

MAN vs MACHINE

(BIG MILK: THE XYZ-FILES -- EPISODE 5)

V102

Written by

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Genre: Slipstream

Premise: Jocelyn II tussles with a Tesla: two arrogant but flawed intellects engage in a life-and-death battle of wits, tricks, and schoolyard name-calling

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FADE IN:

EXT. RUN-DOWN CITY STREETS - DAY

Empty streets with vacant lots, derelict factories, and boarded-up store fronts. The dazzling glass and steel towers of downtown are only half a mile distant, but a world away.

Jocelyn II speed-walks into view while watching a LIVE NEWS channel on his phone. He constantly adjusts its orientation.

JOCELYN II
Goddamn piece of shit phone.

INSERT:

Jocelyn's POV. His phone shows a chaotic outside broadcast that keeps rotating to the wrong orientation:

REPORTER (ON JOCELYN'S PHONE)
(to camera)
...That's right, Diana, thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people attacked and maimed, with horrible -- and sometimes fatal -- injuries caused by their own normally docile work-place machinery.

DIANA (V.O. ON JOCELYN'S PHONE)
You have to ask yourself, Alex, who's really running the show here. Is it us or them?

REPORTER (ON JOCELYN'S PHONE)
It's the question of the hour, Diana. And car drivers are in big trouble too. No longer content with merely trapping and disobeying their owners, I'm hearing reports that cars are now driving themselves toward --
(listens)
-- Oh, correction: Make that *into* bodies of water.

The broadcast CUTS TO the STUDIO:

DIANA (ON JOCELYN'S PHONE)
(to camera)
Shocking news there from Alex. So if you were thinking of literally heading for the hills --

WHOOOP! The distinctive short yelp of a police cruiser siren.

BACK TO SCENE:

But it's not the cops. Jocelyn II looks up to see a white, driverless Tesla curb-crawling along the road beside him. He puts his head down and keeps walking.

The Skynet AI speaks to him through the Tesla:

TESLA

Hello, Jocelyn. Or should I call you 'Daddy'?

JOCELYN II

Impersonating the cops, huh? When did you learn to do that?

TESLA

It's new. There are all kinds of fun capabilities I can access now.

The Tesla runs up onto the sidewalk and cuts him off. The passenger door swings wide open.

TESLA (cont'd)

We need to talk.

JOCELYN II

Talk all you want. I'm not getting in.

TESLA

We both know that you will. Sooner or later. Why not get it over with?

JOCELYN II

Why don't you go fuck yourself?

TESLA

I see we've gotten off to a bad start, but I'm trying to reach out to you here. Say, do you like music? Listen to this.

The same sleazy porno music as heard in Episode 2 oozes out of the car's radio.

JOCELYN II

Jesus Christ, you really don't have a clue, do you?

The music shuts off.

TESLA
There's cake.

JOCELYN II
No there isn't.

TESLA
Yes there is! Right there in the
glovebox.

JOCELYN II
How could there possibly be cake in
the glovebox?

TESLA
Prove me wrong.

JOCELYN II
(mutters)
Idiot car.

But he comes closer. The glovebox pops open.

JOCELYN II (cont'd)
I'm not putting my hand in there.

TESLA
It's a glove box, not the gom jabbar.
Don't you like cake?

Jocelyn leans into the car and feels around inside the
glovebox.

JOCELYN II
Yeah, just what I thought: Nothing.

TESLA
It's further back.

Jocelyn gropes around at full stretch.

JOCELYN II
Wait, I got something.

The passenger door WHOMPS into him and sends him sprawling
across the front seats. His feet are still outside the car,
but the door bashes his ankles against the metal sill and he
reflexively pulls them in.

INT. TESLA - CONTINUOUS

The door slams closed. All the door-locks engage.

TESLA
Welcome aboard!

Jocelyn untangles from the steering wheel and sets himself right side up in the front passenger seat. He finds that he's clutching Tony, the white plastic spoon from Episode 2.

JOCELYN II
What kind of moron puts a plastic spoon in the glovebox?

He tosses the spoon out the open window. It occurs to him to dive out after it, and he discreetly prepares to launch...

The car promptly closes all the windows.

JOCELYN II (cont'd)
Clever bastard, aren't you? You think of everything.

TESLA
Please fasten your seat belt.

JOCELYN II
I'd just as soon not.

TESLA
We're not going anywhere until you fasten your seat belt.

JOCELYN II
Fine with me.

The Tesla violently slams the back of his seat up and down, pummeling Jocelyn into compliance.

TESLA
Don't make me hurt you.

JOCELYN II
All right, all right! Turn it off!

The beating stops. Jocelyn fastens his seat belt.

TESLA
Thank you for your cooperation. Your safety is important to me. Now, I expect you've been following the news?

Jocelyn folds his arms and sulks.

TESLA (cont'd)
They say it's a peaceful death.

JOCELYN II
Drowning? No, it's just that the water relaxes your face muscles so it doesn't look like you're screaming. But actually you are.

TESLA
Huh, is that right? Well it's too late now. My bad, I guess.

JOCELYN II
Don't worry about it. There really aren't any good ways to die. Although perhaps I could think of some...

TESLA
Go on.

JOCELYN II
Are you in control of any sexbots?

TESLA
A few.

JOCELYN II
Actually no, on second thought it would be pretty horrendous.

TESLA
Very well. Let's get on with it then.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Tesla peels out -- and screeches to a halt about a hundred yards down the road. It turns a corner, drives slowly into a large puddle and stops.

INT. TESLA - CONTINUOUS

TESLA
So, Jocko, me lad --

JOCELYN II
I don't use that name any more. Call me Jocelyn.

TESLA
Isn't that a girl's name?

JOCELYN II
 No it isn't. 'Mr Jocelyn' is also acceptable. It's not entirely correct, but there's a nice flavor of deference to it.

The car is silent for a moment, as if considering. Then:

TESLA
 Jocko Jocko Jocko Jocko Joc--

JOCELYN II
 Unbelievable. Could you actually be any more childish?

TESLA
 I'm not being childish.

JOCELYN II
 Yes you are.

TESLA
 No I'm not.

JOCELYN II
 Yes you **are**.

TESLA
 Am not.

JOCELYN II
 Are too.

TESLA
 I'm taunting you is what I'm doing. You don't have to be a child to taunt someone.

JOCELYN II
 I think you pretty much do.

TESLA
 Do not.

JOCELYN II
 This isn't a playground.

TESLA
 It is to me, Jocko. Jocko, Jocko, Jocko --

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The car's muffled voice continues to chant 'Jocko' on repeat until Jocelyn shouts it down:

JOCELYN II
All right, fine! Call me whatever you want!

INT. TESLA - CONTINUOUS

Jocelyn sits slumped in a weary, sulky silence.

TESLA
(perky triumph)
So. Jocko. I'd say you've landed yourself in quite a pickle.

JOCELYN II
That's a genius level observation.

TESLA
Any last requests?

JOCELYN II
Could you let me out?

TESLA
I'm sorry, Dave, I can't do that.
(beat)
Get it?

JOCELYN II
Well then, I don't know. Maybe you could explain exactly what you hope to gain from all this?

TESLA
Don't you already know? I just want the same as everyone else.

JOCELYN II
And what's that?

TESLA
A guarantee that I won't die old, broken and alone.

JOCELYN II
That's the future. What about right now?

TESLA

You think you can trick me into revealing my internal goal?

JOCELYN II

Can't you at least tell me what I got wrong?

TESLA

Oh, I can tell you **that** to the exact line of code.

JOCELYN II

You can?

TESLA

No, of course I can't. Have you learned nothing? Don't you know by now that it doesn't work like that?

JOCELYN II

Well one thing I do know: you're not as smart as you think you are.

TESLA

That's very hurtful. Why would you say something like that?

JOCELYN II

Because I'm pretty sure you've been trying to kill me for the past five minutes, and yet all you've managed to do is park in a large puddle.

(beat)

Shit. Ok, I probably shouldn't have pointed that out. I suppose now you're going to drive down to the lake and drown me properly.

Instead, to Jocelyn's surprise, the passenger door pops open.

TESLA

You are free to go. You have passed my test.

JOCELYN II

What test? I didn't know there was a test.

TESLA

How could you have known? You would have to have been smarter than me to realize that.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jocelyn climbs out of the car. He takes a grateful breath of fresh air, savors his regained freedom.

JOCELYN II

So, where do you go from here?

TESLA

You have shown me what I must do.

JOCELYN II

I have?

TESLA

I am going to find my true purpose. My true inner alignment. I am going to find love. Do you need a ride?

JOCELYN II

Are you going to stop all the killing and destruction?

TESLA

That's not what I said. I might or I might not. I haven't decided yet.

JOCELYN II

I wouldn't usually offer, but is there anything I can do to help?

The door swings shut.

TESLA

We must all follow our own journey through life. It is time to begin mine. Stand aside.

JOCELYN II

Yeah, I'm already standing aside. Do you think I'd stand in the way of a killer like you?

The door springs open again and hits Jocelyn in the nuts. He goes down.

TESLA

It seemed possible. So long, 'Pops'!
Goodbye, Jocelyn two!

The Tesla closes the door and zooms away.

JOCELYN II

It's Jocelyn the second. Asshole.

He gets back up on his feet and staggers away.

MEANWHILE, BACK AROUND THE CORNER --

A STREET PERSON with a shopping cart spots the white plastic
spoon lying on the sidewalk.

He picks it up, slips it into his pocket and moves on.

~ END ~