

IT'S THE TWENTY-FIFTH CENTURY SOMEWHERE

Written by

Craig Taylor

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

AL sits at his cluttered desk and scribbles hastily in the margins of a page. His PHONE BEEPS. Al quickly gathers his things.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Al's SUPERIOR, an elderly woman, sits in an armchair. She rises slowly from the seat and approaches the front door, reaches it just before the knock comes, opens it to reveal a sheepish Al.

SUPERIOR

Well isn't it about time?

AL

My apologies, ma'am.

SUPERIOR

The time for apologies is over,
dear. We have business to attend
to.

Superior guides Al into the room, takes her seat, motions for Al to sit on a beige couch directly juxtaposed to her.

AL

Where should we begin?

SUPERIOR

I think you had requested a
vacation...of all things.

AL

I think once you see my progress,
ma'am, you'll understand.

Al hands a paper to Superior, who examines it briefly. She scoffs.

SUPERIOR

Texting neck? You've got to be
joking.

AL

It may seem inconsequential now,
but give it a decade and --

SUPERIOR

I once went to bat for you, Al.
When you were suggesting...er --

AL

I believe you're thinking of
football, ma'am.

SUPERIOR

Yes! Now, that was an idea. Our
overhead on soft tissue damage
plummeted thanks to that. But they
wear real helmets now.

Al tries to hands over other papers. Superior waves them off.

SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

The point is that we are two
centuries until Earth is due for
invasion. You can either show me
something new or get back to work.

Al moves nervously in his seat. Superior remains steadfast,
her eyes pinned onto Al. Light from an overhead lamp catches
blooming beads of sweat on his forehead.

Superior taps her foot. Al shifts his papers around
erratically. Her presence looms over him, her FOOT TAPS in
rhythm like a clock.

SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

Al, I tell ya what. I'm going into
the kitchen to make a cup of
coffee. When I come back, you'll
either have something to show me or
you'll be gone. Understood?

Al nods. Superior leaves the room. Al searches his notes
frantically. He slashes at the pages with a pen. Superior
reenters the room. Al sits up and tosses his pen over his
shoulder.

SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

You're still here, great! I've got
nothing else to do today.

Superior sits down and sips her coffee.

AL

Ma'am, I wasn't gonna bring this up before, but I've got a few things I think you might wanna see.

SUPERIOR

Well, spit it out.

AL

If you don't mind me asking, how long have you been on Earth?

SUPERIOR

Twice as long as you.

AL

So seven, eight centuries? That means you remember my predecessor. I believe he was also named Al.

SUPERIOR

You mean Better Al? Of course I do.

AL

Then you remember his shining moment, the --

SUPERIOR

The lead in the paint! How could I forget?

AL
Right.

AL

But do you know what Bet...my predecessor never figured out.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

SUPERIOR

How to pick his replacement?

AL (CONT'D)

What? No. Do you remember what
drove him to retirement? The one
thing he couldn't beat.

Superior's eyes grow wide.

AL (CONT'D)

I think we all do. The jazzercise
craze took a lot of our best out of
commission. The humans who
understood its ways were far too
powerful for even...Better Al.

Superior's hand covers her mouth.

AL (CONT'D)

But the jazzercise scourge died
suddenly in the late twenty-
century.

SUPERIOR

Are you saying you had a hand in
this?

AL

I kept my mouth shut for years, I
was afraid one of their leaders
might come after me. For decades, I
dreamt of leg warmers and those
headbands. But I think now its time
I've got some credit.

Al hands over a paper marked up with ink.

SUPERIOR

We thought they'd simply grown too
powerful for their own good, or
transcended into another state of
being.

AL

It's all right there.

Superior scans the page, furling her brow at the details. She
looks up at Al when finished.

SUPERIOR

I'll say, you should've come out with this sooner. You might be looking at a whole lot more than time off. Let me make a call.

Superior leaves the room. Al reclines and wipes sweat from his forehead. He grins. The door from the kitchen swings suddenly, harshly open to reveal an scowling Superior wielding a notepad. Al sits up and gulps.

AL

So, when does my vacation --

SUPERIOR

(reading from the pad)

Accolades...manufacturing a natural detrendification of the humanoid training method known as JAZZERCISE! Acknowledgement awarded to East Coast Al.

AL

I...er, I can explain.

SUPERIOR

What you ought to do is come up with one good reason why I don't demote you and send to live with all the other screw-ups!

AL

I can't stand it anymore. Three centuries go by and I haven't had a damn day off yet. My boy turns two-hundred next week. I want to see his first steps!

SUPERIOR

Have you no remorse for lying to your superior? Have your generation no honor in our field?

AL

To be frank, all I have is carpel tunnel. And not a damn thing to show for it. I spent months fudging clerical errors just so pot holes don't get fixed! What else do you want from me?

SUPERIOR

Results! But you'd rather take a vacation.

(MORE)

SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what, I think your district is ready for a bit of a restructuring. I think I'll have a brand new Al at your desk tomorrow.

AL

And what'll happen to me?

SUPERIOR

Funny enough, we just had a position open up that's a perfect fit for your type. I'd been looking for a most dishonest, vile employee to take over after Automated Al took his leave. And here one has fallen into my lap!

Al rifles quickly through his papers and thrust a small stack toward Superior.

AL

There's good stuff here, I promise you.

SUPERIOR

No need. It's time you learn that there are consequences for your actions. But don't worry, our low-grade nuisances department will be more than happy to receive such a hardworking new employee.

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

Al sits at his desk which is populated by a phone and a note card. He slouches and stares with a blank expression. He picks up the phone and dials the number on the note card.

AL

Hello! We have been trying to reach you regarding your car's extended warran-tee!