

INT. TALK SHOW SET - NIGHT

Talk show host Elwin Hillard sits behind his desk with Andrea, suffragette dress, in the first guest's seat. A graphic behind them reads: "Elwin Hillard at ZERO GRAVITY."

ELWIN

Good for you, Andrea, using your Two-0-Nine status as a platform for your political message. But doesn't it make more sense to start with civil rights for all androids?

ANDREA

Oh no. I'm not about to wait a hundred years to win gender equality. That is, unless absolutely necessary.

Garners LAUGH from audience.

ELWIN

Pretty scary if you think about it.

ANDREA

What's that, Elwin?

ELWIN

Just that you droids are going to outlive us all. I mean, assuming no one deactivates you!

(another laugh from audience)

Oh well... Speaking of immortal, let me introduce our next guest, that glorious priestess of the written word, Phoebe Myrtle.

The audience CLAPS as Phoebe, revealing dress, strolls on and up to Elwin, who reaches over to share an air kiss. Phoebe prepares to sit, waits for Andrea to move.

Andrea scans Phoebe's outfit disapprovingly, moves slowly over. Phoebe sits.

ELWIN

Phoebe. So glad you could pay us a visit. You've been a rising star of late, and now this latest triumph in ancient Greece. What do you have in store for us tonight?

PHOEBE

I'm shifting forward about a thousand years, Elwin, to the Roman empire.

ELWIN

Do I hear orgies and gladiator fights to the death?

PHOEBE

Sorry, Elwin. You'll just have to wait and find out like everybody else.

ELWIN

Phoebe, you naughty girl! Speaking of naughty, you can at least share your other little triumph with us.

PHOEBE

Oh, that? Well, if you insist...

She looks offstage. Arch 209 strides on, grins and bows to the CHEERING audience. Andrea, Phoebe move down. Arch hesitates, stunned eyes fixated on Andrea, finally sits.

ELWIN

Glad to meet you, Arch Two-O-Nine.

ARCH

(glancing at Andrea)

Call me Arch. Thanks for having me on, sir. Truth is, my programming has been overwhelmed by the, well, attention thrust upon me.

ELWIN

Overwhelmed? How so?

ARCH

Well, for example, I know I am exceptional but we're not permitted to become egotistical. The internal conflict is quite interesting.

ANDREA

(grins at Arch)

I know exactly what you mean about conflict! I'm fighting for the rights of women, but I actually hate women, like I dream of killing them. Of course I can't.

Stage and audience go silent. Andrea waits, grinning.

ANDREA

I'm joking!

(off uncertain laughter)

I actually love women. In fact, I prefer them to men though of course my programming makes me quite versatile in that respect. I'm sorry. I'm afraid I have a long way to go with my comic timing.

Arch gives her a look of disgust. She returns it, half smile.

PHOEBE

You are kooky, I'll give you that. Too bad you can't join us in Rome.

ANDREA

(to Arch)

Oh yeah, because you're the only Two-O-Nine allowed to participate.

ARCH

I'm not just a Two-O-Nine. I am Two-O-Nine. And a gifted thespian.

Band leader ROWAN (40), with band side-stage, puts in:

ROWAN

Get a room, you two!

Audience LAUGHS. Drummer punctuates it with a roll. Arch, Andrea grin. Phoebe smiles ironically.