

Space Oddity

By

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INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

An old slide projector HUMS as it throws an image of a red planet across a wall.

ALEX (V.O.)
This is Mars.

The projector WHIRS, then CLICKS: small, futuristic white dots on the planet's surface.

ALEX (V.O.)
This will be the first colony on
Mars.

CLICK. A shuttle.

ALEX (V.O.)
For 210 days, I will travel there
in this.

CLICK. The white dots are pods, connected by hallways.

ALEX (V.O.)
Then this will be my home.

QUICK CLICKS: a compact bedroom, a greenhouse, a lab, a rec room. A face in a space suit, walking the foreign terrain. Two hands joined in matrimony. A flag planted on a hill.

ALEX (V.O.)
This is where I'll sleep. This is
where I'll eat. Work. Play.
Explore. Get sick. Get better.
Marry. Pioneer. And die.

BACK ON: Mars. Desolate, alien Mars.

ALEX (V.O.)
Mars is where I'll die.

A long, dramatic pause as ALEXANDER MCALLISTER (27) looks out over his audience.

Handsome, with an intelligent face and an air of awkward endearment he would strongly dispute, he wears a t-shirt with a CIRCULAR RED LOGO, not unlike NASA's.

DIMITRI (O.S.)
This is for children?

His audience is DIMITRI (30), a Russian with brooding features that are at a constant clash with an uncharacteristically cheery personality.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Yes.

DIMITRI

And you must end on dying?

ALEX

That is how it ends.

DIMITRI

But do you really want to bring
that up to a room of first graders?

ALEX

Second graders...

DIMITRI

Maybe you should talk more of space
adventures?

ALEX

Space adventures?

DIMITRI

Discovering aliens, or racing
rovers. Oh, oh, oh - playing
basketball!

ALEX

You're thinking of Space Jam.

DIMITRI

Oh. Yes. I do not think they would
realize this, though.

ALEX

That stuff isn't real, Dimitri.

DIMITRI

Well this is not yet real, either.

ALEX

It will be. That's the difference.

DIMITRI

(considering)

Let me see it again-

He grabs the remote from Alex and CLICKS through slides.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Projectors and Space Jam...what a
time to be alive.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
(re: slides)
Some are from my old astronomy set.
I thought it'd be kind of cool...

DIMITRI
Is that why Pluto's still a planet?

Alex looks at the projection. The former planet looks back.

ALEX
Oh...maybe I can scratch it out.

Dimitri watches as Alex attempts to tamper with the slide.

DIMITRI
Use a laptop.

ALEX
(having destroyed the slide)
Fine.

DIMITRI
And finish with living. This is
where I live, the end.

ALEX
Alright.
(beat)
They released Space Jam in Russia?

OVER CREDITS:

EXT. VERMONT - DAWN

Mars, a tiny dot in the night sky, disappears behind
sunlight as DAY BREAKS over an enormous field of flowers.

A figure lies among them. UP CLOSE we see it's Alex, doing
push ups, fog swirling around his motion. We HEAR him
breathing. We SEE his focus. This is a man on a mission.

And then he's off, RUNNING down a long driveway, watched
from the retreating farmhouse by his bemused PARENTS.

EXT. VERMONT - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

He runs through meadows, past hay barrels and farm animals.
A dark cloud follows him, but it never gives way to rain.

He races himself up a hill, framed by staggering mountain
ranges, running towards the sights and sounds of life in-

EXT. BARTLET - TOWN SQUARE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

-Bartlet, a small town with a bustling main street and town square housing too many STATUES of long lost pioneers.

He stops by ETHAN ALLEN, MILITIA LEADER, 1738-1789, leaning against his bronze coattails as he catches his breath.

EVAN (O.S.)
We have a perimeter breach. This is
not a drill.

JACK (O.S.)
Put your weapons down and your
hands up. I said weapons down!

LOUIS (O.S.)
Weapons down, hands up!

Three EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS stand on the balcony above the corner store, head to toe in army camouflage and pointing menacing POTATO GUNS at him. Several POTATOES roll round their feet.

ALEX
(hands up in surrender)
I'm a civilian.

EVAN steps forward. He talks like he's seen a whole lot of Brad Pitt movies a kid shouldn't have seen.

EVAN
State your name.

ALEX
Alexander McAllister.

EVAN
Your purpose?

ALEX
Supply pick up.

Evan eyes him. Checks with his team. A tense beat.

EVAN
Denied.

And they unleash a HAIL of potato pellets. Alex ducks and covers himself as they RAIN down on him.

ALEX
Evan!

(CONTINUED)

A stray PLONKS onto a passing WOMAN'S head. She touches her hair, pulls it out and turns.

This is DAISY TAYLOR (27), a tangle of dark hair and inquisitive eyes, the perfect match for the personality churning beneath.

The boys DUCK under the safety of the white railing, hidden. No such luck for Alex.

DAISY
People usually just tap me on the shoulder.

Alex looks to the balcony. Nothing. He's on his own.

ALEX
Well...you've got to stand out.

DAISY
Does it ever work?

ALEX
Does what?

DAISY
Throwing potato at passing strangers?

ALEX
It's...hit or miss...

Beat. And then she laughs. He's quite proud of himself.

DAISY
Oh, you deserve this.

She flicks it at him before turning. He notices another pellet caught in her hair.

ALEX
Wait - there's another one.

She shakes her head but it remains lodged. He tentatively moves closer and pulls it out. From here, he can see freckles, the hazel in her eyes, a scar...

DAISY
Thanks.

She pulls away, bringing him back to reality.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Righting your wrongs. How noble.

ALEX
(losing his nerve)
I mean...you know there are kids up
there, right?

DAISY
(a glance to the balcony)
Are there? I've only ever seen
highly trained military operatives.

She grins and walks off. The boys emerge from their hiding.

EVAN
Smooth.

Grimacing, Alex throws the pellet back up at them.

ALEX
Thanks Evan.

As he slings his fake gun over his shoulder and looks off
into the distance:

EVAN
That's Commander Marshburn to you,
son.

INT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex enters, still holding the pellet. Evan's mother LINDA
(40's) is perched behind the counter, eyes glued to a KINDLE
which plays a constant stream of the darkest - though
sleekest - Scandinavian crime dramas.

We hear Swedish DIALOGUE. Intense MUSIC. FOOTSTEPS. Blood
SPLATTERING over minimalist furniture.

ALEX
Hey-

She jumps.

LINDA
Sorry. Good bit. Hi Alex.

And her eyes are right back on the Kindle as Alex pays for a
newspaper.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Think there's been another raid on
the potatoes.

He sets the pellet down within her line of sight.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

JANE and JEFF MCALLISTER (60's) eat breakfast round the table of a immaculately clean house, joined by daughter LIZ (30), a high strung PR Executive in a serious and committed relationship with her phone.

Jeff reads the paper. Jane looks at her spoon and, dissatisfied, rubs at the sole blemish on it. In the reflection, she catches her daughter TYPING furiously.

JANE

Honey, it's not going to kill you
if you look away for two minutes.

LIZ

It won't. People will.

Alex enters, sweaty. He throws Jeff the newest edition.

ALEX

(to Liz)

Good, you came.

LIZ

Whatever I can do to fulfill your
unreasonable demands.

She continues TAPPING on her phone. Alex pours cereal.

ALEX

It was a request.

LIZ

Mom made it a demand.

JANE

No, I didn't.

A look between mother and daughter: you sure as hell did.

ALEX

Well, I'm forever grateful that you
made the impossible journey from
the city-

(CONTINUED)

JANE
Alexander.

LIZ
(still on her phone)
It's OK mom, I didn't hear him.

ALEX
Do you need me to text it to you?

LIZ
Would that mean I can leave?

JANE
(warning tone)
Elizabeth...

LIZ
(mimicking her)
Mom...

ALEX
Can I start?

JANE
Yes, yes, sorry. Shh, Elizabeth.

All eyes on him, Alex sits down. Clears his throat.

ALEX
So I asked you here for a reason.

LIZ
You need a lift.

ALEX
(ignoring her)
I'm not returning to engineering.

LIZ
What. Why?
(beat)
God, please don't be a food truck.

ALEX
I got through to the next round.

Jane and Jeff share a nervous look.

JANE
Wow, honey...

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
Next round of what?

ALEX
The Mission Mars Space Program.

LIZ
What the hell is that?

ALEX
I'm going to Mars.

LIZ
(playing along)
Okay.

ALEX
It's a one way journey so I wanted
to tell you all as soon as I knew
for sure.

Now Liz is concerned, glancing over at her guilty-looking
parents.

LIZ
I don't understand. Are we joking-

ALEX
I'm going to Mars.

LIZ
Like with NASA?

ALEX
(scoffing)
NASA's schedule is thirty years
out. We're doing it in ten.

LIZ
I still don't...what...

ALEX
I'm going to be training soon,
mostly in isolation, so I thought
we should all spend some time
together before that happens.

Liz looks around the room. Looks back at him. His sincerity.

LIZ
You really believe this?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

It's not a belief, it's a reality-

Liz isn't listening, she's glaring at her mother.

The home phone RINGS. Alex answers:

ALEX

Hello?

NEWS PRODUCER (O.S.)

Is this Alex McAllister?

He exits into the hallway.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ALEX

Yes, it is.

NEWS PRODUCER (O.S.)

I'm calling from NBC Local News 5.
We'd like to interview you for a
segment tonight.

ALEX

Uh...sure-

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LIZ

You knew about this?

JANE

Elizabeth...

LIZ

(accusingly)

Dad?

JEFF

I thought it was like that LARP-ing
thing people do. When they dress up
as knights and-

LIZ

Yes I know what it is, Jeff.

He shrugs and goes back to the sports pages. Alex returns:

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

They're going to interview me for the news! And the paper's writing a story. They want a photo of me as a kid - where do we keep the photos?

LIZ

Oh my god.

Jane pulls her daughter into the kitchen.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LIZ (CONT'D)

Mom, he's fucking lost it! And you've let him!

JANE

Shhh, he can hear.

LIZ

So? He probably thinks you're Santa Claus and I'm the god damn Pope!

JANE

This is the most he's done all year. He gets up early, he exercises, he works with your father - he goes *outside*. *Outside*, Liz! Remember how long it took him just to come out of his room?

ON LIZ: She does.

JANE (CONT'D)

So does it really matter why?

LIZ

Of *course* it matters. You are pandering to a lunatic!

JANE

He's your brother.

LIZ

So he's a lunatic with a sister!

JANE

We don't know this isn't real. They're a private company. They have means.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
To get to Mars?

Well when you put it like that...

LIZ (CONT'D)
Mom, do you have any idea how much this would even cost? The technology they'd need to have access to?

JANE
No, I don't, Elizabeth. *But he does.* And he's excited and happy.

LIZ
(exasperated)
Because he thinks he's moving to another planet.

JANE
Well, maybe he is.
(off her glare)
In any case you need to leave him alone. Do you understand?

LIZ
No.

JANE
Then start to. Whatever gets him out of bed in the morning, we will support. We will *all* support him.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BATHROOM - DAY

Alex wipes the steam from the mirror.

ALEX
This is Alex McAllister, calling Mission Control. It's 9:50AM on Mars. The temperature is a balmy -40, wind speed a mild 5 knots and the radiation reading on track for an annual 300 millisieverts. Final numbers should be coming through shortly, but, all in all, a nice day to be on Mars. Over and out.

The steam snakes its way across the mirror again, cutting the "transmission."

PRELAP: The sound of a SKYPE CALL.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex's bedroom is decorated in space posters. It looks like a child's room. He runs through and answers:

CURTIS
What's up, cosmonaut?

CURTIS (40's) is middle aged, balding, crass, permanently on the Mission Mars forums and BEYOND EXCITED to leave Earth.

ALEX
Did you get through?

CURTIS
You better believe it. We're on our way, boy.

...he also uses a lot of lingo best left to teenagers.

ALEX
I wish it was tomorrow.

CURTIS
I'd be first in line. Mars, bro!

A SCREAM in the background. A child FLASHES PAST.

CURTIS (CONT'D)
Hey, HEY- daddy is on the phone, do you understand? He is on the phone.

ALEX
They must be excited.

CURTIS
They are LOVING IT. Dad's an astronaut!

CHILD
Dad's an astronaut!

Curtis laughs a big, BOOMING laugh.

CURTIS
That's right! But go outside. Now.

He leaves the frame. Some SQUEALS and a door SHUTTING.

ALEX
Any news on training sites yet?

(CONTINUED)

CURTIS

Nah. I'm still betting Antarctica.
Closest to the real thing.

Alex looks at a poster of the planet. To him, that red, rocky surface is nothing but an invitation.

ALEX

Can't wait.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY

Jeff and Dimitri work in the flower fields.

Jeff doesn't talk, but Dimitri has a little STEREO which he uses to SING ALONG to Eastern European ballads.

ALEX (O.S.)

Dimitri!

INT. MCALLISTER FARM - GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Alex is in the furthest greenhouse, which has been transformed into his makeshift lab.

A metal contraption lies on the ground. Dimitri bounds in:

DIMITRI

Finally, my time to shine.

ALEX

No, I just need you to hold that
end up there while I join these-

Slightly disappointed, Dimitri lifts it up.

DIMITRI

What does it do?

ALEX

Ideally, it will germinate seeds
using Martian soil.

DIMITRI

But Martian soil is not really
soil, yes?

ALEX

That's what I have to figure out.

He opens a control panel and fiddles with the wiring.

(CONTINUED)

DIMITRI
(thoughtful)
The winters in Russia are the same,
it is impossible to grow plants
but, somehow, life finds a way.

ALEX
That's from Jurassic Park.

DIMITRI
No it isn't.

ALEX
Yes it is.

DIMITRI
What is a Jurassic Park?

The machine WHIRS. SMOKE pours out. Alex SHUTS IT DOWN.

ALEX (CONT'D)
So that didn't work.
(rubbing his eyes)
And it's burning my face.

DIMITRI
It's good practice for space, no?
This is what it will be like when
you disintegrate because you
accidentally opened a window?

ON ALEX: Very funny.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeff and Jane are in their comfy chairs - Jane polishing the silverware because she must always be doing something - as Liz paces around the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR STEVE
Now to space news - boy, you don't
hear that often enough - where
privately funded company Mission
Mars has today announced it's final
candidates in the race to colonize
the planet.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - BARN - NIGHT

As the story continues, Alex is across the fields, climbing the debris of a very old, very unstable barn.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

NEWS ANCHOR LISA

That's right Steve. The incredibly ambitious, perhaps impossible, goal of the program is to get humans on Mars by 2023, decades ahead of NASA, Space X and Virgin Galactic. Mission Mars believes they can by making it a one way journey, thereby halving the supplies and materials needed for a round trip.

NEWS ANCHOR STEVE

You're saying there's no return?

NEWS ANCHOR LISA

Yes, Steve. Colonists will farewell their friends, their families and their lives here to participate.

NEWS ANCHOR STEVE

You'd sure hope you like your coworkers!

Lisa can't hide her smile.

LIZ

They're mocking him.

JANE

No they aren't.

INT. MCALLISTER FARM - BARN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Alex nearly falls as a chunk of timber crumbles, but grabs on to a piece of the roof and hoists himself up.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

NEWS ANCHOR LISA

Who would sign up for a one way ticket to a place so inhospitable that it's atmosphere and sub-zero temperatures would kill you in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEWS ANCHOR LISA (cont'd)
seconds? The answer, from this
state at least, is Alex McAllister,
who we spoke to earlier today.

A TAPED SEGMENT plays. Alex's face appears on the screen.
Liz GROANS.

ALEX ON TV
Hi Lisa, Steve.

NEWS ANCHOR LISA
Alex, will you really leave planet
Earth forever?

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - BARN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Alex lies back on the roof, looking up at the stars. His
future home, somewhere up there.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

ALEX ON TV
Without a second thought, Lisa. I'm
very excited.

NEWS ANCHOR LISA
But can you even grasp what you're
giving up? You're relinquishing
your whole life to this program.

ALEX ON TV
Well, you may see it as giving up a
life, but I see it as choosing a
new one.

LIZ
(to Jane)
He sounds like he's in a cult.

NEWS ANCHOR STEVE
Question, Alex - if you have kids
up there, are they martians?

ALEX ON TV
(considering)
Yeah, I guess they are.

The anchors erupt into laughter.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
Jesus Christ.

EXT. BARTLET - DAY

Alex is back in town. He looks at a MAN reading THE BARTLET GAZETTE. Double takes when he see's his own face on the front page.

Another NEWSPAPER ALEX floats past in the hand of a WOMAN.

He passes the corner store - slowing as he catches sight of even more newspapers - and is HIT by a potato pellet.

EVAN
Keep moving, citizen.

Reality reaffirmed, he carries on to a row of small offices.

INT. THOMPSON & TAYLOR INSURANCE - DAY

He concentrates deeply as he folds a post-it note into a small but mighty PAPER PLANE.

With the last wing assembled, he SHOOTS IT into the air, watching as it soars above him in blissful, perfect FLIGHT.

Then the door SWINGS OPEN and it CRASH LANDS into Daisy.

She looks at the plane, lifeless on the ground, and back up at him, trying to conceal a smile.

DAISY
Now I feel like this is just how
you greet people.

ALEX
(grimacing)
Only when I'm really trying to
impress them.

DAISY
Then I'm honored.

She shakes his hand as she sits behind her desk.

DAISY (CONT'D)
I'm Daisy, by the way. I'll be
helping you with your insurance.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
Where's Mike?

DAISY
He asked me to sit down with
you...I hope that's alright.

ALEX
(very pleased)
Yeah, absolutely, screw Mike.

DAISY
He's my Uncle.

ALEX
Oh. I didn't know he had nieces.

DAISY
Well, he does, it's me.
(amused)
So what can I do for you, Mr.
McAllister?

ALEX
Alex.

DAISY
Alex.

ALEX
I need to take out a life insurance
policy.

Daisy shuffles through forms.

DAISY
Is this for yourself?

ALEX
Yes. I'm going to Mars.

DAISY
I'm sorry?

He points at a copy of THE BARTLET GAZETTE on her desk.

ALEX
I'm a crew member on a mission to
Mars and as it's a little hazardous
I felt I should look into life
insurance.

Daisy takes a second, then LAUGHS. God, he likes her laugh.
It makes him want to laugh along and NOW HE IS.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
Ok, I'll just use our standard
space travel template.

ALEX
Great.

Then she stops. He stops. Her eyes widen.

DAISY
Are you not joking?

ALEX
No.

DAISY
You're going to Mars?

ALEX
Yes.

DAISY
How?

ALEX
The Mission Mars Space Program.

DAISY
I thought that was a scam.
(off his look)
Sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

ALEX
It's alright. You're not the first.

DAISY
Okay, so, wow. Mars.

ALEX
Mars.

DAISY
I actually don't have a template
for that.

She rustles around in the papers.

DAISY (CONT'D)
I guess you can fill out the
standard form to start.

She hands it over. Watches as he writes. Taking in his
earnestness. Eventually unable to help herself:

(CONTINUED)

DAISY (CONT'D)
Why are you going?

ALEX
No one ever asks me that.

DAISY
(curious)
...I am.

ALEX
Because it's Mars!

DAISY
And?

ALEX
You really want the "and"?
(off her nod)
Well, we know next to nothing about
the universe, and we aren't going
to figure it out from here. Just
like a hundred years ago we didn't
know anything about the Amazon, or
Antarctica. We had to explore. So
we get to Mars, maybe we could
start to find answers...it could be
the beginning of everything.

She sits back, playing with her pen. Intrigued.

DAISY
"The beginning of everything."
Sounds like a song.

ALEX
Thanks.

He cringes: why is he pleased?

Her eyes flicker to the clock. Quarter to five.

Right. He looks back down and continues scribbling. Until:

ALEX (CONT'D)
Did you just move here?

DAISY
What?

ALEX
It's a small town...

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
Yeah, I did.

ALEX
Why?

DAISY
I guess sometimes you wake up with the crippling desire to work in the insurance industry, and then you do everything possible to make that dream a reality.

ALEX
Oh.

He goes back to the paperwork, oblivious. Or confused.

DAISY
I wanted to be a swimmer.

He looks up.

ALEX
What happened?

DAISY
A lot of other people did too.

Beat.

ALEX
I'm a really bad swimmer.

DAISY
(laughing)
Well, good, then I at least beat you.

EXT. TAYLOR & THOMPSON INSURANCE - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

She walks him out, keys in hand.

DAISY
I might have some follow up questions if that's OK.

ALEX
That's fine.
(lingering)
What are you doing tonight?

(CONTINUED)

DAISY

Don't know anyone yet so just
hanging out with my pal Netflix.

ALEX

Are you two close?

DAISY

Not really. He keeps trying to make
me watch the Vanilla Ice Renovation
show. Need some new friends...

She looks at him. Pointedly. And he freaks out.

ALEX

Ok, well, have a swell night.

She raises an eyebrow: swell?

Cringing, he's down the steps and across the street before
she can blink again. MIKE TAYLOR (60's) joins her.

MIKE

Sweet kid. Known him since he was
yea high-

He reaches his hand low to the ground.

DAISY

Is he crazy?

MIKE

I never thought so before.
(thinking)
Look, obviously we can't insure him
if this is all nonsense, but we owe
it to him to look into it. I know
it's not part of the job
description but...

Far away now, Alex glances back, OUT OF BREATH from his
escape.

DAISY

(fascinated)

I'll do it. I don't mind.

Alex ducks and shields his face as he enters the zone of
potato pellets. Mike pats her on the back, relieved.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex sits in the dark, watching the earth roll by via the International Space Station STREAM on his enormous MONITOR.

Except he's not really watching. He's daydreaming. Reflections glide over his face. The Earth, going from night to day in seconds, and her somewhere on it.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DUSK

Alex and Dimitri are putting equipment away. Dimitri is singing, and following each verse with translations.

DIMITRI

She's saying when you say her name,
she will run through the flames to
you. Peace will prevail-

ALEX

There will be peace because you
said her name?

DIMITRI

And fire. Peace *and* fire.

Jane leads Daisy towards them.

DAISY (O.S.)

Wow, this is beautiful.

Alex hears and looks up. Panics, but there's nowhere to run.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Hi.

ALEX

Hi.

They both notice the other person beside them, grinning deliriously. Dimitri is quickly back to work and Jane-

JANE

-I think I hear your father-

-is gone in a flutter. Beat.

DAISY

So you live on a flower farm.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
Yeah...flowers everywhere.

DAISY
Any daisies?

ALEX
(scoffing)
No. Daisies are weeds.

DAISY
Thank you.

He has no idea how to save that moment.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Sorry to just show up...I had some follow up questions but you didn't leave a number.

ALEX
I don't have a phone. It's part of preparing for isolation.

DAISY
Oh, of course...isolation.

She looks around. Dimitri sings quietly nearby.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Well, we can underwrite a policy, but since it's such a unique situation I need some more details in order to create a plan.

ALEX
Ok. But I'm running late for something.

Dimitri GLARES at him.

DAISY
Sorry, I came at a bad time...

Dimitri GESTURES to her.

ALEX
It's a first aid course.
(beat)
Dimitri sometimes helps me out but-

Dimitri SPEEDS past:

(CONTINUED)

DIMITRI

So busy tonight. Plans. All of them. See you tomorrow.

ALEX

I guess seeing the training might answer some of your questions?

DAISY

You're learning first aid for *space*?

ALEX

Just locally at the moment. They'll put us through more rigorous stuff down the line.

(beat)

I have to go right now.

She looks at him. Such an odd proposal. Decides.

DAISY

Ok.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Bodies and dummies litter the floor. Daisy is lying on a mat in front of Alex.

The course is run by RENEE (60's), a retiree who has wholeheartedly embraced the idea of Alex training for Mars.

Alex looks MORTIFIED. We find out because it is CPR NIGHT.

RENEE

Your cousin has jumped in the pool, can't swim and is drowning. You must resuscitate her.

She turns to Alex.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Alex, Daisy here has taken her helmet off for too long.

ALEX

Ok, but in that case, she'd be dead instantly.

RENEE

Why?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Because there's very little oxygen.

RENEE

Well, say there is oxygen.

ALEX

But there isn't. She'd be dead.

RENEE

Then say she fell into a pool too.
But the pool is on Mars.
Resuscitate her. Begin!

The class performs CPR. Alex sighs.

DAISY

Am I drowning now? Ok-

She makes a choking sound.

ALEX

I'm sorry, I didn't realize we were
doing CPR tonight.

DAISY

Sure you didn't.

ALEX

No, I really didn't.

Daisy makes another choking sound. From across the room:

RENEE

Alex, she's *dying*! Save her! Save
her now!

With extreme reluctance, Alex kneels down. He places his
fingers on her neck to find her pulse. Then he moves over
her mouth. He gets close. His lips right above hers.

ALEX

And then I do the breathing part. I
get it. It makes sense.

He sits back up and tentatively places his hands on her
chest, beginning light compressions.

DAISY

You're not doing it right.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

What?

DAISY

You're pushing the wrong parts.
You're not making me breathe.

She takes his hands and moves them over her chest to the proper position. She leaves her hands on top of his.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Now push.

She pushes their hands. He's having trouble concentrating.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Here - let me show you.

She gets up and indicates for him to lie.

ALEX

Oh...no-

DAISY

Come on, I was a swimmer, remember?

With extreme hesitation, he complies. Her lips press his as she performs perfect CPR. It catches Renee's attention:

RENEE

Bravo Daisy, after surviving a near drowning she has pulled Alex from the water and now saved his life.

Daisy grins at the disgruntled astronaut before her.

DAISY

Sounds like you owe me.

EXT. BARTLET - NIGHT - LATER

They separate from the dispersing class.

ALEX

I'm sorry. I thought we'd be tying bandages or something.

DAISY

Hey, at least one useful thing came out of my swimming days.

They walk in silence for a little. Alex, as he is prone to do, looks up at the night sky. She follows his gaze.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY (CONT'D)
Were you always into space?

ALEX
When I was a kid.

DAISY
Then puberty happened?

ALEX
Something like that.

DAISY
So what did you do in between?

ALEX
Before Mars? I went to school.

DAISY
For what?

ALEX
Engineering and psychology...

DAISY
Psychology?

ALEX
Hard to believe?

She smiles.

DAISY
But you don't want to do anything
with them?

ALEX
I'm going to Mars with them.

DAISY
Right. Of course...have you had a
lot of other jobs?

ALEX
Job offers.

DAISY
You turned them down?

ALEX
Didn't think they'd fit.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
So you went a whole other
direction?

He hesitates, but nods.

DAISY (CONT'D)
I can't imagine. I was only ever
good at the one thing...and not
even good enough at that.

ALEX
No one's only good at one
thing...you're great at first aid.

DAISY
I guess.

ALEX
You just don't love it.

DAISY
No.

ALEX
So now try something else. One day
you'll find the thing you want to
do. It's an inevitability.

DAISY
(extremely skeptical)
Sure.

ALEX
It also helps to remember we're all
just on a giant rock hurtling
through space and our meaningless
existence could end at any moment.

She actually laughs at this nugget.

DAISY
Thank you. That will keep me warm
at night.

ALEX
Sorry.

DAISY
Have you tried teaching?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
You think I shouldn't.

DAISY
Actually, I think you'd be great.

ALEX
I hope you're right. I'm speaking
at the school next week.

DAISY
...can I come?

ALEX
Why?

DAISY
Maybe I want to learn more about my
meaningless existence.

He looks at her as her mouth twitches, hiding a smile.

ALEX
Oh. Yeah, then. You should.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex SPINS in his chair, on the phone to Curtis.

CURTIS
Bang her.

ALEX
I'm not banging anyone.

CURTIS
Bang her.

ALEX
No. It's not like that. She's just
doing my insurance.

CURTIS
A woman named Martha does my
insurance. Have you ever heard me
talk about her?

ALEX
No.

(CONTINUED)

CURTIS
Because Martha's a hoarder who
dresses like she died on the
Titanic. You need to grab these
opportunities when they fall into
your lap!

ALEX
It's not like that.

CURTIS
Make it like that!

Curtis plays a SUGGESTIVE SONG in the background.

ALEX
I'm going.

CURTIS
Listen.

ALEX
No, I'm going. Bye-

CURTIS
Bang her!

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Alex runs down a forest path shrouded by trees.

EXT. BARTLET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Then the town, breathing hard.

Potato pellets.

INT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Danish interrogation scenes. A newspaper.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. OLSEN (60's), town physician, sits across from Alex.

DR. OLSEN
They're sending you to Mars but
they only care about my medical
opinion?

(CONTINUED)

(off his nod)
I don't usually work for NASA.

ALEX
You're approved.

DR. OLSEN
(indicating the room)
How? I deal in flu shots and diaper
rash.

ALEX
You're qualified.

Dr. Olsen pushes a jar of LOLLIPOPS towards him.

DR. OLSEN
You need the kind of doctor who
doesn't have these on his desk.

ALEX
How do you know there aren't
lollipops at NASA?

DR. OLSEN
A wild guess.

ALEX
Please...

He looks over the forms headed with the MISSION MARS logo.

DR. OLSEN
It's a standard physical.

ALEX
Then it will be easy!

DR. OLSEN
(dumbfounded)
On the bench with you, then.

Alex moves to the bench.

DR. OLSEN (CONT'D)
(feeling his glands)
Still disease free?

ALEX
Yep.

(CONTINUED)

DR. OLSEN
(sticking a thermometer in his
mouth)
Alcohol or drug habits?

ALEX
No.

The thermometer BEEPS. He looks down at the forms.

DR. OLSEN
They don't even require a
tuberculosis X-ray? You have to get
that just to move countries...

ALEX
I'm sure they will somewhere down
the line.

DR. OLSEN
Hmm.

Now he's TAPPING for reflexes, swinging joints for movement.
While swaying an arm:

DR. OLSEN (CONT'D)
Your joints are fit for space
travel.

ALEX
Great.

DR. OLSEN
In ten years it might be a whole
other story.

ALEX
That's alright. I'm keeping fit.

He takes his blood pressure.

DR. OLSEN (CONT'D)
What about your mental health?

ALEX
It's fine.

DR. OLSEN
You don't get to decide that. How
are you feeling?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
Fantastic.

DR. OLSEN
Willing to see a psychologist to
confirm that?

ALEX
Nope.

DR. OLSEN
So you're asking me to sign off on
the psych evaluation as well?

ALEX
Yep.

Olsen sighs.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Can I have a lollipop?

INT. BARTLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Liz and Jane wait in the hallway.

LIZ
This is irresponsible. They're
children.

JANE
He's not telling them unicorns
exist, Lizzy.

Liz's phone BUZZES. The SCREECH of approaching footsteps.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(answering)
Liz McAllister.

Alex rounds the corner with a laptop, lollipop in mouth.

JANE
Just in time.

ALEX
It's alright, they can't give me
detention.

JANE
This is a good thing you're doing.

Ignoring *her*, his focus is on Liz:

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
Give me ten minutes...tell them I'm
in a meeting.

She spots Alex watching her.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I have to go. Distract. Bye.
(to her brother)
Ok, Alex, I have ten minutes.

ALEX
I heard.

LIZ
So, with our clients, we tell them
to stick to the story. Your story
is space. Not you in space, because
that's a hypothetical, but space.

ALEX
But I am going to space.

Jane discretely mimes hugging Alex - *supporting* Alex.

LIZ
Do you think you could just keep it
to what's real right now, though?

ALEX
Did you tell Miss Frizzle the same
thing?

JANE
Alex-

ALEX
(to Liz)
Are we paying you for this?

LIZ
You're a semi-public figure at the
moment and that means you have to
be careful with what you say.

ALEX
They're second graders...

LIZ
And second graders talk.
(off Jane's hugging motion)
Can you please just teach them
facts? And when you have a shuttle
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)
and a launch date you can come back
and talk about the mission.

Jane gives her a thumbs up. Alex surrenders his laptop.

ALEX
Yeah. Ok.

He looks back to the empty hallway. Liz follows his gaze.

LIZ
What are you looking at?

ALEX
Someone might come.

LIZ
That is how hallways work.

ALEX
I mean someone I invited.

She pulls the lollipop out of his mouth. He reaches into his pocket and produces one for her.

LIZ
Focus.

INT. BARTLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Alex stands in front of EYES. Rows and rows of EYES, all glued on him. Among them are the ARMY BOYS.

He's currently the only thing standing between these kids and home. And they know it.

ALEX
So I understand you've been
studying the solar system.

Silence. Alex looks longingly at his laptop in Liz's arms.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Which one's your favorite planet?

Blank faces. They want OUT OF THERE. Alex thinks.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Ok, how about this, everybody up-

INT. BARTLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Daisy rounds the corner, looking for him.

Hearing LAUGHTER, she looks in a window to see him arranging the kids in several circles.

INT. BARTLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As she slips in:

ALEX
Ready...go!

The kids TWIRL and SPIN and GIGGLE in their circles. Alex moves through them, adjusting as he goes.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Jack, you're the sun, got it? You stay still - everything orbits around you.

Jack nods. He moves to another child.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You're Mercury. It only takes you eighty seven days to orbit Jack so you're going to move quickly now. Yes, exactly. Venus, you rotate counter-clockwise. Like this.

He demonstrates. Venus follows. He repositions Evan.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Evan, you're Earth. You're our home. You spin a bit slower than Venus. Every time you come back to face Jack you've experienced a day, and every time you rotate all the way around Jack it's been a year.

The kids are eating it up.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Louie, you're the moon. There are lots of moons in the solar system but we'll just use ours today. So you circle around Evan as he circles around the sun.

The boys LAUGH as they try to keep track of their spinning.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)
You're Mars. You're where we will
live in the future.
(noting Liz's warning look)
And you orbit like this-

He demonstrates an elliptical orbit. Mars mimics it. A few
PARENTS are now huddled in the doorway.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Good! Now you four are the gas
giants. Jupiter. Saturn. Uranus.
Neptune. Some of you have rings
around you, like you Saturn. And
some of you are very cold, Uranus.
Neptune, it takes you 164 years to
orbit the sun. So you have to move
really slowly, alright?

Neptune slows his orbit.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Are you dizzy yet?

KIDS
(excited)
No!

ALEX
Good! Jupiter and Saturn, you have
metallic hydrogen layers that
conduct electricity.

On the kids: COOL.

ALEX (CONT'D)
And Saturn, you have 150 moons so
don't bump into them.

Saturn holds his arms tight against his body as he turns.

ALEX
You guys make up the solar system!
Want to go even bigger?

CLASS
Yes!

ALEX
The rest of you, then, can you
stand around our solar system?
You're the stars in the milky way.

They TWINKLE with their hands. The TEACHERS join in.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)
Very good! There are billions of
stars so imagine a lot more of you.

The room is awash with MOVEMENT and LAUGHTER.

Alex meets Daisy's eyes over the chaos. He shrugs. She twinkles her hands in support, smiling. Liz witnesses this, and studies Daisy with curiosity.

Alex crosses through the increasingly frenetic solar system.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(to the kids)
I'm an asteroid.
(to Daisy)
You made it.

DAISY
How could I miss the formation of
the universe?

ALEX
Actually this is how it is right
now, when it was formed it looked
completely different-

He stops himself.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Do you want to get a drink?

She smiles.

Mars STUMBLES into Earth. Alex looks back. A domino effect is underway.

ALEX (CONT'D)
In a minute, I mean. Give me a
minute. Have to save the world.

INT. O'REILLY'S - NIGHT

A New England dive bar. The Red Sox chase a ball across several TV screens. The patrons CHEER and BOO as their team inevitably lets them down again.

DAISY
You have a way with kids. I mean
it. They were spell bound.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Because space is interesting.

DAISY

It's not easy to understand,
though. But they got it. I got it.

ALEX

What didn't you get before?

DAISY

Don't be too judgmental here, but
I'd forgotten the difference
between the solar system and the
milky way.

ALEX

Oh, that's simple.

DAISY

Hey!

ALEX

Sorry...but I mean I could make
your head explode.

DAISY

(challenging)
Go on, then.

ALEX

Are you sure?

DAISY

I'm not that attached to it.

ALEX

Well, for instance, there are a 100
billion stars in the milky way and
maybe ten trillion galaxies in the
universe. Multiply that by a 100
billion and you have an extremely
rough, probably low estimate for
the number of stars.

DAISY

I can't do that math.

ALEX

100 octillion...it's a 1 with 29
zeros after it.

(beat)

We make the mistake of thinking the
universe is for us. But it's not.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY

Ok, new rule: every time you tell me how meaningless my existence is I'm going to need another drink.

ALEX

(signaling to the bartender)

Alright.

INT. O'REILLY'S - NIGHT - LATER

Alex has clearly been responsible for a few more rounds.

DAISY

Nah, I dated an asshole.

ALEX

What did he do?

DAISY

Crossfit.

Alex laughs. He's the most relaxed we've seen him.

DAISY (CONT'D)

What?

ALEX

Come on.

DAISY

Shut up.

ALEX

Is that why you're letting me talk about space? Because you've only heard about protein for two years?

DAISY

He didn't just talk about protein...he also liked talking about reps. It was...educational.

ALEX

Sounds like it.

DAISY

Anyway-

(a pointed look)

Before him there was Venti Bold, X-Files-

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
What was that one?

DAISY
He was into conspiracy theories.
God, I shouldn't tell you this.

ALEX
I don't know if you should tell
anyone this.
(off her mock anger)
What would I be?

This is forthcoming for him, and they both know it.

DAISY
The Martian.
(laughing)
Nah, that's too easy.

ALEX
Also not true scientifically-

DAISY
Shh, I can't take another drink.

ALEX
Ok, ok. It's not bad.

DAISY
Really?

ALEX
Beats the current one.

DAISY
Which is?

ALEX
Alexander the Great.
(beat)
We were named after historical
figures.

DAISY
No way.

ALEX
Christopher, Elizabeth and
Alexander.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY

The explorer and the queen?

(off his nod)

Wow. So you don't have much to live up to.

ALEX

He'd conquered half the world by the time he was thirty two.

DAISY

Still got a few years.

ALEX

Yeah.

DAISY

Plus he never got to Mars.

ALEX

It's not like they could even fathom that there were other planets out there, we can barely comprehend it now-

DAISY

And that's another drink.
Bartender!

EXT. BARTLET - NIGHT - LATER

The now drunk pair emerge from the bar.

It's RAINING. Daisy takes off in a run, YELLING back:

DAISY

You don't have to walk me home.
Rain's a game changer.

But he doesn't like the implication and follows her.

ALEX

I'm not scared of rain.

They RUN through the town:

DAISY

At least you won't have to worry about it on Mars!

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
Just the solar flares which cause
storms that last for hundreds-

DAISY
Bartender!

ALEX
He's not here!

They head down Main Street. Alex is trying to catch up to her but she's quite fast. And oblivious to his effort.

They hit suburbia. A few streets come and go before she skids to a halt under a semi-effective umbrella tree.

DAISY
This is me-

It's a driveway leading to a guest house.

ALEX
It's nice.

DAISY
Yeah. Well, have a *swell* night.

He LOCKS EYES with her. The gaze lasts that one extra time-bending second.

He leans forward and KISSES her.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The door CRASHES open.

They BUMP into a dresser as she PULLS OFF his shirt. She laughs.

ALEX
I like your laugh.

DAISY
Shhh.

They fall on the bed.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DAY

Alex opens his eyes. He's in an unfamiliar place and his head hurts. The clock reads 9:30AM.

He turns over to see Daisy asleep beside him. God, she's pretty. But-

This is not part of the plan.

He quietly gets out of bed, pulls his jeans over his MISSION MARS BOXER SHORTS and sneaks out.

EXT. BARTLET TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The army boys sport royal blue t-shirts and shorts today.

ALEX
Career change?

EVAN
We've been recruited.

ALEX
Where?

EVAN
It's classified.

INT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Linda glances up. Today she doesn't look back down. Slyly:

LINDA
Where are you coming from?

On screen, someone is being BLUDGEONED to death.

ALEX
Nowhere. Home.
(points at the screen)
Murder.

EXT. BARTLET TOWN SQUARE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Even the statues seem to be judging him today. He speeds up.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - DAY

Liz follows Jeff through the fields. An odd sight given her corporate look.

LIZ
There's something wrong with him.

JEFF
I know.

LIZ
I don't care what mom thinks,
ignoring it isn't good for him.
Have you even looked into this
company? They sound
convincing...but what if that's it?
What if it's a *scam*?

He thinks.

JEFF
I should show you something.

INT. MCALLISTER FARM - GREENHOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They inspect the seed germination machine.

LIZ
How long does he spend on this?

JEFF
Hours.

LIZ
Does it even do anything?
(off Jeff's shrug)
This is worse than I thought.

He exits. She pursues.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LIZ (CONT'D)
Dad, look at him. He has a training
schedule *to get to another planet*.
He's building machines when he
should be working. And he's
spending all his money on
merchandise, I swear to God if I
see that stupid logo one more time-

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (O.S.)

Sorry!

Alex is running down the stairs. He passes them heading for Dimitri in the fields.

But all they can see is that MISSION MARS logo stamped on his shirt. Liz FUMES.

JEFF

He went to Dr. Olsen last week.

LIZ

He did? For what?

JEFF

His "space physical."

LIZ

Then he already knows he's crazy!
We need to see him. He can help us!

JEFF

I don't know-

LIZ

Look, it may seem harmless now but this is how these things start and I don't want him to become one of those guys who sits in a Starbucks all day talking on an imaginary phone about FBI missions.

Jeff sighs, defeated.

JEFF

We can't tell your mother.

LIZ

I'll get the car.

She's STARTLED when she runs into Dimitri on the main path.

DIMITRI

The infamous Elizabeth! What are you doing here?

LIZ

Not today, Russia.

He leans down, plucks out a flower and hands it to her.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (CONT'D)
Thanks, that fixed everything.

She keeps walking...but she also keeps the flower.

INT. DR. OLSEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Olsen is trailed as he prepares his exam room.

DR. OLSEN
Doctor/patient confidentiality
means what it sounds like it means.

LIZ
But this is different. This is
Alex.

DR. OLSEN
A patient.

LIZ
An insane patient who needs help.

DR. OLSEN
He diagnoses himself sane and you
diagnose him insane - at the very
least we can have no doubt you two
are siblings.

Liz nudges her father.

JEFF
You've told me about him before.

DR. OLSEN
Yes, when he was a child!

Liz's phone BUZZES. She glances at it.

JEFF
Joe, I know it's breaking protocol-

DR. OLSEN
The law-

JEFF
But we are concerned.

DR. OLSEN
That doesn't mean I break the law.

Liz sits down in a chair and crosses her arms.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
I'm not going to leave.

Dr. Olsen turns with a SYRINGE in his hand.

DR. OLSEN
What if I break out one of these?
Are your immunizations up to date?

Liz bristles. The downside of having a small town, lifelong physician is that he knows your secrets.

DR. OLSEN (CONT'D)
Sometimes at night, I still hear
the screams from your measles shot.

She weighs her options, not taking her eyes off the needle.

LIZ
If you help...you can give me the
tetanus booster.

DR. OLSEN
(tempted)
I've been waiting ten years for
that.

She holds out her arm.

LIZ
Please.

Dr. Olsen looks at them. He sighs.

DR. OLSEN
He's not crazy - he's one of the
smartest people to ever come out of
this town. You know that.

LIZ
That's the problem, then? He's so
smart he doesn't know what to do?

DR. OLSEN
There is no problem. Maybe he has a
slight delusion, but once upon a
time you were convinced you were a
wizard.

LIZ
I was ten.

(CONTINUED)

DR. OLSEN

They don't always follow age guidelines.

LIZ

But this is suicide!

DR. OLSEN

It's only suicide if he goes through with it. So far he's just living out a fantasy. What's the difference between that and someone who plays video games all day?

Jeff looks to Liz: he has a point.

DR. OLSEN (CONT'D)

Do you know how many MENSA members are unemployed?

(off their silence)

More than you'd imagine. What you have is an exceptionally intelligent brother, Liz. And sometimes those kinds of people have the hardest time living. Sometimes they have the hardest time *coping*. Consider that this might be something he needs to do.

LIZ

We can't let him keep believing it's real.

DR. OLSEN

It *is* real to him.

LIZ

(hesitant)

What about the fact that it's space?

DR. OLSEN

What about it?

LIZ

You know when he was a kid he used to be obsessed with space.

(reluctantly)

They *both* were.

Jeff cringes. Olsen watches the reaction.

(CONTINUED)

DR. OLSEN

It likely plays a part. But say I brought him back in here. What would you have me say? That he's not going to Mars? Would he listen?

(off her silence)

We all have our distractions. You've looked at your phone ten times since you walked in.

Liz tries very, very hard not to look at her phone.

DR. OLSEN (CONT'D)

(preparing an injection)

Now sit still.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Alex collects a dummy as the class sets up. Returns to his spot to find Daisy standing there.

ALEX

(terrified)

Hi...

DAISY

I just want to preface that the girl you hung out with a few times doesn't need to talk about what happened, but the insurance agent who works for you does.

ALEX

Ok...

DAISY

So we got drunk.

ALEX

I remember.

DAISY

Things happened.

ALEX

I remember that less.

DAISY

It meant nothing.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
No. We were drunk.

DAISY
Which was your fault.

ALEX
Spoken like a true insurance agent.

RENEE
Take your places, life savers!

The class shuffles to the mats. Renee YELLS instructions.

ALEX
I'm sorry for sneaking out. I
didn't know what to do. I can't
have a relationship right now with
training and isolation coming up-

DAISY
-did you assume that's what I
wanted? Remember that whole
conversation about Crossfit?

ALEX
Sort of.

DAISY
It *just* ended. I don't want
anything to do with-

She makes a circle motion with her hands.

DAISY (CONT'D)
That.

RENEE
Miss Daisy, you are far too alive
right now. Assume the position of
my choking mother or leave it to
the dummy.

DAISY
So we're ok?

ALEX
Yep.

DAISY
What are we doing, then?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
The Heimlich maneuver.

DAISY
I mean you and I.

ALEX
What do you mean?

DAISY
I thought we could be friends.

ALEX
I didn't think you'd want to.

DAISY
Why? Because you're odd?

ON Alex: thank you.

ALEX
Because of last night. And because
I'm leaving the planet.

DAISY
I don't mind. I can help you train!
I'm actually great at that.

ALEX
Then...sure.

DAISY
Yeah? God, I was hoping you'd say
that - I'd already told Netflix I
wasn't interested anymore.

ALEX
How'd he take it?

DAISY
Recommended the Saw movies. They
take up the whole screen when you
line them up.

RENEE
Patients, begin choking-

HACKING SOUNDS fill the room.

RENEE (CONT'D)
Life savers...start your saving!

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
Go ahead then, save me.

ALEX
I wasn't paying attention.

DAISY
Can't. Breathe.

ALEX
You're not going to show me how to
do it?

DAISY
You're on your own. Don't kill me.

He puts his arms around her waist. Doesn't see her smile.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Alex does knee ups. Sets the timer on his watch and:

EXT. VERMONT - DAY

He runs. Shoes THUD on asphalt down a long road.

He breathes HEAVILY. Likely because another pair of shoes
THUD ahead.

It's Daisy. And he's struggling to keep up with her.

She stops at a light post, waiting for him.

DAISY
Come on!
(checking her watch)
You were two minutes and twelve
seconds quicker yesterday. Two and
thirty last week.

Huffing and puffing, he finally catches up:

ALEX
Just so you know, I completely
regret this.

He takes off again, trying his darndest to get a head start.

She smiles, knowing it won't last, turns and follows.

EXT. BARTLET - TOWN SQUARE - DAY - LATER

Post run, they're walking through town, Alex still panting.

DAISY
Oh my god, look-

Alex turns to see the three boys, on the balcony and in astronaut suits. Their career change. He's touched.

They're "walking on the moon" but stop and salute him with the utmost severity as he passes.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY

Alex leads Daisy through the flowers, showing her the farm.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jane and Liz watch from the windows.

LIZ
He's outside. With a girl.

JANE
That's his insurance agent.

LIZ
She's really going above the line
of duty...

Their eyes gleam with hope.

INT. MCALLISTER FARM - GREENHOUSE - DAY - LATER

Alex demonstrates his machine.

DIMITRI
We're calling it The Germinator.

ALEX
No we aren't.

DIMITRI
But we should.

DAISY
I think you should.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

That's the least important part.

DAISY

I don't know - people judge books by their covers.

ALEX

Anyway...this is how the world will work one day. Underground, self-sustaining farms. There's one in an old tube station in London already. I just need to be able to make it work-

DIMITRI

-on Mars.

ALEX

Yeah. The International Space Station got some seeds growing but Mars is another story. I have to account for the lack of atmosphere, the radiation, the gravity...

DAISY

This could go to NASA, Alex. I mean it. This could be your career.

ALEX

It's only a small bit.

DAISY

It's the survival bit!
(off his skepticism)
You could take it to the Vermont Space Consortium. They're run by NASA. You could get grants and funding and a team and everything!

Dimitri looks excited, Alex less than thrilled.

ALEX

Nah. Probably won't work anyway.

DAISY

Come on-

ALEX

(firm)

No. Thanks.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

They've all stayed on for dinner. Jane runs the room.

JANE
Dimitri, you get the potatoes.

DIMITRI
In Russia we call them kartofels.

Liz SCOFFS:

LIZ
Beautiful language.

DIMITRI
Yes, I forget about the glory of
the word potato.

JANE
Get the kartofels then. Liz,
Elizabeth, hello-

Liz looks up from her phone.

JANE (CONT'D)
Yes, you. Can you take the plates?

LIZ
In a sec.

DIMITRI
Come on, Liz, I'll help you with
the tarelkas.

He over-pronounces it, enjoying annoying her.

LIZ
Whatever, comrade.

Daisy and Alex watch them from the kitchen bar.

DAISY
Well, that's an inevitability.

ALEX
What?

DAISY
Those two.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
There's a better chance of Putin
opening a wildlife sanctuary.

DAISY
(shrugging)
He's pretty charming.

Something twinges in Alex.

ALEX
He said potato in another language.

DAISY
It was charming.

Beat.

ALEX
Patata.

DAISY
What?

ALEX
That's potato in Spanish.

Daisy turns to respond but-

JANE
Daisy, dear, if you could just
carry this plate out. Then please,
take a seat.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

She does. The others are already there, including Jeff.

Alex and Jane join them. They pass the food. Liz watches as
Daisy plates potatoes for Alex. Watches when she says:

DAISY
-Patata-

-to Alex, before laughing. Watches as Alex grumbles, then
laughs in spite of himself.

LIZ
So, Daisy, you seem normal.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
Relatively.

LIZ
How do you tolerate Alex?

JANE
Liz!

DAISY
He's not the worst.

ALEX
Thank you.

LIZ
You're not an investigative
reporter, are you?

Jane DROPS her cutlery. Jeff jumps.

JANE
(exasperated)
Are you?

LIZ
I read a feature on one of the
British applicants and they'd
revealed everything to this
reporter feigning friendship. I
mean, Daisy, you get it-

ALEX
Wow, thanks-

DAISY
No, wait, it's alright. I get it.
(to Liz)
I'm not a reporter.

LIZ
Thank you.

ALEX
And you're not a cop.

LIZ
I'm looking out for you.

ALEX
Don't.

(CONTINUED)

JANE

Elizabeth! Alexander! Stop!

They both lean back in their chairs, harumph-ing.

Daisy puts it on herself to break the silence:

DAISY

They really suit their names, Mrs. McAllister.

LIZ

No, we don't.

DAISY

You do! You rule a PR company and Alex is conquering space...it fits, doesn't it?

JANE

I certainly hope so - I spent my pregnancies buried in books.

Alex and Liz SIGH: they've heard this a thousand times.

JEFF

What she means to say is you were looking like a Genghis for a minute there, Alex.

JANE

Well, at the end of the day, the right names were given to the right people and I have no regrets.

DAISY

What about Christopher, then? Is he a big traveler?

The room falls into a swift and terrifying silence.

DAISY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, what did I...sorry-

LIZ

(matter of fact)

He was.

Nobody really knows what to do. Alex won't look at her.

Jane forces a smile, scrubbing at a small water mark on the table, and, unnaturally brightly:

(CONTINUED)

JANE
How do you like the green beans?

DAISY
They're great.

JANE
Good. Dimitri used a recipe he brought over from Russia.

LIZ
Mom, he put paprika on them. It's hardly revolutionary.

DIMITRI
Maybe it is. We've had quite a few.

LIZ
That's not what I meant.

As they continue to bicker, everything back to normal, Daisy looks at Alex. He's still looking at his plate.

EXT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT - LATER

Daisy waves goodbye from her car before driving off.

LIZ
Sorry about cornering her.
(off his skepticism)
Sort of sorry.
(continued skepticism)
She's nice. I like her.

ALEX
I heard that.

LIZ
Heard what?

ALEX
She's just a friend, Liz.

LIZ
Why?

ALEX
I can't form attachments when I have to prepare for training.

Liz tries to maintain calm despite her head exploding.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Why even be friends with her then?

ALEX

It's good practice for the mission.
She's different from most people
around here so makes a good stand
in for the other astronauts.
Relationship building will be half
the battle before launch.

Though she doesn't push it, she doesn't buy it for a second.

LIZ

Does she *know* she's not your
girlfriend?

ALEX

Yeah.

LIZ

Do *you*?

He pauses for a moment, then exits, leaving her baffled.

EXT. GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike's sorting the recycling. Daisy greets him as she walks
past. Then she stops. Walks again. Stops.

DAISY

You said you've known them for
years, right?

MIKE

Known who?

DAISY

The McAllisters. What happened to
them?

Mike stands up tall and looks at her.

MIKE

Rats, he's crazy, isn't he?

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY

Alex hauls several bunches of lavender over to Jeff.

ALEX
We can do another field today and
be ahead on the orders.

JEFF
Let's finish this one first. My
knees are getting too crook.

ALEX
You should go to the doctor.

JEFF
It's age Alex. There's no
outrunning it.
(a glance at his son)
I would like to leave the business
in good hands, when the time comes.

ALEX
Yeah.

JEFF
I want to sign it over to you.

Alex stops, genuinely surprised.

ALEX
Dad, I'm going to space, remember?
I won't be here to take it.

JEFF
But realistically-

ALEX
I am being realistic.

JEFF
You won't even consider it?

ALEX
No.

JEFF
Because you're going to space...

ALEX
Yeah - it'd be a waste of time for
both of us.

Jeff just looks at him - no IDEA how to handle this.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Daisy and Alex walk through a dense, less traveled part of the forest, pushing aside branches and stepping over logs.

ALEX

You know I saw some at my house last night. It's not some magical forest thing. They aren't fairies.

DAISY

But today is the day most of them are out. It's like their reunion.

ALEX

You mean they're mating?

DAISY

Yeah...or dying. I forget which.

ALEX

How did you get your scar?

DAISY

You ask things at strange times.

ALEX

Sorry.

DAISY

Are you still asking?

ALEX

Yes.

DAISY

We spun out on the freeway when a tire came off our car. My sister and I both went-

She SLAMS a balled up fist into her hand.

DAISY (CONT'D)

-through the windshield. The doctors could see my skull.

ALEX

That's disgusting.

DAISY

My sister was worse. We thought she was dead.

(CONTINUED)

Alex's expression changes - very much against his will - to one of sorrow.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Shit. I didn't mean to-

ALEX
(deliberate)
Sorry you had to see her like that.

It reads very clearly: he doesn't want to talk about it.

DAISY
(cautiously)
It wasn't all bad. She was a mean teenager. This leveled out her brain and made her tolerable again.

He laughs as they sit on a tree stump.

ALEX
You know, you're weirder than I thought you were.

DAISY
Well, you're less weird than I thought you were.

They smile at each other, when suddenly a firefly LIGHTS UP in her face. She instinctively SWATS at it:

DAISY (CONT'D)
Ah!

ALEX
Did you kill it?

DAISY
No!

ALEX
Then where is it?

DAISY
I don't know!

There is a tense few seconds. Then a little light near them.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Ok, he's fine.

There's another light. And another. She loves it, pointing at them all like he can't see them with his own eyes.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
You're getting joy out of a bug's
ass lighting up.

DAISY
Come on, so are you.

ALEX
No, I'm not.

She puts her arm around him. He tries very hard to act like this means nothing.

DAISY
Yes, you are. Watch those pretty,
pretty butts.
(off his laughter)
Now how could you think about
giving this up?

At that moment, he doesn't know.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DAY

Alex opens his eyes.

He turns to see Daisy asleep beside him. He watches her. The vein in her neck pulsing very subtly with her heart beat.

And then he frowns. Jumps up.

ALEX
What happened?

DAISY
(eyes closed)
What?

ALEX
Did we?

DAISY
Look down.

He does. He's fully dressed.

DAISY (CONT'D)
(grinning, eyes still closed)
If you stop panicking you might
remember falling asleep. Very
scandalous. Especially when you
drooled.

(CONTINUED)

He looks behind her. Her clock shows 10:14am.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I have to go.

DAISY
Where?

ALEX
(frustrated)
Training, Daisy. I'm training.

And he's out the door.

EXT. GUEST HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex CLAPS his hands in the cold morning air. Does knee ups in the driveway. Furious at himself for slipping.

Mike watches from the main house, concerned.

INT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - DAY

LINDA
(playful)
Late again, hmmm.

ALEX
It's not what you think.

She glances down at the Kindle. SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC. A surprised SWEDISH VOICE. The murderer is REVEALED.

LINDA
It never is.

As he grabs his newspaper, he catches the USA TODAY headline:

BOSTON MISSION MARS FINALIST: IT'S A SCAM.

His face clouds. He throws money down and leaves.

EXT. BARTLET - MAIN STREET - DAY

Alex is walking down the street when there is a:

PERSON (O.S.)
Schizo!

He spins around. People stare, but no one reads guilty. He studies the second story windows. Whoever it was is hiding.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S ROOM - DAY

A glum Alex is on a VIDEO CALL with Curtis.

CURTIS

Of course they're calling it a scam
- they're angry they didn't get
through.

ALEX

I know.

CURTIS

And they're going to call it
impossible until the day we take
off. But then who'll be laughing?
(off his silence)
Me. Loudly. Through all the layers
of the atmosphere. You too.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Liz is trying to get better cell reception when she hears
Alex TALKING. She leans up against the door.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CURTIS

Did you watch the press conference?

ALEX

Not yet.

CURTIS

They said we'll be able to request
the Super Bowl. And it'll only be a
three minute delay!

ALEX

I don't watch the Super Bowl now...

CURTIS

Well, you will when we're on Mars,
brother, trust me. PATS NATION!

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Liz fumes at the door.

LIZ

Nope, nope, nope, nope-

She walks down the hall towards the kitchen-

LIZ (CONT'D)

(hollering)

Mom!

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jane is cleaning the windows.

LIZ

He's still fucking crazy.

JANE

No he's not.

LIZ

I just heard him talking to one of
the other psychopaths about the
"mission." Nothing's changing.

JANE

No-

JEFF

She's right, Jane.

They both turn to look at Jeff. Interjection is a rarity.

JEFF (CONT'D)

It isn't healthy. And it's not
getting better.

JANE

Well, what are we meant to do?
Ground him?

LIZ

Get some psychologists and let them
treat him!

JANE

He's not crazy!

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
He's talking about watching the
Super Bowl from Mars.

JEFF
But he doesn't watch the Super
Bowl.

LIZ
I know, he said that, that's not
the point-
(a heavy sigh)
Maybe it's not just a slight
delusion. You know he and Chris
used to pretend to be astronauts...

JANE
(terse)
Yes, we remember.

LIZ
Don't you think something might
have gone wrong in his brain, then?
If he really wanted to go to space
wouldn't he have gone to NASA?

It's a good point. But they don't know what to say.

LIZ (CONT'D)
What if it's about Chris?

JANE
(snapping)
It's not about him.

LIZ
It has to be.

JANE
Oh, leave it alone, Elizabeth!

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS
Alex watches the Space Station stream as he talks to Curtis.

ALEX
Curtis-

CURTIS
Yeah-

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
You have a family-

CURTIS
The screaming give it away?

ALEX
They're okay knowing that you're
leaving Earth?

CURTIS
Yeah man, Tiff's fine with it.

ALEX
Really?

CURTIS
Of course. It's bad if the other
person doesn't want you to follow
your dream, am I right? I am right.

Alex notices YELLING coming from outside. Turns to the door.

INT. THOMPSON & TAYLOR INSURANCE - DAY

Daisy researches the mission, increasingly concerned. Mike
enters and reads over her shoulder.

MIKE
Did he ever tell you how he was
selected?

She shakes her head.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Skype Interviews. Does that sound
like NASA to you?
(beat)
Don't spend too much time on
this..."policy."

She looks at him.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Because there are lots of
"policies." And most of them are
more normal than
this...particular...one.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex peeks in the kitchen to find Liz and Jane at war.

LIZ
He's spending all his money on that merchandise.

JANE
That's his choice.

LIZ
He has nothing saved. He's not planning for a future because he thinks he's going to fucking Mars-

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex enters.

ALEX
I am going to "fucking Mars."

LIZ
No you aren't!

JANE
Elizabeth!

LIZ
Mom, stop letting him go on like this - you're not helping him!

ALEX
What's wrong with you?

LIZ
What's wrong with me? Are you really asking me that?

JANE
She's just concerned, honey, you're doing something so different, it's only natural to be concerned. But you have to do what's best for you-

ALEX
I'm going to Mars.

LIZ
God, if I hear you say that one more time.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

I'm. Going. To. Mars.

LIZ

He's not going to have kids, mom.
Think about that. He's not going to
have a career or family or anything
normal. He's just going to sit in
this house and rot waiting to get
on a spaceship that never comes.

JANE

No...he will. You will, Alex.
You'll find all those things.

ALEX

(hesitant)

Not on Earth, mom.

Jane wavers a little. Alex kneels down beside her.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You're looking at this the wrong
way - think of your history books.
Think how many thousands of people
have left everything behind and
migrated to the unknown, with no
intention of returning to their
homes. Even Alexander the Great did
it. It's how we've evolved.

LIZ

You can't seriously think that's
the same thing.

He clearly does.

JANE

(quietly)

Are you really giving them all your
money?

ALEX

I donate to help fund the mission.
So do thousands of others.

JANE

And you won't have a family?

ALEX

It wouldn't be right, mom, if I'm
just going to leave them a few
years after.

(CONTINUED)

Jane lets out a small GASP, unable to mask her distress.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(trying to lighten the mood)
Come on, who's going to love me
enough to have kids with me?

JANE
(upset)
No one if you don't let them, Alex!

LIZ
You're using this as an excuse not
to live your life.

ALEX
You should know.

As if on cue, her phone RUMBLES with messages.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Why do you care now, Liz? You've
barely been around this whole year.
Why do you care so much now?

LIZ
Because you're committing suicide,
you asshole. Even if you've got it
masked in this space explorer
bullshit I can still see what
you're doing! Dad, help me-

JEFF
What do you want me to do?

LIZ
Something! You can't be passive
anymore! He's killing himself.
That's all this is. He's just being
really fucking creative about it.

Jeff really, really doesn't know what to do. Liz takes a
deep breath, preparing for the backlash that will follow:

LIZ (CONT'D)
Is this because of Christopher?

JANE
Elizabeth!

ALEX
Don't bring him into this.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
It is, isn't it?

ALEX
(angry)
Stop talking about him!

LIZ
We have to!

JEFF
Liz-

LIZ
No, dad!
(to Alex)
You can't escape by jumping on a
rocket. You will feel all the same
things about Chris up there.

ALEX
How do you know what I feel?

LIZ
Really? I don't know what it feels
like? You have it worse because you
were his *brother* and I'm just the
lowly fucking sister?

All now YELLING, Jane stands up between them.

JANE
Stop it, stop it, both of you. Show
some respect and leave him out of
this. This conversation is OVER.

She says it with such ferocity that they're instantly quiet.

Alex GLARES at Liz as he storms back to his room. Liz GLARES
at Jane as she exits the house. Her CAR is heard speeding
off. Jane looks to Jeff, but he's looking into the distance.

In a daze, she slowly goes back to cleaning the windows.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - DAY

Daisy drives. Alex stares out the window. She glances over.

DAISY
What's happened?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
Nothing.

DAISY
You've been weird all day.

ALEX
I'm fine.
(she remains concerned)
I'm fine.

And suddenly he is fine, because this is his area of expertise. He smiles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Maybe I'm a bit scared of your driving...

DAISY
(grinning)
Shut up.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY - LATER

They hike a forest trail until they emerge-

EXT. NATIONAL SEASHORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

-to find themselves on the edge of a bluff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The vast beach before them is dwarfed only by the ocean stretching out in all directions beyond it.

ALEX
I know you miss swimming, so...

She turns and hugs him.

DAISY
But I mean, don't get me wrong, I also hate swimming.

ALEX
I know.

DAISY
It ruined my life.

ALEX
Temporarily.

He has such a faith in her she believes it.

(CONTINUED)

A PEELING WHITE FENCE stops people from tumbling down the steep, eroded hill. She hoists a leg over it.

ALEX (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

DAISY
Come on.

ALEX
Wait, there's a trail that leads to the beach-

DAISY
No time-

ALEX
-No way.

DAISY
If you're going to get to Mars then you can also get down this cliff.

ALEX
No.

She swings the other leg over.

DAISY
Come on Alexander the Great.

ALEX
No.

DAISY
Trust me.

With a smirk, she disappears, SQUEALING, SKIDDING - and then unwittingly SLIDING - down the enormous dune.

He waits, hesitates, um's and ah's, until:

ALEX
Fuck it.

And he follows. SCREAMING...more than he'd probably like.

After reaching the bottom, he races after her.

Daisy RUNS into the surf, sun beaming down on her back, not caring about anything except the water. She lets the waves crash over her. It makes him happy to see her happy.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY

Alex!

He BOUNDS in, dodging the waves en route to her. She's a little over waist deep, where they break.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Let them hit you.

ALEX

What?

DAISY

I used to love doing it when I was younger.

ALEX

Why?

They duck under a wave. Surface.

DAISY

(insistent)

Because.

Another wave is approaching-

DAISY (CONT'D)

Let it hit you.

She backs away from him. Holds out her arms to the wave.

Alex reluctantly turns to face it. It CRASHES into them. They're both thrown around in the surf. It's exhilarating.

Another wave BREAKS. She's flung down. He helps her up. Instinctively, he brushes her hair off her face.

He blinks. He loves her.

He blinks again. Oh *shit*, he loves her.

Then BAM, they're thrown by another wave. She SHRIEKS.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Neat houses in neat rows. Daisy and Alex approach one, though the lawn needs mowing and the rafters some paint.

DAISY

You've really never met Curtis?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
No. He lives in another state.

DAISY
We're *two hours* from your house.

ALEX
Oh, we should meet Curtis then.

EXT. CURTIS' HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She laughs and rings the DOORBELL. It swings open.

CURTIS
Hey hey!

They embrace. Curtis notes Alex's MISSION MARS shirt. He wears a similar one.

CURTIS (CONT'D)
Nice!

ALEX
Sorry, this is Daisy.

CURTIS
(shaking her hand)
What insurance agency do you work
for? I'm thinking of switching.

He WINKS at Alex. Daisy does not like it.

INT. CURTIS' HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CURTIS
Welcome to mi casa!

A CHILD CRIES upstairs. Another RUNS past, followed by a very nice but very tired looking WOMAN, who stops.

TIFFANY
I'm Tiffany. Sorry for the ruckus.

Tiffany glances at the logo on Alex's shirt.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Oh, you're a colonist.

CURTIS
He'll be waving down at you, too!

She looks at Daisy. A desperately cheery warning:

(CONTINUED)

TIFFANY

I thought it was just a phase!

A BLUR of a child zooms past again.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Sorry - I better get him.

She disappears. Curtis slaps Alex on the arm.

CURTIS

Best part about Mars is the no kids
policy, am I right?He LAUGHS LOUDLY and leads them through, sliding open the
back door to reveal a shed in the corner of the yard.

INT. CURTIS' SHED - DAY

Computer monitors. A stereo with the volume on high. A couch
with a pillow and Curtis-sized indent. A mini fridge.

He turns on SPACESHIP by Kanye West.

DAISY

Your wife is nice.

CURTIS

Yeah, Tiff's great. Sit, sit.

They gingerly perch on the couch. Daisy is not impressed.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

It's good to meet you properly, my
man. You realize I'm one of the
only people you're going to see in
person for the rest of your life?
Crazy, huh?

ALEX

Crazy.

DAISY

(deadpan)

Wild.

CURTIS

I'm sick of waiting. When will
training start? I'm ready to go!

He holds his hand out for a high five. Alex HALF FIVES it.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
I'm sure you'll be missed.

CURTIS
(oblivious)
Well, what can you do, space calls.

A KNOCKING on the door.

CHILD
Daddy!

Curtis leans over and turns the music up.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - DAY

Alex drives in a stunned silence. He nervously glances over at Daisy a few times but she just gazes out the window.

ALEX
Curtis is very intelligent. He published a paper several years ago on the topic of solar flares on Mars. The atmosphere there is very-

DAISY
Stop.

ALEX
What?

DAISY
Stop. For five seconds. Just stop talking about Mars.

ALEX
What do you want to talk about?

DAISY
Anything else.

He doesn't have anything else. She turns his CD Player on.

It's SPACE ODDITY by David Bowie. She switches it off.

And then she turns back to him:

DAISY (CONT'D)
I think you need to consider if you're going for the right reasons.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

What?

DAISY

If it's to be an explorer and a scientist, then great, I can get behind it. If not...

ALEX

If not what?

DAISY

Did you not see that man? He's just going to escape his own life!

ALEX

You think I'm doing the same thing?

DAISY

I'm asking if you are.

He pulls over. Gets out.

DAISY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

ALEX

I need some air.

He disappears into the trees. She contemplates, then grabs the keys and follows.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - CONTINUOUS

DAISY

But we're talking.

ALEX

So keep talking.

DAISY

Fine. I looked into your mission.

ALEX

And?

DAISY

And it's a whole bunch of ifs and maybes.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

So?

DAISY

So what if you don't get there?
What if it all amounts to nothing?
Do you want to turn around and see
you could have had a life but you
didn't because you were waiting?

ALEX

It's a risk-

DAISY

It's hiding.

ALEX

I'm not hiding.

DAISY

Yes you are! You're giving up on an
entire planet after barely
experiencing it. You have degrees
you don't use, you haven't had
relationships, you haven't traveled
- you haven't really tried Alex,
but you act like the problem is the
world and not you.

ALEX

It's a shit world.

DAISY

Then change it! Don't go finding a
new one!

He sighs, hands in his pockets, all defenses up.

ALEX

Can we talk about this later? When
we're home?

DAISY

No way. You let all these things
churn inside of you and you don't
acknowledge them and you don't let
anyone else acknowledge them and it
isn't healthy and I won't
contribute to it.

ALEX

What things?

(CONTINUED)

DAISY

Well, like your brother. We don't talk about your brother. I know he died last year, but you still can't talk about him? Even to remember?

ALEX

(tense)

What else.

DAISY

Really?

ALEX

Yep. What else.

DAISY

Fine. How about that you like me? That's a *happy* thing and you still won't acknowledge it. And the stupid thing is *I like you too*, and we have to pretend it isn't happening because it doesn't fit your schedule?

Equal parts surprised and elated and terrified:

ALEX

I thought we weren't dating.

DAISY

You're right. You drove me four hours up the coast to take me to the beach because we're buddies.

ALEX

So what, then? Do you want me to quit the mission so I can date you?

DAISY

No!

She circles around, thinking of a way to get through to him.

DAISY (CONT'D)

I want you to decide which world you're going to live on. The one where you shut yourself off from everyone and everything because your focus is on the mission and nothing else. Or one where, yeah, you're a little sadder, because you've had to accept the things

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAISY (CONT'D) (cont'd)
that have happened, and you're a
little scared, because you don't
know what's next. But that's the
adventure, isn't it? You don't have
a clue what's in store. Just like I
didn't know that the guy needing
space insurance would turn out to
be the most interesting and strange
and fun person I've ever known. And
that kind of thing happening, when
you least expect it, that makes you
happier than you could ever be on
that other world because it's real.
(meeting his gaze)
You have one life, Alex, one single
life and if you waste it waiting
for this, you don't get a second
chance.

Beat.

ALEX
...spoken from the daring realm of
the insurance industry.

DAISY
(losing hope)
Temporarily.

ALEX
I don't see you trying to do
anything else.

That's a real blow to her, and they're both aware.

DAISY
At least I tried, Alex.

He watches a SQUIRREL run down a tree and onto the road,
picking at something on the asphalt. It seems to glance up
at him. Then it turns to face an oncoming CAR. Frozen.

Right before the car makes contact, it LEAPS out of the way
and runs back into the forest past him.

ALEX
I'm going to Mars.

She nods, already knowing she'd lost.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
Then I'm going home.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - NIGHT - LATER

She gets out of the car. Pauses at his window.

ALEX
Well...have a swell night.

She smiles a weak smile.

There's a moment where he hesitates. Wanting to reach out to her. But he just nods and drives away.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex's alarm BUZZES. It's promptly THROWN across the room.

MUSIC: SPACE ODDITY by David Bowie.

He passes the computer. Curtis is CALLING. It goes ignored.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BATHROOM - DAWN

Unwashed Mission Mars T-shirt on, he addresses his mirror:

ALEX
This is Alex McAllister, calling
Mission Control. Sorry you're stuck
on Earth.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAWN

He does jumping jacks. Push ups. Puts his earphones in.

ALEX (V.O.)
Sorry I left you all to die.

And he runs. Angrily. Tearing through the forest. Purposely STOMPING on whatever CRUNCHES and bypassing the town.

ALEX (V.O.)
Sorry you'll never know anything
except overpopulation and
commercial breaks...

Reaching the open plains, he takes off, running as fast as he can, the world a blur around him.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (V.O.)
Sorry you're stuck with each other.

He runs until he can't go a second longer and COLLAPSES in the middle of a field.

He watches a plane pass through the blue sky above him.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BATHROOM - DAWN

Alex SPITS OUT the toothpaste.

ALEX (V.O.)
Over and out.

EXT. BARTLET - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The SUMMER HARVEST FESTIVAL is in full swing. Vendors line the streets, buskers and animals and tourists and kids racing through them all, BUZZED on sugar.

Daisy runs into Liz by JOHN STARK (1728-1822) HERO OF BENNINGTON.

LIZ
Hey.

DAISY
Hi! I didn't know you were in town?

LIZ
Just helping out. How are you?

DAISY
Good.
(beat)
How's Alex?

LIZ
Oh, you know...preparing for space travel.

To both of them this signifies a lost cause.

Dimitri appears from around a booth.

DIMITRI
Elizabeth, I lied, I can't carry it all.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Coming.

Daisy looks between them both. Liz appears very guilty.

DAISY

I knew it.

LIZ

We're just getting some food.

DAISY

That *is* helpful.

LIZ

Gotta feed the employees.

DAISY

Where are the rest of them?

Busted. Liz smiles.

EXT. BARTLET - TOWN SQUARE - DAY - LATER

Alex and JEFF cross the festival to JANE, Liz and Dimitri.

DAVE (40's) and his FRIEND have spotted Alex and are PUSHING through the crowd towards him. They meet at the same time.

DAVE

Hey Jeff.

He shakes hands with Jeff. Everyone knows everyone.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Alex, wanted to have a quick word?

ALEX

Sure.

DAVE

I've been told you're talking at the school again.

ALEX

Looks like it.

DAVE

Some of the parents and I wondered if you might reconsider.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Why?

DAVE

(uncomfortable)

You know...

ALEX

No?

DAVE

I mean, it's not like you're from the observatory...

ALEX

So?

DAVE

So I'm all about knowledge and learning but my kid doesn't need to hear about some scam.

ALEX

It's not a scam.

DAVE

Come on, he thinks he knows an astronaut, for God's sake. He thinks he's going to follow in your footsteps!

JEFF

And last week he thought he was in World War II. I don't think any harm has been done here.

DAVE

There is if he believes it can happen. If he becomes deluded like-

He stops himself on Jeff's look, but Alex understands. Is that what people actually think of him?

He see's Daisy in the small crowd around them. She's heard everything. She's sympathetic. It makes him FURIOUS.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY

Alex pulls out VIOLETS in a FLOWER KILLING RAGE.

He KICKS another bunch. Grabs a handful and THROWS THEM as far as he can. Petals and leaves FLOAT to the ground, unable to keep up as the stalks TORPEDO through the sky.

(CONTINUED)

He stops to catch his breath. Jeff calmly walks out of the house. Notes the circle of destruction around Alex.

JEFF

You gonna replant those?

Alex stops.

ALEX

Yes.

JEFF

Now?

Beat. Then, begrudgingly:

ALEX

Yes.

Jeff heads back inside-

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

-where Liz and Dimitri have been watching.

LIZ

It's really good that he's angry,
dad, trust me.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY - LATER

Alex rakes the destroyed flowers, leaving the ground barren.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - LATER

He's on his hands and knees, pulling out damaged bulbs and replacing them with fresh ones.

Dimitri comes to help, digging to coerce debris out.

DIMITRI

I know I joke with you...but I
understand what you're doing. I
come from a different place, and I
came here never intending to
return. I came to America to die in
America. Ideally after many more
years. But that's my truth. I did
it and it's not easy but people
have always done these things and I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DIMITRI (cont'd)
think they always will. You just
have to be sure. That's all.

Alex is quiet.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - BARN - DUSK - LATER

Alex lies on the roof, tired and dirty.

LIZ
(from below)
Alex?

ALEX
He's not here.

LIZ
I can see his feet.

The feet disappear and suddenly he's peering down at Liz.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Can I come up?

ALEX
The roof might collapse with two
people on it.

He watches as she disappears into the barn. A few moments
later she can be heard CLIMBING the ladder.

He goes to the hole and pulls her up.

LIZ
I haven't been up here in so long.

As she surveys the land spread out around them, he lies back
down, looking up at the stars. She sits beside him.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Killed enough flowers for one day?

ALEX
Yeah.

LIZ
Good. It seemed pretty effective.

ALEX
(a begrudging smile)
It was.

(CONTINUED)

Beat.

LIZ
I don't think I ever asked you why
you were doing this.

ALEX
There's not one answer.

LIZ
Well, that part's pretty normal.

She plays with her jacket.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Do you really think I don't care?
(off his shrug)
Every time I look at you I see
Chris. Then I imagine you dying as
well, which, trust me, I'm aware I
need colossal amounts of therapy to
fix. Just imagining it...the pain
is so unbearable, so instantly-
(searching for the word)
-crippling, it's just been easier
if I stay away.

Something is resonating with him.

LIZ (CONT')
Look, mom and dad are their own
people and they can handle things
how they like, but I get angry
because I care. I can't face losing
another brother and that's exactly
what they're letting happen with
you. We're losing you.

Alex looks at her, framed by the night sky, surprised.

ALEX
I thought there was something wrong
with me because I imagine you
dying, too.

LIZ
Really?

She laughs, relieved.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Wow. See? Everyone's fucked up. I
don't think you realize that but
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (CONT'D) (cont'd)
everyone is...I still sometimes
jump into bed at night in case the
monster grabs my ankles.

ALEX
That is messed up.

LIZ
The most. Of all these things.

ALEX
By far.

She lies down next to him and looks up at the stars.

LIZ
Can you see Mars from here?

ALEX
Nah, it's behind the sun for the
next few months.

Alex points out two little lights:

ALEX (CONT'D)
But that's Venus. And Jupiter.

LIZ
You're willing to live in such a
big universe. I prefer thinking
it's only us.

ALEX
It's never been only us.

A long beat.

LIZ
I think the last time I was up
here, Chris was too. Right here.

She pats the empty roof next to her.

ALEX
He was.

He's quiet for a moment, then turns over onto his stomach.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Do you remember this?

(CONTINUED)

She turns to look at the wooden beam behind them. Badly etched into the wood are six words: THE EXPLORER, THE QUEEN and THE CONQUEROR.

LIZ

Oh my god.

She reaches out to touch it. And then she bursts into tears.

He hugs her.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Back from his run, Alex picks up a stack of mail. Under it is Liz's beloved phone, abandoned.

ALEX

Liz?

There's a YELLING outside. He looks out to see her in the fields, wearing farm clothes and helping Dimitri. Dimitri says something and she throws her head back and laughs.

He spots a Mission Mars logo on one of the envelopes.

EXT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - DAY

Alex approaches the store. The balcony holds two astronauts and one very sad plain-clothed boy. It's Evan.

ALEX

Permission to come aboard the shuttle?

Evan nudges Jack.

JACK

Proceed via the airlock chamber.

EXT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Alex emerges from the fire escape/airlock chamber.

ALEX

I have a delivery from Earth.

It's a box of space toys and memorabilia, including the projector.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

These were my brothers and mine...but I thought they might be better use to you.

EVAN

I didn't know you had a brother.

ALEX

I used to, yeah. We wanted to work at NASA.

EVAN

That's where I want to work!

ALEX

Good! Tell your dad that!

Louie holds up walkie-talkies from the box:

LOUIE

Evan!

EXT. BARTLET COUNTY GENERAL STORE - BALCONY - DAY - LATER

They are lying on chairs that have been turned horizontal, to better mimic a space shuttle launch. Alex is on board.

EVAN

Houston, we are ready for launch.

ALEX

Roger that.

EVAN

Lift off in 10, 9, 8, 7-

As the boys madly flip imaginary launch buttons, Alex looks through the railing and sees Daisy walking below.

EVAN (CONT'D)

6, 5, 4-

He's conflicted. He wants to call out.

EVAN (CONT'D)

3, 2, 1-

A stream of BLAST OFF and FIRE noises courtesy of the astronauts. Alex takes part, BUMPING his chair around.

A series of WHOOPS as they celebrate a successful launch.

(CONTINUED)

EVAN (CONT'D)
We did it, son.

Apparently, Brad Pitt's made it onto the shuttle, too.

Alex grins. This might be enough.

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

He paces, looking at the Space Station stream, the Mission Mars forums, the unopened letter...

INT. MCALLISTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The family and Dimitri eat breakfast. Jane cleans the pans. Liz gets up and steers her to the table.

LIZ
Stop! Don't move. I'm doing it.

Jane tries to resist but Liz has already taken over.

Alex sticks his head in:

ALEX
Mom, do you know where my suit is?
The grey one?

JANE
The hall closet.

Alex disappears. She and Liz exchange looks. He bounds back in a moment later, suit in hand.

ALEX
I'm going to the dry cleaners, if
anyone wants me to take anything.

LIZ
What's the occasion?

ALEX
Getting my suit dry cleaned.

LIZ
Thank you. I meant *why*.

ALEX
I have a job interview.

More glances. Rising hope.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Where?

ALEX

(fiddling with the suit)

The Vermont Space Grant Consortium.
They have some impressive resources
- I was surprised - plus they
expressed interest in my project-

DIMITRI

The Germinator!

ALEX

Still not calling it that. I don't
know. They're run by NASA, so-

He shrugs, aiming for nonchalance.

JANE

(tentatively)

That's great, honey. And the
mission is OK with it?

ALEX

Well, I was thinking of just
concentrating on this.

A COMMUNAL GASP that ripples round the table. And then
silence as they all look hesitantly to Jeff.

JEFF

(genuine)

I think that's a great idea.
Really. Much better than mine.

The group attempts not to EXPLODE from complete and utter
joy. Liz breaks first, reaching out and grabbing his arm:

LIZ

It is great.

JANE

Wonderful.

ALEX

It's just an interview.

LIZ

It's still great.

(CONTINUED)

DIMITRI

It was great when Daisy suggested
it, too.

All eyes are back on Alex.

ALEX

I don't remember that.

DIMITRI

Yes, remember she was like "they'll
give you funding" and you were like
"no thanks, I'm fine in my
greenhouse?"

ALEX

(Yep)

No.

More furtive glances. More hope.

LIZ

I always liked her.

JANE

So did I.

JEFF

Me too.

DIMITRI

I like anyone who likes The
Germinator.

ALEX

(grumbling)

Ok, I get it, you all like Daisy.

LIZ

They're just observations.

He grabs the keys and heads out the door:

ALEX

Bye!

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY

They're installing a new watering system along a flower row.
Dimitri SINGS along to his stereo. A JAZZY SONG begins:

(CONTINUED)

DIMITRI
This is the Russian Frank Sinatra.

ALEX
There's a Russian Frank Sinatra?

DIMITRI
Or is Frank Sinatra an American
Vladimir Krestovozdvizhensky?

He sings the lyrics in English over Vladimir.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
*There was something in the sky that
night, there was something in the
air like light, there's a magical
spark like breaking car parts-*
(he pauses)
That sounds more romantic in
Russian...

Alex stops. He grins and shakes his head.

ALEX
God dammit.

DIMITRI
What? It's not that bad.

ALEX
It sounds like he's talking about
fireflies.

DIMITRI
No it doesn't, we don't even have
them in Russia.

ALEX
I know, I know, it just sounds-
(yelling)
Liz!

She comes out to the patio. Yells:

LIZ
What?

ALEX
Do you know where Daisy works?

LIZ
Yeah...why?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

I need to talk to her.

Her eyes light up.

LIZ

What changed your mind?

DIMITRI

Ah Elizabeth, I would sing it but
then you will fall in love with me
even more.

Liz rolls her eyes...but also blushes.

LIZ

Calm down, Romeo.

(to Alex)

Why can't you go?

ALEX

I have to do something first.

LIZ

Well, what am I supposed to say?

ALEX

I don't know. PR something.

LIZ

Not how that works.

ALEX

Liz!

LIZ

I'll go, I'll go.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY - LATER

Alex and Dimitri hastily plough an empty field.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY - LATER

They prepare soil.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - DAY - LATER

And plant seeds. Dimitri is singing again.

EXT. MCALLISTER FARM - FIELDS - LATER

Daisy stands before Alex. Skeptical.

And Alex's grand gesture: a field of brown dirt.

ALEX

I know you can't tell but they're
daisies.

(beat)

We only had the seeds.

She surveys her seeds.

Liz and Dimitri are "picking flowers" nearby. They are the
most suspiciously silent they have ever been.

DAISY

They're very beautiful.

(beat)

Could this not have waited 'til
after work?

ALEX

I was wrong. And you were right.

DAISY

Never mind, I like this.

ALEX

Space is safe, to me, I can control
it...except, you know, it's ever
expanding and completely
unpredictable to a degree where it
could all implode at any moment-

She TAPS her foot.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Not the point. The point is this-
(indicating them)

-and this is terrifying. I'm
terrified. Ever since you threw
potato at me, I've been terrified.
You are terrifying.

(CONTINUED)

DAISY
Glad I've brought so much to the
table.

ALEX
My brother died.

Daisy shuts her mouth.

DAISY
I know.

ALEX
But I never told you. So, there it
is. He died. Last year. He was
traveling, he was happy, and it was
sudden. He was one of the only
things I thought was a constant in
my life, but in a second he wasn't
there anymore. And I have to wake
up every morning and remember that.
And I'm scared, I'm so scared, of
it happening to anyone else I love.
(looking at the ground)
I'm scared of it happening to you.

She's touched.

ALEX (CONT'D)
So that's how I know this is the
real adventure. For me.
(he frowns as she smiles)
That's corny.

DAISY
Sure is.

ALEX
But you know what I mean.

DAISY
I do.

He moves closer and strokes her cheek. He goes to brush her
hair back when Jeff saunters out:

JEFF
What have you got there?

ALEX
Daisies.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF
Weeds, huh?

ALEX
Couldn't really do roses...

Jeff glances over at Daisy, with the hint of a smile:

JEFF
As it happens, I rather like them.
(unable to help himself)
Though keep them separated from the
rest of the fields.

LIZ
(from her flower picking)
Dad, go away!

He leaves and Alex turns back to Daisy.

DAISY
Forever a weed.

He reaches out to her again. She hesitates.

DAISY (CONT'D)
What about Mars?

He stops, thinks - he's got it.

ALEX
There are no daisies on Mars.

DAISY
(laughing)
Wow. Did you rehearse that?

ALEX
Actually, it just came to me.

DAISY
Well, you nailed it.

ALEX
Really?

DAISY
Really.

And in the middle of a field of dirt, with the sun shining down and the wind blowing through the fields, he looks at her. Finally out of words and hesitations and apprehensions and deliberations, he pulls her close and kisses her.

(CONTINUED)

Liz jumps up and down, CLAPPING.

DIMITRI

Yes. Now we die here together.

He pulls his shirt over his head and runs around the field, as if scoring a soccer goal. Liz is suddenly distracted.

OVER BLACK:

ALEX (V.O.)

This is Mars.

VISUAL: the projector's image of Mars.

ALEX (V.O.)

This will be the first colony on Mars.

CLICK. Small, futuristic white dots on the planet's surface.

ALEX (V.O.)

For 210 days, people will travel there in this.

CLICK. A shuttle.

ALEX (V.O.)

Then this will be their home.

CLICK. The white dots are pods, connected by hallways.

Beat.

ALEX (V.O.)

But I will be here.

VISUAL: Earth, from space.

ALEX (V.O.)

This is my home.

ZOOM IN: An apartment he shares with Daisy.

ALEX (V.O.)

This is where I sleep. Where I eat. Work. Play.

FAST CUTS: A comfortable bedroom, a kitchen with two discarded mugs, a lab at the consortium where a high-tech version of his machine is worked on. Alex showing children the stars. Daisy teaching the same children how to swim.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (V.O.)
Explore.

VISUAL: Alex and Daisy visiting the Taj Mahal, the Pyramids,
Machu Picchu.

ALEX (V.O.)
Get sick, get better.

VISUAL: Dr. Olsen reluctantly handing over a lollipop.

ALEX (V.O.)
Pioneer.

VISUAL: Alex presenting his experiment to NASA. Daisy
attending university classes.

ALEX (V.O.)
Grow old, and live.

VISUAL: Him hiking with Daisy. The sun cutting through the
trees. Then on top of a mountain. Her touch on his skin.

Then, more satisfied, as we zoom out to show the earth:

ALEX (V.O.)
This is where I live.