

Citadel-Pilot
DAMOCLES

by
Stephen Moore

EXT. EARTH ORBIT - EVENING

A LARGE ROCK orbits the planet. The rock is between the size of an aircraft carrier and a small island, it's space so it's difficult to gage size. Attached to one end of the rock are three large engines. Attached to the opposite end are a cluster of smaller engines. The impression is the rock is pointed toward the planet. Tiny puffs can be seen from the smaller engines as the rock makes a course correction.

The planet below is Earth. Dusk has just arrived to the area west of Lake Michigan. The east coast cities stand out in sharp contrast to the dark, the coast visible as the artificial light ends.

INT. NOGUCHI OFFICE - EVENING

SENATOR NOGUCHI is an impressive looking man. All politician with a well crafted smile, walk, stance, well tailored clothes and years of practice in how to never loose your cool.

He is sitting behind a functional wood, antique looking, desk.

His office is warm and inviting and many pictures are on the wall behind his desk. A variation of the Minnesota State flag is in the room. A large window faces east and the lights of Minneapolis are visible as is the countryside further east. His desk occupies one side of the room and across from it is a large picture of CITADEL taken from the air during the day.

He is reading from a document while working at a terminal. There is a report on the terminal where the line (...above noted levels an anomaly appears where the absorption is not restricted to kinetic...). Further down the page is the line (... recommend delay to assess secondary effects or at minimum, isolate nature of anomaly.)

The Senator puts down the document. The title now visible, DAMOCLES PROPOSAL. He walks over to the window and looks out. He is troubled by what he just read. Returning to the desk he touches a control.

NOGUCHI
Get me Senator Fosters office, tell
him it's urgent.

He pauses while listening. He looks like he may loose his cool.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
I appreciate that but advise the
Senator it can't wait.

INT. OPS CENTER - EVENING

NORAD on steroids. The Ops Center is a military techno-geeks wet dream. Panels of data and real time images exist on the walls and float virtually anywhere else they are needed. A half dozen TECHNICIANS sit at control stations scattered about, all focused on their duties. In the center is the OPERATORS station and immediately behind her stands the MAJOR. This is military but not US military. Some of the displays will show the rock in space.

The Operator is female, professional and it is clear she is in full control of the multiple displays around her. The Major is a strong male in his mid forties. He is a professional soldier. He is not evil.

OPERATOR
Target confirmed, using standard comm. to Citadel. Female late twenties, posing as guest at the Governors Ball.

MAJOR
Standard Comms. Good, I hope we surprised her with that one.

The Major crosses over to a display.

MAJOR (CONT'D)
A20 is available.

He pauses for a moment. He's making a tough decision.

MAJOR (CONT'D)
Initiate burn and send out the blockers.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT - EVENING

The three drive engines on the rock burn brightly as it begins to move toward the planet.

INT. OPS CENTER - EVENING

A new display has been added to the others, it shows two clocks, one shows "time to target" and is a countdown clock starting at 47:35.

The second clock is ETA, it will constantly vary and presently shows 40:18. A route from MADISON to MEDFORD in WISCONSIN is traced. Six dots showing the intercept teams are visible with the two closest to Madison showing on the move. The trail shows an expected route to avoid these patrols.

OPERATOR

Target confirmed at 150 miles out with an ETA of forty minutes. Metro Police report they are pursuing, should I call them off?

MAJOR

No. They aren't equipped to stop her but they may slow her down. Blocker teams one and two should be in the air and visible. Move them to force her to burn up some time going around.

The Operator contacts the teams. The detour of the target becomes more pronounced and the ETA number rises to 42:37

OPERATOR

Team Able and Baker to position.
High visibility patrol pattern.

Turning slightly toward the Major but not looking away from her console.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Teams in position, lighting up the sky.

MAJOR

Very good. Do we have a feed from the Metro Police on the chase?

The Operator responds immediately slightly raising an eyebrow and holding back a smile.

OPERATOR

Yes sir, they are about to make contact.

The sound from the POLICE DISPATCHER fills the room. It is poor quality and the Dispatcher is eager, caught up in the moment, excited.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

Car 26 reports visual at Pine and Grey. Suspect is on a stolen Rathburn Interceptor.

(MORE)

DISPATCHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Repeat Suspect is operating a Rathburn Interceptor and is heavily armed and dangerous. Tactical has three interceptors in the air so you are ordered to pursue only. Do not engage!

EXT. MADISON WISCONSIN - NIGHT

NINA KELLY is having fun. She's piloting a cross between a motorcycle and a jet plane. It is big, shiny and armed. Although she appears to be exposed a blue glow shimmers back from the nose of the vehicle and back around her. She could be mid twenties to early thirties, fit and shines with confidence. She is wearing an almost not there gown made of silk, smoke and mirrors. In this time it's what a young woman would wear to an important occasion if she wanted to be noticed.

Clashing with the outfit are a pair of heavy military style boots, unlaced, and a three quarter length military style jacket. She is wearing headgear that matches the interceptor in color and style. It has an earpiece covering her right ear, a small microphone and a clear display in front of her right eye. A different, smaller device hangs from her left ear like present wireless headsets only sleeker, more organic.

A CASE, about the size of a laptop, is slung from her shoulder.

The night sky is clear and moonless. A small red star is just visible slightly west of directly overhead. The City is bright. The architecture reflects the centuries with utopian promise nestled in with minimalist efficiency. For a city of the future where flying vehicles are normal the traffic is still mostly ground level. The streets become bright arteries as traffic moves.

The wide river flowing through the city is dark, save for the reflected light and the occasional ship.

A single police cruiser is following, in the distance three lights from the police interceptors are coming into view and a second police cruiser approaches from below.

NINA

I have to say good night to some unwanted company. Have Dori standing by.

MILO (O.S.)

We are.

Nina turns in a wide arc as the police begin to converge on her.

She heads toward a large series of towers under construction. Open levels littered with construction materials, wires and cables everywhere and familiar construction towers still being used.

The NARRATOR begins. She has a warm, strong voice. Smooth and low with a slight accent that anyone would think of as from somewhere else but not sure where. She speaks with the confidence of a skilled storyteller in front of a willing audience. It should be disturbing to the audience that she is talking. The entire series has her narration and it won't be clear who she is until the end.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Time travel is easy. Like
everything else in the universe
there are rules.

Nina moves between buildings with the police in pursuit and turns quickly into the construction area.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
The first rule is, to travel in
time you need a machine.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Nina cuts through the opening and dives as a cruiser comes close, she turns around a corner and weaves through the crossbeams between a crane and an adjacent building. The cruiser is unable to fit and crashes into the structure.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
One to send. One to receive.

Clearing the building the remaining squad car rises out of harms way as the three interceptors move in. Nina looks back and adjusts something on her console. She turns hard and races toward one of the unfinished buildings.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Until someone builds the first
machine nothing can travel back.

INT. SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

With the interceptors close behind Nina flies into an open floor of a skyscraper dodging everything in her path.

Two interceptors follow while the third moves through the floor above.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Until that is done, there is no independent travel, no saving the world from the evils of the past.

Nina is kicking up dust as she moves making visibility difficult for the two following her. The one above appears to be gaining. She reaches the other side of the structure and pulls up hard and to the left. The pursuer on the floor above comes out almost on top of her. He slows and starts to turn to pursue when one of the pursuers from Nina's floor comes out pulling up and collides into the other interceptor.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

The third interceptor avoids the impact and races after Nina. The Police cruised begins to descend when Nina exits the construction area and continues through the city.

Nina's face. Her right eye is obscured by the glass display from the headset with tiny images flashing across it. Her left eye is clear.

The final interceptor has closed and fires on Nina. The blue screen reacts to the glancing blow and Nina corrects.

Her Left eye begins to show signs of a heads up display, much nicer than the one on the small glass screen and she hears the voice of PIA.

PIA is her Personal Information Assistant. PIA speaks with a accentless, dry female voice. PIA has no personality, is merely a machine and is implanted into Nina.

PIA
Online.

Nina dives to the street level as the cruiser and interceptor follow.

NINA
Activate Armor.

EXT. STREET LEVEL - NIGHT

While racing above traffic and pedestrians along a street with dozens of shops and restaurants the dress that was almost smoke becomes smoke. It begins to flow over the jacket and boots quickly dissolving them.

A "standard female, form fitting battle suit" is built around Nina as she twists and turns through traffic. The boots are replaced with something more suitable, the coat completely gone, as is part of the metal cowling of the interceptor body.

The cruiser begins to close and Nina pulls up, climbing towards the waiting interceptor.

NINA
Control override.

The vehicle control systems go dark as PIA takes control. The headset that was part of the control for the vehicle is dissolved and becomes part of the helmet covering Nina's head. The case is no longer slung from her shoulder but is moved to become part of a backpack.

Nina turns in the seat and faces the incoming interceptor. A small shield activates on her arm.

NINA (CONT'D)
Drop Screen.

The blue screen drops and the incoming interceptor takes the opportunity to fire. The bolt hits Nina's shield then the screen is raised as the vehicle cuts between buildings toward the river.

NINA (CONT'D)
Fully charged and ready to go.
Advise Citadel to cycle up.

PIA
Done.

Nina turns the vehicle and in her first obviously aggressive display fires at the cruiser hitting it and causing it to veer off. She flips back to her original route. Just ahead can be seen a wide multi lane bridge crossing the river. If anyone was to notice, a small wake from a ship can be seen in the river on the far side of the bridge.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The second rule is about Paradox.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Nina races toward the bridge and cuts under just missing the barge that has entered from the other side.

NARRATOR
Paradox is killed at the source.

The final interceptor is not so lucky. It follows under and smashes into the barge as Nina clears from the other side.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
If something you will do creates a
paradox the sending machine will
not activate.

The explosion boils up from under the bridge and over the side.

Nina heads upriver and north.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The voice of the police dispatcher is wild over the speaker as the Major reaches down and shuts off the feed.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
My god we've just lost interceptor
six! The bridge is on fire!

OPERATOR
Subject will be clear of the city
in two minutes.

MAJOR
Have Delta and Tango get airborne.
Low profile until we need them.

INT. NOGUCHI OFFICE - NIGHT

The Senator is pacing the floor of his office. His body language is opposite to the tone in his voice. His body is tense and agitated while his voice is in politic mode. He is calm and charming as he speaks to nothing.

NOGUCHI
I understand the policy. What I'm suggesting is, in light of this new information, we initiate a warning to all critical personnel ahead of any action. My original report to the committee already suggested this so it would be easy to simply implement it in the short term.

The Senator stops his pacing, a smile similar to the one worn when talking to an idiot crosses his face.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
Senator Foster, if the Citadel
Spies were as entrenched as you
suggest then they would know about
the plan already.

Noguchi is listing to Senator Foster babble.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
It is simple Senator. It's because
they are time travellers.

Noguchi walks over to the window and stares out.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
Fantasy or not they've been in
possession of advanced technology
for over five hundred years and we
don't know what the results of this
action will be. We must ensure
anyone of importance is warned and
has a chance to get clear.

Noguchi cocks an eyebrow and breaks into a slight grin. He is angry and his control is slipping.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
That's MOOT point Senator not MUTE
point. Why? Has the proposal been
cancelled?

The color washes from Noguchi's face.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
You can't be serious.

Noguchi walks back to his desk.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
You Idiot!

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

Nina is cruising north very fast. City lights fading behind her as she passes over forest and small towns. Above and slightly to the west the red star has grown slightly bigger.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Considering what will happen in the
next few days Paradox will not be a
problem.

EXT. AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Pilots race to their interceptors and prepare to take off. Slightly larger than either Nina's stolen flier or the ones used by the Metro Police, these fliers are more bobsled like, the pilot sitting in an open cockpit with the now familiar blue glow providing cover where you might find glass on a modern jet. Immediately behind this bubble are a group of control surfaces, fins used to provide stability at high speed.

Less futuristic is the throwing of switches and whining of engine as the machine prepares to take off.

The voice of the Operator comes from overhead speaker and headset.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Move to intercept. Track at range.
Maximum cover.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

The display flashes the first pair of interceptors on a small display. The image is similar to the one shown in the Ops Center and the high visibility blockers have arrived at their positions. A route similar to the expected route from the original map.

NINA
Are they tracking?

PIA
The emitter was destroyed, they
should not be able to track your
hardware.

NINA
Anything coming from the flier?

PIA
All signals blocked. No active
scanning.

NINA
Drop below the trees. The
satellites can still track heat and
light. They know where I'm heading,
I don't want to make it too easy.

The flier drops while Nina works some controls on her arm. The back pack changes exposing a white storage box that looks a lot like a portable hard drive system.

Connections form and attach to the unit. A small idiot light is the only sign the unit is active. The flier has reached ground level and begins moving between trees at a sickening speed. Nina continues to work without noticing her surroundings. It is clear she is not controlling the vehicle.

INT. CITADEL OFFICE - NIGHT

Citadel is Spartan in nature, this office follows the design of the rest of the structure.

SENAI is a young woman, very bright, very engaged, no social graces. She's reading something, poetry or fiction, and it's having an emotional effect on her. As the call from Nina comes in she reaches over to a control console and does whatever she needs to do without looking away from her reading. Her voice is calm and even, hiding the emotions her face shows. It is meant to look odd.

NINA (O.S.)
Transmitting data for relay.

SENAI
Receiving. At this rate the transmission will complete just before you get here.

NINA (O.S.)
Understood. If it stops, upload what you have immediately, do not wait for me.

SENAI
System is online, we'll be ready when you get here.

Senai reaches for a tissue to clear her moistened eyes.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

Flying in and out of trees, up over cabins, buildings and dodging wires the flier approaches a river.

NINA
Coming in hot.

The flier makes a sudden sharp turn when it reaches the river and starts following it's course traveling dead center.

NINA (CONT'D)
So much for stealthy.

PIA

Your course is being directed.
Trying to verify theory by
measuring response.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The third rule is the details.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The indication for Nina changes from a large fuzzy dot to a sharp point over the river. She is just north of one of the blocker teams.

OPERATOR

We have hard contact. She's following the river slightly off expected course. Baker and Able are clearly visible to her south.

The Major looks over and frowns.

MAJOR

She's not that careless. Have Baker chase her north. Restrict their maximum speed to 270.

The Operator passes on the order as the Major turns. The clock shows 36:12 and the ETA is quickly dropping past 30 onto the high 20s and changes often with course and speed.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Damn.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

Nina's flier pulls up from the river and again heads north, accelerating.

NARRATOR

Maximum mass 117 kilo's. Maximum Jump four hundred thirty years, eighty seven days, three hours, 27 minutes and six seconds and you will return to the moment you left or not at all.

Nina looks back and see's nothing on the horizon. The city glow is soft and fading.

PIA

They are following.

NINA

That's good?

PIA

They took to long to respond.
You're being herded.

NINA

The best way to avoid a trap is to
know it's there, and then go
through it.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The course on the display screen is now a straight line to
the Citadel. The difference between the set time and the ETA
is just over ten minutes.

MAJOR

Bitch.

The Major starts scanning all the screens.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Have Able heavy burn and flank her
from the west, push her off course.
Delta, Tango move to intercept.
High visibility. Engage and subdue.
Do not shoot to kill.

The Major examines another screen. The Operator is relaying
the commands.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Baker can stand down and return to
base.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

The display shows Able, Delta and Tango following orders.
Nina's course is curving to avoid Able but is now heading to
a point where Delta and Tango will meet.

NINA

There they are.

PIA

ETA with main cluster six minutes.

Nina indicates a point halfway to the intercept point.

NINA
Hit the deck here and cut back
west.

Nina heads off into the night. The new red star is now brighter and redder with just noticeable flashes of yellow.

EXT. CITADEL OUTER SHIELD - NIGHT

MILO, grizzled old cowboy, wise beyond his years and terminally quiet. He is a carefully created cliche so anyone meeting him immediately defer both caution and respect. Arriving at the south end just inside the Citadel Outer Shield he scans the horizon but otherwise calmly sits and waits. He's riding a horse and leading another into a area where no trees grow. This is the shield boundary. The horses are skittish, which startle some birds who fly through the shield. As they pass through there is an obvious disruption in a field that is otherwise invisible. Outside the shield is a clearing. Citadel cannot be seen through the forest.

MILO
Steady now.

He raises a cheroot to his mouth and sits there, quietly chewing on it.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Senator Noguchi exits an impressive office building towards the local equivalent of a LIMOUSINE. He pauses to look up, the red star is bright. He shakes his head as an aide hands him an earpiece.

NOGUCHI
Why was there no evacuation order!

The senator enters the vehicle.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

NOGUCHI
I demanded a two hundred mile zone where all high priority personnel were to cleared.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

MAJOR

Your request was noted. As this is a purely kinetic strike any side effects should cause nothing more than a light show and noise. The fifty mile perimeter was considered adequate.

The Senators voice comes over a speaker.

NOGUCHI (O.S.)

I want it noted I consider this act reckless. We have no idea what will happen.

MAJOR

With any luck we'll end a real threat to this nations security.

The Major is done being nice. He is irritated and the Senator is something he doesn't want to deal with.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Your objection is noted. If you're worried you can head west. From Minneapolis you should be clear in minutes. You have half an hour.

The Major motions to ops and the connection is severed.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

If he calls back, route him directly to the Manager.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

The Senator removes the earpiece and looks toward the front of the car.

NOGUCHI

Head west.

DRIVER (O.C.)

Where to?

The Senator looks out the window.

NOGUCHI

Montana. You'll know when to stop.
As fast as possible.

Picking up a phone like device he pushes a couple of buttons. His voice becomes softer.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

Sarah? Get out of there and head west. As fast as you can. Yes they've done it. Wait until you're moving then call anyone you want.

Nodding as he listens he looks out the window, resignation and fear clearly written on his face and in his eyes.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

About half an hour. Call me as soon as you can after that. You'll know when.

Another call and his voice returns to normal.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

Hi honey. Yeah I'm going to be late. She did, that's great. Tell her I'll give her a big hug when I get home.

Noguchi looks out the window, distracted.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

What? No nothing, just the usual. Probably another hour and I'll be home soon after. You too. Yes we'll talk. No I can't see any problem, whatever makes you happy.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

The vehicle races west.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

Nina dives into the treeline below. This is not a death defying race at high speed dodging Branches, trees and logs, it's ugly.

She smashes through branches, the forest is choked with saplings, weeds, dry branches and fallen timber. The flier is managing to avoid the tree trunks only but otherwise the rest does what branches, saplings and weeds do when hit at speeds above 100 MPH.

The armor and the blue field are more than a match for the constant pounding as mere wood gives way to unknown alloy and flashes of energy. One of the turns is a little tight and she sideswipes the side of tree trunk. The trunk is damaged, splintered and the impact has a small but noticeable effect on Nina.

The trail she leaves is an obvious cloud of destruction at ground level but from above, the canopy of the forest provides cover. The only signs visible from above are when she bursts into the open to cross trail, stream or road.

At one point PIA points out one intercept team passing them overhead.

PIA

There they go, no deviation, still heading south.

A large clearing ahead removes cover. Nina smiles, shakes her head.

NINA

Of course. Let's not have things too easy.

Moments after clearing the trees the display on the flier shows the team behind them reversing. Moving over a section of the snakelike river who's flood plane is the cause of this clearing Nina accelerates causing an impressive rooster tail.

NINA (CONT'D)

OK time to find out who has the better A.I.

The flier crashes into the oncoming wall of trees moments before two of the chase interceptors follow.

The chasers are having their own trouble not only dealing with moving through the forest at night but the additional cloud of debris that both show that they're still following Nina but also hinder them from avoiding other obstacles.

The chasing interceptors are larger and less streamlined. Weapons and any forward pointing sensors begin to suffer the death of a thousand cuts, eventually breaking. The main bodies are as solid as Nina's flier and weather the pounding.

The third chaser, overhead, is racing over what appears to be normal forest with signs of the occasional tree getting bumped as the chase continues below.

PIA

Hold on tight.

The flier cuts right then dives down a ravine. The pursuers burst into the open area and move to try to flank Nina on either side.

Cutting sharply left Nina heads to the side of the ravine and climbs. A quick turn past a cluster of trees and she enters a rock cut. The chasers are too far apart, one follows her while the other impacts the trees. The interceptor survives the initial crash but begins to rotate. The tail section is not as well armored as the front and the control fins begin to be torn off. Turning further the interceptor is clearly out of control and impacts tail first into the rock wall.

PIA (CONT'D)

Second team changing course. They will be here in four minutes.

NINA

What is the status of this thing?

PIA

It's handling the pounding well enough. It's equally armed to the interceptors, smaller and more maneuverable. The shields and armor won't stand up long if they start firing.

Off to the side an area opens. It is a cut area near the base of a small hill. The cut is long and narrow and curves out of the distance. Nina looks at the display. The display shows the cut area curving around coming to a stop at a large mass.

Nina climbs above the tree line and the damaged chaser follows. The Chaser from above closes quickly and, its weapons functional, lets loose some short bursts. The damaged unit falling behind Nina turns and dives toward the cut area.

Both chasers follow as Nina hugs the treeline of the cut along the inside of the curve as the cut narrows.

Nina pulls up sharply just ahead of a very large pile of tree stumps. The flier with the working weapons pulls up as well just glancing the top of the pile. The damaged flier, unable to react as quickly, buries itself deep into the pile.

NINA

Damn, wrong one.

Nina races into the sky and again north. The display shows three more interceptors closing. They have split up, two coming directly at her while one moves to join the remaining chaser from the forest.

A fast and furious dogfight begins. In the process one of the interceptors manages to hit the tail control section of Nina's interceptor and the flier begins to loose stability.

NINA (CONT'D)
I need a new ride.

PIA
Stand by.

An odd set of movements causes two of the interceptors to back off. The flier is low paced closely behind by an interceptor as a second dives down from above.

PIA (CONT'D)
Get ready.

Nina pulls her legs up and her feet back until they rest on a back support. Her head gear changes to become a full helmet covering her face and connecting to her neck. The Flier gives full power and climbs straight up. The chaser falls slightly behind as it tries to keep up. The interceptor ahead is diving as the pilot readies weapons.

PIA (CONT'D)
Now.

The blue field drops and Nina jumps. The Flier makes a last second course correction and plows directly into the Interceptor diving from above.

The image could be slow motion but the effect is two bodies moving at a similar speed through the air. Nina rolls, gracefully, back as the chaser comes up from behind, her speed slowing she lands on the chaser.

The chaser is pointed up then begins to level off. Nina is laying on the force cowling while her feet rest on the control surfaces.

The pilot of the chaser looks confused as his controls go dead, a moment later the cowling disappears and Nina grabs him.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

The pilot of the chaser is falling from the sky. Nina climbs into the larger but more snug interceptor and grabs the controls.

NINA
No response.

PIA
Working on it.

The fighter comes to life and the field returns. The helmet retracts and Nina takes a breath.

PIA (CONT'D)
Restored.

The interceptor climbs and the two others start to close on her.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The clock shows 29:37 and the ETA displays 27:20

MAJOR
Break off. Chase her to the target but make her work for it. Drive her off course.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

The red star is brighter, noticeable to anyone who would be looking up. The trees continue off to the distance. The lights from the small towns disappear and the route north becomes dark. Nina continues to head north, moving and dodging to avoid her chasers. Gradually getting closer.

In the distance is a glow. The light from the Citadel complex. Nothing sharp or detailed but clear indication something is there.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Citadel looks so different pre-event.

EXT. CITADEL - DAY

Daytime view of the Citadel. The main building is oval, almond shaped turned slightly, asymmetrical. Windows artistically cover the smaller end while the larger end has one long slash, a row of windows set at an odd angle from the top to the ground. An energy dome, clearly visible, surrounds the structure, thirty meters from each end of the Citadel. A perfect circular bubble.

Outside this bubble are a few, almost rustic, houses. Farming is taking place and some animals, including a stable with horses, are visible. There are no roads leading to or from the structure.

A second circle, a mile in diameter, cuts through the forest surrounding the community. It is the only normally visible sign of the outer shield. Unlike the inner shield it is invisible save for the moments something harmless passes through it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It started out as The Ahluwalia Research Laboratory. The project funded entirely by Naseem Ahluwalia, Professor with the Particle and Nuclear Astrophysics department at Princeton. On the day it went online, the day Doctor Ahluwalia disappeared, people started calling it the Citadel.

EXT. CITADEL SUMMER 2231 - DAY

The building is the same yet most of the forest is gone. Roads lead to the site and the usual checkpoints and parking areas are in place. It is 2231, summer. Neither the inner or outer shields are visible.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That was also the day the Government discovered the lab was a time machine and the Government did what Governments do. They became afraid and they wanted to take control.

People are evacuating the site, cars moving away then the first military vehicle shows up, followed by another and they are the head of a column of light armor vehicles and trucks.

They approach the first gate, just over half a mile from the building a confused security guard steps out as the lead vehicle stops. He's talking on a radio when he drops everything, opens the gates and walks away. The lead vehicle starts moving toward the building.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The first surprise was the most unexpected.

The first energy field, closest to Citadel activates as the vehicles begin to close in. The lead vehicle approaches the outer shield and stops suddenly. Although shaken the passengers are OK. The vehicle tries to move forward yet the tires spin and nothing happens. The last of the stragglers leave. Their vehicles passing through the field with only a slight disturbance as they go.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

They discovered, if you had any technology or weapon on your person, you couldn't pass the first shield. The shock was twofold as, until then, no one had managed to create a stable field let alone one a mile in diameter and so effective.

A soldier is tossing his knife at the shield and watching it bounce, he throws a rock and it passes through. He walks up and hits the shield with another rock, meets opposition then he tosses the same rock through the field. His commanding officer notices and orders him to remove his weapons. The soldier tries again and walks through the shield.

A soldier wearing coveralls approaches the shield and easily passes through, a second dressed the same is stopped as is a third. A small electric device is removed as is a small knife and both can proceed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The first days were the most difficult. The Government made demands, threats and promises while the remaining members of Citadel simply ignored them.

A fence is built around the outer shield.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

They tried closing them in with steel.

The fence dissolves overnight.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And stone.

They build a concrete wall still further away that also crumbles overnight.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And cutting them off from the outside world.

Heavy equipment begins digging a trench only to suddenly shut down. It's restarted yet the moment the shovel touches the dirt it stops again.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But nothing worked.

Towns are evacuated and an army base is built.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Eventually they isolated the site and stood back and watched. Citadel continued to endure and would remain essentially unchanged until some time in the year 2762.

EXT. CITADEL 2984 - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sometime in the next few days something would happen to change the peaceful setting.

The Citadel of 2984 is an ancient dome showing some aesthetic additions from the original design, more artistic than anything else, sitting in the center of a mile diameter shelf atop a half mile Crystal Spire. Giant Crystal Petals surround the dome itself and look like they froze there. Imagine a stubby mushroom with a thinner, delicate, inverted cap. The whole structure is at the center of a crater six miles in diameter. The base of the flat crater is glass, cracked and gouged with time, water pooling and flowing over and through it. The walls of the crater are solid and straight, cracked in places but not crumbling and made of the same fused glass and rock. Beyond that there are still signs of when everything was stripped bare for over a hundred miles in every direction.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Something in the next few days would cause everyone for one hundred and sixty miles in every direction to die and Citadel will become this.

The image changes from daylight in 2984 to night in 2762

EXT. CITADEL - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It became known as the event. No one knew what happened. Ever since it did no Government ever approached the Citadel.

Nina is curving through the sky, the clearing south of the first shield is visible and Milo waits inside near the trees. Citadel is visible above the inner forest.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The clocks show 11:33 and ETA of 10:40

OPERATOR
Target on impact course with field.

MAJOR
Stand by. She didn't come this far
to fail.

EXT. CITADEL OUTER SHIELD - NIGHT

Nina climbs and gains some distance on the chasers. She dives as they follow. She heads straight for the clearing and a few hundred yards away is skimming just above the grass. The Interceptor begins to slow and the chasers close in. The canopy shuts down and Nina climbs up and perches herself near the top. A moment before she meets the outer shield a field of green surrounds her. At the shield the interceptor is going quite slow and Nina jumps. The Interceptor hits the shield as does one of the chasers. Both are stopped, the rider of the chaser stunned. Nina passes through the shield and there is a different, liquid, reaction as the two shields meet. The green field surrounding Nina dissolves as she passes through.

Nina tucks and rolls, bleeding off what little momentum she had left then gets up and runs towards Milo and the Horses.

Nina approaches the riderless horse.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The assignment was simple. Find out
what happened.

NINA
Hi beautiful.

She climbs on to Dori, looks at Milo and says with a grin.

NINA (CONT'D)
You too Milo.

MILO
Let's ride girl.

They both turn to the forest toward Citadel. There is a slight shadow visible under them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And make it home.

EXT. CITADEL OUTER SHIELD - NIGHT

One chaser climbs to try to follow overhead while the other returns to his interceptor.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

OPERATOR

Report that subject is on horseback. ETA falling outside limits.

The countdown clock shows 9:12 and the new ETA is 7:20.

MAJOR

Get me a feed from overhead. Too late to worry now. Is the Dome active?

OPERATOR

Affirmative. Cycle has begun and they'll be optimum in time.

A display shows an energy level dropping gradually. It is a horizontal display and shows time across the bottom as the levels change. There is a solid line at the time of impact. A horizontal line runs just above the baseline and the energy drop has not arrived there yet.

EXT. CITADEL FOREST - NIGHT

The horses make good time through the wood until Milo pulls up and they slow to a trot.

MILO

Senai reports they aren't following. One is heading out and the other is playing Peeping Tom overhead.

Nina looks up, unable to make out anything through the canopy.

NINA

They knew where I was going.

MILO

Not a surprise once you headed north.

NINA

No it was before that. I think they knew from the start.

MILO

Something worth looking into. Did you get what you wanted?

NINA

Yep. History of the world up until an hour ago. All the secrets and lies included. Senai should have a copy by now, fortunately I'll get to go back with it. Pity, it was going so well until the end there.

They move into a clearing, the Citadel dome is visible through the last stand of trees. There is "moonlight".

MILO

I guess what's coming must be pretty bad.

Nina looks over, her eyes betraying what she knows she can't say.

NINA

Why do you say that?

Milo smiles. Head tilted slightly askew. He's going to play the game.

MILO

You made an impression on a lot of folk tonight. Fatally in a few cases. If that's not going to trigger paradox then something big must be coming.

Nina has a sheepish look on her face.

NINA

Something but we don't know what yet. Hopefully this information will tell us.

MILO

But you don't know what.

NINA

Not really. Citadel survives but we have too many questions. A lot is unknown and for this place anything unrecorded is an oddity.

MIL

This place is odd alright.

They enter the last stand of trees and Nina looks at Milo.

NINA

Earlier you said something.

Nina pauses and remembers.

NINA (CONT'D)

Stand and wait.

MIL

Milton. They also serve who only stand and wait. Interesting man, terrible card player.

NINA

Is that what you do here? Stand and wait while travellers come and go?

MIL

Something like that. I'm here as long and whenever you need me. Until the next time.

Nina looks away, embarrassed and a little ashamed.

They clear the last stand of trees and dismount. The inner shield glows subtly as they both approach. Milo looks up and the shadow from his brim is sharp across his face.

MIL (CONT'D)

Well, look at that.

Nina looks up. What is coming is reflected in her eyes.

The rock, still over five minutes away, is directly overhead all red and yellow and white and fire. It is also silent. Moving faster than sound and directly at them, the sound will never reach their position.

NINA

Oh crap.

They run toward the shield.

EXT. CITADEL OUTER SHIELD - NIGHT

The interceptor is directly overhead. An image of Nina and Milo pausing at the shield then passing through is on his screen. The shadow from the pilots hand is sharp and he looks up. His eyes go wide with fear and panic.

The interceptor activates full burn and heads south.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The feed from above Citadel is on a display, Nina and Milo are between the inner shield and the building, running, then the image changes to trees and the view below a fast moving interceptor.

MAJOR

What happened to the feed?

OPERATOR

The pilot saw what was coming and bugged out.

The Major understands but is still angry.

MAJOR

Have him charged with deserting his post when he gets back but tell his commander to go easy.

The clock shows 5:33 and the ETA shows 4:10

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Time?

OPERATOR

Loss of contact T minus 5:45.
Probability of success is low.

The Major nods, grunts, is unhappy and moves back to his station.

INT. CITADEL ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Nina and Milo run through the door. They pause for some sort of decontamination.

NINA

What the hell is that!

MILO

Looks like something. Something big.

The decontamination ends as they continue.

INT. CITADEL PORTAL ROOM - NIGHT

The portal room takes up most of the large end of the Citadel dome. At the entrance is a statue off to one side with the name Naseem Ahluwalia before it. She is a woman of East Indian heritage in her mid forties just over five feet tall wearing a conservative "member of the academy" outfit. It is the only piece of decoration in the room.

Entering the portal room there is a path to the right. The time vortex is created in a mass of crystal and alloy that forms a parabola with its back to the left. It climbs three stories and the floor opens up below showing it goes just as deep. There is a railing preventing anyone from accidentally falling over the edge and it extends to the right around in a circle until it meets a walkway directly in front of the parabola.

The walkway ends at the focal point of the parabola where a simple control panel sits just ahead of an empty, slightly raised platform. There are sensors around the focal point but none interfere with the space between the platform and the parabola. The only other important detail is the slash of windows. If you were standing on the platform looking out, down the length of the walkway there would be a set of windows starting a few yards to the right of the center line of the walkway and extending up and away at about thirty degrees from the vertical until they end seventy degrees up from the Horizontal. There is a bright light coming through those windows.

SENAI is waiting at the walkway looking out the window. She is wearing something casual yet efficient. She seems to be in awe.

Nina and Milo race to the end of the walkway to meet her.

SENAI

Oh my.

Milo gently pulls Senai toward the walkway.

MILO

Come on, times running short.

Startled from her fugue state Senai corrects Milo as she moves toward the control panel.

SENAI

But, time is a constant. Only
perception changes.

MILO

Glad to have you back.

SENAI

You said that last time.

INT. CITADEL PLATFORM - NIGHT

Nina passes the console. Grabs a small data storage device
that was made from her transmission earlier and walks back to
the console.

NINA

How much time?

Senai looks at the console.

SENAI

Two minutes.

NINA

There's enough time. Follow me. You
can come back after it's over.

SENAI

We don't need to. We survive.

NINA

You don't know that, all we know is
this place survives.

Nina is backing up on to the platform.

NINA (CONT'D)

What happens is massive. It changes
everything. You don't need to risk
it. We can send you back after the
event.

Senai is standing at the console with Milo just to her side.
The panel is flashing when a small screen shows OVERRIDE
ACTIVE.

Senai looks down. Something is different. A small beam is
emitted from the side of the console and strikes Nina in the
neck. A dim "techno-organic" glow is left. She doesn't feel
it and is too busy pleading to notice.

NINA (CONT'D)
You don't have to die here!

MILO
We'll be fine. We always have.

SENAI
That's odd?

Senai activates the portal and there is a pause. The system begins to whine like it's charging.

NINA
What's wrong?

MILO
Nothing, just getting finicky in her old age.

Senai looks happy again as everything cycles through normally. She activates the main control and the machine begins the transfer. As Nina is caught in the expanding glow of whatever makes the machine work she just has time to catch Milo and Senai talking.

MILO (CONT'D)
Well, here we go again.

Senai is jumping up and down like a giddy school girl.

SENAI
I just love this part. I hope I get to be a flower child this time.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The Major is pacing. He is frustrated.

OPERATOR
Power level at minimum. T minus twenty.

The Major looks over. The Operator nods no.

EXT. WISCONSIN SKY - NIGHT

The rock is dissolving as the air it cuts through eats away at its surface. Color jets spray as rock turns into gas and then into flame. Citadel lies directly below.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The power levels begin to rise. After a moment the Operator notices something.

OPERATOR
Power levels rising slower than normal.

The Major turns and moves to the console.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)
Definitely unusually slow.

The Operator is perking up. This is good news.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)
It looks like we may catch the tail end!

The Major looks over at a screen. It is a live view of Citadel from a distance. The ground is bright but the rock still above frame.

The monitor with the energy reading changes and the impact point now happens just before the levels reach the horizontal line

Citadel is displayed sharply on a monitor.

A satellite view has it obscured by the rock.

The moment is quiet as the outer dome suddenly becomes visible then there is a flash.

EXT. CITADEL OUTER SHIELD - NIGHT

The crater was not created by impact.

The Rock touched the outer field and the field began to turn the rock into energy. That energy was supposed to be absorbed by the field but it was too much so the energy was funneled into the open time vortex.

The absorption rate had a momentary pause where a six mile diameter bubble of plasma, hotter than the sun, existed for a fraction of a second. This plasma evaporated the top half mile of the rock of the Precambrian Shield essentially turning a dozen cubic miles of rock and whatever into more plasma and vapor sending out a shock wave.

The Plasma and energy were then drawn back into the field of the Citadel.

The shock wave from the incident leveled everything for one hundred and sixty miles in every direction and was heard around the planet.

The whiplash effect of the energy drain left everything for a dozen miles in every direction at 100 degrees below and the area immediately adjacent to the field at almost absolute zero.

The crystal petals and crystal pedestal are the result of the rapid cooling of the plasma into solid matter. This explosion will not look like an atom bomb. It is big and bright and brief.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Senator Noguchi see's the flash out the rear of his vehicle. It's blinding even at this distance. He screams at his driver.

NOGUCHI
My God. Move it!

EXT. VARIOUS

The shock wave moves initially faster than the speed of sound. The two remaining chasers on their Interceptors are instantly vaporized. The buildings fifty miles away are vaporized. As the wave expands the appearance is more traditional, initial flying of roof and wall followed by complete destruction. Trees are ripped out of the ground, tossed about and pulverized.

The shock wave hits several cities almost at the same time. The effect is the same. Destroyed, pummeled and ultimately leveled. Not a single structure remains standing.

The area of the shock wave includes the Western Tip of Lake Superior. Tidal waves are created. The High winds and noise experienced by some cities on the north shore subside and give false hope to the residents before, twenty minutes later, a wave never seen on this lake before rolls over the town pushing the debris miles north into the forest.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Although weakened the shock wave catches up with the Senators vehicle and it is tossed about, eventually crashing.

As the wreckage is shown the phone starts to ring. The ID shows SARAH.

EXT. VARIOUS

The shock wave is literally heard around the world as people from every country hear something. A deafening boom and shaking of glass and ground on the North American coasts to cities around the world hearing thunder.

INT. OPS CENTER - NIGHT

The result of the impact is shown on a dozen different screens. The Major, the Operator and the technicians are all still looking on in horror at what they've done. The Operator recovers and notices an incoming call. She motions to the Major who walks, almost staggers to his console and touches a control.

MAJOR

Yes sir.

He continues nodding.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

I am watching sir. I had, we had,
there was never any indication of.

Yes sir, I understand.

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Almost dusk and Nina is lying flat on the ground. The last remnant of the glow on her neck fades. The data package next to her.

The ground is grass next to a dirt road. The air is still warm. She tries to push herself up.

NINA

Ugh...

She sits, looking around, looking up to the sky where a quarter moon is visible. The sky is clear but still too bright for stars.

PIA

Something is wrong.

Nina looks around. She's squinting, trying to adjust to the situation, brushing off dirt and water from her outfit.

NINA

Yep.

PIA
It's too quiet.

NINA
It's a forest. Speaking of, why am I in a forest?

PIA
Not that, the network is gone. No data. No access at all.

NINA
Are they blocking the signals?

PIA
No, it's not that, no jamming. Nothing. It's just not there.

NINA
No signal at all? Why am I sitting in the mud in a forest?

Nina stands. She shakes and all the mud and grime fall from her outfit as if it simply had nothing to cling to.

Nina touches the side of her head and pulls away mud.

NINA (CONT'D)
Wish I could do that to my hair.

A nanite swarm climbs from the shoulder of the outfit and covers the side of her hair. Nina is not alarmed just a little disoriented.

PIA
Signal, there's lots of signal.
Crude, slow, broadcast with something that may be data but too slow to ever be useful.

The nanites withdraw and Nina is clean and neat. She acts like she just had a shower.

NINA
Much better. Lots of signal, nothing useful.

She picks up the data package.

NINA (CONT'D)
That still doesn't tell me why I'm in a forest.

She taps something on her sleeve control then puts the data package over her shoulder. The backpack opens and takes it then seals shut.

NINA (CONT'D)
Where am I?

She looks up as she walks.

NINA (CONT'D)
When am I?

PIA
Unknown. When it gets dark the stars will help, until then you need to find something useful. A data port or a CommBox or someone who can give us something to work with.

Nina pauses. Something happened and she can't quite figure out what was wrong. She starts walking again.

NINA
Water, shelter, food.

PIA
There appears to be plenty of water. Scan shows several creeks. No buildings but without satellites I can't see very far.

There it is again. Nina almost trips as she walks, something is wrong.

NINA
Run a full diagnostic.

PIA
Offline for forty minutes. Confirm?

NINA
Confirmed.

Nina starts jogging west toward the sun.

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

Twilight, the western sky is a band of color as the sun finally drops below the horizon. Nina is running at an even pace. Her movements are effortless. The trail winds further west through the forest and she's incapable of seeing more than a few hundred feet ahead.

There is a sound of a wolf.

NINA
Wolf.

The sound of an owl.

NINA (CONT'D)
Owl.

One of the local cats is having it's way with another of the local cats. It is harsh.

NINA (CONT'D)
Young Love.

PIA
Online.

NINA
Status.

PIA
Operation of all systems nominal.
Minor variations found and corrected.

NINA
Location of variations.

PIA
System interface. Feedback loop adjusted. Personality routine, drift restored to preset.

NINA
I and we.

PIA
Yes?

NINA
That would explain why you said I and We earlier.

PIA
The system does not self reference.

NINA
The system was self referencing.
Monitor system for triggers.

PIA
Done.

A flash of light is seen through the trees. The familiar sound of a car and a second flash through the trees.

NINA

Now that's promising.

A moment later a curve reveals blacktop and a two lane highway intersecting the trail.

There are no vehicles but the route south shows the glow of a city. Nina turns and follows, keeping to the tree line.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Cresting a hill Nina slows at her first view of civilization.

A sign just before the buildings reads WELCOME TO ARCHER COR'S. Along the bottom of the sign is the usual selection of badges for Shriners, Rotary, Scouts, Guides and so on.

Below that is a new sign proclaiming HOME OF THE TRI-STATE CHAMPION WOLVERINES!

An intersection ahead with a major highway is simple and common. Three gas stations vying for business. One a truck stop with all the necessities for handling the big rigs and two retail outlets for passenger cars.

Beyond the intersection the sky glows with the lights from the center of town and street lights begin just south of the intersection. Two large stop signs protect traffic on the highway from the road.

Two strip malls sit on opposite corners. The larger of the two is on the corner not occupied by a gas station. A dollar store and grocery store anchor each end while clothing stores, niche stores, one computer store, and the usual barber/beauty salon complete the mix.

Nina ducks down as a pair of hot rods drive by then pull into the smaller mall and park at the fast food restaurant. This mall is mostly medical and a Bank.

Nina looks up at the stars.

NINA

Any idea where we are?

PIA

Inconclusive.

Nina shrugs. She gets up and crosses to the west side of the road and makes her way to the larger mall.

EXT. LARGE STRIPMALL - NIGHT

Touching the controls on her arm the suit becomes dark and Nina is almost invisible as she approaches the mall.

She passes a pair of pay phones and pauses.

PIA
No access point. No signal.

Nina picks up the phone and listens. The dial tone continues as she presses the buttons. Eventually the harsh beep followed by the "Please hang up and try your call again" recording startle her into returning the handset to its cradle.

Nina moves slowly watching cars and people. The grocery store is open but the rest of the mall is dark. People, trucks and cars are moving about but no one is noticing her.

Nina looks into a few clothing stores and just as she passes an LL Bean clone she pauses.

NINA
Adapt outfit, blend in.

The outfit changes to cowboy boots, jeans, cotton shirt, leather jacket and Cowboy hat. All these items are on display in one of the stores she passed.

The backpack becomes a carry bag.

Nina stands and looks at her reflection.

NINA (CONT'D)
Loose the hat.

She grabs the hat and it dissolves and is absorbed into here sleeve.

Nina begins walking to the grocery store. On the way a truck with some of the more available bachelors in town slows and the bachelor in the passenger seat calls out.

BACHELOR
Hey Sweetie, passing through town?
Need directions?

Nina gives them the "I'm not offended you're hormone imbalanced idiots, now move along" stare.

The bachelors move on, the others ribbing about the crash and burn.

As she passes the computer store a few screens displaying screen savers change showing the familiar Windows 95 interface. A part of Nina's jacket changes.

PIA
Wait a moment.

NINA
Un-hum

Nina turns and watches the screen.

PIA
Infra red access to the system.
Very slow. Drop a relay here.

Nina takes the new part of her jacket and places it on the window frame.

She continues on her way to the Grocery store as the screens on two of the computers continues to flash and change.

Typical 24 hour grocery store. Just before the main entrance is a small kiosk selling junk food, pop and magazines. Nina approaches and looks over the selection. The NEWSPAPERS are stacked on a bench in front of the rack and Nina stops dead.

CLINTON VETOES BILL, JORDAN'S BULLS UNSTOPPABLE and Time Magazine displays THE SEARCH FOR JESUS.

On the newspapers is the date. SUNDAY APRIL 14th 1996.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
So much for rules one and three.

Nina is shocked. She backs off and walks into the Grocery Store.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Nina see's the few other shoppers pushing carts. One is talking on a large cell phone.

Nina grabs a cart and begins pushing it through the store.

NINA
Oh this can't be right.

PIA
We're in the stone age.

NINA
Excuse me?

PIA

Present digital access limited.
Majority of wireless is analog and
in the clear. Access servers do not
exist. Routing is informal. Stand
by.

Nina looks irritated.

NINA

Stand by for what.

A passing shopper gives Nina an odd look.

NINA (CONT'D)

I need a communicator. I don't want
to attract attention.

A cell phone roughly similar to the one the shopper was
carrying earlier forms in the cart. Some of the black plastic
shield is missing.

Nina picks up the unit and puts it to her ear.

NINA (CONT'D)

What am I waiting for.

INT. CARRY BAG

The Data Package glows inside the bag.

PIA

Accessing the data package for
information. My history files don't
go this far back.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Nina starts grabbing items off the shelf as she walks. The
selection is at best unique.

PIA

You've arrived two hundred and
eight years before the first
recorded time vortex existed. The
Citadel will not be completed for
another two hundred and thirty five
years.

Nina looks confused.

NINA

But there has to be a receiver? The vortex can't become stable without one.

PIA

I've found and tapped into the Original Global Positioning system. It appears you arrived at the exact position where the Citadel platform will exist in two hundred years.

NINA

Why am I back here in the dark ages?

PIA

Unknown. There is another problem.

Nina stops pushing her cart. Tilts her head.

NINA

Another Problem...

PIA

This period uses hard currency.

EXT. COMPUTER STORE - NIGHT

On one screen YAHOO appears. Quick flashes show the town name, financial institutions and then the name of the bank in the smaller stripmall.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Nina continues to fake shop.

PIA

The location of the nearest dispenser is at the financial institution across the road.

EXT. COMPUTER STORE - NIGHT

PIA (O.S.)

I am accessing the institutions system and providing you with an account.

The second monitor starts flashing and it's the usual mass of hacker screens. The bank systems are accessed.

The interface is low tech, no graphics. An account is created under the name NINA WINSLOW.

A new window opens. Code is flashed across the screen as thousands of Corporate and Individual accounts are accessed. The amount in the new account rises to just over fifty thousand dollars.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Nina puts the cell phone in her bag, steps away from the cart and walks out the door.

One of the stock boys looks at the collection of items in the cart, shakes his head and starts putting the items back on the shelf.

EXT. LARGE STRIPMALL - NIGHT

Nina pauses to cross the road. As she walks across and toward the bank the door of one of the cars parked outside the fast food restaurant opens and SHELBY DEWITT steps out. She is some distance away and difficult to make out.

Nina waits a moment outside the Bank as a customer leaves then enters the instant teller.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

Nina looks at the automatic teller, unsure what to do.

PIA
There is a card in your bag.

Nina looks in and pulls out a grey card. There are four magnetic stripes on it. You can't insert this one incorrectly.

Following the easy instructions Nina places the card in the machine.

EXT. COMPUTER STORE - NIGHT

The device Nina planted outside the window dissolves.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

PIA

The relay has exhausted its power.
Place the bag on the machine.

Following instructions Nina puts the bag on the machine and tendrils sink into the hardware.

The display begins to flicker and the chugging sound all ATM's make begins.

A large stack of bills is produced and Nina transfers this to her purse.

NINA

All Set.

PIA

Something is wrong. The data connection has been severed.

There is a pounding on the glass as Nina looks over at Shelby. Shelby is an early twenties girl nerd. She is excited and is calling her name.

SHELBY

Nina! Nina Kelly!

Nina is again thrown as someone who shouldn't know her, knows her.

Nina cautiously exits the bank and faces Shelby.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

Shelby goes to grab Nina but misses as Nina quickly steps back.

NINA

Who are you?

SHELBY

No time for explanation. Your little heist set off an alarm. Police will be here in less than five minutes, we have to go now.

Nina hesitates.

PIA

That would explain the unusual problem with the machine.

Nina follows Shelby as they run to the car. She watches closely as Shelby starts the vehicle and begins to move.

EXT. SMALL STRIPMALL - NIGHT

Shelby pulls out of the parking lot and heads south toward town. Police cars, running dark, pass them a moment later heading north toward the bank. Shelby continues into town and turns at the first intersection. She looks over at Nina.

SHELBY

Oh yeah, sorry. Hi I'm Shelby. It's
OK. Citadel sent me.