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## Running on XM






**H**er fingers paused over the keyboard, hovering in the air just above it. Devra thought long and hard about even using Christie's computer. She wasn't sure of the extent of ADA's reach.

She had witnessed the algorithm in action many times before, and the connectivity and speed with which ADA could collate and process data was still astonishing to Devra. And now she knew that ADA was capable of so much more. Maybe even murder, if that was her plan for Jarvis. Yet here was Devra, still alive and sitting on a sofa in one of the nicer apartments in Zagreb. ADA had something else in mind for her.

Christie, her current savior and one of the most brilliant men she had ever met, had put out pillows and blankets and had left Devra his laptop on the coffee table. There was no one







else in the apartment but the two of them. The chemical engineer was a bachelor, thankfully. Less people to lie to.

Now, as she heard him snoring in the next room, the screen of the laptop stared blankly back at her. Although she felt safe here, she also knew that the computer was an open portal – one through which ADA could reach out and find her.

It was a risk she had to take. Devra needed to start lining up her other contacts. Any communications she was about to make now would look like they came from Christie, she assured herself. And she would refrain from trying to access anything personal – her email, or online banking, or cloud storage. She was sure ADA would be waiting there if she did.



Devra's fingers hit the keyboard. She started by installing an onion router encryption service on Christie's computer. She had used this before in previous projects to ensure anonymous communications with other researchers, especially those who had emails and chats that were logged by their university IT departments.



Satisfied that her IP and information were now hidden, she set about searching for the first piece of data she'd need. The contact number for a colleague she had worked with in Milan. Then, she searched for any stories she could find about what had happened in Zurich. It now appeared to be some type of street theater that had gone awry, according to the most recent article.

Devra smiled to herself, thinking Jarvis would probably appreciate the fact that his murder was now considered a piece of performance art.

There was other information to be found about Niantic on the web. The leak within the project was an insider – of that much Devra was certain. The details were too accurate to be

suppositions. Maybe they had bigger problems than her, Devra thought. And maybe that would buy her some time.

For her plan to work, Devra was going to need to set up her own operation. That meant she needed talent, like Christie, and facilities, or access to them. And money. Always money. And if there's one thing governments of the world are great at losing but intent on keeping complete track of, it's money. Devra knew that any source of funds was going to require the utmost discretion, at least initially.

Once she had things in motion, Devra would go public, and trust that daylight would keep the NIA in the shadows. That was the plan. At least the one she had conceived over beers with Christie two hours ago.

But big picture would have to give way to small details for now. First things first. Save yourself before you save the world. She looked at the time on the computer. It read 3:49 AM. Had they been at the pub that long, Devra wondered?

Her eyes scanned Christie's living room searching for a clock. She found one sitting on a shelf in the bookcase against the wall behind her. Although it looked antique, its mechanism was battery operated. 2:23. Or maybe 2:25. The hands and dial were abstract enough to allow for a little room in either direction.

When Devra looked back at the computer, the time now appeared as 8:55 PM. The discrepancy had barely registered in her mind when a pop-up window opened in the bottom corner of the screen.

*You're up early – :)*

The message was from a woman named Katalena.

*This is not like you. I hope everything is okay.*

Devra wasn't sure what to do.