

LOVE FROM MARS

by

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TEASER

EXT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

JOURNALISTS swarm the lawn of an impressive industrial building. SECURITY GUARDS line the perimeter, checking credentials as only the elite enter.

REPORTER

(to camera)

You're witnessing history in the making.
In just a few short minutes, the Martian
Six will finally be revealed.

A run-down Sedan flies into the jammed parking lot past a LOT FULL sign.

INT. SEDAN -- CONTINUOUS

EMMA, a young woman (25) wearing smart clothes, searches for a parking space.

EMMA

Come on...

She speeds past a fire hydrant red zone and slams on her brakes. Her worn-out workbag falls off the passenger seat. A blue credential badge spills out and onto the floor.

She cranks the car in reverse and dips into the illegal space.

EXT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT

Emma slams her car door shut and flings her bag over her shoulder. She races toward the building, ignoring the PARKING ATTENDANT calling after her.

PARKING ATTENDANT

Excuse me, you can't park there!

Emma runs toward the building's entrance, pushing past clusters of PEOPLE loitering around the event.

SECURITY GUARD

Badge?

Emma searches her bag.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

No badge, no entry.

EMMA

I have one, I swear.

She desperately scours the large bag.

SECURITY GUARD

Step aside ma'am.

EMMA

Please --

SECURITY GUARD

Step aside!

The next reporter in line pushes passed Emma. She gets swallowed by the swell of people.

Security pushes back an increasing number of SPECTATORS there to see the show. Some wear alien costumes. Others hold signs. A lucky few give commentary to news cameras.

Emma makes her way out of the fray and surveys the scene. She moves toward the rear of the large steel building.

EXT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - BACK ENTRANCE

A tall metal fence blocks an unguarded entrance. Emma locks her heeled feet into a chain link and scales the fence.

She struggles to pull herself up and over. She loses balance as she climbs back down, but catches herself. Her feet touch down on the other side.

RYAN (O.S.)

Can I help you?

Emma whips around to find RYAN, mid-twenties. He wears a suit instead of a security outfit.

EMMA

Can you let me in?

He examines her.

RYAN

Sure.

EMMA

Thanks!

RYAN

What's the magic password?

EMMA

Look, I'm from the Sentinel. I have a badge, but I lost it. I'm usually super organized, but my boss gave me this assignment at the last minute because the senior reporter called in sick. It's a huge opportunity for me. My first gig as a field reporter. Will you please just let me in?

RYAN

I guess anyone willing to climb a fence in those shoes deserves to be let inside.

Ryan scans his ID card, and the door unlocks. Emma follows him inside.

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS -- CORRIDOR

Sterile steel walls, flickering florescent lights.

EMMA

You work here?

RYAN

Didn't you watch the selection show?

EMMA

I hate reality TV. It amazes me that a legitimate mission to Mars would pick people by filming them sabotaging each other.

RYAN

There were some skill tests involved.

EMMA

Ratings and telephone voting charges picked the Martian Six. Skill and intelligence had nothing to do with it.

RYAN

(points)

The conference room is that way.

EMMA

Thank you so much!

Ryan studies Emma as she races away without looking back.

ACT ONE

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE -- CONTINUOUS

Standing room only. Emma elbows her way in.

A red curtain lines the wall behind a long table with seven chairs. A microphone rests in front of each empty chair.

STEVEN GROSS (40) emerges from behind the curtain. Slicked backed hair, designer suit and shiny Rolex.

Steven poses as photographers attack him with their flashes. He sits at the middle seat of the long table.

STEVEN

Thanks for coming. I'm Steven Gross, the Communication Director for the Man on Mars project. As you may know, thousands of people applied to be one of the first six people to colonize Mars. These everyday citizens have been whittled down with the help of people around the world who have voted every step of the journey. Without further ado, I present to you, the Martian Six!

Cheesy music plays.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Jack Carter!

JACK (22) muscular with a mo-hawk runs through the curtains. He howls like a wolf and jumps into a handstand.

Cameras flash, reporters call his name, and Jack howls again as he paces behind the table banging on his chest.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Great. Jack, please take a seat.

Emma rolls her eyes.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Up next, Jessica Jewel!

JESSICA (25) a skinny blonde with big boobs popping out of her tight top, jumps up and down suggestively.

MALE REPORTER

(to Emma)

That's one way to make sure the colony procreates, but how will she fit those jugs into a space suit?

EMMA

Pig!

Ryan, the man who let Emma inside, emerges from behind the curtain. He nods modestly and quickly takes a seat.

STEVEN

Introducing Ryan Clarke!

Amidst the flurry of flashing cameras, he sees Emma. They lock eyes despite the crowded room.

Emma examines Ryan, really seeing him for the first time. All else fades away as if they're the only two in the room. Emma blushes when Ryan notices she is still looking at him.

The next man is called, snapping Emma out of her tunnel vision.

GREGG, an overly tan man, (40) leaps into a dramatic surfer's stance before taking his seat.

GREGG

(Australian accent)

That's Gregg with two G's.

STEVEN

Dezzy from Amsterdam.

DEZZY, an overweight woman (35), emerges. She cheeses as reporters take her picture.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Last but definitely not least, Amy from Brooklyn!

AMY, an African-American woman, (30) runs out and gives the rest of the Martian Six exaggerated high fives.

AMY

(New York accent)

Give me some sugar! Woo hoo!

Amy takes her seat.

STEVEN

Okay, we'll take a few questions now.

Reporters scream out for attention. Steven picks someone from the front row.

REPORTER

How does it feel to be one of the chosen six?

JACK

I knew I would make it, and here I am. Hi mom!

The room laughs - except Emma.

RYAN

(quietly)

Well--

STEVEN

Speak up, Ryan.

Ryan moves closer to his microphone.

RYAN

I'm glad the whole process is over. Now the work begins. The next two years of training will be intense, but that's all that matters.

Ryan locks eyes with Emma.

EMMA

(calls out)

Ryan! Emma from the local Sentinel. Can you tell us what that training will entail?

STEVEN

That will be revealed in the next installment of media.

EMMA

Does that mean the TV show will continue?

STEVEN

The television series will not continue now that we have our Martian Six. There will be a feature documentary coming soon. That's all I can say for now.

Steven calls on another reporter from the front row.

Emma and Ryan smile at each other.

REPORTER #2

Has the weight of the situation set in?
The fact that it's a one-way ticket to
Mars?

JESSICA

I know, right? I'm totally going to miss
Starbucks and spa days.

Laughter from the room.

STEVEN

That's all the questions we have time
for. Any outlets with pre-approved
exclusive interviews, please join me at
the front.

The room erupts with side conversations as the Martian
Six stand. Some reporters move to the front to chat with
Steven, and others dash toward Jack and Jessica.

Emma runs to the front of the room as Ryan moves toward
the curtain. Just as he's about to duck away...

EMMA

Ryan!

Ryan turns to face Emma. She tenses.

RYAN

Hello...

EMMA

Hi! I'm...

RYAN

Emma, from the Sentinel.

EMMA

Right. Hey, I'd love to talk to you more.
Get to know you better. Maybe we could
get together sometime?

RYAN

Are you asking me out on a date?

EMMA

Oh no, I'm asking you for an exclusive
interview. Sorry, this is my first big
assignment.

RYAN

I know. Sure, we can go out on an
interview.

EMMA

Great! Here's my card.

She hands it to him.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It hasn't been updated with my new title yet, but never mind. It has my email, office line and cell.

RYAN

I'll call you.

EMMA

Great! Thanks.

Ryan ducks behind the curtain.

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Tiny studio apartment with the kitchen and dining area in the same room as her bed. Small bathroom off to the side.

Emma googles Ryan Clarke. The main facts: he's single with no siblings and his parent's died in a car crash a few years ago.

She clicks the video tab which curates clips from the reality TV elimination show. She opens a video called *Man on Mars highlights*.

MAN ON MARS ELIMINATION SERIES MONTAGE

Typical reality TV fights highlight Jack and a blue haired MAXAMILLION as the main instigators in the house. The CONTESTANTS compete in Mars-themed obstacle courses in between the drama and emotional eliminations.

BACK TO:

Emma clicks on another video titled *Ryan's Reasons Why*.

RYAN

When my parents died, I did a lot of soul searching. I wondered why? Why did they die? Why do we live?

EMMA

(to herself)

I can relate to that...

RYAN

I don't know the answers to these questions yet, but what I do know is this: Life is so fragile, we never know when our time will come. We might die on Mars, but if giving up my life gives the future of mankind more time to figure out why it exists and what happens next, it'd be worth it. I'd rather give my life to a cause than to a car accident. I have no family here on Earth, and of course there would be things I'd miss. But I'd rather sacrifice my future on this planet than see someone with a family go up there.

The camera pans to another applicant, MARK, with the lower thirds title that says *Has Two Kids*.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I hope I'm fit enough to endure the harsh tests that we will no doubt face. I hope I'm smart enough to problem solve the inevitable things that will go wrong. I hope I'm free of attachments so I can make any sacrifice necessary to keep the colony alive, and hopefully thrive. I'm ready to put my life on the line, but if there are people more qualified than me, than I fully support them in their journey. I just want what's best for the mission, and for the future of mankind.

Emma wipes a tear from her eyes and clicks on another clip.

INT. SENTINEL OFFICE - EMMA'S CUBICLE -- MORNING

Emma sits at her desk eating a jelly donut, devouring another article about Ryan Clarke.

Her boss JOHN (52) walks by without stopping.

JOHN

Where's my exclusive, Em?

Startled, she minimizes her internet browser. Jelly from her donut spills onto her blouse.

EMMA

It's coming, I promise.

She cleans up her jelly donut mess.

JOHN

It better be!

Emma looks over her cubicle wall to see John walking into his office.

She checks her phone. No messages.

Emma reopens her browser, showcasing a picture of Ryan. She stares at him longingly.

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Emma and her older sister, ASHLEY, (30) eat at her small dinner table.

ASHLEY

How's your first feature coming?

Emma slams her head down onto her kitchen table.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

That good, huh?

EMMA

I thought I scored an exclusive with the most thoughtful, interesting man. But it's been five days and he still hasn't called.

ASHLEY

Are we still talking about those trashy people they're sending to Mars?

EMMA

They're not all trashy like I thought. That was judgmental of me to think.

ASHLEY

Whoa. You're admitting you were wrong? He must be really hot.

EMMA

It's not like that. He's humble, intelligent, and noble.

ASHLEY

Sounds like you've got a crush on this guy, whoever he is.

EMMA

I do not! I just really want him to call me... For the article! So I can get an edge on the competition.

ASHLEY

Right.

Emma stuffs salad into her mouth as her cell phone rings. She doesn't recognize the number, but answers anyway.

EMMA

(food in mouth)

Hello?

RYAN (O.S.)

Hello? Is this Emma?

Emma chokes on her salad. She motions for Ashley to hand her some water.

RYAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello? Are you there?

Emma throws back the drink and clears her throat.

EMMA

Yeah, it's me. Who's this?

RYAN (O.S.)

It's Ryan Clarke. From the Martian Six.

EMMA

Ryan! Great to hear from you. How is everything?

Emma stands and puts as much distance between herself and Ashley as possible in the tiny apartment.

RYAN (O.S.)

Everything's good. Sorry it took me so long to call. We've been sequestered. They wouldn't let us call anyone until we'd been completely debriefed.

EMMA

Debriefed? That sounds so official.

Emma cringes at herself, but Ryan laughs so she relaxes.

RYAN (O.S.)

Yeah, things are getting pretty intense around here.

EMMA

Can we meet up?

RYAN (O.S.)

That'd be great.

EMMA

Name a time and place.

Emma does a little dance as she writes down an address.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Awesome, see you then.

She hangs up the phone and walks back to the table.

ASHLEY

So when are you meeting with this guy,
who you clearly don't have a crush on.

Emma tries to hide her smile, but fails miserably.

EMMA

It's not a date. It's for the article.

ASHLEY

I hope so because you've got a terrible
track record for picking guys.

EMMA

I'm not stupid enough to date a man who's
leaving the planet. Give me some credit.

ASHLEY

Okay... Well now that you're in a better
mood, I need to ask you about something.

EMMA

Sure, what's up?

ASHLEY

I know you're not really interested in
looking for dad, but --

EMMA

No!

ASHLEY

Em, my thirtieth birthday is coming up,
and it got me thinking. It's time to
resolve that part of my life.

EMMA

Trust me, you're better off not knowing.

ASHLEY

What do you mean?

EMMA

You're welcome to look for him, but I'm not interested in hearing anything about it.

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

MONTAGE: Emma tries on nearly everything in her closet. The blue dress is too low cut. The pinstripe blazer is too uptight. The black dress pants hug her curves perfectly so she pairs them with a simple black blouse with a ruby red necklace and shoes to match.

She walks around in the red heels which are clearly uncomfortable. Still, she goes with them.

Emma looks at herself in the mirror.

EMMA

This is just a simple interview. No big deal...

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY -- DAY

Ryan greets Emma.

RYAN

(whispers)

It's actually a really big deal that I was able to get you in here.

EMMA

(whispers)

Why?

Ryan looks back at the RECEPTIONIST at the front desk. He lays his hand on the small of Emma's back and leads her out a side door.

EXT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - ATRIUM - GRASSY KNOLL

Ryan leads Emma to a private strip of land that's surrounded by glass walls.

RYAN

I'm not supposed to be talking to reporters so I put you on my friends and family list.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

I was worried someone would look you up, but I think they let it slide since you're the only one on my list.

EMMA

I find it hard to believe that you don't have any friends.

RYAN

I have lots of friends from college, but they live on the other side of the country. So you'll have to do.

EMMA

Will I get you in trouble if I write an article about you?

RYAN

I think it'll be okay.

They take a beat to breathe each other in.

EMMA

So, what's it like being in the Martian Six? Is it everything you dreamed it would be, and more?

RYAN

The first week was tough, I'm not gonna lie. We went straight into astronaut boot camp, learning how to use and fix equipment mostly.

EMMA

At the press conference, you said you were eager to start training?

Ryan leans in closer.

RYAN

Off the record?

Emma smells him.

EMMA

Of course. Off the record.

RYAN

It's not me that I'm worried about. I'm immersed in the work, and it's crazy exciting. I'm literally learning rocket science!

EMMA

So what's the problem?

RYAN

Let's just say, not all of my teammates are the sharpest tools in the shed. I'm getting a little worried they're not going to have my back when we're thirty-four million miles away, you know?

EMMA

Yeah, I get that. That was my first impression of the whole thing. Did the world really think reality TV stars were the best candidates for the job? No offense.

RYAN

And we only have two years to train... Anyway, enough about me. What's your story?

EMMA

We're not here to talk about me.

RYAN

That's no fun. How about for every question you answer, I'll answer one?

EMMA

Fine... I'm twenty-five, I studied journalism obviously. I'm left handed. What do you --

RYAN

Not so fast. I haven't asked a question yet. You just offered up that information.

EMMA

What do you want to know?

RYAN

What's your family like?

EMMA

My sister, Ashley is my best friend. So tell me about --

RYAN

Wait, what about your parents?

EMMA

I answered your question, now it's your turn.

RYAN

Not so fast --

EMMA

Ryan, please!

Her tone startles him. She softens.

EMMA (CONT'D)

... My father left my mother when I was really young. I barely remember him.

RYAN

I'm sorry.

Ryan puts his hand on hers.

EMMA

My mom died last year. Breast cancer.

RYAN

I'm sorry to hear that, too.

EMMA

Let's play a new game.

RYAN

Okay.

EMMA

Twenty questions, rapid fire style. Answer with the first thing that comes to mind. Ready?

RYAN

Ready.

EMMA

Are you an introvert or extrovert?

RYAN

Introvert.

EMMA

Glass half empty or half full?

RYAN

Half full.

EMMA

What do you do when you're alone?

RYAN

Meditate.

EMMA

Come on, really?

RYAN

Yeah, I'm big into meditation. I do it multiple times a day.

EMMA

So you'll be the first hippie on Mars. Are you going to pack a bunch of sage and incense with you when you go?

RYAN

Hey! Don't knock it 'til you try it.

EMMA

Okay... Growing up, did you always want to be an astronaut?

RYAN

No, I wanted to be a doctor. Then I wanted to be a painter. I ended up studying public policy and biology. Go figure.

EMMA

How do you want to be remembered when you're gone?

RYAN

Why would I want to be remembered at all?

EMMA

I find that hard to believe coming from someone who'll wind up in the history books.

RYAN

I'd never lie to you, Emma. Things like that don't matter to me.

EMMA

What motivated you to sign up for a one-way ticket to Mars?

Ryan opens his mouth to answer, but stops.

RYAN
No, it'll sound weird.

Emma hits his arm playfully.

EMMA
You can't do that to me! Come on, now you
have to tell me!

RYAN
Next question, please.

EMMA
Okay. What's your biggest regret in life?

Ryan leans in.

RYAN
Not meeting you sooner.

They linger close enough to kiss.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Do you believe in fate, Emma?

EMMA
I believe in facts.

RYAN
HMMMMMMM. Come on, I want to show you
something.

Ryan takes her hand and leads Emma back into the
building.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - BASEMENT

They step out into a large open warehouse space, home to an oversized portion of a rocket ship.

RYAN

This is the flight simulator.

Emma cranes her neck to see the large scale model.

Ryan and Emma walk to a metal ladder leading to the cockpit.

They climb into the simulator and sit next to each other, surrounded by countless switches, blinking lights, and buttons.

EMMA

Wow!

RYAN

(points)

Exterior lights.

(points)

Pressure stabilizer.

(pulls lever)

Landing gear. Got it?

Emma nods. Ryan presses a few buttons.

COMPUTER VOICE

Commencing landing simulator.

Emma watches his every move. The cockpit shakes.

RYAN

We're coming in hot. Pull that lever over there.

EMMA

Which one?

Ryan reaches over and pulls a lever. The cockpit thrusts forward causing Ryan's arm to brush against Emma's breasts.

COMPUTER VOICE

Landing successful.

RYAN

I still need practice, but not bad for my second try. Okay, let's see how much you remember. What does this button do?

EMMA

Exterior lights.

RYAN

Very good. And this one?

EMMA

Pressure stabilizer?

RYAN

Well done!

She points to a big red button.

EMMA

What does this do?

RYAN

Don't touch that!

Emma pulls her hand away quickly. Ryan laughs.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Just kidding. You can touch it.

EMMA

No way, I'm not touching anything now.

She hits him in his chest and laughs.

RYAN

Then the tour continues!

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - RYAN'S BUNKER

They step into a small room with metal walls. In one corner, a shower is sanctioned off with glass walls. There's a bed, a desk covered in books, and a wingback chair.

RYAN

This is my room. Pretty depressing, huh?

EMMA

No, it's... charming.

Emma sits on the bed. She checks the backs of her feet to find blisters. She jams her feet back into the red heels.

RYAN

I never understood why women wear uncomfortable shoes. You look great in them though.

Emma blushes. Ryan pulls out a first aid kit from a desk drawer. He sits down next to her and cradles her feet in his hands. Ryan gently lays a Band-Aid over her cracked skin and smooths it out with his fingers. They hold their gaze longer than most.

RYAN (CONT'D)

So anyway... We've got a pretty strict schedule. We wake up at 5 AM everyday and work out before our first technical training class.

Emma looks over at the glass shower and IMAGINES RYAN INSIDE TAKING A SHOW. HOT WATER GLISTENS DOWN HIS NAKED BODY AS STEAM RISES AROUND HIM.

She snaps out of her daze.

EMMA

Will you be able to receive any phone calls while you're on Mars?

RYAN

No. We'll be able to communicate with the ground, but they don't want us getting home sick, so we've agreed to cut all ties completely.

EMMA

Is two years of training really enough?

RYAN

I sure hope so.

EMMA

Any chance they'll push the launch date?

RYAN

Highly doubtful.

EMMA

What will you miss most about Earth?

RYAN

The opportunity to talk to a beautiful woman like you.

EMMA

You have three female teammates.

RYAN

Not my type.

Emma tries to hide her smirk.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What about you? What would you miss most about Earth?

EMMA

Nature. And my sister.

Ryan leans in closer.

RYAN

You don't have a boyfriend you'd miss?

Emma shakes her head as they both slowly inch their way closer. Their lips almost meet.

PA SYSTEM

Martian Six, please report to the flight simulator.

Emma pulls away.

RYAN

I guess visiting hours are over. I better walk you out. We've got another training session starting soon.

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY

Ryan ushers Emma toward the large glass front door. She goes in for a handshake.

EMMA

Thank you so much for today.

RYAN

Come here. I'm a hugger.

Ryan opens his arms and hugs Emma. He smells her hair as she sinks into his embrace. She finally pulls away.

EMMA

Good luck with everything.

She turns and walks away. He walks back toward the elevator.

They both turn back to see each other again. They smile and continue to go their separate ways.

EXT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Steven Gross passes Emma as she exits the building. He's on his cell phone and doesn't notice her.

STEVEN

(whispers)

Phase Two sounds volatile. Let's see if they even survive the first cycle before implementing such a controversial component.

Emma spins around to hear more, but the glass door shuts behind him. She marches back into the building as Mr. Gross glides past security.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(into cell phone)

They'll do whatever I tell them.

INT. SENTINEL BUILDING - JOHN'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Emma paces in front of her boss, John, who sits at a desk covered in papers.

EMMA

We need to shut down their whole operation, John.

JOHN

What have you got?

EMMA

It's a suicide mission! Those poor people are like lab rats in a sick and twisted experiment. They're not capable of colonizing Mars, they're reality TV personalities!

JOHN

They may have started out that way, but they're going to have to learn how to be astronauts now.

EMMA

Who cares if they live or die as long as they provide a little entertainment along the way?

JOHN

That's not what I meant.

EMMA

We have to expose the Man on Mars mission for the fraud it really is!

JOHN

Do you have some new information or are you just spouting steam?

EMMA

I overheard Steven Gross talking about a controversial Phase Two.

JOHN

Tell me more.

EMMA

I don't know much about it, but it sounds like they won't even survive Phase One. I could lead an investigation --

JOHN

Sounds like hearsay, Em. Without more to go on, I can't give you a green light.

Emma paces, searching for something more to say.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Look, we know they used the TV show to gain funding, but colonizing Mars is an expensive venture and without government sponsorship, they had to do it somehow. That might have been a stupid idea in retrospect, but it certainly isn't fraud.

Emma nods reluctantly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Are you okay? I haven't seen you this shaken up since the refugee crisis.

EMMA

I'd still like to write a feature. I've been inside the building so I can describe their living conditions and training simulations.

JOHN

That'll work. I know you want to break a major story, but don't worry. You'll get there.

A knock on the door grabs their attention. JASON, a tall, distinguished blonde gentleman (35) stands in the door frame carrying a briefcase.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Ah, Jason. Come on in.

He enters.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Emma, this is Jason Starr.

EMMA
Jason Starr of the Boston Globe? THE
Jason Starr that broke the government sex
trafficking scandal?

JASON
The one and only.

EMMA
It's an honor to meet you, sir.

JASON
The pleasure is all mine.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Emma and Ashley eat dinner inside a dimly lit booth.

ASHLEY
So how was your date with the Mars guy?

EMMA
It wasn't a date! But it went well.

Emma hid a smile with her fork.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I met a legend in the field today. That
was pretty cool.

ASHLEY
Do tell.

EMMA
He's award-winning, but I was shocked to
see how young he is. Mid-thirties at the
most.

ASHLEY
Is he hot?

EMMA
Ashley!

ASHLEY

(laughs)

What? Is he?

EMMA

I'm not goona lie, he is pretty attractive. Tall, blonde, has this air about him. Like he's got it all together.

ASHLEY

Did you get his number?

EMMA

You already know, the whole dating and family thing isn't in the cards for me.

ASHLEY

You just have to pick the right guy, Em.

EMMA

And we all know how bad I am at that!

INT. SENTINEL BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM -- MORNING

JOURNALISTS file in and sit around a large table. Emma walks in and sees Jason Starr. She pushes past a co-worker to score a seat across from him.

John sits at the head of the table.

JOHN

Exciting news, everyone. Please welcome Jason Starr, our new lead reporter.

The team claps, and Jason soaks up the attention.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Alright, let's get right into it. Jason, feel free to jump in at any time. Who's working on the refugee crisis?

A CO-WORKER raises her hand.

CO-WORKER

Draft coming to you in the next few hours.

JOHN

Good. Brett, I'd like you to cover the president's trip, Suzie take the pope, and Dave's got the UN Summit. What are you working on, Em?

EMMA

My article about Ryan Clarke scored millions of eyeballs so I'd like to write another feature about the Man on Mars project.

JOHN

What's the angle?

EMMA

I'd like to explore the physical and psychological effects the Martian Six will have to ensure during their journey through space.

CO-WORKER

Won't that be too science-y?

JASON

The nation does have Mars fever at the moment.

JOHN

True, let's capitalize on that. Give me a thousand words on the long-term effects on humans in space.

JASON

It is a fascinating idea. I'd like to work with Emma on this.

JOHN

Sounds good. Tyler, what are you working on?

Emma and Jason exchange smiles.

INT. SENTINEL BUILDING - EMMA'S CUBICLE -- EVENING

Emma scrolls through internet pages. Jason enters.

JASON

How's the research coming?

EMMA

There's a lot of speculation out there, but not a lot of facts. This is uncharted territory, and the program has been so tight lipped about their plans. I've got calls into the top astronauts who have spent the most time in space. They seem like the most reliable sources.

JASON

I scored a phone interview with an engineer at Man on Mars.

EMMA

How'd you do that? They all signed non-disclosure agreements.

JASON

You're cute.

Jason moves in closer in the tight space.

JASON (CONT'D)

With their chosen flight path, it'll take six months to reach Mars. To save on supplies, the astronauts will go into hibernation. In order to monitor themselves, they'll take fourteen day shifts watching over each other. Every two weeks, another teammate will be woken up. Then it's their turn to spend two weeks in isolation watching over the others.

EMMA

Sounds incredibly lonely.

JASON

I bet you're a social butterfly.

EMMA

Not exactly, but I would go insane with no outside stimulation.

JASON

Without stimulation, people literally do go insane. Long bouts of isolation lead some people to experience mental breaks and extreme psychosis.

EMMA

Hmmmmmm.....

JASON

Can you type up my notes from the call? With these, the article should write itself.

Emma grabs Jason's hand-scrawled notes.

EMMA

Should I still talk to the astronauts if they call me back?

JASON

Sure, it'd be nice to include a few quotes.

Jason checks his Rolex.

JASON (CONT'D)

I'm done for the day. Want to grab a drink with me? We can get to know each other better. You can type those notes up later.

EMMA

Sure.

JASON

Cool, I'll be right back.

Jason walks to his corner office. Emma checks her reflection in her computer monitor and combs her hands through her hair.

Her cell phone rings. She immediately recognizes the number and answers.

EMMA

Hi Ryan, how are you?

RYAN (O.S.)

Good. I'm good.

EMMA

Thanks again for meeting with me. My article went over really well.

RYAN (O.S.)

I'm so glad.

EMMA

So well in fact, I'm writing another one about the project. Maybe we could get together again soon? I'd love to ask you more questions about life in outer space.

RYAN (O.S.)

I'd love to, but the project wasn't too happy about your article actually. They've taken you off my visitor's list.

EMMA

Oh, okay. I'm sorry if I got you in trouble.

RYAN (O.S.)

Listen, I'm going to be sent into an isolation tank for two weeks so I was wondering if you'd like to get together again. I'd really like to have some meaningful conversation before I go. But it can't be for any article.

EMMA

I get it, and I'd love to.

RYAN (O.S.)

Awesome. I've got something special planned. Meet me in the headquarters parking lot in thirty minutes. Don't go inside. This will be our little secret.

EMMA

Okay! See you soon.

Jason turns the corner as Emma hangs up.

JASON

Ready?

EMMA

I'm sorry. I need to take a rain check. Something unexpected came up.

Emma stands and grabs her work bag. Jason puts his arm around her as they walk to the elevator.

JASON

Really? You're standing me up? Is it for the story?

EMMA

No.

JASON

Then I won't take no for an answer. There's a great place not too far from here.

The elevator opens and they step inside. Emma bites her lip as the door closes.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SENTINEL BUILDING - PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

Emma and Jason walk toward their cars.

JASON

Let's take my car.

The lights on a brand new Mercedes flash.

EMMA

I gotta run, but we'll do it soon. I promise.

Emma beelines for her run-down Sedan. Jason throws his arms up in disbelief.

EXT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Ryan stands beneath a street lamp in the empty parking lot.

Emma exits her car and walks over to him. He wraps her in a big hug. They walk to a black car parked around the corner.

EMMA

Where are we going?

Ryan opens the car door and she steps inside. He runs over to the other side.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Ryan slides in next to her.

RYAN

Thanks for coming, Emma.

EMMA

My pleasure. I can't imagine being in an isolation tank for two weeks.

Ryan grabs her hand, but she pulls away.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm not going to be your last fling on Earth, okay?

RYAN

I know, I'm sorry. I'm not being fair to you.

They sit in silence as the car drives on.

EXT. AIRPORT HANGAR -- NIGHT

The car parks. Ryan steps out and runs around to the other side. He opens Emma's door.

EMMA

Ryan, what is this?

An airplane is parked behind them marked with "Zero G's."

EMMA (CONT'D)

Zero G's meaning, like, zero gravity?

Ryan smiles.

INT. ZERO G'S AIRPLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Ryan and Emma enter. Most of the seats in the commercial plane have been replaced with white padding. Four rows of seats remain at the back. They sit in the front row and buckle their seat belts.

RYAN

You ready to experience what it's like to be weightless in space?

EMMA

I... I don't know.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT greets them.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Welcome to Zero G's. After take off, we'll be flying to 12,000 feet. In order to simulate zero gravity, the plane will take several dips, known as parabolas. With each dip, you'll become weightless. It takes some getting used to, but please no kicking. When the plane heads back up for another dip, the gravity will be twice as heavy as normal. Any questions?

EMMA

I have, like, a million questions.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

You're in good hands with Ryan. It's time to prepare for take off.

The flight attendant moves to the back of the plane. Emma grips her arm rests.

RYAN

Don't be nervous. I've already done it twice this week, and it's amazing. There's nothing else like it. Trust me.

EXT. AIRPORT -- NIGHT

The plane heads down the runway and takes off.

INT. AIRPLANE -- CONTINUOUS

As they soar through the clouds, Ryan makes a funny face as he plugs his nose and breathes out, popping his ears. Emma laughs.

PILOT

(over loudspeaker)

Prepare for the first parabola.

The nose of the plane dips up dramatically, pinning Ryan and Emma to their seats. Their face skin pulls back in the double gravity.

The plane reaches the top of its arch and plunges back downward, lifting the pressure.

Ryan unbuckles his seat belt and floats out of his chair.

EMMA

What are you doing?

Ryan does a somersault through the zero gravity air. He spins around and extends his hand out to Emma.

She nervously unhooks her seat belt and reaches out for his hand. She glides up into the air and slams into Ryan. Their bodies press together suspended in air.

RYAN

May I have this dance?

He twirls her through the atmosphere and holds onto her waist. They lock eyes as he rocks her side to side.

PILOT (O.S.)

On the pull.

The plane dives back up. Ryan and Emma fly to the ground through the sheer force of returned gravity. She lands on her back, and he lands on top of her.

Chest to chest, heart to heart, they gaze into each other's eyes until the plane dips back down.

They drift back up. Emma pirouettes through the air.

Ryan claps for her and flies like Superman. They laugh and play like kids in the deep end of the swimming pool.

Emma grabs his hand and they spin each other around. He grabs her hips and they sway through the air together.

Emma presses herself into his muscular body.

He caresses her face and they kiss passionately. Their kiss is so hot, they don't notice the gravity returning.

They fall back down to the ground locked in their fiery embrace.

The kiss continues as zero gravity returns and fades once more.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Ahem.

The flight attendant taps Ryan on the shoulder. He finally breaks away from their steamy make out session.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

We've begun our final descent.

Ryan takes Emma's hand, and they head back to their seats, brimming with sexual energy.

Flustered, Emma fumbles with her seat belt. Ryan reaches over and secures the belt close to her waist.

Unable to resist, Emma kisses Ryan again. Their lips don't part again until the plane lands on solid ground.

EXT. AIRPORT HANGAR -- NIGHT

Ryan walks Emma back to the car.

EMMA

Wow, that was amazing!

RYAN
I'm glad you liked it.

EMMA
Want to go get a drink or something?

RYAN
I'd love to, but unfortunately, I can't.
I'm not even supposed to be here.

On Emma's look --

INT. CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

They drive in silence, holding hands. The car parks outside the Man on Mars headquarters.

EMMA
Thanks for tonight. I've never experienced anything like that.

RYAN
No, thank you. You have no idea how much this means to be. I'll replay every second of tonight while I'm in the isolation tank.

EMMA
Right.

Emma looks outside the window, avoiding eye contact.

RYAN
Hey, this meant more than you know.

EMMA
Can I see you again? You'll need extra TLC once you get out of isolation.

RYAN
The good news is, yes. I'd love to see you again. The bad news is... we'll have to wait four weeks. I'll be in isolation for two weeks and hibernation for another two.

EMMA
Wow, that sounds really hard.

RYAN
We need to learn how to watch over each other in hibernation. It'll be interesting to see what that feels like.

EMMA

I read there could be memory loss?

RYAN

Oh no, I don't think so.

EMMA

What about the mental exhaustion from isolation. I read all about --

Ryan pulls Emma in for another kiss.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Ryan, are you scared at all?

RYAN

Scared? What do you mean?

EMMA

Scared of isolation, hibernation, leaving the planet.

RYAN

I'm not scared of the isolation or hibernation. It's not exactly my idea of fun, but I'll be okay.

EMMA

Life on Mars will be dangerous.

RYAN

... We'll have all the resources we need. We'll be ready.

EMMA

What's Phase Two?

RYAN

Huh?

EMMA

I overheard Steven Gross talking about Phase Two. I got the impression the whole program was on shaky ground.

RYAN

Don't be ridiculous. They've got it all covered.

Emma breaks away from his embrace.

EMMA

Don't be so naive. You need to find out what's going on behind the scenes.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Question everything every step of the way.

RYAN

I better go so I can be fresh for tomorrow. Before I go in, I'm going to talk to management about getting you back on my visitor's list so I can see you when I get out. I'll miss you.

EMMA

Be careful, Ryan.

INT. MAN ON MARS HQ -- ISOLATION ROOM -- MORNING

Ryan and Gregg walk into the cramped room which contains a chair, a treadmill, a built-in bunk bed, and cabinets filled with freeze-dried food. A body harness hangs from one wall next to IVs and a breathing machine. A two-way mirror completes the space.

RYAN

Who goes under first?

The two men bust into a game of rock-paper-scissors. Gregg's rock loses to Ryan's paper.

Ryan helps Gregg into the harness.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You ready?

GREGG

No, but here we go.

RYAN

Just like we practiced.

Gregg puts a breathing mask over his face and nods.

Ryan inserts a needle into Gregg's vein and releases the IV valve.

RYAN (CONT'D)

See you on the other side.

Gregg's eyes fall. His breathing slows, his heart beat nearly stops. He's still alive, but barely.

INT. ISOLATION ROOM -- MONTAGE

Ryan runs on the treadmill, reads manuals, eats some rations, and maintains his hygiene with baby wipes.

He sleeps, checks on Gregg, and paces restlessly.

He sits cross-legged to meditate. With eyes closed, he slows his breathing.

Gregg's body monitors beep.

Ryan's breathing increases. Sweat drips down his face as his thoughts overtake him.

Emma's voice echoes in his ear.

EMMA
(whispers)
Ryan...

Her fingertips graze his neck.

Her lips linger near his ear.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Ryan...

The hairs on his neck stand up from the warmth of her breath.

His eyes fly open. All traces of Emma disappear.

He exhales deeply and closes his eyes again, refocusing his meditation efforts. His breathing is rhythmic. His body relaxes and his eyes open slightly, revealing the whites of his upward gaze.

RYAN (V.O.)
(to himself)
Why has Emma come into my life? Am I supposed to love her? Am I supposed to be with her?

His eyes flutter slightly as he falls deeper into meditation. His breathing ticks on mylodically.

RYAN'S HIGHER SELF (V.O.)
(whispers)
Yes...

RYAN (V.O.)
Am I still supposed to go to Mars?

RYAN'S HIGHER SELF (V.O.)
 (whispers)
 Yes...

RYAN (V.O.)
 How can I do both? How can I be with Emma
 and be on Mars?

RYAN'S HIGHER SELF (V.O.)
 (whispers)
 Earth and Mars are only far in the realm
 of illusion...

A BEEPING echoes, breaking Ryan's concentration. He ignores it, but the beeping continues.

Ryan opens his eyes and turns toward the noise. It's coming from Gregg's monitors. He gets up and moves over to his teammate. He pulls out a fresh IV bag and changes it out like a pro. The beeping stops.

Ryan paces around the empty room.

RYAN
 (to himself)
 Earth and Mars are only far in the realm
 of illusion...

INT. SENTINEL BUILDING - JASON'S OFFICE -- EVENING

Emma sits across Jason in his corner office.

JASON
 This is a solid draft, Emma.

EMMA
 Thanks! There's so much more to explore on this. Next, I'd love to research terraforming and growing plants on Mars. But I think the real story has to do with the inner workings of the program. My instinct tells me there's secrets to expose there.

JASON
 Wow, you're really into this stuff. John asked me to organize a team to focus on election coverage coming up. Would you like to join me on that?

EMMA
 I'd be honored.

JASON

Great. I'm looking forward to working with you more. Now, how about we get that drink?

EMMA

Yeah, sorry again about the other night.

JASON

You hurt my feelings. I've never been stood up in my life.

EMMA

I bet.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

A WAITER pops open a bottle of expensive champagne. Jason sits close to Emma in a dimly lit booth.

EMMA

So how did you crack the trafficking scandal?

JASON

Simple. I don't take no for an answer. Cheers.

He clinks his glass against hers.

EMMA

Cheers. It must feel amazing to be so established at such a young age. How'd you get so far, so fast?

JASON

It probably didn't hurt that my father owns the Globe.

EMMA

Is that right?

Emma tosses back her flute of bubbly. He refills her glass.

JASON

Most people don't know that. I changed my last name so people wouldn't find out. You'll keep my secret though, won't you?

EMMA

Of course.

JASON

That's why I moved over to the Sentinel. It's a much smaller paper, but it's good to step out of my father's shadow. He's a real son of a bitch. How about you? What's your father like?

EMMA

He died when I was young.

She chases down her lie with another big gulp of champagne. He refills her glass despite it not being empty.

JASON

Do you want a family of your own?

EMMA

Oh, I don't --

JASON

I'm sure you'd make a wonderful mother.

Emma tips back her glass too far, dribbling champagne down her chin.

JASON (CONT'D)

Let me get that for you.

Jason slides closer and wipes her chin with his napkin. He leans in for a kiss, but she lifts her glass between them and takes another swig.

JASON (CONT'D)

You should come up to my lake house sometime.

They clink their glasses together to seal the proposition.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS -- ISOLATION ROOM

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. Ryan changes Gregg's IV bag, sending a new liquid through his veins that jolts Gregg awake like Frankenstein's monster.

RYAN

Good morning, sunshine.

Gregg looks around disoriented.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You better get ready to watch over my half-baked body, bro.

Ryan removes Gregg's IV and sensor nodes. He massages Gregg's muscles.

GREGG

Good to see you, ya bastard.

RYAN

You have no idea how good it is to hear someone else speak. Someone that's actually here.

(to himself)

Only two more weeks, Emma.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

Emma and Ashley walk toward a yoga studio carrying mats.

EMMA

Is it a bad idea to date a co-worker?

ASHLEY

Depends on the situation. Why?

EMMA

Remember that star reporter I was telling you about?

ASHLEY

The hot one?

EMMA

We went out for drinks, and it seemed more like a date than two co-workers talking shop.

ASHLEY

Do you like him? How old is he? Does he seem like a playboy or do you think he's for real?

EMMA

He was talking about wanting to have a family.

ASHLEY

That's a good sign! Sounds like a keeper.

EMMA

He's from a good family. Already very successful. He's been supportive of my work too, which is nice. He still likes me after I threw up all over his shoes.

ASHLEY

You didn't.

EMMA

There was a lot of champagne involved, okay?

Ashley laughs.

ASHLEY

Oh my god, Em. You've been burned so much in the past. Don't rush into things. Take it slow. Get to know him more and let things develop naturally. If you play your cards right, he might be the one!

EMMA

Yeah, maybe.

INT. ISOLATION ROOM -- TWO WEEKS LATER

RYAN

Emma!

GREGG

Save your strength there, mate.

Ryan tries to get out of the wall harness, but his muscles are like jello.

RYAN
I need to see her.

GREGG
You've been out for two weeks. You need
to relax.

INT. SENTINEL BUILDING - EMMA'S CUBICLE -- EVENING

Emma's cell phone rings. It's Ryan.

Jason pops his head into her space.

JASON
Hey babe, want to go see a movie this
weekend?

Her phone rings again. It's still Ryan.

JASON (CONT'D)
Do you need to get that?

EMMA
No, it's just a telemarketer. A movie
this weekend sounds great.

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Emma paces the perimeter of her studio drinking a glass
of wine. She periodically checks her cell phone. No new
calls.

She pours herself another glass and continues pacing.
Finally, her phone rings. It's Ryan. She races to answer
it.

EMMA
(slurs)
Hello?

RYAN (O.S.)
Emma, it's you! It's so good to hear your
voice. You're all I could think about in
isolation.

Emma cries.

RYAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are you okay? What's wrong?

She tries to muffle her sobs.

RYAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 These last few weeks must have been hard,
 but I made it out. I'm back. Can you come
 over? I'm still trying to get you added
 to the visitor's list, but I could sneak
 out and meet you in the parking lot or
 something.

EMMA
 I can't.

RYAN (O.S.)
 Tomorrow then. Promise me you'll come
 tomorrow.

Emma struggles to speak.

RYAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Please, Emma.

EMMA
 Tomorrow. Noon.

RYAN (O.S.)
 Tomorrow at noon. Okay.

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - COMMON ROOM -- NIGHT
 Ryan hangs up the phone. He sits on a couch, dejected.
 Dezzy enters and slams herself down onto another couch.

DEZZY
 Leave me alone, Jack.

Jack follows her in.

JACK
 I'm not letting this go, Fatty.

RYAN
 Hey, what's your problem, Jack?

JACK
 My problem is with Dezzy so stay out of
 it.

RYAN
 There's no need to name call.

JACK
 That's the only way Tubby will learn.

DEZZY

I said I was sorry. I miscalculated.

JACK

You knew you were eating my rations. I starved the last two days in isolation. If you do that on Mars, I'll kill you and eat your flesh.

RYAN

We haven't even left Earth yet, and we're already resorting to cannibalism? Don't worry, Dez, I'll protect you.

DEZZY

He's right. I'm not strong enough to live this way.

RYAN

You can and you will. I'm here to help every step of the way.

Dezzy smiles. Amy pops her head into the room.

AMY

Yo! Mr. Gross wants us all upstairs. Something about Phase Two.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS -- GROSS' OFFICE

Steven Gross ushers Ryan inside and shuts the door behind them. Ryan sits on a plush velvet chair across from Steven's impressive desk.

STEVEN

Everyone's very proud of you, Ryan. You've proven yourself in every simulation.

RYAN

Thank you, sir.

STEVEN

Tell me, what do you think of your teammates?

RYAN

Well, I'm most impressed with Gregg.

STEVEN

What about your female companions?

RYAN

Amy aced the landing simulation. Dezzy gravitates toward the terraforming research, and Jessica... she'd thrive with a little extra tutoring.

STEVEN

What do you think about them... personally?

RYAN

I don't understand what you mean.

STEVEN

I'm going to level with you, Ryan. The training will prepare you to inhabit Mars, but the program is always working to take the colony even further. Are you willing to do whatever it takes to help the project in that aim?

RYAN

Of course, sir.

STEVEN

With that common goal in mind, we'd like to begin exploring options for Phase Two.

RYAN

Which is?

STEVEN

Once the colony is stable, we'd like to introduce a procreation plan.

RYAN

You're kidding, right?

STEVEN

Think of the future, Ryan. It's only natural a successful colony would breed.

RYAN

Sure, but shouldn't we focus on being successful first?

STEVEN

Of course, there's no rush. We don't want any babies born in the first few years, but we do plan to explore this several years down the line. The org just wants to... plant the seeds. As you continue to get to know your teammates, try to keep an open mind. I'll be talking to everyone about their preferences, and if there are a few matches, then we'll know better how things may unfold in the future. Don't be afraid to create a bond, or two, that could serve a higher purpose.

RYAN

I'll try to keep that in mind.

STEVEN

That's all I ask.

RYAN

I'd like to ask a favor in return, Mr. Gross.

Steven nods.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Emma Davis was taken off my visitor's list, and I'd like her to be added back on. I've made several requests already.

STEVEN

Miss Davis is a member of the press, and we can't--

RYAN

She's a personal friend of mine.

STEVEN

It's time to leave Earth behind. Focus instead on your team, for the good of humanity.

RYAN

I'd like to have Miss Davis added back to my list, and I would appreciate not having to ask again.

Ryan stands up and opens the office door.

Amy and Dezzy sit outside awaiting their turn to talk to Steven.

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - RYAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ryan lays on his bed reading a book. Jessica stands in the doorway. Her Man on Mars jumpsuit is rolled down to her waist, exposing a camisole that barely covers her voluptuous body.

JESSICA

Knock, knock. Can I come in?

RYAN

Now's not a good time, Jessica.

JESSICA

I could make it a good time.

RYAN

I'm in the middle of something.

She stomps away. Her voice echoes from the hallway.

JESSICA (O.S.)

(giggles)

Hey Jack, what are you up to?

Ryan rolls his eyes and goes back to his book.

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY -- DAY

Emma enters and sees Ryan waiting for her in the atrium. She walks over to join him.

INT. MAN ON MARS HEADQUARTERS - ATRIUM -- CONTINUOUS

He rushes toward her and gives her a big hug. Her stiff body relaxes into his embrace.

RYAN

What can I say? This situation sucks.

She pulls away, crying.

EMMA

I'm sorry, I hate crying in front of people.

She wipes her eyes and nose.

RYAN

I'm the one that's sorry, Emma, for putting you in this difficult position.

EMMA

Ryan, I really like you, but --

RYAN

I love you, Emma Davis.

EMMA

What?

RYAN

I know we've only just met, but this feels right to me. You feel right to me. I spent roughly 20,160 minutes in isolation, and every moment was filled with thoughts of you.

EMMA

I had a lot of time to think, too. I really like you... but we shouldn't be together.

RYAN

You don't mean that.

EMMA

We're setting ourselves up for failure. Can't you see that?

Ryan grabs Emma's hand.

RYAN

When I was in isolation, I asked for guidance. I asked why you came into my life and if we should be together.

EMMA

Guidance? What do you mean?

RYAN

I have two years on Earth for training. We can physically be together for two years. That's long enough to create a deep and powerful soul connection.

Emma is speechless.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Earth and Mars are only far in the realm of illusion. Emma, you and I are meant to be together. We're meant to learn from each other. We're meant to grow together. Even when we're physically apart, we can still be emotionally and spiritually connected.

EMMA

Spiritually connected? Ryan, you're not making any sense.

RYAN

What about that doesn't make sense to you?

EMMA

Ryan, I'm worried about you. Isolation can cause severe mental breaks.

RYAN

You think I've gone crazy?

EMMA

It's a common side effect. Not to mention whatever chemicals they use for the hibernation process.

RYAN

You can't believe that someone honestly loves you. Can you? Well, I do. I love you. And I want to be with you.

EMMA

Until you leave the planet! What am I supposed to do then?

Tears return to Emma's eyes. Ryan wipes her cheeks and gives her an innocent kiss.

RYAN

Don't you trust me?

EMMA

It's me I don't trust.

Emma pulls away, but despite her rational side, grabs Ryan and kisses him passionately...

THE END