

The Cosmonaut

Nicolás Alcalá

Creative Commons BySaNc

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 Apollogy.

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

114 COMMUNICATION'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Yulia is in the control room. She turns off some lights and calls Stan.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA
Stan, can you hear me?

STAN (OFF)
I can hear you, guys.

YULIA
It's Yulia. There's no one else.

STAN (OFF)
You don't know how tremendously
bored I am.

She smiles.

STAN (OFF)
Do you want me to sing you a
song?

She smiles, releasing all the accumulated stress.

YULIA
No, please.. But I'm really happy
to hear you.

STAN (OFF)
How are the Apollo-Soyuz guys
doing?

YULIA
Light and pretty as two huge
birds courting each other.

STAN (OFF)
Wow, I would like to see that.

YULIA
I've got to go, Stan. I'll call
you again later.

She connects back some buttons and keeps on working.

115 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

One day more in Star City. Cosmonaut's wives go shopping
and walk their children. The kids go to school. A couple of
soldiers pass by. Other cosmonauts are training.

116 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia starts a new clay planet: The Moon.

117 COMUNICATION'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei controls the Soyuz-Apollo mission together with the communication engineers in the control room.

 LEONOV (OFF)

 Systems, checked. Everything is perfect. The Earth looks really beautiful from up here. I think I can see my wife waving at us.

Everyone laughs.

 ANDREI

 I'm really glad you are enjoying so much. I hope you come back speaking a better English than when you left. What I need now is that you get ready to decouple.

 LEONOV (OFF)

 Deke Slayton told me that he was excited. He would have preferred to fly with the Mercury project, but it was beautiful anyway. I answered that I would have preferred to go to the Moon. I guess we cannot have all the things we want.

Andrei and other officer look at each other for a second and swallow.

 ANDREI

 We'll talk about that when you come back and you can tell us all your adventures, guys, now, get the decoupling system ready.

 LEONOV (OFF)

 Sure.

118 INSIDE SPACECRAFT. INT. SPACE

Stan sings a traditional children's song in space.

119 COMUNICATION'S ROOM. INT. NIGHT

It's already night. Andrei talks to the two technicians left in the room.

 ANDREI

 Boys, why don't you go for a rest. I stay on duty. I call you if something happens.

(CONTINUED)

They nod and go out. Andrei opens a communication channel with Stan.

ANDREI

Stan, this is Chaika. Can you hear me?

STAN (OFF)

(faking the voice of an old lady)
Hello? Who do you want to talk to?

ANDREI

Madam, can I talk to your idiot son?

STAN (OFF)

Which one?

ANDREI

Eh... The cosmonaut

Both burst out laughing.

ANDREI

What's up?

STAN (OFF)

It's very exciting to be here. Everything is so beautiful. You cannot imagine the infinite variety of shades of black until you come up here.

ANDREI

And the sun? What about the sun?

STAN (OFF)

It's impossible to describe it. None of the pictures or videos you've seen do justice to it. It's the most impressive thing ever reflected in my eyes. What about down there?

ANDREI

Everything is fine. The Soyuz-guys are about to come back. Chelomei has been two days without sleep, nervous like a child. And yesterday, I burnt my fingers cooking.

STAN (OFF)

Oups. I'm sorry. What have you had for lunch today?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREI

Hot dogs. A new technician from NASA has come today and the Americans invited us.

STAN (OFF)

Wow, I'm hungry now. I think I'll eat another one of my delicious hamburgers in a tube. Or the dehydrated fries that look like stuffed worms. Hmmm.

ANDREI

A new girl has come too. She is really beautiful.

There is a silence.

STAN (OFF)

It's so quiet up here that I can even hear my nails growing. I think I'm going to sleep for a while.

ANDREI

Ok. We'll talk in the morning.

STAN (OFF)

Over and out.

120 CORRIDORS. INT. DAY

Yulia walks around the station towards the control room. She says hello to somebody. Another girl joins her on her way. They hurry up because they are running late.

121 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

They arrive. There is a small group of technicians. Chelomei is there too.

ANDREI

Hello everyone. Listen. There are some minutes left for the first disconnection. The spacecraft will take 30 minutes to go through the hidden face of the Moon. We will restore the communication afterwards, and will proceed with the Moon landing.

Yulia connects with Stan.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA

Ok, Stan. Is everything ready?

STAN (OFF)

Yep. I thought you would never arrive.

YULIA

Can we proceed with the system check-up?

STAN (OFF)

Of course.

Yulia describes several systems and Stan answers all of them as right.

It's a relaxed atmosphere.

STAN (OFF)

Engines, checked. Wait a minute... (some seconds of silence) How was this? Ah, yes, Houston, we have a problem here.

ANDREI

Very funny, commander Arsenievich. If this were an open mission, you'd be deported to Siberia when you come back.

STAN (OFF)

No, I'm serious. There is some kind of problem with the communication antenna. Something went wrong (these last words are a bit distorted).

The whispers spread through the room. Andrei orders to check the problems.

STAN (OFF)

Can you still hear me? I cannot hear you... Let's try something funny: Marco?

Andrei starts sweating nervously.

ANDREI

Very funny. Polo

Silence.

STAN (OFF)

Marco?

ANDREI

Polo. Stan, stop playing.

STAN (OFF)

I don't think you suddenly shut up. I think this is broken.

Suddenly, there is an interference sound, and then silence. Absolute silence.

ANDREI

Stan? This is Chaika. Answer, over. Stan?

Some seconds more, nothing is heard.

ANDREI

How long did he have to get into the isolated area?

TECHNICIAN

Still two minutes left. We should hear him loud and clear.

Andrei stays quiet for some seconds and starts to frenetically allocate work to everyone.

ANDREI

I want everything to be checked when he comes out at the other side. It better be our problem and not the spaceship's.

122 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

The clock keeps moving every single second. The atmosphere is tense. No one speaks, they just touch some controls and wait. It's quite hot.

TECHNICIAN 2

Do you know when is the heating going to be fixed?

Andrei shakes his head and dries the sweat with a handkerchief. Yulia is a bit lost, like a little girl. She looks fragile and disorientated. Andrei looks at one of the technicians.

TECHNICIAN

In forty seconds we should start hearing him and getting the signal back in the radar.

They all wait in silence. Time seems to delay. Yulia touches her chest smoothly and feels her fast heartbeats. Toc-toc. Toc-toc.

(CONTINUED)

TECHNICIAN 2

Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven. Six.
Five. Four. Three. Two. One.

.... Silence. Silence. And then silence. Yulia takes her hands to her lips. Andrei doesn't know what to say and stays paralyzed. Yulia stands up and hugs him. He holds her between her arms, almost about to faint. The clock keeps on moving. Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

123 SPACECRAFT INTERIOR. INT. SPACE

Stan turns a video camera on and starts recording himself.

STAN

Something has damaged the Kolibri's communication antenna. I cannot communicate with Earth at all. It's the third orbit I do around the Moon. It's so beautiful that I barely believe that I'm here. (pause). I don't know exactly how, but here you realize about the terrible vastness of space. And about the huge loneliness. Without anyone else, a quarter million kilometres away from home and isolated... I feel what Adam should have felt. (pause) I decided to land besides the problems with the antenna.

124 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. NIGHT

A printer spits data out on a continuous roll. Andrei makes calculations non-stop, in despair. He looks at some maps with coordinates and compares the data the printer spits. It's night and he's alone. There are several lights shining in the panels. Some calculation goes wrong and Andrei gets mad. He starts again. Yulia talks to him from behind.

YULIA

Andrei Sergéevich Vasíliev, you should sleep.

ANDREI

When I check the six quadrants left.

YULIA

Stop looking for him Andrei... it's been two weeks. You know that spacecraft better than anyone.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREI

I can't.

She burst into tears in a fragile and violent way. He hugs her and her head leans over his chest. Some seconds later, Andrei talks to her without splitting up.

ANDREI

Do you love me, Yulia?

She stands still, completely quiet. Then she leaves.

125 WOODS. EXT. DAY

The water runs in slow-motion through a stream. We see Star City in the distance.

Sign: 7 months later.

126 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei has fallen asleep on the keyboards. Suddenly, he's awoken by a beep. It's a dot in the radar. He checks a couple of things and quickly lifts the phone.

127 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

He goes out of the complex in a hurry. It's very early in the morning.

128 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

He arrives to Yulia's house running and open with his own key. He hangs the coat close to one of his jackets. He goes to the room where Yulia, awake and with red eyes, is trembling a bit with a handkerchief in her hand. She has huge bags under her eyes and looks tired. Andrei lies down behind her and hugs her. She talks into the distance, as daydreaming.

YULIA

A new letter arrived. You're going to make us get arrested.

He kisses her in her neck while he talks to her in a whisper with a clam voice.

ANDREI

The spacecraft is coming back to Earth. He is coming back...

Yulia gets paralyzed and holds her breath. She squeezes Andrei's hand.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREI

I know it's been a while. I know it's almost impossible. But the universe is too big to make it fall down here without a chance. Come on, get up. It will fall down in less than an hour.

She holds her eyes tightly shut, as trying to get out of a bad dream.

YULIA

I catch you now.

She sits up slowly. Andrei kneels down by her and kisses her on her lips. She kisses him back and holds his face with delicacy. They hug and he leaves. Yulia takes the clay moon she was making months ago out of a drawer. It's still half done. She looks at it for some seconds and then she drops it out of the window.

129

WOODS. EXT. DAY

Several people walk through the woods amongst the trees. Some of them have small radios emitting light signals. They walk in a parallel line, sweeping the area. Every now and then someone shouts "Nothing!", and the rest answers with the same sound, on a row, as an echo. Andrei also walks with a transistor where some interferences are heard. He tries to tune in some sound. Yulia, some metres away, has another one in her hand. Suddenly, a broken voice is heard.

STAN (OFF)

sp...ed... I... ing...
atm...sphere... I'ts really h..t.

Yulia stops, in anguish, without breath, shaking. She leans against a tree.

The men get to an open space. The signals intensifies and they finally see the Kolibri module in the distance, scorched and smoky. The parachute burns together with some of the dried grass around.

They quickly open the hatch.

TECHNICIAN

There is no one inside. It's empty.

Everyone looks around puzzled. There is no trace of Stan. They look inside the spacecraft and the surroundings. Yulia clutches her white hands against the radio that it is still on.

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF)

Chaik? St...n speaking. Chaika?
Bird lande... The Kolíbri module
is back. Over. ...I can't see
anyo... Where are you? Chaika?
Over.

There is a clap of thunder and starts raining. Andrei breaths upset. Another thunder.

130 WOODS. EXT. DAY

Stan looks around by his spacecraft. There is no trace of human life. The flames crackle by the spacecraft. There is a clap of thunder and it starts raining. Another thunder.

131 YULIA'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei, completely soaked, tries to connect the light fuse-switches. The house is completely dark but for a candle Yulia holds, who looks from a corner in anguish and distress closing her mouth with one of her hands. There is an awful storm outside. Andrei looks in a drawer and he finally takes an old radio transistor out. He connects the transistor and turns it on. They tune up a specific frequency and suddenly, in the silence, Stan's voice is heard distant and distorted.

STAN (OFF)

Chaika? I've been hours looking
for you. I've shot two of the
three rescue flare... Why no one
answers me? Ov..r. Chaika?

Yulia's heart miss a beat and she drops the candle. Then she faints.

132 WOODS. EXT. DAY

Stan walks through the woods at dawn, with the sounds of birds waking up and the calm. He walks a bit excited amongst branches and rough stones, with the helmet in his hand.

STAN (OFF)

I once heard that in a morbid
state, dreams are identified by
their outstanding color, their
sharpness and their strange
resemblance with reality. The
capacity of dreaming more precise
and specific, as well as more
emotionally intense images
increases when the individual is

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)
much closer to an animically
violent situation, to the limit
of his faculties.

133 YULIA'S ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei wakes up because of some noise. It's dawn and he's in bed without t-shirt together with Yulia. She wears a nightdress and is lying, embracing the pillow, and she has her eyes open staring into the void. Andrei rubs his eyes.

ANDREI
Have you been awake the whole
night again?

YULIA
(talking very low)
I don't like what I see when I
sleep.

ANDREI
Yulia... your health.. you should
maybe listen to the doctor and
start taking that pills.

YULIA
I have already started.

Andrei sits up

ANDREI
Do you want some coffee?

She gets up too. She looks tenderly at him despite the tiredness.

YULIA
Don't worry. I'll do it.

She goes towards the kitchen

134 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia starts to make coffee and turns the radio on. There is just statics.

YULIA (OFF)
He came back for some seconds and
then he left again. Where are you
cosmonaut?

135 WOODS. EXT. DAY

Stan walks through the woods in a kind of oneiric image, following a blue hummingbird that guides him and makes him go around. He finally arrives to a clearing in the woods where Yulia waits for him smiling, dressed up as a cosmonaut.

STAN (OFF)

Paradise C is the most recurrent one. First, there is a blue hummingbird asking me to follow it. Then it takes me to a clearing in the woods and that's where the cosmonaut is, shining in technicolor. At the end, she always disappears and I end up by the crystal-clear water of a river, where a drowned gazelle lies.

We see images of all the things the cosmonaut describes.

136 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia washes some white dishes wearing an apron. A sound in the next room makes her turn her head suddenly. She drops the dish and rushes out towards the living room. She sits nervous in front of the table with the radio Andrei took out months ago. A buzz and click mean that a communication channel has been opened. She cannot help laughing nervous. A breath is heard. Suddenly, Stan starts talking.

STAN (OFF)

Today is march 17th. As far as I remember, today is my birthday.

Yulia holds the table nervous. She rummages in her hair and takes out a small flower on a brooch. She holds it out to the radio, with watery eyes.

STAN (OFF)

The day before yesterday, when I was making calculations, I found out that several weeks ago I lost the count of the months that have passed since the launch. I could calculate it following the day of today, but I forgot the exact date the spacecraft set off to space.

Yulia smiles with tears falling down her eyes and she talks to the transistor, barely rising her voice.

(CONTINUED)

YULIA

8 months and twenty-two days,
Cosmonaut.

STAN (OFF)

This morning, I have seen you
again before my eyes. I don't
care if I'm found. I cannot get
you out of my head. The only
thing I would like is you to be
here to make me laugh, to scratch
my head as you do everytime I
talk nonsense. To see your smile.
Lately, I can't stop having
visions where you appear.

There is a noise that makes Yulia turn her head. It's the front door. Yulia turns off the radio and stands up rushing towards the door. Andrei is hanging his jacket and she stays still by him. Andrei turns around and looks at her seriously. She tries to explain herself with her eyes, but she keeps a strong and confident look. He looks at the flower she is still holding.

ANDREI

You should have two flowers.

She holds out her hand to him and tries to hold his hand, but he rejects it and goes to his room. She stays standing still in the middle of the living room, looking at him.

137 RIVER. EXT. DAY

The cosmonaut is in the middle of river stream, and catches a fish with his own hands. It fidgets alive trying to escape.

138 VALLEY. EXT. DAY

The cosmonaut walks through a huge valley, almost dragging himself. He stops on a hill for a second to look at the deserted horizon.

139 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia watches slides projected on a screen. They are pictures screened automatically. Almost all of them show her with Andrei and Stan in the back, or the three of them. Every picture is followed by another one of the same place where Stan was, now empty.

YULIA (OFF)

A story is never complete without
the empty spaces between images.

(CONTINUED)

The slides come to its end and the projector keeps on changing the slide, but just projecting a white screen. Yulia stays still looking at it. Andrei looks at her from the doorframe. He gets to her, turns the projector off, look at her in the eyes, and kisses her in her lips. She surrenders in his arms. The radio is still broadcasting the dull statics sound.

140 WOODS. EXT. DUSK

It's dusk, and Stan is before a clay tumulus with a lit torch lighting it.

STAN (OFF)

I live in a kind of memory Eden,
with no other context or time
than the one of nostalgia, of
memory. It's a complete
nonsense. The seasons have
changed really fast. The leaves
are, at last, green and warm.
Sometimes I bury myself in a clay
field. Why is everything so
absurd?

141 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. NIGHT

Yulia is in the deserted communication room, with the headphones on. She carefully opens a cardboard box. There are several hand-numbered audio recordings. She puts one of them in the control panels and push a couple of buttons. The cosmonaut voice sounds in the silence of the night.

STAN (OFF)

I have decided to number them not
to forget. I forget things more
often.

Yulia fast-forwards the tape some seconds.

STAN (OFF)

A paradise lasted just for a
moment. I was floating in the
middle of the ocean. I remember
the touchdown module to be burnt
to a cinder because of the
reentry. Then I saw you on that
rock for just some seconds. You
had te body of a mermaid and
everything was really strange.

Yulia takes out another tape. She puts it on and directly fast-forwards it some seconds.

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF)

Paradise C were your lips
exhaling a breath misting over
the air in successive
repetitions. It was getting dark,
I remember that.

The tape is over and everything remains silent.

142 SEVERAL. EXT. DAY/NIGHT

We see objects and empty places in slow-motion. A broken mirror on the ground reflecting the sky. The clouds passing by in fast-forward. The water running in slow-motion. Shots of animals in the darkness lit by spotlight: a gazelle. An owl. A dog. Finally, a cosmonaut burns up at the edge of a cliff by the sea.

143 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia is leaning against the bathroom doorframe wearing an almost transparent nightdress. Steams comes out of it. Andrei shows up wearing a towel tied to his waist while he's drying himself with another one. His body is still muscular and his skin is smooth. He stops by the door frame, looking at her. She touches softly his pectoral still with some small drops, like hesitating. She looks at his body, never at his eyes, as in penance. He takes her hand delicately, as if he was going to put it aside. They look at each other. She kisses him slowly. He lets her do it.

144 UNDER THE WATER. INT. DAY

We see several diffused images of Yulia under water. We can barely see the bottom and the water is greenish and translucent. Some rays of light get in from the surface. Stan is with her as well. They both are naked. They swim together, they look for each other, they run away from each other. They look at each other.

145 SEVERAL. EXT. DAY

The cosmonaut in front of a huge sun. A really enormous sun occupying everything, crackling and making the image soften with the heat. It is a gigantic ball of fire producing a dull sound devouring everything. There are shots of undergrowth in the shadows that are covered by the sun in stop motion. Buildings, streets, everything is devoured slowly by the sunlight while dawning. It's a thunderous noise, as a huge beat, as a wave, as something alive.

146 FIELD. EXT. DAY

Stan wakes up in the middle of a field, with an intense sun falling down over him and producing muffled sounds. He stands up slowly. He is inside a demolished house where the only things left are walls of few centimetres. He suddenly hears a noise and starts breathing a bit upset. He sees the shadow of an animal in the next room, just separated by a wall. He gets closer slowly, breathing with difficulty. He picks up a rusty how from the ground, and moves slowly towards the wall. His face is soaked in sweat. The dull sounds. When he's about to attack, a fox runs away hysterical and desperate. Stan breaths deeply, suffocated. He gets desperate and hits himself against the stone wall repeatedly.

147 WOODS. EXT. DAY

Stan walks through the woods, in the snow. It's difficult for him to walk. He eats some berries. Finally, he sees Star City in the distance, empty, desolate.

148 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Stan walks round the deserted city. The swimming pools. The centrifuge. Everything has an abandoned look.

149 YULIA'S HOUSE. EXT/INT. DAY

The cosmonaut goes up the stairs of an old building. There is a complete silence. He gets to the eighth floor and walks towards the end, where just few rays of light get in. He stops in front of a door. He opens it carefully. It's Yulia's apartment, now empty. Stan goes round the house in silence, touching the surfaces in nostalgia and respect.

150 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Yulia is listening to the radio with his breath suppressed. There is just a dull and constant buzz. And a distant breath. There is a noise of a chair. The water tap. The sounds are as if they were in the same room. Suddenly, a vinyl plays in the distance. It's the same song they danced in the distance in that party. Yulia stands up startled. She puts her hands over her lips.

STAN (OFF)

I remember a party, but not the reason of it. I remember the dress you were wearing.

151 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Stan looks around, standing, in the middle of the living room. He sits on the sofa carefully. He closes his eyes trying to sleep.

152 ANDREI'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT

Andrei organizes his pictures and makes some drawings with unwillingness.

We see images of the empty city. Of Stan, still in Yulia's house, walking to and fro.

ANDREI (OFF)

Last months have been really hard. Since Stan died things have become more and more complicated. Yulia is barely awake, but her body is much weaker. I can barely work. The other day, I dreamt I was talking to Stan. I asked him if it was worth going to space. He answered it was, but he lost the woman of his life. I asked him if that was worth it. He answered it wasn't, but he felt alive. I envy him.

153 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

Yulia listen to tapes for hours. She swap, number and organized them with some carelessness.

YULIA (OFF)

I heard a story once. About a bird without paws. It could only fly and fly and keep on flying. When it got tired, it slept over the wind. It just landed once. The day it died. What sense makes having someone you love so close but you cannot have him? Stan told me once we live in memory. That's why I'm so afraid of being forgotten. But I'm not going to forget him. How could I? Maybe is time to let him go.

154 ANDREI'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

Andrei walks around the room.

155 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

Andrei goes to have a walk round Star City, deserted now.

156 CORRIDORS. INT. DAY

In the early morning Andrei hands his uniform over.

157 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

He picks Yulia up at her house. She takes a small suitcase and leaves with him, having the last look at the house before closing.

158 YULIA'S HOUSE. INT. DAY

The cosmonaut wakes up with a door closing, and sits up, alone, and breaths looking around. He calmly stands up and picks his things up and leaves too.

159 CAR. INT. DAY

Yulia and Andrei travel in a car. The day is cloudy and grey. Yulia stares at the road. She breaths harder, as if she couldn't get enough air. She touches her chest. She unfastens her seat belt and opens the door intending to jump. Andrei swerves. When he open his eyes, the car slips fast through a field until it crashes against an old and leafless tree. Andrei breaths with difficulty. He's confused. He looks to his side and discover a terrible truth. Yulia lies on the seat with her head sideways, lifeless. Andrei goes out of the car in despair and gets her from the other door. He asks for help into the void. He desperately unfasten her seat belt and takes her out of the car in his arms. He gives out a dull sound asking for help. When Yulia has a dull spasm, Andrei discovers the tall and thin figure of the cosmonaut behind him. It starts raining. Stan stands close to him in his soaked orange suit, and the drops hitting his helmet. Finally, the reunion has occured.

They both look at each other in silence, examining each other. The cosmonaut face just shows peace, contrasting with Andrei's twisted face. They breath upset in the rain. Stan gets closer slowly to Andrei and picks Yulia's dead body up from his arms, delicately, until he holds her firmly. Her thin dress sticks to her bluish skin. Andrei feels the void like a sting. The cosmonaut looks at him

for the last time holding her in his arms, he smiles, and goes away.

160 HUT BY THE SEA. INT. DAY

In a white and beautiful room by the sea, Andrei holds Yulia in his arms embracing him, and he puts her in bed. He sits by her side and caresses her. She smiles back.

ANDREI

Everything's going to be fine,
dear Yulia. Everythings's going to
be fine. You'll see.

She smiles, pale and weak, although she seems empty inside. She sighs. She looks out of the window. She hears the waves braking.

161 STAR CITY. EXT. DAY

A new bus with pilots willing to be trained arrives to Star City. A cosmonaut trains in the pools. Some others do sports. Another takes some medical tests. Life goes on.

THE END

162 SUPPLEMENT. THE MOON FILES (STAN'S STORY)

NOTE: What comes next is a complete chapter where Stan's story is told from the moment he loses the communication with Earth control, until the moment his spacecraft gets again into the atmosphere.

These sequences will be shot in a conventional way, but they won't be included in the film, but broadcasted through different channels. They will allow the audience to know part of the hidden story until that moment, in order to fit together the parts of the puzzle The Cosmonaut consists of.

163 SPACECRAFT INTERIOR. INT. SPACE

Stan turns a video camera on and starts recording himself.

STAN

Something has damaged the
Kolibri's communication antenna.
I cannot communicate with Earth
control anymore. It's the third
orbit I do around the Moon. It's
so beautiful that I barely
believe that I'm here. (pause). I
don't know exactly how, but here

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (cont'd)
you realize about the terrible vastness of space. And about the huge loneliness. Without anyone else, a quarter million kilometres away from home and isolated... I feel what Adam should have felt. (pause) I decided to land besides the problems with the antenna. I will be describing every detail for future analysis. In about twelve minutes I will began the direct descent of the Kolibri module to the Moon surface.

He cuts. The camera turns on again. We see the landing process recorded live by the video camera. It takes 6 minutes. Technical procedures, coming up problems and all kind of light indicators, alarms and others are detailed. Finally, the spacecraft lands on the surface. Stan breaths relieved. He gives a high five to himself.

164 MOON SURFACE. EXT. SPACE

The moment of setting foot on the moon is a complete epiphany. In a close-up of his face we see his expression when he looks at Earth, at the Sun, at the universe, when he touches the lunar dust. After a while, he finds the nameplate with the dead cosmonauts left by the Apollo mission, and he leaves his notebook with the legends of the missing cosmonauts by its side. He also leaves Andrei's badge and a mission patch with the hummingbird. He doesn't want to leave. He talks about how wonderful it is. He stays there until he is out of oxygen. He gets into the spacecraft again.

165 SPACECRAFT INTERIOR. INT. SPACE

The spacecraft launches to Earth with minimum resources, in really bad conditions and with several lights of emergency flickering. Once the spacecraft is out of the orbit of the Moon, the emergency lights turn off, and the spacecraft goes on with the trip. Stan reports a failure in the solar panels, therefore, in the spacecraft energy.

When he gets closer to Earth, the spacecraft is almost out off battery. It's running out little by little. The spacecraft wanders adrift towards the Earth, pushed by the inertia and almost nothing else.

STAN
Pushkin once said that the sacred
sound of the bells is only heard
when it announces a great

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (cont'd)
misfortune or a solemn
celebration... I heard a bell
ringing in the vastness of Space
last night.

Finally, the Cosmonaut, exhausted and with less and less strength, gets to the Earth's orbit. The spacecraft catches it smoothly and starts orbiting.

The video camera turns on.

STAN
(exhausted, with the giggles
due to the tiredness)
I don't have energy enough to
force the reentry. I don't even
know if the parachutes would
open. I can neither communicate
with Earth to tell them where I
am. I would say the situation is
ironic, and almost comical, if it
didn't piss me off that much
getting here for nothing. I would
have preferred to stay on the
Moon. I know you don't want to
listen to this if you find the
tapes, but I've been thinking for
hours how would be a better way
to die, just waiting until the
air is over or opening the hatch.
I don't want you to think that I
am such a pessimist, I spent the
first twenty hours thinking how
the hell I was going to quick in
the ass of this piece of junk to
make it reenter the atmosphere.
Now, I keep more amused
discussing about the other topic.

The systems go off little by little as the battery runs out.

STAN
(he laughs, exhausted)
Isn't it absurd that I don't stop
talking to all that people that I
don't even know when I just want
to talk to you? I would love you
to be with me up here to see The
Earth. I'm not that scared
anymore about the idea, do you
know? About you and me, I mean.
Looking from up here how small we
are, the worst thing it could
happen would be to make a fool of
ourselves. That you didn't like

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (cont'd)
how I kiss, or I was bothered
about your breath in the morning.
Or you stopped making me laugh.
Although, now that I think, that
would really be a drama. Do you
want to sing a song with me? I
know.

Stan starts singing Fly me to the moon.

STAN
I guess I should organize some
things before this turns off or I
jump out of the hatch. I haven't
decided yet. Anyway, give Andrei
all my things. He is more
materialistic than you. And tell
him I love him a lot. Ok? I'm
really going to miss you two.
(he laughs for a second at
something we don't know)
It's funny. I have just
half-closed my eyes and I
started to see things. I saw
the three of us having a
bath in a beach.)
How funny. I half closed my eyes
and started to see things. I have
seen all three of us bathing in
the beach.

The oxygen filtering capsule turns off. The air becomes
rarified and Stan starts to fall sleep little by little.

STAN
Wait...

He closes his eyes again. He starts to be delirious. There
is wind sound. A cosmonaut jumps into the void, with the
Earth under him, and starts falling down from the
stratosphere. We feel an unimaginable vertigo with the
fall and we just hear the deadening sound of the wind
filtering in the suit.

STAN (OFF)
This attraction of the orbit I
made around you is the only thing
that prevents me from opening the
hatch and jump. You don't know
how nice is to feel the wind in
your face. Do you want to listen
to a curious thing? Matter
consists of elementary particles.
They are particles without
internal structure. The smallest
part of us. And there is a kind

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (OFF) (cont'd)
of particles in the universe called quantum particles. There is a strange phenomenon without explanation. Sometimes, two quantum particles are together and they split up. Nevermind how many kilometres are there between them, they can "resound" each other. When any of them is affected by a physical phenomenon, the other one can feel it from the other corner of the galaxy.

He is running out of air. Slowly. He gets asleep little by little. With his eyes closer and closer. Between his eyelids, he thinks he sees a hummingbird flying from one side of the spacecraft to the other.

STAN
Were you the one who told me about that story of the bird without paws who never stopped flying? How ironic, something similar is going to happen with the Kolibri. Wow, this is a nice feeling... I can hear a seagull flying over the water... And the clouds. Some clouds in a really southern place. And your smile... And...

Stan dies.

The Kolibri module is trapped in the Earth orbit, with Stan dead inside.

166 SPACE

SIGN: 7 months later.

The spacecraft crashes against a piece of space junk. This makes Stan's dead body move some centimetres and press a lever. This activates a system that makes the spacecraft turn enough to get a reflection in the solar panels and activate a mechanism, provoking its reentry in the atmosphere to fall back to Earth.

167 COMMUNICATION ROOM. INT. DAY

Andrei has fallen asleep on the keyboards. Suddenly, he's awoken by a beep. It's a dot in the radar. He checks a couple of things and quickly lifts the phone.