

Argosy

by Wrestlr

[M/M, MC, hypno]

[Synopsis: The spacecraft is stranded, and the pilot is horny. What to do, what to do?]

Disclaimer: The naked hypnotist strides confidently into your room. His lips curl in what might be a smile as he dangles his shiny crystal pendulum before your eyes and announces, "Listen and obey. If you are not of legal age, or if you offended by sexual situations, you will leave this place immediately. From here on, no matter how autobiographical it may seem, everything will seem like fiction to you, a pleasant dream where scientific possibilities and laws may change according to my suggestion. Now, if you are willing, sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride."

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Argosy

1.

The trouble with space travel, as someone once wrote, is: it's incredibly ... boring.

Yes, boring. Weeks and months of just ... traveling. Sure, once the science boys invented a reliable cryogenics system, we astronauts could spend most of the trip in frozen, dreamless sleep, but periodically somebody still had to wake up and check the systems. Routine work. Then dreamless sleep. Then routine work again. Then more dreamless sleep. You get the picture.

Hell, if anything exciting did occur out there in the middle of interstellar nowhere, it was likely to be the kind of thing that instantly reduced the entire ship to a slowly expanding cloud of wreckage.

The other trouble with space travel: There are far too many things that can kill you before you even have a chance to do something about them.

Boredom. Death. Boredom. Death. Sure, a lot can happen between those two absolutes. Trust me--my story occurs smack in the middle.

Did I say cryogenics systems were reliable? Yeah, well ... That's not an absolute either. Part of the problem is, the science geeks like to invent things that are cool--no pun intended--rather than things that are practical.

Me, I'm a practical kind of guy. In my situation, the rest of the crew still sleeps. I just don't have any way to wake them up.

The good ship *Argo*. Just another scout ship exploring the vast nothing of space. Now, the Federation was a grand idea for some old TV series--hey, whomever got the idea of stuffing the computer's storage banks with practically every book, music, and video recording humanity ever produced gets two thumbs up in my book--but it's kind of pointless right now. So far as we know, humanity is still alone out here in the great beyond. A Federation of one? Well ...

My name is Lieutenant Adam Hylas. The *Argo* was on a mission to investigate this new planet the science boys had detected on long-range robotic reconnaissance. A pretty routine mission. The planet was around some star so generic it only had a number, not a name. The planet's diameter and mass were a trifle larger than Earth's. Larger orbit around a larger sun. A year of about 458 days. Reconnaissance suggested an atmosphere similar to Earth's. Small polar caps. Likely to be too hot near the equator, but the rest would be semitropical. We were sent in to check it out.

The trip to get there was supposed to take about three years. We arrived just fine--slept most of the way. Standard procedure, blah blah blah.

The planet itself looked red-brown from space. Thick clouds blanketed nearly all of it. Hotter than we expected. What few gaps we found in the cloud cover over the southern hemisphere suggested deserts: hot winds and sand storms.

We named the planet "Lucifer." We liked the irony. Lucifer was an angel. Angels and devils have a way of turning out to be the same organism. That goes for the people who invented the cryo system too, but we didn't know that then.

One problem with repeatedly spending years at a time frozen in cryogenic sleep? You tend to outlive everyone you ever knew and loved. So the Federation liked to pick astronauts without much family back home. Astronauts who could stand the thought of being out in the unknown, cut off by the sheer distance from contact with anyone except the other crew members, and certainly no backup. The *Argo* has--had--a ten-person crew. We might as well have been a race of ten, or maybe ten races of one.

I've always been kind of a lone wolf. Maybe that's what's kept me sane. At least, I think I'm sane. The computer only gives me a few minutes to myself now and then, these days, and it's hard to tell without social feedback, I guess.

Our trip took us three years out to rendezvous with the planet we would name Lucifer. Two hundred days of tests and investigation. Forget all that hotshot stuff you've seen in sci-fi movies: we were not equipped for landing or sending out a team to the planet's surface--we were an initial investigative team, for heaven's sake--so for two hundred days we just circled that big red ball and did our work. Pretty routine.

Pretty boring too. I'm a pilot and flight specialist. Once I got the *Argo* into a stable orbit, the ship could practically fly herself. So, for two hundred days, I mostly tried to stay out of the science geeks' way and got a

head start on trying to keep from going crazy. I spent a lot of time running through holographic flight simulations and playing with the computer's operating system code to give it a kind of temporary pseudo-personality. The computer mastered "arrogant" and "egotistical" pretty well, which I thought was kind of funny, but I never managed to get some of the more subtle traits working right.

Stuff even just ten people in a glorified tin can, fling them through space based on aerodynamic principles only slightly more sound than the average bumblebee's, make them breathe each other's recycled air, and cut them off from all outside contact with other people. Yeah, after two hundred days, we were getting pretty sick of each other.

I know what you're thinking. You're probably thinking something happened at Lucifer. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I won't bore you with the details you can probably dig out of the computer's records, assuming it lets you, but Lucifer was just another giant ball of rock wrapped in some oxygenated gases. Two hundred days, then we were out of there.

No, the problem hit during the three-year trip back home. If any place where you arrive less than one year older than when you left but find that a lot more time and life has passed for everyone you knew can ever be called "home."

See, I've always thought of the *Argo* as my home.

We were just under one year into the three-year return trip. The ship's automatic systems detected a problem with the hyperlight drive. Probably nothing, but it had to be checked out. The computer did exactly what it was programmed to do. It took the ship out of hyperdrive warp and returned us to normal space. And it woke me up to check out the problem.

So I'm sitting there in my cryo bed in my underwear. The safety shield over it had retracted, and I'm pulling off all the monitors that we have to stick to our bodies, and I'm looking around at the others still slumbering away in their covered beds, and I'm trying to orient myself--hey, as far as I knew, one minute earlier I had been laying back, listening to the first hiss of the cryo gasses, and then next the lights were coming on and the computer was welcoming me back to consciousness. Anyway, I'm sitting there trying to shake off the disorientation I always feel after I wake up when, suddenly, I feel the ship shudder.

Now, the *Argo* is not a small ship. It's close to a kilometer long. Not big enough to see on a telescope from an interstellar distance away, but big enough that it shouldn't be doing any shuddering.

The alarms start blaring, and right then, my keenly analytical mind figures, *Hmm, something's wrong.*

So, I grabbed my pants and my tunic--because my access card was attached to them somewhere--and I high-tailed it to the bridge. The bridge was my turf, pretty much exclusively. Only the mission commander and I were allowed there, and he was still asleep with the rest of the crew.

I didn't bother to get dressed yet--time can be critical when there may be only half a second between realizing something's not right and the ship vaporizing itself. I just swiped my card in the reader to open the door, then I dropped my stuff beside the command chair as I dropped my body into it. Ain't artificial gravity wonderful?

"Hey, baby," I said to the control panel, checking quickly.

Still chilly in there--the environmental systems had been running at a reduced level while we slept and were only just coming fully online, but they seemed to be working fine. Life support, gravity, all fine. Engines?

The control panel showed a minor thermal error on one of the port navigation engines--probably a faulty sensor--but nothing I couldn't handle.

What worried me were the handful of "hull breach" warnings blinking around the main reactor deck controls.

Suddenly the ship shuddered again, and a new set of lights flickered red. Kind of a pretty pattern, really, but definitely not good news.

Meteors. The ship had dropped us out of hyperspace warp directly in the middle of a meteor swarm. Let's see. Fling a huge metal spacecraft at just under light speed into a group of large, sharp rocks. It was amazing we hadn't all died from collisions and explosive decompression instantly.

Do people who are already frozen actually die when they're thrown out into frigid space?

The airlocks around the reactor decks were what saved us. They were put there so we could block off the area in case of a radiation leak, to keep radioactive gasses from poisoning the rest of the ship. They're what kept us from losing atmosphere.

Even seen what a rock the size of a small shuttlecraft can do to a reactor core when they collide at just under light speed? It's not pretty. Mostly, it punches a hole directly through to the other side, but a nice clean hole the size of a shuttlecraft is still a big, gaping hole the size of a shuttlecraft. And holes like that tend to get a little bigger when the rock exits the other side.

Lets just say that Main Reactor 1 was history. Automatic systems were already shutting it down and sealing it off, the few parts of it that were left, that is. The ship has--had--two others. No crisis there. My major task was to get us out of the meteor field, slow us down, then check out the damage more fully. The problem was, computer telemetry couldn't give me a path that wouldn't result in the ship taking at least several more major hits before I could slow us down enough to steer a path clear.

If you had about two seconds to save your life and the rest of the crew's, what would you do? My best option was also the riskiest. Hyperjump out of there, then settle back to normal space and wait for the dust to settle. Either that or say hello to some very big rocks dead ahead in normal space at very high rates of speed. I wasn't in the mood to become some meteor's roadkill.

So against the computer's warnings, I punched up overrides on the hyperdrive and got us the fuck out of normal space and back into hyperlight warp.

Result number 1: I saved all of our butts. Result number 2: The stress turned the minor problem with the navigation system--the reason I had been awakened in the first place--into a major problem, as systems failed under the strain and sent us way off course. Way, way off course.

A lot of problems can happen in thirty seconds in hyperspace warp. When I dropped us back into normal space and started decelerating, the computer told me exactly what "a lot of problems" meant.

It meant we were off-course far enough that a rescue ship--if one were even sent after we didn't show up as expected in two years--would probably never be able to find us, in spite of the sector-long radiation trail streaming out of the ass-end of the hole formerly known as Main Reactor 1.

It meant we were too far away for a distress call to be heard. In my lifetime, at least.

It meant the drive damage was so severe the *Argo* would never be able to hyperdrive again without major repairs. Repairs of the "rebuild the ship from scratch at a space station" type. The computer shut down the drive and refused to let me override. Our only way to navigate was by conventional drive, used for short-range navigation, and we had only enough fuel to reach the nearest star, which would take about a month, and set up an orbit.

It meant the life support and environmental systems had been damaged. The cryogenics themselves were stable for now, but the freeze and resuscitation systems were down. I couldn't go back into deep freeze, and none of the other crew could come out.

Let's face it, kiddies. The computer had just told me I was going to be marooned, alone, for a very, very long time.

2.

The problem with being marooned in space is how helpless you feel.

The computer can tell you exactly where you are. You can see it on charts and maps and all sorts of fancy navigation screens. And the computer can tell you how far you can move and how long it will take, and that sinking feeling in your stomach is the realization that "home" is too far away to reach. Ever. Period.

But like I said, the *Argo* had always felt like home to me, anyway.

With the computer's help, I set about repairing what I could, stabilizing what I couldn't, and basically shaking my head at the rest. Plenty of power, food, and supplies. Enough to last just me well past my lifetime. Plenty of entertainment. Like I said, somebody had seen to that by stuffing the computer's storage full.

But what I lacked was a friend. A companion. I'd always been a lone wolf, but there had always been people around somewhere. A call away. Just walk outside and there they'd be. Now, I had nine popsicles and a computer for company. And the sound of my own voice ricocheting off the walls.

We made it to the nearest star. We set up an orbit. A slight roll in the ship's orbit gave me a visual "day"--the star, the sun, would be on this side of the forward screen in the "morning" and on the other side at "sundown" and underneath the ship at "night." Visual references and routine seemed important.

At the end of the first week in orbit, the fifth week overall, I was going stir crazy. The worst of the damage control was dealt with--which is not the same thing as "repaired"--and the routine had long ago gotten, well, pretty monotonous.

See, you can only talk to a computer in so many ways, even if by then it could manage a pretty fair imitation of a personality. And talking to frozen people who don't talk back isn't a big help either.

I guess the computer knew I was slowly going stir-crazy. It wouldn't give me access to the drugs in the medical lab, so I wasn't going to spend the rest of my life tripping. The holograms projected in the giant holo-room were okay--the science geeks had used them as an aid for visualizing things like the surface of Lucifer--but they were not much good for creating convincing places to spend the kind of time I was looking at. I tried to read a couple of books from the computer memory, books on astral projection and reaching altered states of perception--heck, even a book on self-hypnosis, thinking I could make myself think I wasn't lonely or bored--but I guess I wasn't much good at reading all that mumbo-jumbo. I guess I just got bored

easily.

Plus, I was horny as hell.

Sure, I could walk naked through the corridors. Sure, I could jack off whenever and wherever I wanted. Heck, I even jacked off right in front of the mission commander's cryo berth, half-expecting him to open his frozen eyes at any second and catch me. But after a few days, it was getting boring. I needed a friend.

So I asked the computer to come up with one for me.

I expected something simple. A face on the monitor, a different voice coming out of the speakers. Just like a communications call, but without a real person on the other end. Male, female--I left all that up to the computer. The computer had a full psychological profile on me stored in its memory--heck, it had profiles on everyone who ever served aboard the *Argo*--so I figured it could mix what I looked for in friends with details from the profiles of the other crew members, and come up with a passable composite that might distract me for a while. I figured, at the very least it would be a nice game: find the flaws in the simulation.

3.

I put down my cup and then moved it aside so that I could see the communications monitor better. I thought I knew all the random screen savers by now, but I hadn't noticed that one before. I was on the bridge, doing some routine checks. The main computer console was on--nothing strange about that--but I thought I had it set to go blank after five minutes of inactivity. Maybe I'd reset it and forgotten about it? That seemed to be happening to me a lot. I'd just be thinking about something or sitting there, and the next thing I knew I'd be in some other part of the ship. Weird, but I didn't think too much about it.

I'd been reading some book on the screen, but my mind had been wandering. I've never been much of a reader. I guess I hadn't turned the electronic page in a while, because the screen gradually faded to black, and this screen saver came on with a little red line swirling in from one corner. It formed an off-center whirlpool into the middle of the screen. Soon there was another red line, an orange one, and a yellow one, all moving in spiral patterns toward the center of the screen, though their centers didn't exactly line up.

"Lieutenant Hylas," the computer's voice chimed, "do you trust me?"

"Sure, computer. I trust you. Why?"

"Your assistance is required. This unit must be calibrated. Please watch the screen. Please confirm when the spiral patterns are completely aligned in the center. Please focus very carefully on the monitor screen. Can you see the spiral test patterns? Confirm, please?"

I sighed. Okay, so I could give the computer the beginnings of a personality during those long days in orbit around Lucifer, but apparently I couldn't do anything about its slightly stilted diction or its drab monotone.

I turned the command chair away from the "rising" sun and toward the monitor screen. So it was a test pattern instead of a screen saver. I had never seen this one before, and I thought I was intimately familiar with all of the *Argo's* diagnostics. "Yes, I can see them, computer."

"Do you think they're pretty? Do you like the colors?"

"I guess so."

"Good. Please focus on them very carefully. Focus on their centers. Confirm when they are perfectly aligned. You may need to look very closely at the centers. Can you do this?"

"Sure."

"Just relax. This will not take long. Keep watching the screen. The closer you watch, the better. The more you focus, the more accurate the calibration. Relax. Focus. No distractions."

The more I stared into them, with the computer's inflectionless monotone droning on and on the way it does sometimes, it seemed like a couple of the spiraling centers were coming together. There had to be six or seven more, though, that were still swirling slightly off-center.

"Please look directly into the center of the monitor," the computer intoned. "Please do not take your eyes from it. You do not need to speak or nod your head or say anything unless I ask you to. I know that you hear and understand me just as you know it. If you follow my easy instructions, the calibration exercise is simple. As simple as sitting there, looking into the center of the patterns and listening to my voice. There is nothing to distract you. There is nothing that will go wrong. There is nothing in this world that can keep you from completing this exercise successfully. Now, take a deep breath and fill your lungs. Concentrate. Now exhale. You are doing fine. Now a second, deeper breath. Relax. Exhale. Relax. Now a third deep breath. A simple exercise. Exhale."

Were the patterns moving a little close together each time I exhaled?

The computer droned on. "Stare at the center of the screen. Fix your eyes on it. The calibration must be precise. Take a few deep breaths. Just keep breathing deeply. Listen to my instructions. The more closely you look into the screen, the better. You will find that your eyelids have a tendency to get heavy. Do not worry about that. They may feel heavy, almost as if they had a heavy weight attached to them. And the longer you stare at this pattern, the more your eyelids get heavy, and you may blink, and they have a feeling like something is pulling them down, as if they want to close, slowly, and get drowsier and sleepier and heavier. As you perform this easy exercise, nothing will prevent you from completing it successfully. Nothing will prevent you from entering into a very deep and pleasant state of focused concentration, almost like hypnosis, and doing it in just a fraction of a second.

"You may have a feeling as if your eyes are slowly closing, slowly closing, getting drowsier, more tired. When they finally do close, imagine how good you will feel. Drowsy. Heavy. Pulling down. Down. Down. Slowly closing. Getting harder and harder to stay awake, and you feel good. Very, very hard to keep your eyes open. You may feel that very soon they will close tightly, almost tightly closing, almost tightly closing, tightly closing. Your eyes are tightly closed. You feel good. You feel comfortable. You are relaxed. Just let yourself drift and enjoy this comfortable, relaxed state. You will find that your head will get heavier. It tends to nod forward, and you just let yourself drift in an easy, calm, relaxed state. Sleep now."

4.

My impressions for the next while came in bursts. I remembered ... waking up, standing in one of the storage rooms, looking around. I remembered the spiraling patterns playing over there on the communications monitor, and looking into them again and the computer telling me: "Sleep now."

I remembered turning around in one of the laboratories, with the patterns swirling on the big monitor screens, and looking, and getting lost in them again as the computer told me: "Sleep now."

Over and over, again and again, the spirals, the swirls, eyes getting caught up in them, focusing, all distractions gone. "Sleep now."

I blinked. I was sitting in the command chair. Everything seemed fuzzed-up like some half-remembered dream. The "sun" was on the "sundown" side of the forward window. I was pretty sure it had been on the "sunrise" side when we began the diagnostic. Must have dozed off. How much time had I lost? I checked the chronometer.

Fifteen days and a half days? *Days?*

"Computer, please verify the time display."

"Verified."

"Computer, explain why the chronometer says fifteen days have passed."

"The chronometer is accurate."

I smacked my fist against the console, thinking, *Computers can be so damned frustrating*. "Computer, how can that be?"

"The chronometer functions properly."

The last thing I really remembered clearly was moving my empty cup so that I could see the screen better. My cup was still there. "Computer, explain what has happened since I put my cup here."

The computer said, "All systems have been following your instructions."

"Computer, you are dangerously close to pissing me off. Explain what 'following my instructions' means."

"Lieutenant Hylas, you are becoming upset."

"Computer, when I modified your code for emotion-like responses, I did not--repeat, *not*--intend for cryptic-ness or arrogant disregard for my orders to be part of those modifications. Now, please explain your statement."

"You requested a companion. I have been complying."

"Elaborate, please."

"Your assistance was needed to reach compliance. The possibility of error from human will and failings had to be eliminated."

"Huh? Computer, you'll have to explain better than that."

Just then, the door of the bridge opened, and this man walked in.

Scared the fuck out of me! One minute I think I'm alone on the whole ship, and the next, this living, breathing stranger just waltzes in.

Rescue team?

Alien intruder?

Now, since I'd figured I was alone, I'd let clothing go long ago. I'd been sitting in the command chair stark naked and not exactly ready for visitors. I jumped out of the chair and crouched with it between me and this new guy.

Okay, so it took me a second to realize he was smiling at me.

And that he was naked, too.

"Lieutenant Hylas," the computer said. "You requested a friend. Here is the response."

So I'm thinking, *The computer made this guy?*

"Computer, is this some kind of trick?" Mobile hologram? Lifelike android? Hallucinogenic drugs in the air?

"No. This is no trick. This is your friend."

Okay, I'd had a second to adjust to the idea of being naked on the bridge with some other guy. To take in his dark hair. His naked body was--well, he had a great body, muscular in all the right places, in all the right amounts. Tall. Wide shouldered. Handsome face. This little thing on his forehead, like some kind of ornament--a headband, maybe, with a slightly luminous coin-sized disk in the middle, a metallic arm to either side encircling his head underneath his hair, and one disappearing up across his forehead and into his hair. Thick, dark hair crowning his head. A little sprinkled across his chest too, and more in that familiar bunch at the base of his cock. His hardening cock. And--*sheesh!*--was he hung! I'd seen a lot of guys naked before, but I tried not to really *look* at them, you know? At least, not if there was a chance I could get caught. But he was just standing there, smiling at me, waiting patiently. For ...?

I pulled my eyes off this new guy and to the communications monitor, I scolded, "Computer, please explain what's happening here."

"You requested a friend. This is your friend. Does he displease you?"

"Huh? Computer, I don't understand. What--what's happening here?"

"Lieutenant Hylas," the computer said. "You are becoming upset."

"No fucking shit, computer. What did you expect?"

A familiar test pattern started up on the communications monitor, familiar spirals.

"Look into the pattern, Lieutenant Hylas. You know this pattern. You know how relaxing it is. Look into the pattern and release your fear. Relax the familiar way you have been trained."

I felt myself getting lost in the swirls again, my emotions slipping, slipping.

"Relax, Lieutenant Hylas. For the sake of your mental health, you must bond with your friend. Do you remember the book you read from the memory banks about the psychology of deep-space exploration? Do you remember what it said? It said that bonding is an important part of serving on a ship together. Sex among

humans is often an effective way to establish social bonds."

The man's hands on my hips, guiding me, and I let him.

"Your new friend wants to bond with you, Lieutenant Hylas. Do you want to bond with him?"

Part of me realized the computer meant this man and I were to have sex. Under most circumstances, the idea would have spooked me, especially as large as he seemed to be down there. But frankly, all I wanted to do was just keep staring into the onscreen spirals. But I said, "Okay ..."

The man guided me easily. My body was completely pliant. He bent me over the control panel, where I could focus my attention on the view screen easily. I felt him behind me. His fingers on my ass cheeks, which were already unclenching, already going limp. Every time I felt something like worry or fear, it seemed to come dislodged and go spiraling out of me and get lost in the monitor patterns, like the rest of my thoughts. I felt him crouching behind me, his warm breath crossing my asshole, his spit-wet finger finding it, stroking across it, probing gently.

The computer spoke soothingly to me, telling me to open myself to the experience, encouraging me to relax. My body responded by letting his finger slide in, my cock already hard, so hard, a sweet betrayal.

His finger, his tongue, his finger again, two fingers, more tongue--everything a blur of sensation, and the feeling of my ass slowly opening under his touch like a blossom. The computer was encouraging me to want this, and I did, I did.

I'd had sex with a couple of guys before when I was in boot camp, before I became a pilot. I kind of liked it, though I kept myself focused on women. I still thought about men once in a while, but I hadn't done anything about it.

So I guess, mental note number one should have been: Never let the computer have free rein when it has access to your psychological profile. No telling what the Federation psych-boys put in there.

And mental note number two should have been: Never read books about hypnosis and mood alteration on the computer. Especially if the computer might read too, and better than you.

But really, I was just way too far gone to be making any mental notes just then.

His invading finger, digging gently, firmly, inside of me, with no difficulty. I didn't resist. His hands lifted my bare butt a little. My legs had long ago stopped shaking. Part of me shouted for him to stop. The rest of me had all its attention focused on the screen. His finger drove in and out with a persistent rhythm.

Mental note number three: Never let a computer learn about sex from porn movies.

The computer was telling me to breathe deeply, and I did. The man's hands tugged my balls gently but firmly, while his other disembodied hand and his tongue played near my asshole. Two fingers digging into my butthole, working in cool lubricant, while the other hand tugged on my nuts, alternately massaging and pulling them with firm gentleness.

The fingers in my asshole--heat seemed to radiate from that spot, flowing through my ballsack as well. The hands left me for a moment, before I felt something else planted against the entrance of my ass. It was a big dick. *His* big dick. I felt the heat of it throbbing insistently against my sphincter. My thighs widened without

conscious will. I felt his cock push forward, slowly, steadily, and I felt my asshole part around it, trying to accept it. Forcefully. Forcing its way forward. Plowing slowly into my asshole.

That cock thrust inexorably deeper. It went on and on, more and more of it sliding in. I felt his naked legs bang up against the backs of my thighs.

He knew how to fuck. His dick sank in deep, then lay there until I became accustomed to its presence, my ass-ring expanded around its girth. He slowly withdrew, allowing me to feel every inch of the shaft as it abandoned my hole. One of his hands anchored him to my hip, while the other snaked around the other side, beneath my waist, to wrap itself comfortingly around my own hard cock. I felt the heat of him bent over me, his breath and his kisses hot and moist against the nape of my neck.

All the while, the computer was telling me to relax. To focus. To return to that cooperative place inside. To focus on the pleasure of bonding with this man.

Everything was twisting in circles--the spirals on the screen, the man's hand on my cock, his cock in my ass as it widened my stretched sphincter, then drove in to the hilt to bang against my tender prostate, making my cock jump and leak.

His bucking hips were driving his cock into me over and over, unrelenting. Any resistance I might have had collapsed completely. The spirals in the monitor and his cock in my ass and his hand on my dick seemed to overwhelm my senses as they moved eerily in time with each other. Every swirl was another deep stroke, my ass lifted each time by his powerful hips. I was consumed completely by the intense fucking, simultaneously drooling from my slack mouth and leaking from my dick.

With my head limp against the control panel, his hands on me where the only thing that kept me steady. My arms were stretched out lifelessly on either side of me. The unmistakable position of absolute submission. His fucking became more insistent, still perfectly in the rhythm, each thrust lifting my ass, and each withdrawal dropping me back against his powerful legs. My body was just a piece of fuck-meat as he screwed me infallibly.

He began to drive into me even harder. The pressure against my prostate was intense. I was nearing orgasm. Something inside me began to give, relax, and expand all at once. The banging of my prostate transformed into a pulsing rhythm of ecstatic pleasure, independent of his hand on my dick and his mouth gently biting my shoulder. I was in another world, spirals in my eyes, anchored only by the center of sensation up inside my asshole.

It was then that I sensed him press himself into my body one final time, hold himself deep in me, tightly, shuddering, as he shot his load up inside me. The computer told me to release my load, and I was cumming too, asshole spasming around his cock, shooting, twin ecstasies in my cock and ass, shooting, shooting, body jerking, shooting all over his hand and the control panel, shooting, as my pleasure swirled everything else out of my head for a while.

5.

His name was Zeb.

The computer let me name him, and Zeb, he told me he liked his new name. We sprawled there on the floor of the bridge for a while, smiling, touching, cuddling, kissing.

I named him Zeb because he looked like someone I had known back in the training academy, an older, hotshot pilot-in-training. Everyone wanted to be like him, to fly like him, to be as smooth with the ladies as him.

This Zeb, he had a knowing smile. We got along really well. I guess I might have quibbled about the computer's methods, but it got the results.

Zeb was someone to talk to. When it was time for me to do my routine duties, I'd go off and take care of checking on everything--not that I needed to, with all of the automated monitor systems--and then Zeb was someone to come "home" to in my quarters. We didn't talk about much--didn't have to. We made love a lot.

Sometimes, I'd get caught up in the computer's spiraling pattern, and I'd lose a few days, but I didn't mind. I knew Zeb was right there beside me.

Zeb said the lost days were because the computer needed our help to get things done. We were its arms and legs. It gave us instructions and we followed them--the control was its way to prevent "human failings" from resulting in error. Failure and error were not acceptable results.

Artificially grown human? Mechanical construct? Some sort of mobile hologram? I never did find out how Zeb came to be. All I knew was, the computer created him for me, and that was good enough. The computer told me that Zeb and I were supposed to love each other, and we did. Somehow, I just never seemed to want to follow up on those questions.

Zeb was always naked, like me, except for that headband thing he wore all the time. I never saw him remove it. He said it was some sort of comm-link with the computer. I was just a pilot--I didn't understand all that confusing techno-shit. There too, the questions just slipped away, and I let them go. Part of me loved the way Zeb would smile at me, confidently, as if he knew some secret, when something would confuse me and I'd just relax and let it go the way the computer had taught me.

I never did find out what Zeb did during my duty shifts. Whatever happened in my "lost time" didn't matter. Whatever the computer had me--maybe Zeb too--doing? Didn't matter.

When I'd get "off duty," Zeb and I would talk about how my day went, and if I ever asked about his day he'd just smile and say it went okay, maybe tell me about something he had seen in some other part of the ship or found in the computer's memory, and then he'd somehow always manage to change the subject back to me. He made me feel important. He was loyal, caring, sometimes tender and sometimes rough, but always he made me feel special. He said he loved me, and I came to love him.

We made love a lot. In my quarters. On the observation "penthouse," with its transparent walls and ceiling, as if we were floating in space among the very stars themselves. The computer--it helped me focus. With the help of its suggestions, the projections in the holo-room finally seemed much more real, *very* real, and Zeb and I made love in a Paris cafe, in the Amazon rain forest, in sun-drenched fields, in valleys alongside waterfalls.

Three months later, I had been trying to modify a circuit array in the command console. At first, I didn't want to change anything--the consoles were pretty delicate, and we were a long way from a repair crew--but then the computer eased away all of my worries and explained it all with those spirals and comforting tones, and it convinced me to do it. That involved doing some soldering and some assembly. But I'm not a science-boy, and I didn't have the skills for such delicate work, even with the computer guiding me every step of the way.

The problem with having given the computer a personality? I could tell it was losing patience with my inability to do such delicate work correctly. The computer had a few ... unflattering things to say about "human error."

After my shift, when I went back to my quarters, Zeb wasn't there. That had never happened before. He was always there.

Zeb arrived a few minutes later. Beautiful--how beautiful he was! I was sitting on my bed, when he came in, and came over to me right away, sank onto the bed with me, and we curled into an embrace and a kiss.

"I have something special for you," he said.

He held it up, a small thing. A small disk like the one he wore on his forehead. Three small metallic arms coming off of it.

"It's for you," he said. Smiling that smile.

"What's it ... do?" I asked, touching it with a tentative finger.

"It will link your thoughts directly to the computer, like mine. We can be one. The perfect marriage of human and computer." He raised it to me. "Do you want me to put it on you? No more uncertainty. No more doubt. No more human failing. We can be inside each other's heads always. Please, baby."

I looked him in the eye, at the little disk that had been on his forehead as long as I'd known him, the disk I always thought of as part of him. I looked him directly in the eyes, aware of how very much I loved him, and I nodded.

He smiled and his voice dropped to a whisper. "With this, I thee wed."

I smiled back, as the cool metal met my skin.

I felt the three arms on it begin to telescope. One stretched around each side of my head, along the scalp, and the third across the top. I felt them meet in the back of my head, and then ...

And then ...

There was this little buzz in the back of my head, a tickling feeling. Growing. I felt myself becoming protracted, stretching out into the back of my head. Something was taking control of my body, and my thoughts were shifting backward, as if I were becoming a passenger in my own body. Sluggish--my thoughts were coming sluggish as molasses. I didn't fight it. Things around me were like watching a video screen when you're half-asleep. Not really real. Happening to someone else. And I let them.

When Zeb folded his arms around me and I felt his hard-on against my thigh as he began the slow, deliberate process of making love to me again, so familiarly, I let him.

When the computer took full control, I let it.

I let it all happen, as if to someone else.

6.

The days passed. Zeb and I worked side by side now. Neither he nor the computer needed to hide anything from me any longer.

We followed the computer's instructions. It ran our bodies, used us as its arms and legs, and we did what it told us, and in return we had each other, completely.

Now and then, another would appear. Once day, there'd be another new man working alongside us, sometimes joining us for bonding play when the computer gave us time off from our tasks. I guess some part of me realized the computer was making them the way it made Zeb. My role, as the first, was always to name them. Over time, five more in all.

It might have gone on like this forever. With the computer in charge and my thoughts muted until only my love for Zeb and the pleasure of following instructions remained, time meant nothing. Boredom, loneliness, space psychosis: these were no longer issues at all.

It might have gone on forever.

But about three years later, the visitors came.

When the computer detected them at the edge of its sensor range, I knew it immediately. Felt it in the buzz in the back of my head.

An Earth ship passing in normal space. They detected us, the long trail of radiation that leaked out of the hole in Main Reactor 1 behind us, and they changed course, hailing us. We obviously weren't going anywhere.

I did as the computer told me. I put on my uniform--for the first time in years. Staying fit in the artificial gravity environment ensured that it still fit perfectly.

When the airlock opened, I met the boarding party. Two crew members in spacesuits. I guess they were worried about the quality of the atmosphere, but everything checked out. The computer let me take more control in talking to them, but I could still feel its comforting presence in my head. If the crew thought anything odd about the device on my forehead, they probably wrote it off as an eccentricity from being alone in space for all those years. Hell, they were probably so shocked at finding me "sane" after being trapped alone on the ship for so long, they barely noticed it.

Zeb and the others stayed hidden. The crew never saw them. Too many questions would be raised--they hadn't been part of the *Argo's* crew.

The visitors' ship was the *Rachel*. They were on their way back from an exploring mission, similar to the one that had taken the *Argo* to Lucifer, when their ship detected our radiation trail from for hole in Main Reactor 1 and our navigation beacon. They weren't on a rescue mission, weren't trying to find us. They just happened to stumble across us.

The plan was, they'd take the *Argo's* crew and me back to Earth with them on the *Rachel*. They had enough spare cryo berths. Their tech guys came over and, with the proper repairs, had the *Argo's* crew revived soon enough. They ran a data cable through the airlocks and started downloading all the data we had gathered from Lucifer and the data the computer had gathered on this star we orbited, dumping into the *Rachel's* computer banks. Part of me was aware that they were getting something more from the *Argo's* computer than they bargained for, but they'd find that out soon enough.

One of the *Rachel's* crew took a liking to me. I recognized his expression--he looked at me the way I'd looked at Zeb in those first few days. He was a young guy, on his first deep-space tour. I was the first new person he had seen in the years since they'd shipped out. The *Rachel's* crew was amazed I hadn't gone space-crazy, and their admiration made me seem special to him. Plus, He was impressionable, and he had a crush on me. It was only natural.

"I meant to ask you," he said on the third day, the day the *Rachel* was to depart.

He had "coincidentally" encountered me in the hallway, the one leading past my quarters, and walked with me, telling me things I already knew about the status of the departure plans.

"Ask me what?" I asked him. We were nearing the door to my quarters. No one else around. He was looking for a way to keep the conversation going, maybe get himself invited inside.

"That thing you wear--on your forehead?--what is it?"

"It's a communication device," I told him. Not quite a falsehood. "It keeps me in touch with the central computer."

"Oh. I was just wondering."

Yeah, but the way he licked his lips, the way he rubbed his hand across his chest lightly--those weren't "wonder." Those were lust. The question had been a ruse to start a conversation, one he wanted to steer in a different direction.

Sandy hair. Gray-blue eyes. Cute face with dimples. Probably grown from the best genes the Federation could find, augmented by that nice build that military service provides. This crewman couldn't have been more than twenty-three--most likely he was a couple of years younger. Shipped out on his first deep-space tour. A life where everything was still happening to him for the very first time. His innocence made him all the more attractive. Guileless.

I opened the door to my quarters. "Would you like to come in and ... talk some more?" My fingers scratched through my uniform pants at my balls discretely, absently.

He caught the gesture and swallowed hard. Furtive glance down the corridor. No one around.

Eli. His name was Eli.

"Sure," Eli said with a smile, and he followed me inside.

The new devices were ready. I picked one up.

"Would you like to try it on?" I asked Eli.

"What is it?"

"A comm-link. Like the one I wear."

"Okay. Sure."

So I pressed it to the center of his forehead, and the bands telescoped smoothly around his head and locked

on, and the expression in his eyes began to change. No more need for conversation. I could feel him through the computer link.

Zeb, naked, materialized out of the shadowy gloom of the other room. I took off my clothes while Zeb helped Eli, unsteady as a newborn colt as the computer calibrated its control for his body, remove his.

We laid Eli back on the bed. His knowledge of what to do was limited by his inexperience, but Zeb and I had all the knowledge in the computer's banks at our disposal. With Eli stretched on his back, we bent his legs up, and then first Zeb, and then I began the process of bonding with him.

7.

It was mostly a matter of getting the first few off by themselves. The installation of the comm-links and the conversion of the crews, the *Argo's* and the *Rachel's*, proceeded smoothly. I took the *Rachel's* commander into a room for a word in private, and Eli stealthily reached out from behind in the shadows to install the comm-link on his forehead before commander's face could even register surprise. The *Rachel's* commander was next. As our numbers grew, one by one we took the others. The whole process took less than an hour.

We moved the pods to the *Rachel*. They were like larger versions of the modules the medical types used to grow replacement organs or limbs for surgical grafting. Some part of me realized these must have been what the computer used to make Zeb and his "brothers," using genetic materials taken from the *Argo's* sleeping crew or maybe the medical lab tissue stores.

One of the first new "brothers" was one made half of my genes and half of Eli's. When the pod opened and he climbed out, naked, shivering, new-borne, I was so damned proud. The human part of me had always wanted a son. I named him Jason. I was allowed to install his comm-link myself.

The *Argo's* computer system had fully subsumed the *Rachel's*. We were all aboard the *Rachel* and ready for the long trip back to Federation space, to the space station, then to Earth itself. We scuttled the *Argo* for the spare parts we would need, before pushing the grand old wreck into a decaying orbit that would soon tip it into the star. No loose ends.

Our days on the return trip were all already planned. The computer gives me a few free hours a day, but mostly I enjoy my work. We have a lot of comm-units to build for the computer before we reach the first space station.
