DEJA_VU

Written by

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INT. LOCKER ROOM – DAY

DARRIN, 30, strong, handsome, daring, the man you want to guard your back, slaps down Velcro straps on high-tech hiking boots.

He’s on a bench in a small room, the walls lined with lockers. He wears a slick, form-fitting, silver uniform, something from a superhero convention.

DARRIN
What to you think, AR 15s?

At the end of the bench, MEREDITH, 30, pretty, athletic, confident as hell, fixes her own boots.

MEREDITH
No one is sending you with a rifle.

DARRIN
We need a way to defend ourselves.

MEREDITH
No footprint, remember? In and out, we alter nothing.

He stands and pulls a jacket and silver gloves from his locker.

DARRIN
And a jacket? It’s July for chrissakes.

She grabs her own jacket and gloves.

MEREDITH
Can’t you think of something else to talk about?

DARRIN
If I don’t talk, I’ll think about this mission, and if I think about this mission, I’ll crap my pants.

MEREDITH
Don’t be a baby.

They head for the door.

KARN (V.O.)
Mission parameters are absolute.
INT. TIME LAUNCH CHAMBER – DAY

No windows, one wall nothing but a huge quivering screen. On the other side of the room is a capsule, just big enough for two people. Stainless steel with no windows, it looks like a bullet.

Standing next to the capsule are Meredith and Darren, in jackets and gloves. Alongside stands KARN, 50, in lab coat and glasses, armed with a tablet computer.

KARN
You have exactly one hour. The vehicle will return automatically, so don’t get caught outside.

DARRIN
Don’t we have some kind of failsafe code?

KARN
The delay protocol extends mission return by five minutes. It can be repeated twice. After that, the vehicle returns whether you’re on board or not.

DARRIN
See, was that so hard?

INT. CAPSULE – DAY

Darrin and Meredith sit one behind the other, crammed inside the small, windowless vehicle. Strapped into seats.

MEREDITH
You do know this is a scientific expedition, right?

DARRIN
I know it’s some kind of wild goose chase. Why the hell would they send us back a hundred thousand years?

MEREDITH
A hundred and ten thousand, and we’re going to gather data you can’t get from ice cores.

WARREN
What if we run into a wooly mammoth?
Sudden acceleration flattens them against the seats.

WARREN (V.O.)
What the hell.

EXT. LONG ISLAND NY – DAY

Dark clouds scud across the sky. Snow whips past Darrin and Meredith as they stand beside the capsule. Ahead of them is an asphalt road. No cars pass. In the distance are a number of houses.

WARREN
Somebody screwed up.

MEREDITH
The computer doesn’t make mistakes.

WARREN
If you look close, you can see Manhattan. I’m kinda certain the city didn’t exist a hundred thousand years ago.

MEREDITH
It’s cold. It shouldn’t be cold in July.

WARREN
Because they screwed up.

MEREDITH
Wait, where is the empire state building?

WARRIN
It’s right...

He frowns.

WARRIN (CONT’D)
Not there.

MEREDITH
And there’s something wrong with the Chrysler building too. But I’m not sure what.

WARRIN
Shit. We slipped through a hole. We’re in some hyper-parallel universe.
MEREDITH
The computer controls for that.
This is earth one hundred and ten thousand years ago.

WARRIN
Bullshit.

She walks toward the houses.

MEREDITH
Come on. We have an hour.

He follows.

WARRIN
And ten minutes.

EXT. ASPHALT ROAD – DAY
Meredith and Warrin stand in the middle of the road. Nothing moves. Not even a bird crosses the sky.

MEREDITH
This is weird.

WARRIN
And colder than...Jesus, where is everyone?

MEREDITH
I don’t understand.

WARRIN
Even in a parallel universe there should be people.

MEREDITH
And animals.

INT. HOUSE – FAMILY ROOM -- DAY
Warren flips switches on the wall. Nothing works. Meredith enters from another room.

WARREN
No power.

MEREDITH
No food or water or clothes or anything.
WARREN
I bet they’re all like this. Abandoned.

MEREDITH
But why?

WARREN
Parallel universe.

MEREDITH
It’s time to go.

EXT. ASPHALT ROAD – DAY

Darker, snowier, Warren and Meredith stand in the road.

MEREDITH
Street signs.

WARREN
What?

MEREDITH
The street signs are in English.

WARRN
So?

MEREDITH
We’re over a hundred thousand years in the past, and the signs are in English. There were no written languages that far back.

WARREN
Obviously, the experts are wrong. Unless we’re in a–

MEREDITH
With English, right.

WARREN
What’s that?

In the distance, there appears to be a vehicle running through the heavier snow.

MEREDITH
Some kind of car. But we don’t have time. Our hour is almost up.
WARREN
We have the extra ten minutes.

MEREDITH
We’re not supposed to use the protocol.

WARREN
Don’t you want to know what this is all about?

MEREDITH
The squints back home will figure it out. Besides, interaction is strictly forbidden.

WARREN
Go start the protocol. I’ll wait.

MEREDITH
I can’t stop it once it starts.

WARREN
Go.

Meredith starts for the capsule. Warren raises a hand at the vehicle.

What approaches Warren is a pickup of sorts. It resembles an ordinary truck, but the lights are configured differently, and the top is all glass.

The driver is on the wrong side. It stops in front of Warren. Through the glass, Warren can see two MEN. One MAN climbs out. He’s dressed in furs.

WARREN (CONT’D)
Hello.

MAN
Halo.

WARREN
My name is Warren. What happened to all the people?

The Man cocks his head as if he doesn’t quite understand.

WARREN (CONT’D)
Others, where are the others?

MAN
Gon. All gon.
WARREN
Why?

MAN
Ise.

WARREN
Ice?

MAN
Ise commun.

MEREDITH (O.S.)
Warren!

Warren waves at Meredith.

WARREN
What year is it?

MAN
Wot?

WARREN
Year, year, time.

MAN
Ah, ano. Is tre one for sevin.

WARREN
Three one four seven?

The Man nods.

MEREDITH (O.S.)
IT’S TIME!

Warren turns from the Man and runs for the time vehicle. He watches Meredith climb in and strap down.

WARREN
I’m coming!

As he nears, the top of the cylinder slides closed.

WARREN (CONT’D)
NOOOOOOO!

He launches himself at the cylinder even as it disappears. He lands on the ground and rolls over. He’s been left behind.

He SCREAMS!
IINT. TIME LAUNCH CHAMBER – DAY

Meredith scrambles out of the cylinder.

MEREDITH
I have to go back.

Karn plugs a cable into the cylinder.

KARN
You can’t.

MEREDITH
Of course, I can. Same mission parameters. I’ll grab Warren and come right back.

KARN
I won’t bore you with the physics, but the hole you used was a one-time opportunity. We can’t use the same parameters.

MEREDITH
Then, find another hole. We can’t leave him back there.

As the cylinder downloads its data, a camera picture of the road and skyline appears on a large screen.

KARN
My god, are you seeing this?

Meredith grabs Karn and turns him to face her.

MEREDITH
Warren is back there. We have to save him!

KARN
We can’t. It’s that simple. We can’t!

They stare at each other before she releases him. He turns back to the screen as the camera zooms in on the skyline.

KARN (CONT’D)
Manhattan?
INT. CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

Big table, filled with scientists in white coats, including Meredith. At the end, Karn points at a big screen showing the camera footage from the cylinder.

KARN
As near as we can reason, this civilization had reached a high level of sophistication and built a city much like what we know today. There are significant differences, but in many respects it’s a clone.

SCIENTIST
I don’t get it.

KARN
It appears they built buildings and homes like ours, homes that were erased by a hundred thousand year ice age.

SCIENTIST
That’s crazy.

KARN
Not when you think about it. Why wouldn’t intelligent beings reach the same level of sophistication? Build the same things? Think of it as some sort of retained common memory.

SCIENTIST
You’re making this up so you’ll get more funding.

MEREDITH
I was there. It’s not made up.

KARN
And then, there’s this.

Karn produces a clay pot and places it on the table.

KARN (CONT’D)
This was recovered from a mine in Africa. Dating makes it over a hundred thousand years old.

Karn pulls off the lid and reaches inside.
KARN (CONT’D)
But this dates from now.

He brings out a soiled silver glove and lays it on the table.

MEREDITH
Oh my god.

FADE OUT