

LINCHPIN

Written by

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INT. KITCHEN - MIDDAY

A wall clock TICKS incessantly above the refrigerator as JAMIE, 30s, finishes unpacking some groceries.

She places a few things in the cupboard: bread, cereal, a pasta box, then a few things in the fridge: milk, eggs, OJ.

She pulls out a box of assorted chocolates. Eyes them hungrily, then glances at the clock --TICK TOCK-- then back to the box. Shrugs.

She opens the box. Scans for a morsel to devour. Picks one. Is about to pop it into her mouth when --ZAP!-- a burst of air and a flash of light illuminates the kitchen.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Don't!

A HAND flies into view and smacks the chocolate from Jamie's grasp. Flabbergasted, she looks up to the culprit. Her eyes go wide with shock, but then something else seeps in...annoyance?

JAMIE

Are those my *fucking* earrings???

CUT TO:

OVER BLACK SCREEN

TITLE CARD: Linchpin

The TICK of the clock fades in, getting louder until...

JAMIE (V.O.)

I don't believe you.

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

The TICKING continues as Jamie sits at the kitchen table. She stares, confused, surprise, dumbfounded even at someone across from her that can't possibly be there.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

And why's that?

JAMIE

Because this is ridiculous. It's not even possible.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Which part?

JAMIE
Uh, all parts? You can't prove any
of what you just said.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
What more's there to prove?

Jamie's eyes flick to the single chocolate on the table. To
the still opened box of assorted chocolates next to it.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't.

JAMIE
Don't what?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Think about it.

JAMIE
I'm not thinking about anything.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Yes you are. I know you. We think
the same way about things.

JAMIE
But a piece of chocolate? Really?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
You think I'm kidding? You think I
came all this way just to play some
kind of cosmic joke on you?

JAMIE
(shrugs)
Maybe...

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
(sighs)
Maybe?

The voice's HAND carefully reaches across the table. Grabs a
chocolate from the box, purposely avoiding the loose piece
next to it. The HAND then brings it to her mouth to
reveal...a second JAMIE (J2)???

J2
(chewing casually)
Look, I get it. Time travel. What a
weird concept.
(MORE)

J2 (CONT'D)

I didn't believe it at first either, but this is serious. Infinitely so. And I can't risk the fate of the world on the fact that we have sweet tooth.

Jamie sits for a second. Contemplates what she's just heard.

JAMIE

Prove it.

J2

You literally *just* saw me blink into existence like five minutes ago. How often does that happen to you?

(beat)

Dumb, question. It's never happened to you.

JAMIE

Well, yeah, I mean obviously, but I need some kind of proof that you're you...uh...me. Like an actual future version of me, not some clone or a Terminator wearing my skin as a jacket or-or--

J2

(quick)

A-reptilian-alien-life-form-that-looks-human-whose-sole-purpose-is-to-take-over-the-world-and-enslave-humanity?

JAMIE

(surprised)

Y-yeah. Exactly that actually.

(to self)

I love that show.

J2

So do I. See? Same person. Same thoughts.

Jamie looks at her doppelganger sideways, still trying to suss out what's happening. She narrows her eyes.

JAMIE

Alright, "Jamie", pop quiz: how did we get this?

Jamie flips her elbow to J2. Taps a long jagged scar on it.

J2

Easy. We thought we were cool trying to impress Dustin at the bonfire and gashed it when we tried to hop the fence.

JAMIE

Okay. And this?

She shows J2 another scar across her palm.

J2

Trick question. That happened the same night.

(beat)

Trying to impress Justin though.

JAMIE

Ah, Justin and Dustin. What a duo.

J2

Yeah.

(beat)

Really miss those two...

Jamie looks at J2, concerned for the moment and then...

JAMIE

Okay, last question. A serious one. What was the first thing we thought when we heard about Mom and Dad?

J2

(gathers herself)

We thought...we *hoped* that we wouldn't get left with him.

JAMIE

Yeah...that's right.

(beat)

Fine, you pass the "you're me" test, I guess, but I still don't know if I buy all of this. It's a piece of chocolate, not, like, global warming or the big red button that could wipe everyone off the map in seconds.

J2

True. And I'm sure that's still a problem, but for now--

(point to chocolate)

--*that's* the problem. Which is why I can't let you eat it.

JAMIE

But how do you know it's that exact piece and not one of the others? I mean, the box is full of them. How come it's not--

Jamie shoots out her hand. Grabs a chocolate from the box. Surprisingly, J2 doesn't react, just keeps her eyes on Jamie.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

--the hazelnut one?

(eats it)

Or the caramel?

(eats another)

Or the coconut???

Jamie's mouth is full as she reaches for the coconut chocolate, but thinks better of it.

JAMIE

J2

Ew.

Ew.

Jamie and J2 share an amused glance with one another. Jamie chuckles a bit, swallows as much of the chocolate in her mouth as she can, but J2 gets serious almost immediately.

J2

Listen, I came here for one reason and one reason only: to stop you from eating that *specific* chocolate and by doing that, save the world. Toss it all in the garbage, give the box to Sheryl at work, re-gift it to Mom for the holidays, but please do *not* put it in your mouth. Don't make the same mistake I made.

Jamie audibly GULPS the rest of the chocolate down. Stares at Jamie unbelieving.

JAMIE

Wait...did you eat it? Are you coming back to stop you from doing what you already did? Is that it?

J2 takes a deep breath. Looks at Jamie hard.

J2

I can't give you too much information about the future, you know that.

JAMIE

That's it then! You messed up big-time and now I can't eat one measly piece of chocolate. Bravo.

J2

Jamie, don't. You're talking to yourself don't forget.

JAMIE

Am I? How do I know you aren't some alternate timeline version of me where the future is messed up from what you did, not what *I'm* gonna do?

J2

All these questions--

JAMIE

And what even happens if I do eat it? Does the world just stop spinning? Do you go all Marty McFly and fade out of existence? How quick does it all happen?

J2

Jamie--

JAMIE

And another thing, who even sent you? Do you know for a fact that the world actually ended because of this? Cuz you don't look like you came from some post-apocalyptic wasteland where eating a piece of chocolate ended every--

J2

(frustrated)

Does it really matter?! I'd like to say that I have all the answers, but I don't! I don't even understand it all myself. All I know is that the one that came back to see me said that they call these moments "linchpins", or moments in the past that the entire flow of time is structured around.

(MORE)

J2 (CONT'D)

They said that this tiny,
insignificant event sets off a
chain reaction that butterfly
effects the entire world, and they
figured *you* aka *me* were the best
chance at convincing yourself not
to do this, so...

(beat)

...here I am.

JAMIE

Right...here you are...

Jamie looks down to the chocolate. Back to J2. Back to the
chocolate, her mouth salivating.

J2

I'm serious, Jamie, don't. This
isn't a game.

JAMIE

But it's just a piece of chocolate.

J2

Don't.

JAMIE

And I'm really hungry.

J2

I'm warning you.

JAMIE

What could really happen?

A tense moment passes as Jamie and J2 stare each other down.

Then, as if J2 has seen something familiar in Jamie's eyes,
J2 tries to snatch the chocolate from the table, but Jamie is
too quick.

Jamie grabs the chocolate, J2 barely missing her own grab,
then pops it into her mouth. Chews.

J2

No! You don't under--

ZAP! Gone. J2 disappears in a burst of air and a flash of
light.

Jamie stops chewing for a moment. Looks around the kitchen,
waiting for some sort of apocalypse that doesn't seem to be
coming, then continues to chew.

JAMIE

Well, so much for that.

Jamie swallows. Reaches for another chocolate. Pops it into her mouth as she continues to wait for doomsday.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Jamie noms on a few more chocolates, blatantly avoiding the coconut one when --ZAP!-- another burst of air and flash of light hits the kitchen near the refrigerator.

Jamie whips her head over to see something unbelievable: yet another JAMIE (J3) has arrived!

Disheveled and dirty, wearing ragged and torn clothing like she actually has come straight from the apocalypse, J3 rushes over to Jamie with the milk carton from the fridge and an empty glass in her hand.

She pours hastily. Tries to shove the milk into Jamie's hand.

J3

Hurry! Drink this! The fate of the world is at stake!

Jamie can barely comprehend what's going on, and as J3 pushes the glass into her palm, it slips, falls and --CRASH!

Both Jamie and J3 look to the ground when...

J3 (CONT'D)

Shit!

CUT TO BLACK:

END