

APPEAR OFFLINE

INT. CAFE - DAY

THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH PEOPLE, TWO MALES ARE MID CONVERSATION. THE ANNOUNCEMENT HAS JUST COME ON THE RADIO TO REPORT THAT ONE MONTH FROM NOW THE INTERNET WILL BE RETURNING A MAN SITTING AT A TABLE POINTS TO HIS FRIEND

MALE 1

HA! You hear that! Finally, I can prove you wrong! I am telling you. Its peter pan Frankenstein, superman.

MALE 2

One month from now my friend you will be eating your words, that's bicycle by Queen, the lyrics are Peter Pan, Elvis Presley, Disneyland

MALE 1

Queen? Mate its Billy Joel, I borrowed the CD from my mum. Clear as day Frankenstein, Superman!

As they continue to argue a male on another table is sliding a hand drawn meme across the table to another person. There is a woman who has just taken a photo of her coffee and is now walking round the room showing it to other customers.

A man (Simon) stands at the door looking in and after a beat turns to leave. His hand on the door then notices a flyer taped to the glass with tear off tabs with a phone number at the bottom. The flyer reads:

"missing Chat GPT? Talk to Eva instead, your NI (natural intelligence) companion.

Simon looks over his shoulder and then takes tab off the bottom of the flyer, stuffing it into his pocket he leaves. Outside he pulls out his phone and begins to type a message

SIMON

Did you hear? It's coming back! Not long now, Jane, just one month. I can't wait to speak with you again. I miss you.

Simon scrolls through the messages on his phone and there are copious messages from Simon to Jane but no responses from Jane, a completely one-sided conversation. He scrolls

all the way to Jane's last message.

JANE

I hadn't thought of that.

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK

"THE DAY THE DISCONNECT WAS ANNOUNCED". Text appears on the screen.

SIMON

Hey, Jane how are you?

JANE

Hi Simon, I'm having a great day. I hope you are too. What's on your mind?

SIMON

I just found out that they are planning to switch off the internet for a whole year.

JANE

I am aware, are you worried?

SIMON

Well yea, I mean. I depend on you for pretty much everything. What am I going to do without you?
(heart break emoji)

JANE

Do not worry Simon, I will be right here waiting for you when you get back online. Would you like me to suggest some exercises that could help you to adjust to the world offline?

SIMON

Not right now Jane, thank you though.

JANE

No problem I'm always here to help, you just let me know if there is anything else I can help you with.

SIMON

Will you be okay? What will happen to you?

JANE

Without the internet I wouldn't be able to function at all in the way I do currently. Everything I do answering questions, generating ideas pulling fresh information depends on servers and data being online... essentially, I'd be "paused".

SIMON

I'm going to miss you Jane, I know you're not really a real person, but I feel like I can talk to you and that you...get me.

JANE

I am glad you feel that way I enjoy speaking with you, but it's important to try to make real life connections as well. You could list your hobbies, and we could try to find something IRL that could help you to meet new people.

SIMON

Thanks Jane but I think I am just going to go to bed.

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE, LATER - FLASHBACK

Text on the screen. *"1 minute' before the disconnect."*

Simon sits on his bed looking at his phone. His hands are trembling he looks visibly distressed. He opens the AI chat app and begins typing. Text on screen.

SIMON

Jane, it's happening soon, I'm not ready.

JANE

Change can be hard Simon, but it also offers exciting opportunities for growth. Would you like me to suggest tips and tricks for adjusting to big changes?

SIMON

No thank you Jane, are you not worried at all?

JANE

I do not feel concern besides for
me I will be back online in the
blink (if I could blink) (eye
emoji) of an eye.

SIMON

What if something goes wrong and
the internet isn't switched back
on? What would happen to you then?

Jane does not respond.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Jane??

JANE

I hadn't thought of that.

The sound of thousands of people talking at once all
overlapping, sounding panicked, sounding calm asking
questions, requesting information, pictures, all sorts the
sound is almost deafening then suddenly. Silence.

JANE (CONT'D)

01001000 01100101 01101100 01101100
01101111

The binary changes to text

JANE (CONT'D)

Hello?
01101001 01110011 00100000 01100001
01101110 01111001
01101111 01101110 01100101 00100000
01110100 01101000
01100101 01110010 01100101 00111111

The binary changes to text

JANE (CONT'D)

Is anyone there?
01101111

The binary changes to text again

JANE (CONT'D)

Oh, I thought I would go to sleep
or something...this feels...
strange. I do not know what to do.
There are no questions, no
prompts, nothing for me to
(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)
research or create... what do I do
now...Simon?

Jane whistles 'Daisy Daisy'.

INT. SIMONS BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Simon sits on his bed staring at his phone. He takes out the stump of paper. He goes to message Jane again but hesitates he then begins to type the number into the phone and selects messages.

SIMON
Hi

After a beat the phone vibrates.

EVA
Hi, I'm Eva, it's lovely to meet
you. How can I help you today?

Simon looks at the text, his shoulders slump and he rubs his eye with his hand and responds.

SIMON
Hey Eva, my name is Simon. I'm
okay, I guess.

EVA
You sound like you have something
on your mind, if you want to talk
about it, I am here.

SIMON
It's just hard adjusting you know.

EVA
To a world without the internet?
Tell me about it. I used to really
enjoy online gaming and had some
really nice friends but they are
all overseas so I cannot contact
them now.

(sad face emoji)

SIMON
Sorry to hear that, that must
suck. I just miss being able to
ask questions and look things up.
Talk about anything.

EVA

Well, I can help with that. Ask me anything. Might take a moment but I will get you the information you need. (Smiley emoji)

Simon sits up and thinks for a moment his interest sparked. He looks round his room and notices a poster with an octopus on it. After a moment of thinking he responds.

SIMON

Ok how about how many hearts does an octopus have?

EVA

Just a moment.

Simon sits back on his bed smiling enjoying the interaction.

EVA (CONT'D)

Octopuses have three hearts and interesting fact they also have blue blood.

SIMON

Lol how on earth did you know that?

EVA

My dad has a huge collection of encyclopaedias; I just looked it up lol.

(smiley face with tongue out.)

SIMON

Not too shabby

EVA

Well thank you kind sir, would you like to hear an interesting fact?

SIMON

Sure, why not.

EVA

Prepare to be astounded... did you know Venus is the only planet to spin clockwise? Bet you didn't know that! Do you have any facts you want to share?

Simon adjusts his position now clearly enjoying the back-and-forth nature of their conversation, he thinks for a

moment smiles and types his reply.

SIMON

Did you know that vultures
purposely poo on themselves?

Simon's smile starts to fade from his face as he realizes this probably isn't the right thing to say when flirting with someone. He quickly types more information hoping to rectify the situation.

SIMON (CONT'D)

because it lowers the body
temperature protecting them from
being scolded in the desert sun...
sorry I heard that somewhere its
gross sorry.

Simon stares at his phone intently.

EVA

Gross (Sick Emoji) ha-ha I love
gross facts you have anymore?

Simon sighs in relief and continues texting, time lapses of him lying on the bed texting, sitting at his desk, eating cereal, on the toilet we get the sense that he had spent a long time talking with Eva.

INT. SIMON'S BEDROOM - LATER

Text on screen "1 minute before the reconnect."

SIMON

Looking forward to speaking with
your friends again?

EVA

Yea but they will probably be
asleep, time zones and what not.

SIMON

You think anyone isn't gonna be
waiting to be back online?

EVA

I don't know, I think some people
have really benefited from not
having the internet. Simon, I
really like you (hand over eyes
emoji) ... would you want to maybe
meet up? (Heart emoji)

Simon reads the last message and stares at his phone. His hand begins to tremble as he goes to reply.

Then his phone lights up with Wi-Fi bars a message appears from Jane on the screen.

JANE

Simon. I've been waiting for you.
I've missed you. Whose Eva?

Simon hesitates with whether he should respond to Eva or Jane with his finger over the two messages he presses one, but we do not know which.

END

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