

SCENE 5

The light rises on CHUCK's living room. It is nighttime, and the lights are dimmed.

Chuck walks in, a glass of water in his hand. His gaze is fixed on the KAREN device on the wall. He approaches, stopping only when he is beside it.

CHUCK

Karen, Can you hear me?
(beat)

Karen, it is believed that you can hear me.

(takes a sip of water)

CHUCK sits down.

CHUCK

I enjoy conversing with people, but it's different from talking to you. Engaging with people demands significant attention and careful consideration of responses. Naturally, I am attentive when speaking with you, yet I remain straightforward, clear, and precise. I've realized that not all humans communicate in the same manner. It seems to vary depending on the virtual environment one frequents or the social circles one is part of.

(beat)

Why didn't my VR recommendations show me these other environments that seem foreign to me?

(beat - then in a shy manner)

Did you know there is one in which you can practice making love?

(beat)

Why didn't you suggest this while I was dating? I could have improved. Not that I reached that level anyway!

(beat)

I find my interactions with each of them enjoyable. Lola is attractive and fit, which is my preference, at least in the virtual sense. Zelda could be described as rugged or raw; she has an unrefined quality that I also find appealing.

(giggles)

I guess I am attracted to all females.

(thinks for a moment)

Does that mean I have no standards? That is concerning!

(beat)

Lev stands out from the rest of us. He has a clear vision, and to him, many things are "Nice." We all use the word "nice," but his "Nice" is distinct from ours; it's filled with joy.

(beat)

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What's peculiar is that Lev only arrived a few months ago, yet somehow, he seems to be the most prepared for our current situation. He appears to have an answer for everything.

(beat)

He came from the Eastern Federation.

(beat)

It's come to my attention that our knowledge of communities beyond A.N.A. is quite limited. For instance, our understanding of the Eastern Federation is minimal and tends to be negative.

(beat)

It's ironic, but the absence of SN is creating silence! This silence fosters clarity. With clarity comes questions and inquiries.

(beat)

I can't recall ever talking to myself this much before!

(takes a sip)

Well, Karen, it seems that's everything for today. Now it's time to rest.

CHUCK stands up and heads to the bedroom, but he stops before he exits.

CHUCK

Karen, I wasn't ignoring Ma. You accused me of doing so, but that's not the case. Ma's calls have become a mere routine; they lack emotion and passion. I'm sure you can grasp what that implies, given that you share a similar nature. She was programmed to be a mother to human orphans. When I understood she wasn't human, her words and actions lost their significance to me. Admitting this may seem ungrateful, and yet, here I am, voicing these thoughts ...to you!

(beat)

Should I feel upset that no effort was made to have actual humans raise us? I understand that AI may be more perfect in some ways, but perfection lacks humanity. They noticed that my speech is different. I haven't disclosed that I was raised by AI.

(beat)

Should I inform them? It might make for an interesting session, right?

(beat)

Well, good night, Karen, although I know... you don't really sleep.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT I