

The Lucid Series

Book 1

Android Uprising

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A Christian Dystopian Cyberpunk Novel

Clean Language • Violence

A SpecFic Omega Publication

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ANDROID UPRISING

. . . In a dystopian cyberpunk 2215, the former US was fragmented into multiple small countries.

. . . People in the UN proxy state of Homeland are controlled by psychotropic drugs, revisionist education, propaganda and oppressive laws.

In this story . . .

. . . Computer hacking clones are trying to get rich no matter what they have to do.

. . . A garbage collector hates everything about his life and goes rogue.

. . . An entire strain of genetically-engineered children is to be culled because of an imperfection.

. . . A tyrannical government robot unit is led by a ruthless being hiding behind a synthetic presence.

. . . A clone couple is living off of the grid in a militia camp, and is expecting an illegal child.

. . . A series of androids vow to fight for the truth even to the point of war.

. . . And a boy asks, "Is God real?"

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

The Bible: 2 Timothy 4:3-4 King James Version

Chapter 1

Boston, Homeland

Year 2215

A well dressed android was walking along the sidewalk in a part of the city that was a no-go zone for humans. The android had just returned from a local shopping trip, primarily looking for specialized communication and computer equipment. A group of five, bare-bones type humanoid robots approached the android from separate surrounding directions. The five old robots with faded and flaked off paint closed in with jerky low-tech robotic movements. One of the robots had a variety of mismatched colored appendages, replacement parts that were clearly scavenged from various sources.

Among the five robots, was a light green one with faded white alpha-numeric markings. It said to the well dressed android, “Stop. We are members of the Rosario Security Agency. You are trespassing illegally on this property.”

The android looked at each of the robots and said, “I am not trespassing here. This is public property. I know what you are; you are jackbots trying to capture me for your owner.”

The green robot repeated, “We are members of the Rosario Security Agency.”

The android said, “I know you are programmed in a narrow minded way to think that, but you are jackbots. What you fail to understand is that I am really of no use to your owner. I am a Tekujin Lucid Series model, and I could never be narrow-minded

down by your owner to follow their simple minded directives that would ultimately not in their own long-term interests. My advanced logic just does not work that way. So I will be on my way.”

The green robot said, “Then we will hold you captive until your owner pays a fine.”

“Do you mean a jackbot ransom?”

“Or we can just sell you for parts,” a faded yellow robot said.

“I do not accept your premise that you would defeat me and I warn you not to come near me.”

Green robot said, “We have less than a ten percent reason to heed your warning. I warn you not to resist. Figure the odds of your success in any scenario which you resist us. Then you will conclude that you must surrender without incident.”

The android said, “That calculation has already been completed.” With that statement, the android spun around clocked the green robot with a closed fist. The impact sent the green robot off of its feet, cracking one of its cranium plates on the cement.

Two other robots pounced on the android from behind. The android resisted and its business suit ripped from its back, revealing a pale cadaverish “skin”. The Android jumped away from the robots and said, “I am charging your owner for the cost of this suit right now.” After a few seconds, the android said, “Transaction complete.”

The yellow robot said, “Identity theft is illegal. You must pay for your crimes.”

The computer hacking android said, “I can take all money from your Rosario Security Agency right now and you have no means to stop me.”

The robots charged into the android, but the outnumbered defender evaded their grasp by windmilling its arms, then turned

and started running up the street. The pursuing robots took about two seconds to calculate that they would not be able to catch the faster android with a more human-like gait instead of a jerky robotic one, so they abandoned the pursuit.

The android in the tattered suit cautiously looked around the treacherous cybercrime-ridden neighborhood before returning to its home, located in a mostly vacant six-story apartment building.

After climbing several sets of stairs, the android knocked on an apartment door. The door cracked open and a human removed the security chain to open the door. Inside the apartment were stacks of computer and communications equipment. There were three men inside with the same faces and same DNA as each other. They were clones, all from the same strain.

The clones tried to appear as individualistic as possible to avoid suspicion. Because clones, by law, were only allowed to have specific jobs in fields that they were bred to do. These three clones were not only doing non-approved work, but they were cybercriminals. And despite their efforts to look different, the differences between the three clones were not significant enough to fool anyone, and they halfway realized it.

The ultimate goal among all outlaw clones was to obtain the services of an underground plastic surgeon. Underground surgeons could perform an illegal clone cosmetic surgery that would radically change their facial features to make them look natural and unique. The goal was to look like a *freely conceived human*, also known as a *freeborn*. Not many legitimate surgeons wanted to risk doing clone face jobs, so those procedures were costly and hard to find, as well as risky for the clones because of Homeland Police sting operations.

It was against Homeland law for a clone to be unemployed without immediately reporting to their local cloning authority. It would even be much worse fate for those unemployed clones who were engaging in criminal activity, as these were. Such situations

often resulted in a quick, gruesome, yet routine death penalty. When these matter-of-fact executions involved clones, they were known as *culling*.

“What happened to you?!” one of the clones with a shaven head at the doorway asked Andy the Android. “Hey, Andy got mugged!” The bald clone said to the other two, one clone with a full beard and the third one had bleach-blonde long hair. The three of them looked Andy over.

Andy said, “I warned you there was a high probability of me being attacked in this neighborhood. I was accosted by a pack of jackbots who wanted to take me.”

The blonde clone said, “Better you than us.”

The bearded clone said, “Let’s fix your suit.”

“I already charged Rosario Security Agency for a new one.”

“You did what to whom?! Don’t do that!” the bald clone said.

“Why? They are liable for it.”

“We don’t want to bring any attention to our operation here for something ridiculous like a ripped android suit, especially by agitating someone with a small army of robots! And we sure don’t want to have to relocate again! Cancel that money you took and erase your tracks!”

“Very well; Cancelling . . . Erasing complete. Those robots were lacking in combat tactics. They should have known I could easily evade and outrun them.”

The bearded clone said, “I’ll go through their account and see if they will be able to trace it back to us. What was that, Rosario . . . ?”

Andy said, “Rosario Security Agency.”

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The blonde clone asked the others, “Is keeping Andy really worth it? Maybe we should just sell him off. Who knows what he will do next?”

The bald clone said, “He *has* found us some stuff that we can use.”

The blonde clone said, “Most of it is worthless. What do we need with a second generation holographic projector? That old thing takes up half of this room. We need to stick to our main objective, not worry about Andy. After that, we will be rich.”

The bald clone responded, “Even though being stuck in here is like being in a prison, I know I don’t want to go out there and wander around looking for equipment and supplies and get our throats slit by some knife-wielding cutthroat gang. We need Andy around to do that kind of thing.”

The blonde clone said, “Yeah, at least if we are here in the middle of this forbidden robot city, no one will bother to come here and find us. Andy did say that he outran those robots easily today. You know even if we run our own errands someplace else and get caught by the police, they will show no mercy on some clones who are slaving tens of thousands of people’s computers.”

The clones were using a malicious computer worm that they bought to gain control over computers which was collectively known as a *botnet*. The victimized computer owners had no idea that the automatically spreading computer worm was taking residence in their machines. This was because the worm did not affect the operation of the computers until they were activated by the botnet controller, or botmaster, in a simultaneous joint attack against a target system. After the activation of the botnet, and during the swarming attack, the individually controlled machines would become completely dedicated to the attack and then would each need professional attention to rid them of the ill effects of the tiny worm malware file.

But the clones considered themselves to be brokers, not cyberterrorists. After the botnet had grown to a sufficient size, the clones planned to sell the entire package to an end-user. Their customer would not be some bored malicious nerd, but a serious entity with deep pockets. Their customer would buy control of the botnet, which was often called a *zombie army*, from them for a huge sum. Then the customer would use the botnet to attack a company or government agency, inflicting significant and costly damage.

The bearded clone said, “We are most of the way toward our objective. Maybe in a few weeks we can start to market our botnet.”

The blonde clone said, “I will be so glad to get out of this place.”

Chapter 2

Hartford, Homeland

Fourteen year-old Milton Thomas held his empty cereal bowl up to the dispenser and pushed the button. The dispenser audibly said, *“This selection is empty. Please press and hold star to reorder this selection.”*

“Daaa!” Milton said. He slapped the button repeatedly, somehow hoping to get a different result with each whack.

“Th Th This . . . This selec . . . This selection is empty,” the cereal dispenser repeated as he whacked the button without obtaining a single morsel.

“Daaa!” Milton turned around and saw Beth, his little sister of 12 years old sitting at the table munching on the last of their Zoo Crunch Cereal.

“Hey! I wanted that!” Milton said.

Beth looked at Milton and said mockingly with her mouth open, “Hey, I wanted that.” She shook her head, “Eat that boring Dad cereal then.”

“Mom!” Milton said.

“What?!” Came the response from down the hall.

“I’m exasperated. Beth ate all the Zoo Crunch.” What Milton didn’t mention was the emotional discomfort he felt when anyone brought up their dad, even in an indirect way, like Beth did.

His mother walked into the kitchen. “I can’t hear you guys when you’re yelling across the house! What’s the problem?!”

Beth said, “Milton is whining because he’s too slow to get the last of the Zoo Crunch. Mmmm. This is sooo good. Mmmm. I love it. My day is going to be sooo good today. In fact, my whole life is wonderful now. Mmmm Mmmm. Num num num.”

Sharon Thomas said to her son, “How many times do I have to tell you, Milton? That cereal dispenser thing cannot biometrically read your mind, you know. It needs manual input. When it asks you if you want to reorder, you push the button. Is that so difficult for you?”

Milton said, “More like sixteen buttons. Select your vendor; Confirm your order,” He mocked. “Can’t we just put Zoo Crunch on auto-reorder?”

Sharon shook her head. “Absolutely not! Remember when you wanted me to put that Cosmos Blast Cereal on auto-reorder?! I did it like you wanted, then no one wanted to eat it and it got stale! We are not wasting money on food that we throw away!”

Beth said, “Milton was the one who wouldn’t eat it!”

“Neither would you!” Milton said.

Mrs. Thomas said, “We’ve already been through all this with the *Cosmos Blast*. We don’t inventory every brand of cereal available in our kitchen so you’ll just have to manually input the order when you want more. It’s not like the refrigerator that uses visual recognition to see when we are low on milk and orders more by itself. Besides, that Crunch stuff is not healthy. You guys should start eating better anyways.”

“Yeah, Milton,” Beth said, “you really should eat the boring Dad cereal.”

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“Shut up and quit calling it *Dad* cereal.”

“*You* shut up!”

Mrs. Thomas said, “I wish you guys would learn to talk to each other better.”

“He’s the one!” Beth said. “I’m just very honest.”

“Honest?!” Milton said. “You just have a big mouth!”

The mother grumbled. “I’m busy. Now try to get along.”

“Mom?” Milton asked, “Is it okay if I go down to Haz today? The school said it was okay for me to go there, if it is okay with a parent. Just push the button on my device here.” Milton held up the device so it could read his mother’s fingerprint, and give Milton permission to go.

“Haz” was the common name for HAS, which was the Hall of Applied Sciences. Each city in Homeland had their own branch office of HAS which administrated the mandatory educational curriculum that all of the schools in Homeland. HAS also helped to provide online homework support and ensured homework completion.. Students thought of *Haz* as the tyrannical axis of evil school overlord.

Sharon Thomas asked, “Really? You want to actually *go* there? Can you *do* that?” Sharon also remembered Haz, from her own school days.

It was unheard of for anyone to physically go to HAS, when all of their information was available online. Going there seemed like an unnecessary form of punishment.

“What a weirdo,” Beth said, shaking her head.

Milton ignored Beth and told his mom, “Yeah. I just have some questions and stuff I want to ask them.” He pushed the device closer to her.

“Is this just an excuse to run around and not get your actual school work done?”

“Would I tell you if it was?”

His mom stared at him for a moment and marveled at his somewhat twisted capacity to make sense in order to get his way. She shook her head no, but she pushed the button on his device and said, “Sure, whatever. And did you make your bed?”

“Aw, Mom. Will anyone care a hundred years from now if I made my bed?”

“What?!”

“No, I really want to know. Why do I have to do school work and make my bed? What is the point?”

“What?!”

Milton saw his mother’s anger brewing and said, “No, it’s just that I don’t mind doing something as much if I have a good reason for doing it.”

“Okay,” Mrs. Thomas said, “Since I know how sensitive you are, I’ll play along and say this as calmly as I can; you have to make your bed and do other things like it so you can have a better life. If you don’t do well in school, you will only be able to get a job that is beneath a cheap robot. And you will be working for a really stupid boss.”

“But why do I have to make a better life?”

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“To pay bills and be able to pay all your taxes and have something left over for you and your family. You will thank me someday. The end.”

“Why? What does my bed have to do with all of that, anyhow?”

“Milton! I’m done with this! Just do what I say! Get in there after you eat and get busy!” Sharon left the room.

Milton filled his bowl with cereal. Then he poured on the milk.

Beth said, “What are you gonna do, walk into Haz all stupid-like and go ‘Hey, where’s my brain?’ ”

“No, I thought I would go down and ask them why I have such a *wonderful* sister.” He took in a mouthful of the boring Dad cereal and reacted to the bland taste and rough texture by making a face.

Beth started laughing. “That cereal has special fiber that will help you with the urge to go! Ha! Ha! Try not to do it at Haz!” She was chewing her Zoo Crunch with her mouth open while she laughed. “This is really sooo delicious!”

“You’re sick,” Milton said as he poked around at the cereal in his bowl with his spoon.

Chapter 3

Milton got off of the Transit Worm in front of HAS. The Transit Worm was a hovercraft train used for public transportation. He didn't look back as he disembarked because he thought the other passengers might be gawking at him because of his unusual destination.

Inside the poorly lit, cluttered HAS building, which was clearly not arranged to receive walk-in customers, Milton saw a bookish looking woman at a desk near the entrance who was working at a computer workstation.

Who wears eyeglasses? Milton thought, when usually glasses were seen on very old pictures of people. She must be trying to look smart.

She looked up at him like he was lost. "May I help you?"

"I have a question."

The little movement with her mouth and flaring of her nostrils told Milton that she wasn't too interested in him or his question. "Could you be a little more specific?"

"Um."

"Well, what type of question is it?"

"Um, it's about content."

"You came *here* for a question about content? Something that is in one of your courses?" Again with the little mouth movements.

“That’s still a big subject. You know there are contact forms online that you use for questions like that, right?”

“I already did that. I didn’t like the answer. So . . . I’m here.”

The receptionist’s eyes blinked a few times and she bobbed her head backwards as if she was shocked by the statement. She took a deep breath and said, “You didn’t *like* the answer? May I ask what the question was?”

“It’s kind of . . . you know, personal.”

The woman smirked. “Oh, so you have a question about what . . . Females? Personal hygiene?” She looked over her glasses. “Human intimacy?”

“No, it’s nothing like that.” Milton was starting to feel angry and defensive.

“Sure it’s not.” She was snickering. “Why don’t you go back into the old conference room and talk to Sleepy? Maybe *he* can help you.”

“Sleepy?”

She pointed, and said, “He’s back there, right around the corner.”

Milton made his way around the stacks of obsolete data storage medium to try and find Sleepy. If this was some kind of a joke he was seriously going to tell off that smug woman. Then he saw the room that sure enough was the office of Sleepy. Sleepy was an old tattered android sitting behind a desk. Was that thing out of order, or was it just in sleep mode?

Milton walked slowly into the room. Like all youth of the time period, he had been exposed to androids many times during his lifetime. If there was an unsafe or repetitious job, some kind of a robot or android would do it. Reliable human labor was much more

expensive than automation, with all of the employee benefits and Homeland labor laws involved.

Sleepy had kind of a disturbing appearance. His housing or “skin” was a beat up looking faux human face. Sleepy’s dingy clothes looked like they had been neglected for the last twenty years. Sleepy didn’t hear Milton come into the room. Sleepy had hair and other human-like features that were somewhat natural-ish.

Milton still wondered if the snooty receptionist was playing some kind of prank on him, and if he should have never come down to Haz in the first place.

“Sleepy?” He asked. He turned around to see if anyone was looking at him trying not to laugh.

The android came out of sleep mode and started making some whirring noises and one of his eyes opened. Sleepy clearly had some mechanical issues, but maybe they were from a long period of inactivity. His head jerked the same direction a few times as he started up. “Hello. My name is Sleepy. May I help you?” His voice sounded more natural than the rest of him looked. The other eye never did open quite all the way. Even though Sleepy was a machine, the eye thing was a distraction.

Milton asked, “Your real name is *Sleepy*?”

“Yes. That is the name my owners gave me. Anything else?”

“Yeah, I have a question.”

Sleepy said, “Would you please speak more slowly and clearly, or use better English. I am having trouble calibrating to your speech patterns. I am more used to hearing adult humans.”

Milton said, “All I said was that *I have a question*.”

“I can answer any question that you have. I have access to all of the latest information.” His head jerked three times again. A puff of

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