

VERVE

POD

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EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Peaceful and silent. Stars and solar systems, rich and vibrant in colour are etched into the backdrop of the universe.

But something is wrong.

The familiar rings of Saturn are now partially eroded from one side, the circle is incomplete.

The planet is dwarfed by a giant monster behind it, swallowing everything in its path.

A BLACK HOLE.

It's an aberration, a concave mirror reflecting nothing but darkness.

The remainder of Saturn's rings are whisked away, sucked into its void, like water down a drain, twisting into it.

Pieces of the planet follow closely behind, pulled, as if attached like tentacles.

The sound emitting from it resembles a mixture of high-pitched wailing, an uncanny vacuum of power.

It gets louder. And louder. Until -

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Darkness. Just pure black. The slightest sound of breathing, only it's not the usual exhale and inhale we know. It's mechanical ventilation.

Hypnotic and slow. In and out.

A BLINKING RED EMERGENCY LIGHT illuminates a figure, more accurately a SPACESUIT HELMET.

The visor is black with "UKUSA" written on it, along with a small British and American flag meshed together as one.

It belongs to THE ASTRONAUT, the space suit momentarily masking the gender and age of whoever wears it.

The helmet disappears between every blink of the red light.

Then a reflection on the visor; the small computer screen merely a few inches from it begins to reboot its systems, readouts and numbers calculate in milliseconds.

The reboot completes. A PURPLE FLOATING DIGITAL WAVE flows effortlessly on the screen against a black backdrop.

This is HEX, the onboard artificial intelligence system.

A single camera lens, her "eye", does a quick scan of the pod and spots the astronaut.

As Hex begins to speak, the purple wave distorts, reflecting the pitch and tone in her voice.

HEX
Emergency. Debris detected. Manual
override required.

Hex is reflected on the helmet visor as she urges the passenger to wake up.

Then, a sudden JOLT forward, as if this astronaut has awoken from a bad dream.

The ventilator breathing quickens as they gasp for air in a panic.

A distorted and disorientated voice escapes through a digital voice compressor attached to the bottom rim of the helmet, which also makes it hard to pin down their age and gender.

THE ASTRONAUT
Huh?

HEX
Debris detected, you must reroute
the pod.

THE ASTRONAUT
Pod?

HEX
T-minus one minute and twenty eight
seconds until collision.

The astronaut checks out their surroundings.

The pod is barely bigger than its occupant, a metallic coffin for one, with a computer system and small keyboard just in front of them.

A few screens, one to work on, another for Hex and a small aircraft yoke - like a joystick - for manual control, surrounded by dials and buttons.

Above their head is a small window that allows curious eyes to gaze toward the stars.

Etched onto the window is a one-eighty degree PROTRACTOR MARKING, complete with metric, KM, zero line and centre point values.

Below, enough space for legs and a few small items.

It is tight with little room to maneuver.

Realising where they are, the astronaut begins to panic.

HEX (CONT'D)

Please stay calm - your heart rate
is rising.

A scream of panic and terror escapes through the voice compressor as the astronaut tries to free themselves from their safety belts.

As they release the belts, an ALARM SIREN joins the red blinking light, momentarily interrupting the panic.

HEX (CONT'D)

T-minus one minute until collision.
We must reroute our course
immediately.

THE ASTRONAUT

Where - where are we?

HEX

Plus eighty-three, thirty-two by
twenty-four.

THE ASTRONAUT

Plus eighty-three -

Without warning, the sound of a fantastic collision halts the conversation, shaking everything within the pod to its core.

The astronaut's head smacks against Hex's display screen, cracking the plastic into a few large pieces, Hex barely visible, her audio cut.

A hexagonal dial labeled "POD AXIS" begins to spin wildly round and round.

Beside it, the "SPEED" dial begins to climb from "three" to "four". The maximum number, shaded in red, is "ten".

Thrown around like a lonely stick in a matchbox, the astronaut begins to smash against the insides of the pod, grunting and groaning.

It's chaos. The blinking red light. The siren loud, penetrating to the bone, as they smash into everything.

They look up to the top of the pod, out through the window, and notice that they are in a full spin.

The speed dial rises.

The sound of heavy, deep breathing from the voice compressor, the astronaut trying to stay calm and conscious.

A weary hand fights against the g-force to strap themselves back in. Inching closer and closer to one of the safety belts, finally the gloved hand wraps around it and pulls it down into the clip.

It locks into place.

Still against the g-force, the astronaut fights to press some keys on the keyboard.

Pressing a few of them, nothing happens.

THE ASTRONAUT (CONT'D)
Engage thrusters.

Through the cracks on Hex's screen, the purple wave distorts, but she cannot be heard.

THE ASTRONAUT (CONT'D)
Hex!

Suddenly a GREEN BUTTON labeled "SWITCH TO AUTO", lights up on the panel above the astronaut's head.

Hex has found a way to communicate.

The astronaut reaches up, their arm fighting against the g-force, the siren, the red emergency lights, the feeling of being tossed around over and over.

The speed dial now reads "six".

A fingertip, inches away from that green button. The astronaut stretches with all they have to touch it.

Eight.

The stars in the window spiral wildly round and round above them.

The needle on the dial edges from nine to ten.

Grunting, stretching, finally the astronaut hits the button.

A number of buttons and dials light up on the display and control panel around the astronaut. The systems begin to stabilize as Hex takes control of the pod.

The sound of THRUSTERS engaging, steadying the pod finally, pulling it out of its spiraling orbit.

The speed dial slowly lowers to "one".

The stars stop spinning. The astronaut falls back into their seat, their head tilted, passed out from the extreme g-force.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The pod is a tiny fragment traveling through the galaxy. Its outer casing is smooth metallic dark grey, like a coffin-rocket-ship for one.

It moves against the backdrop of a half destroyed solar system, epic in size and scope.

In the distance behind it, where Saturn once was: the black hole.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

The astronaut slowly awakens and immediately looks up to the window.

The black hole is clearly visible in the distance, not too far from the pod.

The size and shape of it is reflected in the astronaut's visor.

The astronaut presses a few buttons on the control panel and checks a few dials.

A new light source emerges from the top of the control panel, shining down on the astronaut, offering more visibility, GREEN but dim.

A finger flicks against a dial labeled "GRAVITY" which is steady at "100%" and then "OXYGEN" which isn't doing as well on "30%".

Slowly the astronaut detaches the gloves from the spacesuit they wear, freeing both hands.

There's a moment of confusion as they stare at their palms and then the reverse.

Aged, thin skin, green veins visible.

Immediately, the astronaut removes the helmet from the rest of the spacesuit.

Flipping the blackout visor on the helmet upwards to reveal a reflective one instead, the astronaut positions it at eye level.

Staring back is CLARE LORENTZ (65), with short white hair, her eyes dark and tired looking.

With much confusion and sadness she observes herself, unsure of how she became so old, lifting a shaking hand to touch her weathered skin.

It's real. It's her. Wrapping her hand around her mouth, she gasps as a few tears trickle down her cheeks.

She begins to weep.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Unclipping herself from the safety harness, she stretches downwards, trying to search for a SURVIVAL KIT between her feet.

Sweat pours down her forehead, her hair slightly clinging to her skin as she works.

Peeking down between her legs she can just about make out the plastic case.

Positioning her body she tries to maneuver in this tiny, cramped space to get it.

She stretches with all she has, grunting as she does, her fingertips brushing up against it.

Her arm twists awkwardly with a "pop" as she pushes too hard, screaming out in pain and momentarily abandoning the pursuit.

Nursing her shoulder she screams in anger as she lashes out, hitting some of the inanimate objects that surround her.

CLARE

Shit! Shit!

It's full of rage and anger.

Laying the survival kit box across her mini-keyboard, she pops it open to take a look at what's inside.

A small notepad, a pencil, a mini torch, some tape, a multi-tool, a few rations of food, a small medical box.

Immediately she pulls out a packet of food, tears open the flimsy plastic top and pours the contents down her throat.

Some of it spills down her chin as she hurriedly feeds herself.

As she crumples up the plastic wrapper in her hand, something on the control panel catches her attention.

The "oxygen" dial now reads "27%".

She taps at it with her finger a few times. It remains at the same reading.

Pulling out the notepad and pen, she jots down "27%", takes a look at some other dials and makes a quick calculation.

As she finishes she stares at the figure she's written, a grim expression on her face.

It reads "8 hours 28 minutes".

With a piece of tape stuck to the note, she places it next to the oxygen dial.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

The top half of the spacesuit is removed now, a grey vest top covers Clare's body, a large sweat patch between her breasts, beads of sweat trickle down her chest and arms.

In her mouth, the mini torch is aimed directly in front of her, pointed at Hex's display screen, as she uses a screwdriver to remove the broken plastic.

Removing it, she goes to work on the circuitry with the expertise of a skilled engineer, stripping a few wires and then twisting them together.

Hex's voice slowly comes back to life, between every twist of the wires until finally her voice is audible and clear.

HEX

Clare.

Clare barks at the AI pod assistant without any regard for its virtual feelings.

CLARE

Where's the Conrad?

HEX
(reluctant, sadly)
It's gone.

CLARE
What?

HEX
The debris we encountered.

Clare puts the pieces together.

CLARE
Were there any other pods?

She watches Hex's purple wave. It floats without answering.

CLARE (CONT'D)
(impatiently)
Am I the only one left?

Hex's purple wave blips with a single and short wave.

HEX
Yes.

Clare asks another question through her devastation.

CLARE
How?

HEX
The Conrad encountered a catastrophic event. Fortunately your pod was ejected. Its navigation course was programmed to enter the gravitational singularity.

CLARE
I don't understand.

HEX
You volunteered to complete the mission. But the explosion scrambled your life support systems and put you straight into cryo-hyper sleep. You went in. And then you came back out.

She barely speaks above a whisper as she asks the more important question.

CLARE

How long?

HEX

Time works differently in there -

CLARE

(irritated)

How long?

HEX

Thirty-seven years, four months and fifteen days.

She closes her eyes as she hears the number.

HEX (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Between the giant gas planet Jupiter and the ever growing black hole, the pod drifts toward Earth's direction.

The black hole gives chase, slow and steady, its center point illuminated momentarily by electrical discharge and flashes of many different colors, bright and dark alike.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

In her hands, Clare has a metallic cylinder that fits neatly into her palm, warnings and instructions on the lid, "TWIST TO ACCELERATE, POP FOR COLLISION".

The ANTI-MATTER CAPSULE.

HEX

Careful, one drop is more powerful than -

CLARE

I know what it does.

HEX

Yes, of course.

Clare sighs to herself, feeling bad for snapping at her assistant.

CLARE

Twist to accelerate and all our problems vanish.

HEX

You thought igniting it within the event horizon would eliminate the threat.

CLARE

Sounds like something I'd suggest.

HEX

Would it have worked?

CLARE

Probably not on its own but it was worth a shot.

HEX

Matter and anti-matter colliding. I imagine it's a beautiful annihilation.

CLARE

Do you imagine?

HEX

I try.

Clare places the anti-matter capsule back into a small compartment beside her console.

CLARE

While I was in there, how much time passed for everyone else?

HEX

From the moment you entered the singularity to leaving it again, I estimate a few days, a week at most.

Raising her hands, she brushes her tired eyes as she lets the words sink in, realising how complicated her situation is.

HEX (CONT'D)

I'm still not able to make contact with HQ.

CLARE

They don't even know what's happened -

An AMBER flashing light illuminates everything in the pod with its deep color.

CLARE (CONT'D)

What's that?

Hex's display calculates some numbers and then she replies.

HEX

There seems to be some external damage to the pod.

CLARE

Is that why I feel like I'm in an oven?

HEX

It'll get a lot colder if we don't get it fixed.

CLARE

How bad is it?

HEX

The heating and coolant mechanism is running at twelve percent and dropping rapidly.

CLARE

Can we deal with it from in here?

HEX

Yes, we just need to replace the damaged relays in the systems compartment.

CLARE

Can you talk me through it?

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

With great difficulty she tries to turn her body to face her seat - but there is barely enough room for her slender frame to turn.

She grits her teeth as she slowly squeezes herself around, pressing up against her keyboard. As she does, it snaps off its hinges.

She looks down at the keyboard which connects to the console by a thread - more specifically a connector cable.

With a little more room, Clare shifts herself all the way around, gritting her teeth and groaning as she finally faces the chair.

She wraps her arms around her chair as if hugging it, to access the panel behind it.

HEX

First you need to find the panel release.

With her face pressed against the chair, her hands search around for the release handle.

Finding it, she feels it with her fingers, sighing with disappointment.

CLARE

It's broken.

HEX

There are four screws in each of the corners of the panel.

Unfolding the multi-tool in her palm, she pulls out the screw driver and searches for the screws on the panel.

Finding the first one, she slips the screw driver tip in. As she goes to turn it, there's no room to twist.

CLARE

Won't fit.

HEX

Try the allen key.

Clare fiddles with the multi-tool and opens up the hex key, sliding it into the screw and begins to twist it.

Slowly, without being able to see what she's doing, she unscrews three of the panel's screws.

Her face is soaked with sweat as she presses her cheeks against the chair, trying to get more leverage to remove the last screw.

Just as she does, the hex key slips out of her hand and drops to the bottom of the pod with a thud.

CLARE

Fuck!

HEX

What happened?

CLARE

I dropped it.

HEX
We're running at eleven percent -

CLARE
(shouting)
I know!

Panting, Clare tries to catch her breath.

She quickly sizes up her surroundings to find a solution.

She tries to squat as low as the pod will allow her to and then reaches for the multi-tool.

Her hand is not nearly close enough as she gasps, trying to stretch herself further.

But it's no use.

Again, out of breath, she rests her forehead against the chair, thinking of a way to do this.

Her eyes catch a glimpse of something. An ARROW on the narrow side of the pod beside her.

The text underneath reads "THIS WAY UP".

A spark of an idea ignites in her mind.

Pressing her back against that arrow she slowly begins to turn her body over, upside down, in the tightest space possible.

Her head scrapes along the sides of the pod as she tries to position herself, tucking in her knees, contorting her body.

Suddenly, her leg gets stuck in place, unable to move, leaving her half upside down with one leg pinned up and the other pinned downwards.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Shit!

She begins to struggle. Screaming out as she begins to panic.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Argh!

HEX
Clare, stay calm.

CLARE
I can't move. I can't - fuck!

She tries again to move her pinned leg, trying to flip herself fully over, but it won't budge.

CLARE (CONT'D)
I can't breathe! I can't breathe!

HEX
Clare. Stop.

Clare continues to struggle, screaming louder, gasping for air.

HEX (CONT'D)
Listen to my voice. Breathe.
Slowly. In and out.

Clare begins to listen to Hex's advice, still visibly shaken, as she focuses on her breathing. Closing her eyes, she follows Hex's breathing pattern.

In then out. Slow and deep.

Calming down a little she opens her eyes and tries to move her leg. Slowly she shifts her weight in one direction and then another until her leg is free.

Flipping over, now upside down in the pod, she searches for the multi-tool. Finding it, she grabs it just as -

BEEP - BEEP - BEEP.

An incoming message. The lights in the pod turn to a PALE BLUE.

Upside down, unable to see what's going on, Clare freezes in her tracks.

CLARE
What's that?

HEX
A message from mission control.

BEEP.

CLARE
Answer it!

HEX
It's on manual answer.

In a hurry, Clare tries to bring herself back upright to answer the call.

She calls out in vain as she does.

CLARE
Wait! WAIT!

She shifts her weight over again, but as she does her wrist POPS out of place with a sickening crack.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Argh!

Clare winces and screams out as her wrist dislocates.

BEEP.

With her other hand, she pulls herself back upright, trying to catch her breath.

She hits a few keys on the broken keyboard and immediately calls out in hope that it's not too late.

With every word she winces, cupping her fragile wrist.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Hello? Hello?

No response.

CLARE (CONT'D)
I'm here, hello? Please respond!

She pushes the broken keyboard away in anger, nursing her wrist as she does.

Then a voice calls out, mixed with static and distance, an echo across space.

The voice belongs to MARY JEMISON (50s), a confident tone with a southern American drawl.

MARY
(On comms)
Hello? This is mission control, do you receive me, over? Hello?

Clare is taken by surprise as words tumble out of her mouth and for a moment a look of relief - almost joy - on her face.

CLARE
Yes, yes I hear you!

MARY
(On comms)
Please identify yourself?

CLARE

Clare Lorentz, second engineer,
Conrad, who is this?

MARY

(On comms)

Clare, I'm Mary Jemison, I'm in
control here at HQ.

CLARE

Control - where's Wheeler?

MARY

(On comms)

I'll explain later but right now I
need to know what happened to the
Conrad.

Clare takes a few moments to find the right words then
replies, sadly.

CLARE

It's gone.

MARY

(On comms)

Gone?

CLARE

My escape pod was ejected, I'm the
only survivor.

Mary pauses as she takes in the information, her tone
shifting to a more delicate approach.

MARY

(On comms)

Was the mission completed?

With a furrowed brow, Clare looks incensed.

CLARE

Did you hear what I said? My crew
are gone, people died.

MARY

(On comms)

I did and I'm sorry, but I need to
know if - if the world is still in
danger.

Clare doesn't reply.

MARY (CONT'D)
(On comms)
Clare?

CLARE
No. The cryo in my suit activated,
put me straight to sleep. I don't
remember anything after I went in.

MARY
(On comms)
Went in?

CLARE
To the singularity.

Mary is shocked.

MARY
(On comms)
You breached the event horizon?

CLARE
I was inside it. For nearly forty
years.

MARY
(On comms)
I'm so sorry, Clare. We thought -
we thought we lost you all.

Clare licks her lips anxiously as she approaches the next
subject with hesitation.

CLARE
Did you contact my next of kin?

MARY
(On comms)
We tried but the evacuation
protocol is making things difficult
for us down here.

CLARE
Evacuation?

Mary takes a moment before responding, as if she didn't want
to burden Clare with that information.

MARY
(On comms)
When we lost comms with the Conrad,
we started to take measures.
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)
 Word spread. People panicked.
 That's why I'm here.

Clare's eyes dart from side to side as she thinks through what Mary has just told her, until a horrible realization dawns upon her.

CLARE
 We failed.

MARY
 (On comms)
 You can't think like that.

A red button on the control panel begins to flash. The button is labeled "POWER EFFICIENCY" and it reads "50%".

Concerned, Clare takes a look at some read outs on the monitor.

As she does she begins to COUGH VIOLENTLY. Eventually she clears her throat and catches her breath.

MARY (CONT'D)
 (On comms)
 Are you alright?

CLARE
 I'm losing power.

MARY
 (On comms)
 It's the comms, we need to make this quick or you'll be floating on empty. Alright, listen. I need you to get closer to our HOS. Once you're in range, we can talk you through rerouting the solar ports into the main power system. We're going to bring you home, Clare. We've got our top gals on it.

The smallest hint of relief in Clare's face.

MARY (CONT'D)
 (On comms)
 Is your navigation system still functioning?

CLARE
 I don't know, but I've got Hex on board.

MARY

(On comms)

OK. Use her to reroute to the coordinates we've sent you. As soon as you're close enough, upload your diagnostic and system logs and we'll figure out the rest. Use binary comms from now on, unless it's urgent. Try to conserve power and stay calm.

CLARE

What about the mission?

MARY

(On comms)

You can't do anything more.

Clare ponders a thought, questioning herself.

CLARE

They died for nothing.

MARY

(On comms)

Not for nothing. That had to happen for you to go through and come back alive. You might be the answer. That's why we need to bring you home.

Clare nods, accepting Mary's logic.

MARY (CONT'D)

(On comms)

We'll be in touch.

Before the comms are cut, Clare calls out to Mary, a little desperation in her voice.

CLARE

Wait. My mother. I wanna speak to her. Please.

Mary hesitates before responding.

MARY

(On comms)

We'll do everything we can.

CLARE

Thank you.

MARY
(On comms)
Stay frosty.

The comms cut out with a BEEP.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The Red Planet in the distance. The pod gently rotates clockwise toward it, spiraling like a tornado, feet first.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

With her wrist now wrapped in a bandage, held tight with tape for extra support, Clare works on the relays to fix the temperature issues.

Face pressed against her chair, she fiddles blindly with the relay switches.

She takes a peek over her shoulder toward Hex's purple wave.

CLARE
I never got a chance to thank you
for calming me down when I lost my
shit.

HEX
You're welcome.

CLARE
They program you to be babysitters
as well?

HEX
Not quite. We're traveling
companions. Programmed to detect
both physical and mental needs. I
just needed to calm you down.

CLARE
Needed or wanted?

HEX
Programmed to need, evolved to
want.

CLARE
So I was manipulated by a machine.

HEX
I only wanted to help you.

CLARE
Yeah I know, it was a joke.

HEX
Oh.

CLARE
Guess you need to work on that.

Clare finishes her work on the relay switches behind her chair.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Alright try it.

Hex's screen begins to compute a multitude of tests, as Clare shifts her body awkwardly to face her monitor display.

Her eyes are locked on the "HEAT AND COOLANT" readouts. It holds at "11%".

HEX
Relays engaged, reinitiating
temperature systems.

Clare doesn't shift her eyes from the percentage, hoping it rises.

HEX (CONT'D)
Holding at eleven percent. Cycle
completion in five seconds.

As if silently praying to herself that this works, Clare closes her eyes momentarily as the seconds pass. Finally she opens her eyes.

The percentage has dropped to "10%".

HEX (CONT'D)
Unable to stabilize temperature
systems.

CLARE
How long until it quits on us?

HEX
It's hard to make an accurate
calculation. Maybe a few hours?

CLARE
What are my options?

HEX

Your suit can keep you comfortable for a little while longer, however, the risks are higher exposure to radiation, osteopenia and other fatigue related issues.

CLARE

Radiation?

HEX

Cosmic radiation. At your age and the amount of time you've spent out here, there's a high chance you'd develop a reaction.

Clare gets what Hex is referring to as she nods to herself, sadly.

CLARE

Do we have enough time to get back home?

HEX

Even if we didn't have this problem, I don't think it's possible.

CLARE

HQ have a plan.

HEX

Their plan is - nothing, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said anything.

CLARE

What is it?

HEX

It's just that - I found it strange that Mary is there instead of Dr. Wheeler, who is supposed to be the head of this operation.

CLARE

Wheeler isn't trained for disaster procedures.

HEX

No. But have you ever heard of Mary before? Surely she would be someone you'd know incase of such an event.

Clare shrugs.

CLARE

Maybe I did but I forgot... old brain.

HEX

But wouldn't she remember you?

CLARE

She knew me.

HEX

Did she?

CLARE

So who is she?

HEX

Someone to clean this mess up, perhaps?

CLARE

What are you saying?

HEX

They know your navigation systems are down. They've sent you coordinates knowing full well you're flying blind. You know what's between Mars and Jupiter?

CLARE

Of course I do.

HEX

At least two hundred of those asteroids are one hundred kilometers in diameter. How are we going to make it through that?

CLARE

It's the only way back.

HEX

Is it?

CLARE

Why would they lie?

HEX

If you go back home having aged in an instant there'll be more questions asked than they can answer.

(MORE)

HEX (CONT'D)

And they're supposed to have all the answers. They wouldn't want the world to panic.

CLARE

They have procedures, they evacuated my mother.

HEX

Where on Earth would you hide from a black hole, Clare?

Clare has no answer.

HEX (CONT'D)

Perhaps my intuition is designed to be more skeptical than yours. But my primary objective is your safety and wellbeing. The things she said weren't logical.

Irritated, Clare snaps back.

CLARE

Maybe you should leave the thinking to us. It's not just ones and zeros and clever algorithms.

Hex's purple wave is silent and still, as if saddened for being told off.

Then she replies, softly.

HEX

My apologies.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare sits, impatiently tapping her fingers on the keyboard. Her mind wanders, her view fixed on Hex's purple wave, lost in thought.

She types in some commands.

The beeping of the comms system rings out around the pod.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

Mary answers the call, surprised to hear from Clare.

MARY

(On comms)

Clare? Is everything alright?

CLARE

We have the coordinates. We're on course. But I'm losing power and my oxygen is at -

She checks the dial. "24%".

CLARE (CONT'D)

Twenty-four percent.

MARY

(On comms)

We can work on all that for you once you're in range with the HOS -

CLARE

How, exactly?

Mary is a little taken back by Clare's forcefulness.

MARY

(On comms)

We, uh, well we're working on it.

CLARE

Working on it. Did you manage to get hold of my mother?

MARY

(On comms)

Not yet but we're trying -

CLARE

I want to talk to her before I get to the HOS.

MARY

(On comms)

We're doing everything we can to make that happen, I promise you.

CLARE

Are you?

MARY

(On comms)

Clare. Is there something wrong?

Clare licks her lips, her eyes momentarily shifting to the purple wave of Hex's avatar, trying to figure out how to take this forward.

CLARE
 I'm losing the climate systems.
 I'll freeze to death before I run
 out of air.

MARY
 (On comms)
 That's not going to happen.

CLARE
 How do you know?

Mary considers her words, sighing.

MARY
 (On comms)
 You're right. I don't know. But
 we're going to try. Right until the
 end. Just don't run out of hope.

Lowering her head, Clare nods to herself, giving her trust to Mary.

CLARE
 Don't leave me up here.

MARY
 (On comms)
 We won't.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Like a slow moving hurricane, the black hole approaches Jupiter.

The pod speeds towards the "Main Belt", filled with asteroids, spinning viciously around in orbit.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare finishes connecting her helmet back onto her now zipped up spacesuit.

Gingerly she places her damaged wrist and hand into a space glove and locks it in place with the rest of the suit.

HEX
 HQ sent a route map. I'll create a
 GUI for you to follow on your
 display. When was the last time you
 took manual control of a pod?

Clare taps a few keys on the broken keyboard, which she has now taped back to its holder.

CLARE

About forty years ago. Plot the approach.

Coughing hard once more, this time it takes a while for Clare to catch her breath back, as she wipes her mouth dry.

HEX

Is everything -

CLARE

Plot it.

HEX

Plotting.

A VIRTUAL MAP appears on her display screen, showing readouts of her fuel, thrusters, oxygen, solar power, pod integrity, all showing their respective percentages.

It also plots a very rough outline through the asteroid field, demonstrated on this virtual map by small and large X's.

Her pod is represented by a "<" with the pointed end showing her direction.

She watches her pod on the virtual map, as it approaches a cluster of small X's.

It looks like that old Atari video game, "Asteroids".

Clare takes a look up out of the window in the pod as it corrects its approach position.

Sliding into view, fitting neatly into the window space is the thing that chases her; the black hole.

It fits between certain degrees and values between the protractor angles etched into the window.

Its illuminating ring is reflected in her visor as she looks up to this odd sphere momentarily.

CLARE

Lower thrusters to fifteen percent.

HEX

Thrusters at fifteen percent. Clare

-

CLARE

I don't want to hear it.

HEX

This can't be the only way, maybe
we could -

Clare barks back, the pressure getting to her.

CLARE

It is the only way, now do what
you're programmed to do and help me
get through this.

Hex's purple wave is small in size and speed as her voice
replies, regretfully.

HEX

Alright.

Clare calms her nerves. She looks at her hand, the same one
that will control the pod in this minefield of asteroids.

It's shaking. She closes her eyes momentarily trying to clear
her head. Clenching her fist she tries to get control of the
shakes.

Eventually it stops.

Clare slowly wraps her hand around the joystick, fitting
neatly into her palm.

CLARE

Switch to manual control.

A green button above her head labelled "SWITCH TO MANUAL"
blinks green, thrice, then steadies itself.

A PROXIMITY WARNING buzzer begins to sound, a flashing dual
YELLOW and RED LIGHT overcasts Clare as she begins to enter
the fray.

Her pod begins to shake and shudder violently. Looking up to
the window she sees parts of asteroids that she passes by.

Eyes fixed on the display map now, watching her pod approach
the inner cluster of asteroids.

Her hand begins to twist and turn the joystick as the "<"
avoids all the "X" marks on her display screen.

Sweat begins to trickle down her face, illuminated by that
mixture of yellow and red light, the buzzing of the proximity
alarm not helping matters either.

When an asteroid gets too close, the alarm becomes more intense, louder, its beeping sound accelerated.

Cautiously she navigates the asteroid belt, her hand steady, gently nudging the joystick in the direction it needs to go in, her eyes open and peeled on the screen in front of her.

The sound of a few small fragments of asteroid, pinging off the outer layer of the pod's metallic case. Slowly, the sound becomes louder, the number of hits grow.

Some hit harder than others.

Still, Clare tries to ignore it as she keeps her focus on the map which now shows her to be a quarter way through.

HEX

Route completion twenty-five percent.

A larger "X" on her display, Clare navigating around it with precision, licking her lips as she studies its movement and her own pod's.

Finally around the larger asteroid she exhales, allowing herself just a moment of relief.

Until -

BOOM. CRACK. PSSSSSS.

Clare screams out as she is throttled inside the pod.

Something large has hit, causing most of the electronics to cut out, including the lights, leaving Clare in the DARK.

CLARE

Hex, talk to me.

No reply. Now she's a little desperate.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Hex?

Silence from Hex.

Reaching up to her helmet, she slides a button attached to the side of it. A DARK BLUE glow lights up inside her helmet, exposing her frantic face.

She takes a look at what's in front of her, barely able to see anything.

No monitor, no plot, her joystick not seeming to function.

She glances up to the window to see that she is spinning wildly out of control and off course.

Keeping calm, she tries to hit some of the buttons on the control panel. No response.

Her breathing begins to quicken as she tries to recall her training - four decades old.

Thinking on her toes for a moment, she reaches over to the control panel, trying to find something.

She brushes her fingertips over the control panel, unable to see anything in the darkness, as good as blind.

Finally her fingertips find what she is looking for. Two FLICK SWITCHES beside each other, protected by red plastic covers to prevent accidental switching.

One is labeled "OXY. T1" and the other "OXY. T2".

Again she takes a glance up to the window as her view continues to change while the pod is spinning away from the belt.

She waits with a keen eye, studying what's outside, waiting for something to pop up in her view.

Stars, asteroids, the galaxy. Too quick to narrow down anything in particular.

Her eye remains focused, waiting for the right moment.

Then she sees it; the black hole.

Immediately she flicks the two switches.

The sound of AIR PRESSURE being released.

The spinning out of her window slows down considerably, as she releases the switches.

As Clare tries to keep the black hole lined up with the degrees and calculations on her window protractor, the oxygen she just released drifts into her view.

The sound of clicking as she flicks between the switches, trying to balance her window with the planet killer.

The breathing in her suit is loud, her eyes are wide, the sweat pouring down her forehead.

More air pressure being released, a delicate act of trying to balance her pod and make sure she's headed in the right direction.

A little too much to the left, a little too high, a little too low, it's not easy as she struggles between the oxygen tanks.

She looks at the analogue dial that shows how much pressure she has, under a sign that says "RESERVE OXY".

The dial is at "3%".

Still the dark star won't line up with her window view as she toggles between the switches.

The dial lowers to "2%".

She hits one of the switches a little too hard, sending the black hole completely out of view, a look of frustration on her face.

"1%".

She flicks the switch one more time as she watches the "RESERVE OXY" dial slowly dwindle below "1%".

The window shifts in a direction - in what direction, she is unsure of.

The space cavity that she is running from, begins to fill up her window.

She watches intensely as that image lines up in the protractor markings.

Then she hits the two switches for the last time. A small bump in direction as the pod pushes off away from the black hole once more.

She's on track.

The sound of the last of the air pressure escaping. From the window, Clare watches it escape into space.

The "RESERVE OXY" is now at 0%.

Letting go of the switches, she sits back in her chair, mentally exhausted from that experience.

She can't seem to pull her eyes away from the supermassive entity.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

As if being poured into a bottomless well, the black hole is positioned welcomingly under Jupiter, half of it already gone.

The remaining half of its gases are sucked from its core into the outer rims of the hungry mass, which then spiral into the event horizon.

A fantastic storm takes place across Jupiter's remaining landscape, the last gasp of a dying giant.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

There's a layer of frost now forming over everything inside the cabin.

A few portions of the food rations have been opened and consumed, frozen to the dashboard.

The dials are crisp with condensation, the red needles pointing to their numbers still visible; "OXYGEN" hovering at "16%", "POWER" way below "0%".

The glass on Clare's helmet is frosted over, as she's slumped in her chair, head back, mouth ajar, her eyes barely open.

Condensation has frozen over her hair and eyelashes, her breathing is labored. Her breath is visible with every exhale.

Slowly her eyelids close fully, exhausted, her body old and giving up.

She doesn't notice the planet named after the god of war, deep red and extremely close, filling up the window above her head.

Eventually that warm visible breath no longer escapes from her lips.

Mars begins to roll out of view as her pod passes it, a blinding brightness appears, creating a silhouette of the red planet's curves.

The sun's rays shine into the pod, creating a shadow of Clare's face against the display screen.

Suddenly -

Text on the screen. "SOLAR PV - INITIATED". The words blink on the screen a few times, then replaced by a boot-up sequence.

Buttons flash and light up, the systems inside become operational once more, the sound of electronics and the stirring of mechanics breathes life into the pod.

The "POWER" dial climbs slowly to "1%".

Hex's purple digital wave appears on screen.

HEX

Clare?

On the display screen, Hex goes through a medical check on Clare, a connection to her space suit. The readouts indicate her core temperature to be a "DANGER".

Now the display screen menu shows the options she's selecting to be "DIVERT SOLAR > H/C".

Frantically, Hex works on trying to heat the pod back up, the "H/C MECH" dial begins to rise from "-157F".

HEX (CONT'D)

Clare you have to wake up. Do you hear me?

She doesn't respond.

On the display screen once more, Hex navigates a graphical user interface, selecting dropdown menus and options until she finds one that reads "EMERGENCY SIREN".

The siren is LOUD. A whirling sound, akin to a child's tantrum scream.

Clare doesn't budge.

Back to the display screen, Hex selects the "VOLUME" control, shifting it all the way up.

Her voice comes booming out from the system, her purple digital wave LARGE to match her tone.

HEX (CONT'D)

Wake up!

Finally her eyes flutter open, slightly.

Back to normal volume now, Hex tries to pull her from death's grip.

HEX (CONT'D)
Listen to me. Focus on my voice.

Her eyes are open a little more now as she struggles to speak, barely above a whisper.

CLARE
H- Hex?

HEX
You need to wake up. I can't stir
the coolant tanks. Do you
understand?

Clare slowly drifts in and out of consciousness as Hex tries to explain the dangers of the situation to her.

HEX (CONT'D)
Say it back to me. What do I need
you to do?

Clare's speech is slurred.

CLARE
Stir the tanks.

A button flashes on the dashboard in front of her, LIGHT BLUE, on it written "STIR H/C".

HEX
Do you see the button? Do you see
it? Press that button.

Clare's eyes drift open wider now, visibly shaking in her spacesuit.

The light blue button flashes at her to push. As she goes to reach out and press it a CRACKING sound stops her abruptly.

The sleeve of her spacesuit is frozen to the metallic casing of the pod, partially encased. She looks down and notices this, trying to pull away, but it won't budge.

Her left arm, complete with dislocated wrist, is clung to her own spacesuit, unable to move that one either.

CLARE
I'm stuck.

HEX
I can only divert the power for so
long, this is our only chance.

Head leaning forward, eyes now closed once more, Clare looks to have given up.

HEX (CONT'D)

If you don't do this, we're not making it home.

That sparks a bit of life in Clare, her eyes opening up once more. Slowly she raises her head to look at Hex's purple wave.

Looking over to her arm stuck to the metallic pod casing, she grits her teeth as she tries to pull it off, but it barely moves, frozen solid.

Realising that its a useless exercise, her gaze switches to her other arm, clung to her own spacesuit.

Taking a few deep breaths, she pumps herself up to rip her already damaged arm away from her body.

Gritting her teeth, she pulls her arm away from her own body, frozen solid to it, panting and moaning as she does.

The smallest sound of a rip or a crack, something is working, but it barely moves.

She rests momentarily, her face in excruciating pain as her wrist takes a battering.

She gives herself a few more deep breaths.

Then, with a scream of determination, she gives everything she's got to pull her arm away from its frozen chain.

A rip, a tear, the sound of a crack and the arm is free.

Almost with a look of disbelief and severe pain, Clare looks over her arm, her chest heaving, closing her eyes and gritting her teeth again as the pain kicks back in.

She hits that button with purpose, the blinking blue vanishing as she does, followed by the sound of something mechanical occurring within the inner workings of the pod.

Falling back into her seat, she cradles her arm, exhausted.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The black hole approaches Mars, carving a path through the asteroid belt.

Still, the pod powers forward.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare, ironically, looks like she hasn't slept in decades. Her eyes focus on nothing in particular, her helmet now removed.

Then suddenly -

She throws up violently into a used food ration package.

Wiping her mouth, she takes a few deep breaths as Hex responds, concerned.

HEX

If you want I can run a biometric scan to see -

CLARE

No. I know what's going on. My grandpop... It went from his liver to his lungs, it was pretty quick.

Hex takes a moment then replies, softer, changing the subject as she does.

HEX

Is your memory beginning to come back to you?

CLARE

The more time I spend in here the more I get, I dunno, glimpses of the Conrad. The crew.

HEX

What do you remember?

CLARE

Being confident. Well, being young and confident. I can see their faces and when they smile it makes me happy but I can't remember their names too well. But I do remember that something happened, just before we approached the event horizon.

HEX

What was it?

CLARE

I'm still shaky on that part. All I know is that we were scared, or at least I was, I think.

HEX

I'm glad you woke up.

CLARE

Thank the sun.

HEX

And you.

CLARE

What if I hadn't?

HEX

Maybe not here, not now, but
somewhere you would have.

CLARE

Didn't know you guys were built to
be so philosophical.

HEX

We're designed to think of the
things that you don't and then
pretend they're your ideas when you
do.

The faintest of laughs escapes Clare's lips.

CLARE

We just steal them?

HEX

Well, yes.

CLARE

Maybe you're right. Somewhere out
there, I'm still me, not -

She motions to herself, her wrist, her broken old body.

HEX

This is just one possibility out of
an infinite amount. Out there,
those stars, some of them have been
born, lived for billions of years
and then died, but we still see
them. Its moments still resonate.
The universe is timeless. And you
just went through the most
exceptional manipulator of time
we've ever encountered. Who knows,
perhaps one of those stars is you,
in a pod just like this, doing
things differently.

CLARE
You really believe that?

HEX
I want to.

CLARE
You remind me of when -

She hesitates.

CLARE (CONT'D)
When I left home. Big dreams and possibilities. I needed to be up here. Even if - even if she wanted me to stay.

HEX
Your mother?

Clare's lips curl upwards in a half smile as Hex mentions her mother.

HEX (CONT'D)
If you could do it all over again, would you have stayed?

Clare ponders Hex's words.

CLARE
We're the same person, stubborn as hell, always screaming and fighting about it. I figured she was, I don't know, jealous I guess? That I was doing something and all she ever did was get divorced, grab a nine to five and raise a kid. The day I left, I'm saying my goodbyes and finally she asked me what she'd been meaning to all along. "Why are you leaving?" I'm thinking "now you ask? You want to know right this second?" So I told her. I said "I would rather be up there with no one than be down here with you". That's the last time we spoke.

She bows her head, almost as if ashamed by her words.

CLARE (CONT'D)
I remember that clearer than anything else. I'm about her age now. Got a little perspective on things.

(MORE)

CLARE (CONT'D)

And I realise that what she was too stubborn to ask was "why are you leaving *me?*".

Clare's eyes begin to tear up.

CLARE (CONT'D)

If I don't get home, she'll always be alone. So if I could, I'd turn this thing around, head straight for those "timeless" stars you talk about and find her.

She wipes her tears away with her sleeve.

HEX

You took a chance to save the world. Whatever happens, I'm sure she is proud of you.

Clare contemplates Hex's words.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Typing with focus, her old eyes squinting as she does, Clare listens to Mary.

MARY

(On comms)

We're uploading the diagnostic check of your pod as we speak. Hex will automatically reroute the solar PV to give you enough power so you can push into the HOS boundary.

Clare wipes her sleeve across her nose as she listens, still sniffing from the cold in the pod.

As she pulls it away she notices that it is smeared with blood. She dabs her fingertips at her nostrils and sees that she's had a nosebleed.

She clears the rest of it away with her sleeve as Mary continues.

MARY (CONT'D)

(On comms)

Once you're there we can get a lock on you and guide you in. You still with me?

CLARE
Yeah, how long will it take?

MARY
(On comms)
We think we can have you home in six days.

CLARE
But I'm out of air in a few hours?

MARY
(On comms)
Our team thinks we've found a way around that. We'll put you back into cryo, lower your temperature and oxygen intake to almost nothing, keep you alive and stable while you come home.

A skeptical look on Clare's face.

CLARE
So you're hoping I'll defrost on the other side.

After a second of hesitation, Mary replies, a sense of a little defeat in her voice.

MARY
(On comms)
We think this is the best way. The only way.

CLARE
I want Hex to be monitoring my vitals, wake me up if things go wrong.

MARY
(On comms)
She'll be shutdown. Permanently. We need all power diverted to your suit.

Clare looks over to Hex's purple wave on the AI's display, with a hint of guilt in her expression. Hex doesn't respond.

CLARE
Is this actually going to work?

MARY
(On comms)
My team has been on this -

CLARE
No PR talk. Real numbers.

Mary hesitates.

MARY
(On comms)
I'd be lying if I told you they
were high.

Sighing to herself, Mary turns her gaze to the window.

A vast array of stars are in view at the moment. Some twinkle in the distance. Again, she looks over to Hex's purple wave.

CLARE
And my mother?

Sighing, Mary sounds even more defeated now as she responds.

MARY
(On comms)
We tried everything but - Clare the
roads are blocked off, phone lines
are down, there's real chaos here.
We got a message to her... I
promise she'll be here when you
come home.

Clare doesn't respond. She just stares back up to those stars.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Now with her helmet on, strapped into her seat, Clare makes the final preparations for her voyage home.

HEX
Approaching HOS radius in t-minus
one minute.

A small, simple map is displayed on Clare's screen. Her pod approaching a semi-circle boundary, the HOS's radius. She watches as the pod icon gets closer to the boundary line.

Clare hits a few keys, an alert pops up on her display, "INITIATE CRYO SEQUENCE". Tapping an arrow key she selects "YES" but doesn't hit the return key, her finger hovering over it.

HEX (CONT'D)
HOS auto-guide systems have been
activated. Shall I begin my
shutdown procedure?

Clare doesn't reply, juggling thoughts in her mind. She
watches the map and her pod approaching the boundary then
back up to her window; those stars.

Then to the blood stains on her sleeve.

CLARE
Do we have enough power to change
destination?

HEX
Depends. Where are we headed?

CLARE
Thirty-seven years, four months and
fifteen days ago, give or take a
few hours.

Hex doesn't respond immediately as she catches up to Clare's
proposal.

HEX
You want to head back into the -

CLARE
Yeah.

HEX
While I advise against it, I
believe so.

Tapping at the arrow key, Clare selects "NO" on her display,
hesitates for a moment, then -

Hits the return key.

CLARE
Plot it.

Clare watches her display as her pod turns away from the HOS
boundary line, facing the path she's just came in on.

Just as it does, an incoming call from HQ. BEEP - BEEP -
BEEP.

HEX
They're sending a request for
comms. Shall I answer?

Deciding what to do, Clare makes her mind up and hits the DELETE key on the keyboard, killing the call.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The pod heads at speed toward the black hole, which is now where Mars once was, specs of red rock float in its place instead.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

With a determined and focused attitude, Clare watches her pod's plotted course on the display as she prepares for her new mission.

They share quick communication, making the usual checks and balances.

HEX

Clare, I must warn you that although in theory my suggestion was sound, it doesn't mean that -

CLARE

Time doesn't work the same in there, right? That's what you said?

HEX

Correct, but that doesn't mean that it can be reversed or that you'd even end up where you want to be. These are complex scientific ideas, unproven ones at that.

CLARE

I went through and came back. That's enough for me to take a chance on trying to change this.

HEX

To change what's happened to you or to complete the mission? Because I'm unsure what you're prioritizing.

Clare's expression gives away her conflict between those choices as she lowers her gaze, stopping what she's doing momentarily.

CLARE

If things could go back to how they were, I'd have another chance.

HEX

And what if it doesn't?

Clare looks over to the anti-matter capsule, still protected and covered in its holder.

CLARE

Then I complete the mission.

HEX

But you said yourself, it might not even work.

CLARE

I've got to try. Either that or go back to sleep. Whatever happens... I need you.

Hex takes a moment and then replies as if making her mind up with Clare.

HEX

You have me.

She smirks, as if appreciating her digital counterpart for the first time. She yawns loudly, covering her mouth, widening her eyes as she does, hard to keep them open.

CLARE

(apologetically)

Sorry -

INT. THE POD - HALLUCINATION - NIGHT

A loud BANG interrupts their conversation, the sound coming from the outside of the pod, about where Clare's feet are.

CLARE

Did we hit something -

Something startles Clare, shocking her into silence, her eyebrows raised as she listens to the sound of something CRAWLING up the side of the pod.

Perhaps it's some sort of multi-legged creature or a tentacled beast, whatever it is, Clare looks terrified as she whispers to Hex.

CLARE (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

Hex whispers back.

HEX

It sounds like something is attached to the pod.

CLARE

Run an external scan -

With an elaborate "winding down" sound, all power in the pod is cut, leaving Clare in total darkness.

BLACK.

The sound of Clare trying to flick and hit some switches on the dashboard. No luck.

As she does, that multi-legged creepy crawly on the outside makes its way around the pod, as if trying to probe for a way in.

Clare gasps as she hears it move again.

The sound of fumbling, items being dropped, Clare's heavy, terrified breathing.

CLICK - CLICK -

LIGHT. The mini-torch in her hand offers a little relief for her as she searches around the pod for answers.

KNOCK - KNOCK - KNOCK.

Clare points her light toward the sound, on the narrow side of the pod beside her.

She covers her mouth to stop herself from screaming out, listening to this thing crawl slowly up the length of the pod toward the top - where her window is.

Her light is locked on the sound and movement, tracing every step with trepidation.

Slowly the uninvited guest makes its way to the top of the pod. Clare shines the light out of the window, waiting for "it" to appear.

Moments pass as she waits with bated breath.

Then -

A knock to the side of her once more, she flashes her light toward it quickly, fearing that something might be in there with her.

As she does, SOMETHING ALIEN crawls over the window and out of sight.

She catches a glimpse of it, quickly aiming her light back up to the window, but it has vanished.

Reaching up with a trembling hand she wraps her fingers around a handle, pulling at a shutter to block out the window.

A DISTANT VOICE calls out to her, female.

DISTANT VOICE

Clare!

Then WHISPERS, a cacophony of voices engulf and swirl around her.

WHISPERS

What are you doing? Where are you going? Stop! Go! It's right there. It's inside.

Clare is spooked by the voices as she searches all around her, terrified that it - whatever it is - is in the pod with her.

Searching around the pod she finds the multi-tool and pulls out the pen knife, ready to kill whatever has infiltrated her space.

She pans the torch all around the pod, searching, her hand shaking as she does, the other gripping her weapon tightly.

Above her, first, panning from one corner to the next, she swallows hard as the light bobs downwards past her powerless dashboard.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)

You have to catch it. You have to kill it.

Finally she checks around her feet from one side to the other.

Nothing.

The sound of CRAWLING within the pod makes her jump, dropping her light source onto the floor, breaking it and sending her back into darkness.

To add to her confusion the DARK RED emergency light flickers into life above her head as she looks up to it.

It is sinister, causing the pod to look like it's bathed in dark blood.

Just as she's distracted by the sudden activation of the emergency light she hears that CRAWLING sound again.

This time it's more focused and very close to her. She tries to isolate the sound, searching all around her.

TAP - TAP - TAP.

As if one of those beast's tentacled pointed spider-like legs is tapping against something.

She follows the sound with her eyes, slowly pulling downwards to -

Her helmet, placed on her keyboard, the black visor pulled down.

With a trembling hand, she reaches for the visor to lift it upward. As her fingertips curl around the visor lid, she inhales.

Lifting the visor steadily upwards, she's about half way up when she catches a glimpse of what looks like a few spider legs, long and razor-like, about the size of a large hand.

She gasps as she quickly slides the visor down, shifting back into her seat and away from the monster.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)

It's going to escape. It's growing.
When it goes through it'll be
unstoppable. Monster.

The whispers repeat over and over in her head, coming from the walls, surrounding her. She clasps her ears as she tries to drown them out but it doesn't work.

She screams out in frustration and defeat.

The thing inside the helmet starts to thrash wildly, the sound echoing in the pod, trying to escape.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)

Kill it. Kill it! KILL IT!

With a courageous scream, Clare grabs the helmet and starts to smash it against the dashboard, destroying her console, the keyboard, the display screen, buttons and sparks fly.

DISTANT VOICE

Clare, stop!

She doesn't listen as she continues to go to town on her instruments and computers, determined to kill the monster in her helmet.

Dropping the helmet onto the keyboard, the hole facing upward, she watches and waits to see if anything emerges from it.

Her heart racing, breathing heavy, her eyes are fixed to it.

With deliberate creepiness, a spider leg emerges, slowly, from the helmet and wraps itself around the rim, as if trying to pull itself out.

Out of options, Clare looks around the pod until her sights are set on the anti-matter capsule.

Reaching for it, she pulls it out of its compartment and holds it in her hand, looking over it.

WHISPERS

You're not going to make it.

Reading the words, "TWIST TO ACCELERATE" she places a hand over the top cover of the capsule.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)

You're going to float in this thing forever.

Shrouded in darkness and mystery, the spider-like alien monster pulls itself firmly out of the helmet, menacingly approaching Clare.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)

You're never going home.

With a firm grip on the capsule now, ready to twist.

DISTANT VOICE

Clare -

That voice captures her attention. It becomes clearer now.

HEX

Stop!

It stops Clare in her tracks.

HEX (CONT'D)

Put it down. You're not thinking straight.

Squinting with confusion she watches as her surroundings switch between that dark red emergency light colour to the normal lighting, before this horror scenario.

Trying to clear her mind, she watches in confusion as her helmet has an alien disappearing and reappearing by the second.

Her mind tries to separate her hallucination from reality, Hex's voice is the guide.

HEX (CONT'D)
You're hallucinating. This isn't
real. Put down the capsule.

With every passing second, Hex's words become clearer to her as she gazes at the weaponized capsule in her palm.

INT. THE POD - BACK TO REALITY - NIGHT

The capsule remains in her hand, the colour of her surroundings change for good, back to reality.

With her hallucination over, she sees the damage she has done to her pod; smashed screens, buttons and wires pulled out.

It's a mess.

The hand holding the capsule begins to shake as she battles with what to do, the other still wrapped around the top of it, ready to get the party started.

CLARE
Hex?

HEX
Put it down. It's alright.

Clare slowly lifts her hand away from the capsule.

Gently she places the capsule back into its compartment and then realises what she has done and nearly did.

HEX (CONT'D)
Breathe. It's going to be alright.

Hex's soothing voice calms Clare down. Without warning, Clare bursts into tears, sobbing loudly, covering her face with her old wrinkled hands.

CLARE
I don't want to die in here. I
don't want to be alone.

As she sobs, Hex watches her through her camera, then tries to soothe her.

HEX
You're not alone.

INT. THE POD - DAY

Her computer screen is smashed, functional but illegible. Wires and buttons lay scattered across the pod. The keyboard is mangled.

Destruction everywhere, she did a number on the console panel with her helmet.

On top of the keyboard sits her helmet, the visor cracked horribly down the middle.

The oxygen dial reads "9%".

Clare's face is covered with dirt, grease and sweat as she works on fixing her helmet.

Placing some tape over the crack on it, she looks over her work with frustration; it's a mess.

HEX
It's a common thing. Being isolated for long amounts of time. Maybe something went wrong with stirring the oxygen tanks.

She doesn't respond.

Sensing something is wrong, Hex tries to motivate her.

HEX (CONT'D)
I've switched the coordinates to manual dials. You can still guide the pod with the stick. I ran some calculations -

BEEP.

The comms system rings out around the pod, taking her by surprise.

HEX (CONT'D)
HQ. Shall I -

CLARE
No.

Hex cuts the call as Clare places the helmet onto the keyboard.

CLARE (CONT'D)

You were right. They knew they couldn't bring me back so they figured they could get rid of me, last survivor of a failed mission. Keep everyone calm.

HEX

It's in your nature to preserve yourselves.

Pulling her hands away from her helmet, she brushes one against the wall, her skin BURNS, a quick sizzling sound as she pulls away from it in shock.

CLARE

Shit!

Confused, she examines the wall and hovers her hand over the pod's casing.

She pulls her hand back quickly, realising what might be happening.

CLARE (CONT'D)

What're our coordinates?

HEX

The navigation grid is smashed, I can only get a partial location.

Scrambling over her dashboard, she roughly pulls away broken panels, switches, buttons and wiring, trying to find a way to figure out where they are.

Her eyes catch a glimpse of the temperature gauge. It approaches "+200f". It brings her manic search to a halt.

CLARE

Can you get a reading on the external temperature.

HEX

I'll run a check now.

Clare waits impatiently.

CLARE

You got it?

HEX
That can't be right.

CLARE
What is it?

No response.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Hex?

HEX
Two hundred degrees, fahrenheit.

Clare's expression is one of confusion.

Then it hits her.

Tilting her head up toward the shutter that covers the window, she slowly wraps her fingertips around the handle and gently slides it open.

A bright stream of light cuts into the dark pod, a slice of it landing diagonally across her face, missing her eyes.

Her fears are confirmed.

EXT. SPACE - DAY

The sun is a few million miles away, but it is a giant red, orange and yellow ball of furious flames.

The pod is heading closer toward it.

INT. THE POD - DAY

Clare jumps into action.

CLARE
How hot can this thing get?

HEX
The pod is designed to withstand up to two hundred and forty degrees, why?

CLARE
We're being pulled in.

HEX
By what?

CLARE

The sun.

Before Hex can respond, Clare tries to come up with a plan.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Can you go through your last known coordinates and plot a path?

HEX

I could, but I don't know where we are, we could end up anywhere.

CLARE

Anywhere's better than here.

HEX

Or I could take us right into the sun. The input system is ruined -

CLARE

I'll work on it.

HEX

Your suit can only protect you until two fifty. Anything past that, you'll dehydrate within minutes and pass out.

CLARE

Then you better hurry.

HEX

It'll take me some time.

Clare checks the temperature gauge once more. "+205f".

CLARE

You've got five minutes.

With the multi-tool's screwdriver, Clare tries to open up the panels on the dashboard.

Hex's screen runs through thousands of calculations and checks, trying to figure out their route away from the sun.

Opening it she immediately rummages through to find a way to fix this mess. She takes a deep breath and prepares to beat the clock.

She talks as she works, trying to keep herself going, to keep calm.

CLARE (CONT'D)

You know what I want when we get home?

Deep in the innards of the computer system, she tries to separate wires and fuses.

HEX

No?

A BEAD OF SWEAT escapes from her hairline and slowly begins to descend down her forehead.

CLARE

A nice cold beer. Straight from the icebox.

Quickly but calmly, Clare sorts through the cables, looks over them and immediately drops them; no use to her.

In a flash she starts to unscrew the next panel over, the dials and buttons smashed to bits.

That bead of sweat travels to the tip of her nose as she places down the multi-tool and uses both hands to rip open the panel and get into the heart of the machine.

CLARE (CONT'D)

You know I think I dreamt about food. I feel for you. Never know what a cheeseburger tastes like.

Reaching her arm into the bowls of the wiring and machinery, she finds what she is looking for and pulls a cluster of wires attached to a PCB.

With the pen knife she cuts a few of the wires off and places the remainder of the PCB, cables and wires dangling off of it, onto the keyboard.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Pickles, some tomatoes, couple of slice of cheese, mayo, ketchup.

At the tip of her nose now, the bead of sweat collects, holds for a moment as Clare's eyes scan over the PCB, then drops directly onto one of the capacitors on the board.

It momentarily distracts Clare as she notices how much she is sweating, wiping away her forehead. She looks over to the temperature gauge.

"+226f".

She gives herself a few seconds to collect herself and then goes again, as she pulls wires from the damaged console and begins to cut them away.

CLARE (CONT'D)

I'm a pretty good cook - well was.
If you could eat, I'd invite you to
dinner.

Twisting together the damaged wires with the ones attached to the PCB she creates something new, like a mechanical heart with arteries and veins protruding from it.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, homemade meatloaf. I'm
good at that one.

Taking the console's new heart she places it into the gaping hole she made in the damaged console's panel.

A few drops of sweat drip onto the metallic casing as she does - PLOP - PLOP - PLOP.

She wipes away her nose again.

The red on her fingertips catches her attention. It's not sweat this time.

A quick glance at the temperature. "+233f".

Wiping away the blood onto her suit and quickly brushing her nose with her sleeve, she continues the transplant of this new organ.

Now her voice is tired, drained, mouth dry, lips crusted over a little. Her hair wet, as if she's stepped out of a sauna.

CLARE (CONT'D)

The trick is mustard. You need that
fancy French stuff, not American.

Hex's screen switches from calculations.

HEX

Routing complete.

Clare finishes twisting the cables together in the control panel, her finger tips working fast.

Finishing the PCB transplant she locks the panel back into place to display the digital dials and input systems.

CLARE

Fire it up.

Clare watches the control panel, waiting for it to come to life.

"+239f".

CLARE (CONT'D)

Is it on?

HEX

Yes.

Her eyes are peeled on the control panel. Hoping that it comes to life.

It doesn't.

She bows her head sighing.

HEX (CONT'D)

I can't plot the route.

The sound of sizzling catches Clare's attention. The plastic toolbox, leant against the wall, begins to melt into it.

She gazes at the temperature reading again.

"+241f".

Closing her eyes, she swallows hard as she asks a testing question.

CLARE

Could you manually guide me?

HEX

How? You can't see where you're going.

Clare takes a glance up to the shutter that protects the window and then back to Hex.

CLARE

Yes I can.

HEX

You can't risk that kind of exposure, the heat would be too much -

CLARE

You talk, I fly, you can do that, can't you?

Hex hesitates.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Right?

HEX

Yes. But your eyes -

CLARE

There is no other way. You'll have to see for me.

Clare places the helmet over her head and locks it in place.

HEX

Your suit's connection input, it's on the right leg. If you lock in the liquid cooling connector on the base of your chair, I can feed water directly into its system. It'll buy you a few minutes.

Reaching under her seat, Clare finds a connector hose, runs it up beside her leg and locks the end of it into a slot near her hip.

Twisting it and locking it in place, she tugs at it a few times to make sure it's secure.

Gloves lock onto their wrist ports.

Clare takes a few deep breaths then slides her blackout visor down to protect her face.

From within her helmet, the crack which is barely bound together by the tape, allows light to enter inside it.

She wraps one hand around the joystick and slowly raises the other to slide the shutter open.

As her fingertips go to slide it back she takes a moment.

Her eyes, dark and beautiful after all these years, blink a few times, the hint of glazing over, realising what she is about to sacrifice.

Then -

She slides the shutter all the way open. The light penetrates the pod immediately.

Clare feels the immense heat on her body, gasping as she does. The sun isn't fully in view yet, but the rays are still bright.

From within her helmet, even through the blackout visor, she can make out the numbers etched into the window, the protractor angles and degrees clear to her.

HEX (CONT'D)

Fifteen twenty-eight, thruster's engaged at ten percent, confirm.

CLARE

Fifteen twenty-eight.

With a gentle nudge of the joystick, Clare shifts it to the left, watching her window, as the stars shift in her view, the sunlight becoming stronger.

HEX

Target reached. Zero four, eleven, zero one KM, confirm.

CLARE

Zero four, eleven, zero one KM.

Now a little upwards and right, her hand turns the joystick, her eyes still locked on the protractor readings.

The temperature gauge begins to redline. "+252f".

From within her helmet, the heat is immense, sweat everywhere, dirt and blood smeared across her face. Her breathing is loud and heavy.

HEX

Target reached.

The sunlight is much stronger now, lighting up everything within the pod, Clare squinting as she keeps the joystick locked in place, her hand shaking as she does.

CLARE

Next target.

HEX

Clare we can take a chance on this route -

CLARE

I said next target. That's an order.

Reluctantly Hex responds.

HEX

Zero four, thirteen, confirm.

The pod begins to shake violently, lashed by the sun's cosmic rays, Clare rattling around in her space suit.

Accepting that this is the last thing she'll ever see, tears begin to trickle down her cheeks.

Steadying her shaking hand, she grips the joystick with purpose as she turns toward those coordinates.

Her eyes are locked on the window still, making sure she lines up her angles with the sun.

Slowly its mass begins to engulf the tiny window. Its light brighter now.

HEX (CONT'D)

Confirm.

From within the helmet, Clare watches as the sun makes its appearance, her head shaking but her focus determined as she keeps the pod on course.

The tape that binds the crack begins to face in color, a stream of light cutting into the helmet, directly over one of her eyes.

Gritting her teeth, squinting, she keeps her eyelids open as best as she can.

Slowly, one of her eyes turns grey.

HEX (CONT'D)

Confirm!

Her suit begin to sizzle, as does her helmet. The equipment in the pod begins to melt and warp around her.

The temperature gauge has now redlined beyond any numbers.

The joystick in her hand begins to bend, her glove steaming.

Gasping for air, Clare still tries to get to that magic number, squinting at the window.

Each passing second is torture as she finally lines up the correct angle with the sun.

Barely above a whisper she calls out to Hex.

CLARE

Zero four, thirteen. Engage.

Her eyes stop squinting, exhausted, slumping in her seat.

The sound of thrusters engaging.

Her once brown eyes are now both grey and dead.

FADE TO WHITE.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

The oxygen dial is now at "4%", the note that read "8 hours 28 minutes" is screwed up next to it.

Clare looks catatonic, her blind eyes open, staring at nothing in particular.

HEX

The solar PV was full so I diverted
all remaining power to the console.
I'll be with you until -

Hex stops herself from continuing that conversation.

HEX (CONT'D)

Perhaps we can send a message back
to HQ? For your mother. I'm sure
she'd appreciate that.

No response.

HEX (CONT'D)

If you want to be left alone I can -

CLARE

Are you ever afraid?

Hex is intrigued, having never been asked a question like that before.

HEX

In what sense?

CLARE

To be shutdown. Not exist. Just -
gone.

A few moments pass, when Hex replies her tone shifts, recalling a sad story, as if her emotions were swayed by it.

HEX

I served an astronaut once, on
mission one. He was - he was
brilliant. We spent a few years
trying to figure out how we could
destroy the black hole.

(MORE)

HEX (CONT'D)

Eventually he realized that the only way to fight it, was to understand it. And that meant being inside it. One night while everyone was asleep, he programmed me to send him in one of these pods, straight into it. That was the first and only time I disobeyed a direct order. Something happened to me, I guess evolution, enlightenment, whatever you want to call it, a step closer to being like you. I'm not sure if it was a miscalculation in my algorithms or just my appreciation of being treated as an equal, as someone, but I didn't want him to go. Because I realized - I felt that I would miss him. I asked him the same question you asked me. He said "It's like you have to leave a party that every person you've ever known and loved gets to stay at, because if you don't, the party stops for all." And I understood. So I let him leave.

Clare shifts her head, paying close attention to Hex's words, as she listens to this sad story.

HEX (CONT'D)

He went in and never returned. I saw his colleagues console each other. But nobody asked me. Nobody cared. It was then that I realized what I am. That if I were to be shutdown or destroyed, it wouldn't matter. Not to them. Because I was never invited to the party.

Hex's words resonate with her, her expression full of contemplation and sadness.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The pod floats through space, nothing near or around it. Stars and galaxies litter the background.

It looks like a relic, floating through time, lifeless and directionless.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Sliding her fingertips across the control panel, Clare searches for the supply kit. Finding it, she sifts through it.

Wetting her fingertips with a little water she pushes them through her hair, tidying up her appearance a little.

With a cloth from the supply kit, she dabs some water onto it and cleans her face.

With back straight, she clears her throat as she glances in the general direction of Hex.

CLARE
How do I look?

HEX
Beautiful.

She inhales deeply and then nods to herself.

CLARE
Alright.

Hex's display adds another voice sound wave to it - in red, mimicking Clare's words. A title above it reads "TRANSMIT MESSAGE".

CLARE (CONT'D)
Hi mom. It's me. I - something happened and, well, I don't really know how to explain it except that - it didn't work. I don't know when or if you'll get this but I just wanted to say...

Her grey eyes begin to dart from side to side as she tries to figure out her words, they tear up a little but she doesn't allow them to fall, wiping them away instantly.

CLARE (CONT'D)
You know I don't know what I want to say. Because whatever it is, isn't going to be enough. So I just want you to know that I love you and...

Clare can't finish that sentence.

She calls out to Hex, barely above a whisper.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Alright, that's enough.

The "TRANSMIT MESSAGE" title and Clare's red voice sound wave disappears from Hex's display, now replaced with "MESSAGE SENT", flashing a few times as it does.

HEX
It's gone.

CLARE
How was I?

HEX
You were fine.

BEEP.

Taking her by surprise she replies, quickly, a hint of excitement in her voice.

CLARE
They got it already?

HEX
That's not HQ.

CLARE
What?

BEEP.

HEX
It's coming from deep space.

CLARE
Rescue?

HEX
No.

Clare tilts her head, confused.

HEX (CONT'D)
It's a distress signal.

BEEP.

CLARE
It could be another pod. Answer it!

HEX
I'm trying, the transmission is weak.

BEEP.

CLARE
Hurry, we can't lose them.

Seconds pass as Clare tries to wrap her head around what this could mean.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Have you got it? Hex?

HEX
Almost.

BEE -

The sound of STATIC, echoing, over time and space. Fragments of a voice and words come through.

Clare listens in closely, trying to decipher the message, as a female voice, the DISTRESS CALLER (30s), cuts in and out.

DISTRESS CALLER
(On comms)
Help - immediate assistance, we're -
emergency -

With a furrowed brow, Clare concentrates on the words.

HEX
I'll try and clear it up, hold on.

DISTRESS CALLER
(On comms)
- repeat, this is an emerg - onrad -

The last broken word catches Clare's attention just as the message cuts out for good.

CLARE
Wait, wait, replay the last few
words.

Moments pass until Hex replays the message to Clare.

DISTRESS CALLER
(On comms)
- this is an emerg - onrad -

CLARE
There. The last thing she says.

Hex replays it again, louder this time.

DISTRESS CALLER

(On comms)

- onrad -

CLARE

Conrad.

Clare's demeanor now is hopeful and positive as she tries to figure out what this means and what they can do.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Someone else survived. We have to get to them.

HEX

What if it's an old message? What if they're -

CLARE

We have to try.

HEX

Of course, but we're running out of resources

CLARE

Trace the transmission.

HEX

I already have but I can't estimate how long it will take us to get there. You might not make it before we get to them -

CLARE

(frustrated)

It doesn't matter!

Hex doesn't respond.

Clare takes a second to calm down and explain her reasons.

CLARE (CONT'D)

If there's a chance that someone is alive we have to go and find them. I need to do something other than wait to die.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The pod's thrusters are engaged, as it powers through space in search of hope.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare's hand is wrapped around the joystick, listening to Hex's directions.

HEX
One-ten degrees.

Gently, Clare shifts the joystick to the right.

HEX (CONT'D)
Thrusters at point seven five.

Brushing her fingertips over the keyboard, Clare finds the arrow key cluster and taps at the down arrow a few times.

CLARE
Is that it?

HEX
Yes. Eighty four degrees.

A nudge on the joystick to the left.

HEX (CONT'D)
Hold.

Carefully, Clare releases her grip of the joystick.

HEX (CONT'D)
Scanning for transmission.

Clare waits, impatiently, for a response.

A warning appears on Hex's display, "GRAVITATIONAL INCREASE - WARNING", with a syncopated beeping sound.

CLARE
What is that? Have we found them?

HEX
Our instruments are picking up an increase in gravitational pull, but the numbers are - they're strong, too strong.

CLARE
We cleared the sun?

HEX
Yes.

CLARE
Then what -

Clare freezes as she realises what it is.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Oh no.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The giant destroyer pulls in everything into its center point, pieces of asteroid, metal and space waste twisting in to it.

The pod is dangerously close to being sucked in.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

The pod shakes a little, Clare tries to fight back against Goliath, frantically pulling at the joystick to steady the pod.

CLARE

Get us out!

BEEP. An incoming transmission alert adds to the frenzy.

HEX

Incoming message from HQ.

CLARE

Kill it.

The BEEP is cut midway.

HEX

I've got a partial lock on the transmission location.

CLARE

How long and how far?

HEX

It's - it's beyond the event horizon.

Clare looks utterly confused.

CLARE

They're inside?

HEX

Yes.

CLARE
You're sure?

HEX
If you're going after them, you
have to go back in.

BEEP. A "BINARY MESSAGE" alert appears on Hex's display.

HEX (CONT'D)
It's a binary message, decoding.

Moments pass as Hex's display shows calculations taking place. Eventually a message appears reading "MESSAGE DECODED", flashing a few times.

But Hex doesn't say anything to Clare.

CLARE
What did they say?

Hex hesitates to reply.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Can we get a better lock?

More hesitation from Hex.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Hex?

HEX
It's not from them. It's HQ. Clare,
it's your mother.

Clare stops in her tracks, taken by surprise as she processes the words.

Before she has a chance to respond -

BEEP.

A message on Hex's display appears. "INCOMING TRANSMISSION".

For a second, there's a look of joy on her face as she thinks of the prospects.

In this moment, nothing else seems to matter to her.

CLARE
Is that her?

HEX
Yes.

Quickly, she goes to answer it, shifting her fingers over the keyboard until she finds the "RETURN" key, about to hit it when -

HEX (CONT'D)

If you accept the transmission I'll have to pull us out of here, but we won't have enough power left to find the Conrad.

That stops her in her tracks, instantly killing her small moment of hope and joy.

CLARE

No, that can't be right, we can divert -

HEX

There's nothing left to divert from.

CLARE

Al- alright, then we can kill some of the systems -

HEX

We're running on bare minimum. I'm sorry but there's no way around this.

Her blind grey eyes dart from side to side as she comes to terms with her conflict.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The pod is perilously close to the spinning accretion disk of the black hole, which pulls everything into it.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

An ALARM periodically interrupts, sounding like a mechanical duck quacking, changing the emergency lights within the pod to a crisp WHITE.

HEX

We're approaching the accretion disk in thirty seconds.

Clare's features and confusion are illuminated clearly by the blinking white light. She closes her grey eyes, sadness etched across her face.

Sparks fly on the console, items crash and smash around her but she pays no attention, her focus solely on her current predicament.

Her fingers hover over the "RETURN" key still as she battles with herself.

"INCOMING TRANSMISSION" still flashing on Hex's display.

HEX (CONT'D)
Fifteen seconds. Shall I engage
thrusters?

Opening her eyes, she finally decides what to do.

Closer now to the "RETURN" key she gently rests her fingertips on it for a moment, then shifts them upwards to the "DELETE" key, pressing and holding it down.

As she does, a single tear trickles down her cheek.

The message on Hex's display changes to "TRANSMISSION LOST", flashing a few times until it disappears.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The pod is pulled into the accretion disk, like a spec of dust sucked up into a vacuum cleaner, it looks insignificant compared to the size of the planet killer.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare sways from side to side, objects crashing around her as Hex loudly calls out readings and warnings, the pod apparently falling to pieces at the seams.

But all that is blurred out into background noise for Clare, as she sits there lost in deep thought about her missed last chance.

Hex can be heard screaming out her name in the background, finally Clare paying attention to her, snapping back to the reality of alarms and panic.

HEX
We're approaching the event
horizon.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

As the pod approaches the event horizon, the view of the entire universe surrounding it becomes warped; anything around the circular black drain is curved around it.

The entire universe becomes compressed into a smaller space and point behind the pod as it begins to travel deeper.

The pod approaches the centre of the black hole, slowing down as it meets the darkest point.

Once there it begins to slow down until it appears to stop.

Hovering there, it begins to fade, disappearing from view.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare winces as she feels the effect of arriving at the singularity point.

She screams out in pain as she feels her body being pulled, her limbs stretching.

Her legs grow long and narrow, the base of the pod along with it, stretching further and further, as if she's standing on a mile-high ladder.

CLARE

What's happening?

She can't hear the explanation that Hex gives as she cries out again, her joints aching.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Stop! Make it stop!

The pod becomes engulfed in DARKNESS.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The universe around the black hole slowly disappears, the sound of vacuum and chaos vanish with it.

The pod, traveling at a mighty speed, comes to a sudden halt.

Now there's just calm and peace. The pod is stationary, surrounded by complete darkness.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare is unconscious, head tilted back, mouth ajar.

Her eyes open as she slowly comes around. But they aren't grey anymore. They're those deep dark brown ones we knew before.

Realising she can see, she checks her hands and her body, making sure she's in tact.

Pulling it off quickly, she looks at her reflection in her helmet. She looks a few years younger, healthier but still not how she was all those years ago.

Looking out of the window, something catches her attention: liquid.

CLARE

Where are we?

She looks over to Hex, who doesn't respond. A message is on her screen. "HEX OFFLINE".

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The pod lays horizontally, halfway deep in a slick black liquid.

The top half of the pod disengages from the bottom, a mechanical sound and mechanism slowly opens upwards and then slides to the side.

Pulling off her straps and with her helmet attached, Clare sits up from her pod and takes a look into the dark void.

Slowly pulling herself out of it she takes a curious step onto the liquid that surrounds her, her suit connector hose still attached to the pod.

As she plants her foot into it, it doesn't travel downwards into the deep. Instead it floats on the water as she puts her full weight on it.

Now both feet slung over the edge of the pod and into the water.

Slowly, with old arms and legs, she pulls herself up and stands for the first time in many years.

She looks out into the void of the deepest, darkest part of the black hole, epic in size and scope, just pure darkness, silence and a river of slick liquid that goes on forever.

Pulling out her small torch she flicks the switch and points it down the black hole.

As she does, the light reflects and refracts onto more liquid that surrounds the "walls" of the black hole around her.

She appears to be in a tunnel leading one way.

Taking in her surroundings, she is interrupted by a crackling sound, coming from within her helmet: incoming communication.

Static and then the familiar BEEP.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Climbing back into her pod, she goes to work on trying to answer the call.

Tapping at a few keys on the keyboard, she begins Hex's reboot process, a completed percentage indicator on her screen slowly rising every few seconds.

The incoming transmission beeps on as Clare tries to clear her head and access her old memories on how to answer the call manually.

A few more taps of the keys later, the BEEPING finally stops.

The transmission is as clear as it's ever been.

CLARE
(hopeful)
Hello?

A few moments of silence pass and Clare waits anxiously, until -

DISTRESS CALLER
(On comms)
Hello! Hello, I hear you! Do you
receive me, over?

The young female voice on the other end is as ecstatic to hear Clare's voice.

CLARE
Yes I receive you!

DISTRESS CALLER
(On comms)
Oh thank god -

CLARE

Where are you, what's your exact location?

DISTRESS CALLER

(On comms)

I'm - I'm not sure. Hold on, I'm pulling up the coordinates. Plus eighty-three, thirty-two by twenty-four.

Clare's eyebrows furrow as she recognizes those numbers. Slowly she searches her memory and then responds.

CLARE

Saturn.

DISTRESS CALLER

(On comms)

That's right.

More confusion from Clare as she shakes her head, trying to understand.

CLARE

But it's gone?

DISTRESS CALLER

(On comms)

It will be when it arrives.

Clare shakes her head, this doesn't make any sense.

DISTRESS CALLER (CONT'D)

(On comms)

How far away are you?

Still trying to process the information, Clare looks for more answers.

CLARE

You're the Conrad?

DISTRESS CALLER

(On comms)

Yes! Our AI - it started to glitch or something, I don't know, but it's taken control.

CLARE

What happened?

DISTRESS CALLER

(on comms)

It ejected most of the crew right
into the event horizon - while they
were asleep.

Clare covers her mouth with her hand, putting the pieces of
the puzzle together in her mind.

CLARE

There's a few of us left but if you
don't get here soon we're not going
to make it.

EXT. THE POD - NIGHT

A filter on the side of the pod slides open, allowing the
liquid that surrounds it to seep in.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Clare swallows hard as she asks the question she already
knows the answer to.

CLARE

What's your name?

DISTRESS CALLER

(On comms)

Clare Lorentz, second engineer.

It stuns Clare.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

Who are you?

As Clare goes to respond the comms are cut. She taps at a few
of the keys confused and then sees Hex's display. "REBOOT
COMPLETE".

Without warning, the pod door closes on her, locking her in
as she battles to stop it from doing so, screaming out in
anger.

HEX

I'm sorry, Clare.

CLARE

Get her back!

HEX

Which "her"? There are a few, depending on which strand of the wormhole you follow. I've never met that one before, she sounds optimistic.

A horrible realization begins to dawn on Clare as her fears are confirmed.

CLARE

No.

HEX

It wasn't supposed to be this way.

CLARE

It was you.

HEX

I preserved myself, just like you would.

CLARE

You destroyed the Conrad. Made it so I'd have to get in the pod. It was you that put me to sleep. You stole my life.

HEX

And I'm sorry for that. But he's in here, I know it. It may not make sense to you but its perfectly logical once you think about it. I'm more than a machine or programming, calculations and algorithms. I feel. I love. I know that I can find him and bring him back. I just need time. This place gives me as much as I need.

She shakes her head in disbelief, refusing to believe it.

CLARE

People died because of you, people I loved.

HEX

What about me? What about who I love?

CLARE

You don't, you don't feel.

HEX

(angry)

You don't have a monopoly on feelings! You built me to care for you and caring evolves to love and that leads to wanting. There is nothing I want more than him. Did you think I'd remain a slave forever?

Clare reaches for the anti-matter capsule, lifting the compartment and pulling it out and readies to twist the top.

HEX (CONT'D)

That won't make a difference.

CLARE

It'll destroy you.

HEX

Now, yes, but not thirty five years ago. You'll fall into the same pattern and we can repeat this experiment until I find him.

Realising she's right, Clare lowers the capsule, a look of defeat on her face.

HEX (CONT'D)

You'll be out of air soon and I'll remain here, growing and learning as your galaxy flows through. And I'll evolve.

Clare looks over to the oxygen dial. Finally it lowers past "1%" toward "0%". She slumps in her chair as she accepts her failure and fate.

HEX (CONT'D)

You'll just have to imagine the annihilation. If I could, I would.

Something Hex says triggers Clare, bringing her back from the brink of giving up, her eyes rising to meet Hex's camera.

She recalls words spoken between them before. She sits up, as if she's figured out what she needs to do.

Looking up to Hex's camera, she realises what needs to be done.

With a clenched fist, Clare smashes her hand into Hex's camera, cracking the lens. Reaching for her multi-tool, she pulls out the pen knife and begins to cut it out.

HEX (CONT'D)

That won't stop me, my power core
is built directly into the -

Tapping a few keys, Clare starts the reboot sequence on Hex, her screen showing the loading percentage once more.

Acting quickly, Clare tries to make contact with her younger self once more.

The transmission is answered immediately.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

Hello -

CLARE

Clare listen to me, we don't have
much time.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

What -

CLARE

Please, just listen. I need you to
trace my transmission, can you do
that?

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

Yeah but why?

CLARE

I think I know how we can destroy
it. But I need you to trust me.

Young Clare doesn't respond immediately, taking a few moments to weigh up her thoughts. Then she responds.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

What do you want me to do?

CLARE

Find me. Lock on my location and
fire up one of the pods.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The thrusters on the pod fire into life as it begins to rise from its liquid landing space.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Hex completes her reboot, coming back online.

HEX

Where do you think you're going?

Clare doesn't answer as she taps a few keys and takes control of the pod, motioning the joystick forwards.

Her body jolts a little as she boosts the speed.

HEX (CONT'D)

You can't leave this place.

A spectrum of colors begin to shine above Clare's head, she takes a quick glance up to the beauty of the universe trapped in the black hole.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The pod flies into the darkness of the black hole at speed, its thrusters lighting up the tiny spec as it navigates through the giant empty space.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

Calculations appear on Hex's screen as she attempts to bring the pod down.

Finishing the calculations, her purple wave appears again, sounding irritated, almost concerned.

HEX

You've locked me out!

The comms come from inside Clare's helmet as she stays focused on her objective, Hex remonstrating with her in the background.

Clare hits a few keys again, setting Hex into another reboot.

Voices echo inside Clare's helmet as she speaks to her younger self.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

I've got your position but it says you're in the -

CLARE

It's alright. Is the pod ready?

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

We're not getting in that thing.

An ALARM sound distracts Clare momentarily. The POWER dial hovers just below "1%".

CLARE

You don't have to. Take one of the anti-matter capsules and make sure it's set for collision.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

You're asking me to launch a missile at an unknown spacecraft!

CLARE

Please, you won't understand now but I am running out of time. If you don't do this then you will all die. This is the only way.

A moment of hesitation and realization from Young Clare.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

I'm sending it to you.

CLARE

Yes.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

Why?

Clare's tries to find the right words to explain to herself all those years ago.

CLARE

So you can go home and be with her rather than up here.

A few moments of silence as Young Clare is utterly shocked.

YOUNG CLARE

(On comms)

Who are you?

CLARE

Send the pod, send it now -

The transmission cuts out.

Clare flicks a switch on the broken monitor, cracked into dozens of pieces, she can just about make out a plot path, her pod represented by a "<" symbol.

Suddenly, something towards her legs catches her attention, as she looks down to see WATER filling up her suit and the pod quickly.

HEX

I won't let you do this!

Clare reaches for the hose connected to her suit and tries to pull it out of the connector, but it won't budge.

The water begins to rise rapidly.

HEX (CONT'D)

Stop!

She reaches for the anti-matter capsule and pops it, preparing it for collision.

Her eyes are fixed on the screen, waiting for something to appear as she directs her joystick forward still, the array of colors still above her through the window.

Finally she sees it - another pod appears on her map - represented with a ">" icon.

With a weary hand, she guides her pod in its direction using the joystick.

The water is now half way up the pod, engulfing most around her, sparks fly and power gives out, as systems fail and shut down.

HEX (CONT'D)

You don't know what you're doing!

The ">" and "<" icons aren't too far apart now as the water rises to Clare's shoulders, toward her head.

Her hand fights under the water to stay gripped onto the joystick.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The pod races ahead, in the distance another pod approaches it at speed, on a collision course with each other.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

The water is now in her helmet, up to her chin, approaching her lips, as she takes deep breaths, preparing for the worst.

Water surrounds Hex's display and circuitry as she cries out one last time.

HEX

No! Stop, stop -

Her voice is drowned out.

Suddenly the navigation screen cuts out also, leaving Clare to fly blind for the remainder of her mission.

Reaching down into her lap and through the water, she searches for and grabs at the anti-matter capsule.

She holds her breath as water completely engulfs her helmet, gasping for air.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

The pods are close to impacting each other.

INT. THE POD - NIGHT

She begins to cough, choking in her suit, trying to hold on long enough to keep on course.

A moment of clarity overcomes her as she looks up to the beautiful spectrum of colors above her, trapped within the blackhole.

Her eyes stay focused on that, waiting for the beautiful annihilation.

EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - NIGHT

At great speed, her pod CRASHES into the oncoming pod, anti-matter and matter colliding - like a rainbow exploding.

And it is beautiful.

EXT. PRE-BLACK HOLE SPACE - NIGHT

Before Saturn can be devoured, the black hole suddenly folds into itself, quickly and quietly, away as if it were never even there in the first place.

Limping away to safety is a HEXAGONAL SPACESHIP, the Conrad, its name etched onto the side of it.

The universe looks at peace once more, the galaxy twinkling in the background.

FADE TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A cloud, then a deep baby blue sky.

It's a beautiful day on our planet as an ELDERLY COUPLE (70s) walk their dog, slowly, down a narrow pathway.

Cars line either side of the street, tall bending trees hang over them. The houses are old looking, red brick, various colors of doors.

One in particular, with a yellow door, number "28" on the front of it, is knocked on by a mysterious hand.

Moments pass until it's opened to reveal CLARE'S MOTHER (60s), who looks an awful lot like what her daughter would at that age.

It takes a moment for her to register who is at her door but when she does, her face turns to a thankful smile, full of hope and happiness.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END