

LAYERS - PILOT

By

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EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT. COLD OPEN.

A SECURITY OFFICER casually strolls along his patrol path. He's bored and looking for some action, and isn't afraid to start it himself. A shadow flickers behind the corner of one warehouse. He officer pulls out his gun.

SECURITY OFFICER
This is private property! Show
yourself!

A faint crackling comes from the barrel of the officer's gun. VIVIAN KEYES, a vivid green-eyed teen girl, steps out from the shadows, her arms held up as if she's been doing something.

VIVIAN
Sure, it's private. If someone pays
enough, they can do whatever they
want, right?

Vivian laughs. The officer pulls the trigger, but his gun explodes in his hands. He collapses onto the ground, his hands burned.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Go remind whoever hired you that
they've left these warehouses
abandoned for over half a decade.
We've taken them back. If they care
so much about things they own, they
should make some damn housing. Oh,
quiet down. I'll fix that for ya.

Vivian throws her hand out. Crystals cover the officer's hands and his screams turn to a feeble moan. Vivian drops her hand and the crystals vanish. The cop scrambles to his feet and runs as fast as he can in the other direction, dropping a leaflet on his way, advertising about the company's plans to start using the warehouses again. Vivian picks it up and sighs. She returns to one of the warehouses, with a sign on the front labeled "THE BARN". She slides the door open to reveal a wood-paneled, warm room, with Vivian's friends and roommates EMILY FLETCHER and SARAH CLAIRE. Vivian huffs and puts on a serious face.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Emily, Sarah, we've got a problem.

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INT. THE BARN - CONTINUOUS. ACT ONE.

EMILY

Viv! Is everything ok?

VIVIAN

Not really. The pigs who "own" this place wanna do something with it for the first time in seven years, and they're gonna force us out.

SARAH

And there's nothing we can do?

VIVIAN

Not really. We fight back, they call cops. Even with my crystals, your light, and Em's wind, it's just not gonna be enough against riot gear.

EMILY

I'll try to look for any legal ways we can stay, maybe? Lemme look up the state rules for prescriptive easements.

VIVIAN

This doesn't exactly fit the definition of a prescriptive easement. That's just like footpaths and stuff.

EMILY

What are we supposed to do, then? We can't just leave.

SARAH

We'll have to wait and see what happens. Most likely they just give up.

VIVIAN

Should we start sleeping in shifts?

SARAH

It's not that much of a threat yet. Besides, our sleep is already bad enough without having to constantly worry about keeping guard.

EMILY

Don't worry, Viv. We aren't gonna go down without a fight.

SARAH

Tell you what. I'll go out and do patrol tonight, ok? You need to get some rest.

VIVIAN

You sure, Sarah? You're not supposed to exert yourself that much. What if you run into more security people?

SARAH

I'm in a better state to do this thank you are. Trust me.

VIVIAN

Fine, fine. Just stay safe, ok?

3

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NEXT NIGHT

Sarah is walking the patrol tonight. She's got a slight limp, but is otherwise just fine for now. She continues on the regular patrol until she hears a whining in the air. She ducks behind a building right before a massive explosion thunders throughout the complex.

GUARD 1

What the hell, man? Are you TRYING to get us fired?

GUARD 2

I don't give a shit. They want us to guard whatever the fuck these things are, I say we get to have a little fun. Don'tcha think?

Sarah looks around the corner and sees a huge molten hole in the wall of a warehouse. She looks towards the guards and notices one of them is holding something. It looks like a gun, but is nothing like Sarah's ever seen. She stifles a gasp and keeps watching.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

Let's see, what'd those suits say again? "Inspired design optimized for efficiency and a good user experience. Advanced plasma technology with not a single piece of lead, copper or steel. Still

(MORE)

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)
detectible by modern scanners, but totally invisible to classic metal detectors." Something like that, yeah?

GUARD 1
I don't care what they said! You just destroyed a fucking wall! What if that was one of the ones with the guns in them?

GUARD 2
Relax. I snuck a look at the schedules. They're just starting with the south warehouses right now; they're not gonna get to packing them into these ones for another two weeks. Didn't say where they're coming from, though. Ah well. Not our problem.

Sarah throws a gust in the direction of the guards to mask the sound of her sprinting back to the barn. She collapses as soon as she gets in the door.

4 INT. THE BARN - CONTINUOUS

VIVIAN
Oh my god, Sarah! What the hell happened?

SARAH
Whoever's trying to kick us out -- they've got guns. They're replacing us with warehouses full of fuck-off deadly guns. It sounded like they were smuggled or something. We gotta do something about this.

EMILY
Holy shit. Oh my god. What the hell are we supposed to do? We can't alert authorities; they'll just lock us up for trespassing.

SARAH
I think it'd be better to just try and destroy the weapons. I bet that Viv's crystals clogging up the emitter would work the same as if they were in a gun.

VIVIAN

Wait wait wait. You want to destroy all of them? They could be our key to keeping our home safe! If they're as intense as you're making them sound, I bet they'd bust riot gear no problem.

SARAH

We can't use a full warehouse's worth of guns, much less a full complex's worth. If we don't destroy at least most of them, then the cops can just grab some, can't they?

VIVIAN

We could still stockpile some of them. Raid one warehouse, grab one crate, get it back here, boom. With how many they seem like they wanna bring in here, they wouldn't miss a thing.

EMILY

And what would we gain from that? We'd only realistically use one per person at a time, and I can't see any reason why we would need a whole crate full.

VIVIAN

Why would they need a whole complex full, then? Unless they're trying to smuggle weapons for an entire fucking army, they wouldn't have any reason to get that many.

EMILY

Maybe that's what they're DOING, ok?! Let's just wait and see what happens. If they're getting that many, it's gonna take time. We should be patient and look at the scenario before we decide what to do. Got it?

VIVIAN

Fine. I'll go along with you two and wait, for now. Let's see what these folks are up to.

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INT. THE BARN - NEXT NIGHT. ACT TWO.

Vivian returns to the barn and pulls out her phone. Emily and Sarah are sitting on the ground at a coffee table.

EMILY

Any luck finding stuff?

Vivian puts her phone on the coffee table and pulls up a map of the warehouse district. She begins annotating the map, scribbling in areas as she mentions them.

VIVIAN

Looks like that guard Sarah overheard was right. They've only started loading crates into the southmost row of warehouses. Haven't got manifests, but I peeked inside a crate and there are guns galore.

EMILY

You did WHAT?

VIVIAN

Relax, they're all unsealed already. Though, to be fair, that might also **not** be a reason to relax...

SARAH

Hm, if they're starting to unseal them already, it looks like they're gonna be doing something with 'em soon. I'm starting starting to agree with the "take one or two" idea, but if they've got 'em too, I'm just still not sure.

EMILY

They said the next shipment's in two weeks, yeah? If we're really gonna go through with this, I think it might be best to take some the night before the shipment. They'll be too busy getting the new ones in that they won't be checking for a few missing units. Let's try and get a look at the actual schedule as soon as possible.

VIVIAN

Sounds good. On another note,
Sarah, how's your tendon holding
up?

SARAH

Been better. Running last night
absolutely didn't help, and I've
gotta go in for a check-up soon,
but definitely can't afford it.

EMILY

Yeah, we really need to get some
more cash as soon as possible. Viv,
you been having any luck doing
freelance stuff?

VIVIAN

Somewhat. Had a couple graphic
design contractor slots, but they
haven't paid as much as I've
wanted. That's the problem with
charging by the hour; if you work
fast, your work is cheaper. I've
been considering just inflating my
numbers a bit, but if I get caught
I'm gonna get blacklisted
instantly. I've been applying for
some fixed-cost things and I hope
one of them gets approved soon. At
least I'm not short on a portfolio.

Vivian sighs and picks up her phone, then opens up her
freelancing app again. No new jobs yet.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Fuck it. While I'm waiting, I'm
just gonna go get the schedule.
Emily, you wanna come help? You
might be able to help keep us
hidden.

SARAH

What, and just leave me here alone?

Vivian freezes and starts trembling.

VIVIAN

O-oh, sorry, S-sarah, I-

Sarah laughs a little, but then realizes Vivian's actually
freaking out and stops.

SARAH
It's chill, don't worry. I'm
alright, it'll be ok.

Vivian takes a few deep breaths and manages to calm herself down.

VIVIAN
A-alright. Ready, Emily?

EMILY
Yeah. It's gonna be alright.

SARAH
Sorry for freaking you out, Viv.
I'm ok. It's ok.

VIVIAN
Thanks, you two. Em, let's go.

Emily and Vivian leave the Barn to head to the management office.

6 EXT. SECURITY OFFICE - LATER

Two figures walk along the wall of a warehouse, cloaked in shadows from the moonlight. They're amorphous masses of utter, absolute darkness, one with eyes and one without. The blobs melt away to reveal Vivian and Emily. Emily is bouncing on her heels, and Viv's eyes are closed.

VIVIAN
You alright, Em?

EMILY
Absorbing every individual light
ray headed in our direction is hard
to calculate out, but it means a
lotta energy for me to use. I think
you should be clear to open your
eyes again.

Vivian opens her eyes and squints, even the moonlight blinding after no light whatsoever.

VIVIAN
Ow, ow, ow. That's painful, wow.
Gimme a minute to adjust.

EMILY
Yeah, no worries. It's like letting
your eyes adjust from a dark room
to outside, just with adjusting
(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)
from no light whatsoever to
darkness.

VIVIAN
Alright, I think I'm adjusted. We
at the office?

EMILY
Yep, it's that building right
there.

Emily points to a dilapidated brick building. There's a
light flickering faintly inside, but it's quiet.

VIVIAN
Y'know if there's anyone in there?

EMILY
Can't tell yet. We're gonna need to
get closer. Lemme put all that
energy I picked up to use...

Emily walks around near the door and holds up her arm. A
thin film of light starts glowing in front of the door's
window, looking almost like a tear in reality.

EMILY (CONT'D)
That might help. Cloning a snapshot
of all the rays going through that
film is way too intensive for me to
move around, but if I stop sending
out the ones coming from the other
side of the window, we should be
able to look inside without them
noticing. Give a look for me, Viv.

VIVIAN
Okay, that is pretty neat. You've
been doing a lot of thinking on how
to use this stuff, haven't you? Try
not to over-exert yourself though,
Em, ok?

Emily nods and Vivian walks over to look through the back
side of the film. The office has a light on, but empty. She
gives a thumbs-up to Emily, who puts her hand down.

EMILY
Alright, looks like we'll be ok
without my light for now. Is it
unlocked?

Vivian rattles the handle, to no avail. She steps back.

VIVIAN
Not yet, but check this.

Vivian reaches out her hand, and the keyhole starts to crackle.

EMILY
Don't tell me you're gonna blow it open. That is such a bad idea.

Vivian ignores her and keeps focusing. The keyhole keeps crackling until a crystal the shape of a key head appears out of the lock. Vivian turns the key and opens the door with a squeak.

VIVIAN
Have some faith in me, Em. I don't do **everything** destructively. Just most things. Let's find that schedule.

Vivian pockets the key then enters, with Emily following.

7 INT. SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emily and Vivian look around the office. Despite falling apart on the outside, it's clear that the new management's trying to spruce things up inside. There are new tables and a sheetmetal-pattern wallpaper. The shipping schedules for the next four are hung up on the right wall, with a strange green infinity symbol in a blue circle on the bottom-right of each month with the label "Infinity Foundation". A map of the complex is at the top left of the wall.

EMILY
What the hell are they doing? If you're a smuggling group and you want to have a sheetmetal design on your wall, you could afford actual sheetmetal, couldn't you?

VIVIAN
It's not even a **good** sheetmetal wallpaper. I'll never understand these pigs. Ah well, let's get a photo of the schedule and get out of here.

Vivian pulls out her phone and snaps a photo of the schedule, then takes a separate photo of each month along with the map.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Hm, Infinity Foundation. Let's look
'em up when we get back. Anything
else we should get right now?

EMILY
Can't see anything else that might
be important. No cameras to mess
with or anything. Let's go.

As the two start to leave, the door squeaks again. Emily gasps and throws up a film behind her and Vivian, then pulls Viv back behind the film. A SECURITY GUARD enters the room and sits down behind the desk. Vivian and Emily start talking in ASL, Emily having trouble because of having one hand busy keeping the film up.

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)
Shit. How're we gonna get out?

EMILY (SUBTITLE)
I'll try to think. Even if I throw
up another film, he'd hear us open
the door. We gotta get a
distraction.

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)
Would blowing out the light be
enough? Darken the room at the same
time to make it more important for
the guard to get a new bulb.

EMILY (SUBTITLE)
Better than anything I can think
of. Gonna use crystals?

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)
Yeah. I'll count off, go on three.
Ready?

Emily nods. Vivian points up at the light in the room, then counts up to three on her other hand. Once she hits three, the light in the room fizzles out. Emily throws out her other hand and the room darkens even further.

SECURITY OFFICER
God damnit! Can't upgrade a single
thing in this dump, can they? Guess
it'll be my job to replace shit
again.

The officer gets up and storms out of the office, grumbling and leaving the door open. Emily drops the film and the shadow, and the two quietly and carefully exit the office. Emily throws up a cloak around herself and Vivian, then the two make their way back to the barn.

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INT. THE BARN - LATER

Vivian, Emily, and Sarah are sitting around the table again. Emily is rocking back and forth, Vivian is tapping away at her phone, and Sarah is looking at the images of the schedule.

SARAH

Alright, first things first. Any idea what the hell the Infinity Foundation is?

VIVIAN

Looking it up right now, it seems to be some tech billionaire's charity org, but with what they're shipping in, it's probably a bit of a front.

SARAH

Also, did you look at the schedule at all? There's way more on here than shipping times. There's some "Introductory Event" going on Tuesday at noon and an "Initial Test" Wednesday evening. Next shipment's that Friday, so we've got a week and a half to prep.

VIVIAN

Hm, think it might be a good idea to snoop in on the introductory event? We might learn some more about what exactly they're planning to do with a warehouse complex full of hyperguns.

EMILY

Sounds like a good idea to me. How do we blend in with a bunch of techie pigs, though? Even with this much energy, I can't really process making light disguises.

VIVIAN

It depends on where they're holding the event. Sarah?

SARAH

It looks like it's gonna be starting at the front of the complex. We might be able to get on the roofs and watch from there?

VIVIAN

If you think you can get up there with your leg, I'm all for it. Don't want you to make it worse.

SARAH

I can make it. Air is surprisingly good at cushioning if you compress it in the right way. Don't worry about it.

EMILY

Alright, sounds like we're all up for this. Anything else we'll need to prep for?

VIVIAN

I can't think of anything. Guess we just wait for Tuesday and hope they don't find us.

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EXT. COMPLEX ENTRANCE - TUESDAY

Vivian, Sarah, and Emily are sneaking around the back of a warehouse close to the entrance of the complex. Sarah creates strong gusts under Vivian and Emily to launch them up to the roof, then lifts herself up more gently to protect her leg.

EMILY

Alright, we're up. Now to wait half an hour for things to start. Thaaaanks, Viv.

VIVIAN

Sheemetal is loud. Landing hard on sheetmetal is louder. Don't want anyone to hear us get up or down.

EMILY

Ugh, fine. Guess I'll be patient.

SARAH

Shh, shh, shh! Someone's driving up!

A red SUV drives up to the entrance, and out steps a brown-haired white man in a navy blue three-piece suit. Over the next half hour, another dozen similar businessmen arrive. At noon, a black-haired man in dark jeans and a long-sleeved v-neck with the Infinity Foundation logo on its front walks to the entrance from within the complex. This man is PHILLIP YVER, the founder of the Infinity Foundation.

YVER

Greetings, friends and donors. You all know who I am. Welcome to the Infinity Foundation's new research and distribution center, right in the heart of South San Francisco. From here, the Foundation will be able to both develop new technologies and share them with the world in one place.

The three start conversing in ASL.

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)

Who the hell's that guy?

SARAH (SUBTITLE)

Looks like Phillip Yver, the slimeball who made the group that's trying to kick us out. He's the owner of an ad company and a military contractor, which are surprisingly not one and the same.

Vivian makes a gagging motion.

YVER

As you all know, the Foundation has recently been contributing significantly to researching the fundamentals of our universe. Our most recent findings are going through of peer review at this very moment. Understanding our universe is absolutely essential, because the better we understand how a system works, the better we can use it to our advantages. A true quantum future is now inevitable, and it's all because of your generous support.

EMILY (SUBTITLE)

Did he really have to say "inevitable"? Is he TRYING to sound like an evil mastermind?

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)
I mean, he's a CEO, so probably.
There are only two types of tech
CEOs: Tony Stark or Victor von
Doom.

EMILY (SUBTITLE)
There's a difference?

Vivian has to stifle a laugh and shakes her head. Yver starts to lead the group through the group of donors through the complex. After the group is out of sight, the three start talking.

SARAH
So that's something.

EMILY
That is something indeed. Sounds like a guy trying to mooch off public funding under the promise of making the world better to me. Sleazy at best and downright malevolent at worst.

VIVIAN
Shame we can't really do anything about him ourselves. Hopefully he'll torch his reputation by having meltdowns enough to just have all his investors give up on him.

EMILY
Yeah, but that won't be fast enough self-destruction to keep 'em from kicking us out.

A buzzing sound can be heard, getting closer.

VIVIAN
Is that a drone.

EMILY
Lemme throw up a mirror.

Emily throws out her hand, creating a mirror out of angled light rays. A drone is seen in the mirror.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Yep, it absolutely is.

VIVIAN

Oh boy. Sarah, wanna help me blind
and banish?

SARAH

Probably not much of an option.
They've probably seen us already
anyway, but just to be safe.

The drone keeps approaching. As soon as it gets within 20 feet, Vivian throws her arm. A crystal forms around the drone's camera, then Sarah throws out a gust to blow it away. It loses control and crashes to the ground. Vivian stomps on the wreck to ensure it's fully broken.

VIVIAN

Alright, that's a destruction of
property charge under our belts. If
they didn't know we're here before,
they definitely do now.

EMILY

I mean, not really any other reason
they'd send out a drone, unless
they're getting really paranoid
about whatever they're working on
here.

SARAH

Whaaaat? A tech CEO? Paranoid?
Never.

The three share a giggle then head back to the Barn.

10 INT. SECURITY OFFICE - THAT NIGHT

The security officer is at his desk. He's on the phone, tapping his foot impatiently, a hold melody playing from the receiver. He's trying to call a higher-up, but isn't having any luck. Finally, someone picks up, but it's only an ASSISTANT.

ASSISTANT

Office of security, Infinity
Foundation. How can I help you?

SECURITY OFFICER

Hey. This is officer N-34-06. I've
got an anomaly and need to get in
contact with Chief Officer
Redshank.

ASSISTANT

What sort of anomaly do you mean?

SECURITY OFFICER

One of our drones was on a routine surveillance loop when its camera was disrupted and the drone was knocked out of the sky. Evidence points towards someone else in the complex. I need to talk to Redshank.

ASSISTANT

I'm afraid Chief Officer Redshank isn't available right now. I'll let him know to call back as soon as possible.

A third voice interjects in the call.

REDSHANK

Don't worry. That won't be necessary.

The office door opens and in walks Chief Security Officer JAMES REDSHANK. The other officer puts the phone down and stands at attention.

REDSHANK (CONT'D)

Sit back down. This isn't the military. Now tell me what you got from the drone.

SECURITY OFFICER

Not much. Some visual distortion, then three figures. They disappear then the visual frosts over, and after that the drone goes out of control and cuts out when it crashes.

REDSHANK

Alright, so we know there are at least three people. Any anomalies on the most recent satellite footage?

SECURITY OFFICER

We have satellites?

REDSHANK

We don't, but your *phone* does. Just go to satellite mode in Maps. Let's

(MORE)

REDSHANK (CONT'D)
see if there's anything out of the
ordinary.

The guard pulls out his phone and opens up satellite maps of the area. Redshank points at a section of buildings.

REDSHANK (CONT'D)
There. Put it into 3D mode and take
a look.

The view shifts into 3D, revealing the sign for the Barn.

REDSHANK (CONT'D)
Looks like we've got some uninvited
guests. I warned the board that we
should've checked the entire
facility before starting to move
in, but I guess we'll have to deal
with them now. I think I'll have a
talk with them tomorrow afternoon.
Thank you for finding this. I'll
put in a good word for you to your
supervisor.

Redshank exits.

11 INT. THE BARN - AFTERNOON

Emily wakes up from a nap to someone knocking on the door. She looks around the room to see Vivian and Sarah still asleep. She picks her phone up and starts recording, then opens the door. Redshank is outside.

EMILY
And who might you be?

REDSHANK
Greetings. I'm James Redshank,
Chief Security Officer of the
Infinity Foundation. Are you and
your friends available to chat for
a bit?

Emily looks behind her to her sleeping friends.

EMILY
I think it'd be better for just you
and me to talk. Is it ok if we go
somewhere else?

REDSHANK

That's fine. I just wanna have a short talk.

Emily nods and leads Redshank a few warehouses away.

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EXT. THE BARN - CONTINUOUS

EMILY

So I'm guessing you're here to kick us out?

REDSHANK

To put it harshly, yes. The Infinity Foundation is repurposing these facilities for R&D and distribution, and it's not safe to have kids like you on site in case something goes wrong.

EMILY

Where are you gonna have us go, then? We've been living here for three years. Are you just gonna throw us to the streets?

Redshank laughs.

REDSHANK

Oh, heavens, no. We're a charitable organization. We'll do everything in our power to find you suitable homes or shelters.

EMILY

Sorry for not exactly trusting you, but I've heard that one before.

REDSHANK

I understand, but know that the Foundation has the resources and the generosity to help, should you accept it. Whichever way you decide, it would be best if you cleared out what you seem to call the Barn by Friday. New are being shipped in Friday night and we're gonna need this section to store them in.

Emily blinks and then laughs out.

EMILY

Oh, you mean the sign we've got?
That's been there since the last
owners abandoned this place. It's
got a label on the back saying it's
for some bar out in New York, but I
guess the company who made it went
under before they could ship it, so
it was just collecting dust. We put
it up as a sort of "fuck you" to
the system that kicked us out, as
proof that they'll just crush
themselves under their own
expectations. The folks who promise
the biggest things never seem to be
able to carry through, y'know?

Redshank gives a short huff and pulls out a business card.

REDSHANK

Either way, make sure you're out of
here by Friday. I wouldn't want to
have to get the law involved. The
police exist to protect property; I
don't think you'd enjoy having to
talk to them about how long you've
been here or that drone you
destroyed. If you want our help,
just give me a call.

Emily nods slightly and takes the card.

EMILY

...Yeah. Thank you.

REDSHANK

I'll leave you to making your
decision. Good luck!

Redshank walks off. Emily sighs and returns to the barn.

13

INT. THE BARN - CONTINUOUS

When Emily returns, Sarah and Vivian are awake. Emily stops
filming.

VIVIAN

Everything alright? Where were you?

EMILY

...Remember how you said they
definitely know we're here now?

SARAH

They came to get us out of here,
didn't they?

EMILY

Yep. We're out by Friday, or we
face 'em in court. They're offering
to help support us finding a new
home, but it's very clearly a
farce.

VIVIAN

Of course. Of fucking course.
Replacing our home with goddamn
guns.

EMILY

I think it might be something else.
Take a look at the shipping
schedule again. We're in the second
row on the map, but they say only
rows 5 and 6 are being filled on
Friday. I think there's gonna be
something else going on.

VIVIAN

So what? Are they actually real
fucking evil masterminds?

EMILY

I...don't know. I guess we go to
the test in E7 tomorrow night and
see what's going on? If we can find
something extra dirty we might be
able to leak it or something.

VIVIAN

That's not gonna be enough. We
gotta take out these monsters
ourselves.

EMILY

How?! Now that they know we're here
they're gonna triple the security
at LEAST. They're kicking us out
right before the shipment comes in,
so we can't even get their
hyperguns!

SARAH

Em, I...agree with Vivian. We have
to do **something**. We can't just sit
here and let them take away

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
everything. If they do, I-I don't know if I'll be able to get help for my leg, **period**. If we're here, we have at least a chance.

EMILY
Alright, so what--we pretend to clear out but stick around and do a raid before an all-out attack?

VIVIAN
Well, yeah. That and take a peek at what's going on tomorrow night. Not much we can do otherwise, I guess. If you can think of anything, feel free to let me know.

EMILY
And you realize we have virtually zero chance of making it out of this alive?

VIVIAN
If we let them ship us off to wherever they want to ship us off to, we have actually zero chance of making it out alive once they realize that we know about all the shit they're doing.

EMILY
Alright, if you're absolutely sure this is a good idea.

VIVIAN
Oh, no, no, no. This is a terrible idea. It's just the only thing we can do that gives us a chance of surviving.

Emily rolls her eyes and sighs.

EMILY
Fine, fine, fine. Let's do this. What could possibly go wrong, other than **everything**?

SARAH
Em, we know. This isn't what I want to be doing either, but we're just at a point of absolute desperation. Besides, this is our **home**. I don't wanna lose our home again.

EMILY

I...yeah. I don't either, but I'm just...this is so dangerous for us to do. Just...stay safe, alright? I don't wanna lose our home, but I don't wanna lose you two either.

SARAH

You won't, don't worry. We'll be ok. I promise.

EMILY

Alright. Let's do this.

14

EXT. BUILDING E7 - NEXT NIGHT. ACT THREE.

The three walk along under Emily's cloak. There is light shining from the crack at the foot of the door to E7. Emily dispels the cloak and Vivian and Sarah take a moment to adjust, then step to either side of the door. Vivian gently turns the doorknob to open it, then Sarah blows the door open slowly.

SCIENTIST 1

Damn, this wind. I knew working in SF was a bad idea.

SCIENTIST 2

Sounds like someone forgot to actually close the door. I'll get it.

Emily throws up two light-field clones and the three slip inside. They all slip behind the second clone and Emily drops the first as soon as the scientist gets to the door, keeping him from noticing. The three silently look around the and see a door in the center of the room, as well as a table with three key-looking devices hooked up to bundles of wires. There are about a dozen SCIENTISTS in Foundation-branded labcoats scattered around the room, tinkering with various machines and preparing recording equipment.

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)

Looks like someone's busy.

EMILY (SUBTITLE)

Are they trying to make universal-unlock keys or something?

SCIENTIST 1

Alright, is everyone ready to begin?

SCIENTIST 2
Affirmative.

SCIENTIST 1
Camera?

SCIENTIST 2
Rolling.

SCIENTIST 1
And action.

The first scientist turns towards the camera.

SCIENTIST 1 (CONT'D)
This is test 0128-B of Limited
Access Yield to Expanded Reality
Systems. Given any metal door and
door frame, the current device can
open access to approximately
thirty-six to the fourth expanded
sections of reality, which are
being referred to as "layers". Test
0128-B serves as a companion to
test 0128-A, which accessed Layer
JX52 in a Prime Layer location
approximately 200 feet south of the
access point for test 0128-B and
placed a silver briefcase five feet
north of the in-layer access point.
The goal of test 0128-B is to
retrieve that briefcase, and to
observe the result of accessing the
same layer from different Prime
Layer locations.

The scientist walks over to the table and picks up a key.
Its body is a fluorescent green crystal, and its head has a
plug-like face with a blue character display and four
scrolling wheels. He inserts it into the door's keyhole and
scrolls each wheel until the display reads JX52. He turns
the key, unlocking the door, then keeps turning it until the
key itself clicks. The key starts vibrating, giving off a
harmonic humming which spreads to the door and the frame.

SCIENTIST 1 (CONT'D)
Status?

SCIENTIST 2
Power rising. Drawing 12 kilowatts
at 240 volts. Clear.

The scientist puts on a glove and turns the doorknob. Beyond the door is an empty, light gray plane in a white void. Five feet outside the door is a silver briefcase.

SCIENTIST 1

Interesting. It appear that space
in a Layer is relative to the entry
point. Retrieve the case.

Two scientists enter the void and pick up the briefcase. Once they exit, they open the case. Inside is one of the guns. Emily and Sarah do a double take, and Vivian stifles a gasp. The first scientist takes the gun out.

SCIENTIST 1 (CONT'D)

Initial observation, no visible
alteration. We'll verify with the
lab later. Current findings will
require further verification. Cut.

The scientists stop filming, and the three look at each other in shock.

VIVIAN (SUBTITLE)

They just.

EMILY (SUBTITLE)

Hoooooly shit.

SARAH (SUBTITLE)

Does that mean they're trying to--

The door opens. Yver enters, followed by two guards. The scientists stand at attention.

YVER

Well, well, well. As soon as I saw
the briefcase on your stream, I
just *had* to come over. Can I see
the gun?

SCIENTIST 1

I-yes, Doctor Yver. Right away.

The scientist hands Yver the gun. Yver takes it and looks at it adoringly.

YVER

This is beautiful. Imagine what we
can do with tech like this. Move
armies halfway across the world in
an instant. Truly undetectable
nuclear testing. Server access to

(MORE)

YVER (CONT'D)
anywhere, from anywhere, free from
regulation or oversight holding us
down. I'm appropriating this tech
for InTraq and Yver Industries,
effective immediately.

SCIENTIST 1
Sir, we haven't verified findings!
We don't know the stability of
long-distance travel or
simultaneous access or in-Layer
point activation, and the energy
cost is--

YVER
Fine, fine. I'll keep it with
Infinity for now, but I'm gonna be
bringing teams on from InTraq and
Yver to help you out. Understand?

The scientist is quiet for a moment.

SCIENTIST 1
Y-yes sir. Onward and upward.

YVER
You were worried about being able
to get out of a layer? Let's try
it, then. You know that doors open
to the same place. Take a key and
go inside. If you don't come out in
two minutes, we'll come get you.
Got it?

SCIENTIST 1
But the energy!--

YVER
Is half that of a motorboat engine
at fifty amps. Just bring a
generator with you. A portable
generator strong enough to power a
Key was one of the first things I
brought in.

SCIENTIST 1
Yes, Doctor Yver. Commence
experiment!

The researchers start setting up the experiment again. The
first scientist grabs the portable generator and connects it
to a key, then fills the generator up. The scientist

activates the door then steps through it, bringing the generator and key along. Another scientist closes the door, and everyone in the room waits. A minute and a half later, the door opens again, and the scientist staggers out. A cloud of smoke follows behind him.

SCIENTIST 2

What happened?

SCIENTIST 1

The door stayed behind when I you closed it. Like a door to nowhere. I couldn't get back. Tried 0000, AAAA, ZZZZ, 9999, all the obvious ones. Each of them opened to a different layer. Finally tried JX52 again, and it got me back, but the generator blew out while I was opening the door.

YVER

Well, we're glad you're back. Now let's go celebrate. Drinks are on me.

SCIENTIST 1

Let us at least lock down the system first.

YVER

Eh, no need. Nobody knows we're here. Just power it down; we'll know if someone tries to start it up.

SCIENTIST 1

I-yes, Doctor Yver.

The scientists power down the equipment and return the keys to their places, then leave with Yver. Once the door closes, Emily drops the cloak.

EMILY

GOD, that was tiring. Either way, holy shit. Hoooooooooly shit.

VIVIAN

This is way worse than the Foundation just being an evil cult.

SARAH

Nothing's worse than a legit research organization run by a

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
businessman. Just wait till the
government gets their hands on
this.

VIVIAN
We gotta shut this down, now. I'm
gonna destroy the keys.

Vivian starts to walk forward, but Sarah stops her.

SARAH
Wait! We can use them!

VIVIAN
How? Did you HEAR how much power
they take?

SARAH
Do you know how much energy the sun
throws at the earth every day? They
were drawing at 120 kilowatts for
about ten seconds, so that's about
1.2 gigajoules. SF is around 40
degrees north, so around this time
of year we get maybe 500 watts per
square yard at noon.

Sarah pulls out her phone and taps in some numbers.

SARAH (CONT'D)
250,000 divided by 500 is 240, so
you cloaked a two hundred forty
square yard area for five seconds
you'd get the same amount of power.
That is...about a 16 by 16 yard
square. Make it bigger and you can
charge faster. How far away are you
able to absorb light?

EMILY
I...wow. That was a lot of math. I
think eight yards or so? Maybe ten,
I'm not sure.

Sarah keeps calculating out the logistics.

SARAH
Alright. A ten-yard radius circle
would...charge in less than a
second! That's perfect. Then you
gotta funnel all of that into the
key and turn it, and we're golden.

EMILY
Funnel it in?

SARAH
Yeah. You don't store the energy you absorb as light, do you? If you did, you would be glowing after you used a cloak. You might be able to send it out as electrical energy.

EMILY
I hope I will. Got anything else in your plan?

SARAH
Well, we're gonna need to reshape the key to fit the barn door. You saw what it was made of, yeah?

VIVIAN
Crystal. Looks like I'll be up first? Can't turn a key if it won't unlock the door. Question is, which key do we take?

SARAH
Well, we know where the middle one goes. It'd throw a huge wrench in their research. Maybe that one?

VIVIAN
Makes sense to me. I'll grab the right one too, just in case Let's do this.

Vivian walks over to the table and picks up the middle and right keys. She unplugs them and walks back to the others.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Alright, let's head home.

Emily throws up a cloak, and the three return to the barn.

15 EXT. THE BARN - NEXT DAY

Emily, Vivian, and Sarah are outside the barn. With them, they have their table, three mattresses, and the Barn's sign

VIVIAN
Y'know, it's gonna be weird not having walls.

EMILY

Maybe sometime we'll figure out a way to bring the whole Barn in. What Layer should we use, by the way?

SARAH

Hmmmm...84RN.

VIVIAN

Really? Just barn in leetspeak?

SARAH

It'll be easy for us to remember, and they won't think of it for at least a little while. It'll give us time. Emily, Viv, ready?

VIVIAN

Lemme get a feel for this crystal, then yeah.

Vivian puts the body of the first key in her hand and closes her eyes. The crystal starts to slowly change into a hexagonal prism, then back into a key body.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Alright, got a feel for this one's makeup. Now let's get it for the barn door.

Vivian removes the teeth and grooves from the key body, then inserts it into the door and concentrates. When she pulls it out, the key is a new shape.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Em, ready?

EMILY

As I'll ever be.

Emily takes the key and scrolls it to layer 84RN. She inserts it and reaches one hand up. A domed, circular cloak appears ten yards above Emily for a couple seconds, then disappears. Emily starts tapping her foot rapidly.

SARAH

That took a little while. Everything ok?

EMILY

Max range ten yards. Can't make a ten-yard disc ten yards above me.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

Gonna be slower than expected. Got extra some extra charge just in case. Let's do this.

Emily puts a glove on her right hand, and points at the power port with her left hand. She turns the key to unlock the door, then a quarter turn further. The key and door start humming, and she turns the doorknob. The Layer behind the door has a slate-looking floor and a white void. Emily leaves the door open and starts helping Vivian and Sarah move things in. First goes the table, then the mattresses. As they start to pick up sign, an alarm begins to ring through the complex. Guards start running towards the barn with weapons out. One guard has one of the hyper-guns.

VIVIAN

Shit shit shit! Faster!

EMILY

Trying!

Sarah uses a gust to help push Vivian and Emily through the door. As soon as they're through, Sarah runs her hand across the wheels of the Key interface to hide their Layer address and closes the door right as the guard with the hyper-gun pulls the trigger.

16 INT. 84RN - CONTINUOUS

Emily, Sarah, and Vivian collapse to the ground, breathing heavily.

SARAH

Here's hoping we can get back out.

EMILY

Yeah, that door probably doesn't exist anymore.

VIVIAN

I...hm. Can I have the Key for a second, Em?

EMILY

Uh, sure. Got an idea?

VIVIAN

Actually, yeah.

Vivian takes the Key, and pulls the crystal key for the security office out of her pocket. She reshapes the Key to match the security office, and gives it back to Emily.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Is there enough light in here to charge up?

EMILY

Hmmm...feels like it. If not, I've got the extra charge I got earlier. Just open the door to see if I can see out then close it again?

VIVIAN

Yep. If you need to, grab some more power while you're out there.

Emily nods and puts the key in the door to nowhere inside the Layer. She puts one hand up and creates a cloak, keeping it up for a few seconds before dropping it.

EMILY

Hmm...the light in here is more like an industrial light. Not as powerful as the sun, but it'll do. Let's test this out.

Emily sets the Key to 84RN, then turns and activates it. When she opens the door, the view outside is one of the buildings outside of the security office. She closes the door again.

EMILY (CONT'D)

...huh, I guess it'll take whatever key you give it and let you into that door?

VIVIAN

Seems like it. That seems...really arbitrary, honestly.

SARAH

Maybe it's the door you're thinking of or something with the Key's programming? Dunno. Not our job to figure that out. Either way, we know what they're doing now, and we have to do something about it. Now we don't have to worry about them arresting us, for the time being.

VIVIAN

Nope. All we have to worry about is surviving. Luckily, this gives us a bit of an edge. Let's give this billionaire a taste of his own aspirations.