

UTOPIA

Episode 101

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EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DOORSTEP - MORNING

ETHAN and OLIVIA, mid-20s, wholesome, stand outside a cute, tidy COTTAGE. OLIVIA fiddles with the lock; ETHAN holds a sleeve of TRASH BAGS.

ETHAN

I can't believe your grandpa left you a whole house.

OLIVIA

I was the only grandkid.

ETHAN

My grandpa left me his spittoon.

OLIVIA

You have too many cousins. It's sorta gross how many cousins-

She bangs at the door, rattles with the key.

ETHAN

Still: A house?

OLIVIA

(flash of an engagement ring)

Our house.

She finally, indelicately, gives the door a hell of a KICK. The door flings open. OLIVIA ushers ETHAN in with a grand TADA!

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The inside is PACKED, wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling with newspapers, files, ancient phone books, pizza boxes, TRASH. Gramps was a HOARDER. A few pathways have been carved out to bedroom, bathroom, but every other inch is covered.

ETHAN glances down at his paltry sleeve of trash bags, then up at the endless TRASH heap.

EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY

A rent-a-DUMPSTER is parked outside the house. OLIVIA, hair now pulled pragmatically back in a bandanna, sleeves rolled up, is dumping a giant handful of MUCK into the bin.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY

She enters the house just as ETHAN is grabbing a big handful of grimy papers.

ETHAN

Just think, O, right before we opened that door, I was the one who was lucky to be marrying you. Now?

He sweeps his hand over the miles of trash.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Table: turned.

OLIVIA

A little elbow grease and it'll be good as new.

ETHAN

Grease we got. And mildew and fungus. Probably some killer mold.

He starts exiting with his handful. Suddenly, a sheath of brightly colored ARTWORK flutters out from his pile. He stops to pick it up. Begins examining the pages.

OLIVIA

Don't look. Just dump.

She grabs another pile, heads outside, as ETHAN begins flipping through the pages, transfixed, by what we can't see. He settles himself in the small hollow of space they've just created and begins laying out pages. OLIVIA returns, annoyed.

ETHAN

This is the freakiest thing I've ever seen.

OLIVIA

(exasperated)

What?

ETHAN

(pointing at title)

Utopia. It's like a comic book, or something, but-

He holds up a page to her: image of dozens of CHILDREN, collapsing, DYING, as ANIMAL-headed creatures in doctors' coats stand, TRIUMPHANT, holding their entrails like ribbons.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, what was your Grandpa into?

OLIVIA studies it. While ETHAN seems intrigued, she just looks horrified.

OLIVIA

Oh God. Throw it away.

But ETHAN is busy putting the pages in a semblance of order, assessing each page hurriedly.

ETHAN

Fucked up, fucked up, really fucked up...

We see little JESSICA HYDE, a pixie of a girl, attacked by a shadowy figure who is suctioning her up - JESSICA's skin is literally MELTING away from her.

OLIVIA

Ethan. Don't look. Just dump.

ETHAN

(pointing at inside page)  
Hold on, hold on. Check it out:  
"UTOPIA: The Conclusion to  
DYSTOPIA." So there's more of this  
shit out there?

He starts fiddling with his PHONE, trying to pull up the INTERNET. We follow him through the pathways between the giant TRASH piles; it feels like WWI trenches.

OLIVIA

What are you doing?

ETHAN

Could be worth something. Some guy last year found an old Batman comic in his attic, sold it for a million.

OLIVIA

(following)  
Batman's fun. This is...fucked up.

ETHAN gets service. C.U On his phone: A scruffy, BRO-y NERD HOST pops up on Youtube, his vid titled: "TRUTHPILL!" Host uses a WHITEBOARD overlaid with cheap-o GRAPHICS.

HOST

Hey skeetz and skeezas, your boy BugSec here with a Truthpill rundooown! Today's conspiracy du jour: *DYSTOPIA*. It's a BIG FUCKED-UP BITCH, so strap in: Here's the THREE things you need to know!

Goofy music and graphics. Each bullet point is a RED PILL.

ETHAN

I love me some "three things."

HOST

ONE: *Dystopia* is way beyond a comic book. It came out of nowhere. ...Panels started showing up on the Internet in Truthpill-approved forums like r/conspiracy and 4chan/pol/ in the spring of 2013; **It's been called "a masterpiece of modern samizdat."**

ETHAN

Cool.

OLIVIA

I'm thrilled.

HOST

TWO: Hardcore fans believe its **dark-as-shit story** contains predictions of real world pandemics *that actually came truuuue!* The outbreak of MERS in South Korea in 2015... The Zika epidemic of 2015--

We see an illustrated panel of an ominous MOSQUITO scattering poisoned DUST from a pouch attached to its belt.

HOST (CONT'D)

**That's right, it predicted this shit before it happened. I'm not kidding-**

BREAKS UP

ETHAN

Fuck!

ETHAN tries to find service, begins walking, holding phone in air, tall stacks of trash occasionally caving in behind him. The host appears again.

HOST

Three: *Dystopia* follows the spunky young waif JESSICA HYDE, **daughter of a brilliant scientist...saved by Artemis, the...**

INSERT: A YOUNG RAGAMUFFIN JESSICA and her FAT SAVIOR run from...

HOST (CONT'D)

...hunted down by the fucking dark force Mr. Rabbit...

A *Dystopia* panel: MR. RABBIT. In a suit made of HYPODERMICS.

HOST (CONT'D)

...Motherfluffer asks just one question before he kills you: *Where is Jessica Hyde?* And the answer is--

Drumroll: Shots of a Cartoon Jessica on fan-made T-shirts.

HOST (CONT'D)

--on the backs of the faithful.  
**Much like Slenderfans and Juggalos, these folks are SERIOUS AS SHIT.**  
*Dystopia* is basically the Bible to a small but feverishly fervent group...

ETHAN

"Feverishly fervent." Promising.

Youtube lags. ETHAN climbs up a pile of old phone books. It's back:

HOST

...course, doubters think any resemblance between reality and *Dystopia* is purely coincidental...

OLIVIA

(impatient, working)  
Ethan!

HOST

...but fans say... *all will be revealed...* in the promised sequel, *UTOPIA*, which has yet to surface. And oh gooooood, do they want it to surface.

ETHAN wobbles on the phone books.

ETHAN

Oh it's surfaced, baby.

He begins clambering down, ungainly, detritus mudsliding.  
He's giddy, approaching OLIVIA.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Wow. The sickos are gonna go nuts.

EXT. PHOENIX CEMETERY LAWN - AFTERNOON

SAMANTHA, late 20s, extremely pretty, the epitome of health, is in a white uniform, lettering on the back reading "NO WATER? NO PROBLEM! THE GREEN TEAM." She is spraying all the brown, ruined grass BRIGHT GREEN. Her phone alerts. Reads:

SAM TEXT

Just discovered! UTOPIA! The  
Conclusion to Dystopia. For sale by  
owner.

Her jaw drops. Her spray drops, the dye begins puddling  
around her feet. A big, dark grin crosses her face.

SAMANTHA

Holy cunt-sucking Christ.

She looks around for someone to share the news with. No one.  
All HEADSTONES. She aims the phone at one. EZEKIEL  
HAMMERSMITH (1918-1972).

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Big doings, Mr. Ezekiel  
Hammersmith.

She sits down to text. She is on the sidewalk, half the lawn  
PAINTED GREEN, half STILL BROWN. The GREEN keeps flowing.

INT. CHICAGO SUBURB - WILSON WILSON'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

WILSON WILSON, late 30s, is in his tiny bedroom, playing a  
quest game.

His wall is COVERED with panels from DYSTOPIA, along with  
photos of VIRUSES -surprisingly BEAUTIFUL, shapes -  
DANDELIONS and ASTEROIDS and BLACKBERRIES - all marked with  
sticky NOTES and scrawled, questions. On a scale of 1 to  
INSANE, we give it an 8.

He occasionally glances at his TV, which has BREAKING NEWS:

We see a small child being wheeled on a stretcher.

## ANCHOR

...rural town of Moody, Alabama, is experiencing an outbreak of a lethal and quick-moving flu that has so far killed six children under the age of 10...

He takes a screen SHOT and...we hear the TEXT alert.

On a second computer, WILSON'S screen saver: the JESSICA HYDE character--eating a COOKIE with a RAZOR blade.

He gets the next bit of the post.

## TEXT

...This weekend at FRINGECON!!!

He squints at it dubiously, goes back to his game. Starts playing, immediately PAUSES again, notes the link is from SAMANTHA, and returns to the post.

## INT. BECKY'S MICRO-APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

BECKY, third-look cute, late 20s, is in her cozy, cocoon-y, MICRO-APARTMENT. Looks like a steerage berth in a ship-- everything can be folded up against the wall.

She's watching TV, while at-home assembling ANGEL PINS (the pins supporters wear for CANCER, MS, LUNG DISEASE). She's quick with her hands (as are many sweat shop workers), grabbing a button from one pile, twisting a piece of TURQUOISE ribbon around, and adding a dab of glue. She goes through three as we see her.

We don't need to know what they support. Just need to see the mounds of RIBBONS in every color on one side and on the other, hundreds of finished PINS like piles of spring leaves.

Suddenly on screen we see the text alert and she reads:

## BECKY'S TEXT

...Darker, nastier, sicker! UTOPIA!  
Must see to believe!

BECKY takes a few calming breaths: in out, in out. Then she gives a thrilled bounce. The RIBBONS avalanche on her lap. She still smiles.

## INT. IAN'S OHIO OFFICE - AFTERNOON

IAN, early 30s, is one of 50 workers in a room, all at small work spaces with a computer and a phone.



The worker bees are organized into QUADRANTS: DROUGHT, WILDFIRE, HURRICANE, ENVIRONMENTAL ILL.

Like in an insane stockbrokers' office, each quadrant is being screamed at what to sell—guided by a giant WALL MAP of the UNITED STATES.

The COASTAL areas are lit up in HURRICANE-BLUE in various swaths; the WILDFIRE is in RED splotches all across the US; DROUGHT sits in patches of BROWN; and SICKLY GREEN means environmental ill. It is there where we'll find IAN.

FIRE STOCK LEADER  
(pointing to the grid)  
Wild fire in Central California!!!  
8,000 acres.

The workers see phone numbers light up on their computer screens and hit the phones.

FIRE SELLER  
(on phone)  
Ms. Jacobs, this fire is fierce and fast - it's just 22 miles from your home and heading in your direction. May I ask if your home is insured against wildfire...I'd say now is exactly the right time...

To DROUGHT:

DROUGHT SELLER  
According to our highly trained meteorologists, southern Illinois will be the next severe drought region- what if I told you I could get you drought insurance for-

To HURRICANE:

FLOOD LEADER  
Hurricane expected to make land in upstate New York in eighteen hours!  
Sell! Sell!

FLOOD SELLER  
(on phone)  
You have the next six hours to buy increased flood protection before Hurricane Jamal-

And now to the quieter ENVIRONMENTAL ILL area. IAN is reading from a script scrolling on his computer screen.

IAN

...According to the CDC, tick related diseases such as Lyme disease have tripled in your-

He listens to the other voice on the line.

IAN (CONT'D)

...That would be a question for a doctor, Mr. Weir.

He's interrupted by:

IAN'S TEXT

UTOPIA!! Viewing by appointment only!!

IAN

I'm not qualified to answer that either-What we offer is-  
(reads, mouths: What the fuck?)  
- gap insurance which- yes, aches are awful. Mr. Weir. Aching sucks.

OFF IAN, staring hopefully at the Utopia note.

INT. GRANT'S CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

On a screen, user name "GRANT", we see: "Bidding begins at \$500." The chair at the laptop is empty.

EXT. CHURCH FRONT LAWN - AFTERNOON

We watch SAMANTHA first then INTERCUT AS NEEDED.

SAMANTHA/TEXT

I'm going. You all should too.

IAN

I'm in.

BECKY

Me too.

WILSON

So we finally all meet in the flesh?

SAMANTHA

Grant, drive your Porsche.  
We may need to swap it for Utopia.

IAN

Wilson, how far are you from  
Chicago?

BECKY

I don't think he'll answer that.

WILSON

Buffering.

SAMANTHA

Wilson, can we stay with you?!

WILSON

Background check required.

IAN

Nice.

BECKY

Grant, you coming?

PAUSE.

SAMANTHA

GRANT!!!! WE NEED YOU!!!!

INT. GRANT'S KANSAS CITY CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

On a COMPUTER screen, the conversation sits, the cursor blinking. We pull back and see the scale: It's a CHILD'S desk and chair at the computer. Pull back more and we see it's a classroom. GRANT, 10, enters the class, sets a hall pass on the teacher's desk, decorated with a big construction-paper heart: KANSAS CITY, HEART OF AMERICA!

GRANT gets in his tiny chair and skims.

GRANT

(typing)

I'll be there, bitches!

GRANT sees the teacher making rounds, switches over to his school screen: A BUNNY in overalls is teaching Math.

EXT. JENNY APARTMENT COMPLEX - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

BECKY walks across the courtyard of a humdrum apartment complex. It's the next step after student living. Lots of twenty-somethings coming/going, all staring at their CELLS.

EXT. JENNY APARTMENT - NIGHT

BECKY rings the bell and JENNY, 20s, wary, opens the door. Past her we see a room not nearly as homey as BECKY's.

BECKY  
(proffering grocery bag)  
I brought a bribe.

JENNY  
I'll need money too.

INT. JENNY APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is sparse. BECKY begins to unpack the goods, beginning with a hunk of MANCEGO.

JENNY  
Cheese? I'm vegan.

BECKY  
You are?!

JENNY  
(dark pause)  
Just because I sell drugs doesn't  
mean I enslave animals.

BECKY  
Shit.

She looks at the rest of what she's unpacking: More cheese.

BECKY (CONT'D)  
Oh!

She pulls out a bottle of wine. Ta-da!

JENNY  
(finally smiles)  
Becky, we're not dating.

BECKY  
But we're friends. Friendly.

JENNY begins unscrewing the wine.

JENNY  
If you wanted Oxy, I'd get-

BECKY  
It's not recreational-

JENNY pours herself a glass of wine.

JENNY

I know. Five hundred.

BECKY hands her a wad of twenties. JENNY counts it. Satisfied, she sets a pharma bottle on the table. Clear there are only a few pills in it.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Reminder: not a cure for Diels, so don't think it is. It's anti-seizure.

BECKY

I know. They won't prescribe it for Diels so-  
(counting)  
This is only four.

JENNY

I can only steal what I can steal.

BECKY

It's never enough.

JENNY

That's what they all say.

She eases up.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Shit, I'm sorry.

Pours BECKY a glass of wine.

JENNY (CONT'D)

On the house.

INT. WILSON WILSON'S ROOM - NIGHT

We spend a bit longer looking at the walls: WILSON has one wall dedicated to old photos and documents from the 1990s. All marked "the T-20." Another wall is those blown-up panels from Dystopia next to real-world VIRUSES.

In his room, hovering, is his cousin, a tween girl. She's examining a panel with Mr. Rabbit.

MONIKA

So it's just like Nostradamus. But with a bunny.

WILSON

No, it's not remotely like  
Nostradamus, because everything  
predicted in Dystopia actually came  
true.

He points at his wall. Narrates what we see on the  
illustrated PANEL:

WILSON (CONT'D)

Back in 2013, Dystopia depicts a  
swarm of mosquitos attacking a  
group of shrunken-headed people.  
Then, two years later, IRL, Zika  
virus hits- a mosquito-borne virus  
that causes- yep, microcephaly.

MONIKA doesn't get the word.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Small heads. Samantha says-

MONIKA

Oh-ohh, Samantha! Whee-whew!

He gives her a look, points to the next panel. The SCIENTIST  
is in a happy HOME, trying to hold the door against an  
enormous, frothing TICK, who is holding a VALENTINE.

WILSON

Heartland virus: a so-called  
fictional disease in Dystopia-

MONIKA

That picture could mean anything.

WILSON

That means Heartland Virus.

The girl wrinkles up her nose.

WILSON (CONT'D)

What?

MONIKA

It kinda reminds me of what you say  
about God.

WILSON does not help out here.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

If the ignorant want to believe,  
they'll find a way.

A mild standoff.

WILSON  
Go tighten your braces.

She flashes her metal at him, affectionately. He pretends to be blinded.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Out. No doubters allowed.

She leaves. WILSON then tapes up a printout of the dying kids in Moody, Alabama and writes: NEW FLU????-UTOPIA????

INT. WILSON HOUSE - MICRO APARTMENTS - NIGHT

WILSON makes his way downstairs, past cozy BEDROOMS dedicated to cousins, aunts, uncles- a full, extended family here.

INT. WILSON'S DAD'S DEN - NIGHT

On the wall is Dad's own conspiracy project. Lots of photos pinned, notes, all about his anti-VAXX theories. Photos of DAD with Andrew Wakefield and Jenny McCarthy, the room very similar to WILSON'S--apple not falling far from tree.

WILSON  
Hey, Dad.

DAD smiles up from some notes he's scribbling.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow's Fringecon.

DAD nods, waits for it.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Can I borrow 30 bucks? Need a train ticket.

WILSON'S DAD  
You borrow 30 bucks for the train so you can spend 200 bucks on comics.

WILSON  
Priorities.

WILSON'S DAD  
(laughing)  
You going to get your hands on that sequel?

WILSON

At least get to see it.

WILSON'S DAD

Answers to all the world's ills.

WILSON

A preview of the world's ills. I want to see what's coming down the pike.

WILSON'S DAD

See what that nasty bunny is up to.

WILSON

Mr. Rabbit is just a metaphor-

WILSON'S DAD

I know, I know! You're too easy to tease, Wilson. A crackpot has to have a sense of humor about his passions. Take it from me.

WILSON

I'll try to be more wacky.

DAD laughs, hands him the money. WILSON turns to leave.

WILSON'S DAD

See if you can sneak some photos of the comic.

(off WILSON's surprise)

I'm interested.

INT. GRANT PROJECT APARTMENT - NIGHT

This place feels absolutely SQUALID. GRANT is packing a small BACKPACK with food he's stealing from the near-empty fridge: all SNAP food, a hunk of processed CHEESE with a kid's BITE out of it, lunch MEAT, a package of grimy HOTDOGS; five left.

The fridge is now EMPTY. He looks over at his SIBLINGS. Begins to put the whole pack of dogs back. Looks at his unconscious mom, beer beside her. Takes it all.

A few feet away, in the "living room" a BABY is howling, TODDLERS squabbling. In all: four younger brothers and sisters.

One six-year-old is switching TV channels manically. We see the NEWS: The Cape Town and South Africa WATER CRISIS;



The WILDFIRE has hit the same California town where IAN's coworker was trying to sell insurance.

The MOODY, ALABAMA FLU epidemic: images of children being rushed in stretchers into a rural hospital. The death toll is now SEVEN.

Finally the boy settles on animated VIOLENCE between animals. GRANT's MOM is passed out on the couch, oblivious.

He packs up DYSTOPIA. It's been printed out on a mix of TYPING paper and CONSTRUCTION paper from school, held together with COLORED STRING. He looks at a page:

JESSICA and her FAT PROTECTOR (ARTEMIS) are battling two BAD GUYS. JESSICA is giving one a solid KICK to the face. GRANT smiles at it and packs DYSTOPIA carefully in his BACKPACK.

He slips out:

INT. PROJECT HALL - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

He does the same KICK we just saw JESSICA give the BAD GUY.

GRANT takes the stairwell a few floors down until some dealers start a transaction a few floors below and glare up at him. He immediately slips out, down another hallway to:

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

GRANT goes down a few blinky, creaky floors until two ominous-looking dealers step in. As they glare at him, GRANT immediately ducks out on the next floor. Down hallway to:

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

GRANT takes the final two floors on the fire escape, drops to the ground below. He skirts across the yard toward the road. His life a continual obstacle course.

Another JESSICA KICK seems appropriate.

EXT. PHOENIX TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

SAMANTHA waits with a CROWD of people and her DAD. Lots of PROTESTERS. Lots of young people on the way to a DC ENVIRO rally.

DAD

You sure this is safe?

We see a sign: "ME TOO" - MOTHER NATURE and CLEAN COAL is a DIRTY LIE!

SAMANTHA

Bunch of earnest, environmentally minded youths!

DAD

I really wish you'd fly.

SAMANTHA

Too hot to fly past 9am these days in Arizona. Air isn't dense enough. We'd crash. Climate change. Thus:

She sweeps her hands at all the PROTESTERS and their posters: PROPLANET IS THE ONLY PROLIFE!...PLANET OVER PROFIT!

DAD scans the crowd. Hard.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Only one in five are serial killers.

DAD

(laughs)

I like those odds.

SAMANTHA hoists her backpack up.

SAMANTHA

God, only 27 hours to go.

DAD

Did you remember cereal bars?

SAMANTHA

You did.

DAD

Did you remember tampons?

SAMANTHA

Wow. Seriously. The helicopter fathering must stop.

DAD

Because last time you said it was like a butcher shop in your pants. I did not ask for that quote.

SAMANTHA

(laughing)

Fuck.

The call to board rings out.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
(to DAD)  
Gotta go.

She grabs his cheeks and smooches him. Her hands leave green-dye marks on his cheeks. She looks at her hands, shows him.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Gotcha again.

DAD shrugs: no big deal.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I know you don't understand this.

DAD  
I know you're traveling cross-country alone to meet up with three guys-

SAMANTHA  
And a girl-

DAD  
That you don't really know in order to acquire a comic-

SAMANTHA  
Graphic novel-

DAD  
That you believe will tell you the dark secrets of our diseased future. And protect all humanity.

DAD gives a sad smile.

SAMANTHA  
Thanks for being nice about it.

DAD  
I hope you get your answers.

SAMANTHA  
I will.

DAD  
My save-the-world girl.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, steps into the crush. Moves just onto the train as the final call rings out.

SAM waves to him. DAD waves and smiles as the TRAIN rumbles down the track. He slowly drops the smile.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Beside her, JACK, 20s, Peace Corp looks, wearing a MAKE AMERICA GREEN AGAIN tee. He chats her up.

JACK

DC?

SAMANTHA

Chicago.

JACK

Was hoping you were going to the Climate Rally. We can use every body-

SAMANTHA

I went to last year's.

JACK

(preachy)

The seas are rising at their fastest rates in 2,000 years. Nearly a million acres of wild habitat have been developed since last year. Sixty thousand monarch butterflies have disappeared since last year-

SAMANTHA

Exactly. Rallies don't work.

JACK

I disagree-

SAMANTHA

They make us feel better about doing nothing.

JACK

I'm traveling for two days to get to DC so I can-

SAMANTHA

(apologetically)

Hold a sign or wave a banner and feel righteous and then go home.

JACK

We're taking action!

SAMANTHA

After the fact. We protest  
agriculture policy after half of  
Africa starves. We ration water  
after we drain our aquifers. We  
rethink the Climate Accord after  
the world is on fire. I want to do  
something ahead of time. For once.

JACK

(offended)

So what are you doing in Chicago?

SAMANTHA

Have you heard of Utopia?

JACK

(challenging)

Oh fuck. Seriously?

SAMANTHA

Ebola. MERS. Zika. Someone is  
taking diseases and weaponizing  
them. And loosing them upon us. I'd  
like to know why, and I'd like to  
stop it. Because it's only going to  
get worse.

JACK

I have a law degree from Berkeley  
I'm using to affect true  
legislative change-

SAMANTHA

And I went to Columbia-yeah-college-  
and I'm going to actually save the  
world while you fondle your  
placard, so you're welcome.

JACK

You're an idiot.

SAMANTHA

Go tweet, sweetheart, you'll feel  
better.

No point in this conversation. She turns away.

INT. JENNY APARTMENT - NIGHT

The wine bottle's empty. So is a second. JENNY smokes a  
joint. BECKY TEXTS.

JENNY  
That your boy Ian?

BECKY grins.

BECKY  
He makes me grin.

JENNY  
Does he know? About the Diels?

BECKY  
Online Becky is healthy. I don't  
pretend to be beautiful or rich or  
smarter than I am. Just not sick.

A BEAT. JENNY reaches lazily for the phone.

JENNY  
Lemme see him.

BECKY  
No photos.

JENNY  
You don't know what he looks like.

BECKY  
None of us do. No last names, no  
photos. Wilson's a security freak.  
(pause)  
I think it's kind of refreshing,  
the mystery of it all. Anyway, I'll  
know what Ian looks like tomorrow.

JENNY  
I thought you were supposed to  
check into the hospital tomorrow.  
For the trial?

BECKY gives a shrug. Begins gathering up her things.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
You have to keep trying.

BECKY  
So far, my side effects in these  
trials have included shortness of  
breath, dizziness, uncontrollable  
shaking, and unconsciousness. Add  
"slow, agonizing death" and it's as  
bad as the Diels itself.

JENNY

It's frustrating, I get it. But the answer is out there.

BECKY is tucking away her DYSTOPIA-riddled with pink and yellow stickies marking pages—into her bag.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(pointedly)

And I doubt it's at a comic-book convention.

BECKY

Actually, that's where you may be wrong.

INT. TRAIN - OKLAHOMA - NIGHT

It's a party-like atmosphere in the viewing carriage. People drinking and enjoying the adventure. SAM sits a little apart from the others, who are making signs and passing bottles.

She has a bottle of her own and is facing outward in a big CAPTAIN'S CHAIR.

She passes a HIGHWAY SIGN: CHICKASAW CULTURAL CENTER, 23 miles; followed by CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER; 17 miles; and then a large banner for:

THIS WEEKEND: 48th ANNUAL TRAIL of TEARS ART SHOW & SALE!!!!

A BEAT. The train whooshes by.

A bright OUTLET MALL lights up the night.

INT. BECKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BECKY is finishing packing. She looks around her tiny place. SWAYS a little but ignores it. A plant is wilting nearby. BECKY picks up a glass, fills it. As she holds the glass, she begins to SHAKE. She tries to control it, save the water. It sloshes everywhere in her SHAKING HANDS.

BECKY

OK. It's OK, sweetheart.

She drops the glass.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Just breathe, it's OK.

She makes her way shakily to a pull-out seat. She pours the PILLS out onto the nearby table, debates. Only four. Begins to take one. Decides not to.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Easy now, it's OK.

The seat has a SEATBELT. She straps herself in. She sets a TIMER nearby.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Just live. Two minutes. Then five.  
No problem. You can do this.

She watches the TIMER. As it goes, she struggles to BREATHE.

INT. IAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is tiny but super cozy - and old lady-ish. DOILIES. EMBROIDERERIES. IAN and his GRANDMA are at a table, playing CHESS.

IAN has claimed a space in the...MAN-CORNER: the walls are covered with FANBOY posters: Lord of the Rings; Dr. Who; Star Wars and, yes, DYSTOPIA, but, in stark contrast to WILSON's total commitment, DYSTOPIA has but a middling space in IAN's world. It's clear what his real attraction to UTOPIA is.

IAN

You sure you'll be OK here with me gone.

GRANDMA

(studying the board)  
That was a really bad move, Ian.

A fat CAT is perched nearby. IAN picks him up and pets him.

IAN

I'm distracted.

GRANDMA

Becky?

IAN

Usually.

He watches her move.

GRANDMA

You'll see her tomorrow. Love at first sight.



IAN

I'm such a loser.

GRANDMA

Why do you say that?

IAN

I'm in love with a girl I only know virtually. I'm 29. I want...life. But I don't know how. I went to college online. I live online. On protected sites.

GRANDMA

Better be protected. You don't want Russia to know what porn you like. Don't want China to know your credit information. Don't want our government to know where you spend your money or what party you favor. Dangerous times. Your only weapon is privacy. Remember that.

She makes a move.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Gotcha.

IAN

You sure you'll be okay?

GRANDMA

I just kicked your ass. I think I can find the refrigerator.

(pause)

You're the one I worry about. Sick times out there.

INT. BECKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She is SHAKING. Can't BREATHE. Stares at the timer. Six minutes and counting. She slowly begins to breathe. The shaking slows. It's almost over. She takes a deep breath.

TIMER reads 6 minutes, 23 seconds. It's over. She breathes, stops shaking, undoes her seatbelt. Slowly stands.

Weak but in control.

BECKY

Stand tall now.

She straightens up. Teary.

She pulls the seatbelt system off the armchair, folds it, and packs it on top of her clothes in her backpack. Zips it shut.

Stares at the DIELS SUPPORT POSTER on her wall. "YOU ARE NOT ALONE."

BECKY (CONT'D)  
(ripping the POSTER)  
Fuck you.

INT. TRAIN - MISSOURI OZARKS HIGHWAY - NIGHT

It's beautiful. Most of the revelers are asleep. With no lights anymore, you can see the STARS. SAMANTHA gapes at the beauty.

We rumble alongside the HIGHWAY, past little MOBILE HOMES, dark except for TVs.

A few more seconds and from the darkness we can see a tiny white FLAG - or something - glow in the trucks' headlights. Then we see what it is: A TODDLER walks down the highway in nothing but a drooping plastic DIAPER.

An older sister, about 7, is holding the toddler's hand. There's nowhere they can particularly be walking to. SAMANTHA watches until the toddler and the girl are lost to the darkness again. Only that white FLAG to be seen. Then not even that.

SAMANTHA looks back to the sky.

INT. SUPERBUS - NIGHT

Everyone is asleep but GRANT. He stares out at the plains of southern ILLINOIS. They are on FIRE. He watches. Looks around. Goes to the front of the bus. Pokes the DRIVER in the arm. Motions to the fire with a sweep of his little hand.

GRANT  
That all supposed to be on fire?

DRIVER  
I just drive.

GRANT goes back to his seat. Watches the FIRE. The flames flicker from his face...on the SUNRISE flickering on the sleeping face of SAMANTHA:

INT. TRAIN - FOUNTAIN VIEW, IL - DAWN

SAMANTHA wakes up as the train pulls into this Chicago suburb.

The train's SPEAKER GOES: next stop Fountain View. SAMANTHA turns to the girl next to her, alternately looking at the girl and out the window.

SAMANTHA

How far am I from Chicago?

GIRL

Just over an hour.

SAMANTHA

Shit. I wanted to see Chicago.  
Kinda sucks to come all the way  
cross country and not see Chicago.

(to herself)

Fucking Fringecon. Can't even be in  
a real fucking city.

She gathers her backpack.

GIRL

Family?

OFF SAMANTHA, debating:

INT. RADISSON/FRINGECON - DAY

SAMANTHA, mused after her trip, enters the fray of a FRINGECON in full swing. She has a big backpack on and is making her way—jostled along—past the motley mess of fans:

SAMANTHA

(Text Group: nerds)

Fringecon achieved!

Steampunkers and sci-fi geeks, aging TV SUPERHEROES hawking AUTOGRAPHS, nothing BIG— this comicon is NOT SLICK. Can't afford the shiny licenses. No DC, no Marvel. Very... Brand X.

A guy dressed as a character called ANTLERMAN walks by, wearing a "SAVE ANTLREMAN TEE". Yes, very Brand X.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

(texting)

Appointments set?

As she strides through FRINGECON, her phone screen pops with YES replies from IAN, WILSON, and BECKY.

Then SAM sees it: a black-and-white printout of Mr. Rabbit and the words: DYSTOPIA Hang and Harangue!

It points down a FORLORN HALLWAY which looks like it's for cleaning staff. Carpet ends; scuffed linoleum begins.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
 (texting)  
 See as much as you can of Utopia.  
 Everyone bid \$500. We keep it low.  
 I'll play sweep-up. More soon.

She follows the arrow to the HANG.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
 (text all)  
 Don't do anything without me.

INT. HALLWAY / STORAGE ROOM - A BIT LATER

SAM rounds the corner to find...

...a thoroughly unprepossessing fandom: Mostly UNFUCKABLE YOUNG MEN, dressed in homemade EVIL RABBIT costumes or SCIENTIST DAD costumes; a few in JESSICA HYDE COSTUMES: wig and pinafore.

We see a poster of an adorably haunted, cartoon GOTH-PIXIE we now know well, emblazoned with: "Where is JESSICA HYDE?"

Also a poster of that FINAL PANEL of DYSTOPIA that WILSON also FETISHIZED: DAD SCIENTIST crying the key words:

**"Stay alive, Jessica Hyde! Look for my message! About WHO you are and WHAT you must do! Find Home! GOD FORGIVE ME!"**

SAMANTHA listens as YOUNG MEN bark and bray and drone over each other, trying to make their points.

EVIL RABBIT DUDE  
 ...which is why, whatever those  
 "Appointment Only" muggles upstairs  
 have? Whatever it is they're  
 selling, that they're calling  
 Utopia -- it's a fake.

JESSICA HYDE DUDE  
 You can't know that.

He points to a BLOWN-UP panel from DYSTOPIA of a MASSIVE, scarf-swathed woman, running, pulling JESSICA by the hand.

EVIL RABBIT DUDE

I can, actually. It's *canon*.  
Dystopia, page 42. "All mothers are  
mirrors, all origins lies, and  
nothing is bestowed." Right before  
Jessica goes with the Fat Lady...

<p>SAMANTHA Her name's Artemis. She's a bad-ass.</p>	<p>SCIENTIST DAD (for Sam's benefit) "Fat Lady" is body shaming.</p>	*
--	--	---

SHITTIER RABBIT COSTUME

Oh fuck you, SJW. Don't bring that  
shit-

EVIL RABBIT DUDE

Look, point is: If UTOPIA's real?  
The fans will see it first.  
Utopia's for us to *find*. Not for  
some chick in a hotel room to *give*.

SHITTIER RABBIT COSTUME

(correcting)  
Sell.

SCIENTIST DAD

(mansplaining to SAMANTHA)  
Artemis is Jessica's mom-

JESSICA HYDE GUY

Her mom died.

SCIENTIST DAD

(pointing at the panel)  
That's what her dad said. To  
protect her-

SAMANTHA's heard enough. She's road-weary. Grumpy. And  
impatient with minutia. She points to a panel.

SAMANTHA

Dystopia has predicted five major  
pandemics since 2013-and you guys  
are debating who the fat lady is.

They turn to look at SAMANTHA as she edges her way in.

EVIL RABBIT DUDE

Oh god, I knew it. I *knew* you were  
too hot.

SHITTIER RABBIT COSTUME  
You're one of those.

EVIL RABBIT DUDE (CONT'D)  
"Signs and portents!"

\*

JESSICA HYDE DUDE

Look, this bedspring in this one panel looks like Ebola DNA! It all has to "mean" something.

SAMANTHA

It does mean something.

(seething)

OK, what's *that* look like?

She's pointing to part of a panel. Going for it. Gonna school these twerps.

EVIL RABBIT DUDE

(to JESSICA HYDE DUDE)

I'd say kill me now but I have an 11:15 appointment upstairs.

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - DAY

OLIVIA and three friends are setting up for potential buyers. Like good sorority girls, they are decorating the room with a theme: Pictures of JESSICA HYDE peer out from the walls. A banner reads: WHERE IS JESSICA HYDE!!?? Another reads STAY ALIVE, JESSICA HYDE.

OLIVIA surveys the effect.

OLIVIA

She's cute.

OLIVIA's friend holds up the panel of the CHILDREN DYING.

FRIEND ONE

You sure you don't want this up somewhere?

OLIVIA flips her off. ETHAN pulls a desk away from the wall and sets it in the middle of the room, giving it a receptionist's feel. A notebook with appointments scribbled down is slapped on the desk. He calls the girls to order.

ETHAN

OK, ya'll. Remember: No browsing. Everyone sees only one page. One page we pick. That's it, no more.

OLIVIA surveys the room, smacks her hands. Satisfied.

OLIVIA

OK, who's got the vodka?

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - COMICON - HELLO KITTY BOOTH - DAY

BECKY is walking past a HELLO KITTY booth, texting.

BECKY  
(texting)  
Ian, where are you?

INT. RADISSON - OLIVIA HALLWAY - DAY

IAN is in one of three chairs OLIVIA has set up outside her room. He sits next to a guy in an elaborate ANTLER headpiece. Every time the guy moves, the antler brushes IAN's hair.

IAN  
(texting)  
My appointment's in 10 minutes,  
then a drink?

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - COMICON - HELLO KITTY BOOTH - DAY

BECKY -in a "STAY ALIVE JESSICA HYDE!" Tee - is smirking at the grown women dressed like girls, Hello Kitty backpacks on.

BECKY  
(texting)  
You bet!

INT. FRINGECON - DYSTOPIA ROOM - DAY

\*

SAMANTHA is lecturing the group of guys. She's pointing at a new panel now: Mr. Rabbit astride a raging river. This has been going on for a while.

SAMANTHA  
Seriously. What am I pointing at?

EVIL RABBIT DUDE  
A leaf. Sometimes a leaf is just-

SAMANTHA  
Uganda. It is a PERFECT Uganda-shaped leaf. Two leaves on this branch, five on this one. Five infected, two dead in Uganda, 2015. Marburg virus.

JESSICA HYDE DUDE  
(whispers to another unfuckable)  
So real chicks are into this now?

SAMANTHA

And this looks like a basic jungle river, right?

They all nod grudgingly, mostly because she's very pretty.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

But look closer. The shapes in the water. Not rocks. *Yellow vesper bats*. Primary disease vector in the Uganda outbreak. See what they're doing?

The guys lean in. Evil Rabbit Dude starts to sneak away.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

(to ERD)

Hey you, "Signs and Portents", I see you. Get your fucking ass back here.

They all call to LARRY! Larry skulks back.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

You lazy, smug fucks. You want a conspiracy? A few decades ago, somehow a bunch of you fucking boy assholes manage to trick the world that comic books were serious fucking literature and then you get to sit around and Joseph Campbell the fucking day away on your spoo-stained pampasans, stewing in the violence, masturbating over the meta-metaphors, pretending you're valid. It doesn't make you smart and deep to debate whether the Fat Lady is Jessica's mom. This shit is about life. This shit is about doing something, not talking about cartoons doing something.

The guys cannot believe this bullshit, no matter how pretty.

LARRY

(to HARVEST DUDE)

I don't care how hot this bitch is, this is fucking bullshit, man.

HARVEST DUDE

(wearing T that reads I AM  
THE FUCKING HARVEST)

(MORE)



HARVEST DUDE (CONT'D)  
I already missed the goddam  
Antlerman panel. I swear, if they  
kill off Antlerman-

SAMANTHA turns away to text:

SAMANTHA  
(texting: Nerds)  
Idiots afoot. Grant-you here? We  
need your money!!!

INT. SUPERBUS - MOVING - DAY

GRANT is in the side of the bus, a quartet of seats,  
surrounded by several elderly women, hustling electronic  
CANDY CRUSH. He plays a few games at a time, wins, beckons  
like an expert with his fingers: gimme the cash. Grabs a few  
SINGLES. Clearly not making big money.

GRANT  
(texting)  
Shoot ran late-supermodels can't  
tell time. Almost there!!!

One woman hands him an old ZINGER.

INT./EXT. RADISSON - ENTRANCE - LOBBY - DAY

BECKY is pushing through the crowd, toward the front, where,  
through the sliding doors, she can see CARSON, 40s,  
immaculately dressed, pull up in a PORSCHE. He tosses keys to  
valet, grabs his designer luggage. BECKY smiles and waits as  
he enters.

BECKY  
Grant!

CARSON stops, amused. Examines BECKY. Kinda cute. Reads her T  
shirt, which bears the line "STAY ALIVE, JESSICA HYDE!"

CARSON  
I wish. Awesome T-shirt. Jessie  
Hyde! "Find House!"

BECKY  
(not delighted)  
Are you here to see Utopia?

CARSON is already scanning the crowd behind her.

CARSON

I'm here to buy Utopia. Phil  
Carson. Fine Art and Fun  
Collectibles!

He hands her a business card.

CARSON (CONT'D)

(looking at SLUTGEAR,  
talking to BECKY)

Come by the bar later, maybe I'll  
give you a peek. Drinks on me.

He dives into the mayhem, paying close attention to SLUTGEAR,  
bosomy, 20s, scantily dressed, to whom he gives a big smile  
and a business card.

BECKY TEXT

Ian, rich guy at 3 o'clock! We have  
competition!

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The friends are on a sofa, drinking, talking. Only OLIVIA and  
ETHAN—mostly ETHAN—are really paying attention. They seat  
IAN. Bustle behind him, picking out what spread to show him.  
IAN assesses the situation uncertainly.

The TEXT alerts but he doesn't see it.

IAN

So how'd you guys get ahold of  
this?

ETHAN

Through a collector.

IAN

Where'd the collector get it?

ETHAN

From the artist.

IAN

(intrigued)  
Really!? Who's the artist?

OLIVIA

Do you want to look at it?

She sets the spread down on the table—this shuts IAN up. It's  
a beautiful and frightening tableau of mass DESTRUCTION:

Human hands digging into the DUST to find droplets of water deep under. HURRICANES and TORNADOS twirling across the country, with human SKELETONS encased inside. A child licking a human shinbone: a tiny shoe dangles from one end.

At the bottom corner, the evil Mr. Rabbit is watching, and saying: "No, No, this will not do!"

IAN begins to turn the page, mesmerized. ETHAN grabs it.

ETHAN

Sorry, man. We've got to protect the exclusivity.

IAN

How do I know I want it if I can't see the whole thing?

ETHAN

(grinning)

You want it because you can't see the whole thing.

He thrusts a pen and paper in front of IAN.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Name, contact info, room number and bid.

IAN writes down name and a number, for bid puts down: \$500. Then scratches out, hesitantly writes: \$700. OLIVIA copies his-paper info into her phone.

IAN

Do you have a lot of interest?

OLIVIA

It's like a pilgrimage for some.

EXT. ARBY PICK-UP ROAD - DAY

ARBY, early 30s, pudgy, asthmatic, stands on the side of the road. He wears dad jeans, a short-sleeve denim button-down. His face is a mask of calm: He stares down the dusty road, which is empty. Pops a CHOCOLATE-COVERED RAISIN in his mouth.

A plume of dirt rolls into the sky over a rolling ridge: A car is coming. ARBY watches it get closer, chewing. Still no reaction from him. He looks at his watch.

It's an ancient MG convertible. Behind the wheel is ROD, early 30s, skinny, dressed very Brit-pop, chirpily nerdy. He gives a huge grin as he pulls in front of ARBY.

ARBY

You're late.

ROD

This car, I love her but she's trouble. '74 MG, 4 cylinder-

ARBY

You're very late.

ROD

-5-speed transmission, and sometimes...she just glitches.

ARBY

Eighty minutes.

ROD

But we'll get there in style.

ARBY

I wanted to get there on time.

ROD

The only thing slowing us down now is you standing on the road instead of getting in the car.

He revs the motor and ARBY gets in. The CAR rattles doubtfully down the road.

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - DAY

BECKY is entering the room. Again, bustling as BECKY sits down and OLIVIA and ETHAN pick a spread.

BECKY

(to OLIVIA)

I like your top.

OLIVIA is wearing the most non-descript top ever. OLIVIA examines BECKY's "STAY ALIVE JESSICA HYDE!" t-shirt.

OLIVIA

Thanks, I like yours.

OLIVIA flips through and seems pleased with her selection of a spread. She sets the spread out. It's Jessica Hyde-intense: YOUNG JESSICA is on the run from a bad guy--the FAT LADY/ARTEMIS, is pulling her through an abandoned building. She's shot in the arm protecting Jessica. BECKY seems a little disappointed.

BECKY

I was wondering if there's anything involving a molecule, a virus or-

OLIVIA

I thought you'd like this one. Because...

(nodding at BECKY's tee)  
Jessica Hyde. Sorry, we can only show one.

BECKY

(a little desperate)  
Could you just tell me if?-

ETHAN sets down the sheet of paper.

ETHAN

Name, contact info, room number and your bid. We'll be back in touch.

CLOSE on paper: By bid, BECKY writes "\$500. Crosses it out. "\$1,000. Will go HIGHER if necessary." BECKY writes her phone number and a SMILEY face. "Call me any time!!!!"

INT. RADISSON - OLIVIA HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

BECKY exits and walks down the hallway, not recognizing:

WILSON, who sits between a guy dressed as SUPERMAN and a guy in some version of a He-man costume: bare chest, blonde wig, battle axe. WILSON eyes the guy disapprovingly.

OLIVIA

Wilson...Wilson?

WILSON hops up.

WILSON

Not a typo, just my name.

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Same drill: WILSON settles in, looking dubiously at the partiers-sipping vodka-who have NO CLUE what they're holding. He attempts a PAINFUL, fake-casual banter.

WILSON

You guys having a good time? I just came to party too.

OLIVIA and ETHAN are picking out a spread.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Thought it might be fun to have a  
look at this. Just for the hell-

OLIVIA sets down the spread in front of him. WILSON trails off. It's disturbing, dreamy:

A group of children are staring up at a STORM in a CEMETERY bristling with plots marked by white CROSSES. They're surrounded by BUNNIES and small DEER-LIKE creatures, eyeing the children as if they're prey. One CRYPT looks like a small CAGE, its door KNOB in a peculiar STARBURST shape—but we skim over that for now.

WILSON puts on GLASSES with jeweler LOUPES attached. Leans in for a CLOSER look, his eye almost on the page.

WILSON (CONT'D)

May I look at it by the window?

ETHAN gives a shrug: Sure. WILSON moves over to the window, his back to the window, with UTOPIA in front of him, so the hotel crowd can only see the cover.

He waits until OLIVIA and ETHAN are refilling their drinks and takes a quick photo with a CAM, which is attached to one of the jeweler LOUPES.

ETHAN turns back around with hands WET from the sweaty glass, begins to pluck UTOPIA out of WILSON's hand.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I wouldn't touch this with wet  
hands. You'll ripple the paper. Not  
that this is mint or anything but-

ETHAN grudgingly wipes his hands on the front of his pants. Snaps it up from WILSON.

ETHAN

It's near mint.

He sets out the contact sheet. WILSON writes his name, his bid-\$500—and by CONTACT INFO writes: NO WAY—I CONTACT YOU.

INT. HOTEL BAR - AFTERNOON

It's absolutely packed with COSTUMED drinkers, at various stages of drunkenness. We see a few more women here, but it's still about four guys to every girl.

On the TV is the latest of the MOODY, ALABAMA FLU: THE DEATH TOLL has RISEN TO 11: AUTHORITIES ARE BAFFLED. It's little more than a crawl; the graphic the same.

IAN sits tidily on a crowded bench against the wall, sipping a beer and scanning the room for BECKY. SLUTGEAR—the woman CARSON gave his card to—sits down across from him with a cranberry and vodka. IAN watches her hopefully for a moment.

IAN

Becky?

SLUTGEAR grabs a FORK and sticks it down the front of her BODICE so she can scratch her RIBS.

SLUTGEAR

"Not Becky."

54 RELIEF achieved, she begins pointedly texting on her cell. 54

On the other side of the bar, BECKY is sipping a pint, maneuvering through the crowd. She jostles a tall, delicate STEAMPUNKER.

BECKY

Ian?

STEAMPUNKER

(cheesy fake English  
accent)

'Fraid not m'love.

That puts her off. She moves on. IAN is now wandering the bar, still hopeful. IAN scans all the girls in various provocative cosplay looks. Hmmm...

Then he sees sweet BECKY in her jeans and JESSICA HYDE T-shirt. IAN busts into a grin, beelines over to her as BECKY is eyeing a guy dressed as Spock.

IAN

Becky?

BECKY

Ian!

She hugs him. Holds him out, looks at him. A sweet smile.

BECKY (CONT'D)

You look just like how I pictured.

IAN

Average?

BECKY

Ian-y.

A pause, then:

IAN	BECKY (CONT'D)	
Did you see it?	Did you see it?	*
IAN	BECKY (CONT'D)	
Yes!	Yes!	*

IAN  
It just made me want to see more.

BECKY  
Smart sales move. Like giving you just one potato chip.

IAN  
They didn't exactly strike me as geniuses.

BECKY  
They don't know what they have. Not really.

IAN  
No, but other people here do.

He holds up her text.

IAN (CONT'D)  
"Rich guy at 3 o'clock." I'm a little freaked.

BECKY  
Me too. I'm really, really freaked. Sam has texted me about-

IAN  
Twenty times.

BECKY downs the last of her beer. Makes a decision.

BECKY  
You know what? A panic spiral is not going to help. So...let's not talk Utopia. Not yet.

That stumps—and alarms—IAN.

IAN  
What will we talk about?

She leads him to the bar, where they squeeze in.



BECKY

Well, here we are, finally in the real world. We have arms, legs, faces, smells-

IAN

I wore aftershave. I'm not sure I did it right.

BECKY

It's spicy. My point is: We don't need to talk about Utopia-life. We could talk about real life for once.

(pause)

You, for starters.

IAN

I can't inflict myself on you. You're way too nice.

BECKY

I'm interested, Ian!

IAN smiles: You asked for it.

IAN

I live with my grandma in Canton, Ohio. I sell gap insurance for people who may or may not develop Lyme disease. I get paid on commission, which is why I live with my grandma. Also because I enjoy her company. On the weekends I play competitive Risk, the board game of strategic conquest. And I have a cat. Two. Cats. Named Tom Bombadil and Goldberry.

BECKY smiles, kindly. Signals bartender for two beers.

BECKY

We should drink more, I think.

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

SAMANTHA is staring at pages she's been offered. She looks like she's been slapped. Then she can't suppress a smile.

SAMANTHA

What's your high bid right now?

OLIVIA and ETHAN exchange a glance.

OLIVIA  
Five thousand.

SAMANTHA  
I'll get you six.

She heads toward the door.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Don't sell!

OLIVIA  
No bids after midnight!  
(to herself)  
I need some nerd breaks.

INT. RADISSON ENTRY - AFTERNOON

The doors slide open to allow for the arrival of ARBY and ROD in all their glory. ROD holds his special patent leather bag.

ARBY seems to maneuver through the crowd with surprising ease. Despite the elaborate costuming and the weaving of the drunks, the frantic merchandising, it seems people go still or move away from him as he needs them to.

A grown man in a JESSICA HYDE pinafore makes his way importantly past them.

ARBY  
What a mass scale of silly people.

ROD  
Disturbing.

ARBY  
I find it sort of wonderful.

ROD  
I find it disturbing.

ARBY  
I count three here. Stacked. Shall we go up?

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

RICH DUDE, CARSON, is examining the chosen pages of UTOPIA. The gang is only half-paying attention, ready to close up shop. OLIVIA's FRIEND comes in pulling a cooler of ice from the ice machine—they begin packing booze in.

OLIVIA is glancing at her list of bidders. She draws a circle and STARS around WILSON Wilson's name. Shows it to ETHAN.

OLIVIA

He's the one to go back to. Anyone who pretends that hard to be that uninterested is really interested.

FRIEND

What about the don't-sell girl?

OLIVIA shrugs.

OLIVIA

Always bet on the nerd.

CARSON finally looks up.

CARSON

How much would it take to buy this right now?

ETHAN

Give us your bid and we-

CARSON grabs the sheet of paper, writes his name and, smirking, "PENTHOUSE" on room number. Then he places a big giant circle around BID, with a series of insistent question marks. Aims it back at them.

CARSON

I'd like to preempt all bidding and leave with this. Now.

He sets down his briefcase and pulls out stacks of CASH.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Twenty thousand.

The group is trying-and mostly failing-to stay cool.

OLIVIA

Cash?

CARSON

(nodding)

Taxes. Is that a problem?

CARSON hands OLIVIA his business card. OLIVIA and ETHAN give a simultaneous "NO" as the CASH dumps out.

INT. RADISSON - OLIVIA HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

We follow CARSON along the hallway and into:

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - AFTERNOON

He presses PH. Glances at the costume detritus on the floor: a broken blue fairy wing, a cheap plastic vambrace. He rolls his eyes. This is clearly not his usual scene.

INT. PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

We see him walk down the hallway, texting.

INT. PENTHOUSE - AFTERNOON

He pops UTOPIA right into a protective sleeve without looking at it. Tosses it on the bed. Pours himself some champagne, finishes texting.

CARSON  
(texting)  
I just bought Utopia.

INT. HOTEL BAR - AFTERNOON

Standing a few people away from BECKY and IAN at the bar, bosomy SLUTGEAR's phone lights up.

TEXT  
Want to come up and see it?!

SLUTGEAR  
(texting)  
I'm at the bar!

We see IAN and BECKY drain their pints--their third round, we can see by the empty glasses--and prepare to leave.

INT. PENTHOUSE - AFTERNOON

CARSON pops a mint, leaves without a second look at UTOPIA.

INT. HOTEL BAR - AFTERNOON

SLUTGEAR sees BECKY and IAN leave, pounces on their two seats just ahead of a couple dressed as Watchmen's THE COMEDIAN and SILK SPECTRE.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - COMICON - AFTERNOON

BECKY and IAN are strolling through the madness, looking much less annoyed at it all now that they're together. In fact, they're kinda GIDDY. They use any excuse to touch each other.

At each booth people are hawking FREE shit to lure buyers in. All the vendors immediately know IAN is a good, soft mark.

BECKY

I've never liked the superhero  
crap: There are enough alpha males  
in the real world-

A hawker crowns him with a plastic ANTLERMAN HELMET.

HAWKER

Hail Antlerman!

BECKY rights the ANTLERS on IAN's head, smiles at the effect.

BECKY

But DYSTOPIA...I want us to get it.  
I think we could really...solve it.

IAN

If there is anything to solve.

BECKY

There is.  
(passionate)  
I know there is.

HAWKER

Pirate Crystal: Source of Wonder 3!

The HAWKER has a pirate eyepatch with fake crystals—she battles to get it around IAN's ANTLERS. He allows it—like a very old cat putting up with a child's avid petting.

IAN

I take your word for it. Aside from  
Samantha, you definitely know the  
most about Dystopia in our group.

BECKY

You forget Wilson; he's an  
encyclopedia.

BECKY stops to adjust IAN's EYEPATCH for him.

IAN

I have the feeling Wilson has a lot  
of spare time on his hands.

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)

Did he make you submit a background check before he gave you his address?

BECKY

"Because it's a weird world and you may be one of the weirdos." I appreciated the honesty.

Someone tosses a boa around IAN's neck, no explanation. BECKY adjusts the BOA. Leaves her arms on IAN's shoulders.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I'm a little tipsy.

They have reached the end of the row of booths. Just feet away is a dark cavernous hallway, unlit.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - COMICON - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

IAN

I'm drunk!

She pulls him down the hallway. Holds her hand up to his GOATEE so it's just a MUSTACHE.

BECKY

You should have a mustache.

IAN

Yeah?

BECKY

A sexy pirate mustache.

She kisses him.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Do you have a girlfriend?

IAN cackles at the idea, then recovers himself as BECKY gives him another kiss.

IAN

I've been waiting to see what your story was.

BECKY

For over a year?

IAN

I was pretty excited to confirm you're not a man.

BECKY

That's sweet.

IAN

I mean— you're really cute.

(rethinking)

Beautiful.

BECKY

Cute's good. Cute's accurate.

A group of comicon fans is wandering down the hallway, trying for an illegal smoke.

BECKY smiles and KISSES IAN. She pulls him into a women's RESTROOM at the end of the hall.

INT. COMICON BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

They bump inside the restroom; BECKY pulls him inside a stall. They start making out in earnest. IAN's ANTLERS slip off—the plastic POINT goes right into BECKY's eye.

She yelps, bats the thing to the floor, tries to pull him to her but his BOA snags on the coat rack and CHOKES him. They yank off the BOA, push back the EYEPATCH so it hangs off one ear.

IAN pulls her to him, they start to pull up her shirt, revealing a TATTOO of an odd MOLECULE-looking shape on her ARM. As IAN clocks this, BECKY pulls her sleeve back down, leans against the toilet roll holder and brings it CRASHING down, her with it. IAN helps pull her up but her head hits his chin and he bites his TONGUE.

During all of this, anytime one of them comes near the TOILET, the automatic flush goes and spews water up the backs of their jeans.

As IAN nurses his tongue and BECKY rubs her back, they both finally start laughing.

BECKY

Good god, uncle!

They each lean on opposite sides of the stall, get their breath, assess the damage.

IAN

My penis isn't exactly up to sex right now anyway.

BECKY

I was only going to give you a handjob.

IAN

I only rate a handjob?

BECKY

You have cats named after Tolkien characters, be grateful.

INT. HOTEL BAR - AFTERNOON

BECKY and IAN enter the bar. We can see the backs of their pants are both wet from the toilet. They scan the bar for a seat and see a late-thirties NERD: black jeans, cheap, baggy black pocket t-shirt, fedora, the most inconspicuous, typical nerd-seemble possible.

He's scribbling in a tiny NOTEBOOK, which he's jealously protecting from other patrons who have no interest in it.

BECKY and IAN exchange a look and march over. WILSON looks up, peevishly. Then takes them both in and gives a smile.

WILSON

Becky. Ian.

A very pretty girl returns with two beers. She stands awkwardly, waiting for them to move. WILSON motions at her.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Samantha.

BECKY and IAN are clearly surprised by her looks.

IAN

Samantha...our Samantha?

SAMANTHA

Did you see it? How much do we have, all pooled together?

(remembering manners)

Oh, hi.

She hugs them both.

BECKY

You're so...pretty.

SAMANTHA

I said I could get them \$6,000. Can we do that?



BECKY  
Six thousand...

SAMANTHA  
I've saved \$2,000 dollars. Wilson  
only has \$200. You all?

BECKY IAN  
I have \$1200. \$600. \*

SAMANTHA  
Fuck. We have to get Utopia.

The NERDS give varying assents: Of course!

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
No, I mean we have to. What I saw  
today?

BECKY  
What?

SAMANTHA gives a triumphant grin.

SAMANTHA  
It's big.

Everyone gives a WHAT? SAM glances at WILSON and his  
notebook. He glances back, puts a hand over it. Clearly a  
little bit of jockeying here.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I don't quite know yet. I need to  
let it percolate.

WILSON  
That's annoying.

SAMANTHA  
I know.

Pause as everyone waits to see if she gives more. Nope.

IAN  
We're short about two thousand.

SAMANTHA  
We need Grant.

EXT. SUPERBUS STATION - PLATFORM - AFTERNOON

GRANT leaves the BUS platform. Hops fence, heads toward city,  
counting his singles, backpack hoisted.

## EXT. OVERPASSES - URBAN RIVER - AFTERNOON

A sad dusty banner for FRINGECON flaps in the wind. GRANT runs his hands along the banner, leaving streaks of clean where his fingers trailed.

## EXT. FOUNTAIN VIEW - URBAN STREETS - AFTERNOON

He is walking into town. This is the dying end of what was once - or maybe planned to be - a thriving Chicago suburb. Now it's just a little RIVER town with a giant RADISSON where conventions that can't afford Chicago can go.

Three people on Segways buzz past him and he cracks himself up laughing at them.

Like BECKY counting her PILLS, GRANT counts his dollar BILLS—he has SIX SINGLES. He counts the money close to his body—one gets the sense he's lost money by not holding close to it before.

As he walks past crummy low-rent "Chicago tourist" signs, everything has a price attached to it, and it's all more than \$6. Even lunch for \$8.

As he walks past a woman with her BABY in a stroller, the little girl grabs an apple from a FRUIT STAND and literally upsets the APPLE cart:

A bunch of APPLES topple to the SIDEWALK. GRANT, not breaking stride, slips down, grabs one, slips it in his pocket and keeps walking. MUNCHES hungrily as he walks.

## EXT. RADISSON - ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

At the Radisson entrance, several EMPLOYEES—polo shirted, dockers-wearing, badged, utterly unthreatening—are posted. Checking IDs and Room Keys for the FRINGECON.

GRANT pauses at this. Stops and checks his image in the glass of a storefront. Smooths his hair, straightens and tucks in his shirt. Checks his teeth for guck. Then he steels himself, tries a grin, and marches confidently and calmly right past the EMPLOYEES, big smile on his face, waving to NO ONE just inside the sliding doors.

GRANT

Nana!

INT. RADISSON - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Once inside the smile drops immediately, and he heads toward the elevators, ignoring all the partying FANS.

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

A knock on OLIVIA's door. She and ETHAN and her friends are all sipping champagne in hotel mugs. They have just put most of the cash in the hotel safe. It is now full up.

A knock again, louder. OLIVIA slams the safe shut, jams the rest in her handbag.

OLIVIA

And a pinch to grow on!

She opens the door onto GRANT.

GRANT

I'm here for Utopia.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry, sweetie. I sold it.

GRANT

(trying tough)  
To who?

OLIVIA just gives him a "please" look.

GRANT (CONT'D)

(trying sweet and  
disappointed)

I just wanted one look at it. Just  
a look. I came all the way from  
Kansas City. Missouri.

OLIVIA assesses him for a second. He looks way too cute.

OLIVIA

Guy's name is Phillip Carson. He's  
up in the penthouse. Maybe he'll  
let you have a look. Good luck.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - COMICON - UNICORN BOOTH - AFTERNOON

GRANT moves through the mayhem fluidly, much more easily than any of the adult Nerds have. As he passes ATTENDEES, he slips his hand in a few open purses or pockets. Finally comes out with a KEY CARD and slips quickly away before the person notices.

Next stop is the Una the Unicorn Rainbow World—a booth featuring a unicorn with oversized anime eyes, a rainbow for a tail. He takes a free Kids' Top Secret Rainbow UNICORN Club membership card. Writes a name on it with a CRAYON.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - RECEPTION - AFTERNOON

GRANT scans the possible clerks: all are men but one. He waits for the LADY to be open. Peers up at her with the same too-cute face. Sets the key card down.

GRANT

My key card isn't working and I can't find my dad.

LADY

Uh-oh!

GRANT

Room 2000 please, the penthouse?

LADY

What's the name on the reservation?

GRANT

My dad is Phillip Carson.

She pecks at keyboard, finds this is true. She's still hesitant.

LADY

We're supposed to ask for ID.

GRANT slides over his Top Secret Rainbow Unicorn Club membership card, knowing this is adorable. Name GRANT CARSON. The girl melts. Gives him a new key card.

INT. HOTEL BAR - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

GRANT walks past the BAR—inside, we see BECKY, IAN, SAM and WILSON all having a drink, as well as CARSON schmoozing SLUTGEAR. GRANT heads to elevators.

INT. PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

We see GRANT walking down the hallway. He tries his key card. Green light. Enters.

INT. PENTHOUSE - AFTERNOON

GRANT's jaw drops. The living room is bigger than his whole apartment.

GRANT

Shit.

He goes straight to the refrigerator. Eats some wrapped CHEESES. Nothing else in fridge except champagne, so he pours himself a glass. Wanders through the penthouse. He picks up an Ipod and earphones. Puts them on.

MUSIC begins: a beat-y Indian rap song. FIERCE.

On a TV console are all sorts of pointless DECORATIVE ITEMS. GRANT stares at them, totally befuddled. The music seems almost timed to his movement. Or vice versa. He spins a miniature GLOBE, pricks his finger on a moravian STAR, examines a CAST IRON SPARROW. Tries to figure out if any of them DO anything. NOTHING. Shakes his head at the dumbness and moves on.

INT. PENTHOUSE BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

A jacuzzi tub with an amazing view of the city is set deep into the floor. GRANT hops in. Even standing, we can barely see his face.

He gingerly tries the tap and WATER wooshes on. He sips the champagne. He kicks off his shoes, lets the water cover his feet and takes in the view.

The city is swarming with people: busy, busy, busy. GRANT can see the group of bored tourists meandering the streets; the worker bees entering and exiting buildings; CARS whipping down side streets to battle traffic; passersby opening UMBRELLAS against the harsh, relentless SUN.

All the movement seems almost choreographed to the RAP SONG so it's strangely beautiful; MAZES being formed and unformed by humans.

GRANT stands in the WATER, watching.

INT. HOTEL BAR - AFTERNOON

BECKY, IAN, SAM and WILSON are drinking up.

SAMANTHA

So what's up with Grant?

BECKY misunderstands the question.

BECKY

Photo shoot ran late.

They all give her a look.

WILSON

You really believe he's a  
photographer to the stars, Becky?

BECKY

Why would he lie?

WILSON

That's what people do.

BECKY

Ian showed up and he was Ian. You  
showed up and you're you...

SAMANTHA

And Grant will show up with a cheap  
Nikon and a complicated story about  
how his Porsche broke down.

BECKY looks to IAN to see if he agrees.

IAN

My bet: Grant's a middle-aged,  
middle-manager type with a wife he  
doesn't particularly like and a  
life that makes him a little sad-

BECKY frowns, a bit disturbed.

IAN (CONT'D)

-So when he comes, we'll ask him  
about the hot supermodels and we'll  
sympathize about his Porsche and  
let him enjoy his imaginary life.

WILSON

I don't pander to frauds.

IAN

Then you can scribble your outrage  
in your notebook for a while.

WILSON smiles, keeps scribbling.

SAMANTHA

Wilson, you do live nearby, right?  
Can we go drink where it's cheap?

WILSON sets his pen down.

IAN

Come on, man, I had to send in DNA swabs.

WILSON

Fine.

SAMANTHA

(checking her phone)

11:52. She said no bids after midnight. So we're safe 'til tomorrow.

She texts: GRANT!!!!

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I don't mind if he doesn't have a Porsche as long as he has cash.

They get up, walk past CARSON and SLUTGEAR. CARSON sees BECKY, almost says something. Turns to SLUTGEAR next to him, all boobs and booziness, and decides not to.

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

We see a closeup of OLIVIA and ETHAN, taking a selfie. Faces smushed together, each displaying a fan of \$100 dollar bills.

It's clear all five revelers are very happy and fairly drunk. OLIVIA slips her phone into her jacket.

OLIVIA's FRIEND ONE, brandishing a bottle of champagne, rushes over to OLIVIA for another SELFIE with the FRIEND's cell. "Say MONEY MONEY MONEY!" OLIVIA admires the photo.

OLIVIA

Let's send this to Avery.

More selfies!

ETHAN

(to OLIVIA)

Give everyone the bad news tomorrow.

OLIVIA

I don't want to deal with nerd rage tonight.

We hear a KNOCK on the door. She rolls her eyes—another NERD?— opens the door while still sending the photo, we hear the swoosh as she barely looks up.

It's ARBY and ROD, completely unthreatening. ROD carries his red patent-leather bag shaped like a tweetie bird.

ARBY

We're here for Utopia.

OLIVIA

It's been sold. Sorry.

She begins to close the door; ARBY snaps the phone from her in a fast snake-pounce motion that doesn't match his looks. He pushes his way in without seeming to use any force.

ARBY

Who did you sell it to?

OLIVIA tries for patronizing.

OLIVIA

Some guy who made an appointment during business hours and had enough money to buy it.

ARBY steps closer. Something in his complete stillness and blank eyes is frightening.

ARBY

Who did you sell it to?

Now she's unnerved.

OLIVIA

A guy. Just a guy!

He steps closer.

ARBY

Who did you sell it to?

She flashes Phillip Carson's business card.

OLIVIA FRIEND

He's in the penthouse, go bug him.

ARBY

Who else was here today?



ETHAN

Look, this is a private party. We don't have Utopia. If you want it, you need to go talk to-

ARBY completely ignores him.

ARBY

Who else was here today?

OLIVIA hands him the bid sheet, with every buyer's name and room number. ETHAN goes to intercede.

ETHAN

We don't want anything to do with any personal beef over Utopia-

ROD pulls out a gun. The group hushes, starts pressing away, toward the walls.

ARBY

Who has seen Utopia?

OLIVIA

(full panic)  
Everyone's seen it.  
(pointing at list)  
They've all seen it.

FRIEND THREE

We don't want any trouble!

ARBY scans the list.

ARBY

This is a complete list?

OLIVIA

Yes!

ARBY

Everyone who's seen Utopia?

OLIVIA

Yes!

ETHAN

If you want it, we can get it back.

Looks up and smiles.

ARBY

No worries.

ARBY gives ROD a nod, takes the GUN from ROD. ROD sets down his cartoon-bird bag on the table. The group watches.

He pulls out a packet of pre-filled SYRINGES, as well as alcohol swabs. Sets them all tidily in a row on the table.

ROD  
(briskly)  
I'll just need to give you a shot.  
All of you. Put you out a bit.  
We'll take your money.

OLIVIA  
So...it's just a robbery?

ROD  
(wagging a champagne  
bottle)  
You'll wake up feeling slightly  
hungover, but not as bad as if you  
finished this bottle.

The GROUP stands motionless.

ROD (CONT'D)  
Right, then. Sleeves up please.  
I'll be quick.

THE FRIENDS hesitate. Glance at ARBY and the gun. He seems more than competent, especially in these close quarters.

ROD (CONT'D)  
I'll repeat it only this once:  
Sleeves up please.

THE FRIENDS form an odd sort of line of patients. Each looking around to see if the others are going to obey. Then they start proffering arms.

ROD swabs FRIEND TWO expertly; the shot going in nice and neat. He dismisses her kindly and quickly—if he could give her a lollipop, he would. He quickly does the same with the two other friends.

OLIVIA and ETHAN are ushered over just as FRIEND TWO drops to the floor. FRIEND ONE and THREE immediately follow. OLIVIA grabs ETHAN's hand.

OLIVIA  
I'm scared.

ETHAN  
It's OK. If they were really going  
to hurt us, you think they'd bother  
swabbing our arms?

ETHAN gets his shot. He's already listing. OLIVIA proffers her arm, gets swabbed.

OLIVIA  
(to no one in particular,  
a little dazed)  
I told him: Don't look, just dump.

She gets her shot. ETHAN and OLIVIA fall to the ground.

INT. PENTHOUSE BATHROOM - EVENING

We hear the gurgle as the last of the water glugs down the drain. GRANT watches the sun begin to set behind the buildings, hops out of the bathtub. Rubs his feet in the plush of the RUG. Shoes back on. He pads down the hallway.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

And on the bed sits UTOPIA. GRANT does a fantastic, small little dance of joy—can this DAY get any BETTER?!—regains his cool and grabs it, just as...

INT. PENTHOUSE - EVENING

CARSON and SLUTGEAR enter, both tipsy and nuzzly. We see GRANT peek from the other room.

CARSON  
A drink, and then I'll get Utopia.

SLUTGEAR  
I'm not that interested actually.

CARSON  
No?

SLUTGEAR  
I wanted to see the penthouse. I've never seen a penthouse.

She goes to the window. CARSON pulls champagne from the fridge—hardly any left, weird. Just around the corner, watching, we see GRANT. CARSON opens a new bottle. The doorbell rings.

CARSON peers through the peephole. His POV shows ARBY and ROD, smiling awkwardly cheek to cheek, as if for a camera.

CARSON frowns. Opens door anyway.

ARBY and ROD enter. ROD leads with the gun this time.

ARBY  
We'd like the Utopia manuscript.

SLUTGEAR  
(to CARSON)  
Is this some cosplay shit?

ROD coldcocks her; she falls to the floor.

ARBY  
We'd like the Utopia manuscript.

CARSON runs and makes a grab for the phone. ARBY takes the CAST-IRON SPARROW that puzzled GRANT earlier and—in that same fluid, oddly graceful motion—HAMMERS it down on CARSON, the beak piercing his hand. CARSON slides to the floor, but not all the way as his hand is sparrowed to the counter.

CARSON  
It's in the bedroom, it's in the  
fucking bedroom!

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - EVENING

ARBY and ROD zip into the bedroom, toss apart everything looking for UTOPIA. GRANT slips out.

INT. PENTHOUSE - EVENING

GRANT is almost to the door. ARBY and ROD are drawing a gun on CARSON, who is bleeding profusely, SPARROW stuck in his hand.

ARBY  
I couldn't find Utopia. Where is  
Utopia?

CARSON  
For fuck's sake, it's on the bed!

GRANT reaches the door as his TEXT alerts: GRANT where are you? ROD and ARBY look up just as GRANT slips out the door. ARBY knocks CARSON unconscious with the gun, moves to the door.

INT. PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - EVENING

ARBY and ROD see GRANT running, holding UTOPIA. GRANT is at the far end of the hall.

ARBY  
(pointing to ceiling)  
Six stacked.

They both simultaneously aim their faces to the floor to protect themselves from security cameras. They follow quickly but not in full chase. Pick up speed as they hit the stairwell.

INT. HOTEL STAIRWELL - EVENING

GRANT is sliding down the bannisters. When he hits a landing, he does a pommel-horse hop and flings himself to the next staircase, begins sliding again.

ARBY and ROD hit the first set of stairs, just as GRANT looks up from many flights below, flings himself off the bannister and disappears. We hear a door slam far below.

ARBY  
What floor was that?

ARBY hits his INHALER.

ROD  
Fifteen?

ARBY  
I thought twelve.

ROD rushes to the stairs.

ARBY (CONT'D)  
Don't bother. We lost him when he made the doors.  
(musing)  
'74 MG.

ROD  
I'm sorry!

ARBY  
We'll contain what we can.

INT. PENTHOUSE - EVENING

ARBY and ROD re-enter, moving quickly. CARSON and SLUTGEAR are both unconscious. CARSON still has the SPARROW embedded in his hand. ARBY motions to the door.

ARBY  
(circling a spot)  
He touched that, right there.

ROD pulls up a set of small fingerprints. ARBY looks along the console, closely at the sparrow. GRANT's small cheese-goo fingerprints are visible.

ARBY (CONT'D)  
And here.

ARBY pulls out the list of OLIVIA's bidder names, phone numbers and room numbers. Works the smartphone. Fifteen texts light up: YOU ARE THE WINNING BIDDER. BE AT YOUR ROOM IN FIVE MINUTES FOR UTOPIA.

ARBY (CONT'D)  
No time for needles, I don't think.

ROD nods in agreement.

ARBY (CONT'D)  
Call Home.

ROD dials a number. Holding his list of nerd-names.

ROD  
It's Rod. We've had a complication.  
I need mental-health screens on the  
following names.

ARBY affixes a silencer to his gun. CLOSE on ARBY'S face as we hear two shots, KILLING SLUTGEAR and CARSON. We see CARSON'S TOOTH go flying past his cheek.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EVENING

Room 902. ARBY is cross checking with his sheet of names. He KNOCKS. The guy dressed as poor man's THOR opens.

ARBY  
Josh Chandler?

JOSH  
Here I go by StarWeaver.

We hear a shot and see a STARBURST of blood spatter ROD's face. He takes out a BABY WIPE from his patent leather bag and cleans it.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EVENING

Room 786. ARBY knocks on the door. The guy from the booth dressed as EVIL RABBIT opens.

ARBY  
Donald Resnick?

Smile. Nod. We hear a shot.

On the floor we see a pool of BLOOD surround broken BUNNY ears.

ROD's text goes. He reads.

ROD  
Room 412 has a history of mental illness.

ARBY  
Good.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EVENING

Room 110. They are actually on the ground floor along with the comicon, a blurry mess at the far end of the hall. A guy dressed as JESSICA HYDE DAD opens. Behind him are two guys dressed as ANTLER MAN, REALLY EVIL MR. RABBIT and VICUNA BOY.

ARBY  
Al Arroya? Wade Rogers, Bill Schiffman and David Villareal?

SMILE. Nod. Shoot. Shoot. Shoot. We just hear the gunshots and see ARBY BLINK, hard, FOUR times.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -EVENING

From the room below, a MAID looks up. Four pools of BLOOD in very different areas slowly REDDEN the ceiling.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EVENING

ARBY closes the door, looks down the hall. No one has seen anything.

ARBY  
412 and we're done here.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EVENING

Room 412. A guy dressed as JESSICA HYDE opens the door. Full WIG and PINAFORE.

ARBY  
Jimmy Klores?

JIMMY  
That's me.

ARBY  
Great view.

JIMMY turns to look at a view of an office building, and gives ARBY his suicide TEMPLE shot.

The WIG falls to the floor, a perfect HOLE in the side.

ARBY places the GUN in his hands, shoots the GUN toward the window, pose him correctly for a SUICIDE. ARBY and ROD back out, calmly.

ARBY looks at his checklist. All names are crossed off except for WILSON, IAN, SAM and BECKY.

ROD  
That didn't go too badly.

ARBY  
We're missing four who saw it.  
We're missing the boy who has it.

ROD  
Right.

ARBY  
We need to erase security footage  
for floors 9, 7, 4, 1 and  
penthouse.

ROD  
Right.

ROD nods, chastened. ARBY points at WILSON's name, which is starred and outlined.

ARBY  
I want to know why Wilson Wilson  
was so important to her.

ROD nods again.



ARBY (CONT'D)  
And we'll need to go Home and get  
some reliable transportation.

ROD nods again.

ARBY (CONT'D)  
Because now I need my tools.

ROD nods again.

ROD  
Things got out of hand so quickly.

ARBY  
Because we didn't have reliable  
transportation.

A slightly ominous moment. Then ARBY shakes it off. Pops a  
chocolate covered RAISIN.

ARBY (CONT'D)  
Should we grab some refreshment  
before we press on?

INT. OLIVIA HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Another knock on OLIVIA's door. This time it opens on its  
own. We see ruined, hole-covered Chuck Taylors, mismatched  
socks, crossing the floor, stamping across used syringes and  
posters of Jessica Hyde.

Now OLIVIA's room looks like a flophouse. The three bodies of  
OLIVIA, ETHAN and FRIEND lie on the floor. ETHAN has a needle  
of HEROIN still in his arm. A flutter of CASH around the  
floor; glassines with remnants of HEROIN.

The GIRL stops to pick up the CASH and a few needles of pre-  
filled heroin.

We can see her fully now and it's not pretty: She's scraggly  
as an alley-cat. Underfed, bony, with greasy hair and clothes  
that don't fit well or look good.

She begins, very efficiently, tearing apart the room, going  
through drawers, turning over bodies. She glares at souvenir  
T-shirts reading "STAY ALIVE, JESSICA HYDE!"

Picks one up. Examines it. Closely.

She reaches OLIVIA, who is barely alive, struggling to  
breathe.

The GIRL ignores her rasping and instead rifles through her jacket pockets, pulls out her cell PHONE, with nerds' names and phone numbers on display, stashes it.

OLIVIA is struggling. The GIRL cradles her head in her hands, not entirely gently.

OLIVIA

Help...

JESSICA HYDE

Where is Utopia?

OLIVIA

They gave us shots...

JESSICA HYDE

I don't care. Where is Utopia?

OLIVIA

Poison.

JESSICA HYDE

I still don't care. Where is Utopia?

OLIVIA hands her the card of PHILLIP CARSON, with PENTHOUSE written on it. She manages some semblance of focus.

OLIVIA

Why do you care?

Jessica looks around at all the adorable faux Jessica Hyde pictures in the room.

JESSICA HYDE

Because *I'm* Jessica Hyde.

As OLIVIA begins the most pitiful DEATH RATTLE, reaching out for help, Jessica takes her hand...steals her engagement RING, lets her head drop to the floor, and walks out.

THE END