

DEATHKILL

by
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ACT ONE

INT. CANCER - MARCUS'S QUARTERS

We're on board a submarine called the Killship Cancer, but we don't know that yet -- it just looks like a bedroom in here. We just barely missed some sex.

MARCUS (early 30s), who's Han Solo if Han Solo were insecure and annoying, is rolling off SHIRLEY (late 20s), a whip-smart Asian secret agent who'd look equally comfortable in a street fight and the swimsuit issue.

MARCUS

Sex, huh?

SHIRLEY

Uh...sure, dude. Yeah, sex.

MARCUS

But, I mean, it was good, right? I mean, I've been told I'm more than competent in that department.

SHIRLEY

It was fine...especially before you started talking about it.

MARCUS

Oh, I get it. You were unhappy with how long it lasted.

SHIRLEY

Are we actually having this conversation, or am I having an anxiety dream?

MARCUS

You're a clock-watcher.

SHIRLEY

Is that a thing?

MARCUS

What you're missing -- what you're failing to understand here, Shirley -- is that I used to be kind of a "bull in a vagina shop." I broke a lot of hearts.

SHIRLEY

Wow.

MARCUS

And if this didn't last as long as some idea you had in your head, it probably means I was really into it -- because I actually like you, for a change. You should take that as a compliment.

SHIRLEY

OK. So what you're saying is that how short it was was kind of a love poem. Or I guess a haiku.

MARCUS

Think of the Ramones: their songs were short, but they were awesome.

SHIRLEY

Yeah, but this was more like that little bass riff from "Seinfeld."

Shirley gets up and starts collecting her clothes -- a badass black jumpsuit.

MARCUS

Wait, let's talk about this. You're being really superficial!

SHIRLEY

See you later, Marcus.

MARCUS

What's this obsession with later and sooner and on time and premature? I thought you were better than that!

(desperate)

Time is an illusion!

Exit Shirley.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - CANCER

A submarine that looks like a spaceship from a 1960s sci-fi movie. On the hull: "KILLSHIP CANCER." Over it, we hear the sound of a press conference.

REPORTERS (O.C.)

Tandy Man! Tandy Man!

TANDY MAN (O.C.)
 (calling on one)
 The one with the winning smile.

REPORTER #1 (O.C.)
 And what about the evil
 Professor Deathkill's--

REPORTER #2 (O.C.)
 When you deflected the giant
 meteor, did--

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Now we see the press conference on a monitor: TANDY MAN (70) was once a state-of-the-art cyborg superhero, but now he's clunky looking, with an old face and old robot body -- deadly when functional but often on the fritz (think Fred Willard).

TANDY MAN (V.O.)
 (to Reporter #2)
 I said winning smile. You call that winning? That's a bronze-medal smile at best. An also-ran smile, an always-the-bridesmaid smile. Get real about yourself, guy, come on.

We pull back to see the command center: a cross between a bridge and a war room, but with a well-used La-Z-Boy instead of a captain's chair. Watching the press conference from the La-Z-Boy is CHARLIE DEATHKILL (mid-30s), the chubby, bumbling son-of-an-evil-genius, who's committed to doing his father proud but is an entirely different and incompatible kind of genius (and not evil). Armed MINIONS stand guard. Marcus stands behind Charlie, buttoning a military officer's jacket.

REPORTER #1 (ON TV)
 Professor Deathkill has vowed to destroy human civilization and repopulate the planet with his evil clones. How do you plan to deal with his International Consortium for Apocalypse in Russia and the United States?

TANDY MAN (ON TV)
 ICARUS?
 (cocky laugh)
 Excuse me -- did someone go back in time and make me not strand Professor Deathkill in space with only his insane clones to keep him company?

REPORTER #1 (ON TV)
 But there are reports that ICARUS
 is still operational--

Charlie excitedly shushes Marcus, who's already silent.

REPORTER #1 (CONT'D)
 --and is being run by Professor
 Deathkill's son, from a submarine
 somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

CHARLIE
 Ha! Did you hear that? "Submarine."

MARCUS
 What about it?

CHARLIE
 The Cancer isn't a submarine! It's
 a giant steel crab, scuttling
 across the ocean floor!

MARCUS
 No, it's a submarine.

CHARLIE
 What?!
 (turns to Marcus)
 Are you sure? I always pictured a
 crab! Is it at least shaped like a
 crab?

MARCUS
 It's shaped like a submarine. Hey,
 do you think Shirley's been a
 little...nitpicky, lately? Like
 weirdly critical of people's...
 speedy and efficient workmanship,
 or...?

On the TV, Tandy Man is doubled over laughing.

TANDY MAN (ON TV)
 I'm sorry, give me another second.

CHARLIE
 What's he laughing about? Marcus,
 you made us miss something funny!

TANDY MAN (ON TV)
 (pulling it together)
 OK, I'm OK.

(MORE)

TANDY MAN (ON TV) (CONT'D)

No: Charlie Deathkill carrying on the ICARUS dream is like Jim Belushi carrying on the Blues Brothers dream.

(then)

He's no John Belushi.

Charlie turns off the monitor.

CHARLIE

Stupid Tandy Man! I'm totally carrying on the ICARUS dream! I am John Belushi!

MARCUS

Well, we have been focusing a lot on the other dream, of turning the Cancer into a casino. But about Shirley. I just think--

CHARLIE

Fun-leviathan, Marcus! The "Deathkill Grand" is going to be a fun-leviathan! We've gone over this a thousand times. The casino is just one small part of it.

MARCUS

OK, fine, right. But so Shirley--

CHARLIE

We're going to have concerts, tigers, Jerry Seinfeld...

MARCUS

(practically flinching)
Not Seinfeld!

CHARLIE

...Carrot Top then, a Chinese corpse exhibit, "Jersey Boys"...

MARCUS

OK, but that's exactly my point, though, about you and Professor Deathkill's dream: whatever you want to call it, you've always been much more passionate about entertainment than you have about your father's original vision.

CHARLIE

This old argument? I am a million percent committed to my father's dream of world apocalypse! There's no reason that's incompatible with the Deathkill Grand! And it doesn't mean people have to get hurt.

MARCUS

It does mean that.

CHARLIE

Does it, though?

MARCUS

In a total world apocalypse? Yes. Absolutely.

CHARLIE

Tomato, to-mah-to.

MARCUS

I don't think you know what that expression means.

CHARLIE

I sort of know!

MARCUS

Anyway, your father certainly thinks people have to get hurt. Remember that message he sent down last month from his space station, about "oceans of blood" and "fewer continents" and bringing the world population down to "six digits, tops"?

CHARLIE

Yeah, and I stepped up my game.

MARCUS

You melted an iceberg.

CHARLIE

Exactly.

MARCUS

A small one. And you rescued a polar bear.

CHARLIE

We had no beef with that bear.

MARCUS

We lost five men, moving it.

CHARLIE

You can't blame a bear for that!
It's a wild animal!

MARCUS

I'm sorry, I've got to say something: I feel like you -- and Shirley -- aren't really appreciating the work I'm doing here. Like, right now, I don't feel like you're paying attention to the advice I'm giving you. I don't want to pat myself on the back or anything, but let's be honest: I'm probably the smartest person on this ship. I wish you could try to see me as more of a consigliere.

CHARLIE

Consigliere, eh?
(pleased by the idea)
So that would make me...Mozart?

MARCUS

No, I--
(giving up)
Look. All I'm saying is if your father finds out what we're really up to down here, he'll pull the plug -- stop funding us.

CHARLIE

(uncertainly)
Not necessarily. Once he hears me sing...

MARCUS

You're a great singer, Charlie. And we all believe in your vision for the Deathkill Grand. It's going to make us all very rich. But Professor Deathkill expects us to be the ICARUS he created, his ICARUS, threatening the safety of all humanity. And it's time to face the reality that your father probably won't understand. But maybe it's not about your father.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Maybe it's about you letting yourself become who you really are, not the Deathkill your father expects you to be, but your own Deathkill, Charlie Deathkill, the Deathkill all of us on the Cancer are proud to stand behind.

(pause)

Charlie?

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, I kind of tuned out after "Mozart."

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - MINION TRAINING CENTER

We see many uniformed MINIONS. Some are exercising, sparring, doing weapons practice, etc.; others are practicing dealing cards and carrying trays of drinks.

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - SHIRLEY'S OFFICE

Shirley's office looks less like a sci-fi set than like something out of "Taxi." She sits behind a messy desk, in her bad-ass black jumpsuit, with her feet up. There are poker chips on her desk, and music is playing. Shirley is carelessly throwing darts in every direction without looking.

Enter GEARS (late 20s), a robot who looks human -- and also happens to be the most "human" person on board: thoughtful, sensitive, and sweet-natured (think Kumail Nanjiani). He has a thing for Shirley.

Shirley throws the last dart, and we see that she has dartboards scattered all over the place, on walls and the ceiling -- and every dart she just threw hit a bullseye.

SHIRLEY

Hey, Gears. What's doin'?

GEARS

Not much. Got a status report for you.

SHIRLEY

Oh boy. OK, go.

GEARS

D squadron's doing great with simulated assassinations, but not so much with hotel wake-up calls. They keep flushing the guests into the ocean. And always at 6 a.m., no matter what time is requested.

SHIRLEY

Yeah, that's gonna hurt our TripAdvisor ratings, for sure.

GEARS

They've also been gassing the spa. You'd think that would be an easy fix, like "Don't gas the spa," but...

SHIRLEY

Charlie had better make up his mind about what we're doing here. Training the minions for world annihilation and customer satisfaction is bound to be kind of a crap festival.

GEARS

Yeah, I guess the minions aren't born multitaskers.

SHIRLEY

They're barely uni-taskers. Tandy Man could take them apart in Power Saver mode.

GEARS

That 256k half-bot relic?

SHIRLEY

That's still about 250k more than our geniuses have got.

GEARS

(indicates a power outlet)
Mind if I plug in?

SHIRLEY

Sure. I thought your power cell had a half-life of 500 years or something.

GEARS

A thousand. I don't need to recharge.

(MORE)

GEARS (CONT'D)

AC electricity is like sugar for me.

(Gears sticks his finger
in the outlet)

Oh, yeah. That's the stuff.

(beat)

Charlie asked how the "gay French-Canadian circus show" was coming along.

SHIRLEY

I tried to tell him it's not going to be French-Canadian. Fortunately most of our minions can do some kind of acrobatics.

GEARS

Oh, and Marcus wanted me to remind you that--

(from memory)

"the length of the magic acts is far less important than the quality of the illusions and the joy they elicit in an uncynical audience"?

SHIRLEY

He is unbelievable!

GEARS

(hopeful)

Oh, no -- are you guys fighting?

SHIRLEY

Getting involved with a coworker is always a mistake.

GEARS

"Always" is such a strong word. I mean, isn't it a case-by-case kind of--

Shirley suddenly sits up, having had an idea.

SHIRLEY

Let's teach 'em how to kill a man with a poker chip!

She grabs a poker chip and throws it at a dartboard -- so hard that it cuts a dart in two and lodges in the bullseye.

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Charlie paces nervously, talking to Marcus.

CHARLIE

Look, we all want to impress my father. We all want him to say, "You're not a 'misfire.' You didn't come out of the 'wrong nut.' I don't wish we had seen your 'dumb fat gnocchi head' in the ultrasound so we could have 'cleaned out that garbage womb.' You are a Deathkill, and you are my son!" We all want to hear him say that.

MARCUS

We also want him to continue funding us until the Deathkill Grand is up and running, and we don't need his financial support anymore.

(changing the subject)

Listen, I think Shirley might need some kind of psychological counseling.

CHARLIE

(ignoring him)

Designing the Deathkill Grand is something I'm actually good at. My father will understand that he has his dream and I have my dream, and that my dream is valid, too.

(off Marcus's skeptical look)

Anyway, he's mellowed out a lot on his space station. Things have quieted down with Tandy Man... I don't think my father cares as much about terrorizing humanity, anymore.

A handheld computer in Marcus's pocket BEEPS. He takes it out of his pocket and looks at it.

MARCUS

Speak of the devil.

CHARLIE

The polar bear??

MARCUS

No, orders from your father.

(reading)

"Press conference a humiliation. Immediate retaliatory show of destructive power imperative. Chief Minion Coordinator to be elevated to..." Oh, no. No, no, no. He's promoting Shirley.

CHARLIE

To what?

MARCUS

Supreme commander of ICARUS!

CHARLIE

Shirley and I are going to be co-commanders? Oh, that's fun! Shirley's probably the most competent person on board, anyway. She does the Sunday crossword in like five minutes!

MARCUS

Not co-commanders. The message switches to complete sentences here...and all caps.

(reading)

"As for that walking testament to the folly of unprotected sex, the disaster that calls itself my son, I'll speak to him face-to-face as soon as we can align our orbits to and reestablish telecommunications. In the meantime, he is to be demoted to bathroom duty, effective immediately."

(then, still reading)

"Disable the toilet-cleaning robots."

CHARLIE

Cryptic.

MARCUS

It isn't cryptic. He's promoting Shirley and demoting you.

CHARLIE

Oh.

MARCUS

This is a disaster.

CHARLIE

Why does anybody have to be promoted or demoted? Why can't we just stay moted?

MARCUS

"Moted" isn't a word.

CHARLIE

You're not a word!

(then)

I'm sorry. That was mean. You're a word.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. OCEAN - CANCER

The Cancer moves through the deep. A crash-test-style dummy in pajamas is jettisoned from the side, still in a hotel bed, with an alarm clock floating next to it, and is immediately set upon by toothy, bioluminescent, deep-sea predators.

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - COMMAND CENTER

Charlie is pacing. Marcus is thinking. They're not really listening to each other.

CHARLIE

If my father promotes Shirley and fires me, I'll never get a chance to prove myself to him. And we can probably kiss my dream goodbye.

MARCUS

(to himself)

I can't work for my girlfriend. Especially not after that stupid thing this morning...

CHARLIE

She does believe in the Deathkill Grand, but she's also kind of into the apocalypse thing -- that was how she wound up here in the first place. She's actually good at it. She'll probably do a way better job of it, and actually wipe out human civilization...and then goodbye customers!

MARCUS

It's not sexist. It's practical. It's about power dynamics. Not that I see everything in terms of power. It's just weird for her to have all the power. Power!

CHARLIE

It's all because Shirley's so good at that sinister-plan stuff!

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I mean, that's why she's in charge of ICARUS minions and fun-leviathan security: she's an intellectual genius, a killing machine, a smart dresser... If only I had her killer instinct!

MARCUS

(hearing Charlie)

Or...

(Eureka!)

...if only she didn't! We still have that brainwashing equipment...

CHARLIE

(thinks he's finishing Marcus's thought)

We sell the brainwashing equipment and buy my father something nice!

MARCUS

No. We use the brainwashing equipment...on Shirley!

CHARLIE

What? No!

MARCUS

Yes! We don't do a full brainwash. She'll still be Shirley. We just go in and remove that killer instinct.
(half to himself)

And maybe a memory or two...from earlier today. And the bass riff from "Seinfeld," while we're in there...

CHARLIE

Marcus, we can't brainwash Shirley! That's the sort of ruthless, cut-throat, uncaring thing that--

Marcus gives him a meaningful look.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(realizing)

--my father would do.

(beat)

OK, maybe her brain could use a light rinse.

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - MARCUS'S LABORATORY

A futuristic O.R. with a metal slab in the middle. Shirley lies unconscious on the table, in hospital clothes. Standing over her are Charlie, Marcus, and Gears.

GEARS

This is not OK.

MARCUS

You want to have your software
reinstalled while we're at it?

SHIRLEY

(coming to)
Where am I?

CHARLIE

You're on board the Cancer, which
is a giant steel crab.

Shirley sits up, unsteadily. She seems much less tough and much less confident.

MARCUS

It's a submarine.

CHARLIE

It's basically the Apollo Theater,
scuttling across the ocean floor.

MARCUS

(to Shirley)
Do you remember your name,
sweetheart?

SHIRLEY

Shirley King.
(then)
"Sweetheart"??

MARCUS

(leaning in close)
And do you remember the last time
we...shared my special gift?

Shirley looks grossed out.

SHIRLEY

I don't even know you.

MARCUS

Excellent.
 (then)
 Wait, what?

CHARLIE

That's Marcus, the chief science officer around here. I'm Charlie -- the supreme commander of ICARUS, no big deal -- and this is Gears.
 (stage whisper)
 He's a robot.

GEARS

Why do you always have to make such a big point of telling people I'm a robot? I don't say "He's a human being" when I talk about you!

CHARLIE

(to Shirley)
 He's programmed to say all that.

SHIRLEY

I remember you two.

MARCUS

Obviously you remember me, too.

SHIRLEY

Thankfully, no.

MARCUS

(leaning in close again)
 I'm kind of important to you.

SHIRLEY

Wow. I think I'd remember something as unpleasant as that.

(then)

You want to get out of my face, dude? Something about you is reminding me of seventh grade. It's making me uncomfortable.

Marcus hesitates.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

If you'd rather, I could see whether I can do that trick where you drive somebody's nose-cartilage into his brain. For some reason I have a feeling I can pull that off.

Marcus moves away from her.

CHARLIE

Shirley, do you remember anything about sowing chaos, destabilizing governments, or defeating cyborg superspies? I mean, would you have any ideas to bring about apocalypse if you were, say, pitching to a global terrorist leader and maybe a couple of his clones?

Shirley gives him a baffled look.

SHIRLEY

Not off the top of my head.

CHARLIE

Great! Now how about planning and then running security for a cutting-edge deep-sea entertainment emporium--

(for Marcus's benefit)
--and casino?

SHIRLEY

Sure...I guess...?

CHARLIE

Wonderful! Gears, would you make sure Shirley knows how to get to her quarters? Walk with me, Marcus.

MARCUS

Hold on a second. Shirley, it's me, Marcus. The golden boy! Think back!

SHIRLEY

You think back, to when you should have decided not to bother me. Walk with him, golden boy.

Exit Marcus and Charlie.

GEARS

What a jerk!

SHIRLEY

Seems like it.

GEARS

Men, huh?

SHIRLEY

Men's egos clog up their personalities like hair in a YWCA shower drain.

GEARS

Well said! I agree. Human men -- I mean, totally organic men -- are just the worst. All ego, exactly.

Awkward pause. Gears likes Shirley; she seems oblivious.

GEARS (CONT'D)

You know, sometimes a good man isn't technically even--

SHIRLEY

Hey, I'm sorry, but for some reason I'm just totally exhausted right now. I can barely keep my eyes open. Would you be offended if I just took a quick nap?

GEARS

No, no, of course! Go ahead!
(to himself)
Robot tears.

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie and Marcus are walking back to the command center.

CHARLIE

I've got to hand it to you, Marcus. That was a great idea!

MARCUS

(to himself)
I erased too much. I wanted to erase this morning's conversation, but now she doesn't even remember me! Me!

CHARLIE

(not listening)
Let's get in touch with my father as soon as possible. He'll see that Shirley doesn't have any good ideas, and then I can wow him with my good ideas, and then--

MARCUS

What good ideas?

CHARLIE

Well, I don't have any particular ones in mind right now, Marcus, I'm not an idea machine. We'll just ask Shirley. She'll be great at coming up with the kind of idea we need because she has that...

Marcus gives him a look. Charlie sees the look, and his speech slows way down as if he's realizing what's wrong with what he's saying -- but it takes him a really long time to get there, so he just keeps talking slowly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

...killer instinct...

(pause)

...so she can be counted on to come up with ideas that...

(pause)

...my father would approve of...

(pause)

...since she's way better at that than I am...

Marcus is giving him a look like "Are you kidding me?"

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Do you have to go to the bathroom or something?

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - SHIRLEY'S QUARTERS

A fairly spartan living area, with a punching bag hanging from the ceiling. Shirley is sitting on her bed, still in her hospital clothes. Charlie, Marcus, and Gears are back in her room. Charlie now understands that Shirley not remembering anything is a big problem.

CHARLIE

Nothing? No ideas at all? We need you to remember.

MARCUS

See if you can remember anything about me, too.

SHIRLEY

(to Charlie)

I don't really understand the question. Why would you even want to dissolve the community of man?

(to Marcus)

As for you, there is something...

MARCUS

Yeah? Maybe something...below the belt?

SHIRLEY

Yeah. Something about you just screams, "Knee me in the balls!"

CHARLIE

That's great, Shirley. Access that feeling, and imagine you want to knee civilization itself in the balls.

SHIRLEY

But why?

CHARLIE

Well, why do you want to knee Marcus in the balls?

SHIRLEY

I don't know. I guess he just sort of seems like a dick.

CHARLIE

Seems like a dick, knee him in the balls. Got it. Would you excuse us for a second?

MARCUS

Gears, keep an eye on her.

Charlie and Marcus move off to the side and start whispering to each other.

SHIRLEY

(to Gears)

Is your name really "Gears"?

GEARS

He calls me Gears. It's very demeaning. I don't even have gears!

SHIRLEY

That must drive you nuts. I'm sure he doesn't mean anything by it, though. He's pretty clearly got a head full of marshmallows.

(gently)

So what should I call you?

Pause as Gears thinks and draws a blank.

GEARS

(defeated)

"Gears"?

Charlie and Marcus come back over.

CHARLIE

Let's say civilization was a dick.

MARCUS

(to Charlie)

That's what you came away with after that whole conversation we just had? Seriously?

SHIRLEY

I guess if I thought civilization was a dick I'd...tweet about it? Like, hashtag-CivilizationFail?

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - CORRIDOR

Charlie and Marcus again head toward the command center.

CHARLIE

And we can't re-brainwash her?

MARCUS

Sure, if we wanted to turn her into a vegetable.

CHARLIE

(carefully considering it)

A vegetable, eh?

MARCUS

That wasn't a suggestion!

CHARLIE

OK, so if I want to continue getting my father's ICARUS funding and using it to set up the Deathkill Grand -- and if I want to convince my father that I'm not "the most disappointing orgasm he ever had" -- I'll need a really sinister idea.

(beat)

And it looks like I'm just going to have to do it myself.

MARCUS

(to himself)

Do it myself...

(has an idea)

Of course! I'll just win her back!

He stops in his tracks and turns back the way they came.

CHARLIE

(to himself)

I'm sure I can come up with something sinister enough without having to hurt anybody...

Gears comes running up the corridor to catch Charlie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, hi, Gears!

GEARS

Listen, you've got to tell Shirley the truth about the brainwashing! It isn't right to leave her in the dark. Do the right thing!

CHARLIE

Boop beep boop-boop! Good robot.

He keeps walking and Gears stops, frustrated.

GEARS

(to himself)

Motherfucker!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. OCEAN - CANCER

The Cancer moves through the deep. It passes a giant squid wrestling a sperm whale (exactly like the exhibit at New York's American Museum of Natural History).

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - SHIRLEY'S QUARTERS

Shirley is punching and kicking the punching bag with expertise, still in her hospital clothes. Marcus comes in, trying to act suave and sexy.

MARCUS

Well, hello, gorgeous. It's Marcus.

SHIRLEY

No locks on these doors, huh?

She stops exercising.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

(to Marcus and the
punching bag)

OK, you two. Switch places.

MARCUS

You know, a lot of women have been impressed by how comfortable I am around chicks with an attitude.

SHIRLEY

Wow. You're really something special. No kidding.

Shirley starts punching and kicking the bag again.

MARCUS

You're an amazing blend of strong and delicate, like a cactus flower.

SHIRLEY

"Like a cactus flower"?! This is an act, right? Like some kind of Andy Kaufman thing?

MARCUS

OK, I get it. You're a woman; you want a real man. Without weakness. Without doubt.

SHIRLEY

Without halitosis.

MARCUS

I've been going about this all wrong. You don't want to be sweet-talked.

SHIRLEY

Oh! Is that what you've been doing?

MARCUS

You want me to sweep you off your feet. You like it rough. You want to know who's in charge.

Marcus tries to grab her and kiss her. She flips him over her head, slams him onto his back on the floor, and drops to her knee on his neck.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

OK OK OK OK I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry...

SHIRLEY

Let me just be clear about something, Marcus, OK? Because I don't want to confuse you. You know how "no" means no?

MARCUS

Yes, yes, that's what it means! It means itself, right!

SHIRLEY

OK. Well, for me, "no" means I fold you up so you can fit in one of those flat-rate boxes from the post office. And not the big kind, either. Then I mail you to Tokyo, where you can crab-walk around like something out of a Japanese horror movie. Am I making any sense?

MARCUS

Yes and no, but I do think I get the gist!

SHIRLEY

Great!

She gets off his neck. He scrambles to his feet and scrambles to the door.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Nice talking with you, garbage mouth!

CUT TO:

INT. CANCER - COMMAND CENTER

Charlie is in the La-Z-Boy, addressing the monitor, where we see DEATHKILL (70), teleconferencing from his space station. Deathkill used to be brilliant but lost his mind in space; now he blinks a lot, gesticulates, and will RANDOMLY START SHOUTING!!! for no reason, with moments of lucidity broken up by subway-maniac-level insanity.

CHARLIE

And this is the good part, Dad: Geneva, Brussels -- then Bordeaux, where they make the wine -- of course Verona and Milano in Italy, Nantucket and Tahoe in the US, Maui, Tahiti... but then Chessmen?! You see what I'm saying?

(beat)

Of course, the thing about those cookies is they're distinctive.

DEATHKILL (ON TV)

Enough of this drivel! You're not even in charge anymore! Get me the new COMMANDER OF ICARUS!!!

CHARLIE

You've gotten really screamy. Is everything OK up there, Dad?

DEATHKILL (ON TV)

If I didn't care about ICARUS and the Cancer, I would have half a mind right now to SINK YOU AND LEAVE YOU ON THE OCEAN FLOOR!!!

CHARLIE

That is incredibly harsh. Listen, Dad, Shirley doesn't have any good ideas. You'll see when she gets here. But I do, now!

Enter Marcus, in a foul mood.

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 (dripping with contempt)
 Like what?

CHARLIE
 Uh...

He looks to Marcus for help. Marcus shrugs, like, "You're on your own."

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 (deep breath)
 Picture the Apollo Theater,
 scuttling across the ocean floor,
 and me on stage, in a tuxedo,
 singing.
 (starts to sing a Harry
 Belafonte song -- really
 well, in fact)
 DAY-O...!

DEATHKILL
 (insane rage)
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...?!

CHARLIE
 Joking! Just joking!
 (heartbroken, he starts
 trying to improvise a
 plan that's more his
 father's speed)
 We're going to build a giant
 robot...worm? And have it tunnel
 under...Portland. Where it will
 vibrate at a frequency that will
 cause all the area's...

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 (interested)
 ...nuclear power plants...?

CHARLIE
 ...yeah, that's right, nuclear
 power plants. It'll cause the
 nuclear power plants there to just
 sort of, you know...

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 (very pleased)
 ...MELT DOWN?!!

Charlie is not comfortable with the direction this is going.

CHARLIE

Oh. Well...I guess we could have them melt down, a little. But I was really thinking something more along the lines of, you know... reverse pressure on the toilets...

DEATHKILL (ON TV)

(on his own roll now)
Bathing the Pacific Northwest--

CHARLIE

(hopefully)
--in toilet water?

DEATHKILL (ON TV)

--in lethal radiation! By the time the pathetic Tandy Man knows what's happening, it will be TOO LATE!!! It seems I've underestimated you, Charlie. Deathkill OUT!!!

The monitor flickers off.

MARCUS

Well, you did it.
(under his breath)
Like a dog accidentally opening a door.

CHARLIE

Yes...

He turns to Marcus, already shaking his head "no" in answer to his own question:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

But of course we don't actually have the technology to do something like that -- build robot worms and make the power plants melt down.

MARCUS

Yeah, we could do that.

Charlie's head-shake turns into an unhappy head-nod.

CHARLIE

We could, huh? And I guess Tandy Man couldn't probably find a way to stop the worms and--?
(off Marcus's reaction)
No, it'll be too late? Oh, boy.

MARCUS

What are you worrying about? You did it. You impressed your father. You're a Deathkill, just like you wanted. You're not "a nasty genetic satire." He'll keep funding us. We can build the Deathkill Grand.

CHARLIE

Yes...

(beat)

How many people do you think could get hurt if we bathed the Pacific Northwest in lethal radiation? Not too many, right? Isn't it mostly tundra up there?

MARCUS

Uh...

Enter Shirley and Gears. Shirley is back in her bad-ass black jumpsuit. Marcus nervously avoids her.

CHARLIE

Shirley! You look like you're feeling better.

SHIRLEY

Gears said you had something to say to me.

CHARLIE

He did? Huh...I can't remember what that would have been. Gears, when did you and I have this conversation?

GEARS

We didn't have a conversation. I just think there's something you need to tell Shirley.

CHARLIE

(to Shirley)

I...love you?

GEARS

Not that.

MARCUS

(whispering, to Charlie)

She's trying to get you to tell her about the ainwashing-bray!

CHARLIE
 (full voice)
 Ainwash--

Marcus slaps his hand over Charlie's mouth.

SHIRLEY
 Charlie. Do you have something to
 say to me, or don't you?

Charlie and Marcus are saved by the bell as the monitor
 flickers back on. It's Deathkill.

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 Charlie! I've had another thought
 about your plan FOR PORTLAND!!!

CHARLIE
 Oh, yeah. You know, I had a
 question about that, too. Maybe
 melting down the power plants is a
 little too, uh...on the nose? I
 mean, wouldn't it be better to--

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 Is there a way to create an army of
 robot worms that can ventilate the
 continents and FLOOD THE WORLD?!?!?

CHARLIE
 Oh, unfortunately, no, we don't
 have the technology to--

MARCUS
 We can do that.

Charlie glares at Marcus.

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 Excellent! I want at least two out
 of every three men, women, and
 children either drowned or at least
TOTALLY DRENCHED!!!

CHARLIE
 Wait, but don't you think--

The monitor flickers out. Charlie is miserable.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, man! That's even worse than--

The monitor flickers back on again.

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 (real fever pitch)
AND DISINTEGRATE ASIA!!!
 (beat)
 You know, just find a way to
 disintegrate it. I thought of that
 and wanted to share it before I
 forgot.

CHARLIE
 Disintegrate Asia?
 (beat)
 No, that is too much!

Deathkill looks at him, surprised.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 We're not disintegrating Asia,
 we're not flooding the world, and
 we're not killing any polar bears!

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 Polar bears?

CHARLIE
 I'm in charge of ICARUS now, Dad!
 And I'm not you. I'm through trying
 to be what you think I should be.
 I'm Charlie Deathkill. I may not be
 a professor, but I do...
 (he's got nothing)
 ...live in a crab.

MARCUS
 It's not a crab.

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
 OK, this makes sense. I knew
 something must be wrong when you
 seemed to be doing something right.
 Agent King, you are to assume
 control of ICARUS IMMEDIATELY!!!

SHIRLEY
 Uh...

CHARLIE
 She can't, Dad! Why? Because--
 (looks at Gears, then at
 Marcus, then at Shirley)
 --we brainwashed her.
 (to Shirley)
 We brainwashed you. I'm sorry.

Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 (to his father)
 And what I really want to be doing
 with my life is--

DEATHKILL (ON TV)
CHARLES ROSENZWEIG DEATHKILL?!??!

Charlie braces himself to be verbally abused more viciously than he's ever been verbally abused before -- if he's lucky.

DEATHKILL (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 Brainwashing Agent King is the
 foulest, most unpleasant
BACKSTABBING MOVE I've ever seen
 you do!
 (then)
 Maybe there's hope for you after
 all. You will resume duties as
SUPREME COMMNDER OF ICARUS!!! with
 Shirley remaining Chief Minion
 Coordinator...
 (craziest yet)
FOR NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 (totally normal voice)
 Deathkill out.

The monitor flickers out.

MARCUS
 Wow. Because of the brainwashing?
 So you get to keep your job and
 your funding because of a plan I
 came up with that didn't even work?
 You even used my line: "I'm Charlie
 Deathkill." Don't I get any credit
 for that? That was a good line!

SHIRLEY
 You're trying to copyright
 Charlie's name, now?

MARCUS
 Not his name! The rhetorical
 presentation of the idea! Jesus!

CHARLIE
 Not now, Marcus.
 (to Shirley)
 Shirley, I'm so sorry I had you
 brainwashed. That was inexcusable.
 (MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Seriously, I feel just awful about
 it. What a dick move.

SHIRLEY
 Stop, stop, it's really OK,
 Charlie. You didn't actually
 brainwash me.

CHARLIE
 Sprechen Sie whaaat??

SHIRLEY
 I've been brainwashed so many times
 over the years, I'm pretty much
 immune at this point.

GEARS
 Wait. So you were just pretending
 to be brainwashed?

CHARLIE
 ...so I could learn to deal with my
 father without anybody's help!
 (then, to Shirley)
 Or were you testing me to see if
 I'd eventually tell you the truth?

SHIRLEY
 Neither. I was just using it as a
 way to get out of dating that.

She points at Marcus.

MARCUS
 You--! I can't believe you would do
 something like that to me! What
 kind of person are you?!

SHIRLEY
 The kind of person who dumps guys
 who think it's OK to brainwash
 their girlfriends.

MARCUS
 (pointing at Charlie)
 Then why aren't you mad at him?!

SHIRLEY
 He doesn't know any better.

CHARLIE
 (thinks it's a compliment)
 Oh, stop. I'm blushing.

SHIRLEY

(to Marcus)

Besides, you said it was your plan.
Oh, and one other thing, Marcus...

She sings the "Seinfeld" bass riff, complete with the little popping sounds afterwards.

MARCUS

It wasn't like that! It was like
the Ramones!

He storms off.

CHARLIE

He'll be all right!

GEARS

Well, I guess everything turned out
OK in the end.

CHARLIE

(to Shirley)

I love this guy! He's like
Woodstock -- you know, the bird who
hangs around the dog? All he says
is these little vertical lines?

GEARS

I don't say vertical lines! I
speak, in sentences, with real
thoughts and feelings!

He pats Gears on the head.

CHARLIE

Isn't he great? I feel like I
should go take a nap on the roof of
my dog house!

He puts his arms around the others and laughs heartily.
Shirley and Gears stand there, waiting for him to stop.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - CANCER

The Cancer moves through the deep...and then we rise, with
lightning speed, through three miles of ocean, emerging to
see--

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY AIRCRAFT CARRIER - DAY

Tandy Man stands at the railing, looking down into the water. He grins.

TANDY MAN

Found you. It's about time I tied
up some loose ends that I left
untied when I was...

(getting confused)

...tying stuff.

(regains focus)

Ready or not, Charlie Deathkill...
here I come.

He pushes a button on his own shoulder, and a glass, fishbowl-style diving helmet (a bit like Buzz Lightyear's) slides out from his robot shoulders to cover his head -- but it moves too fast and when it closes around his head it smashes itself against his body into shards of glass around his head.

Tandy Man, startled, falls off the boat.

TANDY MAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Activate copter! Activate--

We hear a SPLASH.

END OF SHOW