

ARK

written by

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Based on "Project Ark"

A Novel by:

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EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Vast space.

In the distance, we find earth.

Its blue-green color has changed. What was once the blue planet is now dark brown and gray.

A lone space pod drifts past the scorched earth.

INT. SPACE POD - NIGHT

The blue glow of a computer system booting gives off the only light in the small space.

ZITA (V.O.)

The alarms were sounded long ago.

In an instant the blue light vanishes. Velvet black replaces any signs of life.

A small breath fills the empty darkness, increasing with panic as each second passes.

LIGHTS flicker on one-by-one. Relief. The sterile capsule reflects no signs of occupancy - nothing personal.

ZITA (V.O.)

They never tried to keep the dangers a secret, not even from us kids.

A titanium container, strapped to the far wall, and to its right, sits a lone, young girl who stares out the window into the frigid emptiness of space.

ZITA (V.O.)

Every hope was a long shot.

Damp hair clings to her face and her puffy, red eyes reflect unbearable sadness as ZITA COSTELLO, 10, looks over her shoulder to the now blinking control panel.

ZITA

Odin, search for vessels within a 60,000 mile radius of earth.

ODIN A.I. SYSTEM (V.O.)

Searching now...

A holographic map, with earth in its center, hovers over the control panel.

Zita turns back to the window -- there's nothing out there.

ZITA (V.O.)
I was meant to die. That wasn't a secret either.

EXT. THE ARCTIC - SVALBARD - DAY (2059)

SUPER: "Svalbard Seed Bank, Norway, 2059"

SUPER: "Four days ago"

Once covered in deep snow and ice, the sky now glows orange as the intense sun beats down on a dusty savanna. Warm winds howl.

Two bodies make their way across the barren landscape. Their small, electric plane not far behind them.

Straight ahead, a battered, steel doorway, built into the mountain, with a handmade sign that reads: "Doomsday Vault."

Zita studies the holographic map in hand as she wears a thin oxygen-type mask, known as a rebreather.

She glances up at DR. CALE COSTELLO, 39, dirty, worn, and also donning a rebreather, as they trudge across the hot desert.

ZITA
About 350,000 species of plants
and 7 million animal species.
That's a whole lot of DNA.

CALE
It sure is.

ZITA
How long do you think it will take
you to bring back the lungwort?

CALE
Three to four months or so. But,
we'll work on several plant
species at the same time, so we
can mass produce multiple
medicines as quickly as possible.

ZITA
And what if I want a puppy?

CALE
A puppy? That will take longer.
Much longer.

Cale ruffles the hair on her head playfully as they continue the trek toward the doomsday vault.

INT. VAULT DEEP WITHIN THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

A disheveled mess, rusted racks on their sides lying in fetid pools of melted permafrost. Remains of drunken revelry litter the floors.

Cale yanks back fallen shelves to clear a pathway. He flips on his flashlight and turns back to Zita.

He lifts her up over the wreckage and sets her down in front of him. She takes his hand as they head down the long, dark corridor.

INT. VAULT - CORRIDOR - DAY

Cale and Zita stop before a huge sealed door.

Flashlight between teeth, Cale taps his wrist device, a holographic code hovers over it.

He punches it into the wall keypad.

They wait, with bated breath, as the ancient door slides open.

CALE
Ladies first.

Zita's tiny body can barely contain her enthusiasm as she steps inside...

INT. VAULT - HIDDEN ROOM - DAY

Cale enters behind Zita. His smile crumbles. Zita desperately shines her light around the room... it's empty.

Her eyes well as she shakes her head, devastated. She passes the flashlight over the room one more time, just to be sure.

ZITA
But, it's supposed to be here.

Overwhelmed, and ready to burst, Cale turns on his heel and races out of the vault.

INT. VAULT - CORRIDOR - DAY

Cale storms out through the open doorway.

Without hesitation, he yanks a large shelving unit down, onto the ground.

As he reaches for the next unit --

ZITA

Dad.

Cale freezes, head down. He can't look at her - he just can't.

ZITA

Dad!

Devastation reflected on his face, Cale turns to face Zita.

CALE

I'm so sorry, baby.

She steps forward, tears streak her face, as she holds out her pinky finger.

Cale glances at her pinky, then into her eyes.

CALE

I don't know where else to look.

Zita holds her pinky higher, right in front of his face.

ZITA

You pinky promised. We can never give up - not ever. No matter what.

Cale wraps his pinky tight around hers.

CALE

No matter what.

Then he pulls her into a bear hug and squeezes her like he can't ever let go.

A loud BANG echos behind them.

Cale wheels around, alarmed, weapon drawn. A beer bottle rolls off the shelf and smashes onto the floor.

Shelves rattle. Several items crash to the floor. An EARTHQUAKE shakes the vault.

Cale holsters his weapon.

CALE

Five point six.

ZITA

Five point four.

CALE
Come on, smarty-pants.

They head back down the corridor, hand in hand, neither fazed by the quake.

INT. VAULT - NEAR ENTRANCE - DAY

Cale and Zita make their way back toward the exit.

NORWAY RAPACES (Ra-Pa-Says) dangerous scavenger survivors armed with homemade weapons, dressed in remnants from head to toe, re-breathers cover half their faces, appear from the shadows and surround Cale and Zita.

Cale freezes, he slowly guides Zita behind him then raises his hands as he counts heads -- Shit... ten against one.

CALE
I have a child with me. Here...

Cale slips his satchel over his head. He holds it out carefully then tosses it toward the LEADER. Silver food pouches and a water canteen slide out.

Leader glances down at its contents. He looks up at Cale, taps on his own re-breather.

CALE
Afraid we don't have any spares.

Leader nods to BIG RAPACE.

Big Rapace strikes Cale with his staff, hard in the stomach. Cale drops to the floor.

ZITA
Daddy!

Cale holds his hand up toward Zita as he struggles to regain his breath.

Leader reaches for Cale's re-breather.

Cale grabs his arm and bends it backward -- it snaps. In one swift move, Cale stands and sends a palm strike to Leader's nose, knocking him backward.

CALE
(to Zita)
Move!

Zita takes off in a sprint.

It's on... Norway Rapaces move in. Cale defends himself. He's quick. Each strike lands with precision.

Zita searches for cover. She ducks behind a generator.

SHORT RAPACE, knife fashioned from a broken piece of glass, stabs Cale in the side then pushes him backward.

Cale falls, backward, against a shelving unit. The whole thing crashes to the ground, him with it.

Big Rapace steps up behind Zita and rips the re-breather from her face. Zita screams.

Big Rapace pushes Zita to the ground then holds her re-breather in the air, proud.

Norway Rapaces cheer.

Cale scans the area for an exit.

He makes eye contact with Zita and subtly gestures toward the exit. He nods his head then fires his weapon --

Hit in the arm, an electrical surge radiates through Short Rapace's body. He drops to his knees.

As Cale scrambles to his feet, Zita bolts for the exit.

CALE
(to Zita)
Hold your breath!

Short Rapace's hand trembles as he pulls the electric bullet from his arm. Deep breaths. He struggles to move.

Cale races after Zita.

Norway Rapaces clamor over the shelving and charge after them.

EXT. THE ARCTIC - SVALBARD - DAY

Every breath hurts. Zita struggles. Fighting. She does her best to run toward their plane. She slows, ready to collapse...

Cale yanks off his own re-breather as he reaches her. He slides it over her face, then picks her up into his arms.

CALE
I got you, baby.

Norway Rapaces on their tail.

Cale runs with Zita in his arms – it hurts to breathe.

The plane comes into view... along with TWENTY MORE RAPACES.

Cale digs a remote from his pocket with one hand as he holds tight to Zita with the other. He flips it open and slides his thumb across the tiny screen.

The plane powers up and rolls toward Cale.

Norway Rapaces do their best to block the plane, slowing its movement.

Cale eyes the Norway Rapaces gaining on them from behind. He shifts Zita higher onto his shoulder and taps the remote again as he struggles to keep going – the toxic air taking its toll.

CALE

Come on, come on...

The plane gains speed and Norway Rapaces are knocked to the side as it forces its way through the blockade.

Cale's knees buckle... He clings to Zita, as he fights to continue onward.

CALE

Hang on, baby.

The plane nears.

Norway Rapaces almost within reach.

Cale pushes onward with everything he has.

The plane reaches them and Cale collapses against it.

Rapaces close in from ahead and behind.

With all his strength, Cale reaches... his hand presses a black panel. The cockpit opens.

Cale coughs as he uses every ounce of strength left in him to lift Zita in and pull himself up behind her.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Cale flops into his seat. He slaps the button. The cockpit closes around them just as Norway Rapaces reach the plane. Big Rapace pounds on the glass with his staff.

Cale flips a switch, the cockpit's dash lights up. Oxygen pours in through the vents. Cale takes a deep breath.

He shifts the plane into gear. Norway Rapaces fall away as the plane lifts vertically into the air.

Breathing easier, Cale shifts the plane into auto pilot and turns to Zita - she's barely conscious. He slides off the re-breather.

CALE

Come on, breathe baby. Breathe.

She coughs and sputters.

CALE

That's my girl.

Zita wheezes and coughs with each breath.

Cale, visibly shaken, slips an oxygen mask over her face.

CALE

There you go. Try to rest for a bit. We'll be home in a few hours.

Cale shifts the plane into full speed.

INT./EXT. PLANE - CALIFORNIA DESERT - DAY

SUPER: "California"

Cale flies over a barren desert - Joshua Trees, tumbleweeds and all wildlife long gone. Nothing but rock and sand now.

Ahead of them, gigantic SPACE ELEVATORS stretch from the ground, up, past the clouds, and out of sight.

On the ground below, a busy work station. SCIENTISTS race about as WORKERS load VEHICLES parked in a row.

Still weak with the oxygen mask over her face, Zita glances out the window.

ZITA

They're loading out.

Cale cranes his neck to peer out her window, then checks his wrist device: it's cracked. He looks to the clock on the dash.

CALE

Huh. Thirty-two hours ahead of schedule.

ZITA

Do you think something's wrong?

CALE

Nah. Shen would have called. I'm
sure it's nothing to worry about.

Zita nods, convinced. She closes her eyes.

INT./EXT. LOS ANGELES DOME - DAY

The plane flies over the wastelands. Empty highways and
abandoned concrete beneath the burnt orange sky.

They near an enormous dome, stretched over an overly crowded
downtown Los Angeles. Just beyond the dome, the new waterline,
a purple-green, toxic ocean flows around the partially
submerged buildings.

A projected holographic banner, distorted and blinking, reads:
"Welcome to Los Angeles. Outside Temp: 130 Dome Temp: 96
Capacity: Full"

The plane approaches the top of the dome, just below it, the
ECA, Environmental Control Agency - the only building
constructed in the past twenty years.

Cale glances at Zita, asleep but breathing.

CALE

ECA-715 requesting approval to
land. This is Dr. Costello. We
need emergency assistance.

OFFICIAL (V.O.)

(over radio)

ECA-715 you're clear to land.
Emergency medical team en route.

The dome's outer flight deck opens and Cale lowers the plane
vertically onto the deck.

EXT. ECA FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The plane lands on the deck.

Several other planes of various sizes sit, parked in rows along
the deck.

MEDICAL TEAM stands by with a gurney as Cale cuts the engine.

The Medical Team races over as the cockpit opens.

Cale lowers Zita out of the plane. The Medical Team lays her
onto the gurney.

Cale climbs out and races too Zita's side. He squeezes her hand.

CALE

You're going to be just fine. I'm coming right behind you.

Zita nods from underneath her oxygen mask.

The Medical Team rushes off with her as Cale looks after them.

EXT. MEADOW - V.R. EXPERIENCE - DAY

Sun shines through bright green leaves. BIRDS CHIRP and a BABBLING BROOK is heard in the distance.

Zita's fingers gently caress the veins of a leaf. A passing monarch butterfly catches her attention. Her face glows with fascination as she watches it.

The butterfly moves gracefully through the air then passes in front of...

TALISE STRONGBOW, 60's, Native American, intense strength and years of struggle are reflected on her face as she stares at Zita.

TALISE

Zita. Look for me... Talise Strongbow.

Zita gasps.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Zita gasps as she yanks the V.R. glasses from her face and attempts to sit up.

KIT, 20, nurse, the peach-fuzz 'stache and wiry frame a reminder of just how young he is. He lays his hand on Zita's shoulder and gently guides her back down onto the table.

KIT

Whoa there. You have a few more minutes to go.

In a hospital gown and attached to various wires and tubes, Zita, glances around the room, confused.

KIT

Normally, we can't get you out of that thing. Suddenly, you're jumping off the table.

ZITA

Sorry. I uh... saw something new.

KIT

Figured you'd seen it all after a hundred or so trips in. Here we go, last injection starting now.

Zita takes a deep breath and grimaces as she looks up.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

White puffy clouds amongst a sky blue background..

Cale, eyes red, stares at the mural painted on the ceiling, as he leans back in his chair.

SHEN (O.S.)

Tell me this one broke because you tripped and banged it against a rock.

SHEN, 34, low maintenance but brilliant, Cale's partner and best friend, stands beside him, a tablet in hand.

Cale pulls off his wrist device as he sits up in his chair.

CALE

We may have run into a few Rapaces.

SHEN

Cale, she's ten.

Cale shoots him a "don't go there" look and Shen instantly shifts gears. He pulls a new device from his pocket and hands it to Cale.

Cale stands as he wraps the device around his wrist..

SHEN

The sun's magnetosphere is acting in ways we've not observed before. I tried to call, but..

Shen passes the tablet over and Cale scans through it.

CALE

How much time do we have?

SHEN

Latest calculation is two hours...
(looks at his device)
Twelve seconds and counting.

CALE
Right. Mobilize the team.

QUINN (O.S.)
Are you out of your mind?

Cale and Shen both turn to find QUINN, 33, Shen's wife, a doctor who is all attitude encased in a woman. She marches over to them...

QUINN
Those things could have killed her!

CALE
We didn't know there were any Rapaces that far north.

Quinn glances at his blood-stained shirt.

QUINN
How many sutures did you take?

CALE
Twelve.

She looks to Shen, exasperated, then back to Cale.

QUINN
Keira's gone. You have to step up. Zita needs a parent not another playmate.

SHEN
Quinn...

QUINN
No. Look, we love you both, but enough of this. She needs boundaries.

CALE
She needs hope! I know what I'm doing.

(to Shen)
I just want to check in on her before I head over.

SHEN
Sure... I'll start the prep.

Cale heads down the hall, alone.

QUINN
(calls after Cale)
I'm putting her on lockdown!

He turns back, the devastation clear.

QUINN

The exposure made her condition worse. Her lungs can't take it.

CALE

Quinn, please... It'll kill her.

QUINN

Not as fast as those toxins are. Remaining in a controlled air environment will give her a few more months, maybe even a year. But, if she keeps going out there... I'm sorry, Cale. It's done.

He stares at her, heartbroken, then turns and walks away.

Shen and Quinn exchange looks.

INT. ZITA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Zita, now dressed and re-energized, sits cross-legged on the bed, lost in the tablet on her lap.

Cale KNOCKS on the open door as he peeks his head in.

CALE

There's my girl.

Zita's eyes grow wide with excitement.

ZITA

You're not going to believe this! Ever hear of Talise Strongbow?

CALE

Ah, yeah... wasn't she a scientist on Dr. Grace's team? Exiled after he disappeared with the ARK.

ZITA

They were married! Probably knew all of each other's secrets.

CALE

I see where you're going with this.

ZITA

This is it, Dad. She's the key. I know she is. Look, right here it says they had two kids --

CALE

Zita --

ZITA

She showed up in my VR and told me to look for her, weird, right? But, now, I'm having a hard time finding anything after her arrest...

CALE

Zita.

ZITA

I need you to tell me everything you know about her.

CALE

You're on lockdown.

Zita freezes, refusing to look up from her tablet. Silence.

CALE

Quinn says leaving the dome is causing more damage. Your lungs just aren't strong enough.

ZITA

You can un-do it.

Cale shakes his head.

ZITA

You said we'd keep looking. You pinky promised! You have to tell them to un-do it!

He reaches out to stroke her hair. Zita pulls away.

CALE

We can't risk it, baby.

Tears stream down her face.

ZITA

Please. They can't do this to me. You have to talk to them. Tell them how important it is. They can't lock me in now. We're so close... Tell them I have to find the ARK. I have to...

Cale pulls Zita into his chest as she sobs.

CALE
We're launching tonight.

Zita bolts upright, eyes wide -- something's wrong. Cale wipes her tears away.

ZITA
But it's too early..

CALE
No, it's okay. The solar flare is slightly ahead of schedule, nothing to worry about. We're ready. And... in a few months the air will be good enough to breathe. We'll be able to get you off lockdown.

She looks up at him and nods. Cale kisses the top of her head then heads for the door.

ZITA
It's going to work, right?

CALE
It has too.

He winks at her and with one last smile, Cale exits.

Zita wipes her face and sits tall as she stares after him.

EXT. LA DOME STREETS - NIGHT

Billboard SCREENS across the over-crowded city flicker as ESTEBAN REYES, 65, President of Los Angeles, a stern man whose face rests in a frown, appears on the screen.

PEDESTRIANS throughout the dome stop to watch.

REYES
(on screen)
The Environmental Control Agency will be initiating Project Blue Skies at precisely eight-fifty this evening. Over the past two years we have inoculated the atmosphere...

INT. HOSPITAL - CHILDREN'S WING - NIGHT

Game play and activities halt as the CHILDREN, NURSES and PARENTS watch Reyes on the large screen.

Kit rubs his clenched jaw as he listens. Zita, curled up in the large chair beside him, remains lost in her tablet.

REYES
(on screen)
... with five million tons of nano particles dispensed through our space elevators.

Quinn watches from the doorway with her son, SKY, 8, clinging to her side.

REYES
(on screen)
Tonight, we will launch missiles, armed with electro-magnetic pulse bombs, and synchronized with launches from the other four world domes. These missiles will detonate at the exact moment that the solar flare is predicted to reach peak intensity.

KIT
(to Zita)
Electro-magnetic pulse bombs exploding over our heads is kinda insane, no?

Zita, lost in her tablet, doesn't respond. Kit, curious, peeks over her shoulder.

ON TABLET: a 30-year-old mug shot of Talise alongside recent photos of AIYANA STRONGBOW-GRACE, 35, and her brother, BODAWAY STRONGBOW-GRACE, 32.

KIT
Oh hey, I know them.

Zita lights up as she gawks at Kit.

ZITA
You know them? Like know where they are, know them?

Kit studies her, taken aback by her sudden enthusiasm.

KIT
Yeah, we kinda live together.

Zita's mouth drops open, as if he said just confessed to living with rockstars.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Cale enters, in his element. SCIENTISTS rush around as they prepare for the launch.

A wide screen on the far wall plays Reyes' public address.

REYES
(on screen)
We have the utmost confidence in
our ability to successfully carry
out this mission.

Shen hurries over to greet Cale.

SHEN
How'd she take it?

CALE
Let's get this right and air
quality will be one less issue for
her.

Shen nods then pats Cale on the back as he hurries over to a group of scientists...

SUDHIR, LEILI, HECTOR, ANIV and XI, competent and focused, all in their 30's - 50's. Titles of various functions hover above each station as they work furiously to prepare for the launch.

Cale glances over to a glass wall, behind which stands...

INT. REPORT ROOM - MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Reyes speaks directly to the camera as a small CREW films in front of him.

REYES
May God be with us all.

JANI, 45, intense and focused P.R. director, motions for the camera to cut.

JANI
And we're out. Mr. President, that
was excellent.

As the crew wraps the lights and camera, Reyes' focus lands on Cale. Reyes yanks open the glass door and heads straight for him.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Reyes struts across the room like he owns it.

REYES
Costello. A word?

Cale takes a deep breath and crosses to meet Reyes.

CALE
Mr. President.

REYES
I have to say, I don't feel
confident about this sudden change
in timing. Convince me that you
know what you're doing.

CALE
We are still within the window of
probability. Everything is set to
go as planned.

Reyes studies him, unconvinced.

REYES
Every resident of Los Angeles is
counting on you, Dr. Costello.

CALE
Yes, sir. We are all acutely aware
of the stakes.

Grim, Reyes steps away. Cale watches him for a moment...

Reyes' hands fidget by his side as he tries to make himself
appear important and useful. He bumps into a SCIENTIST.

Cale leans down beside Leili as he whispers into her ear.

CALE
Do me a favor, put someone on
Reyes. It would be helpful if he
were more... occupied.

Leili glances over to Reyes as he acts like he can understand
the data on the holographic screen before him.

LEILI
On it.

EXT. LA DOME STREETS - NIGHT

Citizens fill the streets. Some set up blankets and chairs, like it's the Fourth of July, while other, more concerned, residents comfort one another.

NEWS ANCHOR, 45, appears on the city SCREEN.

NEWS ANCHOR

(on screen)

The geo-engineering project, Blue Skies, is officially underway. As the food, water and medical supply crisis intensifies, citizens from all five world domes, watch with anticipation. Will Blue Skies be the miracle we've been waiting for? Ten million souls are praying tonight that it is.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

A colossal 3D image of the sun stands almost three stories high with various analyses indicating the impending flare. A large digital 3D countdown clock clicks over.

Reyes, seated at one of the stations, scrolls through a tablet and he nods as Hector points out specific data to him.

Cale stands before four screens that cover an entire wall.

ON THE SCREENS: GLOBAL SCIENTISTS from the other four world domes stare back at him.

CALE

Launch teams: Russia, India, Australia and China, it is an honor to stand beside you all in this endeavor.

He turns to his team.

CALE

Let's save the world.

The room breaks out into applause and cheers... it's time.

CALE

(to computer system)

Odin, Request confirmation we are go for launch?

ODIN A.I SYSTEM (V.O.)

All systems Go.

TEAM MEMBERS simultaneously place their hands on identity scanners across the room.

XI

The system is alive.

Cale and Shen share a look -- here we go.

CALE

C.M.E ETA?

ON SCREEN: A colossal energy wave emanates from the sun. A satellite in its path is vaporized.

SOLAR GEOPHYSICIST

Coronal mass ejection in sixteen minutes, five seconds, sir.

INSERT: on computer, "Solar energy level 25 x 10²⁵ Watts/Metre.
CLASSIFICATION: CME LEVEL Z - WARNING, WARNING."

CALE

Chlorophyll dispersion stable?

SUDHIR

Affirmative, nanoparticles have reached optimum saturation.

CALE

Power up Alaska HAARP station as standby.

SUDHIR

Alaska HAARP station on standby.

CALE

Activate core reactors. Initiate missile launch operations.

EXT. ICBM MISSILE SITES - NIGHT

All five ICBM bunkers open, ready for launch.

BACK TO SCENE:

Cale stares at the large screens ahead, all five rockets ready to launch.

CALE

Proceed with terminal count.

LEILI

Power House lines up. Standing by the crib.

CALE
Collapse it, please.

LEILI
Affirmative. Crib's a go.

CALE
Payload status?

ANIV
Payload is armed.

CALE
Ignition sequencer status?

ANIV
Ready for launch sequence start.

CALE
Initiate launch sequence start.

LEILI
Ten, nine, eight, seven, six,
five--

The room falls silent. All eyes stare at the screens.

ON SCREEN: The ROCKETS fire up in unison.

LEILI
Four, three, two, one...

ON SCREEN: The five ROCKETS lift off.

EXT. LA DOME STREETS - NIGHT

Citizens stare at the large city screens as the rockets soar into the dark sky.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Cale stares at the screen as Shen steps up beside him.

SHEN
I can't believe we're actually
doing this.

CALE
Wish we'd done it ten years ago.

Shen looks at him -- yeah, he gets it. Cale turns to his team.

CALE
Initiate payload detonation.

ANIV
Detonation in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...

ON THE SCREEN: The missiles BLOW UP - it's shocking. Powerful energy beams disperse in all directions.

All eyes watch the fantastic display as the Earth's atmosphere crackles and sparks like a huge firecracker.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHILDREN'S WING - NIGHT

All eyes wide as children, doctors, nurses and parents stare at the screen.

KIT
Holy shit! Look at that.

Kit looks to Zita who sits, squeezed side-by-side, with Sky in the same chair.

KIT
That suppose to happen?

ZITA
Yeah...

She stares at the screen, mesmerized.

ZITA
It's exactly what's supposed to happen.

Zita glances down at the tablet in her lap at a new image of Talise. Zita traces the small, metal, medicine wheel necklace hangs prominently from Talise's neck with her finger.

She glances at Kit -- the wheels in her head turn.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

All eyes on the screen. Shen's work station "BEEPS." He hurries to his monitors.

SHEN
Direct contact with coronal mass ejection confirmed. Charged particles absorbed.

CHEERS breakout across Mission Control. Scientists hug.

EXT. ECA BUILDING - LA DOME - NIGHT

CROWDS gather outside the ECA Building. Celebration can be seen in the background as...

Live news reporter, MARLEY, 35, mic in hand, speaks to the camera.

MARLEY

While spectacular to watch, the real celebration will occur once the official results are in. In order to optimally sustain life outside the dome the atmospheric carbon content needs to be four hundred parts per million. Currently, it's over a thousand...

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

Back to business. Cale crosses to Shen.

CALE

Carbon content levels?

SHEN

The numbers are coming in now.
1010, 1000, 990, 990, 960...890,
880...

Scientists jump from their seats and cheer like football spectators. Xi can't contain his excitement. He hugs the nearest Scientist.

SHEN

870, 865, 850, 850, 850...

ANIV

Come on 400!

SHEN

850. 850.

The room quiets. All eyes on Shen. He glances over his shoulder, his eyes meet Cale's.

SHEN

850.

All signs of celebration slowly die. Reyes crosses to Cale.

REYES

Why is it stalling?

Cale reviews the data in front of him as he shakes his head.

CALE
I'm not sure.

REYES
What do you mean, you're not sure?

CALE
All systems are responding as anticipated.

REYES
We only get one shot at this, Costello. Make it work.

CALE
We've done everything we can. We have to wait it out and hope --

REYES
Hope? What about this? Isn't it your backup plan?

Reyes holds out the tablet Hector gave him. Cale glances at the tablet... it's the HAARP data.

CALE
Yes, however, we had HAARP online incase the missiles failed to detonate. But they didn't...

He freezes, considering it. The heaviness of the debate within him can be felt from across the room.

Cale looks to Shen. Their eyes lock, like they can read each other's mind. Both of them look ill... it's crazy.

Shen relents. He closes his eyes momentarily, then nods.

Cale nods his agreement. He stands tall, determined.

CALE
Prepare HAARP to deliver additional charge.

XI jumps up.

XI
Wait, what? We could end up overcharging the system!

LEILI
It's online... it could work.

HECTOR

But we have no idea how the additional charge will effect the atmosphere.

SHEN

We're out of options and our window is closing fast.

Chaos. The entire room breaks out in debate.

CALE

Enough!

Mission control falls silent. Cale turns to Reyes, already certain of his response.

CALE

Mr. President?

Reyes steps forward, chin held high.

REYES

The survival of the entire human race is on the line. I refuse to look back on this moment and wish we'd done more. Do it!

Cale nods. He turns to Leili...

CALE

Track at 2.4 MHz and give me a twenty percent hold.

Leili takes a deep breath, and initiates HAARP.

Shen turns his focus back to the CO2 numbers.

SHEN

Still holding at 850.

Cale stares at the screen, he clenches his jaw then...

CALE

Fire it up.

LEILI

Yes, sir.

Reyes grins, satisfied and proud to take part.

The entire room watches in silence.

ON SCREEN: Lightning produces large sprites, brilliant red formations as high as fifty miles into the atmosphere.

Large flares of fire, hundreds of miles in diameter, race horizontally through the sky. Down bursts of flame produce rain and fire at the same time. It's apocalyptic.

Shen's hand lands over his stunned mouth.

Cale clenches his fists.

CALE
(whispers)
Come on, come on, come on...

ODIN COMPUTER VOICE
Warning, Warning. Chemical
reaction malfunctioning.
Photosynthesis halted. Methane
oxidizing to CO2.

Cale's eyes close as he lowers his head.

Shen leans over his screen, almost willing the data to change.

SHEN
No. No-no-no-no-no.

ON SHEN'S MONITOR: The atmospheric CO2 content parts per million numbers begin to climb: 855...875...900.

All eyes on SCREEN as the numbers climb: 910...920...924...
950...972...980...

SHEN
It's going up. 910, 920... 980.

Cale looks to Reyes who collapses down into his chair, stunned and at a loss. Cale turns back to Leili.

CALE
Call it.

LEILI
No, we need to give it more time.

CALE
I said call it!

LEILI
We can't give up, if we give it
more time --

CALE
We're at nine-eighty, Leili! Nine-
eighty. Sudhir, call it.

Sudhir nods. His hands fly across his screen... It's over. It's all over.

Silence. Devastation.

EXT. ECA BUILDING - LA DOME - NIGHT

The crowds continue to celebrate behind Marley as she speaks into the camera.

MARLEY

Wow. I don't think any of us fully expected the kind of display we witnessed tonight. Back to you, David.

EXT. HOSPITAL - CHILDREN'S WING -- NIGHT

News Anchor appears on the SCREEN as children return to their various distractions as adults converse quietly.

Zita bites her lip as she stares at the screen... waiting.

NEWS ANCHOR

Phew, quite the fireworks, indeed. Now, we await word from the ECA on the results of Project Blue Skies.

CLICK. Kit presses the remote and the screen turns off.

Quinn steps up to Zita and Sky, still cuddled in the chair.

QUINN

It could be hours before we hear anything. It's almost lights out. Try to get your minds onto something else for a while, okay?

SKY

Can I stay with Zita for a little bit?

Quinn looks to Zita, whose eyes track Kit before looking up.

ZITA

Sure. It's fine by me if the squirt wants to hang.

QUINN

Just until we hear from your dads. Then lights out.

Sky grins - score!