The Premise:

The year is 2027. A former SJA student and cyber camper is now working for the Department of Homeland Security, and she is one line of code away from completing her new cryptographic algorithm when things take a horrible turn. She must complete the series of puzzles to get her work back, but she cannot do it alone. Luckily, her professors from cyber discovery camp “come back” to help her solve the puzzle.

The Plot:

Madison is sitting in a chair working on the final line of code for her new cryptographic algorithm. Suddenly, she sees a screen that simply says “passphrase.” This is reasonably terrifying, so she proceeds to freak out. Swanbom enters doing the “hands in the air” thing to calm her down. Once he calms and reassures her, she prepares to sit back down and tries to guess the password. As she does this, however, Tims enters and picks on her about her LSU shirt. He gives her a LA Tech shirt and she changes, then she sits down to guess the password. Right after this, she receives a call from Zohan, which states that she must complete a series of puzzles in order to unlock her computer. He sends her a string, encrypted through a Vigenère cipher, that decrypts to some characters that are out of order. She cannot figure it out and starts to get frustrated, but Rufleth enters and tells her that she should not try to “google her problems away.” They speak about the Socratic Method, and eventually unscramble the passphrase. As a reward, he gives her a smartie. Entering the code brings her to a page with hex that decrypts to “who needs a computer, I have a…” Madison does not know what goes in the blank, so Professor DeFee and Professor Deal come to help jog her memory. First, she helps Madison determine the speaker of the quote, and then they talk about his ideology figure out what completes it. The answer (wife) brings Madison to a page with a large amount of information encrypted through a simple Caesar cipher. She easily decrypts it to “I scream for ice cream.” “Cream” unlocks an ice cream truck problem with hex values on it. Madison does not remember what to do with problems like these, but Dr. Gourd comes and teaches her how to solve it. From there, they add the numbers on the nodes and convert it from hex to text through the ASCII table. The resulting word is PARADOXICALL. This unlocks two side-by-side images (gourd rocks). Professor Crook comes to tell her about how her peril relates to the structure of a story, and Zohan concludes with another freaky phone call.

Script:

Madison:  Finally, I am almost done with my brand new encryption system!  Just a few more lines of code and…

(Backdrop changes to passphrase screen)

Madison: Wait, what?  No, no, no! Ok! Ok, I’m okay. It’s fine, I’m fine; it’s not fine! Nope, it’s alright I’m ok.

(Professor Swanbom enters with arms up)

Professor Swanbom:  Settle, settle. Alright, arms up and deep breaths, deep breaths. In and out, in and out.

Madison:  My entire encryption system that I have been working on for months just disappeared!  I cannot believe this. Will I get it back? What does this even mean, “passphrase”

Professor Swanbom:  Deep breaths don’t stress; you know how to handle this.  Look at you, working at the Department of Homeland Security! Plus, you went to LA Tech’s Cyber Discovery Camp.  Just remember what the professors taught you and you will be fine!

Madison:  Okay, I’ll just figure it out.

(Professor Tims busts onto the scene and upon assessing what Madison and he are wearing rips open button up shirt)

Professor Tims:  You are wearing the wrong shirt Madison. Take this *classy* shirt. Just put this on; I’m heading back to the auction. Digital Package. We got 275? 300?

(Professor Tims proceeds to walk away yelling about the item and sings “In the Arms of the Angels”)

Madison: Oops, sorry Professor Tims. Goodbye!

Madison:  Well I guess I should try a few different pass phrases now um…

Swanbom: QWERTY?

Madison: Didn’t work

Swanbom: Try baseball, a top password of 2015 (wink)

Madison: No luck

Swanbom: Wait, it has got to be covfefe!

(Cell phone vibrating)

Madison: Um, hello?

Zohan: Hello, this Is Zohan. The connections seems a little better, so maybe it will be easier for you to understand the tasks you have at hand.

Madison: What sort of tasks?

Zohan: Well, in order for you to retrieve your algorithm, you will have to solve multiple puzzles designed by me. Your first problem to decode is on your screen. Rationality. Good luck.

Madison: Will you help me?

Zohan: Zohan gives no help. Zohan is a disclosed man. Zohan is now hanging up.

Madison: Oh no!

Swanbom: Madison, do not give up now. The other professors want to help you out. Just remember, arms up.

Madison: Ok, this seems to be a Vigenère- I can handle that. Wait, the decryption makes no sense. The letters must be in the wrong order! I will try googling them to see if there’s possibly an anagram.

    (Enter professor Rufleth)

    Rufleth: Woah Madison, you cannot google away your problems.

    Madison: Well ok.

Rufleth: Madison, you remember when we had that talk about Socrates and Google, right?

    Madison: Yeah

Rufleth: Then you remember Socrates believed in questions and thinking through a problem. Use this technique now. Do not guess, be methodical and analyze.

    Madison: Ok, Ok I just need to.. got it!  It was “memorize this”

   Rufleth:  Good job kid! Take the Smarties, you smarty!

Madison: Thanks!

Madison:  The next problem appears to be hex, which is simple, but this translates to “Who needs a computer I have a   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”  What does that mean?

    (Dr. DeFee and Deal enter)

Dr. DeFee: Did you know that the math from Sneakers was real and done by a Mathematician?

    Professor Deal:  Oh, numbers. I’m an architect, an engineer who can’t do math.

Dr. DeFee:  Oh, well still each screen took an entire minute to film in order to achieve its great quality.

    Madison: Oh, hi Professors DeFee and Deal! I could really use your help.

    DeFee and Deal: Of course.

    Madison: So I decoded Zohan’s clue to “Who needs a computer I have a \_\_\_\_\_\_”

    Deal: Oh great, more of your codes.

    DeFee: Well Madison, I know I said we were done with Wendell Berry, but…

    Madison: Of course! How did I not realize?  A wife! He has his wife!

    Deal: Well, what about him having a wife?

Madison:  That is the passphrase; he said he did not need a computer he had a wife instead.

    DeFee: That is right kiddo, good job!

    Madison: Thanks so much for all the help! Bye!

    Deal and DeFee: Good luck!

    Deal: I still believe Origami is much more interesting that math.

    Madison: Ok, now we have another puzzle.

Madison: It’s a simple Cesarean; I can do that.  I (pause) scream (pause) you (pause) scream (pause) we (pause) all (pause) scream (pause) for (pause) ice (pause) cream (turn to see Swanbom). Wait, ice cream truck problems; I don’t remember how to do these!

(Enter Professor Gourd)

Professor Gourd: Hey how we doing over here? Did we figure it out?

Madison: Hi Professor Gourd, I just do not remember how to solve this. It has been a while since I have done one of these.

Professor Gourd: I cannot see why, these are so fun! Just place the trucks on the nodes, and watch out for overlap!

Madison: (works for a bit- what time will allow) I think I have it! Does this look right?

Professor Gourd: Um hm, um hm, uh huh, ah! It seems you have done it. Now what do you need to do?

Madison: I need to convert the hex characters into Standard English letters using the ASCII chart, which gives me OARDAPALCXIL. Any ideas as to what that could be?

Professor Gourd: Think back to the time a glitch almost locked your team out of the system for forty minutes.

Madison: I know, I know! It is PARADOXICALL. Ok, awesome! That worked, but now it brought me to this.. Squash Johnson?

Professor Gourd: Try that and see if it is valid.

Madison: Nope, it did not work.

Professor Gourd: Check your vegetation.

Madison: Gourd Rocks! I have solved it! Thank you so much, professor!

Professor Gourd: No problem.

Professor Crook: Hey, Madison. You did great: nice plot, interesting characters, and what a conflict! So proud of you, kid. What a story, what a story. You climbed over that metaphorical chair!

Madison:  Thanks Professor Crook! And thank you to all my wonderful professors for all you have taught me! I am so glad it is finally over and my system is back! \*sigh of relief\*

Zohan: Or is it?

 BUM BUM BUMMMM

(Beat with Swanbom, then end!)