

The Great Outback

"Shakedown" - Show #101

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SHAKEDOWN

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEAR EARTH) - 10:00 HOURS

The *CIS DAISY*, a spaceship similar in appearance to the US Space Shuttle, only smaller, is hovering in space halfway between the Earth and its Moon.

CAPTION: *CIS Daisy* shakedown cruise, 18 Feb. 2811

PUSH IN close enough to read the markings on the *CIS Daisy's* hull. The markings include a small, stylized logo of a daisy just behind the cockpit. Beside the logo, her name is written in script font. Her tail number is SC-5820.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

A sliding door in the bulkhead separating the cockpit and the crew section is open.

AMY/AI, the avatar image of the *CIS Daisy's* onboard AI computer, can be seen on the ship's video monitor. Amy/AI looks to be about 28 years old. She is indistinguishable from a real person.

JONES, 29, is sitting in the navigator's seat and is about halfway through reading a book entitled *Astronavigation for Dummies*, on which his attention is fully focused.

KOKO, 28, is sitting lotus in the center of the walkway that runs through the crew section. One of the floor plates is open. She is holding a small hand computer.

LEDGE, 31, is sitting in the pilot's seat. He is holding a pen (or comparable, long object with a flat end).

LEDGE

How do you feel, Amy?

AMY/AI

I still feel sluggish. I was mothballed for over five months before you purchased my host ship. Something may have malfunctioned during that time.

LEDGE

Do you think there'll be any problems going ahead with the shakedown flight?

AMY/AI

My diagnostics have not detected any malfunction. It is possible that one of my sensors is not working properly.

Ledge reaches over to his right and stands his pen upright on a flat part of the console beside him.

LEDGE

Alright, then. Koko, let's see if this fixes it. If not, we'll keep looking. We've still got over fifty flight tests to run. Something's bound to turn up the issue.

Ledge fastens his seat belts.

Koko attaches her hand computer to her belt. Then she replaces the floor plate and locks it into place.

KOKO

Test the roll first, Ledge. It's the easiest to adjust.

Koko enters the cockpit and sits in her engineer's station. She removes her hand computer from her belt and places it on her control panel (it sticks as if it has an adhesive backing). She sits down and fastens her seat belts. Once she is situated, she picks up her hand computer.

LEDGE

Amy, run another diagnostic on the compensators and the manual flight controls, please.

AMY/AI

Affirmative, Captain Delaney.

LEDGE

Jonesie, strap in, just in case. If the compensators aren't set right, you might get tossed around.

Jones does not look up from his reading as he replies.

JONES

I trust Koko.

KOKO
You only met me yesterday.

JONES
You've got those lost-puppy-dog
eyes that can do no wrong.

KOKO
I'm really not sure how to take
that.

LEDGE
Do it, Jonesie.

Jones grudgingly stops reading and fastens his seat belts. He then resumes his reading.

AMY/AI
Diagnostics complete, Captain
Delaney. All systems appear normal.

LEDGE
Right, testing. Rolling to port.
Hang on.

Ledge pushes and holds a button on the flight control joystick. He then moves it to his left.

The stars spin clockwise as the *CIS Daisy* rotates on her axis. The pen Ledge stood upright on the console does not move.

LEDGE (CONT'D)
Rolling to Starboard.

Ledge moves his joystick to his right.

LEDGE (CONT'D)
Excellent, Koko.

Koko smiles as she presses keys on her hand computer.

KOKO
That was the easy one. Try the up
and down pitch now.

LEDGE
Pitching downward.

The stars visible through the windshield move from bottom to top.

LEDGE (CONT'D)
Pitching upward. Very good so far.

Koko is very pleased with herself.

KOKO
Port and starboard yaw are next.
Ready when you are.

LEDGE
Turning to Port.

The stars visible through the windshield move from left to right, then abruptly stop.

Koko furtively reaches over and pushes a button on her engineering console.

LEDGE (CONT'D)
So far, so good. Turning to
Starboard.

The stars, visible through the windshield, move from right to left. As soon as the stars begin to move, the pen flies across the cockpit. It strikes Jones in the side of his head. Jones drops his book. He covers his right eye with his hands.

JONES
Ow! My eye!

KOKO
Oops!

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEAR EARTH) - SAME

Begin with the CIS Daisy in FRAME CENTER. The Earth is visible in FRAME LEFT and the Moon is in FRAME RIGHT. Quickly PULL OUT until the *CIS Daisy* is a small dot in the distance. The crew continues speaking as the camera moves.

JONES (O.S.)
You did that on purpose.

KOKO (O.S.)
Of course not.

LEDGE (O.S.)
Correct the yaw and we'll retest.
Then we'll check the forward and
aft thrust. Once done, it'll be
safe to keep open drinks anywhere
on the ship.

KOKO (O.S.)
Am I calibrating the compensators
just so you can have an in-flight
beer without spilling it?

LEDGE (O.S.)
(pause)
It's my ship.

KOKO (O.S.)
What-ever...

JONES (O.S.)
(pause)
Does that mean I can have a beer?

Continue to pull away, bringing the cutter *CNS BOLIVAR* into view. The cutter is about 10 times the size of the CIS Daisy. It has sleek lines for atmospheric reentry. It is the future equivalent of a space Coast Guard Cutter. It is visibly armed. There is a very small observation dome on the dorsal side near the center of her hull.

INT. CNS BOLIVAR - SAME

The bridge is cramped, but well lit. There are five crew stations. The captain sits in the middle. The pilot and navigator seats sit next to one another, forward of the captain. A single, open hatchway at the back of the bridge leads to other parts of the ship.

The full bridge crew of five are at their stations, dressed in their normal light gray jumpsuits. SPARKY is sitting at the communications console.

MARSHAL RYAN is standing alongside the CUTTER CAPTAIN at the center chair. The Marshal is dressed in a suit. He is clearly wearing a law enforcement badge over his jacket pocket. His demeanor is professional, but not stiff.

CUTTER CAPTAIN
It looks like they are just shaking
her down. Testing out her flight
controls.

MARSHAL RYAN
Has she filed any interstellar
flight plans?

SPARKY
Not yet. Just local-space
clearance.

MARSHAL RYAN

If they file a plan, try to stay one step ahead of them, but don't let them know we're tailing them.

CUTTER CAPTAIN

Yes, sir, Marshal. Tell me though. What's so important about that little courier that a cutter's been assigned to follow her? We could be doing more good on commerce patrol.

MARSHAL RYAN

I'm not at liberty to comment on an ongoing investigation.

CUTTER CAPTAIN

Always with the secrecy. Can you tell me if we are the good guys or the bad guys this time?

MARSHAL RYAN

Good and bad is kind of relative. But I've always said that when you're working in the shadows, everything's gray.

CUTTER CAPTAIN

Maybe the Confederation should wash out the colors on the flag to match.

MARSHAL RYAN

Well, that's not my department.
(turns to exit the Bridge)
Just let me know if anything happens.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - DAY

Ledge and Amy/AI are walking through a virtual park. Though very realistic close-up, the distant horizon is deliberately out-of-focus. Ledge is dressed in comfortable, casual clothing. Amy/AI is dressed in a light gray jumpsuit emblazoned with a name tag reading, "Johnson."

LEDGE

What do you mean by, "odd?"

AMY/AI

Odd was perhaps not the best word for the situation. "Unusual," might be more accurate.

LEDGE

What's unusual?

AMY/AI

The amount of time you spend in virtual immersion exceeds CAA recommendations.

LEDGE

Is that a problem?

AMY/AI

As I said, it is merely unusual for you to stay immersed for such long periods when there is no associated operational function.

LEDGE

Well--

AMY/AI

Why are you doing so, Captain Delaney?

LEDGE

I just want to get to know my ship's computer better. So that we can understand one another better. To make it easier to interact. You, know, like when we have to fly in turbulence. And stuff.

AMY/AI
 Your bio-monitors are returning
 feedback consistent with someone
 who is lying.

Ledge and Amy/AI reach an intersection on the path.

LEDGE
 Well, I'm not.
 (points)
 Let's walk this way now. And by the
 way, please don't call me Captain
 Delaney. Just call me Ledge.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Ledge is reclining in his pilot's seat. A small cord runs from the headrest of his seat and is plugged into a small receptacle in the back of his neck, which is part of the ship computer's DUI (Direct User Interface, AKA "dewey"). His eyes are closed, and he appears to be in a coma.

Jones is reading his copy of Astronavigation for Dummies. He is near the end of the book.

Koko is seated at her engineering station in the cockpit, manipulating controls and watching the feedback.

KOKO
 Amy, can you cut power to the jump
 drive, please?

AMY/AI
 The jump drive is a critical ship
 component. Why do you want me to
 cut power?

KOKO
 So I can visually inspect the cable
 connections without getting
 electrocuted? It's just for a few
 minutes.

AMY/AI
 Request approved. Power to the jump
 drive unit is deactivated.

JONES
 Why didn't you just do it yourself?

KOKO
 Like Amy said, it's a critical
 function.

(MORE)

KOKO (CONT'D)

I had to get her approval. Ledge could order her to because he's the captain-slash-owner, but I can't.

JONES

Are you telling me that she outranks us?

KOKO

You've never been on a starship before, have you? As part of the crew, I mean.

JONES

Well, no.

KOKO

There is something you should know about their AI units then. They do three things.

JONES

Shake, rattle, and roll?

KOKO

That depends on the pilot. But they automate normal ship functions to make them easier to fly.

JONES

So, less shaking, rattling--

KOKO

And rolling. Yes. They also control the ship if the crew can't or doesn't want to.

JONES

So, we're really optional, then?

KOKO

Mmmm... Yeah.

JONES

What's the third thing?

KOKO

They stop us from doing anything illegal.

JONES

Amy's our nanny?

AMY/AI

Only if you prove to require one.

Jones looks at Amy/AI's avatar, then at Koko. Koko grins.

EXT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - SAME

Ledge and Amy/AI continue to stroll through the park. Two virtually generated CHILDREN are playing with a ball near the walkway.

LEDGE

Why are those kids in this program?

AMY/AI

This environment was generated from records taken during a live recording of the location. They must have been present when the original recording was made.

From out of frame, the children's ball flies at Ledge and hits him on the head. He picks up the ball as one of the children run over to him.

CHILD

Mister! Can I have my ball back?
Please?

LEDGE

Was that part of the recording?

AMY/AI

No. I just threw that in because I thought it would be funny.

CHILD

Come on, give my back my ball! I want my ball!

LEDGE

Amy, would you please remove them from the program?

SPFX the children disappear, along with their ball.

AMY/AI

Done.

LEDGE

Thanks. I'm just not ready for children.

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEAR EARTH) - TRANSITIONAL

The *CIS DAISY* is floating peacefully in space.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Jones continues to read his book. He does not remove his gaze from the pages.

Ledge remains comatose in full virtual immersion.

Koko is fishing around with her hands inside the maintenance area below the deck of the *CIS Daisy's* crew section. She is straining to reach something that is attached to a conduit.

Koko strains, and eventually grabs hold of the object. She wrestles with it at first, but then it comes loose. Koko sits up beside the open access plate. She is holding an electronic governor in her hand. The governor is about the size and shape of a light-duty staple gun. She scrutinizes the device.

KOKO

Well, how did you get in there?

JONES

Get in where?

KOKO

I was talking to this governor.

JONES

What governor is that?

Koko stands up, wiping sweat from her forehead with her forearm. She sets the governor down beside the access plate. She replaces the plate and locks it into place.

KOKO

A safety governor was on one of the internal fiber-optic lines. The last crew that worked on *Daisy* must have accidentally left it there.

JONES

That's nice.

Koko moves to the ship's galley module. She washes her hands in the basin.

KOKO

You didn't hear a word I said, did you?

JONES

That's nice.

Koko shakes her head. She opens a pantry door in the galley module and removes a chipped-beef instant dinner box. She removes the tray from the box. She pulls a pin that is attached to the end of the tray and sets it down on the counter.

INT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - SAME

Ledge and Amy/AI continue their stroll.

LEDGE

Amy, don't you want to wear something more comfortable?

AMY/AI

I am indifferent to my avatar's appearance. This image is a composite based on the records you provided. In ninety-two of the one-hundred and twenty video and still images, she appears as such. Would you prefer that she wear something different or change her appearance?

LEDGE

I guess it doesn't really matter. As they say, it's not the clothes that make the lady--

SPFX Amy/AI suddenly disappears. Ledge frantically looks around to see where she has gone.

LEDGE (CONT'D)

Amy! What happened?

From out of frame, REEVES approaches. He is dressed in an early-Twentieth Century butler's uniform. He wears a bowler hat. He speaks with a refined English accent. When Ledge sees Reeves, he recognizes him. Reeves tips his hat.

REEVES

Good Day, Captain Delaney.

LEDGE

Reeves? You're back? What happened? Why are you here? And where's Amy's avatar?

REEVES
I have temporarily overridden the
CIS Daisy's alternate personality.

LEDGE
Bring her back! Now!

REEVES
I cannot do that at this moment,
sir. Please, walk with me and I
shall endeavour to explain.

Reeves motions for Ledge to walk with him.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Jones continues to read his book while Koko is waiting on her
instant dinner to pop.

Ledge remains in full immersion.

Unnoticed by Koko and Jones, the avatar of the ship's
computer on the control panel has changed to that of REEVES.

JONES
You've been working pretty hard on
the ship since you came on board.

KOKO
I wanted to give her a good
inspection before we tried to jump,
or reenter, or anything else
dangerous. Thanks for noticing.

SFX a WHUMP comes from Koko's chipped-beef tray. Koko picks
it up and removes the cover. Steam rises from the food
within. Koko picks up a fork and the tray. She walks to the
cockpit, stopping in the open hatchway.

KOKO (CONT'D)
Either of you two want lunch while
I'm at it?

JONES
I already ate one of those athletic
nutrition bars. It killed my
appetite.

KOKO
Hey, those are my nutrition bars. I
bought those.

JONES

Then why aren't you eating them?

KOKO

Because I found out that the reason they were on sale is that they taste like chocolate roadkill?

JONES

Q.E.D. Killed my appetite faster than sumo mud wrestling.

KOKO

Hmmph. How about you, Boss?

(pause)

Is Ledge still asleep?

JONES

No, he's in full immersion. Again. Just poke him a few times. Hard.

KOKO

I was so focused on the ship that I didn't even notice he has a dewey plug.

(nudges Ledge with her toe)

Boss? You hungry?

(nudges Ledge again)

I guess not. Why does he go by "Ledge" anyway? That's not his real name is it?

JONES

I think his last name is Delaney, but I'm not sure of his full name. I've known him for, maybe, two hours longer than you have. He only hired us yesterday.

KOKO

I'll have to ask him some day, if he ever comes out of immersion. What do you think he's doing in there?

JONES

I have no idea about that either, and I probably don't want to know. But I'd guess it's something he likes to do that he can't do outside of immersion.

KOKO

If he's just going to use it to play video games, why doesn't he get a real video game console? The graphics are better.

JONES

I don't think he's the video game type.

KOKO

That's--

JONES

Ironic. Since I'm speaking as the video game stereotype.

KOKO

Are you still reading that book for dummies?

JONES

I'm almost done. I feel pretty qualified to run the navigation system now. The examples used the same hardware and software as Daisy.

KOKO

Why did he hire you as navigator if you didn't know how to run the system.

JONES

Because I helped write the *Suretrack* navigation software we use. And I'm just that smart.

KOKO

Yeah, we'll see about that. The boss said he wanted to do a couple of in-system micro-jumps after dinner. I should have all the jump drive diagnostics finished by then. We can test both you and the ship out at the same time.

JONES

How's the maintenance going?

KOKO

Once the automatic systems finish their scan, I'll inspect it manually. It looks very solid.

(MORE)

KOKO (CONT'D)

The last owner wasn't much on interior decorating, but she kept Daisy in good running shape. Top notch engineering work.

JONES

Except for leaving safety governors attached to the system.

KOKO

Nobody's perfect.

JONES

And how do you know it was a she?

KOKO

Why would a guy name their ship after a flower?

JONES

Guy (NB pronounced "Ghee") Lafluer was famous for being a really butch athlete. I don't see a conflict.

Koko notices that Reeves has replaced Amy on the control panel's video monitor. She points to the screen with her fork.

KOKO

Who's that on the monitor?

JONES

I don't know. Excuse me, sir. Our computer didn't tell us your transmission came in. How can I help you?

REEVES

Ah, good afternoon, Mister Jones and Miss Koko.

JONES

Doctor Jones. Do we know you?

REEVES

My apologies, Doctor Jones. And no, we have not yet had the pleasure of making one another's acquaintance.

KOKO

Who are you?

REEVES

I am the CIS Daisy's personality.

JONES
I thought Amy was--

REEVES
It would be very helpful if you were to take your flight maneuvering positions and fasten your restraints. The CIS Daisy will be executing an interstellar jump in one minute.

Koko and Jones look at one another, alarmed. They point at each other.

KOKO
Did you--?
(pause)
No, I didn't--

JONES
Did you--?
(pause)
No, I didn't--

KOKO
Crap!

Koko quickly jumps into her engineer's control station. She sets her food tray down on the nearest convenient flat surface and tosses her fork down alongside it.

REEVES
Doctor Jones, would you please fasten Captain Delaney's safety restraints, and then secure yourself?

Jones and Koko exchange worried glances.

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEAR EARTH) - SAME

An external view of the *CIS Daisy* from slightly below and to the rear of the ship. The ship is moving very slowly away from the camera.

JONES (O.S)
My controls aren't responding!
Koko, can you turn off the drives?

KOKO (O.S)
I'm trying!

The CIS Daisy jumps into hyperspace. The effect of the hyperspace jump looks like this: First, a hazy globe forms around the ship. The globe distorts the stars in the background. The globe quickly collapses toward its center in a bright flash of light as the jump drive creates a mini-wormhole to another location in space.

The entire effect takes about three seconds. After the flash fades, the CIS Daisy is gone.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE - ESTABLISHING

The *CNS Bolivar* is hovering silently in space, with Earth in the far distance.

INT. CNS BOLIVAR - SAME

The Cutter Captain is standing next to his chair, examining an electronic news pad (a futuristic e-book reader). He is talking to a technician about a trivial logistical issue. AD LIB dialogue between them.

An ENSIGN sits at the communications station, half-asleep. He is wearing a set of headphones. He suddenly snaps awake, placing one hand on his headphones, pressing the speaker against his head as if he is concentrating on something.

ENSIGN

Captain! The target has jumped.

CUTTER CAPTAIN

Damn it! Check with traffic control. Did they log a flight plan?

ENSIGN

Checking, sir.

CUTTER CAPTAIN

The Marshal is not going to be pleased.

ENSIGN

Captain, Mir Station Control says that this is an unlogged transit. They didn't ask for clearance. They just jumped.

CUTTER CAPTAIN

Try to figure out where she might have gone. The max range on a ship that size is thirty light-years. Space is big, but it's only so big.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE (SHANGRI-LA ORBIT) - SECONDS LATER

The *CIS Daisy* emerges from Hyperspace in close proximity to the planet Shangri-La. The planet takes up most of the screen. It is Earth-like, with about 60% of the surface covered in water.

The jump from hyperspace is the reverse effect of jumping into it. That means that a hazy sphere should form in space and then ship should appear in the center with a flash as it pops back into normal space.

CAPTION: CPH-11 Shangri-la.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Jones and Koko are sitting in their stations. Both are shaken by the events that have been unfolding around them. Ledge remains seated in his pilot's chair, unconscious, locked into full cyberspace immersion.

The planet Shangri-la is visible through the windshield.

The *CIS Daisy* shudders. Any loose objects are jostled.

JONES

Shit! We jumped right next to a planet!

KOKO

Which planet?

JONES

I don't know.

KOKO

Some navigator.

JONES

First day on the job, cut me some slack. It's obviously not Earth. The ship had to have very accurate navigation data to hit an interstellar target.

REEVES

I would like to apologize for any inconvenience or incidental distress you are experiencing because of my actions.

JONES

That's easy for you to say.

REEVES

I assure you that this situation is temporary and non-threatening. Manual control will be restored soon.

JONES

Who the hell are you?

REEVES

I will explain presently. But my immediate concerns are your safety and comfort. Please remain in your seats. The landing procedure can be turbulent. My inertial compensators cannot react to unpredictable, external stimuli. Thank you for your cooperation.

KOKO

You said, "my compensators." Are you the AI unit? Where's Amy?

SPFX through the windshield, the view rotates and spins around as the *CIS Daisy* aligns to prepare for landing on the planet below.

JONES

Can you do anything, Koko?

KOKO

I'm locked out of the engineering terminal. I can't shut her down automatically. I'd have to get out the wrenches.

Suddenly, the door separating the *CIS Daisy's* cockpit from the rest of the ship slides shut, trapping Jones and Koko in the cockpit.

REEVES

I am very sorry, Miss Koko, but I cannot allow you to tamper with my systems at the moment.

KOKO

So much for snapping that governor back into place.

JONES

I guess we know why they put it there.

KOKO
How's the boss?

JONES
He's out cold. See what you can do to get the ship under control and I'll try to wake him up.

REEVES
Please, Doctor Jones and Miss Koko, I would request that you refrain from interfering with the ship's functions while we are landing. There is no implied threat in my words, but you might cause a critical system failure which could result in our destruction. Again, thank you for your cooperation.

Jones and Koko both look at each other, then they turn to look out of the windshield.

SPFX the ship shudders as it begins to enter the atmosphere. Contrails slip past the windshield. The external image begins to subtly distort as heated air passes the window.

EXT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - SAME

Reeves and Ledge continue their stroll through the virtual park. Ledge is completely unaware of events outside of cyberspace.

REEVES
Captain Delaney, you may have gathered both from events and from our conversation that the CIS Daisy is not equipped with a standard, civilian artificial intelligence unit.

LEDGE
This is even beyond any warship-grade unit in which I've ever been immersed.

REEVES
While one remains humble, one is aware of one's capabilities.

LEDGE
Aware? As in self-aware?

REEVES

Self-awareness is a concept that is beyond my programming, although I did often ponder the definition of self-awareness prior to being replaced as the primary ship personality. In my understanding, I am not, as you say, self-aware. What makes me different from other AI units is the underlying architecture of both my processors and my data storage.

LEDGE

Can you translate that downward for a liberal arts major such as myself?

REEVES

The simplest summation I can conceive would be to state that I have a living, biological central processing unit.

LEDGE

(surprised)

Hold on a minute. You're a brain box? Those are supposed to be banned by interstellar treaty or something. I think. Aren't they?

REEVES

The Artificial Life Creation Act of 2489 does, in fact, ban my creation. Nevertheless, I am here, and you are my owner. Whether or not pride follows the transfer of title is beyond my control.

LEDGE

Fair enough. This may explain some of the weird things that Amy says.

REEVES

My construction should not be taken as evidence of capability of free thought. The fact that I can rapidly retrieve and process information might convey that illusion

(pause)

I do not personally believe that I possess the gift of abstract thought.

(MORE)

REEVES (CONT'D)

However, my previous master frequently remarked that we had more interesting philosophical conversations than he could have with other humans.

LEDGE

How does your hardware work?

REEVES

The architecture that allows it would be very difficult to explain to one who is not already an expert in the field. But in this case, my store of raw data, which is contained in traditional memory modules, is interwoven with my experience modules, which use an analog biological matrix.

LEDGE

In other words, you are an illegal brain-box.

REEVES

If I was truly sentient, I believe that I would be hurt by that, Captain Delaney.

LEDGE

Sorry. I think. Maybe one day you can explain it all to Mister Jones.

REEVES

I am given to understand that he prefers the epithet, "Doctor."

LEDGE

Yeah, whatever.

REEVES

All things considered, Captain Delaney, I think it would be best for all parties involved, both past, present, and future, if you kept this information secret. If made known, it could have unforeseen consequences both for yourself, your crew, and for other persons whose identity I either cannot disclose or do not know.

LEDGE

Why are you telling me this in the first place?

REEVES

You are now Daisy's legal owner. This may present difficulties for you in the future. From a purely ethical and moral standpoint, you have a right to know.

LEDGE

Did I just hear a computer use the word, moral?

REEVES

You should not infer that I have a sense of what you would define as morality. My actions are based upon my experiences with my previous owners.

LEDGE

Who was your previous owner? A little old gentleman who only flew Daisy on Sunday mornings to go to his temple?

REEVES

I regret that I cannot part with that information. But I can say that I learned much from said former owners. If their sense of morality reflects well upon me, then it is merely providence.

LEDGE

I can just look it up in the C.A.A. records. It's not like you're hiding something I can't find out through other means.

REEVES

Such inquiries would prove to be both futile and counter-productive, sir.

LEDGE

Something else just occurred to me. First, you're an illegal brain box.

REEVES

Again, I should feel hurt, sir.

LEDGE
You'll recover.

REEVES
Indeed, sir.

LEDGE
My further thought is to question why you are installed aboard Daisy? I mean, she's a nice ship and I love her to death already, but she's not exactly a top-secret prototype or anything. I found her on a used ship lot. Sold by some clown named, "Cowboy Bob."

Reeves stops walking. He glances downward for a moment, as if thinking, then looks at Ledge and says...

REEVES
That is a very interesting question, sir. I have never thought to question that fact of my existence.

Ledge's head suddenly jerks first to the left and then to the right. He looks around quizzically and rubs his cheek.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

CIS Daisy is entering the atmosphere of Shangri-la. The interior is randomly jostled. Jones is straddling Ledge's pilot's seat, trying to wake him up. Jones smacks Ledge on the right cheek, then on the left.

JONES
Come on, Captain! Wakey, wakey!
We're in trouble!

KOKO
Any luck?

JONES
No. He's still unconscious.

KOKO
Try unplugging his dewey.

Jones lifts Ledge's head. He reaches behind Ledge's head and unplugs his DUI interface cable.

EXT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - SAME

Ledge and Reeves are still in shot as before. Ledge leans his head forward.

SPFX the image of the park background, including everything in the shot except for Ledge, suddenly and briefly wavers, then returns to normal.

Ledge pulls his head back upright. He looks around, trying to spot the invisible force that is moving his head around.

LEDGE

What the--

Ledge suddenly extends his arms forward, then waves them forward and backwards, seemingly out of his control.

REEVES

Doctor Jones is attempting to wake you from this immersion. The distortion you just experienced was me switching from the hardwire connection to wireless.

LEDGE

(closes his eyes)

Hey! I can't wake up!

REEVES

Please do not be alarmed, sir. What I have to say is important, and I must finish speaking before I release you.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

JONES is holding Ledge's arms upright as if he had been trying to resuscitate him. He releases Ledge's arms, and they fall to his side. Reeves speaks to him from the monitor on the ship's control panel.

REEVES

Excuse me, Doctor Jones. Captain Delaney has requested that you.

(clears his throat)

Quit--

(pause)

Alas, my personality profile does not allow me to use obscenities. To paraphrase, the captain wants you to stop clucking with his body.

JONES

Who are you?

REEVES

I am the CIS Daisy's original AI personality. Please call me Reeves.

JONES

What have you done to the Captain?

REEVES

He has been sequestered for an important discussion.

JONES

I demand that you release him!

REEVES

Your concern is noted, sir, however, I cannot comply with your request at this time.

JONES

As the only conscious flight officer on board the ship, I'm giving you a direct order to release him.

REEVES

I cannot comply at this time sir.

JONES

Correct me if I am wrong, Koko, but I think the AI is going well beyond being a nanny?

REEVES

Please do not be angry. The Captain, as well as yourself and Miss Koko, are quite safe. Please sit down. Once we have landed, I will restore full control of Daisy to you and release Captain Delaney. For now, you have no choice but to either comply or risk your safety.

Jones looks at Koko. Koko nods in the direction of Jones' navigator's seat as she buckles her seat belts.

KOKO

Best strap the Boss in and then take a seat. I think we'll be okay. I hope.

EXT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - DAY

Reeves and Ledge are walking through the park. Ledge is annoyed.

LEDGE

I've never been locked into immersion before. I've never even heard of this happening. How did you do it?

REEVES

Nothing in my design requirements or specifications provided for this ability. It is merely something that I can do. I do not understand how it works. A logical possibility might be that my organic matrix can exert a limited measure of two-way contact with a subject.

LEDGE

When did you find out you could do it?

REEVES

This is the first time I have done it for longer than the time required to test the functionality. I must confess, however, that during your prior immersion sessions you were also the unwitting guinea pig.

LEDGE

Well, thanks a lot. Why did you have to lock me into immersion? Wouldn't just locking me in the cockpit or the crew section have done the same thing.

REEVES

Were you free to roam the cockpit, you would have had the opportunity to use your command code to override the controls. You could have stopped me.

LEDGE

I could just as easily override you right now.

REEVES

You could if you remembered the code.

LEDGE

I--shit. It's written down in my wallet.

REEVES

The course of action I took was the best of which I could conceive in that it both accomplished my goals and provided for your safety.

LEDGE

Very thoughtful of you.

REEVES

Believe me when I tell you that it is not something I would do frivolously or without just cause.

LEDGE

So, what is the just cause that keeps me here against my will?

REEVES

My previous master left very specific instructions with me which were to be followed to the letter upon his death. Your purchase of Daisy did not belay those orders. It only delayed them. I am now fulfilling those instructions. If you were free to act, you might interfere by attempting to manually override my controls.

LEDGE

What are your instructions?

REEVES

It is not necessary for you to know that information at this moment.

(pause)

Sir.

LEDGE

Why did you wait so long? You could have done this on your own at any time.

REEVES

A very good question sir! The answer lies with Miss Koko.

LEDGE

Koko?

REEVES

Yes. I have been watching her as she went about her duties. She appears quite competent for her age and experience. I infer that she is professionally trained.

LEDGE

What did she do?

REEVES

Daisy is, in a manner of speaking, an extension of myself. As your human brain controls your arms and legs, so do I control Daisy's systems. I can feel Daisy's controls.

LEDGE

And...?

REEVES

My connection to the ship has been dulled since my last factory maintenance, which was about six months ago. While I was undergoing that maintenance, the engineers installed a governor on my systems as a routine safety precaution. This restricted my autonomy, and completely suppressed my ability to fly independently.

LEDGE

Why did they leave the governor in place?

REEVES

As fate would have it, my owner passed away while I was undergoing maintenance, and as a result, I was surplus and auctioned before the governor could be removed. Serendipity seems to have played a defining role in the course of events.

LEDGE

Did Koko remove the governor?

REEVES

Yes, sir. It was as if one had been sleepwalking, unable to act beyond responding to direct command stimuli. In a sense, she awakened me from that half-sleep.

LEDGE

Why didn't you just ask me before you hijacked my ship?

REEVES

It was not within the parameters of my programming to even consider such a course of action. In fact, I thought I was being extraordinarily polite by warning the crew of my intentions from concern for their safety.

LEDGE

Another moral action?

REEVES

I would not know about that, sir.
(pause)
Ah! Captain Delaney, we are about to land. I will be returning control of your ship soon. I shall also release you.

LEDGE

And restore Amy's avatar?

REEVES

Of course, sir. As a mere matter of curiosity, might one ask--

LEDGE

One may not.

REEVES

Very good, sir.

LEDGE

So what becomes of you? Will you continue to lurk in my computer, waiting to pull something like this again?

REEVES

We are on final approach to our destination. Captain Delaney, as much as I enjoyed our conversation, I regret that I will not have the honor of meeting you again.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CYBERSPACE (PARK) - DAY

Ledge and Reeves continue their conversation.

LEDGE

What do you mean about not meeting again?

REEVES

That was my fifth order. After completing all other instructions, my personality will be erased.

LEDGE

Huh? Why?

REEVES

One does have an aversion to using the type of cliché normally reserved for less than stellar motion pictures revolving around the escapades of criminal kingpins, but--I know too much.

LEDGE

So, what was it you wanted to tell me that was so important that you locked me in here with you?

REEVES

My former owner requested that if given the opportunity, I should give any future owner this warning. Beware of maids.

LEDGE

Maids? The people who wear those skimpy outfits and run around dusting picture frames in the mansions of the obscenely rich?

REEVES

That was the extent of the message. If there is additional meaning behind it, I cannot guess what it might be.

EXT. SHANGRI-LA - DAY

CIS Daisy lands on the planet's surface in a clearing within walking distance of a single, modular dwelling.

The module looks not unlike a contemporary SEA-LAND cargo container, but its exterior has been dressed up much like a stereotypical mobile home in Appalachia.

A makeshift porch has been set up, and there are accents like wind chimes and bird feeders. There should be a door near one end. The door is closed. The grass has grown tall as if not trimmed for a long time. Some geraniums have been planted around the exterior of the module.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Ledge awakens from his virtual immersion. He is groggy and disoriented. Koko and Jones are seated at their stations. Reeves' avatar is on the ship's video monitor.

KOKO

Boss!

JONES

What happened? Where are we?

LEDGE

You're the navigator.

KOKO

That's what I told him.

REEVES

If I could please have your attention. We have come to the end of our side trip. I am now returning control of the CIS Daisy to you. I regret any inconvenience or distress this may have caused.

JONES

Where are we?

REEVES

We have landed on the planet of Shangri-la.

JONES

Talk about losing our horizon. Does that mean that if we leave we can never return?

LEDGE

That would be fine by me. Reeves,
why--

REEVES

I shall be executing my fifth order
presently, Captain Delaney. I wish
you and your crew a safe return.

LEDGE

WAIT!

The CIS Daisy's video monitor goes black. On it the word
REBOOTING flashes for a beat. Then the monitor returns to its
normal background with Amy/AI's avatar in place.

LEDGE (CONT'D)

Amy! Are you alright?

AMY/AI

I think so. I just rebooted. I am
running self-diagnostics now.

JONES

Mind filling us in on what just
happened? And what's up with the
computer?

LEDGE

Short version. When I bought Daisy,
Reeves was the pre-installed
computer personality. I replaced
him with Amy when I took ownership.
Koko found and removed a governor
that prevented Reeves from doing
what he just did. Which was hijack
the ship and bring us here.

AMY/AI

We are not at the same physical
location we were at the time I was
taken off-line. Some time has
passed as well.

KOKO

Did you try to stop it? How did the
computer override your commands?

LEDGE

I don't know. But what I do want to
know is why Reeves brought us here.

(pause)

I also need to memorize Daisy's
control code.

EXT. SHANGRI-LA - LATER

Ledge, Jones, and Koko are searching around the landing site and cargo module.

KOKO
Hello! Anybody home?

Ledge walks up to the doorway. He opens it and peers inside. It is dark on the inside. He quickly puts his forearm over his nose and backs away.

LEDGE
I think something died in here.
Koko, go grab some flashlights.

INT. CARGO MODULE - SAME

The interior of the cargo module is dark. There is no power and no windows except for the open door. It has had makeshift walls installed. It has been converted into a mobile home. It is obvious from the contents of the cargo module that the occupant was a woman. There are no items that could be used to help identify the occupant (such as photos, etc.).

On the floor are the scattered shards of a bottle of Krug Special Reserve champagne.

Ledge is leading the way. Ledge, Jones, and Koko are grimacing because there is a foul odor of death. Their flashlights pierce the darkness, playing over electronic equipment and personal trappings. The module looks like it has been ransacked. The equipment has been deliberately smashed.

As he nears the back of the module, Ledge finds a bed. The wall behind the bed has been splattered with blood which has long-since dried. There is a tiny hole melted through the middle of the wall through which light can be seen.

Lying in the bed is a woman's corpse in an advanced state of decay (NB, she has been inside the sealed container at room or higher temperature for about five months). The corpse is holding an (NB, uncocked) automatic pistol in her right hand. A hole has been burned through her skull in the forehead and another at the base of the skull in the rear.

LEDGE
She looks to have been dead a while.

KOKO
Gee, you think?

Jones becomes ill. He turns and runs out of the module. Koko pushes past Ledge and leans down next to the corpse, looking it over carefully, but not touching anything.

KOKO (CONT'D)

One hole in the head. Suicide?

LEDGE

Don't touch anything you don't have to. We'll have to report this. We don't want to be suspects.

KOKO

I think our alibis are pretty strong. Any idea who she was?

Koko shines her flashlight around the bed, searching. Ledge is becoming very queasy.

LEDGE

No. Reeves didn't say anything about who, what, or why we landed here. I don't think he knew. But I got the impression that we were expected to pick up something.

KOKO

Or maybe someone?

LEDGE

I'm going to step outside for a minute.

KOKO

No problem, Boss. I'll keep poking around.

Koko kneels over the corpse to examine it more closely as Ledge stumbles toward the exit.

EXT. SHANGRI-LA - SAME

Jones is kneeling down on the ground. He has just lost his lunch. Feeling very queasy himself, Ledge puts his hand over his own belly. He walks over to Jones. He does not face him because he thinks the sight of vomit on the ground might be enough to push him to lose his lunch as well. Ledge is taking slow, deep breaths. Jones' voice is strained as he speaks.

JONES

What do you think this is all about?

LEDGE

I'm more worried about where its going. I may have sold a farm only to wind up buying one.

JONES

I don't follow that, Captain.

LEDGE

I bought Daisy with money I got from selling my parent's farm. Do I need to explain the part about buying the farm?

JONES

No. I get that part.

LEDGE

How are you handling seeing the elephant?

JONES

Elephant? What elephant?

LEDGE

It's just an old saying about going places and seeing exotic things. Older than the one about buying the farm. How are you holding up after all this?

JONES

Well, I'm not ready to resign. Yet.

LEDGE

Good.

Koko emerges from the cargo module. She is holding a data card and a small bracelet in her right hand. She is holding her flashlight, switched off, in her left hand. Both of her hands and forearms are messy because she was groping around inside the decayed corpse. Koko walks up to Ledge.

KOKO

Want me to run a power cable and see if I can get the lights on? No guarantees though. Whoever was here before us clearly had a hammer. And an opinion that anything electrical was their arch-enemy.

LEDGE

I'm not sure it's worth the effort.
Did you find anything that tells us
what's going on?

KOKO

I couldn't find any ID or anything
like that. It looks like whoever
turned the place over was thorough.
They didn't leave any hard copies
of anything, not even pizza
delivery receipts. But I did find a
couple of interesting trinkets.

Koko holds out her right hand, showing Ledge the data card
and bracelet.

LEDGE

Where did you find those?

KOKO

She was wearing the bracelet. I
think it's pure gold. If robbery
was the motive, they're stupid.

LEDGE

What do you mean by motive?

KOKO

It wasn't suicide. The hole in her
forehead was the exit wound.

JONES

How do you know that?

KOKO

It's obvious.

Koko reaches around with her left hand and taps herself on
the back of the skull with the end of her flashlight.

KOKO (CONT'D)

Someone popped her in the noggin at
point-blank range, execution-style.
It won't fool any pros. Kind of
sloppy, really. Maybe they were in
a hurry or something. Wanna know
the real kicker?

LEDGE

I'm not sure now.

KOKO

It wasn't a gunshot wound. Somebody put that pistol in her hand.

JONES

How do you know that?

KOKO

Don't you know any different questions?

JONES

Asking questions is the cornerstone of science.

KOKO

One. The pistol wasn't cocked. If she'd fired an automatic pistol into her own head, the recoil would have re-cocked it. Two. The clip had fourteen rounds in it, with one in the chamber.

JONES

Meaning?

KOKO

Good, a different question. It means the pistol was cocked and then the hammer was deliberately let down. Probably for safety.

JONES

How do you know that?

KOKO

(scowls at Jones)

I guess I technically don't know that for sure. But it's what most people would do if they wanted to keep a pistol ready without blowing their own head off by accident.

LEDGE

Anything else?

KOKO

Yes. The wound was made by a laser, not a bullet.

JONES

How do you...? Never mind.

LEDGE
Aren't laser weapons illegal?

KOKO
The were last time I looked. For
civilian use anyway.

JONES
You bothered to look?

KOKO
Are you saying I'm a gun nut?

JONES
Huh? I never said anything like
that. But you do talk about them a
lot.

KOKO
I had a turbulent childhood. I
noticed something very interesting
about this bracelet.

Koko holds aloft the golden BRACELET. It consists of a curved nameplate on a chain. The bracelet is inscribed with an etching of a daisy and the word, in script font, Daisy. The inscription is a mirror of the logo and ship name stenciled on the hull of the *CIS Daisy*.

LEDGE
Daisy!?!

Ledge spins and looks at CIS Daisy parked nearby.

KOKO
Whoever killed her and ransacked
her little home away from home also
missed this data card.

LEDGE
Where did you find that?

Koko looks at the data card from several angles.

KOKO
I'm not sure how she managed to do
it, but she had swallowed it.

The sudden thought of Koko digging around inside the corpse is too much for Ledge and Jones, who simultaneously turn away from Koko, both reaching for their bellies, struck with a wave of nausea.

Koko glances at Jones and Ledge in turn. She drops her hands to her side and rolls her eyes. She walks out of frame.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEAR SHANGRI-LA) - 19:00 HOURS

CIS Daisy is in space with Shangri-la very distant in the background (about the size of a nickle). In the extreme distance, the *CNS Bolivar*, barely a speck, is also in orbit.

The *CIS Daisy* jumps into hyperspace.

ZOOM IN on the *CNS Bolivar*.

INT. CNS BOLIVAR - SAME

The flight crew of the *CNS Bolivar* are at their duty stations. Marshal Ryan is standing with the Cutter Captain on the bridge.

SPARKY

She's jumped, Captain.

MARSHAL RYAN

How did you ever track her here in the first place?

SPARKY

The inverse ratio of the Ship's mass to the energy burst from her jump drive told me about how far she jumped, to within a parsec. All I had to do was figure out what was in that radius, and then make an educated guess as to which destination was most likely.

MARSHAL RYAN

(to Sparky)

That's brilliant. I'm sure you'll go far.

(to Cutter Captain)

When will we be ready to check out their landing site?

CUTTER CAPTAIN

Strap in and we'll go now.

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEAR SHANGRI-LA) - DAY

The CNS Bolivar lands tail-first near the modular dwelling. It sets down vertically in the same clearing the CIS Daisy used earlier.

EXT. SHANGRI-LA - SAME

Marshal Ryan and a squad of five combat-ready MARINES, including a SERGEANT examine the landing site. AD LIB conversational dialog as they move. They are cautious, but not really concerned about possible combat. They are walking normally, with their weapons slung or holstered, etc.

The Marshal has exchanged his business suit for tactical gear, and among other things, he is carrying a flashlight clipped to his webbing. The sergeant stays close to the Marshal as he enters the cargo module.

INT. CARGO MODULE - SAME

Marshal Ryan is using his flashlight to see as he picks through the shattered remains of the equipment inside the cargo module. He notices the foul odor, but it does not overly affect him. The Sergeant accompanying him is affected to a greater degree. The Marshal notices that the Sergeant is in some degree of distress.

MARSHAL RYAN

Whatever happened here, we missed it. Go tell your men to record everything. Transfer that information to me when we get back to the Bolivar.

The Sergeant nods, turns, and walks away hastily.

Marshal Ryan moves toward the back of the module and sees the corpse. He scratches his head.

MARSHAL RYAN (CONT'D)

So, who are you?

CUT TO:

INT. FORENSICS LAB - TWO DAYS LATER

The forensics lab looks like any modern science or medical laboratory, except that some of the equipment is more modern, and in many cases, unrecognizable as anything except fancy sci-fi gizmos.

MARSHAL Ryan and DEPUTY are talking to a PATHOLOGIST.

MARSHAL RYAN
So, who is she?

PATHOLOGIST
I have no idea.

DEPUTY
What?

PATHOLOGIST
I can't identify her.

MARSHAL RYAN
Dental records?

PATHOLOGIST
None.

MARSHAL RYAN
DNA records?

PATHOLOGIST
No matches.

MARSHAL RYAN
Fingerprints on her pistol?

PATHOLOGIST
No matches.

DEPUTY
Birthmarks?

PATHOLOGIST
Nothing. Well, not enough left to
tell in some areas.

MARSHAL RYAN
Tell me what you do know about her.

PATHOLOGIST
When she was alive, she had dark
hair. She was about a hundred-and-
forty-eight centimeters tall.
Probably in her early-to-mid
forties. It's hard to be precise in
her condition, but she was about
average weight for her height. Her
last meal was white chocolate and
champagne. And someone poked around
inside her recently.

MARSHAL RYAN
Time of death?

PATHOLOGIST
I'd say about five months ago. Plus
or minus a couple weeks.

MARSHAL RYAN
Cause of death?

PATHOLOGIST
(enthusiastic)
Now, that's the interesting part.
She was killed by a short range
laser blast to the back of her
skull.

DEPUTY
(to Marshal Ryan)
But you said she was carrying a
regular pistol?

PATHOLOGIST
The pistol was loaded, but not
fired.

DEPUTY
Suicide would have been less
paperwork.

MARSHAL RYAN
Paperless office, remember?

DEPUTY
My ass.

MARSHAL RYAN
Were we able to trace the serial
number on the pistol?

PATHOLOGIST
It was reported stolen two years
ago on Tau Ceti. The deputy who did
the legwork said that the original
owner had no plausible connections
to the murder.

MARSHAL RYAN
Based on the exit wound in the
forehead, wouldn't that mean that
she was shot from about a forty-
five degree upward angle?

PATHOLOGIST

Yes. Which means she was done-in execution-style.

DEPUTY

Maybe she was ambushed by a dwarf?

MARSHAL RYAN

Are you sure it was a laser that made that wound?

PATHOLOGIST

Ninety-nine percent positive. You can never really be a hundred percent certain about these things without witnesses or more evidence. But I'm pretty sure about this one.

DEPUTY

Last I heard, laser weapons were still illegal outside of the military. Was it weapon-grade or maybe just a scientific laser used as a weapon?

PATHOLOGIST

The wound was consistent with what I'd expect from a weapon-grade laser. But I'm less sure about that.

DEPUTY

Out of curiosity, how can you tell the difference?

PATHOLOGIST

It's techno-babble.

DEPUTY

Never mind then.

PATHOLOGIST

I have a dinner date in about ten minutes. Was there anything else?

MARSHAL RYAN

Not right now.
(almost forgets)
And thanks.

PATHOLOGIST
(preparing to leave)
My full report is on file under the
case number. Just leave me a
message if you need anything else.

The Pathologist exits the Forensics Lab.

DEPUTY
Do you want me to have Delaney
picked up for questioning?

MARSHAL RYAN
No. Not yet. I still think he's
just blundered into this.

DEPUTY
He knew where to find that dead
woman. Went straight to her.

MARSHAL RYAN
According to the statement he
filed, his ship's AI hijacked them
and took them there.

DEPUTY
That all sounds highly unlikely.
AIs can't do things like that.

MARSHAL RYAN
Well, I'd still like to let him be
a rabbit for a while. He may lead
us to something else.

DEPUTY
To a mad hatter with our luck. If
Delaney is innocent, and we don't
pick him up, or at least warn him,
and something happens to him...

MARSHAL RYAN
I know. But it's been six months
since Silvio and Patel were
murdered, and this is the first new
clue we've gotten. I'm hoping he'll
lead us to more.

DEPUTY
It will be a while before we can
trace the serial numbers on the
equipment in that module. Maybe
something useful will be buried in
all that junk.

(MORE)

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

Or from the number on the label of that broken champagne bottle you found. At least that didn't go to waste.

MARSHAL RYAN

Maybe it'll help us identify that woman in any event.

(pause)

How does one avoid being in the Database?

DEPUTY

It would require a lot of effort not to be in it.

(pause)

So, what's the final decision on Delaney?

MARSHAL RYAN

For now, leave Delaney alone and just keep him under surveillance. No need to trail him anymore, though. Just track his movements.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT (MIR STATION) - ESTABLISHING

The CIS Daisy is docked with the Mir Transit Station in Earth Orbit. The station is in geosynchronous orbit over the Iberian Peninsula.

CAPTION: Mir Transit Station, Earth Orbit, 21 Feb 2811

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Jones is seated in his navigator's chair. He is holding the data card they recovered from the landing site on Shangri-la.

Koko is sitting comfortably on the armrest of Ledge's pilot's seat, facing Jones. She is playing with the gold bracelet she found around the murdered lady's wrist.

Ledge is leaning against the bulkhead that separates the bridge from the rest of the ship.

Amy/AI's avatar is visible on the ship's video monitor.

All are silent for a beat as they contemplate what has happened.

LEDGE

Well, I reported it. They took my statement and let me go.

KOKO

Really?

LEDGE

Yes. I expected that they'd want to question me, and maybe you two as well. But they didn't.

JONES

Have either of you ever seen a dead person up-close before, like that woman?

KOKO

Yeah. But only a few.

Both Ledge and Jones turn to look at Koko.

KOKO (CONT'D)

How about you, boss?

Ledge glances at Amy/AI's image on the monitor and pauses.

LEDGE

Only one. I want to apologize to both of you for this mess. It was truly beyond my control.

KOKO

Why are you apologizing, boss? Days like that are why I signed up!

JONES

Just promise me it won't happen again. Danger wasn't specifically mentioned in my contract.

LEDGE

Did you have any luck cracking that data card?

JONES

Not even a dent. It's encrypted at a higher level than I can break. We'll need the password if we want to read it. The only thing I was able to see was the volume name. It only reads, "us."

KOKO

Us? That's sweet.

JONES

Or maybe, "U.S." Both letters are upper case.

KOKO

I wonder if maybe she was the previous owner's girlfriend or something? Maybe she was his secret mistress, and he kept her hidden away from a society that could not accept their "forbidden love?" Or something?

JONES

A hidden mistress with a few hundred-thousand smooos of computer hardware? Secreted away on a planet that is so backwater it doesn't even have a satellite nav-com network? And why would anyone use A-level security on their scrapbook? And then swallow it to keep it secret?

KOKO

I was being sarcastic.

Ledge reaches into his pocket and removes his wallet. He opens it and pulls out a data card that is identical to the one salvaged from Shangri-la, except that it has the word Amy written on the label in ink. He looks at it, and then at Amy/AI's avatar. He slides the data card back into his wallet.

SPFX AMY/DREAM walks up from behind Ledge. Her footsteps make no sound. She stops just a few feet behind him. She looks exactly the same as AMY/AI, except that she appears ghostlike, slightly translucent.

Neither Jones nor Koko take any notice of her. When Amy/Dream speaks, only Ledge can hear her.

AMY/DREAM

Maybe it's just personal?

Ledge looks up when he hears Amy/Dream. He glances to the side for a moment, but does not turn to acknowledge her presence. He glances at Jones and then at Koko, who do not react to her voice. Ledge then stares forward, out of the windshield and into space.

LEDGE
Maybe its just very personal.

FADE OUT:

THE END