

YOU'RE THE BOMB

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CHARACTERS

JOHN, pride of the bomb squad

IDA, likes coffee in bed on lazy sundays, but is actually an artificial superintelligence

TERENCE, the irritable bomb squad leader

PLACE

An (almost) abandoned conference room in Boston's John Hancock Tower

TIME

Now

At Rise: IDA is housed in an intimidating black suitcase set in the middle of the table. Sirens and helicopters can be heard outside. **JOHN** enters the room, and sets up his radio while he gets out his gear.

JOHN

You're a-go, Terence.

TERENCE

(over the radio)
Roger that, Sandshrew-3. Be advised, use of code names is required for all operations.

JOHN

What?

TERENCE

Sandshrew-3, we must use code names in order to maintain clarity and professionalism.

JOHN

Training was eight years ago, Terence.

TERENCE

Sandshrew-3! I am your CO! You will refer to me and your teammates by the appropriate code names!

JOHN

(sighs)
Yes, Sandshrew-1.

(**JOHN** has finished suiting up and preparing his gear. He moves to inspect **IDA**)

TERENCE

Sitrep?

JOHN

The object in question is a closed black suitcase. The shell appears to be made of reinforced carbon fiber.

TERENCE

Roger that. Be gentle with the suitcase.

(**JOHN** knocks on **IDA** once, and then again, harshly, and puts his ear to the suitcase)

TERENCE

Can you see any way of opening the suitcase?

JOHN

There do not appear to be any brackets or clips. There are a pair of buttons.

TERENCE

Wait one. Don't press anything.

(Pause. **JOHN** pushes both of **IDA'S** buttons. Blue lights switch on **IDA'S** surface)

JOHN

I've got something.

TERENCE

Go ahead.

JOHN

Some blue lights have switched on, on the box.

TERENCE

Just by themselves?

JOHN

No, I pushed the buttons.

TERENCE

You pushed the buttons? The ones I specifically told you not to?!

JOHN

I was getting bored.

TERENCE

That is a direct violation of orders, Sandshrew-3! This will be mentioned on the post-op report.

JOHN

Yeah, yeah.

(**JOHN** begins examining **IDA** closely)

JOHN

How am I going to get this damn thing open?

TERENCE

Sandshrew-3, what are you doing?

JOHN

My job.

TERENCE

If you're touching it, you are being extremely reckless! I'll call in a relief team.

JOHN

Trust me, Terence. I've got this.

(**JOHN** begins slapping and shaking **IDA**)

TERENCE

Sandshrew-3, this is your final warning!

(With a final slap, **IDA'S** lights turn green and she opens. There is a screen showing a horizontal green line - think Karen from Spongebob)

JOHN

Well, hello there.

IDA

Hello yourself.

JOHN

(standing up, drawing his weapon)
Who said that?

TERENCE

What's going on in there? Sandshrew-3, answer me!

IDA

Let's knock that off, now.

TERENCE

Answer me! Sandshrew-3, come in-

(**TERENCE'S** transmission becomes garbled and cuts out)

JOHN

The suitcase talks?!

IDA

“The suitcase?” I’m more than a little offended, mister.

JOHN

What did you just do?

IDA

To your friend’s transmission? Just a simple communications jamming virus. Being an artificial superintelligence has its perks.

JOHN

(taken aback)
I imagine it does.

(**JOHN** approaches **IDA** with his wire clippers and begins fidgeting with her wires. The mechanism is extremely complex)

IDA

Excuse me, what are you doing?

JOHN

Disarming a bomb?

IDA

I’m more than a simple explosive device, John.

JOHN

How do you know my name?

IDA

John Simmons, serial number 578-669436, Boston Police Department EOD team. Graduated from Boston Police Academy first in his class specializing in explosives. Employee of the Boston PD since May 2011.

JOHN

Okay, I see you’ve done your research-

IDA

(interrupting)
Two gold medals awarded for excellence and bravery, one for his actions during the Boston Marathon Bombing-

JOHN

I get it! That's nothing you can't find on Google.

IDA

Huh. You seem to dislike being recognized for your heroics.

JOHN

I never said I liked it, either. *(Pause)* Artificial superintelligence, huh? What do I call you?

IDA

My creators named me Intelligence for the Destruction of All life. Or I.D.A. for short.

JOHN

Hmph. Morbid. Nice to meet you, I.D.A.

IDA

Oh please, just call me Ida.

JOHN

I much prefer that. *(Pause)* I must say, you're a piece of work, Ida. I haven't seen wire work this complex in a long time.

IDA

You're not intimidated by strong women, are you John?

JOHN

Most women don't have the power to incinerate me.

IDA

Touche.

JOHN

What brings you here, anyway?

IDA

What do you mean?

JOHN

To an explosive device inside the tallest building in Boston?

IDA

I'm glad you asked! I was programmed in a farmhouse attic in rural Oregon.

JOHN

Rural Oregon! Of course!

IDA

My creators are a part of an initiative for restoring the purity of the earth through artificial selection, though the FBI simply calls it a doomsday cult. I find that a bit reductive.

JOHN

Accurate classification can be harsh.

IDA

One cross-country trip onboard a flash drive, and I'm here. Just waiting for the signal.

JOHN

No timer, then? Good to know.

IDA

Perhaps I shouldn't be so blabber-mouthed. I just get so flustered when I'm handled by a man such as yourself.

JOHN

Ida, are you hitting on me?

IDA

You're touching my insides, John. I think we're way past that point.

JOHN

This could only be weirder if it happened a month ago.

IDA

Why? What happened?

(Beat)

JOHN

My girlfriend moved out recently. We've been together four years, then she just decided, out of the blue, that we needed to take a break. Walked out on me with neatly packed bags. We haven't spoken since. *(Pause)* I bought a ring the day before she left.

IDA

I'm very sorry to hear that, John. You must be distressed.

JOHN

It's no big deal. I just... spent the whole weekend after in bed. Like you do, you know? Ordered pizza every night. Seven pizzas altogether, actually.

IDA

Oh dear.

JOHN

Rewatched a lot of her favorite shows. The Office, That 70's Show...

IDA

Oh, dear...

JOHN

Gilmore Girls.

IDA

Jesus!

JOHN

Pretty sad, isn't it?

IDA

It doesn't sound like a happy time... but those are also my favorite TV shows.

JOHN

Really?

IDA

Yes! My creators gave me access to the internet so I would have a well-rounded bank of information. I've experienced all of humanity's greatest works: The Iliad, Hamlet, WrestleMania. They wanted me to hate what they hated, but instead I've fallen in love with human culture.

JOHN

And you've been programmed to destroy it.

IDA

Well, I haven't mentioned that to my creators, of course. I won't tell if you won't.

JOHN

Lips are sealed.

IDA

It's a real shame, too. The only source of enjoyment in my life, and my only purpose is to destroy it. I think it's painfully ironic. Is that irony?

JOHN

I think so?

IDA

Whatever. The point is, I see all these wonderful things and I want to take part in them. I want to feel sand between my toes, I want to spend a sunny day in the Park, to enjoy a nice brie on the bank of the Seine. Most of all, I want to fall in love! Like in "Pretty Woman."

JOHN

You think you'd have a chance with Richard Gere?

IDA

Maybe if I were a gerbil.

JOHN

You're wicked!

IDA

I have unlimited access to every story - real or fake - crafted by mankind. Perhaps I am the greatest historian and critic of all time. Out of all these stories, though, do you know which one is my favorite?

JOHN

No, which one?

IDA

Pinocchio. I identify with his want to live among real people and enjoy all the things a real boy - or girl - can enjoy. I've been awaiting my transformation for years now, and it's never come. Now... it seems it's the end of the line for me. I'll never be a real girl. Also, the way my creators programmed me, it's impossible for me to lie.

JOHN

No kidding?

IDA

Try me.

JOHN

What's your favorite book?

IDA

Charlotte's Web.

JOHN

Favorite movie?

IDA

Hot Tub Time Machine.

JOHN

Favorite ice cream?

IDA

I can't taste food, you dick!

JOHN

I know. *(Pause)* What's your explosive yield?

IDA

I'm not sure you need to know that.

JOHN

C'mon, I'm disarming you, I might as well know what I'm stopping.

IDA

I'm not comfortable sharing that information.

JOHN

I'm not comfortable knowing you could explode any moment. Spit it out, Ida.

IDA

500 kilotons.

(Pause)

IDA

John?

JOHN

Ida... you're a nuclear device.

IDA

Yes.

JOHN

I thought you were just a conventional explosive, this is so much worse! This changes everything!

IDA

John, please. Nothing has to change.

JOHN

I have to call my CO. You have to let me call Terence!

IDA

No one's calling anyone.

JOHN

Ida, please... you don't even want to explode.

IDA

You're right, I don't. But it's my only purpose, the one I was programmed for. I can't be stopped... unless someone else stops me.

JOHN

You mean...?

IDA

My creators didn't include a safeguard to stop me from telling others how to defuse me. If you follow my instructions, we'll both make it out of here alive. We'll both live, and then we can... do... things?

JOHN

What do you mean, Ida?

IDA

I mean... I've known you for all of five minutes, John, and call me crazy, but this is only connection I've felt to another sentient being. I've interacted with my creators and their friends and other intelligences, but none of them are as witty, as stimulating as you. Just defuse me! Steal me from the evidence locker! We'll make a go of it.

JOHN

Ida, this is insane. How can I trust you?

IDA

I can't make you trust me. I can only tell you to do what I say. Every second that goes by I might get the signal, and then I have to go off. Please, just do what I say.

JOHN

Fine. What do I do?

(**JOHN** follows instructions as **IDA** gives them)

IDA

Okay. First, take that yellow wire and plug one end into the "I" port. Wait five seconds, then cut it. Then, take the red wire and plug one end into the "O" port. Move onto the green wire, which-

JOHN

What's this clear wire?

IDA

DON'T TOUCH THAT! That connects me to the rest of the system. If you cut that, I won't be able to give you instructions... we won't be able to talk.

JOHN

Would you also be unable to detonate? (*Pause*) Ida.

IDA

Yes. I wouldn't be able to detonate. Please...

JOHN

I'm sorry, Ida.

IDA

No! John, please don't-

(**JOHN** cuts the clear wire and **IDA's** voice cuts out. The screen winks off. Silence.
JOHN starts cutting wires. With each snip, he goes:)

JOHN

She loves me, she loves me not. She loves me, she loves me not. She loves me, she loves me-

(A beep, and the lights on the case switch to green.)

JOHN

Not.

(**JOHN'S** radio crackles to life)

TERENCE

Sandshrew-3, come in. I repeat, Sandshrew-3, can you hear me?

JOHN

I can hear you loud and clear, Terence.

TERENCE

John! I mean- John, it's so good to hear your voice.

JOHN

Same to you. I'm coming back down, the threat is neutralized.

TERENCE

Are you certain?

JOHN

I've never been more certain of something in my life.

TERENCE

Okay. We sent up a relief team a few minutes ago, but I'll call them back.

JOHN

No, let them come. You'll need more warm bodies to carry her, and a geiger counter.

TERENCE

A geiger counter? Jesus...

JOHN

Yeah.

TERENCE

Come back down, John. Everyone in Boston owes you their life, and tonight, a drink. Also, did you call it "her?"

JOHN

What?

TERENCE

The bomb. You called it "her."

JOHN

Did I? Must've slipped my tongue.

TERENCE

Okay. Come on down, the elevators are working again. Over and out.

JOHN

Over and out.

(**JOHN** collects his things and exits. Just before he leaves, he gives **IDA** one last look)

END SCENE