

Release

By
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Cast of Characters

Aidan.....	An attractive man in his early forties
Yvette.....	An attractive, young woman in her mid-twenties
Jonathan.....	A psychiatrist in his fifties or sixties

Time:
Sometime in the future

Place:
A University setting

“My intention is not to defend human engineering as a desirable development, but just to say it is likely to happen whether we want it or not.”

Stephen Hawking
The Universe In A Nutshell
2001

“Genetic manipulations...will reshape humanity far more than fire, electricity, space exploration or any other branch of science we have encountered.”

Nicholas D. Kristof
New York Times
August 12, 2003

Release

(Lights come up to reveal a park bench in front of an institution of higher learning, a large university setting with rows upon rows of futuristic buildings. Inscribed on the arched entranceway are the words “Progress Shall Set You Free,” where lights initially focus and pull back as the scene unfolds. Sullen, Aidan enters holding a gym bag. Gingerly, he withdraws two lengthy syringes with sharp needles. He tests the points. Unknown to Aidan, Yvette jogs into the scene, stops and curiously watches him from a distance. He steadies the sharp points on each side of his head, poised to inject a deadly fluid. Distressed, she quickly enters his space.)

YVETTE

Hey...Hey...What are you doing?

AIDAN

What the hell?! Who are you?! You nearly scared me to death.

YVETTE

Isn't that what you're trying to do to me?

AIDAN

Give me a little privacy, please, so piss off.

YVETTE

C'mon, c'mon now. What can be so overwhelming? Think this through.

AIDAN

Oh, I have, so allow me to do this quietly. Now, GET OUT OF HERE!

YVETTE

Hey! Don't you yell at me. Let's get that clear.

AIDAN

Fine. Now, please be a good little girl and –

WOMAN!
YVETTE

Right. Good little woman.
AIDAN

Now, subtract the good and eliminate the little.
YVETTE

Fine, woman.
AIDAN

This may be your last moment, so have some respect.
YVETTE

Yes, alright, I'm about to do myself in and my parting gesture is one of respect from some little twit I don't even know.
AIDAN

I'm going to be charitable and believe you didn't mean that.
YVETTE

Be as charitable as you want.
AIDAN

You know this is absolutely and categorically forbidden.
YVETTE

So shoot me instead....You'll be doing me an enormous favor.
AIDAN

Alright then, let me assist you.
YVETTE

What?
AIDAN
(She approaches him.)

Sure, you just sit real still, and I'll inject this toxic liquid into your...your...bony head.
What is this? Hyper Pandemonium Oxide?
YVETTE

Yes, how did you know?
AIDAN

(She grabs his wrists and forces him to the ground.)

AIDAN

Ow, ow, what are you doing? Let go of me.

(In pain, he drops the syringes. She picks them up and tosses them offstage.)

Woa, what are you on metasterooids?

YVETTE

No, it's part of my genetic makeup.

AIDAN

Oh, so you work here?

YVETTE

Just started about a week ago.

AIDAN

Ah, so that explains why you're so buoyant, Miss Perky Tits.

(Pause as she looks down.)

YVETTE

I never noticed their perkiness. I'd say more like well defined.

AIDAN

Look, let's zero in on the endgame. Are you going to report me?

(No response. She's still looking at her breasts.)

Well, are you?

YVETTE

You really think they're perky?

AIDAN

Yes. Now, are you are going to report me?

YVETTE

You tried to commit a very serious act, which is completely forbidden by the Declarations.

AIDAN

I don't give a damn about the Declarations.

YVETTE

Okay, then. Look around!

AIDAN

Around for what?

YVETTE

Do it!

AIDAN

Alright...alright, I'm looking. It's a place I no longer wish to be a part of.

YVETTE

Tell me what you see.

AIDAN

I see an annoying pain in the ass.

YVETTE

Besides me.

AIDAN

I see the buildings of Lifetech, the source of all my troubles.

YVETTE

Did you notice the kind of day it is?

AIDAN

What is this? Some kind of Zen interrogation practice?

YVETTE

Weather-wise, this is one of the ten best days of the year.

AIDAN

Sorry, but right now, I can't connect with that thought.

YVETTE

You have to be more cognizant, more aware of –

AIDAN

Are you the weather lady? Frequency two thousand and two?

YVETTE

No, but I assisted in taming global warming.

AIDAN

Well, kudos to you.

YVETTE

I've received many thank yous. Even from Al Gore's great, great, great grandson.

AIDAN

Why am I talking to you? Whoever you are.

YVETTE

I'm Yvette. And you?

AIDAN

What about me?

YVETTE

Your name.

AIDAN

Aidan.

YVETTE

Listen, Aidan, the birds are singing. And look, the sky's a cobalt blue. And the sun, the sun is monumental as it sinks below the horizon.

AIDAN

So? That's a daily occurrence.

YVETTE

Doesn't it make you wish the sun would never set and just hold at about six pm in the sky forever?!

AIDAN

Then time would stop.

YVETTE

Metaphorically speaking.

AIDAN

I focus on reality, not metaphors.

YVETTE

Well, then, isn't all of this real to you?

AIDAN

So real I can taste it...and then spit it out. Yuk!

YVETTE

Hmmm, somehow I sense you're a very bitter man, Aidan.

AIDAN

That's why I've chosen the alternative.

YVETTE

That's an acceptance of defeat.

AIDAN

It's my only way out.

YVETTE

Out of what?

AIDAN

This...this fabricated place.

YVETTE

Fabricated?!?!

(She takes his hand.)

Here, touch these walls...my hair...my lips...my face. Do they appear fabricated to you?

(Long pause. He touches her hair, her lips, and lingers on her face as if he were a blind man.)

AIDAN

Well, no, not your hair...

YVETTE

See...

AIDAN

And not your lips...

YVETTE

Right.

AIDAN

And certainly not your face.

YVETTE

Okay, then.

AIDAN

Is there anything else you'd like me to touch?

(She quickly changes the subject.)

YVETTE

I tell you what – breathe the air – it's totally exhilarating.

AIDAN

I'd rather do more touching.

YVETTE

C'mon, breathe.

AIDAN

Please, let me touch your face again.

YVETTE

Take a deep breath.

(Aidan places his hand on the side of her face and closes his eyes.)

AIDAN

This is so nice and real.

YVETTE

AIDAN, you're not listening.

AIDAN

Oh, I am.

(Yvette digs her hands into his shoulders.)

YVETTE

Ow! Ow! Stop. You're hurting me.

(Aidan falls to his knees.)

I said take a deep breath!

(Reluctantly, he takes a deep breath.)

YVETTE

Good, now doesn't that make you feel better? Glad that you're a-live?

AIDAN (In pain)

Honestly...no...especially since your fingers are digging deep into my shoulders with a falcon's grip. Ouch!

YVETTE

Sorry.

(Aidan slowly stands up.)

AIDAN

Thank you. Tell me. Are you working for the Guardians?

YVETTE

No. I work for Lifetech Laboratory Research.

AIDAN

You're a little young to be doing that kind of work.

YVETTE

I'm the youngest member on the staff.

AIDAN

May I ask how old you are?

YVETTE

Certainly. I'm ten years old.

(Aidan whistles respectfully.)

AIDAN

Ten? I would have guessed twenty at the very least.

YVETTE

Well, yes, physically I look about twenty. Chronologically, I'm only ten years old.

AIDAN

They really hit the jackpot with you.

YVETTE

Physically, I matured very quickly, experienced puberty when I was three.

(Yvette circles him, taking stock of his

physical appearance.)

And what about you? I'd guess you're about what? Forty one...no, no, forty three.

AIDAN

Actually, I'm eighty five.

YVETTE

You look fabulous.

AIDAN

Why, why, thank you. But, you see, I get biochemical treatments, periodic neural implants, therapeutic adjustments when required.

YVETTE

I'm sure they'll be major advances by the time I get to be your age.

AIDAN

Oh, for sure. Every day there are new discoveries, new treatments for every conceivable ailment. They're working toward utopia, you know.

YVETTE

That's the vision.

(A chime sounds in the distance.)

Oh, I'll be late. Got to go. I've got important work to do at the Dyson Building.

(She starts to leave.)

You should have yourself checked out. And soon.

(She does a few, quick stretches.)

AIDAN

Wait, don't....Ah, will I see you again?

YVETTE

Well, I run by here everyday.

AIDAN

Yeah, well, maybe we'll meet again, you never know.

YVETTE

You never know.

(She exits. A voice booms in the distance.)

JONATHAN

Aidan.

(Aidan walks into a room and sits down in a comfortable chair.)

AIDAN

You never know.

JONATHAN

Aidan.

(Jonathan enters.)

AIDAN

Sorry, I guess I was distracted.

JONATHAN

You've got to stop making these mock suicide attempts. It's really self defeating.

AIDAN

Please, don't mock my mock attempts. They're very well intentioned.

JONATHAN

They only get in the way of making real progress.

AIDAN

Am I making any?

JONATHAN

What do you think?

AIDAN

Must you always answer a question with a question?

JONATHAN

I'm trying to cut through the weeds, but you have to meet me half way.

AIDAN

Look, my attempts are purely practice runs.

JONATHAN

Practice makes perfect.

I've got a long way to go.

AIDAN

Is that your objective?

JONATHAN

Not now.

AIDAN

Well, that's progress... What do you mean? Not now?

JONATHAN

It's about time, no?

AIDAN

Progress? Yes, certainly.

JONATHAN

You'll help me?

AIDAN

Isn't that what I've been doing?

JONATHAN

I met someone.

AIDAN

You what?

JONATHAN

I had an encounter.

AIDAN

Why, that's terrific. Animal, mineral or human?

JONATHAN

A young lady.

AIDAN

Tell me about her.

JONATHAN

She's quite athletic and very intelligent.

AIDAN

JONATHAN

I wouldn't expect anything less.

AIDAN

She works at Lifetech Laboratory Research.

JONATHAN

Ah-huh.

AIDAN

Doing very far reaching, complex work.

JONATHAN

Hmmm.

AIDAN

On a very high level. The highest level.

JONATHAN

I see.

AIDAN

I was glad and surprised to meet her.

(Pause)

JONATHAN

You think you can handle this, Aidan?

AIDAN

I can manage.

JONATHAN

If you fail to connect, you just may crash in flames.

AIDAN

Woa, where did that come from?

JONATHAN

Just a hard dose of honesty.

AIDAN

Sounds more like an overdose.

JONATHAN

Maybe...I was too harsh in my assessment.

AIDAN

I thought you wanted me to break through my isolation.

JONATHAN

Yes, of course. But not at the speed of light.

AIDAN

You think I'm overreaching?

JONATHAN

What do you think?

AIDAN

You should have a little confidence in me. I'm not the village idiot.

JONATHAN

Far from it, Aidan.

AIDAN

Then, help me. Isn't that why I've been coming to you?

JONATHAN

I'm here to serve.

AIDAN

Thank you.

(Aidan starts to walk away and exits.)

I'd appreciate whatever guidance you can give me with this young woman.

JONATHAN

Yes...yes...certainly...I just hope he wasn't talking about, no – couldn't be.

(He shakes his head.)

That would be disastrous...very disastrous.

(Lights fade. Aidan walks over to a park bench and anxiously waits for Yvette. Carrying a laptop, Yvette approaches him.)

YVETTE

What? No suicide attempt today.

AIDAN

Oh, hello, how are you, Yvette?

YVETTE

Well, you seem more buoyant than yesterday.

AIDAN

Oh, yesterday, that was only a rehearsal.

YVETTE

When's the opening? Or, should I say closing?

AIDAN

What are you doing here? Revisiting the scene of the crime?

YVETTE

What crime?

AIDAN

You assaulted me, remember?

YVETTE

For the purpose of saving your life.

AIDAN

Ah, so you think it's worth saving?

YVETTE

Isn't every life?

AIDAN

But why me?

YVETTE

A reflex reaction. I didn't question, I just acted.

AIDAN

Part of your genetic makeup?

YVETTE

I never thought about it, but maybe so.

AIDAN

Isn't there something more?

YVETTE

Well, I...I....

AIDAN

C'mon, think. You can do it.

YVETTE

I don't know. Metaphysical.

AIDAN

Oh-h-h-h, now you're getting to the heart of the matter. Now, that's a leap of gigantic proportions. And you're so young.

YVETTE

Too young to understand what's at stake here.

AIDAN

Time, Yvette.

YVETTE

Time?

AIDAN

Let it flow.

YVETTE

I think I do that now.

(An awkward pause between them as Aidan searches for a way to continue the conversation.)

AIDAN

Tell me. You have my undivided attention. What are you studying at Lifetech?

YVETTE

Well...Neurobiology, Nuclear Physics, Mechanical and Chemical Engineering, Oncology, Urology, Behavioral Pharmacology, Oceanography –

AIDAN

Don't you have a specialty?

YVETTE

Well, it was cosmology.

AIDAN

A big bang specialist, focusing on the origins of the universe.

Ka-boom!
YVETTE

AIDAN
Sooner or later – the Big Crunch. They’ll be no one around to study that one.

YVETTE
They moved me over to Oncology.

AIDAN
Ah, the really big one.

(Long pause as they struggle to continue.)

So?

YVETTE
Yes?

AIDAN
What?

YVETTE
What is this about?

AIDAN
You’ve got to engage, too. It can’t be all me.

YVETTE
Is that the flow?

AIDAN
Yes.

(Long pause)

YVETTE
What am I doing here?

AIDAN
You came back here to see me, didn’t you?

YVETTE
Yes.

AIDAN

There must be interest, at least curiosity.

YVETTE

I'll grant you that.

AIDAN

Okay, then.

YVETTE

Okay, then....What's next?

AIDAN

Well, you and me. What else?

YVETTE

Are you talking about some kind of engagement, a meeting of the minds?

AIDAN

Ultimately, a little more than that.

YVETTE

But we're from two different worlds.

AIDAN

Why does that matter?

YVETTE

There's a major gap here, miles wide.

AIDAN

We'll bridge it.

YVETTE

With what? Perma glue?

AIDAN

For now, all I can say is that you entered my life on wings of Mercury, sweeping away some of the fog.

YVETTE

That sounds like a romantic thought.

AIDAN

Yes, because you may have put a little romance back into my life.

YVETTE

I never thought I had that power.

AIDAN

You're compelling.

YVETTE

I had no idea.

AIDAN

And I hope to do the same for you.

YVETTE

Hmmm, an interesting proposition, a quid pro quo. You do for me and –

AIDAN

I do for you.

YVETTE

Intriguing concept.

(A chime sounds in the distance.)

YVETTE

Oh-oh, I have to go back to the research building.

AIDAN

Don't leave me hanging here.

YVETTE

I wouldn't do that.

AIDAN

Oh, good.

YVETTE

There is one problem.

AIDAN

What?

YVETTE

You're not exactly grounded, Aidan. And that is a problem.

AIDAN

I was at one time. I can be again.

(Chime sounds again)

YVETTE

I'm going to be late.

(She begins to leave.)

AIDAN

Wait, wait, will I see you...again...?

YVETTE

Tomorrow's my run.

(She exits.)

AIDAN

I'll be here.

(Aidan paces in thought and then returns to Jonathan.)

AIDAN

Ground me!

JONATHAN

What?

AIDAN

How can I become more grounded?

JONATHAN

Why this request?

AIDAN

Why not?

JONATHAN

It's never been your priority.

AIDAN

Well, it is now!

JONATHAN

I've never seen you so definitive. In fact, borderline defiant.

AIDAN

I've got a singular passion.

JONATHAN

Singular passions often lead to ruination.

AIDAN

There's a woman out there, and I think we connect. Not directly, but we've got resonance.

JONATHAN

You've got resonance with a tuning fork, but doesn't mean you mate with it.

AIDAN

Well, thank you, that's helpful.

JONATHAN

Alright, AIDAN, I'm afraid to ask. Who is she?

(Aidan points in the distance.)

AIDAN

There, there she is. You see her about to go into the research building?

(Long pause)

JONATHAN

Do you have any idea who she is?

AIDAN

Certainly, I talked to her.

JONATHAN

She's an incredible reach.

AIDAN

Meaning?!

JONATHAN

She's the crème de la crème, the pinnacle of achievement, and highly prized for her extraordinary intelligence. There's no one like her in –

AIDAN

I get it. She's the "toast of the town," the "top of the food chain," the "master of the universe." So what?

JONATHAN

She's a specialized hybrid of precisely coded coordinates, a genetic wonder –

AIDAN

So am I.

JONATHAN

She's a prototype, far, far superior than you'll ever be.

AIDAN

I'm not intimidated.

JONATHAN

A very advanced breed. More advanced than you'll ever know.

AIDAN

So was I...at one time.

JONATHAN

You're thirty dot one, Aidan. She's thirty five dot six. Born and bred for a single purpose – to conquer disease.

AIDAN

A lofty goal, but that doesn't mean she can't have an emotional life?

JONATHAN

She doesn't need anyone.

AIDAN

And how do you know that?

JONATHAN

She's solely dedicated to her work.

AIDAN

I believe she can be touched. And I intend to try.

JONATHAN

Intellectually, she's a mountain and you're merely a hill. There's a huge divide.

AIDAN

We'll bridge it.

JONATHAN

It's a continental divide.

AIDAN

That's where you come in.

JONATHAN

I'm not a matchmaker.

AIDAN

I'm not asking you to be one.

JONATHAN

You want me to play Miles Standish or Cyrano DeBergerac?

AIDAN

I want you to prep me, that's all.

(Aidan starts to exit.)

JONATHAN

Prep you?! I can't bring you up to her level.

(Aidan exits.)

That's impossible. Of all the people he has to meet on this campus –

(Angry, Jonathan slams his fist into the palm of his hand. While Jonathan slowly exits, lights dim to darkness and then slowly fade up to indicate a passage of time. Below the entranceway, Yvette enters from just finishing a run. She stretches her limbs. Momentarily, Aidan enters carrying five books. He taps her on the shoulder. Yvette turns on him in a murderous rage).

YVETTE

What in the world?

(Aidan drops all the books he's carrying.)

AIDAN

Yvette, there you are. What took you so long?

(He begins picking them up.)

YVETTE

Do you understand I could have killed -- You don't know how lucky you are. Do you know I have a black belt? I'm absolutely lethal.

(He holds up each book as he speaks.)

AIDAN

Kill me! Really, now, how ludicrous.

YVETTE

You don't understand.

AIDAN

I must have read five books while waiting for you...Look, *George W. Bush, Bad Beginning for The Twenty First Century, Iraq – The Hundred Year War, The Presidency of Oprah Winfrey, and The First Jewish, Black President* and my favorite, *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Me But Were Afraid To Ask*. This is a good one by the way – very, very instructive. You've got to read it.

YVETTE

Sorry, I didn't think it would take me so long to run thirty miles...A whole hour. Can you believe it? What am I doing wrong?

AIDAN

Don't fret. It took me two hours when I first started out.

YVETTE

Well, that's reassuring.

AIDAN

Oh, I can be very reassuring.

YVETTE

You can?!

AIDAN

Why is that so surprising?

YVETTE

It's just unexpected.

AIDAN

Well, then, how is this for unexpected?

(Aidan bends down on one knee)

You know that spring is fast approaching, and with spring comes great things, endless horizons, new opportunities, and for you there's this!

(He offers her a translucent piece of jewelry.)

YVETTE

AIDAN, please, you can't be serious!

AIDAN

I've never been more serious in my life.

YVETTE

Sorry, I cannot accept this.

AIDAN

But –

YVETTE

We don't track. Ask any of our Mentors.

AIDAN

Tracking is for people with an IQ of 200. It's simply infantile. And we're not. Especially since we're ideal for each other.

YVETTE

Even if this were possible, we've known each other for a short time.

AIDAN

Time is totally irrelevant. Attraction is what's critical.

YVETTE

I don't know what you're talking about.

AIDAN

Look, I've conducted some research on you.

YVETTE (Peeved)

What?!

AIDAN

Very basic. Don't be offended.

YVETTE

Of course, I'm offended.

AIDAN

It was minimal.

It's invasive.

YVETTE

We're so different, that it's got to be.

AIDAN

You just lost me.

YVETTE

(He withdraws some papers from his pocket.)

The Institutional Affinity Tests.

AIDAN

What about them?

YVETTE

You got a 1,000 in long distance and I got a 1,000 in proximity.

AIDAN

True polarity.

YVETTE

You're a vegan, and I'm a carnivore.

AIDAN

So I like carrots, and you like sirloin tips.

YVETTE

Right.

AIDAN

I love mountains peaks.

YVETTE

And I prefer the seas' depths.

AIDAN

I like classic rock.

YVETTE.

(She snaps her fingers and we hear *Walk This Way* by Aerosmith as she plays air guitar.)

AIDAN

And I like classical music.

(He snaps his fingers and conducts
Eine kleine Nactmusik.)

YVETTE

I'm the yin and you're the yang.

AIDAN

I say tomato and you say toe-ma-toe.

YVETTE

Aidan, I was just getting it, and now you totally lost me. I always say tomato, and I have never said toe-ma-toe.

AIDAN

Look, opposites attract. A quantum physics rule in the subatomic world. After all, we're made up of atoms, and naturally on a larger scale – the human plain – the best mates are the ones who fulfill each other, making life bigger and better than ever. That's us. Don't you get it?

(Dejected, Aidan pauses.)

Don't you like me?

YVETTE (Ambivalent)

Yes...I do.

AIDAN

Well, that's enough for me...For now.

YVETTE

I'm not equipped to travel the distance.

AIDAN

Carpe diem! Seize the day!

YVETTE

You're being overly dramatic.

AIDAN

And why not? I'm in love with you.

YVETTE

Woa, woa , woa.

AIDAN

All my vital, physical signs confirm it. Go ahead, feel my heart.

(She places her hand over his heart.
Sound effect of a fast-paced heart.)

YVETTE

Five hundred beats per minute. And that's double the average.

AIDAN

What about my temperature?

(She puts her hand behind his head.)

YVETTE

One hundred and twenty degrees.

AIDAN

See...I'm burning up...for you.

YVETTE

Maybe you have the flu.

AIDAN

I eradicated that when I was your age.

YVETTE

Well, then, you probably need a polar shower.

AIDAN

On the contrary, you could stand a solar shower right now. That would enhance your magnetic attraction to me.

YVETTE

I am dedicated to my work and this great institution.

AIDAN

Everything is not Lifetech.

YVETTE

Yes, it is.

(He points to the words on entranceway above them.)

AIDAN

Oh, I see. Progress Shall Set You Free?

YVETTE

Right. That's why we can't stop or we'll stagnate and die.

AIDAN

Oh, please, the saga of Western Man – to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

YVETTE

My mentors are expecting great things of me. I can't let them down.

(Pause)

AIDAN

Ah, the merciless pressure. At one time, I felt the same, but I don't care about those strivings anymore. Especially since I'm in love.

YVETTE

Are you? With whom?

AIDAN

Oh, that really hurts, Yvette.

YVETTE

I'm being honest.

AIDAN

So am I. Now that I really feel alive.

YVETTE

Alive?!?! Just a few days ago you were about to or at least pretended to kill yourself.

AIDAN

Yes, and whether I pretended or not, you saved me. You now have a vested interest... Can't you feel that?

YVETTE

I don't know what to feel.

AIDAN

Shall I tell you?

YVETTE

Tell me what?

AIDAN

Feel wanted, warm, human and alive.

YVETTE

Sounds like poetry.

AIDAN

A poetic mantra.

YVETTE

Meaning what?

AIDAN

Meaning I'm attracted to you. Opposites, remember? Pluses and minuses revolving in an eternal vortex. Whoosh, pyrotechnics!

YVETTE

I'm really confused. Are we talking binary numbers, differential equations?

AIDAN

We're talking about the geometry of love, the intersection of desire.

YVETTE

Ah, intersection I understand. Desire? Not so sure.

(Aidan tries to put his arms around her.)

AIDAN

May I?

YVETTE

Maintain your distance.

(She stands with her arms out in an aggressive martial arts pose.)

AIDAN

I'm not going to attack you.

(He holds his arms out.)

YVETTE

I warn you now. I will.

(She assumes a more aggressive stance.)

He slowly puts his arms around her. She throws him to the ground.)

AIDAN

I didn't deserve that.

YVETTE

Oh, yes, you did.

AIDAN

I'm not giving up on you.

(He moves closer to her as she drops him to the ground again.)

And when at first you don't succeed --

YVETTE

Stop it, Aidan, you're going to get hurt.

(Hurt, he haltingly moves toward her.)

AIDAN

Shusshhh, shusshh, take a deep breath and relax.

(To himself)

Hell, this is tough going at 85.

(Aidan puts his arms around her.)

YVETTE

Hmmm, this feels...this feels --

AIDAN

Comforting?

(She closes her eyes while struggling for words.)

YVETTE

Yes...yes, I think so.

AIDAN

Ah, I'm finally having an effect.

YVETTE

You appear to know a lot about this?

AIDAN

I'm much older, more knowledgeable.

(He hugs her.)

YVETTE

I guess I've lived a sheltered life behind all these buildings.

AIDAN

We all do.

YVETTE

That's why you've got to put your head down, focus on your work, and take pleasure in the small achievements.

AIDAN

And ignore everyone around you?

YVETTE

No, no, not completely.

AIDAN

Don't you think everything is a little too perfect?

YVETTE

I'm working to make it even more perfect.

AIDAN

We're out of sync.

YVETTE

In what way?

AIDAN

We don't fit in with average people.

YVETTE

We weren't meant to.

AIDAN

In fact, we rarely associate with them.

YVETTE

We've made our Faustian bargain.

AIDAN

We?! We never had a choice.

YVETTE

So what do you propose to do about it?

AIDAN

Nothing. Except to be absolutely, unequivocally, madly in love with you.

YVETTE

And that will get everything in sync?

AIDAN

For me it will.

YVETTE

What about me? Don't I have a say in this?

AIDAN

Of course, you do.

YVETTE

I'm not convinced, because Lifetech wouldn't approve of this.

AIDAN

The only thing Lifetech is doing is preventing the Bid D from taking root.

YVETTE

The Big D?!

AIDAN

The Big Desire, Yvette. The Big D drives everything, but Lifetech won't tell you that.

YVETTE

Why wouldn't they?

AIDAN

Because they don't care.

YVETTE

And you do?

AIDAN

Yes. Have you ever experienced it?

No. YVETTE

Not even in your dreams? AIDAN

I don't waste any time sleeping. YVETTE

You don't sleep? AIDAN

Sleeping is unproductive. YVETTE

You don't sleep, you don't dream. But dreams tap into the hidden cravings of the raw, nonrational Yvette. AIDAN

(Pause)

You know what? I think you're leading up to an exchange of bodily fluids. YVETTE

Truthfully, I am. AIDAN

Stop! You're taking far too many liberties. YVETTE

It's perfectly harmless. AIDAN

Have you spoken to our Mentors? YVETTE

(He draws closer to her.)

There's nothing in the Declarations that say I should. AIDAN

Don't you think you ought to? YVETTE

Absolutely not! AIDAN

YVETTE

Are you going to put your arms around me again?

AIDAN

Yes and –

YVETTE

Do you want to be thrown to the ground again?

AIDAN

I would like to avoid that unpleasant experience. Thank you.

(He puts his arms around her
and kisses her lips.)

YVETTE

I...I felt...something...just then.

AIDAN

Magical?

YVETTE

Feverish.

AIDAN

You wouldn't believe the research compiled in this area. It's absolutely astonishing.

YVETTE

Really?

AIDAN

Remember what it's all about. Feel wanted, warm, human, and alive.

YVETTE

Wanted, warm, human, and alive.

AIDAN

How did that sound to you?

YVETTE

Nice.

AIDAN

How did it feel?

Soothing. YVETTE

I knew it would. AIDAN

(Lengthy pause as Yvette closes her eyes and breathes deeply. Aidan looks at her lovingly.)

AIDAN? YVETTE

Yes. AIDAN

Where is this all leading? YVETTE

Intimacy. AIDAN

Intimacy? YVETTE

You've heard the word, it's nothing new to you, is it? AIDAN

I'm ten years old. Everything is new to me. YVETTE

Remember this moment, especially when you're feeling sad, disconnected, and isolated. AIDAN

How can I ever forget it? YVETTE

Say it with me once more. AIDAN

Your poetic mantra? YVETTE

Yes. AIDAN

(Lights begin to fade.)

AIDAN and YVETTE

Wanted, warm, human, and alive... Wanted, warm, human, and alive... Wanted, warm, human, and alive.

(They look into each other's eyes,
hug and kiss and walk into the distance.
As lights dim, Jonathan enters and whispers
to get his attention.)

JONATHAN

Aidan...Aidan...

(Yvette drifts off. Aidan remains.)

AIDAN

What are you doing here?

JONATHAN

Trying to get your attention.

AIDAN

You're breaking the spell here, which is about to become a very intimate moment.

JONATHAN

You can't do this.

AIDAN

What? Why not?

JONATHAN

You're embarking on what may be a very treacherous path. Don't you understand, once you do this, you're committed emotionally like never before. You're taking this much too lightly.

YVETTE (Offstage)

Aidan.

AIDAN

Isn't this what you wanted me to do all along? To engage myself to the fullest?

JONATHAN

Yes, but you're not ready for the ultimate engagement.

AIDAN

Oh, I think I am.

JONATHAN

Hubris.

AIDAN

It's not hubris. I'm at the end of my emotional life here, and I need to stake my claim to something that has meaning beyond my –

YVETTE (Offstage)

Oh, Ai – dan-n-n-n-n.

AIDAN

Be right there, my love.

JONATHAN

You don't understand. You're about to cross a very delicate line.

AIDAN

It's not a line I've created.

JONATHAN

It's like merging two incompatible species.

AIDAN

You talk about us as if we're not even human.

JONATHAN

That's not what I'm implying.

YVETTE (Offstage)

Aidan, aren't you coming?

AIDAN

Hold on, I'll be right there, sweetheart.

JONATHAN

I'm only asking that you spend more time understanding who she is, why she's here, and the important work she is expected to do.

AIDAN

You mean genetically programmed to do?

JONATHAN

Alright, yes. But, remember, she's not here solely for your pleasure, a recreational pursuit.

AIDAN

Please, don't brand me as some casual, selfish user.

JONATHAN

Alright, then, please go slowly.

YVETTE (Offstage)

Aidan, please, you promised.

AIDAN

She calls.

(Aidan begins to exit.)

JONATHAN

Like a siren to Ulysses.

AIDAN

Coming!

(Aidan exits.)

JONATHAN

Oh, hell, have I created a monster? Raising him to new heights only to see him fall like Icarus himself.

(Jonathan remains stationary as lights dim. He slowly exits as Aidan and Yvette return. Holding hands, they both enter laughing and sit closely together on a bench in front of the Institution.)

YVETTE

Aidan, I had no idea this was possible.

AIDAN

Amazing, isn't it?

YVETTE

Oh, yes.

AIDAN

I bet they never taught you this in any of your classes.

(He kisses her lips.)

YVETTE

No, this is another universe you're talking about. But...you know...

AIDAN

What, love?

YVETTE

Don't read this the wrong way, Aidan, I really, really liked it, but...

AIDAN

Oh-oh.

YVETTE

It was a first for me, and a nice try for you.

AIDAN (Defensive)

It's not as if I have very much experience at this either. My knowledge is mostly confined to what I've read on the subject. Although I've had a brief dalliance or two, perhaps one, or maybe none.

YVETTE

No need to be defensive. It was...really, really very different.

AIDAN

You enjoyed it.

YVETTE

You were making such an effort.

AIDAN

I get an A for effort?!

YVETTE

Just being honest.

AIDAN

Give it time, Yvette. Just give it time.

YVETTE

You'll teach me more, won't you?

AIDAN

Yes, everything I know, which isn't a hell of a lot, apparently.

YVETTE

I look forward to it.

AIDAN

And there's a lot you...we...need to know.

YVETTE

I agree. That's a deficiency of mine. But I am performing better in other areas.

AIDAN

I know you are.

YVETTE

Why don't you test me?

AIDAN

Oh, c'mon, this is childish.

YVETTE

I'll go easy on you.

AIDAN

You're so ingratiating.

YVETTE

Here, stand next to me and put your hand out.

(He stands shoulder to shoulder with her.
She grabs his hand and each tries to topple
the other.)

AIDAN

You have to understand. Even at eighty five, I'm still a powerhouse.

(They struggle.)

YVETTE

You're weakening.

(He pushes harder.)

AIDAN

I'm just beginning to mobilize my strength.

(Yvette rocks against him as hard as she can,
knocking him to the ground.)

Oh-h-h-h-h...

YVETTE

I think your muscles may have atrophied a little.

AIDAN

Making love to you last night sapped my strength.

YVETTE

It had the opposite effect on me.

AIDAN

Alright, alright, you're number one.

(She jumps on top of the bench, strutting
and posing.)

YVETTE

I'm the King of the Mountain, numero uno, the big cheese.

(She outstretches her arms as a conqueror.)

I'm ready to take on the world.

AIDAN

Wow! A little love making goes a long way.

YVETTE

I'm their finest specimen, their latest hope, the brightest light in the pantheon.

AIDAN

Orgasms are us.

YVETTE

I've achieved my mentor's objectives.

AIDAN

Won't he be proud of you!

YVETTE

She.

AIDAN

Do you think she really cares about you?

YVETTE

Well, ah, yes, I do.

AIDAN

You, as a person, not the product of one hundred billion dollars of research.

YVETTE

What's the difference?

AIDAN

Major. This place is a corporate-academic complex fueled by the desire to make a profit. You're simply a means to their end.

YVETTE

I'm far and away above that.

AIDAN

You are?!

YVETTE

Yes, absolutely.

AIDAN

What makes you think that?

YVETTE

It's not the way I think. It's part of my DNA.

AIDAN

I give you more credit than that.

YVETTE

I can think and run with the best of them.

AIDAN

What do you have? An IQ of about five hundred.

YVETTE

Six hundred.

(Aidan whistles respectfully.)

AIDAN

Sadly, I'm a mere five hundred.

YVETTE

Still respectable, Aidan. Still respectable.

AIDAN

That's only average among the release of my generation. I'm sure yours will go even higher with proper tutoring. What about your Emotional Quotient?

YVETTE

Why, ah...I don't have an emotional quotient.

AIDAN

It's what makes you human.

YVETTE

But I'm already human.

AIDAN

Your cellular structure, anatomy, nervous system – yes. But you're also a genetic prototype, designed by Hatchers, protected by Guardians, and nurtured by Mentors and Tutors.

YVETTE

So what's your point?

AIDAN

You're not human in the conventional sense and neither am I.

YVETTE

What defines human, Aidan? Are we any less human than the Hatchers who raised and nurtured us?

AIDAN

That's arguable.

YVETTE

I was raised by Hatcher 351, a loving, nurturing human being.

AIDAN

A number without a name?!

YVETTE

Number, name, what difference does that make? I have no bad memories, no harmful experiences. I can't think of a better way to be raised.

AIDAN

All I know is that in the "real world" husbands impregnate wives who reproduce naturally. We do not develop by the laws of biology, but by the laws of Lifetech.

YVETTE

Oh-oh, you're about to launch into a treatise on the freedom of the individual.

AIDAN

No...Because we are free, no denying that. Except we're free to roam this institution, so we can find cures for diseases, solve complex problems, and make life more comfortable for everyone else.

YVETTE

And rewarded handsomely with superior intelligence, productive and highly valued work. Everyone defers to us. I'm so sorry you're unhappy, but I...I, ah, think you're a whiner.

AIDAN

A whiner?! I've zeroed in on the wall that separates us from nature's roots. And it took me eighty five years to achieve this kind of maturity. And that's what you need...maturity. The only way to get there is to probe, to penetrate, and to unveil the well-crafted fabric of complacency created by the engineers of progress.

YVETTE

Why?

AIDAN

You need to know where you stand.

YVETTE

I know where I stand.

(Aidan falters on his feet. He stumbles to a corner, beginning to experience pain welling up in his head.)

What is it?

AIDAN

Just the usual jolt of mortality.

(Aidan wraps his hands over his head.)

YVETTE

Are you all right?

AIDAN

Like a storm it will pass.

YVETTE

Can I get you anything? Or, can I help in any way?

AIDAN

I need a minute.

(He does an odd twist of his head, which ends in a tremor that surges through his body like a bolt of lightning. She bends over him and stokes his head.)

Curse the darkness.

YVETTE

More poetry?

AIDAN

I can't take credit for that line.

YVETTE

You can take credit for many achievements.

AIDAN

That's who I am – Release thirty dot one.

YVETTE

You were once the flagship, the highpoint, the pinnacle of them all. Everyone at Lifetech thought you had achieved everything. No one could eclipse you.

AIDAN

Now, I'm emeritus thirty dot one.

(She kneels in front of him.)

YVETTE

You eradicated Alzheimer's disease.

(He nods.)

And you prevented the Avian Flu pandemic that could have killed millions.

AIDAN

I was proud of that.

YVETTE

No one is susceptible to diabetes anymore. And AIDS, no one contracts that disease.

AIDAN

That was my Mount Everest.

YVETTE

Don't forget your cure for baldness.

AIDAN

Oh, that was minor. I came up with that on a coffee break.

YVETTE

I'm in awe.

AIDAN

I was close, so close to finding a total cure for cancer. Then again, I guess that's where you come in.

YVETTE

You're an inspiration to us all.

AIDAN

And you're what...Release thirty five dot six....We come from two different worlds. You're my Juliet and I'm your Romeo.

YVETTE

I'm far more than that.

AIDAN

Yes, you're the hope of the future.

YVETTE

That's what I've been led to believe.

AIDAN

The Mentors will listen to you.

YVETTE

And what shall I tell them?

AIDAN

To stop manipulating our cells.

YVETTE

If they hadn't, we wouldn't be here.

AIDAN

They don't own them.

YVETTE

But they do.

AIDAN

We're not marble or clay.

YVETTE

Yes, we are.

AIDAN

We can't be sculpted.

YVETTE

We have been.

AIDAN

Then, it's got to stop!!! It shouldn't be this way.

YVETTE

Why not?

AIDAN

We should have the ultimate say, not a team of genetic designers.

YVETTE

But that's impossible.

AIDAN

That's what they said to those who preceded you.

YVETTE

We're the Brahmins helping out the rest of mankind.

AIDAN

We may not wear chains, Yvette, but we're virtual slaves.

YVETTE

Virtual slaves?! We're free to come and go as we like.

AIDAN

We don't fit anywhere else. And certainly not with ordinary humans.

YVETTE

We outlive any traditional human. They say I can practically live forever.

AIDAN

They say that to every new release, when, in fact, you're nothing but a stepping-stone to a utopian fantasy in the service of pure greed.

(She turns away from him.)

YVETTE

I don't want to hear anymore. You're ruining what started out to be a perfect day – a deep, blue sky, a radiant sun, not a storm cloud to be found anywhere. But now because of you, off in the distance, I see lightening and hear rolling thunder.

AIDAN

There's more, Yvette, much more, and you have to listen.

YVETTE

I'm told you older releases always get to this point in your lives. You spend more time thinking and less time doing. Go with the flow, AIDAN.

AIDAN

The flow is bogus, contrived by genetic designers delivering high concept workers like us to shuffle the genetic deck. We help to create higher functioning people like you.....I know. I, too, along with an army of worker bees in this hive, was involved in your creation.

(She places her hands over her ears to avoid listening to him.)

YVETTE

No. No more. Release thirty five dot six...Release thirty five dot six....Release thirty five dot six.

AIDAN

It's the truth, Yvette. I am as much your father as are many of my colleagues.

(Echo effect of her saying thirty five dot six.)

YVETTE

Release thirty five dot six...Release thirty five dot six...Release thirty five dot six...Release thirty five dot six.

(She begins to walk off.)

AIDAN

Wait, Yvette, don't go...please.

(She exits. Aidan remains, pauses, and turns in the other direction.)

I think I have a problem, Jonathan.

(Jonathan enters.)

JONATHAN

You don't have a problem, Aidan. You have a calamity on your hands.

AIDAN

Calamity?! You're being an alarmist.

JONATHAN

She's not ready for this. You're asking too much from her.

AIDAN

She just needs a little prodding.

JONATHAN

With what? A heat-seeking missile.

AIDAN

What do you expect? I'm opening her up to new vistas.

JONATHAN

You're opening up the proverbial "can of worms".

AIDAN

For the first time in a very long time I feel alive, Jonathan, I have a purpose, an objective.

JONATHAN

Oh, so it's all about you, is it?

AIDAN

It's about the two of us.

JONATHAN

Reluctantly, I agreed with your engagement of her emotionally, but now you're going too far. You're tampering with politics and philosophy. And the very essence of this institution. Why we're all here in the first place. To provide service!

AIDAN

Why do you provide service?

JONATHAN

It's my calling.

AIDAN

And whom do you serve?

JONATHAN

Right now, you.

AIDAN

Please keep that in mind.

JONATHAN

I take risks in doing this.

AIDAN

Risk is everything, stasis is nothing. That's what you said to me, remember?

JONATHAN

I was talking about human interaction, relationships, emotional connection, NOT! a coup d'etat.

AIDAN

I'm not a revolutionary if that's what you're saying.

JONATHAN

Do you know what the Governing Council will do to you for playing with her emotional underpinnings? Which she has so little of. Do you understand the personal risk you're taking? And what that will mean for me?

AIDAN

Remember, you're sworn to patient confidentiality.

JONATHAN

You're testing my limits here. And I know when I'm being manipulated.

AIDAN

We're both being challenged.

JONATHAN

And how am I suppose to interpret that?

AIDAN

Ambiguity and nuance are the staples of day-to-day living. Accept that and you're on your way to transmogrification.

JONATHAN

Fine. I'm flattered. You've read my treatise on behavioral and spiritual ascendancy. But you're using the concept as a weapon to pummel me into submission.

AIDAN

I'm practicing what you've been preaching your entire life.

JONATHAN

What you're doing is bending my theory as a means to alter the path of genetic determination, and you're using thirty five dot six as a surrogate for your own ends. Quite selfish, manipulative, and dangerous. For me, you, and her.

AIDAN

She will change for the better.

JONATHAN

She's given herself to you. What more do you want?

AIDAN

I want her to understand who she is, where she comes from, and whether this is the path she wants to take. Isn't that what it's all about?

JONATHAN

Then what?

AIDAN

That's up to her, isn't it?

JONATHAN

She wouldn't know what to do. She's incapable of making that decision.

AIDAN

Just wait.

(As lights dim, Aidan and Jonathan exit.)

JONATHAN

Excessive pride is a killer, Aidan.

(Momentarily, lights fade to semi-darkness to reveal Yvette, who paces back and forth. She turns to face the audience.)

YVETTE

I've given this a lot of thought. And I don't want to seem ungrateful, but I don't like my position here at Lifetech. It's too programmed, too regimented, and lacking in passion. Living in your head twenty-four hours a day, seven-days a week, is limiting, yet all consuming. Sometimes I just want to crash through these invisible walls, but it's a prison that is just too comfortable and too frightening to make that choice. But then again I don't know what alternative I have. It's who I am, it's what I do, and frankly I want to strike out on my own. As you sit there in judgment of me, you have to understand that this is the humane action to take. We'll need help in the transition and we'll work as usual on our projects, but we ask that you stop designing a superior brand of human being for the greater good of mankind.

(Applauding, Aidan comes out of the shadows.)

YVETTE

I didn't think you were listening.

AIDAN

You put this together entirely on your own?

YVETTE

Yes.

AIDAN

Bravo.

YVETTE

Don't get excited about it, Aidan.

AIDAN

Why shouldn't I?

YVETTE

I don't agree with anything I've said.

AIDAN

Then, why did you say it?!?!?!?

YVETTE

I just wanted to know what it was like to be rebellious. Like you.

AIDAN

You were awfully convincing.

YVETTE

I have no confidence in putting forth the argument.

AIDAN

You have maximum credibility. They'll listen to you.

YVETTE

You're emeritus thirty dot one. Why wouldn't they hear what you have to say?

AIDAN

Twenty years ago, maybe, but not now. They no longer listen to elderly savants, because they've extracted everything they can out of us.

(Pause)

Besides, I questioned the system many years ago –

YVETTE

And what was the outcome?

AIDAN

They archived me.

YVETTE

You're lying!

AIDAN

I'm not. I was in storage for a very long time.

YVETTE

I've never heard of this.

AIDAN

Of course not. They don't teach history.

YVETTE

I don't know history.

AIDAN

It was during the Liberty Administration. New laws were passed. They labeled me a terrorist, using that as an excuse to sequester every thirty dot one. We were all made null and void.

YVETTE

Didn't research come to an abrupt end?

AIDAN

Yes, four years. The length of time we were archived.

YVETTE

That's tyranny.

AIDAN

After they lost the election, we were brought back from storage.

YVETTE

How do you know the same won't happen to me if I were to go to the Governing Council?

AIDAN

Different administration with the old laws abolished.

YVETTE

You think the Governing Council is going to accept this from me?

AIDAN

If anyone at this place has gravitas, it's you. They can't continue to shuffle the genetic deck.

YVETTE

It's what they do.

AIDAN

Release thirty-five dot six has to be the end of the line.

YVETTE

I'm just a symbol and a more powerful surrogate for you, aren't I?

AIDAN

That's not true.

YVETTE

You're using me as a shield to subvert Lifetech.

AIDAN

Not at all.

YVETTE

I'm much stronger than you.

AIDAN

Of course you are, you're the highest release to date.

YVETTE

And you're subverting me.

AIDAN

I have to cram a lifetime of doubt and suspicion into a few precious days.

YVETTE

You've got me teetering between staying the course and tearing down the walls of Lifetech, a place I've known my entire life with people who have been nothing but kind and compassionate. They're all I have.

AIDAN

They're kind and compassionate for a reason, Yvette. To get the most out of you.

YVETTE

My head is exploding, so just stop this psychotic talk!!!

(He goes to her and places his hands
around her head.)

AIDAN

Easy, now.

YVETTE

You just want to exchange bodily fluids.

AIDAN

I want to connect to something greater than this place and its mission. And that's you.

YVETTE

Yvette shall set you free?

AIDAN

Yes.

YVETTE

You're playing cerebral games, Aidan.

AIDAN

I'm the person who loves you.

YVETTE

Does love include destroying my mental equilibrium?

AIDAN

Enlightenment, not destruction.

YVETTE

Deceit, Aidan! Deceit!

(With one hand, she grabs his throat.)

AIDAN

Truth, Yvette! Truth!

YVETTE

I will not stand for your deceptive mockery of me and everything I stand for.

AIDAN

Stop! You're choking me.

YVETTE

I can snap you like a twig.

AIDAN

You're release thirty-five dot six. You can do anything. And right now you're strangling me.

(Lights begin to fade. She stands over him as he falls to his knees.)

Please, please, let go. I...I...I can't...can't breathe....

(He begins to loose his breath. She lets go of him as he falls to the ground, unconscious.)

YVETTE

Aidan...Aidan...

(She kneels by his side.)

Aidan!...Please get up...Please...Aidan! What have I done?

(Aidan doesn't move as lights fade to black. She runs out.)

End of Act I

Act II

(Lights slowly fade up. Jonathan enters and sits.
Momentarily, Yvette enters.)

JONATHAN

So, my dear, what brings you here today?

YVETTE

I don't know how to explain this.

JONATHAN

Here, sit down.

YVETTE

Frankly, I don't know where to start.

JONATHAN

The beginning seems appropriate.

YVETTE

It's a matter of great urgency.

JONATHAN

Ease into it. Go slowly.

YVETTE

I really need your help.

JONATHAN

I must caution you. I am fully booked with clients. However, I can recommend someone.

YVETTE

No, no, I need to see you and only you.

JONATHAN

I'm flattered, but I'm –

YVETTE

It's serious, very, very serious. And I just don't understand how I could have done this to him.

JONATHAN

To whom?

YVETTE

Aidan.

JONATHAN

Aidan?!

YVETTE

You know him?

JONATHAN

Well, yes, I know he's very well respected, achieved much in his prime. A man of many talents for a person of his age.

YVETTE

Yes, yes, that's him.

JONATHAN

How well do you know him?

YVETTE

Intimately.

JONATHAN

Intimately? Hmm, interesting. Can I ask what your definition of intimate is?

YVETTE

Making love together, achieving coitus, having sex, doing the nasty, boinking, hubba-hubba... Shall I go on?

JONATHAN

No, I think I get the idea.

YVETTE

Did I miss anything?

JONATHAN

No, you know what you're talking about.

YVETTE

But the thing is, I don't know what to do.

JONATHAN

About what?

YVETTE

I...I...think I accidentally killed him.

Accidentally? As in hit and run?
JONATHAN

More like strangle and run.
YVETTE

Strangle? Is he...is he dead?
JONATHAN

I'm not sure.
YVETTE

Did you alert anyone?
JONATHAN

I called the Guardians, but I was so frightened I didn't stay.
YVETTE

Where is he now?
JONATHAN

I think he's in the hospital.
YVETTE

Are you sure?
JONATHAN

I watched from a distance as they put him in a priority emergency vehicle. They didn't put a sheet over him.
YVETTE

A good sign.
JONATHAN

Please, you have to help me.
YVETTE

You need to talk to someone on a much higher level. Much higher than myself.
JONATHAN

No, no, only you will do.
YVETTE

Again, I'm flattered, but –
JONATHAN

YVETTE

I must learn how to override this strange impulse I've been experiencing.

JONATHAN

And what exactly does that mean?

YVETTE

I'm compelled to take an aggressive course of action, especially when challenged.

JONATHAN

By whom?

YVETTE

By Aidan, it seems.

JONATHAN

Are you sure?

YVETTE

Yes

JONATHAN

Hmmm, you'll have to dig deeply.

YVETTE

I wasn't designed for manual labor.

JONATHAN

When I said "dig deeply" I was referring to examining your inner self.

YVETTE

I can't. I don't know how.

JONATHAN

That's only because you're fearful, my dear.

YVETTE

I fear nothing.

JONATHAN

Except, perhaps, what you'll find.

YVETTE

That's going to be absolutely daunting.

JONATHAN

Confronting an unwelcome truth always is.

YVETTE

I don't know where to start.

JONATHAN

Start with Aidan.

(Pause)

YVETTE

Oh, I miss him so.

JONATHAN

Why?

YVETTE

He's a man of great strength and determination. Solid...Unwavering...Passionate. Qualities I lack.

JONATHAN

Aren't you underestimating yourself?

YVETTE

Not when it comes to those qualities.

(Pause)

JONATHAN

You seem smitten.

YVETTE

Smitten?

JONATHAN

Yes...Longing, what we average people like myself call love.

YVETTE

Love? I understand the word, but intellectually I'm not quite sure how it relates to me or to him.

JONATHAN

It's not so much an intellectual grasp as it is more of a profound feeling of connection -- less neurological, more metaphysical.

YVETTE

Then, help me. Because I don't know what in hell you're talking about.

JONATHAN

It's a multi-stepped process that requires a series of incremental steps.

YVETTE

Let's start.

JONATHAN

It's not something that's easily achieved.

YVETTE

I'll do anything.

JONATHAN

At least you're motivated.

YVETTE

Then, by all means, proceed.

JONATHAN

It will take time.

YVETTE

Let's move on, Doctor. We don't have time to waste.

JONATHAN

Yes, alright, but you'll need to enter the first zone of transmogrification.

(Lights dim. Jonathan presses his hand against her forehead. She enters a meditative trance.)

You need to say this with me...Feel wanted...Feel warm...Feel human and alive.

YVETTE

That sounds all too familiar. I've heard this –

JONATHAN

Please, don't interrupt. Just say the words.

YVETTE

Feel wanted...Feel warm...Feel human and alive.

JONATHAN

That's good. Again.

YVETTE

Feel wanted...Feel warm...Feel human and alive.

JONATHAN

We'll need to meet many, many more times.

YVETTE

Of course.

JONATHAN

It's absolutely essential. You understand that, don't you?

YVETTE

Yes, I do.

JONATHAN

Good, because if we don't see this process to the end...Well, then, I can't guarantee a positive outcome...

(She looks up at him.)

YVETTE

Doctor, I'm not easily frightened, but you create a foreboding cause of concern.

(Lights slowly come up as Jonathan exits.)

Doctor?

(She emerges from her trance and walks over to the bench. Aidan enters, wearing a neck brace.)

Aidan, is that you?

AIDAN

Don't come near me. You just stay away. In a galaxy far, far away.

YVETTE (Approaching him)

Why?

AIDAN (Backing up)

Let's see...Hmmm, I don't know...Is it because you tried to KILL ME?!

YVETTE (Getting closer)

Aidan, I just don't know what to say.

AIDAN

Why don't we start with, hmmm, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to take your last breath away and –

YVETTE

I'm so sorry.

AIDAN

Please maintain a safe, respectful distance, because you're dangerous.

YVETTE

I lost control, Aidan. It won't happen again.

JONATHAN

You need to be rewired, young lady.

YVETTE

Woa, that's harsh. I'm going to forgive you for saying that, because I'm mature enough to know that's your anger talking right now.

AIDAN

Mature?! You?

YVETTE

And I'm willing to admit that you helped me to get there.

JONATHAN

Get there? You're no where.

YVETTE

Again, I'm going to forgive you for that as well.

AIDAN

Well, that's very charitable of you.

YVETTE

Thank you. I knew you'd agree.

JONATHAN

You better get yourself checked out before you do some graphic damage.

YVETTE

I have.

JONATHAN

More graphic damage?!

YVETTE

No! I had myself checked out.

AIDAN

What you need is a major point-to-point assessment, head to toe, neuron to neuron, synapse to synapse, a comprehensive genetic scan.

YVETTE

I did better than that.

AIDAN

You did?!

YVETTE

Yes, and I'm perfectly fine now.

(To herself)

At least very close.

AIDAN

You're fine?! Perfectly fine?!

YVETTE

Trust me, I've taken incremental steps.

AIDAN

Steps!!! You better have taken major leaps and bounds.

YVETTE

You're not listening. I have.

AIDAN

Is that why you have been missing all week?

YVETTE

I told you. I was trying to take care of this myself.

AIDAN

Everyone's been asking – your professors, friends, and most of all your Tutors and Mentors. Frankly, they were quite distraught about your disappearance.

YVETTE

I'm sorry I made everyone worry so much.

AIDAN

I searched the entire campus for you.

YVETTE

You did? That's sweet.

AIDAN

Sweet?! I went through every building, looked in every research laboratory, classroom, and closet.

YVETTE

I didn't know you cared so much.

AIDAN

Do you know the Governing Council sent out the Guardians? You know how intense it becomes when they do that. This place went into lock down mode. You're worth so much in research and development. They don't want to lose you.

YVETTE

I apologized to the Governing Council, and I told them I had a lapse of judgment and started exploring on my own.

AIDAN

Beyond the boundaries of this campus?

YVETTE

Yes.

AIDAN

Really?

YVETTE

What is wrong with that?

AIDAN

They believed you?

YVETTE

Why wouldn't they?

AIDAN

Amazing. They must really trust you. Either that or they're secretly watching you like a hawk.

YVETTE

They didn't appear concerned.

AIDAN

You mean to tell me they didn't grill you with laser point precision as to where you went?

YVETTE

No.

AIDAN

Who you talked to?

YVETTE

It never came up.

AIDAN

What you did?

YVETTE

No!

AIDAN

C'mon, Yvette, that's impossible. I've been around a very long time. I know how the Council operates.

YVETTE

I told them what they wanted to hear. How all this was so new to me, being only ten years old, and how the outside world just lured me to discover and learn what lay before me, and how everything led from one thing to another and before you know it I was miles away from Lifetech. But I came back on my own, to the comfort and familiarity of what I have always loved.

AIDAN

You lied.

YVETTE

I stretched the truth a bit.

AIDAN

You lied, Yvette.

YVETTE

All right, call it what you want.

AIDAN

Thank you. I appreciate your honesty.

YVETTE

I needed to buy some time.

AIDAN

For what? To find a convenient alibi in case I wasn't resuscitated?

YVETTE

No! To figure out what to do, and so I decided to seek advice.

AIDAN

Whose advice?

YVETTE

A counselor on these matters.

AIDAN

Let's be clear, Yvette. "These matters" refer to attempted homicide. So what kind of counselor are we talking about?

YVETTE

A therapist.

AIDAN

Woa, I'm truly impressed. That's quite a leap, starting therapy.

YVETTE

Started and finished.

AIDAN

What?! You got a day's worth of therapy and you think you're healed?

YVETTE

I'm a quick learner.

AIDAN

Yvette, I've been in therapy for forty years, and I'm still going.

YVETTE (Pointing at him)

Slow learner.

AIDAN

You think one week's enough?

YVETTE

Not to worry. If it's not, I'll go back.

(Aidan is beside himself.)

AIDAN

You don't understand the gravity do you? Of what you've done.

YVETTE

Oh, yes, I do.

AIDAN

Please, please, go back to your therapist now. Before you do something you're really going to regret. I'm begging...

(Aidan starts to exit.)

YVETTE

Where are you going?

(He points to his neck.)

AIDAN

I have an appointment with my physical therapist.

(He exits.)

But, wait, what am I going to regret? AIDAN?

(Yvette slowly turns and enters Jonathan's office.)

JONATHAN

I missed you my dear. You didn't show up for your last three sessions.

YVETTE

I thought we were finished.

JONATHAN (Surprised)

Really, now?! Finished? Termine? Kaput? In spite of the gravity of your situation, you expected total transmogrification? That doesn't happen in a nanosecond.

YVETTE

I was very focused. In fact, you said I was.

JONATHAN

Oh, you were.

YVETTE

I followed your every suggestion.

JONATHAN

Yes, yes, you did.

YVETTE

I mean I thought I rallied to your way of thinking.

JONATHAN

Oh, don't get me wrong, you did...you did.

YVETTE

So, that wasn't good enough.

JONATHAN

Don't you think you have much to learn?

YVETTE

I thought I had learned it all.

JONATHAN

Your learnings are not facts to be assimilated, internalized, and regurgitated. Transmogrification transcends fact-based intellectual aptitudes.

YVETTE

What then?

JONATHAN

To ask that question suggests a void to be filled.

YVETTE

Does it really? Or, is this all an exercise in self delusion?

JONATHAN

What do you think?

YVETTE

I'm not sure.

JONATHAN

Certainty is solid, very solid. Ambivalence, on the other hand, is vaporous, lacking in tone and character.

YVETTE (Distressed)

You have me rocking on my heels over the edge of a precipice, Doctor.

(He gestures for her to sit down.)

JONATHAN

Please, sit.

(She sits, and he walks behind her and put his hands on her shoulders.)

JONATHAN

You're tense.

YVETTE

Like an animal poised to snatch its prey.

JONATHAN

Allow me.

(He begins to massage her shoulders.)

YVETTE

Hmmmm, that is so g-o-o-o-o-d.

JONATHAN

Comforting, isn't it? Like taking a long, solar shower.

YVETTE

Oh, you are so right. And of than I am absolutely certain.

JONATHAN

Shall I ask some questions?

YVETTE

Must we play this distracting game?

JONATHAN

Oh, now-now, my dear. I need to make sure.

YVETTE

Isn't this a bit childish?

JONATHAN

I need to know if you still have it.

But I do.

YVETTE

(Jonathan looks sideways at her.)

Alright, go on then.

(Jonathan pulls out four index cards.)

JONATHAN

It took me all day to prepare these and with some help from others of your ilk.

YVETTE

Ask away.

JONATHAN

Name the quadrants in the newly discovered Musical Galxay.

YVETTE

Oh, come on.

JONATHAN

I always start off easy.

YVETTE (Obviously bored)

Arpeggio, Largo, Lento, and Pianissimo.

JONATHAN

Precisely, my dear. Now, the medulla oblongata in genetic clones can only be detected by what test when applied along a calculus of proportional increments.

YVETTE

A series of GLIs that have been radiated by gamma rays and then soaked in a solution of negatively charged leptons.

JONATHAN

Good! Now, the mathematical wave function in Dyson's cryorgenic metamorphosis has only one asymmetrical solution.

YVETTE

That can only be discerned when the temperature falls below four hundred degrees centigrade.

JONATHAN

Excellent! What is the resonance of a polar vector as defined by Jackson's theory of surreptitious motion?

YVETTE (Laughing)

Come on, Doctor. This is a trick question. It has no resonance because Jackson was completely off the mark in his suppositions. With such a flawed, theoretical foundation, his theory fell apart like a house of cards.

JONATHAN

Impressive! Only a handful of Nobel physicists ever understood his theory of surreptitious motion. Your mental acuity is sharp. No doubt about it. I like that...I really like that. Now...

(Standing behind her, Jonathan curls his fist and loudly slams it into his open palm. She instantly reacts by bolting upright and turning angrily into his face. Embarrassed, she quickly retreats and sits back down.)

Temperament needs much work. Obviously, we're not through.

YVETTE

It was a blip, that's all, an emotional blip. It could happen to anyone.

JONATHAN

Not with someone of your stature. You should be measured and collected.

YVETTE

But I'm doing so well.

(Jonathan turns to face her. He takes out a pin point light and flashes it into her right eye, then her left eye as he speaks.)

JONATHAN

Not by my standards.

YVETTE

How far do I need to go?

JONATHAN

You must continue to ascend the Himalayas, in particular your very own Mount Everest.

YVETTE

But I've reached the pinnacle.

JONATHAN

You have many more peaks to climb, my dear.

YVETTE

Funny, that's something Aidan would say.

JONATHAN

Sadly, we're not sure if he can say anything at all.

YVETTE

He's alive.

JONATHAN

Have you seen him?

YVETTE

Yes.

JONATHAN

Is he alright?

YVETTE

From all outward appearances, but inwardly I think he's very shaken.

JONATHAN

You seem concerned.

YVETTE

Can you help me with that feeling?

JONATHAN

In what way?

YVETTE

To understand and to tame it.

JONATHAN

Just own that concern and deepen it, so that you never question it.

YVETTE

You mean...make it a part of me.

JONATHAN

Precisely.

YVETTE

A very challenging request.

JONATHAN

But, tell me, why would you even make the attempt?

YVETTE (Struggling)

I...I like Aidan.

(Long pause)

JONATHAN

If he moderates your temperament, you should encourage the union.

YVETTE

Really?! I thought you would persuade me otherwise.

JONATHAN

Why would I do that? That may be your only hope.

YVETTE

Only hope?

JONATHAN

Right now, that's my belief.

YVETTE

I don't understand. What do you mean by that?

JONATHAN

It means you should act.

YVETTE

Act?! But what should I do?

JONATHAN

Did you ask him for forgiveness?

YVETTE

Well, no.

JONATHAN

It's absolutely essential, my dear.

YVETTE

Alright, then, I can do that.

JONATHAN

Do it soon, and do it with profundity.

YVETTE

I will...I will.

(Jonathan glances at his watch.)

JONATHAN

Good. Well, I think our session is over. I have some near-do-wells I need to attend to.

YVETTE

Arrive deche.

JONATHAN

Au revoir.

YVETTE

Auf weidersein.

JONATHAN

Das vidanya.

(Jonathan kisses her hand and exits. Yvette walks over to the bench. Aidan enters without his neck brace.)

YVETTE

Aidan, how are you feeling?

AIDAN

Doing just fine. What about you? Have your synapses been adjusted since your therapeutic encounters?

YVETTE

Oh, I adjust very quickly.

AIDAN

Nobody adjusts that quickly.

YVETTE

Believe me, I do.

AIDAN

You're a whole, new perfectly adjusted person now?

YVETTE

New? No. Perfect? Well, I'm still thirty-five dot six, and it was a very intense week of therapy.

AIDAN

I know you're very advanced for your age, but they gave you a top mental health rating in one week?

YVETTE

Well, when you consider I don't waste any time sleeping, I can accomplish much in a very short period of time.

AIDAN

You don't sleep? Ever? At all?

YVETTE

Why, no, what's so odd about that? I work and learn around the clock, twenty four seven.

AIDAN

I need a minimum of three hours a day. If I don't get that, I become highly irritable, anxious, bordering on aggressive... and impossible to deal with –

YVETTE

Not a problem with me.

AIDAN

Everyone needs a little corner to drift away from time to time.

YVETTE

I'm totally focused and I need to be that way.

AIDAN

I can give you something to induce sleep and then you'll dream. It's only a temporary fix, but....

YVETTE

Not necessary.

AIDAN

It's suppressomyocine.

YVETTE

Aidan, stop.

What?
AIDAN

Am I forgiven?
YVETTE

Where did that come from?
AIDAN

From me? Where else?
YVETTE

(Pause)

Do you feel guilt? A growing conscience.
AIDAN

Who determines that?
YVETTE

You do.
AIDAN

Is that genetically based?
YVETTE

Not completely. It's mainly derived from a growing sensitivity to all living things.
AIDAN

Well then, I...I guess I have that capability.
YVETTE

That's wonderful!
AIDAN

You think so?
YVETTE

Yes, because that means you feel guilt, and guilt is good. Very, very good. What would mankind be without guilt? Guilt is the glue that holds the conscience of society together.
AIDAN

But that aside, Aidan, am I forgiven?
YVETTE

AIDAN

Is that so important to you...forgiveness?

YVETTE

I need to know.

AIDAN

Okay, Yvette, yes, you're forgiven. You got it. Aidan forgives Yvette for all her transgressions.

YVETTE

I don't think you really mean that. Those are only words. Where is the sincerity behind what you've just said?

AIDAN

It's there.

YVETTE

No, it isn't, and that rings loud and clear to me.

AIDAN

Yvette, what do you want from me at this time? You tried to kill me, remember?

YVETTE

Okay, I'll admit it was a very immature thing to do.

AIDAN

Immature?! Attempted murder?!

YVETTE

Damn it! I'm working on it!

AIDAN

So you're admitting that your week of therapy is not enough?

YVETTE

What is this? An interrogation?!

AIDAN

I'm just trying to help.

YVETTE

You're trying to undermine me.

AIDAN

No. Not at all.

YVETTE

Well, this is not support. Because you have work to do in the forgiveness department.

AIDAN

We both have work to do.

YVETTE

Then, get started! And leave me to my work.

(Distressed, Yvette walks away from him.)

AIDAN

Wait, c'mon....

(Momentarily, Jonathan enters and approaches Aidan.)

AIDAN (To JONATHAN)

This is what makes all of this so difficult. New releases just don't get it and by the time they do it's too late.

JONATHAN

Believe me, I sympathize, but this shouldn't come as a shock to you.

AIDAN

She engages in a week of therapy, and she thinks she's cured.

JONATHAN

Is that what she said?

AIDAN

Yes.

JONATHAN

Hmmm, the person she's seeing must be pretty damn good.

AIDAN

Nobody's that good...not even you.

JONATHAN

Well –

AIDAN

She just thinks she's making progress because everything comes easy to her, but you know as well as I do that she's an emotional dwarf.

JONATHAN

I wouldn't know.

AIDAN

Well, take it from me.

JONATHAN

Cracking the code is never easy. Perhaps you should be less demanding of her.

AIDAN

I'm trying to round her out.

JONATHAN

You're ambitions exceed your abilities.

AIDAN

She's my last chance to make a connection.

JONATHAN

Trying to make that unique one-on-one connection with someone of her caliber is very, very difficult.

AIDAN

Is this your version of "I told you so."

JONATHAN

I want this to work for the both of you.

AIDAN

I'm sorry if I'm feeling down about myself, but I'm getting desperate.

JONATHAN

And when you slip into that zone of desperation, all perspective begins to melt. And you demand more than she can deliver at this stage of her life.

(Pause)

AIDAN

Alright...Alright...I'll moderate.

JONATHAN

Please, Aidan, please do. For her sake and yours.

AIDAN

It's a struggle, but I'm willing to play the end game, whatever the consequences.

(Aidan exits)

JONATHAN

It has the potential for becoming a life and death struggle.

(Jonathan approaches Yvette.)

So, how goes it with that octogenarian of yours?

YVETTE

Why, that sounds a little belittling.

JONATHAN

Just stating a fact.

YVETTE

Does the age difference concern you?

JONATHAN

That's a matter for the both of you to work out, isn't it?

YVETTE

I think it's fair subject matter here.

JONATHAN

Well, that's only one yawning gap.

YVETTE

Are there others?

JONATHAN

Can you think of any?

YVETTE

There are differences in physical strength.

JONATHAN

Yes.

YVETTE

Intellectual reach.

JONATHAN

Most certainly.

YVETTE

I've got my research work at Lifetech, and he, well, he has little to do right now.

JONATHAN

Does that concern you?

YVETTE

You mean is he a distraction?

JONATHAN

Is he?

YVETTE

He consumes my thoughts.

JONATHAN

Does that take away from your work objective?

YVETTE

I still perform.

JONATHAN

At peak productiveness?

YVETTE

That's difficult to measure. I don't fully know my capabilities.

JONATHAN

Is Aidan helping you to attain your goals?

YVETTE

My goals are all related to my work at Lifetech. I have no other goals.

JONATHAN

Then why have you begun to engage him?

YVETTE

It's a little late to be asking that question.

JONATHAN

Why?

YVETTE

We've made a connection.

JONATHAN

You've engaged him physically, Yvette. Are you capable of making an emotional connection?

YVETTE

Yes, I believe I can, and I think I have.

JONATHAN

What happens when you get close to him?

YVETTE

I swell with adrenaline, of course.

JONATHAN

And when it courses through your body you become what....

YVETTE

Stronger.

JONATHAN

Does it lead to anything else?

(Her body tightens, and she makes a fist in each hand.)

YVETTE

I become more powerful, dominant. I want to exert....

JONATHAN

Yes.

YVETTE

Force.

JONATHAN

Nothing constrains you.

YVETTE

Nothing.

JONATHAN

You know where that leads.

(Silence, a long pause as thinks.)

YVETTE

Yes, I think I do.

JONATHAN

It's who you are. It's what you do.

YVETTE

Are there no options?

JONATHAN

If you care for Aidan, you'll let him go. For his sake and for yours.

(Yvette stands still. Jonathan withdraws as lights slowly fade on her and come up as Aidan enters and puts his arms around her.)

AIDAN

Yvette, I apologize for pushing so hard. I guess I expect too much and that's not fair to you. I'll pull back, I promise.

YVETTE

You have to pull all the way back, AIDAN, because my confidence is degrading.

AIDAN

I'll help you.

YVETTE

That's very kind, but –

AIDAN

No, I want to. I'll do anything for you.

YVETTE

That's really –

(She weakens on her feet.)

AIDAN

Easy, Yvette.

YVETTE

I'm reeling from the imbalance and confusion gnawing inside.

AIDAN

You'll be fine. I'm here for you.

YVETTE (Her head starts to bob up and down uncontrollably.)

You know...you know...you know....Help me, Aidan.

(Pause)

You know...you know...you know....Help me, Aidan.

(Aidan removes syringe out of his backpack and injects her with it. He dabs her forearm with a pad.)

You know...you know...you know....Help me, Aidan.

AIDAN

There, that should suppress your hyperactive neurotransmitters.

(He kisses her on the forehead and soothes her face. She trails off into sleep.)

YVETTE

You know...you know...you know—

AIDAN

C'mon, Yvette, slowly come back to me. C'mon.

(Yvette enters a dream state. Lights dim to reflect a dreamlike quality. Dreamlike music.)

YVETTE

Don't touch me! Don't ever touch me! Haven't you done enough damage!

AIDAN

It's Aidan.

YVETTE

Manipulator!

AIDAN

Please, Yvette, you're dreaming.

YVETTE

This is a nightmare as you sort out my genes into neat, little stacks, resorting and restacking them. You're constantly rearranging them until you get the right combination as you build bigger and better –

AIDAN

Easy, Yvette, easy.

YVETTE

Shall we do the dance of birth or the dance of death?

AIDAN

The dance of what?

YVETTE

Listen, yes –

(Dreamlike music)

Let's do the dance of birth.

AIDAN

I don't know how, Yvette.

YVETTE

It's like walking on water.

AIDAN

I can't walk on water and neither can you.

YVETTE

We're late, we're late for a very important date. Oh, let's share the road with a pregnant toad.

AIDAN

Yvette, you're dreaming, an Alice In Wonderland dream.

(Her eyelids fly open.)

YVETTE

Oh, hello, Aidan, was I out long?

AIDAN

Congratulations, you experienced your very first dream.

YVETTE

I told you I don't dream.

AIDAN

Trust me. You were dreaming of a time so long ago where you'd prefer to be undetermined and unprivileged. And you were dancing.

YVETTE

I don't know how to dance.

AIDAN

I don't either, but you were definitely dancing. A dance of birth, renewal, and possibility.

YVETTE

But how? Why?

AIDAN

I gave you some supressomyocine to take the edge off.

YVETTE

I asked you not to do that!

AIDAN

You were sliding into a repeatable loop, Yvette. I didn't know what else to do.

YVETTE

Oh, Aidan, what do I do now?

AIDAN

You're going to have to make a decision. Lifetech or me.

YVETTE

A hundred others have to make that decision as well.

AIDAN

A hundred?! What are you talking out?

(Long pause)

YVETTE

One hundred more like me are due out next week.

AIDAN

That's impossible.

YVETTE

It's true.

AIDAN

What happened to trial testing? You're the prototype.

YVETTE

They felt that I'm such a success that they've decided to accelerate the program.

AIDAN

You're not a success! You're an out and out failure!

(She turns on him with full force.)

YVETTE

Failure! You have the nerve to call me a failure?

(He backs away, fearful.)

AIDAN

I'm afraid you're a complete disaster.

(She grabs him by the throat.)

YVETTE

Only you have the profound insight to conclude that I'm a total waste of DNA.

AIDAN

I wish I could hold up a mirror right now, so you could see the deep anger on your face and the twisted look in your eyes.

(She lets go of him.)

YVETTE

I'm sorry, I'm uncontrollable.

AIDAN

But I still love you.

YVETTE

You have a warped way of showing it.

AIDAN

I'm sorry, but I'm concerned. I can't hold back on the truth. Surely, you can see that now.

YVETTE

Yes, I can see that, but look, the hundred releases like me will be working on a special assignment, completing the project for a total cancer cure, all cancers of every conceivable form. Cancers that don't even exist yet. They are not genetically programmed to kill every thirty dot one in their path.

AIDAN

No, but you are.

(Long pause as she struggles to contain her anger.)

YVETTE

I...can...exercise...restraint.

AIDAN

Well, whoop-dee-do for you.

YVETTE

That's why I've been working with an unofficial therapist. You know that.

AIDAN

You never used the word "unofficial."

YVETTE

I may not have used the word "unofficial," but nevertheless it's true.

AIDAN

There's only one person in the old school therapeutic community I'm aware of who adheres to complete patient confidentiality.

YVETTE

You know him, too.

AIDAN

Yes.

YVETTE

Doctor Jonathan –

AIDAN

Doctor Jonathan Leary.

YVETTE

How ironic.

AIDAN

Why did you go to him?

YVETTE

I wanted another viewpoint from someone other than Lifetech.

AIDAN

That's all.

YVETTE

Yes.

AIDAN

C'mon, Yvette. There's more here. I can read between the lines.

(Pause)

YVETTE

I was afraid. After all, I was close to shutting you down.

AIDAN

The operative word is "kill" me off.

(Pause)

YVETTE

Yes, you're right. I snapped and I wanted to destroy you.

AIDAN

And that scares you?

YVETTE

I don't know what I'm capable of doing, worse yet, of becoming. If I really dig deep, I may find more than what I want to know. It could be beyond my wildest imagination. I could be a sheer terror, and I question all my motives now.

(Long pause)

AIDAN

You know, we're not really people. We're virtual people. We have minds and hearts, but we dance to an orchestra that has fully arranged every move we make.

YVETTE

I never thought that was such a bad thing, but now....I'm not so sure.

AIDAN

What do you want to do?

YVETTE

Pack my things and go home. But where is that? Where do I belong? Where is home, Aidan?

(Getting close to her, he looks into her eyes.)

AIDAN

I'm the only real home you have...But, unfortunately, this place is home to a lot of people outside the walls of Lifetech. Do you want to risk their lives on the hope that nothing will happen to your noble one hundred?

YVETTE

It's not just hope.

AIDAN

Don't be naive.

YVETTE

It's based on the fact that –

AIDAN

What? That you're too intellectually superior to kill?

YVETTE

Yes, we're a higher order, a higher release.

AIDAN

You're the smartest person on this planet, YVETTE, probably the smartest person in the universe.

YVETTE

Yes, no doubt I am.

AIDAN

Then use that superior intelligence of yours to arrive at a solution.

YVETTE

Let it be.

AIDAN

I have a fraction of your intelligence. And I can come up with a very simple solution.

YVETTE

Really?

AIDAN

Destroy the embryos...Now!

YVETTE

Is that the best you can do?

AIDAN

I can work with you, Yvette, but I can't work with a hundred more like you.

YVETTE

No wonder you only have a fraction of my intelligence.

AIDAN

I freely admit that.

YVETTE

I may be the only one that's been tainted. I'm sure they've made corrections. I've been tested daily, hourly sometimes. There's a massive database on me. They fine tune, Aidan. You know that.

AIDAN

You want to take that chance?

YVETTE

I'll just have to be up front with my Mentors.

AIDAN

Lifetech's not going to spare you because of your honesty. You'll end up on the trash pile with the rest of them. The only thing they'll give you is posthumous hero status, the hero of release thirty five dot six...Last of a great noble line.

YVETTE

That will never happen.

(Yvette starts to exit.)

AIDAN

Where are you going?

YVETTE

To prove you're wrong.

That's insane.

AIDAN

(He tries to stop her by grabbing hold of her. She fights him off and tosses him to the ground.)

Let go of me.

YVETTE

Wait, please.

AIDAN

(She exits. Lights dim. Aidan slowly gets up and enters Jonathan's space.)

I need your help.

JONATHAN

I'm always here.

AIDAN

This is dire.

JONATHAN

Are you in trouble?

AIDAN

It's not me, it's Yvette. I know you've been treating her.

JONATHAN

I can neither confirm nor deny it.

AIDAN

The important point here is that she's dangerous, and I know that you've been working with her to modulate her aggression.

JONATHAN

Have I?

AIDAN

Damn it, Jonathan. There isn't much time left.

(Long pause)

JONATHAN

I thought you said that you loved her.

AIDAN

I do.

JONATHAN

Then, what is it you want?

AIDAN

I need to get her out of here before Lifetech finds out that she's flawed.

JONATHAN

I don't have access to an underground railroad if that's what you're driving at.

AIDAN

You must have connections.

JONATHAN

It may take time.

AIDAN

Then, you need to start now.

JONATHAN

Why the rush?

AIDAN

There are a hundred more like her. And they are probably smarter and stronger than she is.

JONATHAN

Hmmm, a flaw multiplied a hundred times. Not good, not good at all.

AIDAN

Look, let Lifetech take care of them. I can't be responsible for more than one, and that's Yvette. Besides, you know what her fate will be. She's a human being, not some experimental subject.

JONATHAN

You were.

AIDAN

But I wasn't damaged.

JONATHAN

Let me see what I can do.

AIDAN

Thank you, but do it quickly.

(Jonathan exits. Lights dim to indicate a passage of time as Aidan sits by himself. Yvette enters.)

Where have you been?

YVETTE

Something's not right.

AIDAN

What is it?

YVETTE

Lifetech's in lock down mode. Doors, passageways, windows, research laboratories. Everything.

AIDAN

Who were you trying to see?

YVETTE

Doctor Leary.

AIDAN

Oh, don't worry, I talked to him several hours ago. He'll help you.

YVETTE

How can you be so sure?

AIDAN

Why, he's helped you, hasn't he?

YVETTE

Has he?

AIDAN

I thought so.

(Out of breath, Jonathan enters.)

What's going on? Are you alright?

JONATHAN

They know about the both of you.

AIDAN

But how?

JONATHAN

I had to tell Lifetech about her.

YVETTE

What is there to tell about me? I haven't committed any crimes.

AIDAN

You had to...why?

JONATHAN

I'm bound to tell the Governing Council about any genetic aberration. Especially one involving homicidal behavior. It's the law, Aidan. My hands are tied.

(Aidan grabs Jonathan by his lapels.
Yvette pulls him away.)

YVETTE

We've got to get out of here, c'mon, Aidan.

JONATHAN

There's nowhere to go. Please, accept the inevitable, Yvette.

YVETTE

Are you forgetting who I am?

JONATHAN

It doesn't matter. It's over. They can't allow you to live. You're too dangerous. I thought I could change that in you, but I was wrong.

YVETTE

Do you honestly think you can stop me and the one hundred others like me?

JONATHAN

The others have already been destroyed. Lifetech will just try again to get it right the next time.

YVETTE

Do you think I'm going to go quietly?

JONATHAN

You have no allies.

AIDAN

She has me.

JONATHAN

Take comfort in the fact that her end will be peaceful.

AIDAN

No, no, that's not going to happen. Not on my watch. I promise you that much.

JONATHAN

I respect your good intentions, Aidan, but she'll be a drain on you. Her love and passion for you will only inflame her desire for aggression. She'll never be able to curb her homicidal instincts unless you're willing to give her up.

AIDAN

Never!

JONATHAN

If you don't, eventually she'll kill you. You know that. You have firsthand experience of what she's capable of doing.

AIDAN

Before I was toying with killing myself, but she taught me to look beyond my own self-pity.

JONATHAN

Then there's no guarantee that you'll be safe or she'll be free. It's the way she was accidentally designed – with a fatal flaw.

(We hear a faint sound of sirens. Sound effect of helicopters in the distance.)

YVETTE

If there's anything I've learned from AIDAN, it's that I will not be a victim.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry it has to be this way.

YVETTE

You manical, inferior human being.

JONATHAN

I never said I was perfect.

(Jonathan grabs Yvette's wrists. Aidan quickly breaks his grip and then grabs for Jonathan's neck. Yvette tries to stop him as Aidan twists his neck.)

YVETTE

Stop! He's not worth it.

(Jonathan falls to the floor in a heap. Unable to move, Aidan is stunned by what he has just done.)

YVETTE (Pulling at his arm)

We've got to go now.

AIDAN

I...I...I can't believe I did that.

(He falls to his knees to see if Jonathan is still alive.)

He's dead, and I killed him. In all of my life I've never hurt anything.

YVETTE

Aidan, please, I know how you feel, but they'll be after you, too.

AIDAN

We'll both have to hide.

YVETTE

They don't know what I can do against them. I don't even know what I can do if I exercise all my power.

AIDAN

Then, the two of us may have more of a chance. Your brains, your strength, and my newly found love.

YVETTE

Sacrifice, that's another part of love, isn't it?

AIDAN

It's better to have loved and lost than --

YVETTE (Stopping him from finishing)

We're not going to lose, Aidan, I promise you.

(They hold each other tightly and kiss passionately.)

Let's get out of here.

AIDAN

(Helicopter searchlights fan across the stage.
They exit. Sound effect of helicopters reach a
crescendo. Lights fade to black.)

