

RACING

Written by

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"Winning at Any Cost"  
Sci-Fi, Cream Soda, Go-Kart Track, Pilot

FADE IN:

**INT. CRAMPED COCKPIT - SPACE**

Tandem seats with no visible controls. The scene outside is chaotic, multi-colored, and careening as if an aircraft was barrel-rolling over rough seas.

A nameplate above the front window reads "Temporal Excursion Vehicle *Samuel Madden*".

In the front seat, pilot WAYNE EMIL (37) leans into each of the craft's turns, apparently controlling it by thoughts. His steely demeanor matches his crisp and spotless flightsuit.

In the back seat, DR. NICOLE JAYASHRI (27) fidgets nervously. Each quarter of her long, wavy hair is a different color, and each zipper on her flightsuit is opened for ventilation.

NICOLE

I just know that bastard Ryanson is trying to scoop my study. Can't you take a short-cut that way?

WAYNE

I don't tell you how to be an anthropologist. Now please--

Some kind of "hail" pelts the craft from the side. Wayne revs up the engines, veers away from the thickest of the hail.

WAYNE

We need to set down 'til this passes.

Vibrating with frustration, Nicole bites her lip.

The view outside the window settles down with the hail swirling overhead, and the engines wind down.

WAYNE

We're still in California, but in the middle of Twenty-twenty.

NICOLE

I got eighty-seven immunizations so I could observe the Martis Tribe making petroglyphs. No one's making petroglyphs in Twenty-twenty!

WAYNE

Looks like there'll be a clearing in a couple hours.

NICOLE

Six of them couldn't even be software. Physical injections!

WAYNE

Hey, you want to wait here or walk around outside? We landed in an entertainment facility, but I have this listed as a plague interval. The place should be deserted.

Nicole seethes at the delay, seems ready to scream.

WAYNE

Fine. You want out. Let's see, your current rig can handle any bacteria here. Mitochondrial phages haven't been invented yet. Looks like you only need H.I.V. Group One, H.P.V. Groups One and Two, and Coronavirus Group Five. All just software.

Nicole looks ill for a moment, swallows hard, then goes back to frustrated.

NICOLE

Yuck. Give me an identity from this era that won't attract attention.

Her flightsuit morphs into sneakers, ripped jeans, a tee shirt, and a facemask with a kitty mouth on it. A New York driver's license and a credit card appear on her lap.

She peeks at different parts of her hair, shakes her head, and within a moment all of her hair is one shade of green.

#### **INT. GO-KART TRACK - DAY**

A well-lit indoor racing arena. Nicole appears to step out of a wall, takes a calming breath.

NICOLE

This year might be the armpit of history, but at least I can get a moment of peace.

A go-kart VROOMS past, scaring Nicole half to death. That VROOM is followed by several more loud VROOMS.

NICOLE

What the --  
(VROOM!)  
-- are they doing here?!

**INT. CASHIER'S BOOTH - DAY**

Nicole takes her credit card back from a CASHIER (17) wearing a surgical mask.

NICOLE  
So this plague is still going on,  
but... you're... open.

CASHIER  
Yeah. People are kinda tired of the  
whole pandemic thing.

Nicole spots a vending machine that sells longneck soda bottles. She lightly touches the glass over a bottle clearly labeled as A&W cream soda.

NICOLE  
Beer... is still legal.

**INT. WAITING AREA - DAY**

In line, Nicole takes swigs from her soda. Her flushness and swagger show she can't tell a sugar rush from a beer buzz.

She chats indistinctly with several different CUSTOMERS in line, some wearing masks and some not.

Upon reaching the front of the line, Nicole speaks to the ATTENDANT (22) guiding her to a go-kart.

**INT. GO-KART TRACK - CONTINUOUS**

Nicole tries to hide the bottle and looks at the Customers.

NICOLE  
I am very confused.

ATTENDANT  
It's just like a car. Brake on the  
left, gas on the right.

She leans back, arms on the sides of the go-kart, until she notices the other drivers holding the steering wheel.

**INT. SERIES OF SHOTS - GO-KART TRACK - DAY**

- Nicole stays still when the other go-karts race off.
- then reacts too slow, bumps into a wall.

- then knocks back another long, cold drink of cream soda.
- then almost, but not quite, makes it through a corner.
- then hurries the Cashier along to refill her pass.
- then grits her teeth, struggles to edge past a ten-year-old in another go-kart.
- then she comes in third at the next heat.

**END SERIES OF SHOTS**

**INT. GO-KART TRACK - DAY**

Nicole sips her bottle impatiently, next in line to get back into the go-karts, and rushes over when called.

WAYNE (V.O.)

The storm is clearing. Get yourself over here.

NICOLE

One last one. I'm gonna win it this time. I know it.

WAYNE (V.O.)

This isn't going to wait.

The race starts, and Nicole jumps out to an early lead.

NICOLE

Woo-hoo!

WAYNE (V.O.)

I can't tell when the next clearing will be, and there's no way to refuel here. I have to go.

Nicole's attention is laser-focused on avoiding the sides of the track and keeping other go-karts from edging past her.

WAYNE (V.O.)

You have an emergency beacon. You want me to just leave you here?

Nicole rounds the final curve, fixes her eyes on the checkered flag. She crosses the finish line first.

NICOLE

Yeah!

Nicole does a self-congratulatory dance beside the track.

NICOLE

That... was... awesome! Are you  
ready, Mister Emil? Hello? Pilot?  
Er, Captain? Hello?

Nicole's eyes grow wide with the gradual realization that she's been stranded in the "armpit of history."

Terrified, she scurries out of sight, pushes a spot on her left collarbone while squeezing her left earlobe. Both spots glow briefly, and she sighs in relief.

WAYNE (V.O.)

Step forward.

**INT. SPACIOUS COCKPIT - SPACE**

Similar technology, but with a row of seats behind the pilot.

The nameplate reads "Temporal Excursion Vehicle *H. G. Wells*".

Nicole steps from a glowing sheet of light, and right away her eyes land on the lone passenger, DR. TOSHIHIRO RYANSON (29) relaxed with his arms across two neighboring seats.

WAYNE

Welcome aboard.

TOSHIHIRO

We heard your beacon on the way  
back from my Martis observations.

Nicole stews over this news, digs her nails into her palms, looks ready to scream.

TOSHIHIRO

Too bad for you, there's no point  
having two expeditions to the same  
historical event.

The window shows that the craft is flying again.

Nicole calms herself with visible effort, swigs some soda.

NICOLE

That's... okay, Ryanson. I just  
found a population with some of  
most irrational and self-  
contradictory beliefs imaginable.

FADE OUT.