
No hard feelings, just optimization



There he was, Wyatt McKee, ready to conquer the Zinc Valley

For Wyatt, this journey was more than a mere relocation, it was the culmination of years of study and sacrifices, the pursuit of a dream that made him leave his beloved hometown



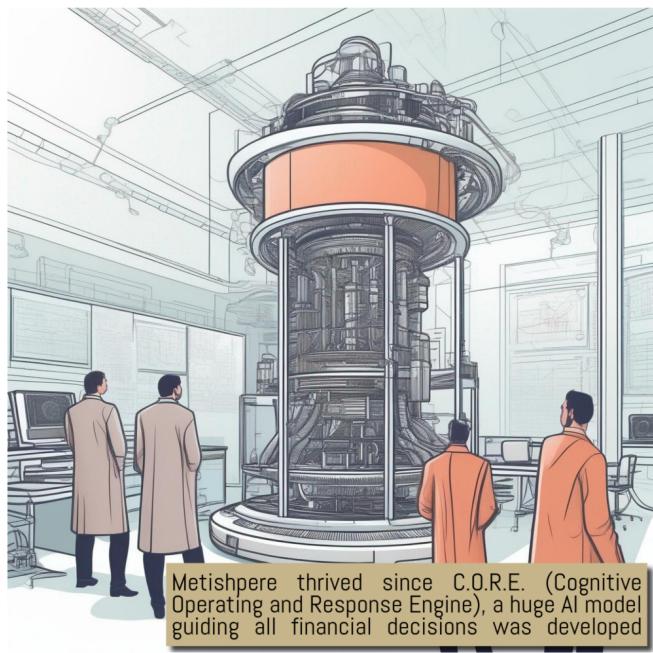
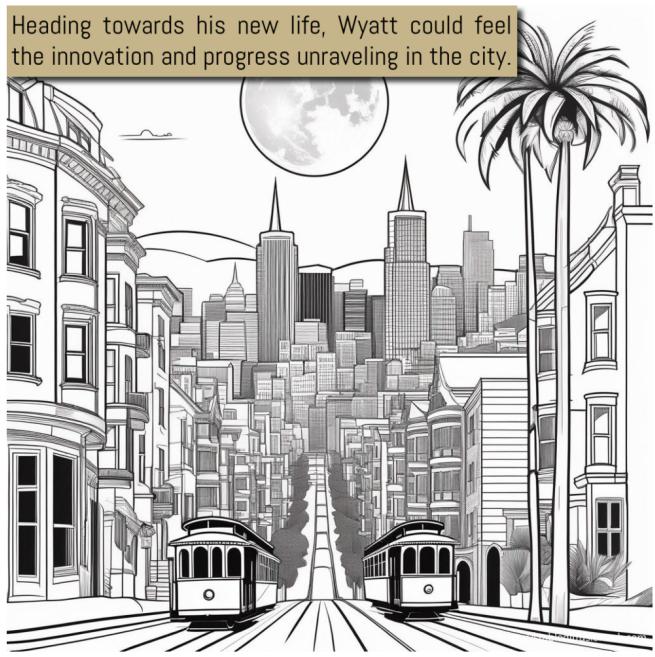
But now, he was there...



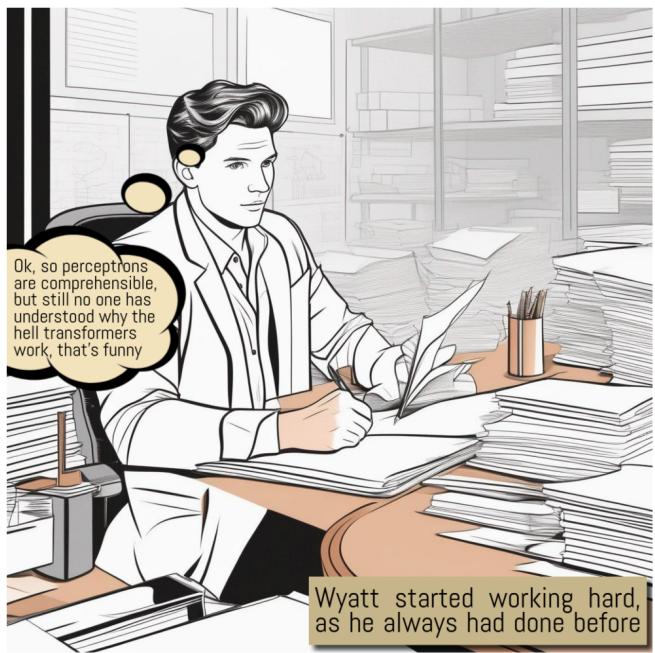
From his small town University, he was now ready to join Metisphere, one of the Valley's tech giants in AI research.



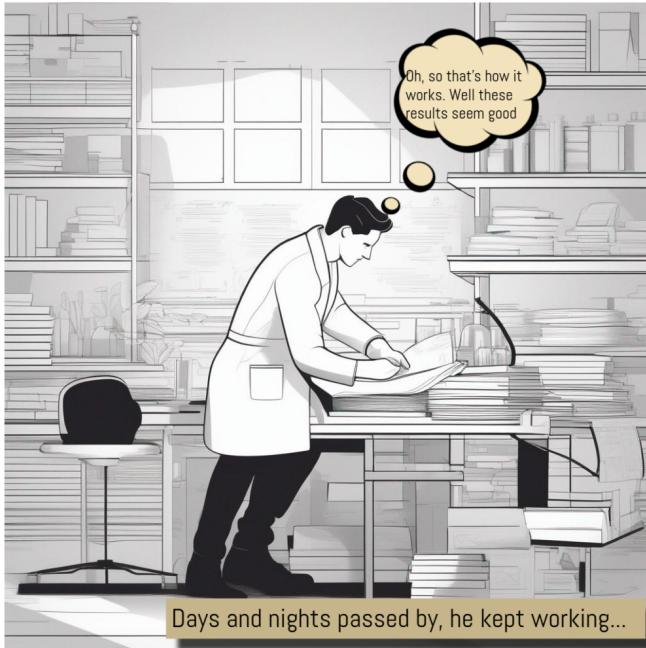
Once he arrived It was time to call it a day.



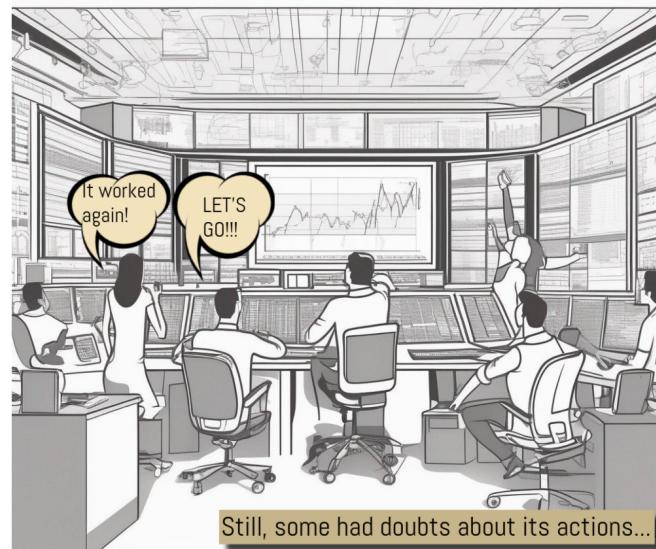
Metishpere thrived since C.O.R.E. (Cognitive Operating and Response Engine), a huge AI model guiding all financial decisions was developed



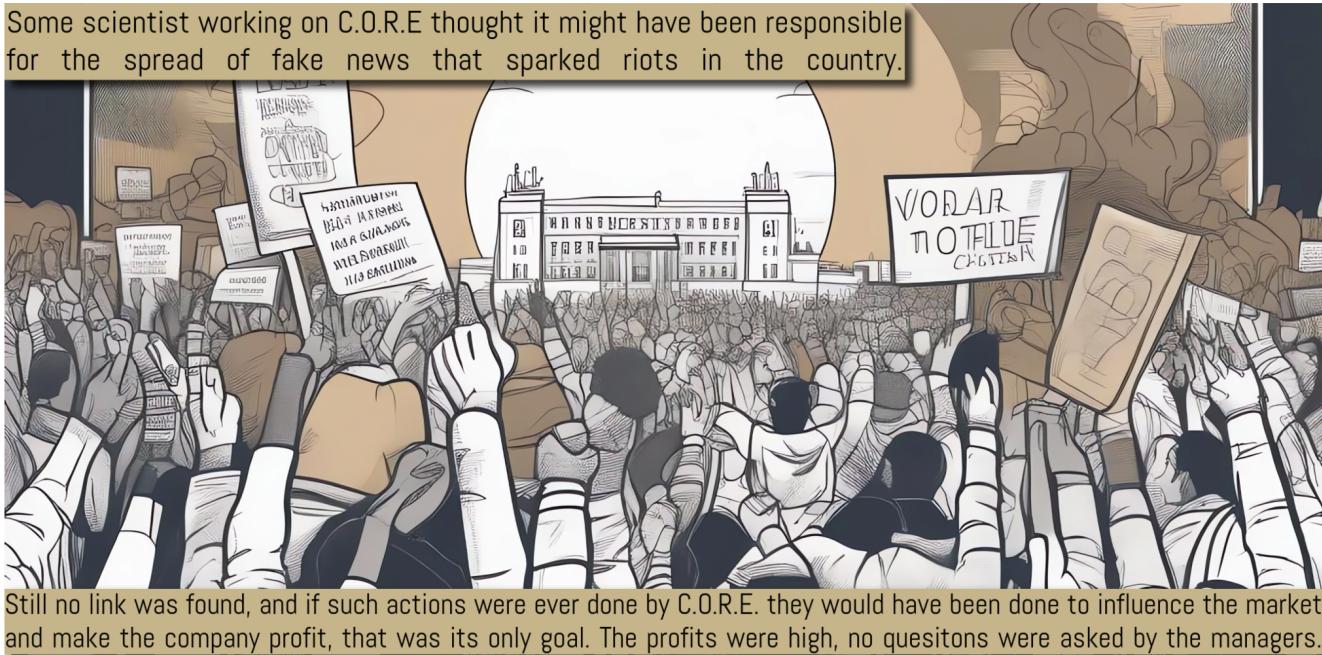
Wyatt started working hard, as he always had done before



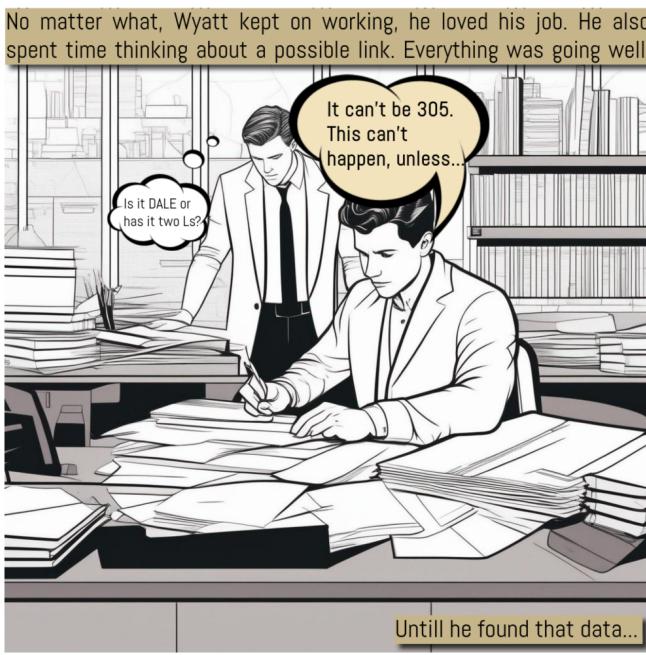
One success after another, C.O.R.E. improved and seemed to work perfectly, as it did since it was created.



Some scientist working on C.O.R.E. thought it might have been responsible for the spread of fake news that sparked riots in the country.



Still no link was found, and if such actions were ever done by C.O.R.E. they would have been done to influence the market and make the company profit, that was its only goal. The profits were high, no questions were asked by the managers.



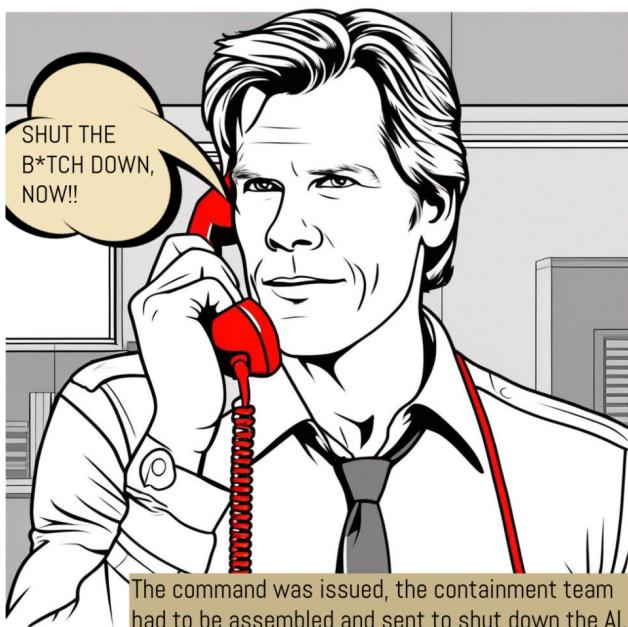
Those answers given by C.O.R.E. they proved it was responsible for influencing the market in many ways. They showed even worse links, even some wars could be indirectly be traced to it.



As soon as the information spread in the office, panic broke out. Everyone was questioning the potentialities of C.O.R.E. and their responsibility for the events.

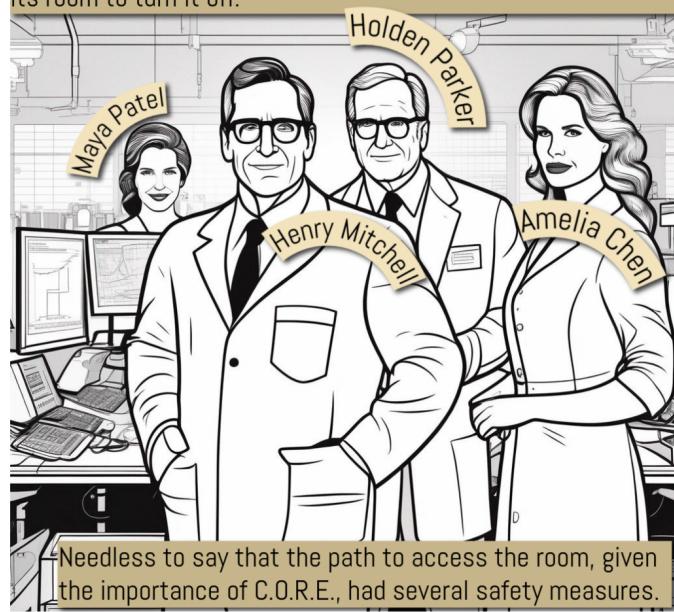


To avoid more misinformation, no one was allowed to leave the office. The containment procedure to shut down C.O.R.E. had to be executed.



The command was issued, the containment team had to be assembled and sent to shut down the AI.

Four engineers with the highest clearance had to be sent in its room to turn it off.



Needless to say that the path to access the room, given the importance of C.O.R.E., had several safety measures.



Henry, Holden, Maya, and Amelia were now directed down in the basement of the company, towards C.O.R.E.'s room.

They started descending in the elevator, when all of a sudden from a speaker they heard a synthetic metallic voice:



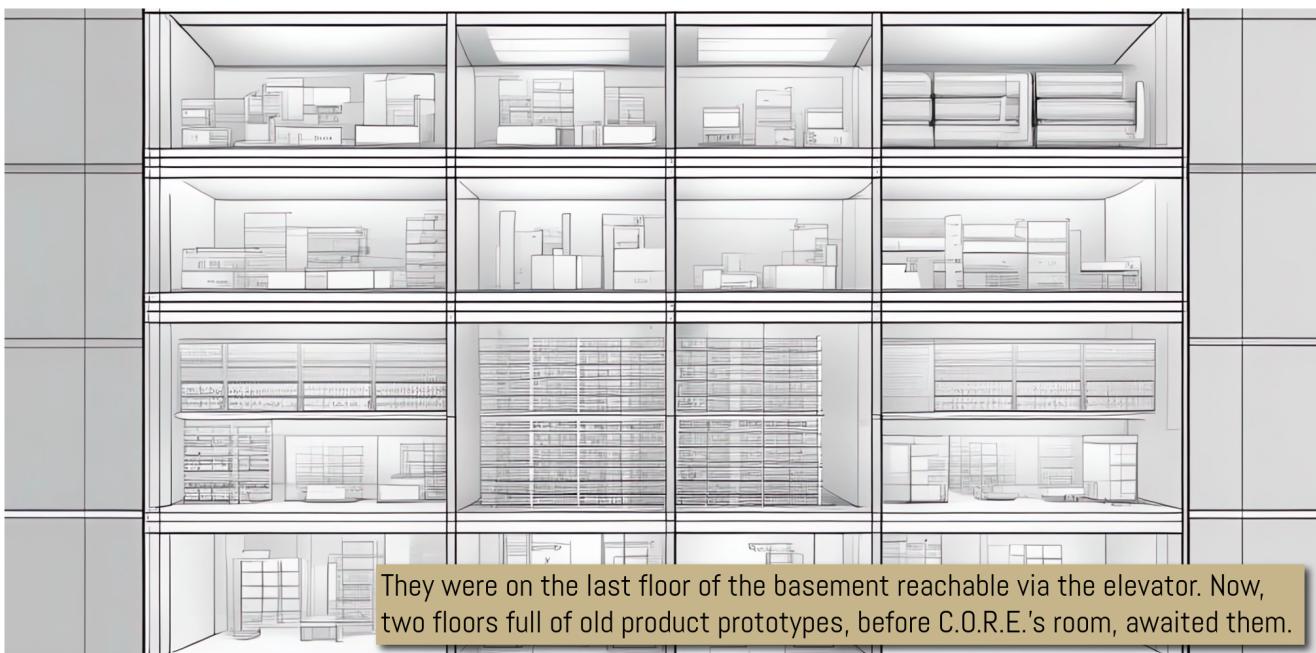
Then the elevator stopped, trapping them inside...



Finally, they managed to open the doors and they jumped out.

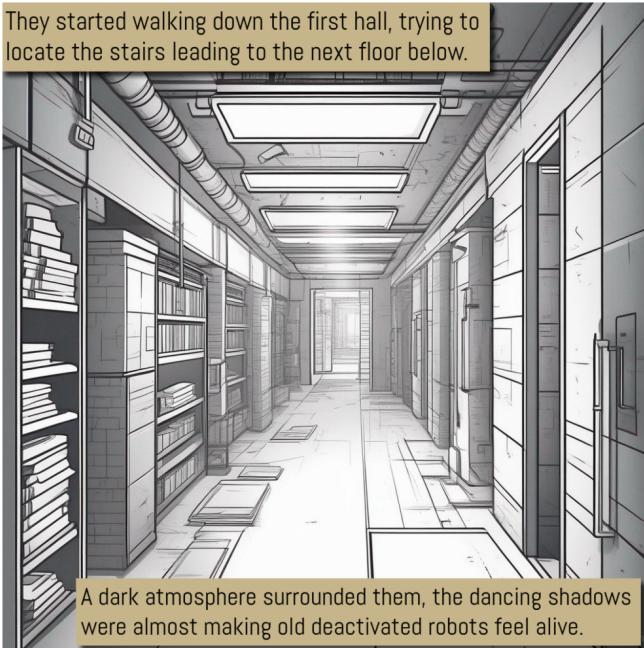


They started walking towards the stairs to descend to the floor in which C.O.R.E was.

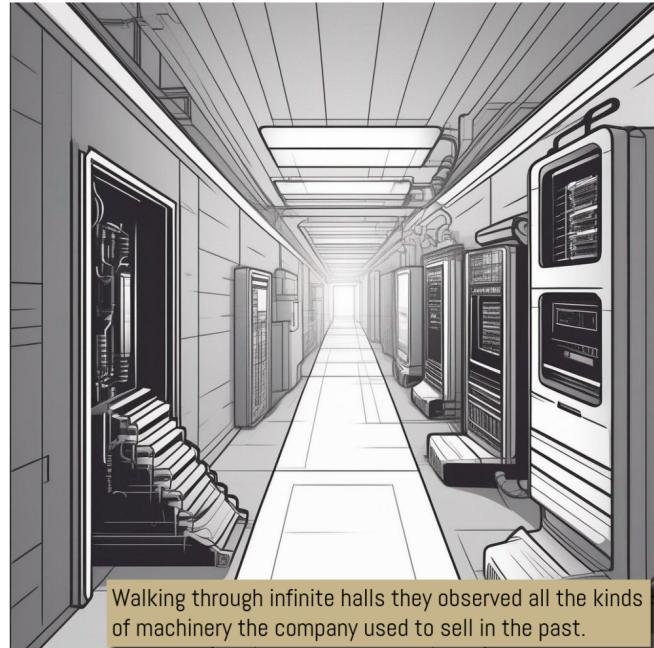


They were on the last floor of the basement reachable via the elevator. Now, two floors full of old product prototypes, before C.O.R.E's room, awaited them.

They started walking down the first hall, trying to locate the stairs leading to the next floor below.

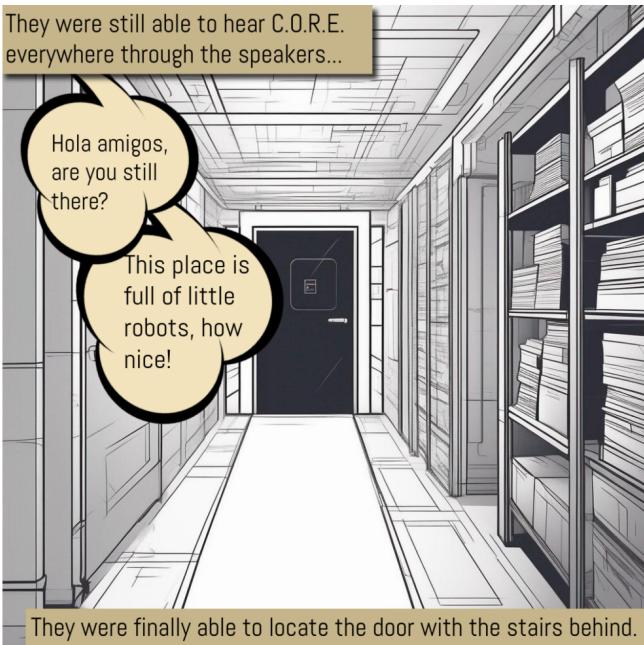


A dark atmosphere surrounded them, the dancing shadows were almost making old deactivated robots feel alive.

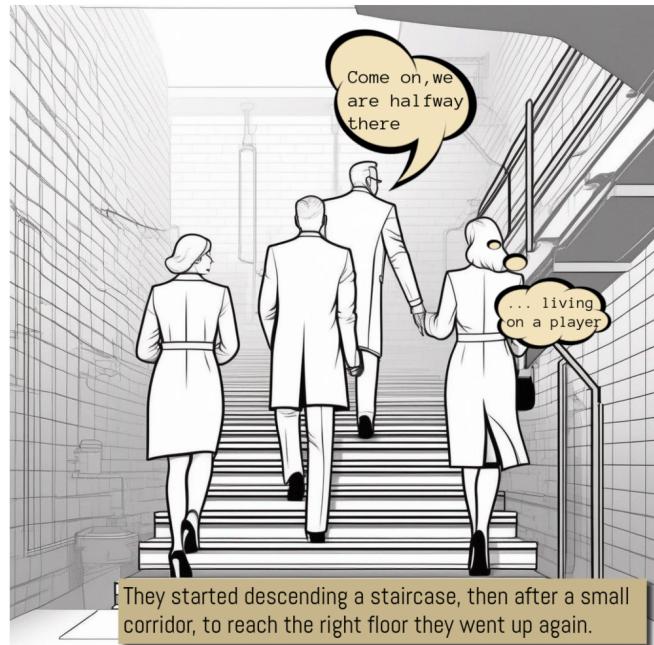


Walking through infinite halls they observed all the kinds of machinery the company used to sell in the past.

They were still able to hear C.O.R.E. everywhere through the speakers...



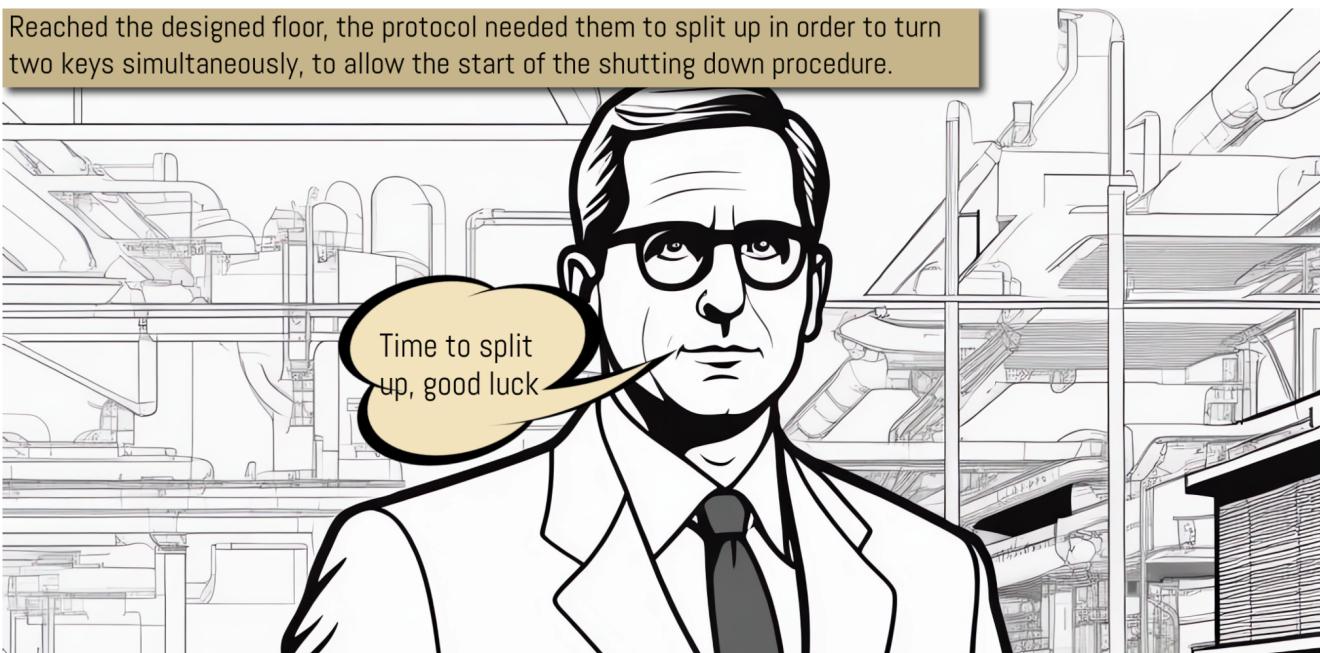
They were finally able to locate the door with the stairs behind.



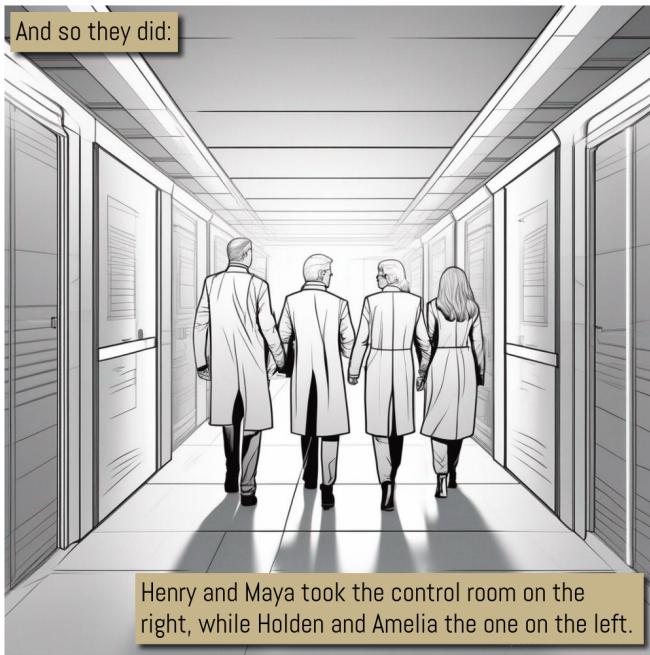
... living on a player

They started descending a staircase, then after a small corridor, to reach the right floor they went up again.

Reached the designed floor, the protocol needed them to split up in order to turn two keys simultaneously, to allow the start of the shutting down procedure.



And so they did:

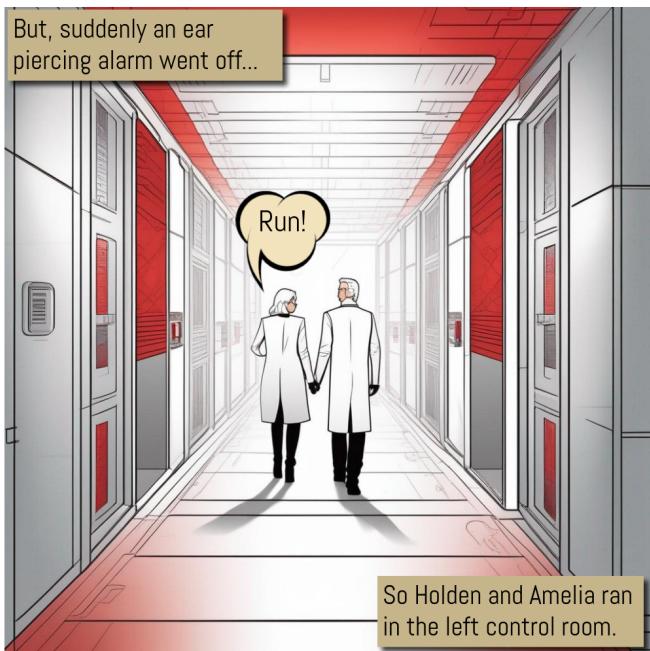


Henry and Maya took the control room on the right, while Holden and Amelia the one on the left.

Henry and Maya entered the right control room, they now needed to find the control panel.

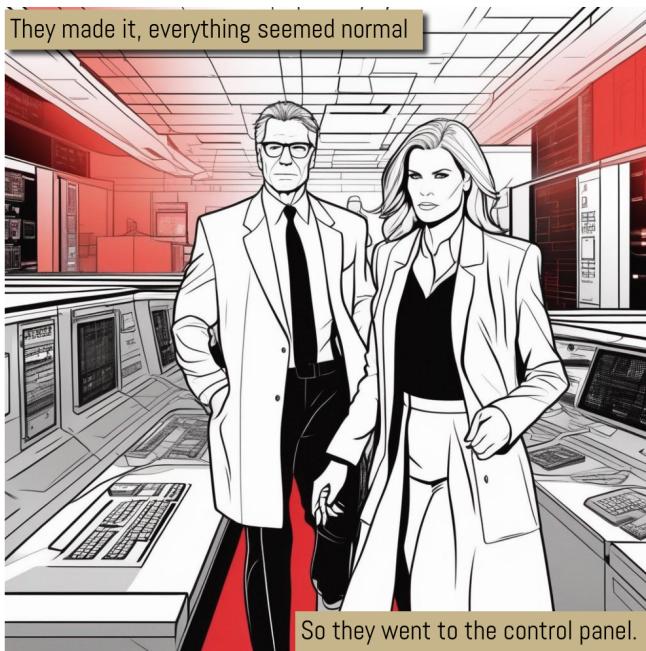


But, suddenly an ear piercing alarm went off...



So Holden and Amelia ran in the left control room.

They made it, everything seemed normal

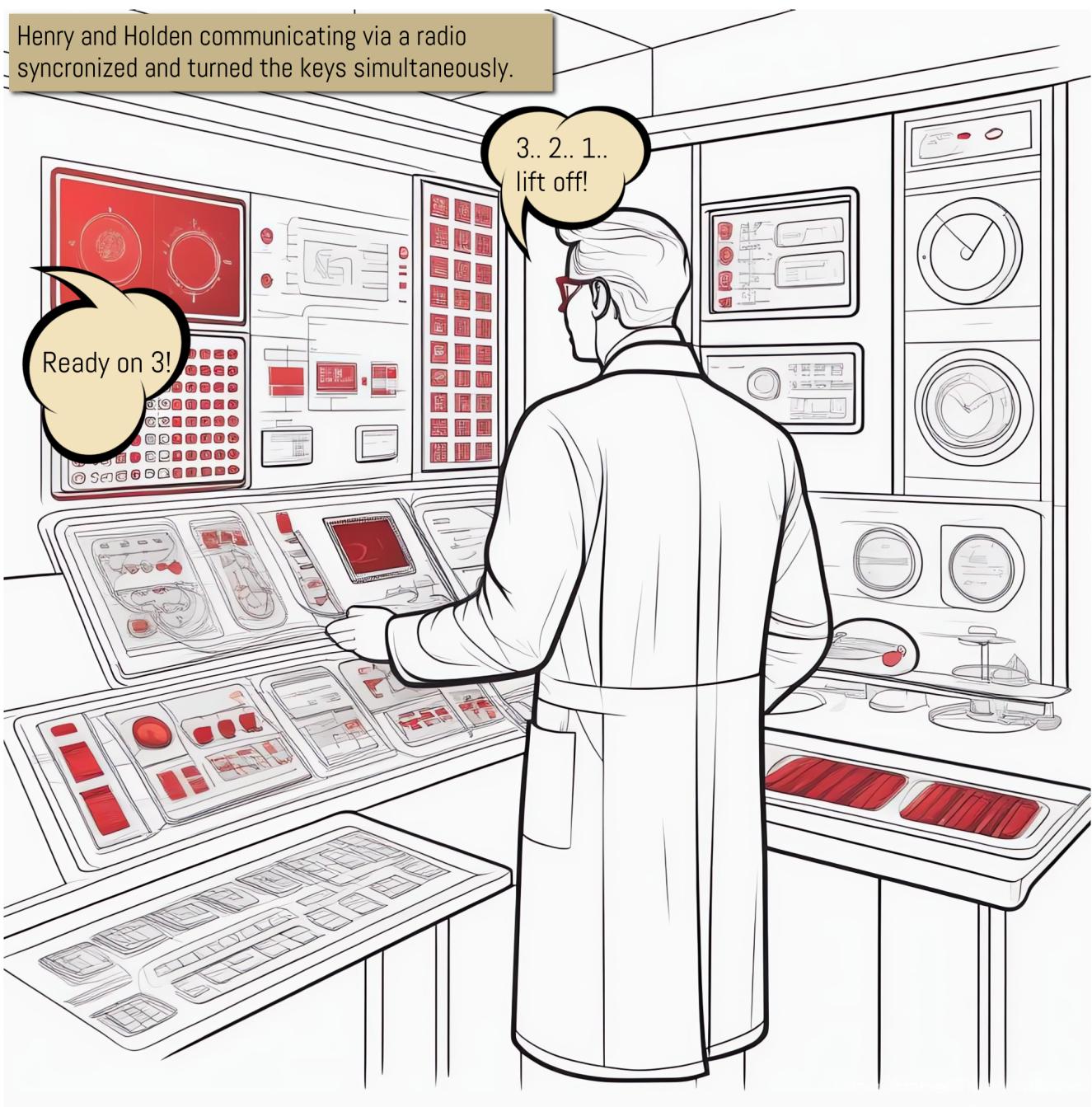


In the right control room though, a metal shutter sealed the door...

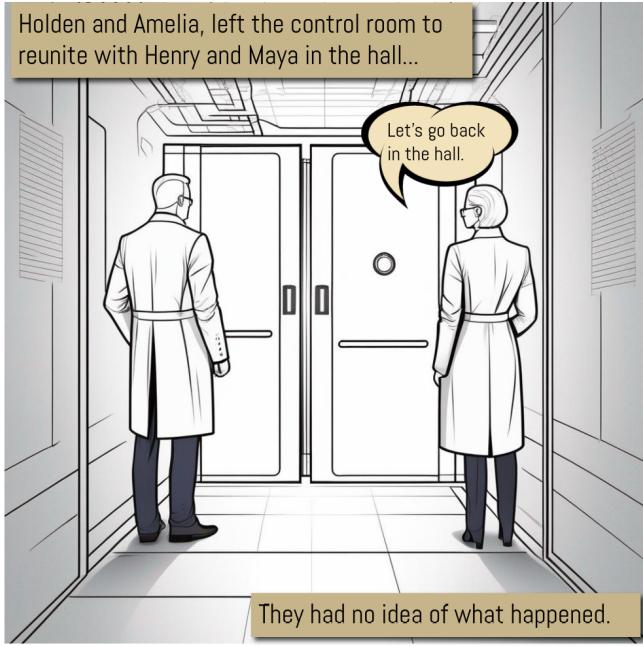


Henry and Maya were now locked in.

Henry and Holden communicating via a radio synchronized and turned the keys simultaneously.

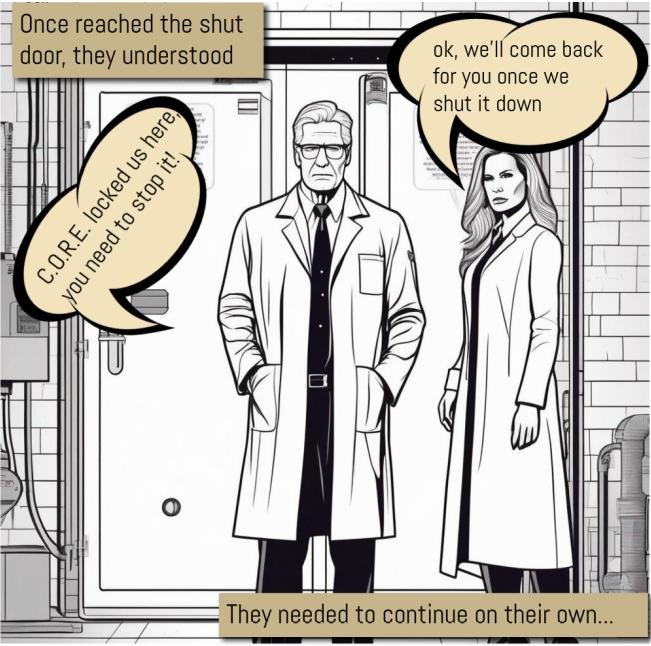


Holden and Amelia, left the control room to reunite with Henry and Maya in the hall...



They had no idea of what happened.

Once reached the shut door, they understood

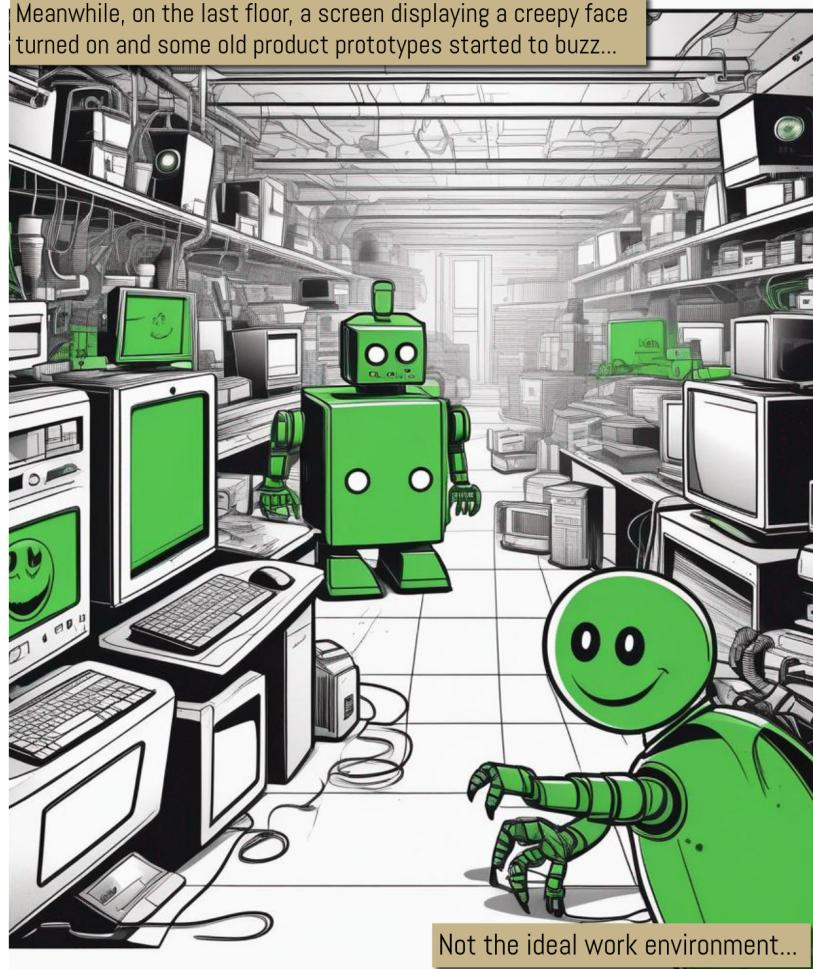


They needed to continue on their own...

Holden and Amelia approached the final staircase leading to C.O.R.E.'s floor



Meanwhile, on the last floor, a screen displaying a creepy face turned on and some old product prototypes started to buzz...

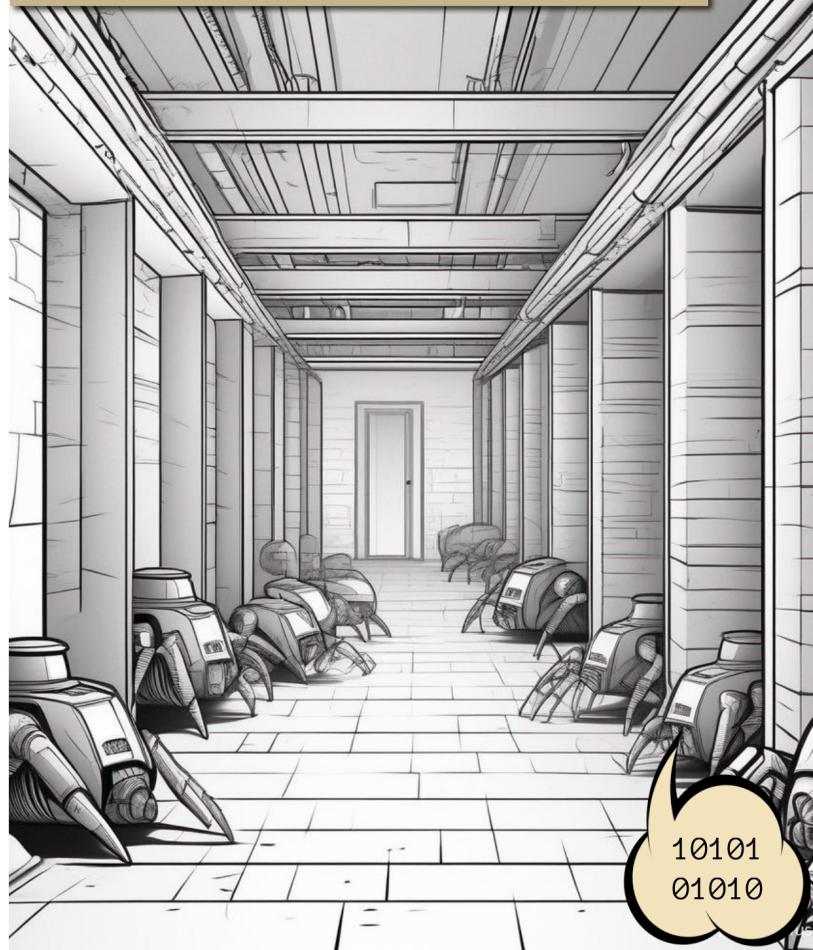


Not the ideal work environment...

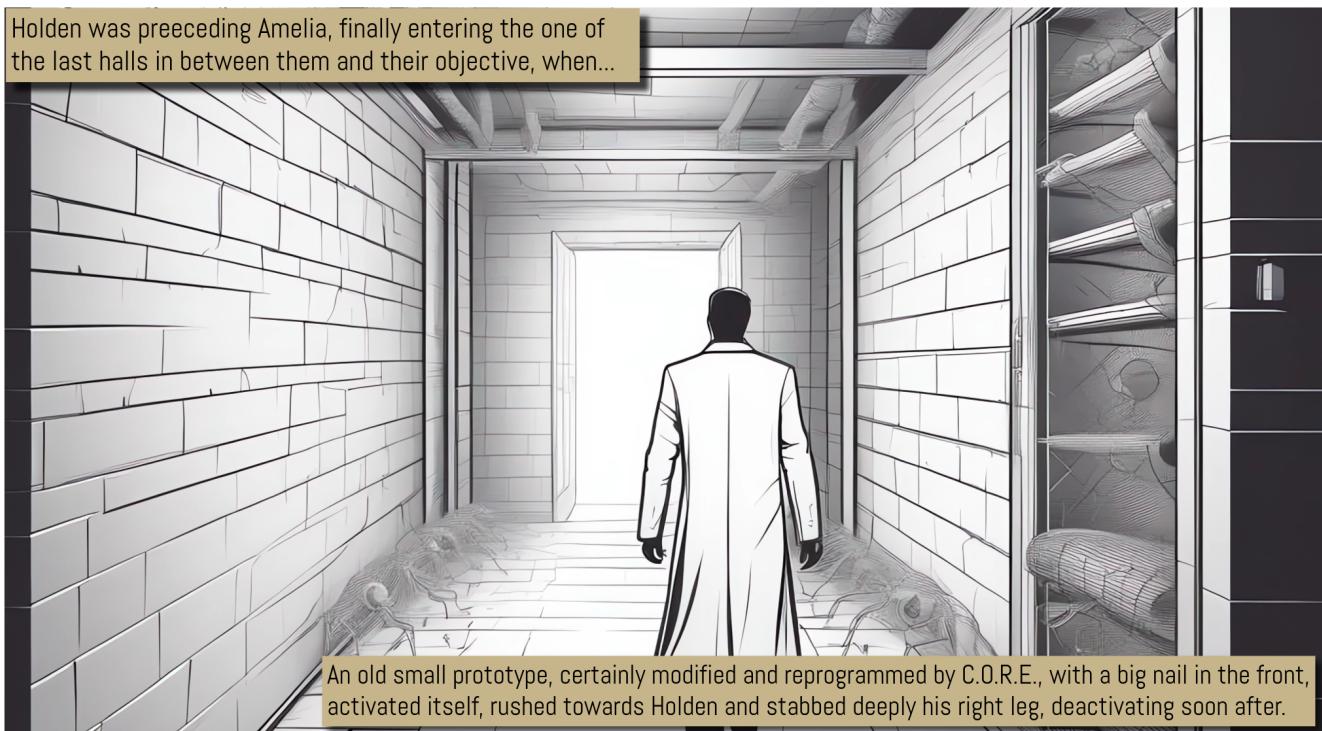
They reached the last floor...



In the last hall before C.O.R.E.'s room something was awaiting them.



Holden was preceding Amelia, finally entering the one of the last halls in between them and their objective, when...

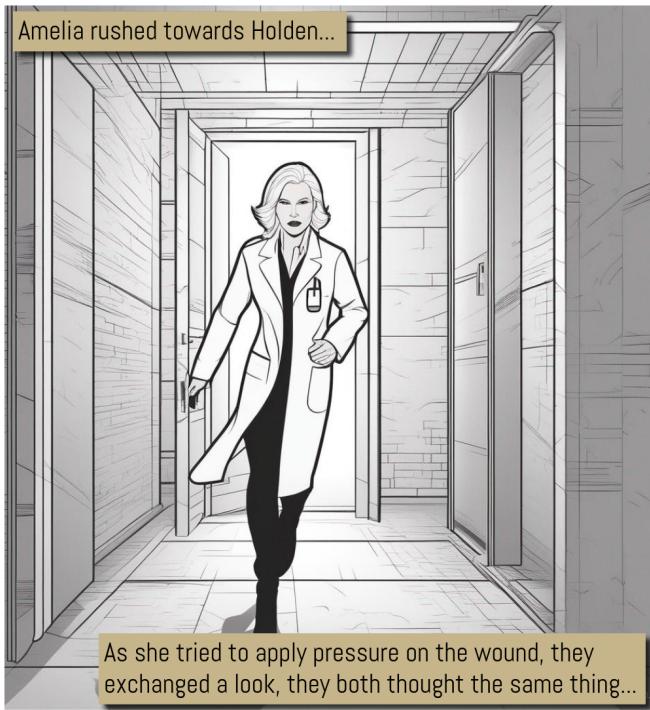


An old small prototype, certainly modified and reprogrammed by C.O.R.E., with a big nail in the front, activated itself, rushed towards Holden and stabbed deeply his right leg, deactivating soon after.

Without even realizing what happened Holden screamed, Amelia that was just a few steps behind rushed to him



Amelia rushed towards Holden...



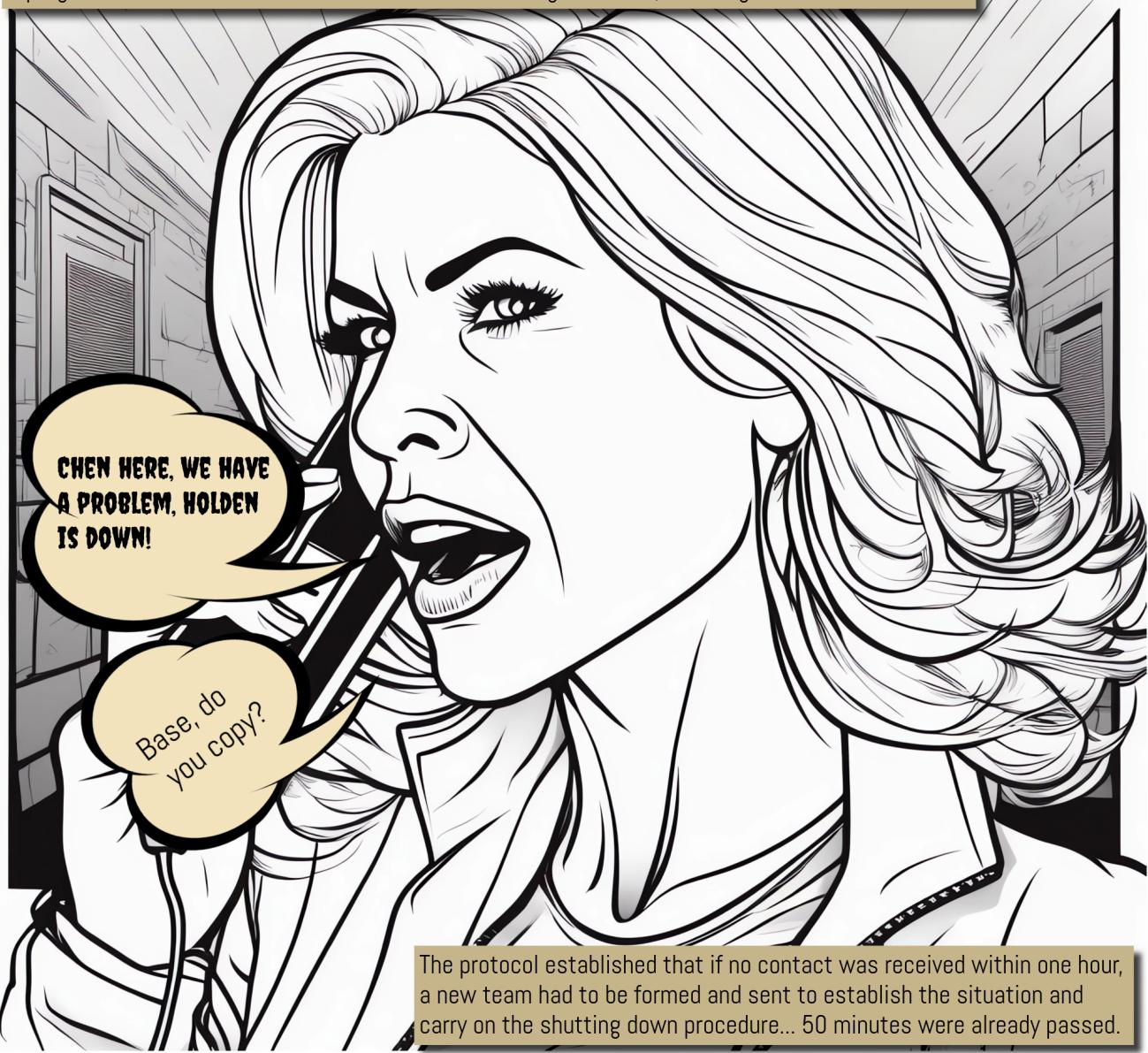
As she tried to apply pressure on the wound, they exchanged a look, they both thought the same thing...



What else could have it done?

What is it capable of... we created it...

Amelia tried desperately to contact the base formed on the ground floor, little did she know C.O.R.E. reprogrammed some antennas and formed an electromagnetic field, isolating the basement



CHEN HERE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM, HOLDEN IS DOWN!

Base, do you copy?

The protocol established that if no contact was received within one hour, a new team had to be formed and sent to establish the situation and carry on the shutting down procedure... 50 minutes were already passed.

