

HOW WE MADE THE MOON

A full-length play

By Sean Abley

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SYNOPSIS

A revisionist sci-fi tale of Earth's moon, and two hearts, breaking to pieces.

1958 - The moon is revealed to be in danger of self-destructing and destroying Earth in the process. The U.S. and U.S.S.R. secretly join forces for "Project Moon 2," to build a moon-shaped space station to replace the unstable satellite. American astronaut Iven "Kinch" Kincheloe and Russian scientist Tatyana Kuznetsova meet, fall in love, and ultimately separate when she leaves to live on Moon 2 without him.

2020 - The project is declassified and the current residents of Moon 2 travel to Earth. Kinch, now in his 90s, having lived for decades with guilt and anger over his actions, recounts the tale of saving Earth (in flashback) to a mysterious visitor.

SETTING

A rural home in the year 2020, a space station and research facility in 1958, all as imagined by 1950s science fiction films.

NOTES

All the characters in *How We Made the Moon*, with the exception of Col. Justine Blankenship and Gwen Edwards, are based on real people involved in some facet of the Space Race of the 50s, 60s and 70s. As this is a revisionist tale, I've used their names and certain aspects of their true histories while taking many, many liberties with their lives, including the years they were active in their respective programs. My goal was to find astronauts, cosmonauts, scientists and others who trained or desired to go into space, but never actually made the trip, and give them their dream of achieving space travel. Gwen Edwards was an actress with whom I worked on projects during my time at the Playwrights Lab at Hollins University, including the very first reading of this script in 2016. The character is actually based on botanist Siri Von Reis, but after Gwen passed away from cancer, I wanted to honor her by including her in the script. Now whenever *How We Made the Moon* is produced, Gwen will be back on stage, and in the stars, where she belongs.

As far as Project Moon 2, obviously the science doesn't add up. But the charm of 1950s and 60s science fiction films is the conviction with which the participants treat the impossible, and I hope I've captured that with this script.

***Optional act break: As written, *How We Made the Moon* has no intermission. If production needs dictate, an intermission may be inserted into production *only* as indicated in the script.

CHARACTERS

THE MEN

IVEN CARL "KINCH" KINCHELOE, JR (1958). – Air Force captain. A young pilot and almost-astronaut from the Men In Space Soonest program, recruited by von Braun for Project Moon 2. 25 years old. Denoted in the script as KINCH.

IVEN CARL “KINCH” KINCHELOE, JR. (2020) – An old man in his 90s living with guilt and anger over his past. As this is the future, he doesn’t look nearly his age thanks to science; you would clock him in his 60s. We meet him living under a government-supplied alias in seclusion after being “killed” in an accident years before. Denoted in the script as IVEN KINCHELOE, JR.

WERNHER VON BRAUN (1958) – German aeronautics scientist at NASA, brilliant rocket scientist, former Nazi brought to the U.S. under “Project Paperclip.” Speaks with a German accent.

VALENTIN BONDARENKO (1958) – 21 years old, Russian, hot-headed. Lieutenant in the Russian military. Speaks with a Russian accent.

ROGER CHAFFEE (1958) – 23 years old, avid hunter, Eagle Scout, member of Phi Kappa Sigma aka “Skulls” fraternity.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER - 34th President of the United States. Republican.

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV (1958) - Premier of U.S.S.R. Speaks with a Russian accent.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE - Russian Project Moon 2 recruit.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO - American Project Moon 2 recruit

THE WOMEN

TATYANA KUZNETSOVA (1958) – 20 years old, Russian, the youngest person ever recruited for space flight. Was supposed to be the first woman in space, but was taken off the Russian team and sent to Project Moon 2. Speaks with a Russian accent.

GWEN EDWARDS (1958) – 22 years old, botanist, brainy, outgoing, wise-cracking member of the USA recruits.

PELAGEYA YAKOVLEVNA POLUBARINOVA-KOCHINA (1958) – 50s-60s, Russian, brilliant mathematician. Stern and no-nonsense representative from the USSR for Project Moon 2. She also acts as den mother to all the women on the project. Speaks with a Russian accent.

COL. JUSTINE BLANKENSHIP, USAF (2020) – 30s, colonel in the Air Force, warmer in person than her military rank would imply.

Suggested doubling:

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER / SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV / SPACE STATION RECRUIT THREE

PLAYWRIGHT'S BIO

SEAN ABLEY is a screenwriter, journalist, dramaturg, novelist, and award-winning playwright. He has over thirty plays published by Playscripts, Brooklyn Publishers, Heuer Publishing, Next Stage Press, Stage Partners, Plays to Order, and Eldridge Plays and Musicals with titles like *End of the World (With Prom to Follow)*, *The Adventures of Rose Red (Snow White's Less-Famous Sister)*, *Horror High: The Musical* and *Two-Faced: A Tragedy...Sort Of*. His plays have been developed and performed at the Kennedy Center, Goodman Theatre, Celebration Theatre, Write/Act Repertory, Factory Theater, Merry-Go-Round Youth Theatre, SkyPilot Theatre Company, Antaeus Theater Company, Virginia City Players, and academically at the Playwrights Lab at Hollins University and California State University-Stanislaus. His plays for young audiences have been performed in over 300 professional and educational productions in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Mexico, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Argentina, Belgium, Singapore, and United Arab Emirates. Most recently his play *Unabridged* was an official selection of the LaBute New Play Festival 2018 at St. Louis Actors' Studio. His play *Popcorn Girl* was the 2nd place winner of the National Partners of the American Theatre Award as part of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival 2017, and his play *Absence Makes the Heart...* was a national finalist for the John Cauble Short Play Award at KCACTF the same year. His short play *Zombie?* was a regional finalist for the Gary Garrison National Ten-Minute Play Award as part of KCACTF 2018. Before moving to Los Angeles, he was the co-founder and co-Artistic Director of Chicago's prolific Factory Theater in 1992 (still going strong as of this writing), where his plays *Bitches*, *Attack of the Killer B's*, *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians: The Musical* and *Nuclear Family* all enjoyed long runs. His recent Los Angeles theatrical endeavors include the world premieres of *Dr. Frankincense and the Christmas Monster* (Write/Act Repertory), *L.A. Tool & Die: Live!* (Celebration Theatre), *Larva!* (SkyPilot Theatre Company), the L.A. premieres of *Bitches!* (Magnum Players), *Attack of the Killer B's* (Factory Theater West, Backstage West Garland Award winner-Best Adaptation), and *Absence Makes the Heart...* (SkyPilot Theatre Company.) His television writing includes multiple episodes of *So Weird* (Disney Channel), *Sabrina, the Animated Series* (Disney/UPN), *Digimon* and *Mega Babies* (both Fox Family), as well as several pilots including *Bench Pressly*, *The World's Strongest Private Dick* with Ahmet Zappa. His produced screenplays include the B-movies *Socket*, *Rope Burn*, *Witchcraft 15: Blood Rose*, *Witchcraft 16: Hollywood Coven* and *Camp Blood 8: Bride of Blood*. He currently serves as the TV Writing instructor at the Orange County School of the Arts in Santa Ana, CA. Sean has an MFA in Playwriting from The Playwrights Lab at Hollins University, and is a member of the Antaeus Theater Company's Playwrights Lab, the Writers Guild of America, and the Dramatists Guild.

HOW WE MADE THE MOON

By Sean Abley

SCENE ONE

KINCH'S HOME, 2020 - A small home in a rural area, located on a piece of land large enough a car is needed to get from the house to the main road. Not a shack, but by no means extravagant. The decor is 2020 as imagined by science fiction films of the 1950s. The time is high noon, with bright sunshine outside the windows. IVEN KINCHELO JR, an old man in his 90s, makes himself a drink - booze, ice, maybe a mixer, but probably just the booze. He doesn't look nearly his age; until his age is revealed in the course of the dialogue, we should believe him to be in his 60s. He doesn't seem particularly happy or unhappy at the moment; this is just his daily routine. Drink in hand he moves over to a record player that feels very out of place in this room, and puts a record on - something upbeat that a young man would listen to in 1958, like Bill Hailey and His Comets, or Chuck Berry. Something you wouldn't expect a senior citizen to enjoy, but he absolutely does.

After a few moments we hear SFX: car of the future approaching the house. He moves to the window, suspicious of the approaching visitor. He turns off the music, then retrieves a futuristic pistol from a drawer. As we hear the car pull up to the house and stop, he quickly sizes up his living area, trying to figure out the best place to both hide and have a clear shot at the front door. He is neither panicked nor frantic, but he does suspect whoever is approaching doesn't have his best interests at heart. SFX: car door shuts, someone walking to the front door. Finally there is a knock at the door. He doesn't move. Another knock. And another. Finally--

JUSTINE

(Off.) Mr. Meyer, my name is Colonel Justine Blankenship of the United States Air Force. I'd like to speak with you if possible. (A moment.) Mr. Meyer, I understand your situation, I do, and I want to reassure you I mean no harm. I'm alone.

SFX: a quick series of beeps, as if coming from a small, futuristic device outside the door.

JUSTINE

(Off.) We know you're in the kitchen area, and you're armed. There's absolutely no reason for a weapon, Mr. Meyer. I'm going to step back off the porch so you can see that I am alone and unarmed. I really hope you'll open the door. I think you'll be happy to hear what I have to say.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR. makes his way to the door and peers through the peephole. He is not skittish or jumpy; he moves with purpose. He finally raises the gun to chest level, then presses a button that opens the door. He speaks to JUSTINE off-stage.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Hands up.

JUSTINE

(Off.) I'm not going to do that.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Why not?

JUSTINE

Because I outrank you.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR. considers this for a moment, then gestures with his gun for JUSTINE to come in. She enters. COL. JUSTINE BLANKENSHIP is in her 30s, crisp in her Air Force uniform. Although military, her demeanor is both warm and direct. She holds an envelope.

JUSTINE

Mr. Meyer. (Holds out her hand to shake.) As I said, I'm Col. Justine Blankenship with the United States Air Force.

He starts to salute, then stops himself.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Don't get too comfortable. You aren't staying long.

JUSTINE

Then I'll get right to the point. I have a document I'm to deliver to Capt. Iven Kincheloe, Jr. Would you happen to know where I could find him?

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

I have no idea. I'm sorry you wasted your time.

JUSTINE

Administrator Bolden, he's the current head of NASA? He sent me to deliver this to you personally. I haven't read it, as you can see--the envelope is still sealed with the official NASA seal--but I have it on good authority it pertains to Project Moon. (Off his reaction. Holds out the envelope.) But I can only give it to Capt. Kincheloe directly.

He hesitates, then takes the envelope.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

It wasn't Project Moon. It was Project Moon 2.

JUSTINE

My apologies, Captain. I stand corrected.

He opens the envelope and reads the single-page document inside.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

This is true?

JUSTINE

As I said, I haven't read it, so I wouldn't know.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

(Reads.) “Dear Capt. Iven Kincheloe, Jr., On behalf of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in general, and the facilitators of Project Moon 2 specifically, I wish to inform you the status of the Project Moon 2 mission has been lowered to ‘declassified.’ As such, the details of your participation in this mission will now be available through ‘Freedom of Information Act’ requests, as well as searchable documents maintained in the NASA archives. Should you for any reason object to this reclassification, or your inclusion therein, please contact the Project Moon 2 Administrator at our main offices in Washington, D.C. Thank you for your service in this ongoing mission and the safety of our planet. Sincerely, Charles Bolden.”

He takes a healthy slug of his drink as he studies the letter.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

This is dated three weeks ago.

JUSTINE

Well, you died in a plane crash almost sixty years ago. That slowed our efforts to locate you a bit.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

It was meant to.

JUSTINE

Captain, I’d like to ask you--

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

I’m going to need some information.

JUSTINE

We can get that for you.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

About what happened after I left.

JUSTINE

Absolutely.

He takes the last slug of his drink, thinks for a moment, gets up and makes another.

JUSTINE

Captain, I’d like you to tell me the story of Project Moon 2.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

It's all in the archives. Help yourself.

JUSTINE

I want you to tell me what isn't in the archives. I want you to tell me why you asked NASA to fake your death. I want to know why the person who helped save the world doesn't want anyone to know who he is.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Over a million people died that day.

JUSTINE

And three billion didn't.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Well, some did. I think about those.

JUSTINE

Captain, please. Don't make me pull rank on you.

He silently studies his drink.

JUSTINE

When was the last time you talked to anyone about the mission?

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

1959. That was the last time I was allowed to talk about it.

JUSTINE

Wouldn't you like to? Now? After all these years?

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Colonel, I am not a virtuous man.

JUSTINE

You are who you are.

She takes out a futuristic recording device and sets it between them.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

I'm a ninety year old man. My memory isn't what it used to be. Thank God.

JUSTINE

If I may say, you look quite good for a ninety year old.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

(Raises his glass.) To medical science. (Takes a drink.) They say I'll live to at least one hundred and fifty. Under duress.

She turns on the recording device, then gestures to the chair.

JUSTINE

Please. Just start talking. I just need the information. Trust me, you'll feel much better if you just let it out.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

So you're a shrink.

JUSTINE

I'm giving you an order, Captain.

He makes sure his drink is full, then sits down near the recording device. He hesitates, then--

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

There was a lot of research going on, independently, outside the government, in the mid-1950s before there was even a project to name. But scientists talk, even scientists from warring countries. And everyone was coming to the same conclusion. Eventually something had to be done. So in the spring of 1958 Wernher Von Braun requested a meeting with President Eisenhower.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWO

THE OVAL OFFICE, 1958. WERNER VON BRAUN, a brilliant German ex-pat rocket scientist, meets with PRESIDENT EISENHOWER.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

Werner Von Braun. I'm told your knowledge of rocket science is unparalleled, and yet your past membership in the Nazi party remains troublesome to me, if not to the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics.

VON BRAUN

World War II was a complicated time, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

You don't say.

VON BRAUN

But I can assure you, my loyalty lies with the United States. Have you read the documents the committee has provided?

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER retrieves a folder of documents from a drawer.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

I have. This report states, and I quote, (Reading.) "Based on our research, this committee is confident the Earth's moon contains a volatile, unstable core which will ultimately lead to its destruction. The fragments, some hundreds of miles across, will fall from their orbit to the planet's surface, resulting in an extinction-level event."

VON BRAUN

When the first of these moon... let's just call them meteors for ease of conversation. When the first of these moon meteors make contact with the Earth, metric tons of dust and debris will fill the air, which will then catch fire as subsequent meteors enter the atmosphere and burn. Flames will sweep the planet. Any human or animal not burned alive will suffocate as the oxygen in the air fuels the flames. By all accounts, a terrible way to die.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

I have to say, the conclusions you draw strain credibility.

VON BRAUN

They're not just my conclusions, Mr. President. They're the conclusions of all reputable space scientists in the world. But I am here with a solution.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

I'm all ears. How are you going to repair the moon?

VON BRAUN

I'm not. I'm going to build a new one.

LIGHT SHIFT to--

SCENE THREE

KINCH HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELO,
JR. and JUSTINE continue to talk.

JUSTINE

Von Braun was recruited via Operation Paperclip, yes?

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

“Recruited” is a kind word. After World War II we rounded up all the scientists from our enemies and forced them to work for the United States.

JUSTINE

I’m surprised at you, Captain.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

For working with a Nazi?

JUSTINE

For not offering your superior officer a drink.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

(Points to his liquor cabinet.) Right over there.

JUSTINE moves over to the liquor cabinet and
pours herself a drink.

JUSTINE

Don’t mind if I do. Whiskey on the rocks, bartender.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

(Impressed by her choice.) Huh.

JUSTINE

I never turn down a good whiskey. But this rotgut you’ve got here will have to do.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

It does the job.

JUSTINE

That it does. (Raises her glass.) To Project Moon 2.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

I’m not toasting to that.

JUSTINE

To NASA, then. To the Air Force. To serving your country.

He finally raises his glass. She clinks the toast,
then takes a healthy gulp.

JUSTINE

Whew. Perfectly terrible. But the best I've had in a long time. The synthetic stuff is even worse. So, Werner Von Braun proposed building a new moon.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

And Eisenhower agreed. But Ike was committed to small government, and a hundred million bucks wasn't small government. So he was forced to reach out to the only other country that had that kind of cash.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE FOUR

OVAL OFFICE / KREMLIN, 1958 - SPLIT
SCENE. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER is on the
phone with NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

Look here, Nikita--

KHRUSHCHEV

I understand your position. I am known to be sympathetic man. But U.S.S.R. cannot be
seen cooperating with West when there are still unresolved issues between our countries
and rest of world.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

Then in secret. A classified project on both accounts. Trust me, the United States is in no
hurry to be seen collaborating with the Russkies. No offense.

KHRUSHCHEV

Of course. And yet, I am still not swayed.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

I've known you long enough to know this is a bargaining ploy. I've anted the end of the
world. Plain speak--what do you want?

KHRUSHCHEV

Sputnik 1 was great success for us.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

Yes, yes, you beat us into orbit. What of it?

KHRUSHCHEV

If we proceed in secret, Russian citizens will know nothing of this even greater
achievement. Russia took great pride in win of, how you say it? Space race. We need
another public victory for people.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

Name it.

KHRUSHCHEV

First man in orbit would also be great success.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

Nikita, you realize that--

KHRUSHCHEV

Yes, I realize scope of project would dictate human space travel. But that is all private. Someday history books may reveal true machinations of our reluctant, what is phrase? Hail Mary. But until then, we will require advance we may share publicly.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

For the sake of humanity, you have a deal.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE FIVE

KINCH HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELO,
JR. and JUSTINE continue to drink and talk.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

How much information do you have on the ongoing mission?

JUSTINE

A fair amount. Some of it is still classified, and I haven't read every document, but I'll tell you what I can.

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

Are the Russians still involved.

JUSTINE

Yes. What else?

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

I don't know. (Takes another drink.) It's been seventy years. What good will it do me now?

JUSTINE

Would it hurt? How about you keep telling me what you do know. How did NACA recruit you?

IVEN KINCHELO, JR.

By the time they got to me it wasn't NACA any more. I was recruited from the Air Force for a program called "Man In Space Soonest." Terrible name. M-I-S-S. As in miss the goal posts. I got called out of training one morning. Von Braun was waiting for me.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE SIX

TRAINING FACILITY, 1958 - VON BRAUN
has met KINCH, in flashback a fit young man in
his early 20s, in the locker room.

KINCH

I gotta be frank with ya. A kraut helping us to beat the Russkies into space makes about as much sense to me as a Chinaman helping us invade North Korea.

VON BRAUN

There are alliances, and there are opportunities. Sometimes reconsidering one leads to benefiting from the other.

KINCH

I find it hard to believe a Nazi would reconsider his hatred for the United States of America.

VON BRAUN

Let's just call it a case of coercive diplomacy and leave it at that.

KINCH

Fair enough.

VON BRAUN

Just three days ago you were the first human pilot to fly the X-2 over one-hundred thousand feet into the air.

KINCH

One hundred, twenty-six thousand, two hundred to be exact. At Mach 2.

VON BRAUN

"America's Number One Spaceman." At least that's what the papers are calling you. Not that you've actually been to space. Yet.

KINCH

Soon, though.

VON BRAUN

Possibly.

KINCH

How can I help you, Mr. Von Braun?

VON BRAUN

What if I were to tell you Earth is facing a threat so grave as to rival the extinction of all animal life during the Cretaceous era.

KINCH

Threat? As in?

VON BRAUN

That is classified information, but I can tell you I've been given the authority to recruit you for a project which, if successful, will ensure the survival of planet Earth.

KINCH

Are you serious? This isn't some gag cooked up by my team, is it?

VON BRAUN

Of the many things I possess, Captain Kincheloe, a sense of humor is not one.

KINCH

Noted. But what about MISS? We're headed to space. Am I supposed to just walk away from that?

VON BRAUN

You will not reach space in that program. This I can guarantee.

KINCH

That you can guarantee. How's that?

VON BRAUN

I'm not at liberty to say.

KINCH

Uh huh. Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Von Braun. Without more details I'm not at liberty to accept your offer. I'll take my chances with MISS.

VON BRAUN

Captain Kincheloe, as a member of the United States military, your assignments are dictated by your superiors, in this case the Commander in Chief. Your participation in this mission is not a request. It is your patriotic duty.

KINCH

I see. Will we be working under military command? NACA?

VON BRAUN

Neither. As of a week ago, NACA no longer exists. President Eisenhower felt the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was a more appropriate name considering this new mission.

KINCH

NASA? Terrible name...

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE SEVEN

KREMLIN, 1958. PELAGEYA
YAKOVLEVNA POLUBARINOVA-
KOCHINA, a 50s-60s Russian woman,
mathematician, pragmatic and no-nonsense
speaks to TATYANA KUZNETSOVA, a 20-year-
old Russian woman, cosmonaut, confident, but
very young.

TATYANA

I do not understand. Why have I been called to Kremlin? Am I to be punished?

PELAGEYA

Lieutenant Kuznetsova, pride of Russia rest on your shoulders. You have been chosen for
top secret mission. You are wanting to travel to space, yes?

TATYANA

Russia has been very generous to place me in cosmonaut program.

PELAGEYA

At great cost. Most orphans work on farm, or factory. You were chosen for great honor of
training for space travel. You owe Mother Russia great debt.

TATYANA

Yes.

PELAGEYA

Now you repay debt. You convince Premier Khrushchev you are cosmonaut for mission.
Then you travel to space.

TATYANA

What mission?

PELAGEYA

That is not for you to know at this time. You pay debt. Have I not been generous with you?

TATYANA

You have, yes.

PELAGEYA

You pay debt.

KHRUSHCHEV enters.

PELAGEYA / TATYANA

Your Excellency.

KHRUSHCHEV

Professor Kochina. This is recruit?

PELAGEYA

Yes, first of many. Lieutenant Kuznetsova.

KHRUSHCHEV

Lieutenant Kuznetsova, you are orphan, yes?

TATYANA

Yes.

KHRUSHCHEV

And you are top of class in cosmonaut training, yes?

TATYANA

Yes.

KHRUSHCHEV

And yet, I think too young for mission.

PELAGEYA

With great respect, Premier Khrushchev, Lieutenant Kuznetsova perfect for mission.

KHRUSHCHEV

Mission last entire lifetime. You never see home again. You understand?

TATYANA

Yes.

KHRUSHCHEV

You are willing to sacrifice for Mother Russia?

TATYANA

(Convincing herself.) Yes. I owe Russia great debt. I'm am grateful for saving me from life on farm or factory. I am now to sacrifice myself for country.

KHRUSHCHEV

Then sacrifice you will. People of Russia, and of Earth, now owe you debt. Bring in next recruit.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE EIGHT

AREA 51 HANGAR, 1958 - A large open space in the Groom Lake, NV testing facility, aka Area 51. Gathered in the space on one side are KINCH; ROGER CHAFFEE, 20-something college fraternity type, budding astronaut, Eagle Scout; GWEN EDWARDS, 20-something brainy type, botanist, outgoing with an easy laugh. On the other side are VALENTIN BONDARENKO, 20-something Russian, loud, aggressive and confident; and TATYANA. We should get the sense the room is actually filled with hundreds of people waiting for more information on the mission. VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA enter the area and position themselves to speak to the crowd.

VON BRAUN

Ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention please. Thank you. Welcome to Area 51. Look around. In the crowd, sitting next to you, are over one thousand of the brightest minds in aviation, chemistry, biology, engineering, agriculture, mathematics, and space travel.

PELAGEYA

Congratulations on your having achievements.

VON BRAUN

One thousand may seem like a large number, but these thousand faces will be the only faces most of you see for the rest of your lives.

There is a concerned rumble from the assembled crowd.

PELAGEYA

Congratulations. You have been chosen to save the planet Earth.

More reaction from the crowd.

VON BRAUN

I am Werner Von Braun, and I will be the United States representative for Project M2. I am a rocket scientist with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

PELAGEYA

I am Pelageya Yakovlevna Polubarinova-Kochina to represent Soviet Union. Professor of theoretical mechanics, mathematics, geophysics, and hydrodynamics, winner of Stalin Prize for work with Fuchsian equations, and one of founders of Siberian branch of Academy of Sciences of USSR.

VON BRAUN

Yes, well, we all have our impressive resumes. And you, all of you, have been recruited for Project M2 aka Project Moon 2.

PELAGEYA

Lights off!

The lights dim. Slides are projected on a large screen as VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA explain Project Moon 2. Slide: Drawing of moon cracking apart.

VON BRAUN

The rumors among the scientific community are true: the Earth's moon is unstable, and will eventually self destruct--

PELAGEYA

Next!

Slide: Chunks of moon destroying Earth.

VON BRAUN

--and destroy Earth, much like the dinosaurs were destroyed millions of years ago. Even if the debris did not strike our planet, the lack of a satellite would affect our climate, tides, possibly even our gravity.

Concerned reaction from the crowd.

PELAGEYA

Next!

Slide: Blueprints of a man-made moon-sized satellite labelled "Moon 2." The image is bisected to reveal Moon 2 to be hollow with everything needed to sustain life in space: living quarters, agricultural areas, generators, water supply, etc.

PELAGEYA

Moon Second. Russian and American work together to create man-made satellite constructed to replace moon first, and additionally sustain human life. Laboratories, gardens, water distillation, experiments, hundreds of humans to populate Moon Second. Next!

Slide: A space station orbiting earth behind the moon.

VON BRAUN

Project Moon 2, Phase One will be to build a space station, upon and around which Moon 2 will be constructed. The space station will be launched in secret, and positioned behind the moon, out of sight of the Earth's population.

PELAGEYA

Secret must be kept for panicking. Next!

Slide: Moon 2 being built in space near space station.

PELAGEYA

Moon Second built in space. Too big for planet's surface. The end!

The lights come back up.

VON BRAUN

Well, that is not the end, exactly. Once Moon 2 is built, we must position it in orbit, as well as dispose of the current moon.

GWEN

How are we going to do that?

PELAGEYA

Please be holding questions.

VON BRAUN

That is classified until necessary for the mission.

ROGER

Why are we working with the Russians? They're communists!

PELAGEYA

Please continue to be holding questions!

VALENTIN

Yes, why are we working with Americans? Is distasteful to collaborate with Western imperialists.

PELAGEYA

Moon segment crushing you is distasteful. Working with American is merely... inconvenient.

KINCH

Will we be living with them?

PELAGEYA

Yes, you will be housed by gender, men on one side of facility, women on other.

General negative reaction from the crowd.

VON BRAUN

You have been chosen as the saviors of Earth. We are facing the annihilation of our planet. Your respective governments have gone to great expense to bring you here, and to facilitate the work you will be doing. If your ideological differences are so insurmountable as to prevent you from putting aside your personal beliefs for the good of all, then you may leave. (A beat.) You will find your assignments in your quarters.

VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA exit. KINCH, ROGER and GWEN gather together to talk, as do TATYANA and VALENTIN.

ROGER

Some speech.

GWEN

I'll say.

ROGER

Sure are doing the hard sell.

KINCH

Guess the end of the world takes a good sales pitch. Captain Iven Kincheloe, but you can call me Kinch.

ROGER

Lieutenant Roger Chaffee.

GWEN

Gwen Edwards. Plain old botanist, so no rank for me.

ROGER

Civilians in this joint, too, huh? Didn't think they'd trust national security to civvies.

GWEN

Gosh, thanks.

ROGER

You know what I mean.

KINCH

I'm pretty sure she does.

GWEN

Just remember me when you're not starving to death on Moon 2.

ROGER

Aw, you gonna feed me?

GWEN

Take a flying leap, Lieutenant.

KINCH

We should mingle. Get to know some of our neighbors.

ROGER

Do I gotta?

GWEN

Quite the diplomat.

GWEN walks over to TATYANA and
VALENTIN, followed by KINCH and ROGER.

GWEN

Welcome to the United States. I'm Gwen Edwards. Do you guys shake hands? Or salute or something?

TATYANA

We do both. You are in military?

ROGER

We are, but she's a civvie.

TATYANA

What is civvie?

GWEN

It's cute word we use for "genius." So whenever you hear Lieutenant Roger Dodger here call anyone that, it's high praise.

TATYANA

Well I am in military, but as you are not, I will shake your hand. (TATYANA and GWEN shake hands.) I am Lieutenant Tatyana Kuznetsova.

VALENTIN salutes. TATYANA, KINCH and
ROGER follow suit.

VALENTIN

Lieutenant Valentin Bondarenko.

ROGER

Lieutenant Roger Chaffee.

KINCH

Captain Iven Kincheloe, but I'm pretty sure rank isn't going to mean much around here.

GWEN

So I'm the only non-military recruit in our little coffee clutch here? How did you get your stripes, sweetie?

TATYANA

I am sniper.

ROGER

What?!

TATYANA

Do I say this correctly? Sniper? I shoot people when they are not looking?

ROGER

Yeah, you're sayin' it correctly. Yikes!

TATYANA

What is "yikes"?

KINCH

We're just not used to girls doing mens' jobs in the military.

TATYANA

That is unfortunately for you. What are you used to them doing?

KINCH

Well, not shooting people. Let's start there.

VALENTIN

Americans treat their women like children. Russian treat their women like objects that are useful.

GWEN

How special they must feel. Honey, what's your dorm assignment?

TATYANA

S-35.

GWEN

Hey, me, too! Let's go check out our digs and see if we can pretty up the place. There's gotta be some paint we can borrow for these gray, gray cinderblocks.

TATYANA

That would be, um, wondering!

GWEN

I think you mean wonderful, honey. Let's go. We're gonna stop by that library and get you a dictionary.

TATYANA

Oh, yes, and I may teach you Russian as well.

GWEN

Oh, honey, we're not going to be speaking Russian. This is America!

GWEN and TATYANA exit.

VALENTIN

We are together in this mission, yes. But we are never together in our hearts. We save planet. Russia and America work together, but are not partners. There is work, and there is life. Russia here to work.

VALENTIN exits.

ROGER

Geez, cold front coming through. But that Tatyana. (Whistles.)

KINCH

I didn't notice.

ROGER

Like heck you didn't. Damn shame that Valentin's got his mits all over her.

KINCH

Think so?

ROGER

Oh, yeah. He's absolutely treating her like an object that's useful. Too bad. That Tatyana could keep a fella warm on some cold nights in space.

KINCH

You have a mission to concentrate on, lieutenant.

ROGER

Got that right. Come on, let's go unpack, then accidentally make a wrong turn into the women's dorm.

KINCH

I'll be there in a minute.

ROGER

Suit yourself.

ROGER exits.

KINCH

These faces are the only faces you'll see for the rest of your lives...

KINCH exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE NINE

KINCH HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELOE,
JR holds an empty booze bottle.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

On behalf of the Department of the Air Force, and a grateful nation, we offer this flag for the faithful and dedicated service of booze.

He unceremoniously drops the bottle in the trash.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Another?

JUSTINE

I am nicely lit already, Captain.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Huh.

JUSTINE

What?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Guess they don't make pigeons like they used to. Quitting before the bottle's empty.

JUSTINE

We already emptied the bottle. You just gave it a military funeral.

He holds up a new bottle.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Looks full to me, Colonel.

She holds out her empty glass. He takes it and
pours two new drinks.

JUSTINE

Despite the circumstances, it must have been exciting to be working on such an important project.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

You know what? It was. Probably the most exciting thing I'd ever done.

JUSTINE

And you'd flown at Mach 2!

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

And I had flown at Mach 2.

JUSTINE

So you get to Area 51, and then what?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

I was put in charge of the slums. The Sustainable Life Unit members.

JUSTINE

The grand tradition of bad space acronyms continues.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Roger, Gwen, Tatyana and Bondy--that's what we called Lieutenant Bondarenko--all reported to me. We worked hard. Had to. There was a ticking bomb hanging over Earth.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TEN

AREA 51 HANGAR, 1958 - ROGER, VALENTIN, TATYANA and GWEN are playing rock-n-roll music on a transistor radio in a recreation area. [NOTE: The music should be the same music IVEN KINCHELO JR was playing in the opening scene.] ROGER and GWEN are doing an elaborate jitterbug routine while VALENTIN and TATYANA laugh and cheer them on. After a moment, GWEN tags out.

GWEN

Whew! I can't keep up with you, flyboy.

ROGER

Sorry civvie, I've got that military endurance.

GWEN

Well, if it's military endurance, take Miss Tatyana here for a spin.

VALENTIN / ROGER / GWEN

(Playfully urge TATYANA to dance.)

TATYANA

No, no! I am not very good.

ROGER

It's easy! I'll go slow. You just have to follow me.

VALENTIN / ROGER / GWEN

(Continue to urge TATYANA to dance.)

TATYANA finally gives in. ROGER takes her hand and they dance. She's actually very good, giving ROGER a run for his money. KINCH enters, unseen by the others. He watches the dancing for a moment, then--

KINCH

What's going on here? Lieutenant Chaffee, what are you doing with Lieutenant Kuznetsova?

ROGER

Aw, we're just fillin' up the clock, Captain.

VALENTIN

Lieutenant Chaffee is teaching us rock and roll dancing.

KINCH

Lieutenant Chaffee should be thrown in the brig if he's calling that dancing. This is dancing.

VALENTIN / ROGER / GWEN / TATYANA

(General reaction to the challenge thrown down.)

KINCH holds out his hand to TATYANA. She takes it, and they dance.

GWEN

C'mere, Russkie. Dance with me.

GWEN drags VALENTIN to the dance floor, basically leading him as they jitterbug. VON BRAUN enters. He clicks off the radio.

VON BRAUN

Your research into rock and roll appears to be quite thorough. How useful it will be on the new moon.

KINCH

Oh, now, don't get frosted. We're just rattlin' the snake to blow off some steam.

VON BRAUN

I see. Well, I will just remind you we have a short time before all of humanity may be crushed by pieces of the moon. But please, continue rattling your snakes.

VON BRAUN exits.

ROGER

Man, what's the German word for "square"?

KINCH

He's not wrong. We should get back to work. Okay, slums, what do we got?

The group moves over to a work table with everyone's projects on or nearby.

TATYANA hands out small pieces of food for everyone to taste.

TATYANA

Food supply team will go first. Please to taste. So, how taste it?

ROGER

Like a shoe.

GWEN

Roger!

ROGER

Sorry. I meant like a dirty shoe.

GWEN

She worked really hard on this. Be polite. (Takes a bite.) It tastes like a shoe.

VALENTIN

I am sorry, comrade, but taste like shoe.

KINCH

What is this?

TATYANA

Food supply team has created meat substitute from soybeans. This is chicken. Soybeans contain protein, so they will be perfect replacement for animal flesh. There will be no chickens on Moon 2.

VALENTIN

No chicken?

ROGER

But plenty of shoe leather.

TATYANA

Not for Phase One. Animals take up too much resource.

KINCH

Nice job. Congratulate the team. (Takes a bite.) Delicious.

GWEN

Uh huh.

TATYANA

Thank you.

KINCH

Who's next?

GWEN presents a glass jar filled with water and a plant.

GWEN

I'll go. The sustainable plant life team is growing plants, like this soybean sprout, in water.

ROGER

Why in water?

GWEN

Well, it's much easier to infuse water with replacement nutrients than it is with soil. We're just assuming soil will be at a premium, at least at first. This will be a massive effort, but the plant life will double as food and a supplemental oxygen supply and carbon dioxide filter.

ROGER

(Picks up the jar.) All that from this little guy, huh? Nice job, civvie.

GWEN

Well, what do you got, pigeon?

ROGER

I got nuclear and solar power.

TATYANA

I know nuclear, but what is solar?

ROGER

The sun, baby. We're gonna harness the sun to power our moon.

GWEN

Wait, so you gotta catch the sunlight from the surface of Moon 2, right? Well, kids with their astronomy kits, and real astronomers, and everyone else with a telescope is gonna spot anything that looks like solar collection panels on the surface of what they think is the real moon. Isn't this new and improved moon situation supposed to be top secret?

ROGER

Got ya covered, literally. The solar panels will be recessed--that means embedded--

GWEN

Gee, thanks.

ROGER

--and covered with the surface of Moon 2. During the new, quarter and half moon, when the area of the moon facing the sun isn't visible to Earth, the panels will open up and soak up all those rays.

GWEN

So clever for a pigeon.

ROGER

Thanks, civvie.

KINCH

Bondy, how's the artificial gravity coming?

VALENTIN refers to charts which have
blueprints for both the space station and Moon 2.

VALENTIN

Station will be ring, Moon 2 will have ring inside. People and machines on inside of ring. Spinning will cause centrifugal force for making false gravity.

ROGER

Hard to believe we can build a new moon, grow plants in water, use the sun for power, make fake gravity, (Picks up a piece of TATYANA's "chicken.") but we can't make this guy taste like chicken.

EVERYONE, including TATYANA, laughs.

TATYANA

You will laugh, but you will eat or you will die. And then I will laugh.

EVERYONE laughs again.

GWEN

Good for you, Tats. Give him some of that Cold War.

KINCH

Okay, slums. Back to work, but I order you to take some time off this week. You're no good to me if you burn out fast.

GWEN

Ay yi!

GWEN, ROGER and VALENTIN exit.
TATYANA lags behind.

TATYANA

Captain...

KINCH

Tatyana, we've been working together for six months. Call me Kinch. Everyone else does.

TATYANA

Yes. Captain Kinch.

KINCH

Close enough. What can I do for you?

TATYANA

It's what you did for me.

KINCH

How so?

TATYANA

My English is, oh, how Lieutenant Chaffee say--not so great. My English not so great.

KINCH

Well...

TATYANA

It's true. But my tongue speaks universal language--taste.

KINCH

Okay...

TATYANA

You said my chicken taste delicious. But I know my chicken taste not so great.

KINCH

I wouldn't say that. It could use some salt.

TATYANA

My chicken taste like shoe.

KINCH

Your chicken taste like a shoe. But you'll get it. I have faith in your team.

TATYANA

I know we will get it. It cannot be so hard to make soybeans taste...so great. But I am wondering--why did you say it taste delicious?

KINCH

Oh. Well. I didn't want your feelings to be hurt.

TATYANA

I see. You treat me like child in front of others.

KINCH

That's not what I meant. I apologize if it sounded like that.

TATYANA

No need to apologize. I am youngest recruit for Project Moon 2. In all of recruits I am only twenty years old. People want to save my feelings. But you know I am orphan, yes?

KINCH

No one here has any family. We're all orphans now.

TATYANA

No, is true. But I am orphan from baby. Sad life in orphanage. Now I am military. I am cosmonaut. I am sniper. I am not soft like child.

KINCH

From now on I'll treat you like everyone else. Scouts honor.

TATYANA

What is scouts honor?

KINCH

It's...hmmm. That's a tough one. Let's just say on my honor I'll treat you like everyone else.

TATYANA

On your honor. I like that.

KINCH

As long as you do the same for me. Kinch?

TATYANA

Kinch. Yes. I will call you Kinch. I will treat you like everyone else. On my honor.

PELAGEYA enters.

PELAGEYA

Captain. Lieutenant. I am assuming meeting went well.

KINCH

Absolutely. The teams are making great progress. We'll be building a new moon in no time.

PELAGEYA

Is good to hear.

KINCH

I have to get back to work. Remember, more salt next time.

TATYANA

Yes, Captain. I mean, Kinch. Yes, Kinch.

KINCH

I'll see you both at dinner.

KINCH exits.

PELAGEYA

Kinch. That is very familiar.

TATYANA

Isn't that what you want?

PELAGEYA

Of course. But you must be careful. Public displays of affection could be taken wrong way.

TATYANA

And what way would that be? That people would think we're in love? Isn't that mission?

PELAGEYA

The mission is to make him fall in love with you. But fraternization between recruits is strictly forbidden until Phase Four of Project Moon Second. You must make him fall in love with you, but you cannot let him lose better judgement. Your love must be kept secret.

TATYANA

Captain Kincheloe is good man.

PELAGEYA

Irrelevant. Area 51 is filled with hundreds of good men and women. That is not point.

TATYANA

Then what is point?

PELAGEYA

Point is guarantee Americans are not keeping secrets from the Russians. Secrets that could be revealed during more... intimate moments between colleagues.

TATYANA

There are many men with more secrets than Captain Kincheloe.

PELAGEYA

Do not worry. We have operatives on every level of Project Moon Second. (Adjusts her clothing.) I am on my way to speak to Werner Von Braun about theoretical engineering. A woman's sexuality can be a great burden, Lieutenant. But there is no shame in using it for greater good.

TATYANA

Of course. I will see you at dinner.

PELAGEYA

You will not.

TATYANA

No? Oh. Yes, ma'am.

TATYANA exits.

PELAGEYA

(Rehearsing.) Hello, Mr. Von Braun. I would very much like to discuss... Hello, Mr. Von Braun. I would very much like to discuss... Hello Mr. Von Braun. Are you hungry? For dinner?

PELAGEYA exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE ELEVEN

AREA 51 - WOMEN'S DORM, 1958 - GWEN
reads a movie gossip magazine. TATYANA
enters.

GWEN

Well, if that ain't a sad puss, I don't know what is. Did we hurt your feelings about the chicken? Honey, you just got started. We all know that. Like they say--artificial chicken wasn't built in a day. Or something like that. Personally, I think if you add paprika you'll be golden.

TATYANA

I'm not sad. I'm just... thinking.

GWEN

Uh huh. Well this'll cheer ya up. Listen to this. (Reads) "Lana Turner's low-life lothario Johnny Stompanato stabbed by delirious daughter." She stabbed him! Could you just die? Well, I guess he just could, actually.

TATYANA

Who is Lana Turner?

GWEN

A really big movie star who shouldn't be dating a mobster like Johnny Stompanato, that's who. Well, I guess she isn't any more. Do you have movie stars in Russia?

TATYANA

Oh, yes. Many. The Soviet government makes such beautiful film. Just before I was recruited I went to cinema and saw "The Cranes Are Flying."

GWEN

Oh, "The Cranes Are Flying"! Isn't that the one they're going to show for the Russians on movie night?

TATYANA

They are? Oh, I can't wait to watch it again!

GWEN

What's it about?

TATYANA

A girl who suffers after World War II.

GWEN

Sounds like a laugh riot. They've got something called "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" for us this week. I don't know much about it, but it's got Liz Taylor and that'll get me in a movie seat every time. You know Liz Taylor?

TATYANA

I have seen photographs, but I have never seen her film. She is so beautiful.

GWEN

(Holds up the magazine.) Let me tell ya, they could fill ten issues of this thing with just her. Three husbands already, and the last went down in a plane crash a couple months before they sealed us up in this can. Could you just die?

TATYANA

Well, I guess he just did.

GWEN

Aaaah! Tats, I believe that was a joke! You're getting good at those!

TATYANA

Yes. By time we are living in Moon 2, I will be proficient in your American humor.

GWEN

It might take time, but looks like we've got nothing but. It's funny. I think they give us these gossip rags and movie nights and all the comforts of home to make it feel like everything is normal, we're just here in this giant facility building a new moon, business as usual. But all I can think when I read these is that I'm never going to be able to get Liz Taylor's autograph. Isn't that silly? We're saving the planet, and all I can think of is what I don't have any more.

TATYANA

I had so little, I don't feel loss.

GWEN

You don't, huh? Well something's eating you. You're usually so chipper. Well, as chipper as a Russian can be. No offense. But that long face doesn't lie.

TATYANA

I am fine. I am just tired from working.

GWEN

Give it up, Tats. You may be a communist, but you're still a woman. What's eating you? Come on, give.

TATYANA

I will give. We both we have nothing, yes? All of us chosen because we have no family, no husband or wife. We may disappear and no one will know.

GWEN

Glad I'm not feeling down. That little pep talk would make me jump off a bridge.

TATYANA

I am not missing what I used to have. I did not have much. I am missing what I will not have.

GWEN

Oh, Tats. Oh, honey, don't be like that. It's not all bad. In fact, it's not even mostly bad. This is going to be a huge adventure, and we're on it. Girls like us, saving the world! Did you ever, for a minute, think you'd be doing something as important as this one day?

TATYANA

No.

GWEN

No! But here we are, pushing the guys around and growing beans in water and coming up with new food people never dreamed of. Honey, what we're doing is important, more important than, well, anything. Because without us, there would be nothing to miss. And one day, after we've saved all their lives, they'll say, "Tatyana Kuznetswhatsis, thank you." And they'll put a medal around your neck that says, "For meritorious service in the field of terrible fake chicken."

They laugh.

TATYANA

I will add salt!

GWEN

And paprika! I beg of you, paprika. And maybe garlic. But definitely paprika.

TATYANA

You make me laugh.

GWEN

I'm glad. Hey, let's get out of this prison cell. I hear the guys are having a poker game. Think we can sneak past ol' Peg-a-leg and get into the men's dorm?

TATYANA

I will guarantee it. She is, how you say... otherwise occupied.

GWEN

I don't even want to know. I don't want to know! Come on!

GWEN and TATYANA exit. LIGHTS SHIFT to-

-

SCENE TWELVE

AREA 51 - MEN'S DORM, 1958 - KINCH, ROGER and VALENTIN around a table with a deck of cards and cigars. Each man has a pile of snack food in front of him, mostly chocolate bars. There are extra chairs, drink cups, etc., suggesting there were other players present earlier in the game.

VALENTIN

You can never beat Russian at poker.

ROGER

That's funny considering I just beat the pants off you.

VALENTIN

I allowed you to win in name of international relations.

KINCH

Well, you certainly cleaned out the guys from engineering. They won't be eating chocolate bars for a month.

TATYANA and GWEN enter. GWEN waves away the cigar smoke.

GWEN

Well, well, well. Looks like we've stumbled on an international den of iniquity. If those are Cuban cigars we can call this dorm the United Nations.

VALENTIN

Tatyana! What are you doing here?

KINCH

Girls in the men's dorm. What would Pelageya say?

TATYANA

Women in the men's dorm.

GWEN

And Pelageya is-- (Gestures to TATYANA.) Say it.

TATYANA

Otherwise occupied.

ROGER

I'm not sure I want to know what that means.

TATYANA

You do not.

GWEN

Got room for a few more?

ROGER

What do you two know about poker?

GWEN

Enough.

TATYANA

I know rules but I have never played before.

ROGER

Well have a seat! Shove over, make room for the ladies, you apes. Now, we can spot you the buy-in.

GWEN

Oh, we came prepared.

GWEN and TATYANA empty their handbags,
spilling candy bars onto the table.

ROGER

Hey moneybags!

VALENTIN

You are hoarding candy bars.

TATYANA

We stop by commissary and negotiate.

KINCH

And what did you trade for these bags of gold?

TATYANA

Promises.

VALENTIN

Tatyana!

TATYANA

Do not Tatyana me. You are not my father. I do what I would like.

SFX: A bell tone signalling a message broadcast.
Everyone turns to a video screen where VON
BRAUN appears.

VALENTIN

I am so tired of motivational speech.

ROGER

I agree.

VON BRAUN

Hello everyone. I want to congratulate you on all of your hard work so far. Our schedule has been arduous, but as I'm sure you understand, crucial to the survival of mankind.

ROGER

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

VON BRAUN

As we move forward, we continually monitor the moon for signs of surface and subterranean activity, and projected end dates.

On the monitor a photo or video of the moon,
with glowing cracks in the surface.

VON BRAUN

Our research shows the moon is even more volatile than previously suspected. According to our projections, Earth's moon will self destruct in six months.

KINCH

Six months?! That's almost a year earlier than we planned.

VON BRAUN

All teams will operate on a twenty-four hour, three-shifts-per-day schedule, with rotations as team captains see fit. I understand this will be a burden, however the alternative is the unthinkable. Please direct all questions to your immediate supervisor. We thank you, and the world will thank you.

VON BRAUN exits as the broadcast ends.
Everyone around the table takes a moment for
this new information to sink in.

GWEN

Well. So, Captain Immediate Supervisor, what's next?

KINCH

We will play what may be the last poker game before we save all of humanity. Who's in? Bondy, deal that deck.

Everyone happily responds in the affirmative.

VALENTIN deals one face-down card to everyone, then one face-up card to everyone.

ROGER

Okay, the ante is one Hershey's kiss.

ROGER antes a Hershey's kiss, and everyone follows in order.

TATYANA

Just one?

KINCH

Yes, unless you'd like to raise.

TATYANA

Oh, no.

VALENTIN

Round two.

VALENTIN deals a second face-up card to everyone. ROGER throws in two Hershey's kisses.

ROGER

I'm in for two.

GWEN

I'll see your two, and raise you a mini milk chocolate.

TATYANA

Oh, what do I do now?

KINCH

You can either call, which means you bet the same amount, or you can raise, which means you add to Gwen's bet. Or you can fold, which means you're out of the game for this hand.

TATYANA

Oh, I will then raise? I will put in your two kisses, mini milk chocolate, and raise one small Mr. Goodbar.

VALENTIN

How do we know Mr. Goodbar is more valuable than milk chocolate?

ROGER

It's got peanuts in it.

KINCH

I will see your Mr. Goodbar, and raise one Hershey's Semi-sweet.

VALENTIN

The dealer folds.

VALENTIN discards his hand, then deals a third face-up card to the rest of the players.

ROGER

I'm out.

ROGER folds his hand.

GWEN

Ooooh, getting interesting. Well I'm definitely in, so I'll bet a mini Krackel. Ha! That name always makes me laugh.

TATYANA

Oh, remind me what is better. More than one of kind? Or in order, like five, six, seven, eight?

KINCH

Well, you have a pair of fives there, and a king. That would be less than a straight, which is five, six, seven, eight, or any cards in order.

TATYANA

Oh. Alright, I will bet your Krackel, and I will raise your mini milk chocolate.

GWEN

On a pair?

TATYANA

Yes.

GWEN

We're gonna have to make another trip to the commissary.

KINCH

I'll see your mini milk chocolate.

VALENTIN

Last card.

VALENTIN deals to GWEN, TATYANA and
KINCH.

VALENTIN

Gwen is having three of kind. Tatyana is having two pair. Kinch is having possible flush.

GWEN

Uh huh. Hmmm. I'm in for a Mr. Goodbar. I don't think he's got that other spade.

TATYANA

I will see your Mr. Goodbar, and I will raise another Mr. Goodbar.

GWEN

On two pair?

TATYANA

Yes.

KINCH

Well, now, I will see your two Mr. Goodbars, and raise you a Mounds bar.

GWEN

Too rich for my blood. I fold. And if you know what's good for you, you will, too, Tats.

TATYANA

I will not fold. I will see Mounds bar, and raise to Almond Joy.

GWEN

On two pair? Tats, Kinch is showing a flush. Do you know what that is?

TATYANA

No.

GWEN

It's all the cards of the same suit. He has four, all he needs is another one and he'll beat your two pair.

TATYANA

Oh. But I feel my cards will beat his maybe cards. Yes?

GWEN

But he's raised you. A Mounds bar, Tats. A Mounds bar. That's gold in this place.

VALENTIN

He has spade under there. I am guaranteeing that.

TATYANA

I do not believe that to be true.

TATYANA pushes all of her candy into the center of the table.

TATYANA

I am, how you say, all in?

EVERYONE reacts to this audacious bet.

ROGER

Wow. Going out in a blaze of glory. You Russkies got guts.

GWEN

Don't say I didn't warn you. And don't come to me for your chocolate fix.

KINCH

I can't in good conscience take this bet.

TATYANA

Why not?

KINCH

Because you've never played before. Because I would be taking advantage of you.

GWEN

He's trying to be a gentleman.

TATYANA

No, he is treating me like a girl. Like, uh, stupid.

KINCH

Tatyana, that's not true. Not one bit.

TATYANA

Then why will you not take my bet? Why will you not raise and call and be all in?

KINCH

Well...

TATYANA

Why will you not treat me like others? Did we not discuss earlier?

KINCH

We did.

TATYANA

And so you will not keep your word?

KINCH

You got me there. I'm all in.

KINCH shoves his entire pile of candy into the center, then turns his face-down card over to reveal another spade.

KINCH

And I warned you--Jack-high flush, all spades.

EVERYONE else reacts as KINCH starts pulling the big pile of candy to himself across the table.

KINCH

If it makes you feel better, I'm more than happy to share. Some of it, anyway.

GWEN

I tried to warn you.

TATYANA

You did. But maybe you should not be taking the candy so quickly.

TATYANA turns her face-down card over to reveal a third king. She has a full house.

TATYANA

Because I will be needing it to feed my full house of kings and fives.

EVERYONE reacts with disbelief, cheering TATYANA on for her deception. TATYANA slides the pile of candy toward her across the table and starts packing it into her purse.

KINCH

You said you've never played before!

TATYANA

That is a thing I said, yes. But perhaps it was not true.

ROGER

You said you had two pair.

TATYANA

I did have two pair! Plus one more king.

GWEN

Kiddo, you are gonna be just fine on the new moon.

VALENTIN

You bring honor to Mother Russia. Congratulations, comrade.

TATYANA

(Russian.) *Spasibo*.

VALENTIN, GWEN and ROGER start cleaning up the poker table, cards, etc.

VALENTIN

Well, to bed now. New schedule tomorrow.

VALENTIN exits.

GWEN

I just hope they don't cancel movie nights.

TATYANA

So, as we discussed, I will treat you like everyone else.

KINCH

(Laughs.) Well, I am your superior officer. So I may order you to let me win when I need more Mr. Goodbars.

TATYANA

Well, if it makes you feel better, I'm more than happy to share. Some of it, anyway.

TATYANA hands KINCH a Mounds bar.

TATYANA

Goodnight, Kinch.

KINCH

Goodnight, Tatyana. Goodnight, Gwen.

GWEN

See ya tomorrow.

TATYANA and GWEN exit.

ROGER

So--

KINCH

Button your lip, Lieutenant.

ROGER

Ay yi, Captain.

ROGER exits. KINCH regards the Mounds bar, smiles, unwraps it and takes a bite as he exits.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

****OPTIONAL ACT BREAK: If production needs dictate, Act One break may take place at this point in the play.*

****BLACK OUT - END OF ACT ONE*

SCENE THIRTEEN

KINCH'S HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELO,
JR. and JUSTINE continue to drink.

JUSTINE

Tell the truth--did you let her win?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

How could I let her win? She had the hand she had.

JUSTINE

Well, if you knew she was a card shark, you could have dropped out early, but you didn't.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Trust me. I didn't know she was bluffing.

JUSTINE

Got it. So, what happened after they pushed the deadline up?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

We worked harder. Two months later we were all on a space station orbiting the Earth,
constructing Moon Two.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE FOURTEEN

SPACE STATION, 1959 - As envisioned by 1950s science fiction films, the Project Moon 2 space station is basically a factory, warehouse, and living quarters from Earth, just in space. Gravity is not a problem, and all the characters wear some form of a Project Moon 2-specific space uniform. VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA address the crowd, which includes KINCH, TATYANA, ROGER, GWEN and VALENTIN.

VON BRAUN

Welcome to space! Earth's moon will explode in sixty days!

PELAGEYA

Lights out!

LIGHTS SHIFT to allow slides/video to be shown to the gathered crowd. Slide: A disintegrating moon on the right, a moon-shaped space station on the left.

VON BRAUN

Phase Two--placement of Moon Two. In order to avoid moon meteors from falling to the earth, Moon Two will be used to preemptively obliterate the moon.

PELAGEYA

Next!

Slide: Moon Two smashing into the moon, causing pieces to fly into space.

VON BRAUN

Moon Two will be maneuvered into place at such an angle as to send the potential moon meteors away from Earth, into space.

PELAGEYA

Next!

Slide: Same as previous slide except now we see Moon Two in cross-section, revealing a community of people inside.

PELAGEYA

Project Moon Second recruits in Moon Second during impact.

VON BRAUN

If the mission is successful and the debris is deflected into space, Project Moon Two will continue as planned, with highly classified research and defense projects, and contact with Earth limited to communication via this space station. If the mission is unsuccessful--

PELAGEYA

Next!

Slide: Moon Two striking the moon, sending debris down onto Earth, destroying the planet.

VON BRAUN

And debris is sent to the planet's surface, the occupants of Moon Two will be responsible for continuing the human race.

PELAGEYA

Next!

Slide: The moon in a solar eclipse, with Moon Two moving toward it.

PELAGEYA

Phase Second will take place during solar eclipse to hide mission from Earth population. Lights on!

LIGHTS SHIFT back up.

VON BRAUN

We will meet with each team captain to determine which recruits will board Moon Two for Phase two of the project. The world thanks you again for your hard work. Tonight's movie will be "Operation Petticoat."

VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA exit.

KINCH

So, who wants to ride a moon into a moon?

ROGER

I'm in!

VALENTIN

There is no question. I am in.

GWEN

I'll head up the Ladies Auxiliary.

ROGER

You can bake cookies and serve punch while we knock the moon out of it's orbit.

GWEN

I'm gonna knock something out of its orbit, that's for sure.

TATYANA

I will go. If I do not go, who will make terrible chicken?

KINCH

We're all going, don't worry. But we have to finish the damn thing first.

TATYANA

Two eclipses until moon destruction. Second in fifty days.

KINCH

Well, then we have forty nine to get ready.

GWEN

Speaking of, I gotta go finish unpacking my lab.

VALENTIN

As do I.

KINCH

Let's meet at oh-eight-hundred hours tomorrow. We'll map out our plan for Phase Two.

TATYANA

Oh, Captain, I have new sample for you to try.

GWEN

I bet you do.

TATYANA

What are you saying?

GWEN

See ya back at the dorm!

GWEN, ROGER and VALENTIN exit.
TATYANA hands KINCH a piece of chocolate.

TATYANA
I know your teeth are sweet, so you will try new chocolate first.

KINCH
Well, isn't that nice of you. This certainly could have waited until the status meeting.

TATYANA
Yes, but then I would not be alone with you.

KINCH
I see.

KINCH tastes the chocolate.

KINCH
Well, I'll say this--it's better than your chicken. But the pork chops are my favorite so far.

TATYANA
Then I will make pork chops again. Perhaps for birthday?

KINCH
That sounds fine.

TATYANA
Then is date.

KINCH
Tatyana. You've been bringing me gifts every other day, and finding ways to talk to me alone for months. You're agreeing with me in meetings when I know for a fact you disagree with what I'm saying or proposing.

TATYANA
That is not true.

KINCH
It is true. And I know what's going on.

TATYANA
You do?

KINCH
You may be Russian, but you're a terrible spy. You couldn't hide your agenda from me if you tried. It's all over your face.

TATYANA

Oh.

KINCH

Tatyana, I know how you feel about me. And I feel the same way about you.

TATYANA

Yes?

KINCH

You have a crush on me. In different circumstances, if we were back on Earth, I might consider letting it go further.

TATYANA

But you will not.

KINCH

Even if we wanted to, we couldn't do this. The mission forbids it. If we were to put aside our professionalism, that would mean we would both be taken off the project. No one is irreplaceable, but without us Project Moon Two would be seriously compromised. The world is counting on us. It would be selfish to put ourselves first.

TATYANA

I see.

KINCH

I'm sorry. I truly am.

TATYANA

You treat me just like everyone else. Just like I ask.

KINCH

Tatyana...

VON BRAUN enters.

VON BRAUN

Captain Kincheloe, Lieutenant Kuznetsova.

KINCH

So just add salt, and I think you're there.

TATYANA

To chocolate?

VON BRAUN

Lieutenant, if you'll excuse us.

TATYANA

Yes, sir.

TATYANA exits.

KINCH

Her team is making a lot of progress on the chicken.

VON BRAUN

Apparently her chocolate needs more salt?

KINCH

Oh, that. I was referring to something else.

VON BRAUN

Captain, I will need your recommendations for Moon Two occupants by the end of the week.

KINCH

That's fine. How many are going?

VON BRAUN

Of the one thousand on the space station, approximately nine-hundred fifty. The rest will stay here or be sent back to Earth. You must choose wisely. Those that leave with Moon Two will never set foot on Earth again. Those that stay behind will be made to... disappear, and may never speak of their work here.

KINCH

Lucky them. What happens after the mission?

VON BRAUN

This station will remain in orbit with a skeleton crew. Should Moon Two suffer catastrophic damage endangering the residents, or some other such disaster or malfunction, the station will be used for evacuation purposes. You should also understand there is a third potential outcome, of which I did not speak during the announcements.

KINCH

Complete failure. Moon Two is destroyed, and the moon's segments fall to Earth. I think we all understand the risks.

VON BRAUN

That failure would leave only the occupants of this space station alive. Which would mean a slow march toward extinction. Those left on this station would have to come to a consensus on how best to meet their fate.

KINCH

Understood. I'll have those recommendations by the end of the week.

VON BRAUN

And a reminder--your final medical exam. Required for all recruits moving on to Moon Two.

KINCH

Already scheduled. Have a good evening.

As KINCH exits he passes PELAGEYA
entering.

KINCH

Professor.

PELAGEYA

Captain. (As she passes VON BRAUN and exits.) Mr. Von Braun.

VON BRAUN

Professor.

VON BRAUN waits a beat, then races out after
PELAGEYA. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE FIFTEEN

KINCH HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELOE,
JR is in the kitchen. JUSTINE remains in her
chair.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR
I'm going to make myself a sandwich. Would you like something?

JUSTINE
I should probably get something in my stomach to soak up all this alcohol. What's on the
menu?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR
Turkey.

JUSTINE
Perfect. Tatyana sounds wonderful. How did you manage to keep your relationship under
wraps?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR
Who said there was a relationship?

JUSTINE
I'm not a detective, Captain, but I'm fairly well versed in human behavior. (IVEN is silent.)
How long did it last.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR
Not long. Long enough, I guess.

JUSTINE
When did they lift the ban on fraternization?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR
I wouldn't know.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE SIXTEEN

SPACE STATION, CONFERENCE ROOM -
1959 - KINCH meets with VALENTIN.

VALENTIN

Is honor to be chosen. Bring great honor to Russia. Moon Second for Valentin. No choice but to Moon Second.

KINCH

I have no doubt you would do an exemplary job on Moon 2. I just need to make sure everyone on my team understands what it truly means to commit to Phase Two, Three and Four of this mission. It may seem like there are a lot of people here on the space station, but you're gonna get tired of looking at those same faces for the rest of your life. You'll be trapped in a spaceship one-fiftieth the size of Earth.

VALENTIN

Understood. Moon Second for Valentin.

KINCH

It's funny, I remember a very cold fella at the beginning of this journey. Something about "we're together on this mission, but we'll never be together in our hearts." Sound familiar?

VALENTIN

(Looks around to make sure he isn't overheard.) I... Valentin is apology for being cold fella. He wrong for saying when first meet. U.S. not just Western imperialists. Offense not. American and Russian work as team, put aside difference for good of planet. Is honor to serve alongside American. Bring honor not to Russia, but to human race. Moon Second for Valentin with team.

KINCH

You convinced me. And for the record, it's an honor to serve alongside our Russian friends as well.

VALENTIN

Spasibo. ("Thank you.")

KINCH

Okay, send in whoever's next.

VALENTIN exits and passes PELAGEYA and
TATYANA in the hallway outside the conference
room.

VALENTIN

Dr. Kochina. Did not realize you are out here.

PELAGEYA

Yes. Eyes of Russia on you at all times.

VALENTIN

Da. (“Yes.”)

He exits.

PELAGEYA

You will convince Captain Kincheloe of your desire to board Moon Second.

TATYANA

Da. (“Yes.”)

PELAGEYA

Look at me. This crucial moment in mission. Some recruits to stay on space station. Russia must have equal recruit with United State on Moon Second. You will not fail in mission. Is understood?

TATYANA

Da. (“Yes.”)

KINCH steps out into the hallway.

KINCH

Dr. Kochina. I thought I heard you out here. Well, more like felt you out here.

PELAGEYA

I am large presence.

KINCH

Indeed. I just need to chat with Tatyana for a bit. No need to hang around. I’m sure you have other duties to attend to.

PELAGEYA

(A beat.) *Da.* (“Yes.”)

PELAGEYA grudgingly exits as KINCH and TATYANA move into the conference room.

KINCH

Have a seat.

TATYANA

Spasibo (“Thank you.”)

KINCH

I hear you and the other Russians saying that to each other. What does it mean?

TATYANA

In English, “thank you.”

KINCH

Spasibo.

TATYANA

(Correcting his pronunciation.) *Spasibo*.

KINCH

Spasibo.

TATYANA

(Laughs.) Close. You will get. With practice.

KINCH

And I will practice! I’m a little slow on the uptake, but lately I’ve been inspired to learn some Russian. For the mission.

TATYANA

Of course.

KINCH

So, like Von Braun announced, not everyone will be boarding Moon Two. We’ll need to keep fifty or so behind to keep things running here. I’m talking to all the members of my teams to get a better picture of who to send and who to leave behind--

TATYANA

I will go to Moon Second.

KINCH

Now not so fast.

TATYANA

I will go to Moon Second. Why keep me on space station?

KINCH

I'm not keeping you anywhere. I just--

TATYANA

We are saving planet. Great honor to save planet. Great honor to sacrifice. I am not scared. I will go to Moon Second.

KINCH

Now just calm down for a second. I'm not keeping you on the space station. I just want to make sure you understand you have a choice.

TATYANA

I have no choice.

KINCH

But you do.

KINCH gets up and checks to make sure
PELAGEYA isn't still lurking outside the room.

KINCH

Just making sure mother isn't eavesdropping. I know you Russians have a very strong sense of... duty, when it comes to following orders, and bringing honor to your country and all that. But I'm here to tell you, as long as I'm in charge of your team on this mission, as long as I have any say at all, you have a choice. Just consider it a gift to you from me in anticipation of your future success in soybean chicken.

TATYANA moves to look out into space.

TATYANA

Moon looks so beautiful from here. Is so close, I feel I could walk to it.

KINCH

Enjoy it while you can. She'll be gone before you know it.

TATYANA

We will drive it away.

KINCH

Yes.

TATYANA

Hopefully we will not die in the process.

KINCH

We're going to do it very carefully. I think we're going to be just fine.

TATYANA

On Earth, no choices. Go here, do this. Always in... how say it... cage. But space... Open. Endless. No walls. No cage. Freedom. Space station? Better. But Moon Second? One step closer to freedom. And every day, I will look out window and I will dream of...

KINCH

What?

TATYANA

Private. Cannot say.

KINCH

I've dreamed of space my whole life. It was the one thing I wanted, more than anything in the world. And now that we're here, I'm not sure what my next dream is.

TATYANA

You will find one. I promise.

KINCH

For some reason when you say it, I believe you.

TATYANA

Is strange.

KINCH

How so?

TATYANA

We have no family. No loved ones. If I die in Moon Second collision, or live and orbit Earth for rest of life, there will be no one to miss me. I will just be there.

KINCH

You'll be a hero. "Great honor to sacrifice."

TATYANA

That is something I said, yes. We make sacrifice. We live hero. We die hero. But who are we until we are hero?

KINCH

Just people, I guess.

TATYANA

I do not feel like just people. I feel like... object that is useful. If not useful, then garbage.

KINCH

Tatyana! Don't talk about yourself that way. You're not garbage.

TATYANA

Not garbage to you?

KINCH

Not garbage to a lot of people. You're smart, smarter than some give you credit for. You're a born leader, and a... Well, you are a great recruit, let's just leave it at that.

TATYANA

Why do we leave it at that? Why do we not take it at that?

KINCH

Because the mission doesn't allow us to.

TATYANA

You will go on Moon Second, yes?

KINCH

Yes.

TATYANA

And I will go on Moon Second, yes?

KINCH

Yes.

TATYANA

We enter orbit, and live for rest of our lives, yes? Or die in terrible space crash. Do we spend life with sadness of being alone? Mission is not to be for sadness. Mission is to be for happiness. But happiness is no good if not happy. A theory: We must change rules, or mission will not be a success. If Earth destroyed, and Moon Second whole species, species cannot continue with mission rules. If Earth is saved, and we live for entire life in Moon Second, mission cannot continue if men and women cannot love freely.

KINCH

Are you saying you love me?

TATYANA

That is theory I have. And you say I am smart.

KINCH pulls TATYANA to him and kisses her.
LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE SEVENTEEN

SPACE STATION, MEN'S QUARTERS - 1959
- ROGER and VALENTIN are playing a knife game. VALENTIN has his hand splayed out on a table. ROGER pokes a pocket knife between each finger in succession, back and forth, faster and faster until he pokes VALENTIN's hand. VALENTIN yanks away his hand.

VALENTIN

Ow!

ROGER

Sorry, Bondy. Didn't mean to hurt ya.

VALENTIN

You did not hurt Bondy. But it is now my turn not to hurt Lieutenant Chaffee.

ROGER hands over the knife and puts his hand on the table. VALENTIN begins poking the knife between his fingers. TATYANA enters.

TATYANA

Hello.

VALENTIN is distracted and accidentally stabs ROGER's hand.

ROGER

Ow!

VALENTIN

Sorry, was distracted.

ROGER

Whaddya want, Tats?

TATYANA

I must speak to Lieutenant Bondarenko. Is of personal nature.

She touches VALENTIN affectionately.

ROGER

Oh, right! No problem. I'll be back in fifteen minutes?

TATYANA

Yes, please.

ROGER gives VALENTIN the thumbs up then exits.

TATYANA

I am here to speak of mission.

VALENTIN

Moon Second mission?

TATYANA

No, other mission. I am feeling conflicted. United States our friend. We work side by side. We share. We, um, socialize. I feel conflict about taking advantage of friendship.

VALENTIN

You have great debt to pay.

TATYANA

Yes. But if all I am is debt, I am not person. But I am person. I have feeling. I have... desire. When will debt be paid? When will I become person?

VALENTIN

I do not know. But is dangerous to question. On Moon Second will be different. One group, not two. Then perhaps debt be paid.

TATYANA

Perhaps.

VALENTIN

Go now. I have mission soon.

TATYANA unbuttons part of her uniform and makes a show of buttoning up while leaving the men's quarters.

TATYANA

Goodbye, Lieutenant Valentin. Do not speak of this!

She exits as ROGER enters.

ROGER

She's got quite a chassis. You take it for a spin?

VALENTIN

Oh, yes, we spinned.

ROGER

Good work, buddy!

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE EIGHTEEN

KINCH HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELOE,
JR and JUSTINE continue their conversation.
JUSTINE looks out the window.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

What are you looking at out there?

JUSTINE

I guess I didn't realize how early it gets dark here.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Fall. Days are getting shorter. Not a fan, although I do like that it means snow's coming.
Big fan of snow.

JUSTINE

You know, I've never actually been in snow.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

You should.

JUSTINE

I plan to. (RE: the moon.) Interesting vantage point. That is one full moon. Well, full Moon
Two. Knowing what I know, I don't think I'll ever get tired of looking at it. Maybe we
could continue this out on the porch? Enjoy your handiwork while we finish our
conversation?

He pushes a button that shuts the window.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

I'd rather not.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR moves over and makes
another drink.

JUSTINE

So, you and Tatyana were an item at that point.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

We weren't an item. We weren't anything.

JUSTINE

I don't believe that's true. I know it's not.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Well if you know so much, then you tell me the story.

JUSTINE

I'd rather hear it from you. Humor me.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Tatyana and I had a couple weeks to get to know each other, and I, uh, I fell pretty hard. Seemed like she did, too. We spent a lot of time together when we could. But the mission was always the priority.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE NINETEEN

SPACE STATION BULKHEAD, 1959 -
KINCH and TATYANA enter. She carries a
crate, the contents of which we cannot see, with a
blanket on top. They stop in front of the giant
windows that allow them to look into space.

TATYANA

This will be perfect.

KINCH grabs her affectionately.

KINCH

The bulkhead?

TATYANA

Perfect view of space and moon.

KINCH

What are you up to?

TATYANA

It is you that are up to what. You are twenty-seven today. It is your happy birthday!

KINCH

I can't believe you remembered that.

TATYANA

Of course! I made promise to make pork chops for birthday for our date. Do you
remember?

KINCH

Now that you mention it, I do.

TATYANA

So I have made you birthday picnic that you will enjoy. Food team has been working very
hard. Please to spread out blanket.

KINCH takes the blanket and spreads it out on
the ground.

KINCH

This is a little out in the open, don't you think? It's going to be hard to explain away a two-person picnic if we get caught.

TATYANA

No one comes up to bulkhead.

KINCH

Oh? How do you know this?

TATYANA

Gwen. She knows many private areas on space station.

KINCH

I bet she does. Wait, does that mean she knows about us?

TATYANA

Gwen is good friend. She will say nothing.

KINCH

I doubt that...

TATYANA

The view is perfect for picnic. Now beginning picnic.

They sit on the blanket. TATYANA presents KINCH with food from the crate. Each item is shaped exactly the same--a cube about three inches square--with different colors for each flavor.

TATYANA

First your favorite--pork chops.

KINCH

Looks... appetizing.

TATYANA

And mashed potatoes.

KINCH

No gravy?

TATYANA hands him gravy--a slice of brown food product much like a cheese single.

TATYANA

Gravy.

KINCH

And how exactly...

TATYANA places the gravy slice on the mashed potato cube.

TATYANA

You put the gravy on top of the mashed potatoes. Have you not eaten mashed potatoes before?

KINCH

Apparently not.

TATYANA

Take bite.

KINCH takes a bite.

KINCH

You know what? This tastes exactly like mashed potatoes and gravy!

TATYANA

That is because is mashed potatoes and gravy!

KINCH

Why the square shape?

TATYANA

Storage. Food must be easily stored. Mashed potatoes cannot stack. Square mashed potatoes stack.

KINCH

Ingenious.

TATYANA

Oh! And not forgetting...

TATYANA retrieves a square piece of cake with a candle. She lights the candle and sings.

TATYANA

(Sings “Happy Birthday” in Russian.) “Happy Birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear Kinch! Happy birthday to you!” Now blow out candle.

KINCH laughs and blows out the candle.

TATYANA

Oh, not forgetting ice cream! Freeze dry so not melt.

TATYANA retrieves a cube of ice cream and places it on the cake.

KINCH

Tatyana, this is wonderful. *Spasibo*. (They kiss.)

TATYANA

No, I thank you.

KINCH

For?

TATYANA

(Gestures out into space.) This.

KINCH

I’m hardly responsible for the universe.

TATYANA

In Russia I trained for to go to space. But there was no joy. There was no excitement of what we would find in sky. There was only work, and winning. No family. No love. Only beating oppressor at all costs.

KINCH

The Americans.

TATYANA

Yes. And I did not know there could be different. But now, here, above Earth at edge of stars, there is love. So much. Like oxygen. Fills space station, and Moon Second, and space. I could open bulkhead airlock and walk in space without suit there is so much love. There is only love, forever.

KINCH

You are quite a girl, Lieutenant Kuznetsova.

TATYANA

I am quite a woman, Captain Kincheloe.

KINCH

Yes, you are.

KINCH and TATYANA kiss.

TATYANA

Oh, I have one more last thing.

TATYANA takes out a small device. She pushes a button and the song “Blue Moon” plays.

TATYANA

I find song about moon. Soon have to change lyrics. (Sings to the tune.) “Moon Second... I saw you standing alone...”

KINCH / TATYANA

(He laughs and joins her.) “Without a dream in my heart... without a love of my own...”

They slow dance together.

TATYANA

What will happen when we replace moon?

KINCH

Assuming we survive--

TATYANA

We will survive.

KINCH

Then research. Experiments. Possible travel to nearby planets. I’m sure Mr. Von Braun and Dr. Kochina have many plans up their collective sleeves.

TATYANA

And for us?

KINCH

One day you and I will get in a rocket and point it toward the nearest galaxy and just go. Leave Moon Two behind and explore the universe together.

TATYANA

Yes?

KINCH

Just you and I, and as much of these pork chops and mashed potatoes we can stack in the hold.

They kiss again. VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA enter, startled to find KINCH and TATYANA. PELAGEYA holds a blanket which she quickly discards out the door.

VON BRAUN

Captain. Lieutenant.

KINCH and TATYANA quickly pull apart.

KINCH

Mr. Von Braun--

TATYANA

Professor!

KINCH / VON BRAUN / TATYANA /
PELAGEYA

(Unison.) What are you doing here?

VON BRAUN

We were looking for you, Captain Kincheloe. There is some business to discuss before decisions are made for the Moon Two launch.

KINCH

And you thought I was in the bulkhead?

VON BRAUN

Professor, perhaps you could escort Lieutenant Kuznetsova back down to the women's quarters.

PELAGEYA

Of course. Gather your things, Lieutenant.

TATYANA

Yes, ma'am.

TATYANA quickly gathers up the picnic and exits with PELAGEYA.

KINCH

Look, I know fraternization is against that rules. That was just a momentary lapse in judgement.

VON BRAUN

Calm down, Captain. Everyone on the project understands romantic entanglements will arise. It's human nature...unfortunately. Phase Four will address fraternization.

KINCH

I see.

VON BRAUN

So worry not about your dalliance with Lieutenant Kuznetsova. There is, however, another piece of business we need to discuss. Have you begun compiling your list of Moon Two recruits?

KINCH

I know who I'm going to recommend, yes.

VON BRAUN

And does that include you?

KINCH

Of course.

VON BRAUN

Unfortunately I'm going to have to ask you to cross your name off that list.

KINCH

What? Why? I told you--that moment with Lieutenant Kuznetsova was a mistake. I acknowledge that.

VON BRAUN

This isn't about Lieutenant Kuznetsova. This is about what's best for Project Moon Two, Earth, and the human race. You are supremely qualified for commanding the space station. You are the top ranking astronaut from the United States. But unfortunately, your medical exam revealed that you've developed a condition since your initial recruitment physical. A mitral valve prolapse. (Off KINCH's reaction.) In more common parlance, heart murmur.

KINCH

Werner--

VON BRAUN

We cannot dilute the future generations of Project Moon Two with substandard genetics.

KINCH

Werner, this is ridiculous--

VON BRAUN

The continuation of the mission as a whole is more important than the feelings of its parts. I'm sorry.

KINCH

We're not "parts"! We're people. Who've sacrificed everything to be here. You have to reconsider!

VON BRAUN

This is out of my hands.

KINCH

Goddammit!

VON BRAUN

Captain, control yourself. Coarse language is beneath you.

KINCH

It's going to get coarser the more you keep talking.

VON BRAUN

If it's any consolation, your work here on the space station is, and will remain, invaluable. And there is the possibility the criteria will be revised and you will be moved to Moon Two once a successful, stable orbit is established.

KINCH

Yeah, that's just great.

VON BRAUN

I'm sorry, Captain. I hope you understand we absolutely value your contributions--

KINCH exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY

SPACE STATION, WOMEN'S QUARTERS -
1959 - TATYANA and PELAGEYA enter.

PELAGEYA

You've made excellent progress.

TATYANA

Have I?

PELAGEYA

What has he told you? What secrets are the Americans keeping from us?

TATYANA

There are no secrets.

PELAGEYA

There are always secrets.

TATYANA

He has told me nothing about mission or Americans' plans you don't already know.

PELAGEYA

Lieutenant, I understand how distasteful this work must be to you. But is our duty to protect Mother Russia at expense of personal comfort if necessary.

TATYANA

Yes, ma'am. I understand.

PELAGEYA

You will be happy to know your personal mission will be coming to an end soon.

TATYANA

What do you mean?

PELAGEYA

You will no longer need to compromise yourself with Captain Kincheloe.

GWEN enters.

GWEN

Hey ladies. What's buzzin, cousin? Answer? Me!

GWEN reveals a half-empty bottle of vodka in her hand.

PELAGEYA

Miss Edwards!

GWEN

Oh, stop. We're all adults here. I'm off shift, and on the stuff. Who's going to join me?

PELAGEYA subtly urges TATYANA to agree.

TATYANA

I will.

GWEN

Tats!

PELAGEYA

I will also join you.

GWEN

Great! Let's get some cups.

TATYANA retrieves three random cups. GWEN pours three drinks, then holds up her glass for a toast.

GWEN

To the moon. May it break like the hearts of the men in our wake.

GWEN / TATYANA / PELAGEYA

The moon!

They drink.

PELAGEYA

(Reading the bottle's label.) "Moskovskaya?" Where did you get this?

GWEN

Apparently certain Russians have a secret stash of vodka aboard this space station. Sneaky, sneaky... I trust all you Reds about as far as I can throw ya. Except Tats here. She's apple butter. Another?

GWEN serves three more shots.

GWEN

You make a toast, Tats.

TATYANA

Oh. To... to our hearts. May they be stronger than moon.

GWEN / TATYANA / PELAGEYA

(Unison.) To our hearts!

They drink.

PELAGEYA

What else have you learned about Russians, Miss Edwards?

GWEN

Oh, you know--you've bugged our telephones, fluoride in the water is a commie plot, the KGB agents are teaching kindergarten. The usual.

PELAGEYA

How perceptive of you.

GWEN

Ya don't fool me.

PELAGEYA

Is lights out, ladies. I will see you in morning. Good night.

GWEN

'Night.

TATYANA

Good night.

PELAGEYA exits.

GWEN

She eyeballed me, and hard.

TATYANA

Who gave you vodka? Lieutenant Bondarenko?

GWEN

I plead the fifth. We can do that in this country. I'm gonna need another one if we're going to keep talking about the male of the species.

GWEN pours herself a drink, but TATYANA politely refuses.

GWEN

Suit yourself.

TATYANA

Gwen, I don't think you should plead the fifth with Lieutenant Bondarenko.

GWEN

Assuming I was, why not?

TATYANA

I do not believe his intentions are pure.

GWEN

(Laughs.) Of course they're not! Why do you think I'm drinking his vodka? Theoretically.

TATYANA

Please, I do not want you to get hurt. We must choose wisely. Once we are on Moon Two...

GWEN

Tats, you're a doll. But I can take care of myself. Heck, I should be lecturing you about fraternizing with a superior officer.

TATYANA

I am ashamed of what I've done.

GWEN

Oh! Are you saying you've... rounded third? Slid into home?

TATYANA

I do not understand.

GWEN

Have you, you know?

TATYANA

Oh! No! I have not you know!

GWEN

Phew. Okay, good. Then you have nothing to be ashamed of.

GWEN screws the lid back on the vodka.

GWEN

Look, it's screw cap o'clock. We can talk about your fall from grace tomorrow after the status meeting. We're finding out who's going and who's staying on this tin can, and I for one can't wait to get on that moon. 'Night, kiddo.

GWEN exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-ONE

SPACE STATION, CONFERENCE ROOM -
1959 - KINCH, TATYANA and ROGER are
waiting for the meeting to begin. VALENTIN
enters, obviously hungover.

VALENTIN

I am sorry. I am feeling ill. I will be fine after coffee.

TATYANA

We are trying out new coffee. It is in pot.

VALENTIN makes himself a cup of coffee.

ROGER

Looks like someone caught a case of potato bottle flu.

GWEN enters, also obviously hung over. She
wears a pair of sunglasses.

GWEN

It's awfully bright in here for space, don't ya think?

ROGER

Wow, guess it's going around.

KINCH

Get some coffee and sit down, both of you. This meeting was called for eight-hundred
hours. If you can't be on time, I'm not sure how you think we're going to save the world.
We're working against a ticking clock that doesn't stop for your lack of control with the
bottle.

GWEN and VALENTIN silently take their seats.

KINCH

My recommendations for Moon Two recruits are due today. I've given this a lot of thought,
and I'm going to recommend Lieutenant Chaffee, Lieutenant Bondarenko, and Miss
Edwards.

ROGER, VALENTIN and GWEN celebrate for
a moment until they realize KINCH has not
called TATYANA's name.

GWEN

Hey, what about Tats?

KINCH

Lieutenant Kuznetsova will remain on the space station.

GWEN

May I ask why?

KINCH

To assist me and the rest of the team staying behind.

ROGER

Wait, both of you aren't going?

KINCH

Correct.

VALENTIN

That makes nonsense! You are both crucial to mission.

KINCH

Lieutenant Kuznetsova will train a member of her team as her replacement for Moon Two, and all teams reporting to me will report to Mr. Von Braun.

GWEN

But we're a team. We've all worked so hard.

KINCH

That's my final decision. Now if there isn't any other business, I suggest you all get to your labs and work like you weren't drinking all night. And make sure to schedule your final physical as soon as possible. Dismissed.

ROGER, VALENTIN and GWEN exit.

TATYANA

Are you punishing me?

KINCH

Tatyana--

TATYANA

Why are you keeping us here?

KINCH

Just listen. I have to stay. It's complicated. My physical showed that I have a heart murmur. Von Braun grounded me from the mission.

TATYANA

But you keep me here?

KINCH

Well, I thought... I mean... I'm sorry I didn't explain the situation before springing it on you in the meeting. I didn't have time. I know it's a shock, but just think about it for a second. We can stay together here on the space station.

TATYANA

You do not let me make choice.

KINCH

Tatyana--

TATYANA

You make choice for me!

KINCH

I thought you wanted to stay with me.

TATYANA

You do not know because you did not ask. You do not treat me like everyone else.

KINCH

But you're not like everyone else! You're mine.

TATYANA

I am not property!

KINCH

That's not what I meant.

TATYANA

We have mission. We save planet. We put mission before ourselves is what you said, no?

KINCH

Yes, but--

TATYANA

It would be selfish to compromise mission, yes?

KINCH

Yes--

TATYANA

I am dedicated to mission. I am loving Kinch. I am making decision for myself.

KINCH

I'm sorry, but you're not.

TATYANA

I am!

KINCH

I've already told Von Braun.

TATYANA

You tell him differently!

KINCH

Tatyana, I know you're angry. I understand. But I think after the launch, after we start the work we have to do here, when you realize what it would mean to be out there instead of here with me, you'll understand I made the right decision. (Pulls her to the window.) We can still have all this, and square pork chops, and the stars and everything else we've talked about. We can still have each other.

TATYANA

Never. I will never have you. I will never have you! I chose, and I do not chose you!

TATYANA exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-TWO

KINCH HOME, 2020 - IVEN KINCHELOE,
JR and JUSTINE continue their conversation.
IVEN has settled into his chair, looking down
into his drink.

JUSTINE

You must understand how she felt.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Oh, I understand all too well now.

JUSTINE

She was angry you'd put her in that position. You'd made the choice for her instead of treating her like an equal. Or at least equally to the men. It was really selfish of you.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Someone was being selfish, alright, but it wasn't me.

JUSTINE

How so? You tried to keep her from Moon Two.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

So you know she went.

JUSTINE

I'm quite familiar with the mission.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Yeah, well, I'm sure there are a few details not in that precious file of yours.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-THREE

SPACE STATION, CONFERENCE ROOM -
1959 - VON BRAUN, PELAGEYA and GWEN
wait for KINCH, who enters after a beat.

KINCH

Is this a problem that can't wait? We're in the final load-in before launch.

VON BRAUN

No, not a problem. But we will be restaffing the plant life team for the launch. Miss Edwards will not be joining the Moon Two recruits.

KINCH

What? Wait a minute. You're not stepping down because I'm keeping Tatyana on the station, are you? That would be completely inappropriate and unprofessional.

GWEN

I'm pregnant.

VON BRAUN

The medical exams revealed five other pregnancies among the recruits.

PELAGEYA

Apparently some felt the need to move on to Phase Four prematurely.

KINCH

I don't know what to say. Who is the father?

VON BRAUN

She refuses to say.

GWEN

Stop talking about me like I'm not here. I'm not going to get some other Joe kicked off this mission.

KINCH

Gwen, you have to tell them.

GWEN

I don't have to do anything.

VON BRAUN

You understand you may never speak to him again after the launch, yes? If the man responsible for your condition is on Moon Two, your child may never know a father?

GWEN

I may be what the guys call a good time girl, and I may break the rules when they don't suit me. But I would never jeopardize the mission over my personal feelings. The father is highly qualified and crucial to Moon Two's success. The fate of every living thing on Earth is more important than me being a single mother

KINCH

Is there no way around this? You said yourself Phase Four will address fraternization.

VON BRAUN

There is not.

GWEN

I'm sorry, Kinch. I really am. Letting you and the mission down is killing me. But it looks like my part of saving the world will be staying on it for the time being.

KINCH

So what now?

PELAGEYA

Replacements for the pregnant recruits have been chosen. Assuming there are no further... complications, Miss Edwards and the others are a minor inconvenience to the overall mission.

GWEN

They've already told her, Kinch. She's packing.

KINCH bolts from the conference room.

LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

SPACE STATION, WOMEN'S QUARTERS -
1959 - TATYANA packs her belongings.
KINCH rushes in.

TATYANA

You cannot stop me from going.

KINCH

I'm not going to try.

TATYANA

They have chosen me. I must.

KINCH

I know.

TATYANA

Our personal feelings are of no concern.

KINCH

They've made that obvious. As have you.

TATYANA

As have you, Captain!

KINCH

Tatyana--

TATYANA

You make me feel wanted. More than own country. You make me feel like woman, not soldier. And I do something terrible.

KINCH

What was that?

TATYANA

I commit treason. I betray my people for American, for oppressor.

KINCH

I don't understand.

TATYANA

I fall in love with you. I make feelings first and mission second. I break rules. Disobey orders. For you.

KINCH

I wanted us to be together.

TATYANA

You treat me like something to be owned, just like my country. You treat me like pet, dog to say “Stay!” or “Go!” You make me feel like woman, then treat me like woman. You break heart. So now I go.

KINCH

Tatyana, I’m sorry. I thought I was doing what was best for you.

TATYANA

Best for you. Not best for me.

KINCH

I know that now. Tatyana, please listen to me.

TATYANA

Russia give me no choice. You give me no choice. Mission give me no choice. But I chose you. I make choice and break rule and you betray me. You commit treason of heart.

KINCH

Tatyana, stop packing for a moment. As your superior officer, I’m commanding you to stop packing.

TATYANA stops packing and faces KINCH.

KINCH

If they don’t send the rest of us to Moon Two once orbit is established, or if the mission is... unsuccessful, we will never see each other again.

TATYANA

Yes.

KINCH

I was selfish. I wanted you so badly I betrayed my country by trying to keep you here. I wanted you beside me at the expense of the mission. That was wrong, but I did it for us. Do you understand that?

TATYANA

That is, how to say, irrelevant. I am leaving. Goodbye, Captain.

KINCH grabs her by the shoulders.

KINCH

Tell me you understand. I can't let you go until you make me believe you understand why I did what I did. Tell me!

TATYANA

I understand. Someday I hope you will understand why I did what I did, too.

They kiss, and as the lights go down, we understand this will lead to KINCH and TATYANA having sex. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-FIVE

SPACE STATION / MOON TWO COCKPIT
SPLIT SCENE - 1959 - KINCH, VON
BRAUN, PELAGEYA, GWEN watch the
launch of Moon Two on giant viewing screens,
while SPACE STATION RECRUITS ONE and
TWO sit at a control panel flipping switches and
taking readings. In the cockpit ROGER and
VALENTIN, in flight gear, ready the new
satellite for launch.

ROGER

Lieutenant Chaffee to mission control. Moon Two secure and ready for launch sequence.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Roger that, Lieutenant. Three minute countdown to optimal launch window: initiated.

VON BRAUN

Open a general channel to Moon Two.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Yes, sir. Channel open.

VON BRAUN

Ladies and gentlemen, the citizens of Earth salute you. With today's launch, Project Moon Two, Phase Two will be complete. As you know, success is not guaranteed. Should the destruction of Earth's moon fail, should you give your life in service to mankind, your bravery will propel you into God's hands. However, if your efforts are successful, all who survive to see tomorrow, and the generations to come, will be forever in your debt. For that, we thank you.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Two minutes to launch.

ROGER

Roger that, mission control.

PELAGEYA

(In Russian.) With great labor we fulfill mission! Glory to science! Glory to labor! Glory to progress!

VALENTIN

(In Russian.) Glory to solidarity! Glory to people!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

One minute to launch.

ROGER

What Bondy said. We have a moon to destroy, and a planet to save. We're going to have a lot to talk about over breakfast tomorrow. Now let's get this tin can into place.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Thirty seconds to launch.

ROGER

Godspeed, and God bless the planet Earth.

SFX: Moon Two firing up its engines. The space station begins to shake and rumble, as does Moon Two. EVERYONE on the deck braces themselves.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three--

ROGER

Here we go!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Two, one, engage!

Moon Two launches toward the moon. ROGER and VALENTIN busily flip switches and pull levers.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Moon Two is on course for collision in three minutes.

VALENTIN

Engaging rocket boosters!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Hold your course, Moon Two. Impact in two minutes, thirty seconds.

VALENTIN

Boosters alpha engaged!

SFX: boosters engaging.

VALENTIN

Boosters beta engaged!

SFX: boosters engaging. VALENTIN flips third switch, but nothing happens.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Moon Two, engage boosters gamma.

VALENTIN

Boosters gamma not engaged. Repeat, boosters gamma not engaged.

GWEN

What happens if they can't get all the boosters to fire?

KINCH

Their course and speed will be off. They could hit the moon at the wrong angle, or miss it altogether.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Moon Two, engage boosters gamma.

VALENTIN

Mission control, boosters gamma not responding. Repeat, boosters gamma not responding!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Moon Two, engage boosters delta.

VALENTIN

Boosters delta engaged.

SFX: boosters engaged.

ROGER

Mission control, what is our trajectory with three out of four booster rockets engaged.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

At current speed and angle, Moon Two will miss optimal target strike zone by fourteen degrees.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Impact in one minute, thirty seconds.

GWEN

What happens if they miss the target zone?

VON BRAUN

Debris from the impact could be deflected down to Earth. Moon Two could sustain structural damage resulting in catastrophic hull breach.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Impact in one minute.

GWEN

The artificial atmosphere could escape?

VON BRAUN

Yes.

VALENTIN

What happen if I disengage boosters beta? One booster on each side for even trajectory?

VON BRAUN

Your speed may not be enough to destroy the target.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Impact in thirty seconds!

VON BRAUN

Moon Two may be destroyed on the moon's surface.

ROGER

But if we hit it at the wrong angle, we're done for anyway!

VALENTIN

Disengaging boosters beta!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Impact in fifteen seconds. Trajectory on target for three degree error from optimal strike zone.

ROGER

It's in God's hands now!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Impact in ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

Impact. The video feed from the cockpit of Moon Two disappears as SFX: Huge impact in space. ROGER and VALENTIN can no longer be seen on screen. The space station shakes violently.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Impact!

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Earth's moon is shattering! They've successfully broken apart the moon.

PELAGEYA

What is debris trajectory?

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Ninety-nine percent on target toward the sun.

PELAGEYA

What of one percent?

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Fragment approximately three hundred yards in diameter falling into Earth's atmosphere.

VON BRAUN

Projected impact?

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Approximately two miles off the coast of New Zealand.

KINCH

Can we warn them?

VON BRAUN

There is nothing we can do. Even if those on Earth knew the potential dangers, there would be no way to prepare for the worst. We did not warn them to avoid a panic.

GWEN

What about Moon Two? Did they survive?

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Mission control to Moon Two. Do you copy?

ROGER (OFF)

This is Moon Two.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Damage report.

ROGER (OFF)

Quadrants A through K reporting heavy external damage. Hull breached. Atmosphere in all quadrants except H is stable. There are casualties. Bondy got a bit banged up, but he's going to survive.

GWEN

Thank God!

ROGER

We'll start repairs as soon as we stabilize our orbit.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Moon debris impact in ten seconds, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two... Impact. Pacific Ocean between New Zealand and Australia.

VON BRAUN

The title wave will submerge New Zealand, and destroy miles of Australian coastline.

KINCH

There are millions of people on New Zealand alone.

PELAGEYA

There is nothing we can do for them now.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT TWO

Moon Two has entered Earth's orbit. Initial scans from planet's surface indicate all gravitational, structural and atmospheric readings within point-oh-eight degrees of normal. The mission appears to be a success.

VON BRAUN

Open general channel to Moon Two.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Yes, sir. Channel open.

VON BRAUN

May I have your attention please. Although there have been lives lost both on our new satellite and down on Earth, your sacrifices have not been in vain.

I am happy to report that Project Moon Two, Phase Two is a success! Working together we have saved mankind and our planet. Your team leaders will guide you in the necessary repairs, and once Moon Two is structurally sound, Phase Three will begin. Congratulations. History will never forget your heroism. Close the channel.

SPACE STATION RECRUIT ONE

Channel closed.

VON BRAUN

Well Professor, we did it. Care to join me in a glass of champagne?

PELAGEYA

I would be delighted. But first we must contact our respective leaders and tell them the good news.

VON BRAUN

Of course. After you.

VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA exit.

GWEN

We did it.

KINCH

Did we? Millions of lives were lost today.

GWEN

Instead of billions.

KINCH

It's hard to pat myself on the back, considering.

GWEN

I think there's one life you're thinking about more than the others.

KINCH

Maybe. I don't know what to think now. I just hope she's alright, and I can somehow maneuver myself onto that satellite in the near future.

GWEN

It's all going to turn out fine. For you, anyway.

KINCH

The project will make sure you're taken care of. That little boy or girl is lucky to have a mother like you. You're a certified hero. Or heroine.

GWEN

A certified heroine on her way back to Earth to raise a child alone. No ticker tape parade for me.

GWEN exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-SIX

SPACE STATION, CONFERENCE ROOM -
1959 - VON BRAUN and PELAGEYA are
waiting for KINCH. KINCH enters.

KINCH

How is Moon Two?

VON BRAUN

Holding steady for the past twelve hours. Pending any catastrophes, I believe we are in the clear.

KINCH

Good. I assume we're here to discuss my new duties on the space station.

VON BRAUN

We are not. Captain, now that we've entered Phase Three of the project, your services are no longer needed aboard the space station.

KINCH

So you're sending me to Moon Two?

VON BRAUN

We are sending you back to Earth.

KINCH

Now look here--

PELAGEYA

Captain, Project Moon Second is highly classified project. You are no longer qualified for project, therefore you are no longer possessing security clearance.

KINCH

You've got to be kidding me. You told me I was staying on the space station!

VON BRAUN

I did not. I told you your efforts were and will be invaluable to the mission. But should Moon Two fail in a catastrophic way in the future, the effect on the Earth would be the same as if our original moon had been left to disintegrate. That would leave the recruits on the space station as the last members of the human race. We cannot take the chance your faulty heart will threaten the future of humanity.

KINCH

You knew. I just put it together. You knew all along, but you used me to get Phase One in motion. You never had any intention of sending me to Moon Two.

VON BRAUN

You will be taken care of for the rest of your life. A gift from a very grateful nation.

KINCH

Some gift. I could strangle both of you.

VON BRAUN

Now, now, Captain. Don't make us send you back in shackles. You will have twenty-four hours to pack your belongings and say your goodbyes.

KINCH

May I contact Moon Two before I leave?

VON BRAUN

You may not. Thank you for your service, Captain.

VON BRAUN exits.

KINCH

What do you want? You sticking around to shove the knife in deeper?

PELAGEYA

Captain Kincheloe, I have information for you that may make return to Earth less... painful.

KINCH

What's that?

PELAGEYA

Lieutenant Kuznetsova.

KINCH

Yes?

PELAGEYA

I am sorry to tell you she died in the collision. Along with thirty-three other recruits. They died heroes, Captain Kincheloe. I hope that brings you comfort.

PELAGEYA moves toward the exit, then stops.

PELAGEYA

I hesitate telling you this, Captain. But please to know--it was Lieutenant Kuznetsova's mission to fall in love with you.

KINCH

What?

PELAGEYA

I am sorry, not to fall in love with you. To show she was in love with you. To...how you say... pretend.

KINCH

You're lying.

PELAGEYA

I am not. It was mission for Russians to fraternize with Americans. It was mission to gather secrets in case mission failed. She was loyal communist and completed mission.

KINCH

Why are you telling me this?

PELAGEYA

We are not monster. Russian have heart. But in war, you must set aside heart. We were in war with moon. But now war is over. You will feel better, in future, understanding you did not lose someone who loved you. This is best for you. Someday you will know.

PELAGEYA exits. LIGHTS SHIFT to--

SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN

KINCH HOME, 2020 - JUSTINE and IVEN
KINCHELOE, JR continue their conversation.

JUSTINE

What she said was... cruel. And yes, it may have been the mission. But she loved you.
Truly. It broke her heart to leave you that day.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

You have no evidence of that. You're just saying that to make me feel better. Or worse.
Take your pick.

JUSTINE

But I do.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Oh, that's in your file, is it? Tatyana's declaration of her undying love for me? Now who's
being cruel?

JUSTINE

Do you know what it means for Project Moon Two to be declassified?

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

I had no idea it was until you showed up at my door. Keep track, pigeon.

JUSTINE

It means all the people living on Moon Two are allowed on Earth.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Wait... is she alive?

JUSTINE

I'm sorry, no. She's not. But she didn't die in the collision. Professor Kochina told you that
with the best of intentions. But it was a lie. Colonel Tatyana Kuznetsova-Chaffee died last
year at eighty-one years old.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

Chaffee?

JUSTINE

May I?

She takes a small data device out of her pocket and connects it to his television. She clicks it on. TATYANA enters, as if she is on the TV screen.

TATYANA

Hello, Kinch. I do not know when you see this, if ever. But I want to make recording about me for you. I have much to say, do not know where to start. It five week after collision. We repair Moon Two and begin lives here. We did it, Kinch. We save world. I have other thing to say. It make me happy and sad. I do not know if make you happy or sad, but is true. I am pregnant. You and I have child. It is secret for now. But I have plan. I marry Roger. He will think his. He is good man. But baby is yours. I will always think of you when I see him or her. The baby. I go now, but am making recording for you every week. I miss you. I love you, my Kinch.

TATYANA exits as video ends. IVEN
KINCHELOE, JR is silent, stunned.

JUSTINE

She had a boy. And two decades later he married and started a family of his own. A daughter. And one day that daughter was allowed to come to Earth and present her grandfather with the declassified files of Project Moon Two. My grandmother was one of the smartest, bravest women I've ever met. And she loved you very much.

He remains silent, taking all this new information in.

JUSTINE

There are decades worth of videos here. Even some of me when I was a kid, which become a bit humiliating during my teens. She really wanted you to know what was happening up there. Shall I play more?

He gets up from his chair and moves toward the front door.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

No. Not right now.

He pushes the button that opens the windows. Moonlight streams in and we are now aware of the full moon in the sky. He pushes another button and "Blue Moon" begins to play.

IVEN KINCHELOE, JR

I want to take a look at our handiwork for awhile.

JUSTINE joins him at the window as the
LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PLAY