

Doorway
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BLACK SCREEN

Brakes SQUEAL. Tires SCREECH. Metal GRINDS and CRUMPLES.
Glass SHATTERS. A girl SCREAMS.

FADE IN:

INT. CONDO - MORNING

KAT, 30s, wakes with a start. Fully clothed. Sprawled on a couch in a messy condo living room. Half-empty bottle of Scotch on the floor.

The doorbell BUZZES. Kat glances at a wall clock. 9:05 a.m.

KAT
Shitshitshit.

Kat drags herself to her feet and shuffles through the debris to the front door. Her passage dislodges a stray pillow on the floor, revealing a framed photo of ZOE, 8, curls and dimples.

EXT. DOORSTEP - MORNING

BUD, 20s, clean-cut, Dockers and button-down shirt, press badge clipped to his belt, looks at his watch. Reaches for the doorbell.

Kat CRACKS the door open.

KAT
Grab some coffee. Twenty minutes.

Bud opens his mouth to speak. Kat SHUTS the door.

INT. SUV - MORNING

Bud wheels the SUV through commute traffic. Kat sips coffee from a Starbucks cup.

BUD
Kat, look.

KAT
Ackerman chew you out again?

BUD
Says if I don't budget my time
better, he'll assign my stories.

KAT

Uh oh.

BUD

Yeah. Dog beauty pageants. Library openings. This has to be the last day.

KAT

Down to our final address anyway.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Kat and Bud exit the SUV. Trash blows across the empty parking lot outside a rundown industrial office park.

BUD

Ackerman's an ass, but you've got to admit, "reclusive scientist claims to invent interstellar door, goes missing" does sound like a bad Sci-Fi Channel flick.

He pulls a camera bag from the back of the SUV. Kat carries a knapsack.

KAT

Interdimensional. Not interstellar. Come on, Bud. Ackerman may not know the difference, but you're a science writer.

BUD

Not yet.

KAT

Not my fault the paper will only spring for one science reporter. At least I got Ackerman to loan you to me.

Bud closes the SUV hatch with a BANG.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Dim outline of a giant chrome steel frame in the center of a dark warehouse. A side door opens. Sunlight silhouettes Kat and Bud in the doorway.

Flashlights CLICK on. Beams play over the chrome frame, cables snaking to computer controls and power outlets.

KAT

Jackpot.

Bud opens a SQUEAKY-hinged power box. Fluorescent lights HUM to life. Kat nods, pleased.

BUD

Huh. Sommers really did build it.

KAT

A quantum gate.

They circle the chrome steel frame.

BUD

Think it actually works? A doorway to another quantum universe?

KAT

Plural. Not singular. Infinite parallel Earths, expressing every possible outcome of any event.

BUD

Like a comic book. Earth where the Nazis won World War II. Earth where dinosaurs never died off.

KAT

Small things, too. Did you eat breakfast?

BUD

Jelly doughnut.

KAT

We'll make a reporter out of you yet. Somewhere there's an Earth exactly like ours, except you had ham and eggs.

Kat finds a sheet of paper next to the computer controls.

BUD

Well?

KAT

Instructions. Let's power it up.

BUD

Sounds dangerous.

KAT

It'll make better photos.

Bud shrugs. They go to work, checking cables, firing up computers, tapping keypads.

A low HUM. Static electricity ARCS from the doorway. Trash floats in the air, rotating around the frame. The HUM grows louder. Skylights and windows RATTLE.

COMPUTER
Activation.

And a shimmering field of energy FILLS the doorway.

Bud WHISTLES. Kat steps up to the doorway, enthralled.

BUD
Don't get too close.

He pulls a digital camera from his bag. Kat reluctantly steps away. Notices a wall of notes, photos, and graffiti.

KAT
Bud.

Kat points. They go over, examine the notes and photos.

BUD
Check out this one.
(reading)
"I go now into the mystery of the unknown, a new world of adventure."
Guy thinks he's Indiana Jones.

KAT
Mementos. Farewells. Looks like we're not the first to follow the trail of bread crumbs Sommers left.

Bud points to a photo of a woman with two young children.

BUD
This woman took her kids.
(reading)
"Fuck you, Kurt. You'll never find us now. We're safe."

KAT
Here's a woman with cancer, looking for a world with a cure.

Bud shakes his head.

BUD
Crazy.

KAT
Why? For hoping they can find a
better world out there?

BUD
We're not here for a story, are we?

KAT
You are.

BUD
Kat, no way. I know you've had it
rough--

KAT
Don't hand me that. I'm not running
away from my problems. I've found a
solution to them.

BUD
Even if you find her--

KAT
Think it through, Bud. Infinite
possibilities. Somewhere there's a
world where I died in that crash,
and Zoe lived. She needs me.

They move back to the activated doorway. Bud keeps himself
between Kat and the energy field.

BUD
Sommers wrote that he couldn't
anchor the other end, remember?
Assuming that thing doesn't just
vaporize you, you have no way of
knowing where you'll end up.

KAT
If it's not the right Earth, I'll
just find the doorway again and go
on to the next.

BUD
Suppose you land on dinosaur Earth?

KAT
Or Earth where Sommers became a fry
cook instead of a physicist? I'll
take that chance.

BUD
You've been planning this for a
long time.

KAT

Once you write your story, they'll have to give you the science beat.

BUD

This is nuts.

KAT

It has to be now, Bud. After your story breaks, the government's going to swoop in and close this all down. Confiscate it.

COMPUTER

Deactivating gate in 10 seconds. 9, 8, ...

Kat and Bud jump.

BUD

Automatic shutdown routine.

KAT

Makes sense.

COMPUTER

7, 6, ...

Bud still blocks Kat's path to the shimmering doorway. They tense.

COMPUTER

5, 4 ...

KAT

Bud. Please.

His shoulders sag.

BUD

I hope you find what you're looking for, Kat.

Bud steps aside.

COMPUTER

Three ...

Kat snatches her knapsack off the table. Hands Bud a file folder.

KAT

Thank you.

COMPUTER

Two ...

Kat steps up to the energy field. Pauses.

KAT

Mommy's coming, Baby.

COMPUTER

One.

Kat steps through. A FLASH of light. She's gone.

COMPUTER

Deactivation.

The energy field vanishes. The doorway powers down.

Bud opens the folder. A photo of Kat and Zoe, and a note. He posts them on the wall next to the others. Pauses. Then picks up his digital camera and starts photographing the lab.

FADE TO BLACK.