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*The Cascade Effect*  
Screenplay  
by  
Josh Becker  
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EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

A title reads: "In the year 2055"

The misty blue-green ball of Earth is seen from space. As our view widens we see that the Earth is now utterly surrounded by satellites and space junk. Some of the satellites have American flags, some have the old USSR hammer & sickle, some are Chinese, Indian, Japanese, French, and a whole host of other countries are represented, too.

A serious, educated, intelligent, female voice of Dr. Erica Hanford is heard Voice Over.

HANFORD (V.O.)

Satellites, space stations, and debris left over from old multi-stage rockets are jamming all of the space around Earth. Absolutely no effort has ever been made to clean up the old space junk, so it's just continued to build up and build up. Satellites of every make and model, from a hundred different countries, some working, some dead, endlessly circle our planet.

EXT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE FACILITY – DAY

The Evergreen radio telescope installation in Colorado in the Rocky Mountains. We see a whole series of giant satellite dishes aimed up into space.

HANFORD (V.O.)

And radio telescopes just like this all over the world keep a constant, twenty-four hour watch on all of the space debris, satellites, and space stations. Should any of these items ever hit each other, moving at over twenty-thousand miles-per-hour in geo-synchronous orbit, it would be catastrophic.

INT. EVERGREEN CENTRAL – DAY

This is the command center for the radio telescope installation. An attractive female astronomer in her late 30s, with a tall black hairdo, and a full-length white lab-coat, DR. ERIKA HANFORD, is talking to a politician in his 60s with gray hair, SENATOR LEFARGE, surrounded by his entourage, who are all wearing suits and ties of the period, which are all brightly colored, with wide lapels, and loud wide ties. And clearly facial hair on the men is in, too, with long, bushy sideburns, mustaches and full beards. The women have odd, tall, styled hairdos, fake eyelashes, and a lot of makeup.

Dr. Hanford turns from a three-dimensional holographic representation of Earth and all its orbiting satellites, space stations, and debris, to the Senator and his people.

HANFORD

So let's just face facts, shall we.  
There's way too much junk up there,  
and we can't keep an eye on it all  
anymore. It's jamming the space lanes.  
So, please tell me, Senator, whatever  
happened to all of the different programs  
over the years to remove and destroy  
it?

Senator LeFarge shrugs, as do all of his people.

LAFARGE

The funding never comes through.  
It's far cheaper to keep hiring more  
astronomers like yourself than to  
keep an eye on everything than it is  
to implement any of those expensive  
programs.

Dr. Hanford shakes her head.

HANFORD

Well, you do know what'll happen if  
any of these satellites or debris begin  
colliding with anything else, right?

The Senator snorts derisively.

LAFARGE

Yeah, yeah. The Cascade Effect.  
Scientists have been predicting that

for over fifty years, but it hasn't happened yet, has it?

HANFORD

No, not *yet*. And it's a miracle, if you ask me. Every little fleck of paint up there is whizzing around at over twenty-thousand miles-per-hour. There are so many satellites and so much junk up there that it's become nothing more than a series of holes that the spaceliners have to maneuver through. I certainly wouldn't want to be one of those pilots.

She steps over to another 3-D holographic image of a Boeing 7007 Spaceliner sitting on a runway—it looks a lot like the present-day space shuttle, though much larger, and it's about to take off on a runway, just like an airplane.

HANFORD

Right now, for instance, this morning's lunar launch is just preparing for take-off from Edwards Spaceport. Although the course will be triangulated and plotted for the ship's auto-pilot from telescopes all over the Earth like this one, the human pilots have to be ready and able to take over navigation at any moment during the forty-eight hour flight. This is particularly stressful because the courses the ships are maneuvering are absurdly crooked and twisted due to all the space debris.

The Senator walks away waving his hand.

LAFARGE

But a pilot has never had to take over the controls of a spaceliner in the ten years of regular space travel between here and Tycho City on the moon. And now with two ships they have three flights a week going in both directions, for goodness sake.

HANFORD

(nods)

I'm well aware of how many flights there are, Senator. I'm an astronomer who has been forced into being an adjunct flight controller, and I don't want to be a flight controller. But our view of the heavens has been obscured by our own waste, and now we of the scientific community believe that the odds have turned against us.

Senator LaFarge walks away and all his people follow along, like ducklings.

LAFARGE

Yes, well, I'll certainly do what I can, you can count on that.

HANFORD

You're not going to do anything, are you?

LAFARGE

I came here, didn't I? I'm very responsive to my constituents' needs and desires. And suddenly the newscasts are predicting doom, so I'm doing something. But to be quite frank with you, my constituents didn't elect me to waste their money in space.

HANFORD

They only elected you to waste their money here on Earth, is that it?

LAFARGE

Exactly. What happens in space has no direct effect on us here on Earth.

HANFORD

But it certainly could.

LAFARGE

If you say so. But until something actually occurs that directly affects the people of Earth,

they don't really care, they just make some noise.  
It was a pleasure meeting you, Dr. Hanford. I  
wish you the best of luck.

HANFORD

(shakes her head and mutters)

We'll need more than luck if something up there  
collides with something else.

Dr. Hanford watches the Senator and his people depart, then turns back to the hologram of the spaceliner warming up on the runway.

EXT. EDWARDS SPACEPORT – DAY

A title reads: "Edwards SpacePort, 1200 hours."

On the side of the actual spaceliner is written, "Galactic Spaceways, Boeing 7007." It is an enormous spacecraft parked on the runway at Edwards SpacePort, just outside Los Angeles. The front pilot's windows are tiny compared to the size of the ship. Baggage-handlers and the runway crew go about their various jobs beneath the spacecraft that's four-times the size of a 747. Humans look like ants compared to the size of the ship. Luggage and food are loaded onto conveyor belts and brought aboard. A long line of over one hundred water trucks are lined up emptying their contents into the bulbous 200,000 gallon water tank located in the belly of the spaceliner.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – DAY

Inside the Spaceliner, it's not that much larger than a modern 747, since most of the girth is taken up by the heat and radiation shields in the fuselage, as well as the huge water tank. There are 500 hundred seats that are presently being filled by passengers, stowing their carry-on luggage, getting comfortable and ordering drinks.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Sitting in the cockpit is the co-pilot, a beautiful, intense, blonde woman in a tight-fitting white uniform, LT. SARAH SIMON, who is going through the standard, routine take-off prep, hitting switches and pushing buttons. A moment later the pilot steps in and he's a tall, good-looking man in his mid-forties with short hair and long sideburns named CAPTAIN BILL MCCORMACK, known to his friends as Mac or Big Mac, depending on how well they know him.

MAC

Course fully loaded?

SIMON

Yes, sir.

MAC

What's it look like?

SIMON

A bent corkscrew tied in a knot.

MAC

An interesting image. See how the seating is going, will you?

SIMON

Yes, sir.

Lt. Simon stands and leaves. She looks great in her tight uniform, which Mac notes with a raise of his eyebrows.

Mac sits down in his seat, straps himself in, then glances down at his right hand which is balled-up in a fist in his lap. He flexes his fingers and sees that he's shaking. Mac looks around cautiously, grimaces, then quickly takes a pill bottle from his pocket, opens it and pops a little white pill in his mouth, which he swallows without water. Mac then hits a button and the holographic head of the FLIGHT CONTROLLER, a black man in his thirties with pointy sideburns, appears before him. He looks amazed.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Mac, I hear Galactic has offered you a free house in Tycho City, and you're not taking it.

MAC

I don't want to live in Tycho City. I can't uproot my family and move 'em to the moon. Jessica would never forgive me.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

(smiles)

Those are nice houses up there, Mac. Swimming pools, golf courses, five-thousand square-feet each, the works. If they offered it to me, I'd sure as heck

take it.

MAC

(sighs)

Honestly, Jim, I'm having a little trouble at home these days and I can't be rockin' the boat, you know what I mean?

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

(nods)

Oh, sure. Still, five-thousand square-feet . . .

Lt. Simon returns with a confused expression on her face.

SIMON

Captain, I think you need to come back and take look.

Mac becomes a bit annoyed.

MAC

Aw, come on, can't you handle it?

SIMON

(frowns)

Just come back and take a look. Please.

Mac sighs, stands and follows her out of the cockpit, mumbling.

MAC

Oh, for goodness sake.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – DAY

The Captain and the Lieutenant walk back through the passenger compartment, where every seat is a full-sized lounge enclosed in a glass structure. The Captain and Lieutenant smile, say hi, and wave to everyone. Lt. Simon points and Mac sees his wife, JESSICA, and their two children, TIM who is ten, and JUDY who's seven, all seated in their lounges and ready to leave. Mac is flabbergasted.

MAC

What's going on?

Jessica, a pretty, hawk-like woman in her mid-thirties, says flatly . . .



JESSICA

Mac, I'm leaving you.

Mac is completely shocked, looks around to see if anyone else heard, then kneels down and speaks softly.

MAC

*What?* What's going on?

JESSICA

I repeat, I'm leaving you.

MAC

Why like this?

JESSICA

(shakes her head)

Because I've tried to tell you fifty other times and you wouldn't listen. You completely stopped listening to me years ago. Well, are you listening now?

MAC

I'm listening.

JESSICA

Good. I'm leaving you. I'm taking the kids, as you see . . .

(Tim and Judy both smile at him from their lounges)

. . . And we're moving to Tycho City, to the free house that you turned down.

MAC

(confused)

But I turned it down.

JESSICA

No, you told *me* to turn it down, but I didn't. I took it.

MAC

(stunned)

But why?

JESSICA

So we can move into it and have a place  
to live. You can live on the house on Earth.

MAC

But why are you leaving?

JESSICA

You really don't know, do you?

MAC

(shakes his head)

No. Tell me.

JESSICA

Mac, face it, you're not a husband and  
you're not a father, you're a pilot, and  
a damn good one, but that's it. And that's  
not enough for me.

MAC

Look, I've done the best I could.

JESSICA

Yeah? Well, it's not good enough.

MAC

So, what am I supposed to do? Quit?

JESSICA

No, you don't have to do anything.  
I'm doing it. Goodbye.

MAC

Well, I'm sorry, but I just don't accept  
this.

JESSICA

Too bad.

Lt. Simon steps up and Jessica throws her a look filled with daggers.

SIMON

(coughs)

Excuse me, sir, but it's time to go. If

we miss this window it will be eight more hours before we can leave.

MAC

Right.

(he stands)

I've got to go.

JESSICA

As always.

Mac and the Lieutenant walk back to the cockpit in silence.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Simon strap themselves in for take-off. Simon glances at Mac, but he doesn't look back. They both go through the standard take-off procedure.

MAC

Water tank topped off?

SIMON

Yes, sir.

MAC

Sealed?

SIMON

Yes, sir.

MAC

Oxygen tanks?

SIMON

Full and sealed.

MAC

Roger that. Close baggage doors.

SIMON

Yes, sir.

EXT. SPACEPORT – DAY

The baggage doors close and the baggage-handlers get out of the way. The conga-line of water trucks drive off, and the connecting chute to the water tank is moved away. The engines on the huge spaceliner fire up.

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL – DAY

Up in the tower in flight control, which is a lot like NASA's flight control, except there are 3-D holographic images above each controller's instruments. We see the Flight Controller in person, standing with a tiny earphone in his ear that's also a microphone, speaking to the ship, which he sees as a 3-D image, as well as for real out the tower's window.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Galactic Spaceliner, number B-2, you  
are cleared for take-off.

MAC (O.S.)

Roger that, flight control.

EXT. SPACEPORT – DAY

The spaceliner taxis down the tarmac, builds up tremendous speed over the course of a mile-long runway before it has sufficient thrust and lift to take off. The spaceliner takes off into the sky just like a big jet.

EXT. SKY – DAY

The spaceliner begins circling the Earth to build up sufficient speed to leave the planet's atmosphere. To achieve this, the ship keeps going higher and higher and faster and faster . . .

The continents and the oceans of Earth go whizzing past faster and faster. Clouds obscure the view, then suddenly the sky is clear, and the ground is farther and farther away.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – DAY

When all of the passengers have relaxed back in their lounges and are watching holovision, the plexi-glass bubbles lower over their lounges, click shut and seal. Then there is a hiss as some sort of sleeping gas is emitted. Everyone promptly falls asleep. Their holovisions automatically blink off, as do the interior lights of the lounges. A digital clock on the wall clicks on and begins counting down the forty-seven hours the passengers will be asleep, which of course, includes Jessica, Tim, and Judy.

EXT. SKY – DAY

By the time the spaceliner nears escape velocity, they are pulling two Gs, or the equivalent of two gravities equal to that of the Earth's gravity.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – DAY

The seats that the pilot and co-pilot are seated in are mushy and filled with a jelly-like substance and have fully reclined to help their bodies withstand the tremendous force pressing on them. Just reaching your hand up and scratching your nose is a big ordeal at two Gs.

Both the pilot and the co-pilot legitimately don't do anything. Everything is done automatically. They are there strictly there as an emergency back-up, in the unlikely event that every other back-up system should fail. This has never occurred in the history of commercial space travel.

The countdown begins . . .

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (O.S.)

Sixty seconds to reach escape velocity  
and leave Earth's atmosphere. Fifty-nine,  
fifty-eight, fifty-seven, fifty-six . . .

Mac and Simon's eyes dart from one control read-out to the next, everything seems to be working A-okay.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (O.S.)

. . . Fifty-five, fifty-four, fifty-three . . .

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Simon grip the ends of their squishy, jelly-filled armrests. Their faces are distorted as the G-forces flatten the skin back against their skulls.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

. . . Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five . . .

Mac and Simon glance at each other and raise their eyebrows, indicating Good Luck.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

. . . Four, three, two, one, escape velocity . . .

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner leaves Earth's atmosphere, with a lot of vibration and a tremendous amount of heat building up on the ship's heat shields, then they suddenly glide soundlessly into the black void of space—

*—Which, at this distance from Earth, happens to be completely filled with satellites and space debris!* There's literally stuff everywhere. The ship begins veering left, right, up, down, sideways, and around to avoid hitting things.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Simon watch the 3-D displays in front of them with complete and total concentration, although they're not doing anything but watching. The auto-pilot steers them through the labyrinth of obstacles with information beamed in from radio telescopes all over the Earth.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER'S SECTION – NIGHT

Nevertheless, it's an incredibly hairy ride for over an hour, and if the passengers weren't anesthetized, they'd all be barfing into their vomit bags. In fact, if they knew what they were going through they probably wouldn't have taken the trip in the first place.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The ship goes whizzing past live bleeping satellites; dead, darkened satellites; hunks of old spaceships; as well as some old nuclear weapons, American, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Pakistani, Israeli and South African.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Simon keep watch, and even though all's well so far, it's like being on a roller-coaster and knowing everything is working right, except you might have to take over the controls at any second, should the need arise.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

Which, as usual, it doesn't. Soon the ship is traveling silently through the clear open void of space, moving toward the glowing orb of the moon, leaving Earth and all of its space debris behind.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

The G-forces go back to normal and Mac and Simon both sit up. Mac glances down at his right hand and it's really shaking. He makes a fist and grits his teeth. Simon notices, but acts like she doesn't.

SIMON

(offhandedly)

I'll take the first watch, you catch some sleep.

Mac shakes his head.

MAC

Naw, I'm fine. I'll take the first watch.

Simon nods and reclines back in her lounge.

SIMON

Yes, sir.

Her lounge seals over and the light goes out.

Mac takes a deep breath. He flexes his fingers, and rubs his right hand with his left. He exhales loudly and shakes his head. Mac glances back over his shoulder, toward the passengers, sighs and shakes his head again.

MAC

What does she think she's doing?

He takes out the pill bottle and pops another pill.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner noiselessly glides through space. A retro rocket silently fires at the back, slightly altering the ship's course.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

Mac stands over the sleeping compartments of his wife and two children. They are in drugged sleep and have no idea he's standing there. Mac frowns sadly, remembering . . .

DISSOLVE:

EXT. MAC'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Mac wears a tuxedo and holds a bottle of champagne, and Jessica wears an evening gown and holds a bouquet. They walk up the front steps to the door. The trees and flowers are in bloom and it's summer. Mac opens the door, then reaches down grabs Jessica and lifts

her in his arms. Mac and Jessica kiss, then he carries her over the threshold. He kicks the front door and it slams closed.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. MAC'S HOUSE – DAY

It's now autumn and the leaves are all red and yellow, falling from the trees and blowing away.

A futuristic car pulls up in front of the house and Mac gets out in an Air Force uniform. He goes up the steps to the front door.

INT. MAC'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN – DAY

Mac walks into the kitchen and finds his pregnant wife cooking dinner. Mac points at his uniform.

MAC

I got promoted.

JESSICA

Oh, Mac, that's wonderful.

She runs to him and give him a big hug.

DISSOLVE:

INT. MAC'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN – DAY

Mac enters his kitchen and finds Jessica, once again pregnant and cooking, only this time also with a baby in a high-chair throwing food around. Mac enters grinning.

MAC

Guess who got promoted?

Jessica looks up, covered with baby food.

JESSICA

That's great, Mac, did you get the week-end off?



MAC

(shakes his head)

No, I have to work, sorry. Here, let me feed the baby.

Mac goes to feed the baby and Jessica sighs.

JESSICA

You said you'd absolutely keep this weekend open. Absolutely, Mac.

MAC

How'd I know I'd get promoted? Now I've got new responsibilities.

JESSICA

That may be so, but *absolutely* means absolutely.

MAC

Not in the military it doesn't.

DISSOLVE:

INT. MAC'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN – DAY

Mac enters the kitchen, now looking a bit older, and finds Jessica, not pregnant and also older, tending to two infants, a three-year-old boy, TIM, and a one-year-old girl, JUDY. Mac smiles.

MAC

Guess who got promoted today.

Tim smiles and runs into his daddy's arms.

TIM

Did *you*?

MAC

Yeah, *me*.

(to Jessica)

So, what do you think?

Jessica doesn't look up from feeding the baby.

JESSICA

That's great, Mac. Now you'll get to spend even more time at the base.

MAC

Not necessarily. And I do get a raise, ya know.

JESSICA

So what? We don't need more money, we need a life.

MAC

Well, I have a life.

JESSICA

Yeah? Good for you.

Mac sighs

DISSOLVE:

INT. MAC'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN – DAY

Mac comes walking into the kitchen grinning.

MAC

Hey, everybody, guess who got a pro—

But the kitchen's empty. There's a note on the kitchen table. Mac picks it up and reads it. We hear Jessica's voice reading the letter.

JESSICA (V.O.)

Mac, you may have forgotten but it's Judy's birthday and there's a party for her, that you were going to come to, but I guess you've missed. Judy is very upset. We'll be back about eight. Jess.

Mac lowers his head and tosses the letter on the table.

MAC

Oh, lord. And this was a good day up until now.

Mac goes to a high cupboard, takes out a bottle of booze, and makes himself a big drink. We see him open a pill bottle, toss a few pills in his mouth and wash them down with liquor.

DISSOLVE:

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

Mac stands over the sleeping compartments of his wife and two children. He sighs deeply, shakes his head, then wearily heads back up to the cockpit.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac sits in the pilot seat, his right hand holding his left hand and massaging it. He glances over at Lt. Sarah Simon, asleep in her co-pilot lounge/seat. Mac remembers . . .

MONTAGE:

EXT. ROOFTOP SWIMMING POOL – DAY

Mac and Sarah are swimming in the domed rooftop pool at the Tycho City Hilton on the moon. It's as bright as daytime around them, but the sky is black and full of stars, with the huge blue-green planet Earth filling half the sky.

INT. CASINO – NIGHT

Mac and Sarah are all dressed up and gambling at the Blackjack table in the Earthview Casino. They are laughing and having a great time.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Mac and Sarah are naked and making love in the hotel room.

INT. HOTEL BAR – NIGHT

Mac and Sarah sit in the Hotel bar, the Earth out the window between them, and speak seriously.

MAC

This'll never work.

SIMON

I know that. I knew it when we started.

MAC

So what do we do now?

SIMON

End it?

MAC

Yeah, I guess so.

They both turn away from one another. The Earth sits between them.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner glides silently through space.

A title reads, “45-hours later . . .”

EXT. THE MOON – NIGHT

The spaceliner begins orbiting the moon.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Sarah are both awake and at their duty positions. Mac nods his head.

MAC

Okay, wake ‘em up.

SIMON

Yes, sir.

Sarah hits a button on the control panel.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

With a hiss the passengers are all awakened at the same time as their sealed lounges all pop open. One by the passengers all sit up and stretch, their hair sticking up in goofy directions, their eyes bleary, having to go to the bathrooms.

EXT. THE MOON – NIGHT

Still too high to land, the spaceliner passes over Tycho City, a ten mile square glass-enclosed city with green rolling hills, big houses, and many golf courses. It looks like

Palm Springs under a series of glass domes. The passengers look down, point, and ooh and ah. Beside the city is a ten-mile long illuminated landing strip.

The spaceliner circles the moon and comes back around on Tycho City, only this time they are coming in very low. Housings on the front of the ship's wings open up revealing reverse retro-rockets which begin firing, slowing the ship's speed.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

Setting the huge ship down is exceptionally smooth on the moon, at one-sixth the gravity of Earth. Stopping the ship's forward movement is the big issue. The retro-rockets fire, working as brakes, and slowly over the course of the ten-mile runway the spaceliner slows down and finally stops.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

All of the passengers hold tightly onto the arms of their seats. It's a smooth landing, but it goes on a for quite a long time.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

The landing crew, wearing space suits, converge on the ship, and a walkway is pushed into place, which locks in and seals to the side of the ship.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Simon look at each other and shrug, another job well-done. Simon glances back toward the passengers and Mac catches her look. Mac sighs, stands and heads back.

MAC

Oh, yeah, that.

Sarah gives him a truly sympathetic look.

SIMON

Good luck.

Mac nods, looking pained.

MAC

Thanks.

He leaves the cockpit.

Sarah watches him go, an expression of pain washing across her face, but what can she do? She still loves him.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

Mac escorts his wife and kids off the ship. Jessica won't talk to him or even look at him.

TIM

So, dad, are you gonna live up here  
on the moon with us?

MAC

Uh . . . We'll see.

JUDY

You mean you won't live with us?

MAC

I don't know. Oh, lord.

(to Jessica)

Honey, we need to discuss this.

JESSICA

That's fine with me, and you know  
where to find me. Here.

INT. TERMINAL – NIGHT

They step into the terminal and find a welcoming committee waiting for them, with a brass band playing "Fly Me to the Moon," and the Mayor of Tycho City, and all of the leading residents waiting to greet them. It turns out that the McCormack's are the 500<sup>th</sup> family to immigrate to the moon and are the people of the hour. Banners say, "Welcome, MacCormack Family" and "You'll like it on the moon." The MAYOR, a heavysset, 50-year-old man with a bald head, speaks into a microphone.

MAYOR

Ladies and gentlemen, the MacCormacks  
are the 500<sup>th</sup> family to immigrate to the  
moon. To start a new life, a better life.  
Let's all give them a big lunar welcome.

There is a big round of applause from the audience. The Mayor puts his arm around Mac's shoulder.

MAYOR

So, Captain, what made you decide to move here?

Mac is completely stuck. Did he move here? Jessica cuts in.

JESSICA

Well, we did get a free house after all.

MAYOR

Yes, of course. And if you'll just come along, you'll see it right now.

MAC

(dazed)

Thanks, thanks a lot.

Mac, Jessica and the kids are driven to their new home in a limo, with a parade following along behind. Mac and Jessica smile at everyone but each other.

EXT. MAC'S NEW HOUSE – NIGHT

The parade arrives at Mac's new house, which really is stunning. Very contemporary, and very large. With a pool. The Mayor hands Mac the keys.

MAYOR

Captain MacCormack, here are the keys to your new house. May you live the rest of your life here in joy and happiness.

MAC

Thanks so much.

JESSICA

Thank you. You're too kind.

They get inside, shut and lock the door.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

Meanwhile, at the Spaceport, another spaceliner is preparing for take-off to go back to Earth.

INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

CAPT. BUCK KRANDALL, a tall, thin man of 50, is the pilot, and LT. JEFFERY JACKSON, a dark-haired man of 35, is the co-pilot. They go through the standard launch prep.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (O.S.)  
Spaceliner B-1, you are cleared for take-off.

JACKSON  
Roger that, tower.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

Stewards and stewardesses get the passengers buckled into their lounges, and ready for take-off.

INT. MAC'S NEW HOUSE – NIGHT

In Mac's new house on the moon, his family is asleep upstairs and he's camped-out on the couch. But Mac can't sleep. He goes over to his suitcase, removes a bottle of whiskey, as well as a pill bottle, and takes them both back over to the couch. Mac dumps a couple of white pills into his hand, then washes them down with liquor straight from the bottle. Jessica's voice comes from behind him.

JESSICA  
Great combination.

Mac turns around and sees his wife standing on the stairs.

MAC  
You ever try it?

JESSICA  
No.

MAC  
Then don't knock it.

Jessica comes over and stands before him.

JESSICA



Why do you need that?

MAC

(sighs)

Because my nerves are shot, okay?

JESSICA

And why's that?

Mac looks up at her sadly.

MAC

Well, basically, because I'm stuck in a bad marriage and I work too hard.

Jessica sits down beside him looking somewhat vexed.

JESSICA

You want out of this marriage? So you can get together with your co-pilot? What's her name? She's very pretty.

MAC

Lieutenant Simon.

Jessica looks surprised.

JESSICA

Lieutenant, eh? When you sleep with her does she call you Captain and salute?

Mac shakes his head, sighs deeply and takes a slug of booze.

MAC

That was one weekend over a year ago. I've said I'm sorry a million times. What else do you want me to do?

JESSICA

I wanted you, Mac. I wanted you around, to be a husband, to be a father. All you ever did was come home to

change clothes. Sleeping with the pretty lieutenant was just the last straw. You'd obviously found everything else you needed at work, so once you found sex there, too, I knew there was nothing left for me.

Mac takes another big slug of whiskey.

MAC

You married a pilot, Jessica. This is what I do.

JESSICA

Most pilots don't leave the Earth. You took the most difficult pilot job there is. You chose your work over your wife and family. So live with it.

MAC

I'm having trouble living with it.

Mac takes another drink.

JESSICA

I see that. So, what's the problem?

MAC

The problem this second, or the big problem?

JESSICA

The big problem.

MAC

(snide)

Oh, *now* you ask?

JESSICA

Yeah, now I'm asking?

MAC

Well, it may very well be the most difficult pilot job to get, but, you see,

I don't actually do anything.

JESSICA

What do you mean?

MAC

I mean, I'm a back-up safety system that's never been used. I'm like a cop who hasn't drawn his weapon in ten years, and now I don't know if I could use it if he had to. And each run the lives of five hundred people depend on me. You see?

JESSICA

Yeah? So?

MAC

(looks away)

I knew you wouldn't understand.

JESSICA

I understand, Mac, I just don't care. You act like you became a pilot on purpose, but you got married and had kids by mistake. I'm tired of being a mistake, an afterthought.

Mac stands up and unsteadily puts on his jacket and hat. He downs the remainder of his drink.

MAC

Y'know what, I can't deal with this right now. We'll have to talk about it later.

Mac picks up the bottle of booze and the bottle of pills, which he puts in his pocket, then weaves his way toward the door. Jessica is stunned.

JESSICA

You're just walking out on me?

MAC

Yes I am. You did it to me, so now I'm doing it to you. Go ahead, live on

the moon. Raise my children to adulthood without me. What do I care, I'll just have some more kids. So, you have a happy life, and I wish you all the luck in the world.

JESSICA

Where are you going?

MAC

What's it to you?

JESSICA

I still care, Mac, and I still love you.

MAC

Do you?

JESSICA

Yes, I do.

MAC

You've chosen a fine way to show it.

JESSICA

So have you.

MAC

Okay, we both did it. Nothing lasts forever.

JESSICA

But where are you going?

MAC

Yeah, well, I'm going exploring on the moon, and maybe I'll sleep in a crater. And I'll eat moon rocks for breakfast. Don't worry about me.

Mac walks out the front door and slams it behind him. Jessica stands there infuriated.

JESSICA

*Damn him!*

She stomps her foot.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

The spaceliner piloted by Capt. Krandall and Lt. Jackson sits at the end of the long runway, outside the glass-domed city.

INT. SPACELINER/ COCKPIT – NIGHT

Capt. Krandall and Lt. Jackson go through the standard take-off prep.

KRANDALL

Oxygen tanks?

JACKSON

Full and sealed.

KRANDALL

Roger that. Close baggage compartment doors.

JACKSON

Yes, sir.

Jackson hits a switch.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

We see the baggage compartment doors on the belly of the ship close and seal. However, just as the last door closes, we see the strap of a suitcase gets caught in the seal, with just a half-inch poking out. There is the very quiet hiss of an air leak.

KRANDALL (O.S.)

Galactic spaceliner B-1 ready for take-off.

INT. TYCHO CITY FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT

The head flight controller, TOM HASTINGS, speaks to the spaceliner.

TOM

Roger that, spaceliner. You are cleared for take-off.

JACKSON (O.S.)

Roger, flight control.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

The spaceliner taxis down the long lunar runway, builds sufficient speed and lifts gently into space, due to the moon's light gravity. The ship's retro rockets fire propelling it away from the moon and off toward Earth, which lies in the distance.

EXT. THE STREETS OF TYCHO CITY – NIGHT

Mac wanders the streets of suburban Tycho City holding a bottle of booze, and weaving drunkenly along the sidewalks past large suburban houses with neatly manicured lawns. Mac takes the pill bottle out of his pocket, pops a pill and washes it down with a slug of liquor. A Tycho City police car pulls up beside Mac and cruises along beside him and stops. Two COPS get out and confront Mac.

COP #1

No drinking in public.

MAC

Why not?

COP #2

'Cause that's the law.

MAC

(belligerent)

It's a stupid law.

COP #1

That may be, but we didn't make the law, we just enforce it.

Mac seriously considers starting a fight, just for the fun of it. He furrows his brow and glares at both Cops. They look back at him with blank expressions, waiting for him to make the first move. Finally, Mac sighs and gives in, handing over the bottle.

COP #2

You're the pilot of the spaceliner, aren't you?

MAC

What of it?

COP #2

Didn't they just give you a free house?

MAC

Yeah, they did. With a swimming pool.

COP #2

Well I'm sure Galactic Spacelines wouldn't want to hear that you're wandering drunk through the streets of Tycho City with a bottle in your hands.

MAC

(nods)

I'm sure they wouldn't.

COP #1

Now go home and go to bed.

MAC

Yes, sir.

He salutes, then watches as the cops get back in the car and drive away. Mac pulls a little flask out of his coat pocket and grins.

MAC

Suckers.

He takes a drink, turns and trips over a kid's bicycle. He stands and staggers up the sidewalk.

INT. HOTEL GYM – NIGHT

Lt. Sarah Simon runs on a modern-looking treadmill in the hotel gym and she's really hauling ass and sweating. She turns the treadmill higher and runs faster, than faster still. Finally, she got it up too fast and gets thrown back onto the floor in a heap. She drops her face into her hand and begins to cry.

INT. LT. SIMON'S HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Sarah enters her hotel room in sweats with a towel around her neck. She suddenly wipes her tear-stained face on her sleeve, then tears off her sweaty clothes, savagely tossing each piece across the room.

SIMON

Just get on with your life, will you!

Grow up!

Sarah then goes into the bathroom and takes a shower.

INT. HILTON HOTEL BAR – NIGHT

Mac sits at the bar in the Hilton Hotel and drinks scotch and soda. He's pretty hammered, but not yet totaled. Mac's face goes through the gamut of emotion, from indignation to anger to resignation. Finally, Mac looks up and suddenly his face changes completely, to an expression of wide-eyed amazement.

There coming through the door into the bar, in a very pretty, tight-fitting, modern-looking dress, is Sarah Simon. Mac just sits there and watches her, struck by her beauty. Sarah enters the bar, but doesn't see Mac. She walks hesitantly in her unfamiliar high-heels, and makes her way to a small table at the edge of the dance floor. Sarah sits down and demurely crosses her legs. Mac steps up beside her.

MAC

Mind if I sit down?

Sarah glances up and sees Mac standing there drunkenly grinning. Her whole face lights up.

SIMON

Mac, what are you doing here?

Mac sits down.

MAC

Waiting for you.

SIMON

What about your wife?

MAC

She left me, you saw it, you were there. She took the kids and went to the moon. And now they play among the stars.

SIMON

(grins)

You're drunk.

MAC



Yeah, what of it?  
(he holds up his fist)  
Wanna make something of it?

SIMON  
(smiles)  
No.

MAC  
Good, then have a drink with me.

Mac waves his hand at the bartender and holds up two fingers.

SIMON  
So, the last I saw a parade was taking  
you off to your new house.

MAC  
*Her* new house. I told her to turn it  
down, but does she ever listen to me?  
No. So now she lives on the moon.  
Meanwhile, I live back on Earth, just  
like you.

SIMON  
Is that how you want it?

MAC  
Nobody asked me. What's it matter  
what *I* want?

SIMON  
Well, what do you want?

Mac grins, leans forward and takes Sarah's hands.

MAC  
I want *you*.

SIMON  
(guarded)  
For what?

MAC  
To dance with me, that's what.

Mac stands, lifts Sarah to her feet and escorts her out onto the dance floor. Mac takes her in his arms and they dance slowly. Through the big window of the Hilton they are backlit by the light of Earth.

SIMON

I've dreamed about this, Mac. Exactly like this. Well, almost exactly like this.

MAC

What was different?

Sarah puts her cheek against Mac's shoulder and sighs.

SIMON

Well, you weren't married, for one thing.

MAC

She left me. I'm separated now. I'm free.

SIMON

Are you?

MAC

Well I'm here right now. And so are you.

Sarah takes a firmer hold of Mac.

SIMON

Hold me tighter, Mac, like you really mean it.

MAC

I do really mean it.

Sarah strokes his hair.

SIMON

I know you do.

MAC

She hates that I'm a pilot. How'd I find a woman that hates the best part of me?

SIMON

Maybe that's not the best part of you.

MAC

You think?

SIMON

Yeah, I think.

MAC

(he thinks)

Hmmmm?

SIMON

Maybe that's something you still need to discover.

MAC

Maybe.

They keep dancing, all by themselves, backlit by the light of the Earth.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner glides through the darkness of space and the twinkling stars, toward Earth.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT – NIGHT

Inside the baggage compartment, where the strap is caught in the seal, air is being sucked out into space. The suitcases and the walls are coated with frost. Bundles of wiring at the back of the compartment are beginning to freeze up, too.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Lt. Jackson is studying a digital read-out on the control panel, and doesn't like what he sees.

JACKSON

We've got some sort of pressure leak, but I'm not sure where. Possibly the baggage compartment.

KRANDALL

Is there anything you can do about it?

JACKSON

No.

KRANDALL

(shrugs)

There you go. Keep an eye on it.

JACKSON

Yes, sir.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY – NIGHT

Mac and Sarah are both drunk and arrive at Sarah's hotel room. Sarah leans back against the door and Mac leans in and kisses her. Sarah's handbag nears the door handle and the door automatically unlocks. After they kiss for a long moment their lips part.

SIMON

Coming in?

MAC

Do you mind?

SIMON

No, I don't mind.

MAC

But just for a minute, okay? I mean,  
like, just for a nightcap.

SIMON

Okay.

MAC

Okay then.

They go into the hotel room and the door shuts and locks.

EXT. EARTH – NIGHT

Capt. Krandall and Lt. Jackson pilot the spaceliner as it is about to enter the field of space debris around Earth.

## INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT – NIGHT

The suitcases and walls are completely frozen. The insulated bundle of wiring is also frozen, and it suddenly snaps. Sparks fly out of the severed wires.

## INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Capt. Krandall and Lt. Jackson are just beginning to travel the tortuous, twisted course through the junk when red lights on the control panel begin to flash and a warning buzzer goes off. Jackson looks horrified.

JACKSON

Hey! What a great time for the auto-pilot controls to malfunction.

KRANDALL

Oh, that's not possible, I mean it's never happened before.

JACKSON

Yeah, well, it's happening now.

KRANDALL

That's okay, I'll just have to fly this ship the old-fashioned way. Manually.

JACKSON

Can it be done?

KRANDALL

(snorts)

Can it be done? Sure it can be done, why do you think we're here. We're pilots, remember?

Capt. Krandall has to take over the controls and fly the ship manually through the space junk, which is an insane ride.

They just miss one satellite, then nearly collide with a hunk of a rocket. They veer right past this, and just beside that.

## INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Sweat beads up on Krandall's forehead. Jackson's eyes jump back and forth between watching the passing space junk out the window and watching Capt. Krandall steer around it. It's one near-miss after another after another.

## EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner veers a jagged course through the debris. When it appears they're going to make it, the spaceliner just nicks an old satellite that goes whizzing off into space end over end, completely out of control.

The satellite collides with another old satellite and they both explode, sending out thousands of pieces of shrapnel whizzing into space.

The pieces of shrapnel zip through space like bullets and finally find other old satellites to collide with. When the shrapnel hits them it causes them to explode, sending out more speeding shrapnel in all directions.

The Cascade Effect has begun.

## INT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

Down on Earth, at the radio telescope installation, Dr. Hanford and her team are watching as the monitored space junk begins to holographically fly out of control, collide with other space junk and explode. Everyone stands there helpless. There's nothing they can do.

Dr. Hanford shakes her head sadly. Her assistant, DR. DAVID CUMMINGS, a blond, good-looking man of twenty-five, looks up at her in horror.

CUMMINGS

It's the Cascade Effect. I can't believe it's actually happening.

Dr Hanford looks very sad.

HANFORD

I told them and I told them, they just wouldn't listen.

CUMMINGS

Well, maybe they'll listen now.

Dr. Hanford shrugs and turns her back on everyone.

HANFORD

(shrugs)

Now it's too late.

END ACT THREE:

ACT FOUR:

EXT. EARTH – NIGHT

The Cascade Effect is in the midst of occurring. The shrapnel of an exploding satellite hits another satellite and it too explodes, sending off shrapnel into yet another one, causing it to explode. On and on . . .

INT. TYCHO CITY FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT

At the control tower at the Tycho City Spaceport, the flight controllers have spotted the explosions on their advanced-looking radar screens. A flight controller turns to Tom Hastings, the head flight controller.

TYCHO CITY FC #1

You think this is just going to keep going?

TOM

(sighs)

It sure looks like it.

(turns to two police officers)

Get Captain McCormack in here immediately. He needs to see this.

The two POLICE OFFICERS go running out of the control room at top speed.

The flight controllers return their attention to the holographic explosions.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

Meanwhile, the spaceliner, now with a damaged wing, completes its next orbit of the Earth, not knowing what it has caused and left behind in its wake.

## INT. SPACELINER/COCKPIT – NIGHT

Still flying on manual and avoiding the junk, Krاندall and Jackson feel like they've nearly made it. They both feel like they just escaped with their lives and are busy mopping their brows.

JACKSON

Whoa! That was close.

KRANDALL

You can say that again. But I think we're okay now.

JACKSON

Thank God for that.

They both look up and see through the window in front of them that they are flying head-on into a roiling wall of flaming shrapnel and exploding satellites. There's no stopping their course at this late date and they fly straight into it.

## EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner flies right into the fiery wall of exploding space debris and disappears.

## INT. SPACELINER/ PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

Pieces of speeding debris come ripping through the walls of the spaceliner like machine gun bullets, killing every single passenger aboard in their lounges. Spirals of blood swirl weightlessly out of the holes in the lounges.

## INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Hundreds of bits of speeding shrapnel come shooting through the cockpit ripping right through both Captain Krاندall and Lieutenant Jackson, tearing them to shreds. The cockpit fills with blood.

## EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

Then the entire huge spaceliner first implodes, flattening itself out, then it explodes. This creates even more shrapnel and debris which begins colliding with other floating detritus.



EXT. EARTH FROM SPACE – NIGHT

The Cascade Effect keeps expanding and growing like a flaming blanket enveloping the planet.

EXT. DOWN ON EARTH/ MONTAGE – DAY

On Earth, people from all over the world are looking up into the sky and watching explosions occur. It's like a fireworks display, but much higher up in space.

Explosions in the sky are happening with the Eiffel Tower in the foreground.

Explosions go off in the sky behind Big Ben in London.

Explosions above Mt. Rushmore.

Explosions over the plains of Africa.

Explosions over the onion-domed buildings of St. Petersburg.

EXT. MAC'S NEW HOUSE – NIGHT

On the moon, a Tycho City police car comes screeching up in front of the McCormack's house. The two Police Officers from the Spaceport step up to the door.

INT. MAC'S NEW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

The doorbell begins ringing insistently. Jessica answers the door and it's the two Police Officers. The two kids, Tim and Judy, appear at the top of the stairs in the PJs and watch quietly.

OFFICER #1

Excuse me, ma'am, but Captain McCormack needs to report immediately to the spaceport.

JESSICA

I'm sorry, but Captain McCormack isn't here.

OFFICER #1

Do you know where is he?

JESSICA

I'm sorry, but I don't.

The officers look completely flustered.

OFFICER #2

This is an emergency, ma'am, we really have to find him.

JESSICA

Of course it is, it's *always* an emergency.

OFFICER #1

No, this is *really* an emergency.

JESSICA

Well . . . Have you checked Lt. Simon's quarters?

The officers look baffled and shrug.

OFFICER #1

Lt. Simon?

JESSICA

Captain McCormack's co-pilot? The pretty blonde.

Both officers remember her and they get it.

OFFICER #2

Oh. You don't know where she lives, do you?

JESSICA

Unless they gave her a house, too, I'd guess she's at the Hilton. And if one of you don't mind staying here with my kids, I'd like to come along with you.

Officer #1 turns to Officer #2. Tim and Judy look down.

OFFICER #1

Stay here.

(to Jessica)  
Come on, let's go.

Jessica and the Officer leave in a hurry.

EXT. HOTEL HALLWAY – NIGHT

Jessica, the police officer, and the Hotel Manager walk quickly up the hotel hallway, stop at a door and the Manager knocks. There is a long moment, then he knocks again. Sarah's voice comes from within.

SIMON (O.S.)  
One second.

The door opens and there stands Sarah in her nightgown looking doozy from having just been woken up. She's a bit surprised seeing Jessica.

SIMON  
Yes?

Jessica looks past Sarah into the darkened room.

JESSICA  
Is my husband in there?

Sarah glances back over her shoulder.

SIMON  
As a matter of fact, no.

JESSICA  
(surprised)  
He's not?

SARAH  
No.

OFFICER  
Do you know where he is? It's an emergency.

SARAH  
I suppose he has his own room. What's wrong?

OFFICER

Plenty. Satellites around Earth have begun exploding.

Sarah's eyes widen in horror.

SIMON

(hushed)

The Cascade Effect.

OFFICER

You better get dressed, lieutenant, and check in as soon as you can at the spaceport, I'm sure they'll be needing you.

SIMON

Yes, sir.

The Officer heads away quickly, but Jessica stays.

JESSICA

Did you see Mac last night?

SIMON

(nods)

Yeah.

JESSICA

But he didn't stay?

SIMON

No.

JESSICA

How come?

Sarah shakes her head in disgust.

SIMON

Because he loves you, that's why.

JESSICA

(skeptical)  
Oh yeah? Are you sure about that?

SIMON

(nods)  
Unfortunately, I am sure about that.  
It's a damn shame you're not. Now,  
if you'll excuse me, I have to get  
dressed.

Sarah shuts the door in Jessica's face. Jessica stands there for a second looking seriously confused, then rushes off down the hall.

INT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

At the radio telescope on Earth, Dr. Hanford and her assistants watch the holographic images as one explosion after another continues to occur in space. One by one the holographic images begin to blink out and disappear as the radio telescope stops functioning. A moment later the power goes out, including the lights. Dr. Hanford speaks calmly.

HANFORD

Just be calm, the back-up generators  
will kick in any second.

The sound of machinery whirling to life is heard, then the lights come back on.

Dr. Cummings turns to Dr. Hanford and asks in a frightened tone . . .

CUMMINGS

Aren't there quite a few nuclear warheads  
floating around up there?

HANFORD

Yes, quite a few.

CUMMINGS

So what happens when they explode?

Dr. Hanford sighs and looks around.

HANFORD

I guess we'll find out pretty soon. Although,  
whatever it is, I'm certain that it can't be  
good.

## INT. HOTEL LOBBY – NIGHT

The Police Officer, Jessica, and the Manager are at the front desk speaking to the DESK CLERK.

## DESK CLERK

I'm sorry, but Captain McCormack is not registered. We all know him and no one remembers him checking in, either. I'm afraid he's just not here.

Jessica and the Police Officer look befuddled.

## OFFICER

Let's search the hotel.

## JESSICA

Right. And I suggest that we start with the bar.

They exit quickly.

## EXT. EARTH/ MONTAGE – NIGHT

The satellites continue to blow up all around the Earth, one by one. It just keeps going and going. People on Earth look and watch in terrified amazement.

All of the phones stop working. Cell phones, hard-lines, everything, they all go down.

The televisions all blink off.

All satellite navigation systems in airplanes quit and planes immediately begin to crash into mountains and into the ocean.

## INT. HOTEL ROOFTOP SWIMMING POOL – NIGHT

Jessica and the Police Officer and the Manager come out into the enclosed rooftop swimming pool of the Hilton Hotel. They find Mac passed out in a chaise lounge beside the pool. Jessica rolls her eyes in exasperation, but also in relief.

## JESSICA

(to herself)

My hero.

Meanwhile, above Mac, through the glass enclosure, the Earth sits large in the sky, reflecting off the water in the pool. Explosions can be seen popping all around the globe.

Jessica, the Police Officer, and the Manager all look at the Earth and are stupefied.

MANAGER

What's happening?

OFFICER

The satellites around the Earth are all blowing up. It's really bad news.

MANAGER

Holy crap!

Jessica reaches down and shakes Mac awake.

MAC

What is it?

JESSICA

Mac, there's a catastrophe going on. Look.

Jessica points up through the glass enclosure.

Mac looks up and sees the explosions popping all around the Earth. He sits up straight and shakes his head.

MAC

Oh my God, it's the Cascade Effect. It finally happened. We're all in really big trouble.

They all look up.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

Meanwhile, nuclear warheads attached to satellites float in space around Earth. Some of the weapons are American, Russian (with the old U.S.S.R. markings), Chinese, Japanese, North Korean, a couple of Indian missiles, and even a Pakistani missile, too. All aiming down at the Earth, waiting to start the ultimate war.

Suddenly, tiny pieces of debris begin whizzing past the missiles like bullets, then more and more, until the missiles are finally struck and detonated.

EXT. EARTH/ MONTAGE – DAY

Down on Earth, the entire planet experiences a series of huge earthquakes.

The sky turns to blazing fire and becomes too bright to look at. There is one big flash after another after another.

BOOM! BOOM!! BOOM!!!

Most people crouch down behind something, or fall down.

Buildings and bridges collapse.

Concrete freeway embankments crack and fall apart.

Fault lines split in the ground creating new gorges that swallow up houses and cars.

Avalanches crash down the sides of mountains, covering entire towns.

Enormous tidal waves are kicked up, that start moving around the globe, smashing and drowning ships of all sizes, as well as entire islands nations.

EXT. TYCHO CITY – NIGHT

On the moon, the residents of Tycho City have all come out of their houses and look up through the clear glass of the bubble over the city at the blue-green ball of Earth floating in the sky like the moon does on Earth. Only there are explosions going off all around the planet, like brilliant flaring stars of fire.

Then suddenly there is a series of huge ripping explosions around the Earth that can be felt all the way on the moon. The people all look horrified.

INT. HOTEL ROOFTOP SWIMMING POOL – NIGHT

Mac, Jessica and the Manager watch the explosions blanketing the Earth. The reverberations cause the water to slosh out of the swimming pool and wash around their feet. Mac looks around, concerned.

MAC

Let's get outta here.

Mac takes Jessica's arm and they all exit in a hurry.

INT. TYCHO CITY FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT



The flight crew and the navigators are in the control tower at the spaceport and are watching the explosions rocking the Earth. They are in contact with Earth, although the reception is breaking up.

CUMMINGS (O.S.)

We are experiencing enormous seismic activity due to the detonation of the nuclear warheads. I'm not sure how much longer communications will contin—

The transmission is cut off and the line goes dead. Only crackling static can be heard.

Everyone in flight control turns and looks at one another with great concern.

EXT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

The earthquakes knock over most of the big satellite dishes, which crash to the ground and break. They spark and sizzle and begin to smoke.

INT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

At the radio telescope installation, Dr. Hanford and her team pick themselves up off the floor to find most of their equipment smoking and in ruins. The younger astronomers look to their leader.

CUMMINGS

What's going to happen now?

Dr. Hanford brushes the dirt off of her clothes and looks up.

HANFORD

Most communications will stop working. Space travel has just ended for about a hundred years, and since the moon base is not yet self-sustaining—meaning they have no water supply up there—uh, they're all dead.

From the horrified expressions of all the astronomers, we slowly . . .

FADE OUT:

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE:

## EXT. EARTH – NIGHT

The Cascade Effect has stopped. The planet Earth is now completely enshrouded with a million particles of twinkling debris.

People are standing up, brushing themselves off and venturing outside.

Nothing works: all electricity has stopped for the time being, as well as most communications.

There is smoldering rubble and fires in many places.

Freeways are torn up and twisted.

Many bridges have disappeared.

Skyscrapers have collapsed into smoking ruins.

## INT. TYCHO CITY FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT

All of the flight controllers, as well as Mac and Sarah, sit in the control room and wait. They all look expectantly from the sparkling planet Earth in the sky, to the silent loudspeakers.

TOM

Three hours and not a word from Earth. I think that's it. We're cut off. Communication with Earth has stopped.

MAC

And all the water we have is all the water we'll ever have. We better start some serious conservation programs right away. We may also want to station police officers at the water tanks.

## EXT. TYCHO CITY/ MONTAGE – NIGHT

On the moon, the residents of Tycho City immediately begin to panic. Suddenly water is more valuable than gold. Ten policemen arrive at the water tanks with electric stun rifles and station themselves around them at attention. A crowd of people builds up around the water tanks.

Everyone begins hoarding water, draining their toilets and hot water heaters, as well as siphoning off all the water from the water hazards on the golf courses, and the fountains in front of buildings.

All of the stored ice in freezers is melted back into water and saved in containers.

#### INT. TYCHO CITY FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT

In the spaceport tower, more and more top officials are showing up, including the panic-stricken Mayor.

MAYOR

Look, we've got to get everybody out of here and back to Earth, otherwise we'll all die of thirst.

Tom Hastings looks at the Mayor and shakes his head.

TOM

We've lost communications with Earth. But given the size of those explosions—all the nuclear warheads going off—Earth may very possibly not be worth going back to. Also, with all of that new debris in space, I seriously doubt whether we can maneuver a ship through the space lanes anymore.

The Mayor turns to Captain McCormack.

MAYOR

What do you think, Captain? Is there a chance? Can you get your ship back home?

Mac turns and shrugs his big shoulders.

MAC

Honestly, I don't know. But it sure doesn't look good, I can tell you that. It was hard enough maneuvering a ship through there before, and that was with the help of a lot of other people plotting the course.

The Mayor really begins to panic now.

MAYOR

Then we're all doomed! We're all going to die!

TOM

(shrugs)

I'd say that's a distinct possibility.

MAYOR

(to Mac)

Do you want to die here on the moon?

MAC

(he shrugs, too)

If I've got to die, I guess it's as good a place as any.

The Mayor turns and addresses everybody.

MAYOR

That's not a good answer. That's crap! I for one do not intend to die on some Godforsaken rock out in space. I demand that you figure out a way to get us all out of here. That's an order!

The Mayor stomps out of the room. Everybody else looks grim. Mac scratches his head and looks closely at the planet Earth outside the window.

INT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

At the radio telescope, Dr. Hanford and her people have some of their equipment back up and running, but not most of it, and not the radio telescope, which is completely ruined.

They do have numerous conventional telescopes set up, though, and some of them are quite large. People are writing with pens on paper, which is a new experience for them.

Dr. Hanford is looking through the largest of the telescopes. She suddenly turns and looks at Dr. Cummings who is wearing headphones and slowly turning a dial.

HANFORD

Anything?

Dr. Cummings listens even harder. We see that they have jerry-rigged a small dish receiver aiming up into space. Cummings shakes his head.

CUMMINGS

Nope, not yet.

HANFORD

It's just a chance. I'm not at all sure my calculations were correct.

CUMMINGS

Nothing yet.

HANFORD

But given the size and proximity of the nuclear warheads, I just have a suspicion that I'm right.

CUMMINGS

(he keeps listening, then  
his face lights up)

Got it.

Dr. Cummings throws a switch and the sound comes out a speaker for everyone to hear.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (O.S.)

Come in Earth, this the Lunar Spaceport,  
do you read? Come back.

Dr. Hanford smiles.

HANFORD

I knew I was right.

Dr. Cummings speaks into a microphone.

CUMMINGS

Lunar Spaceport, this is this is Evergreen,  
we read you. Come back.

INT. TYCHO CITY FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT

There's an audible sigh of relief from everyone in the Tycho City Spaceport.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Thank goodness. Very good to hear  
your voice, Evergreen. So then com-  
munications are resumed?

CUMMINGS (O.S.)

No, not exactly. We're transmitting  
through a hole in the space debris  
created by the exploding nuclear  
weapons. This hole won't last very  
long because we're orbiting past it . . .

(static builds and drops)

. . . We'll be able to communicate  
for a few minutes everyday as our  
transmitter lines up with the hole,  
until the hole closes up, that is—

As the static builds up again the voices are lost.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

How long will that be? Evergreen, come  
back.

But the voice is gone. Reception is lost. Everyone in the spaceport sighs. One of the  
flight controllers looks up.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

That's a sign of hope, don't you think?  
That we can make radio contact.

Everyone mumbles in the affirmative. Tom Hastings cuts in.

TOM

But that's only as long as the hole  
lasts, which can't be all that long  
with all that debris, even in geo-

synchronous orbit.

Meanwhile, Mac is thinking hard. Sarah glances at him, then looks even closer.

SIMON

Mac? What are you thinking?

He holds up his hands. Everyone turns and looks at him. Mac furrows his brow.

MAC

Tom, tell me about this hole in the debris that they just broadcast through.

TOM

Well, apparently a cluster of nuclear weapons went off simultaneously and created a clear spot. And since everything in geo-synchronous orbit is moving at approximately the same speed, the hole is staying open.

MAC

How long, do you suppose?

TOM

Hard to say. A few days. A week. Not for too long, that's for sure.

MAC

Hmmmm . . . ?

TOM

What?

MAC

Well . . . If they can transmit through the hole, why can't we fly through the hole?

Everyone in flight control continues to look at him. Finally, Tom Hastings lifts his index finger.

TOM

But they could only broadcast through

the hole for a minute.

MAC

But the hole is in orbit and the transmitter is moving past it as the planet turns. Once we're also in geo-synchronous orbit the same as the debris, the hole would be stationary for us coming through it.

Tom thinks about it for a minute, then shrugs.

TOM

But it's full of debris and radiation. Besides, without the radio telescopes on Earth, we can't plot a course through it for you.

MAC

No? Then I guess I'll just have to fly it by sight and intuition. Just like the old days.

The Mayor turns eagerly to Mac.

MAYOR

Do you actually think you can do it?

MAC

(shrugs)

I don't know. It sounds tough. But that's why I'm here, right? That's what I was trained for. Not to be a back-up safety system.

TOM

But right now you *are* the back-up safety system.

MAC

Okay, so now I finally get to do my job.

MAYOR



But is it possible?

MAC

Do you want to stay here and die  
of thirst?

MAYOR

No.

MAC

I don't know if it's possible or  
not, but I haven't heard any  
alternate suggestions so far. If  
this is our only choice—which  
is one more than we thought we  
had a few minutes ago—then I  
guess you'll all just have to trust  
me to get you home. So, let's  
make plans to leave as soon as  
possible, while the hole is still  
open.

TOM

How many people can you get  
aboard?

Everyone gasps. No one else thought of this.

MAC

Well, we have five hundred lounges,  
but we can put a few people in each  
lounge.

The Mayor starts to panic again.

MAYOR

So that's a thousand people. There's  
nearly fifteen hundred people here  
right now. Now what do we do?

Mac thinks about it, then shrugs.

MAC

Hold on, hold on. We'll just smash 'em all in. We'll still be light because the water tanks are empty. But no one can take any luggage. Just what fits in their pockets.

The Mayor stands and heads out of the room.

MAYOR

Right, I'm on it.

He leaves in a hurry.

Mac turns to all the flight controllers.

MAC

I don't know how long this hole will last, so I say we leave as soon as possible. How soon can that be?

Tom Hastings says without hesitation . . .

TOM

An hour at our end, Mac. But it's getting everyone aboard that'll take some time.

MAC

Then get everyone on it. Cops, baggage-handlers, everyone that works here. We've got a chance, here folks, so let's not blow it, okay?

People start to move.

TOM

Right.

(Tom turns to some nearby cops just standing there)

You heard the man, get on it!

COP

Yes, sir.

They Cops turn and leave. People start to run. Mac looks around the room.

MAC

And do we need any people to actually be here at flight control to allow for take-off?

Tom thinks about it a second, then nods.

TOM

Yes, at least one. We'll need someone here plotting our course to Earth so we come out near the hole. Also, we'll need someone here to tell the people on Earth that we'll be landing or they won't be ready for us, there could well be no place to land, or debris on the runway, or anything could happen. But the ship won't be able to make that transmission in the middle of the debris.

MAC

Well, keep thinking about that, and if there's possibly a way to rig it without a person, do it. If not, then think about who might be willing to stay.  
(he turns to Lt. Simon)  
Lieutenant, go warm up the engines.  
I'm going to go get my family.

A look of pain flashes across Sarah's face, but she salutes smartly.

SIMON

Yes, sir.

Sarah and Mac both exit in different directions.

END ACT FIVE:

ACT SIX:

EXT. TYCHO CITY – NIGHT

There is panic and confusion in the streets of Tycho City as the entire population makes its way to the spaceport. Two cars crash into each other, a fist-fight breaks out, and every cop is working.

Abandoned dogs and cats don't know where to go.

Spaceport policemen and other employees with megaphones are announcing . . .

EMPLOYEES

Please leave your vehicles and proceed calmly to the spaceport. Move quickly, but don't run. There's enough room on the ship for everybody, so don't panic. Once again, please proceed calmly to the spaceport . . .

Mac is running in the opposite direction as the masses, pushing his way through the people. People are annoyed.

CROWD #1

Hey, watch it, buddy!

CROWD #2

You're goin' the wrong way!

Before he even gets to his house he encounters his wife and children, all holding bags. He grabs his family.

MAC

Thank goodness. Quick, we've got to hurry.

Mac tosses their bags away, and Tim and Judy immediately start to cry.

TIM

Dad, that's all my stuff.

MAC

Sorry, this is an emergency. I'll get you new stuff.

JUDY

But my dolls.

MAC  
Enough! I'll get you more. Come  
on!

He hustles them back in the same direction that everyone else is going.

JESSICA  
Mac, what's happening?

MAC  
There's a disaster occurring on Earth,  
so we're all leaving immediately.

JESSICA  
(concerned)  
For Earth?

MAC  
Yes.

JESSICA  
(confused)  
But that's where the disaster is.

MAC  
If we don't leave now we may never  
be able to go back, and that would be  
an even worse disaster for us. Come  
on.

EXT. SPACEPORT – NIGHT

There is an insanely long line of people building up outside the terminal waiting to get inside and board the spaceliner. People are pushing and fighting and cops are breaking them up. Spaceport officials are trying to keep everybody in order while getting rid of their luggage. People are fighting and won't give up their bags.

Mac, Jessica, and the kids arrive and he tries to push his way through the crowd.

MAC  
Excuse me. Pardon me.

People block his path.

PERSON #1

Get to the back of the line!

PERSON #2

Yeah, who do you think you are?

MAC

I'm the pilot of the ship.

Suddenly there is a hush, then urgently whispered voices.

PERSON #2

It's the pilot, let him through.

PERSON #1

For God's sake, let him through. It's the pilot.

PERSON #3

He'll save us.

The crowd parts like the Red Sea to let them through.

Mac looks at Jessica and grins.

MAC

You see, sometimes being the pilot's wife isn't so bad, huh?

Jessica nods and begrudgingly smiles.

JESSICA

Okay, I'll give you this one.

As Mac and his family move through the crowd, people reach out and smack him on the back. They enter the terminal.

INT. SPACEPORT – NIGHT

Mac, Jessica and the kids pass the long line of people waiting to get onboard, as well as all of the spacelines officials, who give them the thumbs-up.

CROWD #1

It's pilot.

CROWD #2

He'll get us home.

CROWD #3

Good luck, Captain.

MAC

Thanks.

As word spreads of who this is, suddenly the whole terminal full of people burst into applause for Mac.

Jessica and the kids look seriously proud.

JESSICA

A lot of people are depending on you,  
Mac.

MAC

Yeah, like everybody.

He frowns and flexes his hand. Jessica sees this.

INT. SPACELINER – NIGHT

Mac and his family board the spacecraft. Mac secures a single lounge for his wife and kids, who must all three squeeze into it.

MAC

Tim, you'll lie next to your mother,  
and Judy, you'll be on her lap.

TIM

(whining)

I want my own lounge, like when we  
came here.

MAC

Well, there won't be room. Everyone  
in the whole city is coming aboard.  
We're lucky to get a lounge at all.  
You see, a lot of people will have to  
sit on the floor. Now do as your told  
and snuggle up to your mother.

Tim and Judy do as they're told. Jessica and the two kids cram themselves into the lounge. Mac starts to leave and Jessica grabs his hand.

JESSICA

Mac, I love you.

MAC

I love you, too. I love all of you. And I'm going to get you home, so don't worry.

Jessica takes his hand and speaks very seriously.

JESSICA

Mac, I absolutely know you can do this. So do it. Get us all home, and we'll start again and be happy. You and me and the kids. It can all still work out.

MAC

(nods)

Okay, I'll do my best.

Mac kisses his kids and his wife, as though it were possibly the last time.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people must lie on the floor. Stewards and stewardesses attend to everyone, trying to make them as comfortable as possible. They hand out pillows, as well as going about rigging up straps to hold everyone down, which is a big ordeal.

Mac makes his way up to the cockpit, stepping over and around people in the aisles. He runs into Tom Hastings who is waiting outside the cockpit door looking very serious. Mac and Tom nod at each other.

TOM

Mac.

MAC

Tom.

Mac opens the door to the cockpit.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT



Mac finds Lt. Simon in the co-pilot's seat awaiting him. Mac takes his seat and straps himself in.

MAC  
Everything okay?

SIMON  
(nods)  
Everything's A-OK, Captain, no problems.

MAC  
Excellent. How's the boarding going?

SIMON  
It'll still take a few more minutes, but they're handling it. It'll be tight.

MAC  
Yeah, well, comfort's not the issue here. If we get home they're all fine, matter what they look like.

SIMON  
(nods)  
Right.

MAC  
Did they work out the issue in the tower? Does someone actually have to stay behind?

SIMON  
(nods)  
Yeah. One person.

Mac shakes his head.

MAC  
That's a damn shame. So, did anyone volunteer?

SIMON

(nods)

Yeah. One person.

MAC

Really? Who?

SIMON

Me.

Mac is horrified.

MAC

*You?* But you have to co-pilot the ship.

She shakes her head and disengages her belt.

SIMON

You've got to pilot this ship on your own, Mac. And if you need any help, Tom Hastings is a pilot, and with a lot more experience than me, and he's also got three kids. You see, I don't have anyone, I'm not married, no kids, no family, so I can do this.

MAC

That's not good enough. I don't want you doing this.

SIMON

Look, Mac, you need me to help navigate you through that hole. And I'll get you a clean landing, too. I know what needs to be done, and I'll do it.

MAC

I know you will, but why? This is a huge decision. Too big. I can't let you do it.

SIMON

Why? I'll tell you why. I've waited my whole life to be vital, to be necessary,

and now I finally am. And I may never get the chance again. I mean, come on, if I don't do this, who will? Really. Think about it.

Mac shakes his head sadly. He doesn't know what to say.

MAC

I don't know.

SIMON

That's right, there isn't anyone else. It has to be me. And I'll do it. And right now the lives of all these people depend on you *and* me. So we'll do what we have to do.

Mac stands and takes her into his arms.

MAC

Wow! You're really something. You impress the hell out of me.

SIMON

(smiles)

Thanks. You do, too.

MAC

I love you, Lieutenant. I really do.

Sarah puts her face on his shoulder, tears streaming out of her eyes.

SIMON

And I love you, too. If only I'd seen you first, but I didn't. So there's the breaks, huh? But we'll always have our weekend up here on the moon, right?

MAC

Yes we will. Always.

Sarah turns and quickly leaves the cockpit. Mac watches her go. Tom Hastings steps in and sits down in the co-pilot's seat. He looks at Mac, but Mac turns away. Tom starts hitting switches to begin the take-off procedure.

TOM

All right, let's begin the take-off prep.  
Sealing oxygen tanks.  
(hits a switch)  
Oxygen tanks secured.

MAC

Roger. Baggage doors closed and sealed?

TOM

Roger.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

The spaceliner taxis to the end of the runway, then turns and stops. The runway lights blink on in sections, one by one, going off into the distance as far as the eye can see.

END ACT SIX:

ACT SEVEN:

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

The 7007 Spaceliner sits at the end of the long lighted runway on the moon, it's big jet engines revving.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Tom sit in the cockpit at the controls looking down the long runway, which is reflected back on the ship's front window.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

There are three times too many people onboard the ship, strapped down on the floor, lashed between the lounges, on the floor of the service areas, sitting in the aisles, smashed uncomfortably together, children on parents' laps. Everyone looks very nervous.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac and Tom both just sit there staring out the window at the long lighted runway. Finally, Mac turns to Tom.

MAC

Y'know, once we leave here we're committed to this course of action because won't have enough fuel to return to the moon.

TOM

I know.

MAC

If we can't get through the field of debris, we'll die in space.

TOM

(nods)

Uh-huh. So?

MAC

So, I just thought I'd bring it up one more time before we committed ourselves.

TOM

Mac, this is our only choice, so we're already committed. Let's just get on with it, okay?

MAC

(nods)

Okay.

Sarah's holographic image appears before the pilots in the cockpit.

SIMON

Runway is clear and ready. Take-off prep is A-OK. Proceed at your discretion.

MAC

Roger that, tower.

Tom turns and looks at Mac, but Mac's face is expressionless.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

The spaceliner pulls out onto the long, illuminated runway and begins taxiing. It builds speed and thrust, and finally lifts off from the moon, which at one-sixth the gravity it isn't very difficult even with so many people aboard. The ship moves away from the moon and glides into the vast expanse of space.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

All of the people smashed into the lounges, as well as all of the people on the floor, grit their teeth and take hold of anything they can. It's a smooth take-off, but very tense, nevertheless.

EXT. TYCHO CITY – NIGHT

The spaceliner's view of Tycho City gets farther and farther away, until the whole city becomes nothing more than just illuminated circles located in a crater on the moon.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Sarah's holographic image appears in the cockpit.

SIMON

Mac, I'll calculate your course settings, which you can then set manually, and I'll get you into that hole for the best possible moment of re-entry.

MAC

I know you will.

(Mac turns to Tom)

Get everyone you can crammed into the lounges and let's put 'em to sleep. Let's also get sedatives into everyone else on the floor. Everyone takes a sedative, including the stewards and stewardesses. If people start panicking and vomiting, there will be absolutely nothing we can do about it.

Tom unbuckles his belt and stands.

TOM

Yes, sir. I've got it.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

The lounges have several people in each of them. They are closed, sealed, and the hiss of the sleeping gas is heard. Meanwhile, all of the people in the aisles are strapped down, too, and are drinking what look like cocktails. Several passengers toast each other, trying to think positively as they drink their sedative cocktails.

Mac pushes the intercom button and speaks. Everybody on the floor looks up and pays close attention.

MAC (O.S.)

For those of you not in the lounges, I recommend lying as flat as you can, preferably on your backs, and with something under your heads for cushions, then we will strap you down. Everybody must be strapped down. Also, absolutely everyone must take a sedative, and that includes the stewards and stewardesses. This is not a request, it's an order. As we near Earth we will be taking a rather serpentine course, which will generate a lot of G-force, pressing you down. It's uncomfortable, but it's not fatal, and both of us up here in the cockpit will be dealing with it, too, okay? But we'll all get through this together, and before you know it we'll all be back on Earth, so don't worry.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Tom enters the cockpit and seats himself in the co-pilot's seat. He looks at Mac and nods.

TOM

'A rather serpentine course'?

MAC

(grins)

Good, huh?

Mac and Tom look up through the front window which is quickly becoming filled with the planet Earth and all of it's shining, whizzing space junk that engulfs it in a sparkling, fiery cloud.

TOM

It doesn't even look like Earth anymore.  
It looks like a different place.

MAC

(sighs)

It is a different place. Let's just hope  
it's still habitable.

TOM

The folks at Evergreen sounded okay.

MAC

Yeah? But I'll bet there's plenty they  
haven't told us. Those nuclear bombs  
going off shook us on the moon. Besides,  
they can only transmit for a few minutes  
at a time, so basically they haven't told  
us anything.

TOM

(sighs)

I guess that's true. I was just trying  
to look on the bright side.

MAC

Thanks.

EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

Sarah is in the flight tower on the moon all by herself. It's kind of creepy having only one single person in a facility designed for so many. Sarah looks at a clock closely, then pushes a button on the console.



SIMON

Come in Evergreen, this Lunar Space  
Station, do you read?

Sarah keeps repeating this, then listening for a moment to the static coming back, then repeats it again. A confused-looking golden retriever wanders into the flight tower. It sits down beside Sarah and she pets it while repeating the same words over and over.

Finally, she hears the voice of Dr. Cummings from Evergreen.

CUMMINGS (O.S.)

–unar Space Station, this is Evergreen,  
come back.

Sarah smiles and sighs. She speaks quickly and precisely.

SIMON

Listen Evergreen, we don't have much  
time. The spaceliner is on its way back  
to Earth, and will be traveling through  
the very same hole we're transmitting  
through now. It expects to be landing  
at Edwards Spaceport, so please contact  
them and have them waiting. If there's  
any debris on the runway, please have it  
cleared. You will have to give the ship  
as much information as you have on the  
shape and dimension of the hole through  
the debris as well as course headings as  
soon as you detect the ship coming  
through the hole. Did you copy all of  
this, Evergreen?

Sarah lets up on the button, but all that comes back is static. Did they get it or not? She doesn't know.

Sarah contacts the ship.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Sarah's holographic head appears before Mac.

SIMON

Mac?

Mac looks up and smiles.

MAC

Yeah?

SIMON

I spoke with Evergreen, and they will be contacting you shortly, as soon as you enter the hole, with course headings through the hole. Also, the runway will be cleared and ready for landing at Edwards.

Mac and Tom both shake their heads and smile.

MAC

Good work, Lieutenant. That's just what we needed to hear.

SIMON

Good luck, Mac.

MAC

Thanks. And good luck to you, too, Sarah.

SIMON

Thanks.

Sarah's head disappears, leaving nothing in their view but the debris-enshrouded Earth, which is flying up at them very fast. Mac reaches into his pocket and removes his bottle of pills. Tom sees them.

TOM

What are those?

MAC

They're for my nerves.

Tom looks horrified.

TOM  
You're kiddin'? *Now* you tell me?

MAC  
It's not *that* bad.

TOM  
But bad enough for you to need to take those pills?

MAC  
Well, I don't *need* to. I just do.

Tom looks at Mac very seriously.

TOM  
You want me to fly this thing?

Mac shakes his head vehemently.

MAC  
Hell no, I'm flying it. I don't need these damn things, it's just a habit.

He tosses the bottle of pills on the floor. Tom doesn't look convinced.

TOM  
You sure? I mean, if you need to take the pills, then take 'em. Fifteen hundred people's lives depend on it.

MAC  
I know that and I'm sure. I'm fine.

But of course he's not a 100-percent sure. Mac looks down at the controls which are on auto-pilot, then at his hands which are slightly shaking. Tom looks straight back at him.

Mac and Tom both glance out through the window.

EXT. EARTH – NIGHT

As they circle the Earth and it's shroud of junk, which is now orbiting past them, they see the opening to a glowing, snake-like hole through the debris which reveals a clear view of Earth.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Suddenly, Evergreen becomes audible.

CUMMINGS (O.S.)

Come in, spaceliner, this Evergreen.

Mac answers.

MAC

Come in, Evergreen. It's good to hear your voice.

CUMMINGS (O.S.)

Yours, too. We cannot compute a course setting for you through debris this small, we don't have the proper equipment functioning. You'll have to steer your course manually, spaceliner. We have, however, gotten you cleared to land at Edwards. Do you copy?

Tom answers.

TOM

Yes, we do, Evergreen. Have you got any advice for going through this, uh, wormhole?

But only static comes back, they've lost them.

EXT. EARTH – NIGHT

And here comes the weird, crazy, twisting wormhole through the space debris that Mac must now steer through manually.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Tom turns and looks at Mac.

TOM

You ready?

Mac cracks all of his knuckles.

MAC  
As ready as I'll ever be.

END ACT SEVEN:

ACT EIGHT:

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac takes hold of the controls. Tom disengages a cover on the control panel marked “Auto-Pilot” and reveals a keyhole. A flashing red light goes on, as well as a buzzer. Tom inserts a key into the slot. The red light turns yellow and flashes faster, and the buzzer goes up an octave.

MAC  
Ready to disengage the auto-pilot?

TOM  
(unsure)  
I guess.

MAC  
Okay, then, let's do it.

TOM  
Yes, sir.

Tom turns the key and switches the controls from auto to manual. A green light goes on and the buzzer goes off.

Suddenly it's like a 3-D ride, but with extremely high G-forces, slamming Mac and Tom back into their seats and distorting their faces. Mac hangs onto the wheel and steers the ship into the wormhole.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The spaceliner goes whizzing into the wormhole in the debris. It's like trying to fly a plane through a tornado. Every now and then little bits of shrapnel come streaking right at them then go ricocheting off the hull and fuselage, but luckily don't go through them.

#### INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

The people lying on the floor of the ship and being mashed down like bugs and several people barf right back up into their own faces. Someone begins to choke and another passenger reaches out through the intense G-forces and turns the vomiting person's head to the side, thus saving their life.

And meanwhile, a variety of stuff comes flying out of people's pockets, all the items they were allowed to take: change, pens, glasses, necklaces, rings, wads of money, and anything else that's not nailed down. It flies up into the air, hangs there weightlessly, swirls around crazily, then flies off against the walls and shatters.

The people in the lounges are dead asleep, and are being thrown around like rag dolls in a dryer.

The straps holding down a fat man lying on the floor come loose. The fat man suddenly goes flying straight up into the air and hits the ceiling. A moment later, he spins around one way, then the other, then he flies off at an enormous speed down the length of the interior of the spaceliner and goes careening out of control into the rear bulkhead, where he collides with a bone-crunching thud and a mushy splat of blood. His remains slide down the wall leaving a smear of blood and hit the floor with a plop.

#### EXT. TYCHO CITY SPACEPORT – NIGHT

As soon as the spaceliner enters the wormhole, Sarah loses radio contact with them.

SIMON

Come in spaceliner? Do you read  
me? Please come back. Spaceliner,  
do you read me?

She gets nothing but static in return. She now not only has the golden retriever, there's a cocker spaniel, and a black and white, cat, too. Sarah has put out a bowl of water for them.

#### INT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

Evergreen has lost contact with the ship, too. Everybody in the installation looks at the speakers, then at each other in dread. All they can hear is static. Dr. Cummings is muttering to himself, but speaking for everyone.

CUMMINGS

Come on, come on . . .

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

It's a very hairy ride, and Mac looks like he's going to lose it a few times, but he hangs on and keeps steering through the crazy wormhole. He's working on pure instinct and impulse, his face flattened back against the seat.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

The ship spirals through the wormhole, narrowly missing one enormous hunk of debris after another. Smaller bits of detritus ricochet off the hull like bullets.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac is pulling so hard on the steering wheel, with his face smashed backward, that he gets a nosebleed. The droplets of blood float up into the air weightlessly, then splatter against the controls. Tom sees this and painfully asks . . .

TOM

Need help?

Mac answers painfully with a smashed face.

MAC

Not yet.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

Finally, a hunk of floating, jagged metal rips a gash in the spaceliner's fuselage. Vapor begins spewing out the tear into the vacuum of space.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Red warning lights indicating a pressure leak begin to flash on the control panel, and an intermittent buzzer goes off, too. Mac and Tom both see this, but there's nothing they can do about it. Tom glances at the oxygen tank pressure gauge and sees that it's rapidly dropping.

TOM

We're losing oxygen. Fast.

MAC

Great.

EXT. SPACE – NIGHT

Several more hunks of debris hit the ship and cause other tears in it's skin. Vapor spews out of all of them as well.

EXT. EARTH – DAY

The spaceliner enters Earth's atmosphere. The sky suddenly becomes blue and now there's no more debris in their way.

INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – NIGHT

All of the change and stuff drops to the floor. The passengers and crew aboard the spaceliner realize that there is gravity again, and there are blue skies out the windows. They all go crazy, clapping and cheering and yelling.

That's until they realize they have no more oxygen, and that they're still so high up in the atmosphere that there isn't enough oxygen to breathe. Everyone begins to choke and asphyxiate.

INT. COCKPIT – NIGHT

Mac has his teeth clamped together and holds onto the steering wheel as hard as he can. Oxygen masks drop out of compartments in the ceiling above them. They both immediately put them on. They speak through the masks.

MAC

There's no oxygen in the ship. And there's no oxygen in the atmosphere this high up

TOM

Everybody's going to asphyxiate very soon. In two or three minutes.

MAC

Then I guess we can't wait that long.

Mac jams the steering wheel all the way forward.



## EXT. SKY – DAY

The spaceliner goes into an extremely severe nose dive. The sound turns to a scream as the huge ship races down through the atmosphere.

## INT. COCKPIT – DAY

This maneuver increases the G-forces by an enormous amount, really and truly smashing them back into their seats, mashing their faces into pancakes. It's now very nearly unbearable. Hanging on to the wheel is almost impossible. Mac grunts to Tom through the crushing pressure.

MAC

Grab on! Help me pull it back!

Tom reaches out with extreme effort and grabs the steering wheel. The two men pull as hard as they've ever pulled on anything in their lives.

MAC

*Goddamn son of a bitch!*

## EXT. SKY – DAY

The spaceliner slowly straightens out from its nose dive. The sound eases up. The ship begins traveling on a much more horizontal course.

## INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – DAY

The passengers realize that they can breath again, and they all take advantage and gulp in the air. The G-forces have lessened to normal, too. They're no longer being smashed. Everybody sighs in relief.

## INT. COCKPIT – DAY

Tom reaches out and massages Mac's shoulder.

TOM

Nice flyin', Mac.

MAC

Thanks.

Mac takes a deep breath and starts to relax.

MAC

Let's make preparations for landing.  
Go see how the passengers are.

TOM

Yes, sir.

Tom stands.

EXT. EDWARDS SPACEPORT – DAY

As the spaceliner appears over Edwards Spaceport, the landing crew is still clearing wreckage off all the runways.

INT. COCKPIT – DAY

Mac suddenly gets the holographic image of the first flight controller on Earth, the black guy with the pointy sideburns.

FC

Mac, you're back. It's impossible.

MAC

Oh no it's not. Is my runway clear?

The flight controller grimaces.

FC

Mostly. We just got the information  
you were coming just a short while  
ago. We're doing the best we can.

Mac shakes his head and sighs.

MAC

The ship's damaged, and I haven't got  
enough fuel or oxygen for another try,  
so ready or not, here we come.

## EXT. EDWARDS SPACEPORT – DAY

Mac brings the enormous spaceliner in for a landing on a long runway that still has bulldozers pulling parts of broken spaceships, wrecked ground vehicles, and other debris out of the way.

As the enormous aircraft comes in for a landing it manages to hit almost every single item on the runway. Spaceport workers run for their lives as bulldozers, and various other vehicles are knocked out of the way like toys. The huge wheels of the ship go right over smaller vehicles.

## INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – DAY

The passengers are tossed up and down and all over the place as the ship hits things, and bounces over other things. People let out horrible grunts as they collide with the walls or the floor.

## EXT. EDWARDS SPACEPORT – DAY

The spaceliner narrowly misses killing anybody, then deftly makes a hard right turn and pulls up to the jetway, which locks onto the side of the ship.

## INT. COCKPIT – DAY

Mac releases the steering wheel and lets out a big breath.

FC (O.S.)  
Nice landing, spaceliner.

MAC  
Thanks, tower.

## INT. SPACELINER/PASSENGER SECTION – DAY

The people on the floor of the ship, many vomit-spattered, all with their hair sticking straight up, slowly stand. Tom pushes the button that releases the lids of the lounges. The sleeping people awaken, including Jessica and the kids. One by one all of the passengers realize they're safe on Earth and begin clapping.

Mac and Tom step out of the cockpit smiling and take their bows. They both shake hands. They made it.

Jessica and the kids run into Mac's arms. Mac holds onto them tightly.

The crowd pushes in around them, cheering, incredibly happy to be alive.

Mac grins.

DISSOLVE:

A title reads: "Three Months Later."

EXT. EVERGREEN RADIO TELESCOPE – DAY

Most of the satellite dishes that sit in front of the observatory are destroyed, sitting on their sides and useless. There are two smaller dishes up and running, though.

INT. EVERGREEN CENTRAL – DAY

Dr. Cummings is listening with headphones, and suddenly he picks up something. His eyes widen.

CUMMINGS

I'm picking up a broadcast from Tycho City Spaceport.

Dr. Hanford steps up looking slightly horrified.

HANFORD

It's not possible. She can't still be alive.

ASSISTANT

Well, someone's broadcasting.

HANFORD

Turn it up.

Dr. Cummings turns up the volume and there is a loud hissing static. Everybody pays attention and listens.

EXT. TYCHO CITY – NIGHT

The moon base sits empty. Some of the lights have burned out. Other lights flicker.

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL – NIGHT

Sarah and all of the stray dogs and cats of Tycho City are living in the flight terminal. Most of the dogs and cats have already died of thirst. Sarah is just about to expire

herself. Her lips and tongue are white. She speaks her last words into the microphone, which comes out mostly as dry croak.

SIMON

Tell Mac—

Lt. Sarah Simon's eyes roll back in her head and she dies.

INT. EVERGREEN CENTRAL – DAY

All of the people in Evergreen lower their heads and look sadly at the floor.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE MOON – NIGHT

The full moon is obscured by all the twinkling junk, but it's still there. Our view widens out and we realize that the moon is hanging in the sky above a suburban house . . .

EXT. MAC'S HOUSE – NIGHT

We can hear Jessica inside putting Tim and Judy to bed.

TIM (O.S.)

Can I stay up?

JESSICA (O.S.)

No, you cannot.

JUDY (O.S.)

Can I stay up?

JESSICA (O.S.)

If he can't, why should you? No, you can't.

JUDY (O.S.)

Please . . .

JESSICA (O.S.)

Go to sleep, both of you.

INT. MAC'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Jessica steps into the living room and looks around.

JESSICA

Mac? Where are you?

She walks down the hall toward the back of the house.

EXT. MAC'S HOUSE/ BACKYARD – NIGHT

Jessica steps out the back door into the backyard. She sees Mac, steps up to his side and puts her arms around him. Mac puts his arm around her, too, and holds her tight. Nevertheless, he is looking sadly, painfully, longingly up at the moon. Jessica sees this, but pulls him tighter.

Mac just keeps looking up.

FADE OUT:

END ACT EIGHT: