We hear over the comm, “Come in, come in it’s me, Izar. Over.”
“We’re here,” Darnit responds.
“I just had a visit from orbit. Tres hopped out. Of a shuttle. Out of space. And… Daryo died. His body went into rapid organ failure and died suddenly and they could save him.”
“Is it possible his consciousness is still in the ReDream?” Darnit says to Ego.
“Enough is unknown here that anything seems possible. Daryo certainly seemed to think the AI was freeing him from his body. For his sake, I hope he’s right.”
Something happened with the OTS communications devices, so they couldn’t just radio to us. It’s being interrupted by a magnetic field created by the gas giant here.
Tres is asking whether to put the body on ice or what. We agree that is for the best. Ego especially would like to investigate.

Firecrotch the bugbear makes the first move, slides under Hrothulf’s legs, knocks him over and is jumping up and down upon Hrothulf’s chest.
Darnit is now giving strategic advice to Hrothulf.
There is an elevated bit in the middle, about three feet up, and a chasm all around about 6-7 ft down and three feet across.
While Firecrotch is jumping on his chest erratically, Hrothulf realizes there is a smoky haze billowing from the chasm in all directions, creating a dense fog.
The next time Firecrotch comes down upon Hrothulf, Hrothulf catches him and rolls, rolling one of Firecrotch’s ankles.

Out with Tres, Ego emerges. “Hey there, loser!” says Izar. Ego ignores her, and says, much too loudly coming from the din of the colosseum, “Good to see you, Tres, in spite of the consequences.” “You too. What should we do?” Thinking for a moment, Ego asks how we would have told them when to send the shuttle, with the comms. Tres is a bit defensive. “We didn’t know it was down until all this happened!” Ego says she was just trying to figure this out. Ego, a bit agitated by the situation: “Izar, I need to get to Daryo. We need to decide when to have the shuttle come back to pick you all up.” “I don’t know, ten minutes?” Izar says. The trip is about two hours, Tres tells us. Ego says she can wait ten minutes rather than sending back the shuttle later.

Firecrotch comes in with a flying kick that kind of pushes Hrothulf a little but doesn’t do much at all. Firecrotch is 95 lbs, very thin and scraggly, green with orange hair on his chest, crotch, shins, mohawk. (A la street fighter) Hrothulf tries again to grab an ankle and succeeds. Firecrotch tries to spin and kick with his other foot, but misses. Hrothulf now has an ankle and Firecrotch is otherwise prostrate. Hrothulf reaches over with his other hand and grabs his neck. His hand reaches nearly all the way around. And he beats Firecrotch’s face into the ground repeatedly. Firecrotch is knocked out. The red lights circle the arena indicating the fight is over, and Hrothulf’s avatar gif of him, doing the floss and ending in a dab, goes up with the confetti emoji, so to speak. Hrothulf kneels over to make sure Firecrotch can breathe and will be okay, then he lights a cigar and walks away. “Y’all come back now, ya hear?” The audience is more pleased by this fight than the last couple.

As soon as Hrothulf gets out, a couple of people are asking about his workout regimen, and how he got so swoll. “It’s mostly the vodka martinis.” “Is that lava or creatine flowing there under your skin, brah?” “I’ll never tell.” Hrothulf forgoes the option of another fight, to the disappointment of onlookers. He wants to get to the group, and heads toward the door. He recommends to his admirers a lava swim. “Good for the constitution. If you can handle it, it’s fantastic.” Darnit also heads outside with him.

Seeing Hrothulf, Izar says, “I know how you feel, Hrothulf. Victory is sweet. We’re pretty much the same, you and I.” “You didn’t win!” Ego says. Darnit notes Hrothulf won eight seconds faster than he did.

Ego urges the group to go to the ship now, saying that otherwise we won’t know when to send the shuttle back, so we all need to go now. Darnit is a bit disappointed there was no divine meeting, but figures there would have been a Vardum trap otherwise anyway.

Back on the ship…
Daryo is still in the seat. Ego unplugs Daryo from the ReDream, then investigates the tech, able to without qualm for the first time, and carefully removing from his wrist the item DarAI requested.

Darnit talks the fight with Hrothulf, somewhat resentful of Hrothulf’s quicker victory, but hiding this.

Ego is thinking, so she unplugs Daryo from the ReDream. Normally you wouldn’t for the burst to the body that could cause. Unless something changed, DarAI was stuck in the ReDream, no connection even seemingly possible. So if there was a distinction between Daryo and DarAI, then DarAI is disconnected from the body, and a ghost in the machine. The watch is encrypted, requiring dna encryption before it will activate.

Izar is saddened by Daryo’s passing, but also knows he was in a lot of pain and suffering. He believes he is able to still adventure in some sense now. “I’ll be right back,” Izar says, and walks away, walking to Daryo’s room and looks for his candies. Izar says, “Hiare, set to work and organize.” Hiare starts categorizing Daryo’s things in the room, organizing by type. Izar is okay with Hiare eating some of the candy. Then she blinks away and doesn’t come back. Empathic link is fuzzy at best. But the parts Izar catches: she’s elated.

Ego: “I’d like to go in there.”
Good heavens, no,” Hortulf says. “I’m just a simple barbarian here, but it’s my understanding there is a rogue ai that’s desperate to get out under any circumstances.”
“I’m with the Firecrotch beater,” Darnit says.
Ego: “But there’s no difference between this time and last, is there?”

Hrothulf and Darnit are skeptical.
Darnit: There is a difference. There is no body here.
What difference does that make?
In part we had a deal including the body and partial power.
Ego maintains that disconnection from the body didn't change anything, but Horthulf and Darnit convince that we should investigate the cause of death, and that any other sort of way of interacting, like creating a Data for the AI to inhabit, would be better than risking these meatbags.

Ego looks at the logs. About six hours ago, there was a surge of activity. All visceral responses peaked all at once. Every system in Daryo's body activated at its most extreme, then all of a sudden crashed. So there was organ failure after organ failure all in the span of about thirty seconds. Before that he was pretty much brain dead, but in a steady rhythm supported by the chair. Nervous system collapses first. Then circulatory. Brain is the last to go. But it was all pretty simultaneous.

Ego: "Was anyone here with him when everything went to eleven?"
"Nah man, we weren't here chilling with a boring vegetable guy."
"What about cameras?" Hrothulf asks.
The body convulses for a couple seconds. And at the same time the image flickers a bit.
Izar leans over at the screen. "Enhance. Or at least slow it down."
Seems to Ego like it's just an electrical surge, like when multiple systems beg for power at the same time and not all of them get it. Hrothulf recognizes such a thing from when some plebeian walks in and uses the microwave while he is using other items.
With things slowed down, we don't really catch any new information.
Ego investigates the source of the electrical surge, whether it was the ReDream or the chair or something else in the ship that caused this.
Hrothulf suggests a full ship diagnostic.

The surge seems to be all of the life support and equipment in the chair as well struggling to try to reboot Daryo's body, trying to repair everything simultaneously, such that they short themselves and defeat their own purpose. It seems the sudden hyper-function of Daryo's body caused all these issues, and that caused the surge as the chair was responding.

Ego, misunderstanding Hrothulf's Data suggestion for making something to go into the ReDream, thinks about making something of the sort. Perhaps making a new AI to go into the DarAI. And if that's bad, then maybe another AI, iterating ever more good and powerful AIs (hopefully) until it works out! Others are skeptical. Some doubt the need to keep this dangerous AI around even, though Ego argues it is like having a genie in a lamp and never rubbing it the right way. We eventually realize that Ego probably can't create another AI, since the first one required the program in the key, and we no longer have that program.

We decide, in closer accordance to what Hrothulf actually meant, to connect up a mic, speaker, and googly eyes so that the AI can communicate with us without us going in, hopefully.

Izar will read the book of the griffins.

We will either attempt the center of the gas planet with the help of the AI, or head to Janus where Dhund Hal Kal is.