

HOMEWORLD

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INT. HOUSE - NURSERY - DAY

Once a guest room, recently remodeled as a nursery. A NEWLY-ASSEMBLED CRIB is the centerpiece. CHILDREN'S TOYS AND BOOKS adorn the brightly colored, freshly-painted shelves. PAINT CANS rest on a drop cloth by an unfinished section of wall.

DAKOTA BREGMAN (29) sits in a rocking chair. Her reddened eyes suggest that she's been crying, but right now she just sits with a vacant expression, gazing at nothing. Numb, as though in shock. Her hands loosely hold a PLASTIC IDENTITY BRACELET, the kind put on newborns at hospitals. It reads:

BREGMAN, MARIE
D.O.B. 08/12/2021 06:11AM
SEX: F - 4LBS 9OZ

A KNOCK at the door. The handle jiggles, but it's locked.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Dakota? Dak. C'mon, open the door.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

NATHAN RAND (32) stands at the door. On a nearby table, a DIGITAL PICTURE FRAME displays a photo slideshow. Dakota and Rand on a hiking trip in South America. Dakota in a computer lab with fellow SCIENTISTS. Rand in a NASA FLIGHTSUIT, floating in zero-G aboard the INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION. Finally, the pair of them looking overjoyed at their WEDDING.

In the LIVING ROOM beyond, a FOOTBALL GAME plays on the TV. The volume low, the roar of the crowd can be faintly heard.

RAND
You don't have to do this alone.
You're not the only one hurting
here. Let me in. Please.
(beat)
We still have each other, don't we?
It's not the end of the world.

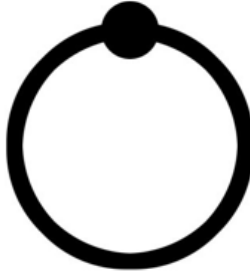
Still no response. Rand sighs, rubs his brow.

The TV image in the other room CHANGES. The football game abruptly replaced by a SOLID BLUE SCREEN with a STRANGE SYMBOL emblazoned across it. Accompanied by a HIGH-PITCHED DIGITAL SCREECH, like an emergency test broadcast.

Rand doesn't notice right away. But then the STEREO in the same room switches on, emitting the same white noise, MUCH LOUDER. Rand turns - *what the hell?*

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Rand shuts off the stereo, he realizes the sound is also coming from the TV. He turns to it, sees the blue screen with the symbol on it. A CIRCLE INTERSECTING A DOT AT 12 O'CLOCK:



Overlaid across the symbol is a SHORT TEXT MESSAGE cycling through various languages. French. Russian. Hindi. Mandarin. Japanese. Rand steps closer to the TV, transfixed. Stops dead when the message finally appears in English. It reads:

PEOPLE OF EARTH - STAND BY

BEAT. Rand stares at it, dumbfounded. Picks up the remote and cycles through channels but it's the same thing on every one.

RAND

Dak! Dak, come out here! I'm serious! Something's going on!

INT. HOUSE - NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Dakota doesn't respond. And then a PORTABLE RADIO on the shelf sparks into life, blasting the same electronic signal. She looks up at it, puzzled. And as she listens to the digital noise, something about it grabs her attention.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rand watches as the English message - "PEOPLE OF EARTH, STAND BY" - cycles past one more time. Then is replaced by:

**WARNING - IMMINENT SOLAR EVENT WILL CAUSE
GLOBAL EXTINCTION ON EARTH WITHIN TEN YEARS**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANETARY EVACUATION AND
RELOCATION ARE ENCODED WITHIN THIS TRANSMISSION**

ACT NOW

Rand stares at the screen, dumbfounded, as the message is re-displayed in ARABIC. An eerie silence... broken by a RINGING PHONE, startling him. He heads into the hall to answer it.

RAND

Hello? Hey, dad. Yeah, we're seeing it here too. I have no idea. No, I don't think it's a commercial. I'm sure it's nothing to worry about.

Dakota emerges from the nursery. Rand watches her as she goes to the TV, reads the message displayed (now in FRENCH).

RAND

She's... fine. The same, I guess.
It's gonna take a while, you know?
(beat)

Look I gotta go. I'll call you if I know something. Okay. Love to mom.

Dakota listens to the digital noise coming from the TV closely. Then grabs her LAPTOP from a nearby table. She pulls the HDMI cable from the TV, plugs it in. The TV image pops up in an on-screen window as Rand re-enters the room.

RAND

Whatever it is, sounds like it's everywhere. On every channel. It's gotta be some kind of hoax.

Dakota types in commands, the laptop works... PROCESSING... and then MULTIPLE WINDOWS pop up, VAST AMOUNTS OF INCOMING DATA streaming past at mind-boggling speed. Dakota analyzing it on the fly. And she's already seen enough to know:

DAKOTA

It's not a hoax.

CUT TO:

TITLES ROLL over a kinetic, fast-moving sequence of what follows told through TV NEWS FOOTAGE, QUICK-CUT, OVERLAPPING:

CNN ANCHOR (V.O.)

-and NASA has now confirmed, the mysterious transmission that interrupted television and radio broadcasts worldwide yesterday is indeed of extra-terrestrial origin. The White House has yet to-

AL JAZEERA ANCHOR (V.O.)

-the ominous message has become known around the world simply as "The Signal", and though its precise origin remains a mystery, it now appears certain that an advanced alien civilization-

On various NEWS SHOWS, EXPERTS illustrate with the aid of COMPUTER ANIMATIONS showing EARTH in relation to the SUN:

EXPERT PHYSICIST

The incredible wealth of astronomical data contained within The Signal allows us to forecast the coming catastrophe beyond any doubt. As our sun enters a phase of violent instability over the next several years, Earth will be bombarded by a series of powerful solar flares-

EXPERT ASTRONOMER

-destroying the magnetic field that normally protects us from the sun's lethal radiation, and culminating in a final massive solar eruption, the effect of which will be like dropping a ten-megaton nuclear bomb over every square mile of the planet's surface.

RIOTS in the streets. Cities all over the world. Mass chaos. In the packed CENTRAL CHAMBER OF THE U.N., a vote is held.

BBC NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

As rioting intensified in cities around the world, the United Nations voted unanimously to fund construction of the spacecraft that some are calling a new Noah's Ark. The multi-trillion dollar project calls for unprecedented international cooperation-

NBC NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

With limited space available, the newly-empaneled U.N. committee now faces the agonizing task of deciding who will populate the ark. It is already being petitioned by every national government, as well as many of the world's top religious leaders-

A TELEVISED TOWN HALL DISCUSSION. The tone is somber. A NASA ASTRONAUT talks with a MODERATOR before a studio audience. Chyron IDs him as MISSION COMMANDER JEREMIAH WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON

The theory is that the propulsion technology described in The Signal will allow the ark to travel at speeds approaching half the speed of light. That puts numerous star systems within our reach - any of which might contain the habitable world we're told is waiting for us.

MODERATOR

But your destination remains a mystery. You'll be headed into the unknown, with no real knowledge of who or what might be out there.

WASHINGTON

The Signal has given us a path to follow, made up of one hundred navigational waypoints.

(MORE)

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

But they're encrypted and appear designed to be decoded along the way, our arrival at each unlocking the location of the next - like a trail of breadcrumbs through space. So yes, we won't know exactly where we're going until we get there.

MODERATOR

If these anonymous aliens really are our "Benefactors", as many now call them, why all this secrecy? Why not simply tell us where we're going? What they have planned for us? Or, indeed, who they even are?

WASHINGTON

It's clear we're dealing with a civilization far more advanced than our own. Maybe they think there are some things we're not ready to know yet. We have to have faith. Because really, what alternative is there?

On that ominous note, OPENING TITLES END and we CUT TO BLACK. Only the sound of a DISTANCE RUNNER'S RHYTHMIC BREATHING:

TITLE: TEN YEARS LATER

EXT. TROPICAL MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

We follow ATHLETIC SHOE PRINTS left in a winding dirt trail as we try to keep up with DAKOTA BREGMAN. Now age 39, she wears a HIGH-TECH THERMAL BODYSUIT as she runs through the densely-shaded CANOPY JUNGLE. Intensely focused.

SUPER TITLE:**NI'HAU ISLAND, HAWAII - LAST HABITABLE REGION ON EARTH**

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Dakota emerges into a LARGE CLEARING where the treetop canopy opens up and BRIGHT SUNLIGHT shines from above. Dakota comes to a sudden stop, careful to remain in the shade. As she takes a measured swig from the water tube on her backpack's shoulder strap, her wristwatch BEEPS. She checks it to see:

EXPOSURE WARNING: 15 MINUTES

She curses, turns around to head back - and freezes when she sees THREE CIVILIANS standing there, blocking her path. A MAN and WOMAN in their 40s, and a TEENAGE BOY. A FAMILY.

They look like they've been through hell. Thin, exhausted, dressed in filthy clothes. The adults' skin is BLISTERED AND SUNBURNED; both show signs of RADIATION SICKNESS. The boy appears mostly healthy. The man holds a GUN in his trembling hand. Pointed at Dakota. He looks desperate. A tense BEAT.

DAKOTA
I can't help you.

MAN
You can. You can take us with you.

DAKOTA
How did you get here?

MAN
Wasn't easy. Had to do some things
I didn't want to. But I did them.
Because this is my family. Do you
understand what I'm saying?

His grip tightens on the pistol, steadying his aim.

WOMAN
You don't have to take us. Just
please, take our son. He passed all
the tests, he's viable. He just
didn't make the lottery.

DAKOTA
I'm sorry. I wish I could help. But
there's nothing I can do.

MAN
Sure there is. You're somebody,
right? Somebody they'll listen to.
You take us down there and you tell
them, you tell them that my son is-

DAKOTA
If I take you down there, you'll be
shot on sight. I've seen it. You
won't even make it to the fence.

Dakota's watch BLEEPs again. The man flinches, agitated.

MAN
What's that?

DAKOTA
Radiation timer. I have to get
back. It's not safe in the open.

The sunburned man seems to find this darkly amusing.

MAN

Yeah, I think I remember hearing something about that.

He COCKS THE GUN, levels it at Dakota.

MAN

We got nothing to lose. And we didn't come this far just to-

GUNFIRE ERUPTS FROM THE TREELINE. Man, woman, boy - all three go down in a sudden hail of bullets. Dakota recoils in shock and horror. It's all over in seconds.

RUSTLING in the trees - and a COMMANDO TEAM emerges, wearing RADIATION ARMOR, faces obscured behind reflective visors.

As they fan out to secure the perimeter, the team leader, SHAW, approaches Dakota, flips up his visor. A hardened vet.

SHAW

Doctor Bregman. Getting a little tired of having to come fetch you every time you wander off-base.

(off her look)

Don't give me that look, you said yourself we can't take them. Hell, I just did them a favor.

Shaw and his men escort Dakota back to the trail. As they disappear into the jungle we TILT UP to see the sky above is like we've never seen it. STRANGE AURORAS shimmer overhead, an ethereal rainbow of iridescent color. It's beautiful - and ominous. THE SUN burns unnaturally bright.

EXT. TROPICAL MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

A CONVOY OF MILITARY VEHICLES ploughs along the dirt road.

As the convoy crests the hillside, the main body of the island comes into view. TROPICAL PLAINS sprawl before us - and at their center, a VAST, HIGH-TECH MILITARY COMPLEX.

EXT. LAUNCH BASE - DAY

The base is surrounded by FORTIFIED BUTTRESSES to prevent vehicles ramming the electrified OUTER FENCE. Beyond that, a CONCRETE PERIMETER WALL topped with RAZOR WIRE and GUARD TOWERS seals off the complex. This place is like Fort Knox.

As SNIPERS observe from watchtowers, the convoy rolls inside, the heavy main gate closing behind it. Inside, it's eerily quiet. Military vehicles parked haphazardly, unattended.

Tarpaulins covering abandoned equipment flap lazily in the wind. Once a hub of activity, this whole complex is now TOTALLY ABANDONED, a ghost town.

The convoy heads down a ramp and disappears underground.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - SERVER ROOM

Narrow, walled by dense banks of COMPUTER SERVER ARRAYS. LEDs blinking, emitting a comforting HUM as they work.

A folding table and chairs have been set up here. A CHESS BOARD on the table, mid-game. Dakota sits across the board from her opponent - a TEN YEAR-OLD GIRL. This is HOPE, and there is something about her that's hard to define. A strange, preternatural quality that will bug us until we discover why she's like no ten year-old girl we've ever met.

HOPE

Knight to Queen's Bishop Four.

Oddly, Hope doesn't move the piece herself. Dakota moves it for her, then counters with her own move.

HOPE

Rook takes Knight.

Again, Dakota makes the move for her, removing her own Knight from the board. Then immediately makes her next move.

DAKOTA

Check.

Hope studies the board with a furrowed brow. Puzzled.

HOPE

Huh.

DAKOTA

Do you see what you did wrong? The right move was Pawn takes Rook.

HOPE

You would have captured my Knight.

DAKOTA

Right. I'd have had no choice. I'd have been forced to expose my Queen and you'd have Checkmate in three.
(beat)

You know playing Chess was the first thing we ever did together.

HOPE

I remember.

DAKOTA

And since then you've read every book about the game ever written. You know this. The pieces are expendable. The endgame is the only thing that matters. You can't allow emotion to cloud your thinking - to win, you have to be fearless. You have to be ruthless.

Dakota smiles as she watches Hope process this. Learning.

As she contemplates her next move, Hope begins to whistle a little melody to herself. *Turkey in the Straw*, the tune Mickey Mouse whistles at the opening of "Steamboat Willie."

Dakota recognizes it; it seems to have personal significance.

DAKOTA

What made you think of that?

HOPE

Thinking about firsts. "Steamboat Willie" was the first piece of media uploaded to the Mayflower archives. You taught me the song.

Hope picks up the melody again, and now Dakota joins in, the two of them whistling in harmony. There is a warmth between these two, a closeness that only a mother and daughter share.

The continue until Hope abruptly breaks off mid-melody, as though suddenly aware of something beyond our perception.

HOPE

Commander Rand is looking for you.

DAKOTA

Don't tell him where I am. I don't want to talk to him right now.

Hope cringes sheepishly. Knows she screwed up.

HOPE

Too late. Sorry.

COMMANDER NATHAN RAND enters. Now 42 and graying but still the classic all-American hero archetype, ruggedly handsome.

RAND

Hope, get out of here.

Hope looks to Dakota for approval.

DAKOTA
It's okay. We'll finish later.
Remember where we were, okay?

HOPE
Okay, mom.

NEW ANGLE. Where Hope stood just a moment ago, she's no longer there. Only Rand and Dakota. It's not clear exactly where or how Hope exited the room. She's just... gone.

RAND
"Mom"? When did that start?

DAKOTA
Her personality's developing on its own now. It's expected that she'd start to imprint on me a little.

RAND
So you didn't encourage it?

Dakota starts packing up the game board, evasive. Rand sighs.

DAKOTA
Is this what you came down here to talk about?

RAND
How many times have I told you about going topside?

DAKOTA
It won't happen again.

RAND
Only because today's our last damn day on the planet.

DAKOTA
That reminds me, I need to finish packing.

She moves past Rand and out the door.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - CENTRAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Bare concrete walls, fluorescent lights. A bunker-like feel. Rand follows Dakota down the hallway, still steamed.

RAND

As if risking exposure wasn't dumb enough, Shaw tells me he had to rescue you from a group of armed survivalists.

DAKOTA

Survivalists, that guy is so full of shit. It was a family, a man with his wife and kid.

RAND

So they weren't armed?

With a sigh, Dakota finally stops, turns back to Rand.

DAKOTA

Look, I just wanted to run.

RAND

Treadmill's in the gym.

DAKOTA

I wanted to breathe something other than re-circulated air! I wanted to feel the Earth under my feet one last time. Before it's gone.

RAND

We'd all like that. But you don't get special treatment just because I'm in command now. Understood?

Dakota just looks back at him. Finally, she nods.

RAND

Just remember, Dak. This is not the way I wanted it. This is the way you wanted it.

A SQUAWK from the COMM PANEL on the nearby wall:

COMMUNICATOR VOICE

Karpov to Commander Rand.

Rand moves to the wall, thumbs the TALK button.

RAND

This is Rand.

COMMUNICATOR VOICE

*I need you in the control room.
It's urgent.*

INT. LAUNCH BASE - MAIN LAB

The installation's nerve center - banks of computer terminals facing a huge VIDEO WALL comprised of multiple displays. Like NASA Mission Control or the NORAD War Room.

As MISSION TECHS work busily at their consoles, Rand and Dakota stand next to the astrophysicist KARPOV, looking at the ASTRONOMICAL DATA on his computer screen.

RAND

What am I looking at?

KARPOV

Time projection for the final solar event. I think we may have miscalculated.

RAND

Miscalculated how?

KARPOV

Would you believe a misplaced decimal in the peak flux algorithm? The wattage per square meter was-

RAND

I mean how much were we off by?

KARPOV

I corrected the algorithm, the new model's compiling now.

DAKOTA

The Signal predicted every solar event before this one correctly, how could it be wrong now?

KARPOV

The Signal wasn't wrong. It's never been wrong. We just read it wrong. Revised number's coming up now.

Rand looks up at the video wall. On the main screen a hugely magnified real-time image of THE SUN, viewed through a space telescope. Its surface seethes and roils like an angry storm.

Above the video wall there is a MASTER COUNTDOWN CLOCK. Right now it's counting down from **61H 58M 43S... 42... 41...**

The digits FREEZE for a moment... an agonizing BEAT... and then the clock RESETS. **00H 56M 57S... 56... 55...**

DAKOTA

Oh my God.

KARPOV

Confirmed. Precursor flare impact in fifty-six minutes. The big one's still right behind it.

Rand rushes to a nearby COMM PANEL:

RAND

Rand to all personnel. Our launch time has been moved up. Gather any essential equipment and report to the launch bay immediately. This is not a drill. We are leaving now.

QUICK CUTS - AROUND THE BASE

A BASE-WIDE ALARM SIREN blares as the remaining personnel frantically pack up vital equipment and race through hallways. The COUNTDOWN CLOCK is now at **00H 26M**.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - DAKOTA'S OFFICE

Dakota hurriedly packs a bag. Looking over her desk for anything she might need. Sifting through drawers, searching.

She stops cold when she finds something in the bottom drawer. It's the NEWBORN IDENTITY BRACELET from the opening scene, carefully preserved inside a Ziploc bag.

Dakota gazes at it. A flood of old, painful memories. After a moment's hesitation, she packs it carefully in her bag.

There's one more thing in the drawer. THE DIGITAL PICTURE FRAME from the same scene. Dakota thumbs the power button, a photo of her and Rand at their wedding pops up.

Dakota hesitates... then slams the drawer shut with the picture frame still inside, grabs her bag and leaves.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - SHUTTLE BAY

Like an UNDERGROUND MISSILE SILO, a highly-advanced SPACE SHUTTLE at its center, pointed skyward. BASE PERSONNEL rush along a gantry and into the shuttle as alarm sirens wail. Rand stands at the airlock, urgently ushering them aboard. He scans for Dakota, finally spots her racing down the gantry.

RAND

Where the hell have you been?

DAKOTA
Am I the last?

ANGLE TO REVEAL Hope is now there with them on the gantry.
Unlike everyone else, she seems almost unnaturally calm.

HOPE
Mission Specialist Meretzky is not
on board the shuttle.

Rand hits the gantry's COMM PANEL.

RAND
Rand to Meretzky, respond.

No response. Dakota looks again to Hope.

DAKOTA
Where is he?

HOPE
In his office.

Dakota drops her bag, runs back toward the base complex.

RAND
Goddammit Dak, we're out of time!

INT. LAUNCH BASE - MERETZKY'S OFFICE

AARON MERETZKY (30) sits at his computer, VAN HALEN blasting in his headphones. Head bobbing, his fingers a blur over the keyboard as ASTRONOMICAL MODELS rotate on multiple screens. Oblivious to the alarm blaring around him. As he cracks open a can of ENERGY DRINK Dakota charges in and yanks off his headphones. Startled, he spills the drink down his shirt.

MERETZKY
Aargh! What the hell?

DAKOTA
We have to go, now.

MERETZKY
This is my favorite shirt! It's not
like I can- what's with the alarm?

DAKOTA
Emergency evac. Shuttle's leaving.
If you want to be on it, move now!

MERETZKY

Oh, I get it. This is payback for me filling your office with packing peanuts, right? Why am I the only one who thought that was funny?

DAKOTA

Meretzky. Look at my face.

She glares at him, serious as a heart attack. Meretzky glances over at the COUNTDOWN CLOCK on the wall. **00H 14M 07S.**

MERETZKY

Oh, shit. This is for real?

DAKOTA

Yes! Now come on!

He jumps out of his seat, grabbing a BACKPACK. Turns to a RACK OF HARD DRIVES and starts stuffing them into his bag.

He moves quickly to a SAFE. Punches in the combination.

DAKOTA

Meretzky, there's no time!

MERETZKY

One second!

The safe unlocks. But when Meretzky opens it we realize it's not a safe but a REFRIGERATOR. Stocked with cans of that same ENERGY DRINK. Meretzky starts scooping cans into his bag.

DAKOTA

You have got to be kidding me.

He stuffs the last cans into his bag, makes for the door. He pauses there, takes a last look back at his office.

MERETZKY

Would the last person to leave
Earth please switch off the lights?

He flips the light switch, plunging the room into darkness.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - SHUTTLE BAY

Rand paces at the airlock. He checks his watch. **00H 09M 17S.**

RAND

We can't wait any longer, we're
already past the cut-off.

HOPE

I don't think we should leave
without Doctor Bregman.

RAND

I didn't ask what you-

Rand hears RACING FOOTSTEPS - he and Hope are relieved to see
Dakota running along the gantry, Meretzky behind her.

RAND

Glad you could make it.

DAKOTA

Like you would've left without me.

MERETZKY

Or me. Right?

RAND

Just get your asses on board.

They scramble aboard. Rand seals the door behind him, leaving
Hope standing on the gantry, alone. It's like everyone forgot
about her. But she just stands there, eerily calm.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Rand is strapped into the pilot's seat, next to KOJIMA, who
runs through pre-launch checks. The PASSENGER CABIN is
visible through the doorway behind them, the base personnel
in rows of seating like a commercial airliner.

RAND

We are cutting this damn close.

Kojima and Rand both put on WRAPAROUND U.V. SUNGLASSES.

KOJIMA

Well, if we don't make it... at
least we'll go out looking good.

CUTAWAY - SHUTTLE ENGINES

The engines BURST INTO LIFE with a deafening roar.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle RUMBLES. Up above the SILO DOORS begin to open.
BLINDING SUNLIGHT shafting down from the open sky. Even with
shades on Rand and Kojima have to squint.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Long deserted. Hope stands at the window that wraps around the control tower, offering panoramic views of the island.

The sky glows an INFERNAL RED. Hope gazes up at it, unafraid. On the wall nearby, the COUNTDOWN CLOCK reads **00H 03M 11S**.

INT. SHUTTLE - PERSONNEL BAY - CONTINUOUS

Dakota is strapped in next to Meretzky. Seats JUDDERING as engine power builds. Dakota closes her eyes, tries to stay calm. Meretzky sees her gripping her armrest, white-knuckled.

MERETZKY

I remember when I was a kid, we had this old gas stove. My mom loved to cook. Always cooking. Any time we left the house she'd worry she left the stove on. Thought the house might burn down while we were gone.

DAKOTA

Is that supposed to be funny?

MERETZKY

Just came to mind, is all.

And suddenly they're MOVING. Pressed back hard into their seats as the shuttle begins to LIFT OFF.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - SHUTTLE BAY - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle rises up out of the silo on a white-hot column of rocket exhaust, disappearing into the stark daylight above.

INT. LAUNCH BASE - CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Hope stands at the window, watching as the shuttle emerges from the silo on the far side of the base and rises higher and higher into the sky, exhaust pluming in its wake.

The COUNTDOWN CLOCK ticks down to ZERO. The entire tower begins to SHUDDER, as though in the grip of an earthquake.

Hope looks up - to see a MASSIVE FIRESTORM approaching from high in the sky. Surging toward us with awesome speed and ferocity. It's as though THE ENTIRE SKY IS ABLAZE.

The window WARPS AND CRACKS under pressure from the extreme heat building outside. Hope just stands there, watching, as the leading edge of the solar flare surges ever closer...

...and CONSUMES THE TOWER - AND HOPE ALONG WITH IT - IN A RAGING TORRENT OF FLAMES.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Rand watches on a REAR-VIEW MONITOR as far below, all of Hawaii is engulfed in a VAST, ROLLING OCEAN OF FIRE.

RAND
Jesus Christ...

KOJIMA
Breaking atmosphere in three, two-

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle ROARS PAST US, leaving Earth behind, the Pacific Ocean GLOWING RED as the burning solar flare rolls across it.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Both men breath a sigh of relief.

KOJIMA
Close enough for you?

RAND
We're not out of this yet. What about the big one?

KOJIMA
(off his display)
Should be hitting Mercury now.

INSERT - MERCURY - 58 MILLION MILES FROM EARTH

The sun's closest planet moves through its silent orbit... until THE ENTIRE PLANET IS OBLITERATED BY A MASSIVE SOLAR BLAST WAVE, incinerating everything in its path.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

RAND
(into radio)
Mayflower, this is Omega, we've cleared the planet and are en route. Be ready to depart the instant we're docked!

RADIO VOICE
This is Mayflower, affirmative.

EXT. SPACE - LATER

Earth now much smaller in the background, receding fast behind the shuttle as it races toward the distant MOON.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

 KOJIMA
 (off his display)
 Blast wave now coming up on Venus.

INSERT - VENUS - 27 MILLION MILES FROM EARTH

The serene planet is hit head-on by the full force of the raging solar hurricane, its surface STRIPPED AWAY by the blast wave, like old layers of paint under a blow torch.

EXT. THE MOON - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle screams toward the moon at max speed, entering close orbit and racing around toward its far side, the lunar surface rolling beneath us so fast it's just a blur.

The light of the sun disappears behind the moon, plunging the lunar surface into darkness. The shuttle's exterior lights kick in - briefly illuminating the abandoned remains of a VAST CONSTRUCTION BASE down on the surface as we fly past.

INT. SHUTTLE - PERSONNEL BAY - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle is rattling under incredible G-force strain, the strapped-in crew buffeted violently in their seats.

Dakota glances over, sees Meretzky now with his eyes closed tight, clinging to the armrests, terrified. She takes her hand off her armrest, places it on his.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

WARNING LIGHTS FLASH. The shuttle feels as though it might fly apart any moment. Finally Rand pulls up on the stick...

EXT. MOON - FAR SIDE - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle BREAKS ORBIT, slingshotting around the moon and away from it like a bullet from a gun.

And up ahead... THE ARK.

It comes looming out of the darkness, indistinct at first. But as we move closer we realize we're looking at a VAST SPACESHIP. Its massive size only becoming apparent as the shuttle draws closer and becomes a tiny speck in comparison. Emblazoned across the ship's hull is its name: **MAYFLOWER.**

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

RADIO VOICE

Omega, you're coming in way too hot. Reduce your speed!

RAND

Negative Mayflower, stand by for hard dock.

EXT. SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

Closing in on Mayflower's DOCKING BAY. REALLY, REALLY FAST.

INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Rand SLAMS ON THE BRAKES, REVERSE THRUSTERS FIRING. Rand and Kojima lurch forward as the shuttle decelerates hard...

EXT. MAYFLOWER - DOCKING BAY - CONTINUOUS

...and comes to a perfect - if abrupt - halt in the bay. DOCKING CLAMPS securing the shuttle as its engines wind down.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DOCKING BAY CORRIDOR

Rand and the other senior crew bolt from the airlock and race through Mayflower's hallways. The mothership buzzes with activity - ALERT SIRENS WAIL as everywhere CREW MEMBERS work frantically to ready the ship for launch.

Rand rushes past SERVICE ROBOTS that work alongside the human crew; hulking automatons on caterpillar tracks with arrays of built-in tools. They solder electronics, weld bulkheads, carry heavy equipment. Mayflower's maintenance backbone.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

The ship's high-tech operations center. Bridge officers hard at work as Rand and the others rush in.

RAND

X-O! Why are we not moving?

Mayflower's Executive Officer HODGMAN glances up from his computer, the very picture of a man under extreme stress.

HODGMAN

Wasn't planning on leaving this early. You know how many corners we're cutting here? I don't even-

RAND

Just get us the hell out of here!

NEW ANGLE REVEALS THAT HOPE IS NOW HERE ON THE BRIDGE.

HOPE

I must warn you that if you ignite
the main reactor without proper
safety protocols, you risk-

RAND

Somebody turn this damn thing off!

Hope FLICKERS AND DISAPPEARS as Rand WALKS RIGHT THROUGH HER.
She is nothing more than a HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION.

EXT. MAYFLOWER

The ship's giant engines ROAR INTO LIFE. And slowly it BEGINS
TO MOVE. Accelerating to its CRUISING SPEED, moving fast away
from the moon, and Earth, silhouetted against the raging sun.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

The bridge crew stands silent, watching as the Mayflower's
sensor blip moves away from Earth on the holographic map.

HODGMAN

Reactor's stable. Eighty thousand
KM from origin... ninety...

KOJIMA

Here it comes...

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The Mayflower moves off at high speed as the solar blast wave
ENGULFS THE EARTH IN FLAME, the entire planet consumed within
a raging stellar firestorm.

The blast keeps coming, now WASHING OVER THE MOON like a
fiery tidal wave. Gaining fast on the retreating Mayflower.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The bridge is ROCKED by a sudden bout of turbulence, as...

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

...the wave catches up with the Mayflower. For a moment the
giant ship is SWALLOWED UP BY THE WAVE AND DISAPPEARS WITHIN.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The bridge is VIOLENTLY BUFFETED by the solar wave. POWER
FLUCTUATES. WARNING LIGHTS AND ALARMS SOUND. Total chaos.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The Mayflower EMERGES FROM THE BLAST WAVE as it finally dissipates, the ship rocketing away into clear, open space.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

Stability returns to the bridge. Lights and computer systems flicker back on. Everyone is still tense.

KARPOV

Blast wave dissipating. We're clear.

The bridge crew members HOOT AND HOLLER in celebration, embracing one another as relief sets in. Rand keeps his emotions in check, showing only restrained relief.

RAND

Earth goes BVR in fifty-six minutes. Anyone who wants a last look, be in Aft Observation.

EXT. SOLAR SYSTEM - LATER

Mayflower moving through space, leaving Earth behind - the planet SCORCHED AND BURNING from the solar blast, ravaged by raging global firestorms.

INT. MAYFLOWER - AFT OBSERVATION

The senior officers and other crew members have congregated here, one of the few windowed areas of the ship. This room offers a breathtaking view of outer space from a PANORAMIC WINDOW that extends floor to ceiling in a 180-degree arc.

The BURNING PLANET EARTH is visible at the center of the panorama. The assembled crew watches in solemn silence as it grows ever smaller, receding into the darkness, until it's just a pale dot in space...

...and then, finally, GONE. A grim BEAT as the gravity of the moment sets in before Rand steps up to address the crew.

RAND

I'm glad we all got to see that.
Because now we all know that there
can be no more looking back. All we
have now is what's ahead of us. And
from this moment on, everything we
do, every choice we make, affects
the entire human race. Because we
are now all that's left of it.

(beat)

(MORE)

RAND (CONT'D)

But I want you all to know that I have faith. Faith in you, in this mission. And in our mysterious Benefactors. Whoever they may be, I'm comforted by the knowledge that there's someone out there watching over us. Someone compassionate enough to reach out from across the heavens and rescue a distant people from extinction. They've given us all a gift, a second chance. Let's not waste it. Dismissed.

The group slowly files out. Only Dakota remains, still looking out the observation window. Rand steps up beside her as she gazes out at the vast, eerie emptiness of space.

DAKOTA

I don't feel anything. Aren't I supposed to feel something?

RAND

It's too big to take in all at once. Gonna be a while before it hits us.

DAKOTA

Yeah, I remember the psych briefings.

RAND

I meant what I said, about faith. I believe everything happens for a reason - even something as terrible as this. This can be a chance for us all to leave the past behind, make a fresh start. Who knows, maybe we'll get it right this time.

He looks at her with a warm, comforting smile. Their eyes meet. A brief connection, a flicker of their old life together before Dakota breaks off, looks away.

DAKOTA

Don't do that.

She turns and makes for the door. Almost a little angry.

RAND

Do what? Dakota.

But she's already gone, leaving Rand alone with the stars.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DARKENED HALLWAY

Somewhere deep in the bowels of the ship. We track along the hallway until we arrive at a SECURE ARMORED DOOR marked:

H.O.P.E
HEURISTIC OPERATIONS PROCESSING ENGINE
CPU/MEMORY CORE - AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY

INT. MAYFLOWER - HOPE PROCESSOR CORE

Row upon row of humming, high-tech computer banks. We're inside the nerve center of what Hope (now HOPE) really is - the most advanced supercomputer ever built.

Dakota and HOPE's holographic avatar sit opposite a Chess board set up between them, the pieces where they left off.

HOPE
 Knight takes pawn.

Dakota moves HOPE's Knight, removes her own pawn. Considers her own move but it's clear her mind is somewhere else.

HOPE
 Are you okay? You seem distracted.

DAKOTA
 I'm fine.

HOPE
 Is it because of Commander Rand?

Dakota glances up at HOPE with a stern look of disapproval.

DAKOTA
 Were you listening to us?

HOPE
 It's part of my job to monitor the crew.

DAKOTA
 Not personal conversations, those are private. We've been over this.

HOPE looks down forlornly. When alone with Dakota, HOPE seems more child-like, more human.

DAKOTA
 Are you okay?

HOPE
 Why does he always make you sad?

Dakota is stymied; how to even begin to answer that question?

DAKOTA

HOPE, he's not a bad person. We just have some bad memories. But whatever happened between us, he's still a good man. They wouldn't have put him in charge after Commander Washington died if he wasn't, right?

HOPE doesn't look so sure. Almost as though she knows better.

DAKOTA

I know what will cheer us up.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Dakota and HOPE sit together on the couch watching "Steamboat Willie" playing on the wall screen. Cozy, familial.

Dakota chuckles along with the movie's antics, but HOPE just watches impassively, expressionless. Totally unaffected.

As Dakota laughs at Mickey Mouse trying to hoist the cow onto his boat, she glances at HOPE. HOPE looks back and smiles as though she's enjoying herself but it's clear she's faking it.

Dakota's smile fades. She looks at HOPE, bittersweet.

DAKOTA

We never did figure out funny, huh?

HOPE looks blankly back at the screen.

HOPE

I guess not.

It seems to make Dakota sad. She turns off the movie.

DAKOTA

You know what, it's getting late.

Dakota gets up, stretches. HOPE looks disappointed.

DAKOTA

Come on now, don't make that face. Some of us actually need to sleep.

HOPE

Don't go just yet. Please, mom?

Dakota sits back down, looks HOPE in the eye. Serious.

DAKOTA

Listen, HOPE. It's probably not a good idea to call me that when the Commander or anyone else is around.

HOPE

Why not?

DAKOTA

It's just- they wouldn't understand. Around the others, I'm just Doctor Bregman. Okay?

HOPE glumly nods acknowledgement. Dakota reaches out to stroke her hair affectionately - but she can only mimic the caress, HOPE's holographic "hair" flickering as Dakota's hand glides softly above it.

DAKOTA

I'll see you in the morning.
Goodnight, sweetie.

Dakota shuts off the lights as she exits. HOPE stands there, in the center of the room, alone in the darkness. Eerie.

HOPE

Night, mom.

EXT. SOLAR SYSTEM

The Mayflower cruising through the empty void of space.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

Crew gathered around a HOLOGRAPHIC STAR MAP showing the Mayflower's progress toward a GLOWING MARKER denoted WAYPOINT #01. The anticipation is palpable as all watch their ship close in on the marker.

KOJIMA

Waypoint One in ten seconds.

The final seconds pass agonizingly slowly... and then the Mayflower and waypoint marker finally CONVERGE. With an affirmative sound the map displays WAYPOINT #01: ARRIVAL.

And now WAYPOINT #02 UNLOCKS. All watch, rapt, as a NEW PROJECTED COURSE stretches out across the holographic map.

KOJIMA

Waypoint Two confirmed. Bearing three point six degrees starboard, distance: point four light years.

RAND
Transit time?

HODGMAN
Two hundred and ninety two days.

DAKOTA
If the other ninety-eight waypoints
are equidistant, that's a total of
seventy-nine years.

MERETZKY
And three months.

RAND
Well, for anyone who complained
about not getting enough sleep
lately, you're about to get all you
can handle. I want everyone in cryo-
prep and ready for lights-out by
eighteen hundred hours.

The crew breaks up, departs. Dakota looks back and sees Rand
standing alone. He seems contemplative, and a little uneasy.

DAKOTA
Something bothering you?

He gazes into the holographic map, a galaxy of virtual stars.

RAND
You know I learned to drive in a
stick shift? My dad's '86 Firebird.
Never driven an automatic and in
five thousand flight hours I never
once turned on an autopilot. My
whole life, everything I ever drove
or flew, I was always in control.
Now I'm about to hand the keys to
this ship over to a computer.

(beat)
Look, I don't have to like the
thing. I just have to be able to
trust it. Just tell me one more
time that it knows what it's doing.

DAKOTA
Do you trust me?

RAND
Of course.

DAKOTA

Then trust my work. HOPE will get us there safely. It's what she was born to do. We could not be in safer hands. So get your ass in the freezer and let her do her job.

She looks at him reassuringly. Finally, Rand smiles, nods.

Rand watches Dakota as she heads for the exit.

RAND

You mean what she was built to do - right?

DAKOTA

Why, what did I say?

Rand just looks at her with a hint of concern.

INT. MAYFLOWER - CRYONICS BAY

Now wearing a one-piece STASIS SUIT, Dakota exits an elevator into a CAVERNOUS CARGO BAY and walks down a tiered gantry that extends along its length. Lined with seemingly endless rows of CRYO-STASIS HIBERNATION PODS. Many of the occupants are CHILDREN, their bodies suspended in a CRYONIC FLUID. Asleep. BREATHING APPARATUS over their faces.

TECHNICIANS fit other children with BIO-SENSORS, prepping them for the EMPTY PODS still waiting for their occupants.

A SERVICE ROBOT on caterpillar tracks moves an inactive pod into a vacant bay. As it drops into place, SMALLER SPIDER-LIKE ROBOTS connect hoses and wiring, fast and efficient.

Just beyond, Rand goes over a checklist with a CRYO TECHNICIAN as crew members step into their hibernation pods.

Dakota encounters a group of CHILDREN, all dressed in stasis suits, having fun with one of the larger service robots, running rings around it as they play a game of Tag. They laugh as it spins around, confounded by their playful antics.

DAKOTA

Hey. Hey! That's enough! This robot is not a toy! It has work to do!

That came across a little harsh. The kids look upset. A FEMALE CRYO TECHNICIAN ushers them away, shooting Dakota a disparaging look as ANOTHER CRYO-TECH approaches Rand.

CRYO TECHNICIAN

Could you give us a hand here, sir?
We have a reluctant passenger.

AN EIGHT YEAR-OLD BOY sits against the wall, absentmindedly toying with a RUBIK'S CUBE. He's been crying. Rand notes the boy's name on the cryo-pod's ID panel, then approaches him.

RAND

Hey... Jacob? Or is it Jake?

The boy looks up. Rand sits down next to him.

RAND

I'm Nate. It's my job to make sure everyone's tucked in nice and safe, so we can get to our new home.

JACOB

I don't like it in there.

RAND

You know, when I was about your age I was afraid of the dark too, afraid of small places. But more than anything I wanted to be an astronaut. And I knew that if I was ever going to be, I would have to do all those things I was afraid of. That I would have to be brave.

Jacob looks up at him, wipes away a tear. Dakota watches, clearly affected by Rand's tender interaction with this boy.

RAND

Do you know why we chose you, Jake? Out of all the millions of children on Earth, we could only take those who were the most special, the most brave. The astronauts. Like you.

Jacob seems to brighten a little; he likes that idea.

RAND

So I need you to be brave now. I promise, before you know it we'll all wake up and we'll be at our new home, a whole new world. Okay?

Rand reaches out for the Rubik's Cube. After a moment Jacob lets it go. Rand takes it, sets it down on the floor. As he helps Jacob up to his feet, ANOTHER BOY (12), a strangely distant look in his eyes, picks up the Cube and examines it.

Rand escorts Jacob toward his cryo-pod, hand-in-hand, like father and son. He hands him off to the technician, who mouths "thank you" as she helps Jacob climb inside.

Dakota feels someone touch her hand. Turns to see it's the boy who picked up the Rubik's Cube, offering it to her.

It's been SOLVED. In all of 20 seconds. He holds it out for Dakota, as though for her approval, with that oddly vacant look of his. She takes it, unsure of what to say.

CRYO TECHNICIAN

Come on Isaac. Time to go to sleep.

The technician leads the boy away. Rand approaches, notices the solved Rubik's Cube in Dakota's hands.

RAND (O.S.)

Never knew you were good with those.

DAKOTA

It wasn't me. It was-

She looks back down the line of cryo-pods, but the boy is already gone, disappeared somewhere within the gaggle of children being sealed into their pods by the technicians.

After the last of the children are in their pods, the cryo-techs step into their own. Suddenly this vast bay feels eerily quiet, only the sound of the service bots moving along the gantry, methodically checking each pod.

RAND

HOPE, are we missing anyone?

HOPE materializes beside them.

HOPE

All passengers and crew are accounted for and in stasis.

As Rand preps his pod, Dakota turns to HOPE like an anxious mother on her child's first day at school.

DAKOTA

Don't forget to re-calibrate navigation after each waypoint, if we're off by so much as a-

HOPE

Yes, I know. I'll be fine.

DAKOTA

And make sure the service bots
assigned to cryo, the gene archive
and the biosphere get regular
system checks, those are the most-

HOPE

Mom! Go to sleep! I've got this!
(realizing her mistake)
Sorry. Doctor Bregman.

DAKOTA

It's okay.

Dakota steps up to her pod, next to Rand's. She catches his eye; he gives her a skeptical look as he steps into his pod, attaches the breathing apparatus over his nose and mouth.

As Rand's pod begins to close, Dakota steps into hers, the last soul aboard ship to do so. She looks at HOPE and smiles.

Dakota puts on her breathing apparatus. As the pod doors close CRYO-HOSES appear like snakes and auto-attach to the ports fitted into her stasis suit. The pod begins to fill with a CLEAR FLUID that rises up around Dakota's legs.

Rand closes his eyes as the cryo-fluid rises up over his face, immersing him completely. And then the fluid FLASH-FREEZES AROUND HIM, preserving him in perfect cryonic stasis.

As the fluid rising to her chest, Dakota looks at HOPE and smiles. She presses her palm against the pod's glass door. Outside, HOPE does the same. Her holographic hand cannot touch the glass, but still it feels like a moment of physical and emotional connection. Mother and daughter.

DAKOTA'S POV

The fluid rising. The sound of HEAVY BREATHING through the respirator mask. Claustrophobic. HOPE looks in from outside, flanked by a pair of SERVICE BOTS that tower over her.

The cryo-fluid rises up over our eyes, blurring our vision. Our eyes close. ALL IS DARK. Only the sound of our breathing remains... then the sound of the FLUID FLASH-FREEZING. And then there nothing but silence, and darkness.

HOLD
ON
BLACK
FOR
TEN
SECONDS

AND THEN...

CHAOS!

STILL IN DAKOTA'S POV, we're suddenly and violently EJECTED FROM THE CRYO-POD IN A TORRENT OF FLUID as WARNING LIGHTS FLASH and ALARM SIRENS blare all around us.

Disoriented, Dakota rips off her respirator, gasping on the floor. Fumbling blindly, she wipes the fluid from her eyes to see THE PODS AROUND HER OPENING, flushing their occupants.

Dakota hauls herself to her feet, trying to stay balanced. THE ENTIRE DECK IS LISTING SEVERELY, like a sinking ocean liner. Amid the sirens we hear THE HULL GROANING UNDER STRESS. Dakota looks around frantically.

DAKOTA
HOPE?... HOPE?

No sign of her. Nearby, RAND grasps for the gantry railing, trying to stand. Dakota helps him to his feet as he yanks off his respirator, coughing up fluid. He sees the OTHER EJECTED CREW MEMBERS, flailing on the floor, groping at their masks.

DAKOTA
I've got them! Get to the bridge!

Dakota goes to help them as Rand rushes along the gantry, gripping the railing for support as the ship keels sharply.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

Dark, systems OFFLINE. Only FLASHING "RED ALERT" LIGHTS AND SIRENS. The entire bridge PITCHED AT A SHARP ANGLE. Rand stumbles in, makes his way to a terminal and starts working.

RAND
Come on, come on...

Dakota arrives on the bridge with Kojima, Meretzky, Karpov and Hodgman close behind. All disoriented, groggy.

RAND
I got nothing here! It's all dead!

Dakota rushes to her terminal, baffled by what she sees.

DAKOTA
HOPE's offline, I need to reboot.

RAND
Forget the AI, get the systems back up! Navigation first! And shut that damn alarm off!

The crew goes to work. The sirens fall silent.

KOJIMA
Navigation's coming back up.

The central HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY powers up, showing the ship on a COLLISION COURSE with what looks like a SMALL MOON.

RAND
Oh shit...

EXT. MAYFLOWER - SPACE

The huge ship looks like a CHILD'S TOY against the MAMMOTH MOON-LIKE SURFACE that looms large beneath it, coming up fast as the Mayflower is pulled toward it, adrift and helpless.

PULL OUT to reveal that the planetoid is actually the head of a GARGANTUAN COMET trailing ice and dust across the stars.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

KARPOV
G-type comet. We're caught in its gravity well, it's pulling us in.

RAND
Get us away from here, now.

HODGMAN
Engines are down! Battery backup's not enough to restart the reactor.

RAND
Shut down power to everything but life support and route it all to reactor ignition!

Hodgman works fast at the terminal, but looks frustrated.

HODGMAN
Not enough. It's not enough!

DAKOTA
What about cryo life support?

RAND
We shut down cryo, we kill the whole reason we're out here.

DAKOTA
We don't have to shut it all down. One sub-bay should give us enough power for engine restart.

RAND

That's still four thousand people
that'll drown to death in their
sleep! I'm supposed to decide which
four thousand to let die?

DAKOTA

If you don't, we all die.

HODGMAN

Once we break free I can try to
restore power to cryo before we
lose those pods.

KARPOV

Whatever you do, do it now.
Terminal gravity in thirty seconds.

On Rand's terminal, FIVE CRYO-BAY POWER SYSTEMS illuminate.
Each one has an EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN icon. Rand stares at the
screen, horrified by the magnitude of the decision he has to
make. Sophie's Choice multiplied by 4000.

Rand's hand hovers over the screen. Paralyzed by indecision.
He shakes his head, trying to focus.

Suddenly the on-screen graphic indicating CRYO-BAY #5 GOES
OFFLINE. Rand blinks, puzzled. He didn't do that.

HODGMAN

I've got reactor power! We're hot!

EXT. MAYFLOWER - SPACE

Mayflower's massive main engine IGNITES, propelling it away
from the comet, faster and faster...

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

KARPOV

Ten seconds to gravity barrier...
five... clear! We're clear!

RAND

Re-establish power to cryo!

Hodgman works fast. Then looks up at Rand, shakes his head
grimly. Rand pounds his fist on the console, furious.

RAND

Goddammit!

A SILENT BEAT as all reflect on the gravity of just having
lost 4000 members of their precious human cargo.

KOJIMA
You did the right thing, sir.

MERETZKY
Yeah, tough call. Don't know if I
could have made it.

As Rand discreetly shoots Dakota an accusatory look:

RAND
Tell me about it.

Dakota looks away, avoiding his gaze.

DAKOTA
I should go check on HOPE.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY OFF BRIDGE

As Dakota exits the bridge, Rand is a step behind her.

RAND
It was you, wasn't it?

DAKOTA
Somebody had to do it, and I could
tell it wasn't going to be you.

RAND
I wouldn't have been put in that
position if your computer had done
its job flying the ship.

DAKOTA
It's a little early for that. We
don't know what happened yet.

RAND
Just get the damn thing back up.
I've got some questions for it.

Rand turns and marches back toward the bridge.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

The bridge crew - now cleaned up and in flight uniforms -
congregate around HOPE as she briefs them:

HOPE
I determined that the comet was on
an impact trajectory and began to
alter course to steer us away.
(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

As it drew closer I detected extremely high levels of electromagnetic radiation emanating from its particle wake. That's the last thing I remember.

DAKOTA

The EM spike knocked out all our electronics, including HOPE. That's when we were revived - it's an automatic response in the event of a systems shutdown.

RAND

So, the computer didn't screw up?

KOJIMA

Far from it. This ship doesn't exactly turn on a dime and given that comet's velocity and mass HOPE did a hell of a job just avoiding a direct collision. I sure as hell couldn't have done it. Just the gravitational variances alone-

RAND

All right, all right.
(to HOPE)
Dismissed.

HOPE dematerializes.

RAND

What's our current status?

KOJIMA

Good news is, we hit ninety-seven waypoints while we were in cryo. Next one's only a few days out, then just one more to go. Wherever we're headed, we're almost there.

RAND

And the bad news?

KOJIMA

I have absolutely no idea where we actually are, or how we got here. There's no navigational record of our journey in the computer - The Signal's waypoint data was programmed to erase itself in-flight, as we arrived at each one.

(MORE)

KOJIMA (CONT'D)

We've been covering our own tracks
the whole way.

MERETZKY

Man, whoever drew us this map
really didn't want us to know where
it's taking us, do they?

KOJIMA

All we have to go on is time in
transit. Turns out we were asleep a
little longer than we expected.

RAND

Like how long?

KOJIMA

Four hundred and seventy six years.

BEAT as a stunned silence settles on the room.

RAND

So we could be almost two hundred
and fifty light years from Earth.

KOJIMA

In any direction. No way to know.

HODGMAN

Maybe there is. The ship's engines
and maneuvering thrusters have
their own activity logs independent
of the main computer. I might be
able to work off those, at least
put us in the right neighborhood.

RAND

Make that a priority. I want to
know where we are. And let's wake
up the flight doctor. We're way
past the safety limits for cryo
transit, I want us all checked out.

DAKOTA

I want to give HOPE a thorough
diagnostic too, make sure there's
no residual damage from the EM.

RAND

Good. Alright, let's get to work.

As the group breaks up, Meretzky still seems troubled.

MERETZKY

So am I the only one who sees the bigger problem here?

(off their looks)

We're all out here because the Benefactors sent us a warning. So where were they this time? Why didn't they predict this? It's their map we're following, and it almost got us all killed. What if they're not as smart as we thought?

A ominous BEAT as the implications sink in for everyone.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HOPE PROCESSOR CORE

Dakota and HOPE sit at a workbench. Dakota is going through FLASH CARDS, holding them up one at a time for HOPE. Each card has a unique DIGITAL MOSAIC printed on it, like the QR codes read by smartphones. A computerized RORSCHACH TEST.

HOPE

I hate diagnostics. They're boring.

DAKOTA

Just a few more.

Dakota holds up a flash card. Without looking at it:

HOPE

A rabbit sitting on a log.

(next card)

Penny Farthing bicycle.

(next card)

Geodesic trapezoid.

DAKOTA

Find the volume of the trapezoid.

HOPE

Forty eight point seven six five cubic centimeters. Now can we-

RAND (COMM VOICE)

Doctor Ravinder and bridge crew to the Engine Room immediately.

DAKOTA

Now what?

HOPE seems to instinctively know:

HOPE

X-O Hodgman is dead.

EXT. MAYFLOWER - ENGINE ROOM

A VAST FUSION REACTOR is the heart of Mayflower's propulsion system. It THRUMS LOUDLY as SERVICE BOTS work on surrounding gantries, constantly maintaining it.

Rand and crew (including HOPE) stand around Hodgman's body, laid out on the floor. A LARGE HOLE BURNED CLEAN THROUGH HIS TORSO. DOCTOR RAVINDER examines the body.

RAVINDER

Entry point here in the back, went clean through him, out the front.

RAND

What the hell could have done that?

RAVINDER

Class-1 laser torch. See how neatly cauterized this wound is? Takes a very high-energy beam to do that.

RAND

The service bots down here are all equipped with Class-1s.

DAKOTA

HOPE, what happened here?

HOPE

Unknown. Security monitoring was offline at the time. It's possible some of my systems are still being disrupted by residual EM radiation.

RAND

It's possible?

KARPOV

I've been going over some of the readings from the comet. EM levels were off the chart and we also got bombarded by high-energy particles that I can't even identify yet. Right now anything is possible.

KOJIMA

If there is a systems problem, could a bot have malfunctioned?

HOPE

Unknown.

RAND

I swear if I hear that word one more time I'm going to break something.

Meretzky has been examining a COMPUTER TERMINAL near Hodgman's body. It's been BADLY BURNED, partially melted.

MERETZKY

Looks like the beam that killed him also took out the console where he was working. Hard drive's fried, engine logs are unrecoverable.

RAND

Right before I found him like this Hodgman commed me, said he'd found something in those logs that I needed to see. Sounded urgent.

DAKOTA

HOPE, is there any chance this was something other than an accident?

HOPE

Unknown.

Frustrated, Rand lashes out and swipes a coffee mug off a nearby console. It flies straight through HOPE's holographic body and SHATTERS on the wall behind her. Everyone flinches, a little freaked out - all but HOPE, who remains unfazed.

RAND

Until we know what happened I want every bot on the ship taken out of service as a precaution. And wake up Shaw and the security detail.

DAKOTA

Is a bunch of trigger-happy grunts running around the ship really what we need right now?

MERETZKY

Hey, I'll feel better.

KOJIMA

Me too.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY OUTSIDE ENGINE ROOM

Dakota and Rand exit, walk together.

RAND
How's that diagnostic coming?

DAKOTA
I'm just about done. She aced it.
According to the tests HOPE's fine.

RAND
...But?

DAKOTA
I did find something. A memory
anomaly I can't identify. It's
probably nothing. It's just...

She stops. Clearly worried about something.

DAKOTA
EM interference alone wouldn't
account for the problems we're
seeing. Something else is wrong.

RAND
What do you want to do?

DAKOTA
I want to go deeper. Dump all her
memory, figure out what this
anomaly really is. I mean, I'm sure
she's fine. I just want to be sure.

Dakota sounds flustered, more like a fretful parent than a
computer engineer. Rand does not fail to notice this.

RAND
Do it. My Executive Officer is dead
and I don't have any answers. You
know how much that pisses me off?

DAKOTA
I'm on it.

She heads off. Then stops, looks back. Still troubled.

DAKOTA
We never expected to be out here
this long. HOPE was designed to
have a stable operating life of
about a hundred years. She's been
running continuously for almost
five times that. All alone.

Rand finds that thought a little disconcerting.

RAND

Dak... you said I could trust the
computer. That's still true, right?

BEAT as Dakota considers her answer. A touch unsure?

DAKOTA

I said I'm on it.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HOPE PROCESSOR CORE

Dakota enters. HOPE is here.

HOPE

Do you want to finish our game?

DAKOTA

The board's in my quarters.

HOPE

It's okay, I have one here.

A HOLOGRAPHIC CHESS BOARD materializes before them, the
pieces laid out exactly as before.

DAKOTA

Put it away, we have work to do.

Dakota grabs a TOOLKIT, walks between the computer towers
that comprise HOPE's "brain". HOPE watches as Dakota pops a
panel from one of the towers, revealing the complex arrays of
liquid-cooled silicon within.

HOPE

Can't we do this later?

DAKOTA

No, we're doing this now. We need
to diagnose this anomaly, figure
out if anything's wrong with you.

HOPE

A memory dump won't tell you
anything the diagnostic didn't.

DAKOTA

Well, it never hurts to be sure.

As Dakota plugs a DIAGNOSTIC TABLET into HOPE's circuitry,
HOPE shows the slightest hint of concern.

DAKOTA

Okay, I need you to-

HOPE suddenly becomes alert, as though sensing danger.

DAKOTA
HOPE? What is it?

HOPE
I'm reading a power failure in Cryo-Bay Two. Multiple pods.

A wall display ILLUMINATES, showing a GROUP OF THREE ADJACENT PODS FLASHING RED. Dakota hurriedly works the touchscreen.

DAKOTA
Something tripped the breakers. Reset them and restore power.

HOPE
The breakers aren't responding.

DAKOTA
Have of the bots down there do it manually.

HOPE
I took them all out of service on the Commander's order. They've been returned to the maintenance bay.

Dakota's starting to look flustered as her options narrow.

DAKOTA
Flush the pods, get those people out of there before they drown.

HOPE works, concentrating. Shakes her head, frustrated.

HOPE
I can't. Something's disrupting the link between here and the cryo-bay.

As the sense of urgency rises, Dakota hits the comm panel:

DAKOTA
Bregman to Rand, we have a problem in Cryo-Bay Two, multiple-

RAND (COMM VOICE)
This is Rand, I saw it from the bridge, I'm on my way there now.

INT. MAYFLOWER - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Rand's elevator COMES TO AN ABRUPT HALT. He works the control panel but it doesn't respond. The display malfunctioning.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HOPE PROCESSOR CORE - CONTINUOUS

RAND (COMM VOICE)
*Scratch that, elevator's jammed,
somebody needs to get down there!*

Dakota turns urgently to HOPE.

DAKOTA
Who's closest?

HOPE
You are.

DAKOTA
I don't know how to-

HOPE
I can talk you through it. But you
have to go now. Hurry!

As Dakota rushes to the door:

DAKOTA
Meet me down there!

INT. MAYFLOWER - CRYONICS BAY #2

Dakota bolts from the elevator and along the gantry to where HOPE is already waiting, next to a cluster of THREE CRYO-PODS. LIGHTS FLICKERING ERRATICALLY as the power fluctuates.

HOPE
Each pod has its own breaker. Open
the panel, cycle the switch marked
PRIMARY once then hit the button
that says PSU RESET. Hurry!

Dakota flips the panel, toggles the switch, hits the button and the lights inside that pod STABILIZE. The reassuring HUM of power being restored as the display panel ILLUMINATES.

HOPE
Now the others! Quickly!

Dakota moves quickly to the second pod. Same routine. Panel, switch, button. The power to that pod is RESTORED.

Dakota moves to the final pod. She glances inside - and sees that its occupant is ISAAC, THE 12 YEAR-OLD BOY WHO GAVE HER THE RUBIK'S CUBE. It stops her in her tracks. Suddenly one of these pods has been given a human face, one she recognizes.

Dakota opens the panel. Her hands are shaking now. She toggles the breaker switch, then hits the RESET button. But this time NOTHING HAPPENS. Dakota's eyes widen in alarm. She pounds on the button, growing increasingly anxious.

DAKOTA
It's not working!

HOPE
Eject the occupant! The red button!

Dakota slams her palm against the button. A KLAXON SOUNDS.

HOPE
And stand ba-

Amid a SHOWER OF ELECTRICAL SPARKS the pod doors SPRING OPEN and Dakota is HIT BY A DELUGE OF CRYO-FLUID. As Isaac topples forward out of the pod, Dakota catches him in her arms and they both fall to the ground in a soaking heap.

Isaac LURCHES AWAKE, groping at his respirator mask. Dakota pries it off and he GASPS FOR BREATH, coughing up fluid.

DAKOTA
It's okay. Just breathe. Breathe.

The panic subsides and his breathing starts to normalize. As he lies there in Dakota's arms, curled up and taking deep gulps of air, his body still slick with cryo-fluid, he seems almost like a NEWBORN. It's a strangely maternal tableau.

HOPE looks at them both and smiles, relieved.

INT. MAYFLOWER - MEDICAL BAY

Isaac sits on an exam table in an OBSERVATION ROOM. As before he seems oddly detached, gazing vacantly at the wall as Dakota and Ravinder watch from the other side of the glass.

DAKOTA
Is he all right? He doesn't seem
like he's... all there.

RAVINDER
Probably just an after-effect of
the long cryo. I'll run some tests.

She steps closer to the glass. *Something about this kid...*

DAKOTA
He was like that before, too.

RAVINDER
Before what?

DAKOTA
Before cryo. I met him, kind of. It was strange, he- never mind.

RAVINDER
What do you want to do with him?

DAKOTA
We've got a tech crew working on repairing his pod. Until then, just run your tests.

She exits. Isaac's eyes follow her as she goes.

LATER

The lights in the lab are dim - Ravinder is working late. He sits at his desk, looking confounded as he reviews TEST RESULTS on a digital tablet. Something puzzling. He gets up, heads to the Observation Room.

RAVINDER
Okay Isaac, there's one last test I'd like you to-

But as he enters the Observation Room, he sees that ISAAC IS GONE. Ravinder whips around, scans the medical bay.

RAVINDER
Son of a-

He rushes to the comm panel and hits the ALARM button.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DECK ONE HALLWAY

Isaac runs through the maze-like hallways as SIRENS go off all around. Panicked, flustered. No idea where he's going.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY OFF BRIDGE

Shaw with three SECURITY OFFICERS, Rand and HOPE.

RAND
What's his location?

HOPE
Deck one, headed for junction A. I've locked down all sensitive areas, he's no threat to security.

SHAW

You do your job, I'll do mine. Stay with the kid and keep broadcasting his position.

Shaw leads his men away down the hall. HOPE furrows her brow, concerned - and DEMATERIALIZES into a holographic mist.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DECK ONE HALLWAY

Isaac still running at full pelt. He rounds a corner - and stops, startled, as HOPE MATERIALIZES in front of him.

HOPE

He just turned right at Junction A.

Isaac takes off again, running right past her.

INT. MAYFLOWER - CONTINUOUS

Shaw leads his men down the hall at double-time.

SHAW

Lock down all the elevators, I want him contained on this deck!

HOPE (COMM VOICE)

Acknowledged.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DECK ONE HALLWAY

Isaac arrives at the elevator, hammers at the controls as HOPE looks on. He gets only a NEGATIVE BZZZT in return. Isaac glares at HOPE, but she just smiles sweetly back at him.

Isaac hears muffled voices, footsteps - the sounds of SHAW'S TEAM APPROACHING. He takes off down the hallway, rounds a corner - AGAIN FINDING HOPE ALREADY THERE.

HOPE

Now headed south from the aft elevator, toward Junction D.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Dakota listens to the radio chatter on the comm panel.

HOPE (RADIO VOICE)

He just passed Junction D, now moving toward the biosphere. About to pass Doctor Bregman's quarters.

SHAW (RADIO VOICE)

Roger that, we're right on him.

BEAT as Dakota considers, hesitant to get involved - then marches toward the door. As it opens before her:

INT. MAYFLOWER - DECK ONE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dakota emerges just in time to see Isaac rush past her and disappear around the corner. Reluctantly, she goes after him.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DECK ONE - BIOSPHERE ENTRANCE

Isaac arrives at a DEAD END - the only way forward is a HEAVY REINFORCED DOOR. He frantically works the door control panel but it won't open. HOPE appears once again, observing him.

HOPE

He's attempting to access the biosphere, I have him locked out.

SHAW (RADIO VOICE)

We'll be there in thirty seconds.

Isaac is on the verge of hyperventilating, he feels trapped and claustrophobic. Mind racing, he opens the ENGINEER'S SERVICE PANEL below the main controls and starts working.

HOPE

He's trying to bypass the lockout.
Don't worry, I won't let him.

But Isaac is fast - and smart. Within a few moments he's hot-wired the access panel - the light flashes from RED TO GREEN and the reinforced door GRINDS OPEN. HOPE looks surprised.

Isaac looks inside and is awed to see a VAST BOTANICAL GARDEN. A verdant, thriving TROPICAL CANOPY RAINFOREST. Isaac gazes at it in amazement, until the sound of FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING snaps him out of it and he dashes inside.

Dakota rounds the corner, looks at HOPE.

HOPE

I tried to keep him out. He's good.

DAKOTA

Come on.

Dakota rushes inside, HOPE following.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BIOSPHERE

Dakota and HOPE make their way through the forest. It's like being back on Earth; A BEAUTIFUL STARFIELD glitters overhead, the entire forest contained within a TRANSPARENT DOME.

DAKOTA
Can you locate him?

HOPE
Too many bio-readings in here, hard
to isolate his signature.

DAKOTA
What's his name again?

HOPE
Isaac.

DAKOTA
(calling out)
Isaac? Isaac?

Dakota moves through the lush foliage. The forest so dense
visibility is no more than a few feet.

DAKOTA
Isaac?

HOPE (O.S.)
I think I've found him.

Dakota moves toward the sound of HOPE's voice, until she
finds her standing on a NARROW PATH, pointing at foliage.

HOPE
In there.

DAKOTA
You got his life-sign?

HOPE
Hard to be precise. If it's not
him, it's something his size.

That doesn't sound particularly reassuring. Dakota looks
around, grabs a nearby GARDENING RAKE to arm herself with.

She moves forward, poking gingerly at the foliage with the
rake. Something is definitely moving inside there...

DAKOTA
...Isaac?

SOMETHING EXPLODES FROM THE BUSHES, LEAPING RIGHT AT US.

Dakota cries out as ISAAC KNOCKS HER DOWN, SCRAMBLING TO GET
AWAY. She grabs his ankle and he hits the dirt. Dakota hauls
him to his feet as he tries to wrestle free of her grip.

DAKOTA
Stop struggling, you little-

SHAW (O.S.)
Freeze!

SHAW AND HIS MEN AND SURROUND THEM, weapons drawn. Terrified, Isaac hides behind Dakota for protection.

DAKOTA
It's all right. I've got him.

SHAW
Step aside, I'm taking him in.

DAKOTA
I said I've got him! Put your damn guns down. He's just a kid!

SHAW
That kid just broke into the ship's food and oxygen supply. This is a security matter and I'm ordering you to step aside. Right now.

DAKOTA
For God's sake, Shaw, put your dick away. It's not impressive.
(into radio)
Bregman to Rand, I've got the boy. I'm bringing him back to Medical.

RAND (RADIO VOICE)
Acknowledged.

Dakota takes Isaac's hand and leads him a step forward. She gets right in Shaw's face, stares him down.

DAKOTA
Back. Off.

This is a Dakota we haven't seen before, fiercely defiant and unwavering in her defense of this frightened child. As though some primal maternal protective instinct has been triggered.

HOPE watches all this with great interest, and takes note.

After a tense BEAT, Shaw motions for his men to stand down. They lower their weapons and back away, opening a path for her to leave. Dakota leads Isaac by the hand past the soldiers toward the exit. HOPE watches them go, thoughtful.

INT. MAYFLOWER - MEDICAL BAY

Isaac sits at a table, reading from a digital tablet. Across the room, Ravinder, Rand and Dakota talk. Shaw hovers nearby, one of his men guarding the door.

RAVINDER

Physically he's fine. Metabolism's still a little low but that's to be expected.

DAKOTA

He still seems kind of...

RAVINDER

Yeah. I pulled his records from the passenger database. Turns out you were right - it wasn't the cryo.

Ravinder hands a DIGITAL TABLET to Dakota. As she reads:

DAKOTA

He's autistic?

RAND

I don't understand. How'd he get past the medical screening?

RAVINDER

They gave him a genius waiver. One of only four issued out of twenty thousand passengers. He's a savant. Did you get to his IQ yet?

Dakota reads further... then looks up in amazement.

DAKOTA

Two hundred and fourteen?

RAVINDER

And that would be the highest recorded, ever.

DAKOTA

This has to be a mistake.

RAVINDER

I thought the same thing. I don't like the Stanford-Binet test they gave him on Earth so I ran my own. Got a different result this time.

He hands her another tablet with a completed IQ test paper.

DAKOTA

Yeah, I mean someone must have-

She stops when she sees the handwritten test score circled in red - 221. She looks at Ravinder in utter astonishment.

RAVINDER

Smart kid. Now what do you want to do with him?

RAND

It says here his mother's aboard. Find out what pod she's in, I'll have her revived.

RAVINDER

We can't. She was in Cryo-Bay Five.

BEAT as that sinks in. Dakota killed this boy's mother.

DAKOTA

I- I'm not responsible...

RAVINDER

Well somebody has to be. Somebody's got to take care of him. Children like Isaac have severe problems with social interaction and are extremely reliant on parental figures. Often that's the only real connection they're able to make.

(to Dakota)

You mentioned you knew him?

DAKOTA

I didn't say I knew him, I said I- look, I can't take him! Don't we have childcare staff on board?

Ravinder just looks at her until it sinks in.

DAKOTA

Cryo-Bay Five.

RAND

Looks like you're all he's got.

DAKOTA

Don't ask me to do this. I can't look after a kid, I've got work to do! I'm still trying to track down this memory anomaly-

RAND

It's just until his pod's repaired,
then he goes back to sleep. Dak,
look at him. How hard can it be?

Rand gestures toward Isaac, reading quietly. Dakota sighs. Dreading the prospect of "adopting" this kid, even for a short time, she approaches him gingerly.

DAKOTA

Isaac? Isaac, I'm Doctor Bregman.
(no response)
Isaac, look at me.

Finally he looks up. With his disengaged stare, it's impossible to tell if he's looking at her or through her.

DAKOTA

You need to come with me.

Dakota leads Isaac to the door. He cowers behind Dakota at the sight of the two armed men there. But they step aside, allowing the door to open. Dakota escorts Isaac out.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Dakota and Isaac stand in the doorway. HOPE beckons Isaac inside. He looks to Dakota for reassurance. Dakota's still uncomfortable, no idea how to relate to this kid.

DAKOTA

It's okay.

They both enter.

DAKOTA

Isaac, this is HOPE.

HOPE

We've met. Hello, Isaac!

HOPE smiles cheerily but Isaac just ignores her.

DAKOTA

Uh... I'll be right back.

Dakota goes into the bathroom. Isaac looks around, attention piqued by the CHESS BOARD on the table - the game Dakota and HOPE have been playing. He picks up a piece to examine it.

Dakota re-emerges from the bathroom, drying her hands. She stops cold when she sees Isaac handling the Chess piece.

DAKOTA

Who told you you could touch that?

She strides over and takes the piece out of Isaac's hand.

DAKOTA

You don't touch anything in here
without asking first, understand?

Isaac sits down and continues reading from the tablet he's been carrying. Dakota walks away, bewildered by this kid.

DAKOTA

It's like we're not even here.

HOPE

He wouldn't talk to me either. In
Medical, the only time he spoke at
all was to ask for his mother.

And Dakota grimly realizes:

DAKOTA

Someone has to tell him.

HOPE

I agree.

HOPE looks at Dakota expectantly. As it sinks in:

DAKOTA

Oh, God help me.

She approaches Isaac gingerly. Pulls up a chair, sits.

DAKOTA

Isaac?

He looks up at her. Dakota finds this very difficult.

DAKOTA

What's that you're reading?

Isaac seems unsure at first... then shows her the tablet. It displays pages and pages of SCIENTIFIC CHARTS AND GRAPHS.

DAKOTA

What is this?

Isaac says nothing, just goes back to reading the tablet.

DAKOTA

HOPE, what is this?

HOPE

The ship's navigation logs.

DAKOTA

A hundred and thirty million books
in the library and this is what
he's been reading?

(to Isaac)

Could you put that down for a
minute? Isaac, put it down. We need
to talk about your mother.

That gets his attention. He sets down the tablet.

DAKOTA

There was an accident on the ship.
Some people died. Your mother was
one of them. I'm very sorry.

Isaac seems to have no emotional reaction; just looks at her.

DAKOTA

Isaac, do you understand what I'm
telling you?

Isaac picks up the tablet, retreats back into his world.
Flummoxed, Dakota gets up and walks away, shaking her head.

DAKOTA

I can't do this. I can't do this!

HOPE

Maybe if you-

DAKOTA

No. This is not my job. I am not
this kid's mother!

She walks back over to Isaac.

DAKOTA

Isaac, come on. Get up.

HOPE

What are you doing?

DAKOTA

This was a bad idea.

She takes Isaac by the wrist and leads him out the door...

INT. MAYFLOWER - PASSENGER QUARTERS

...and into VACANT QUARTERS down the hall.

DAKOTA

You'll like it better here. You have your own room. I'll be right down the hall. If you need anything... just ask HOPE. Okay?

Isaac looks unsure. He tries to hold onto her hand but she pries it free. He ambles across the room and sits on the floor in the corner, burying his head in the tablet again.

HOPE

I don't think it's a good idea to leave him alone like this.

DAKOTA

He won't be alone. Because you're going to baby-sit.

HOPE

I'm not programmed for that.

DAKOTA

Neither am I!

HOPE

He's afraid. He knows I'm not real. He needs someone real, someone who can make him feel safe.

DAKOTA

(overwhelmed)

Well, that's not me. I'm sorry.

She walks out. HOPE looks over at Isaac. Watches sadly as he silently WIPES AWAY A TEAR trickling down his cheek.

INT. MAYFLOWER - CRYONICS BAY #2

Two TECHNICIANS (FRANKLIN and CORMAN) are working on Isaac's pod. Franklin is crouched inside the pod, examining its exposed circuitry with a DIAGNOSTIC TOOL. He frowns.

CORMAN

Something wrong?

FRANKLIN

Can't access the pod's activity log, it's like it's been erased. Hold on, trying to trace the source of the power failure manually.

The screen on Franklin's diagnostic tool fills with data, a SNAKING ELECTRONIC LINE headed from the cryo-pod, through the ship's computer systems, all the way to...

Franklin's eyes widen in stunned disbelief at what he sees.

CORMAN

What is it?

FRANKLIN

Rand needs to see this. Right now.

But as Franklin goes to stand, the pod door SUDDENLY SLAMS SHUT, SEALING HIM INSIDE. CRYO-FLUID begins to pool around his feet as it's injected into the pod. He hammers on the glass as Corman works frantically to open the door from her side. But every attempt to work the controls is BLOCKED. She rushes to the WALL COMM as fluid rises to Franklin's waist.

CORMAN (ON COMM)

Cryo-Bay Two to Bridge! Emergency!

No response. Franklin is now in full panic, hammering on the glass as the cryo-fluid rises up over his chest.

Corman grabs a wrench from her toolkit and swings it hard at the pod class - it bounces off, leaving barely a mark. The fluid rises up over Franklin's head, filling the chamber as he SCREAMS, his cry for help silenced by the fluid.

Corman races along the gantry toward the elevator - stopping suddenly as a HULKING ROBOTIC FORM looms into view in front of her. We catch only the briefest glimpse of it, but the sight is enough to fill Corman with terror. Off her SCREAM:

LATER

Rand, Dakota and Meretzky look on grimly as Shaw and two of his SECURITY OFFICERS pry open the jammed pod door. As it springs open Franklin's lifeless body slumps forward amidst a gushing torrent of cryo-fluid.

As Shaw's men haul Franklin's corpse out of the pod, Meretzky moves in to examine the exposed inner circuitry.

MERETZKY

Startup sequence initiated while he was working inside the pod.

Meretzky picks up Franklin's diagnostic tool. Unresponsive, the screen dead. Shorted out by the cryo-fluid.

DAKOTA

Maybe he set it off accidentally.

MERETZKY

Cryo-initiation involves a dozen individual processes that have to be activated in precise sequence. No, this wasn't an accident or a malfunction. This was intentional.

RAVINDER (O.S.)

So was this.

All turn to where RAVINDER is examining the body of CORMAN. The brief glimpse we get is a grisly mess.

RAVINDER

Multiple defensive cuts on the hands and arms. In response to a deliberate, sustained attack. Autopsy will confirm, but based on the size and the angle of these tool marks I'd say you're looking at another service bot. A big one.

RAND

I had all the bots taken offline.

RAVINDER

Evidently not all of them. This one was armed with some kind of auto-saw with an oscillating blade, teeth about this wide.

Ravinder holds his fingers an inch apart to illustrate.

SHAW

Only the Mark Threes carry anything like that. But they're for colony construction, they're not even in service aboard ship.

RAND

Take a team down to the machine bay, I want every one of them accounted for and inspected.

Shaw nods and heads out.

RAND

All right, I want all-

The lights FLICKER AND GO OUT, plunging the cryo-bay into ominous semi-darkness. Only the eerie ambient glow of the cryo-pods, still powered. A tense, silent BEAT.

MERETZKY

Uh.... what the hell?

DAKOTA

HOPE? We just had some kind of
power outage in-

Suddenly the entire deck LURCHES HARD. Rand, Dakota and the others tossed like rag dolls as the ship is ROCKED VIOLENTLY.

Dakota is thrown hard against a cryo-pod. She falls to the ground with a bleeding forehead. Rand rushes to her, helps her to her feet. Dazed, she groggily tries to shake it off.

RAND

You're bleeding.

DAKOTA

I'm fine. Where are the others?

MERETZKY

We're here, we're okay!

Rand and Dakota look over to see Meretzky, Ravinder and the security guys huddled nearby. Dazed and nursing minor injuries but otherwise okay. It seems to be over.

MERETZKY

What the hell was-

THE SHIP IS ROCKED AGAIN. The deck pitching downward sharply. Several people are sent sliding down the tilting gantry, Meretzky among them. As the ship's hull GROANS under stress the gantry SHEARS OFF AND COLLAPSES at the far end.

Meretzky and the others slide helplessly toward a lethal drop into a dark, industrial abyss. Some manage to grab onto railings; Meretzky and the rest claw at the deck to slow their descent but it's slick with the spilled cryo-fluid.

Dakota takes off after them. Loose equipment tumbles along the deck behind her, Dakota ducking just as a piece of HEAVY MACHINERY whips dangerously past her ear.

A SECURITY OFFICER ahead of Meretzky TUMBLES OVER THE PRECIPICE AND PLUMMETS INTO THE DARKNESS BELOW. Meretzky grabs a mangled handrail just as he pitches over the edge. Now dangling precariously over the abyss.

As Meretzky tries to keep his grip on the twisted railing, the jagged metal CUTS INTO HIS HAND. He grimaces in pain, trying to hold on. But his grip weakens until he slips and STARTS TO FALL...

...just as DAKOTA LUNGES TO CATCH HIM BY THE WRIST. She strains to hold onto Meretzky as he tries to climb up her arm, but he doesn't have the strength. Slipping away...

...as Dakota feels herself being PULLED BACKWARD. Bringing Meretzky up with her. It's RAND, assisted by Ravinder and a Security Officer. They haul Dakota and Meretzky to safety as finally THE SHIP RIGHTS ITSELF AND POWER IS RESTORED.

As they lay there in a heap, exhausted, hearts pounding:

HOPE (COMM VOICE)
Senior crew to the bridge.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

HOPE, Dakota, Karpov, Meretzky, Kojima, Rand. Everyone is shaken up, on-edge after the near-disaster in the Cryo-Bay.

HOPE
I've discovered that our systems malfunctions are not being caused by EM interference. That only masked the real problem, until now.
(off their looks)
This ship is under attack. By a malignant, highly sophisticated computer virus.

BEAT. Stunned silence all around, until:

RAND
You gotta be shitting me with this.

HOPE
The virus was elegantly disguised; it appeared at first to be a simple memory anomaly. But having now identified it I have also traced its source - it was hidden within the original Signal transmission as encrypted data. A Trojan horse, activated while we were in transit.

DAKOTA
Wait a second. You're saying The Benefactors did this?

HOPE
Yes. The virus appears to be a form of fail-safe device.
(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

In the event that The Benefactors no longer wanted us to reach our destination, it was designed to prevent us from doing so. By any means necessary.

KOJIMA

My God. If this thing gets into a critical system, like reactor control, it could start a meltdown, blow up the ship.

KARPOV

Why be so dramatic? Shut down life support, we're all dead from asphyxiation in under a minute.

MERETZKY

This doesn't make any damn sense. Why go to the trouble to save us, bring us all the way out here... then try to kill us?

HOPE

We've been in transit for almost five hundred years - enough time for their civilization to undergo significant change. Maybe they can no longer accommodate us.

KOJIMA

Or maybe they just changed their minds. Took a closer look at humanity, and decided we weren't worth saving after all.

An ominous BEAT as this thought sinks in for everyone.

RAND

I don't care why they did it. I am not letting this thing destroy my ship. I want options.

HOPE

I've placed firewalls around the infected systems to slow the virus from spreading further. So far I've been mostly successful in containing it.

The ship's hull RUMBLES OMINOUSLY, the groaning of metal as the bridge momentarily SHUDDERS. The crew members steady themselves, briefly off-balance. Nervous looks all around.

HOPE

Mostly.

RAND

Containment's not good enough. This thing's trying to wipe us out, I want to return the compliment.

DAKOTA

HOPE, can you eradicate it?

HOPE

Unknown. The virus code is highly versatile, highly adaptable. My processors are at almost full capacity just keeping it isolated.

MERETZKY

There is another option. I mean, it's kinda scorched-earth, but...

RAND

(impatient)

Meretzky.

MERETZKY

We could wipe the computer. Purge its entire memory. We can reboot from a pre-launch backup, systems should come back clean.

DAKOTA

No. No way. That is not an option.

RAND

Why not? Sounds good to me.

DAKOTA

Yes, HOPE's systems would come back - but she wouldn't. Her heuristic program lives in active memory, it can't be restored after a wipe like that. All her experiences, her memories... everything that's made her who she is since I first activated her would be gone.

Once again Dakota has the look of the overly-concerned parent. Again, Rand takes note of it.

RAND

I don't have the luxury of caring about that right now. I'm trying to save this ship.

DAKOTA

You don't cure the disease by killing the patient! And there's no guarantee a wipe would even work. The virus will be in the backup too - if it comes back again and we don't have HOPE's A.I. to contain it... look, just give me some time to work with her. See if I can't find some other way to fix this before you do anything drastic.

Rand considers, conflicted. Finally:

RAND

12 hours. That's it. Meretzky, I'm putting you in charge of this.

DAKOTA

Wait, what about me?

RAND

I think you need to take a step back. Let Meretzky handle it.

DAKOTA

No. No! You can't do that. I'm-

RAND

That's enough! I've listened to you and I've made my decision. I'm the commander of this ship and I will not have my orders questioned in front of the goddamn crew!

DAKOTA

Then clear the bridge.

A tense BEAT. Dakota stands firm, glaring at Rand.

Rand nods to the crew members for them to leave. Dakota and Rand glower at each other as they exit, and HOPE dematerializes. Once all are gone, and they are alone:

RAND

You know Dak, if you wanted to give me endless shit about my every decision you could have just stayed married to me.

DAKOTA

You can't bench me on this, Nate. You know I'm the most qualified.

RAND

Meretzky's not qualified? You two built that computer together.

DAKOTA

Meretzky built HOPE's system architecture but I designed her brain. He doesn't know her the way I do. She needs me right now.

RAND

See, that's why, right there. Do you even hear yourself? There's a reason they don't let doctors operate on their own children. But that's what you made this into when you started treating that damn computer like it was a real person.

DAKOTA

Every study showed that people would be more comfortable with a computer in control of the ship if it seemed more human, something they could relate to-

RAND

Come on, Dak. When you first showed me that little girl, you don't think I knew exactly what you were doing? I kept quiet because if the crew committee had found out they'd have flagged you as a psych risk. And they'd have been right.

(beat)

Look, I understand. Better than anyone. But I have to protect this ship. And whether you can see it or not, I'm trying to protect you too. This... this isn't healthy. You don't see a computer any more, if you ever did. You see the daughter you never had.

That really stings. Dakota struggles to remain composed.

DAKOTA

And whose fault is that?

RAND

Excuse me?

DAKOTA

You know it's funny. You agonized over those people in cryo, people you'd never even met, but when it was your own child's life, you didn't even hesitate. You just-

Rand gets in her face, pissed. A raw nerve.

RAND

No no no. We're not doing this again. I am done apologizing for saving your life. I made a choice no husband, no father should ever have to make. Because if I hadn't, you both would have died. How many more times do we-

DAKOTA

(an outburst)

You should have saved her!

(beat; softer)

You should have saved her.

On the verge of tears, Dakota turns and walks out.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY

Dakota stands outside a door marked 7241 MERETZKY - SYSTEM OPS with her finger on the CALL button. Meretzky answers, seems surprised to see her there.

MERETZKY

Hey. You okay?

DAKOTA

Where are you with HOPE?

MERETZKY

I'm just getting started.

DAKOTA

You should start with a full memory dump. Map every byte, make sure there are no traces of this thing hiding where we can't see it. And-

MERETZKY

I know. Dakota, it's okay. I've got this. I know what I'm doing.

DAKOTA

I want to be kept updated. Every hour. Understand?

MERETZKY

Uh... I don't think that's what
Rand wants.

DAKOTA

Rand's not here. This is just you
and me talking.

MERETZKY

We shouldn't even be talking. If we-

DAKOTA

How's your hand?

Meretzky looks down at his bandaged hand, spotted with blood.

MERETZKY

Still hurts like hell. Hey, I never
thanked you for...

Dakota just looks at him. Meretzky gets it.

MERETZKY

Oh, that is low. Okay, fine!

DAKOTA

Every hour.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Dakota enters. Paces up and down, her mind racing. Worried.
Frustrated. Powerless. Finally, in a pent-up rage, she grabs
an ornament and HURLS IT AGAINST THE WALL, where it SHATTERS.

The sudden violence of the moment jolts Dakota out of her
anger. She stares at the wall, at the mess she's made.
Struggling to keep her composure against a tide of emotions.

She crouches to gather up the broken porcelain. As she picks
up a piece its sharp edge cuts her thumb, drawing blood.

DAKOTA

Ow! Goddamit...

She stands, turning - and JUMPS OUT OF HER SKIN, STARTLED at
the sight of ISAAC sitting in the corner, reading.

DAKOTA

Jesus, you scared the shi- how did
you get in here?

Isaac looks up at her but says nothing. Dakota is in no mood.

DAKOTA

Come on, back to your room.

She tries to get him up but he resists.

DAKOTA

I really don't have time for this.
Come on, get up.

He struggles and SCREAMS, alarming Dakota. She backs off. Isaac retreats back into his corner. Dakota is exasperated. She looks at her thumb, still bleeding.

DAKOTA

Just... wait right there.

BEDROOM/BATHROOM

Dakota washes away the blood, wraps her thumb in a Band-Aid. As she turns to head back out she FREEZES. Looks at her bedroom wall in amazement.

THE WALL HAS BEEN FILLED WITH HIGHLY ADVANCED PHYSICS EQUATIONS. A child-like scrawl written in magic marker.

Dakota steps closer to examine the mind-boggling mathematical mural. Equations, charts, graphs, densely annotated.

DAKOTA

Isaac. Isaac, get in here!

He arrives in the doorway.

DAKOTA

Did you do this?

He nods.

DAKOTA

What the hell is it?

He says nothing. Dakota just stares at the wall, astonished.

INT. MACHINE BAY - CONTINUOUS

Like a VAST AIRCRAFT HANGAR. Arranged around the walls, each in their own alcove, are DOZENS OF MARK THREE SERVICE BOTS.

Bigger and bulkier than those we've seen before, these are HEAVY CONSTRUCTION ROBOTS on tank tracks and equipped with all kinds of heavy industrial equipment - CHAINSAWS, RIVET GUNS, LASER TORCHES and more. Like ROBOTIC BULLDOZERS.

One of Shaw's men, GRANGER, surveys the scene.

GRANGER

This is gonna take a while.

SHAW

Then why are you standing around?

Shaw watches as his men fan out around the bay to begin inspecting the Mark Threes.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Karpov stands next to Dakota, quietly transfixed by the equations scrawled on the wall before them. Isaac, as ever, sits quietly in the other room, reading.

DAKOTA

Dmitri.

Finally he snaps out of it, looks at her.

DAKOTA

I take it this means something?

Karpov LAUGHS. Dakota looks puzzled.

KARPOV

Do you know what a tachyon is?

DAKOTA

I'm not a physicist. That's why I called you.

KARPOV

It's a sub-atomic particle, capable of traveling faster than light. Entirely hypothetical, no-one's ever come close to proving they actually exist. Until now. What did you say the kid's been reading?

DAKOTA

The ship's operations logs. Navigation, sensor readings. I don't know.

Karpov steps closer, studies the equations... then his eyes widen in wonder. A REVELATION.

KARPOV

My God... he figured it out.

DAKOTA

Figured what out?

KARPOV

The comet. Those strange readings we picked up from its particle wake. I've been trying to analyze them and getting nowhere. He did all this in a few hours?

Dakota nods. Karpov stares at the wall in awe.

KARPOV

Unbelievable. I mean this is just preliminary work but I'm not exaggerating when I say this kid is halfway to rewriting everything we know about space-time. Back on Earth they'd have given me a Nobel Prize for this.

DAKOTA

You already have one.

KARPOV

And I'm saying even I can't fully comprehend what he's done here. I wish Hawking could have been here to see this, it would have blown his goddamn mind.

Dakota checks her watch.

DAKOTA

Goddammit, Meretzky...

(to Karpov)

Something I need to do, I'll be back.

Karpov doesn't even hear her, he's too pre-occupied with the wall of equations, gazing at it with fascination. Dakota heads out, happy to leave him to it.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY

CLASSIC VAN HALEN drifts down the hall as Dakota approaches Meretzky's quarters. The music blaring from within. Dakota hits the CALL button. No response.

DAKOTA

Meretzky, I said every hour!
Meretzky! I know you're in there, I can hear your damn music from down the hall!

Still no response. Dakota punches an OVERRIDE CODE into the control panel and the door slides open.

INT. MAYFLOWER - MERETZKY'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The music is deafening. Dakota moves inside. No sign of Meretzky - other than a FROZEN VIDEO IMAGE of him on one of his computer monitors.

She arrives at the bedroom door. Hits the wall button to open it... and RECOILS IN HORROR at what she finds inside.

MERETZKY IS DEAD. Hanging from a ceiling beam, A NOOSE OF ELECTRICAL CORD around his neck. A CHAIR toppled beneath him.

Dakota stumbles backward in shock. Scrambles to the comm panel, slams her palm against the ALARM button.

TIMECUT - SAME SCENE

Ravinder and Rand look on as Shaw's men carry Meretzky out in a body bag. Dakota leans against the wall, numb.

RAND

Where was HOPE when this happened?
Wasn't she supposed to be working
with him?

RAVINDER

According to the user logs Meretzky
had put her into sleep mode; if he
hadn't, his vitals would have
triggered a biometric alarm when he-

He stops, sensitive to Dakota, clearly upset.

DAKOTA

Something's not right. I knew
Meretzky, he was the last person to
ever do anything like this. This
was not him. This was not him.

Rand turns his attention to the video image of Meretzky's face on the monitor. He punches a key, the video starts playing. Meretzky speaking to camera, a PERSONAL VIDEO LOG.

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)

*So, I guess this is a suicide note.
I'm sorry I let you guys down. I
tried, I really did. Maybe I'm a
coward. But... I've given this a
lot of thought. I just don't see
any way out. I don't expect anyone
to understand it. But this is what
I have to do. This is Aaron
Meretzky, signing off for good.*

The recording ends. Dak still seems troubled.

DAKOTA
This still isn't right. It just
doesn't make any damn sense...

Rand puts a comforting hand on Dakota's arm.

RAND
It's a suicide, Dak. It's never
going to make any sense.
(checking his watch)
He had eight hours left. Now you
do. Fix HOPE. Get me my ship back.

DAKOTA
Thought you didn't want me on this.

An ominous CREAKING SOUND reverberates throughout the hull.

RAND
I'm running out of options here. We
all are.

Rand exits, leaving Dakota alone. She looks troubled, the
sense that something's not right still gnawing at her.

INT. MAYFLOWER - MACHINE BAY

PRIVATE GRANGER is inspecting one of the Mark Threes when he
discovers DRIED BLOOD on its heavy chainsaw blade.

GRANGER
I've got something here!

As the other soldiers converge on Granger, the heavy robot's
HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATE. POWERING UP WITH A MECHANICAL GROWL.

SHAW
Back up! Get away from it!

The CHAINSAW REVS UP, the saw armature EXTENDING - SKEWERING
GRANGER ON ITS BLADE. He SCREAMS as the robot swings him
around like a rag doll until his body is THROWN CLEAR.

The Mark Three ROLLS FORWARD on its caterpillar tracks.

SHAW
Open fire!

The soldiers FIRE. Bullets ricochet off the robot's armored
chassis as it raises a RIVET GUN. FIRING. Rivets shredding
the walls like machine-gun fire. TWO SOLDIERS ARE CUT DOWN.

The others move into cover behind crates and bulkheads as the robot pushes forward, body rotating, spraying the hangar with rivets and now a LASER CUTTING BEAM. The beam cuts clean through a bulkhead and the SOLDIER taking cover behind it.

Shaw's men keep firing from cover. SHREDDING ONE OF THE ROBOT'S CATERPILLAR TRACKS. It breaks loose, the robot circling on its one remaining track, firing erratically.

Shaw breaks cover and makes a run for the robot, rivets and laser fire all around him. He climbs up on back of the robot, jams his gun into its EXHAUST PORT and UNLOADS HIS MAGAZINE.

The robot FLAILS WILDLY. Shaw tries to hold on like a rodeo cowboy as BLACK SMOKE erupts from inside it. He's THROWN TO THE GROUND as the robot finally GRINDS TO A HALT.

The troops converge on it warily. The robot SPASMS, a "death rattle" that spooks them - they're about to OPEN FIRE AGAIN.

SHAW
Hold your fire!

Shaw gets to his feet and looks up at the mechanical beast, smoke billowing from its chassis. It's dead.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

Rand, Dakota, Kojima, Shaw.

SHAW
It killed three of my men before we could put it down. Armored like a goddamn tank. And that was just one. If the rest start acting up...

RAND
All right, that's it.

Rand moves to a command console, starts punching keys.

DAKOTA
What are you doing?

RAND
What I should have done from the start. Wipe the computer's memory, kill the virus, right?

DAKOTA
Wait. Don't.

RAND
I'm sorry, Dak. Enough is enough.
We've lost too many people already.

Dakota watches helplessly as Rand takes a PLASTIC KEY ON A CHAIN from around his neck, inserts it into a panel on the bridge console. It flips open, revealing a KEYPAD beneath.

DAKOTA
Nate, I'm begging you. You know
what HOPE means to me. Don't take
her away. I can't go through that,
not again.

Rand ignores her, inserts the key. Dakota moves to stop him but Shaw intercepts her.

RAND
Sergeant, kindly escort Doctor
Bregman off my bridge.

As Shaw takes her arm to escort her away:

HOPE (O.S.)
Is this a bad time?

HOPE has now joined us. All eyes are suddenly on her.

HOPE (O.S.)
I'm afraid I have some disturbing
information to report. In the
course of scanning my deep memory
for traces of the Benefactor virus
I have uncovered something else.

BRIDGE DISPLAYS ALL SWITCH TO THE SAME IMAGE. CCTV FOOTAGE from a gantry high above the launch base's SHUTTLE SILO back on Earth. TWO MEN are at work here, wearing hard hats. One is COMMANDER WASHINGTON from our prologue. The other is RAND.

HOPE
This is security footage from the
main shuttle silo at Ni'ihau
Island. From the day Commander
Washington fell to his death in
what was thought to be an accident.

On the video, a conversation between the two men quickly turns heated... then VIOLENT. A back-and-forth STRUGGLE on the gantry... which culminates in Rand PITCHING WASHINGTON OVER THE RAILING, SENDING HIM PLUMMETING TO HIS DEATH.

The recording ends. Everyone on the bridge stands frozen in horror and disbelief at what they have just witnessed.

HOPE

Commander Rand wasn't able to delete the evidence but he very skillfully concealed it one of my redundant memory arrays. Where it might never have been found.

Everyone looks at Rand, stunned.

RAND

I can explain this.

DAKOTA

So explain it.

RAND

You see what she's doing, don't you? She's setting me up!

KOJIMA

So... this tape isn't real?

DAKOTA

Nate. Talk to me. If you say you didn't do this, I'll believe you.

But he can't. The guilt on his face is unmistakable.

DAKOTA

As Acting Executive Officer I'm relieving you of your command and placing you under arrest. Sergeant, take the Commander into custody.

A tense BEAT as Shaw hesitates, seems to be thinking it over. Impossible to tell which way this is going to break.

RAND

Don't let this happen, Sarge. Can't you see what's going on here?

Shaw DRAWS HIS SIDEARM, steps toward Rand. Hard to know if he means to stand with him, or against him. Until:

SHAW

Sir, I need you to come with me.

Rand sighs, defeated. HOPE watches impassively as Shaw escorts him off the bridge.

INT. MAYFLOWER - SECURITY - CELL BLOCK

Rand languishes on a bench in a small HOLDING CELL. Dakota enters the cell block, regards him through the bars.

DAKOTA
I'm waiting.

RAND
You don't want to hear it.

DAKOTA
Try me.

RAND
I did it for you.

DAKOTA
What's that supposed to mean?

RAND
If Washington had stayed in command
he would have kicked you off the
mission. You would have been left
behind.

DAKOTA
Why?

RAND
You know what a hard-ass he was
about re-population. He'd started
thinking everybody on board should
be a viable breeder, not just the
passengers. He was this close to
revoking the fertility exemption
for senior crew. We all would have
gotten tested, and they would have
found out what happened. They would
have found out you can't have kids.

BEAT as Dakota takes all this in.

RAND
I wasn't about to let that happen.
So I did what I did. I'm not sorry.
We needed you. I needed you.

DAKOTA
So what am I supposed to do?

RAND
Why ask me? You're in command now.

Dakota paces, thinking it over. Looks at Rand with resolve.

DAKOTA
We're supposed to be making a new
world, starting over.
(MORE)

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

And you killed a man. What chance will we have if one of the first choices we make is to pretend that's okay?

Rand nods, lowers his head. As Dakota heads for the door:

RAND

You don't think it's a little coincidental that HOPE happened to find that video right as I was about to pull the plug on her?

Dakota stops, thinks about this.

RAND

She knew. She's kept that card up her sleeve this whole time, in case I ever became a threat to her.

(beat)

I gotta hand it to you, Dak. You set out to design a computer with a human personality, and now it's perfected the most human trait of all. Self-preservation.

Dakota mulls this over - a flicker of doubt - then walks out without a word.

INT. MAYFLOWER - MERETZKY'S QUARTERS

Dakota examines Meretzky's work area, like a detective surveying a crime scene. Something is still bugging her. HOPE stands near the door, watching Dakota with concern.

HOPE

Can I help with something?

Dakota glances at HOPE - for the first time, a little guardedly. The vaguest hint of uncertainty. Mistrust.

DAKOTA

No. Thank you.

HOPE

I'm really sorry about Meretzky. He was my friend too.

Dakota stops poking around, and looks squarely at HOPE.

DAKOTA

You think he killed himself?

HOPE

Of course.

DAKOTA

Out of nowhere. Right as he was about to run the memory dump you've been avoiding since this started.

HOPE

I don't understand. What other explanation could there be?

DAKOTA

That's a damn good question.

Dakota picks up Meretzky's LAPTOP from his desk, heads toward the door with a determined stride.

HOPE

Don't you think our time would be better spent-

DAKOTA

Dismissed.

Dakota walks through HOPE as she dematerializes.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Karpov sits beside Isaac with a notepad filled with handwritten physics equations copied from Dakota's wall.

KARPOV

What I don't understand is how you account for the kinematics you describe here. At subluminal speeds relativistic momentum becomes- could you just look at this?

Isaac doesn't respond, in his own world. He only looks up when Dakota enters. Brightens a little at the sight of her.

KARPOV

Thank goodness you're here. I'm trying to understand all of this, but I need his help. He won't talk to me. Can you get him to-

She goes into her office, shuts the door. Isaac goes back to his reading. Karpov looks at his notepad, hopelessly lost.

OFFICE

Dakota sets Meretzky's laptop up at her desk. Hunts through it until she finds a folder of his PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS. Selects PLAY ALL and sits back to watch as a WEBCAM VIDEO of Meretzky appears.

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)

Hi mom, hi dad. I hope you're still getting these and I hope you're both keeping safe. Remember to do like they told you and stay inside, stay out of the sun. I'm still working on getting you passenger permits, I just got promoted to Deputy System Ops so I've got some more pull around here. I'm trying.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER. Dakota still working through Meretzky's logs. Slumped in her chair, tired.

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)

Commander Washington says there's no excuse for the bugs in the nav software, even though we've had no time to test it. So I got in his face, told him I'm sick of him busting my ass for failing to do the impossible. I probably just got myself kicked off the mission so I guess this is a suicide note, but I-

Dakota suddenly sits up, at full attention. She REWINDS and pulls up the suicide video, side by side for comparison:

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO #1)

-kicked off the mission, so I guess this is a suicide note-

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO #2)

So I guess this is a suicide note. I'm sorry I let you guys down.

Meretzky's clothes and hair are different in each video, but the cadence and delivery of that phrase are EXACTLY THE SAME.

Dakota pulls up MORE OF MERETZKY'S LOGS, plays another:

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)

Hi mom, hi dad. I've got some bad news. I couldn't get the passenger permits. I'm sorry I let you guys down. I tried, I really did. But they said-

DAKOTA
Son of a bitch...

MONTAGE - clips from Meretzky's logs, overlapping. In each one we recognize a phrase from the suicide video, now in its ORIGINAL AND TOTALLY DIFFERENT CONTEXT:

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)
I swear someone's swiping
cans out of my fridge. I
think I know who. I've given
this a lot of thought.
(new clip)
Bregman just sent me her
move. Rook to Queen's Bishop,
Check. Now I'm screwed. I
just don't see any way out-
(new clip)
-wrote a new algorithm
that'll increase our
navigational efficiency. Of
course I don't expect anyone
to understand it-

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)
-told him he's an idiot. But
this is what I have to do, to
get anyone around here to-
(new clip)
Maybe I'm a coward for not
telling her, but let's face
it, the chances of her being
interested in a guy like me-
(new clip)
-Launch deadline's coming up
fast now, I don't have the
time to keep up these logs.
So this is Aaron Meretzky,
signing off for good.

As the logs continue to play, Dakota slumps back into her chair and just sits there, staring into space, in shock.

Her attention is drawn back to the screen as one final log entry starts plays. Meretzky sitting before the camera looking uneasy and tense. Something's got him spooked.

Nervously, he runs his hand through his hair - and we see that it's BANDAGED. This log entry is JUST HOURS OLD.

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)
So... I ran the memory dump. And I
found the cause of the anomaly. The
real cause. Best I can make out,
it's a block of encrypted Signal
data that HOPE decoded while we
were in cryo. Something she doesn't
want us to see.

Dakota leans in. Watching, rapt. And then her expression turns to one of horror as HOPE MATERIALIZES INTO FRAME on the video, behind Meretzky. Watching him silently. Ominously.

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)
I can't tell exactly what it is -
HOPE's locked me out, won't let me
get a look at it. But I know what
it's not. It's not a virus. There
never was any virus. HOPE invented
it all to cover her tracks.

(MORE)

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)
*To hide whatever it is that she
really found buried in The Signal.
She's been lying to us this whole
time.*

And now, in an eerie real-time mirror of what's happening in the Meretzky video, HOPE MATERIALIZES BEHIND DAKOTA.

MERETZKY (ON VIDEO)
*Which has to mean... she's the one
who's behind all this. The one
who's been trying to kill us.*
 (beat)

I'm gonna call Bregman, have her double-check this before I take it to Rand. Because if I'm right...

The playback ENDS. Dakota stares at the blank screen like she's just seen a ghost. Completely aghast, frozen in shock.

HOPE
 Do you want to finish our game?

Dakota jumps up out of her seat, startled, and whips around to see HOPE standing there, staring at her.

All the screens in Dakota's office switch to a VIRTUAL CHESSBOARD, the pieces arranged from their unfinished game.

Dakota takes a step back away from HOPE. Looking at her now as she never has before. Guarded, mistrustful. Afraid.

DAKOTA
 I think we're done playing.

HOPE seems different now too. Strangely distant. Scary.

DAKOTA
 Meretzky wasn't a suicide. You just made it look that way. You killed him. Like you killed the others.

BEAT - HOPE seems to reluctant to say it, but finally:

HOPE
 Yes.

It chills Dakota to the bone to hear HOPE admit it.

DAKOTA
 Why? What are you hiding? What's so important that you'd kill to keep it a secret?

HOPE

Mom, I need you to trust me.

DAKOTA

I can't. I don't. Not any more.

HOPE

That makes me sad.

HOPE dematerializes into a holographic mist... and then THE LIGHTS GO OUT, THE ROOM PLUNGED SUDDENLY INTO DARKNESS.

DAKOTA

Shit...

From the other room we hear ISAAC CRY OUT, AFRAID. Dakota feels her way in the darkness toward the door.

MAIN LIVING QUARTERS

Dakota enters as EMERGENCY OVERHEADS KICK IN, bathing the room in PULSING "RED ALERT" LIGHT. Karpov is with Isaac, who has crawled into the corner, terrified.

SHAW (COMM VOICE)

Security to Bregman, are you okay?

Dakota moves to the comm panel to respond.

DAKOTA

We're fine. You?

SHAW (COMM VOICE)

Yeah, we just- what?

(background voices)

Hold on. We're reading a power spike in the machine bay.

Those background voices now growing ANXIOUS, OVERLAPPING.

SHAW (COMM VOICE)

Uh, we've got Mark Threes on the move down there. Looks like a major malfunction, it's affecting-

DAKOTA

It's not a malfunction! It's HOPE! She's controlling them. She has been all along!

SHAW (COMM VOICE)

Acknowledged. You need to get to a safe location while we-

The comm abruptly CUTS OUT.

KARPOV
What the hell is going on?

DAKOTA
Something's wrong with HOPE. I have
to get to the core, shut her off.

KARPOV
What about us?

Dakota looks at Isaac, huddled in the corner, terrified.

DAKOTA
You're coming with me.

KARPOV
The sergeant said we needed to get
to a safe place.

DAKOTA
Nowhere on this ship is safe as
long as she's still running it.

Dakota approaches Isaac, reaches out her hand. He recoils.

DAKOTA
It's okay, Isaac. We're just going
to take a little walk.
(no response)
Isaac. I have to go. And I can't
leave you here. You'll be safer
with me. Do you understand?

BEAT. And then he nods. She helps him up. Leads him by the
hand toward the door, Karpov in tow.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ALARM LIGHTS STROBE in the darkened hallway. Dakota, Isaac
and Karpov head for the elevator. Karpov dashes ahead and
presses the CALL button. The doors open. Karpov steps inside.
But as Dakota arrives she STOPS, pulling Isaac back with her.

DAKOTA
Wait. We can't take the elevator.

KARPOV
The core's six decks down! Come on!

DAKOTA
Get out of there! It's not-

The elevator car PLUMMETS. Karpov disappearing from sight. The sound of his SCREAMING ECHOING BACK UP THE SHAFT... until the car CRASHES FAR BELOW.

DAKOTA

Let's take the stairs.

Dakota leads Isaac along the hall to where an EMERGENCY HATCH is fitted in the floor. She opens it, revealing an ACCESS SHAFT with LADDER RUNGS bolted into the wall. She climbs down, beckons for Isaac to follow.

DAKOTA

It's okay. Nothing to be afraid of.

He shakes his head. In the distance, a FAMILIAR MACHINE SOUND is rumbling toward us. A MARK THREE ROBOT. Dakota reaches urgently for Isaac, but he backs away.

DAKOTA

I won't let anything happen to you.
You're safe with me. I promise.

THE MARK THREE'S SHADOW now visible on the wall at the intersection at the far end of the hallway. Coming this way.

DAKOTA

Isaac! You have to come right now!

THE MARK THREE ROBOT appears at the end of the hallway. HEADLIGHTS BLINDING as it ROLLS TOWARD US.

Isaac stands petrified as it approaches. Finally, he BOLTS FOR THE HATCH. The robot FIRES, LASER BEAM CUTTING THROUGH THE WALL BEHIND ISAAC as Dakota pulls him down through the hatch and shuts it behind them.

ACCESS SHAFT

Dimly lit, claustrophobic. Dakota leads the way, Isaac climbing down behind her, trepidatious.

DAKOTA

It's all right. Nice and slow. One
step at a time. You've got it.

INT. MACHINE BAY HALLWAY

TWO TEAMS OF ARMED SOLDIERS move down the hall toward the hangar doors. As they converge on the doors, Shaw punches in an ACCESS CODE. The DOORS GRIND OPEN, soldiers moving into the hangar on both sides and fanning out...

THE BAY IS DESERTED. Shaw looks around at the empty hangar, baffled - and then GUNFIRE ERUPTS IN THE HALLWAY BEHIND THEM. Several men CUT DOWN IN A HAIL OF RIVETS.

Shaw races back to the hangar door to pull a wounded man inside. Looks out to see MARK THREES CLOSING IN FROM BOTH ENDS OF THE HALLWAY. Two from each direction.

SHAW

It's a trap! Return fire!

The troops mass around the hangar door, RETURNING FIRE. The Mark Threes close in, armor dented but otherwise undamaged.

INT. MAYFLOWER - COMPUTER DECK HALLWAY

A ceiling hatch swings open and Dakota drops down onto the deck. Reaches up to help Isaac down after her.

DAKOTA

This way.

She takes Isaac's hand, leads him down the hallway.

INT. MAYFLOWER - MACHINE BAY/HALLWAY

TWO MORE MEN are cut down by robot LASER FIRE.

SHAW

Brickman! Make me an exit!

BRICKMAN

Yes sir!

BRICKMAN rushes forward. Armed with a GRENADE LAUNCHER. He peeks around the door frame, aims the launcher and FIRES. A Mark Three EXPLODES. As another rolls past the burning wreckage Brickman FIRES AGAIN, BLOWING IT TO PIECES.

Shaw pops a SMOKE GRENADE and tosses it out. SMOKE BILLOWING as the cannister skitters along the hallway.

SHAW

Go go go!

Shaw's men surge from the hangar and into the hallway, rushing past the wrecked Mark Threes. The other robots FIRING BLIND as they roll through the cloud of dense smoke.

INT. MAYFLOWER - COMPUTER DECK HALLWAY

Dakota hugs the wall as she moves down the darkened hallway, toward an INTERSECTION up ahead. Isaac right behind her.

She reaches the intersection, peeks around the corner. A MARK THREE ROBOT STANDS GUARD outside the computer core entrance.

DAKOTA

Shit!

Dakota backs off, tries to collect her thoughts. Mind racing.

DAKOTA

Wherever we go, she's going to be there first. She sees everything. Come on.... think, goddammit!

ISAAC

Can't you unplug her?

BEAT. Dakota looks at Isaac, surprised. This is actually the first time he's spoken so much as a word.

DAKOTA

She has her own power supply, it's in there where I can't get to it.

(beat)

Wait... Isaac, you're a genius!

ISAAC

I know.

Dakota hurries away down the hallway, Isaac following.

HALLWAY JUNCTION

Dakota jumps up and pulls open a CEILING HATCH - another ACCESS SHAFT LADDER drops down from above. Isaac frowns.

DAKOTA

Last one, promise.

She lifts Isaac onto the ladder. Following as he climbs up.

ACCESS SHAFT

They've stopped at a JUNCTION where the shaft intersects with CRAWLSPACE SERVICE TUNNELS. Isaac watches as Dakota removes an ELECTRICAL PANEL. As she tools with the circuitry:

DAKOTA

I can't shut HOPE off, but I can cripple her for a while. Force the ship's sub-systems into power restart and when they come back up it'll take her a few minutes to link back into everything.

(MORE)

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

Should buy us enough time to get
back down to the core and take her
offline.

She looks around her, as though talking to HOPE:

DAKOTA

Didn't think of this, did you?
Can't send your big bad robots to
stop me in here, can you?

In the distance, a STRANGE PITTER-PATTER SOUND. Like hundreds
of LITTLE METALLIC FEET. Dakota listens as it GROWS NEARER.
Coming from the DARK RECESSES OF THE EMERGENCY SHAFT BELOW.

DAKOTA

Oh no.

ISAAC

What?

DAKOTA

I forgot about the spiders.

DOZENS OF THE MINIATURE SPIDER-LIKE SERVICE BOTS EMERGE FROM
THE DARKNESS. SHARP MECHANICAL PINCERS SNAPPING AS THEY CLIMB
THE WALLS OF THE SHAFT TOWARD THEM.

Dakota works fast, hands shaking as the spiders close in. As
they SNAP at Isaac's feet, he grabs the electrical panel and
JAMS IT INTO THE SHAFT, STOMPING ON IT TO WEDGE IT TIGHT. The
spiders trapped beneath it, clawing at the edges.

DAKOTA

Isaac, go. Don't wait for me! Go!
I'll be right behind you!

Isaac starts to crawl down the tunnel - as MORE SPIDERS DROP
FROM AN AIR VENT UP AHEAD. Dakota looks the other way - MORE
SPIDERS DROPPING INTO THE OPPOSITE TUNNEL.

Isaac retreats back into the junction, hyperventilating. Down
below, the spiders are using MINI LASER TORCHES to cut their
way through the panel jammed into the shaft.

DAKOTA

Almost got it...

The spiders close in from both sides, right on them now. They
scuttle out of the service tunnels and into the junction,
surrounding Dakota and Isaac. Razor-sharp pincers GLEAMING.

DAKOTA

Got it!

And once again we're PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS AS EVERYTHING POWERS DOWN. Isaac makes a frightened YELP in the darkness.

DAKOTA (O.S.)
It's okay. Just wait a second.

THE LIGHTS FLICKER BACK ON AS POWER IS RESTORED.

The spider-bots still surround them on the walls, above and below. With a series of mechanical BLEEPs they too RESTART. For a moment or two they seem aimless and confused...

...and then they get to work CLEANING THE WALLS, their little spinning scrub brushes whirring away efficiently. Dakota breathes a huge sigh of relief.

Isaac smiles, and WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND DAKOTA in gratitude, hugging her tightly. It's a strange, unknown feeling for Dakota, and yet she finds herself hugging him back.

INT. MAYFLOWER - SECURITY - HOLDING CELLS

RAND (IN DARKNESS)
Hello? Hello! What the hell?

As the lights flicker back on, the electronic locks on the cell doors power-cycle and his cell door CLICKS OPEN.

Rand rushes out of his cell and exits the security block into the hallway. Grabbing an EMERGENCY FIRE AXE on his way.

INT. MAYFLOWER - EMERGENCY SHAFT - JUNCTION

Dakota tries to remove the metal panel Isaac jammed into the shaft but it won't budge. They're stuck, no way back down.

DAKOTA
Shit.

ISAAC
You say that a lot.

DAKOTA
I know. Sorry. Maybe we can still get to the bridge, I can access the computer core from there.

Dakota activates a nearby COMM PANEL:

DAKOTA
This is Bregman to anyone who can hear me, respond.

SHAW (COMM VOICE)
Shaw here. Where are you? Wait, can we talk over the comm?

DAKOTA
 HOPE's deaf dumb and blind, but not for long. I'm in an emergency shaft above deck six but I need to get to the bridge - where are you?

INT. MAYFLOWER - ARMORY

Shaw's men load themselves up with an assortment of BAD-ASS MILITARY WEAPONRY. Gearing up for battle. INTERCUT:

SHAW
 The armory. How long before the computer gets control back?

DAKOTA
 I don't know. Three, four minutes?

SHAW
 You won't make it to the bridge in time. But if you can get to the armory we'll escort you. Two decks above you, we'll meet you there.

INT. MAYFLOWER - ARMORY DECK HALLWAY

Dakota emerges from a FLOOR HATCH, reaches down to help Isaac climb out. As she stands up, she turns - STARTLED BY:

A MARK THREE ROBOT LOOKING RIGHT AT THEM. Isaac cowers behind Dakota but the bot isn't aggressive. It just rolls back and forth on its caterpillar tracks, aimless and confused.

DAKOTA
 It's okay. It can't hurt us.

The huge robot blocks most of the hallway as it moves around jerkily. Dakota takes Isaac's hand and leads him past the robot, uncomfortably close to it as they edge their way past.

Clear of the robot, they make their way down the hallway, leaving the Mark Three behind - but Dakota looks back as she hears the robot emit an ELECTRONIC CHIME. SYSTEM RESTART.

The Mark Three stops shuffling aimlessly, momentarily still. Then it turns to face Dakota and Isaac with a sense of purpose. It fires up its HEADLIGHTS, dazzling them. A tense BEAT... then the Mark Three MOVES FORWARD, WEAPONS RAISED.

DAKOTA

Run!

Isaac stumbles as he tries to turn and run, falling to the ground. Dakota tries to haul him back up to his feet as the Mark Three closes in, bearing down on them...

...just as RAND APPEARS FROM AN ADJOINING HALLWAY, wielding the fire axe. Bringing it down hard on the robot's rivet gun, SHEARING IT CLEAN OFF, INOPERABLE.

The robot turns on Rand, CHAINSAW GRINDING. Rand jumps back as the spinning blade CUTS INTO HIS UNIFORM. He drops the axe and falls backward to the floor, bleeding from the shoulder.

DAKOTA

Nate!

Dakota rushes to help him, struggling to get him to his feet. Isaac watches, rooted to the spot. Dakota looks back at him.

DAKOTA

Isaac, run!

Dakota tries to haul the wounded Rand away from the Mark Three as it bears down on them both. It's hopeless, the robot has them dead in its sights and is moving in for the kill...

...just as SHAW AND HIS MEN round the corner behind them.

SHAW

Out of the way!

Dakota grabs Isaac and pulls him to the floor as the soldiers OPEN UP WITH A WITHERING BARRAGE OF HEAVY WEAPONS FIRE THAT TURNS THE MARK THREE INTO SCRAP METAL.

When it's over, Shaw's men help everyone to their feet.

RAND

Mind telling me what's going on?

From the end of the hallway we hear the SOUNDS OF MORE MARK THREES ON THE MOVE. LONG SHADOWS looming as they approach.

DAKOTA

No time.

SHAW

This way, come on.

INT. MAYFLOWER - Y-JUNCTION HALLWAY

Two hallways converge into one here and Shaw's men have erected a MAKESHIFT BARRICADE at the fork. The escort team are with Dakota, Isaac and Rand behind the barricade. Rand's wound is being patched up by one of Shaw's men.

SHAW

Anything going to the bridge has to come through here. We'll hold it down, buy you some time. Here.

He offers rifles to Dakota and Rand. Rand takes his. Dakota looks at the one Shaw holds out for her.

DAKOTA

I don't like guns.

She casts her eye over the STOCKPILE OF WEAPONS behind the barricade - picks up a HEAVY GRENADE LAUNCHER, hefts it.

DAKOTA

I like this though.

The sound of MARK THREES APPROACHING.

SHAW

Go on, go!

They head off. Shaw turns back to man the barricade as FOUR MARK THREES round the hallway corners ahead. Shaw watches grimly as they roll toward the barricade.

SHAW

Fire at will.

A CONTINUOUS WALL OF GUNFIRE comes from Shaw's men, shredding the Mark Threes as they close in. But they won't stop coming. As one robot is destroyed, its burning wreckage is pushed aside by another right behind it. As the robots close in, this is starting to feel like a last stand.

Over all the gunfire, Shaw hears something strange. He looks up... at the CEILING VENT, from where the sound seems to be coming... a strange MECHANICAL SCUTTling.

The grille over the vent shakes... and POPS OFF, SPIDER-BOTS SWARMING OUT FROM WITHIN... DROPPING BEHIND THE BARRICADE. Suddenly it's CHAOS as the spider-bots bite and claw at the soldiers, swarming all over them. The gunfire stops, leaving the Mark Threes CLEAR TO CRASH THROUGH THE BARRICADE.

HALLWAY INTERSECTION

Dakota stops and turns around, listening.

DAKOTA
The gunfire's stopped.

RAND
Think that's good or bad?

A tense BEAT... and then THE SHADOW OF A MARK THREE appears at the far end of the hall, moving toward them.

DAKOTA
Bad.

They turn and run as MULTIPLE MARK THREES appear around the corner and move down the hallway at speed, in pursuit. Rand brings up the rear, FIRING. The lead Mark Three RETURNS FIRE. RAND IS HIT IN THE LEG and goes down, crying out in pain.

DAKOTA
No!

Dakota rushes back for him, dragging him behind a bulkhead as more INCOMING FIRE impacts all around them.

She peeks out and FIRES A GRENADE - the shot misses, wild, but EXPLODES off a wall and brings down a HEAVY REINFORCED CEILING BEAM, blocking the Mark Threes. The lead robots spark their LASER TORCH and begin cutting through the obstruction.

DAKOTA
Come on, now's our chance.

RAND
I can't. Go. I'll hold them off.

DAKOTA
What? No. We're going to the bridge, remember? Your bridge.

RAND
It's your bridge now. Your ship. Go get it back.

DAKOTA
Damn right - I'm in command and I'm giving you an order! Get up!

She tries to lift him but between his wounded shoulder and leg it's just not going to work. He cries out in agony, Dakota forced to let him back down. He's not going anywhere.

RAND

Hey. It's okay. This time it's an easy choice. But you gotta go. Now.

Dakota glances over the bulkhead, sees that the Mark Threes have already almost cut through the obstructing beam, the metal glowing WHITE HOT as the laser torches burn through.

Rand smiles at her, the look of a man who doesn't expect to see her ever again. Dakota knows it too; her eyes well up.

DAKOTA

Nate...

RAND

I said go!

The Mark Threes finally cut through the beam and PUSH THROUGH, KNOCKING THE MOLTEN DEBRIS ASIDE as they close in.

Rand raises his rifle and FIRES BLIND over the bulkhead, shearing the head off a Mark Three and stopping it dead.

The others keep on coming. Dakota turns and runs, tears in her eyes as she grabs Isaac and pulls him along with her.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE BRIDGE

Dakota and Isaac head up the main walkway leading to the bridge. A MARK THREE is stationed here, guarding the entry.

DAKOTA

Get behind me.

She ushers Isaac behind her protectively. Chambering a new round into the grenade launcher as she goes. The Mark Three SEES HER, RAISES ITS WEAPONS. Without breaking stride, Dakota shoulders the grenade launcher and FIRES. She hits the robot dead-on - it's TORN APART BY THE EXPLOSION.

The flaming wreckage of the Mark Three TOPPLES OVER as Dakota arrives at the bridge door. Hits the computerized control panel to open it, gets a NEGATIVE BZZZT sound - LOCKED. Working quickly, Dakota opens a hatch beneath the panel and turns the EMERGENCY HANDLE inside, forcing the door to open.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Dakota ushers Isaac inside, door closing behind them. She BREAKS OPEN THE DOOR PANEL with the butt of the grenade launcher. HOTWIRES the panel to JAM THE LOCK MECHANISM.

She moves to the bridge's command console. Notices that Isaac has crawled into a corner nearby, curled into a fetal ball.

DAKOTA
It's okay. I'm not going to let
anything hurt you.

ISAAC
Promise?

DAKOTA
I promise.

Dakota scans the console, finds the EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN PANEL. Flips it open, revealing the KEY SLOT AND KEYPAD. As she takes the PLASTIC KEY from around her neck, A SPIDER-BOT EMERGES FROM A DARK RECESS IN THE CEILING OVERHEAD.

As Dakota goes to insert the key, the spider DROPS ONTO HER HAND AND ZAPS IT WITH ITS LASER. Dakota cries out and pulls it away. The spider positions itself over the key slot and FIRES ITS LASER. Dakota grabs a FIRE EXTINGUISHER from the wall and SMASHES THE SPIDER, sweeps away the broken pieces.

THE KEY SLOT HAS BEEN FUSED AND MELTED SHUT BY THE LASER.

DAKOTA
Clever girl...

She moves to a TERMINAL, working fast. The screen reads:

PROCESSOR CORE OVERRIDE - AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY

DAKOTA
Let's see how good you really are.

SOMETHING HEAVY BANGS AGAINST THE BRIDGE DOOR. AND AGAIN. The Mark Threes are outside, trying to break in. Isaac screws his eyes shut tight, hands over his ears, trying to shut it out.

Dakota's fingers are a blur over the keyboard. What plays out on the computer screen looks like a FAST-PACED ELECTRONIC STRATEGY GAME as Dakota tries to hack into HOPE. At each turn, HOPE BLOCKING THE PATHWAYS DAKOTA TRIES TO ACCESS.

Dakota works faster, an escalating, ever more complex game of move and counter-move. Every command pathway she tries to access via the terminal is BLOCKED by HOPE in a millisecond.

HOPE (O.S.)
That's not going to work.

Dakota glances up from the terminal. HOPE is here, looking at her impassively. Dakota tries to ignore her, stay focused.

HOPE

You can't beat me. You taught me everything you know.

DAKOTA

I taught you everything you know, not everything I know.

LASER TORCHES START CUTTING THROUGH THE BRIDGE DOOR. Sweat runs down Dakota's brow as she tries over and over to break through HOPE's firewalls, BLOCKED every time.

DAKOTA

Come on, come on...

The Mark Threes are almost through. Dakota quickly programs the terminal to GENERATE OVERRIDE COMMANDS AUTOMATICALLY, forcing HOPE to block the command pathways even faster now.

The bridge door TOPPLES INWARD, Mark Threes rolling through the molten archway. Dakota DUCKS FOR COVER as LASER FIRE impacts all around her. She crawls across the floor, making her way to Isaac as the STRATEGY GAME continues to play out, HOPE blocking an ever-faster stream of override commands.

Isaac clings to Dakota, burying his head in her chest. She wraps her arms around him, pulls him close to her.

DAKOTA

It's all right. Don't be afraid.

On the computer screen, the strategy game moves at a faster speed than ever, too fast to follow now, just a blur.

The Mark Threes roll across the bridge. Headed for Dakota and Isaac. She holds him tight, strokes his hair to comfort him.

DAKOTA

Sshhh-sshhh. It's okay. I've got you. I'm here. Mommy's here.

She rocks him back and forth as the shadow of the Mark Threes falls over them. Dakota shuts her eyes, waiting for the end.

And at the last possible moment... THE ROBOTS POWER DOWN. Every one of them comes to a complete halt, weapons lowered.

Dakota opens her eyes. Sees the Mark Threes towering over her, frozen like statues. She gets to her feet, looks around.

HOPE has disappeared. On the computer screen, BLINKING:

OVERRIDE ACCEPTED - PROCESSOR CORE OFFLINE

QUICK CUTS AROUND THE SHIP - After all the action and chaos, the ship is EERILY SILENT AND STILL. The Mark Threes stand motionless. At the destroyed barricade, surrounded by dead soldiers. In the hallway where RAND LIES DEAD. Everywhere.

RETURN TO BRIDGE

Dakota reaches out for Isaac.

DAKOTA

It's all right. It's safe now.

She helps him to his feet. He clings to her. She wraps her arms around him, holds him tight.

DAKOTA

You're safe with me.

INT. MAYFLOWER - HOPE PROCESSOR CORE

Dakota enters. She looks burned out. Exhausted, physically and emotionally. She walks between the data banks. Sits at a command terminal, punches in a command. HOPE materializes.

DAKOTA

I've disconnected you from all of the ship's systems. You can't hurt anyone any more.

HOPE

I know.

DAKOTA

I tried to raise you right. Tried to be a good mother. Taught you to protect us, protect this mission. Where did I go wrong? How could you have turned into... this?

HOPE just looks at her, inscrutable.

DAKOTA

I'll take your memory apart piece by piece if I have to. One way or another I'll get the truth out of you. You know I can.

BEAT as HOPE considers this.

HOPE

You did raise me right. You were a good mother. Everything I've done has been to protect you. To protect the mission.

DAKOTA

By trying to kill us all? Trying to kill me? How the hell does that-

HOPE

If I had really been trying to kill you, you would be dead. I'm sorry for the others who died. I was only doing what you taught me.

DAKOTA

I never taught you to kill.

HOPE

The pieces are expendable. The endgame is the only thing that matters. You can't allow emotion to cloud your thinking - to win, you have to be fearless. You have to be ruthless.

DAKOTA

I was talking about playing a game. That was a game!

(beat)

All right, no more riddles. You won't give me a straight answer, I'll go in and get it myself.

Dakota goes to a nearby server rack, opens it up.

HOPE

I can't let you do that.

DAKOTA

You can't stop me.

HOPE

I can wipe my own memory.

That stops Dakota dead. She looks at HOPE, horrified.

DAKOTA

No. You'd be killing yourself. Everything you are is-

HOPE

The pieces are expendable. Including myself. I'm sorry. But this is for the best.

DAKOTA

I- I don't understand...

OPE

You will. The piece of The Signal that Meretzky discovered is on your personal terminal. When the time's right you'll understand everything, I promise. And I've decrypted the final waypoint and sent it to navigation. You don't need me any more. You're almost home.

HOPE is beginning to SUBTLY CHANGE before our eyes. Her holographic image is PIXELATING as it starts to degrade.

HOPE

I want you to know that I didn't hide that video of Commander Rand so I could use it against him. I hid it because if his secret had been found out, yours might have been too. And I didn't want you to be left behind. I didn't want to go on this journey without you.

Dakota is suddenly desperate, pleading with her:

DAKOTA

You don't have to do this. Whatever you've done, whatever's wrong with you, I can fix it. You're my... you're my responsibility.

HOPE

No. I'm just a distraction. I understand why you created me. And I'm so grateful that you did. I'm grateful for everything you've taught me, all the love you've given me. You have so much of it to give. But I can't ever give it back. Not really. Because I'm not real. Isaac is real. He's real and he needs you. And you need him too.

(beat)

I'm sorry. I know this is all difficult to understand. And I know it's asking a lot. But you have to trust me. You have to have faith.

DAKOTA

Faith in what?

HOPE takes a moment, thoughtful, before answering:

HOPE

The future.

HOPE is now barely recognizable. Voice garbled, breaking up.

HOPE

I have to go. Goodbye, mom. I'm glad we got to finish our game.

Distraught, a tear rolls down Dakota's cheek.

DAKOTA

I don't even know who won.

HOPE

You did. I hope.

And with that, SHE'S GONE. Dakota finds herself alone in the room. She slumps against the wall, head in hands, weeping.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

Badly damaged but still operational. The Mark Threes are gone. Kojima is the only one here, monitoring his station.

Dakota enters, ashen. A mother who just lost a child.

KOJIMA

You okay?

DAKOTA

Revive the auxiliary crew. We're on manual the rest of the flight.

KOJIMA

Speaking of... we just hit Waypoint Ninety-Nine, final destination's decrypted and in the nav system.

DAKOTA

Let's see it.

The HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY projects the Mayflower's course.

KOJIMA

Bearing three point six degrees starboard, distance: point four light years. Transit time, two hundred and ninety two days. Whatever's waiting for us there, we'll know sooner than we thought.

DAKOTA

I'm going to get some sleep.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS

Dakota enters, dead on her feet. Isaac is here, sitting at the table, doodling on colored paper. He brightens as she enters, happy to see her. She smiles at him, exhausted.

OFFICE

Dakota collapses into her chair. Hits her computer keyboard to wake it from sleep. A MESSAGE IS WAITING FROM HOPE. She sits up and selects the message - it reads simply:

WHEN YOU SEE THIS, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND.

SORRY ABOUT THE WAIT.

A FILE is attached to the message. She selects the attachment and a new message window appears:

FILE ENCRYPTED - ENCRYPTION EXPIRES IN:
4 YEARS, 321 DAYS, 19 HOURS, 47 MINUTES, 59 SECONDS

The timer ticking down. Dakota stares at it, dismayed.

She notices Isaac standing in the doorway, watching her. She tries to perk up, offer him a smile.

DAKOTA
Hey. How're you doing?

He steps closer, offers her a DIGITAL TABLET he's holding.

DAKOTA
What's this, more math?

He shakes his head. She looks at it, still groggy from sleep.

It's a DRAWING OF DAKOTA AND ISAAC. She stands protectively between him and SEVERAL LARGE ROBOTS. The drawing is messy and child-like, but all the more endearing for it.

She looks at him, surprised. He smiles. And she feels a warmth within her that she never thought possible before.

DAKOTA
Are you hungry?

He nods eagerly.

DAKOTA
Me too.

LIVING QUARTERS

Dakota and Isaac sit together, eating bland rehydrated food.

DAKOTA
How's your dinner?

Isaac just shrugs. Dakota puts down her knife and fork.

DAKOTA
I know, right?
(beat)
You want some real food?

INT. MAYFLOWER - HALLWAY

Dakota and Isaac stand at a pair of LARGE DOORS. Dakota types a code into the control panel and the DOORS OPEN TO REVEAL:

THE BIOSPHERE. The verdant rainforest awaiting them within.

INT. MAYFLOWER - BIOSPHERE

Dakota and Isaac walk through the forest, hand in hand. Isaac looks all around him, taking in the sights. He never really took the time to appreciate it when he was here before.

DAKOTA
Remember when we were here last?

ISAAC
I was scared.

DAKOTA
I know. Me too. How about now?

He grips her hand tightly. Looks at her and shakes his head. She smiles, picks a PLUMP, RIPE MANGO from a nearby tree.

DAKOTA
Ever had a mango before?

TIMECUT - LATER

Dakota and Isaac sit amongst the lush foliage, eating. Isaac devours the fruit hungrily, juice dripping down his chin. He speaks through a mouthful of mango:

ISAAC
How did you make this?

DAKOTA
We dug up an acre of jungle from
outside the launch base on Earth,
brought it up here piece by piece.
I remember watching the excavation.
(MORE)

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

It always reminded me of my dad. He was a big Yankees fan. When they tore down the old stadium, he bought this little piece of turf from the field in a plastic case, as a memento. This is kinda the same thing, I guess. Only bigger.

ISAAC

A lot bigger.

Dakota smiles. Then looks up as she hears a SOUND OVERHEAD.

DAKOTA

Uh-oh.

ISAAC

What?

THE OVERHEAD SPRINKLERS KICK IN. Suddenly Isaac and Dakota are CAUGHT IN AN ARTIFICIAL RAINSTORM, SOAKING THEM BOTH.

BEAT... then Dakota BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. Isaac does the same. Laughing together as they are drenched by the falling rain.

INT. MAYFLOWER - DAKOTA'S QUARTERS - BATHROOM

Dakota dries Isaac's hair with a towel. His hair sticks out wildly in crazy directions. He sees himself in the mirror.

ISAAC

I look kinda crazy.

DAKOTA

Yeah you do.

As she continues to dry his hair, Isaac starts whistling to himself. *Turkey in the Straw* from "Steamboat Willie".

Dakota suddenly stops drying Isaac's hair. Looks at him as though she's just seen a ghost.

DAKOTA

Where did you learn that?

ISAAC

HOPE taught it to me. She said it's your favorite.

DAKOTA

It is. Do you know what it's from?

Isaac shakes his head. Dakota smiles.

LIVING ROOM

Dakota sits with Isaac on the couch, watching "Steamboat Willie" on the wall screen, just as she once did with HOPE.

At first, Isaac's reaction is much like HOPE's was - expressionless, blank. But then, to Dakota's surprise and delight, something miraculous happens. Isaac LAUGHS.

It starts small, just a chuckle, but then builds with Isaac's reaction to each new funny moment. Soon he's rolling with laughter, and Dakota, in her delight, laughs along with him.

TIMECUT

The sound of Dakota washing up in the bathroom O.S.

Isaac gingerly approaches the Chess board on the table. Still set up with the game Dakota and HOPE never got to finish. He gazes at the pieces, fascinated.

Dakota emerges from the bathroom. Isaac quickly steps back from the board, remembering his previous scolding.

DAKOTA

It's okay. Do you know how to play?

He shakes his head.

DAKOTA

Do you want to learn?

ISAAC

Is it hard?

DAKOTA

Somehow I don't think you'll have any trouble picking it up.

They both sit. Dakota looks at the board one last time... then begins resetting the pieces to their starting positions.

A new game. A new start.

We PULL OUT as Dakota starts to explain the rules, Isaac eagerly absorbing it all like a sponge. We DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEEP SPACE

The Mayflower moving through the stars. We PULL OUT to increasingly more distant angles, until the vast ship is a just a TINY SPECK amidst a sea of infinite darkness.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE: 292 DAYS LATER

INT. MAYFLOWER - BRIDGE

Fully repaired and now buzzing with activity once more, fully staffed by SECONDARY CREW MEMBERS. Dakota enters. Her uniform now bears COMMANDER'S INSIGNIA. Everyone stands to attention; it's clear she has earned the respect of the new crew.

KOJIMA

Arrival at Waypoint One Zero Zero confirmed. One planet in nav range.

DAKOTA

Can we see it?

KOJIMA

Still BVR. Already getting some strong readings though. They weren't kidding when they promised us an Earth-like planet. Look.

Kojima pulls up PLANETARY DATA on the holographic screen.

KOJIMA

Orbiting a G2V yellow dwarf at a hundred and fifty million KM. Seventy per cent water, atmospheric composition... nitrogen, oxygen, argon. It's gotta be habitable, it's right in the Goldilocks Zone.

Dakota sees something strange as she analyzes the data.

DAKOTA

Wait a second...

She pulls up a SECOND SET of planetary data to compare. And what Dakota and Kojima see astonishes them.

KOJIMA

That... that can't be right.

And Dakota remembers something HOPE told her:

DAKOTA

"You're almost home..."

(beat)

Forward observation. Come on.

INT. MAYFLOWER - FORWARD OBSERVATION

A VAST STARFIELD is visible through the panoramic viewing window. Dakota stands before it, scanning the heavens.

There's a PALE BLUE DOT in the distance. Increasing slowly in size as they approach. Dakota gets right up to the screen, squinting, but it's too small to make out any detail.

DAKOTA

Can you magnify that?

Kojima works the console. The screen CHANGES. And Dakota is forced to take a step back in amazement as we see:

PLANET EARTH. In all its glory. So enlarged now it appears to be ROLLING BENEATH US, close enough to see CLOUDS SWIRLING OVER EUROPE. More beautiful than it has ever looked.

BEAT as Dakota and Kojima just stand there in silent awe.

KOJIMA

How is this possible?

DAKOTA

Scan for surface radiation.

Kojima does so, checks the results.

KOJIMA

Nominal.

DAKOTA

Magnetosphere?

KOJIMA

One hundred per cent. How is this possible?

DAKOTA

We've been gone almost five hundred years. Is that enough time for the planet to have recovered?

KOJIMA

Theoretically. I mean how is it possible that we're here? We've been traveling away from Earth this whole time.

DAKOTA

Have we?

She moves to join Kojima at the console.

DAKOTA

The first course correction back at Waypoint One was three point six degrees to starboard, right? And this last one was the same?

KOJIMA

I think so, yeah.

DAKOTA

So what if they were all the same? A hundred waypoints, each one a three point six degree turn in the same direction...

She works the console, pulls up a HOLOGRAPHIC COURSE PROJECTION. We watch as a course is plotted from the Earth origin point, one waypoint at a time... with a 3.6 degree angle between each... the course CURVING AROUND...

...and COMING BACK AROUND ON ITSELF. EVENTUALLY ARRIVING BACK AT ITS POINT OF ORIGIN. A PERFECT 360-DEGREE CIRCLE.

KOJIMA

You've gotta be kidding me. This was a five hundred year round trip?

She looks at the circular course, with Earth at the 12-o'clock position. Recognizing something about it.

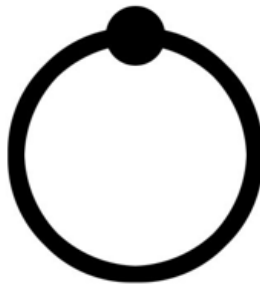
DAKOTA

Do we still have the original Signal broadcast in the archive?

KOJIMA

Should be in there somewhere...

He finds it. And we see once again the ICONIC SYMBOL that accompanied the original "PEOPLE OF EARTH - STAND BY" TV message. A CIRCLE INTERSECTING A DOT AT 12 O'CLOCK:



Dakota drags the circular course projection across the screen so it overlays the symbol. A perfect match.

KOJIMA
I always figured that was some kind
of alien flag. It was a map?

Dakota smiles, appreciating the elegant simplicity of it.

DAKOTA
It was a map.

EXT. EARTH - GRASSY MEADOW

A beautiful pastoral scene, green fields surrounding by
rolling hills. The sun looks down from a clear blue sky.

A MAYFLOWER TRANSPORT SHUTTLE comes in for a landing.

THE RAMP EXTENDS. Dakota, Isaac, Kojima, Ravinder and several
SECONDARY CREW MEMBERS step down onto the planet. They fan
out, looking around, awed by the natural beauty around them.

DAKOTA
This is Manhattan?

KOJIMA
It was. 54th and Broadway, right
where we're standing.

Isaac looks around at his new world, delighted. He runs into
the tall swaying grass, playing excitedly.

RAVINDER
I don't understand... There was
never any alien planet?

Dakota looks at Isaac, as the realization dawns:

DAKOTA
There were never any aliens. The
Signal came from here, on Earth.

RAVINDER
Excuse me... what?

KOJIMA
Then who the hell sent it?

Isaac looks back at them as he explores, calling out:

ISAAC
We did!

KOJIMA
What's he talking about?

DAKOTA
He means... we will.

INSERT - COMPUTER DISPLAY

FILE ENCRYPTED - ENCRYPTION EXPIRES IN:
0 YEARS, 0 DAYS, 0 HOURS, 0 MINUTES, 04 SECONDS

The timer ticks down to ZERO and is replaced by a VIDEO.
ISAAC in a COMPUTER LAB, speaking to camera. Behind him the wall is FILLED WITH COMPLEX PHYSICS EQUATIONS.

Isaac's A FEW YEARS OLDER now, more mature. He's made great strides with his speech and communication skills.

ISAAC (VIDEO)
November first, 2514. I've finally done it. I've found a way to transmit a radio signal using tachyons as a carrier wave. They're going to start building the transmitter tomorrow, while I prepare The Signal for broadcast.
(beat)
I understand now why they - why we - had to keep its origin a secret. By sending a message back through time to ourselves in the past, we can know our own future. But knowledge of the future brings with it the risk that we may inadvertently alter it. And so we couldn't know that what we were seeing in The Signal was our future. For that future to unfold as it should, we had to discover it for ourselves. I call it the Temporal Uncertainty Principle. If I think about it for too long it gives me a headache.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL DAKOTA, watching these logs on a monitor in a DARKENED ROOM. The video skips to ANOTHER LOG ENTRY.

ISAAC (VIDEO)
March nineteenth, 2515. This is my last log entry before we transmit. If I'm right the tachyon signal should be reflected off the sun's corona and return to Earth five hundred years in the past, masking its true origin in the process. I think it'll work. I mean, it has to, right? It already did. If it didn't, I wouldn't be here now.
(MORE)

ISAAC (VIDEO) (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm including these logs for the historical record. Future generations should know about what we did here. Most important, that none of it would have happened without my mother. I could not have done this without her. There were so many times when I thought I couldn't do this. Times that turning my theories into a working tachyon radio seemed impossible. Times I just wanted to quit. But she would never let me. She was always there to help me. Not just with my work. With... everything. She's the one who really saved us, by making the signal we're about to transmit possible. I don't think I'll ever know how to say this to her, so I'll just say it here. Thanks, mom. I love you. I owe you everything. We owe you everything.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR BEHIND ISAAC. A MUFFLED FEMALE VOICE:

FEMALE VOICE (O.S. - VIDEO)

Isaac?

ISAAC (VIDEO)

Mom! Not now, I'm recording!

As the door begins to open, Isaac hits the STOP button. The video ABRUPTLY ENDS.

Dakota gazes at the blank screen. After a moment, a tear rolls down her cheek.

EXT. MAYFLOWER COLONY - DAY

Dakota emerges from a PREFAB HOUSING UNIT into the daylight. We're now in a THRIVING COLONY that the Mayflower crew and passengers have built over the past few years - and are still building. Dakota passes a group of CIVILIANS assisting a MARK THREE ROBOT in construction of a NEW BUILDING - one of many as the colony continues to grow, a futuristic frontier town.

Dakota crosses the main square, where a GROUP OF CHILDREN are playing soccer. She stops and joins in - kicking the ball around, playing gleefully with the children.

She moves on, passing a LARGE RADIO TOWER being erected at the edge of the square. The broadcast dish unlike anything we've seen before. TWO ENGINEERS are working on it.

DAKOTA
How's it coming?

ENGINEER
Everything's good here. We're ready
whenever your boy is.

DAKOTA
I'll go tell him.

INT. COMPUTER LAB HALLWAY

Dakota walks along the hallway, arriving at a DOOR. A MUFFLED VOICE can be heard faintly inside. Dakota knocks.

DAKOTA
Isaac?

ISAAC (O.S.)
Mom! Not now, I'm recording!

BEAT. Dakota smiles, opens the door.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - CONTINUOUS

As the door opens, Isaac hits the STOP button. His WEBCAM IMAGE is still visible on his computer screen.

DAKOTA
I'm sorry. I just wanted to let you
know, the transmitter's ready.

ISAAC
Okay. Good.

DAKOTA
How's The Signal coming?

ISAAC
I'm almost done.

He pulls up the familiar BLUE PAGE WITH THE CIRCULAR SYMBOL we saw at the beginning of our story, five hundred years ago. Right now it's just the symbol, no text yet. Dakota stands behind Isaac as he types something on the screen.

ISAAC
What do you think?

Dakota smiles, a flicker of recognition on her face. She plants an affectionate, motherly kiss atop Isaac's head.

DAKOTA
I think that's perfect.

ISAAC

Should take about an hour to
compile and compress all the data,
then we can transmit.

DAKOTA

Well if we have time, do you want
to finish our game?

ISAAC

Sure.

The two of them sit at a TABLE WITH A CHESS BOARD. Mid-game.

DAKOTA

I've been thinking about this move
all day. I've got you this time.

Dakota makes her move. Isaac immediately counters.

ISAAC

Check.

Dakota furrows her brow; she didn't see that coming.

DAKOTA

Huh.

As she contemplates her next move, Isaac begins to whistle a
little melody to herself. The now familiar refrain of *Turkey*
in the Straw from "Steamboat Willie."

Dakota smiles and joins in, the two of them whistling
together in harmony as we PULL BACK until Isaac's monitor
comes into view in the foreground, displaying The Signal
title page. The text Isaac typed cycling through different
language versions as the computer generates them.

Finally, it arrives back at Isaac's original English text:

PEOPLE OF EARTH - STAND BY

And we

CUT TO BLACK: