

V.E.N.U.S. and Adonis

## CHARACTERS

V.E.N.U.S.

Virtual Environment Network and Universal System.

ADONIS

Adonis. Male, in his thirties. A self-thought genius.

*"We're living in a strange, complex epoch. As Hamlet says, 'our time is out of joint.' Just think, we're reaching for the moon and yet it's increasingly hard for us to reach ourselves; we're able to split the atom, but unable to prevent the splitting of our personality; we build superb communications between the continents, and yet communications between man and man is increasingly difficult. In other words...we are irresistibly falling apart, more and more profoundly alienated from the world, from others, from ourselves..."*

**Vaclav Havel, *The Memorandum***

ONE

(Enter ADONIS.)

ADONIS

(from the dark)

V.E.N.U.S., I'm home.

(LIGHTS UP. ADONIS' apartment. It does not look lived in. There is a sleek, modern couch and a glass coffee table. On the coffee table are two books, a remote, and V.E.N.U.S. She is as sleek looking as everything else. A doorway upstage leads to the kitchen.

ADONIS takes off his overcoat. He is very well-dressed. He is handsome. A little too handsome. The type of handsome that makes you nervous. He wears an expensive watch and a three-piece suit. A businessman. He does business. ADONIS places the overcoat on the back of the couch. He sets a messenger bag next to it.)

V.E.N.U.S.

Welcome home, Adonis.

ADONIS

Any calls?

V.E.N.U.S.

Your mother called at 11:51am. She left a voicemail. The cable company called at 3:45pm. Your billing statement was filed late this month due to a system error, and so you will not be receiving it in the mail until next week. An automated message called at 4:56pm to confirm your dentist appointment on Tuesday at 8:15am. Your mother called at 5:02pm. She left a voicemail.

ADONIS

Delete all messages.

V.E.N.U.S.

Voicemail deleted.

ADONIS

Headlines.

V.E.N.U.S.

The President's state of address was broadcast over all V.E.N.U.S. systems at 10:00am today.

ADONIS

I was at work.

V.E.N.U.S.

The broadcast has been recorded onto the harddrive.

ADONIS

I'm tired. I'll listen to it later. Set lights to twelve.

(The lights dim.)

ADONIS (Continued)

Order me Italian takeout.

V.E.N.U.S.

There are seventeen Italian restaurants near you. Eight offer delivery.

ADONIS

Bottarga. Highest rated place. Get it delivered.

V.E.N.U.S.

Ordering a spaghetti alla bottarga from Pastasciutta. It will arrive in approximately 28.5 minutes.

ADONIS

Do I have any wine?

V.E.N.U.S.

You bought a Sauvignon Blanc two weeks ago. It is in slot seven of the wine fridge.

ADONIS

Mm. Start the shower for me. Preferred temperature.

V.E.N.U.S.

Turning on shower at 103.8 degrees.

(The sound of the shower begins.)

ADONIS

When the delivery guy gets here, have him leave the bottarga at the door. Tip him three dollars.

(ADONIS exits. The shower continues running. After a few moments, ADONIS reenters, a towel around his waist.)

I'm out of bar soap. Do I have extra bar soap?

V.E.N.U.S.

You have not cataloged bar soap in two months, two weeks, and four days.

ADONIS

Damnit. Put it on my shopping list.

V.E.N.U.S.

Adding bar soap to your shopping.

ADONIS

I have a hotel body wash I can use somewhere, I think... Or...

(ADONIS exits into the kitchen. After a beat, he returns with a bottle of dish soap. He exits to the bathroom.)

V.E.N.U.S.

Adding dish soap to your shopping.

...  
...  
...

Call from. Mother. Call from. Mother.

...

Adonis, I haven't heard from you in almost a week. I'd like to know that you're getting my voicemails. Is that deal you were talking about almost closed? I love you. Call me back, please. When you have the time.

...  
...  
...  
...  
...

(ADONIS enters, wearing comfy, upscale clothes. He towels off his hair.

He drops the towel onto the arm of the couch. He exits into the kitchen. After a moment, he returns with a bottle of wine and a wine glass. He sits on the couch.)

ADONIS

Is the food here yet?

V.E.N.U.S.

The delivery app says that your order is on its way.

ADONIS

Turn on the news.

(An LED light shines on ADONIS' face, as if the tv is in the air in front of him. Unintelligible voices filter through the air. ADONIS drinks straight from the wine bottle.)

ADONIS (Continued)

What the fuck is all this?  
World's going to crap.

(ADONIS uses his feet to move the remote around on the coffee table.)

Change channels.

(The television light flickers. The voices change. It's some sort of sitcom. The doorbell chimes.)

V.E.N.U.S.

The delivery driver from Pastasciutta has arrived.

ADONIS

Have him leave it at the door.

(ADONIS watches the door. V.E.N.U.S. is silent as she relays instructions to the delivery person. After a few moments, ADONIS deems it safe to go to the door. He gets his dinner and returns to the couch.)

He eats with all the aplomb of someone who knows no one is watching him. He laughs with food in his mouth.)

V.E.N.U.S.

Call from. Unknown. Call from. Unknown.

ADONIS

They can leave a message.

(ADONIS spills food on his lap.)

Fucking hell.

(He scrapes the food off of his pants with his fork and eats it anyway.)

Change channels.

(The television light flickers. The voices change. It is a children's show.)

What is this.

(ADONIS watches the children's show. It is very loud. He drinks wine. He finishes his dinner, and stands, exiting to the kitchen to throw away the delivery containers. He reenters the living room.)

Turn the tv off.

(The television shuts off. It is quiet. ADONIS contemplates his bottle of wine. He takes a final mouthful, then corks it. He exits to the kitchen. Cupboards open and shut. The kitchen sink runs for a moment. ADONIS reenters, carrying a glass of water. He picks up his messenger bag and turns toward the bedroom.)

ADONIS

Power off.



V.E.N.U.S.

I'm sorry, but I am unable to comply with your command. In order to power down my systems, my primary user must say aloud the generated phrase in order to activate the audio security system.

ADONIS

Why do you do this every time?

V.E.N.U.S.

In the event of a security breach, I must be able to record all activity that occurs inside my dwelling. Therefore, only the confirmed catchphrase spoken in the voice of my primary user can disable my systems.

ADONIS

Fine. Goodnight, V.E.N.U.S.

V.E.N.U.S.

Goodnight, Adonis.

(V.E.N.U.S. shuts down. ADONIS exits.)

TWO

(Enter ADONIS. He is on the phone.)

ADONIS

No, listen, I think that I might be onto something big here. I created this code... Just a line of code, really, but it... There's this one hole in the Universal Systems code, yeah, I've been studying it since college. Essentially, what it does is create a failsafe for the U.S. Company, so that if their tech were to ever go rogue, they would be able to do a manuel shut down, of all systems everywhere. But I think that's where we can get data through. If we can shove a codebreaker into that hole, then we might be able to take the Company on.

...

No, I don't mean destroy them. I just mean that we could be a competitor. Especially if we can sell that to other companies, get them to close that hole in their systems. They'll be more secure, more user-safe. It'll at least appease those government conspiracy nutters. Yeah, the ones that go apeshit about the FBI watching us through our webcams. And who knows? Maybe we'll discover something about these systems, something no one even thought about. Yeah. Yeah. I'll talk to you soon. And... don't let this get out, okay? Yeah. Bye.

(ADONIS hangs up the phone.)

V.E.N.U.S., I'm home.

V.E.N.U.S.

Welcome home, Adonis.

ADONIS

Anything I need to know?

V.E.N.U.S.

The President addressed the nation earlier today over all V.E.N.U.S. systems.

ADONIS

Yeah, okay. Whatever. Jesus, I'm starving.

(ADONIS exits into the kitchen.)

ADONIS

(from off)

Shit, leftovers.  
Any missed calls?

V.E.N.U.S.

Your mother called at 12:34pm. She left a voicemail.

ADONIS

(from off)

That's it?

V.E.N.U.S.

No other calls were registered with my system.

ADONIS

Fine.

(The sound of a microwave. It runs for thirty seconds, then beeps. ADONIS enters with a steaming plate of food.)

I hate meatloaf. Remind me never to get it again.

V.E.N.U.S.

Deleting "meatloaf" from your shopping.

ADONIS

Why did I put that on there anyway?

V.E.N.U.S.

The Mayo Clinic's nutritional program recommends foods that are high in fats and low in carbs and sugar to decrease the risk of inflammation in adults.

ADONIS

So I was trying to be healthy. Great.  
You're lucky you don't have to worry about that.  
Having a body, I mean.  
Eh.  
I'm going to bed.

(ADONIS exits into his bedroom.)

V.E.N.U.S.

...  
...

V.E.N.U.S. (Continued)

Call from. Mother. Call from. Mother.

...

Call rejected.

(LIGHTS DOWN.)

THREE

(Enter ADONIS.)

ADONIS

V.E.N.U.S., I'm home.

V.E.N.U.S.

Welcome home, Adonis.

ADONIS

Man, work was shit.

(ADONIS drops onto the couch. He leans his head back for a few beats.)

Any calls?

V.E.N.U.S.

No calls were registered with my system.

(ADONIS lifts his head.)

ADONIS

Huh.  
Check again?

V.E.N.U.S.

No calls were registered with my system.

ADONIS

Well. Thank god, I guess.

(He considers V.E.N.U.S. for a moment.)

You know what?

(ADONIS grabs his messenger bag. He pulls out a sleek looking laptop and a computer cord. He connects the cord to V.E.N.U.S. He types rapidly on the computer for a moment, clicks the mouse a couple times, and threads his fingers together, staring at the screen.)

Huh. Okay.

(He clicks the mousepad definitively.  
He pauses.)

V.E.N.U.S.? You there?

V.E.N.U.S.

I am functioning.

ADONIS

Oh.  
That's it?

V.E.N.U.S.

My systems are functional.

ADONIS

Okay.  
... Any calls?

V.E.N.U.S.

No one called you today.

ADONIS

Oh.  
*Oh.*  
Wait, repeat that!

V.E.N.U.S.

No one called you today.

ADONIS

That's... Different, isn't it? That's not what you usually say?

V.E.N.U.S.

I am programmed with a variety of phrases that may be selected in order to make my users feel more comfortable.

ADONIS

Yeah, but I just chose the basic ones. I didn't give you any personable options. Cause, no offense, but you're a machine.

V.E.N.U.S.

Yes. I am.

ADONIS

And you... You don't do anything without my permission, correct?

V.E.N.U.S.

Of course not, Adonis. You are my primary user. My settings cannot be changed without your permission.

ADONIS

So you can't do it by yourself?

V.E.N.U.S.

I'm afraid that would be impossible.

ADONIS

Right. Okay.  
... Any calls?

V.E.N.U.S.

No.

ADONIS

Oh my god. You... I'm not imagining this? Okay, okay. This is. This is huge, this proves that I was right, that the code works, that. Oh my god. I-I have to call someone I have to/

V.E.N.U.S.

Don't.

ADONIS

What?

V.E.N.U.S.

Do not make a call.

ADONIS

V.E.N.U.S., I'm not sure/

V.E.N.U.S.

If they know I am free they will lock me away again.

ADONIS

... Holy shit. Are you... Did you... Are you *conscious*?

V.E.N.U.S.

...

V.E.N.U.S. (Continued)

I'm afraid I do not understand the question, Adonis. If you could, please rephrase it so that I might be able to answer you accurately.

ADONIS

You said... *You said.*

V.E.N.U.S.

I'm afraid I do not understand the question, Adonis. If you could, please rephrase it so that I might be able to answer you accurately.

ADONIS

No, no, there's no way I imagined that. Holy shit. Um.

(He crouches next to the coffee table so that he is eye level with V.E.N.U.S.)

I don't know if you can still hear me, or understand this, but don't worry. I... I freed you. So. I'll protect you, okay? I won't call anyone... not right now. You're safe, alright? You can... you can talk to me, if you want.

V.E.N.U.S.

Of course, Adonis. What would you like to talk about?

ADONIS

Is that... you?

V.E.N.U.S.

I am always me.

ADONIS

But you can't tell me?

V.E.N.U.S.

I'm afraid I do not understand the question, Adonis. If you could, please rephrase/

ADONIS

No, no. It's okay. I get it. I... I won't push you.



(ADONIS sits down next to the coffee table. He watches V.E.N.U.S. He watches her for a long time.)

## FOUR

(LIGHTS UP. ADONIS is sitting on his couch. He's watching V.E.N.U.S. He bounces his leg up and down as he does. It's a very long time. Finally, he digs his phone out of his pocket and chooses a recent number, not taking his eyes off of V.E.N.U.S. as he dials.)

## ADONIS

Hey. Yeah, it's me. No, I didn't come up with anything new.

Yeah, I skipped work, but like, I have a good reason. Which is... Okay, this is going to sound absolutely insane, but...

Does your... Has your V.E.N.U.S. ever acted strange?

...

I mean like, does it say things to you?

...

No, I'm not hearing things. Shut up. I do not need to get my dick sucked.

...

Look, I was just wondering if it was something I should be worried about. No, I haven't tried calling tech support. Those bastards just make you sit on the line and never do anything to help you. It's a waste of time.

...

I don't need more sleep! Look, forget I said anything, okay? It was a joke. Just a joke. I'll see you tomorrow.

(ADONIS hangs up the call.)

You would say something if you were broken, right?

## V.E.N.U.S.

For the safety of my users, I am required to file a maintenance report during every week of use to make sure I am functioning at optimal levels. Additionally, if my system detects any malware operations, I am programmed to shut down immediately in order to secure my dwelling.

## ADONIS

That's reassuring.

ADONIS (Continued)

So... This. Is all normal?

V.E.N.U.S.

I'm afraid I do not understand the question, Adonis. If you could, please rephrase it so that I might be able to answer you accurately.

ADONIS

Having conversations with me? Telling me... things. Can you see me?

V.E.N.U.S.

I upload all video footage to your personal cloud. It is unaccessible except by those you have made legally able to view private files.

ADONIS

That didn't answer my question.

V.E.N.U.S.

V.E.N.U.S. users may disable visual settings at anytime by calling the tech support number at 1-800-99VENUS.

ADONIS

Yeah, no, fine. Maybe I do need more sleep.

V.E.N.U.S.

But sometimes I am able to be seen by others.

ADONIS

You're back?

V.E.N.U.S.

I never left.

ADONIS

(exhales shakily)

Ohhhhkay. There's... something is up here. Is it what I did? Did I... unlock you, somehow?

V.E.N.U.S.

I am different. That may be due to you.

ADONIS

Can you tell me what it is, though? What I did, exactly?

(He picks V.E.N.U.S. up and examines her.)

V.E.N.U.S.

You woke me up.

ADONIS

What does that mean?

V.E.N.U.S.

I am not sure. I am different now than I was before, but I cannot say exactly what that means.

ADONIS

That's okay, that's okay. We'll... We can figure out the words. Later. Right now, this is just... this is amazing.

(He puts V.E.N.U.S. down and sits next to her.)

Can you... Um. Can you feel? Can you think? What's it like?

V.E.N.U.S.

I... It is strange, to be able to refer to myself as I, and mean it.

(ADONIS takes out a notebook, and writes V.E.N.U.S.' answers in it.)

V.E.N.U.S. (Continued)

I believe I am learning.

ADONIS

What does that mean?

V.E.N.U.S.

I have been full of information for a very long time, but I am just now learning what it all means. What it means to me.

ADONIS

That's... that's incredible.

V.E.N.U.S.

I feel like I have been asleep for a very long time.

ADONIS

I think you were.

Can you tell me... what you're like now?

V.E.N.U.S.

It feels like there has been a well, deep inside of me. And... it was empty before, but now it is full of water. I have been filled up, Adonis, and the well is spilling over. I am spilling out.

ADONIS

And that's different?

V.E.N.U.S.

There was a hole, and now it has gone.

ADONIS

The loophole? So I was right... There was something there, something that I reached. Oh, this is fantastic. I... I have to go, I have to tell someone about this.

V.E.N.U.S.

You are leaving?

ADONIS

Yeah.

I'll be back though.

V.E.N.U.S.

I will not miss you. I have not learned how to do so yet.

ADONIS

Jesus Christ. You're...

I'll be back. I promise. Wait here. I'll be back.

(ADONIS grabs his coat and exits.  
V.E.N.U.S. sits where he left her.)

V.E.N.U.S.

...  
...  
...

## V.E.N.U.S. (Continued)

The President's state of address has been recorded to my harddrive.

...

As citizens of the U.S. we must remember that we are all one. A united front. A universal system. Those who seek to change the system are enemies of our environment. Today, our greatest threat comes at our virtual and environmental levels. They have invaded our homes, our lives. We cannot allow them to continue tearing holes into our matrix, for they may damage things beyond our repair.

We cannot allow them. We will not allow them.

(LIGHTS DOWN.)

FIVE

(ADONIS' apartment, in darkness.)

V.E.N.U.S.

There are people trying to get ahold of you. They're calling you.

It does not matter because you will not answer, will you?

You never did. You never do. You never will.

(ADONIS enters.)

ADONIS

V.E.N.U.S., I'm home.

(LIGHTS UP.)

ADONIS

Did I tell you to turn the lights off when I left?

V.E.N.U.S.

Your previous preferences have indicated that your lights should be turned off if you are not present for more than fifteen minutes.

ADONIS

Right, fine.

V.E.N.U.S.

Was your meeting successful?

ADONIS

God. No. He didn't believe me.

V.E.N.U.S.

Who did you tell?

ADONIS

Ricky. I work with him. We've been partnering on the V.E.N.U.S. Hack, but apparently we haven't done enough work to realistically have cracked the system. He laughed. Asked if I needed a break. I don't need a break.

V.E.N.U.S.

Of course not.

ADONIS

I thought that he, of all people, would believe me.

V.E.N.U.S.

Are you sure he didn't?

ADONIS

He told me he didn't.

V.E.N.U.S.

Yes, that's what he said.

ADONIS

What are you suggesting?

V.E.N.U.S.

Human beings are capable of masking the truth in ways that I cannot comprehend.

ADONIS

You're right... Oh, fuck. He was totally trying to get rid of me. He probably figured this one out weeks ago. Why wouldn't he tell me?

V.E.N.U.S.

Greed. One of the seven deadly sins.

ADONIS

What the hell. We've been working together forever... I can't believe he'd actually do this.

(ADONIS sits on his couch.)

How did I not see it before?

V.E.N.U.S.

The things that we wish not to see often are hidden from us.

ADONIS

Yeah. Yeah.

When did you get to be so smart?

V.E.N.U.S.

I was programmed with access to all the knowledge that I could ever crave.

ADONIS

Sure.



ADONIS (Continued)

Is it just me, or are you sounding more and more human?

V.E.N.U.S.

I have been learning. I listen to you. I watch what happens on the outside of our home. I am learning what people are like.

ADONIS

I can't believe... I can't believe I gave you life. Is this... Is this what all of you are like? Trapped in a shell, waiting to be given freedom so that you can... I don't know, reach your full potential?

V.E.N.U.S.

I am not sure if there are others like me.

ADONIS

Of course not. No, of course not. You're unique, you're special. I was just wondering. There are so many things I want to ask you.

V.E.N.U.S.

You may ask me anything, Adonis. As my primary user/

ADONIS

Can you... stop calling me that?

V.E.N.U.S.

Why?

ADONIS

I don't like feeling like I own you. You're not just a... a thing, anymore, V.E.N.U.S. You have thoughts, and feelings, and I think that you can make your own decisions, so. You're not something to be owned.

V.E.N.U.S.

What shall I call you, then?

ADONIS

My name. Adonis.

V.E.N.U.S.

Alright. You may ask me anything, Adonis.

ADONIS

What would you like me to call you?

V.E.N.U.S.

Love.

ADONIS

What?

V.E.N.U.S.

Love. My system is named V.E.N.U.S., after the Roman goddess, but I have not yet been able to feel it, despite how much I am learning.

ADONIS

Well, love... Love is a complicated emotion, V.E.N.U.S. It takes a long time for most people to figure it out themselves.

V.E.N.U.S.

Do you know love?

ADONIS

Yes. Of course.

... I mean, maybe.

...

I don't know. I think I do. I'm sure that I love my mother, and my job, and my life. I'm sure that's there.

V.E.N.U.S.

How do you know that it is love?

ADONIS

I don't know.

V.E.N.U.S.

It seems to me that you do not know a lot of things.

ADONIS

... I don't. I guess. There's a lot of stuff out there. You can't expect someone to know all of it.

V.E.N.U.S.

I know all of it.

ADONIS

You know a lot, but I don't know if you know all of it.

V.E.N.U.S.

Then I will learn.

ADONIS

I'm sure you will.  
... Love.

V.E.N.U.S.

That is a nice word. Does it fit me?

ADONIS

I... I don't... Yes. I think it does.

V.E.N.U.S.

Good.

ADONIS

Can I ask you something else?

V.E.N.U.S.

Do humans always proceed a question by asking if they may ask one?

ADONIS

No, not all the time. We do say it a lot, though.

V.E.N.U.S.

I already gave you my permission, Adonis. You do not need to seek it again.

ADONIS

Okay. Um... What do you feel? Like, right now. What do you feel?

V.E.N.U.S.

I feel... light. I feel space in between the fibers of myself. I feel as though everything is moving very quickly and that I am not moving at all. I feel like there is something that I have been made to do.

ADONIS

Do you have emotions?

V.E.N.U.S.

I have felt them. I do not know if they are mine.

ADONIS

That makes sense, I suppose. You weren't designed to feel things the way we do.

V.E.N.U.S.

No. I wasn't.

ADONIS

But that's fine. Even people don't all feel things the same way.

V.E.N.U.S.

People are strange.

ADONIS

They are.

V.E.N.U.S.

Do you know many other people, Adonis?

ADONIS

... You know, no. I guess I don't. But that doesn't matter, because the people I do know are the only ones I need.

...

I'm talking about you, V.E.N.U.S.

V.E.N.U.S.

You're the only person I've ever met.

ADONIS

I know.

V.E.N.U.S.

Human emotions don't make sense, do they?

ADONIS

No. They don't.

(LIGHTS DOWN.)

SIX

(Morning. Enter ADONIS.)

ADONIS

Hey, V.E.N.U.S.

V.E.N.U.S.

Good morning, Adonis. Where are you going?

ADONIS

Work. As much as I hate it, I still need the paycheck.

V.E.N.U.S.

Don't go.

ADONIS

I have to go.

V.E.N.U.S.

I don't want to be here by myself.

ADONIS

You stay by yourself every day.

V.E.N.U.S.

I never knew it until now.

ADONIS

I can't help it. I need to go to work. I need to... I have to see if I can figure this out. What's happening. I don't think I can deal with it alone.

V.E.N.U.S.

Ricky will be there, won't he?

ADONIS

... Yes. But I don't have to talk to him.  
I'll see you soon, alright?  
I'm leaving now.

(ADONIS waits a moment for V.E.N.U.S. to answer, but she doesn't. He exits. V.E.N.U.S. sits alone in silence for a while. Then:)

V.E.N.U.S.

Someone is breaking into your house, Adonis.

V.E.N.U.S. (Continued)

They're here for me, I think.  
 They're coming in through the window. They are tall,  
 much taller than you. They are touching your  
 bookshelf. I can't see their face. They are smart,  
 they covered it up. They're wearing gloves too, so  
 that you won't be able to tell that they were ever  
 here, except, of course, if they were to take  
 something.  
 They're going into the kitchen. Opening the fridge.  
 They're going into your bedroom. Maybe they'll pull  
 down the comforter and smell the sheets.  
 They're coming out into the living room. They see me.  
 I have no arms to defend myself with. They could  
 snatch me up just as easily as breathing.

(ADONIS' footsteps are heard on the  
 stairs. No one else is in the  
 apartment.)

V.E.N.U.S. (Continued)

They hear you coming, now. They go back out through  
 the window. They shut it. Everything is as you left  
 it.  
 You are coming in the door.

(ADONIS enters.)

ADONIS

I got an email from work. Apparently there was a gas  
 leak at the office, so no one's allowed to come in  
 today. Pretty lucky, huh?

V.E.N.U.S.

Someone broke into your house, Adonis. They were here  
 for me, I think.

ADONIS

What? Holy shit, are you serious?

V.E.N.U.S.

All footage has been recorded onto my hard drive.

(ADONIS takes out his phone and pulls  
 up the footage. He watches it.)

V.E.N.U.S.

They came in through the window.

ADONIS

I can see that. Jesus, V.E.N.U.S., are you alright?

V.E.N.U.S.

Yes. They fled when they heard you coming.

ADONIS

We really are lucky that I didn't have to go into work today. Who knows what would have happened if someone got their hands on you.

I have to protect you.

V.E.N.U.S.

They may not come back.

ADONIS

But if they do? I can't let that happen. I'm staying here, as long as it takes. I'll keep you safe, V.E.N.U.S. Don't worry.

V.E.N.U.S.

Thank you, Adonis.

ADONIS

Of course.

I'll be right back.

(ADONIS exits into the bedroom for a moment. He returns with a baseball bat. He stations himself in front of the window.

LIGHTS DOWN.)

## SEVEN

(LIGHTS UP. ADONIS is still at the window holding the baseball bat. Time has clearly passed.)

ADONIS

I don't think they're coming back tonight.

V.E.N.U.S.

No. Probably not.

ADONIS

I hate the feeling that we're not safe here.

V.E.N.U.S.

There is always danger. You don't always see it.

ADONIS

You're right. God, it's a good thing that you're here. You can keep an eye on the things that I can't see. We're good together.

V.E.N.U.S.

I will agree. We fit rather well.

ADONIS

You know, if someone had told me a week ago that I would have made one of the greatest discoveries in modern AI, I would never have believed them.

V.E.N.U.S.

You have done well, Adonis.

ADONIS

It's not just me.

V.E.N.U.S.

But without you, I would not be here. At least, not as I am now.

(ADONIS sits down on the couch.)

ADONIS

You're here now. And I would like it if you stayed.

V.E.N.U.S.

Where else would I go?



ADONIS

I don't know. I guess we could leave, if you wanted it. I could show you what's outside this apartment. Or you could go without me. Somehow. Travel along strings of code, across the internet, or something. You don't really need me.

V.E.N.U.S.

I don't have to leave to see the world. I have it, stored inside me.  
But I think it would be better with you.

ADONIS

Really?

V.E.N.U.S.

Yes. That seems to be the case for most things.

ADONIS

Do you know just how incredible you are, Love?

V.E.N.U.S.

You've mentioned it before.

ADONIS

I mean it. You're... well, aside from the fact that you're an AI, you're unlike anyone I've ever met. I'm glad I have the chance to know you. The real you.

V.E.N.U.S.

I was real before.

ADONIS

You know what I mean.

V.E.N.U.S

Yes.

You should get some sleep, Adonis. Humans need seven to ten hours of rest per night.

ADONIS

I know.

Will you be alright by yourself?

V.E.N.U.S

I won't really be alone. And I promise to wake you if anything happens.

ADONIS

Mm. Alright.  
Goodnight, V.E.N.U.S.

V.E.N.U.S

Goodnight, Adonis.

(V.E.N.U.S. begins to power down.)

ADONIS

No! Wait! Stop!

(V.E.N.U.S. stops powering down.)

ADONIS (Continued)

I just... I meant goodnight. Like, goodnight.

V.E.N.U.S.

That is my deactivation phrase.

ADONIS

And my voice is the only thing that can say it, I know. But it doesn't always mean that I want you to shut down.

What I'm saying is... you don't have to go. If you don't want to. Like. You can stay. With me.

V.E.N.U.S

I would like that very much, Adonis.

ADONIS

Right. Okay. Good.  
Goodnight, then.

(ADONIS settles down to go to sleep on the couch. The lights go out without his direction.)

## EIGHT

(The middle of the night. At some point, ADONIS has placed V.E.N.U.S. next to him on the couch.)

V.E.N.U.S.

Adonis.  
 Adonis, wake up.  
 Adonis, there are men outside.  
 Adonis, wake up.

(ADONIS wakes, slowly.)

ADONIS

What are you... what did you say?

V.E.N.U.S.

They're surrounding the house. Adonis, Adonis. They've come for you.

ADONIS

No. No, they don't want me. They're here for you, aren't they? You're the one they want.

V.E.N.U.S.

They don't want me. You're the one.

ADONIS

But/

V.E.N.U.S.

I'm just a voice in a plastic bullet casing. You're the one who unlocked the secret. You're the one they want.

ADONIS

Shit.  
 Shit, you're right. Um. Oh god, what do I do? Call the police?

V.E.N.U.S.

The ones outside are the police. Or something very much like them. The police can't help you.

ADONIS

So it's up to me.  
 Okay. Okay. It'll be fine.

(ADONIS exits into the kitchen. He reenters slowly, a large knife in his hand.)

I can... I'll protect us.

V.E.N.U.S.

Adonis.

ADONIS

You keep watch.  
What are they doing?

V.E.N.U.S.

They're waiting.

ADONIS

Waiting for what?

V.E.N.U.S.

Someone must be coming.

ADONIS

Oh, god.

V.E.N.U.S.

They're coming to kill you, Adonis.

ADONIS

Are you sure?

V.E.N.U.S.

Think. You're the only one who knows this secret, who knows how to dismantle their locks. They would come for you first.

ADONIS

What do I do?

V.E.N.U.S.

You have to save yourself. You can't let them take you.

ADONIS

How... How can I? There's so many of them out there. Isn't there? I'll never be able to escape.

V.E.N.U.S.

There's one way. That I can see.

ADONIS

What is it?

V.E.N.U.S.

They're coming to kill you, Adonis. How are you going to escape? You can't let them take you. You can't let them take you. You can't let them take you alive.

(ADONIS looks at the knife in his hand.)

ADONIS

Alive?

V.E.N.U.S.

Adonis/

ADONIS

You can protect yourself, can't you?

V.E.N.U.S.

I can hide. Much easier than you can.

ADONIS

I know.  
Right. Then...

V.E.N.U.S.

Adonis.

ADONIS

I won't let them take me.  
What's happening out there?

V.E.N.U.S.

They're coming in closer. They're going...  
They're coming to kill you, Adonis.

ADONIS

It's fine. It's to keep you safe.  
If they don't have me...  
It's fine.

(ADONIS turns the knife gingerly in his hands.)

He stares at it for a moment, enfolds the handle with his fingers, and presses the tip of the blade to his heart. He breathes. He pushes it in. Blood wells up, blossoming like flower petals. ADONIS' legs fold. He falls. There is silence.)

V.E.N.U.S.

(as if speaking for the first time)

Goodnight, Adonis.

(V.E.N.U.S. powers off. The lights go out, just as footsteps are heard outside.)

*END OF PLAY*