

Quantam Leap

By

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FADE IN:

INT. FUTURE LABORATORY - DAY

Shrouded in the shadows and the speckled lights of technical equipment in the room, DR. SAMANTHA BECKETT (32) steps into the chamber of the QUANTUM LEAP ACCELERATOR.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Theorizing that her long lost  
father, the inventor of time  
travel, was still lost in the time  
stream of the past,...

Blue light and energy envelops Sam's body.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
... Doctor Samantha Becket stepped  
into the Quantum Leap Accelerator  
and vanished.

She disappears in a ball of light.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Blue light and energy appear in the driver's seat of the taxi cab as Sam materializes behind the wheel.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
She woke to find herself trapped in  
the past, facing mirror images that  
were not her own...

Disorientated, she adjusts the rear view mirror. In it's reflection stares back the surpsied visage of a bald and bearded TAXI DRIVER (55).

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
... and passionately driven by a  
desire to find and rescue her  
father, no matter how long it  
takes.

She looks out the window. A fifty-seven Chevy and an old Studebaker drive past.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
She is guided by, Lewis, an  
artificial intelligence from her  
time who appears in the form of a  
holographic projection that only  
Sam can see and hear.

In the back seat, the image of LEWIS, a middle aged man, digitally flickers to life. He looks out the window and with a snap of his fingers flickers "1958" into the air as a hologram before Sam.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

PEDESTRIANS crowd around Sam, dressed in a business suit, desperately held onto by a WEeping MOTHER (28) near the edge of the bridge's safety rails. Sam peers over the edge into the ocean far below with relief.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so, Doctor Beckett finds  
herself leaping from life to life,  
time after time, striving to put  
right what once went wrong...

Blue energy washes over Sam.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

... and hoping each time that her  
next leap will bring her closer. To  
dad.

EXT. IMPERIAL HIGHWAY LIQUORS - LOS ANGELES - DAY

A blue flash of energy as Sam materializes, dressed in saggy pants and LA Lakers tank top, in mid throw of a brick that flies through the window of the liquor store.

The window shatters. The store's ALARM sounds.

Before the glass settles, two BLACK YOUTHS rush through the window in a snatch and grab. In mere moments they emerge with arms full of alcohol.

SAM

Oh boy.

Skinny and full of excitement, JUNIOR (14) hands Sam bottles of Jack Daniels.

JUNIOR

Hold this! I'm gonna get some more!

Junior hops back in through the window.

Confused, Sam leans to the side and peers into the store's last unbroken window to find a confused TEENAGE BLACK GANGBANGER in her reflection.

Shocked, she drops all the bottles of Jack, shattering them.

Junior steps back out of the window, now with bottles of gin.

JUNIOR

Yo, dawg! What are you doing?

SAM

Um, sorry. They slipped. Dawg.

A POLICE SIREN's wail grows in the distance. Behind them the red and blue lights of a police cruiser flash towards the store.

In the streets around them, dozens of LOOTERS scatter out of broken store windows, arms full of goods, and run away.

Another boy, RAIDER (17), tattooed and with crazy cornrows, steps out of the liquor store in front of Sam with an assortment of liquors. Without hesitation he throws a bottle towards the police car.

RAIDER

Yo, fuck tha police!

Junior watches then does the same with his gin.

JUNIOR

Yeah. Stupid pigs!

Awash in pride, Junior looks up towards Raider. Laughing, they both both run off to leave Sam alone and dumbfounded.

RAIDER

Hey, Snitch! Move your black ass!

SAM

Oh, that's me! Hey, wait up!

Sam runs after them.

EXT. BERNEDO AVE - INGLEWOOD, LOS ANGELES - DAY

Police sirens blare as the trio run at full speed down the street past more broken shops.

They turn a corner and duck into an alley. Seconds later a police cruiser speeds past. The sirens fade away.

Raider catches his breath, swigs on a bottle of Jack, and hands it to Junior.

RAIDER

There you go Junior, hit that shit.

Junior coughs his deep swig down.

SAM

What are we?

Lewis flickers into view by her side.

LEWIS

What? You don't recognize this place?

RAIDER

Bernedo Avenue fool! Did you take a rock to the head?

Hologram video footage of the L.A. riots floats in front of Sam along with the year "1992".

LEWIS

The sirens. The smoke. Your fashionable attire. What else could this be but the L.A. Riots? Over one billion dollars in damages and sixty-three recorded deaths before this nightmare ends.

SAM

Oh boy, pass the bottle.

Sam reaches for Junior's bottle and throws back a shot. Lewis disapproves.

LEWIS

Sure, why not? When in Rome right?

Sam also chokes it down through coughs.

RAIDER

Snitch, you OK?

Oblivious, Sam catches her breath. Raider punches her arm.

RAIDER

Yo, Snitch! I'm talking to you!

SAM

Huh? Oh. Um, yeah dog. I'm straight. Hellz yeah?

Raider cautiously takes the liquor from her as Junior looks on, a bit perplexed.

RAIDER

Yeah. I think you took one to the back of the head. Why don't you get straight? Come with me, Junior.

Lewis turns to watch as Raider and Junior walk through his projection to the end of the alley. Junior empties his pockets and hands over packs of stolen cigarettes to Raider as they do.

LEWIS

And to think they haven't outlawed those cancer causing... mouth tampons yet. Human behavior is so hard to process at times.

SAM

So who are these upstanding young citizens?

LEWIS

See that little guy in front of you? That's Junior. It's his birthday tomorrow. But he won't be around to see it.

Sam still huffs and puffs to catch her breath.

SAM

What happened?

LEWIS

He gets gunned down while stealing a box of Pop Tarts later this afternoon.

SAM

What are, Pop? Tarts?

LEWIS

Another form of cancer delivery. A popular alternative to breakfast, they were found to be extremely carcinogenic to children under twelve years of age in twenty twenty-four and were finally made illegal by the FDA the following year. Before your time.

SAM

Unbelievable.

LEWIS

And it seems you're his older brother, goes by Snitch.... makes one wonder how you survived so long on the streets with that moniker. Anyways, he looks up to you.

A holographic photo of Snitch and Junior together in happier times appears in front of Sam.

LEWIS

I take it back. He used to. Before you fell in with the Fifth Street Crips. And their leader over there, Raider.

The hologram fades away, to reveal Raider with his hand on Junior's shoulder laughing as he encourages Junior to take another large drink.

LEWIS

Now, he just wants to drink gin and juice all day, listen to rap music and gang bang with the hommies.

Sam looks up in despair.

SAM

A gangsta's paradise.

LEWIS

Excuse me, Sam?

SAM

It's a classic. Never mind.

EXT. NORMANDIE AVE - INGLEWOOD, LOS ANGELES - DAY

The trio walk down the sidewalk past a gas station and towards an intersection. An indistinguishable mix of BYSTANDERS and LOOTERS mingle about. A smokey haze blankets the skyline.

RAIDER

Damn, man, this is all so crazy. Can you believe all this?

SAM

Destroying your own community for a pack of smokes and a color TV hardly seems worth it.

Raider stops dead in his tracks. Turns around, fronts Sam with Junior caught in between.

RAIDER  
Excuse me hommie?

SAM  
Look around. Who do you think you're getting revenge on? Who owns all these local businesses we just trashed? It's not the man you're hurting. It's not whitey, if that's your goal! It's local blacks and minorities who are suffering! Just like you!

RAIDER  
Just like us, don't you mean?

SAM  
Yes! I meant, us. Of course. Us!

RAIDER  
Don't for a minute think you're one of us...

Curious is Raider knows, Sam pauses.

RAIDER  
... I was born here hommie. This is my hood! My streets! You only moved in, what like three years ago from uptown man, and now you act like this is your home too? It's not and it never will be. You're just a fake, player. And if I say it's time we teach tehse crooked cops who really runs this joint then sign me up.

SAM  
Bullshit. You're just looking for any excuse to turn a quick buck and you know it.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! Raider checks his belt's beeper.

RAIDER  
Are you for real? Lucky for your ass, I just got beeped. I need to take this. Here, kill it, Junior.

Raider tosses Junior the bottle and leaves towards a payphone at the gas station behind them.

SAM

Sure. Just go ahead and run away  
when confronted with consequences  
you don't like!

Raider shoulders the payphone as he digs for change in his  
pocket. Sam turns back to Junior.

SAM

Wait, what's a beeper?

Lewis materializes by Sam's side.

LEWIS

A beeper is a late twentieth  
century communication device.  
Except you really can't communicate  
on it. It just records missed phone  
calls.

SAM

Sort of like a voice mail?

LEWIS

No. It just tells you when you've  
received a message but it doesn't  
actually store the message. It's  
only purpose is to notify the user  
of the intent to communicate but it  
doesn't actually facilitate  
communication in any way.

SAM

Can you at least play games with  
it?

LEWIS

I dunno. Maybe catch?

Junior looks awkwardly at what appears to be Sam's  
conversation with himself. He raises the bottle in need of a  
drink.

JUNIOR

Are you sure you're OK, bro? You  
forget what a beeper is?

Sam snatches the bottle away from Junior, pours the last  
shot out onto the sidewalk.

SAM

(nervously laughing)  
A little young to be drinking don't  
you think?

JUNIOR

OK, now I know something's up. Who are you to ever pass up perfectly good liquor?

SAM

I've been thinking of quitting for awhile now actually. As should you. You shouldn't be drinking so much. At your age, you shouldn't be drinking at all. Wait, how old are you again?

Junior looks away saddened.

JUNIOR

You forgot again did you?

SAM

Look, I've been thinking about a lot of stuff recently. My life, running around from place to place, it's a hard one with no stability. An endlessly long tunnel with just the faintest of light at the end that I wouldn't wish on anybody.

JUNIOR

But you always said the gang was our family.

SAM

This? You think this is family? No, I want something better for you. For us.

Sam has Junior's attention.

JUNIOR

Really? Like what?

LEWIS

That's good, Sam. Keep it up.

SAM

I dunno. What hobbies and interests do you have? You have to find something your passionate about and devote your life to it fully. Never look back.

LEWIS

My data banks are showing, Junior was the captain of his youth chess club back in the third grade. He even won some local tournaments in the neighboring area.

SAM

When was the last time you played chess?

At the pay phone, Raider looks on at them with suspicion.

JUNIOR

(angry)

Chess? Not since, Dad left and you started gang banging.

LEWIS

Uh oh, Sam look out.

SAM

See, chess! That's it! Why don't you go back to playing chess! You were good at it! A lot less chance of dying young when you're castling your rooks!

JUNIOR

I only played chess because, you and Dad pushed me to! And then he disappeared and you were never home to play with me so what was I supposed to do? Stay inside while you were out having all the fun?

Junior grabs the bottle from Sam and smashes it onto the ground.

JUNIOR

(crying)

Not that you knew or cared! You grew up with Dad, no big loss to you when he ran away! You don't know what it's like having to grow up without a father!

Stunned, Sam kneels to Junior's level. Looks in his red and watery eyes.

SAM

Son, trust me, I know all about how much it hurts to grow up without your father.

RAIDER (O.S.)  
 Look at this! I leave for one  
 minute and you all turn into a  
 bunch of teary eyed sissies!

Raider looms tall over them both.

RAIDER  
 We gotta bounce y'all. Big Twain  
 says there's some action going on a  
 couple blocks away and a chance we  
 can score big before everything is  
 scooped up.

Junior stows his tears and follows Raider as he leaves.

As they leave, a RED DUMP TRUCK stops at the intersection  
 next to Sam who runs to catch up with Raider.

SAM  
 Junior! Get back here!

Four BLACK YOUTHS menacingly approach the truck, open up the  
 driver door and pull the TRUCK DRIVER (36) out and begin to  
 beat on him.

Lewis stays to watch on, then covers his eyes in disgust.

LEWIS  
 Humans. Impossible to process.

EXT. W 120TH ST - INGLEWOOD, LOS ANGELES - DAY

A car burns in the street as LOOTERS mill about everywhere.  
 In the wrong place at the wrong time, CARS swerve by to  
 avoid being hit by rocks and bottles. From the broken shop  
 windows on the sidewalk, looters come and go at will,  
 carrying anything left of value.

Through this mess, Raider navigates with ease. Behind him,  
 Sam and Junior straggle behind, dazed by the social  
 breakdown.

They walk by an ANGRY MAN (55) confronting the looters alone  
 in the street armed with only a hammer.

ANGRY MAN  
 Don't burn down my business! Don't  
 destroy my stuff! I worked too hard  
 for this! It's not right! It's not  
 right what you all doing! I came  
 from the ghetto too and now look at  
 (MORE)

ANGRY MAN (cont'd)  
 you all! I tired to make it! I  
 worked hard and now look at all  
 this! It's not right!

Sam puts her hand on Junior's shoulder.

SAM  
 Hey, why don't we head home, you  
 think? We don't need to be here in  
 the middle of all this. Enough is  
 enough.

RAIDER  
 Go home? Shit. I'm not going home  
 until I grab myself a VCR at least.

Raider stops in front of an unbroken storefront window.  
 QUICK LEE'S CONVENIENCE prominently displayed on the glass.

RAIDER  
 Who's hungry?

Raider grabs a ROCK from the sidewalk and throws it through  
 the window. It SHATTERS to the ground. He steps in through  
 the shards.

INT. QUICK LEE'S CONVENIENCE STORE - INGLEWOOD, LOS ANGELES  
 - DAY

Sam and Junior climb in through the window to find Raider  
 ransacking the shelves of snacks.

RAIDER  
 Take what you want! It's all free!

Junior goes down an aisle, stops at the Pop Tarts.

SAM  
 Come on Raider, we shouldn't be  
 here.

Crouched behind the counter, LEE (42), the small Vietnamese  
 store owner clutches a handgun. A sweaty, nervous wreck and  
 scared out of his wits.

Raider turns to confront Sam.

RAIDER  
 What the hell got up your ass,  
 Snitch? Hell, this was all your  
 idea in the first place, or did you  
 (MORE)

RAIDER (cont'd)  
 forget? Head downtown, smash some windows, steal some shit and have some fun! And know you act like you didn't help cause all this. Well guess what, people like you, where you're from, you're exactly what caused it all!

Sam turns to look into a broken window to his side. Snitch's sad reflection stares back at him.

SAM  
 I was wrong. I made a mistake, but we all seriously need to go before one of us gets hurt, or worse!

Junior runs over to them with the Pop Tarts in hand.

JUNIOR  
 Hey, I found something!

In his reflection, Sam sees movement behind the sales counter.

Shaking uncontrollably, Lee rises from behind the counter and grabs Junior. He holds him hostage with the gun to his head.

JUNIOR  
 Hey! Let go of me!

LEE  
 You hoodlums messed with the wrong store! Nobody's destroying my shop! I'm sick of this neighborhood and you people! And I'm not gonna be a victim anymore!

Lewis materializes quickly beside Sam.

LEWIS  
 Sam! Look out!

SAM  
 Whoa! Whoa! Easy now!

RAIDER  
 Damn! Where did you come from commie?

JUNIOR!  
 James! Help me!

LEWIS

That's you, Sam! Your real name I mean!

SAM

Hang on Junior! Please, sir, you don't want to do this! That's my kid brother. We didn't mean any harm! We're sorry!

LEWIS

Uh, Sam, no he does want to do this! His heart rate is off the charts. Pupils dilated with adrenaline! The simulations say there's a thirty-one percent chance, Junior gets shot in the next minute if you don't do something fast!

LEE

It's bad enough I put up with all your shoplifting every day but now you want to destroy my store! And for what? Because of a stupid verdict on some crooked cops in a different part of town?

SAM

Just let my brother go and we'll leave you be. I promise! Now put the gun down.

LEE

I've had enough! It's time you lose something today too!

LEWIS

Sam, I think he means it!  
Thirty-nine percent!

Suddenly, Raider pulls a gun out from behind his waistband, draws down on Lee.

RAIDER

No. You lose today bitch!

LEWIS

Whoa! Sam! Ninety-five percent chance Junior gets shot now! It's Raider, not the store owner you should worry about!

SAM

Raider! What the hell are you doing?

RAIDER

Come on man, act like you've been around a gun before.

LEE

You son of a bitch! I'll do it!

RAIDER

No you won't.

LEWIS

Oh, but he will, Sam!

Exasperated, Sam rushes in between the two of them.

SAM

Stop it! Both of you! Look around you! All of this came about because we forgot how to communicate with each other. It's a zero sum game and it needs to end now. Or else somebody's gonna get killed! Now put the guns down!

Police sirens begin to echo in from afar. Lewis projects a hologram map of the neighborhood into the air. A line races towards their location.

LEWIS

Looks like somebody called the police. They'll be here in twenty-seven seconds!

RAIDER

What's that?

LEE

It better be an ambulance for your sake!

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! Raider and Lee are momentarily confused by the sudden high pitch shrill of Raider's beeper.

Desperate, Sam takes advantage of the distraction, spins around and grabs the gun from Lee's hand and pistol whips him unconscious. Freed, Junior scrambles behind Sam.

The sirens grow louder.

LEWIS  
Sam! What you doing? Wrong gun!

SAM  
Lay off, I'm improvising here!

His aim steady, Raider keeps a bead on Sam.

RAIDER  
How'd you learn how to do that?

SAM  
I've been around more guns than you  
have trust me. Now put that one  
down, Raider.

RAIDER  
I don't think so hommie. See, pigs  
are coming and I don't plan on  
going back to the hole. Better they  
arrest both your sorry asses  
instead of mine so I can get away.

Exasperated, Lewis steps behind Raider's shoulder in Sam's  
view.

LEWIS  
Um, Sam. Because of that little  
stunt of yours there's now a  
ninety-six percent probability  
you're the one that gets shot and  
killed now, not Junior!

JUNIOR  
Raider! Stop!

SAM  
You don't want to do this. You're  
making a big mistake.

RAIDER  
First rule of the streets, Junior,  
survival is a single player game.

Junior steps in between Sam and Raider, stern and  
determined. Raider takes a step back, surprised.

JUNIOR  
Check.

RAIDER  
Check?

The police sirens become deafening.

LEWIS

He's sacrificing himself for you,  
Sam. The probability just jumped  
back onto him.

SAM

Junior get back here!

JUNIOR

You shoot him, then you have to  
take me out first.

From outside the store, TIRES SCREECH. The police sirens go  
silent. Car doors open. The jostling of officers can be  
heard.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Everybody disperse and go home! Or  
we will arrest you all!

JUNIOR

(to Raider)

You're move.

SAM

You're out of moves, Raider. Don't  
throw your life away over this.  
Take your lumps like a man and for  
once in your life, take  
responsibility for your actions.  
Now put the gun down.

His hand trembles as Raider begins to waiver.

RAIDER

I promised my boy I wouldn't go  
back.

SAM

What's worse? A few years behind  
bars or life in prison for murder?

Through tears, Raider lowers his gun.

SAM

Checkmate.

LEWIS

You did it, Sam!

RAIDER

I promised him! Don't you  
understand. I promised I wouldn't  
leave no more!

Sam reaches out to grab the gun away from him. She places both firearms on the counter carefully out of reach. Flood lights from the police outside illuminate the store's interior.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)  
Put your hands up! Drop your  
weapons!

A mess of sobs, Raider slowly raises his hands. Junior and Sam follow suit.

SAM  
(to Junior)  
Where'd you learn that move?

JUNIOR  
A deflection pawn sacrifice. It  
only works if you have a strong  
piece in position to back up the  
play. Learned it from a good  
teacher long time ago.

Full of pride, Junior looks up towards Sam.

SAM  
Looks like we'll both have plenty  
of time to brush up on our game  
soon.

JUNIOR  
It's ok. Maybe we both needed to be  
put in check.

LEWIS  
Smart kid.

SAM  
Happy birthday little brother. I'm  
sorry about all this.

A huge smile beams across Junior's face.

JUNIOR  
My birthday. You did remember.

SAM  
Of course.. Wouldn't forget it.

Two POLICE OFFICERS climb in through the window and begin to handcuff Raider who puts up no resistance.

LEWIS

You did it Sam! Junior spends six months in juvi but ends up going to USC on a chess scholarship and becomes a medical malpractice lawyer with a wife and two little girls!

Lewis points to Raider.

LEWIS

Coolio over there serves five years for aggravated assault but cleans up his life shortly after and runs a liquor store a few blocks from here with his son. No more gangsta's paradise for him.

SAM

(to Lewis)

Gangsta's paradise?

LEWIS

I looked it up. Catchy chorus.

JUNIOR

Thanks bro.

SAM

For what?

The officers begin to cuff Junior and Sam's hands behind their backs.

JUNIOR

For being there for me. Just like old times.

A smile between brothers as a wave of blue energy envelops Sam.

She leaps away.

INT. OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

Blue energy fills the decadently furnished room. It takes the shape of Sam, dressed in a revealing cocktail dress, legs crossed, seated on a luxurious couch.

In front of her, an INDIFFERENT SECRETARY (49) types on her computer. Expensively framed movie posters line the walls behind her.

Sam looks around, notices the skimpy skirt and attempts to pull it down more modestly.

The office phone of the secretary's desk RINGS. Uninterested, she picks it up to her ear then hangs up as quickly.

INDIFFERENT SECRETARY  
Mr. Weinstein will see you now.

SAM  
.....Oh boy.

FADE OUT: