

FADE IN:

EXT. MARS - DAY

Find the camera skimming over the Martian landscape at high speed with the Beach Boys 'Kokomo' playing loudly (the way it sounds on Earth).

SUPERIMPOSE:

MARS

JULY 2050

ÆTHER STATION

POPULATION 2,692 SOULS

HUMANITY'S LAST TOEHOLD IN THE COSMOS

Just over a ridge, a spacecraft appears surrounded by seventeen jagged holes. Ten people in matching spacesuits (RED ROCK MINING & EXCAVATION with a pickaxe and spade symbol) are trudging up a ramp at its rear.

Find the camera entering the cargo bay between the two columns of miners--the music changes to the way it would sound on Mars (no high notes)--then continues into the cockpit. The pilot TERRA [F, 21, Israeli], is singing along flipping through a checklist (Blue flight suit, no helmet. Name tape: TERRA RAVIV-STRIKER. Shoulder patches: Mars with #1 beside it and on the other, an Israeli flag). Next to her is the copilot, CHASE [M, 53, French] (Blue flight suit, no helmet. Name tape: CHASE FLEMING, shoulder patch: French flag).

The last man, MR MEYERS [M, 60+] raises the ramp, then plugs a cord into his helmet.

MR MEYERS

Ramp is up.

CHASE

Copy. Pressurizing.

Show gauges: CO2 96% and dropping. O2% increasing. Loud whistling sound fills the cockpit.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Toss me that repair kit.

Terra hands him a roll of duct tape. He puts it over a crack in the windscreen--whistling stops.

MR MEYERS
No Willie Nelson today?

CHASE
Nope, its tradition: left seat
picks the tunes.

Terra grins.

MR MEYERS
Terra's a pilot?

CHASE
Well, it's not official until I pin
on her wings, but her mother
decided to save that for tomorrow
at her birthday party.

MR MEYERS
Congratulations Terra, we're all
very proud of you.

TERRA
Thank you Mr. Meyers.

MR MEYERS
You remind me so much of my Sarah.
She was your age ... the last time
I saw her.
(beat)
But forgive me, I don't mean to
impose my bad memories on you.

TERRA
It's okay Mr. Meyers ... this time
of year is really hard on everyone.

CHASE
Your crew doesn't look very happy?

MR MEYERS
Our wildcatting hasn't found enough
lithium to power that fancy watch
of yours.

CHASE
I'm glad I'm not the one that has
to tell that to Astra.

Find Terra flipping the selector switch on her control stick
to OPS.

TERRA
Ops this is SEA-VIPER requesting
launch clearance?

At the AETHER STATION Operations Center, Troopers in mottled red/gray camouflaged flight suits and wearing headsets are manning consoles in front of two large video displays. Duty Officer is Captain YASMEEN [F, 21, Cuban](Name tape: YASMEEN CHAVEZ. Shoulder patches: Mars #2 on one and a Cuban flag on the other).

YASMEEN
SEA-VIPER, you are cleared for
rotation and direct approach to
Aether.
(whispers to herself)
Godspeed.
(kisses a crucifix hanging
around her neck)

Find Terra and Chase flipping switches. Terra pushes forward a lever and four large thrusters, one at each corner, rotate to vertical. More buttons and levers. Thrust from the engines kick up a cloud of dust as SEA-VIPER takes off.

MR MEYERS
Hey Terra, I'd sure appreciate a
fly-by of the ship to check on my
excavation crew?

Terra checks the gauges and looks at Chase, who nods. Terra changes her selector to INT.

TERRA
Sure, Mr. Meyers, we can make that
happen.

Terra changes her selector to OPS.

TERRA (CONT'D)
Ops, this is SEA-VIPER requesting
clearance to overfly ET Crater?

TROOPER#1 [M, 30s, Shoulder patch: American flag] looks over at Yasmeen, who nods.

TROOPER#1
Roger SEA-VIPER, 1000 AGL min.

TERRA
Copy, 1000 AGL, SEA-VIPER out.

SEA-VIPER banks and flies off screen across a flat plain.

Find SEA-VIPER emerging from around an escarpment. Mostly buried inside a huge, shadowed crater is a massive spacecraft. The miners scramble to get the best view.

TERRA (CONT'D)

Look at that crumpled bow!

Terra yanks the control stick and banks sharply.

TERRA (CONT'D)

I was right! This was NOT their destination. They didn't land here, they crashed.

CHASE

Just for the record--I agreed with you--there's no way an advanced civilization came all this way to explore a lifeless rock.

MR MEYERS

(chuckles)

Yet here we are.

CHASE

Not what I meant, and you know it. We're four light-years from Proxima Centauri.

MR MEYERS

Have they proved that's where it's from?

TERRA

Yeah, as soon as they got the reactor up and running, they used the comm settings to pinpoint the source.

MR MEYERS

I remember the chaos when that signal was first detected on Earth--no one believed it, except for geeks like Chase and your dad.

CHASE

I think that was a compliment?

MR MEYERS

Oh absolutely! I'm just a simple rock crusher ... who'd be happy to run a cable and connect the reactor to the station's main power grid ... hint, hint.

TERRA

(scoffing)

Oh my God, I haven't even joined the Board yet.

MR MEYERS

The early bird gets the worm, right, and I heard Sam's Troopers already got some fancy new toys for free.

TERRA

Oh come on, not even you robber barons can't object to that.

CHASE

Sam's the fairest man I've ever met and besides, it's not easy keeping the peace amongst you ruffians.

MR MEYERS

Agreed, but I'm a business man.

TERRA

Don't worry Mr Meyers, mother's promised all *commercial* technologies will be put up for auction. You'll get your shot.

Terra flips her selector to OPS as they turn for home.

TERRA (CONT'D)

OPS, private channel with Captain Chavez please.

Yasmeen presses a button on her console and steps away from the Duty Officer's desk as Terra flips her COMM selector to PVT.

YASMEEN

You rang?

TERRA

What'd you find out?

YASMEEN

Is that all you think about! Honestly, if you'd lay off the sweets and come to my Boot Camp my madre wouldn't be busting her ass letting out your G-suit every month.

TERRA

I'm appalled my seamstress is blabbing about alterations I may, or may NOT, have requested.

YASMEEN

What can I say ... us Cubanos are tight.

TERRA

And yet our birthday cake is a complete mystery to you.

YASMEEN

Hey! I tried! Papá scoffed and booted me out, but the bakery smelled heavenly.

TERRA

I'm truly astounded Intel didn't snap you right up when you graduated.

YASMEEN

Hey, I'm serious, come to my Boot Camp--I'll tighten your ass up in no time.

TERRA

A-it's on the Sabbath and B-it's too damn early.

(beat)

And I don't appreciate your nasty insinuation. I'll have you know your handsome LT sniffs and drools like Pavlov's dog every time I'm upwind of him.

Yasmeen looks over at the LT [M, 20, Black. Shoulder patches: Mars #7 and on the other an Israeli flag].

YASMEEN

You didn't invite him ... did you?

TERRA

My share of the guest list is a closely guarded secret ... and since you've proven you're no Sherlock Holmes, you're just gonna have to wait and see.

YASMEEN

Hey, I told you who I--

Terra flips her selector switch to OPS.

TERRA

OPS, check with space weather, I'm getting a lot of interference. And tell Captain Chavez I'm sorry we got cut off.

TROOPER#1

Yes ma'am, I'll let her know.

CUT TO:

EXT. AETHER STATION - DAY

Find SEA-VIPER approaching Aether station: twelve clear domes on the surface, one of them is destroyed, two Starships on launch pads, five small transports like SEA-VIPER, a small fleet of buggies coming and going and a sea of solar arrays. Beneath the domes are the tops of palm trees. Terra switches her selector to CARGO.

TERRA

Just wanna thank all you for being my first passengers.

(Loud cheers)

But it's time to belt up and put on those helmets.

All the miners set to it. Seconds later, an external view shows the engine nacelles rotating to vertical--but the right front explodes. SEA-VIPER dips and goes veering off towards a large field of solar arrays.

TERRA (CONT'D)

Oh shit! We've lost #2.

CHASE

Mayday. Mayday. Mayday. We've lost an engine.

TROOPER#1

Copy SEA-VIPER, we're dispatching emergency crews.

Yasmeen grabs her crucifix and mumbles a prayer. Her face shows her concern ... as does the LT's.

Terra grabs the throttle levers--pulls one to zero and the other three to maximum.

CHASE

Watch your pitch, a few more
degrees of roll, slide her in, keep
the nose up ... just like that.

Terra is intensely focused as they plow through solar arrays.

CHASE (CONT'D)

No worries, they're flimsy ... just
watch out for the domes.

(beat)

Get ready ... it'll happen fast.

TERRA

(Keys her mic)

BRACE! BRACE! BRACE!

All the miners grab their straps. Terra wrestles with the
stick as SEA-VIPER slides across the ground like it's a slip-
n-slide throwing up a huge cloud of dust.

TERRA (CONT'D)

Fuel pumps to off.

CHASE

(Flipping switches)

Pumps are off, ready for purge.

SEA-VIPER comes to a stop near the destroyed dome.

TERRA

PURGE. PURGE. PURGE.

Terra flips switches and there's a loud whoosh, followed by
complete silence. Euphoric cheers from the miners.

CHASE

Better than Disneyland!

The cockpit suddenly jettisons away from SEA-VIPER. It floats
down under a massive parachute next to the burned-out Beijing
sector's dome. A welcome message in Chinese wraps around the
dome--it's covered in anti-Asian graffiti.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Terra awakens. She's still in her spacesuit on a gurney being
wheeled by medics. Chase is walking beside her.

TERRA

(Stunned)

I ... didn't ... do it. I didn't
... you saw me ... didn't you?

CHASE

I know. Just calm down. It's okay.

TERRA

The miners?

CHASE

They're fine. Well, better than
fine. They're gonna spend all week
in a pub spending that crash bonus
you just earned 'em.

TERRA

I didn't do it Chase ... I didn't.

CUT TO:

INT. OPS CENTER - DAY

YASMEEN

Ms. Astra, this is Captain Chavez,
I'm the Duty Officer. Ma'am,
there's been an accident--

INTERCUT: INT. TEMPORAL FLUX PORTAL - DAY

Find ASTRA [F, 47, Israeli] on her cellphone inside the alien spacecraft. She's wearing a spacesuit (Flag: Israel), but no helmet, standing in front of the Temporal Flux Portal (like a TSA walk-through body scanner but with a beautiful shimmering blue surface that's opaque). Working on a laptop nearby is PING [F, 55, Chinese], also in a spacesuit (Flag: China).

ASTRA

Thank you Yasmeen, let the hospital
know I'm on my way.

Ping looks up, concerned. Astra is cramming things into her duffel bag.

ASTRA (CONT'D)

Terra crashed a transport.
Everyone's fine but she bashed her
head.

PING

How bad?

Astra grabs her helmet.

ASTRA
A concussion for sure.

PING
Go! I will close up here and find a
ride ... see you soon.

EXT. ET CRATER - DAY

Find Astra in the driver's seat of a buggy. Takes off her helmet and flings it into the seat beside her.

Find Astra's buggy following a well-rutted path to Aether.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Terra is sitting up on the bed in a flight suit. Chase is sitting in a chair.

TERRA
Why haven't they released me? They
let the miners leave an hour ago.

CHASE
Because you lost consciousness AND
you're a pilot ... those two don't
mix.

TERRA
(scoffing)
Not for long. Mother isn't
passionate about anything, so she's
never understood how much I love to
fly.

CHASE
Honey, I've known your mother a
long time ... and trust me, you've
got your father's skills, but that
passion is pure Raviv.

TERRA
(scoffing)
Well she hides it really, really,
well.

CHASE

I know it's none of my business,
but do the two of you ever talk
about it ... I mean, what happened
the day you were born?

TERRA

(shakes her head)
Not really. She changes the subject
every time I bring it up.

INTERCUT - INT. FREIGHTER BOUND FOR MARS - DAY

Find Young Astra and Young Chase on a space freighter crammed
to the gills with plants.

CHASE (V.O.)

Well ... I really wish you could've
seen her when she first arrived ...
so determined to transform your
grandfather's station into a Garden
of Eden.

INTERCUT - INT. AETHER STATION FARMS - DAY

Find massive underground caverns with fields of wheat and
sugarcane and others crammed full of hydroponic gardens.

CHASE (V.O.)

Nobody worked longer hours at the
wheat and sugarcane farms ...

INTERCUT - INT. RESERVOIR - DAY

Find Young Astra wading through the Kiddie Pool of a massive
underground reservoir with a large Tiki Hut pavilion over it.

INTERCUT - EXT. MARTIAN SOUTH POLE - DAY

Find a string of buggies pulling trailers with huge blocks of
ice.

CHASE (V.O.)

... and the reservoir that made it
all possible was her doing as well.

Find settlers in spacesuits feeding blocks of ice down into
the reservoir.

CHASE (V.O.)

And not even you slowed her down.
She threw a party to celebrate the
final delivery of polar ice.

Find Terra smiling, imagining her pregnant mother partying.

Find pregnant Young Astra and settlers celebrating at the
Tiki Hut pavilion with Caribbean music and dancing.

CHASE (V.O.)

And that's where we were went she
went into labor. I was the one that
took her to the hospital.

INTERCUT - INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Find Young Chase helping Pregnant Young Astra down the
hallway in distress. A nurse rushes up with a wheelchair and
Chase helps Astra into it.

CHASE

She was in the delivery room when
the flood of news about the war
suddenly stopped.

(beat)

Earth was gone and your mother was
in charge of this place ...
humanities last foothold in the
cosmos.

Find Young Astra holding an infant in a hospital room.

CHASE (V.O.)

You were less than an hour old when
Sam rushed in and demanded to see
your mother.

Find YOUNG SAM [M, 44, Black] walking into Astra's hospital
room wearing a camo flight suit (Shoulder patch: American
flag) escorted by three heavily armed Troopers.

CHASE (V.O.)

Vigilantes were rampaging through
the Beijing sector murdering every
Asian they could find--they blamed
China for the war.

TERRA

I know about that part ... I
studied it at school.

Find Sam's Troopers in urban combat.

CHASE (V.O.)

(Nodding)

Then you know Sam's Troopers were badly outnumbered, and this station is business, not a country or a kingdom, so to save it, your mother needed partners ...

Find Young Astra meeting in private with a much older Palestinian man and a much older Russian man.

CHASE (V.O.)

... and she found them in Abu Hanafa and Alexi Ubanov.

TERRA (V.O.)

Momma created Arabia Energy and Arctic Air--I had no idea.

CHASE

Well, it's not something she's very proud of, given what--

Find Terra touching Chase's arm, interrupting.

TERRA

Chase ... you've known me my entire life, but you've never shared any of this?

CHASE

It didn't matter ... but tomorrow you join the Board, and the Board controls all of our lives.

Find Yasmeen rushing into the room.

TERRA

Yasmeen!

Yasmeen rushes over and clings on to Terra with a raw emotion that makes Chase feel awkward.

CHASE

I'm just gonna wait outside ... your mother'll be here soon.

Chase leaves.

YASMEEN

I was so worried.

TERRA
I'm sorry Chica, I didn't mean to
scare you. The landing was
textbook, but then--

Yasmeen kisses Terra, like a lover, for the first time, and
Terra is thrilled. She looks at Yasmeen with adoration.

TERRA (CONT'D)
I should've crashed a long time
ago.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Find Chase turning a corner and coming face-to-face with
Astra still in her spacesuit.

ASTRA
How is she?

CHASE
She'll be fine--the ejection caught
us by surprise and she banged her
head.

ASTRA
Was it sabotage?

CHASE
What?

ASTRA
Six of those miners live in Riyadh
and with Shirin in charge now ...
well, we can't rule it out.

CHASE
I don't think so, but I'll get with
Sam.

ASTRA
Was it Terra's fault?

CHASE
No, absolutely not. Our fleet's
literally held together with duct
tape and baling wire--you know
that.
(beat)
Meyers and his miners owe her their
lives.

Astra hugs Chase.

Find Astra walking up to Terra's hospital room. She peeks through the little window and smiles. Astra steps in, but holds the door open. Yasmeen jumps away from Terra like she's suddenly burst into flame.

ASTRA
Yasmeen, could I speak to my
daughter please.

YASMEEN
Yes ma'am, of course.
(beat)
I'll check on you later.

TERRA
You better!

Terra's eyes follow Yasmeen as she hurries out. Astra smiles, happy that Yasmeen is warming up to Terra's affections.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Find Yasmeen stopped in the hallway not far from Terra's room. She pulls out her crucifix and kisses it. She falls back against the wall and starts to cry. Ashamed.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Find Astra standing in front of her daughter.

ASTRA
Hey kiddo. Rough day at work?

Astra sits down on the bed beside Terra.

TERRA
It's not what you think!

ASTRA
Really? I heard you crash-landed a
spacecraft and you'll never buy
your own drinks ever again.
(beat)
Does that sound about right?

TERRA

Momma, I was just doing my job.

ASTRA

Flying isn't your job, Honey, it's your passion, and it's important you--

TERRA

Can you please save your speeches for tomorrow.

ASTRA

I'm sorry your birthright is such a burden to you.

(Looks at her blue lapis
Rolex)

It's five o'clock somewhere and I've got an aged bottle of Carlos's spiced rum that'll make you forget all about that headache.

Terra sighs and grabs a metal clipboard by the bed.

TERRA

They haven't released me yet.

Astra snatches the clipboard and flings it across the room.

ASTRA

You're a Raviv ... and it's high time you start acting like one.

Astra strides from the room like a queen. Terra looks at the clipboard, then follows her.

CUT TO:

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

Find Yasmeen stopping and opening an airlock cut into the stone. Above it reads: WELCOME TO HAVANA SECTOR in English and Spanish.

Find Yasmeen walking into a stone church. Eyes are red and puffy from crying. Inside are stone pews and a stone altar with a large crucifix above it. Yasmeen dips her fingers into the Holy water font and makes the sign of the cross, then she walks to a confessional and disappears.

CUT TO:

INT. ASTRA'S LUXURIOUS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Find Astra opening Terra's bedroom door and peeking in. It's a large room befitting Astra's status as owner of Aether Station. One entire wall is a flatscreen showing a thunderstorm at sunset. The sound of rain and surf fill the room. Terra is asleep and doesn't notice her mother.

Find Astra entering her spacious, well-appointed living room. She's drunk and it shows. She pours another drink from a bottle of 'RedRum,' then staggers to the couch, presses play, enters a password, and reclines. A video begins playing on the large flatscreen: "Wedding photos: Rene & Astra, The Gardens of Versailles"

INTERCUT - EXT. GARDEN OF VERSAILLES - DAY

Find Young Chase [29] in military dress uniform straightening the bowtie of RENE [29] who's dressed in a classic tuxedo. Indistinct chatter by the men. Soft laughter. Pan over to ISAAC [M, 49, Israeli] in a bespoke tuxedo smiling with Young Astra [23] in an exquisite wedding dress.

ISAAC

(Addressing Rene)

Young man, I'm trusting you'll make good use of this honeymoon--

YOUNG ASTRA

Oh Papa, stop it! You just love embarrassing him.

ISAAC

I'm serious--I want my grandchild to be the first true Martian.

RENE

Sir, I promise I'll do my best. After we climb the Eiffel Tower, we'll spend the rest of the week in the hotel.

Everyone laughs gaily, but Isaac is serious.

ISAAC

That's the spirit.

Find Astra in the recliner, the glass slips from her hand and breaks on the stone floor, but she doesn't notice.

Find Terra waking up from the sound of shattering glass.

Find Terra padding barefoot into the living room. The private wedding video is still playing. She checks on her mother, then goes to the kitchen and grabs tools to clean up.

Find Terra kneeling on the floor, cleaning up when Rene's last video begins and she looks up, mesmerized.

CUT TO:

INTERCUT - INT. BOCA CHICA KEY CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Find Rene [M, 32, French] wearing a blue Aether flight suit (Name tape: RENE STRIKER, shoulder patch: French flag). He's standing alone. Empty consoles everywhere. Two giant flatscreens behind him. One is showing CNN BREAKING NEWS: CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN and shows NORAD tracking red and blue lines all over the world map. The other is an external view of Aether Station with all 12 domes intact. Rene is heartbroken and using the cameras in Mission Control to say goodbye.

RENE

Honey, I'm so sorry.

(beat)

Isaac is gone, somewhere over the Atlantic ... and NOVA's ready, but there's no one here to launch her.

(beat)

The second we realized the Chinese were attacking, everyone raced home to protect their families.

Find Rene walking up and stopping in front of a huge glass wall. Over his shoulder we see three launch pads one mile offshore (like modified oil drilling rigs). The launch pads are connected by a causeway. Along the shore is a marina. Isaac's brightly-lit super-yacht ASTRA is docked there.

NOVA is on the pad, stacked on a booster, lights blazing. Huge flashes behind her as the Navy battles the Chinese Navy.

RENE (CONT'D)

Saving the station will be the hardest thing you've ever done, but you're a Raviv ... and so is our daughter.

(beat)

I'm sorry I won't get to meet her-- I hope she's more like you than me.

(beat)

Let's name her Terra. Can we do that?

Find Terra, sitting on the floor sobbing.

Find Rene staring out the glass wall. A missile streaks over NOVA and slams into the ASTRA. Explodes. ASTRA is burning. Rene turns and faces the camera to look at the flatscreens behind him. Sees his imminent death.

RENE (CONT'D)

(Yelling)

Baby I love you with all my heart--

A nuclear blast sweeps in from offshore, destroys NOVA, shattering glass sweeps Rene away. Loss of transmission.

Find Terra still on the floor crying, but now it's tears of strength and fortitude. She grabs her mother's hand and bows her head against her arm.

TERRA

Oh momma, I'm so sorry ... I'll help you, I promise.

(beat)

You're not alone anymore.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. RESERVOIR - NIGHT

Find a birthday party at the Tiki Hut pavilion over the reservoir. Caribbean music. Dancing. Fake coconut glasses.

Find Terra arriving wearing a mesh dress over a vibrant pink bikini. She spies Yasmeen dancing and grins, then walks to the bar for a drink.

Find Terra walking up to SAM [M, 65] who's wearing a vibrant Hawaiian print shirt. He looks dour, but brightens.

SAM

There's the birthday girl.

Sam hugs Terra, fatherly.

TERRA

Commander, didn't you read the invite. Mother forbids dour expressions at this party?

SAM

I could say the same to you.

TERRA

Well, she won't go easy on either of us, so cheer up.

SAM
Yes, ma'am.

Terra drifts over to where her mother is talking to Chase.

CHASE
Happy Birthday.

TERRA
(Hugging)
Thank you, and thanks for coming.
(beat)
Are you and mother huddled up over
here deciding my fate?

ASTRA
Yes, actually.
(beat)
Happy Birthday ... you're cleared
to fly again.

TERRA
Oh my God! That's great! Thank you!
(hugs her mother)
I've gotta tell Yasmeeen.

Terra rushes off. Astra watches. Chase scowls at Astra.

CHASE
The Board decided something like
that without my testimony?

ASTRA
No need to waste time with that.

CHASE
Is this about Shirin? Do you think
she'd vote to ground Terra just to
embarrass you?

ASTRA
I don't plan to find out.

CHASE
So you're going to make the Board
look irrelevant instead.

Astra puts her arm through Chase's.

ASTRA
No ... quite the opposite. It's a
sign of the Board's faith in you.

She leads him towards the pavilion.