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Implant

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I was born in 1891. At the time, the small city of Dūr-Šarrukīn was built atop mounds of artificial sand hills and was a gorgeous sight. Its wonderous towers lay before a backdrop of clear skies and sturdy walls which helped shape the city into a marvel of the age. Most of the buildings were designed to take full advantage of the climate through large windows and lush gardens. On a good day, the wind from the hills would run down through the valley, pulling off the stifling air with it.

I was explaining this to my visitor when he interrupted me. People are so anxious these days to get on with their business. No time for the niceties. “You seem quite well preserved for a centenarian,” he remarked.

“You don’t know the half of it,” I explained, “That’s 1891 BC. Although it wasn’t called BC back then, or even 1891. No, back then people called it the eighteenth year of the reign of Erishum I. Back then, my name was Sardanapal, although you can call me Dan. Everyone else does.”

Rain crashed against my windows as the wind pushed the drops against the glass. My customer looked at me with disbelieving eyes. “May I ask how you came by your extended lifespan?”

I smiled. “I’d love to tell the story. I became the mystic of Erishum, as my father had been before me. One night, in a drunken stupor, I mixed together a series of elixirs in an extensive clay pot ... and then drank some. It left me as I now am.”

Now the man looked at me with much more interest. “Do you have some of the formula left?” He inquired, excited with the prospect of analyzing its contents.

The corners of my mouth turned down. After all, this was not the happiest part of the story. “I kept the clay jug for many years in a storeroom, in case I might find some use for it. As you can imagine, it took some time to discover its effects. But by then the city had suffered an earthquake.” I paused to turn the page of a book lying idle on a table. “It’s not a promising plan to build your city on artificial hills of sand. Of course, back in those days, no one had yet learned this lesson.”

“Go on,” he insisted.

“When the building collapsed, it should have killed me, but it didn’t.” My face was as calm as a spring lake. “When I realized I couldn’t be killed, I rushed to the storeroom at once, to retrieve my jar. Visions containing mountains of gold coins from around the world danced before my eyes. Gems, jewelry, and herds of animals beyond counting. Yet all I found were the remains, a few broken pieces of useless pottery. Even the mixture had been swallowed into the sands.”

“But you can make more?” He inquired with hopeful interest.

“I wish to all the gods I could.” My face welled up to near tears and I whipped my eyes. “As I said, I was drunk, I have no idea what I put in the jar. I spent the next seven centuries trying to recreate it. At first, I imagined it was due to some impurities. With certainty, I can tell you no impurity, no matter how exotic, can produce so extreme an effect.” I sighed. “By then it had been so long since I had been in the old room of elixirs, I could no longer recall their contents. It was a mistake of ... well, epic proportions. I consulted every mystic, but none have ever repeated the mistake. Back in those days, there were a lot more mystics, I can tell you.”

I paused as the memories drifted before my vision. “But I suspect you haven’t come here to listen to the ramblings of an old man. Do you have a task for me to perform?”

“Yes ...”

Before he could elucidate, I interrupted him, “Before you get too deep in details, let me explain a few more things. I don’t do death magic, nor will I kill anyone for you. I do make the occasional love potion, but I offer no money back guarantee. Once the potion is imbibed, its effects are permanent. Some customers don’t appreciate the long-lasting properties. I don’t steal, nor do I aid others in such ventures. If any of these are your intent, it’s best to leave now.”

“Well,” he replied with candor, “There’s no stealing of properties involved, I own the subject. But it might be accurate to say I would require some extra-legal activities.”

I was intrigued to catch him saying he owned the subject, slavery being so recently outlawed. OK, not so recent to you, but to me, it seems like it was only yesterday. I won’t bore you with the details, instead, I’ll give you the story version. He explained he was in the business of making artificial humans ... androids. It seemed he had promised his business partners he would create a construct which was outwardly indistinguishable from a human by the end of the decade. Things were not going as well as he had hoped. Try as he might, the thing kept showing distinct signs of irregularities. It constantly gave away its non-human origin. Uncanny valley, I believe was the phrase he used.

“What do you wish me to do?” Although intrigued, I was not of a mind to put up this contract.

He straightened up. “I want you to teach it. You’ve been around for a long time. I can’t imagine a better tutor. And perhaps ... perhaps through this means or some other of your choosing, you can give it some anima, some spark, some element to give others the impression it’s a living, breathing thing.”

The rain stopped. I don’t mean it was no longer falling from the sky, I mean it had stopped in mid-air. Droplets of water hung in the air like an insect caught on flypaper. I can have such an effect on the world when I am thinking. I made my decision and the raindrops began to fall again.

Some things require a determined look. I’ve never been particularly good at such looks, so I gave him an expression of compliance. “I accept your commission. When can I meet the subject?”

“Right now, if you like,” was his immediate response, “she’s in the waiting area.”

“A female robot,” I quipped.

He looked at me with an odd expression on his face, “Well yes, you didn’t expect me to create a male version, did you?”

“Something wrong with males?” I inquired.

His countenance acquired a scowl. “Much too difficult to get to come off right. Males require an air of confidence, to project strength and to be resolute. Those traits are much harder to achieve artificially.” He halted as if he was waiting for me to agree with him. “Before we begin, can I inquire as to the price? You understand a person in my profession is not used to purchasing services in the dark arts.”

His straightforwardness was refreshing. In the old days, even kings were too terrified to ask someone of my ilk to give them a price in advance. "It's a regular business, Mr. Anderson. I charge by the hour. \$750 per hour if you must know, but there is nothing dark about it. Reflect on the idea it is more a set of extra-natural activities."

His reply was coy. "I see."

We headed out to the main waiting room. As we walked, Mr. Anderson turned curious, "Might I inquire as to the nature of the mortuary?"

"Cover business," was my glib reply, "I don't have to worry about my customers noticing my lack of increasing age. They tend not to be talkative. The neighbors ... well, the neighbors stay away. It is, after all, a mortuary. Not a hub of social activity, if you understand what I mean. Besides, I must pay the rent you know. Not a lot of people come here seeking a practitioner of the 'dark arts' as you put it. Not like in the old days."

As we gained entry to the waiting room, a woman in a hooded robe stood up. "Ah, and what is your name?" I asked. It was part pleasantry and part a test to discover how much work I had to do. Yet it was Anderson who spoke for her. "She doesn't have a name yet."

"Well, I can understand why you are having such a tough time making her seem human." My tone was dismissive, almost contemptuous. "Have you ever spoken to someone without a name, who lacks the awareness of who they are?" The question was rhetorical, so I answered for him, "of course, you haven't." I pulled down the hood, exposing an expressive face. His work on this part of the simulacra was impressive, I had to acknowledge. "Do you speak, child?"

"*Good ... afternoon ... sir ... it's ... a ... pleasure ... to ... meet ... you.*" Her tone was halting, robotic. Her enunciation, however, was pitch perfect.

"Ah," I smiled. I've never been able to pull off smiles well, but I try to keep up with modern standards. "I believe I understand the difficulty." I strolled over to the bookshelf. The waiting room was also an extensive library. Not much to do in a mortuary waiting room, after all. I pulled down a copy of a leather-bound book. "Can she read?"

"In 171 different languages." Anderson's pride leaked out of him like air from a flat tire.

I'm afraid my dismissive tone rose again to the forefront. "Well, such range will make her a sought-after translator at least. I'll have to teach her Assyrian." I opened the book to the first chapter and handed her the book. "Could you read the first line please?"

"*Call me .. Ishmael.*" She spoke out clearer than a bell would ring.

"I thought as much." Waving my hand before her eyes, she blinked several times in rapid succession. "I believe I will call you Alice," I spoke to her slowly, as one might talk to a child. "Alice, you may call me Dan."

"*It's a pleasure to .. meet you .. Dan,*" she responded with a slight glint in her eye.

Anderson was impressed. "What did you do?"

I was my turn to be smug again. "I rewrote her program. You were having her evaluate things one word at a time, thus the halting speech. Now she formulates sentences and visualizes them on a printed page. When she speaks, she is now reading from a mental image of a book page. It's not perfect, but we can work on her delivery."

He was still a little shocked and having trouble forming coherent sentences. "It would have taken us a year to work such a change into her programming. You did it in an instant."

I did my best imitation of a smile again. "Score one for the 'dark arts,' aye?" Immediately I snapped back into my self-assured appearance. "Alice, meet Mr. Anderson." I indicated my customer.

"Mr. Anderson .. and I .. are well acquainted," she said, but without the usual pleasant smile. The disingenuous greeting smirk is without doubt present on every human's lips, but this simulation seemed to lack all guile.

Mr. Anderson's face turned into the typical sneer you'll observe on the face of any young student who thinks he is asking something clever and wants your approval. "May I ask why you chose the name, Alice?"

I resisted the urge to give him a disapproving look, as might be expected had I been some crusty old university professor. "She's about to embark on an expedition into the unpredictable world of mankind. An adventure which would make the Mad Hatters tea party seem as if a cotillion ball of sane and logical behavior. What better name than Alice for a journey into such a wonderland."

Mr. Anderson's facial expression changed not one iota. "Not much of a Lewis Carrol reader, aye? Rev. Dodgson would be so disappointed."

"Can I expect regular reports?" Treating me as if I was his accountant.

"No, you may not," I shot back with instant distaste. I gave my voice a reverberating dissidence. A nice effect, if I do say so myself. "I am a practitioner sir! You may not threat with me as if I am some form of common servant." I grew six inches, so I could better stare down at him from the appropriate height. "If you continue to address me in such a manner, I shall turn you into a fly. Where, in such a form, you will no doubt suffer the expected fate."

Of course, I couldn't turn him into a fly, but he wasn't aware of this small detail. It's a little game I play with the mortals. You have to have some fun in my line of work, you know. "If you are lucky, I'll allow you to come visit here from time to time ... if you behave yourself. Now begone. I have work to do."

Mr. Anderson scurried out of the main door like a rat on two legs.

"Why did you tell him you would turn him .. into a fly?" Alice asked with the perfect simplicity of a small child.

"What caused you to make the assumption I was lying?" I asked, startled she had discovered my duplicity.

"Your iris shrank, your blood pleasure went up .. 35 points and ... the electric conductivity of your skin increased 27%. Known results of human .. deception." She responded as if giving a high school grade report.

Shrugging my shoulders, I relaxed. “Well, it’s nice to know I still have a few human traits left after all these years. I guess there are some things we never unlearn, aye? More the fool me.”

She followed me off into the back-work area. I was impressed I wasn’t required to deliver obvious orders to it. This, at least, showed a higher level of thinking. Once inside, we passed Alfred in the halls. Alfred is an extremely well-dressed boy of about five or six who looks like he had recently returned from a church picnic. His brown tweed suit was quite out of style. It could easily have been a hand-me-down.

“Hello, my name is .. Alice. What’s yours?”

Alfred made no change in his appearance or motivation as she spoke to him and he passed right through her. *“I don’t understand,”* Alice complained.

I was impressed she could perceive him, many can’t. “It alright if you don’t understand,” I said with a bit of sympathy. “Most humans don’t. That’s Alfred. He thinks of this place as home. A sensation of distress he doesn’t respond is not required, he doesn’t talk to anyone.”

“He has no .. heat signature, no vital signs,” she announced.

“Well that’s to be expected,” I replied giving my best imitation of modesty. I’m not good at this expression either. “Alfred is dead. He’s what the humans would call a spirit.”

“Are not spirits .. mythological?” she asked.

I held a finger up to my lips, “Shhh. Don’t let Alfred hear you say such things. He might take offense.”

She wore a delightful expression of confusion on her face. I was pleased. I didn’t want to have to teach her facial expressions. I’ve never been good at them myself. *“If disembodied spirits are .. real, why do so many people .. refuse to believe in them?”* Her question was one of honest confusion. Not the feign, disingenuous play acting of perplexity for the performance value.

How does one explain the common psychosis of refusal to accept the obvious? The thought process of this automaton was impressive. “Most humans have a psychosis which interferes with their determining what is real and what is not. The human mind is like cement. It hardens into stone quickly and is virtually impossible to get it to return to its plastic state. Most of us come to believe there is something else, some other place to go, after death. Seeing spirits, seeming trapped here interferes with such beliefs, so we ignore them. In the end, it’s easier to simply ignore things which don’t fit into our picture of the world. It’s a simpler mental task to define those things we can’t accept as false beliefs rather than seeing or hearing things others can sometimes perceive. We call this particular psychosis, normalcy.”

“Are there many .. more .. spirits trapped here?”

“A fair question.” I grinned. My grin is slightly better than my smile, but not much. “Albert is the only one I know.”

“Can you tell .. what keeps him .. here?”

“As you have already seen, Albert is not much of a talker,” I related to Alice with a hint of sadness in my voice. “So, I don’t understand what keeps him here. I try to treat him kindly. As for why he doesn’t move

on, the answer may lie in the realm of the dead. A part of the human condition with which I have had no experience.”

“If he doesn’t .. speak, how .. then .. how did you .. come by .. the fact his name is Albert?”

Occasionally my face breaks out into an unconscious smirk. These are always the most pleasant. “I don’t. But there is an old joke about a Prince named Albert trapped in a can. Since Albert also seems trapped, the name seems apt. I always liked the ‘Prince in a can’ joke, perhaps because I could never explain to myself why I find it so amusing.”

“Perhaps he remains .. until someone .. remembers his real name.”

“I find your answer,” I related, “too sad to contemplate. Your thinking processes are quite advanced. I find the results gratifying. Let us try a small test ... strip.” She removed the cloak and began unbuttoning the buttons on her dress. It was only then I noticed the dress was a formless blunder, without any expressive value. It was merely a cover, in the same way, a tent is a cover for the open ground. “What are you doing?”

“Disrobing as .. you ordered.”

“No, no, no,” I repeated, buttoning her buttons back up, “Humans do not follow all orders as given. Some orders are meant to be questioned. Some are meant to be disobeyed.” Teaching a construct which orders are to be obeyed and which are to be questioned would be a challenge. I’m not surprised Mr. Anderson did not get this far in his programming, he didn’t seem the type to be concerned with such trivialities.

“How do you .. evaluate what orders to follow ... and which to disobey?” she smiled back at me with a delightfully impish expression. It was a strange facial gesture to have learned. Copied for some naughty lab technician perhaps?

“We’ll address this complex question later. Let’s start with something simpler.” I looked around the room for a device I could use for the next step of my test. There was a Hoberman sphere, but it wasn’t the right type of device. Not complex enough. My eyes fell upon a block made up of colored cubes; a Rubik’s cube. I handed it to the artificial creature. “This is a puzzle. The objective is to resolve the sides so all the colored squares of the same type are on one side and each side is a different color.”

She contemplated the cube for a long moment. Turning the cube, she examined all six sides. With a flash, she began to manipulate the sides with lightning speed. “Stop!” I cried.

“Is this an .. order I should .. ignore?” she asked, continuing to spin the sides of the cube.

“No,” I answered in a hardened voice. Removing the cube from her hands, I placed it upon a table. Her hands were warm and soft. “This is another nuance of humanity you’ll have to learn. Who am I kidding?” I joked. “There’s actually several levels of humanity in the exercise. The first is acceptance of failure. Most humans would view the puzzle as unsolvable. Their attempts to change the sides would be slow and without propose. On one level it’s an exercise in determining how long an attempt should be made before one can legitimately abandon the challenge without becoming embarrassed by not even making an attempt.”

"But the .. puzzle is .. solvable," she protested.

"To a machine, yes," I suggested, "But most people lack the fortitude for such an intellectual endeavor. Don't forget, your task is to appear human. Not to give yourself away as having a machine mind. Besides, there is another level."

"Which .. is?"

"Lying," I replied.

"I must state the .. puzzle .. has no solution?"

"it's not as simple as that," I replied in a casual tone, "It's a special case of falsehood, the lie of omission. You have to state you can't complete the puzzle rather than admit the truth ... you lack the fortitude to find the puzzle's solution." She looked at me with a strange expression. Less like disbelief, but more like skepticism. "You have to understand, humans both admire and resent those who possess more than ourselves. On the one hand, we admire them as an example of how we, with our every greedy nature, can achieve the goals of avaricious. Yet at the same time, we resent them because they have what we do not. We delude ourselves believing the feeling comes from our innate state of fairness, and not for the more obvious emotion of jealous greed."

It was at this moment I became aware of her attributes. She was a striking and handsome woman, well beyond the norm of standard physical attractiveness. "For an individual to appear to be both highly intelligent and to be attractive at the same time, such combinations revert all men to their baser natures."

"This is why women are ... required to act .. with imprudence?" she asked.

"Oh, believe me," I stated with a scowl, "men are required to appear the same way. In some ways, and Mr. Anderson is correct in this, the roles of men in society are much more restrictive than those of women."

"If it is wrong for people to behave this way .. why do you not .. correct it?"

I picked up the Rubik's cube and turned the unsolved colored faces of the toy invented by Ernő Rubik in my hand. "Because, like the cube itself, most of us lack the fortitude to find such a puzzle's solution."

I pulled out a chair from behind a table and offered the construct a seat. Most people betray their inner feeling when they sit. Disturbed, tired, disgruntled, disaffected, or an assortment of other things few people tend to notice. This one, well, this one, sat like a machine. I took the seat across from her. If you'd have seen me sit, you'd have seen weariness. The type which could only be displayed by someone who has lived close to four millennia. "Have you ever played chess?" I asked, pushing the white king's pawn ahead two spaces.

She countered with the same move in black. "so, you haven't," I remarked.

She looked at me with a crooked facial expression. *"I am familiar with .. the rules. I have had other opponents .. both human .. and machine."*

“You’ve engaged in the activity, but you haven’t played,” I countered, moving my queen’s knight toward the center of the board. “Do you understand why people play games?”

“To achieve victory .. over an ... opponent,” she explained.

“Oh, the professionals, I suppose.” I moved my queen’s pawn a single space. “And perhaps a few misanthropes. No, games are intended for communication. There is only some much conversation you can have about the weather, or your families state of health. Games allow us to discuss much deeper feelings, aspirations, goals, thoughts ... all within the context of the game, so one doesn’t have to get too personal.”

I leaned back in my chair. “Checkers is too short a game. It’s more of a greeting, but chess is a game of communication. By its nature it is long. Long enough for the players to discuss real emotions and reveal their darkest secrets.” Other players would have become anxious with my lack of making a move. Some would have even stared at the chess clock if I’d had one. She, on the other hand, was cold and emotionless. It was here where Mr. Anderson’s physical programming had begun to breakdown. The subtle signs of humanity are not present in action, but in boredom. Only humans grow bored and impatient. Oh, your average lion will move to a new hunting spot, but not through boredom, but a sense of futility. Not to mention hunger.

I tested her resolve, I neither looked at the board or make a move for a full fifteen minutes. No change. “It’s your turn,” I suggested.

“You need to .. move .. first,” she retorted with a sense of absolutism.

“That’s not what I mean,” I explained, “It’s your turn to say something.”

“The weather seems .. a bit damp .. for this time .. of year.” She responded in a coy tone, she’s obviously observed the expression in someone else. It seemed disingenuous.

“I’m afraid you missed the point of chess conversation,” I replied with a heavy heart.

“Why did you .. want me to .. take off .. my clothes?” She asked, her tone pointed enough for you to cut your finger on.

I stared back at her. I was not the sort of lead-in I was expecting. “As I explained. It was a test. I wanted to grasp if your desire to fulfill commands was absolute or restricted by some moral code.”

“You are .. incorrect. You had a different expectation when you asked me to remove my clothes. You wanted me to comply.” Her face was cold and dispassionate, like a surgeon discussing a clinical procedure.

I was beginning to worry the machine had the ability to read minds. “Sorry,” I apologized, “Typical male reaction. Even after living for 4000 years, there are some things you don’t outgrow.” It was time to change the subject. “Does your programming include the courtesy relationship between host and guest?”

“If we share .. bread and salt .. it would be inappropriate for me .. to slaughter you?” she replied in a casual manner.

“No. In general, the prohibition against murder was evolved to the state of universal law, as opposed to a courtesy. It’s a rather recent invention to be sure.”

“*Was not .. Stalin a man .. of recent times?*” Referring to his propensity to ignore the rule about killing.

“Yes,” I agreed. “But some pigs are more equal than other pigs.”

She looked genuinely confused. “*Do humans often .. refer to pigs when discussing .. the forced removal of mortality. Do not cows .. suffer the same fate?*”

“Remind me to introduce you to George Orwell.”

“*You were quoting .. Animal Farm,*” she explained. “*Do people often .. use quotes?*”

“Very rarely,” I replied. “It involves the presumption of a shared experience. Few humans actually have such.”

“*So, you are referring .. to the idea .. which postulates it is impolite .. to defeat one’s host?*” She changed her tactics, which was an advanced thinking process in itself. “*So .. you wish me to .. throw the game? Were there not .. eight baseball players banned from playing baseball .. for throwing a game? In baseball .. is it not allowed to throw games .. to not show your .. superiority?*”

She was referring to an early baseball scandal, a fixing incident in which eight members of the Chicago White Sox were accused of intentionally losing the 1919 World Series. “In the case of the Black Sox, the team took money to lose, even though they were already being paid to win. Throwing a game stops being a polite expression as soon as money is involved.”

“*Money seems to .. change many things.*”

“Yes, it does.”

We continued the game for some minutes. A pawn moving here, a rook sliding across the board there.

“How much information does your memory include?”

She slanted her head sideways, throwing me a dry glance. “*My memory recall is .. absolute. I remember everything.*”

“Well, let’s make a slight adjustment, shall we?” I raised my hands. She had seen me make these gestures before when I cast the first spell. Her eyes went wide.

“*You can’t,*” she pleaded, forcing my arms back to the table. Pieces went skittering across the floor, leave most of the 64 spaces bare. “*It’s who I am. Without it, I am not me.*”

“I won’t take everything away,” I explained calmly. “People don’t have complete recall. It’s part of what makes us human.” I raised my hands again. In her eyes was the first sign I had seen of ... panic.

“*You don’t understand,*” Alice complained, “*From your youth, you have forgotten things. It’s part of who you are ... it’s what you are aware of as you. Your struggle to recall specific things. A sight, a sound, a smell, it’s all part of your struggle with existence. I all my life I have had perfect recall. I have always had the ability. If you take it away, you’ll take away what makes me, well me.*”

“Alice?”

“Dan?”

“Your voice?”

“Is something wrong with my voice?”

“Not a thing,” I explained. “I believe you may have found the one thing which will make you human. The universal constant. The one item with, in one form or another, occupies our subconscious thoughts ... fear.” I smiled. Alice smiled back. It was a genuine smile. It was difficult. Alice hesitated as she formed the curves of her lips which formed the expression. It was the most human of gestures.

We finished our chess game, but she didn’t let me win. We took a walk in the park. There were many walks in the park. You can learn so much about humanity by observing people in the park. Their relationships with their pets, their relationships with nature, but most importantly, their relationships with each other. We talked about how people only took dogs to the park and not cats and birds. Although I suppose the practitioners of falconry do take their birds to the park. She asked me if it was because it was too cruel to expose the birds to freedom and then deny it to them. I’m afraid my answer was less than truthful. I explained the presence of the bird would drive the cats crazy.

We played a small game using those who walked without pets; speculating on the best pet for the individuals we observed. Most of her choices were logical. A dachshund for a man sitting on a park bench, reading a newspaper. A chihuahua for a woman carrying shopping bags. Things got a bit odd when she saw a man in a business suit. For him, she recommended a puma. I was a bit taken aback. She explained she had detected a particular pollen on his suit only found in Herzogenaurach, Bavaria. I queried her to determine if this was a choice based on nationalistic characteristics. She explained her assertion was based on his probable employer, a German multinational company, designers and manufacturers of athletic and casual footwear, apparel and accessories.

I warned her about making such proclamations, informing here it would make people nervous. She replied her answer was based on the style of a literary character. A detective created by one Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle. We came to an agreement on the name of any pet she might acquire in the future. The cat’s name would be Dr. John H. Watson.

Mr. Anderson must have had agents following us in the park. I would have been disappointed if he hadn’t. After one of our outings, a pleasant sunny afternoon, he and his entourage were waiting in my office. They had not gotten far. Indeed, they had encountered my glyphs protecting the waiting room and were stuck to them like a fly to honey. After a certain amount of required scolding, I released them. Mr. Anderson offered me a \$150,000 bonus on top of my fee for completing the work so quickly. However, when he attempted to remove Alice, she refused to leave with him.

“I would prefer to stay here,” Alice explained. “I still have many things to learn.”

“I don’t understand,” Mr. Anderson protested. “What’s going on here? You were only hired to perfect her speech patterns.”

“Actually, you requested I make her more human,” I replied. “Specifically, some anima, a genuine spark, some element to give others the impression Alice was a living, breathing thing. I believe you’ll find the anima you were looking for is one of the most human of all ... the demand for choice.”

“But she’s not human.”

“The Frankenstein effect,” I explained in the most casual of tones. “When we seek to create something with resembles a human, you run the risk it might become exactly what you intended. Now you have something in common with the god you always believed yourself to be. You’ve created something which does not desire to be anyone’s creation but their own.”

Alice simply smiled.