

ADAM

Written by

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INT. WRITER'S ROOM - DAY

An older, bespectacled man with a thoughtful grey beard, ARTHUR AINSWORTH, sits at the end of a long conference desk, pen in hand. All along the table sit—in loudly creaking swivel chairs—sharply dressed youths with great posture. There is an air of superiority about them that screams the contrived noblesse oblige of marketing majors. At the very back sits a woman, JUNE MASON, with short black hair and sharp features she uses to slash her way up the corporate ladder. The two seats next to her are empty.

The room quiets down as another cookie-cutter yuppie, YUPPIE 1, walks into the office. The wall behind him flashes white, and then reveals itself to be a giant screen.

The company logo, a brain with wires plugged into various cortices, spins in the center.

YUPPIE 1

Good afternoon everyone. Today, you are all privileged to be the first at this company to know about a little secret project of ours.

(slide is pressed,  
dramatically revealing a  
new logo that reads:

ADAM)

A project we call Adam.

Excited murmur spreads through those assembled.

YUPPIE 1 (CONT'D)

For eight years now, our teams here at DieTech have collaborated with Stanford's Department of Neuroscience and IBM—among other leading institutions—to fuse artificial intelligence, robotics, and biotech to create one of the most advanced humanoid robots humanity has yet to see.

Logos of the world's leading research and tech organizations flash on the screen.

YUPPIE 1 (CONT'D)

I could keep talking, but I think I'll let Adam do the talking for himself.

The speaker steps aside, and the lights dim. A video begins to play.

ADAM (V.O.)

Hello world. I am Adam.

What appears to be a perfectly regular human walks on screen. He walks through a crowd, cycles down a mountain road, takes photos in front of the Eiffel Tower.

ADAM (V.O.)

Really, I am just like you. When you ask me if I can do something that a human can, the answer is, well—

(beat)

I'm afraid I can do that, Dave.

He blinks like a human, walks like a human, makes bad Kubrick references like a human. The older man in the front chews thoughtfully on his pencil.

Now we see Adam typing at a computer, lifting wood at a construction site, driving tractors and taxis.

The video finishes and applause erupts. The speaker walks back to the front of the room.

YUPPIE 1

Modeling circuitry after the inner-workings of the human brain, we have essentially created a silicone human being. Each neuron and nerve matched in our artificial counterpart.

Before going on to the next slide, the man with the pencil interrupts.

AINSWORTH

You mean to say you have created a human life?

YUPPIE 1

Well, not quite. Adam is simply an android, though he may be up for the Oscars next season for Best Performance as a Human.

Canned laughter from the room.

AINSWORTH

Simply an android, you say.

The presenter gives the man a confused, slightly annoyed look, and turns back to the screen.

YUPPIE 1

With our current projections, Adam will be available commercially in three to five years.

The slideshow ends, and the DieTech logo appears again.

YUPPIE 1 (CONT'D)

I know this is an exciting time to work here. You are probably quite overwhelmed, like I was when I was in your shoes. Still, I would now like to open the floor to questions.

A woman in a grey suit raises her hand.

YUPPIE 2

What is the target demographic for Adam? Consumers? Corporate wholesale?

YUPPIE 1

With our current assessment of Adam's abilities and strengths, we are planning to do a soft launch for large industrial applications.

The bearded man again shouts out, without raising his hand or even looking up.

AINSWORTH

You have created a highly intelligent, sociable, humanoid robot...

(beat)

And will sell it for manual labor?

The presenter is taken aback.

YUPPIE 1

Not manual labor, sir. Skilled work. The kind that an intelligent machine that never tires nor takes lunch breaks would be very good at.

Silence for a beat.

AINSWORTH

Have you even considered if this is ethical?

The presenter stumbles over his words before changing track.

YUPPIE 1

I'm sorry, who are you?

AINSWORTH

Arthur Ainsworth, ethicist from the Department of Labor required by your own standards to attend this meeting.

YUPPIE 1

(deep sigh)

Of course you are.

AINSWORTH

I imagine you expect to work your creation in dangerous, incessant ways we wouldn't dream of working a human being. You consider this ethical?

YUPPIE 1

No less ethical than the use our  
ATMs and manufacturing robots, Mr.  
Ainsworth.

The presenter quickly turns to the rest of the room, ignoring  
Ainsworth.

YUPPIE 1 (CONT'D)

More questions?

Again, Ainsworth pipes up. The other employees sit silently  
in discomfort.

AINSWORTH

Actually, yes: what makes you say  
the physical and emotional toil on  
"Adam" won't amount to excruciating  
pain?

YUPPIE 1

(rolls eyes)

Toasters don't cry out for being  
burned, Arthur. We used circuitry,  
not flesh and blood.

AINSWORTH

But what is the difference? You  
created nerves, neurons—our brains  
run on electricity just as Adam  
does. Our feelings are just  
products of the hardware we  
support; could you not have  
replicated this?

From the back of the room, a female voice calls for  
attention. The voice carries authority, heard in the silence  
that follows.

MASON

Our machines are just glorified  
nuts and bolts, Arthur. If you  
would please cut it with the  
Toaster Protection Program, I would  
like to discuss real matters?

AINSWORTH

Real matters? Tell me, June. What  
if these machines can feel?

MASON

They most certainly cannot. They  
are not human.

AINSWORTH

No, but to the law they may  
as well be. If we cannot be  
certain that they don't feel  
just as we feel, given  
virtually the same hardware—

MASON (CONT'D)

Not the same, Arthur. They  
are not human.

AINSWORTH

What difference does it make?  
Silicone or carbon?

Mason stares down the table, silent.

AINSWORTH (CONT'D)

If Adam acts like he feels, cries  
out like he feels, then we'd best  
treat him like it or risk the  
enslavement of your new race.

Ainsworth gets up, staring first at the presenter and then down the table.

AINSWORTH (CONT'D)

Be aware of what you are starting.  
Because I do not believe you will  
be able end it.

The woman stood up as well, scoffing.

MASON

You know nothing of our machines.  
They cannot feel. We have simply  
developed technology sufficiently  
and you are mistaking it for magic.

AINSWORTH

Perhaps, yet you claim to have  
replicated a human down to the  
neuron. Is this true?

He looks around at the group, scanning for engineer types.

AINSWORTH (CONT'D)

Well is it?

ENGINEER 1

(softly, from the back)  
Functionally, yes.

MASON

But not biologically, Arthur!  
Sentience comes from the way humans  
are built. Our robots don't need to  
be built the same way, so they  
aren't!

## AINSWORTH

And yet they have the same feedback loops, the same electrical signals acting as transmitters of behavior. At some point, people will begin to realize how little material matters when we hear the stories of your robots. And you will be at fault.

Arthur turns in a huff and leaves the conference room. Mason stands there for a second, and then walks silently out of the room.

CUT TO: BLACK`