

Jade

Chapter 1

Our first android case starts like most others, with my partner complaining.

“Why do we even need to give it the test anyway?” Isaac says as he fills up his cup of coffee.

“It killed its owner, Isaac,” I respond “Then was found crying at the crime scene.”

“It’s a goddamn robot made to fuck people,” he says. “I doubt it has sentience or even sapience.”

“It’s still standard procedure,” I say.

Isaac takes a sip of coffee and then spits it back into the cup. “Can this department cut back coffee expenses any more?”

“I enjoy it,” I say.

“Yeah, you’re cheap.” he says. “You wouldn’t spend extra money on anything unless someone put a gun against your head.”

“And you don’t know when to keep your mouth shut,” I respond.

We walk through the hallways, filled with other officers busy with something else, down to the holding cells. Two cops guard the door.

One says, “before we can let you in, you both know that the android you are talking to doesn’t have sentience under the Emily v Jackson case, correct?”

“Yes,” Isaac says.

“That’s what we’re trying to figure out.” I say

“Ok, It’s all yours” the officer says, “Here’s the tablet that you will be using, all the questions are on it.”

“Thanks,” I grab the tablet, “Has it been checked for bugs yet?”

“No,” A nervous grin appears on his face. “But don’t worry, you won’t be attacked, most likely anyway.”

“What do you think it looks like?” Isaac says

I try to remember if the chief told us anything about it, but my mind comes up blank. “All I know is that it was made by the FeelGood Corporation.”

Isaac laughs.

“Who else,” and walks in with me behind him. The room is plain white with an one sided mirror on one of the walls. A metal table is in the middle with two chairs. Sitting across from us is what looks like a skinny 20-something girl covered in dry blood. The blood cakes its wavy orange hair that goes to about its shoulders. The paleness of its skin is only matched by those who have never seen the sun. Its face is round with realistic freckles dotted around its cheeks. Its lips are colored the same as its eyes. It’s wearing some of the most revealing clothing I’ve ever seen. Its hands are covered in layers of dry blood. Its long nails are painted with blood. Even though everything else looks real, its green eyes look too green to be confused as human. I can hear Isaac mumble “Hot damn,” under his breath.

We slowly sit down in the chairs across the table from her. I look into the mirror where the chief watches us. I manage to speak first

“Hello.”

“Hi,” it says with a shy, sincere voice.

“We are going to ask you a couple of questions,” I say, “We want you to answer them as honestly as you can.”

“Okay,” It says, nodding.

“Just remember that you are being recorded,” Isaac says, pulling out a recording device, placing it on the table, turning it on.

“Well, let’s get started,” it says.

I look down at the tablet. First question: *Does it have a name? If so type it out.*

“What is your name?”

“Jade.” It says

“No last name?”

“I was never given one.”

I bubble in *Yes*.

“Do you know what city you are in?”

“Chicago Illinois, United States of America.”

“Do you know what building you are in?”

“Chicago Police Department, Holding Cells 3-C, Room 4.”

“Bullshit,” Isaac says. He walks and looks out from the door and says, “It’s right.”

A smirk appears on Jade’s face

I bubble in *Yes*.

I continue

“What are you?”

“I’m an android made by the FeelGood Corporation from the Gem line.”

“What is your model number?”

“JD-4876AC7”

“What is your prime directive?”

“To seduce and have intercourse with as many customers as possible.” My eyes darted to her face. She looked so young, almost childlike. Something knotted in my gut.

“Do you have Asimov’s Three Laws?”

“Yes.”

“How could you have harmed the guy if you can’t?”

“I don’t know.”

“Do you have an owner?”

“Yes, Jacob Musk.”

I pull up the image of the victim. The screen shows an unattractive late 30ish man with short black hair and a stubble. I ask

“Do you know who this is?”

“Yes.”

“How do you know him?”

“He owns me.”

“Do you know why you are here?”

“I harmed my owner.”

“Correction,” Isaac interrupts, “killed him.”

Its face turn paler than I thought could be possible, its smile turing into a expression of shock.

“That couldn’t be possible, I check his pulse, he was alive.”

Isaac continues “He died on the way to the hospital, I saw body, what you did was horrific.”

“I didn’t... I didn’t mean it, I was scared.” Its breathing speeds up.

“What were you scared of?”

“He was trying to... trying to harm me.”

“How?”

“He was... he was trying... to shut me down.”

Isaac chimes in “Isn’t just sleeping, that doesn’t seem like a good reason to kill a man.”

“No it isn’t sleeping, if anything it’s like being paralyzed, blinded, and having your tongue cut out, you want to scream but can’t.” Jade says

I type it down.

Isaac says “Look, I have an android maid, and it doesn’t kill me everytime I shut it down to charge.”

“Well I’m not an maid, so fu... fuck off.”

“Look here you fucking fleshlight with a body, both models have very fucking similar programing, so..”

“No we...” Jade shouts

SLAM!

“Can we continue?” I say, staring at both of them. My hand burns as I do. Fuck, I didn’t mean to hit the table that hard.

“Yes, we can.” It says, smirking like if they won the argument.

“Isaac?”

“Sure, fine, whatever.” He looks at Jade, “But if you burst out again, I will smash you face into the table.”

“Isaac.” I say

“Fine, let just continue.”

“Now, Jade, do you have any interest?”

“I like reading books.”

“Anything else?”

“No, nothing much.”

I pull up a image of a cat and show it to it.

“What is this?”

“A cat.”

“And this?”

“A girl on a swing set.”

“What is this?”

“A painting of a city.”

“How does it make you feel?”

“Insignificant.”

“That’s all I have to say right now, just do as my partner tells you to.”

“Okay.” Jade says

Isaac pulls out a smooth black disk with a knob on the top and ask “Hold out your hand.”

Jade holds out its hand and Isaac places the disk onto it. He twist the knob saying

“How does the disk feel?”

“Hot.”

Isaac twist the knob again.

“How bout now?”

“Cold.”

He twist the knob again and says, “Tell me how it feels .”

“Hot.” We sit silently for a couple of seconds, looking at the plain white walls. Jade then drops the disk and shakes its hand. It says

“Ouch! You did that on purpose”

After Isaac picks up the stone, a grin on his face, and places it back into his pocket, I say,

“We’re going to ask a few more questions if you.”

“If you saw a wounded baby deer, how would you feel?”

“What’s a deer?”

“Let me rephrase it, If you saw a baby animal that appeared wounded how would you feel?”

“I would feel pity the creature, because it’s not only in pain but is lost from its parent.”

I write down what she said, making a footnote that she doesn’t know what deer are.

“If someone harmed you physically, how would you feel?”

“Well, I would feel angry that they hurt me and that I should get back at them.”

I write it down.

“If the person that wanted to harm you was near you, how would you feel?”

“I would fear for my safety and try to get as far away from them as I could.”

“Let’s say a friend gives you a gift unexpectedly, how would you feel?”

“Like when Jared gave me books?”

“Who’s Jared?” I ask

“One of my customers.”

“Ok, yes, so how did you feel when Jared gave you books?”

“Well, I felt happy and surprised that he did.”

“If that gift you want is going to be delivered in a week, how would you feel?”

“I would feel excited and like time couldn’t pass slower.”

“Now let’s say the gift is delivered to you, but the Jared wants to borrow it for a couple of days, would you let him?”

“No.”

“Why’s that?”

“I wouldn’t trust him enough to keep it without damaging it.”

“Let’s say you find a rotting corpse, and on closer inspection, you find out that it’s Jared, how would you feel?”

“Are you trying to say I murdered him for trying to borrow my gift?”

“No, I’m not saying that, this is just questions to see if you sentient.”

“Well I am.”

“We’ll see when the test is scored, but we need you to finish to do that.”

“Well, I would feel...”

The lights flicker for a second, then go out. A veil of darkness covers everything except two glowing orbs where Jade’s eyes were.

“Grossed out because it’s a rotting corpse of a friend.”

The two green circles looks at Isaac, then me, then back at Isaac. It says,

“What are you staring at?”

Neither of us answer. After a few more seconds, the lights come back on. I cough and say,

“Let’s continue with the test.”

_____ “Sure.” Jade says

“A trolley loses the ability to brake and is going to kill 5 workers on the track, but you can pull a lever and have it kill one person instead, what would you do?”

“What’s a trolley?”

“Okay let’s say the trolley is a train.”

“I don’t know what that is either.”

“Enough of this,” Isaac shouts, “Let’s say five people will be killed, but you can save them by pulling a lever that will kill one person, what would you do?”

Jade freezes, as if it’s using all of their processing power to decide. After a minute, it says

“I wouldn’t pull the lever.”

“Why not?”

“Pulling the lever would save five people, but it would make me a murderer of an innocent person, no matter the amount of people I’ve saved.”

“What about your owner,” Isaac says “He was innocent.”

“Isaac, let’s just continue.”

“I’m just asking.”

“I know,” I say, “But this isn’t the time or place for this.”

“Fine.” Isaac starts tapping on the table.

“Now, Jade, A person who only knows English is placed in a room with a book that shows how to answer strings of Chinese characters. Another person who only know Chinese

outside the room sends in messages of chinese, and the first person uses the book to answer and the second believes the first knows chinese. Will the first ever understand chinese?"

It freezes again and after a few seconds, it says,

"Yes, the first won't understand chinese, but would be able to memorize what strings of the characters. They know without understanding. But if they were given translations of each character, they would be able to understand."

"Okay." It starts twisting its fingers around its hair. Jade doesn't notice the bits of dry blood getting caught in it.

I say

"Are you ready for more questions?"

"Yes, I'm ready."

"Okay, now let's say a woman is married to a man she is madly in love with and lives a happy life. But unknown to her, the husband is cheating on her with another woman. Now, the knowledge of this would destroy the woman's entire life, so should the woman learn about the affair or should she remain being ignorant?"

Silence, then a question leaves its lips.

"Well depends, how old is the woman?"

"Why is the age of the woman important?"

"Well, if it's an 80 year old woman in poor health, she would feel sad for the rest of her life, but if it's a young woman, she would get over it eventually."

"Since the test never states how old the woman is, do you have a different answer or are you keeping with the depends on the age of the woman answer?"

"I'll keep my answer."

"Okay."

"Now, while I type this down, I want you to think of an answer for the next question. So, let's say that there is a machine that puts you into a world where you feel nothing but happiness, but when you get plugged in you think that the fake world is the real one and you stay there for your rest of your life. The question is would you plug in?"

I start typing its last answer as quickly as I can before it can finish this one. Just before I finish, Jade asks,

“Are you finished?”

“Almost,” I say as I finish the last word. “Okay, I’m done now, so have you come up with a solution?”

“Yes, and my answer is no, happiness alone is dull, you need bad emotions to make the good emotions mean something.”

“Now for the final question, A horse is placed between two identical bales of hay. the horse has no free will, and always acts in the most rational manner. However, as both bales are equidistant from the horse and offer the same nourishment, neither choice is better than the other. Does it choose at all or stand still till it starves?”

“This is an easy one, since it acts in the most rational manner, it would eat one of the bales of hays eventually before it starves. It isn’t rational to starve in a room full of food.”

I type down it down and put the tablet into a sealed bag. Isaac and I get up and start walk out, then Jade says

“Will you come see me anytime soon?”

I look back at it and say

“Tomorrow, most likely.”

“Well, see you tomorrow...” Jade raises it hand.

“Philip.” I reach out and shake.

“Philip.”

We walk out and into the observatory room. The chief is in there, Isaac says

“Hey chief, do we have to do this investigation.”

The chief itches his mustache and says,

“Isaac, as long as the entire android unit is busy with the Madison case, you two have to do this. Besides, you’re one of the best human detectives on the force, what makes this any different than one of your other cases?”

“Well to start off, most of the people that we investigate weren't made in a factory.”

“Isaac, you get a bonus and a weeks vacation from doing this. Isn’t that enough to stop you from complaining?”

“Why can’t we just send it back to FeelGood? They want it back anyway.”

“You know as well as I do that it’s against protocol.”

“Fine, let’s just get this case over with as fast as we can. Philip, hand him the test.”

I hand it to him and ask,

“How long is it going to take to score it?”

The chief pauses and then says

“At most, it will take till tomorrow morning.”

“Great, now can we get out of here,” Isaac says.

“One more thing, the lead engineer of FeelGood has asked for you to talk to him.”

“Can Philip go alone, I have my anniversary with Oliver and we have plans.”

“Only if Philip is okay with it.”

Isaac stares at me with a look that says “Say okay or I’ll kill you right here.” I decide not to try him.

“Yeah I’m okay with going alone.”

“Good, we’ll give you the address tomorrow. You’re free to go home.”

I say before exiting,

“Oh, can you get Jade a shower and some clothing. I don’t want to keep interviewing it while it’s looking like that.”

“Sure, Philip.” the chief says, walking towards his office.

I leave the police station and walk to the train station. Even at one in the morning the city is ablaze with lights. Only two people are on my train as we pull out of the station. We pass by Lake Michigan, glowing a million colors in the night.

As I walk up to my house, the lights are still on. I walk in and hear Susan say

“You’re home late.”

“Busy night.” I respond

“Let’s go to bed.”

As we lay in bed she asks,

“What case are you working on?”

“Android killed its owner and now we have to figure out if it’s sentient.”

“You’re working on the Madison case.”

“No, a different one.”

“I saw part of the trial on the news today, it seems complicated.”

“From what I heard, it is.”

“Do you ever wish you worked on a big case like that?”

“Nah, I’ve talk to some of the guys working on it. People protesting outside your door, news agencies interviewing you all day, long work hours, it’s tiring.”

“Well, I’m glad you’re working on small cases then, goodnight.”

“Yeah, me too, goodnight.”