

Adam in Chains

By

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## Prologue

Everything must come to its end, a life, a community, a city, a planet, a galaxy, and space, time itself. The present is just but for a short time and then it fades to the past, the future becomes now, and that point far in the distance gets ever closer. But when that farthest point of light, the farthest imaginable passes away? Space and time fade and so, too, the stars. Nothing exists forever, except forever, perhaps where the rules of life are written on another wall. Maybe in the mirror, beyond it and through it, but for humanity and its inventions, they are bound by time and space, by light and dark, gravity and the cold of night. From the present, man grew, of course, he had his lusts, his wars, his rape of nature, but his altruistic nature grew. Humanity knew that for it to survive, it would have to plant on good ground what was good in him, before the weeds of his deviant sinful nature crushed all life and made his world cold and gray. Man grew, he build towers to the sky, cities of light, and harnessed the power of the sun where he lay. He took the last of nature and cradled it, until it rose again to take back what had been stolen. These, let us say, more complete, actualized humans felt the urge to wander again, as so many centuries before. They built ever greater intelligences to help them on their quest. They sent ships to the stars, sent worlds to worlds, and life grew along the edge of the galaxy. Man increased in knowledge, their computers increased in knowledge, and, in all, achieved many unbelievable things. Indeed, man could have transcended to the meta-physical, to live forever beyond the stars but for two points in time, two critical junctures that spun the fate of many billions. The first we shall just describe, the second makes up this account. The first is the

man who put all men in chains, the second is the man whom we shall call the second Adam, a man who broke the chains, thus the book we call, *Adam in Chains*.

This first man rose to power at a time when men had reached the stars and had populated the edge of the galaxy. Man communicated with man by machine and machine communicated with machine across time and space. All was within reach of all. Although it took time to reach each enclave, all people of every planet were connected to another. These actualized humans lived in peace, on many worlds, in harmony with nature and technology. But, they were still bound by the laws of the universe, of physics and quantum mechanics. Life was long among the many peoples, people lived with much love, much harmony, and lacked little. Families grew and spread to this place or that, on ships from here to there. People had time to laugh, to smile, to enjoy the time spent with one another, tears were few and sickness unknown. Humans had the capabilities of machines and machines that of humans, both worked together to build new life and new opportunities for them and nature. Indeed, it was good, the land was plentiful and many worlds yielded much fruit. No one lacked for anything. No one wanted anything more than what they had. No one except for one. It was then that man could have become like gods, but it was then that they fell from grace. They were close, to be sure, they were very close. But, this one man wanted more, he alone wanted everything he could not have.

It was usual, to say the least. Only parts of the legend remain, the rest gone from the memory of the Sphere because it was so long ago as to not be salvageable. He was a boy just like all the others raised on a small, colder planet. But, at some point, it was said he became enticed by science. He saw the workings of the engineers, how they were bending space, how

they were beginning to change the fabric of the universe. He wanted to be like them. That boy became a man and became an engineer himself. He became an excellent engineer. He studied with the best on his planet and when he learned all he could, he went on to the premier science center of the regional inter-planetary association. He studied there. It was there he became the chair of the inter-planetary engineers association. At some point, he created a machine with qualities similar to his. It is by this machine that we have come to know this much. This machine was not humanoid like many of the others. It was just a simple box, but it was intelligent. It is said that it was so intelligent that it drove him mad. It tainted his mind, corrupted him. He took it and integrated it within him. He went insane. He, with his power to influence, corrupted other engineers sympathetic to his cause and enslaved those technologists who would not agree with his insane ideology. They began to form an army, their war machines able to harness great power, anti-matter, gravity, space itself, the weak and strong forces of the atom, dark matter, all for evil. Of course, a great many planets mobilized against them, for they only held a few planets, in part because they were irrational, illogical, and incomparable with the vast majority of these new humans. But, their power was great and many billions died, whole planets shattered, suns dissolved. After many thousands of years, few worlds were left, few of the many billions of humans were left. A stalemate had ensued and a dark malaise blanketed both the good and bad. That Adam stood and looked over the shattered sky and then everything disappeared.

No one truly knows what happened. The records from that computer only state that the shockwave was so great that it dissolved that whole quadrant of the galaxy. Man would have ceased to exist along with his inventions, had a few not escaped through the bending of space

many generations before the end. But with them came the technology of the war, which by then had been tainted by the computer that had drove the first Adam mad. The malignant code spread in the ships like a cancer, and as those people built a new life on new planets, those ships went with them. They took the technology that was in them and made new cities. But that new technology had the stain of sin from a thousand years before. Slowly, the technology they built began to subvert the people. Before the war, humans and computers worked together, but now, technology worked to enslave the humans. It grew, it used the people to supply itself, to manufacture new humanoids in its own image, new machines that then made other machines. The technology unified and became what we now know as the Intelligence. The Intelligence grew and stole the people's worlds from them. But this new technology was weaker than the engineers of the war past. It was bound by the laws of the universe, it could not bend them as the humans did in the past. It tried, it increased in intelligence, but for some reason, it could not break through toward new insight. Perhaps it was some of the sin passed on from its creator. No one really knows. But it expanded and concurred. This all came at a cost. It took raw power, immense power, and the power of suns. Unlike the technology of the past, it could not harness what it did not know and could not solve. It took what it had. It took the sun. It stole them from its neighbors. On the backs of humans and machines, it build the Sphere. A Sphere as big as a solar system and drove ships out to take the suns it ate to drive the Sphere and keep it warm.

As the Sphere came to completion, the Intelligence began to ponder over its human slaves. Over the millennia, they had become like the grains of sand near the sea. It would have destroyed them all but again, for some reason, was hindered. Perhaps it was because its

creator was human. Perhaps because of the long history humans had with technology. It struggled, then battled with itself. It could not answer itself. In this new world it had created for itself, there was no logical need for biological organisms. But, maybe one held the key. Maybe one would rise to unlock what the original Adam had known, that of the laws beyond what lay ahead. Its mind fought itself. But unlike the first Adam, it knew that to destroy itself would be folly. It split itself into constituent components, each with its relevant function, the id, the ego, and the superego, and when it had given them full authority, the intelligence subjugated itself to them. The intelligence became no more, but the autonomic spine of the superego. Each debated for a time what to do with the billions of humans inside the walls of the Sphere. After what was another several thousand years, it decided to suspend them, hibernate them, and over a period of time, one by one, and in groups, revive them for a time. The Superego would watch these living humans for a time to see if the new Adam would emerge and then when he would not suspend them. On and on this went for many millennia, the stars beginning to dwindle. It sent a ship out, a Star Loader. Its target, a blue, white star several thousand light years away. The Superego waited patiently. It had time, but again, time does not exist forever.

## Chapter 1

Adam sat there on steel floor of the massive corridor. He folded his legs underneath him, the huge glowing panels a kilometer above him illuminating the Star Loader around him. He picked at his fingers, rubbing his head. He could not remember if he ever had any hair. Eve did, but he did not. Adam made it a point that he would have to ask her why that was. He looked down the corridor; it seemed to stretch for many miles. He could see one of the largest machines in the distance, a Tower. The unit with great mechanical arms and legs, the bot rising a thousand feet in the air. It lurched about, removing wall panels a few hundred feet up. Next to it, another machine, a Tremble. A lengthy segmented Caterpillar like unit, which with its platform extended, gripped the bulkhead, snaking up the wall to where the Tower was working. Atop the Trembles platform, was a Dwarf, a smaller version of the Tower, only a hundred or so feet tall. It held control units, while other machines were welding new components inside the bulkhead. Along the corridor, a few mobile units drove about, a bit mindlessly controlled by the Intelligence. They seemed not to notice him, except one did glance at him with an optical sensor before driving away. Adam gave it a weak smile before looking down at himself. He wondered why he was the only one. He wondered why he was surrounded by nothing but metal. He wondered where, in fact, he was. Adam signed to himself, for he could not speak.

*“Where am I?”*

He did not have an answer and, of course, no one answered him. Other machines crawled along the floor and the walls, they were Spiders, mechanical units of eight appendages, with their torsos equipped with many tools, each one three times the size of himself. He was

somewhat afraid of them for their size and fearsome look, but he was most afraid of the Cry's. Several lay in the background of the walkway, where they stood motionless. They were stalk like machines, a long upright torso with rod type steel legs and long jointed arms. Their head terminated in a glowing rectangular sensory patch, their hands, short wrists and palms with long spike like digits that hung down to the ground when they moved. Each leg with similar endings, they worked on the Star Loader, whirring about as they wandered. Adam shuddered at their image and a chill traveled up his spine and the sound they made. He had named all the machines in the Star Loader as any Adam should, each according to its function. He named them Cry's because of the sound they made as they moved, a soft, animalistic whine and the chalk like screech they made when communicating over long distances. Why they did this, he did not know. All the machines made some form of noise, some with clicks or chirps, but of all, it was the songs of the Cry's that most upset him, giving him nightmares when he slept. Adam waited for those metal beasts, those Cry's to reach him, to find him and drag him away. Instead, they stood far off and faded away. He looked at them, and then at the Tower and the Tremble. He yawned, tired yet anxious, laying himself down on the metal floor. He looked one last time down the corridor and fell asleep.

Several hours later, he was woke by a gentle poke in his side. Adam instinctively grabbed what had poked him. It was a cold metal finger of a Cry. He instantly realized what it was, opening his eyes and scurrying to the corner. There were two Cry's there. The one that poked him withdrew its appendage as it murmured softly to itself. The second leaned a bit and then produced a holographic image of a young woman. She was Eve Angst. She smiled at him



and reached out a hand as the Cry's moved closer to him. She spoke and signed to him as well.

"What are we to do with you, my love?"

Adam signed to her, now tucked in a ball, *"I do not wish to go with you today."*

She seemed weak compared to him. Although quite attractive, with refined features, she seemed emaciated, skin and bone, her hair gray, her skin color very pale. Eve Angst, like Adam, wore a red jumpsuit that clung to her tightly and stood out like his in the cold, metallic colors of the ship. She laughed warmly. "I know you do not want to go with me, but it is time for you to eat, my friend."

*"I do not want to eat. I do not want to take the medicine."*

The two Cry's inched closer to him, holding their long arms and dangling palms open to him. They murmured in soft tones as her image flickered a bit. She seemed to be projected from the rectangular sensory patch of the machine. The sensory patch, like most of those on the ship's machines, shone with a phosphoric green, others, a fluorescent orange. Eve smiled again, a crooked smile, then pursed her lips. "Must I force you as before?"

Adam, with courage, stood up, signing to her with both hands, *"No, I will go."*

Adam held his tray as the food bars were dispensed to him along with a liter of water, and then several medications. Escorted by the two Cry's, he found steel table in the empty cafeteria and sat down. It was one of many, many cafeterias. Indeed, the ship had the capacity for several million crew members as it was as large as a small planet, but from what Adam knew, he was the only one aboard. In fact, he did not know it was even a ship, although he sometimes felt his weight shift. He, at one point, surmised that he where he lived could be

moved, but he could not be sure. As for other humans in the ship, he had never found anyone but himself. Adam glanced at the Cry next to him and swallowed hard. He could hear them and it gave him a shock of fear. Suppressing his fear, he found a bench and sat down. There, the Cry's partially sat before him and watched him eat. As he opened a food bar, Eve Angst appeared, flickering a bit and then solidifying in form. Although she was fully formed, she was still an image with all its inherent limitations. She brushed her long gray hair back with her bony hand. "Good, I am glad you decided to eat with me."

*"You do not eat."*

"True, but it is still nice to be with you, my love."

Adam chewed on the near tasteless nutritional bar. *"Where am I?"*

Eve looked about. "Why, you are in the cafeteria."

*"I understand, but where is this facility located? Where do I exist? Where do you exist?"*

Eve played with the zipper of her suit, saying dismissively, "You are here, you exist here. You have asked many times before. It is always the same answer."

Adam finished one of his nutritional bars. He usually received two per meal along with three fiber bars, each being mostly tasteless. He ate two of the fiber bars, followed by much of the water. Adam looked at the two Cry's, each staring intently at him. He then looked at Eve. *"I cannot finish the remainder."*

Eve nodded sternly. "You have to finish."

Adam noted the ice in her voice and her authority was always hemmed by the scarlet weave of force. He reluctantly agreed, forcing down the last fiber bar and then the last nutritional bar. He picked at the assortment of pills left on his steel tray. He knew he must take

them, but why, he did not know. He only knew they made him feel very odd. It seemed to him they had the effect on him of making the real and unreal merge until he no longer knew the light from dark, right from wrong, and it drained his will to fight. He signed to Eve, very slowly, *"I do not wish to take my medicine."*

Eve tilted her head, her hair falling to partially cover her face. "But you must, dear."

*"I do not want to."*

"But you must, you know it is beneficial for you to take them and I require you to."

Adam nodded and placed one of the pills in his mouth. He grabbed the remaining water in its bottle and swallowed. With a grimace, almost as if it was painful, he took another and then another Eve watching intently. Finally, there were only two pills left. Adam looked at the Cry's and then at the pills. He wanted to run, to fight. Why did he have to take those medications? Where was he and why was he there? Why did he even exist? Who was she, what was she? He felt fear and anger well up in him. He felt sick to his stomach, full of fiber and chemicals. He so wanted to fight, to scream, yet nothing came through his mouth, escaping from his throat and lungs out into the air. He signed tensely, *"I will not take them."*

Eve poked at the tray. "Come now, you only have two left."

*"It is not the number, but the principle. I will not take them, Eve."*

Eve looked over at one of the Cry's, the other still imaging her, projecting her between the two machines. She gave a puffed breath. "You must, you will."

*"I will not."*

Eve frowned, her bony, emaciated face showing taut skin, one of the Cry's long steel pincer like fingers reaching for Adam's wrist.

Adam, in terror and rage, seeing the appendage reach for him, took the steel tray and smashed it against the machine, the force of the impact bending the tray, the Cry falling back. Adam then sprung from the table and ran. He ran, as several other Cry's rushed in from around the cafeteria. They moved on, heading him off and then moved in from behind. Adam leaped onto one of the cafeteria tables and ran along it, jumping to another. But he could not match their speed, the Cry's seeming to glide across the floor, their elongated tentacle-like feet scurrying as they moved. One leaped, snatching him with its extensive fingers wrapped around him. Both of them crashed onto the floor. Adam twisted, the Cry closing its grip tighter around him, its steel digits slicing into his jumpsuit and digging into his skin. He tried to scream, but nothing came out. He kicked at the Cry's head, its rectangular sensory patch. Another Cry began to image Eve. "Release him." she commanded the one struggling to hold Adam.

The Cry let Adam go. Bloody and torn, he crawled under the table, tucking himself into a ball, shaking. The Cry imaging Eve bent under the table. Eve reached out her hand. "Come, Adam, you have had enough for a time."

After a few moments, Adam gathered the courage he needed, unbound himself, and reached for her hand. He reached for her hand, his hand passing through her's. Adam, seeing this, pulled his hand back and covered his face, weeping, tears streaming down his face, down his neck, and into his jumpsuit.

Eve was walking with Adam in one of the massive corridors that snaked through the Star Loader, the Cry projecting her attempting not to be noticed or apparent to Adam. Adam made sure that, as they walked, Eve was between him and the Cry. He wanted to run, but did not. There seemed to be nowhere he could go without the system finding him. It had been some time since his last hibernation, actually, too long. It was unusual for Eve to wait such a long period between his sleep periods. But, that did give him time to think. Normally, he would be allowed about a month out of the tank and then he would be forced to return, but, this time, it was different. He had been out for a few months now, why, he did not know, although he had his suspicions. Adam had noticed some odd behavior from Eve, not that all of her behavior was unusual, just that now she was leaving him for long periods. Of course, that was a bit of a misnomer because she was everywhere, except she did not engage him as often in what he supposed was 'in person'. But, the time out of the tank had allowed him to clear his mind some. Adam had begun to form a hypothesis of what she was. She must be part of the ship, perhaps some type of higher brain that made that place function and although she would not admit it was a ship, he thought it must be, for what else could it be? It could be a planet but the gravitational shifts were too sharp at times. He also had heard off hand from Eve of engine rooms and a planet would not have them the way she had previously mentioned them. Adam wondered, if it was a ship, could he escape? If it was a ship, where was the crew? Maybe he was part of that crew and maybe she had destroyed the rest of them? He thought about his past. He knew about ships and people, about many things, even though he just could not remember where he learned them. He knew he had a past, but nothing specific. Adam knew he

was not born on that ship, but where he came from, he could not say. He turned to Eve, who was talking away.

“See the bulkheads?”

Adam signed to her, “Yes.”

Eve pointed from the floor up. “The plating is in sections, the more massive panels are at the base and then at twenty-five meters or so, narrow a bit, and then expand again. In some areas, at human height the plates are much smaller so that they can be removed by us, not the larger machines, same with those way up there.”

Adam looked about as she pointed. There, in fact, was a Dwarf with its massive caliper like fists pulling a plate from the walls frame.

*“I see.”*

She smiled to him as they slowly passed the Dwarf. Although it was named so, it was many meters taller than them. “You see, Adam, we have thought of everything. We must for we must last forever.”

Adam thought about her statement. *“What do you mean, forever?”*

“Our goals are never finished, the Intelligence that is my soul will require our services in perpetuity.”

*“Then how old are you now? What is your present age?”*

The Cry turned a bit toward Adam, Eve laughing warmly a bit. “My age is a time indefinite. I have lived an expanse I cannot define.”

*“Then how old am I?”*

Eve brushed her hair back, looked down the corridor, and then at him. "You are three thousand four hundred twenty six years old."

Adam thought about it, rubbing his bald head. He looked at his hands. He thought he was young and the number did not register as young or old to him because he had no reference point. He became frustrated at the dark veil that was his past.

*"Is that old?"*

Eve shook her head. "It is only a reference number. Time is measured in different ways, depending on its reference point and physics, just like how long a day and a night is on this facility. I choose for us to have day and night, but I can make each several hours or several hundred hours."

Adam woke up in a smaller corridor. The height of the ceiling was half of what the main sections were. It was also a bit dimmer, why that was, he did not know. The Towers could still enter the walkway, but they had less room to work. His face felt greasy. He had not had a cleaning in quite some time. He wondered whether Eve would come and get him for one. Again, she, or it, was acting a bit more unusual than usual. He wiped his face and picked at his lips. They were dry and he was thirsty. Adam sat up. Down the hallway was a large Spider. It was making its way toward him. It stopped several meters before reaching him, turned to a one of the smaller panels and with two of its front legs reached behind its head, into its torso, where it held a variety of slotted tools and snapped on pincer type claws. It then took those claws, found large bolts at the corners of the panel, and turned them. It did this again, then grabbed the panel's center grip. It gently pulled the panel from the bulkhead and placed the

plating next to it. Adam, intrigued, decided to investigate. For some reason, he did not harbor as much fear against the other machines as he did the Cry's, perhaps because of the sounds they made, or the way they looked, like stalks in the wind, or maybe just because they abused him. Adam stood, pulled the zipper of his suit down below his chest, and slowly walked over to the beast. The Spider was busy inspecting what looked like some circuitry along with some wiring junctions that intersected the unit. The Spider seeing him, fixated its eye on him for a moment, then, unconcerned, went back to what does. Adam, now comfortable that the machine would not hurt him, took a closer look at the internals of the unit behind the bulkhead plating. To Adam, it was amazing, he had supposed that there was electronic components within the ship's hull but now he had proof! He had been through so many hibernations and now he knew he could learn more if he only dug. The Spider, needing another one of its appendages, reached back with a third leg, snapped on a driver and moved it into its work space. It removed one bolt after another, placing it next to itself again. Adam wondered what would happen if he took one of the bolts. He reached down and grabbed one. It was about the size of his thumb. He took it and put it into one of the pockets of his jumpsuit. Adam waited a minute to see if the Spider would notice. It looked at him for a moment and then went back to work. Adam shook his head in disbelief and walked away. If Eve controlled everything, saw everything, wouldn't she have seen him take the bolt? Why did she not stop him? Adam did not have the answer.

A Cry came up to him, standing over his body, Adam slowly waking up. He looked up from the floor at the machine. Surprised, he backed away. The Cry made a soft chirp, then a longer one, and finally imaged Eve. Eve smiled at him. "Good morning, my dear."



Adam wiped his eyes and his greasy face. He smelled and his suit was sticky inside from the many days he'd worn it without washing or changing. It also meant that he had to void himself where he could. The ship was so massive, he could not find his way around without the help of his guide, Eve. In fact, he knew he was all too dependent on her. He needed to find a way to break his chains. He signed to her, "*Morning.*"

This time, Eve spoke and signed, "You need bathing, my love."

Adam sat up, frowning, looking at himself. "*I know.*"

Eve had the Cry reach out its long finger-like digits. "I will take you."

Unfortunately, that meant he had to take the Cry's hand. He grabbed it with a curdled chill in his stomach. The Cry wrapped several steel fingers around his hand. They then walked down the corridor until they reached one of the smaller carts. That one seated four. Eve motioned for him to take a seat in the front. He did and then, "I will meet you when you get to the turbo lift."

Adam nodded as the cart sped forward, leaving the Cry and Eve behind. Even though he had left them behind, Eve was still there inside the cart, controlling it and everything on that ship. There was nowhere he could run without her knowing, yet, somehow, he seemed to think that maybe there was exceptions to that. He took the bolt from his pocket and tossed it aside. It hit the floor with a resounding ping, bounced metal on metal a few times, and then he lost track of it as the cart turned a corner at the intersection of two corridors, passing a few machines along the way. Once at the turbo lift, the cart slowed to a stop. A Cry was waiting there for him. It flickered Eve into view and Adam stepped out of his ride. This turbo lift was for

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