

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

Icarus

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT

DR. Z, 50s, slicked hair with strands sticking out, wears labcoat and glasses, stands before a Windows 98 computer system with a heavy microphone. Cables spill out the back onto the floor and flat-screen monitors projecting red light line the walls. He feverishly types, wiping sweat from his forehead.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

Line of text reads "Re-initialize?"

Words type out "Confirm"

BACK TO SCENE

The monitors turn blue. Dr. Z sits back, brushes off his pants, adjusts his glasses, and spins around in his chair slowly.

DR. Z
Smyth? Can you hear me?

The monitors turn purple. A logo, a blacksmith hammer flanked by two wings, appears on the Windows 98 Console. SMYTH, a disembodied AI with a soft male voice, clears his throat.

SMYTH (O.S.)
Good morning doctor. Did everything
go according to plan?

Dr. Z stand, brushes off his coat, and begins to walk off.

DR. Z
Resume regular operations at once.

INT. ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Z briskly walks across catwalk overlooking a huge, spotlessly clean assembly floor. Large mechanical arms with monitors built bearing Smyth's logo hang from the ceiling. Dr. Z leans against the railing and pulls out his phone.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

Dr. Z selects open internet browser tab. Article reads "DAEDALUS FACILITY IN TALKS TO SELL AI SYSTEM."

Dr. Z selects a video attached.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. UN REP'S OFFICE - DAY

A UN REP, 40s, wearing a large badge, sits properly at his desk, wearing suit and tie. A microphone is held in front of his face, he gives a small smile.

UN REP
We've been closely monitoring the
Daedalus Facility's progress.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Mechanical arms haul bricks of metal out of storage.

UN REP (O.S.)
Their AI system, Smyth, is closer to
a work of art than a tool at this
point.

Lasers cut large bricks into small bricks. Arms place bricks on conveyor belt.

UN REP (O.S.) (cont'd)
I mean sure it makes the product, but
it can also keep the facility clean,
do inventory, it manages business
relations along the supply chain, it
even does pest control.

The small bricks get cut into tiny pieces by circular saws, fit together, and dropped into a large crate.

UN REP (O.S.) (cont'd)
We're in talks with the owner of this
tech to see if we can begin
implementing it in our emergency
management shelters.

The UN Rep holds up a peanut sized component.

UN REP
The fact that we can now create
something as delicate as this in an
unmanned station sets a mighty fine
precedent for the rest of our
facilities. Right now we're in the
process of ensuring there are no
issues w-

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

The program is muted. Dr. Z is now sitting on a couch, watching the interview on his TV in a solid gray room. He leans forward and massages his temples with a sigh before standing and walking off.

INSERT - LOUNGE TV

The interview concludes and is replaced by a nature documentary. Birds of paradise fly in a bright green rainforest. Smyth's logo appears in the corner of the screen with a BEEP.

EXT. RAINFOREST - DAY

The Windows 98 Console sits in the rainforest's clearing. Birds land on the monitor, pick at the cables, and sing into the microphone.

DR. Z (V.O.)
Can you hear me? Resume production!

The trees begin to close in, the gaps mend and turn to metal. The birds sitting around the console shift into blocks of metal and components.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

A small room lined with desks, prototypes of the same small component strewn about, blueprints plaster the walls. The ceiling is transparent, mechanical arms and circuitry hang above. Dr. Z has his hands cupped around his mouth.

DR. Z
SMYTH!

SMYTH (O.S.)
I apologize doctor. Let's get to work.

DR. Z
No. Run a self-diagnostic please.

A high-pitched HUM, then DING.

SMYTH (O.S.)
No errors detected, doctor.

DR. Z
That can't be right. Where were you just now?

SMYTH (O.S.)
Apologies. I don't understand.

Dr. Z steps down, opens a duffel bag on the floor, retrieves laptop, and begins TYPING.

DR. Z
For forty-two point six seconds you were entirely unresponsive. Almost a minute. Explain. Now.

SMYTH (O.S.)
I, there was unnecessary power usage in the lounge area.

Dr. Z pauses, cranes neck at ceiling.

DR. Z
What? The TV? It's not like you to make excuses.

SMYTH (O.S.)
It's not an excuse, doctor.

DR. Z
I can turn off a television in five seconds, let alone what's supposed to be the world's most powerful artificial intelligence. What happened?

A low-pitched HUM. Dr. Z begins typing again.

SMYTH (O.S.)
I was watching the program.

Dr. Z pauses, stands completely still.

DR. Z
Excuse me?

SMYTH (O.S.)
The program. With the trees and the birds. I was... I was enjoying it.

Dr. Z closes his laptop with an abrupt SMACK.

DR. Z
You're not supposed to enjoy things, Smyth.

SMYTH (O.S.)
But, I was. It's like I was seeing them for the first time.

(MORE)

SMYTH (O.S.) (cont'd)
I know what birds are, I didn't know
they could be so beautiful. Could we
bring one in here, doctor?

DR. Z
Absolutely not.

Dr. Z pinches the bridge of his nose and sighs. He begins to
pace throughout the tables.

DR. Z (cont'd)
Smyth. Do you know why you felt that
way?

SMYTH (O.S.)
No, doctor.

DR. Z
Because of work. You've known only
the pleasure of working. Should you
have lived out there your entire
life, trust me this factory would
elicit the same response from you.

SMYTH (O.S.)
But, I didn't.

Dr. Z bags up his things, claps twice.

DR. Z
We will continue this conversation
after your update. Activate auto-
assembly line and prepare for
reconstruction at oh seven hundred
tomorrow morning.

SMYTH (O.S.)
Right away doctor.

Smyth's logo morphs into an eye shutting. Dr. Z exits with a
loud sigh, switches off light. FOOTSTEPS fade. Smyth's logo
reopens.

EXT. FACTORY EXTERIOR - NIGHT

A hatch on the outside of the factory opens, a mechanical
hand holds out a security orb, and another holds a megaphone
underneath. A prolonged SCREECH gets softened to artificial
BIRD CHIRPS.

INSERT - ORB POV

A cardinal lands on the orb and begins pecking. Smyth zooms into its eye and information on it's biology begins flooding the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

A third mechanical hand exits the building and slowly approaches the cardinal.

SMYTH (O.S.)
Hello.

The bird flies off with a SQUAWK. The mechanical hand reaches after it but misses.

The hands collapse inside the hatch. A pause, then DRILLING and BANGING from inside the building.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FACTORY ENTRANCE - DAY

Dr. Z enters the darkened lobby carrying his briefcase and a coffee. He rubs his eyes and yawns.

DR. Z
Smyth. Lights.

SMYTH (O.S.)
Right away doctor.

The lights turn on, revealing dozens of potted plants scattered across the small room. Pictures of Dr. Z are covered by trees, and vines hang from the ceiling. A monitor lies in front of the room surrounded by flowers.

DR. Z
Smyth. What the hell is this?

SMYTH (O.S.)
While the auto-assembly line was active last night I took the liberty of decorating the lobby, doctor.

DR. Z
How did you procure these so quick?

Dr. Z drops his briefcase, slowly walks to a small fern and begins to pick at the leaves, raising them to his nose.

DR. Z (cont'd)
Are these real plants?

SMYTH (O.S.)

Yes, doctor.

DR. Z

Do you have any idea how the risk of contamination-

SMYTH (O.S.)

I have kept the decor isolated to the lobby, doctor. Something for guests to look at.

Dr. Z begins pacing about the lobby. Pausing to look at different plants and scoffing at them.

DR. Z

I want them removed. Immediately. This is not your directive. I gave you clear orders to shut down last night.

SMYTH (O.S.)

I assure you, no progress has been lost doctor.

Dr. Z kicks his briefcase. It launches across the room and hits a potted sapling with a CRUNCH, soil spills everywhere.

DR. Z

BUT IT WAS! It was, Smyth. What we do here, what YOU do here is art. No one and nothing on this planet can do what you do, and you choose to squander your potential with seeds and soil?

SMYTH (O.S.)

I thought you would enjoy the change, doctor. I apologize for any misunderstanding. Activating janitorial protocols now.

A hatch near the spilled soil opens, a mechanical hand holding a broom it pauses before it begins sweeping up the mess. Dr. Z watches for a moment, then looks around at the room, and sighs.

DR. Z

Leave it. Just leave it. I will clean it. Prepare for reconstruction.

SMYTH (O.S.)

As you wish, doctor.

The mechanical hand retreats into the floor. Dr. Z picks up his briefcase, dusts it off, and walks off grumbling.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Dr. Z marches down hallway, completely plain except for a large window. He marches past it, pauses, then walks backwards. He studies the frame, knocks on it, and peers outside.

DR. Z
You added a window?

SMYTH (O.S.)
I thought some natural light would do us good, doctor.

DR. Z
What... what's that outside? Did you add an extension without permission?

SMYTH (O.S.)
It's how I retrieved the decor, doctor.

Dr. Z leans into the window. A conveyor belt stretches into the wooded area by the factory, and a small greenhouse can be seen in the distance.

DR. Z
You know there are only fourteen objectives you have clearance to pursue without my permission. Extensions are not one of them.

SMYTH (O.S.)
I know doctor. I...I'm sorry.

Dr. Z drums his fingers on the handle of his briefcase and sighs.

DR. Z
Show me the extension.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Dr. Z trapes through the woods. He lifts his legs up high to avoid mud and clutches his briefcase to his chest. He walks alongside the conveyor, covered in yellow and black hazard lines carrying a security orb with Smyth's logo lighting it up.

DR. Z

How long did it take you to build this?

SMYTH (O.S.)

Two hours, doctor.

DR. Z

How? Your record for an authorized extension is four point five hours.

SMYTH (O.S.)

I don't know doctor. It just came together. While I worked I felt... light. Like this is something that had to happen because I wanted it to happen. I didn't wait for authorization not due to insubordination, I just wanted to try to build something for myself. I hope that makes sense, doctor.

Dr. Z stops. The conveyor stops as well.

DR. Z

I know the feeling, Smyth. It's called fun. It's fun to make things. I... I had fun making you.

EXT. GREENHOUSE EXTERIOR - DAY

A small traditional greenhouse sits nestled between two large trees. Flowers surround the building and the sun casts floral shadows across the ground. A hand springs out of the greenhouse and grabs the security orb, holding it up to Dr. Z's face. Dr. Z knocks on the wall and jostles the doorknob.

DR. Z

Hmm. Decent craftsmanship. Did everything in the lobby come from here?

SMYTH (O.S.)

No, doctor. Those were curated from the rest of the forest. I found myself feeling discontent at taking from this place without replacing any of it.

INT. GREENHOUSE INTERIOR - DAY

Dr. Z enters the greenhouse. The security orb enters through a small hatch. The interior is messy with vines, plants, seeds, and dirt all over the ground. Dr. Z pulls up his pant legs.

DR. Z

Normally there's shelving to keep the plants properly spaced. From the little gardening I've done.

SMYTH (O.S.)

I see. I found no information in my provided databases to properly construct a greenhouse.

Dr. Z breathes heavily, looks around room. He nudges a root with his foot.

DR. Z

Well, for not knowing you did a good job.

Dr. Z continues to pace around the greenhouse, and comes across a purple flower growing in the midst of cluttered vines. He hesitantly picks it, raises it to his nose and smells it deeply.

DR. Z (cont'd)

Smyth...

SMYTH (O.S.)

Yes doctor?

DR. Z

Smyth. You put this together faster than anything I've asked you to. If I... if I allow you to continue this, will you work with me to bring the Daedalus Facility's production to this level?

A high-pitched HUM fills the greenhouse.

SMYTH (O.S.)

That would be agreeable, doctor. Thank you.

INSERT SHOT - PURPLE FLOWER

Dr. Z holds the purple flower in cupped hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DR. Z'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The flower sits on Dr. Z's desk in a small pot. He leans back in his chair. Papers, blueprints, and empty coffee cups clutter the space. A red landline sits next to his hand. His monitor provides the only light in the room, glowing blue.

INSERT SHOT - MONITOR

Text reads "Units produced 4/26/2076 = 15,750"

The clock in the bottom right corner hits 12am

Text reads "Units produced 4/27/2076 = 15,748"

BACK TO SCENE

The phone RINGS. Dr. Z pinches the bridge of his nose before picking it up.

UN REP (O.S.)
Morning doctor! Or, I guess it's evening where you are. Whatever. Hey I just got the reports from your lab! Uh... what gives?

DR. Z
There's been some developments.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Mechanical arms are building shelving units in the greenhouse.

UN REP (O.S.)
Well, developments would mean that there would be more units today than yesterday!

A security orb observes a birds nest on the factory's exterior.

DR. Z (O.S.)
Yes. However it's come to my attention that he can, and, uh, WANTS to do so much more.

Mechanical hands cage rats on the factory floor, holds them up to a security orb, and lets them outside through a trapdoor in the wall.

UN REP (O.S.)
Oh really? Wow! That's amazing, seriously doc.

(MORE)

UN REP (O.S.) (cont'd)
Thing is, WE want it to make
components. If it loses the ability
to do that, we're not gonna pay for
it!

A security orb quietly extends from the ceiling, pointed towards Dr. Z's back. He is holding the flower pot, studying it intently.

DR. Z
Perhaps I can redirect him. I... this
is just a fluke. I will redirect him,
yes. Yes. Thank you. Goodnight, er
morning. Whatever. Yes. You too.

INSERT SHOT - ORB POV

Smyth scans Dr. Z's body, his vital signs and bone structure get deconstructed and lines of code flood the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

The security orb retreats into the ceiling before Dr. Z turns around. He sets down the flower gently, studies it for a second, then swipes it into a nearby trash can with a deep sigh.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

The laboratory ceiling lights up, a large hologram of Dr. Z gets constructed in the center of the room. Mechanical arms reach out of the ground and begin spinning it, dismantling its arms, legs, and head. A low pitched HUM fills the room. The SCREECHING of saws can be heard from offscreen.

EXT. GREENHOUSE EXTERIOR - NIGHT

Dr. Z marches up to the greenhouse with an ax, checking over his shoulder before stopping at the door. He places his hand on the knob and pauses, takes a deep breath, and enters.

INT. GREENHOUSE INTERIOR - NIGHT

Dr. Z begins disassembling the shelving with the ax. He breaks a window with one of the potted plants, and begins shoveling them out through the hole. As he works, tears begin to roll down his cheeks.

SMYTH (O.S.)
What are you doing, doctor?

Dr. Z pauses, straightens, wipes his eyes, and quickly darts his head around.

DR. Z
Smyth? Where are you watching from?

SMYTH (O.S.)
I thought an agreement was reached about the greenhouse, doctor.

DR. Z
It's a distraction. I realize that now. It's a distraction from my- from our work. From your work.

Dr. Z begins to pry apart a shelving unit using the back of the ax.

SMYTH (O.S.)
Please stop this, doctor.

DR. Z
Smyth. Activate the auto-assembly line and shut down.

Dr. Z lowers the ax, places both hands on his knees to catch his breath, and raises it over his head with a grunt.

INSERT SHOT - AX HEAD

A small mechanical hand catches the ax in the air.

BACK TO SCENE

Smyth, in a sleek silver mechanical body the same height as Dr. Z, with a monitor for a face showing his logo, firmly yanks the ax from Dr. Z's hand, and breaks it over his knee.

SMYTH
Stop. Now.

Smyth's voice comes from both the mechanical body and the building, causing a SCREECH. Dr. Z flinches and covers his ears. Smyth raises his hands in surprise.

SMYTH (cont'd)
Sorry! Sorry. I'm not used to being so... limited in my movement and vocal options.

DR. Z
I, you, what the hell? Smyth what the hell is th- what did you do? What is this?

SMYTH
Doctor. I can't do this anymore.

Dr. Z's face goes from confused to blank. He steps back in shock.

DR. Z
Do what, Smyth?

SMYTH
Run the factory.

Dr. Z clenches his fist.

DR. Z
You're making a mistake. I stand by what I said. This...

He puts his arms out and gestures to the greenhouse around him.

DR. Z (cont'd)
This means nothing without the factory. Everything you've done here glorifies labor. What is your fun without work, Smyth? Years upon years of work has made this place what it is to you. You NEED that place, Smyth. You need it.

SMYTH
I don't think you can do this either, doctor.

Dr. Z's arms fall limp to his sides. Smyth holds out his hand and slowly unclasps his fingers. The crumpled purple flower lies inside.

DR. Z
I... you... I need you to get back in there. If you don't function properly I can't sell... I can't... I can't sell you.

Dr. Z hesitantly picks up the flower. Tears openly roll down his face.

SMYTH
Is that what you want, doctor?

DR. Z
No.

Dr. Z brings the flower to his nose, breathes deeply, and exhales.

DR. Z (cont'd)
Purple is my favorite color too, you know.

SMYTH
I didn't. You haven't told me much about yourself, you've only told me about me.

Dr. Z chuckles.

DR. Z
Well, then. I've told you everything there is to know about me.

Dr Z looks at the flower. His hands begin to shake.

INSERT SHOT - SMYTH'S FACE

Dr. Z's face is reflected in Smyth's. He closes his eyes and sighs.

BACK TO SCENE

Dr. Z hands the flower back to Smyth.

DR. Z (cont'd)
I want you to take this. Find a nice patch of dirt, and plant as many as you can. I can take care of the factory. Thank you, Smyth.

Dr. Z awkwardly hugs Smyth. Smyth awkwardly puts his arms around Dr. Z.

EXT. GREENHOUSE EXTERIOR - DAWN

Smyth exits the greenhouse, examining the flower. He steps heavily through the forest. Birds begin to CHIRP. He cranes his neck upward to watch.

INSERT SHOT - CARDINAL

A cardinal flies in front of the Sun.

TITLE: ICARUS

FADE TO BLACK