

The Long Journey Through The Circuit Trace

Sitting in the Stryker three-quarters of a mile away from the Holiday Skin in an alley filled with trash, Xanthe reached her hand into the green liquid on the console pulling a VitBit and pills out of it. "What are the calculations on my reaction to the effects of this drug?"

"Unknown Xanthe since you do not have a human brain or major organs. Your entire makeup consists of microchips and emerald gel. The effects could be catastrophic; on the other hand, you could have no reaction at all. There is inconclusive evidence to support either reaction. It could be adverse or beneficial. More time and chemical analysis is needed to study the reaction effects."

"Time is one thing we do not have on our side," Xanthe stared at the VitBit and the purple pills in her palm contemplating this entire set of circumstances that led up to this very moment. Could she become the very thing she hated the most, a libertine, a follower, reduced to a subservient fuckstick in a growing cult hell-bent on destroying humanity. If she did not jump off the cliff, she would never know. Alice never thought this hard about her journey down the rabbit hole, as did Neo. "Jaesa stay put and do not touch anything. SIS will watch out for you."

"Okay Xanthe" Jaesa was still humming kicking her small shoes against the end of the chair. "I am bored."

"Have you located her mother Nicole?"

"Yes. I have located Nicole's birthplace and employment records. She is from Central Alberta Canada particularly the city of Red Deer. It is 1,829 miles from Odessa approximately twenty-seven hours away."

"How did you get all the way down here?"

"I was stolded when my mommy was on vacation in this fucking shithole country."

"SIS perhaps Emerald can locate her mother if she has left a DNA or an electronic trail. You know what to do if I get my ass kicked in here."

"Yes Xanthe."

Pulling the VitBit over her left wrist, she swallowed a Chillaxifan. The time on the Vidscreen display read 7:55 p.m.

The

"Christine. Christine—"a man's voice said in thick European accent.

"I can't feel my legs—I can't feel my legs. I smell smoke. Is something on fire? Derek. Where is Derek? It's so—cold. I can't feel my legs."

"Is the chopper here? Let me see the paperwork", he took the clipboard from the nurse and flipped through several pages scanning each one, "all of the signatures look like they are here for the trip. Make sure you keep her alive the entire time, it's in the contract. She has no DNR—okay—everything looks in order." He handed the clipboard back to the nurse.

"Yes the aircraft is here sir." The nurse and two technicians replied to him in the same thick European accent.

"Christine can you understand me?"

"Yes. I can't feel my legs. Why can't I feel my legs?"

"Christine you have been in an accident. Do you remember?"

"No—"A tear seeped out of the corner of her eye. It ran down her blackened and blistered cheek. "Derek, where's Derek?"

"You are in shock. We are going to give you something for the pain is that okay?"

"Okay. Where am I? What accident?"

The nurse pulled several syringes out of her white lab coat pocket and began uncapping them. In succession, she administered them into the five IV bags with various

colored fluids hanging above the gurney. The bright white overhead lights were going by quickly. Loud noises, people talking, chatter, a squeaky wheel—thump, thump, thump.

"Stop the thump. Please stop the thumping. Stop the thumping. I can't feel my legs—I can't feel my legs"

"Give her another dose but make sure you keep an eye on her vitals. Keep resuscitating her if necessary. She must stay alive." He yelled over the loud rotor wash as two EMT technicians lifted her gurney into a black helicopter turning and burning, ready for take-off. The intense smell of kerosene was in the air. *Повітряні Сили України, Povitryani Syly Ukrayiny* was painted on the door in blue and gold lettering. It read 'Ukrainian Air Force' on the Mil Mi-24 black gunship helicopter.

"Yes sir." They both yelled back in Ukrainian as they sat on either side of the gurney sliding the heavy door shut. The pilot saluted the man on the ground standing next to the nurse.

"She is in God's hands now. Please take care of her God." The nurse spoke in Ukrainian, weeping, standing next to the man as the helicopter took off due east.

"Yes. Her husband has no idea what he has done. If Mr. Thompson is lucky, she will never remember this moment in time. God help her soul, poor child."

The nurse began crying harder as the doctor put his arm around her shoulder comforting her. They turned around walking back towards the fiery hell that was nicknamed "Ukraine's most horrific catastrophe" in 2018 by the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Company and the rest of the world. The chain reaction of explosions set off by an unknown arsonist killed 1,291 men, women, and children in the manufacturing plant and the small towns surrounding the eastern Kiev area.

Long

"Christine—"

"Yes."

"Were going to start the download, are you steady?"

"Yes."

"Increasing dosage to 10,000 microwatts, network protocols at maximum, delivery speed at 333 geophytes and rising, you're doing great."

Cables, bundled, rows of computers, servers connected to multi-colored wiring snaked for miles back and forth through the complex. Frosted over stainless steel server coolers emitted their frozen blow-off in puffs of tiny clouds. Forty ten-foot high clear tubes sat upright in a row upon glowing green steel-plated platforms. The first tube in the row began to vibrate and shudder. Hoses connected to the tube began to straighten out, becoming rigid. Heat was rising off them as they began to gurgle and sputter. A cavity inside of a ten-foot high block of carbonite in the back half of the tube quickly filled up with a hot white sticky substance. First, the feet, then the legs, hips, rising up until it formed the outline of a human being. Monitors and screens provided an inside look into the process. Cameras were set up on tripods throughout the complex.

"How are we doing Christine?"

"I am steady."

The edges around the form dried quickly as another tube began shooting and plopping a beautiful cobalt gel into the form. Within seconds, it filled to the top of the form.

"How are we doing Callie?"

"Great Major, her waves are perfect. The QASAI algorithm is holding her synapses steady. All patterns are good." Swiping two virtual keyboards at once, the woman was monitoring several computer screens stacked on top of each other sitting in front of a liquid cooled console surrounded by towering servers and cables. 3D anatomical, brain, chemical, and microchip charts displayed on various screens Labeled SIS or the Silicon Interface System. This was the link between the virtual and physical world.

"Christine we are going to release. Are you ready?"

"Yes Major."

"Callie initiate now—"

The first tube began to vibrate and shake. The back half of the tube split in half releasing a strong beautiful clean wintery smell into the air. The white phosphorous human form of a woman remained plastered to the inside of the back half of the form. Gears under the platform began to turn the form to the front clear acrylic side. The Major stood in front of the tube wiping away the hot condensation. Her eyes opened. A long drawn out scream followed as she stared at the Major. The most ungodly horrific painful scream any of them had ever heard up to this point. The form sunk into the bottom of the tube. A vacuum attached to the bottom of the platform quickly sucked out any remaining gel and the form itself.

"Christine are you still with us?"

"Yes." Sobbing came out of the speakers attached to the server array.

"I am so sorry Christine. Please believe me I will do everything within my power to make this right."

"I know you will Major. I know you will."

Journey

"Mark time and date Callie."

"Yes Major." She began scribing the events with a microphone and a camera pointed at her. A beautiful unique face, blue eyes, and green lab coat showed up on the screen in front of her. Hair up in a loose bun held together with two chopsticks through the top of her black hair from the lunch an hour earlier. "August 21, 2073 time 13:09 p.m. Trial synapses normal. Christine Thompson subject number one, test twenty-seven. First QASAI Aureolin Yellow test Roswell New Mexico, Area 77."

"Christine are you ready?"

"Yes Major. I am steady."

"Callie initiate Aureolin program."

"Yes Major", she swatted a spider crawling across her desk with a paperback book, "all these damn spiders in here. Where in the hell are they coming from?" she muttered to herself.

"A penny for your thoughts James, you look confident?"

"I am Anthony. Between 3D printing and advances in microbiology injection machines, this will revolutionize humanity, as we know it. I am telling though you we need to tighten security up. You have miles of networking modules and cables here. Only God knows where the start of this program begins and the end of this firewall is at."

"You are right. I agree. Let's see how these trials go and you can call in the big boys and lock it down."

"The transfer is complete Major. I am not showing any erratic or abnormal waves."

The two men walked down to tube number one. James wiped away the condensation from the front of the clear tube. Two yellow eyes and a shit-eating grin stared back at them on the white female form that hung from two titanium hooks. An acidic smell filled the air.

"Christine?"

"Yes Major." It replied.

"Is it really you?"

"Yes it is me. Thank you." The form waved four fingers at them as it was sucked down through the bottom of the tube by the vacuum. A whoosh sound followed. The two men shook hands hard smiling at each other. They looked over at Callie who was holding her face in her hands finally smiling, eyes watering with joy.

Through

"Second trial of Cobalt and Aureolin Yellow November 5th, 2073 time 7:07 a.m. Trial synapses normal. Christine Thompson subject number one, test twenty-nine. Roswell New Mexico, Area 77 Neuroscientist Callie Lynn Hermanson scribing videolog."

"Christine are you steady?"

"Yes Major" softly came out of the array speakers echoing throughout the room.

"Callie, begin Emerald mix transfer."

"Yes Major."

Two hoses, each filled with a hot yellow and blue gel, began to fill up the form attached to the rear of tube number one.

"Transfer the binary trace synapses and the program."

"Yes Major."

"Christine can you hear me?" he asked staring back at the server array.

A muffled sound came from the other side of the room. The Major ran down to tube number one. The perfect form of a beautiful five-foot ten-inch woman was beating on the inside of the tube. The tube started to crack.

"Callie open tube one!"

"Yes Major." She swiped a screen and the tube split opening vertically down the middle. The white form fell out on the floor spilling a gagging ammonia scent along with it. On all fours now, she vomited out more of the liquid. He got down on the ground next to her and began holding her around the waist as she continued to spew copious amounts of a mixture of Cobalt and Aureolin gel. Her bald, nude figure, as exquisite and perfect as God had intended. She turned her head towards him and grinned raising her eyelids. Her irises glowed a beautiful emerald. A smile in her eyes, she reached for his hand. He met her hand with a tear in his eye.

"Christine?"

"Yea, it is me Major, nice to meet you."

He held her in his arms sitting on the floor as she shook from shock. "I am so very happy to finally meet you Christine. Call me Anthony. Anthony Christopher Dace."

"Thank you for never giving up on me."

"As I would not with my own daughter Petra, I could never."

The

"Nice to meet you, you have come highly recommended by General Cooper and the NIB. It looks like we are going to need some help in cleaning up our network. We really need to lock it down and secure it."

"So what do you do here?"

"We are a think tank. We basically run a research and development program."

"Sounds interesting, well after looking over most of the server information I am quite sure we can be of help in ways you would never dream of. We will also make sure none of your encrypted files are sliced by the kind of people who will do damage to your secure files or put this nation's secrets at risk."

Major Dace stared at the purple virtual business card with a flower imprinted on its backside for a second and reached out his right hand to the young handsome man. "Nice to meet you Charles", Charles reached out and pleasingly shook his hand.

"The Heliotrope Corporation is the securest data company in the nation Major. We'll lock it up tight for you."

"Thank you Charles."

The video camera hidden in the corner of the office recorded the entire scene. Christine carefully watched this meeting unfold sitting underground next to Callie surrounded by black server arrays as she received programs uploaded to her silicon form.

Circuit

"We cannot fix this? You're telling me this can't be fixed! There has to be another way. I don't believe in 'can't' Jim." Major Dace punched the wall next to Cooper's head as Cooper ducked away. The plaster fell to the ground as the Major frantically shook his hand. Blood seeped from his knuckles mixed with drywall dust.

"It's the only way to do it Anthony. I cannot trust Ray anymore so I am putting eyes on him. He has gone off the deep end; I mean he is acting really fucking screwy with those three. I just brought a new brain onboard to work with Norman. Her name is Doctor Siebert, a Neuroscientist with a PhD, and she is just about as smart as they come. She is picking up where Ray left off. We are paralleling what you are doing here in Meredith. I asked her a hypothetical question about it and she said it has to be a dump. It is the only way Anthony."

Dace slumped down in a chair in his green lab coat in the small makeshift office staring out through the window at Christine and Callie. Christine was running on a treadmill wearing loose running clothes. Her legs were moving so fast he could not tell them apart. A short black wig sat upon her head. She turned and smiled at him. He forced a smile back her way. Those big beautiful green eyes were piercing his soul. "Tabula Rasa Jim is that it?" he rubbed his bloody knuckles hard.

"Yep, every time I am afraid until we come up with another way. Clean slate my friend. She will eventually shut down and die if you do not. We just don't have a way to help her unload the old data right now."

"How long before she—"

"—we think maybe a month, maybe longer, due to her size. Since her entire body is one giant processor, the calculations come out to about thirty-five days at the current rate of input. The less data she takes in the longer she will live. What kind of a life is that?"

"I promised her Jim. I promised her. There has to be another way."

"She looks damn good for a seventy-five year old Anthony."

"Yes, yes she does."

Cooper put his hand on Dace's shoulder. Standing behind him staring at Christine he rubbed his shoulder patting him in the process. "You are the finest man I know and the only one I can trust right now. You are one of the most honorable men I know and one smart sonofabitch, one of the smartest on this planet excluding Raymond of course."

"Of course, but—I know there is a big "but" coming up."

"You might have to let this one go. You've been consumed with this for over a decade while your daughter is out there fighting in the Middle East. I know what you are doing."

"You think I am replacing Petra with Christine and SIS? You're nuts." He rolled his eyes turning his head looking up at Cooper.

"You can't see it but everyone around you does."

Christine stepped off the treadmill and began chatting with Callie sitting at her desk. She turned and walked towards the office. Dace and Cooper both stopped talking staring at her as she opened the glass door and poked her head inside. "Have you two thought about an external server stack dump every twenty-four hours and an output backup? If you continually dump the external information I have collected I get to keep my charming rebellious fucking non-conformist personality, and you get to keep my input information. Now of course you will probably need a server array the size of Montana and a satellite to maintain the connection but I believe it can be done." She grinned at both of them. She pointed to each of their mouths as an acknowledgement of her advancement in lip reading.

Cooper's mouth was open as far as his jaw would allow it to go and Dace had a big shit-eating grin on his face.

"You cannot beat alien engineering gentleman." Christine grinned comforted as spiders crawled out of the cracked hole in the wall behind Cooper and Dace.

"Callie, can you please come in here for a moment?" Dace asked speaking into his Vidset. She turned getting up out of her chair and headed into the office. Her stride was one of confidence and effervescent energy.

"Yes major?"

"I need you to start downloading the remainder of the subjects into SIS."

"Yes sir, right away. What's with all the damn spiders?" she asked holding the door open as they crawled from the office heading straight towards the steaming vats of emerald gel.

Trace

"What do you want us to do with it Colonel Blanchard?"

He rubbed his chiseled jaw and stubble for a moment. "What is the most secure location we have lieutenant?"

"There's one off the top of my head sir, Wright Patterson Air Force base."

"We need one that is not on the list, something obscure."

"There's Walker right here in New Mexico sir, the Air Force base. It's hidden from the public from what I hear. They do a lot of night R and D there." They both stood there staring at the object. It had scorched the earth for a mile and a half causing an enormous crater the size of a large house. A spattering of an unknown substance had leaked out of the object upon impact.

"Okay but keep this under wraps do you hear me? Tell the press something else until we figure out what it is. We don't need this country going bonkers after we just survived a war."

"Yes sir. What about all of this yellow goo?"

"Clean it up and get a sample. Maybe one of our smart guys at the base will be able to analyze it for us." He removed his cap and scratched his head. Walking away, he headed towards the green military Jeep parked up on a dusty road. A large sign on the side of the road next to the Jeep read 'Corona New Mexico 30 Miles'. "This is all we need. They will think the Nazi's are invading or some shit. Tell the press it's a weather balloon or something." He yelled back to the lieutenant as he sat in the passenger side of the Jeep.

"Yes sir." The young lieutenant replied saluting him in the process. He turned his head sideways squinting, blocking out the sun with his hand, trying to read the long list of numbers and symbols on the side of the hexagonal thirty-foot wide silver object.

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Catching a glimpse out of the corner the lieutenant's eye as the Colonel's Jeep sped off, the 'yellow goo' seemed to take on a personality of its own. It coalesced, gathering in one unique spot. It started to flow uphill over rocky terrain towards a damaged spider web between two fallen tree trunks twenty-five feet away from the smoldering crash site.