

1) Sample from the Sci-Fi BiblioMMO, Tau Station. Cur8, an android acquaintance, asks the player to help their partner Qui9 with difficult case:

Player Choice: What's my role in all this?

Cur8: As I said, your presence is serendipitous, [player name] – Qui9 has decided to investigate matters herself, and has already landed in Tianjin.

Given your assistance in understanding employee motivations, I would request that you meet with Qui9 and help with her investigation. There will be no contract this time – this is a personal matter, off the record.

He smiles at you.

Cur8: You would be compensated, of course. The matter is affecting my work, and I am curious on a personal level... such as it is.

Player Choice: What does Qui9 think is happening?

Cur8: It would be better for you not to know. Objectivity is useful in a situation like this one, and even androids, gynoids and xynoids have biases.

Player Choice: You have biases?

Cur8: Of course. There is not enough computational power to model everything in the universe in real-time, to ask an infinite number of questions and process all their answers and feed those back into our systems. As such, we have to decide what information to look at, which questions to ask, and that requires use of our best judgement. A bias, if you would.

His explanation is kind, without a trace of condescension.

Cur8: In addition, all forms of artificial intelligence, such as myself, make these decisions due to the way we were programmed... by humanoids such as yourself, who are known to have biases of their own.

2) Sample from a later part of the above mission, from Tau Station.

[Upon player searching the wrong area]

You look for anyone who may be willing to talk about what happened. If anyone saw the corpse art, they aren't willing to talk. You should try your luck elsewhere.

[Upon player searching the correct area]

As you walk past a shop selling particularly gruesome gadgets, you overhear three patrons touting the fleeting beauty of decaying bodies as works of art. They praise the medium's ability to capture humanity's visceral desires, and their never-ending quest for immortality.

[Intelligence Check] Use clever-sounding jargon to insinuate yourself into their conversation.

You point out how the triple spiral's upward trend signifies striving for immortality, but the pained faces topping each spiral show that we will never be content, even with true immortality of the flesh. Your listeners seem mildly impressed.

Slender Man: Well, yes, of course. It is a conflict as old as mankind – yearning for what you cannot have, and knowing that if you achieve it, you will immediately be dissatisfied. But I daresay the piece captured it in a way I haven't seen in cycles. And not just because it was born from the actual death of dummies!

Young Woman: Perhaps, but I think the true value of the piece lies in its specific shade of gray. Why pewter? As an alloy, it suits a statue made from multiple different bodies, but there are many others to choose from. Perhaps it's pewter's tin content – tin is associated with Jupiter's deities, after all...

Long-Haired Figure: Jupiter, the planet orbiting Sol? I must admit I don't remember its specific gods, but that's because I prefer other levels of symbolism. Triple helices are rather uncommon in this medium. To use the flesh and bones of dummies without clones adds even more fragility...

As the conversation continues, it becomes increasingly clear that these three individuals are fixated on the deaths involved in the statue's creation. While they never claim to want another accident to happen, they do seem intrigued by the idea. Eventually you excuse yourself.

3) Sample from the magical realist RPG, Elemental Flow. Clara visits her grandmother, Maria Luisa, who recently had an accident and now suffers from limited mobility.

Clara: I'm sure there are things you can still do.

Maria Luisa: What, new hobbies? Little activities to entertain old people?

Clara: Hey, don't mock hobbies! There's still—

Maria Luisa: —I know, I know, I've heard it all before, Clara.

"You've got time to pick up something new!"

"You should make friends here!"

"You're retired, it's the perfect time to learn how to knit. It'll be more relaxing than repairing the stove!"

Clara: They really said all that?

Maria Luisa: They may as well have.

Clara: I mean, making friends is probably a good idea...

Maria Luisa: They treat me like a kid, Clara! My own children!

Setting up *playdates* with local old gardeners, as if I cared about plants...

Going to book clubs, or whatever else people my age are supposed to do...

Clara: You do like reading, though.

Maria Luisa: As a solitary activity! Not so José the retired doctor can tell me the main character's motivations.

Clara: Yeah, I suppose that's not the same.

A pause.

Maria Luisa: ...I thought you would understand, Clara.

You've always done what you wanted, had your freedom.

Why can't I have mine now? Haven't I earned it?

Clara: Maybe if you—

Maria Luisa: —Let's go, Clara. I'm getting tired.

The screen fades to black, and Clara finds herself transported into Maria Luisa's mind. It's not the first time this has happened to Clara, but never before with her grandmother.

Clara: This place... It's an idealised version of a plaza.

The soft murmur of voices, grass rustling in a warm breeze, a golden sunset...

Clara: I wonder if this is Grandma's mind.

Upon finding Maria Luisa...

Clara: There you are!

Maria Luisa: My Clarita... you stopped by.

Clara: I'm glad I did! It's such an amazing place.

Maria Luisa: Thanks. I built the gazebo myself, you know.

The wood is red quebracho. It's not just used for barbecues, you know!

Clara: I didn't even know it *was* used for barbecues.

Maria Luisa: Back home that's certainly the case.

I've always wanted to build something with it.

Clara: And now you have!

Maria Luisa: That's because no one stopped me this time.

I managed to design the gazebo without your aunt telling me to "take it easy"!

Clara: Design and build, too, from the looks of it.

Maria Luisa: Building is just applied engineering.

It's fun to get a bit of field practise in.

A pause.

Clara: You really miss it, don't you?

Maria Luisa: I don't "miss" engineering, Clara. I *am* an engineer.

Why can no one see that?

Clara has an Encounter, akin to an RPG battle, but involving conversation. "Misunderstanding", a passive focus on Maria Luisa, makes it hard to succeed, although it can be turned off.

Clara: (Hm... I need to find another way to explain this.)

What if, hypothetically, you couldn't design anymore?

You injured yourself, your vision got worse, or something like that.

What happens then?

Maria Luisa: That wouldn't be me.

Clara: So who would it be? Maria Luisa version 2.0?

I went to Rhodan and now I'm Clara 2.0 - it's not a bad thing!

4) Sample from the Sci-Fi BiblioMMO, Tau Station.

Sergio: You must be [player name], the one Jada messaged me about. Can we talk over there, though? I just don't want to, you know...

He trails off awkwardly and leads you both to a quiet break area. After a few failed attempts to sit somewhere inconspicuous, he compromises by standing behind a flowering plant, which unfortunately makes him stand out even more.

Sergio: Jada's told you about the conference, right? She thinks everyone here is too wound up... and honestly, I feel the same way. I only started working here this cycle, but I'm feeling exhausted already. I don't know how anyone keeps this up! So when I heard Jada ranting about the good old days, I thought "that sounds like it might actually be fun"!

The voice he uses for his inner thoughts is strangely deep.

Sergio: I've got the perfect idea, but they're watching Jada, and I think they might be watching me too. And maybe all of the University personnel. So, what I need you to do is get me some Liquid Gold. I've sent you the details to an anonymous account you can use for the payment, just do it quickly, alright? I'm sure you can find some in the commerce hub.

Player: Wait, what's Liquid—

Sergio is off before you can finish your sentence, waving at you as he rushes back to work.

New Goal: Find "Liquid Gold" at the market (Cape Verde Commerce Hub)

You browse a few of the compact retail units until one catches your eye. While it mostly houses personal protective equipment, a small corner is dedicated to a collection of metallic doodads and colourful knick-knacks. As soon as you show interest, the owner offers you a wide smile.

Bart: Welcome, friend, to Bart Van de Bock's Bric-a-Brac Stand! If you need protective equipment, it's available in all sizes, colours, and for all genotypes. I've also got some things that are a little more frivolous – you know, to add some entertainment to your containment!

Player: I'm looking for Liquid Gold.

As soon as he hears the words, Bart's friendly demeanour drops, as does his jaw. He barely manages to blurt out his next words.

Bart: I wouldn't, I mean – what makes you think I'd sell something like that? Have you really come to Bart's Bric-a-Brac looking for something so... inappropriate?

*** Player Choice 1:** Oh. I thought it was a type of alcohol.

Bart seems to relax a little.

Bart: A drink? Well... It could be, I suppose. Let me think...

A trader low on credits paid me with a few bottles of gold flake absinthe, maybe that's what you're looking for. Let me ring you up. But please... don't call it Liquid Gold, alright?

You give him the anonymous account's details and receive half a dozen golden-labelled bottles in exchange.

*** Player Choice 2:** Isn't it food of some sort?

Bart seems to relax a little.

Bart: Something edible? Well... It could be, I suppose. I have a colleague who tinkers with food printers in her spare time, and she's got a recipe for everything. Let me see if she knows what you might be looking for...

He busies himself with his CORETECHS for a few moments, then looks back at you triumphantly.

Bart: It looks like her lemon mini scones topped with gold flakes have been all the rage — I'd wager that's what you're looking for. If you wait a few minutes, I'll send the recipe to the food printer and get you a few dozen.

You give him the anonymous account's details and receive a few nicely-wrapped boxes in exchange.

*** Player Choice 3:** I don't understand, what's Liquid Gold?

Bart seems to relax a little.

Bart: Hm... If you don't know what it is, then you're probably looking for something else with a similar name. Let me think...

There is a mild attention-enhancing sim that the researchers have been very keen on, very keen... You know, I reckon that's what you're looking for. I've still got some left, so you're welcome to the lot of them. Just... don't call them Liquid Gold, alright?

You give him the anonymous account's details and receive a few dozen doses of attention-enhancing stims in gold vials.