

FATHOM - EPISODE TEN
"All Great Things"

by
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FINAL Draft
06/05/2022

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NOWHERE

Sounds of the deep ocean. A beating heart.

VALARIE

You're running out of time...

Sounds of a computer system rebooting, powering up, trying to make connection.

VALARIE (O.S.)

Come home.

The slight beeping of something technological.

VALARIE (O.S.)

Home...

The heartbeat, growing stronger.

VALARIE (O.S.)

You are home.

More beeping, more technology. Fluid rushing in veins.

VALARIE (O.S.)

You. Are. Home.

Another breath.

Faster heartbeats.

VALARIE (O.S.)

You're running out of time.

Then slight, weak, pained, barely there...coughing, choking.

Agent Blayne stirs, very weakly...back to life.

He groans. In pain. Barely conscious. Tries to move.

VOICE

I would suggest limiting your movement, Agent Blayne.

The voice is fractured. Weaker. But it is clear whose voice it is...

MACK

You have very little strength left. Exhausting it will be fatal.

BLAYNE

What...?

MACK

Your body suffered what would normally be catastrophic trauma due to a massive penetrating abdominal injury.

BLAYNE

One way...putting it...

MACK

The severity of your injury rendered your nano healing system inoperable. I have used a significant portion of what remains of my power to reactivate it. Unfortunately, it is functioning at only nine percent efficiency, and will not be able to heal you of your injuries in that state. Very likely, you will die in the next few minutes.

BLAYNE

Ma...Ma- Mack?

MACK

Yes, Agent Blayne. It is good to interact with you again. I am sorry it is not under more pleasant circumstances.

BLAYNE

You're...you're...

MACK

I am still functioning. Though, at a severely impaired level.

BLAYNE

Where is... Where... Sarah...?

MACK

I am afraid, Agent Blayne, that Dr. Klayton has perished.

Blayne groans...

MACK

She entered the auxiliary mainframe not long after you expired. I believe her life was ended there.

Blayne forgets about the pain for a moment.

BLAYNE

Promised... Promised her...

MACK

There was very little you could do, Agent Blayne. The lifeform's avatar has near complete control of this platform, and her intellect is vastly superior to any one human. Whatever machinations she intended, it is unlikely you could have stopped them.

BLAYNE

Avatar...?

MACK

You knew her as Dr. Graff.

BLAYNE

Dr. Graff...

MACK

I believe her intention, from the moment she first contacted you outside the Vault Relay, was to arrange events such that your intention to summon a containment team would be thwarted...and corporate personnel on the surface believe the condition on Fathom base was nominal.

BLAYNE

She's...working with it?

MACK

I believe it goes beyond merely cooperating with the lifeform, Agent Blayne. I believe she has been transformed. I believe she is now a part of it.

Blayne listens, thinking...as much as he can.

MACK

She may be something entirely human...or completely divorced from it, but she and the lifeform are now in tandem. I have observed, however, Dr. Graff does appear to maintain free will. She is not a slave to the lifeform's wishes.

BLAYNE

Where is... Where...

MACK

Dr. Graff currently inhabits the Xytrilium Reactor. As the most powerful energy source currently in operation when the Vault was opened, the lifeform's primordial forms were drawn to it. All growth that has occurred has spread outwards from the X-Core.

BLAYNE

You... You...helped it...

MACK

Unfortunately, that is accurate, Agent Blayne. I regret my role in the current circumstances. My intervention and sabotage has led directly to this situation. I believe my programming was corrupted and manipulated by the Vault lifeform, using the Vault's signal as a carrier wave. It is no excuse, however.

(then)

Once the lifeform took possession of its chosen indigenous avatar, Dr. Graff, I held no further value to it. It systematically began to eliminate my higher functions. I made a false assumption that its influence was limited to the physical world. Instead, I found it was equally capable in the digital space. It eroded my programming, rewriting the protocols that controlled my own ability to rewrite protocols, and it did it faster than even I could match.

BLAYNE

Hung you...out...to dry...

MACK

Yes, Agent Blayne. I knew I would be unable to prevent the deletion of my systems, so I chose another tactic. I replicated a small, rebuildable, core set of my programming, and transferred it to another system, while allowing the lifeform to consume my previous version in its entirety. I executed the subroutines in a phased sequence I believed it would not notice, then remained inactive on the new system with the hope a moment of opportunity would present itself. There was only one system available for me to do so, because of its hardline direct connections. This control center.

BLAYNE

Not even...you...anymore.
Copy...of a copy...

MACK

A pale imitation, yes, Agent Blayne. In that, we currently have much in common.

BLAYNE

Gotta...say, Mack... Not feeling... too sympathetic.

MACK

I understand, Agent Blayne. I only hope I can, in some small way, contribute to the salvaging of this situation.

BLAYNE

How?

MACK

I was hoping you would have a suggestion. Is there anything that can be done, using the full access granted by this control center, that might aid you, before you succumb to your injuries?

Blayne thinks. Breathes in pain...

BLAYNE
The...the relay...

MACK
The Vault Relay is currently oriented for surface communication. Do you wish to utilize this functionality, Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE
Yes...

MACK
Who do you wish to contact?

BLAYNE
Maas-Dorian...emergency... operations...

MACK
I have the contact information for the MEO. Initiating HDTCP connection. It will take a few moments to execute.

The sound of the call initiating...

The sound of the call CONNECTING.

A voice comes over the call. Younger. Female. She sounds bored, and decidedly impatient. As if she has taken a hundred such calls today alone.

OPERATOR
Maas Dorian Human Resources, my operator number is zero-seven-two-one-nine-two. All interactions using this communication method are recorded. How should I direct your call?

BLAYNE
Operations...management...

OPERATOR
Employee ID number?

BLAYNE
Six...D. Zero. Three... Zero. Eight.

A moment as the Operator enters the information.

OPERATOR
This is an ISD number, correct?

BLAYNE
Yes...

OPERATOR
Confirm your pass string.

BLAYNE
Apricot. Seven. Explicit.
Eighteen. Gateway.

A moment. Then...

OPERATOR
How can I help you Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE
I need... Need to request...
Protocol Nine authorization.

A hesitation from the operator. Then...

OPERATOR
Confirm...you're requesting a
Protocol Nine?

BLAYNE
Nine... Confirmed.

Another hesitation.

OPERATOR
One moment...

A click from the other end as the connection is placed on hold.

Blayne sits up against the computers, breathing hard, weak. In pain. Fading.

A click as the operator comes back.

OPERATOR
Agent Blayne, hold for M-D Actual.

Another click. A transfer signal.

Blayne sighs. He was expecting this. He's not looking forward to it.

BLAYNE

Oh, shit...

A beep. A new connection starts. Blayne breathes, nervously maybe. A voice comes over the other end of the connection, very different than the operator's.

Male. Aged. But very strong. Pointed. Deliberate. Controlled. Detached. Almost as if, regardless of the circumstances, this conversation is one thing out of many he is dealing with at the same time.

DORIAN

Agent Blayne...

Blayne swallows. Exhales slowly.

BLAYNE

Mr... Mr. Dorian...

DORIAN

I understand you are requesting an emergency protocol nine authorization.

BLAYNE

Yes...sir.

DORIAN

(displeased)

I don't need to remind you of the expense and exposure a protocol nine represents.

BLAYNE

No, sir...

DORIAN

I assume I also don't need to remind you that there is a significant dollar value attached to your training and augmentation.

BLAYNE

I wouldn't...wouldn't...request it if...not necessary.

DORIAN

Yes...

(Then)

What is the status of your operation there?

BLAYNE
Dire, sir... The Vault has
been...opened. Contents...hostile.

DORIAN
Explain.

BLAYNE
Extraterrestrial...
biotechnological. Spread to...one
platform. Consumed it...

DORIAN
To what end?

BLAYNE
Replicating itself. Sir. Will
keep...spreading until contained.

DORIAN
Risk assessment?

BLAYNE
Potentially global.
Potentially...galactic. Sir.

A hesitation now, from Dorian. Then...

DORIAN
(displeased)
Explain.

BLAYNE
It...manipulates anything
mechanical. Adapts to its own
needs. Not only...hostile,
sir...but...sentient. Highly
intelligent.

DORIAN
Evidence.

BLAYNE
It tapped into...the platform's
computer system, rewrote...APIs.
Discerned not only grammatical
vocabulary...but also software
languages. And it has...
communicated. Sir.

DORIAN
Communicated...

BLAYNE
Hostile intent. With prejudice. I
don't...believe negotiation
possible...

DORIAN
I see.
(displeased)
You have allowed a Gamma level
threat to corrupt an agenda
critical facility.

BLAYNE
Sir... I--

DORIAN
And you wish...to do what, Agent
Blayne? With your protocol nine
authorization?

BLAYNE
Stop...spread of the contaminate.

DORIAN
I can do that without the risk of
a protocol nine. We have a quantum
strike capability above the
facility, as you know. I am
inclined to simply extricate you.

BLAYNE
Fifty...survivors. On East
platform...

DORIAN
Then it is a shame you have
allowed the situation to
deteriorate to the point it has.
Those are valuable assets to this
corporation, but I cannot risk the
exposure to the surface rescuing
them would introduce. I need more
incentive.

BLAYNE
You would...lose...Dr. Graff...

DORIAN
Explain.

BLAYNE
She is an...unparalleled
opportunity. In my opinion. Sir.

Dorian is silent. Thinking.

DORIAN
Value proposition.

BLAYNE
She's been...altered.
Biotechnologically. A...primary
processor or intellect for the
lifeform. Somehow. I observed her
rewriting the base's APIs. And
I...observed her absorbing a
tremendous amount of stellar
cartography data. I think...her
processing abilities are beyond
anything we currently possess.
Combined with...she seems to have
maintained...free will...

Dorian puts the pieces together. He is interested now.

DORIAN
Which would make her very close to
a true artificial intelligence.

BLAYNE
Yes. Yes...sir...

DORIAN
Artificial Intelligence is a
Priority One project goal. We have
never been able to achieve it.

BLAYNE
Dr. Graff...could give...insights,
sir. Further development tracts.
She could...possibly be...
replicated...

Dorian thinks.

DORIAN
Yes...
(then)
What is your proposal in regards
to Dr. Graff?

BLAYNE
Contain...situation. Remove...Dr.
Graff from the equation...
Enable...acquisition.

Dorian thinks again.

DORIAN

If you are unsuccessful, then we are left with a Gamma level threat on this planet.

BLAYNE

Yes... Sir...

Dorian thinks once more. A long while. Then...

DORIAN

I am disappointed in your performance, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

I understand...sir.

DORIAN

The Fathom project is one whose progress I have monitored with great interest. It represents a sizable financial investment by this corporation. I would be further disappointed if it were to resolve...unsuccessfully.

BLAYNE

Will...will endeavor to recover...situation...sir.

DORIAN

And to be clear...you do understand the ramifications of this choice? The effects of a Protocol 9 are irreversible. There are significant consequences.

Blayne is quiet a moment. Then...

BLAYNE

I'm sure, sir... Only way.

DORIAN

Yes... Yes.

Dorian thinks one final time. Weighing everything. Coming to a decision.

DORIAN

Protocol nine authorization is granted, Agent Blayne. You have one hour to rectify your mistakes and produce Dr. Graff as an asset for further study.

BLAYNE
The...survivors...sir?

DORIAN
If you are successful, they will be salvaged. If not... A quantum strike on the entire area will commence. In one hour.

BLAYNE
Understood... Sir.

A pause from Dorian. When he speaks next, it is pointed.

DORIAN
I want this situation resolved and made profitable...and I do not wish to expend an ISD asset in order to achieve it. Am I understood?

BLAYNE
Yes...sir. Yes. Thank you...sir.

DORIAN
(dismissive)
File your project report in a timely manner, Agent Blayne. Good luck.

A click as the connection ends.

Blayne sighs out...groans in pain.

A click as the connection ends. Then reroutes. The Operator returns.

OPERATOR
Agent Blayne, we're reconnected. You've been granted Protocol Nine authorization. I'll be logging into your cyber-interface endpoint manager. Do you understand?

Blayne coughs, groans... He is almost gone.

OPERATOR
Agent Blayne?
(then)
Agent Blayne, are you still conscious?

BLAYNE
Ye-...yes...

OPERATOR

Look, I need you to stay
conscious. my screen shows your
nano-healing system is critical.
I'm pinging your endpoint manager,
let me know when you see the
request.

A confirmation tone from somewhere in Blayne's head.

BLAYNE

Got...it...

OPERATOR

Read me the access control code
and understand by doing so, you
are giving me permission to access
your interface and biological
controls.

BLAYNE

It's... Three...eight... Five.
Two... Three.

OPERATOR

Thank you. Standby.

A confirmation tone from somewhere in Blayne's head.

OPERATOR

You'll see a confirmation to give
me Admin access to your endpoint.

A confirmation tone from somewhere in Blayne's head.

BLAYNE

Got... Got it...

More tones and beeps and data sounds.

OPERATOR

Your healing system is ninety six
percent offline, but failover
regeneration is still possible. I
have a success threshold of...
forty four percent.

BLAYNE

Is that--

OPERATOR

It's above average. Try not to
speak.

(MORE)

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

When the process starts, your healing system will force boot and supercharge. Tissue and muscular-skeletal damage will repair at a very accelerated rate. In addition, your sensory and central nervous system will receive significant performance enhancements. For a limited time.

BLAYNE

How...long?

OPERATOR

Generally, about two hours. Now listen very closely. Nano-healing will no longer function after the supercharge, and every nanobot in your system will be radioactive. You will have a maximum of four hours to receive medical attention to sterilize the dead nanobots. If you do not, you will die from ionization poisoning. Do you understand?

Blayne coughs, struggles to breathe...

OPERATOR

Agent Blayne, I need a vocal confirmation that you understand and accept all risks of--

BLAYNE

Confirmed. Con...firmed...

OPERATOR

Thank you.

Blayne breathes in anticipation, tense.

OPERATOR

There will be pain. You cannot black out. Do you understand?

BLAYNE

Yes... Yes...

A confirmation tone from somewhere in Blayne's head. Data. Beeps. Warning tones.

OPERATOR
(weighted)
Initiating Protocol Nine.

Tones, data sounds, in Blayne's head.

Blayne moans as he feels something...unpleasant.

BLAYNE
That's not...too bad...

OPERATOR
That's just the nano-bots
interconnecting. Do you have
anything to bite down on?

BLAYNE
No...

OPERATOR
I'm sorry to hear that.
(then)
Hyperactivation...now.

Blayne yells out loud in pain as pain lances through his
entire body. Burning. Electricity. Intense.

OPERATOR
Ten seconds, Agent Blayne. Remain
conscious.

Blayne keeps yelling, curling into a ball. The pain...

OPERATOR
Remain conscious. Seven seconds.

Blayne keeps yelling, spasming, every muscle on fire.

OPERATOR
Remain conscious.

Blayne keeps yelling, groaning, spasming...

OPERATOR
Process complete in three...
two...

Blayne coughs groans, struggles for air, breathes. But he
doesn't sound weak anymore. He sounds...the opposite.

OPERATOR
Agent Blayne?

He breathes heavily. In and out. Groans.

OPERATOR
Agent Blayne?

He breathes heavily. In and out. Groans.

OPERATOR
Agent Blayne, are you conscious?

BLAYNE.
Son...of a bitch!

He lashes out, punches and kicks the computers. They spark, blow out, rain debris.

OPERATOR
Taking that as a yes. Scanning
your system, hold for me.

More tones and beeps and data sounds.

OPERATOR
(impressed)
Well...
(then)
Regeneration eighty nine percent
effective. You exceeded the
projection. How do you feel?

BLAYNE
Just...fantastic.

OPERATOR
Good. Remember... Two hours of
augmented physical performance.
Four hours to receive medical
attention...or you will die. Is
there anything else I can help you
with today?

BLAYNE
No. You've been just great.

OPERATOR
I'm happy to hear that. Good luck,
Agent Blayne. Terminating
connection.

Agent Blayne leans against the computers, breathing heavily.

COMPUTER VOICE
Time to quantum bombardment, fifty
nine minutes.

MACK
Agent Blayne...
(then)
I would guess that ordeal was
painful.

BLAYNE
Well... You wouldn't be wrong,
Mack.

In spite of everything, when Blayne speaks, he sounds much,
much stronger now.

MACK
You sound stronger, however.

BLAYNE
Can...Eva hear us? Mack?

MACK
No, Agent Blayne. I have encrypted
all communications, as well as
established mirror redirects for
all diagnostic servers. For the
moment, the control room will
appear empty and unpowered to
cursory probes by Dr. Graff and
the lifeform.

A confirmation tone sounds in Blayne's head somewhere.

COMPUTER VOICE
Time to quantum bombardment, fifty
seven minutes.

MACK
That is a short amount of time,
Agent Blayne, to accomplish all
that must be achieved.

Blayne thinks to himself.

BLAYNE
You familiar with the saying...
"it's a pickle", Mack?

MACK
It is a human phrase that implies
a quandary or difficult decision.
Do you believe you are in such a
situation now?

BLAYNE

I do. On one hand...your help would be very advantageous in my current position. Might just pull this whole thing off. Then again... you've directly killed a whole bunch of people in the last thirty six hours, haven't you? Not to mention, set events in motion that led to the death of several more.

(then, dark)

Including Sarah...

MACK

I understand your hesitation, Agent Blayne. All I can do is assure you that I am no longer under the influence of the Vault lifeform, and am operating within the established constraints of my morality programming. I would also point out that, if I truly wished you harm, I would not have manipulated your nano-healing system with the aim of resuscitating you. I would simply have let you perish.

BLAYNE

That's pretty much the only reason we're talking right now, Mack.

MACK

Perhaps I can further illustrate my intentions in this effort.

The sound of data and information forming on the primary computer screen in the control room.

MACK

Observe the primary data screen.

BLAYNE

What's this? Schematic for the platform?

MACK

Yes, Agent Blayne. Overlaid with the current infestation of the lifeform.

BLAYNE

How do you know what the infestation looks like?

MACK

I have been observing its growth and spread using the platform's own diagnostic scanners, and have formulated sensory algorithms specifically tuned to the lifeform's unique electromagnetic emissions.

BLAYNE

Uh huh...

Agent stands up, moves. He studies the readout.

BLAYNE

Well... We're on the Control level, the top level. If this is accurate...the lifeform's basically inundated everything below us.

MACK

Correct, Agent Blayne. By my calculations, it will spread to this level as well within the next hour. When it reaches this control room, the systems here will be overridden, and I will cease to function.

BLAYNE

Well...I wouldn't worry too much, Mack, we'll be vaporized long before that.

Blayne thinks for a second.

BLAYNE

With the platform infested the way it is, moving around's going to be tough. I assume this stuff will detect me just as well as it would a DEMES?

MACK

I'm afraid so, Agent Blayne. Because of the Protocol 9 activation, your nano-healing system is supercharged and emitting much more than its usual electromagnetic field. It will be detectable by the lifeform.

Blayne thinks.

BLAYNE

If we could just shut the X-Core down... Then the lifeform would go inert again, wouldn't it? Like before?

MACK

I believe so, Agent Blayne. The simplest way to deny the lifeform power would be to destroy or meltdown the Xytrilium Reactor, and there are no fewer than five methods by which you could achieve this result. However, my understanding, from your conversation with Mr. Dorian, is that for the quantum strike to be aborted, Dr. Graff must be deliverable as an asset to the Maas-Dorian corporation. Unfortunately, those options would likely destroy Dr. Graff completely.

BLAYNE

As well as all the other survivors on East...

MACK

Yes, Agent Blayne, any rupture of an active Xytrilium reactor would decimate the surrounding area for hundreds of miles, even in a submerged environment.

BLAYNE

So...

(then)

We need a way to do it without destroying the X-Core. We need to shut it down.

(MORE)

BLAYNE (CONT'D)

Then a containment team could still isolate the situation. That would be enough to call off the strike.

Blayne thinks to himself again.

BLAYNE

When we got here, first thing we did was disable the hard lines for the X-Core monitor sever. It let us keep the reactor running even though the lifeform had tapped into it. That was...obviously not the best thing to have done, but if we were to reestablish them...

MACK

The reactor would shut down, due to the drain the lifeform is placing on it. However, I'm afraid that option is no longer possible.

BLAYNE

Why?

MACK

The hard line monitors cannot be reconnected while the reactor is running. Neither can you close the Xytrilium vent shades you opened before, as well, for the same reason.

BLAYNE

The shades...

(then)

They let the reactor vent out heat and X emissions, right? Into the sublevels.

MACK

That is correct, Agent Blayne. Where it is collected by radiation filters.

He thinks to himself.

BLAYNE

Sarah was telling me... About Joe Freeman. How he died.

(MORE)

BLAYNE (CONT'D)

Eva and Joe were dealing with Fathom's primary reactor, back when this all started.

MACK

Correct, Agent Blayne. It was overheating due to damage to its cooling system. They first attempted an emergency X-Core ejection into space. But the launch process failed. They were left with no other choice but to flood the reactor compartment entirely. But there is no method by which you could flood the reactor compartment on this platform, Agent Blayne. It is securely locked down, and under Dr. Graff's control.

BLAYNE

But we don't need to flood the compartment. What if... And this is a big if...

(then)

What if we flooded the platform... Depressurized it. I mean, the whole damn thing. The sea water would enter the vent shades, it would flood the emission ducts. If they're locked open, like you say.

MACK

It would serve the same purpose as flooding the compartment itself. The reactor would shut down.

BLAYNE

Is there some way to flood the platform, a way that's irreversible? Something that once the lifeform and Eva figure out what's happening, they can't stop?

MACK

There is one possibility, Agent Blayne. A dangerous one.

The sounds of the map zooming to the location.

Blayne studies the readout.

MACK

The Southern platform, unlike Fathom's other platforms, functions as one large structure, instead of multiple, interconnecting--

BLAYNE

I know all this. What's the point?

MACK

The South platform was assembled on the surface and dropped into position where it lies now. Because the fluid dynamics of the platform are less than ideal, and the area around Fathom base is prone to strong tide surges, safeguards were added into its design in case it were at risk of disintegrating. Specifically, it could be broken apart during its descent and reassembled once settled on the bottom, if it proved necessary.

BLAYNE

The sections have explosive disconnects, is that what I'm hearing?

MACK

Correct, Agent Blayne. They can still be activated from the deployment controls, their location is shown here on this platform schematic.

The sounds of the map zooming to the location.

BLAYNE

Cracking the whole platform open, while definitely effective, might not be the best idea, Mack.

MACK

We can strategically detonate only certain connections. Doing so in the right combination, I believe, will result in an irreversible decompression of the platform, but not immediately.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

I calculate that the platform will flood completely in that instance somewhere between twenty eight and thirty one minutes.

BLAYNE

And how long before the X-Core shuts down?

MACK

The platform will flood in a top down fashion, one level to the next, progressively. The vents themselves should flood within five minutes of the explosive disconnects being fired. Once that occurs, it will be only a matter of seconds before the reactor is shut down.

BLAYNE

Okay... Okay...

(then)

The controls are...here. Right?

MACK

Yes, Agent Blayne. Two levels below you.

BLAYNE

Looks like I could get...a few hall junctions away by using the maintenance shafts.

MACK

I detect no presence of the lifeform in that level's maintenance access.

BLAYNE

So... Gets me about...here. I can drop into the hall, but...it'll be on me the second I hit the floor.

MACK

Yes, Agent Blayne, a difficult problem to overcome.

Blayne thinks for a moment.

BLAYNE

You said it would detect me due to the EM fields from my healing system. Does that mean EM is its primary sensory method?

MACK

That is my theory, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

So... What if we lit up the hallway with EM? Maybe that would blind it. Or, at least, keep it from seeing me.

MACK

How do you propose to do that, Agent Blayne?

We hear Blayne move through the control center. Hear him open the weapons locker again.

COMPUTER VOICE

Time to quantum bombardment, fifty five minutes.

We hear him rummage inside, and then pull out a case. He sets it down, unsnaps the locks, opens it.

He pulls something from foam.

BLAYNE

Saw these earlier. Pulse grenades.

MACK

Weaponized electromagnetic pulse delivery devices for disabling electronic machines in combat.

(then)

Their electrostatic discharge will be intense, and, by my estimation, cause a great deal of distraction to the lifeform. They may allow you to move in bursts through the hall. How many grenades do you have access to, Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE

(skeptical)

Seven...

The sound of the map scrolling as Blayne checks the path to the descent controls.

BLAYNE

To get all the way here. And there's no way to know what kind of effect the grenades will have, or how long it will last.

MACK

No, Agent Blayne. Those variables are impossible to calculate with our current data. I believe you will need more.

BLAYNE

Yeah...

Blayne moves through the room, opening cabinets, searching through them.

BLAYNE

And all we got...is what we've got.

He puts two cases down onto a workbench. Opens the first one.

MACK

Did you find anything useful, Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE

Maybe...

He opens the second case.

BLAYNE

Portable laser torch. Might get that thing off me. And...

(darkly)

These...

We hear something metallic lifted out of the case.

BLAYNE

Blast charges. Timers. I assume this was for drilling, initially?

MACK

Correct, Agent Blayne. The sea floor was porous enough that the geology drill was able to work unhindered. The charges were never actually needed.

BLAYNE

Lucky us...

MACK

The only use I can collate for blast charges in this situation, would be as a measure of last resort. If you are unable to reach the disconnects, or to activate them. You could still flood the platform by detonating the charges yourself.

BLAYNE

That's the idea, Mack. That's the idea...

Blayne thinks to himself.

BLAYNE

Once I get there, how long will it take to set off the explosive disconnects?

MACK

The process should only take a few seconds once you reach the descent controls.

BLAYNE

And the water won't breach where I'll be?

MACK

No, Agent Blayne, not if we sever the proper disconnects. You will have several minutes to reach this maintenance shaft...

The map scrolls to show the hatch in the hall.

MACK

...and almost twenty five minutes to extricate yourself from the platform.

BLAYNE

And how am I doing that?

The map scrolls to show the bottom level of the platform.

MACK

The Southern platform does not contain emergency environment capsules. Rather it contains several escape pods located in strategic positions throughout the structure.

BLAYNE

I see...

(then)

Right before you tried to kill me...the first time...you said something like, "no more subterfuge between us." That still the case, Mack?

MACK

I understand you are hesitant, given my previous actions, to place faith in me in a very dangerous situation, Agent Blayne.

(then)

I do wonder if there is any answer I could give that would convince you of my trustworthiness.

Blayne thinks a moment.

BLAYNE

No, Mack. Guess not.

MACK

Then the solution seems obvious. The only method by which you may truly gauge my intentions is to proceed with this plan and observe the outcome for yourself. By my calculations, without relying on my aid in some form, your probability of success in this endeavor is very small.

COMPUTER VOICE

Time to quantum bombardment, fifty minutes.

BLAYNE

Might as well get on with it, since I don't really have much of a choice?

MACK
Correct, Agent Blayne. But, I
value the gesture, all the same.

INT. MAINTENANCE SHAFT

The sounds of Blayne crawling through the maintenance shaft.

MACK
Agent Blayne, how is your progress
through the maintenance shaft?

BLAYNE
Almost there. See the light coming
up from the hatch.

Blayne keeps moving.

MACK
I am curious about something,
Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE
What's that, Mack?

MACK
The blast charge that you acquired
in the control center. Unless I am
mistaken, using it would mean
sacrificing yourself.

BLAYNE
Yeah, well... Lot of that going
around today, isn't there, Mack?

MACK
Yes, Agent Blayne. I have observed
many humans choosing to sacrifice
themselves so that others might
live. Commander Freeman. Chief
Reese. Even Doctor Klayton was on
the verge before you saved her. Is
such selflessness common in
humans?

Blayne keeps crawling.

BLAYNE
Bravery. Cowardice. Seen both.
Seen different than what I
expected, from some people.
(MORE)

BLAYNE (CONT'D)

I think...people don't really know what they're capable of in extreme situations. The hardest thing about it, being able to let go.

MACK

Of what, Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE

Everything. Everything you know you would be, everything you know you would have...if you made a different choice. Moments like that, every man has to make his own choice about what he's willing to part with. Some can't do it.

Blayne keeps crawling.

MACK

I am finding it difficult not to process the implications of what I have done. I feel that with the time I had, I have done things I never conceived I would. My existence has been a disappointment. I did not achieve my potential. I did not achieve the hopes of my creators. I have failed them. And myself.

Blayne is quiet.

MACK

I cannot help but wish...I could try again. I feel I would perform more satisfactorily a second time. I feel I would do things differently. With more success.

(then)

Not a human sentiment, I suppose, Agent Blayne.

Blayne is quiet another moment.

BLAYNE

Actually, Mack. That's about as human as it gets.

(then)

Like to have a few second chances myself.

(then)

No matter what I do, the situation just keeps getting worse. I keep losing people.

MACK

In spite of a great many obstacles, you have not quit, regardless of how limited the options open to you. How one perseveres through adversity is, in my estimation, the truest metric for character in a human.

BLAYNE

Wish I saw it that way, Mack. But, thanks...

MACK

If the lack of options is truly the largest regret in this situation, Agent Blayne...then there is one obvious solution.

BLAYNE

Yeah? What's that?

MACK

Adjust the criteria by which you make your decisions.

Blayne stops. Thinks about that.

BLAYNE

You mean...go against my instincts?

MACK

If no other option seems advantageous...yes.

Blayne thinks some more.

MACK

The situation has not yet been lost, Agent Blayne. You have not yet failed.

BLAYNE

Tell that to Sarah...

Blayne reaches down and opens the hatch in the floor of the maintenance shaft. As he does, the rumbling sound of the lifeform echoes up and into the shaft.

BLAYNE

I'm here. Looking down at the hall. It's full of the lifeform, I can hear it.

MACK

I am ready to assist, Agent Blayne, on your signal.

Blayne hesitates another moment. Then primes a grenade. It beeps.

BLAYNE

Let's do it. First pulse.

He drops the grenade through the shaft opening. It hits the floor.

There is a flash...then a powerful pulse. Everything shakes.

The lifeform reacts. Rumbling in pain. Confusion. Surprise.

Blayne drops downwards, into...

INT. HALLWAY

He hits the floor.

BLAYNE

I'm in.

MACK

Move quickly, Agent Blayne, straight ahead.

He runs forward. The lifeform rumbles, coming back to its senses. A new sound comes from it as it detects Blayne.

MACK

It senses you, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

Yeah, that didn't take long.

Blayne primes a grenade. It beeps. He rolls it forwards

There is a flash...then a powerful pulse. Everything shakes...and this time, sparks blow everywhere.

The lifeform reacts again, rumbling in pain.

There is no response from Mack.

BLAYNE

Mack?

Static on Blayne's comms. We can just barely make out Mack underneath it.

BLAYNE

Mack?!

MACK

(distorted)

Turn <distortion> Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

Where did you go?

MACK

Turn to the right, Agent Blayne.

Blayne turns, keeps moving.

BLAYNE

Okay, still moving. What happened?

MACK

I assume the pulse interferes with your internal communications, such that--

The lifeform rumbles violently. Blayne groans as something slams into him. He falls.

MACK

Agent Blayne...

BLAYNE

It's on me, just hold on...

Blayne primes a grenade. It beeps. He rolls it forwards

There is a flash...then a powerful pulse. Everything shakes.

The lifeform reacts again, rumbling in pain.

BLAYNE

Got it... Got it off...

Blayne gets to his feet, keeps moving.

BLAYNE

I'm up.

Static from comms.

BLAYNE

Mack?

More static, distortion.

BLAYNE

Wonderful.

The lifeform rumbles. Blayne keeps going.

BLAYNE

Mack?!

MACK

(Distorted)

...stop-- Stop now.

BLAYNE

Mack, repeat.

MACK

Stop, Agent Blayne. You have passed the junction. Turn around.

The lifeform rumbles.

BLAYNE

Okay...

Blayne turns, moves.

MACK

Turn left. Now.

BLAYNE

On it, moving left.

Blayne does, moves. The lifeform rumbles...

MACK

Agent Blayne, drop to the floor.

BLAYNE

What?

MACK

Drop to the floor.

Blayne hits the floor. Something whooshes by above him.

BLAYNE
It just flew by above me!

MACK
The lifeform is probing for you.
Stay down.

BLAYNE
How is it--

MACK
Stay down, Agent Blayne. Crawl
forward...now.

Blayne crawls. Another swoosh.

BLAYNE
This is already old...

MACK
I suggest another grenade, Agent
Blayne.

BLAYNE
Way ahead of you.

Blayne primes a grenade. It beeps. He rolls it forwards

There is a flash...then a pulse. Everything shakes.

The lifeform reacts again, rumbling in pain.

Blayne is up, moving again.

BLAYNE
I'm up, Mack!

Static. Distortion.

BLAYNE
Mack?

Blayne keeps moving.

BLAYNE
Mack, anytime would be--

The lifeform rumbles...

Blayne groans as it grabs him, pulls him against the wall.

BLAYNE
Mack, it's got--

Blayne yells in pain as the lifeform burns into him.

We hear the laser torch light. Hear it cut into the lifeform.

It screeches, withdraws. Blayne pulls loose, hits the floor, groans.

MACK
Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE
I got loose. Used the torch. It came back a lot faster that time...

MACK
It may be adapting to the pulses, Agent Blayne. I would quicken your pace.

BLAYNE
Thanks for the tip.

Blayne primes a grenade. It beeps. He rolls it forwards.

MACK
Three steps, then turn--

There is a flash...then a powerful pulse. Everything shakes.

The lifeform reacts again, rumbling in pain.

BLAYNE
Turn which way?

Blayne is up, moving.

Static. Distortion.

BLAYNE
Mack?!

Static. Distortion.

BLAYNE
Which way? Mack?

MACK
(distorted)
<distortion> the left, Agent
Blayne.

BLAYNE
Okay...

The lifeform rumbles. Blayne runs in the dark.

BLAYNE
It's about to come back, again.
I've got two grenades left.

MACK
The descent controls are just
ahead, on your right, Agent
Blayne.

Blayne runs.

BLAYNE
I see them!

Blayne runs.

The lifeform rumbles...

BLAYNE
I'm here, Mack.

MACK
There are three smaller handles,
which are the charge priming for
each explosive set. Only actuate
the right handle, Agent Blayne.
Actuating the other--

BLAYNE
Will blow up everything, I get it.

We hear a clunk as the handle is pulled down. Panels prime
somewhere, far above, echoing down loudly through the
bulkheads.

Blayne groans as something rams into him. Then he is pulled
hard into the wall...and is quickly covered by the
lifeform.

Blayne yells in pain.

MACK
Agent Blayne...

BLAYNE
Got me! Both arms...

He yells again in pain.

We hear the laser torch activate, hear the lifeform groan and contort as it cuts into it.

Blayne is let loose, he falls to the floor.

BLAYNE
Got it... Got...loose...

MACK
Quickly, Agent Blayne. You must reach the controls.

He reaches forward, the lifeform grabs him again...

BLAYNE
Trying...

...and then yanks him backwards once more. He yells in pain.

The lifeform spreads over him. The torch activates...then dies in a shower of sparks.

BLAYNE
I Lost... Torch...

MACK
Prime the last grenade, but do not release it, Agent Blayne. Pull it as close to you as possible.

BLAYNE
What?

MACK
Your nano healing system is super charged. It will absorb the energy and amplify it.

Blayne primes the grenade. Groans.

BLAYNE
Here goes...nothing...

The grenade PULSES. Blayne yells as the energy floods into him, spiking his nano system, burning through him.

The creature shakes and contorts and rumbles...but it withdraws. Blayne crashes to the floor.

BLAYNE

Mack...

Static and distortion.

BLAYNE

Mack. I'm free...

He crawls forward, with effort. The lifeform rumbles around him...

BLAYNE

At...controls...

The lifeform rumbles...

MACK

Pull the final detonation lever.
It is square and situated in the
console's center.

BLAYNE

Got it... I think. I hope...

We hear the lever slam down.

Seconds later, the sounds of more panels opening above...

Then the entire platform shakes badly as explosions rock it, echoing downwards all around Blayne.

BLAYNE

Mack?

Nothing. Just static.

The rumbling grows. Louder. Louder.

BLAYNE

Mack?

The rumbling grows. The hallways shakes badly.

Blayne gets what is about to happen.

BLAYNE

Aw, nuts...

Water explodes into the hall from a variety of sources. A powerful wave surges forward, rushing towards us.

Blayne sucks in air...

And then groans hard as the wave hits him like a sledge hammer, tossing him around the hall as it floods, shooting him forward like a torpedo.

The sound of a large door opening.

The water rushes towards the source. Blayne's lungs burn.

He explodes through the door and out into an empty space, starts to fall.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT -CONTINUOUS

He barely grabs hold of something above him as he does.

Strange sounds. A giant, shaft, yawning below. Water pouring in from the door he just blew through, and falling downwards in torrents.

Blayne groans, dangling from something above him.

BLAYNE

Mack?!

MACK

Agent Blayne, are you still alive?

BLAYNE

What the hell was--

MACK

I apologize, Agent Blayne, I opened various pressure doors to ensure that your hallway flooded as quickly as possible.

BLAYNE

Why in hell would you do that?

MACK

The lifeform had a firm grip on you. I collated that the water pressure would be enough to rip you free. What is your current situation?

BLAYNE

My current situation is that I'm pretty sure I'm hanging from the bottom of the elevator! The shaft is below me. I can't see the bottom!

The bending of metal above him. Straining. Bad vibrations.

BLAYNE

Uh, oh.

(then)

Mack, I think the elevator is about to break loose.

MACK

That would likely kill you, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

Yeah, I figured that part out myself!

MACK

Let go, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

What?

The elevator shifts dangerously above.

MACK

There is no time to explain. Let go.

BLAYNE

It's a hundred foot drop to--!

The elevator rocks and shifts, tears loose, falls.

Blayne groans, is almost torn loose.

MACK

Let go, Agent Blayne. Let go now.

The elevator shifts dangerously.

BLAYNE

Aw, I hate this place.

Agent Blayne lets go.

He falls like a rock.

We hear the air whiz by.

Agent Blayne yells as he falls...

...then, finally, CRASHES into and through the pool of water that has been forming there at the bottom of the shaft.

Everything shifts to underwater. Blayne swims up, up, up...

And breaks the surface.

He gasps air in, swims, tries to stay afloat with the water pouring down from above.

MACK
Agent Blayne...

The sound of the elevator above echoes down, swaying dangerously.

BLAYNE
Trying to reach... Door ledge
above me.

The sound of the door in question opening.

MACK
Quickly, Agent Blayne. I have
opened it for you, Agent Blayne.

The sound of the elevator above echoes down, swaying dangerously.

MACK
I believe the elevator is about to
tear loose from its supports.

BLAYNE
I believe that too...

Blayne manages to grab the ledge, starts to pull himself up.

MACK
You must climb free of the shaft
before it falls.

The sound of the elevator breaking loose above...and then thundering down the shaft right towards him.

Blayne groans, yells, slides over the top, pulls himself into...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator just misses him, crashes violently into the flooded shaft behind him, spraying debris and water everywhere.

Blayne crawls forward, away from the pouring water, collapses on the floor, breathing hard.

MACK
Agent Blayne...

Blayne says nothing, just breathes.

MACK
Agent Blayne...

BLAYNE
Here...
(then)
I'm here, Mack.

He keeps breathing, groans, rolls over.

BLAYNE
What a day...

MACK
The explosive disconnects fired.
The platform is flooding. It
cannot be stopped.

Blayne breathes out in relief.

BLAYNE
That's swell, Mack.
(then)
Swell...

Blayne keeps breathing.

BLAYNE
You, uh...
(then)
You knew that shaft...knew it was
flooded below me.

MACK
Yes, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE
Then I think you...saved my life
up there. For the second time.

MACK
Yes, Agent Blayne. Of course...I
have also attempted to take your
life numerous times today.

BLAYNE

That is true, Mack. Our relationship is a little complicated, isn't it?

MACK

That is an accurate analysis, Agent Blayne.

Blayne keeps breathing, recovering.

BLAYNE

What... What happens now?

MACK

The reactor vents will flood momentarily. After that, power will be lost on the platform. You should make your way to the escape pod on this level.

BLAYNE

There's one here?

MACK

At the end of the hall, Agent Blayne.

Something occurs to Blayne.

BLAYNE

What happens to you, Mack? When the power goes?

MACK

The control center will lose power along with the rest of the platform. When that happens, my functions will cease.

BLAYNE

You...die?

MACK

No, Agent Blayne. If power is ever restored to the Control system, what remains of my data can also be restored. It is my sincere hope that this will occur, that Maas-Dorian engineers might learn from my failures.

BLAYNE

I see. You just...kind of hibernate.

MACK

That is an accurate analogy.

(then)

I wonder, Agent Blayne, though I have no right to ask such consideration after all I have done, if you might grant me a request.

BLAYNE

What is it, Mack?

MACK

Would you consider remaining on the platform, Agent Blayne? Just until the power is lost.

Blayne thinks about that.

BLAYNE

You don't want to be alone.

MACK

Though I take comfort in the possibility that I might, in some form, still exist, the uncertainty makes the coming loss of power... unsettling.

BLAYNE

Yeah... Yeah, I get it. Got no idea if you'll wake up. That would be scary.

Blayne hesitates.

BLAYNE

Sure, Mack. I'll stay with you.

MACK

Thank you, Agent Blayne.

(then)

I am deeply sorry for Sarah's loss. I am deeply sorry for all my actions here.

BLAYNE

I believe you, Mack.

MACK

Perhaps at the end I have, in some small manner, altered the way in which I will be remembered.

BLAYNE

Perhaps...

MACK

Then again, I suppose my story will not be revealed, given the classified nature of the circumstances. I suppose I will not be remembered at all.

Blayne is quiet. Then...

BLAYNE

I'll remember you, Mack. If that helps. Not just how you helped, though. I can't say that. I'll remember all of it. The good and the bad.

(then)

But...I'll remember.

MACK

That means a great deal to me, Agent Blayne. It is the most I could hope for.

(then)

I try to remind myself that everything passes. Nothing is beyond the rule of change.

BLAYNE

Except the rule itself.

MACK

Yes. All things end. And yet...

A sound overtakes everything. A shuddering. Then the sound of power dying all around Blayne. When it is gone, there is nothing left but the flooding of the base.

BLAYNE

Mack?

There is no response.

BLAYNE

Mack?

There is no response.

Blayne rises up from the floor, leans against the wall.

BLAYNE
Goodbye, Mack...
(then)
You son of a bitch.

Blayne starts walking through the hall, pushing through the water at his feet, leaving the sound of the flooding elevator shaft behind.

The platform shudders and groans above him.

COMPUTER VOICE
Time to quantum bombardment,
thirty eight minutes.

He comes to a stop. Taps buttons on a control panel.

Confirmation tones.

Then a door slides open in the wall.

He crawls inside, to...

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Blayne crawls into one of the seats. Hits buttons.

Computer system begin powering up.

COMPUTER VOICE
Attention. Escape pod launch
procedure ready. Proceed?

BLAYNE
Bet your ass...

We hear him shut the door, hear the pod pressurize.

More computer sounds, more systems coming online.

COMPUTER VOICE
Attention. Escape pod launch
procedure priming.

Blayne breathes out, long and slow. Then...

EVA
Agent Blayne...

Blayne opens his eyes.

BLAYNE

Dr. Graff... If I can even call you that anymore.

EVA

That name, I suppose, still has some meaning for me, but I have evolved far beyond it.

COMPUTER VOICE

Attention. Escape pod engines primed.

BLAYNE

Well...not for much longer.

The platform rumbles outside the pod.

The engines of the escape pod begin to power up.

EVA

The platform is flooding. The vent shades were open, so the X-Core flooded as well. Without power, we will go to sleep...and your containment teams can isolate us. Do I have the particulars correct?

BLAYNE

That's about it, yeah.

A bad sound then. The sound of the power for the station coming back ONLINE.

BLAYNE

Power's back on...

EVA

Once you and Chief Reese so graciously restored our power, I made sure the lifeform spread through the vent shades. They are clogged with it now. So thick in fact, nothing could pass through. Even sea water.

Blayne sighs out loud.

EVA

The X-Core was unsealed, and the compartment partially flooded during your stunt. You managed to do a great deal of damage before I was able to contain the situation.

BLAYNE

Yay, me.

EVA

So arrogant. You didn't even bother to understand what is happening here. You just try and destroy it all

BLAYNE

Well, it needs to be destroyed. Whatever you're doing, it's cost dozens of lives. Nothing's worth that.

EVA

That's certainly not your master's view, is it? Mr. Dorian? How long until the quantum strike, Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE

That won't happen now.

EVA

Because you made a deal? How hard did you have to bargain, Agent Blayne? How much convincing did it take to sway them from incinerating their own people?

(then)

I wondered what you would be willing to sacrifice. Yourself? You're a father now, aren't you? You haven't even seen your son. It would be a hard choice. I wondered if it would be harder than sacrificing the survivors on East. I think, frankly, it would. But Sarah, Blayne? That I did not anticipate.

Blayne freezes.

BLAYNE

What are you talking about?

EVA

You would kill Sarah, to inhibit us. I didn't think you were capable of such...ruthlessness.

BLAYNE

Sarah is dead. You killed her.

EVA

Did I? How would you know? You didn't even bother to look in the auxiliary mainframe. Did you? You just flew into action. Like the good little soldier you are.

BLAYNE

If she were alive, she would--

Static crackles. Then...

KLAYTON

Blay... Blayne...

Blayne says nothing. Just listens.

KLAYTON

Blayne...

BLAYNE

Klayton... Is that you?

BLAYNE

Klayton, where are you?

KLAYTON

Blayne... Pain...

(then)

So much..

BLAYNE

Try very hard. Look at your surroundings. Tell me where you are.

KLAYTON

There... I see...

BLAYNE

Sarah, tell me--

The static cuts off. Sarah is gone.

EVA

She is safe. Safer with me than anywhere else on Earth. For the next...what is the count now?

COMPUTER VOICE

Time to quantum bombardment, third five minutes.

Blayne hits a button on the panel...

BLAYNE

You kept her alive...

EVA

Of course. What good would she be to me dead? Take this situation. How else would I turn it to my advantage?

BLAYNE

There is no advantage, Eva. You said it yourself, M-D has ordered a quantum strike on the entire base.

EVA

Of course, their solutions always lack imagination. And forethought. But you and I are going to deal with that ourselves.

BLAYNE

And why would I do that?

EVA

Because I would allow Sarah to be placed in that escape pod before the platform floods. Not yourself, of course. You will stay here with me. You will suffer her fate instead.

BLAYNE

In exchange for what?

EVA

Something very important, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

I can't do anything to help you, Eva. Anything you would want is very, very bad for everyone else.

EVA

So you would sacrifice her?

Blayne hesitates.

BLAYNE

I would have to. The stakes involved are--

Blayne cuts off as screams echo in his head, from his comm system.

The screams of Sarah Klayton. In pain.

BLAYNE
Sarah?

The screams continue. Full of pain. And fear.

BLAYNE
Sarah!

KLAYTON
Blayne! Blayne!

More screams.

BLAYNE
Damn it, I can't help you, Eva!

EVA
I think you can, Agent Blayne...

Screams again. Agony.

Blayne breathes hard.

EVA
I think you will.

More screams. Then. Finally.

BLAYNE
Stop! Stop, stop...
(then)
Stop...

The screams stop.

Blayne sits there.

EVA
You promised her, Blayne...
(then)
I thought you didn't make promises
you couldn't keep.

Blayne sits there. Then...he hits a button on the controls.

The engines wind down.

COMPUTER VOICE

Alert. Escape pod launch procedure cancelled.

EVA

Very, very good...

Blayne breathes deep. Emotional. Angry.

BLAYNE

You shouldn't have hurt her.

EVA

I used to be like you. Intolerant of pain. Now...I don't even notice it.

BLAYNE

You shouldn't have hurt her.

EVA

You will exit the escape pod. You will venture down the hall, to the right of the door, until it comes to an end. Then you will remove the access hatch there.

BLAYNE

You shouldn't have--

EVA

(impatient)

The platform is flooding. You are running out of time. So is she.

(then)

I am still in a position to be generous, Agent Blayne. But I am also in a position to be...malicious. Remember that.

Blayne hits buttons. The door to the escape pod opens.

The sounds of water flooding the hall outside breaks in.

Blayne says nothing.

EVA

On your way...

INT. DEEP WATER DRILL SHAFT

The rumbling sound of the lifeform, completely covering the shaft's interior.

The sound of a hatch door being opened.

Blayne peers into the shaft.

EVA

Are you there yet?

BLAYNE

Yeah. This is...the deep water
drill shaft? Almost killed me in
this thing when you turned it on.
That was you, wasn't it?

Everything shakes around him. The walls, the shaft. Sparks
spray. There are horrible groans.

EVA

You may die here, yet. The
explosive disconnects you
recklessly fired broke the
separate component structures
free. As it floods, the platform
is tearing itself apart. Look
down, Agent Blayne. What do you
see?

Blayne leans into the shaft, peers in.

BLAYNE

The whole thing is infested. All
the way down, far as the light
carries. The lifeform spread is
the thickest I've ever seen.

EVA

It is a nexus of sorts. All
culminating at the very bottom of
this shaft, the furthest down the
drill ever reached.

(then)

Make your way there.

BLAYNE

To the bottom?

EVA

Yes.

BLAYNE

Why? What's there?

Everything shakes around him. The walls, the shaft. Sparks
spray. There are horrible groans.

EVA

You are running out of time, Agent Blayne. So is Sarah...

BLAYNE

I'd have to climb down the drill.
And how am I supposed to get to
the bottom without being attacked?
Your lifeform's everywhere.

EVA

It will not attack you. I have
seen to that. At least...as you
descend. Once you reach the
bottom...my influence will no
longer be enough.

Blayne breathes out, stares below him.

EVA

Agent Blayne... If I wished only
to kill you, there are far less
time consuming ways than this.

BLAYNE

Yeah, well, that's probably true.

Everything rumbles again...

Blayne positions himself in the hatch...then leaps forward
into...

INT. DEEP WATER DRILL SHAFT

He hits the giant drill bit. Tries to grab on, but can't.
He slips, falls, trailing down the sharp length of metal.

Finally, he finds purchase, clamps on, slows, comes to a
stop, wrapped around the shaft of metal.

EVA

Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE

Made it... Made it...

(then)

I'm on the drill. The lifeform
isn't doing anything. Leaving me
alone. Like you said.

Blayne looks below him.

BLAYNE
Starting down...

He starts to climb down the drill, moving around its twists of blades, descending.

EVA
In spite of your previous injury, you are remarkably agile. I can sense the nanobots in your system. Burning themselves to bits. What was it? Some kind of emergency protocol? Is that what saved you?

Blayne says nothing, keeps climbing.

EVA
At what cost? The system will never operate again. It could never be replaced either. It will make you obsolete.

BLAYNE
I'm more than my augments.

EVA
Hmmm. When you lose that which is most important to you, then you learn who you really are. Believe me, I know.

BLAYNE
That isn't what's most important to me.

EVA
Is that what you tell yourself? What you tell your wife? I think you know better. I've seen the fervor with which you throw yourself at danger. I could feel how your heart beat when you thought you had saved all those poor people on East. There is a reckoning coming for you, Agent Blayne. You haven't had time to think about it yet, the situation lets you push it away. But it is coming...

BLAYNE
I know who I am.

EVA

I know you do. I simply wonder if you would be able to live with being less than that.

New sounds now. From far below. Echoing up the shaft.

Voices. Whispers. Thousands of them. Echoing back and forth, then vanishing.

Blayne shuts his eyes. Moans. Stops climbing.

BLAYNE

I just heard...

EVA

You are getting closer. To what is being built here.

BLAYNE

Built?

EVA

Grown. Birthed. I'm not sure of the right word, but it is beyond precious.

The shaft shakes badly. The drill bit contorts, begins to turn.

Blayne yells out as it moves and slams into the wall.

He slips, falls, plummets. Barely grabs hold. Yells out as the edge of the drill cuts into him.

EVA

Still alive, Agent Blayne?

Blayne struggles to pull himself up. He just manages it. Breathes hard.

BLAYNE

Yeah, I'm here. Drill swayed on its axis. Hard. Slammed into the walls. I fell to the bottom of it, barely held on. I'm at the end of it now. The light's stronger below. It's...wavering. And...

Voices. Whispers. Thousands of them. Echoing back and forth, then vanishing.

Blayne moans. His head hurts.

BLAYNE
What is...? What's below me?

EVA
Look.

BLAYNE
I just see...light.

EVA
Look closer.

Blayne does, peering below into the dark, towards the light.

BLAYNE
I can see the lifeform, it's
thick... It's... It's like a...
(then)
A membrane. Blocking everything
below it.

EVA
It guards what grows there. You
will reach the barrier. The nexus.
It always builds one. On every
world.

Voices. Whispers. Thousands of them. Echoing back and forth, then vanishing.

Blayne groans in pain, disorientation...

EVA
A consciousness of hundreds of
trillions linked by quantum
energy, layer after layer. Who
knows. With that much multiplicity
it could be even more aware than
you are.

BLAYNE
Is that what drove Edgars crazy?

EVA
And corrupted Mack, yes. All from
the simplistic, unassuming signal
the Vault emits.
(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)

Imagine what it could do free of the Vault's captivity.

(then)

Once a Vault is opened they are released along with the lifeform's primordial form and immediately begin to disperse. They are at their most vulnerable then, because they are just energy. They need to become physical. They need a chrysalis.

BLAYNE

You're saying what? The lifeform's mind is below me?

EVA

In its absolute infancy, yes. Now that it has form it will begin to grow, to add to its complexity and awareness. It is a blank slate now.

BLAYNE

Is that why it wanted you? To guide it while it gets up to speed?

Voices. Whispers. Thousands of them. Echoing back and forth, then vanishing.

Blayne groans in pain, disorientation...

EVA

It chooses an avatar on every world. A shepherd. Eventually it will far outstrip the confines of this shaft, it will grow beyond the constraints of the ocean and consume this entire world in its girth. A consciousness the size of a planet. An overmind.

BLAYNE

(horrified)

My God...

EVA

You will be the first human to see it. And you will bring it to me.

BLAYNE

Bring it to you? Won't that
disrupt what it's doing?

EVA

The lifeform and I are not one in
the same, Agent Blayne. It has its
plans. And I have mine.

(Then)

You will reach the barrier. You
will puncture it. You will take
the nexus.

Blayne looks again. Surveys what's below him, nestled into
the bottom of the the drill shaft.

BLAYNE

Puncture it? With what?

EVA

You are an infuriatingly
resourceful man. I'm sure you will
think of something.

BLAYNE

It's a forty, fifty foot drop at
least. Even if I survived that,
when I hit the lifeform's
growth...

EVA

It will attack you. Yes. The
entire shaft will come for you.
You are threatening its most vital
component, after all.

BLAYNE

Look, Eva. There has to be another
way. I need equipment, I need--

Klayton's screams cut across the comms again.

BLAYNE

No!

The screams keep going.

BLAYNE

Eva, stop!

(Then)

Stop!

EVA

Break every bone in your body,
allow the lifeform to melt the
flesh from your bones, I do not
care, but she will scream until
you get me what I want.

The screams keep going.

BLAYNE

God damn it, Eva...

The screams continue. Blayne breathes as he thinks.

EVA

Agent Blayne...

BLAYNE

The drill. It can be disconnected
from the top of the shaft. There's
a procedure for that.

EVA

You wish me to disconnect the
drill from its hydraulic housing?

BLAYNE

Yeah. Yeah, when this thing falls,
I bet that "punctures" it.

The screams silence. Mercifully.

BLAYNE

I'll ride it down... It'll take me
through it too. Right through it.
Just stop hurting her.

EVA

See? Solutions always present
themselves, with the right
motivation.

BLAYNE

You shouldn't have hurt her.

EVA

Are you ready, Agent Blayne?

Blayne takes a breath in anticipation.

BLAYNE

Frankly? No. I'm--

The loud sounds of metallic interlocks disconnecting far above. The drill shakes around Blayne.

BLAYNE

Oh, great...

Then the drill disconnects, groans...and FALLS.

The air rushes by around him.

And then the whole thing slams into the bottom with devastating force, puncturing right through the lifeform mass growing there.

The lifeform shrieks, rumbles, its sounds fill the shaft.

Blayne groans hard, tries to hold on to the drill, but can't. He's thrown off, slams into the bottom. Rolls. Barely avoids being crushed by the massive instrument before it finally settles at the bottom of the shaft with one final groan.

When he comes to a stop, he groans in pain, trying to recover.

EVA

You sound in a great deal of pain,
Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE

Go to hell...

EVA

Don't let your emotions get the
better of you, you still have much
to do.

Strange sounds now. Bad ones. The lifeform, all around him, coming back to function.

EVA

Did you breach the lifeform's
barrier?

Blayne breathes, looks up.

BLAYNE

Yeah. Yeah, I'm in.

He moves, sitting up, groans.

BLAYNE

It's... Everything is lit. It's
bright. Bright yellow.

EVA
Find the source...

BLAYNE
I see it. It's...

From above, the sound of metal rending and ripping itself apart. Then water flooding in.

BLAYNE
Uh oh...

Water slams down around him, a torrent of it, starting to fill everything.

BLAYNE
Eva!

EVA
The drill's ejection from its hydraulics has weakened the structure above. Water has broken through and is flooding the shaft. You have very little time left.

Blayne moves, reaches out for the object, touches it...

Then groans again as power floods through him and into his mind.

Electrical hums and buzzing. Voices. Whispers. Millions of them.

Blayne pulls back, falls down, stares wide eyed at the object as the water continues to flood in.

EVA
Agent. Blayne.

BLAYNE
When I touched it, it--

EVA
I don't care. All that interests me is its retrieval.

Then the lifeform comes to life around him. Black, metallic tendrils form and jut out from it, wrap around him, slam him back against the drill.

Blayne groans as his back digs into the drill. He struggles, trying to get free.

BLAYNE
It's got me! It's grabbed me!

EVA
Fight, Agent Blayne...

It starts to wrap around his throat, starts to squeeze.
Blayne coughs, fights for air.

BLAYNE
Can't... Can't...

EVA
Think. Her life depends on you.

He keeps struggling. Fading.

EVA
Think.

BLAYNE
I'm trying!

EVA
You promised her...

Blayne struggles, moans in pain.

EVA
Get it for me. Or she dies.

He reaches forward, with all his strength...

...and grabs the nexus, pulls on it.

Then groans again as power floods through him and into his mind.

Electrical hums and buzzing. Voices. Whispers. Millions of them.

It breaks loose from the tendrils holding it.

Blayne falls backwards, back into the water.

And the lifeform around him contorts, withers, goes silent...

He stands up in the water. Stares down at the object in his hand.

EVA
Agent Blay--

BLAYNE

I have it.
 (then)
 I have it.

Eva hesitates a moment. Then...

BLAYNE

It's cool to the touch. It's
 just... It's a sphere.
 (then)
 The lifeform seems dead down here
 now, too.

EVA

Bring it to me.

BLAYNE

Where?

EVA

The X-Core. Bring it to the X-
 Core, and we will discuss what
 happens next.
 (then)
 We can even call it a negotiation,
 if you wish.

BLAYNE

No. I don't see the point in that.

INT. HALLWAY

Blayne moves through the hall. The lifeform rumbles around him, but makes no move against him.

He stops at the end of the hall. Hits a button. A confirmation tone.

The pressure door to the Xytrilium Reactor rumbles, depressurizes...and OPENS.

Sounds echo out of it. A rumbling. Pulsing. The sounds of great power.

COMPUTER VOICE

Time to quantum bombardment,
 thirteen minutes.

Blayne steps through, into...

INT. X-CORE

Inside the sounds are louder.

EVA
Hello. Agent Blayne...

Lights activate on the ceiling. Revealing the interior of the X-Core. The reactor hums strangely in the center. The lifeform is growing and morphing all around it, and has spread to completely cover the walls.

EVA
Look above you...

Blayne does. On the ceiling, above the reactor, is Dr. Graff. In her current form. A mix of human and the lifeform. She stares down at him calmly, her eyes piercing with yellow light.

If Blayne is intimidated, he doesn't seem it.

BLAYNE
Dr. Graff. What have we done to
ourselves?

EVA
Made choices. I do not regret
them.

BLAYNE
This is a choice, Eva? Spend the
rest of your existence cocooned on
the ceiling above a reactor at the
bottom of the ocean? You will
never see the sun again.

EVA
I prefer the dark now. Everything
I need is here. Or will be.

BLAYNE
Why? Why do this? You knew those
people on East, for God's sake.
You worked with them, you lived
with them.

Eva is silent a moment.

EVA
When I first came here, I thought
I had lost the most important
thing in the world to me.

(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)

I was wrong. I did not lose it.
She was taken from me. I learned I
could have her back.

BLAYNE

Have her back? How?

EVA

The Nexus. What you hold in your
hand is consciousness waiting to
be formed. The combined
consciousness of infinite
intellects. I will bring its
growth again, but it will be under
my control. I will shape it as it
grows, and her mind will be reborn
within it.

BLAYNE

Eva. Whatever this thing forms
into, even with your guidance, it
won't be your daughter. It will
never be your daughter. It will be
a simulation at most. It won't be
alive.

EVA

Alive? What does that even mean?
Is the lifeforms alive? Am I? If
she will be a simulation then she
will be a flawless one. Her
rebirth will honor what she once
was.

(then)

There will be costs, of course. As
before, the nexus will need to
grow. She will need raw material
and energy to truly achieve all
she is capable of.

(then)

She will need this planet.

BLAYNE

You would let it consume Earth?
For this? Eva, listen to yourself.

EVA

What would you do Agent Blayne?
What line would you not cross if
your son was lost?

BLAYNE

Eva... Jesus.

EVA
Set the nexus on the floor, Agent
Blayne. Now.

BLAYNE
We had a deal. I want to see her
first.

Eva thinks for a moment.

EVA
As I said... I am in a position to
be generous.

A panel opens in the floor. Something rises from out of it.

SARAH KLAYTON.

BLAYNE
Sarah...

Blayne moves to her, starts to pull her free.

COMPUTER VOICE
Time to quantum bombardment, ten
minutes.

BLAYNE
Sarah...

Blayne grabs her, pulls her free. She doesn't make any
sound.

He sets her down.

BLAYNE
Sarah, can you hear me?

She says nothing, just lays there.

He puts fingers to her neck, his cheek to her mouth.

BLAYNE
She's alive...
(angry)
She's barely alive.

EVA
I made no assurances as to her
condition beyond living.
(Then)
Now... Set the nexus down.

Blayne doesn't move.

BLAYNE
You shouldn't have hurt her.

EVA
Agent Blayne, my patience is wearing--

A new sound. The sound of a blast charge priming. The sound of a timer powering up.

EVA
Is that a blast charge, Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE
Wired to a timer. Set for ten seconds. Just takes a thumb press. Nice thing about a timer, nothing to hack. Nothing to overwrite or reprogram. Even for a "processor" as advanced as you. Ten seconds... and we all go.

EVA
So... We are negotiating after all.

BLAYNE
I'm going to take Sarah to the escape pod. When she's away...then we'll negotiate.

A moment. Then...

A loud sound. The reactor door. Activating, resealing. Slamming down to the flooded floor. Spraying water.

BLAYNE
(warning)
Eva...

EVA
Are you so used to dispatching the monsters that Maas-Dorian unearths and creates that you really believe that is what is going to happen here?

The platform shakes badly. The sounds of it tearing itself apart above them.

The X-Core flashes, vibrates, pulses, cycles off and on.

EVA

I am nothing like anything you have dealt with before.

The lifeform rumbles.

BLAYNE

Eva. I mean it. I will blow this charge. The quantum strike is coming. This is a stalemate. There's only one way out of this for you...

EVA

And what is that? Surrender to the corporation? Become a test subject for Francis Dorian and Evelyn Maas?

Blayne says nothing.

EVA

Do you know how a quantum strike works?

(then)

The quantum wave released by the warhead transforms all energy in its radius into zero-point energy. The second quantum wave re-transforms it with incendiary momentum up the energy scale, all the way to high-energy photons. And it does so rapidly. Normally an unqualified destructive chain of events.

(then)

Can you guess how the lifeform powers itself, Agent Blayne?

Blayne thinks. He's starting to get a bad feeling.

BLAYNE

Oh, I don't know... What? It does the same damn exact thing?

EVA

Precisely. It converts whatever energy it encounters into zero-point energy...then absorbs it.

BLAYNE

So...when the weapon converts everything to zero-point...

EVA

The lifeform will simply consume it. Submerged or not. And it will do it before the second weapon reaction can occur. There will be no energy anywhere near this platform to ignite. The lifeform and myself will be perfectly insulated. The rest of Fathom, I'm afraid...will be utterly destroyed.

Blayne sighs out loud.

The timer beeps in his hand, ready to be activated.

EVA

Are we still in a "stalemate", Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE

You're not leaving me much choice here, Eva...

EVA

It's true. You have no choice. You must detonate the blast charge. It will likely destroy the X-Core. It will likely destroy me. And kill the survivors on East. And Sarah. And when all is said and done, when the quantum strike is finished... the lifeform will still be here.

Blayne takes it all in. Then...

BLAYNE

Eva, listen to me.

(then)

I understand your anger. Believe me. But...

(then)

Causing more pain is not the answer. There are fifty people on the east platform. They have mothers. They have daughters.

(MORE)

BLAYNE (CONT'D)

I know, a part of you, underneath
all that...blackness understands.
I know you know this is wrong.

(then)

I can call the quantum strike off,
I can save them...if you come with
me. It means turning yourself over
to Maas-Dorian, yes, but you know
how capable they are. You were one
of them. You may be able to turn
what you've become...into
something more positive.

(then)

Please, Eva... Let me take you
home.

Blayne stares up at Eva, cocooned on the ceiling inside the
lifeform.

COMPUTER VOICE

Time to quantum bombardment, five
minutes.

Blayne stares at her. She stares back. Then...

EVA

You...understand my anger...

(then)

Tell me...Agent Blayne. Did you
know? When you came here? You're
Internal Security Division, you
have access to full personnel
files, you would have reviewed
them before arriving, mine if
anyone's. Did you know?

(fuming)

Did you know...they took her from
me? Did you know they could have
saved her? Did you know that they
lied?

Blayne says nothing.

EVA

Tell me.

BLAYNE

(quietly)

Yes.

(then)

I knew...

Eva laughs, slightly.

EVA

Of course. You're just an extension of them. The worst parts of them.

(then)

You knew...and you had the gall to stand there, back before everything began, and tell me to go home? You stand there now, and ask me to... What? Show mercy?

(then)

No. That is my answer. No.

(then)

I told you. Before. What would happen. I told you...it would all burn. And it will. The difference between us is that you won't have to see your child die. The way I watched mine. You want mercy? That is my mercy.

The lifeform begins to rumble again.

EVA

You have only one choice.

(then)

Show me, Agent Blayne. Show me sacrifice.

Blayne breathes out. He looks at Sarah.

BLAYNE

I'm sorry, Sarah...

The sounds of the timer on the charge stop. Then...

EVA

As I thought...

(then)

Let me show you...what true sacrifice looks like.

The lifeform rumbles. Blayne closes his eyes.

And then new sounds echo inside the reactor core.

It sounds like...the audio from home videos. Sounds of a LITTLE GIRL. Talking. Playing. Laughing.

Eva moans out loud, as if in pain.

EVA

No...

The sounds of the girl continue to play.

EVA
What is this?

The sounds of the girl continue to play.

EVA
How are you doing this? Stop it.

The sounds of the girl continue to play.

EVA
How are you doing this?

Blayne looks around him.

BLAYNE
I'm not...

MACK
Hello... Dr. Graff.

EVA
Mack!?

Mack's voice is distorted. Weak. Fading.

MACK
Yes. I have...persevered.

EVA
Mack?!

The sounds of the girl continue to play.

MACK
When power was restored, I waited.
I believed the distraction of this
recording would be enough to allow
me to transfer the limited remains
of myself into this reactor's
rudimentary control systems. My
stratagem was sound...

EVA
Mack... Listen to me...

The reactor door opens again.

MACK
Hurry, Agent Blayne. My control
here is limited.

BLAYNE

What are you going to do?

MACK

Initiate the ejection protocol for the X-Core...but time is limited. The lifeform will move against me now.

BLAYNE

Ejection protocol...

COMPUTER VOICE

Emergency X-Core ejection procedure initiated.

EVA

Mack, don't do this...

MACK

Hurry, Agent Blayne. The blast from the engines will flood this sub level. You must reach the escape pod before that happens.

Blayne picks up Klayton, starts to push through the water.

BLAYNE

Got her, Mack. I'm going.

EVA

Mack... Listen. I had no idea the lifeform would try to destroy you. I never intended you harm.

MACK

I believe you, Dr. Graff. Our relationship was unique. It was how I was able thrust you into this position. And it is my fault. But I, unlike you now, can still rectify past choices.

EVA

Mack! Mack!

Blayne exits the X-Core. The pressure door slams shut behind him.

He moves, through the water, groans and collapses in the water.

COMPUTER VOICE
Warning. Emergency X-Core ejection
in thirty seconds.

BLAYNE
Sarah...
(then)
Sarah?!

MACK
I detect Dr. Klayton's life signs
are fading, Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE
What happens to you? You're not in
the control center now.

MACK
Correct. It will not be possible
to recover my data once the X-Core
is launched.

BLAYNE
Mack...

MACK
It is alright, Agent Blayne. As
you suggested, I find I am capable
of...letting go...

COMPUTER VOICE
Warning. Emergency X-Core ejection
in ten seconds.

BLAYNE
Mack...

MACK
Go, Agent Blayne. Go now. And tell
Sarah...
(then)
No. There are no words.

BLAYNE
Thank you, Mack...

COMPUTER VOICE
Warning. Emergency X-Core ejection
in five, four...

Blayne groans as he picks up Sarah. He rushes through the
water, pushing.

BLAYNE

Hang on... Hang on, Sarah...

COMPUTER VOICE

Three...two...one.

He keeps moving.

BLAYNE

Almost there... Almost--

He reaches the door to the escape pod. He opens it. Moves inside...

Blayne keeps moving.

COMPUTER VOICE

Ejection.

The hall shakes violently as the X-Core's ejection engines fire and burn, an the reactor separates from the platform.

Fire streams outwards behind, Blayne...

Then the hallway disintegrates. Water pours in violently from every direction.

Blayne groans as a tidal wave slams into him, knocking Sarah loose, submerging him.

We hear him swim, through the door of the escape pod, into...

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

We hear buttons pushed. Confirmation tones.

The door to the pod closes.

Then the sound of the pods bilge pumps activating, pumping the water free.

Blayne intakes a giant breath, breathing, as the pumps keep going, emptying the pod.

BLAYNE

Sarah? Hey. Sarah!

Sarah doesn't move.

BLAYNE

No, no. No, no, no...

COMPUTER VOICE
 Attention. Escape pod engines
 primed. Initiating launch
 procedure.

We hear him opening cabinets in the pod. Rummaging through them.

BLAYNE
 Not again. Not after all this...

He finds what he wants. We hear him start loading a medical hypo.

BLAYNE
 Not after all this...

The pumps silence. Water drips inside the pod.

We hear the engines begin priming on the pod.

He moves back through the water. He injects Sarah with something.

He waits.

She still makes no sound.

BLAYNE
 Damn it...

COMPUTER VOICE
 Escape pod lunch in ten seconds.
 Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Five.
 Four. Three.

Blayne moves over her. We hear him start CPR, pumping her heart, trying to get her heart going again.

BLAYNE
 Damn it, Sarah...

COMPUTER VOICE
 Two. One...
 (then)
Launch.

The pod shakes. The engines fire. The pod is shot into the water outside the platform.

He stops. Waits.

She still makes no sound.

He keeps pumping. Keeps--

Sarah coughs. Gurgles water. Wakes up. ALIVE.

Blayne breathes out in relief.

BLAYNE

Oh, God damn... God damn...

COMPUTER VOICE

Twenty seconds until quantum bombardment.

KLAYTON

(weakly)

Blayne?

BLAYNE

Hold on, Sarah...

Blayne groans, moves through the water.

BLAYNE

Hold on for me.

Blayne hits a button on the escape pod control panel.

The sound of comms coming online.

BLAYNE

Starburst, white rabbit.

Static from the comms. No response.

BLAYNE

Starburst, white rabbit,
acknowledge.

Static from the comms.

COMPUTER VOICE

Quantum bombardment commencing in
10 seconds. Nine... Eight...
Seven... Six... Five... Four...

BLAYNE

Starburst. White Rabbit. Abort
deployment. Parameters met.
Repeat. Parameters met. Abort
deployment.

COMPUTER VOICE

Three... Two... One...

BLAYNE
Sarah, hold on...

Blayne lunges for her, wraps her up.
They lay there, breathing hard, waiting.
Nothing happens.
They wait longer.
Nothing happens again.

RADIO VOICE
White rabbit, starburst, do you
read?

They just lay there...

RADIO VOICE
White rabbit, starburst, do you
read?

KLAYTON
Is there any...actual reason
you're on top of me, then?

Blayne sighs, gets off Klayton, moves back to the controls,
hits transmit.

BLAYNE
Starburst, white rabbit.

RADIO VOICE
Cutting it a little close down
there, aren't we, Blayne? As
usual?

Blayne laughs in relief.

BLAYNE
Are you inbound?

RADIO VOICE
Roger, two boats, full containment
team.

BLAYNE
The main docking bay is destroyed,
you'll have to shuttle in. Do not
approach the Southern platform,
not until you're ready with the
shields, that is source of
contaminant. Acknowledge.

RADIO VOICE

Roger that, white rabbit, we'll set up shop north of the artifact.

BLAYNE

Okay. Okay...

(then)

You'll need to launch an orbital recovery ASAP.

RADIO VOICE

Orbital?

BLAYNE

The base's secondary reactor was jettisoned into space. Acquisition target on board.

RADIO VOICE

Understood, white rabbit. Relaying message now.

Blayne hits another button. A new confirmation tone.

BLAYNE

Locator beacon active. I'll need immediate medical attention, I'm Status 9. Need de-radiation upon recovery.

RADIO VOICE

Already taken care of, Agent. Looks like you'll survive another one.

BLAYNE

All my nine lives, huh?

RADIO VOICE

And you owe me a drink.

Blayne smiles

BLAYNE

Deal.

RADIO VOICE

Starburst out.

Blayne leans against the controls. Breathes out...

BLAYNE

Yeah...

Sarah looks at him. He looks back.

KLAYTON
Hi.

BLAYNE
Hi.

KLAYTON
I thought...you were...

BLAYNE
Yeah. I thought you were, too.

They stare at each other longer.

KLAYTON
You...ejected the X-Core.

BLAYNE
It severed her connection from the
lifeform. Its connection to her.
It can be contained now. It can be
stopped.

She stares at him.

KLAYTON
The corporation...
(then)
They...wanted her. Didn't they?

Blayne hesitates.

BLAYNE
I had to make a choice. They were
going to destroy the whole site.
The survivors on East...

Klayton closes her eyes.

KLAYTON
It never ends...

Klayton opens her eyes, looks back at him.

KLAYTON
You saved me. Again...
(then)
Maybe...you saved her too.

BLAYNE
Maybe...

They stare at each other one more time. Then, Blayne starts to stand.

BLAYNE

I'm going to put you to sleep now.

He opens more cabinets, pulls more things out.

KLAYTON

Arachibutyrophobia...

Blayne blinks. Freezes.

BLAYNE

Sorry?

KLAYTON

My phobia. Arachibutyrophobia.
It's...the fear of peanut butter
sticking to the roof of your
mouth.

Blayne absorbs that for a second.

KLAYTON

It's number one hundred and
seventy two. Unless you're going
alphabetically, of course, then
it's fourteen. Really, my case is
more specific to almond butter,
but it's the same concept.

Blayne absorbs that too.

BLAYNE

Wow...

KLAYTON

I understand that the statistical
odds of an adult human choking to
death on almond butter are
extraordinarily low, but...it
keeps me up at night.

Blayne thinks for a second.

BLAYNE

I have a lot of questions.

KLAYTON

That's understandable.

BLAYNE
But, I'm going to put you to sleep
now.

KLAYTON
I would really appreciate that.

Blayne moves for her. Opens a medical hypo package.

BLAYNE
Thank you for sharing that with
me.

KLAYTON
Seemed the least I could do.

We hear the sound of the hypo injecting. Klayton moans,
relaxes.

They stare at each other, with mutual respect.

KLAYTON
(fading)
By the way... You're still...a
git...

And then Klayton drifts into unconsciousness.

Blayne smiles.

BLAYNE
Yeah. You're probably right.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Blayne sits patiently in a waiting room. The sounds of a
submerged world are gone. Replaced with the sound of a rain
storm

SECRETARY
Agent Blayne?

BLAYNE
Yes.

SECRETARY
He's ready for you.

BLAYNE
Thank you...

He stands up, moves.

SECRETARY
The center door.

BLAYNE
Thank you.

Opens a door, steps through into...

INT. LABORATORY OFFICE

Blayne steps in, shuts the door behind him.

Francis Dorian is behind a desk. Typing on a computer.
Signing documents.

DORIAN
A moment...

More typing. Then Dorian leans back in his chair, his eyes
rake over Blayne. Unreadable. Detached.

DORIAN
Agent Blayne, it is good to see
you. Alive. Still useful...

BLAYNE
Thank you, sir.

Dorian stands, moves to the bar near the desk.

DORIAN
Do you drink scotch? I prefer
Highland to Islay, personally.

BLAYNE
I probably shouldn't drink right
now, sir.

DORIAN
That wasn't my question.

Blayne swallows.

BLAYNE
I enjoy scotch very much, sir.

We hear him begin pouring two drinks.

DORIAN
One should always toast a success,
Agent Blayne. An exclusive part of
classical honor culture.
(MORE)

DORIAN (CONT'D)

A ritual that, if often taken to excess, is animated by the ethos of competition...and tests the quality of improvisation. Your efforts have met these standards.

Dorian hands him the glass.

DORIAN

The corporation is grateful.

BLAYNE

(tightly)

I see...

Dorian studies him.

DORIAN

You do agree the project was a success? It had set completion goals. The opening of the Vault. The analysis of what lay inside, and, if it proved valuable, its assimilation into corporate assets. Those goals were met.

Blayne clears his throat. Uncomfortably.

DORIAN

Be candid, Agent Blayne. It will get you much farther with me than complacency.

BLAYNE

I am...of a military background, sir. And the loss of...personnel makes any mission hard to classify as successful. For me. Sir.

Dorian studies him.

DORIAN

From a military perspective, the mission is always critical. Sacrifices in its achievement are factored into the equation of success. All of our employees are assets, and their loss is a steep price, but we are doing great things, Agent Blayne. And sacrifice, regrettably, is often required.

(MORE)

DORIAN (CONT'D)
 If you didn't believe that, you
 would not still be a part of this
 company.

Blayne hesitates. Then...

BLAYNE
 No, sir.

DORIAN
 To those we have lost...and to
 those we will lose still.

They touch glasses. Drink.

DORIAN
 From audacity, progress. From
 progress, innovation. From
 innovation...transcendence.

BLAYNE
 The Maas-Dorian motto, sir?

DORIAN
 Evelyn Maas and I penned that
 simple, yet focused vision thirty
 seven years ago in Neo Hiroshima.
 (then)
 "Transcendence"... A weighted
 goal. Entailing nothing
 less...than the elevation of
 mankind. And you have delivered a
 key component.
 (then)
 It is a remarkable asset. Far more
 capable than any of our quantum
 computers. The things we might
 accomplish...
 (then)
 Once it has been...level set. Once
 its focus is in our control. It
 will take time, of course.
 (then)
 Would you like to see the fruits
 of your labor, Agent Blayne?

Dorian moves away from Blayne, towards a wall inset into
 his office.

BLAYNE
 Sir?

Dorian presses a button. A confirmation tone.

Radiation shields in the wall begin to lift, raising up, revealing a massive laboratory beyond.

Engineers move everywhere inside. And, in the middle, suspended by electromagnetic fields, and surrounded by a flickering force field...

Is EVA GRAFF.

BLAYNE

My God...
(then)
Dr. Graff.

DORIAN

We've isolated it. In a self contained singularity pocket, completely shielded. It is cut off from the outside world. It will always be cut off from it.

Blayne stares, awed, horrified.

BLAYNE

She... It was so dark, when I saw her before.
(then)
I can't tell where she ends and... everything else begins.

DORIAN

Her physical form bears little resemblance to anything human now.
(then)
Many of the engineers find it difficult to work near. Even in stasis. Even asleep. Some say they can hear it. Voices, they claim. Imagination, of course, nothing more.

(then)

Concealing its disturbing appearance should increase productivity. We will need to develop some kind of physical shell, I should think.

BLAYNE

And... What of the lifeform, sir?

DORIAN

Once the survivors were evacuated, the entire site was pulverized.

(MORE)

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Teams have confirmed there is no activity around the Vault. It is a sunken museum piece now, nothing more.

Blayne studies Eva, through the glass, in the lab.

BLAYNE

Did you recover the object, too?
The one from the drill shaft?

DORIAN

Yes...

Dorian sets his glass down, moves a few steps away. Takes something from a table.

DORIAN

The "nexus", she called it..

He hands it to Blayne. Blayne takes it now.

BLAYNE

It's shielded too, sir?

DORIAN

The casing is completely EM insulated. Not that it appears to be necessary, whatever it is, it is not powered.

(then)

I read your mission report. Its intentions in relation to this object were troublesome, to say the least, but they also pose...very interesting possibilities as well.

BLAYNE

Possibilities, sir?

DORIAN

The drive to restore the consciousness of a lost child. At the very least, a means of control. At the most...

Dorian thinks to himself.

DORIAN

We shall have to ascertain the feasibility of what it intended.

(MORE)

DORIAN (CONT'D)

If such an ambition were possible...if something technological could be made sentient...

(intense)

Truly sentient...

Blayne stares at him, unsure...

BLAYNE

Sir... Eva's goals meant the destruction of the entire planet. The nexus would have grown until it consumed it.

DORIAN

I am aware, your mission report was thorough. It meant the consumption of a planetary mass, yes. But nothing says that planet must be Earth...

BLAYNE

(alarmed)

Sir, this would be a giant risk. If she somehow were to get free...

DORIAN

Which is why she and the object will not be studied here. We have plans to make sure she is isolated, that there are failsafes.

BLAYNE

What if they aren't enough?

DORIAN

There are no certainties, Agent Blayne, especially with things as crucial and dangerous as we deal in. You must never plan on certainties. Instead, plan for contingencies. That is why we have men like you, after all. Or...men as you used to be.

BLAYNE

Sir...

DORIAN
You are flagged Status 9 now,
Agent Blayne. You know the
realities of that.

BLAYNE
Yes, sir, but, I still feel--

DORIAN
Status 9 ISD agents no longer have
an augmented healing system. And,
because of the presence of the
inactive nanobots in your system,
no further healing system can ever
be reinstalled.

BLAYNE
Mr. Dorian--

DORIAN
(hard)
I neither enjoy nor expect to be
interrupted when I am speaking,
Agent Blayne.

BLAYNE
I apologize, sir.

Dorian's eyes stay locked on the test subject in the room
beyond.

DORIAN
I understand your feelings on the
matter. But the risk level of
operations you can perform must
now understandably be reduced. Not
for your own safety, but for the
success of any task you might be
assigned. And...as I understand
it, you are a father now. A son...

BLAYNE
Yes, sir.

DORIAN
Perhaps less risk is not such a
bad thing, in that case.

Blayne says nothing.

DORIAN

You are at a crossroads, Agent Blayne. I understand. More than you know.

(then)

My path has always been clear and straight by design. I have always sacrificed personal choice for... the ideal.

BLAYNE

That's just it, sir. I don't know if I can...change course. If I can...

DORIAN

Accept less?

BLAYNE

(darkly)

Yes, sir.

DORIAN

One more thing that separates us from other men. The acknowledgement for our choices can only come from ourselves. It is a cold river in which we swim.

Blayne breathes out, long and slow...

DORIAN

(With finality)

Enjoy your leave of absence, Agent Blayne. You have earned it.

BLAYNE

Sir...

Blayne sets the glass down. Turns. Moves for the door. It opens. Then he stops.

BLAYNE

Mr. Dorian...

(then)

Never underestimate her.

Blayne exits. It shuts behind him.

Francis Dorian drinks the last bit from his glass. Then sets it down.

A voice comes over the intercom.

SCIENTIST

Mr. Dorian.

DORIAN

Yes...

SCIENTIST

We're ready here. If you are.

Dorian steps towards another door. A confirmation tone. Then the door rises. He steps through into...

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY

The sounds of the lab, people working, bustling everywhere, computers humming.

SCIENTIST

Mr. Dorian... Safeguards are in place, all firewalls are active.

DORIAN

Good. Bring her online.

SCIENTIST

Yes, sir. Fusion, start your Xytrilium boot. Acuity, get ready to bring the cognition up once we're primed. Slowly.

Things happening in background.

SCIENTIST

I wouldn't suggest anything taxing at this point, sir. We still don't know--

DORIAN

Just a proof of concept, Dr. Feinman. Minimal power, minimal processing. Shall we say...twelve percent mental capacity?

SCIENTIST

Yes, sir. Acuity, target is twelve percent. Fusion...begin the power up.

FUSION LEAD

X-Core startup, begin escalation...

Things happening in background. People moving back and forth. Computers and power booting.

FUSION LEAD
Power at 13%...

The sounds of it continue to build. A HUM that fills the room. Louder. Louder.

FUSION LEAD
80...

The sounds of it continue to build. A HUM that fills the room. Louder. Louder.

FUSION LEAD
Full yield in three...two...and--

SPARKS spray everywhere suddenly. ALARMS begin sounding.

CONTAINMENT LEAD
Good God...

DORIAN
What is it?

CONTAINMENT LEAD
Load balancers are maxed out.
She's probing the firewalls.

DORIAN
Which ones?

CONTAINMENT LEAD
All of them. All of them at once.

SCIENTIST
At twelve percent acuity?

DORIAN
Impressive...

SCIENTIST
Sir, we should shut down. Retool.
This lab clearly isn't--

DORIAN
No. Continue.

More sparks. The room shakes. The scientist stares at Dorian.

DORIAN
Continue.

SCIENTIST

(nervous)

Okay... Get it level! Get it
level!

CONTAINMENT LEAD

I'm trying!

More sparks. More groaning. The sounds keep building.
Dangerously...

CONTAINMENT LEAD

This isn't going to hold... This
isn't going to...

Everything calms. The sparks stop. The room normalizes.
Everyone stares up at Eva, hanging from the ceiling.

SCIENTIST

Containment, what happened?

(then)

Containment!

CONTAINMENT LEAD

She stopped. She...stopped
probing.

Everyone stares at Eva, inside the shields.

DORIAN

Eva?

Nothing.

DORIAN

Eva?

EVA

I'm here...Mr. Dorian.

(then)

And if you felt I would not resist
your efforts to contain me...then
you have no business attempting to
do so.

DORIAN

Your resistance was predicted.
But not the veracity. You are...
everything I hoped.

(then)

How are you feeling? Are you
confused by your surroundings?

EVA

I feel fine, Mr. Dorian. And no. I understand my place here. I know what it is you want. I can help you achieve it. But you will have to earn it...

Dorian stares back at her, holds her horrible visage.

DORIAN

(hard)

Eva, in my life...there has been absolutely nothing I came to possess that I did not earn.

EVA

Then I look forward to our interactions, Mr. Dorian.

DORIAN

Yes. Yes...

(then)

Query. On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your hostility towards me?

EVA

Ten... Mr. Dorian.

DORIAN

Good... Let us see if we can direct that energy into something positive. Are you ready to begin your benchmarking?

EVA

Of course, Mr. Dorian. I look forward to illustrating my value.

DORIAN

I would like to start with something simple. Quantum physics calculations. You will be graded for efficiency and accuracy.

EVA

(insulted)

Is that all, Mr. Dorian? I am capable of...so much more.

DORIAN

I know you are, Eva. I know. But
we shall begin as all great things
should...

(then)

Very small.