CHARACTER: MELCHIOR

passengercall: « Palais des Congrès. »

=== melchior-01-intro
                              $$ movie: lamparo_on, display_passenger $$
                              $$ sfx: sfx_gameplay_car_openclose_from_ext $$
The next passenger gets in your cab like an old man returning to his armchair, all grunts and groans.
After what seems like several minutes, he settles himself in and delicately fastens the belt across his chest.
Looking in the mirror you notice the man's age with surprise. He can't be older than 25.
MELCHIOR: "Howdy. You got the address right?"
"Palais de Congres?"
MELCHIOR: "Bingo. Let's roll,dude."
                              $$ travel: start $$
You smile to yourself and turn the key in the ignition.
After a few moments of silence, you hear your passenger moaning softly to himself, apparently in pain.
                    * "Are you ok back there?" -> melchior-01-intro-ok
                    * :smile: "Good night?" -> melchior-01-intro-goodnight
                    * "A conference center at this time of night?" -> melchior-01-intro-conf
                    * :silence: (Say nothing.) -> melchior-01-intro-silence

=== melchior-01-intro-ok
MELCHIOR: "I look that bad huh?"
"No, no it's just…"
MELCHIOR: "I'm kidding man, I know I look like roadkill. Feel like roadkill. Like I ate roadkill."
MELCHIOR: "Like some roadkill ate me."
MELCHIOR: "But I'm fine, really. Thanks for checking in."
                    -> melchior-01-scared-preshow

=== melchior-01-intro-goodnight
You see a smile beneath his hood.
MELCHIOR: "Define 'good.'"
MELCHIOR: "Feel like I got hit by a truck carrying a herd of elephants and…I'm scared as all hell but yeah. Yeah I think it's good. So far."
                    -> melchior-01-scared-preshow

=== melchior-01-intro-conf
MELCHIOR: "Right?! I told them it was a stupid idea."
MELCHIOR: "Counterculture my ass, if you hold your conference in the middle of the night to look cool you're gonna look cool on your own."
MELCHIOR: "Then again, here I am making my way across town, feeling like I got

ambushed by a bunch of sledgehammer salesmen, just to get there."
MELCHIOR: "So I guess the joke's on me, right?"
He smiles under his hood.
                    -> melchior-01-scared-preshow

=== melchior-01-intro-silence
MELCHIOR: "Been a while since I took one of these. Last guy was a bit chattier than you, my guy."
MELCHIOR: "Gonna be honest, I prefer your take on things."
MELCHIOR: "Talking…hurts."
He turns his whole body to stare out of the window.
MELCHIOR: "But here I am…still doing it. It helps, you know? Takes my mind off…my mind."
                    -> melchior-01-scared-preshow

=== melchior-01-scared-preshow
You look back at him. His eyes are hidden beneath his hood but his whole body is curled in on itself. He looks…terrified.
"Are you sure you're ok?"
MELCHIOR: "Just…preshow jitters."
He laughs unconvincingly.
MELCHIOR: "Who am I kidding? I'm scared out of my mind."
MELCHIOR: "…literally. Ha."
                    * "Scared?" -> melchior-01-scared-conf
                    * "Are you sick?" -> melchior-01-scared-sick
                    * (Say nothing.) -> melchior-01-scared-intro

=== melchior-01-scared-intro
Your passenger's face is hard to make out in the murk of the back seat, but his skin looks porcelain white.
                    -> melchior-01-scared-conf

=== melchior-01-scared-sick
MELCHIOR: "Well that depends who you ask."
MELCHIOR: "My peers probably think I'm a little crazy. A little on the edge."
MELCHIOR: "My old man though? The only reason he didn't have me committed was the possibility of the neighbors finding out…"
MELCHIOR: "All because of my work."
                    -> melchior-01-scared-conf

=== melchior-01-scared-conf
MELCHIOR: "Technotopia 9. That's… where we're going."
MELCHIOR: "Every biohacker, transhumanist and futurologist worth his cryptocurrency will be there."

MELCHIOR: "I'm giving a talk. The closing talk, in fact."
        * "Bio…what-ers?" -> melchior-01-scared-hack
        * "Sounds like a big deal." -> melchior-01-scared-BD
        * (Say nothing.) -> melchior-01-scared-scared

=== melchior-01-scared-hack
MELCHIOR: "Let's just say we're a bunch of…techno-pragmatists."
"That doesn't really help."
The young man laughs, and immediately clutches his head.
MELCHIOR: "Ow, damnit."
MELCHIOR: "Progressives, then. We're tech savvy…progressives."
            -> melchior-01-scared-scared-intro

=== melchior-01-scared-BD
MELCHIOR: "Oh man it is!"
MELCHIOR: "Someone even saw Mitnick there yesterday. I mean, the Condor himself!"
The name means nothing to you, but your passenger looks positively star-struck.
MELCHIOR: "Me, showing off my work to the Who's Who, man! The cream!"
A huge grin splits his face an instant before he groans again. He digs his elbows deep into the seat.
            -> melchior-01-scared-scared

=== melchior-01-scared-scared-intro
MELCHIOR: " I'm about half an hour away from telling about a thousand of them about my breakthrough…"
            -> melchior-01-scared-scared

=== melchior-01-scared-scared
MELCHIOR: "And all it took was a little brain surgery."
        * "What?" -> melchior-01-scared-what
        * "You're recovering from brain surgery?" -> melchior-01-scared-recovery
        * "Shouldn't you be in hospital?" -> melchior-01-scared-hospital
        * (Say nothing.) -> melchior-01-scared-silence

=== melchior-01-scared-recovery
MELCHIOR: "I certainly hope so."
He points to his head.
MELCHIOR: "Although, we only completed the procedure a few days ago. Too early to tell at this point."
            -> melchior-01-procedure

=== melchior-01-scared-hospital

MELCHIOR: "Oh, believe me, I was."
MELCHIOR: "Two days in that…clean, extremely well-staffed hell-hole."
MELCHIOR: "Do you know they tried to serve me three square meals a day?! The nerve."
MELCHIOR: "Losers like me get by on 2 protein shakes and a candy bar per day, preferably consumed after dark."
He scoffs. Gently.
                  -> melchior-01-procedure

=== melchior-01-scared-what
MELCHIOR: "Yeah, don't worry about me."
                  -> melchior-01-scared-silence

=== melchior-01-scared-silence
You can't help a look of surprise crossing your face, but you manage to stay quiet.
                  -> melchior-01-procedure

=== melchior-01-procedure
MELCHIOR: "That's the real reason I'm so fucking scared, if I'm honest."
MELCHIOR: "I did this to myself."
He gestures towards his current state.
MELCHIOR: "Designed a new kind of brain implant, one that can access…everything."
MELCHIOR: "The unlimited learning potential of the meta-web. A mind-gate between my brain and the Cloud."
                  * "The Cloud?" -> melchior-01-procedure-cloud
                  * "You put a computer in your head?" -> melchior-01-procedure-computer
                  * "You're a doctor?" -> melchior-01-procedure-doctor

=== melchior-01-procedure-cloud
MELCHIOR: "You got one of those smart speakers?"
                  * "No." -> melchior-01-noway
                  * "Absolutely not." -> melchior-01-noway

=== melchior-01-noway
MELCHIOR: "But you're aware of the concept? Machine learning? The Internet of Things…"
"More or less…"
He jabs a finger at you.
MELCHIOR: "That."
You make a turn and see the lights of the conference center.
MELCHIOR: "The problem is…"
                  -> melchior-01-procedure-alone

=== melchior-01-procedure-computer

MELCHIOR: "No I…"
MELCHIOR: "…yes. More or less."
MELCHIOR: "A chip, at least."
MELCHIOR: "I'm always connected now."
You make a turn and see the lights of the conference center.
MELCHIOR: "Problem is…"
                -> melchior-01-procedure-alone

=== melchior-01-procedure-doctor
He lifts his head to look at you in the mirror.
MELCHIOR: "If you think this…"
He gestures to himself.
MELCHIOR: "…is what a doctor looks like… Dude, you should see your doctor more often."
MELCHIOR: "I'm a biohacker. A Grinder. Self-improvement through technological upgrade."
MELCHIOR: "We… I…paid a doctor to implant the mind-gate."
You make a turn and see the lights of the conference center.
MELCHIOR: "The problem is…"
                -> melchior-01-procedure-alone

=== melchior-01-procedure-alone
He dips into silence for a second.
MELCHIOR: "…have you ever felt like, I dunno…"
You hear his teeth clicking, like he's weighing something up.
MELCHIOR: "Have you ever felt there's something else in the darkness behind your eyes?
Some voice telling you what to do?"
                * "Sometimes." -> melchior-01-procedure-voice
                * (Lie.) -> melchior-01-procedure-novoice
                * :silence: (Say nothing.) -> melchior-01-procedure-silentvoice

=== melchior-01-procedure-voice
That night with Ade.
That one, very specific minute.
How it felt like you were just going through the motions while someone, something else, was
at the wheel.
Telling her to call the cops.
Telling her to lock herself up in the bedroom.
Telling her to follow your lead.
"Sometimes instinct takes over, guides our hands."
MELCHIOR: "Instinct, right."
                -> melchior-01-procedure-reveal

=== melchior-01-procedure-novoice
"No, never."
The words stick in your throat.

You remember how you felt when Ade called. The decision you made seemed to come from…somewhere else. You didn't even have time to think. It was just…there.
MELCHIOR: "Oh. Ok."
MELCHIOR: "I guess you have to own your choices huh? Even the…bad ones."
MELCHIOR: "Especially if you made them for the right reasons, right?"
"Right."
                    -> melchior-01-procedure-reveal

=== melchior-01-procedure-silentvoice
You cast your mind back to the night your brother…
To when Ade called.
Were you really in control? Was it you who made the decision, or something else?
You don't want to think about it.
In the back your passenger is shaking.
                    -> melchior-01-procedure-reveal

=== melchior-01-procedure-reveal
MELCHIOR: "It's just that… Since the op… I started hearing…"
MELCHIOR: "…started seeing…"
His leans forward and his hood falls from his face.
MELCHIOR: "I don't think I'm alone in here anymore."
                        %% Because the character art will react here (hopefully) I'm not sure
we need the following description in full.
A jagged trackmark of a scar winds across his hairline but his eyes really scare you.
One is completely dark, pupil blown.
The other is milky white.
                    -> melchior-01-end-final

=== melchior-01-end
He pulls the hood back over his head and returns to the shadows.
                            $$ travel: stop $$
You take a moment and realize you've arrived at the drop-off.
You hear yourself state the amount of the fare.
When he passes you the money, his hand is ice cold.
MELCHIOR: "Have you ever done anything truly special with your life, do you think?"
MELCHIOR: "Something people will remember you for?"
            * "I… I couldn't say." -> melchior-01-end-no
            * "I try and make a difference…when I can." -> melchior-01-end-yes
            * :silence: (Say nothing.) -> melchior-01-end-silence

=== melchior-01-end-no
The man smiles beneath his hood. When he talks, his voice is somehow different.
Colder. More distant.
MELCHIOR: "Good answer."
MELCHIOR: "Who are we to guess how the future will see us?"

MELCHIOR: "But I tell you what, my friend…"
MELCHIOR: "Tonight… we're going to give immortality a damn good shot."
    -> melchior-01-end-final

=== melchior-01-end-yes
The figure reaches out and pats you on the shoulder.
When he talks his tone is changed. It is smoother. More confident.
MELCHIOR: "A sympathetic ear is hard to find. I… We… Thank you for that."
MELCHIOR: "Now it's our turn to talk."
MELCHIOR: "To…teach."
MELCHIOR: "After all…"
MELCHIOR: "Revolutions don't start themselves…"
    -> melchior-01-end-final

=== melchior-01-end-silence
The man sighs resignedly and when he talks again, his voice has changed.
It is deeper, less casual.
MELCHIOR: "An answer in itself, we think."
MELCHIOR: "Often it's the silent who are remembered above those who seek immortality."
MELCHIOR: "But tonight… tonight we will talk."
MELCHIOR: "And they will listen."
    -> melchior-01-end-final

=== melchior-01-end-final
                $$ movie: lamparo_off, hide_passenger $$
                $$ sfx: sfx_gameplay_car_openclose_from_int $$
The figure unfastens itself and exits in one fluid movement.
You watch it disappear into the crowd before turning the key and driving away.
    -> END