

One Way To Mars
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INT. SPACE CAPSULE.

Three astronauts in an elaborate space vehicle, headed for Mars. Two men are active at the controls. One woman is in a deep sleep and has been sleeping for the journey so far.

We hear static and the sounds of turn maneuvers. In the window we can see Mars.

Powers

I've got to hand it to you, what you taught me made this easy.

Talbot

Get the turn sequence right, Powers. Keep your mind on your work.

Powers

Easy for you to say. Or maybe not so easy, eh?

Talbot

It's my choice.

Powers

Better you than me.

Talbot

Drive.

Talbot starts an awakening sequence with Tanner, the woman astronaut. A news cast is heard over their speakers as they approach Mars.

Voice

...an unusual tale of sacrifice in this unprecedented journey – a journey of three noble and brave travelers – but only two will return...

Talbot

Vital signs restored.

Powers

Approaching first pass. Targeted orbiting sequence initiated.

Voice

...as two of our Mars travelers establish connection and

completion – and then return the elder Talbot will stay behind, establishing a base, initiating the lengthy terraforming protocol and for what is left of his life, remaining a citizen of Mars...

Talbot

Odd. I don't remember you being quite so beautiful.

Tanner is still unconscious but visibly breathing, seated upright, and gaining a life-like sense of color.

Voice

...let's see if we can make contact...

Static noises. Talbot turns a knob and the sound of the announcer fades into soft white noise.

Powers

I can't get this thing to respond.

Talbot

Work the sequence!

Powers

It's not working.

Talbot

You're better than this!

Powers

Take the controls!

Talbot

I need for you to do this. How will you make it back without me if you don't...

Powers

I've...got it. The sequence is tracking. (laughs)
Tracking! (laughs) We'll be on Mars in minutes.
Where's mission control?

Talbot

We need a...certain amount of silence. Now and then.

Powers

They're not going to like that...

Talbot

There's a lot they aren't going to like. They'll need to get over it. It's our lives on the line, not theirs.

Powers

Stop talking smack old man. This is on their dime.
(turns control, sound comes up)

Voice

Mission Red-1 come in. Mission Red-1 come in.

Powers

This is officer Powers on Red-1. Initiating landing sequence. Officer Talbot is healthy, Officer Tanner reviving.

Voice

Got that on visual.

Tanner

Damn.

Talbot

Good morning, darling. You're about to land on Mars.

Tanner

I'll take it from here. (she assumes command from her position)

Powers

Damn.

Tanner consumes a small packet of nourishment, adjusts some controls. All three are now responding to the landing sequence.

Blackout.

INT. Capsule.

All three are sorting thru some samples. They've been busy. From the window we can see a small village set up with living quarters, an energy plant, and a water source.

Talbot holds a weapon on Powers, catching him by surprise.

Powers

What are you doing here?

Talbot

We have a change in plans. I won't be staying behind after all.

Powers

You can't do that. You're old. You'll never survive the radiation. Your job is to stay here and lay the ground work for a future colony. That's important. You made that choice. What kind of man are you?

Talbot

The kind who's going to make it back while your sorry ass stays here and does the grunt work. I'm going to take back a story, some samples, and my passion for living.

Powers

What about Tanner..

Tanner

What about Tanner? What ABOUT Tanner? Did you think I was just going to stay in the background and let you do whatever you wanted? Did you think that I was going to stay behind with Powers and start the new colony?

Talbot

That's exactly what you're going to do. You've had a terrible accident. You were lost on Mars. It's regrettable but you were young enough to locate the module – the two of you – and start the new colony without me. Won't that be noble? You'd almost buy into that, wouldn't you? It's actually much better for the mission than leaving me behind. Maybe you'll start a family...

Tanner

I don't think so.

Tanner triggers a hatch door that isolates Talbot and Powers from the main capsule. She checks the instruments.

Assholes. Enough fuel for one. Somebody planned on me staying behind all along. I can't say I'm that surprised. Did they think I buy into that? Well, that makes for an easy decision.

Powers and Talbot look on in panic.

Tanner adjusts controls and downs another food packet.

Powers and Talbot start to scuffle but then gain a sense of their situation.

They initiate a well planned sequence and physically transfer a fuel canister from Tanner's compartment to theirs, rendering her isolated and without fuel.

Tanner realizes her new situation and feverishly works to reverse the fuel.

She opens the gate, all three fight and struggle for control.

Mars looms ever larger in the portal.

Sounds of disconnected lines and controls.

Fuel pack comes disconnected and is seen drifting toward Mars on its own.

Voice Over

Return to Earth sequence has been aborted. Selecting orbital vs. landing sequence.

Landing sequence initiated.

Mars looms larger. The crew stops fighting and catches its breath.

Talbot

Looks like I'm going have some company after all. You'd better get a grip on that landing sequence Mister Powers, we're here to stay.

Mars looms larger. Tanner spits out a mouthful of blood. Powers wipes a cut on his head.

Zoom in on Mars.

Fade to black.