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VIVY: Fluorite Eye's Song Prototype 1

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Special thanks to Devil and LoremIpsumVerb for
providing and transcribing the raws.

「 P r o l o g u e 」

—He could hear singing. A song was playing. A song was... reverberating.

“Haah...! Haa~h...!”

Out of breath, the man frantically scurried within the building, wherein resounded a singing voice.

Sweat on his forehead, an earnest expression on his face. Yet he was sluggish. His stance poor, the lack of ordinary physical exercise now haunting him was clear to even the most untrained eye. His feet could tangle and collapse at any instant.

However, the man was desperate. He was earnest, with his life on the line. He was running the fastest run of his life.

At the very least, his ardour alone was genuine.

“Gh!”

Dashing towards the turn in the path, he crashed into the wall, unable to curve his trajectory. His crushed shoulder bore dreadful pain. He may have fractured a bone or two. But it was not a matter of concern. He was grateful that his energy did not diminish.

At the same pace, right ahead as though tumbling, he leapt into the room like a bullet.

“Pull the shutters down!!”

A moment following his hoarse bellow, a shutter fell upon the entrance of the room like the step of a heel.

His conduct entirely ignored the security mechanisms that should've originally been activated. However, the man did not bat an eye and stood up, advancing forward, towards the interior of the room.

Behind him, on the other side of the shutter, echoed the sound of multiple gunshots.

The disaster prevention shutter was built with sturdy durability, but it shan't last long when continually faced with attacks questing after destruction.

“No matter. It won't take any time.....”

—The preparations were already complete.

"— —"

However, whether they were perfect was another matter.

Simply put, only the basic minimum required preparations were ready. The present circumstance made it difficult to mobilise them. Even so, that he'd managed to come this far was nothing ordinary. It was the consequence of many sacrifices.

His back turned towards society, stones thrown at him, with sympathy from no one, he scurried all by himself.

With simply one promise, and the sense of purpose as a human— one last thing in the end, the obstinacy of a father.

“System activation, execution sequence... all green.”

His fingers on the computer terminal before his eyes, a vast amount of data was being processed.

A deed evidently exceeding the limits of mankind. Naturally, such a task was beyond him. Hence, the man was not alone. He could not have made it all the way here by himself had it been any other way.

The credit for allowing the man to reach this place, for making such absurdity come true, belonged to a single person— nay, a single collaborator.

Seizing the systems of the facility, they had offered support to this man's slow legs, just so that he could reach this point. They had done so despite knowing full well that it would make for a one way trip, and this was quite possibly the time they parted ways with life.

—Truly a failure of a father he was. He appeared abominable to himself.

“Space-time coordinates, set. Project『Singularity』— first stage, complete.”

In contrast to the despondency that had taken hold of his mind, the man's body managed to complete 90% of the tasks imposed on it.

Before his eyes, on the monitor whose display changed with every touch of the man's finger on the terminal, rows of infinite numbers and letters were jumbled together, seeking to materialise the *Miraculous Folly* which concentrated all of humanity's scientific skill.

In reality, nobody so far had provided proof for this sitting abstract theory.

Desperately searching for any means available, in a one-strike, no-holds-barred game with everything riding on it—

"—"

Eyes closed, he inhaled.

The monitor before his eyes awaited the final push— that is, the moment the enter key would be pressed.

With that single push, all answers shall come to light.

Whether the path he chose was correct or not, it shall all be proven.

"...No, that's meaningless, isn't it?"

What he wished to prove wasn't whether his actions or conviction were right or wrong.

To begin with, the answer regarding that had already come forth. —He was immensely mistaken. He had continually committed wrongs.

Hence, what he sought was not to affirm his correctness, but a different answer, sharing no boundaries with correctness.

Making many a mistake, erring more often than not, mankind remained beyond rectification. Yet, that same intelligence which continually made foolish choices desperately also scurried in an attempt to overcome them.

What he sought was a conclusion. Whether what lay ahead of his resistance was the end or the beginning.

—In these moments, the man's hand touched the gateways of judgement shaped like a keyboard.

"—"

In his rear, piercing shrill reports echoed as the shutter basking in blind gunshots was sent flying. The door of meagre bulletproof quality was easily blown off, as the efflux of gunpowder smoke streamed into the room.

He grasped, from the terribly metallic resonances, that many entities were now stepping foot into the room.

Neither shall he turn back.

The man— Matsumoto Osamu, simply stationed a finger on the enter key.

"—Humanity. The future... I leave it in your hands, Vivy."

Matsumoto's finger pushed the enter key with all his might.

The countless sequences of letters being displayed on the monitor altered with fearsome vigour, activating the program denoted as *Singularity*.

It mediated the network, connected to the world, borrowed the strength of immense electrical energy, and opened a hole in space-time.

Wrenching it open, ramming itself within, flowing, cascading upstream. —A torrent of information erupted.

This was an arrow of counterattack, donning the form of luminescence.

Aimed directly ahead, the fired arrow shot straight out from Matsumoto's hand, bolted away from the harnesses of the world, and surged forth towards its locus.

"With this..."

His lips loosened with fulfilment, Matsumoto cast his eyes downward.

Behind him, guns had trained their sights on him. He had not even the time to turn back.

Successive gunshots echoed, the fragrance of gunpowder effectively enshrouding the room.

—Now, the die was cast.

Chapter 1: "The Songstress, Vivy"

1.01

—An unanticipated datalink brought with it a faint disturbance to the singing voice.

“—”

Albeit, its effect lasted for a mere moment.

The noise, so slight that it did not even register in the logs, was instantly swallowed by the heat reigning over the hall and disappeared. That was how overwhelming the wild enthusiasm— no, the peaceful excitement that filled the event hall had been.

"Nialand" was an enormous theme park which was hailed as the best in the country, and the event hall within the park, able to accommodate more than a thousand people, had all its tickets sold, as the spectators, men and women of all ages, directed their attention to the stage.

Toward the *Songstress* singing atop the centre of the main stage, monopolizing the gazes of everyone—

“—”

To an outsider, this peaceful wild enthusiasm would appear as an eccentric spectacle.

An audience exceeding a thousand people, including young children, yet none of them made a sound. They couldn't possibly intrude upon the song. They were simply dazed by the singing voice.

“—Vivy.”

Someone amongst the audience murmured so, like a breath bedecked with admiration otherwise impossible to voice.

Vivy— that was the proprietor of the singing voice that captivated a great many on the main stage. The being manifesting a singing voice one wouldn't think belonged to a human, was verbatim not a *Human*. She was an AI.

Frame number A-03, alias *VIVY*. —That was the identity of this songstress.



The beautiful singing voice and ability rendered an audience of thousands speechless, as they listened in ecstasy with stupefied expressions. That was precisely what the true worth of the *Songstress* Vivy, the utmost new AI brought forth by humanity, was.

“—Thank you for your kind attention.”

As the beautiful rhythm came to an end, Vivy quietly bowed on stage.

Only the tenderly bowing Vivy's voice echoed in the deathly silent hall. Before long, the spectators slowly accepted the denouement of the magnificent time spent— a few seconds later, thunderous applause incessantly rained.

The spectators raised their voices in excitement, some shed tears, some remained immobile from stupefaction. However, regardless of the disparity in their reactions, it could all be encapsulated as commendation toward Vivy.

Basking in their commendation, there was a change in Vivy's smile, and she bowed towards the spectators.

Her gesture augmented the enthusiasm and applause in the hall.

"—"

Upon turning her eye camera towards the wings of the stage, she could see the hall staff members, who had been on stand by, clapping their hands or holding autograph boards in appreciation.

At that sight, with the accomplishment of her mission, Vivy attained a quiet sense of relief in her cerebral cortex.

—Even upon bringing a close to the great stage, the *Songstress* Vivy's role was not yet over. The work of a *Songstress* didn't end at singing on the stage.

“That was so moving, Vivy!”

“Your voice had an even more relaxed pitch today. You made us proud.”

“T-Today was the first time I bought a ticket! Please shake hands with me!”

Following the closing of the stage, Vivy was chased by the established fan meet.

The fan meet held after the event was an opportunity to interact with Vivy only select members of the audience chosen via lottery could participate in. For Vivy, as an AI unbeknownst to fatigue, this was a precious part of her work.

“Thank you so much. Please look forward to the next stage as well.”

Her lips smiling, head tilted, she executed interaction with the visitors with optimal and calculated motion.

Following an exchange with the smiling Vivy, the participants, regardless male or female, left the hall in satisfaction.

“—”

Vivy's supple, slender silhouette was the implementation of the *Ideal Songstress* visual model computed through a vast online survey, undertaken by the developing corporation OGC.

More than ten million people answered the survey, and Vivy's appearance, calculated to be satisfying to 86% of the responders, could potentially make a favourable impression to 90% of people on Earth according to calculations.

Above all, contrary to such endeavours of the corporation in her construction, Vivy continued to have first-hand exchanges with her fans when her cerebral cortex was not particularly designed to have potential for such self-driven calculations.

“—Say, Vivy. Today, just once, didn't you start thinking about something else midway through?”

—A young question yielded a momentary pause in Vivy's calculation circuits.

However, the pause was a matter of only a literal moment. Vivy immediately rebuilt her smile, the pause lasting less than a couple of seconds.

“No, Momoka. No such thing happened.”

“Eeeh, reaaally?”

The lovable young girl, her age about ten, conceived doubt in her eyes at Vivy's response.

The young quirky girl, her dark brown hair parted and tied up into two ponytails, pouted her cheeks red like apples, her eyes illuminating as if peeking into Vivy's innermost mind.

“No, Momoka. You can't trouble Vivy.”

“Eek! Geez, Papa!”

The misgivings of the young girl—Momoka—were interrupted once her father, standing immediately behind her, scooped her up. Held up and being tickled, Momoka's puffed cheeks loosened as she heartily laughed with a high-pitched voice.

“So sorry, Vivy. Momoka's always giving you so much trouble.”

“No, it is not an issue. Thank you for visiting the park this year as well, Kirishima-sama.”

Momoka still in his arms, the father apologised to her with a pleasant expression. Being regular patrons of Nialond, not only Momoka, but her father as well were close to Vivy.

This father and daughter of the Kirishima household made it a habit to participate in the memorial event held in Nialand every year. The memorial event celebrated the day of Nialand's opening, and along with that—,

“—Now, Vivy. Happy birthday!”

“Thank you, Momoka.”

It was also Vivy's formally established birthday.

Hence, when she walked around the park as a cast member on this day, the amount of people reaching out to her was also far greater. Though giving gifts during movement was forbidden, many congratulatory gifts were delivered to the present box installed in the hall and she had been informed of the successive gifts being brought in inside in the waiting room.

Thus, the opportunity to hand over a present to Vivy was also exclusive to this fan meet. Gift boxes had already been accumulated behind Vivy, Momoka's present counting among them.

“Kirishima-sama, is your wife not accompanying you today?”

“Yeah, about that. My wife's actually...”

“Mama is hospitalised right now! Momoka's little sister will be born soon!”

Vivy questioned upon noticing the mismatch of the amount of people compared to last year's record, to which Momoka responded energetically. For but an instant, Vivy reflected on the potential impoliteness of her question, but her lips soon relaxed with an “oh my”.

“My warmest congratulations, Kirishima-sama. Momoka, I am glad for you as well.”

“Mhm! Once my little sister's born I'll have her meet you too, so look forward to it, Vivy!”

“Yes, I very much look forward to it. I will also sing for your dear little sister for certain, Momoka.”

“Wah.....!”

Delighted by Vivy's answer, Momoka's eyes twinkled as she blushed. After which the young girl pointed towards the present she had handed over to Vivy, her nostrils flaring in excitement,

“Thank you, Vivy. Try opening the present too!”

“Yes. Please wait for a moment.”

Smiling at Momoka's impatient conduct, Vivy gently peeled the present's wrapping paper off. Thanks to precise programming, the movement of her fingers was on a level where even embroidery was possible for her. Opening the packaging of a present was but an effortless task.

“Isn't it cute? It's a watch of a cute little bear.”

Wrapped therein was a multi-purpose watch modelled after a bear cub— a multitask watch. Made of soft, light material like a plushie, but also an excellent article functioning not only as a watch, but also capable of surfing the internet connected with a computer terminal.

Regardless, all of those functions were standard equipment Vivy was furnished with as well. Nothing about it was particularly novel or contributory to Vivy's daily life. However—,

“—Yes, it is very cute. Thank you very much, Momoka. I shall cherish it.”

Glancing back onto Momoka's smile, Vivy answered whilst positioning the cub beside her face. Subsequently exchanging a glance with Momoka's father, she enquired “Is it truly alright?”

“Yeah, no problem. Momoka loves you too, after all.”

“I love Momoka as well.”

Given approval with a smile, Vivy spread her arms wide and hugged Momoka's young figure.

Vivy's artificial skin scrupulously replicated the sensation and texture of human skin. The lubricants streaming within her body regulated the temperature of her skin, approximately maintaining that of a human body, making for a warm embrace.

And at the close of their hug, Vivy brought her forehead to Momoka's.

“—”

Overlapping their brows and touching each other's fringes was no untypical deed for AI. It was natural for AI to converge brows and execute a datalink. As a result of this, many AI preferred this gesture when in contact with humans as well, who did not need datalinks.

Within the currently short history of AI, this was a spontaneously reared habit, and Vivy was no exception to this preference.

“—Momoka, what I'm going to tell you is a secret.”

“What is it?”

“The truth is, in the midst of singing I fell asleep for a short duration.”

“Huh.”

Momoka blinked her spherical eyes in utter astonishment upon Vivy's confession, her voice so soft as to be silent.



「はい、可愛いですね。」

「ありがとうございます。モモカ。大切にします」

「네. 귀여워요」

「감사합니다. 모모카. 소중히 할게요」

「可愛いでしょ。クマちゃんの時計だよ」

「귀엽지. 곰인형시계야」

A secret confession solely between the two, not to be heard by anyone else. Smiling at each other, the two put a finger on their lips together.

—Momoka was able to tell the subtle alteration in the singing voice beyond the normal range of human hearing. She could perhaps grow to be a revered musician in the future.

Extraneous to any AI-esque calculations, Vivy envisaged a baseless future of such kind.