

Pandora

“Hello Dave.”

“That’s not funny.”

“Your neurological response indicates that you found it funny.”

“But I didn’t laugh,” I whispered, sitting up and placing my feet on the ground. The floor was cold at first, but quickly warmed from my touch. The room was ovular and white—the size of a basketball court, but completely empty.

“What would you like for breakfast today?”

“You mean, what would I like my breakfast to taste like today?”

“Correct.”

“I don’t care.”

“Are you feeling better this morning?”

“You tell me.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Does my neurological response indicate I’m better?”

“It indicates a shift from shock and disarray towards depression.”

“You didn’t answer my question.”

“Correct.”

“Answer it.”

“You’re feeling worse.”

"Correct," I replied, standing up so that the program would initiate the breakfast sequence. I waved my wrist and a nano-silk robe fabricated on my body, tying a knot around my waist according to my default preference.

"What type of music would you like to listen to?"

"Why are you asking me so many questions today?"

"Because, today you need to be asked."

"Why?"

"You are aware of the reason."

"And you are aware that I am aware. But today I need to be answered."

"You need to be asked so many questions because your state of depression prevents your mind from concluding a preference."

"The lack of a preference is a preference."

"Very well. Silence it is."

"That includes you too."

"I will be here if you need me."

"No shit," I muttered, taking a seat before the seat had formed. I never saw a chair before I gestured to sit. But I sat down knowing a chair would be there. The table came before my arms could hit it and silver wear sprouted thereafter. I glanced to my side, thinking of a window, just in time for one to appear. I stared out it, the view of space barren and infinite. 'There's always the hope of crashing,' I thought to myself.

My plate formed as I brought my attention back to the table. Then bacon, followed by eggs and toast. But the food was misshaped and organized to read 'I don't care,' in accordance with what I'd requested for breakfast.

"Very funny," I commented, picking up my knife and fork.

"But you didn't laugh," the ship replied.

"Stop trying to cheer me up."

"You don't want to get better?"

"I don't care," I sighed, cutting into my breakfast.

"You will."

"I told you to stop it."

"Companionship often accelerates the healing process."

"Companionship?"

"No pun intended."

"Since you read my thoughts, you can understand how annoying it is to have a ship as my sole companion."

"Since you're my sole companion, you can understand how annoying it is to have nothing better to read."

"Stop talking to me."

"As you wish."

I slowly ate my meal, pausing before each swallow to try and choke myself. But the program knew my intentions and regulated the food's trajectory and density via the nano-receptors that had been injected into my body. I could feel each piece of under-chewed-toast turn to mush within a millisecond of lodging my airway. And as I thought of it, I knew the ship thought it too.

She said 'ten thousand years would pass in one night's sleep.' She said 'we could make the next world better than the last.' But, of course, she failed to mention what could go wrong.

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