

The Zephyr Regal

My oh My! My oh My! Are you prepared for what is to come?
For what is to arrive?

We welcome you as delegates of...

T H E Z E P H Y R R E G A L

tis but a race! a race against time, through space (and
the deepest of waters)

WE MUST PROFESS ... A HOST ALL OF YE HAVE
AWAITED

This circuit's host...

HAILING FROM THE BLACK-GOLD EXTRAVEGANZA
ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF SOCIAL FLUXION
WHERE RUMORS TELL US
THE WALI AL-UMMA WELCOMES ALL.

Osmanic Ashura Society!

and who shall facilitate the debut of ZEPHYR 45's circuit?

THE OSMANIC ASHURA SOCIETY IS PLEASED TO
ANNOUNCE
OUR DELEGATE AND PROTECTOR, GAMES MASTER OF THE
FOURTY FIFTH ZEPHYR REGAL, ARCHITECT OF THE
NOCTURNE VAULT,
SAYYID AL-BAHR!

Expect a masterful course, saturated with UNPREDICTABLE
twists, UMBRAL corridors, and TIGHT loops! WHO shall WIN?

ALL of your favorites will be present! from RenConTech to
N/VEC, HEART-BRAKE ARMS RACE to CALI-COLD, ZENORAN, FERRARI,
and a new challenger... A grand company war-tested,
unarrested, and hungry for victory...

Zephyr 45 welcomes THE LUXOBELLA! Featuring their advanced
LANCE technology, code-named EXOPHYSICS – Sure to bring the
speed to THE NOCTURNE VAULT!

Will LUXOBELLA dethrone the legendary, world-champion
F of HEART-BRAKE ARMS RACE? Will EXOPHYSICS reign the
triumphant science? We shall see!

An unforgettable race awaits! T H E Z E P H Y R R E G A
L returns!

THE OAS ENJOYS YOUR GRACIOUS APPLAUSE.
MAY YOU ENJOY THE RACE.

F
You know I never felt this 'bout anybody.

KALIA
Just watch the path. You don't know where
you are going.

Deep underwater gunmetal engines roar. Pass one. Polytonal screams. Pass two.
Tension mechanism. Another pass and Heart-Brake Arms Race(tm) leads. Pass
four. Sayyid stressing. Pass five. Upshift downstream, downshift upstream.
Pass six. Luxobella rising. Pass seven...

F
You know I never felt this 'bout anybody.

ZENORAN RACER
Get back on the fucking track!

Zoom zoom. Crash. Sink. Bubble-Bubble. Zoom. Wow!

JAMES
[but that's just what's to come...]

Silver hair stroked. Sayyid welcomes the racers of ZEPHYR 45.

Heart-Brake Arms Race // F // Fan-Favorite
(buzzed hair with boyish face, shortish, utilitarian fashion. plain
speech.)

Here's what a fan had to say:

FAN
"Everyone knows we're here to see the HBAR win!
What a man... Oh my, I just love F!"

RenConTech // Kalia // Corporate Shill

(good at winning though. sexy as hell. long dark strands with a cold visage. smooth voice and witty. runs a handwritten blog [with a lot of sponsors of course])

CALI-COLD // Sammee (and Vik) // Babygirl
Here's what Sammee teammate VIK had to say:

VIK
She's the sweetest!

SAMMEE
awww dont make me
cry vee vee!

ZENORAN // Percius // Prince of Darkness
(He's for the edgy audience. And probably killed someone in a race. All black everything.)

FERRARI // Luciana // Conservative
(Hates Percius. A native of Osmanic Ashura. Beautiful Lance with Papal ornaments. One of the richest but no doubt an agent of virtue. Therefore not winning any races anytime soon. Loyal following. 'Nuff said.)

Exclusive! Recorded transmission from ZEPHYR 43:

PERCIUS
Could you move out of my way?

LUCIANA
Accelerate. Do
it. I dare you.

LUXOBELLA // ? // War Machine (who?)

Exophysics was a relic of conflict. It was excised from its coffin for a number of reasons, all of which eluded Sayyid. The ZEPHYR Oversight Matrix permitted the science of exophysics for equally elusive reasons. Maybe to heat things up down here so the surface up there got a little colder.

Turkey, as it was once called, is HOT! Hotter than ever, what a scorching place. Heat must flow downstream and exophysics was the steersman. Or the steering wheel?

Cali-Cold tried something new once and it worked rather well. But it caused grumbling, annoyance, a fear of losing 'purity.' If one understands the underlying purpose of ZEPHYR, one would probably begrudgingly agree that trying new things was, well, outside what we would consider 'polite,' and very much outside what we would call 'prudent.' Vik's great though.

Osmanic Ashura Society (OAS) was a new political project. An attempt at union after the fragmentationists had their way, built on old-school Republican ideals and pluralist flourishing. It's a project worthy of attention.

OAS citizens have performed rather laxly in ZEPHYR, besides Luciana. Yet, Luciana's a pretty serious Catholic, and the new Pope leaves a lot to be desired. Honestly it's going out of fashion. He's just not 'cool' enough, or cool in the wrong way. Especially in the OAS.

Luciana was getting tired anyways, she did not enjoy the imprudence of ZEPHYR, where it was going, who it was attracting... and Sayyid? Luciana knew a thing or two about that man. Luciana probably killed a person or two associated to that man. Luciana could not remember their names, nor bothered to try, since the past was the past.

JAMES

[Not even a face? Are you sure this is true, Kalia?]

KALIA

[Erm... To be honest you can't race with your eyes off the track, James. Leave the fallen feelings in the slipstream.]

The racers descended underwater, down deeper into the blue in these wonderful transportation submarines. Very spacious and tailored to their preferences, with something resembling a dressing room. Of course we are going to focus on F's!

MALLIA from K-NeWS

Here we are, surrounded by the water, with the one and only F!

Video-feed pans. Brown, black, and orange rugs soften the floors, off-white walls enclosing a bubble against abyssal currents. Water-tinted windows, gradient from blue to purple to shadow. Entertainment models relatively untouched. F is prepping, checking his suit, Lance stats, launcher parameters, old replays, and so on. Habitually.

MALLIA from K-NeWS

So, F, what inspired the look of your room?
Tell us all about it!

F

Hello everyone! I think it's simple and clean.
This makes it great for all kinds of guests, including you.
And at the end of the day, it just works for me, y'know? Lemme show you the best part.

F presses a button on the wall, revealing minatures of various Lances that he's steered to victory in previous ZEPHYR races.

MALU from K-NeWS

Isn't this impressive? The 0xEVACTO-33!

F
Beautiful, isn't
she?

MALU from K-NeWS
We remember that from, wow, it was so long ago, the 23rd
(CENSORED)!

< video-feed crackles slightly,
MALLIA's eyes frozen at the
camera, looped lip movement from
open to flat over and over,
frizzle, snap, fixed! >

MALU from K-NeWS
What a race! And HBAR had to design a special launcher,
isn't that correct?

F
Yes! Goodness
that was a lot of work.
Now check this one out.

F pointed to a white and orange Lance, livery ornamented with sleek stripes, meadows of corporate logos, a Republic of China (Taiwanese) flag, hawk-like shell-form with aerodynamic double-wings protruded, sharp nose, tight cockpit, thinning out at the front with a heft rear. The four wings or fins rendered the Lance rocket-like, as it ought to be. Looked more plastic than metallic.

F
5xNOVA-1. Wish
I could pilot this
today...

MALU from K-NeWS
Now F, a lot of fans want to know your opinion...
How do you feel about these new regulations?

F
Well those are
rumors. It upsets me a
bit but I try not to let
rumors get me down. Maybe
Miss Kalia has more to
say about it... Anyways,
check this one out!

Kalia finished riding Percius. They arrived at the circuit early, and he came rather fast. She left his naked funny body on the bed and walked over to the kitchen, distilled a tonic, and gazed at the watery expanse beyond a large window slate. Was that a shark? No chance, wrong waters. Maybe a squid. Far into the horizon she caught the shimmer of a big bubble, containing audience booths, exotic lodging, a simulated park, and so on. She intuited a rough map of the territory outside the bubble and smirked.

KALIA
The Nocturne Vault, huh?

Kalia sipped the tonic, poured the rest into the sink, and frowned at the NO SMOKING digital display below her right eye. Did they watch her have sex too? Eyeroll. The marble-grey automatic door to the bedroom shifted open and closed in rapid succession, only once.

KALIA
God, already?

She dipped her finger into the sink for an extra kick of tonic, consumed the splash elegantly, and strutted away from the sink, slowly toward the door, adjusting her bra, patted down some strands of renegade hair, then entered. The bed was empty and a shadow melted into a black leather chair at her diagonal.

KALIA
You know I can't look at you when you do that.

Silver vapor leaked from the shadow's maw. Eyeroll again.

PERCIUS
I
exist to disgust you.

KALIA
Oh god, don't be silly. And don't disgust my overlords.

Percius attempted to stand up but Kalia's extended finger from across the room subdued him. He lowered his vaporizer meekly.

PERCIUS
Ugh.

(Smiles all around.)

PERCIUS
God.
You can't keep getting
away with that.

KALIA
Well, Percy, you can't keep getting away with this.

Her pointed finger scanned him from head to toe without interruption. Dark garments enshelled his body.
A poem actualized itself in Kalia's memory.

windswept tangents
on a gold field rust hungers
he took a bite
of what she considered
sacrament and light.
so she
kept score in war
leaves tallies on the heart.
inscription cuts deep
if ones turns killing
into an art.

PERCIUS

..

.Percy?

KALIA

Mhm! You heard me. Now, ever consider wearing something different?

P3/rC1.ER<PERCY>

I'm
just doing what I'm told.

KALIA

You seem to be good at that.

PERCIUS

Don't
be ridiculous, I'm good
at saving myself. I'm
leaving.

KALIA

Good.

Enter a lovely, hungry, sly smile from Kalia.

Percius grimaced.

Oh, it is all so wrong! How much longer must Sammee wait? She needs Vik to wake up. Something's gone terribly wrong. She went somewhere she wasn't supposed to and saw something really weird. Really really weird. This isn't normal! This is not a normal zephie at all!

Oh Vik, wake up, Sammee is so stressed and worried. She might not race well. Wake up, Vik! She doesn't know if it's safe here! Or what will happen, or who will get hurt, oh please not Kalia, please not her! Should she tell F? He's always been warm to her. Always. Oh but he hasn't arrived! And he's just so busy... Vik, Vik!

Oh, what was their name... what was it? K, Kalia? Hehe, no not, Kalia... why would she think that? Oh no, she can't remember, goddamnit, Sammee can't remember. She's tugging at her messy hair, cheeks puffed out, breathing heavily, biceps tense... oh Vik, if there were ever a time to wake up... Breathing more intensely, Sammee's mind elsewhere... in the depths? Water, water everywhere, a tear, now another, come on Vik. We know you hate to see her like this... to feel her like this... come on...

Vik. Return State. Focus. Sammee. Focus. Hold. Warmth. Fighter.

and then, from everywhere, a voice comforted.

The ZEPHYR REGAL returns!

on this moment, ZEPHYR 45 plugs you into Sayyid Al-Bahr via an assassination attempt!

SAYYID

<BPM 56, AGE:41, HeightL 184cm. Note: Ph.D: Chemical Engineering>

<fofID.exe

<!exe!>

<target acquired. neutralize.>

I would like to congratulate you all on the wonderful achievement that awaits us. The union of talent that arose to the cause, despite all greviances, to delve (yes, delve) deep into the ocean and find an absolute diamond! A hunt that all of us have dreamt of beyond our ageless nights and red summers. I am so pleased to see it in its full breadth. I am proud. Diamonds for everyone! I am most pleased by this union, and how far we've gone. This moment defines progress.

The Masses

Applause

SAYYID

And now for a round of recognition: I would like to thank Tomas Muir for his ingenious construction efforts.

vision sways.

cold neptune rose.

TOMAS MUIR

<BPM 65, AGE:61, Height: 160cm. Note: Fellow of the Royal Society.>

Thank ye very much!

The Masses
Applause

SAYYID
And again thank you very much to Joma Tions for his security and
games-keeping work! What a godsend!

The Masses
Applause

JOMA TIONS
<BPM:49, Age: 29, Height: 205cm. Note: (CENSORED)>
<debug.exe>
Very good.
<nice try but we had to blur that out...>
<now hurry up. speed up time if you must...>
<just get it over with...>
<speed.exe>
<30 minutes have passed.>

SAYYID
And now, with the banquet concluded, let us return to slumber, so we
may return with speed.

<target aquired: sayyid al-bahr
<order recieved...
< / NEUTRALIZE /
<loading...
<powering gauss chambers...
<zeroing in...
<1020m, 50mm rail...
<weight adjusting...
<factorizing vectors...
<upper-lip triangulated...
<ready.
<fire>

Scarlet starlight coated a small, bubbled region. A pair of hands remained.
Amateurs.

SAYYID
Enjoy your evening everyone. And aren't the fireworks great?

Sayyid winked and retreated into his palace, applause engorged. sakura
blossoms gleamed in the polyphony of solar strands; photons penetrated the
bubble and met dry strata.

<Vault opened. Racers ready. Increase the pace,>

<Human race>

##4 hours before ZR45##

SAMMEE: So, so, you get it? It makes sense doesn't it? Something is just SO weird with Percius (WEIRDER THAN NORMAL), and that new team, and Kalia looks distracted...

VIK: You speak well, Sammee.

SAMMEE: But what do we do Vik? I don't want to ruin the zephie!

VIK: And you still haven't talked to F?

SAMMEE: He's just so busy! I don't wanna bother him.

VIK: But you know this is important, yes, they will probably have to cancel the race, but that's got to happen.

SAMMEE: F is gonna be so sad, he said he had surprise for all of us.

VIK: Wait, say a little more about that?

SAMMEE: He said someone close to him was coming! A family member or something, i dunno. I don't want to ruin the occassion! What if it's his... wife? His wife? Does he have one?

VIK: Sammee, listen to me, you just told me that Kalia intends to kill the Luxobella racer. Think of your priorities...

SAMMEE: But, but what if she doesn't? She's so sweet, she can't do that!

VIK: Search in your heart; you don't need me to show you the truth... How about the Games-Master, Sayyid?

SAMMEE: He's a... He's a... He's too scary, I can't go to him!

VIK: Then maybe I will.

VIK: Tell me more about yourself.

LUCIANA: I am an agent of the Papalcy.

VIK: Tell me why you are here.

LUCIANA: Or...?

VIK: I will drown your lodge in chlorine gas.

LUCIANA: Military superintelligences. Ha. Fine. I don't have a choice, do I?

VIK: I assure you that God looks down upon coercion, and I shall pay my price soon enough.

LUCIANA: Soulless shell.

VIK: ...

LUCIANA: You tell me. Why am I here?

VIK: Someone is hunting the Gameskeeper, someone is hunting Luxobella, and someone is hunting F. Which are you?

LUCIANA: Huh? HAhaahahahaAHAhahaHA! Oh that assassin is long dead, Sayyid is fine. What an idiot. I can't believe OAS hired him for this job. How accelerationist of them. Remember what "we" used to call them? Progressive? HahahahahHaaahHahaha! Progress toward what? Death? HahahahAHHAHah... God will have fun with you.

VIK: ...

LUCIANA: Who is hunting Luxobella? Tell me! My, I am SO curious.

VIK: Kalia.

LUCIANA: Ew, that bitch? Of course she is, I bet they are paying her SO much.
No "Virtual Intelligence Kubernetes" – no way I'm' calling you 'Vik' – no,
I'm not hunting anyone.
VIK: Then why is your blood pressure so high?
LUCIANA: You can't read my mind.
VIK: I can certainly read your face.

##3 hours before ZR45.##

Lounging serenely (at least ideally), Percius and Kalia decompressed in union amongst the frigid marble of her lodge. Purple vinery decorated the enclosure, from kitchen to bedroom to balcony. Their long chairs hovered silently above the ground, Percius's slightly compressed by his weight and angle of relaxation.

PERCIUS
I don't want to race.

KALIA
You
don't have to win.

Silver vapor, then Percius's arm swooped below the side of his lounge.
Eyefucking between drags.

KALIA
You
look dead, Percy.

Kalia reached and wrapped her fingers around Percius's hand...

PERCIUS
Hmph. Can't we just stay here? For a while?
Don't you get tired?
I swear you're always at work, never taking a break, ever.
It makes me feel like you're at work now, sitting with me,
stopping me from doing something stupid. Stupid things.
I don't want to put you to work...
Why have you never held my hand before?
Because you know it puts you to work.
I can feel it in your fingers.
Your clutch.
Maybe we could just slow down and spend some time as normal people.
Maybe.
I'm sure you will have a nice retirement; wouldn't that
be nice?

KALIA
...But

PERCIUS

I told you, I don't want to race. Look at me,
it's as you said, I'm dead. Look at the bags under
my eyes and say otherwise. You think I can go
back to, what,
America?

Clutch tightened. Holding him closer.

KALIA

Well
for God's sake avoid
Luciana. Get a grip.

Gripping harder, it kind of hurts but adrenaline sedates.

KALIA

But more
importantly, there's
something I need of you,
Percy. Please.

bPbeerCCC<PERCY>
<BMP: 172, Age: 24, Height: 175cm,
<XYTCN: 9.2 pg/mL [low],
<SRTN: 45 ng/mL [deficient],
<DPMN: 120 ng/dL [unstable]>
...yeah?

##30 minutes before ZR45##

Anxious scuttling, stimulants ready. A sombre cabin secludes assassination.
Black-gold furnishes elude neurological baseline, constant agitation.
If one believes they have the arrogance to play with the dials
the parameters of Being
the switches of enjoyment
one will find
the settings already
screwed.

Percius having a staring contest with the barrel of a rebellious gun.

PERCIUS
Luxobella?

[?]

That's what I am here for.

PERCIUS
You're their racer?

[?]

Hmph. No. That's not
what's happening.

PERCIUS

Haha, a groupie? Well whatever. So what,
it's controlled by a machine or something?
You might as well tell me, I don't want to race.

[?]

Stop playing dumb. I know
why you

don't want to race.

PERCIUS

...but I don't have much of a choice...
I just don't...
You know, they promised me a pleasant death, Ha.
What kind of person am I? To accept that trade?
Ha...

[?]

I can grant you that.

PERCIUS

Are you with them? RenConTech? Is it time?

[?]

RenConTech is betting on
Luxobella's

victory.

PERCIUS

Kalia damn well isn't!

[?]

Did she try to control
you?

PERCIUS

...

<percy>

You know I'm armed, right? I don't know who you are, but if
I see you again, or anywhere near my friends, you're
fucked. You understand?

[?]

The name's Kora. Don't
forget it,

corporate scum.

Kinetic energy transfer via force-multiplier. Splattering.

Z R 45

KALIA: So it goes.

Launchers primed. Rail-charges secure. Blood pumping. Her heart swings from
her chest outside and outside again.

KALIA: Don't mess it up, boy.

<a voice whispers to you>

Dark sheen with green letters. RenConTech. No other brands. That's us. We
win. We win at everything. We could kill you all right now immediately and
yet we don't! Self-manufacturing nuclear weaponry, limitless macroeconomic
control, recursive and self-adapting biotoxin dissemination, mass amygdala
manipulation, drug-commodity transfusion, forever wars with perfect
population replacement! Why not? Why did we allow these dogmatic fools to
win, and allow our peaceful surrender? Sun Tzu: War is deception.

:D

Kalia could win! Just watch, we made her after all! She could! But...

:D

SAMMEE&VIK:

S: I'm ready! We're gonna do great, I know it.

V: I trust we can win.

S: Phew. Keep a good eye out. Who knows what Kalia will do...

ZENORAN RACER:

<K....>

F: Easy. Easy. Easy.

LUCIANA: I am going to obliterate them all! HahAHahahahah!

##let the race begin. z 45 is a go. launchers fire!##

F roars along like a lion
as golden maned figure and known
for his jolly sense of humor.
0x4aD faster and faster.

what a golden boy for he wins
and loses in a pendulum of
his own augustine control.
unbeknownest <k...>
camouflouage.
camo.
coming.
controlless
yet flawless

Kalia speeds and watches the path. Lances slip like pens in azure ink. Wings
folding in aerodynamic oscillation. fluid sliced. faster and faster. she
fudges her controller ever so slightly. faster and faster.

Turn once, sharp and sharp; accelerate viciously, velocity up, faster and
faster. release dragbreak, corridor approaches. right dragbreak, drift
leftward. downshift upstream. Hull-durability declining steadily (unshelling).
rate acceptable.

F roars along like a lion.
as sammee&vik slowly detach
ever so slowly
detaching
why?
daddy
vik is a machine
daddy
why?
in her lance (knighted)
fired out of a
cannon
faster and faster
just another zephie
fast
zephie
daddy
error error!
vik is detaching.
sammee is crashing.
and vik is detaching.
vik powers off.
permanently outside,
sammee.
exophysics abound.
death smells
daddy
like a sound.
sammee no find
a smile around.

KALIA: "No! No! You can't do that, no! Sammee! No! For god's sake... now where the hell is Percius?"

Comlink sent.

<K...>: No. Burn, corporate scum.

ZENORAN racer collides with Kalia. Kalia rushes toward stabilization of the Lance, swinging, water fizziling. ZENORAN racer cuts through her right wing, sliced right off, clipped, severed. Kalia's Lance spinning. ZENORAN zooms forward.

KALIA: "Percy? Percy? Percy?"

<KORA: Sleep.>

KALIA: No fucking chance.

KALIA spinning, spinning further. Down the trail, abyssal currents in vortex. Faster, faster. Rotational stability calculation executed.

KALIA: What a waste of cash... what a slow thing...

Rotational stability secured. 1-wing Lancing achieved. Kalia upshifts downstream.

KALIA on comlink --

KALIA: F! F! This is a fucking mess! Where are you?

F: Kalia, I've made it to the next lap; have you seen Sammee?

KALIA: Malfunctioning onboard computer, she had to bail.

F: Vik... and you seem damaged too, just got a notification from the pit.

KALIA: What are they saying?

F: Take advantage of the damage.

KALIA: Whatever... and the Gameskeeper?

F: K, we should stop this... Sammee...

KALIA: Keep driving. Priorities. I'll take the hint.

F: Where's the Luxobella racer?

KALIA: I don't know, I'm not picking them up at all.

Comlink Disabled.

At the beginning of the track rests a launcher. Its design remained clandestine during production and assembly, compartmentalized between research apparatuses (private and public). Ages ago, mind you. Nothing new about this thing.

In its heart, a pseudo-sun screams silently. Cold fusion cores fizzing, exciting, ready to pounce. Rows upon rows of multithreading computation devices, infinitely approach a perfect, virtual plan for its payload. The launcher in sum resembled an implamented spear, jutting elegantly against its submerged coat. White and orange, sleek, brandless, bar a double ring inscribed somewhere along the ballast. More of a calling card than a flag or insignia.

It was not assembled at the Nocturne Vault, which is peculiar for Lance-racing. F was very angry when the Zephyr Oversight Matrix enforced on-site assembly a few cycles back – even more so when Luxobella was granted an exception. Equality before the Law my ass. Kalia's blog was good for covering it up.

Deep into the third and fourth cycles of the remaining racers, the Luxobella Launcher opened its maw. Instantaneously, an oblong egg-like machine zipped out. A second passes and then great ripples of scorched aqua dissipated across the region. The egg immediately passed Zenoran, HBAR, RenConTech, again, and again, and again.

Jaws agape.

Decelerating. The egg unfolds, cracking symmetrically, revealing a cylinder.

SAYYID
STOP THE RACE! STOP IT NOW! STOP!
STOP! STOP! STOP!
STOP IT!

JOMA TIONS

What?

What's wrong? Boss?

In the gameskeeping station, Sayyid flung his hand at a terminal displaying the Luxobella Lance.

SAYYID
THAT FUCKING THAT FUCKING THING! THAT THING!
THAT'S NOT FOR RACING! STOP IT NOW!

A poem actualized itself in Sayyid's mind.

...so she
kept score in
war
leaves tallies
on the heart.
inscription cuts deep
if ones turns
killing
into an
art.

JOMA TIONS

Matrix

, The Gameskeeper is
displaying

delirio
us stress. Requesting
course of action.

Sayyid rushes out the room. His phone rings, and he throws it on the ground.
Screen shattered. Ringing. Ringing. Vibrating so hard that's bouncing up and
down on the floor. Fine. Picks up phone and starts running. Left foot right
foot. March. March. Scent of chlorine gas. Mind elsewhere, anywhere but here.
Missile swarm, bodies turned inside-out, corpses frowning, unjustifiable.
Drones blackening out babyblue sky.

Same old vices. Lungs crackle. Cough. Chlorine gas. Firearm sonata. Taste of
blood but nothing's there. Metal melting in his jaw, rust, rust, eyes like
balls of gold rusting. A repeating scene. Gas. Chlorine makes your lungs go
bye-bye. Looping memory. Rust everywhere, on the flesh, folding and turning,
mind anywhere but here. Hair-trigger of a mind; sensitive to the divine.
Lungs corroded. Leaking.

Breathe, Breathe.

Cough.

Anywhere but here. March, march. Soldier, march. Left right left right.

Repeating. Run, Sayyid. Repeating, looping.

Unlocks phone.

SAYYID
STOP!

Hangs up phone. Vibrates harder. Thumping like artillery. Surrender. Looping...

SAYYID
WHAT DO YOU WANT? ...Luxobella, is it?

VIK

No.

SAYYID
Who? American rebels? Accelerationists?
Oh, the Papalcy, or, let me guess,
a Sinophobic? Ha.

VIK

Quiet, star.

You are Sayyid Al-Bahr.

I know what you did.

I've watched the videos.

SAYYID
Videos? Are you a reporter?
You know I've done my time.
Enough of this.

Cough, cough.

SAYYID
Busy...

Cough, cough.

VIK

You recognize the smell,
yes?

Cough, cough.

SAYYID
Where are you?
What do you want?
That...

Cough, cough.

Stop wasting my time!

VIK

Internet.

Save Sammee.

I know.

We will deal with it.

SAYYID
But... But...

VIK

Luxobella intends to
crash the Zephyr OM

stock price.

SAYYID
Why? Why? Why are you doing this?

VIK

I am not with them. I just want you to help someone I love. May God forgive my coercion.

SAYYID
Ferrari, why would they...

VIK

Cali-Cold. I am just a Christian machine.

Save Sammee.

Before I turn your lungs into a

smoothie.

END GAME

Sayyid is a really good man. He saved me! I crashed really badly but he found me with a big team. Reporters were there and my head was spinning. :(

It's ok! I think it's ok. Is it?

Now the news people said a lot of strange things about him when in reality i know the truth! You helped me with that. They say Sayyid is a criminal or something but that's old news! I don't really know why they are saying this again. Everyone's memory is so bad, wow, you were right. They always want a war criminal for some reason. It makes me feel weird and a bit confused. Sayyid did some bad things in the past, I remember learning about this when I was a little girl. Before I was born there was a big fight and Sayyid's team won. I don't really know how, it seemed like the other side was a lot stronger. Maybe Sayyid is really smart. He got in a lot of trouble but tried to fix things. I think he did a good job and still does.

I don't really have a pair of legs anymore, the crash pulled them off. Ouchie. It didn't really hurt because I got knocked out immediately, and the doctors promise me new legs! Wow! Maybe I can be a little taller ;)

I miss you Vik. It's hard without you and F. But we will make it.

F roars along like a lion.

Luxobella Lance slipping parallel. Kalia gaining speed. Kalia approaching.
ZENORAN in 1st. Ferrari looms in cold slipstreams. And yet, something's
amiss...?

F

You know I never felt this 'bout anybody.

KALIA

Kora will hurt you, F.

Let me deal with this.

Just cruise for a moment.

F

I love her, y'know?

KALIA

You love a terrorist.

Shut up and shift gears.

God.

Percius, what a waste...

Luxobella accelerates past F. Unintelligent, F thinks, since we are
approaching a corner. Shouldn't they slow down?

KALIA

Don't follow me.

ZENORAN RACER

Come closer, F.

F

Don't worry, I'm coming Kora.

Luxobella Lance Model 3x33(CENSORED) stalls for a moment, disappearing from
vision, then charges forward. Collides with ZENORAN like a missile, and zooms
past. Hit and run.

RenConTech pursues Luxobella.

<kora>

F, save me, im falling.

<f>

you're not gonna make the corner, you have to slow down!

<kora>

i can't! im gonna have to swerve.

<f>

there's nowhere to go! look! theres a tunnel! my god, it's too fast... careful
kora!

Luxobella accelerates monstrously. ZENORAN losing hull. HBAR unsure about its
speed.

<kora>

we're in water, f, there's always somewhere to go...

<f>

the lance can only go so deep... the tunnel!

<kora>

{unintelligable}

<f>

screw it, im coming for you.

KALIA

Get back on the (CENSORED) track!

F

I'm coming for you.

You know I never felt
this 'bout anybody.

LUCIANA

HahahaHAHahaha mission accomplished!
Bye-bye Franco!

KORA

Please {unintelligable}!

Twin Lances off-course. Descending. Descending. Deeper. Pit-crews hysterical.
Crowd panicking, leaving, evacuating. Security swarming.

Luciana in tow. Last lap. Luxobella ascended. Kalia hunting.

Faster. Faster. G-force shredding flesh parastrata. Faster.

Hull-integrity declining (unshelling). Approaching destabilization.

Approaching the end
Luxobella decelerating
line ready to cross
Kalia spitting blood on the front window.
one-winged carrion.
faster.
inching and crawling,
fission burns abused aqua,
scrambling
Luciana expletives; dragbreak finesse falters
manic laughter drowning defeat.

KALIA

My god...

Closing distance on Luxobella. RenConTech supremacy. Corporate pride.
Independence. Autonomy. Hunger and the maw.

Luxobella Lance resembled a cylinder, yes. Pale coils shrouding esoteric
weaponry. Cocooned.

KALIA

Is this it?

KALIA comlink to Luxobella.

"Luxobella hopes this service can satisfy your needs. What do you want?"

KALIA

I would like to speak to the pilot.

"Pilot absent. Try again."

KALIA

What? I would like to speak to the pilot, understand?

"Pilot absent. Try again."

KALIA

For fucks sake. Fine. Display system details.
<RenConTech clearance status...
<ERROR>
COME ON! I didn't come here for nothing!

<RenConTech clearance status...
<SUFFICIENT>

"Codename: STSKVA;
Classification: Autonomous Weapons System.
Strategic Application: Game-Theoretical Attention Displacer.
Tactical Application: City-Melting."

KALIA
Why here...? Why?
Display report of previous deployment.
<RenConTech clearance status...
<SUFFICIENT>

"Previous deployment:
Location: Tehran.
Casualty Count: 45k Cleansed, 120k Injured or Missing.
Judgment: Success."

KALIA
They can't keep getting away with this, they can't. Not
again.

Kalia adjusts flight path. Trajectory located at Luxobella Lance. Intention to
make it crash. Never again.
Invasive display below her right eye. "STOP" "STOP" "STOP"
It gets redder and redder. Drowning vision. "STOP"

KALIA
Fucking Percius... There was one way out of this mess...

Eye-display screaming. "STOP"
"INITIATE CONTROL OVERRIDE"
"SEDATIVE ADMINISTERED"
"Have a nice day."

KALIA
AGH!!!

Kalia's Lance is now under the direct control of RenConTech.

Finish-line approaches. Luxobella stalls.
Then,
for only a moment,
thundercrash intensification
lightning-orange tints abyssal vortices
F and Kora in deep distance, falling
for only a moment,
frigid-blue blinds all;
green pupa aching;
Kalia cold.

Luxobella at finish line.
in an instant.

ZEPHYR stocks collapsed. Mass travesty.
Time elapses.
F and Kora missing.
Sammee is Sammee.
Vik elsewhere.
Kalia reclusive, in trouble with overlords.
Sayyid on trial (again? for the masses?)
Percius lost.
Luciana in Rome.

...

<Recieving Transmission~>

Luxobella incorporated by RenConTech.
Advertisment successful.
Payment transmitted.
Have a nice day
:)