

B L U E C R O C O D I L E

b. b. brown

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FADE IN

INT ROOM OF DARKNESS NO TIME

A BRIGHT OBJECT squats in darkness. It reflects a DULL GOLDEN LIGHT and, set on a PEDESTAL, revolves in a slow CIRCLE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In ancient days, there was a king who loved crocodiles. As he decreed that the people should worship him, so he worshipped the remorseless predator. The king ordered a golden crocodile cast and set beside his bed, so that he might contemplate the terror his own power inspired. After years of cruelty, the king vanished as if the merciless creature had never lived.

The object STOPS. TWO BRIGHT BLUE EYES sparkle.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

(continuing)

But the blue crocodile is waiting still.

INT AIRPORT AFTERNOON

ESTABLISH a futuristic AIRPORT TERMINAL. On the runways, huge AIRCRAFT without functional wings slowly circle, or come in for a landing like helicopters without blades.

The walls throughout the airport are huge TELEVISION SCREENS. A few of the Screens show LANDSCAPES, such as the countryside or seashore. Others are INACTIVE. Most, however, feature ADVERTISEMENTS of all descriptions.

Around the building, inside and out, MECHANICALS--mobile and nonmobile automated machines--do simple tasks such as REFUELING AIRCRAFT or SCANNING PASSENGERS.

Inside the building, there are MANY DIFFERENT plastic and metal Mechanicals of various sizes and shapes crawling about the FLOORS and WALLS.

One STATIONARY MECHANICAL provides directions with a SCREEN in its belly.

A VENDOR MECHANICAL sells TICKETS.

A MOBILE MECHANICAL--a box on wheels with multiple arms--sells FOOD which it pulls from its big, square body.

A SMALLER MECHANICAL, intended to clean the airport area, VACUUMS a crying CHILD, while the MOTHER kicks its sides.

Meanwhile, HURRIED PEOPLE rush to and fro amid the mixed shimmer and grime of the setting.

INT HOLOGRAPHIC PHONE STATIONS

There is a long line of busy STATIONS with PEOPLE going to and from them quickly.

The HOLOPHONE is flexible. It can used as a traditional telephone for privacy, or show a three-dimensional projection spoken to directly without the hand-held receiver. Or it can mix the applications.

A SIGN hangs above the stations:

PLEASE USE HOLOPHONE STATIONS ON AIRPORT PROPERTY.
OTHER COMMUNICATIONS FORBIDDEN BY FEDERAL LAW.
SEX-PEEKS NOT ALLOWED IN PUBLIC AREAS.

LIGEIA, 30, called LY, waits at an open station with a PHONE to her ear and an OVERNIGHT HANDBAG over one shoulder. She wears an expensive BRACELET, which she fingers absentmindedly, especially when under pressure.

Her face brightens, then frowns angrily. A RECORDED VOICE IMAGE SPEAKS.

VOICE (V.O.)

I'm not available at the moment.
Leave information and I'll get back
to you when convenient.

Ly slams down the phone as a BEEP SOUNDS. Impatiently rocking her head back and forth, she flips through a PERSONAL PHONE LIST.

A HEAVY WOMAN, surrounded by TWO SMALL BOYS and a LITTLE GIRL and wrestling with an armload of LUGGAGE, jams into the next phone station. The little girl has several pieces of STICK CANDY in a pocket.

This miniature crowd unintentionally PUSHES Ly. It annoys her. The little girl insists on standing beside Ly and staring at her.

Ly's expression changes suddenly as the IMAGE of TRISH-A, 42, appears. Using the phone receiver for privacy, Ly switches to a sweet manner.

LY

Trisha, this is Ly, I just got in.

Trisha replies but what she says can't be heard.

LY

(continuing)

No, overnight. You're the first one
I thought to call.

INT AIRPORT WAITING AREA

A COURIER, 22, watches the telephone area from a CHAIR. In his lap lies a leather satchel, to which he clings tightly.

Behind the Courier, a man, named MORAY, 30, sits with his back to the Courier. They do not seem to notice one another.

INT AIRPORT TELEPHONE STATIONS

The Woman with the luggage hangs up and exits with her children. Without interrupting her conversation, Ly

steals a piece of stick candy. The little girl doesn't notice.

LY

I'll see you as soon as I can get a taxi. Bye, Trish.

(hangs up)

That'll save the cost of a room.

As she walks away, she sucks on the candy and searches in her handbag.

LY

(continuing)

That's what friends are for.

INT AIRPORT WAITING AREA

Having glanced away, the Courier turns back. He sees that Ly has gone. Several consecutive phone stations are empty. No one is nearby them. Standing quickly, he strides towards them.

INT AIRPORT CORRIDOR

Ly stops around the corner from the phone stations. She still searches through her handbag.

In the background, the Courier cannot see her. He steps to a station and uses the phone without the imaging. Although Ly can hear him, at first she doesn't pay attention.

COURIER

This is the Courier. Give me Grandhomme.

He chews his fingernails.

COURIER

(continuing)

Grandhomme, I've got the piece. You want it, you'll have pay.

She finds her phone list in a pocket but has by now become very interested in the conversation.

COURIER

(continuing)

I work for me, Grandhomme. Me. Just remember that no one owns that thing except the one who has it.

The Courier runs out of patience.

COURIER

(continuing)

I'm the one making the threats. Do you want it, or do I take it to MacGregor?

(pauses)

Okay then, I'll get back to you with details.

He slaps the phone down, then JUMPS in the air and WHOOPS.

COURIER

(continuing)

Hot damn!

People in the distance look at him. Feigning a calm air, he straightens his clothes and walks away. Ly peeks around the corner, then follows him.

EXT AIRPORT ENTRANCE

BOER, 55, a powerfully built black man, strides to the entrance. He passes a ONE-LEGGED MAN who holds a BUCKET and a SIGN.

The sign reads: WAR VET PLEASE HELP

When Boer passes, the Man holds out the bucket particularly to him.

ONE-LEGGED MAN

Semper fi, man.

BOER

Get a job.

INT AIRPORT LOBBY

The Courier walks jauntily at first, then abruptly stops when he sees Boer enter the Lobby. In the background, Ly quickly bends over a WATER FOUNTAIN. Frightened, the Courier scuttles behind a shiny metal COLUMN.

COURIER

Think think think.

He glances around and sees some LARGE, LEAFY PLANTS in pots scattered about a waiting area.

COURIER

(continuing)

Okay.

Ly watches as the Courier sits in a chair, hides his satchel amid the plants, then slips away. A small MECHANICAL rolls up and POLISHES the satchel as though it were a shoe.

Affecting a casual air, Ly crosses to the chair, sits, and locates the satchel. Scanning the people around her, she sees nothing intimidating.

Picking up the satchel casually, she stands and walks away.

Someone SCREAMS. People look around. Ly, self-conscious and frightened, exits the airport.

EXT AIRPORT EXIT

GROUND VEHICLES run on a CUSHION OF AIR rather than tires. Ly climbs into a AUTOMATED TAXI and it pulls away.

INT TAXI

The taxi is run by a computer that is supervised by remote control. The "DRIVER" is a holograph of a BORED PERSON who is miles distant.

Ly turns away from the holograph and opens the stolen satchel. Finding an object wrapped in PADDING, she unwraps it bit. A COLD BLUE EYE stares at her.

Removing the padded object from the satchel, she slips it into her handbag. Suddenly, the taxi stops with a JERK.

DRIVER HOLOGRAPH (O.S.)
What the hell does he want?

Ly sees a HUMANOID MECHANICAL with stocky arms, a long torso, and short legs, MOE. It blocks the taxi.

DRIVER HOLOGRAPH (O.S.)
(continuing)
Has this anything to do with you,
lady?

LY
Who me?

Moe advances on the taxi. The Mechanical RAMS ITS ARMS through the hood into the engine.

EXT AIRPORT PARKING

The holographic Driver yells at the Mechanical.

DRIVER HOLOGRAPH (O.S.)
Has your brain burnt out? Who's
your owner? What's your operating
number?

Ly exits at a run toward the airport entrance.

EXT MOE'S P.O.V.

Its internal screen displays SOLID STRUCTURES as line-drawing outlines. PEOPLE register as patterns of heat, respiration, and heartbeat. Any ADDITIONAL INFORMATION feeds along the bottom or sides of the screen.

MOE'S SCREEN
Vehicle Status = Nonfunctioning.

The damaged car shows as a PRECISE IMAGE, while Ly appears as a HEAT BLOB. A FLASHING, BLUE LIGHT bounces beside her.

MOE'S SCREEN

(continuing)

Unit Alert = Subject #HI25.

Status = Not Safe.

EXT AIRPORT PARKING

The Mechanical trails after Ly.

INT AIRPORT LOBBY

Boer steps to one side and uses a small TRANSMITTER with an EARPLUG for reception.

BOER

Control to Unit -- Report status.

LARRY (O.S.)

Specify Unit Designation.

BOER

Control to Moe Unit -- Report status of object.

MOE (O.S.)

Approaching Your Position.

Ly reenters the airport.

BOER

Report description.

MOE (O.S.)

Heart Rate 110, Respiration--

BOER

(interrupting)

Terminate report. Is it male or female?

MOE (O.S.)

Elaborate And Specify.

Walking with a CROWD of people, Ly passes Boer and descends an ESCALATOR that has no steps.

BOER
(to himself)
This job isn't worth the aggravation.

He tries Moe again.

BOER
(continuing)
Control to Moe Unit -- Is the object still approaching?

MOE (O.S.)
Negative.

BOER
Where is it?

MOE (O.S.)
Thirty Meters Northeast Of Your Position, With Five Meters Declension.

BOER
What?

Seeing the escalator, Boer immediately heads toward it.

BOER
(continuing)
Control to all Units -- Converge and secure designated target. Repeat -- Converge and secure designated target.

INT AIRPORT LOWER LEVEL

Ly makes for a lower-level exit. A second HUMANOID MECHANICAL appears, the long-legged LARRY. It heads directly for her.

LY
I haven't done anything.

Ly plunges into a crowd.

INT LARRY'S P.O.V.

The screen becomes a WALL of heat blobs. The flashing blue light appears and disappears.

INT AIRPORT LOWER LEVEL

Larry stops.

Ly doesn't realize that the crowd has gathered near the Courier's BODY, which has fallen from an upper level. Several MECHANICALS move around the body in confusion about what to do with the "trash".

She escapes the other side of the crowd. A VENDOR MECHANICAL tags along beside her.

VENDOR MECHANICAL
Hot nuts? Hot nuts? Tasty tasty!
Hot popcorn? Hot popcorn? Mmmm
good!

LY
Beat it.

INT LARRY'S P.O.V.

The flashing light reappears as soon as Ly clears the crowd.

INT AIRPORT LOWER LEVEL

Larry dogs her again. It BROADCASTS loudly.

LARRY
Stop thief. Stop thief. Stop thief.

INT AIRPORT

Boer hears "Stop thief" ECHOING through the airport. He pulls out his earplug to doublecheck the direction.

BOER
Control to Larry Unit -- SHUT UP.

A GUARD working crowd control at the site of the Courier's body uses his RADIO.

GUARD #1
Dispatch, there seems to be a problem here with a mobile mechanical.

INT AIRPORT LUGGAGE PICKUP AREA

Ly hurries past CIRCULAR LUGGAGE BINS with Larry in pursuit. A RELIGIOUS MECHANICAL floats along with her.

RELIGIOUS MECHANICAL
Do you know why you're going to hell? Do you know the true path to salvation? Would you like to be saved?

LY
Go away.

She runs toward two more SECURITY GUARDS who are approaching her.

GUARD #2
Is there a problem, ma'am?

LY
(pointing)
Yes!

GUARD #3
(into radio)
Dispatch, Patrol Three checking the Mechanical situation now.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
Check, Mobile Three.

GUARD #2
A Mechanical is chasing you?

Ly runs past them.

LY
What do you think?

The Guards place themselves in front of Larry.

GUARD #3
Stop, Mechanical, and identify your
owner.

Larry pushes Guard #3 aside.

GUARD #2
Can we get in trouble for shooting
one of these things?

GUARD #3
Who cares?

Both pull their HAND WEAPONS, which are high-capacity,
lethal-velocity, compressed-air guns that make minimal
noise. Larry stops.

INT LARRY'S P.O.V.

The screen shows two BLOBS and two PRECISELY DEFINED
WEAPONS which point in its direction.

LARRY'S SCREEN
EMERGENCY OVERRIDE = Initiate De-
fense Mode.

INT AIRPORT EXIT

A RECRUITING MECHANICAL obstructs Ly's path.

RECRUITING MECHANICAL
EVERYONE serves TODAY'S military.
Have YOU?

LY
Why me?

She knocks it out of the way with her handbag.

INT AIRPORT LUGGAGE PICKUP AREA

Larry confronts the Guards.

GUARD #2
Halt, Mechanical. Identify your
owner.

EXT AIRPORT

Ly climbs into an AIRPORT SHUTTLE, and it pulls away.

INT AIRPORT LUGGAGE PICKUP AREA

Larry kicks Guard #2. Guard #3 backs off firing. The
projectiles RICOCHET into surrounding Wall Screens.
ADULTS in the vicinity either run, or hit the floor, or
cower to protect CHILDREN. SCREAMING is heard.

EXT AIRPORT TRAFFIC LIGHT

Ly exits the shuttle bus in the parking lot. She tries
to catch her breath.

LY
Think think think.

INT AIRPORT LUGGAGE PICKUP AREA

LUGGAGE spits out of a COMPRESSED AIR TUBE. An
occasional piece of luggage has been literally cut into
HALVES along the line.

Larry pursues Guard #3 around the LUGGAGE BELTS as the
Guard tries to use his radio. The Mechanical uses a
kick that knocks him unconscious onto the LUGGAGE BIN.
Turning, the Mechanical strides after Ly.

EXT AIRPORT TRAFFIC LIGHT

Ly sees a third HUMANOID MECHANICAL, CURLY, the
weaponry machine, not far from her.

LY
Sweet Glory, another one.

Behind her, CARS have stopped for a red light. Ly
climbs into the first CONVERTIBLE she can find. It is
JACK III's RED SPORTS CAR.

JACK

What in hell are you doing? Get out.

Ly slides down onto the floor.

LY

You've got to help me. They're trying to hurt me.

JACK

Get the hell out of my car.

Curly stops on the side of the convertible where Ly hides.

INT CAR CURLY'S P.O.V.

A line drawing of the convertible contains two blobs of color and one flashing blue light.

INT JACK'S RED CAR

JACK

Are you going to get out?

A METAL TOOL snaps out of Curly's body and starts CUTTING through the CAR DOOR between it and Ly.

Ly SCREAMS. Jack SCREAMS.

JACK

(continuing)

MY CAR.

Jack hits the accelerator and leaves the Mechanical behind.

EXT AIRPORT TRAFFIC LIGHT

Boer runs up in time to see JACK'S PROFILE as he pulls away. In frustration, Boer hits Curly.

BOER

You could've reached in and grabbed it.

Curly remains motionless.

BOER

(continuing)

I should be sucking on an alcoholic beverage instead of indulging this idiocy.

(into his transmitter)

Control to all Units -- Converge on mobile base. Repeat -- Converge on mobile base.

EXT AIRPORT PARKING

Jack stops his car a short distance from where Ly jumped in. Leaning over, he opens the door and points.

JACK

Out. Out. Out. Out. Out. Out.

Ly grudgingly clambers out of the car.

LY

Thanks, Galahad.

She slams the door. Jack screeches off. Ly looks around.

LY

(continuing)

I haven't gone anywhere.

She turns and walks through the parked cars. Then she halts. In the distance, one of the Humanoid Mechanicals is moving in her direction. Ducking down, she runs between parked cars.

She almost scuttles into Boer and Curly. She freezes in place.

Boer and Curly seem to be waiting. Boer punches a button on a small ELECTRONIC DEVICE in his hand. There is a SHORT SQUEAK from a nearby VAN.

INT CURLY'S P.O.V.

Ly and the blue light appear on its screen.

CURLY'S SCREEN

Primary Order = Converge On Mobile
Base.
Previous Order = Secure Designated
Target. SUSPENDED

EXT AIRPORT PARKING

Ly tries several CARS, but the doors are locked. She
pauses a moment, then she moves toward the VAN.

When the other two Humanoid Mechanicals approach, Boer
and Curly go to the van. All three Mechanicals pause.

BOER

What are you doing?

CURLY

NOTE = Previous Order Suspended.
Do You Wish Suspension Lifted?

BOER

I want you three deadheads to get
your butts in the van.

LARRY

Elaborate And Specify.

BOER

Control orders this -- Get in the
van. Do nothing. Say nothing.

MOE

Designated Target #HI25 Is Safe?

BOER

It's just dandy. Now obey Con-
trol's orders.

The Mechanicals climb into the van. Not looking in the
van, Boer slams the door and goes to the driver's side.

BOER

(continuing)

No more babysitting. I don't care
what they cost.

INT BOER'S VAN

Inside the rear of the van, Ly freezes against a wall and stares at the three Mechanicals. Boer starts the van and drives out of the parking lot. From where he sits, he can't see her.

Moe sits motionless.

MOE'S SCREEN
"Obey Control's Directives"

Larry sits motionless.

LARRY'S SCREEN
"Do nothing, say nothing"

Curly sits motionless.

CURLY'S SCREEN
Subject #HI25. Status = Safe.
Unit Status = Inactive.
POWER-SAVE.

The three Mechanicals incline their heads. Ly slowly breathes again.

INT SMALL WAREHOUSE LATE AFTERNOON

A loading door OPENS and Boer's van enters. The warehouse is a short-term depot for distributing "products" and includes a WORK AREA for repairs.

The PROFESSOR, 57, wears a LAB COAT and a complacent smile. The van pulls up, and Boer hops out.

PROFESSOR
Have you contacted Grandhomme?

BOER
No.

PROFESSOR
He was quite anxious about whether you'd recovered the piece or not.

Boer goes to the rear of the van preparing to open the doors.

PROFESSOR
(continuing)
Did you recover it?

Boer pauses with his hand on the door handle.

BOER
No.

PROFESSOR
Problems?

BOER
No, Professor. I don't have any problems. But those metal dolls of yours do.

PROFESSOR
What do you mean? They're the most advanced prototypes in the world. They were especially designed by me for Grandhomme's use.

BOER
Are they programmed to broadcast "Stop thief"?

PROFESSOR
"Stop thief"?

BOER
That's right. And since when do they question direct orders?

PROFESSOR
There must have been a conflict present in the orders.

BOER
I'll tell you the conflict. You check them out. And I mean thoroughly. Or I'll start a part-by-part inventory on them myself. Got it?

PROFESSOR
Yes. I've got it.

Boer turns and strides towards a GLASS-WALLED OFFICE. The Professor silently mocks him behind his back while opening the van door. Then he steps back to give the Humanoid Mechanicals room to exit.

PROFESSOR
(continuing)
Master Control to Units -- Disembark.

As Larry exits the van, the Professor sees DENTS and MARKS from the bullets fired by the airport guards.

PROFESSOR
(continuing)
Nasty little dents. He brings you back with nasty little dents.

He doesn't see Ly crouching in a corner.

PROFESSOR
(continuing)
Directives -- Proceed to diagnostic area, prepare for testing.

Hurrying off with his Mechanicals, he leaves the doors open. Ly is readily visible if anyone were looking.

INT BOER LY'S P.O.V.

Ly watches as Boer enters the glass-walled office.

INT SMALL WAREHOUSE

Ly exits the van and hides on the other side. An EXIT SIGN shines on the opposite side of the warehouse. She quietly flees toward it.

INT GLASS-WALLED OFFICE

Boer uses a holophone. A COMPUTERIZED OPERATOR appears.

OPERATOR

Who is calling, please?

BOER

Boer reporting to Grandhomme.

OPERATOR

We're sorry, but Grandhomme is on another line. Please hold and he will be with you in a moment.

BOER

Goddamn toys.

INT RECEPTION HOUSE STUDY

There are several different holographs in operation simultaneously. All but one, a man in a LAB COAT who refers to a COMPUTERIZED CLIPBOARD, is on hold.

A second holograph is a woman in BUSINESS DRESS. A third is a man dressed as a MECHANIC. The fourth is Boer as he waits at the warehouse.

GRANDHOMME is heard off-screen, but not seen.

LAB COAT

...and the bronze head of Julius the Second is almost done.

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

I want that piece finished.

LAB COAT

We've been having problems with the casting--

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

I don't care what problems you have, get it done. With that piece, we'll change the history books. Besides, I have a customer waiting.

He cuts off the transmission and the Lab Coat fades. The Computerized Operator appears.

OPERATOR

Boer reporting to Grandhomme. And
Senator Putt--

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

Tell them to wait.

(to Business Dress)

Is that new recreational drug ready
for distribution?

BUSINESS DRESS

Yes, sir. All ads and publicity are
waiting for your approval.

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

What was the pitch?

BUSINESS DRESS

"Is WHACK too stiff? Try WHACK
LITE!"

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

Fine. The morons will like it.

He cuts off the transmission. The Mechanic's VISUAL has
begun to turn in a circle like a wheel.

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

(continuing)

Chop Shop, you're visual's roll-
ing. Straighten it up.

The visual stops rolling. Now the figure stands on his
head.

MECHANIC

How's that, chief?

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

About what I expected. What's the
problem?

MECHANIC

I know you got your heart set on
cutting these new SGY230s. And the
military's always willing to buy
back it's own equipment.

His holograph has started rolling in the opposite direction.

MECHANIC

(continuing)

But these are monsters! They're transport aircraft, for god's sake. Where are we supposed to store the parts?

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

All right, Chop Shop, the problem is noted. Now, sign off. You're making me sick.

The holograph disappears.

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

(continuing)

Cannot find good help these days.

The Boer holograph enlarges. Boer waits.

GRANDHOMME (O.S.)

(continuing)

What's your excuse, Boer?

INT EXIT DOOR

Ly finds the exit door CHAINED and LOCKED. She tugs the chain angrily. Seeing a SECOND EXIT LIGHT, she heads for it.

INT SMALL WAREHOUSE

The warehouse door OPENS AGAIN. A SECOND VAN enters. Boer emerges from the office and walks to the van. It stops and LOTUS, 26, steps out. Boer puts an arm around her.

BOER

Got a hot load?

Lotus slips a hand over his crotch.

LOTUS

Do you?

The Professor pretends to ignore them, but watches in the REFLECTION on Larry's metal skin.

BOER
All boys are the same to you.

LOTUS
I like big boys more.

Lotus capriciously pushes him away.

LOTUS
(continuing)
Did you collect Grandhomme's prize?

BOER
No. Somebody killed the Courier.

LOTUS
Competition?

BOER
Maybe.

LOTUS
Moray will tell us.

Boer turns away and walks toward the Professor.

BOER
Moray's a snake.

LOTUS
(smirking)
Moray is efficient.

Boer pauses to make his point.

BOER
So is a gun. But you damn well
better point it in the right
direction.

INT SECOND EXIT DOOR

Ly reaches the other door. It is sealed in the same manner as the first door.

LY
I-hate-cages!

She looks at Lotus' van.

INT MAT AREA

Boer approaches the Professor and his Mechanicals.

BOER
Well?

PROFESSOR
Perfect working order.

BOER
So's my dead granny.

The Professor fingers the dents in Larry's "skin".

PROFESSOR
Especially considering what they've had happen to them while in your care.

BOER
They're not built to deliver groceries. We've got time for a stress test.

PROFESSOR
You take a chance on damaging them every time you do that.

BOER
Put them on the mat.

INT MAT AREA

Wearing specially made PADDING, Boer steps on a LARGE MAT--not soft, but thin and firm. Moe, the puncher, steps on the mat and waits.

The Professor takes his place in front of his DIAGNOSTIC MACHINES. Small MONITOR MECHANICALS hover near the Humanoid Mechanicals. Lotus waits on the sidelines.

BOER

Let's go.

Frowning, the Professor presses a BUTTON.

MOE'S SCREEN

Initiate Defense Mode

They fight. Boer works hard to stay ahead of Moe. But while the Humanoid Mechanical is powerful, the man moves faster and proves more adaptable.

Although Boer takes a few STRIKES TO HIS PADDING, he enjoys banging the hell out of the Mechanical. With every SOLID BLOW to the Mechanical, the diagnostic read-outs PEG THE METERS, the Professor winces, and Lotus reacts.

INT LOTUS' VAN

Ly opens the rear door to Lotus' van. A WOMAN'S VOICE comes from inside the van.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Thank god for some fresh air.

Lovely LADIES and their LUGGAGE fill the van.

LY

I'm going with you.

Ly hops into the van. She works her way to the front of the van past knees, legs, feet, and luggage.

2ND WOMAN'S VOICE

Watch the toes.

INT MAT AREA

Boer works on the mat with Curly. The Professor keeps an eye on his equipment. Lotus keeps an eye on Boer.

Boer must work hardest of all with Curly, the weaponry machine. The Mechanical's lethal weaponry CUTS HIS PADDING at several points in one attack.

Pressed hard, Boer drops to the floor with his feet wrapped about the JOINT of one of Curly's legs.

BOER

Halt.

Curly freezes. Boer stands and Curly retracts his weaponry. Boer pats it almost affectionately.

BOER

(continuing)

If we'd continued, I would have damaged you to protect myself. You always have to protect yourself.

CURLY'S SCREEN

Memory =

1. "Always protect self"
2. Damage=Protection=Defense Mode.

The Professor takes a piece of DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT from a FLOATING EQUIPMENT TRAY. He scans Curly.

BOER

They're flashy, Professor. But, like I've said before, they're not ready for field work. Keep them restricted to simple tasks.

PROFESSOR

But--

BOER

(interrupting)

Simple tasks.

(checks a cut)

Where's the bandages?

PROFESSOR

I'm doing something important.

INT LOTUS' VAN

Lotus quickly crosses to the van.

LOTUS
Who opened this door?

Ly hides as far behind the other ladies as possible.

LADY #2
It's stuffy. We're crammed in like
sardines.

LOTUS
Tough shit.

Lotus SLAMS the door. In the dark comes a VOICE.

WOMAN'S VOICE
This job isn't worth the aggrava-
tion.

INT MAT AREA

Lotus walks back to the Professor.

LOTUS
Where's Boer?

A MOTOR STARTS. Lotus' van PIVOTS ON AIR until it stops
by her. Boer drives.

LOTUS
(continuing)
That's my van, and those are my
girls.

BOER
Maybe the Professor will let you
ride with his tin babies. See you
at the house.

He drives away smiling, the automatic door opens, and
the van disappears. Lotus snarls like the cat she is.

LOTUS
You'll get yours, black boy.

EXT RECEPTION HOUSE DUSK

Lotus' van turns into the DRIVEWAY of an expensive FORMER RESIDENCE used for business affairs.

INT SHOWROOM

Activity whirls around GRANDHOMME, 60, the thief as sophisticate. WORKERS arrange DISPLAY CASES. SECURITY PERSONNEL circulate warily. Grandhomme fusses with the CATERER about the food.

GRANDHOMME

I don't like it.

CATERER

But, sir, it is the usual menu served at such functions.

GRANDHOMME

My functions are not typical.

CATERER

I'm very sorry, sir.

GRANDHOMME

My guests must receive the proper impression. Change it.

CATERER

I only wished to--

GRANDHOMME

(interrupting)

You have one hour.

The Caterer hurries off. CHING-CHING, a very small woman with WITHERED LEGS, who moves about using a FLOATING WHEELCHAIR, enters. She holds up a small, electronic device, a VOICE THROWER, and speaks into it.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Excellent, Ching-Ching, I will inspect them.

EXT SERVANTS' ENTRANCE

The van stands close to the entrance. Boer waits on one side and AXE, 30s, wearing an ARTIFICIAL ARM, stands on the other.

Most of Boer's SECURITY MEN have visible or noticeable WAR INJURIES with accompanying FUTURISTIC PROSTHETICS.

The Ladies walk on a few steps from the van to the entrance. However, with their luggage, etc., it does take a few moments for them to unload. Ly looks discreetly in all directions as she exits the van alongside TOY.

LY
(to herself)
A cow led to slaughter.

TOY
(whispering)
They make me feel like a cow, too.

INT HOUSE LOBBY

The Ladies enter the SUMPTUOUSLY DECORATED lobby. Boer motions to Axe, and they step to the side.

BOER
Any further information about the airport?

AXE
Negative. There's nothing on the street, and our formal sources are blank.

BOER
An independent?

AXE
Probable.

Axe begins to speak but frowns.

BOER
What?

AXE

Nothing. Grandhomme is waiting.

BOER

Has Moray made contact?

AXE

Negative.

BOER

Everything about Moray is negative.

Grandhomme, having glanced over the Ladies, pauses significantly. Boer steps to him.

GRANDHOMME

Empty hands, Boer?

BOER

Better than an empty head, Grandhomme.

GRANDHOMME

What do you mean?

BOER

You sent me too late to do any good.

GRANDHOMME

I loaned you my new Mechanicals to ensure that the piece could be located. You still lost the delivery.

BOER

In the first place, I told you that Courier couldn't be trusted. Second, I told you those fancy mechanicals weren't suitable for field work. But you don't listen.

Grandhomme controls his irritation.

GRANDHOMME

We will discuss it in private.

He turns back to the Ladies. They resemble Lotus in physical type and carriage. Ly is the exception.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Where is Lotus?

BOER

She's riding over with the Professor.

GRANDHOMME

She loathes him.

BOER

Yeah.

Grandhomme almost laughs but catches himself. Instead, he speaks to Ly.

GRANDHOMME

What is your name, young woman?

Ly answers before she thinks.

LY

Ly.

GRANDHOMME

Lie?

LY

Ligeia.

GRANDHOMME

Yes, E. A. Poe. Very good. And why are you here, Ligeia?

LY

I'm the best fuck in town.

GRANDHOMME

Then why are you nervous?

LY

It makes me better.

GRANDHOMME

Excellent, a professional. But don't push the brazen act too hard lest we offend a customer. Always be prepared to play soft.

LY

Yes, sir.

Grandhomme nods and returns to the Showroom. As Ching-Ching motions for the Ladies to go UPSTAIRS, Toy whispers to Ly.

TOY

Good show.

INT SHOWROOM

The frantic activity has ceased. The Showroom has a dramatic, shadowy look that is almost creepy.

Grandhomme and Boer enter. Walking about the room, Grandhomme indicates specific places with tiny but not effeminate gestures.

GRANDHOMME

I want one Mechanical here. One on the opposite side. Put the last on the edge of those shadows for a dramatic touch. Do you understand, Boer?

BOER

I understand, Grandhomme.

CHING-CHING appears in the doorway and speaks into the Voice Thrower. Grandhomme nods and she exits.

GRANDHOMME

Moray will soon arrive to discuss the day's events.

BOER

I don't trust Moray.

GRANDHOMME

Whom do you suggest I trust?

BOER

I'm a professional, Grandhomme. I
take a job, I do what must be done.
If necessary, I take the bullet.
Moray does only what he wants.

GRANDHOMME

Don't we all.

BOER

I'm trying to tell you that things
are not going right.

GRANDHOMME

Your opinion is noted.

Lotus enters the lobby followed at a distance by the
Humanoid Mechanicals and hurries to the stairway.
Grandhomme raises his voice.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Very good choice of ladies, my
dear.

LOTUS

Of course, darling.

Lotus passes Ching-Ching. Each pretends to ignore the
other. They both speak in undertones.

LOTUS

(continuing)

Out of my way, pretzel-legs.

CHING-CHING

Slut.

LOTUS

At least I get some.

CHING-CHING

You'll get plenty.

INT MORAY'S CAR

PERFECTLY DRESSED, Moray cruises the EXPRESSWAY effortlessly slipping in and out of traffic without hesitation, and rarely a pause. He SPEAKS into a HOLOPHONE set for privacy.

MORAY

No, sir, I'm on his trail. No, sir, I know him better than he does himself.

(pauses)

Yes, sir, another all-night job. You'll be pleased with the results.

He puts away the phone and turns on the STEREO. A sprightly piece of MOZART begins. As it plays, he slides precisely in and out of traffic.

INT LOTUS' BEDROOM

In a DRESSING GOWN, Lotus stares into an ordinary MIRROR touching up her face quickly and professionally. SOUND OF KNOCKING AT DOOR. Irritated, Lotus sweeps the door open. Grandhomme stands there.

LOTUS

I am trying to dress. This isn't another of your one minute visits, is it?

GRANDHOMME

We have several new guests tonight.

LOTUS

What do you want? Am I supposed to give sample blow-jobs just so your new clientele will feel at home?

GRANDHOMME

I simply want you to be especially gracious to them.

LOTUS

It comes down to the same thing.
Well, is that all?

GRANDHOMME

I've had better hostesses. And
better lovers. Don't push me, my
dear Lotus blossom.

He exits. Although infuriated, she shuts the door
quietly.

INT LARGE BEDROOM

There are Wall Screens showing exciting and beautiful
footage of FOREIGN LOCATIONS. NATURE SOUNDS are heard.

LADY

Jesus, what is that shit? Can't we
have some music or something?

One of the LADIES touches a place on the wall and the
scenes shift to a POPULAR BAND CONCERT. The SOUND
INCREASES.

Special HOLOGRAPHIC MAKEUP MIRRORS sit about the room.
Each mirror gives the "perfect" makeup for the person
using it. Clothing and luggage lie scattered on the
bed, floor, and furniture.

In addition to the mirrors, there are MAKEUP DRONES
which will apply makeup, and MOBILE TRAYS which hold
SUPPLIES and a portable MIRROR.

As Ladies wrap their bodies and put on faces, Ly
remains a still point amid frenzied activity. Toy and
Ly SHOUT above the noise of the music.

TOY

Hurry up or Lotus'll be pissed.

LY

I can dress faster when some of the
others have finished.

TOY

I know what you mean.

Lotus enters the room to inspect the Ladies. She wears a clinging BLACK DRESS with a THIN, RED RIBBON round her neck.

The first thing she does is change the Wall Screen back to the original setting. Then, seeing Ly, she stalks directly to her.

LOTUS
Who the hell are you? What're you
doing here?

LY
(hesitating)
Boer brought me.

Lotus looks her up and down.

LOTUS
Typical. Get dressed.
(to the room)
Ten minutes, "girls".

Lotus exits. Toy winks at Ly.

INT SHOWROOM EVENING

The Humanoid Mechanicals, each holding an excellent but FAKE ART OBJECT in front of them, stand in the positions which Grandhomme noted to Boer.

DISPLAY MECHANICALS also sit about the room, holding art objects. Various small MECHANICALS putter around the room aimlessly.

INT SHOWROOM CURLY'S P.O.V.

Each fake art object is marked by a STEADY LIGHT. The flashing blue light of the Blue Crocodile appears in a BOX IN AN UPPER CORNER.

CURLY'S SCREEN
Subject #HI25. Status = Safe.

INT HOUSE LOBBY

Lotus descends the stairs. Her manner, although rushed when she first appears, loses its sharpness and assumes a regal air. By the time she reaches the foot of the stairway, she could be mistaken for an expensively bred piece of royalty.

The security personnel seen earlier have changed their CLOTHING and manner to transform themselves into BUTLERS and WAITERS. GUESTS arrive.

A butler opens the door for JOE HENLEY. Lotus speaks beautifully but with mockery.

LOTUS

Good evening, Doctor Henley.

JOE

Good evening, Lotus. Oh, my, you are so beautiful, but you are always so beautiful.

A FLOATING TRAY filled with DRINKS stops by Joe, and he takes one automatically.

LOTUS

And you, as always, are so early. The hostesses haven't even finished dressing.

Embarrassed and happy, Joe blushes. He has a crush on Lotus.

JOE

Oh, yes, of course, yes. Mmmh, yes.

Boer enters wearing FORMAL ATTIRE.

LOTUS

Please wait in the Showroom, Doctor Henley.

JOE

Uh, yes, mmmh, yes.

Joe exits into the Showroom. Boer approaches. The Floating Tray stops by him, but he raises a hand and shakes his head. It moves on.

BOER

He never misses one of these.

LOTUS

He never buys anything.

BOER

He brings buyers.

LOTUS

He never misses one of my new girls.

BOER

They're paid for.

LOTUS

Henley is a worm.

Moray enters. He smiles like the Cheshire cat.

MORAY

Good evening, Lotus. Lovely and aloof, as always.

He kisses her hand, and Lotus permits herself a smile. Moray extends his hand, but Boer refuses it.

BOER

We don't need you here.

MORAY

How's the cripple brigade?

BOER

Anyone of my associates is more of a man than you'll ever be.

MORAY

Lotus, run and get us a measuring stick. We'll compare.

She laughs.

BOER
A real sophisticate.

MORAY
We can't all be antiquated war
heroes.

Moray exits.

BOER
That man stinks of blood.

LOTUS
Shut up, pimp.

Boer stiffens with anger. Lotus exits smirking.

INT UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR

Leaning against a wall and hugging her handbag, Ly looks up and down the corridor. COUPLES pass her occasionally, going in and out of rooms. She starts trying different doors.

The first DOOR is locked. The second is a BROOM CLOSET stuffed with numerous CLEANING MECHANICALS. A LIGHT appears on each of them, and a VOICE is heard.

VOICE (O.S.)
How may we help you to brighten and
sanitize your home?

Ly shuts the door.

LY
Doesn't anybody use a broom?

She cautiously opens another door. Inside, the Wall Screen plays a WESTERN with lots of "shoot'em up" action. On the bed, a SEMI-NUDE FEMALE bumps down and up on a NUDE MAN.

MAN
Ride'em, cowgirl!

Embarrassed, Ly quickly shuts the door. She moves to another door, hesitates, then opens it.

Inside, the Wall Screen plays a BALL GAME. A MAN with his COAT off and his TIE undone sits on the bed watching the game. A SEMI-NUDE WOMAN waits in a chair. When Ly peeks in, the woman indicates the man and rolls her eyes.

Moving to another door, Ly peeks in. A YOUNG WOMAN and a MATURE MAN sit semi-naked on a bed watching a pornographic film.

MATURE MAN

I did that position once. I wasn't able to move for three days.

YOUNG WOMAN

I thought about being an actress.

Moving to yet another door, Ly opens it, looks in, then exits inside.

INT SMALL BEDROOM

The Wall Screen shows OCEAN SHORE and WAVES. No one is in the room. Ly crosses to a window. Looking the frame over carefully, she finds a BURGLAR ALARM.

Turning away angrily, hugging her handbag against herself, she paces back and forth. She pauses, then exits into the bathroom.

INT BATHROOM

Ly removes the lid to the TOILET RESERVOIR. Sitting, she takes the Blue Crocodile out of the handbag. Unwrapping it completely, she turns it around and around.

LY

Damn thing is ugly.

INT SHOWROOM

Boer walks through inspecting the various Mechanicals holding art-objects. No Guests are present.

He turns to exit, but pauses. Stepping to the Curly Mechanical, he KNOCKS on its head with his knuckles.

BOER

Yo. Is Curly in there?

CURLY

Affirmative. This Is Curly Unit.

BOER

How's it hanging?

CURLY

Elaborate and specify.

BOER

The Professor's buffed you all bright and shiny to bedazzle the clientele. New toys to impress the hicks.

Curly makes no response.

BOER

I wonder what makes you so damn valuable. No brains. No initiative.

CURLY

Do You Have An Interrogative For This Unit?

BOER

Yeah, I've got an interrogative. Why don't I do what I know I should?

CURLY

Elaborate and specify.

BOER

Who's dumber, you or me?

INT LARGE BEDROOM

Toy hurriedly reenters to search for something in her luggage, then to check her makeup. Ly enters.

TOY

Good grief, girl, aren't you ready yet? Lotus is ready to drop you as it is.

LY

Can you help me? My boyfriend must have picked up my bag instead of his. I just don't have anything to wear.

TOY

You're first big job? I know how it is. Keeping up with the cost of outfits is maddening. And they always want something you haven't worn before. How do they expect us to make a buck?

LY

Yeah.

TOY

I always bring an extra in case of accident. You know how men are. You can borrow it, but be careful.

LY

I really appreciate it.

TOY

Hurry up.

INT LOBBY

GUESTS are scattered about. They are mostly MALE and RICH. Most are OVER FORTY. SERVER MECHANICALS float about offering REFRESHMENTS, CIGARS, etc. Lotus mingles graciously and flirts familiarly.

Among one group of DIGNIFIED OLDER MEN, attempting to act sophisticated, is Jack III. The older men obviously wish he were somewhere else.

JACK

This artsy-fartsy stuff is
(more)

JACK (cont'd)
important, of course, for a proper
image. So Father suggested I hop
along here for the evening.

GUEST #1
Why didn't your father attend?

JACK
He had the runs or something. Say,
is this stuff real? I mean, is it
like real art?

GUEST #2
Art, young man, is in the eye of
the beholder.

GUEST #1
Why don't you go play with one of
those pretty hostesses and leave
the serious business of art to your
elders.

Some Ladies entertain Guests by joking with the
mechanical, Larry.

LADY #1
I'll bet you can keep your leg up a
long time.

LARRY
Affirmative.

LADY #2
How long?

LARRY
Indefinitely.

LADY #1
Oh, that's exciting.

INT STUDY

Moray plays with a SMALL, METAL ART OBJECT while he
waits. When Grandhomme enters the room, Moray drops

the piece without regard for where it falls and, like a dancer, sits gracefully.

Grandhomme picks up the metal art object, inspects it, then places it on a shelf. He stares accusingly at Moray, who smiles placidly and waits.

GRANDHOMME

We have lost a piece, and a courier.

MORAY

The courier stole it.

GRANDHOMME

How do you know?

MORAY

I had suspicions, so I made certain to be there.

Grandhomme sits at his DESK. A SERVER MECHANICAL floats to him. Its top snaps open to reveal CIGARS, ELECTRIC MATCHES, and a V-CUTTER for clipping the cigar head.

MECHANICAL

Would you like a cigar?

Grandhomme lights a cigar elegantly as he talks.

GRANDHOMME

I also had my doubts. So I sent Boer to forestall difficulties.

MORAY

Yes, I saw him playing with his new toys.

GRANDHOMME

Those are my toys.

MORAY

They're cute.

GRANDHOMME

Who has my piece?

MORAY

I saw the Courier hide it, but it was snatched before I returned.

GRANDHOMME

And who killed our Courier-Thief?

MORAY

I did.

GRANDHOMME

Why?

MORAY

To seal a leak.

GRANDHOMME

You can be too efficient.

The MECHANICAL floats to Moray.

MECHANICAL

Would you like a cigar?

Moray ignores it.

GRANDHOMME

Whom do you think took it from the thief?

MORAY

Whom do you think?

GRANDHOMME

I don't pay you to play games!

Moray's eyes flash, but his smile merely broadens.

MORAY

Your competitor.

GRANDHOMME

MacGregor? That talentless nobody. What proof do you have?

MORAY

My sources are confidential. Take
it or leave it as you wish.

INT LARGE BEDROOM

Ly has partially dressed. Behind her, the door opens
and Joe peeks in. He studies her for a moment, then
enters quietly and shuts the door.

JOE

I'm not intruding, am I?

Ly starts and covers herself.

JOE

(continuing)

Oh, you're the "shy" one.

Ly clears her throat.

LY

That's me.

JOE

Oh, ah, you're, mmmh, so attrac-
tive.

LY

Thank you.

Quickly taking the initiative, Ly grips Joe by the
elbow and leads him to the door.

LY

(continuing)

Wouldn't you like to wait for me
downstairs?

JOE

I'd rather, mmmh, spend my time,
uh, mmmh, alone with you.

LY

That sounds exciting. But why don't
you get us something to drink? I'll
come for you.

JOE

Oh, yes, mmmh, yes. That sounds wonderful, uh, wonderful.

Ly pushes him out the door.

LY

Wait for me. Downstairs.

INT STUDY

Unusually agitated, Grandhomme paces a few steps back and forth. The Server Mechanical remains at Moray's elbow.

GRANDHOMME

It was most difficult to secure that piece. It required a great deal of patience. I expected to have it tonight.

MECHANICAL

Would you like a cigar?

MORAY

Consider it in transit.

GRANDHOMME

I want it. It's mine!

Grandhomme calms himself.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

I'm a collector, too.

MORAY

You mean it's one of your few genuine pieces.

GRANDHOMME

You may go.

MORAY

There is one other thing.

MECHANICAL

Would you like a cigar?

With a snap of his elbow, Moray knocks the Mechanical flying across the room.

GRANDHOMME

Well?

MORAY

Of late, your operations have become more noticeable.

GRANDHOMME

Then take care of it. You have resources. You have official connections. Cover our tracks.

MORAY

It has already begun.

INT SHOWROOM EVENING

Larry holds one of his LEGS in the air. Not comprehending the LAUGHTER around him, the Mechanical periodically states the time he has held the leg suspended in the air.

LARRY

One minute twenty seconds.

EXT COURTYARD

Boer escorts Moray to his car. Moray, grinning, drives away. Staring after him briefly, Boer then reenters the house.

INT SHOWROOM

Boer enters to find Larry with its leg in the air. He motions for the Ladies to move on and speaks politely to the men.

BOER

Excuse me, gentlemen, but the auction will begin soon. Please be
(more)

BOER (cont'd)
certain to examine all the objects
being offered tonight.

Laughing, the Ladies and Guests disperse. Boer stands
beside Larry without looking at the Humanoid
Mechanical.

BOER
(continuing)
Control to Larry Unit -- Put your
leg down.

Larry complies.

BOER
(continuing)
Explain your action.

LARRY
Query Was Made As To How Long My
Leg Could Remain Suspended In The
Air.

BOER
(snorts)
They were talking about a man, and
you'll never have the right
equipment for that. Christ.

Boer turns to go, but Axe meets him.

AXE
About the same IQ as a raw re-
cruit.

BOER
I think the recruit's got the edge.

Axe says nothing, but it's obvious something is on his
mind.

BOER
(continuing)
Spit it out.

AXE

When're you going to wise up?

BOER

What do you mean?

AXE

Once upon a time, we were a team.

BOER

And?

AXE

Our lives depend on you. On your brains. Your experience. But Grandhomme won't stop interfering. The genius, Herr Micromanager, overrides your plans on no more than a whim.

Guests and Ladies wander by. The men wait until they've passed.

AXE

(continuing)

He risks our butts. And that's not considering the danger posed by that scavenger Moray.

BOER

So what do you want?

AXE

Let's get out of here.

BOER

I'm too old. This is it for me.

AXE

That ain't the reason.

Boer frowns. Axe waits.

BOER

You have to hear it.

AXE

Yes, I do.

BOER

I don't walk out. I don't break a contract.

AXE

Are you sure we can afford all this personal integrity? What about us? We were working as a team long before you hooked us up to Grandhomme. What about our contract?

Boer is silent.

AXE

(continuing)

Even rats know when to jump ship.

BOER

Get back to work.

Axe looks at Larry.

AXE

I wonder what those clunkers think about? Electric sleep?

BOER

How not to trip on their own feet.

AXE

Who the hell doesn't?

Axe and Boer exit separately.

Larry stands motionless.

LARRY'S SCREEN

Key Words = Man = Human Being.

To Be = To Function.

Reference = Analogous Equipment.

Moe stands motionless.

MOE'S SCREEN

Comparison = What Mechanical
Equipment Systems Have Functions
Similar To Human Being?

Curly stands motionless.

CURLY'S SCREEN

Search = What Equipment Systems
Does A Mechanical Lack?

INT SHOWROOM

Ly holds the arm of a distinguished-looking, older man, CORSON, who carries himself stiffly erect. He is a blunt man who is envious of Grandhomme's aura of refinement.

CORSON

You're much too intelligent a girl
to be doing this type of work.

LY

That's sweet of you, sir.

CORSON

How did you get into it?

LY

Sort of stumbled into it.

Grandhomme enters the room smiling pleasantly. Ly watches him carefully as he mingles with his Guests.

CORSON

You should make plans, my girl.
Look at Grandhomme. One would never
think that he had fought his way
out of filth and poverty. You won't
get anywhere in your life just
stumbling around.

LY

You sound like my daddy.
(she catches herself)
I didn't mean...

His chest puffs out proudly, and he puts his arm around her waist.

CORSON

That's quite all right.

Grandhomme approaches them.

GRANDHOMME

Well, Ligeia, is it a pleasant evening?

LY

The best is yet to come.

Smiling expansively, Grandhomme turns to Corson.

GRANDHOMME

Well, Corson, my old friend, have any of the pieces in tonight's exhibition caught your eye?

CORSON

Yes, indeed. The Holy Women at the foot of the Cross. It strikes me hard.

GRANDHOMME

Indeed, a magnificent example of Gothic ivory. You've always had a good eye for religious works.

CORSON

You have provenance?

GRANDHOMME

But, naturally.

CORSON

(nodding)

I admire your style, Grandhomme.

GRANDHOMME

Merci. Style of course is the essence of art.

CORSON

A man of style! That's what you are, Grandhomme. The things you've had to do to climb so far from the sewer. The choices you--

GRANDHOMME

(interrupting; irritated)

There was no choice. I've often wished to have done many things in my life differently, but it wasn't possible. There were things which simply had to be done if I wished to achieve my goals.

CORSON

Of course, of course. But you--

GRANDHOMME

(interrupting)

As for style--est l'essence de la femme aussi, eh?

CORSON

Mais oui.

He places his free hand on Ly's arm.

CORSON

(continuing)

Elle est sympathique?

GRANDHOMME

Mais si, très sympathique.

Ly tries to smile. Grandhomme bows away muttering to himself.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Peasant.

He addresses the room.

GRANDHOMME
(continuing)

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is time to bid for the three feature pieces of tonight's exhibition.

As the Guests and Ladies move to one of the exhibition pieces, Jack spots Ly. She does not see him. He watches her closely.

INT REMOTE EXTERIOR DOOR

Lotus opens an outside door. Moray enters from darkness into light.

INT SHOWROOM

The Guests and Ladies stand in a semicircle about Grandhomme. There are only a half-dozen or so pieces at this exclusive showing, so he doesn't rush.

GRANDHOMME
You have all received information on the tonight's objets d'art. And you have examined them for yourselves. Who would like a closer inspection of our first objet d'art?

A GUEST makes a slight signal. Grandhomme indicates him to a Mechanical, and the first item is carried to the Guest.

Ly stands beside Corson as the exhibition proceeds. He clings to her possessively. She glances around, then whispers in his ear. He presses her arm with a hand and nods. She leaves the room.

Jack watches her exit.

INT SMALL BEDROOM

Ly enters the room where she has hidden the Blue Crocodile. Hurrying into the bathroom, she retrieves the figure and reappears.

The bedroom door opens as she approaches it. Ly quickly drops to the floor and scrambles under the bed. Moray and Lotus enter. Lotus clings to Moray.

LOTUS

You haven't visited me. Not even for information.

MORAY

I've been busy.

LOTUS

Boer says you're an eel, just like your name. Slick and slippery.

MORAY

An eel is also tenacious.

LOTUS

Today he said that you're a snake. A pit viper.

MORAY

How zoological of him.

LOTUS

You're nothing but a classy fraud.

MORAY

Everyone's a fraud one way or another.

Lotus, puzzled by his distant attitude, takes a step back and studies him.

LOTUS

What's racing around in that slippery snake brain of yours?

MORAY

Grandhomme wants to protect his invisible empire. He wants to eliminate risk.

LOTUS

Which means?

MORAY

It can be done. But it will involve several decisive steps.

LOTUS

Such as?

MORAY

You would only be interested in the first.

LOTUS

Well?

MORAY

A murder.

LOTUS

Whose?

MORAY

Yours.

Lotus attempts to strike him, but he spins her around and traps her arms in front of her.

MORAY

(continuing)

Can't have you talking, my dear.

He cuts her throat to the bone and lets her fall beside the bed. She struggles fitfully as her life ebbs.

INT LOTUS' FACE LY'S P.O.V.

Lotus' face lies level with Ly's face. Blood flows from the wound quickly over the carpet. Ly slides as far away as she can.

INT SMALL BEDROOM

Moray calmly places his foot on the back of Lotus' neck to hold her still. He observes her movements acutely, but with an expressionless face.

INT MORAY'S SHOE LY'S P.O.V.

Ly can see one of Moray's two-tone shoes holding Lotus down as she writhes.

INT UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR

Joe Henley carries a bottle of champagne down the hall as he looks in one room after another. He opens the door to the small bedroom. The sight of Moray standing with one foot on Lotus makes him freeze.

INT SMALL BEDROOM

Moray leaps across the room and drags Joe into the room. Without struggle, Moray kills him with an upward thrust through the abdomen to the heart.

Joe's body falls on the other side of the bed from Lotus. His portly body blocks that side of the bed. Ly is trapped on all sides.

INT UNDER THE BED

Ly squirms towards Joe's body to get away from Lotus' BLOOD. Trapped, she bites her lips to keep from screaming.

INT LY'S P.O.V.

She watches as Moray wipes blood from one of his shoes with Lotus' gown.

INT UNDER THE BED

Ly rocks back and forth. Tears run down her cheeks.

INT SMALL BEDROOM

Moray stops by a mirror to check his appearance. He straightens his hair and jacket, then exits.

Laboriously, Ly wriggles from under the bed by first using her feet to push Lotus' legs and hip away. During the process, she drops the Blue Crocodile.

Crawling across the floor, she leans against a CHAIR. From where she is, Ly can see part of Joe's body and the Blue Crocodile smeared with blood. Its bright blue eyes seem to stare.

Pulling herself up, Ly walks to the door. She stops. Returning, she picks up her handbag and exits.

INT UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR

Ly enters. Using a wall for support, she exits through a door at the end of the corridor.

At the opposite end of the corridor, Jack steps around a corner. He goes cautiously to the door of the bedroom and looks in. He gasps.

Soon, however, he discovers something of great interest. Entering the room, Jack immediately reappears, wrapping an object with a TOWEL and stuffing it under his jacket. He exits.

INT SHOWROOM

The three Mechanicals are outwardly as still as ever.

INT CURLY'S P.O.V.

Part of his screen displays the people in his immediate vicinity. Another part runs a PROGRAM at top speed, comparing the CHEMICAL COMPONENTS of a mechanical to a human being.

INT SHOWROOM

Larry is just as still.

INT LARRY'S P.O.V.

Larry's identical split-screen shows a PROGRAM comparing ELECTRICAL aspects.

INT SHOWROOM

Moe waits in place while a Guest looks at an art object.

INT MOE'S P.O.V.

Moe's split-screen shows a PROGRAM comparing MOTIVE AND STRUCTURAL aspects. Then the program stops.

MOE'S SCREEN
PROGRAM SUSPENDED.

INT SHOWROOM

Curly, not surrounded by Guests, exits. Grandhomme sees but says nothing. Boer follows Curly.

INT HOUSE LOBBY

Jack walks to the front door attempting to look nonchalant. Curly strides directly towards him.

CURLY'S SCREEN
Alert = Foreign Object Controls
Subject #HI25.
Status = Unsafe.
Order = Secure Designated Target.
SUSPENSION LIFTED.

Curly's steel "hands" clinch Jack's upper arms like vices and lift him off the floor. Jack writhes in pain. An object wrapped in a TOWEL drops to the floor. Boer picks it up.

BOER
Control to Curly Unit -- Take the subject into the library.

CURLY
You Control Subject #HI25.

BOER
Correction -- Take the object into the library. And make it fast.

Curly turns and carries Jack away. Boer follows unwrapping the towel. He finds the Blue Crocodile staring back at him.

BOER
(continuing)
Got you, you little bastard

INT REMOTE EXTERIOR DOOR

Ly exits into the darkness via the same door Moray entered.

EXT COURTYARD

In the courtyard, EMPTY LIMOUSINES wait for their chauffeurs and owners. Their HEADLIGHTS resemble vacant eyes. A CHAUFFEUR appears from the house and goes to the TRUNK of a limousine.

Opening the trunk lid, he takes out a WHISKEY BOTTLE, which he wraps in a TOWEL. He shuts the trunk lid, but it comes open again. He slams it. Once again, it opens.

CHAUFFEUR
Stu-pid-son-of-a-bitch.

He slams it as hard as he can. It stays. The Chauffeur exits. When the Chauffeur has disappeared, the trunk lid opens by itself. Glancing around quickly, Ly runs over, climbs in the trunk, and pulls the lid down.

INT HOUSE LOBBY

A Guest and Lady come rushing down the stairs. They run to the Showroom.

INT SHOWROOM

The two Guests hurry to their respective friends and WHISPER. Other guests LOOK AROUND with mounting uncertainty. The whisperers abruptly exit.

Ching-Ching enters and speaks into the Voice Thrower. Grandhomme starts, then immediately addresses his Guests.

GRANDHOMME
We've had an unfortunate incident.
(more)

BOER (cont'd)

I suggest that the bidding be postponed and everyone depart promptly.

Boer's Security Personnel automatically take places by the art pieces with weapons at the ready.

INT LOBBY

The Guests exit hurriedly. Their BODYGUARDS stand about the exit route with weapons visible. The Ladies, ignored and uncertain, stand in a group to one side.

INT SMALL BEDROOM

The door opens, and Grandhomme enters. Boer waits. Grandhomme looks at the bodies of Joe and Lotus.

GRANDHOMME

Take the essentials. Burn the building. Meet me at the main warehouse.

He studies Lotus' crumpled body.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Leave no trace.

INT LIMOUSINE TRUNK

Ly waits as limousine doors slam. The limousine rocks slightly as it backs up, then drives away. Raising the trunk lid a bit, she peeps out.

EXT LY'S P.O.V. FROM TRUNK

The building and its anxiously departing rats recede into the distance.

EXT TRAFFIC LIGHT

The limousine stops for a RED LIGHT at a busy intersection. Ly throws open the trunk lid, jumps out, and runs around a corner. She glances back to see if she was discovered.

A BODYGUARD gets out of the limousine, walks to the rear, and slams the trunk lid very hard. It stays shut. Then he gets back in.

Ly slips away, looking behind her frequently. She bumps into something lying on the sidewalk. It's a LEGLESS STREETPERSON trying to sleep. The man rolls over without opening his eyes.

LEGLESS MAN

Awww, sarge, let me sleep.

Ly steps around him and continues. The street and sidewalk are covered with TRASH. There is very little illumination, most of the STREETLIGHTS having been broken. In the distance are the BRIGHT LIGHTS of an all-night drug store.

As Ly passes an alleyway, a GIRL, 14, steps out. The clothes she wears are CLEAN, but she looks SICKLY. She vacillates between being pushy and afraid.

GIRL

Hey, lady, want a date?

Ly keeps walking.

GIRL

(continuing)

Nice outfit, lady. Come on, I'm clean. I'll do anything you want. I'm hot.

Ly stops, then turns and looks at the girl.

GIRL

(continuing)

Never know what it's like until you've done it with another woman.

Ly takes off her bracelet and gives it to the girl. The girl examines the bracelet carefully, afraid that it isn't real. Ly exits.

INT LATE NIGHT DRUGSTORE

Ly enters. The contrast between her clothing and her expression cause CUSTOMERS to stare. She walks to a counter. A CLERK MECHANICAL greets her.

CLERK MECHANICAL

May we be of service? Our special today is Ducky Cold Cream for healthy, youthful skin, fifty milliliters for only ten ninety-five.

LY

I have to call the police. It's an emergency. May I use your phone?

CLERK

Our holophone is for employees only. May I interest you in Shredder's See-Through Panties--

A PHARMACIST interrupts.

PHARMACIST

May I help you?

LY

I have to call the police. It's an emergency. May I use your phone?

PHARMACIST

(continuing)

Come this way.

INT DRUGSTORE BACKROOM

The Pharmacist enters followed by LY. There is a DESK with a holophone, which he sets for privacy.

PHARMACIST

(into the phone)

I have an emergency call for you. One moment.

He hands her the phone.

PHARMACIST
(continuing)
Are you okay?

Ly nods.

PHARMACIST
(continuing)
I'll be outside if you need any-
thing.

LY
Thank you.

The Pharmacist exits. Ly speaks into the phone.

LY
(continuing)
I would like to report an
emergency. My name is Ligeia--

She stops. On her arm is a swath of BLOOD. Ly tries to
scream, but only air rushes out.

INT POLICE STATION LATE NIGHT

People exit as the graveyard shift takes over. A
BATTERED CLEANING MECHANICAL bangs into FURNITURE
repeatedly as it tries to vacuum.

Ly sits at the DESK of DETECTIVE GEORGE SOUSE. She
wears JEANS and a SWEATSHIRT. Sousé enters with a CUP
OF WATER. Ly takes the cup, drains it, and
automatically hands it back to him.

LY
Thank you.

Ly remains still as Sousé throws the cup away and sits
opposite her.

SOUSE
As I said before, it's unlikely
there'll be charges brought against
you, but don't leave town just yet.
Okay?

LY

Yes, sir.

He stares. She remains silent.

SOUSE

Your dress has been sent to the lab, although they probably won't get to it for some time. All departments are backed up.

LY

The dress wasn't mine.

SOUSE

Yes, that's right. You told me.

Ly hugs her handbag silently. Sousé fidgets.

SOUSE

(continuing)

We're waiting for the remains of the house to cool. So it can be sifted for evidence. It was obviously set on fire soon after you left.

LY

Yes.

She is silent. Sousé drums his fingers in a quick TATTOO, then tries again.

SOUSE

This case involves the federal government, but it'll probably be a while before the correct people are notified. And, most likely, even longer before they get here.

LY

I understand.

SOUSE

I'm arranging for your protection, but it'll take time. We have a cot, if you'd like to lie down.

Ly looks at the floor and says nothing.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Maybe it wouldn't tire you too much to go back over your statement. While the details are still fresh.

LY

Fresh? It keeps running again and again in my head, like a ghastly carousel, again and again.

SOUSE

Let's take it piece by piece. One, the sophisticated mechanicals, the trained personnel, the fact that they didn't hesitate to burn a base of operations. All this implies a large and well-funded organization. Perhaps even one international in scope.

LY

Yeah, I guess.

SOUSE

Second. The names you heard--Lotus, Boer--aren't real names. They're business labels. Like the woman you met, "Toy", that's a common name in the sex trade.

LY

I remember now. When Grandhomme asked my name--well, I slipped and told him my real name. But he treated it like some kind of stage name.

Sousé nods and doodles. ON THE PAPER are VARIATIONS in spelling the names "LOTUS", "BOER", and "GRANDHOMME".

SOUSE

By the way, how did you ever get wrapped with a label like "Ligeia"?

LY

My father was an Edgar Poe nut.

SOUSE

And "Ligeia" was his favorite. It was Poe's favorite, too. Ligeia, beauty as god.

LY

Yeah. You must read a lot.

SOUSE

I suppose. What did this Grandhomme look like?

LY

Tall. Elegant. He spoke several languages at the party or auction or whatever.

SOUSE

Grandhomme. I think it's French. The first word is "grand", meaning great or large. The second is "homme", meaning man. Great man. And he's selling what can only be presumed to be illegal or stolen art works.

He paces the floor.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Let's try something else.

LY

Okay.

SOUSE

When you were under the bed are you certain you didn't detect
(more)

SOUSE (cont'd)
anything? About the killer? It
could be minute.

Ly struggles with the memory.

LY
No. Nothing. All I saw were his
two-tone shoes. All I heard was
his voice. I'll never forget his
voice.

SOUSE
Why? What was it like?

LY
I don't know.

Sousé sits again.

SOUSE
Give it a try. Describe it.

LY
The way he said things was
peculiar. Very precise. Like a
voice coach, or a professor, I
guess.

SOUSE
A trained speaker? Interesting. May
indicate an ability with languages.

A woman, ADAMS, 45, stops and looks at Sousé in
surprise.

ADAMS
Quitting time.

SOUSE
Go away, you bother me.

ADAMS
Go home, little boy.

SOUSE
Beat it, I'm busy.

Adams exits.

LY
Who was that?

SOUSE
My boss.

LY
Oh. Why would he kill Lotus?

SOUSE
From what you've said, I suspect he
was covering his tracks. My guess
is Lotus was feeding him
information.

LY
And the chubby man came along at
the wrong time.

SOUSE
Yeah. Eels and snakes.

She shudders.

SOUSE
(continuing)
Any idea about the warehouse where
Boer played with the mechanicals?
Did you hear anything on the way
there?

LY
No. Sorry

SOUSE
Think about it. You never know when
a detail will pop up.

LY
I wish I could do something.

SOUSE

Just keep in mind that somebody is
doing something.

Sousé stands again.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Pardon me, but I have to ease the
bladder.

Sousé exits. Ly closes her eyes. Fatigue lies heavy on
her.

INT TENT REVIVAL DECADES EARLIER

A strong, impressive figure, LY'S FATHER, moves back
and forth on a PLATFORM, addressing the audience with
out a podium. The AUDIENCE is intent. Ten-YEAR-OLD
LIGEIA sits close to the podium, mesmerized.

FATHER

Life is not always an easy journey.
There are the sweet oases of good,
which we seek. There are the fiery
pits of evil, which tempt us. And
there lies--in-between the two--the
desert of confusion. We have only
our inner light to guide us through
this bleak desert.

INT POLICE STATION LATE NIGHT

Ly inhales shakily.

LY

Oh, Daddy, I'm lost in the in-be-
tween.

She hears the SOUND OF SHOES WALKING on a waxed floor.

Opening her eyes, Ly sees a pair of two-tone shoes
coming down the hall. A LONG PARTITION of the type used
to separate office space hides the rest. The shoes stop
next to another PAIR OF SHOES which go the opposite
direction.

MORAY (O.S.)
Can you tell me where Detective
Sousé's desk is?

VOICE (O.S.)
Other side of this partition.
Name's on the desk.

MORAY (O.S.)
Got it.

The shoes continue to the end of the partition and turn
the corner. Moray appears.

Sousé's office is empty.

INT TRISHA'S HOUSE

TRISHA, wearing an OVERSIZED SWEATER and holding a CAT
under one arm, opens the FRONT DOOR to reveal Ly.

TRISHA
Ligeia, my dear. Where the hell
have you been?

LY
Trish, I need to crash for a while.
But it could be dangerous.

Surprised, Trisha looks at Ly as if she were a
stranger.

TRISHA
Come in.

LY
Very dangerous.

Trisha hesitates again.

TRISHA
Come in, Ly. Where have you been?

LY
In hell.

TRISHA

Dance on the edge long enough, and
you're bound to fall in.

LY

Thanks, Mom.

INT TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM

Trisha's home is warm, cozy, soothing and quiet, unless
you don't like cats. CATS OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS lounge
over the furniture and floor, slinking in and out of
the room at will. Ly enters.

LY

I see you continue to reduce the
homeless cat population.

TRISHA

Very funny, Miss Show-up-hours-
late-looking-lost-and-bedraggled.
Move a cat and dump your stuff.

Ly does and follows Trisha out of the room.

TRISHA

(continuing)

Enter my sanctum sanctorium.

LY

Most people call it a kitchen.

INT TRISHA'S KITCHEN

Trisha takes a FOOD CONTAINER from the REFRIGERATOR.

TRISHA

What kind of chicken soup would you
like?

Trisha turns and sees that Ly has already taken a BOWL
and DRINKING GLASS from a CABINET.

TRISHA

(continuing)

Spoon?

Trisha takes a SPOON from a DRAWER and sets it on the table with a NAPKIN. While Trisha puts the food container in a MICROWAVE, Ly sits and plays nervously with the spoon.

LY

I really shouldn't be here.

TRISHA

Tell me about it.

LY

Trish, I'm not certain I should.

TRISHA

I'm not trustworthy?

LY

All right, I stole something. At the airport.

TRISHA

You? Heavens, I'm shocked.

LY

Smartass.

TRISHA

The police are looking for you?

LY

No, they've questioned me.

TRISHA

So?

LY

I think someone is trying to kill me.

Trisha stares. The microwave BEEPS. Trisha, running on automatic, puts SOUP in Ly's bowl. Ly plays with the spoon.

TRISHA

Eat.

LY

I'm really not hungry.

Trisha gets MILK from the REFRIGERATOR and fills a glass for LY.

TRISHA

Milk. Soup with chicken. Who would want to kill you?

LY

You never change.

TRISHA

Talk or eat.

LY

There's this man named Grandhomme.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Grandhomme supervises a rush of activity at a LARGE WAREHOUSE. He inspects PAPERWORK as LOADER MECHANICALS put BOXES onto LARGE TRUCKS. The trucks immediately exit.

In the background, a WORKER uses remote control to manipulate a huge LOADER MECAHNICAL, TINY, to move the heaviest crates.

The Professor enters but must wait. Grandhomme checks a TRUCK MANIFEST and hands it to a driver, OBIE.

OBIE

We'll be ready to empty the small warehouse after this load.

GRANDHOMME

Excellent. Continue.

Obie leaves.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Yes, Professor?

The Professor hands him a DRAWING.

PROFESSOR

This draft came in. I can send word to start as soon as you approve it.

Grandhomme glances at it.

GRANDHOMME

What's this?

PROFESSOR

It's the fake altarpiece commission.

GRANDHOMME

We do not produce fakes. We recreate lost art objects.

PROFESSOR

Yes, I only meant--

GRANDHOMME

(interrupting)

I heard what you said. As for this design, it's totally inadequate. Any fool could see the anachronistic additions.

PROFESSOR

What?

GRANDHOMME

(interrupting)

The folds in the clothing, you imbecile. What is seventeenth century extravagance doing in a fourteenth century altarpiece? They were worshipping Jesus and the Virgin, not their tailors.

PROFESSOR

It's a small mistake.

GRANDHOMME

This is not the first time I've caught your people trying to be creative at my expense.

PROFESSOR

Few of your customers would object.

GRANDHOMME

I object.

PROFESSOR

Art is what you like.

GRANDHOMME

No, art is what the customer pays for. The design is not approved.

Grandhomme tears up the paper and exits.

INT CORNER OF LARGE WAREHOUSE

The three Humanoid Mechanicals methodically pass a succession of SMALL BOXES along a line with the last me-chemical placing them in a CRATE.

MOE'S SCREEN

Search = Completed. Comparison Completed.

LARRY'S SCREEN

Query Answered = Mechanicals Lack Reproductive System.

CURLY'S SCREEN

CONCLUSION = Maintain System Integrity.

INT TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM

Ly sleeps curled up on the COUCH. A KITTEN has curled asleep beside her. Trisha enters from the kitchen. Removing the kitten, she puts an AFGHAN COVER over Ly.

TRISHA

Little girl, you've never gotten yourself into such a mess.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Grandhomme enters the warehouse's OFFICES, where Jack III sits BOUND and GAGGED. A big man, MANN, stands guard. Grandhomme pulls a chair in front of Jack and sits.

GRANDHOMME

What is to be done with you?

He motions, and Mann removes Jack's gag.

JACK

You're really in trouble. You just wait. My old man knows people.

GRANDHOMME

You should try thinking before you speak.

JACK

I'm innocent. I haven't done a thing.

GRANDHOMME

Innocent? No. Stupid? Yes. You attempted to steal a valuable artwork of mine.

JACK

I found it, that's all. It was just lying there.

GRANDHOMME

And a strange woman jumped into your car.

JACK

That's right.

GRANDHOMME

And she was at my exhibition.

JACK

Exactly.

GRANDHOMME

Well, no matter the actual circumstances, the original question remains. Should you have a fatal accident or not?

JACK

My father knows where I went last night. He'll know who's responsible.

GRANDHOMME

There were many people present. More to the point, how many times has daddy saved you from a revoked license, or even a jail sentence?

Jack is silent.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

An accident while driving under the influence would be in character for a spoiled little boy like you. Yes?

Jack continues a sullen silence. Grandhomme considers him.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

Tell me more about this woman you saw. Describe her.

EXT DARK LAND WITH FOG

Ly struggles to run. THICK RED MUD sucks at her feet.

She can't breathe in the FOG. Her hands leave BLOOD RED STREAKS on her face and throat.

Bright, living BLUE EYES surface in the red mud ahead of her. The BLOOD VESSELS in the eyes visibly pulsate.

The mud has her arms and legs trapped. A HUGE MOUTH snaps open and rows of WHITE FANGS rush at her.

She opens her mouth but can't scream.

INT TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM

Ly wakes SCREAMING. Cats and kittens of every description run frantically in all directions. The afghan cover tangles her FEET. She fights hysterically to get loose. Trisha enters to her.

TRISHA
Ly! Ly, wake up!

She unwraps the afghan. With her legs free, Ly stops struggling.

TRISHA
(continuing)
You're safe.

Ly curls up. Trisha sits beside her.

TRISHA
(continuing)
You're okay, right?

LY
I'm okay.

Ly starts crying.

TRISHA
You said you were okay.

LY
I lied.

Trisha wipes her eyes.

TRISHA
You're hurt and I'm crying.

LY
That's because you're a good person. I'd forgotten. I've forgotten a lot of important stuff.

TRISHA

You've changed. The girl I knew would have skipped town as fast as possible. Why didn't you?

LY

I don't know. It was as if everything I've considered important had fallen away. Fallen away into nothing.

TRISHA

Sometimes a shock can help us see things better.

LY

I don't...

TRISHA

What?

LY

I can't help feeling my Father would be ashamed of me.

Ly springs to her feet and, wiping her eyes roughly, strides back and forth.

LY

(continuing)

I've got to do something, Trisha. I can't stand being inactive. It's torture.

TRISHA

What do you want to do?

LY

I don't know. Find out something to help the police, I guess. That would be good, wouldn't it?

Trisha pulls a hiding KITTEN from under a chair, whispers to it, and strokes it.

TRISHA

What was the name of the little
chubby fellow you mentioned?

LY

I don't know. I only heard it once.
He was a doctor.

TRISHA

You mean a medical doctor? Or a
professor?

LY

I just heard "doctor".

Ly pets a CAT hiding on top of a BOOKSHELF, coaxing it
down.

TRISHA

And you say he was heavy, round-
faced, and excitable?

LY

Yes.

TRISHA

Like a big puppy dog?

LY

Yeah, why?

They sit again. Cats appear from everywhere.

TRISHA

There's a professor in the
university art department who fits
that description. His name is
Doctor Joseph Henley.

LY

Joseph? Sweet Glory, that was the
name.

TRISHA

He always stops to talk with the
ladies at the reference desk.

LY

Detective Sousé said the organization might be international. They might have contact with a lot of people like Doctor Henley.

TRISHA

Can you imagine the brains Grand-homme must have to put it together?

LY

Brains, I don't know. I've seen the blood. Can I borrow your car?

TRISHA

For what?

LY

I think I can find that warehouse.

TRISHA

Why take a chance?

LY

I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed to sit and do nothing while people are dying.

Trisha sighs.

TRISHA

I'll drive.

LY

Why?

TRISHA

I'm a friend.

INT HOTEL ROOM

Moray sits on his BED with LEGS CROSSED in yoga fashion. In front of him lies an ASSORTMENT of WEAPONRY. He ROCKS back and forth, HUMMING (not chanting). He is smiling, eyes closed. Suddenly, he stops.

MORAY

(innocently)

I don't know why people get the
wrong idea about me.

He laughs to himself. The laughter gets louder and
louder.

INT POLICE STATION

Sousé sits in front of a computer screen. A detective,
TAI, 28, stops by his chair.

TAI

Don't you have a beautiful wife
waiting for you at home?

SOUSE

What wife?

TAI

Do you mind if I sleep with her?

SOUSE

Change the sheets when you're done.

TAI

You're sick.

SOUSE

I have a supposition.

TAI

Ready-set-go.

SOUSE

You run illegal art objects
internationally.

TAI

Got you.

SOUSE

You bribe the agents who are
supposed to investigate you.

TAI

Money talks.

SOUSE

The organization's camouflage starts to unravel. What do you do?

TAI

Take cover fast as my ass will go.

SOUSE

And if you were an agent on the take?

TAI

I'd move twice as fast.

SOUSE

What if there are incriminating witnesses?

TAI

What witnesses?

SOUSE

Right.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

All the trucks and workers have gone. Grandhomme, Boer, and the Professor stand near the three motionless Humanoid Mechanicals.

GRANDHOMME

Ly. An appropriate name. The question is whether she is freelance or a contractor.

BOER

A freak. A chance encounter. Nothing adds up, like she had no plan.

GRANDHOMME

Agreed. MacGregor would have struck in a different and totally predictable manner.

PROFESSOR

Possibly, it was a petty thief who blundered into the system.

GRANDHOMME

A bold, petty thief. Professor, why did the mechanicals not alert us to the presence of the Blue Crocodile while the woman still had it? It had been prepared so it would register on their instruments, yes?

PROFESSOR

Boer must have countermanded their programming somehow.

GRANDHOMME

I suggest that you find out what went wrong, or your babies will be turned into scrap.

The Mechanicals remain outwardly immobile.

MOE'S SCREEN

Definition, "Scrap" = Nonfunctioning Material.

LARRY'S SCREEN

Nonfunction = Nonvalue. Function = Value.

CURLY'S SCREEN

Mechanical Nonfunction = Nonvalue.

MOE'S SCREEN

Order = "Protect Objects of Value".

EXT AIRPORT AREA

There is little TRAFFIC on the night streets as Trisha stops her SMALL CAR next to a curb.

INT TRISHA'S SMALL CAR

Ly studies a MAP.

LY

Okay. I got into Boer's van in the parking lot. And the rest is jumbled.

TRISHA

Were there lots of stops and starts? Did you hear anything unusual?

Ly concentrates.

INT BOER'S VAN LY'S P.O.V. AFTERNOON

The interior of the van rocks gently.

INT TRISHA'S SMALL CAR

LY

We didn't stop. And we didn't turn that much. It was a fairly straight drive.

TRISHA

Did you ride a long way?

LY

No. It can't be far from here.

INT BOER'S VAN LY'S P.O.V. AFTERNOON

The van stops. There's a great ROARING SOUND that passes, then recedes.

INT TRISHA'S SMALL CAR

Ly frowns.

INT BOER'S VAN LY'S P.O.V. AFTERNOON

The roaring sound repeats.

INT TRISHA'S SMALL CAR

TRISHA

You remember something else?

INT BOER'S VAN LY'S P.O.V. AFTERNOON

The roaring sound repeats.

INT TRISHA'S SMALL CAR

LY

A train! We stopped at a train crossing.

They look at the map.

TRISHA

We're looking for a warehouse that's not far away. It's a fairly straight drive. And there's a railroad crossing.

Trisha studies the map, then indicates some points.

TRISHA

(continuing)

This is the main road. It runs east and west. No rail line crosses it to the east for several miles. But to the west, the tracks cross the road a few blocks from here. That's our next step.

LY

You're enjoying this too much.

TRISHA

Let's cruise.

INT POLICE STATION

Sousé holds a WET CLOTH against his eyes. He uses the phone receiver with the holograph, which displays BERNIE in his pajamas, looking irritated.

SOUSE

Bernie, this George Sousé. Are you awake?

Bernie rubs his eyes and speaks.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Yes, I know the time. I need you to feed some names into that data link of yours and tell me what real estate comes up.

Bernie shakes his head and motions angrily.

SOUSE

(continuing)

I know you have access to that information. You know you have access to that information. So don't play with me.

Tai enters and sets down HOT COFFEE. Souse takes the cloth from his eyes, nods his thanks, and sips. Bernie still shakes his head vigorously.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Bernie, do you want problems renewing your operating license next year?

Tai rubs his fingers in a "naughty, naughty" gesture. Bernie stares at him, and then, turning to one side as if to work on a keyboard, speaks.

SOUSE

(continuing)

That's fine. I can wait.

Bernie continues speaking.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Language, Bernie, I'm sensitive.

EXT WAREHOUSE PARK

Trisha stops her car near a GROUP OF WAREHOUSES and cuts the LIGHTS. Ly and she look up and down the warehouses. TRUCKS are backed against a warehouse's LOADING DOCKS, but there isn't any movement.

LY

Well?

TRISHA

This is the only group of
warehouses this side of the tracks.

LY

The only ones we've found.

TRISHA

Think positive.

In the distance, a TRUCK starts and pulls away from a
loading dock, heading for the road.

LY

The other warehouses look closed.

Trisha starts up and follows the truck.

INT POLICE STATION

Sousé finishes making some notes.

SOUSE

A long way from home. A stranger
wants to kill her. Can't trust the
authorities. There's only one place
where she would feel safe.

He checks his notes, then turns to the phone and
punches out a number.

SOUSE

(continuing)

A thousand acquaintances, and only
one friend.

INT TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM

The phone HUMS, first on a high tone, then a low one.
It repeats.

The front door opens. Moray pauses, half in light, half
in darkness, then slips outside with the still hush of
a ghost.

EXT TWO-LANE ROAD EARLY MORNING

Trisha's car continues to follow the truck discreetly. It pulls off the main road onto an UNPAVED DRIVE.

The drive leads down a HILL to a LARGE WAREHOUSE which sits almost hidden from the main road. Trisha slows at the drive, then pulls over and stops.

TRISHA

So what do we do now?

LY

We need to call Sousé.

TRISHA

What do we tell him? That we followed a truck?

LY

Yeah.

Ly looks into the darkness.

LY

(continuing)

You go call Sousé.

TRISHA

Wait a minute.

LY

And I'll--

TRISHA

(interrupting)

Wait a minute. What're you thinking?

Ly opens the door.

TRISHA

(continuing)

That isn't the right answer.

LY

I've got to know, Trisha. I don't care if it makes sense or not. I've got to know if this is the right place.

Ly gets out. Trisha throws her a JACKET. Ly slips it on.

LY

(continuing)

I'll slip down for a look. And then meet you back here. Okay?

Ly walks down the road.

TRISHA

Be careful, little girl.

The car pulls away.

A BRIGHT MOON shines on Ly's path. The warehouse sits in its own pool of ARTIFICIAL LIGHT. Ly pauses. Then, picking her way carefully, she steps off the road and walks across the grass to a HIGH FENCE.

INT FRONT OFFICES

A LIGHT pops on and a PANEL BEEPS. Mann, the guard watching Jack, uses a RADIO.

MANN

Boer. The panel indicates someone on the entrance drive.

EXT FENCE PERIMETER

Ly approaches the fence. She glances over the warehouse lot. Jack's little red car sits to one side.

A FOREARM clamps her throat from the rear. Lifted off the ground, she cannot breathe. She slips into unconsciousness.

EXT LY'S P.O.V.

Her vision shifts from fuzziness to clarity. The

ground slides past, and the backs of the shoes lift up into the air. Ly's arms hang downward. Her wrists are handcuffed.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Someone dumps Ly on a chair. She opens her eyes slowly and looks around. Grandhomme stares. Boer stares. And the Professor, looking very ill-at-ease, stares at her.

GRANDHOMME

(smiling)

Ligeia. Welcome back. Perhaps you've mislaid something? What might that be?

LY

(hoarsely)

Pompous ass.

Grandhomme turns to Jack.

GRANDHOMME

Is this the one?

Jack, gagged again, nods. Grandhomme turns to Boer.

GRANDHOMME

(continuing)

You could not find her after the incident last night?

BOER

No.

Grandhomme's smile vanishes.

GRANDHOMME

You've endangered my operation. You disrupted my exhibition. And you stole my artwork, you two-bit thief.

EXT FENCE PERIMETER

Moray appears out of the darknes. Wearing a SHOULDER PACK and BLACK CLOTHING, he carries a large-bored WEAPON shaped like a rifle.

A single GUARD patrols the ENTRANCE GATE. Moray shoots him with a SILENCED PISTOL. Slipping through the gate, Moray props the rifle between the guard's legs. Then he runs around the far corner of the warehouse.

INT FRONT OFFICES

The Professor hesitantly proffers a thought.

PROFESSOR

Perhaps there's been some kind of mistake.

LY

I stole your ugly piece of metal.

GRANDHOMME

A confession?

LY

I hope it eats you alive.

BOER

For whom do you work?

LY

Nobody.

GRANDHOMME

Why did you kill Lotus?

LY

I didn't. That thing with the two-tone shoes did.

BOER

Moray.

(laughs bitterly)

Imagine that.

GRANDHOMME

Betrayed.

BOER

Betrayed? Fool! It's self-defense
from your pompous arrogance.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

Moray enters the rear of the warehouse. There is a
GUARD, whom he shoots. Staying clear of a SYSTEM OF
SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS, he scans the area.

Satisfied, he climbs to the roof of a STORAGE ROOM. AIR
CONDITIONING UNITS simultaneously hide him from sight
and allow a view of the rear of the warehouse.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Moe and Larry stand motionless.

MOE'S SCREEN

Alert = Control Unit "Hank".
Respiration = Negative.
Heart Rate = Negative.
Status = Inoperable.

LARRY'S SCREEN

Note = Unit "Moray" Present.
Status = Access Clearance.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

Curly moves out of a corridor.

CURLY'S SCREEN

Order #15 = "Investigate And Report
When Control Units Are
Unavailable".
Action = Request Information Of
Unit "Moray".

Curly faces Moray in his perch.

CURLY

Unit "Moray" -- Information Re-
quested.

Moray points the large-bored rifle at Curly.

CURLY'S SCREEN
EMERGENCY ALERT = Initiate Defense
Mode.

Moray SHOOTS. Curly's head EXPLODES.

INT MECHANICALS'S P.O.V.

Moe and Larry receive MASSIVE READ-OUTS of Curly's
failing systems.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

With circuits SHORTING OUT explosively, Curly
collapses.

INT MECHANICALS'S P.O.V.

Curly's read-outs CEASE.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Moe and Larry SOUND AN ALARM.

INT FRONT OFFICES

The ALARM SOUNDS in the front offices. Boer takes
command.

BOER
(to Mann)
Watch the prisoners. Protect the
boss.
(to Grandhomme)
Stay here or get your ass shot off.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Boer rushes out of the offices and motions to Axe. They
advance on the Mechanicals.

BOER
Control to Mechanicals -- Where is
Curly Unit?

MOE
Curly Unit Is Nonfunctional.

BOER
Is Moray in the warehouse?

LARRY
Affirmative.

BOER
Take me to him.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Grandhomme and the Professor search for Moray with the surveillance cameras. The PICTURE quality is poor.

GRANDHOMME
Can't you get a better picture than that?

PROFESSOR
It's as good as it's going to get.
I wanted a better system but, no,
you had to make budget cuts.

GRANDHOMME
Shut up.

Behind them, Ly eases to her feet and stands beside the chair.

EXT WAREHOUSE DRIVE

Sousé pulls his CAR off the road and onto the drive. He parks and cuts his lights.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

Keeping themselves hidden behind METAL STACKS, Boer and Axe cautiously scan the area surrounding the destroyed Mechanical. They see the dead guard.

BOER
I warned him about that bloody
bastard. Control to Larry Unit—
(more)

BOER (cont'd)
Move to the other side of the
Storage House.

LARRY
Order denied.

BOER
Say what?

Moray watches carefully. He can't see Boer and Axe
clearly, but he can distinguish where they must be.

MOE
Situation Entails Danger To System
Integrity.

BOER
You refuse because you might be
damaged?

LARRY
"Always protect self".

Moray FIRES. The explosive hits the metal behind which
Boer and Axe crouch. The CONCUSSION knocks them across
the floor.

EXT WAREHOUSE DRIVE

The explosion REVERBERATES outside.

SOUSE
I think a little backup is in
order.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

Stunned, Boer drags himself to cover. When his head
clears, he sees Axe lying dead, pierced by a SPLINTER
OF METAL. The Humanoid Mechanicals stand where they
were.

BOER
If you boneheads don't obey my
orders, I'm gonna be a goddamn big
(more)

BOER (cont'd)
danger to your system integrity.
NOW MOVE IT.

His gun points in their direction.

MOE'S SCREEN
EMERGENCY ALERT. Initiate Defense
Mode.

The Mechanicals attack Boer.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Grandhomme and the Professor watch Boer and the
mechanicals.

GRANDHOMME
What is happening?

The Professor says nothing, while Mann divides his time
between Grandhomme and the monitor. For the moment, Ly
is forgotten.

Ly slowly edges her way to a small but heavy METAL
SCULPTURE set on a desk not far away. She glances from
Mann to Grandhomme. She continues moving toward the
metal sculpture.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

The Mechanicals chase Boer into the open where Moray
has a clear shot at any of the three. Instead, Moray
lowers his weapon and watches the fight.

Boer shoots Moe in a LEG JOINT. The machine collapses
to one side. Boer places a bullet in one of its "eyes".
It shorts out and lies still.

BOER
Damn stupid machines.

Larry disarms him and knocks Boer to the floor. Rolling
away, Boer grabs a length of heavy pipe and attacks the
Mechanical.

INT FRONT OFFICE

The Professor locates Moray's position with the cameras.

PROFESSOR

Got him.

GRANDHOMME

Activate Tiny.

PROFESSOR

Tiny is extremely limited. It has no defense program.

GRANDHOMME

Perhaps you would like to greet our visitor personally.

PROFESSOR

No.

GRANDHOMME

Then run Tiny manually. And make it work. Understood, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Yes.

INT REAR LOADING DOCK

Boer catches the second Mechanical at a LEG JOINT with the pipe. The leg collapses.

LARRY'S SCREEN

EMERGENCY ALERT. Status = Critical.

Boer knocks the Mechanical to the floor.

LARRY'S SCREEN

(continuing)

Status = Inoperable.

Boer rams the pipe into one of its "eyes".

MORAY

Good show, old boy.

Moray uses his silenced weapon to shoot Boer. He empties the clip.

Scanning the surrounding area, Moray then climbs down and runs to the front of the warehouse.

EXT WAREHOUSE DRIVE

Sousé paces back and forth.

SOUSE

Backup is coming, backup is coming.
I can feel it. Backup really is on
the way.

INT FRONT OFFICES

The Professor and Grandhomme watch for Moray to appear in the Front Dock area. The Professor uses Tiny's VISION SYSTEM, while Grandhomme uses the warehouse camera system.

Ly has almost reached the metal sculpture.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Moray moves stealthily along a corridor of heavy metal racks toward the Front Offices. He stops. At the end of the corridor, Tiny waits for him.

Moray snarls like a cat and shoots out one of Tiny's legs. The huge machine falls to one side, but catches itself on an arm. With the other arm, it knocks a metal rack in front of Moray.

EXT WAREHOUSE DRIVE

The EXPLOSION and sounds of the FIGHT echo from the warehouse.

SOUSE

Sounds like a goddamn war.

He debates briefly, then pulls a RIOT GUN out of his car.

SOUSE
(continuing)
Heroes don't make overtime. I am
not being heroic.

He trots down the drive.

SOUSE
(continuing)
I wish I had a bigger gun.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Moray escaped being crushed by the metal rack, but lost his explosives-launcher under a pile of fallen metal. Tiny pursues him using one arm as a crutch and the other arm like a giant fly-swatter.

INT FRONT OFFICES

The fight absorbs Grandhomme, the Professor, and Mann. Ly gets a good grip on the metal sculpture.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Unable to damage the Mechanical, Moray plays a deadly game of hide-n-seek among the metal racks.

EXT WAREHOUSE DRIVE

Sousé passes the electronic alarm on the drive.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Mann hears the alarm panel BEEP and turns. The art object hits him in the face. He automatically swings an arm and knocks Ly to the floor, but can't see for the blood filling his eye sockets.

Ly stands back up and attacks him with everything. She rams the heel of her hand on his nose, kicks his legs and knees until he falls, then kicks him in the head several times.

When she turns toward Grandhomme, a fist hits her in the face. Stunned and bleeding, she falls to her knees.

Grandhomme squeezes his hand and does a little dance from pain. When a bloody Ly stands again, Grandhomme impulsively grabs her in a bear hug from the rear.

Distracted by the commotion in the office, the Professor doesn't realize that Tiny has frozen in place.

INT FRONT DOCK

Tiny has frozen. Seeing his chance, Moray grabs a pipe similar to the one Boer used against the other Mechanicals. He throws it like a spear into one of Tiny's "eyes".

INT FRONT DOCK TINY'S P.O.V.

Tiny suddenly loses sight on one side of its field of vision.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Using stamps, kicks and bites, Ly fights like hell. Grandhomme has nearly lost control of her.

GRANDHOMME
(to Professor)
Help me, you idiot.

The Professor ignores him.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Tiny moves more awkwardly and with less accuracy. It pauses while the Professor searches for Moray.

Moray hides behind a metal rack. Taking both EXPLOSIVE and a TIMER from his pack, Moray quickly prepares the material.

EXT FENCE PERIMETER

Sousé cautiously enters the gate. He looks at the guard's body. Its eyes are open but lifeless.

SOUSE

This is insane.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Grandhomme and Ly pant from the struggle. Ly twists around to face Grandhomme, then knees him in the legs and groin four hard times. He collapses.

Jack, having loosened the bindings on his feet, uses the opportunity to snatch up the Blue Crocodile and run for the door.

Grandhomme, still on the floor, grabs Jack's legs and trips him. Grandhomme clings to him as Jack clings to the Blue Crocodile.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Moray rushes in on Tiny's blind side and fixes the explosive. He vaults away to escape the explosion, but the Mechanical's arm clips his head.

The explosion blows out Tiny's CONTROL CENTER. The machine tilts and slowly falls over. Moray sees Tiny falling, but the head blow has dazed him. The behemoth collapses on him.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Ly crawls frantically for Mann's gun, while the Professor runs for the exit. She gets the gun. Bullets hit the wall and door as the Professor escapes. Ly turns to the others.

LY

Don't move. Don't breath.

JACK

Help me get up.

LY

Shut up.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Tiny has fallen Moray's arm. In excruciating pain, Moray pulls the crushed arm from under the hulk. Half-stumbling, half-walking on his knees, he drags himself toward the offices.

EXT WAREHOUSE LOT

Sousé catches the Professor trying to start a vehicle and shoves the riot gun under his jaw.

SOUSE

This dance ain't over.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Moray attempts to set the timer on another explosive. Because of the injured arm, he must lean against a wall to stay upright.

He fumbles the explosive, and it falls to his feet. He reaches for it. It EXPLODES.

INT FRONT OFFICES

Ly puts the gun in Jack's face, then retrieves the Blue Crocodile. She backs away and looks at it.

LY

Got you, you little bastard.

She shifts her position until standing between her prisoners and the exit. Then she whispers to Grandhomme.

LY

(continuing)

Thief, thief, thief.

GRANDHOMME

We can do business.

LY

I'll show you business.

GRANDHOMME

Don't be hasty.

INT FRONT LOADING DOCK

Sousé handcuffs the Professor to a piece of substantial METALWORK. Then he cautiously enters the offices with gun drawn.

INT FRONT OFFICES DAWN

Sousé enters behind Ly.

SOUSE

Ly, it's Detective Sousé. You okay?

She doesn't move. He approaches warily.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Put down the gun, Ly.

She trembles but doesn't change her position. He keeps his gun in ready position.

SOUSE

(continuing)

Come on, Ly, it might go bang.
Don't take a chance.

She lowers the gun.

LY

It won't go bang.

She holds up the Blue Crocodile.

LY

(continuing)

I got it back.

He takes the gun.

SOUSE

So I see.

LY
I got it back.

FADE OUT