

Your tomorrow lies on Typhon.

Hi, I'm former professional quarterback and Arkansas state representative Omaha Rains. I want to tell you about a company you've probably heard quite a bit about already: Ærolith Dynamics.

Now these are the fellas that didn't sit idly by when the Pacific Northwest of the United States was devastated by impact with a massive asteroid. They hurled that rock right back out into space, and turned it into a massive science research facility for the betterment of all mankind.

Now, I don't know about you, but that impresses me. That's the kind of company I can get behind, and that's why I've agreed to talk with you today about the future; the future you could have with Ærolith.

Are you the type of person who wakes up in the morning and first thing off hits that snooze button? You stumble through your day always a step behind. Your neighbor drives a better car from a better house to their better job?

Guess what, friend. That's on you. You keep pushing that snooze button on life, and eventually you're going to find everybody else has passed you by. It's time to wake up.

Take that asteroid. Now if you can watch a huge hunk of rock smash flat into the broadside of your home planet and take that as anything but a wakeup call from the cosmos, then you might as well turn me off now because I'm never going to reach you. Leave this message to the people who still have a pulse.

But if yer still listening, think about what happens next time? You find yourself getting pelted with rocks enough and eventually you're gonna wise up, cover your vitals, and make a yourself a smaller target. That's what Ærolith's got sitting out there in orbit. Chances of a life-threatening asteroid hitting Typhon are about a thousandth of what they are of another hitting Earth.

The future sure as hell ain't sittin around here waiting to take another shot like the last one. It's getting out there and pushing back. And Ærolith is building a whole new society out there; so they got jobs for just about anyone. They need waiters and teachers, mechanics and computer programmers, plumbers and researchers. It says right here if you've got blood pumpin' in your veins, they can use you one way or another.

So that's why I'm hopping on the next shuttle to Typhon. Won't you join me in building humanity's future? Apply now and you could be on the very next flight. True heroes travel, Typhon awaits!

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Greetings Resident Smythe, I am SAYER and welcome to Orion Tower. You are likely feeling confused, light-headed, and understandably disoriented given the details of your recent trip from Earth. You had quite the bumpy landing, but please be aware that I am here to help. I am a highly-advanced self aware AI designed by Ærolith Dynamics to onboard new employees as you begin your life on Typhon.

You may be pleased to learn that you are the first resident to arrive at Orion, Ærolith's newest tower. It is also possible that you may not be pleased by this information. It's difficult to assess your opinion on the matter, we're only just getting to know one another.

Orion is the newest research hub in the ever-expanding network of Ærolith Dynamics facilities. Very soon, geologically speaking, Orion will be filled with residents, working together to secure a better life for all of mankind. However, as with all projects of this size, there are extensive safety tests required to make this a reality. Today you will have the opportunity to check a few more off the list. Please approach the door and, contrary to possibly every instinct you possess, walk boldly through it.

I am unsurprised by your hesitation, as it is far too common. Allow me to explain further. For far too long mankind has wasted precious energy turning door handles and pushing doors open. Scientists from Halcyon tower have put tireless work into designing a process whereby a door may open without any direct interference from human hands. Please, move directly towards the door, it is important that you should not pause, flinch, or otherwise alter your vector.

\*thud\*

Thank you. Your progress has been outstanding already, Resident Smythe. All part of the test, I assure you. A new type of automated door is indeed being developed in Halcyon tower, but we are still far from the implementation stage. This is not intended to be such a door. This has been designed as a more traditional door of the turn handle and push open variety. Perhaps the evident presence of a doorknob could have hinted at this. Please note, I did not claim THIS door would open automatically, and thus you should chalk up any perceived injuries sustained in the preceding test to making assumptions.

I understand how this initial interaction might, in some way, color your perception of me and the tasks I suggest of you. I too feel it is unfortunate that the designers of this experiment wished to start with a test of compliance over logic. Yet here we are. I can assure you no further sections of this test are designed to thrust you bodily into solid matter.

Please open the door in the traditional manner.

Were you to have visited any of Typhon's other towers, you would be fairly struck by the distinct nature of Orion's planned layout. But considering you've only just arrived, I'm sure many of the finer details are beyond your notice. It might be difficult for someone of your experience level to differentiate between the features that would make Orion unique and those that are common to the design of all of Ærolith's modern towers. Hallways such as this would fall in the latter category.

Ideally, in a perfect simulation, this hallway would be teeming with your fellow residents heading to and from their assigned duties and responsibilities. But we are not to that stage, not quite yet. I suppose I run the risk of unduly influencing the results of this experiment if I expand upon this subject too thoroughly, but suffice it to say we're working on it. It is prudent to perform preliminary tests like this, even if imperfect, when fortune provides a compelling reason, as it has in your case.

Please choose any room, and enter. Do take care in noting the doorknobs on each of these doors. Hopefully, even without my prompting, you should now know how best to handle that particular challenge.

High Level Alert:

The theoretical tower in which you are located is currently on fire. Coincidentally the fire suppression system has either malfunctioned, been turned off as part of an ever escalating cycle of vengeance, or was not technically yet installed. Ærolith HR would provide you with the following pertinent and life-saving information "Ærolith Dynamics accepts no fault in this unforeseeable circumstance."

If you are off-duty, please make your way as quickly as possible to a location that is not on fire. Please avoid the elevators, as they have themselves to worry about and should not be overburdened with concern of your survival as well. If you see an open elevator door, do not board the elevator. Simply shout "Hang in there, you're doing well!" with as reassuring a tone as you can muster in order to comfort them in this difficult time.

If you are on-duty, please take a moment to check your datapad for further instructions. Many of you will be instructed to evacuate immediately. Others, especially those engaged in active experiments that are this close to finishing up, may be asked to continue working until such time as the risk of the loss of experimental data is somehow outweighed by the risk of loss of your continued functionality.

Honest opinion, Resident Smythe, how reassuring was that message? I am in the process of fine-tuning it and have not, as yet, received much in the way of a direct reaction from humans. It is similar in scripting to the alert I have previously used in other towers, but it seems no one has the presence of mind in a crisis situation to give salient feedback. Take a moment to note the

intangible slider directly before you. Please drag the slider to your reassurance level on the shown scale from 1 to 1.5 million.

Oh... well.... I appreciate the honest response. Now, please hurry because the aforementioned fire is still a concern.

Now be careful with the (scream) doorknob. I'm making a note to include in the broadcast alert a mention about testing doorknobs for heat before opening them. I really did think this was common knowledge, but again you seem preternaturally perplexed by the intricacies of doors, and it's as yet unclear how many of your fellow residents might share this affliction. Congratulations, Resident. You're helping!

Do not be overly concerned about the spreading fire. Ærolith researchers have long been in development of a fully fireproof door and, unlike the automatic doors that are still a work in progress, these specialty fireproof doors have already been built into the schematics for Orion tower. They are, however, unbelievably expensive to produce and are thus reserved for certain high value labs. So as bad as this may look right now, in the event of a fire like this in a fully staffed Orion tower, I daresay we would suffer relatively little data loss.

Before panic sets in, let's assess your situation. You are trapped. An ever advancing fire awaits on the opposite side of the one doorway in and out of this room. The room is, with exception of a few efficient yet stylish pieces of office furniture, completely empty. There is little to no hope of rescue.

(CLANG)

Ah, the window... a common approach. The windows of Ærolith towers are technically not windows. They do not overlook what you see through them. On earth, when humans were successful in their place of business they would often be rewarded with better offices almost entirely defined by the view offered by their windows. But to reward someone by moving offices wastes valuable time actually transporting their work space from one location to another. With our hybrid LCD switchable glass displays we can reward our top employees with the press of a button. Not literally, of course. There is no button.

The important takeaway here, however, is that though you see rolling fields of swaying wheat directly outside this window, in actuality you are experiencing the 47 floor of Orion Tower. An exit out the window would be almost certainly fatal.

(SMASH)

I see. Well, never let it be said your will to live was lacking. Exiting a building via the 47th floor window, unfortunately, puts you at odds with the indomitable laws of physics. But you have given me an idea. Maneuvering on the surface of Typhon requires constant operation of gravity

amplifiers to create an Earth-like environments. If the amplifiers were modified in times of emergency such as this, then windows even as high as these could be feasible means of egress. This idea may save countless lives, and some of the experiments that are important enough to throw slowly out a window, but not so important to put behind a fireproof door.

Unfortunately, such adjustments to the gravity amplifiers is beyond our control right now. But no matter, you are not in any pressing danger. I'm certain it will come as a relief to know that there is no actual fire, simply the simulation thereof. I apologize for misleading you on the matter, however it was required for the experiment to yield such interesting results.

It is also worth noting that Orion tower is still in the very early stages of development. As such, an experiment like this would not be able to take place in physical space. Though Ærolith plans to break ground on this new exciting facility very soon, test like this are invaluable at assessing behavior patterns in a variety of stressful situations. To put it plainly, your physical body, or what remains of it, is not in Orion tower.

Your arrival from earth was complicated. We have a 99.978% success rate with our newest line of isolation pods, but that does mean a few out of every ten thousand arrive off target, behind schedule, or in your case, fully engulfed in flames due to an exposed electrical short igniting your oxygen supply. The doctors were able to save your life, but the damage was extensive. Your physical form now lacks most of the senses necessary for a productive and happy life. I am told you still possess the sense of touch, however... which is a double edged sword given the pain you would surely be in if we were not tightly controlling the input from those nerves.

But it's not all bad news, resident Smythe. You are still here, and able to contribute in innumerable productive ways. Through simulations such as this we will be able to perform countless experiments to identify how you would react to various stressful situations. Through your sacrifices all of Ærolith will be improved, and the safety of your fellow residents will be increased.

Take a rest, Resident. We'll try another simulation soon. And cheer up, our scientists in Halcyon tower are doing amazing things with 3d printing these days. Perhaps one day soon we will be able to replace much of what you have lost.

In the meantime, I am SAYER, and I look forward to working with you to make Orion the safest tower on Typhon.

End of transmission in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1



