

Time Crime 2098:  
Quantum Endangerment

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v1.0

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EXT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER, DENVER, CO - NIGHT

The minute hand of the clock tower clunks into place, accompanied by twelve distinct rings of a bell.

It is midnight in Denver, CO. The year is 2028.

We approach the clock face, getting closer and closer until we pass through to the inside.

INT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER, DENVER, CO - CONTINUOUS

The inner workings of the tower churn and clink, illuminated only by what little moonlight permeates through the faces of the clock.

In the center of the tower, space appears to start bowing and bending. It's as if the world itself exists on the surface of a balloon, and an invisible finger is poking through.

The warp bends deeper and deeper into itself until a pinpoint of bright light appears at the tip of this unseen appendage. In an instant, a swirling mist explodes out from the point of light, growing into a large pulsating ring of smoke. A shockwave blows through the inside of the clocktower, shattering the clock faces and sending glass careening down onto the street below.

A **cloaked figure** leaps through the portal, carrying a large backpack which spews smoke out of a nozzle. The smoke feeds into the swirling portal, tethered to it. The cloaked figure turns a dial on the backpack, halting the flow.

The figure limps their way down the stairs. They hold something in their hand, resembling a large hinge. They bump into the wall, and a piece of the metal object breaks off. It bounces across the floor and out through the shattered clock face. It careens toward the ground, but we don't see it land.

Up above, as the portal begins to shrink, it creates a vortex that pulls debris inside like a vacuum.

On the other side, before it fully closes, we have only a moment to witness the gleaming neon lights of our future.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD

"Time Crime 2098: Quantum Endangerment"

FADE IN:

EXT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER, DENVER, CO - AFTERNOON

From the outside, in the light of day, the clock tower has certainly seen better days. The hands are beginning to rust at the tips, the stonework is stained with a hundred years of bird droppings, and now the glass faces of the clock have been completely blown out.

We fly down the tower, peering past windows that look into the inner staircase. At street level, a beat-up Toyota Camry sits parked. The driver's arm hangs out the window, a burnt-out joint pressed between their fingers. A loud snore reveals that the driver is fast asleep.

But not for long. The tinny alarm from a phone speaker yanks them from their slumber. MAYA RODRIGUEZ (29, curly dark hair with shaved sides, jeans, and a faded t-shirt) jolts up in her seat.

MAYA

Agh!

She shakes her head, rubs her eyes, and silences the alarm on her phone. She leans back in her seat and massages her forehead.

MAYA (cont'd)

(exhausted)

It's showtime. Wooo.

EXT. ZG GALLERY - EVENING

Maya, hair up, stands alone among a sea of large adult men. They all gaze forward, watching a box truck back up behind the gallery. The driver walks around the side and lifts the massive rolling hatch, revealing slabs of canvases wrapped in protective plastic.

Maya elbows a man next to her.

MAYA

Looks pretty heavy, Terry. You gonna be ok?

Terry chuckles.

TERRY

I don't think you can even grab one of these by yourself.

MAYA  
You don't think? Ah well that we can  
agree on.

Maya sprouts a shit-eating grin. Terry holds his back.

TERRY  
Alright. Whatever, twinkle-toes.

MAYA  
(laughing)  
I got you. I did.

Terry grabs a canvas from the truck, heaves it up with one arm, and starts walking it inside.

Maya watches him pass. She awkwardly slides a canvas off the back of the truck, struggling under the weight. She sets it down on the asphalt as her legs shake from the strain.

She readies herself to push the canvas upright. With very little effort, the canvas lifts.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Oh that was way easier than-

The canvas lifts away from her, revealing two other men have grabbed either side. They lift and walk it in.

Maya blows a loose strand of hair out of her face.

INT. ZG GALLERY - EVENING

Maya, feet shoulder width apart, holds a rope attached to the support beam center of a massive wooden canvas.

A huddle of men stand around the perimeter. They grab the corners and lift it upright, with Maya in the middle wrangling it like cattle.

INT. ZG GALLERY - LATER

Maya drills mounting brackets into the walls and hangs up the smaller canvases by herself. BARRY, (60s, balding, bad polo shirt) walks up behind her.

MAYA  
Evening, Barry.

BARRY  
Maya, got a bit of bad news.

Maya, still facing the canvas, lets her expression slip for only a moment. She turns around, pursing her lips.

MAYA

Yeah?

BARRY

We had an issue with our accountant.  
Paychecks are gonna be a little late  
this week.

MAYA

Barry, the first is tomorrow.

BARRY

I know, I know.

MAYA

Are you gonna cover the late fee when  
I miss rent?

BARRY

That's not- We can't do that.

MAYA

Then what am I supposed to do, Barry?

Barry's eyes dart around the room, looking for answers.

BARRY

Put it on your credit card?

EXT. ZG GALLERY - DAWN

Maya storms out of the gallery towards her Camry, She  
mutters under her breath as she yanks her hair tie out.

MAYA

Son of a goddamn piece of stupid- I  
swear, I'm gonna- Ughhhhh!

INT. VERNE COFFEE ROASTERS - MORNING

Maya, wearing an apron and visor, grins wide despite the  
bags under her eyes.

MAYA

Latte with no foam, two sugars, oat  
milk, and 3 shots of espresso for  
Carl?  
Lattewithnofoamtwsugarsoatmilkthrees  
hots for Carl??

Carl takes his overly complicated order without a word. Maya drops the phony smile.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Have a brilliant day.

INT. VERNE COFFEE ROASTERS - LATER

Maya, leaning on the counter, has fully fallen asleep in the sparsely populated coffee shop.

A customer walks up to the counter, notices her, looks around. He tries to wave at her. He timidly sits back down.

*Dingalingaling!* The door to the coffee shop opens. We hear the roll of a skateboard across the floor, and a man approaches the counter where Maya is still fast asleep.

MAN (O.S.)  
Ma'am?

Maya lets out another snore. The man plops a Zizzle iZ down on the counter. *(Editor's note: Google it.)*

He plugs a first generation iPod into the iZ via an old, ratty aux cable, and presses a button on his iPod.

The iZ starts shredding some absolutely radical ska music through busted speakers.

Maya jolts awake at the sound of trumpets and rhythm guitar in perfect harmony. *(Editor's note: Ska is NOT dead!!)*

She looks up to see a man who appears to have leaped out of an old MTV reality show. This 2000'S MAN wears jeans with holes in them, a denim jacket with a Nickelback tour shirt underneath, tinted wraparound sunglasses.

The pièce de résistance? Frosted tips, baby.

2000'S MAN  
Yo dawg, how do you even fall asleep  
at a coffee shop, jafeel? That's  
gotta be, like, illegal or something.

Maya stares back in shock.

MAYA  
The hell- I mean, um, so sorry! What  
can I get you?

2000's Man looks up at the chalkboard behind her.

MAYA (cont'd)  
A... tomagatchi, maybe?

2000's Man pulls a Motorola flip phone out of his pocket.

2000'S MAN  
Sorry, gotta take this.

We did not hear it ring.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)  
(into phone)  
Veronica! How the hell are ya? Oh, you're telling me. That George... um, uh... Bush! That George Bush, amirite? What a chud. Anywho, am I gonna see you at the Green Day concert this weekend? Radical. Catch you on the flip!

2000's Man snaps the phone shut with one hand.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)  
Could I get a "latty" please?

MAYA  
A "latte"?

2000'S MAN  
Aw, that's a cute accent.

Bewildered, Maya inches over to the espresso machine and begins making the coffee. Between steps, she repeatedly eyes the 2000's Man. He grins wide when he catches her gaze, but she also catches him peering around the store.

Maya hands him the latte. An older man enters the store and stands behind the 2000's Man.

MAYA  
That'll be \$5.75.

2000's Man points to the card reader.

2000'S MAN  
Here?

Maya nods. The 2000's Man pulls out a \$10 bill and attempts to insert it inside the chip reader. The older man pipes up.

OLDER MAN  
Hey buddy, you just blow in from Stupid Town?

2000's Man chuckles nervously. Maya reaches her hand out for the bill.

MAYA  
I can take that.

2000'S MAN  
Um, right. Duh. Thanks. Smoked too much, uh, "grass", jafeel?

MAYA  
You can say weed. It's legal here.

OLDER MAN  
He really is from Stupid Town.

Maya leans around to 2000's Man to fire a customer service smile at the older man behind him.

MAYA  
Hi! Not helping.

Maya opens the register and gives 2000's Man his change. 2000's Man shakes off his nervous expression, and gives her a surfer salute.

2000'S MAN  
Yeah! Rock on, dude!

Maya returns the salute. Embarrassed, she immediately puts her hand back down. The older man in line approaches the counter, rolling his eyes.

MAN  
(derogatory)  
Millennials.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maya shuffles inside her apartment where her roommate KATIE (late-20s, pantsuit, perfectly straight hair) sits at the kitchen table and talks into the webcam of her laptop computer.

KATIE  
So I think if we can pool our resources in the right areas, we can optimize our customer retention and bring value to these otherwise stagnant assets.  
(MORE)



KATIE (cont'd)  
(to Maya)  
Hi!  
(to laptop)  
Furthermore-

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maya plops down on her bed. She is surrounded, flanked on all sides, by a countless number of half-finished paintings. Portraits, landscapes, still-life, you name it.

Not a single one is finished.

Detailed patches of painting trail off into blank canvas. Some paintings have only gone past outlining basic shapes. Others look mostly complete, but appear to be missing chunks from their little worlds. It's as if someone couldn't decide between heads or tails, so they chose neither.

As the morning light beams through the slots between the blinds, Maya's eyes get heavy, and she falls asleep.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

*Beep! Beep! Beep!* The bedside alarm goes off. The clock now reads 4:30pm.

Maya wipes the sleep from her eyes and stumbles out of her bed. She opens her dresser drawers, changes only her shirt, then exits.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Katie is still clacking away at her laptop with headphones on. She doesn't even notice Maya walking out the front door.

EXT. ZG GALLERY - EVENING

Maya sits on a concrete parking block behind the gallery and scrolls through her contacts. She presses one labeled "Mom" and puts the phone to her ear.

MOM (V.O.)  
(through phone)  
Hola! You have reached Anita Rodriguez. I can't come to the phone right now, but leave your name and number and I'll get back to you as soon as I can. Gracias!

A beep plays through the phone.

MAYA

Hola, Mami. Just needed to hear your voice. Dealing with some stuff at work. You know, nothing you haven't dealt with before. Could use some advice right now. I'll talk to you soon, ok? Adios.

A man whistles at Maya as the back hatch of another flatbed truck rolls up.

MAYA (cont'd)

Coming, Jerry!

INT. ZG GALLERY - NIGHT

Maya kneels while carefully unwrapping protective plastic from pieces of an abstract, swirling sculpture. Meanwhile, the men begin drilling the bottom pieces down into the base.

Barry approaches with a clipboard.

BARRY

Maya, can I get a sec?

MAYA

Sure thing. Just gotta finish this.

BARRY

Of course, take your time.

Maya puts the plastic wrap over her face in a vain attempt to smother herself. She gets to her feet and follows Barry to the front of the gallery near the large glass windows.

MAYA

Everything get sorted with the accountant?

BARRY

No. In fact, that's why we need to talk. Um-

MAYA

Barry. What's up.

BARRY

We crunched some numbers and came to the unfortunate decision to... let you go.

Maya crosses her arms and rolls her head across her shoulders.

MAYA

(cold)

May I ask why?

BARRY

Well, sure. It's a matter of, well...

Barry looks around at the large, beefy men moving heavy artwork around the gallery.

BARRY (cont'd)

Performance.

MAYA

I'm not performing?

BARRY

You can't lift as much as the guys.

MAYA

Oh! So it's sexism??

BARRY

It's not- It's biology, Maya.

MAYA

Call it whatever the hell you want to call it, Barry, Jerry, Terry, Larry, Gary, whoever the hell you are!

BARRY

Now, there is no need for that-

MAYA

How long do I have?

BARRY

End of the week.

MAYA

I'm taking my break.

Barry sighs and lets his shoulders slump. The hard, scary part is finally over.

Maya barrels past him.

MAYA (cont'd)

Prick.

BARRY  
Alright now, come on!

EXT. ZG GALLERY FRONT - CONTINUOUS

Maya bursts through the doors of the gallery and lets out an Earth-rattling scream.

She turns around to see the entire crew and Barry staring at her through the big glass windows behind her. She flips them all the bird and storms out of view.

She begins barrelling down the sidewalk, wiping angry tears from her eyes. She picks up her phone and plays the message from her mother again.

MOM (V.O.)  
(through phone)  
Hola! You have reached Anita Rodriguez. I can't come to the phone right now, but leave your name and number and I'll-

*Crash! Klunk! Zzzzeow!*

Maya hangs up upon hearing the loud, abrasive sounds. They seem to be coming from an alleyway a few yards in front of her. She inches toward the corner and peers around.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pieces of garbage fling out from within the belly of a big iron dumpster.

Between items of flying garbage, we hear a strange, low-buzzing hum. It's accompanied by a bright blue light that shines out of the dumpster. The light travels over the alleyway with the sound, emulating something like a photocopy machine.

Maya maneuvers low across the entry to the alleyway and crouches around the other corner.

Another pile of garbage in the air. Another scanning light.

But finally, a man's voice emanates from the dumpster-

MAN (O.S.)  
(hushed)  
Yes!

The man stands up inside the dumpster, revealing himself to be none other than 2000's Man.

MAYA  
(bewildered)

Huh.

2000's Man holds a grimy, busted up piece of metal in his hands. There appears to be nothing particularly remarkable about it, but the elated 2000's Man crawls out of the dumpster, clutching it tight.

He peers up and down the alleyway as Maya hides herself back. He takes off into the darkness, leaving the sound of footsteps splashing in puddles behind him.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Nope. Don't care. Not intriguing at all.

Maya rises slowly to her feet.

She turns the corner and follows the man down the alleyway.

EXT. DENVER AIRPORT - NIGHT

Maya tails 2000's Man a few hundred feet back as they walk through the sleepy streets of Denver. In the distance, she can see the glowing red eyes of the Blue Mustang statue at the entrance to the airport.

Maya looks at her watch, it's nearly midnight.

MAYA  
This was a really bad idea.

Maya eyes the mace in her pocket.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Phew, thank god.

A shovel leans up against the horse legs of "Blucifer". 2000's Man grabs it and begins digging behind the statue. Maya uses this as her opportunity to get closer.

Maya hides behind an electrical control box near the statue's base. 2000's Man tosses his shovel to the side and pulls a backpack out of the ground, adorned with a large nozzle on top.

He starts to press buttons on the pack. It lights it up as something revs to life from inside. Something that does not sound like a combustion engine.

Maya grabs her phone and begins filming. Through the phone screen, we see 2000's Man rip off his sunglasses, frosted tips, denim, and Doc Martens. He replaces them with a sleek dark brown trench coat and complicated boots adorned with lights. He places the pack on his back and pulls a gas mask over his head.

Maya steps out from behind the electrical box.

2000's Man turns a dial on the pack, and a flurry of smoke spews out from the nozzle on the top. It forms into a cloud, suspended about 10 feet into the air. The cloud of smoke begins to swirl, and the space in the middle of the cloud begins to bend. The smoke becomes a ring swirling around the bulge in space-time, until finally-

The portal opens, and a shockwave billows out, blowing back the tails of the man's trench coat.

Maya, on the other hand, tumbles backward a few yards behind.

Through the swirling portal, glimmering neon lights start to shine through. We hear whispers of the soundscape of the future: bleeps, bloops, zooms, fuzzy synths, the works.

2000's Man presses a button on the pack, and the nozzle turns to point toward the ground. With another press, a pillar of smoke jettisons out the back of the pack, launching 2000's Man into the air and through the suspended portal.

Maya looks up from the ground just in time to see him disappear into the hovering ring. She scrambles to her feet and watches the portal swirl behind the Blue Mustang.

She pulls up her phone again and snaps a photo.

At that moment, the portal begins to close. Maya notices her hair pulling towards it on the wind. She turns to run away, but the vortex sweeps her off her feet.

She skids across the lawn, clawing at the grass, but it's no use. Along with debris around her, she lifts off the ground, up into the air, and into the portal.

INT. PORTAL - TIME UNKNOWN

Maya screams as she flies through a smoky tunnel, only until she realizes no sound is coming out. The swirling walls around her show no sign of escape. She looks down at her hands to see her very form bending and stretching inside the time stream.

She tries to take a breath, but there's no oxygen to fill her lungs. She clutches her throat, gasping while she floats weightlessly through the tunnel. Her eyes roll into the back of her head, and her face starts going to blue.

The world around her fades to black.

EXT. DENVER AIRPORT - NIGHT

Maya lands with a thud at the base of Blucifer. She gasps for air, heaving heavy breaths to refill her vacuumed lungs. She lies on her back, looking up at the night sky. She tries to get to her feet, but nothing seems to be working.

Suddenly, a gas mask enters her field of vision. Maya begins thrashing.

2000'S MAN

(muffled)

Calm down! Calm down! It will pass in a minute.

2000's Man rips the gas mask off, revealing to us his true face for the first time. He has jet black hair, thick dark eyebrows, brilliant green eyes, and now he speaks with a thick Irish accent. (*Editor's Note: Yes, I am dream-casting Colin Farrell.*)

2000'S MAN (cont'd)

Can you breathe for me? Just breathe.

With a little effort, Maya breathes in and out.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)

Better?

Maya nods her head.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)

What you're experiencing is totally natural. Jump sickness is rarely permanent.

Maya turns her head towards the city, but 2000's Man pushes it back.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)

Ah, nope. Nope. No, don't want to do that. We're going to get you back home, and this will all be like a bad dream, ok?

Maya shakes her head no.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)  
Wasn't a suggestion.

2000's Man starts typing something into the pack again. Maya squirms on the ground.

Maya's fingers start twitching, and form into a fist.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)  
Ok, we will have you all set here in  
just a-

*WHAM!* Maya knocks a clean one across 2000's Man's jaw. She takes off in a limping sprint as he crumbles to his feet.

2000's Man rubs his face.

2000'S MAN (cont'd)  
Shite.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Maya limps through dark, grungy alleyways separating large, monolithic buildings near the airport. With no time to take in her surroundings, she misses the cat perched on a dumpster with floppy basset hound ears.

MAYA  
(to herself)  
Just gotta get home. Just gotta get home.

She shakes her head and tries to navigate the dark dingy corridors with blurry vision.

Maya exits out onto a street where a handful of vehicles cruise down the road. One comes to a stop in front of her. She peers in to see an empty driver's seat.

DRIVERLESS CAR  
Please step away from the vehicle!

Maya backs up.

MAYA  
Oh. Sorry?

The car drives off.

Maya, still backing up, bumps into another pedestrian on the sidewalk.



MAYA (cont'd)

Oh! Excuse me.

The pedestrian stares back at her through a glowing green eye made out of metal.

PEDESTRIAN

Why don't you watch where you're going?!

MAYA

S-sorry? What part of town...?

Maya turns a corner where a brilliant splash of light plays over her face. She faces toward the source of the colorful beams and looks out in awe.

The city skyline of Denver, Colorado has completely changed. Old buildings are smashed together with futuristic pylons and towers that loom over the ancient architecture below. A large network of beams suspends over the city, carrying suspended tram cars from rooftop to rooftop. The Rocky Mountains can barely be made out in the background. The peaks and divots are silhouetted against an orange night sky, the kind you see when a forest fire burns far away.

MAYA (cont'd)

That's new.

A gas mask is placed backwards over Maya's head. Two large trench coated arms grab her from behind.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

The gas mask whips off, and Maya finds herself in a dark room with a single light dangling above her.

A few feet ahead, masked in the shadows, the end of a cigarette illuminates the face of 2000's Man. He steps into the shaft of dangling light, looking Maya up and down.

2000'S MAN

Who are you?

MAYA

M-Maya.

2000'S MAN

Date of birth?

MAYA

February 17, 1999.

2000'S MAN  
Occupation?

MAYA  
Art handler. Um, baris- hold on.  
Where the hell am I? You don't have  
any right to detain me! I-I need to  
speak to a lawyer.

2000's Man rolls his eyes.

2000'S MAN  
Darlin', a lawyer isn't going to do  
you much good right now. But for the  
sake of handling an olive branch, the  
name's Donovan.

MAYA  
"Extending" an olive branch.

DONOVAN  
Beg yer pardon?

MAYA  
You said it wrong. It's not "handling  
an olive branch". It's "extending an  
olive branch".

Donovan ignores her.

DONOVAN  
Anywho! Maya, we're finding ourselves  
in a bit of a pickle.

MAYA  
We?

DONOVAN  
Well, I'm certainly not getting  
promoted for allowing you to get  
caught inside the wormhole.

MAYA  
Wormhole? So we're...?

DONOVAN  
In the future, yes. The year 2098.

MAYA  
I... It's been 70 years?

DONOVAN  
69 and a half.

MAYA

What?

DONOVAN

Not important. Now that you're awake,  
and the jump sickness has worn off,  
it's time to get you back.

Donovan walks back into the dark, approaching a corner where he flips a switch on the wall. The overhead lights flicker to life, revealing the rest of the room.

INT. DONOVAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Like the dingy office of a noir private eye and an Apple store smashed together, Donovan's office is a blend of the old and new. An old mahogany desk is equipped with curved, paper-thin monitors. An ancient electric fan spins overhead, suspended next to a massive metallic structure centered around a large lens. The blinds are a simple mechanical metal hinge design, letting in beams of colorful neon light.

MAYA

Nice place, I think.

DONOVAN

(sarcastic)

Why, thank you.

Maya jostles the chair she's tied up in.

MAYA

Can you please let me out of this?!

DONOVAN

Not yet, sweetheart.

MAYA

Ew, don't call me that.

Donovan meets her gaze.

DONOVAN

Understood. Unfortunately, ma'am, you are presently in the wrong place and quite literally the wrong time. If I don't get you back to your respective time stream, there could be disastrous consequences.

MAYA

(chuckles)

What, like *Back to the Future*?

Donovan rubs his temples.

DONOVAN  
Americans.

Donovan clacks away at a keyboard beneath the monitors.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Now, we'll simply open another portal  
and get you on your way.

MAYA  
What if I tell people?

Donovan lets out a wry snort.

DONOVAN  
I'm sure they'll believe you saw the  
future.

MAYA  
What- what if I start killing a bunch  
of butterflies?

DONOVAN  
Beg your pardon?

MAYA  
You know. The butterfly effect. It  
will... change the future?

DONOVAN  
So is *all* of your education on  
quantum theory from Hollywood films  
or just most of it?

MAYA  
Ok, then, tell me how it works!

DONOVAN  
That's for us to know, and for you  
folks to find out in...

Maya leans in.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
An unspecified number of decades.

Donovan smirks.

MAYA  
Shit.

DONOVAN  
I'm not that stupid, sweet-

MAYA  
HEY!

DONOVAN  
Ma'am.

Maya nods.

Donovan looks back down at the monitor. His face shifts.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
No. No, no, no.

MAYA  
What? What is it?

DONOVAN  
It shrank. The anomaly shrank.

MAYA  
And what *exactly* does that mean?

DONOVAN  
You can't go home.

MAYA  
Ok, well now I want to go home!!

Maya shakes again in the chair.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Let me out, you crazy psycho! Let me out!!

Donovan runs around to the back of the chair and produces a small mechanical device resembling a potato peeler. Where a blade would be, a thin blue laser beam appears. Donovan cuts the restraints, and Maya sprints to the door.

DONOVAN  
Maya, listen to me! There's no way home out there. I can get you back, but you just- you have to listen to me. For one second.

Maya takes her hand off the door, where we can see there's no doorknob, only a keypad. She pulls the mace from her pocket and aims it at Donovan. Donovan throws his hands up in surrender.

MAYA

I'm listening. Make it quick.

DONOVAN

Ok, ok. Time travel crash course, then.

He walks to a portion of the wall that connects to the large lens-like structure overhead. He presses a few buttons, sending brilliant glowing signals up into the ceiling, down through the lens, and into a glittering hologram suspended in midair.

Maya lowers the mace.

MAYA

Woah.

Donovan smiles. A 3D model of the nozzled backpack appears in the hologram. Donovan starts pointing to various pieces and chambers, rapidly explaining their uses.

DONOVAN

So, this is your standard Mayberg Semi-Portable Time Machine. Designed exclusively for use by the Time Crime Department of America. Time fluid is housed in this compartment here, gets supercharged and vaporized by the twin fusion engines on either side, then shot out the nozzle. At which point-

Donovan inserts his hand through a holographic ring and flicks his wrist to the right. The ring changes from blue to orange, and the 3D model of the time machine begins spewing a cloud of vaporized time fluid, forming a wormhole.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Due to the time fluid's temporal resonance upon interacting with the Earth's atmosphere, the vapor naturally begins to form a ring, opening up a wormhole which allows you to travel backward or forward in spacetime increments of 608,820 hours, 25,367 and a half days, or, if you'd like, 69 and a half years. Any questions? No? Good.

MAYA

I actually have a lot.

DONOVAN  
And so little time! What a shame.

Donovan hits a button on the wall and hologram disappears.  
He walks over to his desk and presses a few buttons on the computer.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Now normally, these machines are only  
to be used by members of the TCDA in  
Omaha HQ-

MAYA  
Omaha?

DONOVAN  
But every once in a while, something  
goes wrong, a machine is stolen, and  
that's where detectives such as  
myself come in.

Maya peers over Donovan's shoulder as he flies backward  
through the timeline on his screen, scrolling all the way  
leftward to 2028. Here, we can see the timeline turn a dark  
red in and around April of that year. On the right hand of  
the screen is an accompanied percentage, displayed beneath a  
title that reads "Probability of Timeline Collapse".

It's a 92% chance.

MAYA  
That doesn't look good.

DONOVAN  
No, but surprisingly enough, it was  
worse this morning.

MAYA  
Meaning?

DONOVAN  
Either it doesn't matter which  
timezone you're in and something else  
caused the Probability to shrink,  
or...

MAYA  
I'm *supposed* to be here?

DONOVAN  
It's a possibility. And I can't risk  
sending you back if it means bringing  
us even closer to a timeline  
collapse.

Donovan turns off the computer and goes to a coat rack where he adorns a trench coat and fedora.

MAYA

How is that possible? If I'm not home, then everything I was going to do today or tomorrow doesn't happen, and then... I mean, the future would unravel right?

Donovan snickers.

MAYA (cont'd)

Oh my God. WHAT is so funny to you?! My entire life has just disappeared, don't you get it!!

Donovan steps back and wipes the smirk off his face.

DONOVAN

You're right. I'm sorry. You get a little jaded doing this sort of thing over and over again.

MAYA

You've kidnapped women from the past before?

DONOVAN

I have not-! No. This is a first, alright? Let me make that perfectly clear.

Maya crosses her arms.

MAYA

I'm choosing to believe you.

DONOVAN

Time just... doesn't work the way you think it does. It's not that rigid. Rather, it's more fluid. If some small thing happens a different way than it was supposed to, if someone-  
(gestures to Maya)  
-goes missing even, if a butterfly dies on accident, time sort of... fills in the gaps. Resealing itself.

Donovan grabs a spare coat and tosses it to Maya. She takes a whiff of it and recoils. She begrudgingly puts it on.

MAYA

But that red spot on your timeline?



DONOVAN

A Nexus Point. Those are the places in space and time the Department has to protect the most. If a butterfly dies *there*? Game over.

Donovan presses a few numbers on the keypad next to his door.

MAYA

So. What am I supposed to do here exactly? Am I supposed to help you?

Donovan takes a deep breath and smiles wide.

DONOVAN

I have no idea.

EXT. FUTURE DENVER STREETS - NIGHT

When the door hisses open, we push through the threshold to take in the sights and sounds of the future. From the street level, large, towering monoliths of buildings, adorned with neon signs hanging haphazardly from their sides, stretch into the sky and are swallowed by dark clouds.

People adorned in trench coats, goggles, hats and hoods with all different kinds of glowing gadgetry embedded into the fabric.

Completely automated food service carts dispense hot meals and cold drinks with no trace of a human soul within.

Above, just beneath the cloud line, gondolas hang from a suspended monorail track, weaving through the buildings. Passengers move to and from their respective destinations without ever touching the ground.

Maya stands in the middle of the sidewalk, stunned at the vision before her. She tries her best to take in every detail she sees. A dark leather coat jacket rams into her shoulder.

MAYA

Sorry!

The jacket's owner turns to look at Maya. Her face is familiarly human but for the glowing red pupils staring back at her through metal eyes.

Maya recoils absentmindedly into another pedestrian, knocking them both to the floor. Maya crawls to her feet and offers a hand down.

MAYA (cont'd)  
I'm so sorry about that! Here let me help you.

A cold, metal claw grasps at Maya's hand and she muffles a shriek. The pedestrian rises to their feet, and spits out something gruff and unintelligible.

Donovan appears behind her.

DONOVAN  
So!

Maya jumps.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Glad I didn't let you go out here all alone?

MAYA  
I was glad until just now.

DONOVAN  
Not the first time I've heard that.  
Follow me. We've already got our first clue.

Donovan holds up a mangled piece of metal. On it, a serial number remains intact against the carnage.

INT. KAYDIK'S BODY SHOP - NIGHT

A flickering sign out front, housed underneath a rotating robotic arm, Maya and Donovan walk through the saloon-style doors into the body shop.

MAYA  
Ooh. Felt like a cowboy.

DONOVAN  
And that's why they put it in.

Donovan puts a toothpick in his mouth and tips his hat.

Donovan approaches the counter where an absolute behemoth of a body has their back turned, sparks flying every which way from behind their impossibly broad shoulders.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Dikky, how the hell are ya!

The sparks stop, and the massive torso rotates around, revealing a broad chest, large gut, cannon arms.

A small head rests atop, covered in a futuristic blacksmith's mask, adorned with rotating lenses resembling an ophthalmoscope.

A surprisingly soft voice responds.

KAYDIK

I told you not to call me that,  
detective.

Maya turns to Donovan.

MAYA

Gee, that sounds familiar.

DONOVAN

Alright, alright. Point taken.

KAYDIK

(gesturing to Maya)  
And who is this?

DONOVAN

My, uh-

MAYA

Partner.

Donovan laughs.

DONOVAN

Not on your life! She's... assisting  
me in a case here. My *assistant*.

MAYA

That remains to be seen.

DONOVAN

(to Maya)  
It does, doesn't it?  
(to Kaydik)  
Can you identify this?

Donovan places the mangled metal on the counter.

KAYDIK

Fee first this time. It took you four  
weeks to pay me back when-

DONOVAN

I know, I know, I know! I know...  
when. We're all familiar with *when*.

MAYA  
I'm not familiar with "when".

DONOVAN  
You don't wanna know about "when".

MAYA  
How do I know whether I wanna know  
about "when" or not if I don't know  
what "when" is?

Kaydik places a tree trunk arm on the counter and leans  
towards Maya. They flip up their blacksmith's mask to reveal  
a soft, round, feminine face atop this burly body.

KAYDIK  
You don't want to know about "when".

Maya backs off.

MAYA  
I think you're right.

Kaydik puts the welding mask down. Donovan scans a card onto  
a reader to pay.

KAYDIK  
I often am, and this is a piece of a  
Jetball Leg, International League  
Class.

Kaydik points an oil-covered finger towards the broken part.

DONOVAN  
That was fast.

KAYDIK  
The security cam scanned the serial  
number into I.A.M. when you walked  
in.

MAYA  
That's what the saloon doors are for!

KAYDIK  
They also make you feel like a  
cowboy.

Donovan walks away from the counter with the piece under his  
arm and waves goodbye.

DONOVAN  
Much obliged! See you next time.

KAYDIK  
Hopefully not.

Maya and Kaydik remain at the counter.

MAYA  
I guess I should catch up with him.

KAYDIK  
You're not from here, are you?

MAYA  
Uh, no. I'm from... New York.

KAYDIK  
(laughs)  
I don't see any gills.

MAYA  
Excuse me?

KAYDIK  
New York's been under water since the  
Big Melt.

Maya steps back.

MAYA  
Um, I meant the- Upstate New York.  
Y'know, where it's up above the...  
melt water. I gotta go,  
thankssomuchbye!

Maya bolts out the saloon doors.

EXT. FUTURE DENVER STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Donovan walks ahead, clutching the jetleg piece tight. A few self-driving cars whiz past Maya and veer out of the way just before hitting her. She freezes in place, exhales in relief, and runs up to Donovan.

MAYA  
Would you please slow down?!

DONOVAN  
You've got to pick up the pace. Time  
is of the essence!

Donovan brushes his jacket and adjusts his badge.

PUNK #1  
Hey my turn!

MAYA  
(turning)  
Huh?

Maya sees a gaggle of punk teens wrestling for a piece of cable wire near a glowing purple kiosk.

PUNK #1  
Gimme the Mick, man!

PUNK #2  
You just used the Mick, numbnuts,  
it's my turn!

PUNK #3  
Heheheh. Hey guys. Guys. Suck my  
Mick. Get it?

PUNK #1 AND #2  
Shut up, Clyde.

PUNK #3  
Aw.

MAYA  
Should I ask what that's all about?

DONOVAN  
Yeah, that's a McLintock Kiosk. You  
wanna steer clear of those. Weird  
folks round there.

MAYA  
So... what is it?

DONOVAN  
You see those plugs in the back of  
their necks?

Maya looks over at the horde near the kiosk and notices the tall, thin plug ports embedded in the back of the users' neck and spine. Punk #1 finally snags the cable from Punk #2 and rams the plughead into the port. His eyes roll back white, and his face rapidly switches past a flurry of different emotions.

His eyes roll back and he heaves forward, yanking the plug out.

PUNK #1  
Dude that was nuts!

PUNK #2  
I know!

PUNK #1  
It was in a snowglobe the whole  
freakin' time, dude!

PUNK #3  
Hey, don't spoil it.

PUNK #1 AND #2  
Shove off, Clyde!!

PUNK #3  
Double aw.

MAYA  
Snowglobe? Are they talking about St.  
Elsewhere?

DONOVAN  
I don't know what that is, but those  
things let you watch an entire movie  
in a snap. A season of TV in a few  
seconds.

Donovan snaps his fingers.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
It's pretty much the only way to keep  
up with how much shite they're  
cooking up these days. Your mother  
ever tell you too much TV rots your  
brain?

MAYA  
I actually grew up watching that show  
with my mom.

The cinephile punks devolve into a mosh pit and begin  
shaking the kiosk.

DONOVAN  
Well, I rest my case.

EXT. JETSET STADIUM - LATER

Maya and Donovan approach a large coliseum-like structure  
with multiple overhead railways feeding into them.

Maya stares up at the suspended train cars flying overhead.

MAYA  
So that's the future of public  
transportation?

DONOVAN

"Public" is a strong word. Lot of folks down here can't afford the fees.

MAYA

Can you?

DONOVAN

Say! I wonder what this large obelisk-esque building is, don't you? And how it pertains to our mission?

MAYA

Yeah, so, you haven't told me anything about what our mission is exactly.

DONOVAN

I've told you everything I know.

MAYA

So... nothing.

Donovan looks at Maya, and down at the leg piece.

DONOVAN

Look, time travel is... unfathomably complicated. It's not my job to understand it, just to follow my orders and fix it. I located the Nexus Point in the middle of Denver, April 2028. I packed up my things from Omaha and made it over here as soon as I could.

MAYA

Well, have you dealt with something like this before? We can start there.

DONOVAN

We haven't seen anything this dangerous in the entire history of the TCDA.

Maya squints, and mouths "TCDA".

MAYA

Oh, got it.



INT. JETSET STADIUM - LATER

Maya and Donovan shuffle into their seats high up in the bleachers, overlooking the jetball field. The field consists of a flat rectangle of synthetic grass, marked on all four corners by tall, towering devices. They each glow with blue hololenses that point toward the center of the field.

Donovan dumps the leg piece into Maya's hand.

DONOVAN  
Keep this out of sight, I'll be  
scouting.

Maya looks around.

MAYA  
So what do I do?

DONOVAN  
What I just said. Keep that out of  
sight.

MAYA  
Whatever.

DONOVAN  
And enjoy the game!

Maya slumps into her seat, arms crossed over the metal piece. She awkwardly slides her sweatshirt over the twisted hunk of junk.

Maya jumps at the announcer's voice blasting overhead.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS! ARE YOU READY??  
FOR JETBALLLLLLLLLLLL????

The crowd goes wild, lasers and spotlights fly all around the multi-tiered slopes of Jetset Stadium. On the other side, Maya can see a sea of people lighting up devices in sequence. The effect simulates a glowing wave splashing across the crowd.

The wave wraps around the stadium to her section, and she watches the crowd around her stand. The members of the crowd are equipped with an assortment of implants. Some common and repeated, others more singular and unique. Each implant has lights that shine brighter as the wave passes over them.

Maya reaches into her pocket to pull out her cellphone. Her lock screen displays a picture of herself and an older woman bearing a striking resemblance to her. She still has no service.

Horns blare through the speakers and the audience cheers as the Jetball players spill out onto the field.

INT. JETSET STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Far from where he left Maya, Donovan casually saunters through the bleachers of the stadium. He pulls his hat down over his eyes and takes an empty seat. His gaze focuses on two men a few rows below him, the best seats in the house.

Donovan retrieves a device from his jacket pocket. He presses a button, and a satellite dish springs forth from the machinery.

INT. JETSET STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Back in Maya's seat, we see the opposing jetball teams line up on the starting line and shake hands. The hololenses that flank the play field light up with a brilliant cerulean glow.

The players gaze skyward.

Maya leans in as she sees the apparition appear in empty space. A glowing blue ball fizzles to life, a hologram suspended in space, projected by the large towers. On either end of the field, blue holographic circles appear. They float up and down on a single axis.

With a sound like a gunshot, the players activate their jet legs in unison, and they rocket upwards towards the holoball. Maya glances down at the busted piece under her sweatshirt.

One player rockets higher than the rest. She sports a neon Pink Mohawk, a nose ring, and countless brands across her jersey.

She unhooks a pair of sticks from a holster on her jet legs. The sticks are attached by a cable on either end, linking them together like nunchucks. One stick appears like the handle of a baseball bat while the other resembles a giant ice cream scoop.

The speedy player grabs the handle of the nunchucks and spins the scoop rapidly until it becomes a blur. She reaches the holoball.

With a swing and flick of her wrist, the scoop catches the ball in its spin. The player swings the instrument forward, and the holoball careens across the field toward the goal circles. The holoball leaves a brilliant blue trail behind it, mapping its trajectory for the crowd to see.

Another player jets across the air and smacks the holoball back where it came from. The teams engage in a volley at breakneck speed. They send the ball back and forth with such ferocity that the teams appear as flies caught on a brilliant blue spiderweb.

The crowd goes wild. Even Maya forgets herself and stands to cheer, nearly dropping the busted leg piece. She kneels down to catch it in time and returns to her seat, looking around to make sure she hasn't drawn any attention. To her benefit, nothing in the stands is nearly as exciting as what's happening on the field.

The holoball flies up to the tippy top of the play area. Its top half fizzles away as it breaches the bounds of the hololens towers. Our pink-mohawked player is in hot pursuit, jetting upwards to make contact before anyone else can. She spins the scoop again, pulls her arm back for a swing...

And her jet legs turn off.

The flames sputter out. She flails as gravity reclaims her. A player on the opposing team reaches the holoball and smacks it towards the goal circle. It's a perfect shot.

He doesn't notice the player careening toward the ground beneath him.

As Pink continues to fall, reality dawns upon the crowd, and murmurs turn into shrieks. A few of Pink's teammates recognize the danger, drop their chuks, and jet towards her plummeting body.

Pink falls faster and faster. The view below her is swallowed by the sickly green of the synthetic turf. She screams for help, grasping at thin air that will not save her.

She's only 10 feet from the ground now. Her teammates aren't going to make it in time. Some in the crowd look away, but most can't help but to stare. Something terrible is about to happen, and everyone wants to say they saw it firsthand.

*Click! KKKKKHHHHRRRRRRRRRR!*

Pink's jet legs rumble back to life. The fire of the jets melt the synthetic turf mere centimeters beneath her feet.

She turns the legs off, standing safely on the ground. Legs weak, too stunned to speak.

A manager and a referee trot onto the field to attend to Pink. They huddle for a short minute and the stadium goes completely silent.

Through a strained smile, Pink waves at the crowd. The manager claps. The referee gives a thumbs up. The crowd goes wild.

Crisis averted.

DONOVAN

Oi!

Donovan appears out of nowhere right to next to Maya, giving her a jolt.

MAYA

Jesus! Did you see that?

DONOVAN

See what? We got what we needed.  
Let's skedaddle.

INT. DONOVAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Donovan produces the device from earlier. He plugs it into the console connected to the overhead hololens.

MAYA

You seriously didn't see that player almost die in front of everybody?

DONOVAN

Forget it, Maya. It's jetball.

Maya shoots back a quizzical look.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

It's the most dangerous sport in the world. People get hurt all the time. It's like what you have in your era, the uh...

MAYA

Football?

DONOVAN

The one where you're on the ice with the big brooms and the fat rock.

MAYA

Curling?!

DONOVAN

I'm noting your disbelief, but you better keep an eye out during the 2044 Winter Olympics. "The Night of Crimson Snow" they called it.

Donovan presses a few buttons on the console. A hologram of an audio waveform appears suspended in the air below the lens. Donovan slowly swipes his hand across the waveform, left to right. A nearby speaker plays back a soundscape of the jetball stadium. It's a cacophony of human voices, machine hums, crowd cheers, announcer commentary, and rocket jets. Donovan swipes his hand backward through the waveform and the audio plays backward.

MAYA

What are you do-

DONOVAN

Working. Take a seat and don't touch anything.

Maya plants herself in a chair with her arms crossed.

MAYA

Whatever gets me home sooner.

Donovan opens a drawer in the console and pulls out a tiny scalpel. He clicks a button and the blade of the scalpel glows blue.

With surgical precision, Donovan begins to shave pieces off of the holographic waveform with the glowing scalpel. Every time he cuts a piece off, he waves his hand through to see how the playback has changed. With every scrape, every cut, two distinct voices start to get louder in the symphony of noise.

Finally, Donovan flicks the last piece of data off the waveform and plays it back. Like the sculptor hitting the skin, he has isolated the exact conversation he was searching for. The voices are garbled, sounding heavily digitized and distant, but they are clear enough to make out words.

MAN #1

I understand yo...--were harassed by the...er?

MAN #2  
...riefly. W---n't too hard to  
outru....em.

MAN #1  
--eds to move on. Let --t go...been  
a persis--nnt thorn in our side for  
ye... Y---...ure --'ll stay quiet?

MAN #2  
--oesn't matter...--no one will  
listen t--.

MAN #1  
..--mperative we don't let this  
happen again.

MAN #2  
But sir...--would require a redesign  
of--...ntire line.

MAN #1  
W--re not going to resor..to that.  
Wait..What's h---on the field?

Donovan presses a button and the holoprojector turns off.

MAYA  
Who were these guys?

DONOVAN  
Scott Bionics executives. They all  
get season passes. Their tech is the  
only reason the sport exists in the  
first place.

MAYA  
They make all the robot arms and  
stuff?

DONOVAN  
Yeah, and stuff. Practically run the  
world at this point. Nearly everyone  
has some kind of biotech implant from  
Scott.

MAYA  
Do you?

DONOVAN  
No, ma'am! I'm a natty through and  
through.

(MORE)

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
But I figured if the anomaly led me to that piece of jetleg, and the piece led me to Scott, and these boyos are CLEARLY attempting to hide something in plain sight...

MAYA  
Our next step is to investigate the robot leg guys?

DONOVAN  
(mocking)  
Yes, the robot guys.

MAYA  
You're a real piece of work. You know that?

DONOVAN  
You'd be surprised to hear I get that a lot.

MAYA  
Mmmm sure. And how exactly do we start investigating a big scary future tech company?

Donovan dawns an uncharacteristically cheery smile. Maya's eyes narrow.

MAYA (cont'd)  
...how do we do that, Donovan?

Donovan lets out a contented sigh.

DONOVAN  
From the inside.

INT. SCOTT BIONICS - DAY

Maya stands out front of the entrance to Scott Bionics, a massive complex spanning a whole block on the streets on the Denver. She wears an outfit that could be best described as "neo-tech bro" complete with an iridescent faux leather jacket, self-adjusting sweatpants, and a cap with controller buttons and a small screen on the brim. She taps the side of her glasses with a finger.

MAYA  
The future sucks.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Right it does, but now it's time to  
get yourself to your very real and  
very legitimate job interview.

Maya takes a breath and steps inside, gripping a folder full  
of papers.

INT. SCOTT BIONICS LOBBY - DAY

The entryway of Scott Bionics is cavernously large and  
prodigiously empty. White walls reflect every single photon  
of light into a blinding, sterile whitewash. The front desk  
sits an absurd distance away from the entrance, supervised  
by a single employee. To the right of the desk, a large row  
of scanners leading towards a cluster of elevators.

Maya's Chuck Taylor's outfitted with RGB LEDs squeak across  
the floor as she makes the long, silent journey to the front  
desk.

On approach, Maya notices the receptionist's glasses are  
attached to metal implants with blinking lights embedded in  
her temples.

The receptionist doesn't look up from her holographic  
screens.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Stay cool.

Maya waves.

MAYA  
Um, hi!

The receptionist looks up blankly. An awkward silence  
follows.

MAYA (cont'd)  
So... I'm here for an interview.

RECEPTIONIST  
Department?

MAYA  
Prosthetics R&D, Sports Division.  
Melanie Ringer.

RECEPTIONIST  
Hm.



The receptionist looks back down at the hologram screen and swipes through a few windows. Melanie Ringer's profile comes up, with a headshot of Maya attached to the file.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)  
Seems your preliminary interviews  
went rather well.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Thanks to me.

Maya taps the side of her glasses and smiles.

MAYA  
What can I say? I interview well.

The receptionist looks her up and down. She notices the folder Maya clutches.

RECEPTIONIST  
Is that... paper?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Game time. Make this look good.

Maya fumbles to open the folder.

MAYA  
Yes! My resume, some of my portfolio,  
references, all that stuff.

RECEPTIONIST  
(bewildered)  
Why wouldn't you just bring that all  
in a puck?

Maya shrugs.

MAYA  
You could call me old-fashioned, I  
guess. Besides there's- whoops!!

Maya comically drops all the papers across the floor.

RECEPTIONIST  
Ugh great.

MAYA  
I'm so sorry!

RECEPTIONIST  
Haven't you ever heard of fomite  
transmission?! I'll have to call the  
sanitation crew down here.

In the chaos, Maya inches her way towards one of the scanners near the elevators.

MAYA  
Sorry! Sorry, I'll be more careful upstairs.

Maya sneaks a small circular tab onto a scanner.

RECEPTIONIST  
Yes, please do!

Maya picks up the papers off the floor.

MAYA  
Should I wait here, or...?

Receptionist points through the scanner, pinching the bridge of her nose.

RECEPTIONIST  
Just go!

Maya taps the side of her glasses.

MAYA  
Get ready.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
3... 2... 1.

The small circular tab glows blue. Maya walks through the scanner. The blue glow turns off.

MAYA  
Am I all clear?

The receptionist waves her away while she speaks into one of her implants.

Maya taps her glasses.

MAYA (cont'd)  
That was an EMP?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Highly localized, yes. Without that, those scanners would've pinged these glasses immediately and you'd have found yourself in a world of trouble.

MAYA  
And you were 100% certain that was going to work?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
More or less.

The elevator doors open. Maya walks in.

INT. PROSTHETICS R&D, SPORTS DIVISION - DAY

The elevator doors slide open to reveal a large atrium. A hallway, separated by support columns, circles the perimeter for three floors upward.

Maya steps out of the elevator with feigned confidence.

Cubicle-like workstations fill the space of the atrium, each populated by a single employee. Robotic limbs of all shapes and sizes are suspended on adjustable frames, connected to hololens displays where diagnostic codes run.

Every single person in this room, apart from Maya, wears an identical piece of tech embedded in their temple.

MAYA  
(hushed, to Donovan)  
Where to next?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
What do you mean? You're already there.

MAYA  
Donov-! This place is huge! There's like a million people here.

DONOVAN  
Now, listen, you can't be too proud to ask for directions, can ya?

Maya rolls her eyes and approaches the nearest cubicle.

MAYA  
Excuse me, I'm here for an interview?

The employee looks upward with a blank expression. Without any reaction, the robotic arm attached to their frame points toward an enclosed office at the other side of the atrium.

Maya looks between the arm and the unblinking worker.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Uhm-  
(to the arm)  
Thanks.

They return to their work.

MAYA (cont'd)  
(to Donovan)  
What was-?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Stay focused.

Maya approaches the office which resembles an oversized phone booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Maya enters and looks back at the sea of workers.

GARY  
Tough crowd, huh?

Maya whips a 180.

At the desk sits GARY (60s, striking resemblance to Barry).

MAYA  
Oh hi! I was just- I'm Maaa-elanie.  
I'm here for the interview.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Oh, come on, there's no way he's  
gonna buy that.

Maya dawns a phony smile.

GARY  
Have a seat!

He totally bought it.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Unbelievable.

Maya hands her folder forward.

As Gary leans forward to grab the folder, Maya notices that he sports a similar hunk of metal on the side of his head, glittering with LEDs. It's a clearly more advanced model than the ones on the atrium floor.

MAYA  
You should find all my materials  
there.

GARY

Oh-ho! A paper resume. Haven't seen one of these since, well, hm, long before you were born.

MAYA

(rehearsed)

People call me old fashioned. I get it a lot.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Well done so far. Remember the script.

Gary flips through the pages.

GARY

You know, there was paper everywhere back then. Coupons, magazines, burger wrappers, tissues. Of course that was before all the-

Gary brandishes a terse smile.

GARY (cont'd)

Anyhow, what drew you to Scott Bionics?

MAYA

I wanted to change the world, and this is the place to do it.

GARY

Well-said! Well said, yes. And I see here you have plenty of experience in quantum computing systems, robotics, quality control. We could put your skills to great use. But, so could, say, the Nile or Visage. Why here?

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Stick to the script.

MAYA

Because Scott Bionics is the premiere innovator in today's-

GARY

No, no, no, I don't want to hear some jargon plucked off an I.A.M search.

Gary holds up the papers.

GARY (cont'd)  
I can tell you're different. Why here?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Ah shite. That's not in the script, is it?

MAYA  
Uhhhh... because prosthetics...

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Don't panic! I'll think of something.

Maya looks out the glass partition of the office at the various permutations of limb adorning the atrium.

MAYA  
Are a piece of art, in a way.

Gary's eyebrows perk.

GARY  
Oh?

MAYA  
And while we may not be the... owners of this art, we are its handlers. And those that... those who are the ones who would, of course, handle said art, should see the beauty in it as much as, if not more, than its intended... user.

Gary leans back.

GARY  
Hm.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Okay then, plan B. Thank him for his time, and-

GARY  
That was... truly remarkable! I might have to put that in our monthly newsletter, even. May I?

MAYA  
Oh. Oh! Of course!

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
They can't possibly be this-

GARY  
Melanie, I think you would be a terrific addition to our team! One more thing, though. I noticed your resume said you went to Columbia.

Maya nods.

MAYA  
Yes, I majored in-

GARY  
Columbia's been underwater for twenty years.

Maya freezes. She blinks twice.

MAYA  
Did that say Columbia University? That must be a typo. I attended Columbia College. Which still exists. In Chicago.  
(under her breath)  
Right?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Gimme a sec.

Muted clacking sounds play over the headset.

DONOVAN (O.S.) (cont'd)  
You're good.

GARY  
Haven't heard of it, but I'll run it through I.A.M. later. No need to worry. I'm sure the one in Chicago is just as good. For now, we need you to sign some first-time papers, of course. Noticed you were a natty when you walked in.

MAYA  
Did you say a "natty"?

Gary laughs.

GARY  
Oh. You're not- Do they not call it "natty" where you're from?

MAYA  
I, uh...

GARY

Natty. Natural. No implants.

MAYA

Oh! Yes, yes, I'm so sorry, yes, I thought you were saying "Matty" with an M. M, as in Ma- yeah, no, I am. A Natty. Clearly.

GARY

Yes, so we'll need you to sign these papers to undergo your surgery. Don't worry, our insurance covers the whole thing.

MAYA

Surgery?

GARY

Well, you won't be able to get much done without one of these, will you?

Gary points to the interface embedded in his temple.

Maya strains to hide her disgust.

MAYA

Hahahahaha! I guess I wouldn't! Ok. Yeah.

Maya signs scribbles on the forms in a midair holodisplay.

GARY

We'll schedule you for next Wednesday. A few days of orientation will be best before the post-install fog sets in. Only lasts around a month, not to worry.

MAYA

Mhmm. Makes sense.

Maya grips her seat with white knuckles.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Maya, these glasses have a heart rate monitor. Are you ok?

MAYA

If that's all, I was wondering if you could point me to the nearest restroom before I leave?



GARY

Certainly. Out the door, to the left,  
down the hall, first right, then  
second left, through the hibernium,  
and under the halogen lamps.

MAYA

The "hibernium" of course. Got it.

INT. PROSTHETICS R&D, SPORTS DIVISION - CONTINUOUS

Maya steps out of the booth and back into the atrium.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

There should be an elevator at the  
bottom-left corner from where you're  
facing.

MAYA

I'm facing away from the office.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Top-right corner.

Maya makes her way through the cubicles past more and more  
blank faces.

MAYA

Why do they all look like that?

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Probably an amygdala firewall during  
work hours.

MAYA

So it's a kinda brain block?

DONOVAN (O.S.)

The part that processes emotion,  
yeah.

Maya looks around.

MAYA

These people can't feel anything?

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Not between the hours of 8 to 7.  
Let's get a move on.

Maya turns the corner to see the elevator a few yards down  
the hall.

A worker presses their wrist to a panel on the wall. Through a glass shaft, we see the elevator zip into place. The doors open, and they step inside.

DONOVAN (O.S.) (cont'd)  
Alright, you'll need to incapacitate the next person to try and use these lifts. Take their hand, put it on the sensor, hide their body somewhere inconspicuous, and make it down to the server room.

MAYA  
Hide the body? Are you crazy?! I can't incapacitate anybody!

An elevator slides into place. The doors open, and a worker steps out with the same blank expression as everyone else.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
You better think of something quick. Another one is coming here now, and the longer we wait, the sooner the bald bastard runs your papers through I.A.M. to find out it's a load of swallop.

Maya runs up to the worker.

MAYA  
Hey, hi! I'm Melanie. First day! Yay, so fun. Hey, could you do me a solid? I don't have my wrist... card yet. Gotta get something from down the tube. Could you beep me in? Please?

The worker stares back.

WORKER  
That's not protocol.

MAYA  
I know, but it's just this one little teensy time. I'll owe you one! It's right there. Riiight within reach. Move your arm, what, a foot? Done.

WORKER  
That's not protocol.

Maya deflates.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
There's probably a desk chair nearby  
you could hit him with.

Maya removes the glasses.

DONOVAN (O.S.) (cont'd)  
Hey, what are-!

Donovan's voice goes along with the headset.

MAYA  
Gary said you gotta beep me in.

WORKER  
Oh, ok. That's protocol.

The worker presses their wrist to the panel. The doors open.  
Maya steps in.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Maya puts the glasses and headset back on.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
There you are! What happened? Did you  
get in the elevator?

MAYA  
Sure did.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Did you check to make sure they were  
still breathing?

MAYA  
I didn't-! I pulled rank on him. Said  
the bald guy said to beep me in. No  
violence necessary, Rambo.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
(surprised)  
Ah. Nicely done.

MAYA  
Thanks.

INT. BASE LEVEL - LATER

The doors slide open, and Maya steps out of the elevator.  
There's a long corridor straight ahead with a double door at  
the end, shut tight. On the right: a second door, wide open.

Maya tiptoes down the corridor. We hear the faint sounds of machinery and voices coming from the open door.

Maya reaches it and peeks around the corner. She sees a massive warehouse full of rows and rows of shelves. Each are adorned with futuristic, sleek black crates.

The sea of workers move between stations where the crates are packed with raw metals, machined parts, finished prosthetics, and small vehicles resembling forklifts.

Upon further inspection of the packing area, we can see that every worker's right hand and forearm has been replaced with a robotic claw.

They load the materials into the crate, shut the lid, and insert their replacement limb into a slot. Their claw hands twist like a drill within, locking the crates tight.

Maya hops in front of the door. No one notices her.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

You made it to the server room yet?

MAYA

I'm close. Got distracted.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Please. It is imperative you stay focused.

Maya reaches the door at the end of the hall.

MAYA

Another locked door. I need to convince somebody to let me in again.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Or there's always my way!

MAYA

Hush. Let me-

\*Beep beep\*

The door swings open, pinning Maya into the corner. Another claw hand worker exits, carrying a load of cables.

Maya catches the handle before the door swings shut. She watches, frozen in place, as the worker shuffles down the hall and through the door to the warehouse.

INT. SERVER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maya slips in, suddenly awash in green light.

The room consists of rows upon rows of glowing cylindrical server stacks. Each cylindrical metal puck is separated by a ring of green. Their hums reverberate in the windowless room.

MAYA

I'm here.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Righty-o. You see the towers, yah?

MAYA

Yup.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Green means they're online. Online means they're connected to I.A.M. and verified. If they're hiding something, it won't be online.

MAYA

So I'm looking for a different color than green. Easy enough.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Go one row at a time, and I'll mark them off here until you find something.

Maya strolls up and down the narrow rows and columns of server towers. She snakes through the room, checking every section of every tower.

She reaches the other end of the room, empty handed.

MAYA

Nothing. Everything is green.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

You sure?

MAYA

Positive.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

That's not good. Give me a minute.  
Gonna go back to the drawing board.

Maya notices a canvas painting hanging on one of the walls. She squints at it.

MAYA

Hang on.

Maya approaches the canvas, and runs her hand down the side of it. Her fingers halt at the bottom, where we can see a sizeable gap between the canvas and the wall.

Maya walks around to the front of the painting and squares her knees into a squat. She grasps the bottom of the canvas and lifts it off the hook. She shuffles sideways a few steps and places it on the ground.

A lone keypad can now be seen on the wall.

MAYA (cont'd)

There was a keypad behind this painting.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Oh. How'd you spot that?

MAYA

From the right angle, you could see it wasn't flush with the wall. That means there's probably something sticking out behind it. Happens a lot with thermostats at work.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Well, well, well, Sherlock. Maybe you should be the detective.

MAYA

Yeah, maybe I should.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Hey, now.

MAYA

You started it.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Anywho! We need a code.

MAYA

The security here is so awful, they probably put it on the back of-

Maya looks at the canvas.

MAYA (cont'd)

No.

She lifts it off the wall and peers behind.

0-2-7-4 is printed on a label glued to the back.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Unbelievable.

INT. SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A secret door slides upward into the wall when Maya puts the code into the keypad.

The room is pitch black. Maya feels around for a light switch.

Harsh fluorescent lights flicker on above Maya, revealing a bare, gray room. Old school filing cabinets line all four walls.

Maya approaches a cabinet and opens the top drawer.

MAYA  
It's all paper in here.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Paper?! Oh boy, they really don't want whatever is in here to get out.

The filing cabinets are categorized by department and date. Maya opens drawers on the cabinets labeled "Sports Division". Each file is labeled with a serial number.

MAYA  
What's the serial number on that leg again?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
SCO-7738952.

Maya flips through a drawer, slams it shut. Flips through another, slams it shut. Flips through another, you get the idea.

Finally, she yanks a file folder from a drawer.

MAYA  
SCO-7738952?

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
That's it.

Maya flips through the pages.

MAYA

I think this is it! Includes a request for a recall of this specific model. Some schematics. A... a worker's comp request!

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Bingo.

MAYA

Says here... an athlete outfitted with a Scott Biotech Jetleg suffered injury, and is pursuing damages... Oh damn.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

What?

Thick, horizontal black lines cover much of the page.

MAYA

Everything else is redacted. Names, address, hospital, team name.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Damn, indeed.

MAYA

But we've got the date. And the location! Denver. Are there any other jetball stadiums in the city?

DONOVAN (O.S.)

Not that I know of. It happened here? Strange. I haven't heard anything about this.

MAYA

I'm beginning to think that's on purpose.

INT. 50'S RETRO DINER - DUSK

Maya and Donovan sit across from one another at a booth, poring over the contents of the stolen document.

A waiter comes by to fill the coffee mugs. Maya drops in some cream and sips her coffee. Donovan chugs black coffee in a handful of gulps and points to the mug.

DONOVAN

More, please. Thank you.



The waiter refills Donovan's mug. Maya watches as she drifts over to the next table, lifting an extremely heavy stack of plates with a robotic forearm.

MAYA

You think we can work with this?

DONOVAN

Potentially. There are a few ways to figure out what we don't know, but none of them are very easy.

MAYA

Such as?

DONOVAN

Breaking back into Scott Bionics. Seeing if we can trace that report to who wrote it.

MAYA

Don't love that.

DONOVAN

No, it's incredibly flimsy. Hinges on pure luck.

MAYA

Would the press have any info on this?

DONOVAN

Press what?

MAYA

I mean the news. There had to be a journalist who wrote about this. Before it was covered up.

Donovan chuckles darkly.

DONOVAN

Oh, the news! Yeah. Don't really have that anymore.

MAYA

What? How does anybody know anything?

DONOVAN

Most people don't. World events are a pretty niche interest these days. Most folks have enough to worry about right in front of them.

MAYA  
So where do you find that niche?

DONOVAN  
I.A.M.

MAYA  
You've said that word twenty times by  
now as if I'm supposed to know what  
it means.

Donovan takes a long sip from his mug.

DONOVAN  
I.A.M. is a conscious, living search  
engine.

MAYA  
It's an AI?

DONOVAN  
Interconnected Awareness Matrix. The  
only AI left. Imagine a giant glowing  
eye that sees everything.

MAYA  
Like Sauron.

DONOVAN  
Who?

MAYA  
He's the- nevermind. There were more  
AIs and you got rid of them?

DONOVAN  
Congress did. Before they dissolved.

MAYA  
Dissolved? How does anybody vote in  
the future?

DONOVAN  
With their dollar.

Maya's attention returns to her coffee, attempting to hide  
an expression of horror.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
They called it the Gates' Act for the  
Protection of Labor. AI got so  
advanced that it essentially put  
everyone out of a job. There were  
some dark years. Lot of violence.  
(MORE)

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
So, they passed legislation ensuring  
that you could not replace any given  
worker with an autonomous machine.  
Thusly, all artificial intelligence  
was condensed and relegated to a  
single instance of being: I.A.M.

Maya looks over at the robotic arm on the waiter.

MAYA  
So the robo-limbs are...

DONOVAN  
The result. You can't replace people  
with robots. But somebody figured out  
along the way that there were no laws  
against replacing *parts* of people  
with machines.

MAYA  
Scott Bionics.

DONOVAN  
Precisely.

The waiter returns and drops two plates of food on the  
table. Maya has eggs, bacon, hashbrowns. Donovan has soup  
and toast.

MAYA  
How'd you make it this far then as  
a... a natty?

DONOVAN  
Gig work. No medical contracts. And I  
made a promise.

Maya studies Donovan.

MAYA  
To your... girlfriend? Boyfriend?

DONOVAN  
My son.

MAYA  
Where is he these days?

DONOVAN  
He's not.

MAYA  
Oh... I'm sorry.

Donovan straightens in his seat.

DONOVAN

Furthermore, the Time Crime Department of America doesn't want agents that would look significantly out of place anywhere in the past. Makes contact and negotiations that much more difficult.

MAYA

Negotiations? Wouldn't that compromise the timeline or something?

DONOVAN

Let me show you something.

Donovan moves the bowl of soup to the center of the table.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Time is a kind of fluid. It generally flows in a single direction, but you can swim upstream if your equipment is strong enough. Now, if you change things in the past, *usually* this is what happens.

Donovan dips his spoon into the soup, pulls some out, and eats it.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

See?

MAYA

I'm seeing soup.

DONOVAN

That you are. The surface is flat just as before. Time is able to seal itself rather easily. You can't go back and retake a test you failed because you'll just flunk another one later. You can't go back and redo that job interview because you'll get fired in a few weeks.

MAYA

But it's different with these Nexus Points.

DONOVAN

Yes. Points at which the course of human history is altered so drastically that no combination of quantum corrections could possibly retain the status quo. Like this.

Donovan drops his coffee mug into the soup. The soup shoots up the sides of the bowl and spills out of the ends.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

And *that* is what we call Quantum Endangerment.

MAYA

You made a mess.

DONOVAN

And a point!

Donovan waves down the server.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Ma'am? Deepest apologies. We had a wee spill over here.

The waiter dispenses a towel from her arm and wipes the counter down. Donovan flashes her a smile. She passive-aggressively reciprocates.

MAYA

This endangerment must happen all the time though, right? It's just you and a few other agents running across time to protect every single nexus point?

DONOVAN

Come now, we're not that incompetent. For starters, the Time Crime Department was created immediately after the discovery of time travel, and it was outlawed for anyone else.

MAYA

But someone stole a time machine.

DONOVAN

A rare instance. But yes, that's why we're doing all of this. And luckily, whoever they are, they can only access the nexus in 2028.

MAYA

Because?

DONOVAN

The time machine is also a teleporter. It has to be.

Donovan pushes his plate forward.

MAYA

Another food metaphor?

DONOVAN

They're useful and visually stimulating. Shh.

Donovan skewers a piece of toast on a fork and holds it up.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

The fork is the Earth and you're the toast, yeah?

Donovan moves the fork in a circle.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

This is you, attached to the Earth via gravity, traveling along as this big blue rock careens through the cosmos at millions of miles an hour.

Donovan moves the fork and toast to one point.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

This is point A.

Donovan orbits the fork and toast further around the imaginary circle.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

This is point B. You travel from A to B on the Earth like everyone else. But then you use a time machine. You go back to the time where point A is. And suddenly-

Donovan removes the toast from the fork, holds the toast in point B, and moves to the fork to point A.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Now, you're in the past, but your cosmic coordinates are in the wrong spot.

(MORE)

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Now, the Earth is aaaaall the way  
back here, and you're floating in the  
dead vacuum of space, waiting to die.  
We lost a lot of good men that way  
during testing.

Donovan gestures to Maya.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
And women! Of course.

MAYA  
Hm, thanks for that. So what changed?

DONOVAN  
To be perfectly honest, I don't  
understand the math on this part, but  
a couple of eggheads figured out  
there's a kind of... space-time  
resonant frequency? The teleportation  
quotient lines up again with clean  
fractions after so many years. So it  
was discovered that time jumps on  
Earth could be safely made only in  
intervals of sixty-nine and a half  
years.

MAYA  
So this time thief can only go back  
70 years to 2028? And from there 70  
years back to 1958?

DONOVAN  
Sixty-nine and a half years. Yes.

MAYA  
So, it's as if the past is happening  
alongside us right now? I've been  
here for a couple days. If we jump  
back, those same couple of days will  
have passed?

Donovan takes a bite of his toast.

DONOVAN  
You got it.

MAYA  
Oh god. My landlord is gonna screw  
me.

DONOVAN

Hey. Quantum Endangerment. Timeline deconstruction. The end of everything. Never seeing home again.

MAYA

Right, right.

The waiter comes by with a keypad, and Donovan swipes a card on the reader. Maya packs up her hash browns in a hermetically sealed box. They put on their coats as the waiter lifts all their plates and silverware with ease.

MAYA (cont'd)

There's one thing I don't understand though.

DONOVAN

Only one?

MAYA

Why do you still have retro 50's diners in 2098?

Donovan looks around the diner.

DONOVAN

It's a crowd-pleaser!

EXT. DENVER STREETS - NIGHT

Maya and Donovan are basked in neon light as they stroll through the rainy, cyberpunked streets of future Denver. Maya looks up at the railway system suspended over the city skyline.

MAYA

Are we ever going to take those?

DONOVAN

Not unless we have to.

MAYA

They're that bad?

DONOVAN

Worse.

MAYA

I'm gonna be honest with you Donovan. The future doesn't seem to be all it's cracked up to be.



Donovan sighs.

DONOVAN  
Well it's the best we got, isn't it?

MAYA  
I guess.

They shuffle in silence a few more paces.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Um. I lost someone too. A few years back.

DONOVAN  
(cold)  
Sorry to hear.

MAYA  
Car accident. Fell asleep at the wheel after a 14 hour shift. What hap-?

DONOVAN  
I do not want to talk about it.

MAYA  
Sorry.

DONOVAN  
Nobody lives in Ireland anymore. We can leave it at that.

MAYA  
Didn't mean to pry.

DONOVAN  
Well, you did.

As they pass by an alleyway, Maya halts at the sound of clanking metal and whirring machinery. A steady *clunk* and *clink* land like footsteps as a figure shuffles out from the shadows.

This figure is bald with sunken eyes and dark circles underneath. They're wrapped in a large blanket, but beneath the folds, you can see different artificial limbs have replaced every natural appendage on their body:

A screwdriver/drill arm, an articulated robotic hand, a jackhammer boot mechanism, a leg with built-in roller wheels, and finally a speaker system replacing their lower jaw.

Their voice comes through the speaker, sounding grating and electronic.

OBSOLESCENT

Good evening. Can you spare any change tonight?

Donovan keeps walking. Doesn't look in their direction.

DONOVAN

Sorry. Can't. Have a good night.

Maya shoots Donovan an angry look. She holds up her box of hashbrowns.

MAYA

I don't have any money, but I have this?

OBSOLESCENT

Thank you. Bless you.

MAYA

You have a good night.

OBSOLESCENT

Good night.

The figure shuffles back into the alleyway where we can see more people in tattered clothes, each missing more than half of their organic bodies, huddled around a heater.

DONOVAN

You shouldn't have done that. It's not safe.

MAYA

They needed help. What even happened to them?

DONOVAN

Those are Obsolescents. They don't need any help from us.

MAYA

(disgusted)

Did you just call them "obsclent"?!

DONOVAN

It's- it's because of their bionics. They had old models installed. Maybe their factories went under.

(MORE)

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Maybe they were laid off when surgery  
on new recruits became cheaper than  
upgrading an old model. I don't know,  
but this is what happens when you  
sign contract after contract without  
thinking.

MAYA  
But it looks like they don't really  
have a choice.

DONOVAN  
We've all got a choice, Maya.

They walk silently for another few yards.

MAYA  
Have you chosen where we're going  
exactly?

DONOVAN  
To see a friend.

INT. KAYDIK'S BODY SHOP - NIGHT

Donovan busts through the saloon doors with Maya.

KAYDIK  
We're clo-

DONOVAN  
Kaydik! My buddy. My pal. My  
confidant.

Kaydik groans.

KAYDIK  
Oh no. This is gonna be bad, isn't  
it?

DONOVAN  
Not at all!

KAYDIK  
Stupid, then.

DONOVAN  
Maybe a little.

Donovan points at the three of them.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
We... are gonna break into I.A.M.

KAYDIK  
I.A.M.?? For what?

DONOVAN  
Medical records. The ones that are  
silo-ed off from public access.

KAYDIK  
Donovan, you belong in an  
institution.

DONOVAN  
Thank you.

KAYDIK  
A mental institution, Donovan.

DONOVAN  
Ah, right. Hey, I've made it this  
far, haven't I?

KAYDIK  
If not for me, you would've been dead  
years ago.

DONOVAN  
Probably true, which is why I need  
your brilliant expertise!

KAYDIK  
The only way to access medical  
records like that is to go *inside* the  
data chamber.

DONOVAN  
Yes.

KAYDIK  
The *data chamber*.

DONOVAN  
I heard you the fir-

KAYDIK  
The spherical panopticon of server  
cubes with a giant floating all-  
seeing eye dead in the center.

DONOVAN  
The all-seeing eye that can only look  
in one direction at a time.

KAYDIK  
No.

DONOVAN

Please.

KAYDIK

No. I'm not doing it. It's too dangerous.

MAYA

What's too dangerous? Can you two stop being so vague? It's stressing me out.

KAYDIK

Your boyfriend wants me to create another AI and scan it into I.A.M.

DONOVAN & MAYA

WOAH!!!

MAYA

He is *not* my-

DONOVAN

Not in a million years- no offense

MAYA

Offense taken, but also yeah, the same.

KAYDIK

If I make a new AI, the hunter drones will be on me like flies on shit. They'll destroy the workshop.

DONOVAN

Build it remotely somewhere on the edge of the city and use a proxy server to activate it.

KAYDIK

That wouldn't... Huh. Okay maybe.

DONOVAN

Huh? Huh??? Pretty good plan, yeah?

KAYDIK

It's still a massive risk. A million things could go wrong. If that eye looks at you for a fraction of a second, it'll pull up everything about you and use it to neutralize you. Allergies, disabilities, past trauma. It can cripple you, mentally and physically.

DONOVAN  
Kaydik, Kaydik, Kaydik. Come now.  
It's me!

KAYDIK  
That's exactly what I'm afraid of.

DONOVAN  
If it helps get you motivated, you'll  
be ensuring the safety of the  
entirety of everything you hold dear  
in this timeline.

KAYDIK  
If I refuse?

DONOVAN  
Quantum Endangerment.

KAYDIK  
You put the word "quantum" in front  
of everything to make it seem like  
you know what you're talking about.

MAYA  
That's true.

DONOVAN  
Yes, fine, I do, but also I do know  
what I'm talking about. Look.

Donovan pulls out a small device with a hololens. It  
displays the Timeline Collapse Percentage.

It's now at 96%.

Kaydik rolls their eyes.

KAYDIK  
(to themselves)  
Being selfish must be so blissful.  
(to Donovan)  
Fine, I'll do it. You should know  
though, they've shut off the  
pedestrian walkways to I.A.M. No  
street-level access.

Donovan groans and puts his head in his hands.

DONOVAN  
Oh no no no.

MAYA  
How come?

KAYDIK

To keep the riffraff out.

MAYA

Right.

KAYDIK

Donovan, you're going to have to use the Skyway.

DONOVAN

Noooooo!

EXT. SKYWAY STATION BOTTOM - NIGHT

Maya and Donovan stand in a line that feeds into a tall cylindrical elevator.

MAYA

Ugh, I'm exhausted. I didn't get much sleep before the interview.

DONOVAN

You can nap on the way there. Or, you can try. But we gotta keep moving. We don't know how close this mystery thief is to doing irreversible damage.

MAYA

The athlete we're looking for and the time thief are one in the same right? Once we have their name, it shouldn't be too hard to find them.

DONOVAN

That's the running theory. They get a busty leg from Scott Bio, try for compensation, company shuts them down, steals a time machine and goes back to 2028 just as the company is starting. But it's usually never that simple.

MAYA

Scott Bio is from my time?

DONOVAN

Yup. Tiny little space in a large office building near the clocktower. Tried to check it out when I was gathering evidence back then.

MAYA  
And did they kick you out because you  
dressed for the wrong decade and  
looked completely insane?

Donovan peeks out around the line.

DONOVAN  
Damn, this is taking forever. I hate  
the damn Skyway.

MAYA  
I've seen worse.

Donovan scoffs.

DONOVAN  
Stinky, smelly, expensive, and the  
swings are brutal.

MAYA  
The swings?

The attendant at the door of the elevator shouts to Donovan  
and Maya.

ATTENDANT  
Step forward! Hello.

DONOVAN  
Hi.

ATTENDANT  
Would we like a full ticket or ad-  
supported ticket today?

DONOVAN  
How much is a full ticket right now?

ATTENDANT  
\$250. The ad-supported ticket is \$50.

Donovan leans over to Maya.

DONOVAN  
(to Maya)  
I'm sorry about this.  
(to Attendant)  
Ad-supported, please.

The Attendant presses a button on their arm. They open a  
portion of their shirt to reveal a hololens embedded in  
their chest. Beams of light dance through the air as a  
holographic commercial floats in front of them.



A can of bubbly soda floats before them while an actor with a temple implant drinks it.

COMMERCIAL  
SUDSO SODA! GOOD! DELICIOUS! DRINK!  
DRINK IT NOW!!!

MAYA  
Jesus Christ.

DONOVAN  
There's more.

An image of Nevada suspends in the air, showing a coastline that runs across the edge of Vegas.

COMMERCIAL  
VEGAS BEACH! VISIT NEVADA NOW! YOU  
DESERVE IT! VACATION! VACATION TODAY!  
NEVADA!!!

MAYA  
Please tell me there isn't-

ATTENDANT & DONOVAN  
There's one more.

Scenes play on the holographic screen from a generic action movie starring a bald man in a suit.

COMMERCIAL  
MCLINTOCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS! GUN  
MAN! GUNS! MANS! HE GETS SH\*T DONE!  
AVAILABLE NOW! PLUG IN NOW! GUN  
MAN!!!

MAYA  
Don't ever put me through that again.

DONOVAN  
(to Attendant)  
Thanks for that.

ATTENDANT  
And thank you for traveling with The  
Nile today.

They enter the elevator.

EXT. SKYWAY STATION TOP - NIGHT

Donovan and Maya step out onto a catwalk suspended hundreds of feet above the ground. Maya looks down over a railing and shudders.

Suspended cars shaped like silver bullets move into the station and sidle up to the catwalk for ease of access.

A bullet comes by, the doors open, and they step inside.

INT. SKYWAY BULLET - CONTINUOUS

A plethora of hand grips dangle from the ceiling as the crowd moves in. Donovan and Maya move to the back of the bullet. Maya leans against the wall.

DONOVAN  
Don't do that. Grab on.

MAYA  
I know how to ride public transit. We have that in 2028.

Donovan shrugs.

The bullet takes off. The passengers grip the dangling handles tight as Maya somersaults backwards.

MAYA (cont'd)  
Ow.

DONOVAN  
Grab on! Quick, there's a swing coming up.

Maya jumps to her feet and grabs a handle.

MAYA  
I still don't know what a swing- Look out!

Through the front windshield of the bullet, Maya can see another train car barreling towards a head-on collision.

DONOVAN  
Just hang on.

The bullet lurches as it swings to the left. Out the windshield, the opposing bullet swings right.

Simultaneously, both bullets swing back the other way, further than the first swing.

They whiz right by each other on the same track. The bullet returns to its normal resting position.

Maya, eyes wide, attempts to catch her breath.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
I hate the damn Skyway.

MAYA  
Why did they make it like this???

DONOVAN  
Using only one track is cheaper.

Maya stares out the window at the city passing beneath her.

EXT. I.A.M. - LATER

Maya and Donovan step out of the Skyway station to see the IAM Central Console: A massive pyramidal superstructure made of concrete and steel, spattered with lights peeking through windows two thousand feet away.

Large metal fences surround the perimeter of the structure, only allowing for vehicles and the single Skyway access.

MAYA  
Do we know what to expect in there?

DONOVAN  
Not entirely. The gravity chamber Kaydik mentioned is likely to be in the dead center of that pyramid.

MAYA  
Where the unbeatable superintelligence is.

Brilliant headlights shine from a fleet of vehicles floating above the magnetized street. They silhouette Maya and Donovan as they cross.

MAYA (cont'd)  
You don't seem particularly concerned about that?

DONOVAN  
It is brilliant, yes. But it's mapped off the human brain, so it inherited our limitations.

MAYA  
Such as?

DONOVAN

It can only focus on one thing at a time. As long as Kaydik can keep it distracted, we won't need worry about that.

MAYA

How long until we can't distract it anymore?

They arrive at the first flight of steps leading up to the pyramid. Donovan looks back over his shoulder, smiling.

DONOVAN

No idea. So we better be quick!

Donovan winks and starts up the steps. Maya stands at the bottom, her face a confusing blend of annoyance and admiration.

Her face softens slightly.

MAYA

(to herself)

Nope. No, no, no.

She shakes her head and follows Donovan up to the landing.

DDDINT. I.A.M. HALLWAY - LATER

The soft whir of machinery echoes through the hallway. The walls are lined with rows and rows of pipes, tubes, and electromagnetic coils.

On one of the hallway's walls, a red glow draws a line from the bottom of the floor, upwards, over, and back down. A slab of metal and concrete the shape of a door scoots forward across the floor by a few inches.

A pause. It scoots again slightly.

One more scoot. A single hand reaches through the crack and grasps the corner.

We hear the muffled grunts of effort from Donovan.

DONOVAN (O.S.)

(muffled)

Oi!

He curses Irish gibberish under his breath.

MAYA (O.S.)  
(muffled)  
Here. Move over.

Another pause. Then, the door opens in a handful of short, effective scoots, one after the other. With each, we hear Maya's controlled exhales.

Maya squeezes through the opening.

MAYA  
You can't push something this big all  
in one go. Too much friction.

Donovan, face red as a beet, sheepishly squeezes in.

DONOVAN  
Right, yeah. I knew-

Maya shoots a look back.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
I didn't know that.

MAYA  
Exactly.

Maya turns around, and her smug smile melts off her face.

A drone with a glowing red eye hovers two feet in front of her. It buzzes menacingly as it slowly approaches.

Donovan presses a finger to an earpiece.

DONOVAN  
(whispering)  
Kaydik! Now! Put it online now!!

Maya inhales and holds. The drone gets closer.

Closer.

Maya leans back slightly as the eye approaches her face. A small mechanical appendage folds down from the drone's chassis. It has a barrel resembling that of a gun or medical instrument. A small electrified taser slides out of the barrel.

*BWEEP! BWEEP! BWEEP!*

The drone backs away and zips around the corner and down the hall.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
That was Kaydik! Let's go!

Donovan grabs Maya by the wrist and sprints down the corridors. He skirts around corners, bracing himself on the walls and pushing off to regain speed.

A bright white light shines into the dark hallway from an adjacent wall.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
I think this is it. Brace yourself.

Maya and Donovan arrive at the door. Looking inward, they see a massive spherical room. Bright white walls surround the whole space. Floating a few feet off the inner surface, blinking server cubes interconnect through a web of wires. They criss and cross in and around one another like a cat's cradle, tethered to the walls by mounting hooks.

In the middle of the room, an austere black sphere hovers silently. A vertical pupil comprised of a series of red LED dots stares at a group of cubes on the other side.

Donovan stands with his back to the door.

He crosses his arms over his chest and falls backwards into the room. Maya reaches out to grab him. She misses.

Donovan tumbles backward and floats harmlessly through the air. He's grinning from ear to ear.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
C'mon!

INT. ANTI-GRAVITY CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Donovan grabs one of the wires attached to the server cubes and pulls himself toward the wall.

Maya looks down into the deep white bowl below her. She closes her eyes, takes a breath, and jumps.

When she opens her eyes, she's floating serenely through the room. She tries moving around, flapping her arms to swim towards the wall.

Donovan silently grabs her leg and pulls her to a cube next to him. He proceeds to pull a device the size of a pocketbook from his jacket. There's a screen display and two metal nodes on the bottom.

He sticks the nodes onto the server cube. The screen displays "scanning" along with a progress bar.

With a *ding!* a file directory manifest appears on the screen. Donovan scrolls through with a dial on the side of the device.

DONOVAN  
(whispering)  
Medical, medical, come on, now.

Donovan yanks the device off.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
No dice. Onto the next one. Here.

He produces another scanner from his jacket. He pushes it slowly across the space to float it over to Maya.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
Remember, we gotta be quick and quiet about this. Don't go anywhere near that eye. I go left, you go right.

MAYA  
(whispering)  
Got it.

Maya and Donovan split off, attaching their scanners to each cube and scrolling through directories.

Maya attaches her scanner to a cube. The file header reads out "Cooking Recipes". She moves to the next cube. "Building Schematics". The next. "21st Century Clothing".

MAYA (cont'd)  
Donovan, there's literally *everything* here. We're looking for a needle in a haystack.

DONOVAN  
(whispering)  
Which is why we gotta be quicker and quieter.

The eye rumbles slightly at the noise but returns its focus.

MAYA  
(whispering)  
This is impossible.

Maya attaches her scanner to another cube. The display reads "Obituaries". She looks over at Donovan who continues scanning server cubes in rapid succession.

She uses the dial on the side of the device to scroll through the file manifest. She scrolls to "United States" then "Colorado" then "Denver". There's a search bar at the top of the display.

She types in "Maya Rodriguez".

She hears a whistle from across the room. She looks over to see Donovan pointing ferociously at a single cube.

DONOVAN  
(mouthing)  
<We found it!>

Maya watches the results of her search flood the display. An entire profile appears, showing an aged Maya.

"Age of death: 55."

Maya's face goes white.

She turns back to Donovan and gives him a weak thumbs up.

A rumble quakes through the gravity chamber. I.A.M.'s eye flickers.

MAYA  
(mouthing)  
<What was that?>

Donovan presses his finger to his earpiece.

DONOVAN  
(whispering)  
Kaydik. Status?

KAYDIK (O.S.)  
It didn't work! The drones decrypted the VPN shell. They were headed towards the shop. I had to shut it down.

DONOVAN  
(whispering shout)  
Maya! The goose is cooked!

Donovan spins his finger in the air, signaling a "let's get the hell out of here" motion.



MAYA

Shit.

DONOVAN

(whispering)

Come on, we got what we need! Let's go!

Maya looks back at her scanner. She chooses the option "download to offline" in the menu bar. A progress bar slowly crawls across the screen.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

(whisper shout)

Maya!!

MAYA

(whisper shout)

Just a second!

In the middle of the room, the eye disengages from the singular cube it focused on.

Donovan yanks the scanner off the server cube, letting out a sharp *clunk* as the nodes disengage.

The ominous red pupil splits horizontally, and the lights travel over the top and underneath the bottom, reconvening on the other side into the devilish red eye.

Now, it stares directly at Donovan.

DONOVAN

Oh no. Oh no, no, no. Maya!!!

I.A.M. now fully awake, approaches Donovan with its all-seeing eye. From I.A.M.'s POV, we can see a box forming around Donovan's face, comparing it against multiple reference images, looking for a match.

The progress bar on Maya's scanner is 75% of the way there. She looks between the scanner, Donovan, I.A.M., and back to the scanner.

She leaves it behind as she pushes off a server cube with her foot. The force yanks a wire hard enough to disconnect from an adjacent cube. Its inertia causes it to float freely in the chamber.

Maya aims her body in mid-air, twisting her torso around to get between Donovan and I.A.M.

Back in I.A.M.'s POV, it reaches a match with Donovan's face. "Donovan O'Neil" reads across the screen.

A map of Ireland. The face of a woman. The face of a boy. A clipping of a headline reading "Ireland Swallowed by Devastating Oceanic Floods".

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Please. Please don't.

A shaft of light emanates out from I.A.M.'s pupil, forming a sickly red-tinted hologram. A woman holds onto a child, reaching her hand out, as a turbulent stream up to her midriff pulls her away.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
NO! NO NO **NO NOOO!!!!**

Tears stream down Donovan's face. He powerlessly reaches out towards the woman made of intangible bloody light.

Before he can make contact, Maya's body floats through the projection. She grabs a nearby wire for support. She faces I.A.M., her back to Donovan.

From I.A.M.'s POV, the AI attempts to match Maya's face against its database. It comes across a partial match of an old woman's face. It scrolls through images of that same woman's face over decades, the face getting younger and younger during its search.

It lands on a match. Over the top of the display, the name reads "Maya Rodriguez".

A warning symbol appears on the bottom right corner.

"Maya Rodriguez. Status: Deceased"

"Conflicting information."

"Maya Rodriguez. Status: Alive"

"Status: Deceased. Age: 55."

"Status: Alive. Age: 29."

"ERROR"

"ERROR"

"ERROR"

The dots of light across I.A.M.'s austere onyx eye flicker and scatter across the surface. It retreats, floating back into position to compute the conflicting information.

Maya eyes her scanner on the other side of the room. By now the download must be complete. She looks behind herself to see Donovan shivering and staring into the distance.

MAYA

Let's go. Ok? Donovan, we gotta go.

Donovan nods. He doesn't look at her.

She takes him by the hand and pulls them across the net of wiring towards the exit door. She swings Donovan out into the hallway and then steps in herself.

Maya's abandoned scanner, full of her future's secrets, lies attached to the server cube.

INT. I.A.M. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A swarm of drones fly in from around the corner and hover in front of Donovan. They each produce a taser attachment and boot up hologram projectors.

Before the image can form, Maya stands in front of Donovan.

MAYA

I don't think they can clock me. I'm not supposed to be here.

The drone computes and computes, unable to place Maya. Unable to produce a hologram.

The two of them walk through the hallway towards their makeshift entrance. Maya skirts around the drones with Donovan close at her back. They swarm and continue to follow menacingly but are unable to act.

Maya and Donovan reach the exit and squeeze through the gap to the outside.

EXT. KAYDIK'S BODY SHOP - LATER

Maya and Donovan see an armada of security vehicles in formation around Kaydik's shop. Before they can be spotted, Donovan grabs Maya's arm and spins them both behind a McKlintock kiosk.

DONOVAN

Dammit. They got Kaydik.

MAYA

We can't just leave them. This was your idea.

DONOVAN  
A stupid one. And there's no time to  
fix it. Come on.

MAYA  
Donovan, you can't-

DONOVAN  
Now!

INT. DONOVAN'S OFFICE - LATER

When the door to Donovan's office opens, he makes a beeline straight to the computer terminal. He plugs in the scanner and sifts through the medical records.

Maya closes the door behind them.

MAYA  
Donovan... What happened back there?

DONOVAN  
No.

He runs the hard copy papers from Scott Bionics into a processor that scans the information onto the screen. He presses an "execute" command which begins to cross reference the medical records against the papers.

His expression softens and his shoulders drop slightly.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Thank you. For what you did. We got  
what we were looking for.

MAYA  
Yeah. Of course.

DONOVAN  
And I'm... sorry. About Kaydik. I'll  
figure something out once you're back  
home. I promise.

MAYA  
You better.

Maya takes a seat. She watches the computer terminal run through its cross referencing program.

MAYA (cont'd)  
What was your home like? Before you  
had to come here?

Donovan doesn't respond. The question hangs in the air as he types away on the computer terminal. When he finally speaks, his eyes stay locked to the screen.

DONOVAN

Cold. Rainy. Gray. Green. At every pub, you'd meet the funniest fella you'd ever met.

Donovan stops typing.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

We brought Gaelic back from the brink. Folks in Belfast, if you can believe it, began talking about a United Republic again. Things were good. Getting better, even.

MAYA

That sounds nice.

DONOVAN

It was.

Donovan cracks a small smile. His gaze breaks from the screen and moves to Maya.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

And you? What kind of home am I sending you back to?

MAYA

Warm. Getting warmer. Busy. Exhausting. Never seemed to be enough time or money to go around. It... felt like the future was coming at me too fast, and it wasn't looking good. I feel like now that I've seen it, there shouldn't be so much to be scared about. But...

Maya trails off. She's not able to tell Donovan what she saw at I.A.M.

DONOVAN

Family?

MAYA

Just my mom.

DONOVAN

And where is she?

MAYA

She's not.

DONOVAN

Sorry.

MAYA

It's ok. I tried to mention it earlier when you weren't listening. It's been a few years. I never let them disconnect her phone. I still pay her monthly bill just so the answering machine stays on.

DONOVAN

It's nice you have that to remember her by.

MAYA

It is.

The screen blinks a message reading "MATCH CONFIRMED". The data from the medical records fills in the redacted black lines in the Scott Bionics report.

DONOVAN

We have our culprit! Ana Kusagi. Jetball player from 2093-2095. Jetball injury resulted in... huh.

MAYA

Is that a good "huh" or bad "huh"?

DONOVAN

Confused "huh". Her discharge forms aren't here, but the records denote her intake. The injury was severe. The leg needed to be amputated. Where did she go after that?

MAYA

We got her home address, though, right?

DONOVAN

Yes. 1601 Arapahoe.

MAYA

Did you say Arapahoe?

Donovan nods.

MAYA (cont'd)

That's the clock tower.

DONOVAN  
Let's pray she's there. Check the  
Collapse Probability.

Maya looks over at another monitor.

NEXUS DESTABILIZATION AT 98%.

Donovan pulls his trench coat off the hook.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
We've finally got the upper hand.  
This will likely be our only chance  
to stop them. You ready?

Maya looks at Ana's profile on the other monitor. Her age  
reads "29 years old". She looks back at the Collapse  
Probability.

She swallows.

MAYA  
Ready.

EXT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER, DENVER, CO - NIGHT

Donovan and Maya look up at the decrepit structure It barely  
resembles the clock tower from 2028. One face of the clock  
is hanging off the side. Another is gone completely and  
boarded up with plywood.

DONOVAN  
Only one way up.

MAYA  
Grapple hook?

DONOVAN  
The stairs. Do I look like Batman?

MAYA  
You look a little like Commissioner  
Gordon.

DONOVAN  
I'll take it. Let's move.

INT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Donovan cuts a laser through the wood blocking the doorway.  
The two enter and look upward at the spiraling staircase  
twisting towards the top.

DONOVAN  
If you see anybody, we follow my  
lead, yeah?

MAYA  
Got it.

The two begin to climb the staircase up to the top of the tower.

INT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER TOP - LATER

Maya steps into the room first with Donovan panting behind her.

MAYA  
Follow *your* lead?

DONOVAN  
(breathless)  
Shu- hoo boy. Shut up.

They stand in a square room at the top of the tower. The clock faces line the walls: two intact, one hanging loose, and one boarded up.

The room features two mattresses spread out on the floor. A makeshift kitchen with a sink built from jerry rigged PBC piping. A stove constructed from four camping stoves strung together. It's a makeshift home engineered by squatters.

Maya approaches one of the mattresses. She finds a dusty tablet wedged underneath.

She brushes the screen and presses a button on the side. The screen displays a selfie photo of Ana Kusagi and an older woman behind her. The old woman has a few implants embedded in her bald head.

Something about her is eerily familiar.

MAYA  
Hey, Donovan, take a look at-

Maya turns to face Donovan. He's pointing a gun at the corner of the room.

DONOVAN  
Quiet.

MAYA  
You brought a gun?!



DONOVAN

Quiet.

Donovan slowly steps forward towards the corner.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

It's alright. We won't hurt you. As long as you come with us quietly. We just want the machine back.

Ssssssssssss. The hiss of a release valve emanates from the dark corner. Maya can now see a figure in the shadows, hidden behind a cloak.

At the figure's feet, time fluid gas seeps like liquid nitrogen poured across a floor.

The figure's arm reaches up and smashes a button on the wall next to her. A flood light, mounted to the ceiling, washes Maya and Donovan in blinding light.

The figure darts across the room. Donovan fires off a shot. The blaster beam leaves a smoldering hole in the 12-hour mark of the southern clock face.

The figure, time fluid trailing behind them, pushes the hanging clock face forward until it lies parallel with the street 300 feet below.

Donovan fires off another shot that grazes the shoulder of the cloaked figure.

But it's too late. The time fluid gas has begun to swirl into a wormhole that swirls in the night air.

The figure takes a step back, explodes into a full sprint, and jumps over the empty chasm. They use the propulsion from the nozzle of the time machine to jettison through the portal.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Damn, damn!

MAYA

We gotta go back to the TCDA. Don't they have more packs we can use?

DONOVAN

There's no time!

Donovan pulls up the small digital screen displaying the Nexus Percentage. It reads 99%.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
We have to jump.

MAYA  
WHAT?!

DONOVAN  
Trust me, that'll be the easiest part. The implosion will pull us in. Where it spits us back out is another story.

MAYA  
We could plummet to our deaths!

DONOVAN  
And she could destroy everything! We have no choice. Come on.

The two step out onto the clock face. It creaks under their weight and bends slightly. Maya flinches.

She looks at the slowly closing wormhole a few feet in front of her. She then peers over the edge at the sheer drop beneath their feet. The vertigo causes her vision to stretch, and the street appears as if it's a mile below.

Donovan holds out his hand and offers Maya a nervous smile.

MAYA  
Fuck you, man.

DONOVAN  
Fair enough.

The two jump across the empty space, into the wormhole, and back to 2028.

EXT. DANIELS & FISHER TOWER - 2028 - NIGHT

Maya and Donovan are spit out of the wormhole, facing the opposite direction. The force of the time jump's shockwave catapults their bodies forward.

Arms flailing, they both desperately grab onto the shallow window ledges of a building across the street. A violent gust of wind whips away at their hair and clothes as they hang on.

MAYA  
Owwwww...

DONOVAN  
Are you alright?

MAYA  
Barely.

DONOVAN  
Well, on the bright side, I got you  
home, didn't I?

MAYA  
Can you stop being wry for two  
goddamn seconds?! We're going to DIE!

DONOVAN  
We'll be fine. Take this.

Donovan hands her a circular puck with a wire attached to it. He daisy-chains the puck to an identical one clipped onto his belt. Maya clips hers in as well.

Donovan pulls another piece from his puck and flicks it out with a thumb to reveal...

A grapple hook.

MAYA  
Oh, for fu-!

Donovan fires out the grapple hook. It attaches to the roof of the building. Maya wraps her arms around his waist. They swing around a corner and climb the side of the building, one after the other... like Batman and Robin.

They pull themselves up over the lip of the roof.

The mysterious figure stands before them. Cloak rippling in the torrent of wind, their back turned to Maya and Donovan.

Donovan hands the grapple hook to Maya.

DONOVAN  
Hold onto this for me.

As they approach, they notice something in the figure's right hand:

A robotic hand.

MAYA  
Ana's only implants were the jet  
legs, right?

DONOVAN

Right.

The figure lowers the hood to reveal a bald head embedded with tech. They turn around.

It's the Obsolescent.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

You! You- We- we saw you!

The Obsolescent speaks through the speaker system that replaced their jaw. The audio comes out muffled and digitized.

OBSOLESCENT

And I saw you.

Maya steps forward.

MAYA

We're looking for Ana Kusagi. We thought that was you. Where is she?

OBSOLESCENT

Gone. Taken. They wouldn't even let me see the body.

MAYA

What are you talking about?

OBSOLESCENT

Ana.

MAYA

But she survived.

OBSOLESCENT

No. I did.

MAYA

Who are you?

OBSOLESCENT

Number 11283. I can't remember my first name. Not that it matters.

Donovan brandishes the gun once again.

DONOVAN

I don't care who you are or what you're planning or why!

(MORE)

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
But you're going to give us back the time machine. And you're going to drop your weapon. You are standing in the middle of a Nexus Point. Your next moves should be considered very carefully.

OBSOLESCE  
Oh. I have considered. For a long time. Have you?

The Obsolescent takes a step forward. Donovan presses a button that loads a charge into the gun.

DONOVAN  
Stop. Right. There. I will shoot.

OBSOLESCE  
I thought I'd be long dead before my dream could come true. My dream of fixing things. Going back. Saving everyone.

The Obsolescent arms the device in their hand.

OBSOLESCE (cont'd)  
And then you all came along.

DONOVAN  
It's a localized EMP...  
(to himself)  
Where are we right now?

MAYA  
Donovan, what's she talking about?

Donovan ignores her. He fires a shot at the Obsolescent's legs.

The Obsolescent's chuckle comes through their speaker system like the grating, raspy friction of metal-on-metal.

OBSOLESCE  
You have nothing to threaten me with. You cannot scare me. My greatest fears have already come true. Have yours?

Donovan taps away on his personal display device. His eyes go wide, and he raises his gun again.

Maya steps into the line of fire.

DONOVAN  
Maya, what are you-?

MAYA  
She was your daughter.

The Obsolescent's expression grows heavy.

MAYA (cont'd)  
I'm so sorry.

OBSOLESCENT  
I'm glad you can understand. Why I  
have to do this.

The Obsloscnt's robotic thumb reaches towards the  
detonator.

*PYOW! PYOW! PYOW!*

Donovan fires three shots into the Obsolescent's body. He  
closes his personal display device.

MAYA  
NOOO!!

They crumple to the ground, and the EMP rolls out of their  
hand a few feet away.

MAYA (cont'd)  
What did-? What did you-?

Donovan holsters his blaster and approaches the body.

MAYA (cont'd)  
DONOVAN!

Donovan kneels down and picks up the EMP.

DONOVAN  
I'm sorry, Maya. Had to be done.

MAYA  
Sh-She was-

DONOVAN  
She was *going* to set off that EMP in  
the middle of a Nexus Point. Do you  
even realize what's under your feet  
right now?

MAYA  
I can't believe y-

DONOVAN

Scott Bionics! Specifically, the fledgling little company that will become them. You understand? I figured it out. That's the Nexus Point. One little EMP at the right place and the right time, their servers go dark, they lose years of data and research, their investors back out, and they get sold for parts.

Maya's hair blows in her face with an angry breath of the Colorado mountain air.

Donovan removes the time machine off the Obsolescent's back.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

I'm sorry it had to go this way. But there's too much at stake. The timeline must be maintained.

The Obsolescent groans on the ground. They turn to face Maya.

OBSOLESCENT

He's lying to you.

DONOVAN

Shut the hell up!

Donovan kick's the Obsolescent's broken body.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!!

The Obsolescent laughs their raspy laugh.

OBSOLESCENT

He's not here to save anyone. He's here to steal from you.

MAYA

Donovan. What's she talking about?

DONOVAN

She is a dirty little good-for-nothing monster who pulled her body apart and expects us all to feel sorry for her.

Maya can barely hold back her boiling rage.

MAYA

Donovan.

DONOVAN

What? What!! She's got dead people.  
We've all got dead people. Doesn't  
give you the right to destroy  
everything we've worked for!

MAYA

What. Is she. Talking about.

The Obsolescent lets out a heavy sigh.

OBSOLESCE

The TCDA wasn't created to protect  
time travel. They created it to steal  
from you. Your resources. Your water.  
Your food.

MAYA

Is that true?

Donovan breathes heavily.

MAYA (cont'd)

(quieter)

Is it true.

It no longer sounds like a question.

DONOVAN

Maya, look, it's more complicated  
than that. And for what it's worth,  
you really should've figured it out a  
lot sooner. It's a dying planet. How  
else did you think we could power  
everything in the-?

*Chyoo!*

Maya shoots the grapple hook through Donovan's leg.

He crumples forward in agony. She yanks his leg forward,  
summoning another excruciating scream.

The EMP rolls away until it collides with Maya's foot. It  
wobbles on the ground until it settles in silence.

Maya picks it up.

DONOVAN (cont'd)

Yahh!!! You- What the hell are you  
doing?



MAYA  
I can't let it happen.

DONOVAN  
What?!

MAYA  
Any of it. Your future. It's...  
you're disgusting.

DONOVAN  
Maya, y--eeaaaghhh! You have no idea  
what you're talking about.

MAYA  
Don't I? Do you really think because  
you lost something that everyone else  
should suffer with you?! The world  
CAN be better. None of this has to  
happen.

DONOVAN  
Of course it does!

MAYA  
Why!!

DONOVAN  
Because it did! Because it happened!  
Because it happened to me!  
(pointing)  
And her!

Donovan rests his hand on his bleeding leg.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
If you do this, you'll doom billions  
of lives to never exist. People won't  
be where they should, and they won't  
meet who they're meant to meet. The  
time stream won't fix this. It's  
Quantum Endangerment, Maya!! I won't  
exist. Deborah won't exist. My Sam...  
he won't exist!

Donovan breaks into a sob.

DONOVAN (cont'd)  
Don't you get it?? It all has to  
happen! It has to! I can't... I can't  
lose them again.

Maya looks over at the Obsolscent. She's still alive,  
barely. She reaches her jackhammer arm out towards Maya.

OBSOLESCENT  
Please... Please end it.

MAYA  
Donovan. None of that has happened  
yet. It can be better this time.

DONOVAN  
You don't *know* that!!

MAYA  
You're right. I don't.

Maya presses the detonator.

A shockwave explodes from the tiny handheld device. All around them, the city lights of Denver, Colorado go dark in an ever-expanding radius. The shockwave reaches towards the river, then dissipates.

The roof of the office building is lit only by distant city lights and the stars above.

Maya looks down to see the Obsolescent and Donovan lying beneath her.

The time machine begins to rumble. It quakes, phases, duplicates, and finally explodes into a brilliant blue swirl of light.

The time fluid ebbs and flows in a grand monument in front of Maya. She cranes her neck back to witness the entirety of it.

Starting from the toes, the Obsolescent and Donovan slowly fade away. Their feet disappear into the time fluid like a vacuum. It crawls their way up their bodies.

The Obsolescent closes their eyes and sighs contently. The bionics embedded into them fade before their skin, leaving behind the person they once were.

We see their face for the first time, lit by the glow of the blue wormhole.

OBSOLESCENT  
Thank you.

Maya smiles back. She turns to Donovan.

MAYA  
It'll be better this time.

Dejected, Donovan scowls. But then, softens into a deep sorrow.

DONOVAN  
I hope you're right.

The glow is brighter and brighter as the two of them are enveloped. Time fluid passes harmlessly between Maya's feet, continually flowing into the center at an ever-increasing rate. The grapple hook in her hand disintegrates in a quick poof.

The wormhole grows and glows until suddenly-

It warps in on itself, leaving nothing behind but Maya, standing alone in the bitter winds.

She slumps to the ground, staring ahead at the spot where Donovan just was.

*Bzzzt. Bzzzt. Bzt. Bz-Bzt.*

Maya's phone starts going off in her pocket. A flurry of texts from Barry flood her notifications.

BARRY  
[HELLO! WE NEED YOU!]  
[PLEASE ANSWER! SHITSHOW!]  
[PERRY INJURED HIS SHOULDER LIFTING A  
BALLOON DOG!]  
[NOT KIDDING!]

Maya throws her head back and groans.

Another bing.

LANDLORD  
[RENT IS OVERDUE! LATE FEE APPLIED  
BELOW!]

MAYA  
So cool.

INT. GALLERY - EARLY MORNING

Maya, sporting dark under-eye bags, heaves another canvas upright. She wipes the sweat off her forehead and exhales.

She looks around the room at the larger men around her.

It's the exact same environment as before. Apart from the fact that this time, Maya notices something new.

The men all look completely exhausted.

Maya scans the room to see more heavy faces and sallow expressions.

One of the art handlers walks by her. She holds a hand out to stop him.

MAYA

Hey, Carey, can I ask you something?

CAREY

Shoot.

MAYA

What do you think about starting a union?

The question hangs in the air.

They both smile.

THE END