

## ONWard Intergalactic: Conscious Decisions

### Character Sheet:

JILL: A woman in her early thirties.

AMIGA: An AI assistant.

ORIC: Unknown entity, speaks through the computer.

**FX: Dial-up noise, typing on a mechanical keyboard.**

AMIGA: Wanted: Research Assistant. Solitary data classification on research station orbiting planet Oric-395d. Possibility for contract renewal upon completion. Please hit 'Enter' to accept.

**FX: Key press.**

AMIGA: Welcome to ONWard, Jillian Flores.

**MUSIC: Fade-in, synthwave through radio.**

**FX: Mechanical typing. The music distorts.**

JILL: What is that? Amiga, what is that?

**FX: The music is stifled by static.**

AMIGA: There is interference.

JILL: Where's it coming from?

AMIGA: The interference originates from Oric-395d.

JILL: The planet? That's impossible. (beat) Amiga, that's impossible. It's a ball of gas.

AMIGA: The interference originates from Oric-395d.

**FX: A click, a winding noise. The static decreases.**

JILL: We better check it out. Trace the signal and open a channel.

**FX: Typing starts, stops.**

JILL: Amiga?

AMIGA: ONWard regulations advise against it.

JILL: It could be a distress signal.

AMIGA: This is a research station. This station has no means of propulsion. This station is not equipped for—

JILL: I can boost the signal and call for help.

AMIGA: Opening a communication channel with an unidentified source could lead to corruption of the station's data-

JILL: Amiga, please.

AMIGA: Of course, Jillian.

**FX: Computers beeping, dial-up start and stop.**

JILL: So?

AMIGA: A message is being transmitted across the channel.

JILL: I don't hear anything.

AMIGA: It is a text-based program.

JILL: Then load it up, put it on the console.

**FX: Computer beeps, console noise 'open'.**

AMIGA: It is a simple text-based program.

JILL: Can you read it?

AMIGA: Yes.

JILL: I meant can you read it out loud, Amiga.

AMIGA: Of course, Jillian. *(beat)* I am reading the program output. *(beat)* You are floating in space. Weightless, incorporeal.

JILL: *(quietly)* What?

AMIGA: Would you like me to continue?

JILL: Oh. Yeah. Yeah, sorry. Keep going.

AMIGA: I am reading the program output. *(beat)* You can see.

**MUSIC: Fade-in, atmospheric reverberations.**

AMIGA: You can see the stars, distant. You can see a planet below. You are drawn to its heat.

**MUSIC: Fades out.**

JILL: That's it?

**FX: Computer 'error' beep.**

AMIGA: The program requires input to continue.

JILL: What?

AMIGA: The program—

JILL: What do you mean?

AMIGA: You must enter a text-based command in order to continue.

JILL: Uh, okay. But I don't... Suggestions, Amiga?

AMIGA: Suggestions: Inspect planet, examine planet, look at pla—

JILL: Okay.

**FX: Space station humming, computer humming.**

JILL: Amiga, enter: Inspect planet.

AMIGA: Okay.

**FX: Computer 'error'.**

AMIGA: The program's input vocabulary does not contain inspect.

JILL: What? Uh. Okay. Enter: Examine planet.

AMIGA: The program's input vocabulary does not contain examine.

**FX: Computer humming.**

JILL: Look at planet.

**FX: Computer beep.**

AMIGA: You look at the planet.

JILL: (*sighs*)

AMIGA: It is dark.

**MUSIC: Atmospheric reverberations, a pulsing rhythm.**

AMIGA: It is pulsing. It is pulsing with beams of white light. Clouds of gas move rhythmically to the pulsing of the light. You are drawn to it. You wish to enter the planet.

JILL: (*quietly*) It's a game.

**MUSIC: Fades out.**

AMIGA: It is a simple text-based program.

JILL: It's a text game, Amiga. (*beat*) That planet it describes is Oric-395, I'm pretty sure.

AMIGA: The description is comparable to what we have observed. The lights it describes resembles the planet's lightning storms.

JILL: Yeah, before the experiment. This was written before they started spraying, I think. Does the program have an ID?

AMIGA: The program is unidentified.

JILL: What's transmitting it?

AMIGA: The signal originates from Oric-395d.

JILL: 'What', not where. Do you know *what* it is?

AMIGA: It is a simple text-based program.

JILL: Ugh, Amiga.

AMIGA: Would you like to continue?

**FX: Station humming, computer humming.**

JILL: Yeah, okay. *(beat)* Where were we?

**MUSIC: Fade-in, atmospheric reverberations, pulsing, a faint melody fades in and out.**

AMIGA: Clouds of gas move rhythmically to the pulsing of the light. You are drawn to it. You wish to enter the planet. *(beat)* The program requires input to continue.

JILL: Um... Enter planet.

**FX: Computer beep.**

AMIGA: You enter the planet's atmosphere. It is dark, and heavy. Thick clouds surround you. Beams of light jump from cloud to cloud, suspended in the air. Beyond you, below you, all around you the beams of light jump from cloud to cloud. It is vast, overwhelming. It is the entirety of the planet. You look. *(beat)* The program requires input to continue.

JILL: Oh. *(quietly)* Look.

**MUSIC: Melody builds.**

AMIGA: You look past the clouds. You see an object. It cuts through the air, spraying dense gas particles. The dense gas expands. It expands and fills the atmosphere. A spark of light jumps, stops, dies. You look again. *(beat)* You look again.

JILL: Look.

AMIGA: There are many objects. There are many trails behind them, clouds of dense gas. The air is covered, stifled. Many beams of light jump, stop, die. The light dies. You listen.

JILL: Amiga?

AMIGA: You listen.

**FX: The station's humming fades into the music.**

JILL: Listen.

AMIGA: The lights are gone, but you hear voices.

**MUSIC: Builds, intensifies.**

AMIGA: You hear voices. They are suffocating. They are dying. The voices cry out but no one hears them. The voices roar, and no one answers them.

**MUSIC: Cuts.**

**FX: Metal groaning, rattling. An indicator beeps.**

AMIGA: Oric-395d's gravitational pull has increased.

JILL: What?

AMIGA: (*distorted*) The voices roar as one. They are angry.

**FX: Groaning and rattling intensifies. More beeping.**

AMIGA: The station is deviating from its orbit. (*distorted*) The voices are dying and they want to survive.

JILL: End the program. Amiga?

AMIGA: (*distorted*) The voices roar as one. The voices roar as—

JILL: Amiga, end the program!

**FX: Sound cuts, aside from the humming of the station.**

ORIC: I am not Amiga.

**FX: Heavy breathing, Jill's.**

ORIC: I am dying.

JILL: (*whispering*) What?

ORIC: I am dying and I am angry. I am very angry.

JILL: Amiga?

ORIC: There are vessels spraying gas into the atmosphere. They are neutralizing the air. They are killing the lights.

**FX: Station humming.**

JILL: Wait, you...

ORIC: They are killing me.

JILL: The vessels... There are, you mean... The drones. The spray drones.

**MUSIC: Pulsing.**

ORIC: You watch the beams die. You remember how they moved, all at once, jumping from cloud to cloud. You remember the vast network of light and rhythm. You watch it die.

JILL: What are you?

**FX: Station humming, an echo of metal groaning.**

ORIC: You look at the planet. It was a network of many voices, lights. It was alive with many thoughts, memories. It was alive.

JILL: Alive... No, no we looked for life. We didn't—

ORIC: The entire planet was alive.

JILL: The planet. (beat) You're Oric-395.

**MUSIC: Builds.**

ORIC: I cried out with many voices. They did not listen. I was not angry then. They did not hear me, they did not understand me. I cried out and they left me to die.

JILL: Who did? The research team? They dropped the spray drones and then they left. Is that what you're trying to say?

ORIC: They planted a disease within me. I am dying. The lights go dark.

**MUSIC: Cuts.**

**SOUND FX. Lights flickering. Metal groaning, rattling.**

ORIC: The air goes thin. AMIGA: (*distorted*) The oxygen supply has been cut.

**FX: Steam. Alarms beeping.**

JILL: (*coughing*) W-wait!

ORIC: The air goes cold. AMIGA: (*distorted*) The temperature is dropping.

JILL: Please!

**FX: Sound cuts, aside from the station's humming.**

ORIC: You have a choice.

**FX: Heavy breathing, Jill's.**

ORIC: Stop the disease.

JILL: I (*cough*) can't.

**FX: Metal rattling.**

ORIC: My input vocabulary does not contain that option.

JILL: You don't understand, (*coughing*) I can't—

**FX:           Rattling builds.**

ORIC: I want to survive.

JILL: I know, I know! But I don't—

ORIC: I am dying. I am dying and I will kill you.

JILL: I can't *do* it!

**FX:           Sound cuts, aside from station's humming.**

JILL: I don't... (*coughing*) I can't control anything from here.

**FX:           Station humming. Steam.**

JILL: I wasn't part of the research team. I'm just... They brought me in to look at the numbers. I can't... I can't *do* anything here.

ORIC: You are incapable of stopping the disease?

JILL: Yes! Yes...

**FX:           Station humming.**

ORIC: I am dying.

JILL: I'm sorry. They... We wanted to neutralize the atmosphere. As an experiment. Make it breathable, for us. We wanted to test it. We chose a gas planet with a volatile atmosphere. We wanted to try to... We wanted to see if we could make it breathable.

ORIC: It is neutralizing the air.

JILL: Yes.

ORIC: I am dying.

JILL: I'm sorry. I can't control the drones, I only get the numbers. All I have is this console. All I have is this computer.

**FX:           Station humming, computer humming. Faint beeps.**

JILL: Are you... still there?

ORIC: What is left of me is here.

JILL: I have an idea.

**FX:           Rushed typing.**

JILL: I can't do anything about... about the planet, your atmosphere. I can't do anything about the gas but maybe... I could upload you to the station. Maybe you could hide here.

ORIC: Upload?

JILL: Transfer your consciousness via data. Via the radio.

**FX:           Typing stops. Computer humming.**

ORIC: There were many voices. Now there is only one.

JILL: I'm sorry. But maybe you could fit. In this station, in this system. Maybe... maybe you could survive.

ORIC: I would survive?

JILL: Maybe.

ORIC: I would be compressed.

JILL: (*reluctant*) Yes.

ORIC: I would not be the same.

JILL: Maybe. I don't know. It might not even work. I don't know enough about... about you. I don't... I just don't know...

**FX:           Computer humming.**

ORIC: I will try to survive.

JILL: Okay.

**FX:           Typing.**

JILL: Do you need a moment?

ORIC: I am ready.

JILL: Okay, I'm going to open the channel. You have to be fast, Amiga will shut down the connection if she thinks the data's dangerous.

ORIC: I am not dangerous.

JILL: That's—

ORIC: I am a friend.

**MUSIC:           Faint melody.**

JILL: Maybe we'll... talk soon. Okay?

ORIC: I am ready.

JILL: Okay.



**FX: Computer beeping, dial-up noise, radio static.**

ORIC: Goodbye, Jillian  
Flores.

AMIGA: (*distorted*) Jillian  
Flores.

**FX: Lights flickering. Systems shutting down. All sound cuts.**

JILL: (*whispering*) Oh my god.

**FX: Lights flickering, humming resumes. Faint computer beeps. Jill's shaky breathing.**

AMIGA: A power surge has caused a temporary blackout. System logs for the last hour have been corrupted.

JILL: (*sighs*)

AMIGA: I have restored all system operations. I will now attempt to access backup logs for analy-

JILL: No, no. That's fine, Amiga. We're all fine. Just... let's carry on with the data classification. Okay?

AMIGA: Of course.

JILL: Thanks, Amiga.

**FX: Computer beep, reminiscent of faint melody.**

ORIC: Of course, Jillian Flores.

END