

FLIGHTSUIT

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FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE, ABOVE JUPITER

Jupiter's clouds swirl below like cream in coffee. Gold and silver accentuate the highest clouds against the dark, oily maelstrom beneath.

This close, the gigantic planet obscures everything else. The explorer blinks as his eyes struggle to find focus in the impossible scale of it.

He raises a white gloved hand. Now, it is the planet that is dwarfed. His palm and two wide, flat fingers are large enough to cover the great red cyclone and his vertigo subsides.

Reflected in the transparent dome of the flightsuit's helmet, the explorer's bulbous chameleon's eyes rove independently. The face is simian, seething with pent hostility, even in the quiet and solitary wonder of space. Two long obsidian tusks curve up from its block jaw.

The explorer turns away from the great flowing skies of Jupiter, its eyes scanning the black until a singular blue speck is found. Lights and symbols appear in the helmet and the explorer nods. The flightsuit adjusts direction until the blue light is in the center of the helmet dome.

The explorer's angry eyes tighten and the flightsuit speeds toward the blue light as Jupiter contracts into a swirling marble.

EXT. ENTERING EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

Fiery, buffeting forces pummel the flightsuit. The words coming from the snarling explorer are unintelligible, but its tone is furious. One of the lights in the helmet's display dims.

A soothing, calm voice replies, and the dimmed symbol relights. The explorer grunts loudly, and again the symbol dims. Flightsuit and explorer plummet through the atmosphere.

The soothing calm voice speaks again, only to be cut off by more snarling from the angry explorer.

The flightsuit tumbles, scalding the thickening atmosphere as the flightsuit traces a path of fire across the night sky.

The explorer's angry growls become shrieks of pain as the planet's air slices into the flightsuit's elbow joint. He screams as his arm is detached, spinning away with its own fiery trail.

The helmet is burned black, then heated red as the explorer's eyes sear. Then there is only black burning heat as the explorer howls in pain. Seconds later the howl abruptly ends.

INT. INSIDE AIRPLANE - NIGHT

TED TAYLOR, 30, sits in the middle seat. He is pudgy and wearing the same wrinkled suit he wore yesterday. The eight-year-old in the window seat beside him is named "Joey", or "Joseph" depending on the level of miscreant behavior his negligent mother observes from the seat in front of them.

Slumped in his seat, Joey sees the fiery trail of the flightsuit as it emerges from the clouds above the plane. He sits up, pulling his shoes up into the seat and kicking Taylor's hip.

TAYLOR  
(hushed voice)  
Will you stop it?

JOEY  
It's a shooting star!

Joey's hand presses the shared armrest as he tries to get a better view of the streaking flames. Taylor leans over and grinds his elbow on Joey's fingers. Joey snatches them away and stares at Taylor.

Taylor glares back, grins and nods. He leans back into the headrest and sees Joey's mother staring at him. He raises an eyebrow daring her to say anything. She turns back

around. She presses the button to call an attendant and Taylor rolls his eyes.

REAR OF PLANE

The flight attendant walks the aisle toward the call light. As she passes, she observes that every adult passenger is rubbing forehead or temple. Arriving at the light, she turns to look back as almost every passenger is rubbing eyes or head, including those who appeared otherwise to be asleep. She blinks feeling a headache herself and looks toward the front of the plane for reassurance.

The twinge passes, and as she looks back, the passengers are once again sleeping or watching flickering movies in the dark.

Joey's mother motions for the attendant to lean closer and whispers something to her. The attendant looks at Taylor as she leans away from Joey's mother.

Taylor is rubbing his temple as the attendant assesses him. She moves back to his row and leans across an overweight woman snoring beside Taylor.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir. Do we have a problem?

The attendant stares at Taylor, daring him to raise a defense. He looks up and opens his mouth to do so when his right eye rolls independently to the side. The eye roves over the face and chest of the attendant, then slides even farther right at the passenger across the aisle.

The passenger recoils slightly at the sight.

Taylor blinks several times until his eye finally returns to the center. The attendant and the passenger across the aisle are staring at Taylor.

EXT. STREAM BED - NIGHT

The air is still, and the only sound is the stream's gentle gurgles as it polishes smooth stones of its bed. Dark sleeping mountains ring the small valley.

The clear moonlit water is like glass, with smooth rolling waves and the occasional jostle of stones rolling from one resting place to another.

The stream is spanned by wild raspberry briars. The briar tunnel is unbroken, except for a small hole, smoking and steaming into the night sky.

A sleeve of the flightsuit rests in the stream beneath the briar hole. The sleeve ticks and pings, cooling in the stream. It twitches with a single sudden movement, either from the last efforts of blackened tendon, or the water.

INT. OFFICES OF BERG CONSULTING - DAY

As he steps out of the elevator, Taylor notices that everyone else is already in the conference room. One of the project managers, Jill, sits closest to the door. She makes eye contact with him and lets him see a wicked curling smile as she closes the door.

Taylor glares at the door and hurriedly walks past the remaining array of colorful donuts outside the conference room. His hand is on the knob when he decides that he might as well get a donut at this point. He picks one of the powdered ones.

Everyone looks up when he opens the door. DENNIE BERG, the owner's condescending son, and Taylor's boss, pointedly looks down at his expensive watch and then sideways at Taylor.

DENNIE

Come in Ted. There's an open seat for you, and it is very close to the door.

Taylor offers a quick smile, but Dennie was writing on his planner and did not see it, maybe.

The headache has grown worse. His pulsing blood was an ocean's surf that backgrounded the voices in the conference room. Powdered sugar dusts his slacks, he slides his notebook under it managing to shake more sugar off the donut.

He shakes his head in slow frustration and rubs his throbbing temple, leaving white powder there. He looks up to see Jill watching him.

His right eye drifts from Jill toward the whiteboard. Jill leans back, staring at him wide-eyed. Taylor seems not to notice that his eyes are moving independently and continues staring at her with his left eye as the right scans the faces around the table.

A moment later, the wayward eye joins the other and he glares at Jill until she looks away.

The visiting clients are from a software company. Taylor watches them. He tries to remember the names of any of the people, or even the company, but cannot.

Developers and business reps are talking past each other with developers talking business and the business reps recommending adoption of the latest development fads. Like always.

Taylor stares, unable to follow the conversation. He rubs his temple again. The headache is overwhelming. The voices in the room are rising into a cacophony, overlapping so that he cannot follow any of it. The whiteboard is filling up with scribbled concepts, but nothing makes sense.

Until all at once, the loud overlapping voices become a soft whisper, as if a great wind had stilled. Taylor watches people speaking, but the whispers are not coming from their lips. He looks around for the source, or a sign that anyone else hears the voices. There is no source, and no sign that anyone else hears them.

He stares at the whiteboard and the scribbblings seem to crawl into order, becoming illustrations and figures from a textbook. He pops the whole donut into his mouth, dusts off his notebook and begins writing. He fills the page and turns it.

Taylor hunches over the notebook, writing with an almost frantic pace, until people walk past. The meeting is ending. Taylor looks up. He does not understand what has happened. After everyone is gone, he sits alone staring at the whiteboard. It is no longer an illustration, but a meaningless jumble.

He flips through his pages of notes trying to make sense of what he has written. The last page ends in a checklist. He scans through them until he reaches one near the bottom that reads "Quit job & start company today".

Taylor stares at the instruction and long minutes later, nods.

He stops at donut table, picks the best donuts from one of the boxes, puts them into the empty spaces of a half-full box and takes the box to his office as the receptionist stares.

EXT. CITY STREET OUTSIDE BROWNSTONE OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "Four years later"

Two black SUVs pull into reserved parking in front of a brownstone. A third SUV waits behind, blocking a lane.

MAJOR HENRY ("HACK") SAMUELS, 35, retired domestic terrorism infiltrator, on indefinite assignment under the NSA, watches from the third SUV as his research team exits both parked vehicles and walks to the brownstone.

The two lead SUVs depart and the third pulls into the vacated space.

In the back seat, Hack leans toward the driver's side and surveys the rooftop until he spots the sniper, AGENT SARAH WALKER, early 30's. Walker is fast-tracking promotions and too good to keep much longer. She has already stayed longer than Hack expected.

WALKER (ON EARPIECE)

Clear from here Major.

Hack nods, then turns to watch the last of the researchers step through the building's heavy wooden door.

HACK

Acknowledged. Sowyer?

An alert agent in black with his Glock in a low ready position, stands by the building's polished wooden sign. "TIMESHARE COUNSEL, INC" is written in gold leaf.

Agent Charlie Sowyer, early 30's, is good-natured, most of the time, and liked by everyone. Sowyer nods in response.

SOWYER (ON EARPIECE)  
Clear on the street Hack.

HACK  
Here we go.

Hack slides from the SUV with a square aluminum briefcase.

HACK (CONT'D)  
Sowyer. (smiles and nods as he passes Sowyer)

SOWYER  
Let's hope this works boss man.

HACK  
Last bolt in the quiver. It had better.

Sowyer's face is skeptical. He falls in behind Hack, keeping the pistol ready as they climb the steps and walk inside.

INT. STYLISH AND SECURE OFFICE OF TIMESHARE COUNSEL - DAY

The conference room's polished wood bookcase covers an entire wall, floor to ceiling, with a wheeled ladder for the higher shelves.

A large, computerized whiteboard spans the opposite wall, with a projection screen built into the other.

The researchers sit along an ornately carved table with binders on the table before them. The binders are identical and stamped "CONFIDENTIAL".

Sowyer walks to the far end of the table. He holds a pistol in one hand and stands watching the door.

Hack also remains standing. He fingers his watch and stares at the door, impatient to get underway, already annoyed. The square briefcase is on the table within reach.



Taylor enters. He is wearing a crisp black suit and cornflower tie. He is less pudgy now, and his smile conveys only trace smugness.

Taylor carries a green leather journal. He places it on the table in front of his chair. The cover has "T. Taylor - Timeshare Checklists" stamped in gold leaf.

Taylor walks in, offers a slight smile to Hack, and starts shaking hands on the opposite side of the table, leaving Hack until last.

Hack's jaw clenches as Taylor shakes hands and speaks quietly with each of the researchers. His gaze softens when he notices that Taylor seems to win over each of the surly and skeptical researchers, leaving them smiling.

Finally, Taylor rounds the table to Hack. He shakes hands, says nothing, and walks to his seat. Taylor motions for his guests to be seated.

TAYLOR

Thank you for the trust you  
have placed in my company.

Taylor makes brief eye contact with each researcher, and a longer connection with Hack.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Many other teams have come to  
me with problems like yours.  
Disagreement on the next  
lines of research, process  
differences, even personal  
conflicts. Stasis.

Hack watches with growing approval, as Taylor connects with the researchers.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Let me reassure you. You are  
on the verge of discovery.  
You only require a catalyst.  
I can help you.

Taylor smiles at each of them. Hack is astonished by their positive reactions. When he looks back to Taylor, Taylor makes eye contact and smiles.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

But first, please, may I see  
the artifact? (smiles)

Hack draws the case to him and places his palm on it. The latches click open. When Hack removes his hand, a red imprint of his palm is visible. It quickly fades.

The artifact is encased in black foam. Hack lifts it from the case and hands it to Taylor.

The artifact resembles a cracked soup bowl. It is white with a subtle blue tint and when Hack places it on the table, it sounds like it might be ceramic or metal.

Taylor lifts the artifact and is taken aback.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

So light.

HACK

That's everyone's reaction.  
It weighs much less than  
metal.

MALE RESEARCHER WITH  
PONYTAIL

The traced lines that  
resemble indentations are  
subsurface.

PERRY, BUSHY WALRUS  
MUSTACHE RESEARCHER

They're for communication.

Several of the other researchers react to the statement, shaking their heads and eye rolling.

ROBERTS, RED-HAIRED  
AND RED-FACED  
RESEARCHER

Stop trying to sway him  
Perry. We all agreed we  
wouldn't, even though we all  
knew you would anyway.

Hack gives Perry a stern look and then turns to Taylor.

HACK

They've scanned it with X-  
rays and scopes, there's no  
physical indication of the  
traces, although they are  
clearly visible.

(turns back to Perry)

Taylor caresses the artifact's surface, lost in thought.  
Hack regards him, like a raven studying a silver splash.

Taylor looks up from the artifact, scans the researcher's  
eyes and turns to Hack.

TAYLOR

What about the sound?

HACK

Sound? You hear a sound?

TAYLOR

Almost music. It was in the  
reports you provided. But no  
definitive patterns, at least  
at the time I received the  
reports.

HACK

Dr. Roberts, would you  
outline your findings from  
this week for Mr. Taylor?

ROBERTS

We have monitored the artifact's vibrational energy for three months, trying to identify patterns. We have some but have not been able to decode them.

Taylor is transfixed, maintaining long eye contact with Roberts as he listens. Taylor's eye begins to drift, but he winks the eyelid tightly until it recenters. Roberts pauses, staring, until Taylor motions for him to continue.

ROBERTS (CONT'D)

We observed repeating patterns when various objects were brought near the artifact, but always with enough variation that we couldn't be sure.

PERRY

No suggestions Roberts.

ROBERTS

We built a fixture, so we could put test objects in the exact same positions relative to each other. The patterns improved.

TAYLOR

Cat's whiskers.

(the researchers stir)

The vibrations are some form of echolocation, detecting space and objects around the artifact.

ROBERTS

Right! That's what I proposed two weeks ago, but Jonas' ridiculously contrived experiment came next in the rotation and I didn't get a chance to prove it.

JONAS

There's nothing ridiculous...

HACK

Enough. Mr. Taylor, what are you doing with your right hand?

Sowyer leans forward. The pistol is once again in both hands.

Taylor returns Hack's glare, but only for an instant, then smiles and nods. He turns his hand palm up revealing thread-like wires under each finger, connecting to a dime-sized button in his palm.

TAYLOR

I'm writing your report Major.

(waves his fingers)

It is a full featured publishing instrument, with thousands of subtle control combinations. I partnered with a client business to develop it, but we decided not to manufacture it. It proved too challenging for even the most sophisticated users, and so I purchased the rights for my own use.

HACK

And you're claiming you can do it while facilitating this meeting?

TAYLOR

Obviously.

HACK

I look forward to reading that report Mr. Taylor.

TAYLOR

I'm glad. Please, let's continue. I have some questions from the

preliminary reports.

INT. TIMESHARE COUNSEL CONFERENCE ROOM DOORWAY - DAY

The researchers file out of the conference room laughing and back-slapping as if they'd just won a championship. Taylor and Hack make eye contact several times as the researchers congratulate Taylor on their way out.

Hack locks the artifact in the case and waits for everyone else to leave before approaching Taylor.

TAYLOR

Major. Were your considerable fees well spent?

HACK

Even watching you do it...

(shakes head)

Every time they stoked the coals of previous arguments, you took their wind away.

TAYLOR

Fellow intellectuals Major. We think alike. It's not that hard.

HACK

You'd have made a great terrorist infiltrator, but obviously the money's better doing this.

TAYLOR

(laughing)

I believe I will stick with consulting. You're right about the money.

(pauses)

Major, it's clear to me that your current assignment doesn't engage you in the same way as infiltrating terrorist groups, but this artifact is almost certainly non-terrestrial. It could lead to benefits we cannot imagine.

HACK

You forget. I've seen you work. I know what you're doing. They needed a hero for political reasons, so they broke my cover and gave me this project to keep me busy. Even someone with your gifts can't convince me this is the best use of my experience.

A neatly groomed young man in a blazer steps close to Taylor and passes him a two-inch thick spiral bound notebook with a blue leather cover. "CONFIDENTIAL" is stamped in gold leaf.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Thank you James.

James leaves. Taylor presents the notebook to Hack.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Your report Major. Everything that was discussed. I've proposed six additional lines of research. It's quite thorough.

Hack's face registers his disbelief. He opens the notebook, and as he scans the contents, he begins to flip more quickly through it.

HACK

How did you do this?

TAYLOR

I'm most interested in the artifact's microscopic neutrino mills of course. Imagine the implications of continuous, ever-replenishing energy.

Taylor nods and leaves. Sowyer approaches Hack shaking his head.

SOWYER

I think that actually worked. I always thought consultants borrow your watch to tell you the time, but that guy really did his homework.

HACK

It's more amazing than you think. That part about the music, the vibrations, that wasn't in the preliminary package. I removed it so that Roberts wouldn't dominate the discussion.

SOWYER

You must have left some mention of it in there.

HACK

No. I'm positive.

SOWYER

How do you explain him knowing then?

HACK

I don't know. For all I know he heard it. It wouldn't be the most surprising thing we saw today.



Sowyer and Hack exchange uneasy smiles and leave. Hack looks back over his shoulder as he walks away.

EXT. ABANDONED STRIP MALL - DAY

SUPER: "Six months later"

Taylor sits in his car in the shade of dogwood tree. A tall, unkempt hedge separates the parking lot from the access road and frames his secluded spot.

The green leather journal lies open in his lap.

He has lost weight since the meeting. His shirt is wrinkled and hair disheveled. He regards the rear-view mirror and tugs his lower eyelid to reveal a burst blood vessel. His eye starts to wander, and he blinks until it aligns with the other eye.

He rubs his temple and squeezes his eyes shut, then shakes his head and snatches a prescription bottle from the passenger seat. He puts a migraine pill between his lips, letting it hang like a cigarette as he sees a car pull into the parking lot.

Taylor swigs the pill down with cold coffee, grimacing at the taste.

Sowyer pulls his car window to window with Taylor's car. Sowyer has changed since the meeting too. His previous ever-present grin has wandered off and become lost.

Taylor looks quickly away from Sowyer's angry face and peers into the seat behind him.

TAYLOR

You have it?

Sowyer glares in response. He is holding a pistol in his right hand below the window. It is a revolver, different from the one he normally carries.

Taylor glances down to his lap. His finger taps lightly on a journal entry. The entry reads "13. Keep Sawyer calm. He is inclined toward anger and has tendencies toward solving problems with violence. Do not argue with him about anything!"

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

That's good Agent Sawyer. I knew that you would be successful. You're extremely capable.

Sawyer stares at him like he's a bug in need of a heavy boot.

SOWYER

What about me, my family?

TAYLOR

You have every reason to trust me Agent Sawyer.

Sawyer's mouth purses tighter.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Our interests are the same. We both want to keep our relationship confidential and that ensures I will keep your relationship with Agent Walker confidential.

SOWYER

I broke it off. There is no relationship. Not anymore.

TAYLOR

This is not blackmail. We're doing business, with mutual value.

SOWYER

It's blackmail. You're fooling no one. Give me the money.

Taylor reaches into the passenger seat, keeping his eyes on Sowyer. He hands over a small book satchel with "Mr. Wonderful" stenciled on it.

Sowyer eyes the satchel.

SOWYER (CONT'D)  
Your idea of a joke asshole?

Taylor glances at the journal entry.

TAYLOR  
A little levity doesn't hurt.

Sowyer glares.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
It was a gift from my employees. A joke at my expense. I didn't think it was funny, so I cut the bonus pool funds. The next year, I received a more suitable gift.

Sowyer flips through stacks of cash in the satchel.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
You can retire Agent Sowyer.  
You and your wife.

Sowyer reaches into his passenger seat and hands Taylor an object wrapped in brown paper.

Taylor tears open the paper revealing the artifact. His face is like the face of a boy on Christmas day, in an asylum.

SOWYER  
If I ever see you again.  
You're dead.

Sowyer reverses out of the parking slot and drives to the exit.

Taylor watches Sowyer's car turn out of sight, then looks at the artifact in his hand. He smiles and looks down at the journal.

The next line on his checklist reads, "14. Get artifact from Sawyer. Feel it, hold it, and make sure it's the real thing. Give him the money. If he balks, give him more money, as much as he needs to make it happen. If there's a problem, kill him, and take it."

INT. HACK'S OFFICE IN THE RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

Hack sits at his desk. His office has glass walls on three sides with unobstructed views of the facility's lab. The lab and offices are clean and new, within the shell of a dusty warehouse with crates stacked around the periphery.

Roberts, his red face now a swollen plum, bursts into Hack's office. The door bangs into the wall and back into Roberts.

Roberts holds the artifact aloft in one hand.

ROBERTS

Where is it?

Hack rises, his eyes boring into Roberts.

HACK

Dr. Roberts. Do you realize you are breaking security protocols?

Hack sees Sawyer arrive. Sawyer follows close behind Roberts as Roberts approaches Hack's desk.

HACK (CONT'D)

Agent Sawyer, report.

SOWYER

Yes sir, Major...

ROBERTS

It doesn't make...

Hack holds a finger to Roberts and stares him silent.

SOWYER

Sir, I'm sorry. He was in study room two doing electrical tests and suddenly yanked the artifact from its fixture. I saw him on the monitors and chased in here after him.

HACK

You didn't leave the monitor room with no one on watch, did you?

SOWYER

What?

HACK

Who did you leave in your absence to ensure this situation does not become any worse?

SOWYER

Oh, um, Sarah.

Hack's eyes tighten.

SOWYER (CONT'D)

I mean Agent Walker sir.

HACK

Good. We train on procedures so we can follow them under circumstances like this.

SOWYER

Yes sir.

Hack turns his eyes to Roberts and lowers his finger.

HACK

All right Dr. Roberts. We will escort you down to study room two and watch you put the artifact back into its security case. Then we will hear your concerns and get to the bottom of this.

Roberts raises the artifact to eye level.

ROBERTS

This? This piece of junk?

Roberts slams the artifact onto Hack's desk, then flings it into the thick glass wall. It bounces off and spins into a corner.

Hack reacts too quickly for Roberts to evade him. He slams Robert's head into the desk and holds his face flat against the surface.

HACK

Dr. Roberts. You now have my undivided attention. Tell me what your problem is.

Robert's mouth is mashed so hard to the desk that his words are mumbled.

ROBERTS

Fake! It's a fake.

INT. DARK SECURITY CONTROL STATION - DAY

The only light in the security control room comes from the six monitors. Four of them are cycling between various camera images of the lab. Hack leans forward in a chair staring at two of the monitors.

Sowyer knocks and enters.

SOWYER

Anything?

Hack exhales, leans back in the chair, and rubs his eyes.

HACK

Nothing.

SOWYER

How far back?

HACK

Twelve hours. I'm twelve hours into the recordings and so far, the only person that's not on my contact list is Becca. I checked the logs and her last test on the artifact was Tuesday, so that will be everyone, including you and me.

SOWYER

That's bad.

HACK

Yeah. Roberts last ran vibration tests 14 days ago.

Sowyer rubs his eyes and looks back through the doorway.

HACK (CONT'D)

How are they coming downstairs?

SOWYER

The fake is titanium. It's heavier than the artifact, but Jonas and Becca said you wouldn't be able to tell the difference without holding both the artifact and the fake at the same time or weighing it.

HACK

They share any theories?

SOWYER

Just that it was a very accurate fake, at least physically. If Roberts had not run the vibration tests...

HACK

Yeah.

SOWYER

What can I do?

HACK

Take a rotation here. Crawl through the recordings, watch for any opportunities for someone to switch the artifact and the fake.

Hack rubs his eyes and twists his neck.

HACK (CONT'D)

Take a break every ten minutes. It's tedious and you could miss something.

SOWYER

Will do. What are you going to do?

HACK

Walker is pulling background on anyone that has been in the building in the last six months and anyone we've road-showed in the last twelve, including the staff of the Congressional Committee.

SOWYER

Twelve months? But Roberts tested it 14 days ago. We know it was genuine then.



HACK

What if Roberts faked that test? Charlie, someone on the inside was involved with this. They machined an exact duplicate from titanium.

Sowyer swallows, looking queasy. Hack's eyes linger on him. After a moment, Sowyer shakes his head and looks at the monitors.

HACK (CONT'D)

Yeah.

INT. HACK'S OFFICE IN THE RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

Hack sits in his office. The thick glass walls provide views of two converging halls and he looks up as people move between labs.

After a few moments, he leans back. His face is grim and determined. He clicks a button onscreen. A few seconds later Walker emerges from one of the lab doors and walks quickly to his office.

Hack nods her in. He flicks a button on his desk and the windows turn opaque.

WALKER

You have something.

Hack nods.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Who?

HACK

The guy at Timeshare, Taylor.

Walker tilts her head, her face skeptical. She waits for an explanation. Hack smiles his approval.

HACK (CONT'D)

I've always liked you Sharon. You don't want special considerations. You just out-hustle everyone else.

Walker seems uncomfortable and leans slightly back.

HACK (CONT'D)

I know about you and Charlie.  
I've known for months. You  
two were discreet. I'm glad  
for that. It gives me  
options.

Walker glances down and then back to Hack. Hack waits. His face is expressionless.

WALKER

I'm sorry sir. It was a  
mistake. It shouldn't have  
happened. I broke it off. We  
both decided.

Hack rubs his fingers on beard stubble. His eyes are locked onto Walker's.

HACK

That's the reason I let it go  
as long as I did. I thought  
one of you would step back  
and look at the situation  
with a clear perspective at  
some point.

Walker nods.

HACK (CONT'D)

I'd like to keep both of you,  
at least until you've done  
the time necessary to move up  
again. Charlie's not as good  
as you, but he's good and  
he'll be here after you've  
moved up.

WALKER

Thank you Hack. What's next?

Hack stares a moment longer.

HACK

I have a contact in the Transaction Services Division from my infiltration days. TSD mines financial data for patterns that indicate covert behavior. Finances, travel, everything people buy or search for, all of it.

HACK (CONT'D)

The artifact was originally fished out of a recycling smelter in East Tennessee. It was unharmed of course. We don't know where it was before that, maybe someone found it, kept it for a while and eventually decided it was junk and dropped it off at a recycling center.

WALKER

I wondered where we found it.

HACK

Now you know as much as anyone. We know only that the recycling drop off was in East Tennessee.

Hack nods toward his monitor.

HACK

My buddy set a watch zone around the area, so that if anyone associated with our project goes there, I'd know. Anyone, including a Senator on our committee, or other agencies.

WALKER

Why?

HACK

Because I know these people and I don't trust them. If they found another piece of whatever the artifact is, they wouldn't tell us, and I don't intend to be wandering in the dark trying to solve problems without all the data.

WALKER

And your buddy found something.

HACK

Taylor bought gas and snacks in a town called Erwin last night.

WALKER

Let's go get him.

HACK

Pack assault gear. We're leaving in 30 minutes.

EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR PARKED BESIDE THE RIVER - DAY

Taylor's shining black car is parked along the two-lane. The Nolichucky river's bank is just a few yards away. The river is in a hurry here, squeezed by the bend. Morning sunlight transforms the leaves above into a cathedral of stained glass.

Inside the car, Taylor is frantic. The green leather journal is in his lap and he is flipping pages. His face is not the face of a man sitting by a peaceful river. It is the face of a man that has become snagged on a train track with the train's rumble growing louder.

Taylor flips again to the page that reads...

"13. Keep Sowyer calm. He is inclined toward anger and has tendencies toward solving problems with violence. Do not argue with him about anything!"

"14. Get artifact from Sowyer. Feel it, hold it, and make sure it's the real thing. Give him the money. If he balks, give him more money, as much as he needs to make it happen. If there's a problem, kill him, and take it."

TAYLOR

Kill him? How did this make sense to me?

Taylor turns to stare at the river's movement. The river's roiling facets carve the morning sunlight into lances, piercing his bloodshot eyes. He closes his eyes. The sunlight feels good and warm on his face. He had not noticed it before.

DREAM - TAYLOR PLANNING HIS FUTURE

Taylor sits by his pool. There are travel books on the table beside him with island resorts, couples dancing, and hammocks slung at sunset.

The green journal is in his lap. He traces the lines with a finger as he reads. His lips mouth unintelligible words.

He lifts his eyes from the journal and stares into the distance. He is accustomed now to the way his eyes roam independently and only rubs them back into cooperation if someone is watching.

But someone is watching. He senses them, although there is no sound or movement that has betrayed their presence. He turns around uneasily, tensed against expected surprise.

When he sees himself, it is a relief, at first. The guest version of himself is not dressed for sitting beside the pool. He wears wrinkled clothes and is untucked in every way a man can be.

The guest stares until Taylor becomes uncomfortable and wonders if the guest might leave soon or stay.

His roving eyes are drawn to the guest's forehead and as he watches, the guest reaches a finger up to touch the same spot.

Taylor watches as the guest presses the finger deep into his forehead. Blood runs down the guest's face as the finger sinks deeper. The guest wedges another finger in and

reaches up with the other hand. The guest pulls at the skin until it tears.

Taylor is horrified but cannot take his eyes away from the dark bloody hole the guest has made. When the hole stretches over the guest's eye, Taylor sees a repulsive rolling eye enfolded by leathery red skin.

Taylor awakens and looks around for the creature from his dream. His scanning eyes settle on the rearview mirror. He looks into his own eyes for several minutes before dropping his eyes once more to the journal.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

How does stealing a useless  
thing connect with my plans?  
It makes no sense.

His finger traces down the page.

"15. Drive to Bumpas Cove in Tennessee."

He looks at the river, then back to the journal.

"16. Wait in the car."

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Wait? For what? What was I  
thinking? Oh God, what was I  
thinking?

Taylor looks in the rear-view at a black leather duffel.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Find a way out. Get rid of it  
and get on a plane before  
they figure out that I took  
it.

Taylor snatches the artifact from the passenger seat and scrambles from the car. He stumbles over exposed roots to the river's edge and stretches his arm back to launch the artifact.

He stops, frozen and trembling with strain.

VISION - A finger-wide strip of skin peels from Taylor's shoulder, down his arm and forearm before tearing free and falling to the soft mossy ground. Taylor screams in agony.

Another strip tears from under his arm. Taylor screams and moves to quickly throw the artifact. Several more strips begin to pull down his arm and he sobs in searing pain.

Taylor blinks and his arm is whole and unharmed. He tentatively reaches fingers to his arm, no longer sure he can believe his eyes.

He looks at the artifact.

VISION - Taylor sees himself running across the two-lane and scrambling up the steep and overgrown hillside.

He looks at the artifact. His eyes draw down and a sob escapes him. He crosses the road and begins climbing the hill with the artifact.

Behind him, his car sits with the door open.

INT. BLACK SUV ON HIGHWAY - DAY

Sowyer is driving. Hack and Walker are in the back. Hack is looking out the window and Walker is reading pages from a folder.

Hack's phone buzzes and he looks down at the message. He keys a quick reply and turns to Walker who is now expectantly watching him.

HACK

They found Taylor's car in a place called "Bumpas Cove". There's no sign of him.

Sowyer begins keying the destination into the GPS.

HACK (CONT'D)

(to Walker)

Look the place up and get us some background while I call the sheriff down there and make sure nothing is disturbed.

HACK

(into phone)

Hi Bill, I need you to contact the Sheriff's Department for a place called "Bumpas Cove".

HACK (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Just one "s" I think. Message me when you can confirm and send me the sheriff's contact info.

WALKER

Ready?

HACK

What'd you find?

WALKER

They mined iron there from 1912 until the 60's. A Pennsylvania company bought land in the cove to dump toxic chemicals that they were supposed to be incinerating.

SOWYER

Great place.

WALKER

The State regulators permitted the dumping and ended up as employees of the company later.

WALKER (CONT'D)

They dumped chemicals until the 80's when a baby died in her crib from skin ulcers.

(hesitates)

At that point, the people rose up and physically blocked the road so the trucks couldn't get in.



The site was listed on the  
EPA's 100 Most Dangerous  
Landfills in the 80's.

SOWYER

Sweet.

INT. BUMPAS COVE, SCHOOL BUS - DAY

14-year-old LEO sits alone. Two rows forward, boys from his class strain their voices talking over each other, narrating their progress on handheld games, oblivious that no one other than Leo is listening.

Across the aisle, four boys hunch over the seat flipping pages of a game magazine, pointing at stage bosses they have defeated and nodding self-approval.

Unnoticed, Leo nods and smiles as if part of their conversation, tracing a thinning cotton spot on his jeans with his finger and widening a small hole.

The boys crowd off the bus in a group. Leo turns to watch them through the bus' rear window. The houses are large and landscaped with colorful rhododendrons, and bradford pear trees.

After several stops, the bus is almost empty. The bus turns onto a smaller road. A green road sign indicates "Bumpas Cove". The Nolichucky river flows close beside the road. The hills surrounding the cove are green and lush.

The bus stops and Leo rises. As he passes the seats where the boys sat, he sees the discarded magazine on the floor. He picks it up, smooths out the creases and carries it off the bus. The sympathetic bus driver watches him step down.

INT. LEO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Melanie, 42, is Leo's mother. She kept a high-school figure with edges sharpened by adversity.

MELANIE (O.S)

Did you have a better day?

LEO

Okay.

In his bedroom, Leo pulls an old hunting knife in a handmade sheath from a drawer and loops his belt through it.

LEO (CONT'D)

I'm going to go explore the old village.

Melanie is emptying the dishwasher. She shifts aside, giving Leo room to fill a plastic water bottle from the sink.

MELANIE

All right, but don't be late, and don't do anything dangerous.

EXT. ABANDONED IRON MINING VILLAGE - DAY

Leo follows the narrow road as it turns away from the river. Taylor's car is parked by the river less than a quarter mile away but hidden from Leo's view as the river road wraps around the mountain.

After a mile, the maintained road ends. Leo steps across a chain onto asphalt broken and cracked by weeds and lined by bristling red raspberry briars.

The broken road travels the valley, beside a small stream. Mountains fold closely around, thick with oaks and poplars.

Leo tracks directly to a particular house. He leaps three steps and lands on the porch, ducking low, drawing his knife and stabbing an imagined enemy. From the porch, he can see several other houses. The neighborhood has become half forest. Leo cocks his head as he listens.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

Inside, the stairs are rotten and collapsed. Leo climbs the stubbed and splintered steps up to the second floor.

## BEDROOM

Vines create green curtains for the small bedroom. Items Leo has collected from the abandoned village are arrayed in the room, stacked neatly on shelves and the small desk by the window. He picks up a rusty fishing reel and winds it.

## EXT. VALLEY IN APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

Leo rambles over smooth brown stones of the stream's bed. The crystal stream tunnels through briars and thick scrub on either side. In the sunlight, the briars resemble glowing red, hairy legs of giant spiders.

He hops stones over the knee-deep water trying to keep his shoes from getting wetter.

Something white in the muddy bank catches his eye as he lands on a large stone. He waves his arms for balance, squinting to keep track of it.

There are no convenient stones between his perch and the bank, and no obvious crossing points up or down stream. He steps into the stream and wades to the bank.

Leo bends down close to the water's gurgling surface, peering at the white object. Cautiously, he reaches into the water and touches it.

He fans mud from it. The current swirls the mud away revealing more of the object and Leo sees there is an opening, like a wide pipe. Leo leans further over it, casting a shadow with his hand to see inside.

He decides to pull it free and grasps it with both hands. He pulls harder, and grins in surprise when it slides easily from the mud.

The mud runs off like oil. It is a sleeve, with hand and long fingers that trail into the water as Leo strains to lift it higher.

He upends the sleeve, pouring muddy water and debris into a pile on the bank. He peers into the sleeve and then lowers it into the water, rinsing it until only clear water pours out.

Leo lifts the glove and holds his own hand beside it. The glove is much larger, with two long, flat fingers. He turns it over, peers in and slowly sticks his arm in. His face squirms in disgust as his fingers reach further into the sleeve.

When he holds it up in the scattered sunlight that reaches through the briar tunnel, it gleams, and his grin widens.

SOUND: MECHANICAL CLICK

Leo wails, his mouth wide. He tries pulling the sleeve off, and winces with pain. The briars overhead seem to twist, and wind and Leo's vision fades to black.

He turns limp and falls into the shallow stream. Beside him, water washes away the mud he poured from the sleeve, revealing gray bones.

EXT. GURGLING STREAM - DAY

The stream glides over the smooth brown stones, flushing crack and crevice on its way to meet the river.

Leo's eyes open and he sits up splashing in the cold water. His head swivels. As he leans back to scan behind him, the sleeve stabs deep into his upper arm.

He cries out, and gingerly feels the sleeve's rim with his free fingers. His frantic breath becomes almost continuous as he tries to pull his arm out.

His eyes clamp tight in sharp pain as the hook bites deeper. He cries out again.

A small flicker of orange lights the water beneath the sleeve. Leo blinks and rubs his eyes. He pulls the sleeve into his lap and sees a tiny orange dot on the sleeve. It flashes dimly on and off.

As he watches, a second orange dot appears, flashing in unison with the first.

Leo stands in the water, stumbling on the smooth, wet stones in the shallow water and holding the sleeve up so he can see the orange lights. He watches the dots as he moves downstream.

After a few yards, it is evident that walking downstream, toward home, is increasing the distance between the two blips. He takes another step downstream and the hook in his arm vibrates rapidly. Pain sizzles down the long bone of his arm.

LEO

Ouch!

(sobs)

Please, stop.

The hook's vibration continues until he hurriedly steps upstream.

LEO

This can't be happening.

Wincing and gritting his teeth, he takes a step downstream. The sleeve vibrates again, and he inhales sharply with pain.

LEO

Don't! Don't hurt me anymore  
and I will go that way.

(sniffs)

For a while.

He looks downstream and then at the sleeve once more before he climbs up the bank and walks toward the hill.

EXT. A STEEP, RISING HILLSIDE THICK WITH SCRUB - NIGHT

Leo uses the sleeve to push aside thick briar shoots and hunches low to pass beneath it. He leans on a small tree, catching his breath and looks at the sleeve.

The distance between the flashing orange blips is less now. He notices there is now a red blip as well. It flashes with greater frequency than the orange markers and it appears to be moving.

Leo hears shuffling leaves and tries to pinpoint the sound. He listens but the shuffling has stopped. He looks down at the sleeve just as something makes a loud huffing sound.

LEO

A bear. (whispers)

The huffing sound repeats as Leo looks down at the sleeve and then toward a thick patch of rhododendrons. After a moment, the shuffling continues, and Leo watches anxiously to see if the red blip will get closer to the orange dot that he knows represents the sleeve.

He breathes again when the red dot moves away.

INT./EXT. SMALL HOUSE IN THE WOODS - DAY

ETHAN, mid-40s. Ethan's hair is greying, and there are lines edging his eyes and mouth that suggest better times.

Ethan leans on the sun-bleached rail of his porch. A coffee cup rests on the rail, adding the latest ring on the fading paint.

Light streams through a canopy of green leaves, illuminating motes into swirling slanted columns.

Oscar, a golden retriever, leans against Ethan's leg. Ethan absently strokes Oscar's ear.

Ethan and Oscar hear something in the brush at the far end of the clearing. Oscar's ears cock up.

Leo stumbles from the brush. After two steps, he falls to his knees and then forward onto the ground.

Distracted by Leo's sudden arrival, Ethan unconsciously relaxes his control and entropy accelerates around him. There is a soft whisper of rushing air, barely audible, like a draft through an almost closed window. The dust motes that seem always near Ethan sparkle in the sunlight. The paint on the porch rail near Ethan's hand suddenly fades from white to gray, then curls and peels from the dry wood.

Ethan absently rubs his hands together shaking paint dust from them as he walks toward Leo.

Oscar is sniffing Leo's face as Ethan arrives.

ETHAN

Back up, let me have a look.

Ethan feels for a pulse, then leans back, staring at the sleeve.

INT. ETHAN'S OLD HOUSE - DAY

Leo opens his eyes. He lies still as he takes in the room around him. A nightstand beside the bed has pictures of a man and woman with a wizened old man between them. There are wooden carvings of strange figures beneath a dusty lamp.

ETHAN

Glad to see you coming  
around.

Leo sits up, leaning on the sleeve, wincing with pain.

LEO

Where am I?

ETHAN

You're safe. I brought you  
inside the house.

Oscar ambles into the room and looks at Leo.

LEO

Who are you?

ETHAN

My name's Ethan.

Leo looks at the door behind Ethan.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You can leave anytime. I  
won't stop you.

Leo scans Ethan's face. Adults are better liars than kids. He licks his lips with a dry tongue.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I'll get you a drink, and  
some crackers.

Ethan walks into the kitchen, leaving dust motes aswirl in a sunbeam that crosses the room.

Leo's brows knit as he watches Ethan filling a cup from an orange sports cooler. The kitchen is orderly, but dust covered. A radio on the counter announces local news.

Ethan comes back with cup and crackers. Leo compares Ethan's face to the man in the photograph.

Ethan follows Leo's eyes to the photograph. He hands Leo the cup and lays a pack of peanut butter crackers on the bed beside him.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

That's my wife, ex-wife, and my boy, Ray.

Leo is confused and turns to stare at the old man in the picture.

LEO

Why does he look --

ETHAN

-- He had a disease called "progeria". He aged fast. He was about your age in that picture.

LEO

Is he dead?

Ethan swallows and nods.

ETHAN

What's your name?

LEO

Leo Christiansen.

ETHAN

You live down on the river road?

LEO

The yellow house.

ETHAN

I know the one. What happened to you?

LEO

I was collecting stuff, from the old cabins. Do you live here?



ETHAN

For years and years. (pauses)  
What's on your arm Leo?

Tears swell in Leo's eyes.

LEO

I don't know. I found it and  
when I put my arm in it, it  
woke up and stuck something  
in my arm so I can't get it  
off.

ETHAN

Lord, that's sounds painful.  
I thought it might be some  
kind of prosthetic. Tell me  
the rest, while I'm getting a  
pack together. We'll get you  
down the mountain where a  
doctor can get that off  
without hurting you.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ethan walks back into the bedroom carrying a small pack. He stops when he sees Leo holding one of the carved figures. The figure Leo holds has a single large eye in place of a body, with three squat legs that look like an elephant's.

ETHAN

I carve those from dreams  
that I have.

LEO

Are they monsters?

ETHAN

Not monsters, just creatures, I  
guess.

Leo leans to pick up another one.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

That one flies. The tail is a  
poisonous spike.

LEO  
From your dream, you mean?

ETHAN  
Yeah.

Leo leans to reach the farthest figure. His eyes grow wider as he retrieves it. When he looks back to Ethan, Ethan's eyes are wide too.

Leo edges slightly away from Ethan.

The carving looks like an ape, with tusks curling its upper lip. It is hunched, leaning on the knuckles of one hand. The other hand leans on its thigh. The carved hand has two flat fingers.

LEO  
It's the same.

Ethan says nothing. His mouth moves like a fish lifted from the river.

LEO (CONT'D)  
What is this one?  
(Ethan doesn't respond)  
What is this one? Look at its fingers. It has two flat fingers like the sleeve.

ETHAN  
I...can't explain it. I dreamt of it a few years ago.

LEO  
What was it? In your dream, what was it?

ETHAN  
The others feared it. It was aggressive, an explorer.

LEO  
That's all?

ETHAN  
All that I remember.

LEO  
Why were you dreaming about  
it?

ETHAN  
I have no idea.

Leo slides from the bed, keeping his distance from Ethan.

LEO  
We better go.

EXT. PORCH OF ETHAN'S CABIN - DAY.

Leo looks over his shoulder as he leaves Ethan's cabin. He is nervous that Ethan will grab him and pull him back inside. Seeing the figure has spooked him and it feels like Ethan might be somehow involved.

Leo steps into the tall grass and stops. He looks at the sleeve. There are two orange dots, and they are close together.

ETHAN  
What is it?

Leo looks back, then turns and holds the sleeve out for Ethan to see the lights on the forearm.

LEO  
The orange dots are pieces of  
it, I think. That's why I  
came here. The hook vibrated  
when I tried to go home, to  
hurt me and make me come  
here. I think there is  
another piece. If we find it,  
maybe it will let go of me.

ETHAN  
Where is it pointing?

Leo looks toward a small collapsed shed.

LEO  
I think there.

EXT. COLLAPSED SHED - DAY

A rusty toy construction grader with a faded "TONKA" imprinted rests near the shed. Grass grew through it. Leo looks from the toy to Ethan, then back to the sleeve.

ETHAN

Walk around the shed and  
let's watch the dots to make  
sure.

Leo walks slowly around the shed. The orange lights seem to circle each other. He stops close behind Ethan and follows Ethan's eyes into the forest.

Far off, one of the treetops has been clipped. Ethan turns, marking the path of whatever collapsed the shed. His eyes continue the imagined path directly to his bedroom window.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Whoa.

Ethan's control momentarily wanes, dust motes sparkle like fairies in the woods and Leo blinks and stumbles. Ethan reaches out to catch him just as Leo's knees are buckling.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Oh no, I'm sorry. Let's get  
you over there. You can rest  
on that log.

Leo's head is bowed. He stares absently at the ground.

LEO

What happened? I'm just so  
tired all of the sudden.

Ethan's jaw is clenched as he shakes his head.

ETHAN

It's okay. It's back under  
control. You're exhausted.  
Eat some of these crackers.  
They're stale but you need  
energy.

Leo munches the crackers and notices Ethan sliding a little further away on the log.

LEO

So, another piece fell here?  
Caved in your shed and you  
didn't notice?

ETHAN

The shed had been coming down  
for years. I didn't use it,  
so when it finally came down,  
it didn't surprise me.

LEO

How long ago?

ETHAN

About four or five years, I  
guess. Are you feeling  
better?

Leo nods. He watches Ethan closely.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Rest there. Drink and eat  
those crackers. We'll dig a  
little and see if we find  
anything. Then we'll get you  
down the mountain.

EXT. COLLAPSED SHED - DAY

Ethan is shin-deep in a hole. A rusty pickaxe lays in the  
grass, along with a shovel. Ethan chops a mattock into the  
bottom of the hole, draws back again and repeats.

Leo sits on a nearby log and watches. He strokes Oscar's  
head and leans forward to see over the piled dirt.

The mattock rings with the sound of metal on metal. Ethan  
and Leo exchange hopeful grins.

Leo rises and peers into the hole.

Ethan kneels and digs by hand. He brushes a clump of dirt  
aside and a gleaming white surface matching the sleeve is  
revealed. They both nod and Ethan continues digging.

EXT. COLLAPSED SHED - DAY

Ethan and Leo stand beside the hole and stare at the partially exposed torso and other sleeve of the suit. Leo gets wobbly again and moves back to the log.

ETHAN

Rest there. I'll pull it the rest of the way out.

LEO

Be careful...

Ethan turns, looks at the sleeve on Leo's arm and nods.

ETHAN

I will.

Ethan digs around the edges of the torso. The dirt brushes easily off the surface of the suit, leaving it clean, almost glowing, white. Ethan touches it tentatively at first, then begins tugging it free of the ground.

It comes free and Ethan tumbles backward.

LEO

Ethan!

Ethan turns to Leo. Leo is crumpled to his hands and knees.

ETHAN

What happened?

LEO

The sleeve got heavy and pushed me down.

Ethan turns back to the torso. It floats above the hole. Dust and dirt fall from it, leaving a polished surface.

ETHAN

It's okay. I'll help you up.

Oscar begins barking, and Leo looks up and sees the floating torso.

LEO  
It's floating!

ETHAN  
Yeah...

Ethan licks dry lips and moves to help Leo. As he helps Leo up, he touches the sleeve and instantly jerks his hand back.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
It stung me!

Ethan and Leo exchange looks and then Ethan stares at his fingers. Neither of them notices that the grass instantly turns brown in a small circle around them.

Oscar barks and circles the floating torso.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
My hand's...getting numb. I  
can't move my fingers.

Leo manages to get his legs beneath him and sits back against the log. The sleeve leans its knuckles on the ground like an ape.

Ethan drops to his knees and then leans back on the dirt pile. Sweat drips from his forehead as he strains against the paralysis. His breathing is ragged.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
Can't move. Leo?

LEO  
I'm okay. So tired. It's  
making me so tired.

Ethan closes his eyes, breathes deeply. When he opens his eyes, the torso, still floating, begins to turn toward them. A blue pinpoint of light flares under the left sleeve of the torso. It streams down the barrel belly leaving a blue line.

Leo and Ethan stare as the torso splits open. Each movement of the torso causes Leo to waver. The torso floats slowly closer to Leo as his eyes grow wide.

ETHAN

Oscar! Quiet! Go sit on the porch.

Oscar runs to the porch, turning to bark twice over his shoulder. He sits on the porch waiting for a chance to run back.

LEO

When it moves, it pulls on me. It's pulling toward me.

The gaping torso resembles an open mouth as it glides slowly toward Leo. Leo struggles to his feet, stumbling with his changing center of gravity. The torso moves to the side. Leo turns to keep it in front of him, but the torso circles like a tiger, floating over the log.

Finally, it is behind him, and he can only watch horrified over his shoulder as it gets closer. When it brushes the top of Leo's shoulder, he cries out.

LEO (CONT'D)

Ethan! Help me!

Paralyzed, Ethan can only watch with dread as the torso wraps itself around Leo.

Leo clutches his left arm to his chest, determined not to let the suit trap him further.

LEO (CONT'D)

I won't put my arm in there.

Ethan continues to struggle against his paralysis. He stares at his right foot and smiles slightly when it moves.

LEO (CONT'D)

No, oh no, please!

ETHAN

What? What is it doing?

LEO

The whole inside is full of them!

ETHAN

Of what Leo? Full of what?



LEO

Spikes. Like the one in the sleeve. It has spikes inside. They come out and go back in. These are longer!

The spikes extend and retract with a clicking sound.

LEO (CONT'D)

It wants me to put my arm in, or it will stick me with those spikes. It will kill me.

ETHAN

I don't know Leo. I don't know.

Leo closes his eyes, sobs softly, and extends his arm into the open sleeve. The torso closes around him, and the blue trace seals the seam without a mark.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

It's going to be okay.

Leo meets Ethan's eyes, shakes his head slightly side to side.

EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR PARKED BESIDE THE RIVER - DAY

Hack leans in the open door of Taylor's car. Looks at the black duffle and backs carefully away. His agents, the sheriff and a team of deputies encircle the car with pistols leveled.

Sheriff Kent Larman, 50s, is a bear of a man, poured concrete in an XXXL shirt.

HACK

Sowyer, where's the chopper, how far out?

SOWYER

An hour, maybe less.

HACK

Sheriff, can you get us dogs  
to track the man that left  
this car?

LARMAN

Already on the way.

Hack smiles approvingly.

HACK

How close is the nearest  
bomb-squad?

LARMAN

Asheville, bit more'n an  
hour.

HACK

Call them. Could you station  
a couple of deputies to keep  
anyone from touching this  
car?

Larman nods to the last two deputies to arrive. You two  
hear that? The two young deputies nod. Larman points to the  
remaining deputies.

LARMAN

You three will be heading up  
the hill with the Major and I  
once the dogs get here.

Hack looks for any give in the sheriff's eyes and seeing  
none, decides against starting a debate over it. Hack  
smiles at him and Larman grins back.

EXT. COLLAPSED SHED - DAY

Leo stands with the suit covering his shoulders, torso and  
now, both arms. He blinks, trying to clear the tears from  
his eyes. He draws the back of the sleeve across his face,  
trying to wipe the itching tears, but his arms are too  
short to manipulate the fingers.

Leo looks up to see Ethan watching him. Ethan looks down at his own fingers, willing them to move. His brows knit with the strain.

The fingers of the suit suddenly flick open. The fingers were longer than an adult human's and not much thicker, so they looked proportionally flatter.

LEO

Ethan! It's moving!

The suit's fingers snapped open and closed. They flash like steel traps, open and closed. The fingers stop as suddenly as they started. Leo looks up into Ethan's eyes, but finds no reassurance.

The suit makes a small clicking sound and Leo cries out in pain.

ETHAN

What is it?

Leo draws his head back, trying to see into the wide collar of the suit. He cautiously moves his arm.

LEO

The hook is gone. What does that mean?

Leo looks to Ethan, hopeful for anything encouraging. Ethan's mouth opens, as if he is about to say something, but closes again.

Leo exhales a discouraged sigh.

The suit's arms suddenly extend and retract, jabbing punches in front and to the side, flashing in the sun. The fingers begin moving again, surrounding Leo in flashing movement.

Ethan stares. His mouth hangs open as he watches.

The suit stops moving. In the quiet, Leo's rapid breathing is the loudest sound.

LEO (CONT'D)

Do something!

Ethan flexes the fingers of his own hand. Slow and stiff by comparison to the snake-strikes of the suit.

ETHAN  
I'm trying.

Ethan's jaw clenches as he draws his fingers into a fist.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
Leo. Listen to me. I am getting the feeling back. In a few minutes, I will be able to get up and we will get you down the mountain.

LEO  
Okay. Please hurry...

The suit snaps into motion. Both arms planted on the ground. The arms are long enough that when fully extended, there is a four-inch gap between the seat of Leo's jeans and the ground.

The suit's elbows bend and extend, as if the suit is testing his weight.

LEO (CONT'D)  
Oh oh.

ETHAN  
What's it doing?

LEO  
It's inflating inside, tightening up on me.

Leo's eyes widen in fear. His head twists and turns as he tries to see inside the suit. Then he is still with only his eyes roving as he tries to sense the suit around him.

ETHAN  
What?

LEO

It stopped. I thought it was going to squeeze me until my head pops off, but it stopped. It's not crushing, just tight like a sweater.

Before Ethan can reply, the suit explodes into motion. The long arms piston against the ground. Leo exhales in a rush and the suit leaps over the log, high enough that Leo's dangling feet clear the log by two feet.

Leo bends his knees, bracing for a hard impact, but when the suit's knuckles strike the ground, they piston the suit forward, converting the momentum into forward motion. Leo's shoes drag in the dust only briefly before he is airborne again.

The leap carries them toward a thick limb. Leo turns his face from the impact, just as the suit's left arm flashes out and locks its fingers around the limb. Leo's head is pressed forward as the arm swings them in an arc around the limb.

At the arc's apex, the suit powers a hard press from the creaking limb and leaps into the air toward another tree. The suit carries Leo fifteen feet into the intertwined trees, and quickly leaves the clearing behind.

Leo hears Ethan yelling, but the rushing wind in his ears makes it impossible to discern words.

The suit swings higher into the branches and Leo looks down on the rusty tin rooftops of the abandoned colony.

Branches swipe at his face, and he sees a limb, large enough to split his skull, just before the suit's right arm smashes it to splinters.

EXT. TREETOPS - DAY

Leo's neck is strained and sore from the swinging down-force of the suit, he is struggling to keep his head up as the suit continues swinging through the treetops.

Eventually, the suit stops swinging and Leo raises his head to look around. The suit hangs beneath a large limb. Leo cranes his neck trying to see the ground below. It is hidden by the bulk of the suit's barrel chest.

He notices there are lights on the suit's forearm. The orange light that he now knows represents the suit, and another orange blip moving closer. Leo scans the woods trying to determine the direction indicated.

The suit releases its grip on the limb and drops ten feet to a lower limb. Leo gasps at the sudden and unexpected drop. He hears someone walking through the woods.

LEO

Help! Help me! I'm up here.

He scans the woods, searching for the source of the sound.

LEO (CONT'D)

Someone's coming.

Leo's face shows his exhausted relief as he squints at movement ahead. His brows knit as he stares, and his eyes track slowly back to the suit's sleeve where he sees the two orange blips are getting closer together.

He turns back to look at the sound of walking in the woods. The hope drains from his face. A pair of white legs step through the briars. Just legs and boots, with no one wearing them. Leo closes his eyes and sobs quietly.

INT./EXT. ETHAN'S OLD HOUSE - DAY

Ethan stands. His legs are shaking as he steps slowly toward a tool shed. After a few moments, he emerges from the shed carrying a small hand axe and a hacksaw.

Ethan lays the tools on the kitchen table, snatches up the backpack and moves quickly to a closet. He pulls neatly stacked white t-shirts, still in their crinkly plastic from the shelf, letting them drop to the floor as he peers further back on the shelf.

Ethan pulls a gleaming silver Colt 45 from the shelf. He looks for something to wrap it in and notices the dirt on the shirt he is wearing. He shrugs it off and wraps it

around the gun before sliding it into the backpack.

He tears open a fresh t-shirt and pulls it over his head.

He reaches into the closet and draws out a box of bullets. The box is old and dry. He opens it and the bullets inside shine silver.

Ethan puts the box of shells into the backpack.

As he turns to leave, his eyes linger on the picture of Ray.

EXT. TREETOPS - DAY

Leo watches as the legs march through the underbrush and disappear beneath him.

He looks up at the suit's fingers just as they release, turning loose of the limb. He gasps, but it is immediately clear that they are floating slowly to the ground, not falling.

Leo cannot see below him, but he knows the legs are there, waiting to swallow him. He draws his legs up, breath chugging with exertion as sweat drips from him.

LEO

No. No you stupid monkey-suit.

The torso's slow descent stops. Leo dangles a leg, feeling for the lower half of the suit. He feels it and lifts his legs up and apart, preventing the suit from lowering him.

The exertion of keeping his legs up is too much, and after several minutes, Leo lets his legs relax. The suit immediately takes advantage of the opportunity and before Leo can react, his legs are inside.

The suit's simian shape makes the legs fit Leo better than the long arms. Although the suit is balancing for him, he jerks several times, feeling as if he is about to fall.

The suit is cool against him now, and in the summer heat, chill bumps rise on Leo's neck. He rolls his head in a circle, trying to relieve the strained muscles of his neck.

EXT. FOREST UNDERGROWTH - DAY

Ethan looks up into the trees for broken branches, but he believes that the suit is heading toward the cliffs. The briars are slowing him down, tearing at his shirt and the backs of his arms as he shields his face and charges through.

He stops and shakes his head.

ETHAN

Stupid.

Ethan closes his eyes. The air around him fills with softly glowing dust motes and the sound of a slow breeze. He turns his hands palms up and after a moment, unfurls his fingers as if he is tossing confetti. The briars make a soft rustling sound and turn to dust.

Ethan walks forward several paces before stopping and repeating the process.

He leaves a clear path behind.

EXT. FOREST UNDERGROWTH - DAY

Ethan hears the chopping of a helicopter and climbs up on a large rock trying to see it through the trees. The helicopter is flying a search pattern.

As the copter turns away, Ethan hears branches breaking and turns in time to see something white before it is lost in the woods.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - DAY

The suit marches uphill. It swipes branches and briars away from Leo's exposed face, but a few get past and leave scratches.

The suit reaches the top of a ridge, and slides to a stop on loose gravels. Leo looks around at the mountaintops and tries to get his bearings.

The suit squats and Leo notices that it is the same pose that Ethan carved. Then, the suit rockets into the air in a great leap that crushes Leo's head into the collar.



Air rushes past as Leo frantically looks at the tops of trees far below. The rise is a short one, and his eyes grow even wider as the suit descends.

The suit's arms move in front of his face, shielding him as he crashes through branches and limbs of all sizes. Through eyes squinted behind the white armored forearms, Leo sees the ground and impact approaching and closes his eyes.

The impact is jarring, but less than Leo expects. The suit slides through decaying leaves, splinters branches aside with powerful swats of its great arms, runs for several steps and leaps again.

EXT. CLIFF RIDGE - DAY

Lifted above the treetops, Leo sees a wide, rocky clearing ahead, an edge of the mountain with a sheer cliff. He shuts his eyes tight against the splintering branches as the suit lands near the clearing.

He is shocked when the suit takes a few steps toward the edge and leaps. There are no trees below now, only rocks, as they sail closer to the precipice.

Leo draws his head back, but there is nothing he can do to pull the suit short of the edge. The suit stretches its arms and legs into an "X" and Leo realizes it has jumped with more power than was needed to reach the edge.

Leo and the suit draw closer to the edge and just as Leo is sure they will fly out over it and smash him like a jelly jar, the suit's forward movement decreases.

LEO

We're going to miss the edge  
you stupid monkey-suit!

There is no reply. The suit's arms and legs are extended, cutting the last of the forward momentum as gravity begins drawing them down.

The suit crunches hard into gravel, spraying broken chips and large rocks into the air and over the cliff, just feet away. The impact, and the suit's sudden extension of his arm to grab hold of the ground take Leo's breath.

Leo keeps his eyes closed after the impact and opens them slowly. There is only air before his eyes. He turns his head to each side, and the view is the same. He can see the tall poplars that ring the clearing only by turning his head uncomfortably far.

LEO (CONT'D)

No wonder you were in pieces.

The suit moves into a standing position. The bulk of its chest is too great for Leo to see how close the boots are to the edge. In fact, the boots are right at the edge and when the suit stands up small rocks are tip over the edge to crash below.

LEO (CONT'D)

Why don't you back up a little bit?

The suit extends its arms to the side. It begins to hum, just loud enough to hear between the gusts of wind that try to tease them from the edge.

Leo hears footsteps in the woods beyond the clearing. A small and hopeful smile comes and goes from Leo's face. He grimaces with the strain as he tries to locate the sound's source, but the figure moving in the distance is almost directly behind him.

LEO (CONT'D)

Hello! Help!

EXT. CLEARING, REAR - DAY

LEO (O.S.)

Hello! Help!

Taylor hears, or imagines that he hears, the rapid beat of a rabbit's heart, trying to escape a snare as it hears the hunter's footfall.

A sadist's grin crawls onto Taylor's face. He is exhausted from the climb, and grimy from the horrible summer humidity of this place, but he is within sight of his goal now.

The sound of a helicopter is far off. He scans the sky for it. It is safely distant and not flying in this direction.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Stumbling to his knees several times, Taylor makes his way to the precipice. Taylor is fascinated by the gleaming white suit and part of the reason he stumbles so often is that he is watching the suit as much as his path across the jumbled rocks.

Taylor steps close to Leo. This close to the sheer edge, he is careful and repeatedly checks the few inches between his foot and the edge.

He takes a breath and settles himself, then reaches up to touch the suit.

LEO

No! Don't touch it! It will  
shock you!

Taylor hesitates only briefly. He gives Leo a smug grin and slides his fingers across the shoulder and down the sleeve. He raps on the suit, producing a metallic ring, and grins again.

Taylor moves a step back from the edge and drops a small pack from his shoulder. He removes the stolen artifact and holds it up trying to see where it should fit. There is no obvious hole in the suit.

The artifact floats from Taylor's fingers, passes in front of Leo's wide eyes, and settles into place over the left shoulder. It seems to melt into place, leaving not even a seam.

LEO (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Taylor holds a grimy finger to Leo's lips. Leo jerks away in disgust.

INT. DARK MAZE OF THOUGHTS - DAY

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)

Shh.

Leo and the cliff fade into darkness. Taylor sees himself floating slowly down into a great maze, until he stands in a dark corridor. Black, oily liquid rises just below his knees, sloshing with little sound.

Ahead, a blue glow illuminates a distant corner of the long hall. As Taylor watches, the blue glow increases and a blue sphere floats rapidly around the corner, and bobs on the black rolling waves.

He looks down as it floats past. Turning, he sees many more of the floating orbs floating down the corridor and disappearing into the maze's turns.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)

His thoughts. More than  
timesharing. These are his  
thoughts.

Taylor snatches one of the blue orbs from the water. He hears a scream on the wind from far off as he squeezes it. He holds it close to his face staring into it. Pearlescent squirls squirm within it. Taylor licks it, then squeezes tighter until it ruptures.

As blue jelly drips from the ruptured orb, Taylor cocks his head at the sound of a voice.

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
Maybe he owns it?

Taylor drops the burst jelly thing into the black liquid. It draws blue light from the liquid and reforms, then rises back to the surface and bobs down the dark hall.

Taylor looks his hands. The blue jelly is now gray, cold slime. Wet and dead. Taylor crouches toward an approaching orb and grins.

INT. DARK MAZE OF THOUGHTS - DAY

Taylor runs through the dark maze. He is cackling as he chases the floating orbs down and squeezes Leo's thoughts from them. He is covered in grey slime now.

He stops and his eyes look far-off as he contemplates a new idea. His eyes slope left as he gives the idea flesh in his mind. The grin crawls back out of his lips and he holds his hands in the air before him in the shape of the orbs.

As he closes his eyes, a spark of blue forms between his cupped hands. It swirls and swells, inflating until it looks like the orbs he has been chasing.

Taylor smiles with satisfaction. Once the orb has swollen to the size of the others, he squeezes it as he has the others. He is jolted with pain and immediately stops. His flinty smile returns as he realizes he has been causing this pain to the boy.

Taylor lets the orb drop from his fingers. It splashes to the liquid's surface, and bobs across the waves and out of sight.

Taylor watches for the next orb, to see if his idea worked.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Immobilized, Leo can only wait for the sweating man to acknowledge him in any way.

LEO

Who are you? Did you come for  
the suit? You can have it.

Taylor's eyes track Leo's but are vacant. Leo hears a deafening voice like a thunderclap.

TAYLOR (VOICE  
TELEPATHICALLY  
AMPLIFIED)

I AM.

Leo searches the sky for the source of the booming voice. When he looks back to Taylor's face, Taylor is grinning.

LEO

Was that you?

Taylor again presses his finger to Leo's lips. Leo shakes his head, disgusted by Taylor's touch.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)

I think that we can do better  
than that now boy.

LEO

What...

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)

Talking in my mind.

Taylor nods and then screams and spasms in pain.

When the pain stops, Taylor sees both the maze and the clearing. Now superimposed upon each other. He sees himself kneeling, and the boy too, no longer wearing the suit. They are both kneeling.

Towering over them is an orange-red menacing ape. It is a third the height of the poplar trees that ring the clearing. The ape appears furious, as if it might let loose a tremendous roar that would blow them over the edge.

The creature is covered in thick, short fur, with longer growth on its forearms and lower legs. Muscle and tendon ripple under the fur.

The ape's eyes are all black, and bulbous like the eyes of a chameleon. The great ape looks up into the sky and reaches its fingers toward the sky. The fingers curl into fists and it slams them to the ground on either side of Taylor.

Bits of rock explode and fly into the air and over the edge as the ground rumbles.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)

Oh my God. This has  
been...inside me.

Taylor tries to swallow.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)

The...the timesharing. Using  
the people around me to think  
better. It was you, not me.

The ape nods.

Taylor's eyes squint as he looks for the boy. He is gone, the suit stands empty on the precipice.

The great ape hunches lower and glares at a large stone. The stone shimmers and as Taylor watches, it flows into the shape of the boy. The ape snarls at the boy, its snarling, tusked face only inches away.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
Do you hear that sound?

The ape turns to Taylor with barely restrained fury. Taylor hunkers down fearing he will be torn to pieces.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
It's...a helicopter.  
People...other people are  
coming. They want the suit...

Taylor arches his back with a sudden stabbing pain.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
Flightsuit...I understand.  
They are coming to take the  
flightsuit.

The ape looks past Taylor, staring at the approaching helicopter, still distant, but now clearly moving toward them.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
What are you going to do with  
me?

The ape shifts its great bulk and leans close to Taylor. Two long, black tusks curl up from its bottom jaw. The ape's mouth moves as if it is chewing something.

The ape comes so close that Taylor can see only the bottomless black of its eyes. A shape forms within them, and Taylor sees the face, now reflecting from the inside of the flightsuit's helmet.

Other than the ape's reflection, there is only black for a while. Gradually, stars reveal themselves in the vision. One grows brighter and soon he sees a planet close to the brighter star. The planet is easily recognizable. Jupiter grows close, and so large that Taylor's depth perception makes him feel as if he is a giant that has nearly stumbled into it.

He twists away from the giant planet and breathes his relief as he passes. Taylor sees the blue and green ball of Earth.

Taylor blinks in the bright sunlight of the clearing. Leo is still in the flightsuit. He stares at Taylor with a mix of anger and sadness.

Taylor looks for the ape, but the vision has ended.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
I understand. I can help you.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Taylor is elated at the prospect of being rid of the alien presence. He grins as he circles immobilized Leo, projecting his thoughts like thunder into Leo's mind.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)  
Something amazing is  
happening to you boy.

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
Well, that's good news. I  
thought it might be something  
awful.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)  
You've found something unique  
in all the world. Mountains  
of gold yet to be unearthed  
and treasures of every kind,  
and all of them combined  
aren't as special as the  
flightsuit you found.



LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
I'll take the gold.

Taylor's roar of laughter sounds like the ominous roll of an approaching storm. Leo glances past Taylor at the helicopter. Taylor looks over his shoulder.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)  
I wouldn't waste my time watching that helicopter boy. Our mutual acquaintance is working fast now. Our minds are much faster than the world moves. How about I speed things up in here?

The helicopter's chopping beat slows until there are seemingly seconds between each whup sound.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
Now we have time.

QUICK FLASH - Leo's discarded memories

- A younger Leo sits in his mother's lap. His small hands point to the book she is reading to him. Sunlight sparkles through the window.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
They are explorers and adventurers. They live long lifetimes, alone, between the stars. Those who return with discovered worlds are celebrated and their families have wealth for generations.

- Leo lifts the cardboard lid from a box in the attic and sees pictures of his mother and father. They are smiling in most.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)

The flightsuits are powered by microscopic neutrino mills. There are more than 100 trillion neutrinos passing through us every second. The neutrinos power the flightsuit and the flightsuit feeds the explorer.

- Leo pulls schoolbooks from his backpack. It is new and he loves carrying it. He slides the books into the cubby beneath his desk.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)

But they have a faster way to get home. It's even less safe than flying alone through space, but it's fast.

Leo blinks at the latest fleeting memory. The helicopter chuffs a long, slow beat, and Leo turns back to Taylor before the next beat.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (cont'd)

The explorers have the flightsuits down. The AI in them guides their missions and even injects hormones to control the explorer's natural rages.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)

The return trip system is new, and not reliable. The flightsuit is going to break you down into code and transmit you to their homeworld.

Leo blinks and looks about in panic.

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
What happens to me?

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)  
Zzt. Encoded and shot in  
encoded neutrinos and  
possibly put back together,  
or possibly scrambled into  
soup. Either way, on this  
side it's a destructive  
process and all that's left  
is gray slime in the  
flightsuit.

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
Why won't you help me?

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)  
Why? The thing's still in my  
head at the moment. I'm only  
telling you all this because  
it wanted me to keep you calm  
while it cleared out your  
memories to make room for  
itself.

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
What?

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)  
Its consciousness is too big  
for our human mind's  
structure. That's why it let  
me stretch out and use the  
minds of people around me.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
I call it timesharing. It  
stretches out into their  
minds and I get smarter. I  
write instructions to myself  
while I'm timesharing that I  
can barely understand later.

LEO (V.O. TELEPATHY)  
 My memories...I can't  
 remember even my mom's face!

TAYLOR (V.O.  
 TELEPATHY)  
 Well, it's for the best  
 really. As soon as it makes  
 enough room in there, it's  
 leaving my mind and moving  
 in.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
 TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
 Hang on. I think it's ready.

Taylor turns around and scans the rocks. A few yards from Leo, Taylor kneels beside a pile of rocks and a patch of tall grass and begins digging.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
 TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
 Here we go, last piece!

Taylor turns around holding a large glass bowl. He wipes the inside with his sweaty shirttail and stumbles back to Leo.

Standing in front of Leo, Taylor lowers the helmet over his own eyes and grins.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
 TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)  
 The helmet.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Leo stares into the sky overhead. He is still immobilized in the arms-outstretched flightsuit.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
 TELEPATHY)  
 You're going kid. You won't  
 be more than a headache,  
 pushed aside and forgotten,  
 but you'll see another world.

Taylor lifts the helmet, admiring it.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY) (CONT'D)

As soon as this goes on, the system seals and whatever's inside, be it you, or a raccoon, will be the pilot. By then he'll be inside your cleaned out mind and that'll be him, not you. That's why we're stalling. If I put the helmet on now, he'd be cut off and you'd be the pilot.

With a voice that rumbles like a falling mountain, the alien speaks.

ALIEN (V.O. TELEPATHY)

Ready.

Leo and Taylor lock eyes. Leo's face is of dread, Taylor's of excitement.

TAYLOR

It's never spoken to me before. It has always just used memory images and pain. I'm the first person to hear an alien speak.

LEO

I'm here too jerk. I heard it.

TAYLOR

You're not here for long.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

A black military helicopter drops beside the cliff edge, hovering at eye-level with Leo. The sound is deafening, and Leo is still immobilized in the outstretched flightsuit and cannot even cover his ears.

The helicopter's door slides open and a man wearing black tactical clothes aims a rifle at them.

Leo hears shouting and turns to see seven people with three wearing brown uniforms entering the clearing behind him. They also raise rifles.

Ethan steps into the opposite clearing and tries to make sense of the scene before him. He is breathing hard from the exertion and the fresh t-shirt is now torn and aged.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Leo looks down into the flightsuit's collar. He feels a vibration that is nearer than the helicopter's thrumming beat. He traces the vibration to the flightsuit's shoulder and sees a small dimple the size of a quarter rise from the shoulder.

Leo watches the flightsuit's skin draw back from the dimple, leaving a BB-sized hole. Eye-searing blue light shines from the hole as a tiny white and blue light floats free of the flightsuit.

The black-clad soldier sees the floating light. The rifle's tip dips as he yells back to the pilot.

The floating light hesitates a second, then shoots toward the helicopter.

When the light object contacts the helicopter, the thrumming sound is replaced by the sound of a roaring wind.

With a thunderclap the helicopter implodes, rippling inward upon itself as if liquid. Leo sees the afterimage of the soldier's screaming face, but in an instant the helicopter and soldier are gone.

A second later, a horrendous crash sounds from the rocks below as the super-dense crushed pinhead that was the helicopter impacts.

Leo stares over the collar, trying to see what is left of the helicopter. Taylor raps his knuckles on the flightsuit, startling him. Taylor's eyes are excited as he holds up the helmet.

TAYLOR

Ready for company?

Leo notices Ethan over Taylor's shoulder. Ethan's staring slack jawed.

EXT. CLEARING, LEFT SIDE - DAY

Hack, Sawyer, Walker, Larman and the three deputies have taken only a few steps from the trees into the clearing when the helicopter implodes. Their faces are uniform astonishment until Hack takes charge.

HACK

No one fires until I do.  
Sawyer, target Taylor's leg  
or something non-vital. I  
want him and that helmet away  
from the suit, but don't kill  
him.

Hack does not see Sawyer's smile.

SAWYER

Yes sir.

EXT. CLEARING, RIGHT SIDE - DAY

Ethan stares at the spot where the helicopter was. He looks to the other side of the clearing and sees seven people. They are aiming rifles at Leo or the man beside him, it is not clear which.

Ethan looks at Leo's face. Even from here, the fear is obvious. He looks at the man lowering a clear glass disk that can only be the suit's helmet onto Leo.

ETHAN

I won't let it happen Ray.

The pack is slung at Ethan's side. He reaches into it and then lowers his shoulder to let the pack slide down his arm. As the bag drops, the long silver Colt gleams in his hand.

He levels the Colt and takes a moment to exhale. Then he opens his eyes and pulls the trigger.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Taylor lowers the helmet over Leo's eyes. He is grinning and eager to be rid of the alien.

Blood and bits of gray and white splash the helmet. The gore slides off the helmet like mercury.

Leo stares at Taylor in shock. Taylor's eyes are open wide, his grin becomes tired and uncertain, and the top left side of his head looks as if it was snatched away.

Taylor's projected thoughts did not rumble as thunder. Now they sound like a boy, with rising fear behind them.

TAYLOR (V.O.  
TELEPATHY)

What are you looking at?  
What's happening?

Leo turns away from Taylor, his stomach rising suddenly into his chest. Leo hears the sharp crack of Ethan's pistol and then a sound like wind in a crevice.

The helmet slides down the flightsuit and clangs heavily to the rocks at Leo's feet. Taylor's face shows stupefied confusion. His mouth hangs open, and his eyes rove independently, locking on nothing. He leans toward the cliff.

Taylor's hand slaps at the flightsuit, leaving a red smear. The smear beads and slides off as Taylor tumbles headfirst over the cliff edge.

It is quiet now, and Leo closes his eyes at the wet sound of Taylor's body crashing into the rocks below.



EXT. CLEARING, LEFT SIDE - DAY

HACK

What the hell? Who is *this* guy?

Sowyer smiles briefly at the sight of Taylor's body toppling over the edge. Then he swings his rifle toward Ethan. The deputies level their own rifles on Ethan.

Hack sees the deputies' fingers tighten.

HACK (CONT'D)

Wait! Don't...

EXT. CLEARING, RIGHT SIDE - DAY

Ethan lowers the pistol, then lets it drop from his fingers onto the pack. He begins raising his hands just as the deputies fire.

Between Ethan and the deputies, there is a small puff of red dust. The weeds in front of Ethan turn from green to bleached straw.

EXT. CLEARING, LEFT SIDE - DAY

The deputies raise their eyes from their rifle sights and stare at Ethan.

HACK

Hold fire.

Hack watches the deputies lower their rifles.

HACK (CONT'D)

It appears we have just about no idea what is going on here.

Sowyer glances at Hack, then turns back to Ethan.

HACK (CONT'D)

The guy's deadly accurate with that pistol, but unless he picks it up, you are not shooting again. Do you understand?

Sowyer and the deputies nod.

LARMAN

He's doing something.

All eyes turn to Ethan.

SOWYER

What's he see in the woods?

Danny, a burly young deputy scans the woods through his rifle scope.

DANNY

Nothing. Nothing I can see from this angle anyway.

Ethan is motioning at something in the woods.

WALKER

Oh my God, look!

The tall and spear-straight poplars that ring the clearing have broad, green leaves to soak up the summer sun, but one of the tallest trees seems to catch fire as its leaves pass through their seasonal color in the span of two seconds.

Leaves fall from the tree's branches, crumbling to brown dust in midair. There is a sharp crack, and two more, then the poplar's highest limbs shake, and it leans toward the clearing.

The poplar is a giant. It crashes to the rocky clearing with a loud "whoosh" and a deep "thump".

Hack hunches lower behind his cover and turns to see the deputies and his team doing the same. Except for Sowyer, who drops his rifle onto the rocks and clamps his palms to his temples in apparent agony.

Hack glances across the clearing. Ethan is looking at Leo, so Hack assumes he is not attacking Sawyer in some mysterious manner.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Ethan runs, clambering over large rocks in places, to Leo's side. He slides on the loose scabble and peers over the edge. He shakes head and looks at Leo's face.

ETHAN

Are you okay?

LEO

What was that? What just happened?

ETHAN

Long story. It'll wait.

Ethan glances back at the seven. They are struggling to restrain one of their group. Leo twists in the flightsuit to see.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

How do we get this off you?

Leo hesitates and glances back toward Hack and the deputies. He sighs and shakes his head.

LEO

We can't. We can't take it off. There's no time. You've got to help me put the helmet on.

ETHAN

What? No.

LEO

We can't get the flightsuit off in time Ethan. That's him.

(nods toward Sawyer)

That's the alien. It's taking over one of those guys now, and then he'll come for me. He'll take over my mind and leave.

(nods skyward)

ETHAN

I don't understand.

LEO

Home! He's going home Ethan. The alien that came in this flightsuit is going to come over here, invade my mind, and then he's going to beam us back to his world or turn us into jelly.

Leo cranes his head trying to see over the flightsuit's bulky chest.

LEO (CONT'D)

I can't see the helmet.

Ethan spots the helmet, then stoops to pick it up.

ETHAN

It's here.

LEO

Put it on me before they see what you're doing.

ETHAN

I don't know. Maybe that's --

LEO

-- If you don't, you're  
condemning me. Alone and  
helpless. I'll live out my  
whole life as a voice with no  
one listening. Please. Ethan,  
put the helmet on me now!

Ethan raises the helmet above Leo's head and slowly lowers it as he watches Leo's eyes for any change of heart.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

As the gap between helmet and flightsuit closes to less than an inch, the helmet snaps down, pulling free of Ethan's fingers, and clicking together like two strong magnets.

The flightsuit's arms release and drop to its sides. Off-balance, Leo stumbles in the suit and Ethan pulls him back from the edge.

Ethan quickly pulls his hands away from the flightsuit, his eyes showing relief that it did not paralyze him.

The flightsuit changes its form to fit Leo. The arms draw back and Leo wiggles fingers that now reach the tips of five-fingered gloves. The flightsuit's barrel chest snugs into a more human form.

Leo looks into Ethan's face as the flightsuit's neckline flows down toward his collarbones creating an unobstructed view of the ground.

Leo smiles, then grins. Ethan smiles uncertainly back.

ETHAN

You're okay? Can you hear me  
through the helmet?

LEO

I hear you. It's as clear as if you were talking right into my ear. I can see the ground at my feet now too. That helps. I think it's okay Ethan.

EXT. PRECIPICE - DAY

Two deputies are holding the still-struggling Sowyer, with his hands zip-tied. Hack advances toward Leo and Ethan with his pistol drawn. Walker, Larman and the remaining deputy are beside him, stepping carefully over the sharp rocks.

Walker edges closer to Hack and speaks low.

WALKER

That's a kid in the suit Hack. If we bring him back, they'll peel it off him and it won't matter if he lives through it.

Hack nods and glances back at Larman and motions to stop. They are five yards apart.

Leo and Ethan stand, staring and waiting.

HACK

This is close enough. Lower the guns. We are going to talk this out. Now one else is getting killed.

Hack looks into Leo's eyes.

HACK (CONT'D)

You don't think we are going to just let you walk out of here.

Hack bites the inside of his mouth and keeps his eyes locked on Leo's.

Leo pauses. He is exhausted and uncertain, but something he sees, or senses, in Hack's eyes or tone, suggests leeway.

LEO

I don't think there is  
anything you can do to stop  
us.

Hack flicks a slight smile and nod, visible only to Leo and Ethan. It was less a statement than a question, but the words were what mattered, for the record.

HACK

We could shoot you. That  
would stop you.

LEO

You tried shooting. It didn't  
work and I don't think you  
want to try it again, this  
close. Something worse might  
happen.

The smile flickers once again on Hack's face.

Leo throws an arm around Ethan and leaps from the cliff's edge.

HACK

Kid! No!

EXT. FALLING FROM THE PRECIPICE - DAY

The face of the cliff bulges below and Leo squeezes his eyes shut and braces for the impact. The flightsuit extends his arm toward a sharp wedge of rock, stiff-arms the rock and twists away from the impact.

The flightsuit tumbles down the cliff face, at first careening wildly, then gaining control with each impact of glove or boots with the rock. The flightsuit's left arm still held Ethan. Each jarring impact punches air from him.

The flightsuit leverages every impact to twist or launch itself into a better descent path. As the first branches of trees approach, it turns, and the branches shatter against its back.

The crashing and jarring impacts stop. The flightsuit's arm releases Ethan and he rolls onto soft and mossy ground moaning.

LEO

Wow. I thought we were gonna die.

Ethan looks at him. They turn to look up. The cliff is nearly vertical, and Ethan stumbles a bit as he leans back. The flightsuit snaps an arm out to steady him.

ETHAN

Thanks.

LEO

Wasn't me.

Their eyes meet for a moment, then they turn again to look up. They see Hack, Walker and Larman carefully peering over the edge.

ETHAN

We need to get away from them.

LEO

Yeah, but there's something we need first. If I pick you up, I think we can travel faster.

The suggestion is unappealing to Ethan and he starts to shake his head, only to change his mind.

ETHAN

Okay. Let's give it a try, I guess.

He taps knuckles on the flightsuit's shoulder.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Be easier on my back this time.

LEO

Think that will make a difference?



ETHAN

I hope so. I have a feeling  
I'll look like a squashed  
blueberry tomorrow.

Leo reaches over, scoops Ethan into an arm and sets off  
through the woods.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

What is it that we're after?

LEO

A journal. It has all the  
plans of the guy you shot.

ETHAN

His plans didn't seem that  
good.

LEO

Not the ones at the end, but  
the alien gave him ways to  
make money and hide, and we  
will need that. There's also  
a bag of money.

The flightsuit lengthens Leo's strides.

LEO (CONT'D)

It wants to move faster.

ETHAN

I noticed.

LEO

I think it will jump in a few  
more steps. Get ready.

ETHAN

How high?

LEO

Pretty high. Treetops.

ETHAN

What?

As if on cue, the flightsuit's next step carries them thirty feet. The movement is smooth, with no indication of strain.

LEO  
Are you --

ETHAN  
-- Yeah, I'm okay.

LEO  
Hold on!

ETHAN  
You hold onto me.

The flightsuit leaps higher as it builds momentum. Ethan wraps his arms around the flightsuit's neck and shoulder, and the initial terror gives way after a few leaps. As they sail above the treetops Leo speaks.

LEO  
Amazing, isn't it?

ETHAN  
I can't believe it.

LEO  
Is it banging you up too much?

ETHAN  
I'll be sore, but it moves to absorb impact like a cat. Is it trying to communicate with you?

LEO  
Not that I can tell. We're almost there.

Ethan turns to see the river through a crease in treetops cut by the road.

EXT. GRASSY HILLTOP ABOVE TAYLOR'S CAR - DAY

The flightsuit yields control to Leo and opens its arm releasing Ethan. Ethan steps away arching his back and wincing.

LEO

Okay?

ETHAN

Considering, yeah, but when the adrenaline is gone, I'm going to really feel it. Let's get what we came for and get out of here. The people from the cliff will be coming.

Leo hunches down and crawls toward a rise in the hilltop. The weeds and brambles are thick. Ethan follows him, stepping down on the briars. At the rise, they see Taylor's car and two deputies.

LEO

That's Taylor's car. He left the money and journal inside.

ETHAN

Is it stolen?

LEO

No. He earned it. When the flightsuit exploded in the atmosphere, the alien sought out the closest and most compatible mind. The alien hid inside him for years. The alien calls itself an explorer, the way we say we're "human".

ETHAN

Keep going but make it quick.

LEO

Right. The alien can stretch its mind out and use the brains of people that are nearby. Taylor called it "timesharing". He used that to consult with people, using their minds to solve their problems. He got rich, until the alien became aware there was a piece of the flightsuit being tested by a team led by the guy on the cliff.

ETHAN

It's amazing you know this.

LEO

It was awful and I don't want to talk about that part, but yeah, Taylor shared all of it. He was a gigantic jerk, and he was proud of it.

LEO (CONT'D)

It was a good deal for Taylor until the alien found the flightsuit piece, and then it torched Taylor's future and brought him here.

ETHAN

Okay, how do you plan to get the journal and bag of money?

LEO

I guess, sneak down there?

ETHAN

Sneak? They'd spot you two seconds after you stand up and me in two more. That won't work.

Suddenly, Leo dims and disappears.

LEO

Look, I'm making this up as we go here. You're the adult, what's your plan?

Ethan stares at the space where Leo was. The briars shift beneath the now invisible flightsuit. Ethan reaches out to touch the flightsuit with his fingers.

LEO (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

ETHAN

You're invisible.

Leo raises his gloved palm up and sees the fingers.

LEO

I can see my fingers Ethan.

ETHAN

The suit is doing something to camouflage you. When you move, I can see a little hazy movement, but when you're still, nothing.

LEO

Wow.

ETHAN

Yeah, one amazing thing after another. They are going to want this suit Leo. We've got to get out of here soon. They will kill us for it.

Leo stands up. The camouflaged flightsuit is clearly visible from Leo's view through the helmet but is only distinguished by a hazy disturbance in the air when he moves.

EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR PARKED BESIDE THE RIVER

Leo walks carefully down the hill toward Taylor's car. The flightsuit provides gentle assistance, smoothing movements that would otherwise be awkward.

Leo closes the distance, forty feet, then thirty. The deputies are standing in the shade of an oak a few yards from the car. When one of the deputies stares right at him, he stops and holds his breath. He breathes out with a wavering whisper when the deputy continues talking.

A few more steps before a twig cracks beneath his boot and both deputies look up. Leo freezes, eyes wide. He waits again for them to continue talking.

Leo tiptoes in the flightsuit, avoiding the scattered branches and twigs. The river's tumbling over the smooth stones of its bed seems loud enough to cover the sound of his steps in the soft sand between the road and river.

After a few steps, one of the deputies stops in mid-sentence and stares intently at something behind Leo. As the deputy approaches, Leo turns to see what has caught his attention.

LEO

My footprint (whispers).

Leo freezes as the deputy kneels right beside him. The deputy touches the boot print in the sand and then looks at the more defined print that Leo still stands in.

Leo's eyes tighten in anticipation as the deputy reaches over and touches his invisible boot. The deputy springs back, scrambling to his feet and drawing his pistol.

Leo moves the last few steps toward Taylor's car as the second deputy draws his pistol. Leo tries to open the car's passenger door, but his gloved fingers are too thick. He shakes his head inside the helmet in frustration and smashes the flightsuit's fist into the window. The flightsuit amplifies his movement and the window explodes into glitter.

The blow is so forceful that the windshield cracks and the glass blows out of the driver's window. The deputies duck

away from the explosion.

Leo sees the green leather journal in the passenger seat and snatches it. He slams the seat forward, wrenching it from its rails and grabs the strap of Taylor's black duffle.

The deputies fire at the haze with the journal and the duffle apparently suspended in midair. Bullets ring and ricochet off the flightsuit.

The flightsuit is not simply deflecting the bullets, it absorbs the kinetic energy from them, calculates the precise vector and then restores the energy. The bullets travel back into the guns.

The deputies drop their pistols. Their hands are exploded with fingers missing and flayed back. The deputies look as if they tried to hold exploding grenades.

The deputies fall to the ground screaming. Leo rushes to the nearest deputy, the one that touched his boot. The deputy is young, in his twenties. As Leo watches, the deputy's eyes roll back, and he passes out. His head smacks a smooth brown river stone with a sound like a watermelon being ripped open.

LEO (CONT'D)

Stop! Don't hurt anyone else!  
Stop it!

Leo looks down at the journal in his glove and shakes his head. He turns toward Ethan. Ethan is standing on the hilltop and begins to move toward Leo.

Leo jumps from the car to land directly beside Ethan. He throws his arms around Ethan.

LEO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean for  
that to happen. It wasn't me.  
The flightsuit...

Ethan hesitates, then he hugs Leo back, staring at the scene below.

ETHAN

It's okay. It wasn't you.

The flightsuit disables the camouflage and Ethan sees tears streaming from Leo's eyes.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
It wasn't you.

They hear an approaching helicopter.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
We've got to get out of here.

LEO  
Where?

ETHAN  
I think I know a place they won't look. At least I hope they won't.

LEO  
Can we get there?

ETHAN  
Yeah. Listen, they will get dogs up here after us. It won't take long. Do you know where mine number twelve is?

LEO  
I know where it is, but it is locked.

ETHAN  
I know. I have a key. Go there. Jump as far as you can so their dogs won't have a trail to follow.

LEO  
What about you?

ETHAN  
I will meet you there. I've got to get some things from my house and Oscar.

LEO  
Okay.



Leo hesitates for a moment watching Ethan.

ETHAN

You go first. Go on jump.  
Move.

Leo leaps high into the air. Ethan watches until he begins to arc back toward the ground and then sets off.

EXT. LOCKED GATE TO THE IRON MINE - NIGHT

Ethan climbs through the undergrowth toward mine number twelve.

ETHAN

Leo?

LEO

I'm here. I see you.

Ethan snakes through briars and rhododendrons tangles for a few more yards and sees Leo sitting by the rusty iron gate with the dark maw of the mine behind it.

Oscar sits beside Leo and Leo pets him.

ETHAN

Hey, you got your glove off.

LEO

Yeah. I just asked myself how I would ever get this thing off, and there was a tiny buzzing sound and the glove separated from the sleeve.

ETHAN

That's great. You think you can get the helmet off that easily?

LEO

Oh yeah, I've had it off. I just put it back on to watch for you because it has night vision.

ETHAN

That's good news. I was starting to worry that we might not be able to get water to you.

LEO

I've had water.

ETHAN

Where did you get water? You can't drink out of the stream.

LEO

From the flightsuit. There's a little tube with water in it.

ETHAN

What? Didn't you think that whatever an alien might drink could be poisonous?

LEO

No. I was thirsty, and that was before I figured out how to get the helmet off, so I drank. It's water.

ETHAN

Not sure that was a good idea, but I understand. Okay, let's get inside. I heard them in the valley not far away. There are more and more searchers.

Ethan holds up an old heavy iron key and grins.

INT. THE MINE'S BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

The flightsuit is stacked in a pile beside a damp and almost rotten picnic table. It gleams white in the low light of Ethan's lantern. There are rusted steel lockers on one wall with decayed and peeling announcement posters and charts on another wall.

Leo has piled the money into a neat grid on the picnic table. Wrappers from crackers and empty soup cans are piled on the opposite side of the picnic table.

Ethan is digging something out of his backpack.

LEO

Four million dollars.

Ethan walks up, winding an alarm clock.

ETHAN

I never imagined being close  
to even one million before.

LEO

What's the clock for?

ETHAN

So that I don't oversleep.

LEO

What did you do, up there on  
the cliff?

Ethan sits on the opposite bench, grimacing at the pain in his back.

ETHAN

You saw the picture of my  
son, Ray, at the cabin.

Leo nods. Oscar ambles over close to Leo and Leo scruffs behind Oscar's ear.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

The disease he had is called "progeria", it's an inherited disease. I have it too, but back then, I had no idea.

LEO

But you didn't age fast and die.

ETHAN

There is something in me that's just a little different than the other people that have progeria. Or maybe we all have it, but no one else knows about it. That would be even sadder because whatever it is that's inside me can control the disease.

Oscar lays his head in Leo's lap. Leo and Ethan exchange smiles.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Truth is that I don't actually believe it is just a disease, not anymore. I think there is something like a door inside me. Behind it there are particles, maybe tachyons, or something no one has named yet, or even imagined.

LEO

What do they do?

ETHAN

They speed up, or slow down, the way time passes. I think people with progeria have that door inside them, but it is wide open, and they can't shut it.

LEO  
You can shut it?

ETHAN  
Some at least. I'm sure you  
noticed that my house and  
clothes always seem old.

Ethan pats his chest and dust  
furls from the dingy t-shirt.

ETHAN  
This was a new shirt today.  
(pauses)  
Whatever is behind that door  
slips out, ages things.

Ethan lifts his revolver from the backpack and lays it on  
the table.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
Except silver. Silver's not  
affected. Whatever it is,  
actually keeps silver  
polished and shining.

The revolver gleams in the low light.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
I can sometimes bend or move  
inside my head to open the  
door wider. Then things  
around me fall apart. Metal  
rusts, things like that.

LEO  
You made the tree age faster?

Ethan nods.

LEO  
Can you do it now?

ETHAN  
You want to see a trick?

Leo grins and nods.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Hand me that rusty can. No,  
the one that's empty. We  
don't want to open up  
whatever is spoiled in that  
unopened one.

Leo sets the can on the table and backs away.

Ethan smiles at the precaution and closes his eyes. He  
raises a hand to the can. A second passes, then the can  
crumbles into dusty metal particles.

LEO

Awesome!

Ethan smiles, but with sadness that his control came too  
late.

ETHAN

There's one more part.

Leo sits down and pats his lap for Oscar to lay his head  
down again.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

When I sleep, it gets out and  
wraps around me like a  
cocoon.

Leo makes a disgusted face.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Not like you're thinking. Not  
one you can see. It seems to  
shift me out of the flow of  
time, and while time passes  
around me, I sleep for weeks  
or months.

Ethan nods toward Oscar.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Long enough for a puppy to  
grow old.

LEO

So, the alarm is to wake you  
up.

ETHAN

Actually, it's to wake you  
up, so you can wake me. You  
might need to shake me pretty  
hard.

INT. THE MINE'S BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan is asleep in the adjacent room.

The flightsuit stands, assembled, but empty, at the end of the moldering picnic table. The flightsuit's arms are crossed, like a waiting mob enforcer.

The helmet rests on several stacks of money at Leo's eye level where he sits between the flightsuit and helmet. The helmet projects images on the dark rock walls behind it.

In one projected scene, the flightsuit floats amidst sunset clouds of orange, red and pink. Jupiter and Saturn seem almost within reach on another wall.

The helmet projects the face of a boy, older than Leo. The projected face smiles and nods and glances toward the projected scenes along with Leo.

Leo and the face on the flightsuit's helmet are talking, but Leo's words are low, and no sounds can be heard when the projected boy speaks.

INT. IN THE MINE - DAY

Ethan is sleeping on an old cot.

Leo kneels close to him, watching the slow rise and fall of his chest.

He has the alarm clock in his hand. He looks at it, then back at Ethan. He stares a moment longer, then sets the clock aside and begins shaking Ethan.

After a moment, Ethan's eyes open. He blinks, trying to remember where he is, then smiles at Leo.

ETHAN

How long did you let me  
sleep?

LEO

Fourteen hours.

Ethan smiles and nods.

ETHAN

I figured you'd do that. I  
guess we'd better get up and  
get to work on a plan.

LEO

I already have a plan.

Ethan eyes him.

ETHAN

Well, in that case, it's  
already better than mine.  
Let's heat up some coffee and  
hear it.

INT. IN THE MINE - DAY

The flightsuit stands, with helmet in place, in the corner  
as if it is watching over them. The flightsuit's arms are  
relaxed at its sides.

An old tin coffee pot rests on a metal frame with a Sterno  
can below. Blue flames lick upward when Ethan lifts the pot  
to pour himself some coffee. He motions to Leo, but Leo  
hooks a thumb at the plastic soda bottle that was still  
half full.

They had consumed nearly all the supplies that Ethan had  
packed.

Ethan sits down gingerly.

ETHAN

Okay, let's hear this plan.



LEO

Well, obviously, I can't go home. They'll be waiting for that.

ETHAN

Right. They will. We'll figure out some way to let your mother know you're alive, but we'll have to make sure it is in a roundabout way.

LEO

We have money.

ETHAN

(laughs softly)  
A lot.

LEO

And we can use the book to make a lot more.

Ethan's brows tighten and he tilts his head sideways.

LEO (CONT'D)

I read the journal while you slept. Taylor made step-by-step notes because he was only super-smart when he and the alien were timesharing on people. Other than that, he wasn't that smart.

ETHAN

And?

LEO

Taylor wasn't just a jerk, he was greedy. There are dates for planned stock purchases that are still in the future. He planned to make even more money.

ETHAN

So why would we need more than four million dollars?

LEO

Because Taylor's full plan needs more.

ETHAN

He's dead, so what does it matter?

LEO

Because if you are going to rescue my mom, you're going to need a place to hide afterward. Taylor's got an island getaway planned, but it will cost more than four million to pay for everything.

ETHAN

Are you some kind of financial whiz?

LEO

No, but Taylor's journal lays out every step, and I can read.

ETHAN

So that's your plan?

LEO

That's half of it. The other half is that part of the flightsuit is missing and I want to get it.

ETHAN

What part?

LEO

The flight part. When everything exploded, the flightsuit was high up there and the flightpack blew off first.

ETHAN

So, where's this flightpack?

LEO

I know exactly where it is.

ETHAN

Was that in Taylor's journal?

LEO

No. He had no idea about it.

ETHAN

So how do you know where it is?

LEO

The flightsuit showed me. It showed me a map and a diagram of the flightpack.

Ethan squints at the flightsuit.

ETHAN

Where does the map show this flightpack is?

LEO

It's in an underground silo at Area 51.

ETHAN

(laughs)

Well, there's no way you're getting it then. They'll have an army guarding it.

Leo looks at the flightsuit and grins.

LEO

An army won't be enough.

INT: PRISON WAITING CELL - DAY

SUPER: "Epilogue"

Hack is escorted through barred doors of a high-security prison. After passing through several doors, he enters a holding area. The holding area has a metal chair with a small table on one side. Both chair and table are bolted to the floor.

The chair faces a wall of bars and behind the bars there is a duplicate metal chair and table.

He sits down and lays a finger-thick folder on the table. After a moment, he begins thumbing through the folder. As he flips a page with a photograph of Ethan Abram with "83 years old?" written and circled in red, the cell door across from him opens.

Agent Charlie Sowyer enters. He is wearing an orange prison jumpsuit and looks disheveled. He smiles at Hack and sits heavily into the metal chair.

SOWYER

Major (nods). I appreciate that you came.

HACK

Hello Charlie. Are you all right?

SOWYER

I'm not all right, but it doesn't matter.

HACK

Matters to me Charlie. There are a lot of people that care about you, regardless of everything that's happened.

Sowyer nods.

SOWYER

If I cooperate, they will let my wife in here to see me, assuming she still wants to.

Sowyer's eyes glisten. He rubs his temples. His right eye drifts away but slides back when he blinks.

SOWYER (CONT'D)

Are you going after it? The suit.

HACK

I can't talk about any of that Charlie. Anyway, it's not a concern for you now.

SOWYER

(laughs softly)  
No not my concern.

HACK

Leave that to me. All you need to do is get better, so you can make the best choices for yourself going forward. You still have your family, your boys. They'll need you as they grow up. You can make a difference in their lives even if --

SOWYER

-- I'm never getting out. The deputies, the copter crew, they'll add all of that to my sentence, not to mention that I lost the most important discovery in mankind's history.

HACK

How are you feeling? Any better?

SOWYER

Better today. Better when people visit. When it is just me the headaches are worse.

SOWYER (CONT'D)

I even like talking to the psychologists, how funny is that?

HACK

Yeah, pretty funny.

SOWYER

I just needed somebody to talk to Hack. Nothing special. I just knew that they'd probably let you come because there's nothing I could leak that you don't know already.

SOWYER (CONT'D)

It doesn't feel real. It happened so fast. I did things I'm not proud of, but now everyone in the world thinks "traitor" is my first name.

HACK

I went through something similar Charlie. I know what you mean. Everyone thinks they know me from Cane Creek but all that does is keep them from knowing anything else about me.

SOWYER

Except you're a national hero from Cane Creek and people spit my name out like it's poison.

HACK

Can I get you anything?  
Anything they'd let me do I  
mean.

SOWYER

No. Nothing they'd let you  
do.

Hack stands up slowly and gathers the folder.

SOWYER (CONT'D)

Is - Walker okay?

HACK

She's fine Charlie. Everyone  
out there is just worried  
about you.

Sowyer stares at Hack's shoes.

SOWYER

Catch them.

HACK

What?

SOWYER

Catch them. Get the suit  
back. It's not theirs. It  
doesn't belong to them.

HACK

I will Charlie. I'll catch  
them. The suit belongs to  
everyone, I agree.

SOWYER

Just catch them and get the  
suit. You can promise me that  
you'll be the one that  
catches them and gets the  
suit back, can't you?

HACK

Yeah. I promise.

Sowyer's brooding eyes lift to stare into Hack's.

SOWYER

Thanks for coming.

HACK

I'm glad to, if it helps you.

SOWYER

I feel a little better  
already.

Hack smiles hopefully and knocks for the guard.

On the way out, Hack rubs his temple.

FADE TO BLACK.