

Paradox

by

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1 BLACK - TITLES 1

A QUOTE appears on screen:

*"If all unique moments on the spacetime continuum occur simultaneously, and the future is a given, does it mean that there is nothing that we can do today to change what happens tomorrow?"*

~Caleb Holman, *The Multiverse Theory*

CUT TO:

2 INT. - A DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT 2

A thunderstorm rages outside. TITLES appear on screen:  
"09:08 PM, October 15, 2084".

A woman, JAE, stands with her back to the CAMERA, which slowly DOLLIES towards her.

The CAMERA BOOMS over Jae's head, looking down upon her, and then lowers in front of her so that her face is revealed, but appears upside-down on screen.

The CAMERA ROTATES so that Jae is oriented correctly on screen. She is staring down at a table strewn with books. She has long, silver hair pulled back in a braid, and messy bangs. Her face seems young, but there is something about her that suggests old age. Her LEFT EYE is white - she is half-blind.

JAE

I'm going to change it.

CUT TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. - NEW YORK CITY STREETS - NIGHT 3

Jae is wearing a black jumpsuit and is carrying a helmet. She passes through the evening crowd like a ghost.

The CAMERA BOOMS up from her to reveal a shot of a futuristic New York City skyline with a number of sleek new buildings, and an airship passing high overhead.

4 EXT. - ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES - NIGHT 4

Jae arrives at a building with an engraved title over its entrance: "NEW YORK ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES".

She takes a passkey from her pocket and swipes it in front of a keypad. The door opens, and Jae enters.

5 INT. - ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES - NIGHT 5

In the lobby there is a retina-and-DNA scanner, similar to a metal detector in build. Jae leans forward and allows the machine to scan her blind eye, then she walks in.

6 INT. - SECURITY MAINFRAME - NIGHT 6

Jae enters a room with a computer and sits down in front of it. She draws up records by month and year of OVERRIDE CODES. She finds what she wants and presses a "SEND" button.

A BEEP emits from a mini-computer on Jae's right wrist, and letters flash on screen: "TRANSFER COMPLETE". Suddenly RED LIGHTS begin flashing and an ALARM sounds - use of the computer has revealed Jae's break-in.

She turns and spies a security guard rifle stored in a glass case. She walks over and SHATTERS the glass with her elbow. She cocks the rifle, her face set in grim determination.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES appear: "PARADOX"

7 INT. - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY 7

At the bottom of the screen, TITLES FADE UP: "10:58 AM, April 8, 2034".

At the back of a row of students, SOPHIE WALTERS is nervous as she takes her test. She is slight and pretty: 24, long dark hair, brown eyes, and glasses.

Sophie's VOICE is heard reading the last question of the exam in her mind:

SOPHIE (V.O.)

A young man is shipwrecked and washes up on the shore of a desert island. There is already an old man living there, and he takes the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 young man uphill to show him where  
 fresh water is, so he can survive.  
 Months pass, and the old man dies.  
 The young man remains on the island  
 for a long time, until he stumbles  
 upon a time machine. Thinking he  
 might use it to escape, he  
 activates it. He is transported to  
 the shore of his island, and sees a  
 young man washing up on shore: it  
 is himself from the past.

CUT TO:

INSERT OF TEST PAPER

The question which she is reading can be seen on the page.

SOPHIE (V.O.)  
 Not wanting his past self to drown,  
 the young man - who is now an old  
 man - helps his past self up and  
 brings him uphill to show him where  
 fresh water is, so he can survive.

Beneath the paragraph are the following questions:

**"10 POINTS****1. Who discovered the fresh water?****a. The old man****b. The young man****c. Both the old man and the young man played equal parts in the discovery of the water****d. None of the above****20 POINTS****Explain your answer: \_\_\_\_\_"**

CUT TO:

SOPHIE  
*(Whispering to herself.)*  
 What...?

(CONTINUED)

PROCTOR (O.S.)  
Pencils down, pass your papers to  
the front.

Sophie looks up, then quickly looks back at her page, which is blank. Before she can make a guess, the paper is snatched off her desk by the PROCTOR as he walks past.

PROCTOR  
Pencils down. Time's up.

The other students file out. Sophie just sits there, staring after her exam.

8

INT. - ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES LOBBY - DAY

8

Sophie trudges out of the elevator bay and into a lobby. She heads over to the front desk, sits in front of her computer and puts a headset on. A moment later the phone RINGS. Sophie presses the side of her headset to answer.

SOPHIE  
New York Academy of Temporal  
Sciences, how may I help you?

She pauses, then leans over to check something on her desk. There is an electronic chart of names of scientists, each with a little light next to his or her name.

She runs her finger down the chart to check on ROBERT TANAKA, PHD. The light next to his name is currently OFF.

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
He's not at his desk at the moment,  
may I take a message?

From across the lobby, Tanaka, who has just come in, hails her.

TANAKA (O.S.)  
Morning, Sophie.

SOPHIE  
(*To the phone.*)  
Hold on one moment, please.

She presses another button to put the phone on hold as Tanaka walks up to her.

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
Good morning, Dr. Tanaka. I have  
Amelia Ritter from the Grant  
Committee on line one.

(CONTINUED)

TANAKA

Oh god, it's too early for her. Put her through to voicemail.

SOPHIE

Right away, sir.

Tanaka puts a tablet on Sophie's desk without a glance at her and starts looking up files.

TANAKA

Coffee?

Sophie turns to a compact Espresso machine at the end of the desk. She presses a button, slides open a panel, and a steaming cup of espresso awaits.

She hands this to Tanaka, who takes it without a word.

SOPHIE

I picked up your dry cleaning again. Your suit is in your office.

TANAKA

Very good.

SOPHIE

*(Pushing the conversation.)*

I had to pick it up early because I took the temporal program entry exam this morning.

TANAKA

No kidding. You want to do lab work?

SOPHIE

Yes...that's why I'm here.

Tanaka doesn't respond to this, so she continues trying to push the conversation in the direction she wants.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

I'll find out how I did in a couple weeks. It's almost impossible to get the internship if you're not already a student, which in *itself* is an extremely selective. I'm still looking for letters of recommendation -

(CONTINUED)

TANAKA

*(Not really listening.)*

Well, I'll put in a few good words  
for you with the Admissions Board.

SOPHIE

Wha - really? Thank you!

TANAKA

No problem. You'd make a good lab  
assistant. Great with paperwork.

He gives her a patronizing SMILE, hands her his empty coffee  
cup, then heads off. Sophie is left staring off into space.

SOPHIE

*(Softly to herself.)*

What's that, Sophie, you want to be  
an aeononaut?

The phone RINGS again. She SIGHS.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Not in this universe.

9 EXT. - ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES - DAY 9

It is a cold, gray afternoon when Sophie exits the Academy.  
She heads towards a nearby train station.

10 INT. - THE SUBWAY - DAY 10

Sophie sits on an empty, futuristic high-speed subway car.  
She is reading a book entitled "TIME THEORY". The train is  
headed into Queens, and the skyline is visible behind her.

In a fit of frustration, she tosses the book away.

11 INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY 11

Sophie enters her apartment. She stands in the living room  
for a moment; then she slams her face onto the back of the  
couch and SCREAMS into the pillows to muffle the sound.

Suddenly CALEB HOLMAN speaks from off-screen:

CALEB (O.S.)

That bad, huh?

(CONTINUED)

Sophie straightens and turns to face Caleb. He is good-looking in a nerdy way: late 20s, tall and lean, messy hair, thick glasses, and a gray suit jacket.

It is not immediately apparent what Caleb's relationship is to Sophie, though it's clear that they are close, and there is a definite chemistry between them.

SOPHIE

I failed.

CALEB

Sophie -

SOPHIE

I didn't answer a 30-point question, Caleb.

*(With a bitter laugh.)*

I really thought it would be the math or physics that killed me, but no - I was screwed over by an essay question about...about fresh water!

CALEB

Ah, they got you with the paradox, huh?

He walks to the kitchen, giving Sophie a knowing glance. She follows him.

12

INT. - SOPHIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

12

SOPHIE

So, this an actual thing? Because when I read it, it sounded like a poorly-written children's fable.

CALEB

Oh, it's a thing. It's *the* thing.

He picks up two bottles of soda from the fridge and offers one to Sophie. She doesn't take it.

CALEB

You have to spend years studying causality and quantum physics to scratch the surface of that answer. I don't even get it.

SOPHIE

You get everything. You're brilliant.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

If that were true, I'm sure the Academy would have approved my grant proposal by now.

SOPHIE

They haven't given you an answer yet?

CALEB

Not in *this* universe.

They exchange a smiling glance - this is an inside joke, something to do with Caleb's graduate studies and research.

SOPHIE

Assholes.

CALEB

*Such* assholes. I've studied the work of Tegmark, Wheeler, Smolin, Everett...I've worked in string theory, the data all checks out...and still it's not enough.

He glances at her. Sophie SIGHS.

SOPHIE

I have to change. I have double shifts at the club all this week.

CALEB

Again?

SOPHIE

That test was expensive. And enrollment at the Academy will be prohibitively expensive.

Beat. Then, sourly:

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Assuming, of course, that I ever get in.

CALEB

Sophie.

SOPHIE

(*Unable to look at him.*)

No matter what I do, how hard I try, it doesn't matter and I can't get my foot in the door.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

*Sophie.*

She turns. He gestures for her to come over. With a reluctant SMILE, she does so. They meet in the middle of the kitchen in a hug.

SOPHIE

One day, things will get better.

CALEB

One day very far in the future.  
We're gonna be short on the rent  
again this month.

SOPHIE

Thank you for reminding me.

Sophie pulls away and hurries towards the bathroom, leaning into her room to grab her work clothes as she does.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

We'll figure it out.

Caleb raises his soda in a wry toast to the sentiment. Sophie SMILES and closes the door.

13 INT. - SOPHIE'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 13

Sophie turns to the mirror and starts fixing her hair. As she watches her reflection, her smile begins to fade.

Eventually she closes her eyes and turns away from the mirror, unable to look at herself anymore.

14 EXT. - THE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT 14

The city can be seen in the distance, and in the foreground, the CLUB where Sophie works as a serving girl is visible.

15 INT. - THE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT 15

The club is loud and smoky. Girls dance in the background to a techno song.

Sophie squeezes her way through the patrons. She is wearing her uniform: a low-cut, sheer white shirt and short-shorts.

She reaches a booth where a number of men are sitting. One of them, BEN, is a regular and knows Sophie.

(CONTINUED)

PATRON #1  
*(Shouting at a stripper.)*  
 Dance on over this way, baby!

The stripper approaches and offers her ankle as she dances, where there is a small black band with a scanner on it. The patrons flash their credits cards across the scanner, crediting the stripper with tips. She WINKS at them.

SOPHIE  
 Who ordered the house nachos?

BEN  
 That'd be me, sweet-cheeks.

SOPHIE  
*(Resigned.)*  
 Here you go, Ben.

Ben grabs Sophie's hand as she gives him the nachos and pulls her towards him. She tolerates it long enough for him to tuck a \$50 bill down the front of her shirt.

BEN  
 My number's on there, too.

SOPHIE  
 I'm a waitress, not a stripper. And there are nicer ways to tip.

BEN  
 Where would be the fun in that?  
 'Sides, you're cute when you're mad.

Sophie yanks herself away from him and sets the rest of the beers down on the table. She quickly leaves.

16 INT. - THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

16

Sophie enters the back area of the club to get her next order. A STRIPPER walks past, checking her scanner.

STRIPPER  
 Is that douchebag at it again?

SOPHIE  
 Yeah, but it seems he's in a generous mood tonight.

She pulls the bill out of her bra. The stripper LAUGHS.

(CONTINUED)

STRIPPER

I'll be happy to bring him his next round!

SOPHIE

Be my guest.

They smile at each other, then go their separate ways.

17

EXT. - BEHIND THE CLUB - NIGHT

17

Sophie, lugging two large trash bags, kicks open the back door and exits into a filthy area used for trash disposal.

She makes her way through rain puddles towards the dumpster and heaves the trash bags into it.

She turns around and finds herself face-to-face with the drunken Ben, who has stumbled out after her.

BEN

I ordered a shot of Whiskey ten minutes ago. Where's my Whiskey?

SOPHIE

I think you've had more than enough Whiskey for tonight, Ben.

She tries to side-step him to go back into the club, but he blocks her path and grabs her upper arm.

BEN

Why didn't you come back to the table?

SOPHIE

You need to go inside.

She tries to pry his fingers off her arm, but he overpowers her, backing her up against the wall of the club.

BEN

Why you gotta be so disagreeable all the time, Sophie? You think you're better'n me? You think you're gonna go off and be a fancy scientist and be better'n me?

SOPHIE

Let go!

(CONTINUED)

BEN

You're a nobody. I think you're  
right where you deserve to be,  
right here with me.

He leans forward and tries to KISS her. She SHOVES him,  
causing him to stumble back, and that gives her enough room  
to ELBOW him in the face. Ben puts his hands over his nose.

BEN

*(Muffled.)*

Son of a bitch!

SOPHIE

Go settle your tab, Ben.

BEN

You broke my fuckin' nose!

He lunges for her but she dodges and PUSHES him again; he  
trips over a pile of garbage bags. Pressing her advantage,  
Sophie runs out of the back area.

18 EXT. - SIDE ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

18

Sophie stops just before she gets to the street. She leans  
her head against the wall of the club and fumbles in the  
back pocket of her shorts.

She pulls out a small, futuristic phone and presses a button  
while she attempts to fix up her shirt, which Ben RIPPED.

CUT TO:

19 INT. - CALEB'S ROOM - NIGHT

19

Caleb's phone RINGS a number of times before he rolls over  
in his bed and answers it.

CALEB

*(Blearily.)*

H'lo?

SOPHIE (V.O.)

Caleb?

He perks up immediately.

CALEB

Sophie?

20 EXT. - SIDE ALLEY - NIGHT

20

Sophie is pacing back and forth in the alley. It has started to DRIZZLE.

She is still upset, but is trying to keep that hidden from Caleb as she talks to him.

SOPHIE

Hey, um...do you think you could come pick me up from work?

CALEB (V.O.)

Wha - it's 2:30 AM. I thought you were working all night?

SOPHIE

Yeah, well you know, it's...

Beat. She can't keep it together.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Caleb, please. I need you.

21 INT. - CALEB'S ROOM - NIGHT

21

Caleb sits up even straighter.

CALEB

Yeah - yeah, of course. I'm coming right now.

He gets up and goes over to his dresser, getting out pants and pulling them on. Then someone else moves under the covers. A woman, CARLA, late 20s, mature, tall, beautiful and slender, turns over to look at him.

CARLA

What's wrong?

CALEB

Sophie needs me to go pick her up.

CARLA

She can't take the train?

Caleb SHRUGS and pulls on a t-shirt.

CARLA (cont'd)

You have a grant meeting tomorrow morning. Sophie can get home on her own.

(CONTINUED)

Caleb walks around the bed, leans down and KISSES Carla on her forehead.

CALEB  
Good night, Carla.

He exits, and Carla flops back down on the pillows.

22 EXT. - SIDE ALLEY - NIGHT 22

Sophie leans against the wall and slides down until she is sitting on the ground.

SOPHIE  
(*Reassuring herself.*)  
You're going to save enough money to go to the Academy. You're going to be accepted and you're going to be an aevonaut and you're going to have a great life and do something that matters. You're going to get out of here.

Beat. Then, as if to convince herself:

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
You're going to get out of here.

CUT TO:

23 INT. - THE ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES - NIGHT 23

TITLES appear on screen: "11:41 PM, October 15, 2084".

Jae walks down a dark hallway, silhouetted by FLASHING RED LIGHTS. The rifle is slung over her shoulder. The ALARM is still sounding.

24 INT. - THE PARTICLE ACCELERATOR ROOM - NIGHT 24

Jae enters the Particle Accelerator room. In the center of the room is the accelerator.

On one wall there is a control room hidden behind protective glass. Jae heads towards this.

25 INT. - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

25

Once inside, she goes to the start-up mechanism for the accelerator. A COMMAND PROMPT pops up on the computer screen. Jae types in a code script she has written.

She looks to a different screen and types in the latitude, longitude, and altitude of a known safe teleport location.

Then she presses a SYNC BUTTON, which causes another screen with an atomic clock to turn on. Below that, there is a timer with all its numbers set to "0".

She rolls up her left sleeve, revealing four watches on her wrist. She presses the SYNC BUTTON on the bottommost one.

A computerized voice makes an announcement:

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)  
 Defining Moment search parameters  
 accepted. Particle Accelerator  
 transport sequence initiated.

26 INT. - PARTICLE ACCELERATOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

26

Jae steps out and begins to cross the floor, but before she can get to the accelerator, two SECURITY GUARDS enter.

SECURITY GUARD #1  
 Hey! You can't be in here!

Jae un-slings the rifle and SHOOTS the first guard without hesitation. The bullet GLOWS WHITE - it is PLASMA.

He goes down, and his partner drops to one knee, pulling his own plasma gun as he speaks into his ear piece:

SECURITY GUARD #2  
 We need backup in the accelerator  
 room! Code 23, all personnel to the  
 accelerator room!

Jae SHOOTS at the second guard, but misses. Behind him, three more guards run into the room.

SECURITY GUARD #2 (cont'd)  
 Drop your weapon!

COMPUTER (V.O.)  
 Your sequence is complete. Radium  
 226 ions accelerated to 60% light  
 speed. You are ready for transport.

(CONTINUED)

Jae runs towards the accelerator opening to enter the particle field.

One of the guards SHOOTs. The plasma grazes Jae's helmet, knocking it from her head. She falters and stumbles, dropping her rifle. However, she has reached the opening by that time, and she collapses into the particle field.

Her body shimmers; then she VANISHES.

CUT TO:

INSERT OF THE CONTROL ROOM COMPUTER

Now the countdown clock is working, as well. Its numbers are speeding backwards.

Finally, the numbers land on 03:48:37/04.09.2034.

CUT TO:

27

EXT. - THE POINT - NIGHT

27

Sophie and Caleb are sitting at the edge of a suburban Queens road, looking out across the bay. Sophie is wearing Caleb's jacket around her shoulders.

SOPHIE

We were so different when we first came here. So...happy.

CALEB

You must have been five or six. I can't believe you remember that.

SOPHIE

Are you kidding? That's my favorite memory. It was before my dad left. And before I had to leave school.

*(Bitterly.)*

Before everything went to hell.

Beat.

CALEB

Do you want to tell me what's wrong?

SOPHIE

Nothing. Everything. I don't know, it's...what am I doing with my life, Caleb? How did I end up here?

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

You called me and I drove you here.

Sophie SMILES against her will and elbows him in the side.

CALEB (cont'd)

There it is, I got a smile.

SOPHIE

I just worry about what will happen if things don't work out.

Caleb is silent. Sophie shakes her head.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

One day I'll be a time traveler and everything will be perfect.

CALEB

You're a dreamer, Sophie. I gotta love that about you.

SOPHIE

What's that supposed to mean?

CALEB

I'm not sure time travel will ever get invented. All points in spacetime exist simultaneously, which means that the past is happening right now, and so is the future - just in different places on the continuum. So if time travel gets invented, by definition, we'd have known about it by now.

SOPHIE

Not necessarily. I mean, that's the paradox, right? If we discover time travel because time travelers traveled back here to tell us about time travel, then who discovered time travel?

CALEB

Hm, someone's been hitting the books.

Beat. Sophie looks down, thinking about her failed exam.

CALEB (cont'd)

You'll be ready for that test the next time you take it.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

Oh, I'm sure they'll come up with a different paradox by the time I save enough money for that.

They sit for a moment in silence.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

We should go home. Carla will be worried about you.

CALEB

Yes she will. And I have that grant meeting in...

*(He checks his phone.)*

...four-and-a-half hours.

SOPHIE

Oh, no...Caleb, I'm sorry -

CALEB

Don't be. No matter how eloquently I defend myself, they won't give me funding. My professors think my multiverse theory is, and I quote, "ill-defined and asinine".

SOPHIE

But I shouldn't have called you -

Suddenly out in the water there is a FLASH of light, a strong GUST of wind, and a SPLASH. Then all is still again.

Sophie and Caleb exchange confused glances. Sophie gets up and goes down the hill towards the water's edge.

CALEB

Soph, don't -

SOPHIE (O.S.)

I think someone's down here!

Caleb gets up and hurries out of frame.

28

EXT. - THE WATERFRONT - CONTINUOUS

28

Caleb reaches the bottom of the hill and arrives at the shore in time to see Sophie splashing into the shallows. There is a person floating in the water.

He runs over, and he and Sophie start pulling the person out: it's Jae.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

Hello? Can you hear me?

Jae is not responsive. Her nose is bleeding. Her face is pale from blood loss, and she isn't breathing.

From within a monitoring chip in her jumpsuit, a COMPUTERIZED VOICE is heard:

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)

No helmet sensed. Administering emergency serum reserves directly to aortic artery in accordance with Protocol 8-13.

A green LIGHT on the breast pocket of Jae's jumpsuit LIGHTS UP, and there is a sound like the HISSING of air. Jae SPASMS, waking up, GASPING and COUGHING.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)

Administer second dose of serum immediately.

Jae shows responsiveness to the prompts. With shaking hands, she starts feeling up and down the length of her body.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Administer second dose of serum immediately. Serum is located in storage compartment B-5.

Jae reaches into a pocket. She pulls a needle out, pops the safety cap off, then STABS herself in the chest with it.

Sophie SCREAMS, but Jae's breathing steadies, and the flow of blood from her nose abates. She BLINKS, and the world comes into focus. The first thing she sees is Sophie.

SOPHIE

Are you okay?

JAE

Sophie Walters?

SOPHIE

*(Stunned, a bit frightened.)*

Yes?

Sophie reaches out to Jae's face to help wipe some of the blood off. But Jae violently HITS her hand away and scrambles backwards.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
Ow! What the -

JAE  
No...no, no, no, no, NO!!

CALEB  
What's -

JAE  
*FUCK!*

Jae still doesn't have her balance, so she falls down. She POUNDS her fist into the sand in fury.

JAE  
This can't happen! It *can't!*  
(*Screaming to the night.*)  
Why did you do this to me? Was this  
what you wanted? Was this all part  
of your fucking plan?!

She curls up and starts SOBBING silently. Sophie gets up to go over to her, but Caleb holds a hand out to stop her.

CALEB  
Be careful.

Jae looks up at Caleb. Her tormented expression softens.

JAE  
Caleb Holman. Would you look at  
that.

SOPHIE  
How do you know who we are?

CALEB  
Better yet, who are you?

JAE  
That is an excellent question. And  
the short answer is that it doesn't  
really matter who I am, because I'm  
just a puppet. A little time-puppet  
with strings attached.

SOPHIE  
(*Trying again.*)  
What's your name?

JAE

Who gives a shit. Doesn't matter.

Sophie and Caleb exchange glances. Jae lets out a SIGH and rolls onto her back.

JAE (cont'd)

No, it's...fuck, what did I tell you?

*(Snapping her fingers, as if remembering.)*

Jae. That's what I said.

Now that Jae is lying on her back, Caleb notices something on her jumpsuit. Upon Jae's breast pocket is emblazoned "ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES: AEVONAUTICAL SUIT #260"

Caleb kneels down next to Jae and grabs the front of her suit to examine the material. Inside, we can see a silver, glowing lining that contains some sort of liquid substance.

Jae raises her eyebrows at his invasion of her personal space, but makes no complaint.

JAE (cont'd)

Oh, hello.

CALEB

This suit doesn't exist yet. This is a prototype that is locked away in the labs at the Academy.

SOPHIE

Caleb? What's wrong?

JAE

*(To herself.)*

And here we go.

Beat. She and Caleb look at each other.

CALEB

This woman is an aevonaut.

29

INT. - CALEB'S CAR - NIGHT

29

Caleb is speeding down an empty street. Sophie sits in the front seat, and Jae can be seen lying across the back seats.

SOPHIE

Do you think its possible that she's really from the future?

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

I don't know, Sophie, okay? I'm just a numbers man. I - this is way beyond my comfort zone. I believe what science can support, and there's nothing to support the idea that time travel is actually possible. At least, not right now.

SOPHIE

But she has the suit, doesn't she?

CALEB

...she does.

SOPHIE

*(In an excited whisper.)*

Do you know what this means? We are making history as we speak! This is the most important thing to happen in science for...for ever!

Jae SNORTS rudely.

JAE

I remember being like you. Idealistic, naive, selfish, stupid.

SOPHIE

Excuse me?

JAE

Those are not good things to be, Sophie. You're chasing the wrong dreams, believe me.

SOPHIE

*(Defensively.)*

I'm sorry, but you don't know me.

JAE

Of course I know you. You ruined my life.

SOPHIE

What? How? *When?*

Jae SHAKES HER HEAD, and refuses to say anything more.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Look, I'm trying to help you.

(CONTINUED)

JAE

*(Tired, resigned.)*

No one can help. This has all happened already. I say these exact same words and do these exact same things. And what I realize now is that I fail. That I am, in fact, *designed* to fail.

Sophie and Caleb glance at each other again; they both wonder in silence about Jae's cryptic words.

30

EXT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

30

Caleb pulls up in front of the apartment. He gets out, then walks around and yanks open the passenger side back door.

He reaches out for Jae, she jerks away from him.

JAE

*Don't touch me. I will make my own choices. I can stay, right here, right now, and I can change it.*

CALEB

I don't know what that means. You seem crazy, but you also seem to know us, so I'm assuming there's a reason you're here.

JAE

And you are right, as always. There is a great reason I'm here. It's just not *my* reason.

SOPHIE

Well, maybe we can...fix whatever I did? Maybe we can change things?

JAE

I came back with every intention to change things. But that is a folly doomed to disaster.

SOPHIE

We can help -

JAE

*Stop with the help, okay? I don't want your help! I don't -*

*(She gives a hysterical LAUGH.)*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAE (cont'd)

- I remember this, I *remember* this! Do you know how it feels to hear these words coming from my mouth, to *know* they're fake, and to not be able to do anything about it? What do I say next? Whatever pops into my mind, it *is* what I say next. It was planted there. It has been *written*. I am *trapped*.

Caleb purses his lips in frustration, then puts his hand on her shoulder. Surprised, she turns back around.

CALEB

I need to understand this. How you got here, how you have that suit, how you know us, and whatever the hell it is you're blabbering about.

Jae stares at him for a long moment.

JAE

I'm so sorry. For everything. I want you to know that.

CALEB

That's nice. Now I need answers, so are you ready to cooperate?

JAE

Being here again...it's almost like anything's possible. Like I *can* change things.

*(She smiles ruefully.)*

All right, I'll play along. Let's go. Because, spoiler alert: that's what happens anyway.

Caleb helps her out of the car. Before she lets go of him, she fishes two more capped needles out of her pocket. She puts these in his hand and closes his fingers around them.

CALEB

What is this?

JAE

Do me a favor and hang onto those for the next week. That serum is going to save both our lives.

Caleb opens his mouth to ask more questions, but Jae forestalls him:

(CONTINUED)

JAE (cont'd)

No. There are certain things I  
can't tell you, because if we want  
to have any hope of fixing this,  
then the less you know, the better.

She gets out of the car and walks towards the apartment.  
Caleb locks it and, despite the fact that he is suspicious  
of Jae, he POCKETS the needles.

CALEB

(To Sophie.)

You think she's insane?

SOPHIE

Not insane, but certainly  
obnoxious.

JAE

Oh, by the way, Carla's waiting up  
for us.

She turns and looks at them, her eyebrows raised.

JAE (cont'd)

And she's pissed.

31 INT. - CORRIDOR TO THE APARTMENT - NIGHT 31

Sophie, Jae and Caleb approach the apartment door. Caleb  
takes out his passkey, then turns to the girls.

CALEB

Let me go in first and explain, all  
right? Just...just stay here.

He UNLOCKS the door and slips inside.

32 INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 32

Caleb tries to ease the door closed behind him; before he  
can shut it, a LIGHT turns on.

CUT TO:

Carla is sitting on the couch in a skimpy bathrobe, waiting  
for him. She stands, putting her hands on her hips.

CARLA

What took you so long?

(CONTINUED)

CALEB  
What? Nothing.

CARLA  
Where's Sophie?

CALEB  
What?

CARLA  
*Sophie*, our roommate. You went to go pick her up two hours ago. So where is she?

JAE (O.S.)  
Right here!

On cue, Jae barges into the room, dragging Sophie with her.

JAE  
Hello, Carla. Long time no see!

CARLA  
(*To Caleb.*)  
Who is that?

JAE  
(*In a patronizing voice.*)  
This will be a lot to handle, and you end up unconscious by the end of our conversation, so why don't you sit your fat ass down, hm?

CALEB  
Hey, there's no need for -

JAE  
Oh, it's all in good fun, Carla and I just don't like each other. Never have, never will.

Jae enjoys this conversation - this should be a moment of levity for her.

CARLA  
Wha...I don't even *know* you!

JAE  
Actually, you do! But you don't know it yet. Isn't that bizarre? Maybe it's too complex a concept for your small mind to comprehend.

(CONTINUED)

CARLA

Okay, get out of my apartment *right*  
now!

She points furiously at the door. Jae puts an affected look of regret on her face and SIGHS melodramatically.

JAE

I could. I could if I had any  
control over my actions  
whatsoever...but I don't, so I'll  
just stay here, you dumb ugly cow.

CARLA

(*To Caleb, appalled.*)  
*Caleb!*

CALEB

(*To Jae.*)  
Look, I don't care who you are or  
when you came from, you either  
apologize, or you leave.

JAE

No. I won't leave. I came back to  
change the past, and you know what?  
I've decided I'm going to do it. I  
am going to prevent the invention  
of time travel.

There is stunned silence for a moment.

CALEB

That's impossible. By definition,  
you fail.

JAE

How do you know? You're not from  
the future.

CALEB

No, but you are. Ergo, whatever you  
attempt in the past doesn't work.

JAE

Excuse me, are you or are you not  
the genius who came up with the  
Holman Multiverse Theory?

There is another silence. Caleb is shocked; Sophie puts her hands over her mouth. Carla is lost.

JAE (cont'd)

(*Smug.*)

Yeah, that's right, I know.

CALEB

Wait - does that mean I get the grant? My theory gets published?

JAE

Something like that.

SOPHIE

That's fantastic!

CALEB

I fucking get *published!*

Carla watches their interaction with jealous, narrowed eyes.

CARLA

What is this theory, and why haven't I heard about it?

JAE

It states that an infinite number of universes exist in quantum superposition for each possible outcome of any given change factor until, through some act of interference, observation, or choice, one outcome becomes real.

Beat.

CARLA

What?

JAE

I see your miniscule brain is struggling to understand, so allow me to present an example.

(*Addressing the whole room, as if making a presentation.*)

In the next three minutes, I am going to make a choice: I will either punch Carla in the face, or I won't. This decision is a change factor that causes a particular eventuality to become real. It causes our universe to either become the reality in which I keep my hands to myself, or the reality in which I smack Carla in her stupid whore mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CARLA

I will call the police -

JAE

No, you'll shut up and listen, because I'm trying to save all of you.

CALEB

I don't care if you're trying to end world hunger, you don't talk like that to us.

Jae SIGHS, and she relents and backs off.

JAE

You can go ahead and hate me. I'm too far gone to make an effort, and I am too old to care. But regardless what you think of me, we need to get to the defining moment that made our universe split off into the fucked-up future I come from, and we need to change it.

SOPHIE

Sorry - but what is a 'defining moment'?

JAE

The moment a change factor determines which universe, out of the infinite possibilities, becomes reality. A wrong choice was made...

She consults her watches.

JAE (cont'd)

...six days, twenty-three hours, nine minutes and fifty-two seconds from now. So I must change that.

CALEB

You can't measure the wrongness of a *choice*. How can you even assert it was wrong?

JAE

Because *fuck* this universe! Because we live in a future where the fucking Academy basically owns everything, and we are all *slaves*.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

This sounds more like politics or philosophy than aevo-nautical science.

JAE

Oh, I have numbers to back me up. Our computers can pinpoint, to the picosecond, when a change factor determines a universal split.

CALEB

Be that as it may, what you're suggesting can't be done.

JAE

Yes it *can*! We can change our reality by altering the spin of subatomic particles, or some physics-y shit like that. I don't get it, Caleb, but you do. You wrote this. And I need your help.

CALEB

To force our universe into a different eventuality, you would have to find the moment which began the chain of events that leads to the formulation of our current future -

JAE

Defining moment, I've done that.

CALEB

- and force every quark *in the universe* to behave differently at that *precise* point in time.

JAE

No, by definition, if you can force even one molecule to do something different, then you have changed time. New universe. New future.

SOPHIE

That doesn't sound too hard.

Jae lets out a bitter LAUGH. She doesn't even grace this with a response, and Sophie SCOWLS.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

You would need a massive  
electromagnetic generator to -

JAE

Hello-ooo, you have a particle  
accelerator in the Academy!

Caleb is still skeptical. He shakes his head.

JAE (cont'd)

Look, I already did the hard work.  
I have one week, and that's  
actually not a lot of time. So  
let's get this show on the road.

CARLA

Oh no. NO! Caleb, I forbid you to  
go anywhere with this woman, she -

Before Carla can finish her sentence, Jae crosses to her.  
She removes another needle from her pocket, uncaps it, and  
sticks Carla in the neck.

Carla's eyes roll up into her head and she slumps down onto  
the couch, unconscious.

CALEB

What did you do?!

JAE

Relax, it's just a tranquilizer.

CALEB

What is *wrong* with you?

He runs to Carla's side and checks her pulse.

JAE

It wasn't my fault. That's what  
happens. I was just following the  
path of our universe's reality.

CALEB

Oh, bullshit!

JAE

*(Darkly, more serious.)*

This is for her own good, Caleb. I  
infect anyone I interact with.

The word "infect" grabs both Sophie's and Caleb's attention.  
Caleb scowls at Jae.

(CONTINUED)

JAE (cont'd)  
 I'll explain everything, but you've  
 gotta trust me.  
*(She turns to Sophie and holds  
 out her hand.)*  
 Sophie? Do you want to work in a  
 strip club for the rest of your  
 life, or do you want to save the  
 world?

Sophie hesitates.

JAE (cont'd)  
*(In a fake whisper.)*  
 Psst...you end up coming with me,  
 so let's cut the shit.

Sophie takes a deep breath. She NODS, but pointedly does not  
 take Jae's hand. Jae lets her hand drop slowly.

SOPHIE  
 I'll do it.

33 EXT. - THE WETLANDS - SUNRISE

33

It is a gray morning. Sophie, Caleb and Jae are walking  
 towards the edge of the shore. Jae is in front with her  
 phone out, Sophie and Caleb are lagging behind.

SOPHIE  
 You're missing your grant meeting.

CALEB  
 Apparently I get published anyway,  
 so whatever happens now doesn't  
 matter.

Ahead of them, Jae crouches and puts her phone near the  
 ground. She draws a needle from her pocket, presses a button  
 to elongate its point, and sticks it into the ground.

JAE  
 Got it.

She stands, holding her needle aloft. There is silver liquid  
 inside.

CALEB  
 What is that?

(CONTINUED)

JAE

Mercury.

CALEB

*(Muttering to himself.)*

This just gets better and better.

SOPHIE

How the hell did you know there was Mercury here?

JAE

There's an app for that.

She holds her phone close to the needle. It BEEPS, and a VOICE announces:

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)

Mercury-202 detected.

JAE

I need it to make lining for your clothes. The Academy is currently studying the effects of colliding radium-226 ions at about 120% light speed. What they *don't* know yet is that the subsequent collisions end up tearing the Higgs Field, which means any massive particle in the collision path becomes mass-less, allowing that particle to exit the spacetime continuum. In layman's terms, *voila!* Time travel. But even minimal exposure can be lethal, so I'm taking no chances with you.

She digs in her pocket and TOSSES two more needles to Sophie and Caleb.

JAE (cont'd)

Get as much as you can. There's tons of it out here from that Superfund fiasco back in '29.

CALEB

Uh...I'm still a little unclear as to why we should help you.

JAE

*(With a SIGH.)*

I assume you're familiar with the story of the young man and the old man? Who discovers the fresh water?

(CONTINUED)

They nod; Sophie's mouth twists.

JAE (cont'd)

The discovery is a paradox. Where does the knowledge of the water's location come from? The man is regurgitating words and actions he thinks are his own, but he didn't come up with them. He told them to his past self, who heard them from his future self, who told them to his past self, etcetera ad nauseum. A paradox is created when temporal radiation occurs between its subjects. As best I can tell, this radiation...it controls us. It plants words in our heads, makes us move, makes us think. It tells us where the fresh water is.

CALEB

*(While extracting mercury.)*

Who cares where the knowledge comes from? I'd love to have my future self hand me a copy of my published findings.

JAE

Are you fucking stupid?

*(At the same time as Sophie.)*

It means -

SOPHIE

*(At the same time as Jae.)*

It means free will doesn't exist.

JAE

Thank you. Jesus. I can't even remember why you like this twit.

At her words, Caleb looks at Sophie and she BLUSHES. Jae continues before they can respond:

JAE (cont'd)

Time travel causes some of our atomic nuclei to decay in a non-standard way. The more of that radiation there is in the world, the more we are able to be controlled by it.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

And now you've irradiated us.

JAE

Minimal amounts won't hurt you. A piece of paper can block alpha particles. One gamma molecule isn't going to turn you into the Hulk.

CALEB

Neither alpha nor gamma particles can do what you're claiming this radiation does.

JAE

Omega particles could.

CALEB

There's no such thing.

JAE

There is such a thing once time travel is invented. The radiation is referred to as the Influence.

Caleb SNORTS and tosses up his hands in disbelief.

JAE (cont'd)

*(In a flippant tone.)*

See, if you weren't being controlled by the Influence to be a jerk right now, you'd be singing a different tune.

She WINKS at Caleb, but neither Caleb nor Sophie are amused.

JAE (cont'd)

No? No sense of humor back here in '34?

SOPHIE

How can you laugh about this?

JAE

How can I not? Nothing I do matters, so why should I let it bother me?

*(Growing more somber.)*

Whatever choices I *think* I make, it's just part of the Influence's plan. I'm a toy. I am a pawn.

*(On the verge of tears.)*

It's that awkward moment when you realize that your whole life,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAE (cont'd)  
everything you fought for,  
everything you wanted, is a lie.

SOPHIE  
And you think you can change it?

JAE  
According to his theory I can.

She POINTS at Caleb.

CALEB  
Great. Except what if we end up any  
of the *infinite* universes that are  
shittier than this one? What if we  
end up in a universe where we all  
die in a nuclear war?

JAE  
Then you die a free man.

CALEB  
I'm actually fine right here. The  
odds of this working are -

SOPHIE  
(*Interrupting.*)  
Are 50/50.

Caleb looks at her.

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
If there are infinite universes,  
then the possibility of ending up  
in one where there is no Influence  
is roughly 50/50. Regardless of the  
variance of eventualities, those  
odds are pretty good.

CALEB  
You can't be buying this voodoo  
science. Don't feel beholden to her  
just because she told you that you  
ruined her life. That is not your  
fault or your problem, it's *hers*.

Beat. Jae looks back and forth at them, a strange expression  
on her face. Sophie looks away and continues extracting  
mercury.

34

EXT. - THE PATH TO THE STREET - DAY

34

Sophie, Caleb and Jae are making their way back towards the street, each carrying a few needles of mercury.

Caleb is ahead of the girls and passes out of frame, clearly in a bad mood. Sophie is behind him, and Jae behind her.

JAE

Thanks for taking my side, kiddo.

SOPHIE

I'm not taking anyone's side. I'm doing this because it's right. If there's a universe where we are free, I have to try to get there.

JAE

*(Facetiously.)*

I can't remember what it feels like to do things for the right reasons.

SOPHIE

Then I will treat you as an example of everything I *never* want to be.

JAE

Oh, I've *wanted* to do the right thing all my life. I've just never been able to.

SOPHIE

Well, I'm not like you.

JAE

You are just as much a puppet as I am, so why don't you get off your high horse and pull that pole out of your ass? An attitude like that will ruin us.

She shoves past Sophie and walks out of frame as well. Sophie stops for a moment, GLARING after her.

SOPHIE

*(Under her breath.)*

You're one to talk about attitudes.

35 INT. - CALEB'S CAR - DAY 35

Sophie leans her forehead against the window of Caleb's car. They are driving along a back road.

Jae NARRATES; Sophie and Caleb react to her instructions.

JAE (V.O.)

You need to take yourselves off the grid for the next six days. Toss your phone, call in sick, quit your jobs - don't interact with anyone else if you can help it.

36 INT. - SUPERMARKET - DAY 36

A SERIES OF SHOTS of Sophie and Caleb collecting supplies from their local supermarket.

Sophie picks up a futuristic SWISS ARMY KNIFE from the shelf, and, deciding it may be useful, puts it in her cart.

JAE (V.O.)

Buy yourselves a couple helmets, and get me some lead and a tank of hydrogen so I can make your gear.

37 INT. - CALEB'S CAR - DAY 37

Sophie and Caleb turn the corner onto their street. Caleb suddenly SLAMS on the brakes. The car jerks to a stop.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 38

A police car is parked outside the apartment. A couple of POLICE OFFICERS are standing on the sidewalk, talking to Carla, who is still in her bathrobe.

39 INT. - CALEB'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 39

Caleb pulls over behind a large SUV and puts his car in park.

CALEB

Shit.

Jae sits up from the back seat and takes a look around, wondering why they've stopped. She spots the officers.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB (cont'd)  
(Turning back to her.)  
Did you foresee *that* happening?

JAE  
Huh. I forgot about this.

CALEB  
You forgot?

JAE  
It's been 150 years, okay? I don't remember everything. I have brain damage. I only get memories back when a connection is triggered.

She POKES her forehead vigorously, indicating her brain doesn't work the way she wishes it would.

SOPHIE  
Well, what happens next?

Jae, glaring at the two of them, takes a needle out of her storage pocket. She pops the cap off and STABS herself in the chest again, making Sophie wince.

Beat; Jae stares around, taking everything in, making the necessary connections. She remembers now.

JAE  
Oh yeah. Caleb talks to them and they go away.

CALEB  
Can you be more specific? What are they here for?

JAE  
They're trying to find me because your girlfriend complained that I attacked her.

CALEB  
You *did*.

JAE  
Well, we obviously we can't allow these fine law enforcement officers to arrest me, because I would infect them. So fix it.

CALEB  
Me? What do I say?

JAE  
Who cares? They leave in five minutes.

CALEB  
But -

JAE  
(*Snappishly.*)  
Look, it doesn't matter because it's happened already, and I *know* that they go away. You could say "pineapple" and they'd go away.

Beat.

JAE (cont'd)  
Actually, you should do that. Go out there and say "pineapple" to them.

CALEB  
That is an awful idea.

JAE  
You're a scientist, aren't you? Here's a lovely little experiment in causality.

Caleb SIGHS in exasperation. Then he gets out of the car and starts down the street towards Carla and the policemen.

40 EXT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

40

Caleb sidles up, and the officers and Carla spot him.

POLICE OFFICER  
Is that him, ma'am?

CARLA  
Caleb, where have you been? I've been calling you for hours! What the hell is going on?!

Caleb looks around, debating whether he should continue with his experiment. Finally, he throws caution to the winds.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB  
Pineapple.

Carla stares at him as if he's just sprouted two heads. The police officers exchange dubious glances.

41 INT. - CALEB'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

41

Meanwhile, in the car, Sophie and Jae sit in silence. Finally, Sophie twists around in her seat.

SOPHIE  
Are you really 150?

Jae rolls up her sleeve, revealing her four watches.

JAE  
*(Tapping the second watch.)*  
This watch tells me how much linear time has passed in my life. I was born 74 years ago, but counting all the relative time I spent outside of the continuum, and all the time I spend in the past or future, I am technically...  
*(She consults it.)*  
153 years, 7 months, 1 week, 5 days and 21 hours old.

SOPHIE  
Why don't you look that old?

JAE  
Time travel, having no mass...it does some weird things to your molecular structure. Plus I've had some work done. First I didn't like my face, so I got a new one. Then I fucked that face up -

She points to her one white eye, alluding to a past injury.

JAE (cont'd)  
- so I got a new one again. And then I got a third new face, cause I just couldn't stand looking at myself anymore.

Beat.

SOPHIE

How do you know me in the future?

JAE

Everyone knows you. You're a real celebrity. In fact, you're the reason time travel gets invented.

SOPHIE

*(Shocked.)*

Really? Oh my god...I'm like the Neil Armstrong of aevonauts! This is my dream!

Jae makes a NOISE OF DISGUST.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

How does it happen?

JAE

From what I now know, having come back to the past, things go wrong when we try to change the defining moment. Instead of sending us into a new universe, the accelerator sends you and Caleb back in time. By studying you, the clowns at the Academy get the information they need to make time travel possible.

Beat.

JAE (cont'd)

In case you were wondering, that time-trip also causes the first omega radiation. So all of this, the Influence and the ruination of free will, is your fault.

SOPHIE

No, that can't...that's not possible.

JAE

No matter. It's just the role you were meant to play.

SOPHIE

*(Angry.)*

But you're the one who came back, and you're the one who roped me into this. It's your fault.

(CONTINUED)

JAE

You and me, kiddo. The two biggest fuck-ups in the universe.

SOPHIE

I don't understand how you can be so blasé about this. If I were an aeonaut, I'd fix my mistakes.

JAE

And what in the hell do you think I'm trying to do right now?

At that point, Caleb returns. He opens the car door and looks in, an angry expression on his face.

CALEB

They left.

JAE

Told you they would.

SOPHIE

What did you say?

CALEB

I just kept saying "pineapple" and Carla kept talking about you -  
(*He points at Jae.*)  
- and they thought we were high. So they did a drug test.

He shows them his arm, where he sports a bandage from the impromptu police drug test.

CALEB (cont'd)

I was clean, but Carla wasn't. They arrested her.

Jae LAUGHS.

CALEB (cont'd)

What was in that tranquilizer?

JAE

Some fun stuff they won't invent for a few more years. It'll pose enough of a mystery to keep her safely locked up this week.

Caleb SLAMS the door shut and walks back to the apartment.

Jae WIGGLES HER EYEBROWS at Sophie, as if the two of them are sharing an inside joke.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

You're crazy.

JAE

Maybe you're right. But the new future will have an old past. We're changing reality *after* the defining moment which is...

She consults the last of her four watches, which is a watch that has a countdown clock to the defining moment.

JAE (cont'd)

Six days, thirteen hours, ten minutes, two seconds, and who-gives-a-shit picoseconds away. *That* is why we don't interact. Minimal radiation won't be a problem, but a lot will.

She KICKS open her car door and exits, leaving Sophie alone.

42

INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

42

TITLES appear on screen: "04:39 PM, April 11, 2034".

Caleb is getting things ready for the mission. He comes out of his room with some clothes in hand, wheeling a hydrogen tank. He is on the phone, his earpiece lit up as he SPEAKS:

CALEB

I can't bail you out, it's...it's complicated, okay? You're better off where you are.

Carla's angry VOICE can be heard through the earpiece.

CALEB (cont'd)

I'm sorry, but I can't tell you anything else right now. I don't - hello? Carla?

He TAPS his earpiece, then SIGHS, realizing that she has hung up on him. Then he starts setting up the tank and fiddling with power tools he has assembled on the table.

He glances up, and is startled when he sees Jae sitting in the shadows in the corner, watching him.

CALEB (cont'd)

What?

(CONTINUED)

JAE

Nothing.

CALEB

You want to help me with this?

He indicates the tank. Jae stands and checks her watches.

JAE

No, it's time for a chat with someone.

She walks past him, exiting the living room. Caleb retreats into his own room, SLAMMING the door behind him.

43

INT. - SOPHIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

43

Sophie is sitting on the floor, going through her clothes. Jae walks into the room and leans against the door frame.

JAE

What is that?

SOPHIE

You told us to find clothes that we can line with protective material.

JAE

Yes, but why are you using *that*?

She indicates a jacket Sophie is holding.

SOPHIE

It's comfy, it's practical, I like it. It's vintage from '08.

JAE

Maybe it should have stayed in '08, huh?

SOPHIE

What is it with you? You are so...unpleasant.

JAE

Well, given that I just recently found out that I am a slave to incomprehensible malignant forces that control and define my every move, and given that you are directly responsible for that, I'd say I'm justified in my surliness.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

Go away.

JAE

No.

She reaches down and snatches the jacket from Sophie, who scrambles to her feet.

SOPHIE

Hey!

JAE

You need to get your act together before the defining moment because this -

*(She gestures around.)*

- clearly isn't working for you. You're sleeping in a tiny bed with cockroaches and pretending to be a scientist while the man you love is *fucking* Carla in the next room.

SOPHIE

Excuse me?!

JAE

Sophie. Let's not play games.

SOPHIE

I'm not in love with Caleb!

JAE

You want some advice, lose the glasses and wash your hair occasionally.

Sophie pushes past Jae in an angry huff, leaving the room. Jae follows her.

44

INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

44

JAE

*(Enjoying herself.)*

Really though, how many decades have you been obsessed with him?

SOPHIE

Caleb and I grew up together. We are just friends. We have *always* been just friends!

(CONTINUED)

CALEB (O.S.)  
 (*From inside his room.*)  
 Soph? Something wrong?

JAE  
 Ah, Caleb! We were just talking  
 about -

SOPHIE  
 Shh!

She grabs Jae's arm and pulls her out of the apartment.

45

EXT. - THE ROOF OF SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

45

On the roof, Sophie storms out. This is where she comes to think and blow off steam. Jae follows her.

JAE  
 You know that African River? The Nile? That's still around, right? It doesn't dry up til '73?

SOPHIE  
 Caleb is with Carla. They've talked about marriage, for goodness' sake.

JAE  
 No, *Carla* has talked about marriage. Because *Carla* is a parasite, and when she looks at him, she sees a handsome, kind, *brilliant* man who will be able to support her for the rest of ever.

SOPHIE  
 (*Now defensive.*)  
 Maybe you're in love with him.

JAE  
 This isn't about me, for once. I have lived my life and made my choices. Or rather, they were all predetermined for me. Whatever.

Sophie glares at Jae over her shoulder; Jae approaches, becoming more serious.

JAE (cont'd)  
 I'm saying this because if - *when* you end up with a new future, I want you to forget the science stuff.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

You are as much at fault as I am for the Influence. Don't you dare blame me for your problems!

JAE

I'll blame whoever the fuck I want. I am great at apportioning blame. Now you listen to me, and -

SOPHIE

NO! I'm not going to ruin my friendship with Caleb just because you've ruined your own life!

JAE

*(Growing subdued.)*

Did I ruin my own life? It's hard to tell. I don't know where I stop and the Influence begins. All I know is that I am so tired of fighting a battle that can't be won. I'm bitter. I'm angry, I've grown fat and old - and I'm alone.

She SIGHS and looks out at the city skyline.

JAE (cont'd)

You should tell Caleb how you feel.

SOPHIE

*(With a rueful LAUGH.)*

What can I offer him? I want to be an aeonaut, but I'm not smart. I want to be beautiful, but I can't compete with Carla. I'm a mess. I'm a nobody. I look at myself and I can't conceive of how someone could love me. Then I think of all Caleb's done, all the work he's planning to do, and I think, "I should wait until I'm a better person. I should wait until I'm smarter. Or until I'm prettier. Or until I'm an aeonaut." But I wait and wait, and that day never comes. So who in their right mind would want to be with me?

JAE

Don't know 'til you ask. And you should ask while you can, because one day it might be too late.

(CONTINUED)

The note of sorrow in Jae's tone makes Sophie look at her.

SOPHIE

Who did you lose?

JAE

The man I loved. He died. The Influence killed him so I would make the decision to come back in time...thereby helping to create the Influence.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry.

JAE

Yeah. I am, too.

SOPHIE

You're hoping you'll end up in a future where you're together?

JAE

I'm hoping I'll end up in a future where I don't exist.

SOPHIE

You want to die?

JAE

No. My death wouldn't solve anything.

She closes her eyes, and a single tear falls down her cheek.

JAE (cont'd)

I just want to be different.

46

EXT. - SOPHIE'S BACKYARD - EVENING

46

TITLES appear on screen: "5:03 PM, April 13, 2034".

Caleb is outside, doing some lawn work to keep himself busy. The lawn is mostly brown and dead. He is ripping up weeds and tossing them into a rusty wheelbarrow.

He turns, wiping his hands off on his jeans, and JUMPS in shock when he sees Jae lurking in the shadows of the doorway to enter the apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Jesus! You need to stop doing that.

JAE

What did I tell you? I said take yourself off the grid. Don't interact with anyone.

CALEB

I'm not. I'm interacting with these weeds. I can't sit in that apartment anymore.

JAE

Just being outside is a risk. You don't know who's around.

CALEB

*(Approaching her.)*

You know, I've been thinking about that. The more time you spend with us, the more you expose us to the omega radiation, right? So why not leave? By your own admission, aren't you just ruining the future more and more, the longer you stay with us? Why bring us to the Academy for your defining moment?

JAE

Because the two of you, you're too deep in it. I have to make sure that the things you do - the things you're *forced* to do - I mean, you can't fuck that stuff up again. I don't trust her -

*(She POINTS up towards Sophie's room.)*

- not to fuck it up.

Caleb stops before her, getting right up in her face. Though he towers over her, Jae is not intimidated.

CALEB

Maybe you're fucking it up. Maybe your being here is causing us to make whatever choices lead us to the future you hate so much.

JAE

Could it be? Have I made a convert out of you, Caleb?

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Absolutely not. You're a sociopath, your argument is flawed, and I think you should go try to do the impossible without dragging us through your shit.

Jae glares at him. She reaches up towards his face, her voice growing soft and dark.

JAE

Oh, if you only knew why I do the things I do, if you -

Caleb HITS her hand away.

CALEB

Don't touch me.

JAE

Do you think if there was a way to leave you out of it, I wouldn't do it? I am *trapped*! I am confined by an invariable timeline, and I am doing the only thing, the *only thing* I know how to do to make it right! And you don't care.

She turns on her heel and stalks back inside. The CAMERA follows her as she starts up the stairs.

She takes out a needle and STABS herself with it. She looks around, blinking and disoriented. It doesn't seem to have worked.

JAE (cont'd)

Fucking *stupid*!

She hurls the needle into a corner, where it shatters, and runs up the stairs, MUTTERING to herself.

From his place at the doorway, Caleb watches her go.

47

INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - MONTAGE

47

TITLES appear on screen: "09:22 PM, April 14, 2034".

Series of shots of Jae assembling the materials for the protective suits and beginning to piece them together.

CROSS FADE TO:

48 INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 48

Jae sits in the middle of the living room. She is using a contraption that is making a NOISE like a blender, and she is stripping down the tungsten rail into thin strips.

Next to her on the floor is her jumpsuit, folded neatly, and clothes that Sophie and Caleb have given to her to modify.

49 INT. - CALEB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 49

Behind her, Sophie and Caleb sit on his bed, watching her through the open door. It is RAINING outside.

Sophie and Caleb are speaking in whispers; they don't want Jae to overhear.

CALEB

(*Watching Jae.*)

Soph, are we really going to go through with this?

SOPHIE

How can we not?

CALEB

What do we know about her? She knows everything about us, but...

At that moment, the SOUND from Jae's machine winds down. In the silence, Caleb gets up and shuts the door.

CUT TO:

50 INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 50

Jae hears the SOUND of the door closing behind her. Her face changes subtly, but she just keeps working.

51 INT. - CALEB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 51

CALEB

...but why did she really come back? Why does she want to change the past so much?

SOPHIE

She wants to have the chance - the *ability* to make the right choices. She's trying to free us from the Influence.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Yeah. "The Influence."

SOPHIE

(*Noticing his tone.*)

What?

CALEB

The Influence isn't real. It's code for people who don't want to take responsibility for their actions. What is so terrible about this universe that makes you want to change it?

SOPHIE

(*Slowly.*)

I create the Influence the first time I time travel.

CALEB

I thought all you ever wanted was to be an aeonaut?

SOPHIE

Not like this! I want to change the world for the *better*. I want to be someone who matters, not...

She trails off and makes a halfhearted gesture at herself.

CALEB

When did you become so unhappy?

SOPHIE

Oh come on, Caleb. Don't you wish you had the power to change things?

CALEB

Sure, but...things are the way they are because of choices we made.

SOPHIE

What if we *didn't* make them?

CALEB

I think you would love to believe that because it makes you not guilty. If you mess up, it wasn't your fault. I mean, the two of you, you're just unbelievable. You think being in a new universe will help, but it won't.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

But then things would happen  
because of *us*, not because of some  
external force!

CALEB

Sophie, if you want to change your  
future so much, then change it!

SOPHIE

It isn't that easy.

CALEB

*(Softly, taking her hand.)*  
Maybe it can be.

Sophie looks up into his eyes.

CALEB (cont'd)

What are you afraid of?

Sophie opens her mouth to answer, but can't find the words.  
They look at each other for a long moment; then she leans  
forward and KISSES him.

For a moment, Caleb is too surprised to respond; then  
instinct takes over, and he puts his arms around Sophie's  
neck. She pulls him down on the bed.

Still entwined in the kiss, he takes off her shirt. She  
starts unbuttoning his shirt too, then she seems to come to  
herself and opens her eyes. Caleb senses a shift in mood.

Sophie sits up. She is flustered, not thinking straight.  
Caleb sits up as well.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done  
that.

CALEB

Why is this happening now? Why not  
three years ago? Why not *ten* years  
ago?

SOPHIE

*(Scrubbing her hands over her  
face in anxiety.)*  
That was a mistake. We can't do  
this to Carla, and I'm never home,  
I work 80 hour weeks, and the rest  
of the time I'm studying or  
commuting. And you, you have to  
publish your theory -

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

You really don't think we could do all that and be together?

Beat.

SOPHIE

I can't ask you for this, Caleb.

CALEB

You're not asking me. I'm asking you. Is this what you want?

SOPHIE

It would be unfair. We could never devote enough time to our work.

CALEB

Screw the work, Sophie. Let's give ourselves this chance. I would torch my dissertation if it meant being with you.

He offers her a smile. Sophie considers this, and it seems, for a moment, that she is on the verge of smiling back.

But she waits too long, and Caleb realizes something:

CALEB (cont'd)

But you wouldn't.

SOPHIE

What?

CALEB

That lunatic -

*(He nods towards the living room, indicating Jae.)*

- knows about my theory, which means I don't drop it. I keep going and get published, and that's because we don't end up together.

SOPHIE

It doesn't mean all of that!

CALEB

You just made the argument that it does. So which is it? Look me in the eye and be honest with me for once. Would you give up your work to try to make us work?

Sophie is silent. Caleb NODS.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB (cont'd)

Then that's our answer. We go back to doing what we do, and we forget this conversation ever happened.

He stands up and starts putting his shirt back on.

SOPHIE

Wait, if we end up in a different -

CALEB

*(Interrupting, angry now.)*

It's not gonna be any different, Sophie. You are who you are.

He crosses to the door and opens it, leaving Sophie alone.

52 INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 52

Jae listens as Caleb exits the room and crosses out of frame. There is the SOUND of the door opening and closing, but she doesn't stop him leaving. Sophie is also visible through Caleb's open door in the background, out of focus.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 53

CLOSE UP on Jae injecting herself with more serum.

TITLES appear on screen: "06:33 PM, April 15, 2034".

The sun is setting; it is the following day, and Sophie and Jae are ready to go.

Jae is in her jumpsuit. Sophie is dressed in black pants and a zip-up jacket, both of which are lined with the protective compound. She has a backpack on her shoulder, and is stuffing her lead-lined helmet in amidst provisions.

Caleb comes out of the front door. He doesn't look ready.

SOPHIE

Where's your gear?

CALEB

I'm not going. I'd rather stay in *this* universe and get published than try my luck in another one.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

Caleb, if this is because you're angry with me -

CALEB

(*Coldly.*)

It's not. It's because I don't believe any of this paradox stuff. I think we make our own futures, and therefore, our own choices.

He looks at Jae accusingly.

CALEB (cont'd)

And I think that you, in particular, make poor ones.

SOPHIE

If the future has happened already, then how can you reconcile that belief with *this* one?

CALEB

The future is a direct result of the choices we make.

(*To Jae.*)

So I'm choosing not to have anything else to do with you.

JAE

Well, if you don't want to come, I won't make you.

SOPHIE

What?! You can't -

JAE

It doesn't matter what he does. He ends up at the particle accelerator with us anyway.

CALEB

You are a nihilist and you are wrong. About *everything*.

He storms away from them.

SOPHIE

I - I have to go after him.

JAE

Don't waste your energy. No matter what we do, he'll end up exactly where he's supposed to be.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE  
He's really upset.

JAE  
But he will come back.

Sophie looks after Caleb's retreating form.

54

INT. - CALEB'S CAR - NIGHT

54

Sophie and Jae drive towards the city.

JAE  
It won't do you any good to worry.  
Everything works out.

SOPHIE  
Up until it doesn't.

JAE  
But we're going to change that.

SOPHIE  
Maybe it isn't worth the risk.

JAE  
Well, I could let you go home if  
you like. I mean, that's not what  
happens, but even if it was, you'd  
end up right where the Influence  
wants you to be, which is in that  
accelerator room in -  
(*She checks her watches.*)  
- eight hours, 25 minutes and 47  
seconds.

SOPHIE  
Has it ever occurred to you that  
you're playing right into the  
Influence's plan?

JAE  
Of course it's occurred to me. It's  
a given fucking fact, Sophie.

SOPHIE  
Well, what if you did something  
different right now? What if you  
*did* stop the car?

(CONTINUED)

JAE

Stopping the car is not a great way  
to change the defining moment.

SOPHIE

But by definition, wouldn't doing  
something different change the  
future?

JAE

(*Fed up.*)

Fine, let's stop the car. Sure.

With a SCREECH of tires, Jae swerves to the side of the  
road. An ANGRY HORN sounds behind her, and Sophie GASPS.

Jae presses a button, and the passenger side door pops open.

JAE (cont'd)

Get out. You can walk to the city,  
you can walk home, or you can sit  
your ass down right here and get  
murdered by a hobo. Your choice. We  
just changed the future.

SOPHIE

(*Excited.*)

Wait...did we really?

JAE

Of course not, idiot! I remember  
this. I know what happens next, I  
know what you *should* do, and I know  
what you're *going* to do, because I  
know exactly what's running through  
your mind.

SOPHIE

You don't know what's best for me.  
You don't know what I'm thinking!

JAE

Yeah? Then prove me wrong. What's  
it gonna be?

Sophie hesitates; then she gets out of the car. Jae doesn't  
protest, and Sophie stops.

SOPHIE

Wait - is this what I end up doing?

(CONTINUED)

JAE

You tell me. It's another  
experiment in causality. You do  
whatever the fuck you feel like.

Sophie glares at her; then she decisively sits back down  
inside the car.

SOPHIE

I don't want to be filled with  
doubt for the rest of my life.

Jae doesn't respond; she puts the car back in drive and  
peels off onto the road.

The car speeds away into the night.

55

EXT. - A QUEENS STREET - NIGHT

55

Caleb is walking down the sidewalk. He is so distracted that  
he doesn't even notice Tanaka, who is walking his dog down  
the street, headed towards Caleb.

TANAKA

Caleb?

Caleb is jolted out of his reverie. He stops and looks up.

CALEB

Professor Tanaka.

TANAKA

What the hell are you doing out  
here?

CALEB

I live here. We've been neighbors  
for years.

TANAKA

Are you feeling all right? Can you  
remember how you got here?

Tanaka takes a step towards him, and Caleb starts to sense  
that there is something going on.

CALEB

*(Slowly.)*

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

TANAKA

It's okay. We're gonna get you back to the Academy and we're gonna take care of you.

Tanaka presses his earpiece phone and then reaches out to take Caleb by the elbow.

TANAKA (cont'd)

You have any more nose bleeds?

CALEB

What -

TANAKA

*(Speaking to the phone.)*

José, it's Bob Tanaka. I'm here in Queens with Caleb Holman. I have no idea how he got out, but...

Beat.

TANAKA (cont'd)

What do you mean, Caleb's still with you?

Caleb, sensing trouble, suddenly BOLTS. He tears away from Tanaka and starts sprinting back down the sidewalk.

TANAKA (cont'd)

Hey!

CUT TO:

56 EXT. - THE STREET - CONTINUOUS 56

A shot of Caleb sprinting as fast as he can away from Tanaka.

57 EXT. - ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES - NIGHT 57

Sophie and Jae head to the entrance. They are wearing the protective helmets they made so that the security cameras won't see them.

They press up against the marble wall next to the keypad that will open the side employee door, off the main street.

JAE

You bring your passkey?

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

Yeah, but you also need codes. I'm not at that level of authorization.

Jae taps the device on her right wrist. It BEEPS and WHIRS, and she quickly finds the information she needs:

JAE

2-1-5-2. Type it in!

Sophie fumbles in her pocket for her passkey. She swipes it over the electronic keypad, and a YELLOW LIGHT appears. Then she types in 2-1-5-2. With a BEEP, the light turns GREEN and there is a CLICK, indicating the doors have unlocked.

Jae pushes Sophie inside and follows quickly.

58

INT. - ACADEMY FOR TEMPORAL SCIENCES - CONTINUOUS

58

Sophie and Jae walk down a hallway that leads into the main lobby. At the end of the hall is the retina scanner.

Sophie slows down. She takes off her helmet. Jae pushes past her and continues towards the device.

SOPHIE

Wait, this scans your retina and when you pass through, it reads your DNA or something. I don't know how it works. But I know that you need to be in the system for it to not...you know, laser you to death.

JAE

Relax.

Jae also removes her helmet. She goes over to the scanner and places her blind eye in front of it.

A RED LIGHT scans the eye, and without a moment's hesitation, Jae turns and walks through the laser light that blocks the way into the entry lobby.

JAE (cont'd)

This eye is new -

*(She indicates her good eye.)*

- but this...

*(She indicates her blind eye.)*

This has been in the system for years.

Sophie steps forward to have her eye scanned, then passes through the red laser light to join Jae in the lobby.

59

INT. - THE ACADEMY ENTRY LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

59

They are in a vast marble room lined with elevators on one wall. Jae makes her way towards these, with no apparent worry of being seen by security cameras or guards.

SOPHIE

Careful! What if we're seen?

JAE

We don't get seen.

SOPHIE

But the security cameras -

JAE

It's Sunday. That means there's maintenance tonight and the cameras are offline. I know what I'm doing, okay? I remember how this pans out. So don't get cute and think you know better than me.

SOPHIE

If we're stuck in this together, it wouldn't kill you to be a little nicer.

JAE

*(Already walking away.)*

You want to find a nice version of me, look in a different fucking universe.

Sophie glares at her, but hurries across the floor to the elevator bay. Jae punches the down button repeatedly.

SOPHIE

I'm starting to think Caleb was right about you.

JAE

*(Snappishly.)*

Caleb's always right.

There is a DING, and one set of doors slides open. The two walk over and enter the elevator.

60

INT. - ACADEMY BASEMENT - NIGHT

60

Sophie and Jae exit the elevator and walk into a warehouse-type room. They cross about halfway through the room before Jae nonchalantly takes Sophie's arm and steers her behind a large stack of crates to hide.

SOPHIE

What -

JAE

*(Whispering.)*

You're about to freak out. This is going to be a shock, so...

She trails off, and a moment later, Sophie sees why. FOOTSTEPS are heard off screen.

A group of lab technicians wearing protective haz-mat suits are striding across the room. They are wheeling along two people in wheelchairs, both of whom are hooked up to IV drips and wearing hospital gowns, both of whose faces are covered by oxygen masks; beneath the masks, their nose and mouth areas are caked in dried blood from nose bleeds.

The people in the wheelchairs are Caleb and Sophie. In addition to the bloody nose, Caleb also appears to have a broken hand. It is heavily bandaged.

Jae covers Sophie's mouth just in time to muffle a SCREAM.

SOPHIE

*(Pulling her hand away.)*

That was Caleb! And me! How is that me?

JAE

Because we're still in the universe in which you end up going back in time. That -

She points to wheelchair-Sophie, who is now being wheeled around a corner and out of sight.

JAE (cont'd)

- is you from about three days in your personal, linear future.

SOPHIE

*(Shaken.)*

Why was I bleeding?

(CONTINUED)

JAE

You get brain damage from exposure to the particle field in the accelerator.

SOPHIE

If I'm brain damaged, how do I become an aevonaut?

Jae pulls out another needle from her jumpsuit.

JAE

This is a serum they develop one month from now. It acts as a defibrillator for your brain. It forces your synapses to start making connections again. Once you get it in your system, if you get a memory jog, you can start remembering stuff. It takes you five years to become fully functional, because this first treatment was so delayed.

SOPHIE

But if they haven't invented it yet, how do I save myself from getting brain damage now?

CUT TO:

61 INT. - THE ACADEMY ENTRY LOBBY - NIGHT

61

The main doors burst open, and a group of Academy SECURITY GUARDS, all wearing radiation suits, march Caleb into the building. Tanaka is with them, wearing a gas mask.

Caleb is restrained with a straight jacket, but is still fighting to get away.

CALEB

Let me go! You have no right to detain me -

TANAKA

Calm down. None of us understand what's going on yet, but I promise everything will be fine.

From outside the door, SOUNDS of a scuffle and loud, upset VOICES can be heard. They grow louder and louder until the door bursts open, and Caleb is brought into the room.

CALEB

I will sue this institution and every individual working in it -

TANAKA

*(To the guards.)*

Secure him.

The security guard NODS as he forces Caleb down onto a metal table and straps him onto it.

The security guards finish with Caleb and they turn to leave. He SCREAMS in fury and yells out after them:

CALEB

Tanaka, I swear if you shut that door on me -

TANAKA

We're going to run some diagnostics and check the accelerator. If everything goes well...

*(He takes off the gas mask and smiles.)*

...then we may have just made the most important discovery in the history of the universe.

The guards exit, and the metal door slides shut.

CALEB

Don't walk away from me! You can't do this!

No response. Caleb looks around, and for the first time he realizes he's not alone in the room.

He sees Sophie and himself, lying on hospital beds, hooked up to their IVs and various machines. Their faces are clean, having been washed before Caleb was brought in.

CALEB (cont'd)

*(Whispering.)*

Sophie?

Sophie is non-responsive. A small trickle of blood starts dribbling out of her left nostril.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB (cont'd)  
Sophie! Can you hear me?

There is a moment of silence. Then, the metal door slides open and two suited LAB TECHNICIANS enter the room. They walk over to the incapacitated Sophie and Caleb.

CALEB (cont'd)  
Hey! Is she all right?

No response. One of the technicians draws a needle and takes a blood sample from Sophie's nose.

CALEB (cont'd)  
I'm talking to you!

The lab technician looks up at him briefly; then goes back to sampling the blood. Caleb is silent for a moment; then he starts COUGHING.

CALEB (cont'd)  
I think something's wrong.

The technicians continue to ignore him. He GROANS in pain.

CALEB (cont'd)  
Something's wrong with my stomach!  
Help me! *Please!*

Finally, his cries force the technicians into action. They go over to him; one technician starts unbuckling him from the metal table, the other leans over him. Caleb COUGHS and starts GASPING, as if he can't breathe.

LAB TECHNICIAN #2  
(*Pressing a communications  
button on his suit.*)  
Get a respirator in here!

The technicians lean him upright, remove his arms from the jacket sleeves and lay him back down. The first one rolls up his shirt and prods at Caleb's abdomen.

LAB TECHNICIAN #1  
Does this hurt?

Caleb is quiet for a moment; then without warning, one of his free arms shoots up, and he PUNCHES the first lab technician. The man falls to the floor.

The second lab technician tries to scramble away, but Caleb leaps up and YANKS the man backwards, and his head SLAMS against the metal table. He is knocked unconscious.

(CONTINUED)

Meanwhile, the first lab technician has gotten his feet under him and is trying to escape, heading for the door.

LAB TECHNICIAN #1 (cont'd)  
(*Pressing his communications  
button.*)

Subject has escaped restraints -

Caleb kicks off the straight jacket and LEAPS over the table. He grabs the man and PUNCHES him in the face again. The plastic visor of the mask CRACKS under the force of the impact, and the man goes limp, unconscious.

Caleb drops him and doubles up over his hand, which has been broken from the impact. However, there isn't much time for him to rest, because he hears SHOUTS from the hall.

He stumbles to the door. There is a keypad on this side of the door as well. With his good hand, Caleb types in a code, and a RED LIGHT appears above the keypad.

Caleb slumps against the wall. Outside, he can hear BANGING on the door.

TANAKA (V.O.)  
(*Muffled.*)  
Caleb, open the door!

Caleb shoves himself off the wall and walks over to Sophie. He looks down at her and tenderly brushes a strand of hair away from her forehead.

CALEB  
I'm sorry. I should have come with  
you. I tried to change things,  
but...here we are.

Then he looks up at the other body: his own body.

The sight of the nose bleeds jogs something in Caleb's memory. He slowly reaches into his back pocket and draws out the needles Jae gave him on the night she arrived.

There is a louder BANG from outside, and Caleb glances over his shoulder at the door. He shakes his head, then uncaps one of the needles and inserts it into Sophie's IV drip.

CALEB (cont'd)  
Please let this work.

Once the needle is empty he proceeds to his own bedside.

He stares down at his future self. The moment of consideration is cut short by another BANG outside, and a loud electronic BEEP from the keypad.

Caleb injects the second needle's serum into his own IV, then glances around the room for an exit and spies something. As he goes towards it, he hears a SOUND from Sophie. He stops by her bedside.

Sophie's eyelids flutter, and she BLINKS and looks up at Caleb. He SMILES, thankful that whatever he did worked.

He reaches for Sophie's hand with his good one. After a moment, her fingers twitch, and she squeezes his hand back.

Another BEEP jolts Caleb into action. He leaves Sophie, goes over to one of the technicians, and fishes out a STUN GUN from the man's belt, preparing himself.

63 INT. - OUTSIDE THE EXPERIMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS 63

Tanaka and two other SCIENTISTS are outside the door. One of them is fiddling with the keypad on the outside.

Also standing beside them are two SECURITY GUARDS, both wearing gas masks.

SCIENTIST

We're in!

A GREEN LIGHT appears above the keypad, and the metal door slides open. Tanaka and the others stream into the room.

64 INT. - ACADEMY LAB EXPERIMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS 64

Inside, they see future-Sophie and future-Caleb lying on their tables. Of present-Caleb, there is no sign.

TANAKA

Where did he go?

SCIENTIST

Sir?

Tanaka looks at the scientist, who points upwards. Above Sophie's bed, there is an air vent which is hanging open.

Tanaka runs his hands through his hair, anxious and aggravated. He turns to the wall where there is an emergency code button, lifts the glass covering it, and SLAMS it. RED LIGHTS begin flashing.

65 INT. - HALLWAY IN THE ACADEMY - NIGHT 65

Sophie and Jae race through the halls. The RED LIGHTS are flashing outside, and an ALARM begins to sound.

They round a corner, and Jae pulls Sophie into the shadows just in time to allow a unit of security guards to pass.

66 INT. - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE ACCELERATOR - CONTINUOUS 66

Another group of security guards runs past the doors to the accelerator.

As soon as they're gone, Sophie and Jae slip out from behind some crates and cross the hall.

Sophie swipes her passkey in front of the keypad, and a YELLOW light appears. Jae punches in 2-1-5-2, and the light turns GREEN. The doors slide open.

67 INT. - PARTICLE ACCELERATOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS 67

Inside, Jae goes to the keypad on the other side of the doors. She types in the override code, and then a longer and more complicated code.

The doors slide shut, and a BUZZER SOUNDS. The HAZARD CONTAINMENT doors lower into the floor.

SOPHIE

What the hell? You just locked everyone out!

JAE

Indeed I did.

SOPHIE

Then how does Caleb get in?

Jae SHRUGS. She reaches into her pocket...but she is out of needles. Her face pales, and she begins checking her other pockets...but she is out of serum.

JAE

*(Whispering.)*

I don't remember.

As if in a trance, she walks past Sophie to the control room. Sophie, outraged, follows her.

68 INT. - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

68

Jae sits at the desk and presses a large RED BUTTON.

The computer HUMS to life, and outside, the particle accelerator starts GLOWING BLUE, cycling on.

She tries to sync her watch with the accelerator computer, but an ERROR MESSAGE flashes on screen: ERROR CODE 815: COMMAND NOT RECOGNIZED. MANUAL SYNC REQUIRED.

JAE

*(To herself, frightened and angry.)*

What the fuck. What the fucking shit! Goddamned shitty past technology bullshit -

She stands to go outside to the accelerator to manually sync the countdown, but Sophie blocks her way.

SOPHIE

If you don't remember, then how can you know if Caleb even comes back?

JAE

Because I remember what happens after the defining moment.

SOPHIE

Oh yeah? And what's that?

Jae looks over at the accelerator through the protective glass window of the control room. It glows brighter each passing moment.

JAE

Something goes wrong, and you time-travel. You and Caleb wake up three days ago...

CUT TO:

69 INT. - PARTICLE ACCELERATOR ROOM - NIGHT

69

TITLES appear on screen: "08:34 PM, April 13, 2034".

The scene FADES UP, overexposed and high-contrast. The SOUND is MUTED and has an echo-y effect. Sophie and Caleb are lying on the floor, both unconscious.

The color and SOUND begins to return to the scene, and the washed-out, over-exposed feeling fades.

(CONTINUED)

Beyond the two bodies, the hazard containment doors open, and a number of scientists and technicians stream in.

LAB TECHNICIAN #1  
Code 18! We've got radiation levels  
off the charts!

LAB TECHNICIAN #2  
*(Trying to get a response from  
Caleb.)*  
Hello? Can you hear me?

LAB TECHNICIAN #1  
Get those two into quarantine!

70

INT. - ACADEMY LAB EXPERIMENT ROOM - NIGHT

70

Sophie and Caleb are rushed into a lab room. They are placed on gurneys and hooked up to machines and oxygen masks.

Tanaka hurries in, already wearing a radiation suit. He walks over to a MEDIC who is administering to Sophie.

MEDIC  
*(While shining lights in  
Sophie's eyes.)*  
All neural activity for both  
voluntary and involuntary systems  
has shut down. Scientifically,  
they're dead. What happened?

TANAKA  
The radiation alarm in the  
accelerator room went off, and when  
we got in there, there they were.  
The only thing that *could* have  
caused this would be exposure to  
the particle field, but we haven't  
cycled it on in days!

He looks down at Sophie.

TANAKA (cont'd)  
She called in sick four days ago,  
and no one's seen her since. Same  
story with Caleb - he missed his  
grant meeting with the Board.

MEDIC  
What should we do with them?

(CONTINUED)

TANAKA

Contact next of kin and get our lawyers on the phone. We keep them on life support until the families instruct otherwise...and we do whatever it takes to keep this quiet from the media. Understood?

MEDIC

Understood, sir.

71

INT. - ACADEMY LAB EXPERIMENT ROOM - LATER

71

TITLES appear on screen: "01:31 AM, April 16, 2034".

Everyone has left the room; Sophie and Caleb are now alone, hooked up to their monitoring machines.

(NOTE: This is the same scene from earlier when Caleb arrives in the room and uses the serum to re-awaken Sophie and his future self.)

CUT TO:

A hand reaches in and injects the serum into Sophie's IV drip. Then the person who has administered the serum moves through the frame, and can be seen in the background, administering a dose to Caleb.

Meanwhile, Sophie's eyelids flutter open.

CUT TO:

POV SOPHIE

The world FADES UP through Sophie's eyes, though her vision is out of focus, and all she can see are blotchy patches of alternating brightness and darkness.

CUT TO:

Sophie BLINKS rapidly. In the background of the frame, Caleb can be seen crawling into the air vent in the ceiling.

Sophie turns her head to the right. Beside her, she sees Caleb, who is also awakening. He looks to his left, and their eyes meet. Slowly, she reaches out. Caleb reaches out as well, and they hold hands.

The CAMERA remains on Sophie and Caleb, but in the background Tanaka and the scientists and guards can be seen, out of focus, bursting into the room.

(CONTINUED)

TANAKA  
Where did he go?

SCIENTIST  
Sir?

The scientist points to the open air vent.

Tanaka turns to the wall and hits the emergency code button. RED LIGHTS begin flashing. Then he walks over to check on Sophie and Caleb.

TANAKA  
They're awake!

He leans down next to Caleb. He takes off the mask of his suit. Slight recognition registers in Caleb's eyes.

TANAKA (cont'd)  
(*Slowly.*)  
Caleb, can you hear me? Do you  
understand me? Caleb?

Caleb slowly NODS once. Tanaka stands, smiling triumphantly.

Then suddenly, a different ALARM emits a long, harsh buzzing NOISE. Tanaka looks up; all the lights flicker and fade before returning to full power.

TANAKA (cont'd)  
Jesus Christ, what now?

SECURITY GUARD  
(*Listening to his earpiece.*)  
Sir, we just got a report from the  
accelerator room - someone locked  
it down from the inside, and its  
been cycled on with irregular  
settings.

TANAKA  
(*To himself.*)  
This has to be it...  
(*Aloud, to the guard.*)  
Initiate Override Protocol 44.

SECURITY GUARD  
Sir.

He nods and runs out, followed by the second guard.

TITLES appear on screen: "03:47 AM, April 16, 2034".

Tanaka stands there, surrounded by a ground of armed guards, who all have their rifles pointed at the hazard containment doors that have closed over the accelerator room.

At the panel beside the door, a TECHNICIAN is working diligently on the key pad. He has a hand held device hooked up to the pad and is typing in the override code.

TANAKA

*(To the guards.)*

No matter what we find on the other end of these doors, your job is to subdue, *not* to kill.

TECHNICIAN

Dr. Tanaka, the Override Protocol has been successful.

Tanaka strides forward, and the technician steps back. He types in the regular code, 2-1-5-2, and the hazard containment doors slide open, as do the regular doors.

They are stunned by the glow inside, and overwhelmed by the rumble from the accelerator. Tanaka squints in, and is just in time to see the three bodies of Sophie, Caleb and Jae caught in the particle stream. Jae is standing next to the keypad on the accelerator. She looks to her left and makes eye contact with Tanaka.

They hold each others' gazes for a moment before Jae's body shimmers and vanishes. Sophie and Caleb, who are further away from the concentrated center of the particles, shimmer and vanish moments later.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

*(From the keypad.)*

Override Protocol 44 executed.

The accelerator loses power, and the glowing, humming, shaking commotion in the room ceases immediately.

Everyone in the corridor stands staring inside. Tanaka allows himself a small smile.

TANAKA

Gentlemen, I believe you have just witnessed the invention of time travel.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES appear on screen: "10:45 AM, February 18, 2035".

Sophie and Caleb, dressed in hospital gowns and hooked up to neural activity-monitoring devices, are sitting in a white room. A LAB WORKER in a radiation suit walks into the room.

LAB WORKER

Good morning, Sophie, Caleb. I trust you've had your daily dose of serum. Any side effects to report? Do you feel well? Everything seems to be working?

They NOD.

LAB WORKER

Very good. Now, because you've been making such fine progress in reestablishing connections, we're going to step away from our basic program and try something a little more advanced today. Do you know what this is?

He pulls out the SWISS ARMY KNIFE and sets it on the table in front of Sophie.

SOPHIE

*(Slowly, slightly slurred.)*  
Knife?

LAB WORKER

A standard Swiss Army Knife, yes. This particular knife should hold relevance to one or both of you - it was found with you in the accelerator room.

Sophie frowns at it.

LAB WORKER (cont'd)

Do you remember anything about it? Anything else about what happened that night?

SOPHIE

I bought it...  
*(She glances at Caleb.)*  
...we bought it from a store. We were buying it because...we had to come to the Academy...

(CONTINUED)

LAB WORKER

Yes?

74 INT. - ACADEMY LAB EXPERIMENT ROOM - FLASHBACK 74

Once again, the moment when Sophie regained consciousness in the experiment room is shown through her POV.

The moment her brain begins to function again, she sees Caleb. In her flashback, the CAMERA focuses on the Caleb lying across from her on the other table.

SOPHIE (V.O.)

We were here...there were two Calebs...

LAB WORKER (V.O.)

That coincides with our records. Anything else? Anything unusual or anachronistic?

In the flashback, the CAMERA focuses on the needle in the present-Caleb's hand, and for a moment it looks like a connection to Jae has been made.

Then Sophie re-focuses on the Caleb lying across from her. As present-Caleb stands on her table and removes the air vent, future-Caleb opens his eyes, and their gazes meet.

75 INT. - ACADEMY TRAINING ROOM - DAY 75

SOPHIE

*(Staring at Caleb.)*

We were together.

Caleb stares back at her. A small smile forms on his face.

The lab worker SIGHS in disappointment and shakes his head, making a note on the tablet he is holding.

76 INT. - SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY 76

TITLES appear on screen: "02:57 PM, September 8, 2039"

Sophie is in her room, packing her things. Caleb is in the living room.

CALEB

Don't do this, Sophie. We only just got our lives back.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

They *offered* me a position as an aevonaut. No tests, no fees, no theories, no fresh water bullshit.

CALEB

We've been irradiated, we have *brain damage*. What's the last connection you made before the incident?

SOPHIE

It was a bad night at the club. I called you to come pick me up at around 2 AM.

CALEB

And we ended up in the accelerator room four *days* later! What happened during that time? For that matter, what happened for most of our lives? We've lost years we'll never get back because there are no memory jogs we can get. Because we don't even know what we're supposed to be trying to remember.

SOPHIE

I want this.

CALEB

You want to go back to the media circus? You want to be Tanaka's lab rat for -

*(He makes air quotes with his fingers.)*

- "controlled temporal movement"?

Sophie has already packed her bag and is headed for the door. She pushes past him, ignoring his words.

CALEB (cont'd)

Sophie, please. There's only one thing that makes sense to me anymore.

He reaches out for her, but she does not see the gesture.

SOPHIE

I have to do this. This is *everything* I've dreamed of. I don't understand why you can't be supportive.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Because I know it will end badly.

Sophie shakes her head and turns around. Caleb watches as she exits the room.

77 INT. - PARTICLE ACCELERATOR ROOM - DAY 77

TITLES appear on screen: "04:09 PM, July 22, 2057".

Sophie, older and looking like she's had some work done on her face, stands in the accelerator room.

On the other side of the accelerator, another Sophie stumbles out of the field. There is a group of scientists waiting for her.

Instead of focusing on past-Sophie, this time the CAMERA stays on present-Sophie. She takes her helmet off, while in the background, past-Sophie can be seen to step into the particle field on the other side of the room. She SMILES around at her peers, who are now talking over her head.

Her smile fades as she is left alone in the center of the commotion.

CUT TO:

78 INT. - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS 78

Caleb, also older, stands in the control room. He has a hand held radiation monitor which he is watching, his face grave.

The display screen on the device is claiming that there are high levels of radioactivity.

The CAMERA dollies closer to Caleb. His face darkens. He turns and hurries out of the room.

79 INT. - CALEB'S OFFICE - NIGHT 79

Caleb storms into his office in the Academy and sits down at his desk. He presses a button and a large, electronic 3D display appears in front of him. He begins feverishly tapping on a glass keyboard built into his desk.

On screen, he pulls up a file folder entitled "MY BOOK". Within that folder there are files labeled "ANNOTATIONS", "INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS", "INTERVIEWS", "FULL TEXT", "MULTIVERSE", "OMEGA RESEARCH", "REFERENCES".

He clicks on "OMEGA RESEARCH" and a document appears on screen, entitled "THE MULTIVERSE THEORY".

80

INT. - THE ACADEMY BOARD HEARING ROOM - DAY

80

TITLES appear on screen: "03:00 PM, November 14, 2071".

The Board of Executives of the Academy of Temporal Sciences is having a hearing to discuss the ban of time travel.

Caleb is on one side of the room; Sophie is on the other side. Both have graying hair and aged faces. An ACADEMY EXECUTIVE addresses the room, reading from his notes.

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE

Caleb Holman, it is this board's intent to ascertain the validity of your research in regards to banning aevo-nautical exploration before we allow your book to be released to the public.

CALEB

*(Standing up.)*

I'd like to point out that this is a gross violation of free speech and human rights. You can't prevent my findings from being published.

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE

We can if there is reasonable doubt that your findings are accurate. You're presenting a very dangerous concept. You could throw the public into a needless state of hysteria.

CALEB

All I've done is address the health and moral issues of time travel. And, while I would need years to investigate the exact role the omega particles play, it's obvious that the radiation is detrimentally impacting our world on a subatomic level.

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE #2

And you ought to know, wouldn't you, Mr. Holman?

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

What is that supposed to mean?

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE

10:33 PM, April 15th, 2034 - two versions of your person were in the Academy. You took part in illegal, unauthorized temporal movement.

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE #2

Movement which engendered the very radiation you are now fighting to prove is dangerous to our society.

CALEB

*(In a tired voice.)*

We've been through this. I can't remember why I was at the Academy that night, or what I was doing prior to my temporal movement. I've lost all that time.

Beat. He glances at Sophie.

CALEB (cont'd)

There are pieces of the puzzle that are missing. I can't make the necessary connections to figure out what happened.

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE

A great convenience.

CALEB

Are you trying to say I had something to do with this?

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE #2

Ever since that night, the moment aevo-nautical travel was discovered, you have been fighting against and hindering this institution, and now you seek to defame our research.

ACADEMY EXECUTIVE

You must admit, Mr. Holman, that the evidence does not reflect well upon you.

CALEB

What *evidence*? What kind of kangaroo court bullshit *is* this?

*(Turning to Sophie.)*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CALEB (cont'd)  
Tell them! Back me up!

Sophie stands slowly. Her eyes are overbright, and she stares at Caleb as she speaks:

SOPHIE  
We shouldn't throw years of  
research and *billions* of dollars  
worth of equipment out based on the  
unsubstantiated findings of a  
brain-damaged, washed-up scientist.

An uproar ensues. Sophie leaves her seat and walks out of the room. After a moment, Caleb stands and runs after her.

The Board members exchange dark, telling glances as soon as he is out of the room.

81 INT. - ACADEMY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

81

Sophie walks out of the board room and down the hall. Behind her, Caleb emerges from the room moments later.

CALEB  
Sophie!

He runs to catch up with her.

CALEB (cont'd)  
Why are you doing this?

SOPHIE  
I read your book. You tied time  
travel into your multiverse theory  
very elegantly. Congratulations.

She digs into her coat pocket and produces a tablet. She presses a button and brings up a copy of Caleb's eBook. She begins quoting from the synopsis:

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
You "use aevo-nautical data to  
investigate causality and examine  
how a particular eventuality  
becomes real", and you "delve into  
the issues of temporal paradoxes  
and how the omega radiation affects  
us". This book is about me, Caleb.  
Your "aevo-nautical data" is my  
life. You basically asserted that  
all my actions are a result of  
being irradiated.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

First off, the book is *not* solely about you -

SOPHIE

The first time something goes right, that I do something that matters, you try to take it away!

*(Quoting from book again.)*

Blah blah blah, "based on subatomic particle behavior, it can be shown that temporal radiation occurring between the two subjects may even influence which eventuality our reality becomes." Is that it? I've been "influenced" to do all the things I've done? Because none of it could possibly have come from me, right? I'm too stupid to be an aevonaut on my own.

CALEB

If this is what you took away from reading that book, you're crazy.

SOPHIE

Well, if I'm crazy, then so are you. We're both damaged.

*(She pokes her forehead vigorously.)*

We've both been influenced.

CALEB

Yes, we're damaged, Sophie! That is why I wrote the goddamn book in the first place - you're hurting yourself more and more every day, and you can't even see it! I'm not trying to take anything away from you, I'm trying to save you!

He reaches out to her, but she jerks away from him.

SOPHIE

Don't touch me!

CALEB

What happened to us? Where did we go wrong?

SOPHIE

Maybe we didn't go wrong. Maybe we just haven't gotten to where we need to be yet.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

And where do you think that is?

SOPHIE

I know it's not here.

CALEB

All you have is here and now.  
Happiness is a choice.

SOPHIE

*(Screaming.)*

Then why have I never been happy?!

Her vehement reaction surprises both of them.

CALEB

Sophie, maybe I haven't done right  
by you. Maybe there were things I  
could have done to change this. I  
should have told you how I felt.

SOPHIE

Well, do you want to know how I  
feel?

Sophie stands stock still for a moment. Then she THROWS the  
tablet against the wall, where it SHATTERS. Caleb flinches.  
Then Sophie turns her back on him and leaves.

82 INT. - SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

82

TITLES appear on screen: "02:07 AM, November 30, 2071".

Sophie is asleep; she is awoken by her phone RINGING.

She rolls over and presses a button on a futuristic phone  
dock, which lights up and displays the Caller ID: "NEW YORK  
ACADEMY OF TEMPORAL SCIENCES".

SOPHIE

Hello?

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)

Ms. Walters, this is Dr. Hadley.  
I'm afraid I have some bad news.

83 INT. - SOPHIE'S HOUSE - THE FOLLOWING NIGHT

83

Sophie is alone, SOBBING. A newspaper lies at her feet with the headline "PROMINENT SCIENTIST TAKES HIS OWN LIFE", and the tag "FOUND DEAD IN MANHATTAN APARTMENT".

SOPHIE

I made the wrong choices.

In a fit of rage, Sophie stands and starts flinging furniture around.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

(Screaming.)

I made the wrong choices!

She throws her chair at her glass window, which SHATTERS spectacularly. A few stray shards of glass fly back towards her. They hit her face.

Sophie collapses to the floor, holding her hands over her face, now SCREAMING in pain. Blood leaks from between her fingers.

84 EXT. - GRAVEYARD - DAY

84

TITLES appear on screen: "01:44 PM, December 22, 2071".

Sophie, whose face is in a reconstructive brace, stands in front of Caleb's grave. Her left eye is blind. The other eye has been replaced by a new one of a different color.

She sinks to her knees, and with one shaking hand she reaches out to touch the headstone.

SOPHIE

Caleb?

Beat. She starts crying.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Caleb, I...I don't know what to do. I have this - this wound inside of me. This emptiness. I tried to fix it with science, I tried to fix it with success...and all my life I've tried...I've tried so hard to ignore the fact that it was there. That I was incomplete. That I was *broken*. But now...

She trails off. She stands up and backs away from the grave. A crazed look crosses her face.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
 I know it wasn't your fault. It  
 wasn't even my fault. The Influence  
 did this to us.

85 INT. - SOPHIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

85

TITLES appear on screen: "05:19 PM, January 1, 2072".

Sophie, whose face has been surgically altered again, sits in front of a holographic book display screen. She scans Caleb's book.

The table is a light-up tablet screen upon which she uses an electronic pen to scribble notes.

SOPHIE  
 (*Muttering to herself, poring  
 over her notes.*)  
 Maybe if I go back and warn...no,  
 because *if* I go back, that means  
 I've already gone back and it  
 didn't work. I need a clean slate.  
 I need to start over, to somehow do  
 something different. To get away  
 from the *fucking* Influence, which  
*fucking* killed him.  
 (*Looking up at the book.*)  
 C'mon, Caleb. I know the answer is  
 in here.

The electronic display scrolls down at a fast rate and lands on a new chapter: "DEFINING MOMENTS IN SPACETIME".

Intrigued, she scrolls down to the meat of the text in the middle of the chapter.

INSERT OF TEXT:

CLOSE UP of the text on screen: "*If all unique moments on the spacetime continuum occur simultaneously, and the future is a given, does it mean that there is nothing that we can do today to change what happens tomorrow?*"

CLOSE UP of just Sophie's eyes; they widen, and she looks into the CAMERA.

MATCH CUT TO:

86

INT. - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

86

CLOSE UP on Jae's eyes, back in the present - the exact same eyes as those Sophie had by the end of her story. A tear has worked its way down Jae's cheek during the time it took her to explain how her life pans out.

Sophie, meanwhile, is staring in horror and shock at Jae. There are tears in her eyes as well.

JAE

74 years...74 years, and you never once told him you loved him.

She looks at Sophie.

JAE

What a sad life we've lived.

SOPHIE

*(With a shaking voice.)*

This makes no sense. If I get my memories back, why don't I remember you? Or why didn't you remember this? I - we have known everything since last Friday! How do I not manage to realize that everything I do in my life is *WRONG?!?*

JAE

You never get a memory jog for me. The first time you interact with me is a week ago. And the last time you interact with me...is tonight.

Sophie sinks down to her knees.

SOPHIE

No.

JAE

Sorry, kiddo.

SOPHIE

No. I'm not you. I'm not like you!

She stands up again and backs away.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

This is all your fault! You should never have come back!

(CONTINUED)

JAE  
I wish I hadn't.

SOPHIE  
Then why did you?!

JAE  
I couldn't remember that this happened! And even if I had, I couldn't have helped it.

SOPHIE  
You couldn't have figured it out from any of the clues? How about the fact that you teleported back to the exact fucking spot where Caleb and I - you - were sitting?

JAE  
I never went back to that place after the defining moment. I never knew what it was to me.

SOPHIE  
(*Desperately.*)  
How about any time you looked in the mirror in the past five years?!

JAE  
Once the serum is out of your system it stops helping you form connections. I haven't had to take any for decades...until I traveled back to the past. And the first thing I saw after administering the dose was you. Being in that moment, seeing myself, and remembering what I...

She trails off, overcome with emotion.

JAE  
It's a little unsettling, isn't it? To know that every puzzle piece has fallen into place and fitted together just so, to completely and utterly fuck you over.

SOPHIE  
I don't believe any of this. You're ugly and miserable and stupid and a failure! *I can't become you!*

JAE

But you do. How else would I remember everything that went on this past week?

SOPHIE

You're from the future!

JAE

Some random jackass from the future wouldn't know what happened in your personal life. They wouldn't know how you feel about Caleb.

Sophie SCREAMS in rage and lunges at Jae. She catches Jae off-guard and HITS her in the face.

Jae and Sophie topple off the chair to the ground. As they go down, Sophie's elbow HITS one of the buttons on the computer and changes the acceleration sequence.

A Terminal display on one of the monitors flashes:

**>: ELECTROMAGNETIC SEQUENCE HALTED.**

**>: COLLISION SEQUENCE ACTIVATED.**

Jae scrambles up and backs out of the control room.

87

INT. - PARTICLE ACCELERATOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

87

JAE

Don't make me hurt you, Sophie. I'd hate to wake up in a new reality with a punched-in face.

SOPHIE

*(Following her.)*

It won't work, you ignorant, arrogant bitch!

JAE

Now you don't believe anymore?

SOPHIE

NO! Because it's *happened* already! Because you are me, and you're *here*. There is nothing else. This is where we ended up! And you - you fucked it all up! *YOU KILLED HIM!*

She LUNGES at Jae again, but Jae dodges.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (cont'd)

You had a lifetime to remember what  
you did!

Blind with tears, she goes for Jae again. Jae is ready for  
her this time, and she catches Sophie's arms.

Sophie struggles against her grip, but Jae is much stronger.

JAE

You listen to me. This will work.  
We can change things!

SOPHIE

We can't -

JAE

(Yelling.)

We can! I have to believe we can!

Something in her voice causes Sophie to calm down.

JAE (cont'd)

I don't want to be this person any  
more than you do. I have to know  
that all of this...that my life  
wasn't for nothing. If I - if we  
can save Caleb, save *ourselves*,  
then...

SOPHIE

(Dissolving into tears.)

Why did you do this to me?

Beat. Jae lets go of her, and Sophie sinks to the floor.

JAE

I didn't have a choice.

Jae turns her back on Sophie. She walks towards the  
accelerator, which is HUMMING ever more loudly and GLOWING  
BLUE. She goes to the keypad next to the accelerator opening  
and pulls a thin connector cable from her defining moment  
countdown watch, connecting it to the keypad.

She presses a green "EXECUTE" button, and instantly, the  
numbers sync.

Behind her, Sophie looks up.

SOPHIE

I'm going to kill you.

(CONTINUED)

JAE  
(Wryly.)  
Not in this universe.

She looks back at Sophie. Sophie pulls the SWISS ARMY KNIFE that she bought from the supermarket out of her pocket.

SOPHIE  
You and I were damned to this fate.  
The Influence made us. We are the  
paradox. But Caleb isn't a part of  
this.

JAE  
Sophie -

SOPHIE  
Maybe I *can* change the future.  
Maybe *this* is our defining moment.

Sophie raises the knife to her throat.

SOPHIE (cont'd)  
You said your death wouldn't solve  
anything...but if I kill myself,  
I'll keep you from coming back and  
ruining everything.

JAE  
If you can, I won't stop you.

Sophie presses the knife to her jugular. Jae winces. Sophie squeezes her eyes closed, then quickly draws the knife back. She grips it with both hands, to plunge it into her heart.

There is a BUZZING sound, and Sophie's body goes limp. She collapses on the floor. Behind her, Caleb is standing, holding the STUN GUN in his good hand. There is an open air vent visible behind him in the corner of the room.

Jae looks shocked - then resigned. Caleb goes over to Sophie and takes her in his arms.

CALEB  
What were you doing?

JAE  
I wasn't doing anything, she was  
doing it. But of *course* you swoop  
in at the last moment to save her.  
Of course you do.

CALEB

I really thought for a moment you were trying to help - but this...

He stares down at Sophie.

JAE

She was willing to give up her life to save us all. She would have made the ultimate sacrifice, because this is all her fault.

CALEB

No. It's *your* fault. You came here and planted ideas of inevitability in her head - *both* our heads - and that sticks with a person. It's not a good thing to be thinking about. I don't know what happens next, but when all this is over...I want you to leave. Go back to whenever you came from and never mess with our lives again.

Beat.

CALEB (cont'd)

I told Sophie that if she wanted to change her future -

JAE

*(Finishing the thought.)*

She should change it.

CALEB

You're a coward. You're afraid to own your choices...but Sophie's not like you. She's kind and brave, she's smart - but she has no confidence, so she's impressionable. And you are an awful influence on her.

His casual use of the word "influence" has a great effect on Jae. She WINCES, shying away from his accusations. Then a loud BEEP sounds from her stopwatch, and she looks down at the clock. She has one minute left to the defining moment.

JAE

Fuck! You're not wearing any lining!

Caleb looks down at his clothes. His eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

Jae immediately rips off her countdown watch and runs to Caleb's side. In her haste, she doesn't notice that the watch's weight causes it to fall behind her, breaking the connection and stopping the countdown at 54 seconds.

She unzips her jumpsuit and tears it off, trying to wrap it around Caleb's shoulders and head with shaking hands.

JAE (cont'd)

I don't know what happens next, either. I think you were right about everything, and I wish that I'd listened to you. Even if it *did* work, I don't know that anything I've done here would matter. Because I am who I am. So there's something I have to say, finally. No matter what universe we're in, no matter where we end up or how we get there...

Beat; she takes a breath for courage, wasting precious time.

JAE (cont'd)

I will always love you.

INSERT OF COUNTDOWN WATCH ON FLOOR:

CLOSE UP of the watch. At that exact moment, the numbers reach zero.

The watch BEEPS loudly, and Jae looks over her shoulder. She sees that the countdown has halted, and a horrified expression comes across her face. Caleb is also shocked; he can't wrap his mind around what Jae has just revealed.

JAE (cont'd)

I missed the defining moment...

She stands, going back to the keypad. She looks down at her watch and picks it up. Then she punches the keypad in fury, breaking it.

The keypad SPARKS, and the particle sequence activates. Everything starts to become bright, approaching the same over-exposed, washed-out feel of the flashbacks. Jae stands in front of the opening, tears streaming down her face, and looks over her shoulder at Caleb.

JAE (cont'd)

I'm so sorry. For everything. I want you to know that.

She glances to her left. Then there is a bright FLASH.

(CONTINUED)

FADE TO WHITE.

88 WHITE SCREEN

88

Sophie's VOICE speaks over the white, reading the excerpt from Caleb's book:

SOPHIE (V.O.)

If all unique moments on the spacetime continuum occur simultaneously, and the future is a given, does it mean that there is nothing that we can do today to change what happens tomorrow?

FADE UP:

89 SERIES OF SHOTS - MONTAGE

89

Series of shots of Sophie's life: her and Caleb lying on the accelerator room floor; them hooked up to their life support machines; Sophie reawakening and seeing Caleb; Sophie leaving Caleb behind in the apartment; Caleb monitoring Sophie's radiation levels; Sophie walking away from Caleb in the halls of the Academy; Sophie standing before Caleb's grave, Sophie doing research, ending with her reading from the book:

SOPHIE (V.O.)

If the choices we make are nothing more than pieces of a quantum equation, if they are only meaningful in defining a universe and not in defining a life, then what good are they to us? We can't let go of what could have been, and we're terrified of what might be; it is in our nature. And so if we accept that all of this is true, then we all know where our paths will lead us, and we will all reach one inevitable decision...

90 INT. - SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

90

TITLES appear on screen: "09:08 PM, October 15, 2084".

Sophie stands with her back towards the CAMERA as it DOLLIES towards her.

(CONTINUED)

The CAMERA BOOMS over Sophie's head, looking down upon her, and then lowers in front of her so that her face is revealed, but appears upside-down on screen.

The CAMERA ROTATES so that Sophie is oriented correctly on screen. But Sophie is no longer Sophie: she has become Jae.

JAE

*(Looking into camera.)*

I'm going to change it.

CUT TO BLACK.