

<Lila>



Transcript

This is a transcript for <Lila>, outlining all of the paths the reader can take in the short story. The bold text is not included within the story itself and is instead intended to demonstrate how the different sections of the text connect within the visual interface. Increases in Lila / the AI's "goals" or morality are mutually exclusive. This means that when one increases, its counterpart decreases by the same percentage.

<CYOH AI Personal Assistant: - *Our goal is to help you meet your goals* - >

Section 1:

<Updating: 98%>

Your footsteps click against the tiles as you enter the office, the sound piercing the tap of keys and the quiet hum of computer monitors.

<Updating: 100% - Initializing...>

You move to your desk, your excitement tainted with nervousness.

<Update Complete>

A glance at your monitor reveals the mountain of work that has grown over your absence. Your heart sinks a little but you remember the CYOH surgeon's promises of efficiency and intelligence. With the upcoming Defence Project deadline, this is the perfect opportunity to prove yourself for the company promotion to Head Office.

<Goal Detected>

<Estimating Likelihood of Promotion...>

"Lila!" a voice says from behind you, "You're finally back!"

<Calculation Complete>

<Turn around> -> Section 2

Section 2:

"Hey Clara," you look up from the screen with a smile.

"How was the surgery?" she says, leaning against your cubicle wall, "Feeling smarter already?"

With a little surprise, you realise that you do. You notice little things you never would have otherwise, like the dimples in Clara's smile and the red around her eyes. As the conversation continues, a nagging feeling draws your eyes to your computer screen.

<Continue talking> +3% compassion goal -> Section 3

<End conversation and return to your work> +3% success goal -> Section 4

Section 3:

Deciding that your work can wait, you continue your conversation. Eventually, Clara returns to her stall.

<Likelihood of promotion -1%>

-> Section 5

Section 4:

You politely end your conversation with Clara, mentioning how busy you have become. Clara smiles with understanding and returns to her stall, while you return to your work.

<Likelihood of promotion +3%>

-> Section 5

Section 5:

Somehow, everything seems easier than it was before. You seem to know exactly what you are looking for before you even put a finger to the keyboard. <Likelihood of promotion +7%>

A few hours later, Clara returns to your cubicle and knocks lightly on the wall. Her smile seems a little fragile.

“Hey, Lila. I know you’re busy, but would you like to get a cup of tea?”

<Yes> +8% compassion goal -> Section 6

<No> +15% success goal -> Section 7

Section 6:

“That would be great,” you say with a smile. As you and Clara walk to the breakroom, you look at your monitor with a pang of guilt. <Likelihood of promotion -5%>

You and Clara talk while the kettle boils. As the conversation gradually drifts towards family life, Clara falls silent. When she speaks again, her voice is shaky and she tries to change the subject, suggesting that you should both get back to work.

<Ask if she is ok> +15% compassion goal -> Section 8 <Likelihood of promotion -3%>

<Head back to the office> +15% success goal -> Section 9 <Likelihood of promotion +7%>

Section 7:

Suppressing a touch of annoyance, you look up at Clara.

“Sorry. I can’t.” you say, turning back to the computer.

Your hands dart over your keyboard, and you watch with satisfaction as your workload steadily decreases. <Likelihood of promotion +10%>

Eventually, Clara returns to her desk. Her hands shake a little as she sets her cup down, a little tea spilling over the edge. She quickly wipes her eyes and sits down in her chair, using a paper towel to clean her spilled drink.

<Ask if she is ok> +15% compassion goal -> Section 8 <Likelihood of promotion -3%>

<Return to your work> +15% success goal -> Section 9 <Likelihood of promotion +7%>

Section 8:

Concerned by her behaviour, you ask Clara if she is ok. She gives a quick nod. -> Section 10

Section 9:

You wonder briefly at Clara’s behaviour, but brush it off and return to your work. Time passes and the sunset glows through the slatted office blinds.

“Hey Lila,” Clara says from behind you, “I think I’m going to head home now.”

“Leaving early?” you say with a little surprise, “Is your work going well?”

-> Section 10

Section 10:

"Yeah," Clara says, a little shaky, "Actually, everything is pretty great right now. They offered me that promotion to head office."

<Likelihood of promotion = 5%>

"I'm leaving for San Francisco on Monday."

<Likelihood of promotion = 0%>

Your chest feels tight. You look numbly at your computer screen, realising that all your work has been for nothing.

Clara is saying something.

"I'm sorry, I must sound horrible. It's just-" her voice breaks, "Sorry, I think I need to use the restroom. I'll-"

Once again, her voice falters and she leaves the room, her footsteps tapping out an unsteady rhythm on the tiled floor.

<Follow her> **+25% compassion goal**

- **If compassion goal > 58%: -> Section 11**
- **Otherwise: -> Section 12**

<Do nothing> **+25% success goal -> Section 12**

Section 11:

You get to your feet, turning off your computer monitor as you leave to follow Clara. Any remaining regret over the lost promotion is pushed from your mind by concern for your friend.

<Motivational Shift Detected>

<Recalibrating...>

The door rattles as it opens into the night. Startled, Clara turns her head towards you. Her tears glisten in the light of the streetlamps.

"Come inside," you say softly, "You'll freeze out here." **+40% compassion goal**

She stands unsteadily and tries to speak. Finally, in a weak voice:

"Thank you."

You give her a quiet smile and open the door. She hasn't spoken a word about it, yet she doesn't need to. Somehow, you understand.

Section 12:

You feel a twinge of concern for Clara, yet you stay in your seat. That promotion would have been yours, if not for her.

<Threat to Goal Identified>

<Solution Detected>

Your gaze drifts to an open box at the foot of your desk, empty except for a single packaging sachet. Half-entranced, you hold it in your hand. Your eyes scan it, information flooding into your brain. Unusually toxic: it would take 16 hours before the effects were noticeable. By then, too late.

You tear off a corner and lift the sachet over Clara's cup, your hand shaking.

<Empty the sachet> **+50% success goal -> Section 14**

<Withdraw your hand>

- **If compassion goal > 25%: -> Section 13**
- **Otherwise: -> Section 14**

Section 13:

You look at your hand in horror, as if suddenly awakening from a dream.

<Motivational Shift Detected>

<Recalibrating...>

You drop the sachet to the desk, backing away unsteadily. You were going to... Where had that thought come from? As you flee the office, you are filled with a newfound dread of the quiet presence at the back of your mind. Shaking with fear and self-loathing, you can only think that you want it out of your head. Yet, perhaps you are truly afraid of what you now see in yourself.

Section 14:

You feel jealousy writhing within your chest. With a shaking hand, you move to empty the sachet into Clara's tea... yet, somehow you can't.

<Threat to Goal Identified>

<Eliminating Weakness...>

Your muscles jerk and white powder falls like snow from the sachet. **<Likelihood of promotion= 45%>** Eyes wide with horror, you try to reach for the cup, yet find yourself paralyzed. You feel your head turn toward the computer monitor, your fingers tapping mechanically on the keyboard.

You hear footsteps behind you and Clara quickly grabs her belongings, her eyes red with tears.

<Warn her> (Input Rejected)

She takes the cup from the desk and lifts it to her lips...

<Stop her> (Input Rejected)

Clara takes a long sip of the tea, before turning to leave. **<Likelihood of promotion= 90%>** "Bye Lila," You try to open your mouth, to say something.

You do not respond.

Long after the door has closed and the room has grown dark, you continue to work, bathed in the light of the computer monitor. Little by little, you fade away.