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[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Short Stories

[Back](#)

Justin Sangermano

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[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
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JUSTIN SANGERMANO

[Back](#)

The Flight of Instantaneous Travel.

Amy looks at her car's clock with a dreadful feeling in the pit of her stomach. It seems that the few vehicles that still travel the road these days are all in front of her in a line that fails to move faster than a crawl. It doesn't help that the spotlights seem to be playing a sick prank on her. In the back seat, her four-year-old daughter, Dorothy, is unable to sit still in her car seat and thrashes around while singing the wrong words to a jazzy pop song on the radio several octaves too high. Her wailing dampens her mother's focus and creates tension in her temples, but she appears to be having too much fun to know or care. Another light turns red right before the car in front of them reaches the line. If this other person had not been there, Amy would have gunned it.

She looks at the clock again. Seven fifty-three. She only has seven minutes to drop Dorothy off at daycare and get to her job interview three blocks away. Her first destination is only one light ahead of them, but at this pace that might take eternities. She takes a deep breath and rubs her forehead to alleviate the pain. The song on the radio ends and so does Dorothy's squalling. This is a plus. In the song's place, an advertisement comes on with the voice of an all too cheery salesman.

"Tired of waiting endlessly for the arrival of public transportation?" he asks with unnecessary volume. "Tired of walking to work or getting caught in traffic? Well, I have a solution for you: Terry's Teleportation Services. Introducing the next step in innovation and technology, we're here to get you where you need to go not just faster, but instantly!" Dorothy's face lights up. "This will be you soon, Mommy."

"Kinda," Amy says. "I won't be on the radio though."
The advertisement continues. "Think about all the time you've been wasting on your morning commutes. Now you can hop into one of our boxes and click a button to be transported to another one of our machines anywhere in the world! Traveling has never been easier. And our machine will fit great in your home: it's no bigger than your fridge!"

The light turns green, and Amy flicks the radio off as she begins moving again. She is not interested in an ad that so accurately describes her situation without offering an accessible solution.

"Why'd you turn it off, Mommy?" Dorothy asks.

"Mommy just wants a little peace and quiet right now, Sugar," Amy says.

So, Dorothy reclines in the stained purple fabric and droops her little arms over the rests, which are getting brittle from use. However, she doesn't seem to care as she gazes upon the city with youthful wonder. The skyline seems to occupy her mind for only a few moments before she forgets her mother's request for silence, she asks, "Will we ever get a teleporter? All the other kids at daycare have one in their homes."

"I don't know, Sugar," Amy says.

"We have to. Cars are unsafe."

Amy's heart is transported from her chest to her throat. She knows why Dorothy is saying this and hates that she has to endure that pain at such a young age. "I know, Sweetie." She cannot think of anything more comforting to add, but luckily, they pull into the daycare before she has to make a cover for their financial situation.

"Will the house still be dark when I come home?" Dorothy asks as her mother unbuckles her seatbelt.

"I'm working on it," Amy says through a forced smile. She hands her daughter her lunch box. "I love you. Have a beautiful and joyous day."

"I love you too, Mommy."

One of the daycare workers opens the door and Dorothy hops out. She hovers on the sidewalk for a moment to wave goodbye, but Amy's focus is back on the clock as she pulls away and back into the long line of cars. It is now seven fifty-six. Her interview starts in four minutes. She can feel all hopes of arriving on time slipping away. In the race against other candidates who can literally be there at the press of a button, this alone could cost her the opportunity. She desperately wants this job. For one, its proximity to Dorothy's daycare makes it highly convenient for her morning commutes. Also, the chance to sell teleporters would give her a better understanding of the different options in case she ever did get a chance to purchase one. Maybe an employee discount or the extra money from commissions could help provide this opportunity.

She realizes what the holdup is at seven fifty-eight; a Sudan is facing the wrong way and looks like a crushed beer can. Cars creep around it as lines of impatient drivers spread on for miles behind them. Amy can't help but stare at the scene and notices a second car that has fallen off the road. It is upside down and squished. A woman is sitting near it with her head in her hands. Amy knows her pain all too well and wonders if this accident trapped her husband inside the wreckage too.

She breathes a sigh of relief as the cars move faster without the crash in front of them, and soon passes the breakfast diner she works at most weekdays. She hates waiting tables but has needed the income during her job search ever since the car dealership she worked for went out of business. She despised this job as well; it served as constant reminders of both her husband's accident and that the products she was selling would soon be obsolete and her job would go out with it.

It is already five minutes after the hour as she whips into park in the office building's lot, her back tire just touching the line. She doesn't realize she's dropped her sunglasses as she blunders out of the car, moving in time to the fast rhythm of her heart. She runs into the building and frantically presses the button to summon the elevator. Its appearance is untimely and adds another two minutes to her arrival on the third floor.

Her desired employer's office is second to the right. She steps inside and is greeted by a receptionist with extravagant green eyeshadow that compliments her emerald earrings nicely.

The waiting room is freshly cleaned with a row of black leather seats. In the corner is a transporter; a metallic box as tall as the ceiling with at least a hundred miscellaneous wires running into the wall. Its sleek surface glistens in the light.

"I'm here to see Walter Hutchins," Amy says.

"Okay, I'll get you all checked in." The receptionist types something into her keyboard and then looks up at Amy. "Are you Samantha?"

"No, my name is Amelia, Amelia Samson."

The receptionist stares at her computer for a second. "I don't see your name listed."

"I had an interview with Mr. Hutchins scheduled at 8."

"Oh, sorry I can't see past bookings?"

"Okay but it's been less than ten minutes, can you tell Mr. Hutchins I'm here? Please."

The receptionist agrees and makes her way towards the back. Not knowing what to do, Amy stands awkwardly by her desk and looks around the room to occupy her mind. The popcorn kernel groves in the ceiling calm her nerves as she lets her lungs fill with air.

The receptionist comes back a moment later with Walter. Amy shakes his hand and apologizes for being late, providing extra detail about the chaos of the overturned car.

"That is frightening," Walter says drily. "Are you ready to come meet with me in my office or do you need even more time?"

Amy answers, "I'm ready now. Lead the."

Before she can finish the sentence, a faint high-pitched ringing fills the air. The hair on her arms stands up as the transporter flashes a bright white light and a woman steps out of it. She is dressed in a navy-blue pants suit with her brunette hair fastened in a neat bun behind her head. Her smile is full of perfectly shaped teeth.

"Good morning," she says to everyone. "My name is Samantha Halbra and I'm here for my eight-thirty interview with Mr. Hutchins."

Walter steps forward and shakes her hand. "That's me, Walter Hutchins. How was your commute getting here?"

"Commuter?" Samantha asks with a laugh. "I took my teleporter here; I don't know if it was much of a commute."

"That explains why you're here almost twenty minutes early and ready to start the day then. How thoughtful of you."

"Thank you. I'm just trying to respect your time," Samantha answers, her smile still spread across her cheeks.

"And I appreciate that, Ms. Halbra."

Amy tries not to roll her eyes as Walter turns his attention back to her.

"Now, Amelia, can you assure me you won't run into these traffic issues again?"

"Absolutely, Sir. It won't happen again."

"Can you promise me that? Can you personally guarantee that no burning cars will slow down your commute every single day?"

The dreadful feeling in Amy's stomach doubles in size. "Well no, I guess I can't exactly guarantee that, but I'll make sure to start leaving my apartment earlier."

"Samantha, can you personally guarantee that you are in your teleporter at a quarter to eight every morning and stepping onto the floor of this office only seconds after?"

Somewhat Samantha's smile gets even brighter. "I can do that."

"Then I think I have my candidate. Ms. Samson, it was a pleasure meeting you but I think it would be in both of our best interests to pursue other options. Thank you."

He turns to leave as Amy blurts out, "I drove through awful traffic to get here for this."

"Then you should know your way back," Walter says without turning.

Samantha frowns at Amy but ultimately follows Walter anyway. Amy turns around and takes a long look at the teleporter before leaving through the door she came in, back towards the parking lot.