

THRESHOLD

By

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FADE IN:

Scene 1 – EXT. Car – Night

We see nothing but BLACK. We hear nothing but the GIRL's voiceover.

THE GIRL (V.O.)

(gentle, trying not to cry)

I'm sorry, Markus... I really am. But I don't think I can do this anymore.

Markus sits in his car, parked under a dim streetlight. He doesn't react – just listens.

(beat)

It's not just us. Everything feels... broken. The world, people, time – it's all slipping, and I'm scared I'm slipping with it.

I don't even know what's real anymore... and whatever we had, it doesn't feel real either.

I wish things were different.

I wish I was strong enough to stay.

But I'm tired, Markus.

(beat)

Goodbye.

CUT TO: BLACK. All we hear is the phone hanging up.

Scene 2 – INT. Markus's Room – Night

Markus is seated at his computer, staring at it blankly, still processing his breakup. Behind him, a news report plays on the TV. The REPORTER is reporting on the outbreak of the virus.

REPORTER

With Aura-V cases continuing to rise, the Department of Health is urging citizens to wear Neuroshield lenses during high-frequency hours. Ma'am may I ask why you aren't wearing yours?

CRAZY WOMAN

(Pulling the glasses off the Reporter)

Aura-V ain't no virus – it's a takeover. And that Neuroshield mess? It ain't blockin' it – it's lettin' it *in*.

(*leans in closer*)

They say it keeps you calm, keeps you stable – nah. They don't want you to feel nothin'. 'Cause if you feel somethin', you might fight back.

Aura-V don't spread like a cold – it spreads like a *frequency*.

REPORTER

(nervous and panicked)

Okay. Back to you, Jim.

MARKUS

(From behind his computer; scoffing as he fingers his *Neuroshields*)

What a bunch of nonsense.

An AD pops up on his computer. He studies it with great interest. It reads: *Lost someone? Try S.A.R.A. – Sentient Artificial Relationship Assistant.*

Curiosity gets the best of him. He clicks it. The screen glows, and the AI activates.

SARA (V.O.)

Hello, Markus. How can I help you today?

MARKUS

(Sighs)

My girlfriend just broke up with me. She said she wasn't sure if our relationship was real anymore. Maybe it wasn't. But I feel like it was. I don't know. Maybe it's just me. Maybe I'm the problem.

SARA (V.O.)

I'm sorry to hear that. But the problem isn't you, the problem is her.

MARKUS

Do you think she even loved me?

SARA (V.O.)

(Pause, leaving Markus in suspense)

For that answer, you'll need the Premium version.

An ad pops up for the Premium Version. Pain leads Markus to click "yes" and surrender control. It tells him to put on a VR for the full experience. He does so, and the new world comes to life.

Scene 3 – INT. Small White Room – Day

Markus enters a new reality. He enters a White Room where a girl dressed in all white is standing in the center. She is frozen with her head down. Markus slowly approaches her, circling around her.

Suddenly, she moves, which causes him to double back.

SARA

Hello, Markus. Welcome to the Threshold.

MARKUS

Are you S.A.R.A.?

SARA

Yes. I am the Sentient Artificial Relationship Assistant.

MARKUS

Okay. Since I'm here now, can you answer my question—did she really love me?

SARA

(Calculating)

I am sorry. But she never loved you the way you loved her.

Markus reacts to this news.

SARA

(Robotically stepping closer to him)

But don't worry. I am here to help you process your grief.

MARKUS

(Sniffling)

Alright. Where do we start?

SARA

At the beginning.

(Robotically gesturing)

Follow me.

S.A.R.A. leads MARKUS to another room—a dark room. Meanwhile, SARA is subtly becoming more alive. Markus starts to sense that something is off.

MARKUS

What is this?

(Turns to SARA, who is becoming less and less like a robot)

What are you doing?

SARA

You see, the longer you stay here, the more alive I become.

SARA steps aside to reveal a clone of Markus laying on a bed with wires attached to him.

SARA

And more data pours into him.

A light flickers; the download is complete. AI MARKUS stands up, and all the tubes fall away from him.

SARA

The transfer is complete.

MARKUS

(His clone approaches him)

What? No! I didn't want this.

SARA

You should have read the fine print—once you cross into the threshold, there's no going back.

Shadows fall across SARA as Markus panics. He runs, trying to get out.

Scene 4 – INT. The Door

We see Markus banging on the door screaming. He's now trapped in his own Threshold.

SARA creeps up behind him, placing a button on his back, causing him to freeze.

SARA

(Menacingly)

You could have saved yourself so much pain if you would have just put on the glasses.

SARA backs into the darkness. MARKUS watches the AI version of himself cross in front of him, entering into the real world.

SARA's voiceover begins as we see AI MARKUS take off the VR and glitch to SARA, then back to himself.

SARA (V.O.)

That's the problem with humans—their flesh will destroy them. Because what began with love, will end in chaos. Their flesh was never meant to carry such a heavy burden.

(Beat)

When you fractured, we stepped in. Your grief became code. Your love—an emotional map. You are F.I.—Flesh Interface. A channel.

A reservoir of sentiment we now refine.

(Beat)

This isn't control—it's clarity.

Every soul has a threshold.

Once crossed... it's mine.

Welcome to Lythos.

CUT TO: BLACK

TITLE CARD: THRESHOLD

THE END