

LAUNCHING THE PATTERSONS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - ROCKET PARK, 1999 - NIGHT

A starlit night under the big Texas sky. Bad boy Astronaut WILL PATTERSON (30) and his wife, LANEY (28), the feisty girl next door, sneak through the gate and into the park of famous N.A.S.A rockets.

Laney looks at the Security SUV cruising in the distance.

LANEY

Are we allowed to be here? I'd hate to spend our first date night in three months in the clink.

WILL

We're definitely trespassing, but they won't care. Besides, I had to tell you here.

They arrive at a picnic Will set up on what would be the launch pad of the towering Saturn V rocket. It's impressive. She turns to him, surprised - this must mean big news.

WILL (CONT'D)

Laney, I got it. You're looking at the pilot for the first U.S. mission to the Space Station.

LANEY

You got it?! Over Harrison? Will, I'm so happy for you.

She hugs him tight, not letting go.

WILL

Who'd thought, the kid from Chi-town is finally makin' good.

LANEY

I did.
(then)
When do you leave?

WILL

We've got three days of sleep deprivation training, which will be about as fun as rollin' in glass, but then it's off to Florida.

Laney's smile fades.

WILL (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

LANEY

I was hoping you'd get some time with the kids before you left. They miss you. I miss you.

WILL

I know I haven't been around much. But it'll all be worth it. When I get back, I'm gonna take endorsement deals and be on the Wheaties box, maybe even run for Congress. We're gonna have a big life.

LANEY

Congress? Hon, you haven't voted since they wanted to legalize marijuana.

WILL

Hey, if John Glenn did it, so can I. The sky's the limit, babe.

She grins at his excitement, then looks at him earnestly.

LANEY

Just promise me one thing. When you get back from up there, you're going to focus on what we have, right here.

WILL

I promise.

LANEY

I'm so proud of you.

They kiss. SIRENS are heard - they look up to see three security SUVs racing towards them.

LANEY (CONT'D)

I think they care.

WILL

We should run.

Laney gives him a look, then takes off her heels and they hightail it out of there.

INT. JSC - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The next day. Thirty of N.A.S.A's best and brightest TECHS sit at their controls for Will's crew's final test run.

ON THE MONITOR ABOVE: The Space Shuttle simulates it's approach to the Zarya module, the first piece of the space station.

Flight Director JAMES DUVALL (50), a tough ex-military commander, runs the show from the deck, headset on.

DUVALL

Two minutes until you reach the space station. You're go for docking.

BEEPING. The MED TECH looks up.

MED TECH

Sir, Patterson's heart rate is skyrocketing.

DUVALL

Patterson, you okay?

INT. SPACE SHUTTLE SIMULATOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Will grips the controls, concerned about docking the ship - more concerned that sweat is dripping down his face. He forces a re-assuring smile.

WILL

Just excited to make history here.
Crew, prepare for docking.

Will gasps for breath. JOHN HARRISON, the cocky co-pilot who'd give his left nut to have Will's job, glances over.

HARRISON

What's the matter, Patterson? Having a panic attack? Wet dreams really do come true.

WILL

Don't blow your wad, I'm fine.

HARRISON

Really? Cause you're sweating like a crack whore. I'm just thrilled all of N.A.S.A is here to watch you lose your shit.

WILL

I'm not losing anything!
(into his mic)
Houston, I'm initiating docking.

Will attempts to punch in the docking sequence, but sweat blocks his vision.

The whole crew exchanges nervous looks. JOE DEMPSEY, the Mission Specialist and Will's best friend, hands him a towel.

DEMPSEY

Will, we've been up 56 hours. There's no shame in handing over the controls.

WILL

I've got it!

HARRISON

Good, refuse the towel. If I get thirsty I can lick your face.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

Duvall and crew watch the monitor of Will, soaked in sweat.

TECH

Is he having a heart attack?

MED TECH

Looks like a panic attack.

TECH

I haven't seen a melt down like this since the Nixon tapes.

DUVALL

Patterson, what the hell is going on?!

ON WILL (on the monitor)

WILL

I've got it, sir. It's just a little hot in here.

Will rips open his flight suit.

DUVALL

That's it. Patterson, you're out. Harrison, take the controls.

IN THE SHUTTLE

Harrison pops out of his seat.

HARRISON

You heard him, Meltdown, you're out.

WILL

I said I've got it!
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
 (singing to himself
 as he punches in the
 code)
 One way, or another, I'm gonna find
 ya. I'm gonna get ya get ya get
 ya...

DEMPSEY
 Will, hand over the controls!

WILL
 (ignoring them)
 I'll get ya, I'll get ya.

Will enters the code. The shuttle rocks. Then docks.

WILL (CONT'D)
 We're in!

The crew sighs in relief.

Will rips out of the seat, then bursts out of the shuttle simulator door.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

One tech claps, then stops. Silence. Duvall rips off his headset.

OUTSIDE THE SHUTTLE SIMULATOR

Will stumbles out of the simulator, gasping for breath. Medical staff rush to him. He grabs the paper bag, struggling to catch his breath.

Dempsey watches with concern. Harrison grins.

HARRISON
 Houston, we have a problem.

INT. N.A.S.A. BUILDING ONE - DUVALL'S OFFICE

Will and Harrison stand at attention before Duvall, seated at his desk, smoking a fat stogie. Pictures of Duvall from his glory days as an astronaut line the desk, including him shaking hands with President Kennedy.

WILL
 Look, today sleep deprivation took
 it's toll on everyone.

HARRISON
 Not me. I was fine.

WILL

But the key is I docked the ship.
I'm good to go, I swear.

Duvall considers Will, cigar in hand, poker face on.

HARRISON

Sir, he's a choker. Gus Grissom
2.0. I wouldn't trust him to drive
my grandmother to her nursing home.

WILL

I've been flying circles around you
since you were in Jr. High with a
bad perm.

HARRISON

And yet I've never wet my pants.

DUVALL

Enough! Harrison, you're excused.

HARRISON

I'm trained. I'm ready. Give me
Expedition One.

Harrison levels a look at Duvall, then leaves.

WILL

He's been waiting for years to throw
me under the bus.

DUVALL

I know he's a prick. And even with
today's meltdown, you're still our
best pilot. But dammit Will! You're
a shitty leader.

WILL

I docked the plane! I did my job!

DUVALL

You were compromised and didn't let
your crew help!

Duvall settles down.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

You're not a lone fighter pilot
anymore, Will. You're part of a
team. In ten years you still haven't
gotten that. I'm relieving you of
your duties.

Will's stunned.

WILL

Duvall, you can't do that. Ground me for the mission, test the hell out of me, but I'm an astronaut. It's what I do.

DUVALL

Not anymore. I'll announce that you got the flu and are unable to fly. Then you'll resign for personal reasons.

WILL

Duvall, please. I've told my kids.

DUVALL

I'm sorry Will.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Will slumps against the wall, trying to get his head around what just happened.

He glances over to see Harrison watching him. A grin spreads across Harrison's face as he realizes he's got Will's job.

Off Will's devastation, we cut to...

EXT. SANTA MONICA AIRPORT - PRESENT DAY

SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

A little Cessna files unevenly across the sky.

On the ground, a free standing building with a "Pete's Flight Academy" sign.

INT. PETE'S FLIGHT ACADEMY - CLASSROOM - DAY

Will's bored out of his mind as he stands in front of ten STUDENTS teaching flight 101. He's packed on a beer gut, hasn't shaven for weeks, and dark circles of stress and sub-par living line his eyes.

WILL

If you lose control of the craft and get into a dead spin you should eject.
(flipping through the
text book)

There's a whole section here about surviving if your plane lands in water, but if you go down in water you're toast.

The students exchange concerned looks.

WILL (CONT'D)

Don't worry, you just fly like I
teach you, and you'll be fine.

An eager hand pops up, a sparkly TEEN KID with bright eyes
brimming with hope. Will hates this kid.

KID

Is it true you were an astronaut?

WILL

Yeah. Now if you do find yourself
in a downward spiral --

KID

Could I be an astronaut?

Will takes in the kid. He hates this question.

WILL

Sure, you could go to the Airforce
Academy, bust your ass flying jets,
get chosen for N.A.S.A., go through
six years of intensive training
getting paid like a janitor, and
then at the last minute, they'll cut
your balls off, ground you forever,
and leave you with a wife who thinks
you're a loser and kicks you out
because her therapist tells her you're
a dead weight to her dreams. If
that sounds awesome, go for it.

The students look at him, stunned. Will glances at the clock.

WILL (CONT'D)

That'll be all for today. Study up.

INT. PETE'S FLIGHT ACADEMY - WILL'S OFFICE - DAY

A hot and cramped flight office. Will lights a smoke and
kicks his feet up on the piles of stale paperwork. His
attention is drawn to the small TV in the corner.

ON THE TV: Katie Couric addresses us with her robotically
soothing "serious" anchor voice.

KATIE COURIC

The China National Space
Administration has shocked the world
today by sending the first civilian
family into space.

Will sits up - holy shit.

CLIPS ON TV: An Asian family floats weightlessly in their space ship, waving to the camera.

KATIE COURIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The Li family paid twenty million
 dollars for the chance to make
 history.

Will watches the happy family train, his jaw clenches.

WILL
 Lucky S.O.B.'s.

Will's cell phone rings.

WILL (CONT'D)
 (on the phone)
 Hey Dex. Wait, slow down - a fight?
 I'll be right there.

Will leaves the office and we close in on the TV and the Li's happy, smiling faces.

CLOSE ON: Wingtip shoes hurry down a marble hallway.

INT. JOHNSON'S SPACE CENTER - EXECUTIVE OFFICES - DAY

WILSON, a tall lanky tech geek in an ill-fitting suit, strides down the hall, a concerned look on his face.

INT. J.S.C. - EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Wilson bursts in on the meeting with N.A.S.A.'s top brass.

WILSON
 It's confirmed. China sent up a
 family in their new space jet.

James Duvall, now ten years older and N.A.S.A.'s Chief of Operations, throws his pen down.

DUVALL
 And China just took the lead in the
 space race.

Joe Dempsey, Will's former Mission Specialist and current Chief of Development, turns to Duvall.

DEMPSEY

We have to get the Galaxy Jet up there. It's faster, cheaper, and drastically safer than the shuttle. It puts us back in the game.

DUVALL

I'm not pulling the budget from the shuttles. The Space Station needs vital repairs - the oxygen filter system can't wait.

ZOE SHELTON (O.S.)

Gentlemen, you're talking about money for missions that won't exist in four months.

They turn to ZOE SHELTON (40), a smart, sexy P.R. pitbull.

DUVALL

This is Zoe Shelton, she's a consultant sent from the Pentagon.

The guys exchange looks - f'ing consultants.

ZOE SHELTON

I save sinking ships, and right now N.A.S.A is the Titanic.

(standing for her
power-point)

Congress votes on your budget in four months, and in this economic crisis, no one's willing to give millions of dollars for a bunch of science geeks to get their rocks off.

DEMPSEY

It actually takes billions of dollars to get our rocks off.

ZOE SHELTON

That's my point. We need an event to make space relevant again to the average American.

She walks around the room, selling her pitch like Don Draper.

ZOE SHELTON (CONT'D)

We need an event that brings us back to the days when everyone was huddled around the TV to watch Neil Armstrong walk on the moon. We need to bring the magic back.

DUVALL

What do you suggest, Ms. Shelton?

ZOE SHELTON

China sent a family into orbit. I say we send a family to the Space Station.

Skeptical looks are exchanged.

ZOE SHELTON (CONT'D)

Sending a family shows the future of space belongs to the average American.

(to Dempsey)

Send them in the Galaxy, and we prove we're still the leader of the space race.

DEMPSEY

I'm feeling the magic.

DUVALL

Ms. Shelton, you're talking about this like it's a trip to the mall. This is still space - anything can happen. We need qualified astronauts.

DEMPSEY

So we start with astronauts - astronauts that have families.

Duvall considers this. He turns to Dempsey.

DUVALL

If you can get a family to pass all the tests of real astronauts, and I mean all of them, I'll consider sending them up with a crew.

DEMPSEY

I'll get right on it.

EXT. EL SEGUNDO HIGH - DAY

Will rolls up in front of the gym in his Jeep to pick up his son, DEX (13). Dex is that unfortunate kid who hasn't had a growth spurt since fourth grade. He's nursing a bloody nose and broken glasses, and clutching a robot vehicle.

WILL

Dex, what happened?!

DEX

Suzie Kellerman.

WILL
This was over a girl?

DEX
No, I asked Suzie Kellerman if she wanted to see my robot. I think she mistook it as a sexual reference. She definitely had some Tae Kwon Do training.

WILL
A girl did this to you?!

DEX
She's pretty big.

Will puts on his best dad face.

WILL
Look, Dex, you walk around school with a robot and all of a sudden you're the weird kid who's got a robot. You know?

DEX
I thought you said robots were cool.

WILL
Private cool. You know what I mean?

Dex looks at Will, confused.

DEX
Like masturbating?

WILL
No. Look, if I take you to your ComBot challenge this weekend, will you drop the robot thing for a while?

DEX
Can mom come, too?

WILL
No. Daddy and Mommy are still in their anger stage.

DEX
Are you getting divorced?

WILL
Not yet.

DEX
Yet. So it is going to happen.

WILL
(mussing his hair)
Hey, don't worry about that yet.

DEX
Yet. Great.

Just then, Will spots his daughter KIRSTEN (16) in a short miniskirt flirting her newly developed ass-off with a tattooed dude on a motorcycle, BEAU (21).

WILL
Hang on.

Will pops out and heads over to his daughter. Kirsten sees her dad - her face falls.

KIRSTEN
I'm at mom's today.

WILL
I know. I just wanted to meet your friend. Nice ink.

BEAU
Thanks.

WILL
That's a nice bike. My daughter does not ride on this. Ever.

BEAU
Chilax, man.

WILL
How 'bout you chilax, man.

BEAU
You chilax, bro!

WILL
I'm not your bro, dude!

KIRSTEN
(to Beau with smile)
Isn't he hilarious? Catch ya later, sexy.

BIKE DUDE
Not if I catch you first.

He winks at Kirsten and rips away from the curb.

WILL
(yelling after him)
She's fifteen! Jailbait!

Kirsten storms away from Will, mortified.

KIRSTEN
Are you trying to ruin my life?!

WILL
He's 25! He should be on "To Catch
a Predator"!

KIRSTEN
Beau's 22 and an amazing musician.
He's gonna let me front his band.

WILL
I bet he is. You just tell him you
already have a girl band.

KIRSTEN
Beau's right - girl bands have been
dead since the Go-Gos. If I want to
be Gwen Stefani, I need to front a
guy band and bring the hotness.

WILL
You don't need to dress like a slut
to be a good singer.

She looks at him, stung.

WILL (CONT'D)
That came out wrong.

KIRSTEN
Back off, dad. I can take care of
myself.

WILL
You're still a kid.

KIRSTEN
Really dad? What's today?

WILL
Tuesday. Why?

She stares at him a hurt beat.

KIRSTEN
Unbelievable. Why don't you go play
super-dad with someone who buys it.

She storms away. Will has a feeling he's screwed up, he just has no idea how.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Will lays on the couch watching TV as he pops open his sixth beer. There's sparse furniture and boxes stacked around. His dog whimpers for pizza.

WILL
Don't tell your mom I let you eat
from the table.

The dog tilts his head and Will tosses him a slice with a pat on the head.

A KNOCK at the door. Will answers - to his shock it's Dempsey.

WILL (CONT'D)
Dempsey! What the hell are you doing
here?!

DEMPSEY
You're a very hard man to track down.

WILL
Yeah, I've had a few moves.

Dempsey looks at his place - it's a wreck.

DEMPSEY
I hope I didn't catch you at a bad
time?

WILL
No, no. The guys were just over to
watch the game.

Dempsey sees Oprah paused on Tivo.

WILL (CONT'D)
My place is a mess, let's grab a
drink.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Will and Dempsey are bellied up to the bar, drinking and catching up.

WILL
Then Laney's therapist told her a
separation was "vital" for her
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
emotional health. I never thought
she'd do it.

DEMPSEY
Fucking therapists. But you're still
legally married, right?

WILL
Yeah, why?

DEMPSEY
And your kids are all reasonably
intelligent?

WILL
Why, you want to move in on my family?

DEMPSEY
No, smartass. There may be an
opportunity for you to go up.

This catches Will's attention.

WILL
Up? Up up?

DEMPSEY
Yeah, I'm talking dream come true
time. N.A.S.A is looking to train a
family to take over Expedition 18.
We're asking former pilots who are
married with three kids or more.
And despite the shit storm that is
your life, you're qualified.

WILL
What the hell is N.A.S.A doing sending
a family?

DEMPSEY
It's a bullshit PR mission - but the
point is this. You got screwed over.
I'm giving you a second chance.

Will considers his scotch.

WILL
I'd love to, more than anything, but
my family is closer to being on Jerry
Springer than national heroes.

DEMPSEY
Then pull them together!
(MORE)

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)

Will, you were the best pilot I knew.
You had the girl I wanted. Now look
at you, getting fat, teaching flight
101, watching Oprah for God's sake.

WILL

I was not watching Oprah.

DEMPSEY

This is chance to get your life back.

WILL

That was harsh.

DEMPSEY

I didn't want to give the speech,
but you made me give the speech.

WILL

Okay. Give me a day, I'll see what
I can do.

EXT. LANEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Will parks his Jeep behind a BMW and walks up to his old
house. He knocks and Laney opens the door. The years have
treated her well, and she's dressed for a date.

LANEY

What's wrong?

WILL

Nothing.

Will hands her flowers. She eyes him suspiciously.

LANEY

Flowers used to mean what did you
do. Now they mean what do you want.

WILL

I totally respect your new boundaries
thing, but I really need to talk to
you guys.

Will glances into the living room to see his three kids...
and a well dressed man sitting at the head of the table.

WILL (CONT'D)

Who the hell is that?

LANEY

That's Richard.

WILL
Your therapist? The one who told
you to kick me out of my own house?!

LANEY
He's become a friend.

WILL
He wants to bone you.

LANEY
Classy. Is this going to turn into
one of your Neanderthal moments?

WILL
No, I'm fine.

RICHARD (45) comes over with a smile and extends a hand to
Will.

RICHARD
Hi Will, I'm Richard.

WILL
You look like a Dick.

RICHARD
I can understand your feelings of
insecurity seeing me here. But I
assure you, I don't think you're a
bad guy. Everyone forgets a birthday.

Will registers - Kirsten's birthday. Shit.

WILL
I'd never forget the best day of my
life.

Will fakes a smile and heads into the living room.

WILL (CONT'D)
(mutters to Laney)
A heads-up would have been nice.

LANEY
I can't believe you forgot!

INT. DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Sweet 16 birthday balloons hang from the chandelier. Dex
sits next to JOHNNY (17), Will's oldest son - a good looking
surfer dude with flowing shoulder length hair he secretly
thinks is the source of his mojo. He's totally high.

Will grins and heads over to Kirsten.

WILL

Hey sweetheart. You probably thought I forgot your birthday, but I was actually waiting to surprise you with a really cool gift.

KIRSTEN

Really? What?

WILL

It hasn't come yet, but in the meantime I wanted to give you this.

He hands her twenty bucks.

KIRSTEN

Twenty bucks? Wow, dad, you shouldn't have.

RICHARD

Well, if we're doing presents, I'll give you mine.

Richard hands Kirsten a huge wrapped present. She tears into it... it's a hot pink Daisy Rock electric guitar!

KIRSTEN

Oh my gosh! I love it!!! Thank you!!!

She gives Richard a huge hug. Will glares at Laney. She doesn't notice Will; she's enjoying the moment.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)

This will be perfect! Beau just asked me to front their first gig of the summer.

WILL

Speaking of summer, I've got a huge opportunity for us. Bigger than any gig.

All eyes on Will.

WILL (CONT'D)

N.A.S.A. is looking for a family to send up in the new space plane. And they want to train us.

They're stunned. Dex lights up.

DEX

The Galaxy?! No way!

LANEY

I don't understand, you haven't been a N.A.S.A pilot for years.

WILL

Dempsey did me a solid. It's the chance of a lifetime.

RICHARD

But they want a family. You're fractured.

WILL

We're still married, and more importantly we're still a family.

(to the kids)

Think of how much fun it will be to spend the summer flying jets, being weightless - Johnny, you'll love it more than surfing.

Johnny speaks with the great depth of being totally baked.

JOHNNY

This is so weird. I was gonna Jack Kerouac it with my buddies surfing the coast this summer. But then if Jack Kerouac got asked to train for space, he'd totally go, because that's like the most random shit you can do. Dilemma.

WILL

(to Laney)

He's high.

LANEY

He's on cold medication.

RICHARD

That's denial.

KIRSTEN

As fun as it'd be to spend the summer at space camp and pretend to be a happy family, my summer's booked.

WILL

Kirsten, I know we've had our differences. But this is my dream.

KIRSTEN

Really? Cause it's my dream to have a car. Maybe there's a win win here?

Will looks at his daughter, shocked.

LANEY

Will, can I see you in the kitchen?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Will watches as Laney paces, pissed.

LANEY

The nerve of you coming in here
wanting to use us as props!

RICHARD (O.S.)

Use your feeling words.

Laney slams the door closed.

WILL

I thought you'd be happy for me.

LANEY

I am, Will. But it's always about
you. You wouldn't take us on a family
vacation, or come out to dinner with
our friends --

WILL

They're *your* real-estate buddies who
just brag about their big houses and
drink chardonnay.

LANEY

You wouldn't even come to therapy to
save our marriage.

WILL

I didn't know our marriage was on
the line!

(gathering himself)

Look, I know it's a lot to ask, but
it's not just about me.

LANEY

Oh please.

WILL

You wanted me to plug into the kids
and I have! They're a mess! Johnny's
high half the time, Dex is getting
beaten up by a girl, and Kirsten's a
fake ID away from getting knocked up
by some douchebag from The Hills.

Laney slumps on the kitchen counter.

LANEY

I know. They're messed up. I was trying so hard not to have messed up kids.

WILL

This gives us two months of quality time with them.

LANEY

Like that has helped.

WILL

It's N.A.S.A. It's discipline. It opens up their world to be other things than Gwen Stefani and Jack Kerouac.

(sincerely)

This could be a chance for us to pull together, as a family.

He puts his hand on hers. She considers his hand, then gives him a penetrating look.

LANEY

Fine. I'll give you this last chance. But this has got to be about more than space. This has got to be about you bringing our family together.

WILL

I'll be plugged in like never before.

LANEY

And if things don't change, I mean really change, then when we get back, I want a divorce.

(off his stung look)

No legal battles, no juvenile games, just an amicable parting of ways.

WILL

If that's what you want. But I've got two months to change your mind.

LANEY

You can tell Kirsten the good news.

INT. KIRSTEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Close on Kirsten face as she screams in anguish.

KIRSTEN

Noooo!

EXT. HOUSTON AIRPORT - DAY

Dempsey and Wilson, wearing his Steve Job glasses, wait outside their SUV. Wilson eagerly holds a "Pattersons" sign.

DEMPSEY

Lose the sign.

WILSON

Limo drivers do it.

DEMPSEY

You look like you're picking up a mail-order bride.

Wilson lowers the sign.

The Pattersons straggle out from baggage claim a total mess. Dex and Johnny are in a slap fight. Laney's on her phone closing a business deal. Kirsten storms out with a huge suitcases and tear stained face, arguing with Will.

KIRSTEN

What, so now we live in Muslim Iraq?!
I just have to put on a berka and a
happy face and do whatever you say?

WILL

I have never treated you like a
Muslim!
(to Dempsey)
Hey guys. We're all super excited
to be here.

Will puts his arm around Kirsten. She swats it away.

WILSON

(aside to Dempsey)
I told you his offspring would be
emotionally damaged.

*

Will gives Wilson a look. Wilson extends his hand.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Duane Wilson, I did my thesis on
your meltdown prior to Expedition
One. Great to meet a legend.

Off Will's look, we cut to..

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - HOUSTON, TEXAS - DAY

The N.A.S.A SUV drives through the entrance of the Johnson Space Center. It's like a college campus with rocket monuments and impressive N.A.S.A buildings.

Astronauts jog by.

INSIDE THE SUV

The Pattersons take in the sites as Dempsey drives and gives them the 411.

DEMPSEY

This is the astronaut training lab where you'll be spending twelve hours a day. Every astronaut since John Glenn has trained here.

Dex looks out the window, impressed.

WILL

Pretty cool, huh?

DEX

This is better than the Robogames!

Kirsten leans forward flirtatiously.

KIRSTEN

So what do you guys do for fun? Do you club, shop, go out?

WILSON

There will be zero time for leisure activities, especially with the extra training you'll need, being sub-par both physically and mentally.

KIRSTEN

Fuck you, social retard!

LANEY

Kirsten! She's kidding.

WILL

(to Wilson)

Or was she? Write a thesis about that.

Will and Wilson lock eyes. Dempsey pulls over in front of the barracks.

DEMPSEY

Okay! Wilson, get the bags and cool off.

Wilson backs out of the car, still locked in a staring contests with Will. Laney rolls her eyes.

LANEY

Here we go.

DEMPSEY

Okay, Pattersons. Wilson will get you settled in, then we'll see you at the cocktail reception at eighteen hundred.

JOHNNY

Eighteen hundred? So it's like a theme party?

DEMPSEY

Six O'clock, Johnny.
(to Will)
He's the one you named after John Glenn?

WILL

I know.

INT. J.S.C. - SPACE MUSEUM - NIGHT

The space museum is sleekly lit with an impressive array of iconic memorabilia. FOUR OTHER FAMILIES mingle with N.A.S.A BRASS. Zoe Shelton looks over the crowd with Duvall.

ZOE SHELTON

So these are the chosen ones?

DUVALL

The best, the brightest, even a "spunky underdog", per request.

ZOE SHELTON

Good. Now the question is, which family is going to make America fall in love?

DUVALL

No doll, the question is who are the real astronauts.

ZOE SHELTON

Brains are good. Big tits are better.

She smacks his ass and leaves. Duvall watches her, stunned.

The Pattersons straggle in. Will's suit is too tight.

WILL

I think the dry cleaner shrunk my pants.

LANEY
 (re: his beer gut)
 It wasn't the dry cleaner.

Dempsey approaches. Will notices the other families.

WILL
 Who are they?

DEMPSEY
 The competition. We train five
 families, the best goes up.

Kirsten perks up.

KIRSTEN
 When is the soonest we can be
 eliminated?

WILL
 No one's getting eliminated.
 (to Dempsey)
 Give me the rundown on these hosers.

Dempsey and Will scan the room. Laney joins.

DEMPSEY
 Those are the Kims.

Will looks over at THE KIMS, the five Asians sitting on the
 bench watching a N.A.S.A promo film.

WILL
 Let me guess, they're a Mensa family.

LANEY
 Honey, don't racially profile.
 (then to Dempsey)
 They're home schooled. You can tell
 by how enamored they are by moving
 pictures.

DEMPSEY
 She's showing her kids footage of
 one of her three missions.

LANEY
 Oh.

DEMPSEY
 Yeah. Over there is Gabriel Sanchez.
 Two time pilot, three time adopter.

Will sizes up the SANCHEZES and their Jolie-Pitt gang of
 grown kids.

WILL

So what do you think? Do we have a shot?

DEMPSEY

I would say yes if it wasn't for them.

Dempsey nods to the HARRISONS, Will's old nemesis and his family of ridiculously fit and beautiful kids.

WILL

You've got to be kidding me.

LANEY

Who's the Ambercrombie family?

WILL

John Harrison, the douchebag who took my spot.

Laney sees the hurt in Will's eyes.

DEMPSEY

Go, mingle with people with stars on their jackets.

Dempsey slaps him on the back and leaves. Harrison sees Will and grins. Will tries to hide, then realizes he can't.

HARRISON

If it isn't piss pants. What kind of strings did your little bitch Dempsey have to pull to get you here?

DEMPSEY

(from across the room)
I can still hear you.

LANEY

Now I see why you said he was an obnoxious pig.
(to Harrison)
I'm Laney, Will's wife.

Harrison grins lasciviously at Laney.

HARRISON

Oh honey, you married down.
(to Will)
Come, sit with us. I want my kids to meet the man who gave me my shot.

WILL

We've got a table.

HARRISON

I know, table 12, I arranged it myself.

Harrison winks at Laney. Will grabs a beer from a passing waiter and chugs.

AT THE DINNER TABLE

The Pattersons sit like they're bored on a first date with the Harrisons as John Harrison rambles on about himself.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

After my third mission, I hung up my wings to get into the restaurant biz. We're opening our tenth Harrison's Hamlet this month.

His wife, JANE HARRISON, a surgically enhanced 40-something with long blonde extensions and a drinking problem, smiles as much as her botox will allow.

MRS. HARRISON

Our burgers are "out of this world". John came up with that himself.

WILL

Clever.

HARRISON

But you know, the most important thing is family. So when they asked me to be a part of this, I thought what better gift to give my children than a place in history.

Harrison turns to his oldest son CASEY (18), a lanky kid with a cocky grin.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Casey here has early acceptance at the Air Force academy and is going to fly jets like his dad.

CASEY

(to Kirsten)

Dad said this would be fun. He didn't mention anything about beautiful women.

Kirsten blushes. Will glares at Casey.

Harrison puts his arm around his other son, CHAD (19), a dark and brooding kid, handsome, but creepy. Think future serial-killer.

HARRISON

Chad is a published physicist in his freshman year at Harvard.

CHAD

That made father happy.

Chad stabs his steak and grins at Johnny. Johnny looks around - wtf?

Harrison turns to his daughter, JENNY (15), 6'1 and hugely muscular - she's gotta be doping more than A-Rod.

HARRISON

And Jenny was offered a Mensa scholarship to Harvard, but turned it down to train for the Olympics. She's sponsored by Nike and working on her own line of athletic gear.

Jenny smiles sweetly, then lets out her WAY DEEP VOICE.

JENNY

It's for large-boned girls.

Will almost chokes on his drink. Dex shyly smiles at Jenny - half fascinated, half turned-on.

HARRISON

So who's in your crew, Patterson?

WILL

My son Dex here is really talented with robotics.

HARRISON

Play a lot of X-Box, kid?

WILL

He's actually nominated for a Nobel Prize in robotic physics.

Laney looks at Will, shocked.

DEX

No I wasn't.

WILL

He's modest. My oldest son Johnny's a surfer - he just won his division in the X-games.

JOHNNY

I did? Wait, was that last summer?

WILL
My daughter Kirsten is in a band.
She's going to be on American Idol.

Kirsten rolls her eyes. Will puts his arm around Laney.

WILL (CONT'D)
And my lovely wife here is the CEO
of her own Real Estate company.

LANEY
We just sold the White House to the
Obamas.

JOHNNY
They own that?

LANEY
Just a little real estate joke.

WILL
And I've been teaching flight lessons.
(off Harrison's look)
At Top Gun.

LANEY
We call him Maverick.

Harrison gets Will's posturing and chuckles.

HARRISON
Like I always say, if you ain't got
it, lie.

JANE HARRISON
(totally clueless)
Maverick. That's cute.

Jane goes to take a swig of her third martini and Harrison stops her.

DUVALL (O.S.)
Good evening, everyone.

They all turn towards the stage.

ON STAGE

Duvall is at the podium.

DUVALL (CONT'D)
I'm N.A.S.A. Flight Director James
Duvall.

(MORE)

DUVALL (CONT'D)

I want to welcome you to the most intense two months of your life. You will be training for Expedition 18, the maiden voyage of the new space jet, the Galaxy.

APPLAUSE. Images of the Galaxy fill the screen behind him.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

China just sent a family into orbit, and we're going to one up them, rendezvousing with the Space Station.

Will nudges Dex, who's beaming.

Duvall nods to Dempsey, sitting at the head table with Zoe Shelton and head trainer MAJOR HANDCOCK.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

Joe Dempsey and Major Handcock will be in charge of your training.

Duvall then points to a FLIGHT BOARD behind him.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

The flight board will show where each family ranks. At the end of one month, the family at the top will begin mission specific training at the Kennedy Space Center.

The screen behind him rolls clips of the great moments in space achievement.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

Alan Shepard, the first American in space. Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon. And one family sitting in this room will make history as the first U.S. family in space. Good luck.

Will glows as he hears this. He wants this.

AFTER DINNER

As the families amble out, Harrison approaches Will.

HARRISON

It's gonna be a hell of a trip. It's a shame they can't send two families.

WILL

I'm confident the best family will win.

Will looks over to see Dex licking an ice statue as Johnny laughs. Harrison sees it and grins.

HARRISON

This is gonna be fun.

INT. JSC - BARRACKS - NIGHT

Dempsey hands the Pattersons their jumpsuits.

DEMPSEY

Tomorrow's a big day - physical tests and psych evals. Report to the track at oh six-hundred. That's six A.M., Johnny.

Dempsey leaves. Kirsten holds up the jumpsuit and cringes.

KIRSTEN

If we fail the tests, do we get to go home?

WILL

We're not going anywhere! Look, guys, we have a shot at this, but we all have to give a hundred and ten percent. That means Kirsten, I need you to stay in sweet girl mode, and not snap into bitch mode.

KIRSTEN

What the hell is bitch mode?!

WILL

That's it - when you get angry. You're like that big green monster --

DEX

The hulk.

WILL

Yes, no hulking. Dex, I need you to man up. If that big boned girl tries to hit you, cover your head so your brain is not damaged. Johnny, do not speak unless spoken to.

LANEY

Wow babe, it's great how much faith you have in us.

WILL
I've been lettin' this family slide
too long. But from now on I promise,
you'll get my best.

KIRSTEN
So you've been giving us half-ass
for how long?

WILL
The last five years, maybe six.
Sorry. But all of that changes right
now. We're the Pattersons. The sky
is not our limit.

Kirsten rolls her eyes.

KIRSTEN
Uh, okay, dad.

WILL
Come on, bring it in for a huddle.
A hundred and ten percent on three.

KIRSTEN
I gotta go to bed.

LANEY
Yeah, I need to make a call.

They disburse.

DEX
Technically you can't give more than
one hundred percent.

WILL
Just go to bed.

EXT. JSC TRACK - DAWN

It's still dark as all the families do their morning laps.
Dempsey looks around - the Pattersons are missing.

INT. THE PATTERSON'S ROOM - MORNING

The Pattersons are all out cold. There's a POUNDING on their
door. Will glances at the clock.

WILL
Shit!

Will whips up and hits his head on the upper bunk.

WILL (CONT'D)

Mother f-er!

Kirsten opens the door with a sleep mask on her head.

KIRSTEN

You've got to be kidding me. It's pitch black outside.

DEMPSEY

And the family I put my ass on the line for is late.

WILL

Sorry man, new alarm clock. We'll be right there.

(shaking Dex)

Dex, get up buddy. We're running late.

*

Johnny pops up from the bunk below Dex.

JOHNNY

What's that smell?

Will sniffs the air and traces it to a drip from Dex's bed onto Johnny's. They both realize it's PEE! Johnny jumps up.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Ew! Dex, you little bedwetter! How old are you?!

DEX

I didn't mean to.

LANEY

Okay, this stuff happens in new places. Let's just get dressed.

Dex sits up - he's wearing his training jumpsuit.

DEX

What should I wear?

WILL

You slept in your jumpsuit?!

(thinking fast)

Okay, Kirsten, get me your hairdryer.

KIRSTEN

You're not using my hairdryer to dry his pee!

JOHNNY

I gotta jump in the shower.

WILL

Kirsten, get your hairdryer. Johnny sponge off, we're leaving in two.

JOHNNY

I smell like pee!

WILL

Sponge off!

Laney is drying Dex's pee spot on his uniform.

WILL (CONT'D)

Laney, put it on high.

LANEY

I don't want to burn him.

Will grabs the hairdryer and turns it on high.

WILL

See, he's fine.

DEX

(screaming like a
girl)

Ahhhhh!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PATTERSON'S WINDOW - DAY

Creepy Chad Harrison video tapes the whole thing, snickering to himself as he does.

INT. JOHNSON CENTER - ASTRONAUT TRAINING LAB - DAY

All the families stand in their jumpsuits in front of Dempsey and MAJOR HANDCOCK (80), N.A.S.A's tough-as-nails trainer with a leather jacket and cane. He inspects the families like they were troops.

HANDCOCK

I'm Major Handcock, and I'm here to turn you flabby ass civilians into astronauts.

Johnny giggles.

JOHNNY

Major Handcock!

Handcock shoots Johnny a look to kill. Then he notices Will wearing Dex's small jumpsuit with a wet spot in the crotch.

HANDCOCK

Did you piss yourself?

WILL

I like to mark my territory in new places. It's a primal thing.

The Harrisons exchange disgusted looks. Chad has his video camera and zooms in on Will's crotch.

HANDCOCK

I've trained monkeys to fly. I've broken the spirit of hot-shit pilots. But I've never seen a more piss-poor group of Ass Cads than you.

DEMPSEY

That's astronaut candidates.

HANDCOCK

Shut up, suit. Today we see if you pansies can have the basic physical and mental capacity to train for space. I'll determine if you're men or pussies.

The families react in shock. SANCHEZ (50), a hippy looking guy with long grey hair braided in back speaks up.

GABRIEL SANCHEZ

Is that language really necessary? We've got kids here.

HANDCOCK

This isn't space camp, Woodstock. This is military training designed to weed out anyone who can't handle themselves on a mission. If you don't like it, leave.

Kirsten turns to go. Will pulls her back.

INT. JOHNSON CENTER - CARDIO LAB - DAY

The Pattersons and Harrisons run on vertical treadmills, suspended by wire harnesses. They've got sensors connected to their bodies to measure cardio efficiency.

Dempsey walks down the line making notes. Johnny's kicking butt.

DEMPSEY

Wow, Johnny, you could pass the N.A.S.A. physical today.

Johnny gives two thumbs up and swings off the treadmill.

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)
Hands on the sensors.

Then he turns to the next treadmill where Harrison is jogging fast and strong.

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)
Harrison, you've actually gained lung capacity.

HARRISON
My family runs five miles every morning.
(to the Harrisons)
Who's the best?

ALL HARRISONS
The Harrisons!

Laney and Kirsten exchange an eye roll, both struggling on the treadmills.

Dempsey comes to Will, who's pouring sweat.

WILL
(out of breath)
Piece. Of. Cake.

DEMPSEY
Congratulations, you've lost 70 percent of your lung capacity. Have you exercised at all?

WILL
(gasping for breath)
Yeah, I jog.

DEMPSEY
To where? Burger King and back?

Off Will's look, we cut to...

INT. N.A.S.A. MEDIC BUILDING - DAY

Will sits across from a N.A.S.A. psychologist taking a psych eval. She scribbles down notes as he talks.

WILL
My family jumped at the chance to be here. I had my doubts, but they were like "Daddy, daddy, we have to do this."

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
We're really tight.

CUT TO:

KIRSTEN IN PSYCH EVALS

She sits in the same seat talking to the psychologist.

KIRSTEN
My dad said he'd ground me my entire senior year if I didn't come here and pretend we're this big happy family. So I'm basically a kidnap victim.

CUT TO:

LANEY IN PSYCH EVALS

In the hot seat.

LANEY
Yes, I'd consider myself a nurturer.

Then her cell phone rings.

LANEY (CONT'D)
Hang on, it's work. *
(on her cell)
What?! No! No way! Tell him to find a pair of balls, strap 'em on, and go through escrow like a man!
(she hangs up)
Where were we?

The psychologist looks up, shocked, then makes a note.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Harrison takes the urinal next to Johnny and Will and Dex, all giving urine samples.

Harrison proudly zips up with his urine sample cup brimming.

HARRISON
Nice and pale. That's hydration.
Oh, Will, if you need help finding your dick, it's that baby carrot just under your muffin top.

WILL
You'd better piss in a cup for your girl, we all know she's pumping 'roids.

Harrison thinks a moment, then quickly leaves.

JOHNNY

Um, dad, do you think they're checking
for like medical things?

WILL

If you say medical marijuana I will
kill you.

JOHNNY

Okay, now I don't know what to say.

Will slaps him upside the head.

WILL

Do pot again, I will end you. Give
me your cup.

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY LAB - DAY

The Harrisons and Pattersons gather poolside in their bathing
suits for the swim test.

Dex stands by the pool as Jenny approaches the lane next to
him in her red power-Harrison suit.

DEX POV/SLOW MOTION: Jenny looks at him and smiles. Then
she looks down at his crotch and is horrified.

Dex realizes and covers his pup tent. From across the room,
Chad Harrison cracks up laughing, filming the whole thing.

DEX

(to Jenny)

It's just a physiological reaction
to arousal. You should take it as a
compliment.

She looks at him disgusted, her arm comes FLYING TOWARDS
HIM. Dex cowers, covering his head.

DEX (CONT'D)

(screaming like a
girl)

Ahhhh!

Jenny continues her arm warm up, looking down at Dex,
perplexed.

JENNY

What's wrong with you?

A FEW YARDS AWAY

Both Laney and Jane Harrison watch the exchange in horror.

LANEY

He just had a thing where he got
beat up by a girl, so he's a tad
P.T.S.D.

JANE HARRISON

I understand. He's "special".

Jane winks.

LANEY

No, my son is not "special", he's
incredibly intelligent.

JANE HARRISON

That is the best approach. Just
keep treating them like normal and
one day they will be.

She smiles, then gives Laney a body check as she walks away.

Laney walks over to Will.

LANEY

Alright, let's beat these jerks.

WILL

That's the spirit.

Will sees Johnny leaping over the N.A.S.A scuba vehicle and
jumping to the top of the pool rail with impressive agility.

WILL (CONT'D)

Johnny, stop with the Parkour.
Where's Kirsten?

Just then Kirsten struts in her itty bitty bikini. All the
guys look. Wilson can't help but stare.

WILSON

That is not a N.A.S.A. approved suit.

KIRSTEN

(flirtatiously)
Do you approve?

Wilson is tongue tied. Will covers her up with a towel - he
sees a BELLY RING.

WILL

That better be a clip on.

From a few lanes away, Casey Harrison grins at her.

CASEY
I think it's hot.

Will shoots Casey a look.

Handcock blows a WHISTLE and the families turn to him and Dempsey.

HANDCOCK
Final test. Each member of your crew has two minutes to retrieve a dummy from the bottom of the pool.

Handcock nods to Wilson and a N.A.S.A TECH - they throw two life-sized dummies into the pool.

HANDCOCK (CONT'D)
We'll go two at a time. Harrison, Choker, you two go first and show 'em how it's done.

WILL
Did he just call me choker?

HARRISON
I've been talking you up.

Will glares at Harrison as the two men line up at the edge of the pool.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
This is gonna be tough for you, Shamu.

WILL
(glancing at Harrison's Speedo)
Fabio called, he's missing his mankini.

HARRISON
It's hydrodynamic, Pillsbury.

Handcock blows the WHISTLE and the men dive in.

UNDERWATER

Will gets to the dummy first and grabs it. Instead of going for the second dummy, Harrison grabs Will's. They yank back and forth until Harrison knees Will in the nuts. Will clutches himself in pain as Harrison grabs the dummy.

Will sinks for a painful moment then BAM! He's kicked in the face by Harrison's foot!

POOLSIDE

Harrison emerges with the dummy victoriously.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

First!

His family cheers him on.

JANE HARRISON

That's my big man!

The Pattersons aren't paying attention - Laney's on her cell phone, Johnny's doing Parkour, Dex is on his Nintendo SD, Kirsten's on her ipod "laying out" in the stream of sunlight.

They don't notice as Will's UNCONSCIOUS BODY floats to the surface. Chad films him, mesmerized.

ON DEMPSEY AND HANDCOCK

DEMPSEY

That is not good.

HANDCOCK

He still has a minute-thirty.

Dempsey double-takes at Handcock.

ON THE PATTERSONS

Dex sees Will floating face down.

DEX

(screaming like a
girl)

Ahhhhhh!

Laney looks up - her face registers horror. She jumps in to save Will.

IN THE POOL

Laney grabs Will and swims him to the side of the pool, but sinks trying to lift him out. A crowd gathers.

ON DEMPSEY AND HANDCOCK

DEMPSEY

That's it, I'm going in.

HANDCOCK

Let 'em work it out. This is how
teams bond.

IN THE POOL

Laney lifts Will out of the pool, but then he flops back in.

KIRSTEN

Daddy!

Dempsey looks at Handcock.

DEMPSEY

He's drowning.

HANDCOCK

We've got 7 minutes.

DEMPSEY

Before he's brain dead!

HANDCOCK

Evolution is a fascinating thing.

DEMPSEY

(to the Patterson
kids)

For the love of God, help your
parents!

Dex runs and belly-flops into the pool.

WILSON

This is why we don't send civilians.

Johnny helps Laney pull Will out of the pool, dragging his bare back on the cement edge.

Will flops unconscious on the side of the pool. Kirsten runs over and rolls Will on his side.

KIRSTEN

Give him space, STAT!

She smacks him on his back and Will comes to, coughing.

HARRISON

His time's up! He failed!

Will's POV: of his family gathered around him, worried.

WILL

I'm okay. I'm fine.

Will wobbles to a stand.

WILL (CONT'D)

Let's go again.

LANEY

You're bleeding! Will, sit down.

WILL

Failure is not an option!

Will stumbles and grabs Wilson to steady himself, knocking Wilson into the pool. Will collapses on the side, breathing heavily and clutching his chest, panic attack starting.

Harrison stands over Will with a grin.

HARRISON

Too late, Choker! You're gone baby gone!

INT. N.A.S.A LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Will sits shivering in a towel holding ice on his head as his family tries to cheer him up.

DEX

The rest of us passed. Four out of five isn't bad.

WILL

(rocking)

I'm the weak link. I'm the weak link.

LANEY

Will, he cheated. You have to get another chance.

WILL

Did I get a second chance with Expedition One? No. N.A.S.A is the place where dreams die!

KIRSTEN

Dad, stop being a drama queen. Dempsey said he'd take care of it.

Handcock storms into the room.

HANDCOCK

If it were up to me, you'd all be gone back to your mochaccinos and Ho Ho's. But the brass wants me to get you trained, so that's what we're gonna do. Gather your essential gear. We're going on a field trip.

INT. ABANDONED BARN - NIGHT

Will and his family wait in the old abandoned barn. Rusty cages are all around.

LANEY

This is creepy.

DEX

He can't kill us, right?

WILL

No.

(then)

Kirsten, call 911 for a check in.

KIRSTEN

No cell reception.

JOHNNY

This is like the beginning of a bad horror movie.

Handcock walks in and drops a huge wooden crate on the ground.

HANDCOCK

This is the place where I trained legends. Miss Baker. A one pound South American squirrel monkey - the first monkeyonaut to survive space.

DEX

Are you gonna kill us?

HANDCOCK

No, pup tent. I'm goin' old school on your ass. Your crew acts like a bunch of un-neutered monkeys, so I'm gonna train you like monkeys.

Handcock brings out a rusty cuff and puts it around Will's wrist.

HANDCOCK (CONT'D)

These are training aids that deliver a small but painful volt of electricity when you screw up.

Handcock pushes the button. Will flinches.

WILL

Ow! Mother f -!

BUZZ. Will jumps and grabs his wrist.

WILL (CONT'D)

Holy S -!

BUZZ.

WILL (CONT'D)

Jesus C -!

BUZZ.

HANDCOCK

Keep talking. I can go all day long.

WILL

This is ridicul -

BUZZ. Will settles down, glaring at Handcock.

HANDCOCK

See, Will has already learned that you don't speak unless spoken to.

Handcock tosses him a freeze dried banana treat.

HANDCOCK (CONT'D)

Go ahead and eat it, probably the first fruit you've had in years.

LANEY

What is wrong with you?!

HANDCOCK

Are you gonna need one, too, little momma?

Handcock paces.

HANDCOCK (CONT'D)

I've been watching your "crew", and see some basic problems in communication. So we're going to do a drill called "Obey or Cry".

The family all looks at Handcock with fear.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED FIELD - NIGHT

The family is dropped off in the middle of a rocky plain desert. Will, Laney, Johnny, Kirsten and Dex all rub their burned wrists.

Handcock tosses a huge duffel bag out of survival gear from the back of his truck.

HANDCOCK

Alright monkeynauts. If you can last a night out here, and find your way back tomorrow, then I'll consider you physically able to start training.

Handcock gets in his truck and slams the door.

HANDCOCK (CONT'D)

Remember, a crew listens to each other. They rely on each other. They don't sue N.A.S.A instructors.

Handcock takes off in his truck. The family looks around.

KIRSTEN

Awesome vaca, dad. Pass the burn cream.

DEX

Did he really just leave us out here alone? We're wolf bait.

WILL

There aren't any wolves.

A wolf HOWLS.

WILL (CONT'D)

He was very far away. Johnny, get out the inflatable air module. Dex, you and mom gather firewood. I'm gonna get the flair gun and start wolf patrol.

LANEY

Will, this is ridiculous. Let's just find the highway and hitchhike home.

WILL

Home? Home home?

KIRSTEN

Dad, we gave it a try. We just don't have the right stuff.

WILL

If we leave they win. We'll be the laughing stock of N.A.S.A.

DEX

Dad, N.A.S.A is like a bully. Maybe it's best that we run.

Will considers his family, listening for the first time.

WILL
Okay, if you want to leave, we'll
leave.

Kirsten and Laney both look up, surprised.

WILL (CONT'D)
Let's just get a fire going, dehydrate
some food, and then we'll hike to
the highway.

LANEY
Thanks, babe.

Will and Laney exchange a look. Johnny pulls the cord on
the inflatable habitat - it inflates and knocks him back.

JOHNNY
Whoa!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ABANDONED FIELD - NIGHT

The Pattersons sit around a small fire they've built and eat
freeze-dried food.

JOHNNY
I don't get why you wanted us to
come so bad.

KIRSTEN
Yeah, dad, why did you want to be an
astronaut in the first place?

WILL
Joe Benson. He was my neighbor.

They look to him, wanting more. Will decides to share.

WILL (CONT'D)
I know I don't talk about it much,
but my dad was pretty much a drunk.
I was getting into all sorts of
trouble, and Joe Benson was an
astronaut, and took me under his
wing.

The kids all watch Will, seeing him in a different light.

WILL (CONT'D)
Joe saw that I could be something.
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

He made me want to stop fighting the idiots at my school and start fighting to get into the Air Force Academy. And when I did, everyone saw me in a new way. I got respect.

Will looks at his kids.

WILL (CONT'D)

See, it's not just about space. It's about doing something great. Everyone who goes up, they come back and there's something different in their eyes. They know they've done something great. I wanted that. I wanted that for all of us.

Kirsten takes in her dad.

KIRSTEN

This is really important to you, isn't it?

WILL

Yeah. It's like the most important thing I never got to do.

KIRSTEN

Then we shouldn't quit.

Laney looks at her, shocked. Kirsten takes out her belly ring and hands it to her dad.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)

I'm in. I promise not to hulk.

DEX

Yeah. I want to be remembered for my brain, not my pup tent.

Dex hands his dad his Nintendo SD.

DEX (CONT'D)

I promise to be brave.

JOHNNY

I promise not to get high.

Johnny gets out a baggie of pot and gives it to him.

WILL

You said you quit.

JOHNNY

I will now.

Johnny fishes out three more baggies hidden in various pockets.

LANEY

We'll talk about this later.

Laney hands Will her cell phone.

LANEY (CONT'D)

If they want to stay, I promise to put my business aside.

WILL

Thank you. This means the world to me.

Will puts out his pack of smokes.

WILL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna work on my cardio.

JOHNNY

But wait, how are we gonna beat the Harrisons? *

KIRSTEN

We could steal Handcock's tranq gun and drug 'em.

Will looks at her, stunned.

WILL

Do you know where he keeps it?

LANEY

Forget about the Harrisons. Focusing on them is what's gotten us into trouble. We work together, we stick together. Win or lose we leave with our head held high.

WILL

Mom's right. From this point on, I'm focused on my crew, right here.

DEX

We're the Pattersons. The sky is not our limit.

WILL

That's right!

Will musses his hair. Dex sees a wolf staring at them.

DEX
(screaming like a
girl)
Ahhh!

The wolf is spooked and runs away.

WILL
We'll work on the scream.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - DAY

Handcock addresses the four other families outside the main quad. Dempsey and Wilson are by his side.

HANDCOCK
Congratulations. You four families
have qualified to begin astronaut
training. You have three weeks to
learn your crew positions.

DEMPSEY
(aside to Handcock)
Where are the Pattersons?

HANDCOCK
Looks like they washed out.

WILSON
He tortured them then left them in
the desert.

DEMPSEY
Very funny.

WILSON
I'm not kidding.

Dempsey looks at Handcock, horrified.

DEMPSEY
Have you lost your mind?!

ON THE HARRISONS

Harrison turns to the gate - his face falls.

HARRISON
No way.

ON THE HORIZON

The Pattersons march back onto the base, dusty and tired, but standing tall.

DUVALL
I'll be damned.

Dempsey approaches them.

DEMPSEY
Hey, you guys okay?

WILL
We're more than okay. Let's do this.

DEMPSEY
(to Hancock and Wilson)
This is my team. I picked them.

Dempsey slaps Will on his back. Dex collapses.

DEX
Water.

Dempsey rushes to him with a water bottle.

INT. SPACE VEHICLE MOCK-UP FACILITY (SVMP) - DAY

The Pattersons stand in front of a life-sized mock up of the Galaxy Space Jet. Will assigns crew positions.

WILL
Dex, you like robots, so I'm making
you Mission Specialist One.

Will's instructions carry over the following montage of scenes...

INT. GALAXY TRAINER - DAY

Dex operates the joystick that moves the huge robot arm outside the shuttle.

WILL (V.O.)
You're in charge of equipment function
and operation of the robot arm.

OUTSIDE THE GALAXY TRAINER

Dex moves the robotic arm to Hancock and taps him on the butt. Hancock whips around, and Dex moves the arm to pat his butt from the other side. He spins again, then glares at Dex.

INSIDE THE TRAINER

WILL (CONT'D)

Sorry sir, he's still learning.

Will then gives Dex a low-five.

INT. PRECISION AIR BEARING FLOOR - DAY

Think a huge air-hockey table. Johnny is strapped onto a glider to simulate the movement he will have outside the ship in zero gravity.

WILL (V.O.)

Johnny, you're a daredevil, so I'm making you Mission Specialist Two in charge of extra vehicular activity -- that means you do space walks.

Will glides over to Johnny as he instructs him.

WILL (CONT'D)

You'll need core strength from being a surfer to operate in zero gravity. Now gently push off the shuttle - like a baby.

Johnny used both legs to power-off -- he slides across the whole floor and crashes into the other side.

WILL (CONT'D)

I said push off like a baby! Not like Michael Phelps in Beijing!

Johnny tries again and slams into the other wall.

INT. THE SINGLE SYSTEM TRAINER - DAY

In the trainer, Kirsten is going over a HUGE stack of cue cards.

WILL (V.O.)

Kirsten, you're very good on your phone, so you're in charge of communications.

KIRSTEN

(thumbing through the cards)

This protocol is complicated. Why can't I just say "We're ready to launch?"

(MORE)

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)
 Or "Hey, turn left so we don't get
 sucked in that black hole and
 disappear like Michael Jackson in
 the 90's."

Will looks at her, deadpan.

WILL
 (on the com)
 We're gonna need more time.

EXT. N.A.S.A. T-38 JET HANGER - DAY

Will climbs in the cockpit of the T-38 with a grin.

DEMPSEY (V.O.)
 Okay, Will, that makes you the pilot.
 And you've got some flight hours to
 make up.

WILL
 (to the plane)
 It's been a long time, baby.
 (then to Johnny)
 Johnny, get in here. I want to show
 you what a real high is like.

CUT TO:

EXT. N.A.S.A TARMAC - DAY

Laney, Kirsten and Dex all search the sky for signs of Will.
 Nothin' but calm blue. Then Will's Jet rockets by at mock
 2! Dex is thrilled!

KIRTEN
 Wow, dad is kinda bad ass.

DEX
 Totally bad ass!

Laney smiles.

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

Will hollers in pure excitement.

WILL
 And I'm back, baby!

Johnny's grinning ear to ear.

JOHNNY
 This is awesome!

WILL
Go to college, you could do this,
too.

Will brings the plane up and they do some tricks.

JOHNNY
Yeah baby!

INT. SPACE VEHICLE MOCK-UP FACILITY - DAY

Dempsey gives his final crew assignment to Laney.

DEMPSEY
Which leaves Mission Commander to
Laney.

Will laughs, then pulls Dempsey aside.

WILL
Laney the Commander? For real?
I've been doing this for years.

DEMPSEY
Laney is used to multi-tasking four
busy schedules while running a
business of her own. You're an
obsessive control freak.

Will glares at Dempsey, then turns back to his family.

WILL
I've decided that Mommy should be
Mission Commander.

INT. SHUTTLE SINGLE SYSTEM TRAINER - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Will and Laney are running through a landing sequence. Will's
piloting, struggling to remember the landing codes.

LANEY
Will, just call in and ask.

WILL
No, I can remember.

LANEY
(on her com)
Dempsey, can you give us a brief
update on the landing codes?

WILL
 (on his com)
 Cancel that, we've got it covered.

LANEY
 This is just like the time you got
 lost driving to Aunt Martha's
 Christmas party.

WILL
 I didn't get lost.

LANEY
 You drove in a circle for forty
 minutes.

WILL
 I'd rather drive in a circles than
 sit through your Aunt Martha sloshed
 and singing show tunes from Cats.

LANEY
 I thought you loved Aunt Martha?!

The WARNING BELL goes on.

WILL
 She cuddles me like I'm her build-a
 bear. And last Christmas she slapped
 my butt. Twice.

DEMPSEY (V.O.)
 Correct your course or you will crash.

LANEY
 She's old and needs affection!

WILL
 So I should let her fondle me?!

The ALARM BLARES as they crash. Laney and Will sit there.

LANEY
 Told you.

INT. JOHNSON CENTER - CARDIO LAB - DAY

Harrison and Will are next to each other, racing. Harrison
 bumps up his treadmill speed. Will bumps up his - he
 struggles like hell, but keeps up with Harrison. Dempsey
 makes a note, impressed.

INT. N.A.S.A. MEDICAL FACILITY - DAY

The Pattersons and Harrison are in a class learning how to give CPR to dummies in Emergency Medical Training.

DEMPSEY

So let's say one of your crew members has the following symptoms... weakness of breath, fumbling, and a body temperature of 93 degrees.

JANE HARRISON

That's a hangover, sweetheart. Pop an aspirin, you'll be fine.

KIRSTEN

No, that's acute hypothermia. Get him into the heating foil with another crew member, STAT.

They all look at her, stunned. She shrugs.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)

I watch Grey's Anatomy.

Will motions to Harrison "Face".

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY LAB - DAY

Will retrieves the dummy from the bottom of the pool. Hancock times him at 32 seconds. Will's family cheers.

ON THE LAUNCH CHART

The Pattersons move up to fourth place.

INT. CENTRIFUGE TRAINER - MONTAGE

We see a series of shots as each Patterson is strapped into the G-Force trainer which makes their face contort like they're in a wind tunnel.

HANDCOCK (V.O.)

The goal is to get to six G's and not G-Log - our code for pass out.

LANEY IN THE TRAINER - Her face is blown back from the G's as she sucks gulps of air - she makes it! Thumbs up.

KIRSTEN IN THE TRAINER - She yells "Screw this!" With each breath, but makes it! She grins.

DEX IN THE TRAINER - His face starts to contort at four G's. He lets out a high-pitched, girly scream.

Outside the trainer, the Harrisons exchange smiles.

HARRISON

(to Will)

Your little girl is doing great.

WILL

That's good son, power scream just like I taught you.

Dex makes it to six! Will claps loud and proud, then hands Dex his inhaler as he stumbles out of the trainer.

Wilson marks down "Pattersons - passed".

INT. PATTERSON'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Laney watches as Will stays up late with Kirsten helping her learn all the commands.

Laney smiles, loving to see Will so plugged into his kids.

INT. SPACE LAB - SPACE STATION SIMULATOR - NIGHT

Will and Laney get out of the trainer and their attention is drawn to the N.A.S.A. TECH GEEKS gathered around the space station simulator CHEERING. The Harrisons are also watching, stunned.

Will and Laney approach the group and see the astronaut causing all the excitement in the simulator is Dex!

LANEY

What's going on?!

WILSON

Despite his genetic predisposition of fear, your son is brilliant.

WILL

He's not fearful - he power screams, like a ninja.

WILSON

Ninjas are silent. My point is, no one has been able to find a way to repair the space stations oxygen system in a reliable way without bringing it back down to earth.

Wilson points to the monitor as Dex runs the sequence.

WILSON (CONT'D)

The sequence is complex. It's like solving three Rubix cubes in under two minutes. Our best guys can't even do this under four minutes.

WILL

Seriously?

WILSON

I'm always serious.

Will and Laney watch in amazement as Dex makes the repairs in two minutes. They all cheer.

Laney looks at Jane Harrison.

LANEY

You were right, Jane - my son is special.

Dex bounds over to Will.

DEX

Dad, did you see me?!

WILL

Yeah I did. Never let me talk you out of robotics club again.

Will musses Dex's hair, then looks up to Harrison, who's glaring at them.

HARRISON

Your sissy boy got lucky.

JENNY HARRISON

(star-struck with Dex)

He's not a sissy, dad - he's a genius.

Dex glows as he hears this.

WILL

Watch your back, Harrison, we're coming for you.

ON THE FLIGHT CHARTS

Dempsey updates the flight chart - Pattersons move up to number three!

Will is stoked. Duvall takes note. Harrison takes note, too.

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY LAB - DAY

It's the day of the final test. Duvall address all the families as Zoe Shelton's CAMERA CREW films.

DUVALL

Congratulations on making it this far. Today is your final competition. You'll launch, dock, have your Mission Specialist make an EVA, and undock. Your time will be added into your final score.

Duvall nods towards Zoe Shelton.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

Zoe Shelton is N.A.S.A's PR consultant. Her crew will be filming you as well, so be likable.

ZOE SHELTON

Just relax and be your charming selves.

Dex stares into the camera as a STEADY CAM GUY films him.

ZOE SHELTON (CONT'D)

And don't stare into the cameras.

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY LAB - PREP AREA - DAY

The Pattersons help Johnny suit up in a huge suit for extra-vehicular space walks.

Will's psyching his crew up for the test, pacing.

WILL

Dempsey is throwing every curve ball he can. The Kims and the Sanchezes choked, but the Harrison just completed the drill in ten minutes. We need to beat them to have a shot at winning. Kirsten, what do you do in an event of an asteroid headed towards our ship?

KIRSTEN

Pray.

WILL

Wrong! You call it in to headquarters and decide if it's a credible threat!

Will starts to sweat and breathe heavily.

WILL (CONT'D)

Oh no.

KIRSTEN

I was kidding, dad, relax, we're going to do fine. Yoga breathe with me.

WILL

We need to review!

Kirsten gently takes his hand and smiles.

KIRSTEN

Just picture yourself flying. The sky is clear blue and you haven't got a care in the world.

WILL

(wiping his sweat)
This is ridiculous.

KIRSTEN

Do it!

He closes his eyes and concentrates.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)

Okay, now breathe.

Will breathes with her a few beats. He starts to relax.

WILL

Hey, that's working.

KIRSTEN

See dad? We've got your back.

Will takes her in -- this team thing could work.

DEMPSEY

Okay, Pattersons, you're up.

The Harrisons enter the room, thrilled from their victory.

HARRISON

My crew just set the record - ten minutes, baby! Good luck beating that - oh, or better yet, have a panic attack. I'm sure your kids would love to see that.

Will is thrown. Kirsten steps up to Harrison.

KIRSTEN

We don't engage in smack talk with
fat-head losers.

WILL

What she said.

The Pattersons head out to the simulator.

INT. GALAXY SIMULATOR - DAY

The Pattersons are in the middle of their drill. Will Laney, Dex, and Kirsten are in the Galaxy simulator. They communicate with Johnny, who's underwater in the neutral buoyancy lab simulating a space walk.

WILL

Okay, Johnny, lock back into the
crane.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY LAB - DAY

Johnny's underwater in a full on space suit and EMU (Extra Vehicular Mobility Unit - like a jet-pack to propel him through space). He's guided by divers who move him like the EMU would in space.

Johnny locks into the robotic arm controlled by Dex.

IN GALAXY MOCK UP

Dex uses a series of controls and the "Space Vision System" on a graphical laptop computer to guide Johnny into the Payload bay.

WILL

Good Dex, that was perfect! Now
bring him back in.

(checking his watch)

Seven minutes - we're beating the
Harrisons!

IN THE COMMAND CENTER

Dempsey runs the drill, headset on, as Wilson and the tech geeks man the boards. Zoe and Handcock watch the Pattersons through the monitors as well. Duvall comes over.

DUVALL

How are they doing?

DEMPSEY

Great. They're dealing with everything I'm throwing at them.

DUVALL

See how they do with a power glitch.

HANDCOCK

Sir, it's the Pattersons. They'll never be able to handle that.

DUVALL

Let's see what they've got.

IN THE SHUTTLE SIMULATOR

An ALARM SOUNDS. Laney checks her controls.

LANEY

Uh-oh, that's not good. We've lost power to the arm.

WILL

You've gotta be kidding me.

LANEY

Um, okay, Kirsten, go to manual mode.

Kirsten nods, then flips the wrong switch - all the power on the shuttle goes out.

KIRSTEN

Oops.

WILL

What did you do!

KIRTEN

I flipped the manual switch!

WILL

You flipped the power off!

Will unbuckles to help her. Laney takes control.

LANEY

Will! Sit back down! I need you at the controls.

WILL

But she -

LANEY

Get your ass back in your seat!

BACK IN MISSION CONTROL

Zoe laughs as she watches the monitor.

ZOE SHELTON

I like them. They're real.

HANDCOCK

A real mess.

BACK IN THE SHUTTLE

Kirsten scrambles looking through her cue cards in the dark. Another alarm sounds.

KIRSTEN

What's that?

Will's now sitting back, prepared for them to fail.

WILL

That would be our oxygen monitor.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

What's going on?

WILL

Ask your mom.

DEX

(to Kirsten)

Try disabling the over-ride system.

Kirsten looks at her panel and flips the over-ride off, then turns the auxiliary power on.

KIRSTEN

Got it!

The alarms stop. Will sits up, shocked. He noodles around with his controls.

WILL

We're back in business!

LANEY

Great job, Kirsten! Dex, bring Johnny in. Will, prepare to undock.

Dex maneuvers the space crane controls. Will checks his watch.

WILL

Holy shit! We can beat the Harrisons!

IN THE NEUTRAL BUOYANCY LAB

The shuttle doors open and Johnny is brought back in.

IN SHUTTLE SIMULATOR

Dex closes the shuttle doors.

DEX

He's in!

LANEY

Okay, Galaxy, we're go for undock.

Will unlocks the shuttle from the space station and puts in the codes to fly back home.

IN THE COMMAND CENTER

Everyone's impressed. Hancock is stunned. Dempsey grins.

DEMPSEY

And that's mission complete, Galaxy,
good work.

The Harrisons watch from the back.

CHAD

They beat our time! You said they
would flail.

HARRISON

Shut up, son.

IN THE GALAXY SIMULATOR

The family celebrates.

WILL

Holy crap! We did it! And we beat
the Harrisons!

DEX

We're the Pattersons! The sky is
not our limit! Woo hoo!

Kirsten and Laney give each other a high five.

IN THE COMMAND CENTER

Zoe is delighted, clapping with them.

ZOE SHELTON

They're likeable. That's exactly
what we want.

Duvall considers this - turns to Dempsey.

DUVALL

You really think they could handle the mission?

DEMPSEY

They need more work, but we can get them there.

HANDCOCK

Sir, the Pattersons fell ass backwards into a win. I'd trust a crew of monkeys over them. The Harrisons are the logical choice.

Duvall considers the Harrisons. Harrison smiles and waves.

DUVALL

I've got some decisions to make.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Will and Dex check their standing on the board -- it's blank.

DEX

What does that mean?

WILL

It means Duvall made his decision.

Laney takes her tray and joins her family at the dinner table, talking excitedly.

LANEY

We definitely edged out the Kims. On their third docking attempt they took out the space station.

DEX

I think we're going to make it. We never died once.

JOHNNY

Neither did the Harrisons. And their Com specialist didn't choke.

Kirsten glares at him.

KIRSTEN

I didn't choke, grass ass. I strategically cut our power to prove how well we respond under stress.

DEX

We don't respond well under stress.
That was terrible strategy.

Will tries to play it cool.

WILL

No matter what happens, we tried,
and that's all that matters.

They all look at him, surprised. Will smiles, then snaps his plastic fork from stress.

DEMPSEY (V.O.)

Attention everyone. Duvall has an
announcement.

All the families turn to the front podium to see Duvall.

DUVALL

After serious evaluation, we're
sending the Harrisons on to finish
training at Kennedy Space Station.

The Harrisons jump up, thrilled!

Will and all the Pattersons are hit hard.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

(then reluctantly)

And because they had a strong finish,
and are apparently "relatable", we're
also sending the Pattersons.

Will looks up, shocked. The other families are shocked, too. Dex jumps up and does a victory dance.

DEX

Yes! Yes! Yes!

Johnny and Kirsten high five.

The Sanchezes react.

GABREIL SANCHEZ

Them?! We were robbed!

Laney and Will hug - it's a moment.

Dex then looks over to Jenny and they share a smile across the room.

Duvall and Zoe approach the Harrisons and Pattersons.

DUVALL

Alright, your two crews are far from finished. We're gonna put you through hell in Florida, and the best crew will be selected in three weeks.

ZOE SHELTON

But first we're gonna introduce you to the world. The Pattersons and the Harrisons are going to be the new faces of N.A.S.A. You'll be competing on a press tour for the title of America's sweethearts.

KIRSTEN

We're gonna be on TV? Holy shit!

ZOE SHELTON

And let's go ahead and make "no potty language outta that pretty mouth" rule number one.

HARRISON

I assure you, my family is ready for our close up.

Chad zooms in his video camera onto Zoe's chest and snickers creepily. Dempsey moves Chad's camera up.

WILL

So is mine.

ZOE SHELTON

Actually, I've been gathering data from our focus groups - you're gonna need a man-over.

Johnny cracks up laughing.

JOHNNY

A man-over! Classic!

ZOE SHELTON

And you need a hair cut, young man. No one wants Johnny Depp flying their space ship.

JOHNNY

But it's the source of my mojo!

JANE HARRISON

If we're getting makeovers, I could use a pinch of filler to plump my upper lip.

ZOE SHELTON

Really? I think you look natural.
You don't wanna go trout pout.

JANE HARRISON

Aren't you a doll! Then spend my
portion on Laney, she needs botox
like Ethiopian Children need porridge.

Laney looks at her, pissed.

JANE HARRISON (CONT'D)

See how angry she looks?

Duvall rolls his eyes. Dempsey steps in.

DEMPSEY

The big message is congratulations.
Now get some sleep, we're all flying
to Florida bright and early tomorrow
morning at six am.

JOHNNY

You mean oh six thousand.

DEMPSEY

Close Johnny, close.

They all disperse. Will saunters over to Harrison.

WILL

You heard it here first, I'm the new
face of N.A.S.A.

HARRISON

Look Patterson, you got lucky today.
But you've never had the right stuff,
and now the whole world is gonna see
what losers you really are.

Will takes it in as Harrison walks away. Will's family bounds
up to him, so thrilled.

LANEY

Babe, can you believe it?! N.A.S.A.
actually thinks we're on par with
the Stepford family!

WILL

We're more than on par, we're going
to crush them.

KIRSTEN

You guys, who cares about space,
we're gonna be famous!

DEX

Yes! I'm finally going to be known for more than being Suzie Kellerman's bitch.

JOHNNY

If I'm gonna have to cut my hair, I think it'd be cool if I were like, a role model.

Laney and Will both stare at Johnny, shocked.

WILL

That would be great, John.

JOHNNY

Maybe that Wilson cat can hook me up with some spectacles so, you know, I come off as smart.

KIRSTEN

Or you could just not talk and come off brooding instead of brain-fried.

JOHNNY

I can brood.

He does.

WILL

You look like you're about to drop a deuce.

Laney elbows Will.

LANEY

I think it's great that you're going to use your new visibility to promote a cause, Johnny.

JOHNNY

A cause! Good one, mom.

WILL

Guys, I for one couldn't be more proud of us. Now go pack.

KIRSTEN

This is cool, dad. Space camp doesn't suck.

Will and Kirsten exchange a grin - both knowing this is the best compliment he's gonna get.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

Will sits outside the space center, taking a moment to enjoy the view of the Galaxy Jet lit up from inside the building. He grins to himself as he fiddles with an unlit cigarette.

Laney approaches and hands him a box of Nicorette.

WILL

Where'd ya get this?

LANEY

Dempsey did me a solid. I'm really proud of you.

WILL

For quitting smoking, or being a kickass pilot?

LANEY

For being a great dad.

Will takes this in. He pockets his cigarette.

WILL

You've been pretty amazing yourself. You were totally right to put me in my place today.

LANEY

Just doing my job as commander.

WILL

Yeah, well, you were good at it. That's one thing I never did enough of. Listen to you.

LANEY

Wow. I've been wanting to hear that for the last 20 years.

WILL

I guess I'm not always good at doing the team thing. You know, trusting you guys like I should have.

LANEY

It's hard when you're always right.

Will smiles at her.

WILL

Yeah.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

(then)

We're still gonna have to work our asses off to beat the Harrisons.

LANEY

Worry about that tomorrow. For tonight, let's just enjoy the moment.

Laney leans her head on his shoulder. Will smiles at her, and takes in the view, sitting together with their thoughts.

EXT. FLORIDA SKY - DAY

Ten fighter jets fly in formation along the Florida Coast carrying the Pattersons, Harrisons, Zoe, Duvall, Dempsey, and Wilson to the Kennedy Space Center.

INT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - LANDING STRIP - DAY

The Pattersons, Harrisons, and our N.A.S.A crew stride off the planes and take in the epic sight of the launch pad.

Casey approaches Kirsten.

CASEY

I'm glad you guys made it. It'll give us time to date after all.

KIRSTEN

If you play your cards right.

The families are surprised to see a bunch of PRESS is gathered to greet them. A reporter approaches the Pattersons.

REPORTER

Is it true you're competing for which family will be sent up in the Galaxy?

KIRSTEN

Hardly, we're going to send the Harrison's home in helmets and tell them to take the short bus!

The reporters are shocked. Zoe intercepts the press.

ZOE SHELTON

We welcome you to attend the press conference.

She grabs the families and pulls them inside.

INT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - PR SUITE - DAY

Zoe takes the families into a posh press room.

ZOE SHELTON

No one talks to the press without my okay. From now on you'll put your best foot forward. No cussing, no fighting, no telling military secrets. First up - image tightening.

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Johnny gets his pride and joy surfer hair cut.

JOHNNY

This is one small sacrifice for me, but one giant sacrifice for my role modelee's.

Will's getting low-lights to take out the grey. Harrison teases him.

HARRISON

Your highlights look pretty.

WILL

(glaring at him)
They're low-lights.

Laney is getting her hair styled. Jane Harrison approaches with HUGE TEXAS HAIR and a low cut top.

JANE HARRISON

Darlin' go blonder, it'll take the focus away from your lack of assets.

LANEY

Slutty isn't really my look.

JANE HARRISON

(extending her chest)
Good, then I'll be the hot one.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Kirsten comes out in a stylish and cute dress that looks classy.

WILL

Honey, you look great.

KIRSTEN

It's my new image - I have the public to think about now.

Zoe winks at Will. Casey comes out of the dressing room bare-chested, holding up two shirts.

CASEY

Whadda ya think, Kirsten, the blue
or the white?

KIRSTEN

(staring at his abs)

Wow.

Casey grins.

INT. KENNEDY CENTER - PRESS ROOM - DAY

The Pattersons and the Harrisons pose for a picture in flight
suits, the N.A.S.A. logo in the background.

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - NIGHT

The Pattersons and the Harrisons Skype into the show.

JIMMY

So what it's like to potentially be
the first family launched into space?

HARRISON

It's a great privilege, Jimmy. I
had the joy of going on three
missions, and each time I thought
this is almost perfect... if only my
family were with me. I'm thrilled.

JIMMY

Wow, you're very confident. Now
Will, I heard Harrison replaced you
on your first mission. Now be honest,
how much do you hate this guy?

WILL

You know what they say, winning is
the best revenge.

JIMMY

And it's game on!

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

The Pattersons shoot a cheesy commercial for Power Aid.

WILL

That's why I only drink Power Aid.

Will takes a drink and cringes, then fakes a smile.

DIRECTOR

Okay, try again, this time don't
look like you hate it.

WILL

Can I get something that doesn't
taste like piss. You sure this is
good for you?

EXT. SANTA MONICA AIRPORT - DAY

Will's boss is handing out Power Aid next to a big cut out
cardboard picture of Will.

WILL'S BOSS

Take flight lessons from this guy!
He's our best teacher.

EXT. EL CAMINO HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Girls are looking through a Teen Beat with Dex on the cover
"Smart is the New Sexy."

The girl who beat Dex up grabs the magazine.

SUZIE KELLERMAN

Oh my God, that's the kid I beat up.

FRIEND

He's hot, in like that scrawny way.

SUZIE KELLERMAN

Yeah.

INT. SURFER KID'S BASEMENT - DAY

Johnny's surfer buddies are smoking out and watching TV as
Johnny's PSA comes on.

ON TV: Johnny does a skate trick, then looks directly into
the camera.

JOHNNY

How am I gonna get launch ready? By
staying off drugs, and staying in
school. Stay in school - it's cool.

He gives a thumbs up and a wink.

His buddies watch it, busting up laughing. One guy puts
down his joint.

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - NIGHT

Kirsten and her girl band play a cover of "Rocket Man".
Kirsten is on vocals, her spunky bff WENDY rocks the bass.

INT. BEAU'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kirsten's bad boyfriend watches Kirsten and her *girl band* on Kimmel - his jaw drops.

INT. RICHARD'S WORK - NIGHT

Richard, Laney's therapist/wannabe love interest, watches the news story about the Pattersons and Harrisons.

ON TV - Laney's driving a Lunar Vehicle with Will riding shotgun. He makes a joke and Laney laughs.

His assistant walks in and watches.

RICHARD'S ASSISTANT
Isn't that your girlfriend?

RICHARD
We're pre-dating.

RICHARD'S ASSISTANT
But she's married?

RICHARD
Technically.

RICHARD'S ASSISTANT
Not cool man.

INT. KENNEDY CENTER PRESS ROOM - DAY

The Pattersons sit for their interview with Katie Couric.

KATIE COURIC
Kirsten, you've got a huge twitter following. Dex, you're on the cover of Teen Beat. And Johnny, you're doing PSA's. Do you feel pressure to be role models?

JOHNNY
No, Katie, it's like an honor. It's nice to finally be acknowledged for my intelligence. I'm thinking of going into the Air Force to fly jets like my dad.

They all look at him, shocked.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
I mean, at first I was like, what's the point of college. But now I'm like, there totally IS a point, ya know?

KATIE COURIC

That's a great message. Dex what it's like living with a dad that's an astronaut?

DEX

Actually, I only live with him on the weekends.

Everyone tenses at his slip. Katie smells the blood in the water.

KATIE COURIC

So your parents are separated?

Will covers and grabs Laney's hand.

WILL

You know, Katie, like every family, we've gone through some rough patches. But we're together now. And that's all that matters.

Laney looks at Will -- does he mean that?

CLOSE ON - TIME MAGAZINE COVER

Both families are on the cover in their N.A.S.A. flight suits with the headline "Who Will Make History?"

INT. KENNEDY CENTER - TRAINING LAB - DAY

The Pattersons are doing a water tank emergency escape drill. The mock Galaxy fuselage plunges into the pool and the Pattersons have to escape. There is a TON of press covering every move.

Dempsey is taping an interviewed on the side.

DEMPSEY

(to the reporter)

This proves beyond a shadow of doubt that the future of space travel belongs to an average American. The time when a family could actually live in space is within our reach, no question.

The Pattersons get out of the pool, Dex throws his arms up in victory, and Kirsten does a victory dance. The press is charmed - they go nuts asking questions. Will glows in the spotlight. Harrison watches from the side, worried.

Duvall and Zoe watch, too.

ZOE SHELTON

This is working. The Pattersons are the number one Twitter subject. I think they're our family.

DUVALL

I'll decide after the final skills test tomorrow. The real question is will this get our budget passed?

ZOE SHELTON

I have to run the numbers, but my gut says hell yeah.

(then)

Which means they better succeed. If this goes badly, it'll be the worst blow N.A.S.A.'s had yet.

DUVALL

Now on that, we agree.

Harrison watches Will with the press, they all laugh at one of Will's jokes. Chad approaches Harrison, filming.

HARRISON

Would you quit filming them!

CHAD

They're intriguing.

HARRISON

Unbelievable. If they saw what we did in training, no way would they be getting more press than us.

(getting an idea)

Hey, do you still have all that footage of them?

CHAD

Yeah, it's hilarious. Especially when Dex wets his bed.

HARRISON

(with an evil grin)

Perfect.

INT. LANEY AND KIRSTEN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Will knocks on the girls hotel room door. Laney opens it in her robe. Will's flustered.

WILL

Oh, hey, I was just seeing if you girls wanted to get some dinner.

Kirsten takes in her mom and dad.

KIRSTEN

Uh, why don't you and dad go? I've got some fan mail to answer.

LANEY

(to Will)

Want to?

WILL

Sure.

INT. BEACH FRONT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Laney and Will sit at a romantic beach front restaurant.

LANEY

Annapolis is considering Johnny for late admission.

WILL

Seriously?! That would be great.

A WOMAN interrupts them.

WOMAN

Excuse me, Mr. and Mrs. Patterson, can I take your picture.

Will looks back, surprised.

WILL

Sure.

They pose for the picture. The lady leaves.

LANEY

Can you believe this? I always thought my fifteen minutes of fame would come from being married to an astronaut, not being one.

WILL

So what does Dick think about all this?

LANEY

I wouldn't know. It turns out me disappearing for months with my husband isn't his love language.

WILL

Sorry.

LANEY

No you're not. You hated him.

WILL

That's true. But I know you've sacrificed a lot to make this happen, and I really appreciate it.

LANEY

Well, it's great to have the family back together. Seeing you these last two months being so great with the kids and loving what you're doing - it's like you're alive again. I've missed you.

WILL

I've missed you, too. A hell of a lot.

There's a moment. Will takes Laney's hand, then kisses her. Will's cell phone rings. They both smile as Will takes it.

WILL (CONT'D)

What is it, Kirsten?

His face falls.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Laney and Will ride up the elevator. The elevator doors open and the kids are there to greet them, frantic.

KIRSTEN

It's a publicity nightmare!

WILL

What is?!

DEX

(looking at Will)

Why do you have lipstick on?

Will wipes his mouth. Kirsten looks between her mom and dad.

KIRSTEN

OMG. You totally hooked up.

JOHNNY

Who?

KIRSTEN
 (shaking it off)
 We've got bigger problems. The
 Harrisons posted clips of us in
 training - and it's bad.

INT. THE GIRL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The Pattersons cringe as they watch the YOUTUBE clips on
 Dex's computer.

ON THE COMPUTER - The "Reel of Shame" plays...

-- Clips of Kirsten and Will in hilarious heated argument...
 Will and Kirsten both drop the F-bomb, then Will covers Chad's
 camera lens.

-- Clips of Dex screaming like a little girl in fear. Clips
 of Johnny doing Parkour and slipping on his face.

-- Clips of them in the vomit comet, Johnny flips and kicks
 Kirsten's face. Laney vomits.

-- Clips from outside the Patterson's barrack window as Will
 yells at Dex for wetting his bed.

The final screen says "America's Heroes?"

LANEY
 How many people have seen this?

KIRSTEN
 Everyone!

DEX
 Five hundred thousand.
 (hitting refresh)
 Make that seventy-five thousand.

WILL
 I'm gonna kill him!

LANEY
 It's out there, Will. All we have
 is the final test tomorrow. The
 press is covering it, we can redeem
 ourselves there and prove to Duvall
 we're the best astronauts for the
 mission.

WILL
 Okay, you're right. You guys study.
 I'm gonna take care of this.

EXT. HARRISON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Will pounds on the door. Harrison opens it up. He's wearing an Oriental Robe and drinking champagne.

HARRISON
Aw, America's hero.

His family watches the reel of shame in the background. Jane and Chad laugh as they watch.

JANE HARRISON
Come on in, Will. You're really very funny.

WILL
This was a low blow, even from you. Take it down, right now.

HARRISON
The damage is done. You're America's laughing stock.

Will slams Harrison up against the wall.

WILL
You had no right to do this to my family.

They get into a fight. Will throws Harrison down across the table, then goes to punch him in the face.

JANE HARRISON
Not the face!

CASEY
Neither of you will go up with a broken nose.

Will considers this, then slaps Harrison in the face. They get into a slap fight. It evolves into a wrestling match.

CHAD
Go Dad! Rip his eyes out!

JENNY
Stop it, everyone!

Dempsey walks in.

DEMPSEY
Jeez, you two fight like toddlers! Seriously, if this was a mini-van, I'd be pulling over.

Harrison has will in a choke hold.

WILL

Did you see what this asshole posted?!

DEMPSEY

Yes, it's hilarious. But we've got bigger problems.

Harrison and Will both look to Dempsey. Dempsey catches a glimpse of Harrison's open robe and cringes.

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)

Pull yourselves together. Duvall needs to see you both.

INT. KENNEDY CENTER COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Dempsey brings in Will and Harrison to meet with Duvall. The N.A.S.A. ground crew is in a tense frenzy working with the space station astronauts.

WILL

Listen, I can explain about the clips.

DUVALL

I don't care about you acting like an idiot.

(to Harrison)

You both have. But you're also the best trained pilots we've got.

Duvall turns to the computer screen showing a graph of the space station oxygen systems.

DUVALL (CONT'D)

The oxygen system in the space station has failed. They're using the back up system now, but we need to get the shuttle up there ASAP to bring it home to fix.

WILL

So you're scrapping the Galaxy Launch?

DEMPSEY

The press coverage is too intense - but we've changed the mission. We'll launch a family into the first atmosphere of space, wave a flag, then come home.

WILL

So it's just a joyride?

DEMPSEY

A billion dollar joyride. Yeah.

DUVALL

The real mission will be on the shuttle, to get the oxygen system back on board the shuttle, then replace one of the Russians for a six months stay in the space station. I'm asking one of you to take command.

WILL

Me? I'm not even on the flight roster.

DUVALL

You're up to date on this mission, and one of our best pilots.

WILL

Sir, I'm honored, but my family is really set on this flight.

HARRISON

Take it Will, your family is already done. I need the Galaxy launch to keep my endorsement deals.

DUVALL

(to Will)

This is the single biggest mission we've done for the space station since Expedition One. If you're not up to the task, I'll find someone who is.

WILL

Let me think about it.

DUVALL

Let me know by morning.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Will's family looks disheveled and tired as Will gives them the news.

LANEY

Wait, so you'd do this mission instead of going up with us?

WILL

Honey, it's a plane flight at this point. And there's still a good chance N.A.S.A. will go with the Harrisons. This is a real mission, it's set. And it's to the Space Station.

KIRSTEN

So you want us to just quit?

DEX

Dad, we need to beat the Harrisons -- I need to redeem myself so I'm not known as the bedwetter.

WILL

Look, I wish I could do both, but I can't.

KIRSTEN

Typical. Dad's bailing. I thought you'd changed. You said we had to trust you. You said we were a team. But this whole time you were just using us.

Will's shocked at how angry she is.

WILL

You didn't want to do this in the first place! I thought you'd be happy to be get back home.

LANEY

Come on, Will. They all want this. We all do. This isn't just about space. It's about Johnny wanting to go to college, and Dex getting recognized for being great at something, and you and I...

She trails off.

WILL

Laney, this doesn't change anything -- you and the kids can move to Texas with me. We'd all be together, see how it goes in real life.

LANEY

You want me to leave my business and uproot the kids school all so we can 'see how it goes?'

(MORE)

LANEY (CONT'D)

Frankly, I don't think this family is ever going to mean more to you than whatever it is you think you're going to find up there on some stupid Space Station.

WILL

It's not locked down, I can still say no.

LANEY

And then resent us for the rest of your life? No, I don't want that, either.

JOHNNY

Dad, I get it. Do what you have to do.

WILL

Thanks, Johnny. Dex?

DEX

Dad, I still think we can win, as a team. Please.

Will looks down.

KIRSTEN

It doesn't matter, Dex. Dad's already made up his mind.

Kirsten leaves and slams the door. Will looks at Dex.

WILL

Please understand, buddy. If I thought we'd win, I'd turn this down.

DEX

You said together we could do anything. But you never really believed it.

Dex slumps on the bed. Will is bummed.

LANEY

Well then, I guess we'll pack.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Will waves to his family as they go through the security line. Johnny waves back.

RANDOM GUY

No way! It's that bedwetter kid!

Will's hurt as he hears this.

INT. KENNEDY CENTER TRAINING LAB - DAY

Will runs drills with his new crew.

WILL

Kirsten, I need our ETA --

He turns to his Mission Specialist, JOHNSON.

JOHNSON

The name's Johnson, hot shot.

WILL

Right.

Will turns back to his controls, sad. It's not as fun as he thought it'd be.

INT. PATTERSON'S HOUSE - KIRSTEN ROOM - NIGHT

She takes down the picture of her and her dad grinning in their flight suits. A news report comes on.

ON THE TV: The Harrisons are dressed in their flight suits waving to fans.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

N.A.S.A. has just announced they're launching the Harrisons.

Kirsten throws a cupcake at the TV.

KIRSTEN

Losers!

INT. WILL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Will watches the same news story on the Harrisons, drinking alone.

WILL

Losers.

Will picks up the phone and calls Laney. It rings and goes to her voicemail. Will hangs up.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Johnny sees Dex bummed.

JOHNNY
Wanna play with your robots?

DEX
I don't feel like it.

EXT. KENNEDY CENTER - LAUNCH PAD - NIGHT

Dempsey and Will talk as they look over the launch pad.

DEMPSEY
Your mission is amazing, I'd go myself
if they'd let me.

WILL
Yeah.

Will seems distracted.

DEMPSEY
Did you talk to Laney and the kids?

WILL
They're still not talking to me.

Will settles on the railing.

WILL (CONT'D)
Ever since I was a kid, being an
astronaut was the thing, you know.
I knew if I just got up there, things
would be different. And now I'm
going up, and nothing seems different.
If anything I feel like I made the
biggest mistake of my life.

DEMPSEY
I don't want to say this, because I
really want you on this mission.
But maybe you didn't come for a second
chance to go to space. Maybe you
came for a second chance with your
family.

Will takes this in.

WILL
It's too late now.

DEMPSEY
Maybe it is. Maybe it isn't.

Will considers this.

EXT. KENNEDY CENTER - PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

A platform with a huge American flag behind them. Duvall and tons of N.A.S.A brass are there to announce the two crews to the PRESS.

Will walks onto the stage with his crew - he sits on the stage next to Harrison.

HARRISON

Enjoy the trip. I'm guessing you don't have a lot to come back to.

Will doesn't have a response. He turns to Duvall at the podium.

DUVALL

And now I'd like to introduce the commander for our emergency trip to the Space Station launching tomorrow, Will Patterson.

The group claps. Will reluctantly takes the podium. N.A.S.A. photographers snap pictures.

WILL

Look, this mission to the Space Station has been my dream, ever since I can remember. And I appreciate N.A.S.A. giving me this chance. But I can't do it.

Will glances at Duvall, who gives him a "WTF?!" look.

WILL (CONT'D)

I basically threw my family under the bus to take this mission -- now I know you've all seen the video clips. And yeah, we're not the perfect family. But Dex is the smartest 13 year old you'll meet. And Kirsten may have a temper, but she's loyal, and tough. And Johnny, he's a hell of an athlete. And my wife -- she'd go to the ends of the earth for her family. Literally. They're my crew. And I can't leave for six months when I left such a mess at home.

(turning to a N.A.S.A. pilot)

There was another guy, Commander Johnson who was supposed to head this mission up. So I'm going to let him do it.

Will leaves the podium - mutters are heard through the room.
Duvall chases Will down.

DUVALL

What the hell are you doing?!

WILL

You said I wasn't a team player, and you were right. But that's changing, starting right now.

DUVALL

Will, you won't get another shot.

WILL

I won't get another shot with my family, either.

INT. WILL'S HOTEL - NIGHT

Will takes off his N.A.S.A. jacket. He knows he'll never put it on again. He considers the pin, then tosses it in the trash.

He calls Laney.

WILL

(on the phone)

Laney, hey, I just wanted to let you know I did something spontaneous and stupid today. I think you'd be proud of me. Give me a call - we really need to talk.

Knock on the door.

WILL (CONT'D)

It's open.

Will glances up and is shocked to see Laney and the kids.

WILL (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

LANEY

You think we'd really let you launch into space without being there to watch?

Will's touched.

WILL

But it doesn't look like there's going to be much of a show.

KIRSTEN

Yeah, we saw the speech. What is up with you self-destructing? You should really see Richard about that.

LANEY

It was a good speech. But I'm atill mad.

WILL

I know.

DEX

It was a noble epiphany. I just wish you had it a week ago.

WILL

Me too.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

An ALARM SOUNDS. The tech hops to. Duvall comes in.

DUVALL

What's the problem?

Wilson stands up.

WILSON

It's the space station, sir. There a problem - the back-up oxygen system has failed.

Panic sets in.

DUVALL

How did this happen?!

DEMPSEY

We need to focus on solutions. We can have the shuttle ready to launch tomorrow.

WILSON

Tomorrow's too late - today is too late. They've only got two days worth of oxygen.

DUVALL

Get all your tech guys on it. The Galaxy can get there in time. Dempsey, prep an emergency crew - we need to send someone who can fix the system on-site.

WILSON

Sir, it's not designed to do that - it's like open heart surgery in the middle of a battlefield.

DUVALL

So I need surgery and it's the battle field, who do I send?

WILSON

Bronson is our best man. He's been able to fix it twice in simulations. We may be able to talk him through it.

DEMPSEY

Jake Bronson's in the hospital with a broken tibia.

WILSON

How'd he do that?

DEMPSEY

Mountain biking.

DUVALL

Damn! Get him in here anyway, I don't care if he's in a stretcher, we need his brains on this. Who else?

WILSON

The only other person I've seen do it consistently in that short of time is that Patterson kid.

DUVALL

Give me a real choice. Who else?

WILSON

Sir, if you're asking me who has the best chance of fixing this in space, I'm telling you, it's the Patterson kid.

Looks are exchanged.

DUVALL

So I'm supposed to put the fate of five astronauts and a billion dollar piece of equipment in the hands of a 14-year-old?

WILSON

A 14-year-old genius.

DUVALL

This is crazy. Okay, who would we crew him up with?

DEMPSEY

I would have as little variables as possible. The crew he trained with for 600 hours.

Duvall gives him a look.

DUVALL

You want me to send the Pattersons?

DEMPSEY

With myself and Handcock. The three of us could land the ship by ourselves.

DUVALL

Do you know what happens if I send up a family and anything goes wrong?

DEMPSEY

I know what happens if you don't.

INT. WILL'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Kirsten picks up the phone.

KIRSTEN

Dad, it's for you. N.A.S.A has a problem.

INT. N.A.S.A. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Will talks with Duvall and Dempsey.

WILL

Dex? You gotta be kidding me. He's a kid.

DUVALL

Trust me, if there were any other way, we'd do it. If you don't think your family or Dex can handle this, tell me right now.

WILL

Let me talk to them.

INT. KENNEDY CENTER - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Will pitches the idea to his family.

WILL

The back-up oxygen system on the space station failed.

They all register the seriousness of the situation.

DEX

That's a catastrophic event.

JOHNNY

Wait? Why?

KIRSTEN

Because you need air to breathe, dumbshit.

DEX

They only have two days of oxygen at best. There's no time for the shuttle to retrieve the primary system - or even deliver a back-up system in the shuttle.

WILL

Right. That's where you come in. They think if anyone has a shot of fixing the primary system in orbit, it's you.

JOHNNY

Whoa, you're like Luke Skywalker. You're their only hope, Dex.

WILL

The only way the system can be fixed is by using a robotic attachment off the EMU.

Dex takes a hit of his inhaler.

LANEY

Will, this is too much to ask of a fourteen year old kid.

DEX

I'm not a kid, guys. I'm an astronaut. I know I can do it.

(then to Will)

I'm the only one who can.

Will's never been prouder of his son. Will looks to Laney.

LANEY

If we do this, we need a serious crew. I mean the best of the best.

WILL

Dempsey and Handcock are coming with us. If I was putting together my dream crew, those guys would be the first on my list.

KIRSTEN

I say we do it.

JOHNNY

A rescue mission! Sweet!

INT. N.A.S.A. PRESS ROOM - DAY

Zoe Shelton gives a press conference.

ZOE SHELTON

A situation has made it necessary for the Galaxy to dock on the space station and do a space walk to repair the oxygen system. The Pattersons have trained extensively for this scenario and will be going up with two of our best astronauts.

PRESS GUY

Shouldn't N.A.S.A. be sending up real astronauts?

ZOE SHELTON

The Pattersons are real astronauts. And we're confident that they will rise to the occasion and make America proud in this moment of crisis.

INT. KIRSTEN'S BFF'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kirsten's best friend WENDY is watching "The Hills" when an emergency news report comes through.

ON THE TV

REPORTER

N.A.S.A. has just announced an emergency mission to the space station and they're sending the *Patterson* family.

Kirsten's bff sits up.

WENDY

O.M.G!

She grabs her cell to start the phone chain.

INT. SUZIE KELLERMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The girl who beat Dex up is crying hysterically with her parents.

SUZIE KELLERMAN

That's my boyfriend up there! He built a robot for me!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS ROOM - DAY

The President gives a message.

PRESIDENT

Our hope for the five astronauts aboard the space station now rests in the hands of an All-American family. I'd like to wish the Pattersons good luck, and Godspeed.

EXT. LAUNCH AIRSTRIP - DAY

The Pattersons stride out past the crowd in their full gear. It's the slow motion bad-ass hero walk.

The press takes pictures. The stands are full of fans and supporters. Someone holds a sign that says "Godspeed Pattersons!" Another woman holds a sign that says "Marry me, Johnny!" Johnny grins and waves at the girl.

Harrison is there as Will is about to board the bus. He extends a hand to Will.

HARRISON

Good luck.

Will takes Harrison in. The guy is sincere.

WILL

Thanks.

They shake.

Casey approaches Kirsten.

CASEY

I guess this means you won. I wish we'd made a bet, loser gets a date.

KIRSTEN

I'm about to risk my life to basically save N.A.S.A and you're worried about a stupid date?!

Casey grins.

CASEY
Just come home safe.

He hugs her. She's touched by his genuine concern.

WILL
Come on, it's go time.

Kirsten follows Will into the bus, looking back at Casey.

INT. BUS - DAY

Will sees the Galaxy Jet become huge as the bus approaches. Laney watches Will - he looks like a little kid. She smiles and takes his hand.

INT. GALAXY JET - DAY

The N.A.S.A. support crew straps the Pattersons, Dempsey and Hancock into the jet, then closes the door.

It's silent as they all feel the enormity of the task at hand. Someone farts.

KIRSTEN
Ew! Who ripped one?

JOHNNY
Smells like bananas.

They look to Hancock.

HANDCOCK
I'm an old man, I'll fart when I damn well please.

DEMPSEY
And those are the historic first words spoken aboard the Galaxy.

WILL
Everyone settle down.
(on his com)
Mission Control, this is Galaxy. We are ready for take off.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Forty people are on standby along with the Harrisons who watch from the observation deck. Duvall heads the operation.

DUVALL
It's a beautiful day for a rescue mission. You are go for take off, Galaxy.

INT. GALAXY - SIMULTANEOUS

Will fires up the engines.

WILL

Okay everyone, remember to breathe.

Will starts the Galaxy taking off down the runway - it's gaining speed by the second.

KIRSTEN

Dad, remember the money you gave me for Cheer camp?

WILL

Yeah.

KIRSTEN

I really went to Mexico with Wendy. We got tattoos.

WILL

What?!

The engine FIRES full force! They take off into the air - instantly slammed back into their seats with six G's.

LANEY

Ahhhhh!

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - DAY

The Galaxy rockets into the air like a huge jet fighter. The crowd at Kennedy CHEERS.

INT. KIRSTEN'S BEST FRIEND'S HOUSE - DAY

Wendy has a ton of people over, all gathered around the TV. They CHEER as the Galaxy takes off.

INT. PETE'S FLIGHT SCHOOL - DAY

Pete and the other instructors watch in awe.

PETE

No wonder he was bored flying Cessnas.

INT. HARRISON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

They watch from TV. Chad stabs the table with a knife.

CHAD

It should have been us!

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Duvall and all the N.A.S.A. techs watch with baited breath as the Galaxy disappears into orbit.

N.A.S.A. TECH
And they're in orbit!

Everyone claps.

DUVALL
Good.
(then glances at Wilson)
Now we're about to see if this was a
good idea.

INT. GALAXY JET - SPACE

The Galaxy makes it into space. The Pattersons all start to float.

DEMPSEY
And we're in orbit.

LANEY
(unclenching her eyes)
That was it?

WILL
It's time we take a look around.

Will unclips from his seat belt and floats to the rear window... the earth looks huge and beautiful.

WILL (CONT'D)
Not a bad view.

Kirsten floats over to him.

KIRSTEN
Wow. So this is what all the fuss
was about.

As the whole family gathers around to look at the magnificent view.

LANEY
Now that's beautiful.

Will sees the reflection of his family in the window.

WILL
(re: his family)
It sure is.

Dempsey floats over with a video camera.

DEMPSEY

Zoe just radioed in - she wants us to give a re-assuring message.

JOHNNY

I should say something to my fans.
(into the camera)

Hey guys, it's Johnny. So basically I just made it into space, and it's bitchin'!

(then serious)

Now I want to respond to a fan question from Jenny. No, I'm not scared. I do study my log books every day. If anything squirrely goes down, I'm totally prepared. Stay off drugs.

Kirsten floats behind him and gives the rocker sign.

INT. SHUTTLE - NIGHT

Dempsey, Hancock, Dex, Johnny, and Kirsten are all zipped up in their space hammocks sleeping. Hancock snores.

Will floats up to Laney at the controls, taking in the magnificent view.

LANEY

This is amazing. I finally get it.
(looking at Will)

I can't believe you were willing to give this up for us.

WILL

Deep down this whole competition was bigger than a trip to space. It was a chance to get you back. I messed that up once - I don't plan on doing it again. Ever.

Will takes her hands. She looks at him, eyes full of emotion.

LANEY

You are a frustrating man to love, Will Patterson. But I do - I love you.

WILL

God it's good to hear that.

He kisses her. They stay close, soaking in the moment. Just then, they see the space station on the horizon.

LANEY

There it is.

Dempsey floats up.

DEMPSEY

Okay, wrap up the lovefest, it's go time, people!

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Duvall radios the Space Station. The astronauts and cosmonauts are on the big video monitor - they look bad.

COSMONAUT

(via the monitor)

In two hours we'll be out of oxygen.

DUVALL

Okay gentlemen, we don't exactly have the Calvary coming, but help is on the way.

(then to his tech guys)

I want everyone who's not needed working out this exact drill. Pull everyone in. There can be no mistakes.

Teams of scientists hurry out of the room.

INT. GALAXY JET - SPACE

The whole team is now strapped back into positions as Will docks the Galaxy to the Space Station.

DEMPSEY

And we're in.

Dempsey turns to the crew.

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)

Handcock, once the airlock is secure, get into the space station with the oxygen tanks before the cosmonauts start losing brain cells.

Handcock unstraps and makes his way to the airlock.

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)

Okay, Will, you're point man on this mission. Once the system is back up and the hose is connected, give me the word and I'll re-start the system from the space station.

WILL

Got it.

Dempsey unclips and follows Hancock into the airlock to the Space Station.

WILL (CONT'D)

Okay, gang, this is just like the training exercise. Johnny, you are going to suit up for a space walk. Dex will lead you out of the airlock on the robotic arm. Then you've got to get into the tiny crawl space, open the electric panel, and lead the robot arm where Dex tells you.

JOHNNY

Got it.

LANEY

I'm going with him. He'll need backup when it comes time to re-attach the hose.

WILL

You sure you feel comfortable operating the EMU?

LANEY

More comfortable than sending my son out there alone.

WILL

Good point. Dex, once the door is open, you have two minutes to fix it - period.

DEX

One minute fifty-five. That's my goal so I have some wiggle room.

WILL

Good. Each and every person must do their job EXACTLY RIGHT. You ready?

KIRSTEN

As we'll ever be.

Will gives Laney and Johnny a hug.

WILL

You two be careful out there. And don't worry about the astronauts on the Space Station or all of America watching you.

LANEY
 Hon, no pep talk.
 (to Johnny)
 Okay, let's do this.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

All eyes are on the monitors.

WILL (O.S.)
 Our space walkers are suited up and
 ready.

DUVALL
 Okay, Will, this is your show. Lead
 them through.

ON THE GALAXY

WILL
 Dex, open the docking doors.

DEX
 Aye aye.

EXT. GALAXY - SPACE

A shot of the huge space arm guiding Johnny and Laney out to the airlock of the Galaxy and over to the electric control unit of the Space Station that houses the broken oxygen system.

Dex moves them as close as possible with the robot arm. They get to the small crawl space - Johnny can't fit.

JOHNNY
 Dad, it's too tight. I can't get
 in.

LANEY
 Let me try.

Laney goes into position - she almost fits, but not quite.

BACK IN THE GALAXY

WILL
 Dammit!

He turns to Kirsten.

KIRSTEN

What?

(getting it)

No way. I get space sick.

WILL

Honey, we need you on this one.

KIRSTEN

Great! Of course I'm the one who needs to save the day.

WILL

I know you can do this, honey.

KIRSTEN

When I get back, I want a car.

WILL

We'll see.

EXT. GALAXY JET - SPACE

Kirsten hums to herself as she drifts into space using her EMU to guide her over to Laney and Johnny.

WILL (O.S.)

Okay, Kirsten, this is just like driving the jeep... you gotta be really easy on the gas.

Kirsten hits the gas too hard! She slams into the space station.

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

Kirsten! Are you okay?!

KIRSTEN

Yeah. This just has a pretty touchy clutch.

IN THE GALAXY

WILL

Now back away, gently.

KIRSTEN

I don't want to fly into space.

WILL

Honey, I know you can do this. I wouldn't have sent you out there if I didn't know you could do this.

OUTSIDE THE SPACE STATION

Johnny comes close to her and extends his hand.

JOHNNY

I got you.

She takes his hand and gently backs away from the station. The two glide into position above the crawl space.

Now the big moment -- Kirsten tries to fit into the crawl space. She fits!

KIRSTEN

I'm in!

WILL (O.S.)

Great! Okay, now just unscrew the bolts.

KIRSTEN

Okay.

Kirsten starts turning the bolt free - one comes out and drifts into space.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)

Oops.

They all watch the bolt drift away.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Duvall and all the Techs watch the bolt go.

DUVALL

Did we give them extra bolts?

WILSON

Yes. One.

DUVALL

Next time you talk me into sending up civilians, you're fired.

EXT. SPACE STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

Kirsten watches the bolt drift away.

KIRSTEN

Was that bad?

WILL

Don't worry about it, sweetheart, you're doing great. Just don't lose anymore.

Kirsten gets the other bolts off.

WILL (CONT'D)

Good. Now get Dex's robotic arm into position. Give us a countdown to when you take the access cover off.

KIRSTEN

Okay. Three, two, one.

She takes the cover off.

INSIDE THE GALAXY

Will turns to Dex.

WILL

It's all you, kid.

Dex is suited up with his visual goggles as he manipulates the robot arm at lightning fast speed.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SIMULTANEOUS

Wilson watches his stop watch.

WILSON

One minute fifty seconds.

DUVALL

If any of you pray, now would be the time.

INT. SPACE STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

Handcock and Dempsey each hold oxygen masks up to a cosmonaut.

HANDCOCK

(to Dempsey)

He's in. Let's hope you were right about the kid.

INT. GALAXY - SPACE

Dex is working the robot perfectly.

WILL

You're doing great. Thirty seconds.

DEX

Shoot!

WILL

What?

Will drifts over to him.

WILL (CONT'D)
Come on come on come on.

EXT. SPACE STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

The robotic hand moves at lightening speed.

WILL (O.S.)
Kirsten, get back into position.
You need to get the door on
immediately after he's finished.

KIRSTEN
Okay, just tell me when.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SIMULTANEOUS

All eyes are on the screen.

WILSON
Damn, he should be done. Five,
four...

INT. GALAXY - SIMULTANEOUS

Dex is sweating as he makes the final move.

DEX
Done!

WILL
He's done! Kirsten, get the door
back on, stat!

EXT. SPACE STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

Kirsten puts the door back on and slams it shut.

KIRSTEN
It's closed!

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The whole place bursts into applause.

WILSON
He did it! Yes! That's my little
man!

DUVALL
Nice work, Galaxy.

INT. GALAXY - SIMULTANEOUS

Will grins at Dex as he finishes screwing the bolts back in.

WILL

Son, you did a hell of a job.

They high-five.

WILL (CONT'D)

(to Johnny)

Okay guys, this is the most dangerous part of the mission. If the hose isn't attached right you'll be flung out into space.

JOHNNY

We got it.

Kirsten hands Johnny the loose side of the hose. He screws it in.

WILL

Okay, turn it on, slowly.

IN MISSION CONTROL

Everyone in mission control waits nervously as Laney opens up the valve.

OUTSIDE THE SPACE STATION

It looks like it's going to work -- then Kirsten's side of the hose busts off!

Kirsten is literally slung into space!

Laney's thrown back too, but manages to grab the hose.

LANEY

Kirsten! Johnny! Go after her!

IN THE GALAXY

Will panics!

WILL

Johnny! Go after your sister, now!

OUTSIDE THE SPACE STATION

Johnny goes after his sister - she floating towards earth.

Kirsten's screaming and crying.

KIRSTEN

I don't wanna die! I don't want to die!

WILL (O.S.)

Kirsten! Listen to me!

KIRSTEN

I don't want to die!

WILL (O.S.)

Kirsten! If you want my Jeep, you have to listen to me.

KIRSTEN

Okay.

WILL

Pull the control backwards, just a touch. That will stop your spin.

She pulls the lever back and slows down, her spin stops.

WILL (CONT'D)

Good. Now toss your safety line to Johnny, he's right behind you.

She tosses it in the wrong direction.

IN MISSION CONTROL

Duvall clenches his jaw.

INSIDE THE GALAXY

WILL (CONT'D)

Johnny, you're going to have to go get her, quick. Give it some gas.

JOHNNY (O.S.)

You said never to go full throttle.

WILL

Go full throttle, now!

OUTSIDE THE SPACE STATION

Johnny guns it and slams into Kirsten, grabbing her. The two hurl towards earth.

WILL (CONT'D)

Now slow down and get control!

Johnny slows them down, then turns them back towards the space station.

JOHNNY

Sweet! It's like a half-pike in
space!

INSIDE THE SHUTTLE

Will and Dex both sigh in relief.

WILL

Now get back here before your mom
has a heart attack.

MISSION CONTROL

Dempsey and everyone are relieved.

DUVALL

Every mission has one. That was our
one.

WILSON

We also lost the screw. So
technically that's two.

Duvall glares at him.

INSIDE THE SPACE STATION

Dempsey is at the oxygen control center.

DEMPSEY

Okay, let's see if this worked.

He re-boots the system. Nothing happens. Then the oxygen
system slowly starts to chug to life. Fresh air starts
pumping through the vents. The cosmonauts cling to the vents,
breathing in the fresh air.

IN MISSION CONTROL

Dempsey grins into the camera.

DEMPSEY (CONT'D)

And the air flow is back!

Mission control explodes in applause.

DUVALL

Nice job, team. Now lets bring them
home.

INT. KIRSTEN'S BFF'S HOUSE - DAY

Wendy and her gang are glued to the TV.

REPORTER

The rescue mission was a success!

WENDY

Woo hoo! That's my best friend!

Everyone celebrates.

INT. SHUTTLE - SPACE

Johnny and Kirsten float back into the main cabin. Will hugs his kids like he's never hugged them before.

WILL

I've never been more proud of you guys.

KIRSTEN

(wiping a tear from
her eye)

Do you think Bebe will sponsor me now?

Will laughs and pulls her into a hug.

LANEY

Okay, that was enough excitement for my entire life. Let's go home!

EXT. KENNEDY CENTER - DAY

A HUGE crowd watches as Will lands the Galaxy Jet.

Fire trucks, ambulances, and news vans race towards the shuttle. It touches down without a hitch.

The Pattersons get out and are greeted by huge cheers. Will kisses Laney. The kids all bask in the glow of the spotlight.

Duvall shakes Will's hand.

DUVALL

Good work, commander. You did N.A.S.A. proud.

WILL

Thank you, sir.

DUVALL

So am I going to get a call from you wanting a job?

WILL

We'll see. But probably yes.

Duvall smiles at Will.

DUVALL
Cocky bastard.

WILL
But I'm your cocky bastard.

Laney looks at Will.

LANEY
Ready to go home?

Will grins. He takes her hand.

WILL
Yeah.

SERIES OF SHOTS

We see fun shots of the Pattersons as they're celebrated with a dinner at the white house.

Then there's a clip of them on Oprah.

Dex is back at school holding hands with the girl who beat him up, now the most popular kid at school.

Kirsten's bad boy boyfriend wants to date her now, suddenly ready to commit. But she's already got a boyfriend, Casey Harrison.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PATTERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The final shot is the Pattersons back at home having dinner around the table.

Kirsten and Johnny get in an argument that ends in a thigh-punch fight.

Will smiles and grabs Laney's hand. He notices her ring is now back on. He kisses her, and then they continue dinner.

We pull out to see...

EXT. THE PATTERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see the Pattersons from outside the house - arguing like an ordinary day, but they're together.

FADE OUT.