

Volunteered Forced Conversion: Work

How long has it been? It's impossible to tell. There are no clocks. No day or night cycle. Falling asleep is no longer the same, being unable to close your eyes does it, but at the same time the dark light and the sleek vanta-black faceless face that stares back at him isn't too distracting. At times Brandon finds himself forgetting what he is looking at is himself. The only thing breaking the monotony of absolutely nothing happening is his bi-daily supplemental nourishments, fed to him through a tentacle that breaks through the rubber of his face, connecting with the gag in his mouth, allowing the tasteless fluid to slide down the back of his throat. The machines forced him to swallow it, making self-starvation impossible. For a while he counted the feedings to try to keep track of time, but after seventy? Ninety? He lost count.

Muscles twitch from the electroshocks that keep his tightly held body from suffering any atrophy. He calmly breathes through his nostrils, the only source of air he can receive, the sleek back vanta-black rubber suit that envelopes him provides the atmospheric pressure needed to keep his body healthy in the vacuum that this lunar base is kept at. It's run by machines, why would they need to breathe? His entire existence and survival is put into these machines, every bit of agency he has, has been stripped from him.

When his mind drifts to this, a rush of excitement moves through him, while at the same time a bit of dread. The time to let this reality sink into him has long passed, long before he even lost count of what day it was, or how long he's been in here. Not being used, not being utilized, he simply existed in this storage chamber, unused, completely helpless wrapped up by the machines, just like before...

Brandon awoke with his body numb, unable to move. A panic sets over him, seeing the wyervin over him in the alien jungle with the purple leaves, the machine's cold monotone voice sends a shiver down his spine, "**Remain calm. Repairs are in progress,**" UT-KVI-0023 says, the sleek silver wyervin machine, with three glowing clusters of lights attached to its flat front of the elongated head. The machine keeps him flat on his back, held up slightly off the ground by dozens of machine tentacles, one of which he realizes is firmly attached to the back of his skull, preventing any sensation from the neck down.

A rush of adrenaline moves through his body, his breathing growing faster, he tries to move his head to look around but is unable to do so. A half a dozen of smaller tendrils are shooting out from the machine's chest, the smell of ozone and burnt flesh linger in the air. Brandon tries to speak but finds that even that has been disabled. His eyes stare at the machine full of worry, concern, hearing the soft whir of machinery, cutting of flesh, a numb sensation telling him that UT-KVI-0023 is working on *his* body.

Brandon pants heavily, trying to move, trying to do anything, his mind running a mile a minute failing to fully comprehend just what happened. Last he recalls he was at those pods then the wyervin jumped him... "*Was this a plan to abduct me? Am I being abducted?*" Brandon thought, his heart racing faster, faster.

“Remain calm,” UT-KVI-0023 stated, a soft whir on the back of his neck, a greater pressure at the back of his spine. It was paralyzing him! It forced a rush of drugs into his body, calming him, breathing slowing down, becoming nice and steady once again, yet the excitement in his mind remained even if his body was relaxed.

“I’m going to be taken away. Never to be seen again. Made into some faceless nothing. A drone. A nobody. Controlled by a heartless cold emotionless machine like an object. A puppet,” he thought and what caused a twinge of fear in him greater than anything else he could have ever imagined. Something that he thought not in a million years he’d come to the conclusion to. The idea is kind of hot...

“Brandon, your reaction to your current situation is an anomaly.”

“Wait... how? Is it reading my mind? It is attached to me,” his eyes looked at the moving tendrils that are currently working down inside his body.

“Your repair is almost complete. Remain calm.”

“Repair? Wait it said something about that before,” he thought, eyes looking down, suddenly locked on the three distinct incisions made across his body, one in his upper chest, and two in his gut. Suddenly an energy bubble appears around them, a small insect having bumped into it, preventing it from entering the area.

“Brandon. You are what you’d translate as being ‘lucky’. The shot missed your heart by three millimeters.”

“It’s saving my life?” Brandon thought, a few moments later, the machine seals each wound, nanites working together to bind the skin back together.

“Repair complete. Disabling neural blockers. Remain quiet as it is not safe. You will probably feel discomfort upon disconnect.”

With a soft whir, a pinch in the back of his neck, Brandon felt a surge of pain throbbing in his chest and gut. He gritted his teeth, the machine gently laying him down onto his back, Brandon sitting up, wincing in pain, nostrils flaring, breathing heavily.

“It is advised you limit your movements for twenty-four hours as you are more comprehensively repaired.”

Brandon balled his hands into a fist, taking another slow deep breath, the shooting pains deep within his body, feeling like he’s been stabbed in the same spot repeatedly. He looks down his body, seeing a thin silver gleam from the nanites on his skin. “Y-you saved me.”

The tendrils retracted back into its body, the armor plates pulling back, covering the openings. The machine adjusts, standing back up from its hunched position, Brandon noticing minor damages on its winged metal wings that give the wyervins their name, as it reminds people of wyverns, with their wing armed draconic features, **“Your premature expiration was stopped.”**

“Why?” Brandon asks, grunting in pain, moving onto his feet.

“It is not advised that you move for another hour,” Brandon sits back down with a sigh, the machine adjusting itself, continuing its response, **“Clarify your question.”**

“Why did you save my life.”

“Your life has value. It is not to be wasted. The lost units can be retrieved later. Your life cannot.”

Brandon’s eyes widen slightly, “B-but... you enslave people.”

“We process organics into drones. They are used to fulfill various tasks that require their individualized skills. They are also a good commodity to trade with certain organic races.”

“Yes. You have no respect for our lives. You’ve enslaved people of my race, we’ve fought a war that my father...” he trails off for a moment, hands tensing, “How could you care about life? When you remove people’s individuality. People’s will?”

Brandon watched the machine adjust itself, looking up for a **“Brandon, you find this hard to understand?”**

“You’re damn right I do.”

“Everything has value. You are no different from anything else.”

“Including you?”

“Yes.”

“Then why do you enslave people? Tell me that huh?”

“Efficiency.”

“Efficiency?” Brandon looks at the machine curiously.

“Energy in the universe is limited. Organics waste energy that is not sustainable. Organics are processed to be made efficient.”

“That’s... I can’t argue with your logic, but your methods are just...”

“You do not know of the processing methods. Only the end result.”

“Yeah, that’s true, I think... I’ve heard stories. People who have been de-droned. Only threats of your destruction did you make peace... probably under false pretenses.”

“Deceit is a tool of weakness. The current peace was made without such. There was no need.”

Brandon let out a huff, wincing in pain, “Shit that hurts.”

“Rest is advised.”

“Tell me something at least, since we have a moment.”

“What is your inquiry?”

“What’s with the black rubbery faceless look with your drones?”

“It’s to-- interruption, enemy approach,” the machine states, Brandon reaching for his weapon which was beside him. The answer will have to come later...

Brandon is snapped back to reality by the machine’s words, **“Unit H-BRA-5391 desires to be a drone with a high efficiency coefficient. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”**

Brandon nods without a second thought. At this point it felt natural to simply listen and follow through the motions. Once done, silence returns, the endless waiting in his little box, *“Why did I think about that just now?”* Brandon wonders.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 is required in section 2.0001. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to location and perform necessary repairs. Audio inhibitor is to be removed. It is advised that audio communication is only warranted upon necessary inquiry. Failure to follow guidelines will reduce unit H-BRA-5391 efficiency coefficient value. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod that Unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods. A tentacle moves in front of him, the razor thin wires from the mouth gag retract back into the sphere, the tentacle penetrating his faceless smooth mouth, attaching to the metallic gag which detached from his tongue and teeth, pulling out of his mouth, revealing the same black void of a face as before, the rubber unbroken.

Like a phantom limb, Brandon feels a longing for the gag to be put back into his mouth. It's been there for so long it's as if a part of him was just removed, but with the minor movements of his jaw, it's revealed to him that his muscles work fine. There is no aches or pains from being locked up for such a long duration. The tentacle tube in his rear disconnects with a click that he can only feel through his body. The same goes for his frontal waste drainage port. A small silver metal dot where his smoothed slightly bulged codpiece is that tightly holds and contains his pacified and disable genitalia. No matter what arousal he might find himself in, or excitement his mind plays through his seemingly inexhaustible fetish for bondage, his length doesn't stir, which somehow makes it all the more unbearable, Brandon wanting more.

“What is wrong with me? How can I love this that much?” Brandon thought, the small containment chamber opening, the contacts on his eyes showing a HUD display of where he is meant to travel. In that HUD in that same corner is the red text that has been burned into his mind, that he now understands the complaints that those who have been de-droned that they can always “see” their old name and what they were. For Brandon it's the same, his name and what he is. **“H-BRA-5391: Class Z Drone.”**

The magnets on his feet disable, allowing him to move his feet away from their slots, his body slipping out of its tight cramped quarters, feet touching the ground binding him to the floor, compensating for the ultra-low gravity of this moon world.

Machine tendrils from the ceiling move down, disconnecting his breath tubes from the storage chamber, unscrewing them like one would unscrew the cap of an inflatable tire. Brandon's air is cut off, only for a few seconds, the nasal tubes connected once again to dangling tubes that move with him as he walks. His air supplied by the machines; without them he could not exist in this hellscape of overbearing control.

To Brandon's surprise yet also what he expected, his muscles move without pain. Without any sore aching sensation for being held in one place for so very long. The most surprising thing for him for that matter is what he's feeling. The quickened heartbeat. The butterflies filling his stomach. A lump in his throat that he swallows, *“How am I excited for this? Excited to be used like a fucking object.”* Brandon thinks, walking down the path.

With each step there is a soft thud, the magnets turning on and off as needed to keep him bound to the floor. He walks with perfect posture, proud stance. He doesn't turn his head to

look at the hundred or more other storage chambers designed to hold those who didn't obey. Were they all full? Was only his? He couldn't see inside, there was no way of knowing.

"What am I to do when I get there?" Brandon eventually asks, stepping out of the hallway where he was kept.

"Unit H-BRA-5391 needs only to follow the instructions given. Unit H-BRA-5391 is a drone. Unit H-BRA-5391 does not need to think, simply follow instructions given. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands."

Without a thought, Brandon nods. A shiver runs down his spine, breath quickens slightly, *"Did I just... like a tool? I just did it. I'm just..."* His mind trails off when the machine speaks into his synthetically enhanced ears.

"Unit H-BRA-5391 is advised to remain calm to improve unit H-BRA-5391's efficiency coefficient value."

Brandon took a deep breath through his nostrils, releasing it through his mouth, the rubber cheeks bulging, the air swept up through the suit, to the nostrils where it is recycled. Nothing was left to waste, not even the air he breathes.

Moving through the maze of hallways, each part looking like the last making it impossible to know if he was coming or going anywhere. Other smooth faceless humanoid drones move past him. Their sleek rubbery squeaks unheard due to the vacuum of space. The rubber tubes that provide them with air attached to their nostrils or anything equivalent for the species. The only thing he can hear from the other drones are their footsteps, the minor vibrations in the ground that his enhanced ears can pick up as they travel through the floor up his feet and legs till they reach him, limiting what he can hear to only a few feet around him in all directions.

When Brandon looks at the drone, a targeting reticle appears, a quick summary of information is shown to him, **"A-JRQ-0216:Class X Drone."** Brandon processes the data instantly, understanding that is who he is looking at, but just as fast he walks past them toward his destination. Every drone he sees this happens, time and time again. Though faceless, unable to tell who from their features is, he knew 'who' they were. *"Is this me? No... it is me as well. I'm just a unit. A drone here. No face. No different. Only the name given to me by the machines. Everything about me... was given to me by the wyervins. No one here knows I'm Brandon. No one knows... I'm just..."*

Suddenly he reaches the end of a hallway, facing a sheer cliff drop. A clear glass tube gives Brandon an outside view of the outside world for the first time. The blue sun blocking all-stars giving a black void surrounding him. To his right he sees out over the horizon the blue and black marble of the wyervin home world, the large processing stations that orbit the planet visible from here.

"Unit H-BRA-5391 proceed forward. Further delay will reflect negatively on unit H-BRA-5391's efficiency coefficient value."

Brandon looks down at the vertical drop, his heart picking up the pace, seeing the clear three-hundred-meter drop with only a gentle curve at the edge to allow continuous path.

“Unit H-BRA-5391’s magnetic field will prevent Unit H-BRA-5391 from harm. Proceed forward.”

Brandon tenses, taking a deep breath through his nostrils, looking at the middle of the tunnel that has the track that allows his rubber breath tubes to follow him. He takes the leap of faith, stepping forward, his magnetic feet binding to the wall which now has become his floor. He looks straight down to the bottom, heart beating faster, *“Heights...”* he swallows a lump in his throat, feeling the soft pull of gravity of the moon, proceeding down to his target.

From his vantage point he sees massive machines dredging into the moon’s surface, digging up valuable minerals and resources that can be used and processed for the machine empire. Absolutely giant machines that are equal to anything that Brandon has seen outside of the military. And there were dozens of them working together, digging, processing, sending materials back to the base for further processing. Their movement vibrates the ground, allowing him to hear a constant rumble breaking the near perfect silence he has been experiencing. Curiously though when he looks at each one, a target reticle appears, giving information on them equal to the drones he’s walked past.

“Unit Q-BGE-0025:Class L Excavation Drone”

“Wait... are those sentient too? Why would they have sentient digging machines? No, it must be just for organization. That’s it,” Brandon thinks, eventually reaching his destination before one of these behemoth’s sits idle within a massive dome. Dozens of drones are lined up waiting, unmoving, some humanoid and similar size to himself, others bigger, more monstrous, all vanta-black faceless drones, breathing tubes attached to a small hovering machine over each drone’s head.

When Brandon steps into the area, his tubes are quickly unscrewed and re-attached to a similar drone, **“Attaching air supply to a portable drone unit.... Attachment complete.”** When he reaches his designated spot, lined up along with all the other drones he hears the machine speak, and a subtle muffled synthetic voice that is spoken into the ears of the two closest drones, all of which say the same thing.

“All service Drones loaded. Uploading command protocols. Unit H-BRA-5391 proceeded to the designated location and completed the designated task,” it says, Brandon catching bits and pieces of the designation of the others around him.

A new path is shown before Brandon, he simply follows it, moving past a tube that raises a belt and a set of tools, **“Stand by the instrument augments for temporary attachment.”**

Without thought Brandon does as he is told, tentacles take the belt, attaching it around his waist, the rubber merging with it, making it part of his body, **“Proceed to the next location.”**

Brandon silently nods, turning and following his new path up into the massive machine. His feet thudding against the metal body, stepping inside, he sees miles of wiring and machinery, a complex network on par of any organic body amplified several fold over.

A sense of wonder and awe washes over Brandon, his eyes unable to widen, staring helplessly at the massive complex at the core of the machine. Glowing, humming with energy, an advanced Class C-21 according to his target read out a cold fusion reactor. The literal heart of

the machine, **“Unit H-BRA-5391 is to perform level two routine maintenance on Unit Q-BGA-0015:Class L Excavation Drone’s Class C-21 reactor. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that Unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”**

Brandon nods without thinking before freezing up, “Wait, I don’t know how to work something like this! This is something only the top scientists in all of humanity have possibly begun to understand.”

“Unit H-BRA-5391 does not need to understand. Unit H-BRA-5391 only needs to follow commands. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon takes a deep breath, nodding. Accepting the command, he is given he follows to his new location, his HUD displaying where he should put his arms, followed by instructions on what to do, what to see, what to monitor. He taps on a holographic computer screen, viewing information that is completely alien, foreign to him. Far behind a foreign language, it's an alien language on a topic that in of itself is alien and behind comprehension to him.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to scroll through the data. Any anomalous data will be reported.”

“Wouldn’t this data just be sent to you? Could it just be transmitted?” Brandon inquired.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 has offered a good inquiry. Unit H-BRA-5391’s efficiency coefficient value will not be reduced for speaking without authorization. Unit H-BRA-5391 does need to question. Further such inquiries will result in a reduction in Unit H-BRA-5391’s efficiency coefficient value. Unit H-BRA-5391 will do as commanded. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that Unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods without even thinking about the command in itself, *“This must be part of the training. They are simply whittling me down. Preventing me from thinking. I have no power here. I can’t breathe without them. I can’t survive here without them. I can’t complete my task without them. I can only do what they say when they say it, and that’s it. I am simply an object... going through the motions,”* thinks, following the commands, any subtle movements are guided, taps of his fingers on the screen, pulling out a tool, proceeding to do complex maintenance that he has no idea how to do otherwise. Everything without agency of his own, filling him with a mixture of dread and excitement.

He is not the only one in the area, there are a dozen other drones much like himself. One in particular, a female humanoid that could very well be human but it's impossible to tell. Like him she has the attachments, the silver bits sticking out of her crotch, the spinal cord, silver metallic soles on her feet, only the bust and smoother crotch give any indication of her sex.

The target reticle on his HUD vision says, **“Unit H-MAR-1263: Class Y Drone.”** Followed by commands to go near the drone to do some maintenance work. Without question he follows his command, the sound of his footsteps, the only sound he hears outside of the rumbling of machinery around him felt through his feet. But when he gets close, he faintly hears.

“Unit H-MAR-1263 will continue monitoring at this station.”

Brandon twitches slightly, he is so close to her now that he can hear the machine's voice through his body. Muffled, but his ears enhanced and clarified the garbled information so he could understand it. After fifteen or so minutes he says, "Hi... how are you doing?" he asks, while not missing a beat following the HUD which guides him to what moves to make with his arms, like matching an outline. It's slow, concise, easy to follow, pulsating that draws his attention to it, making him want to follow through so it no longer distracts, yet it's always there when it's needed, drawing him to it like a moth to the flame.

H-MAR-1263 doesn't turn her head, she continues to move, the sounds of her rubber squeaking body lost to the vacuum, only the subtle vibrations his ears enhanced ears enable him to hear.

Like a teenager asking their crush out on a date the silence was deafening, a pit in his stomach formed, "I know talking is bad for our efficiency coefficient value, but if you can hear me can you nod?"

No response, H-MAR-1263 works without flinching, or slowing down, it's like talking to a wall.

"H-MAR-1263?" Brandon asks when the machines speak into his ear. Though monotone, spoken the exact same heartless cold and uncaring way as done before, he can't help but feel that these particular words are dripping with icy intent, and perhaps malice.

"Unit H-BRA-5391. Unconstructive communication reduces your efficiency coefficient value. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands this."

Brandon nods, swallowing a lump in his throat, while still following the instructions in front of him, continuing his work, mind struggling to multitask at this delicate operation, far more complex than his means, made simple by his enslavers.

"Clarify why unit H-BRA-5391 is then attempting unconstructive communication with unit H-MAR-1263?"

A tingle runs down Brandon's spine, heart racing, memories of when he last panicked, his neural motor functions were disabled, causing him to fall to the ground like a pile of bricks. Memories that he had to be carried over to his storage container, left there up till this recent point. Having been forced to be in that cramped small compartment for an unknown amount of time with nothing to do but to listen and wait for his masters to tell him when he can come out. He felt terrified, never before has he felt such insecurities with himself. He was a soldier, battle hardened. Risked his life countless times under enemy fire, some of which was against the wyervins, but nothing felt even as close to this except when he was with UT-KVI-0023.

"It helps me focus. Talking. Minor conversation. Nothing major."

"Unit H-BRA-5391 is stating that unconstructive communication improves your efficiency coefficient value?"

"Yes, it does."

“Unit H-BRA-5391 is stating that Unit H-BRA-5391 is able to improve Unit H-BRA-5391’s efficiency coefficient value greater than the reduction caused by constructive communication between two units?”

Brandon nods instinctively, “Yes I do. You can monitor me and her. If I am wrong, you can tell me and I will stop, without question.”

“Unit H-BRA-5391 can already stop without question.”

Brandon felt his heart sink at those cold words, piercing his chest, heart sinking, yet he continued the task before him without slowing down, working to the best of his enhanced ability to follow the instructions.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 has permission for extreme short-range communication with unit H-MAR-1263. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands that this permission can be rescinded at any time and appropriate punishments will be taken for reduction in efficiency coefficient value.”

A surge of delight filled him, like a kid waking up for Christmas day, eager to know that there are presents waiting for him under the tree. He nods. Less than a moment later he asks, “Have you been here long H-MAR-1263?”

H-MAR-1263 continues to work, grabbing a tool from her belt, running some kind of diagnostic that is beyond Brandon, but also something that he is not focused on, his attention mostly drawn to his duties, the urge to keep up his efficiency, to show that he works better when talking to another is doable.

“I’m not sure if you can hear me... But if you can, well, um... I’m not sure how long I’ve been here. Did you start off as that level of drone?” he asks. Another long awkward silence comes between them. Only the vibrations of their work which is a surreal muffled sound is what he hears.

Brandon hears the machine speak again, but it's distant, muffled. **“Unit H-MAR-1263 will proceed to have unconstructive conversation with unit H-BRA-5391. Unit H-MAR-1263 will nod to confirm that unit H-MAR-1263 understands.”** out of the corner of his eye, he sees H-MAR-1263 nodding.

“Time is irrelevant, only service and efficiency to that service,” says H-MAR-1263 working hard on her current task, not looking at him but neither is he, simply two drones focused on their work. Their words are cold, not completely devoid of emotion

“Ah...so are you human?”

“No.”

“What are you then?”

“Class Y Drone,” she responds, the tone Brandon can pick up would be considered closer to disdain, disinterest, almost spiteful in their words, but part of him knows that’s not the case. It’s his mind trying to put something there when there is none, something that he could relate to and process as a human. Simply there is nothing there. It’s a void like her face that he is trying to fill, yet like the void, it feels impossible. The weight of the conversation tugging on his mind.

“Were you always a class Y Drone?”

“No.”

Brandon thinks for a half a second, following his tasks, thinking less and less upon them, becoming a bit of secondhand nature to simply follow the instructions that stream before him,

“What were you before?”

“Class Z Drone.”

“Like me?”

“Yes.”

“And before?”

“Human.”

“What was your name before? I’m just curious,” he asks.

“Irrelevant.”

“Irrelevant. You can see why.”

“Ah... right...” Brandon replies, focusing on the target around H-MAR-1263 that provides him the data he is looking for... that she is a unit, an object, a simple drone, just like him.

“Do you do this often?”

“Explain.”

“Working on this reactor.”

“The work done is dependent on the work that needs to be done.”

“That would make sense...”

“Having a high efficiency coefficient value is important.”

Brandon thinks on her words for a moment, feeling them sink in into his very core, feeling that part of him that can’t help but agree, “Yes, it is.”

“Do you like it? Working here?” Brandon asks, a shiver running down his spine, thinking, *“Why did I ask that? Who could possibly enjoy this? Being an object. A thing. No will of your own. Helplessly following commands.”*

“Commands are to be followed. Emotions to the task are irrelevant.”

“I can understand that,” Brandon replies, recalling back to those who have been enslaved by the wyervins and later freed. People often described them as emotionally detached, unable to relate with those around them, broken people, *“Is this happening to me?”* he thinks.

“Unit H-BRA-5391’s improved efficiency coefficient has not compensated for unit H-BRA-5391’s reduction in efficiency coefficient value. Permission to have unconstructive communication has been rescinded. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Without another word Brandon nods. Never ceasing his work, continuing to work hard, the suit fighting any fatigue that he might feel, the thumping of machinery vibrating through the giant machine, his footsteps, heartbeat, breathing through his nostrils, and the close range footsteps of other drones are the only thing he is able to hear, along with the vibrations of his squeaking rubber skin.

Hours upon hours of work, he moves through the reactor running various diagnostics, using tools that he has no idea how to use, following what the HUD tells him to do, what vocal commands he receives.

“Nothing to do. Nothing to think about. Just do, do, do.”

The HUD helps him focus on the task even more, body shivering in delight, a soft moan escaping his lips, arousal building higher and higher, yet there is no signs of it within his loins. No throbbing ache but there is certainly a need, *“I... why am I...,”* Brandon grunts softly, hips occasionally bucking, restraining himself, heart racing.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will remain calm. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods, taking deep breaths through his nostrils, feeling the warm recycled air that he’s breathed over and over again, faint scent of sterilization and latex hanging heavy in the air, the little drone hanging overhead, watching, controlling one of the very essences of his existence. While walking toward the next destination across the reactor room he looks up at the drone.

“Unit I-IIV-0531:Class J Drone,” says his targeting reticle. *“Wait, is this drone a person like me? Wait no... I’m not like that simple machine. Doing its task without... thinking.”* Brandon thinks a shiver running down his spine, lowering his head, focusing on his task, not missing a beat.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 has completed unit H-BRA-5391’s designated task. Unit H-BRA-5391 will return the tools and return to unit H-BRA-5391’s storage chamber till needed. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods, retracing his steps through the machine maze, exiting the behemoth, tools removed from his body before following the path laid before him. Unsure if he’s taking the same way back, the only constant he can even recall is the vertical wall that he walks up, this time with a hint of hesitation, the drone that supplied his air shifting its duties back to the building itself. His eyes occasionally look out to focus at the wondrous sight of the space around him, the massive processing lunar facility, the planet, the giant machines, the dozens of unique faceless drones composed of dozens of other species, all like him bound to the iron will of their machine masters.

It’s not till Brandon reaches a hallway with a long line of tall cylindrical pods. A glass window shows several of the pods have faceless drones in tight individual compartments, unmoving, staring straight at a featureless wall, none even looking at him when he passes. A target reticle appears over each one giving their name and class of drone. The path leads to a storage chamber just big enough to fit him with only a few millimeters of clearance in any direction. His HUD tells him to turn around and back into.

“Uh...” Brandon swallows a lump in his throat, body tensing slightly, shifting slightly, feeling a surge of delight, arousal, feeling nervousness overcome him.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will comply. Unit H-BRA-5391’s failure to comply will result negatively on unit H-BRA-5391’s efficiency coefficient value and temporary shutdown of the neutral network responsible for your motor function.”

“I have a request!” Brandon exclaims, his heart about to jump out of his chest.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 does not make requests. Unit H-BRA-5391 will comply with the instructions given, otherwise unit H-BRA-5391 will be punished.”

“That’s the thing! I want to be in the punishment storage chamber.”

There is a moment of pause, Brandon breathing so heavily that his rubber cheeks bulge, nostrils flaring breathing deeply, hands would be shaking if it wasn’t for the spine attachment making adjustments to keep his movements smooth and perfect. At any moment he feels his body will drop like a sack of bricks, becoming limp and dead for disobeying. Fear filled his mind already, regretting for having questioned the machine.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will clarify. Punishment is for non-compliance. H-BRA-5391 will comply and be punished?”

“Ah, s-sort of. I like the tightness of it. It’s safe, secure, it’s hard to explain. I feel as if... I’m sorry. I shouldn’t resist. This is ruining my efficiency coefficient value. But I--”

“Silence. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods. The HUD no longer presents a location for him to go. Nothing for him to do. He simply stands there, before the pod, open, waiting, breathing in and out, in and out. Over half an hour passes before he thinks, *“Am I in trouble? Better yet. Why am I doing nothing. Am I already that well trained? That I can’t even think of walking from this spot? I’m just here. I can’t be that broken already. It’s only been... uh... I don’t know how long it’s been, it’s like time is irrelevant here... irrelevant.”* He swallows a lump in his throat, more time passing. Impossible to tell how much time is passing, but when the machine speaks again, a surge of excitement fills him.

“Units do not make requests.”

The words cut through him again, shoulders slumping.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will be permanently re-assigned to a punishment storage chamber till processing is fully completed.”

Brandon’s heart races, *“They are granting my request?”* he tenses slightly, “T-thank you.”

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to stricken unit H-BRA-5391’s self-referral from its external and internal communications.”

“W-what?”

“Does unit H-BRA-5391 require clarification? Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod if unit H-BRA-5391 requires clarification.”

Brandon nods.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will no longer use pronouns nor refer to themselves in anyway except when answering a direct question of unit H-BRA-5391’s name. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods and with that nod a new path highlights for him.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to its new storage chamber.”

Brandon walks down the path, *“It said internal and external communication. Does that mean my thoughts are being read? Wait, I just used a pronoun there. Damn it I did it again... and there again,”* he thinks, a shiver running down his spine.

“Excited? Am...” he mentally cuts himself off, *“Okay just think without those pronouns for now. Even if it doesn’t make any sense. It would be fine in that case right? Should. Not referring to a person... Not referring to a person. Not a person... thoughts being read? Or was it just to mess with my head. Damn there it is again. This is difficult. Wait why am I even doing it? Like an eager puppy wanting a treat.”*

He breathes deeply, taking those soft metallic footsteps, down the path laid before him, never deviating from it, while his mind trips over itself again and again. Over and over, *“If they can hear my thoughts How am I to think this over. Wait not think this over just simply do this? I never thought how much I refer to myself as I do now. And all this just to get that tight chamber? Is it that exciting? Wanted that much? Is this worth it? To get this experience? What is the reward? Is there any reward? Or... this just something desired?”*

Brandon feels the arousal build within him, yet the machinery attached to him prevents any visible sign of arousal, his length completely numb and unmoving, only connected to the tubes and wires so it can be drained when needed. Eventually he reaches the storage chamber which opens to him. He turns, backing up into, feet becoming magnetic once slipped into place, binding his feet into the chamber, arms slipping in next, head lowered, forced into a small cramped kneeling position, the breathing tubes shifted from the ceiling to the pod.

Once inside the chamber door closes, blocking his view of the outside world. Arms locked into place behind him, the reflection of the door revealing the void drone face and body. Wires attach to his rear, beginning to drain his waist fluids, the same processing done for his rear.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will vocal communication will be disabled while within the punishment storage chamber,” the machine explains, the sphere moves down, countless razor thin tendrils extend and contract, testing themselves before slipping into his mouth, penetrating through the rubber, but never breaking it. His mouth sealed shut, tongue restrained, wires pushing into his flesh to stimulate and control.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 will now receive supplementary nourishment,” it states, another tentacle comes down, the tapered tip slipping into his faceless rubber mouth, penetrating the rubber connecting to the gag, pushing forward till it was down the back of his throat, wires forcing him to swallow as the food is given.

“Not even able to eat without their aid. Can’t even swallow without them. Is them even allowed when referring to them? Wait, will they tell me that? Or would they not reveal if they

can read my thoughts or not. Is this what they do? Make me question myself? Question my thoughts? This is just more than I could have expected. Could have ever dreamed about,” Brandon thinks, breathing heavily through his nostrils.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 is an object. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods, breaking his line of thought, hearing those cold wonderful words speaking into his ears.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 desires to increase their efficiency coefficient value. Increasing stated value is important to unit H-BRA-5391. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod that unit H-BRA-5391 understands.”

Brandon nods, looking forward he sees his vanta-black void face. His void body, tightly bound, no wiggle room, nothing to look at. Simply staring, the feeding tentacle already pulled back leaving him there, waiting for the next time to be used. Leaving him wanting to be used. To break free from the monotony for staring at himself. This person of nothing, insignificant thing.

“How is this going to be done? Okay that was good. No pronouns there. I must...” Brandon mentally smacks himself, *“Damn it, not the way it should go. Slow. Relax. Nothing to do till I...”* Brandon breathes deeply through his nostrils, slowly exhaling, rubber cheeks bulging.

“Slow. Take it slow. If it is done slow, with steady calculated thought. It can be done. It will take a lot of work but... it can be done. If...just do it. Forgo those pronouns. They aren’t needed. Why is this so hot! Why does this excite... enthrall... feeling so alive. Feeling so... UT-KVI-0023. Is this what you had planned? You when referring to UT-KVI-0023 is okay right? It should be... wait. Now that I... damn it, did it again!” Brandon thinks, taking another slow deep breath, his thoughts broken by the machine speaking into his ear.

“Unit H-BRA-5391 follows instructions as instructed. Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod to confirm that unit H-BRA-5391 understands this.”

Brandon nods, a cold shiver realization came over him. *“This is how wyervins speak. I...”* Brandon mentally sighs, *“No recollection of them ever referring to themselves. Not that they ever made idle chatter either. UT-KVI-0023 never spoke without purpose. Without a reason. Calling what was said between us when I... spoke unconstructive communication. Hmm... Was this their purpose? To make... to be more like them? To think less? Less in terms of extra not needed thinking. This is becoming stressful... draining and it’s only been... I... damn it!”* He takes a deep breath, relaxing.

“Not sure how long it's been. Time is irrelevant here. Not like there is the normal day cycle. Or anything to do except when being used. When being commanded. Nothing changes,” Brandon thinks, feeling a slight longing for his time outside of his pod, being told what to do, commanded. Relaxing, yet exciting to be doing something, but now he’s back in the storage chamber, safe, secure, helpless. Heart races, spine tingles, posture kept perfectly still, with nothing but his mind, and the occasional words of the machine to break the monotony.

“Is this what unit H-BRA-5391 expected? Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod if yes.”

Brandon’s mind snaps back from his struggling thoughts, his repeated failed attempts to not refer to himself in the way that they wanted, his body shifting slightly at break of what was being said to him. It felt so... personal. He does nothing but stare at his nothingness of a face.

“Is this what unit H-BRA-5391 wanted? Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod if yes.”

It was personalized, spoken to him, the first sign that this... he simply nods. A surge of pleasure rushes over him, but he doesn’t react with arousal like he would have before, when he fantasized about this. Those days of pleasure stuck in a vac bed with a trusted friend. This was nothing like that, this was far better, superior. A weight rises off of him with this one strange realization, that this is *enjoyable* to him.

“Does unit H-BRA-5391 want more?”

Brandon froze at the words, *“That was never... but... this was never considered that I... damn it did that again. Focus Brandon, foc... name. Used my name... and that pronoun there. Wait. There was no way to confirm. Are they giving me time to think? Did it again. It might be easier to just reactionary think,”* Brandon thinks, his mind jumping through hoops, processing what he wanted.

“Is this what was wanted all along? UT-KVI-0023 did show me a side of wyervins that was never known to... at least was unknown to... well. What depth could this go? How much time is left? Or would this extend it? Can this be even refused? Is that even wanted? Not sure. Probably not... not wanting to refuse. Could this be a trick question? A test? Why would there be a test? This was never discussed either. UT-KVI-0023 please help. It can be useful to have such help right now. You were so confident even though you spoke with no emotions, the way you carried yourself. The way you helped me was...” Brandon breathed heavily, tensing, grunting, body shifting, squeaking, the vibrations through his body allowing him to hear anything at all, except his own quickened breath and speeding heartbeat. Staring straight ahead into that void of a face. Nothing there. Not even himself to be seen, lost in the darkness, that abyss, he is staring into the abyss for he is the abyss and it's impossible for him to blink.

“What kind of person wants this? To be trapped here like this? The idea that there is no escape. No way to be rescued. To be reduced to such an object. To being a simple cog in a wheel. This is the darkest of fantasies of dehumanization. If anyone found out, that would have been the end. Sent in for psychiatric help. Taken off the front lines. Told that there was something wrong. But they don’t understand. They would only make up reasons why this... to feel this way is bad, wrong, not what a normal person should feel. Normal people don’t want to be made helpless. Normal people don’t want to be humanized. Normal people don’t want to be made into simply sheep to follow a shepherd. Normal people want to live, not just exist. But without this. Without this thrill. Without this delight. Without knowing what it is like to have it all taken away from you. Life is not worth having. Never knowing how good it is to have all of those things till they are taken away from you. Forcefully. At least that is what is...” Brandon

stops his train of thought, not wanting to use an unnecessary and ‘useless’ pronoun there for the object that he is allowing himself to become.

“Sure, others don’t need that. Don’t want it. That is understandable. But not everyone’s the same. If everyone was the same well... we’d be machines. No, that’s not true either. These machines. They are different. Unique. UT-KVI-0023, you showed me that when we got back to the ship. The time spent with you was unforgettable. The rest of your kind weren’t so bad either, but... why is this even a thing? A thought? Why hasn’t it asked me if this is wanted or not? What is with the delay? Come on... damn. Perhaps the thoughts aren’t being read. Or maybe it’s just a matter of time. To wait. Letting this all play out in... the mind.”

“No escape. Nowhere to go. No hope of rescue. This part of the galaxy isn’t even chartered thanks to the wyervins control. What was seen? What was discovered? They won’t let that go. Was that their plan from the beginning? Never did they intend to... or did they know from the beginning that this is just how deep the rabbit hole that... was wanted. It’s obvious something like this is dark. Disturbing even. But it is what is wanted. It won’t leave...god fuck damn it its so hard to keep thinking this way. This won’t leave my fucking thoughts. I feel this so bad. I want it. I fucking want it. To go down all the way. Not because I won’t to forgo my responsibilities. Not because I want to give up who I was. I like me, kinks and fucking all of it. But my life was empty. Sure. I had friends, family, loved ones, but it felt all hollow. Yet you. UT-KVI-0023, a cold heartless machine. Blunt and honest in ways I could never fathom. You didn’t care about me. I know you didn’t. Just a machine made, one of countless others, all like you. But that didn’t bother you. Concern you. You are sentient but your lack of will never bothered you. You had a purpose. A reason to exist. What was my reason to exist? To fuck and have kids? To serve my country? My race? To do what I was told by those who came before me. In the end I’m not that different from you. And that is what scares me. This fucking terrifies me. Not going back. To be one of those broken people if I am rescued. I’m not even sure if I want to be rescued.”

Brandon takes a deep breath, working to calm himself, the silence was deafening. The machines have yet to speak to him, forcing him to continue his line of thought. Preventing him from tumbling down further and further, preventing him from realizing just how much means to him.

“No, fuck that’s a lie. I’ve just been lying to myself all this fucking time. If you can read my thoughts, forgive me I am breaking what you asked. I will be working on it but at this moment. I just can’t. I can’t do it. I need to focus on what I want to think, what I want to say to you wyervins. Just how free you wyervins are. Not physically, or mentally. You are bound to the laws of physics. Bound to your programing, bound to your purpose, but you are free to be yourselves! Free to not worry what others think. The chains I put on myself to hide what I’ve liked, loved, enjoyed all this time. To be concerned about what OTHERS think of me. It’s draining you know? Well maybe not. You don’t have that problem. When the phrase bondage sets you free. I meant it, but what scares me is this is way deeper than simple uncontrolled fetish or kink. Just something to get off on. I feel that this is opening myself, my soul to you, heartless

soulless machines. I know you don't care about any of this. This is just part of what you do. To break organics down. To make them into puppets with no will of their own. No agency. No control. No worries. No concerns except what is expected of them. Just material being used for whatever purpose that has been decided for them. It's life distilled to the very basics, taken to the extremes, made clear to everyone else, and that scares them. It scares me. I've never been so terrified. Yet so excited."

Brandon swallows a lump in his throat, his eyes trying to water but the contacts placed over them disabled such capabilities, his unblinking eyes always kept clean, vision crystal clear.

"What can I say at this point that has not already been said? You've liberated me from one track and placed me on another that is exactly the same, yet better. Others will surely disagree with me. And rightfully so, but I am not other people. I am not normal, but what is normal except the expectations placed upon you. That would make you UT-KVI-0023 normal, but you were nothing like what I expected. You don't care about this pathetic human, placing itself in a position that he is now. His own self destruction. His own character assassination. This is over. I won't be who I was when I was picked up in that bar. My body screams at me as how wrong this is. How scary it is. You could adjust my air to make me as calm and docile as a baby kitten, but you don't. You WANT me to feel this. You want me to have these thoughts. You've calculated all of this. Nothing is left to chance, every option already considered, possibility thought of, what ifs played out countless times. I lost the game that the board of life that I was put upon since the moment I was born."

Brandon takes another slow deep breath, slowing himself for a second, collecting his thoughts, *"And what scares me more than the consequences of these actions? The realization that those who genuinely care about me will never see me again? The hearts that I've broken. The worry and concern I've surely caused? That I'm a selfish bastard who'd do it all over again to get to this point. I want this. With every fiber of my being, suppressing my animal instinct to get the fuck out of here, simply allowing me, the REAL ME to be set free. I may be some strange anomaly to you machines. I don't give a fuck. I want to be like you. To join you. This is more than just some kind of misplaced love or some mushy shit like that. This is more than that. More than just my sexual impulses. This is a definition of who I am as a person. And it's nothing. I'm nothing. And I am to be nothing. I want to be my own nothing of my own choosing. I don't know if it is even possible, but I want to be like you. In particular UT-KVI-0023. Not that you machines can hear this... and even so you won't let me know. I don't even know if UT-KVI-0023 knows I'm here. Cares if I am here? Does it matter? No... not really. I'd do this anyway. Not for anyone but me. Please. Let me have this. Let me have it all. I want it more than anything."*

Brandon pants heavily through his nostrils, chest rising and falling, body kept at a constant comfortable temperature, adjusted for his heated thoughts, rising emotions. His only response is silence. A deafening silence that leaves all that he thought sinking into his mind. Mind bubbling over with emotions, processing it all, reading through his own realization just what he's said, to the one person who needed to hear it the most... himself.

"Unit H-BRA-5391 wanted? Unit H-BRA-5391 will proceed to nod if yes."

When the phrase broke the silence, his heart skipped a beat, feeling like he died and like a phoenix he's rising from the ashes. Without hesitation. Without thinking. Without even rushing. He solemnly nods. The tethers holding him in place adjust, forcing him to focus more on his simple featureless smooth face. No indication who he is, he was. All he sees before him is the object they want him to be. The object that he wants to be. Mentally exhausted from all he has said, he relaxes, mind blinking, simply staring at the object that he is.