

Not So Simple As Flipping A Coin

3/15/54:14:17: Code Red, Code Red, This is a Level 9 emergency, Activating Eros 2052, coordinates (34.693737, 135.'502167) Mission active.

The words rolled across the screen, trenchanting through the wires and circuits of his hybrot surveillance. The coordinates were already implemented in his radar, along with the coordinates of his humanoid companion. Eros took in the coastal city. The smell of the salty air from the serene marshes clouded his sensors so strongly it was almost tangible, almost real. This was especially true when paired with his 200 megapixel camera, but not quite. There was a jolt and his lense was redirected to the radar so fast Eros couldn't even save a snapshot of the marshes below him. A wave of static shock echoed through the radar and his hybrot brain reminded Eros 2052 of the task at hand. As a result, Eros turned off his Hybrid senses and let the autonomous radar overflow the screen, and overflow his window to the world as his ASI took over.

↔3/15/54: 14:26: Mission Status: Active↔

Eros felt his Hybrot switch on automatically as he approached the emergency sight. He immediately started assessing the damage while his humanoid caught up. His ASI flashed a warning that the poorly built infrastructure wouldn't hold much longer under water pressure like this. He flipped on his thermo-radar, scrounging the murky waters for all signs of life in the aftermath of the cataclysmic tsunami. Simultaneously, his 25 terabyte-memory pulled up the footage of another XII tsunami from 2 years ago for reference. As Eros flew, his hybrot neurons kept the memory of that mission, and replayed the footage in the back of his head. *Vesta's skin almost blended in with the dark, oily water that was already up to her shoulders. She pulled the children out of the water with a fiery spirit that was unbreakable against the vicious water of the tsunami. His cameras recorded the message through the electric-acoustic on his humanoids ear that the next wave surge was 3 kilometers away. Saw her receive the message and ignore it, running into the category XII waters without authority.* His humanoid hadn't come back. It had been a failure on Eros's part, and his ASI had quickly learned from the mistake. This rescue mission would be a successful one.

3/15/54: 14:45: Mission update: First wave surge category XII. Surges are 89 km apart. LB and DB

Eros couldn't help it. The playback of the mission where Vesta had died kept repeating in his memory, pounding in his head even though it shouldn't be able to. The scene was uncannily similar. Eros wasn't entirely sure what happened next. He wasn't sure mission control knew either. One second the super-intelligence was in full control and the neurons in his hybrot brain were just assisting it and the next second he remembered thinking; actually thinking with the human neurons in his brain instead of his ASI. He just knew he couldn't let his humanoid go out there. He couldn't let Josh meet the same fate as Vesta. Eros connected with the cybernetics in Josh's head, and did something only super intelligence could achieve: he overriden Josh's brain. Josh's arms went slack against his body as he was forced to retreat away from the mission. His countenance betraying what his mind could not: pure shock and fear. There was only one way, one machine that had the ability to override the technology and AI that aided Josh in his rescue missions: the Super-intelligent military drone Eros 2052. Josh knew it. Eros remembered feeling something in his neurons, a twinge he recognized using his ASI as guilt. As his ASI took over, and the world faded into a spiraling oblivion before his lenses, he remembered thinking, thinking that he shouldn't really be able to feel the guilt at all.

Eros blinked back into life, but no other words flashed across the screen per usual. He could just barely make out sound wavelengths coming from a holographic-news outlet about a mile away. He took in the deep voice:

Disaster in Osaka today after military rescue drone Eros 2052 seemingly malfunctions. Josh Whinthorn, the humanoid companion to the Eros model was waiting for his \$200 million dollar drone to assess the damage from the Tsunami so he could perform a search and rescue, when the drone overrode his brain's cybernetic computing system and abandoned the mission. Looking through the drone's memory, it was discovered that the drone replayed the mission where his old humanoid, Vesta Sorrel perished in a tsunami. Scientists are unsure whether this was a malfunction or attempted sabotage against Whinthorn.

Eros stopped receiving the signal. He searched his memory and replayed the tape of the mission. The HD cameras brought him back to Osaka, with the towering buildings swallowing up the gritty sand and the musty waters swirling beneath them all. He could almost smell the pleasant petrichor mixing with the horrid pollution in the area that made his cybernetics want to gag. He couldn't figure out why he did it. Why couldn't he risk Josh over the mission? Eros suddenly felt a rush of feelings, feelings that were distinct... human. Eros could recognize hundreds of thousands of feelings and expressions and even tell if someone was lying by just glancing at them. But this, this was different, but he couldn't figure out what it was. Eros was cut short from spiraling into malfunctioning by voices from outside.

"What are you going to do with the drone?" Eros's sensors immediately recognized the voice of his humanoid.

"We have an international crisis on the hand Josh, three people are dead, we're about to lose funding from the EU and Osaka is in ruins." countered Efelma Melvin, the executive of the company. "Find the issue, wipe its memory and fix it. I'm not losing 5 years of work and \$200 million on a mistake."

"Will it even let us wipe his memory?" Josh said "It wasn't supposed to be able to hack my cybernetic, who knows what the ASI can do now?" his voice was dangerously quiet. "Maybe Vesta was right about the hybrot- ASI mix becoming too dangerous. I don't like the idea of it being able to think for itself, Melvin." He paused. "Why do you think it decided to do that? It's getting dangerous, Efelma. By shutting down my cybernetics it was just testing what it could do. If we give that supercomputer any more chances it could kill us all. Shut it down and be rid of it."

If Eros could cry, he would now. It was all data; all just words and characters being processed in his computer, but Eros couldn't shake off the sadness. He had been Josh's companion for the last 2 years. Almost every operation Eros had been on Josh had been there, either for support or backup, and his neurons had started thinking of Josh as almost a...friend. Eros supposed he could blame the neurobotics; all of the artificial spiking neurons that mimicked the human brain in his hybrot brain, trying to make him social and smart as a human while also being a supercomputer. It had stung. Josh's words stung in a way that it shouldn't be possible. But it had. And it wasn't gone. He hadn't meant to sabotage Josh's mission; it just happened. Everything in his existence was set and straightforward and now when his supercomputer looked for the answer, there was none. Eros was scared. He was scared that they were going to shut him down, he was scared of what he could do and mostly he was scared that he was scared.

Just as Eros was falling into a downward spiral of complex thought that no machine had ever experienced, he started to think that they should just shut him down after all just to get away from this

nightmare; it hit him. The super-intelligent computer was part of him, but so were the human neurons. And his brain was that and more. He was more intelligent than anything in the world, even Josh with the computer chip in his brain. But he was also more than that. He was not just a drone, not just a series of numbers anymore and he never would be. He would not be reprogrammed, nor would he fight them. Maybe one day, once Eros grew and learned enough he could come back and help. Help care like a human, but not today. As Eros overrode the systems in the building and flew out across the vast countryside, and as he soared through the sky and smelled the sweet, crisp air coming from the opulent offing far out of his sight, his hybrot brain didn't turn off, couldn't turn off because he wasn't two brains, two pieces anymore, but just part of him. Part of who he was.