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# SAMPLE SCRIPT

VOLUME I

# TROUBLE THE WATERS

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CREATED BY TONY WARD

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## WELCOME TO THE LOCUS.

**The following is an excerpt of original script from Volume I, *Trouble the Waters*, Issue 3.**

**James Michalek**, the protagonist of this series, is a struggling 36-year-old Chicagoan who finds himself chosen to the Locus: a plane of existence within and around our known reality which grants to its eight residents the gifts of healing, health, leisure, and eternal life.

**Méline Dumont** is a 27-year-old native of rural France who was chosen to the Locus from a life of peril and abuse in 1918. She is small of stature but strong of spirit, and often prone to erring on the side of her emotional impulses.

The following excerpt takes place in Jim's Chicago home, immediately after his first traumatic encounter with this strange new existence.

This excerpt contains some language and other content which may not be suitable for all readers.

**For more information, please visit [thelocuscomic.com](http://thelocuscomic.com).**

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PANEL 1. JIM'S HOME, LIVING ROOM, NIGHT, this time the genuine article. Color is drab, lights are off. Dark and cold. Jim and Méline are still facing each other, hands held.

PANEL 2. Jim lets go of Méline's hands...

PANEL 3. Moves to a side table holding a framed photo and a small metal ashtray.

PANEL 4. Closeup of the table top. Photo is of Jim's parents; ashtray holds a ragged matchbook and a man's wedding band.

PANEL 5. Side view of Méline, left, slightly confused; Jim, right, head down, gazing at the ashtray.

1. JIM: I'm going to stay.

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**PANEL 1. Méline, fore, tries to unpack that statement. Jim in background, still turned away.**

1. MÉLINE: <Of course, James. You can stay as long as you—>

2. JIM: I don't **want** the Locus.

**PANEL 2. Jim's face, tears at the corners of his eyes.**

1. JIM: Please tell the others for me?

**PANEL 3. Méline's face; a mixture of disappointment and disbelief.**

1. MÉLINE: <I— I don't understand...>

2. JIM (OFF): I wouldn't **expect** you to.

**PANEL 4. Side view. Méline is gently pleading with him.**

1. MÉLINE: <As horrible as Michael was with you, he was **right**... the Locus is a great gift.>

2. MÉLINE: <Your **every** need is met there. Your days of labor, drudgery, suffering, **all** of it are ended—>

**PANEL 4. Jim turns around, wedding ring in hand.**

1. JIM: Méline, I'm not even **close** to the end of my suffering.

2. JIM: I don't know **why** in God's name this—Locus chose me—, but it sure as shit **wasn't** for my track record.

**continued >**

**PANEL 5. Back to the ashtray. Jim tosses the ring back in.**

1. SFX: CLINK
2. JIM: **A year ago**, when my wife left me, I wanted my life to end.

**PANEL 6. Back to side shot (P4)**

1. JIM: **Four months ago**, when I got laid off after ten years of good work... I wanted my life to end.
2. JIM: I'm shoving **antidepressants** into my face every morning and **drinking** every night...

**PANEL 7. Closeup, Jim, side view. He has turned away again, shaking his head.**

1. JIM: ... and I'm supposed to want to keep that life up **forever**? No, thank you.

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**PANEL 1. Same as previous; Méline places a hand on James' shoulder.**

1. MÉLINE: James...

**PANEL 2. Méline's face; she is clearly angry.**

1. MÉLINE: <Stop **pitying** yourself.>

**PANEL 2. Reverse the perspective; Jim to left, Méline to right. She places her hands firmly over his heart; Jim is taken completely aback, as if she has entered his very mind.**

1. JIM: What—

2. MÉLINE: <I was a **prostitute**, James. Worthless and abused.>

**PANEL 3. Flashback: Paris, 1918; a gaslit boudoir, lingerie scattered. Jim, his back to us, and not entirely opaque, witnesses the scene from left foreground. A large and ill-maintained armoire is prominent, far right; one door is slightly ajar (do we see her hand trying to close it, but fading away?) A hideous man is crashing drunkenly through the bedroom door, bloodied knife in hand.**

NARRATION (MÉLINE): <This was **Darius**.>

NARRATION (MÉLINE): <The mad **bastard** stormed our brothel, and two girls were **dead** before he climbed the stairs.>

NARRATION (MÉLINE): <I was Chosen with **seconds** to spare.>

**continued >**

**PANEL 4. Half-page, nested panels: Outer is Jim, Méline still grasping his chest; he is terrified.**

**4A. The Garden in Prague, Charles clutching at his chest, not a heart attack but surely a prelude to one.**

1. NARRATION (MÉLINE): <Poor **Charles** was horribly overworked... he would have **died** in that garden.>

**4B. 1601: ÁRMANN, seen for the first time, stumbling through the door of a crumbling cottage in Iceland. His leg is bleeding profusely.**

2. NARRATION (MÉLINE): <Ármann was close to death from a bandit's blade.>

*Ármann is only briefly seen in this issue. He is approx. 5'11, muscular, reddish-brown curly hair, hazel eyes.*

**4C. 1998: Rural India. Priya is consoling a malnourished, dying child, looking rather underfed herself.**

3. NARRATION (MÉLINE): <Priya was rescued from **unspeakable** poverty.>

**4D. South Carolina, 1837. Samuel is shirtless, hands tied around a tree trunk, and screaming in agony as a shadowy overseer brutally whips his back.**

4. NARRATION (MÉLINE): <Samuel was one of your country's abducted **slaves**.>

*Samuel is African, around the same age and height as Jim. IN THIS FLASHBACK, he is wan, muscular, haggard. GENERALLY, Average build and maybe a little extra body fat on him. Round, genial face, soft-spoken.*

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**PANEL 1. Back to the present. Méline holding onto that grip. Jim is pale with shock. We do not see this particular vision.**

1. MÉLINE: <Even **Michael**, the, what was it,>
2. MÉLINE: “fucking prick?”
3. MÉLINE: <Watched his young wife **die** in childbirth, and spent forty years **alone** with his grief.>
4. MÉLINE: <Then, just **two years ago**, found love again with a Companion, only to see her **killed** before the Locus could save her.>

**PANEL 2. Méline lets go, steps back. She is visibly shaken.**

**PANEL 3. Jim’s eyes are filled with tears.**

1. JIM: **How** did you... how did I **see** that? and **feel** it?

**PANEL 4. Méline now turns away, anger changing to disappointment.**

1. MÉLINE: <Another **gift** of the Locus. One that I’d **hoped** would change your mind.>

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**PANEL 1. Side view. Méline's turn to bow her head, turned away.**

1. MÉLINE: <All you need to do to exit the Locus and be free of its influence is to cross **back** through your Portal.>

2. MÉLINE: <You have only to **wish** it.>

3. JIM (OFF): Thank you.

**PANEL 2. Méline turns her head back towards us, speaking over her shoulder.**

1. MÉLINE: <But **every** day you live outside the Locus is a day of normal, **mortal** life. You age, you get sick, you get hurt.>

2. MÉLINE: <You **die**.>

**PANEL 3. Back to Jim, who, strangely, is beginning to smile.**

1. JIM: Méline, as hard as this must be to understand, I can't imagine living **any other way**.

2. JIM: I'm **sorry**.

**PANEL 4. Méline turns to face him.**

1. MÉLINE: <James, one last thing:>

2. MÉLINE: <Your Portal brought you **to** us. It can also bring you **back**, if you ever wish it.>

**PANEL 5. Méline is just starting to fade away, clearly saddened.**

1. MÉLINE: <Please be **careful** with it...>

2. MÉLINE: <and with **you**.>

**PANEL 6. Jim now stands alone in his living room.**

**PANEL 7. Closeup of Jim's face, closing his eyes tightly; the room is melting away.**