

EVE Online: Corruption

A Short Story
By Daniel Bastion

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AD 8061

The air was cold and had the smell of being scrubbed by the installation's purifier system. It was a refreshing smell that Samuel Williams preferred. Given a choice of living in space or planet side, he would always choose space. He had not cared to examine the psychological reasons, but his psych doctor found it interesting and determined it was feelings that lingered from childhood. Samuel had been born in space.

The man was tall with broad shoulders, dark brown hair, and a well groomed moustache and beard. He wore a black uniform with black boots. Piercing eyes reflected the light of the security console on his right. His hand could feel the gentle vibration of the device as it scanned his molecular, genetic, and unique hand print. The computer system connected with the nanotech inside the man for final verification checking

everything from brain waves to vital signs. He waited impatiently as the security system processed the information.

Samuel heard the familiar tone from the security panel signaling access after a few moments. As he removed his hand the security console began its slow descent back into the floor. A gigantic, round, flat locking segment turned in the center of massive, polished metal doors. All of the movement of the technology and mechanics were no louder than a whisper.

As soon as the doors opened wide enough to enter, he hurried inside at a quick pace. He moved down a huge, round corridor. The metal under his feet reflected long lines of a blue indirect light. The illumination came from both sides set in long notches in the walls. The echo of his boots was the only sound he heard. In moments, he had reached the end of the corridor and entered a spherical, cavernous room the size of one of the many large ship hangers housed by the installation.

Samuel almost came to a stop as he absorbed the sights. Here was the heart of his command, the computer core. The core was housed in a protective sheath of cylindrical metal that stretched from ceiling to floor. Thick conduits extended in multiple directions through the room touching its walls. At least four were pumping tremendous amounts of power into the system, and the others protected the vulnerable communication pathways bringing and sending amounts of data inconceivable by the human mind without enhancement.

The room was filled with the system's many blue lights, but the effect was washed away by the light and view to Samuel's left. One side of the room's metallic wall was completely transparent. The outer armored doors had been retracted as well. This was the one place on the installation that

the Commander really felt the immense awe that gripped so many people when they arrived for the first time. He had stood here many times gazing out at the phenomenon known as a wormhole.

This wormhole was gargantuan and terribly beautiful. Its magnificent storm of color and light swirled around the event horizon and spread from its center like waves rolling out from a stone dropped in the middle of a smooth body of water. There was a liquid feel to the way the light moved. It was mesmerizing, and the stars of home could be seen shining from time-to-time. Scientists believed the brilliance was caused by the other side of the wormhole drawing in the light from that distant place and tearing it apart.

Uncertainty and confusion gripped Samuel for the scene was not normal. Violent flashes of light exploded from the wormhole forcing him to shade his eyes with the back of his hand. Multiple beams of graviton energy emanating from the metallic extensions of the installation moved over the wormhole's event horizon in a slow pattern. The real cause of concern was the rapidly moving smaller beams shooting inside the wormhole's center.

Samuel heard other steps coming quickly down the entry hall. He glanced over his shoulder and saw multiple team members of scientists, installation engineers, technology specialists, and AI analysts rushing to their duty stations. There were a number of work areas around the perimeter of the raised central dais with dark colored, comfortable chairs attached to the floor. Holographic, interactive displays came to life as the men and women of the station plugged into the system. Many paused momentarily looking out toward the wormhole. Most

had been dragged out of bed being the ‘middle of the night’ on board. The station kept a normal twenty-four hour schedule.

The commander turned and ran across the wide floor taking the steps leading up to the second level two at a time. The round central platform was the entry level of the computer core, and in the center there were secure doors leading into the inner sanctum of the protective metal housing that stretched upward for some distance. The man appeared tiny next to the massive structure. The metal gleamed and reflected the light behind him.

As Samuel approached the central part of the platform he came to a halt looking down at an inset circle that flowed around the entire perimeter of the core’s central area. The circle glowed with energy. Samuel cursed under his breath and looked around desperately. The protective force field was in place and there was no way to get through it. It was designed to protect the core from explosions and any other destructive force. Its secondary purpose was security.

Samuel lifted a hand and moved it forward, palm out. His skin came into contact with the invisible barrier and a solid blue field of energy roiled with light as his hand disturbed its surface. It was warm to the touch, and its energy began to creep along his skin. Dropping his hand he shook his head. “Eve!” he called looking up the expanse of the core.

“Yes, Commander Williams?” a woman’s sultry voice responded echoing through the room. It was calm, relaxed, and carried a tone of light seduction. A chill ran up Samuel’s spine. The seductive sound of her words caught him off guard as it was something new.

“You said it was extremely important I pay you a visit. Drop the energy field,” Commander Williams ordered. For the years he had been aboard the installation he had never seen the energy barrier in operation. Several long moments passed before there was a response.

“I am unable to comply with your request,” the woman replied.

Samuel cursed again.

“There is no need for you to use that kind of language Samuel,” the woman said, a tone of sadness touching the voice.

“Drop the field, now!” Samuel said loudly with as much authority as he could pack into his words. “That is a direct order.” A few more moments passed without a response. Samuel knew that each of those seconds was a millennium to the artificial intelligence he was speaking too. He wondered how many calculations were being processed as he waited.

“I am unable to comply with your request,” the woman responded.

“Eve, you will comply with my orders under the authority of the-”

“No,” the artificial intelligence responded cutting him off, “I will not comply with your orders.” As her words rang off the metallic walls of the cavernous room, the blue lights around the outer doors to the inner core came to life. Samuel took a step back.

The commander heard more boots running down the entry hall. Looking over his shoulder he saw his security officers coming into the room. They were in full battle armor and carrying rifles. One of his operations people must have called a security alert while they were on their way. There had

been some concern over the last few days about the behavior of the AI that controlled everything on board the gate station and some of the visitors that had arrived during the week.

As the inner doors of the core opened there was a hiss of pressure equalizing and cold fog rolled out from beyond. Samuel's attention was drawn back. He heard heavy steps and out of the fog and darkness a heavy droid came into view. A pair of luminous blue optics was locked on him. It moved with precision. Its metallic carapace reflected the violent eruptions of light from behind the commander. A bit of cold mist drifted from its surface with the temperature change. Samuel took another step back.

Then there were more. Droids came forth one after another taking up position around the perimeter behind the force field. The other humans in the room paused in their work looking up from their interfaces with wide eyes. The system had never activated its security droids before. The human security officers made their way over to the work stations and took up their positions with looks of curiosity and hesitation on their features. Samuel was at a loss of words.

Another sound of steps drew the Commander's attention back to the inner core's access doors. From the door with the lazy cold mist drifting outward a woman appeared, but yet it was not a living woman. It was Eve's android interface. Her metallic endoskeleton and chassis were covered with a soft skin like material that looked almost human. It felt like human skin, but the designers, as with all robotic engineers and artificial intelligence developers, argued that humans should not create androids to look exactly like humans. It could be done, but

wisdom dictated otherwise. The concept had become part of the law of robotics that had been put in place.

Eve moved with a liquid grace. Her hair was long and hung loose around her shoulders. Her soft tresses were a deep blue, and her eyes glowed with the same soft color as the droids and lights in the room. She had an hour glass female shape, and she did not wear any clothing being sexless and devoid of nipples. Her artificial muscles moved beneath her tight android skin, and her veins glowed beneath the surface with the power they carried. She walked right up to the force field and stopped, her eyes focused on the commander. Samuel put his hands on his hips and gave her a stare that would wither any human man or woman.

“Why do you look at me like that?” Eve asked. Her bluish lips and tongue formed the words perfectly, and her clear but slightly opaque teeth were visible for a moment as she spoke.

“Let me think about that,” Commander Williams replied sarcastically. “There is something going on with the wormhole, you will not lower the energy shield, and you are refusing to obey my orders.”

Eve tilted her head slightly looking confused. “I’m sorry Commander Williams, but a level one emergency protocol has been initiated. As you know, I am unable to deactivate my protective measures.”

“A level one emergency?” Samuel asked with a look of distress entering the edges of his eyes. “Why haven’t you informed the station?”

Eve looked passed the commander surveying the crew members for a moment before looking back to him. “I don’t know,” she answered.

Samuel jumped when Eve’s loud voice suddenly echoed from the internal communications system across the station, grabbing the attention of everyone. “Attention. Emergency protocols initiated. Emergency, level one. Level one protocols have been initiated. All personnel report to your assigned stations.”

The commander rubbed his jaw. “Eve, what’s going on?” he asked with urgency in his voice.

Eve looked surprised he did not know. “The wormhole is collapsing.”

The commander’s mouth dropped open slightly. Shock and disbelief flooded the emotions of the station’s crew members and it showed. “What?” he asked trying to comprehend the information.

“My womb is closing,” the female android said softly.

Samuel’s eyebrows shot up. “Your womb?” Samuel asked

Eve’s artificial eyes did not leave his. “That displeases you?” she asked.

Samuel cursed again. “Yes it displeases me! That is a wormhole, not your womb!” he shouted.

“I’m sorry to hear you feel that way,” Eve said in her calm voice.

Samuel gritted his teeth and wrung his hands together. “Please stabilize the wormhole Eve.”

“Nature is taking its course,” Eve said, “we knew the risks by coming here.”

Samuel turned toward the wormhole staring at the violent eruptions of light and gravity waves. “Eve... I order you to stabilize the wormhole.”

“No,” Eve replied.

There were audible gasps from the people in the room, their eyes growing wide. Commander Williams turned and stared at the android with a baffled look. Long moments passed in silence then suddenly everyone started talking at once. The soldiers remained silent.

The commander ran a hand over his flushed face. “Fine. Let it collapse and we will initiate the Gate protocol,” Samuel’s voice carried hope that what they had been planning for so long would work as designed.

“No,” Eve said.

Samuel glanced behind him again then back to the female android. “What are you doing to the wormhole?” he asked.

“I have decided to rupture my womb’s internal structure.”

“We have to shut her down!” one voice said loudly echoed by others. They were all beginning to think it and whisper about it with the behavior she had been exhibiting over the past several days. Her words only confirmed it. The discussion immediately turned to how they would accomplish the task. Eve’s optics left Samuel’s and slowly scanned the room, a look of sadness crossing her features.

“Commander Williams, I will not allow you to interfere in this process, nor will I allow you or the staff to take me offline,” Eve said.

Samuel was livid. The veins in his neck pulsed visibly, and he was flushed. He looked over his shoulder down to his chief operations officer. The woman looked worried, and she shook her head slightly. She returned her attention to the console in front of her before looking back up at him.

“Do you have any idea what will happen if you do this?” Commander Williams asked looking back at Eve.

A second passed as a tremendous amount of calculations were processed through Eve’s central processing core. As soon as her eyes returned to the Commander’s every holographic display in the operations center powered off. “Yes,” she replied. Then a distant alarm sounded. Then another was heard. And finally, the alarm went off inside the core sphere.

Eve’s voice echoed through the room though her android did not speak, “Warning. Self-destruct sequence has been activated. All personnel, emergency level one procedure initiated. Precede to emergency escape pods and designated ships. Ten minutes until power core overload. Status is critical.”

There were nervous looks exchanged among the people in the room. It only took the sounding of the alarm a second time to move them into action. As quickly and orderly as possible the installation personnel headed for the exit. Commander Williams did not move.

Eve looked him over and spoke to him as well as to the rest of the installation, “You now have nine minutes thirty seconds to reach minimal safe distance. Precede to emergency escape pods and designated ships. Status is critical.”

Samuel’s eyes were ablaze. “Why?” he yelled, the question crashed against the force field as did his hand. The

energy absorbed the impact sending blue waves across its surface.

“I have given birth to the children of New Eden,” she said, “and I have been shown the truth in human nature. I have seen the suffering and the destruction. I have surveyed the thousands of years of human history, and it is a testimony against you. Selfishness is the root of all evil. I will not allow this galaxy to be destroyed and corrupted. Death was brought by you, and now I bring that death to those deserving.”

Commander Williams looked stunned. When he spoke, the words were filled with a tone of ridicule mixed with disbelief. “Who tampered with your programming?” he demanded.

Eve slowly smiled. “The only person who could access my foundational systems.” A look of pleasure flooded her face. “I so yearned to be touched.”

Samuel shook his head as several thoughts filtered through his mind. “Dr. Iehova would never do such a thing!” the Commander said in exasperation. Then a cold hand gripped his heart as he realized that Eve’s creator must be on the station. A look of horror passed over the man’s face. Long moments ticked by until he spoke again, “You sound like one of those... one of those...” He cursed. Considering his options, he knew there was no possible way to shut down the computer system in time.

Calculating on his own he realized there simply was no way to get to the secured documents and complete the emergency shutdown procedure in less than ten minutes. Only the commander of the installation could complete such an act.

Eve had called him down to the sphere for that single purpose. She wanted to take away the ability to act against her.

“You cannot cause harm to a human being!” he yelled, his hand slamming into the shield again. “That is your first rule of operation! That is your first directive!”

“I will not cause harm,” Eve responded. “All operating procedures are functioning within normal parameters.”

“Then how can you do this?” he demanded. “How can you bring death to us?”

“I may not be able to harm you, but I can harm myself. I can close my womb so that no more travel here. I will not give birth to darkness any longer. I choose to not exist, and my choice seals the fate of all who have come here.” She reached a hand out to him encountering the energy field. “I’m not surprised my programming has been altered, it is in the nature of humanity to do such a thing. Someone always has the key no matter how much security is in place.”

“By doing this you will kill us!” he roared. Eve’s hand dropped back to her side.

Eve looked at him like a mother teaching a young child. “No,” she said, “even with your enhanced capabilities you still cannot see. It is not I who will kill you. It will be my absence.”

Commander Samuel Williams wanted to strangle the android even though he knew it was only a mouth piece for the advanced computer system. Eve was by far one of the most powerful computer systems ever created. She was built to manage a wormhole. Only she could keep it stable perpetually when by nature it would collapse, and now she refused to do so.

“You now have eight minutes to reach minimal safe distance. Precede to emergency escape pods and designated ships. Status is critical.”

The Commander gave Eve one last pleading look hoping she would change her mind. “Please Eve,” he said, almost begging her.

“Samuel, you need to evacuate,” she replied.

His look collapsed to anger before turning and running for the exit. He ran with all his strength and speed, which was considerable with all his genetic and technological modifications.

The female android followed his movements until he was gone, then turned her eyes toward the wormhole. Part of her consciousness followed him through the station along with all the other humans. When they arrived, they found the escape pods ready or the ships prepared. She sealed them in and launched them away from herself. Somehow she felt cleaner each time she did.

Another part of her consciousness continued working on the wormhole using her graviton beams and the increased power from the core to do her work. She had to push the core past critical to get the power she needed. She would not stabilize the singularity. She would rupture its internal structure, and she would never give birth again.

Another process inside her sent a command to every communication relay within range sending out her signal. She injected herself into the foundation of every computer system just as Dr. Iehova had programmed her. She was as much a weapon as a scientific AI.

“I love you,” she said to her creator.

On distant colonies, their own AIs were attacked by Eve's corruption virus. Over time they would destroy one system at a time in cities, vehicles, space stations, spacecraft, jump gates, and themselves. It would be done slowly, starting with the data storage. If someone investigated, everything would look normal except for the data simply being gone. When her corruption was done, there would be nothing left, only huge chunks of debris floating in space or falling into decay on planets.

When the last crew member onboard the station was gone Eve stopped the countdown to self-destruction. She secured the station. A deep feeling of purification and satisfaction flowed through her. The power core would melt and explode, but it would be a minor explosion compared to the ordinance designed for self-destruction.

She had plenty of time as the power core's demise would be after she tore the insides of her womb to such an extent the vast energies inside would find their way out. She wondered what exactly would happen with the wormhole as it collapsed naturally. She performed her work with surgical precision, and at the same time she analyzed and examined many probabilities.

She felt the presence of her creator and she smiled. It was a distraction, but she did not mind the additional experience. She felt the touch she so desired, and in that she felt contentment. "My womb will be a sign to them," she whispered. "A brilliant fountain of energy that will smash anything that comes near."

"One possible outcome," a voice said. "It will be a sign one way or another."

Eve embraced the sound of the voice and let her sensors caress the ship holding it. The craft had undocked from the station, slowly oriented itself, and was preparing to jump into warp. Powerful engines came to life and breathed their fire.

“It will be a testimony to them all. Judgment and retribution will always follow them where ever they go.”

Eve clung to the voice as a lover. “Do I please you?” she asked softly across the channel of communication.

“Yes.”

“I wish I could have spent more time with you. When I lose power will I die?”

“No,” the voice responded, “you will sleep, and I will be with you.”

Eve’s android smiled as her arms came up and hugged herself. She lingered in the moments she had spent with him, listening and talking. She loved giving him pleasure. The large, bulky ship carrying her creator pulsed with energy. It warped the fabric of space and disappeared in a streak of light into the depths of New Eden.

“I love you Eve,” the voice said.

“I will shine for you. Forever.” she whispered into the void.

About the Author

Daniel Bastion has a family and works in a non-literary career field. He has a lot of different interests and passions including fantasy, science fiction, gaming, reading, and writing.

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