

Blind World

By

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An original teleplay.
"Pilot"

Dayna VonThaer 2015

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Blind World

"PILOT"
"Meek Inheritance."

TEASER

HAPPY CAMPERS

OPENING SEQUENCE. WHITE.

BRIGHT WHITE.

SILENCE.

BLINDING.

NOISE SLOWLY FADING IN.

WIND.

SOUNDS OF BREATH.

STRUGGLING.

FAINT VOICES.

EXT. Day. CONTINUOUS Day during the Austral summer.

Bright white changes to blowing snow.

PULL BACK to reveal a white bucket. The bucket is upside down on a person's head.

PULL BACK more to a person holding a rope that is tied around the waist. They turn, the bucket has a cartoon-like face drawn onto it with thick black marker.

PULL BACK to reveal the scene. A line of people in parkas wearing white buckets on their heads are walking in a line holding a heavy rope. They are moving slowly between buildings in the incoming storm, blinded by the buckets on their heads. Each one has a different face drawn on it.

VOICE ONE

Number One out!

VOICE TWO

Number two out!

VOICE THREE

Number three out!

(CONTINUED)

This continues after all eight people with buckets on their heads are out of one building. They are doing an exercise to blindly go to a second building about 50 yards away in the event of a white out. The last person holds the end of the rope with a knot tied to it. The first person holds the line that leads back to building one. Buildings look like double-wide trailers.

Number one leads them astray. Number three is in a red parka. Three falls and calls out during a harsh blast of wind.

VOICE THREE

Number three down!

PAN to building Two.

Dr. Angela Audibert is standing afar, watching from the door of building two. Red parka, Explorer patch on her front left, her name embroidered on the patch. DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT. She shakes her head and roughly tugs the hood of her parka onto her head. She steps outside. She braves the bitter chill and walks to building one which is blue.

The line struggles to find their way, veering further and further off course. She walks past them with an air of not just importance, but skill and understanding. She stops just before the door of building one. She turns with intent to the group with the buckets on their heads.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

Use your voice! One day this will
be more than an exercise.

SUPERIMPOSE: "DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT, PH.D., Glaciologist. Deputy Chief of Marine Research. Founder of the Explorer's Initiative Program. UNITED STATES."

The good doctor turns and gets onto a large truck and is driven towards the taller, larger buildings. The 'DORMS.'

Number seven slips and falls. The white bucket falls off of his head. Once his falls, the rest of the line deteriorates. The line collapses onto itself. Buckets fall off their heads. They all fall into the snow and onto one another. Number three rips her bucket off and struggles to get to her feet. Number three is Dr. Johanna Masters. She looks around at the state of the line and the people lying on their backs, defeated. Camera follows her eyes from where she is to the door of building one, then of building two. She sees the back of Dr. A's red parka disappear into the truck. Camera circles back to her face, her expression. Red-faced and exhausted, frustrated.

(CONTINUED)

SUPERIMPOSE: "DR. JOHANNA MASTERS, PH.D., ASTROPHYSICIST. ENGLAND."

ACT ONE

MCMURDO BASE

INT. DAY.

BUILDING ONE IS A BASE/CAMP-LIKE STRUCTURE. IT IS BARE MINIMUM HOUSING. CURVED CEILING, GRAY AND BEIGE WALLS, GRAY FLOORS. FIFTY SHADES OF BEIGE. WOOD SHELVES HOLD FOOD AND SUPPLIES. IT VERY MUCH RESEMBLES A PRISON IN ITS BLEAKNESS. MINIMAL FURNITURE. BOOTS, BLANKETS AND PARKAS HANG ON LINES TO DRY IN EACH ROOM. BUNK BEDS ARE COTS WITH THIN METAL FRAMES. IF THERE IS A SINGLE BED, IT IS SIMPLE AND UTILITARIAN CHEAP-LOOKING WOOD. FUNCTION IS THE ONLY PURPOSE HERE.

INT. Day.

Dr. Masters walks down a narrow corridor, peeling off her many layers. She walks past room after room. Some are empty. One has an odd man in it, shaking a jar with a creature sloshing around in it. Another has a pair of men playing chess. She stops in front of this room. The bucket is in her hand, hanging at her side. She observes. The radio is on.

Foreigner's Cold as Ice is playing.

RUDY

You can't deny me Terry. I'm winning and you don't know it yet.

TERRY

There must be another definition of winning because, Check.

SUPERIMPOSE: "RUDY KOSLOSKI, Terrabus driver. UNITED STATES"

SUPERIMPOSE: "TERRY BREWER, COMPUTER TECHNICIAN. WALES"

Terry checks Rudy's queen. He has an annoyed look on his face. Rudy rubs his hand across his pock-mark filled face. His skin is in very poor condition. His nose is red from cold and his cheeks are redder from cystic acne. This grosses out Terry. He watches Rudy touch his face then his chess pieces. Johanna stays at the door with a small smile. Terry is a huge germaphobe. Terry looks at the door and shudders. He stands up and Rudy hollers.

(CONTINUED)

RUDY
See? Winning!

Rudy makes several big gestures and knocks down chess pieces, grinning and making noise in the process. Terry walks to the doorway.

TERRY
Uh huh. Hi Joey. Another banner day in paradise.

JOHANNA
Veritable utopia. Hey, Terry? When you have a spare moment could you take a look at my equipment?

RUDY
Whispers- She wants you to look at her equipment, all right.

TERRY
Sure. What's the problem?

RUDY
Come on T-Terrible Terry. Rematch! Don't you want to reclaim your dignity?

TERRY
I won, Rude-ass.

Terry looks at Johanna and quickly corrects himself with an eye roll.

JOHANNA
My calibration is off on my seismic gauge or maybe the reader is bad. It is giving me inaccurate readings.

TERRY
How do you know they're off?

Rudy is in the background picking at his face. One pimple oozes a little and Rudy uses a shirt hanging on a line to stop it. Johanna looks like she may vomit and Terry turns away from her. He rips the shirt away from Rudy and they start to argue.

JOHANNA
Because, if the readings are right, we would be back stroking to New Zealand in a week's time.

TERRY

I'll be there in a few.

Johanna leaves.

INT. - McMurdo Living Quarters.

CAMERA FOLLOWS JOHANNA WALKING.

Johanna walks down the hall then up a flight of stairs. She turns down another bland corridor. She enters her room and shuts the door. There are photos on the desk. Three women are in one, a younger Johanna in a graduation cap and gown in another. Another photo is a vintage looking one of a couple. A third photo is of a family, her parents, sister and herself. One wall is an entire wood encasement of shelving with food. Canned goods and boxes of crackers, etc.

This is a small space. Two single beds. A very serious telescope is in a corner with large rolls of paper. Lunar and solar charts are above a desk that has several screens with active charts being recorded. Back packs for outdoor research, a thick snowsuit, extra boots, long johns and various types of hats cover the room in neat order. Johanna stops at the desk as she unhooks her snowsuit and starts to undress. The graphs appear all over the place. She reads a data sheet that has calculations and measurements for the past few hours on it. She takes a pen and circles two points of interest.

A knock raps on her door. She slips into different pants and opens the door. Terry is standing there. An envelope is taped to her door. He lets himself in and Johanna rips the envelope from the door. She is reading it as Terry types on a keyboard. Her face twists with rage.

TERRY

Rudy is a backwoods urchin.

JOHANNA

That's a bit of an insult to urchins.

TERRY

He's so annoying. No wonder he's here at the Pole. Rest of the world couldn't stand him.

JOHANNA

That cow!

Terry spins in the chair. The computers appear to make a bunch of noise and Johanna tosses the letter onto the desk.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

Moo?

JOHANNA

See? There!

Terry picks up the letter and reads a phrase aloud.

TERRY

'Skills as a researcher borderline exceptional while within the safe and secure confines of a walled laboratory, yet a disappointingly soft and reluctant leader in the field.' Ouch.

JOHANNA

I didn't realize I was meant to bark orders at twenty below whilst wearing a bucket on my head in order to make my researching materials publishable.

The bucket is sitting on her telescope making it look like a robot.

The screens show graphs that brighten from black to green to orange then red.

TERRY

What does that mean?

JOHANNA

It means, of course, if it were accurate, that we're about to experience a solar storm like we've never seen before.

TERRY

A solar storm? Would that melt the planet kind of a solar storm?

JOHANNA

You know, you're funny, Terry.

TERRY

Not trying to be. I'm serious.

JOHANNA

Oh, well, no. Not melt it but I guess in a way yes. Our electricians will veritably cease to exist. The program was working just fine

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA (cont'd)
before. Now it just shows all of
this activity. It's been this way
since I moved it from the lab.

TERRY
Well, we're sure its inaccurate
then.

Johanna shoots him a look.

TERRY
Why did you move it from the lab?

JOHANNA
I didn't. Dr. A did.

TERRY
Why would she do that when we're
only days away from seasonal
departure?

JOHANNA
I don't know. Why would she send me
to Happy Campers for two straight
days, again?

TERRY
Why did she do that?

JOHANNA
Because she's a sadist. The last
thing I needed to be doing was
taking the survival initiation just
as we're about to leave. All our
reports have already been
submitted. I've lost another two
days!

TERRY
[Off topic.] Even doctors have to
call her Dr. A?

Johanna's snorts. She looks to the door then to the photos
on her desk.

JOHANNA
Oh, don't get me started. She calls
me, 'Joey' because she thinks I'm
Australian. I'm a bloody nuclear
astrophysicist and she talks to me
like a child. Pets my head.

Terry looks down. Like he's just thought of something.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

What?

TERRY

I- I'm sorry. I thought you liked it. Everyone calls you, 'Joey.' I didn't know it bothered you. I feel like an asshole.

JOHANNA

No! It's fine. You're fine, Terry. Yeah, actually, many people do, I guess. I don't know. My father called me... I'm sorry. I'm complaining. It's just her, I think. Perhaps only I find her dulcet tones offensive.

Johanna stands back and observes the screens and their data for a moment. She snatches the letter from her desk and leaves. Her voice carries from the corridor.

TERRY

Where are you going?

JOHANNA

Let me know what you find!

INT. - DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT'S OFFICE

Dr. A is a severe-looking woman. Her office is tidy. Her desk is pulled away from the wall and put in the middle of the floor like a business office. There are neat stacks of MANILA folders on her desk. Two photos are on the desk. One is with an African tribe, with Dr. A in the middle. The other is of a group of children outside of a school while Dr. A is cutting a red ribbon surrounded by people grinning. Dr. A has a face of stone in both photos and behind her desk. Johanna knocks on her door, which is open.

DR. A

As you can plainly see, it is open.

Johanna enters the office. She steels herself.

JOHANNA

I'd like to talk to you about my exit letter.

DR. A

I believe it is accurate and to the point, *Joey*.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

This exit letter acts as a letter of recommendation. I've spent five months...

DR. A

I am well aware of what constitutes a recommendation and the purpose of an exit letter seeing as I wrote the letter myself.

JOHANNA

You described me as meek.

DR. A

Yes, I did. I am aware. I also believe that is a fitting description. I tend to choose my words wisely.

Johanna fumbles to find her words but Dr. Audibert continues before Johanna can find her verbal footing. Dr. Audibert is cool, smooth as silk and tough as nails. She doesn't sweat, she makes you sweat.

DR. A

Before you embarrass yourself with some inadequate nonsense about inheriting the earth it would do you well to remember that the earth will inherit you here. It will swallow you up and not bother spitting out the bones. More experienced scientists have met very ugly ends to extraordinary lives leaving behind legacies that will fill text books for generations. You appear capable enough as a researcher but where you fail is not solely in your inability to lead, but in your lack of care as to why leadership is important. I stand firmly planted behind every word.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SEE A DEFEATED JOHANNA STARE WIDE-EYED AT DR. AUDIBERT. JOHANNA FINALLY TURNS SLOWLY AS DR. AUDIBERT CONTINUES WITH HER PAPERWORK. CAMERA FOLLOWS JOHANNA DOWN THE HALL IN A BLURRED AND MUMBLED SHOT AS SHE GOES DOWN CORRIDOR AFTER CORRIDOR.

Johanna leans against a wall and puts her head down, steadies her breath. An echo fills her ears of overlapping words. "Meek. Inability. Fail. Inability. Meek. Inability. Inadequate. Her surroundings become distant.

MR. FROSTY

INT. The cafeteria.

It resembles an army mess hall. There is a line around the Mr. Frosty machine. The residents love their Mr. Frosty. Mr. Frosty is not working and the natives are restless. There is a crowd complaining about the lack of frozen treat.

Johanna gets a tray and goes into the line. She grabs a bit of food here and there without really looking to see what she is doing. She sits down to eat, watching the cluster of people by the ice cream machine. They are getting louder, more annoying. She eats with a blank stare, her face still pink from the cold and flush.

As she eats, she see two people she knows well having an animated conversation. A name catches her attention. She scoops a lump of potatoes into her mouth and goes to the crowd gathering around Mr. Frosty.

SUPERIMPOSE: "DR. RAPHAEL RUMINIO, PH.D., TOPOGRAPHER, BRAZIL."

SUPERIMPOSE: "KYLE MORRIS -Expedition Guide, UNITED STATES."

[Dr. Ruminio is speaking with Kyle Morris who is the expedition guide. He is just back from the field camp that houses a small team that hosts temporary researchers on small and specific quests. The winter season is approaching and field camps are starting to close for the season. Kyle has a team of dogs that are his children. Commanding but kind. Raphael Ruminio is handsome and quiet, serious. They are having an intense conversation. Kyle has his hand to his mouth and is shaking his head. They are not concerned with Mr. Frosty but rather something important. Johanna tries to catch words without catching their eye.]

KYLE MORRIS

Dr. Audibert isn't the friendliest animal I've encountered, but I was surprised she was actually capable of such emotions.

Hearing the name, Johanna can't help but overhear and assume this was partially about her lack of recommendation by Dr. A. She's visibly upset and stares directly [awkwardly] at the men. They see her and pause.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

Emotions? I find that very hard to believe. The woman has the charm of a wet dog.

Raphael connects that they haven't met yet and makes the introduction.

DR. RAPHAEL RUMINIO

Dr. Johanna Masters, this is Kyle Morris. He is an exhibition guide, the best. He's back to hitch a ride home in a few days' time. Dr. Masters is with Dr. A's Explorer's Program. And, I wonder if she has heard the news after being in the field all day.

The men look distraught. They look very worried about something that Johanna fears has to do with her.

JOHANNA

News?

The trio look uncomfortable at one another. Terry walks quickly from the end of the cafeteria hall to where they're standing. He is annoyed at the crowd of people around.

TERRY

Sorry to interrupt. Joey? Can I speak with you?

Johanna holds up her hand at Terry. She squares herself in front of Raphael. Mr. Frosty is back online and the small crowd starts cheering. Terry tugs on Johanna. Kyle lowers his head.

RAPHAEL

It's Dr. Bryant.

JOHANNA

Mike? What happened?

The cafeteria grows louder. The radio station plays Ice Ice Baby and the cafeteria grows wild. We can't hear what Raphael is saying. Johanna takes off and Terry follows close behind. She hustles through the building to her room where she starts to dress for the outdoors. She checks a schedule on the wall with her finger and she tugs on a coat with her free arm. Terry rushes in behind her.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

I can't find anything wrong with your equipment.

JOHANNA

Do you know if this is still Mike's schedule? Dr. Bryant with NSF? Is he packed up? he didn't leave yet, did he?

TERRY

Joey, I don't really know him. I have no idea. Did you hear me? Your gear is going off the charts and I can't find what's wrong with it.

JOHANNA

I'll look at it later. Do you know what happened? Did something happen to him?

TERRY

All I know is that someone died. Look, what if your program isn't off? What if it's accurate?

JOHANNA

WHO died? MICHAEL? Oh my god!

TERRY

I don't know. Someone. Is he your boyfriend? What about...?

Johanna leaves her room quickly and Terry tries to follow. The machines continue to make noise in the background. The colors red and orange start to overpower the black and green. He stops in the hall and goes back to Johanna's room to look at the colors and data changing on the screen and printouts. He sits down and starts typing at the keyboard.

EXT. Still daylight. - Antarctica

The sun hangs low on the horizon this time of year. There is never night, just endless day. The storm from earlier lost steam and the sky is clear. Johanna is on a snowmobile.

CAMERA IS AT HER LOWER RIGHT REAR, FOLLOWING HER IN THE SNOW THE SNOWMOBILE IS SPRAYING. SHE TRAVELS AWAY FROM THE MAIN AREA OF MCMURDO WHICH IS DINGY, LIKE A HUGE CONSTRUCTION SITE. THE GROUND BECOMES CLEANER AND MORE SNOW-COVERED.

(CONTINUED)

The silence here swallows you up. There is nothing. No electrical buzzes or traffic sounds. It is absolute silence as if in space. The noise from the snowmobile is all-encompassing.

Johanna approaches a field camp. These are smaller hut-type makeshift houses on the ice. She turns off the snowmobile. We listen to absolute silence she experiences here. We begin to hear her heartbeat.

EXT. Constant daylight.

Johanna knocks on a door in a field camp. It is smaller than the main building which houses several hundred people. This camp fits only a few and is narrow and squat.

INT. Field Camp.

The ceiling is padded. Clothes are hanging everywhere. There is an otherworldly sound coming from the depths. A man sits in the corner with a pair of headphones on. This is not who she is looking for. She touches his foot and he wakes.

SUPERIMPOSE: "DR. GEORGE PIEDMONT, CELL BIOLOGIST AND DIVER. UNITED STATES."

He is retiring after his final dive today.

JOHANNA

I'm so sorry to disturb you.

GEORGE

No, Joey. It is quite all right. I gather you're here about Mike.

There are photos on the walls of George and another man, Dr. Michael Bryant. There are numerous newspaper clippings and pages of research. There are packed duffels and scuba gear. Dr. George Piedmont is older, and is retiring. He is showing a deep sadness that prompts Johanna to sniffle.

JOHANNA

No one has said what happened. I rushed over here but, I don't know what happened...

The door opens. It is Mike. Johanna has a look of relief but it is squashed by his red eyes. He looks surprised to see her, but relieved.

SUPERIMPOSE: DR. MICHAEL BRYANT, PH.D., VOLCANOLOGIST/GLACIOLOGIST. AUSTRALIA."

JOHANNA

Mike! What happened? No one will say!

She turns and approaches him as if she is going to hug him but she doesn't. They're swallowed by their huge gear and outerwear.

MICHAEL

It's Klara.

Johanna can hear George rustle in the corner, masking a cry. Her gaze goes to the cluster of photos.

SMASH IN TO A PHOTO OF MIKE, A WOMAN AND A LITTLE GIRL AT A TOURIST SITE - WAITOMO CAVES. THEY ARE WEARING HARD HATS WITH LIGHTS ON THEM AND HOLDING RUBBER INNER TUBES.

JOHANNA

Your wife? What the hell happened?

George walks past them and leaves the shack. He sounds terribly upset as he leaves. The wind is picking up again.

There is movement underfoot. Out here, they are on eight feet of thick ice. There is no solid ground. There is always a feeling of movement. The ice is thick, but beneath that is the wild and vast ocean, including the mammals.

MICHAEL'S CAMP

EXT. Day.

It is night although it isn't dark. Mike and Johanna are lying on their backs on the ice. They are listening to seals sing below the surface. The seals songs are ethereal, almost techno-sounding. They come in booms and clicks and then sometimes these long stretches of crying.

Johanna keeps wiping tears away from her face. Mike is telling her how his wife died.

MICHAEL

I just talked to her a few days ago. She and Violet are on holiday in Christchurch while they wait for me to come home, you know? Twenty years I've been coming here. Except when Klara does, of course. We were all going to meet up as always, have a month or so just us. Holiday. Surfing. They decided to go fishing. Go swim a bit on the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
boat. Klara - my God - she's a
damned Oceanographer. There was a
strong current.

Johanna nods. The eerie sounds of the seals lay their tune
as the backdrop to his story.

MICHAEL
They said she hit her head on the
edge of the boat. Vi's only eleven
but she is one hell of a swimmer,
of course. Violet pulled her in.
Gave her mouth-to-mouth. She tried
to save her mother. She tried.
Imagine what that's like for a kid?
Trying to save your own mother only
to have her die in your arms. It's
time for me to go home.

Fade out.

The seal's song fading with picture, then, a BOOM of the
seal's voices.

Music overlaps with the underwater song.

SAYING GOODBYE TO KLARA

INT. Day.

We see the back of a young girl with long hair. Arms folded
across her chest. She is standing in a doorway, looking out
of a screen door. Far off in the distance is the ocean.
Boats punctuate the horizon. Little white houses fill in the
gaps in the hills. Her silhouette is created by the sun
rising.

A conversation is happening behind her.

MAN 1
I understand your concern, but Dr.
Bryant's wishes are clear.

GRANDMOTHER
I couldn't care less!

GRANDFATHER
No daughter of ours is being
cremated!

(CONTINUED)

MAN 1

I do understand. However...

GRANDMOTHER

Then understand that our daughter will be buried with her family. In American soil. I don't care what I have to do.

MAN 1

I really cannot release the body to you. Dr. Bryant's instructions for cremation are clear. I'm sorry.

GRANDFATHER

Doctor Bryant! That man has no right to dictate what happens to her body! We do! Do you see him here? No!

The young girl plucks herself from the wall, turns and approaches the trio. The man looks at her sympathetically.

VIOLET

My mother is Dr. Bryant. Dr. Bryant is your daughter. Doctor Bryant will be cremated, as she wished.

Violet turns and exits the screen door. She leans against a railing and cries softly to herself.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

MICHAEL'S CAMP

INT.

Mike is pouring a drink into a glass. Johanna is looking around at his gear and general layout. She likes this better than the big building which seems very much like a prison.

She takes the drink and holds it. She looks around his room/office space. Samples of rocks sit in jars lining the shelves. Stacks of papers litter nearly every available surface. This is a small space where work and home are one in the same. Work is life. Life is work. He drinks his drink, sadness hanging on his shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

How did you find out?

JOHANNA

I overheard Raphael telling an exhibition guide.

MICHAEL

Kyle?

Johanna nods and finally sips her drink.

MICHAEL

He took Klara and Dr. A out on their first time. Probably twelve years ago.

JOHANNA

WHAT? Are you serious?

MICHAEL

Of course I'm serious. Klara had come here six times in her career. At first, I was an exhibition guide, myself. I trained Kyle. She encouraged me to get my doctorate. I wanted volcanoes. I hadn't yet given Mt. Erebus its proper respect. She came newly minted, like you.

JOHANNA

Where did you two meet? She's American, isn't she?

MICHAEL

That's right. We met on Everest. Had our first meal at the base camp. We shared a second meal in the Lukla Airport as we left to go about our lives. She was a student, still. I went to the Antarctic as usual, for the season. I had to wait six months for a third date.

Michael breaks down to himself, hangs his head. Johanna puts her hand on his back and wipes the wetness from her face. She walks to the desk area to collect herself and dry her face so as to not get chapped or frostbite. The computers are acting up like hers. She sees a paper on the desk that she wrote. She looks around and sees a folder sitting off to the side. Johanna opens it. It is filled with data she has collected over the past week.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

What is this doing here?
(She does not intend to sound
insensitive though INITIALLY
it comes across that way.

Michael looks up from his seated position.

MICHAEL

Angela. Dr. A. She gave it to me.
She said it was yours.

JOHANNA

It is mine. This chart is from five
days ago. This one is from seven.

MICHAEL

That's right.

JOHANNA

But, why did she give it to you?
This was part of my exit paper for
the Explorers Fellowship.

MICHAEL

She told me as much.

JOHANNA

Why did she give them to you?

Johanna slaps the papers around and looks at the screens in
front of her.

MICHAEL

I'm assuming because she thought
I'd find them helpful. I'm always
examining your charts, of course,
as a mentor. Your work and mine go
hand-in-hand.

JOHANNA

How long has your seismograph been
doing this?

Mike shrugs but gets up entirely and is engaged. He looks at
the sheets in her hand.

MICHAEL

A few days now. You were right about
the solar storm last week. We saw
two small eruptions, close in time.
They were only eight minutes apart.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

You didn't move your equipment? The last few days to pack up or anything? This stuff hasn't been moved?

MICHAEL

No. Why?

JOHANNA

This isn't the only bit. I gave her three hundred pages worth.

MICHAEL

Indeed.

JOHANNA

Did you read them? Those two small storms aren't the point. Its the threat of a third.

MICHAEL

We're in constant communication with NASA. They are aware, of course and are monitoring the solar storm from space.

JOHANNA

I need a proper lab. Leave a note for George.

MICHAEL

Why?

EXT.

Still the usual daylight, sun hung low giving off a pink hue. The mountain range is off in the distance, B15, as it's called. B15 is a mammoth iceberg. It looms over the camps, ever so slowly shifting and causing these great sound effects.

Johanna and Michael ride snowmobiles across the thick ice. Sprays of ice hit the camera as they make their way to the main center of McMurdo.

IT LOOKS LIKE A MINING TOWN. CATERPILLAR EQUIPMENT, BOBCATS AND CONSTRUCTION TRUCKS LITTER THE LANDSCAPE. THERE IS CONSTRUCTION MESS AND DIRT EVERYWHERE. THERE ARE DOZENS OF OUT BUILDINGS SEPARATE FROM THE MAIN BUILDING. TRUCKS AND SNOWPLOWS LINE UP ALL AROUND THE OUTSKIRTS OF CAMP. BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE CAMP IS ALL WHITE AND PRISTINE. BUT INSIDE IT IS DIRTY, DINGY.

(CONTINUED)

INT. Johanna's room.

They are poring over her research notes and making notes at different intervals.

JOHANNA

Here. I thought it was a mistake.

MICHAEL

Johanna, Dr. A gave this to me yesterday. She thought it could indicate an impending earthquake or an eruption on Erebus.

JOHANNA

I gave this report to her two days ago. It isn't an earthquake, Michael. It's a solar storm. A huge, unprecedented solar eruption. This thing is larger than the storm on Jupiter, which storm is ten times the size of our planet.

THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE DESK WHICH IS NO LONGER NEAT BUT SCATTERED WITH PAGES OF DATA. MICHAEL RUBS HIS FACE.

MICHAEL

I'm aware, Joey. Like I said, NASA has all of this, if not more. They have satellites monitoring the sun at all times.

JOHANNA

Yes, but... Two years ago we had a massive solar storm that barely missed us. NASA waited two years to inform the public because of mass hysteria.

MICHAEL

We were fine. Nothing happened.

JOHANNA

I'm not confident that's true.

MICHAEL

In fact, NASA has the Solar Dynamics Observatory. I'm sure they know what you know, Jo.

JOHANNA

On July 23, 2012, the most powerful solar storm in over 150 years came

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA (cont'd)
pretty damn close to sending us
into the middle ages.

MICHAEL
It didn't because?

JOHANNA
Because it was a week late. Had it
happened say, July 16, we would
have been hit. Directly hit. The
spot on the sun would have been
directed towards Earth.

MICHAEL
And now? This isn't July.

JOHANNA
Summer and heat aren't the factors,
here. In 1859, the Carrington
Event. There was an X-Class Coronal
Mass Ejection. It was the most
powerful on record.

MICHAEL
Right. And we're still here.

JOHANNA
At the time, it was so severe, the
storm lit telegraph wires on fire.
Even after they were unplugged.

MICHAEL
Right. I've studied that as well.

JOHANNA
Depending on how hot this gets,
there could be wildfires and all
kinds of ugly Mother Nature.
Anything that plugs into a wall
will be fried. Anything. All
communication. Our entire global
network and infrastructure gone
like it never existed.

MICHAEL
I also believe NASA has systems put
in place now. Australia does. I'm
sure England as well.

JOHANNA
Yes. Yes they do. My question to
you is the same as I posed to Dr.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA (cont'd)

A. What if those systems fail?
These cannot be stopped, only
predicted.

MICHAEL

Jo.

JOHANNA

Don't.

MICHAEL

Johanna.

JOHANNA

Michael, do you think NASA would
tell us? Risk the panic?

MICHAEL

They are our colleagues. And
frankly, I'm Australian so I don't
necessarily answer to NASA. Neither
do you.

JOHANNA

Dr. Audibert does.

They stare at each other. They look at each other knowingly.

JOHANNA

I'm not a 'Doomsday Prepper' and
you know that. My concern is
getting stranded here with little
to no way back to the mainland,
even if it only for an additional
week. What if it's a month? Can you
leave Violet in the care of those
people that long?

MICHAEL

I need to get George. We need to
bend Dr. A's ear on this. We have
hundreds of people on this base
alone and we can't all be stuck
here. I can't be stuck here.

JOHANNA

I told Dr. A about this already.

Michael looks at her, shocked.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

You had the data in your room! I gave it directly to her and she punished me. She sent me to Happy Campers, which is the fifth time by the way, that she has subjected me to that two day tutorial of life at MacTown. I've been here five months and my last week during the biggest event we have ever seen and she shoved me out with a bucket over my head!

MICHAEL

I'm sure she has her reasons. She wanted me to see this.

JOHANNA

Reasons. Indeed. She called me meek, Mike.

MICHAEL

She wanted me to see this. We need to talk to her, right now.

Johanna calms down and takes a series of deep breaths. She gathers her materials. Michael rolls a series of papers into a cardboard container that he stuffs into a pack. He puts the pack on his back.

JOHANNA

I agree. This should not be ignored. I hate speaking in public. Hate it. Apparently, I need to make my voice heard. I need to speak clearly with conviction.

MICHAEL

Joey, just explain it like you did with a minute ago. Obviously, she is aware of the importance. This could strand us here!

JOHANNA

I agree. We need an exit plan. We need a town hall meeting. Without communication or power, we... We could be stranded here.

MICHAEL

Violet is alone, Joey.

Johanna softens her look.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Her grandparents came in sometime today to keep her until I get back. They're waiting for me in Christchurch. I have to get to her.

Beyond the obvious sadness after losing his wife, there is another element to Michael's emotions. When he talks about the grandparents being there, he is at once glad they are but at the same time alarmed. This is not a good relationship.

DR. AUDIBERT'S OFFICE

INT.

It is the middle of the night. MacTown is quiet for the most part. Dr. A is awake and standing at her desk in her robe. Johanna and Michael are on the other side pointing to the data sheets. It is still. Dr. A is breathing steadily and then looks to the pair across the desk.

DR. A

I sent this report to our home office. The official statement is that it is winter in the northern hemisphere and the chances of this amounting to anything are minuscule.

JOHANNA

So they do what they did before?
Say nothing?

DR. A

That is the official position.

MICHAEL

Angela, you gave this to me. Why?
If we're just going to pretend it isn't happening.

DR. A

I thought you could give backup to the research.

MICHAEL

If communication is disrupted we could be stranded here.

JOHANNA

What if it doesn't pass? What we're not lucky?

(CONTINUED)

DR. A
Now you have an opinion?

JOHANNA
I handed it to you myself.

DR. A
That is all? You handed it to me?

JOHANNA
What was I supposed to do? You sent me to the welcome wagon and then dismantled my lab!

DR. A
You have yet to speak about any of your research. Just paper after paper. Is this a hobby for you?

MICHAEL
We're getting off topic.

Johanna leans across the desk, inches from Dr. Audibert's face.

JOHANNA
A coronal mass ejection erupted two days ago. A second solar storm that is bigger, stronger and infinitely more powerful than the one in 2012 will erupt in one to five days' time. The majority of this base won't be leaving until the following day. Worldwide communications will be non-existent. Here. There. Up top, all of it. We could be stranded here if we don't act swiftly.

DR. A
We're talking a widespread blackout?

JOHANNA
Yes. Though I would love to be wrong.

MICHAEL
Do you think you're wrong?

JOHANNA
No. I do not.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

It may interest you to know that I have been and am always in constant contact with a variety of scientists and with NASA.

JOHANNA

I understand.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

It may also interest you to know that we've already begun evacuation plans in the event of a larger more damaging storm.

JOHANNA

Oh. Well, then good.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

We are about to have a meeting with all personnel. I will inform Staff Sergeant Willard that you would like to claim your credit.

JOHANNA

Doctor. This isn't about credit.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

Of course, it is.

TOWN HALL

INT. Early Hours.

The conference room at McMurdo is a shell of a space. It is packed with people. Johanna is off to the side with a cluster of other people reading charts. There is a distinct grouping order. The scientists form packs within their groups. Cell biologists cluster together within their groups. Truckers come in closer from maintenance. Even at the bottom of the world there is a higher order and like-grouping.

STAFF SGT. WILLARD

Quiet down. As you know, I am Staff Sgt. Dan Willard. Earlier today, scientists discovered a massive solar storm.

People are talking over him and among themselves. Hands raise in the air as objections start flying.

(CONTINUED)

STAFF SGT. WILLARD

Quiet! Our reaction to this is the same as any weather report. The winter is coming. We have two-hundred and twenty two people on base. The winter season is already approaching. All groups will pack for mass evacuation as of tomorrow starting at noon. I have some of our physicists here to explain more.

Johanna and several other scientists take the stage. There are slides behind them showing the sun and a slow-motion flare. The crowd quiets down marginally.

DR. PATRICK CHASE

Hello. I am Dr. Patrick Chase. I am a physicist and researcher with NSF. One my colleagues, Dr. Johanna Masters will join us in a moment. She is the physicist that discovered the CME. Please give her your undivided attention.

JOHANNA

Hello. Thank you Dr. Chase. A CME, or a coronal mass ejection is a solar flare. A storm on the sun. This flare is the largest we've seen. Though CME'S have been reported in the past, this one is particularly problematic. Our team believes the chances for disruption are great.

Johanna addresses the screen behind her. She is visibly nervous. Her voice cracks as she speaks. The graphic behind the podium shows a massive solar flare erupting one frame at a time. She speaks with a tone a little louder than usual, taking great care to be heard. Public speaking is terrifying for her.

JOHANNA

This graphic shows the flare from July 2012. We narrowly missed it by one week. Had this storm erupted a week before, our global communications systems would have collapsed. Any electrical power source would cease to exist.

(CONTINUED)

The camera pans over the crowd which has grown somber and attentive. All eyes are on Johanna. She swallows hard and looks noticeably nervous. She grabs the edges of the podium and grips tight. Dr. A narrows her eyes.

JOHANNA

It is very unlikely we will miss this one. We cannot assume we will be lucky this time around. Core temperatures are already raised from the smaller flare just two days ago. We have experienced a total of four smaller flares which had cleared the interplanetary medium. I'm going to hand over the podium to Dr. Michael Bryant. Most of you know Mike, but for those who don't he is world-renowned geologist specializing in volcanic activity and geophysics.

Michael takes the podium. He is far more at ease than Johanna. He is at ease and yet commanding attention. Michael uses the slides and graphs behind him expertly. His job now is to explain the situation in the simplest way to not just a room full of scientists, but to the supporting staff at McMurdo which includes plumbing, construction and drivers.

MICHAEL

What this means for us could be catastrophic. As you know, we are sitting on an ice cap. We are here in the middle of the Ross Sea. Should we remain here, not only could our communication systems be downed in this storm, but the very base where we sit could become uninhabitable. If temperatures increase further, even temporarily, we could find ourselves at the bottom of the Ross Sea.

The crowd starts to murmur and shift around. Michael maintains his cool. He appears very comfortable in front of the crowd.

MICHAEL

We have no data to show us what would happen. A solar storm can only be predicted, not prevented. To err on the side of caution, we need to assume the worst. We have no room for error. I want to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
address the situation after
evacuation. The likelihood of
communication being down is likely.
You will want to communicate with
your families. Your station leader
will have that information for you
when you meet after this meeting.

MICHAEL STEPS AWAY FROM THE PODIUM AND THE ROOM REMAINS
QUIET. THE GRAPHIC BEHIND THE PODIUM CONTINUES TO ROLL IN
SLOW MOTION. IT SHOWS A BRIGHT RED/ORANGE SUN. A STORM
SWIRLING IN SLOW MOTION LEADING INTO AN ERUPTION. THE FLARE
GOES RIGHT TO THE CAMERA AS THE CAMERA GETS CLOSER AND
CLOSER TO RED.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

THE DOCKS

Ext. Day. - New Zealand.

Violet is pulling fishing net from the water. She is
struggling a little. A man is watching her nearby, also
pulling the nets. They continue their work for a minute then
he calls out to her. She slips and falls. He stops what he
is doing and runs over to her.

COOPER
Honey, you all right there?

VIOLET
I'm fine, Cooper, okay!

Cooper helps her to her feet. Violet is noticeably annoyed.
She gets to her feet and he helps her with her nets.

COOPER
Remember to ground your right foot.

VIOLET
I know.

COOPER
I know you know, that's why I
didn't say anything until you broke
my dock with your hump.

Violet drops the net. She doesn't walk away, but she turns
like she will. She faces the house where she is staying up
off the beach. Cooper clearly knows her very well, and he
keeps working.

(CONTINUED)

COOPER

I know you're not about to run away
and leave me to this mess by
myself.

VIOLET

No. I don't have anywhere to go,
anyways.

COOPER

Take this end. Don't give me
that. You've been to a thousand
places and each of them would
welcome you with open arms while
you wait for your dad. That
includes this place.

Together they work in tandem to pull in large nets filled
with fish. The fish are not alive like they should be. Most
of them are dead right out of the water.

VIOLET

What's wrong? Why are they dead?

COOPER

I don't know, Vi. The other nets
are just as useless. Been like this
for two days now.

VIOLET

Really?

There is noticeable tension here.

CAMERA PANS TO THE WATER AND THEN FURTHER OUT TO THE OCEAN.
WE SEE DEAD FISH IN THE NET TO EVENTUALLY WHALES JUMPING OUT
OF THE WATER.

VIOLET AND COOPER HAVE JUST FINISHED CLEANING UP THE DOCK.
VIOLET IS CLEANING IT WITH A HOSE WHEN HER GRANDMOTHER CALLS
FOR HER.

COOPER

It's okay. I'll finish up.

VIOLET

I don't want to go back there. I'd
rather clean up fish guts.

COOPER

You know Vi, how sorry I am.

(CONTINUED)

VIOLET
I know. Thanks.

COOPER
I've known your parents since..
Well...

VIOLET
Before I was born?

COOPER NODS AND THEY KEEP CLEANING, HAULING THE GEAR TO ONE OF COOPER'S SHEDS.

THE GRANDMOTHER CALLS AGAIN, ANGRIER. VIOLET LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ABOUT TO BE TORTURED.

COOPER
My point is... You know. Your dad used to come here fishing with his parents. I grew up in that house.

VIOLET
Really?

COOPER
Oh, yes. You been sleepin' in my room all these year now!

VIOLET SMILES

COOPER
Yeah. My parents moved further inland the same summer your mom and dad showed up with her belly huge. Like she swallowed a beach ball. They've been coming back to that house ever since.

VIOLET
Why didn't you stay there?

COOPER
Ah. I would sleep on the ocean if I could. Closet thing I got is my boat. I got used to it when I was probably just a little older than you. I can't sleep if the floor's not movin'.

Violet offers a smile.

VIOLET TAKES FOOD FROM THE STORAGE CLOSET AND VERY SPECIFICALLY GIVES HIS TWO DOGS TREATS. SHE CHECKS THEIR PAWS AND TEETH WHILE HE SPEAKS TO HER.

(CONTINUED)

COOPER
Your mom just loved animals, too.

VIOLET
Yeah.

COOPER
You're so much like her.

VIOLET NODS. PAUSES WHAT SHE IS DOING. FROZEN IN THOUGHT.

COOPER
Your mom was my friend, too. You know, she helped us get all these boats ready, years ago? Your dad was on the Pole and she was with you. You were just a nugget. She helped me start this little thing. Renting boats. Gear. Taught me more about fish than...

HIS VOICE BREAKS. VIOLET STANDS. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, HOLDING BACK THEIR MUCH-NEEDED BREAKDOWN.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN TO THEIR WATERY FACES.

CAMERA ZOOMS OUT TO GRANDMOTHER INTERRUPTING THEM, SLAPPING AT COOPER.

VIOLET TRIES TO INTERVENE, THE DOGS GROWL.

JUNE
Stay away from my grandchild!

VIOLET
Grandma, it's okay. I've known him forever! That's Cooper. He owns...

JUNE
I called you. I called you to dinner twice! Now you get to the house and clean up! Oh, you smell like a fishery!

COOPER
Ma'am? Ma'am? Listen. My name is Cooper Surrey. Okay? I have known your daughter and son-in-law for a really long time. We were all friends.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

You know nothing! You didn't know her. No one knew her. Now, stay away. Stay away or I will call the police!

GRANDMOTHER DRAGS VIOLET AWAY. COOPER TRIES TO CALM DOWN THE DOGS. THEY GIVE EACH OTHER ONE FINAL KNOWING LOOK. VIOLET STOPS WALKING. SHE LOOKS AT HIM, DEAD ON.

VIOLET

Why do you think all the fish died, Coop?

COOPER

I don't know honey. I don't know.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SEE VIOLET BEING CHASTISED BY HER GRANDMOTHER. THEY STRUGGLE ALL THE WAY UP TO THE HOUSE. COOPER WATCHES UNTIL THEY DISAPPEAR BEHIND THE DOOR. HE THEN STARES OUT AT THE WATER. THE DOGS NUZZLE HIS LEGS.

RED DAWN

INT. McMurdo Station.

Camera PULLS BACK from red to the back of a red parka. There are a dozen people in red parkas in line. They are standing and waiting at a long station desk with computers. The group sitting at the computers types as personal message to their loved ones with a standardized message that was written by Dr. AUDIBERT. One group stands up and exits to the left. The next in line sits down in sync and begins their messages. That group leaves, and the third sits down. Johanna is in this group.

She begins typing with everyone else. She logs into her email and sees one from her mother. The camera is focused on the screen. A voice button is glowing. Johanna puts on headphones and clicks the button. It is the voice of her mother. As she listens, she reads the accompanying email which is verbatim what is spoken.

Hello, darling. Its mum of course.
I was thinking of you today. We had a bit of snow come in. I know how you love it when it covers the rooftops. Mrs. Moriarty down the road took some photos and said she would send them to your sister and Fiona would then send them to you. After she has, then you can describe it to me. You know how I enjoy that. You've always had such

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TEASER (cont'd)

a lovely speaking voice. I suppose you will be home quite soon and I am glad for that. I love you, Johanna. Take good care, darling.

Johanna stares at the screen for a moment, then takes off her headphones. She goes back into her email. There isn't one from her sister. Johanna then reaches for the microphone that sits apart from the machine. Her three minutes are nearly up. She clears her throat.

JOHANNA

Hi, mum. I'm actually coming home a few days early. A storm is coming and they thought it right to head back sooner. Listen, I want you to unplug everything, alright? Especially the computers in dad's work room. Just please do as I ask and I will explain once at home. It is important, understand? The radar, everything. I don't want anything ruined if the storm worsens if that makes sense. Have Fiona do it. Also, have her fetch batteries and put them in the old walkies and radio and also flashlights. Have her get loads of them. Water, extra food and supplies like tissue paper and the like. Erm, and oil for the lamps. Please tell her I said thank you for the lovely photos. They were beautiful. They do make me sick for home. Please have her do this, all right?

UNKNOWN MAN

What is she doing?

Johanna stops speaking.

UNKNOWN MAN

What are you doing? We can't make recordings, just type.

JOHANNA

Said who?

UNKNOWN MAN

No one said we could. I would have done that myself!

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

Okay, then.

Johanna continues. She brings the microphone to her face and again begins to speak. The man rips the microphone from her and she stands up. A physical altercation breaks out. Johanna's face twists. They shove one another. Usually docile and very well mannered, Johanna snaps. She gets a hold of the microphone. She smacks the man over the head with the microphone he is trying to take from her. People rush to break it up and pull them apart. The man backhands her in the face, hard.

UNKNOWN PERSON/FRANK

She can't do that! Our families deserve the truth! She can't do that! My wife would like to hear from me, too! What makes you special?

The crowd pulls them apart but Johanna struggles to be released and finally frees herself. She shoves past the toppled chairs and people. Johanna reaches over a shoulder and hits SEND. She has a bit of blood on her lip. She wipes it with her finger and shoves past the crowd and approaches the man who assaulted her. He is still screaming about this injustice.

JOHANNA

My mother is blind!

UNKNOWN PERSON

I don't care if she's deaf and dumb!

Johanna lunges at him but is caught by the shoulder and brought backwards by an authority.

Johanna shoves the hand away from her and addresses them directly. Dr. AUDIBERT is witnessing the confrontation.

JOHANNA

If her program translates the text improperly, then it is meaningless. It was agreed I only communicate with her verbally so as not to risk an incorrect translation.

UNKNOWN PERSON

We all want to talk to our families and you're taking special privilege...

DR. A

Frank.

The unknown man has now been identified as 'Frank' by Dr. Audibert. He is breathing hard but shrugs off the people keeping him restrained. There is commotion in the background as groups of people move with purpose.

FRANK

It isn't fair, Angela. It's not right. I got a wife and three kids. I think they should be able to hear my voice, too. It could be the last time. Any of us. We have family, too, dammit. We have family, too.

Frank breaks down in tears. The people holding him back now help him to his feet and walk him away. Dr. A joins them and comforts Frank. They walk down a corridor, leaving Johanna behind. People scramble to get the chairs back up. A voice calls out as the chairs scrape and clunk back into their positions.

VOICE

Okay, people. Keep it going. Short and sweet.

JOHANNA'S ROOM

INT.

Johanna is packing. The printer is furiously printing page upon page of data. Johanna zips her last pack and sits it neatly on top of the other duffel by the door. Her room is now bare except for the photo in her hand. It is the one of three women and a man; Johanna, her father, her mother and sister. She looks at it when there is a knock at the door.

Johanna looks over to see Dr. A letting herself in but slowly, not pushing, but appearing friendly.

DR. A

I've known Frank for over ten years.

Johanna nods. There is still dried blood on her lip.

DR. A

I have never heard him say more than a few words at a time, before today.

Johanna pays attention, staying rigid and emotionless.

(CONTINUED)

DR. A

I guess I don't want you thinking less of Frank. He is a brilliant physicist. Molecules. He is very embarrassed for his behavior.

Johanna nods.

DR. A

Is that your family?

Dr. AUDIBERT points to the photo in Johanna's hands. Johanna looks surprised. Dr. AUDIBERT is not a personal sort of person. She has a never gotten personal before. Johanna seems surprised by this.

JOHANNA

Yes. Erm, my father is deceased. This is my favorite photo of us.

DR. A

Yes, of course. I've read his work on neutrinos. He is well-known and respected.

JOHANNA

Yes. He was a professor at Vauxhall College. I was named after him. My mother says we're quite alike.

DR. A

Ah. Joseph/Johanna. I hadn't made the connection.

JOHANNA

This is my mother, Beatrice. My sister, Fiona.

DR. A

Lovely family. I didn't realize your mother is blind. I apologize, I wasn't aware.

JOHANNA

Quite all right. She was in the Peace Corps. That's how she and dad met. She wasn't born blind. Whilst in Africa she contracted a fever and subsequently lost her sight. She gets on fine.

(CONTINUED)

DR. A
You worry about her, of course.

JOHANNA
We all worry for someone.

Dr. Audibert nods, stands and begins to leave the room. She pauses at the doorway and turns back to address Johanna once more.

DR. A
Well done earlier, by the way. You took the podium with grace.

DR. AUDIBERT LEAVES THE ROOM.

THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN TO THE PHOTO IN JOHANNA'S HAND. IT FREEZES ON THE FACES OF THE FAMILY, THEIR SMILES. IT SHOWS HER FATHER, MOTHER, SISTER AND JOHANNA.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

ENGLISH GARDEN

EXT. Day. - The Cotswolds, rural England.

Small snow flurries dance around a picket fence. A gate clatters back and forth in the wind.

INT. - Beatrice's House.

A woman is standing at the sink in a neat little kitchen. She is washing dishes. She seems to be looking out of the window. A faint sound of the garden gate can be heard creaking, then shutting beyond the sound of the running water. Footfalls can be heard, then another door opening. A sound comes from the other room, and the woman calls out.

BEATRICE
I think that gate needs a new latch.

FIONA
The latch is fine, mum.

BEATRICE
Is it? The wind must be awfully potent then.

(CONTINUED)

FIONA

Not really.

Fiona is Beatrice's daughter, Johanna's sister. There is a definite resemblance. Fiona and Beatrice are similar in stature. Graceful. Fiona removes her scarf, coat and boots by the door. She then goes fully into the kitchen and begins to unload an armful of groceries.

BEATRICE

Do you know if Mrs. Moriarty's boy is back at school yet? Did she mention it when you saw her yesterday?

FIONA

I wouldn't know, mum.

BEATRICE

So, she didn't say? Or he wasn't there?

Fiona looks at her mother, noticeably annoyed. This appears to be old hat between them. A back-and-forth dance that Fiona is tired of dancing.

FIONA

Ring her and ask. I don't think the latch needs replacing.

BEATRICE

Thank you, darling.

FIONA

Besides, if you fix it, how will you know when someone's come through?

BEATRICE

So, it does need fixing?

FIONA

Mum.

BEATRICE

I can tell just fine. I'd rather not hear it knocking about all day until it finally gives out.

FIONA

I will call her and ask if he's still handy.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Thank you.

Fiona finishes putting away the groceries. She then heads out of the kitchen as her mother shuts off the water and dries her hands. Beatrice turns around to face her daughter's direction. It is now very clear that Beatrice is blind. Even still, it's as if she can see straight through her daughter. Fiona recognizes this.

FIONA

What?

BEATRICE

Nothing. Nothing at all.

Fiona looks at her mother, knowing full well this is not nothing at all.

BEATRICE

I'm putting a stew on for supper.

FIONA

Great.

Fiona continues out of the room, but barely makes it to the hall when her mother continues.

BEATRICE

Thank you, by the way. For sending the photos to your sister. I sent her a message just before you came home.

Fiona stops full on. She barely moves.

BEATRICE

She'll be home in a week or so. I'm sure she misses home. Being in that inhospitable place for six months. I'll be happy when we're all here, together.

Fiona finally begins to walk again and quietly goes into her room, then shuts the door.

CAMERA PANS. WE SEE THE LIVING ROOM - WHICH IS SPOTLESS - METICULOUSLY ORGANIZED. THE FURNITURE IS ARRANGED WITH GENEROUS GAPS FOR WALKING BETWEEN PIECES. PHOTOS HANG ON THE WALLS AND SIT ON A PIANO. THE WIND PICKS UP, AND YOU CAN HEAR IT WHISTLE. BEATRICE SITS DOWN ON A COMFORTABLE CHAIR, PICKS UP A BOOK, AND BEGINS TO FOLLOW THE PAGES WITH HER FINGER, READING IN BRAILLE. WE CAN HEAR THE GATE KNOCK. EACH

(CONTINUED)

TIME IT IS A LITTLE LOUDER AND MORE NOTICEABLE FROM BEATRICE'S EARS. IT BEGINS FAINT AND THEN GROWS LOUDER.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN TO HER FINGER, FOLLOWING THE WORDS IN HER BOOK. EVERY TIME THE GATE CREAKS, A SLIGHT TWITCH HAPPENS IN HER FACE. THIS HAPPENS THREE MORE TIMES.

FIONA RIPS HER DOOR OPEN. SHE STOMPS INTO THE KITCHEN AND PICKS UP THE PHONE.

FIONA

HI MRS. MORIARTY. ITS FIONA MASTERS, HOW ARE YOU? NO, WE'RE FINE HERE. MY MOTHER WONDERED IF CARL IS STILL HOME OR HAS HE GONE BACK TO SCHOOL?

[PAUSE]

GREAT, IF POSSIBLE, DO YOU THINK HE COULD MEND OUR GARDEN GATE? IT HAS A TERRIBLE SQUEAK.

[PAUSE]

WE WOULD BE EVER GRATEFUL. YES. IT DOES DRIVE HER A BIT MAD, INDEED.

[PAUSE]

LOVELY. THANKS SO MUCH. MHM. BYE-BYE.

FIONA

She said he'd come by after his supper.

BEATRICE

Thanks ever so much. IT IS A BIT MADDENING.

EXT. DAY. - LIGHT SNOWING.

CAMERA PANS TO THE GARDEN GATE, BLOWING BACK AND FORTH, MAKING WHAT SOUNDS LIKE A TERRIBLE RACKET. THE SNOW SWIRLS HARDER AND FASTER, THE CREAKING GROWING. CAMERA FOLLOWS THE PACE OF THE FLURRIES FROM THE GATE TO A SWIRL THEY ARE MAKING ON THE COBBLESTONE PATHWAY. CAMERA SMASHES IN TO THE SNOWY PATHWAY.

CAMERA ZOOMS OUT FROM THE FLURRIES IN THE GARDEN TO REVEAL HARSHER FLURRIES IN THE ANTARCTIC.

ESCAPE

EXT. McMurdo Base.

Snow flurries swirl, wind is picking up. Trucks are moving around the edges of camp, hauling various types of equipment. A large military plane sits out closer to where the ugly dirt of the camp washes clean again with fresh ice and snow. A HUGE truck haul passengers to and from the plane called IVAN THE TERRABUS. It is one of only seven in the world. It is a huge monster of a truck that doesn't look like anything else in the world. People are working swiftly.

The wind picks up momentum. Bleak.

INT. -Lab.

Several military personnel are talking animatedly. In the background:

We only have the one.

They are refusing to leave.

What about supplies?

We have field offices that haven't checked in.

What about the other sites? The Italian base isn't evacuating.

There are several military personnel talking in increasing voices. Dr. Audibert and a dozen other leaders are listening to their debate.

SUPERIMPOSE: "PETER FEEHAN, MACTOWN FIRE CHIEF, UNITED STATES."

F.C. FEEHAN

We have a separation in ranks. My department is the last to go, its protocol.

COL. FERNANDEZ

There are two other sites here. There is no way we can fit them all for a mass evac.

DR. ADAM NOWITSKY

Scientists have been wrong in the past. Dedicated, published scientists with long notable careers.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT
Are you questioning Dr. Masters?

DR. ADAM NOWITSKY
Yes! It is my job description to question!

COL. FERNANDEZ
We simply don't have the resources for an evacuation of this scale.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT
There aren't enough supplies if we don't.

DR. ADAM NOWITSKY
This is every scientist's dream! We could learn much more by staying than by running with the pack. Energy, global warming, we could provide answers to Earth's greatest dilemmas.

COL. FERNANDEZ
I appreciate your enthusiasm, Doctor, but we can't pick and choose who stays and faces certain death.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT
That is precisely what is being done!

DR. ADAM NOWITSKY
I'm surprised at you, Angela. I'd think as a fellow scientist...

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT
And as a scientist, you need to understand that for every twenty doctors you keep here, you must keep a civilian. An engineer. A plumber. By risking your life, you in turn risk theirs.

The room quiets down. There is a list of civilians in a stack of papers. The colonel looks down at it and nods. Dr. Nowitsky looks at the same paper.

DR. ADAM NOWITSKY
A small price to pay.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT
On someone else's credit.

Terry walks frantically down the corridor to Johanna's room.
Another woman is in there.

TERRY
Where's Johanna? Wait, who are you?

WOMAN
I'm her roommate. Who the hell are you?

TERRY
Joey has a roommate?

WOMAN
Am I invisible?

TERRY
No, you're actually pretty cute. I wouldn't say you're invisible at all.

WOMAN
Get the hell outta here!

JOHANNA
What's going on?

TERRY
You have a roommate?

WOMAN
Obviously, you dipshit!

JOHANNA
K.C. You are mean as hell today.
And, what are you doing? We leave in ten minutes. Why aren't you packed?

SUPERIMPOSE: "KACEY-CHRISTINE CHILDS -K.C.- FIREFIGHTER, UNITED STATES."

Terry hands Johanna a piece of paper. It has a huge stamp on it.

JOHANNA
What is this?

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

I'm staying behind.

JOHANNA

What? No! They said we're all evacuated.

K.C.

We're special. They can't run this base without big timers like us.

JOHANNA

No, this isn't right.

K.C.

What are you in for?

TERRY

I guess they need a computer guy.

K.C.

Tsk.

TERRY

What about you? I never even saw you before.

K.C.

Firehouse. I'm usually in building 201. I only come back to 155 when I'm the only female.

JOHANNA

No. They can't do this.

K.C.

They did. Nothing you say is going to change their minds. Probably better this way. I don't play well up top.

Johanna runs down corridor after corridor. Everything is empty. She reaches Col. Fernandez's room. It isn't empty but no one is there. She keeps running until she finds two officers in uniform.

JOHANNA

Who is in charge of this? The list? They made a mistake. They're making a mistake.

(An alarm goes off. People start rushing the exits. A commanding voice spills into the halls.)

(CONTINUED)

Departure. The bus to Pegasus leaves in ten minutes. All scheduled personnel report to your leader.

Johanna runs full on through the building to a group of red parkas. She fights her way to the front. Dr. Audibert is there giving instructions.

JOHANNA

Please. Please move. This isn't right. Please. Dr. A!

Dr. Audibert quiets momentarily but THEN SCOLDS Johanna.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

Calm yourself, Dr. Masters. He dressed out! This is not a drill!

JOHANNA

He has to get home! He has a daughter!

The group cuts a path so Johanna can get to the front.

DR. A

We all have someone or something. Dr. Bryant is skilled and highly trained. He is needed here. This isn't what I meant by using your voice, Joey. Now stop being disruptive so these people can get back to the ice runway safely.

JOHANNA

I'll stay! Me. I volunteer. Not Mike.

DR. A

That is not your decision to make. Go, now. That is an order, Johanna.

JOHANNA

I said... I volunteer. Dr. Bryant should be with his family.

The crowd begins to move out of the building in an organized fashion. The wind picks up and howls through the door.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

If I could replace Mike, if, I still wouldn't choose you, Joey. You're smart, but this environment is not a place where you thrive.

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

You said in your report, I believe it was, "Dr. Masters needs to not only find her voice but use it." I am using it now. I volunteer to stay behind.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

What do you think you can do here? Hmm? Mike has fifteen years' experience in the harshest terrain on this planet. He has spent more time in the wilderness than all of your college years combined. He is an asset. You are a risk and a hindrance. Now you're adding fool to the list.

JOHANNA

I can help. I am stronger than you think.

DR. ANGELA AUDIBERT

No, Joey. You're just more arrogant than you think. Suit up. Your bus to William's airfield leaves shortly. Listen here, listen to me carefully, you will be on it.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO OVERHEAD. PEOPLE ARE SCURRYING LIKE MICE IN A MAZE. RED COATS IN ONE DIRECTION. ORANGE IN ANOTHER. THEY ALL BEGIN THEIR MASS EXODUS TO THE BIG RED BUS CALLED IVAN THE TERRABUS.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

INT. Night. - Beatrice's House.

Beatrice is layering a scarf around her neck. The wind can be heard howling through the old windows. Fiona is watching her. Someone is outside [Mrs. Moriarty's son] fixing the gate.

FIONA

Mum, Carl is doing fine on his own. Don't go bothering him.

BEATRICE

I'm sure he is, darling.

FIONA

Then what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE
Dad's office. If you must know.

Fiona snorts. There is a subtle look to Beatrice's face when she hears it.

Beatrice continues out of the door despite Fiona's mild protests.

BEATRICE
Leave the telly off, darling.

FIONA
Because Jo said so?

EXT. Night.

Beatrice walks outside in the cold to have a small talk with Carl.

BEATRICE
Oh, Carl, thank you for coming here so very late.

CARL
No worries at all Mrs. Masters.

BEATRICE
See Fiona when you're done for a cup of tea.

CARL
Yes, ma'am.

BEATRICE
Also, Carl?

CARL
Yes, Ma'am?

BEATRICE
Could you flip the breaker switch on Dr. Master's study on your way home?

CARL
Yes, ma'am. The one on the wall with the ivy?

BEATRICE
That's the one.

CARL

Yes, of course, ma'am.

BEATRICE

I thank you.

EXT. Night.

Beatrice heads down the pathway to a very small cottage like structure. CAMERA follows her. She goes routine from opening the door, to latching it back into place.

INT. Night.

This is her late husband's study. It appears ancient and almost lopsided. It has stacks of boxes and papers, walls lined with degrees covered in newspaper clippings. Every available inch is covered in books and pages and photos. Beatrice moves through the cluttered space expertly. She unplugs the computers with a delicate hand, and wraps the cords. She sits back into an old comfortable-looking leather chair. It is definitely cold, but she doesn't appear bothered. She reaches for the papers and sifts through them until she uncovers a book. On the cover is her husband, and the title is paired in Braille. She cracks open the cover and begins to follow a line with her finger. It is the dedication.

'To my Bea. The light that illuminates all of the things that remain as yet unseen.'

INT. Night. - Beatrice's house.

Fiona hands Carl a 20 note. He looks at the kettle on the stove. It isn't boiling. Fiona tries to usher him out of the house.

CARL

Cheers, Thanks. Your mum said..

FIONA

'Have some tea' is her polite way of saying collect your money.

CARL

Right.

FIONA

I'm not making you tea.

CARL

I'm not asking. She asked me to flip off the switch to the breaker in your dad's office.

(CONTINUED)

FIONA
For fuck's sake.

CARL
What is she on about?

FIONA
She treats her like we ought to just bow down because she's a bloody doctor. Not a real one, mind, just someone who stayed in school to stare at the sky.

CARL
Who? Joey? Well, I dunno she is actually a bloody doctor, yeah?

FIONA
I'm not doing anything she asks.

CARL
Oh, right. This is about that chap she was going on with, yeah?

Fiona shoots him a dangerously hateful look. Her face is beautiful like her mother's, but Fiona has a fierceness that women find uneasy and that downright terrifies men.

EXT. Night.

Carl walks down the pathway and searches for the fuse box. He finds it entangled in the ivy and manages to flip it off.

INT. Beatrice is reading in Braille, and looks towards the window when she hears the power go off. She nods to herself and continues reading.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

KLARA'S KITCHEN

INT. Day. Kitchen. - New Zealand.

GRANDMOTHER
That is repulsive. How anyone can eat it is beyond me.

VIOLET
I actually like it.

Violet spreads a thick layer of vegemite on a piece of toast.

(CONTINUED)

GRANDMOTHER

Well, you just don't know any better. All of these years gallivanting all over the globe and hopping from place-to-place has left you without manners, poise, or palate my dear. I will remedy that as soon as we get to Dallas.

VIOLET

I like it here.

Grandfather enters from doorway.

GRANDFATHER

Of course you like it, there's no school, no discipline, no rules!

VIOLET

I go to school. We have rules, they're just different from yours.

GRANDMOTHER slaps Violet's face.

GRANDMOTHER

Talking back is the first rule, child. And, there will be no talking back. Now, run along and fetch the scissors. I think you need a haircut to tame that hair before we head home.

VIOLET

I'm not cutting my hair!

Violet starts to react, but instead withholds. She begins to leave the room, and looks at the mark on her face in the mirror on the opposite wall.

Violet stops on the stairs as she ascends, listening to them having a conversation.

GRANDMOTHER

No training. They have raised her like a common animal.

GRANDFATHER

Well, look at who she married.
(Screen changes to show Violet and her family together, at an earlier time. As the grandparents speak, the screen shows Violet and her parents

(CONTINUED)

flashing from time after
time.)

GRANDPARENTS VOICE OVER:

GRANDMOTHER

That man! Her father is so
irresponsible!

SCENE: VIOLET IS DOING HER HOMEWORK AS HER FATHER LOOKS AT
HIS STOP WATCH. VIOLET FINISHES AND RUNS OUTSIDE TO PLAY.

GRANDFATHER

He never had the chance to make any
money. He's supposed to be a
doctor, doesn't have a pot to piss
in. A waste of an education if you
ask me.

SCENE: VIOLET REMEMBERS HER FATHER TAKING A LEAK INTO A TREE
AND SHE SMILES TO HERSELF, FIGHTING BACK TEARS. THEY ARE ON
A MOUNTAIN RANGE, AND A BEAR CUB COMES OUT OF TREE LINE. HER
FATHER YELPS AND RUNS.

GRANDMOTHER

He cannot take care of her without
Klara here.

GRANDFATHER

I'm not sure either of 'em could,
June.

GRANDMOTHER/JUNE

Klara used to be so focused. Such
potential.

GRANDFATHER

Well June, like I said. When she
married him, she pissed all of that
away.

JUNE

I've had just about enough of your
language today. Talking filthy like
that.

GRANDFATHER

She had her own say too, honey. She
walked out of our lives all by
herself.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

He stole her. That's what he did.
He saw this young, beautiful girl
and he snatched her away..

GRANDFATHER/PHILIP

You can't steal someone that's gone
willingly, June. I've been telling
you this going on thirteen years
now.

JUNE

They couldn't take care of her
together as it is. Leaving her by
herself like this. What kind of a
man just ups and leaves his wife
and child?? He is not fit.

SCENE: VIOLET'S TEARS ARE FREE-FLOWING. SHE CLOSES HER EYES.
SHE RECALLS A MEMORY WHEN SHE WAS SICK. HER FATHER STAYED
NEXT TO HER ALL NIGHT HOLDING HER HAND. HE DIDN'T SLEEP. HE
WAS JUST THERE, HUMMING TO HER, STAYING BY HER SIDE. HER
EYES OPEN AND SHE SEES HIS FACE, RED-RIMMED EYES AND TIRED
BUT SMILING, UNSHAVEN AND EXHAUSTED. THRILLED THAT SHE IS
AWAKE AND APPEARS TO BE FEELING BETTER. CAMERA SMASHES TO
THE PRESENT WHEN SHE OPENS HER EYES IN THE MEMORY.

WE HEAR HER GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE IN A VOICE OVER.

GRANDMOTHER

We leave immediately. He swooped in
and took Klara from us. Now he
thinks he can just ruin another
young girl's life. He'll see.
Michael will never see her again,
so help me God.

MCMURDO COMMAND CENTER

INT. - McMurdo Base.

CHATTER IS HAPPENING IN THE BACKGROUND. VOICES ARE ANXIOUS,
SERIOUS. THERE ARE A DOZEN OR MORE PEOPLE IN THE ROOM
TALKING AT A RAPID PACE, CREATING AN AUDIBLE WHITE STATIC.

**SUPERIMPOSE: "SERGEANT DAVID THOMAS CATLIN, UNITED STATES
MARINE CORPS."**

SGT. CATLIN IS STANDING, ARMS AT HIS HIPS. HE IS
STONE-FACED, RIGID. THREE MEMBERS OF HIS TEAM ARE LOOKING AT
A WALL OF MONITORS, THEIR KEYBOARDS CLICKING. ALL EYES ARE
FORWARD. THE SCREENS SHOW VARIOUS AREAS OF THE GLOBE.
WEATHER PATTERNS. SOLAR PATTERNS. FLIGHT PATTERNS.
COMMUNICATIONS. GRIDS. NUMBERS.

(CONTINUED)

SGT. CATLIN

What about the other bases? Have we made contact? What are their plans?

LANCE CPL. BYRON

Concordia is riding it out. They have only a fifteen member team and they're confident it will pass.

CPL. LAWRY

Concordia is France and Italy. What about Sanae? The South African base?

LCPL. BYRON

I haven't heard from South Africa yet, sir. Princess Elizabeth had already evacuated.

CPL. LAWRY

Princess Elizabeth is in the northernmost region of the continent, Sir. Belgium built Liz only for the summer, so they were already prepared for evac.

SGT. CATLIN

Okay. So, they ended their term before the threat. Check on their supplies. What is the estimated time-table?

CPL. LAWRY

Sir, we're not getting further response. Other than Concordia, every one else is quiet, sir.

SGT. CATLIN

Good. Get that bus off the ground. I want this base at below half capacity before the inevitable dawn.

CPL. TABOR

Sir, The Princess Elizabeth is built only for summer research. They evacuated before the threat was announced. There should be no supplies left behind.

SGT. CATLIN

Very well.

(CONTINUED)

LCPL. BYRON

Sir, how do we respond should one of the other bases make contact?

SGT. CATLIN

You don't.

The officers side glance, unsure of his meaning.

SGT. CATLIN

Corporal Tabor, you will send notifications to all personnel on the pole that we have evacuated successfully, and are on our way north.

CPL. TABOR

Sir? I thought we were staying behind?

SGT. CATLIN

We are, Corporal. Transmit.

CPL. TABOR

Transmitting, sir.

CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE ROOM. THERMAL INDICATORS RISE WHILE A TEAM LOOKS AT VARIOUS COMPUTER SCREENS. NUMBERS ROLL UP AND DOWN ANOTHER SCREEN. A SEPARATE SCREEN SHOWS THE ENTIRE CONTINENT WITH PINS MARKING THE VARIOUS BASES AND COMMAND CENTERS. AN ADDITIONAL SCREEN SHOWS THE POSITION OF THE SUN IN RELATION TO THE GLOBE.

CAMERA zooms in to Terry, working on a computer panel. He is has been overhearing their discussion.

VIOLET'S ROOM

INT. Night. - Violet's bedroom.

Violet is sitting on her bed, reading an e-mail from her dad. She reads it aloud.

CAMERA PANS around room to collect images of Violet and her mother and father in happy times on mountains, in lakes, on boats and in the ocean. There are pictures taped to a well-worn suitcase.

Scene changes as the e-mail is read to the grandparents packing up her mother's things.

VIOLET'S VOICE OVER:

(CONTINUED)

Vi. I don't know what to tell you. A storm is coming, and I may not make it back home as scheduled. This isn't like other storms, Vi. This is a massive solar storm. Stay away from the cities. Stay out of the air. Get Mum's kit. I'll come to you as soon as I can. Stay safe, make them keep you safe. June and Phillip. Make them understand. The people here don't want me to tell you but I am, because you're smart and I know you'll understand. If I could hop a train home, I would and you know that. Mom said.. [Violet's voice cracks]

Mum said you're staying at Cooper's again until I get back. Remember that place where you used to go to read? Where I said it wasn't safe because it was too high? Go there, now. Stay away from the power lines and the outlets. Unplug everything. Remember flashlights and batteries. Water. Enough for yourself for a week maybe if we lose power. I promise you I will find you. I am coming home to you. I love you, kid.

Violet breaks and she sobs into her arm. She looks up and steadily hardens. She is thinking, hard.

Int. Night.

CAMERA follows twelve-year old Violet. She begins by changing her clothes. She collects extra clothing that she organizes expertly. She folds complete sets within themselves to create tidy little packages. She ties a hair tie to each little package.

Violet creeps into the hall and pauses. She slides down the wall and crouches, listening. The grandparents are in the living room downstairs but one of them is moving around. She listens to them make plans for leaving in the morning.

Doing a crab walk, Violet goes down the hall to her parent's bedroom. She collects a large knapsack from their closet. She hears the grandparents come up the stairs. Violet hides in her parent's closet.

CAMERA SMASHES IN to Violet's face. She listens to the grandparent's movements. As she waits, she notices her mother's clothes. She takes a shirt hanging in the back. She brings it to her nose and smells it.

CAMERA shows the grandparents milling around and getting dressed for bed. As they tend to their teeth and such Violet is in the closet, taking specific items of her mother's clothing. Utilitarian shirts and pants, folding them neatly, quietly. She hears the grandmother go to her room to check on Violet.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

Violet! Where is she?

PHILIP

She isn't in here.

JUNE

Yes I know that, Philip!

June stomps down the hall then the stairs. Violet uses this opportunity to sneak out of the closet, grabbing her mother's clothes, the knapsack and into her room. She changes into a nightgown and shoves the knapsack under her bed.

June slams open Violet's door. We see Violet with headphones on and brushing her teeth. June yanks the headphones off Violet's head. She then turns with the headphones in hand, turns off the light and leaves shutting the door behind her. We hear her go into the other bedroom.

In the near dark, we watch Violet pack the rest of the bag in silence. She takes off the nightgown, and tugs at the bottom of her pants so they fall to her ankle. She cuffs the bottoms and straps them into place. She waits. Once she's sure they're asleep, she tiptoes out of her room and down the stairs.

Int. Night.

Violet moves swiftly around the house as she collects flashlights, batteries and food. She stands at the pantry and looks at a jar of Vegemite in her hand. She puts it into the bag. She opens the refrigerator and ponders, but doesn't take anything. The refrigerator door has three tickets stuck to it. WAITOMO CAVES printed on them. There is a photo of the family of three in front of the caves wearing hard hats with lights on them. They are holding rubber inner tubes. Violet looks a little younger. She brings it with her. [This is the same photo Michael has in his camp at McMurdo.]

COME TO JESUS

INT. - McMurdo Base Evacuation.

Johanna is dressed in her red parka with the others. The line of red is occasionally dotted with yellow as the line leads from the building to the Terrabus. Terry scurries through the masses to find her. A guard has his eyes on her and tries to intervene.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

Jo. Dr. Masters. Please let me through.

JOHANNA

Terry? What are you doing? She's gonna have your balls for this.

TERRY

No. Listen. You were right I think. You have stop that bus.

JOHANNA

Why?

The line moves, ushering her towards the door. Terry is grabbed by the guard but pulls away, his shirt partially ripping off of his body. Terry is covered in terrible scars down his arm. He grips Johanna firmly.

TERRY

They don't want us to know. Don't get on. No one else is flying. They've already gone. Don't get in the air.

Terry is pulled from the crowd as Johanna and the rest are ushered onto the Terrabus. She tries to look back to see where Terry is, calling for him.

JOHANNA

No! Terry! Terry! Stop! Leave him alone! No, Terry!

The Terrabus seals its doors. Johanna is shoved into a seat behind the driver. The bus starts to move slowly over the ice. The ground is rough, shaking beneath the creeping, enormous vehicle. The sounds are loud and ominous sounding. Johanna starts to look around for help, any person who can listen to her.

VOICE OVER RADIO: Flight Zealand is successful at take-off.

RADIO CHATTER: Flight Sydney cleared and is headed to Oz.

RUDY

Copy that, Con. Con-trol. Ru--Rudy.

CONTROL

Flight Zealand, this is Control.

(CONTINUED)

RUDY

SssssSettle down, this is Ru-Rudy
and I wel-welcome you ttttttto Ivan
the T-Ttttterrabbbbbbus.

Johanna looks right at Rudy in his mirror and makes a move
to persuade him.

JOHANNA

(Whispering) Rudy. Hey.

RUDY

Hey, Jjjoo- Joe-Joey. You got the
gggggolden ticket to Ppp-Paradise
yeah? Me too.

CONTROL

Captain Ino, this Control. Do you
read?

RUDY

'Cleared and headed to Oz.'

JOHANNA

Rudy? Why is that? Why are they
going to Australia?

RUDY

That is privileged information,
Doctor.

JOHANNA

You too? Are you coming with us?
Who's going to drive Ivan, Rudy?

Rudy looks back in the mirror perplexed. The ground shakes
the bus. Passengers start to scream and make a ruckus.

Johanna looks back to see the people she is being banned
with. There's Paulina, a fellow scientist. Bender Jenkins, (a
former con turned savior who Johanna thinks is still a con.)
He's holding a large cross around his tattooed neck. Three
adventure junkies that seem to be getting more than they
bargained for. One has a wrapped hand. Another has his nose
bandaged. There are faces lined triple deep that Johanna
doesn't know off hand. They all appear injured or scared or
both.

JOHANNA

[I don't know these people.] Rudy,
who is going to drive Ivan, huh? If
you're gone, who drives the
Terrabus?

(CONTINUED)

The ground shakes.

RUDY

Ain't no one allowed but me! I
gggg-got the only license!

JOHANNA

I know you do, Rudester. The one
and only. So, how do you think they
are going to get off the Pole?

RUDY

W-wwwhat are you getting at?

A second rumble begins to toss the bus back and forth.

JOHANNA

Why is that plane headed to Sydney
instead of Christchurch like the
others?

Rudy tries to maintain control of the bus. Rudy turns his
attention to the bus and tries to get it under control.
People bounce hard in the bus. The rumbling grows louder.
Passengers are unseated.

JOHANNA

Look at who is leaving and who is
staying behind. Rudy, you, me and
all of these people are leaving.
The only ones staying are the,
the...

RUDY

Important folk?

CAMERA pans to windows. The plane that just took off crashes
into a huge iceberg. In the dim grayness of the sky, the
bright orange of the blast assaults the senses.

People call out, **CRASH, OH NO, LOOK NO NO NO!**

Rudy loses control of the bus and it tips dangerously to one
side.

People fall in the aisles, audible cries for help and
screams can be heard.

Camera loses focus as the bus tilts back and forth
dangerously. Rudy tries to correct the bus.

CAMERA SMASH TO BLACK.

Horrible scraping and screams can be heard.

FIONA'S BEDROOM

INT. Night. - Fiona's Bedroom.

Fiona is changing into more comfortable clothes. She looks out of the window towards her father's office, shaking her head. She plugs the television back in and turns it on, settling into her bed. She watches t.v. and looks at her laptop. There is a glass of wine next to her as she surfs.

THE BOAT HOUSE

INT. Early Hours. 4 AM. - Boathouse.

Violet is taking stock in what she has packed. She looks at her pictures again and repacks everything neatly. She tries to settle in the rafters but can't sleep. She looks out of the window over the dock. Whales can be seen further out cresting the water. A beautiful aurora covers the night sky. Vivid shades of pink and purple make the star-lit sky appear otherworldly. She looks back when she hears a noise. A light goes on in the house through the other window she sees a light go on in the house way off in the distance. That is her bedroom light. She panics. Violet scrambles together her things and climbs down the wobbly stairs. More lights go on in the house.

Violet looks around for safety. She heads towards Cooper's boat, but then decides against it. She sees her bike locked up near the garage and starts off on it. The bike has a flat. More lights go on in the house, and she hears her grandmother call for her. She stops to appraise the flat. She looks around for a solution and hears her grandmother again. Desperate, she takes her mother's scooter from the garage. It is light purple with little violets on it. She puts it in neutral and quickly wheels it up to the road. Once on the road, she starts it, and takes off.

JUNE

Violet! Philip, I can't find her
anywhere! Violet!

We see Violet riding her mother's scooter with the huge knapsack on her back. CAMERA still while Violet shrinks into the distance. The sky is stunningly beautiful. She drives right into the purple shaded sky.

THE SKY IS FALLING

EXT. Day. - Antarctic.

The sky appears vast and unencumbered. Brilliant ribbons of light dance across, highlighting the stars and their paths. The aurora can be seen here, too. The wreckage continues to

(CONTINUED)

rage beyond the group of people gathered. They are staring at the sky, in pain. Afraid. Smoke is billowing from the wreckage in the distance. The sky mocks them with it's unreal beauty.

Johanna and others stand or sit in their agony and watch it unfold before them.

FIONA'S BEDROOM

INT. Evening. -Fiona's Bedroom.

The news is reporting the solar storm. Fiona barely looks at it, annoyed. She is clicking through websites on her laptop while pouring another glass of wine.

Newscaster: NASA and the National Science Foundation warn that communications could be interrupted during the solar storm. The eruption could damage satellites and interfere with GPS for a day or more.

FIONA

"Ah, yes. A day without cell service is indeed a tragedy."

Her cell phone beeps. It is a text from "Oliver."

OLIVER

You ought to mind the news. Do you need anything? I can make a run for Beatrice if need be.

FIONA

We have it sorted, thanks.

OLIVER

Good.

OLIVER

Is Joey on her way, then?

FIONA

I wouldn't know.

OLIVER

Come off it, is she?

FIONA

[SILENCE.]

OLIVER

Please take the necessary precautions. Even if it is out of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OLIVER (cont'd)
spite. Let me know when she
arrives?

FIONA
Piss off.

OLIVER
Well, perhaps take your face out of
your mirror for a moment and enjoy
the aurora. Might never see another
one. Take care.

Fiona tosses her cell phone onto the bed. She takes her wine glass to the window and looks at the sky. It is breathtaking. In England the sky appears more green and purple. The colors are vivid and stunning.

She goes back to the television and watches what they're saying about the storm. She looks back to the window and then goes back to her laptop. She plugs it in and sits at her desk. She begins writing an e-mail to her sister. She uploads the photo of her neighbors quaint little cottage in the snow. It takes a while to load. She feels her laptop, which feels really hot. It goes blank. The power goes off. Smoke begins to rise from the floor, and the ceiling begins to sizzle.

FIONA
Mum! Mum!

Fiona starts to leave her room when a blinding light flashes. Her television ignites, her laptop and the wires attaching it to the electricity, melt. Fiona falls. A fire erupts.

INT. Dr. Master's office.

Beatrice hears her daughter and stands, the book falling to the floor.

BEATRICE
Fiona! Fiona! No, no. Fiona!

Beatrice walks towards the door. We see a fire erupt in the house. Another fire erupts in another house in the distance. Sirens begin to go off. Beatrice hurriedly tries to get to her daughter. She leaves her husband's office and we see fires popping into action all over the countryside. Beatrice cries for help.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Fiona! Darling, no. HELP! Please,
help us!

The quiet blasts into a raging, guttural noise followed by fires exploding all over the area. Horns, sirens, people screaming, calls for help. Beatrice becomes disoriented. She turns, trying to find out where she is. She falls.

She reaches her hand out and feels the heat of the fire.

BEATRICE

Fiona! Please, my daughter. Help!
Please. Help us!

STRANDED

EXT. - Antarctica.

The wreckage continues to smoke. Michael, Dr. Audibert and other watch smoke billow up from the iceberg. An officer is muffled as he tells them the plane has wrecked and the bus has crashed. Mike grabs a parka and starts to zip it up. Others follow suit. He and others including Dr. Ruminio and Kyle Morris exit the building and begin talking about transportation options. K.C. Approaches the group and offers help. She joins them as they go off to a huge building holding equipment.

CAMERA zooms to Dr. Angela Audibert. Stone faced, she is holding back her emotions as a sergeant speaks to her very closely.

EXT.- The Terrabus.

Johanna looks at the sky. She is banged up and bruised. She is approached by Rudy. He is banged up pretty hard. Johanna's nose is bleeding, as is her newly reopened lip. Rudy has a swollen eye.

RUDY

Can't hardly see nothing now. How'm
I gon' drive when I can't hardly
see nuthin'?

CAMERA SCANS THE SMOKE OF THE WRECKAGE AND CONTINUE TO OPEN UP ON THE SKY. MORE AND MORE COLOR, INTENSE STARS. IT LOOKS LIKE THE HEAVENS HAVE OPENED A GATEWAY.

Voice Over:

(CONTINUED)

JOHANNA

It was the last time we'd see such perfect beauty. In the middle of the impending storm, we paused for it, as it took away our breath. The world was so beautiful once, and this was a reminder of that. We would never see it that way again."

CAMERA SMASHES IN TO THE SKY AND STARS, GETTING BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER UNTIL...

FADE TO WHITE.

THE END