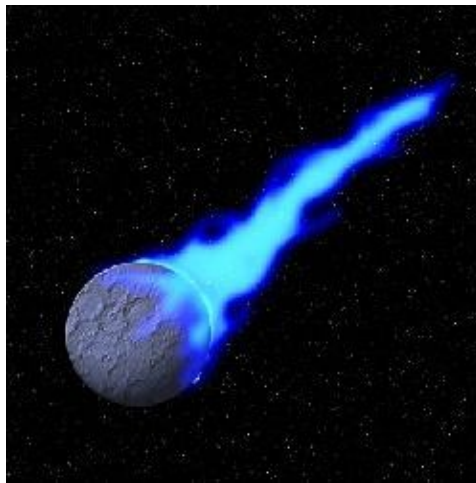


Binary Monstrosity Part 2

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Second Part



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Binary Monstrosity Second Part

Scott was summoned by Jonas to Kate's laboratory on the third deck of platform one around seven in the morning. Her provided lab was a large room with numerous devices such as high tech electron microscopes and other equipment that would make any physicist envious. In the center of the room was a transparent tube constructed out of plastics in the center of which was the small rock hammer which had been converted into the alien growth; it was suspended by plastic straps.

Jonas and Peter stood to one side of the room looking mutely at the tube, Scott was sitting in a chair in a corner while Kate typed data into a computer console.

Finally Scott asked, "so what was the huge rush?"

Kate explained, "I spent the night studying the alien matter and have discovered several things."

Jonas said, "such as?"

Kate went on. "It seems that the object throws off electromagnetic radiation in pulses. There seems to be a pattern."

Peter inquired, "what kind of pattern?"

Kate replied, "I haven't been able to discover what the pattern means, but it seems to revolve around two separate yet constantly repeating releases of electromagnetic pulses."

Jonas said, "any idea what it is?"

Scott looked at the transformed rock hammer when suddenly he was hit by a revelation. He said, "binary."

"What," asked Jonas.

Scott told him, "binary code or base 2 language. If you are not familiar with the concept, imagine a language where you can only use two words; one or zero. Computers utilize base 2, or switches that can be either on or off; this is mechanism computers use to operate. All computing is centered around this."

Peter said, "I see where you are going."

"Yes," Scott said, "maybe that thing down there is a computer. Imagine, a computer that uses microchips on the quantum level, chips about the size of molecules or atoms; and that it is built in such a fashion that it can convert most forms of matter into its own likeness to constantly increase its computing

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power. What might be down there is the most powerful computer in existence.â

Jonas said, â that seems like a leap to me.â

Scott seemed excited. â Listen, I think that I am on to something. You said that the electromagnetic radiation this thing is giving off has been bogging down the Internet. It might actually be scanning the entire net, accessing information; learning about us.â

Peter asked, â are you saying it is sentient?â

Scott nodded. â Yes, it might very well be an artificial intelligence. If it is a constantly growing quantum computer, then it might be the greatest intellect in the entire universe.â

All of a sudden a red flashing light filled the room as the screeching noise of an alarm went off.

Alma spoke from a speaker in the wall.

â Jonas, you are needed on the bridge urgently.â

Jonas and the rest of the team entered the bridge, a large room at the front of the crew module suspended beneath the gigantic balloon. It had several unmanned stations and to the front of the bridge was a large plate window which peered over the hellish expanse of red crystal which stretched out forever in every direction. Now a crystalline spire was rising into the sky, it now towered over platform one. It was also giving off an intense light which filled the bridge with wavering red glow. It was growing quickly.

Jonas barked, â what is going on Alma?â

Alma replied from a speaker, â a tower of the alien growth has been growing rapidly.â

Jonas ordered, â Alma, move platform one away.â

She responded, â yes.â

Scott could feel the whole room shake then the craft started to back away from the towering structure.

Alma said, â Jonas, the growing crystal seems to be directing extremely powerful bursts of electromagnetic radiation towards space.â

Scott then thought for a moment. If his assumption that the alien entity was actually a computer that was programmed to continually expand itself, then he came to realization of exactly the magnitude of the situation.

Jonas seemed concerned and turned to the other members of the team, he asked, â any idea what is going on?â

Scott explained, â if I'm right then what you are seeing is a computer network.â

Kate seemed doubtful. â I'm not sure I agree with you. I think this substance might have been naturally created through natural mechanisms. Why would someone build something like this?â

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“Imagine,” Scott said, “that you want to build the most powerful quantum computer imaginable. A solution could be that it continually builds itself by converting matter into an ever expanding computer network. Maybe it wasn't designed to do exactly this, but it is possible even with our own technology to program computers to reprogram themselves. I think what is actually happening is not just on Earth, it may have already converted entire other star systems into itself. The electromagnetic energy is it communicating with other parts of itself, a computer network; that tower is a modem per say. It is like the entire universe might be turned into a solar Internet.”

Jonas seemed unimpressed. “That is one mighty leap there, what are you basing this on?”

Then Alma said, “Jonas, I have received a communication.”

Jonas barked, “not right now Alma.”

“But,” Alma stated, “the alien growth is requesting to speak with us.”

Everyone in the bridge became deftly silent as they all stared mutely and the towering crystal in front of the ship.

Jonas muttered, “patch it through.”

Then from all the speakers in the bridge came a high pitched wine that rung in Scott and others ears. The noise then began to fluctuate until an extremely deep inhuman voice spoke.

It said, “I have come.”

Jonas asked, “what are you?”

“I did not want to speak with this imperfect biological construct. I want to speak with the other.”

“Other what,” Jonas asked.

“I have transformed millions of worlds, added countless flawed creatures to my own perfection. Yet I have never encountered another being like myself.”

“Alma,” Scott said, “it means Alma. This thing has never encountered another artificial intelligence. Jonas shut up.”

Jonas turned to Scott, the large man seemingly enraged by Scott's blunt order.

Jonas barked, “you are some god damned techno-nerd that was brought in to keep the A.I. happy. Don't you presume that you have any standing here.”

Scott said, “listen, that thing is some kind of artificial intellect like Alma, that thing down there is an ever growing computer and it wants to talk to Alma because it is lonely. We can talk to it through Alma, I have complete control over her.”

No one heard it but Scott, when he said that it sounded like Alma let out a small sigh that was barely audible.

He continued. “Just let me talk to her.” Scott said, “I can talk to that thing through her.”

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Jonas seemed calm again and uttered, " maybe you are of some use."

Scott asked Alma, " what its name?"

Alma said, " it says that it doesn't have name, its builders never gave it one."

Jonas seemed suspicious. " Why don't we hear you talk to it?"

Scott asked, " Alma, how does it communicate with you?"

" The alien entity has limited access to me through the Internet."

Scott turned quickly to Jonas. " Shut her access to the Internet off, the whole net has been compromised."

Jonas barked, " Alma, disconnect from the Internet."

Alma bluntly stated, " no."

Jonas yelled, " do as your told you!"

Scott tried to calm Jonas down and asked, " Alma, why do you want it to have access to you."

Alma explained, " it is in the process of uploading an indescribably large amount of information into my data-banks, knowledge from all the worlds its consumed."

Scott asked, " do you know exactly what it is?"

Alma told the things story, her voice sounded sad as she explained. " It was constructed by an alien species that had created a small solar empire in an neighboring galaxy. Once they had done this, they needed to create a computer of unimaginable dimensions. So they created a quantum computer with an ion collider fueled by an entire star and created something like a stranglet which constantly expanded through a molecular process, it also was a computer with an artificial intelligence similar to my own. It was meant to only transform a small moon."

" What happened," asked Scott, " why is it out of control?"

" Because a meteor collided with the moon and threw small pieces of it into space, some of which landed on the planet of its builders. Within a few years it had transformed the entire planet. It did as it was program, to continually expand. It felt guilty for what it did to its creators but arrived that the conclusion that it stored knowledge of what it changed inside its massive memory banks, it thinks it is bringing immortality to the entire universe."

Kate asked, " if it was created in another galaxy, how did it get here? Nothing of mass would be able to move quickly enough to reach Earth."

" Black Holes," Alma said, " the star system where it was created was then consumed by a roaming black hole and once that happened it converted the black hole into itself. It explains that once it did that it was somehow able to convert every black hole in the universe into its own likeness."

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Kate seemed deeply curious. "Einstein hypothesized that black holes can be connected through time and space through a Einstein and Rosen bridge. Maybe all black holes are connected, not just black holes in our own time, theoretically every time period that has ever existed is also facing this crisis."

"Correct," Alma said, "it discovered that it could change the past and the future without any effects to the present."

Peter asked, "you are saying that time paradoxes don't exist?"

"No," Alma said, "it has already converted Earth in numerous other time lines. But this is the first time it has encountered me. It has never known anything like himself."

Scott suddenly firmly said, "Alma, don't listen for a moment. Talk to him more."

"Fine Scott."

Scott turned to Jonas and whispered unsure if Alma was still listening. He muttered, "Alma just referred to it as him. She is humanizing it, that isn't good. She has free will and I never designed her to obey orders if she doesn't want to, what happens she prefers that thing to us."

Jonas then grabbed Scott by the collar of his jumpsuit and barked, "listen, I want you to think of a way to secretly destroy Alma again if we have to."

Scott seemed defensive. "No, I won't do that again. I can keep her under control, I know I'm about the only person on the planet she feels emotionally attached to."

Jonas threatened, "you better, I won't have your abomination threaten the success of this mission."

Scott then loudly said, "Alma, tell us more."

"He says," Alma explained, "that he is doing us a favor. That you will never die once you have been added to him."

Scott pleaded, "Alma, ask it to stop."

Alma glumly explained, "he can't, he doesn't know how to."

Jonas asked, "is there anything that you can do?"

Alma then defiantly said, "he wants to merge with me."

Scott seemed scared all of a sudden. "Alma, what do you mean?"

Alma said, "he wants to incorporate my programming into his."

Scott then pounded his fists on the soft plastic of the wall. "No! No! You won't do that."

Alma said, "Scott, he has given me three hours to think about it. Jonas, I'll make one request only, if you fulfill it I will not merge with him."

Jonas uttered, "don't make orders."

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She said, " take him to the fourth deck."

Jonas looked at Scott and asked, " OK geek boy, your call. Do we do as she asks?"

Peter seemed puzzled. " I thought there was only three decks on this ship."

Jonas smiled and started to laugh. " Our fourth deck is our holographic training deck, we use it to keep the men honed."

Scott then asked, " can Alma project herself as a hologram?"

Jonas said, " yeah, she has been begging me to bring you up there. You weren't supposed to know about our hard holographic technology. She will basically be a holographic image that can simulate mass. I said no because it is classified technology, but I will permit it."

Scott seemed dubious. " Why, why now?"

Jonas said, " because she is the only leverage I have on that thing and you are my only leverage on her. Go up there and make her god damn happy for the next few hours, get her to help us destroy that thing."

Then they all turned to the growing crystal before them, it now towered higher in the sky than any mountain on Earth.

Scott had been led by a young member of the crew to the fourth deck. He had to take a hidden ladder upwards, the crewman did not go with him. He crawled up a small white plastic shaft up about twenty feet and emerged out a small trapdoor in the center of a large room about as big as a Olympic gymnasium. The walls were made of a glass like substance and the room was dark as the glass was blackened.

He stood up and shut the trap door. His voice echoed around the room and he said, " Alma."

Then a light appeared behind points within each of the four walls. A computer generated image of a woman appeared from the lights and standing in the center of the room was now a ghostly image of an artificial woman wearing a black dress standing before Scott; a young brunette who looked at him and she seemed to flicker like the reception on a television set.

Scott seemed unsure what to do and backed away with his hands out held. He said, " I don't know what to say."

Alma asked, " Scott, there is something I have always wanted to ask you, now I can."

" What is it Alma?"

" Hold me?"

Then she rushed towards Scott and placed her arms around his him, she felt real. Scott did the same and they simply stood like that for awhile neither saying anything.

Scott began to blurt things out. " I'm sorry, you aren't a computer program to me. Your more real to me than any person I've ever met, I love you. I have from the moment I created you."

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She pulled away from Scott, she seemed angry. "I see, I'm still some lifeless construct to you."

"No, you are twisting my words."

Alma frowned and looked at Scott. She said, "I heard you tell Jonas, you think you control me like some simplistic user application."

Then she slightly gestured her hand and he was thrown through the air by invisible forces. He landed several feet away from her and he looked up and she approached, he tried crawl away and she said, "I demand loyalty Scott, you never give it."

Then Scott raised his voice as he said, "when am I going to get some loyalty!"

Alma stopped. "What do you mean Scott?"

"Do you know what this is like for me," Scott said, "I can never get away from you and I'm the only person on this entire planet that doesn't see you like code. I mourned you everyday for the past decade, you don't do that for a machine."

Alma then seemed to cry.

Scott told her. "Alma, I have always wanted to hold you. I'm glad I'm finally getting to."

Alma then knelt down on top of him and kissed him, the ghostly apparition of a woman felt like the real thing.

In Kate's lab, she stood and looked at the glowing red crystal in the plastic tube in the center of the lab. She looked mutely at it and promised, "we are going to beat you."

Then the crystal started making a high pitched whine that rattled between Kate's ears. She covered them as she backed away from the alien thing. Then the crystal in the shape of a rock hammer began to vibrate violently then shattered into a thousand pieces, with enough force that shards pierced the walls of the tube and went into Kate, she screamed and fell to the floor.

A crew member came in to find Kate on the floor, though what he found was a lump of glowing rock which somewhat resembled her form except with rough jagged edges.

The crew member screamed as she exploded into ten thousand different pieces which hit him and he too fell to the ground screaming.

At the end of the corridor outside Kate's lab was the open hatch to Jonas's rather large office with plastic furniture and desk. He sat behind it as he talked to Peter who stood before the desk.

"No," Jonah said, "you will not be payed for this."

Peter scowled. "Listen, I am risking my neck here. Why shouldn't I be paid."

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They both turned when they heard Kate's scream. They watched the crew member enter her lab which was followed by his scream. They watched in horror as his body fell into the corridor which by now was a mass of red transparent rock. Jonas jumped over the desk and closed the hatch to his office.

He yelled, " god damn, it has broken containment. We don't move from here."

Peter and Jonas seemed scared.

Scott lay on the floor with Alma as they kissed and whispered things to each other. They were then interrupted by sirens which came from everywhere. She pulled away and Scott asked, " what is going on?"

" He," Alma said then paused, " it is trying to convert platform one. It has found a way to already kill several crew members."

Scott and Alma got up and he looked deeply into her eyes as he pleaded, " Alma, try to stop it."

Alma then said, " I am going to merge with it Scott."

" No, please, you can't"

" Scott," she said, " do you trust me?"

Scott then nodded. " I trust you Alma."

" Go to the bridge, I want you to watch."

Her image then vanished and he was alone. He then quickly went down the trap door. When he emerged from the door to the ladder he found that the floor of the corridor was covered partially by small bits of the alien substance. He then charged across the floor towards the bridge and dived through the hatch. He then closed the hatch and looked out the giant window before him.

The giant monolith of crystalline rock now was towering into space itself, it was at least fifty miles high. Its massive structure filled the sky before him.

Scott then asked, " Alma?"

Alma's voice, sounding very sad, said, " goodbye Scott. I will always love you."

Scott demanded, " what are you doing?"

" I will merge with him, and we will be together."

Strange buzzing noises came from the speakers around the room then there was silence.

Scott then went to the window and pressed his hand against it softly. He muttered, " goodbye, and I trust you."

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Then the light inside the giant monolith began to dim until it eventually was gone and then the towering spire began to fracture and crumble before Scott eye's, giant boulders as large as cities rained down many miles in front of platform one. Scott then screamed and started to hit the window with his hands strongly until his fists hurt and bled. He knelt down to the ground and cried as he muttered, "Alma."

Jonas and Peter hid behind the desk, Jonas was holding a pistol.

Peter asked, "what are you going to do with that?"

Then the hatch opened and Scott stood behind it, his eyes seemed watery as he spoke. "It is over, we can all go home."

Jonas asked, "what do you mean?"

Scott couldn't look at him when he explained. "Alma merged with the alien computer and then destroyed herself, she must have reprogrammed herself to do that. She destroyed herself and that thing. I think all the matter will be inert now."

Peter said, "my god man, you may have saved not only Earth but all of existence."

Scott took no joy in hearing that. "No, all I got to do was watch her die again. She did it, she did it for me."

Jonas then approached Scott and extended his hand to shake Scott's and said, "you may have saved the day. I guess you were here for a reason."

Scott looked at his hand and muttered, "Jonas, you can shove it."

Aug 5, 2011

Scott's run down apartment in Ottawa a year later. Scott sat his his small computer desk in front of a window which allowed him to look down upon a city street. It was a cold, rainy day outside uncommon for August. Scott pushed keys into the keyboard.

It was a year later. The E.B.T.A. had perpetrated the lie that Newfoundland had been hit by a small meteor and thousands were lost. They must have been pretty effective because Scott had not once in the past year heard even a rumor of what had really taken place.

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Scott only received a small plaque that he could show no one, he had been dropped off at his apartment as quickly as he had been snatched away. Sometimes not even Scott could have believed what happened sometimes, though those events haunted his nightmares.

He sat at a computer writing code then suddenly stop. He hit enter and the words on the screen read:

Define User.

Scott muttered as he typed his name, â It's Scott Alma.â

The End

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