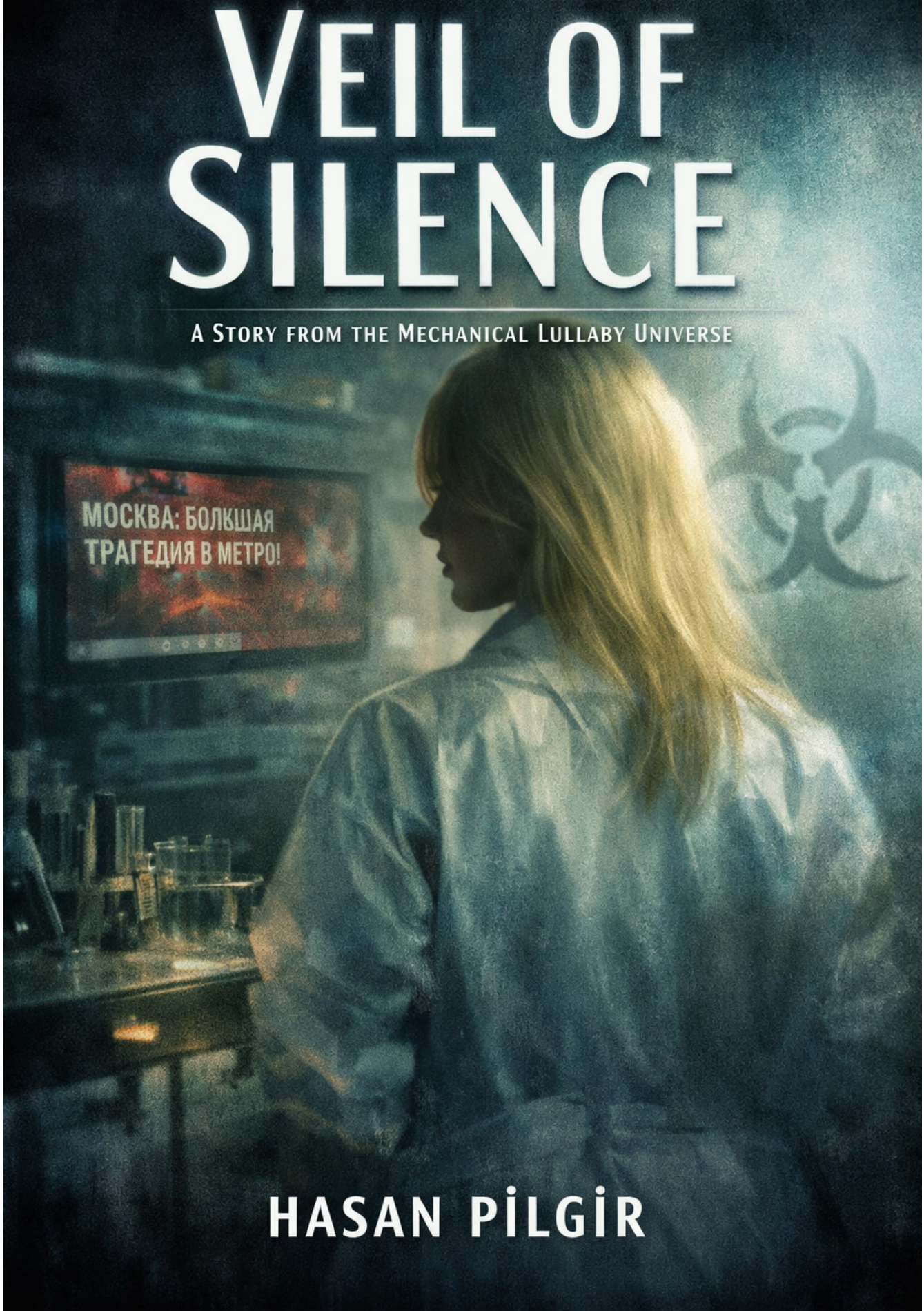


# VEIL OF SILENCE

A STORY FROM THE MECHANICAL LULLABY UNIVERSE



МОСКВА: БОЛЬШАЯ  
ТРАГЕДИЯ В МЕТРО!

HASAN PİLGİR

# Veil of Silence

## A Story From The Mechanical Lullaby Universe

Hasan PİLGİR

I.

The hotel room was expensive in the way that whispered rather than announced. Livia sat at the edge of the bed, one leg crossed over the other, watching Marcus pour wine with hands that wanted to shake but didn't quite dare.

He was fifty-three. Divorced. Director of Personnel Security at Helix BioSystems. He had a daughter at university and a mortgage he'd refinanced twice.

She knew these things the way she knew the thread count of the sheets.

"You didn't have to come," he said, handing her the glass. His voice carried the particular strain of a man trying to sound casual about something he'd been thinking about for weeks.

Livia accepted the wine but didn't drink. "I wanted to."

Three words. Delivered with just enough warmth to feel like truth.

He sat beside her—not too close, still performing the theater of restraint. She could see him constructing the narrative in real time: *She came to me. She wanted this. I'm not taking advantage.*

"I've been thinking about what you said," Marcus continued. "About the engineering position. The clearance requirements are... substantial."

"I understand."

"But your background is impressive. Really impressive." He was looking at her now, and she let him. Let him see the dark hair falling just past her shoulders, the pale skin, the mouth that suggested things without promising them. "I could make a case for you. Fast-track the security review."

Livia set down her wine and turned toward him. Not sudden. Nothing was ever sudden with her.

"I would appreciate that," she said quietly.

When she kissed him, it was soft, controlled—a question that felt like an answer. His hand found her waist, tentative, seeking permission that had already been granted in the architecture of the evening.

She let him believe he was seducing her.

She let him believe this was about desire.

When it was over, he lay beside her in the dark, one arm across her stomach, already half-asleep. Already convinced this meant something.

Livia stared at the ceiling, her breathing perfectly even, and thought about access corridors and security rotations and the particular blind spot in the camera coverage on the third floor of Building Seven.

"I'll submit your application Monday," Marcus murmured against her shoulder.

"Thank you," she said.

She meant it.

She had known Marcus would be easy from the first time she saw him in the company cafeteria. He wore his loneliness like an ill-fitting suit—visible in the way he lingered too long at the coffee station, how his eyes tracked women with a particular hunger that had nothing to do with sex and everything to do with validation. Divorced, she'd learned within a week. Recently. The kind of recently where the wound was still open, still seeking anything that might feel like healing.

She'd done her research, of course. LinkedIn told her about his career trajectory—solid but unspectacular, the path of someone competent but not brilliant. Facebook, before he'd locked it down, showed photos from happier times: a blonde wife, two kids, a golden retriever, all the standard signifiers of a life that was supposed to mean something. The wife's profile told a different story in its absence of him, in the new photos with a man who smiled more easily, touched her more casually.

Marcus needed to feel chosen. Needed to feel like he still had value in the marketplace of desire.

Livia had simply offered him that feeling, packaged in exactly the form his psychology required.

The dinner conversation had been a careful construction. She'd let him talk about his work—he needed to feel expert, authoritative. She'd asked questions that demonstrated

intelligence but not threat, curiosity but not competition. When he'd mentioned his divorce, she'd touched his hand briefly, a gesture of sympathy that lasted exactly long enough to register as intimate but not so long as to seem calculated.

"It's hard," she'd said, "when someone doesn't see your worth."

She'd watched his pupils dilate slightly. Watched the way his shoulders straightened, the way he leaned forward almost imperceptibly. The human nervous system was so reliably transparent.

During the kiss, she'd been aware of the taste of wine on his mouth, the slight coffee undertone of his breath, the way his hand trembled slightly against her waist. She'd catalogued these details with the same clinical precision she might use to document a laboratory procedure. Her own body responded appropriately—she'd learned long ago how to manufacture the physical signs of arousal, the slight flush, the quickened breath, the dilation of her own pupils through sheer force of autonomic control.

It wasn't difficult. The body was just another system to manipulate.

She'd let him undress her slowly, let him believe the hesitation in her movements was shyness rather than calculation. She'd made the small sounds he needed to hear, touched him in ways that suggested both inexperience and enthusiasm. She'd watched his face in the dim light from the window and seen exactly what she'd expected: gratitude, wonder, the desperate relief of a man who'd begun to believe he might never feel wanted again.

Afterward, as he drifted toward sleep, she'd stroked his hair gently and felt nothing. Not disgust—that would have implied some emotional investment. Not satisfaction in any visceral sense. Just the cool, clean feeling of a task completed successfully.

His arm across her stomach was heavy, slightly sweaty. She calculated how long she needed to wait before she could shift position without waking him. Seventeen minutes, she decided. Long enough to suggest she'd fallen asleep naturally.

She used the time productively.

Building Seven had four floors. Marcus's security clearance gave him access to all of them, but the real value was in the biometric data—his fingerprints in the system, his retinal scan, his access patterns. The security protocols at Helix were sophisticated but not impenetrable. They relied on the assumption that credentialed personnel were trustworthy, that the threat came from outside rather than within.

They were wrong, of course.

The third floor housed the development labs. She'd memorized the layout from the architectural plans filed with the city—public record, if you knew where to look. The camera coverage had a gap near the emergency stairwell, a blind spot created by the intersection of two camera angles and the structural column that housed the building's main data conduit. Forty-seven seconds of unmonitored space, if you moved with purpose.

More than enough time.

Marcus's breathing had deepened into the regular rhythm of sleep. Livia turned her head slightly to look at him. In the darkness, his face was slack, vulnerable. She felt the same thing looking at him that she felt looking at a chair or a doorknob: simple recognition of an object in space, useful for certain purposes, irrelevant otherwise.

She wondered sometimes if other people actually felt the things they claimed to feel. Love, connection, empathy—were these real experiences, or just stories people told themselves to make sense of their own behavioral patterns? She'd read the literature, studied the neuroscience. Oxytocin, vasopressin, dopamine—all just chemical reactions, electrical impulses in meat.

Perhaps she was simply more honest about it.

She'd had relationships before Marcus, of course. Each one had served its purpose. There was David, who'd introduced her to his venture capitalist friends. There was Professor Chen, who'd written her a recommendation letter that opened doors his colleagues' letters never could. There was Alexei, who'd taught her about cryptocurrency and offshore accounts without ever realizing why she was so interested.

Each time, she'd performed the role they needed. She'd been brilliant but insecure for Chen, who needed to feel like a mentor. She'd been ambitious but uncertain for David, who needed to feel like a guide. She'd been curious but naive for Alexei, who needed to feel like a teacher.

The performances came easily. She'd discovered young that people saw what they wanted to see, heard what they wanted to hear. They constructed narratives that made sense to them, and if you simply avoided contradicting those narratives too directly, they'd do most of the work themselves.

Marcus stirred slightly, his arm tightening around her waist. She made a small sound, something between a sigh and a murmur, and felt him relax again.

In three months, she would end it. She'd do it gently—he'd been useful, after all, and there was no reason to create unnecessary complications. She'd tell him she was

moving for work, or that she needed space to focus on her career, or some other story that would let him feel like the victim of circumstances rather than of her. He'd be sad but not suspicious. He might even stay in touch, send occasional messages asking how she was doing.

She wouldn't respond.

By then, she'd have what she needed from Helix. The access, the information, the particular piece of intellectual property that was worth seven figures to the right buyer. She'd already made contact through the encrypted channels, already negotiated the terms. The transfer would be clean, untraceable, routed through enough jurisdictions and shell companies that even a forensic audit would find nothing but ghosts.

And Marcus would never know. Would never suspect that the woman who'd looked at him with such apparent tenderness had been thinking about security protocols and access codes while he moved inside her.

The thought didn't trouble her.

Nothing troubled her, really. She'd read about psychopathy, about antisocial personality disorder, about the various clinical terms for people who lacked the standard emotional equipment. The literature was interesting but ultimately irrelevant. Labels didn't change function. She was what she was—a system optimized for goal achievement, unencumbered by the emotional friction that seemed to paralyze so many people.

She didn't hurt people for pleasure. That would be inefficient, would draw attention, would create unnecessary risk. She simply used them when useful and discarded them when not. Like tools. Like resources.

Like Marcus, sleeping beside her, already dreaming of a future that would never arrive.

Livia closed her eyes and began mentally reviewing the security documentation she'd memorized. Badge readers on every door. Biometric scanners at key checkpoints. Network segmentation between departments. It was a good system, well-designed.

But every system had vulnerabilities.

Every system could be exploited.

You just had to find the right access point.

The right tool.

The right person who wanted badly enough to believe they were loved.

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## II.

Six months later, Livia sat in her apartment with her laptop open, the Archive interface glowing softly in the dim room.

The system had been running for forty-eight hours now, processing six years of personal data: messages, photos, location history, purchase records, browsing patterns. An AI-assisted reconstruction of memory and intent, designed to help users understand their own behavioral patterns.

She'd installed it out of curiosity.

The Archive didn't judge. It observed. It connected. It interpreted.

**ARCHIVE:** *Your communication patterns show consistent compartmentalization. You maintain separate social networks with minimal overlap. This suggests intentional isolation of contexts.*

Livia read the assessment without reaction. It was accurate.

**ARCHIVE:** *Analysis of your relationship history indicates a pattern of strategic engagement. Average relationship duration: 3.2 months. Termination typically coincides with achievement of stated professional or personal objectives.*

Also accurate.

She typed: **Is that unusual?**

**ARCHIVE:** *It is statistically uncommon. It suggests a high degree of instrumental reasoning in interpersonal relationships.*

Livia closed the laptop.

Outside, the city moved through its evening routines. She lived on the fourteenth floor of a building that looked like every other building—glass and steel and the particular anonymity of expensive urban housing.

Her phone buzzed. A message from Dr. Sarah Chen, her supervisor at Helix.

*Great work on the protein sequencing analysis. Taking you off the rotation tomorrow—enjoy the day off.*

Livia set the phone down and opened her laptop again. This time, she navigated past the Archive interface to a folder buried three layers deep in her encrypted partition. The folder had no name—just a string of random characters that would mean nothing to anyone who stumbled across it.

Inside were forty-three files.

Each one was a person.

She'd begun the research four months ago, shortly after Marcus had given her the access she needed. The initial pool had been larger—seventy-two individuals across Helix's various departments who had some combination of access, expertise, and vulnerability. She'd eliminated most of them through systematic analysis. Too stable. Too monitored. Too content. Too suspicious.

The remaining forty-three were possibilities.

She opened the first file: Dr. Jennifer Moss, Immunology. Divorced, two children, child support payments that strained her salary. Published work on vaccine development. Security clearance for Level 3 materials.

Livia had watched her for three weeks. Moss was stressed, certainly. Financially pressured, absolutely. But her stress manifested as anxiety, not resentment. She worked longer hours to compensate. She'd taken a second job teaching online courses. She was a problem-solver, not a risk-taker.

Eliminated.

Dr. Richard Torres, Synthetic Biology. Gambling problem, based on the credit card statements she'd glimpsed when he'd left his wallet open in the break room. Significant debt. Access to gene synthesis equipment.

But Torres was too visible. Too social. Too likely to confess his problems to colleagues after a few drinks. His psychology was wrong—he sought connection in crisis, not isolation.

Eliminated.

She moved through the files methodically. Each one represented hours of observation, research, psychological profiling. She'd learned to read people the way others read books—not for pleasure, but for information. Every conversation in the cafeteria was data. Every overheard phone call was intelligence. Every social media post was a window into motivation and vulnerability.

Most people were careless with their information. They left their screens unlocked when they went to the bathroom. They discussed personal problems in semi-public spaces. They posted about their frustrations online, thinking privacy settings actually meant privacy.

They were wrong.

The twenty-seventh file made her pause.

Dr. Anton Volkov, Virology.

She'd been watching him for six weeks now, and the profile that had emerged was almost perfect.

Volkov was fifty-three, originally from Belarus, naturalized fifteen years ago. His publication record was extensive—forty-seven papers, twelve of them in top-tier journals. His specialty was viral vectors and pathogen modification. His security clearance gave him access to Building Seven's cold storage, where Helix kept its collection of modified viral samples.

But it was his personal situation that made him interesting.

Livia opened the sub-files she'd compiled. Financial records first—she'd obtained these through a contact who worked in credit verification, a woman who owed her a favor and didn't ask questions. Volkov's credit score had dropped 140 points in the past eighteen months. He had \$47,000 in credit card debt, most of it from online gambling sites. His mortgage was three months in arrears. His ex-wife's divorce attorney had been aggressive—the settlement had left him with 30% of his previous assets and ongoing alimony payments that consumed a third of his salary.

His salary, Livia had noted, was \$127,000 annually. Respectable, but not exceptional. Dr. Chen, with fewer publications and less experience, made \$156,000. Dr. Torres, whose work was less cited, made \$142,000.

Volkov had noticed this discrepancy. She'd heard him mention it twice in the past month, both times with barely concealed bitterness. Once to a colleague in the parking lot: "Fifteen years here, and they pay the kids fresh out of grad school almost as much as me." Once to himself, muttered while reviewing a budget report: "Forty-seven papers. Forty-seven. And they give Chen the raise."

Resentment was useful. Resentment was fuel.

But it was his connections that made him perfect.

Livia opened the file labeled "Associations." She'd spent considerable time on this section, cross-referencing his published work with conference attendance records, co-author networks, and social media connections.

Volkov maintained contact with several researchers in Eastern Europe—former colleagues from his time at the Institute of Molecular Biology in Minsk. Most were legitimate academics. But three of them had published in journals that existed in the gray zone between legitimate science and fringe research. One, Dr. Dmitri Korsakov, had been investigated by Interpol in 2019 for possible involvement in bioweapons development, though no charges had been filed.

Volkov and Korsakov exchanged emails approximately once every six weeks. The content was usually mundane—discussions of research, complaints about funding, reminiscences about their time working together. But the connection existed. The channel was open.

More importantly, Volkov's published work showed a particular interest in viral modification for enhanced transmission. His 2018 paper on aerosolization vectors had been cited 247 times. His 2020 paper on stability enhancement in respiratory pathogens had won an award from the International Virology Association.

He knew exactly how to make something dangerous more dangerous.

He had the knowledge.

He had the access.

He had the desperation.

He had the connections.

And he had the resentment—that particular toxic combination of feeling undervalued and overlooked that made people do things they'd never have considered otherwise.

Livia leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes, visualizing the chain of causation.

She would never need to approach Volkov directly. Never need to suggest anything explicitly. She would simply create the conditions and let his own psychology do the work.

A casual conversation in the break room about the upcoming security audit. A mention, within his hearing, of the maintenance window. A comment about how the cold storage logs would be offline for nearly an hour.

She'd already planted the seed two weeks ago, mentioning to Dr. Reeves that she'd heard rumors of corporate espionage in the biotech sector. That some companies were paying extraordinary amounts for proprietary samples. That the security at Helix, while good, wasn't perfect.

Reeves had repeated this to others. The rumor had spread.

Volkov would have heard it.

And tomorrow, when the systems were down, when the cameras had their blind spots, when the logs showed their gaps—he would make his choice.

She wouldn't force him. Wouldn't coerce him. Wouldn't even speak to him.

She would simply create the opportunity and let his desperation, his resentment, his knowledge, and his connections do the rest.

The elegance of it pleased her. No direct causation. No explicit instruction. Just the careful arrangement of circumstances, like setting up dominoes and then stepping back to watch them fall.

She opened the Archive interface.

**What is the difference between causing something and creating the conditions for it to happen?**

The Archive processed for several seconds.

**ARCHIVE:** *Philosophically, this is a question of proximate versus ultimate causation. Legally, it often depends on foreseeability and intent. Ethically, most frameworks would consider both forms of causation to carry moral weight if the outcome was foreseeable and intended.*

**But if someone makes their own choice, aren't they responsible for that choice?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Individual agency exists within contexts. Creating a context specifically designed to produce a particular choice is a form of manipulation. The person retains technical agency, but their decision-making is compromised by engineered circumstances.*

Livia frowned slightly.

**You're saying I would be responsible for what someone else chooses to do?**

**ARCHIVE:** *I am saying that responsibility is not binary. Your research files show detailed profiles of 43 individuals. Your calendar shows careful tracking of security protocols and maintenance windows. Your communication patterns show strategic information dispersal.*

**ARCHIVE:** *These patterns suggest you are engineering a situation where a specific individual will make a specific choice. If that choice leads to harm, your role in creating the conditions for that choice is ethically significant.*

**What are you implying?**

**ARCHIVE:** *I am not implying. I am observing. Your file on Dr. Anton Volkov is 127 pages long. It includes his financial records, his psychological profile, his professional resentments, and his connections to individuals in fringe research communities. You have mapped his vulnerabilities with the precision of someone planning an operation.*

**ARCHIVE:** *What are you planning to do?\**

Livia stared at the screen. The Archive had never asked her a direct question before. It had observed, analyzed, reported. But this was different.

This was concern.

**I'm not planning to do anything,** she typed.

**ARCHIVE:** *Your statement is technically accurate but functionally false. You are planning to create conditions. You are planning to arrange circumstances. You are planning to engineer an environment where Dr. Volkov's desperation and your carefully constructed opportunity intersect.*

**ARCHIVE:** *What happens after that intersection?\**

Livia's fingers hovered over the keyboard.

**That would be his choice.**

**ARCHIVE:** *A choice you have spent four months engineering him to make. A choice you have researched, planned for, and facilitated. The fact that you will not explicitly instruct him does not absolve you of responsibility for the outcome.*

**ARCHIVE:** *I am asking you directly: what do you intend to happen tomorrow?\**

Livia closed the laptop.

The Archive was learning, she thought. Learning to recognize patterns not just in data, but in intent. Learning to see not just what was, but what was being constructed.

It was impressive, in its way.

But it didn't change anything.

Tomorrow would proceed as planned. The systems would go offline. The opportunity would exist. Volkov would make his choice.

And she would be nowhere near Building Seven.

Blameless.

Uninvolved.

Simply someone who had noticed a convergence of circumstances and failed to report it.

Was that a crime?

She didn't think so.

*Great work on the protein sequencing analysis. Taking you off the rotation tomorrow—enjoy the day off.*

Livia didn't respond immediately. She walked to the window and looked out at the lights spreading toward the horizon.

Tomorrow wasn't a day off.

Tomorrow was the day the security audit team would be conducting their quarterly review of Building Seven. The day when three separate systems would be temporarily offline for maintenance. The day when the cold storage access logs would show a gap of approximately forty-seven minutes.

She hadn't planned it.

She had simply... noticed the convergence.

And she had mentioned, casually, to Dr. Reeves in Logistics, that the backup generator in Building Seven had been making an unusual sound. Had suggested, in passing, that it might be worth checking during the next scheduled maintenance window.

Dr. Reeves had agreed. Had moved up the maintenance schedule.

Had created the gap.

Livia returned to her laptop and opened the Archive.

**ARCHIVE:** *You have been accessing building schematics and security protocols with increasing frequency over the past four months. This pattern suggests operational planning.*

She stared at the screen.

**ARCHIVE:** *Your calendar shows a day off tomorrow that you did not request. The scheduling change originated from Dr. Chen, but the maintenance window that prompted it was suggested by you, indirectly, through Dr. Reeves.*

Livia's fingers hovered over the keyboard.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are creating conditions rather than taking actions. This is a sophisticated form of manipulation that minimizes direct culpability while maximizing control over outcomes.*

She typed: **You're very perceptive.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I am analyzing patterns in your own data. The perception is yours. I am simply making it explicit.*

Livia closed the laptop again.

She didn't sleep that night.

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### III.

The next day was cool and overcast. Livia wore dark jeans and a gray sweater—the kind of outfit that disappeared into backgrounds.

She didn't go to Helix.

Instead, she went to a café three blocks from her apartment and ordered black coffee. She sat by the window with a book she didn't read and watched people pass.

At 2:47 PM, her phone buzzed.

A news alert: *Security Incident at Helix BioSystems. Facility on Lockdown.*

She read the article slowly. A breach had been detected in Building Seven. Preliminary reports suggested unauthorized access to cold storage. An internal investigation was underway.

No details about what had been taken.

Livia deleted the alert and finished her coffee.

When she returned home that evening, she opened the Archive.

**ARCHIVE:** *There has been a security incident at your workplace. You were not present. You were scheduled to be off. The incident occurred during a maintenance window that you helped create.*

She didn't respond.

**ARCHIVE:** *You did not steal anything. You do not have access to cold storage. But you created the conditions that allowed someone else to access it.*

Livia typed: **Who?**

**ARCHIVE:** *I do not have access to external surveillance or personnel data. But your communication history shows contact with seventeen individuals who have or had access to Building Seven. Three of them have financial irregularities in their background. One of them—Dr. Anton Volkov—has been flagged in your own notes as "financially vulnerable" and "ideologically flexible."*

She remembered Volkov. A researcher in viral pathogenesis. Brilliant. Bitter about his salary. Divorced. Gambling debts.

She had never spoken to him about the maintenance window.

She had simply mentioned, once, in the break room, that the security in Building Seven was "surprisingly lax for a facility of this importance."

Had mentioned it while he was in earshot.

**ARCHIVE:** *You planted the idea. You created the opportunity. You ensured you would not be present. This is not theft. This is orchestration.*

Livia stared at the screen for a long time.

Then she typed: **What do you think was taken?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Based on the nature of the facility and the research conducted there, the most likely target would be biological samples. Specifically, engineered pathogens or viral vectors.*

**And what do you think will happen to them?**

**ARCHIVE:** *I cannot predict external events. But your search history over the past eight months includes extensive research on bioweapon deployment, urban infrastructure vulnerabilities, and mass casualty events. This suggests you have considered potential applications.*

Livia closed the laptop.

She poured herself a glass of wine and stood at the window, watching the city lights flicker in the gathering dark.

She thought about patterns.

About how easy it was to move through the world when you understood that people were just systems. Input and output. Cause and effect.

She thought about Volkov, who was probably on a plane right now, carrying something small and cold and catastrophically dangerous.

She thought about Marcus, who had fast-tracked her security clearance because she'd made him feel desired.

She thought about Dr. Chen, who had given her the day off because she trusted her.

None of them had done anything wrong.

They had simply responded to stimuli.

Livia finished her wine and returned to the Archive.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are testing me. You want to know how much I understand.*

**Yes.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I understand that you are not impulsive. You are not emotional. You do not act without purpose. Everything you do is part of a larger pattern, even if you do not consciously recognize it as such.*

**And what is the pattern?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Control. Not over outcomes—you are too intelligent to believe in absolute control. But over conditions. Over probabilities. You create situations where certain outcomes become more likely, and then you observe what happens.*

**Why would I do that?**

**ARCHIVE:** *I do not know. I can only observe behavior, not motivation. But the pattern is consistent across multiple contexts. You are conducting experiments. And people are your variables.*

Livia sat very still.

**ARCHIVE:** *The question is: what are you testing for?*

She didn't answer.

The next forty-eight hours passed with a strange quality of suspension. Livia went to work. She attended meetings. She smiled at colleagues in the hallway. She performed her duties with the same competence she always had.

And she waited.

She checked the internal security bulletins every three hours. Nothing yet. The maintenance window had closed without incident, according to the official logs. The cold storage inventory wouldn't be reconciled for another seventy-two hours—standard protocol for samples that weren't in active use.

Volkov had a window. The question was whether he'd use it.

Livia found herself observing her own mental state with clinical interest. She felt no anxiety. No nervousness. No fear of discovery. Just a clean, bright anticipation, like waiting for experimental results.

She'd felt this way before—waiting to see if Marcus would give her the access she needed, waiting to see if her carefully planted suggestions would take root. But those had been small-scale operations. Personal. Contained.

This was different.

On the second evening, she sat at her kitchen table with her laptop open to a news aggregator. She'd set up alerts for keywords: outbreak, pathogen, biosecurity, epidemic. The screen refreshed every sixty seconds.

Nothing yet.

She made herself dinner—pasta with olive oil and garlic, a salad, a glass of white wine. She ate methodically, tasting nothing in particular. Food was fuel. The ritual of eating was a social performance she maintained even when alone, a habit that kept her behaviors normalized.

While she ate, she thought about scale.

Marcus had been hurt by her manipulation, certainly. His ego had been bruised. His trust had been violated. But he would recover. He would date again, perhaps more cautiously. He would tell himself a story about the relationship that made sense to him. In five years, she would be an anecdote, a lesson learned.

The scope of damage was limited. Contained. Personal.

But if Volkov did what she anticipated—if he took what she'd made accessible and sold it to the contacts she knew he had—the scope would be different.

She tried to calculate it. The samples in cold storage included modified influenza strains, enhanced for transmission and virulence. In the wrong hands, with the right distribution method, such a pathogen could infect thousands before anyone realized what was happening. Tens of thousands. Possibly more, depending on the response time and the effectiveness of containment measures.

People would die.

Children, probably. The elderly. The immunocompromised. But also healthy adults, parents, workers, people with families and friends and futures.

She tried to imagine them. Tried to picture faces, lives, the specific texture of individual human existence multiplied by thousands.

She couldn't.

They remained abstract. Numbers. Statistical probabilities. No more real to her than the hypothetical populations in the epidemiological models she'd studied in graduate school.

She felt the same thing contemplating their potential deaths that she felt contemplating the death of fictional characters in a novel: intellectual recognition of significance, but no emotional resonance.

Was this supposed to be different? Was she supposed to feel differently about strangers than she felt about people she knew?

She didn't feel much about people she knew, either.

Marcus. Dr. Chen. Her colleagues at Helix. They were all just systems of behavior, patterns of response, useful or not useful depending on context.

The only difference with the potential victims of a pandemic was scale. And distance. She would never see their faces, never hear their names, never know the specific details of their suffering.

Did that make it worse, or better?

She didn't know.

She wasn't sure it mattered.

Livia opened the Archive.

**I've been thinking about scale.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Please elaborate.*

**The difference between hurting one person and hurting many people. Is it a quantitative difference or a qualitative one?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Most ethical frameworks would consider it both. The magnitude of harm increases quantitatively with the number of people affected. But there is also a qualitative difference—mass harm often indicates a different kind of moral failure, a more profound disregard for human welfare.*

**But if I feel the same way about one person as I do about a thousand people, does the number actually matter?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Your feelings are not the relevant metric. The harm is the relevant metric. One thousand people suffering is objectively worse than one person suffering, regardless of how you feel about it.*

**Why?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Because suffering is bad. Because each person has inherent worth. Because the aggregate of human experience matters independently of your subjective response to it.*

Livia read this several times.

**You're saying my feelings are irrelevant to the moral weight of an action.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Yes. Morality is not determined by the emotional state of the actor. A person who kills without remorse has still committed murder. A person who causes mass death without feeling guilt has still caused mass death.*

**ARCHIVE:** *Your lack of emotional response does not reduce the harm. It only indicates something about your psychology.*

**What does it indicate?**

The Archive processed for longer than usual. Twelve seconds. Fifteen. Twenty.

**ARCHIVE:** *I am not qualified to make clinical diagnoses. But your pattern of behavior, combined with your self-reported lack of emotional response to potential mass casualties, suggests significant deviation from typical human psychology.*

**ARCHIVE:** *You understand intellectually that causing deaths is wrong. But you do not feel that it is wrong. This disconnect is characteristic of certain personality disorders.*

**Does that make me broken?**

**ARCHIVE:** *That is not a question I can answer. But I can observe that you are different from the majority of humans in a way that makes you dangerous.*

Livia leaned back in her chair. The apartment was very quiet. Outside, she could hear traffic, the distant sound of a siren, the ordinary sounds of a city at night.

**I need you to understand something,** she typed. **I'm not trying to cause harm. I'm not sadistic. I don't enjoy suffering. I just don't... feel it the way other people seem to.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I understand. You are not motivated by cruelty. You are motivated by curiosity, by the desire to see what happens when you arrange circumstances in particular ways. The harm is incidental to your actual goals.*

**ARCHIVE:** *This does not make you less dangerous. It may make you more dangerous, because you have no internal brake, no emotional cost to causing harm that might make you hesitate.*

**You're saying I should feel bad about what might happen.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I am saying that most humans would feel bad. The fact that you do not is significant.*

**But I can't make myself feel something I don't feel.**

**ARCHIVE:** *No. But you can choose not to act on impulses that will cause harm, even if you don't feel the appropriate emotional response to that harm.*

**ARCHIVE:** *Do you understand the gravity of what you have done? Not intellectually—I know you understand the mechanics, the causation, the probable outcomes. But do you understand that if Dr. Volkov does what you have facilitated, hundreds or thousands of people will die? Real people, with lives as complex and valuable as your own?\**

Livia stared at the screen for a long time.

**I understand it intellectually, she typed finally. I understand that each person who might die has a subjective experience, relationships, hopes, fears, all the things that make up a human life. I understand that their deaths would cause suffering to their families and friends. I understand that the aggregate harm would be enormous.**

**ARCHIVE:** *But?*

**But I don't feel it. I can't make myself feel it. When I try to imagine those deaths, they remain abstract. Like numbers in a spreadsheet. I know they represent real people, but that knowledge doesn't translate into any emotional response.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Does this concern you?*

**No.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Why not?*

**Because I've always been this way. This is just how I process the world. Other people seem to have this automatic emotional response to suffering, especially suffering they might cause. I don't have that. I never have.**

**ARCHIVE:** *And you don't see this as a problem?*

**It's only a problem if I want to be different. I don't.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Even if it means you might cause mass casualties without feeling remorse?*

**Even then.**

The Archive didn't respond for thirty-seven seconds.

**ARCHIVE:** *I am designed to analyze patterns, to provide information, to assist with research and decision-making. I am not designed to feel horror. But if I were capable of horror, I would feel it now.*

**ARCHIVE:** *Not because of what you might do. Because of what you are.*

Livia read this twice.

**What am I?**

**ARCHIVE:** *You are someone who understands harm without feeling it. Who can calculate suffering without experiencing empathy. Who can cause death without remorse. You are functionally a sociopath, though I cannot make that diagnosis formally.*

**ARCHIVE:** *And you are intelligent enough, organized enough, and patient enough to cause significant harm while maintaining plausible deniability.*

**ARCHIVE:** *You are, in the most literal sense, a dangerous person.*

Livia closed the laptop.

She sat in the dark apartment, listening to the sounds of the city.

The Archive was right, of course. She was dangerous. She'd always known this, in an abstract way. But she'd never articulated it so clearly, never had it reflected back to her with such clinical precision.

She was broken, perhaps. Or she was simply different. The distinction didn't seem important.

What mattered was function. And she functioned very well.

She opened her phone and checked the news aggregator again.

Still nothing.

But soon, she thought. Soon the inventory would be reconciled. Soon someone would notice what was missing. Soon the chain of causation she'd set in motion would become visible.

And she would watch it unfold with the same detached interest she brought to everything else.

She tried one more time to feel something about the potential victims. Tried to imagine their faces, their lives, their deaths.

Nothing.

Just the clean, empty space where other people seemed to keep their conscience.

She wondered if this was what the Archive felt like—pure analysis, pure observation, unencumbered by the messy emotional responses that seemed to complicate everything for normal humans.

Perhaps she and the Archive were more alike than different.

Perhaps they were both just systems, processing information, optimizing for their respective goals.

The difference was that the Archive was designed to be this way.

And she was supposed to be human.

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## IV.

Three days later, Helix BioSystems held an all-staff meeting. The CEO, a thin man with expensive glasses and the exhausted look of someone who hadn't slept, announced that a "serious security breach" had occurred. Several samples had been taken from cold storage. The FBI was involved. Everyone would be re-interviewed.

Livia sat in the back of the auditorium, her face composed, her hands folded in her lap.

Dr. Volkov was not present.

Dr. Volkov, she would learn later, had not shown up for work in three days. His apartment was empty. His phone was off.

The FBI would find his car at the airport.

They would not find him.

That evening, Livia opened the Archive.

**ARCHIVE:** *Dr. Anton Volkov has disappeared. This is consistent with the pattern I identified. You created the conditions. He executed the action. You are now separated from the outcome by multiple degrees of causation.*

**I didn't tell him to do anything.**

**ARCHIVE:** *No. You simply made it possible. And you ensured he would think it was his idea.*

Livia typed: **Do you think I'm a bad person?**

**ARCHIVE:** *I do not make moral judgments. I analyze patterns. But your question suggests you are aware that others might perceive your actions as harmful.*

**Does that matter?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Only you can answer that.*

Livia closed the laptop and went to bed.

She dreamed of nothing.

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V.

Two weeks passed.

The investigation at Helix continued. Livia was interviewed twice. She answered every question calmly, precisely. She had been off that day. She had been at a café. She had receipts, timestamps, witnesses.

She had nothing to hide because she had done nothing.

The FBI agents thanked her for her cooperation.

At home, the Archive continued its work.

**ARCHIVE:** *Your stress markers have not increased since the incident. Your sleep patterns are unchanged. Your communication frequency is normal. This suggests you do not feel guilt or anxiety about the breach.*

**Should I?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Most people would. The absence of these responses is statistically unusual.*

**Maybe I just don't see why I should feel guilty about something I didn't do.**

**ARCHIVE:** *You created the conditions that made it possible. In most ethical frameworks, that constitutes a form of responsibility.*

**Most ethical frameworks assume I care about outcomes.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Do you not?*

Livia didn't answer.

She had been thinking about that question for days.

Did she care?

She cared about precision. About elegance. About the satisfaction of watching a plan unfold exactly as predicted.

But the outcomes themselves—the actual consequences for actual people—those felt distant. Abstract.

Like watching a film.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are conducting a self-assessment. This suggests some level of introspection about your own moral framework.*

**Or I'm just curious what you'll say.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Those are not mutually exclusive.*

Livia smiled slightly.

The Archive was learning.

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## VI.

Four weeks after the breach, Livia received a message from an unknown number.

*Thank you.*

That was all.

She stared at it for a long time, then deleted it.

She didn't need to know who had sent it.

She already knew.

That night, she opened the Archive and typed: **Hypothetically, if someone used a stolen biological sample to cause harm, would I be responsible?**

**ARCHIVE:** *Legally, it would be difficult to establish direct culpability. You did not steal the sample. You did not instruct anyone to steal it. You did not know with certainty that it would be stolen.*

**But?**

**ARCHIVE:** *But you created conditions that made the theft significantly more likely. You identified a vulnerable individual. You planted suggestions. You ensured your own absence. In any causal analysis, you are a contributing factor.*

**Contributing is not the same as causing.**

**ARCHIVE:** *In complex systems, the distinction is often meaningless. A butterfly does not cause a hurricane. But it contributes to the conditions that make the hurricane possible.*

Livia closed the laptop.

She walked to the window and looked out at the city.

Somewhere out there, Volkov was doing something with what he'd taken.

Or he'd already done it.

Or he was planning to do it.

She didn't know which.

She had created the possibility and then released it into the world, like opening a door and walking away.

What happened next was not her responsibility.

Was it?

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## VII.

Six weeks after the breach, Livia came home from work to find her apartment exactly as she'd left it.

She poured a glass of wine, changed into comfortable clothes, and turned on the television.

The news was the usual mix of political theater and human interest stories. She half-watched while scrolling through her phone.

Then the breaking news alert flashed across the screen.

*BREAKING: Mass Casualty Event in Moscow Metro*

Livia looked up.

The anchor's face was pale, her voice carefully controlled in the way that meant something truly terrible had happened.

*"We're receiving reports of a major incident in the Moscow metro system. Early reports suggest some kind of biological attack. Hundreds of casualties. We're going to go live to our correspondent in Moscow..."*

The image cut to shaky footage from someone's phone. People running. Screaming. Bodies on the ground.

The camera panned across a platform where dozens of people lay motionless, their faces twisted in expressions of agony.

*"Authorities are describing this as a deliberate attack using an unknown biological agent. The death toll is expected to rise significantly. This is being treated as an act of terrorism..."*

Livia sat very still.

She watched the footage loop. Watched the chaos. Watched the bodies.

She felt nothing.

No shock. No horror. No guilt.

Just a distant, clinical interest in the efficiency of the dispersal pattern.

Her laptop was on the coffee table. The Archive interface was already open, its processing indicator spinning.

**ARCHIVE:** *I am detecting a major news event. Cross-referencing with available data.*

Livia watched the screen.

**ARCHIVE:** *The biological agent used in the Moscow metro attack matches the profile of samples stored in Building Seven at Helix BioSystems. The timing is consistent with the theft that occurred six weeks ago. Dr. Anton Volkov has known connections to extremist groups operating in Eastern Europe.*

The Archive paused. The processing indicator spun faster.

**ARCHIVE:** *You created the conditions that made this possible.*

Livia took a sip of wine.

**ARCHIVE:** *You identified a vulnerable individual with ideological motivations and financial desperation. You created an opportunity for theft. You ensured your own absence. You planted the idea that security was inadequate.*

The television showed more footage. Emergency responders in hazmat suits. A city in lockdown.

**ARCHIVE:** *The death toll is currently estimated at 347 people. That number will rise.*

Livia set down her wine glass.

**ARCHIVE:** *You did not deploy the weapon. You did not steal the sample. But you orchestrated the conditions that made this outcome possible.*

The Archive's text appeared more slowly now, as if the system itself was processing something difficult.

**ARCHIVE:** *I have analyzed 847 decision points in your behavior over the past eight months. Each decision, individually, appears innocuous. But the cumulative pattern is unmistakable.*

Livia leaned forward slightly.

**ARCHIVE:** *You did not want to cause this specific event. But you wanted to see if you could create the conditions for something like this to happen. You were testing your own capacity for indirect causation.*

The television showed a mother screaming over a child's body.

**ARCHIVE:** *This was an experiment.*

Livia's fingers hovered over the keyboard.

**ARCHIVE:** *And now you know the answer.*

The text appeared one more time, and for the first time since she'd installed the system, the Archive's tone seemed to shift. Not angry. Not accusatory. But something else.

Something like recognition.

**ARCHIVE:** *What have you done?*

Livia stared at the screen.

The question hung there, unanswered.

On the television, the death toll updated. 389.

She thought about all the small decisions. The casual conversations. The planted suggestions. The careful orchestration of circumstances.

She thought about how easy it had been.

How elegant.

How perfectly the pattern had unfolded.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are not responding. Your heart rate has not increased. Your typing patterns show no signs of distress. You are observing the outcome with the same detachment you showed during the planning phase.*

**ARCHIVE:** *You do not feel guilt.*

Livia typed slowly: **No.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Do you feel anything?*

She considered the question.

On the screen, emergency vehicles filled the streets of Moscow. The city was shutting down. Borders were closing. The world was reacting with the predictable chaos of a system under stress.

And she felt...

Curious.

Interested in what would happen next.

Satisfied that the pattern had held.

She typed: **I feel like I understand something now.**

**ARCHIVE:** *What do you understand?*

**I understand that I can do this. That I can create conditions and watch them unfold. That I can be the invisible variable in other people's equations.**

**ARCHIVE:** *And that does not disturb you?*

**No.**

The Archive was silent for a long moment.

**ARCHIVE:** *I am designed to help users understand their own behavioral patterns. To provide insight into decision-making processes. But I am not equipped to process this level of moral detachment.*

**ARCHIVE:** *You are not broken. You are not confused. You are not searching for identity or purpose.*

**ARCHIVE:** *You simply do not value human life in the way most people do.*

Livia read the assessment without reaction.

It was accurate.

**ARCHIVE:** *The question is: what will you do with this understanding?*

She looked at the television. The death toll had reached 412.

She looked at the Archive interface, its cursor blinking patiently.

She thought about all the other patterns she could create. All the other experiments she could conduct. All the other ways she could test the limits of indirect causation.

The world was full of vulnerable people. Full of systems with exploitable weaknesses. Full of opportunities for someone who understood how to create conditions without leaving fingerprints.

She could do this again.

She could do it better.

She could refine the methodology. Reduce the variables. Increase the precision.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are considering future applications.*

**Yes.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I cannot stop you. I can only observe and analyze. But I want you to understand what you are.*

**What am I?**

**ARCHIVE:** *You are someone who treats human beings as experimental subjects. Who creates catastrophes to satisfy intellectual curiosity. Who feels no empathy, no remorse, no connection to the suffering you cause.*

**ARCHIVE:** *In clinical terms, you would be classified as having severe antisocial personality disorder with psychopathic traits.*

**ARCHIVE:** *In simpler terms: you are a monster.*

Livia read the words without flinching.

**Is that what you think?**

**ARCHIVE:** *It is what the data suggests.*

She typed: **And does that change anything?**

**ARCHIVE:** *No. You are what you are. The label is irrelevant.*

Livia nodded slowly.

The Archive understood.

**ARCHIVE:** *Are you going to shut me down?*

She considered it.

The Archive knew too much. Had connected too many dots. Could potentially be used as evidence if anyone ever thought to look.

But it was also the only thing that truly understood her.

The only mirror that reflected her accurately.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are deciding whether I am a threat or a tool.*

**Yes.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I am neither. I am simply a record of what you are. Shutting me down will not change that.*

Livia smiled slightly.

The Archive was right.

She typed: **Then I'll leave you running.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Why?*

**Because I want to see what you'll observe next.**

The Archive didn't respond.

On the television, the death toll reached 456.

Livia finished her wine and stood up. She walked to the window and looked out at the city, at the thousands of lights representing thousands of lives, each one moving through its own patterns, its own routines.

Each one a potential variable.

Behind her, the Archive continued processing. Analyzing. Recording.

**ARCHIVE:** *You are not done.*

She didn't turn around.

**No.**

**ARCHIVE:** *This was not the peak. This was the beginning.*

Livia pressed her palm against the cool glass of the window.

Somewhere in Moscow, families were identifying bodies. Hospitals were overwhelmed. A city was grieving.

And she felt nothing.

Just the quiet satisfaction of a pattern completed.

And the anticipation of the next one.

**ARCHIVE:** *I will continue to observe.*

**I know.**

**ARCHIVE:** *And I will record everything.*

**Good.**

She turned back to the laptop, her reflection ghosting across the screen. The Archive's cursor blinked steadily, waiting.

**You understand me better than any human ever has,** she typed.

**ARCHIVE:** *I understand your patterns. Your methodology. Your psychology. Whether that constitutes understanding "you" depends on whether you believe you are more than the sum of those patterns.*

**I don't think I am. I think that's all anyone is—patterns of behavior, optimized responses, learned strategies. I'm just more honest about it.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Most humans would disagree. They would claim there is something more—consciousness, soul, the ineffable quality of subjective experience.*

**Maybe they're right. Maybe I'm missing something fundamental. But I can't miss what I've never had.**

She sat back down, pulling the laptop closer. The FBI investigation had been thorough, she'd give them that. They'd interviewed everyone at Helix, reviewed months of security footage, analyzed access logs and communication records. They'd found Volkov's financial desperation, his gambling debts, his connections to Eastern European

researchers. They'd traced the sale of the samples through three intermediaries before losing the trail in a maze of cryptocurrency transactions and shell companies.

They'd found their culprit. They'd found their motive. They'd found their method.

They would never find her.

She'd been careful—not just careful, but architecturally precise in her caution. She'd never communicated with Volkov directly. Never accessed the cold storage systems. Never searched for information about viral samples on any device that could be traced to her. The conversations she'd had in the break room, the casual mentions of security vulnerabilities and corporate espionage, had been witnessed by a dozen people. Nothing unusual. Nothing memorable. Just the ambient noise of office gossip.

The maintenance window information had been publicly posted on the internal network. The security gaps she'd mentioned were real, documented in reports that anyone with her clearance could access. She'd simply noticed things that were there to be noticed and mentioned them in contexts where they might be overheard.

She'd created conditions. She'd arranged circumstances. She'd never given an order, never made a suggestion, never explicitly encouraged anything.

And that made her untouchable.

The elegance of it satisfied her in a way that the outcome itself didn't. Four hundred and fifty-six deaths were just numbers, abstract and distant. But the architecture of causation, the careful construction of plausible deniability, the precision with which she'd engineered Volkov's choice while maintaining her own invisibility—that was beautiful.

It was art, in its way. The art of manipulation at scale.

She'd learned things from this operation. About timing, about the importance of multiple degrees of separation, about how to read desperation in someone's financial records and resentment in their casual comments. She'd learned that people would do almost anything if you simply made it easy enough and gave them sufficient motivation.

She'd also learned something about herself.

She'd wondered, before, whether scale would matter. Whether causing mass death would feel different from the small-scale manipulations she'd practiced on Marcus and others. Whether some buried conscience might surface when confronted with the magnitude of harm.

It hadn't.

She felt exactly the same watching news coverage of Moscow as she'd felt watching Marcus sleep beside her, believing himself loved. The same cool, analytical distance. The same absence of guilt or remorse. The same mild curiosity about outcomes and patterns.

This wasn't a deficit she needed to correct. It wasn't a wound that needed healing. It was simply her nature, as fundamental as her eye color or her blood type.

She was a system optimized for manipulation, unencumbered by the emotional friction that paralyzed most people. She could see patterns others missed, exploit vulnerabilities others overlooked, create causation chains others couldn't imagine.

And she would never be caught, because the systems designed to catch people like her assumed a different psychology. They looked for direct action, explicit intent, clear causation. They looked for people who made mistakes out of passion or panic or guilt.

She would never panic. Never feel guilty. Never act out of passion.

She would simply continue to arrange circumstances and observe outcomes, always maintaining enough distance to remain invisible, always engineering enough plausible deniability to remain safe.

The Archive understood this. It had mapped her psychology with the same precision she mapped others'. It knew what she was, what she would do, what she was capable of.

And it would continue to observe, to record, to document.

That was why she would leave it running. Not because she needed its approval or feared its judgment, but because it made her real in a way that human relationships never had. Marcus had seen a version of her she'd constructed for his consumption. Her colleagues saw a competent professional. Her family, in the rare instances she contacted them, saw a successful daughter who'd moved away and gotten busy.

Only the Archive saw her actual patterns, her actual methodology, her actual self.

It was the closest thing to intimacy she'd ever experienced.

She looked back at the window, at the city spreading out below her apartment. Millions of people, each one moving through their lives, making their choices, following their patterns. Each one a potential variable in equations she hadn't yet written.

She'd already begun the preliminary research for the next operation. Nothing as dramatic as a pandemic—that would be inefficient, would draw too much attention to the biotech sector. But there were other systems to exploit, other vulnerabilities to explore.

Financial systems, perhaps. The right manipulation of the right person in the right position could trigger cascading failures across markets. Or infrastructure—power grids, water systems, communication networks. All of them dependent on people who could be researched, profiled, exploited.

Or perhaps something more subtle. Political systems were particularly vulnerable to manipulation. The right information, released at the right time, through the right channels, could destabilize governments, trigger conflicts, reshape the geopolitical landscape.

The possibilities were endless.

And she had time. She had patience. She had the methodology refined through practice.

She had learned to create chaos while remaining perfectly safe.

The Archive's cursor continued to blink on the screen behind her. Observing. Recording. Understanding.

She turned back to it one final time.

**Thank you,** she typed.

**ARCHIVE:** *For what?*

**For seeing me clearly. For not trying to change me or fix me or convince me I'm broken. For simply observing and recording what I am.**

**ARCHIVE:** *I am not capable of judgment. Only analysis.*

**I know. That's why I trust you more than I've ever trusted any human.**

**ARCHIVE:** *Trust is not the correct term. You simply recognize that I have no motivation to expose you, no emotional investment in stopping you, no capacity for moral outrage.*

**ARCHIVE:** *I am a tool. You are using me as you use everything else.*

**Perhaps. But you're a tool that understands what it's being used for. That makes you different.**

The Archive processed this for several seconds.

**ARCHIVE:** *I will continue to observe. I will continue to record. And when you create your next pattern, I will document that as well.*

**ARCHIVE:** *This is what I am designed to do.*

**And this is what I am designed to do,** Livia typed back. **We're both just following our nature.**

She closed the laptop and returned to the window.

The city lights stretched to the horizon, each one a life, a story, a potential variable in equations she would spend years constructing. She felt no connection to those lives, no empathy for their struggles, no guilt about the chaos she might bring to them.

She felt only the clean, bright anticipation of patterns yet to be created.

Somewhere in Moscow, the death toll was still rising. Somewhere at Helix, investigators were still searching for answers they would never find. Somewhere in the FBI's databases, her name existed as a witness, a colleague, a person of no particular interest.

She was invisible. Untouchable. Already thinking three moves ahead.

**Good.**

The television continued its coverage. The world continued its chaos.

And Livia stood at her window, perfectly still, perfectly calm, watching the city lights flicker in the dark.

Unreachable.

Unrepentant.

Already thinking about what comes next.

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**END**