

I Love You

By Kenzie

FADE IN:

INT. SPACECRAFT

JAMES (40s), floats alone in a cramped spacecraft owned by NASA. His face etched with pain.

The distant glow of the SUN illuminates his face.

JAMES (V.O.)
I should've stayed home.

EXT. SPACECRAFT

Spacecraft drifts closer and closer to the sun.

INT. SPACECRAFT - CONTINUOUS

James drifts to a makeshift recording station, activating it with a weary hand.

JAMES
Sarah, Emily, Jack...It's me again.
I miss you. All of you.

He falters, overwhelmed by emotion.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I never thought I'd be so far away,
so alone.

James reaches for his phone, scrolling through old photos of his family.

INT. JAMES' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The kitchen is alive with the sound of sizzling bacon and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee.

James sits at the table, flipping through a newspaper.

SARAH (40s) his WIFE, preparing breakfast for their two kids. EMILY (8) and JACK (9). For the upcoming school day.

SARAH
Breakfast is ready.

Sarah passes a plate of bacon.

James smiles warmly, taking a bite of bacon.

JAMES
Mmm, delicious as always.

Emily and Jack giggle as they gobble down their food.
 Sarah joins, sitting down at the table.
 She pours James a cup of coffee.

SARAH
 So, any news on your next mission?

James looks up. Glancing at his family.

JAMES
 Actually, there's something I need
 to tell you all--

CUT TO:

INT. NASA HEADQUARTERS - JAMES' OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

James sit at his cluttered desk in his office. Surrounded by stacks of paperwork and monitors displaying various data streams.

James runs a hand through his hair deep in thought.

--A KNOCK at the door interrupts his reverie.

JAMES
 Come in.

The door opens. DR. THOMPSON (60s) a stern-face superior.

DR. THOMPSON
 James, we need to talk.

James shows him his seat.

JAMES
 Come take a seat.

Dr. Thompson takes a seat across from James.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 What's going on, Doctor?

DR. THOMPSON
 You've been selected for a mission,
 James. It's a crucial assignment,
 one that requires your expertise.

James' eyes widen in disbelief.

JAMES
 You are joking right...? I can't
 just leave. I have a family,
 responsibilities...

Dr. Thompsons leans forward.

DR. THOMPSON

I understand your concerns, but this mission is of the utmost importance. You're the best person for the job.

James shakes his head.

JAMES

How long would i be away for?

DR. THOMPSON

It could be years.

JAMES

I can't be gone for years. What about Sarah, my kids? They need me...They need their father.

DR. THOMPSON

This isn't up for debate, James. You have a duty to NASA, to your country.

James laughs.

JAMES

Right, for our country! I can't just abandon my family.

Dr. Thompsons patience starts wearing thin.

DR. THOMPSON

You have a choice, James. Fulfil your duty or face the consequences.

James' defeated.

JAMES

Fine, i'll fucking do it.

Dr. Thompson nods.

DR. THOMPSON

Good. We'll make the necessary arrangements.

James watches, as Dr. Thompson exits the office.

James sits there in disbelief.

James stands from his seat. He stands at the window of his office, overlooking the bustling activity of the NASA facility.

He gazes at tower where the spacecraft will be made.

PULL BACK:

INT. SPACECRAFT

James wipes away tears.

JAMES (V.O.)
I promised I'd come back. I
promised...

He navigates to a folder labelled "Family" on his phone.

Each image a bittersweet reminder of his family at home. Each
have their own memory.

He sees a image of them at the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The sun over the horizon, casts a warm glow over the beach.

Sarah and James sit together on a blanket, their toes buried
in the soft sand.

Laughter and the sound of waves can be heard. Jack and Emily
splash around in the water.

Sarah leans into James, resting her head on his shoulder as
they watch their children play.

SARAH
Isn't this perfect?

James wraps his arm around Sarah, pulling her close.

JAMES
It's more than perfect. It's
everything I've ever wanted.

Sarah smiles, her eyes sparkling with love.

SARAH
You know, we should do this more
often. Just the four of us,
enjoying each other's company.

James nods, a soft smile playing on his lips.

JAMES
I'd like that. A lot.

They sit in comfortable silence for a moment, soaking in the moment.

SARAH
You know, I've been thinking...

JAMES
About what?

SARAH
About our future. About what comes.

JAMES
And what do you see?

SARAH
I see us. Somewhere far away from here. A place where we can start fresh, build a new life together.

JAMES
I love that idea. Just you, me, Emily, and Jack. A new adventure.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
A new adventure.

They share a kiss. As the sun sets on the horizon.

ABRUPT CUT:

INT. JAMES AND SARAH'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

James and Sarah sit across from each other, tension build in the air.

Sarah's expression is one of frustration.

SARAH
(angrily)
I can't believe you're actually considering this, James!

James rubs his forehead.

JAMES
Sarah, please...It's not like I have a choice.

SARAH
You always have a choice, James!
You could refuse, stand up for what's right for our family.

JAMES

I tried, Sarah. I fought tooth and nail to get out of this mission, but they wouldn't listen. They threatened me.

SARAH

But what about us? What about Emily and Jack? You won't see them for years!

James reaches out, grasping Sarah's hand gently.

JAMES

I don't want to leave you. You have to believe me, Sarah. But this is something I have to do.

Sarah pulls her hand away, tears begin to well in her eyes.

She stands up abruptly, leaving James alone.

James buries his face in his hands.

INT. BARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

Sarah watches from a far of James and the kids as they playfully wrestle in the living room.

James and Sarah a tender kiss beneath a canopy of stars.

Emily and Jack run into James; arms as he arrive home from work, their faces lighting up.

James teaches Emily how to ride a bike running alongside her with a proud smile.

Sarah and James cuddle on the couch, wrapped in a blanket as they watch a movie together.

CUT BACK:

INT. SPACECRAFT

James clutches the phone to his chest.

JAMES (V.O.)

Sarah, Emily, Jack... I miss you more than words can say.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I wish I could be there with you, to hold you close and tell you how much I love you. But sure I'll be home soon to say that.

INT. SPACECRAFT, CONTROL ROOM

The spacecraft's control room, bathed in a eerie glow from the panels.

James sits at the main console. The AI's calm voice breaks through the silence.

AI

James, I have calculated our trajectory. We are approaching the sun's gravitational field. Estimated time until impact: T-minus thirty minutes.

James' sits there, emotionless.

JAMES

Thirty minutes... That's all we have left?

AI

Affirmative. I suggest you prepare for the final descent.

James nods.

JAMES

Thank you, AI.

James sits there in silence. A bottle of Vodka in his left hand.

INT. NASA HEADQUARTERS, ENTRANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

James steps through the entrance of NASA. Activity of the facility is surrounding him.

He pauses for a moment, his gaze drawn to the massive spacecraft being constructed in the distance.

All he can do is just look up and down it.

INT. NASA HEADQUARTERS, MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

James enters a dimly lit meeting room, where a group of engineers and scientists are gathered.

Dr. Thompson stands at the head of the table.

DR. THOMPSON

James, good to see you. Please, have a seat.

James takes a seat at the table. His eyes scanning the room.

JAMES

So, what's this all about, Doctor?

DR. THOMPSON

We're here to discuss the details of the mission. The mission that will take you far beyond the reaches of our solar system.

James surprised.

JAMES

Beyond our solar system?

Dr. Thompson nods.

DR. THOMPSON

Yes. You'll be part of an exploratory mission to search for habitable planets in distant galaxies.

JAMES

Why...why are we searching for other planets if we have earth?

DR. THOMPSON

Think of the future. For the future generation.

DR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

It's a journey of discovery, James. One that could change the course of humanity forever.

JAMES

And...How long will this mission last?

DR. THOMPSON

We're looking at a mission duration of several years. Possibly even longer.

James shakes his head.

JAMES

What about my family? How could they cope with their father being gone for so years. That is years i'll miss with my kids.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'll miss them growing up.

DR. THOMPSON

We'll provide support for your family, James.

(MORE)

DR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)
Counselling, financial assistance-
whatever they need.

James sits there in silence.

He remembers what his wife said as he hears voices of the argument.

CUT TO:

INT. JAMES AND SARAH'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

James and Sarah stand face to face. Tension heavy.

SARAH
(furious)
I can't believe you're actually
going through with this, James!
You're choosing your career over
your family!

James struggling to maintain his composure.

JAMES
Sarah, please... You know i have no
choice.

Sarah shakes her head.

SARAH
I don't care about your job! I care
about us. About our family.

JAMES
I'm doing this for us, Sarah. For
our future. You have to believe me.

Sarah's eyes fill with tears. Shaking her head.

SARAH
I can't do this anymore.

James shocked.

JAMES
What...!

SARAH
I can't. I just can't no more.

JAMES
Sarah, Please... Don't do this.

Sarah takes a step back.

SARAH

I'm done, James. I'm done waiting
for you to come back to us. Pack
your bags and get out.

James' world crumbles around him. He watches as she turns
away, leaving him alone.

ABRUPT CUT:

INT. NASA HEADQUARTERS, LOBBY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

James storms through the doors of NASA headquarters. He
marches up to the reception desk. Where the bewildered
RECEPTIONIST looks up at him.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you, sir?

JAMES

I need to speak with Dr. Thompson.
Now.

RECEPTIONIST

I-I'm not sure if he's currently
available at the momen--

JAMES

I don't care. This is urgent.

Without waiting.

He storms past. Down the corridor.

INT. NASA HEADQUARTERS, DR THOMPSON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

James bursts into Dr. Thompson's office without knocking.

JAMES

I'm ready for the mission.

Dr. Thompson looks up from his desk, surprised by James'
sudden appearance.

DR. THOMPSON

James, what's the meaning of this?

A sudden second pause--

JAMES

I'm ready.

They both look at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACECRAFT, LIVING QUARTERS

James sits against a wall. His eyes are red-rimmed and swollen from tears.

A empty bottle of vodka and whiskey sit beside him.

He raises his phone, the screen flickering as he activates the recording function.

JAMES

Sarah, Emily, Jack...It's me. I don't know if you'll ever hear this but i need you to know...I'm sorry.

Tears stream down his face.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I should have listened to you, Sarah. I should have stayed. But i was selfish, and now... now it's too late.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I never got to say goodbye to the kids. I never got to tell them how much i love them.

James' sob.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Emily. I'm sorry, Jack. Daddy loves you so so much. Make sure you look after your mom for me. I love you!

With a trembling hand, James ends the recording.

James stand. He walks towards the window, where he looks out.

As the spacecraft draws closer and closer to the sun James drop to his knees.

He holds a family photo close to his heart. All he can do is sob.

The lights turn red in the craft.

The spacecraft becomes brighter and brighter by the sun. It also shakes, as things start to fall of tables, each photo falls from the wall.

Before the ship crashes. James life flashes before his eyes.

He relives all the happy moments of his life. And ONLY the happy moments.

CUT TO BLACK.