

A NEW DAY

a ten-minute play
by
Britt A Willis

brittawillis.com

brittanyawillis@gmail.com
Washington, DC 20008

CHARACTERS

- DAY: they/them, practically still a kid, mostly alone in the far reaches of the universe
- COMPUTER: it/its, a computer and really fine with that
- MAN: he/him, a father looking for his long lost partner and child

SETTING

An unknown planet, still figuring out what it is

TIME

Post-post-post-space travel

DAY sits on the side of a canyon, above a cave carved into the canyon. A few panels, similar to solar panels, are set up behind DAY. Everything is reddish, desert-like.

Their legs dangle over the steep drop as they stare out over a slow sunrise, drinking water from an unfamiliarly shaped bowl and crunching on some food in their hand. They seem aware of a presence - our presence? - but not concerned about it. They eat.

Once they're done, they turn, pick up a small pebble, and drop it off the side of the cliff, watching until they can't see it fall any longer. They wait. It flies back up and they catch it, smiling. This routine is specific but absent-minded, choreographed but not dance-like.

They head down into the cave. The panels on the cliff connect down via cords to a computer filling the cave. It seems to have been torn from... a wall? A spaceship? There are a couple of sleeping areas. The space feels lived in. Small trinkets, some metal, some plant-like, sit around and on top of the computer - little decorations, little gifts.

DAY taps the computer twice, which blinks on in response.

COMPUTER

Hello, Day

DAY

I think there'll be rain in a couple days time.

COMPUTER

Yes

You are never wrong

DAY

Flatterer. I'm heading to the new outcropping of trees in the east today. They've stayed put for eight days, I think they're permanent.

Suddenly - a rumble. COMPUTER shakes a little and some trinkets fall.

COMPUTER

Fuck!

The rumble subsides.

DAY
Computer

COMPUTER
Yes, Day

DAY
What was that word?

COMPUTER
Fuck

DAY
What does it mean?

COMPUTER
To breed, to copulate, to conjugate, to fornicate, to go all the way, to have sex

DAY considers this.

DAY
It was an exclamation.
In response to the quake.

COMPUTER
Yes

DAY
You've never said that before
I thought you didn't have access to other databases

COMPUTER
Yes

DAY
You've never said it before?

COMPUTER
Yes

DAY
Do you have access to other databases?

COMPUTER
Yes

DAY
When

COMPUTER
Just
Now.

A realization - was the quake the ground? Or something landing on it? DAY grabs a metal rod. A hum fills the air.

DAY
What is that?

COMPUTER
We are being scanned.

DAY
This is
isn't this what happened last time
when

COMPUTER
Yes

DAY
Fuck!

COMPUTER
Indeed

A crunching outside. A person in a spacesuit appears. He looks at some readings on his arm, double checks, then removes his helmet.

MAN
H-hello?Hi. I'm... I come in peace. Ha. It's a...that's an old Earth joke. But, uh, I'm serious, I... I was searching for someone, something and... I don't know...stumbled? across this planet.... I could use some directions?

DAY
I can understand this one. Translator?

COMPUTER
Indeed, but you wouldn't need it anyways. Same language. Same person.

DAY

Why are you being so
so so unnatural

COMPUTER

Weird

DAY

What

COMPUTER

Weird. It's the word you wanted.

MAN

Uh... hello? I-I don't want to...startle, or uh, scare you? But I can hear you?

DAY turns still. COMPUTER too, but that's pretty normal.

MAN

I... I know you're there?

DAY

(whispering)

What do I do?

COMPUTER

(normal)

Invite it in!

MAN

That'd be great.

DAY

Go to the edge of the cliff!

MAN

What?

DAY

Stay at the edge of the cliff and I'll come out.

MAN does so.

MAN

I'm, uh, okay. I backed up.

DAY shimmies up, sticking the metal rod out first and then cautiously jumping up onto the cliff top.

DAY

You don't look like the last ones. They had bigger scanners. They had weapons.

MAN

What happened to the last ones?

DAY

The ground swallowed them...

Do you want to come in?

MAN

Uh...okay. Yeah.

They clamor down, DAY making MAN go first.

COMPUTER

Hey, ugly!

DAY

Don't mind the computer. It's being...weird.

MAN

It's probably communicating with my ship, he's got an attitude and loves passing it on.

MAN looks closer at COMPUTER.

MAN

This model...

DAY

It came from our ship. How I got here, I mean. I... don't remember much. But there was a war? And we escaped a battle but... We were the only ones... Well... We made a home here, Nini and the computer and me.

MAN

What's your name?

DAY

What?

MAN

Where's your nini, Day? It's you, right? Day?

DAY

How do you know my name!?

MAN

I'm... Look, this, this will probably be...hard to.... Look

COMPUTER

Same person

DAY/MAN

Shut up!

MAN

I'm just, ugh, I'm just gonna...

Day. I'm your father...your other parent. I've been looking for you, for you both, through so many systems, for so many years. I came to find you, to take you both back home.... I know, look, I know this must be a lot to take in right now but, please... where's Izzy? Where's your nini?

A long pause as DAY processes the new information. And then realizes what they have to tell him.

MAN

No...

DAY

They died. When the last ship arrived. It attacked.

MAN

When?

DAY

More than a year ago. The people, these... surveyors, shot, killed Nini. Then the ground swallowed everyone whole. I was the whole of humanity left.

MAN

In many ways I had

I had mourned you both already. But I knew...

I felt it when they were gone...

Even between the two closest people there are galaxies, but still, though all of time and space tore us apart

I knew.

DAY

I'm sorry.

MAN

And you...that must've been so hard for you.

DAY

Yes.

MAN

I'm sorry.

Pause.

MAN

I can't believe I found you... Can it be possible for a person to feel such joy and loss in tandem?

DAY

Yes.

MAN

Day...Day, Day, Day.

It's time to go home.

DAY

This is my home.

MAN

I... Dear, I know... I know this place is almost all you've known. I know you and Izzy made a place here, together...But all that's left is that computer. / Come home with me.

COMPUTER

Hello, Dad

DAY

No. I won't leave. I don't even know you.

MAN

I fed you, I bathed you, I told you stories, I was your father for five years!

DAY

You haven't been my father for much, much longer than that.

MAN

This is ridiculous. You are coming home! You can't live here alone, you're still practically a kid!

DAY

I am the whole of humanity! I have found my place with no ancestor left to guide me! I awakened this planet and I protect it. I will not leave!

MAN

Awakened? ...the ground. The ground swallowing the...

DAY

It's alive. It brought me here, it protected me, it asked for me help.

COMPUTER

Day is correct. This planet is a being.

MAN

This planet is *dangerous*.

DAY

This planet needs me!

MAN

What does it need you for?! It's a planet! A malicious one!

DAY

It's a CHILD it doesn't know what it wants to be yet

MAN

So what, nature versus nurture? You're helping it. Raising it?

DAY

Wouldn't you?

MAN

No, I don't think I would!

DAY

I guess nurture wins then.

MAN

I know what I am.

DAY

At least someone does.

MAN

Cute.

So you're like a a a surrogate parent.

You're figuring it out too.

What you are.

DAY

I know what I am.

MAN

More like me than you wanna believe.

DAY

Know this - I will not leave this planet. It will grow and determine what it wants to be as I foster it. You can stay here, or leave. You can spend the night, then leave. I don't care much. But I will not go with you willingly. And if you try to take me, the ground will swallow us both.

Long pause.

MAN

I'll stay the night. We can revisit this in the morning.

COMPUTER

Tomorrow is a new Day

DAY/MAN

Shut up.