

DEVS

EPISODE 1

OPEN ON -

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAWN

- daybreak over San Francisco.

Water. Mist. Bridge.

CUT TO -

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

- a couple waking together in a small but desirable apartment.

They are both in their late twenties.

LILY is Chinese/American.

SERGEI is Russian born, but has been living in America since college.

On waking, they both sleepily reach for their cell phones.

In silence, they check emails, check messages, check Instagram.

Then SERGEI cuddles up to LILY.

LILY
Hello, baby.

SERGEI
Hello, baby.

CUT TO -

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

- LILY and SERGEI eating breakfast together, in their living room, chatting idly.

SERGEI is doing something on his lap-top.

LILY is putting butter on toast.

SERGEI
I'm just saying elliptical curve is
inherently better than RSA.

LILY

Yeah. But you're saying it as someone who doesn't work in encryption, to someone who does.

SERGEI

You're saying they're equal?

LILY

I'm saying you're picking a fight because you're nervous about your presentation today.

(adds)

And RSA is only weak if it's implemented badly.

SERGEI

(smiling)

RSA is more brute-forceable!

LILY

Which is irrelevant, because any encryption is only as strong as its weakest point. And both are weak to attack from quantum computers, so, by sharing the same weak point, are equally weak. Okay?

Beat.

SERGEI

(mutters)

RSA is still more brute-forceable.

A beat on LILY.

Then she takes her knife, and takes a slice of butter.

Then pulls back the knife against her forefinger and thumb, like a catapult -

- and releases it.

The butter flies across the table -

- and lands on SERGEI'S shirt.

SERGEI (CONT'D)

... Holy shit. You did not just do that.

LILY gazes back. Insouciant.

LILY
How's that for brute force?

SERGEI
Jesus. Now I'll have to change
this.

CUT TO -

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

- SERGEI - in a new shirt - and LILY leaving their building.

The front door is blocked by the body of a sleeping HOMELESS MAN, and won't open.

SERGEI
Dude. Move. Please.

The HOMELESS MAN wakes.

HOMELESS MAN
Oh, hey guys.

LILY
Sorry to wake you.

HOMELESS MAN
No problem, Lily.

He shifts so they can exit.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The freeway leading out of San Francisco.

Among the cars are the many shuttle buses, commuting to the large tech companies that satellite the city.

INT. SHUTTLE BUS - DAY

Inside one of these buses, we find LILY and SERGEI, sat together.

SERGEI is gazing out of the window.

A car rolls past.

It's a battered old Toyota, with chipped white paint and rust spots.

At the wheel is a man in his early forties. He wears glasses. Dressed in a T-Shirt. He's talking on a cell phone attached to headphones. Not Bluetooth.

He's slightly struggling with the headphone cable as he drives, which has snared around the gear stick.

SERGEI

Forest.

LILY

You saw him?

SERGEI

He just drove past.

LILY reaches for SERGEI'S hand.

SERGEI looks back out of the window.

Zones out.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/ENTRANCE - DAY

Off the freeway. A narrow road through trees.

Then above the trees, a strange sight. A massive statue of a three year-old girl.

Angelic face. Blonde hair. Ultra real, photographically real, colossal, three stories high, frozen.

She is seated in the forest, gazing into middle distance with an intense and slightly quizzical stare.

The bus drives past her.

Through security gates.

Into the campus of AMAYA CORP.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION CAMPUS/ROTUNDA - DAY

In the middle of the AMAYA CAMPUS is a Modernist rotunda, surrounded by gardens - manicured lawns, sculpted hillocks, benches, dotted trees.

Inside the rotunda is a coffee shop and restaurant - called QUOFFEE - filled with AMAYA employees.

From the rotunda, paths cut through the gardens to each of the various buildings of the corporation.

Signs mark the paths - Q-ENCRYPTION, Q-AI, Q-DATA, Q-SECURITY, Q-TECHNICAL SUPPORT.

One of the paths doesn't apparently lead to a building. It leads to a wooded area.

In contrast to the rest of the campus, the wooded area looks untended. The grass around the path is long and seeded. The woods themselves are more forest than garden.

This path is marked simply 'DEVs'. No Q.

Among the young techies in the hub area, we find SERGEI and LILY.

LILY
Let me know, okay?

SERGEI
Of course.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
I love you.

LILY
I love you too, baby. Good luck.

They hug before they separate.

LILY heading for ENCRYPTION.

SERGEI heading for AI.

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION/AI LABS - DAY

SERGEI sits with his three-person team around a conference table, each with an open laptop. They are SUZIE, JON, and LAZLO.

At one end of the room is a large screen.

On the screen, we can see AMAYA branding, running as a screen-saver. It takes the form of a home-video of the little girl we saw represented as a massive statue. She's playing with toys in a living room.

A cable run from the screen to a tower hard-drive.

A fat cable runs from the hard-drive to a hub unit. And cables run from the hub unit to each of their lap-tops.

Also on the table is a large MICROSCOPE, from which another cable runs.

The team sit in silence. Waiting.

JON shoots SERGEI a look.

SERGEI
Just tell me it's still alive.

LAZLO rises and goes to the MICROSCOPE.

Peers through the eyepiece.

LAZLO
It's still alive.

SERGEI nods.

LAZLO sits.

Another beat.

Then the door to the room opens, and two people enter.

The first is FOREST - the man we saw driving the battered Toyota. The CEO of AMAYA CORP. He's carrying a coffee and a bagel, and his headphones still dangle from his ears.

The second is KATIE. Thirty years old. A woman with an obvious intelligence, obvious observance.

Immediately the room is filled with noise - a kind of overstated casualness, given the tense silence that preceded it.

FOREST
Guys. Sorry we're late. You see that thing this morning? New York Times?

SERGEI
Uh, no.

FOREST
Fucking stocks. I mean, stocks, really? Still? Don't they *know*?

They sit. FOREST plants his coffee.

FOREST (CONT'D)
Anyway. We're here. We've got -
(checks digital Casio watch)
- fifteen minutes. And you've got some cool stuff to show.

The team laugh.

SERGEI

We hope.

FOREST

We all hope. Hit us.

SERGEI

Okay. Jon?

JON

Hitting us.

JON hits a key on his laptop.

On the large screen, the image of AMAYA disappears, and is replaced with another image.

There are two boxes.

On the LEFT BOX, there is a hugely magnified image of a NEMATODE WORM - seen through a microscope.

The organism is a tenth of a millimetre long. Tiny, translucent. Writhing gently on a backlit pool of gel.

On the RIGHT BOX there is a very simple computer graphic. Five short lines, connected by vectors into a single segmented line, creating a crude worm shape.

SERGEI

So. This is iteration eighty nine of the Nematode simulation. Three hundred and two neurons mapped. Nature data tracked from moment of first cell division.

FOREST

Beautiful.

SERGEI

Okay.

SERGEI takes a breath. Not able to fully disguise his nervousness.

SERGEI (CONT'D)

Synchronise.

SUZIE

Synchronising.

A clock countdown starts at the top of the screen.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

In three. Two. One. Go.

On GO -

- the crude vector worm graphic suddenly comes to life.

Moving, writhing, in a mirror of the real NEMATODE opposite.

SERGEI

Overlay, please.

LAZLO

Yup.

LAZLO hits keys -

- and the TWO BOXES move across the screen from the right and left to become ONE BOX in the middle of the screen.

And we can clearly see the VECTOR WORM and the NEMATODE are moving in perfect unison.

FOREST

... Woah.

KATIE speaks for the first time.

KATIE

That's impressive.

SERGEI

Thank you.

KATIE

And at this moment there's no sensor-based connection between the nematode and the simulation?

SERGEI

Nothing at all from the point of synchronisation. This is movement initiated by the mapped neurons and the nurture data. That's all.

KATIE

In which case you can demonstrate that with a future projection?

SERGEI

Absolutely.

FOREST

Ten seconds?

SERGEI
Yes. Suzie?

SUZIE
Coming now. Predicted movement
loop, ten seconds into the future.

The VECTOR WORM and the NEMATODE suddenly go out of synch in their movement.

The VECTOR WORM now writhes in a one second loop of movement, jumping back to its start position each time.

And the COUNTDOWN clock starts running down again.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
So that's five. Four. Three.
Two. One.

And suddenly the real NEMATODE has 'caught up' with the position of the VECTOR NEMATODE - and now they move in synch again.

FOREST bursts out laughing.

FOREST
Oh. My. God. Right in front of
my fucking eyes, you just predicted
the exact behaviour of a living
organism. Ten seconds into the
future.

SERGEI nods. And exhales gently.

SERGEI
The simplest organism we could
find. But - yes. We did.

FOREST sits back in his chair.

FOREST
I love it. I love you.

CUT TO -

- KATIE. Who is frowning.

CUT TO -

- the screen.

On which, the NEMATODE and the VECTOR WORM are slightly less in synch than before.

And it's getting worse.

CUT TO -

- SERGEI, seeing KATIE'S gaze.

SERGEI

Okay - and so... about thirty seconds from the moment we synchronise... we start to lose correlation.

FOREST is watching SERGEI closely.

FOREST

Thirty seconds.

SERGEI

Thereabouts.

FOREST

And why do you think that is?

SERGEI

Sheer complexity. The numbers we're crunching go insane. As in, truly insane.

FOREST

Or?

SERGEI

It's a quantum type problem. Somewhere in the multiverse, there's a world where the two stay in synch. But it's not this one.

FOREST smiles.

FOREST

Not a fan of multiverse theory. I'd go with the former.

FOREST glances at KATIE.

KATIE gives a discrete nod.

FOREST (CONT'D)

Okay everyone, I'd like a moment alone with Sergei.

JON shoots SERGEI a look.

Mouths: *good luck.*

All rise. Including KATIE. And exit.

SERGEI and FOREST are alone.

Beat.

FOREST (CONT'D)
Sergei, you've done fantastic work.
Exceptional work. But - I think
your time on the AI division has
run its course.

On SERGEI - momentarily unsure if he's being fired.

FOREST (CONT'D)
I want you to join Devs.

SERGEI
... Devs.

Beat.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
Really?

FOREST
Yeah.

SERGEI closes his eyes.

Reopens them.

SERGEI
Thank you.

CUT TO -

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LILY and SERGEI lie in bed together. Side by side. Gazing at the ceiling in silence and wonder.

LILY
I honestly can't believe it. Devs.
It's beyond all. Not that you
don't deserve it, *totally* deserve
it...

SERGEI
I can't believe it either.

LILY
I'm just so fucking *proud* of you,
baby.

LILY rolls on to her side to face him.

LILY (CONT'D)
And you start tomorrow?

SERGEI
Apparently there's a whole security
process. But as long as I pass, by
the end of the day, I'll actually
be in there. Like - doing it.

LILY
Whatever doing it is.

SERGEI
Yeah.

Beat.

LILY
You're not going to be able to tell
me anything about what that is.

SERGEI
Well, I might be able to -

LILY sits up.

LILY
No. I'm saying let's keep it
totally simple. You tell me
nothing. And I never ask.

Beat.

SERGEI
Thank you.

LILY
Of course. I mean, *obviously*.

Beat.

SERGEI
I'm not going to be able to sleep.

LILY smiles.

LILY
So let's not sleep.

She leans down to SERGEI.

Pulls off his white vest, and chucks it aside.

Then they make love.

CUT TO -

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION/SECURITY ROOM - DAY

- KENTON.

The head of security at AMAYA. Early fifties. Tall, slim, short grey hair.

KENTON is reading handwritten notes.

SERGEI is sitting opposite him, hooked up to a polygraph machine.

KENTON looks up at SERGEI. Stares at him. Soul-reads him.

KENTON

Born Moscow. Moved to the US at eighteen. MIT. Then a failed start up. Then another. Then here. For four years.

SERGEI

Yes.

KENTON

You're dating someone at the company.

SERGEI

Lily Chan.

KENTON

Who works in encryption. And is Chinese.

SERGEI hesitates.

SERGEI

She's -

KENTON

(cuts in)

Is it a serious relationship?

SERGEI

Yes.

KENTON
You're faithful to each other? No
trouble on the horizon?

SERGEI
As far as I know.

KENTON
Planning to get married?

SERGEI
We've talked about it.

KENTON
Planning to have kids?

SERGEI
No time soon.

KENTON
You won't be able to discuss your
work with her at all. Think you'll
be able to do that?

SERGEI
Absolutely. We've discussed it
already. There's no issue there.

KENTON
No issue there.

Beat.

KENTON (CONT'D)
You Russian. Her Chinese. Me
nervous.

SERGEI
... Why?

KENTON
Why is the head of Amaya security
nervous about the Russians and the
Chinese?

SERGEI
Lily is American. Third - no,
fourth generation.

KENTON
Sure.

KENTON glances down at the POLYGRAPH.

Then back at SERGEI.

Beat.

KENTON (CONT'D)
Are you religious?

SERGEI
Excuse me?

KENTON
Are you religious.

SERGEI
... No. Not at all.

CUT TO -

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION/SECURITY CLEARANCE - DAY

EXTREME CLOSE UP on SERGEI'S retina being scanned.

His face being scanned.

His fingerprints being scanned.

His mouth being swabbed for DNA.

REVEAL -

- FOREST, appearing behind SERGEI and the SECURITY
TECHNICIANS, looking vaguely amused.

FOREST
Did you get his shoe-size?

SERGEI
I'm a ten.

FOREST laughs.

FOREST
Okay, guys. We're good.

CUT TO -

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION/ENCRYPTION - DAY

- LILY, watching SERGEI and FOREST in the distance, from her
office window.

They are walking along the path marked DEVS that leads from the rotunda to the woods.

She watches until they disappear into the trees.

On the screen behind her, the AMAYA branded screen-saver plays.

This time, the little girl is playing in a garden.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS WOODS - DAY

SERGEI and FOREST walk through the trees. The path here is pine needles. We would feel as if we were in a national park if not for the dotted cameras and sensors that are nestled in the green.

FOREST
So tell me about Devs.

SERGEI looks puzzled.

SERGEI
I can't tell you anything. No one knows what the Devs team does - except the Devs team.

FOREST
I wouldn't even say the Devs team knows what the Devs team does. Not all of them, anyway. But I'm asking you to guess.

FOREST glances at SERGEI.

FOREST (CONT'D)
I'm just curious.

SERGEI
... Okay.

Beat.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
Well - it's Devs. It's development, obviously. Of what's new. Of what's coming.

FOREST says nothing.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
But I doubt it's doubling up with any of the other Amaya divisions.
(MORE)

SERGEI (CONT'D)
So it's not AI, not encryption, not
search engines.

SERGEI hesitates.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
I think it probably relates to
National Security.

FOREST smiles.

FOREST
I don't give two fucks about our
National Security.

Beat.

SERGEI
Biotech.

FOREST
A misuse of resources.

SERGEI
Cold fusion?

FOREST
Alchemy.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS CLEARING - DAY

SERGEI and FOREST step out into a clearing.

In the clearing is a cube building, with half the cube below
ground. The visible part of the building is two stories
high. No windows. No features - except an entrance tunnel.

Clad entirely in metal. A dullish blue-grey.

FOREST
A full lead casing. Above and
below ground. Then a three metre
concrete shell. Then a series of
interference meshes. Then a five
metre vacuum seal - totally
unbroken. Then the labs.

SERGEI
The labs are inside an unbroken
vacuum seal? How we get across?

FOREST
You'll see. It's pretty neat.

FOREST starts walking towards the entrance tunnel.

FOREST (CONT'D)
Last chance to guess, Sergei.

SERGEI
Quantum home computers.

FOREST laughs.

INT. DEVS/ENTRANCE TUNNEL - DAY

A long entrance tunnel leads to -

INT. DEVS/VACUUM SEAL - DAY

- the VACUUM SEAL, and an AIRLOCK.

Both are made of clear glass, which allows us to see that DEVS is apparently a box within a box.

The interior wall of the outer box is covered in a gold-weave mesh.

The internal cube - which contains the labs - is completely unconnected to the exterior cube. Effectively, the interior box is floating in mid-air. No means of support anywhere.

Through the glass walls of the labs, we can see inside to the people working. In that respect, it is like viewing an office space from the street. DEVS TECHNICIANS are sitting at desks, working on computer terminals, chatting.

SERGEI
The entire lab is supported by
magnetic fields?

FOREST
Yep.

FOREST opens the door to the airlock -

- entering a glass capsule the size of an elevator, with metal strips along the underside of the floor.

INT. DEVS/VACUUM SEAL - DAY

From inside the vacuum seal, we watch as FOREST and SERGEI glide across the airless void in the glass capsule.

CUT TO -

INT. DEVS/LABS - DAY

- AMAYA playing on the screen.

A desk, a terminal.

A chair on which SERGEI sits.

The terminal is by the glass outer wall of the labs. Five metres away from SERGEI, the gold interference mesh shimmers.

On the inside wall of the lab, through more glass, we can see the CORE.

The CORE runs from the top to the bottom of the internal cube.

It contains a complex structure, made of largely of gold. Tight spirals of yellow metal, vertical bars and tubes, leading to fat white ceramic cylinders.

In some respects, it looks like a vast Modernist chandelier.

It is in fact the QUANTUM COMPUTER that sits at the heart of DEVS.

Around SERGEI'S desk, other DEVS TECHNICIANS work quietly at their terminals.

FOREST stands beside him.

FOREST

So. This is your station. If for you don't like the position, you can move to another station, as long as no one else is sitting there. Everything here is open. All code can be accessed. There are no passwords. There are no closed doors. There are also no cleaners - so please tidy up after yourself.

Beat.

SERGEI

... But what am I actually doing here?

FOREST

I'm not going to tell you. I don't actually need to.

FOREST reaches forwards and presses a key.

AMAYA vanishes from the screen, and is replaced by lines of CODE.

FOREST (CONT'D)
 Just sit. Read code. Take your
 time. And don't worry: you're
 going to figure it out.

FOREST watches SERGEI for a final moment.

FOREST (CONT'D)
 I know you are.

Then he rests a hand on the young man's shoulder. There's something in the gesture - something almost paternal, or vaguely regretful.

But SERGEI doesn't even notice. He is already zoning out. A slight frown of concentration starting to appear on his face. Starting to get lost in the lines on the screen.

Behind him, FOREST leaves.

We fill our field of vision with CODE.

Then **CUT TO -**

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

- home video. The corporation branding videos.

AMAYA is making a cake.

Stirring the mix with a wooden spoon.

The mixture is stiff, and she loses grip of the spoon, and it falls to the floor.

AMAYA looks up into the camera.

AMAYA
 Oh dear.

CUT TO -

INT. DEVS/TOILETS - DAY

Non-gender toilets.

A door opens.

SERGEI enters. Quickly locks the door.

Then goes to the toilet bowl and throws up.

He pauses between the violent retches. Fights to catches his breath.

Throws up again.

CUT TO -

- SERGEI by the sink.

The tap running. Washing out his mouth.

Then he dries his hands and face -

- and takes his WRISTWATCH off.

TIGHT ON the mechanical WATCH.

SERGEI'S fingers are trembling.

He's doing something - pulling out the crown, adjusting the DATE.

It flicks past date numbers, until it gets to 21.

But there is no 21.

There is a tiny CAMERA LENS.

A beat on SERGEI.

Shaking. Clenching his fist. Trying to control himself.

CUT TO -

INT. DEVS/LABS - LATER

- SERGEI at his desk.

Apparently lost in thought.

Hand resting on his chin. WATCH angled towards the screen.

CLOSE UP on the tiny lens in the watch.

CLOSE UP on a single bead of sweat, caught in SERGEI'S hairline, stopped from rolling down his temple.

On the screen, pages of code scroll by.

VOICE

Hey.

SERGEI starts slightly. Drops his wrist. Looks round.
Sees KATIE behind him. Holding a glass of water.
She smiles.

KATIE
Katie. We met earlier, but weren't
introduced.

SERGEI
Sergei.

KATIE
And Sergei's head is exploding.

SERGEI
Yes. It is.

KATIE puts the glass on the desk.

KATIE
Here. Take this. And remember
what Forest told you. There's no
hurry. You don't have to lose
yourself. You can take your time.

KATIE smiles.

KATIE (CONT'D)
In a way, that's the point, right?

SERGEI
... I guess it is.

She turns to go.

SERGEI quickly wipes away the bead of sweat.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
Katie.

KATIE turns.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
Just tell me - will it work? I
mean - really. Work.

KATIE pauses.

KATIE
... I don't know.

She shrugs.

KATIE (CONT'D)
But we'll all find out one day.

CUT TO -

INT. DEVS/VACUUM SEAL - LATER

- the view of SERGEI from the vacuum.

Scanning the code.

Stealing the code.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS CLEARING - NIGHT

Stars. Moon.

Softly illuminating the DEVS structure.

From the entrance tunnel, SERGEI appears.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS WOODS - NIGHT

SERGEI walks through the woods.

Walking quickly.

Not trying to look hurried. But wanting to get away.

Moonlight filters through the trees.

Soft glowing ground-level lamps up-light the pine needle path.

SERGEI turns a curve in the path.

Then stops.

Catches his breath.

FOREST is just ahead.

Leaning with his back against a tree.

A beat.

Then FOREST speaks.

FOREST
The universe is deterministic.

Beat.

SERGEI
... Sorry?

FOREST
(repeats)
The universe is deterministic.

FOREST turns to SERGEI.

FOREST (CONT'D)
The marble rolls because it was pushed; the man eats because he is hungry; an effect is the result of a cause. The life we lead, with all its apparent chaos, is actually a life on a tram line. Prescribed. Undeviating. Deterministic.

FOREST pushes himself off the tree.

FOREST (CONT'D)
I know it doesn't *feel* that way, Sergei. We fall into an illusion of Free Will, because the tram lines are invisible, and we feel so certain about our subjective state. Our feelings, opinions, judgements, decisions.

FOREST takes a step closer.

FOREST (CONT'D)
You joined my company. Gained our trust. Gained *my* trust. Then stole my code, on your James Bond wristwatch.

SERGEI is frozen to the spot.

Blood running cold.

SERGEI
... I don't know what you mean.

FOREST ignores SERGEI'S attempt to lie.

FOREST
That would appear to be the result of some decisions, wouldn't it? About where you placed your allegiance. About who you would betray.

(MORE)

FOREST (CONT'D)

But if we live in a deterministic universe, then those decisions can only have been the result of something prior. Where you were born; how you were brought up; the physical construction of your particular brain.

FOREST moves closer again. Now only a couple of metres away.

FOREST (CONT'D)

It's the nature/nurture matrix. Exactly the same as the nematode worm in your simulation. More complex, more nuanced, but still, at the end of the day: cause and effect.

SERGEI'S gaze flicks to the path ahead.

Clearly considering making a run for it.

Assessing whether he will get past the man on the path ahead.

FOREST looks at SERGEI for a final beat.

He looks sad. Concerned for the younger man in front of him.

FOREST (CONT'D)

I hope you understand what I'm saying, Sergei. This is forgiveness. This is absolution. You made no decision to betray me. You literally could *only* have done what you did.

AT THAT MOMENT -

- SERGEI starts to run.

FOREST doesn't stop him.

But KENTON does.

Five metres down the path, KENTON steps out from where he has been hiding, and knocks SERGEI flying.

SERGEI lands hard, but before he can get up, KENTON is on him.

He pulls SERGEI upwards to a kneeling position -

- and in the same move, pulls a transparent PLASTIC BAG over SERGEI'S head.

With the first instinctive intake of breath, the bag vacuum-forms around SERGEI'S face, and he starts to choke.

SERGEI fights, but KENTON holds firm.

It takes over a minute for SERGEI to die.

It's a painfully extended length of time.

Oddly quiet and still.

And *during this time*, one of the DEVS TECHNICIANS appears on the path, walking home.

It's KATIE - the young woman who brought SERGEI a glass of water.

She sees what's happening at the side of the path.

Sees KENTON holding and suffocating SERGEI.

Sees FOREST watching the young man dying.

But she doesn't break her stride. Her response is the way someone might walk past an incident in the street, in which one did not wish to become involved.

As KATIE disappears, SERGEI'S struggling starts to weaken.

Then the movement stops.

Then the attempts at breathing.

Silence.

A couple of beats later, KENTON lets SERGEI slump.

KENTON wipes the back of his hand over his mouth.

KENTON

I fucking hate killing people.

FOREST

Were you not listening to what I just said? Not your fault.

KENTON

I was listening. Tram lines.

KENTON looks down at SERGEI'S lifeless body.

KENTON (CONT'D)

Still makes me feel sick.

CUT TO -

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

LILY is in bed, reading.

She puts her book down.

Checks her phone.

It reads 12:25 AM.

LILY
What the fuck.

She dials SERGEI'S phone. It goes straight to answer.

She hesitates.

Then calls another number.

CUT TO -

INT. JON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

- JON, SERGEI'S colleague from the AI team, waking as his phone rings.

He sees the caller: LILY.

Picks up.

JON
He's still not back?

LILY
(down phone)
No. I'm really worried, Jon. I know something has happened.

JON
Something like what?

LILY
(down phone)
Something.

JON
He's almost certainly still in Devs. No way there'll be a phone signal there, right?
(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)
Knowing Sergei, he's lost track of
time from all the cool toys he's
got to play with. Get some sleep.
And try not to wake up when he
rolls in at three AM.

LILY
(down phone)
... Okay.

JON
Night, Lils.

JON hangs up.

Sinks back to his pillow.

CUT TO -

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAWN

- the time reading 5:48 AM.

Light is creeping past the bedroom blinds.

LILY wakes with a start.

Immediately checks the bed beside her.

Empty.

LILY
No. No, no...

She checks her phone.

No messages.

Gets up.

Walks into the living room.

Checks the bathroom.

Nothing.

LILY (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
... Oh God.

CUT TO -

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION/KENTON'S OFFICE - DAY

- KENTON listening to LILY with a slight expression of concern on his face.

LILY

That was the last time I saw him.
I was at my office window.

KENTON

In encryption.

LILY

Yes. He was heading towards Devs,
from the hub. And after that,
nothing.

KENTON

And obviously you would have
expected to hear from him.

LILY

Definitely.

KENTON

No trouble at home. No way he
could have gone somewhere else last
night. You live together, right?

LILY

No trouble. I promise you, Sergei
disappearing makes no sense at all.

KENTON holds up a hand.

KENTON

Ma'am - I believe you. And the
good news is that with our systems
here, his movements are going to be
easy to track. You kids are
monitored with facial recognition
and voice-print the entire time
you're on campus. So let me just
punch in his ID and we'll get to
the bottom of this in no time.

Beat.

KENTON (CONT'D)

Okay. Here we are. Looks like he
left Devs at quarter to ten last
night.

LILY
And went where?

KENTON tilts his monitor around for LILY to see.

It shows SERGEI walking past the rotunda. The time code reads 21:58.

KENTON
That's him, right?

LILY
That's him.

KENTON
Okay. So let's see where this leads.

KENTON starts fast-forwarding through the recording.

KENTON (CONT'D)
So our cameras have him crossing the car park at half ten.

LILY
He's not taking the shuttle bus...

KENTON
And look - we've got him again here. Eleven o'clock.

The recording shows SERGEI walking past the massive statue of AMAYA.

LILY
He's walking to the freeway?

KENTON
Looks like it.

LILY
But why would he do that?

KENTON
I don't know. But from this point he's off campus. We can't track him any more.

AT THAT MOMENT -

- the door to KENTON'S office opens.

Revealing FOREST.

FOREST
K, sorry to bust in, but looks like
we've got a VIP visit this
afternoon.

KENTON
One moment, sir. We seem to have a
situation here. One of our
employees has apparently gone
missing, some time last night.

FOREST frowns.

FOREST
Missing? Who?

KENTON
It's the kid who just joined Devs.
The one I screened.

FOREST frowns.

FOREST
Sergei? From AI?

LILY
Yes. Did you see him yesterday?

FOREST
Sure. I took him to Devs
personally. But what are you
talking about, 'missing'?

KENTON indicates his monitor.

KENTON
We've got CCTV of him leaving the
campus on foot. Twenty three
hundred hours. Then nothing.

FOREST
(to Lily)
And no missed calls. No messages.
He never came home.

LILY shakes her head.

LILY
And that never happens.

FOREST thinks a moment.

FOREST

Okay. Now - I don't want you to worry. I'm sure everything is going to be fine, with a simple explanation. But to be on the safe side, we're going to go by the book.

(to Kenton)

Call the police. Report him missing. Right now.

KENTON

Sir.

CUT TO -

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION CAMPUS/ROTUNDA - DAY

Outside the rotunda, two COPS are talking to KENTON and FOREST.

Inside the rotunda, LILY sits with JON.

JON

It's going to be all right, Lils.

LILY shakes her head.

LILY

... I honestly don't think it is.

JON

But how can you know that?

LILY

I just feel it. Even in the film. The film of him walking. There was something strange about it. It was like - purposeful. Heading somewhere. But like a zombie.

JON

I don't even know what that means.

FOREST enters and sits at their table.

FOREST

You've spoken to the cops.

LILY

Yes. They took a statement.

FOREST

I'm just about to give mine. And what you're going to do now is take the rest of the day off work. We've got a car which is going to drive you home.

He reaches out and puts his hand on hers.

FOREST (CONT'D)

Lily, you have my personal guarantee that I'm all over this. As soon as I hear something, I'm going to let you know.

FOREST gives LILY his card.

FOREST (CONT'D)

This is my personal cell. You call me any time. I mean it. Okay?

LILY

Thank you.

FOREST squeezes her hand.

FOREST

It's going to be okay.

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT - DAY

The empty apartment.

The latch turns.

LILY enters.

LILY

Sergei?

Silence.

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

LILY enters the bedroom.

On the floor on SERGEI'S side of the bed is his white vest and shorts, discarded two nights ago.

LILY'S eyes suddenly fill with tears.

She sits on the bed and starts to cry.

Then -

- she stops.

Takes a breath.

And wipes her eyes.

Suddenly thinking.

Thinking hard.

CUT TO -

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

- a drawer being pulled open, revealing various pieces of abandoned previous-generation tech gear.

Including an old cell phone. Her old cell phone.

LILY picks it up.

CUT TO -

- the phone powering-up, attached to a charger.

The wallpaper is a picture of her and SERGEI.

LILY scrolls through menus -

- until she gets to ERASE ALL DATA AND RESTORE TO FACTORY SETTINGS.

She confirms.

The phone starts to reformat itself.

CUT TO -

- LILY standing by the window.

Gazing at San Francisco.

Until the phone pings back to life.

CUT TO -

- LILY sitting on the sofa.

Inputting data to the phone.

REVEAL the screen.

The phone is asking: WHAT IS YOUR CLOUD ACCOUNT?

LILY types SERGEI_144

The phone asks: RESTORE FROM MOST RECENT BACKUP?

LILY confirms.

And enters a password.

CUT TO -

- the phone coming back to life.

As SERGEI'S phone.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS WOODS - DAY

KATIE walks through the woodlands towards DEVS.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS CLEARING - DAY

KATIE enters the clearing in which the DEVS structure is located.

Heading for the entrance tunnel.

Then sees FOREST.

He's sitting alone at the edge of the clearing. Gazing at the DEVS cube structure.

But perhaps lost in thought.

KATIE hesitates a moment.

Then starts walking towards him.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/DEVS CLEARING - DAY

KATIE sits beside FOREST.

KATIE

... Hi.

FOREST doesn't answer.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I know. It's really hard.

FOREST
It really shouldn't be.

KATIE
No. It shouldn't. But it *is*.

KATIE rests a hand on his shoulder. Consoling.

KATIE (CONT'D)
What are we supposed to do?
Unravel a lifetime of moral
experience? Unlearn what has
always seemed true? These things -
they run deep.

FOREST nods.

FOREST
Yeah. They do.

KATIE
It's like, whatever we *know*, the
things we *feel* are still locked
inside us. Human beings are hard-
wired magical thinkers. You could
have the most rational person in
the world, but if their kid gets
sick, they'll start praying.

KATIE glances at FOREST.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Sorry. That was clumsy. I was
just -

FOREST waves a hand.

FOREST
It's fine, Katie. You're right.

FOREST looks back at her.

FOREST (CONT'D)
Wise, too.

KATIE smiles.

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

LILY sits at a dining table. She's going through SERGEI'S
phone.

Text messages.

WhatsApp.

Emails.

Beside her, she's got paper and pen and is making notes.

Names. Times. Places. Searching for anything that might tell her something.

But finding nothing.

She rubs her eyes.

LILY

Sergei, give me something. *Please.*

She looks back at the phone.

Flicking through the apps.

Then pauses.

Frowns slightly.

Looking at a SUDOKU app.

LILY (CONT'D)

Sudoku? You fucking hate Sudoku.

She taps the app.

And immediately a PASSWORD BOX appears.

LILY (CONT'D)

Who password protects a puzzle game?

She thinks a moment.

LILY (CONT'D)

Well you use this for pretty much everything else...

LILY types in a password.

Hits DONE.

And a message appears:

PASSWORD FAIL

TWO MORE FAILS WILL CAUSE TOTAL DATA WIPE

Beat.

LILY stares at the screen.

LILY (CONT'D)
... Woah.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO/OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Workers filter out of an office building at night.

Among them we find a young man. JAMIE. Late twenties.

Slightly scruffy. Jeans, trainers, Fred Perry T-Shirt.
Carrying a laptop-sized backpack.

He heads down the street.

Passes LILY, who is tucked into a shop doorway, without seeing her.

LILY
Jamie.

JAMIE stops.

Looks round.

Sees LILY, and his face drops.

JAMIE
Oh no.

LILY
Can we talk?

JAMIE closes his eyes. As if hoping she won't be there when he reopens them.

But she is.

LILY (CONT'D)
Please.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

JAMIE and LILY sit in a bar, facing each other.

LILY looking at JAMIE.

JAMIE looking at his hands.

Beats pass.

Then LILY tries to speak.

LILY

I -

JAMIE cuts her off.

JAMIE

Here's what happened.

He looks up at her.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I was totally in love with you. I thought you were in love with me. You land an amazing new job at Amaya, and I couldn't be happier. You start the job. A fortnight later, I go to visit my folks in Chicago. I'm away three fucking weeks. And when I get back, you're cold. You won't smile at me, or touch me, or hardly even look at me. Four days later - four *days* - I ask you if you want to split up. I'm hoping more than anything that you're going to say no. But you say *yes*.

JAMIE takes a deep breath.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That same afternoon, I leave our apartment with two bags. And I never hear from you again.

LILY

... I'm sorry.

JAMIE

I hear *about* you. I hear about you the whole fucking time. I hear you started seeing some AI coder called Sergei pretty much as soon as I'd gone. I hear he's ultra talented. I hear he's moved in to the apartment we used to share. But I don't hear *from* you. For two fucking years.

LILY shrugs. Helplessly.

LILY

I'm *sorry*.

JAMIE
And is that why you're here? To
tell me that?

Silence.

Then LILY shakes her head.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Then what? Not quite done grinding
my self-esteem into the dust?

LILY takes a breath.

LILY
I need your help.

A beat on JAMIE. He can see the seriousness in her eyes. In her voice.

JAMIE
... My help?

LILY
Yes.

JAMIE softens slightly.

JAMIE
... With what?

LILY doesn't answer. Struggling with precisely what to say.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
(quiet)
Oh shit.

JAMIE exhales.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Okay. Look - let's start this
conversation again. When you
dumped me, it seriously fucked me
up. But I don't mean to sound
angry. Or I don't want to be
angry. I just -

He breaks off.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
If you really need my help,
obviously I'll give it. Tell me
what's going on.

LILY hesitates one more moment.

Then speaks. Not meeting JAMIE'S gaze.

LILY

Sergei went missing last night.
And I know something bad has
happened to him. And there's
something weird on his phone, and
it's password protected, and will
reformat if I get the password
wrong. And you're the one person I
know who might figure out a way to
get around that.

LILY now looks up to meet JAMIE'S gaze again.

And sees that the softness has fully gone.

JAMIE

You want my help to track down your
boyfriend by cracking his phone?

LILY

... Yes.

Silence.

JAMIE

Unreal. Literally unreal.

JAMIE stands.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Lily. Sincerely. From the very
bottom of my heart. Fuck off.

JAMIE exits.

Leaving LILY alone.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION CAMPUS - NIGHT

The view over AMAYA CAMPUS at night.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The massive photo-real statue of AMAYA that towers over the
trees.

Then suddenly, from the trees -

- a FIREBALL.

A lick of bright orange flame, curling up into the night sky.

Illuminating the statue's face.

An eerie glow on the little's girl's massive face.

Glinting in her eyes.

Which then subsides.

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The front door bell to the apartment is ringing.

INT. LILY AND SERGEI'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - MORNING

LILY wakes with a start at the noise.

Gets up at once.

Goes to the intercom.

Sees JON on the video-link to the street outside.

LILY

Jon? What is it? Have they found
him?

JON

Get dressed. They need us to come
in. Right now.

CUT TO -

INT. AMAYA CORPORATION/KENTON'S OFFICE - DAY

- FULL SCREEN on CCTV footage.

We are watching SERGEI.

He is walking through trees.

It's night.

He's carrying something in his hand.

A fuel canister.

The image cuts between different cameras as we track him.

Then he stops.

Stands still a moment.

Then SERGEI takes the fuel canister, lifts it above his head, and pours the liquid over him.

Then he drops the fuel canister.

Reaches into his pocket.

Pulls something out.

A lighter.

He pauses a final moment.

Then flicks the lighter, and is instantly engulfed in flame.

OFF SCREEN -

- LILY makes a half choke, half sob.

The image switches off.

REVEAL -

- we have been watching the monitor in KENTON'S office.

KENTON is at his desk.

LILY is sat opposite, in a state of shock.

FOREST is beside her, holding her arm.

And a COP stands behind them.

COP
It's definitely him?

FOREST
(quiet)
Definitely him.

LILY rises.

LILY
No, no, no -

FOREST
Lily -

LILY wrenches free of FOREST'S grasp.

LILY

NO!

She exits the room.

Before anyone can stop her.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

LILY runs across the campus.

Past the rotunda.

Employees watch her pass, exchanging glances.

EXT. AMAYA CORPORATION/ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

LILY runs past the feet of the AMAYA statue.

Ahead are COPS, and police tape.

She has run past them before they know what's happening.

Past two white-suited FORENSIC OFFICERS -

- to the area of blackened grass, and the discarded fuel canister.

And SERGEI'S burned body.

There, LILY stops.

And starts screaming.

CUT TO -

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

- HOME VIDEO.

AMAYA is in bed. FOREST lies next to her.

They are reading a bedtime story: The Very Hungry Caterpillar.

FOREST

So what did he eat on Saturday?

AMAYA points at the book.

AMAYA

A cake. And ice cream. And
cheese. And another cake.

FOREST

That's the same cake.

AMAYA

No. He ate too much cake. Because
he had a stomach ache.

FOREST

I bet he had a stomach ache.

FOREST turns the page.

FOREST (CONT'D)

But what happened on Sunday? 'On
Sunday, the caterpillar ate through
one nice green leaf. And after
that he felt much better.'

AMAYA

Yes. He felt better. But he was a
fat caterpillar. But then -

AMAYA turns the next page -

AMAYA (CONT'D)

- he was a BUTTERFLY!

FOREST laughs.

FOREST

You skipped ahead!

AMAYA

Yes. Because that's the end.

FOREST

Is it?

AMAYA

Yes. It's the end now.

FOREST

Okay.

FOREST closes the book.

CUT TO BLACK