forever ago. Gimme that.

MARCUS

Yeah, I guess. Give you what?

Kevin motions to the pipe. Marcus looks at his hands.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hahaha. Oh shit. Cool.

Marcus takes a long drag. Still holds the pipe.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Marcus is not smart. But he's a good friend. And our best customer.

Marcus pulls a wad of cash out of his pants.

MARCUS
I almost forgot! Here man.

KEVIN
Thanks.

MARCUS
Wanna order Mr. Fatty's?

KEVIN
Definitely.

Marcus gets up. He doesn't pass the pipe. We stay on Kevin.

MARCUS (O.S)
Has she told her parents yet?

FLASHBACK:

INT. HOCKEY ARENA - NIGHT

Little Kevin stares up at Amber's Mom and her bouncing breasts. He gets hit from behind. His nose hits the ice and immediately explodes in a spray of blood.

He lies on the ice. He watches the blood escape his face, red on white. Through blood-pounding ears he hears-

AMBER'S DAD (O.S.)
WATKINS!!!

He tries to get it together. But the blood. It pools and swirls, like craters. It almost seems to be making a face.

Two giant hockey skates spray to a stop in front of him.

He's lifted by something - someone - massive. His tiny boy body is turned. Held. He passes out. In the black -

KEVIN (V.O.)
Amber's terrifying dad.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BAR - DAY

Amber's parents, a few decades older, sit on one side of a high top. Kevin and Amber sit on the other.

Kevin tries not to look at Amber's mom's breasts, which rest on the table. He fails. Amber nervously rips up a napkin.

AMBER

If I go to Mars, I can't come back.

Off Amber's Mom, who starts to cry quietly.

AMBER'S DAD

Deanne. Hush.

KEVIN (V.O.)

He hates that Amber ended up with me. But in this moment, I had hope. He's sensible. Controlling. Finnish. He used to weigh her food.

Amber's Dad takes a big gulp of beer. His face is stern. Suddenly, he breaks into an unnatural grin. Kevin recoils.

AMBER'S DAD

The Kivenens have always been pioneers. We are Vikings.

KEVIN

(To us, whispering)

Actually, they aren't. Amber did a school project on it once. They're fishermen. And one was a murderer.

AMBER'S DAD

We will die as Vikings. Yes! You will go to Mars.

Amber's mom wipes her tears. Her dad holds his beer glass aloft, looking directly into Kevin's eyes.

AMBER'S DAD (CONT'D)

To Mars!

Everyone holds their glasses up, smiling. Kevin's is forced.

EVERYONE

To Mars!

AMBER'S DAD

(To Kevin)

And you? Still in the background of TV shows I don't watch?

INT. POT ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin looks over the pot plants. A few of them look a little droopy. He lifts a sad leaf, tenderly.

MARCUS (O.S.)
Get in here man. It's starting.

KEVIN
Coming. (To plants) Sorry, guys.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin plops down on Voyager just as we hear the strains of an inspirational, Star Trek-like theme song.

INT. MARSNOW CREDIT SEQUENCE - SAME

A CGI space-scape, with Mars at its center.

HOST (V.O.)
Imagine the future of humankind.
Imagine what is possible when we
aren't bound by this planet. When
we leave behind all this hate,
destruction, and disease.

Images of Neo-Nazis with tiki torches, icebergs breaking away, Syrian children crying in a bomb-blasted street...

Suddenly overtaken by titles reading MARS NOW. It's abrupt.

HOST (V.O.)
We can. We can go to Mars. Now. We
can make a new world. A better
world. On Mars. Now.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - SAME

A camera sweeps over PEOPLE in matching white jumpsuits with orange MarsNow insignias, standing like soldiers.

Among them, shining brightly, proudly, is Amber.

MARCUS (O.S.)
Oh shit! Dude! Look!

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

The two friends are dug in on the couch like they're growing roots. It's a stark contrast to the clean white scene on TV.

KEVIN
I'm looking.

MARCUS
She's on TV!

KEVIN
Yeah, I see her. She looks great.
(Then, sadly) She looks perfect.

MARCUS
Wild, dude. This is wild.

Marcus produces and takes a massive hit from a water bong.

On TV the HOST, an Elon Musk-like bro, walks dramatically down a long metal gangway. He speaks to the camera.

INTERCUT: SHOW/LIVING ROOM.

HOST
Welcome to MarsNow. I made close to a billion dollars last year, but the world is still bad.

MARCUS
Haha. This guy rules. What a prick.

HOST
I decided that I needed to do something. But I can't solve all the world's problems, so I'm doing the next best thing. I'm leaving them behind. To go to Mars. Now.

The Host approaches the contestants, including a stoic Amber.

HOST (CONT'D)
Well not me, but two of them. Brave but ordinary citizens, people like you who want to be the first human beings ever to live on Mars.

Suddenly, the channel changes to cartoons.

KEVIN
Marcus!

MARCUS
Fuck, sorry. I got bored.

The channel changes back to reveal a handsome dude, ADAM. The lower third reads "Adam, Israel." He's fit and earnest.

ADAM
I got out of the military and knew
I needed to keep helping, however I
could. So I became a doctor.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Dr. Adam helps various PEOPLE. He looks confident, happy, and at ease with himself.

MARCUS (O.S.)
This guy's a prick.

KEVIN (O.S.)
Marcus. Shut up.

Back to Adam's direct-to-camera interview.

INTERCUT: LIVING ROOM/SHOW.

ADAM
And the idea of going to Mars. It's
just...I mean, I can't imagine it.
Being the first man on Mars. Making
it habitable. It makes me tingly.

He tears up. He wipes perfect tears with a perfect thumb.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. It's just so moving.

MARCUS (O.S.)
PRIIIIIICK.

The music grows softer, more feminine. Amber appears. She strides through a garden. She picks and eats an apple.

The lower third says "AMBER, USA." Marcus smacks Kevin's arm repeatedly. Kevin swats him away.

AMBER (V.O.)
I'm Amber. I'm a hydroponics
expert, which basically means I
know how to grow plants.

MARCUS
Yeah, sticky icky plants.

Amber does a direct to camera. She's fresh faced, pretty. Her hair is in a high ponytail. She looks happy.

AMBER

I used to be a gymnast. I qualified for the Olympics, but I hurt my shoulder and that was kind of it. But growing things, making things live, made me feel whole again.

Amber looks down, then back up. Her eyes shine. She smiles.

Kevin sits forward, focusing on Amber. Everything else falls away. He loves her. So does the camera.

MARCUS

Ding, ding. We have a winner!

Kevin's eyes widen, like "Oh fuck."

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin snoozes on Voyager. There's a knock on the door. He sleeps on. Another knock, more insistent. He wakes up.

INT. APARTMENT DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kevin opens the door to reveal BLOWJOB JEREMY. He's one of those handsome hippies you suspect has family money.

KEVIN

(To us)

Oh good, it's Blowjob Jeremy.

BLOWJOB JEREMY

Hey man, what's up? Can I?

A moment. Kevin hesitates, then lets Jeremy in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin and Blowjob Jeremy sit on the couch. It's uneasy. Kevin weighs pot on a scale. Blowjob Jeremy looks poised to speak.

KEVIN (V.O.)

3...2...1...

BLOWJOB JEREMY

How's Amber?

KEVIN

(To us)

I knew it. (To him) Good, I guess.

BLOWJOB JEREMY
It's cool to see her on the show.
It's bananas, right? Mars?

KEVIN
(To us)
Who says bananas? (To him) She
seems to like it. They're not
allowed to call us or whatever.

BLOWJOB JEREMY
Bummer. Must be kinda lonely, huh?
(Then) I feel like she could win.
She's got such a good attitude.

KEVIN
Uh-huh.

BLOWJOB JEREMY
What happens to you? If she wins, I
mean?

Kevin looks at Jeremy. Lunges at him. Chokes him out.

At least, he imagines he does. In reality, Kevin twists a tie
on the pot baggie oh-so-tightly shut and hands it over.

KEVIN
That'll be eighty.

BLOWJOB JEREMY
Eighty! It used to be sixty-five.

KEVIN
Yeah, it's eighty now. I'm all
alone here, y'know? Lonely.

EXT. APARTMENT DOORWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin opens the door. Jeremy stops, a little too close.

BLOWJOB JEREMY
Thanks man. If you do talk to her,
just tell her I said hi, okay?

FLASHBACK:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin walks in on Amber giving Jeremy a blowjob. We don't see
the act, but he does. He hides.

KEVIN

(To us, whispering)
No, I never told her. I wanted to.
But when's a good time to say "I
saw you blowing a dude on Voyager?"
Before or after you put together an
Ikea dresser? And anyway, it never
went anywhere. (Beat) She's always
happier when she has a secret.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. APARTMENT DOORWAY - DAY (BACK TO SCENE)

Jeremy waits for Kevin to respond. After a beat -

KEVIN

Like I said, they're not allowed to
talk to us.

JEREMY

Right. Cool. Peace man.

Jeremy gives a peace sign. Douche. Kevin shuts the door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Kevin mixes a green-looking cake batter. Marcus looks over
his shoulder and gives him a thumbs up. Kevin's phone rings.

KEVIN (V.O.)

What Blowjob Jeremy didn't know
was, she was calling me anyway.

On screen: "Slammer." He drops the spoon. He answers.

KEVIN

Amber?

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin slips into the tub.

AMBER (O.S.)

(through the phone)
Hey Kev. Are you in the tub?

KEVIN

Yeah. (To us) The tub's the coolest
place in the house. And the only
place we get decent service.

AMBER (O.S.)
How are you?

KEVIN
I'm okay. How are you?

AMBER (O.S.)
Good. Really good. It's — I'm
always tired. And they made me get
fake eyelashes. But it feels good,
you know? I feel healthy.

KEVIN
Awesome.

A quiet moment passes. Kevin smiles.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Hey, I thought you weren't supposed
to call the people at home?

AMBER (O.S.)
We're not, but I missed you so I
begged a producer to let me have my
phone. I said your mom was sick.

KEVIN
Joke's on them. Louise is dead.

AMBER (O.S.)
Haha, yeah.

KEVIN
I miss you too. I'm proud of you.
Probably not as proud as (imitating
Amber's dad) Pekke John Kivinen.
(Himself) But proud. Super proud.

AMBER (V.O.)
Thanks, Kev.

KEVIN
I think about you all the time. I—
Mostly I wish you were here to...
watch you with me. Which is weird.

AMBER (O.S.)
You sound stoned.

KEVIN
Guilty as charged.

AMBER (O.S.)
How are the plants?

KEVIN
(lying)
The babies are good.

AMBER (O.S.)
Don't forget to test the pH on
Wednesdays, okay?

KEVIN
Actually, I've been doing it on
Mondays before the show. It's a new
tradition.

AMBER (O.S.)
You should go back to Wednesdays.
They like structure.

KEVIN
Yeah, totally. I will. Sorry.

AMBER (O.S.)
It's not a big deal. I don't- I'm
sorry I didn't say goodbye
properly. I kinda pulled a runner.

KEVIN
It's okay. (To us) It's not okay.
She pulls runners when she's sad. I
should ask her if she's sad.

A beat. He doesn't say anything.

AMBER (O.S.)
I gotta go, I promised I'd only be
five minutes. I'm glad you're good.

KEVIN
Yeah, you too. Love you Slammer.
(Beat) I hope you win.

A pause. Kevin holds his breath.

AMBER
Love you too.

Kevin exhales. He hangs up.

KEVIN (V.O.)
I guess I'm the Blowjob Jeremy,
now. I'm the secret she's keeping
from the entire planet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin flops onto Voyager. He passes the pipe to Marcus. The MarsNow theme song plays in the background.

MARCUS

It's weird how sometimes I forget
she's gone because she's on TV.

A MONTAGE, spinning on the axis of the living room:

- Marcus and Kevin watch the show and cheer Amber on.
- Kevin checks out the plants. Frowns at wilting leaves.
- Kevin picks up call after call from Amber in the tub.
- A beaming Amber stays on MarsNow as others are eliminated.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Round after round, Amber stayed.
Why? Because she had a story. Mars
gave her a purpose. Her story
wasn't better than anyone else's,
but she'd been raised in her
father's church. She could sell it.
I was lost but now am found. Ding,
ding, we have a winner.

- Down to six. She calls less and less.
- Marcus continues to cheer. Kevin smokes, anxiously.
- Kevin looks at their bedroom, and closes the door. He tosses and turns on Voyager instead.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

KIDS sit at desks and swing their legs. The solar system hangs in the corner.

TEACHER

Each of you will have a summer pen
pal. You'll exchange addresses and
write one another letters.

Little Kevin looks at the back of Little Amber's head.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
I'm passing out different colored
paper. Find the person with the
same color. That's your penpal.

The teacher drops an orange paper circle on Little Kevin's desk. He picks it up and looks at it, then puts it down.

Little Amber appears at his desk. She holds an orange circle. She smiles and puts their circles on top of one another.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin kicks blankets aside on Voyager, a cookie in his mouth.

Suddenly, the apartment door opens. It's Amber, with a MarsNow bag. Her arm is in a sling.

She drops the bag and blasts in, unsettling everything. Kevin sits bolt upright. He watches her in shock - she's back!

She flops down on Voyager next to him, flapping the sling.

AMBER
They made me come home because of
this. I'm so pissed. What is the
point? I could hang out in my pod.

KEVIN
You're here.

Amber vibrates with intensity. She seems not to hear him.

AMBER
And they made me sign like fifteen
NDAs, so again, what's the point?
I'm missing so many chances to
strategize. It sucks.

KEVIN
Your shoulder.

She finally looks at him.

AMBER
I'm sorry, I'm just kind of in it,
you know? (Beat) I forgot how hot
it is in here all the time. And
small. I feel too tall.

Amber stands up and awkwardly strips off a layer. She hesitates, then sits back down.

KEVIN
Are you okay?

AMBER
I'm not allowed to talk about it.
It's going to be on this episode.

She leans her head on Kevin's shoulder. He seems to calm her.

AMBER (CONT'D)
This is better. Feel my heart.

She lifts Kevin's hand to her chest. We hear an elevated thump-thump, thump-thump. It gradually slows. Amber sighs.

KEVIN
You wanna smoke?

AMBER
You know what? I do. Screw them.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The futon is open to a bed. Kevin and Amber stare up at the ceiling together, passing the pipe back and forth.

AMBER
It's weird to be here. I forgot how messed up the ceiling is.

KEVIN
Yeah. Messed up and falling on us.

The ceiling is a patchwork of spots, cracks, and bumps from pseudo-repairs. Like a planet's surface. Or a relationship.

AMBER
I can't see the face anymore.

KEVIN
It's there.

AMBER
Where?

Kevin passes her the pipe and holds his hands up and apart.

KEVIN
Between my hands.

Amber starts to laugh.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

What?

AMBER

Kev, I can't see between your hands
the way you can. I told you before.

Amber takes a huge drag on the pipe.

KEVIN

Okay, but that's where the face is.

Amber sputters smoke as she laughs.

AMBER

You've got a beautiful mind.

KEVIN

That means you think I'm dumb.

AMBER

No! It means you think differently
than other people. And that the way
you think is pretty stupid.

They laugh. A lot. Stoned laughs, signifying nothing and
everything at once.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Can you blame me for thinking this
meant something? That since she was
getting high, risking a drug test,
that she was done with Mars? For
thinking she was home?

AMBER

There's a face on Mars, too. It's
called Cydonia.

KEVIN

Cool. Creepy.

Amber props herself up on her good elbow. They continue to
pass the pipe between them.

AMBER

You know, this is what the pressure
cooker feels like.

KEVIN

The what? What's that?

AMBER

The gravity chamber. We all have to go in there a couple hours a day to get ready for the atmosphere. Mars will crush you otherwise.

KEVIN

And it feels like this?

AMBER

Like a body high, only way better. It's amazing. The Russian guy puked, which is how I knew he'd never done drugs.

Amber passes the pipe over, then plays with Kevin's fingers.

KEVIN

So you liked it.

AMBER

Like it. Present tense. I'm going back as soon as I get the all-clear on my shoulder.

KEVIN

(gut punched)
Oh. Right. Of course.

AMBER

It feels important. Even if I don't win. (Beat) But if-

She looks at him. There's more there, but not yet. He kisses her, fast. To stop her from saying it. To stop it. All of it.

Amber kisses back. She tugs on Kevin's shirt. He helps pull it over his head, then pulls her shirt around her sling.

AMBER (CONT'D)

(whispering)
Be careful.

KEVIN

(whispering)
Of course. I've done this before.

They kiss, carefully this time. It's something close to sad.

KEVIN (V.O.)

I didn't know this was the last time. I would have... (beat) I'm not sure what I would have done.

They kiss again. Amber's eyes close. Kevin studies her face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Kevin wakes up in Voyager's ass-crack in full daylight. He sits up. The apartment has been cleaned as he slept. Amber.

INT. POT ROOM - SAME

The sad, spotty plants look a little better, somehow.

A small jar of orange goo sits on a shelf. A Post-It note reads, "Use me! I can help! - X, Amber." Kevin smiles.

EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT - DAY

Amber stands, hands on hips on the sun-blasted New Mexico desert. She's poised, focused. The camera eats her up.

HOST (V.O.)

This is what determination can do.
Amber was the child of immigrants
who became a gymnastics legend.
Then she got hurt. Now look at her.

Amber tilts forward on her toes and starts to run.

HOST (V.O.)

This is an obstacle course. It
makes our contestants have to think
about their next steps, to make
choices and solve problems-

The word "MUTE" suddenly appears in the bottom right corner.

MARCUS (O.S.)

(imitating host, robotic)
This is a TV show. I'm a massive
prick and I host it. Ironically, my
wiener is very small!

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Marcus, Kevin and Amber are watching the show on Voyager. Kevin is smoking from the small, amber-colored pipe.

Kevin yanks the remote from Marcus and presses a button. The word "Mute" disappears and the sound comes back up.

MARCUS
Sorry, Amber.

AMBER
No, you're right. He is a prick.
His eyebrows are drawn on.

Marcus laughs. On TV, Amber runs towards a massive log.

INTERCUT: LIVING ROOM/SHOW.

HOST (V.O.)
Each contestant has to lift the
tree trunk out of the way. For
Amber, this might be tough.

TV Amber bends to pick up the tree. She squat-shuffles it.
Suddenly, her right shoulder drops dramatically. She screams.

HOST (V.O.)
Oh no. It looks like Amber has re-
injured her bad shoulder. Not good.

MARCUS
Dude. That must have hurt.

AMBER
Worse than the first time.

Kevin puts his arm around Amber, pulling her close. But
something's up with her. She's cagey. Aloof.

TV Amber tries to push the log with her hips. An intense
music sting matches the overly-dramatic closeups of her face.

HOST (V.O.)
What's this now?

Suddenly we see Adam. He runs on a diagonal through the other
courses towards Amber like a fireman to a fire.

HOST (V.O.)
It looks like – yes, that's Adam
running over from his own course,
abandoning it, to help her.

Adam reaches Amber. He lifts and moves the log with ease.

MARCUS
This pr–

Marcus looks at Amber. Amber fidgets, panicky. Kevin notices.
Marcus notices.

HOST (V.O.)

Wow. It appears as though Adam has
thrown this round to help Amber.

A teary TV Amber turns to look at Adam. The world stops.

Adam takes the side of Amber's face with both hands. He says
something quietly to her. She nods. He handles her arm gently
and pops her shoulder back into place. Amber winces.

They do not break eye contact.

He places his hands back on her face, and they touch
foreheads. The camera lingers on their faces. TV Amber cries.

HOST (V.O.)

Wow. I...I don't have the words.

A long beat. Marcus, Amber, and Kevin sit, stock-still. Amber
gets up and goes into the bathroom.

MARCUS

I'm just gonna-

KEVIN

Yep.

Marcus hastily leaves, gathering up his stuff as he goes. He
returns, grabs few joints, and makes an "I'm sorry" face.

Kevin approaches the bathroom door.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KIVINENS' HALLWAY - DAY

Teenage Kevin and Amber's dad stand facing each other outside
Amber's bedroom door.

CANNONBALL by The Breeders plays from within.

AMBER'S DAD

She won't let me in. Or her mother.

Amber's Dad knocks on her door, heavily.

TEENAGE AMBER (O.S.)

Go away, dad.

Her dad gestures to Kevin, like "Go ahead."

TEENAGE KEVIN

Hey Amber? It's Kevin.

TEENAGE AMBER

Come in.

INT. AMBER'S TEENAGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Teenage Kevin closes the door, edging out Amber's Dad.

Teenage Amber sits on the floor, her face red from crying. Her arm is in a sling, with "Doomed" scrawled on it.

Teenage Kevin sits beside her. We see Amber through his eyes: Sad and beautiful. She talks, cries. Kevin listens, stays.

KEVIN (V.O.)

I remember everything she said that day. That she hadn't been able to breathe properly since losing her shot at the Olympics. That she felt sick all the time because now she didn't know what to do with her life. She was only 17, but she was already fully heartbroken.

Teenage Amber mouths "fully heartbroken" in sync with Kevin's VO. She rests her head on Teenage Kevin's shoulder.

KEVIN (V.O.)

She told me everything. Only me. We were never really apart after that.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO SCENE)

Kevin hovers at the bathroom door. Almost knocks, but doesn't. He goes back to Voyager. A beat. The door opens.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kevin looks in. Amber sits in the tub. She's been crying.

AMBER

I didn't know they were going to edit it like that. I'm sorry.

KEVIN (V.O.)

This was it. The moment to start. To talk about everything that was wrong. To try to fix it. So naturally, I said-

KEVIN

Bullshit. You and Doctor Muscles
knew exactly what you were doing.
(To us) Doctor Muscles? Ugh. What?
Did I say that out loud?

AMBER

Huh. Wow, Kevin. Classy.

KEVIN

I did. I said it out loud. (To
Amber) You know what's classier?
Running away from your problems by
moving to another fucking planet.
(To us) Holy shit.

Amber looks at him. She pulls herself up out of the tub. She
walks right up to him.

AMBER

Anything else you want to say?

KEVIN (V.O.)

I miss you, I love you, pick me,
don't go.

KEVIN

Nope. That covers it. (Beat, to us)
Stay. Stay. Stay.

A beat. Amber starts to cry. She steps forward, as if to hug
him, but instead opens the door. She exits. The door slams.

INT. BEDROOM/DEN - MORNING

Kevin wakes up with a start. Amber is gone.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Kevin dejectedly rolls a cart down the aisles. He pops olives
in his mouth. He fills his cart with chips and beer. He loads
his groceries onto the checkout belt.

He looks up to see Amber and Adam's forehead moment on the
front page of the NY Times. "A Hero's Journey: From Doctors
Without Borders to MarsNow's Doctor on Call."

He turns away, but they're also on US Weekly. "The First Man
and First Lady of Space?" Kevin stares at it.

TANYA (O.S.)

That everything?

Kevin comes to. The cashier, TANYA, wry and present, smirks. He smiles weakly back. He throws the magazine on the belt.

KEVIN
Uh. No. And this.

TANYA
(re: US Weekly)
Man. I just see my exes on
Instagram. This is next level.

Kevin can't process this. He stares at her. Tanya grabs a box of Slim Jims and dumps all of them in Kevin's bag. Winks.

TANYA (CONT'D)
On the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin sits on Voyager. He reads US Weekly and snaps into a Slim Jim. His phone beeps.

INSERT: Series of texts from Marcus: "U up? JK. Mars time?"

Kevin starts typing a reply.

INSERT: Kevin's reply: "Not feeling it tonight. Next week?"

INSERT: Marcus's reply: "Cool" plus a gif of a guy falling down stairs. Then: "Haha falling is tits."

A moment passes. Kevin turns on the TV.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - SAME

The Host walks past the remaining contestants, including Adam and Amber. Amber's teeth are whiter, her skin brighter.

HOST
This is the supplies challenge.
Each pair will decide what they
need for one year on Mars and race
to the pile. If you're thinking,
"Hey this is like the Hunger
Games," you're right. But it's
better, because it's real.

The Host winks.

KEVIN (O.S.)
Prick.

HOST

And starting this week, we're doing something new. From now on, you can vote for who you want to stay and who goes home. Your votes will help us decide who goes to Mars.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kevin perches on Voyager. He stares at the TV. It's off. He thinks. He looks over at the pot room. Sad plants stare back.

HOTLINE OPERATOR (V.O.)

Thank you for calling the MarsNow hotline. *Para Español, oprima dos.* To purchase MarsNow official branded merchandise, press 1. To vote for your favorite MarsNow contestant, press 3.

We hear a "beep" as Kevin presses a button. We hear his hotline call over the action of this scene and the next.

Kevin leaps up, runs at the pot room door, and swats it open. It cracks against the wall.

INT. POT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kevin stares at the plants. His failure to keep them alive.

HOTLINE OPERATOR (V.O.)

To vote for Adam, press 1. For Amber, press 2. For Mariko-

Beep. Kevin picks up a wilted pot plant and looks at it.

HOTLINE OPERATOR (V.O.)

You have voted for Am-burr Kiv-eye-nen. To leave a recorded message for Amber, press 3.

Beep. Kevin raises the plant above his head.

AMBER (V.O.)

Hi! I'm Amber. I'd love to go to Mars, and thanks to you, I might.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Uh. Hey Slammer. I hope you win. (Beat) Actually, I don't. But I do, you know? Fuck.

Beep. He drops the plant. It smashes. Dirt sprays. He picks up another. Drops it. Smash.

HOTLINE OPERATOR (V.O.)
Is that all you've got?

KEVIN (V.O.)
What? What did you say?

HOTLINE OPERATOR (V.O.)
I said, is that all you've got to say, Kevin?

Kevin goes berserk: Plants, dirt, pieces of hose, fertilizer, vials of various things are tossed and smashed. He slides and slips in the wet mud and dirt. All as we hear-

KEVIN (V.O.)
Actually. No. (Beat) You know what, MarsNow? You guys are screwed. Because I know something you don't. Amber won't settle. Mars will seem great at first, and so will Adam. But eventually Mars will be stifling too, and he'll be just like me. The guy who's always around. And he'll probably still love her too, like a fucking chump.

The line clicks and plays a canned message.

HOST (V.O.)
Thanks for calling MarsNow. We can make a better world. On Mars. Now.

We hear Kevin scream into the phone. He watch him flail in the wasteland of the pot room.

MARCUS (O.S.)
Dude, what the fuck?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Reveal Marcus with Mr. Fatty's bags. He surveys the wreckage like he's Brad Pitt realizing what's in the box. A beat.

MARCUS
I have an idea.

EXT. BACKYARD - LATER

Kevin and Marcus eat Mr. Fattys beside a bonfire of decimated weed plants. Smoke pummels them. They cry/laugh hysterically.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CAR - DAY

Kevin and Amber sit in a car. They're dressed for a funeral. Amber gently takes Kevin's hand.

Outside the car, people walk solemnly toward a funeral home.

AMBER
You ready?

KEVIN
Absolutely not.

AMBER
(looking out)
Oh no.

Kevin follows her line of sight. A haggard man shuffles toward the funeral home. People regard him with disdain. Whispers. He's not welcome here. This is KEVIN'S DAD.

KEVIN
Aw, man. Not today.

AMBER
I've got it.

KEVIN
No, Amber. Don't. He's-

AMBER
I know what to do. Let me do it.

She kisses Kevin. She gets out of the car. He watches her stride confidently to meet the man. She pulls him aside.

She speaks. Gestures to Kevin. Kevin's dad looks over. He waves. Kevin deflates. Amber takes the man's hands.

We don't hear anything she says, just see Kevin's dad look at her. He seems to understand. His demeanor changes. He nods. He hugs Amber. Looks toward the car again. Turns. Leaves.

Amber strides back. She bends next to Kevin's window. He rolls it down.

AMBER (CONT'D)
C'mon, Tater. It's time.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BASEMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A towel hits a sleeping Kevin. He sits up.

MARCUS
Shower. We're watching this shit.

Kevin puts his head in his hands. Marcus softens.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Look, I get it. It sucks. But she's
either going to Mars or she's not,
whether we watch, or not. So.

Kevin peels himself off Voyager.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin and Marcus eat Mr. Fatty's and watch.

EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT - SAME

On TV, Amber stands next to the Host. She's out of breath.

HOST
What made you decide to share
supplies with Adam's team?

AMBER
Well, I thought since he sacrificed
for me, with my shoulder, I should
sacrifice for him. Teamwork.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - SAME

The remaining four contestants, seen in a MONTAGE:

--They bounce in the Pressure Cooker.

--They smile to camera, laugh, and wave while eating
together, Amber and Adam side-by-side.

--They explore the MarsNow "Living Space," a shuttle with a
bed, a computer lab, a medical room, and a hydroponics lab.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Marcus and Kevin smoke.

MARCUS

You okay, man?

KEVIN

Ask me in ten minutes.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - SAME

Amber, Adam, Mariko, and Pablo, stand in a tense line under their country's respective flags. The Host walks out.

HOST

These four brave but ordinary citizens have spent the last few months showing you why they are the best people to go to Mars now. You voted, our experts weighed in, and now two people from Earth are going to start a new life on Mars. Here they are: Amber, hydroponics expert. Adam, doctor.

The camera pans to Mariko, then Pablo.

HOST (CONT'D)

Mariko, chemist. And Pablo, computer scientist-slash-poet. The moment has arrived. (Beat) Your MarsNow travelers are...

A too-long pause. TV time stretched to its limits.

HOST (CONT'D)

Adam and -

Amber looks up a beat early, as if on cue.

KEVIN (V.O.)

She's not a good actress. In high school she was the stage manager.

HOST (O.S.)

Amber! Amber and Adam are going to Mars!

The music swells. Amber and Adam look at each other. They press their foreheads together, turn, hold hands, and wave.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Marcus's mouth hangs open. He brings the pipe up to his lips and inhales. Exhales.

MARCUS

Fuck, man. That was good TV.

Kevin stares at the screen. He barely breathes.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Amber walks in slow motion down a gangway. She wears a jumpsuit with a MarsNow insignia. Triumphant music plays.

Adam walks down another gangway. His suit has a codpiece.

They meet at a Y and smile as they continue together. They climb into the oval door of a ship-like structure.

HOST (V.O.)

Now that they're inside the pod,
they can't come out. Over the next
six months, they'll be gradually
acclimated to Mars's atmosphere.

As the Host speaks, an animated graphic of Amber and Adam illustrates what he's saying.

HOST (V.O.)

These are Amber and Adam's last
moments on Earth. Their loved ones
are at MarsNow HQ to say goodbye.

On the gangway, Amber's parents arrive with ADAM'S MOTHER and TEENAGE TWINS, younger copies of Adam. They all wave.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kevin stares at the TV in the dark. He lays down and sinks into Voyager like quicksand.

BLACK OUT.

In the inky black we hear the sound of a human heartbeat: th-thump, th-thump.

KEVIN (V.O.)

About two months after the launch,
I figured out that Amber and I were
still looking at the same sunset.

A white line splits the screen horizontally, getting redder as the sun travels to it from both directions, crossing space in one half and crossing the Earth's sky in another.

Underneath the heartbeat sound, there's an echo of sorts. A more rapid, fainter beat. But strong.

KEVIN (V.O.)

If you go to Mars too fast your bones get crushed to powder. That's if the radiation doesn't get you first. Or the isolation insanity.

The "suns" disappear into one another. The heartbeats merge, overlap, and are overtaken by canned TV laughter.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin sits on Voyager. He stares at the TV as the laughter peals louder around him.

TANYA VARGAS, the grocery store cashier, crosses him and sits down. She grabs his inner thigh playfully, bites his ear.

Marcus crosses the other way and sits, distributing Mr. Fatty's bags. They eat in SLO MO. Tanya laughs. Marcus laughs. Kevin too, but in a "I'm trying to laugh!" way.

INSERT TITLE: 6 MONTHS AFTER LAUNCH.

A jaunty, upbeat song starts.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The sun blasts through the window. Tanya sets the table. Marcus babbles at her. It's a happy scene.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Honestly, I'm doing great!

Kevin stands at the stove. He burns bacon. Oily smoke pelts his face. He smiles through it, staring off.

INT. MAKEUP TRAILER - DAY

Kevin stares at - through - his reflection. He smiles.

HMU snaps a bald cap on his head. Taped to the mirror is a grisly crime scene photo of a bald dude who has been cut in half. As you might imagine, the dude is not smiling.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Work's great. I feel whole, again.

Reveal that Kevin wears green screen pants. He's half a man.

KEVIN (V.O.)
I barely think about her.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

The jaunty tune plays. Kevin showers.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Sure, thoughts of her occasionally
float in. I'm not sad though.

He bursts into tears. Reveal a Ghost-like Amber in the shower with him, in her MarsNow uniform. She watches him cry.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Then there's this. But I know she's
not actually there, so I'm not
worried about it.

Ghost Amber opens her mouth, too wide. The heartbeat sound rises, competing with the jaunty music. And then-

INT. SHOWER - SAME

Tanya hugs Kevin from behind. He screams like Janet Leigh in Psycho, which stops the crying. The music/heartbeat stops.

TANYA
Oh no! I didn't mean to scare you,
Watkins. Haha. Shit! Sorry.

Tanya holds him. Kevin smiles, forcibly. Ghost Amber is gone.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Hahaha, oh Tanya. She's great.
(Beat) Life is great!

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tanya snoozes on Kevin's lap. Marcus reclines, half asleep. He peels himself up.

MARCUS
Alright, I'm out. Goodnight man.

KEVIN

Yeah, us too probably. Night.

Marcus goes into the former pot room. The door swings open, revealing a mattress on the floor and a single, wilted plant.

Kevin stares. Ghost Amber appears in the pot room. The heartbeat rises: th-thump. Then Marcus kicks the door closed.

Kevin picks up the remote to turn the TV off. But then - actual Amber's face fills the screen. Kevin turns it up.

EXT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - SAME

The familiar shape of the white, egg-like pod.

HOST (V.O.)

Six months ago, two brave yet ordinary citizens took the ultimate leap and went to Mars, Now.

We see clips from the show, including the forehead touch.

HOST (V.O.)

Amber and Adam wowed us with their courage and obvious chemistry. Six months later, they're starting the next phase of their journey.

Back to the pod. It floats through space.

HOST (V.O.)

Now the real adventure begins. On Mars. Now.

Titles overtake the screen: MarsNow Season 2: Mars. Now. Season Premiere Thursday at 7pm.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Kevin breathes raggedly. Closeup on his face as Tanya's tongue enters his right ear. He appears not to notice.

Tanya kisses and licks his ear. We see that her hand is in his sweatpants, working vigorously. He's unmoved.

After a beat, he returns to himself. Kevin reaches down and stops Tanya's hand for a moment, then lets her resume.

KEVIN (V.O.)

This is all fine. Like I said-

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Kevin rides the bus. It stops at a red light. He looks up and sees a billboard for MarsNow. Amber's and Adam's faces peer out over the city, huge and inspiring.

KEVIN
I'm doing great!

An OLD LADY next to him looks up at the billboard, too.

OLD LADY
Sure you are.

KEVIN
No. No. I am. I started jogging.
I've been reading.

OLD LADY
You jogged twice and you skimmed
the Mars Wikipedia page. And for
about ten minutes you read the Mars
Volta page instead.

KEVIN
They were a good band!

OLD LADY
They were weird! (Beat) Admit it,
you need her.

KEVIN
No, I don't.

OLD LADY
Yes you do. Amber's your
gymnastics. She's what you're good
at. Or were.

Reveal a LITTLE GIRL, holding her MOTHER's hand.

LITTLE GIRL
Then, boom. Mars.

OLD LADY
That's right. Not to mention Adam.

The Old Woman fans herself, like "yum, Adam." Reveal a YOUNG MAN with a basketball tucked under his arm.

YOUNG MAN
Man, if I were you, I'd have so
many questions.

LITTLE GIRL

Me too!

KEVIN

Like what? What do you mean?

YOUNG MAN

Like, do you still love me?

LITTLE GIRL

What went wrong, and can I fix it?

YOUNG MAN

Or, like, if you were my purpose,
and you're gone, what's my purpose
now? Or some shit.

LITTLE GIRL

Why don't you need me anymore?

KEVIN

Alright, I get it.

YOUNG MAN

You should try to talk to her.

OLD LADY

Uh, duh, she's in space! (Beat)
Just move on. Focus on that nice
girl who gives you handjobs on the
couch.

KEVIN

Tanya. Her name's Tanya.

OLD LADY

I know her name, dumbass. I'm you.
We're all you.

YOUNG MAN

Yeah, what are you doing with
Tanya, bro?

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

He's fucking her around, that's
what he's doing.

Reveal the BUS DRIVER, looking back through the rear view.

OLD LADY

Literally.

The passenger chorus all laughs, like Kevin and Marcus would
while stoned. High fives, etc.

LITTLE GIRL
(laughing along)
I don't know what a handjob is!

Kevin stands up, defiant.

KEVIN
Look, again: I'm great. Okay? I
have a new life.

BUS DRIVER
That's the spirit. Amber doesn't
want you! She left you behind on
purpose. Can you imagine? Brutal.

OLD LADY
Absolute brutality!

YOUNG MAN
However, she didn't break up with
you, either.

LITTLE GIRL
Some part of her still needs you.

OLD LADY
She humiliated you! Forget her!

KEVIN
I'm trying, goddamn it!

The bus goes silent. Kevin sits back down. The Old Lady gets
very close to Kevin's ear.

OLD LADY
You've never tried to do anything.
Except love Amber Kivenen. And look
where that got you.

Her tongue darts into his ear, Tanya-style. He flinches.

INT. CITY BUS - SAME

Off the flinch, Kevin wakes up. Beside him, the Old Lady
reads a bible. The Little Girl looks out the window. The
Young Man listens to headphones. The driver...drives.

Kevin rubs his face, lightly touches his ear. He looks
around, getting his bearings.

KEVIN
Shit!

The Old Lady tsks disapprovingly. Kevin rudely scrambles over her. She shakes her head and goes back to reading.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin stumbles in. Marcus and Tanya share chips and the amber-colored pipe. They're having fun.

MARCUS

Kevin! It's starting!

TANYA

Kevin! Come sit down!

Tanya and Marcus move apart and pat the futon between them. Marcus sweeps a wayward chip onto the floor. Kevin sits. Marcus claps him on the back. Tanya grabs his hand.

On screen, blackness swirls into planets, obviously CGI-ed.

HOST (V.O.)

It's been six months. 183 days.
4380 hours. 262,800 minutes. And
now, we're seconds from a miracle.

EXT. MARS - CONTINUOUS

Actual Mars comes into view. There are mountains, craters, entire continents. It's beautiful and terrifying.

HOST (V.O.)

Since they left us, Amber and Adam
have been in their confinement pod.
There's not much to do except talk.
Apparently, they have been playing
a lot of Uno. Hahaha adorable.

A human face appears in a swirl of space-dust. Cydonia.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They all stare, slack-jawed. Marcus puts down the pipe.

MARCUS

Never thought I'd say this, but I
don't think I can watch this high.

HOST (V.O.)

You are looking at the first ever
live feed of the surface of Mars.

INT. MARS - CONTINUOUS

Vast. Orange. Swirling. A tiny, white pod comes into view.

INTERCUT: LIVING ROOM/SHOW.

HOST (V.O.)

Here they come. Let's take a look.

A blurry black and orange adjustment and then the pod, larger and closer, edges into view. Two flaps open on either side. The frame shakes violently as the pod tilts and wobbles.

The little orb hovers, then disappears. Dust. Nothing else. Kevin searches the screen, his eyes wide.

HOST (V.O.)

Awaiting visual confirmation.

The dust thins. The white pod is revealed, sitting flat and calm on the surface of Mars. A massive CHEER goes up.

INT. MARSNOW ENGINEERING - CONTINUOUS

A Houston-like room, stacked with dozens of cheering ENGINEERS in grey versions of the white MarsNow jumpsuits.

The host sits in a specially-lit central throne. He gestures and the engineers go quiet at once.

HOST

This is the MarsNow control room.
There are 4,113 cameras and 842
microphones on my MarsNow Rovers
and inside the MarsNow Living Space
operating 24/7.

An ENGINEER enters frame, smiling stiffly.

ENGINEER

Sir? It's time.

HOST

Perfect. Let's watch.

The Host points, and the camera robotically follows.

EXT. MARS - CONTINUOUS

The pod placidly sits. Winds whip up and around it. A seam splits the center like an opening eye, revealing a glass window. The camera finds focus as two figures come into view.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Tanya chews her thumbnail. Kevin takes tiny sips of air. Marcus lifts, lights, and inhales the pipe.

EXT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Amber and Adam, in white MarsNow jumpsuits, stand proudly in the window. They wave, then turn and kiss. Amber frames her torso with her hands. She's clearly, visibly pregnant.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Kevin wrenches free. He stands, hitting things off the table.

HOST (O.S.)

Yes, that's right. Now, finally, we
get to share some MarsNow news:
Amber and Adam are expecting.

Kevin stumbles over Marcus. He kicks him, hard. Marcus is clearly in pain, but says nothing. Kevin falls. He makes a strangled sound. He stays down.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Amber and the baby are both
healthy. She is due in 2 months.

Kevin crawls into the bathroom. He shuts the door.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Yes, it's true: These two have been
in love since this crazy experiment
started. Hahahahahaha!

The Host laughs, like he just learned how. It's weird and monotone. From within the bathroom we hear an echo-

KEVIN (O.S.)

Hahahahahaha!

On TV, Amber and Adam wave and pose from the pod's window, blips on a big orange surface. Inspirational music swells.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kevin slides into the tub. He puts his hand to his chest. Th-thump, th-th-thump. A baby. That's what he's been hearing.

FLASHBACK:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin lies on Voyager. A pregnancy test drops onto his chest. He realizes what it is and sits up. Amber sits beside him.

AMBER

The women in my family miscarry so don't worry. My mom had like, four of them before I was born.

KEVIN

Okay.

AMBER

And if for some reason I don't, I'll get an abortion. Okay?

KEVIN

Yeah. That's...okay.

AMBER

I think I want kids. But not yet.

KEVIN

Me too. Little versions of you, tearing around.

He pictures it. Maybe for the first time. He wants it.

AMBER

Here? Look around. We're not...Yeah. What a mess.

Amber wipes her eyes. A moment passes. She makes her own choice. Resolute. Her face sets. The end begins.

She reaches out to grab Kevin's hand. Kevin puts the test down on the table, wipes his hand on his shirt, then holds her hand back. They laugh a little.

KEVIN

I mean, you did pee on it.

AMBER

It's true. I peed on that so hard.

They laugh harder. Kevin touches her face with the same hand that held the test. He holds her down. She squirms, giggling.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO SCENE)

Kevin sits with the memory. He looks at the line of several loud and colorful shampoos and soaps belonging to Tanya.

He picks up a foot grater. He opens it and foot skin falls on him like confetti. He laughs. He tries not to scream.

INT. CAR - DAY

Tanya drives. She sings along to the radio. Kevin watches her. They're in the desert.

TANYA

This was a good idea, Watkins.

KEVIN

Yes it was. (To us) I'm an asshole.

TANYA

Oh look at this place! We are stopping here.

Reveal: Marcus in the backseat. He leans forward.

MARCUS

Hell yeah!

TANYA

I'm going to buy some postcards.

She pulls over and hops out of the car.

MARCUS

You coming, dude?

KEVIN

Nah.

MARCUS

But I thought you were excited to see the desert.

KEVIN

I am. I'm just a little car sick.

MARCUS

Damn. I'll get you a ginger ale!

Marcus claps Kevin's shoulder and hops out.

INT./EXT. CAR/ROADSIDE STOP - CONTINUOUS

An alien-themed roadside pit stop, a la Roswell. Marcus bounds inside. Tanya browses a postcard stand. A sign reads: "Send a postcard to space!"

Marcus, in an alien mask, covers Tanya's eyes from behind.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. BRISTLECONE FOREST - DAY

Kevin leads a blindfolded Amber through a copse of trees. From the look of them, this is about five years ago.

AMBER
I want to see!

KEVIN
We're almost there, I promise.
(Beat) Okay, stop! You can look.

She stops. Takes off her blindfold. Looks around. Gasps.

AMBER
Oh my god.

KEVIN
Happy birthday!

Amber approaches a bristlecone pine tree. She circles it lovingly. She gently touches it. She starts to cry.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Ah-ha. You're crying.

AMBER
Shit!

KEVIN
That's fifty bucks! I told you
you'd cry.

AMBER
Unfair. The bristlecone pine is the
oldest tree in North America.

KEVIN
I know. You told me.

AMBER

This tree has been here for almost
5000 years. Think about what it's
seen. What it's been through.

She steps back and looks at it. It's gnarly, ancient, stubby.
Not particularly beautiful. Amber takes Kevin's hand.

He watches her, her ecstasy at being in the presence of an
ugly-ass old tree. This is why he loves her. Well, this and-

AMBER (CONT'D)

(playful)

In its 5000 years, do you think
this tree has ever watched two
people fuck?

KEVIN

Probably. Right? (Beat, then) Oh.

EXT. BRISTLECONE FOREST - LATER

Kevin and Amber, half-dressed and blissed out, lay under the
tree. Kevin shivers.

KEVIN

It gets cold fast up here. (Beat)
We should head back. Start a fire.
S'mores for dinner? I think so.

Kevin gets up and finishes dressing. Amber lingers.

AMBER

Do you mind if I hang here alone
for a bit? Me and the tree?

KEVIN

Of course not. (To tree) But keep
your branches to yourself, friend.

Kevin packs up. Amber dresses and sits back down, her back
against the tree. She's content, but her mind is elsewhere.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You sure you want to stay? It's
getting dark.

AMBER

(nods)

I need a little space, Tater.

Kevin kisses her goodbye. She smiles.

Kevin walks down the trail. He looks back at Amber. She doesn't look at him. She looks up.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CAR - SAME (BACK TO SCENE)

Tanya gets back in the car. She wears alien-eyeball shaped sunglasses and sucks on a green lollipop.

TANYA
I love it here. Eat this.

She takes the lollipop out of her mouth and shoves it in Kevin's. He absently takes it.

Marcus gets in the back with a giant alien stuffy. He shoves a bag that reads "Alien Jerky: Space Flesh" in front of Kevin. Kevin waves it off.

A road sign reads: Los Alamos Gov't Testing Site - 45 miles.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin and Tanya sit up in bed. Marcus sings in the shower. In the other bed, the alien toy is tucked in like a kid.

Tanya flips TV channels. Click. The new MarsNow episode. On TV, Amber repots a plant with care.

TANYA
Do you want to watch?

KEVIN
Sure.

TANYA
Isn't it weird to watch your ex-girlfriend live a totally different life? I would lose my shit.

KEVIN
I don't mind. (To us) I do mind.

TANYA
That's probably cuz you've got me.

Tanya snuggles into Kevin's armpit. On TV, Adam comes up behind Amber and kisses her neck. They sway together.

KEVIN (V.O.)
I'm such an asshole.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

In the early light, Kevin quietly dresses in a cheap white jumpsuit, the kind you buy to paint in. He grabs a shoulder bag and tiptoes out the door. Tanya and Marcus sleep.

EXT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin quietly closes the trunk of the car. Reveal Marcus, his arms crossed. Kevin jumps.

KEVIN
(whispering)
Marcus. Jesus, you scared me.

MARCUS
(whispering)
Where are you going? (Beat,
realizing) No.

Kevin doesn't reply. Marcus waits. The rest of their exchange is conducted in shout-whispers.

KEVIN
I have to talk to her.

MARCUS
You're joking.

KEVIN
No! I need to try. I have to.

MARCUS
This is some shit, you know that?
In there is a cool lady who likes
you. And you're doing her so dirty
right now.

KEVIN
It's...I didn't plan it like this.
I don't know what I'm doing.

MARCUS
Duh, man. You never have.

KEVIN
What's that supposed to mean?

MARCUS
It means it's hard to watch your
best friend be with the wrong
person for-fucking-ever!

KEVIN

Fuck you. She's not the wrong person.

MARCUS

Fuck you! You put Amber on such a high pedestal she had to go to fucking space to get away from you.

KEVIN

Fuck you!

MARCUS

Prick.

Kevin lunges at Marcus. They fall. They quietly scuffle. Kevin escapes. He elbows Marcus in the nose, stunning him.

Kevin gets in the car. He pulls out and away. Marcus watches.

INT./EXT. CAR/NEW MEXICO DESERT - LATER

A rental car with Oregon plates turns down an access road that says "Los Alamos Testing Site. Restricted Area."

Kevin drives with singular focus. He's dirty and scuffed up from the fight. He eats a power bar. He drops the wrapper on the seat. He eyes his shoulder bag in the backseat.

EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT - LATER

The car pulls up to a military-grade gate covered in warning signs. One says: Home to the MarsNow Official Launch Site.

In the distance there's a series of squat, ugly buildings and a giant, gleaming orb-like structure.

INT. CAR - SAME

Kevin rolls down the window. A scary GUARD leans in.

GUARD

Sir, this is a government restricted area.

KEVIN

Hello, officer. How are you today?

The guard doesn't speak.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I'm not here for the government,
I'm here for MarsNow.

GUARD

As I said, this is a restricted
area. Please turn your car around
or we will take possession of it.

KEVIN

But I need to talk to MarsNow. They
have my girlfriend. I'll show you.

Kevin reaches for the shoulder bag in the backseat. As he
does, myriad GUARDS with many guns appear.

INT. MARSNOW INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

A grey, sterile room. Kevin sits at a metal table, his hands
zip-tied behind him. Across the table, OFFICER SHELBY looks
at a bunch of stuff from the shoulder bag.

She holds up a boardwalk caricature of Kevin as a
skateboarding potato with "Tater Toter!" under it.

OFFICER SHELBY

This is you? You're Tater TOTE-er?

KEVIN

Tater Totter. Yes ma'am. (Beat) Can
I use the bathroom?

OFFICER SHELBY

You're not wearing a diaper? Most
of the kooky murderous astronaut
types wear a diaper.

KEVIN

I'm not wearing a diaper. Or kooky
or murderous or an astronaut.

A beat. Officer Shelby studies a nervous Kevin. As she does,
her face goes from rigidly stern to motherly concern.

OFFICER SHELBY

Let's see: Your girlfriend left you
to go to Mars and you thought you'd
come here and try to call her on
the...space phone? But they thought
you were crazy because you drove up
in a rental car wearing a dollar-
store jumpsuit with a belly full of
energy bars. Is that it?

KEVIN

Yeah, that's it.

OFFICER SHELBY

It's an admirable grand gesture. My ex-husband once caught the fly ball at a Diamondbacks game and gave it to me - on the Jumbotron! Those things matter. But, and I say this with love, you seem a little kooky.

KEVIN

My heart is broken.

It slips out. Kevin is surprised.

OFFICER SHELBY

Oh, sweetie. I can see that. But it's not going to get fixed here. It has to get fixed here.

She pokes him in the chest, a little too hard. She starts gathering up stuff from his bag. A ratty orange circle of paper pokes out. She looks at it, then at Kevin.

OFFICER SHELBY (CONT'D)

What's this?

KEVIN

(defeated)

It's, uh. It doesn't matter.

OFFICER SHELBY

Wait here.

Officer Shelby leaves the room. After a beat, she returns with a MarsNow tablet. She sits and starts clicking/swiping.

OFFICER SHELBY (CONT'D)

I thought so.

She brings her chair around to sit beside Kevin, props the tablet up, and presses play.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

On video, Amber sits at the table Kevin is sitting at now. She's flush from her win. This must have been right after.

OFFICER SHELBY (O.S.)

This is the pre-flight security log for Amber Kivenen. Hi Amber. Congratulations. I knew you'd win.

AMBER
(to camera)
Thank you. (Beat) Um. What do I do?

OFFICER SHELBY (O.S.)
Oh, sure. Ha! Sorry. Okay, so you are... (pro forma) logging any items you're bringing with you on your journey to Mars. Total weight may not exceed three pounds and must be carried on your person in the pod for six months.

AMBER
Ah. In that case, my medals are out. And, um, this photo album.

Amber sets things aside. She studies the table. We can't see what she's looking at.

AMBER (CONT'D)
I think I'm not going to take anything.

OFFICER SHELBY (O.S.)
Okay, hun.

Then, Amber tears up. Her face is full of love. Realization.

AMBER
Except this. I want to take this.

She holds up a perfect orange paper circle. The image of her holding it freezes.

INT. MARSNOW INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Kevin looks at Amber's frozen face. He looks at Officer Shelby. She looks at him, and holds up his orange circle.

KEVIN
She saved it, too.

OFFICER SHELBY
She did.

KEVIN
What do I do?

OFFICER SHELBY
(impassioned)
You go catch the fly ball.

KEVIN

I do what? What do I do?

OFFICER SHELBY

I've got this. (Beat, loud) I'll go sign out your power bars, if they still exist. Likelihood: low. Evidence guys'll eat anything.

KEVIN

(unsure)

Sure. Okay.

OFFICER SHELBY

(repeatedly winking, loud)

Now, let's get you home, huh? Mr. Kulap and Ms. Vargas already picked up the car, they said to tell you -

She looks down at her notes.

OFFICER SHELBY (CONT'D)

"Fuck off." So I'll take you to the airport. You need a whizz, right? Let's get you that whizz.

They stand. Officer Shelby opens the door.

OFFICER SHELBY (CONT'D)

You're lucky Darrell was in a good mood today. Normally he just shoots on site. He's allowed to do that.

INT. MARSNOW TRAINING FACILITY - MOMENTS LATER

Officer Shelby emerges from a back room, Kevin's bag in hand. She shakes the bag and points at it. Winking. Performative.

OFFICER SHELBY

Power bars are gone, as predicted.
(Beat) Hang on there, stud.

Officer Shelby brandishes a knife. She cuts Kevin's zip ties.

OFFICER SHELBY (CONT'D)

You're gonna need your hands. Unless you're one of those guys who can just aim at the bowl. But that takes a degree of muscle control I'm guessing you don't have. No offense. Second door on the right.

KEVIN
Thanks. None taken.

Officer Shelby hands back the bag of Amber ephemera. She looks around, then pulls him in close. Too close.

OFFICER SHELBY
You get one shot. Don't frig it up.

She shoves a confused Kevin towards the bathroom.

INT. MARSNOW BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

At a urinal, Kevin considers his onesie. He unzips, then rethinks. He goes in a stall and locks it.

INT. MARSNOW BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

Kevin hangs his bag. He looks inside it and sees a folded MarsNow uniform and a security badge. Realization blooms.

KEVIN
(To himself/us)
Don't frig it up.

INT. MARSNOW HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin emerges in the MarsNow uniform and badge. He looks down the hall. Officer Shelby stands guard. She gives him a thumbs up, and gestures to his left, like "Look!"

Kevin looks the other way. He sees a laundry-style cart. Ahead, a stream of MarsNow EMPLOYEES drive similar carts.

Kevin pushes the cart away. As he leaves, Officer Shelby looks up, like "please God."

INT. MARSNOW FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

Kevin merges into the line. A MarsNow TECH BRO turns to him. Kevin smiles tightly. He adjusts his shoulder bag.

TECH BRO
What's in the bag?

KEVIN
(unable to lie)
A caricature of me as a potato.

TECH BRO

(okay, sure)

Well, don't let Captain Prick see you. (As the Host) Your personal belongings remind me you're a person! Beep boop.

KEVIN

Oh, yeah. For sure. I won't.

The line starts to move. Employees approach a door, press their badge to a panel, look up at a camera, and enter. Press. Look. Enter. Press. Look. Enter.

TECH BRO

Can you believe this? Like I got a comp sci degree just to deliver love letters to some space bitch. I was supposed to intern at Facebook.

KEVIN

Love letters?

TECH BRO

Dude. You didn't read the brief? These are for the chick from the show. Who cares! She's hot, though.

Kevin takes in the sacks. Hundreds of letters, all for Amber.

They get closer to the door. Press. Look. Enter. A pair of GUARDS approach. Kevin freezes. They sidle up to Tech Bro.

GUARD #1

Can you come with us please?

TECH BRO

Me? What'd I do?

GUARD #1

We have reason to believe you are not in full support of the MarsNow mission statement and goals.

TECH BRO

What? Why?

The guards pull the Bro away. Kevin keeps his head down.

GUARD #2

A series of social media posts under the handle "FuckMarsNow69."

TECH BRO
This is bullshit. (To the line)
They're going to fuck up Mars just
like they fucked up Earth! Watch!

They haul the Tech Bro off. Another EMPLOYEE takes his place.
They press, look, and enter with their cart.

A nervous Kevin presses his stolen badge to the panel. He
looks at the camera. An alert sounds. Security breach.

There's a commotion as the Tech Bro runs by holding a bust of
the Host. He looks up at the camera. The doors open.

TECH BRO (CONT'D)
Haha, suckers!

Several intense GUARDS in armor follow, Storm Trooper-like.

A GUARD points a device at Tech Bro. He twitches, mid-air,
like he's been hit with a futuristic taser. Which he has. He
drops the bust. It shatters. He falls, laughing.

The line breaks as people crush forward to look. Kevin leads
his cart through the chaos and down a side hallway.

INT. MARSNOW LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

Kevin arrives into a featureless white room. A poised,
CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE stands by a concentric circle on the wall.

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE
Is everything okay?

KEVIN
(panic)
What do you mean? Why?

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE
I heard sounds.

KEVIN
Oh. A guy tried to steal something.

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE
Stealing is wrong.

KEVIN
Yes.

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE
He will be punished.

KEVIN

Yes. Yep.

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE

I don't know you. Are you new?

KEVIN

Yes?

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE

That's annoying.

She produces a MarsNow tablet and scribbles notes. Finally she looks up, bright again. She presses a button and the wall circle opens. It's noisy, like an airplane motor.

Kevin picks up a sack of letters, with difficulty, and drops it down the chute. She makes a mark on the tablet.

There's a sudden commotion outside. Tech Bro runs by, still laughing. The Childlike Employee darts into the hallway.

CHILDLIKE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Guards! He's over here!

TECH BRO (O.S.)

Hey! You little narc!

She sticks her tongue out at the unseen Tech Bro. Kevin turns to the loud, scary, chute. One shot. He leaps down it.

A strangled YELP of pain can be heard. The Childlike Employee returns, her brow furrowed. She looks down the chute.

INT. CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Kevin clunks and bangs his way down a seemingly endless tube. Dull thuds are punctuated by cries of pain.

He hits a fork in the tube and hovers, suspended in a vacuum of air. He succumbs to the suction of the right fork.

His uniform sucks away from him, almost tearing off. He grabs at it and tucks into the fetal position. He yelps as he's sucked, ass first, through another concentric white circle.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MAIL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin drops into a massive pile of sacks. He disappears.

After a moment of stillness, the pile of sacks ripples, and Kevin's head emerges at the bottom. He yanks his arms free.

With a ripping sound, the pile of sacks gives birth to Kevin and several letters. Kevin grunts. He sits up. He's disheveled and bruised. He lays back down.

He picks up the letter closest to him. It's addressed to Amber in youthful, assured handwriting. On the back is a photorealistic drawing of Mars.

Kevin looks around. He sees a panel. It reads: MNSV-817 Supply Vessel. He realizes: ***I'm on the ship.***

He quickly crafts a "captain's chair" of letter sacks and the strap from his bag. He straps himself to a sack, and the sack to a ring on the floor. He tests it. Secure. He waits.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MAIL ROOM - LATER

A bored Kevin has made paper airplanes from letters to Amber. Strapped to his tower of sacks, he flies planes at the walls.

His stomach growls. Kevin grasps for his bag, just out of reach. He undoes his strap. He digs into his bag. Nothing.

He eyes a ball of paper. He lifts it to his mouth.

Suddenly, there's a loud BANG. The room shifts, and Kevin is thrown sideways. Paper airplanes slide after him.

He crawls to his "captain's chair" and manages to strap in. Kevin clings to his sack and closes his eyes, grits his teeth. The room begins to tremble and shake.

Kevin moans. The moan becomes a yell. The room bucks, and he spins off sideways. His strap breaks. He careens into a corner. Bags pummel him.

He grabs at a nearby envelope, puts his head in and barfs into it. He seals it and shoves it away. It pops open.

The squadron of paper airplanes rises around his head.

He rises, too. He paddles his arms and realizes he can swim in the air. His barf sails past him and away.

The axis tilts back the other way. His own barf gently splashes back across his face. It's almost beautiful.

Then: BLAM! He slams against the ceiling. THUD! He hits the floor, face down. Out cold. The paper airplanes rain down.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MAIL ROOM - LATER

Kevin is passed out. Covered in paper airplanes.

A sliver of light finds him, like the horizon line but vertical. The light grows, dawning on a crumpled Kevin and his chaotic nest of sacks and paper.

A formidable, hulking shadow enters the shaft of light.

ROBERTA (O.S.)
What in the living Christ?

The door slams shut. Black.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SICK BAY - LATER

A swirl of light resolves into the faces of PABLO and MARIKO (the MarsNow runners up, stern and fun-loving respectively), the small, silent DEL, and ROBERTA, 50s, Cherry Jones type.

They peer intensely at Kevin. He peers back at them.

Reveal: Kevin is strapped into a pouch on the wall, like a man-sized Baby Bjorn. It's branded MarsNow MotherTucker(TM). Roberta shines a light in Kevin's eyes.

KEVIN
No, no thank you.

ROBERTA
It speaks.

Kevin passes out. His head lolls sideways like a baby's.

MARIKO
Uh oh. He's broken.

PABLO
Your type!

Mariko elbows Pablo. Roberta smacks Kevin, hard. He stirs.

MARIKO
Jesus, Roberta. Be careful, he
looks kind of...soft.

Del grabs Kevin's arm and pinches the skin. Kevin yelps.

KEVIN
Ah! I'm awake.

He passes out again. Mariko examines a small screen.

MARIKO

His levels are okay. Dehydration and fatigue. (Beat, baby talk) He's a thirsty, tired baby.

ROBERTA

Don't. I loathe baby talk.

Mariko punches a few buttons. A blue LED-light wave rolls across Kevin's body. He smiles in his sleep.

The suit makes an air-pump sound and compresses. Kevin burps. The suit releases. He fusses a bit then falls back asleep.

MARIKO

This thing is Mommy Fetish-central.

ROBERTA

Del, pinch him again. Hold it.

Del does what Roberta says, which is how this place works. Kevin snaps awake. Pablo really looks at him.

PABLO

Wait a minute. Amber talked about him. This is the guy, that guy! Remember the guy?

MARIKO

Oh! Right, what was it? Potato?

Del pinches and re-pinches with tiny fingers.

KEVIN

Tater Totter. Ow!

ROBERTA

And you're here why?

KEVIN

(Practiced)

My name is Kevin Watkins, and I need to see Amber Kivenen. Please take me to her.

MARIKO

Aw!

Roberta shoots her a look.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

What? It's romantic! Like Romeo charging back from banishment to reclaim Juliet.

PABLO
Yeah, except we have to feed Romeo.

KEVIN
(rising panic)
What happens when I-

Kevin looks down, vaguely at his "diaper" region.

MARIKO
Oh. I mean, I think it's built in.

KEVIN
Sorry.

They all exchange looks, and take a few steps back.

INT. MARSNOW ENGINEERING - SAME

Kevin barfs and watches his barf hit his face. It loops.
Reveal this is on a screen. An amused SECURITY TECH watches.

SECURITY TECH
Haha. The worst.

Dozens of ENGINEERS watch the loop and laugh.

Suddenly, the Host bursts in with a pained Officer Shelby.
The Security Tech panics and hits pause. The splash hits
Kevin's face and stays. Engineers disperse back to stations.

THE HOST
(re: the screen)
This is him? The boyfriend?

OFFICER SHELBY
Yes, sir. Again, sir, I'm sorry. I
got divorced recently and I'm not-

The Host gestures like "I don't want to hear it."

THE HOST
Play it.

We stay on the Host as we hear the gentle splash of barf. His
demeanor melts a little. An idea appears to form.

OFFICER SHELBY
Sir, if you want to fire me I
understand.

THE HOST
Shut up. (Beat, to Security Tech)
Get me MNSV-817 control.

Kevin's barf splash freezes on screen. Roberta's angry face overtakes the main screen. She's huge. Planetary.

ROBERTA
(through screen)
Nice security over there.

THE HOST
Hello to you, too. Roberta.

ROBERTA
That is Captain Lacey, to you.

THE HOST
I understand you have a passenger.

ROBERTA
Correct. My kingdom for a brig.

THE HOST
Actually, your mission has shifted.
This man is now part of your crew.

ROBERTA
Actually, bite me.

THE HOST
Captain-

ROBERTA
I have been on five NASA mission crews. I have been part of the space program since before you were born. I have dealt with every type of shitty-pants man that there is, both on *terra firma* and in tin cans sailing above the blue dot, *ad infinitum*. But in all those years, I have never been reduced to space babysitter. I won't start now.

SECURITY TECH
(under breath)
Mommy and Daddy are fighting again.

THE HOST
(to Roberta)
You done?

ROBERTA

Almost. Your money doesn't make you capable or smart. It makes you rich. The end.

Engineers exchange looks like "Oh, shit." The Host seethes.

THE HOST

Wrong. It also makes me your boss. Train him. Make sure he gets to Mars. With less puking, preferably.

ROBERTA

Aye aye, pri-

The Host kills Roberta's feed. He hits a button and Kevin's barf splash freeze-frame takes over again. He hits play.

THE HOST

Lovesick man-child sneaks on supply ship to follow ex-girlfriend to Mars. (Beat) You.

He points at Officer Shelby. She's stricken.

THE HOST (CONT'D)

Take a day off. Paid. Divorce is hell. Wouldn't wish it on anyone.

All hold their breath. This is unexpectedly humane.

THE HOST (CONT'D)

Let's watch this meat sack fail spectacularly, shall we?

Off the screen as Kevin lays splayed face down. Paper airplanes fall around him.

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marcus and Tanya enter. Marcus's nose is bandaged. Tanya drops bags and stomps into the bedroom. She slams the door.

Marcus plops onto the couch. He lights the amber-colored pipe. Turns on the TV.

THE HOST (O.S)

Next time, on MarsNow...

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MAIL ROOM - SAME

Viewed through the security camera, Kevin sits on a stack of sacks, making paper airplanes.

THE HOST (V.O.)
A surprise stowaway from Amber's
past makes a daring, romantic
overture. But can an unskilled
nobody survive the trip? Let's see.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Marcus stares at the TV, awestruck.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
That's this Thursday at 7pm ET,
only on MarsNow.

MARCUS
He did it! (Then, sadly) He did it.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BEDROOM/DEN - MORNING

From Kevin's POV, we watch Amber sleeping peacefully. She rolls over and opens her eyes. She smiles at him/us.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SICK BAY - SAME

Kevin snoozes in the MotherTucker. Mariko rips open a MarsNow pouch and waves it under Kevin's nose. He sniffs and stirs.

MARIKO
Morning sunshine!

KEVIN
Is there coffee?

MARIKO
(brightly)
Yep! You just had it. (Beat) Ready?

Mariko pulls a lever that releases Kevin. He falls out. He's in a MarsNow romper that resembles a 1920s bathing suit. He curls in on himself like a toenail clipping.

MARIKO (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah. That'll take a minute.
Muscle compression. Little
stretchies! Just little ones.

Mariko helps Kevin stretch, pushing on his foot to bend his knee, then pulling his leg straight. She counts and grins.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SHOWER BAY DOORS - MOMENTS LATER

A door slides open, revealing Kevin and Mariko. Kevin, still hunched in his skivvies, holds a MarsNow-branded pouch.

MARIKO
An easy way to remember is hallways
equal gravity but rooms don't. But
some rooms do. And the suits are
switchy. So just remember, okay?

Kevin shivers and looks around. He nods, vaguely.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SHOWER BAY - CONTINUOUS

A large chamber. On one wall, a nozzle juts out. Mariko holds her hand under it. Foam comes out. Kevin joins her.

MARIKO
Soap. Strip down, rub it in.

KEVIN
Water?

MARIKO
No water. It's space. (Beat) You're
really not trained, huh? Pablo and
I had a bet. I said you were but
hiding it. I owe him 5 pouches.

KEVIN
I don't know anything. I just...
decided. To. Come. Here.

MARIKO
Talking gets easier.

KEVIN
This is how I talk.

MARIKO
Oh. Okay! (Beat) See you outside.

KEVIN
Thanks for helping me.

A beat.

MARIKO
I knew Amber was going to win the second she walked on set. Graceful. Beautiful. Nothing surprised her.

KEVIN
I know. It's...how she is.

MARIKO
She was nice to me and it didn't seem fake. I get it. I don't know that I "sneak my way to Mars" get it. But. (Beat) Also, I super want to see her face when she sees you.

Mariko makes a mock-shocked face. She steps back and hits a button. The doors close between them.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin emerges in a MarsNow suit. Mariko hands him a pouch.

MARIKO
Breakfast. Rip it by your mouth so it doesn't float off in zero G.

Kevin does what she says. He sucks back a blob of something. Makes a face. They walk. Mariko takes the pouch.

MARIKO (CONT'D)
Welcome to space food. (Beat) And now, I'm going to leave you with Roberta. Godspeed, little baby.

Mariko gives Kevin a pat. She hits a button. A door opens.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP PRESSURE COOKER - DAY

Roberta faces away, at center. Kevin approaches from behind.

ROBERTA
Stop.

Kevin stops.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)
Go.

Kevin goes.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Stop.

He stops. She turns and yanks on his uniform, like a parent testing a life jacket. No mercy.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

You're smaller in the chest than Pablo, but it'll do. And you listen to me. It's a start. Did you eat?

Kevin nods.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Too bad, you're going to lose it for sure. Let me see your eyes.

She looks closer at Kevin's eyes. They're a bit bloodshot.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

You like weed, huh?

KEVIN

You can see that in my eyes?

ROBERTA

No, in your urine. Weed stays in the pee. Back in '73 I opted out of a Willie Nelson concert so I didn't get second-hand-smoked out of a mission. I love Willie Nelson.

KEVIN

I'm sorry.

Roberta looks at Kevin. She tries to figure him out.

ROBERTA

Don't be. I watched a star go supernova from the VIP section. Willie can't hold a candle.

They stand there a moment, looking at one another.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Point is, you stumbled ass first into something people spend their whole lives training and sacrificing for. But you're here, so we have to deal.

(MORE)

ROBERTA (CONT'D)
And like my daddy used to say on
the farm, another pair of hands
can't hurt. Even yours, in theory.
Good luck.

She punches a code in the wall, and steps out the door.

KEVIN
Good luck with what?

ROBERTA
G-force acclimation.

The doors close. A centrifuge starts up. Kevin looks around.
He rises up off the ground a few inches. His body turns.

KEVIN
Oh no.

His stomach gurgles. He closes his eyes.

INSERT: Amber's mouth saying "It's like a body high."

KEVIN (CONT'D)
...Like a body high.

Kevin breathes. He floats. He doesn't barf.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - SAME

Roberta watches. She's neither impressed nor relieved. She
punches a panel. The sound intensifies.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP PRESSURE COOKER - CONTINUOUS

Kevin floats higher and spins more. He closes his eyes and
tucks in. He turns, a small planet in his own orbit.

He's got it. But then: Higher and more.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Off Roberta's smiling face as we hear Kevin throw up.

MONTAGE: KEVIN GETS PUT THROUGH THE SPACE PACES.

--He jogs the hallways with disappointed Pablo timing him.

--He sucks back various disgusting tubes Mariko hands him.

--He holds tools that Del hands him, trying to keep them from flying away. He bats a floating wrench away from his junk.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MESS HALL - NIGHT

The crew sits around a table. Pablo passes out pouches. Kevin limps in. He's clearly in pain, and worn out.

There's nowhere to sit. Mariko scoots over. Kevin sits.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kevin limps along, tired and sore. Mariko bops beside him.

MARIKO
You did it.

KEVIN
I feel very bad.

MARIKO
Then I shouldn't tell you that it's
going to hurt worse "tomorrow."

Off "tomorrow," she does finger quotes.

KEVIN
Great.

MARIKO
I did finger quotes because day and
night are whatever up here. Today
was more like 2.5 days on Earth.
But right now is a good sleep cycle
time for you. Let's tuck you in.

KEVIN
Is everyone monitoring me?

MARIKO
Kind of. In one way or another.

KEVIN
Okay.

They walk. Awkward silence.

MARIKO
Not much of a talker, huh? (Beat) I
bet people think you're stupid, but
in truth there's a lot going on in
your head, right?

KEVIN

I...uh.

MARIKO

You don't have to say. I like you.

KEVIN

Thanks. I like you too.

MARIKO

Roberta doesn't like you.

KEVIN

I gathered that.

MARIKO

You're sharing quarters with her.

KEVIN

Oh no.

Mariko gestures to a door in the hall, and bops away.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Kevin steps into dark quarters. On a bottom bunk, Roberta sleeps with abundant pillows. She wears an eye mask.

Above her, bunk bed-style, is a narrower, shabbier bed. Kevin hauls his sore body up a set of pegs and throws himself in bed. A beat. He sighs dramatically.

From above, we see Kevin sigh again. Roberta lifts her eye mask. A beat. She replaces the mask and rolls over.

INT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - DAY

A luminous Amber tends her plants, which have sprouted a few small green tomatoes. She shows them to Adam. He hugs her.

THE HOST (V.O.)

This week has been eventful for the MarsNow family. While Amber and Adam grow together-

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - SAME

Kevin jogs the hallways, sluggish and sweaty.

THE HOST (V.O.)
 Amber's ex-boyfriend, an unemployed
 actor named Kevin Watkins, sneaks
 onto a supply ship headed her way.

Heavily edited footage of Kevin in the mail room plays. No
 barf, but lots of stupid-looking moments in isolation.

THE HOST (V.O.)
 Which begs the question: What will
 he say when he gets there? And what
 will Amber and Adam do about it?

A clip of Kevin shows him thudding to the ground.

MONTAGE: SPACE PACES, PART DEUX.

--Kevin's jog times get better, so Pablo puts him in a
 weighted vest. He sweats harder and uglier but keeps going.

--He floats more ably in the Pressure Cooker. Roberta keeps
 dialing it up until he barfs. Eventually, he doesn't.

--He bounds into the mess hall, a little peppier. The team
 now leaves a tiny sliver of room for him.

--He fashions a belt out of his shoulder bag strap and puts
 the tools on it. Del looks impressed. Kevin follows him. The
 wrench on his belt wags like a tail.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Roberta is reading in bed. Kevin quietly enters, climbs up
 the bunk, and collapses into bed. Big sigh.

ROBERTA
 Jesus, Watkins.

KEVIN
 Sorry.

ROBERTA
 I suppose you don't like this any
 more than I do, in a sense. (Beat)
 Now that this is the basket you put
 your eggs in, I want you to ask you
 something. You might not like it.

KEVIN
 Okay.

ROBERTA

Have you considered that she
doesn't owe you anything?

KEVIN

Considered it? It's all I've
thought about since I was six.

ROBERTA

That long, huh? Okay. Tell me.

Kevin takes a deep breath.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - DAY

Kevin jogs heavily up to Pablo. Pablo hits stop on his timer.

PABLO

Tsk. Tsk. Like 12 seconds slower.
And you sweat so much. What was
your diet on earth?

Kevin looks at Pablo like, "Guess."

PABLO (CONT'D)

You're a straight white American
boy so I guess burgers and fries.

KEVIN

Bingo.

PABLO

And now pouches and coffee smells.
Aren't we lucky. Again!

Kevin hangs his head and goes to run. Mariko arrives.

MARIKO

(To Pablo)

Your turn!

PABLO

Ugh, really? It's so boring.

KEVIN

What is it? Can I do it?

Pablo and Mariko look at each other. They have a secret.

MARIKO

No. It's... science-y.

PABLO
 Super science-y. You would hate it.
 (Beat) Just keep jogging.

Kevin reluctantly jogs. Mariko and Pablo watch him go.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MESS HALL - NIGHT

Everyone is laughing. Roberta is mid-story.

ROBERTA
 So I'm dangling by a foot from the
 International Space Station and I
 say, "See, Oksana? Told you I'm a
 catch."

MARIKO
 And then?

ROBERTA
 When we got back, I spent three
 tempestuous years with her in
 Vladivostok.

They laugh and settle into an easy silence. They eat pouches.

PABLO
 Kevin. How did you meet Amber?

They all look at him. Kevin winds up for a-

FLASHBACK:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Two pairs of little feet touch. The light flickers, and-

ROBERTA (V.O.)
 They were six years old. Held hands
 in the dark during a power outage.

END FLASHBACK.

Like that, Roberta drains the memory of its power. Pablo
 nods. Mariko smiles. A stunned Kevin looks at Roberta.

ROBERTA
 I have a more interesting question
 for the stowaway: What are you
 going to say to her?

KEVIN
(taken aback)
Uh, I don't know.

ROBERTA
(as Kevin)
Uh, you'd better figure it out.
(Beat, herself) We all have our
missions, right? Yours is to get
Amber back. So, how will you
complete your mission?

PABLO
Are you going to lure her back to
Earth? Romance her?

MARIKO
Who will she choose? Buh buh buh!

KEVIN
I haven't...thought...

A pause as they watch him struggle. The playfulness fades.

MARIKO
It's okay. You've got time.

PABLO
Yeah, Romeo. Don't worry.

ROBERTA
You two, cease treating this man
like a child. That is an order.
(Beat) This is your life, Watkins.

It lands, hard. A beat of silence. Kevin drops his chin.

INT. KEVIN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Little Kevin tapes letter after letter to his bedroom wall.

LITTLE AMBER (V.O.)
Dear Kevin. I landed a backflip
yesterday which is a big deal.
(Beat) Dear Kevin. The food here is
pretty good. I eat pancakes every
day. (Beat) Dear Kevin. I learned
how to ride a horse. (Beat) I can't
wait for school to start again. I
miss home. (Beat) How is your
summer? PS: You never write back.
Are you dead? Ha ha.

KEVIN'S MOM (V.O.)
That's a lot of letters, Tater.

INT. KEVIN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT

KEVIN'S MOM tucks Little Kevin in. Letters paper the walls.

LITTLE KEVIN
Yeah, Amber wrote them to me.

KEVIN'S MOM
That's nice. Did you write to her?

LITTLE KEVIN
Um. No. Not yet.

KEVIN'S MOM
Summer's almost over. You have to
do something, Tater.

A momentary glitch. The lights in the room flicker. Behind Kevin's mom's head is the paper-mâché solar system.

KEVIN'S MOM (CONT'D)
Pretty soon it'll be too late.

Kevin's mom glitches into Ghost Amber. She bends over to kiss him goodnight, her mouth a black hole. Th-thump. Th-th-thump.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - SAME

Kevin shocks awake, sweaty. He clutches his paper circle. Th-thump. Th-th-thump. He looks down. Roberta isn't there.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin runs down the hall. Th-thump. Th-th-thump. He can hear voices rising. Arguing. A door is open.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roberta, Pablo, Mariko, and Del crowd around a console. It's a mini version of MarsNow Engineering. A live feed of rooms in the Living Space cover many screens. This is the secret.

MARIKO
We should wake him up.

PABLO
But what if-

KEVIN
What's going on?

They turn to Kevin, revealing, on screen: Amber. Bent double, red spreading across the back of her suit. She moans in pain.

Kevin rushes in. They make space for him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Is this her now?

PABLO
Yes. We've been monitoring them. In case something happens.

KEVIN
And hiding it from me. Too "science-y", right?

They all exchange looks. No one speaks.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Right, Roberta?

ROBERTA
Yes, kid. We were hiding it.

INT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - SAME

We watch the security screen, as through Kevin's POV.

Adam reaches Amber. She's on her knees. He gently picks her up. She pauses, in pain. He guides her to the med room.

He helps her onto the table, then closes the curtain, blocking the camera's view for a moment.

We can hear Amber moaning and crying in pain.

Adam opens the curtain, revealing Amber under a sheet, feet in stirrups. She breathes hard and cries. He kisses her head.

ADAM
You're in labor, Amber.

AMBER
It's too early.

ADAM
No, it's okay. You're going to be okay. The baby's going to be okay.

She groans. Adam runs to her, looking under the sheet.

ADAM (CONT'D)
This baby is coming. Now.

AMBER
What? How?

ADAM
I don't know. Focus. Breathe.

She breathes. All is quiet. The eye of the storm.

Then: Amber screams, one long primal sound. Amniotic fluid splashes the floor and Adam's feet. He lifts a tiny infant onto Amber's chest. He joins her.

The baby is silent. Kevin holds his breath.

ADAM (CONT'D)
It's a girl.

AMBER
She's amazing. Wake up, baby girl.

Amber strokes the baby's face.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Adam?

Adam looks worried. Kevin looks worried. He closes his eyes, and the heartbeat rises again: Th-thump, th-th-thump.

INT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, the baby emits a little cough, then a loud wail. Amber and Adam react, joyful.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - SAME

The crew hoots. Kevin too. Mariko hugs him. Roberta dips out and reappears with pouches labelled "Champagne."

ROBERTA
We're supposed to save these for
landing, but what the hell.

Roberta passes out the pouches. They "cheers."

PABLO
To Amber and Adam's baby!

Kevin smiles, but the moment is fading. He takes the pouch and slips out. Roberta watches him go.

On screen, the little family huddles together.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MAIL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin flops down on Amber's fan mail. He closes his eyes.

INT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - DAY (FANTASY)

Amber tends her Mars plants with loving ease. She sprays, picks, and eats abundant greens, all while holding her BABY. Their baby. Kevin's baby.

She smiles, radiantly, at us. An Earth Mother, a magician.

Adam enters. He kisses her. He's so hot and good and smart. Like a genius Ken Doll, except he probably also has a huge dick, because of course. Prick. He turns to the camera.

ADAM

She never needed you, bro.

AMBER

(to camera)

Yeah, I never needed you. At least,
not like I need him.

BABY

(to camera)

No one needs y-

INT. SUPPLY SHIP MAIL ROOM - SAME

Kevin lets out a wail of frustration. He leaps up and grabs one of the sacks. He drags it towards the door.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP TOILET TUBE - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin wails, rips up letters, and shoves the pieces down the toilet tube. He does so with increasingly manic energy.

Reveal: Roberta, Pablo, Mariko, and Del watch him at a remove. Del moves to do something. Roberta stops him.

Kevin wails louder. He weeps. He shoves a bunch of letters down the toilet chute at once. An immense amount of paper.

EXT. SPACE - SAME

The supply ship expels a tiny confetti spray of fan mail into the vast reaches of space. It changes nothing.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP TOILET TUBE - SAME

Kevin makes an angry fist of paper and shoves his whole arm down the tube. He wails in emotional pain, then physical.

ROBERTA

Okay, now we stop him.

They descend.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - LATER

Kevin convalesces in Roberta's bed. Everyone stands in the doorway, looking down on him.

KEVIN

I'm fine. Please go away.

Roberta waves everyone off. The door closes behind her. She sits on the edge of the bed.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I can go up to my bunk.

ROBERTA

It's okay, kid. Stay there.

Kevin stares up at the ceiling. Tears slide down his face.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Hurts, huh? Doing it without help?

KEVIN

It hurts so bad. And my arm smells like shit.

Roberta chuckles.

ROBERTA

So now you know: This is what it feels like to get over someone.

KEVIN

Fuck.

ROBERTA
It's good to feel it, you know.
(Beat, very reluctant) Do
you...want to...talk?

Kevin rolls towards the wall.

KEVIN
No, not really. (Beat) Actually-

He turns back. Roberta has already escaped. The door to quarters whooshes shut. Kevin spots his shoulder bag, dumped on a dresser. An idea dawns.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin roots in an inside pocket of his bag. He pulls out a small green cube wrapped in plastic and holds it up.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Marcus's Cosmic Cake.

FLASHBACK:

INT. POT ROOM - DAY

Amber, in her mask, stands over the plants. She cuts carefully. She places pieces in a sieve and gently shakes them. The smallest bits fall through to a bucket.

KEVIN (V.O.)
This cake is made with shake, the
leftover weed we didn't get right.
It can obliterate you, your
thoughts. Even better: It
obliterates your feelings.

Kevin takes the shake from Amber. He turns to see Marcus with a bowl of cake batter. Kevin dumps the shake in.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Then, there's...Marcus's special
recipe.

Marcus throws in some mushrooms. Why not? And more. Sure!

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT (BACK TO SCENE)

Kevin regards the cube. He pops it in his mouth in one bite.

MONTAGE: A COSMIC CAKE ODYSSEY.

A woozy, fuzzy series of images and events from Kevin's POV:

--The walls and floor seem to rip, like the seams of a stretched garment.

--The floor starts to sprout plant life, and the walls grow long vines with threatening, tentacle-like tips.

--Kevin lies back in the bunk, which turns into Voyager. He wraps his arms around himself. He's swallowed by mossiness.

--He is thrown, upright, into a beautiful garden.

EXT. GARDEN OF EDEN - ETERNAL DAY

Kevin looks down and realizes he's naked. All around him are plants. As he looks closer he realizes they're pot plants.

He touches a leaf, and as he does, he gags. He opens his mouth and pulls out a long human rib bone.

A hand reaches out and grabs it. It's giant, Cosmic Amber, also naked. She swallows the rib. She grabs Kevin's face.

His eyes roll back until the sockets are black holes, through which we can see the starry night sky.

COSMIC AMBER
(her voice is 1000 voices)
Go down on me.

Kevin nods and kneels down. He looks at Amber's pubic hair. It's mossy green, like the shuttle jungle. He kneels, and-

INT. MORGUE SET - DAY

Kevin, half under a sheet, playing a mossy corpse, masturbates. He's on set. He laughs. His eyes are closed.

The Detective and a CORONER stand over him. When they speak, their voices come out as Mariko and Pablo.

CORONER/PABLO
He's really going for it.

DETECTIVE/MARIKO
(English accent)
I've never wanked high, is it good?

CORONER/PABLO
Oh yeah. Like sitting on your hand.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SICK BAY - SAME (BACK TO REALITY)

Mariko and Pablo half-look at Kevin, who lies on a sick bay table under a sheet, jerking off. He laughs.

Pablo edges away. Mariko lingers. Pablo pulls her away.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Kevin watches Amber and the baby on the security screen. His eyes are dark-rimmed, sleepless. Judging by the baby's size, a few months have passed. Mariko enters.

MARIKO
Hey hey! My turn. You are released.

KEVIN
That's cool, I can stay.

MARIKO
You cannot! It's shift change. You need to go relieve Pablo.

Kevin reluctantly peels himself up.

KEVIN
Okay, but if the baby does anything, call me.

Mariko laughs. Kevin doesn't.

MARIKO
Oh. You're serious. You got it.

Kevin gets up. Mariko sits, regarding the screen. Amber sings quietly. She coughs in her hand, and holds up a bloody palm.

KEVIN (O.S.)
She's sick, isn't she?

He appears beside Mariko. Amber rocks the baby and hums.

AMBER
(on screen)
We're too far, aren't we little one? Too far from home.

Kevin watches Amber. She kisses the baby on the head.

AMBER (CONT'D)
(on screen, to the baby)
I'm sorry you were born up here.

MARIKO
(to Kevin)
When's the last time you saw her?

FLASHBACK:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amber, in her sling, laughs and smokes weed in slo-mo, from Kevin's POV. They kiss. He pulls her shirt off.

She slides under him and smiles, then closes her eyes. Her face moves up and down. They're having sex.

KEVIN
When she hurt her shoulder. She
came home for a couple of days.

MARIKO
And that's when you broke up?

Her face is calm and beautiful, but distant.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - SAME (BACK TO SCENE)

Kevin looks at Mariko. She takes it in.

MARIKO
Oh my god. You never broke up.
(Beat) You know, she talked about
you. A lot.

KEVIN
She did?

MARIKO
In the interviews, to us. She
wanted you at the launch. But it
was too messy. With Adam. The hope
they gave people for the future.
You couldn't be part of it, so they
cut you out. (Beat) And then, up
here, when she started getting sick-

KEVIN
Wait. Started? She's been sick?

A beat. Mariko's face floods with regret. Kevin runs out.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Roberta watches Del placidly swim in the pressure cooker. She dials up the spin. He gives her the finger through the window. She returns it. Kevin runs up, Mariko behind.

KEVIN

You knew she was sick and you didn't tell me.

ROBERTA

Slow down and back up.

Kevin stays put. Roberta smiles.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Alright, kid. Yes, I hid her illness from you. I kept waiting for you to answer the question.

KEVIN

What question?

ROBERTA

Why are you here?

KEVIN

To talk to Amber. I told you.

ROBERTA

Try again. What do you think will happen? Do you think she's going home with you? Why are you here?

KEVIN

(all at once)
I didn't know what else to do!

ROBERTA

Exactly. Antimatter. That's you. Yes, she's sick. And that's why Pablo and Mariko are here. To take over when they die. When she dies.

MARIKO

Roberta...

ROBERTA

(to Mariko)

That's Captain Lacey to you. Back to stations, Lt. Misura.

A beat. Mariko leaves. Roberta and Kevin square off in a small hallway. And there's Del, turning in the widening gyre.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

That's why I didn't tell you. What would you do about it except sigh in bed and be a limp dick?

KEVIN

I'm not a limp dick. Also, that seems like the wrong thing to say to me, or anyone.

ROBERTA

No HR here. In space, no one can hear me call you a limp dick.

KEVIN

Fine. Fair enough.

ROBERTA

See, you piss me off, Watkins. The decency of you. (Beat, winding up) When you're a little girl, everyone tells you: You're gonna meet a nice boy – to be really heterosexual about it – and you and that nice boy will get married and have babies. And if he's not nice to you, well, sugar, don't marry him.

But there's an in between thing that no one ever tells girls. There's a guy who's just kind of there, and you'll date seven or so of them between 18 and 34, give or take. He's fine. But he's not helping you excel. He's not fucking up your shit explicitly, but he's fucking it up implicitly.

And if your dreams are bigger than him? Too bad. You have to stay because you stay when they're nice. Nice is good enough, they said. Women like Amber stay because she's the asshole if she can't pretzel herself into submission over the nice guy. You, Kevin, are one of those guys.

Roberta turns and amps up Del's G-force. Mic drop. For Kevin, realization dawns. It hits him like barf to the face:

KEVIN

Oh no. I am one of those guys.

There's a wail of existential pain that seems to come from Kevin's soul. It's actually Del, spinning faster. Too fast.

Suddenly, the ship shakes, violently. Kevin and Roberta stumble. Roberta hits the wall and falls. She's out cold. A RED ALERT sounds. Emergency lights flick on.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Roberta? Captain Lacey?

DEL (O.S.)

Help!

Del pings wildly in the pressure cooker. Kevin stops it.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Mariko and Pablo are huddled around the controls. An aura of panic pervades. The RED ALERT continues.

MARIKO

We've slid too far off orbit. If we can override the autopilot-

PABLO

We can't. This ship isn't logical. It was built by a prick with a god complex. (Beat) We need all of us on controls. And even then-

ROBERTA (O.S)

There's a way.

Pablo and Mariko turn. Kevin hoists a dazed Roberta. A disheveled Del follows.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

(weakly)

If we had a ballast, we could swing back into orbit. On this axis, it wouldn't have to be heavy. A line. 150, 200 pounds. Just dead weight.

Pablo helps Roberta into a seat. He takes her vitals.

KEVIN

I can help.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

The RED ALERT continues. A suited-up Kevin peers out into space, nervously. Mariko shuts his helmet.

MARIKO

Remember: When you get to the end of the line, go limp. The counterweights will do the rest.

KEVIN

I know.

MARIKO

This might not work.

Kevin nods. Mariko kisses Kevin's helmet. It steams up.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

You're being really brave. Especially for a civilian.

KEVIN

(all business)

I have to finish my mission.

MARIKO

Right. (Beat) I forgot you're a fucking idiot, too.

KEVIN

I know. I'm sorry.

Kevin takes Mariko's hands. She looks at him.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Mariko joins Pablo, Del, and Roberta at the controls.

PABLO

Well? Did you tell him?

MARIKO

I called him a fucking idiot.

ROBERTA

Close enough.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Kevin breathes into his helmet. It's quiet.

KEVIN (V.O.)

The longest trip I took before this
was from Minnesota to Oregon. Or, I
guess, a 3-day acid trip with
Marcus. (Beat) Man, I hope Marcus-

The airlock opens. Kevin is thrust out mid-thought. He sails,
fluidly and fast. There's only his breath and space.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP BRIDGE - SAME

They watch Kevin launch out. He reaches the end of his
tether. He grabs onto the line. Then he plays dead.

PABLO

Tres... dos... uno.

ROBERTA

Now!

They all work the controls. Kevin's dead weight flies.

EXT. SPACE - SAME

Kevin flings on his line. Time slows to stillness. He closes
his eyes. He smiles. He's useful.

INTERCUT: SPACE/SUPPLY SHIP BRIDGE

The ship shudders. It makes a shaky arc and slowly stops.

The ship lights flicker on. A console light reads: IN ORBIT.
The crew embrace, relieved. Kevin floats, a meat sack.

Suddenly, he comes to life. He gives a thumbs up. As he pulls
back in, a massive red shape reflects in his visor. Mars.

INT. ROBERTA'S QUARTERS - LATER

Kevin looks out the window at Mars. Roberta enters.

KEVIN

How close are we?

ROBERTA

Any time now. (Beat, then) Listen,
Watkins. Chasing something you love
that won't, can't, love you back?
That's my whole career. (Beat) I'm
a crabby cuss, but-

Kevin turns and pulls Roberta into a big hug, something she would never ask for but deeply needs. Kevin's good that way: He can meet a certain need, for a time. No more, no less.

MONTAGE: PREPARATION FOR LANDING.

--Pablo folds Kevin's paper airplanes back into envelopes.

--Mariko takes inventory of supplies and floats containers along to Del, who ushers them into a mini-shuttle.

--Roberta helps Kevin into a MarsNow flight suit.

--Kevin walks in slo-mo down the hallway, past the crew. He boards the mini-shuttle. Pablo and Mariko follow him in.

INT. MINI-SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

Kevin straps in. The mini-shuttle takes off, emerging from inside the supply ship and into the black of space.

EXT. MARS - MOMENTS LATER

The mini-shuttle descends, shuddering onto the surface. An airlock extends and attaches to the egg-like Living Space.

Above the surface, the supply shuttle hovers, looking down on the mini-shuttle like a nervous parent.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roberta and Del watch the mini-shuttle dock into place. Roberta unleashes a Kevin-like dramatic sigh. Del eyes her.

INT. MINI-SHUTTLE AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Total darkness. A line of light splits the horizon, growing to bright yellow. The dawn, right way up. From within the light, a silhouette: Kevin, in his suit.

He steps onto the airlock off of the mini-shuttle. He hits a series of buttons and the door behind him slides closed.

At the same time, an opaque far wall splits, revealing the MarsNow Living Space airlock behind glass. Amber is in the opposite airlock. She faces away.

Kevin runs to her, then slows. Something's wrong.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - SAME

Roberta and Del watch Kevin. Worry crosses Roberta's face.

INT. MINI-SHUTTLE - SAME

Mariko and Pablo watch the scene on a small bridge screen.

MARIKO

Oh no.

In the Living Space, Adam stands at the locked airlock door. Amber is air-locked between them. Her old life and her new.

PABLO

What's going on?

INT. SUPPLY SHIP SECURITY ROOM - SAME

As if to answer Pablo:

ROBERTA

She locked herself in the airlock.
And the kid.

INT. MARSNOW ENGINEERING - SAME

The Host watches the scene on a massive wall of screens.

HOST

Gimme a closeup. On her and the ex!

OFFICER SHELBY

(quietly, to an engineer)
Actually, they never broke up.

INT. MARSNOW LIVING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

POV of a Rover camera: A crazed Amber, the baby in a bassinet, and Adam's med bag. She wields a gardening spade.

Amber notices the camera and starts stabbing it, violently. The angle changes to a CCTV-style overhead camera.

INT. MINI-SHUTTLE AIRLOCK - SAME

Kevin watches Amber stab the camera.

KEVIN
Get it, Slammer. Fuck it up.

Kevin looks for the button to open the airlock. No avail.

INT. LIVING SPACE AIRLOCK - SAME

Kevin can't be heard. Amber faces away. She wheezes with exertion. Adam watches her. He doesn't notice Kevin yet.

ADAM
Amber, be reasonable. We can figure this out together.

AMBER
There isn't enough! They did this on purpose. There's only a big enough dose for me and Deanne.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Marcus and Tanya watch the show, draped over one another.

TANYA
Deanne?

MARCUS
It's her mom's name.

Marcus makes a "big boob" gesture. Tanya is confused.

INT. LIVING SPACE AIRLOCK - SAME

Adam tries to open the airlock but can't. He pauses.

ADAM
Amber, please. I can help you both. We can all take the medication.

AMBER
You're not sick! Stay away. I trusted you.

ADAM
It's not me, darling. It's the radiation.

AMBER
Don't call me that. You don't know me, at all.

INTERCUT: MINI-SHUTTLE AIRLOCK/LIVING SPACE AIRLOCK

AMBER KEVIN
I hate the word "darling." She hates the word darling.

Adam tries to open the airlock again. Amber stabs at the window with her spade. He backs away. She starts to cry. She sinks down and pulls the bassinet closer.

KEVIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hey, Slammer?

Amber's head turns to the source of the sound. She sees Kevin in the adjacent airlock. He has located a PA button.

Amber drops the gardening spade with a clatter.

INT. BAR - SAME

It's the bar where Amber told her parents about Mars. The show plays on multiple screens. It's packed but quiet. A rowdy group of bros enters. They're shushed, then shoed out.

INT. KIVINENS' HOUSE - SAME

Amber's parents watch. Her mom cries. Her dad sternly huffs.

INT. MARSNOW ENGINEERING - SAME

Everyone watches the screens. Even the Host is entranced.

INT. AIRLOCK - SAME

Amber steps toward Kevin. They touch the glass between them. From the living space, Adam watches.

AMBER
Hi, Tater.

Kevin pulls off his helmet.

KEVIN
Uh, hi. I just- I wanted to talk to you. To tell you that I've always loved you. And I always will.

Amber peers at Kevin. She's still processing his presence.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And also that I understand. Why you left. It must have been hard. Or maybe it wasn't, and that's okay, too. (Beat) You deserve happiness. You deserve whatever you want. You deserve Adam. You should let him help you. I want you to get better. That's it, I guess.

Amber studies Kevin's face. He resets.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I actually- I came to get you.

AMBER

(warmly, but firmly)
You know that's not how I work, Kev. (Beat) And in my condition-

KEVIN

I know.

A beat.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Do you remember our first kiss?

Amber's eyes light up. A knowing smile crosses her lips. She slides down the glass and sits. Kevin follows her down. They sit back to back against the glass.

AMBER

Tell it to me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Marcus sits upright and leans in. He nudges Tanya.

MARCUS

This is a good story. I'm in it.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KIVINENS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Teenage Kevin walks down a hallway. He looks at family photos of Amber: at camp, winning medals, first communion. We've seen these pictures. They were used on the show.

Loud music blares from the other room. Teenage Kevin comes around the corner to a high school party in full swing.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Minnesota. The winter after you got
hurt it was minus-20 most days. We
partied inside a lot.

Teenage Kevin walks right through. He's ignored.

INT. KIVENENS' KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Teenage Kevin enters. Teenage Marcus and a TEENAGE GIRL try
to heat hash on a knife over the hot stove element.

TEENAGE MARCUS
(to Kevin)
Is this how you do a hot knife?

Teenage Kevin shrugs. Teenage Marcus yelps and drops the
knife. The girl giggles and jumps out of the way.

A sliding screen door opens from the freezing outside.
Teenage Amber leans in, steam around her red, beautiful face.
Teenage Kevin stares. Teenage Amber looks right at him.

TEENAGE AMBER
Hey. Kevin. Kevin Who Smells My
Mom's Lotion.

TEENAGE MARCUS
Dude. Haha. What?

TEENAGE AMBER
Can you pass me that?

She points at a boiling kettle. It begins to whistle.

TEENAGE KEVIN
Oh, yeah. Sure.

KEVIN (V.O.)
You saw me. You picked me.

Teenage Kevin grabs the kettle. Teenage Marcus is giving him
goofy, thumbs up, "Get it" type gestures.

EXT. KIVENENS' DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Teenage Kevin opens the deck door and comes outside. He
closes the door and the winter swallows them. It's quiet.

Teenage Amber, her arm in a sling, smokes a joint. She puts
it out. She shivers. Teenage Kevin hands her the kettle, then
takes his hoodie off to give to her.

TEENAGE AMBER
Thanks. You're a gentleman.

TEENAGE KEVIN
Ha. Yeah. I try.

There's an awkward moment while they negotiate items. She pulls the hoodie over her bad shoulder and takes the kettle.

TEENAGE AMBER
Wanna see something cool?

She swings her good arm back and tosses boiling water into the frigid air. It turns into steam. Teenage Kevin is amazed.

TEENAGE KEVIN
Holy shit.

TEENAGE AMBER
Right? My dad showed me. It's my favorite thing. They do it in Finland cuz there's nothing else to do but fish. And murder people.

TEENAGE KEVIN
That's magic.

TEENAGE AMBER
It's science, but yeah. *Tres magique*. (Beat) Sorry, I'm stoned.

TEENAGE KEVIN
Yeah. Me too.

KEVIN (V.O.)
This was it. Our first kiss.

Teenage Amber shivers for a moment in the cold. Teenage Kevin leans in and envelops her in a tender bear hug. It works.

Their breaths rise. He kisses her, his eyes closed. It's brief but sweet. They look at each other, still entwined.

TEENAGE KEVIN
You wanna go inside?

TEENAGE AMBER
Not yet.

Teenage Kevin kisses her again, a little better this time. They breathe hot steam in each other's faces.

A sudden THUD breaks the tension. It's Teenage Marcus, pressing his mouth against the glass from inside.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. AIRLOCKS - DAY (BACK TO SCENE)

Amber's eyes are closed. She cries. They turn to each other.

AMBER

That story's so much better than the speech you made.

KEVIN

I know. (Beat) Thanks for inviting me on the deck for a little while.

AMBER

Thanks for braving the cold.

The decision has been made. It's sad, but it's theirs.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I can't believe you came to Mars to break up with me.

They laugh. Amber stands, and Kevin follows suit.

KEVIN

I also brought you some Mr Fattys.

AMBER

(brightly)

Oh my god, really?

KEVIN

No. Just a bunch of those pouches.

AMBER

Those are so gross. I miss fries.

KEVIN

You just got excited about six month old fries. Disgusting, Amber.

They laugh again. From the corner, the baby cries. Kevin and Amber look at each other a moment longer.

AMBER

Her name is Deanne Louise Kivenen.

KEVIN

Louise was my mom's name.

AMBER

Just listen, Tater. She cries slow
when she's tired, fast when she's
hungry. She likes Bob Seger songs.
When she yawns it surprises her.

Amber keeps talking. Kevin listens intently. She touches her fingers to the glass. Kevin touches his fingers to hers.

MONTAGE: THEIR RELATIONSHIP - THEIR LIVES - IN REVERSE.

--Amber returns to the apartment. She gets into the tub.

--She and Kevin have sex on the couch, backwards, re-dressing and lying together smoking.

--They inverse cheers with her parents.

--She sits with him. She tells him she's going to Mars.

--Back and back, faster and faster. They're at Kevin's mom's funeral. Under the ancient tree. They're teenagers in bed together. They re-dress and sit awkwardly on the bed.

--They kiss in the cold. The mist returns to the kettle.

--Kevin's a kid, taking her letters off the wall.

INT. AIRLOCK - DAY (BACK TO SCENE)

Kevin and Amber face one another. The glass between them slides open. Amber grasps Kevin's hand.

In slo-mo, a suited-up Pablo and Mariko walk past Kevin with supplies. As they flow past, Amber and Kevin stay put.

Adam tries to interrupt. Mariko turns him around.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin's POV as the airlock door closes in front of him. Amber, flanked by Mariko and Pablo, cries. Laughs. Waves.

Kevin opens his hand. He holds Amber's folded paper circle.

EXT. MARS - LATER

On the planet's surface, the pod's glass front closes like an eye. A smaller cylinder rockets away at blinding speed.

INT. SUPPLY SHIP BRIDGE - SAME

Kevin, strapped in tight, watches Mars recede. Roberta sits beside him. She touches his arm, just for a moment.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Kevin Watkins. Okay drug dealer, terrible hockey player, dead guy in the worst shows you barely watch. I don't mean to shit on myself. I'm okay. I loved Amber Kivinen.

Reveal that Baby Deanne is strapped to Kevin's chest. He looks down at her. She sucks on the crunched orange paper.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Yeah, that Amber Kivinen, the one who went to Mars. On that show, that time. I stopped watching it.

A momentary glitch as -

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Two little feet touch. Thunder. Two little hands join. The lights flicker out, then back on.

A paper-mâché solar system swings. On Mars, a human face.

FADE OUT.