

ISS

Written by

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Right now aboard the International Space Station, SIX astronauts are spending their hours working, living, eating, exercising, and sleeping in the close quarters of the vessel.

Half of the ISS was contributed by RUSSIA, the other half by the UNITED STATES.

The same can be said for its crew...

OVER BLACK

HEAVY NERVOUS BREATHS.

FADE IN TO:

INT. SOYUZ SPACECRAFT.

We see the sweat-drenched brow of DR. KIRA WILLIAMS (30), newly an astronaut in every sense of the word. She's a natural alpha personality, and an extrovert to boot. However, in recent years she's carefully practiced repressing those qualities.

A woman's voice with a RUSSIAN ACCENT crackles through the comms-system.

VOICE (O.S.)
Entering final approach...

Kira *is* listening, but in addition to her hood's built-in headset, she's managed to run an additional headphone to one of her ears. We trace the cable to --

An old school CD Walkman. The device is long past its heyday, but after what looks like multiple DIY surgeries, it's still in working order.

Kira's nervous eyes peer through her glass visor, zig-zagging between the various monitors to the small circular window. Outside it, we can see --

The massive **Space Station.** It's the size of a football field, and its white exterior glows bright against the darkness.

Kira's eyes widen at the sight -- *Wow.*

CHRISTIAN
Pretty something, huh?

In the seat next to Kira, we meet CHRISTIAN (late 20s), a bookish, valedictorian type. If you've ever gone to a party when you were supposed to be studying for an exam, then you and Christian don't have much in common. *Oddly enough though, he and Kira actually might...*

Kira half-nods in response.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
Don't worry. Worst part's over.
(beat)
But...
(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

This is right about the point when I
spewed hard on my first ride up
here...

(beat)

It was oatmeal... *mostly*... Got
everywhere. Just floating all over
the place y'know?

Kira closes her eyes tight.

KIRA

I'm sorry to hear that...

CHRISTIAN

I think Gordon's still mad about it.

Her focus shifts to the Walkman. Although we don't hear the
music, we are able to make out the sound of the CD as it
begins to skip within the device --

Carefully, Kira runs a gloved thumb over the old silver duct
tape that's holding the plastic battery cover in place.

She removes the headphones from their jack, blows into the
input, and then slides ear-pods back in, and presses play.
From Kira's reaction, we get the impression that it's working
again.

Christian regards the relic.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Y'know technology's come a long way
since they made those things.

Kira places a protective hand over her Walkman, as her eyes
move back to the ISS.

KIRA

(re: the ISS)

*Y'know it's come a long way since
they made that thing too, right?*

Christian settles back into his seat.

CHRISTIAN

Just wait till you get onboard.

VOICE (O.S.)

Standing by for contact...

Hearing that, Kira's eyes snap shut.

The vessel carrying her is a Russian craft called a **SOYUZ**. It JERKS as it connects with something outside of its tight walls. We hear metal SHIFTING from somewhere beyond the vessel.

Kira holds her breath through it all, until --

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Contact and capture confirmed.

She exhales slightly, anticipating whatever is supposed to come next.

It's quiet.

She waits for something to happen, but nothing does... The lull in action is enough to tickle at the concern center of our brains.

KIRA
(hiding nerves)
Does it usually take this long?

Christian shrugs.

CHRISTIAN
Oh, man. Sometimes it takes hours.

He notices Kira's uncomfortable state.

Kira waits. More sweat seems to accumulate, struggling to cling against her head in the absence of gravity. Christian takes notice.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
...But they do always open the door eventually.

Long beat. Then --

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK!

Three staccato metallic *THUMPS* resonate from the other side of the Soyuz's entry hatch, *BOOMING* through the small space.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
See?

Kira sighs with relief. A thin smile curls her lips as she finally removes her ear-pods and wraps their thin cable around the Walkman. Then --

We hear the sound of heavy metal sliding, and --

BLINDING LIGHT pours into the Soyuz.

Kira squints through it. Our eyes adjust with hers, allowing us to see --

FOUR OTHER ASTRONAUTS in mixed colored jumpsuits, 2 in blue, 2 in green. They clap their hands together, celebrating the new arrivals.

The astronaut nearest us is a kind-faced man, wearing a faded New York Mets cap. He's presumably the person who was KNOCKING. This is ALEXEY PULOV (30s). *We'll get to know him better momentarily.*

He extends a hand, helping to pull a now smiling Christian from the seat and out of the Soyuz.

Once on the other side he yanks Alexey in for a hug and then moves to greet the others.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I missed you guys too.

A handsome GI JOE type, with close-cut hair and a military demeanor, pushes his way toward the front. Meet GORDON BARRETT (late 30s). He slaps a welcoming hand around Christian's before moving back toward the hatch where Kira still waits in darkness.

He reaches out his arm for Kira to take.

Her body floats away from her seat, out of the darkness and toward the light of the ISS. She clasps her hand around Gordon's.

GORDON

Dr. Williams. Welcome to the most remote desert island known to man.

The group of astronauts laugh. Off Gordon's smirk, we --

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD:

ISS

CUT TO:

INT. ISS - LATER

Kira scrolls back a collapsible door, revealing that she is no longer in her spacesuit, but rather a familiar blue jumpsuit with an AMERICAN FLAG prominently featured on the shoulder.

Inside, the ISS is a blaring white mess of technology. Each available inch of wall space has been put to use. Experiments, life support, and vital utilities occupy every visible nook and cranny. *If we're being honest, once you get past the majesty of space, this entire thing is kind of an eyesore...*

Kira's hair floats whimsically away from her skull. She pulls it down only to have it drift back into the air above her.

She scoffs in disbelief, then --

FAMILIAR VOICE (O.S.)
(Russian)
Hair tie?

Kira turns to find, WERONIKA (30), sporting a green jumpsuit with a Russian flag patched to it. She's cut her hair in a half-shaved pixie cut that actually seems to work without gravity. Right off the bat, we can tell Weronika is cool in a hipster kind of way.

KIRA
...Excuse me?

WERONIKA
(with a smile)
Scrunchie?

Weronika pulls a hair tie off her wrist and holds it out for Kira to take.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)
I'm not using it.

Kira accepts the offer, tying her hair back in a ponytail.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)
Now you really look like one of us.

Kira smiles.

KIRA
That's good to hear. *I feel like I'm a set of braces away from being back in middle school.*
(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Thanks.

WERONIKA

(Russian -- no
translation)

Vazhno to, chto my derzhimsya
vmeste.

Kira stares at her, blankly.

KIRA

Just um... One more time, please?

Weronika laughs.

WERONIKA

It means "**The important thing is
that we stick together.**" It's a
quote from a famous astronaut. My
training partner, Alexey, and I say
it all the time.

KIRA

Who was the astronaut?

WERONIKA

Buzz...

KIRA

Aldrin?

Weronika smiles, coyly.

WERONIKA

Lightyear...

Kira smirks.

Weronika holds her hand out for a handshake.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

Weronika.

Kira hesitates, staring at Weronika's hand -- just long
enough for her to take notice.

Forcing herself to save the interaction, Kira extends her
arm, thrusting it out in an over-practiced gesture.

KIRA

Kira.

(beat)

Sorry, my head's a little...

(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

well, spacey right now... *Pun sort of intended.*

Weronika smiles.

WERONIKA

Don't worry about it.

(lowers her breath)

Between us... I still haven't *really* gotten used to all this.

GORDON

I see you ladies've met.

They turn to find Gordon pulling his way toward them.

From their orientation he looks upside down, until he stops and readjusts himself, dropping from the quasi-ceiling to the quasi-floor, making himself eye level with them.

*****Let's take this opportunity to explain that everything within the ISS is completely weightless. As such, every wall/surface serves a purpose.*****

KIRA

Yes, Weronika was just starting to help me get my bearings.

GORDON

Yeah?

(to Weronika)

Think you can help me with that when you're done?

WERONIKA

You're hopeless. But I still have faith in Dr. Williams.

GORDON

Fair enough.

(to Kira)

Well, I'm glad to see you getting acquainted with my better half...

WERONIKA

Gordon!

GORDON

I was talking about the station.

Weronika rolls her eyes. The spark between these two is not lost on Kira... *It's an uncomfortable realization.*

GORDON (CONT'D)
(to Kira)
How about a tour?

Off Kira, we --

CUT TO:

INT. ISS - NODE TWO - MOMENTS LATER

Gordon effortlessly glides through the station's corridors -- *he's been doing this for a while*. Kira follows, less gracefully.

GORDON
How do you like your bedroom?

KIRA
More of a closet, isn't it?

GORDON
S'not so bad.

KIRA
No, it's pretty much everything I was promised... Just think if you wanna call it a bedroom it should have a, y'know -- bed, not --

GORDON
A sleeping bag Velcroed to the wall?

KIRA
Yeah...

GORDON
S'comfier than the Soyuz though, ain't it?

KIRA
High bar...

GORDON
Yeah, well just be grateful you got here in six hours... Took me two full days. And let me tell you, after a trip like that, when you hear a knock on the other side of the hatch you're ready to kiss the first smiley Russian face you see.

KIRA
...Why just the Russians?

GORDON

Could be a dog for all I care.
Russians are just the ones who like to knock... Language barriers are less than they used to be, but they say it's their way of letting you know that "it's time to start paying attention." I guess getting up here is just the commute...

Gordon moves along, returning his attention to the tour.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Node Two back there is pretty much your home away from home. Do whatever you want in your pod. Sleep, watch movies -- you can try the internet, but there's better ways to waste your time up here, connection never really works.

(beat)

Unfortunately, that means your loved ones'll have to be pretty patient with you when you video chat.

KIRA

...Got it.

Despite Kira's efforts to blow past that comment, Gordon detects a twinge of something in her voice.

GORDON

Shit, I feel like it just got colder in here or something.

KIRA

(embarrassed/sarcastic)

Sorry, forgot everyone who comes up here spends five years training because they want to stay in touch with people.

Gordon pauses.

We hear a constant **LOW HUM** resonate through the ISS.

GORDON

...Touché.

(beat)

Well, I suppose I'll take this awkward silence to point out that **LOW HUM** you're hearing.

KIRA

I noticed.

GORDON

**Hope you like the white noise,
because that's our life support. You
hear that, it means everything's
right as rain.**

(half laughs)

**When you don't hear the hum...
That's when you can panic...**

Gordon turns his attention back to his tour, pulling himself toward the next stop.

They pass through an open hatchway, to --

INT. NODE ONE - CONTINUOUS

GORDON

We pretty much share every space up here. So unfortunately I can't offer you much seclusion, but I thought you might be excited to see where you'll be working for the next six months or so.

A glimmer of excitement races across Kira's face as she lays eyes on the small lab setup that's been provided for her.

It's only about four feet wide, but despite her restraint, the sight is enough to put a smile on Kira's lips.

Gordon unhooks a small key-like object from his belt.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Here.

She accepts the key.

KIRA

What's this?

GORDON

Key. Since Alexey and Weronika came up, the active experiments on board have gotten pretty far from safe if you don't know what you're doing...

(MORE)

GORDON (CONT'D)

Like I said, we all pretty much share everything up here, so now if you wanna avoid anyone looking for extra watch glasses and accidentally ruining months of your research, just lock it down with that. Works on any American lock. You can use Russian cabinets if you want too, but you gotta trade keys.

KIRA

Understood.

Kira looks back to the small lab.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Gordon?

GORDON

What can I do ya for?

KIRA

...I'd like a moment to get acquainted with the space. My cultures are time sensitive and I'm hoping to get some set up right away.

(beat)

Alone, if that's alright.

Gordon makes a clicking sound with his cheek as he smiles at her.

GORDON

Take as much time as you like, doctor.

He disappears from sight, leaving Kira to her own devices.

ALONE NOW -- Kira examines the lab. She runs her hands across her samples, counts her beakers/tools, and takes stock of the space.

She pulls back, taking it all in.

KIRA

This'll do...

CUT TO:

INT. NODE ONE - MOMENTS LATER

Kira slips a glass slide under the lab's mounted microscope and peeks through it, seeing --

MICROSCOPE POV -- SEVERAL TISSUE CELLS float aimlessly on the glass. *Whatever they're supposed to be doing, we get the impression they're not doing it.*

Kira frowns, disappointed. Then --

VOICE
(carefully annunciating)
Hello, doctor...

Kira looks up to see --

ALEXEY as he enters.

He's a seemingly nice enough guy, and a hard worker to boot, but in terms of approachability, he's a far cry from Weronika and Gordon.

Kira is guarded.

ALEXEY
(Russian)
I hear we'll be working closely.

Kira looks at him, puzzled. She doesn't have the slightest clue what he's saying. Even if she spoke Russian, she wouldn't know what he is talking about.

KIRA
(broken Russian)
Hello...
(English)
...Sorry, that's pretty much all I
got...

Alexey picks up on this. In an effort to make his intentions more clear --

He places one hand over his chest.

ALEXEY
...Doctor --

KIRA
(interrupting)
-- Pulov, right? I read about you in
my dossier.
(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

Actually I read a translation of your thesis on the contagious cancer among Tasmanian Devils as well. I would love to pick your brain on your work at some point while I'm --

Before Kira can finish her sentence, Alexey points to one of two **laminated signs** over the lab that reads --

BIOLOGICAL ENGINEER: ALEXEY PULOV

The other reads -- BIOLOGICAL ENGINEER: KIRA WILLIAMS

Kira's face drops, something sinks inside her at the sight.

KIRA (CONT'D)

(half to herself)
We're sharing...?

Alexey smiles, blankly. It's his turn to not understand what the other is saying.

Gordon re-enters, now joined by Weronika.

GORDON

Dr. Williams, this is Alexey Pulov... Far as I can tell, he's the nicest bastard on the whole station.

Kira extends her hand -- a bit more casually this time.

KIRA

Pleased to meet you.

Alexey takes off his Mets cap, in an effort to be more formal.

ALEXEY

(Russian)
Welcome aboard.

KIRA

(to Gordon)
I feel bad, they let me fast track through the language requirements way back at the start of my training. I don't understand him.

GORDON

Don't sweat it. Pulov's accent's about as rural as it gets.

WERONIKA

To tell the truth, even I ask him to repeat himself every once in a while...

GORDON

So, who knows, *maybe he's a prick.*

Alexey smiles at Kira. She forces herself to reciprocate.

KIRA

(to Gordon)

Seems nice enough.

WERONIKA

Glad you think so, cuz now's your chance to get to know the bigger Pulov...

Kira follows Gordon and Weronika out of The Node, leaving Alexey alone.

Beat, then --

Alexey wanders over to the microscope Kira had been using a moment ago. He peeks in and examines the cells for himself.

Off Alexey --

INT. ISS - NODE THREE - MOMENTS LATER

Gordon and Kira pull their way into NODE THREE. In here we find --

Christian, already hard at work. His hands are in the protective gloves of an airtight GLASS BOX experiment.

A few feet further into The Node -- NICHOLAI (late 30s), rides as hard as he can on a stationary bike. Think Ivan Drago, then age him up a bit and give him Dolph Lundgren's actual degree in chemical engineering.

INSIDE THE GLOVEBOX --

Christian's gloved arms use a **handheld blowtorch** to light a chemical swab.

KIRA -- recoils as a perfectly spherical orb of fire expands and BLASTS against the protective glass of Christian's experiment.

He takes notice.

CHRISTIAN
Sorry about that.

He removes his hand, turning the box's protective glove inside out in the process.

He notices Kira's eyes drifting back toward the glass glovebox.

KIRA
Looks safe...

CHRISTIAN
I know, but combustion's totally secure in the glovebox. This thing is airtight -- state of the art... *And I missed it very much.*

His eyes roll toward Nicholai.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
-- But don't ask me why they put it in the gym...

Kira smirks.

NICHOLAI
They put the bathroom in here too. Do you hear me complain?

Nicholai hops off the stationary bike, and then from our perspective essentially maneuvers his body to the ceiling where he begins lifting weights on a specialized machine.

GORDON
(to Nicholai)
'Bout the bathroom? Nah... But you've been salty about my bench press since I got up here.

Nicholai scoffs.

NICHOLAI
You're the only person who can brag about lifting weights in zero gravity.

WERONIKA
Whenever you're both done, Nicholai you can say hi to the new girl now.

Between reps, Nicholai throws a halfhearted salute/wave toward Kira.

KIRA

Pleasure.

WERONIKA

(to Kira)

Give him a couple days to warm up.
He's a teddy bear.

GORDON

(to Christian)

Speaking of bragging rights, you
bring it up or what?

Christian moves to a specially designed backpack that he has
fixed to the nearby wall.

CHRISTIAN

Thought you'd never ask.

Kira watches him fish through the pack until he unearths a
small basketball and hands it to Gordon.

GORDON

It's perfect. I owe ya one!

KIRA

You requested a basketball...?

GORDON

You kidding me? I've been waiting
two months for this thing.

Nicholai moves across the Node, accepting the ball from
Gordon. He turns toward a small hoop fit for a kid's bedroom
that's been set up above the door. And --

He shoots, effortlessly bouncing the ball off the ceiling and
through the hoop. Gordon frowns at the site, just as --

Alexey enters the node, plucking the ball out of the air.

GORDON (CONT'D)

(to Nicholai)

What's that then, H.O.R.S.?

Alexey passes the ball back to Gordon.

ALEXEY

H.O.R.S.E.

CHRISTIAN

While I got all you guys here now,
Santa actually brought presents for
everyone this time.

He riffles through his bag, distributing a box of ALENKA Russian chocolate bars to Nicholai.

NICHOLAI

Good man.

Christian hands a rubber-banded stack of paperbacks to Weronika. Her and Alexey trade selections.

ALEXEY

Spasibo.

Christian riffles further, remembering something.

CHRISTIAN

Oh, and I got these from your niece!

He hands Weronika a stack of papers. She lights up at the sight. Nicholai and Alexey moves closer, looking over her shoulders.

WERONIKA

(Russian)

I think she really captured you guys this time.

NICHOLAI

(smiles)

It's beautiful.

We meet his gaze to see that they're looking at a child's drawing. At first it looks like a series of colorful scribbles, but labels help us realize the images are intended to depict every member of the ISS crew. *Everyone, but Kira that is...*

CHRISTIAN

(to Kira)

Sorry, Williams. Wasn't sure what you'd be into. But --

He lifts a small **rocket ship keychain** into view, letting it dangle on a long **strap**.

CHRISTIAN

Something from the gift shop. The strap is the same webbing we use in our tethers.

(beat)

...I'll do better next time.

Kira accepts the tiny trinket, surprised he thought of her at all.

KIRA

I couldn't have asked for anything better.

Nicholai unwraps one of the Alenka bars, and instinctively breaks it in half, giving the bigger side to his brother.

GORDON

If we're done with the Yankee swap, I was just about to show Dr. Williams **Cupola** for the first time, if you gentlemen are interested in joining us.

KIRA

...I've heard a lot.

CHRISTIAN

You kidding me, seeing someone's first time never gets old.

(to Kira)

We don't have a lot to get excited about up here... But I do promise the YouTube tours have nothing on the real thing.

Gordon moves her toward another hatch, this one is downward from where we're oriented.

They all wait for Kira to enter the hatch first.

GORDON

After you.

Kira moves forward, ever so slightly reserved. She reorients herself, pulling her way toward the hatch so that it's at eye level, rather than looking down.

She peers in, and --

KIRA

...Whoah...

Behind her, rest of the ISS crew match her gaze, all framed perfectly within the view of the round hatchway.

We trace Kira's eye line to find she's staring at the ISS's glass-bottom observatory module.

She moves forward, fully placing herself inside --

INT. CUPLOA MODULE - CONTINUOUS

The bright blue glowing Earth occupies every inch of window space. It's beautiful.

CHRISTIAN

Looking up at the ISS is one thing,
but looking down *from* it. That's the
special part.

KIRA

Yeah. I mean... I've seen pictures
but --

GORDON

Soak it in. Only about 500 or so
people have ever seen what you're
seeing.

ALEXEY

(Russian - no translation)
Vnezapno pyat' let obucheniya
nachinayut obretat' smysl, net?

Kira turns her head to glance back, but can't quite remove
her eyes from Earth. Prompting --

WERONIKA

He says "Suddenly five years
training starts to make sense, no?"

Gordon hangs friendly arms around the Pulov brothers in
agreement.

Kira presses her hand against the glass taking it all in. Her
eyes race from continent to continent. Then --

KIRA

...What's that?

GORDON

What?

NICHOLAI

She's looking at Angkor Wat.

KIRA

No, it was like a fl--

SUDDENLY --

**A small spark, like a match head, appears on the globe below,
and then FLARES out, causing our eyes to strain.**

WERONIKA

Was that a --

NICHOLAI

No...

GORDON

You all just saw a flash, right --

Before he can finish his sentence another FLARE erupts on the planet's surface.

The expanding light takes a second to hit all the way up here, but then --

BOOOOOM!

The entire station shakes, knocking every astronaut out of place.

CHRISTIAN

What the hell is going on down there?!

NICHOLAI

Get out of Cupola...

Alexey glances at his brother, understanding his request without need for the language.

KIRA

What?

Without thinking, Alexey climbs through the hatch, pulling his way toward Kira --

NICHOLAI

(to Alexey - Russian)

NET!

She turns her attention toward the commotion. With her attention off Earth, she doesn't notice when another spark ignites on the blue surface of Earth behind her.

WERONIKA

GET OUT NOW!

Alexey wraps his arms around Kira and pushes his legs off the glass bottom of the Cupola, pushing both of them toward --

Nicholai, who thrusts his arm through the hatch, grabbing hold of Kira's wrist and YANKING hard.

The glow behind her and Alexey, EXPANDS even faster and brighter than before.

It moves up, and UP, AND UP, fully engulfing the Cupola's glass bottom, just as --

Nicholai pulls Kira and Alexey fully through the hatch, allowing GORDON to slam it shut behind them --

CRASHHHH!

Kira covers her head.

THE STATION SHAKES VIOLENTLY.

Gordon and Weronika catch Christian, as he loses his grip.

- The group huddles in the safety of each other.

- The station's lights FLICKER.

- Various stowage items FLY out of their place, thrown aimlessly into the zero gravity hull of the station.

After a long moment, the lights steady.

The group struggles to right themselves.

Beat. Then --

KIRA
(worried)
...What just happened?

CUT TO:

INT. ISS - NODE ONE - MOMENTS LATER

All six members of the ISS crew gather in the quasi-kitchen. Nerves are high.

Gordon holds the **radio** earpiece tightly against his ear.

GORDON
(into radio)
Houston, this is Commander Barrett.
Do you read?

No response. He turns to the eagerly awaiting group and shakes his head.

Weronika curses in Russian.

WERONIKA

I need to talk to my sister! I have to know she and the kids are okay.

CHRISTIAN

Well in case anyone's wondering, the internet's obviously out too. Did anyone see if one of those flashes was near California? My whole family's over there. If Sacramento got hit --

NICHOLAI

(interrupting)

-- This isn't a helpful line of thinking.

CHRISTIAN

What are you, a fucking robot?! I just want to know if they're okay!

GORDON

Listen! Nicholai is right... I know everyone has people down there we're worried about.

Kira's eyes drift down. *Maybe not everyone...*

GORDON (CONT'D)

But until we know any better there's no sense in getting all panicked about what could or couldn't be. So let's just try to keep level heads for the time being, okay?

The room remains silent, accepting this, uneasily.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Good.

Gordon turns back to the radio.

WERONIKA leans over him, leaving less distance than two platonic crew members would, as she listens to --

GORDON (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Houston, this is Barrett. Can anyone read me?

Nicholai sits on the far side of The Node, also trying to get a hold of Earth.

GORDON (CONT'D)
 (to Weronika)
 I'm not getting anything...
 (beat)
 If you have a minute, can you do a walkabout of the station and check for any obvious damage?

WERONIKA
 'Course.

ALEXEY -- looks over in time to see Gordon kiss Weronika's hand in a gesture that's less sneaky than he seems to think it is.

Alexey averts his eyes.

Weronika runs a comforting hand across Gordon's back, before moving away to comply with his instructions.

NICHOLAI
 (Russian - into radio)
 Can you hear me? This is Nicholai Pulov, ISS crew. Requesting information from the ground.

NICHOLAI looks up from his monitor. His eyes narrow as he takes note of Alexey's discomfort, before turning his attention toward Weronika as well.

She passes --

CHRISTIAN -- who nervously fiddles with a **pocket-sized Rubik's Cube**. Twisting and turning its sides without even looking to see if the colors are matching up.

Weronika takes notice.

WERONIKA
 Is this really the time for that?

CHRISTIAN
 Helps me relax...

She regrets commenting.

WERONIKA
 ...No judgments. Sorry...

NICHOLAI -- watches the exchange. He keeps his eyes on Weronika as she crosses the room, moving toward Alexey.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)
 (Russian)
 You okay?

ALEXEY
 (Russian)
 As much as the rest of us...
 Anything from the States?

WERONIKA
 (Russian)
 Not yet.
 (beat)
 ...You nervous?

Alexey shrugs -- Yes.

Weronika leans in so no one else can hear.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)
 (Whispering in Russian)
 I have a bottle of vodka taped under
 the Canadarm control console. We can
 share it, like when we were in
 training...
 (smiles)
 Just don't tell Nicholai or Gordon.

Alexey smiles.

ALEXEY
 (Russian)
 Deal.

Weronika gives him a **friendly** squeeze on the shoulder and then EXITS THE NODE.

Kira and Nicholai watch her go from their respective positions.

A CHAT-BOX -- on the LAPTOP monitor Gordon has been hovering over *PINGS* with the message that reads --

GORDON BARRETT. REMAIN SILENT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS CLASSIFIED.

Gordon rereads the message three times, before finally --

He hits the mute key on the monitor, but it's too late.

CHRISTIAN
 (to Gordon)
 Houston respond?

The group turns in unison, awaiting Gordon's answer.

GORDON
 (lying)
 Not yet. Just a confirmation tone
 when I opened the app... Sorry...

The group turns away, disappointed.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE NODE --

NICHOLAI
 (Russian -- into the
 radio)
 Ground. This is --

Nicholai stops short, listening for a response. BUT --
We're just not entirely sure if he's getting one or not.

ON GORDON --

He places his radio's earpiece on its dock, shifting his attention fully to the chat box. A new message reads --

**AN ACT OF WAR HAS OCCURRED BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND
 RUSSIAN MILITARY. FURTHER COUNTRIES' INVOLVEMENT IS BEING
 INVESTIGATED.**

Gordon's eyes widen.

ON NICHOLAI --

We hold on his face. He's wearing headphones, but still we don't know if anything is getting through.

ON GORDON --

Gordon reads as a new message comes in, this time stating --

THE ISS HAS BEEN DEEMED A PRIORITY Foothold.

**ALL U.S. CITIZENS ABOARD ARE TO ABORT ALL ORDERS AND
 EXPERIMENTS.**

YOUR NEW OBJECTIVE IS TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE FACILITY.

Beat. Then --

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.

A droplet of sweat pushes its way off Gordon's head and into the air above him.

After a long moment, he types out a response that simply reads --

...**WHY?**

Before the Americans on the ground can type anything back --

THE STATION SHAKES VIOLENTLY ONCE AGAIN! THE LIGHTS SHUDDER, promptly **CUTTING the chat's feed.**

The group of oblivious astronauts in the middle section of The Node sighs with relief as the lights flicker back on.

Gordon looks past them to Nicholai on the other side of The Node.

NICHOLAI looks back. Their eyes meet only briefly, before he averts his gaze.

CHRISTIAN
(to Gordon -- oblivious)
Anything?

Off Gordon, shell-shocked --

CUT TO:

INT. ISS - NODE ONE - LATER

ALEXEY'S HANDS cut through a plastic snack package with a small **SCISSOR** which is then Velcroed to the food-prep table. He moves to a corner of the room where --

Nicholai hovers, headphones on, desperately attempting to fix the radio. No luck.

The Node feels more claustrophobic than it had moments ago. It's dead silent. Suspicious eyes move around the room.

ACROSS THE NODE --

Gordon pretends to tamper with the small TV above the food prep station.

In truth, he's only using the activity as a cover so he can speak freely to Kira and Christian without alerting their Russian neighbors.

The other Americans feign mundane tasks. Again, we are given the impression that they have heard the news.

They all speak in hushed voices.

KIRA

(under her breath)

This is insane... What the hell are we supposed to do with that information?

GORDON

Hell if I know. That's all they said. No *why*... No *how*... Just the orders from Uncle Sam.

KIRA

Could the transition have been tampered with? Maybe it's a prank or something.

GORDON

Those flashes from down below look like a prank to you? Something shook the hell out of the station too. Did that feel like a prank?

KIRA

No, but it didn't exactly feel like reality either, did it?

CHRISTIAN

It's unlikely anyone would have been able to breach and cut communications like that. It's more probable that something's either damaged or we're dealing with the residual effects of an **electromagnetic pulse**.

GORDON

An *EMP*? You mean to say whatever's going on down there is nuclear.

Christian shrugs -- *Duh*.

CHRISTIAN

The pulse from a warhead at a high enough altitude could have caused one. It's not crazy to think something like that could overload some of our electronics, but we're all still alive, so it can't have been too powerful. If that's the case, hopefully communication will come back online in about twenty-four hours.

KIRA

If it's just damage, how do we fix it?

CHRISTIAN

Depends...

Something occurs to him.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

But maybe the question we should be asking ourselves is -- if we got orders from our government to take control of the ISS... *How do we know the wonder-twins didn't get the same?*

His eyes shift toward ALEXEY AND NICHOLAI, who are now currently finishing a seemingly INTENSE CONVERSATION on the other side of the room. We hold on --

NICHOLAI. We're unsure if he heard anything from the Americans. Then --

Weronika enters, breaking the silence. Her face is awash with concern.

WERONIKA

We have a problem.

Off the worried group waiting for more --

INT. RUSSIAN ORBITAL SEGMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The group stares at a variety of computers, both Russian and American in design. Each displays the same message --
"OFFLINE."

WERONIKA

We have no internal propulsion. Everything's dead or damaged.

CHRISTIAN

This can't be happening...

KIRA

The ISS hasn't used the Zvezda thrusters in years, what's so concerning about not having them now?

Alexey drags a hand down his face.

GORDON

We intentionally let the station lower its altitude to shorten your trip up here. It should never have been a problem to readjust, but --

Gordon trails off. His eyes move to a very worried Weronika -- he'd rather spare her the rest of this statement, but Kira finishes the thought for him.

KIRA

-- But now we're low enough for the drag of the atmosphere to pull us down to Earth. How long do we have?

CHRISTIAN

Little less than a day.

GORDON

We'll find a way to schedule an immediate resupply, use the additional boost to lift us again.

NICHOLAI

That would require talking to the ground.

WERONIKA

(to Nicholai)

I don't hear you suggesting anything!

Nicholai looks like he might SNAP back at her, but Alexey places a calming hand on his brother's shoulder.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

(half to herself)

Great. We survived a nuclear blast only so we could fall to death.

Hearing this, Kira pushes her way to one of the terminals. She clicks a red RECORD icon.

KIRA

(to the computer)

This is Science Officer Kira Williams, requesting immediate reboot assistance from the ground. If you receive this message in the next twenty-four hours, you can still keep us afloat.

(beat)

We're counting on you.

Her message resonates through the group.

She clicks the icon again to stop the recording, and then clicks a different icon marked *SEND*.

The screen is replaced with an empty LOADING BAR labeled "*PENDING*."

KIRA (CONT'D)

Soon as a signal comes back online,
someone down there'll receive that
and send help.

(beat)

...Right?

No one responds out loud.

Finally, Chistian pipes up, breaking the silence as he **SETS HIS WATCH TIMER**, with a *BEEP-BEEP*.

CHRISTIAN

Great, well in about twenty-three
hours we'll all be in a ball of fire
rocketing through the atmosphere, or
we'll be right as rain...

(to Alexey)

Any luck on the radio?

ALEXEY

(Russian -- no
translation)

Razbrosannyye peredachi ... Yesli by
nas porazila kakaya-to ostatochnaya
volna EMI, radio moglo by vernut'sya
v onlayn cherez DVADTSAT' CHETYRE
CHASA. My dolzhny schitat' sebya
schastlivymi, chto eto
yedinstvennoye, chto, pokhozhe, ne
rabotayet.

The Americans stare at him, blankly.

Beat. Nicholai pipes up "TRANSLATING."

NICHOLAI

*He says antenna is broken. Needs to
be repaired... manually.*

Long beat.

The entire group turns their attention to --

GORDON. For the first time since we've met him, he doesn't look quite as macho. *Shit...*

Off Gordon's uneasy nod, we --

SMASH CUT TO:

OVER BLACK UNTIL --

A hatch is opened, causing light to flood in, illuminating --

INT. AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

TWO lifeless SPACESUITS hang, tethered to opposite walls of the small room.

Gordon steps into view, flanked by Christian and Weronika.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Gordon is now almost fully suited up.

Weronika reaches for the helmet, but Gordon snatches it up first.

GORDON

I got it.

(beat)

...I can put it on myself.

Weronika's expression scrunches, confused by his reaction.

WERONIKA

Okay...

She lingers for a moment before moving toward the exit. Then -
-

GORDON

Wait --

Weronika pauses. Gordon shoots Christian a knowing glance, prompting --

CHRISTIAN

Subtle.

He steps outside the room, leaving them alone for a moment.

INT. HALLWAY - OTHER SIDE OF THE AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Christian steps into the hallway. On the far side, he catches sight of --

The Pulov brothers in intense conversation.

Christian presses his back against the wall, hiding his presence. He watches as --

Nicholai places a pieces of paper in his brother's hand. We can't hear what they're saying, but we can tell Alexey is resistant.

Nicholai cups his palm around the back of Alexey's neck and places their foreheads together.

Christian watches as Alexey reluctantly accepts the paper.

Off Christian, suspicious --

INT. AIRLOCK - SAME

Gordon takes Weronika's hand.

GORDON

I um... I guess I haven't had a chance to say this yet, but... You do know I love you, right?

With a smile, she wraps her arms around his now oversized collar and kisses him gently on the lips.

WERONIKA

Tell me that again when you get back.

Gordon nods.

Weronika exits, allowing Christian to return from the hallway.

He fastens the helmet to the suit.

Once Weronika is out of view, Christian helps Gordon finish suiting up.

CHRISTIAN

You good with this?

GORDON

No...

CHRISTIAN

You don't... have to go out there.

Gordon grabs hold of a multipurpose **Drill-Tools**, sitting in charging docks. It looks like something you might buy at Home Depot, but completely silver and JUMBO-SIZED to compensate for the suit's gloved hands.

GORDON

We need to assume I do. I trust Weronika, but I want you guys to keep an eye on the others, alright? You get the slightest hint something's up, you tell me.

CHRISTIAN

We will.
(beat)
I promise.

GORDON

Thanks.

Reluctantly, Gordon pulls his visor down and turns toward the airlock's outer door.

Christian exits, leaving him behind. We hear the inner door seal behind Gordon.

He's alone.

EXT. SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

The outer airlock door opens.

In the perfect silence of space, Gordon emerges from the airlock.

We can feel our stomachs drop as he moves off the platform, now freely suspended in space. He looks downward, and --

GORDON

(quiet)
If you guys can hear me in there...
Try not to look out the windows...

We trace his eye-line until finally we see it... **Earth**, now no longer the same heavenly blue oasis we had seen earlier.

A handful of newly formed deserts of ash and blackness have been scattered across its surface like giant cigarette burns. Clouds of haze have begun to skew the planet's blue/green hue toward a flat grey. It's a deeply discouraging sight.

After a heavy moment, Gordon pulls his attention back to the task at hand. Slowly and cautiously, he HOOKS his braided steel **TETHER** to the station with a carabiner clip designed to prevent him from floating away. *That makes us feel better... but not a whole lot.*

Gordon speaks into his helmet's built-in-radio, finally breaking the silence.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Tether attached. You guys reading me in there?

Beat.

KIRA (O.S.)

I'm here, Gordon.

Gordon begins making his way across the outside of the station as he speaks.

GORDON

Williams? I sure as shit hope Christian's with you... No offense or anything.

KIRA (O.S.)

He's still making his way back from the airlock.

(snarky)

Good thing I trained for this too though, isn't it?

Gordon grunts, dissatisfied.

GORDON

Yeah? Well I haven't... You keeping a close eye on our *friends* in there?

Beat.

KIRA (O.S.)

...Nicholai and Weronika aren't far. I don't see Alexey.

GORDON

I don't like this...

Gordon sets his focus on the **CANADARM** -- a large mechanical appendage attached to the outside of the ISS.

GORDON (CONT'D)
 Approaching Canadarm. Antenna
 shouldn't be far on the other side
 of it.

His movement is cautious and slow. Gordon is well-trained,
 but even that confidence can only take one so far in a
 situation like this.

GORDON (CONT'D)
 I know you haven't done a spacewalk
 yet, but I can promise you, they're
 scary enough without our...
situation inside...

Kira's demeanor softens, picking up on his stress.

KIRA (O.S.)
 What can I do to make you feel
 better?

GORDON
 Just keep talking, alright? If you
 get the sense that something's
 fishy. Even the slightest bit. Give
 me a heads-up, and I'll hustle my
 ass back to the airlock.

KIRA (O.S.)
 I can do that.

INT. ISS - SAME

Alexey pulls his way through the station. He slips through
 the hatchway into --

INT. ISS - NODE TWO - CONTINUOUS

In doing so, he comes face to face with --

CHRISTIAN
 What are you doing?

Alexey points to his temple and shakes his head.

Christian doesn't respond for a moment, then --

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
 Pressure migraine?

Alexey shrugs.

Beat.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
 Let me know if you need some
 Excedrin... Stuff always works the
 best for me...

With a grateful nod, Alexey moves past him.

Christian follows him with his eyes for a moment, until
 Alexey slips into one of the sleep pods and seals the
 collapsible door behind him.

Satisfied enough, Christian continues on his way, exiting
 view.

We stay on the empty node for a long beat, until --

The collapsible door to Alexey's sleep pod SLIDES back
 open...

INT. NODE ONE - SAME

Kira holds herself close to the radio. Nicholai and Weronika
 are on the far side of The Node.

GORDON (O.S.)
 Kira?

KIRA
 Yes?

INTERCUT - GORDON/KIRA

GORDON
 Keep talking.

KIRA
 Um...

She thinks. Then --

KIRA (CONT'D)
 How long have you been seeing
 Weronika?

GORDON
*...I don't know what you're talking
 about...*

Gordon begins to slowly climb his way past the Canadarm.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Moving past the Canadarm.

KIRA
*That's what you're gonna go with,
huh?*

GORDON
That's what I'm goin' with...

Kira is grasping at straws here.

KIRA
Fair, I get it... But I will say,
you've gotta know the PDA's pretty
annoying for everyone around you
guys, right? Pair that with the fact
that relationships aren't
particularly smiled upon by any
space program... And then I gotta
imagine intimately speaking, physics
isn't exactly on your side --

GORDON
Jesus, Williams. Did I ask you?

KIRA
My point is, there's gotta be a good
reason for doing what you're doing.
Don't tell me it's just cuz she's
cute.

Gordon thinks for a moment. Then --

GORDON
I didn't even know her 'till I got
up here five months ago. We had a
karaoke night the week I docked.
*Believe it or not that's the kind of
fun party stuff we'd probably be
doing right now.*

KIRA
Tragic.

GORDON
We'd met, but not *really*, y'know? I
was all business till she got up for
her turn.

KIRA
-- Wooed you with her singing?

GORDON

Not even close, I thought my eardrums were gonna explode.

KIRA

For real?

GORDON

Yeah, she was awful. She knows it too.

(beat)

But she kept getting up there again and again. Just having a blast... *So yeah, maybe you could say by the third at bat, yeah, she technically wooed me with her singing...*

Kira smiles.

INT. NODE THREE - SAME

Alexey sneaks his way into Node Three.

He flips, reorienting himself toward a panel on what was the "ceiling" a moment ago.

A label reading "**COMMS**" has been scribbled across it in Sharpie marker.

He removes one of the plates, uncovering a series of **wires**.

He sifts through them, looking for something specific.

Alexey makes his selection, **choosing a blue wire with black stripes running its length**.

Satisfied with his selection he reaches into his jumpsuit and draws the **SCISSORS** that we've seen before -- swiped from the food prep table.

He lines them up and then --

He pauses.

Alexey pulls the scissors back, conflicted.

He begins to say a prayer in Russian and then attempts to line the blades up once again.

Before we see if he makes the snip, we --

CUT TO:

INT. NODE ONE - SAME

INTERCUT - GORDON/KIRA

GORDON
Y'wanna talk about you now?

KIRA
What about me?

GORDON
Why'd you wanna be an astronaut?

KIRA
*'Thought Sandra Bullock looked good
in the suit. Wanted to see for
myself.*

GORDON
*Really? Because I did see your file,
y'know? Looked like a hard left turn
from a promising biology track, then
you raced through the space program.
No Air Force experience or anything.
S'not easy. Takes a lot of
determination... So, why'd you do
it?*

KIRA
What's it matter? I'm here now.

GORDON
*What's it matter? How about it keeps
me from thinking about the fact that
I'm crawling across the outside of a
space station wearing a glorified
snorkel?*
(beat)
C'mon, Williams...

Kira hesitates. Then --

KIRA
...I spent seven years or so
researching organ replacement. I
thought there could be an easier way
to manufacture what people needed
rather than die on a waitlist. Our
work was promising, you're right
about that... And I was able to work
with my best friend and fiancé every
day during our research phase.

GORDON
So there is a boyfriend in the picture?

KIRA
...*Not a boy...*

Gordon pauses his climb to wince.

GORDON
...I'm an idiot.

KIRA
Yeah, maybe, but don't worry about it.

GORDON
Take it this story doesn't have a happy ending?

KIRA
Not for me... They found each other one night while I was working late... *And apparently every night after that.*

(beat)
I guess they decided that they'd put too much time into our research to let it all go away if I decided to walk.

GORDON
What happened?

KIRA
They published everything early, all under their names.

Oof...

GORDON
...Did you fight it?

KIRA
Yeah. For which I was rewarded with a *cease & desist* and plagiarism accusations from every one of our mutual colleagues.

GORDON
Shit, Williams... So you're telling me, right now they're sitting pretty on a pile of your work?

A melancholy smirk appears on Kira's lips.

KIRA

Not exactly. They published too early. Our research only worked in theory. Every attempt at practice had failed.

(beat)

Because there was too much weight on the cells. They could never hold together properly.

In an instant Gordon realizes what she's doing up here.

GORDON

But up here you don't have that problem... *Sneaky.*

Kira smirks.

She clocks CHRISTIAN as he enters The Node.

INT. NODE THREE - SAME

Alexey bites his lip hard. He holds his breath and --

SNIP!

INT. NODE ONE - SAME

GORDON

Closing in on antenna. I can see it from --

EE --

FEEDBACK rockets through Kira's earpiece. She seethes as the line goes dead.

KIRA

Gordon?! GORDON?!

Weronika takes notice from the other side of the room.

WERONIKA

What happened?

Kira ignores Weronika and turns her attention to Christian instead. She doesn't need to say anything for him to know what's happening.

Christian turns toward Nicholai and Weronika.

CHRISTIAN
Where's Alexey?

They shrug.

Christian pulls his way toward The Node's hatch, when --
Alexey appears in the space's entryway, cutting him off.

ALEXEY
(Russian - weak)
What's wrong?

Christian looks to Kira, worried. She looks back, helpless.

CHRISTIAN
Keep trying the radio.

With that, Christian moves past Alexey, disappearing deeper into the station.

Suddenly, Kira finds herself alone in The Node with the eyes of every Russian crew member fixed on her. It's uncomfortable.

Trying her best to play it cool, Kira turns her back and sets her attention on the radio.

NICHOLAI AND ALEXEY exchange a look. Weronika takes notice.

Nicholai exits The Node.

INT. ISS - NODE ONE - CONTINUOUS

We follow Nicholai as he hastily pulls his way through the station until he finally stops.

We match his gaze to find --

**A monitor station with a joy stick-like device labeled
"Canadarm Control."**

INT. NODE THREE - SAME

Christian enters the empty node. His eyes race around the room and then set on the collection of panels that we last saw with Alexey.

Frantically, he begins to pull their covers off, searching for something.

EXT. ISS - SAME

Once again we find Gordon on his spacewalk in complete silence.

It's a curious juxtaposition to that of the boiling tension within the station.

GORDON

Kira?

(beat)

Kira, you read me?

(beat)

God I hope this is just a busted transmission.

(switching attention)

Approaching radio antenna.

Gordon moves on his way.

We can see what looks like it could be the radio antenna, but it's not close enough for us to get a good look at yet.

He moves closer. The antenna begins to become clearer to us, and Gordon alike, then --

CLICK.

Gordon is stopped in place. He pushes again to no avail.

Confused he checks his tether, to discover --

It's completely taut. He's reached its full extension.

Gordon looks from the overstretched cable to the antenna. It seems just out of reach.

Tough decision. Then --

GORDON (CONT'D)

Kira, if you can hear me... Now would be the time for some words of encouragement...

With that... **Gordon unbuckles his tether.**

CUT TO:

INT. NODE TWO - SAME

KIRA

(into radio)

Gordon? Gordon, do you read me?

She flips switches and thumbs buttons, determined to reconnect the line.

Weronika watches her from across The Node.

We see the shape of her body raise up and slowly begin to approach Kira. It's a discomfoting sight in context.

INT. NODE ONE - SAME

Nicholai boots the computer system, and wraps his fingers around the joystick.

INT. NODE THREE - SAME

Christian searches the same heap of wires that Alexey had been working through moments ago.

He spots something. Pushes excess wires out of the way and finally lays eyes on --

The black and blue wire, but --

IT'S NOT SNIPPED. It's perfectly intact. *Weird...*

He exhales, his expression is a cocktail of relief and confusion.

INT. NODE TWO - SAME

Kira continues to fiddle with the radio. She's completely UNAWARE that Weronika is only a few feet away from her now!

Finally noticing her --

Defensively, Kira wheels around to face her. And --

Weronika extends her radio headset from the Russian comms system.

WERONIKA

Try ours...

Kira looks at it, realizing that she's trying to help.

Off the headset --

EXT. ISS - SAME

With extreme caution, Gordon claws his way toward the radio antenna.

GORDON
I don't know if you can still hear me Kira, but I'm coming up on **the antenna** now. It looks --

He reaches the antenna. Lifts the sun visor on his helmet for a closer look.

GORDON (CONT'D)
It looks completely fine...

We hold on Gordon's face as perplexity turns to fear. *He just realized what's happening.*

GORDON (CONT'D)
THE ANTENNA'S FINE! KIRA --

FINALLY --

Kira's voice CRACKLES through his radio --

KIRA
Gordon!

GORDON
Kira?! What channel is this?

Gordon turns back toward the way he came, just as --

WHAMMM!

We see the CANADARM's blazing incoming in the reflective visor of Gordon's suit before the mechanical appendage comes BARRELING TOWARD HIM, COLLIDING DIRECTLY INTO GORDON AND --

GORDON IS KNOCKED OFF THE ISS ENTIRELY!

His limp body is sent spiraling into the darkness of space around the station!

INT. NODE TWO - SAME

KIRA
Gordon?! GORDON, DO YOU READ ME?!

WERONIKA
(worried)
Let me try!

Without thinking, Kira gives up the headset.

EXT. ISS - SAME

We see Gordon's unattached tether floating aimlessly in space.

BEYOND IT -- we see the small white shape that is Gordon's body as it drifts seemingly further off the ISS.

We CLOSE ON -- Gordon's visor-veiled face. He's unconscious, and unable to respond.

We hear Weronika's muffled voice still fighting to make its way through the radio --

WERONIKA (O.S.)
(over radio)
Gordon! Can you hear me?! I need you
to respond.

Gordon does not. He continues to drift.

WERONIKA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(less clear this time)
Please, Gordon! Say something!

No response.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)
(barely audible)
...Please...

Gordon continues on his course. Which, in turn, is another way of saying toward his death.

In a sense we're watching him drown... And it's a horrible experience.

INT. NODE TWO - SAME

Weronika looks helpless. She stares at the silent radio unable to process what just happened.

KIRA
Weronika...

Kira doesn't know how to finish that sentence.

CHRISTIAN reenters the room, immediately making eye contact with a distraught Kira.

Their look says volumes.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLOCK - SAME

Weronika stands in the still OPEN airlock, now sporting the second spacesuit and a tether of her own.

Kira and Christian watch intently from the room's inner window, as Weronika desperately reels Gordon's tether back toward the station, until finally --

She lays eyes on the empty carabiner at the other side, confirming for her own eyes that it's no longer clipped to Gordon.

Off Weronika, her heart breaking --

INT. NODE TWO - LIVING QUARTERS - LATER

Kira enters her dark closet of a sleeping pod. She slides the collapsing door closed and doesn't bother turning on the small lamp.

She grabs the CD Walkman from its Velcroed position on the wall and pops the ear-pods in.

With music playing, she presses her head into the wall, frustrated.

For a moment we feel she might cry. Then --

Knock, knock!

Kira is jostled back to reality. She remains quiet until --

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
(through the door)
Kira... I think we should talk.

Kira slides the door open, waiting for him to respond.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
...In private.

KIRA
...Are you kidding me?

He's not.

Reluctantly, she makes herself as small as she can in the already undersized space, allowing him to slide in.

Christian closes the collapsing door behind him, effectively sealing himself in a coffin-sized living quarters with Kira.

Off her, tired and not loving this --

CUT TO:

INT. RUSSIAN ORBITAL SEGMENT - SAME

The Pulov brothers are in the middle of a heated argument.

Alexey throws the now-crumpled piece of paper back at his brother.

They continue to bark at each other in Russian, only to simultaneously fall silent when --

Weronika makes her presence known by snatching the piece of paper out of the air between them --

She upwards it revealing a depiction printed wire schematics ripped, annotated in red marker.

Weronika lets her eyes run over the page before speaking up, also in her native tongue.

WERONIKA

(upset)

...What. Happened...?

They don't respond.

She looks to Alexey. He's a mess.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

...Alexey?

ALEXEY

I...I didn't know. Nicholai promised me --

Nicholai interrupts, answering for him.

NICHOLAI

(to Weronika)

You wouldn't have wanted to know.

WERONIKA

What does that mean?!

Nicholai takes his time answering, before --

NICHOLAI

...Before the radios failed, we received orders from the ground. **There's a war brewing between us and the Americans... We have been told to take the ISS... at all costs.**

Weronika's mind reels, processing.

Alexey reaches into his pocket, retrieving something.

He opens his palm, allowing the **two severed sides of the black and blue wire** to float into the air between them.

Weronika doesn't need to ask what she's looking at. She already knows.

Tears pool in Alexey's eyes.

ALEXEY

I replaced it with a dummy... No one will ever know it was tampered with.

WERONIKA

You didn't...

ALEXEY

Weronika, **I didn't know what Nicholai was going to do.** It was only supposed to be a precaution!
(to Nicholai)
Tell her what you told me. The blue and white wire was just supposed to be the Americans earthbound comms. Tell her!

Nicholai remains silent.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

(to Weronika)

You're my friend... You can't have thought I would --

He trails off, weakly. Then --

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

...I'm so sorry...

She looks at Alexey, in disbelief -- then back to Nicholai.

WERONIKA

I DON'T WANT YOUR "SORRY?!"

Nicholai moves closer, towering over Weronika. He speaks, keeping his tone calm.

NICHOLAI

The apology *is* genuine, Weronika...
But as far as anyone's concerned,
wires die all the time. *This was
just an unfortunate accident.* No one
signs up for this work without
knowing the risk.

WERONIKA

THEY SIGN UP ASSUMING THEIR OWN CREW
ISN'T GOING TO TURN ON THEM!

NICHOLAI

Maybe they shouldn't. The ISS is
made up, half and half, by two
countries who have competed over the
stars since the space race.

WERONIKA

(horrified)

You're a monster...

Nicholai looks to his brother, curious to see how he's reacting to that statement. Alexey avoids eye contact.

NICHOLAI

I'm sorry you don't want to hear
that right now, but it's the truth.

WERONIKA

No, I don't. I want to know what
we're going to do about it.

Alexey and Nicholai look at her, unsure where she's going with this.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

He isn't dead. If his suit held up,
then his life support should keep
him alive until it fails... If we
don't move quickly he's going to be
drowning out there for the next
eight hours!

They look at her, but remain silent.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

We need to try! I'm telling the
Americans. If you won't help me,
they will!

ALEXEY

Weronika...

WERONIKA

We don't have time!

NICHOLAI

He's gone!

WERONIKA

No --

NICHOLAI

There was no one on the tether, was there? He must have undone that himself. We don't have eyes on him anymore either... It's over.

Still hopeful, Weronika looks to Alexey. He responds, reluctantly.

ALEXEY

...Even if we knew where to start, with the propulsion from the Manual Maneuvering Units, he would be too far now. We won't be able to reach him and get back... I'm sorry...

The horror of Gordon's fate is not lost on the two men. And yet --

NICHOLAI

(to Alexey)

-- You did what you did for your country.

WERONIKA

There are two more Americans on board, you son of a bitch! Do you intend to murder them too?!

Beat. Neither man answers.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

What is the value of this mission if we all tear each other apart for it? No one deserves what you did to Gordon... **None of us.**

Nicholai moves to comfort her, but Weronika pushes past him, exiting the room.

Off Alexey and Nicholai, watching her go --

INT. ROOM OUTSIDE THE RUSSIAN ORBITAL SEGMENT - CONTINUOUS

Weronika leaves her fellow Russians behind, she pulls her way through the station until she is far enough away to feel alone.

She stops, breathing heavily. She would let herself drop to the floor if the weightlessness would allow her to. Instead --

Weronika pulls her legs into her chest, allowing herself to float in the fetal position at the center of the room.

We watch her back shudder.

She lets herself begin to cry, but only for a moment. Then --

Her body rotates toward us, allowing us to see her face.

Her expression falls slack. Her eyes seem to have glassed over, suggesting her mind has wandered somewhere far away.

INT. RUSSIAN ORBITAL SEGMENT - SAME

Nicholai and Alexey sit in contemplative silence, until --

NICHOLAI
I know you care for her.

ALEXEY
...Stop Nicholai.

NICHOLAI
I see how you look at her --

ALEXEY
STOP!

Nicholai waits a beat. Then --

NICHOLAI
I know this is hard for you too, but
it was necessary.

He moves out of view, leaving his brother behind.

Off Alexey, considering --

CUT TO:

INT. NODE TWO - LIVING QUARTERS - SAME

KIRA

What are you saying exactly?

CHRISTIAN

I don't know. We just need to talk about it. We know what Gordon was told, right? Which means we have to assume that the Russians got the same orders as us.

KIRA

Do we?

CHRISTIAN

What? Yes! Gordon is fucking gone. Did you notice that?!

KIRA

(defensive)

I noticed.

(half to herself)

It's just been quite a first day up here...

Christian collects himself.

CHRISTIAN

I'm sorry. I don't mean to put you on the spot or anything, but I think we can agree that we're playing a man down now, right? That means we need to trust each other. I'm all you have. You're all I have. And I wanna fucking live through this.

Kira sighs.

KIRA

What if what happened to Gordon was an actual accident?

CHRISTIAN

Are you kidding me? C'mon, Williams - you trained to be up here too. You know what kind of safety protocols are in place, don't you?

KIRA

I know those safety protocols exist because being up here is just about the most dangerous place humanity has ever had the batshit crazy idea of putting people.

Christian looks at her, completely at a loss.

KIRA (CONT'D)

(switching tones)

I'm not saying it *WAS* an accident. I know what this looks like... But I also know how fucked up and misguided people can be when they're pushed to believe something that's not necessarily true... That's not just "Team Russia" out there -- they're fellow astronauts, who you've lived and worked with for months now. I don't know them, but *you do*... Are they people who would have murdered Gordon like that?

Christian thinks.

CHRISTIAN

...I don't know...

(beat)

But I know we don't have the time to assume they aren't.

KIRA

...*If*, and I mean *IF* the Russians got the same orders as us. And *IF* they were able to mobilize a plan fast enough to kill one of us...

(beat)

What are you suggesting we do now?

CHRISTIAN

(unsure)

...For starters, I vote we don't believe a single thing they say...

Just then -- we HEAR MOVEMENT outside the sleep pod.

Christian and Kira fall silent, listening.

They angle their eyes through the thin gaps in the collapsible door to see --

WERONIKA as she makes her way through The Node, pausing only to wipe a tear from her eye.

Kira and Christian exchange a look, unsure what to do.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 She knows something...

OUTSIDE the sleep pod, Weronika disappears from view.

Christian looks to Kira, then --

WOOSH! The collapsing door of Kira's sleep pod is yanked open by --

Weronika. She stares in at Christian and Kira who are awkwardly huddled into the tight space.

The group regards each other blankly for a moment. Then --

WERONIKA
 (to Kira)
 I need to talk to you.

Kira looks to Christian -- he's hesitant. She dismisses him with a nod, prompting --

Christian reluctantly exits The Node, allowing the two women a moment together.

Kira moves out of her sleep pod so they can talk. It's clear Weronika has been crying, and Kira takes notice.

KIRA
 I'm sorry about Gordon...

Weronika nods, but doesn't say anything.

KIRA (CONT'D)
 Is there something I can do for you?

WERONIKA
 I need your help. And I need you to keep it a secret.

Kira considers. This is a dangerous game.

KIRA
 ...Why me?

WERONIKA
Because you're new. I know I can't trust anyone else now. But I *don't* know for sure that I can't trust you yet. So you're all I have.

KIRA

You see my hesitation.

WERONIKA

I do. And maybe in a few hours we'll be safe & sound *or maybe we'll be falling out of the sky...* But we have work to do before either of those things happens, and we don't have time for your "hesitation."

Weronika leans closer, inspecting Kira for any sort of tell. Kira doesn't crack.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

I could use your help, but I can't do that if I don't trust you. So can you please start talking?

KIRA

What do you need?

Weronika takes a beat to assess the situation before answering anyway --

WERONIKA

Your key... In exchange, I'll give you mine.

KIRA

I don't want yours... What do you need my key for?

WERONIKA

I want to open an American lock box.

KIRA

(hesitant)
Which one?

WERONIKA

Does it matter?

KIRA

Depends.

Weronika waits for more.

KIRA (CONT'D)

(lying)
I don't have it anymore. I haven't seen it since we first saw the flashes. Must have lost it when we got shaken up.

Weronika isn't falling for it. And as such --

WERONIKA

Did the Americans give you orders to kill us?

Kira is caught off guard.

KIRA

Excuse me?

WERONIKA

What did they ask to do?

KIRA

(lying)

I don't know what you're talking about.

Frustrated, Weronika shows her hand.

WERONIKA

You know you're not the only bioengineer on board...

KIRA

Alexey.

WERONIKA

Do you know what he's working with?

Kira remains silent.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

A virus's mutation from marsupial to human.

(beat)

The ISS is for science and experimentation. Not warfare... But I've seen his notes. **He thinks he's working to prevent something, but you can't cure a sickness without making sure it exists first.**

KIRA

Stop. Even for a potential vaccine, no government would let anyone come up here just to *make* a super virus. There's no need for it to be in zero-gravity and they'd be endangering their own astronauts.

Weronika cocks an eyebrow.

WERONIKA

*If you wanted to build a super virus
and avoid casualties... Where's the
safest place you could possibly do
it?*

Kira's blood runs cold.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

**Intentionally or not, he's the
reason we're all in this position.
If there is a war coming on the
ground, there's nothing else on this
station that might sway its
direction other than his work... And
so I need your help getting rid of
it.**

Kira stares at her, understanding the severity of what she's saying.

Beat. Then --

KIRA

(lying)
*They didn't tell us anything. Gordon
never got through.*

Weronika looks at her for a moment. Then --

WERONIKA

You're sure?

KIRA

...Yes.

WERONIKA

(frustrated)
Fine.

With that, she shoves her way past Kira, making her way toward the exit.

Kira watches Weronika leave in a huff, when something makes her pipe up.

KIRA

They told us to take the ISS...
(beat)
By any means necessary...

Weronika pauses and turns back to face her.

WERONIKA

Why...?

KIRA

We don't know. The transmission cut early.

WERONIKA

(Russian)

Figures.

(English)

We received the same orders.

KIRA

...Then you're saying Gordon --

WERONIKA

-- Yes... I never thought Nicholai and Alexey were capable of doing something so *severe*... But now we both know different. That means they can do worse too.

KIRA

...If what you're saying is true then I want to help you.

WERONIKA

I thought you might say that --

KIRA

-- But what if it's not? Alexey *is* a close friend of yours, isn't he?

WERONIKA

...Yes... And if I'm lying, more of us may get hurt. Just like Gordon did.

(beat)

But if I'm not, then there could be death on a scale that can win a war. So what do you want to do?

Kira considers, torn.

Beat. Then --

She raises her key for Weronika to take. They exchange, leaving Kira with its Russian counterpart.

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

I will create a distraction. You go to your lab, that's why I need your key. Use mine on Alexey's lockbox.

(MORE)

WERONIKA (CONT'D)

The labels are in Russian, but the samples you're looking for have red labels. Take them to the airlock in **NODE ZERO** and get rid of them. Do you understand?

KIRA

Yes.

WERONIKA

Repeat it.

KIRA

Red labels. Node Zero.

The women stare at each other for a moment. Then, with a nod, Weronika moves on her way.

WERONIKA

Good luck.

INT. ISS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Weronika moves quietly through the ISS, unaware that --
NICHOLAI catches sight of her. He follows her to --

INT. NODE THREE - SAME

Weronika approaches the glovebox that Christian had been working through when we first met him.

She slides Kira's key into its allotted slot and turns.

With a POP -- the Plexiglas surface opens, allowing Weronika to reach into the box and retrieve --

The handheld blowtorch.

She stares at it in her hands, marveling over it. *She's not looking at this thing the way a mentally/emotionally stable person looks at a random object.*

After a moment she moves along, disappearing through a nearby hatch.

We follow her down to --

INT. STOWAGE AREA - SAME

Weronika claws her way toward a panel complete with several dials. We can read the words *GAS LINE 1* and *GAS LINE 2* on the top of it.

This is one of the ISS's pure oxygen valve systems.

She un-Velcros a large wrench from a tool wall nearby.

Letting the blowtorch float in the air around her for a moment, she uses the wrench to go to work on the panel, opening the valves with a *TSHHHHHHHHH!*

Just then --

Nicholai makes himself known.

NICHOLAI
What are you doing?

She looks up to find him standing in the hatchway.

We get a good look at Weronika. She's a mess of tears and anguish.

WERONIKA
...Don't you get it? We're supposed
to be scientists. We're not dogs!
But if it's this easy to forget
that, what's the difference?

She grabs the blowtorch from the air above her.

NICHOLAI
That's pure oxygen in those vents,
Weronika. If you light that you'll
torch the whole station.

Weronika doesn't respond. She's already aware.

NICHOLAI (CONT'D)
(calling out)
ALEXEY! GET IN HERE!

Thinking quickly --

NICHOLAI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for what you're going
through, Weronika. I am. But we can
still talk about this, can't we?

Weronika slowly shakes her head. Her mind seems made up. Just then --

Alexey appears behind Nicholai. Immediately, he understands what's at risk of happening.

Weronika looks wounded by his presence.

ALEXEY
(Russian)
Weronika... You don't want to do
this.

WERONIKA
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT! GORDON
KNEW ME AND NOW --

Nicholai makes a HASTY MOTION toward her, but --

WERONIKA SWINGS THE WRENCH AT HIM!

WERONIKA (CONT'D)
STAY AWAY FROM ME!

He backs off.

NICHOLAI
(Russian)
YOU'RE GOING TO GET US ALL KILLED!

ALEXEY
(Russian)
NICHOLAI, SHUT UP!

Nicholai looks at him, surprised. Just as we --

CUT TO:

INT. NODE ONE - SAME

Kira's eyes run wild, scanning the lab she shares with Alexey. Until --

She takes notice of a lockbox built into the wall of the work area. *The bold Russian letters printed across its surface are enough for us to guess whose this is.*

She slides Weronika's key into the latch -- it fits perfectly. She turns it, and --

Pop.

The small door opens, displaying several marked vials -- three of which have **red labels**.

Carefully, she picks them out, when --

VOICE (O.S.)
Those are dangerous...

Startled, Kira wheels around to find Christian staring at her.

KIRA
Christian, good! I don't have time to explain everything, but I could use your help.

Christian looks puzzled.

CHRISTIAN
Okay...

KIRA
I need to get this to the airlock in Node Zero as soon as possible. Can you help me?

Christian scoffs.

CHRISTIAN
I mean, I would...

KIRA
But?!

CHRISTIAN
But there is no Node Zero.

Something breaks in Kira's heart *because if there's no Node Zero then that means --*

KIRA
...She lied.

CHRISTIAN
Who did?

KIRA
WERONIKA PLAYED ME! WE NEED TO FIND HER, NOW!

CUT TO:

INT. STOWAGE AREA - SAME

Weronika moves to light the torch, Nicholai tightens in fear, but --

ALEXEY
(Russian)
Wait!

Weronika pauses.

Alexey moves cautiously toward her. Weronika doesn't stop him.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)
(Russian)
I know you don't want to hear this from me, but just please... listen for a minute.

WERONIKA
(Russian)
Why should I?!

Alexey thinks, then --

ALEXEY
(Russian)
Because... **"The important thing is that we stick together?"**

Weronika's face softens. She lets him talk.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)
(Russian)
Talk to me about your older sister. When you're home you always watch her kids on weeknights while she works, right?

Weronika nods slowly.

WERONIKA
...Maxim and Elena.

ALEXEY
(Russian)
That's right... They look at you like a second mom, right? They used to call you every night when we were in training. Elena still sleeps with the stuffed giraffe you bought her from the zoo. That's one of the first things you ever told me about. I know they're important to you.

Off Weronika --

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Christian and Kira race through the ISS, as fast as they possibly can.

INT. STOWAGE AREA - SAME

Alexey continues his efforts to calm Weronika.

ALEXEY

(Russian)

I'm sorry to make you think about this, but if you light the torch, you know they won't take that news well.

Alexey moves closer, but --

Weronika raises the wrench in a defensive manner.

WERONIKA

(Russian)

I am doing this for them! Don't come closer, Alexey!

Alexey inches along the wall -- keeping his distance, but moving around her.

Her eyes follow him around the room, flashing back to Nicholai every so often.

ALEXEY

(Russian)

Weronika. I understand if I ended our friendship today. And I really can't really blame you if you want to light that torch because of me either... But... I don't believe you want to hurt anyone. And you're not avoiding what's happening on the ground by killing us all... We can't control that, but we do have control of what happens up here. We can still resolve things peacefully.

(beat)

Let's go back to Node One. I'll make some tea. We can figure this out together. Don't you think that's what Gordon would want us to do?

Weronika considers. She nods through her tears.

WERONIKA

You were always a good friend
Alexey...

(beat)

**...But I don't believe any of that
that.**

SHE MOVES TO LIGHT THE TORCH!

Taking his shot, ALEXEY RUSHES HER, but --

Weronika SWINGS THE WRENCH, CRACKING IT DOWN AT HIM --

Alexey catches the makeshift weapon on his forearm.

He screams, recoiling in pain. Nicholai rushes to his brother's aid.

NICHOLAI

(worried)

ALEXEY!

Weronika's face softens when she sees he's hurt.

Her mind seems to clear --

WERONIKA

(Russian)

Alexey?! I'm so sorry --

WHACK!

**OUT OF NOWHERE -- something heavy comes smashing down on the
back of Weronika's skull!**

Her eyes remain open, but consciousness seems to fade from them.

Alexey maintains horrified eye contact with her for a long beat, even as --

**A formless red shape of weightless blood emerges from the
back of her head.**

Nicholai's jaw drops. Kira covers her mouth in horror. Alexey's disbelieving eyes shift toward --

CHRISTIAN, who stands behind the now very unconscious Weronika. He still holds the **bloodstained metal storage box** in hand.

CHRISTIAN

I saw the torch. And the gas... She -
- she was gonna blow up the
station... We could have died. You
all saw that.

Kira ignores him, moving to act.

KIRA

One of you give me your shirts, she
needs a compress on the back of her
head!

Nicholai shoves Kira out of the way.

NICHOLAI

Stay away from her!

Alexey removes his shirt, wrapping it around Weronika's head.

The cloth is almost completely soaked within seconds of it
touching the back of her head.

KIRA

I -- we can help.

NICHOLAI

STAY AWAY FROM HER!

CHRISTIAN

It... was -- I didn't mean to hurt
her like that.

Nicholai looks toward Christian, fire burning in his eyes.

NICHOLAI

(venomous)

GET OUT!

Christian backs up, scared.

He moves toward the hatch door, grabbing hold of Kira's
jumpsuit on the way.

Kira struggles to take her eyes off Weronika.

ALEXEY -- has taken to gently clapping his hand against her
cheek in an effort to wake her.

ALEXEY

(Russian -- under his
breath)

C'mon!

(MORE)

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

C'mon I need you to wake up,
Weronika! You need to stay awake for
me!

CHRISTIAN -- pulls Kira's attention toward him.

CHRISTIAN

We need to get out of here!

Through a daze, Kira reluctantly nods.

INT. ISS - MOMENTS LATER

Christian leads Kira through the ISS with extreme urgency.

KIRA

Where are you taking me?

CHRISTIAN

The Leonardo Permanent Multipurpose
Module -- a big cluttered space full
of garbage and storage. It's our
best bet to hide until the radios
come back online, which --

(checks watch)

Should only be about nine hours now.
That's assuming we're dealing with a
low-grade EMP and your message gets
through to the ground in time.

INTERCUT -- Nicholai holds his shirt against the back of
Weronika's head, while Alexey opens her eyelids and shines a
light inside. They exchange a worried look.

KIRA

What are you talking about? We can
still help Weronika. She's --

CHRISTIAN

(interrupting)

-- She's going to die!

They pause.

Kira falls silent.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

...I felt the back of her skull cave
in... I didn't mean to hit her that
hard -- I promise. I just didn't
want her to light that torch. She
was being crazy, you saw that. And
she lied to you.

(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

If she wasn't trying to destroy the station, why else would she have wanted your key so badly? *That is what she asked for isn't it?*

INTERCUT - Nicholai and Alexey gently wrap a brace around her neck and rush to a flat surface where they can strap her in place.

KIRA

I though she was creating a distraction...

Christian scoffs.

CHRISTIAN

It doesn't matter now. If she's not dead already, her brain is hemorrhaging. Even if we had the training to save her, we don't have the time.

KIRA

So we shouldn't try?

CHRISTIAN

We should try to keep us alive, shouldn't we?

INTERCUT -- Alexey holds Weronika's eyelid open and flashes a small light back and forth through field of vision.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

If the ISS continues without a re-boost, we're gonna have way bigger problems than Nicholai in a few hours.

(beat)

I don't like this any more than you do, but in the meantime, there's obviously teams here. It's us versus Russia, and right now the score is tied.

KIRA

Wow...

CHRISTIAN

You know what I meant.

KIRA

Do I?

CHRISTIAN

You wanna be on your own in all this, be my guest. But I want to live, and believe it or not, I want you to do the same. So can you please listen to me?

Kira is unsure, but --

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I know the station. Let's go.

He moves on his way. Kira follows, reluctantly.

INT. STOWAGE AREA A - SAME

WERONIKA'S HAND is wrapped tightly around Alexey's.

He cradles her.

Nearby, Nicholai empties water from a drinking pouch and attempts to wet a rag -- *a task that's easier said than done up here.*

He holds it out for Nicholai to take --

A sticky *SQUELCH* emits as Alexey removes his hand from the back of Weronika's head.

They both hear the sound. Neither calls attention to it.

Alexey's hand is stained dark red.

They speak in Russian.

ALEXEY

Wait...

Nicholai pauses.

Weronika's fingers go limp, slipping away from Alexey's.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

No...

He jerks her body.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

Weronika!

Shakes her again.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)
WERONIKA!

Alexey's eyes begin to water.

He holds her wrists, feeling for a pulse.

Beat.

We can tell he doesn't feel one, even before he looks up.

Nicholai's tough exterior fails for the first time since we've known him. He attempts to place a comforting hand on his brother's shoulder, but --

Alexey continues to stare down at Weronika, but there's not much to look at anymore. She's gone.

Weronika dies.

Long silent beat, then --

NICHOLAI
I'm finishing this.

Alexey lets go of Weronika. He stands. *Sort of.*

ALEXEY
What does that mean?

NICHOLAI
You know what it means.

Nicholai moves to the wall of Velcroed tools and selects an oversized SCREWDRIVER.

He stares at the makeshift weapon for a long beat before moving toward the hatch. But --

Alexey steps in his way.

NICHOLAI (CONT'D)
Move.

ALEXEY
You're not a murderer.

NICHOLAI
I am a man of my country. Are you coming with me or not?

ALEXEY

Don't be an idiot. I've always listened to you. Look what that got me!

NICHOLAI

What I got you? Look what you got me! You're the reason we're in this situation. Your work.

Alexey seems stung.

ALEXEY

I'm trying to save lives.

Nicholai scoffs.

Nicholai GRABS Alexey, wrapping his massive fist around the bloodstained collar of his brother's jumpsuit!

NICHOLAI

You're not up here to make a vaccine! That's just a byproduct of the weapon. That's what Russia wants. That's what the Americans want. Everyone seems to understand that, except for you.

(beat)

These people killed our friend.

ALEXEY

Did they? Who killed her exactly, Nicholai? Was it Christian when he hit her thinking she was going to blow us all up...? Or did a faceless person in Houston kill her...?

Alexey drops his voice, stating this next part as coldly as he possibly can --

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

Or did the person who took her will to live?

For a moment Nicholai looks both hurt and stunned, but the moment doesn't last long. Anger takes over his expression.

NICHOLAI

You're not my brother.

With that he lets go of his colleague's throat.

NICHOLAI (CONT'D)
But you're Russian. So, nah zda-rovh-
yeh to that, comrade.

With that, Nicholai moves past Alexey.

ALEXEY
(calling after him)
Nicholai!

Nicholai continues on his way without looking back.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)
NICHOLAI!

No response.

Alexey curses in Russian.

He's left alone. He turns back toward Weronika's lifeless body.

Her vacant eyes stare up at him.

He cranes down, cradling her again. After a moment, Alexey removes his Mets cap and places it over her head, covering her eyes.

He looks away, pained.

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS:

- Nicholai moves through the ISS like a hunter stalking prize game.
- He passes through Node One, where there are still the remnants of food and utensils from earlier Velcroed in place.
- Node Two, where the sleeping quarters loom empty.
- And Node Three, where only a matter of hours ago his primary focus was maintaining a healthy exercise regiment.

INT. STOWAGE AREA A - MOMENTS LATER

Alexey wipes tears from his eyes.

He looks worse than we've ever seen him.

After a long beat, he lifts his body, pulling aimlessly away from Weronika.

INT. NODE ONE - MOMENTS LATER

From our perspective, Alexey hangs suspended upside down, he's searching for something tucked deep under a monitor system.

After a moment, he finds his target -- the vodka bottle Weronika had mentioned, duct-taped behind a computer system.

He fastens a "space-straw" to the bottle then reorients himself so that he's upright from where we're looking.

He's about to take a sip, when something catches his eye --

Alexey drops the vodka bottle, letting it float away behind him.

He moves with new intent toward the monitor system.

His eyes widen.

Finally we match Alexey's gaze to find --

The Canadarm control system -- last seen operated by Nicholai.

The sight looks seemingly insignificant. Until --

Alexey SLAMS his body against the console. It's evident that he sees something that we don't yet. Not until --

He zooms the camera toward one of the ISS's many solar arrays.

Still we don't see anything. But --

The camera continues to zoom, until the image blurs.

We can barely make out what we're looking at.

Alexey squints, craning his eyes against the screen. Then --

A blurry white dot peeks out from behind the solar array.

It's hard to say for sure, but if we didn't know any better we might bet that's a tiny white dot that looks a lot like --

GORDON!

Alexey laughs. Nervously at first. Then with excitement! And then with heartbreak, remembering why Weronika is no longer with them...

He takes a beat to collect himself. Considers his options.
Then --

Alexey wraps his fingers around the joystick.

EXT. ISS - SAME

Silence once again.

The station looks unbelievable still.

From out here, it's hard to comprehend the chaos that is
ensuing inside it.

We move along the station's massive hull, and up one solar
array wing, where we finally see --

Gordon, very much alive!

His body is clinging to the side of one of the panels. He
looks insignificantly small in comparison to the gigantic
vessel.

Even now, knowing he's alive, our hope for him is not
promising. Not until --

The CANADARM BEGINS TO MOVE once again! This time not as a
weapon, but rather as a life preserver.

It reaches toward him, becoming a much-needed bridge for the
lost astronaut.

We can't hear Gordon, but his body language tells us he's
aware of what's happening.

Wearily, he repositions himself.

The arm continues to extend itself until it's stretched at
full length, but --

The arm is still several meters from Gordon's position,
unable to reach all the way.

Gordon pulls himself up, balancing carefully on the solar
array. Then --

HE JUMPS!

Before we see if he makes it from the solar array to the
Canadarm, we --

CUT TO:

INT. PERMANENT MULTIPURPOSE MODULE - SAME

We find ourselves looking at an empty room.

Dozens of mismatched/mis-sized bags of garbage and storage sit net-trapped in various crevasses of the room.

We hold on one of the heaps. Several seconds pass before we notice --

Kira's eyes poking out from between the bags.

Beat. Then --

We hear the entry hatch slide open. SOMEONE IS COMING.

Kira nestles deeper into her hiding spot, narrowly avoiding --

NICHOLAI -- as he enters view.

He surveys the room. Above him, we catch sight of --

CHRISTIAN, hiding in one of the adjacent stowage chambers on the ceiling. *Well, it's the ceiling from our current perspective at least...*

He catches sight of the screwdriver as Nicholai tucks it into his jumpsuit, concealing it.

NICHOLAI

(calling out)

Christian? Doctor Williams? I think it's time we all have a talk, don't you?

(lying)

Too many people have been hurt and I think we can all agree this isn't what we're up here for...

No response.

The hulking Russian moves slowly and meticulously through the room, pausing every so often to move garbage bags out of the way of his search. Then --

He sets his focus on the chamber where we know Kira is hiding. Something about it piques his interest.

He moves closer.

Nicholai places one hand inside his jumpsuit, presumably wrapping his fingers around the screwdriver. With the other, he reaches toward the foam box that may be right in front of Kira's face!

Seeing this --

CHRISTIAN -- reaches into his own jumpsuit, unearthing the small **Rubik's Cube**.

He cranes his body momentarily out of his hiding spot.

If Nicholai chose to turn his head in this moment, he would spot Christian for certain.

With all his might Christian hurls the Rubik's Cube.

It sails through the air at a glacially slow pace.

Christian tucks himself back into his hiding spot, disappearing from view.

NICHOLAI -- tugs on the storage box, but --

It's stuck.

He furrows his brow, confused. He removes his other hand from his jumpsuit. He's about to yank the box out of place with full 220 pounds of Russian strength in 3... 2...

CLUNK -- the Rubik's Cube finally taps against one the room's far walls.

Nicholai's head whips toward the sound. He lets go of the box and moves toward the noise.

With Nicholai's attention elsewhere --

BEHIND HIM -- Kira pushes her way out of her hiding spot!

She moves toward the room's exit as fast as she possibly can without causing a sound.

She can see the exit. She looks back to ensure Nicholai isn't looking.

Just as she's about to be home free, she turns her attention back toward the doorway, and --

SHE COMES FACE TO FACE WITH ALEXEY!

Kira looks horrified. Despite being clearly distraught over the loss of Weronika, Alexey looks surprised.

They both realize the situation immediately -- *which is to say, that as far as Kira is concerned, she's fucked...*

Then --

Remaining silent, Alexey extends his hand for her to take.

Kira hesitates.

Alexey glances past her at Nicholai, who seems to be losing interest in the sound he had heard.

Concern builds in Alexey's eyes.

Kira tightens her jaw, and --

She takes Alexey's hand.

BEHIND NICHOLAI -- we can see Alexey unlatch a compartment above them, guide Kira inside it, and close it behind her.

Nicholai turns around, just missing the action.

He sets his eyes on Alexey, who is now alone at the end of the room.

ALEXEY

(Russian)

Did you find anyone yet?

NICHOLAI

(Russian)

Does it look like it?

ALEXEY

(Russian)

No.

NICHOLAI

(Russian)

Have you come to your senses, or are you going to continue to get in the way?

Alexey shrugs.

ALEXEY

(Russian)

I'm not going to get in the way...

Nicholai considers. Then --

NICHOLAI

(switching to English)

That's very good to hear. Very good.

(calling out -- lying)

If anyone is in here.

(MORE)

NICHOLAI (CONT'D)

I just wanted to let you know Alexey has just informed me that *Weronika is going to be okay... We were able to stop the bleeding. She's conscious and resting in her sleep pod. It's a nasty concussion, but nothing out of control. I think when she's feeling a bit better soon we should discuss what's become of us and how to sort this out peacefully. What do you say?*

Nicholai scans the room with his eyes. With the exception of the life support's **LOW HUM**, the space seems quiet and empty.

He looks to Alexey, who stares back at him with a tired and blank expression.

Off this, Alexey makes a show of looking around the room.

ALEXEY

(Russian)

We should check the Soyuz. If they find a way to detach the hooks they might be able to escape the station.

(beat)

It's where I would go.

Nicholai thinks. Satisfied enough, he nods.

Alexey turns to leave the module.

Nicholai moves ever so slightly to follow, only to then stop dead in his tracks.

Alexey seems to take notice.

ALEXEY (CONT'D)

Nicholai...?

Nicholai doesn't respond. His eyes are fixed on something --

He follows it, until we see --

The RUBIK'S CUBE comes floating back into view, inches from Nicholai's nose!

A cold shiver runs up Alexey's spine. They both know what that means.

Nicholai looks directly up above him, laying eyes on --

CHRISTIAN peeking out from inside his hiding spot!

NICHOLAI
(Russian)
Son-of-a-bitch!

He launches his body upward, grabbing hold of Christian by the collar and tearing him out of his crevasse.

CHRISTIAN
No -- please!

Nicholai forces Christian against the wall, and draws the screwdriver.

Alexey rushes to help.

ALEXEY
(Russian)
NICHOLAI STOP! THIS ISN'T US!

Without taking his eyes off Christian, Nicholai THROWS a hard elbow behind him, BLASTING his brother in orbital bone and sending him tumbling away.

Nicholai forces an elbow down on Christian's windpipe, using a nearby grip-pole to apply the pressure without the help of gravity.

Christian struggles in vain.

With his free hand Nicholai raises the screwdriver, and BRINGS IT DOWN HARD! Just as --

KIRA COMES SLAMMING INTO HIM, forcing the weapon to miss its target and blast into a button panel inches from Christian's face.

Nicholai is forced to release the pressure on Christian's windpipe. But --

He sets his gaze on Kira.

KIRA
(through coughs)
CHRISTIAN, RUN!

She tries desperately to make a break for it as well.

Nicholai pursues.

Foot by foot, she claws her way toward the room's exit.

Nicholai comes barreling after her, pulling himself toward her, with both hands.

He's closing in!

Kira passes the room's threshold, but she's only about a foot into the next node when --

Nicholai grabs hold of her ankle. In a matter of milliseconds he yanks his way up her body.

Rearing up like a cobra, he raises the screwdriver again and --

WHAM!

Nicholai is sent FLYING BACK into the module AS THE BUTT OF THE HEAVY METAL DRILL IS BLASTED INTO HIS FACE LIKE A SLEDGEHAMMER!

Disheveled looks from all around the room turn toward --

GORDON
(to Nicholai)
I owed you that one, comrade.

KIRA
Gordon!

GORDON
Hey, Williams.

Gordon notices someone's missing.

GORDON (CONT'D)
...Where's Weronika?

Kira doesn't know how to answer that, but the look she gives him says it all.

Gordon swallows hard, suppressing the heartbreak as much as he can.

GORDON (CONT'D)
...I wasn't here...

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE MODULE, NICHOLAI BEGINS TO RECOVER.

Gordon takes notice. And --

Sorrow turns to anger as he looks up. Gordon's ready for a fight.

GORDON (CONT'D)
(to Kira)
Get out of here.

Both recovering, ALEXEY -- helps Christian up and out of the room.

KIRA
We can't leave you.

GORDON
I told you already. Guy's a teddy bear. How bad can he be?

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ROOM --

Nicholai turns a bloodstained face toward his fellow astronauts.

He SPITS OUT A TOOTH, allowing it to float off into the air above him. A trail of blood follows it like a tiny red comet tail.

GORDON -- sighs.

He looks to Kira with a half-smile, then --

GORDON (CONT'D)
Don't you have some work to finish or something?

With that, **Gordon DROPS THE HATCH DOOR** between them!

He pulls the lever on his side, pressure locking it, and sealing himself in the module with Nicholai.

Kira bangs on the glass in protest, but it's too late.

With a nod, Gordon turns to face Nicholai.

THROUGH THE WINDOW -- Kira watches, helpless, until Christian and Alexey pull her away, leaving Gordon truly on his own.

Nicholai white-knuckles the screwdriver.

Gordon REVS the drill.

INT. ISS - OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR - SAME

KIRA
We can't leave him.

CHRISTIAN
We don't have a choice!

Kira thinks -- fishing for something, anything. Then --

KIRA
Are there more pistol grip tools
onboard?!

CHRISTIAN
What? Yes, of course.

KIRA
Show me!

Christian, Kira, and Alexey barrel away from the door.

INT. PERMANENT MULTIPURPOSE MODULE - SAME

GORDON
(to Nicholai)
'Bout time we touched gloves, huh?

Nicholai smiles a SHATTERED TOOTH smile. *Ever see videos of a great white shark tearing into a sea lion? Yeah, it's a bit like that.*

NICHOLAI PUSHES OFF THE FAR WALL, LAUNCHING HIMSELF TOWARD GORDON.

Gordon closes the distance, SWINGING the butt of his drill in the process and KNOCKING Nicholai's screwdriver out of his hand!

It spins away into the air. But --

Nicholai grabs hold of Gordon's collar. He SLAMS his forehead into his opponent's face, knocking him back. In the process --

WE REORIENT OURSELVES -- THE WALL BECOMES THE FLOOR.

Nicholai pushes Gordon against the nearest wall, pinning the drill.

INT. TOOL CHAMBER - SAME

Christian, Alexey, and Kira come tumbling into a chamber filled with various tools.

Kira grabs one of several drills identical to Gordon's.

She fits the end with a socket bolt and makes her way back out of the room.

Christian follows suit, as fast as physically possible.

Alexey is left alone in the room.

He stares at the last drill-tool for a long beat. **To pick it up means physically acting against his own brother.**

His jaw tightens as he struggles with the decision.

INT. PERMANENT MULTIPURPOSE MODULE - SAME

With his free arm, Gordon manages to throw two quick UPPERCUTS to Nicholai's chin, forcing him back.

Gordon uses all his strength to attempt a sloppy hip toss.

Nicholai grabs hold of a grip bar above him.

WE REORIENT -- THE CEILING BECOMES THE FLOOR.

Gordon revs the drill and thrusts it towards Nicholai, but --

The Russian catches the tool by the hilt. He ROLLS, taking Gordon with him.

WE REORIENT -- FLOOR BECOMES WALL.

Gordon is pinned.

His hand is still wrapped around the spinning drill as Nicholai forces the tool's deadly tip toward Gordon.

INT. ISS - OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR - SAME

Kira and Christian set about removing bolts from the outside of the door.

They can't open it, but they CAN remove the door entirely.

INT. PERMANENT MULTIPURPOSE MODULE - SAME

Gordon fights, but Nicholai is winning. The tip of the drill slowly begins to turn away from Nicholai and toward Gordon's abdomen.

This is like watching the most high stakes arm wrestling match ever.

NICHOLAI

This isn't personal, comrade...

INT. ISS - OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR - SAME

Two thirds of the bolts lay in scattered heaps around the group's feet like discarded bullet shells.

They continue to work on the door, but precious seconds are ticking away fast!

It's clear, they're not working quickly enough. Not until --

Alexey moves into view, a drill of his own in hand as he joins the effort!

INT. PERMANENT MULTIPURPOSE MODULE - SAME

Gordon continues to struggle, but then --

SQUELCH...

The WHIRRING sound of the drill takes on more of a WET quality...

The color rushes out of Gordon's face. His eyes widen, as --

The oozing red form of his weightless blood floats upward from his abdomen.

NICHOLAI

I *am* sorry for this...

Gordon has just lost this fight, but then --

Something catches his eye.

With his free hand Gordon reaches out, SNATCHING THE SCREWDRIVER OUT OF THE AIR AS IT FLOATS BY!

GORDON

Me too...

SHUNK!

HE DRIVES IT ALL THE WAY THROUGH NICHOLAI'S NECK, UNTIL IT IS STOPPED BY THE HILT! The blood-soaked tip sticks two inches out the opposite side of the Russian man's thick neck.

The men hold each other's gaze, each watching the other die.

Nicholai forces a pained, choking, smile. Blood trickles in upward droplets from his mouth.

Gordon lets out a weak scoff at his opponent's reaction.

As their bodies fall limp, they drift off the wall. Just as --

The DOOR FALLS outward, allowing --

Kira, Christian, and Alexey to come crashing through. They're still holding the drill tools of their own, when the group lays eyes on --

GORDON AND NICHOLAI'S BODIES ARE INTERTWINED, FLOATING IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM.

GEYSERS OF BLOOD SPILL UPWARD FROM THEIR WOUNDS AND EXPAND ABOVE THEM LIKE DYE IN WATER.

The room is dead silent. An eerie stillness -- with the exception of the liquid -- has taken over.

In the most fucked up way possible, this is actually kind of a beautiful sight... The image of a blooming rose comes to mind.

The group's hearts sink, as they stare unblinking at their former colleagues.

Alexey swallows a tear at the sight. It's not an easy image for him to take in.

CHRISTIAN

...It's over...

No one responds. They don't have to.

After a long moment, Kira turns her attention to Alexey.

KIRA

(broken Russian)

Thank you.

He nods, softly.

FADE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- The group helps each other wrap up Gordon, Nicholai, and Weronika for future burial.

- Alexey places his forehead against his brother's one last time.

- The bodies each have a respective flag pinned to them. They are left together in one of the stowage areas. The spacesuits are removed to make room.

- Alexey takes an extra moment to look at Nicholai and Weronika before leaving.
- **They hang the TWO spacesuits, temporarily storing them in a small lab-like room we haven't seen before. They sit in the dark like oversized mannequins.**
- Alexey moves through the Russian Orbital Segment. It's empty and more soulless-seeming than it has ever been before. He runs his hand along the wall.
- The three sit in silence in Node One.
- Each member of the group has retired to their own sleep pod.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRA'S SLEEP POD - SAME

Kira lies half-deep in a sleeping bag that's been Velcroed to the wall. Once again, music is pumped directly from her Walkman and into her skull.

She fiddles with the Rocket Ship keychain.

Her eyes trace **the strap** the tiny vessel has been fastened to. We recognize the material as **the same webbing used for the space walk tethers.**

Holding the end of the strap, Kira lets the toy drift upward. It looks like a retro Buck Rogers-style design, but in the weightlessness of the ISS it's actually given the illusion of a tiny spacecraft soaring through the air.

It's a melancholy moment. Then --

She hears something outside the pod. Movement.

She collapses her door, just enough to peek through. In doing so --

She catches sight of ALEXEY as he slowly moves through The Node.

His movement is cautious, as if he doesn't want to be noticed.

Kira furrows her brow.

Once Alexey has vanished from sight, she slides her door further open and slips out.

To prevent her ear-pods from floating away, she tucks them into the collar of her jumpsuit and then silently follows the same path that Alexey had moved in.

CUT TO:

INT. NODE THREE - MOMENTS LATER

Alexey drifts through the quiet space, unaware of his pursuer.

He disappears around a corner.

Beat.

Kira appears. She continues after him.

INT. ISS - MOMENTS LATER

Kira sees Alexey open a hatch and disappear into the adjacent room. *What the fuck is he up to?*

With extreme caution, Kira moves to the open hatch.

She does her best to press against the outer wall.

Holding tight to a grip-pole, she peeks around the corner and into --

INT. STOWAGE AREA B - SAME

Kira lays suspicious eyes on --

Alexey cradling Weronika's body...

Kira's face softens.

A single tear floats into the air above him. His chest heaves.

Her eyes move to Nicholai's body, where we notice an ALENKA chocolate bar has been tucked into his collar.

Kira speaks, making her presence known.

KIRA

I'm sorry...

Alexey's attention shoots toward her, flustered.

ALEXEY
(Russian)
What are you doing in here?

Kira shows her palms.

KIRA
I didn't mean to startle you!

Alexey stares at her blankly. *There's a massive language barrier between these two, but even through it, Kira can tell Alexey's heart is broken.*

Embarrassed, he gently places Weronika's body back next to Gordon's.

Her now-blueish face is exposed. She looks more asleep than she does deceased.

Alexey doesn't take his eyes off her. Not even when Kira moves behind him.

KIRA (CONT'D)
She seemed like a great person... I -
- I know I only knew her a little
bit, but... I dunno... She was kind
to me when I got here.

Alexey turns to look at Kira.

Beat. Then --

KIRA (CONT'D)
...You don't understand anything I'm
saying, do you?

He blinks, unsure how to respond.

Without knowing what else to do, **Kira wraps her arms around him in a hug.**

Alexey's body tightens with surprise.

KIRA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry...

Then, slowly, he allows himself to hug her back.

They hold the embrace for a long beat, before Kira lets herself pull away.

He stares at her, grateful. For this moment in time, they understand each other. No language required.

With a knowing nod, Kira leaves Alexey to be alone.
 Off Alexey as he returns his attention to Weronika's body.

INT. NODE TWO - MOMENTS LATER

An overtired Kira returns toward her sleep pod.

She takes a beat before reentering it. Then --

She REORIENTS herself, placing her body level with an adjacent sleep pod that was above her a moment ago.

She knocks.

Beat. No response.

KIRA
 ...Christian?

Knocks again.

Nothing.

Kira looks perplexed.

She moves to The Node's entryway, opposite the direction she had left Alexey in. She steps through the door and into --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kira turns a corner and --

NEARLY BUMPS DIRECTLY INTO CHRISTIAN!

Kira jumps, surprised.

CHRISTIAN
 Sorry! I wasn't trying to scare you.

KIRA
 Don't worry about it... What *is* that room back there? *Gordon never got the chance to finish his tour...*

CHRISTIAN
 Kibo Module. It's a small lab Japan sent up a little while back. I've never really used it for much, just roaming around to be honest. Feeling pretty restless after all this.

KIRA

I guess I can't blame you for that...

Christian looks at his watch.

CHRISTIAN

I think I'm gonna give the radio another shot. It's already been twenty-two hours since I set this thing. If I'm right about the EMP, then they should be back online soon. There's still time to get our message out and get off this thing. *God willing there's still a world left for us to go back to...*

KIRA

You think it's gonna be that different down there?

CHRISTIAN

I know you're new up here, but don't tell me you aren't ready to get the hell off this thing.

Kira considers for a moment, then --

She pulls the ear-pods of her Walkman out from where they've been tucked in her collar. After fitting them into Christian's ears, she presses play.

We hear Joan Jett's cover of **Crimson and Clover** emit from within them. Kira lets the song play for a moment before speaking --

KIRA

My ex made me this CD when we were in high school... I think now I listen to it more out of habit or muscle memory than anything else. *I don't really know...*

(beat)

But I do *know* I came up here for a reason, and I *know* I made a choice to put two-hundred-twenty miles of space between me and the people I cared about the most...

CHRISTIAN

(still listening to the music)

Great decision that ended up being...

KIRA

I mean, yeah if I could go back and do it again, I probably wouldn't do EVERYTHING the same...

(beat)

*But -- and I can't believe I'm saying this -- I don't really regret coming up here... After the last fucked up twenty-four hours, I sort of finally feel like -- **It's worth trying to find the people who I actually can trust.***

Christian thinks about the statement and then pops the headphones off.

CHRISTIAN

So, not a complete waste of your time then, Williams?

Kira BLINKS as a spell of DIZZINESS washes over her.

KIRA

Not a *COMPLETE* waste --

She stifles her reaction, but Christian takes notice anyway.

CHRISTIAN

...You okay?

KIRA

Just a little lightheaded I guess.

CHRISTIAN

We've been through a lot. I know this sounds impossible, but you should try to close your eyes for a bit. *No sense staying up just to worry.*

Kira nods again.

KIRA

I think I'll do that.

CHRISTIAN

Good luck.

With that, Christian mindlessly **closes the hatch door** behind him and moves past her, disappearing through the opposite end of The Node.

Kira watches him go.

Beat. She's just about to return to her sleep pod, when something catches her eye --

The words **KIBO MODULE** are printed across the door that Christian just closed. However, someone has added downward letters in thick sharpie marker that make the sign read --

N

O

D

E

KIBØ MODULE

IMMEDIATELY, she pulls back, surprised. *Evidently, Node Zero does exist, just not officially.*

Beat.

She stares at the door. Then --

Hastily, she pulls the lever, opening it. Kira steps into --

INT. NODE ZERO - CONTINUOUS

Her eyes race around the room in panicked confusion.

KIRA

No...

We meet her gaze to find --

Where there *had been* two perfectly intact spacesuits, ONLY ONE NOW REMAINS. BUT --

IT'S BEEN TORN TO SHREDS, SLICED APART WITH A BLADE OF SOME SORT, RENDERING IT COMPLETELY USELESS!

The other one is gone entirely.

Kira steps back, worried. Then --

Her hand rises to one of her eyes. She SEETHES in pain, fighting a nasty headache.

KIRA (CONT'D)

What the fuck...

Suddenly, something clicks in Kira's mind.

She pulls her hand away and cranes her ear listening to --

Nothing...

The LOW HUM that has accompanied the station since she arrived is completely gone!

Gordon's words echo in her skull, *but she repeats them for us to hear.*

KIRA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
*"When you don't hear the hum...
That's when you panic..."*

Kira takes off like a shot, RACING out of the room.

INT. NODE TWO - MOMENTS LATER

Kira leaps toward Christian's sleep pod, reorienting herself in the process.

She bangs on the collapsible door.

KIRA
CHRISTIAN! CHRISTIAN, GET OUT HERE
NOW!

No response.

Kira pries the door open. Looking in to find --

THE MISSING SPACESUIT has been tucked safely into the sleep pod.

Kira looks at her own horrified reflection in the helmet's visor. Then --

KIRA (CONT'D)
(warning)
Alexey!

Now fully panicked, she races to the doorway toward the next Node.

INT. NODE ONE - MOMENTS LATER

Kira comes BLASTING into the room. Immediately laying eyes on --

CHRISTIAN AND ALEXEY are both present. They stare at her, blissfully unaware of her alarm.

Alexey fiddles with the radio.

Christian is in the process of making a sandwich.

Kira clocks the **SHARP KNIFE** in his hand, currently being used to spread mustard on a tortilla.

CHRISTIAN
...Everything okay?

She looks from him to Alexey and then back.

KIRA
...Just a headache.

With a shrug, Christian turns his back on her. His attention returns to working on his sandwich.

Kira moves to Alexey.

She places herself in front of him, making her presence known without making a sound.

Alexey looks up at her. She holds his eye contact.

Ensuring that Christian's attention is not on them, she places a finger to her lips in a silent "shhh" gesture.

Alexey's eyebrows move closer to each other, perplexed.

ACROSS THE ROOM -- Christian speaks without looking up from his task.

CHRISTIAN
I've been thinking... What's happened up here is nothing short of tragic, don't get me wrong... But in a roundabout way, you could look at things and say we complied with the orders we were given. The ISS is pretty much under American control.

ON KIRA AND ALEXEY --

Kira responds to Christian without looking away from Alexey.

KIRA
What's your point?

Kira pulls her earlobe and then points upward in a desperate effort to alert him of the missing life support.

Alexey stares at her blankly.

ACROSS THE ROOM --

Christian *CLAPS* the knife down on the prep table, Velcroing it in place. The sound causes Kira's body to tighten with worry.

CHRISTIAN

I just think whoever is still alive -
- *I.E. us* -- stand to gain something
from all this... *Last survivors, of
a mission for the good of the
country -- who make it back home
with mere seconds on the clock?*
We're heroes... I don't know what
your plan was for after the ISS, but
the sky's the limit now... Just a
little silver lining I guess...

ON KIRA AND ALEXEY --

That resonates with Kira. A matter of hours ago that would have been music to her ears. But a lot has happened since she arrived.

She shakes off the allure of the statement.

Growing increasingly desperate, she jerks her head toward Christian, who is miraculously unaware of their failing game of charades.

FINALLY, a look of understanding seems to cross Alexey's face.

He rises up, and turns toward Christian. *Thank God!*

Alexey moves toward him.

Christian takes notice of the approaching Russian.

Alexey is two or three feet away now.

Christian *WRAPS HIS FINGERS AROUND THE KNIFE* once again!

In anticipation, Kira takes something like a half step toward the men. Then --

Alexey reaches up and --

He turns on the TV...

Christian and Kira freeze in place.

Alexey's eyes hover on the screen, until the words *NO SIGNAL* appear in front of him.

He turns back toward Kira and shrugs, having completely misinterpreted her message.

FUCK!

Relieved, Christian SLICES his sandwich in half, covering for picking up the knife in the first place. The sound it makes is a violent one.

Alexey returns his attention to the radio.

Kira rubs her eyes. The headache is getting worse and thinking desperately isn't helping it. Then --

New plan.

KIRA
(calling over)
Christian?

He looks over.

KIRA (CONT'D)
Whatcha making over there? Looks good.

CHRISTIAN
Ham sandwich... Can't say I have much of an appetite, but I realized we haven't eaten in about a full day... I was just about to take it to bed.

KIRA
Looks good.

Christian looks at the sandwich, then back to her.

CHRISTIAN
...Do you want one?

Kira tries extra hard to hide any unwanted inflection in her voice, as she says --

KIRA
I can make it myself.

Her success in this effort is marginal at best...

Suspicion begins to brew in Christian, but he steps aside to make room for her. Even in doing so, he is careful to ensure that he is the closest to THE KNIFE.

Kira crosses the room. Sifting through the net-trap cabinets until she finds the mustard jar.

She's careful not to look back at Alexey. But --

Christian's eyes have begun to wander back and forth between them. While they're set on Alexey --

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Kira CLAPS the jar against the prep table. Three perfectly syncopated beats. **Just like when she was onboard the Soyuz.**

Alexey doesn't look up from the radio, but his eyes laser-focus, taking notice.

It's possible he could be misinterpreting her message again. But we don't get that impression.

Christian looks at Kira.

KIRA (CONT'D)
(covering)
Lid was stuck...

She unscrews the cap.

Her eyes move from the jar to the KNIFE next to Christian.

Here comes the Hail Mary...

Kira holds out her palm.

KIRA (CONT'D)
Do you mind?

Alexey watches them.

Christian's hand is already leaning on the prep table. It doesn't move.

His suspicion of her game is skyrocketing, but he's not ready to blow his cover.

CHRISTIAN
...There are disposable butterknives
in that cabinet.

He directs her attention toward a cabinet on his other side -- clearly farther than the knife he's been using.

Kira leaves her palm in the air. *She's not exactly hiding her motives anymore.*

KIRA
(deadpan)
That one's fine.

They stare at each other.

Alexey's eyes rush back and forth between them.

Long, long, long beat. Then --

Christian breaks into a nervous laugh, maintaining his cover.

CHRISTIAN
Sorry. My head's all over the place.

He picks up the knife, blade first, and moves to hand it to her.

Just before he gives it up --

He pauses.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
Um. Alexey?

Alexey perks up. So does Kira, unsure what he's getting at. Then --

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
(**Russian**)
Would you mind giving Doctor Williams and I a moment in private? There's something she feels she needs to tell me.

He smiles.

This fucker has been able to speak perfect Russian this entire time!

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
(Russian)
No offense.

Confused, Alexey looks from Christian to Kira.

She gives him a nod that, to her, probably means - *"You do understand what's happening, right?"* But, to him, more likely means -- *"What Christian's saying is all true."*

Beat. Then --

ALEXEY TURNS HIS BACK on them and begins to move toward the room's exit.

NO!

Christian flips the knife, placing its hilt in his palm.

He looks to Kira as Alexey moves away behind him.

With an over-satisfied shit-eating smirk, Christian takes a bite of his sandwich. All the while keeping eye contact with Kira.

She thinks. Her mind races, grasping for something. Anything. Then --

KIRA
(calling out in broken
Russian)
***"The important thing is that we
stick together..."***

Alexey pauses and then turns back.

Christian takes notice. He looks nervous.

CHRISTIAN
(Russian)
Alexey. A moment, please.

Alexey looks to Kira, now understanding.

He moves back toward them.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
(worried)
Alexey!

KIRA TAKES HER OPPORTUNITY TO RUSH CHRISTIAN!

She grabs hold of his wrist, trying to control the direction of the blade, but he doesn't let go.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
NO!

Alexey closes in, just as --

Christian manages to shake Kira off, freeing the knife.

Alexey reaches for it, but --

CHRISTIAN LASHES OUT, slashing at Alexey with the blade, slicing through his jumpsuit and into the skin below! The last standing Russian recoils!

Taking his opportunity, Christian turns the blade on Kira!

KIRA
Christian!

He drops the blade down on her like a guillotine, but --

Kira misses the tip... *technically*. The knife catches the rocket ship keychain, slicing the tether its bound to, allowing --

Christian frees the knife! Wild-eyed, he cocks his arm back again, and --

CHRISTIAN STABS TOWARD HER!

SHUNK!

Kira's eyes widen.

Christian looks equal parts surprised and nervous.

An all-too-familiar red liquid floats up between them.

Finally we see where the blade has landed, and reveal --

IT'S BEEN JAMMED HILT-DEEP THROUGH ALEXEY'S PALM. He managed to get his own limb between Christian and Kira, just in time to sacrifice his hand to save her.

Christian attempts to yank the blade back, but --

Using his free hand, Alexey grabs hold of Christian's wrist, holding him in place.

Christian yanks again. And again he fails to free the knife.

Worry creeps into his eyes.

CHRISTIAN
(Russian)
Let go! I froze the life support,
but I can fix it! I know how to
reverse the process!

Alexey looks at him, possibly considering the offer. Then --

ALEXEY
(Russian)
So do I.

JUST THEN --

SNAP!

In a flash -- Kira appears behind Christian and loops the broken, but sturdy strap of the rocket keychain around his neck!

Christian struggles, forgetting about the knife, but unable to free his hands from Alexey.

His face turns blue.

He looks like he wants to say something, but Kira and Alexey don't let go of their respective grips.

Christian stares into Alexey's eyes, until finally --

His body goes limp.

Kira lets go. So does Alexey.

Christian's body drifts out of view.

They look at each other in disbelief of what's become of them.

After a long beat.

Kira finally sighs with relief. An involuntary half-SMILE appears as she does so.

Alexey does his best to reciprocate the reaction.

MONTAGE

- Kira wraps Alexey's hand in a sturdy bandage.

- She helps him as he carefully works on fixing the life support.

- They hug as the LOW CONFIRMING HUM and subsequent breeze return to the station.

- Together they move Christian's body. Instead of placing him with the others, they leave him in the airlock. Alexey places a notebook, a hard drive, and several RED, LABELED VIALS on Christian's chest.

- Kira takes Christian's watch, noting its timer is down to **fifty-six minutes** -- less than an hour before it will be too late to call for help.

- Before they close the airlock's internal door, Kira doubles back and places her Walkman with the other items in Alexey's pile before exiting.

- Outside the ISS -- a hatch opens. Christian's body is sucked out into space. We watch his skin instantly freeze as he drifts by us. The comparatively icy Walkman floats past his frozen face...

INT. NODE ONE - LATER

Alexey and Kira find themselves in Node One once again.

It's just the two of them now. No activities left to occupy their minds.

They rest in silence for a long beat, until --

Alexey moves back toward the small lab where Kira's cell samples amazingly remain where they were left at the beginning of our story. He peers through, considering something. Then --

Kira watches as he looks up, surprised.

KIRA
...What is it?

With a smirk he steps back, allowing her to see. Tentatively, Kira takes a peek for herself.

MIRCROSCOPE POV -- MIRACULOUSLY, the tissue cells have begun to bind to one another, with more life than we've seen from them! This is what they're supposed to be doing.

Kira steps back, stunned.

KIRA (CONT'D)
(half to herself)
They just needed some time...

She looks to Alexey, and --

She laughs. Half with joy, half with disbelief.

Alexey smiles, sharing the moment with her, until --

WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP!

Alexey and Kira snap their attention toward **the radio receiver on the American side of The Node.**

A blue confirmation light BLINKS in unison with the sound.

KIRA (CONT'D)
The radio's back online...

The statement needs to be said out loud. No matter how pointless it may be.

INTERCUT -- we see the familiar monitor in the Russian Orbital Segment that Kira had used to record her message earlier. **Now instead of the PENDING message, it reads "SENT!"** For most intents and purposes... Help is on the way!

The last two astronauts exchange a glance. Half stunned to hear the sound of the radio at all. Half unsure what to do about it. Then --

CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG --

Their heads move toward the other side of The Node, where --

A call comes in on the Russian radio. In perfect contrast, a red light flashes on that side.

The silence of the room has given way to a GRATING cacophony of ringing and siren lights.

Both astronauts have a chance to answer the incoming call from their respective governments. Both of them probably should... And yet --

Kira lifts her hand and slowly places it over Alexey's.

The gesture is friendly in nature rather than romantic, but in this moment it means more to them than anything else in the world... *or even two-hundred-fifty-four miles above it.*

After a moment, Alexey curls his fingers around her hand, reciprocating the embrace.

Neither moves to either radio.

Without a word between them, these two understand what choice they're making.

The red and blue lights continue to blaze.

The calls continue to ring on both sides of The Node, until finally, we --

SMASH CUT TO
BLACK.

THE END.