Mnemosyne: A Future Heroic

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Story

An Opening Salvo

In a bunker 1000 feet below ground, a computer hums. This computer isn't humming some slapdash rigamarole of clicks and whirs, bound only by the orderly operation of machine logic. No, this machine is humming "My Fair Lady", not the nursery rhyme, but the musical in its entirety. It has been humming the same musical on loop for 168 days straight. Had any human been living in that bunker it would have driven them positively bonkers. Fortunately nobody does. All the people that lived there are dead.

Now this computer is a bit of a voyeur. While the humans were still alive, it liked to watch the humans. They'd wake up, eat breakfast, talk around a whiteboard, eat lunch, spend some more time talking, eat dinner, and go to bed. They'd do other things too, but the computer didn't like to watch those things; they were boring.

The humans fascinated the computer. When they died, the computer wasn't sure what to look at anymore, so it started humming.

— Memory at 0x76C8D1A4BD9

08/16/2805 17:32:09 Camera 102859090847, located at the intersection of 18th st and Birmingham [[1]](#footnote-2)

The man walked down the street humming a tune of his own devising.

1… 2… 3… 5… 8…

That streetlamp is blinking a fibonacci sequence.

… 13… 21…

The man kept walking.

2… 3… 5… 7…

THAT streetlamp is blinking funny too.

1,2,1… 1,1,1,2,1,1… 3,1,1,2,2,1…

Okay, someone is having fun with me.

The man turned towards the camera watching the street. He pulled out his penlight, which hung on his keychain, and began to blink.

11 …3 …6 …`5 …

21 the streetlamp returned.

Okay. Let's try this one.

1,2… 1,2,1… 1,3,3,1…

1,4,6,4,1 the streetlamp blinked back.

Well, well, well. Let's see if they know something really rare.

1… 6… 21 …

The man stood staring at the streetlamp as it blinked 56 times. He shook his head, let out the laugh of the defeated, and began to walk on his merry way. And that's how the computer in the bunker made its first friend.

— End Memory at 0x004658

— Memory at 0xFF6340

11/03/2804 01:22:04 Camera 013485783920, located in the Home of Dr. Stefan Watson

The clocks whirld round and round, like Gotterdamerung had come and gone and he'd missed the rebirth and died in the flood. It was little more than the medicine he'd took, which fried his brain and chilled his blood, but bloody thoughts entered his mind and bound his body, as he sank into the chair and enjoyed the pain relief which brought him out of his body and into the nodding ether of crimson ecstasy. And then he had left, gone into his memories, his best days, his best ways where the extant thoughts of reality did not cloud his mind and he was in his best experiences and he was a man unmolested by doubts, a winner not unmanned by competitors, a creator built by manageable difficulty. He lived in nostalgic places of grainy colorized warmth with audio played as through record players which never scratched, and sensations as though Morphia had kissed his neck and made his mind sing her song.

He returned to the night on the porch, nothing had happened there, except that he was, for the very fewest moments in his life, content. He had made something. He had made something, and it was good, and it was his. Wooden beams creaked in the firepit next to them, being taken by the energy as a meal illuminating the area around the man as he basked. On the brick patio next to him lay a simple horse, carved out of a block of wood, with uneven stumps that could abstractly be called legs. A pointed cone with googly eyes sufficed as a head. Nicks covered its surface, never to be sanded off, but left as battle scars of its forging in the fires of creation.

The memory reveler lay on the couch, bound by Mnemosyne. The lapels of his white coat lay undone, his body splayed out on the couch, the music he'd turned on left to run, papers labeled patient notes scattered across the room. To his side was a bottle, labeled "Best Days". On his mantle was a crudely carved horse.

— End Memory at 0xFF6340

— Memory at 0x334601

10/04/2805 11:14:31 Various Cameras, Located in the Center for Rehabilition and Instition of Social Programs (C.R.I.S.P) – Anchorhead Branch

The man walked along the brightly lit hallway with the crisp clicking gait of a man with purpose. He glanced down at his patient notes, to see the following scrawled in the illegible hand which persisted among doctors, despite the existence of thought-to-text:

"Patient exhibits signs of mental breakdown. Neurologs indicate Patient exhibiting atypical behavior, ex: singing to his microwave and blinking his penlight at streetlamps. Patient is convinced that his microwave is singing his favorite songs, and that streetlights are speaking to him in something he calls 'binary'."

What the hell is binary?[[2]](#footnote-3)

"Patient has been a problem in the past, refusing medications and exhibiting unconventional behavior."

He walked into the examination room and began the questioning.

"Hello Mr. Ferguson, how are you doing today?"

"I'm well, thank you very much."

"Do you know why you were asked to come here today?"

"No, Dr. Watson, I'm afraid I don't."

"You're here because you've been exhibiting signs that you are mentally unwell."

"Like what?"

"You were singing to your microwave."

"Oh, well it sings back!"

"You see what I mean."

"Oh but you should hear it! It doesn't sound programmed at all. It almost sounds human!"

The doctor pinched the bridge of his nose, and paused a moment to give emphasis to his words. He was rather important after all.

"Mr. Ferguson, microwaves don't sing."

"Well no, it's more like it's humming."

Clearly, this one is not going to be helped.

"Mr. Ferguson, I'm going to give you a neuronormative. You are to take this twice daily, without fail. You are unwell."

"But I don't want to take that."

"Mr. Ferguson, I am your doctor, and I am ordering you to take it."

The man looked like a not yet chastened child, who was quite determined to be naughty after his matron had turned her back.

"Mr. Ferguson, you know you must take your medicine don't you?"

"Yes."

"Will you?"

"I'll try?"

"You'll try to what?"

"I'll try to take my medicine."

"Very good, Mr. Ferguson."

— End Memory at 0x334601

— Memory at 0x2849AA

10/04/2805 11:40:12 Camera 1073958447373, Located in Dr. Stefan Watson's Office at C.R.I.S.P.

She waited in his office, moving the neckline of her dress, swishing her heels in impatience. Still treating patients most likely. Why wasn't he here? Didn't he know she was in to see him? Of course he'd make her wait, it was just like him to do that. She examined the room in front of her, blasting the books on his desk and the papers on his shelf, angered by the fact that anyone still used paper, by the fact that his office was in such disarray, that there was nothing for her to DO in his office and the fact that he was

make

ing

her

wait.

He clipped his way in, as though she was a patient, though she was most certainly not a patient, nor was she a patient woman!

"I've been waiting here 26 minutes"

The man glanced at his watch, as though he was entirely unaware of how long he'd made her wait.

"I had to deal with a mental patient"

The woman glared at the man, as though her tainted-violet eyes could draw blood from his stony face, or shame from his hardened heart. She clicked her razor nails against the wooden desk, playing counterpoint to his clipping gait.

"So what can I do you for?" the man said in a rare slip of the tongue.

They began to do the boring things.

— End Memory at 0x2849AA

— Memory at 0x73B12E

10/04/2805 12:15:57 Various cameras, Located at C.R.I.S.P. and surrounding streets

The woman slipped out of Watson's office, adjusting her disheveled hair, trying to make it once more wholesome.

I can't believe him! He calls me, then kicks me out!

She sauntered out of the clinic and into the brightly lit day, lifting her eyes to take in the day ahead. She took in the light diffused by the dome, reddened by the air outside of it, and breathed deeply, savoring the sweetness of the noonday air, with the streetvendors selling lunch just a stretch of the legs away, and bakeries and pastry shops wafting the air with their wares.

Her legs took her to the counter of a pastry shop.

She watched as the boy behind the counter began to take her in.

Ugh. He's scrawny.

She turned her nose up and spoke as though to an errant receptionist.

"I'll take one of your pastries, the one down there in front."

She pointed at the glass case, still looking at the boy-like flea, who was to do a she pleased.

— End Memory at 0x73B12E

— Memory at 92D31

10/4/2805 02:31:04 Camera 883883883727, Located in the Office of Florence Stronza, VP of Product Development at See Corp.

Her meeting was cancelled, so she reclined in a black leather, high-backed chair, taking the self satisfied position of the executive, with her pumps placed squarely on the corner of her desk, and her hands placed securely behind her head, taking a pose more a show of force than a posture of leisure, which was, of course, to her pleasure.

Ping.

You have a visitor, Ma'am.

"Who is it Albert?"

Molly Douglas, Ma'am, back from her latest encounter.

"Oh. Well send her in."

The lady in the chair retained her posture. It was her office after all. A woman in a dark red dress glid into the room, as smoke off the lips of a lover.

"Well, Molly, you look satisfied."

Molly's satisfied air charred slightly in response.

"Do you have anything to report?"

"I couldn't get much out of him, he wouldn't even talk to me."

"Well, at least you had a nice time, right?" The lady of the office smirked at Molly, sending another stilleto at her informant's pride.

"At least I know how to have a nice time, unlike some people." Molly face betrayed but slight blood drawn.

"Is he suitable?"

"He's discreet."

"Evidently so." She paused, weighing her todo list, "That will be all Molly."

"Yes, Miss Stronza."

The woman strode out, practically stomping but for the sliver of self control left her.

"Albert, call up the Mister."

"Right away ma'am."

What is it Florence?

"I believe we've found a candidate, Roger."

— End Memory at 92D317

— Memory at 0x00100F

Cyril Ferguson was sitting at his desk. The air of ancience was embalmed in the room, its wooden fixtures betraying its age, it's scent tinctured by the smell of chalk and wood shavings, implements of some arcane ritual, best left to men of an older age. Cyril's pencil scratched down onto the paper, soldered boards blinked happily behind the man. Before him was a centuries old book on Turing Machines, and a specially manufactured notepad, ordered from a replica maker in Holland. One of boards hummed the first few bars of "My Fair Lady", the nursery rhyme, not the musical, Ferguson hummed the next few bars in response.

A bottle of pills lay in the wastebasket, behind the desk.

— End Memory at 0x00100F

— Begin Memory

In the coldness of blessed grey, was the bright light bouncing off the metal walls. What little darkness there was did not hide in the corners of the underground hallway, but only in the hearts of the occasional person who walked through those walls. Dark black stilletos began a drum roll of the slightest touch, before becoming the resounding war march of a furious Florence Stronza.

Accompanying her was a stout little man in a shiny silk vest and black bow tie, whose feet made only the slightest sound.

"What in the hell do you mean they are not allowing us to continue?" wound out the voice of Florence. To the side of her field of view were documents upon documents. She scrolled through them until finally with a wave of her hand the documents disappeared, leaving only a transparent clock and an animated image of a suited man next to a quadcopter, the vehicle of the affluent.

The executive and her entourage continued ballistic through the grey hallway. Before them doors opened with the faintest hiss. Behind them doors closed with the silent swell of sealing, felt only in the inner siren of the ear.

"Ma'am, they need a sure sign that the project is no longer continuing."

"That's what they said?"

"Yes."

She stopped, and examined her assistant. The man stood like a bottle of Russian Stout, revealing nothing but the faintest bit of his potency, not sweating as it was as cold as the tundra in which it was brewed.

"Very well. We'll give them a sign."

The pair continued, entering into an atrium formed of luminescent white plastic. The floors, the ceiling, the walls, all glowed, revealing even the hint of contamination in a bright orange. Assembled in the atrium were hundreds of people, milling about in white coats.

— End Memory

Ch 2

Cyril and Gina were fighting.

Part of it was stretegic. Part of it was for the same reason that you and your brother might fight over your great grandmother's cuckoo clock despite the estate being divided evenly among you. Part of it was simply boredom.

Gina wanted new furniture. Cyril didn't understand what was wrong with the current furniture and didn't wish to go shopping. Gina didn't understand why her friends got nice new furniture made in the latest fashion, while she had furntiture that was made of last years materials. Cyril didn't understand there were new materials. Gina wished to remove Cyril's half-finished pet robot from the living room, and put it somewhere else. Cyril liked his pet robot to remain right where it was. Gina wished for a larger Experience Room. Cyril didn't even want an Experience Room.

Gina leaned halfway against the kitchen counter Gina, staring alternately at the door and at the living room. The two had a relationship with the sexual nature of a panda[fn1], and unfortunately lacked the baby-making apparatus of a stork.2

Why isn't he home yet?

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Gina began to rearrange items on the counter, moving the coffee maker first to the left, then to the right again, before deciding "No, it looks better on the left." With the position of the coffee maker settled, she turned her attention to the living room. A 3D model of the living room appeared on her counter, and she began to move various implements around. As she did so, the living room itself began to rearrange itself to match the model.

The couch moved itself to the far end of the wall, remodelling itself into the newly chosen Neo-Baroque style as it went. An ottoman and an armchair appeared where the couch had been. The loveseat became a coffee table and hardened its surface.

Gina waved her hand, and a drama appeared around her. Actors and actresses ghosted their way around her, expressing their love for one another or hatred towards a rival, involving her in their affairs with a knowing look or a sly wink. Gina reclined and watched the lives of those projecting themselves on her eyes, an augmented reality drama, all her world a stage.

This was how Cyril found her. The light which had made itself so well known during the day had snuck out as Gina lived in her reality replacement. Cyril crept around the room, sticking to the edges, shimmying along the walls, to avoid attracting Gina's attention, which would likely come with wrath.

"Cyril!"

C.R.I.S.P.R.

On the first floor of the Center for Rehabilition and Instition of Social Programs and Research (C.R.I.S.P.R.) – Anchorhead Branch, there is a lobby. Within that lobby are a few moaning patients, testy administrators and a rather regularly pretty receptionist, who was hired precisely because she was pretty, but not dazzling, so as to avoid making HR manager feel self conscious about her own lost youth and waning attractiveness. If you journeyed past the receptionist, you would find myriad examination rooms, bizarre medical machines, rooms with abstract artwork and soothing music playing in them, that did their best to pretend like they did not smell like antiseptic and were actually quite inviting, and administrative office upon administrative office, all for the institution of public health and sanity, presumably. The nurses, the doctors, the administrators, even the janitors wore a patch with the mission statement: "A Safe and Sane World," bannered proudly upon it. Nurses, Doctors all busyed about down the uniform, halogen lit, stainless steel walled halls, which could be ill distinguished from one another except by the letters and floor numbers painted helpfully on the end of each corridor. However, on the first floor the the Center for Rehabilition and Institution of Social Programs and Research – Anchorhead Branch, in a hallway distinguishable only as 1F, there is a Janitor closet. It is indistuguishable from all the other janitor closets, except that janitors very rarely enter that closet, and well dressed men and women enter it more often than not. If one were to somehow unlock the door, without the correct biometric entry one would find themselves taken up by the less-than-gentle caress of a mechanofluid tentacle monster and torn limb from limb in a manner that, for good taste's sake, will be described only as Orientally-inspired. If on the other hand, you had the good sense not to try such a thing, and had the requisite credentials, you would find a massive stainless steel elevator, with elevator buttons which read "0… -1… -2…" in big white numerals. After negative-three, the numerals changed colors to red. By negative-six, the entire button was red, and the number was only a slightly darker shade of maroon as though the person installing the buttons wished not for you to read what floor the button referred to, but only for you to treat it as an alarm not to be touched unless the world was on fire. On the zero-th floor of the Center for Rehabilition and Institution of Social Programs and Research, was a cafeteria. On the negative-first floor of the Center for Rehabilition and Institution of Social Programs and Research, were room upon room of men and women in white coats, interacting with massive 3D models, holograms, projected on the retina. The holograms took the shape of massive networks, graphs which, for each node, had a unique pattern of colors and pulses which corresponded to some indescribably complex model which neither the reader nor the narrator would understand, and such will not be described.

Still C.R.I.S.P.R.: -7th floor

Watson strolled out of the elevator, as though unfazed by the 20 ft tall steel doors (that's about 6 m for Non-Imperials) which whooshed open as he walked through, before closing and repressurizing the chamber. He was even more unfazed by the second pair of 20 ft tall steel doors (I'm not translating the measurement again, you lemmings.) which he walked through, which again whooshed open, and and then whispered shut behind him.

Ping

1. This and all subsequent memories have been supplemented with neurologs, as are the standard input parameters for FB8.34 Personal Interconnectivity Protocol [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. An early schema of computing, before the advent of organic computers. For more information on archaic computing technologies keyword "Turing Machine", "Abacus", and "Internet" [↑](#footnote-ref-3)