

The Breathtaking Blue

A screenplay by

Jason Marx

Story by

Ben Loory & Jason Marx

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A droplet of water... seemingly floating in air... in perfect silence. Like a tiny world unto itself.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
The drop of rain which fell to the earth yesterday and falls today may yet not fall to earth tomorrow. The law that pulls it down has no more permanence than the raindrop itself.

A top-down angle reveals that the tiny droplet is actually *falling*. It is plummeting through the sky at terminal velocity, surrounded by many other drops, all high above the earth.

Far below, a great blue expanse comes into focus. The ocean.

As a roar of wind rises up we realize that these drops are among millions in a storm, plummeting toward a lone DRILLING RIG off the coast of Sri Lanka.

The first drop vanishes among countless others as they tumble into the storm-battered rig.

INT. DRILLING RIG, STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

A SHIFT SUPERVISOR plunges down a metal stairwell, taking three steps at a time. His soaked boots hit the grill floor at the bottom and keep moving.

INT. DRILLING RIG, SMALL SLEEPING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The door bursts open and he barges in, shouting:

SHIFT SUPERVISOR [SUBTITLED]
Get up, all of you!

Three weathered-looking Sri Lankan workers, playing a grimy deck of cards, look up in surprise.

OLDER SRI LANKAN [SUBTITLED]
Our shift's not til seven.

SHIFT SUPERVISOR [SUBTITLED]
Not today! Wake up!

He rattles the cot of a sleeping fourth worker, a YOUNG SRI LANKAN. The sympathetic-looking twenty-year-old groggily comes to.

SHIFT SUPERVISOR [SUBTITLED] (CONT'D)
Ass moving! The drill's functional again!

INT. DRILLING RIG, MAIN DRILLING FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Still dazed, the young Sri Lankan hurries with a dozen older workers into the CENTRAL DRILLING ROOM.

Amid clanging metal and grinding gears we hear the distinctive American voice of a RIG MANAGER shouting into a satellite phone:

RIG MANAGER
Tell regional we're five minutes
from operational! Whatever it was,
it's out of the way now!
(turns, shouts in Sinhala)
Watch the tension on that cable!
(back to phone)
No, I said "operational," not
drilling! We still gotta lower the
bit back down. It's twelve thousand
meters, you want me to just *drop* it
in?

In the background a massive winch SHRIEKS as it raises something out of the three-foot-wide deep-sea borehole.

RIG MANAGER (CONT'D)
(into phone, frustrated)
Morland, we just did a seven mile
extraction! You got schedule
issues? Pay 'em double and make 'em
work through New Years!

Someone taps the rig manager on the shoulder to get his attention. The manager turns angrily -- to see the winch crew staring at the big chunk of EXTRACTED MATTER sitting on the metal floor.

They stare because under the caked-on sediment and drilling mud there is a glimpse of a smooth material. Like *glass*.

The rig manager stares, confused, his phone call suddenly forgotten.

Then he signals to a worker standing near a hose.

CUT TO:

A HIGH-PRESSURE WATER STREAM blasting bits of debris away.

INT. MAIN DRILLING FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Chunks of rock and mud wash off onto the grated metal floor of the drilling room.

The hose shuts off. And the room goes pin-drop SILENT.

For what remains sitting on the drilling room floor is an impossibility.

A *glass box*.

Two feet wide. Solid on all sides. Hollow within.

All the workers stare at it in amazement.

Finally the rig manager approaches the baffling object. He bends down, peers closely at it....

CLOSE UP -- Some sand-like particles remain on top of the smooth glass. The rig manager takes a cloth to wipe them away. But the tiny particles remain. For they are actually *inside*. Seemingly attached to the interior top.

The rig manager frowns -- then gently taps the side of the box. The loose sand particles *rattle* on the ceiling of the box with each vibration. Strangely they do not fall.

The rig manager's brow furrows. He gestures for the closest worker -- the young Sri Lankan -- to approach. Working as one, the two men reach out and CAREFULLY TURN THE BOX OVER.

CLOSE UP -- As the top of the cube becomes the side, the sand particles inside move from their position. But instead of falling to the bottom they fall upward, back to the top. Resting on the box's interior ceiling just as before.

The two men blink, look at each other. They share an amazed smile.

But their smiles vanish as the young worker notices something impossible happening *outside* the box....

On the floor, next to the box, a few bits of rocky debris are also moving. One by one, the small rock chunks hover a few inches off the ground.

Everyone in the room stares. Someone pulls out a Flip recorder.

Then, in the blink of an eye, the small rock chunks TUMBLE UPWARD and STICK to the metal ceiling.

The young Sri Lankan and the rig manager both take a nervous step back....

All heads suddenly turn as a stray WRENCH tumbles up and CLATTERS to the ceiling.

Fearful looks spread over the men's faces. A heartbeat later the entire drilling rig starts to shake like an earthquake--

CUT TO:

BLACK. Silence.

SLOW FADE IN:

INT. AIRBUS A330, BUSINESS CLASS CABIN - DEAD OF NIGHT

Everything is dark in business class. People sleep in their luxury recliners, lulled by the soothing hum of the engines. In the darkness, however, we discover a SINGLE POOL OF LIGHT; one of the seat lamps is on.

Sitting in this seat is SOPHIA (age 27). On the airline tray table in front of her is not an iPad or People magazine or tiny liquor bottles... but a SET OF PAINTS and an ARTIST'S PAD.

The young woman's eyes are focused intently as she adds a final brush stroke to a dreamlike scene: her painting is of a YOUNG GIRL, her arms wrapped around the neck of a giant CRANE-SHAPED BIRD, the rest of her body dangling freely from the creature as it flies. The bird itself appears to be in space, flying toward some distant world.

Sophia considers her work, glancing down at a line of PRINTED TEXT at the bottom: People had always told Zoe you can't travel through space with an airplane. But nobody ever mentioned a thing about Long-necked Ibises.

Her concentration is suddenly broken as she becomes aware that she is being watched. In the next seat over, a groggy 40-YEAR-OLD WOMAN with a sleep mask lifted to her forehead looks at Sophia.

SOPHIA
Sorry, is the light bothering you?

WOMAN
No, it's just...
(re: the painting)
...that's amazing.

SOPHIA
Oh. Thank you.

WOMAN
Is it for sale? I have a niece who
would love it.

SOPHIA

It's for a book. I do children's stories. But here-- your niece is welcome to this one.

Sophia hands the woman a smaller sketch of the same surreal image, charmingly composed on an airline cocktail napkin. The other woman smiles, accepts it appreciatively.

WOMAN

Thank you. You must be on a terrible deadline to be working like this.

SOPHIA

No deadline. This is how I work.

WOMAN

What?

SOPHIA

I get more done on an eighteen hour non-stop from Singapore to Atlanta than I would in a whole month on the ground.

WOMAN

You're kidding.

SOPHIA

It's the only place I can focus. I know it's not so good as far my carbon footprint goes, but...

She flips back through the pages of her artist's pad, filled with completed illustrations -- page after page of STUNNING OTHERWORLDLY SCENES. The woman stares in disbelief.

WOMAN

You painted all that on this flight.

Sophia nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I finished half a sudoku.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - DAY

CUT from the darkness of the plane to *brilliant daylight* and a bird's-eye view of the ATLANTA SKYLINE. Sunshine glints off its legion of skyscrapers.

INT. FINANCIAL FIRM, I.T. OFFICE - DAY

Deep inside one of these skyscrapers a printer spits out a PAGE OF NUMBERS. The data is incomprehensible to us, but not to DUSTIN BRAZELTON (early twenties, geeky handsome).

DUSTIN
No, no, no... I just re-routed you...

The frustrated I.T. technician scans the page repeatedly - we sense both his brightness and his dedication.

GLANZMAN (O.S.)
Goddammit, Dustin!

Less bright is the angry figure now standing in the doorway of the office. It's Dustin's manager, GLANZMAN, twenty-five and imperious.

GLANZMAN (CONT'D)
I've got four floors of executives and every single one of them is screaming for their Asia numbers! What the hell?

DUSTIN
I've been on it since nine, Mr. Glanzman. I've tried establishing feeds through half a dozen other routing stations.

GLANZMAN
Then where's my connection? We need those packets from Hong Kong!

DUSTIN
It's not like someone spilled Fresca on a keyboard somewhere. Schwab's having the identical issue. So's Ameritrade. The problem is big. Both data and voice--

GLANZMAN
I don't want to *talk* to any one in Kowloon. I just need the numbers!

At the same moment Dustin's iPhone lights up. A TEXT reads:
"I'm here. Waiting 4 U."

Seeing this, Dustin promptly folds the print out into his breast pocket and heads for the door.

GLANZMAN (CONT'D)
(flabbergasted)
Where are you going?

DUSTIN

Look, I'm *good* at what I do. But I can't single-handedly fix an IT problem that's made half of Asia disappear. I'm going to lunch.

He's out.

INT. ELEVATOR, SAME SKYSCRAPER - MOMENTS LATER

Dustin hits a button, waits for the elevator to take him to floor 38.

The doors open -- revealing a CRISS-CROSS OF YELLOW TAPE. The tape barring the doorway reads "*CONSTRUCTION. DO NOT ENTER.*"

Dustin ducks under it.

INT. FLOOR 38, UNDER CONSTRUCTION - CONTINUOUS

He walks out onto the massive empty floor. The entire level is just a desert of beige carpet stretching off toward the surrounding picture windows.

It's totally silent. No construction equipment. No workmen. No anything.

Except a girl.

MILLIE

Hey.

MILLIE (22, coffee-shop cute) stands near the elevator, smiling at him.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

What took you?

DUSTIN

Trouble with the overseas server. Glanzman's losing it.

MILLIE

You sure you have time for this? Maybe we shouldn't.

DUSTIN

No. We're definitely doing this.

He smiles devilishly, then beckons her to follow him.

Millie's smile fades as Dustin leads her out into the desert of carpet. Reaching a MASKING TAPE "X" on the floor, he stops.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
So... Monday we made it here.

He winks, then beckons her on. About fifteen feet further they reach A SECOND TAPED "X" on the floor.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Tuesday, here. That was even better.

He confidently leads her further out, closer to the surrounding picture windows. They arrive at a THIRD TAPE MARK on the carpet.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Wednesday here. You were incredible that day. So, today... let's see if you can make it...

Dustin walks five paces beyond her, very close to one of the MASSIVE PICTURE WINDOWS.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
...to here.

He pulls out a ROLL OF TAPE, makes a new "X" on the carpet, then pats it. Millie stares at the tape mark. All trace of a smile is gone from her face.

MILLIE
I can't go that far, Dustin.

DUSTIN
It's only eight more feet than yesterday.

MILLIE
It's way too close.

DUSTIN
You're perfectly safe, Millie. All you gotta do is stand there.

She looks up from the tape mark to the VIEW OF THE CITY SKYLINE. The vista is staggering. Millie's breathing starts to quicken. We realize it's her FEAR OF HEIGHTS they're working on.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Come on. 'Habituation.' It's an established scientific principle.
(MORE)

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Just a little further every day,
and a month from now you and I can
go hangliding. Or take a ride out
there on the "Helios" blimp.

He points to a distant SIGHT-SEEING BLIMP above the city skyline, with a slogan "Helios Sky Tours -- Rediscover Your World."

Millie swallows, scared. She averts her gaze back to the carpeted floor.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I brought you something that'll
help.

Dustin reaches into his pocket. Looking up, Millie sees him produce an expensive-looking BAR OF DARK CHOCOLATE.

MILLIE
You shit.

He grins.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
You can't cure a fear of heights
with a chocolate bar! Where the
hell'd you get that bullshit
scientific notion!

DUSTIN
It's eighty percent cacao, straight
from Brazil. This percentage of
darkness shouldn't even be legal.
But it's *all* yours. All you have to
do is walk over here and get it.

Millie glares. Then she takes a hesitant step towards him.

CUT TO:

A pair of EXPENSIVE MEN'S DRESS SHOES walking briskly down a fancy hallway.

INT. LAW FIRM OF GRAYLING AND MCNALLY - DAY

STEVEN HOLDER (37), attired in a crisp business suit, strides down the hall of the high-end Atlanta law firm where he works. He turns and enters a--

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--in which a PAIR OF SENIOR PARTNERS wait for him behind a large table.

STEVEN
What is it?

HEAD PARTNER
This morning we received a
settlement offer from the hospital.

STEVEN
(miffed)
They should have sent that directly
to me.

SECOND PARTNER
If they'd sent it to you... they
probably would have laced it with
anthrax.

The second partner has only contempt for Steven, but Steven
couldn't care less.

STEVEN
What are the terms?

SECOND PARTNER
(glances over document)
Your client, who we all know
deserves forty cents, will be
receiving forty million dollars.
Well done. One third of that will
be going into the coffers of this
firm--

PARTNER TWO
--and the city's oldest hospital
will be going into Chapter 11.

HEAD PARTNER
Leave it, Geoff.
(back to Steven)
And you, counselor... have finally
earned yourself this.

He stands up and hands Steven a WHITE ENVELOPE.

FIRST PARTNER
Why don't you take the rest of the
day off.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN, MOVING, ATLANTA - DAY

A ROAR as a subway train blasts through a tunnel. Lights
flicker in the passenger compartment. Steven sits inside,
tearing open the envelope. The TYPED LETTER within begins:

"We are pleased to offer you a full partnership at Grayling and McNally...."

CUT TO:

A massive HANGING MOBILE OF NINE PLANETS, swirling round a glowing sun.

INT. ATLANTA CENTRAL LIBRARY - DAY

The rotating solar system hangs beneath a stain-glass dome depicting the heavens. The impressive display is the crowning centerpiece of the MULTI-STORY, CYLINDRICAL LIBRARY BUILDING.

We pan down through the library's open center to a lounge area at the bottom. There are many tables and chairs here; reading at one of them is TWELVE-YEAR-OLD CONNOR MOSLEY.

A stack of books is piled beside him, all subjects. The boy is clearly an avid reader with a wide range of subjects.

Connor glances up from his book for a moment -- to discover a PRETTY GIRL SMILING AT HIM from an opposite table.

Shyly, he returns the girl's smile.

She blushes, returns to her homework. Connor, too, looks back down at his book.

Then--

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, sorry I'm late. The Chevy was acting up on the Turnpike.

Connor turns. His dad HANK MOSLEY (40's) now stands behind him. The boy's smile vanishes.

HANK

This place isn't so easy to find either. What're you reading about?

CONNOR

Um, comparative religions.

Hank blinks, trying to hide his cluelessness.

HANK

Huh.

CONNOR

Things different people around the world believe.

HANK
Well, tell me if there's a prayer
in there to fix the Impala's
electrical system.

Connor doesn't laugh at the joke.

HANK (CONT'D)
So...you ready to hit the road?

Reluctantly, Connor gets up and collects his books.

HANK (CONT'D)
Your mom said she packed you an
overnight bag?

CONNOR
Oh. Yeah.

Connor picks up a duffle bag from under the table. The small boy is an awkward sight with his large bag and his many books. But somehow Hank can sense his son doesn't want his help.

As they walk out together, Hank nearly lays a fatherly hand on Connor's shoulder, but doesn't.

INT. FLOOR 38, UNDER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Dustin stands waiting for Millie, who has now ventured halfway between the two taped "X"s on the carpet. But she doesn't appear to be budging a step further.

DUSTIN
Come on. Another step.

She stubbornly shakes her head.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I know why you didn't take the
promotion from Hollister.

MILLIE
Because it was more work.

DUSTIN
Because he's in a corner office
with a big-ass picture window. You
could be Hollister's personal
assistant. You could be earning an
extra four hundred dollars a month.
Not to mention you wouldn't be
under Glanzman's authority.

MILLIE

No... because as soon as I walked into Hollister's office to bring him his morning files I would *piss myself all over his carpet*. Which means I'd get fired, which means I'd be earning nothing. It's hard enough for me to be in this building at all!

DUSTIN

That's why I'm here. Come on, Mils. One more step.

Millie takes a deep breath. Then takes a step closer to him. A single glance to the WINDOWS, though, starts her pulse pounding. She stops, shouts--

MILLIE

Why do you think you can fix everything, Dustin?!

At this moment Dustin's iPhone buzzes. He pulls it out, reads the message screen, then frowns.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

What's that mean?

DUSTIN

It means now we've lost the Munich server too.

MILLIE

You ought to get back there.

Dustin pockets the phone.

DUSTIN

Nuh-uh. I'm on lunch. Speaking of which...

He unwraps the top of the DARK CHOCOLATE BAR. Breaks off a piece. Starts eating it in front of her.

Six feet away, Millie gives him a death glare.

CUT TO:

A congested CITY STREET thirty-eight stories below...

INT. HANK'S CHEVY IMPALA, DOWNTOWN - DAY

Connor looks small on the wide leather passenger seat of his dad's 1965 RED CHEVY IMPALA.

The vehicle's not in mint condition, and the engine sounds like a death rattle, but the car is very loved by Hank nonetheless.

Hank, however, has no love for the BUMPER-TO-BUMPER TRAFFIC boxing them in on all sides.

HANK
Come on! What *is* it with you city people?

A shadow momentarily passes over the car, cast by the SIGHT-SEEING BLIMP glimpsed earlier. Hank glances up at the airship drifting over the building tops--

HANK (CONT'D)
At least something's moving.

Fed up, he lays on the CAR HORN. Connor turns to him.

CONNOR
Are we in a hurry? I mean, do you have something planned for us?

HANK
(thrown)
Uh, well... no, tiger. I was gonna ask you about that. You name it. What would make you happy?

CONNOR
I was happy at the library.

The boy turns and stares ahead. Hank's at a loss.

HANK
How 'bout I find us some music? I just installed *satellite*. Three hundred stations, take your pick.

Hank flips on the new satellite radio, but all that comes out of the 1965 speakers is:

SPEAKER SYSTEM
*Sirius Communications apologizes.
All stations are currently offline
due to technical difficulties.
Please stand by.*

HANK
What! The friggin' satellite fall out of the sky?

CUT TO:

INT. AIRBUS A330, BUSINESS CLASS CABIN - DAY

Sunlight streams in through Sophia's plane window. Sophia gazes out at the endless cloudscape. Mesmerized.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Ever consider becoming a pilot?

Sophia turns to her neighbor passenger. She doesn't answer this question, however.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Just seems like it suits you. I'm
your exact opposite; can't wait to
get back on the ground.
(checks watch)
You making a connection?

SOPHIA
I haven't decided. There's a non-
stop to Sydney coming up on
Quantas, and I've got a couple new
images in my head...

She glances back out the window at the ever-changing cloud kingdom. A poignant expression flickers on her face.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
But it's been a long time since
I've visited my father.
(beat)
That's what I need to do.

BOOM -- Sophia's paints suddenly SPLATTERS AGAINST THE CABIN CEILING -- the woman next to her SHRIEKS as a FLIGHT ATTENDANT BASHES SICKENINGLY AGAINST AN OVERHEAD BIN -- The first-class cabin is in total chaos as the HUGE PLANE TUMBLES INEXPLICABLY OUT OF CONTROL.

The fuselage walls shake like an earthquake. SCREAMS and FLYING DEBRIS everywhere. And an unearthly ROAR OF WIND.

Close on Sophia, looking around at the sudden insanity as if in slow motion. Terrified she takes a few rapid breaths... then crazily, she UNBUCKLES HER SEATBELT.

Grasping the surrounding seat backs, she pulls herself past the terrified woman next to her, whose eyes are now clenched shut. Sophia makes it to the aisle.

Just two rows ahead is the COCKPIT DOOR -- but with the angle the plane's falling at it's nearly a *forty-five degree climb* to reach it. Gripping anything she can use for leverage, Sophia pulls herself toward it.

Just as she reaches it the COCKPIT DOOR BURSTS OPEN, and out collapses an injured PILOT, his face covered with BLOOD.

There's not a thing Sophia can do for the hurt man. She pulls herself past him and into the cockpit.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

In one of the two seats Sophia discovers a wide-eyed young CO-PILOT. She shouts--

SOPHIA
WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING!

CO-PILOT
Oh, christ, oh, christ, oh christ--

He's petrified. Sophia manages to buckle herself into the open PILOT SEAT.

SOPHIA
What's causing the stall? Talk to me!

CO-PILOT
Instruments are all useless!

SOPHIA
Well, we've gotta regain vertical control!

CO-PILOT
I don't even know which way's up!

Sophia looks out the window for any sign of "earth", but all that's visible are billowing white clouds. Desperately she scans the array of malfunctioning instruments. The co-pilot shouts into the radio's microphone handpiece--

CO-PILOT (CONT'D)
Mayday mayday, Flight 7903--
somebody answer us, god dammit!

Sophia suddenly GRABS the mic out of the co-pilot's hand--

CO-PILOT (CONT'D)
Hey!

--and stretching the coiled cord tight, she WRAPS IT AROUND A CONTROL KNOB ABOVE THEM. THEN SHE RELEASES THE MIC, LETTING IT DANGLE FREE BY ITS CORD. LIKE A PENDULUM.

Instantly Sophia GRABS THE AIRCRAFT'S CONTROL STICK and, using the hanging mic like a level, gradually manages to get the plane flying level again.

Her co-pilot looks at her amazed.

SOPHIA
Ok, we're level now.

She begins to catch her breath. But they're still lost in a sea of clouds.

CO-PILOT
You with the airline?

SOPHIA
No -- What the hell *happened*? It felt like something hit us back there.

CO-PILOT
I've got absolutely no clue.

SOPHIA
Was the ground saying anything before it happened?

CO-PILOT
We lost the ground eighteen minutes ago.
(beat)
All channels. Total silence.

This registers with Sophia. Unnerved, her eyes turn to the window and the brilliant white cloudscape before them.

Dimly seen through the clouds, ahead and high above, she makes out a *small dark falling object*.

Sophia and the co-pilot peer at it in puzzled silence. As it plummets closer they see that it's actually quite big -- a *car-sized object*.

Sophia squints hard at it.

The plummeting object is not merely car-sized.

It appears to be a CAR.

Then it's gone, falling from view below the cockpit window.

CO-PILOT (CONT'D)
(hoarse whisper)
What the hell was that?

SOPHIA
I think it was a Prius.

The two turn and stare at one another.

CO-PILOT
 (spooked)
 I'm taking this plane higher. I
 want out of this cloud.

Not waiting for her reply, the co-pilot starts to pull back on the control wheel.

SOPHIA
 (hesitant)
 Ok....

The giant plane obeys, starts to pull higher.

Gradually the clouds above them start to thin and clear...

...and Sophia's eyes go WIDE WITH DISBELIEF.

Above the plane is not sky, but the great flat expanse of the earth itself, stretching out impossibly like a dark massive CEILING.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

A peaceful image of a large FIELD OF WHEAT in the sunlight. Golden stalks sway gently in the breeze.

But something *unseen* is racing toward the field....

A huge invisible force... like a wave.

A rustling sound as the invisible wave TEARS across the field like a wind gust -- every single wheat stalk STIFFENS as it feels a SUDDEN STRANGE PULL FROM ABOVE. Loose bits of dust and earth are sucked upward so quickly up they practically vanish before our eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLAND RIVER - DAY

The water in a remote winding river seems to vaporize as every water particle is suddenly SUCKED UPWARD. The process happens in a heartbeat, leaving only the rocky bottom of exposed river bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A wide aerial shot of an endless green FOREST. Then a great ROARING SOUND, and we TRACK along with the unseen wave as it races over miles. Trees hold with their roots, but a CASCADE OF LOOSE LEAVES - millions of them - tumble skyward, like some strange reverse autumn.

Make no mistake, it is not weightlessness we are witnessing-- it is *gravity reversing its pull*.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINE OF TELEPHONE POLES - DAY

In the middle of nowhere stands an endless line of TELEPHONE POLES. Connecting them is a single BLACK WIRE, hanging in lazy arches from pole to pole.

Then the wave races down the long line.

There's a sound like WHIP CRACKS as each lazy wire arch is SUDDENLY PULLED TIGHT, one after another -- all are left bending impossibly upward.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL JUNKYARD - DAY

More civilization-- a rural JUNKYARD. The massive wave rushes over it without discrimination, as evidenced by the HUNDREDS OF DERELICT VEHICLES ripping free of the earth and being sucked into the sky.

In the blink of an eye they are only tiny specks within the blue above.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

An afternoon GAME is underway on the field. Bleachers surround it; a crowd of SPECTATORS CHEER ON THE ACTION.

But in the back row of the bleachers a SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL, troubled by something, turns and looks behind her. What the girl can make out in the distance looks something like an approaching storm, but moving faster than any storm she's ever seen...

CLOSE on the girl's widening eyes...

...then CUT to her P.O.V. as the wave roars forward and HITS.

CAMERA PIVOTS a fast 180° to show the impact on the field, but the wave was faster. The free-standing bleachers simply *no longer exist*, only bare patches remaining. The field itself is now empty of players. Empty of all life. And silent as the moon.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNLIT MEADOW - DAY

An empty meadow, save for a single lovely OAK TREE. Unlike the other scenes, this peaceful landscape seems scarcely altered as the wave passes over it. All we perceive are the branches of the oak arching slightly upward in unison -- a quiet, graceful moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND OVERLOOKING CITY - DAY

A quiet playground in a park overlooking the ATLANTA SKYLINE. Through the chains of the swingset we can see the army of mighty skyscrapers.

There's the sound of a *metallic clang* as the unseen force suddenly YANKS ALL THE SWINGS SKYWARD, leaving them hanging straight up by their chains.

In the distance, we observe the destruction build as the wave races toward the unsuspecting metropolis...

CUT TO:

INT. SKYSCRAPER, FLOOR 38 - DAY

Dustin now sits on the carpeted floor by the taped "X", the half-eaten candy bar held limply in his hand.

DUSTIN
Your chocolate's gonna melt.

MILLIE
Fine.

Millie hasn't budged. In fact she's not even facing the picture windows anymore. Back turned, she's stubbornly staring at the elevator doors.

It's a stalemate. Dustin makes one last try--

DUSTIN
I love you, Millie.

MILLIE
Then just love me. Can't you just
do that?

Dustin sighs. His iPhone buzzes again. As he checks the incoming message, his expression changes.

DUSTIN
Wow, this is plain weird. Now
Boston's out. And New York. This
thing's like a wave heading over
the whole globe.
(beat, dry laugh)
Somebody's getting fired for this.

MILLIE
You should make sure it's not you.

DUSTIN
Alright. I'm getting back. As far
as facing fear of heights goes...
you're off the hook for today.

Millie gives him a small, appreciative smile.

Then, without warning, the two of them are THROWN TO THE
CEILING LIKE RAGDOLLS.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN, MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Steven, sitting in his seat on the crowded subway train. Letter in hand, he's perusing the details of the firm's partnership offer. He circles the phrase "BONUS: \$750,000" and considers a moment. Then he crosses out the sum and writes "\$900,000 minimum" in its place.

At that same moment there's an EERIE SCREECHING SOUND... coming from far down the train tunnel.

The subway lights flicker strangely.

Steven frowns, looks up.

Then the entire train, as though it's flying up an invisible ramp, CRASHES INTO THE ROOF OF THE TUNNEL.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEVY IMPALA, DOWNTOWN FREEWAY - DAY

Hank and Connor are still stuck in the endless line of traffic. The satellite radio system repeats its looping 'apology message' over the car speakers.

HANK

Ok Connor, I figured out what you and I are doing today. Soon as we get out of this traffic we're going straight to the goddamn Best Buy that sold me this piece of crap...

But as his dad complains Connor squints ahead, unable to make sense of what he's seeing. Far down the freeway, *something* is happening. And it's getting closer...

The twelve-year-old's eyes go wide as, one after another, moving towards them, EVERY ONE OF THE THOUSANDS OF CARS ON THE FREEWAY IS PLUMMETING UPWARD INTO THE SKY.

Finally Hank looks up to see. His jaw drops open.

A heartbeat later, the '65 CHEVY IMPALA is flung upward as well.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK.

FADE IN:

On a pair of eyelids flickering... slowly opening....

INT. SKYSCRAPER, FLOOR 38 - DAY

The eyes are DUSTIN'S.

He's lying flat on his back, confused and disoriented.

CUT TO his POV as the ceiling above him gradually comes into focus. Something is amiss, though, because for some reason the "X" that he earlier taped to the floor is not where it should be.

For some reason it is now *directly above him.*

Not knowing what to make of this, Dustin slowly sits up, rubs his aching head. He checks his hand -- no blood at least.

Then something strange on the floor beside him catches his eye.

A fluorescent light fixture.

Dustin frowns.

As his eyes scan the "floor" he sees light fixtures everywhere... in neat rows... every ten feet or so... all securely mounted...

The entire room is inverted. Down is up, up is down. Like a doll's house flipped onto its roof.

As Dustin attempts to process this impossibility, there is an eerie CREAKING SOUND. It seems to come from the very bones of the massive highrise. A sound like metal being tested in ways metal was never meant to be tested.

In a heartbeat Dustin's on his feet. In a trance he walks over to the giant picture window and LOOKS OUT.

We do not see what he sees out the glass. Only the look of amazement and terror on his face.

MILLIE (O.S.)

Dustin?

He turns. A few feet away, MILLIE's coming to consciousness.

He hurries over to her as she sits up groggily and starts looking around.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

What happene--

DUSTIN

Don't look.

Another unearthly *metallic groan* bellows from the innards of the giant building.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Don't look.

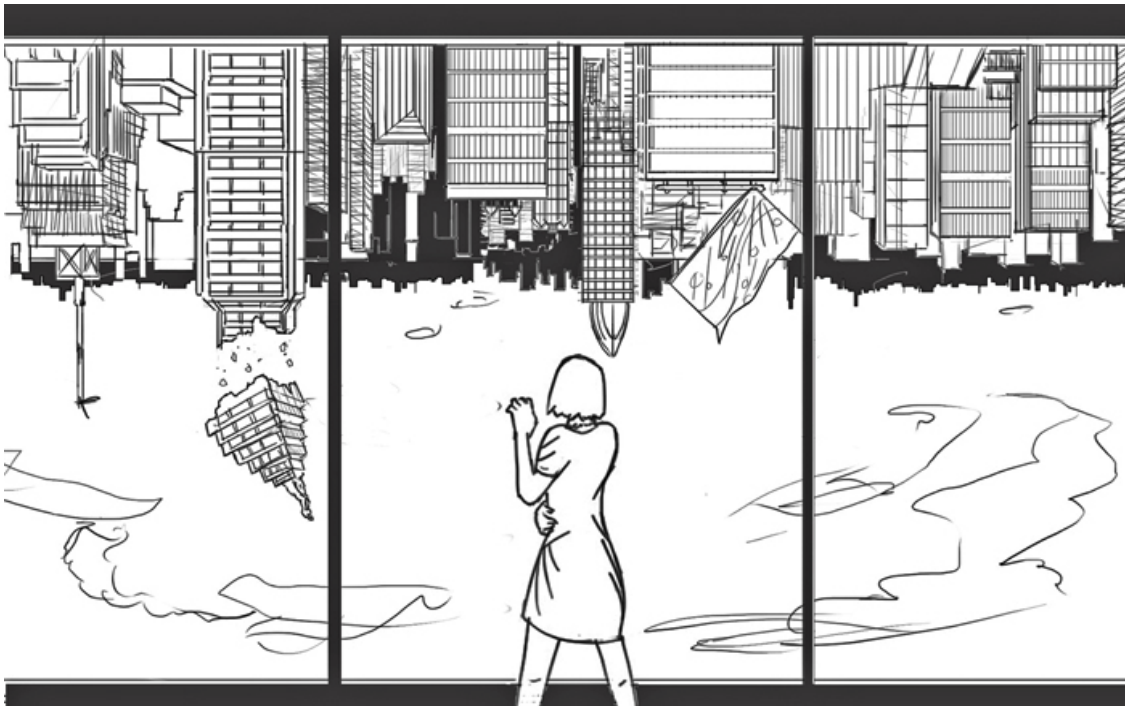
He covers her eyes with his hand.

MILLIE

What are you talking about--

She angrily pulls his hand away... and that's when Millie sees that out the GIANT PLATE-GLASS WINDOWS surrounding them...

...the ENTIRE WORLD is inverted.



What once was "the ground" is now a giant ceiling above, stretching out to infinity. And from this giant endless ceiling, hanging down, are SKYSCRAPERS. Hanging down like stalactites.... hanging down into an endless blue sky below....

Millie is frozen in a state of terror beyond all imagining.

And that's when one of the skyscrapers right in front of her DISLODGES.

The entire building goes plummeting downward into the sky, dropping like a icicle falling from a tree branch. Except that it's not an icicle. It's eighty stories of stone and steel and *people* and in an instant it's simply gone into the blue abyss below.

And then another building falls. Or more precisely *half* of it. The high-rise snaps in two at its middle floor -- half of the building still hanging down, the rest of it plummeting away into the sky.

DUSTIN

We have to move. We have to get out of here. *Right now.*

Millie starts to SCREAM.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Come on!!

She's still screaming. Their building GROANS again.

Dustin grabs her hand, tries to pull her.

MILLIE
I can't--I can't--I can't--

She's frozen, as if in a nightmare, staring at the end of the world.

Dustin grabs the TAPE ROLL from his pocket. He tears off a piece and, in a flash, BLINDFOLDS her with it.

Then he grabs her hand again and PULLS HARD.

The "floor" beneath them starts to *shake...*

The two race like mad, Dustin half-dragging the blind girl. Out the windows around them buildings everywhere are falling like dry autumn leaves.

Their feet scramble across a grid of ceiling fixtures and ventilation covers as they race desperately for the--

FIRE STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The two BURST through an upside-down emergency EXIT DOOR, tumbling into the inverted stairwell.

The stairwell, surprisingly, functions quite well upside-down. The undersides of the steps have the identical contour as the tops. But there's no time to pause and appreciate this small bit of good fortune.

DUSTIN
 Climb.

Still pulling her by the hand, Dustin and Millie scurry up flight after flight.

But from far down the stairwell comes a new sound... a *ripping* sound. Then a pause. Then another louder, *ripping* sound.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
 Faster!

Hearing this strange new sound, though, Millie removes the tape from her eyes to find out what's happening. She looks straight down the OPEN CENTER SHAFT OF THE STAIRWELL to see--

--level after level *ripping* away and tumbling down into the sky.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER, HANGING DOWN - CONTINUOUS

A WIDE SHOT reveals that the floors of this skyscraper are indeed *dislodging individually*.

It's mesmerizing to watch the building come apart like a layer cake. One floor rips loose, tumbles down into oblivion, then a few seconds later the next one does the same....

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Doubly motivated, Millie and Dustin start making great headway up the stairwell. Millie's so driven she barely notices a figure pass them by heading in the other direction. But Dustin turns as he sees Glanzman, confused and terrified, charge past in the *wrong direction*.

GLANZMAN
(to himself, petrified)
Gotta get out, gotta get out, gotta
get out...

Dustin SHOUTS down to his supervisor.

DUSTIN
GLANZMAN! IT'S THE WRONG WAY!

Glanzman freezes. Looks up at him.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
WRONG WAY! WE GOTTA GO HIGHER!!

Glanzman stares at Dustin like he's crazy -- then keeps scrambling down.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dammit!

Cursing himself, Dustin flies down after his boss.

CUT TO:

GLANZMAN'S KENNETH COLE LOAFERS--

--racing down flight after flight in the inverted stairwell.

GLANZMAN
Gonna make it, gonna make it, gonna
make it-- JESUS!!

He's made it the bottom... to find there is *NO BOTTOM*. Glanzman teeters terrified on the final stair, hanging over nothing but yawning blue sky.

Then his arm is GRABBED by DUSTIN--

DUSTIN
Come on!

--who YANKS his supervisor back up the stairwell.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGHER UP THE STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Amidst the chaos, Dustin and Glanzman manage to catch up with Millie. The trio keep climbing up, doing well now, gaining distance from the ripping abyss several stories below.

Then, without warning, FOUR FLOORS RIP AWAY SIMULTANEOUSLY, putting the drop right at their heels.

The three keep scrambling.

MILLIE
We've hit the lobby level!

DUSTIN
Keep going! The parking garage,
it's *under* ground!

They climb the final flights and hit the "top" of the inverted stairwell. An UPSIDE-DOWN DOOR opposite them is marked with a sign reading "PARKING."

But the floor which would normally lead to this door is now above their heads. The door itself is impossible to get to without jumping.



Acting fast, Dustin runs and LEAPS the gap from the stairs to the door, GRABS the HANDLE--

The parking lot door SWINGS OPEN, nearly knocking Dustin off. He manages to pull himself up and into the open parking lot doorway. He turns to Millie and Glanzman--

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Jump!

Glanzman doesn't hesitate -- chivalry be damned. Dustin catches his boss's arm, pulls him into the garage.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Millie!

Dustin stretches out a hand for her. But Millie's petrified, crouched on the metal steps at the other side of the inverted stairwell....

From all around them comes a *sound louder than any we've heard* as the LAST OF THE BUILDING STARTS TO FALL FREE--

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

MILLIE!!

She leaps.

EXT. REMAINS OF SKYSCRAPER - CONTINUOUS

A wide shot shows the entire foundation of the main building plummet into sky, revealing a RECTANGULAR CRATER and ONE EXPOSED SIDE OF AN ADJACENT UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE.

In this parking garage we make out three tiny figures -- Dustin, Millie and Glanzman -- alive, staring in awe down into the wide blue below.

CUT TO:

Darkness.

Occasionally broken by the flicker of emergency lights.

INT. INVERTED SUBWAY TRAIN - UNKNOWN

The weak lighting illuminates a *figure in a business suit*, coming to consciousness within the wrecked, upside-down subway train.

It's STEVEN, lying on his back. His hands gingerly feel over his body for injuries. They chance upon the promotion letter sitting on his chest. Barely thinking, Steven slips it in a pocket as he sits up.

He rubs his head, tries to get oriented. In the background, other passengers do the same.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - SHORTLY AFTER

Through the dark tunnel, Steven makes his way amid a group of other dazed passengers.

SHELL-SHOCKED WOMAN
What happened...?

Steven looks apprehensively at the tunnel, notices that the rails are *above them*. And also that the "CAUTION-HIGH VOLTAGE" signs on the walls are upside-down. Unable to make sense of this--

STEVEN
Just keep walking. I think there's
some light ahead.

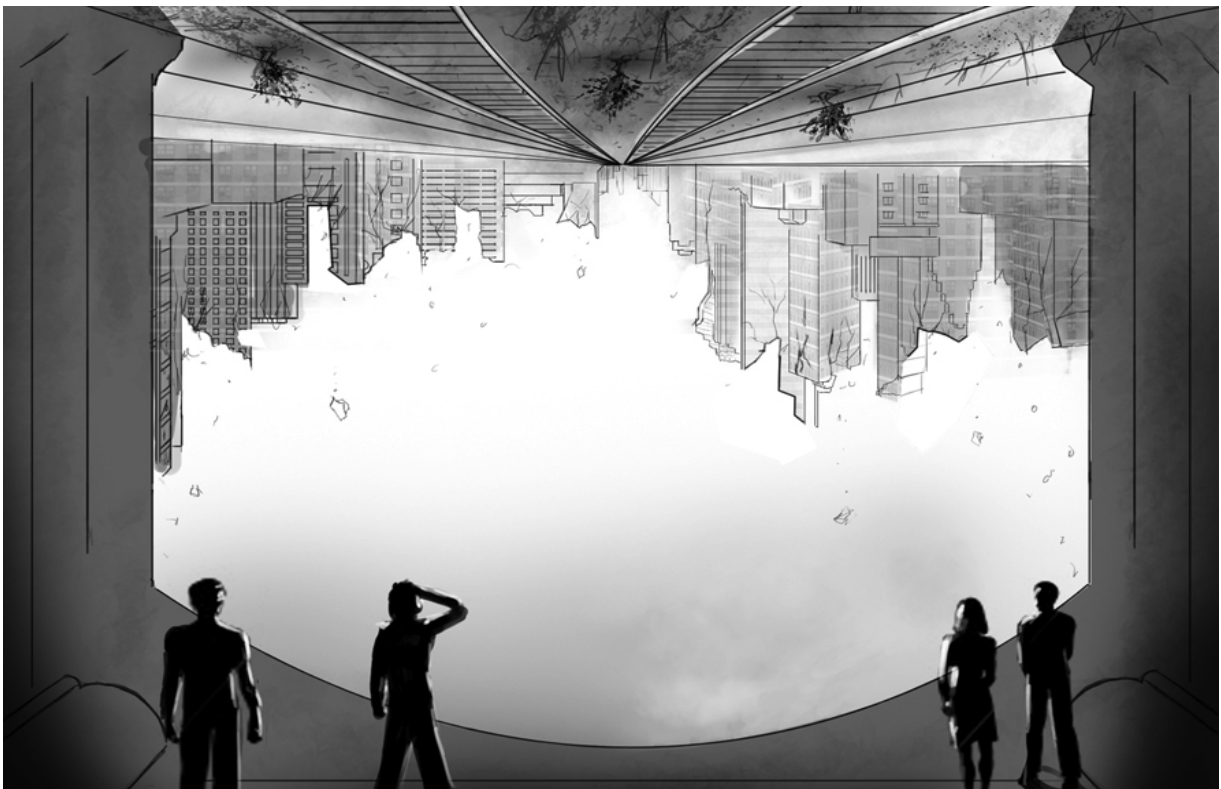
Their tunnel soon converges with another into a single wide passage. At the end of this wide main tunnel DAYLIGHT shines in. Silhouetted at the end are SEVERAL PASSENGERS, wordlessly staring out.

Squinting into the bright light, Steven joins them.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The view everyone is staring at is the same that Dustin and Millie saw -- *ground above, sky beneath*. What is left of the city of Atlanta hangs upside-down in the distance. At the onlookers' feet, just beyond where they stand at the tunnel's edge, is nothing but sky straight down.

The sun shines up brightly from far below. It glints off the metal rails of the TRAIN TRACKS above their heads. The tracks (which have held) continue out of the tunnel into the distance, snaking off along the vast ceiling beyond that is the earth.....



(Reader -- note that this view is the orientation we will see for the duration of the film; earth above like a ceiling, sky like an abyss below. It is the natural way people would perceive this new reality, for humans orient themselves based on the pull of gravity, regardless of the direction it happens to be pulling.)

Nobody has a clue what to say as they look out at this strange new world. A few onlookers check their CELL PHONES for any hint of a signal. Steven takes out his as well -- a message reads "No Service." Then, like a science experiment, Steven holds his \$300 Motorola Droid over the edge of the tunnel... and lets go.

Everybody cranes their necks out as the phone *plummets* like a stone, down into the sky below, till it vanishes out of sight.

SHELL-SHOCKED WOMAN
(trembling voice)
This is... some kind of dream,
right?

ONLOOKER 1
Polar shift.

ONLOOKER 2
What?

ONLOOKER 1
Polar shift. It's gotta be.

ONLOOKER 3

You sure?

The look on Onlooker 1's face says he isn't the slightest bit sure.

ONLOOKER 1

Or maybe... the moon slipped its orbit.

Steven is still peering out, but not at his vanished phone. His eyes are now locked onto a SMALL DOT far off in the sky, drifting slowly under the hanging city.

Noticing him, others squint at the dot as well. It is slowly growing larger.

ONLOOKER 2

What *is* that?

STEVEN

An airliner.

Now everybody is spellbound by the sight. It is indeed an airplane. An A330. With no way to *land*.

ONLOOKER 3

But how can it...?

ONLOOKER 2

What's it gonna do?

ONLOOKER 1

There's nothing it can do. All it can do is circle til it runs out of fuel. Then it'll fall.

The doomed plane, however, is making a slow turn in their general direction. Steven stares at it, increasingly unnerved.

STEVEN

I'm not so sure about that.

CUT TO:

INT. A330 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Warning lights flash and alarms blare. In the pilot seat, Sophia desperately searches the array of switches, then FLIPS one. The terrified young co-pilot next to her shouts.

CO-PILOT

What are you doing?

SOPHIA
Dumping the last of the fuel.

CO-PILOT
What are you *doing*!?

Sophia glances at him, then fixes her gaze straight ahead.

SOPHIA
Landing this thing.

A hundred feet in front of them, a huge DR. PEPPER BILLBOARD plummets from out of nowhere, barely missing the nose of the plane.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Unless you've got a better idea.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

At the subway tunnel's edge, Onlooker 1 tries to engage Steven in a debate.

ONLOOKER 1
What are you talking about? It
can't land. There's no *land* for it
to land on.

But debate doesn't interest Steven -- the plane is *larger* now. Closer. And heading for them.

STEVEN
Everybody... *run*.

ONLOOKER 2
What?

Steven turns and SHOUTS at the crowd of onlookers.

STEVEN
RUN NOW! INTO THE TUNNEL! AS FAR
BACK AS YOU CAN!

The others suddenly realize *exactly* what he's talking about. The plane is indeed heading straight for the very tunnel entrance where they're standing.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
GO!!

Like a flock of frightened sheep, they all TURN AND RUN back into the dark of the tunnel.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. A330 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The co-pilot looks in disbelief at the small distant SUBWAY ENTRANCE Sophia's aiming for.

PILOT
In there? The plane'll never fit!

Sophia stares at the dark tunnel.

SOPHIA
Most of it will.
(turns to him)
You gonna help me or what?

The wide-eyed pilot stares at her a second -- then quick as lightning unbuckles his belt and BOLTS OUT OF THE COCKPIT.

Sophia sighs, then re-focuses on the fast-approaching tunnel entrance.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Steven and the others SPRINT to get as far back into the tunnel as they can. But the shell-shocked woman *stops*, turning and staring back at the opening like Lot's wife.

She sees the A330 clearly visible in the opening, zooming in fast...

The roar of the airliner's engines starts to echo through the train tunnel...

STEVEN
Don't look! Keep running!!

Steven GRABS the woman to get her moving again.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. A330, PASSENGER CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The fear is no less intense within the cabin of the hurtling airliner. Out the windows terrified passengers can see upside-down trees and golden arches whipping past them at eye-level.

The earth hangs a mere few feet above the body of the racing plane.....

CUT TO:

EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

As it closes in on its target the A330's roof actually SCRAPES the surface of the earth--

--then the NOSE of the huge plane *enters* the tunnel entrance dead center--

--then BOOM!

Both WINGS *snap off like twigs* as they slam into the concrete sides of the tunnelway.

A millisecond after the TAIL PIECE *snaps off* as well.

All three massive chunks of metal instantly plummet down into blue below.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE TUNNEL--

The BODY OF THE PLANE remains intact, sending up sparks as it tears down the tunnel at ninety miles an hour.

INSIDE THE CABIN--

Passengers squeeze their eyes shut in terror.

UP AHEAD IN THE TUNNEL--

Steven and the others race like mad as the giant fuselage roars up fast behind them.

IN THE COCKPIT--

Sophia's still at the controls, but there's nothing for her to do but hang on.

DEEP IN THE TUNNEL--

Friction is causing the plane's speed to slow, but not fast enough. It bears down on the people running in the tunnel just twenty feet ahead...

THEN SLAM!

The plane's roof BASHES into the point where the main subway tunnel narrows into two smaller ones.

IN THE COCKPIT--

Sophia's HURLED FORWARD against her seat belt straps--

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

She's done it, however; the A330 is at a dead stop.

The plane's massive girth fills the tunnel entirely. But the BACK END OF THE CABIN where the tail broke away is wide open. Passengers stream off, running as fast as they can from the smoldering fuselage.

Despite the apocalyptic wreckage, Sophia's landing was a complete success.

Except for Sophia.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

She is out cold in the shattered remains of the cockpit, knocked unconscious by the impact.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEPER IN THE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The SUBWAY ONLOOKERS who ran from the plane are still retreating, not taking any chances.

Except for Steven.

He turns and looks back at the wreckage. Through the broken glass of the cockpit windows he can make out a faint *orange glow*.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Sophia. Her unconscious face is getting difficult to see through the smoke now filling the wrecked compartment.

Then a HAND slaps her face.

STEVEN
Wake up. Come on.

Sophia's eyes open. Steven's there, unbuckling her safety belt. Disoriented, she panics and tries to push him away--

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Nuh-uh. Show's over. Out now.

Sophia starts to cough. He grabs her and lifts her UP AND OUT the wide hole in the shattered windshield.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNEL BY PLANE'S NOSE - CONTINUOUS

He lowers Sophia down the plane's nose to the ground, then slides quickly down himself.

Coughing, the two stagger a safe distance away from the wreck. After they catch their breaths a moment, he looks her up and down.

STEVEN
You don't look like a pilot.

SOPHIA
(coughs out last of smoke)
Enthusiast.

STEVEN
Well... you did good real back there.

Sophia turns, staring back at the ruined plane and shattered cockpit, now crackling in flame.

SOPHIA
Thank you. For getting me out.

STEVEN
No biggie.

At this, the ENTIRE BODY OF THE PLANE RIPS THROUGH AS THE 'BOTTOM' OF THE INVERTED TUNNEL GIVES OUT UNDER ITS WEIGHT.

Steven and Sophia instantly find themselves standing at the BRINK OF A GAPING HOLE, staring down as the plane's fuselage *vanishes into a speck* within the bright blue sky below.

After a stunned moment:

STEVEN (CONT'D)
How bout we find a way out of here.

Sophia looks at him. Then lets him lead her off down the dark tunnel.

EXT. INVERTED CITYSCAPE - DAY

A breathtaking WIDE-SHOT as the camera drifts along the underside of the remains of downtown. Some buildings remain, others are gone, some a bit of both.

The camera slowly zeroes in on a single location... the concrete underside of an INVERTED FREEWAY OVERPASS. Stranded on it we discover Hank and twelve-year-old Connor Mosely beside the smashed remains of the '65 Chevy Impala.

This is where they landed when every other car on the freeway went tumbling into the sky.

Hank's got a little mantra going.

HANK
What the fuck... what the fuck...
what the fuck...

He lifts his hands to his mouth and shouts--

HANK (CONT'D)
HELLO! IS ANYBODY OUT THERE? CAN
ANYBODY HEAR ME!!

Only silence from the ruined city.

HANK (CONT'D)
What the fuck... what the fuck...
(turns)
Connor, get back from the edge.

A few feet away, Connor sits at the edge of the overpass, his legs dangling off like a boy sitting on a wooden bridge over a stream. He thoughtfully tosses a pebble down into the sky.

Hank turns from his son back to the smashed car--

HANK (CONT'D)
What the hell is this? What would
do this? Like a... earthquake or
something? Some kinda terrorist
attack?
(lost)
Look what it did to the Chevy! I
just replaced all this trim work!

Hank runs his hands through his thinning hair.

HANK (CONT'D)
Connor, did you hear me!? I said
get ba--

He turns toward Connor-- to discover Connor is gone.

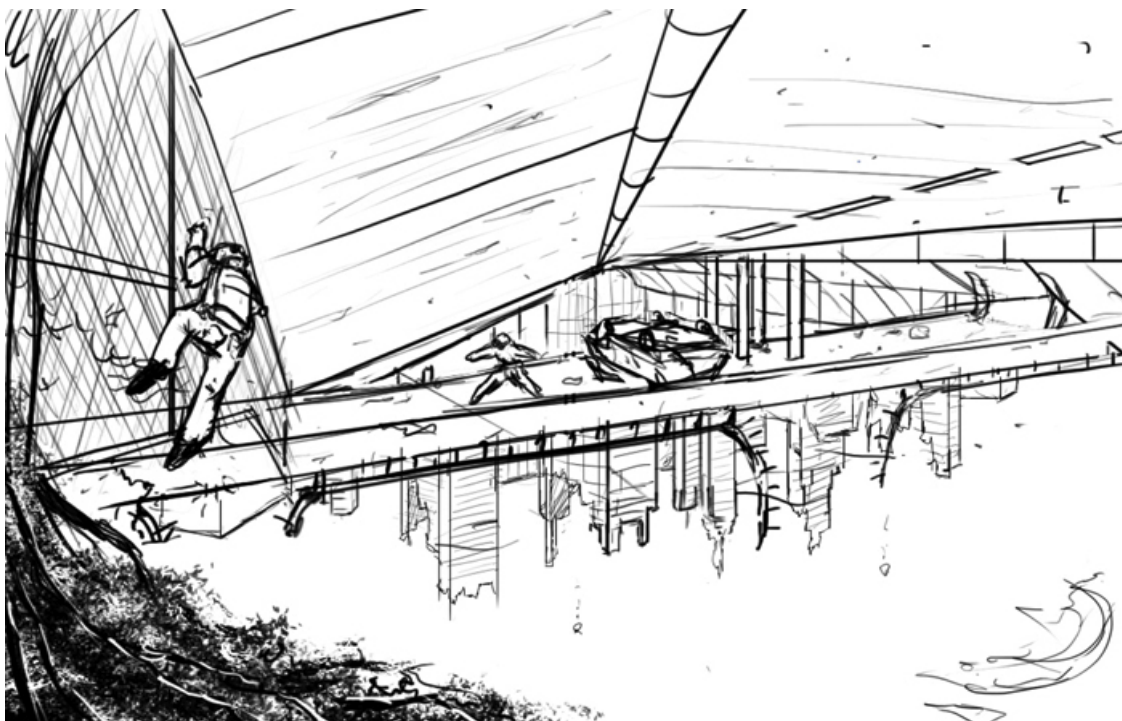
HANK (CONT'D)
CONNOR!?

In a panic, Hank spins around. He is now ALONE on the overpass.

Terrified, he looks over the edge. But there's nothing but clouds below.

Then Hank hears a sound, the *rattling* of a chain-link fence.

Hank rushes to the far end of the upside-down underpass to discover that his *twelve-year-old son has left the safety of the underpass and is edging away on a skinny CHAIN-LINK FENCE*.



The "top" of the fence is cemented into the freeway wall, but there's nothing but an infinite drop below the boy's feet.

HANK (CONT'D)
Connor! Get back here!!

Connor, backpack on, ignores his father. He keeps making his way along the fence. He's now a good fifteen feet away from the overpass.

HANK (CONT'D)
Connor, now!

CONNOR
(calls back)
I'll be ok, Dad.

HANK
I said now--

CONNOR
You just worry about the Chevy.

HANK
Goddamit! I'm your father and I'm
telling you to GET BACK HERE RIGHT
NOW!

Connor gives his dad a willful look, then *lets go*--

--and catches a TREE BRANCH stretched out beneath him. The branch bends slightly, but holds Connor's weight. Then, without a glance back at his dad, the boy climbs further into the tree's tangle of branches.

Heart in throat, Hank tries to make sense of his son's unbelievable actions. He sees Connor reach a TELEPHONE WIRE running through the lower branches of the tree; the boy instantly starts moving hand-over-hand along the wire, like a child on monkey bars.

Hank's gaze follows the telephone wire, sees that it passes within arm's length of a LIGHT POLE....

The base of this light pole connects with a metal SAFETY RAIL leading further into the city....

Tree to wire. Wire to pole. Pole to rail. There is indeed a network of navigable objects hanging below the city that Connor's intending to use to make his way through the downtown area. The urban obstacle course appears to requires only basic jungle gym skills. But it's got an unforgiving drop below.

Hank curses, then goes to the flimsy metal fence and STARTS OUT AFTER CONNOR.

The chain-link rattles under Hank's heavier weight. Bits of cement crumble from its mountings...

HANK (CONT'D)
Oh Jesus.

Hank continues after his runaway son.

INT. INVERTED PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

A large, multi-level parking garage. Hundreds of parked cars in neat rows. The only thing that makes the image exceptional is that all the cars are lying on their roofs, tires up like dead insects.

Here we discover Dustin, Millie and Glanzman. They sit in silence against the far wall of the garage... as far back as they can get from the missing section of the structure and the infinite drop beyond it.

Through the cement columns, Dustin studies the baffling view.

DUSTIN

At first I was thinking the Earth stopped its rotation. That that's why everything's falling off.

No reply from the others.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

But I've been watching the shadows, and they're moving. So the world's definitely still turning. Maybe a polar shift...

GLANZMAN

(softly)

Polar shit, I like it.

DUSTIN

Shift. But I doubt it because--

GLANZMAN

No, I think "polar shit" is spot on. I think some giant polar bear took a GIANT POLAR SHIT, and that GIANT POLAR BEAR SHIT was soooo big that when it hit the ground it shook everything off the face of the whole world.

(beat)

Christ, listen to you try to talk smart, Dustin.

There's a long silence. Dustin turns to Millie.

DUSTIN

You ok?

Millie's not. She's sitting fetal position, facing the wall, back turned to the nightmarish view. Not talking.

Dustin sighs, then gets to his feet.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go see what I can find
us.

GLANZMAN
Great. I'll take a Bacon Jumbo
Jack.

The other two remain sitting there.

CUT TO:

A toppled VENDING MACHINE being heaved up onto its side. A jackpot of SNACK FOOD AND DRINK BOTTLES tumble out of the smashed glass front....

EXT. INVERTED TRAIN STOP - DAY

Steven sifts through the spilled food and drink containers. He's standing on what is technically the ceiling of an ELEVATED TRAIN STOP. His hands seize on *treasure* -- an unbroken bottle of Frappuccino. He tosses it to Sophia, who deftly catches it.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The two of them walk along, drinking and eating, each carrying a plastic bag filled with scavenged food. They could pass for a couple walking home from the grocery store, except that they are trekking along on the UNDERSIDE OF ELEVATED TRAIN TRACKS, with nothing but sky beneath them. The remains of the ruined city hang all around them.

Suddenly they come to a stop. Directly in front of them a huge section of track has *fallen away*, leaving the two stuck at the edge of an unexpected precipice.

STEVEN
And we were doing so good there.

He frowns, looking ahead at the distant spot where the broken tracks resume, over a hundred feet away.

SOPHIA
Doesn't matter. That's not the
direction I need to go anyway.

STEVEN
What direction you need to go?

She turns and points.

SOPHIA
Roughly that way. To my father.

Steven turns and sees what she's pointing at-- A LONG LINE OF WIRE-LINKED ELECTRICAL TOWERS, snaking out from the city into the rural area beyond. The wires connecting them run directly below where Steven and Sophia now stand. The metal towers themselves hang down from the ceiling-earth like huge industrial icicles.

STEVEN
That's insane.

SOPHIA
You don't have anyone you need to get to?

Steven doesn't answer.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Family? Girlfriend?

STEVEN
I got a beta fish in a bowl back in my apartment. Though I've got a feeling Nemo isn't doing so hot right now.

SOPHIA
Well anyway, thanks for your help. Good luck.

Sophia extends a hand to shake. He doesn't take it.

STEVEN
You're *serious*. You're going out on the wires.

SOPHIA
I have to get to him.

STEVEN
Your father.

She nods, as if the matter's that simple.

Steven looks down below them. One of the rails of the severed track bends straight down for several yards, coming within arm's length of the closest electrical tower. It's doable. Just crazy.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Ok... I'm going with you.

SOPHIA
(shakes her head)
Like you said, it's insane. The wires might still have a current.

STEVEN
Doubtful.

SOPHIA
They might break.

STEVEN
Seems like a good reason to have
someone with you.

Sophia realizes that this man is serious about wanting to come.

SOPHIA
No. Thanks anyway.

STEVEN
Please.

He says it softly, but imploringly. Sophia looks puzzled, unable to make sense of what's driving this total stranger to follow her on such a dangerous undertaking.

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS OF:

--one end of a length of SCAVENGED CORD being tossed *upward*.

--the loose end SAILING OVER a higher power wire...

--SOPHIA'S HAND catching the falling end.

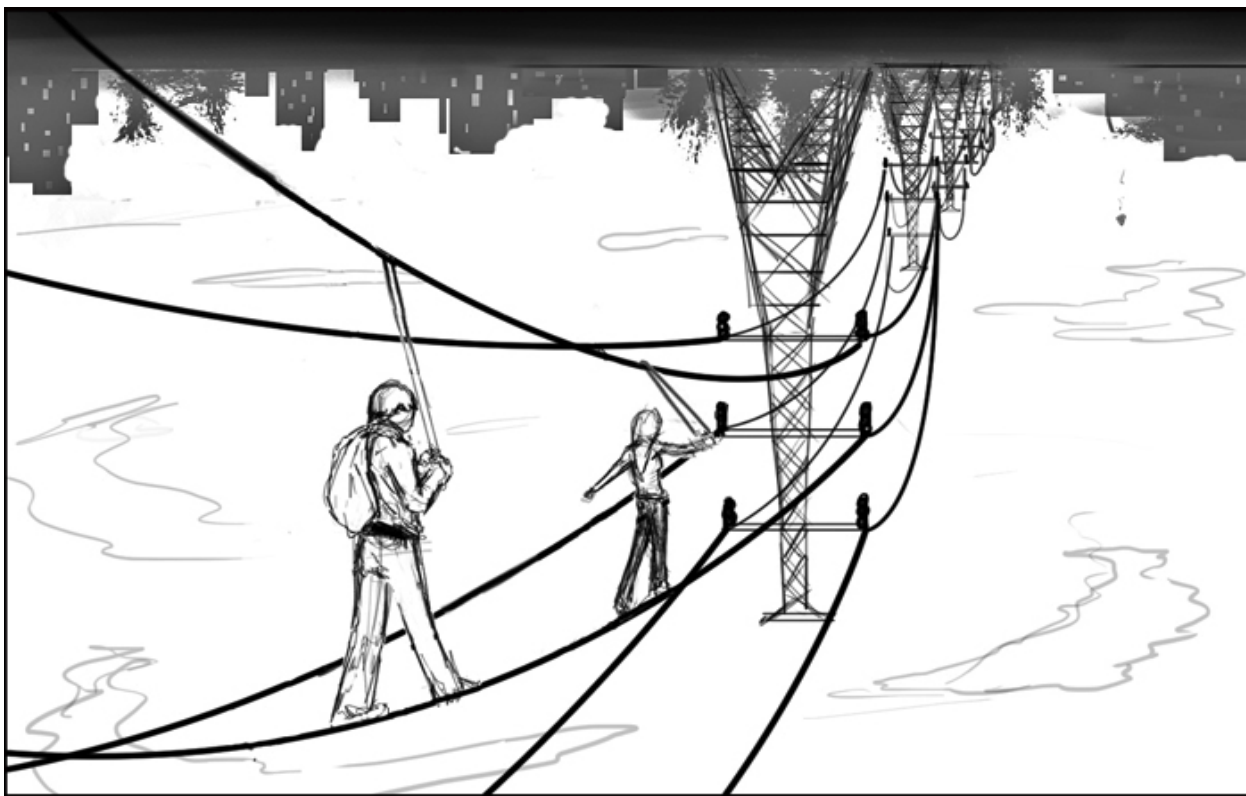
--HER FOOT stepping out onto the wire...

A WIDE SHOT reveals exactly the technique Sophia's using to balance. She's making use of the parallel power wire ten feet above her; the length of scavenged cord is looped over the upper wire. Below it, she hold both ends of the dangling cord tightly, allowing her to maintain balance as she makes her way out.

Above her, the looped portion of cord slides along with each step she takes.

It's hardly a safety device, but it does the trick, allowing her to take step after step out along the narrow wire.

Just behind her, Steven moves exactly the same way.



There's nothing but clouds and blue beneath the wire under their feet. As they continue their tightrope walk off into the strange horizon--

STEVEN

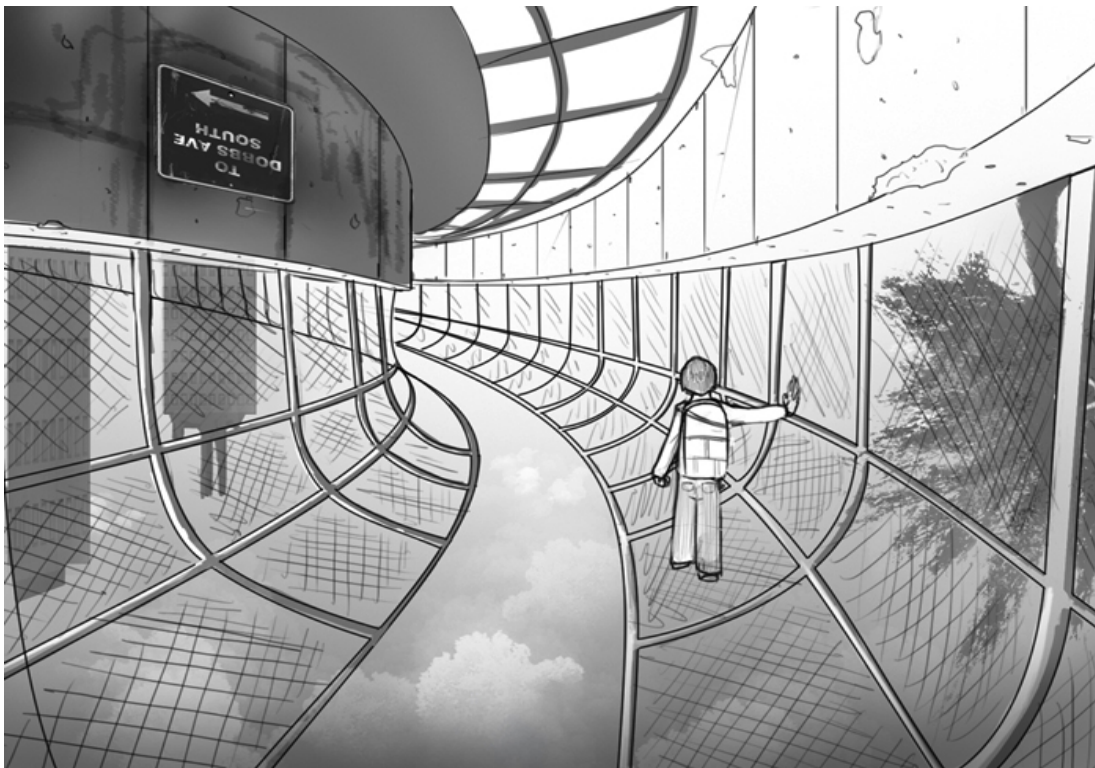
Out of curiosity... think there's anyone else out there doing something remotely this crazy?

SOPHIA

Hard to imagine.

EXT. INVERTED PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS, DOWNTOWN - DAY

Someone *is* as "crazy." It's twelve-year-old Connor, wearing his backpack, looking much like a Boy Scout on a solo expedition. This expedition, however, has him walking along the *curved fencing* of a "suicide cage" beneath an *UPSIDE-DOWN PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY*.



Connor skillfully holds the chain-link side with one hand while keeping distance from the LONG OPEN GAP which runs the length of the walkway like a center trench. The boy's determination seems to insulate him from the fact that he's walking less than a foot away from an infinite drop into nothingness.

Reaching the end of the walkway, though, Connor suddenly stops. For in front of him are no easy navigational options.

There is a WOODEN ELECTRICAL POLE fifteen feet off. A TREE LIMB several feet in another direction. Nothing too close though. No obvious way to keep moving.

The boy studies his options carefully when--

--he's unexpectedly GRABBED from behind by a furious, breathless HANK.

HANK
You little shit! What are you
doing, trying to kill me!?

CONNOR
Let go of me!

HANK
What the hell's gotten into you!

CONNOR
Why do you care!

HANK
You're my son!

CONNOR
All you care about is your stupid car!

HANK
That car was for YOU! My dad gave it to me, and I was keeping it just so that--

CONNOR
I never wanted it! I'm glad it's smashed!

Hank bristles, stung by this.

HANK
Where the hell you trying to get to anyway, Connor?

CONNOR
The library. You gonna stop me?

HANK
Damn right!

CONNOR
What are you gonna do, Dad? Ground me? Tie me up?

Hank is dumbfounded, but Connor's logic is hard to argue with. Hank can only shake his head and stare at his son.

HANK
What's gotten *into* you?

Connor's expression changes.

CONNOR
I think I know what *this* is.
(points all around)
All of this. I know what caused it.

Hank looks at the surrounding world-- familiar yet terrifyingly unrecognizable-- then back at his twelve-year-old son.

HANK
Look... just stay with me... don't run off. Don't run off and I'll get you wherever you want to go.

CONNOR
The library.

HANK
The library. Okay. Just don't
leave, Connor.

Connor considers his dad through narrowed eyes.

CONNOR
Okay.

Hank exhales, relieved. But still pretty freaked.

HANK.
Let's figure out our next move.
It's about to get dark.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

A FULL MOON shines through the concrete beams of the silent parking structure. For a moment Dustin stands there, taking in the strange beauty of the great white sphere hanging *beneath* the remains of the city. Then he snaps out of it, returns to the task at hand.

Dustin's SCAVENGING, crouching and peering through window after window of the many flipped cars, looking for anything to eat or drink. For a light source he's crafted a JURY-RIGGED FLASHLIGHT, cleverly wired together from a headlamp and a car battery.

The light beam shines upon an OPENED PACKAGE OF CHEETOS lying on the ceiling of an upside-down Volvo. Dustin raises a crowbar, SMASHES IN the car window.

INT. OTHER END OF PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT, LATER

The food and drink Dustin managed to find now sits on the ground in front of Millie and Glanzman. Glanzman picks through the scant selection, eating in silence. Millie just sits, still fetal.

Dustin eyes her with concern.

DUSTIN
We can't keep scavenging half empty
corn-nut packets.
(beat)
We can't stay here, Millie.

MILLIE
I'm not moving.

GLANZMAN
We wait til rescue comes.

DUSTIN

There's no rescue coming. This thing... whatever it is... we're on our own.

(turns)

There's nothing here, Millie. We can't stay.

MILLIE

Where should we go? Huh, Dustin? It's the end of the world. So where exactly are you proposing we go?

He's taken aback by her sudden animation.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. It's just... I'm scared. That's all.

Dustin reaches out a hand to comfort her. Millie takes it, squeezing it tight. After a moment--

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Where do you think we should go?

GLANZMAN

(speaking up)

We go *deeper*, that's where. Get to the subway tunnels. It's like an underground city in there. That's the only place.

DUSTIN

I'm not sure... I was thinking we find some way to get back to the surface, try to figure this out--

GLANZMAN

Figure it out! The surface! Are you crazy?! We get to safety, to people. *That's* where we go.

Dustin looks over at Millie, her face full of fear.

MILLIE

If I go anywhere, Dustin, it's deeper. Safer.

She's resolute. He acquiesces.

DUSTIN

Okay. We'll do it. Safer.

CUT TO:

The first rays of morning sun illuminating SOPHIA'S SLEEPING FACE...

EXT. ELECTRICAL TOWER, RURAL AREA - DAWN

There's nothing remotely safe about where Sophia's sleeping. She's lying on the MIDDLE PLATFORM of one of the DOWNWARD-HANGING ELECTRICAL TOWERS. Up close we realize just how huge these towers are; the platform she's on is as long and wide as an S.U.V.

The golden light causes her eyes to flicker and slowly open. Sophia sits up, looks around--

--and notices STEVEN sitting at the end of the platform, watching over her protectively.

STEVEN

Morning.

EXT. SAME PLATFORM - MORNING, SHORTLY AFTER

Breakfast. The tower on which they're eating Smart Bars and Diet Coke is far out from the city. There's no visible civilization in either direction of the endless stretching wires; just serene forest hanging two hundred feet above them.

A gentle breeze blows Sophia's snack food wrapper off the platform. It drifts down into the blue abyss below. Sophia watches it fall, intrigued. After a moment--

SOPHIA

What do you suppose it'd feel like, to just... let go?

STEVEN

To fall?

SOPHIA

Yeah.

He shrugs as he chews.

STEVEN

I went skydiving once. To try and impress my boss. Scared the hell out of me.

SOPHIA

It wouldn't feel like skydiving. No chute, no ground racing up toward you. Just...

She gazes down into the blue, distantly. Steven watches her, then gets to his feet.

STEVEN
Come on. We're burning daylight.
Your dad's waiting.

SOPHIA
(noticing something)
What's that?

Sophia's spotted something, a few feet below them, hanging from one of the tower's climbing pegs. It's a workman's LEATHER TOOL BAG, suspended by its shoulder strap.

Steven quickly makes his way down the tower's climbing pegs. A moment later he's back on the platform, tool bag in hand.

STEVEN
Well, I'd rather not think about
how it got left here... but I'll
take it. Beats the hell out of
plastic.

He starts transferring food items from their flimsy plastic shopping bag to the various compartments of the sturdy leather bag. As he does he discovers a silver BOOZE FLASK tucked in one of its pockets.

With a smile he holds it up in front of Sophia.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah. Today's off to a fine
start.

INT. CENTRAL LIBRARY, DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - MORNING

A cinder block SMASHES through a WIDE WINDOW from outside. It lands with a thud on what now serves as the floor (formerly the ceiling) of the library lobby.

The cinder block has a thick ROPE tied around it; the heavy block acts as an anchor as HANK carefully slides down the rope from outside. He makes his way through the shattered window frame, then turns and helps Connor do the same.

As they glance around, Hank notices someone staring at them in amazement: a MIDDLE-AGED LIBRARIAN sitting against a wall with a makeshift bandage on her head. She's clearly been holed up here since the big event. As she gazes at them in disbelief--

HANK
What, can't a dad take his kid to
the library?

Hank turns, finding that Connor has already started off without him. He quickly catches up to his son.

HANK (CONT'D)
Hey, take it easy.

CONNOR
(striding ahead)
It's okay. I know this place really well.

HANK
All I'm saying is, it's probably kinda different now.

INT. CENTRAL LIBRARY, MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

It *is* different now. The first time we saw the library it was a tall, airy, Guggenheim-like structure, open in the center, with a massive glass dome at the top depicting the heavens.

Now, inverted, it is a big, scary, creaking mess.

Hank and Connor stare down from the edge of the 'top' level. Far below, six levels down, is the stained glass dome. The glass is still intact, but barely visible through the hundreds of books that have tumbled onto it from above.

There's an ominous silence, only broken by a THUNK as a book from one ruined level dislodges and plummets down the central shaft.

Hank lays a hand on his son's shoulder.

HANK
How 'bout we go find you a Kindle somewhere instead.

Connor pushes his dad's hand off his shoulder, starts off. Hank grimaces, follows.

INT. LIBRARY, FURTHER DOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Though upsidedown stairways allows for relative ease of descent, the entire library nonetheless feels like a house of cards ready to collapse.

Hank follows as Connor leads from one section to the next. The boy moves methodically among the toppled shelving units, paying careful attention to the different subject titles. He passes through various aisles... "Physics", "Geology", etc.

HANK
What exactly are you after, Connor?

CONNOR
Keep going.

They move on, their feet treading across scattered books lying everywhere.

INT. LOWEST LIBRARY LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

Close up on a shelving placard reading "REFERENCE
ENCYCLOPEDIAS."

CONNOR
This is the shelf.

Connor says it frowning, for the metal shelving unit lies ON ITS BACK, completely devoid of books. Whatever was on it now lies several feet below, out on the chaos that is the stained glass dome.

HANK
I'm sorry, Connor. You tried.

Connor stares bitterly at the impossible mess of books on the glass dome below them.

Hank starts to pull him away.

CONNOR
No, wait... I see it.

HANK
Connor...

CONNOR
I *SEE* it, Dad.

There's no arguing with this tone. Not for Hank anyway.

INT. LIBRARY, GLASS DOME - MOMENTS LATER

Close on Connor's sneakers as the boy takes one careful step after another *out onto the dome*. He's treading on books, not glass; practically the whole face of the thirty-foot-wide dome is covered with them. Only in few spots do we see shafts of colored light shining up through the stained glass beneath.

Hank stands at the edge of the dome. He looks furious with himself as he watches his boy walking out essentially over nothing. Each creak of the glass and metal framing beneath Connor's feet makes his father wince.

But Connor is determined. For a few feet ahead of him, atop many other fallen volumes, a LARGE BOOK lies open.

CLOSE UP: The left page of the open book is covered with text, but one glance at the right page reveals why Connor is single-mindedly pursuing it...

On it is a large reproduction of a Dürer-like woodcut illustration. It is an apocalyptic vision as rendered by an artist in the Middle Ages. But the image, though ancient, is eerily familiar.... EARTH ABOVE. SKY BELOW. And falling away from the land we see men, women and children...beasts of burden...huts and castles...even an entire church.... all tumbling down into a woodcut illustrated sky.

Connor reaches the book. He picks it up carefully, like a holy grail. He smiles at his find a moment... then quickly slips the volume in his Jansport backpack.

Suddenly Connor's smile vanishes.

At his feet, in the spot where the book lay a moment before, *something else* is now exposed. A DEAD GIRL'S FACE.

Her corpse is mostly covered by fallen volumes. But now that Connor is aware, he has little trouble recognizing her as *the pretty girl doing homework who smiled at him the day before.*

The dead girl's opened eyes stare eerily upward.

HANK
(calling from the edge)
Connor...?

Connor is in a state of growing horror. For the girl is not the only one. What Connor's tunnel vision prevented him from seeing before is now horrifically clear from his current perspective; there are BURIED BODIES all around him. Victims from when the wave initially hit. A limb here... a hand there... the back of a head...

Connor's eyes grow wide.

He is no longer a headstrong, determined seeker of truth.

He is a terrified twelve-year-old boy.

And this is the moment that THE ENTIRE GLASS DOME SHATTERS UNDERNEATH HIS FEET.

Books and bodies plummet like lead into the open sky below, along with a million shards of glass.

CONNOR
DAD...!!!

Connor plummets too.

But as he does, a *cord* we did not see before goes INSTANTLY TAUT. It's a THICK ORANGE ELECTRICAL EXTENSION CORD, tied around Connor's waist at one end, the other end gripped by HANK'S STRONG HANDS.

EXT. OPEN SPACE BELOW SHATTERED DOME - CONTINUOUS

Connor stares wide-eyed as books, bodies and glass tumble below him into the unforgiving blue. The terrified twelve-year-old now dangles twenty feet under the building.

Then... slowly but surely, he feels himself being raised by his father, PULLING steadily from above.

INT. LIBRARY, EDGE OF SHATTERED DOME- CONTINUOUS

Hank struggles to pull his son all the way back up. As soon as the boy is lifted to the relative safety of the library interior he WRAPS HIS ARMS around his father.

CONNOR
I'm sorry--I'm sorry--I'm sorry--
I'm sorry--

HANK
(breathless)
It's okay. It's okay, Connor.

CONNOR
I'm so sorry, Dad--

Hank looks directly into his son's tear-filled face.

HANK
It's okay. I'm gonna take care of
you. You hear me?

Connor nods trustingly. Then hugs his dad tight, eyes shut.

HANK (CONT'D)
So don't worry.

Hank's face is full of worry, however. Even as he embraces his son, the man eyes their dangerous surroundings, looking for the quickest way to get someplace more secure. Hank's one thought now is to keep his boy alive.

EXT. ELECTRICAL WIRES, REMOTE FOREST AREA - DAY

Sophia and Steven have gotten quite good at walking along the wires. They move steadily beneath a breathtaking stretch of suspended forest.

With the aid of their balance cords slung over the wire above them, they are able to proceed a decent pace.

STEVEN

So your dad must be a hell of a guy
for you to be making this trip.

SOPHIA

He's a bastard. Start to finish.

Steven stops momentarily, surprised by this.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

But I wouldn't have made it
yesterday if it wasn't for him. He
let me take flying lessons when I
was a kid. Probably just to keep me
out of his hair, but nonetheless...
by age eleven I had my first
pilot's license. Chopper certified
at fifteen.

STEVEN

Your mom must have loved that.

SOPHIA

(softly)

She died before then. When I was
very young.

STEVEN

I'm sorry.

She's quiet a moment. A lone bird glides silently past,
strangely at ease in this new inverse environment.

SOPHIA

Why do you suppose we're not
talking about it? The *big* it. All
this?

She gestures at the impossible landscape all around them.
Steven answers her matter-of-factly.

STEVEN

I'm not talking about it because I
can't make the slightest bit of
sense out of it. I've got maybe a
seventh grade understanding of
physics, okay, but still... take
these electric towers. They must
weigh twenty tons each. Their
footings, yeah they're strong, but
I have no clue how they're holding
up under these conditions.

They've arrived at the next ELECTRICAL TOWER. As they step onto its metal platform, Steven gazes out at the hanging vista beyond.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
It's... like the earth's just
holding onto whatever it can.

Sophia, while looking back at Steven, notices *something strange*.

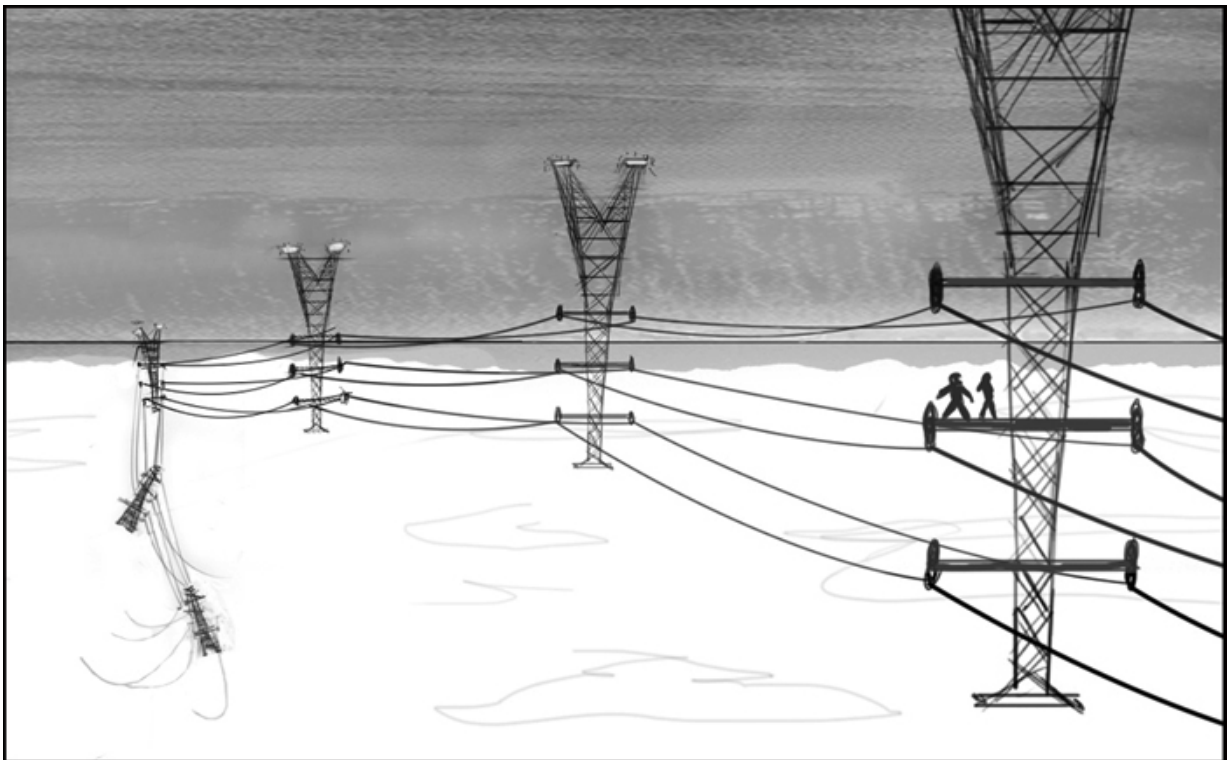
Off her troubled expression he turns--

Several towers back (a mile or so distant), a *single tower has dislodged from the earth*. Half of its connecting power lines have severed, leaving the distant tower dangling into nothingness like a twig hanging from spider silk. Except that this twig is thousands of pounds of steel. And the weight it's now exerting on its neighboring tower is tremendous.

SOPHIA
(blinks in amazement)
Nice going, Steven.

STEVEN
I didn't... I was just saying... oh
fuck.

The strain of the free-hanging tower causes its closest neighbor to suddenly **DISLodge FROM THE EARTH AS WELL**. Now there's a chain of two huge towers dangling down into the sky.



That these events are a mile distant is of no comfort for Steven and Sophia, for there's only a half-dozen intact towers between the one they're standing on and the developing chain reaction. Steven looks around desperately, surveying their precarious situation.

SOPHIA
Sever the wires! The ones between
us. We'll be cut off from it.

Quickly Steven rifles through the leather TOOL BAG. A beat later he pulls out a large industrial WIRE CUTTER.

He scrambles to the closest wire on their platform, starts to cut through it. But this isn't speaker wire; it's thick as Steven's forearm. Even with the heavy duty tool, his progress is difficult and slow.

Sophia watches anxiously. Steven finally manages to cut the thick line; with a *whoosh* it falls free behind them. Sophia flashes him a hopeful smile.

But that's just *one out of several* wires linking them to the growing disaster behind them.

There's an ominous sound from the distance as the next tower in the chain GROANS under the weight of the tons of wire and steel pulling down on it.

Steven turns to Sophia.

STEVEN
You. Start for the next tower
ahead.

SOPHIA
No.

STEVEN
It's not like you can help here,
we've got *one* cutter. Now move!

SOPHIA
I'm not leaving!

There's a metallic roar behind them as the stressed tower RIPS FREE. Its collapse causes a *vibration* that ripples ominously through the tower they're on.

STEVEN
(soft, but imploring)
Go.

Sophia relents. She turns and quickly throws her 'balance cord' over one of the wires above her, then starts out for the relative safety of the next tower ahead.

Steven's already frantically cutting at the next wire behind him.

Three towers remain. Three wires left to cut. It's a race.

EXT. THREE TOWERS BEHIND - CONTINUOUS

With the force of an earthquake, the next tower TEARS AWAY from the ground. Up close we feel the terrifying power as it rips from its moorings. Great chunks of earth and rock crumble away with it. The loose debris falls silently down into the sky. But the tower itself SWINGS AND PULLS like an otherworld beast on the next tower in the chain.

EXT. STEVEN'S TOWER - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on the cutters SLICING through another wire.

Steven's mission is half-accomplished, but he's not pausing to celebrate. He instantly scrambles up fifteen feet to the higher platform on his tower, where the two remaining wires are attached.

EXT. SOPHIA'S WIRE - CONTINUOUS

Thirty feet out on her line, Sophia looks small and vulnerable as she flees the looming disaster. She casts a glance back to see--

EXT. TWO TOWERS BEHIND - CONTINUOUS

--ANOTHER TOWER dislodging under the weight.

Only one left before the chain reaches Steven's tower.

EXT. STEVEN'S TOWER - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on the cutters working away at the metal line....

ZPLING! The sharp tool bites through the third connecting wire, leaving only a *single line* linking Steven's tower to the disaster behind.

But at the same instant, the tower behind him RIPS FREE and plummets.

Suddenly there is an OTHER-WORLDBLY DOWNWARD PULL being exerted on Steven's tower. The metal beams of his tower groan and start to bend. Nearly dropping the cutters, for a moment it's all Steven can do to hang on.

EXT. SOPHIA'S WIRE - CONTINUOUS

Midway out on her wire, Sophia feels the sickening pull. She stops moving and clings to her balance cord, holding on as best she can.

EXT. STEVEN'S TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Steven inches towards the final wire as bits of earth crumble down on him from where the land grips the tower's base.

One of the tower's connecting beams suddenly BUCKLES under the strain, causing a *jolt* to shudder through the structure from top to bottom. Steven manages to hang on, but he can barely get his cutters around the final wire. Things look bad....

Then suddenly -- SNAP. The final wire *severs all on its own*. Ripped in two by the immense weight of the tower-chain hanging beneath it.

There's a beautiful 'whoosh-like' sound as the massive chain of dangling electrical towers plummets freely into the blue. In a few moments it is a speck... then only a memory.

Steven turns and looks above him. His own tower, though bent, remains firmly rooted in the earth above. He laughs, amazed. He turns and smiles at Sophia. From halfway out on the wires she smiles back, similarly amazed.

But then Steven hears a sound... a sound like *metal slowly tearing*....

It's coming from the platform fifteen feet below him. Looking down, Steven sees that one of the wires leading to the next tower has been damaged, and is now ripping in two before his eyes...

It's the line that Sophia's standing on.

STEVEN

Oh shit.
(shouts)
GRAB IT!

Sophia's eyes go wide. She fumbles a hand down to grab the wire--

At the same instant, Steven makes an INSANE LEAP off his platform, diving for the tearing end. His hands lock onto the thick line just as it BREAKS--

The falling line PULLS him *one hundred feet down into nothingness*....

Fifty feet above him, the swing of the line jerks Sophia like a ragdoll. Her grip is broken, and her hands slide part way down the length of the wire....

...then her fingers lose their grasp entirely.

Sophia *FREEFALLS*.

Time seems to stretch out as the strange, alien gravity pulls her down...

Then a hand DARTS OUT, grabbing her by the wrist.

It's STEVEN, hanging at the end of the line. One strong hand clutches Sophia by the arm. His other hand grasps the end of the power line like a vice.

Sophia grasps the line itself. The hanging wire gradually slows its dizzying swing. For a moment they just hang there, Sophia looking at Steven in amazement.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Don't thank me yet.

He gestures up, then nudges her to start the long climb back.

CUT TO:

The silver BOOZE FLASK being cracked open.

EXT. ELECTRICAL TOWER PLATFORM - DAY, SHORTLY AFTER

Steven takes a long pull on its contents. He and Sophia sit breathless but safe on a platform of the intact tower they've climbed up to.

He holds the flask out to her. Sophia shakes her head.

STEVEN
Ready to move on?

SOPHIA
No.

The firmness of her tone makes him turn.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I'm not going a step further until you tell me what you're doing out here.
(beat)
A day ago you didn't know me. If we'd passed each other on the street you wouldn't have looked twice.

(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
So what the *hell* are you doing
risking your life for me like this?

Steven looks at her, then away, reluctant to answer. Finally--

STEVEN
I spent the past ten years
singlemindedly pursuing a career.
At the expense of family,
relationships... and general
decency. My job was to screw people
over on a daily basis. And I did it
without hesitation.

(pause)
But I always told myself it was
temporary. That when I reached a
certain level... when I was rich
enough, established enough,
whatever enough... that I'd start
giving back. Fund a health clinic.
Mentor boy scouts. Bottle-feed
homeless kittens.

He drinks the last of the flask, then chucks it off into the
blue.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
All that's gone. There are no more
chances. Suddenly I have no way
left in this world to do any good
for anybody.
(pause)
Except you.

Sophia stares at Steven a moment, coming to understand him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Can we move on now?

She simply nods. They get to their feet.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - UNKNOWN

Darkness. Dustin, Millie and Glanzman cautiously work their
way down a pitch black subway tunnel. Their only light is the
makeshift flashlight that Dustin earlier wired together from
a car battery and headlamp.

Suddenly Glanzman motions for them to stop.

GLANZMAN
Shh.

DUSTIN
(sotto)
What is it?

GLANZMAN

I saw something ahead. Somebody.

They all peer ahead into the darkness. Glanzman's right. Far off down the tunnel *another beam of light* slices through the black.

GLANZMAN (CONT'D)

Kill the light.

DUSTIN

What? I thought we were *trying* to get to other people.

GLANZMAN

(angry whisper)

Not in the dark where someone's gonna steal our food and bash our heads in!

DUSTIN

Oh come on...

MILLIE

(gentle but scared)

Do it, Dustin.

Dustin reluctantly kills the light, for Millie's sake.

The distant beam of light is now moving in their direction. Glanzman quickly backs into a shallow *ALCOVE* in the subway wall. Millie follows him into the hiding spot.

Dustin curses under his breath, but follows his two companions.

The other light beam grows nearer. With it comes the sound of multiple footfalls.

Pressed inside the alcove, the three wait breathlessly for the unknown entity to pass them...

But the other party does *not* pass. Instead the enemy light stops, turns and *SHINES DEAD AT THEM*.

Dustin, Millie and Glanzman squint fearfully into the light.

MAN'S VOICE

(concerned)

You guys ok?

Dustin flips on his own light. He discovers their adversary is a dad and his young son -- *HANK AND CONNOR MOSLEY*.

DUSTIN
Yeah... we're good. Just, uh,
trying to make it to the main
station.

HANK
Oh, us too.
(beat)
Nice light.

Dustin looks from his car battery/headlamp light to Hank's and discovers that Hank holds a practically identical model. Dustin lets out an awkward laugh.

The trio sheepishly creep out of their hiding spot.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - SHORTLY AFTER

The five of them proceed down the dark tunnel as a group, Hank in front leading the way.

In the rear, Millie steps away from Dustin and Glanzman. She comes up beside the young boy, who walks on his own a few paces behind his dad.

MILLIE
Hey... I'm Millie.

CONNOR
(quietly)
Connor.

MILLIE
Hi, Connor.

The twelve-year-old seems frightened. Gently, Millie slips her hand into his. The two continue walking along together.

Behind them, Dustin smiles slightly at the sight.

EXT. ELECTRICAL TOWER, FORESTED AREA - DAY

Out in brilliant daylight, Sophia and Steven climb up rung after rung of a long SERVICE LADDER. It runs the length of a remote electrical tower, the wires now far beneath.

As the two climb earthward, the metal beams of the tower gradually start to mix with wood branches of OAK TREES.

SOPHIA
This way.

Sophia reaches a hand to a nearby branch and grips it firmly. A second later she is no longer on the metal tower but *in* one of the sturdy trees, standing on a thick limb that holds her weight easily.

She gestures for Steven to follow.

He follows as Sophia leads him on a branch-to-branch path from one solid tree to another. The young woman appears confident of her path, running her fingers along various tree limbs like old, half-forgotten friends.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I played this game as a kid. I
would see how far I could get
without ever touching the earth.

She continues on until one of the thick branches they are on brushes against something man-made: the wooden eaves of a house.

A TWO-STORY WOODEN HOME is perfectly blended in with the forest, looking much like a thing of nature itself. Though hanging, the large wooden dwelling appears to have suffered no more from gravity's reversal than the ancient trees surrounding it.

Sophia steps onto the underside of the eave and walks directly to a second-story window. She opens it.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
This was my room.

Steven follows her in.

INT. SOPHIA'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room, sadly, is a wreck. A childhood's worth of beloved possessions - toys, figurines, artwork - lie scattered and broken on what once was the ceiling.

Sophia surveys the wreckage a moment. Then she moves on.

Steven follows.

INT. CIRCULAR STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

In the dead silent house, they proceed quietly up the underside of a spiral wooden staircase.

STEVEN
How long has it been since you've
seen him?

SOPHIA
Three years.

This registers with Steven. He gently lays a hand on her shoulder, stopping her.

STEVEN
You do realize, the chances of your
dad being here, safe--

SOPHIA
(softly)
I know.

She continues up.

Having reached the main level, Sophia comes round a corner--

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--and there she is greeted by a remarkable sight: a NEARLY NORMAL-LOOKING LIVING ROOM. The wood ceiling now serves as the floor, on which every piece of furniture has been uprighted. Books, art objects all put back in their places.

And in the far corner, trying to re-hang a family photo on the wall, is a GREY-HAIRED MAN (60'S).

The man turns -- and could not look more surprised.

IAN
I... I started straightening up. I
told myself that if you came, it
should be like you remembered it.

He takes a step toward his daughter, amazed.

IAN (CONT'D)
But I never actually believed....

He's at a loss. Sophia simply EMBRACES her father. Tears well in the man's eyes.

SOPHIA
I'm here, Dad.

IAN
I'm sorr--

SOPHIA
Shh... It's okay.

Steven watches the strange reunion in silence. Finally Ian notices him. Collecting himself--

IAN
Who's this?

SOPHIA
(turning)
Oh-- this is Steven. He was my, um...
escort here.

IAN
You helped my daughter make it home
safely?

STEVEN
We helped each other.

The older man clasps Steven's hand firmly.

IAN
You are most welcome here. I'm Ian
Pierce.

INT. DARK SUBWAY TUNNEL - UNKNOWN

The five tunnel trekkers continue through the darkness.
Glanzman squints ahead, seeing something.

GLANZMAN
Check it out.

Not far down the tunnel there is *light and the sound of
activity....*

INT. CENTRAL SUBWAY STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Glanzman, Dustin, Millie, Connor and Hank all emerge wide-
eyed into the BRIGHT CENTRAL STATION.

Filling the station are HUNDREDS OF SURVIVORS. But this is no
scene of post-apocalyptic chaos. Excepting that the giant
room is inverted (and that all activity is taking place on
what was formerly its ceiling), the sight before our five
newcomers' eyes is orderly and impressive.

Survivors are clustered everywhere in small groups, like
campsites. The giant hum of a generator can be heard,
powering several MASSIVE LIGHTS on poles. A MAN in a city
worker's uniform comes up to them.

RECEIVING OFFICER
Five in your group?

HANK
(little speechless)
That's right.

RECEIVING OFFICER
 There's still plenty of floor space
 in the south-west corner.

A second officer hands each of the surprised newcomers a
 BLANKET tied up with a cord and a BOTTLE OF WATER.

RECEIVING OFFICER (CONT'D)
 We've got survivors here from
 Police, from Fire, DWP -- you name
 it -- all working to keep this
 place going. Just cooperate with
 the basic ground rules and we'll do
 our best by you. Officer Kelly'll
 show you where to bed down.

The second officer motions them to follow. Our five survivors
 look at one another, frankly amazed. Millie whispers to
 Connor--

MILLIE
 I think we're safe, Connor.

INT. IAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Ian leads Sophia and Steven down a well-appointed hallway.
 Steven notices the expensive paintings, which have been
 straightened and hang properly on the walls. Only a glimpse
 out a passing window reminds the audience that the large
 wooden house hangs upside-down from its foundation.

SOPHIA
 You weren't hurt?

IAN
 Little bang on the temple. Nothing
 an aspirin couldn't fix. You two?

STEVEN
 I took it mostly on my left
 shoulder.

SOPHIA
 Just under the ribs. Where a seat
 belt dug in.

IAN
 Well, all of us seem to have
 weathered it okay. Same goes for
 the old house, knock on wood--
 (knocks on wooden wall)
 --so I don't see why we all can't
 be quite comfortable here.

Ian opens a door to the walk-in PANTRY. Sophia and Steven stare at its contents: it is packed top to bottom with STORABLE FOOD. *Years worth.*

IAN (CONT'D)
(growing uncomfortable)
I told you we were well stocked.

SOPHIA
What's with having your own
personal supermarket, Dad?

IAN
I, um, don't get out as much as I
used to. Most days... well, the
house serves me just fine.
(pause)
It's different since you left.

Sophia looks at the old man, trying to process that her father has become a recluse.

SOPHIA
I see.

IAN
Anyway... there's the pantry, and
plenty of storage water on hand. We
couldn't be in better shape, all
thing considered. So -- who's
hungry?
(claps hands)
Blueberry pancakes? Still your
favorite?

SOPHIA
Actually, Dad... I think what I am
is *exhausted*. I'd really like to
lie down.

IAN
Of course. Let's get your room
ready.

INT. SUBWAY SURVIVOR STATION - DAY

A BLANKET unfurls, then settles onto a CONCRETE FLOOR. Hank straightens the blanket, then lays a second one beside it.

Connor sits on Millie's blanket, patient while she cleans his dirty face with a wet wipe. She opens another wrapped towelette and starts to clean a shallow gash on the twelve-year-old's forearm. Hank glances over--

HANK
Lemme do that.

MILLIE
No. I've got it.

HANK
It's ok, I'll--

MILLIE
Please.

Hank regards Millie a moment, then nods. She turns back, starts dressing Connor's minor injury.

Their group has settled in one corner of the crowded subway station. All around them, hundreds of other survivors do the same.

Glanzman appears, breathless and smiling.

GLANZMAN
Just toured the whole place. This is exactly where we want to be. There's like twenty Water and Power guys keeping the generators going. Huge food stockpiles over by the food court. Security teams everywhere. And I saw a crew heading out on a supply mission... we're set.

HANK
Any contact with the outside world?

GLANZMAN
This *is* the world now. There's like a government forming, and a hospital zone setting up in the maintenance corridor. Oh, and right near the bathrooms? A betting station.

MILLIE
Betting? On what?

GLANZMAN
Alien attack. Mayan prophecy. Electromagnetic pulse. But the big money's on this all being caused by that Hadron Particle Collider getting switched on.

DUSTIN'S VOICE (O.S.)
It wasn't.

Everyone turns to DUSTIN, who sits a few feet away against a column, preoccupied with his iPhone for some reason.

DUSTIN
The Hadron Collider's in
Switzerland. This whole thing
started a continent away from
there.

CONNOR
(intrigued)
How do you know that?

DUSTIN
I've been back-tracing the order
that servers around the world
stopped transmitting data.

He holds up his iPhone.

MILLIE
You got *internet*?

DUSTIN
There's no such thing anymore. All
this data's in here from yesterday.
So no asking to check your Facebook
page.

Dustin taps on the screen.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
By charting the times and places of
routing nodes as they failed, it's
looking like this thing started in
a single spot, then it spread out
in a circle. Like a wave. I'm still
narrowing down the origin point...
but somewhere in Asia.

The others glance at one another, impressed. Except for Glanzman.

GLANZMAN
All I know, Dustin, is that you had
trouble keeping our local office
server running reliably. So I'm
gonna remain skeptical about your
calculations concerning the end of
the world.
(beat)
I'm lining up for dinner.

He goes. Hank glances at Dustin.

DUSTIN
Former boss.

HANK
'nough said.

A METALLIC VOICE echoes throughout the entire station:

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE
*Attention. Dinner rations will be
available for the next hour. After
that, all generator lights will be
dimmed for the night.*

INT. LIVING ROOM, IAN'S HOUSE - SUNSET

The last rays of sunlight stretch through the large picture window, turning the living room to gold.

Ian gazes out solemnly, watching a great many BIRDS circle peacefully in the sky below. They seem remarkably untroubled by the strange reverse environment.

Across the room, Steven appears the doorway.

STEVEN
She's still asleep.

IAN
Doesn't surprise me. Sophia's
always been a deep sleeper.

Steven remains in the doorway. The moment feels awkward.

IAN (CONT'D)
You seem ill at ease, Steven. We
really are quite safe here. Some of
the corners of this house are
actually built into two-hundred-
year-old oaks. There's plenty of
food. And water. And books to read.

Steven gives a polite smile. Then, unsure what else to do, he wanders to one of the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. He scans the impressive array of old and valuable texts.

Then he notices something curious amongst the literary treasure trove: several glossy BOUND COMPANY REPORTS from the "Cumae Energy Corporation".

STEVEN
Quite a collection of C.E.C.
prospectuses. My law firm did some
work for Cumae... pipeline rights.
You an investor?

IAN
In a way. I own the company.

Steven turns to the man, speechless.

IAN (CONT'D)
Or owned it, I guess. Hard to keep
the tenses right now.

It takes Steven a moment regains his voice.

STEVEN
You're Ian *Pierce*. I didn't put it
together before. I'm sorry, but you
really don't come across as a,
uh...

He falters, searching for the right phrase.

IAN
Blood-sucking oil baron?

STEVEN
I was going to say 'CEO type.'

The older man gives a weak laugh, then takes a seat.

IAN
Sorry. I'm clearly working through
some guilt issues of my own.

Steven sees the man's gaze drift to a FRAMED PHOTO on a table
by the chair: a woman holding a small, happy girl in her
arms.

STEVEN
That's Sophia and her mother?

IAN
She was only seven when her mother
died. A car accident. My fault.

STEVEN
You were driving?

IAN
No, I was in Dubai.
(pause)
I wasn't a model husband. No
infidelity, no affairs, but... I
was obsessed with building my
business. Almost never home. No
time for marriage counselling,
which Charlotte asked for more than
once. I couldn't be bothered.
(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
 I was nine time zones away the day
 I got the call about the accident.
 (pause)
 Charlotte had been driving to meet
 with a divorce attorney.

Steven stays silent at this.

IAN (CONT'D)
 Sophia learned that fact soon
 enough. Afterwards, my solution was
 to get her "shrunked-up." But
 Sophia didn't want shrinks. She
 wanted one thing. She wanted to
fly.
 (pause)
 So I let her do that instead. It
 seemed good for her. Or it let me
 not worry about her. I threw myself
 into building an empire. Sophia
 took to the sky. And we grew far
 apart.

INT. SUBWAY SURVIVOR STATION - LATE NIGHT

Close on an SMART PHONE SCREEN glowing in the dark. It
 displays a *global map*, with various intersecting lines
 crossing it.

We discover Dustin, still awake, relentlessly working
 calculations on the device while everyone else in the
 darkened station lies sleeping on their blankets.

HANK'S VOICE
 (sotto)
 Still at it?

Dustin glances over, surprised to discover Hank lying awake
 as well.

DUSTIN
 For as long as my battery holds.
 This thing was built for sending
 out tweets. It's a major pain
 getting it to run these kind of
 calculations. Nonetheless...

Dustin keeps working diligently. Hank regards him a moment.

HANK
 You remind me of him.

Hank gestures to Connor, who sleeps nearby.

DUSTIN
 How's that?

HANK
 Connor nearly killed himself
 yesterday, trying to get this.

Quietly Hank reaches into his backpack, slides out the large
 LIBRARY BOOK.

HANK (CONT'D)
 I haven't let him look at it since.

In the dim light we get our first look at the BOOK'S COVER,
 which Dustin now reads aloud:

DUSTIN
 "Grimman's Encyclopedia Of The End
 Of The World: From Asteroid Impact
 to Zombie Epidemic."

He gives Hank a dubious look.

HANK
 It's the marked page he was after.

Dustin opens to a dog-eared entry. There is the illustration
 we saw earlier: a middle-ages era rendering of the entire
 world falling into the sky. Dustin's expression changes as he
 looks at it.

DUSTIN
 Woah.

HANK
 There's not much more to it. Just a
 blurb that a few hundred years ago
 some weird group of monks predicted
 all this. Goonsticks.

DUSTIN
 (puzzled, then chuckling)
 "Gnostics."

HANK
 What was their deal?

DUSTIN
 Um...
 (pausing to recall)
 Most religions look at the world as
 a gift. Gnostics believed the
 opposite, that the whole physical
 world is really a kind of trap, a
 cage we're all caught in. Full of
 suffering. And that our real
 destiny is to free ourselves.

HANK
Free ourselves... Like, to go
where?

DUSTIN
Another world, some purer realm...
who knows.

HANK
So that's what it's saying down
there?

Dustin angles the light lower, illuminating a portion of ancient HAND-WRITING incorporated into the bottom of the picture. The manic scrawl looks like something out of Da Vinci's personal journals.

DUSTIN
Not sure. That's Latin.

HANK
You can't read it?

DUSTIN
Nope.

From offscreen, a soft voice responds--

CONNOR (O.S.)
Damn.

Hank and Dustin turn in surprise to discover *Connor* awake now, groggy but listening.

Lying behind him, Millie reaches over and strokes the boy's hair.

MILLIE
Go back to sleep, sweetie.

She frowns like a protective mother at the two talking men.

INT. IAN'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Ian stands at a book case, flashlight in hand, illuminating a shelf for Steven. On it we see the spines of SEVERAL ILLUSTRATED BOOKS, all bearing Sophia Pierce's name.

IAN
She's quite prolific. There's more
upstairs--
(corrects himself)
--downstairs. You know.

Steven flips through one. We recognize the same art style we saw on the airplane -- simple, otherworldly, but with a quality of sadness in each frame, like Saint-Exupery's "The Little Prince."

IAN (CONT'D)

Technically they're children's books. But there's a heaviness in them. I have no idea what children make of them.

STEVEN

They're something.... But still, I saw her fly yesterday. I'm amazed she never made a career of that.

IAN

She wanted to.

(quiet a moment)

When she was seventeen... there was an incident. On the anniversary of her mother's death. The doctors say it was probably half-hearted, not that many pills. But it closed a door. No airline would ever hire a pilot with a suicide attempt on her medical record.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

By candlelight, we see Sophia lying in her bed within her childhood bedroom. She appears to be in a deep sleep, lost to dreams.

Beside the flickering candle, sitting in a chair across the room, we discover Steven. Awake. Watching over her, just like he did the morning before, when she slept out on the tower platform with a fathomless drop below her. Something in his expression says she seems no less vulnerable now.

INT. FAR END OF SUBWAY STATION - LATE NIGHT

Away from the many sleeping survivors, Dustin and Hank stand talking softly in a corner of the dark station.

DUSTIN

I don't know what to say about Connor's book. It's a little more "Nostradamus" than I'm ready to go with this whole thing. But as far as I'm concerned your kid's instinct is dead on.

HANK
What do you mean?

DUSTIN
I mean trying to figure this out,
doing *anything*, is better than
sitting down here doing nothing.

HANK
I am doing something. I'm keeping
my son alive.

Dustin's silent at this. Then--

DUSTIN
I'm leaving, Hank.

HANK
What?

DUSTIN
As soon as morning comes. I've
gotta go see what I can find out.

HANK
You said you narrowed down the
"origin" to where? China?

DUSTIN
Closer to India, actually.

HANK
Still, not real close to midtown
Atlanta.

DUSTIN
It doesn't matter. We're down here
in a hole. In the dark. There's no
hope of making any progress, of
making any sense of this, unless we
get back out to the surface. So I
need to go.

HANK
Lemme ask you one thing. How many
people you think died yesterday?
(grim pause)
A billion? More?

DUSTIN
More than are left.

HANK

Right. Well, there's a girl across the station -- a pretty one too -- who just lost everybody she ever cared about. Her whole family. All her friends. Everybody except one. So now she's gonna lose you too?

Dustin has no response. Hank's struck a nerve.

HANK (CONT'D)

Maybe you should sleep on that. I'm gonna go check on my son.

He heads back toward the others, leaving Dustin standing there alone.

INT. SUBWAY SURVIVOR STATION - MORNING

Harsh electric light announces 'morning' in the now bustling station. Amid the sound of hammering, drilling and droning generators, Dustin wakes groggily on his blanket.

He sees Millie beside him, pouring some instant oatmeal into a styrofoam cup. She mixes in some water with a plastic spoon, then hands the cup sweetly to him.

MILLIE

Bon appetit.

INT. OTHER END OF SURVIVOR STATION - CONTINUOUS

Hank and Connor, eating cereal bars, head over to the source of the DRILLING SOUND which echoes through the station. There they finds three workmen BORING A HOLE into one of the subway's tile walls. They watch the trio work for a moment. When the workers pause--

HANK

You need a hand?

WORKMAN 1

Nah. Just letting the bit cool down.

HANK

What is it you're doing?

WORKMAN 2

(pointing)

There's ground water trickling in through the cracks. Gonna drill in a few feet, see if we can't get this place a steady H2O supply.

Hank looks at the subway wall and sees that there are indeed TRICKLETS OF WATER leaking between some of the tiles.

HANK
(impressed)
Will it be drinkable?

WORKMAN 2
Should be, if we treat it.
Definitely be good for washing up,
having a shower.

HANK
How's that sound, Connor? Gettin'
us some running water?

Hank looks brightly at his son. Connor looks at the three workmen.

CONNOR
Do any of you happen to speak
Latin?

The trio of workmen stare at both kid and his dad like they're crazy.

INT. SURVIVOR STATION, MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

Cut back to Dustin. He's sitting, staring pensively at the many survivors involved in their mundane morning activities.

Dustin starts placing his few possessions on his 'bed'. Then folds his blanket around them. Millie notices as he begins to tie up the bundle with the cord his blanket came wrapped in.

MILLIE
What are you doing?

DUSTIN
I'm leaving, Millie.

MILLIE
What?

DUSTIN
I'm sorry. I love you. But I have
to get to the surface.

MILLIE
Why?

Looking into her tear-filled eyes, Dustin's hesitant to answer. Glanzman does it for him -- snidely.

GLANZMAN

He thinks he's gonna fix it.

DUSTIN

I never said that.

(beat, to Millie)

But people've gotta do more than
just... hang on. And that's all
we're doing here. Just hanging on.

The exchange is momentarily interrupted by a LOUD CHEER from the far end of the station.

WORKER'S VOICE (O.S.)

We've got water!

Across the station, sure enough, a steady STREAM OF GROUND WATER jets out the drilled hole in the wall like a fire hydrant.

At that moment, Hank and Connor arrive back by the others.

HANK

You guys hear the good news?

Nobody answers. Hank sees Dustin's bundled-up blanket and Millie's shattered expression, quickly realizes that he's arrived in the middle of a tense exchange.

GLANZMAN

Hey Dustin, before you go, do me a favor. Picture... a Land Rover. A great big two-ton shiny yellow Land Rover. And the only problem with it is it's flipped over on I-75 and lying on its roof. Now I want you to picture a *flea*. A tiny little flea, sitting on top of one of the Land Rover's axles. But if you listen real close you can hear this little tiny flea saying: "I'm going to flip this truck back on its tires all by mysel--"

DUSTIN

(cuts him off hotly)

Glanzman, do me a favor. Until a Land Rover can drive two feet on open road without *falling into the fucking ionosphere*... why don't you keep your pompous bullshit to yourself.

(beat, softly to Connor)

Sorry.

The twelve-year-old only smiles. Glanzman, however, is stung into silence. A voice echoes over the station loudspeaker:

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE (O.S.)
*Please do not drink the water yet.
 Our maintenance team need to test
 it, make sure it's safe.*

Across the station, people are collecting the water shooting from the wall in whatever containers they have. Glanzman regains his voice--

GLANZMAN
 I guess you haven't noticed, but
 we're doing a lot better just
 "hanging on." Take a look. We're
 about to get indoor plumbing, for
 Christ's sake.

More tiles break away from the opening in the wall. The water pressure is quite strong. The hole is widening.

Out of the corner of his eye, Dustin notices a concerned Connor cautiously pick up the LIBRARY BOOK and wrap it in a plastic bag.

GLANZMAN (CONT'D)
 I know you think you're smarter
 than everybody else, Dustin. But
 sometimes the smartest thing is
 just knowing when to trust the
 group.

BOOM -- A trash can-sized chunk of the wall RIPS OUT and a THOUSAND OF GALLONS rush into the station.

The entire group turn in surprise. A second later a low WALL OF WATER sweeps over all their feet.

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE (O.S.)
*Everybody stay calm. Our
 maintenance team will get it sealed
 and controlled shortl--*

A second MASSIVE HOLE BLASTS through the tile wall, as if the very innards of the earth are flooding out.

In an instant the entire scene is mayhem. Everybody RUNS.

EXT. FLOODING SUBWAY TUNNEL - SECONDS LATER

Amid a swift current of knee-deep water, our five characters struggle down a tunnel along with dozens of others fleeing the central station.

Stopping for a second, they cling to one of the tunnel's metal support columns and desperately survey their options.

MILLIE

In there!

She points to the opposite side of the tunnel, where people are scrambling to get inside a wrecked SUBWAY CAR lying on its back.

Seeing this, Glanzman immediately charges across the tunnel for the safety of the car. He makes it.

Hank grabs Connor's hand, preparing to follow him across the rising water to the up-turned vehicle. Millie, too, is about to take the plunge.

DUSTIN

Wait.

Millie and Hank looks at Dustin, confused. Dustin stares at the car, then at the rising water, like he's reading the situation....

From the doorway of the crowded subway car:

GLANZMAN

For crissake! Run!!

Dustin pulls out a length of cord from his bundle of supplies and LASHES HIMSELF TO THE METAL SUPPORT COLUMN instead.

Hank and Millie look baffled. But Connor doesn't hesitate--he too grabs one of the cords and lashes it to the column just the same. Dustin whispers to the others--

DUSTIN

Trust me.

Millie and Hank have only seconds to decide; the tunnel's emergency lights are starting to FLICKER OUT. In the jam-packed subway car people are pulling the doors closed to seal off the water's entry.

GLANZMAN

(shouting from car)

You want to DROWN!?!?

Hank looks between the safety of the subway car and their own precarious position....

HANK

Shit.

Then he chooses, siding with Dustin and his son by lashing himself to the beam.

Millie does the same.

From inside the subway car, Glanzman stares shocked.

But there's no time left for anyone to contemplate their choices. At that moment an ungodly ROAR OF WATER comes from the main station -- the sound of the tile wall *ripping* completely away. A second later a virtual TIDAL WAVE thunders down the tunnel.

We glimpse the torrent for only a terrifying second; its powerful impact ANNIHILATES all the emergency lights and everything goes COMPLETELY BLACK.

For several seconds the darkness continues.

Only the sound of rushing water.

Then a *light beam* cuts through the dark....

INT. DIMLY LIT SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

The light beam is inside Glanzman's subway car, where a station official shines around a FLASHLIGHT. Dimly we make out a carful of frightened people.

STATION OFFICIAL
Just sit tight, everybody. We're
gonna be ok here.

It looks to be true. Though the flood ROARS all around, inside the car is relatively dry. Just a few inches of water pool at the bottom; barely a trickle seeps in through the doors.

The survivors -- Glanzman among them -- glance at one another and exhale nervously. A couple even hazard optimistic smiles.

STATION OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
That's right. We'll wait it out.

But a woman beside the official does not smile. She's staring out the car window. Then, not asking, she reaches out and PIVOTS THE OFFICIAL'S FLASHLIGHT directly into the darkness beyond the glass.

The light beam illuminates the SUBMERGED SUBWAY WALL on the other side. But something is *strange*. For the cement wall appears to have dislodged... as though it is floating past the car.

We see a dawning horror on the woman's face... on the official's face... on everyone's faces. For it is not the wall that is moving. Their CAR is moving.

The subway car is ADRIFT, being propelled by the water down the dark tunnel at tremendous speed. Like a leaf being swept down a drain.

Cut to Glanzman's face, terrified, as a *new light* slowly illuminates the interior of the car. This strange new light is blue... brilliant... blinding....

The light at the end of the tunnel.

Before he or anyone else can say a thing DAYLIGHT engulfs the cabin....

Glanzman's eyes go wide as he sees the subway walls reach their end, giving way to *blue nothingness as the car passes through the tunnel opening...*

Then the subway car is simply gone. Lost in the massive cascade of water pouring out of the subway tunnel. Down into the bright bottomless sky below.

DISSOLVE TO:

...a single DROP OF WATER, slowly forming.

Sunlight glints off the solitary droplet as it hangs from the cement lip of the tunnel entrance. The droplet swells to its full size... but does not fall.

EXT. SUBWAY TUNNEL ENTRANCE - MORNING, LATER

The tunnel flood has ended.

From the dark of the tunnel emerge four wet figures -- Dustin, Milly, Connor and Hank.

They look like survivors of a shipwreck. At the end of the tunnel, they collapse exhausted on the warm sunlit cement.

For a long moment they lie there, at the very edge of the world, wordlessly catching their breaths.

Then a *shadow* falls over them, blotting out their sunlight.

Dustin squints at the source. So do the others. The shadow is caused by *something huge and silent* passing in front of the bright morning sun. The massive object is difficult to make out, silhouetted by the blinding sunlight.

MILLIE

(amazed)

What *is* that?

Dustin blinks in awe. Then a strange smile spreads across his face.

DUSTIN
It's the ride I promised you,
Millie.

A WIDE SHOT of the object from a reverse angle reveals
PRINTED WORDS IN GIANT LETTERING: "Helios Sky Tours --
Rediscover Your World."

The floating object is the TOURIST BLIMP glimpsed earlier in the film. The airship, its cabin empty, bumps gently against the surface of the hanging city, like a stray balloon floating against a ceiling. Less than a hundred feet away from them.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I say we take it as a sign.

CUT TO:

A flock of birds circling slowly, hypnotically, down in a crystal blue sky....

INT. IAN'S HOUSE, GARAGE - DAY

At the far end of an upside-down garage, Sophia sits gazing from the edge of the overhang. Her feet dangle down into the nothingness. She appears entranced by the peaceful, dream-like motion of the birds circling below.

Across the garage, STEVEN appears in the doorway. Seeing her--

STEVEN
With only three people left in the
world you wouldn't think one of
them would be so hard to find.

Sophia acknowledges him only with a distant nod.

Steven steps inside the cluttered space. Amidst the fallen shelving and toppled landscaping equipment he's surprised to see a small upright MG CONVERTIBLE.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
(murmur to himself)
How'd this thing ever land on its
wheels?

Steven lets the thought go as he makes his way to Sophia, sitting near the edge. She's still gazing down into the blue.

SOPHIA
What do you suppose is down there?

STEVEN
My beta fish somewhere?

SOPHIA
I'm serious. It's like a pool. A
part of me wants to just... dive
in. Let go.

STEVEN
You really believe there's
something better out there?

She falls quiet at this.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
What about your father?

SOPHIA
He knows I love him now.

Now Steven falls quiet. Then--

STEVEN
Let's take the car.
(points to MG)
Pack some sandwiches in a picnic
basket. Throw in a bottle of wine.
Get in and drive off, just like a
road trip--

Sophia stands, angry.

SOPHIA
Stop it.

STEVEN
Stop what?

SOPHIA
You're making fun of me.

STEVEN
Close your eyes.

Sophia frowns at him, confused and still angry.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Do it.

Something in his tone and expression causes Sophia to comply
with his request. She closes her eyes.

CLOSE ON Sophia's face... as one hand of Steven's gently
reaches up and *caresses her cheek*.

A slight shiver runs through her.

Then Steven lightly caresses her other cheek -- this time
with his lips.

Sophia breathes in sharply. Steven whispers while moving towards her lips--

STEVEN (CONT'D)
If you felt yourself starting to
fall backward right now... what
would you do?

He KISSES her lips softly. Then again. He continues whispering--

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Would you let yourself fall away...
or reach out?

A tear falls down the side of her face. Then Sophia *does* reach out, wrapping her hands behind his neck. She looks searchingly into his eyes.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Don't try to tell me you're done
with this world. Because I can feel
it isn't true.

He kisses her fully. She responds in kind. It's more than passion; it is a craving for real connection. Things heat up quickly between them.

Until--

SOPHIA
Stop.

Steven draws back, thrown by this.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
No, *look.*

She points to something in the distance which has caught her eye.

There is a vessel moving on the skyline. AN AIRSHIP. Far off, and low, but pointing in their general direction.

Steven sees it. Every other thought vanishes from his mind.

Letting go of Sophia, he scrambles across the garage, starts searching through the clutter of toppled items. A moment later he grabs a can of PAINT THINNER. Then a RAG.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
What are you going to do?

Steven keeps up his frantic search. His hands seize on a BOX OF MATCHES.

INT. AIRSHIP CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cabin, Connor peers over Dustin's shoulder as Dustin sits at the controls of the blimp.

 CONNOR
This one?

 DUSTIN
Propeller pitch.

 CONNOR
That one?

 DUSTIN
Airspeed control.

Unlike the A330 cockpit, the set-up in this vessel does seem fairly basic.

 CONNOR
That one?

 DUSTIN
Um... not quite sure. We seem to be
doing ok without it.

 CONNOR
Maybe it adjusts the--

 HANK
Hold it. What the hell is *that*?

From behind them, Hank points out the window at something strange in the distance.

About a quarter mile away, falling down from the endless green forest above them, is a shiny RED METALLIC OBJECT.

Dustin and Connor stares out at it, equally puzzled.

 DUSTIN
I think it's an MG.

The small falling sports car suddenly EXPLODES IN A FIREBALL; the three of them blink in surprise.

 CONNOR
I think someone's trying to get our
attention.

EXT. IAN'S HOUSE, FOREST - DAY, LATER

WIDE SHOT of an unusual sight: an airship hovering just beneath the forest ceiling, moored beside a hanging wooden house.

INT. IAN'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Through the picture window we see a make-shift PULLEY SYSTEM has been rigged up between the house and the airship. A box of supplies is being lowered by rope to the vessel's cabin.

Ian sits watching from the armchair by the window. But his gaze drifts from the activity outside to the FRAMED PHOTO held in his lap.

Across the room, Sophia enters. Seeing her father sitting with the picture of her dead mother, she speaks softly.

SOPHIA

Steven says they know the way to the origin point. They want to figure out how it all started.

IAN

They're welcome to anything they need.

SOPHIA

It isn't just about supplies.

IAN

You want to go with.

SOPHIA

I want to find out what this is all about, yes. But... it's probably a one-way trip.

(pause, troubled)

Dad, would you be willing to leave this place? For good?

Beat. Then her father sets aside the photo and stands.

IAN

If there's anything I can do to help set things right, believe me, I'm onboard.

Relieved, Sophia smiles.

CUT TO QUICK SHOTS OF:

--A mooring line UNLASHING from a tree.

--Propeller engines POWERING UP.

--A cabin door SWINGING SHUT.

INT. AIRSHIP, MOVING - DAY

The three newest passengers stand in the doorway, checking out their new 'home' as the airship gets underway.

The tour vessel's cabin, though not huge, is nicely appointed: plush seating for eight, a restroom at the rear, and wide viewing windows all around.

STEVEN

Nice ride.

DUSTIN

(in pilot's seat)

We found it floating. Whoever was onboard originally must've thought it was smarter to climb off.

HANK

Smarter than we are, no doubt.

(extends a hand)

I'm Hank.

STEVEN

Steven. That's Ian, Sophia.

HANK

(pointing)

Dustin, Connor.... Thanks for all the stuff, by the way.

IAN

Not a problem.

DUSTIN

Seriously. We were nil on supplies, and we've got a long way to go.

SOPHIA

How far exactly?

DUSTIN

You really want to know?

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP on an iPHONE screen showing a global map. An animation slowly draws a straight RED LINE across the ATLANTIC... then continues on over SOUTHERN EUROPE... the MIDDLE-EAST... INDIA... before finally ending in a pinpoint off the COAST OF SRI LANKA.

STEVEN

Woah.

DUSTIN

About nine thousand miles.
Calculated it's roughly a week. As
long as we can hold the right
trajectory.

SOPHIA

Well... for starters, you're about
eight degrees off right now.

Dustin looks at her, surprised.

DUSTIN

You know something about
navigation?

SOPHIA

Little bit. It'll be tricky as hell
without GPS. But your real concern
is fuel. You need to stop burning
for propulsion, save everything
you've got for course corrections.

DUSTIN

What would keep us moving?

SOPHIA

Wind. Like balloonists who
circumnavigate the globe. If we
drop down just a couple thousand
feet, we can catch a current
that'll push us east at least fifty
knots, maybe sixty--

She sees Dustin staring back at her like she's made of gold.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Any chance you want me to, uh, take
over?

DUSTIN

God, yes. I can stop faking.

INT. AIRSHIP CABIN, REAR SECTION - DAY

As the vessel drifts along, Ian settles into a seat beside
twelve-year-old Connor.

IAN

Tell me. Anything I should know
about the woman who's been locked
in the restroom ever since we left?

CONNOR
Fear of heights.

IAN
Ah... fascinating.

INT. AIRSHIP RESTROOM - DAY

In the tiny windowless restroom, a pale-looking Millie stares herself down in the mirror. She takes deep breaths.

MILLIE
Habituation. Habituation...
Habitu-fuckin-ation....

INT. AIRSHIP CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Steven, Dustin, and Hank sit together, sharing a tin of fancy cashews. But they all glance back in surprise as Millie actually emerges of her own free will into the main cabin.

She walks slowly along the aisle, taking in her airborne surroundings unsteadily. Finally she arrives by the three men and sits beside Dustin. He smiles at her.

DUSTIN
Nicely done.

Steven offers her the tin of cashews--

STEVEN
I'm Steven. It's "Millie", isn't it?

She gives a nod.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
That short for something?

Pause.

MILLIE
Amelia.

STEVEN
(momentarily stunned)
Like "Earhart"?

It's news to Hank as well, who struggles to suppress a laugh.

MILLIE
A girl named Amelia who's afraid of heights. I get it. Hilarious.

DUSTIN
(puts arm around her)
You're doing great.

CONNOR (O.S.)
What *is* that?

Everyone in the cabin is distracted by a strange sound from outside, a gentle *pitter patter* from above.

Sure enough, out the windows, DROPS OF RAIN appear to be falling.

MILLIE
How can it be raining?

SOPHIA
(from pilot seat)
We've made it to the ocean.

Everyone stares, amazed at the sight outside.

EXT. AIRSHIP - CONTINUOUS

The vessel has crossed the coastline and now drifts under what once was the Atlantic. But it is an ocean no longer. It is now an ENDLESS DARK CAVERN above them. The only seawater remaining drips down like a *light rain* from hanging coral and seaweed.

It's weird as hell.

INT. AIRSHIP BENEATH OCEAN - NIGHT

A moonlit night. In the now-quiet cabin, Sophia gazes out from her pilot's seat at the strange vista before her. A HUGE KELP FOREST dangles down from the waterless ocean-bed above; the night breeze causes the willowy plants to sway in unison, like some strange alien organism.

Someone approaches her from behind -- it's Connor. The boy stands by Sophia, gazing out at the surreal view.

SOPHIA
Pretty strange, isn't it.

CONNOR
Like something from one of your books.
(off her surprised look)
Your dad was describing them to me.

Touched, she smiles at the boy.

SOPHIA
It's Connor, right?

CONNOR
Yes.... He told me your mom died.
When you were young.

Sophia blinks, looks at the boy, trying to understand where this is coming from.

SOPHIA
She did.

CONNOR
(hesitates)
I know my mom's gone too. I haven't
said anything to my dad about it,
but... I can feel it.

She slips her hand into his.

SOPHIA
Yeah. I know what that feels like.

There's nothing more to be said. For a while the two just sit in silence, gazing out at the dark dream-like view.

CONNOR
You don't know how to read Latin,
do you?

SOPHIA
No, sorry.

He gives an unsurprised nod.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
But I know my dad does.

Connor's expression changes.

INT. AIRSHIP - NIGHT

All passengers sit staring expectantly at IAN. The BOOK lies in his hands. He looks dubiously at its cover, raises an eyebrow--

IAN
"Grimman's Encyclopedia Of The End
Of The World: From 'Asteroid Impact
to--

DUSTIN
--'to Zombie Epidemic.' Yeah, yeah.
Just go to the marked entry.

Ian turns to it. He regards the ancient apocalyptic drawing for a moment, then lowers his gaze to the dense Latin handwriting at the bottom.

IAN
I'm a little rusty.

SOPHIA
Please.

Ian's got no choice to proceed. A little halting, but with surprising skill--

IAN
"The drop of rain which fell to the earth yesterday and falls to earth today may yet not fall to the earth tomorrow. The law that pulls it down has no more permanence than the drop itself."

He looks up at his audience. They hang on his every word.

CONNOR
Keep going.

IAN
"Not by fire shall this world end. And not by ice. But the world shall abide until the first stone placed is pulled away. On that day the laws that rule it will cease... for they are the laws of the jail keeper. The sun shines upon a cage; the world itself a prison. A truer world awaits us all. Do not be afraid."

He stops again. The others frown at him expectantly.

IAN (CONT'D)
That's all that's there.

An eerie silence follows. Finally--

HANK
Okay... who's still afraid?

DUSTIN
(chuckle)
Those Gnostics were cheery S.O.B.s.

But Millie looks serious, troubled.

MILLIE

I just want to understand... then they're saying that this whole thing, that it's meant to happen. That it's *good*.

HANK

Yeah, that's a help.

MILLIE

I don't know....

(haltingly)

In the back of my mind this whole time, I've been afraid that... we're all being judged. That that's what all this *is*. You know. Punishment for something.

(pause)

The idea that maybe we're being "freed" instead... there's something in that.

The others don't respond, just listening to her.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Think about it. we've all lost so many people. Family, friends. It helps to think that maybe... God, I don't know. That maybe they're actually someplace better.

STEVEN

Heaven?

MILLIE

Somewhere free from pain. From loss. Call it what you want.

IAN

You do realize you're positing then... that this world itself *is* a kind of trap.

MILLIE

(quietly)

No, I didn't mean that. I'm just trying to understand.

Dustin chimes in--

DUSTIN

Look, people, let's not forget what we're talking about -- this is a piece of crazy old soothsaying.

(MORE)

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
 Written by a bunch of monks who
 drank *mead* for breakfast every
 morning.

CONNOR
 Why are you putting it like that?

DUSTIN
 Connor... there's been a thousand
 flowery-sounding prophecies about
 the end of the world.

CONNOR
 But this one's *right*.

DUSTIN
 The only thing that can help us now
 is some kind of *scientific* insight
 into the cause. Not supernatural
 stuff.

CONNOR
 You believe there's a science book
 anywhere that could explain
 everything we've seen? I read
 somewhere that physicists, they
 don't even know what gravity *is*. I
 mean why it does what it does.

DUSTIN
 (bristling)
 That's oversimplifying. People --
 we can't go off the deep end.

MILLIE
 (softly)
 We are off the deep end, Dustin.
 Look around.

She gestures out the windows to the impossible view
 surrounding them. Annoyed, Dustin turns to Sophia--

DUSTIN
 You've been quiet. What's your two
 cents?

Sophia has been quiet. Dead silent the whole time. Suddenly
 everyone looks at her to weigh in.

SOPHIA
 What I'm interested in right now is
 physics.
 (beat)
 Drag, lift, thrust. Wind speed.
 Vessel weight. I just want to get
 this ship where it's going. So we
 can find out our answers for real.
 (MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
 (getting up)
 I need to check our bearing.

Sophia heads back to the cockpit. The others glance uncomfortably at one another.

STEVEN
 How about we play nice for the time
 being and help her get us there.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MONTAGE OF SHOTS of the airship's journey... slow, silent, dream-like. Opening with a WIDE SHOT of the vessel looking small as a child's toy as it drifts beneath the dark barren ocean floor hanging above it.

DISSOLVE TO:

Twilight. As stars begin to dot the purple horizon Sophia, in the pilot's seat, jots down astronomical observations on a "Helios Sky Tour" cocktail napkin.

DISSOLVE TO:

Day. Connor, on the cabin floor, writes English phrases in the margins of the torn-out page of Latin text. The boy stops and turns questioningly to Ian, sitting beside him. The older man whispers a translation. Connor jots in the margin: "*Primarii Lapidis*. Stone first placed. Foundation stone."

DISSOLVE TO:

Dustin, Steven and Hank play cards. Hank, noticing something offscreen, nudges Dustin to turn and look--

Millie is on her feet approaching one of the wide picture windows. Slowly, she walks right up to the glass and places her palms against it. Taking a deep breath, she STARES STRAIGHT OUT. She begins to count to herself, "one, two, three, four, five...."

Dustin watches her in silent amazement.

DISSOLVE TO:

Night. The dark vessel drifts above a brilliant sea of stars, bright as any human has ever seen them.

DISSOLVE TO:

Day. The airship passes by the broken remains of a hanging LIGHTHOUSE. The lighthouse ruins hang at the edge of stark, inverted CLIFFS; the Atlantic has been crossed.

In the pilot's seat, Sophia writes: "*Day three. 4.17 PM. South coast of Spain.*"

DISSOLVE TO:

Dead of night. Sophia, alone in the pilot seat, tries to keep her gaze fixed on the airship's compass. But her heavy eyelids close from fatigue. Then unexpectedly a figure leans in and kisses her forehead -- STEVEN. He gestures for her to go get some sleep.

Sophia surrenders the pilot's chair. Steven takes position, fixing his gaze on the compass and its S.E. bearing.

DISSOLVE TO:

Connor, first one awake in a now chilly cabin, discovers all the windows *frosted over*. He wipes clear a small section of glass, revealing a spectacular view: the ALPS AT DAWN.

The great mountain chain looms above the small ship like surreal stalactites. Ice still clings to peaks, but the frozen water now hangs down in the form of IMPOSSIBLY HUGE ICICLES. Connor gazes out in silent awe at the sight.

EXTERIOR SHOT as the Helios and its painted side logo -- "*Rediscover Your World*" -- track past the camera and the stunning vista beyond.

DISSOLVE TO:

Millie, at the window again.

But this time, instead of counting, she SLIDES OPEN the glass panel, then places her face *outside* the vessel. Closing her eyes, Millie stands there, peacefully breathing in the cool air as it blows back her hair. Habituation.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AIRSHIP CABIN - PRE-DAWN

A drowsy Sophia sits at the controls, trying to stare vigilantly ahead. Dozens of navigational notes now lie about the cockpit. It's hard for Sophia to see much of anything in the dim purple light.

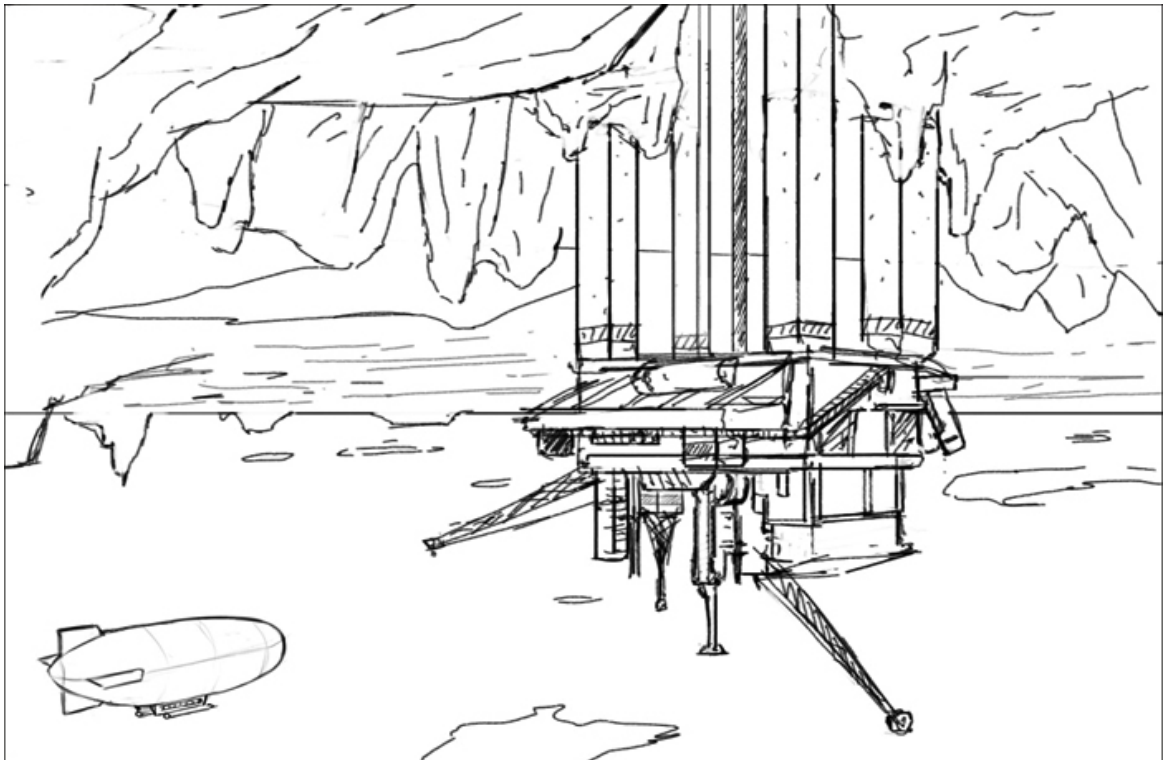
Then she squints, as if not trusting her eyes. But she's able to make out *something* in the distance. Hanging down, amidst all the barren former-ocean landscape, is a *man-made object*.

SOPHIA

Wake up.

Behind her, on the bare cabin floor, the others groggily come to consciousness. Blinking, they peer ahead with her. What they all see in the hazy morning light is an upside-down **DRILLING RIG**, fixed by metal columns to the dry ocean-bed ceiling above it.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I think we're here.



The audience recognizes it as the same rig from the film's opening scene, but it is now an eerie, creaky version of its former self. The whole structure looks as if a strong breeze might blow it loose. And the only sign of life is many **DARK BIRDS**, circling ominously beneath it.

HANK
But is anybody else?

EXT. DRILLING RIG PLATFORM - MORNING, SHORTLY AFTER

The airship hovers beside the huge hanging rig, moored to a metal platform. On the underside of this long platform our seven travelers stand.

The mammoth industrial setting is nearly as traversable upside-down as it was right side-up. But the group proceeds slowly, unnerved by the eeriness of the seeming ghost rig.

The only sound, apart from the birds, is a CREAKING coming from a partially collapsed helideck. Dangling precariously from this is a crazily-skewed HELICOPTER, hanging by its skids from the helideck's metal tiedowns. A wind gust causes the rotor blades to creak against the deck.

The group takes in the unnerving sight of the dead chopper.

STEVEN

Well, one thing's sure. Nobody flew out of here.

VOICE (O.S.)

O yaa sa tya ya?

Everyone turns, startled. Standing in a dark doorframe a few feet away is a HAGGARD-LOOKING FIGURE: a slender young Sri-Lankan man. As he gapes at the visitors in amazement, the audience recognizes him: he's the youngest of the workers we met at the very beginning.

SAJITH

O yaa sa tya ya?

The spooked travelers have no idea how to respond. Then the man repeats his query -- but this time in Indian-accented English.

SAJITH (CONT'D)

Are you real?

Dustin takes a step forward.

DUSTIN

Yeah, we're real.

The spell-bound young Sri Lankan approaches the whole group, looking from one to the next, as if not believing his eyes.

SAJITH

Forgive me. I've been staring at these birds a long time now.

SOPHIA

Is there anyone else here?

SAJITH

No. I'm the last.

Hank suddenly grabs the slender man and THROWS him against a wall.

HANK

What did you do? What were you people up to here! WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO?!

As Steven pulls Hank off, the terrified Sri Lankan answers--

SAJITH
We didn't "do" anything! We *found*
something!

CUT TO:

The strange yet familiar GLASS BOX.

INT. DRILLING RIG, GEOLOGICAL LAB - DAY

Seven faces peer wonderingly into the mysterious glass box, which sits on a righted table in the remains of the rig's sediment analysis lab.

Inside the box, the strange sand particles are now in *motion*. Some grains of sand are falling downward, while others slowly rise back up. Others simply hover. It's an endless surreal cascade within, in defiance of all known laws.

STEVEN
How far down did you find it?

SAJITH
Far. As far as anyone's ever drilled.

DUSTIN
You're saying this has been sitting inside the planet for millions of years.

SAJITH
It was blocking the borehole path. They managed to extract it, pull it up. We noticed the sand inside was falling upward. And a minute later...

He makes a vague "upward" gesture. Then--

SAJITH (CONT'D)
So it's really affected every place? The whole world?

The others nod solemnly.

MILLIE
So... what do we do with it?

HANK
We *smash* it.

Grabbing a heavy wrench, Hank suddenly RAISES THE TOOL high above the glass object--

DUSTIN

Wait!

Dustin throws out an arm to block just as Hank's wrench SMASHES DOWN; the wrench DENTS the metal table an inch from the box.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Hold on there, Gimli!

SAJITH

(murmurs, unphased)

Hit it as hard you want. That thing shattered a million-dollar drill bit.

Surprised, both Hank and Dustin turn to the rig worker.

SAJITH (CONT'D)

Some of the people who survived, they tried to shatter it, burn it, blow it up. Nothing made a scratch. They tried everything except throwing it off the edge... which nobody quite had the nerve to do.

HANK

Well... maybe it's time for that.

But a smaller voice speaks up.

CONNOR

No. We're not supposed to throw it off. It's the Foundation Stone.

All turn to Connor, who holds the torn-out PAGE OF LATIN TEXT in his hand.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Primarii Lapidis. The "first stone placed."

(beat)

We need to put it back.

This pronouncement stuns the others, leaving them all gaping at the soft-spoken twelve-year-old.

From the corner of his eye, Steven sees Ian quietly slipping out of the room. Steven taps Sophia's shoulder, alerting her to this.

EXT. OUTER PLATFORM, DRILLING RIG - MOMENT LATER

Steven and Sophia emerge onto the outer platform, looking for Ian. But it's as if Sophia's dad has disappeared. Finally--

STEVEN

There.

They spy him many yards away, standing by the drop-off edge. Staring out at the strange horizon.

SOPHIA

Dad?

Her father doesn't answer. They comes closer.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Dad... you alright?

IAN

No. It's my fault.

SOPHIA

What?

IAN

This rig you're standing on... it's one of mine.

STEVEN

This is owned by Cumae?

IAN

A subsidiary.

Stunned moment between Sophia and Steven. Finally--

SOPHIA

That doesn't make it your fault.
It's not like you could have known.
Nobody could have known.

This seems to have little impact; the man looks ashen.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Dad... you look really tired. I think what we need is to find you someplace to lie down. I'll get Sajith.

Her father nods distantly. But as she starts to go, Steven grabs her and whispers--

STEVEN
To be safe, let's keep this between
us.

INT. DRILLING RIG, GEOLOGICAL LAB - DAY

Connor and Millie sit by the mysterious box, so close that their breath fogs the glass. We can hear the tiny rattle made by the trapped sand grains each time one falls to the glass bottom. Speaking quietly to Millie--

CONNOR
I kind of think the only reason any
of us are still here is because the
box is. That that's why the world
is still holding together.

MILLIE
Barely holding together.

CONNOR
But I mean if it were to fall free,
into the sky... I bet that'd be it.

Across the room, Steven re-enters. He glances at Connor and Millie by the box, then at the opposite end of the lab--

--where we find Hank and Dustin, watching the two in silence. Hank looks utterly bewildered. Steven comes over.

HANK
(sotto)
It doesn't look like a stone.

STEVEN
Foundation stone. A metaphor.

HANK
(to Dustin)
You're the professor... Is what my
kid's been saying make any sense to
you?

Dustin's eyes are fixed on the enigmatic box across the room. He's quiet a moment.

DUSTIN
He was right about something. About
gravity.
(beat)
You know who can explain it? Why it
does what it does...? Nobody. Not
Newton. Not Einstein. Not Steven
goddamn Hawking.

Hank looks surprised.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Connor was right; people have
studied it, measured its effects.
Written big fat theses on its
apparent properties, how it seems
to function. But "why?" What it is
that makes one object mysteriously
pull towards another...? No one
knows.

He pauses, then nods toward the glass box.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
So... maybe it's that thing.

STEVEN
You're suggesting that box is where
the laws of physics come from?

Flustered, Dustin runs his hands through his hair.

DUSTIN
Listen, I'm talking completely out
my ass here. And I'm not saying a
thing about Gnostics or crazy monks
or whether this entire world is all
some giant existential trap... All
I'm saying is--

He takes a breath.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
--maybe it's time to trust your kid
and figure out a way to put the
damn thing back.

At this, a TREMOR run through the entire rig... like an
earthquake taking place in the bedrock above. Everyone in the
room glances at one another, alarmed, as the lab sways
disconcertingly back and forth for several moments.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
(unnerved)
Before this whole rig rips free
into the sky.

INT. RIG, CENTRAL DRILLING CHAMBER - DAY

Hank clatters down a metal staircase behind Steven and
Sajith; Steven's surveying the rig's interior.

HANK

How the hell are we supposed to
"put it back"? That thing was found
six miles straight up above our
heads! In solid rock.

STEVEN

(ignoring Hank, to Sajith)
What's this?

SAJITH

Central drill shaft.

Steven bangs on the METER-WIDE CASING PIPE which runs the
height of the room and up beyond sight. The thick metal tube
echoes inside. Steven thinks a second.

STEVEN

You said people tried to blow up
the box? What with?

SAJITH

The fuel from the central
generator.

STEVEN

It's got some kick?

SAJITH

Yes. Very dangerous.

STEVEN

Is there much left?

SAJITH

The main storage tank is three-
quarters full.

Steven stares up again at the towering drill shaft, mental
gears turning in his head. Hank watches him, exasperated.

HANK

What?!

INT. DRILLING RIG, GEOLOGICAL LAB - DAY

Everyone (minus Ian) gathers close as Steven scrawls a
DIAGRAM IN RED MARKER on the back of an old Sri Lankan
newspaper. Gradually we make out a rough depiction of the
RIG, the DRILL SHAFT and the 'EARTH CEILING' above it.

STEVEN

Sorry for going low tech. It'd be
prettier in Power Point--
(finishes diagram, points)
(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)
But you've got a borehole. A
perfect cylinder that goes straight
up into the earth to the place the
box first came from.
(beat)
So think of that as a gun barrel.
And the box as... a bullet.

The others glance uncertain at one another.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Anyone with me? You load our
mystery cube into the shaft down
here--then fill the remaining tube
below it with every gallon of
generator fuel on this rig. Then
you set off a charge.
(draws arrow)
Our 'bullet' has nowhere to go but
up. With enough force, it shoots
straight back to its origin
point.... and everything flips to
the way it was.

He turns the newspaper 180 degrees around, 'righting' the
earth's orientation.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Theoretically.

He looks up at the others, who are all dead silent. Finally--

HANK
Um, isn't there something you're
forgetting?
(taking the marker)
You set off a thousand gallons of
generator fuel and...

Hank draws a fat RED X through the rig on the diagram.

HANK (CONT'D)
...they'll be nothing left of this
place.

STEVEN
Right, we can't be on it when it
blows.

SOPHIA
You thinking we're out on the
blimp?
(off Steven's nod)
It's barely holding together as is.
And it wasn't designed for barrel
rolls. If the eight of us are all
on when everything 'flips back'...
(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
we may not end up any less dead
than we would sitting here on the
rig.

STEVEN
(grimly)
I don't see how we have a choice.

SAJITH
I recommend the caves.

Everyone turns, surprised, to the Sri-Lankan worker.

CUT TO:

A BINOCULAR VIEW of several small CAVES DOTTING A CLIFFSIDE.

EXT. OUTER PLATFORM, DRILLING RIG - DAY

Connor's peering through the binoculars. The others stand beside the boy, all gazing at a location Sajith points to, a couple miles distant.

It's a SERIES OF CAVES in the cliffs at the edge of Sri-Lankan mainland.

SAJITH
We'd play in them as kids, along
the beach.

SOPHIA
We take the airship there...

STEVEN
...Everybody gets off. And we just
activate the explosive by some kind
of remote.

HANK
Just?

SOPHIA
A remote detonator might not be
that hard.

HANK
No, I guess the hard part would be
building a homemade mega-bomb
that's somehow gonna launch a glass
box six miles straight up a drill
shaft. I'm only saying, you
honestly think you could put
together something like that,
Steven?

STEVEN

Hell no.

The others frown at this.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

But he can.

Steven points to *Dustin*, who's been silently processing Steven's plan all this time. The others turn to Dustin as well.

HANK

Well... can you save the world?

Dustin hesitates before answering, the enormity of the task weighing on him.

MILLIE

Of course he can.

Millie gives her boyfriend a look of total confidence. It leaves Dustin looking part surprised, part moved. And more than a little overwhelmed.

DUSTIN

We better get on it then... we have a shitload of work to do.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF QUICK SHOTS:

--Sajith POWERING UP an emergency generator

--Hank FIRING UP a blow torch

--Dustin SKETCHING OUT a detailed schematic

--Bright work lights SWITCHING ON throughout the rig

--a BOX OF WALKIE-TALKIES spilling onto a work table

--Hank skillfully using the blow torch to seal a THICK METAL CAP to the end of the drill-shaft's main casing pipe

--Steven DRILLING a network of small precision holes in a higher section of this same multi-story casing pipe

INT. DRILLING RIG, GEOLOGICAL LAB - DAY

Millie enters the lab, sees Dustin hunched over a table littered with circuitry and tools. He's now tinkering with a dissected walkie-talkie.

MILLIE
What can I do?

DUSTIN
Grab that walkie by the door and
say something into it.

MILLIE
(picking it up)
What should I say?

DUSTIN
Anything.

Millie raises it to her mouth and presses the TALK button--

Before she can utter a word an item on the table BLOWS UP; a *tiny dish of fuel* with wires leading from Dustin's dissected walkie-talkie. The small but deafening explosion scares the crap out of Millie.

Dustin beams.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
We've got us a remote detonator.

INT. DRILLING RIG, CENTRAL DRILLING CHAMBER - DAY, LATER

Hank's blow torch is ablaze as he works on a section of the rig's multi-story CENTRAL CASING PIPE. He's leaning into an OPENED ACCESS PANEL in the side of the wide metal pipe.

Inside, Hank's welding a series of *metal rods* across the pipe's interior diameter, creating a crude lattice-like shelf. It's hot, nasty work.

Pouring with sweat, Hank pulls his head out of the access panel. He raises his welding shield and uses his own shirt to wipe his drenched brow. He swigs several mouthfuls of water, spitting the final one onto the floor--

That's when Hank realizes he's being *watched*.

He turns to see CONNOR standing across the room, silently observing him.

Hank looks a little caught out; unnerved by the gaze of his brilliant, ever-critical twelve-year-old.

HANK
What is it?

Connor hesitates.

CONNOR
Is that something I'm old enough to try?

The words melt the blue collar dad's heart. Hank simply motions for the boy to come over.

Connor does, a little nervously. Hank gingerly places the welding shield on his son's head--

HANK
Every boy should have his own blow torch.

He puts the tool in Connor's hand, then SPARKS UP the cool blue flame.

INT. DRILLING RIG, SLEEPING QUARTERS - LATE DAY

We glimpsed this small bunk room at the very beginning of the film. Now it only contains Ian, who gazes out a window at the strange, ever-circling birds.

There's a knock across the room. The door opens partway, revealing Sophia with a tray of FOOD.

SOPHIA
Hope you've got a taste for something foreign. All that's on this rig is rice and chutney.

The man doesn't turn from the dark, circling birds. Concerned, Sophia steps in and sets down the tray.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Things are going well with this whole... plan. Dustin's a force of nature. The device should be ready in just a few hours.

IAN
What are the odds of it working? Honestly?

SOPHIA
I don't know, Dad...
(beat)
But it's ridiculous to go on blaming yourself. There's *millions* of square miles of ocean floor.
(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
The chances of a drill colliding
with a two-foot box? It's
incalculable.

IAN
No. We aimed for it.

Dead silence from her at this.

IAN (CONT'D)
We didn't know what "it" was. At
first it was just data from a
survey team -- anomalous readings
from the north Indian Ocean. There
was a strange "gravitational
density" under the shale. Possibly
indicative of an entire
undiscovered oil reserve. No one
was certain, of course.
(pause)
I told them to drill for the heart
of it.

Ian faces his daughter.

IAN (CONT'D)
This rig cost a fortune.
Unbelievable now when I think about
it. I think what else I could have
done with that money....
(grim laugh)
Built a hundred wind farms. Put up
thousands of solar panels--

SOPHIA
(cuts him off)
Okay, Dad, I get it. Stop.

The old man falls quiet a moment.

IAN
Or maybe the monks had it right.
I've been sitting here wondering
just that. If maybe all this is...
intended. For the best.

The sincerity in his voice chills Sophia. But before she can
respond ANOTHER TREMOR shakes the entire rig. Stronger than
the last one. Several breathless seconds pass before it
subsides. In the wake, she addresses her father brusquely--

SOPHIA
I need to get back. Dad, you need
to rest. Eat something. Lie down.
Promise me.

Ian nods vaguely. Unnerved and impatient, Sophia heads out.

At the door, though, she stops. Returning quickly, she presses a WALKIE TALKIE into her father's hand--

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Call me if you need to.

She goes.

INT. MAIN DRILLING ROOM - LATER

CLOSE UP on Dustin's hands carefully sliding the GLASS BOX onto the completed METAL-ROD SHELF.

A WIDE SHOT reveals six figures (everyone but Ian) staring up at a completed, gargantuan EXPLOSIVE DEVICE.

Wires snake in every direction along the exterior of the thick multi-story casing pipe. Soldered onto one side of the pipe is the dissected walkie-talkie, now a remote detonator. In the heart of it all, the enigmatic box sits suspended on the shelf within the opened access panel of the casing pipe.

Dustin steps back from the thing he's built.

DUSTIN
Alright, our "bullet's" in the
chamber.
(beat)
Now we need gun powder.

INT. DRILLING RIG, FUEL STORAGE ROOM - LATER

Cut to a large FUEL STORAGE TANK, wide as a two-car garage.

Offscreen, we hear a walkie-talkie crackle:

DUSTIN'S VOICE [WALKIE-TALKIE]
Tell him to turn it nice and slow.

SOPHIA [INTO WALKIE]
Hear you.

Sophia nods to Steven and Sajith, who together slowly turn a huge wrench on a valve of the great tank. Jury-rigged to this valve is a LONG BLACK RUBBER HOSE, which snakes out of the fuel room and out of sight.

As the two men labor to twist the big wrench, we begin to hear the sound of *fluid* rushing through the rubber hose.

SOPHIA [INTO WALKIE] (CONT'D)
Coming your way.

INT. DRILLING RIG, CENTRAL DRILLING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Levels below, Dustin and Hank carefully watch the other end of this same long black hose. The hose snakes inside the open access panel of the casing pipe.

Dustin and Hank wait.

The explosive fuel starts to trickle out. We hear it pour down and slowly start to fill the long, vertical casing pipe.

DUSTIN [INTO WALKIE]
 Alright, just like this. It'll take
 a while, but the last thing we need
 is a fuel spill if another tremor
 hits.

SOPHIA'S VOICE [WALKIE-TALKIE]
Got it.

EXT. DRILLING RIG - NIGHT

A distant shot of the rig hanging in the darkness, its emergency lights glowing faintly. It makes a striking sight against all the surrounding blackness, as if it were the only light left in the universe.

INT. DRILLING RIG, FUEL TANK ROOM - NIGHT

Stillness in the fuel tank room. Sophia, Steven and Sajith sit silently on the metal floor, watching the fuel transfer hose while the hours tick by.

Steven subtly reaches a hand out, placing it gently over Sophia's. But her gaze is fixed on the quiet young Sri Lankan worker across the room.

SOPHIA
 I haven't wanted to ask... but what
 happened to the other people here?
 You weren't the only one who
 survived.

SAJITH
 No. There were others.

The rig worker falls silent a moment, troubled. Then he proceeds in his accented but articulate English.

SAJITH (CONT'D)
 After a day or two, we all began to
 realize it was *real*. Not some kind
 of dream.
 (MORE)

SAJITH (CONT'D)

And that we were all trapped here.
People grew very quiet after that.

(beat)

You'd see someone sitting at one of
the ledges, staring down into the
sky. An hour later, you'd walk past
the same spot again. But they
wouldn't be there anymore. They
just....

Sajith doesn't finish. Sophia does it for him.

SOPHIA

They let go.

STEVEN

All of them?

SAJITH

Not all at once. But over a few
days. The pull... is very strong.
You look down at the sky, and it's
like it's calling you. Like into
the blue is where you're meant to
go. You haven't felt it?

Steven glances uncomfortably at Sophia. The woman seems
shaken by the story. But her only reaction is to stand.

SOPHIA

I think it's time I checked on my
father.

She heads off.

INT. DRILLING RIG, HALL OUTSIDE BUNK ROOM - NIGHT

A flashlight beam lights up the contours of a dark hall as
Sophia, alone, makes her way toward the bunk room door. She
reaches it, knocks. Then opens it.

INT. DRILLING RIG, BUNK ROOM - NIGHT

The food she left sits untouched.

The wide window, through which Ian watched the birds, sits
open.

And Ian himself is gone.

SOPHIA

Dad? Dad?

Panic slowly grips her. Into her WALKIE--

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
 Dad? Dad, talk to me please.
 (switches channel)
 Dad!

She falls dead silent. For she's spotted a NOTE. It is near the open window, tucked into its steel frame, fluttering with the breeze from outside.

Sophia removes it from the window frame. Written in her father's hand are the words, "I wish I could give it all back to you."

STEVEN [WALKIE-TALKIE]
Sophia? You okay?

SOPHIA
 He's gone.

STEVEN [WALKIE-TALKIE]
What? What's happened?

SOPHIA
 (empty)
 My father... he let go.

INT. DRILLING RIG, STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Cut to Steven, hurrying down a stairwell--

STEVEN [INTO WALKIE]
 Stay right there. I'm coming--

He's suddenly THROWN off balance by another EARTH TREMOR which rattles the entire rig like a china cupboard.

Then comes a DEAFENING GRINDING AND CRASHING OF METAL FROM SOME LEVEL ABOVE.

SHOUTS OF ALARM immediately follow.

Steven freezes, looks up. Then he BOLTS back toward the commotion.

INT. DRILLING RIG, UPPER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Clambering to the top the stairwell, Steven spots Dustin racing past.

STEVEN
 What is it? A fuel spill?!

DUSTIN
 No--!

Dustin charges on. Steven manages to grab Millie and Hank, running a few paces behind Dustin.

STEVEN
What *happened!*

HANK
A platform collapsed.

MILLIE
It slashed the tethers. The ship's loose!

EXT. DRILLING RIG - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

A moonlit WIDE SHOT reveals that the PASSENGERLESS AIRSHIP is indeed adrift, its severed tether lines dangling free. The wind blows the aircraft against the rig, giving some hope of recapturing it. But the wind is simultaneously pushing the vessel *along the structure's side*. Time is critical.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, OUTSIDE LEDGE - CONTINUOUS

On an exposed ledge running the length of rig, DUSTIN scrambles over beams and emergency lighting to keep up with the blimp. HANK is right behind him. As the huge vessel scrapes against the rusty support legs of the hanging rig they repeatedly reach for the dangling tethers.

But the two men are fast running out of remaining ledge. Only thirty feet til they reach the far end, at which point the ship will be blown completely beyond the perimeter of the rig. They run hard.

Twenty feet...

Ten feet...

Dustin gets within arm's length of the closest tether. But a WIND GUST suddenly picks up, and both tether and ship are blown beyond his grasp.

The two men hit the far end of the ledge, nearly tumbling off. They watch in shock as the vessel floats a dozen feet beyond their reach--

DUSTIN
No!!!

Suddenly, from the ledge directly above them, they see a FIGURE *leap straight out over the dark abyss toward the airship cabin--*

SAJITH.

It's a twelve-foot span from his ledge to the cabin -- Sajith hits the open cabin doorway at chest level. For a second it looks like he's going to fall, but the young man's hands scramble for purchase. He pulls himself up and in.

HANK

Yes! You bastard! YES!!

The two men at the ledge shout in amazement and relief. They're joined a second later by Steven, Millie and Connor.

DUSTIN

Sajith made it on!

CONNOR

Now what?

HANK

That thing's not that hard to steer. He can get it back to us.

MILLIE

(dawning horror)

No... he can't.

Confused, the rest turn to Millie, then to what she's staring at....

Moonlight shines clearly on a gaping YARD-LONG TEAR, freshly ripped in the nylon fabric of the airship's main envelope.

The vessel was torn when scraping the side of the rig.

As the five stare in shock we CUT TO--

INT. AIRSHIP, CABIN - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Sajith. He's heading towards the ship's controls when a sound from above makes him freeze.... the sound of *rushing gas escaping* from the blimp's helium-filled envelope.

Realizing something's very wrong, Sajith hurries to a WINDOW. For a moment the scared young man locks eyes with the figures on the rig, twenty feet away, all looking back at him. Sajith can read the shock and helplessness in their expressions.

But a second later, he can no longer see them at all. The rapidly deflating vessel has now sunk below the level of the rig.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, OUTSIDE LEDGE - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Millie turns away in tears. The rest look on horror-struck as the fatally damaged airship sinks down into the black sky, like a dying balloon.

After a few moments the vessel is no longer visible. It is swallowed up by the infinite darkness below, along with its doomed solitary passenger.

EXT. DRILLING RIG - DAWN

A harsh SUN breaks the inverted horizon.

The piercing rays strike SOPHIA, who stands alone on an outer platform. She watches the dawn with an unreadable expression.

INT. DRILLING RIG, GEOLOGICAL LAB - CONTINUOUS

Steven eyes her through the open doorway of the lab. He and the four others sit inside in grim silence. Finally--

MILLIE

Alright.... we're stranded. What do we do?

Millie looks up at Dustin, but gets no response.

HANK

Is there any place that'll be safe on this rig once the explosion goes off?

DUSTIN

(murmur)

There won't be anything left of this rig at all.

Another mild earth tremor causes the room to shudder. But the ominous rumble barely registers with the ashen-faced people inside.

HANK

Then we don't set it off. We come up with a new plan.

CONNOR

There is no other plan.

(pause)

We do it anyway.

HANK

Quiet, Connor.

CONNOR
I'm serious.

HANK
Shut up, Connor--

DUSTIN
He's right. It's not just us we're trying to save.

The others all look at Dustin.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
You think we're the only ones left? There must be thousands of others, maybe millions, still hanging on. Their only chance is what happens here. We still have to do this.

Hank gets to his feet.

HANK
You're talking *suicide*! I'm not doing it! I'm not blowing up myself or my kid!

MILLIE
(softly)
Maybe... we don't do it like that. Maybe we step off instead. You know, set a fuse and... let go. Fall into the blue.

The others look amazed to hear these words coming out of Mille's mouth. With a dry laugh--

HANK
You've come a long way, baby.

Getting no further reaction from the others, Millie turns to Steven -- who's still focused on Sophia standing on the platform outside.

MILLIE
You--say something.

STEVEN
Whatever you decide... you should do it now. The tremors are coming closer together. There isn't much time.

DUSTIN
There's nothing to decide! We started this thing and we need to finish it.

HANK

(getting in Dustin's face)
Like hell! I'm not killing myself
and I'm not killing my son for some
half-ass plan that may not even
work!

DUSTIN

So what are you saying we do?
Nothing?! Just sit here until the
earth comes apart? Until this rig
rips free and falls into the sky?

SOPHIA'S VOICE

(from across room)

No--

The others turn in surprise. Sophia now stands in the doorway, her expression deadly serious.

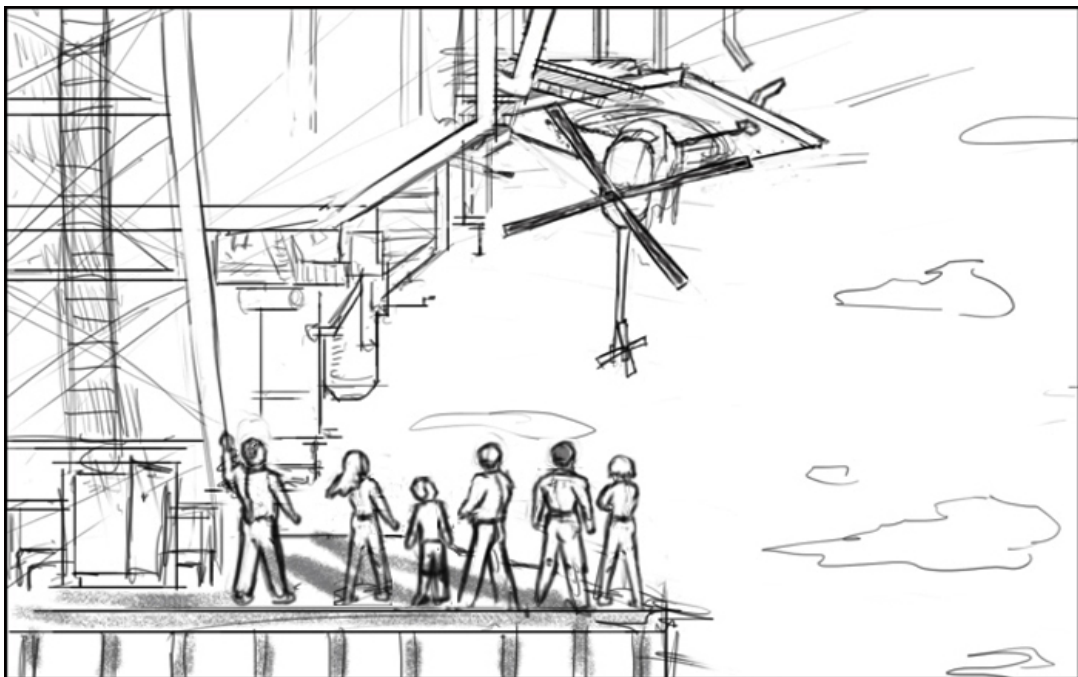
SOPHIA

We use the chopper.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, PLATFORM OVERLOOKING HELIDECK - DAY

CUT TO all of them staring at the HELICOPTER they saw when they first arrived. It's suspended from the PARTIALLY COLLAPSED HELIDECK, which bends down from the rig at a forty-five degree angle. The chopper itself hangs vertically from this helideck, its tail pointed straight down. The only thing securing it to the helideck are two metal "tie down" chains running through its skids.

It looks like a death trap.



STEVEN

It's not possible. It might as well be a bulldozer hanging there.

SOPHIA

It's a helicopter. It can fly.

STEVEN

You can't *start* it. Look! As soon as the rotor blades spin they'll hit the pad and snap right off.

SOPHIA

I'll start it in freefall.

This stuns Steven.

STEVEN

Freefall.

SOPHIA

That's right.

(turns to Hank)

Figure out how to sever those tiedowns.

Hank glances nervously between Sophia and Steven.

STEVEN

You'll be dropping at three hundred feet *per second*. In a machine you don't even know. What makes you think you can fly it?

SOPHIA

I can fly it.

An uncomfortable pause. The others glance nervously at one another. Steven just stares straight at Sophia.

STEVEN

Fine. You wanna get in that thing? I'm going with you.

SOPHIA

No. You can't.

STEVEN

What the hell, I "can't"!?

DUSTIN

She's right, Steven. If she's gonna try to start it in freefall and fly it back up... the less weight the better.

Steven turns to the others.

STEVEN
You people were talking "suicide?"
This is suicide!

Though they all look stricken with concern for Sophia, nobody speaks up to take his side.

MILLIE
Steven... it's all we've got.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, PARTIALLY COLLAPSED HELIDECK - DAY

The helideck creaks disconcertingly as Hank creeps along the upperside of it. Blow torch in hand, he examines the backs of the bolts which hold the hanging chopper's tiedown chains in place.

HANK [INTO WALKIE]
It's two thick bolts on each. I cut
through 'em... and you're falling.

INT. HELICOPTER HANGING TAIL-DOWN - CONTINUOUS

CUT TO the flipside of the helideck, where Sophia is already inside the suspended helicopter. Due to the angle the aircraft hangs at, she's positioned facing straight up, like an astronaut in launch posture.

SOPHIA [INTO WALKIE]
Good. Do it.

EXT. PARTIALLY COLLAPSED HELIDECK - CONTINUOUS

Cut back to Hank, who hesitates -- then ignites the blow torch.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, PLATFORM OVERLOOKING HELIDECK - CONTINUOUS

The others stand on an adjacent platform; from their vantage point they see both Hank working atop the helideck and Sophia strapped inside the hanging chopper below.

Millie and Connor nervously watch the blue flame of Hank's torch SEVER bolt after bolt securing the tiedowns. With each cut the helicopter JOLTS disconcertingly, as if the tiedown chains might rip free at any second.

Next to them, Dustin turns and looks over at STEVEN. Steven's not watching Hank. His eyes are fixed dead on Sophia in the aircraft.

Dustin places a hand on Steven's shoulder--

DUSTIN
She's coming back.

This gesture has zero effect on Steven. His eyes stay trained on the woman in the aircraft.

Then there's a METALLIC SNAP as the final tiedown bolt is severed.

The chopper plummets.

INT. HELICOPTER, SOPHIA'S POV - CONTINUOUS

Unspeakably fast, the view out the helicopter's main window changes. One moment the grey metal of the helideck is a mere three feet away from Sophia. The next instant she's fallen so far that the *entire rig* looks like a child's toy model far above. Insignificantly small.

Sophia should be reaching for the controls to start the aircraft's engine. But she appears entranced by the ever broadening view. The world is starting to reveal itself: wide... abstract... and growing distant by the second.

The roar of the wind against the falling chopper is mesmerizing.

The overpowering effect begins to trigger memories. An assault of images flash before her eyes: *her otherworldly paintings, the Gnostic woodcut of the world coming apart, the open window from which her father "let go"*-

Out the windshield, the very curvature of the earth begins to reveal itself. Distressingly beautiful.

More images flood Sophia's consciousness: *the photograph of her mother, the circling birds in flight, her body in freefall from the electrical tower, STEVEN'S HAND darting out and catching her*--

EXT. DRILLING RIG, PLATFORM BY HELIDECK - DAY, CONTINUOUS

Silence as those on the platform stare down into the blue. But there is nothing to see below. The helicopter is no longer visible.

OUT ON THE HELIDECK--

Hank speaks repeatedly into the walkie-talkie:

HANK [INTO WALKIE]
Sophia, come in. You still hear us?
Sophia?

There is only STATIC from the device.

BACK ON THE PLATFORM--

A distressed Millie squints into the brilliant sky below.

MILLIE
I can't see anything.

CONNOR
(quietly)
It's been too long.

Dustin casts a look over at Steven. But the other man gazes down with an unreadable expression.

Cut back to Connor, whose expression is now changing. As if he hears some sound within the soft breeze blowing against the rig.

Millie twitches; she hears something too.

It is very faint... but it is the sound of *chopper blades*.

They all TURN.

On the horizon far behind them, flying parallel with the rig, the HELICOPTER zeros in on their position.

Sophia has returned.

Dustin, Millie and Connor WHOOP and CHEER. On the helideck, Hank hollers his head off.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, MAKESHIFT LANDING PAD - MOMENTS LATER

Hank BEARHUGS Sophia the second she steps out of the landed chopper. The aircraft now rests on a flat section of open rig.

Behind Hank are Millie and Connor, effusive in their delight. But the others back away as soon as STEVEN approaches, giving the couple space.

Steven stands before her, his face awash in amazement.

SOPHIA
Like you told me... I'm not done
with this world.

She kisses him. Then--

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I did my part. You damn well better
pull off yours.

A quick grin flashes on Steven's face. He rushes off.

CUT TO:

The GLASS BOX, positioned inside the central CASING PIPE...

INT. DRILLING RIG, MAIN DRILLING CHAMBER - DAY

It sits on its metal-rod shelf, suspended over the THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF EXPLOSIVE FUEL that now fill the pipe below it. But a fresh series of EARTH TREMORS cause the box to rattle continuously on its shelf.

Just outside the pipe, we see Dustin TAPING DOWN the intricate network of wires he's put together. He double-checks section after section of the wiring, like he's in a race against the tremors.

Steven appears breathless in the chamber doorway.

STEVEN
(above the din)
This thing ready to blow?

DUSTIN
If the goddamn tremors don't shake
all my wiring apart. Shit--I just
ran out of duct tape!

STEVEN
It's a sign. C'mon, ride's waiting.

DUSTIN
(little hesitant)
Right.

Dustin SWINGS SHUT the pipe's side-access door with a CLANG, sealing the box inside its "launch tube." Then he hurries toward Steven and the exit.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Let's get well clear of this place.

STEVEN
(points)
Think you're forgetting something.

Dustin, confused, turns to see what Steven's pointing at.

On a work table across the room sits a modified WALKIE TALKIE. Stuck to it there's a post-it with big red letters, reading "BOOM".

Dustin's eyes go wide. Beyond embarrassed--

DUSTIN

Holy shit.

Dustin races back across the room and SWIPES the all-critical remote detonator. He returns, nearly too ashamed to make eye contact with Steven.

STEVEN

That'll be our secret.

EXT. DRILLING RIG, MAKESHIFT LANDING PAD - MOMENTS LATER

Both men race toward the waiting helicopter, Dustin with the detonator firmly in hand.

A RUMBLING SOUND from high above -- then a SHOWER OF SAND AND ROCK PARTICLES fall from the earth ceiling, dusting the rig below. Neither man slows his sprint.

They make it to the chopper; belted in already are Millie, Connor and Hank. As soon as the final two passengers climb in Sophia powers up the craft. The rotor blades spin to a blur. The helicopter LIFTS OFF from the rig.

EXT. HELICOPTER, FLYING - DAY

The chopper races through the air, towards the upside-down CLIFFSIDE which defines the edge of the Sri Lankan mainland.

INT. HELICOPTER, FLYING - CONTINUOUS

Inside, passengers look out as the CAVES dotting the cliffs grow closer. Even the largest of these openings looks distressingly small.

As Sophia aims the aircraft towards the widest of them, Connor squeezes his dad's hand nervously. Hank gives his son a reassuring look.

HANK

We'll be fine.

But then Hank turns to his other side, whispering to Steven--

HANK (CONT'D)

Tight fit.

STEVEN
(unphased)
I've seen her make tighter.

Sophia, at the controls, appears equally confident in her abilities. But with twenty yards to go to the cave entrance there's a SOUND OF A HUGE 'CRACK' FROM ABOVE--

A MASSIVE CASCADE OF BROKEN EARTH falls directly in their flight path.

Millie and Connor shriek -- but Sophia's reflexes take over. She PIVOTS the chopper just before it flies dead into the path of the falling debris; the car-sized chunks of dislodged bedrock miss the chopper by mere feet.

People exchange relieved looks inside, then--

CRASH -- a stray piece of falling rock *behind* the craft snaps the tail rotor clean off.

The helicopter veers wildly. A sickening WHIRRING sound comes from the engine....

But somehow Sophia manages to re-point the ailing craft towards the cave...

She ACCELERATES the vehicle straight towards the narrow opening--

INT. CLIFFSIDE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter shoots into the confined space; the second it does the rotor blades get SHEARED OFF. The hurtling chopper itself is spun 90 degrees -- coming to a HARD, UPRIGHT LANDING against the rear wall of the cave.

INT. WRECKED HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Shaken, Sophia turns with concern to the others.

SOPHIA
Everybody good?

One by one, all of them nod.

All except *Dustin*.

People turn to him. Dustin's not injured; but he sits strangely still, staring out the cave opening at the drilling rig hanging on the horizon. He holds the REMOTE DETONATOR in one hand, but makes no move to activate it.

HANK
What are you waiting for?
(no reaction)
Hit it!

His reply is barely a whisper--

DUSTIN
I already did. The second the rock
hit the helicopter.

The others slowly glance at one other in shock, then back at him.

Dustin presses the detonator's button again for them. A LIGHT blinks on to indicate that the device is indeed functional... but out on the horizon the hanging rig remains completely unchanged. No explosion at all.

Beat.

Steven swipes the remote from Dustin's hand, quickly exits the wrecked chopper.

INT. CAVE ENTRANCE - SECONDS LATER

Others follow as Steven rushes to the very edge of the cave entrance. He points the device directly at the hanging rig a mile distant, PRESSES the button. Again nothing.

DUSTIN
(lifeless)
It's not the signal. Something must
have gotten damaged on the rig.

Hank GRABS the device from Steven's hand, presses the button over and over again. Then he SMASHES the thing against the rock floor.

Millie and Connor gaze out in awe; as far as the eye can see, great cracks are forming in the land-ceiling. MASSIVE SECTIONS OF EARTH tumble down into the sky.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. WRECKED HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

--where we discover SOPHIA, still sitting. She alone did not exit when the others did. Devastated, she just watches the grim scene play out through the cracked window of the helicopter.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Sophia?

Sophia blinks. She turns, confused -- for there's no one in the aircraft with her.

Then she realizes it's not a "human" voice -- It's coming from a WALKIE-TALKIE. She draws her forgotten walkie from her pocket.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Sophia? Can you hear me?

SOPHIA
Dad?

It *is* the voice of her father.

IAN [WALKIE-TALKIE]
Yes, it's me, sweetheart.

SOPHIA
Where are you?

IAN [WALKIE-TALKIE]
I thought it might come down to this. I'm sorry for deceiving you, but I knew you'd never willingly leave anyone behind....

SOPHIA
You're still on the rig?

INT. DRILLING RIG, MAIN DRILLING CHAMBER - DAY

Intercut with IAN, alive, on the rig. He's standing in the heart of the main drilling chamber.

IAN
It seemed prudent. And, after all... it is my rig.

As he talks he's examining the wire-wrapped LAUNCH TUBE. He sees a couple of SEVERED WIRES near a damaged duct-taped remote. The cut copper ends send out faint SPARKS.

IAN (CONT'D)
There's a receiver that's come apart, but the rest looks to be in pretty good shape...

Ian opens the side-access panel, revealing the strange GLASS BOX still sitting in position over the fuel chamber.

CUT BACK TO:

Sophia, with a look of dawning horror--

SOPHIA [INTO WALKIE]
Dad, don't do anything. Just *stay*
there, okay?

CUT BACK TO:

Ian gazes at the enigmatic box wonderingly. He touches its smooth glass side.

IAN
I don't know how the monks knew
about the box... but they got the
rest wrong. It's not a trap.

Gently the man closes the side-access door.

IAN (CONT'D)
I believe it's a gift.
(beat)
I love you, sweetheart.

Before she can respond, Ian touches the two SPARKING WIRES together--

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR WIDE SHOT as an EXPLOSION envelops the entire rig.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR SHOT OF FIERY DRILL SHAFT -- and a fleeting glimpse of the GLASS BOX as it's propelled upward into the earth.

CUT TO:

MASSIVE WIDE SHOT OF THE EARTH CEILING as an OTHERWORLDLY SHOCKWAVE spreads out from the site of the destroyed rig--

CUT TO BLACK.

Silence. The black screen slowly fades back in on...

...STEVEN. Coming to consciousness, amid bits of sand and rock, on the cave floor.

INT. CLIFFSIDE CAVE - DAY

Near him lie MILLIE, DUSTIN, CONNOR and HANK. One by one, they come to and slowly sit up. Dazed.

Looking around, they discover SOPHIA. She's already standing at the very edge of the cave, staring out at the view.

The others rise and come over to her. It is only then that they see what it is Sophia sees -- the sight of *flat land stretching as far as the eye can see*.

It's simple, yet breathtaking.

Standing there, Hank discovers a handful of loose rock clenched in his fist. He lets it go, amazed to see the bits fall to the ground the way they're supposed to.

As the others marvel at the view before them, Sophia WALKS OUT of the cave. She heads down the slope leading to the flat dry seabed.

Seeing her, Steven follows. The man moves as if scarcely trusting the solid earth beneath his feet.

Steven catches up with her down on the DRY SEABED. Sophia's gazing straight out searchingly; no trace of the rig remains.

STEVEN
What *happened*?

SOPHIA
It was my father. He stayed behind.

Steven attempts to process this.

STEVEN
Why?

SOPHIA
He wanted me to have it all back.

Sophia looks around at the now-righted world stretching away in all directions. Watching her, Steven notices something fall on one of her eyelashes -- a RAIN DROP.

Sophia touches it with her hand, then looks from the droplet up to the sky. Steven does too.

Above them, a SOFT RAIN has begun to fall.

The impact of this simple phenomenon of nature is irresistible; despite the loss of her father, Sophia cannot resist a smile.

STEVEN
Looks like you got it.

UP AT THE CAVE ENTRANCE--

The other four break out in euphoric shouts. They hurry out of the cave and into the warm rainfall. It rapidly builds in strength, becoming a downpour.

BACK ON THE FLAT SEABED--

Sophia reaches out to touch Steven's hand.

The two share a moment together in the pouring rain.

Then, in the background behind them, HALF A SKYSCRAPER tumbles down from the heavens.

The massive building SMASHES into the earth less than a mile away.

HANK
(from the cave entrance)
Holy shit!!

Sophia and Steven stare at it, stunned. Before either can think to respond, an OCEAN FREIGHTER THE LENGTH OF A FOOTBALL FIELD falls from the sky along with the rain. It PIERCES the ground like a hundred-ton lawn dart.

Looking up, Steven and Sophia see a sky darkening with countless objects falling among the raindrops -- cars, books, buildings, statues... *everything*.

STEVEN
(in shock, to Sophia)
Yeah... you definitely got it.

Up at the cave, the others take in the same terrifying sight. Dustin SHOUTS down to them--

DUSTIN
I think now's a good time to get
back to the cave!

Sophian and Steven run for shelter as the crazy storm rains down earthly objects all around.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLIFFSIDE CAVE, LOOKING OUT - DAY, LATER

Silhouetted in the entrance of the cave, Sophia, Steven, Millie, Dustin, Hank and Connor stare out in wonder at the surreal downpour.

SOPHIA (V.O.)
The strange storm lasted days. The oceans filled back in. New rivers formed. So many things fell. I saw a British double-decker bus, a Chinese pagoda....

DISSOLVE TO:

Sophia's voice continuing over a WIDE SHOT of what once was Sri Lanka, now a wholly transformed landscape. The storm is over, and the sun shines down on a GREEN LAND sparkling with new waterways. Here and there massive relics of modern civilization can be seen, sitting like museum objects in a strange outdoor exhibition.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

But there was one thing none of us
ever saw fall. No people. No
bodies. Nothing that ever lived
fell back. What happened to them
all, I don't know. Are they
somewhere else now? Some purer
realm? I honestly have no idea....

DISSOLVE TO:

SOPHIA, gazing out at a stunning natural landscape, strange and dreamlike as any painting she ever created. It teems with life -- birds of every color and kind.

Steven comes up beside her.

Up ahead, our other FOUR SURVIVORS trek across the wondrous terrain.

SOPHIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All I know is that I get to feel
the sand beneath my feet again. The
sun on my face. The rain when it
falls. And that I'm happy to be a
part of this world.

Pan up to the great BLUE SKY hanging above it all.

END.