

GRAVITY

ACT ONE: Ryan Stone, a quiet biomedical engineer, and Matt Kowalski, a talkative and optimistic veteran mission specialist, space walk outside the space shuttle. They are making routine repairs to the Hubble Space Telescope. (BEAT 1) Except for the repair, Ryan lacks confidence in herself and her abilities.

Mission Control in Houston calls with a warning. Deadly high-speed debris from a destroyed satellite is hurtling through the atmosphere. Within minutes Stone and Ryan are told the debris is coming their way - they are to abort their mission. Before they can return to the shuttle, debris strikes the telescope and space shuttle and knocks Ryan into a frightening free fall. (BEAT 2) Her oxygen is limited and running out fast. The debris returns at regular intervals as it circles the Earth.

Using his thruster pack, Matt navigates through space and rescues Ryan, who is very shaken. He tethers her to him, and they return to the shuttle. But their colleagues are dead and the ship hopelessly compromised – unable to return them to Earth or sustain their lives. They’ve also lost all communication with Mission Control and other space craft. Ryan follows Matt’s direction - she agrees their only hope is to use Matt’s thruster pack to steer them to the International Space Station (ISS) in orbit nearby. The ISS has two Soyuz escape pods/modules. They will fly one back to Earth. (BEAT 3)

ACT TWO: Ryan is pulled through space by Matt who keeps her talking as the sun rises and her oxygen supply lowers dangerously. She tells him she once had a daughter who died in an accident. At home she just works and drives around – she hasn’t truly returned to living since her child’s death. (BEAT 4) She readily admits she is not an experienced mission specialist; she has only practiced flying space modules during simulations and always crashed.

As Ryan and Matt approach the ISS, they see that one Soyuz module is already gone and other one not usable for flight to Earth – its parachute has been accidentally deployed - but they could use it travel to the Chinese Space Station, Tiangong, a mile away. Out of maneuvering power, the two crash into the station and barely get a grip. Ryan’s foot is tangled in the parachute ropes and Matt is barely attached to her. Ryan must release Matt in order to save herself. She can’t do it. Over her protests, he lets go – joking that he wants the record for the longest space walk. He spins out into the void of space. Ryan keeps talking to him, telling him she will take the Soyuz module and come rescue him. (BEAT 5) He keeps talking to her, believing she can make it even if she doesn’t.

Ryan, out of oxygen, but still guided by Matt’s voice, makes it aboard the deserted and damaged ISS. A fire aboard quickly forces her into the Soyuz escape module along with a fire extinguisher. She loses touch with Matt, realizes he is dead or irretrievably lost – and mourns him as she barely manages to release the module from the ISS. She must take control, she must start making her

own decisions. (BEAT 6) However the module's already deployed parachute becomes entangled with the burning station. Fire threatens to spread and engulf the module with Ryan aboard.

Ryan cuts the parachute lines during a daring space walk just as space debris cycles around again. She returns unharmed to the Soyuz module and aligns it with Tiangong but quickly discovers it lacks the fuel needed to keep its power on and fly. Ryan tries the radio, raises no one but a Chinese ham radio operator who can't understand her cries of May Day. She's stranded with no hope of rescue. Ice forms on the module's windows. Ryan gives up. She turns off the lights and the oxygen – starts the process of decompression to commit suicide. She prepares to die. (Beat 7)

ACT THREE: As Ryan loses consciousness, she hallucinates that Matt appears outside, enters the module capsule, and gives her a pep talk on life and on planting her feet firmly on the ground - and reminds her of the Soyuz module's reserve fuel in its landing rockets. Ryan chooses to live or die trying. She talks to Matt, asking him to tell her daughter she loves her, then turns the lights and oxygen back on. She uses the landing rockets to propel the module toward Tiangong.

Unable to dock, she ejects herself into space, and guides herself toward the station's air lock using the fire extinguisher as a makeshift thruster. She enters the empty station just as it is breaking up on the upper edge of the Earth's atmosphere, having been knocked from orbit by the circling debris.

Ryan flees to the Shenzhou escape module, barely detaches it in time, and rides it through a fiery re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. She hears Mission Control tracking her descent and dispatching a rescue team. The module's parachute deploys, setting the capsule down in a shallow lake in a bleak landscape. Ryan is alive. With flames everywhere, she opens the hatch and water rushes in, pinning her inside the capsule until it sinks to the lake floor.

She squeezes out, escaping, only to realize she can't swim in her heavy space suit. She wriggles from the suit and, gasping for air, reaches the water surface. (BEAT 8) Ryan swims to land, collapses on the beach, then stands, putting her two feet firmly on the ground. She takes her first shaky steps, re-adjusting to Earth's gravity. She knows now she is strong enough to face whatever comes. She begins her second life. (BEAT 9)