

Lila looked ahead to her License's Main Menu, ViViDly superimposed. The time, 4:00am, shone like a beacon in the dark. The waiting call icon flashed impatiently.

Who could possibly be calling at four in the morning? The unsettling, powerful essence of her dream stayed with her. Try as she might, she couldn't shake it off.

She voiced her decision to take the call. The darkened bedroom filled with an imposing, all-too familiar symbol—the letters O and C entwined, extending from ceiling to floor. The O was in the shape of an oblong eye—the mark of the Eye of Istvani.

“Your ViViD call has been brought to you by Overcorp Communications Division,” a masculine voice announced boldly, its disembodied authority pounding in her head. “Your connection will be achieved after this brief, imperative message. Twelve credits have been deducted from your License to receive this call.”

An enormous, feminine hand overtook Lila's entire bedroom. Slender fingers wrapped around an attractive medicine bottle, offering it up for her perusal. The scene panned out to show a smiling woman leaning in intimately, confidingly.

“I, too, know what it's like to be awake at four in the morning, Lila Hastings.” Her words were punctuated by a thickly laid on sympathy. The personal information was inserted automatically—a trick Overcorp overused to try and bring a realistic, “friendly” feel to their targeted advertising. All it accomplished for Lila was annoyance at the obvious manipulation.

“Lucky for you and me both, there's maximum strength Slumberol—brought to you by Overcorp's Pharma Division. It's your ticket to dreamland in a bottle!” the woman said cheerily. “To purchase now for immediate retrieval from your dispenser, just say the keyword *Slumbersol*—”

Lila groaned, pulling her pillow up and around her ears. Ah, Overcorp targeted advertising at its finest and least effective. Anything to get the Licensed to part with their hard earned credits.

She parted her lips to request an ad skip, only to shut them and sigh dejectedly. She'd used the last of her License's monthly allotted skips days ago—wasting the last on a ridiculous temper control medication ad that assaulted her in the shower, all because she became frustrated with a faulty dispenser that took her five credits, but refused to dispense shampoo.

Actually, it was probably best she calmed down, lest the temper control medication ad return for an encore.