

SOPHIA: (To phone, a little sarcastically) OK, bye then.

ERIS stops videoing her, SOPHIA doesn't see what she's doing.

VIDEO: SOPHIA makes a call to Violet Rutherford.

Violet, I'm sending you a video. Michaela wants to check it out when she gets into the office in about 20 minutes.

LILITH: Sorry, we're tidying up the labs.

SOPHIA: (A little irritated) Michaela doesn't want them visiting the labs. We'll just be showing them the video. Can you start watching it now? I need to know if there's anything in there that's wildly wrong. I'll be there in 10. The investors are coming at 9, so we'll not have time to make changes.

LILITH: (Resignedly) Fine, we'll take a look. See you soon.

Sophia ends the call and then sends the email with the video.

ERIS: One long black, one flat white, extra shot. My advice – completely free and unbiased – is that no matter how busy you are, you should always stop and take a moment to commune with the first sip of coffee. It's like a small gift of joy from the gods. And that moment can change everything!

SOPHIA: My advice to you – free and unbiased – is that you'll never be successful if you waste time daydreaming in cafes. If you think making Tiktoks is going to make you successful, you'll never move on. You need to work, work, work! (To **VÖR**) Let's go.

VÖR: You go ahead, I'll just get some coffees and muffins for the team. I'm guessing they headed in early.

SOPHIA: We don't have the budget for that.

VÖR: This is on me. See you soon.

LIGHTS down.

LIGHTS up in a simple meeting room, chairs around a table. Whiteboard. SOPHIA stands still at the door for a moment, apparently contemplating her next move.

LILITH and **ULLR** are in lab coats. *They are sat watching the projected screen and we see the end of the video she has made. It focuses on her competence, how she brought order to technical chaos and her ability to lead into the future. They don't notice that SOPHIA has arrived and are groaning and exclaiming things like 'bullshit'. It ends.*

SOPHIA: (From the door) What do you think?

Surprised, they turn around to see SOPHIA. Lilith stands.

LILITH: I think it might be safe to say that we're all disappointed. (Nod from **ULLR**) You don't talk about the science, how it works, who made it. The team that's been working on this for 10 years.

SOPHIA gets increasingly agitated and angry as the scene progresses.

SOPHIA: I just need to be sure that there's nothing wildly wrong. This is being shown to the investors, so we can't be making claims about the tech that aren't true.

ULLR: There's nothing in there that wasn't already cleared for the press releases. But you do make it look easier and faster to scale up and launch than what we've planned for...than we can actually do.

SOPHIA: So it's OK? (*Silence, shrugs...A moment*) I know it's bit focused on my role, but on the science side of things, Michaela, as Chair, was very clear that we show how we have focus and discipline and don't burn investor money on side projects. A story about 10 years of research that still isn't finished would put them right off.

ULLR: But we do have side projects in the plans and budgets.

SOPHIA: Yes, but they won't understand why we need them.

LILITH: Not if we don't tell them about them!

SOPHIA: Look, I want to talk about the science too. But Michaela's right on this. One minute into talking about the science and they're asleep. The investors aren't nerds like us. They're just interested in how fast they're going to make money. They don't want us spending anything at all on research, let alone what we're planning. We keep that in the plans, but won't present it.

ULLR: There's no way we'll have the pilot ready in 6 months. We're miles off.

SOPHIA: What I'm saying to them is that if they give us *additional* money, we'll be able to bring the pilot forwards.

LILITH: We haven't talked about that! You can't... it doesn't work like that!

SOPHIA: They always ask 'how can we make this go faster?'. So that's what I've prepared for. And it will mean more money for the research.

LILITH: Jesus! We don't have time to make changes, do we?

SOPHIA: No, they'll be here soon. (*A moment*) And if there's nothing...

LILITH: (*Interrupting*) I still think they should come and meet the team. We're all ready. But it's your choice.

Awkward silence, then VÖR enters with a tray of coffees and muffins.

SOPHIA: Perfect timing! Thanks for your feedback, team. We won't be doing a tour, so you can all relax. I got you coffee and muffins to say thanks for coming in early.

The team exits, leaving SOPHIA sat at the board table.

LIGHTS fade to a 25% spot on SOPHIA.

She starts off looking happy but she fiddles with a pen, betraying her agitation.

LIGHTS down.

LIGHTS up to SOPHIA, OGHMA, ULLR (as lawyer), TYCHE sat around the table.

The meeting has been going on for a few hours. There are papers scattered, an empty jug of water with glasses. The whiteboard is grubby from being erased badly a few times and has business numbers and diagrams on it. ULLR has different mannerisms to before to make it clear that it is a different character.

TYCHE: (*As if continuing a conversation*) Yes, let's wait for her. She should be here by now.

OGHMA: It's a shame she couldn't join the meeting.