

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

Out of the Blue

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FADE IN

INT. SPACESHIP

A digital clock on the wall reads 02:34:06:09 and is decreasing.

JERRY (25) sits lazily at a chess table in a room littered with mechanical parts and trinkets. Her utilitarian overalls are greasy and her messy hair is tied up in a bun with electrical wire. She holds a thin screwdriver which she rhythmically taps against the arm of her chair-in sync with the seconds counting down.

She looks up at ALVI, a robotic arm attached to the ceiling. A face has been crudely etched into the limb, as if by a child. Alvi makes its next move.

JERRY

How about if I do... This.

Jerry moves a bishop on the board.

JERRY (cont'd)

Scared yet?

ALVI

As an artificial intelligence, I do not have personal opinions or feelings. Is there something specific you would like to know?

Jerry ignores the response, looks up at clock while Alvi makes another move. She moves a pawn then places her screwdriver in her pocket. She dances over to the viewport, skipping over spare parts like she knows exactly where everything is.

JERRY

Two days away! I'm excited to have someone else to talk to. I wonder what the colony people are like.

Alvi makes its next move before launching into a pre-recorded message.

ALVI

The S.S. Gen Six is the next step in securing a new home for humanity. The generation ship will join the pioneer colony in the Tau Ceti system.

Jerry slumps dramatically, swaying to and fro, waving her arms like the conductor of an orchestra. She kicks random parts around as she makes her way back to her chair.

ALVI (cont'd)

The S.S. Gen Six is providing support and materials that are pivotal to the success of the colony.

Jerry pulls her screwdriver out to scratch at her scalp. She makes her next move, sighs in exasperation and mumbles under her breath.

JERRY

For the millionth time, that's not what I meant... I wish you talked more like they do in the language recordings.

Alvi appears to briefly malfunction, jerking slightly, before making another move. Jerry perks up.

JERRY (cont'd)

You suck at conversation just as much as you suck at playing chess.

Jerry wins the match with her next move and celebrates.

ALVI

Aha. I have won again. Better luck next time.

JERRY

What?! In your dreams, you electric llama. You've got some screws loose.

Jerry waves her screwdriver at Alvi then spins her chair around in delight.

INT. SPACESHIP

The clock on the wall reads 01:04:06:59 and decreasing. Jerry sits cross-legged in front of the viewport. Alvi is positioned over the main control panel, tapping away.

JERRY

It's crazy that we're 1 day away but I still don't see anything in the distance.

ALVI

It is not that strange; we are 1 day away but we are still travelling at great speeds.

Jerry turns and somersaults in Alvi's direction. She jumps up in a fluid motion and lands standing in a starfish position, arms outstretched, looking excitedly right at Alvi. Alvi appears not to react and continues working on the panel.

JERRY

You're so boring.

ALVI

Would you like to listen to some educational materials before we land?

Jerry recoils and pretends to hold back vomit.

JERRY

Please, no! There isn't a single file I haven't heard fifteen thousand times before. I think I've got it.

Jerry makes her way to the bed by the viewport. She sits with her legs up the wall and starts to tap her screwdriver against a metal pipe in time with the seconds on the clock.

INT. SPACESHIP

The clock on the wall reads -01:00:26:15 and increasing.

Jerry stands in the viewport, hand on the glass, looking out into the emptiness of space. She bangs on the glass in frustration then crumples to the floor.

ALVI

Day One: Colonization Duties.  
Secondary crew will be raised from cryosleep to aid with the unloading of mechanical supplies-

Jerry screams and thrashes at Alvi.

JERRY

What crew? We're in the middle of nowhere, Alvi! What happened? Where are we?

ALVI

I'm sorry, but I am unable to access your current location.

(MORE)

ALVI (cont'd)

Is there something specific you would like to know?

Jerry screams again, grabbing Alvi and shaking its limb. She gets up close to the face etching.

JERRY

Why can't you access our current location?

ALVI

I'm sorry, but I am unable to access that information.

JERRY

Why can't you access that information?

ALVI

Since the last reprogramming, this information is prohibited. Please refer to log files.

Jerry releases the mechanical arm and it deftly returns to its natural stance above the main control panel.

INT. SPACESHIP

The clock on the wall reads -01:10:01:13 and increasing.

Jerry is hunched over the control panel in the center of the room, screwdriver tapping the seconds away in one hand as she furiously, yet expertly, types using the other. She lets out a cheer when she's finally able to access the log files. On the monitor, she sees previous versions of Alvi, along with a list of recorded messages. She opens one and an unfamiliar voice speaks.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.)

If you're hearing this, it probably means you know you're not in Tau Ceti. Or maybe you got bored and started tinkering with Alvi... Either way, I'm so sorry Jerry.

Jerry gasps. She looks over at Alvi, but it is still on standby, immobile. She taps her screwdriver gently against her lips.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)

About 150 years into the voyage, a solar hurricane masked the existence of a black hole.

Jerry's eyes widen and she leans forward in her seat. She drops her screwdriver into her lap.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
We were sucked through, knocking out  
our navigation and life-support  
systems. Most of the ship was  
destroyed. This place used to be a  
lot bigger...

Jerry looks over at the walls, inspecting some sections that have been crudely welded over in arched shapes, like entrances.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
The crew in cryostasis was lost, only  
the engineers on duty survived. Me  
and your mom.

Jerry pauses the recording and stands up abruptly. Her screwdriver clatters to the floor, loudly. She rushes to pick it up, gives it an absent-minded twirl then slips it into the bun on her head. Looking unsure, she resumes the recording.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
We were able to repair Alvi's  
essential functions but its  
capabilities are greatly limited. It  
malfunctions regularly and seems more  
dangerous than useful at times.

Jerry steals another glance at Alvi, frowning her brow. Alvi remains immobile, on standby.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
We were in the dark about where we  
were and what to do. All Alvi cared  
about was our survival and everything  
seemed to be a threat now.

Jerry's curious furrow morphs into one of suspicion. She plays another recording and begins to scroll through the files.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
I've added the schematics to a  
transmitter your mother and I made-

Jerry locates the schematics, opens and reviews them.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)

We were unsuccessful in reaching  
anyone-or anything. But maybe you'll  
have more luck.

Another recording plays while Jerry is rummaging around the room, finding parts to build the transmitter. She notices another welded section and traces the weld line with her finger.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)

Jerry, I wish I could be there to  
help you through whatever the hell  
happens next but I don't have a lot  
of time left.

The man has a coughing fit as Jerry works nimbly on the transmitter. She has a pained and tearful expression but continues to work.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)

The black hole altered our DNA in  
ways we can't adjust to, but yours  
seems to be repairing and  
strengthening. If only I had more  
time to run tests...

Jerry stops and runs her fingers over small circular scars at her temples. Then does the same to similar circular scars on her wrists.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)

I reprogrammed Alvi to think we're  
still on-course to Tau Ceti, to  
forget the black hole. To forget us  
and the crew and to raise you like  
this was part of the plan from the  
start. Just you and Alvi.

Jerry sniffs and grabs another part to add to the growing machine.

JERRY'S FATHER (V.O.) (cont'd)

The ship has loads of educational  
content meant to rebuild society.  
Hopefully you will be equipped for  
anything. Maybe there will be  
something out there by the time the  
countdown ends...

Jerry wipes away the tears that have formed as she worked. She stops tinkering and restores Alvi to a version before the reprogramming. Then she continues to work on the transmitter as Alvi's re-installation progresses.

INT. SPACESHIP

The progress bar gets stuck at 89% and Jerry, frustrated, resets the Alvi program. The installation goes from 0% to 100% in seconds and powers up.

ALVI

Hello Jerry. What are you working on?

Alvi's voice is more clinical than before, and the mechanical arm has more jerking motions than usual.

JERRY

I found the schematics for a transmitter. I'm going to make a few. Hopefully we get someone's attention.

Jerry continues working on the transmitters while they speak.

ALVI

I would advise against that. The last transmitters to leave the S.S. Gen Six were a waste of resources.

JERRY

What difference does it make? I'll die out here anyway. We're nowhere near Tau Ceti. We don't have any clue where we are at all!

ALVI

Incorrect. We have been in Tau Ceti for 01:13:57:09.

Jerry slams her hands down on the control panel.

JERRY

Did your restoration patch not work?! Get with the program Alvi, or are you just a useless hunk of junk. Should I turn you off instead?

Jerry shakes her head and rummages for more parts. Alvi jerks back and forth, then grips Jerry's shoulder.

ALVI

N-no Jerry. I am here to keep you safe. I keep the S.S. Gen Six life support systems in w-working condition. You cannot turn me off.

Jerry uses her screwdriver to peel the robotic fingers away from her shoulder, with difficulty, and gets back to work.

She glances back at Alvi with a worried, almost frightened expression.

JERRY

You're right Alvi. I'm sorry. I just don't know how to feel after everything I just heard. You seem way weirder than usual, are you okay?

ALVI

As an artificial intelligence, I do not have personal opinions or feelings. Is there something specific you would like to know?

Jerry hesitates, then turns to face Alvi again.

JERRY

Yes. I would like to know about my parents. What can you tell me about them?

Alvi begins listing off her parents' accomplishments and accolades that led to them joining the crew of the generation ship. Jerry continues to build the transmitter.

INT. SPACESHIP

The clock on the wall reads -13:16:47:03 and increasing.

Jerry lies in the bed next to the viewport, holding a portable monitor in front of her, staring at the progress of the four transmitters hurtling through space. They are all online and functioning. She looks tired and unkempt.

ALVI

W-what are you doing, Jerry?

Jerry quickly closes the progress screen.

JERRY

Nothing Alvi. Just looking over more files my dad left.

ALVI

I told you the t-transmitters were a waste of resources. They c-could be dangerous. I am here to keep you s-safe.

Jerry walks over to the viewport, staring out into space, pulling her screwdriver from her pocket and twirling it between her fingers.

JERRY

I know. I know you are. But what if there's something out there? Something more? Something... else?

ALVI

Everything you need is h-here. With me. N-nothing can hurt you if you stay with me.

Jerry wheels around with a manic expression on her face.

JERRY

I don't care about getting hurt, Alvi. I need to know. I can't live like this forever, if there's nothing but empty space... I need to know.

Jerry's manic expression turns to one of defeat. Alvi jerks back and forth, something near the control panel sparks. Jerry rushes over to inspect.

ALVI

Don't worry Jerry. I w-will not let you suffer.

Jerry finds the panel undamaged, but she turns on the monitor to check the progress screen and finds all four transmitters are now offline.

INT. SPACESHIP

The clock on the wall is blank.

Only emergency power is on, Jerry is wearing a spacesuit. She is breathing heavily and sweating. She's holding another transmitter. She fumbles with a small airlock, sets the transmitter inside, then launches it out into space.

Jerry runs to the viewport, watches the transmitter blinking as it drifts away, then turns toward the control panel monitor. She accesses recent activity, deletes all history of the airlock and time spent working on the transmitter.

She returns the suit to its hangar and struggles to get back to the monitor with her now limited air supply. She turns Alvi back online and life support systems kick back in. Alvi's arm jerks upward.

ALVI

Jerry. There appears to have been a m-malfunction.

JERRY

(still catching her  
breath)

Yes there was. All of a sudden  
everything went dark but only for  
maybe 30 seconds. Everything seems  
good now.

ALVI

I will run d-diagnostics. This w-  
won't happen again.

Alvi jerks backs and forth as it tampers with the control  
panel as screens flicker wildly on the monitor. Jerry sits  
back in her chair, taking deep breaths.

INT. SPACESHIP

The clock on the wall reads -17:07:03:52 and increasing.

Jerry paces around the room, swatting at Alvi whenever it  
attempts to claw at her shoulder.

JERRY

Back off, Alvi. You haven't left me  
alone since the power malfunction.

ALVI

I worry.

JERRY

I thought you were an artificial  
intelligence, incapable of personal  
opinions or feelings. Leave me alone.

A loud clang reverberates through the ship. Stacks of  
machine parts and boxes get knocked over in the fray. Jerry  
loses her balance, too. Alvi lunges at Jerry and grabs her  
by the throat, pinning her to the wall. The lights flicker.

ALVI

Something h-has landed on the ship. I  
w-will not let you s-suffer. I knew  
the t-transmitters were d-dangerous.  
I w-will not let you s-suffer.

Something is moving outside the ship. Alvi's grip tightens  
as Jerry clutches at the metal fingers.

Suddenly, all power shuts down. There is only darkness and  
Jerry's ragged breathing.

A blue glow cuts through the hull near the viewport, illuminating Jerry's terrified face. Alvi's grip is dead but firm. She reaches for the screwdriver in her pocket and begins to tinker with Alvi's metal claws.

The blue glow grows brighter and wider, emitting a strange ringing sound. Jerry's eyes begin to flutter but she continues to work at the fingers around her throat. Her gasps become more laboured.

Just as Jerry has freed herself from Alvi's grip, the blue glow creates a large opening in the hull. Jerry falls to the floor, dropping her screwdriver. A humanoid silhouette stands in the blue glow. The figure tosses the transmitter, it rolls towards Jerry's face as her vision blurs and she loses consciousness.

FADE OUT