

The Cosmonaut

Nicolás Alcalá

Creative Commons BySaNc

[hello@thecosmonaut.org](mailto:hello@thecosmonaut.org)

1 TERRACE. EXT. DAY

Sign: 1961

Khrushchev, sitting in a terrace together with other people, watches the blast-off of a huge rocket. He is surrounded by people in suits. Some waiters pass by them serving something on the table. One of them gets closer and whispers something in his ear. The roar of the engines makes the glasses move on the table.

MEN 1

What are you going to answer  
Kennedy?

Khrushchev laughs self-satisfied keeping his eye on the rocket rising.

KHRUSCHEV

If we are going to the moon, we  
are going alone.

2 STAR CITY STREETS. EXT. DAY

Andrei and Stan arrive to Star City in a bus with other new recruits. They are two young, handsome, and strong soldiers, about twenty five years old. Stan wears a pilot jacket. They look at each other and laugh excited. Stan has two pieces of cotton with dried blood in his nose.

STAN

Are you sure we are gonna meet  
more girls in here?

ANDREI

Are you crazy? It's gonna be  
wild.

The bus moves through the city, watching everyday scenes: cosmonaut wives walking with their children, some cars, soldiers patrolling.

ANDREI

How far from Moscow do you think  
we are?

Stan shrugs. They hear a couple of fighters passing by and everyone stick their faces to the bus window looking up to them.

3 CORRIDOR 1. INT. DAY

Andrei and Stan, together with the other new soldiers, pick up their new uniforms. It's a wide corridor boiling in activity and soldiers walking slowly to and fro. Some women give them the clothes from behind a counter. It seems the first day of school.

4 CORRIDOR 2. INT. DAY

Stan and Andrei walk through a chaotic corridor looking for their rooms. They see a cosmonaut dressed as a military passing by them and they look each other full of excitement.

5 CANTEEN. INT. DAY

They are both eating at a table in a common canteen with long tables and a lot of light. All the tables are full of young excited soldiers making noise. There are smoke and sounds coming out of the kitchen, and people walking to and fro.

Stan talks about a traditional Russian game and asks another soldier how to play. The soldier explains it to him.

ANDREI

This is terrible. Are they really gonna feed us like this? It doesn't taste much like (pretending a deep voice) "the chosen by the country to make it a great nation"

Everyone laughs.

6 CORRIDOR 3. INT. NIGHT

It is night already, Stan walks alone through a lonely corridor. He brushes the wall and some objects with his fingers. Everything is completely silent and there is few light. He finally gets to a partially lit room, where a woman in a white coat has just gone out. He gets in.

7 HYPERBARIC CHAMBER PRE-ROOM. INT. NIGHT

There is a small window that overlooks to a hermetic chamber. He looks through it and sees a cosmonaut quietly reading with some electrodes connected to his chest. It's the isolation chamber where cosmonauts spend two weeks completely alone. The man calmly stands up, without noticing him, takes the electrodes off and unworried

(CONTINUED)

throws away a cotton they hold. The room suddenly starts to burn, lightening Stan's face, who is not able to respond. The alarm rings and some seconds later there is a chaos of people. Stan cannot stop looking.

8 CANTEEN. INT. DAY

The next day, during breakfast time, everyone talks in a low voice, gossiping and whispering. A high ranking military, about 50 years old, gets into the canteen and everyone keeps quiet. Everyone look at their plates. His steps resound in his way to Stan's table. He looks around. He leaves a closed envelope by his side. Stan looks at him for a second, and puts the envelope into his pocket. The man looks around, examining them, and finally leaves.

9 ROCKET BAY. INT. DAY

Andrei goes round a bay in Star City where there are engines and rockets. He walks together with other technicians, they are all in white coats. There are soldiers around. Andrei takes a couple of pictures with accuracy. A soldier goes up to him.

SOLDIER 1

You are going to have to sign  
some papers. And hand over copies  
of the pictures.

Andrei nods.

ANDREI

No problem. They are just for  
research.

Meanwhile, the technician guiding them keeps on talking.

TECHNICIAN 1

... we are now in a really  
exciting moment of the space  
race. We can say we have the  
cosmos at our feet. There is vast  
universe to be discovered with  
these huge and powerful machines.  
The greatness of the Soviet Union  
in the service of a mission  
greater than ourselves. Besides,  
we have the most advanced  
technology, enough to prevent the  
United States to snatch the  
sovereignty of the space from us.  
Comrades, the cosmos belongs to  
the Soviet Union.

10 WOODS. EXT. DAY

Stan pays a young soldier some roubles and he gives him a folder.

11 STAN'S ROOM. INT. DUSK

Stan goes through the folder in his room. It is full of western magazine cuttings talking about missing cosmonauts, about mysterious flights emitting acoustic signals, or about a woman screaming when re-entering the atmosphere before dying.

12 LIBRARY. INT. DAY

Chelomei, a 53 year-old man with a sullen look, wearing a worn suit a bit big for him, goes through maps full of numbers in a library.

He gets up to check some books. He draws some lines and circles.

ANDREI (OFF)

The first months have gone very quickly. The hours move away with trainings and study. Star City is like a dream. All the great minds of the country are here, thinking how to go a step further. Currently, there are three task forces, leaded by the designers Korolyov, Chelomei and Yangel. They are planning to conquer the space, and Chelomei has started to develop an ambitious lunar project: The R-700 rocket and the LK-700 landing module.

13 BAIKONUR. EXT. DAY

A rocket blasts off in the distance and explodes into pieces.

Sign: 1967

Andrei and Stan look at the sky, lying down on a meadow, biting the blades of what seems wheat.

STAN (OFF)

Khrushchev's downfall and Korolyov's death changed a lot of things in Star City. But it's still the same for us. We train everyday. My hands have already

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)  
commanded a plane for more than  
one thousand hours. Andrei could  
take a rocket apart and put it  
back together blindfolded. We  
haven't met as many girls as we  
thought, but there is so much to  
do around here that we even  
forget about it. Star city is  
like an island.

14 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

The communication room in Star City is dark and full of communication panels. There is a board with dozens of drawn orbits and tens of calculations. Several technicians push buttons in endless console tables, and several soldiers walk to and fro holding reports. Gagarin, turned back, gives some orders to Komarov, a cosmonaut who has countless problems in orbit.

They all keep silent. Kamanin, the cosmonauts chief, goes up to Gagarin and asks for the communicator.

KAMANIN  
Vladimir, Kamanin speaking.  
(silence) Yes, yes (silence) I  
know, comrade. (a long silence)  
Good luck. Minister Kosygin wants  
to talk to you too.

Kamanin gives Alekséi Kosygin the communicator. The silence is deafening.

KOSYGIN  
Comrade... You are a pride for  
the USSR. And we are proud having  
you as a brother. The party asked  
me to tell you that the funeral  
will be official and in the  
Kremlin... If anything happened.

15 ANNEXE ROOM. INT. DAY

There is another room next to the previous one; this one is filled with the sunlight, allowing the flecks of dust to be seen floating sad and sleepy.

Andrei walks slowly with the cosmonaut wife, she is shaking and her steps are short and ungainly. On his way, he exchanges a look with Yulia, a twenty-something girl with fair skin and deep eyes, who makes connections in the main room. The cosmonaut wife takes a communicator Andrei gives her.

She burst into tears almost before placing it on her ear. Andrei closes the door slowly, leaving her alone with him.

16 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

Kamanin goes up to Andrei and shakes his hand.

KAMANIN

Good job. You can go if you want.

ANDREI

I rather prefer to stay here...  
till the end.

Yulia looks at him out of the corner of the eye. Kamanin nods grateful.

TECHNICIAN

Lunar orientation manoeuvre  
accomplished. The fuel run out  
and the systems went off. The  
spacecraft is in ballistic mode  
for re-entry. The acceleration...  
is going to be tremendous.

Yulia starts transcribing what Komarov says in a low voice.

KAMANIN

(in a low voice to a  
soldier)

Change the rescue measures. It's  
going to fall down in the Orsk  
area.

Everyone looks at Yulia. Andrei goes up to her, and shaking unplugs the headphones jack. The cosmonaut voice fills the silence.

KOMAROV (OFF)

It's really hot in here. None of  
the lights turn on and nothing  
works in this damned machine. You  
can tell the party to go to hell.  
To hell. It's insanely hot. We  
shouldn't fly under these  
conditions. Not like this. Shit.  
The main parachute doesn't open.  
It doesn't open. I'm burning  
alive. The spare parachute...  
shit. Shit! It's too hot in here.

Finally, some hair-rising screams are heard. No one can move. Kamanin goes to the console and turns the communication off. Yulia moves away a bit shocked. Kosygin leaves the room muttering in anger.

17 LANDING STRIP. EXT. DAY

Stan walks slowly towards a fighter in the middle of a landing strip. The night is falling. When he gets to it, he smoothly touches it with his fingers. He brushes the polished surfaces in a kind of religious attitude.

Already inside the cockpit, he smoothly turns the controls on. He feels a light vibration. He breathes deep. He rubs his eyes.

18 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Andrei talks to Yulia.

YULIA (OFF)

Andrei was the first one in asking me out. I said no.

19 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Stan talks to Yulia.

YULIA (OFF)

Then, Stan came. I didn't accept either.

20 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Stan and Andrei talk to Yulia.

YULIA (OFF)

Then, they both tried at the same time. Finally, we ended up playing cat and mouse in a strange triangle, and we became friends.

21 CATEEN. INT. DAY

They are sitting in different tables, looking for each other's eyes. They change places running away from each other, ending up at the same table, ignoring each other. They laugh amused looking at their plates.

22 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Yulia talks to other girls outdoors. Stan and Andrei pass by her side, running, training, in sweaty t-shirts. She looks at them out of the corner of her eyes. They pass back a moment later in the opposite direction in a comic way. They say hello to her. She looks at the ground in

(CONTINUED)

embarrassment. The rest of the girls look at them with tender eyes. They pass by for the third time, and say hello again, trying not to laugh. She looks at the ground and smiles.

YULIA (OFF)

The country is mad these days. Children are told at school that we are going to blow up into pieces any time now, and the thirst for conquering the space have become a race to beat the United States. In the mean time, we try not to grow up, but it's not the same as when we were teenagers. We are more concerned now about the future of The Beatles, even though all that space up there is still turning my stomach.

23 CINEMA. EXT. NIGHT

Sign: 1969

Stan leaves a cinema in Moscow together with a girl. They laugh together.

24 ANDREI'S ROOM. INT. DUSK

Yulia is lying in Andrei's room. He is too. They listen to a vinyl, and Andrei plays with something in his hands.

YULIA

Do you think he's already kissed her?

ANDREI

(absent-minded)  
What does it matter?

He hits the air with his fingers, following the music.

YULIA

I'm sure they are holding hands.

The clock hands move slowly. The crickets sing outside.

YULIA

What if she is a serial killer?

They both keep silent. The vinyl is over, and the stylus is still spinning, making white noise.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREI

What do you think it's gonna  
happen when they land?

She looks at him out of the corner of the eye. Then, she looks at the ceiling. She sighs. She curls up into his arms.

25 SEVERAL. INT. DAWN

Several people in several houses listen attentively to the radio. The radios pick up pirate or American radio stations, broadcasting Neil Armstrong's arrival to the Moon.

26 PARK. EXT. NIGHT

Stan walks with the girl through a park in Moscow. The streets are deserted.

They keep an insignificant conversation.

GIRL

My uncle is in the army. He told me we tried to get first to the moon. Just before they did, but the rocket exploded. They would tell us, wouldn't they?

Stan shrugs. He stops. He kisses her. He looks at the bright, white Moon out of the corner of his eye.

STAN (OFF)

The N1.. Ego has no limits. I hope it's not true. I'm almost out of space in my list of supposedly missing or dead cosmonauts.

27 BREZHNEV'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT

A leaving room only lit by the light coming from a room where junk and clothes fly away. Hits and mumblings are heard. Someone cursing. A woman tries to calm the inner fury from the outside.

BREZHNEV'S WIFE

Leonid, darling, the world is not ending yet.

More hits. Brezhnev complains drunk in the inside.

(CONTINUED)

BREZHNEV

It's not fair, not at all. We are the ones who had to be up there. We are, and not that stupid Neil Armstrong and his stupid partner. What's his name? Ah, yes, Buldrin. We didn't do it that bad, did we? I'm sure I get fired (he makes a typical drunkard pause after realizing the nonsense he has just said). Ah, no. Not that.

28           CORRIDORS. INT. DAY

In a long sequence shot, Andrei walks along the corridors of the space center. He sees Kamanin in the distance talking to someone and gets closer. He gently touches his arm.

ANDREI

Have you seen the images?

Kamanin nods.

KAMANIN

I heard they almost fail.

ANDREI

What about the OBK-52 now? Are they going to allow Chelomei to go on?

Kamanin moves his head in between ignorance and denial.

KAMANIN

I have to go. Are you coming for dinner later? Valentina wants to meet you.

Andrei nods and continues his way. He goes outside.

29           ANDREI'S ROOM. INT. DUSK

Yulia goes into Andrei's room. She stops for a second looking at the surfaces. She breaths the air coming from the window. She takes something out of under the bed. It's a photo album. They are images of rockets and technology; artistic, very meticulous pictures, with weird angles and a great sense for esthetics. Really exquisite shapes and compositions, with an absence of meaning. Suddenly, she hears an explosion.

30           ANDREI'S ROOM, INT. DAY

Andrei looks through the window of his room with a bandage in his eyes and his face full of bruises. Stan goes in, leaving his equipment on the bed. He breaths excited.

                  STAN

                  We have just practised the free  
                  fall. You should come with me any  
                  time. It's like flying.

Andrei breaths something from a inhaler. He doesn't even turn to look at Stan.

                  ANDREI

                  They say I'm going to see again.

                  STAN

                  Great! I told you.

He hits him slightly on the shoulder and then lies on the bed. Andrei is still looking outside.

                  ANDREI

                  I'm not going to fly anymore.  
                  They say I can't train anymore.

Stan sits up.

                  STAN

                  Hey, come on, come on. It's OK.

Andrei stands up a bit upset. He rubs his face and nervously takes some steps. He bumps into a chair.

                  ANDREI

                  I'm not going to space. Do you  
                  understand? Ever.

                  STAN

                  I know, but you can do loads of  
                  other things. You're alive,  
                  Andrei. You have your pictures,  
                  your job, your research, your  
                  rockets. And you have Yulia and  
                  me. Think about it: sometimes you  
                  have to lose your wings to fly  
                  higher.

31           LANDING STRIP. EXT. DAY

Stan and Yulia are in the landing trip. The wind is blowing and stirs the banderoles. It's cloudy. Yulia gazes into the void.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA

I wonder how is not to see.

She takes a bandage and place it over her eyes. The threads stir. Stan goes up to her.

STAN

Blind people have all the other senses more acute. They can hear things that we can't even imagine. Feel farther away. When you are up there... Sometimes, each of those things are more important than seeing.

They both realize they are too close, and notice the chemistry between them, so they uncomfortably got separated. She takes the bandage off.

STAN

Andrei is not going to go blind, but he is not going to fly anymore.

YULIA

What?

STAN

He's been told today. The results have been sent to the Politburó and Kamanin.

Her face changes, she puts her hand on her lips and runs away towards the complex. Stan stares at her and puts the bandage on his eyes.

32      ANDREI'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei combs his hair in front of the mirror. He is still with the bandage over his eyes. He gets frustrated. He smooths his hair down until it's perfect. He does his shirt. He tightens his tie.

33      YULIA'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Yulia is at a wooden table by the window, she smoothly moulds a sphere of clay. She dips her fingers into the water and delicately polishes it. There are some others by her side, they are already finished, in a planet shape with rings and other special characteristics.

34 FOREST. EXT. DAY

Stan is training hard in the woods. He does some exercises and looks tired. He tries even harder.

35 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Andrei talks to some high ranking soldiers in the distance. He seems to please them.

36 BATHROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei takes the bandage off in front of a mirror in a common bathroom. He looks at his dilated pupils in the mirror. He blinks.

37 COMMUNICATION'S ROOM INT. DAY

Yulia manages switches and lines at her position. She sees Andrei in the distance talking to other military.

38 STAN'S ROOM. INT. DUSK

Stan studies in the small hours. He tosses and turns in bed.

39 LIVING ROOM INT. NIGHT

Several soldiers play cards in a room at night. Andrei takes a look from the door and they make him come in, laughing.

40 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Yulia and Stan are lying down on the grass, looking at the sky. They breath the fresh air. They don't say a word. Andrei joins them, in silence.

41 DINNING ROOM. INT. DAY

Stan and Andrei tell their partners a story in the canteen, as if they were just one. Yulia looks at them from a different table, fascinated. She smiles.

42 OFFICE. INT. DAY

Andrei signs his communist party membership card in an office. It is sealed.

43 ANDREI'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei takes everything he has in his room that has to do with cosmonauts and puts them into a box. Yulia looks from the door.

44 WOODS. EXT. DIA

Andrei and Yulia are by a tree. She touches him.

YULIA

Are you sure?

He forces a smile and bury the box under the tree.

Sign: 1971

45 ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

We see library pictures of the death of the Soyuz 11 crew in slow motion. Several people try to revive the three cosmonauts with no success. Then, we see images of the three pilots' funeral in the Kremlin.

STAN (OFF)

When Vasily Mishin, new chief of the Russian space program, was told the doubts the cosmonauts had about flying without an emergency system, he answered something like: "I don't want cowards in my spacecrafts". The 29th of June, three more cosmonauts died in the Soyuz 11, because of a decompression problem in the reentry. Their life was gone through a few millimetres hole they could have covered with a finger.

Now we see images of the funeral for the three pilots in the Kremlin.

STAN (OFF)

Once, an old pilot said nature does not reveal her secrets easily. She always claims some sacrifices in return.

46 ROOM. INT. DAY

We see Stan in a room with some other pilots. Someone reads names from a list.

STAN (OFF)

There were not only bad news  
lately, though. I've been elected  
cosmonaut at last. Cos-mo-naut...

When Stan is nominated, he stands up, nods grateful, and sits down again. Andrei forces a smile, between pride and jealousy.

47 BAR. INT. NIGHT

Andrei, Yulia and Stan drink something together in a tavern. A colorful light landscape shines in a shelf full of bottles of vodka. They are a bit drunk. They laugh. They play making balances and hand games with the military caps. The three of them dance together. They drink vodka shots and eat pickles. Yulia, quite drunk, reprimands Stan.

YULIA

How can you criticize a  
government that gives you  
everything?

STAN

You're right, I forgot about the  
glory and the mother country and  
all that.

Andrei changes his face. Everything becomes a bit serious.

48 CAR. INT. NIGHT

Stan is concentrated driving through a deserted and dark road. Yulia is sitting by his side listening to the music with her eyes closed. Andrei is sitting behind, and he leans forward a bit and rests his hand over her bare shoulder. She looks at his hand, looks at him through the rear-view mirror, and he doesn't notice her. She touches his hand and closes her eyes again. Stan bursts out laughing. The car has stopped.

STAN

The fuel is over.

They all burst out laughing.

49 ROAD. EXT. DAWN

It's getting light and the car is abandoned in the ditch of a deserted backroad.

50 ENTRANCE TO STAR CITY. EXT. DAWN.

Andrei, Yulia and Stan arrive walking to the complex entrance. They hold hands, and are a bit dirty and with a sense of happiness.

GUARDSMAN

Halt. Identify yourselves,  
please.

They laugh, a bit drunk still, tired, but happy.

The guardsmen hold them violently, and they calm them down by showing them their identification cards. They let them go in.

51 KAMANIN'S HOME. INT. DAY

Andrei arrives in Kamanin's house. His wife opens the door.

KAMANIN'S WIFE

Hi Andrei. Come in, come in.

Andrei shakes Kamanin's hand, who is setting everything up for lunch.

KAMANIN

How are your eyes going?

ANDREI

Quite well. I can almost read at night and see clearly in the distance.

KAMANIN

I'm happy about that. And I'm glad you came today, Andrei.

It's a relaxed family atmosphere. Andrei goes to the boy and the girl that are running around.

ANDREI

Vladimir, Valentina. I have brought you a little present I made myself. Come here.

He gives them both a small light with a small battery and put them on their fingers. He explains them how to play: when they push the button with the forefinger and the

(CONTINUED)

thumb, the light turns on as if they had trapped a tiny spot of light. Then, they throw it (by not pushing the button) and the other one "picks it up" by pushing the button, as one throws the spot of light to the other one. The children get excited and start playing, throwing the light and making it bounce in many places and ways. Kamanin smiles. He goes up to Andrei.

KAMANIN

I asked you to come to announce you something and introduce you to someone.

ANDREI

Anything important? Are you ill?

KAMANIN

I'm going to retire. I don't want to bother you with the reasons. I don't want to talk about it. But I want you to meet Chelomei, at last. I have had a lot to do with him in the past years. His task force, OBK-52, it's just amazing. His designs and prototypes are light-years ahead from the ones Korolyov and Mishin developed. N1 is a dead project, however, everything is politics, my friend. Maybe one day you can change something. You'll do fine. But I want you to meet him. I told him you'll be the person to rely on within the complex. He can count on you... Am I right?

ANDREI

I... Sure. You are.

Kamanin finishes the dish he is preparing and goes to the table.

KAMANIN

Valentina, Vladimir, Valentinova, time to eat! Come on, Andrei. I'll tell you more after lunch. Vladimir is coming in a while.

52 YULIA'S HOME. INT. DAY

Stan is sitting in Yulia's apartment, looking at Yulia's delicately-built clay planets. She is preparing something in the kitchen. Stan is captivated watching every single movement of hers. The silence amplifies every sound. He looks at the front holding a cup in his hands. She appears with a tray with coffee. When she places it, a tea spoon

(CONTINUED)

falls down. Both of them make a movement and pick it up at the same time. They look at each other in silence. He lets go of the spoon and she offers it to him, ashamed. He looks at his cup with another spoon in it. Then, looking at her, he takes it. She leaves looking at the ground. They have both expressionless faces.

STAN (OFF)

I have always been afraid of committing myself with something. I could never find out why. I guess it doesn't have to do with the commitment with the object or person itself, but with the doors you close behind you. The vetoed paths. They don't have to be better, it's only about the frustration for the forbidden that makes it irresistible.

I'm afraid of committing myself, not for not living something, but for the fear of not living something.

A shot in the pocket of Stan's trousers shows us that he has kept the spoon.

53           ROCKETS SPACECRAFT. INT. DAY

Sign: 1973

Andrei is working in the construction bay. He gives instructions to several scientists and workers, and supervises uncountable data in the rocket's calculations. He takes some pictures. He looks at the watch and leaves.

54           CHANGING ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei is changing clothes in a changing room and he puts the uniform on.

55           STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Andrei walks through Star City until he gets to the doors of the training swimming pools. He looks at the watch again.

Stan comes out, just changed, and the hair still wet. They smile and hug each other.

STAN

How nice to see you. I haven't seen you in a week!

(CONTINUED)

Andrei smiles in an Apology.

ANDREI

The next launch will be soon, you know. The preparations are driving me mad. If only I could dedicate less hours to this and more to swimming.

He laughs and ruffles Stan's hair.

STAN

Ey!

He laughs too. They start walking.

ANDREI

How is your cousin?

STAN

Not really good.

ANDREI

Are you going to see her? I can write you a leave.

STAN

No, no, it's OK. It's too far away. I'm not worried, and she isn't either. It won't be anything.

ANDREI

I hope so. I intend to claim that date she owns me.

He laughs. Some younger girls pass by them laughing and whispering when they see them.

STAN

(joking)

Why do you insist in bothering all the women I know? Since you have that stripes, and the girls rush at you , you are insufferable.

He laughs again and takes the hat off to wave at the girls, that are moving away.

ANDREI

I told you it was going to be wild...

STAN

How is your move going?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREI

I'll be settled by next week.  
It's almost ready. What about  
you, are you planning to stay in  
that beginner poky little room  
for the rest of your life?

STAN

Are you kidding? With my salary,  
the most I could allow myself is  
to sleep in the seat of one of  
the training spacecrafts. But it  
would be impossible, still, you  
know Alexei is sleeping there and  
how uncomfortable the toilet is.

They both burst out laughing. A car passes by.

56

YULIA'S HOME. INT. DAY

Yulia prepares three plates with a lot of care, in  
happiness. The light comes flooding in by her apartment  
window. She is setting very gently the cutlery, the  
glasses. Someone knocks on the door. It's Stan and Andrei.  
They say hello and she hangs their coats up. She notices a  
new badge in the uniform.

YULIA

You have been promoted again? I  
can't believe it. The last one  
was a couple of days ago, wasn't  
it?

Andrei laughs.

ANDREI

You used to congratulate me.

STAN

Are you sure you are not planning  
to overthrow Brezhnev?

Andrei denies in amusement.

STAN

To conquer the world maybe?

The three of them laugh.

YULIA

Come on, lunch's ready, and it's  
getting cold.

Stan plays some music in the record player while Andrei  
finishes setting up the table. Everything looks delicious  
and they eat in pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

STAN

Ouch. It hurts even when I  
breath.

YULIA

Are the trainings being hard?

STAN

More and more. Last week has been  
a real test.

ANDREI

Come on, Mr. Cosmonaut. Don't  
complain. You must be the  
luckiest person in the world.

57 YULIAS HOME. INT. DAY

They are finishing the coffee. Stan, stands up and looks  
through the window.

STAN

I have to go to end some reports.  
(he looks at Andrei) Are you  
coming?

ANDREI

No. I have to talk to Yulia.

There is a kind of an uncomfortable situation.

STAN

All right. I don't want to bother  
you.

He takes his coat. Yulia looks at Andrei, somewhere  
between mischievous and angry. She moves her lips without  
talking.

YULIA (NO SOUND)

You're an asshole.

YULIA

Hey, jealous boy, don't get  
angry. You are like a girl.

STAN

Whatever. See you tomorrow.

Stan leaves closing the door.

ANDREI

I want to give you something to  
celebrate my promotion.

She looks at him in disapproval.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA

You already know that/

Andrei stands up and takes a jewel from a little box. She is dumbstruck. Something about her expression changes. When she is about to say something, Andrei interrupts her.

ANDREI

Say nothing. Please. I don't want you to tell me that I'm gonna ruin everything. There is no need. Or any other thing that I hear a thousand times from you. Just... keep it, all right?

He kisses her on her cheek, takes his coat and leaves. She stays looking at the precious piece and closes her eyes.

58

STAN'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Stan reads in his room. He goes around. He writes. He shines his boots. He talks on the phone. He plays with the coffee spoon.

STAN (OFF)

Since the day we met Yulia, Andrei and I did a deal. Not to talk about her while she was not in front of us. We don't ask each other if we like her. We don't talk about how important she is for both of us, even though we know it. I will never tell Andrei that I think she is the most perfect being in the world. He would neither tell me he dreams everyday with her hair, with her eyes. We are ok like this. One day, she will chose, but, although is not a matter of choosing. There are things that you cannot choose, and some others that just can't happen.

59

ANDREI'S HOME. INT. DAY

Andrei puts in order his pictures in a house almost empty of furniture and full of boxes. He cuts them and put them in its album.

ANDREI (OFF)

Brezhnev sent Chelomei a letter. "I cannot force Mishin to cancel N1, even though we know that monster it's nothing else but a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDREI (OFF) (cont'd)  
swollen cormorant. It will never fly. We put the first asterisk in the firmament. The first living being. The first human being. We were the first ones in landing on the white surface. We were the first ones in taking pictures from the other side. The moon was ours... I know we have had our differences in the past, but I don't want to die without knowing we walk on it. Without knowing we were able to do it. What can we do, dear Vladimir? How can we fulfill our desires? Yours, Brezhnev". Chelomei answered. "Leonid, shall the past stay on earth. I have a duty to space. It is possible, but letters are not safe. Let's meet." We didn't know it by then, but our lives were about to change.

60 YULIA'S HOUSE BATHROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei smokes nervously in Yulia's house bathroom. He drums his fingers on the sink. He reads the back of a couple of generic beauty products. Yulia goes in and smiles when she see him as nervous as a kid in the first day of school. She takes him the cigarette out of his mouth.

YULIA  
Come on, throw that away, silly boy. Calm down, it's going to be fine.

She sews an insignia with a couple of stitches and fits the neck of his shirt. He smiles, feeling looked after. They leave.

61 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

She kisses him on his cheek. She puts his coat on him.

YULIA  
Call when you arrive.

62 STAN'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Stan, leaning on Yulia's legs, plays with a couple of miniatures of space rockets. He makes noises with his mouth, he crashes them, and lands them. Yulia looks at the ceiling and caress Stan's hair in silence. After a while, she talks to him without looking at him.

YULIA

I can't stand it anymore. Let's go for a walk.

STAN

What if he calls?

YULIA

You're right. Do you have anything to eat? I can't bear it any longer.

STAN

There are some berries in that bag.

Stan sits up and they both eat in silence while the clock ticks. Stan looks at Yulia eating cranberries as the most erotic thing in the world. After a while, the phone rings and both of them rush forward it.

63 HOTEL HALL. INT. DAY

Andrei calls from a phone in the hall of an office or hotel.

ANDREI

You're not going to believe it. No, seriously, you're not going to believe it.

64 STAN'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Stan and Yulia have already hung up, and they stare into the void incredulous.

YULIA

Apollo-Soyuz...

STAN

The Americans training here...

YULIA

I think they have played a joke on him.

65 CANTEEN. INT. NIGHT

Andrei and Yulia dance salsa in the canteen. The tables have been removed and a party is being held. There are some other couples dancing on the dance floor. Stan is dancing with a young girl, and they both laugh and have fun.

ANDREI

It's too much responsibility.

YULIA

When did that stop you? Do not play that game, you have been looking for this for more than two years.

ANDREI

I know, but I never thought it was going to be like this. Working with the NASA is... It's like working suddenly with the enemy. What about all those stories? All those speeches about being the leaders of the conquer of space?

YULIA

Andrei, look around. That was ten years ago.

ANDREI

Maybe you are right.

YULIA

I am...

Yulia leans on Andrei's shoulder and keeps on dancing. She looks at Stan. Stan looks at her too. She closes her eyes when there is a slower song playing. When he sees her, he closes his eyes too. They dance together in the distance.

66 LAKE. EXT. DUSK

Yulia dives into a lake in the dusk.

YULIA (OFF)

My relationship with Andrei and Stan is like three siblings at the age of hormonal changes, when the idea of experiencing is much more attractive than doing what you are supposed to do. It's like we are always on the edge of committing incest. Our games become more and more real. I wonder what is going to happen

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YULIA (OFF) (cont'd)  
when we cross the line. Even though, to be honest, I prefer not to know. I wish this could stay like this forever. In the meantime, there is less people in town. The programmes have been cut. It's like everything is disintegrating. As if we had lost the interest for all that void up there. There are few days left to end the year. Yesterday, Stan was called to go to Baikonur. What for? I cannot even imagine.

68 TRAIN. INT. NIGHT

Stan goes by train to Baikonur in New Year's Eve. He watch at the lights passing by on the way.

69 ANDREI'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT

Some fireworks explode in Star City. A couple of pilots make a low-level flight over the city casting shadows over the ground and the buildings. Yulia and Andrei have dinner at his. He has made an especial dinner, with candles and wine. They have dinner in silence. She listen to the fireworks outside and stands up, taking her plate.

YULIA  
We should be going, it's going to be 12.

He stands up too and gently takes her by her arm. He looks at the brooch he gave her. She is wearing it. He talks to her almost whispering from a really close distance.

ANDREI  
Let's stay here. Drink with me and let's dance all night long. Please.

She feels uncomfortable and looks at him with glassy eyes. She releases her arm and takes her coat with a sense of loss.

YULIA  
I wait for you in the street.

70           ANDREI'S HOUSE. EXT. NIGHT

A cosmonaut statue and clouds passing by in fast-forward over it. Fireworks. Yulia takes a few steps from the front door, doing up her coat.

71           SEVERAL RESOURCES. NIGHT

Music around the city. People in the streets. Planes going past over Star city.

72           TRAIN. INT. NIGHT

Stan's train rattles on the rails with a sense of loneliness.

73           ANDREI'S HOUSE. EXT. NIGHT

Yulia stops after a while and turns back.

                          YULIA (OFF)

I made clear to him that we are not going to bed together. It was uncomfortable to be alone with him, but since Stan is a hundred kilometres away, not staying with Andrei either it's too much.

74           ANDREI'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Yulia and Andrei sleep in his bed, both looking to different sides, dressed.

75           SEVERAL RESOURCES. DAWN

Street sweepers picking bottles up at dawn. Bottles at Andrei's apartment.

76           ROOM. INT. DAY

Stan is in a meeting with several soldiers and scientists. He listens to them with an empty look.

77           BAIKONUR. EXT. DAY

Stan is taken through different places of the city.

                          STAN (OFF)

I don't know if Andrei and Yulia had sex last night. My deal with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)  
Andrei stops me from asking. I don't want to know it either. I have been brought to Baikonur to be told that I will be the first Russian on moon. The first one and the last one. I have been training for ten years for this mission, nonetheless, I feel sad. I have been told that the possibilities of succeeding are less than a half. I cannot stop thinking of Yulia. I don't care about percentages.

78 CORRIDORS. INT. DAY

Yulia walks round the station corridors with some stuff on her arms. She gets to Stan's room and goes in without knocking.

79 STAN'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Stan looks out of the window in melancholy and turns around. Before he can say anything, she starts to throw things and presents at him in anger and about to cry.

STAN  
What exactly are you doing?

YULIA  
You are a complete idiot.

When she finishes, she leaves.

80 CORRIDORS. INT. DAY

Stan catches her up and holds her. She tries to release, but he holds her tight between his arms. He hugs her to calm her down. She bursts into tears and tries to hit him. He hugs her tighter until she finally calms down.

YULIA  
You are not going.

STAN  
Everything's going to be fine.  
I'm going to be ok. Easy. Easy.

He caresses her until she yields. They stay in a hug for some seconds. She leans her head on his chest.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA

I hadn't cried since I was twelve. You are stupid. And I hate you.

Stan laughs.

STAN

It's been also long I hadn't make a girl cry for me... is it that I changed my perfume?

She bursts out laughing among tears. She looks at him.

YULIA

Promise me you'll come back.

He takes a tear slipping down her cheek.

81 OFFICE. INT. DAY

Chelomei is sitting on a chair in his office, taking a glass of Cuban rum from a unlabeled bottle.

Andrei goes round a bit nervous.

ANDREI

Do you know how many tons of propellant you need to rise up the UR-700?

Chelomei stays silent, looking at him.

ANDREI

Of course you know. What a question. If that thing blows up, there will be no life remains in that area for the next twenty years.

CHELOMEI

Nonsense. We've been using it in missiles for years. It's completely operational.

ANDREI

Where are we going to get that amount of fuel? And how do you plan to prevent our satellites and the American's to record both the launch and the landing? Come on... it's insane.

Chelomei smiles. Looks around, complicit. He writes down "1- Nixon 2- Apollo-Soyuz"

82           ANDREI'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Andrei makes calculations and calculations in countless sheets. He goes over maps and prototypes from the LK-700, the engines, the landing processes and the taking off from the Moon.

                  ANDREI (OOF)

I don't know what Brezhnev gave them in return for the fuel and their silence. I don't know if it has to do with the Watergate scandal that has shaken the world in the last months. It doesn't matter. Sometimes, ambition overlooks certain things. Here I am, conspiring to achieve the dream of an entire generation of kids; touching the moon. Chelomei is so excited about it... he almost makes it seem easy. I wonder if this is a personal revenge against Mishin. That doesn't matter either, Brezhnev fired him at last. He was heard to said that he was "a ten years useless loss of time". Now Gushko is on charge.

84           TRAINING SWIMMING POOLS. INT. DAY

Stan takes the soaked suit by the training swimming pools. Some scientists in white coats put some electrodes on his chest.

                  STAN (OFF)

From all the cosmonauts and astronauts that have been in space, just twenty four have left the earth orbit and have been "out there". None of them Russian.

85           CENTRIFUGE. INT. DAY

Stan spins around at high speed inside the centrifuge. Some reflections pass by his helmet fast. Pressure gets higher, 2G... 3G... 4G...

                  STAN (OFF)

This technology. These thousands of screws and nuts... The mechanisms, electrodes, connections... (5G... <Stan's skin starts moving>) All this

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)  
 concentrated energy, fruits of  
 the effort of hundreds of working  
 hours... (7G... <more and more  
 pressure>) Such an effort for  
 just one purpose... To leave the  
 earth (8G.... <and more>) Escape.  
 From God? From ourselves? Too  
 profound. We are much simpler  
 than that. (11G... <an intense  
 pain. He grits his teeth>) All  
 these mathematical and electrical  
 combinations. The physic forces.  
 All this effort (14G... <one  
 turn, and another one, and more  
 and more>) What for? The  
 narrowest hinge in my hand puts  
 to scorn all modern machinery.  
 (16G... <an unbearable pressure  
 on forehead and arms>)

Stan faints for some seconds and the training ends in that very moment.

86 TRAINING SWIMMING POOLS. INT. DAY

Yulia and Andrei are outside looking at Stan's trainings in the pool. Andrei talks to Yulia, using his hands in a enthusiastic way.

ANDREI  
 When Soyuz and Apollo connect,  
 it's going to be like the dance  
 of two birds courting each other,  
 and smoothly getting closer until  
 they fit. In that moment, they're  
 gonna turn into a vast bird with  
 two wings of different shape.  
 Then, when they unlink, Apollo  
 will move a bit and will create  
 an artificial eclipse for the  
 Soyuz, as a peacock showing off  
 its feathers, so our cosmonauts  
 can take pictures of the sun.

YULIA  
 And what about him? (she nods  
 towards Stan)

ANDREI  
 His part is not going to be such  
 poetry. He's gonna have it hard.

They stay in a long silence.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA

What's the name of Stan's spacecraft?

ANDREI

I don't know yet. They ask me to decide it. Any preference?

She keeps silent.

YULIA (OFF)

I heard a story once. It was about a bird without legs. It could only fly and fly and keep on flying. When it got tired, it slept in the wind. It only landed once. The day it died.

87           ANDREI'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Andrei draws sketches in a piece of sheet. He rubs them out. He crosses out and starts again. He has some photographs of a LK-700 lunar module on the table. He uses transparencies to see how it will look on the rocket back. He cares about every detail of the design and the balance.

ANDREI (OFF)

I heard a story once. About a breed of South-American hummingbirds. The males courted the female in twos. The refused bird rose its feathers for one second and then started to fly towards the sun, until he died exhausted.

88           YULIA'S ROOM. INT. DAY

We see a shot of an old hummingbird-shaped pendant Yulia is placing in a box carefully. It has a red ribbon tied.

89           ANDREI'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Andrei draws on the transparencies a hummingbird symbol and writes "Kolibri" under it.

90           SEVERAL. EXT/INT. DAY/NIGHT

Stan trains hard. He runs through the woods, swims in the swimming pools, does press-ups, medical tests, he wakes up when is still night and have a shower with cold water.

91           CENTRIFUGE. INT. DAY

Andrei supervises the training of the two cosmonauts of the Soyuz-Apollo mission in the centrifuge.

92           COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

Yulia works in front of her communication panel.

93           BATHROOM 2. INT. DAY

Stan sinks with some electrodes beneath the surface of a bath full of ice.

94           ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei watches Leonov and Kuvasov medical tests in a room. Stan passes by him, together with a doctor, covered by a blanket and shivering, almost blue. He stands watching at him, and Stan, who notices it, stops to look at him too.

                  ANDREI  
                  (laughing)  
                  What happened?

                  STAN  
                  You, politicians... You should  
                  review the training procedures. I  
                  almost froze in that damned bath.

Andrei bursts out laughing.

95           YULIA'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Yulia listens to something on the radio and rushes out.

96           CORRIDOR. INT. DAY

She gets running to Andrei, who is talking fast to some other people. They walk towards the communication room and Stan joins them.

                  STAN  
                  What happened?

                  ANDREI  
                  The Soyuz 17, they've had a  
                  problem in the launch and they've  
                  fallen down to earth. We don't  
                  know yet if they're still alive  
                  and they might have fallen down  
                  in Chinese territory.

(CONTINUED)

On their way, an assistant goes to Stan and tells him he has a phone call. Stan leaves the group and follows her. Some people run through the corridors. Stan gets to a common phone and answers. The slowness of the conversation contrasts with the hysteria around.

CHICA

Hi Stan... It's Maia.

STAN

(astounded)

Maia...

MAIA

Do you remember? We were dating when you were at the academy...

STAN

Yes, Yes, of course I remember. It's just that I never thought that/

MAIA

(interrupting)

I'm sorry for not calling much.

STAN

How long? Ten, twelve years?

People keeps running to and fro.

MAIA

I... I was wondering if you would like to have a drink together. For the old times...

STAN

Eh... now... it's a bit complicated. It's not a good time.

MAIA

Are you married? I understand. Anyhow...

STAN

(Still astounded and almost laughing to himself about the absurd of the situation) No, no. It's not that. I'm not married.

MAIA

Oh, I understand. Well, maybe next time (really sad, realizing that it is an absurd call. There is a silence). Stan... I'm sorry that I hurt you.

And the discontinuous sound after hanging up. Stan is still some more seconds holding the phone while people keeps on running around him.

97 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia plays with a cosmonaut helmet on her bed.

YULIA (OFF)

The two cosmonauts have survived after bearing more than 20G of pressure, during the 20 minutes of the flight.

Yulia starts pressing her body against the helmet, making some very slow but really erotic movements. She gets every feelings of the materials against her body.

YULIA (OFF)

How is to feel all that pressure against your body? Is it like hundreds of invisible hands touching every inch of your skin?

Yulia leads her hand towards her crotch slowly and breaths deeply.

98 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

A coffee maker has been for hours over the heat, almost melting. The handler drips plastic drops burning in their fall.

99 DACHA. EXT. DUSK

We are in a field in front of a grove. There is a house with a small fence making a garden. It's Andrei's dacha. It's a cold and greyish day, even though the dusk sun floods everything. Andrei, Yulia, Stan, a couple and another man are sitting around the remains of an smoky barbecue. They drink some kind of alcohol and talk about trivial things. It's a friend's meeting. The breeze stirs some white sheets hanging on a rope.

MAN 1

Stan, when is your turn?

Stan forces a smile.

STAN

No idea.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

Won't you have claustrophobia up there?

STAN

Well, actually, I'll have the whole universe just at the other side of the window...

Everyone laughs.

MAN 1

Come on, practice with us. What are you going to say when you come back to earth? Which words are you going to choose for such a special moment?

STAN

(laughing)

I think I'll ask for an even faster plane to fly.

YULIA

Of course, I forgot that cosmonauts are not poets... They are soldiers.

Everyone laughs.

MAN 2

I've heard that the Spiral project is been set off again to answer the American shuttles. Do you know anything about it?

ANDREI

The Spiral is the most beautiful piece of engineering that I've ever seen. Even though I doubt they'll create any further from the existing prototypes.

YULIA

Is that white spacecraft you showed me?

ANDREI

Indeed. It's an aerodynamic and technical wonder with delicate shapes. Too pretty to be military.

MAN 1

Igor, you'll have to tell me one day where you get that kind of information.

(CONTINUED)

They laugh. Stan stares at the sky. Then into the distance. We see a close-up of just one second of Yulia, looking almost at the camera axis, joining those two looks. Andrei stands up.

ANDREI

I'm getting something else to drink. Stan, would you help me?

They walk to the back of the house.

ANDREI

What are you thinking? You're far away from here...

STAN

I'm not sure. I'm bit afraid of the silence chamber.

ANDREI

When do you go in?

STAN

Tomorrow

ANDREI

You should be happy. You're going to achieve your dream... (smiles)  
And mine.

STAN

I am.

They hug. Stan is coming back to the table when Andrei calls him. He takes a badge out of the pocket and holds it out to him.

ANDREI

Would you do me the favour of leaving it up there?

Stan looks at him for some never-ending seconds. Then he takes it.

ANDREI

If someone asks you, just said you lost it. I don't want to be everyone's laughing stock because I took to space a keepsake of my best friend, instead of my wife's.

Both laugh.

STAN (OFF)

Wife? Such a barbaric term. Love is just desire. Sometimes,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)  
desires lasts longer, and some  
others it lasts less time.  
Sometimes it lasts for too long.  
I'm terrified of that old man I'm  
supposed to become. I would  
rather prefer a thousand times to  
be making love for hours with a  
cosmonaut girl than flying my  
microlight on sunny Sundays.  
Desire is a huge sign of  
forbidden.

100 FIELD. EXT. DAY

We see Yulia on slow-motion while her voice goes at a normal speed. She plays with her hair. She gets her hair in a mess. She laughs.

ANDREI (OFF)  
I dream with a universe of messed  
up-hair girls.

She suddenly gets serious and sad.

YULIA  
I'm not really ambitious. The  
only thing I ask for is not to be  
forgotten. Nothing else.  
Nevermind if it's ugly and silly,  
but I want to be remembered. It's  
how we exist. In memories. If  
nobody remembers you...

101 TERRACE. EXT. DAY

Stan, on his cosmonaut suit, is sitting on a rock in front of a deserted place. He plays with the half burned badge between his fingers. It's Andrei's hummingbird, as the label of the mission. You can read "Kolibri Moon Programme" on it.

STAN (OFF)  
I was in a landing training and  
some technician must have done  
the wrong calculations. I've  
fallen down 400 kilometres from  
the predicted point of landing.  
There is less time left for the  
launch and things seem unreal  
sometimes. I wonder what would  
Andrei and Yulia do if something  
happened to me. If only that guy  
wouldn't fail the calculations.  
What if I'm not found and I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)  
cannot even fly in the Kolibri?  
It's funny, I always think of  
Yulia as a hummingbird, but I've  
never told Andrei.

Stan stays sitting for hours. The clouds move over his head in fast-forward. The sun goes down among red shades. reddish tones.

Sign: 1975

103 DINNING ROOM. INT. NIGHT

There is a dinner of the soldiers and their wives. It's to say goodbye to Leonov and Kubasov. Also to Stan, but nobody knows it. The fellow diners ask for food, wine. They have fun. They make jokes about the Americans. Andrei stands up and beats a glass.

ANDREI  
I would like to propose a toast  
for the new horizons opened  
thanks to this mission, and for  
our compatriots that will go to  
space soon.

He looks at Stan out of the corner of the eye. Everyone makes the toast and music starts playing. When everyone stands up to dance, Yulia sweeps Stan outside, and they try Andrei to go with them, but he is too busy greeting important soldiers, and Apollogizes with his eyes, willing to go with them.

104 ROOF. EXT. NIGHT

Stan and Yulia go out to the roof of some building where they see most of the city, in silence now.

YULIA  
What an amazing night. All the  
stars can be seen.

They stay quiet for some seconds. Yulia leans on his shoulder.

YULIA  
Do you know why I decided to work  
here?

STAN  
You've never told me.

YULIA

I was seventeen. I was dating a guy older than me, he was thirty. A communication technician from the army. He was always telling me stories of the radio and the amount of things and information that were floating in the air and we couldn't see. He was the first guy who kissed me. I guess we are trying our whole life to go back to those first years when you find out everything for the first time. It's like in the films. I would like to be again that girl who didn't know what was going to happen next and was surprised every single time, even though the end was always the same.

STAN

Thirty? So that was your first kiss? I always thought you were more premature.

She looks at him in disapproval.

YULIA

What about yours?

STAN

Mine was in my school toilets. I was fourteen. We run away from a class. It was a complete mess.

YULIA

I'm sure you haven't learnt how to kiss yet (she laughs). What about Mister Important? Do you know how was his first kiss?

STAN

No idea. When I met him he seemed to have been dealing with girls his whole life. He taught me all the tricks I know. Maybe he had also an old woman to teach him, like your communication technician.

He laughs and she hits him in the arm. They stay in silence looking at the sky.

STAN

I'm scared to death

(CONTINUED)

YULIA  
(holding out her palm)  
Give me your hand

Stan hesitates. She takes her hand delicately and then she bites it hard.

STAN  
What the hell are you doing?

YULIA  
(Smiling satisfied)  
This way, you won't forget me.  
Even if you forget my face,  
you'll remember me.

STAN  
The marks will disappear in a  
while...

She hesitates

YULIA  
Then I'll make you to hate me. So  
you won't forget me. I'm going to  
try to be the most hateful girl  
you've ever met.

He laughs resigned and looks at her out of the corner of the eye in fascination. Andrei comes after a while and sits. The three of them stay quiet looking at the stars. It starts raining.

105 SEVERALS. EXT. DAY

It's day already, it's raining over the woods, over the rivers, over the lake, over Star City. It rains persistently, without a break. Then the sun comes out, but the sky is full of northern lights and strange shapes in the clouds. Stan and Yulia just wait, play ping-pong, let the drops of water fall down on them laying on bed, Yulia shows Stan how to make clay planets, they read, they look at pictures. Andrei is with them in some of those activities. In some others he is just filling papers, making phone calls, going with the two other cosmonauts.

STAN (OFF)  
It was raining for 8 days on a row. The wait before the launch was unbearable. When it ceased raining, the excessive flame activity of the sun postponed the departure two more weeks. During that time, Yulia didn't leave me. Neither did the northern lights.

106 HANGAR. INT. DAY

Several people finalize the preparations with some vehicles and machinery in a huge hangar. The light gets in through the windows. Stan and Andrei come walking. Some technicians in white coats fix a couple of things in Stan's suit. People move around. Yulia, in the distance, compare some data with some people. She looks at Stan among everything (close shot). He doesn't notice. Someone puts him together with Andrei to take a picture with a polaroid. While they get ready, Stan takes the opportunity to look at Yulia, but she is looking somewhere else now. She is just behind them, backwards.

TECHNICIAN 1

Please, look at the camera.  
Smile.

Stan turns around. In that very moment, Yulia looks at him again, she turns around, and the picture is taken. She is backwards in it. Someone gives Stan the picture. The picture is materializing and Stan looks restrained at it before putting it away. People keep on working around Stan.

107 BAIKONUR. EXT. DAY

Stan urinates on the bus wheel.

108 BAIKONUR'S DESERT. EXT. DAY

We see several figures in Baikonur desert at different depth in a side travelling. There are just 8 or 9 people attending the launch. The wind is blowing and their clothes are stirred. They are all tense, restrained. Andrei and Chelomei look at each other and sigh.

109 SEVERAL. INT. SPACECRAFT AND COMUNICATION'S ROOM INT. DAY

Several technicians touch some controls and some lights turn on.

STAN

Leonov told me once that, during the launch, I'll hear some strange sounds that I've never heard before. When you approach the 30 seconds, the rocket starts to come alive. It's like an animal. A deep shaking that seems to come out of a throat and goes through you like a thunderclap.

We hear the Earth control giving instructions. Sometimes it's not talking to Stan, but to other technicians. Andrei checks the time.

110 BAIKONUR DESERT. EXT. DAY

Yulia cannot stand it and leaves. Andrei watches her leaving.

111 INSIDE SPACECRAFT. INT. DAY

A broadcasted countdown over black. When it reaches 0, Stan opens his eyes. It's a subjective shot from inside the spacecraft, through the hatch, while the rockets explode at 100.000 degrees.

STAN

My eyes blink twice while my body  
moves at two thousand kilometres  
per hour.

112 BAIKONUR DESERT. EXT. DAY

Yulia stops while the R-700 raises majestic at her back. She turns around, looking at it. She says some words without emitting any sound. We just see her lips moving.

113 INSIDE SPACECRAFT. INT. DAY

Immediatly, Stan speaks.

STAN

Control, what have you just said?  
I should have misheard. Can you  
repeat it?

TECHNICIAN 2 (OFF)

We haven't told you anything,  
Stan. It must have been an  
interference. Anyway, check the  
CO2 levels, please.

The rocket raises in vertical. We see the horizon line go down until it disappears. Everything gets dark. Space. Silence.

111 NOTE:

The lite version of the script ends here. If you are interested in the full version of the script, you can read it in [www.thecosmonaut.org](http://www.thecosmonaut.org)