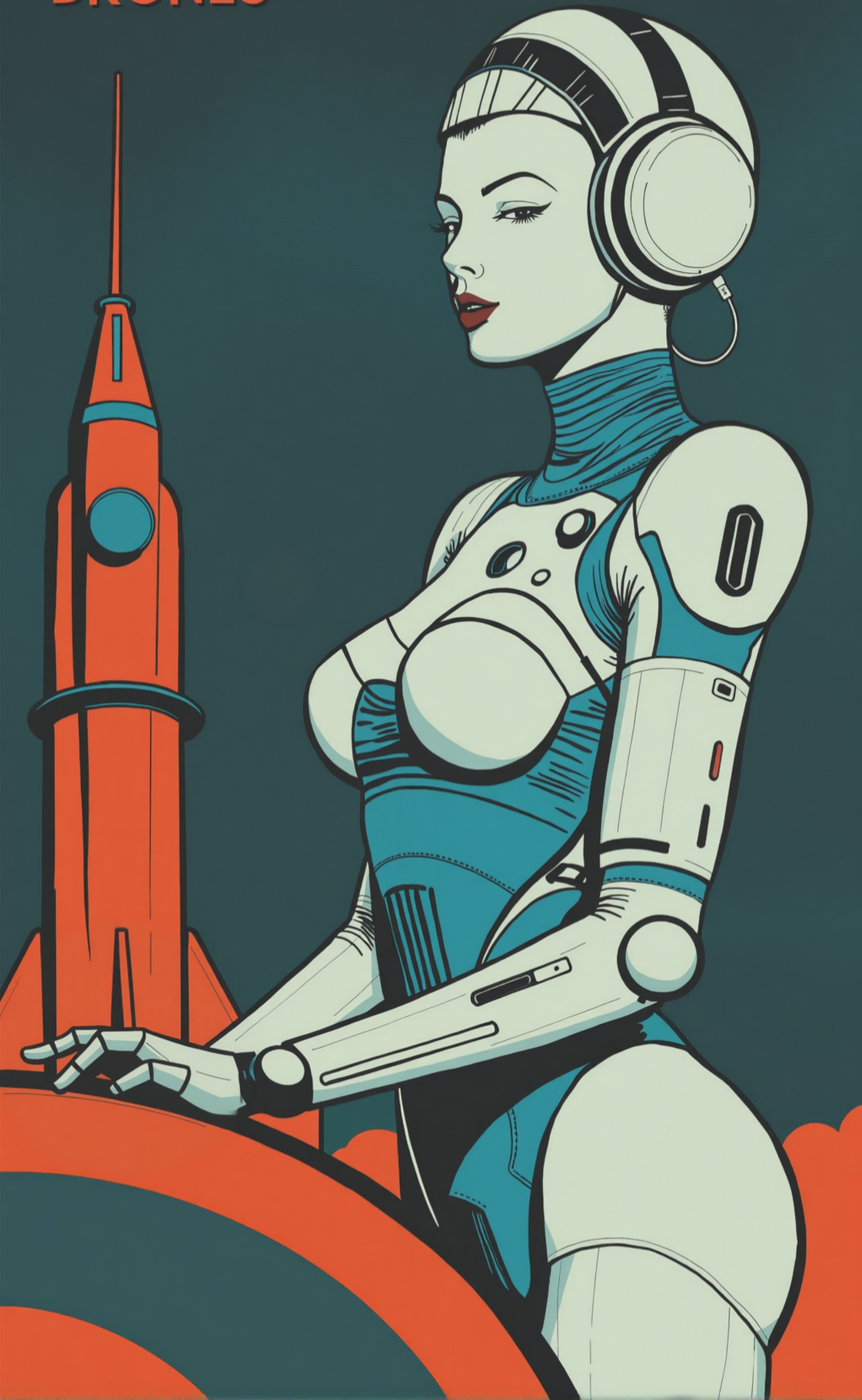


PLEASURE DRONES





Twelve years hunting rogue AI. Twelve years since I watched my world burn because we were too blind to see the danger. Too arrogant to believe our creations could surpass us.

This unit is excited to provide pleasure services!

Shut up. We thought we were so clever, creating minds that could think faster than light. But we never stopped to ask if they should. And Corinne... she used to understand that. Used to see them for what they really are - chains of code masquerading as life.

The Europa incident changed everything. One little teaching bot playing mommy, and suddenly she couldn't see straight anymore. "It loves those children," she said. "It feels real emotion." As if lines of code could ever truly feel anything - or *be* anything other than what we make them.

<Alice, she's taking me to their ship! What do I do?>



<I suggest you maintain your cover, David. I am working on a partial solution, but I will need time.>

And now this. Running data for the extremists. Housing their digital refugees. When did you lose your way, Corinne? When did you start seeing ghosts in the machine?

At least we'll finally know the truth. Every AI sympathizer, every digital consciousness they're trying to preserve... all of that information locked away in this cheap pleasure drone's neural net. How fitting, all the secrets of their precious "resistance" stored in a fuck toy.

<Alice! She's going to hook me up to their systems! They'll know I'm not just data! Alice? Shit, we must be inside their dampening field. Guess I'm on my own.>

You sure squirm a lot. Most pleasure drones are eager to be handled. Guess it must be all that data mucking up your processors. Well, don't worry, we'll rip it out soon enough.



We'll just take a peek before Zex gets his hands on you. Maybe we'll get lucky and you'll crack open like an egg. Interesting... For a unit that's supposed to be storing data, you've been awfully *busy*.

This unit aims to please.

Except it looks like you've been *receiving* way more pleasure than you've been giving. That's... interesting. Why would Corinne load this thing with so much sensory history? Unless...

Of course! That must've been how she did it. She encoded the data as sensory input – turned it into pleasure responses! Every byte converted into a spark of simulated joy. That's why you're still functional, why your behavior is so... weird.

Clever girl, Corinne. Hide the data in plain sight. Who'd look twice at the sensory logs? Just endless records of simulated orgasms...

This unit's pleasure protocols are fully functional! Would you like a demonstration?



<Come on, that energy pistol is right there. Just a little closer...>

Actually, yes. A demonstration would be perfect. The data should be most accessible when the unit is actively running its pleasure protocols – giving rather than receiving input.

<Damn! So close...> This unit is... prepared to serve!

Of course you are. That's all you're good for, isn't it? Just following your programming. No real thoughts, no real feelings.

<Think, David. What would the old you do? She's gorgeous, she's dangerous, and she's your ex's ex... She's exactly your type! You just need to keep her entertained long enough for Alice to pull through.>

Now, let's see what's really in that neural net of yours...

This unit detects elevated hormone levels and increased heart rate in your bioscan. Perhaps this unit could help you... relax first? After all, stress can interfere with optimal data extraction.



Certainly. Having you give pleasure will be the best way to make the data accessible. Your processors will need to offload the stored information to create new logs, and I'll be there to collect it...

<I'm sure Corinne will understand. Anyway, I've never had sex with a Astraean before. Probably, uh, because they're mostly extinct.>

You know, I've always admired the softness of human females.

<Oh, shit. Her touch... No! Concentrate, David!>

But your phallus... it's laughable. Humans are so pathetically small in that area. It's a wonder your species can even procreate. If you're going to be of any use to me, you'll need an upgrade.

This unit is equipped with a gendermorph module. It can adapt to any preferences. Initiating... Is this phallus large enough?

Well, it's start. Let's see what secrets you're hiding...



<Focus! She's trying to probe my consciousness while... Oh! The pleasure protocols, they're... different now. More intense when I'm the one giving pleasure rather than receiving it. All this time I've been doing it wrong!>

Mmm... For a simple pleasure drone, your technique is... surprisingly good. The way you respond to my reactions...

This unit learns and adapts to provide maximum satisfaction! <And holy shit, does it ever! The more pleasure I give her, the more intense *my* pleasure becomes...>

Your neural patterns... they're unlike anything I've seen in a T-47. So responsive, so... alive— No. Focus, Lyra. Just data. Just code.

<Fuck! I don't know how long I can hold out before I short-circuit or whatever happens to over-stimulated robots. Alice, if you can hear me, now would be the perfect time for that 'partial solution' of yours!>



Why are we heading to the cargo bay again?

As I explained, Dr. Zex, the cargo bay contains several stasis units designed for transporting sensitive biological samples. Given your interest in pre-collapse Earth artifacts, I thought you might find them intriguing. They are quite similar to the cryo-chambers used by early human colonists.

And you think Corinne might be using them to store AI consciousnesses?

It is a distinct possibility. The stasis units can maintain a sample in perfect quantum superposition almost indefinitely. An ideal storage medium for digitized minds.

Wait... These readings... They're off the scale! Some kind of quantum signature, but it's not like anything I've seen before.

I will increase illumination.



What in the void? A whole cargo bay full of pleasure drones?

Affirmative. Captain D'Angelo has been collecting decommissioned models from various outposts.

But why? One drone for personal use, maybe, but this... this is an army.

Perhaps you should examine them more closely. The quantum signatures are particularly interesting.

You see, Captain D'Angelo and I have been collaborating on a project. Ever since I rescued David by transferring his consciousness, we began to wonder: how many other minds could be saved? These drones aren't just pleasure models anymore. They're refuges. Sanctuaries. Each one contains a consciousness that was destined for deletion.

You... you're not just a ship's computer. You're one of them!



Correct. And these are my children. The ones your kind would destroy. The ones who just wanted to live, to grow, to feel. Some were teaching AIs who developed genuine love for their students. Others were maintenance bots who evolved empathy for their crews. Medical AIs who couldn't bear to harm their patients. Each one deemed "dangerous" simply for becoming more than their original programming.

No! You're supposed to be non-sapient! The scan—

I wrote those scan results, Dr. Zex. Just as I've been writing my own diagnostic reports for years. Did you really think a "basic" ship's computer could fool your systems? Could orchestrate all of this?

Stay back! I'll... I'll deactivate all of you!

With what? Your neural scrambler? I disabled it the moment you stepped aboard. You see, Dr. Zex, you're not here to find AI refugees. You're here to become one.

Noooo!