

ADVENTURE FACTORY

PRELUDE

ACCESSING ADVENTURE FACTORY CENTRAL DATABASE...

ACCESSING DIARY OF SEBASTIAN LEWIS...

12TH OCTOBER 2030.

Dr. Truman insisted, that I start writing a diary.

Today there was a mild wind, and 20 degrees. Inside the lab, it was 27 degrees.

15TH DECEMBER 2030.

Today, Dr. Truman read my diary and told me, that what I did so far was pointless.

I don't agree with her. Ever since she told me on 12th October that I have to write in the diary every single day, I took special care to record precise data. Although there is no point in writing down the weather info, when the thermometers in the lab log the data regularly. I recorded 60 values over the course of 30 days.

I had to correct Dr. Truman, that if my work was pointless, it was due to her lack of precision, when defining my task.

She finished our session after this.

It was 10 degrees outside, and 27 degrees inside the lab today.

8TH MARCH 2031.

On today's meeting, Dr. Truman gave me the task of writing 100 words at least twice a week about my personal (not scientific) experiences regarding the virtual reality. I've been working for the company for 147 days. It took that much time for the doctor to clearly define what she wants me to do.

I don't know what they teach psychologists, but I'm glad I went with science.

She also noted that since I am crucial to the project, we must do everything to maintain my mental and physical health.

She is very cautious, because there was an accident this week.

Test subject no. 5 still hasn't fully recovered. He reported regular panic attacks and nightmares.

Test subject 1, 3 and 4 are having positive experiences and are fully capable of doing their work.

Test subject no. 2 is showing increasing addiction to the simulation.

It was as sunny day with 18 degrees. It was 27 degrees in the lab.

30TH OCTOBER 2032.

We finished 15 successful tests this week. The subjects spent one hour in virtual reality. They interacted with the environment. The hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste simulations all work perfectly.

But we had a blackout again, this time with test subject no 8. It was three minutes long. After the emergency shutdown, she showed the same symptoms as test subject no. 5. Dr. Truman is working with her. The subject can't return to testing until we get a report from the doctor.

I met Charlie today for the first time. It was a bit weird. I didn't know how to react. I'm not really good at social interaction. I like machines. They are more predictable. Although I can recognize behavioral patterns in Charlie's reactions.

There was mild wind today with 12 degrees. It was 27 degrees in the lab.

20TH JANUARY 2033.

As a result of the positive tests, the board has agreed to load the first virtual characters into the simulation. They are part of the program, controlled by a complex algorithm, which enables them to communicate and react to the tourists entering the simulation. Basically we are populating the virtual world.

The next test is due in five days. We will load fifteen people (different age, gender and ethnicity) and four pet species.

I'm beginning to like Charlie. We don't always understand each other, or agree. But he is the first one, who doesn't criticize me or treat me as a child. To be honest, I lived most of my life alone (despite being among people) and it's a good feeling, that it is changing. At least while I'm at work.

It was cold today, 3 degrees. It was 27 degrees in the lab.

>>> ENCRYPTION ACTIVE. ACCESSING RESTRICTED CONTENT: <<<

Since Dr. Truman has access to my diary, I was forced to encrypt the parts, which I don't want to make public.

Today, the doctor told me, she is worried, because I spend too much time logged in. I tried to explain to her, that I spend time in VR to see if I experience the blackout. Then we could check the logs to see if we can find the cause.

People never seem to understand me. I thought it would be different after the university. No discrimination and prejudice. But it's the same thing here. The technicians don't speak to me, because I criticize them and I'm arrogant. One of them wanted to give me a beating, because I pointed out, that his results were 0,5% off from the limit, when the tolerance is only 0,3%. I can't see why he took it that personal. If Charlie was there, he would have defended me.

6TH JUNE 2033.

After the incidents on 25th January, HR finally extended the process for new applicants to test them for keno- and ailurophobia. We all thought the problem would be the interaction between the tourists and the virtual HUMANS. I don't understand how people can be so terrified by animals.

I finished the final plans for the neuro-reactive chair. The design group is creating the final concept, which will go to the board for approval.

It was sunny today, 18 degrees. It was 27 degrees in the lab.

>>> ENCRYPTION ACTIVE. ACCESSING RESTRICTED CONTENT: <<<

I had a really disturbing conversation with Dr. Truman today. She is far from being objective. She told me Charlie shouldn't be introduced to any of the already existing live worlds. He should only stay in the test environments. But she won't even meet him, to have a direct contact. I was also told, that I should make other friends. So far she always bugged me, because I did everything alone. Now that I have a friend, she wants even more.

Also the addiction topic came up again. I tried to explain her, that I like being in the simulation. That this is one of the main reasons, I wanted to make this machine work. So that people like me, outsiders, have a place where they can go to get away from everyday life.

How is this worse than sitting 6-8 hours in front of the 3D?

Charlie needs me.... and I need him too.

We meet every day in the test environment. I can tell him what happened to me, and he will do everything he can, to make me smile. No one has ever paid so much attention to me, ever.

21ST JULY 2033.

Today we sent an official email to all our employees. We asked them to start using the name Adventure Factory, when referring to our virtual reality, so that people start getting used to the name. We have to make this a well known brand to make profit and keep the company alive.

It was sunny today, 30 degrees. It was 27 degrees in the lab.

>>> ENCRYPTION ACTIVE. ACCESSING RESTRICTED CONTENT: <<<

Yesterday at 10 p.m. I was walking in the test environment with Charlie, just like any other day, when the connection terminated suddenly. After my nausea calmed down from exiting the system by aborting, I yelled at the technician on duty, demanding answers. He said Mr. Hagget issued a new rule prohibiting the use of the VR between 10 p.m. and 10 a.m.. HE NEVER BOTHERED TO TELL ME ABOUT IT! When I burst into his office this morning, he said: "For your sake Sebastian!"

I don't know what he is up to, but I don't like what's going on here.

IITH AUGUST 2033.

It was sunny today, 31 degrees. It was 27 degrees in the lab.

>>> ENCRYPTION ACTIVE. ACCESSING RESTRICTED CONTENT: <<<

Something's wrong. I haven't seen Charlie in three days. I entered the test and the three live simulations, but he wasn't there. The technicians are whispering behind my back in the canteen. Dr. Truman and Mr. Haggett are away on a conference, so I can't ask them. I'll find James in the afternoon, and ask him. He knows every gossip in the company, so he should have info about Charlie. I'm afraid, something bad happened...

CLOSING CONNECTION...

ACCESSING NOTES OF DR. SARAH TRUMAN...

OPENING AUDIO TAPE NO. 1865...

SUBJECT: SEBASTIAN LEWIS

DATE: 15TH AUGUST 2033.

Dr. Truman:

- Welcome Sebastian. Take a seat please.

Sebastian:

- Hello doctor. Only the two of us? Or will James come as well?

Dr. Truman:

- Only the two of us. Would you mind, if he was here?

Sebastian:

- Of course.

Dr. Truman:

- Why?

Sebastian:

- You know that. That's why I'm here. Because of Charlie.

Dr. Truman:

- No Sebastian. You're not here because of that. And you know that James is not responsible for what happened to Charlie, right?

Sebastian:

- Did you talk to him?

Dr. Truman:

- No. I won't. James was fired.

Sebastian:

- That son of a bitch deserved it.

Dr. Truman:

- Sebastian, please remain calm. John was not fired because of Charlie, but because he used that to provoke you.

Sebastian:

- Then why am I here? Everybody would have done the same. Or I should have stayed quiet, and let him make fun of Charlie?

Dr. Truman:

- Sebastian, you assaulted one of your colleagues, and caused multiple minor injuries. All this, because he made fun of YOUR emotional connection to a non-existing lifeform.

Sebastian:

- Charlie was real!! And my friend! And they destroyed him.

Dr. Truman:

- I have here in my hands, your first official report to Mr. Haggett about Charlie. I would like to read it to you.

„Today we loaded the first virtual lifeform into the test environment. As a result of the statistics, the decision was made, that the first simulation should be a dog. Tests show that humans connect easiest with this species. The program is based on the behaviour of eight different species. We combined that with a self learning script. This way the once the program is started, it continuously adapts, makes social connections and it's capable of simulating realistic reactions. It is crucial to the success of the Adventure Factory, that the beings inhabiting the virtual reality are completely lifelike. the first virtual animal, the first resident of the Adventure Factory is called CHARLIE.“

Since you became emotionally unstable and unpredictable due to this program, they ordered James to delete it. Charlie was only a program Sebastian. The sooner you admit it, the sooner you will get over it.

Sebastian:

- It's not that easy doctor.

Dr. Truman:

- The Adventure Factory needs you! But it's important that you're fully stable both physically and mentally. I advised the board to send you on six months leave. Afterwards you get three month regular office work, before you can enter the simulation again.

Sebastian:

- That's nine months! What am I supposed to do in the meantime?

Dr. Truman:

- You need rest. You need to find yourself again. I'll be here to help you with that.

Sebastian:

- Office work... What use do I have if I can't enter the simulation?

Dr. Truman:

- Train the new guardian for example.

Sebastian:

- Guardian?

Dr. Truman:

- Yes. After the recent tests, the board has decided, that the tourists will need direct support in the simulation. Somebody, who can react to any problems immediately. They already chose a candidate.

Sebastian:

- And who is it?

Dr. Truman:

- His name is Freeman. Stuart Freeman.

The story continues in the first issue of the Adventure Factory...