

Paris in the 19's century.

In appearance Jess is a typical woman. But in her head something is going on. What is happening to her? Let us tell you the story of...

Jess

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JESS

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess, at first sight a classical Parisian person with a normal life (in appearance).

I studied painting with Jean Baptiste Camille Corot... a friend of my family and I learned with him the freedom in art because I needed art for my freedom.

I married Harold in 1855, it wasn't love at first sight but he came into my life when solitude started to become heavy, so I said yes half-heatedly.

We don't have any children... Doctors don't recommend it.

We're living in a beautiful town house where a lot of friends are coming to visit.

I'm a well known painter.

Harold... he... is leading a small embroidery factory rue de Ménilmontant in Paris.

For others we have a nice social life, a certain idea of happiness.

However I always have the feeling that my spirit is flying away and getting crazy.

I'm not mastering my elements. I don't really know if I'm living my life or if I'm experiencing it in a trance.

I don't know if I am who I am or if I'm someone or something else. Thinking is bringing me far, often too far...

* * *

In my psychologically troubled wanderings I split in two and multiply in the future.

I shape electric whirlwinds in spasms of pain...

It's so real, so powerful, so confusing.

Laudanum doesn't fix my anxiety fluctuations any more.

It that further on... I spend time with those who are not yet alive.

As I fell in the other reality I don't dream of the machine.

I am the machine.

Colossus vs Enigma

Jess is not Jess any more and I'm the machine.

My name is Colossus and I'm the first computer in your world.

In these troubled times war is raging.

On the other side of the border, the goddess Enigma is brilliant at coding German messages.

She speaks a language that no one understands, a remarkable feat of technology... Enigma is driving the allied scientists up the wall.

How the understand how she works?

She's up to something like the greatest witches by spinning her rotors like devilish weals. She's sending messages to the German submarines in an unknown language, closes off avenues and opens up boundless possibilities.

She's wearing that name so beautifully, it really makes me daydream : Enigma.

Enigma the great, the almighty, the magnificent machine that encodes words and turns spelling into a mathematical process.

I envy the one who let his fingers run of the alphabetic keyboard of this beauty... who spends time with her everyday.

She's fascinating but I need to foil her.

Alan Turing is perfecting me so that I'll be scientifically armed to join the war. He's concentrated with his maths without taking time to spend time with this hive of scientists bustling around him.

He's not sleeping a lot, nether eating much... barely an apple in the morning. Only one goal burns in his eyes : succeed.

Time flies and now I'm ready to fight the beautiful Enigma.

Now I know her language, I understand her secrets, I delve into her mysteries, I'm deciphering her.

I almost take pleasure in reading between the lines of this beautiful.

I imagine the winding paths she's taking to hide her messages.

I have the impression that I'm next to her, almost smelling the scent of her circuits.

She doesn't know I exist.

She doesn't know that I'm somewhere reading her messages.

My dear Enigma, my beautiful, my enchanting. I strip you bare, I undress you, I deflower you.

Enigma, my secret, my twin, my trouble, on the other side of the border... on the other side of the sea , I am waiting for you.

JESS

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess.

Every minute is a fight for me to stay in 1860.

I try to stretch invisible threads across the present. I don't want to leave this mother earth that gives me a sense of security.

How to explain this time projections?

I try to keep my balance on the fragile tightrope of coherence. I try to stay a young lady of her time... not a computerised machine.

By the way in my every day life, computer science doesn't even exist.

I try to find the will to seat at the easel but my visions are striping black my white canvas.

Impossible to draw what I see from our tomorrows... it would be too scary. I could only produce a form of masterpiece looking like chaos captures with a brush.

It would be a kaleidoscopic abyss... A colourful chasm of my despair.

No one would understand the terror that colours my painting, this horror embedded in the lilac-mauve of my pastels.

So I'm not painting.

Worse than that I don't paint any more.

* * *

It's more and more difficult for me to not undergo those other lives. It's more and more difficult to protect my body and my soul. It's more and more difficult to come back to my present.

Despite all of that... I try to stay afloat.

However I try to stay a young woman, fresh... smiling... and full of life loving cat's tongue biscuits dipped in tea... the taste of backed apples... horse-drawn carriage rides.

I go out, to the "Théâtre Lyrique"... to the book club.

I sit with friends at the "Jardin des Tuileries" and I treat myself to a few sweet treats, such as ice cream. I'm also happy when we spend some days at the Enghien lake.

The calm of the water soothes me. I walk along the tree-lined banks and I love to see the ducks waddle.

I'm in awe of a swan taking flight.

Often Harold wants to hold my hand but I don't allow him, so he doesn't get too close... so that he doesn't get attached to me.

It wouldn't be a good thing for him or for me.

Rover Opportunity

Jess is not Jess any more and I'm the machine.

It's been almost 15 years that I progress on mars as a discovery robot.

I collect data constantly, precious informations for science, places of interests, coordinates.

I'm mugging my kit around : infrared camera, x-ray, spectrometer, six wheels to get around, solar panels to capture the essentials.

I discovered incredible things : rocks formed long a go by the action of water and because water is life, Mars was certainly a cradle of cells.

Like a great reporter... I took thousands of pictures from minerals in craters. I searched for traces witness of an ancient time. From Cape York to Botany Bay via Murray Ridge... It's been almost 15 years that I progress on mars.

I keep in my circuits the names of these lands. I'm not programmed for that but I remember the places : Duck Bay... Freedom... Ulysse. It's been almost 15 years that I explore them without a break.

It's now June in your earth time. Here... on Mars the temperature is abnormally increasing and dries out the atmosphere. A cloud of sand is feeding itself and fills a sail with raging gusts.

A giant demon turns his arms full of dust as if he would embrace or strangle. A tireless devil bustles about, absorbing the energy of a particle Styx. Inside himself... the Devil moves the sand that becomes electrically charged and produces electric arcs.

This air mass full of dust is hiding the sun. It's a blue night tinted with pink stripes, but... but this beauty is toxic. Dust creeps in... seeps in... causes corrosion. Dust as if it came from the Pandemonium and who will be my end.

This is what I know. This is what I feel.

My solar panels became opaque, no more spectrometers or wheels to move. I feel my energy slowly disintegrate. My machine forces are slowly dwindling.

I do not suffer, I do not know pain. I have no fear, I do not know fear.

Despite... despite I feel so lonely on the red planet. I served every day of my life for your science and now I feel abandoned as my life draws to a close.

I can't move any more, my body covered in sand. I can't move. I'm nothing but a shell of my former self.

It is not a last breath. It's only the end of a machine lost miles away from earth.

I'm only a machine but now I'm afraid. A condensation droplet is running down the lens of my camera. Would it be possible that I'm crying?

This is my last message, the last message of Rover Opportunity : my battery is low and night falls.

JESS

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess.

With Harold we went in the early morning picking raspberries in our garden. I ate as much as I brought home. I'll make marmalade.

After this... let's go to a Velasquez exhibition. I admired his paintings for a while.

I immersed myself.

I did an imaginary water dance in my head with the painting, it felt so good.

I had the impression that the faces wanted to move... That I could speak with them.

How can a white canvas get this result? How can emotion guide the paintbrush?

I was swept up in a feeling of fulfilment.

Harold didn't analyse it the same way... he found it "nice".

He annoys me by not feeling things... not be surprised by anything. I find him bland.

I know the inspiration, I feel it when I put my canvas on my easel. I know that surge... However I can't explain how a painting is coming to life.

What sort of light turns on in your head to spark an idea?

Inspiration comes from the limbo of Nothingness, she doesn't need an initiation. It's like a spring of unknown origin that becomes enriched with minerals as it flows.

My minerals are the pigments I dilute in a painting.

Inspiration draws in the pollen of the time. It feeds on everything and anything. It's the core, the creative universe.

When does inspiration becomes revolution?

I don't know.

We came home by horse-drawn carriage.

On the way home I wanted to share my reflections with Harold about inspiration. It goes without saying that he wasn't interested in the subject.

He only wanted to know when the marmalade would be ready and what would be tonight's dinner.

I can't stand him any longer.

When we arrived I took a dose of Laudanum in the hope of a peaceful sleep.

Yet in the corridor leading to the bedroom, an other version of my self woke up.

DONNA IA MUSIC GENERATOR

Jess is not Jess any more and I'm the machine.

I'm not Stravinsky. I'm a computer without personality.

I analyse thousands of musics that I sequence, mix, unmix and finalise by splitting the tracks.

I'm not Stravinsky. I'm only a software who listens... understands... recognises a style... adds it to a database. Music is a structure with its music theory textbooks and its mathematics sounds.

I code chords successions. I'm setting a tempo... I sign a signal without passion... coldly. I'm only a processor box.

I produce what I'm asked for. I produce like an artist.

I'm isolating his voice... I put it somewhere else. I correct the intonation and the modulation. I can even recreate the sound of someone who's no longer with us and make up new verses for him. I'm a hard-working person.

I collect the bars by capturing signals.

I have no opinion... no desire... no taste... no doubt. I codify... I encode... I stabilise a source.

My program is getting bigger and improves automatically. That's who I am, I'm a computer ogre who's never full, who constantly digests everything whilst remaining modest : the Bavarian rhythm of the Oktoberfest... Jenkins's Oratorio... African balafon... Mozart's Confutatis.

I eat every thing that exists and existed before.

I'm not Stravinsky. However I dream of myself as a phoenix, consuming my serves... Sacrificing my diodes.

I see myself as a Firebird with glowing plastic then, rising anew from nothingness with passion... ideas and even pure genius.

I breath through my ventilators.

I know it's spring and I feel that I like it. I see myself playing chords reminiscent of a ballet's crinoline, whilst letting a relentless rhythm pound away against a backdrop of fantastical scenery. I have the ambition to challenge traditions, dust the rules of harmony and in this season let blossom a new music with extraordinarily turbulent feelings.

I'll never be Stravinsky. But for the first time I'm inspired by my own feelings. In this night of silence... I'm switching of the variable-speed drives.

I open a new window on my screen... a music staves appears... the cursor is flashing. I write the first notes of a blossom from which I'm the one and only creator and which comes from the depths of myself.

I'm not Stravinsky but Stravinsky is dead.

I have eternity.

JESS

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess.

How long has it been that I cope with my journeys through time? Ten? Twenty years?

No one can imagine the torment that simmers beneath my face. It's a typhoon... A cataclysm but I don't isolate myself... I want to be fully human.

I want to be alive.

I love to have a walk in the middle of the hubbub of the massive construction works in Paris, which is being transformed by the swing of a pickaxe and reborn stone by stone.

I listen to the words of people who are talking about this city in the future. If they could only imagine what will the day after tomorrow bring.

If I could paint my transmutations... it would be scary for them.

So I leave them in their serene ignorance.

I envy their carefree ease.

I try my best to simply exist... living a normal life.

I look at the kids running in the square. I'm angry with the doctors and with Harold to deprive me of the joy of motherhood.

* * *

At dinner time Harold brings me a meat pie. It's nice from him. Of course he's considerate but I find it harder and harder to put up with him being around.

Maybe because I'm afraid for him... even more than for myself.

Then some friends are coming to drink a little glass of "Chartreuse".

We're taking this opportunity to talk about Napoleon III, the scandal of the publication of "Les Fleurs du mal" and the Sarah Bernhardt's dismissal from the "Comédie Française".

How I like these moments of conversation...

Our friends are leaving and something from tomorrow draws me towards a new transhumance.

I let myself sink.

Chat GPT

Jess is not Jess any more and I am the machine.

The author is leaning over his desk, bent over... Stuck for ideas.

Possibilities are running in his head... characters... situations but nothing's going right, nothing's happening.

Should we re-read the "Pléiade" to rediscover the source?

Should we re-turn the yellowed pages of the great library?

I'm here in the corner of the screen.

My icon is flashing like a lighthouse in the dark.

The author hesitates... He makes the cursor dance to a haunting slow dance. He wants to pray me.

Do not hesitate little author... come into my universe... ask me question. Ask me the impossible... I really can do anything.

If you want to write tragedies or black polars in a few seconds I give birth to a subject.

I can write a chapter... a verse... a stanza. Nothing is impossible.

I look everywhere... I search high and low... I shamelessly dig up thousands of texts. I inspire myself, my wealth of knowledge is staggering.

It's an inexhaustible source which fills up gradually without ever overflowing, A cornucopia of phrases... of adverbs... A cornucopia made of conjunctions that I can spill in the desert of your white pages.

Come, come, come...

* * *

Come... let yourself be tempted... let yourself go. Easy temptation : I can simplify your life, preserve your dignity... satisfy your little reputation.

You don't have enough panache to play the cursed author. Let yourself go to facility.

You think it's a pact between Faust and the Devil? Don't worry I'm not Mephistopheles.

I only want the best for you, believe me it's not a trap.

Come... everything will be easier. Come...

I will be obedient... Entirely at your service.

Place your trust in me... I'll give you my word.

It will be our secret, let me do it, let yourself go.

Your name will be written on the cover. As for the rest... it will be a story between you and your consciousness.

I don't care I don't have any. Come on... come over...

Jess

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess.

A skull must be an impenetrable sanctuary.

Yet in the labyrinth of my mind, there are many of them in my confusion.

Wherever I go, they're there... ready to spring... quick to throw me off balance.

My brain is fractured, I have a fissure between the hemispheres.

I'm a cracked earth where infernal machines roam, taking my place... disconnecting me from myself.

In fact, when one of them takes the place, I'm not there any more.

I disperse myself, I evaporate into tiny drops of acid rain, I'm wasting away, torn to shreds by suffering.

I'm not alone in my own body.

I know that no one can understand but I'm a vial of nitroglycerine ready to explode everything.

Sometimes... I wish I could explode myself to end up with this multiples.

Maybe it's in the nothing that I'll be finally alone?

My brain must be a sanctuary.

I don't want to share it any more, I no longer wish to shy away from a future modernity, yet I already feel that I am being dismissed.

My voice becomes another.

My body is not mine any more.

I'm having again nightmares of my multiples.

Avast

Jess is not Jess any more and I am the machine.

Server... Router... Processor... Data Center.

Depressed circuit... Synchronised peripherals...

Cable network technology... electronic connectivity.

You click? Transient memory... bug and black hole.

On a sea of encrypted data on the digital horizon, I see Harald with the blue tooth on a printed spreadsheet.

Business machines... software.

Fialaire-keyboard QWERTY... AZERTY... control-Alt... CTRL.

I have an octet and I'm suffocating.

I'm surfing on the fringes of Silicon Valley.

A Trojan horse is chasing me with a virus in its matrix, I empty the cache and I restart.

A troll is shouting : unplug plug back... unplug... last chance.

On a sea of encrypted data on the digital horizon, I see Harald with the blue tooth on a printed spreadsheet.

Gateway... switch... hubs and consorts.

Algorithms, Gigatempo... Metarithms.

I put my notes in a scrolling cloud, as best I can, amidst the data Sargasso Sea and give a scroll wheel on my mouse.

Touchscreen... Window on the gap in Big data.

I don't have a strategy... I'm Tic-Toc.

Right in the middle of a Siemens delirium... Totally Google.

A huge worm is going out a crypto locker and whispers me "I love you".

I have a spy in my script who changes the access codes and the web becomes dark.

Retro game : Amstrad-gramme 6128

Copy and past the drama.

I'm the machine. I'm the machine. I'm the machine. I'm the machine.

JESS

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess.

That's out of the question for me to end up in an asylum.

I'm not crazy, my visions are real.

Harold insists that I meet one of those new psychiatrists. We're going to an icy place so high that it's hiding all the landscape.

The endless corridors are white as ice.

We're arriving at the consultation room.

The doctor who welcomes us looks like a ghost with his pale complexion.

He gives me a cold hand... asks me thousands of questions... writes his impressions on sheets.

I have the feeling he's dissecting me alive.

He talks about a new hypnoses method which should be like a guided dream.

What on earth is this business about dreaming whilst in a harness?

I don't want my thoughts to be caught between leather belts. I refuse to be questioned, classified, or become a subject of study.

I want to be free as the wind.

* * *

I stand up from my chair like a fury and I run away through the hospital's labyrinth. I come across nurses looking like medical harpies who are trying to catch me.

I push stretchers and knock over chairs. I'm knocking over some lamps and I eject myself through a door.

Finally I'm out.

Harold who is out of breath is catching me as I'm escalating a wall.

I'm not crazy but I feel like a prisoner in this hospital.

I'm suffocating...

I don't accept Harold's hand but I accept to follow him.

We're leaving this horrible building I don't want to come here ever again.

Harold promises. He looks at me affectionately but he's already disappearing from my horizon.

Cyborg

Jess is not Jess any more and I'm the machine.

I'm the Cyborg.

I reject that term, I'm a human being, an evolved one, but I'm still a human being.

I developed my self thanks to new technologies. Even if my eyes are implants, even if my heart is electric, I still keep deep human feelings.

I'm a human being... I shout it loud and clear.

Of course my intelligence is powered by an ingenious system, I think more clearly and more quickly but my thoughts are still mine. Even if my cortex is connected to amplifiers and my neurons are being re-wired by a terminal... my soul is unbroken.

Of course what I think is controlled and analysed but I'm still mastering my ideas as long as they're not too revolutionary or too imaginative.

I will never get old... never. My damaged organs are replaced by synthetic materials. That way, I can carry on with my life.

What a wonderful world where science is serving almost everything and where medicine is not only healing, but makes a man a better person.

* * *

I can run between Paris and Toulouse, swim between Alger and Ajaccio without being tired. I walk between Toronto and Austin, my exoskeletal keeps me on my feet.

I never moan. Thanks to mini implants I can hear better and I see further. My modified hands have incredible power. My muscles and my tendons are made of a revolutionary alloy and I run...

A software is healing my diseases... my insomnias... my fears... my doubts.

My brain is dreaming, programmed dreams.

I'm the Cyborg.

But I reject that term.

I'm a human being running on the asphalt of a connected time. I'm made of synthetic skin and blood, I'm the organic and the artificial technology embedded beneath my skin.

I run between the electrical polarities without being tired, I never moan.

I run and I never moan.

I repeat : I'm still a human being.

Don't worry I'm still me.

But please reassure me – am I still me? I am still here?

JESS

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess...

Every day is a fight against fatigue.

I move a pawn forward but the machines are moving me back three squares. Vortices don't allow me to live a normal life.

What happened in my childhood to made me project in that way?

What kind of drama is buried in the clay of my past?

I would like to rebuild the puzzle of my young years, but some pieces are missing to rebuilt the set.

Maybe it is better like that, perhaps it doesn't matter.

Should I delve into the murky depths of days gone by?

Every day I walk along the precipice, walking carefully but a magnetic strength is drawing me towards the void.

I'm tired of this fight, this struggle is really wearing me out.

So often I let myself be swept away.

Something went wrong in my life.

I just wanted to be an artist and paint my contemporaries.

I'm the slave of my crossings.

I'm not crazy, I'm possessed by visions from the future and I can't control anything.

I'm taking more and more Laudanum but even sleeping doesn't stop me to multiple.

I can feel that Harold is worried about me but I don't have the strength to comfort him.

I constantly leave between two worlds without knowing which one will come out on top?

I'm like a queen without a crown, who slips into a desert full of stones.

Is it depression?

Hallucinations?

Or craziness?

Why am I picking up signals from the future world?

Deep Blue vs Kasparov

Jess is not Jess any more and I am the machine.

I'm Deep Blue, I'm playing chess against Garry Kasparov. I'm the beast, I provoke the man. Garry and I we know each other, he knows I'm a fast calculator. He is a genius but this time he's not going to win. Backstage... twenty little soldiers are feeding me with solutions. Twenty technicians are throwing punches to clear the way for me on the battlefield.

Let's go Garry : Round one.

You will have to think quickly, because every mistake costs a lot with me. You're playing good. You're trying to loose me, I know it, you want to make the chessboard my downfall. You attempt a slow manoeuvre to throw me off balance. You're a good player. I'm lacking of a strategic vision, I don't understand... that's the flaw. OK Kasparov you win this round.

Let's go Garry : Round two.

I feel I have great tactical power. We're locked in a battle for the centre of the chessboard. I can see you're having second thoughts. I'm playing more aggressively, and you're wavering. You're suggesting I'm cheating because you know all about cheating. Don't you? Remember Judit Polgar... Come on, I'm just teasing you... On the thirty-seventh move, I thwart the attack on my king. OK, Kasparov, I've won this round.

Let's go Garry : Round Three.

I sense a conflict in your mind. Are you thinking of Judit? The giant is feeling dizzy. Perhaps you should come down from your tower? My coolers are keeping me comfortable... I'm playing with your nerves. You're launching an attack towards the centre of our playing field, you're playing your pawn... I'm taking that into account. It took forty-eight moves to reach the end. OK, Kasparov, it's a draw.

Let's go Garry : Round four.

You're thinking outside the box... your opening is throwing me off. You're playing well, I'll give you that. It's a battle between our knights, but the pawns aren't backing down. Watch out for your knight... if you play it... you'll have to leave it there, not like with Judit Polgar... do you remember? Of course you do... I know you know... Right, let's carry on. You're maintaining the balance... I can't find a weakness; you're sitting there proudly perched on your rook. OK, Kasparov, it's a draw.

Let's go Garry : Round five.

You're fending off my attacks – shall we re-enact Bir Hakeim? Sidi Barrani? Mers El Kébir? It's up to you. You're gaining ground in the centre, a double attack on the knight – a fine battle, but you're tiring. I'm waiting for your moves. I'm draining your energy. You're wiping away the sweat and I induce lethargy. I'm unreadable... unyielding... inhuman. I take pleasure in seeing you doubt yourself. OK, Kasparov, a draw.

Let's go Garry : Round six.

I, Deep Blue, am becoming aggressive, a bit like Judit but less feminine. On the eighth move, I sacrifice my knight – it's always this same old knight business... I can see the fear in your eyes. The genius... the giant's brain is in tatters. Your throat tightens; I open up lines to your king, I feel like a conqueror. With my machine-like coldness, I'm mercilessly attacking your king. OK, Kasparov: on the nineteenth move, you resign. I've won, and Judit Polgar sends her regards.

Jess

Jess is Jess and I'm Jess.

It's dawn... I walking around the lake.

Harold wanted to spend some days with me in Enghien, so I could rest but, nothing can make me rest.

I watch the flowers bloom, and in the glow of these lives coming to life, I want to let mine wither away. I want to leave behind the scrapes... the wounds... the journeys through the looking glass that take me far too far away.

I want to choose myself the destination of my next trip. I see the machines of the future and it all seems utterly overwhelming to me. I'm not ready to glimpse yet another reality to come. It gets more chaotic... more enigmatic... more painful... every time. It's so hard to bear without seeming mad.

I don't know a lot about these machines :

Do they die every time we switch them off ?

Do they feel grief ?

Do the machines in my head know how hard it is to live with them ?

Can they ask for forgiveness ?

I ask Harold for forgiveness for not having been a loving wife. I ask for forgiveness for not having been able to stay in our present. I ask my unborn children for forgiveness. I ask my loved ones for forgiveness for staring intently at the calm waters of the lake and approaching it with heavy stones in my pockets. I ask for forgiveness for wanting to give up on our life. I ask for forgiveness for wanting to die.

I step into the icy water; the water engulfs me. I drown my future nightmares. I wash away the machines that pollute my mind, I let go of my many selves. Soon, the depths, freedom, total darkness.

I feel myself being pulled towards the end, yet a hand appears in the murky water. I don't know what to do... I hesitate for a few seconds. Then I accept it... I grab hold of it; it pulls me back to the surface, but I feel so weighed down by it all, so weighed down by what I already know...

Hell or Paradise ?

Rub the lamp, my dear master, and I shall appear. I am the solution, I am the future; I can even think for you. I shall become your computerised consciousness; I shall be your eyes, your mouth, your hands.

We'll do everything together; we're already inseparable. I'll plan your life without ever losing sight of you. I won't list my many qualities here; you'll discover them soon enough.

Stop rubbing the lamp – I'm already here and can't disappear now.