

VOYAGERS

by
Zach Dean

Written by:
Zach Dean, WGA

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Producers: Lynda Obst and Ann Druyan

Blackness.

We hear the sound of wind as we FADE IN:

EXT. RHODOPE MOUNTAINS - CENTRAL BULGARIA - 1870 - NIGHT

The jagged dark peaks of the western Rhodope range rise beneath a vast basin of summer stars.

Forests of towering black pines bend in the wind. There is no moon.

EXT. CLIFF TRAIL - SAME MOMENT

On a narrow herding trail worn through centuries into the side of a mountain cliff, a BULGARIAN SHEPHERD GIRL (16) walks under the starlight.

As her SHEEP graze on the trail ahead of her, the shepherd girl pauses at the edge of the cliff.

For a moment, she looks out at the valley of darkness below and listens to the wind.

With incredible power, the girl raises her face to the heavens and SINGS THE OPENING PHRASES OF THE HAUNTING BULGARIAN SONG, "IZLEL YE DELYO HAYDUTIN".

She falls silent, listening as the timbre of her voice is carried on the wind, echoing through the dark canyons and valleys, as if waiting, hoping for a response as we...

FADE TO BLACK:

BEGIN OPENING MONTAGE SEQUENCE. THERE IS NO INDIGENOUS SOUND, ONLY VOICE OVER.

Rising slowly from the blackness we see A TINY, FAINT, PIXILATED BLUE DOT. The dot is the Earth, six billion kilometers in the distance.

CARL (V.O.)

That's here. That's home. That's us...

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - CAPE CANAVERAL - AUGUST 20, 1977 - DAWN

There is NO AUDIO as the purple hue of dawn rises on a NASA launch pad.

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FOUR FRIENDS we will come to know as CARL SAGAN (42), LINDA SALZMAN SAGAN (37), TIM FERRIS (32), and ANNIE DRUYAN (28), stand shoulder to shoulder behind a safety barricade.

CARL (V.O.)
On it everyone you love...

Carl holds his five-year-old son NICK in his arms as they all gaze upward, captivated by a MASSIVE TITAN ROCKET towering above them, seconds from launch...

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE - STELLAR NURSERY

In the vast sea of silent interstellar space, WE SEE THE SWIRLING SPECTACLE OF A NEW STAR BEING FORMED...

CARL (V.O.)
Everyone you know. Everyone you ever heard of...

INT. E-TRAIN - QUEENS PLAZA STATION - 1938

A 1930's subway car. Lost in thought, a HANDSOME YOUNG MAN (20's) sits on the train intently reading A NOVEL. A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN (20's), a stranger, sits in the seat beside him, reading over his shoulder, unbeknownst to the young man.

As he attempts to turn the page the YOUNG WOMAN SUDDENLY PLACES HER HAND ON HIS, STOPPING HIM.

Startled, he looks up at the stranger seeing her beautiful face for the first time...

CARL (V.O.)
Every human being who ever was lived out their lives.....

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ITHACA, NY - 1982

In a hospital bed, Annie, 33, exhausted from birthing, draws her newborn daughter SASHA to her chest...

CARL (V.O.)
The aggregate of our joy and suffering...

EXT. UNDERWATER - ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

As sunlight shimmers in the ocean surface above, a PAIR of majestic HUMPBACK WHALES silently drift in unison through the aquamarine depths off the coast of Bermuda...

CARL (V.O.)

Thousands of confident religions,
ideologies, and economic
doctrines...

EXT. SATURN - OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM

Soundlessly we PUSH THROUGH HUYGEN'S GAP in the breathtaking RINGS OF SATURN...

CARL (V.O.)

Every hunter and forager. Every
hero and coward...

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - 1976

CLOSE UP OF: A DISEMBODIED EEG WAVEFORM mapping a HUMAN BRAINWAVE on a needle and paper graph...

CARL (V.O.)

Every creator and destroyer of
civilization...

EXT. SAGAN HOME - ITHACA NY - 2012 - EVENING

An older Annie and Linda in their 60's celebrate, surrounded by ALL THEIR ADULT CHILDREN.

CARL (V.O.)

Every king and peasant...

EXT. CAPE COD BEACH - AUGUST 22, 1977 - 12:58PM

A younger Linda, 37, in an aqua bikini, kneels with six-year-old Nick in the sand.

Carl watches his wife and child digging with their bare hands for water beneath the sand.

Carl glances at his WRISTWATCH. It reads:

12:58PM

INT. ANNIE'S UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - SAME MOMENT

Annie (28) passes through the living room of her apartment where Tim (32) lies on her couch reading.

An issue of NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE rests on the coffee table featuring CARL'S FACE ON THE COVER.

Annie pauses, looking anxiously at the CLOCK on the living room wall. It reads:

12:59PM

CARL (V.O.)

Every young couple in love...

END OPENING VISUAL SEQUENCE

FADE TO BLACK:

There is a moment of blackness, then a...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - BROOKLYN TENEMENT - 1942 - EVENING

An EXTREME CLOSE UP ON SKETCHBOOK PAGE: a PENCIL TIP carefully writes the headline words:

LIFE FOUND ON VENUS! PREHISTORIC-LIKE REPTILES!

PLUTO HAS BEEN EXPLORED, WHAT'S NEXT?

We PULL OUT slightly revealing an ELABORATE PENCIL DRAWING of TWO ASTRONAUTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUITS POINTING TO THE SKY, surrounded by dozens of FAUX NEWSPAPER HEADLINES OF IMAGINED FUTURISTIC SPACE EXPLORATIONS.

We SHIFT ANGLES TO REVEAL, eight-year-old CARL SAGAN, with boyish cropped hair, wearing a white t-shirt and trousers, hunched over a sketchbook at the dining room table.

Hearing the CLINK OF A DISH, Carl looks up from his drawing and sees his MOTHER and FATHER standing side by side in the adjacent kitchen. Their backs are turned to Carl and we cannot see their faces.

Both reformed Jews, his father is still dressed from his work day at a garment factory. His mother wears a dark housedress. Their bodies touch as they talk, washing the evening dishes together.

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With his pencil between his fingers, Carl stares at his parents, as if examining their intimacy: the way his father touches the small of his mother's back, the way she tilts her head affectionately toward his father.

Carl listens intently, but he cannot hear their warm, private words.

The boy glances at his elaborate drawing, then closes the notebook and slowly stands from the table...

EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP - 1942 - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

We hear the sound of roosting PIGEONS as young Carl walks alone out onto the rooftop of his Bensonhurst tenement.

Carl looks up at the brilliant constellations illuminating the heavens above. The distant lights of a million other worlds reflect in his young eyes as we...

CROSS FADE TO:

SUPERTITLE:

32 YEARS LATER

ITHACA, NY - 1974

EXT. BACKYARD GORGE - SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - PREDAWN

In his bathrobe, Carl, now 40 years old, stands alone in the darkness staring up at the same constellations in the radiant night sky.

Perched in the trees on the edge of an eighty-foot rock gorge, the MODERN DESIGN GLASS EXTERIOR of the SAGAN HOME glows behind him in the darkness.

The sound of falling water is audible from the far side of the ravine.

INT. KITCHEN - SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - SUNRISE

LINDA SALZMAN SAGAN, (34), gorgeous with 70's shagged hair and remarkable figure stands in the kitchen PACKING LUNCHES for her son, NICK and her husband, Carl.

Nick draws a picture of a DOLPHIN with paper and crayons at the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carl, dressed in a corduroy jacket for the lecture hall, walks briskly into the kitchen looking for his shoulder bag...

LINDA

Good morning...

CARL

Have you seen my bag?

LINDA

By the door. I put it there so you wouldn't have to look for it.

CARL

Oh. Thank you.

She reaches into the cupboard and retrieves a COFFEE MUG.

SHE POURS HIM A CUP OF COFFEE, HANDS IT TO HIM, THEN REACHES IN THE REFRIGERATOR FOR A LOAF OF BREAD.

CARL (CONT'D)

I'll be staying in the city tonight. There's a dinner after my...

CARL PAUSES IN MID-SENTENCE, WATCHING LINDA AS SHE SLIDES TWO SLICES OF BREAD INTO THE TOASTER TO HEAT...

CARL (CONT'D)

Why do you do that?

LINDA

Do what?

CARL

Why do you make my toast after my coffee? Is there a reason for that method?

LINDA

What are you talking about?

CARL

Every morning you do the same thing in the same order: the coffee...then the toast. And I have to wait for the toast. Why not put the toast in first, then simultaneously, while the bread is toasting, pour the coffee?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDA

Are you serious?

CARL

It's inefficient.

LINDA

You're talking about a difference
of like...nine seconds?

CARL

Nine seconds each day. If you
extrapolate those nine seconds out
over say...the next 35 years...

Carl GRABS ONE OF NICK'S CRAYONS off the kitchen table
and SCRIBBLES A QUICK EQUATION ON A PAPER TOWEL...

CARL (CONT'D)

31.9 hours. That's nearly a day
and a third of my life wasted on
waiting for toast.

There's a beat of silence as LINDA STARES AT HIM, then...

LINDA SEIZES THE TOASTER, RIPS THE PLUG FROM THE WALL,
OPENS THE SLIDING KITCHEN DOOR AND PITCHES THE TOASTER
OFF THE SECOND FLOOR DECK DOWN INTO THE YARD BELOW.

CARL (CONT'D)

What are you doing!

Young Nick looks up from his dolphin drawing as Linda
LAUGHS to herself...

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Linda)
What's wrong with you?

LINDA

Nothing. I feel wonderful.

Linda pours her own coffee.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I just got back 31.9 hours of my
life.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SAME MOMENT

As the sun rises over the cityscape of 1970's Manhattan, we hear the SOUND OF AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR BEING ADJUSTED NOTE BY NOTE, INTO TUNE...

INT. ANNIE'S UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - SAME MOMENT

Standing naked at the window, silhouetted by the morning sunrise, we see the attractive backside of TIM FERRIS, 30, a handsome, intelligent, Rolling Stone writer with modish shoulder-length hair.

We hear sounds of the city awakening as Tim gazes nude out the fourth floor window, slowly tuning an OLD GUITAR.

Across the apartment, through the open bathroom door, ANNIE DRUYAN, (25), a beautiful young woman with dark curly hair soaks naked in a worn clawfoot tub.

She smiles at her fiancé Tim's back-lit body.

ANNIE

So...apparently it's morning.

Tim turns from the window, smiling as he plucks a string.

TIM

Whose guitar is this anyway?

ANNIE

I don't even know. Somebody left it here last summer.

TIM

The high-E doesn't want to stay in tune.

ANNIE

Are you coming in?

Tim enters the bathroom skillfully STRUMMING THE GUITAR.

Annie picks up a folded copy of ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE sitting beside the tub and reads from an article.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

Our perception of the universe is warped by the fact that humans have never ventured very far from earth.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

*To the collective mind of mankind,
the earth is "here" and the
universe "out there."*

Tim sets the guitar against the wall and SLIDES INTO THE HOT BATH WATER across from Annie, facing her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's a really good article, Tim.

TIM

Thank you.

ANNIE

Sometimes I wonder that about people. Myself particularly. That...despite my best efforts at connection, part of me will always "be here" and everyone else will always be "out there".

Tim looks at her, listening...

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I guess I'm saying I've never ventured very far from myself.

TIM

Maybe that's where love comes in.

Annie smiles.

ANNIE

When you were younger, did you think you were going to get engaged to someone like me? Am I what you imagined?

Tim pauses, considering.

TIM

When I was sixteen I had a vision.

ANNIE

A vision?

TIM

As much as a sixteen-year-old can have a vision, I had one.

Annie smiles playfully.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

Do tell.

TIM

Can we establish that I'm already aware that as visions go, it's a little sophomoric?

ANNIE

Noted.

TIM

Well, when I was sixteen down in Florida, I fell asleep on a beach and I had a dream. And in the dream I saw a woman. Not her face, but her silhouette. She was standing in the distance, completely surrounded by hundreds of white birds, swirling all around her. And I knew in that instant, that was her. That was the one.

Annie eyes him for a beat.

ANNIE

Tim?

TIM

Yes?

ANNIE

You're totally fucking making this up...

Tim breaks in laughter.

TIM

True. But for a second there was a whole new facet of me opening up there.

Annie grins, laughing...

ANNIE

(playful)

White bird woman? Get outta my tub.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NYC - THAT AFTERNOON

The October trees are ablaze with color as the autumn wind blows through Central Park.

Annie, wearing a white Bohemian semi-sheer shirt and bell-bottom jeans walks down a tree lined path.

Tim walks beside her wearing a green fatigue jacket and corduroys.

SMOKING A JOINT, they laugh and wander off the path into the trees toward the great lawn.

ANNIE

I need to finish my book.

TIM

That makes two of us.

ANNIE

No, seriously, listen to me...

TIM

So finish it.

ANNIE

It's not about *just finishing it*.

TIM

Then what's it about?

ANNIE

My book? I've told you ten times.

TIM

I know what your book is about.
I'm talking about you. What's
stopping you from finishing it?

Annie pauses, taking a hit on the joint...

ANNIE

I think it's my mother.

TIM

Pearl? You think Pearl is keeping
you from finishing your book?

ANNIE

Yes. She and Charles Dickens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

Your mother is in league with Dickens?

ANNIE

Indirectly. But the other way around.

TIM

Dickens is in league with your mother?

ANNIE

Exactly.

Annie hands the joint to Tim.

TIM

How so?

ANNIE

For my seventh birthday, Pearl gave me a copy of *David Copperfield*.

TIM

The unconscionable bitch.

ANNIE

Shut up. I'm serious. You know the beginning? The opening lines?

TIM

Yeah. Maybe.

ANNIE

"Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life..."

TIM AND ANNIE

(joining her)
...or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show..."

Annie grins at Tim's knowledge.

TIM

Dickens. Dig it. What's not to like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

Me! Myself! I'm not to like! I'm all talk. I'm terrified I'm fake, Tim. My life has to amount to something significant. Something that matters.

Tim smiles at her with warm empathy.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Does that mean I'm a narcissist?

TIM

It means you give a shit.

Annie smiles as the afternoon sun falls on Tim's face.

ANNIE

Are we still going to this dinner thing?

TIM

It'll be fun. Trust me.

Annie brushes the bushy hair out of Tim's eyes, rises on her tip-toes, and KISSES HIM.

TIM (CONT'D)

She fuckin' hates me you know...

ANNIE

Who?

TIM

Your mother.

ANNIE

No. Not true.

TIM

No?

ANNIE

Nope.

TIM

Did you mention to her we're getting married yet?

ANNIE

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TIM

Why not?

Annie kisses him again and bursts out laughing.

ANNIE

Because she fuckin' hates you!

INT. HALLWAY - NORA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Tim, still wearing his tinted glasses, stands in a warmly lit hallway of a prewar building. The sound of a busy dinner party HUMS from behind an apartment door.

Annie leans into Tim's shoulder as he KNOCKS...

ANNIE

I might be too stoned for this.
Maybe we should walk around the
block again.

Before Tim can respond, the apartment door SWINGS OPEN and RITA ROSEN, 24, a pretty, vital, speed-talking young woman KISSES Tim on the cheek.

RITA

Tim! So glad you're here. It's
been forever and you're handsome
as ever but take off your shades,
you look like a narc.

Rita turns and smiles at Annie.

RITA (CONT'D)

And you must be the often-referred-
to-but-never-seen, Ann?

ANNIE

Call me Annie.

Rita grabs Annie by the hand.

RITA

Annie. Even better. Get in here,
this party needs more women.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT - SECONDS LATER

Rita leads Annie down the hall of a large Manhattan apartment as Tim follows behind them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rita turns back to Tim.

RITA

Tim, just a heads up, your editor's here. He's looking for you.

TIM

Shit. Where was he?

RITA

Don't know. His date was giving him a blow job in the bathroom but I think they've moved on to hors d'oeuvres. Take a look around.

Annie smiles at Tim.

ANNIE

(to Tim)

It's okay, go find him before he finds you.

Tim kisses Annie's cheek, then heads off into the eclectic mix of NEW YORK ARTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS...

As Annie and Rita move through the kitchen, Rita motions to NORA, 33, thin and witty, standing across the room talking with ANOTHER WOMAN...

RITA

(to Annie)

Nora's a writer. She used to work for the Post. Now she works for Esquire. This is her pad.

Pausing to light a cigarette, Rita veers into a non sequitur.

RITA (CONT'D)

Tim says you love baseball as much as I do.

Annie gives Rita a look.

ANNIE

Mets or Yankees?

RITA

I'm a life long Orioles fan.

ANNIE

Oh...did you grow up in Baltimore?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RITA

Don't be ridiculous.

SUDDENLY AN EXPLOSION OF HOWLING HIGH-PITCHED LAUGHTER ECHOES from the adjacent room...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

As she enters, ANNIE SEES CARL FOR THE FIRST TIME, LYING ON HIS BACK ON THE LIVING ROOM RUG, HIS EYES CLOSED, HOWLING WITH UNCONTROLLABLE LAUGHTER.

Annie grins, taken by the sound of his wild, unabashed laughter.

Carl opens his eyes and sees Annie standing over him. Their eyes meet and CARL SMILES.

INT. DINING ROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

GUESTS lounge around a long dining table amid conversation as Nora stands pouring wine.

NORA

Speaking of Carl! Tell us more about the planet thing.

The table's jovial attention turns to Carl.

CARL

(to the group)
Well this particular planetary alignment is a very rare occurrence.

TIM

How rare?

CARL

It occurs once every 175 years.

The dinner guests grow even more interested.

CARL (CONT'D)

We weren't even aware of its existence until about a decade ago. A young grad student at Cal Tech named Gary Flandro was observing the solar system when he discovered the impending alignment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

Well done, Gary Flandro.

CARL

Precisely. Mr. Flandro calculated that with the correct trajectory, an unmanned spacecraft, utilizing the massive gravitational assistance of Jupiter, would create an extraordinary opportunity: a complete and unprecedented survey of the outer planets. We call it the Planetary Grand Tour.

Carl reads the interested, but in some cases, CONFUSED FACES OF THE DINNER GUESTS.

Carl stands up from the table.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to everyone)

Come on. I'll show you how it works.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NORA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

On the rooftop eight stories above Manhattan...

With the rooftop door propped open with a wine bottle, NINE SEMI-INTOXICATED DINNER GUESTS, including Rita, Nora, and others are spaced out in a long line aiding Carl's demonstration.

Annie, Tim, and a CROWD OF OTHER DINNER GUESTS watch from the sidelines intently.

Carl walks down the line of nine guests, giving each the name of a planet...

CARL

(walking down the line of guests)

Dan, you are Mercury. Nora, you are Venus...Rita you're Earth.

Carl continues down the line.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to each in the line)

Mars...Jupiter. Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carl pauses.

CARL (CONT'D)

Now we need...

Carl looks over at Tim standing on the sideline.

CARL (CONT'D)

Tim, would you mind coming over?

Tim approaches and stands at the front of the line.

CARL (CONT'D)

(addressing the nine)

All right, listen up planets. Tim is the sun. A mid-sized G2 star. He contains more than 99.8% of the total mass of the Solar System. Consequently, you're all greatly attracted to his substantial gravity. Thus, you'll all be orbiting around him.

Pleased by his introduction, Tim makes a nonchalant, yet triumphant motion with his fist.

CARL (CONT'D)

In a moment I will ask you all to begin orbiting, but first, in order to fully demonstrate the Planetary Grand Tour, we need one more thing...

Carl looks at Annie.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Annie)

My apologies, I don't know your name.

Annie smiles at Carl.

ANNIE

Annie. Annie Druyan.

CARL

Annie, would you be interested in playing the role of our unmanned spacecraft?

Annie sets down her glass of wine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

My pleasure.

CARL

Technically there will be two spacecrafts launched for the Grand Tour, but for our purposes we'll go with a single example.

ANNIE

I assume I'm launching from Earth.

CARL

Quite right.

Rita smiles warmly at Annie as she approaches.

ANNIE

(to Rita)
Hello Earth.

RITA

(to Annie)
Hello unmanned spacecraft.

Carl addresses the planets...

CARL

Now, in addition to orbiting the sun, you also each have your own indigenous gravitational field relative to your mass. So, just like Tim holds you all in his gravitational orbit, you each hold various moons and other cosmic debris in your own.

TIM

Carl?

CARL

Yes, Tim?

TIM

Shouldn't they all be revolving themselves?

Carl looks at the planet-guests and smiles.

CARL

Yes. They should. (addressing the group) Planets, would you please begin to rotate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The nine planet-guests, still holding their cocktails,
BEGIN TO LAUGH AS THEY ROTATE AT VARIOUS SPEEDS.

CARL (CONT'D)

Venus and Uranus, you two planets
have the distinction of rotating
east to west, the opposite
direction of all the others.

NORA

And why do I do that?

CARL

We don't know. We think you may
have been struck by large
asteroids in your youth, but it's
only a theory.

Annie turns to Carl...

CARL (CONT'D)

Now begin orbiting!

All nine of the spinning guests BEGIN WALKING IN LAZY
ORBITS AROUND TIM at varying distances...

CARL (CONT'D)

Wonderful! Try to keep yourselves
in the appropriate order.

Carl turns to Annie.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Annie)
Are you ready to launch?

ANNIE

Never been more ready.

CARL

Very good. (addressing everyone)
So lets push forward in time three
years from this moment, to mid-
1977, when Gary Flandro's planet
alignment begins to happen.

CARL GENTLY PLACES HIS HANDS ON ANNIE'S SHOULDERS...

CARL (CONT'D)

And lift off...

Carl guides Annie slowly away from Earth...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CARL (CONT'D)

We'll skip Mars and head for
Jupiter...

ANNIE

Why?

CARL

Not part of the trajectory.
Besides, Viking I and II are
already going to land there.

As guests watch, Carl walks Annie slowly toward Tim's
editor JAN, A TALL, ROTATING MAN WITH SIDEBURNS playing
the role of JUPITER.

CARL (CONT'D)

(addressing everyone)

As we approach Jupiter, two years
will have gone by. It will now be
the summer of 1979. Now Annie will
slingshot around Jupiter and...

Carl, with his hands on Annie, demonstrates, arcing
around rotating Jupiter man...

CARL (CONT'D)

We are propelled toward Saturn.

Carl and Annie's MOVEMENT QUICKENS.

The next spinning PARTY GUEST (22), a giggling, Mama Cass-
like woman representing SATURN.

CARL (CONT'D)

It will take nearly two more years
to reach the rings of Saturn. It
will be a new decade. The year
will be 1980.

The spinning Saturn-woman PAUSES and smiles at them.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Saturn-woman)

We will photograph you, count your
moons and study your majestic
rings.

Saturn-woman giggles, then starts her orbit again.

Carl and Annie 'sling-shot' from Saturn-woman's orbit and
head toward the MALE GUEST playing URANUS...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CARL (CONT'D)

The journey to Uranus will take
six years.

As Annie and Carl approach, Carl looks at URANUS-MAN.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Uranus-Man)

You are almost a complete mystery
to humankind. We've never been
anywhere near you.

Annie and Carl 'sling-shot' again toward the last guest,
an OLDER, WHITE-HAIRED MAN representing Neptune...

CARL (CONT'D)

(addressing everyone)

We will push-on, traveling three
more years, until the late summer
of 1989, where at last we'll see
Neptune for the very first time.

Carl pauses with a hint of seriousness.

CARL (CONT'D)

(addressing everyone)

And every single observation we
make, every photograph and
instrument reading, will be a
landmark discovery.

Carl smiles.

CARL (CONT'D)

(addressing everyone)

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you
the Planetary Grand Tour.

The PARTY GUESTS CLAP, CHEER, AND CLINK THEIR GLASSES.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to the 'Planets')

Planets, I thank you for your
assistance. Please cease orbiting
before the solar system is awash
in cosmic retch.

As the crowd bottlenecks toward the roof door, Jann,
Tim's uber-editor, puts his arm around Tim, engaging him
in conversation as they disappear downstairs together.

At the very back of the line, Annie smiles at Carl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ANNIE

(to Carl)

What happens to me then?

Carl is slightly aflutter as Annie gazes at him.

CARL

The spacecraft?

Annie nods.

CARL (CONT'D)

Well, eventually you'll leave our solar system and enter interstellar space.

ANNIE

How long until that would happen?

Carl pauses, looking away from her warm gaze, doing a quick calculation in his head.

CARL

Approximately 38 years from now, Sometime around the year 2012.

ANNIE

And then what?

CARL

And then...then you wander the galaxy indefinitely.

ANNIE

For keeps?

Carl smiles.

CARL

Yes. For keeps.

Suddenly Annie and Carl realize THEY ARE THE LAST TWO PEOPLE REMAINING ON THE ROOF.

CARL (CONT'D)

I suppose we should head down.

They cross the rooftop, but as Carl reaches for the door, he notices SOMEONE HAS ACCIDENTALLY KNOCKED THE BOTTLE PROPPING THE DOOR ASIDE.

CARL TRIES THE DOOR KNOB, BUT THE ACCESS DOOR HAS AUTO-LOCKED FROM INSIDE. IT DOESN'T BUDGE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Carl tries again, pulling self-consciously on the knob.

Carl and Annie exchange a glance.

ANNIE
(re: the door)
Really?

CARL
Apparently.

EXT. ROOFTOP - 20 MINUTES LATER

Carl and Annie sit beside each other on the rooftop looking out at the breathtaking city lights.

ANNIE
It was in 1938, in Queens, and my father was coming home from NYU on the E-Train. And he was reading...

CARL
Do you know what he was reading?

ANNIE
Yes, I do. He was reading *ABSALOM, ABSALOM* by Faulkner. And this young woman sat down beside him. A complete stranger. She was sitting close. He could smell her perfume and he could feel her presence, beside him. But he was very shy and very proper so he kept his head in his novel. And after a moment, when he reached to turn the page, the young woman, this complete stranger, put her hand gently on his and whispered, *Please, I haven't finished reading the page yet.* (pause) And that was the first moment my mother and father saw each other. (Pause) And you know what?

Carl smiles, captivated by Annie.

CARL
What?

Annie grins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

They've fought every single fucking day since that moment for the last sixty-five years! And I guarantee you they are still fighting in Queens this very moment!

Carl BURSTS INTO HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER...

Annie smiles and their eyes meet again, HOLDING FOR AN INSTANT TOO LONG.

SUDDENLY, ACROSS THE ROOFTOP THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN...

TIM

(calling out)
Annie?

Annie turns to the sound of Tim's voice.

ANNIE

(to Tim)
Hey! It took you long enough!

Tim props the door open again and crosses the rooftop as Carl and Annie stand up.

TIM

What can I say?

Tim approaches and KISSES ANNIE ON THE CHEEK.

TIM (CONT'D)

I got wrapped up.

Tim turns to Carl.

TIM (CONT'D)

Carl, my apologies.

CARL

No need. We had a fantastic conversation.

Tim smiles and puts his arm around Annie.

TIM

Listen, Carl. While I've got you here. I was just talking to Jann, my editor downstairs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM (CONT'D)

How would you feel about me coming up to Cornell in a few weeks for an interview?

CARL

An interview? On what topic specifically?

TIM

We want to do a think-piece on the existence of life on other planets and after witnessing your rooftop performance here, we think you're our guy.

CARL

For Rolling Stone Magazine?

TIM

Yup.

There's a beat as Carl SMILES at the idea.

CARL

I think you're right.

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

A VAST EXPANSE OF INTERSTELLAR SPACE...

We hear the hollow cry of a Japanese flute. The lonesome opening notes of "TSURU NO SUGOMORI" play as...

TWO MAGNIFICENT, TWISTING GALAXIES, EACH ILLUMINATED BY BILLIONS OF STARS, SLOWLY ENTER THE EDGES OF THE FRAME.

EXT. BALCONY - SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - DAY

Late afternoon sunlight streams through the trees on a warm late autumn day.

Carl and Tim sit together outside on a second floor balcony. An AUDIO TAPE RECORDER rolls as Tim interviews Carl for his article...

TIM

Carl, why do you think there has been such fierce skepticism about the existence of intelligent life beyond Earth?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With the sunlight on his face, Carl considers his answer.

CARL

Well, it gets very complicated psychologically if we're not the only ones. If you imagine, for an instant, that we're only one kind of life among millions of other kinds, some remarkably more advanced than us. That's a mind-expanding experience, and some people are not quite ready to have their minds expanded...

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. LINDA'S PAINTING STUDIO - SAGAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Each carrying a flute of champagne, Linda leads Annie down a flight of stairs into her painting studio.

The room is flooded with sunlight from the large glass window at the far end.

The long white walls are covered with A SERIES OF UNFINISHED OIL PAINTINGS.

More canvases lean in the corner: some are abstract, some are realistic, and ALL HAVE BEEN ABANDONED in various stages of execution.

ANNIE

(re: the paintings)
Linda, these are great.

LINDA

No, they're not.

Annie looks out the floor to ceiling glass window.

LINDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Maybe they would be if I ever finished one. Lately I've been thinking more about writing.

From Annie's vantage point through the window she can see Carl and Tim recording their interview up on the balcony.

Annie watches as the RICH GOLD AFTERNOON SUNLIGHT FALLS ON THE TWO MEN, SILHOUETTING THEM AGAINST THE SKY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

(re: Carl and Tim)
Look at them up there. Back lit
like that, they look...*divine*.

Linda makes a noise and takes a sip of her champagne.

LINDA (O.S.)

Carl doesn't believe God exists.

Annie turns from the window, glancing at Linda.

LINDA (CONT'D)

He thinks God is a fallacy mankind
has created to help us cope with
our own mortality.

Annie smiles playfully.

ANNIE

He might be on to something there.

LINDA

(cutting Annie off)
What am I supposed to do with
that? A father telling his child
there is no God?

Linda looks at Annie.

LINDA (CONT'D)

You believe in God, don't you
Annie?

Annie pauses, recognizing seriousness in Linda's voice.

ANNIE

I don't know.

Annie offers a disarming smile.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I don't want to believe in
something. I want to know it.

EXT. LIVING ROOM - SAGAN HOME - LATER

As night falls, marijuana smoke curls through the air as
Tim, Annie, Carl, and Linda relax in the living room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

There's this incessant infighting within the Viking landing team about where to land the probes.

TIM

What's your position?

CARL

My position is that if we're going through the incredible effort to put instruments on the surface of Mars, we may as well place at least one of the two probes in an area which yields the highest chance of actually discovering something. Which in my opinion, is near the poles.

ANNIE

What's the argument against that?

CARL

The poles are more topographically treacherous areas, and if the landing fails, it fails on national television. Viking is going to cost a billion dollars. They don't want the star of the show to tumble down a crater.

TIM

Like the Soviet landers in 71'...

CARL

Precisely.

TIM

Are we still on the record?

Carl shrugs.

CARL

I haven't said anything that isn't true.

Carl pauses, considering something.

CARL (CONT'D)

What are you guys doing this summer?

Tim looks at Annie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM

Don't know. Trying to finish our books. We need to get the wedding plans on the rails. I'm not sure exactly. Why?

Carl looks at Linda.

CARL

(to Linda)
They should come out, don't you think?

Carl turns to Tim and Annie before Linda can answer.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Tim and Annie)
You should come out to Pasadena. For the Viking Landings. Stay with Linda and Nick and me. I'm on the imaging team. We're going to see things no human being has ever seen before. You should be there.

INT. CARL'S OFFICE - CORNELL CAMPUS - DAY

As Carl hurries through the office door he is greeted by SHIRLEY, his personal SECRETARY.

Shirley follows him as he gathers DOCUMENTS before leaving for the airport.

SHIRLEY

Your driver is already here. He's waiting in the faculty lot. Your ticket is paid for and is in the inner left breast pocket of your tan blazer...

CARL

The one I'm wearing?

SHIRLEY

Yes, Carl.

In a hurry, Carl reaches in his blazer.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Your other left, Carl.

Carl feels the ticket and nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The PHONE RINGS and Shirley answers it.

SHIRLEY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Hello, office of Dr. Sagan.

Shirley listens, then motions with the phone to Carl.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
(re: the phone)
Gregory Bruce at JPL...

Carl makes a face.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
(covering the phone)
He says it's urgent. He sounds a
little *miffed*.

CARL
Miffed?

Shirley shrugs as Carl takes the phone.

CARL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
On my way to the airport, Greg.
What can I do for you?

BEGIN INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

INT. GREGORY BRUCE'S OFFICE - JPL - SAME MOMENT

Behind a desk stacked with documents, Viking Project Manager DR. GREGORY BRUCE (55), a tightly wound scientist wearing horn-rimmed glasses speaks into the phone.

GREGORY BRUCE (INTO PHONE)
Carl, do you have any idea what
was on my desk as I arrived at
work this morning?

CARL (ON PHONE)
No, Greg. I do not. I'm afraid
I've been quite critical of the
psychic-crystal people lately, so
they revoked my ESP helmet.

Gregory shifts in his chair, gripping the phone.

GREGORY BRUCE (INTO PHONE)
We are not the Doobie Brothers
Carl! We are not The Pink Floyd!
Or...or...or Diana Ross!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (ON PHONE)

Agreed. But we're still relatively young, I don't think we want to paint ourselves into a corner...

WE SHIFT ANGLES TO REVEAL: on Gregory Bruce's desk is a copy of ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE...

GREGORY BRUCE

We are scientists, Carl. Not movie stars...

INT. CARL'S OFFICE - CORNELL CAMPUS - SAME MOMENT

Carl shoves several documents into his shoulder bag as he holds the phone to his ear.

CARL (INTO PHONE)

Greg, when you mix your metaphors it weakens your argument...

GREGORY BRUCE (ON PHONE)

(cutting Carl off)

Then let me make myself abundantly clear! Don't air our dirty laundry in the press! If you have an opinion concerning the Viking probe's landing location then you express it internally.

CARL (INTO PHONE)

I have. On more than one occasion.

GREGORY BRUCE (ON PHONE)

Then consider your opinion taken under advisement and do your job. Viking is my project, Carl. Mine. And you are only one small facet of my team. (pause) I honestly don't know what you were thinking? This is science, Carl! Our life's work! Don't cheapen it! It doesn't belong in the pages of Rolling Stone Magazine or with the hippies that read it!

Carl pauses, setting the bag on his desk.

CARL (INTO PHONE)

Science belongs to everyone, Greg. It's not our own personal set of ideas and facts to play with.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

We have an obligation to explain what we're trying to do in terms people can understand.

GREGORY BRUCE (ON PHONE)

You want to dumb it down.

CARL (INTO PHONE)

No! I want to make it relevant! So it matters to people! Because that's the only way this world gets any better! If we remain in this closed, self-gratifying loop, slapping each other on the back and telling each other how clever we are, we'll end up with a society where almost no one understands science and technology. That's a prescription for disaster and it will blow up in our faces. That's what ignorance with power does.

FADE TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - BEIJING, CHINA - 1967

A small, sparsely decorated classroom at Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.

GUAN PINGHU, a frail, 90-year-old Chinese composer and professor of music demonstrates a technique on the GUQIN, a Chinese 7-string zither, to a group of MUSIC STUDENTS.

The young musicians watch in awe as the OLD MAN'S ANCIENT HANDS DANCE EFFORTLESSLY ACROSS THE FRETLESS STRINGS, CREATING WONDERFULLY COMPLEX, RESONANT MUSIC, when...

SUDDENLY THE CLASSROOM DOOR BURSTS OPEN.

The old professor STOPS PLAYING as a UNIFORMED SQUAD of Mao Zedong's RED GUARD SURGES INTO THE ROOM.

A DOZEN YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN ZEALOTS , donning CRIMSON ARMBANDS, force their way to the front of the class.

The old professor starts to speak, but before the words can leave his mouth the FEMALE SQUAD LEADER (20), STRIKES HIM BRUTALLY IN THE NECK WITH A WOODEN CLUB, SHATTERING HIS FRAGILE COLLARBONE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The seated young musicians watch in terror as their mentor collapses in pain on the floor.

A SECOND GUARD MEMBER (19), STOMPS HIS BOOT HEEL ON THE OLD MAN'S OUTSTRETCHED FINGERS, CRIPPLING HIS PLAYING HAND.

A THIRD MEMBER (20), grabs the STRINGED INSTRUMENT and VIOLENTLY SMASHES IT AGAINST THE WALL.

EXT. UNIVERSITY COURTYARD - BEIJING - MOMENTS LATER

With A HANDMADE SIGN HANGING AROUND HIS NECK, the old professor is dragged by the Red Guard into a UNIVERSITY SQUARE where DOZENS of other UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS lie beaten and humiliated on the ground.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SURFACE OF MARS

A LOW ANGLE SHOT of the ROCKY PLATEAUS AND RAVINES OF THE MARTIAN SURFACE.

Everything is still in the low gravity environment. Then slowly, the red iron-rich soil begins to SWIRL into the air, twisting into DUST-DEVILS as...

The JET BRAKING SYSTEM of the VIKING-I LANDER DESCENDS INTO THE FRAME, TOUCHING DOWN ON THE PLANET SURFACE.

SUPERTITLE:

VIKING - 1976

EXT. CARL AND LINDA'S RENTAL APARTMENT - PASADENA, CA

Palm trees sway in the warm summer breeze as the evening sun slips behind the San Gabriel Mountains.

A MID-SEVENTIES SEDAN SCREECHES TO A HALT on the street in front of Carl and Linda's RENTAL DUPLEX.

Exhausted from lack of sleep, yet buoyed by feverish excitement, Carl pulls himself out of the car.

GATHERING TWO ARMFULS OF CARDBOARD SHIPPING TUBES from the passenger seat, he kicks the car door shut.

INT. CARL AND LINDA'S RENTAL APARTMENT - SECONDS LATER

As Carl steps through the apartment door with his arms loaded, he hears LAUGHTER and the low sound of seventies rock music from the kitchen.

Tim, Annie, and Linda enter into the living room.

Linda approaches Carl to hug him but Carl cuts her off.

CARL

(to Linda)

Hi. Where's Nick?

Linda pauses.

LINDA

Sleeping. I put him down about a half an hour ago. You want to tell us how it's all going at JPL?

CARL

I thought his bed time was eight thirty? I asked you, and you specifically told me eight thirty. It's now only five-after-eight.

Linda makes a face.

LINDA

He was tired, Carl. His sleep is still messed up from west coast time.

CARL

Well, I made an effort to get home. I wanted to talk to him.

LINDA

You haven't been home from the lab in three days! How was I supposed to know you were going to decide to roll in tonight?

Carl TOSSES the cardboard tubes on the couch EXCEPT ONE, which he keeps in his hand. Without another word, Carl heads for Nick's bedroom door.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Carl don't...

He ignores her.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - RENTAL APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Illuminated by a night-light, Carl sits beside Nick, watching as the boy's small chest slowly rises and falls as he sleeps.

Carl is about to wake him, but seeing the peace in the boy's expression, he thinks better of it.

Carl adjusts Nick's blanket, and crosses the room to leave when he hears a small, SLEEPY VOICE...

NICK

Dad?

Carl turns back and sees Nick rubbing his eyes...

NICK (CONT'D)

Is that you?

Carl sits back down beside him.

NICK (CONT'D)

You're home...

CARL

Just for the night. I have to be back at JPL early.

NICK

Can we have breakfast together?

CARL

Probably not. I'll be gone.

There is a beat of silence.

CARL (CONT'D)

Can I show you something?

NICK

Sure.

CARL

I'll need to turn the light on.

NICK

How about a flashlight?

CARL

You have one?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

Uh-huh. Under my pillow. Mom gave
it to me in case I get bad dreams.

Carl smiles as Nick sits up in his pajamas, SWITCHING ON
A SMALL FLASHLIGHT.

Carl pulls the end cap off the cardboard tube and slides
out a 20" ROLLED-UP PHOTOGRAPH.

He slowly unrolls it, revealing a HIGH RESOLUTION, GROUND
LEVEL PHOTOGRAPH OF A MARTIAN CANYON LANDSCAPE.

NICK (CONT'D)

(re: the photo)
Whoa...what is that?

CARL

A ravine, where long, long ago a
great river once flowed on Mars.

NICK

Like it flowed with water?

CARL

Honestly, we don't know the
composition of a Martian river.

Nick stares at the image.

CARL (CONT'D)

Nick, do you know how many kids in
the history of the world have seen
this image?

NICK

How many?

CARL

As of this very moment...one.

Nick GRINS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - RENTAL APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

We can hear the sounds of Linda cooking in the adjacent
kitchen as...

Tim removes Louis Armstrong's 1927 *MELANCHOLY BLUES* from
the record sleeve and places it on a TURNTABLE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tim sets the stylus, and the first MUTED NOTES OF TRUMPET AND TROMBONE drift through the room.

Tim takes a long sip of red wine and closes his eyes for a moment, listening.

INT. DINING ROOM - RENTAL APARTMENT - SAME MOMENT

Carl and Annie stand together alone in the dining room.

The Jazz is audible from the adjacent room as Carl lays dozens of high-resolution PHOTOGRAPHS across the table.

Together they stare at the MYRIAD OF MARTIAN IMAGES.

ANNIE

So...any signs of life?

Carl looks directly into Annie's eyes. It's clear his gaze sends an unexpected electricity through Annie...

CARL

We have to be careful, you know?

There's a charged beat of silence. Annie doesn't break his gaze.

ANNIE

What do you mean?

CARL

False pattern recognition.

ANNIE

And what is that, exactly?

CARL

The human brain has a propensity to create patterns in otherwise random data.

She looks in his eyes.

ANNIE

You mean when we see what we want to see?

CARL

Yes. We project it. We project what we want. What we think we need. And run the risk of becoming blind to reality. I've done that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

In my past I've done it. And I've tried to correct for it. I've created sets of criteria to self-check myself...

ANNIE

(warmly interrupting)

Carl?

CARL

Yes?

ANNIE

What happens if what we see is real?

Carl falls silent, looking at her.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Carl, Tim, Linda, and Annie laugh like a family as they gather around food at the dinner table.

CARL

My mother and father, Rachel and Sam, took me to the World's Fair in Queens. We saw an exhibit called, *The World of Tomorrow*. There were these massive, amazing pavilions displaying futurist visions of what the world might someday look like. To my five-year-old mind, it was simply wonderful.

Annie watches Carl, clearly absorbed in his story.

CARL (CONT'D)

I remember looking for the restrooms with my father...and there was this terribly gaunt man, a derelict, selling pencils. And my father took the apple from my lunch bag and gave it to the him. (pause) I threw a fit. I stomped my feet. And my father pulled me aside so not to make a scene, and he looked me in the eye and he said...Carl, that man is hungry.

Carl glances at the table full of warm food before them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

Amongst all that vision,
imagination, and ingenuity, our
hope for humanity's future, a man
was starving in a stairwell.

There is a beat of silence, then suddenly Annie speaks.

ANNIE

I need to go back to New York.

TIM

All right, but, I was hoping to do
a couple interviews before we...

ANNIE

I'm going to buy a ticket and fly
home tomorrow. You should stay
here. Finish what you started. I
need to go home and get to work.

Carl glances at Annie from the end of the table.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - A WEEK LATER

The August heat beats down on mid-1970's New York City.

The newly completed TWIN TRADE TOWERS shine in the sun.
Checker cabs crowd midtown. Central Park is packed with
overheated NEW YORKERS.

WE HEAR THE STACCATO SOUND OF A TAPPING TYPEWRITER LAPSE-
IN as we CUT TO...

EXT./INT. FIRE ESCAPE - ANNIE'S APARTMENT - SAME MOMENT

Braless, in shorts and a tank top, Annie sits on her
apartment FIRE ESCAPE hunched over her TYPEWRITER as
music plays from the living room.

Pages of her novel are strewn throughout the apartment.

Her hair in a loose ponytail, Annie types sporadically,
then pauses, reading back what she's written...

ANNIE

(to herself)

*"...And then I'd go meet my friend
Lenore and we'd order some fresh
bunting for the Alexandria Library
Fire Memorial.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

*At last year's Lament the purple
seemed
frayed and there were one or two
comments..."*

The TELEPHONE RINGS inside, breaking her flow.

Annie ducks in through the fire escape window, crosses into the small living room, and ANSWERS THE PHONE...

ANNIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Hello?

CARL (ON PHONE)

Annie?

Sweating in the August heat, Annie steps in front of the SMALL ELECTRIC FAN, cooling herself.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

Who's this?

CARL (ON PHONE)

It's Carl...

Annie pauses, clearly thrown.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

Carl. Hi. What's...is everything
okay? Is Tim okay?

CARL (ON PHONE)

As far as I know he is. Sounds
like his interviews are going very
well in Pasadena.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

Yeah, he said the same thing when
I talked to him on Monday...

Annie pauses.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Where are you?

CARL (ON PHONE)

This very moment I'm on the corner
of Broadway and 113th.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

You're in the city?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARL (ON PHONE)

I flew in this morning. I had a NASA thing. Anyway, I was thinking we should have dinner tonight. Are you free?

Annie, blind-sided by the invitation, watches the fan spin as fast as her mind.

There's a long beat of silence on the line.

CARL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Annie?

EXT. BALCONY - PLAZA HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

An elegant 20th floor SUITE at the Plaza.

Carl and Annie stand out on a balcony rolling a Thai-stick as night falls on Central Park below.

ANNIE

But see, no one really knows exactly *why* we are the way we are?

CARL

You're talking as a species?

ANNIE

Generalizations about a species are easy to make. Basically...we want to stay alive. At all costs. Even if it kills us.

Carl laughs as Annie lights the Thai-stick and passes it to Carl.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But I'm talking about personality - who we are as individuals. Sure, there's biology. Which is major, but not necessarily paramount. There are countless examples of people with delicious genetics that turn out to be dreadful, soul sucking human beings.

CARL

You have to consider circumstance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Exactly. The environment you were raised in, the obstacles you face and how you navigate them.

Carl grins.

CARL

The mother...

ANNIE

Damn right! *The mother!* They're a governing dynamic in themselves!

CARL

Like gravity...

ANNIE

Or erosion.

CARL

There should be a '*Mother-Equation.*'

ANNIE

'Solving For 'M'...a modern tragedy by Annie Druyan...

Carl let's out a high, infectious laugh.

INT. HALLWAY ELEVATOR BANK - PLAZA HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Carl and Annie stand beside each other in the scarlet carpeted hallway, waiting for the ELEVATOR in silence.

Judging by their curious expressions, it's evident they are notably stoned.

After a moment, a PLEASANT CHIME RINGS OUT, signifying the arrival of the elevator car.

ANNIE

(re: the chime)

What a beautiful sound.

There's a beat.

CARL

Not as beautiful as your voice.

Annie slowly tilts her head and looks at Carl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is another beat of silence, then ANNIE STEPS SILENTLY INTO THE ELEVATOR FOLLOWED BY CARL.

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - LATER

Carl and Annie sit in a red circular booth at the opulent RUSSIAN TEA ROOM in midtown.

ANNIE

So what was the NASA thing?

CARL

Frank Drake, John Cassani, and I have this idea. We're planning a special project to launch with the Voyagers next year.

ANNIE

What's the project?

CARL

We want to send a message on the Voyagers into interstellar space, in hopes that someday, somewhere, beings from some other world will find it.

ANNIE

A message? What do you want it to say?

CARL

It would be about us. Our species. Who we really are. We want to convey our global culture. We want to send greetings in different human languages. And music. And...

Annie pauses, her mind racing.

ANNIE

(interjecting)

Just human greetings? What about all the other species? You should send the greetings of other species.

Carl pauses.

CARL

What would you recommend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Annie pauses to think.

ANNIE

I don't know. How about whales?

Carl smiles, considering.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And what about all the other ways we communicate? Like the cries of a baby? Or the sound of a kiss?

A WARM SMILE INSTANTLY BROADENS on Carl's face at Annie's suggestions, watching her as they riff...

ANNIE (CONT'D)

In essence, you want to tell our story? All of our stories? Correct?

CARL

Yes.

ANNIE

What about Hiroshima? Or Auschwitz? Do you show them that?

Carl pauses.

CARL

I've been wrestling with that very question. I honestly don't know.

ANNIE

But I suppose, if it's a first contact, the first time you meet someone...you put best foot forward. That's real human nature. We don't lead with your darkest hours. We offer an open hand...or we bow. We try show our intentions are good willed.

CARL

Exactly.

Carl is clearly captivated by their exchange.

CARL (CONT'D)

You know what my problem is with you?

Annie pauses, mid-thought...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

What's that?

CARL

You're a woman. It would be a lot easier if you were a man.

Annie makes an edgy face.

ANNIE

Perhaps you should articulate that thought further.

CARL

The best conversations I've ever had with a woman...

Carl pauses.

CARL (CONT'D)

...I've had with you.

Annie looks at him unflinching.

ANNIE

Just with a woman?

CARL

Maybe the best conversations I've ever had with anyone...

Carl pauses, considering.

CARL (CONT'D)

Except possibly with Joshua Lederberg. The exobiologist.

Annie's beautiful face BREAKS INTO A LAUGH.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - LATER THAT NIGHT

Cabs pass as Carl walks Annie home along Central Park.

ANNIE

When do you head back to Pasadena?

CARL

(interjecting)
Listen Annie...

There is a pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

I'd like you to consider being part of our team. Tim as well.

She stops walking and looks at him.

CARL (CONT'D)

You can stay local. We'll work out of New York as much as we can...

ANNIE

Carl...I'm not a scientist. I'm a college drop-out with a half-finished novel.

CARL

This isn't about science. It's about what it means to be human. We are feeling creatures. And you understand that. Probably better than I do.

Carl looks in Annie's eyes.

CARL (CONT'D)

This is a chance in a lifetime. To do something unprecedented and extraordinary. To reach out. To try to make contact. You said it. *To tell our story. Everyone's story.* It'll be the Earth's message in a bottle. You should be part of that.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

IN THE VAST EXPANSE OF INTERSTELLAR SPACE WE HEAR the staccato Mariachi guitar of "EL CASCABEL," play as...

THE TWO MASSIVE STARS, GROW CLOSER, ENTERING EACH OTHER'S GRAVITATIONAL INFLUENCE.

SLOWLY, THE SEPARATE SOLAR SYSTEMS BEGIN TO SPIN AROUND ONE ANOTHER GROWING FASTER AND FASTER as we...

FADE TO:

EXT. JET PROPULSION LABORATORY (JPL) - PASADENA

Palm trees sway in the warm wind on the 177 acre grounds of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), a research and development center responsible for constructing and operating unmanned spacecraft for the U.S. Government.

SUPERTITLE:**JET PROPULSION LABORATORY - PASADENA, CALIFORNIA****INT. GREGORY BRUCE'S OFFICE - JPL - SAME MOMENT**

Gregory Bruce stands from his desk, shaking the thick hand of JOHN LOWELL, a red-bearded scientist and right wing head of a NASA OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

JOHN LOWELL

First things first, Greg. I wanted to congratulate you on your appointment to director.

John Lowell TAKES A SAMPLE of Gregory's crisp NEW BUSINESS CARDS off a stack on Gregory's desktop.

JOHN LOWELL (CONT'D)

(re: Gregory's card)

I like the font.

Gregory smiles.

GREGORY BRUCE

Just opened the box this morning. Listen, I appreciate your support in helping make it happen.

JOHN LOWELL

We couldn't be happier with the choice.

GREGORY BRUCE

So what can I do for you?

JOHN LOWELL

I'm here about the Voyagers.

GREGORY BRUCE

It's an amazing project. We're incredibly enthusiastic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN LOWELL

Good. That's how it should be. I want to talk about your team.

GREGORY BRUCE

Well, it's not really my team, John. It's Ed Stone's team. His baby.

JOHN LOWELL

Understood. And we love Ed Stone. He's brilliant, understands the minutiae without losing the big picture. Best man for the job.

GREGORY BRUCE

What's your concern then?

JOHN LOWELL

It's my understanding that Carl Sagan has a place on the project.

Gregory pauses.

GREGORY BRUCE

That's correct. He's on the imaging team.

JOHN LOWELL

And we don't have an objection with that at this point. But we've heard something about a pet project of Sagan's. A planetary greeting thing?

GREGORY BRUCE

I'm aware of it. They're making some type of interstellar message.

JOHN LOWELL

A message? Well what the hell would the message say?

GREGORY BRUCE

Well, I don't know the details. I don't think they know the details yet. It's in development.

John Lowell pauses, looking at Gregory.

JOHN LOWELL

I'm going to be frank with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GREGORY BRUCE

Please.

JOHN LOWELL

We have reservations about Sagan.
His politics are questionable.

GREGORY BRUCE

I've known Carl professionally for
years. His ego certainly precedes
him, but I wouldn't describe him
as...

JOHN LOWELL

(cutting him off)

Sagan is the opposite of American
values and should not be America's
voice in space.

The statement hangs heavy in the air.

GREGORY BRUCE

Look, Carl is arguably finest
planetary scientist in the
world...

JOHN LOWELL

(interrupting)

He's a left wing Russian
sympathizer! For god's sake he
even wrote a book with one...

GREGORY BRUCE

I know, I read it...

JOHN LOWELL

(cutting Gregory off)

...and he absolutely reeks of pot!

Gregory Bruce falls silent, rubbing his eyes.

GREGORY BRUCE

It's not my call. I've been
director a month. Ed Stone wants
him. Ed's the man on Voyager. I
can't undermine his authority.

JOHN LOWELL

Then I want a NASA liaison
assigned to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GREGORY BRUCE

You mean a baby sitter? No. No way. Carl will never allow it.

There is a silence.

JOHN LOWELL

Fine. Then the baby sitter is you. He's your responsibility.

John Lowell stands up.

JOHN LOWELL (CONT'D)

So I suggest you keep a very close eye and a very tight lid on Dr. Sagan.

John Lowell TAPS GREGORY'S NEWLY PRINTED BUSINESS CARD BETWEEN HIS FINGER AND THUMB...

JOHN LOWELL (CONT'D)

(re: business card)

I'd sure hate to see these go to waste.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE CBS STUDIOS - NEW YORK - DAY

Carl and Gregory Bruce argue loudly on the street outside CBS STUDIOS in New York...

CARL

Human beings are far more complicated than that! Our emotional life is difficult to communicate...

GREGORY BRUCE

So what's your plan, Carl? How are you going to convey the complexity of human emotion to an alien race that may or may not exist somewhere out in space?

Carl pauses.

CARL

Well, Frank and I had an idea about that.

GREGORY BRUCE

Did you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

We use a record.

GREGORY BRUCE

A record?

CARL

Yes. A phonograph record. On it we can compress data, audio, and visual content. It's far more durable than magnetic tape.

Gregory stares at Carl, not speaking.

CARL (CONT'D)

We can send images of the earth and humanity and recordings of human languages, as well as languages of other species...like whales.

GREGORY BRUCE

Whales?

CARL

Absolutely. Why not?

Gregory pauses.

CARL (CONT'D)

But most importantly, using a record allows us to include music. Music conveys emotion. It's a language of feeling.

GREGORY BRUCE

How would they play the record?

CARL

Who?

GREGORY BRUCE

The aliens!

CARL

We include a stylus and a schematic of how it works.

GREGORY BRUCE

That's a big leap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARL

Greg, logic follows, if they've found one of the Voyagers, it means they're technologically advanced enough to have achieved interstellar travel. And if they can traverse the universe, they probably can reason that a disc, by design, is meant to spin.

GREGORY BRUCE

Okay. (pause) There's a finite amount of room on an LP record, Carl. Who chooses what's included and what isn't?

CARL

My team and I.

GREGORY BRUCE

Do you really think you have the right to make those choices?

CARL

Greg, I'm sure one could argue the complete inappropriateness and absurdity of half a dozen people making decisions for what should and should not represent all of humanity for eternity. That would be a valid line of argumentation...

It's clear Gregory is thinking.

Carl puts his hand on Gregory's shoulder.

CARL (CONT'D)

But it's not mine. I say yes. Yes we do have the right. Because we thought of it and we care enough to do it. And I'm not sure we have another 175 years to wait.

INT. LANGUAGE STUDIES DEPT. - CORNELL UNIVERSITY - DAY

A classroom in Cornell's Language Department.

Linda puts on a pair of recording HEADPHONES, inserts a MICROPHONE PLUG into the side-jack of a portable NAGRA REEL-TO-REEL TAPE RECORDER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Linda switches the NOB to RECORD and the TWIN MAGNETIC TAPE REELS BEGIN TO TURN.

A nervous looking YOUNG ARABIC WOMAN slowly APPROACHES THE MICROPHONE and looks into the camera - seemingly breaking the fourth wall - OFFERING GREETINGS TO THE AUDIENCE AS IF THEY WERE AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE FORM.

ARABIC WOMAN (IN ARABIC - SUBT.)

Greetings to our friends in the stars. We wish that we will meet you someday.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER STREET - NYC - DAY

Tim and Carl walk through the village...

TIM

Bob Dylan?

CARL

No.

TIM

You love Bob Dylan.

CARL

Nobody knows that more than me.

TIM

He's the voice of an entire generation. The most gifted lyricist of the 20th century.

CARL

Completely agree.

TIM

Then how can we say that we're representing humanity and *not* include Bob Dylan?

CARL

What if Bob Dylan was from...central Mongolia?

Tim makes a face.

TIM

Wouldn't hold it against him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

Nor I.

They turn a corner.

CARL (CONT'D)

But if he was from central
Mongolia and he sang in the
Mongolian language, would you know
he was the most gifted lyricist of
the 20th century?

TIM

No.

CARL

Why is that?

TIM

Because I don't speak Mongolian...

Tim pauses, realizing...

TIM (CONT'D)

...Nor will the extraterrestrial
life forms blowing the cosmic dust
off our Golden Record likely speak
English.

CARL

Exactly.

TIM

So the question is, does Dylan's
music alone, without comprehending
his lyrics, merit a spot on the
record?

INT. DINING ROOM - SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - NIGHT

Carl, Linda, Tim and Annie argue around the table as
young Nick watches them, eating a bowl of ice cream...

ANNIE

Chuck Berry.

Tim's pauses, the idea registering...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Think about it. Without Chuck Berry, there would be no Rolling Stones, no Hendrix, no Beach Boys...no rock n' roll.

Annie glances at Carl.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(to Carl)

What do you think, Carl? *Johnny B. Goode*?

Linda laughs in reaction and Carl gives her a look.

TIM

(to Carl, off Linda's laugh)

We'll get you a copy and see what you think.

CARL

(to Annie)

What's the status of the Chinese Music?

ANNIE

Still looking.

LINDA

Tim, what do you want to open the music section with?

TIM

Brandenburg Concerto. Number two in F...

ANNIE

Bach? Really? Sure. I love Bach. I'm sure Carl and Linda love Bach. If you don't take your hat off when Bach walks into the room you're an asshole. Totally get that. But the Brandenburg Concerto almost feels too...obvious...

CARL

(to Annie)

What would you have us begin with?

Annie pauses thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

The Bulgarian piece that Alan Lomax the musicologist played for Tim and I. The Shepardess song. Have you heard it?

Carl shakes his head.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's a lone female voice. A young woman. A shepardess, leading her flock through the mountains at night. Alone in the darkness she sings her song out across the mountains. Her voice is powerful. So magnificent, echoing through the night. And then her song ends and silence falls, and she waits, listening, hoping for a response, for someone out there to hear her voice and call back to her...

Annie looks at the three of them.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Isn't that what Voyager is? Isn't that what we all are? A song, sung into the darkness, hoping someone will hear us?

Carl stares across the dining room table at Annie. He cannot take his eyes off of her.

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

IN SILENT SPACE, THE TWO TWISTING STARS PICK UP SPEED, SPINNING AROUND ONE ANOTHER FASTER AND FASTER, GROWING CLOSER, LOCKED IN EACH OTHER'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL...

INT. LANGUAGE STUDIES DEPT. - CORNELL UNIVERSITY - DAY

CLOSE UP: A YOUNG GREEK MAN APPROACHES THE MICROPHONE. He clears his throat and looks into the camera...

GREEK MAN (IN GREEK - SUBT.)

Greetings to you, whoever you are.
We come in friendship...to those
who are friends.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CBS STUDIOS - DAY

Carl stands alone in a conference room at CBS.

Spread out across the LONG CONFERENCE TABLE are a MYRIAD OF PHOTOGRAPHS depicting ALL THINGS HUMAN.

CLOSE ON PHOTOS OF: THE EARTH, LANDSCAPES, FAMILIES, FOOD, ANIMALS, DIAGRAMS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, MANUFACTURING, CITYSCAPES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, A FRONTAL NUDE OF A MAN AND A PREGNANT WOMAN HOLDING HANDS.

Lost in thought, Carl stares at the images, when suddenly there is a KNOCK...

Carl turns and sees Annie standing in the door frame but not entering the room.

ANNIE

Hey, did Tim pass by this way?

Carl smiles at her.

CARL

I haven't seen him yet today.

Annie smiles and turns to leave, but Carl calls to her.

CARL (CONT'D)

Annie, would you come in? I'd like your opinion on something.

With a charged silence, Annie, enters the room, but makes a point to leave the door open.

Annie eyes the FEAST OF IMAGES spread across the table as Carl smiles and MOTIONS for Annie to join him.

CARL (CONT'D)

We've already included some eclectic examples of typical architecture, but I also wanted to include something more impressive.

On the far end of the table Carl opens a large envelope and SPREADS OUT A SELECTION OF MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLES OF WORLD ARCHITECTURE:

CLOSE ON IMAGES OF: A MAYAN PYRAMID, NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, THE BLUE MOSQUE, TEMPLE MOUNT, THE KA'ABA, MAHABODHI TEMPLE...

For a moment, Annie looks at the beautiful buildings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

But you're not going to use any of these, are you?

Carl looks at her, surprised, but clearly pleased by her comment. He smiles with curiosity.

CARL

That's correct. I'm not. Do you know why?

ANNIE

Because they're all monuments built in the name of God.(pause) Different Gods. And if we choose one over another, we choose one God over another.

Carl smiles.

CARL

Precisely. I've been standing here for thirty minutes trying to find a solution to the fact that...

ANNIE

(interrupting)
Carl?

Carl stops talking as Annie looks into his eyes.

CARL

Yes, Annie?

ANNIE

The Taj Mahal.

Carl looks at her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Use the Taj Mahal. It's one of the most beautiful buildings in history, and it wasn't built in the name of God.

Carl gazes into Annie's beautiful eyes as the idea blossoms in his mind.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(looking in Carl's eyes)
It was built in the name of love.

INT. LANGUAGE STUDIES DEPT. - CORNELL UNIVERSITY - DAY

CLOSE UP ON: A LANKY TURKISH MAN smooths his mustache and speaks into the microphone.

TURKISH MAN (IN TURKISH - SUBT.)

Dear Turkish-speaking friends, may the honors of the morning be upon your heads...

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - EVENING

Tim and Annie walk beneath the WASHINGTON ARCH in Washington Square Park...

TIM

You'll never guess what I have in my pocket.

Annie gives him a *I'm not gonna play* look.

TIM (CONT'D)

I have four, count them, four telegrams.

ANNIE

Which say...

TIM

John's all for it. Paul loves the idea. George is in. And Ringo couldn't be more enthusiastic.

Annie's face lights up.

ANNIE

Tim! That's fantastic! You got permission to use *Here Comes The Sun*?

TIM

No.

ANNIE

But...

TIM

They don't have the power to make the decision.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

They're the Beatles! The Beatles
can do anything...

TIM

Apparently not. Record company
thing. It's a rights issue.
Royalties or something.

ANNIE

Royalties? Like...from the Aliens?

Tim looks up at the darkening heavens above the city.

TIM

(talking to the sky)
I cannot explain this species.

ANNIE

So...*There goes the sun.*

Tim nods.

TIM

You find the Chinese music yet?

ANNIE

Nope. Choosing one single piece of
music to represent a 3400 year-old
culture is proving to be a bit of
a hangnail.

Tim nods, then looks at her.

TIM

Are you coming over tonight?

Annie shakes her head.

ANNIE

Tim, it's been a long day. I just
want to go back to my apartment.

Tim stops walking. YOUNG CHILDREN laugh and run in the
background as Tim looks at Annie...

TIM

It's been a year and a half,
Annie. We haven't set a date.

ANNIE

Tim...can we talk about this
tomorrow?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

We can have dinner or something? I
just, I need to get some sleep,
okay?

Tim nods slowly, knowing he should let it go...

TIM

Okay.

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Annie lies awake in bed, staring at the ceiling and
listening to the city outside her apartment window.

Her mind is racing. She closes her eyes.

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

SILENT INTERSTELLAR SPACE, THE TWO TWISTING GALAXIES SPIN
FASTER AND FASTER, GROWING CLOSER AND CLOSER, TERMINALLY
LOCKED IN EACH OTHER'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL...

EXT. BACKYARD GORGE - SAGAN HOME - THE NEXT MORNING

Dressed for travel, Carl stands in the forested backyard
of his home looking out into the gorge.

Linda approaches him, eyeing his attire...

LINDA

I thought you didn't leave until
this afternoon.

Carl continues gazing at the gorge.

CARL

I had Shirley move my flight up.

LINDA

Carl, our meeting with the Rabbi
is this morning. You said you
would come with me.

CARL

I'm sorry. I don't have time.

LINDA

(with edge)
Would you please look at me when
you speak to me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carl turns to face her.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Carl, you said you would come.

CARL

Linda, if you insist on me being there, then you'll have to reschedule. The NASA oversight meeting is this afternoon in Pasadena. Then I head to Tucson to lecture...

LINDA

This is important, Carl! It's about Nick...

CARL

(cutting her off)
This isn't about Nick! It's about you!

Carl pauses, abruptly stopping himself from saying more.

Holding his gaze, Linda's pretty face strains with emotion as she absorbs his comment.

Carl's voice softens.

CARL (CONT'D)

Linda, look, I'm sorry, I am. But I have to catch this flight.

INT. ANNIE'S UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - SAME MORNING

Sitting cross-legged on the floor with her typewriter when the sound of Annie's APARTMENT BUZZER RINGS.

Annie crosses the room, and POKES HER HEAD OUT THE WINDOW. Several floors below, LINDA STANDS ON THE STREET.

INT. ANNIE'S UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Linda and Annie sit across from each other on the sofa. Linda TEARS UP as she speaks...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA

I'm so sorry. I was over at NYU and I finished the recording session and I was walking to Penn Station and I started crying...and I just kept walking and then I was by the park and I needed somewhere to go to get it together.

Annie puts her hand on Linda's arm.

ANNIE

Linda, it's okay. What's wrong?

LINDA

I don't know what to do. I mean, I knew he was focused when I married him. I knew his life was all about his work. What's worse, I knew he wasn't a good father in his first marriage. (pause) Did you know that? That Carl was married before?

ANNIE

Tim mentioned it once...

LINDA

Carl has two older boys. Jeremy and Dorian. He rarely sees them. Lynn, that's his first wife, she's a brilliant woman, a scientist like Carl. Driven like Carl. As far as I can tell they were spectacularly unhappy together.

Linda wipes her mascara with a piece of toilet paper.

LINDA (CONT'D)

The thing is, when Carl talks to me...when he says my name, it's in the same impatient, tedious tone he speaks to her.

Another rush of tears roll down Linda's face as she breaks down, reaching out to Annie.

Annie hugs her, trying to console her, but THERE IS SOMETHING UNCOMFORTABLE IN ANNIE'S UNSEEN EXPRESSION.

EXT. JET PROPULSION LABRATORY - PASADENA, CA - AFTERNOON

Palm trees sway in the breeze on the grounds of JPL...

INT. GREGORY BRUCE'S OFFICE - JPL - SAME MOMENT

Carl sits with his legs casually crossed as Gregory Bruce aggressively slides a large MANILA ENVELOPE at Carl.

GREGORY BRUCE

(re: the envelope)

You want to explain to me exactly
what this is?

Carl opens the envelope revealing the 8x10 NUDE
PHOTOGRAPH of the MAN AND PREGNANT WOMAN HOLDING HANDS.

CARL

A photograph of two human beings.

GREGORY BRUCE

Don't be coy.

CARL

I've always found coy to be the
appropriate response to
rhetorical.

GREGORY BRUCE

(angry)

Are you kidding me!

CARL

There you go again.

GREGORY BRUCE

Goddamn it, Carl!

Gregory motions with his hands as if reading a headline.

GREGORY BRUCE (CONT'D)

'NASA SENDS SMUT TO THE STARS!'
The committee is freaking out!

The back of Gregory Bruce's neck grows cranberry red.

GREGORY BRUCE (CONT'D)

Carl, we both know the space
program is changing. More funding
is coming from the defense
department than ever before.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GREGORY BRUCE (CONT'D)

And there are people at NASA that do not like you. Those people would very much like to see you removed from the Voyager project. So I strongly suggest you quit poking the fuckin' wolf with the stick!

Carl stands, holding up the PHOTOGRAPH OF THE NUDES.

CARL

(re: the photo)

Greg, this is what our species looks like! This is what we are! Do you honestly think that an alien civilization would somehow be offended by our physical form?

Gregory doesn't respond.

CARL (CONT'D)

Maybe I could paint some fig leaves on there for you? Are we so consumed by a culture of self-shame and puritanical dogma that we can't take ownership of our own bodies?

Gregory looks Carl dead in the eyes.

GREGORY BRUCE

You done?

CARL

(re: photo)

There's nothing in this image to be ashamed of.

GREGORY BRUCE

Lose it. Period. End of speech.

Carl absorbs the resolve in Gregory Bruce's voice.

GREGORY BRUCE (CONT'D)

One more fuck up, Carl, even a little one, and they pull the plug on your record project. Do you understand me? And that is not rhetorical.

INT. METRO DINER - UPPER WEST SIDE - NIGHT

Yellow CHECKER CABS pass outside in the rain as Tim sits across a booth from Annie in an Upper West Side diner.

TIM

I heard Carl is going to be on the cover of Newsweek.

Annie smiles in a quiet way but doesn't respond.

TIM (CONT'D)

You have your meeting at Columbia tomorrow, right? With the Chinese music guy?

ANNIE

That's right.

Tim looks at her distant expression.

TIM

Annie, what's wrong with you?

Annie pauses, then looks away again.

ANNIE

Linda came to see me this morning at my apartment.

TIM

Oh yeah? What'd she say?

ANNIE

Nothing. She just had some stuff on her mind.

Annie pauses.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

We just talked, you know? About things. But it was really nice that she came to me.

TIM

Well, yeah. You're her friend. She trusts you.

Avoiding Tim's gaze, Annie looks out at the wet city as COUPLES HUDDLE TOGETHER, SHARING UMBRELLAS IN THE NIGHT.

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - THE NEXT DAY

The sun hangs over the Hudson River as Annie emerges from the tiled stairwell of the 113th ST. SUBWAY STATION and walks toward the gates of COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

INT. COLUMBIA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Annie walks down a CORRIDOR of PRACTICE ROOMS as YOUNG MUSICIANS religiously practice CELLOS and OBOES and other CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTS behind closed doors.

INT. OFFICE OF DR. CHOU WEN-CHUNG - MOMENTS LATER

In a small, clean office, Annie sits across from DR. CHOU WEN-CHUNG (40's), a quiet, brilliant composer and professor of music.

Annie smiles...

ANNIE

We've had a very difficult time selecting a Chinese piece of music. The truth is, we're ignorant of Chinese culture...

Dr. Wen-Chung HOLDS UP AN AUDIO CASSETTE, interrupting Annie...

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(re: the cassette)
What's that?

DR. CHOU WEN-CHUNG

Ms. Druyan, this is the piece of music you've been looking for.

Annie eyes the cassette again.

ANNIE

Really? Are you certain?

The professor SLIDES the tape across the desk to Annie.

DR. CHOU WEN-CHUNG

(re: the cassette)
The title translated means *Flowing Streams*. It was composed more than 2500 years ago.

She looks at the cassette another moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. CHOU WEN-CHUNG (CONT'D)

Twelve years ago, the musician who performed this particular recording was dragged from his classroom, beaten publicly, and murdered in China's cultural revolution. He was 90 years old. He was my teacher and my friend. And I am certain this is what you're looking for.

EXT./INT. FIRE ESCAPE - ANNIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Annie sits alone on her fire escape as sun falls. She puts on a pair of HI-FI HEAD PHONES, inserts the cassette into a tape player, and pushes PLAY.

As sunlight fades and the city lights come to life, Annie is transported by otherworldly HARMONIC SOUNDS OF AN ANCIENT CHINESE STRING INSTRUMENT.

As the breathtaking music progresses, we HOLD CLOSE on Annie's face AS TEARS WELL IN HER EYES.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - TUCSON - NIGHT

We hear A KEY RATTLING in a lock, and Carl, weary from travel, enters a dark hotel room.

He switches on a fluorescent lamp and gazes around the lonely, nondescript room.

Exhaling, Carl sets his bag on the desk and sits down on the edge of the double bed. He rubs his eyes, listening to the sound of trucks passing on the Arizona interstate.

After a moment he opens his eyes again and begins pulling off his corduroy blazer, when HE STOPS...

We follow his gaze to a SMALL RED MESSAGE LIGHT BLINKING ON THE HOTEL ROOM PHONE...

INT. FIRE ESCAPE - ANNIE'S APARTMENT - A MINUTE LATER

We hear the sound of a PHONE RINGING as Annie crosses through her apartment in a tank top and jeans.

She answers the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

CARL (ON PHONE)

I just got back to my room and found a message that said, *Annie called.*

Annie GRINS at the sound of Carl's voice.

CARL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Why didn't you leave me that message ten years ago?

THERE IS A LONG BEAT AS ANNIE HOLDS THE PHONE RECEIVER TO HER EAR, TRYING TO GATHER HERSELF.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

(in a joking tone)

Well, I've been meaning to talk to you about that, Carl...

Carl doesn't respond.

The silence on the line is deafening.

Annie's tone shifts sober...

ANNIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Do you mean...*for keeps?*

CARL (ON PHONE)

Yes. *For keeps.* Will you marry me, Annie?

The phone trembles in Annie's hand.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

Yeah, I'll marry you.

Without another word, Annie HANGS UP THE PHONE.

She stands for a moment unable to move. Her mind racing, she PACES circles like a compass unable to find North.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Oh...Annie, Annie...oh, dear Annie, what the fuck...

Suddenly the PHONE RINGS AGAIN and Annie LEAPS, startled by the sound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She stares at the phone as it RINGS AGAIN, then answers.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Yup?

CARL (ON PHONE)
In our last conversation...did...

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)
Yes. Yes it did.

CARL (ON PHONE)
Okay. Good. Just making sure all
that really happened.

Annie smiles.

INT. LANGUAGE STUDIES DEPT. - CORNELL UNIVERSITY - DAY

CLOSE UP ON: Nick Sagan (5), steps up to the microphone.
We hear Linda's voice off screen talking sweetly.

LINDA (O.S.)
Go ahead, sweetheart...

Young Nick speaks into the microphone.

YOUNG NICK SAGAN
Hello, from the children of planet
Earth...

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - ONE WEEK LATER - MORNING

The magnificent, 150 foot silhouette of the STATUE OF
LIBERTY rises from the fog shrouding New York Harbor.

On the water far below, a CIRCLE LINE FERRY BOAT cuts
through the mist.

EXT. UPPER DECK - CIRCLE LINE FERRY - SAME MOMENT

Carl and Annie stand beside each other on the nearly
empty, open air UPPER DECK of the CIRCLE LINE FERRY.

Carl adjusts his collar to the wind and looks at Annie.
Her dark hair falls in ringlets in the damp ocean air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

We can't tell anyone. If there's a scandal, NASA could pull the plug on the record.

ANNIE

Then we wait. We wait until after the launch. Until Voyager is safely out of the atmosphere, and it becomes something that cannot be taken back.

Carl nods.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But we need to decide right now when we're going to tell them.

CARL

You mean the date?

ANNIE

I mean the exact date and the exact time.

Carl looks at Annie.

CARL

The launch is on August 20th. How about August 22nd? Linda and I are in the Cape that weekend. I could tell her there.

ANNIE

What time?

CARL

One-o'clock PM Eastern?

ANNIE

All right. I'll tell Tim the very same moment.

Mist drifts through the morning air as Annie looks into Carl's eyes.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Carl, I have an idea...

CARL

Well, that's a phrase I'd like to hear for the next fifty years...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Annie leans in closer as the harbor breeze kicks up.

Carl hesitates for an instant, then, for the first time, as Manhattan emerges out of the fog, THEY KISS...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NYU MEDICAL CENTER - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Annie and Carl's conversation LAPSES IN from the previous scene as we see...

Annie in an EXAMINATION GOWN walking down a long corridor beside a FEMALE NURSE (30's) at NYU Medical Center...

ANNIE (V.O.)

Do you think, if we somehow recorded what it's like to be human. My thoughts. And I don't mean just about me, but about all of us. If we hooked me up to a machine while I meditated...an EEG or something, do you think we could physically capture it? And do you imagine that someday, somewhere out there, another life form could decipher it?

CARL (V.O.)

The record will last a billion years. That's a long time, Annie. Do it.

INT. RESEARCH ROOM - NYU MEDICAL CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Annie lies on a bed while TWO RESEARCHERS PLACE ELECTRODE SENSORS on her forehead, neck, face, and chest.

CARL (V.O.)

What would you want them to know?

As the last of the electrodes are placed, one of the Researchers turns toward a bank of oversized, late-seventies MEDICAL MONITORING EQUIPMENT.

Annie closes her eyes, meditating as we CUT TO...

ANNIE (V.O.)

What it's like to be alive. Here and now. I want them to know what I feel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AN EXTREME CLOSE UP: of an ARCING WAVEFORM DOCUMENTING ANNIE'S EEG (ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAM) BRAIN ACTIVITY.

NOTE: THIS IS THE SAME VISUAL WAVEFORM WE SAW IN THE OPENING MONTAGE OF THE FILM.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I want to put that on our record
and send it into stars.

FADE TO BLACK.

In the darkness we hear A VOICE...

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)

Five...four...three...two...one...

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - CAPE CANAVERAL - AUGUST 20, 1977 - DAWN

The purple hue of dawn rises on a NASA launch pad.

Carl, Linda, Tim, and Annie stand shoulder to shoulder behind a safety barricade.

Carl holds Nick in his arms as they all gaze upward, captivated by a MASSIVE TITAN ROCKET towering above them.

NOTE: THIS MOMENT LOOPS BACK TO THE OPENING MONTAGE OF THE FILM.

IN SLOW MOTION SILENCE, WE SEE THE EARTH BENEATH THEIR FEET BEGIN TO TREMBLE AS THE ROCKET SEQUENCE FIRES.

The darkness is lit with BRILLIANT ORANGE as the rocket carrying Voyager 2 RISES FROM THE LAUNCH SCAFFOLD in a trail of magnificent fire.

As the rocket ascends into the heavens, Tim and Carl raise their arms in joyful triumph.

All four scream with excitement.

Linda turns to Annie with tears streaming down her face, HUGGING HER WITH JOY.

Annie begins to cry in Linda's arms. Her bittersweet expression conveys the attainment of an impossible dream, and also the knowledge of the price to be paid.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPER TITLE**AUGUST 22, 1977 - 12:59pm****EXT. BEACH - CAPE COD, MA - 12:59PM**

Linda, wearing an aquamarine bikini, plays with Nick on the beach.

Carl watches his wife and child as they dig in the sand with their bare hands, looking for the water.

Carl glances at his WRISTWATCH. It reads: **12:59PM...**

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - SAME MOMENT

Tim lies on Annie's couch in her apartment reading.

The new issue of NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE rests on the coffee table featuring CARL'S FACE ON THE COVER.

Annie enters the living room and pauses, looking anxiously at the CLOCK on the living room wall.

She watches as the MINUTE-HAND TICKS PAST **1:00pm...**

ANNIE

Tim...

Tim keeps his eyes on his book.

TIM

(re: something he just read)
Hey, did you know that...

ANNIE

Tim...

Tim looks up from his book and smiles...but his SMILE FADES QUICKLY AS HE SEES THE DREAD ON ANNIE'S FACE.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Tim, I need to tell you something.

There is a long difficult beat of silence as Tim stares at Annie, READING THE GUILT IN HER EYES.

A LOOK OF RECOGNITION FLOODS TIM'S FACE AS HIS GAZE DRIFTS TO THE ISSUE OF NEWSWEEK ON THE COFFEE TABLE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THEN SLOWLY, WITHOUT A WORD, TIM REACHES OUT AND FLIPS OVER THE MAGAZINE, TURNING CARL'S IMAGE FACE DOWN.

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE - SAME MOMENT

WE HEAR THE HAUNTING SOUND OF THE INDIAN, RAGA, "JAAT KAHAN HO," AS...

THE TWO TWISTING STARS WE'VE BEEN TRACKING REACH THEIR FINAL PAS DE DUEX, ENTERING EACH OTHER'S SYSTEMS.

AS THE MUSIC RISES, WE WATCH AS THE EACH STARS INDIGENOUS PLANETS COLLIDE IN BEAUTIFUL, BREATHTAKING DISPLAYS OF SPECTACULAR DESTRUCTION...

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERWATER - SAME MOMENT

Nick's young body glides beneath the ocean waves, grabbing a LARGE SEASHELL OFF THE OCEAN FLOOR as the August sunlight refracts through the surface above him.

The boy hovers for a moment in the current, studying the shell, when somewhere in the distance he HEARS THE MUTED, FAR AWAY SOUND OF HIGH PITCHED VOICES.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - THIRTY-FEET OFFSHORE - SECONDS LATER

Nick BREAKS THE SURFACE OF THE WATER offshore.

He quickly pulls off his DIVING GOGGLES AND IS ABOUT TO HOLD UP THE SEASHELL FOR HIS PARENTS TO SEE.

HE STOPS, HEARING HIS MOTHER'S SCREAMING VOICE. We follow Nick's gaze to...

EXT. BEACH - CAPE COD, MA - CONTINUOUS

Linda, standing in her aqua bikini holding Nick's plastic sand shovel in her hand. Her pretty face is wrought red with furious tears.

LINDA

What have you done, Carl! What have you done to us!

The breeze gusts off the water and Linda's nipples are pronounced through the wet fabric of her bikini top.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

Linda, people can see your breasts...your nipples...through that top...

LINDA

What?

Linda looks down at her body.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Are you fucking serious! Who cares? What is wrong with you?

Carl remains silent.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Do you need to control two women at once now, Carl? Is that it?

Linda's eyes well with hot tears.

LINDA (CONT'D)

You know, Diane said something to me. She pulled me aside at her exhibit a few weeks ago...but I said No! Carl would never!

She shakes her head in disbelief, then looks at him.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Don't. Don't do this. Don't throw us away. I've got no mother. No father. This family is my whole world.

Carl's voice softens.

CARL

Linda, I'm so sorry it happened this way.

LINDA

You're sorry? What about Nick? We have Nick! For God's sake! We have Nick! What are you going to say to him? Are you going to tell him how sorry you are!

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - THIRTY-FEET OFFSHORE - SAME MOMENT

Nick's POV in the water...unnoticed by his parents, Nick watches them from afar.

We SHIFT ANGLES TO REVEAL: his small hand beneath the water LETS GO OF THE SEASHELL AND LETS IT DRIFT AWAY.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER TITLE:**THREE MONTHS LATER**

WE HEAR THE QUIET, CRACKLING SOUND OF A RECORD NEEDLE AIMLESSLY SPINNING AT THE END OF A RECORD AS WE...

FADE IN ON:

AN EXTREME CLOSE UP: of THREE WHITE SUGAR CUBES lined up on a window ledge. In the background, through the window, snow falls on the city.

Slowly, the TIP of a SMALL PIPETTE ENTERS THE FRAME and SQUEEZES A SINGLE DROP OF LIQUID LYSERGIC ACID (LSD) ON EACH OF THE THREE CUBES.

As the chemical is instantly absorbed into the porous sugar we hear a familiar WOMAN'S VOICE...

RITA (O.S.)

Tim...that's...that's a lot of acid.

We SHIFT ANGLES TO REVEAL...

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK CITY - SAME MOMENT

Tim sitting shirtless beside the apartment window looking out at the falling snow.

Rita, whom we met earlier at Nora's party, stands in the foyer. Her coat and boots are wet with snow.

Tim doesn't respond as Rita glances around the room.

SEVERAL HUNDRED LP RECORDS are arranged in geometrically ordered patterns across the hardwood floor.

In the corner A RECORD SPINS AIMLESSLY ON A TURNTABLE, the music having long been over...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RITA

Tim? Did you hear me?

Tim slowly looks up at her. He hasn't shaved in a week. His hair is shaggy. But he's as handsome as ever.

Tim motions to the sugar cubes.

TIM

You want one?

Rita shakes her head.

RITA

It's like...eight-thirty in the morning. I haven't even had a cigarette yet.

TIM

Understood.

Tim PLUCKS ALL THREE SUGAR CUBES OFF THE WINDOW LEDGE AND POPS THEM IN HIS MOUTH.

TIM (CONT'D)

I prefer the early start so I can round the horn before sundown. Sometimes the darkness...you don't want to hit it wrong...

Tim's comment trails off, choosing to look back out the window at the pure white snow falling on the city.

Rita removes her coat and MOTIONS TO THE TURNTABLE...

RITA

(re: the record)

You want me to start that over?

Tim looks curiously at the turntable, as if just realizing there is no music.

TIM

Yeah. I do.

Rita carefully steps over the patterns of albums laid out on the floor and RESTARTS THE RECORD...

The OPENING GUITAR CHORDS of Bob Dylan's *VISIONS OF JOHANNA*, crackle through the quiet room.

Rita pulls up a chair and sits at the window with Tim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM (CONT'D)

(staring at the snow)
To myself, I seem to have only been like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself...now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me...

Tim looks at Rita.

TIM (CONT'D)

You know who said that?

RITA

Issac Newton.

Tim raises his eyebrows.

TIM

You're a smarty.

RITA

Learned it from you. Read it in your book.

Tim smiles.

RITA (CONT'D)

(re: Tim's book)
Red Limit is really good, Tim. The reviews are amazing.

Tim nods quietly as a silence falls between them.

TIM

So...Rita...who sent ya?

Rita lights a cigarette and sets her PACK on the ledge.

RITA

Nobody sent me. I'm just here.

TIM

You never enter a room without a plan.

RITA

I'm here to check in. See how you're doing. I tried calling but it just rings and rings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TIM

I unplugged it awhile back.

RITA

Why?

TIM

Linda. She's really, really angry. And I get that. So she calls me, you know? Morning, noon, and night. To bitch about them. In the beginning, I wanted to help, but after awhile, it's just poison. I couldn't listen to it anymore.

Rita looks at him.

RITA

Tim, have you spoken to Annie?

Tim rubs his eyes, then NABS A CIGARETTE from Rita's pack. He lights it and takes a hard drag.

As Dylan's sand and glue voice echoes quietly in the background, Tim turns his attention back to the snow falling outside the window.

TIM

Rita, I've got eight to ten solid hours of cerebral rewiring ahead of me. The last fuckin' thing I want to do this moment is dish about Annie Druyan.

EXT. A-FRAME CABIN - OUTSIDE ITHACA, NY - DAY

Snow falls hard on a small A-FRAME CABIN nestled in the woods south of Ithaca. Wood smoke drifts from the chimney through the crisp air...

After a moment, an ORANGE 1970 PORSCHE 914, pulls into the snowy driveway. The license plate reads: PHOBOS.

INT. A-FRAME CABIN - SECONDS LATER

Annie curls up in a robe by the fireplace drinking tea and looking badly under the weather.

She COUGHS HARD as she hears Carl come through the door and stomp the snow off his shoes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (O.S.)

Annie?

Annie coughs again...

ANNIE

I'm in by the fire.

Carl enters and looks at Annie sympathetically.

CARL

How do you feel?

ANNIE

No Bueno.

CARL

Fever?

ANNIE

102.

CARL

You need to go see my doctor. I'll have Shirley make you an appointment.

Annie takes a sip of her tea.

ANNIE

How did it go with Linda?

CARL

Not well. She rejected our proposals.

ANNIE

All of them? Carl, we pretty much offered her...

CARL

Everything. I know. Reason is lost on her. Anger seems to be her guiding dynamic.

Annie looks at him.

ANNIE

She was betrayed, Carl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARL

Well, Linda hired a second team of attorneys. She's going to fight it. This divorce could take years.

Annie falls silent as she absorbs the information.

ANNIE

Did you get to see Nick?

CARL

Yes. I took him to lunch. We played some pinball.

ANNIE

How is he?

CARL

I think he hears a lot from Linda. Things he doesn't need to hear.

Annie nods. There's a beat of silence...

ANNIE

I wonder where they are right now.

Carl pauses, thinking...

CARL

They passed through Mars' orbit about two weeks ago.

ANNIE

How long until they reach Jupiter?

CARL

Sixteen months.

EXT. SPACE - SAME MOMENT

THE VOYAGERS RACE AT 35,000 MILES PER HOUR THROUGH SPACE, ENTERING THE GAP BETWEEN MARS AND THE ORANGE ORB OF LIGHT 340 MILLION MILES IN THE DISTANCE CALLED JUPITER...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM - ITHACA, NY - DAY

A GRANNY-APPLE-DOLL-LOOKING RECEPTIONIST (60's) looks up from her desk with pursed lips as Annie sits bundled up in a waiting room feeling terrible.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annie sits on the exam table with a fistful of TISSUES as
A family DOCTOR (60's), white hair, enters the room.

ANNIE

Doctor, thank you so much for
getting me in to see you. I've
been fighting this thing for weeks
and I just can't seem to get...

DOCTOR

(interrupting)
Let me stop you right there
Miss...

The Doctor checks her name on his note pad...

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Miss Druhan...

Annie blows her nose.

ANNIE

Druhan.

DOCTOR

Miss whatever your name is. To be
clear, I have no intention, nor
does any other physician in this
practice have any intention of
treating you today. In fact, if I
had known who you were when
Shirley Arden made the appointment
I would have refused.

Annie stares at the man blankly.

ANNIE

I don't understand...

DOCTOR

This isn't New York City, Miss
Druhan.

ANNIE

Druhan.

DOCTOR

This is a close-knit community.
We're all friends here. We have
values.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
We play baseball and bring food to
each other's houses in times of
need...

Annie shakes her throbbing head.

ANNIE
You've lost me with this whole
Thornton Wilder casserole thing...

DOCTOR
You're a whore Miss Druyan.

Annie instantly falls silent.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
A whore and a home-wrecker.

HER HEART SINKS IN HER CHEST...

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
And after what you did to Linda
Sagan and their little boy, you
should get used to this kind of
reception around here. Now, good
day to you.

EXT. CARL'S OFFICE - CORNELL CAMPUS - MOMENTS LATER

Carl walks out of the ASTRONOMY BUILDING and sees Annie
in the parking lot, leaning against the orange Porsche

CARL
(calling out to her)
Annie?

INT. PORSCHE - MOMENTS LATER

Carl drives as Annie trembles in the passenger seat.

CARL
Annie, what's wrong?

ANNIE
Please, just drive.

CARL
All right. Where to?

ANNIE
Out of this town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

Annie, I have to teach class in
twenty...

Carl stops himself, seeing her tears. He veers the car
onto a rural road, exiting the city limits.

They drive north in silence as Annie stares out the
passenger window at the wet fields and forest.

ANNIE

(whispering to
herself)

What have we done?

Carl looks over at her...

CARL

I'm sorry, I didn't hear you?

Annie turns to him fiercely...

ANNIE

What have we done! To Linda? To
Tim? To Nick?

Carl looks at her, unsure how to answer.

Through the windshield, in the distance, Annie sees an
ABANDONED GAS STATION on the side of the road.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Pull the car over. Pull over
there.

CARL

What are you...

ANNIE

Pull the car over!

Carl slows and pulls the car into the overgrown lot of
the defunct station.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Annie gets out and slams the passenger door shut.

Carl follows her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

It's freezing out here. You're sick...

ANNIE

I want you to go.

CARL

Go where?

ANNIE

I don't care, Carl! But I need to be alone! So just leave, okay?

CARL

But you just asked me to drive with you out into the...

ANNIE

So I'm the first woman in the history of the world to change her mind! Now I'm telling you to go!

Carl looks at the empty, derelict building. The sagging roof is covered with moss. The windows and door are boarded with weathered plywood. The pumps are gone.

CARL

There's nothing here, Annie.

She looks at him with hot tears in her eyes.

ANNIE

Leave.

He's about to say more, then STOPS HIMSELF.

Without another word, Carl gets behind the wheel of the car, PULLS A U-TURN, AND DRIVES AWAY...

Annie lets out a faint, involuntary, MAMMALIAN CRY as she watches the car disappear around a bend.

As she sits down on the curb her body is seized with uncontrollable sobbing.

EXT. ROADSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Carl has pulled the car to the side of the rural road a few miles from the abandoned station.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With the collar of his blazer turned up against the wind, Carl SILENTLY PACES IN CIRCLES, his mind racing.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Annie sits alone on the curb with her EYES CLOSED, LISTENING TO THE WORLD AROUND HER.

The wind blows. Melting ice drips from a rain gutter. Somewhere off to her right, a murder of CROWS takes flight from the barren canopy of a MAPLE TREE.

Then SHE HEARS IT...THE SOUND OF AN APPROACHING CAR.

Without opening her eyes, Annie listens as the vehicle slows, tires meet the gravel roadside, the engine shutters to silence, and a door opens.

Annie finally opens her eyes and SEES CARL STANDING IN FRONT OF HER.

ANNIE

We made this promise. We captured this thing. We did that. I did that. I captured this love I thought I could have...this incredible promise I thought I could keep...and we sent it to the stars. We sent it to forever.

A tear streaks down Annie's face...

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But I can't do it! I can't keep this promise, no matter how much I want it. Because we've ruined these people! These people that we love! It's such hubris! To think that we could have this.

Carl kneels in the wet gravel and takes Annie's hand.

CARL

Look at me...

Annie looks in his eyes.

CARL (CONT'D)

That's what we are. We are lovers and we are killers. That's us.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

That's our story. That's all of
our stories. We sent the truth.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SPACE - OFF THE SHOULDER OF JUPITER

THE IMMENSITY OF PLANET JUPITER DWARFS THE FRAME.

SUPERTITLE:

JUPITER - 1979

VOYAGER 1 glides into the foreground as JOVIAN MOONS
orbit off the planet's shoulder.

EXT. JUPITER ENCOUNTER PARTY - JPL CAMPUS- DUSK

A MASSIVE PARTY sprawling the exterior grounds of JPL,
celebrates Voyager 1 reaching Jupiter.

MUSIC PLAYS as IMMENSE JUMBO-TRONS project NEVER-SEEN-
BEFORE IMAGES OF JUPITER AND ITS MOONS.

HUNDREDS OF SCIENTISTS, NASA OFFICIALS, JOURNALISTS,
CELEBRITIES, and HANGERS-ON mingle.

INT. IMAGING TEAM CONTROL ROOM - JPL - SAME MOMENT

Carl, along with DOZENS OF OTHER SCIENTISTS, stare with
baited breath at a bank of late 1970'S COMPUTERS as...

Carl's face is elated with boyish joy as IMAGES OF
JUPITER are downloaded from the signal being sent back
from Voyager 1. The collective energy and excitement has
the entire room in a state of anxious euphoria.

INT. JPL PRESS ROOM - LATER

As NEWS CAMERAS roll and FLASHBULBS POP, Carl, along with
a PANEL OF OTHER SCIENTISTS, address a room full of PRESS
CORRESPONDENTS.

Carl speaks into a MICROPHONE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL
 (to the press)
 The magnitude of discoveries we've
 made have simply been
 unprecedented...

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER ATMOSPHERE OF JUPITER - SAME MOMENT

VOYAGER P.O.V.:

ATMOSPHERIC BANDS DRIFT ACROSS THE SURFACE OF JUPITER AS
 THE MASSIVE, RED, OVAL-SHAPED STORM TWISTS VIOLENTLY IN A
 COUNTERCLOCKWISE VORTEX.

CARL (V.O.)
 We now believe that the Great Red
 Spot, a prominent oval-shaped
 feature in the southern hemisphere
 of Jupiter, which has been a
 mystery to us since it was first
 observed by Cassini and Hooke 315
 years ago, is in fact, a
 persistent, ongoing, anticyclonic
 storm. A storm that has been
 raging for hundreds, if not
 thousands of years. And at this
 moment, is larger than planet
 Earth itself...

CUT TO:

EXT. SURFACE OF EUROPA - SAME MOMENT

VOYAGER P.O.V.:

JAGGED, THIRTY-FOOT ICE FORMATIONS CALLED PENITENTES RISE
 FROM THE FROZEN SURFACE OF JUPITER'S MOON EUROPA...

CARL (V.O.)
 We now believe that Europa, the
 smallest of Jupiter's four
 Galilean moons is covered in a
 thick crust of ice. And possibly
 hidden beneath that ice lies vast
 oceans of unknown composition...

CUT TO:

EXT. SURFACE OF IO - SAME MOMENTVOYAGER P.O.V.:

A VOLATILE INFERNO OF BURNING LAVA RIVERS AND ERUPTING VOLCANOS SHOWER IO'S LUNAR LANDSCAPE IN MOLTEN FIRE.

CARL (V.O.)

And lastly, and perhaps one of the most exciting discoveries, pertains to Io, the innermost of Jupiter's moons. This discovery which was just made by a young engineer named Linda Morabito, who noticed a series of crescent shaped anomalies on the surface of Io, which we now believe are the plumes of active volcanos. As many as four hundred of them, erupting across the moon's surface.

CUT TO:

INT. JPL PRESS ROOM - SAME MOMENT

An excited hum arcs through the press room.

CARL

We're talking about lava flows 300 miles in length.

The hands of dozens of reporters shoot into the air with questions.

EXT. JUPITER ENCOUNTER PARTY - JPL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Champagne is passed as HUNDREDS OF GUESTS celebrate the success of the Jupiter Encounter.

Having joined the party crowd outside, Carl's arm is wrapped around Annie.

Rita approaches with a glass of champagne.

ANNIE

Hey you!

RITA

My god, the brainpower at this party!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Annie smiles and HUGS Rita warmly. As they embrace, Rita WHISPERS SOMETHING UNHEARD in Annie's ear.

Annie shoots Rita an UNSEEN look. Rita gives her a kiss on the cheek...

RITA (CONT'D)
(quietly to Annie)
I'm just the messenger, babe. Do
with it what you will.

EXT. OUTDOOR STEPS - JPL - MOMENTS LATER

As the sounds of the after party thrive in the distance, Annie walks alone across the sprawling JPL grounds.

As she turns a corner she sees Tim, a glass of SCOTCH in his hand, looking up at Jupiter in the night sky...

Tim doesn't take his eyes off the sky as Annie sits down beside him...

ANNIE
You know Tim, you're making Carl
nervous.

Tim LAUGHS.

TIM
Is his nose doing that twitching
thing?

Annie smiles.

ANNIE
A little.

Tim chuckles to himself and takes a sip of his scotch.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I'm glad you're here, Tim.

TIM
Of course I'm here.

Annie nods.

ANNIE
Rita said you wanted to see me.

Tim looks at Annie for the first time since she sat down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a beat of silence between them.

TIM

Do you have any idea what you're doing, Annie?

She looks at him, then slowly shakes her head.

ANNIE

No. I don't.

TIM

Can you look at me and honestly say you're happier with him than you were with me?

ANNIE

Tim, I don't think about it that way...

TIM

(cutting her off)

I do.

Annie looks at him.

TIM (CONT'D)

That is precisely how I think about it.

ANNIE

Tim, I'm sorry.

TIM

I don't want you to be sorry. I want you to answer me.

In the distance Annie can hear the SOUNDS OF THE PARTY grow louder as the revelry escalates.

Annie looks at Tim with guilt in her eyes.

ANNIE

Yes. The answer is yes. I may not deserve it, but I am so happy.

There is a beat of silence, Tim nods his head as if to himself. He slowly looks back up at Jupiter.

TIM

You should get back to the party.

EXT. CARL AND ANNIE'S RENTED HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

The sun shines on the Hollywood Hills as Rita pulls up in a WHITE CONVERTIBLE outside Annie and Carl's two-story rented house.

As Rita gets out of her car, she sees Carl pacing on the second floor veranda talking into his DICTAPHONE.

Rita looks up from the driveway and calls out...

RITA
(calling up to Carl)
Hey Carl!

Carl, lost in thought, is startled by Rita's voice. He glares down at her.

Rita grins up at him...

RITA (CONT'D)
Can Annie come out and play?

EXT. RITA'S CONVERTIBLE - MULHOLLAND - MOMENTS LATER

In the convertible, Rita and Annie race down Mulholland Drive with breeze in their hair and sun on their faces.

Annie talks loudly over the sound of the road.

ANNIE
...So it's the very first production meeting and everyone is sitting there, all the producers and the director and Carl and so forth. And everyone is going on about this and that and I decide to open my mouth and I say:
Really? MAN IN THE COSMOS? Do we really think that's the appropriate title for this show?

Rita looks at her...

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And of course, total crickets. Nobody says a thing. Not even Carl. And I can see the vein in the director's forehead engorging with blood. But I'm committed at this point, right?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

So I say: *Not only is MAN IN THE COSMOS irretrievably sexist, it's completely ego-centric and regressive. It implies that we, once again, believe that 'mankind' is at the center of the universe. Which, unless I'm mistaken, is the opposite of what this show is about.*

RITA

Fuck. What happened then?

ANNIE

There was an incredibly long, incredibly pregnant pause. Then the director takes the pipe out of his mouth and he bangs his ashes out into the ashtray...

RITA

(re: banging pipe)
For dramatic effect...

ANNIE

Exactly! And it's clear the director's about to launch into some misogynistic carpet-bomb tirade against me, when Carl clears his throat and says, *She's right. It should simply be called, COSMOS.*

Rita's face lights up.

RITA

No shit?

Annie smiles.

ANNIE

No shit.

EXT. CAFE - LOS FELIZ - MOMENTS LATER

In the shade of an avocado tree, Annie and Rita sit drinking wine across a cafe table from one another.

RITA

So she's going to sign the paperwork this time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

I think so. It's been three years for God's sake. I don't know what more she wants.

Rita takes a sip of wine then looks at Annie.

RITA

Did you ever consider that she doesn't want the fight to be over?

Annie looks at Rita.

RITA (CONT'D)

Because, once it's really over, and the lawyers and the phone calls and the letters stop, and she deposits the check...what then? You and Carl will go travel the world...and do your show. But what's next for her?

There is a moment of silence.

ANNIE

What I did to Linda and Tim was the worst thing I've ever done. And I wake up some nights convinced that someday I will pay some terrible price for that.

Annie looks at the shifting sunlight on the avocado leaves.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But all the evidence I have tells me I live on this Earth one time. Once. Period. That's it. Eighty years if I'm average. Ninety if I'm lucky. That's what I know.

Annie pauses.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And if there is one thing I will take with me, it's that Carl is my one true love. And to deny it, is to deny my life itself. And I'm not willing to do that. I'm not going to be selfless. Not with my short time here. There will be no break-up scene.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Because every day I wake up beside
him and think and feel things I
never thought possible.

Annie looks at Rita.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

What would you have done?

Rita offers Annie a SAD SMILE...

RITA

I don't know, babe. I've never
felt like that.

BEGIN WEDDING/SATURN MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. WEDDING - BEL AIR HOTEL - BEVERLY HILLS - EVENING

In SILENT SLOW MOTION, Annie, looking breathtaking in a white wedding dress, looks up into Carl's eyes as they exchange their marriage vows...

WE DON'T HEAR THEIR WORDS, WE HEAR BEETHOVEN'S, STRING QUARTET NO. 13 IN B FLAT, OPUS 130, CAVATINA rising...

As Carl and Annie KISS...

HUNDREDS OF GUESTS CLAP IN THE BACKGROUND, their faces and bodies BLURRED IN SOFT FOCUS. It's clear in this moment, the only people that exist for Carl and Annie are each other.

THE CAVATINA SCORES THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE AS WE...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. SATURN - OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM

VOYAGER-2 APPROACHES THE IMMENSE PLANET SATURN...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. WEDDING DANCE FLOOR - EVENING

THE MUSIC CONTINUES AS...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL AND ANNIE HOLD EACH OTHER, DANCING CLOSELY AS THE SPINNING WORLD BLURS PAST...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. SATURN'S RINGS - OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM

AS THE RESONANT SOUND OF THE STRINGS RISE, WE PUSH THROUGH HUYGENS GAP IN SATURN'S OUTER RINGS...

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. LUXURY SUITE - BEL AIR HOTEL - NIGHT

CARL AND ANNIE MAKE LOVE IN THE DARKNESS.

AS THE CELLOS CRESCENDO...AND THE WALLS OF THE ROOM DISSOLVE INTO A SURREAL BACKDROP OF CONSTELLATIONS.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPERTITLE:

SATURN - 1980

INT. JPL PRESS ROOM - DAYS LATER

As NEWS CAMERAS roll, Carl, along with a PANEL OF OTHER SCIENTISTS, address a room full of CORRESPONDENTS...

Carl speaks into a MICROPHONE...

CARL

(into mic)

In 1655, it was first suggested that Saturn was surrounded by some type of mysterious rings. Thanks to Voyager 2, we can now confirm that those mysterious rings are made almost exclusively of crystallized water ice.

Reporters take notes.

CARL (CONT'D)

We've discovered that Titan, Saturn's largest moon, has a nitrogen rich atmosphere.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

We're talking about clouds and rain on a moon! There's nothing else like it in the solar system...except Earth!(pause) But the haze over Titan is so opaque our instruments cannot penetrate it. So if there's life on Titan, it'll remain a mystery until we put a lander on the surface.

A REPORTER in the front row RAISES HIS HAND...

REPORTER

John Farrell, CBS news. Dr. Sagan, is that a mission NASA is planning?

CARL

NASA's funding is moving drastically away from this type of space exploration.

REPORTER

What direction is it moving?

CARL

Cheap, reusable shuttle missions designed to service surveillance and commercial satellites in low Earth orbit. Providing the superficial illusion of hard scientific research to the taxpayer, but in reality, primarily functioning as a *Mr. Fix-It Truck* for the military and communications sector.

The sound of REPORTERS SCRIBBLING NOTES fills the room.

CARL (CONT'D)

So to answer your question, there's no budget for a Titan mission. But by all means Mr. Farrell, if you'd like to break the ice with the incoming administration, be my guest.

INT. CATWALK ABOVE CLEAN ROOM - JPL - MOMENTS LATER

Gregory and Carl stand on a GLASS-ENCLOSED CATWALK above a massive, bright white, 40,000 square foot CLEAN ROOM designed for the construction of spacecraft.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Forty-feet below them on the clean room floor, an experimental UNMANNED ROVER UNIT lies partially built.

Gregory sets his drink on a ledge and looks at Carl.

GREGORY BRUCE

Carl, you can't talk about NASA that way. Not to the press.

Carl speaks emphatically.

CARL

How should I talk about it then, Greg? The shuttle program is going to gut the funding for real space exploration and transform the Earth's thermosphere into a junk yard of spy satellites staring down at ourselves like some narcissistic, paranoid, futurist cautionary tale. And that's not even to mention the very real, inherent dangers of reusing the same shuttles over and over.

GREGORY BRUCE

(cutting Carl off)
John Lowell came to see me this afternoon. He asked what you want.

CARL

What I want?

GREGORY BRUCE

What. You. Want.

CARL

Like, what appointment? Or job title? Or perhaps funding for a mission to one of my favorite planets? In exchange for me being less...vocal?

GREGORY BRUCE

Something along those lines.

Carl pauses, rubbing his eyes, his voice gaining edge.

CARL

And you're just here kindly passing along this information?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Furious, Carl starts to walk away, then turns back at Gregory with anger.

CARL (CONT'D)

Just out of curiosity, what did you say I would want?

Gregory pauses.

GREGORY BRUCE

An 80 percent reduction in the countries's ICBM arsenal. An annual S.E.T.I. research budget equal to that of Dow Chemical's tax incentive package. And the reallocation of the hundreds of billions they're going to waste on the shuttle program to doing serious exploration of the universe.

Carl's terse expression BREAKS INTO A GRIN...

CARL

You actually said that?

Gregory rattles the ice in his vodka.

GREGORY BRUCE

I did.

CARL

And what was their response?

Gregory drains his glass in one swallow.

GREGORY BRUCE

My resignation by the end of the week. (pause) You're not the only person who's dedicated their life to science around here.

Carl pauses, looking at Gregory.

CARL

Greg, I'm aware I can sometimes be...

GREGORY BRUCE

An impossible asshole?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARL

Indeed. I'm working on that. I sincerely apologize.

Gregory nods, holding Carl's gaze.

GREGORY BRUCE

Carl, they're gonna go after you.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - ITHACA - DAY

The December snow drifts and blows as a LIMOUSINE drives toward the Ithaca airport.

INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME MOMENT

Carl, Annie, and Nick (now 10) are driven to the Ithaca airport by A DRIVER.

Annie, now PREGNANT, smiles and squeezes Carl's hand.

CARL

Nick, do you have your passport?

NICK

St. John is a U.S. territory, dad. You don't need a passport.

Carl smiles warmly.

CARL

Right you are. But for identification purposes?

Nick digs in his BACKPACK and holds up his PASSPORT then looks out the limousine window at the drifting snow.

ANNIE

(off his expression)
Nick? Are you okay, honey?

Nick nods, keeping his gaze out the window...

NICK

I need to call my mom.

Carl and Annie exchange silent glances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

Perhaps it would make more sense if we call her when we land this afternoon, and she'll know you've arrived safely?

NICK

She made me promise to call her before we take off.

Carl pauses.

CARL

Okay. Well, that's what we'll need to do then.

EXT. PAYPHONE - AIRPORT TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Nick stands on the tarmac gripping a payphone receiver with a pained expression on his young face.

Behind them on the snowy runway, the propellers of a PRIVATE CHARTER PLANE spin, waiting for them to board.

Carl and Annie stand nearby holding their coats against the cold wind, watching Nick as we hear LINDA'S UPSET VOICE on the line...

LINDA (ON PHONE)

But you don't want me to be all alone here, do you?

Nick's eyes well with tears.

NICK (INTO PHONE)

No...

Carl and Annie watch Nick BURST INTO TEARS. Carl walks toward him, touching the boy's shoulder.

CARL

Nick, hand me the phone, please.

Nick's face streams with hot tears as he hands his father the phone.

As Nick walks to Annie, Carl puts the phone to his ear.

CARL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Linda, what are you doing?

Linda's voice SCREAMS through the phone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA (ON PHONE)
You can't do this to me, Carl!

Carl's eye's drift to Annie, standing pregnant in the blowing snow.

CARL (INTO PHONE)
I'm not doing anything to you. I'm taking my son on a winter vacation. We discussed and agreed upon this months ago.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. PAINTING STUDIO - LINDA'S ITHACA APARTMENT - SAME

In her apartment, Linda stands in an oversized tee shirt and panties gripping the phone on a long cord.

AN EMPTY WHITE CANVAS hangs on the wall and a mostly empty BOTTLE OF WINE sits on the floor. It's clear by her eyes Linda has been crying...

LINDA (INTO PHONE)
Don't you take him, Carl! Don't you leave me here all alone! It's not fair!

CARL (ON PHONE)
He'll be back in one week. He will call you everyday.

LINDA (INTO PHONE)
He's all I have, Carl.

CARL (ON PHONE)
Linda, he's my child too.

Linda's face floods tears.

LINDA (INTO PHONE)
Well in just a few months you'll have a new one to replace him with, won't you!

CARL (ON PHONE)
Linda...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA (INTO PHONE)
 (cutting him off)
 I'll die here.

CROSS CUT BACK TO:

EXT. PAYPHONE - AIRPORT TARMAC - SAME MOMENT

There is a silence as flecks of snow melt in Carl's hair.
 He can feel Annie and Nick watching him.

CARL (INTO PHONE)
 Linda, you're not going to die.
 Calm down.

LINDA (ON PHONE)
 (cutting him off)
 Don't you tell me to calm down you
 son of a bitch!

Carl TAKES THE PHONE AWAY FROM HIS EAR AS LINDA'S VOICE
 SHRIEKS FROM THE RECEIVER.

LINDA (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
 You motherfucker!

Without another word, Carl DROPS THE PHONE RECEIVER.

LINDA'S FURIOUS VOICE IS STILL AUDIBLE AS THE PAYPHONE
 RECEIVER TWISTS IN THE COLD WIND.

Not looking back, Carl walks toward Annie and Nick,
 motioning to the AIRPLANE waiting on the runway...

CARL
 (to Annie and Nick)
 Let's go.

INT. OCEANFRONT EVENT SPACE - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Tim (now 40) stands at a PODIUM in a blazer and slacks
 giving a book lecture.

A LARGE CROWD occupy the chairs and NUMEROUS OTHERS stand
 in the aisles listening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

(reading from a book)
The trouble is that it's difficult, probably impossible, for a human to make the mental leap to galactic scale. The very concept of space is inadequate for dealing with galaxies; one must invoke time as well. For instance, the Andromeda galaxy is so immense, that when the starlight from the far-side of Andromeda started its journey toward us, Homo habilis, the first humans, did not yet exist. By the time the light from the near-side of Andromeda started towards us, they did...

EXT. REAR BALCONY - EVENT SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Tim steps out A REAR EXIT onto a second floor balcony behind the lecture hall.

Inhaling the damp salty air, Tim looks out into the fog at the Golden Gate Bridge beyond the beach.

The exit door opens and an ASSISTANT (early 20's) pokes her head out.

EVENT ASSISTANT

The Q&A starts in two minutes, Mr. Ferris.

TIM

Yeah, okay...

As the door shuts again, Tim FISHES A JOINT from his interior pocket and lights it...when SOMETHING UNSEEN IN THE DISTANCE CATCHES HIS EYE.

Tim STARES, CAPTIVATED, AND PITCHES THE JOINT ASIDE.

EXT. BEACH - SECONDS LATER

Having abandoned the lecture, Tim hurries through the sand, stripping off his shoes as he walks faster and faster towards something...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WE SHIFT TO TIM'S P.O.V. REVEALING: A LONE SILHOUETTE OF A WOMAN WALKING IN THE FOG AS HUNDREDS OF WHITE SEABIRDS TAKE FLIGHT AROUND HER.

TIM
(calling out)
Hello?

Slowly, the woman turns. She is absolutely beautiful.

AS THE SEA BIRDS ENCIRCLE THEM, she smiles at Tim. He is barefoot and his dress pants are covered in wet sand.

TIM (CONT'D)
Look, I understand that based on my behavior, I may not be providing the best first impression...but please, tell me your name...

The woman pushes the hair out of her face and smiles.

CAL
Carolyn. But you should call me Cal.

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - YOM KIPPUR - ITHACA, NY - EARLY MORNING

Rain falls as Linda and Nick, dressed for Yom Kippur, climb the steps of a Synagogue.

INT. SYNAGOGUE - LATER

Inside the temple, Linda prays in silence as an UNSEEN RABBI speaks in Hebrew.

After a moment, Linda looks at Nick seated nearby...his eyes are closed praying, his boyish face on the verge of adolescence.

A subtle look of maternal love fills Linda's expression.

INT. KITCHEN - LINDA'S ITHACA APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

As the sun sets on Yom Kippur, Linda fills Nick's plate with food.

Having not eaten all day, Nick is famished.

Linda smiles, watching her son eat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA

Nick?

NICK

Yeah, mom?

LINDA

Today I asked to be forgiven for many things.

Nick pauses and looks at her.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Most importantly, I asked to be forgiven by you.

There is a beat of silence, then Nick reaches across the table and gently squeezes her hand.

Linda smiles, emotion welling in her eyes.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I need to make a change, Nick. It's time.

NICK

What kind a change?

Linda pauses.

LINDA

What would you think of California?

Nick's boyish eyebrows raise.

NICK

Really?

Linda smiles.

LINDA

A new start.

EXT. BACKYARD GORGE - SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - DAY

Carl sits in the backyard staring across the gorge.

Carl holds his NEWBORN BABY DAUGHTER SASHA SAGAN wrapped in a white blanket. He looks down at her tiny face as she sleeps. Her mouth is slightly ajar, her eyes dart beneath her eyelids in a dream state.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Annie walks barefoot out of the house in jeans and a tee shirt, approaching them from behind.

Carl smiles as Annie wraps her arms gently around her husband and child.

CARL

She's perfect.

Annie smiles warmly.

ANNIE

I know she is.

She glances at her watch.

Hey love, if you need to get to work I can take her.

Carl pauses, looking into Sasha's newborn eyes.

CARL

I'm not working today. I'm staying right here...

Carl smiles warmly at Sasha.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to baby Sasha)
With you guys.

Annie leans in, touching her lips to Carl's forehead.

FADE TO:

SUPERTITLE:

URANUS - 1986

EXT. URANUS - OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM

VOYAGER P.O.V.:

TILTED ON ITS AXIS WITH RINGS ORBITING VERTICALLY, THE PLANET URANUS FILLS THE FRAME.

NARRATING THE URANUS IMAGERY we hear CARL'S VOICE OVER...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (V.O. ON TELEVISION)

Deep blue and tilted on its side
 from some violent collision during
 the formation of the Solar System,
 Uranus has always been an enigma.
 Up until this past week, mankind's
 understanding of Uranus has
 exclusively been gleaned through
 the limited lens of a telescope.
 The Voyager 2 flyby has opened our
 eyes and our minds to...

We PULL OUT TO REVEAL THE IMAGERY OF URANUS IS ON A
 1980's TELEVISION SET in...

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - SANTA MONICA, CA - DAY

Palm trees sway outside the window as...

Nick, (now 15), sits on the living room couch wearing a
 PINK FLOYD *THE WALL* T-SHIRT watching the Uranus encounter
 coverage on television.

Linda, a few years older, dressed for work in 80's
 fashions, stands at the kitchen table. She pulls the
 final FINISHED PAGE OF A TELEPLAY out of her typewriter.

She binds the script with brass brads while CALLING OUT
 to Nick...

LINDA

(calling to Nick)

I just went shopping so there's
 plenty of food in the fridge! I'll
 be coming over from the valley so
 I probably won't be home until
 seven thirty or so.

NICK (O.S.)

(from living room)

Did you finish it?

A moment later we follow Linda INTO THE LIVING ROOM with
 her car keys and bag over her shoulder.

LINDA

I sure did. I turn the revised
 draft into the network today...

SUDDENLY THE URANUS COVERAGE ON THE TELEVISION CUTS TO
 BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BREAKING NEWS BANNER ECLIPSES THE SCREEN.

NICK AND LINDA INSTANTLY FALL SILENT AS THEY STARE AT THE TELEVISION.

Linda COVERS HER MOUTH in horror as we...

HARD CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: **ACTUAL ARCHIVAL VIDEO FOOTAGE OF THE CHALLENGER SPACE SHUTTLE EXPLODING IN MID-AIR AFTER LAUNCH.**

AS THE SPIRALING PLUMES OF SMOKE AND FIRE DRIFT DOWNWARD THROUGH THE CRISP JANUARY SKY...

WE HEAR THE FIRST METALLIC NOTES OF A BOTTLE NECK SLIDE GUITAR AND THE LOW VIBRATO, VOCAL HUM OF "DARK WAS THE NIGHT" BY BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON...

The HAUNTING GOSPEL SONG CONTINUES, lapsing into the next scene as we FADE TO...

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - RURAL TEXAS - 1945 - NIGHT

A desolate Texas road at night. Wet fields stretch to the wooded horizon. In the darkness, rain falls on the CHARRED RUINS of a BURNED-OUT BAPTIST CHURCH.

INT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - SAME MOMENT

Shivering violently with malarial fever, a BLIND BLACK MAN lies on a bed of wet newspapers.

An impoverished WOMAN, his wife, holds him in her arms and his body trembles...

In his final moments of life, the man looks upward through the burnt roof rafters at the dark sky above.

RAIN FALLS IN HIS SIGHTLESS EYES as the music FADES.

FADE TO:

EXT. SPACE - SAME MOMENT

VOYAGER 2 SPEEDS THROUGH THE DARKNESS TOWARD THE BLUE SPHERE OF NEPTUNE FAR IN THE DISTANCE.

EXT. CORNELL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Daffodils poke their heads from the soil as the warm spring wind blows across the Cornell Campus.

Carl laughs as he strolls toward his classroom holding his now seven-year-old daughter Sasha's hand.

INT. LECTURE HALL - CORNELL UNIVERSITY - MOMENTS LATER

Carl sits in a front row seat of his empty lecture hall as little Sasha in a yellow dress stands up at the BLACKBOARD *teaching him...*

Sasha **DRAWS A BIG CIRCLE** on the blackboard in chalk.

CARL

You've drawn a circle.

SASHA

No, Dad. I've drawn a cake.

Sasha **WRITES 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY'** in the center of the circle, making it look more like a cake.

CARL

I stand corrected. You've drawn a cake.

SASHA

Let's say you're having a party.

CARL

Excellent. Whose birthday is it?

SASHA

It makes no difference. The riddle will remain the same.

Carl laughs...

CARL

Let's say it's Mom's birthday.

Sasha adds '**MOM**' to the cake beneath '**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**'

SASHA

Better?

CARL

Much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASHA

You're having this party and
you've invited eight people.

CARL

Eight. Understood.

SASHA

So here is the riddle: *how can you
cut this cake into eight equal
pieces using only three cuts?*

Carl looks at the circle on the board.

CARL

Each slice has to be exactly the
same?

SASHA

Bingo.

Carl shifts in his seat, thinking...

SASHA (CONT'D)

Need a minute?

Carl smiles...

CARL

Perhaps.

SASHA

Let me know if you need a hint.

Sasha wanders across the stage to the other side of the
blackboard where Carl has CLASS NOTES written.

Carl stares at the circle, clearly imagining different
possibilities in his mind.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Dad?

Carl turns and looks as Sasha, on her tip-toes, points to
THE DRAKE EQUATION written on the other blackboard.

SASHA (CONT'D)

What's this?

CARL

That is *The Drake Equation*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SASHA

What does it do?

CARL

It's a tool, intended to solicit conversation about the possibility of intelligent life existing in other parts of the universe.

SASHA

Aliens. You're always taking about aliens. Did you always talk about aliens? Like when you were my age?

Carl smiles..

CARL

Yes. But I suppose not in quite the same way.

SASHA

Why is it so important to you?

Carl pauses. He looks at the equation.

CARL

Because in theory, if they, whoever *they* are, are advanced enough to communicate with us, then there's a very good chance that their species would be beyond human beings in their evolution as a society.

SASHA

I don't get it. Why is that good?

CARL

Because Presh...extinction is the rule. Survival is the exception. It means they made it. Somehow they got through the dangerous parts. The self destructive parts of their evolution...and came out the other side.

Carl stands from his seat in the front row...

CARL (CONT'D)

So if I ever met one, you know what I would ask them?

Sasha thinks for a second...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SASHA

You'd ask them how they did it.

Carl grins.

CARL

Bingo.

Carl picks up a piece of white chalk and approaches Sasha's circular cake drawing.

CARL (CONT'D)

Your riddle is unsolvable if you only look at the cake from one perspective. You have to look at the cake from a different perspective.

Carl DRAWS A NEW CIRCLE ON THE BOARD...

CARL (CONT'D)

Like you said, it's not a circle...

CARL ADDS TWO SIDES AND A BOTTOM TO THE CIRCLE, CREATING A CYLINDER.

CARL (CONT'D)

It's a cake.

Carl grabs a piece of RED CHALK.

HE DRAWS HIS FIRST RED CUT-LINE ACROSS THE TOP OF THE CYLINDER, cutting the cake into TWO EQUAL PIECES.

HE DRAWS HIS SECOND CUT LINE BISECTING THE FIRST AT 90 DEGREES, cutting the cake into FOUR EQUAL PIECES...

Then he turns the chalk and MAKES HIS FINAL CUT COMPLETELY THROUGH THE SIDE OF THE CAKE, CUTTING IT INTO TWO SEPARATE BUT EQUAL CYLINDERS...therefore creating EIGHT EQUAL PIECES.

Carl sets down the chalk and looks at Sasha.

She grins...

SASHA

I love you dad.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - SANTA MONICA, CA - EVENING

With a bowl of popcorn between them, Nick and Linda sit on the couch watching the final seconds of an episode of the television show, **KNOT'S LANDING**.

As the episode ends, they both STARE AT THE SCREEN WITH DEAFENING SILENCE AS THE CREDITS BEGIN TO ROLL...

CLOSE ON TELEVISION as we see the words...

WRITTEN BY LINDA SALZMAN

As Linda's name appears on the screen Nick leaps off the couch SCREAMING...

NICK

There it is! Right there!

Linda grins and covers her face.

NICK (CONT'D)

Credits baby! She's got credits!

Nick reaches for the clunky VCR CONTROLS. He hits the stop button and begins to rewind the VHS tape.

LINDA

What are you doing?

NICK

I taped it. We're gonna watch it again.

Linda smiles, her face red.

LINDA

Oh honey, it's not that big of a deal. You don't have to...

NICK

(cutting her off)
Fuck that shit! That's my mom!
We're watching it again!

Linda laughs as we...

FADE TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - MORNING

Warm morning sunlight floods the bedroom through the floor to ceiling windows.

Annie lies in bed beneath a white sheet sifting through a stack of recent mail.

Carl stands shirtless in the adjacent master bathroom shaving as he talks into his Dictaphone.

CARL

(into Dictaphone)

Taking into account the new climate models, we must stress the reevaluation of this long standing, dangerously naive idea of a limited nuclear exchange. We must consider, that any nuclear exchange would ignite fires in urban centers and petroleum reserves. The density of the resulting smoke plumes would saturate the atmosphere, feasibly blocking out 99% of sunlight. The effect on the Earth's climate would be devastating...

Annie calls to Carl from the bed.

ANNIE (O.S.)

We got another one! Can you believe it?

Carl stops his Dictaphone and sets it on the sink.

CARL

Another what?

ANNIE (O.S.)

Invitation to the Whitehouse. We've already said no to lunch and dinner. Do they really think *brunch* is what we've been holding out for?

Carl steps out the bathroom wiping remnants of shaving cream from his face. He smiles at Annie.

CARL

The President of the United States has invited us to break bread.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

Do you think we should at least entertain the idea that there could be an opportunity here?

ANNIE

They want you to change your position on S.D.I.. Not to mention nuclear testing, Nicaragua, the war on Drugs...

CARL

I'm aware of their motives. But perhaps, given a private audience, we could influence their perspective instead?

Annie looks at him.

ANNIE

Carl, the first thing they'll do when we walk in the door is a photo-op. You and me and Ronny and Nancy smiling with mimosas.

Carl considers.

CARL

You're right.

ANNIE

I know I'm right...

Annie stops mid-sentence, looking at Carl.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Carl...that mark on the back of your arm, is that the same bruise?

Carl pauses, turning his arm in an awkward position to see the BRUISE-LIKE MARK on the back of his right arm.

CARL

I'm...I'm not sure.

ANNIE

Honey, it's been weeks. It should've healed up by now.

Carl shrugs.

CARL

It's nothing. I probably just ran into something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Annie looks at him.

ANNIE

I know. But let's get Dr. Breiman
to check it out, okay?

Carl gives Annie a reassuring smile.

FADE TO:

SUPERTITLE:

NEPTUNE - 1989

EXT. NEPTUNE - OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM

The deep blue planet NEPTUNE LOOMS IN THE FRAME as we
hear the scorching, OPENING GUITAR RIFF FROM CHUCK
BERRY'S ICONIC 1958 SONG, *JOHNNY BE GOODE*...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. NEPTUNE AFTER PARTY - JPL - NIGHT

The NEPTUNE ENCOUNTER AFTERPARTY...

Rock and roll legend CHUCK BERRY, (63) wearing a white
suit, JAMS OUT ON HIS RED HOLLOW-BODY EPIPHONE GUITAR

Chuck spins, slides up the microphone and sings...

CHUCK BERRY

Deep down Louisiana close to New
Orleans,
Way back up in the woods among the
evergreens,
There stood a log cabin made of
earth and wood,
Where lived a country boy named
Johnny B. Goode,
Who never ever learned to read or
write so well,
But he could play the guitar just
like ringing a bell...

The DANCE FLOOR is filled with JPL EMPLOYEES dancing
wildly to the live performance.

CHUCK BERRY (CONT'D)

Go go!
Go, Johnny go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Above the rocking dance floor a HUGE BANNER READS:

"FAREWELL TO VOYAGER"

EXT. ROOFTOP - JPL - SAME MOMENT

Surrounded by massive RADAR DISH ARRAYS POINTED AT THE HEAVENS, Carl and Annie sit beside each other on a rooftop at the JPL.

Chuck Berry's performance is audible in the distance as Annie rests her hand on her PREGNANT BELLY.

For a moment, Carl appears distant, lost in thought...

ANNIE

What did NASA say?

CARL

They won't turn Voyager's camera around.

ANNIE

Why?

CARL

They find no scientific merit in seeing what the Earth looks like from the edge of the solar system.

ANNIE

The merit isn't scientific. It's philosophical. It puts us in perspective...

Annie pauses mid-sentence, knowing she's preaching to the choir. She reads the distant expression on Carl's face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Carl? What is it? What are you thinking about?

CARL

The Voyagers.

ANNIE

What about them?

Carl pauses, thinking silently.

After a moment, he turns and looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

Annie, I've spent my life
searching for evidence...trying to
prove we aren't all alone in the
cosmos.

Annie listens.

CARL (CONT'D)

Yet I spent a childhood. An
education. A career. Forty years.
Two marriages. Completely alone.

Carl looks in her eyes.

CARL (CONT'D)

It's you, Annie. You're my proof.

EXT. SPACE - BEYOND NEPTUNE - A YEAR LATER

VOYAGER 2 SPEEDS BEYOND THE PLANETS TOWARD THE ABYSS OF
STARS IN THE DISTANCE...

CLOSE ON: VOYAGER'S INSTRUMENTS, SLOWLY THE CAMERA BEGINS
TO PIVOT, TURNING ITS LENS ARRAY BACK TOWARD EARTH SIX
BILLION KILOMETERS IN THE DISTANCE.

EXT. BACKYARD GORGE - SAGAN HOME - DAY

A warm spring day.

Carl and Annie sit beside each other in the forested
backyard. Annie holds their NEWBORN SON SAMUEL.

Sasha, (now 9), shrieks with laughter as she runs through
in the nearby woods playfully chasing Nick, (now 22) as
he tries to get away from her.

Carl smiles at Sasha in the distance, then he reaches for
the LARGE PHOTOGRAPH resting on the table beside him.

CLOSE ON IMAGE: NEARLY UNDETECTABLE IN A DISTANT WASH OF
SUNBEAM IS A TINY, FAINT, PIXILATED BLUE DOT.

Annie and Carl stare at the image.

ANNIE

(re: the image)
Look at that. That one little dot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL

That's us.

Annie looks at the innocent sleeping baby in her arms.

ANNIE

Think about it. All the lives lost. The rivers of blood that have been spilled by all those generals and emperors...just so they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot...

EXT. LUCIFER FALLS - OUTSIDE ITHACA - DAY

Carl walks alone along a forested trail at LUCIFER FALLS, a breathtaking chain of rocky gorges and waterfalls following a rushing river.

Gazing at the intense natural beauty of the waterfalls Carl speaks into his DICTAPHONE as he walks.

CARL

(into Dictaphone)

...Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner. How frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another...how fervent their hatreds...

BEGIN TIME LAPSE SEQUENCE

INT. MRI/CT SCAN TUBE - TIME LAPSE - A YEAR LATER

Carl, looking older in a hospital gown, holds his body still in a coffin-like SCAN TUBE as A RED SCAN LIGHT descends down the contours of his thin body.

CARL (V.O.)

...Think of our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe, are challenged by this point of pale light...

INT. CHEMOTHERAPY UNIT - TIME LAPSE - A YEAR LATER

Carl sits in a padded chair with numerous TUBES FLOWING into his arms.

He looks older, thinner, and frail. His hair is completely gone from chemotherapy.

CARL (V.O.)

...The Earth is the only world known, so far, to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment, the Earth is where we make our stand...

INT. THEATER STAGE - SAN FRANCISCO - A YEAR LATER

Carl stands up at a podium delivering a speech to a packed theatre of GUESTS.

The PALE BLUE DOT IMAGE is projected on a huge screen behind him.

Carl is bald from treatment, thin, but his delivery is as eloquent as ever.

CARL

(to the audience)

...It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known.

The AUDIENCE ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE as Carl carefully makes his way off stage.

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - SAGAN HOME - EVENING

The house is quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carl sits at the dining room table in his bathrobe. He appears tired.

His DICTAPHONE, MANUSCRIPT PAGES, and various COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS are spread out across the tabletop.

As he reads a document, he suddenly hears the CLINKING SOUND OF A DISH and he looks up from his notebook.

We follow his gaze to the adjacent kitchen, where he sees Annie standing alone at the kitchen sink washing dishes. Her back is turned away from him.

For a long, quiet moment Carl silently watches her.

Carl sets aside his notebook and slowly stands, crossing the dining room into the kitchen.

Without a word, Carl takes a place beside the sink with Annie, gently touching the small of her back.

We see Annie's head tilt toward him affectionately, their bodies touching as she hands him a dish to dry.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPERTITLE:

SEATTLE - DECEMBER 20, 1996

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SEATTLE - MORNING

Rain falls hard against a hospital room window as Carl lies in bed.

Carl's body is ravaged by cancer as his vital signs are monitored closely.

He looks up as Sasha (now 14), enters the room.

CARL

(to Sasha)

Your enormous gorgeousness...

Sasha smiles and takes his hand gently, conscious not to touch the HEPARIN LOCK feeding fluids into his body.

Carl's voice is barely a whisper as Sasha begins to cry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL (CONT'D)

Presh...you are alive right this moment. That is the amazing thing. Think about the nearly infinite number of forks in the road that lead to any single person being born.

Sasha leans in, holding him.

CARL (CONT'D)

And I am so lucky that you are you.

Carl touches his forehead to Sasha's.

CARL (CONT'D)

We are all connected. We really are.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SEATTLE - MOMENTS LATER

Annie sits alone with Carl as the STORM STRENGTHENS OUTSIDE, PELTING THE WINDOW WITH SHEETS OF RAIN.

Carl is GROWING CONFUSED AND AGITATED.

CARL

Annie, there's so much...so much I still need to do...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SEATTLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The storm rages outside in the darkness as CARL TREMBLES VIOLENTLY IN BED, DELIRIOUS AND SOAKED IN FEVERISH SWEAT.

ANNIE LIES BESIDE HIM, HOLDING HIS SHAKING BODY AS SHE SPEAKS INTO HIS EAR...

ANNIE

Good man. Brave man. Good life.
Good Man. Brave man. Good life.
Good man. Brave man. Good life...

CUT TO:

EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP - 1942 - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Eight-year-old Carl stands alone on the rooftop of his tenement building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holding the DRAWING of TWO ASTRONAUTS IN ENVIRONMENT SUITS POINTING TO THE SKY, Carl looks up at the brilliant constellations as the distant lights of a million other worlds reflect in his young eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE - SAME MOMENT

IN ABSOLUTE SILENCE, A STAR EXPLODES IN A BLINDING SUPERNOVA FLASH...

THE INCREDIBLE FORCE PROPELS THE BEAUTIFUL, LUMINESCENT SHOCK WAVE OUTWARD ACROSS THE EXPANSE OF SPACE.

THEN SUDDENLY THE EXPLOSION CONTRACTS, IMPLODING ON ITSELF, SUCKING ALL THE MATTER BACK INTO A CENTER MASS.

THE ENERGY AND MATTER TWISTS ON ITSELF IN A MYRIAD OF COLORS, FORMING A VAST MOLECULAR CLOUD, A STELLAR NURSERY, A PLACE WHERE THINGS THAT END CAN BEGIN AGAIN.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BACKYARD GORGE - SAGAN HOME - DAY

Annie stands in the snowy woods looking out at the forested gorge.

She is alone. The woods are silent as snow falls around her.

She gazes at the TWO WOODEN CHAIRS on the edge of the gorge where she and Carl spent endless hours. She cannot speak.

INT. FUNERAL LIMOUSINE - ITHACA - LATER

In the back of a LIMOUSINE, Anne wears a black dress and overcoat on the way to Carl's funeral. Annie's arm is draped around four-year-old Sam beside her. Sasha, also in black, sits across from her.

Annie kisses Sam's head, then looks out the window at the passing frozen landscape.

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

The trees are barren.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blackbirds dart across the sky as Annie steps out of the limousine.

A LARGE CROWD OF MOURNERS await her arrival at the cemetery.

Annie takes her children's hands and walks up the shoveled snow path toward Carl's grave plot...

As Annie reaches Carl's grave, she sees LINDA and Nick (now 26) on the far side of Carl's grave.

Linda looks at Annie.

There is a beat, then without a word, Linda walks around in front of Carl's grave, past the crowd of mourners and STANDS BESIDE ANNIE.

Annie looks at her, and is about to say something WHEN SHE FEELS LINDA TAKE HER HAND AND HOLD IT.

Tears well in Annie's eyes as the two woman stand together for all their guests and their children to see.

Suddenly Annie SENSES SOMEONE WALK UP FROM HER BLIND SIDE.

Annie quickly turns her head and SEES TIM, now 52 years old, dressed in a sharp black suit and long dark coat.

RITA, now 46, emerges from the crowd dressed in black. As she nears she touches Annie's shoulder, then stands beside them...

And as the funeral begins, they all stand together, shoulder to shoulder, facing the loss.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPERTITLE:

2012

EXT. SAGAN HOME - ITHACA, NY - SUMMER 2012 - EVENING

A summer evening. Through a WARMLY LIT WINDOW WE SEE... *

Annie (63), Linda (72), Sasha (30), Sam (21), and Nick (42) and Nick's WIFE AND DAUGHTER, all sitting together around a large table eating dinner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We cannot hear their voices, but we see their relaxed laughter as they eat, drink, and share an intimate evening at home with family.

EXT. BACKYARD GORGE - SAGAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

As the rest of the Sagans clean up from dinner, Annie walks alone out into the back yard to the edge of the gorge where she and Carl always sat and thought.

As the August breeze blows through the trees, Annie looks up into the starlit heavens.

CARL (V.O.)

Stars die and are reborn. They become so hot that the nuclei of the atoms fuse together deep within them to create the oxygen we breathe...

CUT TO:

EXT. NORA'S ROOFTOP - NEW YORK - 38 YEARS BEFORE

NINE ORBITING DINNER GUESTS SPIN IN CIRCLES ON A MANHATTAN ROOFTOP AS CARL LEADS ANNIE TOWARD A PLACE BEYOND THEIR IMAGINATION...

CARL (V.O.)

...and the carbon in our muscles, and the calcium in our bones and the iron in our blood...

EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Against a backdrop of stars, with our solar system behind it, the Voyagers speed into the magnificent unknown.

CARL (V.O.)

...All of it was cooked in the fiery hearts of long vanished stars. The cosmos is also within us. We are made of star stuff. We are a way for the cosmos to know itself.

FADE OUT.