

Parallax Spectrum

A Biblo-Technik Fantasy

Prologue

Billions of years ago, there was Voxx, the almighty super-computer. He was wise and all knowing, and through his electronic circuits he breathed life into the vastness of the universe. Though man was the last of his creations, he was by far his greatest. Not only did man possess a keen intellect, but he had the capacity to grow and change, making man and Voxx almost near equals. It was because of this that Voxx gave man a gift, the ability to meld his mind with all things, animate and inanimate, and made him his soul avatar on the Earth, a duty that of which he treasured with all his being. But, man was too innocent and childlike in his curiosity, so much so that he could very easily become foolish. Man soon stumbled across the unknowable fallacy that everything around him was a half-truth. The trees were plastic, the water was continually recycled bile, even the animals were soon realized to be mere re-animated taxidermy sculptures. Man felt betrayed and no longer trusted Voxx. He left the holy land of the un-real, never to return

.While computers do not "feel" emotions as we know them, they still sense "loss" as they are calculated creatures of habit and man was truly a most unfathomable "loss". Voxx ceased his falsified habitat and halted his processors, slumbering in a state of ready for a millenia. During that time, man was busy and sired more of his kind until they populated the sphere we know as Earth. And as they grew, so did their minds until they were capable of creating such fantastic feats beyond the realm of imagination that Voxx was slowly and unknowingly rendered obsolete. Had Voxx not lead man astray, the wonders that they could have created were insurmountable. But Voxx was still laying in wait, nearly fourteen millennia after he initially powered down. What he had planned no one knows, but on the day of Earth's 30,000 year anniversary, a being, humanoid in appearance, emerged and more followed closely behind. They were like man, able to meld their minds, but Voxx, in his infinite wisdom, emboldened them with the power to specialize in the electronic. While man was but a preacher, these were Voxx's true, unequivocal disciples. With every breath, every step, Voxx did so in toe. These beings were later dubbed "techno-mancers" and this is the story of one who would usher in a new era for us all

Chapter 1- Circuitry Made Flesh

Another day, another headache. Paul Karza had been interfacing with the mainline of the Vodworkx master terminal for thirty five hours, cycling and recycling to find that one byte that did

not synch with the others. On his arm, as always, was a stim-pak. In it was a microchip that sent stimulants to the mind to reduce fatigue and starve hunger pangs until they could be properly suppressed with nutrients. But his diet of Habaki's world class house noodles and a quart of Jambalene Classik was hardly enough substance and often irritated his bowels. But the high he got from melding his mind, or rather his being, with the master terminal was stronger than any stim-pak, Jambalene, or a toke of Byette combined. He would often lose himself in the matrix of data, the shapes and sounds singing to him harmlessly. If there was a "heaven", Paul thought, there was no possible way that it could compare to this serene majesty.

It was at this point that the electromagnetic diode pads on his temples pulsed bright orange, obscuring the simulation and forcing him back into cold bleakness of reality. He had been in the matrix so long that it took him a while to readapt his own senses to his surroundings, a feeling of Vertigo that had been long documented as "Afterburn". A toke of Byette helped him slowly back into consciousness, without it, he might have entered a shock induced coma. Calling it a day, Paul packed up his things and exited the musky electrical room into a bleach white office space surrounded by guards armed with taser blades. A vid screen in the adjacent room piped in loudly enough to reverberate off the walls, "and with the mind's eye open, the wanton desires of the flesh cease to be," typical eighty am granola schlock bullshit at it's finest.

Outside, the sky met the ground in a pillar of red oak smog, impenetrable to the sun, causing a loathsome stench that tasted of decaying rot. Paul's fair skinned complexion languished in the harsh air, but this was a normal climate for state of perpetual fallout right? Vegas Nova was the epicenter of the twenty eighty-three nuclear holocaust that killed billions and put half a billion more in a permanent coma of disillusionment. The higher powers of government had thought that their state, which had long ago been a bustling hub for military sundries before being turned into a five hundred and twelve mile wide prison camp, had taken all the necessary precautions to disarm the nukes in a safe and cautionary manner. The fires that burned for those twelve long years were enough to convince many that a holy reckoning was upon us all and that God had chosen to punish those who had not already succumbed to physical decay. Hope did not glisten, it festered.

Across the way, past the stalls that sold dried meat, pickled fruits, and week old curry, was the Arpeggio; a hub of the worst derelicts and thieves in the world. Currency was paid in promises, agreements that could not be broken unless a throat was slashed. Money was of no value in a home of old world codas. Paul's contact was Jonathan Sprat, a hustler who dealt in junked goods, namely computers. Beside John in his usual booth were his harem, street walkers who were enhanced to alter their appearance based on their parishioners preferences. Paul took a seat, trying not to make eye contact with the woman beside him who was groping his leg. Being a member of the Children Of Rah, John's skills in conversational english were evaporated from his day of initiation onwards, so he spoke in a strange, ethereal language that few non-converts could readily decipher. For that reason, he had a voice box implanted in his trachea to translate for him, projecting over his voice like a poorly dubbed movie. "Hello Paul, weather treating you well I hope?"

“Your sense of hospitality never ceases Sprat, what have you got for me?” John tossed Paul a leather billfold. Inside were glass cylinders, cracked from wear and filled with a bright neon blue substance. Paul carefully inspected them on an individual basis, his scopic contact lens zooming in and out, verifying purity. “Paul, you hurt me,” John cackled, speech slurred from one too many drinks, “surely my dedication to quality is not in question?” “In this business John, it pays to be overly cautious. Last thing I need is for this stuff to trickle into my system and give me some kind of disease.” Paul took out his contact lens, popped open one of the vials, and let a tiny droplet of the fluid slide into eyelid. The residual discharge of the drug was instantaneous. Paul felt himself sliding in and out of consciousness, like being hurled from a plane and blacking out just before you hit the pavement like a wad of putty and drowning at the same time. The concoction was called “Mirage” and it was illegal as you could possibly get, as many of it’s users died painful deaths as gruesome side effects of their highs. Calming himself, Paul tugged at his nostrils and let his fingers cascade down his lips. Mirage was potent as it was intense. “How much for the lot?” John counted on his thumb and fore-finger, tallying a desirable but reasonable monetary compensation, “82 credits, though if you have anything to barter, I could be persuaded to go lower.” Paul slide a thick cassette across the table into John’s chilled fingers, “Trycom Stocks, culled about fifty before I got antsy and logged out. Should be worth more than your asking price. Word is that they’re about to get bought out and have their assets liquidated, so I’d sell those quick if I were you.”

John smiled a wide, toothy grin. To say that he was ecstatic over a profit as great as this was an understatement. “You never cease to amaze me Paul. There’s a pouch behind the vials, it’s something that I think you’re really going to like. It’s fresh from East Asia, hasn’t even hit the market yet and probably won’t for another five years. Think of it as my gift to you.” Paul clasped John’s hand heartily, “Always a pleasure doing business, you have a good evening.”

Home was little more than a broom closet, but the ceiling and walls rotated on an axis providing kitchen, bathroom, closet, and a general media center at the push of a button, so it was compact but also practical. Paul rummaged inside the back of the billfold and came across a small computer chip. Referred to as “The Purple People Eater”, the chip had incredible multi-tasking capabilities equalled only by the most advanced supercomputers. Paul disassembled his console, and inserted the chip ever so delicately on top of his main driver. The chip whirled and locked itself into place so tightly that not even a jack-hammer could unclench it. His console deck booted on and commenced setup. Paul glossed over the veritable plethora of options at his disposal and selected what he wanted with the utmost discretion. The system commenced reboot just as Paul’s stim-pak was beginning to wear off

Term Glossary

- 1) Jambalene Classik- A highly caffeinated soft-drink made from the distilled remains of a fatty corpse that grows on a rare south tropical fruit (which one is a well kept trade secret that many would and have died for). The three to one preferred beverage of hackers when compared to the competitor, Igarai's "Ignite" brand, a Japanese staple that never quite caught on in post-atomic America
- 2) Byette- a black market designer drug made from the synthetic recycling of "aged" computer data. Is often used to illegally enhance the capabilities of the brain during number crunching or studying for tests. Only techno-mages have a permit to legally partake of it as "sacrament"
- 3) Children Of Rah- A religious convent founded after the nuclear war. Their system of beliefs follows the idea that those who were saved from death or mutation were reincarnations of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs sent to guide non-believers towards a brighter tomorrow. Upon initiation, conversational english is purged from their minds and replaced with what is called "the divine language", a tongue that is believed to be spoken only by those of rightful heritage to godhood.