



[ALL SCRIPTS](#)

RED MARS

FADE IN:

EXT. EARTH - VIEWED FROM SPACE

A perfect blue marble - clouds, oceans, continents. A voice begins to speak. An older, wise voice. Bud Chantilas. We'll meet

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
The Earth. From space. In all its glory, the most perfect, self-regulating organism you could imagine. We w
(beat)
We didn't.

The DATE APPEARS in one corner of the screen. 1961.

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
It was 1961 when we first went into space. There were four billion people in the world.

The POPULATION APPEARS in the other.

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
And at a rate that was scarcely comprehensible, we began to poison and populate our planet.

DATE SPINS, the POPULATION as well. The big, sparkling blue marble that is Earth begins to lose its luster and slowly turns gra

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
We increased by 80 million people a year. Pumped out our toxins beyond measure. Destroyed our resources kill

DISSOLVE TO:

PERFECTLY ROUND LILY PAD

in the midst of a pond. Surrounded by hundreds of dead, dying and deformed frogs.

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
We killed all the frogs. Every frog on the face of the planet. We'd killed species before, sure, even a genu

The last frog dies.

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
Nah, we didn't pay any attention to that either. The only people who were really upset were the French. And i

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

EXT. EARTH - VIEWED FROM SPACE

DATE and POPULATION begin to WHIR again. The planet grows dimmer and dimmer. The oceans grayer and grayer.

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
By 2050 there were 12 billion people. It took us 100 years to go from the Industrial Revolution to putting a r

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

A billion stars. We PULL BACK THROUGH -

EXT. ARES - DAY

A spaceship unlike anything you've seen. Thirteen spheres up front, cuboctoahedral packing. The MEV (Mars Entry Vehicle), a la
SUPERIMPOSE: FIRST MANNED MISSION TO MARS (DAY 190)

The ship floats by to reveal -

EXT. MARS

Red, huge, and very close. OVER which we hear -

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Houston, we are go for Mars orbit acquisition.

CAPCOM (V.O.)
You are go. Nice flight. Godspeed.

Engines light up in the back of the craft. The ship heads down towards Mars. Enters orbit. Disappears around the back side.

SUPERIMPOSE: MARS - FOURTH PLANET FROM THE SUN

The WORD SUN STARTS TO BLAZE BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER, FILLING the SCREEN until we are LOOKING AT -

EXT. SUN

A writhing ball of plasma. The surface roils, waves of energy pass by and a flare starts to grow and expand out from one quadra

INT. SOLAR OBSERVATORY (EARTH) - DAY

Two SOLAR ASTRONOMERS stare with mouths agape at the heliostat. Monitors around record the event as well.

SOLAR ASTRONOMER
Jesus...It's gotta be 800,000 miles long. It's gonna shut down every comm satellite on this side of the planet

ALARMS are starting to BUZZ.

SOLAR ASTRONOMER
The good news is it's directional, most of it's gonna miss us.

INT. MISSION CONTROL (HOUSTON) - DAY

More ALARMS. Science Officer, ANDY LOWENTHAL, turns to the Flight Director, MATT RUSSERT.

LOWENTHAL
The bad news is it's directional, and most of it's going toward Mars. Sub-light speed. It'll take 40 minutes

RUSSERT
Let 'em know.

He looks to the Capcom, JOHN SKAVLEM. News gets worse.

SKAVLEM
No comm. They're on backside. They'll be clear in...40 minutes.

(NOTE All the crew in mission control wear small Projected Image Monocles (PIMs) over their dominant eye. There are no giant vi

EXT. MARS ORBIT - NIGHT

Dark side of Mars. The Ares is a slightly shining speck, moving towards the horizon and light. At 17,000 mph.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Commander KATE BOWMAN is at the helm. She's got a kind of quiet assurance. You'd like her. Mission co-pilot ED SANTEN is besi

BOWMAN
We have stable orbit. We've got three laps around, ninety minutes each. In four and a half hours, we will lau

ROBBY GALLAGHER floats in through the hatch in the back. He's been waiting 309 million miles for this -

GALLAGHER
Are we there yet?

Kate shakes her head. She's about to respond when -

EXT. SPACE

They just clear the edge of the planet, lights hit them and...

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

Wham. One light starts to flicker to red. And then another. Some just go off.

BOWMAN
What the hell??

Santen reaches for the RADIO as it begins to blare STATIC.

SANTEN
Comm's out.

Bowman begins to rapidly reset states. Some hold, some flip back to red. Things are bad, but she's calm. Decides.

BOWMAN
Single event upsets. All over the board. Latch up. Free flow. We're gonna lose chips. Shut it down.

SANTEN
Shut it down?

Safety BUZZERS start to go off.

BOWMAN
Everything. SEP, some kind of massive flare.
(then; into the intercom)
Gentlemen, correction, we will launch on this pass. In fact...in five.

Santen is shutting off every system he can get his hands on. She reaches to finish it off herself.

BOWMAN
Proton flux. MULTIPLE Event Upsets. Ed, bye.

Santen is out of his seat and heading back as fast as he can. Gallagher behind him. ALARMS ring now as he rushes out, the arti

INT. ARES - MULTIPLE DECKS

The crew madly scrambling everywhere.

On the MEV DECK, BUD CHANTILAS, Chief Science Officer (60s, graying) is pulling himself into a spacesuit.

Popping out of his bunk and into the wall, CHIP PETTENGILL (30s, a little dour), grabs a satchel of personal possessions and swi
Gallagher and Santen rush along, careening off the walls.

Emerging onto the MEV deck, looking absolutely calm, COOPER BURCHENAL (40s, weathered, unconcerned) stops at an intercom station

BURCHENAL

Katherine, you could probably cut off that caterwauling now. I'm up from my nap.

A moment later, the ALARM CEASES.

INT. MARS ENTRY VEHICLE

6 High G couches are faceted about the interior walls, crew names stenciled on them. (Bowman's remains conspicuously empty.) S

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Kate continues to try to shut the ship down. Some circuits do, others flicker/free flow and refuse to stop. One particular cir

BOWMAN

Gentlemen, it seems I will not be able to join you and will maintain the manual release for the MEV from the F

SANTEN (V.O.)

Commander!?!

She has no time or inclination to engage in discussion about her decision.

BOWMAN

You are go for Mars descent, Lieutenant. On my signal.

INT. MEV

Santen powers up the smaller craft. Seals the door. He can't believe he's doing this, but he has no choice.

SANTEN

We are green across the board.

The last of them finish torquing themselves down. Gallagher toggles his intercom to Bowman -

GALLAGHER

Promise you won't leave if we don't like it there.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

She responds in kind. Keeps her tone as light as she can...

BOWMAN

I promise.

(then)

Lieutenant Santen, you have control authority of the MEV. Now.

She holds the circuit closed...

INT. MEV

Lights are starting to flicker off on the board. Waiting is not a good plan. Santen calls out quickly -

SANTEN

Crew secure??!

ALL OF THEM

Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure.

Santen slams two large buttons on either side of him.

EXT. ARES - MEV CYLINDER - DAY

Explosive bolts blow the two halves of the cylinder away. The MEV is an icosahedron revealed inside. As this is space, and a v

INT. MEV - DAY

However, in here, it's LOUD. EXPLOSION REVERBERATES. Half a moment later, ANOTHER EXPLOSION and -

EXT. ARES - DAY

The MEV is blown free of the Ares. Again, oddly silent. Small maneuvering MOTORS BURN for a moment, starting the MEV out of or
It drops, drops, drops and disappears, friction blazing as...

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

There are still free-flows all over the board. Bowman can't get them to shut down. They flicker, pop on and off. Systems star

INT. ARES SPHERE SIX

Control panel on the wall. We hear a CLICKING. Inside the panel, we see the switch sputtering on/off. It fails, arcs. Smoke

INT ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

A red light comes on. Soft BUZZ. Kate turns. It's a smoke warning in sphere six.

INT. ARES - VARIOUS DECKS - DAY

Bowman rushes through

A sphere that's a garden. Another with orchids growing on walls. Artwork on huge LCD screens...Pulls open panels and slaps dow

INT. ARES - SPHERE SIX

Bowman yanks out a fire extinguisher. Sprays down the offending area. She is, of course, hurled across the room by the force.

ANNUNCIATOR (V.O.)

Fire. Sphere 5. Fire. Sphere 5. Smoke. Sphere 8. Smoke. Sphere 8.

She still doesn't panic. Hurls herself down another access tube and...

EXT. MARS - DAY

Way up in the sky, we can see the tiny flare of the MEV entering the atmosphere. A moment later, a SONIC BOOM reaches us.

INT. ARES

Bowman fights a fire in another sphere. Dark now except for the flickering flames. This time we see them otherworldly round an

INT. ARES - MAINTENANCE LEVEL/MEV DECK - DAY

Kate rushes in. Starts pulling master breakers. LIGHTS are EXPLODING as the power surges. She's surrounded by a cloud of glit

INT. ARES - DAY

The venting air crystallizes in a huge white plume. Papers, books, cups, clothing flies forth as well.

INT. ARES - MAINTENANCE LEVEL/MEV DOCK

Bowman is sucked towards the open hatch. Tethers hold. Watching all her air escape is not a calming moment.

INT. ARES MULTIPLE DECKS

Without oxygen, the fires subside and die. All of them. The ship is still and dead.

INT. MAINTENANCE LEVEL/MEV DOCK

Total silence. Fire lights are out. Kate shuts the hatch. Finally she lets herself begin to react. Starts to hyperventilate

EXT. MARS SURFACE

The MEV has crash-landed. It's a wreck. Air bags deflate. Half have been destroyed. The icosahedron attempts to unfold. A

GALLAGHER

It wasn't supposed to be like this.

FLASHBACK - EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: LAUNCH MINUS 9 DAYS

The air is gray, thick. Stragglers in heavy protective gear struggle through the fetid wind to an airlock on the side of...

INT. NASA BRIEFING HALL - DAY

...and join hundreds of journalists in the audience. Lights dim. In front, face lit from below at a podium, Senior Scientist H

ERNEST

As many of you may know, in 2032 the Space Exploration Office began a series of unmanned flights to Mars.

The entire wall behind him, 40 feet by 100 feet, is a vid screen. As he speaks the images appear. Not as if he's narrating to

ERNEST

It had been determined by 2020 that Mars harbored no life. Although beginning with the same resources as Earth

Exactly as he describes it, it occurs. (Icecaps melt, temperature gradients rise, etc.). In the audience are hundreds of journ

ERNEST

It was, however, concluded that Mars was receptive to terraforming. If we could raise the temperature of the p

We see the probes launching and bursting in aerosol deployments over the Martian surface. Algae blooms. Red, orange, green, bl

ERNEST

The average temperature on Mars has increased two and a half degrees over the last three decades. The oxygen c

The color on Mars ebbs away.

ERNEST

We are about to embark on the greatest mission of human exploration. By using a number of Heavy Lift Launch Ve

We see construction being rushed along and Hab-1 (a kind of big space RV) landing and deploying on Mars as -

ERNEST

Three months ago, Hab-1, an unmanned living environment, was launched. In nine days Ares-1, our first manned r

Light comes up on the crew.

ERNEST

Lt. Commander Katherine Bowman will supervise the flight component of our mission. Commander Bowman has 2200 h
(next)

And we're pleased to have Dr. Bud Chantilas come out of retirement as our Chief Science Officer. Bud brings a
(checks)

...theology when we asked him to join us.

(next)

Dr. Chip Pettengill, who until recently has held the number two position in the Terraforming Office, is an expe
(then)

Dr. Cooper Burchenal, late of Western BioTech has left the private sector to help us.

(last)

And we are also joined by Robert Gallagher.

Santen turns to Kate and quietly mutters.

SANTEN

The janitor.

His MIKE was on. It ECHOES across the room. But Gallagher's too quick to let him try to apologize anyhow.

GALLAGHER
That's technically space janitor.

Crowd likes this. Gallagher continues -

GALLAGHER
When the toilet breaks 80 million miles from the nearest hardware store, they call me. Actually, they called me.

ERNEST
To be more precise, Mr. Gallagher is the Mechanical Systems Engineer. We're glad to have him along.

Ernest moves on quickly.

ERNEST
We stand on the threshold of the most triumphant moment of the millennium. Science has brought us here, and so have we.

CUT TO:

END FLASHBACK

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

The MEV is horrendously battered. It's a wonder they're alive. Chantilas is propped against a rock, moving a device the size of a car. Gallagher emerges from the MEV dragging some tools and other salvaged gear. (NOTE All communication is via the VOX radios in the MEV.)

CHANTILAS
What've we got?

GALLAGHER
The radio's dead. Rover's dead. AMEE's dead. You gave me a shop and three months and I could get this thing done. Santen's climbed to the top of a nearby outcropping of rock. Surveys the area.

red sky, blue clouds, rocks.

BURCHENAL
Anything?

SANTEN
No.

PETTENGILL
Great. We put up with your shit for three hundred million miles, so you could crash-land us on Mars. Just fuck it.

BURCHENAL
By all rights, son, we should be dead. That was a decent piece of flying.

SANTEN
We have a mission to accomplish, people...

PETTENGILL
We'll be dead in eight hours anyhow when the air runs out. 'Cause megapilot missed the landing site. There is no air. That puts it all into perspective.

GALLAGHER
So, where the hell are we?

SANTEN
The G.P.S. was tied to the radios...which are dead. Transponder on the Hab was tied to the nav computer...

GALLAGHER
...which is dead. Didn't the boys at NASA pack us a compass?

BURCHENAL
There's no magnetic core on Mars. Wouldn't do any good.

Gallagher considers all this for a moment.

GALLAGHER
I don't think I like this planet.

CHANTILAS
Best guess. Where do you think we are?

Santen shrugs. As much as you can shrug in a spacesuit.

SANTEN
Somewhere downrange.

Santen pulls his HHC out of a pocket on his thigh. 2050 descendant of a laptop. Mutters at it. It whizzes past all Hab info, including schematics, the standard 360 degree pan from the landing site, topo map of Mars. Zooms in to show where the Hab is.

SANTEN
Based on the last uncorrupted nav state, and given that we were in a full manual descent with no computer corrections.

Okay. That's big. There's a long moment of resignation. It's a little irrational, but then, re the HHC -

BURCHENAL
We've got every other mission variable in here, we ought to be able to figure aerobrake friction and the speed of the MEV.

Gallagher can't believe it.

GALLAGHER

This is it. This is that moment they told us about in high school. Where one day again we'd use algebra. And

Gallagher turns in frustration and walks away. Chantilas calls to him -

CHANTILAS

Stay in range. A thousand yards. And your radio's line of sight.

GALLAGHER

Right, I wouldn't want to get lost.

He continues to wander off. We can hear them discussing drag coefficients and whatnot. It just makes him ill.

Gallagher stares out at the Martian plain. It would be kinda cool. Except for the fact he's gonna die here. He's pissed and f

GALLAGHER

I don't think it's about math. I don't like math, so I'm biased. I think it's about the picture.

He holds out the picture of the panorama. Santen dismisses him - he's not a scientist, he's not a pilot, he should leave them a

SANTEN

We're not in that picture. If we were, we'd know where the Hab was. We're trying to figure this out.

Robby ignores him, tosses a rock in the sand, wraps the the 360 degree panorama around it. Screen bends and turns translucent a

GALLAGHER

Look, say that's the lander. At about 30 degrees in the distance, it sees this mountain with the funny top. i
Now I see this mountain over there. And these peaks over there behind me almost on a straight line. And then

Santen and Chantilas start to manipulate their HHCs faster than you can follow. Muttering to them, hand-gesturing, cross-refere

BURCHENAL

Space Janitor First Class Gallagher, nicely done.

SANTEN

The good news is it's an eight-hour walk.

GALLAGHER

There's bad news?

Chantilas checks Gallagher's wrist monitor.

CHANTILAS

You've got seven and a half hours of air. Try not to breathe too deep.

BURCHENAL

Let's get the hell outta here.

Chantilas struggles to his feet. As the five of them tromp away in the giant landscape...

FLASHBACK - EXT. SPACE -DAY

The Earth FILLS the SCREEN. And then PULLING BACK, BACK, BACK, BACK...It recedes in the distance and disappears. We CATCH UP W
SUPERIMPOSE: MISSION TIME: DAY 1

INT. ARES - PRIMARY SPHERE - DAY

A large open common space. Empty for the moment. Until Chantilas and Pettengill enter through an access tube. Gravity follows

PETTENGILL

Chief Science Officer Chantilas.
(off his nod)
This is trippy.

Chantilas grins. He's been up so many times he's forgotten what it's like the first time.

CHANTILAS

You'll get used to it. When you get home, it feels weird you can't walk on the ceiling.

INT. ARES - MEV DECK - DAY

Gallagher comes in too fast. Stumbles up. It's just confusing. He resets. Opens up a locker, about three feet by three feet.

GALLAGHER

Good morning, AMEE. Step out carefully, we're in multi-directional gravity.

AMEE, the Autonomous Mapping Exploration and Evasion unit, unfolds and steps gingerly from the cabinet. About waist high, eight

GALLAGHER

How are we after launch? I'd like to run a systems check. (as she nods)
Shall we do the hokey-pokey? Just to satisfy me?

She rapidly shakes each of her legs in turn. Gallagher flips on a wrist panel display. Built into the fabric of his suit. He

GALLAGHER

Take a look around.

He flips off the lights. She flicks over to IR, sees just fine in the dark. Turns the lights back on.

GALLAGHER

And how is your C.P.U. today?

A 1000 quick calculations flash by and then - "Good."

GALLAGHER
Okay, run the occasional self test. Let me know if anything's wrong. And back to storage.

AMEE contracts and climbs back into her locker. Gallagher shuts the door. Display reads "Good-bye" and winks out.

INT. ARES - KITCHEN/DINING SPHERE - NIGHT

All six of them are gathered. First dinner in space.

BOWMAN
Any Space Adaptation Sickness? Vertigo? No? Liars. You'll wake up all night long thinking you're falling.

BURCHENAL
Garden's good.

CHANTILAS
Didn't lose a plant.

BOWMAN
Anything else?

Gallagher holds back here a little. Not a scientist, not an astronaut. Suddenly feels like the most junior member of the crew.

GALLAGHER
Ahh, Commander...Bunch of the HVACs jammed from the lift-off. Reset 'em. They're fine now.

BOWMAN
I'll tell you what, unless we pass a recruiting station on an asteroid and you sign up for the military, you can't come.

GALLAGHER
Okay.
(as she waits; he relents)
Kate.

BOWMAN
Why'd you come, Gallagher?

Not expecting this one. Takes a sec -

GALLAGHER
I did two years as a mechanic at NASCAR. A year and a half at McMurdo in the South Pole. Three years on subs.

BOWMAN
That's why they called. Why'd you come?

A beat, then -

GALLAGHER
You ever been to Europe? Europe's horrible. It's full of stodgy people whose ancestors didn't have the balls.

Damn. Burchenal grins.

BURCHENAL
I don't like Europe much either, son. Didn't quite figure it the same way, but damnation, you don't turn down
(to Kate)
You?

BOWMAN
I spent my entire life training to fly the biggest, fastest thing you can fly. This is it. It's the best job
(points to Santen)
He's going 'cause he got the second best job in space. He's a little pissed about it, but he still came.

She's nailed him so precisely, Santen can only wince and look away. Pettengill just pipes up. Maybe no one's gonna ask and he

PETTENGILL
I was never supposed to come. I came 'cause my boss couldn't. He failed the medical. Heart arrhythmia. So I
Chantilas's the last. They turn to him. His reason's a little different.

CHANTILAS
Psalm 107, verse 23
They that go down to the Sea in Ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his

Beat.

SANTEN
You're going to Mars because of a poem??

Chantilas thinks about it. He could go on about it, but...

CHANTILAS
Basically.

INT. ARES - EXERCISE SPHERE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: MISSION TIME: DAY 13

There's no up here, equipment is attached to the floor, ceiling and walls. Santen and Bowman are on a large spinning bicycle-dr

PETTENGILL
So...required exercise. Haven't had this since grade school.

SANTEN

Yeah, you musta been doing some kind of reverse thing where you get small...

Santen's got years in the gym. Muscles on muscles. Bowman takes a two-second evaluation of the situation.

BOWMAN
You're done. You can shower.

SANTEN
I'm not done. I was gonna...

BOWMAN
No. You're done.

Santen can't believe he's being thrown out. But he's also a product of the military and couldn't argue if he tried.

SANTEN
Yes, ma'am.

He leaves. Pettengill feels stupid.

PETTENGILL
You didn't have to do that.

BOWMAN
No. I did. If I didn't nip that in the bud, I wouldn't be doing my job.
(then)
Flying this beast is only half the job. The whole job's to get the crew in place in shape to do what they have

Pettengill stands abashed for a moment and then his resentment just bubbles out...

PETTENGILL
I just hate all those fucking guys. I feel like I've spent my entire life being the guy who was hassled in physics.
(then)
He sells cars for a living now. Cars. I end up working on a project that may save the existence of mankind and

This is impressively obsessive.

BOWMAN
You kept track of him. What happened to her?
(off his look of "who?")
The girl.

He has no idea. She grins at him -

BOWMAN
Little competitive? Who's hardwired for what, Cro-Magnon guy?

He can't help it, he grins, a little abashed.

BOWMAN
We're gonna start with the bungees. Try to quit being pissed off you weren't chosen for dodgeball, willya?

PETTENGILL
I'll try. Twenty years of hating the bullying motherfuckers is a hard habit to break.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. CRASH SITE (MARS) - DAY

It's quiet. And then, a slight METALLIC SOUND. We PUSH TOWARDS the MEV and IN. AMEE lies on the deck beside her storage container.

EXT. CRASH SITE (MARS) - DAY

Looks around. Analyzes. Turns and heads off into the landscape.

EXT. MARTIAN PLAIN - DAY

A landscape so huge, it's hard to comprehend. Five tiny figures progress across the bottom of the frame. They've already come

GALLAGHER
How you doing?

PETTENGILL
Little tired. I'm okay.

SANTEN
You should have put more treadmill time in.

PETTENGILL
(sotto)
Go fuck yourself.

SANTEN
What'd you say?

PETTENGILL
Ahhh...Musclehead, go fuck yourself??

They're both getting louder and louder...

BURCHENAL
Guys...

Burchenal reaches out, checks their wrist monitors.

BURCHENAL
We're doing fine. In point of fact, he's using less O2 than you are. We can stop a minute. Unless you two want to.

PETTENGILL
Sorry.

SANTEN
Fine. I'm sorry, too.

No one's sorry. They rest. Use the moment to look around. It's pretty astounding. Chantilas uses the respite to re-scan his

GALLAGHER
How you doing?

CHANTILAS
Things are as they are.
(then)
Lord. Look at it, we're on Mars. Pretty damn amazing.

PETTENGILL
It's weird. There's nothing here.

GALLAGHER
It's Mars.

PETTENGILL
No, I mean there's not even a trace of the algae.

He kneels down, examines a rock. Nada.

PETTENGILL
Even if it all died, there'd be something - a dried algal mat, traces on the lee sides, something. Nothing. I

BURCHENAL
He's right. We sent up fifty-two varietals. Blue-green, black, orange. Anhydriobiosics, chemotrophs, even a

GALLAGHER
Maybe there was never anything in this valley.

As they walk, Burchenal checks his HCC.

BURCHENAL
If we are where we think we are -

Map appears on a small screen, he mutters to it, overlays of all the algae and lichen that were on Mars appear.

BURCHENAL
This valley was covered with blue algae a month ago. Valley back one should have been covered in an orange-red

They crest a small rise. Below lies a valley that closes down quickly into an extremely narrow canyon. Burchenal and Santen ch

BURCHENAL
This, however, makes sense.

SANTEN
Debris apron. Delineated valley fill. Depositional fan...

He double-checks with Chantilas. Seems they're going the right way. Chantilas leans back heavily against a rock.

CHANTILAS
Good. You gotta keep moving...

Chantilas doesn't get up.

GALLAGHER
And what're you gonna do, sit here and watch? You getting old and lazy?

CHANTILAS
My spleen's ruptured. There's significant internal bleeding. I'm not going any further. And trying to carry

Robby's stunned, frantic.

GALLAGHER
We'll get you to the Hab. Lock out the spine impulse and you can walk one of us through it.

CHANTILAS
No. You won't.

Santen takes charge. It's his mission now.

SANTEN
We build a litter. We take him.

CHANTILAS
(stern)
Chain of command once we hit the surface starts with me. And I'm ordering you to go, Lieutenant. Now.
(turns to Robby)
I've only got about forty minutes. There's really not much pain. Put me around the corner where I've got a v

They lift him to the other side of the rock. Gallagher stays with Chantilas a moment. Stricken, speechless. Inside Gallagher's

CHANTILAS
It's okay. I'm not sorry I came.

Gallagher takes one last look over his shoulder. We are already PULLING BACK, BACK, BACK. Tiny figures in the landscape once a

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Tense. Flight Director Russert watches as Skavlem mutters into the mike.

SKAVLEM

Ares, this Houston, do you read? Ares, this Houston, do you read?

Skavlem continues in the b.g. as -

LOWENTHAL

What do you want to do?

RUSSERT

Get every dish in the Deep Space Network pointed at Mars.
(doesn't like it, but)
Declare a spacecraft emergency.

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

Chantilas has toppled over. Unmoving. We GO WIDE, WIDE, WIDE and...

EXT. HILLSIDE (MARS) - DAY

The four of them trudge up a long hill. The summit is a dozen steps away. Santen is the first to reach it. He looks out over

SANTEN

You're gonna like this.

HIS POV

We see what he sees, as do the others as they arrive - not that far in the distance, in the valley below, they can see the lab s

BACK TO SCENE

BURCHENAL

Twenty-six months of food, water and air, gentlemen.

PETTENGILL

We're saved...

They run down the hillside. For the first time we get a feeling for the .38 gravity. Bouncing sixteen foot steps. Like little

EXT. VALLEY FLOOR (MARS) - DAY

They keep running and leaping and coming. Until the first one begins to slow. It's not from exhaustion. And then the second a

The Hab is in tatters. Roof is gone, walls are gone. Nothing but the titanium ribs remain. They approach. The insides are nc

EXT. MARS - HAB - DAY

They search. The news doesn't improve.

SANTEN

What the fuck happened here?

PETTENGILL

Jesus...

Burchenal continues to look around for a moment. It doesn't matter what happened. It's over. Shakes his head at Gallagher.

BURCHENAL

How's your air?

GALLAGHER

(checks)

Twenty-two minutes.

BURCHENAL

I'm not much better.

SANTEN

What the fuck...

He kicks angrily at what's left of the structure. Storms off. It takes Pettengill a moment to process it, but...

PETTENGILL

We're all gonna die, aren't we?

INT. ARES - MAINTENANCE LEVEL - NIGHT

Pitch black except for the electroluminescent panels she's stuck around the room. She cracks another one on. They work like gl

She's jumpered the circuits. Multimeters Velcroed all over the place. Trying to reboot the entire ship. Checks her loads, bal

INT. ARES - VARIOUS SPHERES - NIGHT

Bowman moves through. The place is a mess. Soot and fire stains in some spheres. Smoke damage in all. Flowers destroyed. Th

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Bowman tries to bring the rest of the ship back to life. Half a dozen systems are just plain dead and have to be locked out. T

EXT. ARES - NIGHT

Door slides open. A small optical receiver is seen. They clear the dark side and burst into the light.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

On a large viewscreen, Bowman can now scan the surface to about a one meter resolution. Searches. Starts wide, scanning the edge. Picks up the glint of the MEV. Zooms in. At first there's nothing but the crashed MEV in profile. (Like a spy satellite, we see the surface. Then the severity of the damage comes clear. Bowman tries not to react. Nothing else is there. No sign of activity or escape.

EXT. HAB & ENVIRONS (MARS) - DAY

Gallagher and Burchenal sit on rocks nearby. Not exerting themselves. Checking their monitors.

BURCHENAL

Maybe we got what we deserved. We ignored science and truth on one planet and poisoned it beyond repair. Then

Burchenal points at a depression a few hundred yards away.

BURCHENAL

(then; points)

That's what they call the datum. Sea level. If there was a sea. Or when there was a sea, that's where it was.

(then)

Would you rather I shut up so you can die quietly?

GALLAGHER

Nah, you can keep talking. It's kinda peaceful.

In the b.g., headed towards a ridge of rocks, we can see a lone figure making its way along.

It's Pettengill. He steps around the ridge. We can hear his RADIO WHOOSH TO STATIC as he loses line of sight communication with

Up ahead of him, standing on the edge of an enormous drop-off, just staring out into space, is Santen. His back is to us. Pett

Santen's radio is off. BEETHOVEN BLARES in his helmet. A 3000 foot drop at his feet. It is magnificent. As Pettengill approaches

Pettengill just walks right up beside him and stares out at the chasm as well. Santen LOWERS his MUSIC. They stand there silently.

SANTEN

Look, I'm sorry. I owe you an apology. I've been a dick. I pick on people who are weaker than I am.

It's way too little, way too late. But Pettengill doesn't let on. Just nods. As if he's forgiven him. Steps away and OUT OF

For half-a-moment we think Santen might regain his footing. But he doesn't. He starts to fall past the edge of the cliff. Slowly.

PETTENGILL

Fuck you. Fuck you. I'm gonna die. But I'm gonna spend the next five minutes of my life completely satisfied.

SANTEN

No, you won't, because...

Pettengill shakes his head and steps back out of the line of sight. Santen's last taunt turns to STATIC.

PETTENGILL

Yes, I will.

He turns and walks away.

EXT. MARS - HAB - DAY

Pettengill returns to the others. He can hear over the RADIO as he approaches -

BURCHENAL

Johannes Kepler was the first to accurately map the orbit of the planet. In 1609.

PETTENGILL

Santen's dead.

They turn. But not surprised. They just figure he -

BURCHENAL

Chewed through his air...

PETTENGILL

He threw himself off the cliff.

GALLAGHER

Ouch.

Burchenal bows his head down for a moment, overcome. But it's not Santen. It's the bigger picture...

BURCHENAL

It's not often you get to fail when 12 billion people are counting on you.

Gallagher's got more pressing problems. Checks his wrist. unnerved.

GALLAGHER

I'm at under a minute here. You guys know what this is gonna be like?

BURCHENAL

Hypoxia? Dizzy. Skin'll tingle. Vision narrows. Then anoxia. Shock, convulsions, acidosis.

GALLAGHER

Gonna hurt?

PETTENGILL

Yeah.

A WARNING TONE GOES OFF on Gallagher's SENSOR. He starts to gasp. Opens his mouth wide. Sucking in and out air that's worth 1
He begins to claw at the air. It's not pretty to watch. Spins about seeking some release. None forthcoming. Claws some more.
Gallagher's growing more claustrophobic and crazed. Falls the rest of the way to the ground. Still clawing at the air. It's h

GALLAGHER
Fuck this planet.

And he's still. Still. And then in a last reflexive shudder. Gasps. Gasps again. Takes in the worthless Mars atmosphere. A

GALLAGHER
I'm not dead.

The other two are watching in amazement.

GALLAGHER
I'm not dead. It's like being at high altitude. There's not much air here. But...

Takes him a minute to catch his breath, but...

GALLAGHER
We're not gonna die.

Burchenal's suit ALARM GOES OFF. He doesn't screw with gasping in the suit. Just opens the damn thing up and prays. Breathes.

BURCHENAL
It ain't much. But it'll do.

He looks around, puzzled.

BURCHENAL
What the hell's going on here??

Pettengill's ALARM GOES OFF as well. Much more tentatively he removes his helmet. Breathes. He's not really rejoicing like th

PETTENGILL
I thought we'd be dead.

The enormity of what he's done strikes him.

PETTENGILL
I thought we'd be dead.

They all breathe the thin Martian air for a moment.

GALLAGHER
God, if Santen had only waited five more minutes. What a waste...

OFF Pettengill's completely unsettled face...

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

STATIC on the comm clears. A brief caesura then -

BOWMAN
Copy.

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
Roger, Ares. Good to hear from you. We believe you may have suffered a proton field upset. What is your stat

Silence. Silence. Bowman struggles to maintain control. Tear runs down. Takes a deep breath.

BOWMAN
MEV launched. Radio contact zero. Visual shows crash site, one body, no motion. Believe entire crew to be E

She punches a button. Starts to upload it to them.

BOWMAN
Air purge in fire control degraded orbital path. Current orbit unstable. Thirty-two hour projected failure.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The telemetry has come in. Russert puts it up on the common viewscreen. Ship status and all the failures are displayed. It's

SKAVLEM
Roger. We copy that.

He lets go of the mike. Can't help himself.

SKAVLEM
Jesus fucking God.

FLASHBACK - INT. ARES - ACCESS TUBE - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: MISSION TIME DAY 15

Dark. Someone moves along. And emerges into -

INT. ARES - OBSERVATION SPHERE - NIGHT

An icosahedronal slice has been removed from one side and replaced with optical glass. A billion stars are brighter and more nu

GALLAGHER
Sorry

CHANTILAS
Lotsa room.

They lean back against the "floor" for a moment and stare out at a billion and a half stars.

CHANTILAS
Know the stars at all?

GALLAGHER
(pointing)
Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Cetus, Lepus, Canis Minor. We're looking at what you'd see south around midnight, mid-1
He's not showing off. He just really does know. Chantilas looks at him, surprised.

GALLAGHER
My grandfather taught me to sail when I was a kid.
(fondly)
He made me learn the stars in case all the G.P.S. satellites fell out of the sky at once. He said anyone who ;

CHANTILAS
He sounds like quite a guy.

GALLAGHER
He didn't like what he called the easy answer or the quick fix. He didn't want to own anything he couldn't re;
(thinking back)
And, oh yeah, everything automatic sooner or later fails automatically, usually during or immediately before a
(then)
He wouldn't've approved of this.

CHANTILAS
Going to Mars?

GALLAGHER
No. That we killed off half the living things on Earth. That after we all but destroyed one planet with globa

CHANTILAS
It looks like we got trouble. That's why they sent us.

A beat. They go back to staring at the heavens. Then -

GALLAGHER
I don't really get it. You quit being a scientist? You went back to school to study God??

CHANTILAS
I just realized science couldn't answer any of the really interesting questions.
(off Robby's look)
There are values that are fundamental to an adequate apprehension of the world in which we live that can't be e
(explaining)
Acknowledgment of basic values. Love, kindness, joy. Science doesn't have much use for these. Look, ugly the

Robby stares back into the void. This is not the kind of conversation he's used to, but -

GALLAGHER
I asked my grandfather once if God existed. He played me Brahms' Third. Then he asked me what good it was? (

CHANTILAS
(following)
What good is beauty?

GALLAGHER
He said if a man could listen to Brahms and not believe in God, he was a fool.

CHANTILAS
I think I woulda liked your grandfather.

Robby turns to him.

GALLAGHER
You didn't come on this trip because of science at all, did you? That's why they let you come, but you're goin

Yup.

CHANTILAS
Maybe I'll pick up a rock and it'll say so on the bottom 'Made by God.'

GALLAGHER
Maybe God's more subtle than you are.
(then)
You think we're doing something we shouldn't, Bud, messing with another planet?

CHANTILAS
(unconcerned)
If so, it's because we're supposed to find something out. (then)
Let's say we didn't. And we finished poisoning off the Earth and everyone was dead in a hundred years. Then ;

GALLAGHER
No one said jack to me about the Greeks and Romans. Shit, I just came along to fix stuff.

CHANTILAS
Fooled ya, didn't we. It's okay. No one told the others either.

There's a quiet moment. Robby just came up to stare at the stars. Wasn't expecting all this. Then -

CHANTILAS

There's a reason the planets go around the stars in exactly the same way electrons go around the nucleus of the

GALLAGHER
I just wish I didn't think he was chuckling.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. HAB (MARS) - DAY

Gallagher, Burchenal, and Pettengill are still stunned over the fact they're alive.

BURCHENAL
There shouldn't be enough oxygen on Mars to do this.

PETTENGILL
We never even got close to a breathable atmosphere. Then the levels started to drop and the sensors all died.

Gallagher is rummaging through the wreckage of the Hab. It's been devastated.

PETTENGILL
Wattya lookin' for?

Gallagher unearths a tangle of wire and chewed-up circuits.

GALLAGHER
This.

He tosses it aside. It's worthless.

GALLAGHER
It used to be the radio. I don't mean to piss on the parade, guys, but no one knows we're here. Don't you see?

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

The schematic she sent back to Earth is on the screen here as well. The ship is fucked-up bad.

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
The ground crew's dead, your orbit's unstable, and you're gonna burn in less than a day and a half.
(beat: then)
Let's get you home.

EXT. HAB - DAY

The three of them rummage through the ravaged structure. News isn't good.

BURCHENAL
We could head back to the lander, try to make something work there.

PETTENGILL
(won't make it)
It's six hours back.

GALLAGHER
And it all ran through the main computer which was half-fried and dropped from a great height.

Shakes his head no. That ain't gonna help. Then Burchenal, of all things, grins.

BURCHENAL
Gotta think about this scientifically. There's another radio. Two kilometers from here.

GALLAGHER
I didn't see any stores on the way over. I miss a Radio Hut?

BURCHENAL
We sent it here. Twenty years before you were born. In 1997. Think where we are...

PETTENGILL
(gets it)
We're right over the edge from the Ares Vallis. The Sojourner site.

The HHCs are yanked out.

PETTENGILL
There was a high-density ridge ringing the valley. The algae never took there.

Gallagher checks his watch.

GALLAGHER
We still might have a chance this pass. We wait long...

They start to run towards a ridge to west. Sun hangs low in the sky. Only an hour or so of day left.

CUT TO:

GALLAGHER, PETTENGILL AND BURCHENAL

with a goofy look on their faces. Like kids at Disneyland the first time. They're standing there looking at -
SAGAN/SOJOURNER SITE

The little rover. All those damned named rocks. Our first big visit to Mars. The reverie is over quickly. Gallagher tosses d

GALLAGHER
Sorry about this.

He pats it once and starts POWER-SCREWING off the cover. Tosses another tool to Burchenal. Re

the Sagan lander -

GALLAGHER
Rip the panels off everything around the aerial.
(then)
It's a fifty-year-old off-the-shelf computer radio modem on a frequency that we're not using for this mission.

PETTENGILL
Then why are we bothering?

GALLAGHER
Cause I'd rather die doing something than just sitting there.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOJOURNER SITE - DAY

Gallagher has cobbled together a radio from 50-year-old parts. Pettengill holds the solar panels at the sun while Robby careful

GALLAGHER
Testing, testing...

He adjusts a tiny pot as he continues to call out. A green LED comes on, flickering with his voice.

BURCHENAL
Does it work??

GALLAGHER
Well, the little green thing lights up. I don't know if it works...
(into mike)
This is Ares ground crew, come back. This is Ares ground crew, do you copy?

We PULL BACK WIDER AND WIDER. They are so damn alone.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Various return scenarios are flickering on different vid screens.

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
Okay, scenario three calls for you to lock out systems 17, 22 and 40.

Kate tries. 40 freeflows, doesn't lock out.

BOWMAN
No joy.

She resets everything.

BOWMAN
Maybe we're trying to be way too subtle. Why don't we just jettison the damn tank?

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
Because the margins for error are so small. There's enough fuel to get you home, then if you don't sneeze. If

BOWMAN
You want nervous...

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Over in the corner, Schlissel is listening to something on his headset that's blowing his mind. He starts waving three fingers

OZZIE (V.O.)
Right, right. Commander Katherine Bowman?

RUSSERT
(peevd)
This is a restricted, encrypted frequency. Who is this?

OZZIE (V.O.)
(unperturbed)
This is Hank Osterbee in Canberra. Deep Space Network, mate. I've got a call for you.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

BOWMAN
A call for me?

OZZIE (V.O.)
Right. From the surface of Mars. I'm routing it through. Direct frequencies follow.

There's CRUNCH OF STATIC, then -

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
Commander Bowman?

BOWMAN
You're alive?? You're alive?!

EXT. SOJOURNER SITE (MARS) - DAY

GALLAGHER
We're at sixty percent. Lieutenant Santen and Bud are gone.
(beat: then)

Oh, and by the way, we can breathe.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

SKAVLEM
You can breathe??!

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
Not real well, but yeah.
(then)

Hey, Kate...We've changed our mind. Get us outta here. We'd like to come home.

If the room was at a standstill before, now it's frozen. Is there hope?

SKAVLEM
If they can breathe, can we live there?

LOWENTHAL
No. Ninety percent of the algae's gone. It's some kind of freak anomaly. Mars is a dying planet. Just like

RUSSERT
They're breathing. It coulda worked. Dammit, it coulda worked...

Then through the cacophony comes one voice.

SCHLISSEL
It doesn't matter. They're going to die tonight anyhow. In an hour, the sun sets on Mars. It's going to be r

Yow. Everyone shuts up. It's ugly but true.

LOWENTHAL
He's right. You can walk across the South Pole, long as you stay moving and you're wearing insulating clothing

SCHLISSEL
Her orbit could degrade at any time. She could auger in and burn while they chat about old times and freeze to

Skavlem doesn't love it, but -

SKAVLEM
We can get a free return trajectory now. She's got enough food and water to bring one person back.

Russert not happy at all, but -

RUSSERT
You're not wrong.

Nods to Skavlem...

SKAVLEM
Commander, this is Mission Control.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

BOWMAN
No.

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
Ma'am?

BOWMAN
I'm not stupid, John, I know what the question is. I'd ask it if I was there. And the answer is no. So let
(then)
By my calculations, if I ditch my reserve tank now and commit to a three-second apogee burn, I stabilize my ori

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Russert has to grin. It's gonna drive him crazy and it's exactly what he'd do. Before any of them can bitch and whine -

RUSSERT
Come on, people, you heard the woman, let's get on it.

The techs begin calculating madly.

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

The crew is coming down a rise toward the Hab. Carrying the radio. Walking back quickly. Sun is flat over the horizon. Shado

BOWMAN (V.O.)
There's some concern at Mission Control. About the weather.

GALLAGHER
(deadpan)
It's gonna rain?

BOWMAN (V.O.)
It's gonna get a little chilly.

GALLAGHER
I could see that. It's dropped about fifty degrees in the last half hour. We figure a hundred below fairly so

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Bowman is doing her best to keep the tone light. But she's gotta know whether or not he thinks he's gonna live or die.

GALLAGHER (V.O.)

It would have been nice to be in the Hab. And there ain't no other motel to check into.

BOWMAN

You have a plan? Any thoughts on how you might...stay alive?

EXT. HAB (MARS) - ALMOST SUNSET

They're back at the Hab now. We can't quite tell what's going on, but Burchenal and Pettengill are busy doing something noisy a

GALLAGHER

Yeah...

Behind Gallagher is a whoooosh of flame as Pettengill gets the debris he's piled in the middle of the Hab to light. He's got st

GALLAGHER

We're gonna have a 75 million dollar campfire.

EXT. HAB (MARS) - 20 MINUTES LATER

The sun sets. First sunset on Mars man has seen. Red upon red upon red. Fire burns behind them. Sky turns black. Fast. A b

GALLAGHER

What the hell was that?

BURCHENAL

She ditched the 'B' tank. She must be figuring there's an even chance we'll live through the night.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The Ares lights up and burns for three long seconds. And off.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Bowman checks the gauges. Eight liters was burned.

BOWMAN

Hell, what's eight liters?

(answers herself)

It'll either save their lives or I've screwed up getting home and I'll spend the next three hundred years circ

EXT. HAB - NIGHT

Burchenal pokes at the flames. They're spread out and low. Flickering yellow and blue.

BURCHENAL

I think we'll make it through. There's so little O2, this is gonna burn real slow.

Gallagher picks up a piece of scrap, about to feed it into the flames, then stops, examines it by the light of the fire. It loc

GALLAGHER

What happened to this place? Everything but the titanium supports were just chewed up. Could a dust storm've

BURCHENAL

No prevailing pattern to the damage. I don't know what could've done it.

Nor does it matter right now. They sit back around the fire and relish the warmth. Out in the darkness, past a rise, something

TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY

Behind a hill, AMEE crouches in the dark. Pops up again, looks over, sees the three men and the fire. Lowers back down - you'd

BACK AROUND FIRE

The weird tableau of three men in spacesuits around a campfire on Mars. A moment then -

GALLAGHER

You still think we had any business coming to Mars? Screwing with stuff? Trying to spread life? You think m

Pettengill just makes some kind of weird gulping noise and turns away. They let him be.

BURCHENAL

God? You talked to Chantilas too much on the trip over. I don't mean to burst your bubble, but God's the ret

GALLAGHER

I bet you don't believe in Santa. And you're no fun at all at Christmas.

(then)

Not everything gets an explanation you can write down as a formula.

BURCHENAL

Son, I'm a scientist. A geneticist, as good as they come. I write code, just like a hacker. Four elements, i

(then)

But I think life's an amazing thing. And I believe that when you get it you should grab it with both hands and

Burchenal shuts his eyes. We PUSH IN ON Gallagher looking rueful and...

FLASHBACK - INT. ARES - HYGIENE SPHERE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: MISSION TIME: DAY 32

Gallagher comes in. His timing, depending how you look at it, is very good or very bad. Bowman steps out of the shower. To dr

BOWMAN

It's okay. I had brothers.

GALLAGHER

I have two sisters.
(gives up)
Neither of them were this fine.

Now she colors.

BOWMAN
The only way this works, is if we both make believe it doesn't matter.

GALLAGHER
I tried. I really tried.
(then)
Maybe I should go fix something.

BOWMAN
(laughing now)
Maybe you should.

He hesitates, leaves. She starts to vacuum dry her hair.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. CAMPFIRE (MARS) - NIGHT

Gallagher's half filled with regret, half annoyed with himself. Sighs, shuts his eyes, tries to get some sleep.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Place is ragged

coffee on the workstations, techs as unshaven and beat as the crew on Mars.

RUSSERT
All right, people, we bought ourselves another eighteen hours in orbit. The crew's burning pretty much what we

LOWENTHAL
...has got to work before the sun sets again tomorrow and they freeze to death anyhow.

RUSSERT
What else is on Mars?

SCHLISSEL
Rocks. Sand.

RUSSERT
The janitor just built a radio out of a fifty-year-old Rover mission. Now, what else is on Mars?

Mars maps come up on all their PIMs. There are things on the surface. Marked with various symbols. Leftovers from other missions.

SKAVLEM
We sent a dozen probes even before the biologics started up. Eight were return missions.

LOWENTHAL
And they're back.

SKAVLEM
There's a Viking lander...

SCHLISSEL
2,200 kilometers away.

Silence. They all stare at the PIMs. And then Schlissel turns to a nearby TECH -

SCHLISSEL
S.Y.F.

TECH
Slap your forehead.

SCHLISSEL
We're not the only people who sent stuff to Mars.

Other overlays come up on the maps. New colors. New symbols.

SKAVLEM
The Twenties were nothing but unmanned sample return missions. Everyone wanted to bring back a bucket of Mars

They find something near the Hab.

SCHLISSEL
There was Euro-Malaysian sample return mission 2018.

TECH
Checking...

LOWENTHAL
(knows)
It blew up on attempted return.

Looking further afield, they find something else.

TECH
It ain't close, but there's an Uzbeki S.R.M. that failed to launch.

SCHLISSEL

(argh)
An Uzbeki probe from 2032.

RUSSERT
Is it viable? Can we get plans?

SCHLISSEL
It was built at the Cosmos factory in Garagin in 2031. (there's more)
The factory closed eight years later. And then it burnt down.

All right, that's the end of that. And then Schlissel spots a detail that means something to him.

SCHLISSEL
It was designed by Aleksandr Ivanovich Borokovski. He was the last of the greats in the Russian space program

RUSSERT
Is he still alive??

Schlissel's PIM flickers madly as he mutters at it.

SCHLISSEL
There's no closing date on his bio. He'd be in his seventies.

RUSSERT
Find him. Somebody get on the line to Kazakhstan.

LOWENTHAL
This is insanity. A thirty-year-old lander built in a factory that doesn't exist anymore.

TECH
Found him!

SCHLISSEL
He emigrated. He runs a deli in Brooklyn.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Low hum of conversation, a bunch of the workstations are vacant, techs sleeping in cots nearby. BOROKOVSKI, in his best suit, 2

BOROKOVSKI
All right, I am Borokovski. I am here.

EXT. HAB (MARS) - PRE-DAWN

Sky's beginning to grow light. Last of the fire flickering out. Nothing left of the Hab but a few metal ribs.

Gallagher stirs. Stiff from sleeping on the ground. Burchenal and Pettengill follow. They've lived through the night. Gallag

GALLAGHER
I'm the first man to piss on Mars.

Burchenal and Pettengill follow suit on the other side of the Hab. A beat, then -

BURCHENAL
Damn.

PETTENGILL
Whoa.

BURCHENAL
You sure get some arc in this low gravity.

The sun's gonna break any minute. Something suddenly hits Burchenal. He yanks up his pants, runs to remains of the Hab. Looks

BURCHENAL
Run. Towards the sun.

Robby understands or doesn't bother to ask why. Takes off. Burchenal yanks free a shard of metal. Pounds it into the sand a d

BURCHENAL
Stop! Left. Left. A little more. Right. Mark it.

He adjusts his own peg a tad. Robby comes loping back.

PETTENGILL
What'd we do?

GALLAGHER
(approvingly)
Built a directional. Now at least we know where something is.

The RADIO CRACKLES.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Good morning, boys. Martian weather today's clear and cold. Warming to a high today of around sixty.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

She hasn't slept. There's notes and charts and additional HHC's all over the place.

BOWMAN
So...Houston has an idea.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAB (MARS) - MOMENTS LATER

Gallagher, Burchenal and Pettengill have heard the plan. It doesn't impress them.

GALLAGHER
That's it? We walk a hundred kilometers in one day to find a twelve-by-twelve object that's been sitting there
(are you kidding)
That's the best plan they could come up with?

BOWMAN (V.O.)
It's the only plan they could come up with.

GALLAGHER
(reconsiders)
I guess that makes it best.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
There's an I.R. maintenance port on the Cosmos. Your H.H.C. should talk to it. You'll have to reprogram the
INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
There's bad news?

BOWMAN
(ignoring him)
...is it's programmed in a forty-year-old dead operating system no one uses anymore. It was something called.

EXT. MARS - DAY

None of them have ever heard of it.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
We're getting a copy of it from the Smithsonian. We're gonna have to download it to you.

GALLAGHER
Let's worry about it when we get there. Where're we going?

BOWMAN (V.O.)
I've got coordinates for you.

BURCHENAL
How 'bout something simpler. Like how many degrees it is off from the direction the sun rose. We marked it.

GALLAGHER
Heck, we just gotta pack.

He picks up a satchel of tools. Everything else's burnt to a cinder.

SAME SCENE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Basic trig has been calculated. A triangle of scavenged wire stretches with one side along the directional, the other side pointing
ON the three of them. Pettengill looks doubtful.

PETTENGILL
A hundred kilometers. Sixty-odd miles. Say two and a half marathons. In twelve hours. Do we really have a chance?

GALLAGHER
It took us six hours to go 26 kilometers last time. We don't have the rebreathers, we don't have the tanks.

BURCHENAL
Figure you weigh about fifty pounds in this gravity. We have a chance in hell. But not much more'n that.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

A messenger is escorted in and taken to Borokovski. He's got a copy of Windows, fifty years old, and still in the shrink wrap.

BOROKOVSKI
I will need a computer with a CD-ROM drive. And a pentium processor.

Nobody moves. It's like asking for a steam engine.

SCHLISSEL
What's a pentium processor?

TECH
What's a CD-ROM?

BOROKOVSKI
(a little defensive)
It was all state-of-the-art in Kazakhstan. We were cut off.

Still nobody moves.

RUSSERT
We gotta wake up the Director of Dead Technology at the Smithsonian. And quick.

Assistants scramble. Schlissel comes over to peer curiously at the shiny silver disk and -

FLASHBACK - EXT. SPACE - ARES - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: MISSION TIME: DAY 132

The ship floats THROUGH FRAME. We hear the familiar CLINK of POKER CHIPS.

CHANTILAS (V.O.)
Call.

 SANTEN (V.O.)
Call.

 GALLAGHER (V.O.)
Call.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING SPHERE - NIGHT

Burchenal, Santen, Chantilas and Gallagher are playing poker. Burchenal fans his cards down. Full house.

 BURCHENAL
Kings over queens.

 CHANTILAS
That's it. You're the best poker player in a hundred million miles.

 BURCHENAL
Yep.

He rakes in all the chips.

 BURCHENAL
And no one'll play for money. What a waste.

 SANTEN
I'm done. See you all in the morning.

Game's over. Santen leaves, Chantilas starts to follow, then turns and asks, three-quarters kidding -

 CHANTILAS
Do you cheat?

 BURCHENAL
Compared to what?

Chantilas gives up and leaves.

 GALLAGHER
Do you cheat?

 BURCHENAL
Only Santen.

That seems fair. Gallagher's putting away the chips when -

 BURCHENAL
You know what I miss? A drink sometimes at the end of the day...Damned hard-asses at NASA.

Gallagher gets a look in his eye.

 GALLAGHER
You got enough gear on board to splice genes, right? Glassware, tubing, Bunsen burners...all that kind of stu:

 BURCHENAL
Yep, sure do. Why?

INT. ARES - MAINTENANCE LEVEL - NIGHT

Bowman comes in. Robby moves quickly to intercept her. Blocks her view.

 BOWMAN
I came to apologize. You were uncomfortable with a situation the other day, and I made you more uncomfortable

 GALLAGHER
Okay.

He's done. She can leave now.

 BOWMAN
Okay? No witty comeback? No gloating?
(beat)
No explanation for why the temperature in this sphere is up three degrees?

She slithers by him before he can stop her to find Burchenal tending a huge contraption of glass tubing, Bunsen burners and filt

 GALLAGHER
He's teaching me. About biology. I've developed an interest in...

 BOWMAN
...fermentation?

Even when you make it out of high-tech glassware, a still looks just like a still.

 BOWMAN
(stern)
You built a still?

 GALLAGHER
It's a science experiment. Did you know that an ounce of red wine per day actually benefits your heart?

 BOWMAN
(adamant)

So does three ounces of grape juice.

GALLAGHER
Grapes don't grow well hydroponically...So we, ah, used potatoes...

BOWMAN
You're making moonshine vodka on my ship.

BURCHENAL
Well, yes, ma'am. But we ran it through the Gas Chromatograph Mass Spectrometer and the impurity levels are v

BOWMAN
How's it taste?

Burchenal is the first to realize they're off the hook.

BURCHENAL
It's a little rough.

BOWMAN
Are you going to offer me a drink?

BURCHENAL
Of course. That would be the polite thing to do.

He does. She tosses it back. Wooooof.

BOWMAN
That's a little rough. How much have you made?

BURCHENAL
...'bout three liters.

She considers. Then -

BOWMAN
You're done. Dismantle the science project. Offer equal rations to the crew. Mr. Santen doesn't drink or ap
(stern again)
Now tell me the truth. How much were you cutting this?

GALLAGHER
(they're busted again)
About three to one. I can't believe you drank that.

BOWMAN
I learned to fly in the Navy. Wimps.

INT. COMMON AREA SPHERE - NIGHT

Gallagher, Bowman, and Burchenal are there. They've got half a beaker of vodka left. They're all looped and laughing.

BURCHENAL
I spent half of my life trying to make a better potato. And the second half trying to stop it. The things we:
(suddenly melancholy)
We fucked up our own back yard, hit the Malthusian wall, and tried to breed our way out of it. Maybe we don't

Then he shakes it off. Laughs.

BURCHENAL
Don't worry, if we need any help on the surface, I'm allowed to grow us some six-fingered lab assistants.

He cracks up again. He's wasted. Knows it.

BURCHENAL
I gotta go to bed.

He heads off drunkenly. Gallagher gets an idea...

GALLAGHER
I'm in space. I wanna see the stars.

He flails off in another direction. She laughs and follows him...

BOWMAN
Don't go outside.

INT. OBSERVATION SPHERE - NIGHT

A billion stars, two very drunk people, half a beaker of moonshine vodka. She's talking about Burchenal -

BOWMAN
He's okay. I bet there's a hell of a girl waiting for him back home.

GALLAGHER
Three. And a horse. He really likes the horse.

BOWMAN
You're serious?

GALLAGHER
He pines for the horse. You?

BOWMAN
I don't have a horse.

GALLAGHER
That's too bad.

He takes another swig. Offers it to her. She matches him.

GALLAGHER
Can I ask you something very personal?

BOWMAN
Okay.

GALLAGHER
It's about bras and space.

She looks at him.

BOWMAN
I don't wear a bra in space.

GALLAGHER
I know.

BOWMAN
Bras are designed to hold your boobs in place on Earth where there's real gravity. Why would I need one in space?

GALLAGHER
Cause it's really fucking distracting.

BOWMAN
You want me to wear a bra?

GALLAGHER
No. Not at all. I'm sorry I ever brought this up.

The good news is neither of them will remember in the morning. Much. Another round. Then -

BOWMAN
Do you have someone waiting for you back home? Or a horse?

GALLAGHER
With the kind of jobs I've had, it's very hard to maintain any kind of relationship. So...no horses.

BOWMAN
Or maybe you took those jobs 'cause you didn't want anyone waiting for you. Or maybe...

GALLAGHER
No, I like horses just fine.

They've floated very close.

BOWMAN
You know, you're not who I thought you were at first.

GALLAGHER
Is that an insult or a compliment?

BOWMAN
An observation.

They're very, very close. And very drunk. It's when he should kiss her. But he doesn't.

The moment passes. They both know it was there and now it's gone. Drift apart. Feel stupid. Damn.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

MOVING ACROSS the landscape. Miles and miles from where they started, we FIND the three men as they move rapidly across a dry
Over the next ridge, the landscape is covered with algae. Colors like brush strokes on the terrain. Oxblood brown, burnt orange.

PETTENGILL
Watty know.

Pettengill gets down on one knee to examine it. Half inch to an inch high, vibrantly colored. Healthy.

PETTENGILL
Maybe it's the longitude. Maybe it's the equatorial belt...

GALLAGHER
Maybe it doesn't matter 'cause we gotta keep moving or we're gonna die.

Pettengill doesn't argue. Just trying to stay alive is the great scientific mystery right now. They bound down far side and...

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Borokovski is laboring to install Windows on a 50-year-old computer from the museum. Schlissel and the Tech watch, kibbutz. It

BOROKOVSKI
Yob tyvou mot!
(Which, by the way, means "fuck your mother.")

SCHLISSEL
It keeps crashing.

BOROKOVSKI
That was part of its charm. You had to buy programs to check why the program you had already bought was not working.

TECH
People installed this on their computers on purpose? It wasn't a virus?

BOROKOVSKI
The company planned it this way. It was later discovered they owned all the companies that sold you the products.

SCHLISSEL
I remember this. The government had to bomb the factory in the end.

Borokovski nods. Windows comes up.

BOROKOVSKI
Look, there we go...

EXT. SURFACE OF MARS - DAY

The ANGLE seems odd. In fact it is. It's from orbit. It's Bowman searching on the telescope.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - MONITOR - DAY

As the picture skitters along the surface and finds them, tiny figures on a landscape. In extreme profile.

EXT. ARES - ORBIT - DAY

A few minutes away from plunging onto the night side.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

She marks their location on the viewscreen, zooms out wide. The Hab and the Cosmos are marked with symbols. The computer pauses. More calculation is done on the screen. They're more than halfway; they've used up less than half the available daylight; their

BOWMAN
Ground crew, this is Ares. You're a little more than half. You're doing great.

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
(over radio)
Oh yeah, we're doing fabulous.

As she plunges into darkness, we hear -

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
(singing)
Rollin', rollin', rollin', keep them doggies rollin'.'

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

They're all exhausted and a little punchy.

BURCHENAL
How long can a man go without food or water?

GALLAGHER
How long can you go without singing that dumb song?

Burchenal looks hurt. Walks another few paces. Begins to sing again. Gallagher turns to Pettengill.

GALLAGHER
There's two of us. And we can stop him from singing.

Pettengill considers. Then sings along instead. They only know the one line. It's really annoying.

GALLAGHER
What is that?

BURCHENAL
I have no idea. It's old, though. It's classic music.

GALLAGHER
I don't know the classics.

This sets Burchenal off. He sings some more -

BURCHENAL
Mars ain't a place to raise your kids

In fact it's cold as hell

And there's no one there to raise them

If you dig.'

GALLAGHER
What the hell is that?

BURCHENAL
You don't know any of the classics, do you? He was a rocket man.

GALLAGHER
An astronaut wrote that?

BURCHENAL

Never mind.

GALLAGHER
Sing the one about the dogs again.

BURCHENAL
It's about cows.

GALLAGHER
Then why does it say doggies?

All this time, they've been walking across a landscape pigmented with color – steel blue, alizarin crimson, malachite green – th

PETTENGILL
What the fuck?

GALLAGHER
Yeah, what the fuck? You said doggies.

Then he sees as well. They all see. Can't help themselves. They're drawn towards it. Gallagher and Burchenal check their cou
It's maybe 100 yards away. At 50, something indistinct can be seen. Sort of. It's like the line, and the surrounding terrain
A billion, a hundred billion...nematodes. Little tiny translucent worms. Eating the algae. Slowly, irrevocably. Advancing.
Pettengill pulls out his entrenching tool. Carefully separates one out. Lifts it up to the light to see. Maybe three inches l
It's fucking scary. It gets worse when you realize how many of them there are. The line's moved three or four inches closer as

GALLAGHER
What...

PETTENGILL
It's a nematode. Or something like one. It's probably this skinny so it defrosts each morning when the sun l

GALLAGHER
Is it something we sent up by accident with the probes?

PETTENGILL
No.

GALLAGHER
I thought we said there wasn't any life on this planet.

PETTENGILL
We did. We were wrong. Maybe there wasn't when we checked. I don't know. It's not from Earth.
(beat; yow)
And it's not from here.

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

Burchenal actually seems kind of upset about it. Gallagher looks at him. Say what? Burch is upset.

BURCHENAL
It can't be here. You don't understand. The odds of there being any other life in the universe are infinites:

GALLAGHER
But it's here.

BURCHENAL
Yeah.

Burchenal seems almost unhappy about this. It rocks his world. In a bad way. Gallagher turns to Pettengill happily and untrou

GALLAGHER
Well, it looks like we're not alone in the universe. You just discovered life on another planet, pal.

It takes a moment for this to sink in. Then something hits Robby.

GALLAGHER
Made by God. That's what's stamped on the bottom. That's what Bud would have said. He woulda loved this.

Gallagher gets down on one knee and looks at them. They're kinda horrible, but as he turns to Pettengill –

GALLAGHER
You know what this means? You're gonna be more famous than Darwin. They're gonna name buildings after you. {

The enormity of how badly Pettengill has screwed up – that in the space of one day, he's committed murder and discovered life on

PETTENGILL
Right. Right. Motherfuck. Motherfuck.

And then he says something really odd –

PETTENGILL
Name them after Santen.

BURCHENAL
You hated Santen.

PETTENGILL
Yeah.

He storms away. They're both confused by this. Pettengill finds a rock, sits down behind it. He's obscured except for his hea

PETTENGILL
I need a minute or two.

GALLAGHER
You wanna tell Houston?

PETTENGILL
Go ahead. You do it. Just give me a few minutes.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
We seem to have come across the, uh, cause of the annihilation of the algae. There's cryptoendolithic life here.

INTERCUT as needed with Mission Control and Mars surface.

LOWENTHAL
(concerned)
They're hallucinating.

BURCHENAL
Pettengill's a bit overcome. Or he'd be telling you about it himself. But the discovery goes to him.
(baffled; but)
Though he wants to name them after Santen...

SKAVLEM
You're saying there's Martian life.

PETTENGILL
(calling out from behind the rock)
No, that there's life on Mars. We're not saying where it came from. But not Earth. Fuck.

They all disregard that last bit.

GALLAGHER
They're like some kind of translucent worms.

SKAVLEM
You're all seeing these?

BURCHENAL
Oh yeah. They're here. What did you think this was, hypoxia?

They did.

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

Conversation's over. Gallagher walks towards the rock -

GALLAGHER
We should get outta here.

Pettengill doesn't respond.

BURCHENAL
Really. We should get going...

Gallagher walks over. We hear a familiar WHINE. Don't recognize what it is at first. Until Gallagher around the rock and sees Pettengill's flicked on the WHIZZING CUTTING EDGE of the entrenching TOOL. Shreds his left wrist. Lifts it and rips through his

BURCHENAL
Jesus...Jesus God...

Burchenal's joined him. There's nothing they could do. Only watch in shock. It gets worse. The worms come. Pulsating and under a diaphanous, hungry wave crests onto Pettengill and engulfs him. He's covered in translucence as they devour him. Gallagher a

WIDE

The two of them walk along. Can't tell if they're hurrying towards something or away. They've both figured out what's up. A bit

GALLAGHER
He killed Santen.

BURCHENAL
Yep.

GALLAGHER
Probably figured we were gonna die anyhow.

BURCHENAL
Yep. Figured wrong. For now.

GALLAGHER
(beat; then)
Nobody deserves to die like that.

BURCHENAL
No.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

There's a general buzz of animated scientific debate. One voice cuts through -

LOWENTHAL
We've thawed out three and four-million-year-old organisms from the permafrost in Siberia and they've come back.

RUSSETT
So even if there wasn't life there, there is now.

SCHLISSEL
And we warmed the place up and sent it something to eat.

LOWENTHAL
It could have sat there for millions of years since Mars cooled. Waiting. Rode in on a frozen meteorite from

A voice chimes in from the corner -

BOROKOVSKI
Like sea monkeys. But not as friendly.

They all consider that. Kinda bizarre but accurate.

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

Burchenal and Gallagher trudge onward. Burchenal checks his watch. It's time. Gallagher hands him the radio. Walks ahead. D

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Bowman just heard the news. It's like she's been punched. It takes her a moment to recover.

BOWMAN
Copy that, Ground Crew.

Mission Control has heard as well. A beat, then -

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
Requiescat in Pace.

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

The sun is way past its zenith. It hangs noticeably lower in the sky. Maybe four or five o'clock. Burchenal and Gallagher plod

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Bowman finds them again with 10m scope. Marks it. Computer analyzes their position. The results aren't encouraging. Their av

EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY

It's worse. They're stumbling. Not keeping in all that straight a line. Having to constantly re-check their position. RADIO

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Ground Crew, this is Ares.
(studiously casual)
How's it goin'?

They look at each other. Is she kidding?

GALLAGHER
We've just done a little over two marathons back to back. We haven't had anything to eat or drink in two days

He starts to laugh. For some weird reason Burchenal joins him.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
You're not going to like what I have to say.

BURCHENAL
You're going home? Bring us some chicken.

They crack up anew.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
You have to pick up the pace.

They laugh. It's not funny, but they really laugh.

BURCHENAL
We're not gonna make it?

BOWMAN (V.O.)
At this pace, you'll make about ninety kilometers.

Burchenal shakes himself. Digs into some deep reserve. Picks up his speed and shouts -

BURCHENAL
We Sleep Till Brooklyn!

He totters off towards the horizon.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
What was that?

GALLAGHER
Cooper's been singing classic music. I don't know most of it.

BURCHENAL
No Sleep Till Brooklyn!

GALLAGHER

Neither does he. I think he knows one line from each song. We'll try to go faster. We really will...
He's trying to convince himself as well as her. But he does pick up the pace and push after Burch and...

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Borokovski has listened in curiously to this exchange.

BOROKOVSKI
Why is he speaking of Brooklyn?

SCHLISSEL
He's singing classic music to keep his spirits up.

The tech looks at him curiously.

SCHLISSEL
I studied it in college. It's the Beastie Guys. Most of the music we listen to today is based on the ground-

EXT. MARS SURFACE - 40 MINUTES LATER

They're stumbling. Literally. Gallagher just stops.

GALLAGHER
You know, I don't care if I weigh 60 pounds on Mars. I am one tired doggie.

Gallagher sits down on a rock. Burchenal collapses nearby. They can't go any further. Burchenal catches his breath.

BURCHENAL
Ten K short.

The sun is a finger above the horizon. Redder than red, breathtakingly beautiful.

BURCHENAL
It's pretty.

GALLAGHER
Too bad we're gonna be dead. I can't keep walking in circles. And there's nothing to keep us warm.

They look around unhappily. Ugly way to die.

GALLAGHER
It's gonna be like trying to live on Mount Everest.

BURCHENAL
What would we do if we were on Mount Everest?

Thinks a long time.

GALLAGHER
I would have brought a tent.

BURCHENAL
If we didn't have a tent.

Robby's so tired he's confused.

GALLAGHER
We don't have a tent.

BURCHENAL
Yeah. Yeah, I know.

GALLAGHER
I'd guess you'd dig a snow cave. Use the snow for insulation. You've seen the 3Ds.

There's a funky-looking hillock nearby. Five feet high, as big around. Burchenal totters to his feet. Goes over and kicks it.

BURCHENAL
Let's dig a snow cave.

GALLAGHER
There's no snow.

Burchenal kicks at it again. Gives. He takes out the entrenching tool, hacks at it. Knocks a piece free.

BURCHENAL
Let's dig a snow cave or we're gonna fucking die.

He starts to wail on it. Gallagher staggers over and joins him. The two of them start to flail away like a cross between prehi

EXT. MARTIAN HORIZON

The sun begins to set. 30 miles away, the terminus, the line where night turns to day, begins to advance across the planet towa
BACK AT HILLOCK

Gallagher and Burchenal can see the darkness approaching. Digging madly. Cackling. Losing their minds. Can't tell who is wh
The sun continues to drop. Terminus continues its pernicious HISSING and freezing approach.

Halfway inside now. On his knees, suit light on, Gallagher chops away at the rock. When he's thigh-deep in debris, he backs ou
The last of the sun disappears. Their breath is in the air. The darkness and frost reaches them now. The sweat begins to free

Gallagher climbs inside. Burchenal drags a lava boulder over to seal the entrance. Climbs in, hooks his tool into the rock and

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

It's not big. The two of them are scrunched into balls. They chop away and pack the debris in the entry tunnel to block the cave

EXT. MARS SURFACE - NIGHT

Nothing. Darkness. Rocks. And in the midst of it all, our crazy hillock/snow cave.

INT. HILLOCK/CAVE - NIGHT

Gallagher looks up to find Burchenal staring at him. Actually, not exactly at him. At his forehead.

GALLAGHER

What? Is this some kind of cartoon moment where you're imagining I'm a giant chicken and you're going to eat me?

BURCHENAL

It's melting

GALLAGHER

It's a Wizard of Oz moment?

BURCHENAL

The ice on your forehead is melting. The rock's really insulating us. We might not freeze to death.

GALLAGHER

Oh. Good.

And then the enormity of what's gone on hits them. And the exhaustion. Adrenaline is gone. Gallagher physically droops. Burchenal

GALLAGHER

I've never been this tired. I've never hurt this bad. You think dead is worse than this?

BURCHENAL

Hell, we'll probably know soon. Shut up. Rest.

GALLAGHER

We oughta probably tell someone we're not frozen solid. Yet.

Burchenal checks his watch.

BURCHENAL

We're on the nightside, can't reach Houston. Bowman's dayside for another forty-five.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Common viewscreen shows ground crew's projected position. Darkside of the planet. Estimated temperature of -20 degrees Fahrenheit

SKAVLEM

Not a word before it got dark.

-25 degrees. -30 degrees.

RUSSERT

They're dead. Or dying. Let's get Bowman home.

SKAVLEM

She's gonna wanna waste a pass trying to get them on the radio.

RUSSERT

Let her. She's got five and a half hours before the orbit starts to decay. If she has to do this so she can communicate

Skavlem gets busy on the radio with Bowman -

SKAVLEM

Ares, this is Houston...

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Their breath condenses on the ceiling. Freezes. Then falls down. It's snowing. They've got their own weather system. Gallagher

BURCHENAL

No, I don't know why the worms are here. No, I don't know why we're still alive.

GALLAGHER

There's gotta be a reason.

A moment, then -

BURCHENAL

You're talking about faith, son. Faith is another way of saying I know something you don't know but I can't tell you.

(agitated)

I live in the real world. I've lived there my whole life. I'm comfortable there.

GALLAGHER

We're not in the real world. We're on Mars.

(softly)

Nobody gets in a rocket ship to outer space without some kind of faith. Do they?

Burchenal doesn't answer. Not directly. But he looks like a third grader busted in some elaborate story he can't keep up.

BURCHENAL

If you think I'm gonna have some kind of weak-ass epiphany for you right here in this cave, you're wrong. Now,

Gallagher's satisfied. Lowers the light to a dull glow, leans back against the rock and...

EXT. ARES - DAY/NIGHT

The ship slips into darkness.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Bowman reaches for the mike, begins -

BOWMAN
Ground crew, this is Ares. Do you read?
(off no response)
Ground crew, this is Ares. Do you read?

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

The radio lies on the ground. The green light flickers with her transmissions. But little signal seeps through the rock. What

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Zzzzz zzz, zzz zz, zzzzzz?

And Gallagher and Burchenal are fast, fast asleep.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Time's passed. Bowman has searched with the 10m scope. IR, thermal. She picks up the occasional footprint. Tracks their prog

BOWMAN
Ground crew, this is Ares. It was a pleasure and an honor to serve with you, gentlemen.

Sits quietly a moment, then turns off the screen. Brings up a new image. Shows her current fuel status, position and projected

EXT. MARS SURFACE - NIGHT

Dead quiet. The two small moons shine faintly. A rime of ice covers everything. The hillock shimmers in the feeble light. Th

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Gallagher and Burchenal breathe shallowly. The inside of the cave is covered in white flaking hoarfrost. Lips are blue. Skin
He moves badly, uncoordinated, but manages to chop and shove it open. Fresh ice cold air rushes in. Burchenal awakes. Only ha

GALLAGHER
Breathe! Breathe!

EXT. MARS SURFACE - NIGHT

Cognizance returns. Burchenal looks at his watch.

It doesn't make any sense. Three hours have passed. Three hours...

BURCHENAL
Son of a bitch. Son of a bitch. We've been asleep for three hours!

Gallagher desperately hauls out the radio.

GALLAGHER
Ares, this is ground crew. Ares, this is ground crew.

BURCHENAL
Forget it. She's dayside again. If she's even still here.
(then)
We gotta get to Cosmos.

Burchenal looks around. Oh God...It gets worse.

BURCHENAL
Can't see the landmarks.

Gallagher starts to madly scan the night sky.

GALLAGHER
We gotta keep moving.

He yanks out his HCC. Mutters rapidly into it. We see the map appear. Hab/Cosmos line marked. Then a star chart for Mars on
A beat. AMEE rises up silently from behind a rock and watches them go.

EXT. MARS - SURFACE - NIGHT

The two men run. Lit by the two moons Phobos and Deimos - Fear and Terror. It's unbelievably cold. Plumes of breath light up
Up and over the next long, long gradient. They lose the star over this false horizon as they climb. There's something odd, how
VALLEY

Completely covered in phosphorescent algae. Pale green and glowing. A mile across, a mile wide. If they weren't rushing for t
Across the vale Canis Minor sits directly in the center of a small mountain pass. They're about to dash onward when something -

BURCHENAL
Stop.

GALLAGHER
What?

Burchenals' not quite sure at first. But won't enter the algae. Walks left, walks right. Kneels down. The algae glows. Otherworldly. And then movement. In the f.g. a worm, green, glowing and filled with algae, slithers through. And then as Burchenal plays his light out across the valley we realize it's entirely full of worms. Gallagher takes an appalled

GALLAGHER
We're fucked.

Burchenal considers for a moment. And yeah, probably has that epiphany. Then-

BURCHENAL
(re the pass)
Get to the closest point you can safely. I'm gonna go down to that end.

He starts to run to the far end.

GALLAGHER
What are you gonna do?

Burchenal's far enough away now that his voice comes over the SUIT RADIO.

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
I'm gonna distract them.

GALLAGHER
You're gonna distract the worms??

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
Yeah.

Perhaps Gallagher ought to give this more thought. But he doesn't. Maybe it's the exhaustion. Maybe it just never would have

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
You ready?

GALLAGHER
Yeah.

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
Good. Lemme know when it starts to clear.

Gallagher doesn't get it. But a moment later, a shiver runs through the worms. And they start to undulate away. Towards Burch

BURCHENAL
at the far end, is five hundred yards into the worms. They know. They've told each other. And they're coming in pulsating wav

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
(stunned)
It's clear.

Burchenal tries to turn around. He's mired now. And they're up to his waist. It's a fucking nematode feeding frenzy.

BURCHENAL
Good.

He can't even lift his feet. They're beginning to cover him now. He can see the color of his suit spreading around him as they

BURCHENAL
(then; oddly calm)
You were right, son. There's gotta be a reason. This can't just be an accident. I don't know what the worms

Gallagher turns. He can see now what Burchenal has done. A tiny glowing figure can be seen 1000 yards away. Gallagher's spec

BURCHENAL
I'm gonna have to turn off my radio in a sec. So you don't have to hear me screaming like a girl.

GALLAGHER
What have you done??

BURCHENAL
Finding out there's things I don't understand. That science don't know squat about. Maybe even the damn Earth

During which we've CUT TO Gallagher, 'cause you don't want to see this.

BURCHENAL (V.O.)
There's two women in Missoula, one in Bozeman. Tell them each they were my last words. And make sure my horse
(then)
Oh, my Lord...

RADIO GOES SILENT. Across the distance we can see a figure, now entirely coated in luminous worms, writhing wildly. Gallagher The phosphorescence is gone in the center of the circle. The edges are the color of his suit. Then blood red for forty yards.

EXT. MARS SURFACE - NIGHT

Gallagher scrambles up, steeper and steeper, to the edge of the valley and the ridge line. From the top he can see the way belc

GALLAGHER
Ares, this is ground crew. Ares, this ground crew. Do you copy?

EXT. ARES - NIGHT

Above him somewhere in the sky.

INT. ARES - MAINTENANCE DECK - NIGHT

Bowman is locking out parts of the ship to conserve power on the way home. At first she's not sure she really heard that. Rush

BOWMAN
Ground crew?! Status??

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
Me. Alone. The worms just ate Burchenal. Thought you might be gone.
(shaky)
Guess you promised you wouldn't leave...

BOWMAN
Robby, I'm...still here.

They both know he's caught her still here sheerly by happenstance.

GALLAGHER (V.O.)
I'm about a kilometer from the Cosmos. It's in sight. Call you when I'm there.

EXT. RIDGE LINE (MARS) - NIGHT

Gallagher heads down. Bounding down the hill. No algae on his side. He leaves a trail of phosphorescent footprints as he goes

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Bowman comes rushing in. Too fast. Slams up into a wall. Resets. Belts herself in.

EXT. COSMOS SITE - NIGHT

It's been sitting there for 30 years. As he approaches, the solar panels turn and track towards his light. It's still waiting.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
How you doing?

GALLAGHER
(unsettled)
It's really cold. My fingers aren't sure they want to work.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
You can do this.
(then)
The maintenance port has a cover. It should be marked.

Gallagher looks it over. Minor stumbling block...

GALLAGHER
Yeah. In Cyrillic.

Finds it anyhow. He flexes his unresponsive fingers, and after a try or two, unscrews the cover, reveals an IR port.

GALLAGHER
Got it.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
All right, I'm gonna download this to you.

Gallagher yanks out his HHC. Dozen adapters in the back. Finds the one that fits the old modem port on the jerry-rigged radio.

GALLAGHER
Go.

Plugs it in. Stuff flashes. On the HHC, Windows comes up, the Cosmos LaunchMaster program, Cyrillic crudely relabeled in Engli

GALLAGHER
It's still got power.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
You should be able to run diagnostics.

There's a diagnostics check and launch check. He hits diagnostics. The two talk, link up, and - a Windows error screen comes
"Warning - your system has become busy or unstable. Press Ctrl-Alt-Delete to exit programs and reboot."

GALLAGHER
I know now why it didn't launch.
(says the magic words)
Control alt delete.

Reboots in the blink of an eye. Systems check positive.

GALLAGHER
It's looking good.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Okay, this thing only has two settings. On and off. One sends it all the way back to Earth. As you don't have

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Bowman is calculating madly as she goes on. Trying to sound calm. She's anything but.

BOWMAN
We want just enough lift for escape velocity. With the weight you left at and the suit...I peg you at 165. If

EXT. COSMOS SITE - DAY

As she continues -

BOWMAN (V.O.)
And you better try to find something to put the fuel in and get it the hell away from there, as we don't want :

Gallagher considers. Yeah, it all makes sense. But how?

CUT TO:

EXT. COSMOS SITE - MINUTES LATER

Gallagher, using the few tools he has left, has unbolted the sample return container. Measures its width -

GALLAGHER
I need you to do some math. A cylinder 50 centimeters wide, how deep is six liters?

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Eleven and three quarters centimeters.

He measures and scribes in the line.

GALLAGHER
Somewhere, Mr. Plummer, my 10th-grade math teacher, is cackling like a son-of-a-bitch.

Under which, he slithers underneath, opens the main purge and fills the big steel bucket with rocket fuel. It looks just like t

GALLAGHER
Now what?

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Launch diagnostics. Avoid pressing anything that says ignition.

He runs it - seals are good, pumps are good, engine's ready. And the ignition power force, all 300 volts of it, is dead as a dc

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Gallagher?

GALLAGHER
No. No go. There's enough power to run the computer, but not enough to launch.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
How much do you need?

GALLAGHER
I need 300 volts at six amps. And I've 28 volts running the computer system. Ignition battery's stone cold.

Beat.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Is there anything you can use?

GALLAGHER
Let me look around and see if I see a high voltage source....No, just rocks. In fact, everywhere I look, there

Then, as he tries not to break down -

GALLAGHER
I'm gonna die here.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

She's shook. She knows he's right. Not a damn thing she can say. Tries to maintain. Barely. Looks up at one of the screens.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. COSMOS SITE - NIGHT

Gallagher steadies himself. Picks the radio back up. He's just babbling to keep himself sane for a little while.

GALLAGHER
I didn't come here to be a citizen. I came as a tourist. You know, visit Mars, check out the sights. Go home

Bowman tries to do the right thing. Whatever the hell that is...Takes a breath, wipes away an errant tear, tries to be calm for

BOWMAN
Is there anything you want me to do?

GALLAGHER
(thinks; then)
Tell all of Burchenal's women that they were the only one. Sell his horse to somebody nice.

BOWMAN
For you?

GALLAGHER
No.

Then, burbling up, unplanned...

GALLAGHER
I shoulda kissed you.

There's a long beat. Yeech. He shouldn't have said anything. Then -

BOWMAN

Yeah. You shoulda kissed me.

Gallagher can't believe it. He could kick himself.

GALLAGHER
(to himself)
Okay. This is like all the worst parts of high school math and the beautiful girl you're too stupid to tell you
(into radio)
Commander Bowman, I am really sorry I didn't kiss you. Really, really sorry.

He pauses. Only half a beat, but...

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

She bursts from the darkness into the light of day side and is gone. RADIO turns to STATIC...

EXT. COSMOS SITE - NIGHT

When he goes on -

GALLAGHER
Loved you madly, shoulda said so.

It's too late. She never hears. STATIC. He realizes she's gone. Puts the radio down. He is very, very alone.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

She sits there, just gut-shot for a moment. Picks up the mike.

BOWMAN
Houston, this is Ares, commencing return sequence.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

On all the PIM's her return trajectory is plotted. She's to come all the way across the day side, enter night, begin acceleration.

SKAVLEM
Copy. Ares, beginning return

She steels herself then reports the rest of the news -

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Ground crew, reduced to Gallagher, reached Cosmos, failed second diagnostics. No joy, no launch. While crew is

There's silence in Mission Control. Not everyone has followed the circumvention.

TECH
What was all that?

SCHLISSEL
Gallagher made it to the Cosmos, won't launch, he's alive, she's gotta leave him.

TECH
Whoa.

BOROKOVSKI
Da...

EXT. COSMOS SITE - NIGHT

Gallagher sits there. And sits there. Alone beyond imagining. Hope gone. Just staring 1000 yards out into the distance. Not
And then...he shakes himself out of it. Just feels foolish he's let himself go this far. Gets up. Done with feeling sorry for

GALLAGHER
Well, this can't get any worse. I guess.

Grabs himself to stay warm. Hops up and down. On one of the hops he ends up facing the direction he came from. There's something
He looks closer. It's not just the ridge. They're down in the valley with him. The ones in the front are back to translucent,

GALLAGHER
I guess I was wrong. It can get worse. A lot fucking worse.
(shouts at them)
Forgive me if I don't feel like getting eaten before I die!

They don't really respond. Except the ones in the front who rear up, and seem to listen or sniff for him. And gnash their little

GALLAGHER
Oh, man...

Sees the bucket of rocket fuel. Lot closer to them than it is to him. Gathers his nerve, runs, grabs the bucket. Drags it twice
It burns low and yellow in the oxygen-depleted atmosphere. Doesn't look like much. Certainly not a defence. First worm gets near
And the next...And the next. Like little sparks. Gallagher watches, puzzled by this...And then it hits. Right as the ring of

GALLAGHER
That's for eating the Hab! And killing Cooper, you slimy worm fuckers!

Rolling waves of flame. Half plasma. Flying blobs of burning worms rain down like napalm. One lands on and torches the cobble
Gallagher does a dance of triumph. However short-lived. Then it hits him -

GALLAGHER

How do you burn like that without oxygen??

There's a BLAST of flame from the far side of the ridge that rattles rocks and Cosmos. Knocks him to the ground.

GALLAGHER
Holy shit...Holy shit!

Gallagher stares with wonder over the hill. He figured it out. There's a couple of dozen worms, unburnt and thrown free. He p

GALLAGHER
You motherfuckers stole all the oxygen.
(realizes)

And you can give it back. Motherfuckers. I gotta tell someone. It could work. It could work here...

He turns, looks - the radio is still burning. He snatches it up, scorches him. Tries to put it out. It's cooked. Deceased.

GALLAGHER
No!! Not after all this. No!!!

It ain't gonna work ever again. All the shouting isn't gonna make a difference. He knows the answer, he knows how to save the
As he stumbles back onto his feet, he's jarred the switch that links to AMEE's display. it comes on, shows:

AMEE'S POV

The fire on the far side of the ridge. She's approaching it. And fast.

BACK TO SCENE

Gallagher stares at it for a moment...

GALLAGHER
My day is not getting better, is it.

There's a look on his face somewhere between inspiration and fear. Like he's got an idea. But it might be a really, really bad

EXT. MARS SURFACE - NIGHT

AMEE skitters along. Moving fast. Climbs up and ever so carefully peers over the ridgeline.

AMEE'S POV

The Cosmos down below. And beneath it, his feet sticking out as he works on something, Gallagher. He messed with her once; she

EXT. COSMOS SITE - NIGHT

She comes down the hill. Twelve, sixteen, twenty-foot strides. Doing forty or fifty miles an hour easy. And all but silently.
And Gallagher, in his skivvies, bursts up from where he's buried himself in the sand, avenging, entrenching tool high over his h
Whatever he's hit, the jolt stiffens his arm, throws him off. The tool stays embedded. She runs headlong into the Cosmos. Sma

GALLAGHER
Robust real-time response to the environment, my butt.

Gallagher grabs his satchel of tools and begins to unbolt her as fast as he can. Checks his watch. Whatever he's racing, there
Deep within the electronic entrails of AMEE, he dredges up her Esource. Size of a soda can. POWER CELL that runs her for year

GALLAGHER
Work.

He rips open a panel on the Cosmos, yanks out the dead cell and hooks the new one in. It doesn't fit. He's got nothing left bu
Runs the launch Diagnostics on his HCC. It flickers, goes to yellow, flashes on and off to green. He yanks back on his suit.
Stuffs it in a side pocket. Looks at the top of SRV. Wedges himself under some cables and wiring on the top.

GALLAGHER
This oughta be interesting.

Checks his watch. It's now or never.

EXT. ARES - DAY

The ship is just about to enter the darkside.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Bowman's got her suit on. Screens show the apogee launch and a slingshot around the backside.

BOWMAN
Houston, this is Ares. I am go for return ignition.

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
Copy that, Ares, you are go for return.

She slides into the darkness.

EXT. COSMOS SITE - NIGHT

Gallagher watches the second hand come around, takes a deep breath, and...

GALLAGHER
Fuck you, Mars.

...slaps the helmet shut. Hits ignition. Nothing happens. Then the GRINDING of thirty-year-old PUMPS. And then a GIANT flame
Gallagher, epoxied to the top, is pinned flat. Face squashes, eyes bulge. Ship starts to glow friction. Thirty-year-old paint
We can hear him roaring at the top of his lungs as the ROCKET BLOWS by and...

MARS

pulls away in the b.g. Rapidly contracting. FROM FILLING the FRAME, TO a red circle below. Atmosphere thins, the friction and
SKY

turns from deep red to maroon to black as he blows through the clouds into the outer reaches of the Mars atmosphere and beyond.
Quiet. He comes skittering back from the edge of blacking out. He floats silently, orbiting the planet, slowing receding into

EXT. ARES - NIGHT

We see Bowman THROUGH the front viewport. Unhurried. Making the last of her preparations. Downhearted and slow. Then -

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

She's strapped in now. Counter on a screen is ticking down. 13, 12, 11...She tries to allay her horror at what she's doing. F

BOWMAN

Robby...

(no answer)

If you can still hear me...I'm so sorry. And I shoulda just kissed you.

EXT. COSMOS SITE

Radio, three-quarters cooked, lays there on the still-smoking ground.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Countdown continues. Nine, eight, seven...Then just breaking the horizon way out in front of her, a shiny metallic speck breach

BOWMAN

Gallagher...

No response.

EXT. COSMOS

Gallagher is sucking on a few useless raspy breaths. He can see her, ten kilometers away. Barely hanging on.

GALLAGHER

No. Air.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

They stare up at the screen awaiting her return ignition.

SKAVLEM

She should be clearing. Starting the burn.

She's not showing. Still not showing. And then...

SCHLISSEL

There's secondary object in orbit.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

Bowman has flipped a set of joysticks/collectives out from underneath the dash in front of her. She's shouting at the computer.

BOWMAN

Reroute. Orbital maneuvering. Power the OMS, power the R.C.S. I need roll, pitch, yaw, X, Y, Z. Now. Godd

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

They've figured out what's up. Some are thrilled, others are freaked.

LOWENTHAL

No! No, there's no fuel for maneuvering. Stop her!

Skavlem shakes his head. Not a chance. Nor would she listen to him.

BOROKOVSKI

She is going to burn fuel to rescue this man without enough to come home?

(very Russian of her)

I like this girl.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

Which is exactly what she does.

BOWMAN

I want ten milliliter bursts. Now!

And puff, puff, puff...

EXT. MARS ORBIT - NIGHT

Ares, bit by bit, dives down into a smaller orbit to catch up with the Cosmos.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK

Bowman grabs the whole orbital maneuvering assembly, yanks it out of the flight deck, turns and rushes from the sphere.

EXT. COSMOS - ORBIT - DAY

As he watches it come closer, he's depleted what little air there was in the suit. And starts to die.

INT. ARES - MEV DECK - DAY

It's now an empty docking port. Bowman careens in. No artificial gravity here. Floats as she shouts at the computer.

BOWMAN
I want a 180 degree. Now!

EXT. ARES - ORBIT - DAY

Puff, puff...The ship turns end over end. As...

INT ARES - MEV DECK

Kate plugs the maneuvering deck in with one hand, slaps an oxygen bottle on and her helmet shut.

BOWMAN
Seal this level! Open the dock.

Clips herself in just in time as the DOORS behind her SLAM shut and the giant doors in front of her open. Air purges. And in

BOWMAN
Gallagher! Gallagher!

He doesn't respond.

EXT. COSMOS - CLOSE ON HIM

Because he's unconscious or dead. His head lolls there.

INT. ARES - MEV DECK

There's no time left for subtlety. Bowman yanks a device off the wall. It looks like a 40mm rifle with a power cable. Points

BOWMAN
Hard Dock!

The ship pauses, like it's thinking. And refuses.

ANNUNCIATOR (V.O.)
Object out of range. Emergency braking will commence in seven seconds.

Ares turns off the pointer. Kate throws it angrily aside. There's a linear acceleration track on the side of the wall with a l

BOWMAN
Last acquisition. Line release. Full velocity.

And it does. The linear accelerator wrenches her violently along the track and hurls her into space. REEL and a line behind he

EXT. ORBIT - DAY

Tumbling, she half-regains her bearing, holds out the mini-thrust ball. Shouts something at it. FIRES. Drags her by the arm t

She shouts something in the silence we can't hear. The reel in the ship starts to spin. So damn fast it's smoking.

The Cosmos is reeled in, oscillating wildly at the end of the line. The Ares, giant by comparison, is about to swallow up the t

INT./EXT. ARES - MEV DECK

Dock comes careening at them. They're both going to be squashed like bugs.

Bowman slashes loose the line. And fires everything left in the portable thrust engine at once. Blue plasma flares. Her arm i

The Cosmos spins 180 degrees as they plunge through the opening of the port into the Ares. They're on the lee side as the Cosmc

BOWMAN
Seal! Emergency atmosphere. Now!

The DOCKING DOORS SLAM SHUT. The room is buffeted in white mist. She grabs an emergency cutting tool, hooks it into the front

BOWMAN
No. Not after all that, dammit. No.

She checks, he has no pulse.

BOWMAN
Dammit, no!

A first aid station is bolted into the wall. She grabs him by the shirtfront, launches them over there. Takes out a pair of p

Gallagher is thrown entirely across the room by the current. Slams into the far wall. Opens his eyes. Starts to breathe.

GALLAGHER
Hey, I knew you wouldn't leave without me.
(beat)
You promised.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

They're all stunned. And freaked. They've got a serious problem now.

BOWMAN (V.O.)
Mission Control. This is Ares. Recovered ground crew. Request recalc and reconfiguration for return flight.

The scientists have been figuring madly. And they don't like what they're coming up with.

LOWENTHAL
We can get 'em back. Slowly. Fifty extra days. And we're not going to be able to support food and and air for

Russert nods. Motions to Skavlem.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Bowman and Gallagher listen as -

SKAVLEM (V.O.)
...that travel has been increased by approximate two months. Concern is that available life support is untenable

Gallagher's unimpressed. Worms tried to eat him, robots tried to kill him and they're worried about this? Feh.

GALLAGHER
Scientists. Scientists sent us here. Scientists figured the whole thing out with Mars. I hate to bring this

He picks up the mike.

GALLAGHER
Hey, guys. How 'bout we come about halfway home and you send a ship with air and food and stuff to meet us? :

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Schlissel nods. That'd work. As Russert, Lowenthal and the big guys start to talk this over, Borokovski motions to Schlissel and

BOROKOVSKI
I know where there is a rocket in Uzbekistan. For cheap. A friend of mine has kept it.

INT. ARES - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

OUT the window, Mars drifts by in the view port. Bowman looks at it kinda sadly.

BOWMAN
So much for saving humankind and living on Mars. I guess the worms took care of that.

GALLAGHER
The worms are not our enemy. They're our friends.

He's pulled the container out of his pocket. Unscrews it to show her the little slimy monsters. She recoils in horror.

BOWMAN
You brought them back? Are you insane??

GALLAGHER
It's okay, I'm pretty sure they don't like titanium.
(then)
We're gonna live. On Mars. Hell, maybe even back on Earth. Maybe anywhere we want. And the reason we're gonna

She finds this hard to believe. But he explains.

GALLAGHER
That's why we could breathe. You should have seen these suckers burn when they went up. I had some time to tell

She's still trying to absorb all this. It's been a long couple of days.

GALLAGHER
God's got a sense of humor. He's giving us another chance. If we can all get along this time. Burchenal kneels

Bowman looks back at Mars. Astounded. Believes.

BOWMAN
You wanna tell them back on Earth the species is saved and we're gonna live?

GALLAGHER
How should I know, I'm the janitor.
(then)
Look, Commander...I just fought off half a million screaming nematodes, and a killer robot and glued myself onto

BOWMAN
If you could kiss me?

GALLAGHER
Yeah.

BOWMAN
Yeah.

He does. She kisses him back. They continue for a long damn time. Finally, they break apart and...

BOWMAN
It's an extra fifty days back.

GALLAGHER
Gee, wonder what we'll find to do with ourselves.

As she starts to laugh...

FADE OUT.

THE END