

NUMINA STAGE

ULLR: Working hard is what counts!
 OGHMA: Ignore her and leave.
 TIW: Calm. You are calm.
 TYCHE: Tell her to fuck off!
 LILITH: (To VÖR) Get us some coffee and cakes would you.
 ULLR: Hot chocolate for me.
 TYCHE: Choc chip MUFFINS!
 OGHMA: We don't have the money for that.
 LILITH: Oh come one! Whose side are you on?
 ULLR: I need chocolate!

LILITH: (To VÖR) Thank you, thank you, thank you!
 ULLR: You're a star.

ERIS comes in and sits by WHITE. TIW sits and stares forwards, seething. The others settle and watch him, waiting. After an awkward pause, as if explaining to kids...

TIW: Next. Additional unnecessary investor meeting causing unnecessary stress for her (indicates WHITE without looking). More than anything else, she needs stability. Change causes stress. If we follow the plan, we will give her stability. That is all we are trying to do. But some of you are changing things, causing her stress. This is the reason she is still here.

ERIS: No it's not, she's...
 TIW: SHUT UP! I will not listen... WE will not listen to a single word. You pretend to care for her and then screw things up on purpose. You will now fix this. The meeting will be short. You will not offer to invest and you will leave. Then we will have the Evergreen meeting.

OGHMA: I have sent a reply to her email offering to meet.

TIW: Good. Let's get it over with.

 Board room... no main office. We'll have the reaction to her

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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.

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video and her assuming control. Saves doing that before the Evergreen meeting.

Everyone!

TYCHE, ULLR, OGHMA and LILITH pull on lab coats, head the short way onto stage and sit waiting.

Lights.

TIW: You have arrived at the office but have no memory of the drive there. You are expecting the team to hate the video, but are determined to use it as you know you are right.

TIW is focused on SOPHIA. VÖR and ERIS appear to chat quietly while watching TIW and the other side. ERIS soothes WHITE who stops grumbling.

WHITE groans at their response, ERIS soothes her again.

TIW: Everything is as it should be, you expected this. Assert your authority and reassure them that this way is best. And Blame Michaela - make it her fault that they've been taken out. You are not to blame.

WHITE stirs again at LILITH'S response. TIW turns to look at her and sees ERIS quietly talking to her.

TIW: (Quickly to SOPHIA) Carry on, stand up to them. You are now on autopilot.

What in the nine hells are you doing? Taking over the cafe, setting up whole new scenes?

ERIS: The plan - your plan - was for me to make her feel important. For me to support the BS that you've got her believing.

REAL WORLD STAGE

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 she 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. (ULLR nods) 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.

Quietly and overlapping with Numina
SOPHIA: So it's OK? (Silence, shrugs...A moment) I know it's bit

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TIW: Not how we agreed.

ERIS: I don't remember agreeing to anything. You told me what to do. I improvised, she feels important. Look at her, she's all puffed up and making shit up about how important she is.

TIW: She's not making things up - everything she's saying is true.

ERIS: Sure, she half believes it's true. But she (indicates WHITE) does not.

WHITE is slumped, shaking her head slowly, quietly, holding her tummy lightly.

TIW: She'll be fine once we're through this. We'll get the money, everything will settle down into a normal routine and then... she'll be fine. We'll let her out.

ERIS: We'll let her out? Just like that. We'll get the money, park her in a life of endless meetings and networking events, and then she'll be fine?

TIW: Exactly. It's stable, predictable. WHITE whimpers at Sophia's approach, TIW and ERIS look at her.

ERIS: You actually think that would work? Nerds like us? Did you tell her to say that?!

TIW: She needs stability. Not being able to pay people, thinking that the whole thing is going to collapse... it's stressful.

ERIS: That's not what she's stressed about!

TIW: Of course it is!

ERIS: OK, on the surface, yes. Maybe. But that's not why she's stuck there. This stuff (waves at scene on other side) is nothing. Maybe a bit irritating for you and me, but we're not going to deal with this (waves at WHITE) by doing that (points to SOPHIA).

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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

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TIW: That is the plan we agreed. You agreed to it.

ERIS: I wasn't paying much attention during that meeting. Even if I was, I admit that I'd probably have agreed with you, with your plan. But now... I've realised you're wrong. Everything's backwards, it's fucked up.

TIW: The plan is fine. It is what we all agreed and we're going to stick to it. We will work together, we'll get the investment and we'll get her settled into a successful life. That will bring everything into balance and settle her (indicating **WHITE**) down.

ERIS: You don't have a clue, do you?

TIW: What? (Looks over) Lights to 25... you are feeling good, you took control, you removed potential distractions, you are in charge.

ERIS: (Realisation hits) You have no fucking idea why she's here! (Indicates **WHITE**).

WHITE gets increasingly agitated as SOPHIA sits at the table thinking. This is because WHITE reacts negatively to being controlled / controlling. The team returns and stand back watching. ULLR has a clipboard and is running through a checklist of how SOPHIA currently feels, taking in comments from all of the team.

TIW: I... I have no idea?! (Sees the other side) Shit, Ty, Og, Ullr, you're back on. You (to **ERIS**)...just stick to the plan. Keep it short, get Rust out, prepare for tomorrow. She will need a business plan with spreadsheets, KPIs, and... and anything else you can come up with to show Evergreen and keep her (indicates **WHITE**) from messing things up again. (At **WHITE**'s agitation) What's wrong with her now?! Lights! Team meeting. Now.

LIGHTS down.

LIGHTS up to **TIW** leaning in to watch the other side. **LILITH** is bored. **WHITE** is lying

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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.

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*on the floor, like she's been worn down. **ERIS** is just about to go on. She has a jacket on.*

TIW: (To **ERIS**) Tell me the plan.

ERIS: (Bored litany) I am a flaky investor. I have a track record of success with investing in start ups but insist on controlling the companies I invest in. I offer her too little and ask for full control - an offer she will refuse.

TIW: Then she will present her plan to Evergreen and get the money she needs.

ERIS: And you believe that will sort her out (indicates **WHITE**)?

TIW: No... Yes! Maybe. That comes later. She gets the money, gets the company running properly, gets a team around her, gets a stable life without the fear of having to live under a bridge. That'll sort our her anxiety.

ERIS: So you think she (**WHITE**) is here because she (**SOPHIA**) is scared of not having money?

TIW: And all of the misery and uncertainty and fear that comes with that, yes, of course! We discussed this, you agreed.

ERIS: (Looking between **TIW** and **WHITE**). Yes, I did, didn't I?

TIW: Keep it short. Board room. Positions now.

OGHMA, **TYCHE** and **ULLR** head to the other side. **ERIS** sits with **WHITE**.

TIW: Lights. Action

They watch quietly.

LIGHTS dim slowly to 50%

REAL WORLD STAGE

Back to normal volume

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.*