

MORE REMOTE THAN BAVARIA

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - SKY - MORNING

Floating above Thomas Jefferson's lawns and neoclassical buildings. The campus teems with peaceful, activist WAHOOS, the nickname for students.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - ROTUNDA - MORNING

Professor LEWIS GALE, 40, approaches a chill Wahoo rally. She's nattily dressed in a vintage corduroy suit, preoccupied, keeping something disturbing at bay.

Lewis barely notices signs promoting a presidential candidate and RACIAL UNITY.

FEMALE STUDENT

Professor! Voting for Thompson?

Lewis flashes a peace sign. SAMUEL runs up, hair streaked blorange, French Caribbean accent.

SAMUEL

Professor, I've been on a meditation retreat and lost track of time. Guess who's late for the 320 paper?

LEWIS

Get it to me in a day or two?

SAMUEL

Absolutely! I thank you, my higher power thanks you --

LEWIS

(winks)
-- No need to cite all of my papers. Half is fine, Samuel.

SAMUEL

Actually, I'm not citing any.

Lewis hides her disappointment, trudges into a building.

INT. CLARK HALL - CORRIDOR - MORNING

A sign indicates: "Geosciences." Lewis notices ARCANE SYMBOLS sprayed in yellow paint as she enters her office.

LEWIS' OFFICE

Lewis nibbles a giant gummy bear while studying ancient MAPS covering the walls. Sardonic Dean BRENDA Simmons enters.

BRENDA

Hemp Gummies again? Giant hemp Gummies?

LEWIS

It's not like I'm enslaved to the fuckers. They just help me chill.

BRENDA

Lewis, possession of psychoactive hemp is punishable by death here in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

LEWIS

Busting me for Gummies, Dean?

BRENDA

I'm busting you because the departmental budget is strapped and we no longer need history about old ass explorers and map makers. What our students need is to understand GPS and satellites.

LEWIS

We need to study old maps. Partly because they're beautiful and scientific truth is beauty --

Brenda mimes playing a violin.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

-- Or so they say. So how can you reduce my God damn funding!

BRENDA

Not reducing it, eliminating it! This is serious, Lewis. The committee decides tomorrow.

LEWIS

This is my serious face.
(makes a face)
You know what? You could make a case for me. If I prove worthy in a test of mind and body?

BRENDA

Which would make me, what? Zero and ten?

Lewis motions to Brenda to turn away from the maps. Brenda obeys, all too familiar with the routine.

LEWIS

Where exactly is South America?

BRENDA

Easy. Directly South of North America.

LEWIS

No. More like 200 miles East of América del Norte. Now the physical contest.

Lewis mounts a nerf basketball hoop on one wall. She tosses Brenda an orange ball.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - MORNING

MADISON GALE, 13, sits near her Berenstein Bears back pack as she sketches on an art pad. She wears a stylish denim skirt, fringes on the bottom.

A NURSE stops by. Madison smiles weakly, revealing BRACES.

NURSE

Understand the doctor is giving you guys news this morning.

MADISON

Yeah, I'm scared.
(fights back tears)
Dad might go to a new hospital.

NURSE

Right, a hospice. Sweetie, is Mom late as usual?

Madison nods, talks on her phone as the nurse leaves.

MADISON

Mom? Where are you?

LEWIS (V.O.)

Hi Maddy -- oh, step back three!

INT. CLARK HALL - LEWIS' OFFICE - MORNING

Now a mess, with one map sporting a torn corner. A grim Lewis clicks her phone off, tosses the ball to Brenda.

LEWIS

Gotta run. Don't have a Hail Mary in your pocket, do you?

BRENDA

Not like you want, but...

Brenda hands over an envelope covered with yellow arcane symbols and the words "Mandela Project."

BRENDA (CONT'D)

From one of the university's secret societies. I forget which one but I do remember, "yellow goes to an honorable fellow." Their charter, I believe, is to recognize people with unimpeachable character. And they have money.

Lewis pulls out a check from the envelope.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

It'll be enough to fund a semester of cartographic research.

LEWIS

Wow... now explain this Mandela stuff.

BRENDA

Don't know, don't care. But since you wiped the floor with me, I'll make a case to the committee. Actually, I would have anyway. You might be obsolete but something's in your favor.

LEWIS

A good outside shot?

BRENDA

Students admire and respect you despite complaints about excessive profanity.

(fights tears)

Now go to your daughter.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - MORNING

An apprehensive Lewis runs up to Madison and hugs her.

MADISON
Mom, they're ready.

LEWIS
Maddy, sorry I'm late. I was stalling.

MADISON
I'm scared too.

Lewis pulls it together. The nurse leads to ONCOLOGY.

PRIVATE ROOM

Lewis and Madison enter to see HENRY GALE, 40s, in bed, connected to tubes and wires. Fatigued but smiling.

Henry's smile sets Lewis off.

LEWIS
No, Henry! You're not giving up!

HENRY
Lewis...

LEWIS
You have to fight! No hospice, I won't let you! I WON'T LOSE YOU!

HENRY
Lewis, my truest. You won't lose me.

Calm, mustached DOCTOR CLAY speaks up.

DOCTOR CLAY
I was expecting to provide very different news this morning. Amazingly, there's no more cancer.

Lewis nearly faints. She staggers over and grasps the doctor's hand.

LEWIS
It's temporary. Like a remission?

DOCTOR CLAY
 No, more like a miracle. The tumors
 are gone, the blood work is
 spotless.

Lewis embraces Henry with tears of joy.

DOCTOR CLAY (CONT'D)
 Henry can go home in a few days.

WAITING AREA - LATER

Lewis and Madison are happy beyond measure.

MADISON
 Mom, last night I prayed.

LEWIS
 But we're not --

MADISON
 -- I know, religious and all.

Lewis gets down on her knees and looks up.

LEWIS
 Look, I'm a scientist... this is
 silly. But if you ever need me for
 anything, I swear I'll do it.

INT. LEWIS' HOME - DEN - NIGHT

A clay model VOLCANO rests on the floor. Lewis and Madison
 devour pizza, watching the James Bond film Moonraker.

LEWIS
 Okay, okay, there he is! Jaws! Look
 at those metal teeth!

MADISON
 Mom, here's the girl! Look, she's
 smiling! And Jaws likes her braces!

LEWIS
 They're totally in love!

MADISON
 You want me to think boys will like
 me even with --

She smiles wide, braces GLEAMING. Lewis pauses the film, hugs
 her daughter tenderly.

LEWIS

Maddy, ready for tomorrow?
We visit your Dad in the morning --
hooray! -- and I show up at your
school at two.

MADISON

Yeah, and I'll bring the volcano.
Mom, the boys made a bet. That
you'll be most boring.

LEWIS

Most boring at bring-your-parent-to-
school day? Really?

MADISON

You should wear your cool vest.

LEWIS

What about my corduroy suit?

MADISON

No, the vest. It's a power vest.

Lewis throws her hands up in surrender. Madison indicates a political poster tacked up.

LEWIS

Right, busy day tomorrow. Gotta
vote for Vanessa Thompson before I
rush over to your school.

Madison hesitates, looking worried.

MADISON

Mom, today I was really scared.

LEWIS

About your Dad?

MADISON

That you wouldn't be okay.

LEWIS

But I'm great.

Madison doesn't look convinced.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Bring-A-Parent-to-School day bores 8TH GRADERS. MISS PERKINS introduces DET. BRIDGEWATER. The rugged African-American speaks with a Southern "Tidewater" accent.

MISS PERKINS

Class, this is Cindy's Dad, a police detective.

SCARED GIRL

Detective, I saw a scary movie where technology destroyed the whole world. The police couldn't stop it.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Mighta seen that one myself. But y'all mighta heard the biggest danger to kids is... ?

WISE ASS KID

Teachers who give too much homework?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

That, plus drugs and alcohol.

MISS PERKINS

Thanks but we're behind schedule. Class, welcome Brandon's dad.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG, 50s, brilliant narcissist, tacks up a photo of ancient computing equipment.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

These massive beasts were the fastest computers back in 1950.

(holds up cell phone)

And even though the computer in this tiny cell phone is millions of times faster, circuits in old and new computers work the same, either on or off. Now, who has a quarter?

Madison hands him one. The Professor shows first one side then the other.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG (CONT'D)

The quarter has to be either heads or tails... or does it?

The Professor SPINS the quarter on a table as Lewis enters.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG (CONT'D)

Which is it now, heads or tails?

MADISON

That's a trick question.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

No. What if the coin could be both heads and tails.

MADISON

It can't be both.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

Well, quantum circuits I design can be both on and off making them trillions of times faster than phones. Every time you flip a coin, you create an alternate universe, identical except with one difference -- like a coin showing heads instead of tails. Quantum computers essentially borrow from alternate universes so we can have heads and tails. We have our cake and eat it too.

LEWIS

Like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

Ah, a religious objection.

LEWIS

I'm actually a scientist myself. Not objecting, just... wondering.

Miss Perkins points to her watch. Habsburg sits.

MISS PERKINS

Class, the Code 9 is almost over. Last is Madison's Mom, a Professor of geoscience.

Lewis tacks up an old, hand-sketched map.

WISE ASS KID

It's just a raggedy old map.

LEWIS

Just an old map?! You wouldn't be here if brave explorers didn't rely on them to do the incredible.

WISE ASS KID

Maps can't give you super powers.

LEWIS
 (indicates her vest)
 See this? It's a power vest. And
 just like Superman --

Lewis RIPS off her vest to reveal just a sports bra, and a TATTOO with the same old map inked on her stomach. Miss Perkins frowns.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
 This tattoo replicates the original "raggedy old map," which was drawn by Thomas Jefferson himself. It's TJ's first sketch of the University of Virginia, good ol' UVA. The U. launched explorers like Lewis and Clark across the entire continent, from sea to shining sea and to the fabled Northwest Passage, a river that connects everything together.

MISS PERKINS
 Professor, we're out of time.

Lewis holds up her arm for "wait." Madison rolls in a cart supporting the clay VOLCANO. A hose connects it to a cylindrical tank. Madison flicks a switch and a motor HUMS.

LEWIS
 Maps can also show us how our earth transforms over time.

SMART KID
 Like with global warming?

LEWIS
 Right. But guess what else heats things up?

Madison hits another switch and the volcano ERUPTS a yucky, muddy fluid into the air! Which DESCENDS on everyone!

Chaos! Kids yell, girls SCREAM. Lewis and Madison grin.

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Lewis and Madison are caked in mud. But nothing can dampen their high spirits.

LEWIS
 Who's boring!? Huh, Maddy!?

MADISON

Not us!

Lewis slows the vehicle near a J. C. Penny store.

LEWIS

This weekend? New threads?

MADISON

Penny's? Ugh!

LEWIS

It's no boutique but my -- ahem --
funding windfall won't cover
wardrobe upgrades.

MADISON

New Cheddar! Mom, you are the GOAT!

LEWIS

Maddy, I'm thinking, because the
election is in the bag for
Thompson, we "bag" watching it --

MADISON

-- For Moonraker and Jaws!

INT. LEWIS' HOME - DEN - NIGHT

Lewis and Madison sleep on a couch. Lewis awakens with a
start, kisses her sleeping daughter's cheek.

LEWIS

(whispers)

It's been a rough stretch, Maddy.
But the world is a better place.

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - MOVING - MORNING

Lewis sees a store sign, SLAMS the brakes, exits the jeep. A
groggy Madison follows.

EXT. STOREFRONT - MORNING

Lewis stares at a sign that now says: "JCPenney." Madison
tugs her arm.

MADISON

Let's go see Dad.

LEWIS
The sign... it isn't right.

MADISON
Mom!

LEWIS
I'm sure, Maddy! It's wrong.

MADISON
You're bad with names unless
they're on a map! Now let's go!

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - MOVING - MORNING

Lewis looks confused, Maddy worried.

MADISON
Mom, you missed the turn!

LEWIS
No, this takes us straight to the
hospital to see your Dad.

MADISON
STOP THE CAR!

LEWIS
If it's one thing I know it's
directions.

MADISON
Mom, please! Trust me!

Lewis hesitates.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Please!

EXT. OAKWOOD CEMETARY - MORNING

Madison leads her Mom to a row of plots.

LEWIS
I don't understand, Maddy, why --

MADISON
(indicates a headstone)
-- Mom just look.

Lewis stares at a headstone for Henry. Lewis can't hide shock
and anger.

MADISON (CONT'D)
It's the one year anniversary.
That's why we came today.

LEWIS
Is this a joke?! Am I gonna have to
call you Moody instead of Maddy
like when --

MADISON
-- You're scaring me again! Look,
just look!
(indicates Lewis' bare
ring finger)
You took it off months ago!

LEWIS
No, we saw him yesterday!

Maddy just sobs.

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - PARKED - MORNING

Lewis watches Maddy trudge off to school. The girl stops and
turns around to grimace at Lewis.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - MORNING

An agitated Lewis flags down a NURSE at the busy hospital.

LEWIS
Remember me? My husband is Henry, a
cancer patient?

NURSE
I'm sorry... wait, your husband was
a patient about a year ago?

LEWIS
I need to speak to his doctor.

NURSE
I'm afraid Dr. Clay is in a
consult.

Lewis darts away, peeks into rooms. She spots Dr. Clay
addressing a group of interns, opens the door.

CONSULT ROOM

The doctor and staff stare at her.

LEWIS
I know I shouldn't interrupt --

DOCTOR CLAY
-- Yeah, you shouldn't, Mrs. Gale.

LEWIS
It's an emergency. Please, I'm
begging you.

LATER

The interns are gone. Dr. Clay flips through Henry's file as Lewis looks on intently.

DR. CLAY
And finally, a copy of the death
certificate, one year old.

LEWIS
This is... impossible! Look me in
the eye, swear we didn't see each
other yesterday.

Dr. Clay presses the intercom button.

DR. CLAY
Security. Consult Room B.

Lewis continues to stare at him as two burly SECURITY GUARDS enter the room.

DR. CLAY (CONT'D)
Show her video of the entrance
yesterday. Then send her home.

SECURITY CONTROL ROOM

Lewis peers at video footage of entrants to the hospital.

LEWIS
It would have been about ten, ten
thirty. Skip ahead!

An annoyed security guard operates the monitor.

ANNOYED SECURITY GUARD
Look, we been over it five times.
You ain't there, your daughter
ain't there. Period.

LEWIS
 You're lying! You manipulated the
 tape!

EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE WAY - MORNING

The two guards usher Lewis out of the building. She lands awkwardly, flips them the finger.

ANNOYED SECURITY GUARD
 Come back, we call the cops.

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - MOVING - MORNING

Lewis drives like a mad woman. Answers her BUZZING cell.

LEWIS
 What?

BRENDA (V.O.)
 Forget about your ten o'clock? Your
 Wahoos are restless, Lewis. You
 don't get here soon, God knows what
 they'll do. Maybe even have sex.

LEWIS
 Be right there.

She jets through town. Spots the JCPENNEY street sign,
 SQUEALS to a stop.

EXT. JCPENNEY - MORNING

Lewis rushes at the entrance, SMACKS Prof. Habsburg exiting
 an adjacent bakery. A CAKE BOX flies into the air. The red
 velvet cake SPLATS them.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
 You! You annihilated my son's
 classroom!

LEWIS
 You were mean to my daughter!

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
 She's a menace! Like mother, like
 daughter!

LEWIS
 Had your cake and ate it too,
 Professor?

(MORE)

LEWIS (CONT'D)

All over your smug, boring face!
That's right, you were voted most
boring parent!

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

Liar! My son says the cop was most
boring.

Habsburg wipes red cake off his face. Lewis suddenly adopts a
conciliatory expression.

LEWIS

Know what? My fault, a hundred
percent, my fault. Give me your
card, I'll pay for the cake and the
dry cleaning.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

Stay the hell away.

LEWIS

You're at the U., just like me,
right? Physics department?

Habsburg walks away but Lewis grabs his arm.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

I'll stop by, I'm dying to hear
more about quantum stuff.

Habsburg yanks free and stomps off. Lewis enters JCPenney.

INT. JCPENNEY - MORNING

Lewis enters in the bath section. Grabs a towel, wipes off
red velvet, scurrying forward. A SALESMAN intercepts.

LEWIS

Where's the manager? It's an
emergency!

SALESMAN

(points)

Why, Mr. Winkle's in the conference
room but you can't go --

Lewis bolts through mahogany double doors.

CONFERENCE ROOM

Managers stare at Lewis. MR. WINKLE is elderly with a kind
face. He motions the others to leave.

MR. WINKLE

Young lady, did you blow up the bakery next door?

LEWIS

My husband died. I'm losing it.

She cries. Mr. Winkle retrieves a bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue. Pours them both generous portions.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Thanks for letting a crazy person barge in here.

MR. WINKLE

My cardiologist would say I'm crazy for drinking. So would my rheumatologist -- hell, all of them doctors would.

They clink glasses.

LEWIS

It's November, 2020 isn't it?

MR. WINKLE

Yep. Now, what's really on your mind?

LEWIS

The store sign. I swear it used to be different.

MR. WINKLE

I been with the store going on fifty years. First as stock boy, then as salesman, and finally now head honcho. And I seen every kind of spelling you could imagine. All of them wrong except for the one on the sign outside.

Lewis looks unconvinced. She polishes off her scotch. Winkle pours them another round.

MR. WINKLE (CONT'D)

Come over here and take a look at this darn computer. Had to enlist my grandson to fix it up for me.

Mr. Winkle opens a lap top. Points to ancient invoices for outdoor signs and newspaper print ads.

MR. WINKLE (CONT'D)
Every sign order and print add
going on forty years now. And all
of them spell it the same way. The
right way.

LEWIS
I'm losing my mind.

MR. WINKLE
Now hold on, lots of folks spell it
wrong. Financial reports, magazine
articles, you even see some of the
other JCPenney stores get it wrong
for gosh sakes. Some folk add an
apostrophe "s" making what they
call a possessive out of the darn
thing.

Lewis stands, shakes the man's hand.

LEWIS
Thank you.

MR. WINKLE
There is something that troubles
me. You're the fifth person who
comes in the last few days
remembering it different.

Lewis stares at him, sits back down. Winkle hesitates, tears
up.

MR. WINKLE (CONT'D)
My Sarah passed back in '07. She
always added an "s", making it what
they call a plural. But don't
matter how you spell it, it
wouldn't bring back our loved ones,
would it?

Lewis nods, the man is right.

MR. WINKLE (CONT'D)
Before you go, how about a new
blouse? On the house.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - LAWNS - MORNING

Near the Rotunda, Wahoos confront WHITE SUPREMACISTS, some in
KKK gowns. A shocked Lewis approaches Samuel.

LEWIS
What the hell? What's happening?

SAMUEL
Yeah, third week in a row!

LEWIS
No, I've never seen --

SAMUEL
(to the KKK)
-- You Assholes! Fuck off!

WHITE SUPREMIST
Fuck you, nigger! Go back to
Africa!

SAMUEL
It's Martinique, genius!

WHITE SUPREMIST
Same thing!

White supremacists shake their signs and banners. One CHARGES Samuel. Lewis steps in front, RIPS off the KKK hood, revealing heavily tattooed FLOYD.

LEWIS
Coward! Hiding your face!

FLOYD
Hey, I know you!

Samuel grabs Lewis' hand and runs.

SAMUEL
Com'on! It's turning violent.

LEWIS
Jesus Christ! I can't believe it!

SAMUEL
These goons have carte blanc
because Thompson lost the election.

LEWIS
Thompson lost!? I don't fucking
believe it!

SAMUEL
Run, Professor!

INT. CLARK HALL - MORNING

Lewis and Samuel stare out the front window at the fighting throng outside.

LEWIS

I feel like I'm waking up to find out Nazis won the war.

SAMUEL

Better wake all the way up Professor because these jerks have been protesting for years. Today they're objecting the removal of Robert E. Lee's statues.

LEWIS

They damn well should be removed.

SAMUEL

On the other hand, we Wahoos demand that all traces of Thomas Jefferson should be removed.

Lewis spots a framed, mounted title page of Jefferson's "Notes on the State of Virginia."

LEWIS

Jefferson was a founding father, the founder of this university --

SAMUEL

-- And he owned slaves, he and Washington. Hell, all of them did.

LEWIS

I'm not sure I can support taking --

SAMUEL

-- Professor! Snap out of it!

LEWIS

What?

SAMUEL

Know why kids dig your classes? Ancient maps, legends and no technology: it's a refuge from the real world... a fairy tale. But out here in this reality you have to pick a side. What does your heart say?

LEWIS
What about bridging the divide?

SAMUEL
With those Nazis? Pick a side!

LEWIS
So it's come to that.

LEWIS' OFFICE

Lewis surveys the mess she and the Dean made. Then stares horrified at her maps while dialing a cell.

LEWIS
Security?! Professor Gale over in
Clark Hall. I've been robbed!
(pause)
Yes, yes, you're stretched thin but
these were valuable artifacts!

Lewis pops a giant hemp Gummy. Examines maps, shaking her head in disbelief.

Brenda enters. Lewis hides the gummy bottle.

BRENDA
No need to hide 'em. Hemp stuff's
been legal for over a year, Lewis.

LEWIS
What? No, they haven't.

BRENDA
Security called me because you
reported the crown jewels missing.
So show me.

LEWIS
Someone replaced my antique --
hell, all my maps with fakes!

Brenda examines a modern map of North and South America. The corner still ripped from their game.

BRENDA
You ripped it blocking my shot.

LEWIS
Yes, but it's wrong. Look at South
America, it's at least a thousand
miles too far East. Therefore, the
map is a fake.

BRENDA
 (indicates another map)
 How about New Zealand?

LEWIS
 It's Northeast, not Southeast of
 Australia. It's another fake, a
 good one, but just plain wrong.

Brenda turns on a laptop. Shows Lewis on-line maps. The
 cartographer grimaces.

BRENDA
 What about these maps, are they
 fake? Or has the world changed?
 (off Lewis' expression)
 Lewis, this is about the
 anniversary of Henry's death. It's
 hit you hard.

Brenda passes Lewis a business card.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
 Saw this coming a mile away. Go see
 Dr. Fourier. He helped me through
 my divorce --

LEWIS
 -- And if I refuse?

BRENDA
 You're on thin ice as it is!

LEWIS
 What about my new funding? From
 that secret whatever?

BRENDA
 What are you ranting about!? Your
 funding is bone dry. Meanwhile, I
 can't have a crazy person teaching
 bad science, Lewis. So pull
 yourself together and drop all of
 this nonsense.

LEWIS
 Okay, boss.

BRENDA
 Swear.

LEWIS
 I swear.

Lewis crosses her fingers behind her back so Brenda can't see. It cancels the oath! Brenda exits.

A text BUZZES on Lewis' phone. The sender is identified only by occult symbols. The message says "for answers." Followed by a name and DC address.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - WASHINGTON DC - DAY

The Washington Monument towers off in the distance. Lewis goes into an anonymous looking building.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY

Lewis punches the button for the sixth floor. The elevator soon lurches open, Lewis exits.

SIXTH FLOOR - SKEPTICAL SOCIETY HQ

Lewis enters a deserted office. She studies framed issues of the "Skeptical Inquirer Magazine." Debunking all manner of superstition.

LEWIS
(calls out)
Hello? Dr. Wren?

The sounds of WHIR, CLUMP, WHIR is heard. Lewis watches a wheelchair roll into view. The driver is DR. WREN, a middle-aged, anxious looking woman.

DR. WREN
I'll need to see some ID.

Lewis flashes her UVA picture badge. Dr. Wren relaxes.

DR. WREN (CONT'D)
Good, UVA. You wouldn't believe the kooks and imposters we get here at the Skeptical Society. Even death threats, if you can believe it.

LEWIS
Really?

DR. WREN
Professor, rigorous science threatens all manner of crackpots and con men.

(MORE)

DR. WREN (CONT'D)

I've even had visitors assume the identity of reputable scientists and it's made me more than a little paranoid.

(shakes Lewis' hand)

Now what can I do for UVA -- wait, you're Professor Lewis the cartographer?

LEWIS

I'm pretty obscure, how'd you --

A MUFFLED SOUND is heard. Dr. Wren glances furtively over her shoulder.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You hear that?

DR. WREN

Yes, the AC is complaining again.

Lewis indicates the framed magazines.

LEWIS

This Skeptical Society... you refute myths like perpetual motion and alien lizards. What about parallel universes?

DR. WREN

It's not just me doing the debunking, we have an elite international team. And as I said, some topics are deadly serious to select individuals. Now what about parallel universes?

Lewis strolls by the framed magazines. She points to one entitled: "Quantum Menace, Fact or Fiction?"

LEWIS

I've heard that quantum computers exploit alternate universes to gain computational advantages. But not without causing catastrophic side effects.

DR. WREN

Side effects like what?

LEWIS

Like changing the locations of land masses.

DR. WREN
Which would fall within your area
of expertise.

LEWIS
It would.

DR. WREN
You believe that? Land masses have
changed positions?

LEWIS
Maybe -- fuck, yes.

Dr. Wren tears up.

DR. WREN
Thank God! I'm not crazy! They have
changed!

LEWIS
You know who I am, so you must be
looking into geographic phenomena!

DR. WREN
Yes, but carefully, because my
reputation is at stake. Surely, you
can appreciate that, Professor.

LEWIS
Of course. Now Dr. Wren, can
quantum computers really cause
these weird effects? I've already
had one lecture featuring quantum
coin flips that went right over my
head.

DR. WREN
That's the many worlds
interpretation of quantum mechanics
where each choice creates an
alternate universe. The theory is
controversial but probably true, in
my opinion. Also understand that
the biggest quantum computers deal
with more possible states than
there are atoms in this universe.
An amazing fact!

Lewis hears the MUFFLED SOUND again, only louder. Dr. Wren
wheels close by and GRABS Lewis by the collar.

DR. WREN (CONT'D)
My time has run out.

LEWIS

What? Why?

DR. WREN

Listen! For quantum computers to perform calculations that are too large for this universe alone, then guess where some calculations must be done?

LEWIS

Alternate universes.

DR. WREN

They don't have the slightest idea what damage that could --

Several SECURITY GUARDS burst in. Dr. Wren wheels around to flee, but a guard blocks and restrains her.

DR. WREN (CONT'D)

Don't give up, Professor! You're on the right path!

Guards open a closet and a bound, gagged woman TUMBLES out.

LATER

A shaken Lewis is attended by a calm guard.

CALM GUARD

Sorry for the commotion, Ma'am.

LEWIS

The woman in the wheelchair, she wasn't really Dr. Wren.

CALM GUARD

Nope, had her tied up in the closet. The disabled lady has wheeled in here before, ranting about the world changing or some crazy shit.

LEWIS

She's psychotic, I guess.

CALM GUARD

Yeah, but this time she went too far. Good thing one of our residents spotted her and called security.

LEWIS

What's next? A psych ward?

CALM GUARD

For her. For you, I recommend going home to kick back and relax.

INT. LEWIS' HOME - DEN - NIGHT

Lewis tries not to show Madison her distress.

MADISON

Mom, turn around. I wanna show you my new masterpiece.

LEWIS

Okay, Picasso.

Lewis turns around. Madison produces a surreal watercolor painting. It depicts her Mom morphed into a map.

MADISON

Okay, get ready to be wowed.

Lewis turns back around. She's impressed with the painting. But then stiffens.

LEWIS

The map. It isn't right.

MADISON

Okay, I'm freaking out.

LEWIS

Me too. But I'm getting help.

Lewis kisses and hugs her daughter.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Now... something I want to ask you, my beautiful, talented daughter. Your Dad's been gone, what, a year? How have I been doing? Taking care of you?

MADISON

Mom, mostly I take care of you.

LEWIS

I'm so sorry... so sorry, Maddy. Something's wrong but I'm seeing a doctor tomorrow.

Lewis gaze lands on Madison's backpack, now spelled "Berenstain Bears." She stares in disbelief.

MADISON

Mom! There's nothing wrong with my backpack!

INT. PSYCHOTHERAPY OFFICE - DAY

Lewis sits silently a long spell across from DR. FOURIER, a patient man with kind eyes.

DR. FOURIER

If it helps, you can begin by saying what brought you here.

Lewis just stares back.

DR. FOURIER (CONT'D)

How about we each tell a joke? I'll start: what's the difference between a psychiatrist and a psychologist? Two hundred bucks an hour. And by the way, I'm on the poor side of that.

LEWIS

I'm a geophysicist, a cartographer actually, so here goes: why didn't the map have any meridians? It was a map of a parallel universe.

They smile, and Lewis releases tension in a long breath.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

I'm here because my boss gave me an ultimatum.

DR. FOURIER

Any other reason?

LEWIS

My Dad was a bookish sort who wanted an adventurous son... an explorer who could live out my Dad's dreams. What he got was a daughter, and as it turns out, mostly bookish. Didn't stop him from naming me after Meriwether Lewis. You know, the explorer who went nuts. Too bad he didn't name me after Clark.

DR. FOURIER
You question your sanity.

LEWIS
Since the day after the election.

DR. FOURIER
After the election many people I
treat have experienced...
disorientation. You're not alone.

Lewis eyes the decor. Framed portraits of jazz greats and --
a globe. She frowns seeing it.

DR. FOURIER (CONT'D)
Does that globe disturb you?

LEWIS
What disturbs me is the day before
the election my husband was
miraculously cured from terminal
fucking cancer. But the next day my
daughter proved he'd been dead
exactly a whole year.

DR. FOURIER
Death anniversaries can be
traumatic.

LEWIS
Yeah, except I didn't know it was
the anniversary. I chill with hemp
Gummies sometimes... they help.

DR. FOURIER
I see. But the CBD or THC in
edibles is unregulated and can
cause paradoxical reactions like
agitation or even psychosis. For
stress relief, I suggest regular
exercise. What could you do?

LEWIS
In high school I was on the swim
team... long distances.

DR. FOURIER
Speaks to determination, work
ethic.

LEWIS
You're trying to make me feel
better about myself. It's pretty
transparent.

DR. FOURIER

I'm reminding you of resources you
may have overlooked.

Lewis stomps up and grabs the globe. She points out various
features.

LEWIS

How can I overlook this, South
America, and this, New Zealand?
It's all wrong! I've studied maps
ever since I heard about Lewis and
Clark. I'm a God damn pro at maps!
What I've discovered since the
election is that the FUCKING MAPS
ARE ALL WRONG!!!

She SLAMS the globe down on the floor, SHATTERING it.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry. I'll pay for it,
of course.

DR. FOURIER

Either your memory is faulty or the
world has changed.

LEWIS

Not just changed! Don't you get
it?! It's much worse!

DR. FOURIER

I want to see you again soon.
There's a lot at stake, like caring
for your daughter.

LEWIS

My daughter? What about her?

DR. FOURIER

I'll have the receptionist set
something up.

LEWIS

Other things are wrong too and now
I have to drive right past one of
them, the fucking JCPenney sign.

The doctor FLINCHES. A reaction Lewis doesn't miss.

WAITING AREA

Lewis passes by ALEXIA, 30, perfectly coiffed but desperate looking. She cradles a Berenstain Bears book. Lewis locks eyes with the woman, then leaves.

EXT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY

Lewis rests against her jeep, checking her watch. Sees Alexia exit the building, intercepts her heading for a Mercedes.

LEWIS

Hey, I'm Lewis. Saw you inside.

ALEXIS

Therapy is confidential so leave me alone.

LEWIS

Your Berenstain Bear book... I damn well know it's supposed to be Berenstein! And I get the feeling you think that too.

ALEXIS

I'm not supposed to indulge these delusions.

Alexis escapes into her car. Lewis turns to find on her jeep's windshield, a note: "for answers."

LEWIS

More fucking answers. Great.

INT. CLARK HALL - LEWIS' OFFICE - DAY

Lewis arrives to see Brenda supervising movers pack up her things.

LEWIS

Jesus, Brenda, I went to the fucking shrink!

BRENDA

Your daughter's school called. You took off your clothes and tried to blow up a classroom?

LEWIS

That's a gross exaggeration --

BRENDA

-- The committee was looking for any excuse. I'm sorry, Lewis.

LEWIS

But I'm tenured for Christ sakes!

BRENDA

Your classes are canceled and you have no research funding. There's simply nothing for you to do.

Lewis watches in horror as the movers start to remove her precious maps.

LEWIS

Stop it, stop it! I'll move my fucking maps!

The movers shrug, carry boxes out of the room.

BRENDA

I called in a favor and got you on an NSF grant. Some kind of inter-university circle jerk. It's only part time but at least it's cartography related.

LEWIS

Where am I supposed to work?

Brenda points down.

CORRIDOR

Lewis exits her office to find a BORED MAN holding an envelope and SUSAN, 30s.

LEWIS

What ray of sunshine is this?

BORED MAN

(hands over a paper)

An invoice for damages you caused at the middle school.

(passes an envelope)

And a restraining order keeping you off school property.

The man leaves. Susan passes her a card: she's an LCSW.

SUSAN

Child protective services was contacted about your behavior. We need to schedule an in-home assessment.

LEWIS

You think my daughter's in danger? From me?!

SUSAN

Call in the next few days or I'll show up with a police escort.

STAIRS

Lewis trudges down long flights of stairs. She hauls several long map tubes.

SUB-BASEMENT

Lewis finds an office at the end. She peeks inside. Movers are unpacking. She sets down her tubes.

She spots a massive rusted IRON DOOR at the end of the hall. Yellow symbols are spray painted on it. No keyhole.

LEWIS

What the hell are you hiding? I'd need explosives to knock your ass down, wouldn't I? That'd be pretty stressful.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - POOL - DAY

Lewis swims painfully slow freestyle. She climbs out gasping and sputtering. A young LIFE GUARD looks concerned.

LIFE GUARD

You okay, Professor... ma'am?

LEWIS

I'm too young to be called "ma'am," so fuck off.

She heads to the locker room. Stops and returns.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. It's been a bad day... few days.

LIFE GUARD

Good form on your freestyle but
your conditioning sucks. Give it a
a month or so.

LEWIS

Anything else?

LIFE GUARD

You've got potential. Don't give
up.

For the first time in a while, Lewis lets herself smile.

LEWIS

Thank you.

EXT. BUILDING - BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Lewis studies the note left on her jeep. The note's address
matches that of the building.

INT. BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

About ten ADULTS, mixed ages and backgrounds. It could be an
AA meeting. Lewis sits in a folding chair next to a huge
bearded man, HEAVY DUTY.

CLINT stands up front. He's 40s, calm demeanor and expensive
suit. He makes serious eye contact with Lewis.

CLINT

I'm Clint, and I'm a Mandela Effect-
oholic.

ALL

Hi Clint!

CLINT

(winks at Lewis)
Just kidding newcomers. This isn't
AA -- you are at the local Mandela
Effect group, or ME for short.

SOCCER MOM

I've got residue!

The eager woman yanks an OLD VIDEO CASSETTE out of a paper
bag. Holds it up, the spelling is "Berenstein Bears."

LEWIS

Jesus, that's how it should be spelled! Where'd you get it?

SOCCER MOM

Ebay for only twenty --

CLINT

-- That's interesting, but we --

MOHAWK HAIR DUDE

-- No man! I got something intense! It's about my DUMBS.

CLINT

The deep underground military bases?

MOHAWK HAIR DUDE

Yeah, dude, all over the planet. There was a huge sucker right under the Denver Airport that was on all the web sites but now it's been scrubbed, like it never existed!

CLINT

Okay, there's a lot to discuss. But first, who'll give an introduction to our newcomer?

Heavy Duty stands up and stares at Lewis.

HEAVY DUTY

Listen, back in 2013, folks got their panty-hose bunched up because they couldn't remember when Mandela, this old black dude died. Soon, more jokers remembered stuff that had changed. Change that was plain wrong.

LEWIS

Nelson Mandela?

HEAVY DUTY

Don't interrupt me, lady. Thing is, folks thought he died in prison in the eighties. But in this freaking world of ours, guess he actually bit it in 2013. I don't give a flyin' fuck about the dude.

(MORE)

HEAVY DUTY (CONT'D)

These other folk be losing their minds 'cause of details they remember how he bought in prison way back when. Me, I don't give a -
-

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN

-- Well, I do, asshole!

HEAVY DUTY

Don't interrupt me, lady!!! I'm the one telling it, ain't I?!! Anyone got a problem with that, they can kiss my Brooklyn ass!!

(to Lewis)

Now, you lady -- know what ain't lit with Mandela stuff?

LEWIS

Tell me, big guy.

Heavy Duty gathers himself. Stretches to an even more imposing height, leans over into Lewis' face.

HEAVY DUTY

Folks call me "Heavy Duty," sometimes just "Duty" 'cause I work numbers, bookmaking... work serious as shit. Sometimes I break legs, kneecaps, whatever. But marks know going in what happens if they welsh and can't pay the juice... the vig. I don't see nuttin' wrong with whacking welchers.

LEWIS

I can respect that. But I happen to like my kneecaps.

HEAVY DUTY

SHUT THE FUCK UP UNTIL I'M DONE!!

LEWIS

No.

HEAVY DUTY

Listen, lady! Because Nelson Mandela, bear books, none of that shit matters! What matters is personal. Like me connecting with bookies on Bushwick and 4th street.

(MORE)

HEAVY DUTY (CONT'D)

The dough was absolutely righteous, so I decide to expand to beaner soccer down in Brazil, a seriously lit idea. Beaners up here, beaners down there, all of 'em go ape shit over freaking soccer, betting mamasita's life savings on a *tiro no escuro* -- on a long shot. So I'm on the horn with hombres down South and we set up some international bookmaking. Genius for a leg breaker like me. But what you think mucked it up?

LEWIS

This weird effect.

HEAVY DUTY

Yeah. I always call Curibita on a Thursday night 'cause the action is on weekends. But the hombres had already vamoosed home! See, the freaking time zone had changed! It was three hours different!

Heavy Duty fights tears of fear and confusion. Lewis stands and kisses him on the cheek.

LEWIS

I'm Lewis, an expert on maps, the fucking mistress of maps, teaching at the U. and stuff. A few days ago, I noticed the maps were all wrong, with South America the worst. It had moved about three time zones East.

Heavy Duty cries with relief.

HEAVY DUTY

I thought I was going nuts, lady!

LEWIS

And Henry, my husband... just days ago was alive. Now I learn he's been dead a whole year. That's what I call personal.

HEAVY DUTY

Damn.

CLINT

Maybe this group can provide answers for some of us.

EXT. BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Lewis walks towards her Jeep.

CLINT (O.S.)
Hey, Lewis.

She turns around to him.

CLINT (CONT'D)
Friends call you Lou?

LEWIS
Not if they wanna keep their teeth.

CLINT
Lou, buy you lunch?

Lewis checks her watch.

LEWIS
I don't know, my daughter's home in
a few hours. And to be clear, I'm
not sleeping with you.

INT. CLINT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Lewis and Clint embrace passionately, both partially
undressed. He kisses her map tattoo. She breaks if off.

LEWIS
I can't. It feels like I was
married just days ago.

CLINT
Maybe we get to know each other
slowly.

LEWIS
I don't think so.

CLINT
My dad was a shrink and my mom was
a dentist so I'm good from the neck
up. And I like 90s rock, what my
kids call "Dad rock."

LEWIS
Dad rock?

Clint hits a button on a CD player. MELLOW ROCK plays.

CLINT

Rock no longer trying to change the world. Background music for chores.

They finish dressing. Lewis notices a painting of Thomas Jefferson. TJ biographies on the night stand.

LEWIS

You know, TJ's taking heat on campus.

CLINT

I'm an attorney who helped big companies exercise their God given right to rape small ones, stripping of them of assets, and generally laying waste. It was Jeffersonian manifest destiny in action. After the ME shattered my existence, I quit to do legal work for the U, fighting lawsuits to remover traces of TJ on campus.

LEWIS

It's curious, I just joined a research project dealing with Jefferson's map collection.

Clint produces a bottle of Vodka. Pours himself a shot, digesting what Lewis just said. Offers her a glass.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You don't have any hemp Gummies do you? I'm supposed to cut back, but I'm addicted.

He smiles and shakes his head. She downs the glass in a few gulps, grimaces.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Hey, Clint, what's residue? Like the woman said at the group.

CLINT

Physical evidence supporting the ME theory that the world changed and it's not just faulty memory or delusions. Like the Bear book being spelled the old way.

LEWIS

What's your take on that?

CLINT
People make typos. All the time.

LEWIS
So how do you explain the weird
shit going on?

CLINT
I don't know.

LEWIS
Well what happened to you?

CLINT
A copy of Rodin's "The Thinker" had
been on my desk for years.

LEWIS
Statue of a guy resting his
forehead on one hand?

CLINT
Yeah. Except one day I came in and
the guy was resting his chin on the
hand. I smashed that sucker into a
million pieces.

LEWIS
Could it be a quantum effect?
Alternate universes and such?

Clint flinches, tries to hide it with a shrug.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Gotta go be a good mom.

She kisses his cheek and leaves. Clint dials his cell.

CLINT
It's me.
(pause)
She's smart, stubborn and about to
poke her nose into Jefferson's
archives. Jesus, she has a huge
clue tattooed on her stomach that
she may not even understand. This
makes her a threat.
(pause)
Too bad because I already took care
of it. A potent cocktail of LSD,
special-K and a few other choice
ingredients.

INT. PROFESSOR HABSBURG'S OFFICE - DAY

Dense equations cover white boards, alongside a photo of Lewis. Physics Professor Habsburg paces while on his cell.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
I just said don't kill her! Orders
from you-know-who!

CLINT (V.O.)
And I said it might be too late
because you-know-who failed to send
me the damn memo!

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
To be clear, we prevent anyone from
finding us except the cartographer.
You-know-who wants to see if she's
smart enough to do it.

EXT. LEWIS' HOME - DUSK

Lewis exits her jeep and approaches her modest, one-story rambler. Waiting outside is Susan, the LCSW.

LEWIS
Madison's not home.

SUSAN
I wanna come in anyway.

LEWIS
Is this even legal?

SUSAN
I could call for police escort.

INT. LEWIS' HOME - DEN - DUSK

Susan looks around at a home with typical clutter. Lewis does her best to tidy up.

SUSAN
I'm more interested in Madison.
Could I see her room?

MADISON'S BEDROOM

Susan sorts through Madison's art projects and drawings as Lewis answers her BUZZING cell.

BRENDA (V.O.)
 Lewis, where have you been? Your
 grant partner says you haven't even
 stopped by!

LEWIS
 (into phone)
 Have an emergency, Bren.

BRENDA (V.O.)
 Did you assault a physics professor
 downtown?

LEWIS
 No, it was just an accidental --

BRENDA (V.O.)
 -- Get over here and meet with your
 partner! And I mean tonight or
 they'll kick you off the fricking
 thing!

Lewis clicks off. Susan puts down Madison's art.

SUSAN
 Madison is a creative girl.

LEWIS
 It's smearing together... worlds.

SUSAN
 What?

LEWIS
 I need a trip far away.

Lewis wanders about unsteadily, muttering. Her eyes roll
 around oddly.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
 I'll find an area more remote than
 Bavaria. In Bavaria or even Bombay,
 love won't let you get away.

SUSAN
 Those are song lyrics -- have you
 been drinking?

LEWIS
 Yes, but it was yuckety yuck! Hemp
 rocks but my shrink poo poed it.

SUSAN
 I'll need to talk to your doctor.

That seems to snap Lewis back to reality.

LEWIS

And if I say no?

SUSAN

Then I'll get a subpoena because I'm worried about your ability to care for Madison. Tell me you haven't been concerned yourself.

LEWIS

I would never do anything to harm Madison. Never.

EXT. LEWIS' HOME - NIGHT

Lewis watches Susan drive off. A minivan soon pulls up and lets out Madison.

The girl pulls a Moonraker DVD from her backpack.

MADISON

Mom, look! Blu-ray with special features!

LEWIS

Soon as I'm back. Can't wait to see the girl smile with those beautiful metal teeth.

MADISON

No, Mom. Only Jaws has metal teeth. You're confused again.

LEWIS

Bye, sweetie, gotta trip to take.

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - MOVING - NIGHT

Lewis is vaguely aware she's tripping. In downtown Charlottesville, she exits for Bavaria!

Lewis finds herself in the Alps... snow tipped mountains, icy roads, chalet style gausthuses. A lederhosen clad skier SHOOSHES across her path.

Lewis SWERVES to miss the skier, then floors the jeep. Landscape colors swirl together.

Lewis takes an exit to Bombay. She hurls by ornate Hindu temples, luxury hotels and street vendors. The colors swirl faster.

She hears a loud WOOOOOOSH.

INT. CLARK HALL - SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lewis finds herself in front of the old iron door in a daze, fixated on the sprayed-on yellow occult symbols.

SAMUEL (O.S.)
Hey Professor.

Lewis turns to the young student. His hair's blorange highlights swirl with bright yellow.

LEWIS
Hey. Don't know how I got here.
(indicates the door)
But these symbols are important,
right? And what's behind that big-
ass ugly door?

SAMUEL
Just a universe killer. Thought
it'd take you longer to catch on.

She takes his hand, leads into her new office.

INT. LEWIS' NEW OFFICE - NIGHT

Cramped, with many boxes unpacked. Lewis stares at Samuel intently, equal parts curiosity and lust.

LEWIS
Yellow goes to an honorable fellow.

SAMUEL
Damn, Professor, good instincts!

He lifts his shirt to reveal a tattoo of yellow symbols. She removes her blouse, exposes her map tat. Then removes her bra, rattling Samuel.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Jesus, Professor, I smell alcohol --
take it back, you're tripping!
We're going to the ER.

She gets dressed. Samuel takes her by the hand, but Lewis halts. Drifting in and out of lucidity.

LEWIS

What'd those symbols mean?

SAMUEL

Danger... and help.

LEWIS

So how'd you learn about the door and the threat to the universe? And why'd you send me to the Skeptical Society?

SAMUEL

I was studying rare, occult writings of Jefferson when I came across something about an evil lurking under the UVA that would arise someday. That night I dreamt that you and I fought the evil together. See, I use scholarship and intuition, just like you.

Lewis is distracted by her map tubes, still unpacked. She starts unpacking.

LEWIS

Secret society, skeptical society... I need to work on a fucking grant. TJ and his maps.

SAMUEL

Yeah, we're both on the NSF thing. But that can wait until after --

This snaps her somewhat back to reality.

LEWIS

-- Can we consult with other faculty?

SAMUEL

Yeah. In fact, NSF's contract gives us reasonable access to any UVA faculty we want. Now let's go!

EXT. CLARK HALL - NIGHT

Samuel leads an unsteady Lewis to the parking lot.

LEWIS

Take me to the physics building.

SAMUEL

You're not yourself, Professor!

LEWIS

Remember what you said about picking a side?

SAMUEL

Yeah, but --

LEWIS

-- I'm picking one! Now take me to the fucking physics department!

INT. PROFESSOR HABSBURG'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lewis barges in, a worried Samuel in tow. They see dense math written on white boards. Habsburg erupts in anger.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

You! How many complaints do I have to file before they lock you up!
(dials phone)
I'm calling security.

LEWIS

It's all about TJ. When he wasn't screwing his slaves, he designed the very U. we all work at. Dude's out of fashion because his big idea was that all straight, white men are created equal. Guess what? The idea's not cutting it. We need boobs and swirling colors.

Habsburg becomes interested at the mention of Thomas Jefferson. He sets his phone down.

SAMUEL

Check your email last Tuesday, Professor. We can talk to any faculty as part of an NSF grant.

Habsburg checks his emails and his expression takes a calculated turn.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

Okay, tell you about my work in exchange for information about your grant.

LEWIS

TJ sent Lewis and Clark to the boundaries of our continent. See, those boys were mucho manifest destinying on turbo, raping and pillaging the continent by divine right, with Jefferson --

SAMUEL

-- Jefferson had the biggest map collection of his era, maintained just down the road in Monticello. We haven't had a chance to go through it yet.

Habsburg writes notes. Lewis gets in his face.

LEWIS

Your turn. And don't flip any more coins, asshole.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

My work is entirely theoretical, dealing with the boundaries of the universe... of every universe. It turns out boundaries occur near black holes, which we can detect by cosmic x-ray data. There, all the information that exits or once exited in each universe resides on a 2D plane. Just like a 3D globe can be projected onto a 2D map, amazingly, 4D space-time can also be represented on 2D. On some far boundary... inconceivably remote.

LEWIS

More remote than Bavaria.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

Quantum computers can read these records, a process that actually entangles universes. Entanglement makes possible an exchange of matter or even information. So you see, boundaries of universes are really quite amazing... if one is smart enough to exploit them.

LEWIS

(indicates Samuel)

Showed him my boobs, not so smart, huh? Struggling with boundary issues myself.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
Time's up. Leave.

LEWIS
You're mucking around underground.
That's my theory. Behind and
beneath that big ass iron door,
pillaging and raping the universe!

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
Get the hell out!

Lewis sees a coin appear out of thin air and land in
Habsburg's pants pocket. Another coin FLOATS out of his other
pocket towards an open window.

Lewis outstretches her hand and lunges for it.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG (CONT'D)
Stay back! The window!

She dives out the window but Samuel just SNAGS her ankle!

Samuel strains, his hand slips... Lewis starts WIGGLING. His
hold fails and she disappears!

Samuel stares out the window in horror, then bolts out of the
room. Habsburg dials his cell.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Despite your little cocktail she
was still connecting the dots.

CLINT (V.O.)
Aren't some of the problem maps at
Monticello?

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
(into phone)
Yeah, but I don't think she has
them yet. Oh, and we should get rid
of her associate, a guy with
highlights for Christ sakes. I'll
email you his vitals. Encrypted, of
course.

CLINT (V.O.)
And Lewis' current status?

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
(into phone)
Unfortunately, dead or injured.

CLINT (V.O.)
That's less than ideal. If she
recovers I'll watch her.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL - COMMON AREA - NIGHT

Lewis is bandaged, one arm in a sling. She stares at a
wallpaper that swirls. A PSYCHIATRIC NURSE taps her shoulder.

LEWIS
My arm hurts.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE
Good, you're more present.

The nurse leads to a couch and they sit. Lewis looks around
and realizes where she is.

LEWIS
I'm crazy, for real.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE
Well, you dove out a three story
window. Luckily, the physical
damage was minor.

LEWIS
I dove out a window... Jesus.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE
What's the last thing you remember?

LEWIS
I visited an odd group with weird
people. Then I took a long drive.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE
My understanding is that you've
been having difficulty staying in
touch with reality, even before the
fall. Is that so?

LEWIS
That's an understatement.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE
Your friend Samuel suspects you
were recently dosed with
hallucinogens, which is difficult
to detect by a blood test.
Furthermore, it can't explain
previous psychotic episodes. Lewis,
do you remember taking any drugs?

LEWIS

Ah... I've been drinking a lot. And recently I gave up an addiction to hemp Gummies.

The nurse writes notes in a chart.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

You may experience flashbacks from the hallucinogens, if in fact you took some. Notify your doctor if that happens.

LEWIS

Wait, now I remember, a social worker was at my house -- Jesus, my daughter! I need to go see Madison!

Lewis stands and makes for the exit. The nurse guides her back to the couch.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

Your daughter is fine.
(consults notes)
She's staying with the Gales. Your parents?

LEWIS

In-laws. My parents are gone.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

Lewis, right now you're a danger to yourself and others, including your daughter. The court has ruled that Madison will stay with her grandparents indefinitely.

LEWIS

My God, I am a danger.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

Rest now. You should be able to receive visitors in a day or so.

THE NEXT NIGHT

Samuel carries a stack of OLD NSF FILES. He joins Lewis, who looks healthier and alert. Also somber.

SUPER: The Next Evening

Lewis indicates a couch and they sit. Samuel stares at a disturbing cadre of mental patients.

SAMUEL
When you getting out?

LEWIS
Before we get into that, thanks for helping me. Hey, was I inappropriate with you?

SAMUEL
You showed me your tattoo.

LEWIS
Anything else?

SAMUEL
Your boobs.

They smile. But Lewis quickly darkens and fights tears.

LEWIS
I really did lose my mind. And it cost me my daughter, my job...

SAMUEL
(passes her files)
How about starting on the grant?
And be sure to study my notes about Jefferson's maps and desks.

Lewis passes him back the files.

LEWIS
I'm done with maps. With believing that maps weren't right when all along, I wasn't right, me.

Samuel passes the files back but REMY, a frizzy haired, wild-eyed patient SNATCHES them away and runs off.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Remy happens to cherish Vanilla Wafers. I'll trade some for your stuff.

SAMUEL
Don't give up, Professor. You were right, dead right.

LEWIS

Let's see, right about swan diving out of a window? About the world changing? About secret societies having answers? And most of all, about Mandela stuff? Tell me I'm right about all that and they'll lock up your ass in here with me.

SAMUEL

Except for the dive, you were right about all of it. Only reason you took a flyer is someone dosed you... maybe the physics guy. Plus he's messing with technology so dangerous that it could seriously mess up reality and somehow you instinctively knew it!

Lewis stands and lead Samuel to the exit. She opens the door and shoves him out.

LEWIS

I can't afford to hang out with crazy people... not if I'm ever getting my daughter back.

Lewis spots Faux Dr. Wren, in a patient gown, rolling towards her.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You! Stay the hell away!

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL - COMMON AREA - MORNING

A nurse hands out meds. Lewis downs them compliantly.

LEWIS

(whispers)

That special favor?

The nurse passes over a napkin holding several Vanilla Wafers. Lewis approaches Remy, who clutches the files.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Hey, interested in a trade?

REMY

You steal those from my stash? Cause that'd be like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

His choice of words affects Lewis. She stares at him.

LEWIS
Give me my God damn files.

They swap files for cookies. He immediately MUNCHES one.

REMY
I overheard you... with your friend.

LEWIS
So?

REMY
Everything he says is true. The
wheelchair lady is also
trustworthy.

LEWIS
How would you know? You live in a
nut house and your hair suggests
you enjoy sticking paper clips into
power outlets.

REMY
Einstein had frizzy hair.

LEWIS
Einstein won the Nobel prize, while
you, on the other hand, recently
won runner-up for ward patient of
the month!

REMY
Einstein never trusted quantum
mechanics and for damn good reason!
So neither should you.

Lewis regards him with extreme agitation. Steam practically
shoots out her ears.

REMY (CONT'D)
Jefferson's maps are important. You
must study them.

LEWIS
STOP LISTENING TO MY CONVERSATIONS
AND POKING INTO MY SHIT!

Lewis snatches a cookie and CRUMBLES it over Remy's head.
Several concerned staff observe.

REMY
I forgive you. Did ya know I used
to be a psychic?

LEWIS

Guess that explains what you're doing here.

REMY

The fabric of reality was altered by the Mandela Effect but no one believed me. Maybe because I was shouting, buck naked in the middle of the street. But I sense you can fix things! YOU MUST!

The psychiatric nurse leads a troubled Lewis away.

CONSULT ROOM

Lewis clutches her files, sitting with a stern looking female
RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST.

LEWIS

Gonna whack my hand with a ruler?

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST

We recently stopped that sort of thing. Or crumbling cookies over patients' heads. Big liability issues either way.

LEWIS

That leaves just verbal scoldings, doesn't it?

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST

We should talk about your future.

LEWIS

Remy the Psychic also wanted to talk about my future.

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST

That upset you. So did your visitor.

Lewis scans a vast array of books with scary mental illness titles.

LEWIS

So what's my future, doc?

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST

Your psychotic symptoms have subsided.

(MORE)

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)

So in your future I see two weeks without an aggressive outburst. That means no gesture of hostility towards yourself or others. Then I see you being released.

LEWIS

Really? Think I'm ready? Because I'm not sure.

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST

You'll continue on meds and with your outside therapist. Those are not requests, understand?

Lewis nods. The doctor rises and so does Lewis. The Resident opens the door, but pauses.

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)

Lewis, you're obviously a bright, capable person. What we call in my field a "smart cookie." Do whatever it takes to get released because there's no future staying in a mental hospital. Sometimes it's simply a matter of choice: which side do you want to be on?

(motions around)

In here. Or --

(points outside)

-- Out there? That's a serious question.

LEWIS

Out there.

Lewis starts to leave but the psychiatrist opens her hands for the files.

RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST

Let me take those. They upset you.

Lewis hesitates.

LEWIS

Nay, I'll keep 'em. Beats the ward's coloring books.

EXT. GALES' HOME - DAY

A healthier Lewis stands outside an upscale brick home. Horses graze in nearby meadows.

Stooped, 70 year-old MARTIN GALE exits the house. He stops at the top of the driveway, his face flushed with anger.

MARTIN GALE
Putting me in a spot here, Lewis.

LEWIS
I just wanna see Maddy. Five minutes.

Lewis spots Martin's wife, BESS GALE, peeking out a window.

MARTIN GALE
I should call the police.

Martin dials his cell.

LEWIS
Wait, wait! Five minutes, that's all I'm asking!

MARTIN GALE
The court order... you can still read, right?

LEWIS
But I haven't seen her --

MARTIN GALE
-- No. Now leave.

He limps back inside. Bess comes out to greet Lewis.

BESS GALE
Lewis, take some time, recover fully. Then you can see her.

LEWIS
How is she?

BESS GALE
There's horses and she paints.

LEWIS
Henry wouldn't have wanted this.

BESS GALE
Martin and I debated telling you but I think it could help all of us move on. You see, Henry was filing for divorce. He had been involved with someone for years, your boss at the school.

LEWIS
 Fuck you, Bess! You know what?!
 Fuck the both of you!!

Lewis somehow makes it into her jeep.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Lewis hands over a credit card, hand shaking.

LEWIS
 Thirty bucks, pump two.

The CLERK swipes the card.

CLERK
 Declined. You might try our slot
 machines.

He indicates an ATM. Lewis feeds it her debit card. Balance:
 \$2.13. She walks out of the store as if in a trance.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Without pumping, Lewis removes the gas nozzle sticking into
 her jeep. Then sobs as a WELL-DRESSED MAN approaches.

WELL-DRESSED MAN
 You're right, gas prices have
 skyrocketed, which explains the
 growing popularity of electric
 cars. Bless their cute little
 battery-operated, low operating
 range hearts.

She suspects he's mocking her. But he smiles and indicates a
 red Maserti convertible

WELL-DRESSED MAN (CONT'D)
 One of the worst MPG ratings of all
 time and I'm proud of it. Now,
 anything I can do for you?

LEWIS
 I recently lost my mind, my job,
 custody of my daughter, and I just
 learned my dead husband was fucking
 someone I work with. To add to my
 pitiful story, I can't afford the
 gas to take me to a doctor's
 appointment.

The man peels off two, crisp hundred dollar bills.

WELL-DRESSED MAN
 Promise you'll never go electric.

INT. LEWIS' JEEP - MOVING - DAY

Lewis answers her BUZZING cell phone.

MADISON (V.O.)
 Mom, it's me. I saw you outside.

LEWIS
 Madison! Thank God!

MADISON (V.O.)
 I bought a burner because they
 check my calls.

LEWIS
 That's my smart girl! How'd you
 know to do that?

MADISON (V.O.)
 Give me a break, Mom! It's on all
 the shows!

LEWIS
 Listen, I'm getting better, I'm
 having my map tat removed --

MADISON (V.O.)
 -- Mom, I want to come home. It's
 like prison here... they're coming!
 Love you, Mom.

Lewis pulls up outside her therapist's building.

EXT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY

Lewis exits her car to find Clint loitering nearby.

LEWIS
 My memory is gradually coming back.
 I know you, right? From Tinder?

CLINT
 Funny. It's Clint, from the Mandela
 Effect group.

LEWIS
 How'd you track me down, Clint?

CLINT

I'm the one who put a note on your jeep. Must of been weeks ago.

(points)

Right over there. An invitation to the ME group.

LEWIS

Well then how'd you track me down back then?

CLINT

Charlottesville, UVA... they're small communities. I contact people I'm told are struggling with ME related issues.

LEWIS

Thanks for sending me to the looney bin with your crazy ass shit, Clint!!!

People in the vicinity look over at the commotion. Dr. Fourier sticks his head out of a window and looks at her.

CLINT

The support group had nothing to do with you jumping out a window.

LEWIS

You seem to know a lot about me... too fucking much.

His face is hard to read... calm, nonchalant even.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You should know I've given up any and all crazy ideas, including ME.

CLINT

Lunch some time? On me.

Lewis scowls. He shrugs and leaves.

INT. PSYCHOTHERAPY OFFICE - DAY

Lewis does her best to appear sane under the watchful eye of Dr. Fourier.

LEWIS

... and I've completely given up anything and everything to do with cartography.

(MORE)

LEWIS (CONT'D)

With maps or globes for that matter. Chucked it all into the trash along with the irrational thinking that caused me to jump out that fucking window.

DR. FOURIER

That's certainly a change.

LEWIS

Speaking of globes, I'll replace yours as soon as my grant money kicks in --

DR. FOURIER

-- That's not important --

LEWIS

-- But I'll need a tab for the therapy. Lost my insurance.

DR. FOURIER

I'm not concerned about remuneration. Not yet, at least.

LEWIS

No? What I'm concerned about is staying stable. I even took up swimming again, per your recommendation.

The doctor looks skeptical.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

What!? I did! The lifeguard even said my form was good!

DR. FOURIER

Lewis, I spoke with your other doctors. You're not out of the woods. Point in fact, the call we just received from your in-laws.

LEWIS

I lost my temper for one whole minute because they won't let me see my own daughter! How's that being lost in the woods?! But you know what would help? Your recommendation, in writing, that I'm stable enough to see my own daughter.

DR. FOURIER
You feel ready for that?

LEWIS
Ready? She's my fucking daughter!

The doctor flips through some notes. Frowning and scratching his forehead.

DR. FOURIER
What about these files you were brought in the ward? The ones that upset you.

LEWIS
I need those files to work on a grant. Which by the way, is my sole source of fucking income, pitiful as it is.

DR. FOURIER
You use a lot of profanity, Lewis.

LEWIS
I'm not hiding how pissed I am. Transparency is the best policy, wouldn't you agree?

DR. FOURIER
My concern is that you'll say what you think I want to hear.

LEWIS
Wanna talk transparency? Well that goes both ways.

DR. FOURIER
I've been transparent with you.

LEWIS
What about our first meeting? When I mentioned JCPenney, you flinched.

She has him dead to rights. He pauses before answering.

DR. FOURIER
Several patients said the sign had changed since the election. It made me question my own memory such that I even talked to the manager. He patiently convinced me that my own memory was impaired, and that the spelling on the sign had never changed over many decades.

LEWIS

But the whole thing made you wonder, didn't it?

DR. FOURIER

Yes, it did. But that's as far as it went. If you really want to see your daughter you'll give up things that trigger your delusions, like those grant files. Because they concern cartography, don't they?

Lewis pulls the files out of her bag. She flips through them before nodding sadly.

LEWIS

I'll throw them out right now.

EXT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY

Lewis exits the building and makes a beeline for a trash dumpster. She opens the dumpster as her phone BUZZES.

SAMUEL (V.O.)

Professor, where are you?

LEWIS

Never ask a cartographer that question. Even if their head's up their ass, know what they'd say?

SAMUEL (V.O.)

Professor, I'm out geocaching in woods East of campus. You have to meet me --

LEWIS

-- As a cartographer, I never get lost, I just do accidental field work. That's what they'd say!

SAMUEL (V.O.)

Shut up! Meet me now!

LEWIS

Nope. Know what I have to do? Get rid of the grant files, get my map tat removed, and stay the hell away from crazy people like you.

Lewis clicks off her cell... holds the files over the dumpster opening. Hesitates, but drops them in.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Lewis wanders. Sees another room with a sign: "Licenced Tatoo Removal." All areas are packed with seedy customers.

KKK agitator and proprietor Floyd greets her.

FLOYD

Hey lady. Knew we met before the rally.

LEWIS

Oh, Robert E. Dickwad. Out from under your hoodie.

Lewis hears a loud LAUGH and finds herself hoisted in the air by Heavy Duty.

HEAVY DUTY

Dickwad! That's funny!

LEWIS

Duty, small world. That's a little cartography joke.

HEAVY DUTY

Lewis, my ME buddy!

LEWIS

Okay, put me the fuck down.

He obeys.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

And it's ex-ME buddy. I decided it was all crazy shit.

Heavy Duty looks like he could cry.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Fact is, I'm here to have my map tat removed.

She removes her blouse. This crowd doesn't bat an eye at exposed skin.

Lewis spots a photo of her map tattoo pinned to a wall along with other photos. She grabs Floyd.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Hey, KKK. What's the big idea?

FLOYD

What? I commiserate my work.

LEWIS

Genius, you mean commemorate --
 (indicates photo of tattoo
 map of the Americas)
 What the living fuck!?! That tat
 shows South America where it should
 be! Who commissioned it, dickwad?

FLOYD

I got something called
 confidentiality. So I ain't saying.

LEWIS

Duty.

Heavy Duty picks up Floyd and DANGLES him by the ankles. The
 rough clientele ignores the action.

FLOYD

Okay.

Heavy Duty drops him.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

It was a meth head, street name
 Manny Maniacal. Dog is also a PCP
 user... hell what don't he use. The
 individual is flat out crazy.

LEWIS

Okay. Now I want my tat removed.

Floyd dusts himself off and motions Lewis into the removal
 room. Heavy Duty follows.

TATOO REMOVAL ROOM

Lewis examines her tattoo in a mirror. Heavy Duty notices her
 hesitation.

HEAVY DUTY

Lewis, you ain't sure, is you?

LEWIS

Not completely. Listen, Duty, can
 you spot me some cash for this?

HEAVY DUTY

Asking me to hold your marker?

FLOYD

Don't do it, lady. The man breaks
 legs for a living.

HEAVY DUTY

Maybe I demonstrate on you, Floyd.

FLOYD

What the hell are you even doing in here trashing up my --

Duty raises his fist and Floyd cowers away.

LEWIS

Duty, what are you doing in this place? White supremacist scum, drug addicts, unemployed --

HEAVY DUTY

-- See, right there, that's my customer base. Here, take my card.
(passes a business card)
And yeah, I'll hold your marker.

Floyd indicates a table and Lewis lies down. Floyd switches on a large laser and positions it over Lewis' tattoo.

FLOYD

It'll hurt like a mother.

LEWIS

Do it.

The laser machine HUMS on. Floyd inches it closer. Lewis' phone BUZZES. She sees the caller ID and jumps up.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You have your own phone back!

MADISON (V.O.)

Mom, I only have a minute before they come. It's really import --

LEWIS

-- Maddy, I'm getting better, just about to have my map tat removed.

MADISON (V.O.)

No, Mom, don't!

LEWIS

Maddy, we'll be able to see each other!

MADISON (V.O.)

Mom, shut up and listen! I watched Moonraker last night. The girl didn't have braces.

LEWIS
 Maybe she never did, Maddy.

MADISON (V.O.)
 No, Mom, she did! I remember!

LEWIS
 Oh, my God! I thought I was crazy!
 (fights tears)
 Thank you, Maddy. Thank you.

MADISON (V.O.)
 I love you, Mom.

Lewis clicks off. Kisses Heavy Duty.

LEWIS
 Duty, I'm your ME buddy again.

The big guys hoists her in joy.

EXT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY

Lewis reaches in the trash dumpster. No NSF files. She jumps in, rummages around -- paydirt! She hops out, files in hand.

INT. CLARK HALL - LEWIS' NEW OFFICE - DAY

Lewis drops her files on a desk. Brenda enters, peeved.

SUPER: The Next Day

BRENDA
 So you finally got out of the hospital, came straight to work.

LEWIS
 You might say, I'm faithful to the work. Fidelity is something I hold in high fucking regard.

BRENDA
 Let's have it.

LEWIS
 Fuck you, Bren! You railroaded me out of the department because you were screwing Henry!

BRENDA

It was never about that, Lewis.
Things changed and there's simply
no place here for you.

Lewis SLAPS her.

LEWIS

That's for Henry.

BRENDA

Just for the record, Henry came on
to me.

LEWIS

Why the hell would he?

BRENDA

You're too obsessed with your work.
Ignoring him... Madison too.

Several POLICE OFFICERS burst in, hands on their weapons.
They motion the surprised women to follow them out.

INT. POLICE HQ - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Lewis sits alone a spell. Det. Bridgewater enters and takes
as seat across. Turns on a tape recorder.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Professor, I'm Detective
Bridgewater.

LEWIS

Yeah, from the school. Voted most
boring parent, as I recall.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

And you blew up the classroom, as I
recall.

LEWIS

Busting me for flinging mud around
a schoolroom?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

The teacher cut me off before I
could discuss some fascinating
homicides. Otherwise the vote would
have been a whole-nother story.

Lewis pales at the mention of "homicides." The Detective
tosses down a photo of Samuel.

LEWIS
No, Jesus. Not Samuel.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
'Fraid so. What was your
relationship?

Lewis cries and Bridgewater passes tissues. Lewis pulls herself together.

LEWIS
He was my student. Then my
colleague.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
The last time you saw him?

LEWIS
He visited me in the hospital. A
few weeks ago.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
What about calls?

LEWIS
Yeah, yesterday. He was geocaching
and --

DET. BRIDGEWATER
-- Geocaching?

LEWIS
Nerds scavenger hunting,
orienteering in the woods.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
They sign some sort of guest book?

LEWIS
How'd you know?

DET. BRIDGEWATER
Professor, at this point, y'all
want a lawyer?

LEWIS
No, why would I?

The Detective refers to notes.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
Your prints happen to be on file,
like with all dangerous mental
patients -- dangerous like flying
out a window dangerous. I
understand you even have blackouts?

LEWIS
Had blackouts. Past tense.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
Samuel was killed yesterday morning
in the woods by a nine... a nine
millimeter handgun. A shell casing
was found and guess which
cartography professor's
fingerprints were on both the
casing and the guest book?

Lewis reels from shock. The detective waits patiently.

LEWIS
I can't explain the prints but I
didn't kill him. I was very fond of
Samuel.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
Then who would wanna hurt him?

LEWIS
A Klansman tried to steam roll him
recently. A Rhodes scholar, name of
Floyd. Runs a tatoo parlor
downtown.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
Professor, where were you yesterday
morning?

LEWIS
Seeing my doctor. Then I went to
Floyd's to get a tattoo removed.
Lots of people saw me.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
The tattoo you exposed along with
beaucoup skin to kids?

LEWIS
Fuck you.

DET. BRIDGEWATER
Back to Floyd, you his KKK buddy?

Bridgewater locks eyes with Lewis a long moment. She looks deep into his eyes and has an "aha" moment. Then smiles.

LEWIS

You don't think I did it. Do you, Detective?

The Detective nods in resignation and turns off the tape machine. Glances at his watch.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

I'll be heading to Shadwells to crack Jimmies and Sooks.
(off her confusion)
You're free, Professor. Show up at Shads, crab lunch is on me.

EXT. SHADWELLS RESTAURANT - DAY

A somber Lewis lugs a briefcase into the upscale place. Clint peers at her through binoculars from a parked van.

INT. SHADWELLS RESTAURANT - DAY

Lewis finds Det. Bridgewater in a dark corner. He speaks to a waitress, who departs.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

I ordered for both of us, ma'am.

LEWIS

How patronizingly old fashioned of you... and call me Lewis.
(leans close)
Lunch with a suspect? Seriously?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

You were never really a suspect... because of extenuating circumstances.

LEWIS

That entire haul-my-ass-into-jail thing... you couldn't have questioned me in private?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Had to go through the motions because of the prints. And your colleague was also released.

LEWIS

The fingerprints mystery... you've seen this sort of thing before?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Yeah, several homicides.

The waitress returns with plates heaped with hard shell crabs, tools for cracking. Bridgewater CRACKS away.

LEWIS

Fuck me, I'm terrible with crabs.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Lewis, I was born and raised between the bridges so I'll crack 'em all.

LEWIS

So, a Tidewater crab boy.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Pert-near. And don't call me "boy."

LEWIS

Listen Tidewater stud, pumping me for more information? Or maybe angling to pump me in another way when I'm grieving and vulnerable.

The Detective's mood darkens. He motions to the waitress and she brings over a pitcher of beer.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Know the legacy of Tidewater?

LEWIS

Jamestown settlers arrived about 1600. Just happened to bring with them the very first slaves.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

So what difference have I made? The world keeps getting worse.

LEWIS

The world got worse for me right after the election. You?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Maybe it's been getting worse all along but we weren't noticing. At any rate, a righteous world seems far away, doesn't it?

LEWIS
Samuel's murder... you're trying to
make a difference.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE ROAD - NIGHT (2015)

A few light trucks SLUSH through snow as they enter
Charlottesville city limits.

DET. BRIDGEWATER (V.O.)
Yeah, but I need your help. About
five years ago I noticed traffic
changes. It began with more and
more cargo trucks. Then came the
weird homicides.

INT. POLICE HQ - CHARLOTTESVILLE - DAY (2015)

Bridgewater puzzles over crime scene photos. Then studies
fingerprints tacked to a pin board.

DET. BRIDGEWATER (V.O.)
By "weird" I mean fresh
fingerprints were found at one
location but the suspect had a rock
solid alibi why they couldn't have
left them there.

LEWIS (V.O.)
Like yours truly.

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE ROAD - DAY (2017)

Bigger trucks and heavy duty construction vehicles roll into
town on a bright summer day.

DET. BRIDGEWATER (V.O.)
Over the years I saw more trucks,
even heavy equipment. Strange
because we don't have much
industry. Another weird thing is
that the shipments all were
addressed to the same place --
Professor Hapsburg at the U.

EXT. UVA PHYSICS BUILDING - DAY (2017)

The Detective hides in shadows. Observes a big rig ease up. Professor Habsburg motions the driver to a road leading beneath the building.

LEWIS (V.O.)

That bastard. Had a sick feeling about him all along.

DET. BRIDGEWATER (V.O.)

The problem is that the physics building doesn't have near enough room for the crap in those trucks. Plus no building permits were filed for massive construction projects. So I decided to explore.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - NIGHT (2017)

Det. Bridgewater pries open a man-hole cover and drops in.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - NIGHT (2017)

By flashlight, Bridgewater explores a narrow and vast system of tunnels... old heating pipes everywhere.

DET. BRIDGEWATER (V.O.)

I poked around under the physics building and guess what I found?

LEWIS (V.O.)

A secret, evil underground base?

The detective hears FOOTSTEPS ahead. Bridgewater's light illuminates TWO MASKED FIGURES. The detective flashes his badge, draws his handgun.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Who the hell are you?

The figures remove their masks... scared SOPHOMORES.

SOPHOMORE

Wahoos at the U. Playing a game.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Ever see anything odd down here? Like new construction?

SOPHOMORE

Just heating pipes, officer. Do we have to leave?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Nah, but don't mess with anything. Never can tell what might happen.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Back in the restaurant, Bridgewater and Lewis move closer, talking conspiratorially.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Turns out there's six miles of heating tunnels under the U. and I walked all six. A big fat nuttin'.

LEWIS

But you're right, he's building a big, mother fucking science project somewhere underground. I think I even found a fortified entrance -- maybe one of several. But, detective, you'd need a truckload of explosives to blast in.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

What the hell is he doing?!

LEWIS

He's messing with the fabric of the entire universe. Not to mention he's probably involved in Samuel's murder.

The Detective jots notes in a small notebook. Then wipes crab off Lewis' face.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

I don't see how I can help you.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

No, your instincts have been spot on. Lewis, my own tell me you're stubborn, nosy, and a big pain-in-the-ass. Excellent qualities for a detective.

LEWIS

Detecting what?

DET. BRIDGEWATER

Use your geology skills to pinpoint exactly where the underground facility is located. I'll question the physicist myself.

Bridgewater throws down cash and hustles Lewis to the front door. He then sends a text.

DET. BRIDGEWATER (CONT'D)

I also want you to see a weird guy who's helped us solve some particularly puzzling homicides. Texted you his address.

LEWIS

Detective, how much of this meeting was solving a mystery and how much was you putting Tidewater moves on little ol' me?

He kisses her.

EXT. SHADWELLS RESTAURANT - DUSK

Lewis and Bridgewater exit to find Clint pointing a handgun. Shit! The attorney motions them into the back of a dark van.

INT. BACK OF VAN - MOVING - DUSK

Clint gestures to Bridgewater, the detective slides over his handgun. Clint searches Lewis' briefcase... only files.

DET. BRIDGEWATER

What now?

Clint fires at Bridgewater's head -- POP, POP. Bridgewater slumps dead.

Lewis rolls away in horror to come face-to-face with Brenda's corpse. She rises ashen-faced.

CLINT

If I had my way you'd be joining these stiffs in a land fill. But I was ordered to let you find your way down the rabbit hole to meet my fearless commander in chief -- leadership's test of your resourcefulness or some shit. But there's only so many bad decisions I can stomach.

(MORE)

CLINT (CONT'D)

(looks at watch)

Not to mention you're about out of time. So I think I'll take you directly to the boss, test failed.

LEWIS

That Rodin stuff was bullshit. Never happened.

CLINT

Not to me. But to some people.

LEWIS

You started an ME group to monitor people poking into the mad professor's shit.

CLINT

Exactly. But Lou, you should really change sides because yours is losing.

Clint lowers the gun. Lewis trembles with fear as she pulls out a giant Gummy.

LEWIS

It calms me.

CLINT

Really?

LEWIS

I might even get sleepy.

Lewis YAWNS WIDE. Clint yawns, instantly she SHOVES the Gummy down his throat. He gags as she KICKS his balls.

Clint writhes in pain. Lewis snatches his wallet from his open jacket.

She wrenches open the back door. Tosses out her briefcase. The van BRAKES. Lewis tumbles out, grasping the back door.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Lewis SWINGS from the fluttering van door, FLIES off into woods. Lewis finds her briefcase and sprints.

Faster... faster still, until she trips and sprawls out on the dirt. She takes a quick peek behind -- all clear.

Lewis frantically pulls up an app on her phone.

LEWIS
Must be near. Com'on fucking
geocaching site.

Her cell displays a local map. She dashes off.

Lewis stops at the geocaching site... an information sign and a plastic container. Lewis opens it, reads a log book of SIGNATURES. Her jaw drops.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Samuel's signature... and fuck me,
my own John Hancock.

Lewis notices footprints leading up a narrow path. She continues ahead to a --

A DIRT MOUND. Lewis pushes aside brush to find a MASSIVE IRON DOOR. She searches for a handle.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Okay, secret underground base, how
the hell do I get in?

Discouraged, Lewis sits in the dirt a long moment.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Everybody I know is pretty much
dead. Which leaves me what?

She pulls up Det. Bridgewater's text... an address.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
You, mother fucker.

A twig SNAPS nearby. Lewis instantly hides in brush.

Clint slowly approaches, handgun drawn. He refers to a map on his cell.

CLINT
I'm tracking your cellphone, Lou.
Might as well come out.

He stares at some brush. Yanks back branches to find Lewis' cellphone sitting on the ground.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Lewis exits a cab, pays with cash from Clint's wallet. Glances over her shoulder for pursuers -- all clear.

She approaches the house, a handwritten sign in the window:
"Fortunes Told, Musical Instruments Repaired."

Lewis knocks... waits. Remy opens it, frizzy hair and all.

REMY
You're late.

LEWIS
You. Great.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Remy ushers a bedraggled Lewis into a dark, dusty room.
Packed with old and broken musical instruments.

REMY
So, here we are, insane no more.

LEWIS
You're my best shot at saving the
universe, or so I've been told.
Does that sound sane to you?

REMY
The Detective sent you.

LEWIS
Just before he got killed.

REMY
Yes, I had a feeling he passed.

LEWIS
You just confirmed information that
I revealed! No fucking psychic
powers required!

REMY
You were followed. That information
is from my powers.

Lewis peers out a window... no one.

REMY (CONT'D)
Two of them are around back. For
another minute.

LEWIS
So hurry, help me!

REMY
You know of the Akashic records?

LEWIS

What fucking records?! Hurry!

REMY

Spiritual traditions say all the information in the universe is contained in them... in fact, information from all universes.

LEWIS

Wait... professor asshole said the same thing using physics buzzwords.

REMY

Go to Jefferson's home, bring your files and consult his maps.

LEWIS

Consult for what?!

The sound of FOOTSTEPS outside.

REMY

Destroy the device in the next 20 hours. Bring fire to do it, not firearms.

LEWIS

What device? What's it doing?

REMY

Enslaving all universes!

An OPERATIVE BURSTS through the door! Remy instantly wraps a guitar string around his neck, CUTTING a spurting wound. The psychic flings open a floor TRAPDOOR, pushes Lewis downward.

REMY (CONT'D)

To survive, you must choose a side! Consult the Akashic records and let the author help you.

LEWIS

What fucking author?!

Remy slams the trapdoor. Hides it with carpet. Wields a violin like a club but -- POP, POP, and a window SHATTERS.

A blood stain BLOOMS on Remy's shirt and he drops dead.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - BACK - NIGHT

Lewis crawls out of a drainage pipe, holding her briefcase. Jumps in an empty SUV, motor still running.

EXT. MONTICELLO - VISITOR CENTER - DAWN

Deserted except for Lewis. She tries a rest room... locked. Jiggles a credit card into the door slot.

INT. MONTICELLO RESTROOM - DAWN

Lewis washes up as best she can. But her mirror reflection still shows a frazzled, grimy woman.

EXT. MONTICELLO - DAWN

Lewis wanders to a squat clay structure. The sign indicates "Slave Quarters #4." She feels a hand on her shoulder, flinches as she turns.

MRS. CHAPEL is 50s, officiously hostile, lugging a heavy bag. A blazer nametag identifies her as Monticello staff.

MRS. CHAPEL

Did you just use the rest room?

LEWIS

Yeah.

MRS. CHAPEL

It's locked so you must have broken in.

LEWIS

Kind of an emergency.

MRS. CHAPEL

I've had it with the homeless! You all smell like the sewer!

LEWIS

Listen, listen! I was in a minor accident and wanted to clean up before I perform my duties as a non-homeless, UVA-slash-NSF researcher. Wouldn't want to track mud all over TJ's house.

Mrs. Chapel scowls, digs in her bag for an appointment book. Lewis peaks into the woman's bag.

MRS. CHAPEL
UVA, huh? No appointment. In fact,
you people never got back to --

LEWIS
-- But I'm here now.

MRS. CHAPEL
Not without an appointment.

LEWIS
Fine. Before I leave could you
answer something?

MRS. CHAPEL
It's about slaves, isn't it? People
forget Jefferson authored the
greatest document ever written!

LEWIS
Jefferson was also a superb
cartographer.

MRS. CHAPEL
Yes, yes he was.
(softening)
I'll answer one question.

LEWIS
He was initially against slavery.
What happened?

MRS. CHAPEL
Monticello was a huge plantation
but was losing money rapidly.
Unfortunately our founding father
did not excel in business. So he
decided to cut labor costs.

LEWIS
It was an economic decision.

MRS. CHAPEL
Perfectly acceptable in his time.

The two walk past a shack. Lewis stops them.

LEWIS
And this structure?

MRS. CHAPEL
Kind of a time out for misbehaving
slaves.

Lewis SNATCHES Mrs. Chapel's bag, retrieves a heavy stapler, BASHES Chapel's head. Gags the woman's mouth with a scarf, binds her hands with another, shoves her in the shack.

Lewis CLICKS a latch that locks the structure.

LEWIS
See how you like it.

Lewis finds the dark main house. Retrieves a cell phone and keys from the bag, opens the house.

INT. MONTICELLO - JEFFERSON'S LIBRARY - MORNING

At a desk, Lewis quickly browses Youtube on the phone, jots notes. Removes NSF files from her briefcase.

She's startled by the entrance of young staffer ALISHA.

LEWIS
Hi, I'm Professor Gale.

Alisha spots Mrs. Chapel's bag. Then meets Lewis' frank gaze.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Mrs. Chapel took a quick time out.

Alisha picks up Lewis' files, flips through them. Her expression brightens.

ALISHA
Oh, NSF! For a second I was about to call security. Now, how can I help you, Professor?
(off handwritten notes in one file)
What's this about a discarded desk?

LEWIS
Something important. Something my colleague emphasized.

ALISHA
Let's go find that desk.

EXT. MONTICELLO - MORNING

Lewis and Alisha walk in dim, morning sun. The cartographer finds herself alone, with Alisha behind. Lewis senses danger and stops.

LEWIS
 Mind leading?
 (off her own sullied
 appearance)
 Fell on my face once this morning.

Alisha leads to a modern supply building. The younger woman enters. Lewis dials Mrs. Chapel's cell phone.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
 Maddy, thank God you still have
 your own cell phone!

MADISON (V.O.)
 Mom, Fruit Loops is spelled wrong
 now. "Fruit" has two "ohs" like
 "Loops." And my science teacher
 said the rain forests are mostly
 gone, the ocean is covered with
 plastic and the coral reefs are
 dead. This world is all wrong...
 and a lot worse. Just like you
 said.

An impatient Alisha pokes her head out of the building,
 indicates her watch, reenters.

LEWIS
 I can make a difference but I need
 to find a lab underneath the U.,
 one that's messing up the universe.
 But I don't know where it is.

MADISON (V.O.)
 You can do it, Mom. It's in your
 wheelhouse.

LEWIS
 Wheelhouse? Where'd you learn that?

Alisha pokes her head out of the building again.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
 (to Alisha)
 Give me a fucking minute!

Alisha retreats back inside.

MADISON (V.O.)
 Mom, one time you told me TJ made
 maps of Virginia caves and caverns.
 Plus he sent Lewis and Clark to
 find that big river that connects
 everything, right?

LEWIS

So, so what?

MADISON (V.O.)

Maybe he knew about rivers and caves under the U. and he put them on a map. Mom, the lab might be in one of TJ's caves near an underground river.

LEWIS

That's my smart girl! But even if I succeed it's just... Maddy, I don't know if we'll be together afterwards.

MADISON (V.O.)

We'll be together sometime, somewhere.

LEWIS

Love you baby girl. Always.

Lewis fights tears, pulls out a business card, punches in another number.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Duty. Might be able to fix everything but it's a long shot.

HEAVY DUTY (V.O.)

A tiro no escuro? I'm in.

LEWIS

Texting you a location and a couple of supplies to bring. Get your massive self there ASAP. When a big ass door opens, go in, head down a ladder or an elevator a long time. Anyone hassles you, make 'em pay.

Lewis sends a text, enters the building.

INT. MONTICELLO SUPPLY BUILDING - MORNING

Boxes and pieces of antiquated furniture. Lewis finds Alisha hunched over antique desks.

ALISHA

TJ rarely used these guys.

LEWIS

You're with them, aren't you? The destroyers.

Alisha stands up sporting a shit-eating grin.

ALISHA

How'd you know?

LEWIS

Well, you just confirmed it.

ALISHA

So what. Anyway, we regard ourselves as transformers. And, yeah, they finagled a position for me here at Monticello a few months ago. Just in case someone figured out how to find the CAP. It's moot now 'cause it's too late.

LEWIS

English?

ALISHA

The Central Akashic Portal. Not so catchy, is it? I suggested the Central Underground Neutron Transformer, after which micro management excommunicated me out here as punishment. By the way, Mrs. Chapel would never leave her bag unattended -- you kill her?

LEWIS

No. How about you? Gonna shoot me?

ALISHA

Nope. Our leader wants to meet you and anyway, I got no gun.

Lewis produces a handgun from her pants. Points it at Alisha.

LEWIS

I got one. Mrs. Chapel sure fits a lot in that fucking bag.

Lewis' eyes roll strangely. She stares at the walls, whose colors SWIRL into compelling patterns.

ALISHA

What's wrong with you?

LEWIS

Drug flashback... hallucinogens. Or worlds smearing together, I don't really know.

(cocks gun)

Now open these desks.

Alisha complies... empty. Lewis fights her mental state, looking increasingly desperate.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Turn the big one over.

Tacked underneath the desk is a large, old leather PARCHMENT MAP. Lewis rips off the parchment, tosses it to Alisha.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Tack it to a wall.

As Alisha complies. Lewis strips down to her sports bra, indicates her map tat.

ALISHA

Yeah, TJ's original map of the U. Never seen it over a belly button.

LEWIS

Somehow I sensed it was vital enough that I should keep it with me always.

(indicates parchment)

And now I've got another map TJ hid on purpose. Maybe protected it for prosperity.

ALISHA

You know what it represents, don't you?

LEWIS

It's a lost page of TJ's "Notes on the State of Virginia," which contained his own maps of local caves. The parchment shows underground rivers leading to a massive fucking cavern, smack damn under UVA!

(indicates her map tat)

And I'm guessing this Monticello pond connects to the rivers and then right into the CAP or the CUNT or however you spell it.

Alisha approaches, her face a mask of triumph and hate.

ALISHA

You're clever, I'll give you that -- but like a trained seal is clever. See, you can balance all the maps you want on your nose or your tummy but everything you touch tumbles away. Your friends die, you lose your job, you destroy your marriage and you even fry your mind. And what have you ever done to support income equality, women's rights, or hell anyone's rights?! You've got privilege stamped all over your tenured, peer-reviewed, obsessed ass. That's what they call it in this world, "privilege," isn't it?

LEWIS

You're right, I'm privileged and I could have done a lot more. Guess I'm making up for it now.

(aims gun)

Go sit in a corner and count to a hundred.

Alisha obeys. Lewis snatches the parchment map off the wall and exits.

EXT. MONTICELLO - DAY

Lewis locks the building, consults her parchment map. She hikes unsteadily up a dirt trail.

Lewis arrives at a large POND, blanketed with MIST. A small MOTOR BOAT sits moored to a pier. An old man appears out of the mist. He is the POND KEEPER.

POND KEEPER

I am keeper of this pond. My responsibility extends to connecting river systems.

LEWIS

Rivers like the James and Rivanna?

POND KEEPER

And others known only to me.

LEWIS

That's a rather stingy attitude.

POND KEEPER

The pond is not open to the public.

LEWIS

I'm not the public, I'm a researcher -- take it back, I'm an explorer.

POND KEEPER

You appear to be a vagrant.

LEWIS

You appear to be decades past retirement so I'm taking that damn boat!

POND KEEPER

You will not. The only key is well hidden.

Lewis peeks at the boat's engine... an empty key hole. Lewis pulls out Clint's stolen wallet.

LEWIS

Forty bucks and a couple of stolen credit cards for the key.

POND KEEPER

No. You must prove yourself worthy.

LEWIS

Hey, AARP, what's a keeper do, anyway?

POND KEEPER

Governments fail to protect the environment so responsibility falls to ordinary citizens... like keepers.

The Pond Keeper SHIMMERS in morning sun.

LEWIS

Are you real? I might be tripping.

POND KEEPER

Explorer, are you willing to sacrifice your life to complete your quest?

LEWIS

I am.

POND KEEPER

Your heart is pure but your intellect is impaired.

(MORE)

POND KEEPER (CONT'D)

Therefore, to further test your worthiness I ask you an easy question relating to music of the spheres: name the worst song ever recorded.

LEWIS

I'm tripping big time.

The Pond Keeper shrugs and starts to walk away.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Wait, wait! "Yummy, Yummy, Yummy I've Got Love in My Tummy," that's my top pick. How'd I do?

POND KEEPER

Hmmmm... there is a dirge called "Macarthur Park" about a cake.

LEWIS

Mine is worse.

POND KEEPER

We quibble.
(indicates the boat)
You have proven yourself worthy.

Lewis steps on board.

POND KEEPER (CONT'D)

The button next to the motor.

Lewis presses it and the engine ROARS to life.

LEWIS

(loud over the motor)
No key needed, so you've been fucking with me!

The Pond Keeper casts off the boat and Lewis steers away. The Keeper calls after her.

POND KEEPER

Stay right and be wary of rapid descents, explorer!

INT. MOTOR BOAT - MOVING - DAY

Lewis consults her parchment map, steers to a cliff shrouded by vines. She steers through the vines to --

An underground stream. She ducks to avoid low natural rock. Lewis opens the throttle to --

A wide underground cavern. The water really CHURNS now and whitecaps threaten her craft. She sees two tributaries ahead.

LEWIS

Two? That's just wrong.

Confused, Lewis eases back the throttle. A shaving mirror hangs by a wire. Lewis removes her blouse, studies her map tat in the mirror.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Okay, TJ, what the hell were you doing with these maps?

She pushes the throttle, the engine roars to life again. Lewis impulsively yanks the boat right.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Right side it is.

The craft bounces as the tributary churns into BOILING EDDIES. Her boat whips about, narrowly missing rocks.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Jesus fucking Christ!

Eddies become rapids. The craft SPINS completely backwards! Lewis yanks the stick, careening the boat back around. A loud ROAR is heard. Lewis' boat shoots over a cascading WATERFALL.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Oh shit!!!!

Lewis hangs on for dear life as the boat plummets. She's flung off like a rag doll.

EXT. UNDERGROUND RIVER - DAY

The cartographer tumbles underwater, disoriented, out of air. Desperate, she kicks vigorously towards light, BURSTS through the surface.

Lewis GASPS for air as a strong current pulls her along. She strokes freestyle, swimming past boat debris.

LATER

An exhausted Lewis takes a feeble freestyle stroke. It would be easy to slip under. Yep, she disappears.

She thrusts a hand upward, which is grasped! She's pulled out of the water. Then --

DARKNESS

EXT. UNDERGROUND RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Lewis opens her eyes. Stands up near a tall man in his 60s, waistcoat, long grayish hair and a cordial but formal manner. He looks like THOMAS JEFFERSON.

LEWIS

You pull me out?

The man nods.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Thanks. You Jefferson?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

That is self evident.

LEWIS

So I'm actually dead.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

You may perish by dissolving physical bands connecting you to the earth. Or instead, you may pursue life and sacred honor by fulfilling your oath.

LEWIS

Cut the crap! You're no smooth talking, silver panned wordsmith. In my book you've got a hell of a lot to answer for, TJ, starting with those damn maps! How could you possibly know about underground construction taking place hundreds of years into the future? And then sketch it into a hidden map someone would find?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

In the course of events, I was divinely inspired.

LEWIS

And how come you sold out about slavery?! Know how much fucking misery that caused?!

Lewis scrutinizes him more carefully than before. His form SHIMMERS.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You remind me of the Pond Keeper.
So you're not really Jefferson, not
a founding father, and not really a
fucking author at all, are you?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

I take many forms. Truthfully, I am
the author of time and space.

LEWIS

So, you're the big cheese, the
supreme enchilada. You son of a
bitch! How dare you create such
suffering!

(crying)

Like me! I've suffered enough in
this world. Do it, mother fucker,
kill me!

THOMAS JEFFERSON

No. Keep the promise made when your
beloved recovered from illness.

LEWIS

You ripped the universe apart and
killed him the very next day! I
don't owe you shit!

Lewis clenches her fist and prepares to cold cock him.
Jefferson smiles and kisses Lewis' forehead.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Continue on and there is a chance
to complete your quest.

LEWIS

Really? My boat is toast, I'm half
drowned, and I don't really know
where the hell I'm going.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

You will continue not because I
demand it but because it is in your
nature.

Jefferson turns to walk away but Lewis calls out.

LEWIS

Wait, wait! There's really an infinite number of universes and a physics guy is messing things up?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Yes. Universes were created by the Word and near identical universes are like homonyms. You might speak or write the word "bank" many times and the acoustics and phonetics would be identical. But the word could imply the side of a river or a building where people store money. The meaning of the word could be very different.

LEWIS

So there are many versions of me, all physically identical but different in -- I hate to say it -- in spirit?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Yes. But the scientist is mixing universes together like a child stirs paints to make a big mess. Mixing up meanings leads to chaos. This world was already badly damaged by neglect and exploitation. Unfortunately, the scientist accelerated the catastrophe so that the situation is dire. This earth can be saved -- just barely -- but sacrifices are required. Even more imperative, this scientist now threatens the rest of creation.

LEWIS

Why don't you stop him?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

I am. Through you.

She fights tears of frustration.

LEWIS

Why me?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

You're relentless and stubborn as shit.

Lewis collapses to the ground. Her eyes close.

LATER

Lewis lies on the riverbank. Her eyes flutter open. She rises. No Jefferson. A tug boat drifts nearby. Lewis sees a grizzled TUG BOAT CAPTAIN on board. She motions him over.

TUG BOAT CAPTAIN
Can't, strict orders.
(recognizing Lewis)
Oh, it's you.

The boat maneuvers close and Lewis is helped on board.

EXT. TUG BOAT - MOVING - NIGHT

The Captain hands Lewis a jacket stenciled: "Central Akashic Portal."

TUG BOAT CAPTAIN
What're you doing out this way?

LEWIS
Mind your own business.

The tug sputters into a busy underground port and is moored. Lewis leaps ashore.

EXT. CENTRAL AKASHIC PORTAL - NIGHT

Lewis rushes past workers to a closed freight elevator. Places her finger into a BIOMETRIC ID. An armed guard watches like a hawk.

The device signals "Lewis Gale Confirmed." She passes through a metal detector, the elevator opens and Lewis enters.

INT. CENTRAL AKASHIC PORTAL - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Lewis exits the elevator, lowers her head, weaves through busy WORKERS in the massive underground facility.

She spots lab coats hanging from hooks. Finds a coat embossed: "Lewis Gale, Project Leader," ID badge attached... bingo! She also slips on a CAP baseball hat.

A skinny laborer approaches.

A SKINNY WORKER
 Hey, Madame Leader, could you --

LEWIS
 -- Beat it. Do your fucking job.

He leaves. Lewis finds her bearings, darts into a long, deserted corridor.

CORRIDOR

Lewis stares at a massive iron door at the end. A sign says "Emergency Access." She hears a noise behind her.

Lewis turns to find ALTERNATE SAMUEL. Mousy hairstyle, an excited, obsequious expression. Munching a cheese stick.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
 Cut your hair, Madame Leader?

LEWIS
 Just wet. You should spice up your own boring-as-shit coiffure. Maybe highlights.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
 I thought you'd be in the control center overseeing transfers.
 (glances at watch)
 Only ten minutes and we ditch this hellhole for Aurora!

An ALARM wails. WARNING LIGHTS FLASH. A SECURITY GUARD peeks his head into the corridor.

SECURITY GUARD
 Intruder alert. Madame Leader, aren't you two supposed to --

LEWIS
 -- Priorities changed. Beat it.

The guard leaves.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
 Samuel, there's a worse problem than one intruder. Namely moles, saboteurs.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
 Who?

LEWIS

Could be anyone. From now on, trust only me.

(indicates massive door)

Open it and the corresponding door that's up topside in Clark Hall.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

But that's against protocol --

LEWIS

-- Follow my fucking orders!

Alternate Samuel stares at her. Confused and suspicious.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

So I'm still on the first wave? Of people transferring to Aurora?

LEWIS

I'm very fond of you, Samuel.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

You barely tolerate me. Except for that time... do you remember?

Lewis hesitates... this is a test. She guesses.

LEWIS

I recall alcohol being consumed and clothing removed.

Samuel nods, types a code on a keypad. The sound of lock tumblers GRINDING. The massive door CREAKS opens.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Now wait.

The faint sound of MACHINERY above them.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

We should really close --

LEWIS

-- I said wait!!!

After a long pause, Heavy Duty enters the open door.

HEAVY DUTY

Damn, Lewis, know how long I waited up there? Before I rode down the longest, skinniest elevator in the world!

LEWIS
Duty, thanks for coming, now quit whining. Samuel, shut the door.

Samuel pushes the massive iron door shut.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
(to Lewis)
He doesn't have a clearance or a visible badge --

LEWIS
-- Are you in charge?

Samuel stares at his feet. Heavy Duty swipes Samuel's cheese stick and devours it.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
(to Alt. Samuel)
I killed your counterpart yesterday.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
I heard.

LEWIS
Don't make me relive it. Get Duty a fucking badge. Fast!

Samuel leaves the corridor.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
(to Heavy Duty)
Bring the stuff?

Duty hands her giant Gummies, a lighter, and a GLASS TUBE filled with a white powder. It all goes into her coat.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
That white stuff... the potassium chlorate I asked for?

HEAVY DUTY
I know a guy, a supplier. I ain't dumb, Lewis.

LEWIS
Youtube said this stuff can produce a mini flamethrower. We need it because a fortune teller from the looney bin said fire will help us.

HEAVY DUTY

Damn, Lewis. Say, what cheese dick said -- you whack somebody?

LEWIS

Nah. Duty, listen, roll with me and maybe we make things right.

Heavy Duty nods as the same Security Guard enters. He marches to Heavy Duty, pulls out a TASER. Duty sneers.

HEAVY DUTY

No piece? Not a deuce or a nine? Just pussy electric, huh, pal?

SECURITY GUARD

Listen numb nuts, ammo could rupture the cooling system or some shit. Anyway, you got no badge, so kiss the ground.

LEWIS

Duty.

Heavy Duty lunges with shocking speed, snatches the taser.

The guard whips out a knife, STABS Duty's arm. Instantly, the big man BREAKS the guard's neck with one hand.

Alternate Samuel enters, horrified at the scene.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

The guard was a mole. Now give the big man his badge.

Samuel obeys. Lewis rips off the guard's shirt, tourniquets Duty's arm. She pockets the knife.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Duty, gonna be okay?

Heavy Duty flashes a thumbs up. The audio alarm is replaced by an AUDIO MESSAGE that repeats.

AUDIO MESSAGE (V.O.)

Attention! In ten minutes first wave will transfer!

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

Wow, it's really happening!
(indicates Heavy Duty)
Madame Leader, why is this guy here at such a critical time?

HEAVY DUTY

Fuck off, cheese -- yeah, Lewis, why am I here? In grade school the principal says I got a strong back but a weak mind, that my future would be lifting stuff but no thinking. That what you have in mind, Lewis? Use me as stupid muscle?! As meat on a slab!

LEWIS

Duty, you are my new chief advisor, my right hand man, so I need you to understand this place.

(indicates Alt. Samuel)

Guess who's gonna explain it to you in five minutes or less.

Heavy Duty grins as the three leave the corridor.

QUANTUM COMPUTER ROOM

Deserted except for the trio. They stare at a massive array of complex computing and cooling equipment. Their breath MISTS in the cold environment.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

I'm only half tech geek but I know this is the quantum computer, powered by huge generators.

HEAVY DUTY

Big whoop, I seen computers before... damn it's cold in here.

LEWIS

Tell him what the computers do, Samuel. Quickly.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

We find resources in alternate universes and the computer transfers them to Aurora. That's a real nice alternate earth we found. No pollution, and in fact, very few people. That's where our team's headed in a few minutes.

HEAVY DUTY

What kinda stuff you move?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Rare elements like gold and
platinum, plus a boatload of other
stuff. More like ten million
boatloads.

HEAVY DUTY
Damn, we'll be rich.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
We're also moving lots of prebuilt
technology -- generators,
filtration units and such.

LEWIS
Tell Duty about side effects when
we move stuff.

Alternate Samuel looks uneasy. Lewis and Heavy Duty stare,
making him squirm.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Bad things get caused by quantum
bit errors and something called
quantum entanglement. Bad like
realities blending together or
stuff getting moved that shouldn't
be. For each transfer, bad things
happen here on this world where we
do processing and in universes
where we take resources.

LEWIS
So Samuel, this world we're on is
being trashed?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Yeah, but there's an infinite
number more. Big deal.

LEWIS
Samuel, my right hand man here is
concerned about sabotage. You're
concerned, aren't you Duty?

Duty nods.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Well, they'd probably hit the
Akashic Records.

LEWIS
Then let's go see Records.

AKASHIC RECORDS ROOM

The trio wander into a massive domed area. A FEMALE SECURITY GUARD stares warily at Heavy Duty's wound.

FEMALE SECURITY GUARD
Madame Leader? Everything okay.

LEWIS
Hunky dory. Leave us.

The guard leaves. Lewis and Duty stare at monitors blanketing walls and ceiling. Displaying FLICKERING images, English text and odd symbols.

HEAVY DUTY
Jesus, I wanna heave. What's all that crap?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Records that help us find stuff in alternate universes. We only check alternate earths, not entire universes. So far, more than a million other earths.

HEAVY DUTY
Hey, cheese dick, what's the shit on the walls?!

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
We inventory other earths about environmental conditions, what elements they got, which people are there, and the latitudes and longitudes of all of it in the local coordinate system.

LEWIS
Duty, each Akashic record is actually a universe itself as well as a ledger of everything in that universe, plus a map of where everything is located. The records are stored in a super library placed on boundaries intersecting all universes, way the fuck out there, farther than... than everything. Samuel, tell Duty how we read the records.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Well, it's Professor Habsburg's invention.

(MORE)

ALTERNATE SAMUEL (CONT'D)

It translates the energy of a record into language and images. That is, into information.

HEAVY DUTY

How do you move shit, cheese? I gotta see it, so move this.

Heavy Duty hands over a baseball cap to Alternate Samuel, who places it on the floor, then sits at a keyboard. As he types, Lewis observes over his shoulder.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

A precise GPS rebroadcast sensor provides the exact location of the hat. The quantum computer will then encode it for transfer.

LEWIS

Yes, I see. Where will you send it?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

Oh, a world we've already damaged. I'm entering it's ID. Bingo.

Lewis and Heavy Duty watch the cap VANISH!

ALTERNATE SAMUEL (CONT'D)

For bulk transfers we move stuff from hangers.

LEWIS

Can you move stuff around from one place to another, local to this world?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

No, it requires a distant Akashic --

DUTY

-- How'd the freaking hat move? Telefornication?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

No not teleportation. Matter like the hat is encoded as energy on a distant 2D Akashic record, or in other words, written to that universe's record. Quantum entanglement converts that 2D representation to physical manifestation in 4D space-time. I was clear about that before.

Duty clenches his good fist and advances on the smaller man.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Madame Leader, I was clear!

LEWIS
Sam, you were vague and a whole lotta asshole to my right hand man.

AUDIO MESSAGE (V.O.)
Attention! In five minutes first wave will transfer!

HEAVY DUTY
Lewis, cheese dick ain't goin'. Not in five *minutos* not ever.

LEWIS
Let's give him one last chance. Samuel, could you find an earth very similar to this one before the transfers started?

A worried Samuel types away at the monitor.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Yeah, there's its ID: A-98211. It's close, like a 99.5 percent match.

LEWIS
Is my husband alive?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
You don't have a -- oh, I get it, the husband of the Lewis in A-98211. Yeah, daughter too, age 13.

LEWIS
How about a Dean Brenda Simmons and a Detective Bridgewater? Both them Charlottesville natives. Oh, and you too, Samuel.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
A minute. Yeah, they're all there.

LEWIS
Everybody healthy?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL
Looks that way.
(indicates monitor)
You can see them.

Lewis sees images of Henry, Madison and the others on the monitor. She holds back tears.

HEAVY DUTY

What about frigging South America?

LEWIS

Samuel, the location of the continents?

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

Yeah, same as this earth used to be. Maybe I could find a closer match to --

LEWIS

-- No, it's close enough. That's the side of the cosmos I pick.

AUDIO MESSAGE (V.O.)

Attention! In four minutes first wave will transfer!

LEWIS

Okay, Samuel, tell Duty how would a saboteur destroy this place?

Samuel indicates a large VENTILATION SHAFT. It's covered by a massive, steel mesh cover.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

Find industrial tools to tear off the shaft cover. Then toss in anything really hot -- that would ignite coolant gases. The quantum computers would then breach, rupturing power generators which would set off local cataclysmic, tectonic plate fractures and even mini volcanos. You could say bye-bye to the CAP, not to mention UVA.

Lewis eyes a wall-mounted GLASS BOX that covers a red button. A sign indicates "Self Destruct Switch."

ALTERNATE SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah, forgot. That'd be a lot easier.

LEWIS

Tell Duty how long it takes. The self destruct.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

Ten seconds? I don't think people really know.

AUDIO MESSAGE (V.O.)

Attention! In three minutes first wave will transfer! Move to the transfer hanger immediately!

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

We gotta get going, Madame Leader.

LEWIS

(indicates switch)

Duty.

Heavy Duty SMASHES the glass box, presses the button. The sound of CHEERING and CLAPPING off screen.

Several burly guards, Professor Habsburg, Clint, and ALTERNATE LEWIS stroll in, the latter clapping. The Alternate Lewis beams at Lewis.

ALTERNATE LEWIS

Surprise, Lewis!

(to Professor Habsburg)

Nah, Nah, Nah! Told you she could track us down here!

(to Lewis)

Well done other-me! You passed my test of mind and body to earn a one-way trip to Aurora!

LEWIS

You've been monitoring me since Monticello... or before.

(to Alternate Samuel)

Nice acting, asshole.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

Your performance didn't fool anyone.

ALTERNATE LEWIS

Oh, hey Lewis, the kill switch is obviously a fake, a little joke.

LEWIS

You think you're just trashing a few worlds but it'll destroy all of them. Shut it down now!

ALTERNATE LEWIS

Lewis, I'm creating a heaven. And the cost? A measly fifty thousand alternate earths... so far. But so fucking what! There's an infinite supply! After we relocate, a crew will remain behind, cherry picking from millions of alternate earths. Then we'll blow this wasteland to kingdom come.

LEWIS

Did you move me here from my world?

ALTERNATE LEWIS

No. You and the Professor are native, but lots of us were moved. But as you know, side effects of transfers are badly degrading and changing the world you knew.

(to Prof. Habsburg)

Tell her the rest, briefly. Then we get the hell out of Dodge.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG

I communicate with technologically sophisticated earths via writing and reading the Akashic Records. Then I transferred here those who agreed with our objectives and had useful skills. For convenience, I restricted the search to natives of Charlottesville. And Lewis, your counterpart is very bossy, so I made her the leader.

AUDIO MESSAGE (V.O.)

Attention! In two minutes first wave will transfer! Move to the hanger immediately!

Clint and Professor Habsburg look nervous. Clint tugs on Alternate Lewis' coat.

CLINT

We should go.

ALTERNATE LEWIS

Wait, wait. Samuel left out one detail. Tell them, Samuel.

ALTERNATE SAMUEL

The most valuable resource we find is human capital.

LEWIS

Slaves. You're moving people to Aurora to be your slaves.

ALTERNATE LEWIS

That's why you're going sweetie, my own personal slave.

Lewis indicates the ventilation shaft.

LEWIS

Duty!

Heavy Duty LEAPS OVER to the shaft. Ignoring his wound, muscles BULGING, Heavy Duty RIPS off the shaft's cover.

Lewis STABS the nearest guard with her stolen knife. A guard TASERS her, she SPASMS. Duty springs back and tackles the guard, BREAKS his neck.

ALTERNATE LEWIS

Get them! Get them!

Clint finds a taser, ZAPS Heavy Duty. The big man QUIVERS uncontrollably as more guards enter.

Lewis recovers, sprints to the ventilation shaft. Finds a towel, wraps her hand. HEATS the glass powder-filled tube with the lighter.

LEWIS

Duty, keep them off me!

Duty recovers, grabs the metal shaft cover. Uses it to shield taser darts, PING, PING, PING! And to BASH in skulls.

Lewis adds giant Gummies to the heated tube. It shoots out a long red FLAME.

A guard knocks Lewis away from the ventilation shaft. Somehow Lewis rises up, SHOOTS the flaming tube as a long 3-pointer, right into the ventilation shaft -- swish!

AUDIO MESSAGE (V.O.)

Attention! In one minute first wave will transfer! Move to the transfer hanger immediately!

LEWIS

Duty, over here! Stand guard!

Lewis indicates Samuel's computer. Duty springs over as she types on the keyboard.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
 What was that? Potassium chlorate
 and sugar? Simple oxidation?

HEAVY DUTY
 Yeah, ass wipe. It was on Youtube.

PROFESSOR HABSBURG
 We're dead.
 (to Alternate Lewis)
 And you just had to meet her here.

ALTERNATE LEWIS
 NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

LEWIS
 Okay, ID A-98211 entered, GPS set.
 Duty, ready to go?

HEAVY DUTY
 Where we goin' Lewis?

LEWIS
 A place like home. Another Lewis
 and Duty might already be there but
 we'll just have to work it out.

HEAVY DUTY
 Is it far?

LEWIS
 It's more remote than Bavaria. And
 Duty, there's a good chance we'll
 get lost on the way. Truth is, it's
 a real *tiro no escuro*.

HEAVY DUTY
 Do it, Lewis.

A loud RUMBLING. The entire facility SHAKES violently. Lewis
 hits one more key. POOF! Lewis and Heavy Duty vanish.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - SKY - NIGHT

Calm. A clear, star filled sky. Then a RUMBLING below and a
 huge EXPLOSION. It lifts the entire campus into the air. A
 massive HOLE appears. Hot MOLTEN LAVA spews out of the hole.
 The VOLCANO rains down fiery death.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - ROTUNDA - DAY

Peaceful Wahoos rally. Signs commemorate President Thompson's election victory. Banners for RACIAL UNITY. No KKK in sight.

SUPER: Alternate Earth A-98211, days later.

Near the rally, mourners approach a MEMORIAL. Henry and Madison Gale drop flowers. Brenda and blonde-haired Samuel bow their heads (all are alternate beings).

Off to the side, our battered Heavy Duty stands with his arm in a sling. Next to him is an ALTERNATE HEAVY DUTY.

ALTERNATE HEAVY DUTY
The dead broad, she was your pal?

HEAVY DUTY
No. But I knew a broad just like her. And yeah, we was best buds.

ALTERNATE HEAVY DUTY
Was you banging her?

HEAVY DUTY
Don't make me regret finding you.

ALTERNATE HEAVY DUTY
I already regret it because this is freaking weird.

Heavy Duty joins the memorial service. The plaque commemorates beloved Geosciences Professor Lewis Gale.

ALTERNATE HENRY
Hard to believe the cancer got Lewis a whole year ago. Seems like only yesterday she was with us. My Lewis was a real keeper --
(to Heavy Duty)
-- I'm sorry, how did you know her?

HEAVY DUTY
I was her right hand man... until just recently. Then she was gone.

Henry looks puzzled. Duty tears up.

FADE OUT