



PROTEAN LU

You bet monodimensionals would think inter-dimensional travel to be so much fun. Some may even have the notion that working with other copies of themselves would be a walk in the park. You'd love to see their faces once you told them that your next deadline involves preventing the end of the world, no, of all possible worlds.

But first things first. Common sense would suggest that holding the universe together is a job for some law of physics, maybe one that has only been discovered in the most scientifically advanced realities, or the word of some authoritarian god, if you're the spiritual type. But your experience and training have shown the only constant of the universe to be the force of habit. It goes without saying that the Pillars of the Universe (technical term) are people just like everyone else, living in a single dimension (the monodimensionals), with an outstanding preference for routine.

People like Dom, who for a lifetime has been taking the first subway ride in the morning, at the same time, for the same stops, every single day. Dom is your Pillar and you are its Warden, meaning you're the Agent of the Order tasked with checking that Dom clocks in in every possible world. The coherence of the universe is at stake.

What you actually do is spend five minutes a day with Dom, share a subway ride with them to check up on things and then employ the rest of your time removing every single obstacle to their routine. Sometimes you meet with your alter egos, the other Lus that are stalking other Doms in other dimensions, to assess the situation.

There is a rotation in place, set at fixed intervals: You take turns. Each of you goes into the world previously occupied by another Lu, so that you all get to enjoy your multidimensional nature. Or so the recruiting ads say. The actual regulations are more honest: The Order forbids you from getting too attached to a single reality and abhors fraternisation with any of the alter egos of a Pillar. Feelings make people unpredictable and dear old universe doesn't have much patience for surprises.

This all sounds sensible, perfectly logical, mathematical even. Pity that, in the end, Dom is the only constant of your life: You get on the subway, you listen to their stories and you get off thinking that the universe may even make sense after all. Dom is the closest thing to a friend you've ever had and you get along with them better than you get along with yourself. Sometimes you really get on your nerves! But with them everything always seems to go over smoothly, you have a special connection and each five-minute ride reinforces the idea that you've known each other since the beginning of time. It may sound corny, but the truth is that they make you feel like a better person: You're genuinely interested in their life and you really wish them the best. They deserve it.

Now comes the part about the impending end of all worlds. What emerged from your last meeting is that all the Doms are thinking about changing their life. A clean break from routine. No more subway rides. No more universe as we know it. In these cases the regulations prescribe a close rotation: You'll change one reality and one Dom a day, to convince the greatest possible number of them to rethink their decision.

It will be pure, utter chaos.