

STRANDED.

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6.5.2023

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREIGN ATMOSPHERE - DAY

On the distant horizon sits an abnormally large sun as the wind GUSHES through the sky. Out of nowhere--

A small, barely visible space capsule PLUMMETS through layers of clouds. A streak of black smoke follows.

INT. SPACE CAPSULE - CONTINUOUS

The cockpit RATTLES apart. In the cabin, perched in his spacesuit, is DAN (35) who struggles to pilot. Red lights flash in the reflection of his helmet as the metal CREAKS and the alarms BLARE.

Distinct BEEPS and DINGS ring faster and faster as Dan struggles to keep his eyes open. He looks out of the small porthole bolted into the ship where--

Streaks of sunshine blind Dan for a moment. He shuts his eyes and immediately goes unconscious-- momentary BLACK... Until--

The cockpit SHAKES him back awake.

His entire body rattles with the ship as he blinks profusely, each one causing a slightly longer BLACK screen. Dan braces for impact - both arms pushed against a near surface.

He can only watch through the bolted window as the ship anchors through layer after layer of clouds. For a second, there's an odd peacefulness to it.

Dan shuts his eyes and accepts his fate.

BLACK.

SUPER-TITLE:

S T R A N D E D

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREIGN VAST OCEAN - DAY

Beyond the tide, a giant cloud of black smoke rises from the ship. Slowly, Dan's body washes up amidst the dark, exotic-blue water.

As he swims and fights the strong tide, Dan has a duffle bag tossed over his shoulder.

His boots trek through the crashing waves until they finally reach shore where he falls to his knees.

Dan's body plunges to the ground face first as he grasps at the foreign sand, grateful to be alive. Still confined in his helmet, he takes in deep breaths of air from his oxygen tank.

He passes out.

INT. LIVING ROOM (DAN'S HOME) - DAY

It seems this is what happened before Dan left on the mission. Perhaps Dan passed out and is revisiting his final days on Earth.

Dan, talking on the landline, stands at the kitchen door between the living room and the kitchen. He's old fashioned: short on words and struggles to open up. Just as Dan rolls up the sleeves to his plain white button-up--

PATRICIA (31), in her 1950s getup, walks in through the front door holding large paper grocery bags. Glad to be home, she lets out a breath of relief as she tosses her keys, sets the bags down, and waits for a response.

PATRICIA

I picked up some groceries after work. What a freakin day!

(pause)

I had to run over and--

Patricia notices Dan on the phone.

DAN

I see. Yes. I understand. Thank you for the opportunity, sir.

Dan hangs up and turns around, slightly surprised to find Patricia close and clearly listening in.

PATRICIA

Everything alright?

DAN

That was the deputy director.

PATRICIA

Why would he...

(pause)

Wait, what did he say?

As Patricia gets nearer to comfort Dan, he gets more frustrated and paces, stiff as a board. He begins to undo his tie, revealing a scar on his neck.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I can put some ointment on it again if you'd like.

DAN

They're sending me back, Pat. I was his first choice.

PATRICIA

What do you mean? It's not as simple as that. You'd need to get evaluated, go through training, I mean--

DAN

Training starts in a couple weeks.

PATRICIA

What? No. No no no. I--

DAN

It's my career, Pat.

PATRICIA

Let me ask you one thing. Do You seriously think you're okay to go through all this again? Answer honestly. Cuz I sure as hell ain't.

DAN

This is my call. Not yours.

PATRICIA

I mean... Dan, I barely recognize you these days. You still haven't even come back from the last. How can it be this simple, I mean, it warrants a conversation. Don't you think?

Dan can't utter a word. So he controls the only thing he can in this moment.

He picks up the groceries and takes them to the kitchen. For a moment by herself, Patricia clutches her eyes shut... But she holds it in and follows.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Patricia walks into the kitchen to Dan, suddenly in his spacesuit, putting groceries away.

Patricia looks at him like a stranger. She doesn't recognize the man she married. The suit is just a metaphor for when Dan goes to his safe place. Even though she can't see the suit, she can tell when he's absent.

The room tone gets drowned out by the heightening sound of crashing WAVES and a high-pitched BEEP coming from--

EXT. FOREIGN BEACH SHORE - LATER THAT DAY

BEEP. BEEP.

Dan's duffle bag, caught in the tide and tangled over his shoulder, tugs him up.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

He hastily stands and checks his wrist. A watch-like device reads "**OXYGEN LEVEL: 59%**". Quickly, he unties his duffle bag and walks further away from the water.

EXT. FOREIGN UPPER BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

At a safe distance from the water now, Dan tosses his duffle bag to the ground, unzips it, and pulls out an intricate orange device. He raises the device to eye level as water drips out of it.

DAN

Fuck.

He CLICKS it on - a large antenna pops out from the side. Dan raises the device to the sky and presses a button. He waits.

After a moment, the device DINGS and reads "**AIR QUALITY UNKNOWN.**"

Dan bangs the device: no change. *Fuck* is right. He gets desperate (and frustrated). He POUNDS the device on the ground over and over again until--

The device screen goes blank. Dan's face drops: pure terror.

DAN (CONT'D)

No no no no!

Dan taps the device once more, gentler until it turns back on. Even though the screen is full of static now, he SIGHS relief that it still works... kind of.

He presses a button on his suit and speaks into the mic in his helmet--

DAN (CONT'D)
Hello? This is Jones making my
first attempt at contact with base,
over. Do you copy? Over.

Dan TAPS the button again, unsure if this tech is broken too.

DAN (CONT'D)
This is Daniel P. Jones, E-T-D-P,
mission 322-4, over.
I'm not sure if this is working but
I've crash landed on Planet-355,
over.

(pause)
My equipment's soaked and I'm
unable to report or assess the
oxygen levels of the atmosphere,
over.

(sigh)
I've lost contact with any and all
base operators. For what it's
worth, I'm following protocol.
Headed North until I...

Dan checks his oxygen level again.

DAN (CONT'D)
Over and out.

Dan rustles up to his feet, tosses everything back into the bag, and gazes off into the distance for a moment. He remembers something--

Reaching into his lower leg pocket, he pulls out a small notepad and quickly marks his coordinates. But something disrupts his focus--

The fine lines of the paper, something is off. His gloves brush over the material and take us into--

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The room is dark and still. A high-tech clock reads **2:14 AM**.

Outside, a body walks past the window. The back door opens - it's Dan. He enters and FLICKS the lights on.

He sets his briefcase down, takes his jacket off, and pulls up a chair - it SCREECHES on the floor - Dan looks around, hopes he didn't wake anyone, then sits.

Dan's tired but his stomach GROWLS. He looks up at the silver, futuristic microwave directly in front of him.

In it, a sandwich in a paper bag has been left for him. He hurries it to the table, sits, and scarfs it down, dropping the paper bag on the floor in the process.

A MUMBLE comes from off-screen: Dan turns to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patricia TALKS in her sleep on the couch. Dan tip-toes in, pulls a blanket over her, and turns the lights off.

Pause. In the dark, he looks down at her and gently plants a kiss on her cheek. He does clearly love her.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

On his way back to his half-eaten sandwich, Dan notices the paper bag he dropped. He picks it up and, right before throwing it away, notices a yellow note inside.

He pulls it out - it's the same paper as his notepad. It reads, "**Hope you had a good day at work. Love, Pat.**"

Dan's smiling face quickly overrides with ANGER at himself. He isn't the man she married anymore and knows he doesn't deserve her. His resentful face transitions to--

EXT. FOREIGN UPPER BEACH - SUNDOWN

Dan gets tearful of the fond memory as he looks over the blank pages on his notepad, smiling at the fond memory.

MOMENTS LATER

It's blue hour as Dan strikes the final flare standing in a circle of others already lit. He stares into one of the flickering flares as its fire dies out. Until it goes--

BLACK.