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Lies of D

Chapter 2

“Let me at least carry one of those,” the professor said. He was following close behind Pinot as the pair made their way up the stairs to Pinot’s new dorm room. Pinot’s arms were full of various boxes which were crammed full of changes of clothes and other dorm room essentials. It would have been way more than any normal person could have carried by themselves, but Pinot was not a normal person. Yet, despite how many boxes he was carrying, he had far fewer boxes than one would expect for moving into a new home.

“I’m far better equipped to carry these than you are,” Pinot said flatly.

“I know that, but I want to help! This is exciting! It’s not every day someone helps their son move into their first dorm,” The professor said.

“That’s just a cover story,” Pinot replied just as flatly as before.

“You wound me!” the professor cried out.

“I haven’t even touched you,” Pinot replied.

“You know that’s not what I meant,” the professor said with a sigh.

There was a heavy silence as the pair made their way up a few more flights of stairs. Pinot knew enough to know that the professor was being oddly quiet, but he did not know enough to be able to infer more than that. Eventually, Pinot felt a hand on his shoulder. He glanced behind him to see the professor staring at him intently. It was rare for the professor to look so serious, and Pinot knew enough to stop his trek and wait for the professor to speak.

Eventually, the professor broke his silence. “I know you have the ability to lie, but you’re capable of more than that. You’re capable of free thought, and with that comes the ability to not just see the world in truth and falsehood but to understand that there’s so much more to it than that.”

“I... don’t think I understand,” Pinot said.

“No... not yet. You have the ability to understand, but you’ll need a lot more lived experience. I want you to listen to me and take what I am about to say to heart.” The professor said solemnly.

Pinot stared into the professor’s eyes for what felt like eternity before the old man finally spoke again.

“Sometimes people say things that we know are not factually true but we want them to be. As far as most of the people in the engineering department know, you are just my newest creation, but I think of you as so much more,” the professor explained.

“I think I understand,” Pinot said. “I’ve spoken to the others in the lab. They make it sound like I’m some kind of great experiment – something that could get you a Nobel Prize.”

The professor let out a sad sigh. “Yes, they would say that... I think you’ll benefit from not being surrounded by scientists all the time.”

Pinot was struck by a strange sensation. He felt like he should reach out to the old man somehow – to do something to lift his spirits, but he lacked the words or understanding to do so. He didn’t even have the ability to lay a hand on the man’s shoulder since Pinot’s arms were currently weighed down with several moving boxes.

“You’ve been around the biggest eggheads this state has to offer and have been speaking with AIs as much as you have other people. You’ve been lead to believe that everything can be summed up as Truth or Lies, but reality is as much fact as it is perception,” the professor said solemnly.

The professor’s words were cryptic, but he didn’t have that tone he normally did when he was presenting Pinot with another puzzle to crack. Somehow, he was presenting these words, however

nonsense they appeared to Pinot, as some immutable fact. Pinot could not wrap his head around the professor's meaning, though.

"I see you have much to learn," the professor said and shook his head. "This isn't something I can teach you, but I think your new roommate will be much better at it than I am."

"My roommate?" Pinot asked.

"Of course. A dorm room without a roommate is little more than a prison. Rooming with someone is what makes it An Experience," The professor said with a devious glint in his eye and tone in his voice.

"So, you know them?" Pinot asked.

"By reputation only," the professor explained. "I think they'll be a good influence on you, and perhaps, you on him."

"Explain," Pinot said.

"Well, he's a bit of a wild card. You could learn a bit of free thinking from him, and maybe, he could pick up a thing or two about being rational from time to time." The professor said with a shrug. He then gestured towards a nearby door. "Speaking of which, we're here."

"Alright. Then let's go meet this 'free thinker' you spoke of," Pinot said.

“I’ll get the door for you, but after that, I’ll leave you two to get to know each other,” the professor said.

“You’re not coming with me?” Pinot asked.

“No. I wanted to walk you to your new dorm, but there’s nothing more awkward than meeting your new roommate with your old man hanging around,” the professor said. He then stuck the key in the knob, turned it, and then pulled the door open for Pinot to pass through. The professor then gave a flourish and a bow and said, “Your future awaits.”