

THE FALL

Written by

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EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

ALAN, 34, enters the main doors as everyone else is leaving. He is a classic techie - lank hair, no care for style.

He pushes through the throng of office workers. They are excited, chatting, laughing; oblivious of Alan. He is in his own world; equally oblivious.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - NIGHT

Alan reaches entry gates. He puts his pass on the reader. A sign on the gate reads: "SEEK ASSISTANCE". He tries again. No luck. Now the sign only partly lights: "EEK ASS".

Alan, impatient, finds a GUARD who opens the gate with a bored slap of his card on the reader. Alan tries to pass.

A happy couple block his path as they exit the gate. The YOUNG WOMAN clutches flowers and a heart-shaped balloon. The MAN has a proprietary hand on her back. Alan waits, irritated. He goes to enter but the gates swing shut on him.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A quiet, empty corridor. Alan, now eager, paces towards his lab. He reaches the door. A sign on it reads: EPOS RESEARCH. Alan types a code into a keypad: ACCESS PERMITTED. Alan smiles, takes a breath of heady anticipation, enters.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Sounds of laughter. Alan stares. First in incomprehension, then in horror.

Rows of desks are set with computers and self-service tills. On the back wall a sign reads "ELECTRONIC POINT OF SALE - THE FUTURE?"

At the far end, hunched over a keyboard are two guffawing men in suits. They look at a screen displaying a crudely animated FEMALE FACE. ROGER, 32, is a slick technician with slick hair.

ROGER

Impressive isn't it?

HUGH, 38, slaps Roger on the arm. Hugh works in marketing, is fit, played rugby at school and college. Confident to the point of arrogance. May or may not be an idiot.

HUGH

Aces. Go on. Make her say it again.

Roger taps at the keyboard.

FEMALE FACE

Hello Hugh. You sexy beast.

Roger and Hugh laugh. Roger types.

FEMALE FACE (CONT'D)

I want you Hugh. I must have you.

More laughter. Hugh points. His finger greases the screen.

HUGH

Mouth moves a bit weird.

Alan stumbles forward, betrayed.

ALAN

No. No.

ROGER

Oh hello, Alan. I've just been showing Hugh your software.

(to Hugh)

Alan's our expert on Artificial Intelligence. Trying to make self-service tills less annoying.

Roger taps the keyboard again, the animated face disappears.

ROGER (CONT'D)

That's enough of that for one night. Now for the annual Valentine's Day exercise in open-wallet surgery.

They exit, chatting.

Alan stands alone staring at his violated computer.

He searches about, finds a wipe in a desk drawer. Runs it over the keyboard and screen. He types and the animated face reappears. He gazes at her face. A pause. He types again.

FEMALE FACE

Who do you love, Alan?

Alan types 'Y-O-U'. Hits enter.

Alan gently strokes the surface of the screen.

ALAN

It's alright, darling.
It's alright. I understand.

Alan leans in, eyes closed, and plants the softest of kisses on the screen. He reaches round and pulls out the cable.

FADE TO BLACK.