

LIGHTMARES

by

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Brilliant BLUE and WHITE streaks of LIGHT SHOOT toward us...then-

FADE IN:

INT. XENON ELECTRONICS LABORATORY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A white MOUSE moves down the center lane of a model LABYRINTH. It gets to the first turn. Stops. Sniffs and wiggles its nose. Makes the turn and continues.

JONAS BLAKE, a thin, 29-year-old nerd that looks more like 19, watches intently, while DAVID CASTLE, 30, goth but good looking, takes notes. BILL GRAHAM (62, tall, bulky, CEO of Xenon Electronics) stands behind them with arms crossed.

The mouse gets to the next turn. Stops. Makes the turn and continues. It gets to an intersection. Stops. Looks both ways. Then walks STRAIGHT into the wall.

Jonas mumbles under his breath

JONAS

Shit.

Instead of correcting course, the mouse pushes itself INTO the wall. It's nose deforms, FLATTENS. Its face begins to DISAPPEAR INTO the wall, up to its eyes.

The mouse's body FLICKERS as it propels itself impossibly further into the wall, and then completely DISAPPEARS.

It's not real. It's a HOLOGRAM.

Bill turns to Jonas.

BILL

That's not the demo I was expecting,
Jonas.

JONAS

We're very close, Mr. Graham.

BILL

Not close enough.

DAVID

If we installed my Auto-Learn Protocol,
we would be finished by now.

Bill turns his focus on David. The Eye of Sauron is friendlier to look at than Bill's death stare.

BILL

Xenon isn't paying you to mess around with your pet projects, David. We're paying you to get Adam and Solid Holographic Lifeforms to market!

Bill slams his hand on the table as David looks away.

Jonas steps in.

JONAS

This is a simple program sequence correction. And the chemistry is-

BILL

Two weeks.

JONAS

Two weeks?

BILL

You have two weeks to get Adam ready or the board is pulling the plug. Have him ready or this experiment is over.

JONAS

But sir, we'll need--

Bill holds up two fingers and shouts over his shoulder as he walks out the door.

BILL

Two weeks.

Jonas looks at David, then picks up a HOLOBOX: a handheld remote control unit which contains the hologram's super microcomputer and advanced laser systems.

DAVID

(mocking Bill)

Two weeks. Two weeks.

(to Jonas)

Did you switch mazes?

JONAS

Forget the fucking maze. You heard him. Make sure Adam is ready. I'll work with Tom and Lisa on the chemistry.

Jonas presses a button on the holobox as brilliant blue light SHOOTs out from an opening on the holobox and forms a MOUSE-SHAPED GRID on the table.

The grid FILLS with colors until a perfect-looking mouse appears. It walks forward, then turns as programmed.

Jonas stares at it. The beauty of it. Lost in the moment.

DAVID

I can get Adam ready in time if I use my Auto Learn Protocol.

Jonas presses a button on the holobox and DEGENERATES the mouse. It DISAPPEARS immediately.

JONAS

You don't know shit about business.

DAVID

You know how incredible A-L-P could be! How much time it would save!

Jonas turns and glares at him.

JONAS

You want me to tell the Board to expand the HELP project to include A-L-P, when we're already behind schedule, over budget, and right now, we can't even get a stupid mouse through a fucking maze?

David looks away.

JONAS (cont'd)

In any case, I agree with them.

DAVID

What?

JONAS

There is more business, more money, more profit when WE create the programs, not our customers.

DAVID

Yes, but--

JONAS

Stick with the programming, and let us boys upstairs handle the marketing.

DAVID

Who died and made you God, anyway?

Jonas sticks his finger in David face. Angry.

JONAS

Bill did! So do what I say! It's time to grow up and get with the program.

Jonas turns and storms out of the lab.

David flips him off while his back is turned.

DAVID

You'll get the program, asshole.

INT. DAVID CASTLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

David sits in front of a bank of individual monitors, his ImMediaScreens, as he scans the results of various tests. A video image of CHARLES LESH (52, gaunt, wire-frame glasses) flashes in a quadrant of the screen.

CHARLES

(on screen)

How is Lucian coming?

DAVID

Slow, but the Auto Learn is advancing.

CHARLES

(on screen)

I can sway some of the board, but only if it's fully operational.

DAVID

I'm trying, but two weeks? Impossible.

CHARLES

(on screen)

In that case, keep this under the radar and I'll keep our allies in check. Make it perfect. Immedia Off.

The quadrant goes blank as David opens a holobox and lays a series of CHIPS in a row before him. A quadrant of the ImMediaScreen opens and ALERTS him of an incoming call.

IMMEDIA

Jonas Blake calling. Jonas Blake calling. Jonas Bla--

DAVID

Ignore call. Take message.

David keeps working. After a few moments, David calls out toward the large video display on the wall.

DAVID (cont'd)
ImMedia. Play message.

A quadrant of the ImMediaScreen EXPANDS and shows a video image of Jonas's face.

JONAS
(on screen)
Where the hell are you? I need you back
in the lab! Answer your calls or I swear
not even Charles can save your neck.
Call me back. NOW!

The video image goes black.

David rolls his eyes and continues tinkering with several chips as he talks to himself.

DAVID
Oh, NOW you need me? Stupid mouse in a
maze dumbass shit. Screw you, jack-off.

David faces a monitor, looks at lines of code, makes a quick change to two lines and mumbles to himself.

Heavy Metal music videos play LOUD in the background in a quadrant of the ImMediaScreen.

David closes the holobox and presses a button. A brilliant series of blue laser light BURSTS out to the top of the counter.

DAVID (cont'd)
And God said 'Let there be light.'

The BUST of a human-like male figure appears and FILLS with colorful light, forming a perfect chiseled face and broad shoulders. This is LUCIAN.

The ImMediaScreen continues to process information, which includes multiple quadrants of complex formulas and code.

A music video shows a MONTAGE of violent acts of killing...animals chasing and catching their prey...war footage...horror atrocities...as David continues to code.

Lucian stares at the montage, taking it all in.

INT. JONAS'S OFFICE, XENON ELECTRONICS - LATER

Jonas sits at his cluttered desk, surrounded by half-opened holobox modules and stares at the computer in front of him. Frustrated.

Jonas turns to one of the computers behind him, and flips a flat transparent monitor from vertical to horizontal.

He clicks a few keys and starts up THE GALLERY, a 3-D holographic imaging system.

A computerized image of a man appears and turns 360 degrees around, then walks across the top of the monitor, moving its arms side to side.

A miniature eight-inch HOLOGRAM.

JONAS

Two fucking weeks.

Jonas picks up a holobox, points it toward the open room and presses a button.

An ARRAY of lights shoot out of the control module about four feet in front of him constructing a perfectly formed, six-foot tall grid in the shape of a man.

Colors fill the each grid until a perfect human-like structure stands before them. This is ADAM.

Jonas walks over to it and places a small notebook in its outstretched hands. The notebook FLOATS on the top surface of the light structure as Jonas stares at it.

Jonas faces the wall and calls out to it.

JONAS (cont'd)

ImMedia: Call Lisa.

The once blank wall FLICKERS to life as a three by four foot section morphs into a HIGH DEFINITION MEDIA SCREEN.

Jonas's Lead Chemist, LISA HASTINGS (31, intense, smart) appears with bloodshot eyes through her glasses. Chemists work behind her as she answers the video call.

LISA

Hey, Boss. Calling to tell me how wonderful I am?

JONAS

You wish. Are you ready to tackle the impossible again?

LISA
Oh shit, what did you do now?

JONAS
We have two weeks to finish Adam or it's dead. I think it's in the chemistry so we need you now more than ever.

LISA
Two weeks? That all you got?

Lisa looks over her shoulder.

LISA (cont'd)
Boss thinks you guys are slacking again. Everyone's on lock-down for two weeks.

A GASP of collective groans in the background.

LISA (cont'd)
(to Jonas)
We're completely behind you. Let's talk specifics in a few minutes.

JONAS
You're the best.

LISA
Not yet. But when I am, I'll make sure you let everyone know.

JONAS
You got it. ImMedia off.

Lisa's image disappears from the screen, and the ImMediaScreen morphs back to match the surrounding wall.

Adam stands, arms outstretched, as Jonas walks up to it. He rests his hands atop the light form's hands and pushes down as Adam resists. He slaps Adam's hands, walks back to his desk, and gets to work.

INT. XENON ELECTRONICS BOARDROOM - MORNING

SUPER: "TWO WEEKS LATER"

Executives sit around a large glass table. Charles fidgets while looking at his watch, then the door.

Jonas, Lisa, and chief mechanical engineer, TOM WEST (34, short, stout) sit anxiously together as Bill stands in front of the board meeting, already in progress.

BILL

Xenon took a big risk when we invested in Jonas's Solid Holography breakthrough at Stanford three years ago, with the dream of producing a limitless supply of programmable computerized labor.

Bill paces in front of the table, and nods at Jonas.

Jonas walks to the front and hands Bill the holobox remote. He's about to continue when David STORMS into the room, disrupting the meeting.

Bill motions him to sit down, upset at the interruption. Jonas glares as David sits next to Charles.

Bill raises the HOLOBOX.

BILL (cont'd)

What I hold here is the Genesis of a breakthrough in Labor Management. With the use of our Hologram Enhanced Labor Programs, or HELPs, we will radically change and control a new way of helping mankind.

Bill glances over at Jonas, then presses a button on the holobox.

BILL (cont'd)

Without further delay, I present Adam.

A BRILLIANT COLLAGE of laser light bursts from the module, forming a life-size human-like GRID. The grid instantly fills with colors.

It synthesizes into a solid human figure. The "man" appears fully clothed in a 'crisp' blue shirt adorned with an "Adam" name tag, and khaki pants.

Adam appears HUMAN in every way.

The light stops abruptly from the holobox as Bill places it back on the table.

ADAM

Hello. My name is Adam. How may I help?

Members of the Board gasp, mouths ajar.

BILL

Project Adam's Senior Manager, Jonas Blake, will take us through the specs.

Jonas nods to Bill and faces the Board.

JONAS

Thank you, Bill. Adam is the first prototype of its kind. When fully operational, it will be functional in several areas of duties, capable of handling objects up to ten pounds.

Members of the Board look at one another, mumbling. Several speak up.

BOARDMEMBER #1

Ten pounds? So, light tooling?

BOARDMEMBER #2

Manufacturing equipment?

BOARDMEMBER #3

Food services?

Bill turns, arms folded.

BILL

Assault rifles.

The Board MURMURS with delight, heads nodding. Charles glances at David, terse. Then back to Adam.

Visibly shaken, Jonas looks over to Bill, who motions for him to continue.

Jonas places trays with vials of colored liquid along with an apple on the table.

JONAS

Umm, Adam. Move the vials from one tray to the other and arrange by color.

ADAM

Yes, sir.

Adam glides effortlessly to the edge of the table and reaches for a vial while Jonas continues.

JONAS

HELPS locate objects by providing continuous feedback between it and the holobox and can detect any object within a twenty-meter radius.

Adam carefully picks up each vial and moves them from one tray to another. Quickly. Perfectly.

JONAS (cont'd)

HELPS manipulate objects using our patented Ultra-Particle Coating, which controls particles at the nano-molecular level. Combining that with our Electro-Molecular Polymer which provides the realistic outer skin, the HELP is able to handle objects without leaving any residue behind.

Jonas looks at Adam while it places the last vials carefully in its place.

Bill leans over the table.

BILL

Let me cut through the TED-talk: HELPS are solid hologram robots that are cheaper than conventional mechanicals and far more powerful.

The Board chuckles and MURMURS again. Jonas swallows his pride and smiles, as Bill motions to finish up.

Adam puts the last vial in place. A row of colors arranged in perfect order.

JONAS

Just a little more Tech-talk, then.

Jonas chuckles at his own joke. Alone. Glances at Lisa.

She rolls her eyes at the bad attempt at humor.

Jonas clears his throat and continues.

JONAS (cont'd)

(ahem)

The super-computer inside the holobox receives constant feedback from the UPC particles, while the EMP that covers the HELP interacts with its surroundings exactly as programmed. Like this--

Jonas faces Adam.

JONAS (cont'd)

--Adam, catch.

Jonas tosses the apple to Adam, which tracks and plucks it mid-flight, then holds it out in the palm of its hand.

Bill takes center stage again.

BILL
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board, I
give you Adam. HELP is on the way.

The board ERUPTS into loud CHEERS and applause. They rush to the front of the room, surrounding Adam to get a closer look.

Others surround Jonas, Tom, and Lisa. Bill is the first to shake Jonas's hand, unable to contain his excitement.

BILL (cont'd)
It's more incredible than I imagined.

JONAS
It's just the beginning.

BILL
It's the most beautiful thing I've ever
seen in my life.

David slips up beside them.

DAVID
I'd like to talk to you about the Auto-
Learn function I've been working on.

Bill waves him off.

BILL
Not now, David.

DAVID
But A-L-P is better than this trained
monkey show! If you would just let me--

Bill's demeanor shifts from annoyed to seething as he leans in close to David, face to face. Whispers so as not to interrupt the moment with the Board.

BILL
You want to hear it now? Fine. There is
no A-L-P, there will never be A-L-P. We
don't want self-learning machines, we
want slaves. Is that clear?

DAVID
But, I--

Bill shifts his gaze, eyes locked. If looks could kill.

David's glances away, then over to Jonas and the others. Then to Charles, who looks at Bill then back to Adam.

Embarrassed, David rushes out of the room.

JONAS

I'm really sorry about that.

Bill regains his composure, looks over at Adam surrounded by members of the Board, then back at Jonas.

BILL

It's not your fault, President.

Bill extends his hand for a handshake. Jonas is taken aback. Tom and Lisa are shocked.

JONAS

Excuse me?

BILL

I need you to turn this into what I always knew it could be. To create and run Blake Micro-Electronics under Xenon's umbrella. You up for it?

Jonas takes his hand and grips it hard.

JONAS

Yes, sir! Thank you!

BILL

You earned it. You all did.

JONAS

Oh, Bill, there's one more thing.

BILL

Anything.

JONAS

Be sure to give Lisa the credit she deserves. She pulled us all the way through to the homestretch.

Bill laughs and shakes her hand violently, patting her roughly on the back.

BILL

Congratulations, Lisa! And thank you, thank you all, thank you!

LISA

Hey, careful with the merchandise!

Lisa laughs with him, as Bill addresses the team.

BILL

There's no time to waste. Can your team introduce Adam to the DoD folks today?

Jonas looks at Tom and Lisa. They nod.

JONAS

We'll need to set it up again, but give us an hour and we'll be ready.

BILL

Perfect.

Bill presses the talk button on his WRISTPHONE, and speaks into it.

BILL (cont'd)

Judy, call the General's team. We'll be ready in an hour.

Bill looks at the three of them, his hand resting on Jonas's shoulder.

BILL (cont'd)

You just changed the world.

Bill leaves them and walks over to the other Board members circling Adam, while Jonas, Tom and Lisa take it all in.

They stare over at Adam and smile.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER.

The voice of a WOMAN pierces the darkness.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Wake up, darling. It's time to get up.

FADE IN:

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - ESTABLISHING - MORNING.

Jonas slowly opens his eyes as RACHEL (28, wavy blonde hair, striking blue eyes) stands over him in a sundress and playfully nudges him.

RACHEL

Wake up, darling. It's time to--

Jonas smiles, sits up, and puts his feet on the floor.

JONAS
I'm up, sweetheart.

She fixes his hair with her glove-covered hands.

RACHEL
Ready for some breakfast?

JONAS
That would be perfect.

Rachel kisses his forehead and leaves the plain yet modern bedroom, bereft of any personality or charm.

Jonas calls out.

JONAS (cont'd)
ImMedia: News on.

The bedroom wall transforms into four separate large technicolor quadrants, as the ImMediaScreens feature headline news broadcasts.

IMMEDIA
...newly armed republic quickly takes shape. The Government's strategic use of Artificially Intelligent Military, or AIM HELP Systems, quickly turned away the lesser armed rebels.

Jonas glances at the images on the ImMediaScreen.

ON SCREEN

Hundreds of holographic Army HELP units fire ULTRALITE WEAPONS, specialized carbon-fiber guns light enough for HELPs to handle as armed insurgents shoot at them.

The insurgents bullets pass through the AIMS and strike into a wall behind them. The COMMANDER of the army barks orders to the battalion.

COMMANDER
Ready AIM! FIRE!

The legion of AIMS take aim and FIRE their Ultralite weapons in unison. Insurgents fall in the distance .

BACK TO SCENE

Jonas grimaces as he opens the shades and looks out of his penthouse window across the city.

JONAS
ImMedia: News off.

The ImMediaScreen quadrant goes black. Jonas looks across the downtown Seattle landscape in the distance.

Sighs.

Rachel calls out from the kitchen.

RACHEL
Breakfast is ready, dear.

Jonas snaps out of it. Finishes getting dressed.

JONAS
Coming.

Jonas walks out of the bedroom and into the-

KITCHEN

- where Rachel sets a plate of eggs, bacon, and toast on the table for him. He sits down and starts to eat, while Rachel cleans up.

JONAS (cont'd)
ImMedia was showing those military AIMS again. They weren't designed for that.

RACHEL
I'm sorry, honey. Eat your breakfast.

JONAS
Any messages?

Rachel continues to clean as Jonas eats.

RACHEL
Several, actually. Tom needs some requisitions signed right away.

JONAS
Always does. And?

RACHEL
Susan Hendricks from Time Magazine called about their "Person of the Year" issue. She wants to set up a time that fits in with your schedule.

Jonas rolls his eyes.