

Two Women, Road Trip, Extraterrestrial

Jass Richards

jassrichards@gmail.com

www.jassrichards.com

{PRIVATE }

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY SCAPE -- DAY

Camera pans a cityscape, then gradually zeroes in on a tall skyscraper, a corporate building with "Manus Corporation" chiseled into it.

INT. MANUS CORPORATION LOBBY -- DAY

Camera moves from the front door into the very richly done lobby: there is polished marble and some sculptures.

The camera passes by the reception desk, which is staffed by three RECEPTIONISTS, all of whom are very occupied and not paying any attention to what's happening beyond the reception desk.

The camera also has in view, momentarily, the security desk, which is located at the back of the lobby; it is staffed by two SECURITY PERSONNEL, who are taking casual notice of what's going on at the corporate goldfish pond in the lobby.

The camera stops to focus on pond which bears a Mission Statement plaque that claims "The Manus Corporation pledges to do its best, with integrity, honesty, and dedication."

There is a gathering of several people at the pond, mostly EMPLOYEES of Manus Corporation, but also a few VISITORS.

ESMERELDA DUBREY, a young white punkish-looking woman, stands on the pond ledge, speaking to the gathered people. She holds a clear plastic bag containing water and two small fish, piranha. The security staff take greater notice as she begins to speak. We gradually begin to make out what she's saying.

ESMERELDA

(loudly)

- this moment of truth! Observe, Understand,
and Remember!

She empties the bag into the corporate pond. There are EXCLAMATIONS of shock, revulsion, and indignation. A few people wince and turn away, unable to watch the carnage.

The security staff start moving in Esmerelda's direction. She sees them, hops off the ledge, and makes a quick exit out the front door.

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE -- CONTINUOUS

JANE SMITH, a young white woman, plain in appearance compared to Esmerelda, is sitting at the work station in an office cubicle, focused on the computer screen of her laptop, not the desk computer.

Esmerelda comes bouncing into Jane's cubicle.

ESMERELDA

Ready to go to lunch?

Jane looks pointedly at a very large clock hung on the wall in a central location. It's 10:00.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Good point. So we'll go in ten minutes.

JANE

(dryly)

Much better.

She begins to turn back to her laptop (not the company computer), then stops.

JANE (CONT'D)

Why aren't you - you staged another moment of truth, didn't you. Another 'outrageous act and everyday rebellion'.

Esmerelda shrugs.

JANE (CONT'D)

(as if reprimanding a dog who's peed in the house)

What did you do?

ESMERELDA

Oh, nothing.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

I sort of replaced the goldfish in the corporate pond with piranha.

JANE

I suspect 'replace' isn't quite - accurate.

Esmerelda tries to change the topic by turning the nameplate on Jane's desk to read it.

ESMERELDA

So who are you today?

JANE

Cynthia Lewis.

ESMERELDA

And what does Cynthia Lewis do?

JANE

I haven't figured that out yet. It's only 10:00.

ESMERELDA

But it's only 10:00 on Thursday. You've been Cynthia since Monday.

JANE

Good point.

ESMERELDA

Maybe she just sits here.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

In which case, you're doing an admirable job.

Jane ignores the dig.

JANE

It wouldn't necessarily be 'just'. Being can be doing.

ESMERELDA

You've been reading Sartre again. Or Heidegger.

JANE

Chodorow. And Rachels. If you give someone a lethal injection and they die, that's active euthanasia. You've done something. But if you withhold food, you're supposedly not doing anything. That's passive euthanasia.

ESMERELDA

But they still die.

JANE

Exactly. So even by not-doing, by just being, you've done something.

Esmerelda looks at the clock. It's not yet 10:10.

ESMERELDA

So is Cynthia a pregnancy or a nervous breakdown?

JANE

Or?

ESMERELDA

Good point.

(pause - still not
10:10)

So how's the book coming?

Jane grimaces as she turns her ever-present laptop so Esmerelda can read.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

"It was a dark and stormy night. Even the jello
was scared."

There is a moment of silence, then Esmerelda bursts out laughing.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

I like it!

A very important MAN #1 comes by and stops at Jane's cubicle.

MAN #1

(friendly, in a
patronizing way)

Ah, just the girl I'm looking -

ESMERELDA

Excuse me? Does she look like a child?

The man is clearly startled to be addressed, not only in that way, but by Esmerelda.

MAN #1

I beg your pardon?

ESMERELDA

Not my pardon you should be begging. Does
she look like a child?

He doesn't understand her point. So he ignores her.

MAN #1

Look,

(turning to Jane)

I need those financial reports -

ESMERELDA

If you can't tell a child from an adult, you
should not have access to financial reports.

MAN #1
(continuing to ignore
Esmerelda)
I need ten copies of those reports by 10:30.

ESMERELDA
No. You want - better yet, you would like -
ten copies. Please.

The man leaves, clearly angered, but he'd be unable to articulate at what exactly.

MAN #1
(shouting back)
10:30!

Beat.

ESMERELDA
Have you found the photocopier yet?

JANE
(ruefully)
No.

ESMERELDA
Have you looked?

JANE
(indignantly)
No.

Esmerelda looks at the clock. It's 10:08.

JANE (CONT'D)
(thoughtfully)
You know, I don't even think he's my
supervisor.

ESMERELDA
He's a man, you're a woman, by definition -

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Okay, time for lunch!

Jane closes her laptop, taking it with her when they leave.

INT. DESSERT CAFE -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane and Esmerelda are sitting at a table inside a dessert cafe. ZELDA, the waitress comes by.

ZELDA

Hey, Jane. Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA

Zelda.

ZELDA

The usual?

They nod. Zelda leaves.

JANE

So are you going back to Manus?

ESMERELDA

I don't think so.

JANE

Got anything else lined up?

ESMERELDA

I hear Riverdance is holding auditions.

Jane bursts out laughing.

Zelda arrives and puts two different, but equally decadent, chocolate desserts on their table, plus two cups of tea.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Thanks Z.

JANE

Aaah, thank you, thank you.

They enjoy their first few bites in ecstatic silence.

ESMERELDA

Mr. I-Need-Those-Financial-Reports should
just chill and have some chocolate.

JANE

(blissed out with the
chocolate, not really
attending to
Esmerelda's line of
thought)

The pure pleasure that is chocolate.

ESMERELDA

But then, men don't seem to have a capacity
for pure pleasure.

Beat. Jane is still in her own little world.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

They seem to derive pleasure only from things
that lead to power - what's the philosophical
term for pleasures like that - pleasures that
aren't pure.

Jane seems to engage in deep thought, searching for the obscure and technical word...

JANE

Impure pleasures.

Esmerelda grins.

JANE (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have quit teaching.

ESMERELDA

You didn't quit. You were fired.

JANE

I was a sessional. Sessionals can't really be fired.

ESMERELDA

(as if to say 'big
difference')

They can just be not-asked to teach again.

JANE

Well, yeah.

ESMERELDA

(reminding her - they
have clearly talked
about this before)

And why did that happen? Because you criticized the students' opinions.

JANE

It was a critical thinking course. The whole point of the course was to teach that not every opinion is equally acceptable.

ESMERELDA

Even so. That was disrespectful. They were offended. Especially what's-his-name who went running to the Dean. Who went running to the Philosophy Chair. Who felt compelled to mention it at the national philosophy conference.

Jane flags Zelda to their table.

JANE

Could I have another one of these?

ESMERELDA

Remember the students' evaluations? "She made it perfectly clear that she knew more than any of us." "She ..."

JANE

I was their professor!

She takes another bite of chocolate.

JANE (CONT'D)

At least I was in the company of my intellectual peers.

ESMERELDA

You mean the faculty, right?

Jane gives her a look.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

As I recall, you weren't too impressed with them either. And I quote, "Inquiring minds don't give a fuck."

JANE

(changing the topic)

I hear that in Paris, they have chocolate bars.

ESMERELDA

They have them here too. At the 7-11.

JANE

No, I mean chocolate bars. Not chocolate bars.

ESMERELDA

(sarcastically, not getting the distinction)

Oh, well, then.

JANE

Like instead of serving beer and - beer, they serve, like, a hundred kinds of chocolate.

ESMERELDA

Yeah?

Esmerelda licks her spoon. She also licks her plate.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

We have to go to Paris then.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Esmerelda is driving, Jane is in the passenger seat. They are driving out of the city.

JANE

This is a bad idea.

Esmerelda looks at her inquiringly.

JANE (CONT'D)

Going to Paris on our lunch hour.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

I thought you meant going to Paris by car.

Beat.

JANE

That too.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

They are driving through a town. There is an annoying SQUEAK.

JANE

That squeak is getting louder.

ESMERELDA

I know. All it needs is a bit of WD-40.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

As they drive, a hardware store comes into view.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda pulls into the lot. They both get out and walk toward the store's entrance.

INT. HARDWARE STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane and Esmerelda enter the store, pass the check-out, and wander around the aisles for a bit, unable to find WD-40. Esmerelda decides to go to the customer service counter at the back, indicated as such with a large reachable sign, while Jane continues looking.

INT. HARDWARE STORE CUSTOMER SERVICE COUNTER -- MOMENTS LATER

There are three men, MAN #2, MAN #3 (BOB), and MAN #4, standing at the counter, leaning onto it and/or over it, talking with each other and with MAC, the Customer Service staffperson. It's like at a bar, all the men validating their masculinity, but instead of talking about sports, they're talking about hardware.

MAN #2

And he says, "Gimme a Phillips." And I say, you don't want a Phillips. What you need is a Robertson. And he says, "Gimme a Phillips."

Esmerelda quickly determines that Man #2 is not asking for customer service. He's just shooting the breeze.

ESMERELDA

Excuse me.

They all ignore her.

MAN #3

He didn't know the difference? Between a Phillips and a Robertson? What kinda -

MAN #2

All I knows is he kept asking for a Phillips.

There is a pause in the inane conversation, but still, no one, least of all the staffperson, acknowledges her. MAN #5 approaches the customer service counter.

MAN #5

Hey, Mac, did those ratchet tie-downs come in yet?

MAC

Yeah, I got 'em right here.

Mac reaches under the counter.

ESMERELDA

(loudly)

Hello? Could I get some help here?

INT. HARDWARE STORE AISLE -- CONTINUOUS

Jane glances over to Esmerelda at the service counter - not with concern, but just to register what's going on.

INT. HARDWARE STORE CUSTOMER SERVICE COUNTER -- CONTINUOUS

Mac looks at her, but doesn't even bother to say "Yes?", let alone, "I'm sorry, what can I do for you?" She is clearly intruding.

MAN #2

We thought you were with him.

Man #2 jerks his thumb at Man #4.

ESMERELDA

Why would you think that?

MAN #2

Well, you're not with me, and you're sure not with Bob here!

He laughs as if he's told a good joke.

Jane walks up to Esmerelda, a can of WD-40 in one hand and a can of pink spray paint in the other. Esmerelda takes the can of spray paint and adds "FOR MEN ONLY" to the "CUSTOMER SERVICE" sign. She and Jane then head back to the front of the store to the check-out.

INT. HARDWARE STORE CHECK-OUT -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda puts the can of WD-40 on the check-out counter. The CASHIER rings it up.

CASHIER

Well, look at that. WD-40 is free today.
(she winks at them)
Seeing as you had to deal with the assholes at
the back.

Esmerelda and Jane grin at her.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

Oh, and we're giving these away today!

She picks out an exacto knife from a plastic bin on the checkout counter and hands it to Esmerelda. They are clearly marked with a price.

ESMERELDA

Why, thank you!

Esmerelda puts it into her pocket.

CASHIER

Anything else I can get for you today?

ESMERELDA

Might battery chargers be free today too?

CASHIER

Fraid not.

ESMERELDA

Okay then, we're good.

JANE

Thank you.

CASHIER

Have a nice day, now.

They leave the store.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

The squeak is clearly audible. Jane looks at Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA

Oh yeah. And we need gas.

EXT. GAS STATION #1 -- MOMENTS LATER

They approach a gas station and pull into it. While Esmerelda pops the hood and squirts some WD-40 onto something, fills up the tank, and pays for the gas, Jane goes into the convenience store, then comes back out with a largish paper bag full of chocolate bars, brownies, and so on.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

Jane and Esmerelda are driving along, each eating a chocolate bar. Jane's ever-present laptop is open and on her lap.

ESMERELDA

Working on the book?

JANE

(with a grimace)

No.

They drive in silence for a bit.

JANE (CONT'D)

Hey did you know Plan B is now available at drugstores without a prescription?

ESMERELDA

The morning after pill? When did that happen?

JANE

And why didn't we know about it?!

ESMERELDA

Well I can tell you the answer to that one.
Check out the major papers around that date.

Jane begins to do so.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

A whole section on sports, a whole section on cars, and a whole section on stock market prices. But the news about Plan B? A few inches of column space, at the bottom of page five. Am I right?

JANE

Close enough.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

If I ran a newspaper, I'd have all the cars, sports, and stock reports on just one page. At the back. The Men's Page.

(beat)

And wars. They'd have to fit on the Men's Page too.

JANE

I don't think there'd be room for them. They'd have to get cut.

ESMERELDA

But then no one would know about all those heroes fighting to save us from...

JANE

Whatever they're told they're fighting to save us from.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

They should advertise it. Plan B.

ESMERELDA

Probably tried. Magazines and television stations probably refused to run the ad. Like that Adbusters thing, remember? We prepared all those cool social comment ads for tv and no one would run them because they were "too controversial".

JANE

Like endorsing alcohol and big cars isn't?

ESMERELDA

"Any ad that criticizes or might offend other advertisers..." - especially the big ones, because if they pull their ads, the magazine or whatever loses all that revenue.

JANE

Well that sucks.

ESMERELDA

Tell me about it.

JANE

But what other advertiser would be offended by -

ESMERELDA

Take your pick. Any conservative, right wing, fundamentalist -

(sarcastically)

"Plan B is wrong, it's murder, it's abortion!"

JANE

No, it's not! It just stops ovulation - which is like not ejaculating. Is it wrong not to jerk off?

ESMERELDA

Have you met Tom?

JANE

And if perchance ovulation has already occurred, Plan B just stops fertilization. Which is like if a guy ejaculates anywhere but in a vagina. Is that wrong?

ESMERELDA

Have you met -

JANE

And if fertilization has already occurred, it just prevents implantation. Hardly murder.

ESMERELDA

(sighing)

You know that. And I know that.

JANE

And if the papers actually gave it decent coverage...

Beat.

ESMERELDA

You know what would make a good ad?

She starts singing to the tune of "It's My Party" ("and I'll cry if I want to...")

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

It's my body, and I'll choose if I want to, choose if I want to -

Jane joins in.

ESMERELDA AND JANE

- choose if I want to. You would choose too if it happened to you.

JANE

That is so good.

She furiously types away.

ESMERELDA

What are you doing?

JANE

Sending it to them.

ESMERELDA

They won't accept it.

JANE

Sure they will - it's good!

ESMERELDA

No, I mean they won't even consider it. Their marketing department won't consider unsolicited ideas.

JANE

Well, how do we get it solicited?

ESMERELDA

Haven't figured that one out yet.

Beat.

JANE

Yeah.

(huge sigh of
resignation)

Just like my "Boston Legal" script. They won't read any scripts, they won't even consider any storylines, from someone outside. Not even if I submitted it through an agent with all the proper release forms signed. I even said they could have it for free.

ESMERELDA

That was the one about that kid playing cops and robbers or something, and he jumps out at a man passing by, and points his toy gun at him? And the guy shoots him, thinking the gun was real?

Jane nods.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

And that was good. You had Alan Shore's lines - they were so Alan Shore.

Beat.

JANE

Maybe you could send the idea to some riotgrrls who do cover tunes.

ESMERELDA

Preaching to the converted. Fun, but -

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

They are by now on a busy highway. Jane stares at the cars whizzing by, in both directions.

JANE

(very frustrated)

We are so fucked up. I mean even when we have good ideas, or solutions, we can't get them out there.

ESMERELDA

Or they get out there and then economic or legislative barriers suddenly and oh-so-mysteriously appear that make it impossible for anything to be done with them.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Men say women take everything personally, but they invented the term "vested interest." If it's not personal, if it's not in their own interests, they don't do it. They don't even think about it.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

And if it's actually against their personal interests, they do everything they can to block it.

JANE

(very depressed)

What's the point? I mean it used to be, for me, 'Quick, live, before you die.' Now it's 'Quick, live, before we're over.'

Beat.

ESMERELDA

You really think -

JANE

It's too late? Yes.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

We can't change the laws of science. It's as simple as that. All those CFCs we put into the atmosphere? Back in the 50s and 60s? Each CFC molecule will get heated by the UV. Which will make each chlorine atom break away. Then each chlorine atom will react with an ozone molecule, taking one of its oxygen atoms, turning it into O2 instead of O3.

ESMERELDA

Which does no good at all in terms of protecting us from a slow sizzling death.

JANE

It's inevitable.

She pulls two chocolate bars out of the paper bag and hands one to Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA

So what do you think, will we go out with a bang or a whimper? Will people freak out or just quietly kill themselves.

JANE

Neither. They'll be listening to the game. Which will not be pre-empted.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

But you'll finish your book?

JANE

(all
intellectual-sounding)

Well, I do think these are the last moments of our species. And it's important to understand what happened.

ESMERELDA

So read to me what you wrote so far today.

She pauses with drama.

JANE

"It was a dark and stormy night. If a train is traveling east at 110 mph and another train is traveling west at 60 mph - "

They burst out laughing. Then drive in silence again for a while.

JANE (CONT'D)

So are we really going to Paris? I mean lunch ends at - well, lunch ends.

ESMERELDA

And if you still had a job, that would be relevant.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

It's three o'clock.

JANE

Good point.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

They hear a SIREN. Esmerelda looks into the rear view mirror, then pulls over. A white van goes by, lights flashing, but it's got advertising all over it, and the siren has given way to some advertisement message. They are both stunned for a moment, with incomprehension.

ESMERELDA

It's a fucking ad!

She pulls back onto the road and speeds after the van.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

I am so fucking tired of advertising! You can't go for a walk, you can't listen to the radio, or watch tv, or check your email - And half the time when you answer your phone it's someone wanting to sell you something.

(beat)

What gives them the right to be so -

JANE

Intrusive?

ESMERELDA

Time for another moment of truth.

When she catches up to the van, she crowds it over to the left lane. Esmerelda rolls down her window and shouts out.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Pull over!

EXT. SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The van pulls over, Esmerelda pulls over, and she, Jane, and JOE, the van's driver, get out.

ESMERELDA

What the fuck are you doing?

JOE

I pulled over. I thought you were the, whatchamacallit, unmarked cops.

ESMERELDA

Yeah, and I thought you were, whatchamacallit, an ambulance!

JOE

(chuckling)

Yeah, that gets 'em every time. People hear the siren, they pull over.

ESMERELDA

And why do you think that is?

JOE

What?

ESMERELDA

Why do people pull over for an ambulance?

JOE

Well, it's the law, I guess.

Esmerelda and Jane exchange pained looks.

ESMERELDA

Or maybe it's because they think it's on its way to save someone's life.

JOE

(triumphantly)

And my siren fools 'em!

He chuckles again.

JANE

You think it's funny? If it happens often enough, people won't pull over anymore when they hear a real siren.

Joe's starting to get the idea that they're not too supportive of his advertising endeavors.

JOE

Yeah, well, not my problem.

JANE

(softly, to no one in particular)

Moral Excuse #1.

He turns to get back into the van, but Esmerelda grabs him, whips out the exacto knife, and holds it across his throat.

ESMERELDA

It could be.

(to Jane)

Better call 9-1-1.

Jane pulls out her cellphone and makes a call.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

What do you think - if I slit your throat, how long would it take you to bleed to death? A minute? Two?

(to Jane)

I don't hear the ambulance, do you?

Jane makes another call.

JANE

They did dispatch an ambulance, but no one's pulling over. Said it'll be at least an hour. Because it's stuck in traffic.

ESMERELDA

Gee, you'll be dead by then. Oh well, not our problem.

She shoves him away from her.

JOE

Look, you got no call to - I'm just minding my own business here -

JANE

Moral Excuse #2.

JOE

That other stuff you're talking about, it's not my concern!

JANE

(softly)
Moral Excuse #3.

ESMERELDA

Not your concern? What, if it doesn't affect you, right here and right now, it's not your concern?

Joe's expression says "Yeah - what's wrong with that?"

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

(to Jane)

What is that, stage one of Kohlberg's moral development?

JANE

Two. Late childhood.

JOE

Hey gimme a break here, I'm just doing my job.

JANE

(softly)

Moral Excuse #4.

ESMERELDA

Yeah, well, get another fucking job! You can do that in this country, you know.

JOE

It's not that easy! I got a wife and kids to support.

JANE

Moral Excuse #5.

ESMERELDA

What, and that justifies -

JANE

I'll bet the guys at the nuclear weapons plant say the same thing.

ESMERELDA

(to Joe)

Whose decision was that?

JOE

What?

ESMERELDA

You decided to keep a woman. And you decided to make a couple kids. Why should we make allowances for your choices?

JOE

Look, lady, I don't know what you're talking about - Mr. Reynolds, he's got a business to run.

JANE

Moral Excuse #6.

ESMERELDA

So? That gives him the right to - kill people?

Joe has managed to get back into his van by now, and he quickly drives away. Esmerelda and Jane get back into their car.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

They just sit there, staring at the van as it goes off into the distance.

JANE

What a metaphor. Money over life. Doesn't get any plainer than that.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

What say we check in to a motel or something. I'm beat.

JANE

Good by me.

EXT. MOTEL #1 PARKING LOT -- EVENING

Esmerelda and Jane pull into the parking lot of a cheap motel, which is apparently undergoing some reconstruction. They get out of the car, grabbing knapsacks, bags, whatever; Jane has her laptop as well. They go into the motel office.

INT. MOTEL #1 OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

MR. DAVIS, an officious motel receptionist, dressed in a suit (trousers, shirt, tie, suitcoat), is at the reception counter. There is, on the counter a bit off to the side, a construction worker's toolbelt and miscellaneous tools, including a staplegun.

MR. DAVIS

Good evening, Ms. -

ESMERELDA

No.

MR. DAVIS

I beg your pardon?

ESMERELDA

Don't call me 'Ms.'

MR. DAVIS

I assure you I was only try to be polite.

ESMERELDA

Polite? What does 'Ms.' mean?

He doesn't get what she's after.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Mr. and Ms., they mean male person and female person. Or penis-person and uterus-person. How did it become polite to refer to someone by part of their anatomy? Whose idea was that, I wonder.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Especially when it is so very unimportant. I mean, I don't define myself by my uterus.

(to Jane)

Do you?

JANE

Never.

ESMERELDA

So, Mr. - or Dickhead -
(she looks at the
nameplate on the
counter)

Davis -

MR. DAVIS

Yes, how can I help you?

ESMERELDA

A room for the night, please.

MR. DAVIS

Certainly. If you'll just fill this out.

He presents a clipboard, on which there is a registration form. Jane takes it and begins filling it out.

ESMERELDA

So, Dickhead Davis, your boss makes you wear a suit and tie?

MR. DAVIS

(apologetic)

No, it's my own idea. I find people give me a little respect when I wear it.

(unaware of the irony)

It gives me a little more authority.

ESMERELDA

Oh yeah? Think it'd work for me? If I wore a tie? I'd like a little more respect. And authority.

Jane is grinning to herself as she listens in while filling out the registration form. She knows what's coming.

MR. DAVIS

(shrugs sadly)

I don't think so.

ESMERELDA

No, eh. I didn't think so.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

So what do you think Id have to wear to get more respect and authority.

Jane passes the completed registration form to him. He reaches under the counter for a key, which he gives her.

MR. DAVIS

Well - I don't think there is anything -

ESMERELDA

Hmm.

He walks to a display of brochures beside the counter and starts picking out a few. Esmerelda meets him there and reaches out to grab his tie.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Take you long to do these knots? They tighten, don't they.

She tightens the knot, choking him, then extends her empty hand, expectantly. Jane is ready; she passes Esmerelda the staple gun that was lying on the counter. Esmerelda lifts the end of the tie up, effectively turning it into a noose, and staples it to the wall behind him. They leave the lobby and head to their room.

INT. MOTEL #1 ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda and Jane enter their motel room. It's pretty basic. Jane unpacks a few things from her bag and heads for the bathroom. Esmerelda flips through some stuff on the phone table, then makes a call.

ESMERELDA

Yeah, I'd like a large, double cheese, pineapple and green olives on one half, mushrooms and black olives on the other.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Mozey's Motel. Number fifteen.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Okay, thanks.

She finds the tv remote, turns it on, and flops onto one of the two beds in the room, casually watching and surfing. Jane comes out of the bathroom, a little fresher.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Pizza'll be here in half an hour.

JANE

Great. I'm famished.

Jane too flops onto a bed, but with her laptop. Esmerelda has found some sports.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)

You wouldn't know by looking at her that she's a housewife and mother of three.

ESMERELDA

(to him, to herself)

And that's important because...

Jane looks up. They watch in silence, as the sportscaster calls a women's 100M race.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)

The two American women are quick out of the blocks - they are clearly dominating, Enser in lane 4 is making an attempt on Reston, but Garvey wins it easily, Reston is second, and Enser will have to be happy with the bronze.

Beat.

SPORTSCASTER (CONT'D)

The men's hundred is next. And as for Johnson -

ESMERELDA

You wouldn't know by looking at him that he looks after his own house and is a father of three.

Jane grins, and Esmerelda turns down the volume. There is a knock at their. Esmerelda gets up to answer it. It's the PIZZA DELIVERY GUY.

PIZZA DELIVERY GUY

Large, double cheese -

ESMERELDA

Yup. How much do I owe you?

The pizza delivery guy looks at the bill taped to the top of the box.

PIZZA DELIVERY GUY

Twenty-three, sixty-nine.

Esmerelda takes a couple bills out of her wallet and gives them to him, taking the pizza.

ESMERELDA

Thanks!

The pizza delivery guy nods and leaves. She closes the door.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Oh, I forgot to get something to drink.

JANE

I'll get it. There's a vending machine out front.

Jane grabs her wallet and leaves the room. Esmerelda puts out a slice for each of them on the napkins provided and settles onto the bed with the tv again. Jane returns, hands one bottle to Esmerelda, uncaps the other for herself, and settles back onto her bed with pizza, drink, and laptop to the side. Esmerelda resumes watching the tv, the volume still at almost-mute.

ESMERELDA

Half the men in this fine country approve of using force to get sex, and the product advertised to make women feel safe is a fucking napkin.

Jane looks up to the tv, and makes no comment; nothing need be added to Esmerelda's observation. Esmerelda changes the station, stopping at some awards show - the Emmys or Academy Awards.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Why are there separate categories for men and women? 'Best Actor' and 'Best Actress'?

JANE

Because women almost always play characters in subordinate roles. So they could never compete with the male actors in their leading roles.

ESMERELDA

But it's the acting that's being judged, not the characters.

JANE

You think people can separate the two?

ESMERELDA

Hm.

They watch for a bit, each taking a second slice of pizza.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Maybe you're right. None of the other categories are sex-segregated - director, writer, cinematography, music.

Beat. They've finished their slices.

JANE

Time for dessert.

Jane gets up and grabs her jacket; Esmerelda follows suit.

JANE (CONT'D)

There's got to be something in this town. A cafe, a dessert shop -

ESMERELDA

Maybe Mr. Respect and Authority will know.

INT. MOTEL #1 OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Esmerelda and Jane enter the lobby. Mr. Davis, tie-less, sees them, then looks around in alarm.

ESMERELDA

Relax.

JANE

Can you tell us where we can get some chocolate?

MR. DAVIS

Chocolate?

ESMERELDA

Yeah - chocolate milkshakes, chocolate ice cream, chocolate cheesecake - any kind of chocolate.

MR. DAVIS

Well, there's an ice cream place just down the way on the main street. Guess you can get your chocolate milkshake and chocolate ice cream there.

JANE

Any dessert place? Cafe?

He looks clueless.

JANE (CONT'D)

Restaurant?

MR. DAVIS

Well, there is a restaurant, but I've never seen any chocolate - oh maybe, they might have just, you know, chocolate cake. Usually they have pie though. Different kinds of pie.

ESMERELDA

Okay, thanks.

Esmerelda and Jane head out.

MR. DAVIS

Wait! I just thought of it. There's a place my sister likes to go to. A tea room?

JANE

That sounds promising.

MR. DAVIS

It's Sophie's place. Just her parlour or something, nothing real business-like.

ESMERELDA

Oh yeah? And where does Sophie live?

MR. DAVIS

I don't know if she'd be open now.

He catches Esmerelda's threatening look.

MR. DAVIS (CONT'D)

But she lives on Maple Street. It's the first, no, the second street, when you leave here.

JANE

Thank you!

They leave the motel.

EXT. MOTEL #1 PARKING LOT -- MORNING

Esmerelda and Jane come out of the motel and head toward their car. A CONSTRUCTION CREW (all male) is there, hard at work. When they pass, CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1 hoots and howls at them.

CONFERENCE WORKER #1

Oooh, you're a hot one!

ESMERELDA

Fuck off!

They keep walking.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1

What's a matter, can't you take a compliment?

Esmerelda stops. As does Jane.

ESMERELDA

You were paying me a compliment? Okay, let's go with that. Do you often call out compliments to people?

The construction worker nods, grinning.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Yeah? Okay, when was the last time you called out to compliment a man, for anything? When was the last time you called out to compliment a woman then, on, say, some specific ability?

He doesn't answer.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

See, I didn't think so. You really weren't paying me a compliment. It isn't about me at all. It's about you. You might have said "She's hot!" But what you really meant is "I'm horny!"

Beat. The guys in the crew giggle.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

And given that sexual desire seems to induce a state of temporary idiocy - we all do really stupid things when we're horny, I'll be the first to admit that -

(momentarily
distracted by a
memory)

- it's not particularly encouraging that the male half of the species actually brags about being in a constant state of sexual readiness.

The construction crew is silent by now. With incomprehension.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Furthermore, any man who feels the need to make a public proclamation about being horny is obviously sexually insecure.

(beat)

And that's okay. A lot of people are insecure about their sexuality. But hey - deal with it on your own! We're not in therapy together. Leave me the fuck out of it!

Jane and Esmerelda start to continue toward their car, but Esmerelda stops for one last comment.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

And answer me this: why would you want to be announcing your sexual insecurity all the time? Especially to your buddies?

Some of the construction crew get that part and they laugh at Construction Worker #1. Esmerelda and Jane get into their car.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

They drive in silence for a while, Jane occasionally working on her laptop.

JANE

Hey, can we go to Boston?

ESMERELDA

Before or after Paris?

JANE

Monday. There's this place, Chantal's, it's a restaurant, but every Monday they have an all-you-can-eat chocolate buffet. Twenty bucks a person.

ESMERELDA

Really?

JANE

Isn't that cool? An all-you-can-eat chocolate buffet.

ESMERELDA

Boston it is.

EXT. BORDER STATION -- DAY

Esmerelda and Jane pull into the border station, in line behind a few cars. The car ahead of them pulls up to the kiosk, so Esmerelda pulls up to nestle behind it. Suddenly, GUARD #1 (male), in full military apparel, walks out to stand in front of their car.

GUARD #1

(authoritative,
intimidating)

Please back up your car. Back up your car now.

Guard #1 gestures at them with pushing back motions.

JANE

I think we're supposed to stay behind the white line.

ESMERELDA

Oh. I didn't notice a white line.

Esmerelda starts backing up. There is a CRUNCH as the passenger side mirror hits a concrete post and snaps off.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Damn it!

She stops the car. Jane opens her door to retrieve the mirror. They are suddenly surrounded by GUARDS, all male and all with their guns drawn.

GUARD #1

Remain in your vehicle! Do not get out of
your vehicle! Put your hands where we can
see them!

Jane slowly raises her hands and gets back into the car, her door still open. Esmerelda
has also raised her hands.

ESMERELDA

(to Jane)

What the fuck -

JANE

(to Esmerelda)

What did we do?

ESMERELDA

(to the guards)

Could you please put away your guns? Men
with guns make me nervous.

JANE

(quick to take back
possible offence)

Women with guns make us nervous too.

The car ahead of them pulls away.

GUARD #1

Pull ahead to the kiosk.

ESMERELDA

Can I use my hands to do that?

Jane gives her a look.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Close your door, we don't want that to get
knocked off too.

JANE

(to guard closest to
her)

I'm going to close my door. Can I use my
hands to do that?

Esmerelda gives her a look.

GUARD #1

Pull ahead to the kiosk now.

ESMERELDA

(to Jane)

What is this guy's problem?

Jane closes her door, awkwardly doing so with both hands visible out the door (her window is open) and Esmerelda drives the car to the kiosk with her hands visible at the top of the steering wheel. The guards still have their guns drawn.

GUARD #2

(in the kiosk)

Passports.

Jane and Esmerelda give him their passports.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)

Proceed to the guardhouse. Slowly. Once
there, wait for instructions. Remain in your
car.

They drive over to the guardhouse and sit in their car. The guards have walked over with them, surrounding their car, guns still drawn.

GUARD #1

Exit the vehicle.

Jane opens her door and slides out onto the pavement. She lies on her back, feebly waving her limbs. Esmerelda looks out the driver's seat at her.

ESMERELDA

What the hell are you doing?

JANE

Jordan's puppy does this all the time.
Whenever she meets an alpha dog.

ESMERELDA

Really?

She stares at Jane for a few moments.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

The dog has no spine.

The guards cock their big guns, the sound of metal fitting into metal is decisive and loud.

JANE

The dog's still alive.

ESMERELDA

Good point.

Esmerelda drops to the ground, rolls over, and waves her arms and legs.

JANE

'Course she does it when she meets beta dogs
too. Any dog, actually. The dog has no spine.

The guards show no response to their peculiar behavior.

GUARD #1

Stand up. Slowly.

They do so.

GUARD #1 (CONT'D)

Proceed into the building.

He gestures with his gun. They begin walking toward the building.

JANE

(to Esmerelda)

When they make us fill out forms - and they will do that - where it says 'occupation', don't put 'independent activist', okay?

ESMERELDA

'Philosopher's going to be just as suspect.

Beat.

JANE

Right. Okay, we're...

JANE AND ESMERELDA

Secretaries!

Beat.

ESMERELDA

Okay, and after they make us fill out forms?

JANE AND ESMERELDA

Chocolate!

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

Jane and Esmerelda are driving along the highway.

JANE

(singsong)

We're on our way to Boston, to eat all the chocolate we can eat. We're on our way to Boston, to eat -

ESMERELDA

If only your high school could see their valedictorian now.

Jane grins at her. They drive in silence for a bit. Then they see a black woman, X, at the side of the road some distance away. She's sort of hitch-hiking, but she's got it all wrong: she's doing something very bizarre with her thumbs, is facing the wrong way, and is moving parts in such a way as to be worthy of inclusion in Monty Python's Silly Walk Hall of Fame.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

What the hell?

They slow down and watch her antics a bit longer. Both can't help laughing.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Is she stoned?

JANE

I don't think so.

ESMERELDA

Drunk?

JANE

Doesn't - she's going to hurt herself.

ESMERELDA

If she hasn't already.

Esmerelda pulls over, and Jane calls out to X.

JANE

Do you need a ride?

X lurches up to their car, giggling.

JANE (CONT'D)

Hey, are you all right? Do you need a ride?

X makes an about face, giggles, then turns again.

ESMERELDA

Get her inside.

JANE

Yeah.

Jane gets out, opens the back door, and bundles X inside, as cars continue to whiz by.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

X is laughing for no apparent reason. Jane turns to face her in the back seat.

JANE

I'm Jane, this is Esmerelda.

X laughs uproariously. Jane and Esmerelda are confused, but since her laughter is infectious, they end up laughing as well.

JANE (CONT'D)

And your name is -

X laughs again.

ESMERELDA

Okaaay.

X continues to laugh.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

(to Jane)

It's almost like hiccups. Maybe she's getting too much oxygen?

JANE

But it's too little oxygen that makes you light-headed.

ESMERELDA

Well, maybe she's an extraterrestrial and it's both. I mean, what do we know about alien physiology?

JANE
(doubtful about the
alien theory)

Right.

Jane empties the paper bag, and passes it to X. X has no idea what to do with it. She laughs. Jane takes back the bag, puts it over her mouth, and breathes in and out. She gives it back to X. X does what Jane did. She stops laughing. She then takes the bag away from her mouth -

X
Thank you. My name is
Xrrmravnbnvdl-yip-yip-yip-yip-
(beat)
-ooooo.

Beat.

ESMERELDA
'Kay, but your friends just call you 'X', right?

X erupts into laughter again. She puts the bag over her mouth again quickly.

X
Mmm. Chocolate fumes.

Both Jane and Esmerelda grin. Jane hands X a chocolate bar.

X (CONT'D)
Oh. Chocolate is good.

X manages to eat the chocolate bar with the paper bag on.

ESMERELDA
Where were you headed? Can we give you a
ride home?

X
(taking the bag away
from her mouth again)
You can do that? In this vehicle?

ESMERELDA

(for Jane's ears only)

What's that supposed to mean?

Jane shrugs. X burst out laughing again. Jane reaches into the back and puts the paper bag completely over X's head. X stops laughing. Camera shot on X sitting there like an idiot with a paper bag over her head.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Where do you live?

X

Grmphflg.

JANE

Sorry?

X

(louder)

Grmphflg. ...

(indecipherable
mumble)

... the Zbixschik star system.

Jane and Esmerelda look at each other.

ESMERELDA

(ready to believe)

Did she say star system?

JANE

(not ready to believe,
to X)

Sorry, we don't know where that is.

ESMERELDA

So look it up on Mapquest.

Jane looks at Esmerelda as if she's crazy.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Hey, I know some IT guys. It's not
inconceivable -

Jane looks up Grmphflg on Mapquest.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Some of them have a very warped sense of
humour.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Get it? Warped?

JANE

Yeah. Ha-ha.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

Mapquest doesn't have an 'outside Earth'
option. Gee.

(to X)

Can you tell us where Grmphflg is?

X

Well yeah. I know where I live. But I don't
know where you live. I was out for a drive and
got lost. So I stopped here to ask for
directions.

Jane and Esmerelda look at each other again. They are speechless.

JANE

You stopped here. To ask for directions.

X faints.

ESMERELDA

Great, now you've gone and killed the alien!

Beat. They stare at her.

JANE

I think she's just fainted.

ESMERELDA

(excited about this
whole alien thing)

Do you think that when she wakes up, she'll
say "Take me to your leader"?

JANE

(carried by
Esmerelda's
excitement for a
moment)

God, I hope not.

(alarmed)

We can't do that. It'd be too embarrassing.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

I hope she doesn't ask about the meaning of
life.

ESMERELDA

Why, haven't got the answer to that one yet?

JANE

The answer? I don't even get the question. I
mean I understand "What's the purpose of
life?" Even if I don't think it has a purpose.
Because purpose implies intentional design.
But what does "What's the meaning of life?"
mean? I mean 'purpose' and 'meaning' are two
different things. 'What's the meaning of
'persnickety'?' That makes sense. But how can
'life' mean anything. Words mean things. Even
an action might mean something. But how can
life mean something? How can life have a
definition?

Beat.

ESMERELDA

Maybe you should take the bag off -

JANE

Oh yeah.

Jane reaches back and does so. With a great intake of air, X comes to, and bursts into laughter. Jane and Esmerelda wait dramatically for her next words.

X

Can we stop somewhere? I have to pee.

EXT. GAS STATION #2-- MOMENTS LATER

As they pull into the gas station, they see an ordinary, middle-class, reasonably well-dressed, reasonably good-looking MAN #6 get out of his car and approach the GAS STATION ATTENDANT, who is waiting for him to speak to him. Esmerelda and Jane just stare.

ESMERELDA

Imagine going through life assuming people will pay attention to you.

From the distance, it's clear the man is asking the attendant about what kind of oil to buy; the attendant apparently provides helpful information, the man makes a decision, and then buys a can of oil. The transaction is easy and quick.

JANE

And being right about that.

While Esmerelda fills up the tank, Jane and X head to the restroom.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X are back in the car and Esmerelda has resumed driving.

JANE

So let's try this again. You're from -

X

Gmphflg.

JANE

(playing along)

But you don't know - but we don't know
where that is.

X

Where is here? If I knew where I was, I could
probably figure out how to get back.

JANE

This is Earth.

X

Doesn't sound familiar.

ESMERELDA

They probably don't call it Earth.

Jane looks at her as if to say, 'You're buying this?'

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Find a map of our solar system and show her
Earth.

Jane does so. X shakes her head - she doesn't recognize it.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Try the Milky Way.

Jane taps on her laptop keyboard for a bit, then shows the screen to X again. X shakes
her head again.

JANE

What's the Milky Way in?

ESMERELDA

The Universe?

Jane taps away and shows X the screen once more.

X

I must have really taken a wrong turn.

ESMERELDA

Maybe we can find a library - show her some star charts or something.

JANE

Okaaay.

X starts laughing hysterically again. Jane puts the paper bag over her head.

EXT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

They pull up to a library in a small city.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

They start to get out of the car.

ESMERELDA

Wait a minute.

She nods to X in her paper bag.

JANE

Right.

JANE (CONT'D)

(to X)

Do you think you'd be all right if you took the paper bag off?

ESMERELDA

Yeah, maybe you've gotten used to the oxygen level or something.

X slowly takes the paper bag off. She giggles a bit, waits a moment, giggles a bit more.

JANE

Why don't you keep the bag with you just in case.

X holds onto the paper bag, and they all get out of the car.

INT. LIBRARY MAIN ENTRANCE AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

While Jane makes inquiries at the front desk, Esmerelda and X glance at the books in a nearby cart that are waiting to be shelved. X picks up a "Curious George" book and starts to flip through. She bursts out laughing. Esmerelda can't help herself - she starts to laugh a bit as well. Then X picks up Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time", flips through, and laughs even more heartily. By this time, Jane has joined them.

ESMERELDA

The guys at MIT are gonna love her.

JANE

(still not convinced
and so ignoring
Esmerelda's
comment)

There aren't any star charts here, but they have several first year astronomy texts.

(to X)

You might recognize something.

ESMERELDA

Lead on!

INT. LIBRARY STACKS -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane leads the way to the right aisle, then scans the books on the shelf, eventually pulling two out. She takes them to a nearby table and they all sit down.

JANE

Why don't you just flip through and see if anything looks familiar.

They watch anxiously as X flips through, stopping at the photographs of various star systems, but she doesn't recognize anything.

X

Where the hell am I?

She closes the book with some finality.

X (CONT'D)

Look, if you just give me your coordinates.

JANE

Our coordinates?

X

Well, not your coordinates, though that would be just as useful. I meant the coordinates of this planet, Earl.

ESMERELDA

Earth.

X doesn't register the correction.

X

See, if you gave me the co-ordinates, I could figure it out. I mean, it would take me some time, it's not that easy, but I could do it.

JANE

What coordinates?

X

(as if they're idiots)

The space-time coordinates. The coordinates of Earl's location on the space-time continuum.

Jane and Esmerelda look at each other, clueless.

JANE

I don't think we know that.

ESMERELDA

Well, not us, but -

JANE

No, I mean 'we' as in 'us Earthlings'.

X looks incredulous.

X

You don't know? How can you not know? It's where you live. You don't know your own address?

X looks pointedly at Esmerelda for some reason, perhaps because she's the one who's been driving.

ESMERELDA

Well, it's not a problem if you've never left home, is it?

X

You've never left home? How old are you?

JANE

Look, it's getting late. What say we find a hotel for the night, come up with a plan.

ESMERELDA

Good idea.

They start walking away.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

(to Jane)

You know, I used to have a cousin named Earl.

JANE

Oh yeah? What was he like?

ESMERELDA

(after a moment)

A man.

EXT. MOTEL #2 PARKING LOT -- EVENING

Jane, Esmerelda and X get out of the car and head toward the motel entrance. On the way, they see a HUSBAND saying good-bye to his WIFE and CHILD, a boy of about five years old.

HUSBAND

(to boy)

Now, you be a good boy and look after your mom until I get back.

X

(to Jane and
Esmerelda, as they
keep walking)

Why is the child to look after the adult? Is she retarded?

Jane and Esmerelda exchange a look.

JANE AND ESMERELDA

Yeah.

They enter the motel office.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE #2 -- MOMENTS LATER

X looks on with curiosity as Jane and Esmerelda check them in. Among various other things, Jane has her laptop and the bag of chocolate bars. They head off to their room.

INT. MOTEL #2 ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter their room wearily.

JANE

Shower, pizza, chocolate. Not necessarily in that order.

Jane grabs a chocolate bar out of the bag on her way to the bathroom. Esmerelda picks up the phone and orders a pizza. X helps herself to the bag of chocolate bars and turns on the tv.

Esmerelda finishes ordering and joins X, also taking a chocolate bar from the bag. Jane comes out of the bathroom and takes another chocolate bar from the bag. She looks in the near-empty bag.

JANE (CONT'D)

Time to refill.

There is a news program on the tv, showing men with guns.

X

You let men have guns?

JANE

(shrugs)

They're the only ones who want them.

They watch unenthusiastically for a bit, changing the channels. The pizza and beverages arrive. Jane answers the door, pays, and they each help themselves to a slice and a beverage.

ESMERELDA

(conversationally)

So if you're not from around here -

Jane gives a look that 'groans' at her choice of words.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Why can you speak English?

X

It came with the brain.

That stops them in mid-bite.

ESMERELDA

(carefully)

What else came with the brain?

X gets up to get another piece of pizza -

X

Emotion, sensory inputs, motor control -

- and falls flat on her face.

X (CONT'D)

Not very much motor control.

JANE

(still trying to
establish evidence for
or against believing

X)

So if you're using a human body, why the
oxygen thing?

X

A don't know. A byproduct of the merge?

Jane and Esmerelda exchange ominous looks.

JANE

The merge.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

(not sure she wants to
know)

Are you using someone else's body?

X

Not 'using'...exactly. If I merged when the
other person was alive, that'd be unethical.
And if I merged when they were dead, that'd
be - yucky.

ESMERELDA

So...what else is there?

X

The time-space between. Duh.

ESMERELDA

Oh yeah. The time-space between.

They're all silent for a while.

JANE

So if you're using - merging - with someone else's body, and presumably their brain, what makes you think you'll be able to figure out our time-space co-ordinates. I mean, chances are, you haven't got a genius in there.

X

No. I don't. You're definitely right about that. But it's got a lot of unused RAM.

JANE

Unused RAM. Gray matter? You can tap into the gray matter?

X turns toward her, a look of horror slowly spreading on her face.

X

You mean, you can't? This -
(she flips a finger at
her head)
- is all there is?

ESMERELDA

Duh.

X gets up and goes into the bathroom.

JANE

Good thing we already crossed the border.

ESMERELDA

Yeah. They would've deported her as an illegal alien.

Esmerelda starts laughing, then puts the paper bag over her head. Doesn't stop.

JANE

After they shot her.

X comes out of the bathroom in time to hear that.

X

Someone's going to shoot me?

(truly confused)

Why would anyone want to kill me?

JANE

Because you're smarter than them.

Beat.

X

What kind of a world is this?

They're quiet again.

JANE

(starting to believe,
but a little nervous
about it)

We find some professor. Someone who knows
this stuff. We go on campus, find this
professor, knock on his door, and just ask.

ESMERELDA

Excuse me, could you please tell us the
time-space coordinates of Earth?

JANE

It might work.

ESMERELDA

Well, yeah, it might. What's in Boston?
Princeton? No, MIT!

JANE

Yeah, and Harvard.

ESMERELDA

Someone's gotta know at one of them.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- DAY

They're driving along, the radio is on, and an announcement comes on about a peace rally that mentions the word 'army' at least once.

ESMERELDA

We should stop and join in for a bit.

JANE

(so tired)

Why? I mean, what's the point?

Esmerelda glances over at her, a little distressed to hear the depth of fatigue.

JANE (CONT'D)

We can send a man to the moon, but we can't keep peace.

Jane's reference to men catches X's attention and she listens carefully to the next interchanges.

ESMERELDA

Well, that's no surprise.

Jane looks at her inquiringly.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

You're looking at intelligence and wondering why we can do one and not the other. But look at competition. That's the primary motivating force.

(beat)

Competition's the reason we can send a man to the moon and the reason we can't keep peace.

X nods in agreement.

JANE

But that just reinforces my - despair. If competition's so primary, it's probably hardwired. Which means they can't help it. If men thrive on conflict, we'll never achieve peace. Simply put, they love fighting too much.

Beat. X nods.

ESMERELDA

(as if to say 'sad to say, but true')

Well... Male mice will learn to run a complex maze when the only reward is the opportunity to have a fight.

JANE

Geez.

ESMERELDA

Men love the noise and the action and the chance to be a hero.

JANE

Yeah. And somehow the death and destruction doesn't register.

X nods.

JANE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time we selectively abort male babies. Limit their numbers to 10% of the population.

Beat. X considers this with a frown.

ESMERELDA

Isn't that a bit extreme - I mean, for you?

JANE

"We are a horrible race, living in horrible times. Perhaps we should have the courage to think of horrible remedies."

Beat. Jane looks at her with a question.

JANE (CONT'D)

(in answer to
Esmerelda's implied
question)

Arthur Koestler.

They are both silent for a bit, then Jane hands the bag of chocolate bars all round. Finally X speaks.

X

What's an army?

JANE

It's a group of people who defend the country
- go to war, fight, kill.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

You haven't got any wars on your planet?

X

Guess not. We don't have any armies.

JANE

What we could do with \$3.2 billion dollars.

Esmerelda shoots her a look of inquiry.

JANE (CONT'D)

What we spend in so-called 'defence'. Per day.

ESMERELDA

(to X)

And you have no fighting on your planet - not for land, food, resources?

X

We have enough. Land, food, resources.

ESMERELDA

And that's because you do something special to unlimit the space, right?

JANE

No, it's because they do something special to limit population.

(she turns to X)

Right?

X

You can't do that? You can't control your population?

JANE

(she turns back)

Apparently not.

They are silent for a bit.

JANE (CONT'D)

Hey -

(she points ahead to
an ice cream place)

ESMERELDA

On it.

She pulls over to the ice cream place.

EXT. ICE CREAM PLACE -- MOMENTS LATER

All three get out and go up to the take-out window.

ESMERELDA

Three double chocolate fudge milkshakes,
please.

She looks at Jane and X to confirm. They nod. They are served their milkshakes and Esmerelda pays.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

JANE

Thanks.

X

Yes, thank you. Chocolate is good.

They get back in the car and carry on.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

They focus on their milkshakes.

JANE

Chocolate is very good.

Again, silence as they enjoy their double chocolate fudge milkshakes.

ESMERELDA

So why did you choose to merge with a
female rather than a male.

X

I chose to merge with a human. I wanted the
most intelligent species.

ESMERELDA

But what I meant was, why a female human
being instead of a male human being?

Long beat.

X

Males are human beings?

(amazed)

You consider them the same species as you?

They are silent.

JANE

Should we tell her now how we reproduce?

ESMERELDA

Or later.

X

Reproduce what?

JANE

Ourselves.

X

You make it sound like you do it every day.

How often do you need to replace -

(suddenly very
concerned about her
decision to stop on
Earth to ask for
directions)

Is there something very wrong here?

Jane snorts.

X (CONT'D)

We have males too, they have a chromosome,
it doesn't form correctly, it gets halfway to
what it's supposed to be and then sort of stops.

We call them -

(she seems to briefly
'search' for the right
word)

- morons.

Both Jane and Esmerelda spurt their milkshakes out their noses.

X (CONT'D)

So, of course, since we don't share all the same chromosomes, we are not the same species. It's the same here, no?

JANE

Well, yes, actually.

(considering this very interesting point)

Chimps' DNA is different from ours by just 1.2% and we call them a different species.

X

We consider males to be intermediate between the apes and us. I mean, isn't it obvious? The body hair, the coarser features, the greater brute strength, the greater tendency to fight and flight, the spatial skills.

JANE

(warming to the idea)

Their fascination with loud noise.

ESMERELDA

(already sold on the idea)

Their obsession with being big.

JANE

Their lack of verbal skills.

ESMERELDA

Their arrested emotional development, their stubborn resistance to acquiring any self-knowledge, a resistance manifest in a disdain for all things psychological -

Jane stares at her. Esmerelda pointedly ignores her. Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

And here we've been blaming testosterone.

X

(shouting)

You let them have testosterone??

She looks around her anxiously.

ESMERELDA

Well, we don't 'let' them have it - they just -
have it. I mean naturally.

X

Yes, but you don't make them take inhibitors?
We've done studies - males with testosterone
inhibitors don't rape, don't kill, don't fight
nearly as much -

ESMERELDA

Yeah. We've done those studies too.

Jane looks at her in surprise, obviously not having heard of these studies either.

X

And still -

JANE

And still.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

They like their testosterone.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

That's part of what makes them morons.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BOSTON -- LATER

They approach, in their car, the outskirts of Boston.

ESMERELDA

So what'll it be, Harvard or MIT?

JANE

I think MIT. Aren't they more specialized in the sciences? Harvard makes me think law, politics, business.

ESMERELDA

MIT it is. Got directions?

JANE

On it.

Jane busies herself at her laptop.

EXT. MIT MAIN ENTRANCE -- LATER

They turn into the main entrance to the MIT campus and eventually see a kiosk at which they stop.

ESMERELDA

Okay, no place to park -
(turning to X)
- can we just drop you off?

JANE

Looks like there's a map on the kiosk, so you just need to figure out where the astronomy building is, or physics, or whatever.

X

Then what - just go in, find someone, and ask for Earl's co-ordinates?

ESMERELDA

(shrugs)
More or less. We wouldn't know what else to say or do -
(looks at Jane for help)

JANE

Yeah, except that you should ask for Earth's coordinates.

ESMERELDA

Oh, right.

JANE

Just explain who - no, wait, don't say who you are or where you're from.

ESMERELDA

(under her breath to
Jane)

Maybe we should go with her.

JANE

(under her breath to
Esmerelda)

It's all-you-can-eat! And I'm still not convinced -

(to X)

Just say you'd like to know the space-time coordinates of Earth. Tell him you're doing a research paper or something.

ESMERELDA

Yeah, that's good. Do that.

X

Okay.

X gets out of the car and goes over to the kiosk to look at the campus map. Jane and Esmerelda drive off. They stop, back up, stop at the kiosk again.

ESMERELDA

We'll meet you here in -

(she looks at Jane)

- a couple hours?

Jane nods.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Two o'clock.

X

Okay.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHOCOLATE BUFFET RESTAURANT -- MOMENTS LATER

Esmerelda and Jane pause to make sure they're at the right restaurant, see a sign announcing an all-you-can-eat chocolate buffet, then enter.

INT. THE CHOCOLATE BUFFET -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane and Esmerelda enter the restaurant and are immediately stunned. They take in the view, in awed silence.

JANE

Oh wow.

ESMERELDA

I had no idea -

They pay the cashier and enter the space. They each pick up an empty tray and start moving around the room. There are several sections around the perimeter of the room, and a huge display of desserts in the center. They pause at the first section, marked "Chocolate Covered". There are chocolate covered raisins, peanuts, cashews, and almonds.

JANE

Chocolate-covered pecans!

She puts a small quantity on her tray.

JANE (CONT'D)

Do you see any chocolate covered cranberries?

Esmerelda scans the table, as does Jane, then points.

ESMERELDA

There?

JANE

Yeah - but no. I don't mean like chocolate covered raisins, I mean like cherry chocolates. You know, like in a box of chocolates? With the syrup and everything?

Esmerelda continues to scan the table.

ESMERELDA

There.

She points. Jane takes one and immediately pops it into her mouth. She moans.

JANE

Laura Secord has got to make these.

She takes several more and adds them to her tray. Esmerelda has moved on a little.

ESMERELDA

Oh my god.

JANE

(mumbling, since her mouth is full)

What?

ESMERELDA

Chocolate-covered chocolate chip cookies.

JANE

No.

ESMERELDA

Yeah. Oh yeah.

They each take several and add them to their trays.

EXT. MIT MAIN ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

X is standing exactly where Jane and Esmerelda left her. Still puzzling over the campus map.

INT. THE CHOCOLATE BUFFET -- CONTINUOUS

Jane and Esmerelda pass by the fondu section.

ESMERELDA
I've never been a fondu person.

JANE
Me neither.

They pass by, but then Jane pauses.

JANE (CONT'D)
Oh wait.

She dips a mandarin orange slice in a pot marked 'cherry chocolate'.

JANE (CONT'D)
I could become a fondu person.

They move on, to the ice cream section. Jane scans her almost full tray.

JANE (CONT'D)
Last.

Esmerelda agrees, and they arrive at the fudge section.

ESMERELDA
(scanning the table)
No surprises here.

Jane has already taken a chunk and popped it into her mouth.

JANE
Except that it's quite possibly the best fudge
I've ever tasted. Try the chocolate cashew one.

Esmerelda takes a chunk, tries it, then takes another. Esmerelda nods to the center table.

ESMERELDA

Are we ready for dessert?

JANE

No, I think we need to make room on our trays first.

ESMERELDA

Good idea.

They head to a table and sit. And indulge.

EXT. MIT MAIN ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

X is standing exactly where Jane and Esmerelda left her. Still puzzling over the campus map.

INT. THE CHOCOLATE BUFFET -- CONTINUOUS

ESMERELDA

Okay, let's do it.

They stand, with newly empty trays, and head to the central dessert section. They circle and circle, each time adding something amazingly decadent to their trays. Once their trays are full, they head back to their table.

Esmerelda pauses at the hot chocolate section, takes a small cup of hot chocolate and sips from it.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Oh, Jane, you've got to try this. It tastes like pure table cream. With melted semi-sweet chocolate.

Jane tries it.

JANE

Oh. God. And look, they've got cinnamon hot chocolate, nutmeg hot chocolate -

She takes one of each. They return to their table and indulge again.

EXT. MIT MAIN ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

X is still standing where Jane and Esmerelda left her. Still puzzling over the campus map.

INT. THE CHOCOLATE BUFFET -- CONTINUOUS

Jane and Esmerelda are still at their table. Still indulging. Esmerelda looks at her watch.

ESMERELDA

We have to go soon. We said we'd meet X at two.

JANE

(alarmed)

No! I'm not done!

She looks at her still/again full tray, then looks around anxiously, then flags down a passing waitress.

JANE (CONT'D)

Excuse me, can you pack this up to go?

WAITRESS

I'm sorry, we can't do that for the buffet.

JANE

But I can't possibly finish it all by - when do we have to go?

ESMERELDA

Now.

JANE

No!

She starts to shovel in the chocolate.

JANE (CONT'D)

Brownies! We haven't even found the brownies yet! Go find the brownies. I'll wait here.

She's still frantically trying to finish what's on her tray.

ESMERELDA

Jane - we have to go now. Jane - put down the chocolate. Jane -

Jane starts to wrap some of her desserts in napkins, but most of it's quite gooey. Just as she's about to put the gooey mess in her pocket anyway, Esmerelda forcibly gets Jane to her feet.

JANE

Just a minute -

ESMERELDA

It's ten to two. We have no idea what she'll do if we're late. Where she'll go.

She starts to wrestle Jane to the door.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

We'll come back.

JANE

But they'll be closed.

ESMERELDA

I meant, we'll come back another Monday.

JANE

No we won't. We can't. We're in Boston.

ESMERELDA

We'll move here.

This possibility stops her.

JANE

Yeah? Promise?

They're at the door. Jane has something chocolate in each hand.

ESMERELDA

Why not? We should be able to not get a good job here just as easily as in Toronto.

Jane nods, mouth full.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

Jane and Esmerelda are in the car, driving back to get X.

JANE

I still think they should have let us take a doggie bag.

ESMERELDA

Doggies can't have chocolate.

JANE

You know what I mean. No reason they couldn't offer take-out. For a price, of course.

ESMERELDA

You would've paid.

JANE

I would've paid.

EXT. MIT MAIN ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at the kiosk where they left X. She's not there.

ESMERELDA

What time is it?

Jane looks at her watch.

JANE

Two-fifteen.

Beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

Do you think she was here and then left?

ESMERELDA

I hope not.

They wait a few minutes, looking out for her.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Let's drive around. Maybe we'll see her.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

They drive around the MIT campus, looking for X. Eventually, they see what looks like a small riot in the distance. They look at each other, then head towards it. It becomes apparent that there are two factions fighting each other - calling each other names and gesticulating. One side is the theological department, in full clerical dress; the other side is the psychology department in casual dress. X emerges from the fray, walking quickly. They drive toward her. Jane rolls down her window.

JANE

Hey!

X hears Jane's voice, looks around, then sees their car. She breaks into a run toward it. She immediately trips and goes sprawling. She gets up and walks quickly, with great restraint not breaking into a run, to their car. She has trouble opening the back door, but eventually succeeds, and gets in.

JANE (CONT'D)

What happened?

X

I tripped!

JANE

No, I meant - what's that all about?

Jane points to the fight.

X

I couldn't find astrophysics. I found psychology though. Really fascinating. Then I found theology. Also fascinating, but in a totally different way. And I thought if these two met - it's like they've never heard of each other, everything here is so separate, it's like you don't understand how things connect. Anyway, I thought if the religion people met the psychology people, a lot of their questions would be, well, not answered, but dissolved. There wouldn't need to be a religion department anymore. So I sort of arranged a meeting -

ESMERELDA

What we saw wasn't a meeting.

She's driven in a circle, back to the scene.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Look.

The theologians are lobbing white lab rats at the psychologists. The psychologists people are prostrating themselves, wagging their bare asses at the theologians.

JANE

Well, it could be. Sort of looks like a faculty meeting...

X

Yeah, it didn't go as I expected. But then, they're all morons. How did that happen?

Esmerelda resumes driving.

JANE

(to Esmerelda)

Good thing she didn't find history.

ESMERELDA

She'd probably go back and insist they quarantine -

JANE

That's why no one's visited us yet!

Beat.

ESMERELDA

Here's another kiosk. Let's try again.

Esmerelda parks the car. They get out, approach the kiosk.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Okay, so we're looking for what, astronomy?
Physics?

They scan the map for a few moments.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Here - "Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary
Sciences". That sounds promising.

JANE

Where is it?

Esmerelda looks at the map then looks around herself to get oriented, then looks at the map again, then looks around again.

ESMERELDA

(pointing)

It's over there, I think.

They begin to walk in the direction indicated.

INT. MIT PLANETARY SCIENCES BLDG -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter the Planetary Sciences building and approach the first open office. It's a general office, staffed by RECEPTIONIST #1.

ESMERELDA

Hi. We're looking for someone - a professor -

RECEPTIONIST #1

Name?

ESMERELDA

Well, we don't have anyone in particular in mind. We're looking for someone who knows about the space-time continuum.

RECEPTIONIST #1

That'd be Physics.

ESMERELDA

Oh. Okay, thanks. And that's...

RECEPTIONIST #1

Out, turn left, third building on your right, across the concourse.

ESMERELDA

Got it, thanks.

They leave.

INT. MIT PHYSICS BLDG -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter the Physics building and again approach the first staffed office.

ESMERELDA

Hi, can you direct us to the office of any professor who knows about the space-time continuum?

RECEPTIONIST #2

(very harried, with
boxes and work piled
everywhere)

Space-time? That'd be Planetary Sciences.

JANE

We just came from there. They sent us here.

RECEPTIONIST #2

(looking pointedly at
the piled up work)

Well, I assure you, no one here knows about
space or time.

They leave.

INT. MIT PLANETARY SCIENCES BLDG -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter the Planetary Sciences building again.

ESMERELDA

Hi - we're back. Physics says our question is
Planetary Sciences.

RECEPTIONIST #1

What was your question again?

ESMERELDA

About the space-time continuum.

RECEPTIONIST #1

Hm. Try Philosophy. Metaphysics.

JANE

No, we're not going to Philosophy.

X

Why not?

JANE

Because Philosophy will be of no help
whatsoever. Philosophy is useless. Totally
useless. Even absolutely useless.

Esmerelda stares at her. Jane pointedly ignores her.

JANE (CONT'D)

(explaining to X)

Half of it was just infant science. And half of it was just infant psychology. And no one's interested in what's left.

ESMERELDA

Which is clearly not math.

Jane ignores the dig.

X

What's left?

JANE

Ethics. And no one's interested in doing the right thing. And Epistemology. But no one cares about knowing, it's much easier to just believe. You don't have to justify faith. With stuff like, oh, I don't know - evidence!

ESMERELDA

Look, let's just walk around, see who's home.

They begin to walk through the building, looking at nameplates and open doors, peaking in to see if anyone's sitting at a desk. After maybe the fourth door/office, Esmerelda stops.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

How about this guy?

X peaks into the office.

X

He's male!

ESMERELDA

Yeah, well.

JANE

Men did discover electricity. And the printing press. CD players. Flush toilets.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

Go figure.

X barges into the office.

X

I need to know Earl's coordinates on the space-time continuum.

Esmerelda walks in behind X.

ESMERELDA

Excuse me, Professor Donaldson. We're sorry to bother you, but we were wondering - see my friends and I, we've got sort of a bet going, she doesn't think you know Earth's coordinates on the space-time continuum, and I think you do, and we're wondering if you could just settle the bet for us.

PROFESSOR DONALDSON

Sorry to disappoint you ladies - I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

X

The continuum! Space? Time? Quantum mechanics?

(beat)

Relativity?

(beat)

Don't you know anything?!

PROFESSOR DONALDSON

(full of pompous
anger)

Look here -

X

String theory? You know that, I know you do.
You think the universe has 11 dimensions,
right? Well, it's more like 11,000, but your
theory might be sufficient for my purposes, if
you could just -

PROFESSOR DONALDSON

(he tries to move them
toward the door)

Look, I don't know who put you up to this, but
I've got work to do.

ESMERELDA

Did he just dismiss us?

JANE

'Run along now, little girls.'

X

But I need to know -

PROFESSOR DONALDSON

No, you don't.

Professor Donaldson physically hustles them out of his office.

PROFESSOR DONALDSON (CONT'D)

(calling after them)

When you can figure out Fermat's last
theorem, maybe I'll have the time, thank you
very much, good-bye -

He closes the door. They walk away in anger and frustration, out of the building, back
to their car.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

They are sitting in their car, still fuming.

JANE

You said there are 11,000 dimensions instead of 11?

X nods.

ESMERELDA

So, what, some genius got the decimal in the wrong place?

Beat.

X

What's Fermat's last theorem?

JANE

Sort of a benchmark for genius. Fermat was some brilliant mathematician who left a cryptic note in the margin of his notes referring to some important problem, saying he'd finally figured out the solution.

ESMERELDA

But no one's been able to figure out what his solution was.

JANE

Actually, someone did. Oh my god, that wasn't him, was it?

Jane starts searching on her laptop.

JANE (CONT'D)

Here it is. Solved by Andrew Wiles.

X

Can I see?

Jane holds up her laptop for X to see.

X (CONT'D)

Yeah - that works. But there's a much simpler solution.

Esmerelda turns around to face X.

ESMERELDA

You figured out Fermat's last theorem?

X

Well, not me personally, no. We learned it in school. Of course, we don't call it Fermat's last theorem -

JANE

What grade?

X

Five.

JANE

And how old are you in grade five?

X

Five.

ESMERELDA

Can you write out the simpler solution?

Jane provides a pen and piece of paper. X obliges. Esmerelda takes the paper and gets out of the car. Jane and X follow her. Esmerelda marches back into the Planetary Sciences building, and straight to Professor Donaldson's office.

INT. PROFESSOR DONALDSON'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Esmerelda, without knocking, opens the door, stomps into his office, and slams the paper on his desk.

PROFESSOR DONALDSON

What the -

He glances at the paper.

PROFESSOR DONALDSON (CONT'D)

This isn't the -

He sits down, all the air out of him. Esmerelda and X leave. Jane lingers to see his reaction, the evidence she's been looking for, then leaves as well.

PROFESSOR DONALDSON (CONT'D)

But this could - oh my god -

The professor runs after them.

PROFESSOR DONALDSON (CONT'D)

Wait! Come back!

X turns and gives him the finger.

ESMERELDA

That come with the body too?

X

No, the guys in psych showed it to me. Or maybe it was the guys in religion.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

The three of them are sitting in the car, still on the MIT campus.

ESMERELDA

While we're here, we may as well visit the library. They're bound to have more, better, more current texts than the public library we went to.

JANE

Good idea, but I'm beat.

ESMERELDA

You're full.

JANE

That too. Either way, I say we call it a day and start fresh tomorrow. At Harvard.

ESMERELDA

Okay. So where are we staying tonight?

JANE

Your call.

Esmerelda nods, then starts the car.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS -- NEXT DAY

Esmerelda, Jane, and X are somewhere on the Harvard campus. They look around, trying to determine which building is the library.

ESMERELDA

(pointing)

I say that one.

JANE

Looks good.

They walk toward the indicated building.

INT. THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY ENTRANCE AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter the main library and approach the entrance turnstyle. Esmerelda goes through first, but gets stuck. Jane tries the turnstyle next to her and also gets stuck. LIBRARY ATTENDANT #1 at a nearby desk sees them.

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #1

You have to insert your student card.

ESMERELDA

Oh. But we don't want to borrow any books.

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #1

Doesn't matter. Access to the stacks requires your student card.

ESMERELDA

Right, okay -

JANE

How about an alumni card from another university?

The attendant shakes her head.

ESMERELDA

Can we become a community member or something?

JANE

Apply for a guest pass just for the day?

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #1

Only current students and faculty of Harvard are allowed access to the library. Sorry.

X

Well, that's stupid.

They leave the building, hustling X out the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY MAIN ENTRANCE --
MOMENTS LATER

They gather outside the building.

ESMERELDA

Okay, that went well.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

So now what.

X

I could use some chocolate.

JANE

Good idea.

They walk to the vending machines off to the side, buy some chocolate bars, and begin munching.

JANE (CONT'D)

Okay, now we improvise. We haven't been temps for nothing.

ESMERELDA

Right! There's got to be another entrance. The one lowly office and cafeteria staff are supposed to use.

They head off to walk around the building. X follows.

EXT. BACK OF THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Esmerelda and Jane are looking at an unmarked door from a distance.

ESMERELDA

What do you think?

JANE

I think it's worth a shot.

Esmerelda walks up to it boldly and pulls on it. It's locked. She returns to Jane and X.

ESMERELDA

Locked. Card key.

JANE

Okay, so we wait for someone to come by -

ESMERELDA

- and we casually walk in as if we belong.

They wait. Eventually, they see MAN #7 approach from afar; he looks like he's heading to the door in question. Jane heads to the door as well. Esmerelda waves good-bye to her in case the man has seen them standing there, then tugs X into the opposite direction.

EXT. BACK DOOR OF THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

Jane rushes up just before the man opens the door.

JANE

Hi.

MAN #7 nods coldly and starts to get out his card key.

JANE (CONT'D)

I'm a temp? I'm supposed to report to Linda?

MAN #7

There is no Linda here.

He starts to open the door.

JANE

But I'm supposed to report to Linda.

MAN #7

Are you sure you're at the right building?
Didn't they give you a key?

JANE

No, I think that's one of the things I have to
see Linda about. This is the library, right?

Jane tries to nudge her way in as he's opening the door and entering. He nudges her out.

MAN #7

Sorry, you really should call your temp agency
again. They've given you the wrong
instructions.

He enters the library and closes the door behind him.

EXT. BACK OF THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane meets Esmerelda and X, who have started to walk back.

JANE

That didn't go so well.

They see WOMAN #1 approach the door.

ESMERELDA

Let me try.

EXT. BACK DOOR OF THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Esmerelda approaches the woman, and the door.

ESMERELDA

Hi, are you Marilyn?

WOMAN #1

Marilyn? No -

ESMERELDA

I'm from the temp agency - they said I should report here, to Marilyn.

WOMAN #1

They got us a temp? Hallelujah. We are so overloaded. I don't know a Marilyn, but come on in, Audrey will surely know.

Esmerelda enters the building with the woman.

EXT. BACK OF THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

X

Now what?

JANE

I don't know. Let's wait here. Hopefully, she'll sneak back and let us in.

They wait. And wait. After a few minutes, the door opens and Esmerelda pokes her head out. She waves them over. Jane and X hurry to the door and slip inside.

INT. THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY BACK ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS
LATER

Esmerelda holds a finger to her lips.

ESMERELDA

(whispering)

The offices are right around the corner.

She points to a nearby elevator and they head to it, push the 'up' button, and wait anxiously. The elevator doors open and they get in.

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Jane, Esmerelda, and X huddle in the elevator.

JANE

How are we going to find the stacks without
being seen? Or at least stopped.

The doors open before Esmerelda can give an answer. They get out, walk cautiously to a corner, peak, and pull back quickly. They hurry back into the elevator.

ESMERELDA

The place can't be that small that everyone
knows everyone. We just have to look like we
work here.

The doors open again, and they get out.

INT. THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY ADMIN AREA -- CONTINUOUS

They walk down a hall, WOMAN #2 passes them by, Jane and Esmerelda nod impersonally, and X nods with piercing exaggeration.

X

Hello! We work here!

Esmerelda and Jane hustle X into a conveniently nearby women's washroom.

INT. WASHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

MAN #7
(indignantly, focused
on X)
Excuse me!

The door opens and the man gets out. The doors close, but before X has a chance to open her mouth, they open again and WOMAN #3 gets in.

WOMAN #3
(looks at the
threesome)
You look lost.

X
Boy am I ever. I took a -

Jane falls into X to shut her up.

ESMERELDA
Yes, we are. We're trying to find the stacks -
we're still in the library building, aren't we?

WOMAN #3
Yes, you are. But you're in the administrative
wing.

ESMERELDA
Ah.

WOMAN #3
The stacks are at the other end. You'll have to
go down to the basement, through the tunnel,
then take the elevator back up to level four.
That'll take you to the main entrance.

JANE
Thanks!

The woman gets out at the next floor. Esmerelda pushes the button for the basement.

INT. THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY BASEMENT TUNNEL -- CONTINUOUS

They get out of the elevator, walk through the tunnel, and get into another elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda is about to push the button for level four.

JANE

But we don't want to get out at the main entrance.

ESMERELDA

Right, so we'll try -

She pushes the button for level seven.

INT. THE HARVARD MAIN LIBRARY STACKS -- CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open and they see stacks. They give a shout of victory and get out.

JANE

Okay, we need to find a computer -

Esmerelda points and they walk toward a computer. Jane starts working at it.

JANE (CONT'D)

Okay, physics books are QC. Astronomy is QB.

(to X)

That should do it?

X shrugs; she's beginning to understand less and less of what's going on. Esmerelda leads them back to the elevator where there's a map on the wall.

ESMERELDA

P to R is on the sixth floor.

They take the stairs down a floor, wander through the stacks, looking for QC and QB. They pause at the end of an aisle near a window.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

This is nuts. The Ps jump to the Rs. Q is still between P and R, isn't it?

(she looks pointedly
at X, who shrugs)
How can a whole section be out?

It suddenly dawns on Jane.

JANE
They're not out. We're in the wrong library.

Then it dawns on Esmerelda too.

ESMERELDA
Shit! How could we be so stupid!

A group of three students, all young men, happen to pass by.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)
Hey, can you guys tell us where the Science
Library is?

MAN #8
(speaks as if they're
real idiots)
Which one?

JANE
Whichever one has physics and astronomy
books.

Once their focus is on Jane, Esmerelda walks around behind them.

MAN #9
That'd be the Gordon McKay, wouldn't it?

Man #9 looks at Man #8, who shrugs.

MAN #10
Or maybe the math library?

JANE
They'd put math, physics, and astronomy all in
the same library?

Esmerelda lifts Man #8's wallet.

MAN #9

Probably not, wait a minute...

(he's pulled a book
out of his knapsack
and is flipping
through)

You want the Wolbach - says here it's got
astrophysics, that's what you're looking for,
yeah?

Esmerelda walks back around to stand beside Jane and X, so X is in the middle.

X

Yeah, because I got lost and -

Both Jane and Esmerelda shove X as she opens her mouth.

JANE

Yeah, exactly. Wolbach. Okay, thanks.

ESMERELDA

Any idea where it is?

MAN #8

(eager to move on)

Don't know, don't care.

Man #9 consults his book, then looks out a nearby window. He points out the window to the left.

MAN #9

That way. I think.

JANE

Okay, great. Thank you so much for your
help.

The group of guys moves on. Esmerelda goes through the wallet she lifted and pulls out a student card.

ESMERELDA

Bingo!

JANE

Tell me that belongs to the asshole of the group.

ESMERELDA

Yes indeed it does. It belongs to James T. Asshole. Aka James T. Blech.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Seriously. B-L-E-C-H.

They start to walk towards the stairs.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Thing is, it's photo id. And I don't think any of us look much like James T.

JANE

Well, no one's going to be standing at the door checking our id. It's a library, not a pub.

ESMERELDA

Oh yeah.

INT. THE WOLBACH LIBRARY ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane enters the Wolbach library, swipes James T.'s student card through the slot at the turnstyle, and heads to the stacks, looking for QB or QC.

INT. THE WOLBACH LIBRARY STACKS -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane has five heavy texts in her arms as she approaches a study carrel next to a window. She puts the books down, then opens the window. She looks out. Sees nothing.

JANE
(calling down)
Yoohoo!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WOLBACH LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda and X hear Jane's 'yoohoo' - they turn and head in that direction.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WOLBACH LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda and X round the corner and see Jane leaning out of a second storey window. They hurry to stand just below her.

ESMERELDA
Yoohoo?

Jane ignores her.

JANE
First one coming down.

She drops a book out the window. Esmerelda picks it up and gives it to X.

ESMERELDA
Anything in there?

X flips through the book, quickly then slowly then quickly...

X
No. Close. But no.

ESMERELDA
Got another one like it?

Jane lets another text drop out the window. It hits X and she crumples.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)
Geez, Jane, you've killed the alien again.

Esmerelda attends to X, who eventually recovers consciousness.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

How about this one?

X stays sitting on the ground and flips through.

X

Too old. I mean it's going in the right direction, but it's like it's 'the history of' - I need current.

Esmerelda checks the publication date.

ESMERELDA

This is current.

X

Oh.

JANE

(from the window)

Well, publication date might be current, but since it probably takes five years from manuscript to - gotta go!

She ducks back inside quickly.

INT. THE WOLBACH LIBRARY STACKS -- CONTINUOUS

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #2 walks toward Jane, who is suddenly paying great attention to her texts, totally engrossed in reading and making notes. The attendant gives her a suspicious look then moves on. Jane waits a moment, then leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WOLBACH LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane meets up with Esmerelda and X, on some grassy area by the Wolbach Library.

JANE

We need to look for journal articles instead of books. By the time a book gets published, it's already five years old.

ESMERELDA

But journal articles take a while to get into print too.

JANE

Good point. Okay, so how about pre-prints?

ESMERELDA

Worth a try.

They sit right where they are, and Jane goes to work on her laptop.

JANE

Right.

ESMERELDA

Got one?

JANE

No. "Access is restricted to current students and faculty."

ESMERELDA

Fuck! What is this?

(beat)

It's easier to get a gun than a little scientific knowledge!!

X

So we're back to one squared?

JANE

Worse. I suspect that to access the computers in any of the libraries, you have to put your student card in the little holder so passing attendants can see it.

ESMERELDA

And your picture.

(she frisbees James
T.'s card across the
grass)

Jane looks in horror.

JANE

He'll never find it!

ESMERELDA

Your point?

Beat. Esmerelda gets up.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Lunch time.

Jane agrees. She and X also get up and they head off to their car.

INT. CAMPUS RESTAURANT -- LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X are into dessert - which was possibly lunch. It's something very chocolate.

JANE

Okay, let's think this through. How do you get a student card? You apply to a university, get accepted, show up, register at the Registrar's office, then go to Finance and pay your tuition, they give you a receipt, and you go to AV to have your picture taken, then a couple days later you go back and pick up your card. Happen that way at your university?

ESMERELDA

Pretty much. Though I think our cards were mailed to us. Or made while we waited. I don't remember going back to AV. But then there's a lot I don't remember...

JANE

Okay, so we need to intercept at the Registrar's --

ESMERELDA

No, at Finance - we don't want to have to pay tuition. Not here.

JANE

Right. Like we could anyway.

ESMERELDA

Like we'd even get accepted.

Beat.

JANE

Right. Where were we?

ESMERELDA

We intercept in Finance -

JANE

Right, we get three receipts marked paid, for female students, then just walk on over to AV.

ESMERELDA

Or we go to AV and say we're from Finance and need to pull a few cards for students whose cheques have bounced.

JANE

That's good. That'd be quicker. Probably boxes full of cards waiting to be picked up by students.

Esmerelda looks at her watch.

ESMERELDA

So we try that now and if it doesn't work, you'll be a temp for Finance first thing tomorrow morning?

JANE

Why me?

ESMERELDA

You look more office-y.

JANE

If only my high school could see their valedictorian now.

INT. HARVARD AV DEPARTMENT -- LATER

Jane walks in with a piece of paper in her hand. MAN #11 is behind the counter.

JANE

Hi, I'm from Finance? They sent me over to pull cards? For students whose cheques have bounced?

MAN #11

Sure, let me see.

Just as he reaches out for the bogus list, Esmerelda and X bounce in.

ESMERELDA

Hi, is this where we come to get our pictures taken for our student cards?

She and X crowd Man #11. Jane pulls back the list.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Right? 'Cuz they told us over at Registrar's -

MAN #11

Yeah, I need to see -

Jane edges around the counter.

JANE

Want me to do this while you're...?

MAN #11

Sure, they're alphabetical, left to right.

ESMERELDA

Are we in the right place? Took us forever to find AV. Actually I didn't know what AV stood for at first, but it's Audio Visual. That's so cool.

MAN #11

(cutting her short)

Yeah, yeah. You got your receipts?

ESMERELDA

What?

MAN #11

You need to pay at Finance first. Bring your receipts, then I take your pictures.

(to Jane)

You through?

JANE

Yup.

(she holds up a few cards)

Thanks.

Jane leaves.

ESMERELDA

We have to go where first?

MAN #11

Finance. It's right beside the Registrar's building.

ESMERELDA

Oh. Okay. We'll be back!

Esmerelda and X leave.

EXT. OUTSIDE HARVARD AV DEPARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X head to a grassy area outside the AV department, and sit down.

ESMERELDA

Any luck?

JANE

You didn't give me very much time.

She fans through the few cards she has, then slumps in defeat.

ESMERELDA

What?

JANE

Only one's a woman.

ESMERELDA

Well that'll do. You can print out a list of possibilities, come out and show X, then go back in and get what she needs.

JANE

A black woman.

Esmerelda and Jane look at X.

X

What?

ESMERELDA

You're black.

X

(surprised)

I am?

She looks at herself, then at Jane and Esmerelda.

X (CONT'D)

You're right! Nah nah.

She's delighted to be black.

ESMERELDA

So you'll have to go in.

X

Go in where.

JANE

This is not going to work.

ESMERELDA

It's worth a try.

Beat.

JANE

Okay, but we can't go back to the Wolbach.

ESMERELDA

Do we need to? I mean, wouldn't the computers in all of the libraries have access to the same databases?

JANE

Maybe.

ESMERELDA

Okay, so we just pick another library.

X is lolling around the grass, looking admiringly at her black arms.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

A big one so no one will notice her.

Jane pulls out her laptop and gets to work.

JANE

Okay...we should probably not send her to the Islamic Seminary Library... The African-American Reading Room?

ESMERELDA

Might have just one computer terminal. How about the other one that guy mentioned - the Gordon McKay?

JANE

Or look, there's a Physics Research Library.

ESMERELDA

Bingo.

JANE

Oh wow. It has its own site, and it has a list of "Preprint Servers". X, come take a look at this.

X looks at Jane's screen.

X

What's a "Google Sholar"?

JANE

No, that's - well, look at that. Harvard doesn't know how to spell 'scholar'.

ESMERELDA

(looking as well)

That's because they're full of sholars.

JANE

(turning her attention
back to X)

Okay, so you select one of these and from there you can probably enter specific search terms.

ESMERELDA

Like 'space time continuum'.

X

Or 'Earl'.

JANE

(to Esmerelda)

This is so not going to work.

(to X)

If you get stuck, just ask -

ESMERELDA

Just ask one of the sholars for help.

X

Okay.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PHYSICS RESEARCH LIBRARY -- LATER

JANE

Okay, you're clear on how the system probably works?

X

Yes. Probably.

ESMERELDA

Good luck!

X enters the library.

INT. INSIDE PHYSICS RESEARCH LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

X swipes her 'borrowed' student card at the turnstyle and passes through. She sees a bank of computers and goes to it, sitting down at one. She places her student card in the holder attached to the monitor, admiring once more the blackness of 'her' picture and, momentarily distracted, of 'her' body. Then she puts her hand on the mouse and makes a few experimental moves with it, following the cursor on the screen. So far, so good. She begins to search for what she wants. After a few moments, she begins to laugh. LIBRARY ATTENDANT #3 looks over to her with moderate interest.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PHYSICS RESEARCH LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

Jane and Esmerelda hear her laughter and exchange a look.

INT. INSIDE PHYSICS RESEARCH LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

X continues to erupt in laughter every now and then. People around here begin to stare. She looks around, then spots a stack of paper beside a printer. She gets up and grabs a piece, fashions it into a funnel, and puts it over her mouth and nose, looking like a unicorn whose horn has slipped. She stops laughing and continues working.

X
(to herself)
Pin? I need a pin?

She looks around.

X (CONT'D)
(to a student, MAN
#12, beside her)
Excuse me, do you have a pin I can borrow?

Man #12 ignores her. X turns to the student on her other side, Man #13.

X (CONT'D)
Excuse me, do you have a pin I can borrow?

Man #13 also ignores her. She stands up, in all her horned glory, and says to the room at large.

X (CONT'D)
Does anyone here have a pin I can borrow?
The computer says I need a pin.

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #3 (male) now gives X her full attention. He walks over to her.

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #3
Can I be of some help?

X

Yes, the computer says I need a pin. Do you have a pin?

LIBRARY ATTENDANT #3

Are you a student here at Harvard?

X

Yes. I have a Harvard student card. Look.

X points to the card. The attendant looks closely at the card, then at X, still uncomprehending, then back to the card. He plucks the card from the holder and walks back to his station.

X (CONT'D)

Hey, I need that. Moron!

The attendant hears that, and makes a call. A SECURITY GUARD shows up and approaches X.

SECURITY GUARD

Would you please come with me?

X

(hopefully)

Do you have a pin?

X sees Jane and Esmerelda waving frantically at the door.

X (CONT'D)

Wait, I see my friends at the door. Maybe they have a pin.

X starts walking to the door. The security guard does not follow. X exits the building.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PHYSICS RESEARCH LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X are huddling on the grass some distance from the Physics Research Library.

ESMERELDA

So I guess there's no point in doing the Finance temp thing tomorrow.

JANE

No. Unless students are assigned an access Personal Identification Number by or before Finance.

ESMERELDA

Unlikely.

JANE

So, what, after they take their letter of acceptance to the Registrar's office, and get a proof of registration, and they take that to Finance, and pay, and take their proof of payment to AV, and get a student card - do they then have to take their student card to the library of their major to get an access PIN?

Beat.

ESMERELDA

We could just get a gun.

They turn to X, who is sitting dejectedly on the grass.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

So did you come close to getting what you need?

X

No. I don't think you people know your space-time coordinates.

JANE

That's a distinct possibility.

X

I'm never going to get home.

ESMERELDA

Can't you just phone home?

Jane gives her a look.

X

No, I need the area code and number from where I'm calling. Which is -

ESMERELDA

Earl's coordinates.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

So, what now, do we try another prof?

JANE

No.

(suddenly has an idea)

Not profs. It's the doctoral students who are cutting edge. We need to find some post-docs.

ESMERELDA

A conference?

Jane's busy with her laptop.

JANE

Hey, we may be in luck. There's an APA conference coming up at Caltech. Can we get to California in a week?

ESMERELDA

We can try.

JANE

Okay...so we don't just attend the conference, we have X do a poster session! To attract the kind of people she needs to talk with.

ESMERELDA

Like some kind of code. So only those doing research into the space-time continuum will stop - or even understand. X, are you following us?

X

No.

JANE

Wait. We might need to be students to register.

Jane busies herself again with her laptop.

ESMERELDA

Well?

JANE

There's a place called "Chocoluscious" near Caltech.

ESMERELDA

And?

JANE

And a chocolate truffle shop.

ESMERELDA

And?

JANE

And we can attend the conference and even present a poster session as independents. But we have to be members of the APA, and we have to register for the conference.

ESMERELDA

Make it so!

INT. CONFERENCE LOBBY -- LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X enter the lobby of the conference center at which the Physics conference is being held. X carries a prepared posterboard. They approach the registration desk.

JANE

Hi, we're here for the conference. Jane Smith -

The conference worker immediately starts flipping through her files.

JANE (CONT'D)

- Esmerelda Dubrey, and

CONFERENCE WORKER #1

X. Notovearl?

Esmerelda rolls her eyes at Jane for the name she made up for X.

CONFERENCE WORKER #1 (CONT'D)

I've got you right here.

She pulls out three receipts from a file and three IDs from a box.

CONFERENCE WORKER #1 (CONT'D)

Here you go. Your receipts, your ID badges
which you must wear at all times, and -

(she takes three thick
folders from a pile)

Your conference guides.

Jane and Esmerelda take what she gives them.

ESMERELDA

And the poster sessions? Where do we set up?

She consults a clipboard.

CONFERENCE WORKER #1

Just you?

(she looks at X)

You're the only one -

X

The only one who's lost, yes -

JANE

We're sort of all together.

CONFERENCE WORKER #1

No problem. You're at Table #42. Down that hall and on your left.

ESMERELDA

Great, thanks.

They head down the hall as directed.

INT. CONFERENCE POSTER SESSION ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter a huge room arranged with tables, two chairs per table, a number in front of each chair, and a tripod beside each chair (on either side of the table). The room is full of people setting up or already set up, as well as people already walking through the room looking at the posters. They wander around until they find #42.

ESMERELDA

Okay, here we are. We put your posterboard here -

(she puts the posterboard on the tripod)

- and you sit there -

(she sits X down on the chair)

- and you've got your conference folder, pens, and papers, looking all official, and we're ready.

X

Now what.

JANE

Now we look interesting and wait.

ESMERELDA

Hopefully some of the people walking by will stop and ask you questions about -

She looks at the posterboard. There is a title across the top, "Extension of Calabi-Yao Manifolds into an 11,000-dimensional space: A proposed approach to navigation in the Brane landscape", and the rest is full of equations using symbols Esmerelda doesn't recognize.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

- that. And you'll be able to figure out who, if anyone, knows what you need to know.

Esmerelda steals a couple unused chairs from nearby and she and Jane sit close to but a little behind X.

JANE

But don't come right out and ask them for Earth's space-time coordinates.

X

Why not?

Some men walk by, showing no interest whatsoever.

ESMERELDA

Because you tried that before and it didn't work.

X

Oh yeah.

INT. CONFERENCE POSTER SESSION ROOM -- LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X have drinks and though X is still sitting sharply at her table, Jane and Esmerelda are sprawled in boredom and fatigue.

More men walk by, they glance at X, then they glance right past the poster.

JANE

They're not even stopping to read it. They see a woman -

ESMERELDA

A black woman -

JANE

And walk right by. Like she's invisible.

ESMERELDA

And that surprises you because...

A man in military dress stops and reads X's poster. He takes out a little notepad and makes a few notes. Then he simply nods at X and moves on.

JANE

(leans forward to X,
urgently)

Okay, if that guy comes back -

ESMERELDA

Or anyone dressed in a uniform like that -

JANE

Don't talk to them. At all.

X

Why not?

JANE

(she sighs, the
answer's complicated)

Because he's a member of the military, which
is -

ESMERELDA

(the answer's simple)

Because he's a moron.

More men pass right by.

INT. CONFERENCE POSTER SESSION ROOM -- LATER

Jane, Esmerelda, and X look very discouraged. There are fewer people walking through the room.

X

I'm never going to get home.

Two young women approach X's table, TANG, a woman of Asian descent, and SHILPA, a woman of Indian descent dressed in a sari. They stop and read X's poster carefully and with intensity. Tang points to the 11,000 figure.

TANG

(to Shilpa, with great excitement)

See?!

Tang moves her finger along the equations. She gets to maybe the third line.

TANG (CONT'D)

(incredulous)

No.

She reads a little further.

TANG (CONT'D)

(incredulous and excited)

Get out.

X

It's true.

Tang focuses on X for the first time. Tang looks back at the poster, reading further still. Then she points to a smiley face in the middle of an equation.

TANG

And this?

X

I needed a symbol for this.

X pulls a page out of her folder, half filled with calculations. Tang studies it, following it, understanding it, and when she gets to the end, she breaks into a wide grin, uncannily like the smiley face.

TANG

(excitedly)

But if - if -

She searches helplessly, her hands making restless gestures. Shilpa hands her a pad of paper and a pencil. Tang scribbles some equations on the paper and shows them to X.

X

Ah, but -

X scribbles some equations back.

TANG

Yeah?

X nods.

TANG (CONT'D)

Can't be.

She scribbles some more. Now it's X's turn to be surprised. And excited.

X

That's a constant?

TANG

Of course.

X

Until where?

ESMERELDA

(softly to Jane)

Until where?

Tang and X scribble back and forth more, Shilpa providing more paper, Jane and Esmerelda silent with awe and hope.

TANG

I knew it!

Tang yelps with glee and does a little happy dance. Shilpa smiles, as do Jane and Esmerelda.

TANG (CONT'D)

Wait a minute - how -

X scribbles more.

TANG (CONT'D)

You're right. You're absolutely right. But then
- oh - my - god.

(to Shilpa)

Can we keep her? Can we take her home with
us?

X nods happily up and down at Jane and Esmerelda, like a goofy mutt at the dog shelter who's just had people ask to adopt him.

SHILPA

(to Jane and
Esmerelda)

Well, not home home.

While Shilpa explains, Tang and X resume scribbling formulae back and forth. Shilpa keeps half an eye on what they're doing.

SHILPA (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Shilpa and this is Tang. We're from
Princeton. I'm a post doc there and Tang's still
slaving away at her dissertation. Her advisor
is a real asshole, he's been holding her back -
excuse me -

Shilpa adds something to the conversation they're having on paper.

TANG

Right. That is easier.

SHILPA

He keeps telling her she's going in the wrong direction. But the girl's a genius.

JANE

So...you want to take X back to Princeton?

SHILPA

X?

JANE

Sorry, I'm Jane, this is Esmerelda, and this is -

X bursts out laughing. Shilpa smiles.

SHILPA

No, I think Tang just wants to go back to our room to work on - this - with - X.

Tang and X are still scribbling equations back and forth.

SHILPA (CONT'D)

We've got a room at the Hilton for the duration of the conference. You're staying at the Hilton too?

JANE

Well, we haven't planned that far ahead yet. We're not really here for the conference. We're just here for X. We'd actually planned to see a bit of Pasadena while she does her thing - there's a place called 'Chocoluscious'...

SHILPA

Oh, that sounds good. Maybe I'll come with you two, while - no, I should stay here. Why don't you go and do your thing, we'll take her back to our room, and do our thing, and then later this evening, why don't you come by? We're in Room 124.

ESMERELDA

Okay, sounds like a plan. X?

They look at X, who's oblivious.

JANE

X?

SHILPA

Tang?

Tang and X stop then and stare at the others.

SHILPA (CONT'D)

X, you want to come back to our room and
continue that -

ESMERELDA

And we'll come by later tonight.

X

Okay.

She grabs her posterboard, Tang grabs all their papers and holds them close to her chest, and they stare at Shilpa waiting to follow her.

SHILPA

(to Jane and
Esmerelda)

Bring me back something?

ESMERELDA

You bet.

Shilpa, Tang, and X leave. Jane looks at Esmerelda with a bit of concern.

JANE

She'll be all right, yeah?

ESMERELDA

I think so.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

Jane and Esmerelda are in their car driving through Pasadena, looking for Chocolumscious.

JANE

There it is! Pull over!

ESMERELDA

Can I find a parking place first?

INT. HILTON ROOM #124 -- CONTINUOUS

X, Tang, and Shilpa are hard at work. There are empty pizza boxes, bottles, and mega chocolate bar wrappers all over the place. As well as two laptops set up and running and paper all over the place.

TANG

So we need to figure out the values for 11,000 variables?

X

No, I crossed dimensions -

Shilpa's eyebrows raise.

X (CONT'D)

- it's sort of like changing lanes - I crossed only five times before I got here. Well, ten maybe. Twenty tops.

SHILPA

Okay, so let me get this straight. What you're suggesting is we figure out the formula for each one, then test it for your own planet. And if we get the right values, we know we've got the formula right.

X

Right. Then we use it to figure out the values for Earl.

TANG

Earl?

X

This planet.

SHILPA

You know by heart all 20 values for your own coordinates?

X

Well, yeah. It's kind of like knowing your own phone number. With area code. And country code. And -

SHILPA

Got it.

TANG

And then when you have Earth's coordinates -

X

Then I can plot my route from here to wherever I was going before I stopped to ask for - oh. I didn't know where I was going next.

SHILPA

Maybe you should go straight home.

X

Yeah.

INT. HILTON ROOM #124 -- LATER

X, Tang, and Shilpa are hard at work. There is a knock at the door. Shilpa gets up to answer it.

SHILPA

Hey, come on in.

Jane and Esmerelda enter. The room is a mess. Esmerelda and Jane speak at the same time.

ESMERELDA

What the hell -

JANE

Hi, we brought you -

Shilpa grabs the box and opens it. Tang and X both stop what they're doing, like dogs catching a scent.

SHILPA

The only thing that'll interrupt her genius.

They gather around the open box. Tang takes out a huge brownie that's two inches of frosting on half an inch brownie.

TANG

Wow. The perfect brownie.

She sinks her teeth into it. Moans. Shilpa does likewise. X takes one and goes back to Tang, Shilpa, and their calculations.

JANE

(helping herself to a
brownie as well)

Don't mind if I do.

ESMERELDA

(also taking a
brownie)

So, how's it going?

SHILPA

Fine. It may take a few days, but I think we can figure out the coordinates.

JANE

So X told you?

SHILPA

Yes. Isn't it remarkable?

Beat.

JANE

Yes, it is.

ESMERELDA

We've been so focused on getting her to - to here - that we haven't -

SHILPA

(misunderstanding)

Don't worry. This is the best place. All these brainiacs around. Whatever we don't know, I'm sure we can find out - with a few discreet questions.

JANE

Glad you said 'discreet'.

SHILPA

Yes, of course.

ESMERELDA

So X, do you want us to hang around for a few days to drive you back to your ship or whatever?

That tears X away from Tang. She looks disoriented.

X

Oh.

JANE

You forgot where you parked it, didn't you.

X

(she nods forlornly)

Yeah.

(beat)

No, wait. It's beside Walmart.

ESMERELDA

Okaaaay...and that would be where?

X

I don't know. I don't know where I parked.

(beat, disconsolate)

I've lost my ship.

Beat.

X (CONT'D)

No, wait!

She rummages in her pocket.

X (CONT'D)

My sister got me this. She knows me. I forgot my head once when it wasn't screwed on tightly enough.

Jane, Esmerelda, and Shilpa look at each other. Tang giggles. X pulls out what looks like a car remote control.

JANE

But you won't hear it from here.

(beat)

Will you?

X

No. There's nothing for me to hear. When I press this, my ship hears me. It's a smartship. It'll come and get me.

ESMERELDA

Cool.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Okay, then, I guess this is good-bye.

The fact of their parting suddenly cuts through X's excitement and feverish work of the last six or seven hours. She is clearly sad, as are Jane and Esmerelda. She gets up and goes to Jane and Esmerelda, hugging them each in turn, jumping up and down when she does so.

X

Thank you. Thank you so much.

JANE

You're welcome. I'm glad it worked out.

ESMERELDA

Yeah, for a while there...good luck.

Esmerelda gives Shilpa a 'take care of her' look; Shilpa understands and gives an 'I will' look.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

Jane and Esmerelda are driving along a highway.

JANE

I keep thinking of things we should have asked her.

ESMERELDA

Yeah, well. We were so busy trying to help her.

JANE

You really think she's okay?

ESMERELDA

Yeah. Tang seemed like a real genius, and Shilpa will look after them both.

JANE

I miss her.

ESMERELDA

So do I.

Beat. Then they both speak at once.

JANE

We should've -

ESMERELDA

Too bad we -

JANE

We were just so focused on -

ESMERELDA

That's why she stopped here. To ask for directions.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

They are still driving along are now somewhere in Kansas.

JANE

So do you think they'll notice I'm a little late coming back from lunch?

Beat.

ESMERELDA

Probably not.

Jane nods in depressed agreement.

INT. ESMERELDA'S CAR -- LATER

They are still driving along somewhere in Kansas.

JANE

So where are we going?

ESMERELDA

Back home?

JANE

You said we'd move to Boston.

ESMERELDA

Well, we could. In fact, we might as well.
We've been through every temp agency in
Toronto.

Beat.

JANE

Why can't we just find real jobs? Good jobs.
Jobs we actually like.

Beat.

ESMERELDA

You've still got your book.

JANE

Well...actually, I've started a new one.
Collected Epitaphs.

ESMERELDA

Oh yeah? What've you got so far?

She opens her laptop and calls up her work-in-progress.

JANE

'It was a dark and stormy night.'

Beat. Esmerelda bursts out laughing.

JANE (CONT'D)

'I told you I was sick.'

ESMERELDA

I think I've heard that one before.

JANE

'I knew this would happen some day.'

ESMERELDA

That's good. How about 'Help, I've fallen and I can't get up!'

JANE

That's good too.
(she types it into her
laptop)

ESMERELDA

Here's another one: 'Yeah, but - '

She types it in. The car starts to make a noise.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Shit!

JANE

Oh that's a really good one!

Esmerelda gives her a look. She pulls over just as the car stops with much ado. She pops the hood and they get out.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN KANSAS -- CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda looks under the hood.

JANE

Well?

ESMERELDA

I think this will require more than a squirt of
WD-40.

Jane flips out her cellphone.

JANE

Tow truck?

ESMERELDA

Yeah.

Jane tries to make a call.

JANE

Damn! I forgot to recharge.

They look up and down the highway. There are no cars.

JANE (CONT'D)

Where are we?

ESMERELDA

Somewhere in Kansas.

Beat.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)

Walk or wait?

JANE

I don't -

Suddenly a compact candyapple-red Porsche-of-a-starship pulls up alongside. X pokes out her head.

X

Need a ride?

ESMERELDA

(grinning from ear to
ear)

Hell, yeah. Where are you going?

Tang pokes her head out of the back and jerks her thumb at X.

TANG

Her place.

They notice then that both Tang and Shilpa are squished in the back.

JANE

(also happy to see X)

Is there room for two more?

Shilpa leans toward the window.

SHILPA

Oh yeah. There's about 3,000 of us in here already.

TANG

(giggling)

Just sort of not all at the same time.

Esmerelda looks at Jane.

ESMERELDA

Well?

JANE

We probably can't come back.

ESMERELDA

Do we have a reason to?

They begin to get in.

JANE

Wait!

(to X)

Do you have chocolate bars on your planet?

X

Please. Every town, no matter how small, has one. At least.

Beat.

X (CONT'D)

What do you think every girl wants to be when she grows up?

JANE

A bartender!

Jane's job search is over! She starts to climb into the back seat, but Esmerelda stops her.

ESMERELDA

Wait.

They are both suddenly sober with their decision.

JANE

A moment of truth?

ESMERELDA

And an epitaph.

Beat. Jane looks out over the land, over Earth.

JANE

It's over.

(she shrugs, sadly,
helplessly)

We're done.

Esmerelda's lines must be delivered to suggest two meanings: Earth has lost to the humans who have destroyed it; and Earl -men - have lost, in their obsession with competition and power and money...they have lost the Earth, they have lost everything. She must definitely not sound victorious; rather, she's sad, disappointed, and a bit puzzled (how could you?).

ESMERELDA

Goodbye, Earl. You lost. Everything.

SHILPA

(anxiously)

You should probably get in now.

A military convoy suddenly appears, racing around a corner. It is fully armed, and then some. Jane and Esmerelda quickly get in. A moment after X's starship takes off down the road and disappears into time and space, the military vehicles start shooting - everything: bullets, rocket launchers, we even see a few mini nuclear mushroom puffs.

FADE OUT

Morons. X (V.O.)