

THE BRIDGE PROTOCOL

Written by

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EXT. CLIFF EDGE - SUNRISE

Wind prowls the rim of the canyon. Trees cast long shadows across dew-lit grass. The first light of morning claws its way over the horizon.

DAVID DOBBS (35) stands a few feet back from the edge of a cliff. His posture is still, heavy.

He lifts his wrist and looks at an advanced smart watch, where a countdown shows there are fifty-eight seconds remaining.

He reaches into his leather satchel and removes a small object. It's sleek and metal, shaped like the pommel of a sword.

THE BRIDGE DEVICE.

An alloy ring juts from the crown. A one-inch LED screen flickers as he presses a button. A spark builds at the ring's center.

A flutter nearby startles him. A BLUEBIRD lands on an outcropping, feathers lit by the golden rays of the morning sunshine. He stares for a moment, holding back tears. The bird tilts its head and regards him for a moment before it lifts off and disappears into the sky.

He checks his watch again.

...Twenty seconds...

He tightens his grip on the Bridge Device and steps closer to the edge. It's a hundred feet to the bottom. He angles the device toward the canyon floor and presses a button. A beam rips from the alloy ring and fires downward, splitting the air open fifty feet below.

...Five seconds...

He takes a deep breath, finds his mettle, and steps off the edge.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

The room is neutral, coldly professional. A digital recorder sits quietly between them, its display counting down the seconds. Time haunts him.

DAVID sits across from DR. POWELL, 40s, notebook in hand.

DR. POWELL
How are you feeling today, David?

DAVID
Fine.

DR. POWELL
But you're still having nightmares?

David doesn't answer immediately. He's lost in thought.

DR. POWELL (CONT'D)
David?

DAVID
Yeah. I still have the nightmares.
They never caught they guy, you
know? How can you shoot a kid at a
school and just get away?

DR. POWELL
I think that's an important and
justified question.

DAVID
(beat)
Did you know the loudest
theoretical sound at sea level caps
out at 194 decibels? Anything
louder alters the atmospheric
pressure.

DR. POWELL
David--

DAVID
I read once that an Irish woman was
recorded screaming at 121 decibels.

DR. POWELL
That's very loud.

DAVID
Yeah. Very.

David rubs his temple, voice strained with fatigue. Dr.
Powell waits for him to continue, visibly intrigued and
frustrated.

DR. POWELL
David, I know you don't want to be
here, but today is April's birthd--

DAVID

If you want to measure sound waves,
what you really need is an
anechoic chamber. Do you know what
that is?

DR. POWELL

Explain it to me.

DAVID

It's a room with no parallel
surfaces. No echo. Nothing for the
waves to bounce off of. If you stay
in there long enough you can go
insane. Can you imagine? Driven
insane by the sound of your own
heartbeat?

DR. POWELL

David, I'd like us to talk more
about--

DAVID

April. You want me to talk about
April. How I'm *processing*. How I'm
grieving. Yeah. I know.

DR. POWELL

I want you to talk about what you
need to talk about, but talking
about nothing is a waste of both of
our times.

DAVID

This is fucking pointless.

DR. POWELL

It's not pointless. I can't take
the pain away, but we can help you
live with it. You have to do the
work, David. I know you're here
because your husband asked you to
be, but if you're not serious about
it--

DAVID

Do you know what Archeoacoustics
is?

DR. POWELL

(Sighs, acquiescing to the
tangent)

No.

DAVID

Some guy... French, maybe? He experimented with these ancient pots and found that when clay is spun on a wheel and a tool scrapes across it, those grooves may capture sound waves. Just like an analog record, the voice of the person who made it, or the sounds of the room, could be etched into a vase. Imagine that. Some person from two thousand years ago humming to themselves, and their voice is still there, imprinted in the ceramic, waiting for someone to figure out how to play it back.

DR. POWELL

David, this is fascinating but--

DAVID

It's fucking terrifying.

He stops for a moment, turning the device over in his hands.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What if April's voice is still ringing somewhere out there. The shot that killed her? First law of thermodynamics-- Energy can't be created or destroyed. The air molecules didn't just forget. The world keeps the echo. It's still out there.

DR. POWELL

What if you could talk back?

DAVID

I'd tell her to not worry. That I'll see her again.

He looks at the countdown on the digital recorder.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's only a matter of time.

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - RESEARCH LAB - DAY

Glass walls. Surgical lighting. The hum of cutting-edge tech. DAVID steps into the sleek lab like it owes him something. He's still carrying the weight of his therapy session.

A luminous HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION swirls above a round metal table--bright strands twist in midair, dense and chaotic like glowing pasta frozen in time.

At the controls, DR. KELLY RICHARDS, 30s, electric-blue ponytail and sleeves of ink, glides through the interface with surgeon-like precision. She doesn't turn around.

KELLY

David! You're late.

DAVID

(gruff)

I know. Therapy.

KELLY

How'd it go?

DAVID

Same as always. I talk about my feelings, don't feel any better, while a person with a master's degree in a soft science tells me to "deal with it."

KELLY

(smirking)

Don't be so dismissive. It's important to Rae.

David softens.

DAVID

You're right. I know you're right.

KELLY

Well, it sounds like you had a great time.

DAVID

Right up there with a root canal. Or this investor meeting.

(beat, eyes on the
hologram)

Please tell me we're ready.

KELLY

We're as ready as anyone can be to ask for more money to do what no human's ever done. No pressure.

DAVID

Yeah, no pressure. What's the range now?

KELLY

Nearly twelve thousand contact points. From 3433 BCE up to 2345 CE. Verified atmospheres from 1.04 to 0.76, and before you ask, yes, I corrected for elevation.

DAVID

(leans in)

We've got Almost five thousand years. Can we boost the Dev Particle output? Push it further?

KELLY

(eyebrow raised)

You want to push more power through an already unstable medium?

She stares like he's grown a second head.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Sure. Let's rewrite the rules of Newtonian physics while we're at it.

DAVID

We already are. Quantum mechanics doesn't care about Newton, which means...? Is that a yes?

KELLY

It's a "let me see if I can do it without ripping a hole in space-time."

DAVID

I have faith in you.

KELLY

That makes one of us.

She taps a control embedded in the table. The projection flickers, expands slightly.

KELLY (CONT'D)

We might get another few centuries.
But the data gets messy past that.
Power's the limiting factor. We
really need this money.

DAVID

Power is problem one-thousand seven
hundred and twenty. We'll get
there. One step at a time.

KELLY

Yeah, well, now you, oh glorious
mentor and reluctant spokesperson,
get to explain all this to people
who think algorithms are what keep
their social feeds friendly.

DAVID

(grimacing)

Investors are the bane of my
existence.

KELLY

Think of them like quantum
mechanics. Or gravity. You don't
have to like them for them to be
real.

DAVID

That was either brilliant or
incredibly depressing.

KELLY

(smiling)

Both can be true.

Across the lab, the ELEVATOR CHIMES. A group of INVESTORS
steps out, heading for the glass-walled conference room.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Showtime, Dr. Dobbs. Put on your
best "I love capitalism" face.

DAVID

(muttering)

I'd rather explain wave-particle
duality to a group of flat-earth,
antivax worms.

KELLY

Well, these are Billionaires.

DAVID
So, slightly below worms.

KELLY
Come on.

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A minimalist, polished space. At the front: a massive screen reads THE BRIDGE PROTOCOL beside a geometric logo. Around the table sit ultra-wealthy investors--people who could save the world with a pen stroke, but won't unless profit's promised.

ANASTASIA DEVEREAUX stands poised at the head of the table. Statuesque. Commanding. Her tailored black suit and platinum-blond hair frame eyes sharp enough to dissect a balance sheet from across the room.

DEVEREAUX
Thank you all for being here. Your generous and continued funding has allowed us to push the boundaries of science in ways the world has never seen. We're here to talk about our next raise, against a very aggressive valuation. But first, I want you to see how far we've come. Let me turn it over to our research heads, Dr. David Dobbs and Dr. Kelly Richards. Dr. Dobbs, as you know, has a PhD in Theoretical Physics from MIT. He did his post-doc at Los Alamos, and he's authored the foundational studies on particle entanglement--papers your teams have been quietly citing for years. He is, quite simply, the foremost mind on temporal theory.

She shifts to KELLY, who stands beside DAVID.

DEVEREAUX (CONT'D)
This is Dr. Kelly Richards. Caltech's best-kept secret until DARPA stole her. PhD in Applied Quantum Engineering. She built the hardware behind our work. Where Dobbs unlocked the door, Dr. Richards built the key.

DAVID leans toward Kelly.

DAVID
Kels, did you bring the string?

KELLY
Shit.

DEVEREAUX
(dry)
Auspicious start.

DAVID
(to the room)
Does anyone have a shoelace I can
borrow? I promise I'll give it
back.

A sneaker hits the table. ALAN MOSS, casually confident,
tosses a lace.

MOSS
I'll play along. Here.

DAVID
Thanks, Mr...?

MOSS
Moss. Alan Moss. Moss Global.

DAVID
Thank you, Mr. Moss.

David pulls the shoelace taut between his hands.

DAVID (CONT'D)
When we think of time, we imagine
this: a line. Past, future, present
in between.

He crumples the lace into a ball.

DAVID (CONT'D)
But time behaves more like this. A
single thread, folding in on
itself. Tangled. Connected.

MOSS
Like the multiverse in the comic
book movies?

DAVID
Not exactly. Time, from our
perspective, folds, and at those
fold points where it touches itself-

-

DEVEREAUX eyes him at "touches."

KELLY advances the slide. The holographic projection appears.

KELLY

(cutting David off)

By tracking a quantum particle - we call them "Dev Particles", we've begun to understand space and time in a way we haven't to prior. Entanglement keeps time from overlapping, and at high-compression points between threads of time, anomalies form. We've built a model to map and access these touchpoints into a... well, a time-map.

She glances at David, who's staring out the window at a bluebird on a bus stop bench.

KELLY (CONT'D)

David?

DAVID

(snaps back)

Yes, sorry. The Dev Particles let us observe space-time... and in understanding it we believe we can interact with it.

INVESTOR

So, we're looking at a model of how time interacts with itself?

DAVID

Think of it like an MRI with contrast. The Dev particles give us spatial 4D context for time.

The investor looks confused.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Imagine a river. You're on the bank. The past is upstream. The Future downstream. The river curves and snakes and doubles back, but the water flows in the same direction regardless. Make sense?

INVESTOR

Okay, I think I get it. But, what's the value prop here? New particle, awesome.

(MORE)

INVESTOR (CONT'D)
Bleeding edge of quantum physics,
cool. What are we building towards?

DEVEREAUX gives David a reassuring nod. David takes a deep breath.

DAVID
Well, imagine a bridge connecting
two different parts of this
hypothetical river, or like the
Panama canal, connecting the
Atlantic and Pacific Ocean through
a series of locks.

The projection zooms.

DAVID (CONT'D)
At these overlap points, where
space-time touches. With the right
equipment, we believe we can create
a 3D pocket of space through 4D
space. The Bridge, if you will.

The display shows two lines nearly touching and a small line
bridges between them.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Time is always moving, always
shifting, but at these specific
locations, at these specific times,
one part of our perceived timeline
rubs across another we theorize
that a bridge can connect the two.

David looks at the crowd who stares back in silence, trying
to glean what he's implying.

MOSS
You're not saying you invented time
travel? Are you?

DAVID
I wouldn't say that. That's silly.
(beat)
We didn't invent it. It's always
been possible.

Silence.

MOSS
You're telling us time travel is
fucking real? Time travel. DeLorean
and Phonebooth time travel?

DAVID

I am, though I don't think using a DeLorean or phone booth is overly practical.

DEVEREAUX

Show them the prototype.

KELLY clicks forward. A sleek schematic fills the screen.

KELLY

We call it the Bridge Device. It's essentially a small particle accelerator that emits a concentrated blast of Dev particles that is theoretically capable of opening a window from our current point on the timeline, the present, to some other adjacent point on the timeline, the past or future.

Stunned silence.

MOSS

Is it a bridge or a window?

KELLY

We don't know yet. And we don't know what would happen to a person or object crossing 4D space. The Bridge is designed to maintain a bubble of 3D space, but this is all in theory.

INVESTOR

This is real?

KELLY

Very. Micro-singularities form when particles hit light-speed, and seem to drag enough 3D space and atmosphere where we theorize something could pass through.

MOSS

What's the worst that could happen if something tried to cross?

KELLY

I'd say, right now, we don't know. Given our data, I'd say don't jump into 4D space without a Bridge. You'd likely be torn apart at the atomic level.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

The other danger, assuming you could pass through safely, would be what's waiting for you on the other side. One of the oddities we've discovered is that these micro-singularities sometimes create small enough rifts to trigger pressure changes in the Earth's crust.

MOSS

Pressure changes?

KELLY

Seismic activity. Earthquakes. Volcanoes. Even if you could safely step from one part of the timeline to another, you might be stepping into a major earthquake or volcano, depending on the timing of the shifts.

DAVID advances the slide to a section of the time map.

DAVID

The intersections occur at specific times and places, and that's the next phase of our project. We've selected a time in the near future for a test. We open a bridge, send something through, and it should appear four hours later a hundred or so miles away if we're successful.

INVESTOR

When is this test?

DAVID

Nineteen months. The overlap window will about three minutes and connect to a section of space-time thirty miles and three hours away. That gives us measurable results.

MOSS

Let me ask you something: What if you're wrong?

DEVEREAUX smiles -- quietly lethal.

DEVEREAUX

What if we're not, Alan?

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The conference room is quiet. Empty chairs. Half-drunk mineral waters. The kind of quiet that hums after a big pitch. At the elevator, DEVEREAUX walks the investors out, laughing, beaming, but the second the doors close her demure smile becomes an outright grin.

DEVEREAUX

We did it!

She hugs KELLY quickly. Turns to DAVID. He offers a dry nod and a short, awkward handshake.

DEVEREAUX (CONT'D)

There's serious money behind this. I'm talking a \$10billion dollar valuation. They want to all but give us a blank check. The test in Santa Fe's locked in. They want a front-row seat.

DAVID

(arms crossed)

That doesn't bother you? What if they'll twist this into something sinister. Or dangerous. These people aren't in it for the good of humanity.

DEVEREAUX

(shrugging, distant)

They'll sell fantasy. Time travel tours. Do-over packages. Let them. The potential applications are endless. We're standing where no one's stood before.

KELLY

(calm, steady)

Dev, we still don't know what this is. Moss was right. It could be a bridge... or it could be a window. We don't know what it would do to a block of iron, let alone a person. The theory holds, but real tests? Years, maybe.

DEVEREAUX

(grinning)

And now, we'll have the money to figure it out. We can't keep it a secret, David. This goes public sooner than you think.

(MORE)

DEVEREAUX (CONT'D)
You discovered time travel. Get
ready to be damn Nobel Laureates.

DAVID
Or we destroy reality mucking with
things we don't understand. This
isn't a win yet.

Devereaux studies them both.

DEVEREAUX
That's why you two are here. To
keep us from doing something
stupid.

KELLY
(measured)
There's still so much we don't
know.

DEVEREAUX
(exhaling, dismissive)
God, you two could bring down a
party.
(beat)
Come on--let's have one night to
enjoy this.

DAVID looks down. His voice is quiet.

DAVID
I can't. Rae and I... we've got
something.

He turns and walks off.

DEVEREAUX
(calling after)
Something?

KELLY
(gentle)
April's birthday.

Devereaux freezes. Rubs her brow.

DEVEREAUX
Jesus. I totally forgot.

KELLY
He won't slow down. It's like he
can't turn off his brain.

DEVEREAUX

(nods)

Tell him he did good. And if something's wrong -- really wrong with him -- let me know. We have too much riding on this.

KELLY

I will.

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID pushes through the door, goes straight to the sink. He leans hard on the counter, both hands braced. His reflection stares back, his face a mask for the rage he feels behind it.

Grief has worn him down. It clings like shadow--his jailer, his hunger, his youth and ambition now just inmates with longer sentences.

A toilet FLUSHES. ALAN MOSS exits a stall, fixing his cuffs like he's about to accept an award.

MOSS

Incredible work. It's real, isn't it?

David doesn't look at him directly. He keeps his gaze locked on the mirror.

DAVID

We're years away from--

MOSS

(cutting in)

Don't feed me that science bullshit, bro. Will it work? Time travel. Will. It. Work?

DAVID

Yeah. It's gonna work.

MOSS

Can you fuckin' believe it, bro? You just opened the floodgates. Napoleon. Lost treasures. Insider trading before there was even a stock market.

MOSS dries his hands, then claps David on the shoulder like they're teammates.

MOSS (CONT'D)
I heard about your daughter. Real
sad. Total tragedy.

David says nothing. His hands grip the counter tighter.

MOSS (CONT'D)
We're going to make history. Your
daughter would be proud.
(beat.)
Now you just have to finish what
you started. Good work Doc. Woo!
Time fucking travel!

MOSS leaves. The door closes. David stays still.

DAVID
(to his reflection)
I just have to finish what I
started.

INT. BASEMENT WORKSHOP - NIGHT

A small blue flame hisses from a blowtorch. DAVID melts jewelry as gold pools in a crucible. He pours the molten gold into small circular molds with coin-like pieces cooling into anonymity. The leather pouch beside him bulges with weeks of work.

Footsteps creak down the basement stairs.

RAE
Tonight is our last.

RAE (mid-30s) steps into the half-light. Tall, broad-shouldered. His dark hair has grown out, framing a face carved by sleepless nights. Once soft with easy smiles, now weighed by knowing too much.

RAE (CONT'D)
I know why you're doing this, but I
wish I understood more about it.

DAVID
The science part doesn't matter.
You understand the reason. You're
the only one who can understand.

RAE picks up the pouch. Shakes it gently.

RAE
Is this enough?

DAVID
It'll have to be. I can trade gold
for supplies, shelter, maybe a
horse. Whatever I need to survive.

RAE
How long will it take?

DAVID
(after a pause)
Eleven bridges. Twenty-three years.

RAE
(quietly, touching David)
Twenty years. You'll be an old man.
Grey hair and all.

DAVID
I know.

RAE
What about Kelly? Does she know?

DAVID
I don't think so. I don't want to
weigh her down with this.

He melts another pair of earrings, pours them into the mold.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You know why I have to go. She was
our whole world, Rae.

RAE
I know. And I know you'll see it
through. No secrets between us,
right?

DAVID
Never.

RAE
Promise me when you're out there
you find time to smile. Maybe even
laugh.

David finally turns, meets Rae's eyes. His anchor.

DAVID
I promise.

Rae squeezes his shoulder.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The investors came by the Institute today.

RAE

How'd it go?

DAVID

As well as can be expected. They're excited. To them, it's just another means to grow their bottom line. But they can't possibly know. After I'm... gone, Kelly will make sure it's not misused.

RAE

What's next?

DAVID

I have to finish up here and then pack up.

RAE looks at the pouch of gold.

RAE

Then everything's set.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

David moves through the house with quiet resolve. In the bedroom, he packs a leather satchel, methodical and deliberate. He pauses at a framed photo: a candid of him, RAE, and a toddler APRIL. Rae holds April in one arm; her shirt features a small bluebird. They're all smiling. A life frozen in joy. He slips the photo into the bag.

Beneath papers, he finds a worn copy of Jules Verne's "From Earth to the Moon." The spine is soft, bent from years of bedtime readings. April would beg for another chapter--he'd protest, then give in. She always fell asleep ten pages later.

He doesn't pack it. It's not essential. And essentials are all time will allow.

INT. APRIL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room remains untouched. Books still tilted on the shelf. The bed unmade. A slumped stuffed bear. A child's universe, paused. David stands in the doorway.

Rae sits in the dark on her bed, staring at his phone. A video plays.

APRIL (V.O.)
Watch me, Abba!

RAE (V.O.)
Okay, Bluebird! Go!

Laughter bursts from the speaker. Pure joy.

APRIL (V.O.)
Dad, I'm hungry.

DAVID (V.O.)
Hi, Hungry. I'm Dad.

RAE (V.O.)
Oh, David. That was terrible.

The video ends. Rae wipes tears from his face.

RAE
That was a good day.

DAVID
The best day. It's time. I have to go.

Rae looks up. David stands in the doorway.

RAE
Will this work?

DAVID
I don't know.

RAE
What if it doesn't?

DAVID
Then I'll be gone.

Rae rises and hugs him, holding tight.

RAE
This is it, then? I thought we'd grow old together. Live to a hundred. You and April mean everything. Tell me if this can fix it. Tell me you can save her.

David closes his eyes. So many variables. Unknowns stacked on probabilities.

DAVID

If I have even the slightest chance... We have to take it, right?

Rae pulls back, searching his eyes.

RAE

Tell me about the path again.

David pulls a thin laser-etched plate from the satchel. Two columns of coordinates and dates. He hands it to Rae.

DAVID

Analog backup. The first bridge leads to November 5, 1842. Then I have two days to reach a spot near Albuquerque. Eleven total, if it all lines up. The last one--

He taps the bottom.

DAVID (CONT'D)

October 11, 2024. Four days before--

He chokes on the rest.

RAE

All those jumps. All those years. Will I remember her dying? When you fix this... will I know? Are you just going to show up tomorrow twenty years older?

DAVID

I don't know. Maybe we won't remember. Maybe this timeline stays while another one branches. Or maybe it's overwritten.

RAE

And if I try to follow?

DAVID

One device. One traveler.

Rae sags. Defeated.

RAE

Then this is really goodbye.

DAVID

No. It's never goodbye. You're the love of my life.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

That doesn't change. I could stay.
I don't have to do this.

Rae touches his cheek.

RAE

You have to. I love you. Our time
with April was everything. If
there's a chance to fix this, you
take it. You save our Bluebird.

They press foreheads together. A kiss. Slow. Final.
Devastating. David pulls away. Grief rides his every step as
he turns toward the unknown, carrying nothing but hope and
the unbearable weight of love.

EXT. DAVID'S DRIVEWAY - PRE-DAWN

In the driveway, DAVID reaches for the car door handle.

A GUNSHOT cracks through the quiet. A flash bursts from
April's bedroom window. Sound rebounds off stucco and
sidewalk--hollow, final. The echo haunts the still air.

David freezes.

His hand trembles against the handle, slick with sweat. Legs
weak. His body leans into the car for support as anguish
overtakes him. Tears blur his vision. The street warps in
front of him. A sob claws its way up, choking him.

He lets the grief come, but only for a moment.

Then, jaw set, he opens the car door, and drives toward the
future by chasing the past.

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - DARK LAB - NIGHT

David moves through the unlit lab, knowing the layout by
heart. He reaches a metal cage, types a code into a keypad.
The lock clicks. Inside: the BRIDGE DEVICE and a companion
tablet.

A sharp click.

The lights snap on.

KELLY

I had a feeling you might come.

David turns, caught.

DAVID

Kels! I, uh, just needed--

KELLY

(gently)

It's all right, David. I've known for weeks. I understand. April was family to me too. So are you and Rae. I tracked the coordinates you've been compiling. I know where they lead. Are you really going to do this?

He doesn't speak. He doesn't need to. She sees it in his face.

KELLY (CONT'D)

You have to.

DAVID

It's my bluebird.

KELLY

(understanding)

Okay. Tell me what the path is like.

David pulls the etched metal plate from his bag, hands it to her.

KELLY (CONT'D)

(running her fingers over it)

Analog. Good idea. Arizona for a few days. 1768 for... *thirteen years?*

(meets his eyes)

Thirteen years? David, some of these coordinates are thousands of miles apart. How are you going to?

DAVID

I'll find a way.

Kelly moves to a locked drawer, retrieves a small black box.

KELLY

Here. A solar charger for the Bridge. Just in case.

DAVID

Kels, I--

She cuts him off with a grin, then pulls a sleek smartwatch from her pocket.

KELLY

Take this too.

DAVID

What am I looking at? A smartwatch?

KELLY

More than that. It's a wearable interface for the Bridge I designed. The AI's named Jules. I dumped everything into it: LLM training set, protocol, encyclopedia. It has a stars based GPS, magnetic guidance, and an astronomical clock. The power cell will last a century.

DAVID

You're remarkable.

Kelly's expression darkens.

KELLY

If this works, you won't just move through time. You'll enter a quantum probability state. Your presence might overwrite itself. Or fracture reality. If closed loops are real... maybe you always did this. But even then-- I may never see you again. Not this version of me. Not this timeline. Will I even know if you survived the first bridge?

DAVID

You'll know.

KELLY

How?

DAVID

What if we're always entangled?
What if we always find each other?
Maybe it's not science. Maybe it's just... us. We're family.

KELLY

(softly)

That sounds more like faith than science.

(squeezes his arm)

DAVID

Call it whatever you want. I have to hold onto it.

KELLY

So what do I do?

DAVID

Continue the work. It's yours now. The equations. The breakthroughs. Protect it. Investors will come. They'll want to exploit it. You're the only one who can hold the line.

(beat)

Tell Devereaux I forced you. Then live a good life. Don't let this consume you. You're brilliant. You deserve more.

KELLY

(emotional)

David--

DAVID

It's been the greatest honor to be your colleague and your friend.

They hug. Long and full of meaning.

KELLY

Go on. You don't have much time left.

David walks a few steps. Stops.

DAVID

Kels, there's an old oak in the university quad that has been there for centuries. If this works, I'll leave you a note. Look for it. If you find it, you'll know I crossed.

KELLY

And if I don't?

DAVID

You'll know that too.

KELLY

It's been a privilege, Dr. Dobbs.

DAVID

The pleasure was all mine, Dr. Richards. More than you'll ever know.

KELLY

Wait. One more thing.

She removes her diamond studs.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Take these. You can trade them. Or something.

DAVID

Kels, I can't. Didn't you say they were your mother's--

KELLY

Don't fight me. Just take them.

She half-laughs, half-sobs. Gives him a playful shove.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Go. Before I change my mind and tie you to a chair.

He leans in, kisses her cheek.

DAVID

Thank you. For everything.

KELLY

From Earth to the Moon, David.

EXT. INDIANA RIDGE - PRE-DAWN

Wind cuts across a tree-lined ridge above West Lafayette. Frost clings to the grass. A leather satchel rests beside DAVID DOBBS as he crouches near the cliff's edge. The sun threatens the horizon.

Beside him: a journal.

He writes slowly, deliberately. Finishing, he breathes in the cold air, puts the journal away, and slings the bag over his shoulder.

Twenty seconds.

He tightens his grip on the Bridge Device and steps closer to the edge. It's a hundred feet to the bottom. He angles the device toward the canyon floor and presses a button.

A beam rips from the alloy ring and fires downward, splitting the air open fifty feet below.

Five seconds.

DAVID

"We are going to the moon, but we
do not know if we shall ever come
back."

He stepped off the cliff, making peace that this was the end, regardless of whether he would cross through the bridge or have his body broken against the rocks.

Reality cracks apart around him, folding in on itself. One second, gravity owned him; the next, it abandoned him. Colors bleed and twist in shards, breaking apart and reforming faster than his mind could process. Pressure closed in, locking him in place. In a blink he's not falling anymore. He's not anywhere at all.

EXT. UNIVERSITY QUAD - DAY

KELLY RICHARDS crosses the campus quad, her pace steady. Students pass in loose clusters. Laughter and conversation drift around her.

She grips a gardening spade. Eyes forward. The OAK TREE at the quad's center towers ahead. Its roots fracture the earth beneath it. She kneels and runs her fingers along the bark.

She searches for a sign and stops at two carved letters:
DD.

She digs-- first with the spade, then her hands. Dirt collects under her nails. She finds a small cloth-wrapped bundle.

Inside: a RUSTED IRON TAG. The etched words still visible:

"FROM EARTH TO THE MOON. -DD"

KELLY

(soft)
You did it.

EXT. DESERT RIDGE - DAY

A crack of light tears open midair. DAVID drops through it and hits the desert floor hard. The impact knocks the breath from him. He lies still, staring into an endless blue sky. The sun blazes overhead.

He props himself up on his elbows, scanning the high plains. No city. No cliff. Just wilderness. In his hand, he still grips the BRIDGE DEVICE, faintly glowing.

DAVID

Yes! It worked, Rae! Bluebird!
Kels! It worked!

He runs his fingers through the dry dirt, laughing, relieved, euphoric.

A voice calls out--

JAMES KIRKER (O.S.)

You okay, mister?

DAVID turns. An old man, JAMES KIRKER (60s) sits atop a mule nearby, hat low, revolver at his side, one hand near the grip. His face is leathery and sun-worn. The mule stands steady beneath him.

KIRKER

What in the hell are you doing out here? Where'd you come from?

DAVID

(stammering)

Oh, I was just... traveling.

KIRKER

You look like you fell out of the damn sky. What's your name, son?

DAVID

David. Dr. David Dobbs.

KIRKER

Doctor? Out here without a hat, no canteen? What kinda doctor are you?

DAVID

Physics.

KIRKER

That so? Well, Dr. Physics, you're lucky I found you.

(MORE)

KIRKER (CONT'D)

Or unlucky, depending on who you ask. James Kirker at your service.

DAVID

Nice to make your acquaintance, Mr. Kirker. Is there a town nearby? Somewhere I can get supplies? A horse maybe? I really need to get to Albuquerque.

KIRKER

There's a trading post five miles east. Maybe a donkey for sale. Haven't seen a good horse in weeks.

DAVID

Five miles. That's probably two hours on foot. Dammit. What if... what if I buy your mule?

KIRKER

(laughs)

This old boy? Ain't for sale.

DAVID pulls a gold coin from his satchel and tosses it to Kirker.

KIRKER catches it, still seated on the mule. Studies it.

KIRKER (CONT'D)

You're carrying gold?

DAVID

I can pay fairly.

KIRKER

You ain't got no hat, but you got gold enough to buy my mule?

DAVID

How much?

KIRKER

(thinks for a second)

Eight coins.

DAVID counts out eight coins. Holds them up and they glint in the sun.

KIRKER leans forward in the saddle... then suddenly shifts upright, drawing the revolver from his hip.

KIRKER (CONT'D)
Actually... I think I'll just take
what you got. Hand over that
satchel.

DAVID
That wasn't the deal.

KIRKER
And this ain't a bank. Hand it
over.

DAVID, the BRIDGE DEVICE still gripped in his hand, clicks a
toggle.

A PULSE OF BLINDING WHITE LIGHT bursts from the device.
Kirker yells, recoiling, nearly falling off the mule as he
shields his eyes.

KIRKER (CONT'D)
God's teeth, what in holy hell?

DAVID steps forward, bathed in the glow, calm and unshaken,
and snatches the gun from Kirker's hand, pointing at him.

DAVID
You should leave now.

KIRKER
You some kind of spirit? One of
them desert ghosts?

DAVID
Something like that.

Kirker, still astride the mule, scrambles off.

KIRKER
Take it. Mule, gold, all of it.
Just don't curse me.

DAVID
Don't worry. I only curse people
who fail their math test. Run.

Kirker backs away, dazed, eyes squinting through afterimages.

KIRKER
Damn ghost scientist.

Kirker runs off into the distance as David watches him go.

EXT. ARIZONA HIGH PLAINS - DAY

The sun blazes overhead. The landscape ripples with heat. DAVID, dusty and exhausted, rides the mule trotting at a surprisingly good pace.

He wipes a sleeve across his sweaty forehead.

DAVID
(quietly)
God, it's hot.

He tugs the reins experimentally. The mule ignores him and keeps moving forward, determined.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Alright...

He gives the mule a soft kick in the ribs. The animal halts, flicks an ear, and slowly turns its head to glare at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(sighs)
You've got to be kidding me.

The mule lowers its head and starts munching on a patch of grass at the edge of the trail. David relaxes his grip and gives the reins the gentlest tug. The mule resumes walking, seemingly satisfied.

DAVID (CONT'D)
That's how it is, huh? I ask, you
decide? Good to know.

MONTAGE:

- David riding in silence.
- The landscape stretching endlessly.
- Sweat pooling beneath his collar.
- His thighs growing sore. Posture slumping.

EXT. PINE TREES - SUNSET

A grove of sparse pines. David, visibly worn, guides the mule into the shade. He dismounts, legs stiff.

His boots hit the ground with a heavy THUD.

DAVID
(grunting)
That's gonna hurt tomorrow.

He winces, stretches out a leg, and begins setting up camp beneath the rustling branches.

EXT. PINE TREES - NIGHT

The fire crackles, sending thin trails of smoke into the empty sky. DAVID sits on a small log, the MULE hitched to a nearby tree.

He pulls out his tablet, toggling between a time map and a local history readout. He looks at his watch, then taps a small button on the side.

DAVID
Uh, Jules?

JULES (V.O.)
David! Look at you, surviving like a pro. From the data I'm pulling, it looks like you made your first crossing. Not bad for a physicist.

DAVID
Um... yeah. I've made it.

JULES (V.O.)
I knew you would. You've got that stubborn resilience thing going for you. So, what's up? Need help setting up camp? I can recommend a five-star dirt patch nearby.

DAVID
I've got both of those covered. Do you have any information on a man named James Kirker?

JULES (V.O.)
One sec... Okay, brace yourself. James Kirker. Irish-born, American privateer, pirate, merchant, mercenary--and, wait for it--professional scalp hunter. The guy literally got paid per scalp by the Mexican Army. Total nightmare. You definitely don't want him over for dinner.

DAVID

Too late. I stole his mule.

JULES (V.O.)

Yikes. Well, congrats on not getting scalped, I guess? Sounds like you've had quite a day.

DAVID

How far do I still have to go?

JULES (V.O.)

Based on your current trajectory and your intended crossing point, you've got roughly thirty-seven miles remaining. But here's the thing: you're about to enter territory with conflicting historical records. The Mexican Army has documented presence in this region around this time, including some scouts and small detachments. You might want to avoid known trails and stay clear of old forts.

DAVID

Great.

JULES (V.O.)

Also, expect terrain to get rougher. There's a dry wash coming up that could slow you down, especially without four legs under you.

DAVID

So, ride the mule.

JULES (V.O.)

It's better than walking, through your glutes may disagree. Also, If you see anyone flying a flag that doesn't look familiar-- ride the other way.

DAVID

Thanks.

JULES

Anytime David. Always here for any questions you have. Enjoy the time traveling!

DAVID closes the interface.

He glances at the mule, which snorts in response.

He shifts on the log, groaning, then lies down near the fire. He adjusts his coat, shivering, and reaches for a rock to tuck under his head. He rubs his hands together and pulls out a worn photo from his journal. His thumb traces over APRIL'S tiny bluebird shirt. He stares at RAE'S smile.

The mule huffs and pulls at its reins.

DAVID
Hey, stop that.

The mule stills, eyes locked on him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
If I'm stuck with you, you'll need
a name. Something with dignity. How
about... Newton?

The mule flicks an ear.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Copernicus?

The mule huffs.

DAVID (CONT'D)
How about Verne?

The mule yanks the reins free, breaking the tree limb, and bolts into the night.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Hey! Get back here, you dumb...
ass!

He scrambles up, watches the beast vanish.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Fine! Run off! See if I care!

Silence.

He sighs, slumps back beside the fire. He curls up, drawing his coat tighter, and pulls the photo closer to his face.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(softly)
I'm trying. I really am.

He brushes a thumb across APRIL'S bluebird shirt, then to RAE'S eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You'd both hate this. But I'm still
here.

The flames dim. The cold deepens. Darkness settles.

EXT. PINE TREES - DAWN

David gasps awake, heart pounding. Sweat clings to his skin despite the biting cold of the high desert morning.

He blinks, disoriented, expecting soft sheets, Rae beside him. April's laughter down the hall. Pancakes on the stove. But all around him is stillness. Vast sky. Stars fading above as a sliver of light claws into the night.

A soft CLOP. Then another.

The MULE steps into view, looming over him. Its dark eyes unreadable.

DAVID
Great. You're back.

The mule lets out a disgruntled neigh.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Fine. I'm up.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MOMENTS LATER

David moves through the morning with mechanical precision: burying the embers, checking his gear, tightening straps.

He turns to the mule, now officially dubbed VERNE. It stares at him, head cocked.

DAVID
Alright. Let's get this over with.

He swings a leg over the saddle--

DAVID (CONT'D)
(grimacing)
God, I am not built for this.

Verne flicks an ear.

David shifts, trying to get comfortable. He shakes the reins. Verne doesn't move.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Seriously?

He nudges him lightly. Nothing. Another, firmer kick.

Verne turns his head--slowly--and stares, pure disapproval. He sighs. Long. Loud. Theatrical.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Unbelievable. Alright, fine.
Just... go.

David tugs the reins. Finally, Verne starts moving.

EXT. ARIZONA PLAINS - DAY

David rides Verne across the endless landscape, nearing the New Mexico border. Sweat clings to him. The horizon dances with heat. He spots smoke in the distance.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOK - MOMENTS LATER

David crouches behind scrub brush. Below, a Mexican Army encampment sprawls across the desert floor. Tents, wagons, soldiers.

DAVID
Dammit.

Verne snorts. David checks his watch.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Four hours.

He wipes his brow, backs away, and returns to Verne.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Appreciate the lift, friend.

He untethers the mule and slaps its flank. Verne trots forward, kicks up dust, then stops. Turns. Stares.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Shoo! You're free! Go live your
life. Do mule... *things*.

Verne slowly lowers onto his haunches. Tail swish. Blink.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Of course you do this now. You're
the most stubborn damn animal I've
ever met.

Verne starts chewing on something invisible.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(sighs)
Fine. Do what you want.

EXT. MEXICAN ARMY ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Tents rustle. Fires burn. Voices murmur in Spanish. David moves in shadows, slipping between canvas walls. A SENTRY adjusts his belt near a wagon. Rifle slung casually. David presses against stacked barrels. The sentry spits, then walks away.

David creeps between tents, sticking to shadows. Distant laughter. Dice clatter. He uses the noise to cross an open space, ducking behind crates. Closer. Closer.

INT. TENT - MOMENTS LATER

David slips inside, and pulls the Bridge Device from his satchel. He checks his watch.

Less than one minute.

He braces himself. Knees bent, ready to dive. Outside, FOOTSTEPS. Fast. The flap lifts. A SOLDIER enters.

SOLDIER
(in Spanish)
Who are you? What are you doing?

His eyes lock on the glowing Bridge device. Panic.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
(in Spanish)
Damn you, you're the devil!

His hand darts for his pistol. David lunges, boot slamming into the soldier's chest. The man crashes out of the tent.

EXT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

The soldier hits the dirt, scrambling. Fingers brush his holster.

Thunder. Dust. A blur.

VERNE barrels in from the night, wild-eyed. His body SLAMS into the soldier, sending him rolling. David turns. The Bridge Device glows bright. Reality bends.

The soldier groans, dazed. He sees the glow and stumbles to his feet.

He yanks open the tent flap--

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

Empty.

The soldier freezes, face pale. He crosses himself.

SOLDIER
Dios me guarde... el diablo
mismo...

Behind him, Verne snorts. Another SOLDIER passes, uninterested.

SECOND SOLDIER
Buen burro. ¿Lo vendes?

EXT. TIME VORTEX - UNKNOWN

The world warps.

Pressure clamps around David from all sides. The air folds, color blurs. His body twists, stretched and compressed.

The sensation is violent, electric. His stomach lurches.

Then--

SMASH.

EXT. BOSTON - 1768 - DAY

David slams into damp, uneven cobblestone. He groans, breath catching. The air reeks of salt and smoke. Sounds flood in-- shouting vendors, wagon wheels, distant hammering.

He blinks.

Super: "Boston. 1768."

A regiment of REDCOATS marches past in rigid formation. Crimson uniforms. White straps. Boots pounding. Drums thundering. The crowd stills. Shopkeepers, children, sailors watch with a mix of reverence and resentment.

David rises, brushing off his coat. He straightens, tries to blend. His clothes aren't wrong, but not right either. Glances linger. Faces twitch with suspicion.

He crosses the street, eyeing a nearby tavern. A wooden sign swings above the door. He adjusts his satchel and heads for the entrance.

INT. TAVERN - BOSTON - 1768 - DAY

Dimly lit. The air thick with smoke curling toward the sagging beams above. Murmurs of conversation fill the space-- punctuated by bursts of laughter, clattering mugs, scraping chairs.

David crosses the uneven floor, finding a stool at the bar.

The BARTENDER, burly and blunt, sizes him up.

BARTENDER

Afternoon, sir.

DAVID

(clears throat)

Hello. Um, can I get an... ale?

The bartender grabs a mug, pours a dark brew.

BARTENDER

Sure thing. Where are ya from? I'm not sure I've heard someone talk like you before.

DAVID

Oh. I'm from a settlement in the Carib--uh, West Indies. I just arrived.

The bartender smirks, setting the mug down.

BARTENDER

Aye, sailor then. That explains your clothes. Looks like you've been to the Orient, too. Things are a bit different out there. You ain't no pirate, are ye?

DAVID
(chuckling)
Not yet.

BARTENDER
Good. We don't serve no pirates
here.

David sips the ale. Grimaces. The bartender takes notice.

DAVID
Mmm. Delicious. Is there an inn
nearby where I can find a room?

BARTENDER
You looking for a room for a couple
of nights or a couple of months?

DAVID
At least a couple of months.

BARTENDER
Then you'll want the Hopkins House.
Just down past the Commons.

DAVID
Thank you.

The bartender moves on, muttering:

BARTENDER
Too many bloody pirates in this
town.

DAVID
(quietly to his wrist)
Jules. How long until my next
bridge?

INSERT - WATCH SCREEN:

Text flickers on the display:

"Hey David. Scans show me you've made it to Boston! Well
done! Your NEXT JUMP: 13 YEARS, 4 MONTHS, 6 DAYS, 22 MINUTES,
4 SECONDS. Hurry up and wait, right?"

David grimaces again after another sip.

BARTENDER
That's a wee bit different than
whatever you were drinking back
wherever you came from.

DAVID
(smiling politely)
It's great. Really. Craft brew.

The bartender leans in.

BARTENDER
What's yer name, pirate?

DAVID
I'm not a pirate. I'm, uh, Dobbs.
David Dobbs. Professor Dobbs,
actually. I'm a scientist.

BARTENDER
Ah. Good on you. Here to teach at
the university, I take it?

DAVID
Well, uh. I am. Yes.

BARTENDER
An educated pirate. That's new.

David places a gold coin on the bar. The bartender lifts it, eyes wide, and gives it a nibble, seeing his teeth marks left behind.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Why, thanks, fella. For this, the
next few rounds are on me.

DAVID
I appreciate that. Thank you.

INT. HOPKINS HOUSE - COMMONS - NIGHT

The inn stands weathered and quiet on the edge of the Commons. DAVID enters, the scent of old wood and pipe smoke hanging in the air.

Behind the desk, a GRIZZLED CLERK with thick sideburns barely glances up.

DAVID
Hi. I'm told you have a room.

He slides a gold coin across the counter.

The clerk eyes it, bites it.

CLERK

Two shillings a day. This'll get
you... say... a month.

David places five more coins on the counter.

The clerk's hand freezes. He tightens his grip.

CLERK (CONT'D)

You got a lot of coin for someone
new in town.

DAVID

And I'll be needing a quiet place
to stay. No questions.

A long stare. Then a grunt.

CLERK

Aye. Got a room with a window for
you, then.

He grabs a brass key.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Follow me.

INT. HOPKINS HOUSE - ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is plain. Smells like wool and smoke. Mattress
stiff. But the lock works, and the fire glows.

The clerk folds his arms.

CLERK

Here's your room. Don't be getting
into any nonsense. We keep to
ourselves around here.

DAVID

I understand. Thank you.

CLERK

Aye. If you need something, you
know where to find me.

He leaves. The door shuts.

David exhales. Rolls his shoulders. Sits on the bed. Pulls
out his tablet. The screen glows faintly.

INSERT - SCREEN:

"NEXT JUMP: 13 YEARS, 4 MONTHS, 6 DAYS..."

David walks to the window. Boston sprawls beyond.

DAVID
(softly)
I'm on my way, Rae. I'm on my way
to save our Bluebird.

He returns to the bed, settles in, and raises his wrist slightly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Jules... what do I need to know to
survive here?

JULES (V.O.)
Rule one: Trust no one in a
powdered wig. Rule two: Learn to
like root vegetables. Rule three:
Always pay in coin. Avoid credit.
And don't mention electricity.
Ever.

David chuckles faintly.

JULES (V.O.)
And if you get invited to anything
called a Sons of Liberty meeting...
maybe just observe. Quietly.

David lays back, tablet dimming beside him. The fire crackles.

DAVID
Thirteen years.

INT. DOBBS ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

TITLE OVER BLACK: "THIRTEEN YEARS LATER"

Firelight glows against rich wood and imported rugs. DAVID DOBBS, now older, composed, enters the drawing room. The room speaks of influence: books, maps, and quiet power. A home earned by foresight, patience, and knowing what comes next.

Enter HENRY SMYTHE and RICHARD BROWN.

Henry, a free black man in his early 20s, moves with quiet dignity and confidence. Ink stains his fingertips. His eyes are sharp and observant.

Richard, also early 20s, is a Jewish man with a stiff leg and a cane. Slightly shorter, he carries the weight of historical burden with dry charm. He scans every room like a strategist.

DAVID
Henry! Richard! Welcome back. Good
to see you.

HENRY
Professor.

RICHARD
Professor.

DAVID
Do you want tea? Ardith!

ARDITH enters. Older, poised, commanding without trying. She pats Richard's shoulder warmly.

RICHARD
Hello, Mother.

ARDITH
Yes, sir?

DAVID
Could you bring tea for everyone?
Thank you.

ARDITH
Of course.

DAVID
I trust your journey was
productive?

HENRY
As expected. But we have some
complications.

Ardith returns with tea. Richard gives her a soft thank you.

ARDITH
Let me know if you need anything
else, sir.

DAVID
Thank you, Ardith.

She exits.

Henry hands David a rolled parchment. David scans it.

RICHARD

Lord Cornwallis has occupied Yorktown since the first of August. Washington's army is moving now. A battle's coming.

DAVID

You found the coordinates?

HENRY

Yes, sir. Southeast part of the city. Paid a cartographer in Philadelphia. It's within British-occupied territory.

DAVID

Damn.

HENRY

Wouldn't it be safer to conduct the experiment here in Boston?

DAVID

No. It has to be there. Two weeks from now. I leave for the Richmond house in the morning.

RICHARD

Very good, Professor. Shall we plan on accompanying you?

DAVID

I don't think it's necessary, but I'll leave it to you.

HENRY

The roads are dangerous. We'll ensure you get there safely. We'll take our leave.

David watches Richard limp out.

DAVID

Henry, stay for a moment.

HENRY

Yes, sir?

DAVID

Yorktown is under British control, but we'll be okay. I wanted to say that you've been an outstanding apprentice.

HENRY

You gave me a chance no one else would. I'm in your debt.

DAVID

This experiment must succeed. We can't fail. Do you understand?

HENRY

I do, sir. We'll find a way.

DAVID

Henry... I don't know if we'll live to see a free world. But I believe it will come.

HENRY

I hope so, sir.

DAVID

I'm glad to have you on the journey my friend. Get some rest.

Henry nods, exits.

INT. DOBBS ESTATE - STUDY - LATER

David sits near the fire. ARDITH appears at the door.

ARDITH

Is there anything else you need tonight, sir?

DAVID

No, thank you. We leave in the morning for Virginia. I won't be back for some time.

She nods, turns to go.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Wait.

She pauses.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The deed to this house, the land, the will--they're on my desk. If anything happens to me, the Richmond estate goes to you and Richard. This house to Henry. Understand?

ARDITH
Of course, sir.

DAVID
You've been wonderful, Ardith. I can't thank you enough. I couldn't have survived this last decade without you. You've become like family.

ARDITH
As have you, Sir. Are you expecting something to happen in Virginia?

DAVID
Just being prepared, Ardith.
Goodnight.

ARDITH
Goodnight, Professor.

David opens a drawer, removes a journal, and his smart watch.

DAVID
Hi, Jules.

JULES (V.O.)
Professor Dobbs! What can I help you with tonight? Ready for the next bridge? We're getting close to time and you're still quite a distance away.

DAVID
Are we sure about Yorktown?

JULES (V.O.)
Absolutely. The bridge point is right in town. This path gives us a 89.2% chance of reaching 2024 successfully.

DAVID
Any paradoxes? Deviations?

JULES (V.O.)
Nope. Dev-particle concentrations haven't changed. No recorded anomalies. Whatever you're doing-- it's not creating any readable effects I can find.

DAVID
Fascinating.

He puts the watch back into the drawer and opens the journal. From within the pages he lifts a folded photo. Rae. April. He runs his thumb across their faces. He turns to a blank page. Dips his quill. Begins to write.

EXT. RICHMOND ESTATE - DUSK

The carriage rumbles to a halt before a grand plantation house. White columns rise into the humid Virginia dusk.

DAVID steps down. HENRY follows, adjusting his coat. RICHARD eases onto the gravel, favoring his stiff leg.

At the top of the steps waits STEWART, the house manager. Late 60s, Irish lilt, silver hair. Upright posture. Eyes that miss nothing.

STEWART

Welcome back, Professor, sir.

DAVID

Stewart. Good to see you. All is well?

STEWART

The war hasn't found our doorstep yet, Sir.

DAVID

Wonderful. Rooms for myself, Henry, and Richard. And open some wine to breathe for supper.

STEWART

Of course, sir. I didn't expect you back until season's end. Is something amiss?

DAVID

No, Stewart.

STEWART

Very good, sir. Much of the staff are still on 'vacation,' per your orders. Should I send word to call them back?

DAVID

That won't be necessary.

STEWART

As you wish, sir.

DAVID pulls a letter from his breast pocket and hands it to Stewart.

DAVID
Can you arrange for a messenger to deliver this to General George Washington post haste? He's encamped not far from here.

STEWART
Of course, Sir.

DAVID
It's a matter of great import.

STEWART
It'll be done, Sir.

RICHARD
General George Washington? Do you know him?

DAVID
We met surveying land in the Ohio Territory a decard or so ago. It was a pleasant few months.

RICHARD
I've only heard the legends. Seven feet tall. Strong as a bear.

DAVID
(laughing)
Hardly. But I'll introduce you.

RICHARD
That would be a great honor.

EXT. RICHMOND ESTATE - EVENING

The clatter of hooves signals a rider. GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON dismounts with a soldier's grace. Tall, broad-shouldered, piercing eyes. His coat, though dusty from travel, shines with discipline.

STEWART waits at the top of the steps.

STEWART
General Washington, sir. You're expected.

From inside:

DAVID (O.S.)
George, you old dog. You look like
hell.

WASHINGTON smirks, stepping inside.

WASHINGTON
Dobbs! What are you doing in
Virginia? I thought you were
escorted in Boston.

DAVID
I hoped to see you. We're a long
way from that ornery horse in Ohio.
What was his name?

WASHINGTON
Dromeo. Bucked you clean into the
mud. I hope you've learned how to
ride since then. You were one of
the worst horsemen I've ever seen.

They laugh.

DAVID
I'm afraid, horses continue to be
one of my weaknesses.

WASHINGTON
I miss those days. But freedom
isn't won on farmland.

DAVID
General, meet my apprentices. Henry
Smythe and Richard Brown.

Henry steps forward.

WASHINGTON
Are you a freeman?

HENRY
Indeed, sir. An honor.

WASHINGTON
Every man should shape his own
fate. My wife often says the same.
I think on it more than I once did.

DAVID
And this is Richard Brown.

RICHARD

Sir, truly an honor to meet you. I wanted to enlist and fight for the cause, but--my leg.

WASHINGTON

No limp hides courage. Where is your family from? You have a look about you.

RICHARD

Thank you sir. My family is Sephardic. From Newport. Came here in 1754.

WASHINGTON

Your people have shaped this cause in commerce and in conscience. Liberty must reach all who seek it.

RICHARD

We believe in those ideals. It's why I wanted to fight.

WASHINGTON

Then keep believing. The war's not won, but good men will be needed after.

DAVID

Richard, Henry--give us a moment. The General and I have matters to discuss.

INT. SITTING ROOM - LATER

The fire flickers. DAVID and WASHINGTON sit opposite, mismatched teacups in hand.

DAVID

How goes the war?

WASHINGTON

Cruel winter. Little food. Less hope. But the men hold.

DAVID

Still no French fleet?

WASHINGTON

De Grasse keeps the British busy in the Caribbean. But if he comes here... everything changes.

DAVID
And Cornwallis?

WASHINGTON
Dug in at Yorktown. Dangerous.
Greene and Lafayette hold him, but
he's no fool.

DAVID
Enough men? Arms?

WASHINGTON
Never. But we have resolve. With
French help--well, anything is
possible.

DAVID
And if they don't come?

WASHINGTON
Then we bleed him. Inch by inch. We
win this war with grit.

DAVID
Do you think the Colonies will
hold?

WASHINGTON
They're already cracking. Taxes,
trade, the promise of freedom--but
for whom?

DAVID stays silent.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)
I own slaves, David. I know what
that means. How can I preach
liberty while denying it?

DAVID
If liberty is to have meaning, it
must belong to all.

WASHINGTON
Indeed. If we are to build a
nation, we must remember that. So,
tell me, Professor, what are you
doing here?

DAVID
General, do you remember I once
said I'd need a favor?

WASHINGTON
I've never forgotten.

DAVID
In four days, I need to be in
Yorktown. Inside the city.

WASHINGTON
That's no small thing. British
patrols. Evacuations. It's chaos.

DAVID
I know. But I need this. It's
vital.

WASHINGTON
Why?

DAVID
Because something depends on it.
More than this war. I can't
explain, but trust me.

WASHINGTON
This could cost lives.

DAVID
It won't. I need to go in alone. I
just need a little help.

A long pause.

WASHINGTON
For you-- I'll find a way.

DAVID
Thank you, George.

WASHINGTON
Whatever you're after, I hope you
find it.

They sit in silence, firelight dancing between them.

EXT. VIRGINIA WOODS - NIGHT

Soft rain from the night before has left the ground damp.
DAVID steps carefully, matching pace with CONTINENTAL
SOLDIERS ahead. A TWIG SNAPS underfoot. Everyone freezes.

Silence.

They move again.

At the front, a young officer leads confidently: ALEXANDER HAMILTON, 26. Keen eyes, restless energy, sharp mind. Already one of Washington's most trusted.

HAMILTON raises two fingers. Then SNAP-SNAPS.

Two snaps echo back.

HAMILTON
That's our cue.

The soldiers move forward, muskets ready. DAVID keeps close, alert.

They reach a LOW STONE WALL.

From the shadows step two men: PATRICK JONES and AARON GREENE. Both rough-hewn, with the stance of men who know how to disappear.

HAMILTON (CONT'D)
Were you seen?

PATRICK
No, Colonel.

Hamilton nods.

HAMILTON
Patrick and Aaron are two of our best spies. Washington insisted. You must be more important than I thought.

DAVID
How far to the city?

AARON
An hour, if we're lucky.

HAMILTON
This is where we part ways. Once the siege begins, we can't help.

DAVID
Understood.

Hamilton studies him for a beat, then turns to his men.

HAMILTON
Move out.

The soldiers vanish into the forest.

Patrick and Aaron nod for David to follow. They slip into the trees.

EXT. YORKTOWN - ALLEYWAYS - DUSK

Yorktown breathes tension. British SOLDIERS move with precision. Commands echo. DAVID, PATRICK JONES, and AARON GREENE dart through the shadows.

DAVID checks his watch.

INSERT - WATCH: Seven minutes.

DAVID
There. That building.

AARON
Mulligan didn't say half the
British Army would be standing in
the way.

DAVID
Who's Mulligan?

PATRICK
Someone who knows things.

AARON
Don't think too hard about it.

DAVID
Can you get me inside?

AARON
We got you in the city.

PATRICK
Patrol's moving. Aaron, we need to
go.

AARON
(sighs)
Can't go tell Washington I got his
friend killed. C'mon.

PATRICK
We'll get you there.

They slip into a building across the square. Inside: six
BRITISH SOLDIERS prep weapons.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Shite.

A REDCOAT looks up.

REDCOAT
Who the bloody hell--?

AARON
(to Patrick)
You're always getting us into
trouble.
(beat)
I've got the left three.

DAVID checks his watch. Five minutes.

DAVID
We don't have time.

PATRICK
Mulligan's fault, really.

Patrick stands, and approaches the soldiers, his palms up as if not wanting any trouble.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
(Louder)
Gentlemen! Know where a man might
find a pint?

Hands move to muskets. Patrick lunges. Chaos erupts. Patrick SLAMS a redcoat into crates. Aaron moves fast, CRACKING a throat, ELBOWING a temple.

A REDCOAT charges DAVID. Bayonet raised. David stumbles. DODGES. Grabs a stool. HURLS it. The REDCOAT recovers.

DAVID
(Pointing beyond the
soldier)
What's that?!

The soldier gullibly looks up. David kicks him in the balls, then punches him in the face. He drops like a stone.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I can't believe that actually
worked.

PATRICK
Not bad, Professor.

Aaron strips a uniform, throws it to David.

AARON
Put this on.

EXT. YORKTOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Smoke. Panic. Cannon blasts. A suspicious REDCOAT steps into their path.

REDCOAT
You three! Get to your unit!

They keep moving.

REDCOAT (CONT'D)
Oi! I said stop!

PATRICK turns.

PATRICK
(Pointing beyond the
soldier)
What the bloody hell is that?

The REDCOAT turns to look, sees nothing, and looks back. Just as he opens his mouth to say something--

Patrick decks him, before turning back to David to give a thumbs up. Aaron rolls his eyes.

REDCOAT 2 (O.S.)
You there! Stop!

A REDCOAT Commander, pistol draw approaches.

REDCOAT 2 (CONT'D)
What is the meaning of this--

BOOM. A cannonball obliterates him. Pink mist. PATRICK wipes off gore.

PATRICK
Well-- that works too.

The siege of Yorktown has begun.

EXT. CITY CHAOS - CONTINUOUS

Cannon fire deafens. Muskets flash. DAVID pushes forward.

PATRICK
Go! We'll be fine!

David nods and leaves Patrick and Aaron behind the enemy lines of a siege now well in progress.

AARON

What now?

PATRICK

Kill some redcoats, grab a drink?

AARON

Mulligan's?

PATRICK

If it's still standing.

They vanish into the smoke.

INT. CONVERGENCE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Dust and chaos. DAVID stumbles through debris.

WATCH - 2:00

A cannon shakes the room. Ceiling cracks. DAVID claws through the wreckage. He hears a cry.

Under some stairs is a child, scared, the building crumbling around him.

DAVID

Hey. You have to get out of here.
The building is coming down.

The child cries. David looks at watch and knows time is short. He picks up the kid and gets him out of the building.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Run!

The child does so. David rushes back in, pulling out the BRIDGE DEVICE from his satchel, hands shaking.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come on.

He powers it on. The hum sputters. A beam collapses inches away. He presses the activation switch. Another cannon hits. Debris flies.

WATCH - 0:15

The device sparks. A blue pulse fractures the air. Ceiling gives. DAVID JUMPS into the fracture as the world EXPLODES.

WHITE OUT.

EXT. THE GREAT WALL - DAY

Dust swirls in the wind. The unfinished GREAT WALL stretches across the horizon, scaffolding clinging to the stone like ribs. DAVID trudges forward, worn and sunbaked, dust coating his clothes.

EXT. MONGOLIAN WILDERNESS - CONTINUOUS

David crests a hill. Below, a SETTLEMENT of YURTS. Smoke curls into the sky. Roasting meat scents the air. He descends slowly.

EXT. MONGOLIAN VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Eyes narrow. Children are pulled away. Whispers rise. Two WARRIORS approach. Armor of leather and metal. Spears raised. They speak in sharp, unfamiliar tones. David raises his hands. Palms open.

He reaches into his satchel. Slowly. Carefully. Pulls out one of KELLY'S DIAMOND EARRINGS. It sparkles in the sun.

An ELDER steps forward. Long gray hair. A silver-streaked beard. Sharp eyes honed by decades. He takes the earring. Studies David. He turns the earring in his hand. Passes it to a warrior. Still watching David. Then, the elder speaks a single word. The warriors lower their weapons. The elder gestures for David to follow.

INT. YURT - NIGHT

The yurt glows with firelight. Shadows dance on curved walls. DAVID sits cross-legged. A steaming bowl is set before him. He eats hungrily. Rich, fatty meat. Thick broth. Spices he doesn't recognize. The warmth hits his stomach like a promise. Finished, he pulls gold coins from his satchel, offering thanks. The ELDER shakes his head. No payment.

DAVID taps his chest.

DAVID
David. Dave-id.

KHABUL
Khabul.

David points, repeating it. The elder nods. Mutual understanding.

INT. YURT - NIGHT - LATER

David lies on furs, finally at rest. The elder watches him from across the room, eyes curious. David reaches into his coat. He pulls out the worn photograph. Rae. April. Himself. The elder speaks. Low, rhythmic. Words David doesn't know. A question. A statement. Sorrow.

DAVID
I miss them. Sometimes I can't
remember their faces.

The elder replies. Gentle. Reassuring. Unfamiliar. But clear in meaning: *Rest now*. David presses the photo to his heart. The fire crackles. His breathing slows.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MONGOLIAN PLAINS - DAY

SUPER: "Five years later."

The cold morning light stretches over the steppe. Some years have passed, and DAVID, now bearded and weatherworn, moves confidently among the BORJIGIN VILLAGERS. He wears woven furs, his posture lean and hardened by years of labor.

INT. MONGOLIAN VILLAGE - VARIOUS

-- David laughs by a fire.

-- He hauls water with the others.

-- Helps mend a tent wall.

-- David grips a rope tied to a YAK, dragging a plow. The beast jerks forward. David SLIPS, falling face-first in the mud. Khabul, the elder, laughs. David joins him, caked in mud.

He's become one of them.

EXT. RIVER - SUNSET

David stands waist-deep in icy water, scrubbing the mud and sweat away. He exhales, lost in memory.

FLASH TO:

-- April splashing.

-- Rae on the riverbank, laughing.

David closes his eyes. Pain and love etched in every breath. On the bank: a SOLAR CHARGER. His WATCH and TABLET rest beside it. He wades ashore.

A boy, TEMUJIN, around ten, crouches beside the charger, curious.

TEMUJIN
(in Borjigin)
Is it magic?

DAVID
(struggling for words)
Not magic.

TEMUJIN
(in Borjigin)
Ice.

He runs fingers over the dark tablet screen.

DAVID
(in Borjigin)
What's your name?

TEMUJIN
(in Borjigin)
Temujin.

Someone yells from the village and the boy and darts off. David picks up the watch.

DAVID
Jules.

JULES (V.O.)
David! It's been a while, man.
Years, actually. I was starting to wonder if things had taken a turn. Scans tell me you're in, well, Mongolia. Twelfth century. Wild.

DAVID

Search the name Temujin in the
history archives.

JULES (V.O.)

Temujin. Born 1162. Later known as
Genghis Khan. David-- did you just
meet Genghis Khan?

DAVID

Yeah. I guess I did.

JULES (V.O.)

Time travel. What a trip, huh?
David, we're three months from
convergence and eight hundred
kilometers out. Do you have a plan
or need help making one?

DAVID

I need help making one.

JULES

No problem, but you're going to
need whatever the twelfth century
equivalent of Nikes, because it's
going to be a bit of a hike.

INT. KHABUL'S YURT - NIGHT

Warm, flickering light. DAVID mends cloth with needle and
thread. Across from him, KHABUL watches.

KHABUL

(in broken English)
You leave tomorrow?

DAVID

Yes.

KHABUL

How long will you walk?

DAVID

A month. Maybe more.

KHABUL

That is a long way.

DAVID

A very long way.

KHABUL

I have enjoyed our time together.

DAVID

So have I.

KHABUL

When you get there-- what do you want to find?

DAVID

Something lost.

KHABUL

When I saw you, long ago, I looked into your eyes and saw--
(he switches to his native language)
A storm?

DAVID

A storm.

KHABUL

Yes. Storm. You carry much, David. Not just in hands. Here.
(taps chest)
Will you carry it more?

DAVID

I have to.

KHABUL

Some storms must be followed. But all storms end.

DAVID

Maybe one day.

KHABUL

One day.

DAVID

I needed help. You gave it freely. Thank you.

KHABUL reaches across, grips DAVID's forearm.

Silence. Fire between them.

INT. KHABUL'S YURT - NIGHT

David is awoken by a hand over his mouth.

WARRIOR
(In Borjigin)
Invaders.

David nods and gets up.

EXT. BORJIGIN VILLAGE - NIGHT

DAVID moves quickly, eyes scanning the chaos. He finds KHABUL near the central yurt, barking orders.

DAVID
We don't have time to run.

KHABUL
We will fight. But they are many.

David's gaze darts to the nearby hills, the narrow pass the riders must cross.

DAVID
We don't fight them head-on.
(beat)
We split. Hide half the warriors in the ravine. When the riders enter, collapse the rocks. Trap them.

KHABUL
And the rest?

DAVID
Hit them from behind. Arrows from the ridge. Horses from the flanks.

Khabul hesitates--then nods.

EXT. RAVINE - MOMENTS LATER

Villagers move fast, taking positions. David places young men behind rocks, hands gripping rope and torches. Others climb the ridge, arrows notched.

EXT. STEPPE - MOMENTS LATER

The raiders charge through the narrow pass--straight into the trap.

David gives the signal.

Rocks crash down from both sides. Screams. Confusion. Arrows rain from above. The villagers charge from the flanks, flanking the trapped riders with fury.

It's over in minutes. The survivors flee. Silence returns.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Fires burn. Wounds are tended. David sits beside the central fire. TEMUJIN, the young boy, watches him with wide eyes.

TEMUJIN
(in Borjigin)
You knew they would come?

David nods.

TEMUJIN (CONT'D)
You knew how to stop them.

David gives a tired smile.

DAVID
(in Borjigin)
I've seen a lot of--
(searches for the word)
war.

Temujin stares at the fire, thoughtful. David looks down, unaware that history has just shifted.

EXT. BORJIGIN VILLAGE - DAWN

DAVID Wrapped in furs. The air is cold. Fires have gone out.

At the edge of the village, KHABUL waits. He places a NECKLACE around David's neck.

DAVID
Thank you, friend.

KHABUL
Safe journey, Dave-id.

DAVID turns and walks NORTH. The village watches him go. Temujin is inspired.

EXT. STEPPE - DAYS LATER

Wide shots. Rolling hills. Bitter wind. DAVID hikes alone, wrapped in furs. Fogged breath. Every step a test. Nights are sleepless. The wind howls. The cold seeps in.

EXT. PLAINS - LATER

A blizzard. Whiteout.

DAVID stumbles. Peels back his sleeve. His fingers shake. He checks his watch. He reaches into his satchel. Grabs the BRIDGE DEVICE. The hum begins. A shimmer forms. DAVID breathes hard. Then throws himself forward into the bridge.

WHITE OUT.

EXT. SHIP - OPEN OCEAN - DAY

The white out fades into the light of the sun glinting off a vast sea. A sturdy ship slices through the waves. Sailors haul ropes, call out to one another. The rhythm of work is constant but calm.

Among them, DAVID moves with quiet efficiency. His clothes are worn but seaworthy, his face shaded by weeks at sea. He navigates the chaos with ease, nodding to crewmen, adjusting sails, scanning the horizon.

MONTAGE - ABOARD THE SHIP - VARIOUS

- David at the bow, scanning the sky.
- Correcting a course mid-storm, shouting orders.
- Teaching a young sailor how to chart by the stars.
- Repairing a rope with practiced ease.
- Avoiding drunken brawls during raucous celebrations.

EXT. SANTO DOMINGO - HARBOR - EARLY MORNING

The ship is docked. The city wakes slowly. Vendors assembling stalls, gulls crying overhead. DAVID steps off the gangplank, his satchel slung over one shoulder, eyes already scanning the horizon.

EXT. SANTO DOMINGO - STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

David moves fast, silent through the narrow cobbled streets. The sun barely crests the horizon. He passes shuttered markets, stone fortresses, empty courtyards where last night's whispers still hang in the air.

INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

- David navigates twisting alleys.
- Passes a watchtower without drawing notice.
- Enters dense underbrush at the edge of town.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Thick vines. Hushed birdsong. David moves carefully but deliberately, pushing through the overgrowth. He checks the DEVICE on his wrist and it pulses faintly beneath the skin. A private rhythm.

EXT. TAINO RUINS - LATER

A forgotten place, stone swallowed by jungle. Moss blankets broken statues. David steps into a small clearing and powers on the BRIDGE DEVICE. He checks his watch.

INSERT - WATCH FACE: 00:00:03

David braces, then jumps.

EXT. NARROW ALLEYWAY - ISTANBUL - TWILIGHT

David stumbles forward, Revolutionary-era boots scraping against damp cobblestones. The Caribbean heat evaporates, replaced by a clinging coolness. The BRIDGE DEVICE in his hand sputters, humming briefly before dying.

He steadies himself against a crumbling wall, checks his WATCH.

DAVID

Jules. Where are we?

JULES (V.O.)

David! As expected, we are in Istanbul, 1971.

(MORE)

JULES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We're headed to Kathmandu, which,
as said by the incomparable Jerry
Reed, "We've got a long way to go
and a short time to get there."
Want advice on arranging travel?

David presses a small button. Jules goes silent.

EXT. COURTYARD CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

David steps from the alley into a riot of color and sound. Lanterns flicker. Backpackers lounge on cushions. Rock music crackles from a radio. Smoke, perfume, engine exhaust, and frying lamb hang in the air. David blinks against the modern-tinted chaos. It overwhelms him.

He slips into the shadow of a CORNER TABLE, collapses into the seat.

A CHAIR SCRAPES beside him.

MATTY FLOWERS (30s), flamboyant, funk relic come to life, drops into the opposite seat. Suede jacket, burnt-orange bell-bottoms, massive afro, sunglasses.

MATTY
Hey spaceman. Mind if I join?

DAVID
Seems like you already did, but
suit yourself.

MATTY
I hope you don't mind me saying,
but you look like a man out of
place. Out of time.

DAVID
You have no idea.

MATTY
I'm serious! You've got the look of
a guy who crash-landed.

David eyes him, guarded.

DAVID
I think you have the wrong table.

Matty tips his sunglasses, revealing shrewd eyes.

MATTY

Nah. It's the right one. You're on a journey. All roads lead east. That's your next move.

Matty casually pulls a tin from his pocket, rolls a joint, lights it. Exhales a cloud.

Offers it to David.

MATTY (CONT'D)

Want a hit?

DAVID

No, thanks.

MATTY

Suit yourself.

He leans in, grinning

MATTY (CONT'D)

I'll buy you a tea. When you realize I'm right about that next move, you can owe me one. What's your name?

Matty offers a handshake, which David reluctantly accepts.

DAVID

David.

MATTY

Matty Flowers. Been bouncing from Tangier to Tehran since '68. Just hit Istanbul from Amsterdam. What's your final stop, Spaceman?

DAVID

Kathmandu. Amsterdam to here. Kind of.

MATTY

Knew it. And I know We're catching that bus together.

He points to a faded blue school bus, parked nearby. Huge yellow peace symbol on its side.

DAVID

I'm not in the habit of hopping buses with strangers.

MATTY

Fair, but I know you're coming. We leave tomorrow morning, so, we got some time to kill.

He flicks his fingers. A WAITER appears and drops two glasses of mint tea on the table. Matty slides one toward David.

MATTY (CONT'D)

No strings. Just tea.

David hesitates. Wraps his hands around the glass and takes a sip, which he didn't know he needed.

DAVID

Thank you. You're American?

MATTY

Yeah, originally from Philly.

DAVID

How'd you get here?

MATTY

That's a long story, Spaceman. Let's say that I grew up with some expectations that I join the family business. You know-- the business of families. You get my drift?

DAVID

Like, the mob?

MATTY

Mob-adjacent. So, one night, I'm guarding a stash house outside Camden--

DAVID

What was in the house?

MATTY

(grinning)

Stash, man. So, I'm guarding this house and--that's when it happened.

DAVID

When what happened?

MATTY

The Divine Spirit of Everything spoke in an audible voice. Clear as you and me talking right now.

(MORE)

MATTY (CONT'D)

The voice said, "Matty, move to California. Become a hippie." A week later, I'm at a party at Haight Ashbury with a bag of stolen mob cash. They didn't like that so I eventually made my way to Amsterdam.

DAVID

The Divine Spirit of Everything?

MATTY

The big heartbeat. The current that runs through everything. You feel it if you've been in the dark long enough.

DAVID

And the Spirit led you here?

MATTY

Call it cosmic hitchhiking. Philly taught me to fight. The Spirit taught me how to ride the wave.

David watches, skeptical but drawn in.

MATTY (CONT'D)

So, Spaceman. Tell me your story.

DAVID

I've been around a bit.

MATTY

Wanderer in exile. Pirate prophet. You, sir, are anachronistic. Know what that means?

DAVID

Not of this time.

MATTY

You learn a thing or two on the fringe.

David almost smiles.

DAVID

You're right about that.

Matty finishes his tea, stretches.

MATTY

You're not here by mistake. The bus? Kathmandu? That's where the current flows. The Divine Spirit sent me to make sure you don't miss the ride.

He steps back, joint in hand.

MATTY (CONT'D)

You'll be on that bus tomorrow morning. You've already got your ticket. I'll be there to punch it.

He wanders into the crowd. Smoke trailing behind. David watches him go and then puts his watch close to his mouth.

DAVID

Hey Jules.

JULES (V.O.)

Hey David. What's up?

DAVID

Can you run a historical search on a guy named Matthew Flowers?

JULES (V.O.)

Sure thing-- but, oh, This is odd. No record. You sure you didn't hallucinate him?

DAVID

I hope not.

EXT. ISTANBUL BACKSTREET - EARLY MORNING

A cramped room above a butcher's shop. David wakes, bleary-eyed. In the doorway: MATTY, grinning like the morning itself.

MATTY

Shalom brother. Come on. The bus is waiting.

David blinks. A BLUEBIRD lands on a nearby railing. It's a sign. He acquiesces.

INT. HIPPIE BUS - MORNING

David boards behind Matty. The moment he steps on... WHAM. Diesel, sweat, patchouli, marijuana.

TIBETAN PRAYER FLAGS hang above. Rucksacks, guitars, people everywhere. Matty strolls to the back, flops down. David takes the seat across.

MATTY

This is it. The Trail east. Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and the beyond.

DAVID

I've traveled before.

MATTY

Yeah. But this road? This road changes people.

A beat.

MATTY (CONT'D)

Some call it the hippie trail, but I'm not a hippie. Not anymore. I'm an EvoRevo.

DAVID

What's that?

Matty grins. Sits up. Voice shifts.

MATTY

This isn't just asphalt and dust, my friends. This bus? It's bathed in the light of the Divine Spirit.

He stands and delivers a sermon like a preacher.

MATTY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Its oil is blood. Its gasoline is nourishment. We are its spirit. It's soul.

Out here, doesn't matter where you've been. What you've been. King. Thief. Pirate. Lost soul. Doesn't matter.

This bus? This is sanctuary. Sanctified in the light of the Spirit herself. Gravity doesn't care if you believe in it. Neither does fate. Both pull you forward. On this ride, you flow with the current. The road ahead? Transformation.

Accept what the Spirit offers.

(MORE)

MATTY (CONT'D)

Be ready to change, to lose, to
find, to become. To say yes. Yes to
an opportunity. Yes to freedom. To
love. To beauty.

He hits the joint and exhales smoke toward the prayer flags
and strides to the surfers, taking a beer from their hand to
steal a sip before giving it back.

MATTY (CONT'D)

The road has room for every note.

He leans down and plants a kiss on the cheek of the guitar
player. She strums a triumphant chord.

MATTY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

An evolutionary waits for change
through peace. A revolutionary
forces it through violence. I'm an
EvoRevo. We make change happen
through peace. Through love.
Through the unexpected Yes.

Ride the wave, brothers and
sisters. Let it carry you. Let go
of fear. Let go of anger. Let go of
the grief that clings like a second
skin. What's left--is us. Here.
Moving forward. Through the ache.
Through the questions. Bon Camino,
travelers. To the unexpected yes.

They all repeat "TO THE UNEXPECTED YES." Soft applause. The
moment lingers. David chuckles, unsure if Matty's a prophet--
or a fraud. Matty flops back across from David and opens a
notebook and begins to scribbles.

MATTY (CONT'D)

Start keeping notes. You'll thank
me later.

David pulls out his own leather-bound journal.

DAVID

Already do.

MATTY

Good man.

EXT. ROAD OUT OF ISTANBUL - SUNSET

The bus winds into the horizon. Late light blazes. David leans into the motion. For the first time in months, he lets go, almost smiling.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH TURKEY AND IRAN - VARIOUS

A blur of heat and dust. The bus winds through jagged hills, plains, border posts.

INT. HIPPIE BUS - OUTSIDE TABRIZ - DUSK

Beneath a bruised sky, Matty passes a joint to David. David hesitates. Accepts. The smoke hits like a forgotten language. His guard starts to fall.

EXT. EDGE OF TEHRAN - NIGHT

A low-slung STREETLAMP hums. Travelers gather. Matty stands on a concrete step, holding a battered tin.

MATTY

These are holy. They will take you
on a pilgrimage to your ego.

He opens it and a dozen neatly lined sugar cubes are inside. Everyone leans in.

MATTY (CONT'D)

This isn't about watching the walls
breathe. This is medicine. The key
to the truth beneath the noise.
Tonight, we don't just walk Tehran.
We commune with it.

He moves person to person, offering a cube like communion.

MATTY (CONT'D)

It's about surrendering to the now.
To what's broken and beautiful
inside ourselves.

David stands, arms crossed. Matty stops in front of him. Holds out a cube. Their eyes meet in the mirror of Matty's glasses. David takes it.

MATTY (CONT'D)

(quietly to David)
Right on with the light on.

DAVID
 (Almost laughing)
 Jesus.

A hush. The group forms a circle.

MATTY
 To the Divine. To the Spirit.

He hugs each person. David tenses, then leans in. Accepting. The group drifts off into the city, their laughter trailing like music.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS - NIGHT

Tehran glows. Western rock and Persian ballads leak from radios. MINISKIRTS brush past HEADSCARVES. Rugs hang beside Beatles records. Matty and David move as one through the crowd.

MATTY
 This city's a paradox, both of old
 empires and new dreams.

DAVID
 I've seen older.

MATTY
 I bet you have.

They walk through bazaars, past glowing mosque domes, deeper into the ancient city.

MATTY (CONT'D)
 What's your story, man?

DAVID
 I'm a traveler.

MATTY
 Not that bullllllllllllshit,
 Spaceman. The real story.

David exhales.

DAVID
 I lost my daughter. She was killed.
 A long time ago now. After it
 happened, for months I was lost.
 Rae asked me to see a shrink, you
 know? I never really tried to move
 on. It never even occurred to me.

MATTY

That's some heavy shit, Spaceman.

DAVID

Yeah, well--then, I remembered I'm a particle physicist, and built a time machine to try and save her. Can you believe that shit? I built a fucking time machine.

MATTY

Wild.

DAVID

I've crossed deserts, cities, centuries. I gave up every part of myself that felt human. The really messed up part is even if I succeed, if I save her-- I've still lived this life of--

He stares at the cobblestones.

DAVID (CONT'D)

God, I miss him. He used to do this thing where he'd... well. Nevermind.

MATTY

Rae? Other Mr. Spaceman?

David nods.

MATTY (CONT'D)

He'd be proud of you, man.

DAVID

You don't think I'm crazy?

MATTY

Crazy's relative, Spaceman.

A smile.

MATTY (CONT'D)

You're walking the same path every seeker walks when the world cracks under their feet. You're fueled by something stronger than grief. Love? That's the real time machine.

He taps David in the chest.

MATTY (CONT'D)
That love? That's eternal. Fourth
dimensional. It's lighting the way.
I know it is. You didn't have to
get on this bus.

DAVID
The unexpected yes.

MATTY
Right on, brother.

Matt stands up and offers David his hand.

MATTY (CONT'D)
Come on, Spaceman. We're running
out of time to get lost.

EXT. TEHRAN PLAZA - LATER

Dancing beneath bare bulbs. A young couple teaches them folk
steps. They laugh. Twirl.

EXT. FOUNTAIN - LATER

Barefoot. Splashing. A Farsi version of "Let It Be" echoes.
They eat kebabs and sticky pastries, messy and free. The
grief eases its grip. David laughs.

EXT. BUS RETURN - DAWN

David and Matty, barefoot, damp, trail back with the others.

EXT. BUS - MOVING - MORNING

David collapses into his seat. Ego stripped down. Lighter.
HAPPIER.

EXT. IRANIAN MOUNTAINS - LATER

The bus carves east through valleys.

INT. HIPPIE BUS - MOVING

David smokes a joint while looking out the window as the
landscape whips by. Matty nudges him.

MATTY
You're breathing like a man who
finally came up for air.

DAVID
Something like that.

EXT. AFGHAN BORDER - DAY

A sun-bleached shack. Armed guards wave them through.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - LATER

The road turns to gravel. Villages flash by. Children wave. A call to prayer rises on the wind.

EXT. MAKESHIFT CAMP - NIGHT

A smoldering fire. Travelers circle. Stories, food.

David looks at his watch.

INSERT - WATCH SCREEN: "16 days, 14 hours, six minutes"

Matty hands him tea.

MATTY
You'll make it.

DAVID
I have to.

MATTY
You will.

EXT. AFGHAN ROADS - DAY

The bus rattles deeper into Afghanistan. Broken roads. Dust. Jagged peaks of the Hindu Kush pressing in.

EXT. ROAD TO KATHMANDU - VARIOUS

Dust storms. Border guards. Nights by firelight. Days blurred by engine hum. They pass through Herat, Quetta, Rawalpindi. Verdant hills rise. Nepal. The bus climbs into morning mist. The Himalayas loom.

EXT. KATHMANDU - DAY

David steps off. The city bustles. Monks. Incense. Vendors. Bicycles.

INSERT - WATCH SCREEN: "1 days, 4 hours, 37 minutes"

Matty steps off behind David.

MATTY

The city at the end of the trail.
You ever read Jules Verne? He's got
this quote I like. "The moon will
be the first stage of solar
conquest."

He gestures wide.

MATTY (CONT'D)

This is your moon, brother. Your
first leap.

EXT. KATHMANDU STREETS - NIGHT

Markets glow. Carved deities. Saffron rice. Prayer flags above. A street musician plays a flute. A crowd gathers. David and Matty dance barefoot in an alley. Candles flicker. They eat momos. Spiced lentils. Lick sauce from their fingers. Music. Rooftops. Laughter echoing off walls. David is free.

EXT. HILLSIDE ABOVE KATHMANDU - DAWN

A steep stone path. A temple emerges. Prayer wheels spin in soft wind.

INT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

Candles flicker. Monks stand in rows. David walks with Matty to the center. Symbols inlaid in stone. Monks watch but don't concern themselves with Matty or David.

David activates the bridge device. Matty squeezes his shoulder.

MATTY

Wild.

David turns, overcome. They hug. Deep and tender.

DAVID

Thank you for everything. You've
been a friend.

Matty places a hand-rolled joint in David's jacket pocket.

MATTY

For the road. A reminder to
breathe.

David nods. Matty raises a peace sign. David steps through
the bridge.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ABOVE POMPEII - NIGHT

David casually STROLLS, the BRIDGE DEVICE pulsing on his
wrist.

Below him--chaos. Pompeii drowns in darkness. FIRE and EMBERS
burst skyward as the volcano erupts. Buildings collapse.
Screams echo, swallowed by wind.

David reaches into his coat and pulls out Matty's joint.

A glowing ember--molten, coin-sized--lands nearby. David
touches the tip of the joint to it, inhaling deeply as he
watches Pompeii die.

With one last drag, an one last look, he steps forward into
the bridge.

INT. CRUMBLING STRUCTURE - UNKNOWN TIME

The ground bucks beneath him. WOOD BEAMS snap with a
deafening CRACK. Dust swallows everything. David collapses.

Darkness takes him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

David lies still. Pain flares through his limbs. The scent of
antiseptic chokes the air. He turns his head. Agony.

NURSE (O.S.)

Well, welcome back to the land of
the living.

He opens his eyes. NURSE LAPIN, mid-30s, calm and observant,
stands at his bedside. Blue uniform, white apron. Auburn hair
pinned under her cap. There's a softness in her features--
something familiar, though David can't yet place it.

Her presence carries a quiet strength, a subtle gravity that draws the eye without demanding it.

DAVID
(croaking)
Where am I?

She offers him a glass of water.

NURSE LAPIN
Slowly.

He drinks. Winces.

DAVID
Where am I?

NURSE LAPIN
Cottage Hospital. San Francisco. Do
you remember what happened?

Fragments flash: volcanic ash, the Bridge opening, Kathmandu monks, Matty's voice --

DAVID
I-- there was a building--

NURSE LAPIN
Yeah, the building you were in
collapsed. You barely survived.

DAVID
What's the date?

NURSE LAPIN
May ninth.

DAVID
The year?

The Nurse gives him an odd look.

NURSE LAPIN
1906.

David's eyes cloud with unease. DOCTOR HOWITT enters.
Mustache. Broad shoulders. Worn coat.

HOWITT
Ah, well. It's good to see you've
come around. I'm Doctor Howitt. Can
you tell me your name?

DAVID
Prof-- David Dobbs.

HOWITT
Oh, a professor you say? Science or
letters?

DAVID
Science. Physics, mostly.

HOWITT
An educated man.

Howitt lifts David's eyelids, looks in his mouth.

HOWITT (CONT'D)
Who is the President?

DAVID
(thinks for a moment)
Roosevelt?

Howitt nods. Satisfied.

HOWITT
Reduce his laudanum to three times
a day.

NURSE LAPIN
Yes, Doctor.

DAVID
My bag. It would've been slung over
my shoulder. Where is it?

She crosses to a cabinet.

NURSE LAPIN
Right here. No one's touched it.

She sets the bag beside him. David opens it. Hands tremble.
His journal. Notes. But-- The bridge device is missing. The
tablet is gone. His watch is gone. He digs deeper. Fingers
find the metal plate.

He holds it to the light. Reads. Calculates. Fuck.

DAVID
No.

He drops the plate. It clatters to the floor.

DAVID (CONT'D)
No. No, no, NO.

NURSE LAPIN

Mr. Dobbs?

He doesn't hear her. Everything hits. Decades. Miles. Sacrifices. One chance. Gone.

NURSE LAPIN (CONT'D)

Doctor! We need help in here!

Hands pin him down. A needle. Cold in his veins. The room spins. Blurs. Fades. Black.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

David blinks at the ceiling. The weight of everything creeps in, but he shoves it back. He turns his head. NURSE LAPIN sits nearby, reading from his journal. Her focus is intense. Something deeper than curiosity. She looks up. Smiles.

NURSE LAPIN

You've got quite the imagination, Mr. Dobbs. Pirates. The Future. Pompeii. Genghis Khan. Are you a writer?

DAVID

I didn't say you could read that.

He pushes upright, wincing.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And No, I'm not a writer. I was a scientist. A teacher.

NURSE LAPIN

Scientist? Ever read Jules Verne? I loved 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. My father used to read it to me.

DAVID

I used to read that one to my little girl.

NURSE LAPIN

Lucky girl. I don't think I'd be who I am without my dad.

She traces a passage in the journal.

NURSE LAPIN (CONT'D)

Who's Bluebird?

DAVID
Someone I lost. Someone who meant
everything.

NURSE LAPIN
She must have been special.

DAVID
She was.

She closes the journal. Sets it aside.

NURSE LAPIN
I'll be by later to check on you.

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

David sits in a wheelchair. Sunlight hits his face. He looks fragile, but less so than before. Nurse Lapin reads nearby. Turning pages in his journal. Her fingers pause on a passage.

A BLUEBIRD lands beside her. David freezes. The bird sits a moment. Still. Then lifts off. Gone. Hope rises-- then falls.

DAVID
I want to go back in, if that's
okay.

NURSE LAPIN
Of course.

She rises and moves behind him to push the chair. They disappear inside.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - RECOVERY MONTAGE

-- Nurse Lapin sits bedside, reading aloud from David's journal.

-- David, in bed, sad.

-- David standing, shaky, holding onto a walker.

-- Nurse Lapin helps him to a chair in the sun.

-- David shaves. Nurse Lapin trims his hair.

-- David asleep as Nurse Lapin watches.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

David buttons his shirt slowly. The suit jacket hangs loose on his frame. Nurse Lapin enters with paperwork.

She studies him, smiling.

NURSE LAPIN

Well, it looks like that suit will
do the trick after all. Let me look
at you.

She adjusts his collar. Smooths the shoulders.

DAVID

Do I look like a respectable
gentleman of the 20th century?

NURSE LAPIN

Almost.

She disappears. Returns with a cane. David hesitates. Takes it. Tries a few steps.

DAVID

Close enough, I suppose.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nurse Lapin guides David to the entrance. Each step slow. The cane steadying him.

NURSE LAPIN

Where are you going to go?

DAVID

I don't know. Find a room. Figure
out what's next.

NURSE LAPIN

You lost something important,
didn't you?

DAVID

Just a chance for something.

NURSE LAPIN

The world's full of second chances.

DAVID

Always the optimist.

NURSE LAPIN

Misery's easy to find. But you never know who, or what-- or when might change everything. Like a butterfly flaps its wings in Tokyo and the wind blows in California.

DAVID

Thank you for everything.

He starts to leave. She stops him.

NURSE LAPIN

Hey.

He turns.

NURSE LAPIN (CONT'D)

Why don't you stay with me? I have an extra room.

DAVID

Oh, I couldn't. That's not appropriate.

NURSE LAPIN

Sure, it is.

DAVID

Why would you do that? You barely know me.

NURSE LAPIN

I know you're more than you say. And that your soul is kind.

DAVID

Really, I can find a place--

NURSE LAPIN

No. I've made up my mind. You'll stay with me. You can have a bit of a *Reboot*. Then decide what's next.

He blinks at the anachronistic phrasing, curious.

DAVID

Okay.

NURSE LAPIN

Wait here. I'll grab my things.

She disappears inside. David eases down onto a bench. He's lost. But for now, he has a place to be.

INT. APRIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

David steps in, chilly from the evening air. Simple. Wooden floors. Nothing very personal about the space. He hesitates.

DAVID

This isn't necessary. I told you--

NURSE LAPIN

Nonsense. You're here now.

INT. APRIL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Sturdy bed. Desk under the window. Wardrobe cracked open full of neatly arranged men's clothing.

NURSE LAPIN

I picked up some things. I think they should fit you.

David eyes her. Suspicion beneath exhaustion.

DAVID

I can't thank you enough. I'll find a place in a day or two--

NURSE LAPIN

No need.

DAVID

I appreciate this. More than you could ever know.

NURSE LAPIN

You're welcome. We have a lot to talk about. Don't go running off.

She exits. David sits for a moment. Curiosity gets the better of him and he opens the desk drawer to find... his WATCH, the cracked TABLET, SOLAR CHARGER, the BRIDGE DEVICE, along with a worn PHOTOGRAPH.

Stunned for a moment, he presses the button on the side of watch.

DAVID

Jules?

JULES (V.O.)

David! Uh oh. The timer shows you missed your bridge. Rough. Do you want me to get to work on finding another path? Wait. No.

(MORE)

JULES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Something's wrong with my interface
and I can't access various sub-
routines. Did something fall on me?

DAVID
Dammit.

He grabs the bridge and limps out.

INT. APRIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

APRIL reads from a copy of Jules Verne's FROM EARTH TO THE
MOON. She doesn't look up.

DAVID
You had it the whole time?

NURSE LAPIN
Of course. Can't let people in 1906
walk around with a 4D Quantum Dev-
Accelerator. That's how you get
paradoxes and witch trials!

DAVID
Who are you?

She finally looks up.

NURSE LAPIN
You're from the future.

DAVID
So are you. Tell me who you are.

NURSE LAPIN
You first, Dr. David Dobbs.
Renowned physicist. Inventor of the
Bridge Protocol along with Dr.
Kelly Richards.

DAVID
Who the hell are you?

NURSE LAPIN
Go through the variables. You
assumed history was fixed. But it
never was.

Recognition dawns-- it's sharp, crushing. Overwhelming.

DAVID
No It's not possible...*Bluebird*?

A slow smile from Nurse Lapin.

APRIL (NURSE LAPIN)
Hi, Daddy.

The photograph slips from his hand. He staggers forward, wraps her in a crushing hug. Sobs rack him. She's real.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Hi Dad.

He cups her face.

DAVID
Let me look at you.
(beat)
How... how is this possible?

APRIL
I didn't know for sure it was you,
the real you, until I read your
journal.

DAVID
How... how... How old are you?

APRIL
Thirty-four. I bridged here from
2050. I've been waiting for you for
almost two years.

DAVID
Waiting? Bridged? Are you a
scientist? A, uh--

APRIL
Dr. April Lapin. Particle
physicist.

DAVID
A physicist?

APRIL
Like my dad.

DAVID
But I missed the bridge. How are
you-- here?

She pulls a sleek bracelet from the shelf. Taps it. A TIME
MAP projects.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This... this is incredible.

APRIL
Mark-13. I designed it.

David leans into the projection, studying it, but his eyes keep going back to April.

DAVID
How much time have you mapped?

APRIL
Almost a hundred thousand years.

Stunned. Beyond anything he considered.

DAVID
Devereaux must be worth billions.

APRIL
She was. Moss pushed her out.

DAVID
Moss?

David closes his eyes for a second, remembering the shoelace.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Alan Moss?

APRIL
Yeah. In my timeline, Moss locks down the tech. Sells it to governments. Runs experiments.

DAVID
In your *timeline*? Are you saying that there is a multiverse?

APRIL
Not in the way you're thinking. There aren't infinite timelines.

DAVID
But, you're not *my* April. You're an April.

APRIL
And you're a David. But we're entangled somehow. And we need to talk about Moss.

She lays it out:

Moss builds a massive device. Sends vehicles back. Strips gold. Tests weapons. Spreads engineered viruses. There's seemingly No consequences. Dev particles show an alternative timeline created and then... gone. Everything just ends for those branches. Energy can't be created or destroyed, and every time a deviated branch of time terminates, it threatens all of space-time as humans perceive it.

APRIL

I saw it. Times Square. A canister. Smoke. People melting. And they bridged out like it was nothing.

DAVID

What about the people left behind?

APRIL

Billions--dead. Or worse. Moss didn't care. Every time he did it the quantum fallout--

DAVID

Time correcting itself.

APRIL

Yeah. Those deviations blink out of existence and the energy destabilizes... well, everything.

DAVID

Jesus.

April uses the holographic display to walk David through Data points.

APRIL

Time doesn't fracture endlessly. Our perception of it does. It branches when something forces it to. When someone forces it to; but then it seems to self-heal, in a sense. The eddy flows back into the main timeline. One deviation, one temporary bypass, then it closes again. No infinite futures, no endless possibilities. Just tight loops trying to stitch themselves back together. The fabric of time doesn't care about us or our perception of how it passes. It *does* care when we start punching holes in it.

DAVID
Dev particles.

APRIL
Exactly. One person stepping across
a bridge? No big deal. It's like a
mosquito bite to space-time. Moss
has been taking a bulldozer to it.

DAVID
He wasn't letting it heal.

APRIL
Exactly. We're all essentially
fourth-dimensional beings and exist
at all points of time
simultaneously, either consciously
or as energy. Moss has been tearing
open fractures and altering the
past. Altering that state of
energy. He's strip-mining reality
and in the process ripping apart
our universe. Every time he creates
a large enough rift he runs the
risk of destroying--.

David leans back, shaking his head.

DAVID
He's driving the entropy of
existence.

APRIL
Yeah.

DAVID
(beat)
But, I don't understand why you
came here. To this time. To find
me. How did you find me?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - RESEARCH LAB - DAY

April is working in an updated version of the Devereaux lab
and she is tracking a pattern of lights. She pulls up the
dates and locations. The same dates and locations of David's
journey.

APRIL (V.O.)
Your bridge device. We can measure
Dev particles with incredible
clarity. I could see in the data a
concentration of Dev activity. At
certain points and they ended here.
In 1906. I hoped it would be you.

END FLASHBACK

INT. APRIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

April bring up the time map again on his holo-display and
several glowing red dots appear.

DAVID
My path.

APRIL
Yeah.

DAVID
So you came here to find whomever
was time traveling? To find me--?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

April and Kelly (older, still iconoclastic), work to destroy
the lab, wiping servers. Other people are in the background
helping them.

APRIL (V.O.)
Before I left 2050, Aunt Kelly and
I destroyed everything. Moss was so
paranoid about keeping the
intellectual property from getting
in the hands of anyone else he
isolated everything on Moss Global
servers. No cloud. Kelly and I
wiped everything we could. Servers,
backups, research notes.

April stands behind a MAN who's sitting at a computer
terminal. We can't see his face, but he's typing away on an
interface.

APRIL (V.O.)
We wrote a virus that could encrypt
everything. Every dollar in the
company.

(MORE)

APRIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Every shred of information left.
Any device connected to a network
would immediately encrypt any
information about the Bridge
Protocol.

The UNIDENTIFIED MAN puts a thumb-drive into a slot and is moving to put his thumb across a small fingerprint reader attached to the small drive.

APRIL (V.O.)
The virus encrypted the data, but
it needs the final input to delete
it.

END FLASHBACK

INT. APRIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

April reaches into her pocket and pulls out a small USB thumb drive type device, with a small fingerprint reader. The ENCRYPTION KEY.

APRIL
It's a biometric execution sequence
that requires the person who wrote
the virus to deploy.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

The camera pans to reveal the UNIDENTIFIED MAN, and it's-- DAVID.

END FLASHBACK

APRIL
Your DNA. It was you. You wrote the
virus.

She hands the encryption key to David.

DAVID
(mind racing)
But Bluebird-- That's-- I'm a
different David. Why didn't he
launch the sequence?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. DEVEREAUX INSTITUTE - RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

David is reaching for the thumb drive to activate it with his thumb when gunfire erupts. April dives to the floor. David is riddled with bullets and falls to the ground, as a security team breaches the lab. David, now dying on the floor, locks eyes with his daughter as he dies.

END FLASHBACK

APRIL

Because he's dead. Moss killed him.

INT. COTTAGE HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - DAY

Polished boots CLICK against the hospital floor. A MAN in a finely tailored suit walks with precision and purpose. Mid-50s. Confident. Dangerous. The YOUNG RECEPTIONIST doesn't look up. He waits. Then clears his throat. She startles. Looks up. Frowns, sensing something off.

RECEPTIONIST

Good afternoon. How may I help you?

He smiles. Polite. Measured.

ALAN MOSS

I'm hoping so. Do you know these two people?

From his coat, he produces a folded PHOTO. Too modern. She peers at it. Confused. Her fingers hover. She's not looking at the image, but rather the physical photograph.

RECEPTIONIST

What... what is this? This isn't like any photograph I've ever seen.

Unease blooms.

ALAN MOSS

(curt)

The image. The people. Do you know the people?

RECEPTIONIST

I-- I don't know what to make of this. I'm not supposed to release patient information. Are you a relative, or--?

MOSS

It's imperative that I find them. A matter of great importance. Life and death, you could say.

She hesitates. Then nods. She's scared of MOSS.

RECEPTIONIST

This man was a patient here. Mr. Dobbs, I believe? He was badly injured in the Earthquake. And Miss Lapin-- well, she's a nurse here. I can pass a message along for her. May I have your name, please?

MOSS

I was hoping to speak with them. Do you know where I might be able to find them?

She fidgets. Nervous.

RECEPTIONIST

I don't, I'm afraid. Miss Lapin isn't scheduled to work until next week, but--

(beat)

I should really fetch the Administrator.

MOSS

That won't be necessary.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Morning light filters through the curtains. Soft shadows stretch across the dining room table.

David sits hunched over the disassembled BRIDGE DEVICE and tablet. Tiny components scattered. April leans in the doorway. Watches.

APRIL

Any progress?

David exhales sharply. Drops a component. Runs his hands down his face.

DAVID

The power supply on the tablet is shot.

APRIL
Unsalvageable?

DAVID
Completely. Without the tablet, I can't control the Dev particle output of the device, and without that attenuation--

APRIL
You can't open a bridge.

DAVID
Right. Jules?

JULES (V.O.)
Hi David! What can I do for you?

DAVID
Jules-- can you regulate the dev flow of the bridge device?

JULES (V.O.)
I'm sorry David. My systems have been damaged and outside of witty banter, I'm afraid my utility is severely diminished.

David silences the watch. Looks at April.

DAVID
What about your device? Can you configure it for two people?

APRIL
No. One device, one person. They were designed that way on purpose.

DAVID
Yeah. By me.

April steps closer. Studies the mess of tech on the table.

APRIL
What about using my device as the attenuation interface for yours?

DAVID
I'd have to write the control software from scratch to adapt it to that operating system, and the computer to do that won't be invented for about ninety years.

APRIL

So, unless one of wants to spend their life slogging through the 20th century, we need this one to work.

DAVID

Yeah. The tablet configures the Bridge's power output, so even if I use your device to find a new path--

APRIL

You couldn't program your device to cross.

DAVID

Right. So, I need to get this tablet powered up. Maybe I can adapt the battery in the watch, but I'd be sacrificing Jules, besides, the case is machined titanium. Getting inside with 1908 tools-- not easy. The solar charger Kelly built was smashed, but maybe I can use some of its circuitry to hardwire power back into the tablet? I don't know.

APRIL

Okay, that's problem one. We'll figure that out. What about problem two?

DAVID

(dry)

That's actually problem seven-thousand and twenty.

April smirks.

APRIL

Well, I do have some good news. Look.

She presses a button on her device. A HOLOGRAM flares above her wrist. She zooms in on a section of the TIME MAP.

APRIL (CONT'D)

When I left 2052 I mapped a Bridge point that takes place in roughly a month, about eighty miles from here.

David leans in. Scans the floating projection.

DAVID

That's lucky. The sheer size of the universe means convergence points are at best rare.

APRIL

When is 2134. Where-- is a different question.

She opens a data table.

APRIL (CONT'D)

The Dev readings show atmosphere, gravity-- but the location is-- *blank*.

DAVID

What do you mean blank?

APRIL

I mean blank. No latitude. No longitude. But look--

She navigates back to the map.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Numerous streams converge there. I've got a path back to 2050, three months after I left. There has to be a path that gets you from there to 2024.

David exhales slowly. Looks at the mess on the table.

DAVID

Okay. Let's assume that's the bridge we take. We have less than a month to figure this all out.

A faint noise. David freezes, head tilted.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Did you hear that?

April looks up. AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE erupts. GLASS SHATTERS. WOOD SPLINTERS. Bullets rip through the room.

David and April dive under the table. The shooting stops. Heavy BOOTS crunch over debris. The front door EXPLODES open. ALAN MOSS steps in. Futuristic Machine gun in hand. Calm. Dangerous.

MOSS

I didn't get you, did I, April? I'm here for my data. I need that encryption key. You didn't think you could just destroy everything and disappear.

DAVID (WHISPERS)

Go out the back. I'll take care of Moss.

APRIL

(whispers, emotional)

Dad, no. Moss is crazy. He's already killed you once, I can't let him do it again.

DAVID

I'm not losing you again. Go! Meet me at the hospital.

April hesitates, then bolts out the back. David breathes deep, then emerges from his hiding spot and charges.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

David tackles Moss. They crash to the floor. A brutal struggle. Elbows. Grunts. Moss drives a KNEE into David's ribs. David winces, but fights on. A punch to Moss's mouth. The gun is wrenched loose. Moss stumbles back, wiping blood from his lip. Grins.

MOSS

David Fucking Dobbs. You're looking a little more alive than the last time I saw you.

David points the gun at Moss.

DAVID

Been a while, Alan.

MOSS

I don't have any issues with you, David. None that haven't been resolved. I just came for something your daughter stole from me.

DAVID

I know what you're after. I know what you've done.

Moss raises his wrist. Shows off his BRIDGE DEVICE.

MOSS

It's your life's work, David.
Without you, none of this would be
possible.

DAVID

I should've known not to trust you.
You've murdered millions.

MOSS

(smiling)

Billions, David. None of it
matters. It doesn't change
anything. Not unless I say it does.

FLASH-- Moss triggers his bridge device, and a blinding light
flashes. David flinches. Moss lunges. They fight. The gun
skitters across the floor. They crash over the DINING TABLE.
Land hard. A beat. Stillness. They both lunge. Moss for the
gun. David for the door.

GUNFIRE RIPS THROUGH THE DOORFRAME.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

David barrels out of the house. Into daylight. Alive. Behind
him, gunfire echoes through the quiet street.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

DAVID sprints toward the hospital, dodging fences and
alleyways. BULLETS RIP through the morning air, kicking up
debris. MOSS chases, machine gun in hand, unrelenting.

INT. COTTAGE HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The doors EXPLODE inward as DAVID crashes through. Glass and
wood SPLINTER around him. He gasps for breath.

APRIL rounds the corner, eyes wide.

APRIL

You're okay!

DAVID

We don't have much time.

Gunfire TEARS through the entrance. MOSS steps in, grinning,
spraying wildly.

MOSS
Just give me what I want, April.

DAVID and APRIL duck around a corner, into a room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They hunker down as Moss hunts for them.

MOSS (O.S.)
David... funny how the smallest
things come back around, isn't it?

MOSS'S voice draws closer. Measured. Confident.

MOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A borrowed shoelace, a simple
favor, and now we're here. You
built this for me.

DAVID peers out, sees MOSS sweep an empty room.

MOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You don't belong here. Not in this
timeline. Not in this fight-- but
don't worry, your death will be
meaningless. Zero impact. None.
Like you never existed.

DAVID turns to APRIL.

DAVID (WHISPERING)
What's he talking about?

MOSS (O.S.)
Did she tell you she's the reason
your April died?

APRIL flinches. DAVID steadies her.

MOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Your past is adjacent, David. A
meaningly deviation of time--
Because I made it that way.

As Moss nears their room, APRIL pulls DAVID toward a nearby
supply closet. They slip inside.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

DAVID
Jules.

DAVID lifts the watch. Taps it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Distract him.

JULES (V.O.)
Certainly. Engaging distraction
protocol.

David tosses the watch out of the closet toward the room's empty bed.

INT. COTTAGE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A tinny voice echoes.

JULES (V.O.)
Hey Allen-- Did you know temporal
manipulation is a class-one felony
in thirteen future legal systems?

MOSS pauses, weapon raised.

JULES (V.O.)
Furthermore, your haircut
statistically reduces trust by 27
percent.

MOSS follows the voice to a nearby room.

MOSS
What the hell is that?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MOSS steps in and the room is empty.

JULES
Congrats genius. You're talking to
the decoy.

MOSS lifts the rifle.

JULES (CONT'D)
Goodbye.

Moss opens fire, blowing the watch and bed to pieces.

MOSS
Come on, David. I just need that
key.

From the closet, APRIL strikes. SYRINGE to the back. MOSS swings wildly. DAVID lunges, SLAMS MOSS into a bedframe. Shot FIRES into the ceiling. MOSS slumps. Sedated. DAVID pulls the Bridge Device off him.

DAVID
Can I use this?

APRIL
No. It's coded to his DNA.

DAVID SMASHES it. POCKETS the remains.

DAVID
We take everything.

APRIL
What do we do with him?

DAVID
Turn him in. Let him rot on
Alcatraz.

They stand over MOSS'S unconscious body. Victory, but at a cost.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dimly lit. DAVID and APRIL sit in a quiet corner. The rest of the bar hums with low conversation, distant.

DAVID leans forward.

DAVID
Tell me the truth.

APRIL hesitates.

APRIL
Dad--

DAVID
The truth, Bluebird.

APRIL
He wasn't lying. I thought maybe I
could go back and stop Moss from
ever getting involved.

DAVID
What's that have to do with my
April?

She takes a steadying breath.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

April waits at the school as kids and parents mull about.

APRIL (V.O.)
I took the first bridge to before
the Bridge Protocol was finished.
2024. I was there. In the school
breezeway. I saw you walking her to
class. Then I saw him.

Moss and April lock eyes. Moss raises a gun and opens fire.

END FLASHBACK

DAVID
Jesus.

APRIL
I watched her--me-- fall. I watched
myself die.

DAVID clenches his fists. His voice breaks.

DAVID
No-- that's not-- That's not
possible.

APRIL
It was. It is. Alan Moss killed
her. Me.

DAVID trembles, rage brewing.

DAVID
That-- son of a bitch-- shot my
Bluebird?

APRIL
Without hesitation. Because to him,
it wasn't real. Just a variable.
Just another deviated timeline.
He's been a step ahead. The minute
he killed her he created your
entire deviation.

DAVID
My life is... an aberration? A
blip. It's been for nothing.

APRIL

When Moss killed my father-- I thought it was over. Once Moss killed your April I knew what the blips were. I knew it was you. I knew that you'd do anything to save me.

DAVID stares through time. Through grief. Through loss. APRIL squeezes his hand.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Everything we lost leads back to him. We're the only ones who can stop it.

David meets her eyes with resolve.

DAVID

Then we stop him.

APRIL

We just handed him to the police.

DAVID

No. We stop him before he ever gets the Bridge. Before he kills April. Before he kills the other me. No matter what it takes.

APRIL

What about the encryption key?

DAVID

We don't need it. We stop Moss before he ever invests. We write a new future. For both of us.

APRIL

Great. How do we do that? We only have one Bridge Device?

He scans the bar. His eyes catch on a folded newspaper.

DAVID

Edison--

APRIL

What?

DAVID gets up and grabs the paper, reading quickly.

DAVID

The Jamestown Exposition. Edison's unveiling a new nickel-iron battery.

APRIL

Nickel...*iron*? Depending on the size, that would produce maybe, one volt, and with five to ten cells in parallel... *That could work.*

DAVID

It has to. We get to Jamestown. We get that battery and put an end to the ambitions of Alan Moss.

INT. PARLOR CAR - NIGHT

The parlor car is dimly lit. Wood-paneled walls. The low hum of steel on steel. DAVID sips his tea, a newspaper unfolded before him.

DAVID

We get to Indianapolis in the morning. I have a small errand.

APRIL

No one we know lives here for another hundred years.

DAVID

I need to send a message to an old friend.

APRIL raises a brow but says nothing. A WAITER approaches.

WAITER

Something to drink, ma'am?

APRIL

Brandy.

WAITER

Very good. And for you, sir?

DAVID

Same.

APRIL

You don't drink brandy.

DAVID

I do now.

They sit for a long beat.

APRIL

This is weird, right?

DAVID

Which part? Time travel, or
drinking with my grown daughter?

APRIL

That. That part.

A beat.

APRIL (CONT'D)

It's weird. You're-- not the man
who raised me. But you're still my
dad. It's-- ineffable.

DAVID

How different am I?

APRIL

It's you, but-- you're, I don't
know. Your eyes are more sad. I
can't imagine what it's been like.

The WAITER returns with two glasses of brandy. Sets them
down.

DAVID

To the strange and impossible.

APRIL

To time.

They drink. Silence. Thought.

APRIL (CONT'D)

What happened to Abba? In your
timeline. After I died.

DAVID tenses. A long pause.

DAVID

Before-- he was radiant. Watching
you grow. That was his joy. After I
left, you know, for this-- I hope
he found peace.

He raises his glass again.

DAVID (CONT'D)
To Rae Dobbs. The best.

APRIL
To Abba.

INT. DAVID'S SLEEPER CAR - MORNING

David carves letters into a thin strip of iron with a pocket knife.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
Indianapolis. Indianapolis. Three-
hour stop in Indianapolis.

David finishes the etching. Wraps the iron plate in oilcloth. Tucks it into his coat.

EXT. UNIVERSITY QUAD - LATER

Crisp light. Quiet. A large oak tree stands at the center. David kneels beneath it. He carves into the bark. Slow, deliberate strokes. Then digs a six-inch hole. Removes the oilcloth-wrapped iron. Places it gently in the earth. Covers it. Presses his palm to the dirt. A silent signal through time.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A train rushes through the rural landscape. Industrialization creeps through the hills. Cities rise in the distance. Rail lines slice across the once-green land.

EXT. SEWELL'S POINT PLATFORM - DAY

Steam hisses. Passengers disembark into the bustle of the JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION. Brass music plays in the distance. Crowds flow past banners showcasing industrial marvels.

EXT. EXPOSITION FAIRGROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

DAVID and APRIL walk among the sprawling pavilions. Vendors shout, selling roasted nuts and caramelized apples. Salesmen demo household contraptions.

APRIL

This is incredible. It's like watching history unfold in real-time.

DAVID

That's exactly what it is.

APRIL

After what Moss did, I've always been reluctant to move through the past. Butterfly effect and deviation points, and all that.

They pass a hand-cranked generator exhibit. APRIL turns the crank. Lightbulbs flicker.

WOMAN IN HAT

Marvelous, isn't it?

APRIL

It's inefficient. Add three or four gears and you'd triple the output with less effort.

WOMAN IN HAT

(surprised)

Oh, I--

DAVID

(placing a hand on April's shoulder)

We need to go.

They walk off. Behind them:

WOMAN IN HAT (O.S.)

(to a young man)

--three or four gears could improve efficiency.

DAVID

Let's try not to alter history more than necessary. Branch points and deviations and all that.

APRIL

It was an observation, not a revolution. Don't lecture me, old man. I know more about time travel than almost anyone, including you.

INT. MANUFACTURERS AND LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Polished brass. Heated metal. Mechanical innovations hum around them.

At the center: A GLASS DISPLAY CASE -- Inside: a rectangular NICKEL-IRON BATTERY with two metal posts. At the front: THOMAS EDISON, stout, sharp-featured, white hair, speaking with admirers. DAVID leads APRIL forward.

DAVID

Mr. Edison. Hi. Apologies for disturbing you. I'm Professor David Dobbs. This is Dr. April Lapin.

EDISON

(scrutinizing)

And what are you a professor of?

DAVID

Physics, among other things.

EDISON

(to April)

And you, miss? Are you also a student of natural philosophy?

APRIL

(defensive)

You mean physics? Yes.

EDISON

(scoffing)

Preposterous. A woman isn't capable of such complex thought.

APRIL

(pissed)

Oh, I'm not capable of complex thoughts huh--

David cuts her off.

DAVID

Mr. Edison, I'd like to speak with you about your nickel-iron battery.

EDISON

You don't work for Tesla, do you?

DAVID

No.

EDISON

Good. That man's a certifiable idiot. Alternating current? Bah.

APRIL

(under her breath)

Not to mention oligarchy and electric cars.

EDISON

(suspicious)

Tesla's making an *electric* horseless carriage?

DAVID

(jumping in)

No. It was a joke. As far as I know, he isn't.

EDISON

What is it that you want, son?

DAVID

(indicating the battery)

I'm interested in acquiring one. Ten cells in series, and-- twelve(?) Volts of output?

EDISON

(curious)

Under optimal conditions.

DAVID

Nickel-iron chemistry--low discharge, resilient to overcharge, temp-stable. Ahead of its time.

EDISON

(interested)

Not many would know that.

DAVID pulls his LEATHER COIN POUCH from his coat, opens it to show the contents, and places it on the table. The weight is unmistakably GOLD.

EDISON (CONT'D)

(eying the pouch)

You must want this battery quite badly.

DAVID

I do.

EDISON inspects the gold.

EDISON
This is a prototype.

DAVID
I don't need perfection. I need
what you have now.

EDISON
What's the application? You're not
with General Electric?

DAVID
No affiliations. Independent
research.

EDISON
And if I say no?

DAVID reclaims the pouch.

DAVID
Then I'd find another way.

EDISON
(smirking)
You remind me of some men I've
dealt with. Stubborn. Calculating.

Edison reaches for the pouch again.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Fine. But this conversation never
happened.

DAVID
Couldn't agree more.

EDISON
Don't make me regret this.

DAVID
You won't. I'm guessing you'll
never hear from me again.

INT. TRAIN CAR - MOVING - SUNSET

A passenger train cuts across the landscape. APRIL and DAVID
sit facing each other, the orange light casting long shadows
through the windows.

APRIL
This better work.

DAVID nods, distracted, his gaze on the wires spread across the small table between them. Edison's battery sits beside the cracked tablet. The setup is delicate--centuries of technology straining to cooperate. APRIL studies the setup. Her arms are crossed.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Is it ready?

DAVID
It should be.

APRIL
Should we say a prayer? Break a leg?

DAVID
(smirks)
Whatever helps.

He flips the switch. Nothing happens. APRIL slumps. Then-- a *flicker*. The DEVERAUX INSTITUTE logo blinks onto the tablet's screen.

APRIL
Oh my god, it worked.

DAVID
We did it.

He grabs her in a tight hug. The interface boots up and David gets to work.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Okay. Have you found a path that gets us to anywhere before 2025?

APRIL
Nothing close. I can get us back to 2050 no problem, but look--

April opens the holographic time map from her wrist and zooms into a part of the time-map.

APRIL (CONT'D)
When you left 2025, it's caused some kind of dead spot. Plenty of connection points, but none anywhere habitable. We can jump directly to an hour before-- as long as you don't mind appearing 73,000 feet above the ground.

DAVID

Okay, let me see what I can find.

He drops into his seat, launches the TIME MAP interface. It sputters, struggles, then stabilizes.

APRIL

Wild. Working in two dimensions.
Everything's holographic in 2050.

DAVID doesn't respond, eyes locked on the screen.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I'll give you space.

She turns toward the window. The train hums beneath them.
DAVID adjusts the screen.

INT. TRAIN CAR - MOVING - LATER

APRIL holds a travel cup of wine, eyes on the dark landscape flying by. DAVID watches her a beat, then speaks.

DAVID

Hey, Bluebird. You alright?

APRIL

I don't know. Are you?

DAVID

You were right about that
convergence point in the future.

He exhales, weary.

DAVID (CONT'D)

There isn't another path. The last
bridge, *my* last bridge, is the one
you found. To 1989. I can't find
anything closer.

APRIL

1989? Dad, that's--

DAVID

It's as close as I can get. There
are a billion combinations. This is
the one I can find that gets me
closest.

APRIL

That can't be right.

DAVID

It is. My timeline's a deviation.
Intertwined with yours, but not the
same. That's where my path leads.

APRIL

So what? We wait? For thirty-six
fucking years? Dad-- this is silly.

DAVID

No. I wait. You go back to 2050.
You go home.

APRIL

You'll be in your nineties. What
if...?

DAVID

What if I don't live that long?
What if I do? What if I hold on
just long enough?

Silence settles.

DAVID (CONT'D)

If I don't do this, billions die.
You die. Rae dies. If I die trying--
at least I did everything I could.
To save them. To save you. To save--

APRIL

Yourself.

DAVID

Yeah.

APRIL

When I get back to 2050, I'll find
a different path. I can use our lab
to find a faster--

DAVID

No. When you get there, if I've
failed and everything is the same,
then you deploy the encryption key
and kill it all. There's no
question anymore. It's not a
choice. It's the path.

April processes, overcome with emotion.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Fate's not a hand pushing us. It's
momentum.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Once it starts, it runs until it ends. A guy I met in Istanbul said, "Every traveler rides their own current." This is mine.

APRIL

What if I don't go back to my time?
What if I go with you? Wait with you?

DAVID

No. You have to go home. If I fail, you'll know what to do.

APRIL

I'll know what to do.

DAVID

You'll know. Then you'll use this.

David hands her the encryption key. It's been activated. APRIL wipes at her eyes. They sit in quiet resolve. The train rolls toward its final stop.

EXT. DAVISVILLE STATION - EVENING

The train screeches into Davisville Station. Steam hisses beneath the engine, rising into the dry, late-spring air.

DAVID steps onto the platform, leather satchel over his shoulder. APRIL joins him, her coat tugged tight. The sky is heavy with storm clouds.

DAVID

We have about an hour until the bridge.

APRIL

(skeptical)

We're walking, aren't we?

DAVID

Unless you see a car waiting.
Come on. The location's about a mile that way.

EXT. DAVISVILLE MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

They move down a dusty street--general stores, a blacksmith, feed store, saloon. Men smoke and talk outside. A sign reads: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

Thunder rumbles. First drops of rain.

APRIL
Perfect timing.

DAVID
Come on.

EXT. FARMLAND - LATER

Rain falls in earnest. The road is mud. Fields stretch out, pastures and new barns rising. A steel water tower looms ahead.

APRIL
Great. Perfect weather for time travel.

DAVID
At least we won't overheat.

APRIL
You're always perfectly temperate.

DAVID
You weren't with me in Pompeii. If I had stayed it would've cooked me like bacon. I'll take the rain.

They pass a windmill. A water tower looms.

DAVID (CONT'D)
We're close. There, near the tower.

APRIL
(consulting device)
Hundred-twenty meters. That way.

They stop at the tower's base.

APRIL (CONT'D)
This is it.

DAVID
Almost. The Bridge point's twenty feet up.

APRIL
Fantastic. I forgot to account for elevation.

DAVID scans for a ladder.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Maybe we could--

But DAVID's already moving.

DAVID
We'll have to jump.

APRIL
What?

DAVID
I've done it before. Time it right,
we make it.

He grabs the ladder and climbs. SUDDENLY, APRIL is slammed back.

VOICE (O.S.)
Dobbs! You didn't think it would be
that easy?

MOSS. Soaked. Wild. Alive.

MOSS
Two guards. Desperate men.
Hopefully not relatives of mine.
Paradoxes and all that. Not that
it's mattered before.

He lunges. Punches APRIL, trying to rip the Bridge device from her wrist. DAVID drops off the ladder and dives at MOSS. They crash into the mud, fists swinging, slipping.

MOSS lifts DAVID, slams him. Grabs his throat. DAVID claws at the satchel, finds something-- SWINGS--

CRACK. MOSS collapses. DAVID gasps.

DAVID
Bluebird?

APRIL
(sitting up)
Yeah. I'm okay.

She stands. MOSS groans.

MOSS
You can't change the past. I win.
You're here because I already won.

APRIL
Go fuck yourself, Alan.

She kicks him in the face. He goes limp. DAVID looks at his hand to see what he used to brain Moss: His Bridge device. It's broken, sparking.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Dad. No.

DAVID
It's gone.

APRIL tears her's off and presses it into David's hand.

APRIL
Take mine.

DAVID
Isn't it coded to your DNA?

APRIL
Moss's was. Mine's not.

DAVID
We'll find another way.

APRIL
There isn't one!

She shoves the device into him.

DAVID
You'll be trapped here.

APRIL
I'll live. You thought you were saving me-- but we were saving each other.

DAVID trembles. APRIL hugs him tight.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Go. Before it's too late.

They hold each other. He presses his forehead to hers.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Go! Save me! Save our future.

DAVID tears away. Runs.

EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

DAVID climbs. Rungs slick. Muscles burning. Rain screaming.

At the top, he powers the Bridge Device. Holograms flicker. Countdown starts.

--40 SECONDS

MOSS crashes into him. They grapple. Punch. Slam. Blood and rain.

--30 SECONDS

MOSS pins DAVID against the railing of the water tower. The ground looms forty feet down.

MOSS
You can't stop fate, David.

--20 SECONDS

DAVID breaks free. They struggle.

--10 SECONDS

DAVID grabs MOSS, spins and throws them both toward the railing, they both go over, DANGLING.

MOSS realizes too late. They hold for a moment, suspended.

David articulates his wrist and a burst of energy erupts from the bridge toward the ground. Moss looks back at the opening in time and space, horrified.

DAVID
One bridge. One person.

David lets go. They fall, tumbling-- and vanish into the BRIDGE. MOSS screams. His body warps, shatters, and explodes in a kaleidoscope of matter and energy.

April is left standing alone in the rain.

EXT. LUNAR COLONY - NIGHT

DAVID steps forward--and something's wrong. His body moves too lightly, gravity loosening its grip. He looks up.

Above him: a dome of glass. Beyond it, EARTH looms. Massive, luminous. Stars burn too sharp. Too close.

The United States Lunar Colony stretches beneath the dome. Clean lines. Titanium towers. People walk polished paths in streamlined fabrics, oblivious to miracles.

INT. MOON CITY WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

DAVID walks on instinct, rain still drying from his skin. Overhead, a holographic display flickers with shuttle times, atmospheric stats, local news.

INT. LUNAR BAR - NIGHT

A sleek, low-lit bar. Stools hover. Liquids swirl inside spherical glasses. DAVID enters, still damp. He drops onto a stool.

The BARTENDER, cybernetic implants glinting, wipes the bar.

BARTENDER

What'll it be?

DAVID

Something strong. And something old.

The bartender pours a glowing liquid into a low glass. It clings unnaturally, then settles.

BARTENDER

First time on the station?

DAVID

Something like that.

RAE (O.S.)

You made it.

DAVID turns. A younger man, familiar in a way that hurts, lifts a glass.

DAVID

Do I know you?

RAE

Not yet. But I know you. I've been expecting you.

He slides onto the stool next to David.

RAE (CONT'D)

My great-grandma Kelly told me a story. About a man who saved, well, *everything*.

DAVID

That sounds exaggerated.

RAE
Not to her. Time traveler. Quiet
hero. Never thanked. Never stopped.

DAVID watches his drink swirl. Haunted.

RAE (CONT'D)
She said he never got to go home.

He pulls a journal from his coat. Leather. Cracked. A ghost
from another time.

DAVID
That's--

RAE
Yours.

DAVID stares at it. Doesn't reach.

DAVID
I can't read that.

RAE
No, you shouldn't. Might find out
the end of your heroic story before
it happens.

DAVID
I never wanted to be a hero.

RAE
The real ones never do. You look
like hell.

DAVID
Not what you expected?

RAE
I didn't know what to expect.

DAVID
Feels about right.

RAE
You did it, you know. Whatever it
cost. You did it.

DAVID breathes. Slow. Heavy.

RAE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm acting like I know
you. I feel like I do. I've read
this a thousand times. I'm Rae.
(MORE)

RAE (CONT'D)
I think I'm your... great, great,
great grandson?

David looks at the man, reconciling what he just said. He can see his long dead husband in this man's features.

DAVID
Do you know who you're named after?

RAE
My dad. I'm actually Rae the fourth.

DAVID
Rae, the first one I guess, was my husband. The love of my life.

RAE
I know.

DAVID blinks. Holds the silence.

RAE (CONT'D)
He, and another you, lived to nearly a hundred. They died days apart. Great-grandma Kelly said you were cool.

DAVID
How'd you find me?

Rae pats the journal on the bar.

RAE
You told me I would. It's all in here. Your whole story. Do you mind if I ask a question?

David is subdued. Unsure how to react.

DAVID
Does it say what happened to--

RAE
April? It does. She lived a full and happy life.

David can't hold back his emotions anymore and a tear cascades down his face.

DAVID
That's-- great.

RAE
Can I ask you a question?

David collects himself and wipes his face with his palm.

DAVID
Go ahead.

RAE
Were you scared?

DAVID
When?

RAE
The whole time I guess?

DAVID
Terrified. I don't remember the
last time I wasn't.

RAE
Wow. You did it anyway. What now?

DAVID
One more bridge.

RAE
Right. To--uh, 1989. Right?

DAVID
Yeah.

RAE
Can I walk you to the bridge?

EXT. LUNAR COLONY - MOMENTS LATER

They walk together through the dark city. The dome above
glows with stars. Earth watches.

RAE
So be honest. Were you really a
pirate?

DAVID
Navigator for one.

RAE
That's exactly what a pirate would
say.

DAVID
What now for you?

RAE
I go home. Back to Earth. Indiana.
I tell my kids about you.

DAVID
Is that enough?

RAE
It has to be. I know how it ends,
you know. Do you want to--

DAVID
No, but I understand the
implications of your existence.

RAE
Fair enough.

EXT. LUNAR COLONY BRIDGE POINT - NIGHT

They reach the edge of the colony. Quiet. Still.

RAE
You sure you don't want to read it?

DAVID
If I read it, I'm looking back. I
need to look forward.

RAE
Then, this is goodbye. The honor
was mine. Thank you for being real.
And, you know, saving *everything*.

DAVID
Thank you for keeping the story
alive.

RAE
Thank you for giving us one worth
telling.

DAVID turns away. His wrist device vibrates. A Countdown
begins.

EXT. SAN RAFAEL HOME - MORNING

DAVID stands at the doorstep of April's house from 1906. It's
been updated with a fresh coat of paint.

David examines the faint remnant of a bullet hold in the door frame. His hand hovers mid-air, knuckles inches from the wooden door. Inside, a cartoon plays--muffled voices of animated chaos.

The door opens.

LILY (mid-30s) stands there. Dark hair. Blue eyes. Familiar.

LILY
Yes? Can I help you?

DAVID
This is going to sound crazy, but I
was wondering--

LILY
Are you David?

DAVID blinks.

DAVID
I am.

LILY
She said you'd come. I'm Lily. Come
on in.

INT. SAN RAFAEL HOME - CONTINUOUS

DAVID steps in. Familiar wood creaks beneath his feet. The house is updated but recognizable. New furniture. Fresh paint. A push-button phone on the wall. He follows her past a color TV playing a cartoon dog chasing its tail. A bookshelf draws his eye. H.G. Wells, Jules Verne. His past staring back.

LILY
She said you might come. I never
really believed her.

DAVID eases into a chair. Looks toward the kitchen.

A LITTLE GIRL (5) appears, rubbing her eyes.

GIRL
Momma, who is this man?

LILY
This is someone who knew Great-
Grandma.

DAVID
And who might you be?

LILY
This is my daughter. Kelly.

DAVID
That's a great name.

KELLY
I'm hungry.

LILY
Hi Hungry, I'm Mom.

She smirks at DAVID.

LILY (CONT'D)
Give me a minute.

She and Kelly disappear into the kitchen.

DAVID looks to the bookshelf. Fingers brush the spine of
From Earth to the Moon. He breathes in memory.

LILY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Would you like coffee?

DAVID
No, thank you. I'm not staying
long.

She reenters, drying her hands on a towel.

LILY
I have something to show you.

She pulls a photo album from the shelf. Opens it.

INSERT - PHOTO of APRIL in a crisp nurse's uniform.

DAVID
She went back to nursing?

LILY
For a while. After the war, she
wanted to make a difference.

A page flips. APRIL teaching physics. Chalkboard. Equations.

LILY (CONT'D)
She fought for that job. She said
science shapes the world.

DAVID stares.

Another photo: APRIL laughing with a man, hands intertwined.

LILY (CONT'D)
That's Al. My grandfather. They
were married forty-one years. She
never remarried.

DAVID
She looks happy.

LILY
She was.

Beat.

LILY (CONT'D)
She told me you'd come, you know.

More photos. More lives. APRIL in lecture halls. Older,
radiant.

LILY (CONT'D)
She told stories when I was little.
About time travel. About her
father. We thought it was her being
eccentric. But she never let it go.

DAVID exhales. Torn between grief and awe.

LILY (CONT'D)
She said you gave up everything. To
save everything. Is that true?

Silence. A cartoon character's voice fills the space.

LILY (CONT'D)
She wasn't lying, was she? You're a
time traveler?

DAVID glances at the book *The Time Machine* on the shelf.

DAVID
Actually, no. My father knew April.
He was her friend. I met her when I
was a boy, briefly.

LILY (SMIRKING)
And your father's name was also
David?

DAVID
It was.

LILY pulls down the book *From Earth to the Moon* from the shelf. Turns it over. Offers it.

LILY
She wanted you to have this.

DAVID thumbs through it. A photo is tucked inside.

INSERT - PHOTO: David, Rae, April between them.

On the back: *Don't be mad at me for keeping this. -Bluebird*

DAVID
Thank you, Lily.

LILY
She waited for her time traveler.
Even knowing she wouldn't see him
again.

DAVID
Yeah. She was stubborn like that.

He slips the photo into the book and the book into his coat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Well. I should let you get back to
your day.

LILY
Are you sure? You don't have to
rush.

DAVID
I have to catch a train to
Indianapolis.

Lily nods. They walk to the door.

LILY (SOFTLY)
Are you my great-grandfather?

He stops. Turns to her.

LILY (CONT'D)
What was she like? When she was
young?

David considers keeping up the lie, but gives up.

DAVID
She was the best. She was my
Bluebird.

LILY
She was the best.

DAVID turns the knob. Pauses.

DAVID
Thank you, Miss Dobbs.

LILY
It's Richards, actually. Lily and
Kelly Richards.

David looks at the little girl and sees his friend in her.

DAVID (SMILES)
Take care of that little girl.
She's going to do amazing things.

LILY
I will.

EXT. SAN RAFAEL HOME - MORNING

DAVID walks down the steps. He turns back. Looks at the house. April's house. She lived. She loved. She grew old.

And now-- Only one thing remains. Hold on. For thirty years.

FADE OUT:

EXT. DAVID'S HOME - INDIANAPOLIS - EARLY MORNING

SUPER: "35 years later."

DAVID (90s) stands at his front door, gripping car keys. His breathing is measured. Sunlight spills over a modest suburban street.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

His weathered, old hand turns the key of a car and the engine hums to life. DAVID pulls out of the driveway, calm and focused. A leather-bound journal rests on the passenger seat.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS STREETS - CONTINUOUS

DAVID drives through quiet streets of 2024. Birds chirp. Lawns glisten with dew. His mind is miles decades--away.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - MOVING

He glances at the dashboard: 7:46 AM.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

DAVID pulls into a far corner. Engine idling. He scans. Across the lot--MOSS. Late 30s. Confident. Dangerous. Walking fast. DAVID's hands tighten on the wheel.

DAVID
Let's go, Spaceman.

He floors the gas.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The car surges forward. Time slows. Relativity stretches seconds into eternities. MOSS turns--shocked. Realizes too late.

IMPACT. MOSS lifts into the air, a dark silhouette against the morning sun. He crashes to the pavement with brutal finality. DEAD.

DAVID'S CAR slams into a parked SUV. Metal twists. Glass explodes.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - SECONDS LATER

DAVID slumps against the airbag. Breathing ragged. Dazed.

YOUNG TEACHER (O.S.)
Hey! Are you okay? Someone call an ambulance!

DAVID looks through the shattered windshield. In the SUV--YOUNG DAVID (30s) sits stunned. In the back seat--YOUNG APRIL. Trembling. Alive. DAVID exhales. Relief flooding his eyes. His vision dims. The world begins to fade.

FADE OUT:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Monitors beep. Nurses move with urgency. The world is distant to DAVID (90s), lying on a bed by the window. Sounds are muffled.

Across the room--APRIL (9) sits on a hospital bed, feet swinging, a small bandage on her head. Beside her stands YOUNG DAVID (30s), tense and watchful. DAVID watches them.

RAE (30s) bursts in, eyes locked on APRIL.

RAE
April? David?

APRIL
(smiling)
Abba, right here.

RAE hurries to her side, checking her over with familiar care. He glances at YOUNG DAVID.

YOUNG DAVID
We're okay. The car's not.

RAE
Screw the car. What happened?

YOUNG DAVID leans in.

YOUNG DAVID
A guy lost control of his car in the parking lot and hit someone. The crazy thing though was that the guy he hit had some kind of gun on him.

RAE
(stiffens)
A gun?

YOUNG DAVID nods.

KELLY and DEVEREAUX rush in.

DEVEREAUX
There you are! David, are you okay?

KELLY
What the hell, man?

YOUNG DAVID
We're fine.

APRIL
The guy he hit had a gun.

RAE exchanges a glance with DAVID.

KELLY

Who?

APRIL points across the ER to David.

APRIL

The man he hit.

They all look at DAVID. Frail. Still. Watching them. KELLY blinks. Recognition stirs. DAVID gestures gently to her.

She approaches, slow. Uncertain. Drawn in.

KELLY

Do I know you? Are you okay?
They're saying you may have stopped
a school shooting.

DAVID doesn't answer. Instead, he lifts the journal from his lap. Offers it. She takes it. A photograph peeks out. She slides it free.

INSERT - PHOTO: DAVID, RAE, and APRIL. Laughing. A life long past.

KELLY scans the journal and sees impossible dates. She looks at the elderly man in the bed, recognition dawning.

KELLY (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)

David?

DAVID

Hey, Kels.

He struggles. Murmurs:

DAVID (CONT'D)

Stop Moss before he begins.

KELLY

The Bridge Protocol works? Who's
Moss?

DAVID

It's all in the journal. From Earth
to the Moon, Kels. It's all in the
journal.

He opens his hand. A diamond earring rests inside. KELLY gasps. She reaches for it. Turns it over. It matches the one she's wearing. DAVID's breathing slows.

His eyes flick to APRIL. To RAE. To KELLY. David reaches for Kelly's hand and curls gently around it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
From Earth to the Moon.

His breath fades. A smile lingers. The monitors hum softly as his heart stops.

Doctors and nurses rush in, but it's too late. His journey is over.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END.