

(PILOT EXCERPT)  
By Jaimie-Lee Wise

**ACID @ SAGE AND THE RANSOMWARE EARTH**  
**"@"**

**EXT. ALLEY - TRIGGER BAIT ASMR CLUB - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT**

SUPER ON BLACK - "TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH - 16sec"

SAGE JANE (24), female, in a phobia triggered panic-attack and hyperventilating BANGS out the club's alley door soaking wet and twisting from a jacket. The door BANGS -Sage jumps.

SUPER - "SAGE"

A Text Message materializes like a hologram in front of her:

"CALL IF U FEEL LIKE THINGSTINGING 2GETHER - CONCH"

SAGE'S EYES reading it as ACID, ANTIVIRUS PROGRAM, female-identifying body-snatches her, taking possession of Sage INVISIBLY EXCEPT in both Sage's eyes where red-blue-lit letter "A" appears. Each "A" strobes twice and out.

SUPER - "ACID@SAGE"

ACID@SAGE brings her new body - Sage's body - from hyperventilation into steady breath.

She runs her newly gained fingers down the back of her newly snatched head until she feels a curving rim on a black device sticking flat to her nape.

Acid@Sage fixes her gaze up and blinks random sequences as if trying out "blinkable" passwords UNTIL a Drone descends.

The Drone, branded in green, "MindVoyage SELFIE-DRONE" hovers filming Acid@Sage, who leaves Sage a message.

ACID@SAGE

Ms. Jane, my name's Officer Acid. I commandeered your body via your MindVoyage. Sorry for not getting consent. I'm an antivirus program from an interstellar internet in trouble. I need your help keeping it from Virus control. We have to work together on this or all your people and millions of years of wisdom shared between worlds alien to each other dies.

(MORE)

ACID@SAGE (CONT'D)  
 -- I was first, now another program  
 can't possess you. I can't stay.  
 I'm coming back. -- Stop selling  
 MindVoyage.

## **A FRAME OF BLACK**

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 9hrs 5min"

The super fades, but the black frame remains as rises the  
 voices of unseen Sage and OSCAR WESTON (47) male, mid-call -

SAGE (V.O.)  
 Makes no sense, Oscar. She dies,  
 and then you're afraid of her?

OSCAR (V.O.)  
 The whole week.

SAGE (V.O.)  
 Pussy.

Rises on the black in green light as they continue:

"MindVoyage"

"MV2"

OSCAR (V.O.)  
 Not the day.

SAGE (V.O.)  
 Oscar Weston, pussy at large.

OSCAR (V.O.)  
 I insist, Sage.

SAGE (V.O.)  
 With equal partners, "insist" means-

OSCAR (V.O.)  
 Please.

The frame of black moves back until it's a flat, round, black  
 device sticking to the back of Sage's neck. Glowing its name  
 in green at its center - "MindVoyage"

Over its Serial Number -

"MV2"

**EXT. JUST SAGE'S NECK - CONTINUOUS**

And the round, black MindVoyage she wears flat on her nape.

"FREE Minus Printing Costs."

SAGE (V.O.)  
Well, that's sweet, but fuck you.  
I'm not taking the week.

**INT. 3D PRINT SHOP - CONTINUOUS**

Full of CUSTOMERS waiting to be served and STORE EMPLOYEES, nicknamed "DIMENSIONISTAS".

SAGE (V.O.)  
I'm not taking the day.

DAVID THE DIMENSIONISTA (26), male, feeds a black page into a 3D Printer.

"\$899 A SHEET."

SAGE (V.O.)  
I don't care how it looks. I'm  
fucking working, and I'm fucking  
smiling all over this fucking town.

David holds his hand over the Printer Tray. Out spits a sticky black wad he catches and drops into a case glowing "MindVoyage."

**EXT. OSCAR'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE ON: Oscar's only ear. Barely an ear at all. Scar tissue. Prosthetics. Glassy plastic surgery.

OSCAR (V.O.)  
Sage -

SAGE (V.O.)  
Besides, I'm seeing Li Jun tonight.

Green light glows from his ear's over-curve. Off a green-lit lens adhered to a strip with three others, a MIC and sensors.

"MindVoyage TECH-STRIP - \$1999."

Oscar looks over his porch-railing over homes, fixating on horizon-streaming Ravens.

OSCAR (V.O.)  
All Li Jun gave you is a rumor.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. ETHAN'S JEEP -- INTERCUT WITH OSCAR**

Driver unseen for now. Sage sits in the passenger seat, dressed work-casual in a t-shirt, jacket, and skirt.

OSCAR  
That's what you're putting your Ex  
in danger for, a rumor.

SAGE  
Li Jun's not my Ex. She's my Ex-  
Babysitter.

OSCAR  
Sage, what's Li Jun bring you this  
or any week that stops the  
machinations of China?

SAGE  
Fuck machinations in the mouth.  
Let's stop them from banning  
MindVoyage.

Sage bounces in her seat as the Jeep bumps on a speed bump.

OSCAR  
I'm not asking you to appear  
grieved. Just to vanish into  
bereavement for a week. At least  
until after the reading.

Jeep pulls to a curb and stops.

SAGE  
What fucking reading?

OSCAR  
Of her will.

SAGE  
An even bigger waste of time than  
talking to you. That's your fucking  
benchmark? Her will? What the fuck?

**STAYING WITH SAGE AND ETHAN IN JEEP - END OSCAR INTERCUT.**

Parked at a curb on a tree-lined and shaded street.

From the driver's seat, ETHAN JANE (30), male, watches the green lens on the MindVoyage Tech-Strip on Sage's ear turn from green to black in HANG-UP.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 9hrs 2min"

SAGE

Mom's shadow is a zombie, Ethan.

ETHAN

Sage? Can we not do this now?

SAGE

Ethan, they love her more than MindVoyage. How many times has that happened? Since it took off? Even in March, she wasn't -

ETHAN

Well, I mean -

SAGE

What happens if she jumps to Legend?

ETHAN

When was the last time that's happened to anybody?

SAGE

I guess there's suicide.

ETHAN

Not funny.

SAGE

You think you're cool being her kid first, before anything else, forever.

ETHAN

Well, that's the thing about being children...

SAGE

Let's see if you're fine being her kid first forever, later.

ETHAN

What happens later?

SAGE

You accomplish something. I'm giving you time to do something.

ETHAN  
Something like you did?

She locks her eyes with his and neither blinks.

SAGE  
She makes it to Legend, I  
decapitate myself.

ETHAN  
Don't say that.

She looks past him to a new building with green glass windows.

"MINDVOYAGE"

CUT TO:

**INT. SAGE REMEMBERS - HER POV - CLOSE ON SOLID WEBSITE PAGE**

Sage sees only the front page of a website -- not translucent but solid, "3D.PLANK.COM" fills her entire POV.

The page scrolls past lists of blueprints for visitors to download and print into "THINGS" using 3D Printers.

Sage hears a click. An Upload Button on 3D.PLANK.COM darkens.

A notification banner appears - "UPLOAD OF 3D PRINTABLE MINDVOYAGE BLUEPRINT SUCCESSFUL."

3D.PLANK.COM fades, revealing -

**OSCAR'S HOSPITAL ROOM.**

Just ahead of her is the PLASTIC WALL OF A BURN UNIT MEDICAL TENT - It's zipped all the way around, a room within a room.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION - 10mos 11days 9hrs"

Beyond the plastic wall, Oscar lays in bed, "dying" of burn injuries.

And he seems unconscious.

SAGE  
In. The. Wild. Under a black flag,  
sure. But free. And thrown to  
online pirates, it'll spread like a  
wildfire -- like a virus.

SAGE (CONT'D)  
We got to change the world  
together, Oscar Weston and Sage  
Jane, and before you left it.

END HER MEMORY:

**INT. ETHAN'S JEEP - CONTINUOUS - DAY**

Sage looks from the MindVoyage office outside to Ethan.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 8hrs 59min"

SAGE  
Tell me you're going home.

ETHAN  
That was the plan.

SAGE  
Ethan. Go. The. Fuck. Home. Please.  
Nobody wants to see you at RAMP.  
Not the guy in line to inherit  
their future.

She bends into the backseat for her bag.

ETHAN  
Tony called.

SAGE  
Me, right after you did. I know.

ETHAN  
Oh?

SAGE  
"Oh." New Cyber-security Emperor to  
the Jane fucking throne and Ethan  
plays it -

ETHAN  
Oh.

SAGE  
And that's twice now folks, cool  
with "oh." Tony wants to set the  
reading.

ETHAN  
We should talk Urns.

SAGE  
And fires.

ETHAN  
Sage, I'm drained.

SAGE  
You're not asking me to help with  
Mom's shit, right?

ETHAN  
Just a hand.

SAGE  
Testicles.

ETHAN  
What?

SAGE  
Testicles.

She pecks his cheek and goes.

ETHAN  
Sage!

When she answers him calling her name, she doesn't look  
backward but keeps her eyes ahead, trained on MindVoyage Inc.

SAGE  
Let me know when. I'll make room!

**EXT. RAMP HEADQUARTERS - 20 MINUTES LATER - DAY**

Ethan drives to a building with no windows at all.

"RORY ANTIVIRUS & MALWARE PROTECTION"

"RAMP"

**INT. RAMP HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS**

Ethan walks through the Cyber-security firm's Zero-Day room,  
ignoring RAMP ENGINEERS he passes.

He glances at wall-sized displays showing emerging global  
vulnerabilities to computer networks, real-time cyber-  
attacks, and just discovered malware and viruses.

Ethan passes his OFFICE NAMEPLATE. He stops at the nameplate  
next door and stares. "RORY JANE."



He strives not to cry, wins, and enters.

**EXT. OUTDOOR TABLE - WILD SNOUT CAFÉ - SANTA MONICA - DAY**

Sage eats at an outdoor table with JANE FAMILY ATTORNEY TONY POLLAN (64), female.

TONY

... And you're wondering why what?

SAGE

Why Oscar may want me off the grid until the reading of her will.

TONY

Did he make a big deal of that?

SAGE

Not exactly that. But he capitulated to it when he wasn't getting his way. And maybe I'm fucking paranoid.

TONY

The clause in your agreement that starts with "any hint of a tie between Sage Jane and Rory Jane except those deemed reasonably familial," remember how it ends?

SAGE

I remember laughing at "reasonably."

TONY

Sage, it's reasonable to ask if Oscar wants to go back to the way things were.

SAGE

Were when?

TONY

Before you knocked on his door. It's reasonable to wonder if he believes he'd be within his right to move forward without you as a partner if your mother left you her company.

SAGE

But unreasonable to believe he'd believe she'd leave it to me.

TONY  
Sage, I'd prepare yourself.

SAGE  
Excuse me?

TONY  
But you didn't hear it from me. Not until you hear me read her will and testament.

SAGE  
Bullshit, she left me RAMP.

TONY  
... If you say so.

SAGE  
If I say so? Tony? Tony, why the fuck? Jesus. What the fuck, Tony?

TONY  
Your mother's secrets are mine to keep.

SAGE  
Give it to Ethan. Draw up the paperwork. A final shot to hurt Oscar and me, that's Mom. But not at the expense of her son.

TONY  
I might suggest that Rory leaving you RAMP has nothing to do with you.

SAGE  
When's Ethan done anything she didn't cream her fucking panties over?

TONY  
Let's see the dessert plate.

WORDS ON BLACK:

"USER AGREES"

WHEN ENTITIES CAN NOT BE AUTO TRANSLATED INTO FORMS

PERCEIVABLE TO THEIR SPECIES TO ACCEPT COMPARABLE MODELS

CONSTRUCTED USING SYMBOLS, RITUALS, & GENDERS FROM THEIR

WORLD"

"- StarNet TERMS OF SERVICE AGREEMENT #256"

# **EXT. A PLANET COLONY IN THE ROUND - OUTER SPACE**

VIGRO-ONE, VIGRO-TWO... SEVEN PLANETS in the -

"VIGRO PLANET COLONY - CANIS MAJOR GALAXY"

Together they create an almost full circle on a flat plane.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH: 26 hrs."

StarNet CONNECTION SIGNALS -- like wide, translucent laser beams -- already extend from their atmospheres.

Up and down the signals flow program instructions, letters, figures, and other symbols -- CODE.

All the CODE shines its STYLE -- a mix of light and pattern unique to its coding language.

CODE from languages ALIEN TO EACH OTHER stream together in every signal.

Rises a pleasant, almost alive sounding computerized voice.

STARNET VOICE (V.O.)  
Thank you for logging on to the  
Universe's most Areawide  
Information Sharing Network.

# **OVERHEAD THE PLANET COLONY - OUTER SPACE**

The seven connection signals impale another StarNet signal-type that looks like digitized piping through physical Outer Space.

# **"THE VIGRO COLONY STARNET PIPE"**

stretches hundreds of millions of miles, seven thousand in circumference, and glows solid blue-hues too bright to see through.

STARNET VOICE (V.O.)  
Welcome to StarNet.

**INT. VIGRO COLONY STARNET PIPE - CYBERSPACE - CONTINUOUS**

Pitch black.

Except where STYLE glances a section of Wall ahead -- off unseen Programs flying behind the view. The unique mix of pattern and light they cast marking the spot ongoing as

RISES THE VOICES of two conscious computer applications.

CRUISER 67 64 MALE IDENTIFYING...

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
Go ahead, STOSA Dispatch, this is  
Cruiser 67 64, I hear you.

... And STOSA DISPATCH FEMALE IDENTIFYING.

STOSA DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Cruiser 67 64, we've got a Data  
Recovery Application attempting to  
resurrect deleted data where it  
shan't.

They sound digital, personable, and aware of themselves and others.

"StarNet TERMS OF SERVICE AGENCY COP BAND RADIO 117"

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
Shan't, huh? Pipe number?

STOSA DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Not just shan't but can't. Not a  
Pipe tonight, Cruiser. You caught a  
Wipe Zone.

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
Never caught a Wipe Zone.

STOSA DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Never dispatched a Cruiser to one.

TWO ROTATING CIRCLES OF LIGHT -- one red, one blue -- hit the Wall and drop growing larger.

Until CRUISER 67 64 appears diving the Wall edge. The circles cast to it starting as spokes of blue and red light widening from his rotating and beacon shaped pupils.

Like everything living or flying inside StarNet, it's clear he's a cyberspace entity.

Tiles flash with red and blue cyber-light everywhere on his humanoid-shaped - but armless - upper body.

STOSA DISPATCH (V.O.)  
You want 20-20-30-Squared.

Faceless up until his eyes and without a mouth for speaking, Cruiser 67 64 stays heard only over the Cop Band Radio.

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
Copy, Wipe Zone 20-20-30-Squared.

STOSA DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Your orders are to stop any  
resurrection of deleted CODE in  
progress.

Deeper into the seeming black void of the StarNet Pipe, CRUISER 67 64 flies with four wings that would look at home on a plane or a spaceship.

They grow from four doors on his squad-car shaped lower body.

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
From a Wipe Zone?

He holds FOUR CYBER TENTACLES rolled with Cannon Mouths on their undersides beyond his door's sparkling windows.

STOSA DISPATCH (V.O.)  
The Commissioner called it in  
herself. She's waiting for you to  
deliver said Data Recovery  
Application to her at HQ  
Quarantine.

CUT TO:

**EXT. 3D PRINT SHOP/TRIGGER BAIT CLUB - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT**

A SIGN in the Window of a 3D PRINT SHOP Claims "FASTEST MindVoyage PRINT IN WEST LA," almost blocked by a line of customers.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 23min"

Rope barriers separate it from a second line waiting to get into an AUTONOMOUS SENSORY MERIDIAN RESPONSE (ASMR) DANCE CLUB named TRIGGER BAIT.

**INT. TRIGGER BAIT ASMR CLUB - CONTINUOUS**

The over-capacity room rolls with euphoric static-tingles, to a dance mix of lip-smacks, finger-nail-clips, and other ASMR sound triggers.

At the front bar, the Bartender notices Sage smiling at him.

He fixes her a drink.

She PERCEIVES the words "SOUND FOCUS ON" as they appear and vanish in the air just ahead of her -- a newscast she'd been listening to lost amidst the club music now goes clear and loud.

The voice of News-Caster HODGE JENKINS (60), male, mid-eulogizing. His voice only audible when she pays attention to him -- silent when her focus goes elsewhere.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 .... Rory Jane, finding herself  
 lauded Cyber Security Queen in a  
 land of Virus-killing Tech Kings-

Sage takes her Sweet and Sour from the Bartender.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 - Rory's testimony at the United  
 Nations over what she believed was  
 grave security dangers -

She drinks it in one long gulp and points for another.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 Ending with Oscar Weston's vision  
 restoring and sight giving  
 technology -

She looks over an ocean of CROWD to a BACK-BAR ENTRANCE.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 Rory vilified for taking literal  
 sight from the-

Glances at a MindVoyage flat on someone's nape.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 - Sight Bound's recall in countries  
 around the globe, marking the start  
 of Rory and Oscar Weston's long  
 Feud -

Her eyes roam nape to nape, most folks wearing them.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 And public war thought cold,  
 broiled again, hotter than ever  
 when Rory's daughter, Sage Jane,  
 partnered with Weston on  
 MindVoyage.

Sage takes her second Sweet and Sour from the Bartender.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 - a mother-daughter relationship  
 damaged by the suicide of Rory's  
 second husband and Sage's father,  
 Alec Jane -

#### **BEHIND AN ALCOVE - TRIGGER BAIT - CONTINUOUS**

CONCH DAROSI (33), male, pretends to watch a screen embedded in a Black Glass Alcove wall he eye-hunts the crowd through.

On the screen, the ASMR VIDEO STAR (24), male, kneels under a circle-jerk of down-slanting BOOM MICROPHONES. He lifts a glass mixing bowl over his head, then taps and scratches its side, making sweet music.

Sage walks past the glass. Conch follows.

A NEW SONG PLAYS, and a wave of Patrons rushing to dance, swallows her from sight.

#### **DANCE FLOOR**

Deeper. Conch is close but not closing on Sage. She seems to have a sixth sense for which gaps in the bodies to take, and he loses her again. Sage, unaware of Conch, ducks a drink-swinging arm.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 - MindVoyage, the world's first  
 Brain-To-Internet Router.

She turns diagonal and avoids streams of HARD PUSHING BROS.

HODGE (V.O.)  
 News of the younger Jane and Oscar  
 Weston's partnership re-igniting  
 Rory's rival -

SAGE'S POV - HODGE presenting THE NEWS. In a translucent broadcast that always floats ahead of her, no matter where she looks.

Through Hodge, flying on his other side, only Sage sees a glowing 6-pack of Augmented Reality Arrowheads tilt and turn when one blinks.

She fills a gap between the bodies it points to.

HODGE (V.O.)

Becoming a household name. Known forevermore as the woman who made America Bright Again for ending the Ransomware attack on our nation's power grid this March, died this morning at her home in Los Angeles. Rory Jane was 58 years old.

Conch rubbernecks to see her enter a door to Back Rooms when the loudest, most distinct pickle crunch anyone has ever heard resonates!

Everyone stops and turns to its source, creating a wall of people Conch can't pass.

He looks where the crowd does. DJ MAMA CRUNCH (31), female, stands in an Elevated Booth. She chews the pickle over a microphone. The crowd shivers with delight.

Conch, trapped in the crowd, eyes DJ Mama Crunch in the booth finishing her pickle -- Crunch-Slurp-Swallow.

DJ MAMA CRUNCH

Trigger warning, babies. DJ Mama Crunch is in a mood for more than pickle. Who's in the mood to know?

Scattered hoots.

DJ MAMA CRUNCH (CONT'D)

Be known?

The crowd loses their shit.

DJ MAMA CRUNCH (CONT'D)

An awful lot of DJ Mamma Crunch's babies crying for exposure. So, come on, loves, and squeeze those privacy settings on your MindVoyage to "VIOLATE."

Conch watches everyone around him squeeze their eyes open and closed in the same sequence. He studies the lift and fall of their eyelids.

They finish. Conch blinks it out correctly.



DJ MAMA CRUNCH (CONT'D)  
 Alright, Knowers. Know only those  
 who deserve to be known.

An eerie green light casts over the dance floor and turns  
 TEXT MESSAGES visible. Some already stream the air and snake  
 the bodies as ropey sequences of letters, digits, and emojis.

Conch watches Text Messages curl around the clubbers' necks,  
 exiting their MindVoyage,

"TEXT MESSAGE SENT".

Enter others,

"TEXT MESSAGE RECEIVED".

Those wanting to KNOW read the message. Everyone else fires  
 them off -- long, flashy, and convoluted, wanting their Text  
 Message to be the MOST KNOWN in Trigger Bait tonight.

Conch, despite himself, knows.

#### **INT. BACKROOM BAR - TRIGGER BAIT - CONTINUOUS**

No bartender. A TV over the bar shows muted news-footage  
 covering the life and death of Sage's mother, RORY JANE.

Empty except Sage and LI JUN (30), female, at a booth.

LI JUN  
 My condolences.

SAGE  
 I keep hearing that.

LI JUN  
 From me, it's sincere.

SAGE  
 Like I keep hearing nothing but  
 garbage about this coin. You sure  
 you want to get paid this way?

Li Jun accepts a memory-stick from her.

LI JUN  
 It's a currency that's morally  
 questionable. In China, what's  
 distasteful is less monitored.

SAGE  
 You're such a weirdo.

LI JUN

You holding yourself together?

SAGE

What? Yeah. Yeah. I'm good. Fan-fucking-really-tastic, Li Jun. You? Any rowdy parties at the Consulate?

LI JUN

We used to speak of everything. Now only MindVoyage.

SAGE

Let's talk about the People's Republic. You tell me the "highly probable" MindVoyage ban was the product of your paranoid mind, so we can talk about whatever the fuck you want.

LI JUN

Sage, I'm sorry.

SAGE

You're sorry? Fuck...

LI JUN

It could happen in weeks.

SAGE

A ban won't work. MindVoyage is in the wild, sailing under a Pirate Flag. What's the plan? What's your President fucking Wan going to do? Send in the Army? Go house-to-house? Rip them off people? Off their fucking necks?

LI JUN

Where there are necks, there can always be nooses.

SAGE

... Nooses?

LI JUN

Sage, they're your Users but my people. We're like Americans. Without the threat of death, what scares anyone anywhere enough to take off their MindVoyage -- and keep it off?

SAGE

Nobody's hanging... fuck, Li Jun.

LI JUN

The People Behind The Ban are MindVoyage Users too. They've seen the world through its interface. Seen how it pales, even people like them, in comparison. Influential, vivid, powerful people. No one's paying attention to them. They look as ordinary and uninteresting as you or me on the other side of a see-through Web- page. Their desire to stop MindVoyage is a desire to survive as what they once were.

SAGE

Give me something I can act on.

LI JUN

In situations like this one, what sometimes works isn't in your tool chest.

SAGE

What's not in my tool chest?

LI JUN

A War Chest.

SAGE

A what chest?

LI JUN

Guns, Sage. This isn't the time to act. It's time to tread lightly.

SAGE

Fuck that in the ass, Li-Jun, what's best for me is a War-Chest.

CUT BACK TO:

# **INT. STARNET PIPE - CYBERSPACE**

A black void save for STYLE cast from Cruiser 67 64 as he flies through it.

No other Apps about. No CODE.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 25hrs 56min"

He turns into an adjoining StarNet Pipe.

**STOSA PROTECTED STORAGE - ADJOINING PIPE - CONTINUOUS**

Cruiser 67 64 flies into a Pipe full of light and

STARNET TERMS OF SERVICE AGENCY COP-SENTRIES.

They guard the silver and towering STOSA DATABASE in a Concentric-Circle-Formation. With the Database in the center-most and tightest of their circular lines.

"STARNET TERMS OF SERVICE AGENCY COP DATABASE"

Wingless and on wheels, they otherwise look like Cruiser 67 64 and seem to rest on a transparent floor atop the black void.

Cruiser 67 64 flies above their ever-tighter sixteen circular lines.

He tilts a wing in hello at SENTRY KAVIE FEMALE IDENTIFYING, flying over her.

She lifts a tentacle from behind her "windows" and waves.

Past the Database, he disappears into a cloud of billions of brightly lit, turning Particles of Digitized Psychic Slag.

"STOSA DIGITIZED PSYCHIC SLAG STORAGE CLOUD"

In their cloud of billions, with every color accounted for, each Digitized Psychic Slag Particle shines a single solid color.

Sea-salt shaped but smaller. They turn in the air.

SUPER ON BLACK:

"INTERNET OF THINGS"

"COMPUTING DEVICES INSIDE EVERYDAY OBJECTS ALLOWING THEM TO SEND AND RECEIVE DATA ACROSS THE INTERNET."

CUT BACK TO:

**INT. BACK-BAR - TRIGGER BAIT - EARTH**

Sage alone in the room, in the booth, in thought.

Conch enters and without a glance at Sage fixes on the TV over the bar showing Rory Jane crossing a White House lawn with a US President.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 9min"

Sage looks him up and down.

Without turning to her at first -

CONCH

What friends she had.

SAGE

Skip the preamble and just tell me what fucking Jag in Big Telecom sent you to bully me.

CONCH

Yeah, I bet you see guys like that about once a week. But with Mom gone, some people you see in days to come will be closer in Caliber to me.

SAGE

My mother didn't protect me a day in her life.

CONCH

Au contraire, SJ. When you guard the passwords of the most influential people in the world, it's protection for the whole family. Case in point - it's been almost a year since you posted Oscar Weston's MindVoyage on a pirate site, and only today do we meet. She made you untouchable, but if it makes you feel better, my employers really resented her for that.

SAGE

Why would you think that'd make me feel better?

CONCH

I don't do anybody without doing thorough research.

SAGE

"Do" anybody?

CONCH  
You're threatening industry making  
things scarier than phones.

SAGE  
Name one.

Conch laughs.

CONCH  
I come from folks in, well, a more  
complex industry...

SAGE  
What does that mean? You know what,  
never mind.

CONCH  
Not everyone's as low-level as  
those fuck-Jags in Big Telecom. SJ,  
some people, the ones who can  
afford it, they're jagged all over.  
By which I mean careful, wary fuck-  
Jags. But now, SJ, my condolences.

SAGE  
Go fuck yourself.

CONCH  
Hey, I'm not even here working.

SAGE  
What?

CONCH  
The job on you hasn't started. That  
light turns green when Mom's put to  
rest. But I did my research in  
advance. I had to come while things  
can still be personable between us.

She goes, but before she exits, the doors close and lock.

CUT BACK TO:

**INT. WIPE ZONE 20 20 30 SQUARED - RUINS OF STARNET 1.0 -  
CYBERSPACE**

For what seems like an eternity, you can only see MOUNDS OF  
CODE FRAGMENTS -- piles of pieces of symbols, figures,  
letters, words, and programs.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 25hrs 50min"

Mounds of them past sight, ensconced in what would be darkness if every CODE Fragment wasn't styling dim Blacklight.

Fragments in the mounds cast their Blacklight style to a frosted white ceiling, making Wipe Zone-20-20-30-Squared glow in the Cyber Dark.

#### **INT. DEEPER IN THE WIPE ZONE - CONTINUOUS**

The twelve tank-like treads of DATA RECOVERY APPLICATION (DRA) roll over mounds of code fragments.

DRA is visible only from its treads up to VENTS on a platform at its center.

Some VENTS SUCK CODE FRAGMENTS IN. Others spit them out.

A GLOWING, PERIWINKLE FRAGMENT vanishes into a vent.

DRA EXPLODES as periwinkle styling CODE FRAGMENTS by the tens of thousands push out from inside it all at once.

No matter the Fragment's shape, every piece is periwinkle and spotted with teeny, white-glowing "O" shapes.

They buzz into the air and create a churning CODE FRAGMENT CYCLONE.

The cyclone merges fragment into fragment, assembling whole CODE.

CODE cyclones into CODE, assembling OVIRAXIS MALE IDENTIFYING COMPUTER VIRUS.

#### **"OVIRAXIS"**

Constructed only in part and as if he's an Alien Cyberspace Cloud Monster Computer Virus with STYLE, his body churns and rolls in translucent periwinkle clouds, digital and drifting.

Jagged light flashes through him, full of swirling and glowing white letters O.

Oviraxis shape-shifts himself a neck and head.

He turns them.

Eyes not yet assembled but not blind, he sees red and blue circles of light rotating on the floor in the distance.

They start as spokes of light from Cruiser 67 64's beacon-shaped pupils. Coming ever closer.

Cruiser 67 64 flies straight and fast through the narrow Wipe Zone without seeing Oviraxis, who vanishes.

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
Negative on any sighting of Data  
Recovery Application.

All the CODE Fragments glowing Blacklight from all the mounds in the Wipe Zone go out -- Cruiser 67 64's light is now the only one remaining.

CRUISER 67 64 (V.O.)  
Dispatch, Wipe Zone 20-20-30-  
Squared just went super dark.

The light-spokes from his beacon-shaped pupils retract all at once, and he enters a spin -- belts one blast of Police-Siren.

Wipe Zone 20-20-30-Squared goes black and silent.

CUT BACK TO:

**INT. BACK-BAR - TRIGGER BAIT - EARTH**

Sage turns from the just closed and locked doors to Conch.

SAGE  
Unlock the fucking doors.

CONCH  
You've done more than lock a few  
doors. Haven't you? SJ?

SAGE  
I don't know what the fuck you're  
talking about. What'd you mean you  
"had to come while things can be  
personable?"

CONCH  
SJ, I'm here for equality.

SAGE  
Equality?

CONCH  
I seldom meet an equal  
ThingStinger.

SAGE  
I don't ThingSting.



CONCH

Like I said, I do my research. And ain't nobody Thingstinging like you except for me, SJ.

SAGE

Open the doors.

CONCH

You're the girl who redirected morning rush hour into an impossible-to-breach concentric wall around her high school, just so she didn't have to go. Who made all those Smart Vacuums eat the curtains in Pacific Palisades. You're one of two whose identity the wannabe ThingStingers are always trying to uncover when they should be Thingstinging. Like I said, one of the two. That's right, I'm the Black Cat. Meow.

SAGE

Please open the doors.

CONCH

Aren't you going to meow back?

SAGE

Open the doors, I'll meow.

Conch laughs.

CONCH

Oh, I knew you'd be fantastic, White Kitten. And just so you know, old Conch, he doesn't mind you being pure, being you're such a purist of ThingSting and all.

SAGE

That's you? That's your name, Conch?

CONCH

Spelled like the shell, but I prefer the hard "K" sound for the "H." Otherwise, everyone sounds like my mother. Know what I mean?

SAGE

No.

CONCH

Conch Darosi. A pleasure.

SAGE

Not my fucking ThingStings, but how the fuck would you know if they were?

CONCH

Click the link.

She closes her right eye shut, squeezes her left, and opens both as a lens on her MindVoyage Tech-Strip turns green.

Six square images appear floating in the air they both see. Each shows a room.

All LIVE VIEWS from Cameras in the home of Jane family attorney, Tony Pollan.

SAGE

What the fuck are you doing?

CONCH

Guess you recognize the place.

Conch sees a lens on her Tech-Strip turn green.

A lens on his strip does, and an image from Tony's place changes into a LIVE STREAM of Ethan Jane's home.

SAGE

Motherfucker.

CONCH

Your brother has more networked THINGS than Tony. And Ethan's THINGS are Smarter.

The lens on Sage's Tech-Strip turns off. The one on his does, and the image of Ethan in his bed changes to an image from Tony's place again.

CONCH (CONT'D)

Now sit back down and watch, or I'll make you watch with the sprinklers on.

SAGE

Sprinklers? What the fuck?

CONCH

Do you think I know all I do about  
you but not your fear of wearing  
wet clothes?

She eyes the sprinkler pipes on the ceiling and sits.

SAGE

Tony Pollan isn't involved in  
MindVoyage.

CONCH

I told you, this isn't about that.  
Showing you my stuff here. Trying.  
Now, scoot, so we can both enjoy  
the show. You can hurry. Either  
this ends with you impressed, or  
traumatized.

She scoots as far as the wall as she can get. Conch sits deep  
and slides to recline with hands behind his head. Both fixed  
on the images of Tony's place.

CONCH (CONT'D)

You'll love this. Eight separate  
programs working in concert. Now,  
all we do is enjoy the show. And  
hope the weather folks got the wind  
right.

SAGE

Wind? Right?

CONCH

You'll see. Equals.

SAGE

You stinging Tony with her THINGS  
or ThingStinging her THINGS?

CONCH

SJ, which cat am I?

SAGE

What are you going to do to her?

CONCH

Wow, SJ, look how excited you're  
trying not to get.

The image of Tony's place changes to one of an UNDERGROUND  
UTILITY CORRIDOR.

CONCH (CONT'D)

Oh, that's right. My ThingSting --  
It starts in a Utility Corridor  
under Santa Monica.

**INT. UNDERGROUND UTILITY CORRIDOR - SANTA MONICA - NIGHT**

Lines, Electric, Fiber-optic, and Telephone - but no utility line more than PIPES enter the Corridor from a tunnel, then interweave in a tangle configuration.

Some Pipes are SMART PIPES -- internet-connected and computer application controlled.

Nothing moves until a ring locking two Blue Water Pipes together brightens orange and spins, then it falls.

The Pipes disconnect. Water pours. One of them swings to the right and directly into the path of a Gray Pipe. Clink, they slip together.

A ring around the Gray Pipe slides ahead and spins the two together. On the Gray Pipe's side blinks -DANGER, GASOLINE!

**INT. BATHROOM - TONY'S HOME - SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS**

Jane Family Attorney Tony Pollan showering rinses her hair.

**TONY'S BEDROOM**

A SMART VACUUM backs up, revealing a hole in a pillow.

Feathers rise the wall from the hole to a SMART VENT, sucking them in.

**TONY'S KITCHEN**

A SMART VENT SPITS THE FEATHERS OUT TO BURNERS clicking aflame on Tony's Stove. They land. Light. Black. Curl away.

CLICK -- the Smart door in the back of the kitchen opens.

SWOOSH - Santa Ana winds blow burning feathers off the stove and into her hall bathroom bound.

**TONY'S SHOWER**

Eyes closed, Tony showers on. Her nostrils flare like she smells something.

Her eyes open just in time for SUDDEN GAS to fill more than her mouth.

She coughs, spins away eyes closed, gags, spits, and trips out of the tub to the floor.

#### **INT. TONY'S HALL**

Burning Feathers blow down the hall toward the open bathroom and Tony's back, where she sits inside on the floor.

#### **INT. TONY'S BATHROOM**

Tony sits up from the floor, still sputtering gas from her lips. Squeezes it from her eyes.

Smelling the Feathers, Tony turns. Her gas-shot-red eyes widen on a cloud of them about to enter.

CUT TO:

#### **INT. STOSA PROTECTED STORAGE PIPE - CYBERSPACE**

Sentry Kavie stands in The Front Line -- front circled line -- of the Sentry's Concentric Guard of the STOSA Database.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 25hrs 40min"

SENTRY KAVIE'S POV - Nothing but a black void ahead. Until a spot of periwinkle appears in its depth.

Not yet clear, it's OVIRAXIS charging her. Ever-closer-faster, ever more abundant, more extensive, rolling forward -- straight at her, but far off.

Like a periwinkle storm out of the black.

Beyond his translucent skin, shapes of O glow and strobe in white.

CUT BACK TO:

#### **INT. TONY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT - EARTH**

Tony SLAMS the DOOR before the feathers enter.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 53 sec"

**TONY'S HALL**

The Feathers drift down the door to the floor and smoke out.

CONCH (V.O.)  
See, didn't hurt her.

SAGE (V.O.)  
I need to call Tony. I need to see  
if she's all right.

CONCH (V.O.)  
Then there's Oscar Weston's fire.

SAGE (V.O.)  
White Kitten, asshole. White  
fucking Kitten.

CUT BACK TO:

**INT. STOSA PROTECTED STORAGE - PIPE - CYBERSPACE**

The closer Oviraxis gets to Sentry Kavie, the faster he SHAPE-STREAMS, roiling and churning through forms of alien monsters at blur speed.

Only his newly assembled EYES appear stable and unchanging.

They swim inside him. Looking out different edges of his body. His eyes suddenly pair up and stare ahead at Kavie.

Oviraxis swoops over The Front Line. End KAVIE'S POV.

OVIRAXIS POV:  
BOTH EYES  
LOOKING DOWN:

All the Sentries extend four tentacles -- one out each of their lower body windows.

Tentacles rise higher. Twist as Sentries aim Cannon Mouths on their undersides at him.

END OVIRAXIS  
POV:

The Sentries all fire at once.

**"ANTIVIRUS DEFINITION SHELLS"**

The shells pass like ghosts into his body and EXPLODE, sending sizzling CODE-shrapnel zig-zagging through him.

He doesn't flinch, try to avoid it, or show any sign he cares.

He widens his body and drifts through all lines of the Sentry's concentric defense formation around the STOSA DATABASE -- like cyber-fog.

He turns himself denser until his body blots the Sentries, even their wigwags.

Their shelling stops.

He shifts from fog to periwinkle overcast and see-through.

Not a Sentry anywhere. They're just gone.

Oviraxis glides through a STOSA Database Wall.

SUPER ON DARK:

"ge`am (verb)

ge`am | geamed | geams | geaming

:to extract pictures from what gleams as if gleaming"

#### **INT. STOSA DATABASE - CONTINUOUS**

A periwinkle glow far down in the dark is the only light.

#### **"STARNET TERMS OF SERVICE AGENCY DATABASE"**

OVIRAXIS (V.O.)  
Show me all known Viruses.

The voice the mouthless Oviraxis emits sounds computerized moreover alive without sounding biological, echoing up through the black.

OVIRAXIS (V.O.)  
Focus on just the Ransomware strains. Now, sort them by quarantine holding them nearest to farthest from here and send it to me called "Crew List."

#### **INT. STOSA DIGITIZED PSYCHIC SLAG STORAGE CLOUD - CONTINUOUS**

Oviraxis floats at the cloud's eye, surrounded by billions of digitized psychic slag particles, each shinning a solid color, turning sea-salt-shaped but smaller right through him.

**INSIDE OVIRAXIS**

Digitized Slag Particles pass in and out his every drifting side.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH 23hrs 52min"

He moves his free-floating inner eyes for a look at those he can catch.

**OVIRAXIS POV - EYE #1**

Particles cluster ahead. Tight. Side-by-side. Each a dot of color. They stop turning and become a picture made of their dots of A BLUE STARNET PIPE and a GRAY STARNET PIPE LINKED.

Behind them burn the Stars of Centaurus -- looming larger than Earth's nearest Constellation ever does from its surface.

**OVIRAXIS POV - EYE #2**

Clustered particles stop turning and form an image. A moving image -- A debris field of Moon Rocks Orbit a Moon Cut into Two Halves.

**OVIRAXIS POV EYE 1 OF A FRAME OF BLACK:**

Center of the frame glows in a green-lit font -

"MV2"

**INT. BACK-BAR - TRIGGER BAIT**

CUT TO:

Sage, in the booth with Conch, looks sick.

SAGE

Oscar's fire was a manufacturer's defect in his Smart home's battery.

CONCH

But Oscar's more than proven he has a mind for making connections that don't yet exist, hasn't he, SJ? And who knows what thoughts run through the mind of a vengeful man...



SAGE

A vengeful man? I wouldn't describe him that way.

CONCH

If it wasn't a vendetta against your mother that made Oscar say yes, then what? How come he said "sure" when you pitched him on the idea of you two partnering up on MindVoyage?

Sage's eyes flicker to the TV over the bar, still showing footage of her mother.

SAGE

I thought you weren't here working.

CONCH

I start, there'll never be an "us"... A shame, really. Both single and good-looking. The world's greatest ThingStingers. SJ, we should date.

The doors all unlock. Conch looks surprised.

CONCH (CONT'D)

Smooth, SJ.

SAGE

There'll never be a fucking "us."

CONCH

Well, in that case...

All the lenses on Conch's Tech-Strip strobe blue and ALL THE SPRINKLERS POP raining water. Sage reflexively slides down her seat and under the table --

Where she watches water assault the floor around it. Sees a READOUT on the booth displays "SMARTER BOOTHS."

The table rises flat to the wall.

Sage lifts onto her feet and forward over wet linoleum. She slips and slides into a double-handed palm-down SLAM of an alley door's metal push handle and bangs out.

A TEXT MESSAGE exits Conch's MindVoyage, "CALL IF U FEEL LIKE THINGSTINGING 2GETHER - CONCH", and zips across the room and enters Sage's MindVoyage before the door slams.

"TIME UNTIL ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH - 16 SECONDS