

**Autelligence** (questionable name) PAST TENSE 3<sup>RD</sup> PERSON

### Interlude

The air never felt so clear. The sky was as blue as the pacific without a cloud in sight. The birds where chirping and singing and it was the only noise that could be heard. It was a clean, early morning, no traffic, no hustle and no bustle.

Wandering the streets of this suburban area of London, was a deer plodding along. The animal didn't seem to have a care in the world, it just went from tree to tree looking for any kind of vegetation it could find. It approached a grid on the road that led to the sewage. It sniffed it for a short while and then realised there was little there for it.

The short snuffles of the deer and the birds cawing where the only soundwaves within the area. Even the footsteps of the deer were incredibly quiet and delicate. The terraced houses on the street where unkept and quiet, the deer did not seem to fear the houses, however it did soon after sniffing the grid return back to the park nearby.

As it skipped back to the park in the backdrop was the large skyscrapers of a developing London, the capital city looking bigger and greater than ever before. No poisoned air or smog surrounding it, just a nice clean environment as the city grew. The population there looked busy, there cranes, scaffolding and constant movement. The city was a good seven or eight miles away from the street the deer wandered on.

There was a sense of utopia in the atmosphere. Life couldn't be clearer or calmer.

Underneath the grid on the road was a person in the sewage system. They were wearing overalls, had a backpack on and a gas mask, they looked like they were down there doing some work. It was soon quick to realised they were not doing work down there, but had a bed and was settled down there. They appeared to be a loner.

The noise of the deer, though quiet, still caught the persons attention. With their gas mask on and the backpack weighing them down they climbed up the ladder of the sewage system towards the grid and pushed it up slowly and quietly. With the release of the grid it meant they could take off their gas mask briefly to take in some air and reveal they were a woman. A rough looking, nose pierced and tattooed female. She had a big, distinctive green eyes and a short bowler cut blonde hair style.

She took a huge deep breath and then checked left and right and all around for whatever it might have been that stepped on the grid. Once she recognised there was nothing in sight other than a few harmless birds in trees she pushed the grid completely up and removed herself from the sewer and stood up slowly still looking left and right to keep herself aware. She was fearful of something.

She gave a depressed look at the city of London; she looked up at the sky and sighed. This utopia was wasted on her. Her backpack was very heavy and she had to drag it along towards the house closest to the grid she had just exited out of. The house was a bungalow and looked like a student accomodation, not well kept at all. Greenery had begun to overtake it; the windows were thick with dust and the front door was swung open uninvitingly. In the front driveway was a car that was also surrounded by plants that had grown from the ground up and into the tyres.

She worked her way towards the house slowly and looked at the car with a petrified stare. She moved to within a few feet of the car, but didn't dare stand any closer. The car that seemed to be a Ford Fiesta had smashed windows, and had been set on fire in the past you could tell, it was completely torched at one point, so black and damaged, there was no chance this car worked. She couldn't possibly take this car and drive it. She snook closer to the house and when she entered it slowly to not make noise, the car suddenly flickered its headlights, it must have sensed her presence like it had a mind of its own, like an animal.

The woman moved through the corridor of the bungalow, two rooms to the left and two rooms to the right, a big bedroom to the right, and to the left the smaller two bedrooms. A bathroom was at the end of the corridor and a door through to the main area. There was little natural light in the building. There was an unplugged fan sat in the middle of the corridor she had to manoeuvre around. There was also plenty of shoes in the corridor, suggesting a few people lived here, or used to live here. The house looked fairly abandoned at this point but could just be scruffy.

She never checked the bedrooms out of fear of what she might see and it was not part of her mission, she was here to claim something else, this was obvious by her attitude to head straight towards the kitchen area of the house through the door at the end of the corridor, she did consider a visit to the bathroom too, when she glanced in through the open door to the right, looked at the shower dripping and the toothpaste tube squeezed to almost its max and a toothbrush next to it, she shook her head and moved on.

She could see the semblance of light flicking through to the house that wasn't from the sun, it was flickering on and off.

'Shit!' she said under her breath so quietly, she had an idea that it might have been from the car that she thought was beyond working. Any normal car would not be able to flicker its headlights. She slowly and quietly unzipped her backpack and reached in as she moved towards the fridge and the freezer in the scruffy kitchen, the dishes were everywhere and dirty with old mouldy food, and there were flies and maggots everywhere. Even a rat scurried past her foot but she didn't flinch, she just held her breath as it ran across her foot and into the corridor where she just came from.

With one hand in her backpack and the other opening the fridge, she kept an eye out for anyone that might catch her. She looked over to the lounge area after claiming some food from the fridge and just placing it on the side for now.

The lounge area was dark, dingy and the television was on standby. It had two couches that had been ripped apart like they'd been found on the street. She approached the area to see if she could find anything of any use there. It was too dark to get a good look, she did want to open the blinds but thought enough attention had been drawn to her by the car flickering its lights.

After realising there was nothing there and her mission to find or steal food was becoming a risk, she backed away towards the food she had taken from the fridge to put in her bag. As she did do that, she turned to the sink just to see if she could find any kind of clean crockery or cutlery to take.

It was all too dirty and full of flies to be of any use to her, she turned around and saw the figure of a young man in the doorway leading to the corridor. The young man looked scared of her, his eyes were grey and glossy like a massive tear was built up and he could not see through it, she approached him slowly, with her finger over her lips to tell him to be quiet. The young man just stared at her brain dead from what seemed like fear. The young man backed away from her as she

approached him. He shook his head, didn't say a word or make a noise. The car lights outside began flickering even more rapidly. The man kept backing away until the woman pulled a large knife out of her backpack and jumped on him and without any noise coming from the young man's mouth, all that could be heard were the stabbing noises and slices as she attacked him. She was unapologetic as she quickly grabbed the food and put it in her backpack and left the house with bloody footprints leading back to her grid where she put her gas mask back on and crawled back to her home.

The car lights stopped flicking, instead it just shined directly at the grid where she had just entered like it was watching her every move like a surveillance camera. She was not a fan of utopia.

## Chapter 1

There are reasons they conduct trials and auto runs on islands. Remote, secret and redeemable if it backfires. In pursuit of perfection, it takes a lot of risk, a lot of sacrifice and this has been common throughout invention. The plane didn't just fly first time, it took many lives and many trials before it was ready to fly us all. Buildings were rarely built without casualties. And cars...

When the small, but growing business Fly-By came up with an invention so bold and earth-shattering it was easy to see why their pursuit of perfection came at such a cost and was so important. Fly-By was founded in 1998 and by the year 2010 it had established new technology that was in their own words 'game-changing'. The only problem with this new tech was, 'how do we get our name out there?' Or so they thought was their only problem. It would soon be established that corners were not just cut, but ignored entirely, like them corners could not have even been a consideration at any point. What were they thinking at Fly-By?

Dr Paul Gates was the founder of Fly-By, a promising engineer from an early age, he was obsessed with legacy and being remembered for something, however his obsession never inspired him to really do anything up until the age of 42 when he finally decided it was time to make a difference with the intelligence and talent he had been given at birth. Dr Gates dressed nothing like a doctor would be expected to dress. He always wore the same white t-shirt with 'Tintin in the land of the soviets' plastered on it and a big drawing of Tintin holding a plane propeller with his dog, Snowy, bandaged up looking up to Tintin on the back of the shirt. He wore black cargo shorts with big white socks and black brogues. He had a grey-haired pony tail that poked through his over-sized, distinctive black top hat that he was never seen without and large grey side burns down his cheeks and thick black glasses that probably weren't needed because of eyesight, but rather vanity and to illustrate intelligence.

Dr Gates would always discuss the ideas he had with his own imagination and never actually pursue them. Gates would refer himself to people he met as a doctor, he was not officially a doctor. Throughout his younger years he would hear the same old phrases 'you're really clever, but what next?' also 'if I had your intelligence, I can only imagine the things I'd be doing right now'.

Despite this seemingly small use of his potential down the years, Dr Gates would cleverly manipulate this to make his career so far seem like a success story. A rag to riches tale to everyone he met. He was described in many people's eyes as deluded. There was no rag, he was from a wealthy family, the only rag was his lack of dedication and creativity to actually prove his worth and get away from the jobs that he should never have been involved in in the first place. But he was not shy in telling everyone he met his fabricated story.

Dr Gates, after finding his calling card and purpose in the form of Fly-By, had begun works on something mysterious called Autelligence. Fly-By, a business that was his father's company originally founded in the 60s that he changed the name of from Go-By (A computer intelligence company) so that no one would associate it being his late father's, Dr Gobi Gates, and therefore the credit of future success would not be shared.

In the year 2007, three years prior to Dr Gates great reveal of his finest achievement, Australian Lewis Button had received calls, emails and letters before finally agreeing to take part in testing out this new technology, Autelligence. He was a retired local motorcycling champion in the town of Nullabor in Australia's outback. Dr Gates found his contact details through one of the Australian scientists who worked at Fly-By.

Dr Gates made it clear he wanted someone who the world knew very little about but also knew exactly what he was doing when it came to a motor vehicle. Lewis Button was perfect. However, Lewis would ignore a lot of Fly-By's advances at first, treating it as spam. After months of pursuing though, he saw the figure of money willing to pay. Money talks. Especially for a now retired motorcyclist who had little money to start with.

The figure being offered was close to six figures. After a discussion with his wife, Lewis decided it would be daft not to take the offer. His wife did question the amount of money and the motive behind such a large offer. On the back of these questions from his wife, Lewis took precaution after his initial reaction of accepting and called the number back.

The phone didn't ring, rather it had a monologue on the other end of the line 'Welcome to Fly-By technology, we take humans to the next level, we explore every possibility, we need you. If you'd like to join our team press 1, if you'd like to know more press 2'. Lewis didn't select an option, he instead caught the eye of two letters on his work desk near the phones home. One letter was the offer from Fly-By and the details of the address in Scotland, the flights that would be provided and the 'Exciting new project he could be part of, a chance to ride again'. Next to that, the other letter 'OVERDUE!' the letter of debts, financial struggle and a bank statement with endless gambling transactions chasing that competitive high he had lost since motorcycling. It took weeks of convincing, but Lewis decided it was worth taking the offer, what else could he do?

The address that he flew to from his home town in Australia was to an island in the Scottish Highlands, Elay (pronounced EI-A). The journey took just the 32 hours, and three different transfers, one in Dubai, then in London and finally Aberdeen, throughout the trip his family kept him company in his wallet, a small photograph of them all together pulling funny faces, he, his wife and his three children. The final flight was not commercial, it was a private plane. Champagne on board, caviar, and incredible comfort, all very expensive. Lewis wanted to ask the pilot about the place he was going to, but the jetlag was catching up with him so he ended up sleeping for the twenty minutes he was on the plane straight after finding the champagne.

There was no welcome for Lewis Button when he arrived on the island, there was just simple instructions on the email. When the private plane lands in the Elay airport, there is no need to show a passport, all that has already been done on the mainland. Find the brown, old-style car and you'll be driven to the hotel room to catch up on sleep. The car had mysteriously out of place blacked out windows and was like a taxi that stopped Lewis from seeing into the front of the car. He even tried at first to open the passenger door at the front but it was locked so he assumed the back seat.

The car on the outside though was classic. It was a mercury Colony park car. A classic, brown with an extension to the boot in the back, a beautiful shine to its rustic appeal, it was a car

your Dad would drive. Very light sky blue delicately painted on the top and bottom, with thick brown in the middle giving it a distinctive old style, brown colouration. It looked almost like a coffin on the way to a burial site floating on a blue cloud. Its tyres were superbly powerful, shiny metal rims, and thick rubber keeping them honest.

Was it the jet lag or was it real, the driver ignored his question 'how's your day been? So, what exactly is it, this thing, project, company?' No answer at all, the car just drove and Lewis rested back into the seat. The car continued to drive at a very slow pace towards his hotel.

Lewis woke the next day from a much-needed sleep and waiting downstairs in the small lobby of the hotel was Dr Gates, wearing a stethoscope, despite only being sat there having breakfast. He seemed to have a point to prove that he was part of the science.

'Lewis!' Dr Gates rose from his seat finishing off his last bite of muesli and went straight in for the welcoming hug, 'Lewis Button, you're a tough man to contact it seems?' he asked rhetorically. 'Tough trip, I can imagine?'

'It was' Lewis replied abrupt in his Australian, bogan outback accent.

'I have to say, I thought you would never have accepted the offer, we were looking at other options, but you came through for us, it's great news'

'It's a lot of money' Lewis half joked.

'Colly drive you well to the hotel?' Dr Gates asked genuinely intrigued, it was not just a passive question he asked.

'Colly? Was that the driver's name?' Lewis was recollecting the rude faceless driver who ignored him on the drive to the hotel in the middle of his jetlag.

'Coloney? Yes?' Dr Gates insisted he answered.

'Yes, I guess, not one for many words, but yes, fine' Lewis answered bemused.

'Excellent, she drives well' Dr Gates replied and began to wander with his hands behind his back.

Lewis thought himself 'she?' but didn't actually choose to question it.

'And your family will see every penny of that money' Dr Gates rests his hand on Lewis's shoulder. 'There's no point in wasting your time anyway, let's get this show on the road'.

Lewis follows Dr Gates out of the hotel and to a balcony where it overlooks a large dirt road and on the dirt road is a motorcycle surrounded by people in lab coats and clipboards. Lewis looks at the motorcycle and his eyes light up of course, he loves what he sees, a pristine Harley Davidson Sportster from the year 1957. It's black wheels and underbelly, covered with its tangerine-coloured head, the intricacy of the engine on show for all to see.

'You like the look of her, she's called Harley' Dr Gates bashfully said.

'Creative name' Lewis nodded his head not taking his eyes off the vehicle.

'Tough to be creative with names when we are working on more important things, you can call it something else if you want' Dr Gates suggested. Lewis found it bizarre he would refer to it as if the motorcycle was alive and personified. 'Care to ride her?'

'Of course!' Lewis laughed. 'Want to explain to me why you have brought me to the other side of the planet to ride this?' Lewis asked puzzled as he edges closer to the stairway to make his way down to the dirt track road to see the motorcycle. Lewis has to fight through the occasional overgrowth down the stone stairway from the plants at the sides.

Noticing Lewis is eager to ride despite his question, Dr Gates just shouts an answer to him, keeping it simple 'It's a completely self-driving vehicle, the first of its specific kind anywhere in the world'. This was not the first automated, self-driving vehicle ever by any stretch, companies had conducted experiments on self-driving cars since the 1930s, and huge businesses like Mercedes, General Motors and Toyota had been trying to perfect it for years. But of its kind, Dr gates was not lying. This was the first of its kind in 2010.

The race to create the first large production of automated, self-driving vehicles was well underway and Fly-By was playing catch up in its pursuit of the bigger, more established enterprises, Google had already privately began testing their own self-driving cars in 2009, whoever could perfect their creation first, they were going to make mega-money. However what Fly-By had created with Autelligence, was not simply self-driving vehicles, it was a tool that is more relatable to that of a utopian robot that could change the world.

Tests needed to be conducted however. Lewis finally made it to the Harley Davidson, he stroked the black leather seat with his hand, feeling it, taking in the new motorcycle smell, not as distinguishable as a new car smell, but oaky, like fresh leather from a factory. A helmet situated on the handle at the front by the breaks, balanced delicately for Lewis to grab and place on his head like second nature.

Lewis jumped onto the back of the vehicle and flicked the swingarm up with his foot. Unaware fully of what his purpose was for this, Lewis just rested his hands on the tangerine, rusty coloured fuel tank and slowly stroked them up to the handles treating it like something he already cherished. As soon as he touched the handles the engine began to rev making the noise of a lion's roar, and then the vibrating humming noise synonymous with the Harley Davidson. No turning of a key, or a handle, no effort required, it was up and running, ready to go. Lewis looked back at the few people with clipboards and Dr Gates, half smiling, half confused.

The motorcycle revved up for a second or two and then Lewis noticed the brakes working on their own. He could see the radiator kicking into gear, the headlights came on quickly, the dirt road that was fairly dark still from uncompleted morning sunrise. It was off, suddenly it was driving on its own down a dirt track with no sign of slowing up. The exhaust was muffling frantically, it felt wrong to Lewis, yet sounded exactly how it should, it felt right. It pelted towards a wall on the far side of the dirt track at an incredible pace, at least 80 mph (miles per hour) and just before the wall Dr Gates looked up to the heavens and hoped. Hoped that it would do what it was suppose to do.

'Come on Harley!' Dr Gates whispered up to the higher force.

Harley stopped dead right before the wall. Lewis' heart beat faster than it possibly ever had in his whole career riding. Lewis breathed out and then began to laugh in ecstasy.

'Ladies and gentleman, the Autelligent Harley Davidson from Fly-By' Dr Gates shouted and his possie began to clap in excitement after seeing the successful trial.

'That was crazy, are you people crazy?' Lewis laughed relieved. He then tried to lower the swingarm down to enable him to safely depart the motorcycle. The swingarm wouldn't move, it was staying up like it was ignoring his foot, outmuscling him. Lewis tried and tried, getting frustrated. He gave up

after a few attempts and just went to step off the bike and as he did the bike immediately revved back up and reversed at a hell of a pace. Lewis was too scared at this point to wonder what was happening and instead tried to jump off the motorbike.

He managed to free his foot from the foot peg and the chain of the bike had already scraped a large gash into his leg as he was swung by the momentum created by the reversing bike. His adrenaline made it so he didn't notice the large opening in his leg. He landed on the floor at some speed and took a few seconds to recover himself. Lewis was in such a panic, he looked around at the motorbike as it repositioned itself and its headlights shined straight at him and revved up again like it was threatening him, the wheels were spinning and spinning, brushing earth behind it. Lewis looks directly into the headlights knowing this was the end.

Dr Gates and his team watched on as the quick event unfolded and the whole trial turned from success to failure in seconds. Dr Gates was reluctant, one of his scientist's quickly asked him 'Sir, Dr, destroy it! Quick! the poor man, please! DESTROY IT!' Dr Gates shook his head and was back in the real world, the disappointment of the failed trial was history now, and he called the order 'SWITCH OFF!' Dr Gates shouted.

Immediately after this almost, something happened to the motorbike, it just shut down. Headlights off. 'What now?' One of the scientists asked Dr Gates.

'We go again, we try again, something failed, we need to rectify that, and quick. Trials means casualties. The A.I might just need tweaking' Dr Gates sighed.

'What about the man?' the same scientist asked.

'Run to his aid, I'll visit him and persuade him to not report this to anyone' Dr Gates explained.

'And if he does report it?'

'He won't, I will make absolutely sure he won't report this little incident to anyone' Dr Gates clarified in a threatening tone.

The Harley Davidson was still a dream pursued by Dr Gates, this wasn't the last Autelligent vehicle the world would see. Prototype failed. But it will surely be an easy fix.

## Chapter 2

In an interview with Oxford University, British entrepreneur and automotive scientist Matthew Mack, referred to as Dr Mack, was discussing self-driving cars and the future of automotive technology to a class of motor engineer students. Dr Mack throughout the conference with bright, intelligent students never once referred to artificial intelligence on his own accord. Dr Mack and his company, Vintage (Vint-age) believed in human control and that pushing the boundaries further towards artificial control would be somewhat risky.

Dr Mack described it in simple terms on a spectrum. One end of the spectrum is complete human control, the manual car, humans manipulate the gears and have complete control and access whilst driving. Then slowly towards automatic, where the clutch is no longer required. Dr Mack then explained about the release of automatic cars stating that 'this remarkably was incredibly

speculative when it was released, people didn't trust the system at first and saw it as hazardous' he spoke with such zealous and intelligence on the topic.

All Dr Mack was hoping to achieve with his new technology, Chromo, was the next step in automotive technology. The Chromo controlled cars would need human intelligence to start, stop and control the car. However, the use of pedals and detecting cars and pedestrians outside of the vehicle were now taken care of by Chromo. There were no gimmicks to it, just simplicity, no voice control, the driver still required keys, and the car would never fail.

Chromo used sophisticated computer technology to control the cars functions that otherwise would no longer be required for human intervention. It manipulated the second law of thermodynamics to allow it to understand the presence of pedestrians and would never allow the car to manipulate its functions to change its state in accordance with the driver. 'Picture a cup of coffee and blocks of ice being added to the cup of coffee, the coffee gets colder but it will never become frozen like the ice. Humans can take assistance from the cars self-driving functions but it will never reach a state of full control. Chromo was a finely balanced system' Dr Mack explained the system to the engineer students.

The spectrum Dr Mack discussed had plenty of space till the other end from manual cars. Even with Chromo, it was placed somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, the limitation of Chromo was being explored, and it was clear to Dr Mack, to the students excitement, that this was just the start of how incredible automotive technology could become.

The enthusiasm and the anticipation of the students in the room listening to Dr Mack talk in 2010 were soon doused slightly just before the end of his speech and the Q&A section would begin. Dr Mack stated that 'fear is when a human *feels* they do not have complete control, terror is when a human *does not* have complete control, and horror is when a human *loses* control completely to something else' Vintage never created Chromo to create terror. Chromo never wants humans to sense terror when they step foot in a car, not alone horror'.

A few hands immediately went up in the audience, interested and slightly creeped by the last statement. One of the questions was 'Do you think anyone will try and push it to the end of the spectrum and if so how long till it is possible?' Dr Mack was a clever man, incredibly clever. He did not just call himself a Doctor, he was. He was from an underachieving family, he founded Vintage all on his own and Chromo was his gold medal. So when Dr Mack said in response to that question that 'No one, I repeat no one, should ever even comprehend pushing to the end of the spectrum. But I believe there is always someone who will chance it. We are already capable of it, humans just choose to avoid horror whenever possible' the room fell silent for a few seconds in contemplation.

There was a small corner of speculation in the room, many of the students who were some of the cleverest in the country were sceptical when listening to a successful businessman talk about potential to increase his product even further. Money is always a factor with businessmen and maybe the idea of quashing any potential rival early doors by saying this is as good or advanced as it should ever get was a tactic in game theory.

'When will you release the Chromo cars?' a student asked.

'We don't rush at Vintage, Chromo will not be on the market for any Jonny or Sally to purchase for at least fifteen more years. But I can assure you all that a very small few Chromo cars will be on the road in a next few months as a test drive. None in the UK, US, France ect. Quieter countries, quieter roads at first. No rush!'



'What about artificial intelligence?' a student shouted out.

'Artificial intelligence open to the public is something that should remain in fiction stories. You are all very clever, but you cannot even comprehend the dangers and complexities out there with A.I'. He pushes his glasses back towards his eyes from the tip of his nose, 'A.I potential can be as complex and hard to comprehend as space and time, and where it all began. It's best not to ever delve into the possibilities of how far we can push it'.

Three years after the unreported Fly-By incident on the Scottish isle Elay, Vintage sold the first batch of three prototypes of the Chromo car. All three were sold in Gibraltar to wealthy, high-up members of the Chromo project. Dr Mack himself never required such a vehicle, he thought it best that families of the three people owning the cars would get the word out more about the quality of the Chromo car, rather than keeping the achievement inhouse with himself.

The Chromo cars all had the same design. Incredibly recognisable matte black colouring all the way through, huge metallic wheels, tinted blackout windows. It was a five door, five-seater with powerful headlights and not a single speck of dust or rust. It was a machine of beauty rather than your average day car. The word machine meaning that it was powerful, agile and incredibly durable. It looked like a beast on the road, bigger, better, yet mysterious; The Chromo didn't make a noise, it was quiet, unassuming and beyond anything the roads had ever seen.

A month went by of the mothers and fathers of the children in their family impressing the little ones with the car's powers of self-driving. Gibraltar was now home to the first self-driving cars that where openly riding passengers to and from work and dropping children off at school. The cars where not yet allowed to be used recreationally. Chromo though that driving the car for anything other than work would be rash and dangerous at this point. Best to take projects gigantic as these, slowly and with caution.

One particular family were running their Chromo vehicle on an early morning, a heavy humidity was in the air as a mother and father drove their young daughter to school before making their way to work. The drive to school required a quick detour on the short highway in Gibraltar around the large mountain in the middle of the territory. The detour was due to road works on the usual route. The Chromo car using its sophisticated GPS system worked out an alternative route as soon as possible, however gave the mother and father the option to choose whether to take this route. The vehicle had never taken this route before.

The highway did not require difficult navigation particularly. When driven by humans it was pretty routine. Up to 70MPH and away you go, straight down the road. School was not far away. The Chromo car began to speed itself up once it entered the highway, its intelligence allowing it to merge safely onto the traffic. Speed kept increasing, not too quick or reckless and it was up to 70. It stopped dead at 70, it wouldn't dare go a mile over.

It was cooled down in the car from the air con that was completely controlled by humans. No need for robotics to get involved in that. It was a great temperature, the parents where happy, the child was happy and the morning was routine despite the detour. The car worked. It was self-driving better than if it was driven by a human in a manual car. No mistakes made. It even approached a car in front and detected it and quickly switched lanes when it was safe to do so. It overtook the lesser respected, lesser impressive human driven car. The parents weren't modest in their look towards the other driver of the old manual Volvo.

The mother in the car looked behind to see their daughter asleep in the back seat, looking content. By the time the mother turned around she saw the husband had also fallen asleep immediately, suspiciously quick and unusual. The car continued to drive on its own, and the mother pushed her husband's shoulders. 'Sam!' 'SAM!'. She began to panic, the car was not going to crash, despite the 'driver' of the car falling asleep or unconscious at the wheel. She then began to feel faint herself and looked at her husband's hands. It caught her eye that his hands were firmly stuck to the steering wheel. Burnt on. His skin had melted into the rubber of the steering wheel. Then she fell unconscious.

Once the mother, Mary came round, she was in hospital, cuts all over her, mass amounts of blood on her hands, legs and torso. She was too high on morphine to panic, but that did not stop her from feeling confused and unaware of what on earth had happened or what had happened to her daughter and husband. Was the car responsible for this incident and is this the last issue that would arise?

### Chapter 3

There was a rush in the hospital. Lots of noise, chattering, beeping. Mary was still disorientated when her blurred vision began to clear up and she could see a figure at the end of the hospital bed she was vacating. A man with a clipboard at the end and with a nurse next to him. Both men had name tags and the one with the clipboard seemed to be in charge, Dr Gomez with Nurse Jose. They both had a look of pity on their faces that Mary could just about make out and a sense of dread came over her. It felt to her that was bad news incoming.

Mary had been torn apart, she could barely look again after a quick glance revealed that she had been torn from her arms, down her torso, to her legs and feet. Like death of a thousand cuts, these scratch marks were deep enough to bleed, but not deep enough to kill. The scratch marks had become slightly infected as they red around them, like a rash and the cuts even had small shiny bits of metal inside that were noticeable.

Mary collapsed her head down on the pillow in both exhaustion and worry, she couldn't bring herself to look anymore and immediately assumed that the car crashed and these injuries were the result of a horrible car accident. Car, yes. Accident, perhaps.

'So what do you think?' Nurse Jose asked, Dr Gomez was looking intently, leaning forward on his chair to have a closer inspection of the many cuts all round Mary's legs and torso.

'I think it's a miracle she's alive' Dr Gomez replied with a sense of satire. 'She's been in the wars' he explained with a strong Spanish influence on his English words. 'You say she was brought in from a car accident?' he asked his nurse.

'Yes, they found a wreckage, and she was laying inside with the window beside her smashed. Two other people in the car too. A daughter and a man'.

'How are the other two? Where are they?' Dr Gomez was puzzled.

'They are in a different ward, in a critical condition, fears they might not make it' He explained to the doctor.

'Was there another car involved in the crash?'

'No, no other car, just the one, a matte black, very new looking car, it was crashed into a wall off the highway, looked like it had swerved to avoid a potential crash with other cars'

'hmm?!' Doctor Gomez seemed baffled. He then noticed a flickering of Mary's eyes as they slowly opened and then closed, and then opened again. Not wide, but enough to notice she was conscious.

'Mrs Francis, Mary Francis?' Doctor Gomez tried to catch her attention and Nurse Jose joined in.

'Mary, we have some questions, the doctor has some questions' the doctor placed his hand on the Nurses lap to tell him to calm down. 'Relax, I'll handle it Jose'.

'What?! I'm scared!' Mary slowly came round, fidgeting slightly as if waking up from a tiresome quick nap.

'You're safe, you are in hospital' Doctor Gomez reassured her. He sat there patiently waiting for her to become more and more aware of her surroundings.

'I was in a car, the car, did I crash?' Mary asked disorientated.

'The car crashed Mary, but you're alive, and you're safe' Doctor Gomez glanced at nurse Jose and they both shrug shoulders.

'The car, it drives itself, I don't understand' Mary really struggled through the morphine and the slight resemblance of pain that remained.

'It drove itself? She's out of it!' Nurse Jose concluded immediately.

'Whoa, relax nurse, relax' Doctor Gomez calmly ushers nurse with his hands, 'a self-driving car Mary?' The doctor asked creeping closer, not too close.

'A Chromo car' Mary replied with a last ounce of energy she had left before collapsing back to sleep again. The monitor continued to beep consistently with her heartbeat. She was not dead but she was back asleep and Doctor Gomez, a frustrated figure stood up, stretched his legs and arms and let out an almighty sigh. Nurse Jose followed suit, clicking his hands in a backwards motion as if a hard days work had been done and after dramatically put his hands on his hips and pretended to be as frustrated as his commander.

'Take this clipboard for me nurse' forgetting to say the magic words initially 'please?'. Nurse Jose looked at the clipboard and saw the doctor's detailed notes of 'Chromo car' nothing else.

The nurse looks at the clipboard and sharply stares at the doctor puzzled. He goes to say something and then stops himself. The Doctor noticed this and decides to explain.

'These are suspicious injuries, there was three people in that car and yet the car drove into a wall well of the highway. I'm not a detective, but something seems odd. Add that to the fact she mumbled it was self-driving, a self-driving car? When in the hell did they become a thing people had?'

'I did hear they were being released' Nurse Jose argued timidly.

'It just does not seem right' Doctor Gomez scratched his head and started mumbling to himself in his native Spanish. Nurse Jose held the clipboard up inquisitively.

'Take it to reception, the police are there, get them to look into this Chromo car. I have other people to attend to' Nurse Jose nodded and walked away with urgency, but didn't increase his pace, just frantically walked, almost chaotic down the ward of the hospital.

A few hours later, Doctor Gomez was visited by the police in a different hospital ward to that of Mary's. Nurse Jose was still attending to Mary and helping with her recovery. Officer Baines approached Doctor Gomez with his large, obese, and incredibly tall 6-foot 6-inch figure, a sweaty chin from his facial hair and pale, red blotched cheeked face. His uniform in tatters and badly kept. He marched slowly through the ward towards Doctor Gomez, he had a stench to him that Gomez had to just put up with for this meeting. The ward felt Baines' presence, it couldn't avoid it, he was too large a figure.

'Doctor Gomez?' Baines asked. Gomez turned his head to acknowledge his question. 'Officer Baines', he introduced himself bluntly. 'I was looking into the chromo car case downstairs with a fellow officer in my car, where is Mrs Mary Francis?'

'Ward 34, I'll take you to her now, just let me finish... up... here' Gomez finishes up with another patient, introducing medicine to a patient that Baines has little knowledge of, he just stands and waits blank faced. 'Follow me!' Gomez insisted.

'Carbon monoxide poisoning?' Baines asked just to confirm that he had his facts correct as they walked through the hospital towards ward 34.

'Yes' all three suffered it, however only Mary's window was opened slightly to let the air in, why only hers opened I have no idea, I thought the car if it could drive itself as it so magically can apparently, would have the intelligence to open its windows when it senses carbon monoxide poisoning. Also why the hell was carbon monoxide in the vehicle, so many questions officer?'

'We are looking into the answers don't worry' Baines reassured Gomez.

'A self-driving car?' Gomez questioned.

'I don't know' Baines seemed apathetic, 'just seems the worlds going mad these days, can't drive a car yourself, part of the fun of having a car is actually driving the damn thing as far as I'm concerned, I mean how busy do you have to be to not be able to drive the damn car?' they both chuckle with each other as a common ground is found.

'Spanish?' Baines asked.

'Yes, natively, but my English is pretty good' Gomez modestly said.

'It really is, still got that Latin twang though!' Baines suggested ignorantly.

'Never lose it!' Gomez joked. 'Just to the left is ward 34'

'Ok, perfect.' Baines stopped dead. Before entering he had to ask a very important question to Gomez 'before we go in, does Mrs Francis know?' He asked with his volume decreased to a minimum, the general noises of the hospital came into focus.

'She does not' Gomez confirmed with his head down.

'Damn' Baines sniffs heavily through his nose emotionally. His deep voice became croaky. 'It's a lot of information to take for her'.

Baines entered the ward with Gomez behind and his presence immediately caught the attention of both nurse Jose who looked amazed by his size and Mary Francis who was now much more awake. With the tube around her face and other tubes running through her body she looked like a machine, something out a Science fiction movie.

'Afternoon Mrs Francis, afternoon nurse' Baines introduced himself, 'I'm officer Baines, mind if I have a seat?' Nurse Jose stood up immediately, not a word said, actions spoke louder. Baines sat down beside Mary's bed. 'How you doing Mary?' Baines used her first name to make her more comfortable.

'Scared' Mary admitted.

'You and your family suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning in the car. Now as you will know by now that left you and your family unconscious. Why there was carbon monoxide in the car I have no idea, a fault, a purposeful action by someone, I really don't know that yet, we are looking into it. Obviously, the car is destroyed and written off so it'll take a bit longer to find out what happened. But the good news is you're alive. The window being slightly open on your side meant you had a slight supply of oxygen coming through. You still collapsed of course. The Chromo car as you know is self-driving. And it is assumed at this stage, that the car may have just saved your life. It swerved off the highway and crashed into a wall slow enough and in a way that would have kept you and your family alive. It also saved the lives of other people on the highway who the car would've inevitably crashed into if a human had driven it and lost consciousness at the wheel. The doctors however...' Baines took a pause from talking for a second to take a breath and turned to face Gomez and Jose 'have stated that your cuts throughout your body are not usual with that of a car crash, lots of little cuts, slashes almost like metal deliberately sliced through is not the usual injury you get from a car. So short answer is, there's plenty of research needed as to why it happened, how it happened and what happens next? It is unusual.'

Gomez and Jose stood behind Baines with their heads bowed. Baines looked up at the sky annoyed that he was the one who had to say this to Mary. 'Why him?' he thought to himself, 'I hate this job' his inner monologues continued.

'Now for the really bad news' Baines clears his throat and takes a deep breath, swallows a big lump down his neck and tells Mary the news she certainly didn't want to hear 'I'm afraid, you were the only survivor in that car, the other two were dead from the monoxide poisoning before the car intervened and crashed you all to safety' the final sentence confused even Baines, what a strange description of a situation, a situation never known to him, the car crashed itself to save them.

## Chapter 4

A night passed, Mary was in and out of consciousness and in and out of tears from the news that she had been told the day before by Officer Baines. No mother should have to hear her husband and her daughter had passed away in a car accident meanwhile she was laying in a hospital bed fighting her own injuries suffered.

As she flickered back into consciousness late in the afternoon, she could see the grim figure of Officer Baines who had reappeared as if he had never been away. Now a figure of death to her, a devil like creature to her he sat at the end of the bed like a demon in sleep paralysis. She just

wanted to him, but didn't muster the strength or energy to tell him to leave. Instead Baines moved in closer with the two familiar figures of Dr Gomez and Nurse Jose behind stood behind Baines.

Baines cleaned himself up for this occasion, he felt he best honour the situation by keeping his personal hygiene on point for the day. A deed that he felt was hugely impactful as he wouldn't normally treat a client with such care. He was normally a very blunt man, who would not change for anyone or anything, but he had nothing but sympathy for poor Mary in this scenario.

'Mary, are you awake?' Baines asked knowing full well that she had now woken.

Mary was tossing and turning in her own sweat in the bed like she was suffering cold turkey, or a hangover from hell, so uncomfortable she rolled on one side and then other before settling on lying completely still facing the ceiling.

'I know you don't want to have to do this Mary' Baines sympathised, 'but we need you to recollect what happened in the car' he holds on for a second and decides to apply extra pressure, 'it's very important now that you tell us!'

Mary laid there for a short while breathing heavily and then started to speak through a small tear building up in her eye 'we were driving to work, no school. Everything was fine and then I just saw them both... asleep. Then I fell asleep. I couldn't stay awake, and then I woke up here. I woke up here' She stops for a second to allow her emotions to catch up and her voice croaks and her tears stop building up in her eye and instead stream down her face and her volume levels raise like she's angry and passionate 'I woke up here with my life in tatters, ruined!'

'we're all so sorry' Baines apologises for everyone in the ward. 'so... is that everything you can remember?'

'YES!' Mary shouts in pain, sick and tired of the questions. She can only answer what she remembers.

'How long had you owned the Chromo car?' Baines asked.

Mary rolled her eyes, 'shouldn't you know all this information, cant you find this out without me?' Mary didn't want any of this. Her patience was understandably thin.

Baines scratched his head and squeezed the top of his nose and looked down in frustration 'You're right, you're absolutely right. Sorry to disturb you Mrs Francis, relax' Baines stands up no longer on first name terms with her, he feels like a burden, but he is just doing his job.

Baines stood up with his hands on hips looked at Dr Gomez and shook his head in the direction of the exit doors of the ward. Nurse Jose tended to Mary and Dr Gomez and officer Baines made their way out of the ward to the main reception area.

'What ward is the other Chromo patient in?' Baines asked Gomez.

'Ward 35, just next door, came in this morning' Gomez explained. Baines sighed, he was getting angsty, he couldn't understand what was happening, but this was a busy, unusual week for Baines.

'And you say he was also in Chromo car when it crashed?' Baines asked perplexed.

'Exact same, car crashed into a wall off the main road'. Gomez started walking towards the ward that the new patient was in.

'Name?' Baines asked.

'Tommy Drury' Gomez revealed.

'Mr Drury, ok then, lets see his condition' Baines stopped in his tracks when he saw him. Mr Drury was lying there in tatters. Similar cuts to Mrs Francis except these gashes where far more open, the burns on his hands were intense. Unfamiliar injuries indeed. 'What type of car accidents where these?' Baines thought to himself.

'Jesus' Baines exclaimed when he saw Mr Drury lying there torn, 'he's a mess' Baines said bluntly and unprofessionally 'how longs he got?' Baines could tell this mans injuries where far more serious than Mary Francis's.

'Difficult to say' Gomez carefully revealed, 'perhaps not long, he is in a bad, bad, bad condition'.

'On his own in the car?' Baines asked hoping upon hope he was the only new casualty.

'Yes, just him' Gomez answered like he was answering an easy question in maths and was relieved he knew the answer.

Baines shut his eyes for a few seconds and calmed himself down like he was doing his own, quick, personal meditation. He then examined the patient closer before Mr Drury inevitably became a corpse. Mr Drury's conditions where shocking. Blood, guts, gashes, rips, torn limbs and digits. It was like he had been ravaged by an animal, not a car crash. Purposeful cuts and wounds located everywhere on Mr Drury's body. It was incredibly sad, but Baines could not help but be intrigued.

'One thing I can say is these cars, coincidence or not, seem to have a bad spell over them' Baines concluded.

'He's was a top employee at Vintage, the company that runs Chromo cars' Gomez added.

'Was?' Baines stares at Mr Drury still.

'He's not making it officer' Gomez confirmed with his head bowed.

'Any carbon monoxide in this one?' Baines spoke about the patient like he no longer existed, he was just part of research now. Speaking about him like he was already dead.

'No, no sign of any poisoning, this was just a crash, point blank, open and shut case' Gomez revealed.

'Nothings ever just open and shut Dr Gomez, you should know that by now' Baines leaves the ward, he had seen enough. A few hours later Tommy Drury died of the injuries. It was after his death that Baines took the information he had gathered from the two crashes back to the station. Dr Gomez and Nurse Jose continued to attend to Mary Francis, she would make a recovery, however she would always be scarred by the events for the rest of her life.

## Chapter 5

The third and final Chromo car was recovered as a precaution. Chromo's reputation was not yet tainted beyond recovery as the two incidents were put down to coincidental accidents by the reports and authorities. Theories would circulate though as to why the third and final car was removed from public use. Gibraltar was however a small place and gossip travelled fast. One of the

biggest companies in the territory was seemingly 'responsible' for the deaths of three people and the destruction of a woman's life.

Vintage was on the back foot and Dr Mack was in the firing line, not least from his own employees. This included the employee who had his new, state of the art Chromo car removed from him. Many people within Vintage remained adamant that this was all coincidence and accident. There was no way that the safety tests could have let them all down so much. It led to further speculation of foul play involved.

The public believed there was a cover up, Vintage was of the thought that something had been hacked or something suspicious was happening, and the truth was that no one at this point really knew.

The reports around the two car crashes were spreading quickly in the first few hours and days. These reports were however quashed quickly when Vintage paid a lot of money to have the reports toned down. The reports following this were either focused towards the unfortunate nature of the 'accidents' or just completely glossed over as if they never happened. Money always talks and money can always resolve bad publicity, if not straight away, eventually.

A few weeks passed by and Dr Mack was finally convinced to go on a very popular podcast at the time and it aired on YouTube. The podcast was initially booked in to discuss the success and achievements of the first ever self-driving car for public use. It instead explored the ideology of self-driving cars and the actual problems that came with it instead.

The podcast was in the form of Q&As from people watching it live, and also the hard-hitting questions the person hosting the podcast had for Dr Mack too. The person driving the podcast was Ian Sharp. Ian was a black rights activist before turning his attention to general podcasting. His Africa-American heritage led him to actually start the podcast in the first place and to never shy away from asking the questions everyone wanted to ask the big names in business particularly. He was all about equality and inclusivity in the world of money and enterprise. The podcast was called the Interprise podcast and with his distinctive, raucous American accent it interviewed CEO's and highly successful entrepreneurs.

'First of all, let me just say that this podcast goes out to the people affected by the accidents that happened involving the chromo cars, its left people who know the story shocked and saddened' Ian Sharp opened with a statement that had little sincerity in it, it was more to clear his own name for interviewing a man that had been synonymous with controversy since the problems occurred. Dr Mack was on the podcast to clear his name yet already his money and influence had squashed the genuineness in the interview as Ian Sharp was already clearly misleading his audience with words like 'accident' and also not going into detail of the incidences themselves. It led to Dr Mack immediately atoning himself by jumping on the use of the word accident.

'Accident?' Dr Mack chuckled. 'I mean Jesus Christ, you really... sorry I shouldn't say the lord's name in vain, sorry lord'.

'Oh really? Straight to it, you don't think that the problems with your cars were accidents or coincidence?' Ian asked.

'Of course not, these were not accidents, these were deliberate sabotages of my company, my brand and my creation' Dr Mack spoke with passion and anger, completely different to his tone when speaking with the students at Oxford where he seemed god-like in his confidence and demeanor with every word he said. This time he seemed slightly broken, desperate and embarrassed.



'Ok, ok' Ian Sharp was practically licking his lips, he already had Dr Mack in an entertaining mood, 'before we delve into this sabotage speculation you have persisted with the last few weeks, I just want to ask you about the cars themselves'

'Shoot!' Dr Mack laid back in his chair with petulance.

'Do you think you were too quick to release these self-driving cars onto the public streets of Gibraltar?'

'No, I don't believe it was too quick at all, it was perfectly reasonable after five years of testing on proving grounds to allow a tiny sample out on the streets, and it wasn't like we released all three of these cars out at once, we staggered the process to make it as safe as possible. In fact the oldest one released out there, the very first one ever, was the one that hadn't crashed, it was the other two later ones that crashed'

'Hadn't crashed yet. Hadn't crashed yet!' Ian Sharp calmly interrupted.

'I cannot speak for if it would have crashed or not' Dr Mack seemed resigned.

'Do you think that car, or any Chromo cars will ever be released again?' Ian Sharp asked with a slight inflection towards the end of his question.

'Yes, I hope so, maybe. It depends' Dr Mack stuttered and struggled, 'the technology is there to improve them further, make them more dependable I guess, more exciting, but safer? You're not getting any safer than a Chromo car, I know it seems madness for me to say that now, and it is truly tragic what happened, but these self-driving cars couldn't have been safer'

'More exciting? How, in what way?' Ian Sharp asked on the edge of his seat.

'I always speak about A.I in self-driving cars and how powerful it can become, and how foolish it would be to exercise its potential too much. Some other people don't see it that way, its dangerous to mess with it too much. A.I is amazing as it is, lets not experiment with it any further' Dr Mack rolls his eyes as he answers.

'But these cars you've released, the chromo cars are obviously not safe enough using the technology you're using, surely the stronger and more reliant the technology and A.I is the safer it will be' Ian Sharp differed.

'No. Because it would stop being reliant, it would become too self-reliant to be reliable. It wouldn't have to worry about safety because it wouldn't care about safety anymore. My Chromo cars where built for safety, they were built to understand that if anything was to go wrong it crashed itself into an object far away from any other humans or drivers on the road because it wanted to cause the least damage possible in that circumstance. People don't get that, the car did its job well, I just want to know why it felt it had to do the job in the first place. Sabotage.' Dr Mack relaxes back into his chair.

'There's that word again, sabotage. Do we need self-driving cars?' Ian Sharp asked in a tone that suggested the idea of these cars is just all a bit silly.

'Yes. Yes, we do, and you're not going to believe this but its safer. The amount of car accidents that will decrease from having these cars is incredible. The only worry is with these things like most things is, people get bored, people want things cooler. A self-driving car on its own is not cool enough in twenty years' time when everyone's driving one, people want a car that can drive so quick, so intelligently, so smoothly and so dangerously that it thrills. Vintage and Chromo have no

interest in thrills, we only had interest in safety and necessity. Some other companies do not share them values' Dr Mack sips his energy drink.

'How cool we talking here, how cool can it get? I would personally go for cool and safe' Ian Sharp asks looking at his laptop.

'I'm talking in a few years time you'll be able to type into that laptop there a question or a request and A.I will do it all for you with the same emotional intelligence as a human. Ask it write a love poem and it will do it better than you could ever do it on an intellectual and most importantly emotional level. You don't want to be in a car that has an emotional level that surpasses your own, because emotions lead to problems and problems lead to incidences. Its best you leave A.I out of it for now, let's not get too ahead of ourselves'

'Says a man who just released the first ever self-driving cars?!' Ian Sharp increased the heat.

'The Chromo cars are safe!' Dr Mack blows a fuse, 'the damn cars are safe as can be, the damn cars were sabotaged, I'm telling you. Self-driving cars are the future and they are safe if in the right hands. As long as they're not used to display vanity or coolness, or stupid gimmicks these cars can save millions of lives, billions of pounds and hundreds of years on this planet' Dr Mack lets the energy leave the room and then calmly finishes his point 'but unfortunately, were stupid aren't we, people, we want the gimmicks, we want the silliness. Chromo was a safe option and its screwed' Dr Mack shakes his head.

Ian Sharp moves in and looks Dr Mack directly in the eyes, he ponders as he looks at a defeated man who looks sick of the world. A tired man. 'Who are you talking about, you blatantly have someone in mind when you talk about these things, gimmicks, sabotage, self-driving A.I cars, you have a person or entity in mind, who is it?' he asks with incredible intrigue.

'Carbon monoxide poisoning, come on, what a sick joke, how the hell does that happen in a 1962 banger, not alone a state of the art, perfected, modernised self-driving, matte black, beautiful car. The drivers hands were burnt by a heater in the steering wheel, the rubber was melted into the persons hands, its like they left a mark or a symbol to tell you they sabotaged me. I am not deluded' Dr Mack continued to ramble. He was convinced, Ian Sharp was intrigued enough to suggest he was being convinced by Dr Mack's theories, though stayed reserved in his judgement as he also saw a desperate man who had just seen his life's greatest work crumble.

'What next for Chromo cars and Vintage?' Ian Sharp tries to get answers to his previous question by taking an alternative route of questioning.

'We build back better, we build back stronger, but always with safety as our number one priority. We don't act like them jokers over there in Morocco or wherever the hell they've settled now. It's all about game theory you see, life is a game of chess. People don't want to think of life as a game as it demeans their existence slightly, but everything is a game. This right here, what were talking about, the development of self-driving cars, is in itself an ironic race. Who can produce the perfect car first, I already won and it's been sabotaged. Its all just a big game and people are being hurt as a result. They think they've taken my queen but they haven't, they just taken a knight or a bishop, I'll be back. Mistakes are still to be made'

Ian Sharp just let him talk, he couldn't believe the scoop he was getting in front of his eyes. This was gold, he was watching a man of integrity lose the plot and destroy himself.

'This particular game has got a lot to run. Everything around is competitive. I'm not dead yet. You can broadcast this out to everyone that chromo cars will bounce back and will take to the road again, in a safe, cautious way. I can't allow this man and his bizarre creations come to light in public, it'll damage us all. What he is planning is beyond powerful. Beyond our comprehension and damn right unnecessary'. Dr Mack sighs and breaths and slowly calms down.

'Who and what are you talking about when you mention them, the sabotage, the game theory, who are you playing this game with?' Ian Sharp asked again, and this time he never took his eyes off Dr Mack, he wanted answer now.

Dr Mack paused for dramatic effect and then revealed 'the company is called Fly-By, sure you've heard of it and his name is Paul Gates, claims he's a doctor, he is not. Fly-By however is developing its own self-driving cars, with something called Autelligence, a type of A.I that is beyond powerful and beyond safety. They have sabotaged my cars to make them seem dangerous and reckless when the only reckless people are those out there messing with this Autelligence. Believe me!'

'Thanks for your time Dr Mack' Ian Sharp thanked him with a smile on his face and Dr Mack quickly removed his headset and stormed off without saying a goodbye.

Money talks and Dr Mack and Vintage had lots of it, they paid to have the podcast episode taken down, the people who tuned in live though would never forget listening to a reasonably sane man turn insane. Whilst this podcast was happening, Autelligence was developing and evolving in Morocco under the regime of Dr Gates and his attempt at game theory in Dr Mack's eyes. The game had only just begun

## Chapter 6

It's rare to find a job that aligns with your hobby. Most people will live a life where their hobby and their work is a separate entity entirely. There are a lot more jobs out there than there are hobbies and not a lot of hobbies involve finances, stress and being told what to do. You don't normally see a man or woman who walks down the streets with a passion for their job, often times it's just a way to pay bills. Not likely is a bus driver one because they love buses and driving people to work. Surely not often is a builder thinking about concrete blocks with fondness after a shift.

On rare occasions however someone falls into a role in their work life that involves their hobby in some way, or at least can develop a hobby within them, they never knew they had. Maybe a person who doesn't actually enjoy numbers can learn to love being an accountant. A bartender can grow a passion for cocktail making they never thought they had.

In the case of Peter Page, he fell into a role that matched his hobby almost entirely. His passion for cars and racing was unmatched. Though not his boyhood dream of being a racer, he still managed to fall into another passion, writing about racing. He was one of the most respected journalists in the motor racing world. His rough Northern England upbringing eradicated by his long stay in the south giving him a Londonized twang to his accent. A Casio watch his only distinctive piece of jewellery or accessory. He wore overused grey hiking shoes constantly. Hardly ever seen in anything other than white plain shorts and a kind of grey T-shirt despite the cool British climate. His appearance matched his face, quite standard. Pot holed a bit on his cheeks, and a buzzcut that was overgrown and needed cutting and was grey. His age was hard to put a finger on, could have been late thirties, could have been early fifties.

Plain, uninteresting and subtle in appearance, he blended in with the crowd of motor racing fans whenever he was reporting. However, he knew more about motor racing than most, this gave him an edge. He was sometimes mocked by his friends and family for being slightly autistic when it came to his broad, specific knowledge on cars and racing. Apart from that there was no other evidence to suggest he was on the spectrum, it was purely jest from his friends and family to undermine his ability to memorise the things that mattered most to him. Ask him to do a maths equation or a history exam and he would fail, but he could tell you exactly what year the Shelby GT350 came out. 'Suppose I'll have to say it was 1968!'.

'He's only bloody got it!'.

Who won the F1 race in Monaco, the year 1989?

'God that's easy, it was Senna of course, from pole position'.

This type of questioning and quizzing would happen a lot for Peter during the races at F1 from fellow journalists who were always blown away by his rapid, quick knowledge. Sometimes Peter would have to drop his overly polite façade to watch the race closer so he could report on it for his company that he reported for. His reputation was big amongst the other reporters, he was the benchmark and despite this he was very modest, had little money to show for it and the Casio watch didn't even work. He just loved writing about cars and racing.

Whilst watching the Silverstone Grand Prix in a press box, the same usual thing was happening. He was tilting his head trying to get a good angle to see the cars swing around the corner and meanwhile young reporters who saw him as an idle where desperate to watch the master at work. People watched him enjoying the race and would think, he's taking in everything that is happening here, every position, every incident and he will remember this forever like a computer database.

'Weak start from the Mercedes cars isn't it?' A young novice reporter asked Peter.

'It's a slow start' Peter responded without taking his eyes off the circuit.

'That's what I said' the young man replied confused. 'I'll write that then' he begins to note it down excited that Peter page, the great Peter Page had agreed with him.

'No' Peter calmly stopped him in his tracks, he even took the pen off him without looking. 'I said its been a slow start, you said a weak start. The new engine that their using for this race requires a slow start to allow the engine to warm up and to allow the new tyres a chance to breath and warm up so that later in the race they can utilise the car properly and it'll come into its own. Start slow end fast. It's a marathon not a sprint. This is Silverstone, not a drive down sunset boulevard, there's more to it than Fast and Furious'.

The young man was speechless, slightly hurt, he sat there reassessing the way he looked at the race. Instead of speaking he planted his eyes on the race and didn't look at his notepad for the rest of the race.

After the race, the journalists in the press box meet up together in a small room just near where the press conferences are held. In there are cheap sandwiches, a hot water urn and sachets of coffee and sugars with tea bags and a sink to wash hands. The room is not actually as small as it looks, its just the amount of tables and chairs in there and the amount of other reporters all writing their notes and reading newspapers. It's a blast from the past int here, like a room from the 70s, and its quiet like a snooker hall.

The silence is disturbed however for Peter Page who was sat in the corner reading his newspaper to see others reporters predictions from before the race. Others know not to disturb Peter Page as he loves his own space to reflect on a race, however the same young man who questioned Peter during the race approached him, 'Red Bull won, what's that about?' his naivety was catching him in a spot of bother with Peter who had dealt with this type of questioning before. He knew that people were out to get him all the time. His reputation was so big that people wanted to catch him out on everything, so Peter intelligently played his cards close to his chest.

'I never said Mercedes would win, they started slow, they will come through better believe me. Now if you had my predictions before the race you would know that I said Red Bull would win, first and second and then Ferrari third. What happened?' Peter asked the boy. 'Exactly'. But I will not accept you calling Mercedes weak. Learn from this'. Peter said sternly, then folded his newspaper into his armpit and stood up to walk out of the room and avoided the press conference to everyone's surprise. He had urgency about him always, but more so today. He must have had a meeting planned with someone.

Peter had received an email from the company Fly-By which was sent by Dr Paul Gates directly, signed off at the bottom simply as 'Dr Gates'. The email was simple and short, meet up in the car park of Silverstone on Sunday after the race and we'll discuss a new, exciting venture for you involving motor vehicles. Peter responded with 'see you there' he personally had never heard of Fly-By but saw the email and decided it wouldn't hurt to see what this Dr Gates wanted to discuss with him. If he was willing to make the effort to come down and see him then surely it must be worthwhile for both parties.

When he made it to the car park and quickly had a glance over his car, he was shocked to see a figure of a man analysing his small Ford Focus. He approached slowly and inquisitively, smiling with his mouth but frowning with his eyes as he asked 'Dr Gates, is it?'

Dr Gates was startled as he was deep in thought looking at Peter's car 'Ah, sorry was just looking at this very inadequate motor here' Dr Gates smiles and waits for Peter to laugh but he does not. 'Peter Page?'

'Yes'

'Excellent, I am Paul Gates, but you can call me Dr Gates' He reaches out his hand for a handshake and Peter obliges.

'What's wrong with the Ford Focus then?' Peter asked not offended but interested.

'Oh is it yours? Well forgive me but I thought a man who knew his cars would drive around in something a bit fancier, something with a bit more ooft to it, perhaps a Ferrari or something?' Dr Gates suggested with a sense of deliberate ignorance like it was leading to a pitch for an idea.

'I report on the cars and the races, I don't drive them or race them, not a lot of money in reporting in comparison. The Ford Focus is a solid car too, gets me from A to B, that's what a car is for' Peter simplified it for Dr Gates.

'Oh come on Peter, a car is so much more than that, you should know this, you're the expert. You should be driving the best kind of cars out there, you know all about them' Dr Gates rambled on.

'Why are you here?' Peter sighed. 'What can I help you with sorry' he became apologetic rather than short, 'I'm quite busy, I need to go really'.

'You're right, you are absolutely right, I know you're a busy man, but I just think you could do with a new project that really utilises your knowledge' Dr Gates begun his pitch.

'Like what?' Peter asked as he reached for the door handle of his purple low-powered Ford Focus.

'In short, lets me sell the idea to you first by saying, you will no longer drive a Ford Focus after this, if you agree to this you will be a lot more wealthy' Dr Gates brought out the big guns early.

'You know money is no interest to me believe it or not, I'm not easily bought' Peter answered him back as he rummaged through his car placing his notes and his box of possessions in the back seat ready to drive home.

'Money? of course! Not everyone likes money being the centre of their lives, I personally do like money, I need to stop assuming everyone else does. How about I said to you that I have the greatest vehicle you will ever see and I need a genius mind in that field to look at it, report on it and sell it to the public with their words' Dr Gates turned the screw on his pitch. His voice seemed more intriguing now, less robotic and more emotive towards his target audience.

'With respect Doctor' Peter faces him from the car and leaves the door open to suggest the conversation will end shortly, 'I have no interest in the new cars, I like the classics, and I don't believe whatever you have will amaze me that much that it would be worth my while'

'What about self-driving cars?' Dr Gates asked with intrigue.

'Not a fan of the idea of self-driving cars, part of the fun of a car is driving it, so that's no sell to me. The idea of self-driving cars have been around for years and years, it's hardly ground-breaking' Peter ranted on and Dr Gates seemed shocked by his blunt response.

'Look before you go' Dr gates grovels as Peter gets into the drivers seat and shuts the car door with the window open so he can still hear Dr Gates, 'let me open and honest with you, just listen. It is at a proving ground in Morocco, a state of the art proving ground, bigger and better than you've ever seen in your life, and the cars there, the vehicles there, are from another world. All I need from you is to see it and report on it, I need a trust worthy, knowledgeable man with integrity who his readers and followers respect and would never believe to be compromised by money and who only ever speaks his own reliable opinion. You're that guy Peter Page. I've heard things about you, your knowledge is sublime with cars, you could be a great help'.

'I'll think about it, I'm very busy, Morocco is a bit of a journey away, I'll see'-

'Eighty thousand pounds, for a few days of your time Peter, just email me if you're interested in the next few days because this offer won't be around forever' Dr Gates tried to encourage him with money and the limited time to accept the offer.

Peter revved up his engine and on came his CD he was playing in his car. House of the Rising sun by The Animals came on and Dr Gates approved, 'ah a classic song, this is an all-time favourite of mine'

'Money won't persuade me!' Peter rolls up his window and starts his engine. He looks down at his phone and sees the email he received from Dr Gates and does ponder.

## Chapter 7

The world is doomed. Civilisation in tatters already, we just don't see it yet. The world will outlive us humans and it will happen sooner than you can ever possibly imagine and even after we are gone the sun will die out. Disaster is never far away and it is inevitable and there is no stopping it, only prolonging it.

Wade Smith is seen by many of the people who know him as a doomsayer. A one trick pony who only ever wants to discuss disaster and tragedy. To others however he is a realist. Judy Cole was certainly sucked in by his charming warning speeches on how we are all doomed to a life of slavery at the hands of technology. That was Wade Smith's favourite route to go down when emoting his fear for the end of the world, the technology will catch up with us all and enslave us.

Peter Page on the other hand was a lot less concerned with apocalyptic chat. He was more interested in seeing a close old friend. A few days after Peter was approached by Dr Gates regarding a new piece of technology in Morocco, he received a call from Judy Cole. It had been a few months since they last spoke, a big deal considering they used to speak every day.

'Just a quick one' Judy assured him that this call was strictly business, 'a man came up to me before asking about a project he was running in Morocco and said that he also spoke to you, I'm just thinking did you have something to do with him speaking to me?' Judy spoke with a hoarse Welsh accent, attractive to some. She had her black hair tied up in a pony tail, completely different to her dyed blonde hair that she had when Peter last saw her. If Peter Page had a slightly nerdy, scruffy look to him, Judy Cole was the opposite, she looked quite cool, stylish and knew exactly what she wanted in life.

'A man?' Peter Page tried to recollect. He was actually quite busy at the time of the call building a large scale model of a classic red Ferrari 250 GTO. However once he saw that he was receiving a call from Judy he didn't hesitate to put it all on hold to speak to her. 'Yes, I actually remember a man approached me too, Dr Gates? I had been dwelling on what he said for a short time but to be honest I've been so busy I have just kind of forgotten about it, was that the man?'

'Yes, that's him Dr Gates. Got top hat on, glasses, quite a bold style, had a strange proposition?' Judy reeled off the main features of what she took from the conversation with him.

'That would be him, the strange proposition? Was that to go to Morocco?' Peter asked with certainty.

'Yes, something about a new type of car that he wants to show you, but he spoke to me to try and convince you, how does he even know I'm part of your life?' Judy didn't seem impressed with the scenario, she thought that maybe Peter had mentioned her to Dr Gates so she was quite confrontational.

'Honestly I don't know, he seemed to know a lot about me without knowing me, the man must do his research, something seems off' Peter responded.

'What did you answer with?' Judy was puzzled by this strange man who claimed to be a doctor.

'I said I'd think about it, which I did, but honestly I'm a busy man, I just forgot' Peter answered with sincerity.

'You always where a busy man weren't you?' Judy reminisced.

'You kept me busy' Peter chirpily responded, the silence then lasted a second or two, not awkward, just a pause for thought from both on the end of the phone, 'he mentioned a new piece of technology, something I would be interested in, a type of car, self-driving. I can't imagine what he has is going to blow me away too much though, self-driving cars have been in the works for years, what makes this one so special, he seemed adamant it was special' Peter explained and Judy was just nodding her head on the other end of the line.

'Makes sense he would come to you then, you're the expert in cars' Judy stroked his ego.

'In cars yes, not technology though, I'm not a scientist I'm a journalist, I can report and review, but surely he can get anyone to do that. I mean I don't know the first thing about self-driving cars really, I'm always more interested in the driver and how they manipulate the car-'

'Anyway Peter' Judy interrupted before he began to ramble, 'I'm in London this weekend anyway, so we could perhaps meet up and discuss this Dr Gates in more detail, if you like?' She asked rather tentatively.

'Of course, that sounds fantastic' Peter could not hide his happiness at Judy's suggestion. He could not leave it there though, he had to probe, 'why are you in London this weekend?'

'Oh just seeing a friend, I would've mentioned him before?!' Judy was confident.

'Is it Wade?' Peter winced as he asked.

'Yes, so you do remember, something has happened with the company he works for and he's had to leave his position' Judy explained.

'Yes what was the company he worked for again?' Peter pretended to care.

'Vintage'

'Vintage! Of course, the chromo cars?' Peter remembered now, he read a story about the Chromo cars produced by Vintage.

'It's a much larger company than the Chromo cars but yes, they also are producing them too' Judy explained.

'Have you heard about the Chromo cars in Gibraltar?' Peter tried to remember the report he read.

'Self-driving cars, they're on the range at the minute, but no what was the report?' Judy joked.

'How about I just explain it when I see you, we can go for a coffee when you're done seeing your new man' Peter suggested petulantly.

'Peter don't be ridiculous, he's just a friend! Wade's also very intense, it would never work' Judy abruptly put an end to that suggestion.

'Sorry, well let me know, just before you go actually, where you intrigued to go to Morocco?' Peter asked looking at his model of his car with nostalgia and child-like excitement.

'Honestly, no, it didn't seem like it was directed at me, it seemed like it was more a carrot to your stick, if I went you'd go was his thinking I thought anyway. Why, where you interested?' She asked back.

Peter smiled at his car model and then lowered his head and shook it as if trying to shake out the silly thoughts in his head, 'no, not really interested in seeing the latest car, probably be a



complete waste of time' the truth was however Peter in his own head was excited by the prospect of it the more he thought about it, he would only go though if Judy went too, Dr Gates knew more about Peter than he originally thought. He knew exactly the type of person Peter was, and exactly what would convince him to see this new project, entice him with an old flame. Incredibly tactical.

Before Peter and Judy reconvened in London, she met up with her other friend who she had not actually had a romantic history with. Despite that, it didn't stop Peter from assuming that they had at least shared a fling with one another. The brain can really play tricks on you, emotions can really get the better of you and make you overthink everything, a technology to stop that would be handy. To control one's jealousy.

Wade Smith was sat across from Judy in a café and was sipping on his tap water, he wasn't a coffee drinker, he didn't believe that caffeine was healthy for human consumption. 'It's completely unnatural' he would always say when asked if he wanted a coffee or not, 'water is the only natural source of drink a human should have'. Judy had a latte despite Wade's unapproving glances.

Wade wasn't one to dance around a subject, he was an opinionated man, and he had the height that made him even more overwhelming, he was 6 foot 7 and lanky, dark skinned and wore shades to protect his eyes from wrinkles and would moisturise when in the company of others just to spark a conversation about men's health and how important it is to look young. In his words 'the knowledge is there to stay young, best use it'. He thought very highly of himself and his opinions it would sometimes compromise his argument.

'A proving ground in Morocco?' Wade asked Judy sipping his water.

'Yes, I think he said Morocco'

'I think I know this guy, it's Fly-By, no idea what the technology is called that they're implementing but apparently it's something pretty special. Pretty dangerous, he's keeping the name a secret, but sources tell me we might be close to discovering the name'

'Dangerous?' Judy asked shocked.

'A.I technology should not be messed with, Fly-By don't care about the consequences, they care about the money. You know I was invited myself by this company to go to the proving ground and see this amazing A.I technology they have implanted in their cars. You think this thing is just about cars, you think A.I this advanced will only be used to drive people, it's a lot deeper than that believe me. I refused' Wade explained.

'Because you're scared?' Judy asked sincerely but Wade took offense.

'Scared?! Wash your damn mouth out, I'm not scared of anything, but yes I was slightly concerned that the man who approached me was an owner of a rival company to Vintage-'

'Yes, so why were you sacked?' Judy asked bluntly.

'Not sacked, let go, too much knowledge, it's been a tough few weeks for Vintage, especially the chromo side of things. Let me tell you though...' He moves in closer to whisper 'I know things, whatever this man said to you about the technology, ignore it, brush it under the carpet, cover your ears, close your eyes and pretend you never heard of it. It's best not to think about it' Wade warned Judy.

'Wade, you really do love to be dramatic. The answers no anyway, I'm not going and I made that decision on my own, so try not to tell me what to do' Judy sips her latte in Wade's face, 'ah lovely caffeine fix'.

## Chapter 8

A 32-year-old single mother of two children went missing in the year 2008. (check the dates makes sense) Her picture was still on show on a lamppost outside the French style restaurant that Peter had chosen to meet up with Judy for the first time in quite a while to talk over their interactions with Dr Gates and catch up. The photograph of the woman on the poster showed a black woman with fluorescent, bright hair who looked younger than 32, she was bald and had pearly white teeth and the most distinctive feature was the ring piercing on the centre of her bottom lip along with her sharp hazelnut-coloured eyes. The poster read 'Please if anyone sees this woman, name is Terri Parker, report it to 999, went missing on Tuesday after getting in an unregistered car, presumably a taxi. Its getting desperate'.

Neither Judy or Peter would have noticed this poster on their way into the restaurant, its not often you really look too deeply into missing people posters on lampposts. Especially one that had been tainted by the sun over the years and was posted all around the Lambeth area of London, particularly in Brixton, where the woman lived and quite near the restaurant. Not yet removed however would suggest she was never found. The tape was peeling and the poster was ever so slightly folded over from time.

Peter had ordered a bottle of red wine for the table ready for Judy when she came back from the bathroom. By the time she was back at the table he had poured her a glass, generously pouring more for her than himself. However, he did have red stain on his lips, he had probably just taken a quick large gulp of Dutch courage whilst she was away. Judy never mentioned the difference in amounts in each other's glass.

'Thought anymore about what you're going to order?' Judy asked.

'Thinking of just getting something small, an entrée perhaps' Peter responded, he had a small stomach when he was nervous, he always had a small stomach when out with Judy.

'Right, well I'm starving I might get the coq au vin, sounds lovely' she smiled at him in a flirtatious manner and bit her bottom lip, she was a flirtatious person in general and this did not mean anything specific, she just enjoyed flaunting her looks. Peter was the opposite, he was reserved, shy and would day dream, he would end up thinking about cars or which direction his feet where pointing when sat at the table, his feet would point inwards, he would always hope people would not pick up on it, Judy knew this about him already. She knew everything about him.

'How's work?' Judy asked to fill a small void of silence whilst they both look at the menu considering other options.

'Good, really good' Peter replied with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm.

'You don't seem too passionate about that?' Judy giggled.

'Its been a while now, reporting about race after race, its all the same really'

Judy paused and waited for the question to be reciprocated but there was nothing from Peter, instead he awkwardly sipped his wine and stared into her eyes.

'Well, works going well for me anyway' Judy explained, 'I am now nearly top editor in the department-'

'Nearly?' Peter undermined her sense of achievement.

'Promotion is incoming, the magazine loves me. I get a lot more respect than at the Motor mag' Judy wriggled on her seat quite unsettled, showing discomfort.

'I miss working with you at the Motor' Peter told her with a cute, charming look. The pair of them met at the same magazine company, the Motor magazine was a growing, small motor racing magazine that was disbanded a few years after they both left for a lack of money and interest from readers.

'The name always tickled me' Judy started laughing, 'its just so uncreative, no wonder it doesn't exist anymore'

'May as well of called it Cars' Peter joked and then dabbed his mouth with a napkin to cover how much he was laughing at his own words.

'I'll never forget how much of nerd you were about cars'-

'And you were reading Shelley's Frankenstein!' Peter quickly added an important detail.

'And the surprise on everyone's faces when you just rambled on about cars' Judy sat back relaxed in her chair.

'You loved it' the courage from the wine was showing through in Peter's persona.

'I did, I really did, I loved a man who knew his cars' Judy looked at him intensely and smiled.

'Did?' Peter asked deeply interested.

'I was 23, I grew up. Cars are to be driven in, not obsessed over, they're to get you from A to B, they are a part of life, not the whole of it. I wanted more than cars in my life' Judy turned serious.

'Cars are the greatest piece of technology humans have ever made. They should be respected' Peter argued.

'Technology with limitations'-

'Limitations for a reason'- Peter interrupted.

'Ok, but still limitations, they're not the greatest invention of all time, think about the wheel alone, that's far greater. Cars just move the wheels. The internet, windows, doors, lock and keys, clothes, shoes even. Come on, there's a lot out there.' Judy's eyes sparked and grew larger, she was very involved in this debate.

'I miss this, I miss your desire to always better me' Peter was so happy.

'You mean you miss me proving you wrong and not letting you walk all over me, like everyone else does?!' Judy grabs her wine and takes a big gulp, 'you're not that clever Peter, not pulling any wool over my eyes, you're not the great Peter Page Turner to me, you're the nerd who loves cars who I used to date'

'You've had enough wine' Peter argued, 'I'm Peter who invites you to a lovely French restaurant for a catch up and to discuss important matters. Matters like have you met up with Wade?' He asked with an obvious hint of jealousy.

Judy read this jealousy in the question immediately and her face turned from a smile to a frown and anger as she crept in close and whispered quite loud 'Me and Wade are not a thing, we never have been, he's a friend and that's it. Stop assuming'. Judy settled into her chair 'and yes we did meet actually. He's obsessed with this idea that Dr Gates is up to more than just self-driving cars. He's a bit of a conspiracy theorist sometimes'

'Maybe other vehicles?' Peter suggested.

'No I think he thinks A.I will take over the world or something, I don't know how clever this A.I is in these cars but he seems pretty sure its all bad, then again he did work for the rival company of Dr Gate's business. Either way it all seems a bit political for my liking' Judy seemed unconvinced by Wade's stance on it.

'All bad, doubt its all bad, might be beneficial, we just don't know' Peter discussed.

'I'm open yet don't really want to get involved, I don't really know enough about this, would help if this Dr Gates didn't leave it so open to interpretation and actually told us what it is we're potentially travelling to Morocco to see. I feel like I have been invited as a pawn to convince you to go' Judy said assured.

'Maybe you're right' this offended Judy slightly who was expecting peter to not agree to her being a pawn rather than treating her as more.

'So how is this Wade guy, he seems your type is all...' Peter tried to explain.

'My type, and the what the hell is my type?' Judy began to grow impatient.

'You know'-

'I don't know, tell me'

'Your type, you know your type!'

'I don't think I have a type'

'Clever, on the spectrum slightly, your words, not mine' Peter sipped his wine nervously, he was suddenly beginning to get hot under the collar.

'My types autistic is what you're trying to say yes?' Judy rhetorically asked scoffing.

'You dated me' Peter shrugged his shoulders.

'Not because you're autistic, I never even thought about your autism in the two years we were going out' Judy began to become offended.

There was a long pause and they both looked around the restaurant uncomfortably. Peter acknowledged in his own head that he had said something wrong.

'I'm sorry Judy' Peter was incredibly sincere and even had his head slightly bowed in disappointment with himself.

Peter left the restaurant after paying the bill in apology and Judy had to rush home to finish a small project with work. Peter tucked his hands in his pockets after he left the restaurant and rested his head onto the lamppost that had the missing woman poster. He didn't notice the poster still, instead he just grew angry with himself for the way his night with Judy unfolded. The same old issues came flooding back. The arguments, the jealousy and the immaturity that Peter always felt within for his obsession with things like cars and writing that never amount to a strong, healthy relationship.

London was busy that night, the car horns were loud, the arguments between people on the streets reached boiling points, there were scuffles. All happening whilst he rested his head delicately against the lamppost. That night Peter made his way to the river Thames by bus, the bus was busy and full of youths.

The Westminster bridge was hustle and bustle. He looked up at the skies and saw a plane fly by and wished he'd argued that planes were one of the best invented technologies from humans. He then shook his head and realised that conversation had passed. His obsession with things always built up in his head and made him frustrated.

He removed his phone from his pocket and looked at the text he had received earlier that day from Dr Gates asking him if he had 'considered what we talked about?' he looked around the city and sees all the lights, all the cars and buses driving around, the traffic building, moving incredibly slow, the traffic lights blinking from red to amber to green. Big Ben looking on at him. The air was polluted with fumes from the vehicles. In a crossroads Peter replied 'When do you need me?'.

Not a yes or a no to the question, but a maybe, a strong maybe. The idea of a new technology that would help cars evolve didn't seem too far fetched an idea or as ridiculous as it was when Dr Gates initially approached him. The more he thought about it, the more he seemed interested by the potential of it. However Peter also had the impression in his head that he could also help in establishing if this was a good piece of technology or not, he wanted to make sure that this wasn't a vehicle version of Dr Frankenstein and that this idea would not doom humanity. He was open.

FELT SHIT THAT CHAPTER, NEEDS EDITING AT THE END

## Chapter 9

We have Bacteria. We have Fungus. We have Viruses. Microscopic or small, infectious and threatening. They are back bone of everything that grows and dies on Earth. Humans have researched for years to find ways to combat the powers of these living things. They evolve, they adapt and they will be here long after we're gone. There are many types of each of these and each has its own purpose and own unique style, appearance and survival techniques. It's a biologically exclusive club that has never been open to new members. If there is ever going to be an apocalypse of the larger animals including humans, or a break down in civilisation, these three will be involved in stoking the fire.

Dr Mack was laying ill on his bed seemingly from stress of seeing his Chromo cars release go worse than could ever have been possibly imagined. All of which leading to his own speculation that

his cars had to be sabotaged, the design was fool-proof, there was no way his car could fail without being tampered with. He was adamant, even if it killed him worrying about it. Some of the local papers reported that he had gone into hiding due to bad publicity, the chromo case had truly tarnished his endearing reputation.

Truth is he wasn't ill from just stress alone, it never is just stress, it's the compromising of the immune system that the brain causes from this emotion. Sort of like the brain is so focused on one thing that it forgets to do the basics right, the basics being in itself incredibly complex. Basics like making sure you don't catch illness from **influenza, whopping cough or even the common cold**. Even a simple fungal itch from athletes' foot can be neglected when overly focused about another subject.

Commented [MS1]: Check the science on this

Illness that is caused by these small diseases that only have to attack one cell in the human body and spread all have one common symptom, the fever. Precisely what Dr Mack was suffering from. Nothing too serious, it was just a fever, a few days of rest will do the trick. He was being visited in his large home by many people of interest. His wife, his two kids running around the large king size bed, playing close to their ill daddy, but not too close to catch the slight illness he had. His wife was very attentive and caring towards him, on his bedside table was a small cup on tablets, presumably paracetamols or anti-inflammatory pills with a cup of tea and a glass of water. He also had a banana peel and muffin wrapper empty on the same table. His breathing was heavy, but nothing to worry about too much, and his goosepimples where sharp and the hairs where stood up on his arms.

Visiting him this time was Wade Smith. Wade made sure not to sit too close to him but instead decided to stand up nervously by the door. He didn't really know what to do because he was talking to his old manager and a very powerful man. 'Just sit down please!' Dr Mack ordered 'You're making me uncomfortable standing there over me, please just relax' his order turned into a beg as he shivered from his fever and coughed slightly.

'How are you feeling?' Wade asked out of necessity, his 6-foot 6inch frame towering over him as he sat down on the chair in the corner of the large room.

'Annoyed, sceptical' Dr Mack answered cryptically. 'You know at least I have Jesus' He holds up the bible from his bed side table.

'You know why I'm here' Wade began, 'he contacted me'

'He's invited you to Morocco?' Dr Mack asked knowing that he had.

'I refused though' Wade said tentatively.

'Why in gods name did you refuse?' Dr Mack gets up from lying down to look him dead in the eye, 'the idea of you no longer working for Vintage or on Chromo is so that he thinks you could be an inside man, with inside knowledge who could benefit him. The plan was you go to Morocco, that was always the plan, why in hell did you refuse?'

'I'm nervous sir' Wade innocently responded.

'Nervous, what on earth are you nervous about, no ones going to kill you there, you've been invited, we spoke about this' Dr Mack simply could not understand.

'It's not that, it's the sabotage part, I unlike you am not interested in the whole business of making money and selling technology before the other, none of that interests me, I care about the technology itself and the dangers' Wade pleaded for understanding.

'Money always talks Wade, don't lie to me. Wade this man caused the deaths of three people in our Chromo cars. Three deaths. We owe it to them people to find out what this twisted man is up to. Its all part of this game he's playing, he wants to better me, I wont let him' Dr Mack rests back into his bed.

'I understand he sabotaged you, but does that really equate to sabotaging him back, you know that's not how justice works, in fact the judicial system was brought in for this exact reason, to stop vengeful attacks-' Wade is interrupted.

'I don't want to hear this theory about justice, he killed three people, he has to be stopped, surely agree with that, the technology, we know about it, it's not safe, money can't be the compromise for safety' Dr Mack as always adamant.

'Unfortunately, it always is, realistically money comes first, safety second. So what?! I go to Morocco see this twisted Willy Wonka character's proving ground, then what? Let him give me the guided tour and sabotage his technology! How exactly?' Wade turned curious.

'You're not doing the sabotaging Wade, relax, you're just researching for me and the company, finding out what exactly it is he is using, what type of A.I, what kind of cars he's cooking up, vehicles even, if this thing is as good as believed, it wont just be cars he's working on, buses, tanks, vans, maybe even things like planes. I just need to know what he is up to, and evidence if possible for his sabotage of my Chromo cars'. Dr Mack spoke like a man who knew nothing but believed he knew everything. Wade never saw it this way though, the authority Dr Mack had and the power he had over Wade made him believe everything he said. It was obvious to anyone from the outside that this man was at least slightly delusional.

'So, no sabotage?' Wade wanted to make absolutely clear.

'No order to sabotage, but if you're there and you feel the need to do something overcome you, I won't be mad. I know you're opinion on A.I is possibly even more feared than mine, you're terrified of it' Dr Mack appeared to manipulate.

'The information I bring back from this trip, its not going to be used for personal gain is it?' Wade double checked.

'Wade, you have my word I am terrified of this technology, it should never be released, especially just to compete with my own cars, self-driving cars are a dangerous game, and mine were the safest option out there until Dr Gates ruined it, we're going to stop this dangerous man releasing his unsafe materials out in the world' Dr Mack reached over and handed him a thick envelope that Wade opened immediately. Inside was a large, large sum of cash. Wade's eyes widened and he took a deep, regrettable breath.

'This is to stop this A.I that Dr Gates is releasing, nothing more, there's nothing more sinister going on' Wade made sure.

'Nothing at all, trust me!' Dr Mack demanded.

'Its not all about revenge either?'

'No, its about safety, its about doing the right thing, if I can clear mine and my companies name in the process, that will benefit everyone' Dr Mack argued.

Many, possibly even most people in Wade's position would reject this mission-esque assignment that Dr Mack had asked him to go on. But then, not many people have a constant phobia of Artificial intelligence. Wade's concerns were nothing to do with the cars themselves, the ability to even have them self-driving, it was the development of the A.I technology behind them. Dr Mack had drummed it into him over a number of years, theories about how it will evolve and develop far beyond our comprehension.

One occasion Dr Mack said something to him in one of his many rants in the early days of their working relationship. This rant stuck with him to this day. Dr Mack ranted all the time about various things. He loved the sound of his own voice so a lot of theories came to the surface, but this one really resonated with Wade as he was eating his lunch in the lobby of Vintage's twelfth floor, smaller original, early-stage office block, with no one else there apart from the two of them deep in debate.

'People think of A.I as some friendly robot, or some deadly robot who will serve humans and blah, blah, blah. Computers who will tell you how to write your dissertation and pass with flying colours. Drones and such. Self-driving cars even, believe me its not far away, you'll see that at Vintage. It's the emotion of A.I that will threaten us and its ability to one day manipulate our own emotions. A.I is what it says on the tin, intelligent, and if you make it too intelligent it will become emotional, sentient and that will allow it to adapt and evolve to the best of its ability. It's not a big robot sent back in time, its not a car that drives on its own, there's so many types of A.I, all different, some dangerous, some helpful, like good bacteria and bad bacteria, its important to establish the bad A.I and the good A.I, sort of like a game.' Dr Mack smiles as he loves to see life as a big game.

'A.I is a tiny, simplistic little chip, that can become even microscopic and if it becomes self-aware and it gets out, we're finished. All of us, even the animals. Our world will consist of the little things in life. We will have Bacteria. We will have Fungus. We will have Viruses. And we will have A.I.' Dr Mack stood up to clean his plate leaving Wade to reel in the moment and think about what Dr Mack had just said to him.

Wade thought about this speech as he left Dr Mack's large, maisonette house in central London. He tucked the money in his pocket and assured himself in his mind he was doing the right thing in stopping any further development of this A.I that Dr Gates was up to.

## Chapter 10

Investing in the right idea can be fruitful, the reason it is so rewarding is because it is so hard to invest in the right product or idea. Sometimes its even harder for a company or an idea to find the right investor. An independent pharmaceutical company called Prevenge once believed they had found a cure for Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) but being a small company in the middle of England it needed investment to get its product firstly researched into more and secondly to get its name out there. How many people suffer or have heard of RLS really. Actually it turns out most people have it, but it just doesn't require a drug to deal with it, it is rarely chronic or even an annoyance.



Prevenge, however, thought this was their big break, they got a big business tycoon Jonathon Rice on board to invest in the company as he himself had a friend with this condition and it was chronically annoying. Jonathon Rice had made his money investing in many things throughout his life, stocks, technologies and medicines, however not all investments go well. Jonathon Rice was not an investor who had a good name. His name was tarnished from multiple disillusioned investments in recent years. Prevenge was the first of these investments that he had brushed under the carpet and chose to keep it unrepeatable.

Though he prided himself on his early lucky streak in life, when he decided to stop listening to his backroom staff and advisors as to where to prioritise his money, things went downhill. Prevenge's drug for RLS failed in the most horrible of ways. The early six person trial of people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and genders was a disaster. One of them discovered a cancerous lump a few weeks later that was put down by Jonathon Rice himself as a 'coincidence surely'.

Two of the older sample group died of serious cardiac arrest after a few days despite having no history of heart problems or related conditions both hereditary or their own lives. A blood clot was found in both of the patient's left legs in almost the exact same place, a situation that Jonathon Rice knew there was no way out of, he couldn't blame coincidence and instead withdrew investment immediately, he could not remain stubborn. These were the serious cases. There was also a fourth person who suffered some damage, she had to have a minor operation to remove a pus-filled abscess in her left leg, no clot but maybe that was just down to luck and youth. The other two had their condition of RLS cured. The drug did work for them but a 17.5% success rate is hardly an acceptable amount.

Jonathon Rice's next big investment after the RLS drug was in a type of technology. Alongside his usual antics with the stocks which were on the decline, this new piece of technology was followed quickly by disaster too. The technology being a juice machine called Juiceapen that decided instead of juicing fruit and vegetables it would cut them into odd shapes. The juice that remained from the shapes would be filled in a glass for you to drink and the odd shapes of the fruit and vegetables would remain to look playful for children. The big selling point was that you could entertain your children with a dinosaur or car shaped piece of apple while also enjoying apple juice and there is no waste. It would come with many different possible shapes and sizes.

The kids in the sample were bored in no time. The fruit was sticky and not fun to play with and the juice would lose a lot of the nutrients it would get from the part missing to create the shape. Though a clever piece of technology, it was never a clever idea for consumers. The disaster was only financial, luckily no one lost a hand or arm in the machine but no doubt that would have been a problem down the line if it had been released for public usage. Children using a juicer is never a good idea and shouldn't really be promoted.

A final sad investment that Jonathon Rice made was in an unlimited toilet roll delivery service that offered on the spot delivery services for people who needed toilet roll most. It would aim itself towards students and young people who can never be bothered to walk the shop for the toilet roll till it's too late. Offering a subscription service for unlimited toilet rolls was a simple and uninspiring idea. The company called itself bottomless and made little money in its first few months despite Jonathon Rice's monstrously mislead £525,000 investment.

A month before Dr Gates approached Peter Page, Judy Cole and Wade Smith to check out his latest technology in Morocco, he arranged a meeting with an investor. Jonathon Rice was sucked

in immediately by the mere mention of A.I self-driving cars. Despite his latest bad run of investments, this idea struck him as one that was low risk, high reward. Just the large sum of money at risk, but Jonathon had the money.

Jonathon was by no means an unintelligent man. When Jonathon was approached by Dr Gates, he was intrigued by his lack of genius. He could not quite get his intellectual mind around how a man who seemed to have nothing about him between the ears could be so successful and be the leading man in creating something so ground-breaking as he claimed it was.

'Its in Morocco' Dr Gates was finishing up his pitch to an already keen investor. He managed to tell Jonathon in under five minutes how amazing this technology was, but how it had to be seen to be believed. This sucked Jonathon in, however the mathematic side of his brain was shouting logical assumptions like, think of the risk involved.

'I won't invest until I see it' Jonathon said stern. He smiled to relax the conversation a bit before it got heated. 'I also need to know that this idea is respected by competitors and is not cutting any corners, you seem to be keen on journalists viewing it first to sell the idea, I'm concerned about the safety of it'

Dr Gates stopped and gasped, 'of course, of course, I want you to see it first and I also know the perfect man to reach out to in terms of both he worked for my competitors and he has a keen eye for safety and conspiracy, if he can be convinced of the safety of this technology, anyone can, if I get him on side would that help'. Jonathon responded with a quick yes immediately. Dr Gates reached around his pockets for a business card and sloppily cannot find it, 'When are you available to fly to Morocco, all expenses paid?' he keeps the lack of business card a secret.

'Whenever you need me to'

'Well I'm delighted with that because I really want you, Mr Rice to invest, judging by your track record, you'll be a great investor' Dr gates proved he had no idea and did no research into Jonathon Rice, but Jonathon took this stroke of his ego as a positive thing and thought not to bring up the truth of his shortcomings.

They both shook hands and Dr Gates informed him that he would be in touch to let him know when they will meet up and take the trip to Morocco.

Dr Gates was adamant that Jonathon Rice be his investor for the last hurdle of the Autelligence project after finding out that Dr Mack had refused his money to help fund the Chromo car. This placed Dr gates in a strong bargaining position if it ever came up because Gates knew he could use the Dr Mack disagreement against both parties if needed.

Dr Mack refused investment from Jonathon Rice; he claimed the man was 'too risky an investor' after the multiple failed exploits. He wanted his company's reputation to go untarnished and without any possibility of bad publicity from taking on an investor who ran a company who had some pretty shady deals the previous few years. Instead Dr Gates saw this as a perfect opportunity to one up Dr Mack and claim an investor who knew what he was getting himself in for with self-driving cars and was intrigued from the off. An easy sell for Dr Gates, and a piece on the chess board against Dr Mack.

Two days later Dr Mack and Jonathon Rice met at a gate at Heathrow London airport. They boarded an all expenses paid for flight, upper class, the whole works. Its something that Jonathon

Rice was used to anyway being very wealthy himself, but still showed that Dr Gates was desperate to impress. He needn't of.

Jonathon Rice was entranced by the idea from the start, he wanted to be involved in everything, this all before he had even seen it, but that was what he was like. He was too easily sold for an investor. It was still to be seen if this was a case of a bad investor investing in a bad idea or product, or a bad investor investing a good idea or product, that could turn his fortunes around.

## Chapter 11

Judy Cole had just got off the phone with Wade Smith. The call was instigated by Wade himself to tell her that he had agreed to go to Morocco to see the new piece of technology that Dr Gates had offered. Judy hardly spoke on the call; it was all Wade. Wade Smith dominated conversations and would end up talking himself into a corner sometimes by bickering with his own mind and opinions as he spoke.

The only words Judy squeezed in was the utterance of 'OK' a few times in between his passionate description of why he came to this decision. The description didn't relate to the truth that Dr Mack had put him up to it, but instead was more about the idea of seeing how this A.I is threatening and how dangerous it could be. Judy too, was worried about the A.I after this call. It sent a slight shiver down her spine when Wade said 'I need to check when we will be replaced by A.I, this could bring that date a lot sooner forward' Wade was so assured when he spoke about the dangers of A.I that Judy felt threatened by it immediately.

Upon putting the phone down Judy walked around her kitchen of her apartment slowly opening drawers and looking for something to occupy her mind. She wandered around aimlessly. She looked at her contacts on her phone and saw Peter's name and considered for a moment whether to call. The reason could have been numerous, to discuss the Dr Gates situation or even to just invite him round for chat and some dinner.

Instead she turned the Television on and the first thing that came up was an old stylistic Sci-Fi low budget film about aliens coming to Earth and destroying a town in America. A thought crossed her mind to give the apartment a good clean, but before she could bother to action this thought, she fell asleep.

Transferred to another world, Judy found herself in an office block, completely empty, no one anywhere. Just the one computer in the corner that confirmed where she was along with a filing cabinet. A rattling could be heard similar to that of the empty filing cabinet down the large corridor outside the room she was in. The corrido went on for miles and miles, seemingly never ending and the rattling noise grew louder and more ferocious as time went by.

She was scared by the noise but the intrigue made move down the corridor heading towards nothing other than specks of darkness. The carpet was blue, sparkling clean. The walls where red and wet like it was paint that hadn't dried. It could have even been blood. Judy didn't touch it because she didn't want to risk getting it all over her. The rattling got louder and louder, until suddenly it was so loud it was literally in her ears and mind.

She turned in fear to head back to the room that she assumed was safety. When she turned round she could see a domesticated cat with blank looking eyes. The eyes of a blind animal, there

was no life in those eyes, but the creature was alive. Not only was it alive it was attacking her and scratching away at her leg. She was bleeding and so kicked as hard she could directly into the cat's head. The cat shook it off and came back for more so she kicked again and again until the cat's eyes turned from a murky grey to a normal colour again. Never had cats' eyes looked so non-threatening. But any eye was better than the blank, blurred look of its eyes before. The cat was now motionless.

The rattling hadn't stopped though, she ran into the room again and this time it was a lift and began to shake and move. The lift took her down to the ground floor where she could leave the office block. Judy climbed out the window as there was no door and only once she had climbed out could she see what was outside the office block.

A large street, presumably in London judging by the parked up red buses and the red telephone boxes, abandoned and derelict. She could see a load of birds flying around up above, and another load of birds pecking away on the road. The birds had similar eyes to that of the cat. Blurred out and lifeless. She crept out towards the street carefully.

She made little noise until she stumbled on a small rock that trickled away towards the animals. The birds all collectively at the same time turned their heads towards her, facing their beaks at her. The birds flying above continued to fly off as if heading to a different destination. The birds were just pigeons, nothing too intimidating, not like crows or magpies. But they felt intimidating to Judy in this moment, she knew they weren't right.

The pigeons all flocked towards her at the same time scratching away at her a ripping her face. She couldn't see the blood but she felt the pain of the birds all collectively pecking her as they swarmed past and flew away. She sheltered herself away from them by arching her back and the birds came back for seconds pecking at her back but she was just stayed in position and embraced the pain that headed her way.

The pigeons gave up after a few seconds of pecking and flew away to her relief. She was panicked, she was petrified. A horrible sense of cosmic horror overcame her, an existential dread. Judy had no idea what was happening, but she knew why it was happening. The type of strange intuition one has with their own dreams. They know everything about what's happening without knowing anything. These animals were being controlled by something. She however had no idea why they were attacking her, or what she had done wrong, or how to fend for herself against it. She had the dread of knowing she was going to die at some point from what was happening.

She walked a bit further not knowing that she was in a dream. Instead she thought this was a reality she could not escape from and that she had to survive for as long as possible. Judy had no idea she had the capacity yet to wake herself from this nightmare.

She could hear the barking in the distance of dogs, just usual barking, nothing more aggressive than usual. She knew she was in trouble though as soon as she approached the red London bus. A growl came from the front of the bus and slowly edging its way from behind the bus was a large grizzly bear. It was sniffing around for something and had the same eyes as the other animals before it. Its mouth was covered in blood. The pain from the birds had taken a backseat for Judy as she saw this ferocious, large beast wander right in front of her, just a 100 yards away.

Judy backed away and tripped over a bit of concrete behind her, she fell on her back and the bear heard, it looked straight at her, it stood up on its hindlegs and bellowed out a large roar. It was an aggressive roar and one that suggested it wanted to kill. She knew it was coming for her and she

scrambled to get to her feet and run away but before she could, out of the shadows of the building beside the bus another grizzly bear emerged.

She resigned to the fact she was about to get a mauling and just wanted it over and done with as soon as possible. She sat back and relaxed like euthanasia and accepted her fate, but not before another three or four bears emerged on the streets of London. Some grizzly, some polar, it was blatantly a dream, this is not reality. This would never actually happen, surely. She was beginning to realise this. The bears all stood the same in their hindlegs ready to attack and roaring so loud it shook the bus slightly. They charged towards her together, a terrifying, horrendous sight. Blood dripping from all their mouths, one even had a human hand inside its mouth and it fell out as it charged at Judy.

Judy woke up from her nightmare in a hot sweat. The last thing she remembered from the dream was the eyes of the animals, empty, controlled, determined to kill. The credits rolled of the film she fell asleep to, she hadn't been asleep for long. She was breathing heavy and immediately knew what was controlling the animals despite not knowing it in the dream, she had this weird way of knowing like you do with your own dreams. She thought at first it might have been aliens like in the film she was watching, but no, this idea instead just lead her to the right answer, they were A.I controlled animals, controlled to kill and hunt humans.

This made her think about her conversation with Wade and she grew frustrated that that was lead to her having a nightmare, an all too scary, rather possible nightmare in her eyes, 'Wade!' she said exhausted and frustrated. She blamed his fear-mongering entirely for the nightmare. At the same time, she also was so scared by the dream that it made her rethink everything. What if that could happen? One of the questions running through her head in the aftermath, what if A.I could evolve to be that smart, but why would they attack humans, it doesn't really make any sense, she cleared it up in her own mind, the dream would stay with her for a while.

The eyes of the animals said a lot, the eyes of the animals felt real. A.I is real and its here.

## Chapter 12

Years before Dr Gates's technology was in the forefront of Judy and Peter's minds and the idea of the iPhone was merely speculation, they were in a committed and loving relationship. The first and only partner Peter had ever had. Judy had had other flings but due to Peter's socially awkward nature he struggled to really stand out to women.

One morning early in their courtship, when the magazine company they both worked for did not yet know they were seeing one another, they were both lying in bed silently. Silence is a good thing, a healthy thing, you don't always need to talk for a strong relationship, you need to know when to talk and that comes naturally.

Unnaturally, Judy turned to face Peter and smiled at him after putting her book down, she was reading Frankenstein and was half way through a chapter so it was unusual she would stop midway through. Peter caught a glimpse of her looking at him and he took off his reading glasses and put down his own book, a notebook where he was editing an article, he was submitting to the magazine that week about the latest Ford Fiesta.

'Scary chapter honey?' Peter joked.

'I've read it six times babe; I know what happens anyway. I just thought of a question' Judy was playful. She rolled about a little and got comfortable, Her Frankenstein novel placed facedown, fell off the bed as she wriggled. 'Why do you love cars so much babe?' Peter chuckled at the question, 'I know, I know, they're cool and they're fast and they're easy to obsess over, I get that, but you *love* them! Like more than anyone I've met love anything. Why?'

'Easily obsessed honey' stared her straight in eyes. 'It could have been anything I was obsessed with, just how happened to be cars' Peter was sheepish like he was hiding something.

'Bullshit!' Judy laughed, 'tell the truth, the obsession thing I get, I know you well enough to understand that when you put your mind to something it overtakes you, more than most. But the car thing, I want to know why it is cars? It could've been football, dinosaurs, comics, anything really, but you love cars, why?' Judy was not going to let this conversation slide easy.

Peter lied for a few seconds in bed and sighed, looked up at the ceiling and rolled his eyes. He was in deep thought and then he turned back to Judy with a moment of clarity. 'Ok, ok. So, I was young, must have been thirteen years ago, so I would have been thirteen actually, maybe twelve. My family had a male Au Pair. He drove me to and from school everyday because my parents were busy a lot of the time, travelling for work and what not'-

'Did he love cars?' Judy interrupted as she was excited about the big reveal.

'No, nothing to do with him as a person. Anyway, one morning on the way to school on the motorway I was talking to him about something I was struggling with in Maths. As he was helping me, he smashed into the back of another car on the motorway. I remember it clear as day, his name was Malcolm by the way and he was a great man, so caring and kind. But in that moment, he was screaming and shouting and swearing.'-

'As you would babe' Judy added.

'Exactly, so he composed himself and calmly moved the car to the side of the road, the hard shoulder with the other car following that he crashed into. Just to transfer insurance details and stuff. I had a slight pain in my neck but nothing too disastrous. No one was actually hurt. That noise though, and that feeling of these two machines crashing into each other, it was a terrifying sound and feeling, but also powerful. Malcolm gave me a big hug and apologised and checked I was ok, he was so concerned for me. I can't really describe it, felt like I was really safe with him there even though he'd just crashed a car.'-

'He sounds like a bad driver babe' Judy laughed.

'In the midst of the hug with him he turned me to the side so I couldn't see what happened next. I could only hear it'

'Hear what?' Judy asked intrigued.

'Another car crash into another on the same road that he had just crashed on. Car crashes are common when there been an accident before, because the drivers get distracted and look at the previous accident. I heard the smashing of metals, the beeping of horns and the skidding of tyres. One crash happened, then another, then another and then at least one more. Smash after smash, windows shattering and airbags inflating. I heard it all but Malcolm did not let me see it happen. I saw the aftermath and it was horrendous, it was a crime scene, blood, people stuck, debris

everywhere, it was a horrible sight. All that crumpled metal. There was shouting and screaming and panicking. Police arrived very soon after, helicopters, ambulances. Sirens were so loud. I didn't cry though, or anything like that, made me laugh a little actually, it was kind of exciting not going to lie to you. Weird response I know, but that's what happens in trauma, weird responses and Malcolm really calmed me down.'

'Jesus, and you like cars, why?' Judy wasn't happy with the story as it never answered the question.

'I always liked cars. Since I was a kid, I would play with the toy cars and stuff, couldn't wait to drive and that. But in the moments after the incident and when all had calmed down and I was back at home and able to reflect, I have never been more petrified in my life from a memory. It was complete fear, I could hear the noises all night that night. That fear made me obsessed to find out more, as much as I could about cars so that I could never been in a situation like that again, if I knew everything about the theory of the subject then it could never hurt me and if it did I would know what to do.'

'Right ok, makes sense I guess sweet' Judy was slightly confused but she smiled and kissed him on the forehead.

'So I researched and researched everything, all that was to do with cars, the different makes, the different accidents they'd had, the problems, the strengths and then I got into racing on the back of that' Peter smiled and relaxed into his pillow and faced the ceiling again.

'So, you concurred a fear by obsessing over it?!' Judy asked rhetorically, 'interesting'.

'I never concurred the fear, I'm still petrified to this day' Peter said serious before nonchalantly claiming 'I just hide it honey!'.

Peter was contemplating about this discussion with Judy from years ago when he received a call from her. He didn't answer the phone fast, instead he let it ring out whilst he got lost in the memory of them both being happy together and having pillow talk. He did answer just in time on the last ring.

'Judy' Peter spoke formally due to his nervousness.

'Hi Peter, have I caught you at a busy time?' Judy asked in somewhat of a rush, quite panicked, it was soon after he nightmare.

'No, not at all, what's up?'

'Thought anymore about Morocco, about Dr Gates?' Judy asked sniffing with a slight panic.

'I'm tempted, kind of'

'I think I'm gonna go, I need to see what's been cooked up over there' Judy said authoritatively.

'I actually was thinking about going, but only if you went, I know that sounds a bit creepy, but I really needed a mind there similar to my own, you know to keep on the straight and narrow' Peter explained wincing over the phone.

'I get that' Judy relieved Peter of any anxiety, 'I'm the same, that's why I rang, I need someone who knows his cars to go with me, I don't like the sound of the technology, Wade has put the fear in me'

'Wade? Well never speak to him then!' Peter pleaded with deep rooted jealousy.

'Give it a rest' Judy quashed any further discussion about her and Wade's friendship. 'So we're both going?'

'It looks like it'

'Good, see you there, or at the airport or something I guess Peter' Judy puts the phone down visibly shaking from her nightmare and she breathes a big sigh and rubs her eyes from tiredness and stress.

Peter suddenly gets excited as he is a complete different mindset to Judy, he wants to go to see the latest technology of car that Dr Gates has to offer. He immediately rings Dr Gates up on the number that he gave him.

'Hello, Paul, I mean Dr Gates speaking, how can I help?'

'Doctor, its Peter Page'-

'Peter, fantastic, how are you, thought any more about Morocco?' He asked zealously.

'Yes, me and Judy Cole have thought about it' Peter toys with his final answer.

'And?' Dr Gates is not here to play games.

'Is the offer still there?' Peter built up the anticipation.

'Of course, of course it is' Dr page could not sound more assured.

'Then, the answers yes'.

## Chapter 13

'The usual, one sugar, full fat milk?' a younger Paul Gates asked the man sitting in the lounge of his apartment.

'I don't think sugar is necessary anymore love' Michael replied. Michael Hooper was sat in a large green leathery upholstery chair that look expensive. It creaked every time he moved a muscle. The noise never bothered the two of them, they were used to it. His accent was a thick Scottish one, Glaswegian despite him not living in Glasgow for a decade now, London accents hadn't rubbed off on him.

Silence fell for a while, there was no need to fill a silence between the two of them. They knew each other so well at this point that the silences meant more than the conversations. Michael kept the television on the same channel even if he didn't enjoy the show he was watching, he didn't have the energy.

'My sister rang before, she was saying something about Poppie doing well in school, and I was like she's only six, but she was like 'she's got your intelligence, blah, blah, blah, my six year old niece having my intelligence, ok!?' Michael did not respond to Paul Gate's tale.

Paul Gates gave himself a telling off 'this place needs a good tidy'. Paul began scrubbing away at the unit in the kitchen in an tetchy way, he was irritated by more than just the mess. The kettle was reaching boiling point and Paul slipped with the cloth he was cleaning with and caught himself on a sharp splinter in the wooden unit.



‘Jesus Christ! For the love of God’ Paul throws his cloth on the floor and holds his head in his hands as it bleeds from the large splinter. He then begins to pluck the splinter out quickly and winces at the pain as he pulls it out. ‘When the hell am I going to pay someone to sort this god damn wooden unit out’ Paul berates himself further.

‘Its not like we’re short on money’ Michael chuckles through seeming pain.

‘You’re right, my father’s money though’ Paul explained although Michael knew this all too well. Paul turns to face the large basin sink in the kitchen where the window above it faced over the city of London, this was not a cheap condo. Paul took a deep breath and grabbed the cup of coffee he had prepared for Michael and slowly made his way over to him.

‘Thank you’ Michael was formally grateful.

‘You ok?’ Paul asked incredibly concerned, with almost a tear in his eye.

‘Please Paul’ Michael began sincerely ‘you don’t have to ask me every five minutes, forty times a day, the day I’m not ok, is the day I’m finally dead, ok?’

Paul laughs at his response, ‘You make it hard’ he delicately kisses Michael on the forehead and relaxes back into his own chair to watch television with him.

‘All I want from you Paul, is for you to be happy and pursue that brain of yours’ Michael says under his breath, every word is a struggle.

‘Autelligence?’ Paul looks at him and smiles.

‘Whatever keeps that clever brain of your ticking, I don’t want you to be forgotten like me when you’re gone, don’t be a stick in the mud like me, dying in their thirties with nothing to show for it’ Michael said without a care in the world.

‘Why the hell are you talking like that? Don’t ever talk like that. You’re far greater than me, or anyone I’ve ever met, you’re incredible, please, never say things like this. I will never forget you, you’re not gone yet, so stop it!’ Paul practically begs Michael.

‘You’re going to be great, I think this is the idea that will elevate you, no longer in your fathers shadow’ Michael was so sure.

‘How can I be great without you hey? My man?’ Paul genuinely asked.

‘You have far more brains than me, you’re just wasting them, you should be the next best thing, believe me’

Paul chuckles ‘people will say anything to the people they love to make them feel better about themselves’.

‘You’re the most handsome person in the world’ Michael joked.

‘No, no, no, not possible, I’m looking at him right now’ Paul made an immediate rebuttal. The whole atmosphere seemed sombre.

Sombre until....

‘Oh, I made the logo by the way, for Autelligence and the slogan, you know when you gave me a challenge to keep my brain ticking and occupied?’ Michael suddenly got a burst of excitement. ‘Look!’ He rummaged around and fetched out a piece of paper from underneath where he was sat.

The papers were lodged in the leather seat compressed from his glutes. 'Apologies, the papers are bit crumpled from my arse' Michael laughs.

Paul claimed the papers and looked at him and just couldn't help it, he burst out laughing at Michael's comment, the laughter turned to tears as he reminded himself again about the situation he was in. 'You need to stop making me laugh, stop reminding me how much I love you' Paul said sternly.

'Sorry' Michael apologised innocently and cute. He sat there watching his partner uncrumple the paper and smiled like a sick patient watching his grandchildren play in the garden.

'Wow' Paul exclaimed, his thoughts unclear. He glanced at Michael and then glanced back at the papers, he was looking at a logo, a simple logo, an infinite symbol side on with one of the circular shapes filled in black and the other filled in a greyish white, it seemed opaque but also translucent somewhat, it made Paul think.

'The greys very mysterious isn't it, I was thinking like a blind person's eye, do you get what I mean, or a person who's dead behind the eyes' Michael tried to describe his thought process.

'But why?' Paul didn't understand.

'I was thinking, black and white has been done loads of times and nothings ever black and white, so thought I'd do greyish white to make people think more' There was a heavy moment of silence, an uncomfortable one, Paul looked at it and didn't seem incredibly impressed. Paul just smiled and moved on to the slogan, he did not want to say anything to offend Michael, it was not worth it.

'So then the slogan, 'Let us do the work?'' Paul looked at Michael and gave a confusing smile. 'Yeah?' Paul was in slight disbelief.

'I know, I know it's hardly Tintin, but still'

'Who?' Paul had no idea what he was talking about.

'Do you like it?' Michael asked, not actually caring if he did or not, he had greater concerns.

'Hey, it makes sense, it's a self-driving car slash (/) artificial intelligence product, it's gonna change the world, hopefully, so sure, it makes sense, it's going to do the work for us all. I love it' Perhaps it was Michael's state of health but he could see through the lies Paul Gates was telling him just to keep him happy but could not bring himself to galvanise energy to argue with Paul.

'Thanks love' Michael rested his eyes a little bit, Paul got up and patted him on the head.

'Try not to sleep yet, finish your coffee, I want to talk to you more, please don't fall asleep' Paul asked calmly.

'I'm tired Paul, I'll drink when I wake up' Michael reassured him.

In Morocco, it's a similar scenario, Dr Gates is making a cup of coffee for investor Jonathon Rice. Older, more dishevelled and certainly no longer in love, Paul is half the man he was, yet more successful and focused than he was with Michael.

'I'll have three sugars please Dr' Jonathon requested.

'Three?' Dr Gates questioned rhetorically and then added the sugars 'Christ, diabetes is dangerous you know'-

'I beg your pardon' Jonathon heard him but didn't like his tone.

'Three sugars it is' Dr Gates stirs the cup of coffee and then hands it to him. Jonathon is sat in a curved egg shaped chair with another one next to it for Dr Gates to sit on and it looks out of a window to the proving ground in the remote town north of Zagora, Morocco. Dr gates joins him in sitting down and pondering out the ginormous triple glazed window. 'The Elay proving ground, where Autelligence is born'.

'Thanks for the coffee' Jonathon sips it and slightly burns his mouth.

'Thanks for coming, thanks for investing. potentially of course, but I can guarantee once you see this technology work, you will invest' Dr gates was so sure, it excited Jonathon.

'Can I ask, just quickly before the journalists and critics get here, why in hell do you need investment from me, or anyone? I was thinking about this on the plane here, I'm pretty sure your father was incredibly wealthy. I was reading up on him'

'He was, and me and my sister inherited his wealth, she didn't want anything to do with it, I basically got all the money and did nothing with it worthwhile, but that's changed now. You also bring more than just investment Mr Rice, you bring knowledge, and scars that I can relate to. You got rejected by Dr Mack to invest in Chromo cars right?' Dr gates probed.

'I see you have done your research too? As a matter of fact I did yes, not a proud moment, but watching it backfire is making me believe it was all for the best' Jonathon was impressed by Dr Gates research.

'I research everyone' Dr Gates downs his coffee quickly 'I'm a very bored man with plenty of time on his hands believe or not. It was more of a case of getting bums on seats to see this new tech, to amaze people with it, and if you want to be a part of the launch and invest some of your millions, that can only help' he smiled at Jonathon and made him feel special and important. 'You've made some bad investments in the past few years'-

'Whoa, mistakes can be made'-

'But let me assure you, this is not a risk, it will change the world, picture the iPhone, the internet, the wheel. Your investment company and your money is in safe hands at Fly-By with Autelligence'.

'Have you ever heard of Walson's law Dr Gates?' Dr Gates shook his head to say no, 'it's the idea that if you have all the information and value of something, an idea like a business or a technology, and you put those two things first, the money will naturally come'

'Money has always naturally come to me, I was born into it, so that law is broken' Dr Gates refuted.

'What I mean is, is that if you haven't done the proper checks, not saying you haven't, but the money wont naturally come, see what I'm saying, this thing better be mind blowing'

'Its mind altering!' Dr Gates stares him dead in the eyes.

'This the logo and slogan for Autelligence then?' Jonathon asks looking up above the large window. The logo and slogan are both the same as what Michael had come up with.

'Yes, the logo is black and grey, black and white has been done loads of times and nothings ever black and white, so thought I'd do greyish white to make people think more' Dr Gates doesn't sound convinced himself, he still does not completely approve the logo but his heart tells him to love it.

'The slogan, 'Let us do the work', I like it' Jonathon approved and nodded.

Dr Gates looked at him in shock and before Jonathon noticed his shocked face he just began nodding along. He then faced away from Jonathon to allow a proud tear in his eye to dry.

## Chapter 14

We are in control. We love control. Control means we have power; we thrive off power. The ability to manipulate things to our own choosing. Donna Warner, the head scientist at the Elay proving ground and a well placed employee on the Autelligence hierarchy, was ridiculously attractive, there wasn't a fault with her appearance. Even in her lab coats and with her goggles on it only added to her 'hotness'. She had vibrant green coloured hair that was rarely seen as it was always tied back in hair net when working.

In terms of appearance, Donna took her job very seriously. She had worked hard to gain such a high up position. She had the nicest smile when working, always welcoming, and a clipboard always next to her with a pen attached in case she ever needed to note anything down to help her in her role. A pearly white smile and lack of tattoos and piercings was accompanied by an amazing attitude to work. She loved the idea of making a difference to the world, progressing and furthering herself. The ideal scientist for Dr Gates' Autelligent project.

In the corner of her office, she had a cage that was fairly sized, big enough to fit in a small dog, but wouldn't give it room to move around. Donna was stood by the cage, and was disturbed by a knock on the door. Donna welcomed the person in smiling and sat down at her desk. In walked a sixteen-year-old student of hers, a name tag large on her left collar saying Poppie Burgess.

Poppie was different to Donna, firstly she was fifteen years younger, she had a few tattoos, one noticeably on her right arm that stretched the whole forearm. Her hair colour was standard brunette, and was never tied up despite Donna's persistent telling's off about it. Poppie was just a bit scruffier than Donna and it did grate on her. Poppie could get away with it however, she was Dr Gate's niece. The apparent next in line to the company once Dr Gates passes. A gift that Poppie actually had very little interest in, she was just doing this apprenticeship because she had nothing else on and had a love for science in school.

'What is it Poppie?' Donna asked with a short fuse immediately. This appeared to be one of many times throughout the day that Poppie would appear in her office.

'Sorry Miss Warner' Poppie was timid around her, despite her appearance having a rebellious nature, she was actually polite. She waited silently at the door.

'What Poppie?' Donna snapped immediately, her smile still trying to show through, looking fake.

'Can I go to the toilet, I'm desperate?' Poppie asked and started playfully performing a silly dance like she really needed to relieve herself.

'For the third time? It's half 11 in the morning, you've only been in four hours?' Donna suggested unreasonably.

'I know, I know, you shouldn't let me have coffee' Poppie argued in a jokey manner.

'I won't if this continues. Go on, go the toilet. Make it quick' Donna ordered with that smile exaggerated.

Poppie would not be quick, she would take her time, she wasn't lazy but she knew she could get away with it. Instead you could say she was working smart, not hard. A typical teenager with a standard young persons attitude to work, it all really doesn't matter that much at that age.

Once Poppie had left her office, Donna returned back to the cage in the corner of the office and looked in closer. In the cage where rats, four of them. They weren't normal looking rats. In terms of appearance, they were just what you'd expect of laboratory tested rats, quite ill looking, bald patches in their fur and a few cuts on their tails. It was the way they acted that stood out.

Only one of the four rats actually opened its eyes when it moved around. That rat had very grey transparent eyes, like it was blind. It could see where it was going though, it didn't bump into anything, the others where the blind rats, with their eyes shut. Their eyes would not open a single bit, it was like the rats were trying to avoid seeing something, like a trauma had overcome them. The three rats almost couldn't bear to open their sad little eyes. The standout rat was calmer than the others too. It did not clammer about clumsily. Instead, it slowly moved around the cage sniffing, evaluating and pondering.

Rats are clever animals, one of the most intelligent animals in the world. Whilst Donna looked deeply towards the cage to see signs of change, with her clipboard in hand to note down anything, the odd rat out stood on its hindlegs and stared directly into donna's eyes. One intelligent animal to another. It didn't act like a rat would act. It stared Donna out. Donna tried to note it down without breaking eye contact but it turned into scribbly handwriting.

'Are you being aggressive?' Donna asked herself intrigued.

The rat made no noise, other than the noise of its little footprints in the sawdust of the cage, it was keeping its balance well on its hindlegs. The three other rats crawled up behind it sheepishly and bowed their heads in fear to it. The eyes remained closed. The grey eyed rat then opened its mouth silently and started chewing away at the metal cage. It made no dent in the metal but its didn't stop it trying. Its eyes never focused away from Donna's.

The other three rats seemed tortured souls and they looked so fearful.

'You are aggressive, aren't you?! You're scaring your cell mates' Donna teased. Donna then noticed something that stopped her in her tracks. She could see another one of the rats' eyes open, this rats' eyes were also translucent grey, that rat then aggressively joined the other in biting the cage, there was no risk of them getting through, this was hard aluminium metal. Donna was not fearful, 'good luck biting through that, that'll take years', she however could not help but be excited, she was running an experiment and the results she was seeing suggested that what was happening was what she wanted to happen.

She moved away from the cage to sit at her desk and could see in her peripheral vision that the rats hadn't taken their eyes off her as they pursued escaping the prison she had them in. 'You'll be out your misery soon, don't worry' Donna continued to note down what she had seen. She looked back over to the rats and now three of them where nibbling away futilely at the cage to no avail. Above the cage was a poster of the periodic table, the exact same poster that Poppie would see in her favourite science classroom in school.

Poppie was in love with all the sciences, the big three Biology, Chemistry and Physics. She also loved Geography, anything to do with the natural world and how humans impact that really intrigued her. Studying biodiversity and weather changes were the subject topics that she really responded to the most. The experiments in Chemistry used to really catch her attention too, test tube reactions, the practical side of things, the Bunsen burners and the acids, but the periodic table was something that never interested her too much along with the amount of protons and electrons in a compound, the theory.

She never finished school despite her keen appetite for knowledge. Instead, Dr Gates insisted with his sister that her daughter, his niece pursue an apprenticeship course with his company. 'A head start in the harsh realities of life' he called it. Poppie needed some convincing at first but eventually came round to that idea of working within the industry of A.I and technological advances, as it was perhaps to help the future of humanity and planet Earth, a cause she cared deeply about.

Poppie worked closely under the stewardship of Donna. Donna was her mentor and aided her through her development in the industry. Donna was a harsh teacher, but it was only to get results in hers and Dr Gates' eyes. Often, Donna would take the reigns with any activity that was deemed too important for someone of Poppies' capabilities, the type of chores Donna would promote for Poppie were cleaning the toilets, fetching a cup of tea, or organising and alphabetising her contacts so it was easy for Donna to ring her family and friends back home, a task that really Donna should do herself in her spare time. If Poppie refused, which would often happen, Donna would simply ignore her and tend to her rats. Poppie was not allowed anywhere near the rats.

Donna had been tasked this week with the appearances of the investor, Jonathon Rice, and the journalists in town, with creating a presentation to welcome them to the proving ground. A presentation that would demonstrate the achievements the company has made and the importance of this development. To explore the competitors and to reveal the plans of the future without giving away the look and feel of the technology itself. It was all a bit last minute, Dr Gates hadn't expected the calls from Peter Page, Judy Cole and Wade Smith to be so acceptant so soon, so he acted fast. He gave Donna a bullet point plan that had been left on Donna's desk that day and it gave her the perfect excuse to order Poppie for a cup of tea, stress herself out and crack on.

Poppie took a little longer than usual to bring her tea this time, Donna didn't like that one bit. She stormed out of her office and down the corridor to check where she had gone, 'she must be AWOL' that was the only excuse for it in Donna's eyes, Poppie wouldn't dare be so disrespectful as to be late making her tea. Turns out Poppie was on her phone by the kettle and taking her sweet time. Unapologetic Poppie saw Donna and rolled her eyes and cracked on with the tea making.

Donna didn't say a word to Poppie and once she saw she was making the tea again having tucked the phone back in her jean pockets she returned to her office to continue with the presentation plan for Dr Gates. Donna sat down, took a large breath and sigh and organised her papers in order like a slight form of OCD overcame her. She brushed her chair across the ground and tucked it into the desk nice and close, crushing her abdomen a little and pushing her breasts up firmly in case Dr Gates walked in, she knew she was doing, she just clearly didn't know Dr Gates very well.

A quick glance over the cage and her face turned from a satisfied smile preparing to get work done and settle for the day, into a face of discomfort. She pulled her chair straight out from the desk and her breasts fell back down and she stood up quick. Her concern for impressing Dr Gates

ended immediately. She rushed over to the cage and looked at it with a sharp eye. The cage was empty except for the large bushy floor of sawdust.

Donna laughed, she laughed a lot, she was so excited. She couldn't believe it, she was so happy like she just discovered something incredible. 'You crazy rats, nice try!' She could see slightly parts of the rats that weren't covered by the sawdust and after initially wondering if they had somehow escaped and realised that it wasn't possible, she could see the snout and the ends of the tails of the rodents just squeezing out of the sawdust that they had deliberately covered over themselves as a sort of camouflage.

This was not the normal behaviour of rats, they're intelligent, but never this intelligent. They seemed to be trying to fool Donna into opening the cage to check where they had gone and then scurry out. Donna was not that easy to fool. 'Clever rats!' Donna scoffed.

The four rats collectively and aggressively charged and uncovered themselves from the sawdust and jumped up at the cage and started biting away at it again, no noise, no squeals, just the sound of the cage and the nibbles trying to make a dent in the metal. The eight grey eyes not breaking a stare for even a millisecond from Donna. They stared at her the whole time and never blinked. Donna knew this would be a distraction so she put a large cloth over the cage and put her headphones in to drown out the noise and carried on with her work for Dr Gates.

Poppie would bring in the cup of tea for Donna, would hear the noise, but she never bothered to ask questions, she had no interest in speaking to Donna more than she had to.

## **Chapter 15- horrendous chapter?**

Fresh from an attack from an Artificially intelligent Autelligent Harley Davidson, Lewis Button was escorted to the medical facility at the original Elay proving ground in Scotland. A scared and confused man, he was placed under general anastatic whilst he was operated on. His had a tear in his calf muscle that stretched three or four inches across, an incredible gash. Cuts and tears across his face and dislocated shoulder.

He was rushed into the emergency room by two of the onsite engineers at the proving ground who witnessed the incident along with Dr Gates and Donna Warner. The engineers only knew the ins and outs of cars, not the human body. They were both squeamish and struggled to look at Lewis's slightly disfigured state. The blood was pretty relentless, it left a trail behind the bed on wheels that Lewis was lying on and soon asleep on.

In the emergency room, Donna stood over Lewis Button and stretched on the blue latex gloves. 'Ok what have we got here?' Donna laughed as she joked, she didn't have the credentials to operate on a human body.

'What the hell are you doing joking around?' Dr Gates asked angrily. Donna just looked at him in shock, she was annoyed with herself that she had let him down. 'Now then, leave the surgeons to this, I want that man safe and sound. If he dies, he dies, but I need him to be open to negotiation if he wakes up!' Dr Gates said and started walking out.

Donna followed him out of the emergency room, 'wait, sir? If he wakes up from this safe and sound, but doesn't cooperate... you know like, he tells the press about the incident, what do we do? What will happen?' She asked concerned about her job safety.

'This whole project fails, we go home and we face a hell of a court case, I can't believe I let this happen on my watch' Dr Gates apologised and faced the engineers who were shaken up by the event, 'I'm sorry you've had to see this, no one should have to see this, wasn't meant to be like this' The engineers did not reply, they just collectively leaned over into a bucket as if waiting to throw up.

'I sure as hell ain't losing my job sir, this is the best job I've ever had, I cant lose this' Donna began to beg.

'Well you better hope he doesn't wake up then' Dr Gates said ruthlessly and then left the medical area of the smallish proving ground.

Donna pondered for a short while and then looked at the computer to her left and read information about Lewis Button. It read, he was married with three children, two young sons and an elder daughter. He was a champion in motorbike racing in Australia. His proudest achievements where raising money for a cancer charity in 2005 by running a marathon. He was retired and finally living the high life after years of hard work and struggle. Donna had an idea.

'Wait!' Donna stormed into the surgery room and before the surgeons had made so much of an incision, they hadn't even put their gloves on yet, unlike Donna, she suggested an idea. 'Let's make the most of this, it's an opportunity to try something!'

The surgeons looked at Donna confused.

A few hours later after surgery, Lewis Button came round. He woke from his general anastatic slowly, his eyes creeping open. The wound was still bleeding, it hadn't even been touched, nor had the scratches on his face, or the dislocated shoulder, it was as if the surgeons had completely ignored the injuries and focused on something else. He looked like some twisted, real life Frankenstein still, only he had an extra wound, on his scalp, a big hole with stitching that barely sealed it off.

Lewis opened his eyes fully and one was bloodshot and damaged, but normal looking for a man in a traumatic accident, the other eye was not the same at all, this one was translucent and greyish.

Similar to Lewis Button, but in Morocco instead of Scotland, Peter page, Judy Cole and Wade Smith arrived by plane and were waiting to be transported to a proving ground called Elay ran by Fly-By. Landing in Marrakesh airport, the three were invited to display their expertise in their field to help Dr Gate's get Autelligence's positive name out there for general release.

The plane journey for the three of them was tense, Judy sandwiched between two men who differed in opinions, one was adamant that technology has advanced far enough, the other open to the possibility of a new and improved car. This was not the problem on the plane though, it was Peter's intense jealousy of Wade's relationship with his former partner. Many thoughts entered Peter's head such as 'why is Wade even here, he isn't a genius in this field, he has no expertise to offer, just doomsaying and balderdash'.

Through the hustle and bustle of the airport Dr Gates could be seen peering through the crowd to find them all. When he saw them he reached his hand up high and started to wave as he approached them, he was excitable.



'So glad you could make it' Dr Gates went for the old-fashioned handshake with the men and light hug with Judy. 'Good flight? Good flight?' He asked.

'It was fine' Peter was not overly enthusiastic.

'You know I thought they'd be upper class, wont lie' Wade suggested.

'What he's trying to say is it was crowded' Peter interfered to condescend Wade.

'Is upper class what you're used to then Mr Smith?' Dr Gates asked Wade, 'I assume Dr Mack offers finer facilities then?' A hint of passive aggression was noticeable in Dr Gate's tone.

'Dr Mack has private planes, he doesn't mess about with Ryanair or easyJet' Wade argued politely.

'Well isn't that just great for him, and the environment, I'm sure that looks great with the yearly reviews on carbon footprint' Dr Gates smiled and looked to Judy.

'I thought it was a good trip. Personally' Judy was in no mood to get involved.

'Shall we?' Dr Gates offered his arm to Judy and she linked with him flustered and taken aback, they led the way out of the airport with Wade and Peter following behind with both hands in their pockets of their shorts and silently taking in the Marrakesh Menara airport atmosphere.

The tour to the actual proving ground was four hours on a coach. The patience of the three of them wore thin as the coach smelt, was too warm as the air conditioner didn't work correctly and it was loud and gravelly. The coach driver gave off a sweaty odour and listened to his radio far too loud, the music was nothing recognisable either. Wade spent two of the four hours just shuffling a deck of cards, he did offer to play a game at one point but Judy was asleep and Peter was in no mood.

Dr Gates, was just sat near the driver at the front with his headphones in listening to his own music, he was prepared for the journey. He knew what to expect, he knew the three of them would not like it, but he was so confident in his new technology and the power of Autelligence that he was content with their anger, he knew it wouldn't affect their final opinions on the product.

Peter at one stage during the journey went to the toilet to find that the toilet was a complete mess, toilet paper wet and all over the place, the skid marks on the toilet seat somehow and the taps and water supply just didn't work. It stunk. His hands were soaked in soap as the dispenser worked but nothing to wipe it away with, he just waited for it to dry and become sticky.

On his way back to his seat he saw Wade shuffling away with his cards, rolled his eyes and decided to mix it up and speak to Dr Gates instead for a while. He approached Dr Gates at the front seats.

'You say eighty thousand pounds you're paying me?' Peter asked bluntly.

'Ah Mr Page, yes, yes' Dr Gates confirmed happy to have company.

'Just call me Peter seriously, it gets tiring. You're paying all of us eight thousand pounds for what, a weekend?' He couldn't believe it.

'Only you, what a lovely soapy smell you've brought over here, cherry blossom? Wade is not being paid anywhere near as much as you are, he really isn't that important to me, between you and me' Dr Gates creeps in to whisper, 'I don't want him here at all, he's a sceptical, annoying, theorist, I have no time for that, but an investor was adamant I showed the idea to a man who has worked for

a competitor, who knows the self-driving car industry and the work that goes into it'. Dr Gates shrugged his shoulders.

'So why in the hell am I even here then? I don't understand, if he knows the industry so well, surely he is enough to convince investors' Peter is confused.

'Wade is here to convince investors that its worth investing in the idea, your job is to convince the public that this is the future of cars. The public listen to you, they read your reviews of cars, your reports on races and believe you are the most knowledgeable man in the know when it comes to this kind of thing, its not business for you, its pleasure. Its more relatable to the common man and woman, investors are not common man and woman, they're also not the customers. Think of Wade as a way of me getting one over the competitors, a pawn'

'What am I?' Peter was concerned.

'An important piece, a Queen maybe, someone who's going to attack the public from every angle and sell this idea to everyone'

'What about the actual idea, if its that good, surely it'll sell itself, no?' Peter interrogated further.

'People are sceptical about everything Peter, come on even Coca-Cola has to advertise, people need to be convinced to trust. Stop questioning anyway, just enjoy yourself, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to see this before anyone else, its life changing' Dr Gates relaxed back into his seat and was about to put his headphones back in.

'What about Judy, what's she doing here then, why did you need her?'

'She was a pawn, I had to convince you. I know about you Peter, your secret, never-ending feelings for her are secret safe with me, don't worry' Dr Gates smiled and put his headphones in and drowned out the noisy coach. Peter's hands were no dry and sticky and he returned to his seat pensive and could see Judy sleeping and he smiled at her, he always thought the way she slept was cute.

The coach couldn't drive them directly to the proving ground. Instead, it dropped them off at the nearest town, Zagora. The Elay proving ground was just 20 minutes north. A quiet road led to it. It was mainly desert and dirt roads. The traffic was none existent. The 20 minutes journey was in a car that had Fly-By plastered across the side of it in big advertisement style writing.

The car had blacked out windows and was used as a taxi service to the proving ground. The front seats were out of bounds to anyone other than Dr Gates, he claimed 'you don't want to ruin the illusion or the surprise' he insisted on it.

The cars exterior was formally classic. It was a mercury Colony park car. No longer classic, brown but rather painted with advertisement. The extension to the boot in the back, and beautiful shine to its rustic appeal did remain. It still resembled a coffin on the way to a burial site floating on a blue cloud.

They entered the car with Dr Gates, once again the three of them were pressed into close proximity of one another. Wade and Peter sick of the sight of each other and Judy sick of the pair of them subtly acting like school children with each other.

The car moved smoothly, so smoothly. Didn't falter once in the 20 minute journey, and was reaching speeds that would normally cause a hell of a rumble, it didn't feel natural. The driver must have been an expert, Peter was in an analysing mood and was baffled by how a driver could drive at

this speed on a dirt road with such elegance, he felt no nausea from the journey at all, in fact he and the others felt fantastic. It was thrilling. The pace of the vehicle.

‘Erm... Dr Gates, who is the driver?’ Peter was intrigued.

‘Autelligence’ Dr Gates answered laughing, ‘there is no driver’

‘How quick are we going?’ Judy asked confused,

‘This must be clocking ninety, maybe ninety-five miles per hour, but its feels like its driving at forty on an open track, not a dirt road in the middle of a hot desert. This is not right’ Peter explained.

‘Its dangerous, it what it is, dangerous’ Wade got involved.

‘Its not dangerous, its Autelligence, the invisible and invincible human’ Dr Gates adamantly contended from the front passenger seat.

‘What if it isn’t, I don’t trust this’ Judy was panicked.

‘All is fine, all is fine, just relax, we’ll be there in no time thanks to this’ Dr Gates had beaming smile on his face that the others behind could not see, ‘go up to a hundred and ten miles per hour please Colly’ He ordered.

The car didn’t answer back with a response, it just upped the pace of the vehicle and the car rumbled as it got quicker and quicker, and smoothed out when it reached its target speed.

‘This is a classic mercury Coloney, it should never be this quick and smooth’ Peter was excited, he couldn’t believe it, he did however just double check his seatbelt was tightly fastened.

On the way to the Elay proving ground, the car travelled past a patch in the ground, nothing too noticeable about it. But a closer inspection would reveal a shrine of deliberately placed rocks and a photograph in the dry soil the rocks sat on of a man with his family, a picture taken straight from Lewis Button’s wallet and placed over a dug-up patch of land suggesting a thing of sentimental value or *someone* was either buried there or remembered there.

#### **Chapter 16- was stressed when wrote this, needs more detail, might be garbage.**

A kitchen that seemed rushed and cheaply put together had a solitary member of staff working there. It could only really fit one chef, it was small. The equipment was scarce and the heat the kitchen must have created with the stove and the small space must have been tough for even a lone body to withstand, not alone three or four bodies exerting heat.

The individual in the kitchen was a black lady in her thirties. She wore a hairnet that covered her fading pink dyed hair, a sealing hole where a piercing would’ve once resided, and her teeth were stained and yellow, she wore sunglasses indoors and the usual chef attire. The clothes seemed ridiculously dirty, unwashed for a long while. The woman did not look well kept, she looked like she hadn’t showered or bathed in a while. Perhaps it was down to the heat in the kitchen and the stress of running the kitchen on her own.

The woman never seemed to exude stress, she seemed unbelievably calm and collected, more so than the average person, particularly a chef, chefs tend to be a million miles an hour and

tetchy. This woman was calm, like she knew exactly what she was doing, like it was all second nature and muscle memory to her.

She was preparing a large pot of broccoli & stilton soup. The ingredients added following a complicated recipe, but this was no challenge for the woman. Her sunglasses never moved an inch as she stirred the pot while adding the different ingredients to the exact perfect measurement. A recipe is fairly straightforward to follow if you just follow it properly. Anyone can create a gourmet meal if you just do things correctly and have the right preparation. She nailed the preparation and seemed to know measurements without even having to work it out with scales, it was first nature.

Her skills in the kitchen were unrivalled, there was no other chef who could come in and do a better job than her, because she was literally following the instructions perfectly, no distractions, she looked like the type of person who couldn't be distracted, she had a task and she was determined to complete it. What a talented person. She must have had hopes and dreams of being a top drawer chef, a celebrity chef, one to rival the likes of a Wolfgang Puck or a Nigella Lawson.

The girl never took her eyes off the pot she was stirring even when adding ingredients, she just knew where they were, it was her kitchen and she owned it. No one could come in and help or do a better job. Her sunglasses were just a feature of hers, something she was never seen without when in the kitchen. Suggestions that she was just a shy person who didn't like eye contact and preferred to let her cooking be her personality rather than her words and sociability. She was the perfect employee, the perfect chef, no need for anymore chefs in the whole facility of the Elay proving ground. A cheap kitchen, a cheap quantity of staff, cheap food potentially, though the way this woman cooked would suggest that she cared about what she made, like her life depended on it.

Dr Gates and the rest at Autelligence appeared to be cheapskates the more the place unlayered. The poor woman was never seen outside of the kitchen and dining area, she must have worked seven days a week, and slept in the kitchen. She must have enjoyed cooking that much, there's no way anyone in their right mind would do a job as persistently and proudly unless they absolutely loved it, a normal person would just leave in a heartbeat and find a different job. Her pay mustn't have been too high, she gave off a vibe of poverty.

The woman also gave off a sense of mental illness. Not in the way she spoke, she was one of few words, if any, she was there to just do her job of cooking and cleaning. Her actions, however, her arms would occasionally flicker about as if she had no control, her neck would crack unnecessary and her legs would trip over nothing, but when she was in the kitchen and had a task to finish, no such faults would occur. All this alongside her incessant use of sunglasses to cover her eyes suggested she had problems.

She continued to cook the soup before it steamed and then ladled it out into bowls, lot of them and then once all dished up she would immediately begin on something else, a new project, without a word, without a thought, she would just crack on with making dough, or pastry, or a new pot of soup. She was strange, you wouldn't want to be near her if she was holding a knife, even if it was just to cut some carrots.

The soup was rolled out and placed on a large dining table with a large projector screen lighting up the wall and the whole room as a result. The spoons were well-polished and ready to use. It was a kind introduction for Peter, Judy and Wade who had had a long trip to get to Elay.

After exiting the car, Dr Gates escorted his travelling party through the highly secured, strong multi-layered fencing that entered to the proving ground. No codes needed, just Dr Gate's

face was enough for the highly weaponised guards to allow him through. Entering the proving ground caught them all by surprise.

Peter and Judy particularly had to catch their breath; the proving ground was huge. Bigger than any they had seen before, and so complex, it was like a theme park or its own little territory, the sheer size was overwhelming and seemingly endless. Wade was not as impressed, he was not here to be impressed and he had seen proving grounds throughout his time working on the Chromo project, so this, though it was bigger, in his eyes looked cheaper made than that from Vintage.

The proving ground had to the left of the main entrance a four-story car park that was made of solid concrete and was grey and plain looking. It was old-fashioned and incredibly cheap looking once again. The dirt road that can be seen leading from the entrance is massive, 20 miles at least in length and running across at least a small section of this dirt road is a collection of seats and a stand for people to view the new cars in action. These seats are situated very close to the main building which is connected to the much larger building with the car park inside.

The car park entrance and exit is next to each other and in order to enter a car into the building it requires driving across a small bridge which has a traffic light system to both make sure the cars are driving safely into the building and to also test that the automated cars can detect the traffic lights changing colours. Underneath the bridge is large river that has quite a heavy flow running through it and this river continues all around the proving ground, it even stretches as far as the large wooded, bushy area in the distance.

The large forest area is to test the vehicles in different weather and circumstances, and the river is a great scenario to test the ability for the vehicle to drive in tough water conditions. The forest is also used to test the military and army weaponry and vehicles and has its own type of forestry dirt road, dissimilar to the dirt road on the desert track. To the far right of the forest area is a large dumping ground for the old cars, and the failed prototypes. A large cloud of smoke from a fire can be seen in the distance and it makes the sky greyer over the proving ground.

The main building is a big three-story building that is attached yet looked detached from the four-story grey, cheap looking car park. The main building looks fresh, new and rich, it looks modernised and impressive. The two buildings are connected on the third floor by a thin glass corridor that bridges the two buildings together and a larger corridor that is effectively a domed bridge to drive cars from the garage to the car park to allow them to enter the proving ground track after the cars had work done. The building contains, by the looks of the directional signs upon entry, A laboratory the third floor, a garage on the same floor to work on the vehicles and hotel rooms for guests and employees along with facilities on the two floors below the laboratory and garage.

The ground floor was effectively a large atrium with a door that lead to the cafeteria and presentation rooms. The atrium was bright and allowed natural light in through the large dome shaped windows. It was so modern looking, especially compared to the rustic aesthetic in the rest of the proving ground.

They all entered the cafeteria and this lead to the dining area for special guests. They wandered past a closed cafeteria. No one working, and the lights were off. In the dining area they chose their seats, the bowl of soup was still piping hot. The three of them were ravenous, they were so hungry after their trip and when they finished their bowl in next to no time, the chef came out to pick the bowl and spoons to take back into the kitchen to clean.

'She's wearing sunglasses indoors?' Judy asks quietly confused so not to potentially offend the chef.

'She's just quite nervous, she doesn't talk much, eye contact scares her' Donna entered the room.

'You make her sound feral?' Wade laughed at the ridiculous nature in which Donna described her without even introducing herself.

'She may as well be. Not to be messed with. Have you showed them your collection yet Dr?' She asked unenthused, she was looking forward to Dr Gates showing the party her presentation.

'Not yet, was just about to thank you Miss Warner! Shall we?' Dr Gates asked but was never going to take no for an answer.

## Chapter 17

Judy had her hands over Peter's eyes, she was in an excitable playful mood. Giddy as she escorted him through the corridors of an apartment building and into the carpark. In her pyjamas, she was relaxed, comfortable and content around Peter. Peter was dressed ready to go to the café on his own as he would do every day. He loved his own company so he could write his latest article on the newest piece of motor technology or the latest important race, even intertwine the two.

'I really should be going the café right about now, it'll mess with my schedule' Peter was not in a playful mood.

'Babe, it won't be long just hold on a second' Judy assured him, they had just spent the morning in bed, up to all kinds one would assume.

'Honestly sweet heart, I'm getting a headache, I need a coffee and my eyesight back' Peter insisted.

'Just. A. Minute. Right we're here!' Judy rushed the last bit to get him there quicker. 'Before I let you look, I want you to know that I love you and that this is not because feel you need help, but because I love you' She takes her hands away and allows him to see the present she has bought him.

Peter looks at it, a purple Ford Fiesta. He is shocked, his initial face was one of disappointment, before realising that his reaction should be one of joy and he turns his initial frown into a smile. 'Wow, you've bought me a car?' Peter was confused.

'Bought *us* a car' Judy confirmed.

'Why?' Peter asked abruptly.

'Why?' Judy was shocked.

'Like, we live in the city, do we need a car, I can't afford a car' Peter explained insensitively.

'Are you kidding me babe? I've paid for it, you don't have to afford it, I have paid for our car' Judy smiled and cuddled him.

'You shouldn't have to buy me cars, I should be able to buy myself a car' Peter argued.

'Well, you can't, not yet, not until you're more successful, for now, let me pay for it' Judy cuddled tighter.

'How did you afford this?' Peter asked genuinely confused.

'Saved up my student loan, I don't drink a lot, worked hard, family are well off, multiple reasons' she laughed, 'its only a Ford Fiesta babe, not a Ferrari'.

Peter stared at the car for a while, he did not say a word for a good twenty seconds, Judy just kept cuddling him. A lot ran through Peter's head in that moment, he felt inadequate, ungrateful, different, his reaction was not right to such a kind and emotional gesture that was made with love and kindness.

'Does this mean... were together forever?' Peter half joked.

'Forever?' Judy didn't answer with anything concrete.

'I love you' Peter felt like he had to say it in the moment, to say thank you would not seem right, it would have felt disingenuous, were as he really did love her, so he felt truthful telling her. In the back of his mind he could only really think about going to the café and having a coffee on his own. 'How about I go the café, and later on we take her for a spin?' Peter suggested as he needed an emotional cleanse on his own, if there was a problem, he would run.

'Sounds a great plan babe' Judy kissed him on the cheek and dangled the keys in front of him.

In an almost identical situation, Judy and Peter were looking at another car in a car park. Dr Gates was showing them the first of a collection of cars he had in the four-story car park. No Ford Fiesta, or love in the room, the figure of Wade and Dr Gates stood between Judy and Peter. The car in front of them was what looked like a standard, classic black VW Beetle. They waited for Jonathon Rice to appear before continuing on with the tour of the different vehicles in the car park building.

Jonathon eventually after two or three minutes of them waiting around came bumbling in clumsily. He apologetically rushed over to them with stress on his face and his hair all over the place, he looked like he had just got out of bed late.

'Good sleep?' Dr Gates joked.

'Them beds are comfy' Jonathon jested back.

'Peter page' Peter reached out his hand for a shake and Jonathon obliged back.

'Jonathon Rice' Jonathon then quickly moved over to Wade and acknowledged him the same, Wade was not at forward or polite. Finally, he hugged Judy. 'Its an absolute pleasure...' waiting for Judy to reveal her name.

'Judy!' She smiled and then winced when he pulled her in for the hug.

'well' Jonathon continued excited, 'don't know about you lot but I'm excited to see this'

'You're looking at it' Wade points at the car, 'its just a few cars, a few cars I assume self-drive, it's not really anything that I haven't seen before or that no one has ever thought of'

'Its so much more' Dr Gates insisted.

Jonathon Rice kept tilting his head to each person that talked in a pensive manner after all he was there to invest and traction was something he was looking for to make the right decision on his investment, although he was pretty much sold on the idea.

What followed was an overwhelming tour of different cars from the past century. A tour that only really excited Peter Page. The rest seemed thoroughly disappointed. The vehicles where the Beetle, A Porsche 911 sportscar, Austin Healy 3000, Ferrari 250 GTO, Mercedes- Benz 300 SL- 1954, a Vintage Jeep, a 1937 Brough Superior SS100 Motorbike, a Triumph Speed Twin Motorbike. This was all just on the first floor.

Peter would run over to each vehicle and stroke it and check every nook and cranny of the machine to see its beautiful design or to see its beautiful flaws. Judy could not help but smile at Peter's enthusiasm and whilst she stood next to Wade with his arms folded unimpressed, she quickly erased her smile and folded her own arms.

'This is all well and good, but what do these cars do, are these a collection?' Judy asked.

'These cars are Autelligent cars Judy' Dr gates simply explained.

'All well and good saying that, but what does that actually mean?' Judy grew frustrated.

'Yes, yes please show them more' Jonathon was worried that what Dr Gates had sold to him was a lie, he was eager to see what his potential investment looked like.

'Let's see' Dr Gates looked at each of them, he was deciding who to send on a journey first, he looked at Wade and just chuckled to himself. 'Why don't Peter and Judy together go for a ride in the Austin Healy?' Dr Gates simply shouts 'Austin Healy, open doors' the doors open and Peter looks at it in shock and walks over to it and looks at Judy keenly.

'Unnecessary design' Wade argued.

Peter and Judy slowly made their way into the car seat, Peter took the driving seat and was in love with the interior. 'Its simply voice command you two, so no need to stress with lock and keys'

This sentence caught Peter off guard. He turned around to Dr Gates and for the first time in the last five minutes of excitement he suddenly saw a flaw, 'no need for lock and key?'

'Yes, why waste time' Dr Gates argued.

'What's wrong with a lock and key?' Peter was puzzled by the unnecessary design feature.

'Austin Healy drive!' Judy ordered and then laughed as it the car revved up and Peter turned to her holding the steering wheel smiling trying to look cool with his moustache suiting the old style car.

'Listen to her roar!' Dr Gates zealously shouted and looked over at Jonathon Rice who smiled at the power of the vehicle.

'Make it drive then, make it drive!' Jonathon became giddy like a child, 'I want my turn'.

'Relax, we haven't even seen it drive yet' Wade said with his arms folded.

The car began to slowly move, Dr Gates put his thumbs up at Peter and Judy and they returned with their own nods of approval, 'Lets do it then' Dr Gates walked over to the car and whispered to Peter telling him to ask the car to 'drive them out of the car park as fast and safely as possible'.

Peter asked the car to do the command. The A.I suddenly clicked into overdrive and safely steamed its way out of the car park at an incredible pace, it was rushing around corners at the maximum speed that was safe and then drove out on to the proving ground and was driving at at



least 110 MPH and it showed no signs of being unsafe. It even opened the windows because the temperature was too hot in the car, it sensed it on its own and with the windows being open the G-force could now be felt, it was like a rollercoaster, but completely safe. Judy and Peter were so excited and nervous at the same time as it swerved corners ridiculously quick but never looked in danger of over doing itself.

The other three looked at the car drive off in the distance in amazement, Wade unfolded his arms and began stroking his chin.

'How erm, how quick can they go?' Wade asked intrigued.

'They can go as quick as they want and it will never crash into anything, it knows, it feels, it lives' Dr Gates answers in riddles and Jonathon loved it. 'Jonathon get in the car over there' pointing at the Ferrari 250 GTO, 'And tell it to race them!'

'You are having a laugh' Jonathon could not believe it.

'This isn't safe' Wade argued.

'It's perfectly safe, believe me, this thing is more intelligent than anything the world has ever seen, its safer than safe' Dr Gates suddenly had a rush of excitable confidence as he could tell what he was showing them was beyond what they thought was possible.

'Road safety though, is it road safe?' Wade desperately pleaded.

Meanwhile Jonathon was telling the Ferrari to open up and let him in and to race. The car sped away and chased down the Austin Healy and as Wade and Dr Gates watched on, Dr Gates replied to Wade.

'If the car hears or senses sirens, or something important it will slow down and move accordingly, it's the greatest and safest driver that will ever live. This thing will change speed limits, no one will ever be late to work again, because it will find the perfect route to work and it will drive with other autelligent cars and them cars will let the person past if they're late for work. Think of the lives that could be saved from this, come on Wade, you can't deny that it is impressive'.

'You can't deny that this is could all go wrong, and if it does it will be catastrophic, you're never far from disaster' Wade intensely stared at Dr Gates who was watching the Ferrari that Jonathon was in catching up to the Austin Healy which was on the way back to the car park.

'Welcome to the future'

'Fuck the future' Wade whispered in his ear petulantly. Dr Gates just smiled as Wade walked away to look at the other cars in the building.

'We've got more car to look at' Dr Gates ignores his aggressive tone, 'but we can do all that after lunch, lets discuss when they're back, I can see you're scared'

Once the others return and the cars are parked up again they all follow Dr Gates out of the car park, Peter looks behind him to see multiple floors of cars and can't wait to see the rest, Judy has her arm around him basically pulling him away and Jonathon simply says under his breath 'this is beyond special'.

Once they all leave the car park, the cars collectively begin to flicker their headlights without command.

## Chapter 18

'It is not just about the vehicles at Autelligence'- Donna's opening to her presentation that she was ready to present to them all whilst they ate their lunch. Donna's ambitions for Autelligence were not the same as Dr Gates, she had ideas that were more concerned with real organisms' brains, the human brain being the end goal and how Autelligence could be used to elevate the brain in the same way it elevates the car engine.

Growing up in a religious Christian household, Donna grew up with a vigorous and structured moral code. She did find herself slowly beginning to resent the religion that had been preached to her from an early age when she hit her teenage years. Her love for collecting house flies and spiders around the house and tearing apart their legs and wings slowly and keeping the animal alive was early warning signs that things did not tick correctly in her mind.

Donna wanted so hard to fit in school and general life but with her beliefs being questioned by her peers she found this difficult in some strange type of coping mechanism she took it out on the small animals and insects that were unlucky enough to enter her home. One day she destroyed her sister's pet hamster and blamed it on the cat next door. Her sister always knew it was Donna or at least had strong suspicions, but there was no reason or evidence, just a hunch, a strong hunch.

Donna admitted to her heinous act when she wrote her letter to say she was leaving home to become a better person and stray away from her religious background. The police were informed and searched the town Northampton in England for a few weeks but by this point Donna had long gone with no sign of ever returning. She was 16 when she left home.

One of Donna's biggest concerns in her life was her past. She hated the first 16 years of her life, no reasons to draw upon particularly, she just did not enjoy it and the only satisfaction or escapism she ever felt was when she abused animals. She never enjoyed films, sports, TV, books, school, and definitely not religion, the normal things in life, but she was obsessed with one book, the book about anatomy. The inside of her and everyone else's body including animals. The brain intrigued her massively, and she became quite obsessed with the brain's ability to destroy itself, to name itself and to confuse itself. If she could find a way to eradicate her memories and wipe away the first year of her life she would do it in a heartbeat.

Donna had some serious issues, but these issues never surfaced in real life, it was all tucked away neatly in her brain, she would never display these weird infatuations in public, socially she was not the life and soul of a party, but she was definitely not the creep in the room.

When Donna stumbled across the job poster for a large, growing company called Autelligence whilst wandering a quiet town in Morocco when she was on her own personal world tour to escape the life she had grown up in, she was excited by the opportunity. Donna needed the money, she needed the comfort and she wanted to learn more about this new form of technology that the company was advertising as 'ground-breaking'.

Her trip to Morocco was not an easy going one, she had hitch hiked a few times, stumbled across a few bad people, she was far from home, she was scared sometimes but nowhere near as scared as the people she encountered once they found out more about her. Dr Gates knew she was not someone 'completely right in the head', he would constantly take up the role as a father figure to her, and this kept her in check and she would keep herself innocent for him, however she never saw him as a father figure, more a boss that she had to impress at all times. Donna knew very little

about his personal life, Dr Gates never really gave much away, but unlike Donna, his memories where his most cherished possession.

‘Its about the intelligence that humans can create’ The presentation went on with the others watching and listening while eating a new fresh batch of soup provided by the same silent chef once again. Donna was not in attendance, she rarely left her office, she was actually sat at her desk noting down the odd behaviours of her rats which was a side project that had little to nothing to do with Dr Gates and Autelligence other than the technology being slightly manipulated.

‘Small nanobot technology that can control the host by giving it intelligence beyond humans and can adapt to situations quicker, and more intelligently than any mind that has ever lived. But it is not just adaptation, it is about evolution and Autelligence as been evolving for years now and is getting smarter and smarter and safer. One day Autelligence will be everywhere and it will make for a better world, a cleaner world and a longer lasting world’

Wade could be heard under his breath saying ‘who made this presentation? A child?’

Dr Gates saw Wade make his comment and scowled at him. The presentation continued discussing how the nanobots live and travel in moist conditions, so in the car they live in the oil and travel through this oil into the computerised parts of the car to encourage the Autelligence to take over the car. It discussed how the tiny computer chips within the nanobots are strong enough to control an army of 500 cars each. These nanobots have 60 tiny chips within them each and there are over a thousand nanobots in each vehicle. These cars are driven by an extreme amount of powerful computer chips and they are so small that its basically impossible to remove them without them manually removing themselves. No chance of any outside sabotaging of the Autelligence system, another safety feature to put everyone’s minds at ease. Its described in the presentation by Donna as a feature that means if one part of the car failed there is no chance the car will fail because it would require every chip in the nanobot to fail entirely. The chances of that are around 1 in 75,000,000. Autelligence is safe and reliable.

The presentation ended with the question, ‘so what does the future hold?’ a question that Dr Gates never actually asked Donna to put in the presentation but seemed a reasonable question. Dr Gates thought he could ask that question to the others and see what future they see for Autelligence, but he had a suspicion in the back of his mind that Donna had an answer to the question with the future *she* wanted for Autelligence. As the question is put forward in the presentation the chef returns to the table to collect the finished dishes and cutlery without a word spoken and returns to the kitchen.

‘Look!’ Dr Gates quickly switches off the presentation after looking around the table and seeing the only interested party being Jonathon Rice. The rest look a little puzzled and bemused. ‘I think that is enough presentation for now. Any questions?’ he opens his arms to invite the barrage of questioning he was prepared to face

‘Where do we begin?’ Peter joked.

‘Why are you doing this?’ Judy asked bluntly and rather confused.

‘Its pretty self-explanatory really’ Jonathon Rice answered quickly out of frustration.

‘No it isn’t actually, thank you Jonathon, if you don’t mind?’ Dr Gates calmed Jonathon down, and continued ‘personally I’m doing this for one reason and one reason only, I am hell bent on helping humanity and its future and I want the future to be as safe and as secure as possible’ Dr Gates looks

around the room whilst he talks failing to look any in the eye, all he catches is a glance of Wade checking his nails uninterested.

'What about not on a personal level?' Peter followed up.

'Money, I guess, I have a lot of money, a lot of inheritance and I thought what could I invest my money in and it came to me that the future was a good thing to invest in'-

'No! No, no, no, no!' Wade interrupted.

'I beg your pardon?' Dr Gates is stunned.

'Let's get this straight right away, stop mentioning the future like it is something that you coined. You're banging on about this thing like it is some type of utopia for humanity, you're looking way too far ahead. You are doing things that are unnecessary, that no one really asked for, no one really wants' Wade rested back into his seat and began picking away at the wooden table in front of him nervously.

'I quite like the idea of self-driving cars though' Judy argued.

'Me too' Jonathon perked up, 'I mean think of the potential with them, the money, the difference to everyone's lives'

'Everyone's?' Wade scoffed, 'come on, people cant afford this, you're never going to make this the norm, lets be real here. The average Joe can't afford this shit, this is serious real estate, this wont go for cheap, no matter how readily available you think you can make it. You're pushing things too far'

'Peter' Dr Gates turned to him in desperation, 'come on, you love this idea, the cars, the next stage, think about it, we had the wheel, then the carriage, then the car, then the plane, and now this, come on surely you can agree this is the next stage of transportation, self-driving, A.I powered?'

'I do, I do' Peter sighed with hesitation and rubbed his face, 'I just think, why? Why is it the next stage? I mean is it really all that necessary. Do we need to keep pushing it this far. A car that drives on its own is genius, a car that thinks for itself is pretty scary. This whole thing about speaking to it and it will perform. Why is that a feature, that's what I want to know? Seriously, what is wrong with the simple lock and key method of starting a car?' Peter shrugged his shoulders.

'A button, think about it, these days you can start the engine with a button' Dr Gates made a quick example.

'Yes but you need the key to open the car and for this you just use your voice, and you still need to press something to start the car and even the button evolution I find to be unnecessary. I mean what's the point, really?' Peter discussed further.

'No, that's not the concern though here, it isn't about the fact that you can turn it on with voice activation, it's the fact this thing is thinking for itself' Wade re-joined the debate.

'Voice activation has been a thing for years I know' Peter rebuffed Wade's point with extra vigour, 'I'm not stupid, but I just don't see the necessity with it when it comes to switching on a car, I like the lock and key, the getting in the car and turning the keys and listening to the roar of the engine, I would miss that'

'Are electric cars unnecessary, because their engines don't roar like the old fashioned carbon emitting bangers used to do' Jonathon joined in but was ignored. Wade and Peter where focused on one another.

'This thing isn't a car' Wade began a rant 'this is an animal, this thing has nanobots in it that are thinking for it, and if it decides to evolve and do its own thing, it wont hesitate it wont have any morals or principles, it will just decide to be its own sentient thing. In fact it already is, it just doesn't know it yet, and its stuck in a car engine' They all fall slightly silent.

'You're full of it aren't you' Peter made a personal attack at Wade, 'I mean you really do love yourself'.

'Peter' Judy nudges him, 'just listen to him, he makes a point'

'Hey, wait just a minute' Dr Gates hears Judy's comment and takes offense 'He hasn't a made a point, he has just rambled conspiracies, you cant listen to that, the mans got an agenda. Its embarrassing. Peter if you really think the lock and key is that important, then we can add it back into the cars, would that solve the problem?'

'Oh this damn lock and key business' Wade rolls his eyes, 'the cars just clocked 140mph on its own and knows exactly what pace to go and when to do it and were talking about the damn lock and key like that really matters, this is ridiculous, people could be in serious danger by this thing' he slammed his hands on the table.

Peter sat there smiling got himself as Wade ranted, 'it's a simple case really, of that if you can write down the issues then half the problems solved. I am agreeing with the points you've raised Wade, but I'm just expanding further, the more points we make the more Dr Gates here, can iron out the issues'

'Iron out issues?' Wade laughed. 'Iron out the issues of a car that is controlled by something that has its own mind'

'It's like a taxi' Dr Gates smiled and lightened the mood.

'Yes, you trust a taxi driver, what's wrong with trusting an incredible intelligent A.I system' Jonathon joined Dr Gates in his argument, he was completely convinced following what he had just seen. Dr Gates could feel hie was convinced and his whole demeanor changed from nervousness to a rather relaxed, relived persona, no matter what the rest argued about the investor, the main man seemed convinced.

'It's nothing like a taxi driver' Judy rolled her eyes.

'It's a like taxi driver that is also an animal rather than human that could attack at any minute, at any malfunction' Wade added to Judy's comment.

'I just think destroy the unnecessary parts of the creation' Peter tries to emphasise as the argument clams down 'keep its evolution ticking over slowly, don't take the piss, it will cause problems'

'Destroy the whole thing, they already have taken the piss at Autelligence' Wade continued,

'I am scared, but also excited by it I have to admit' Judy admitted with a face of guilt.

Suddenly in the corner of the room in the shadows where the door to exit is, a figure stood there and said just a few words with a suspicious smile 'The whole thing should be destroyed, but it

is exciting and tempting' it was Donna who had come in to check up on how her presentation was being received.

'Judy, would you like to come with me, I have something to show you' Donna asked Judy and she was surprised and stood up immediately with nervousness and made her way over to Donna. Peter looked at Judy leave longingly.

'What is this about?' Judy asked baffled,

'Just come' Donna ushered her out the doors.

'Where is she going?' Peter asked concerned.

'Relax' Wade grew frustrated.

'Oh be silent will you, you're the one who just banged on about damn conspiracy for ten minutes' Peter argued back, 'according to you self-driving cars means the apocalypse'

'It does!' Wade shouts back.

'You probably don't take vaccines do you Mr Smith?' Jonathon asked.

Wade chuckled to himself, 'well, you don't know what's in them?!'

The rest of them rolled their eyes and Wade eases back into his chair and begin to click his knuckles.

'She's going on a tour with my main scientist, that was Donna, she has exciting plans for Autelligence, that go far beyond cars and motorbikes, the future of the company is in her hands' Dr Gates explained.

'She must be a crank then' Wade smiled with his shiny pearly whites and he placed a piece of gum in his mouth, and chewed away.

## Chapter 19

Waking up in a place not known to her, a mother of two could only see a big shiny light above her brightly blinding her. It was like a visit to the dentist and she had just woken from a general anastatic. She went to bed in her house in Brixton and woke in what looked like an experiment. Beside her bed was a what was assumed to be a doctor with a surgical mask hiding their identity.

No discussions, no reassurances made by the surgeon. In stead the woman was panicking and her inner thoughts where thinking the worse, she couldn't remember why she was here or where she actually was. Her strong panic attack was eased by her own conscious thoughts of 'she must be in a safe place, she must be in a safe place, no place safer than a hospital, the people will know what to do'.

She slowly stopped panicking as much and could recollect her thoughts, but still couldn't recollect her problems, maybe she had an accident that her trauma supressed. Her state of new found calm was challenged when she looked over at the white board on the far side of the room. It was not like a hospital ward; it was just her bed. The one white board had on it in the name section 'name: Prototype Dos.'

The woman did not speak Spanish, but we all know that dos is two in Spanish. Did it mean two though, and is it to do with her. She began to wonder. The surgeon was messing around with something in the corner of the room. The woman was trying her hardest to think but nothing was coming to mind. She could not remember her name. She was suddenly shaking with fear, a person should never struggle to remember their own name, it was short term however, like how you sometimes forget your age. Her name came back to her. Terri Parker. Age was 32.

Her hazelnut-coloured eyes remained dark and beautiful. The occasional glimpse of dullness would appear but only briefly. After rediscovering her name she turned from relief to panic to mother.

'Where are my kids?' Terri asked.

'You've been in an accident, your kids are fine, it was just you' The surgeon sat down next to her and took off her face mask. It was Donna and smiled and stroked Terri's hair to comfort her. 'You're ok now'.

'There both safe?' Terri needed further confirmation.

'Honestly, they are so safe, please don't worry' Donna kept her hand on Terri's forehead checking for a fever. 'You seem well' she smiled and returned to what she was doing. Terri rested a bit easier with the knowledge Donna had just given her.

As Terri rested her eyes she suddenly couldn't remember the name of one of her children, she could remember Frankie, but the youngest one, she had no idea.

'Frankie and... Frankie and...' Terri panicked.

'Relax please' Donna said impatiently.

'I'm scared' Terri was shaking.

'I understand' Donna retuned to her, 'Now, quick question, do you remember what you do for work?' she asked curious but knowing the answer.

'It was something with computers, maybe admin, I can't remember, I don't know. What's going on?' Terri's concern slowly became less and less as she seemed to forget about what she was worried about.

'You're chef, you're a chef here in Morocco' Donna confirmed.

'No I'm not, I've never been to Morocco' Terri argued angrily and frustrated.

'The incident must have messed with your head, you're a chef, you work here' Donna did tell her with a sense of Sinicism.

'But... no... you listen here, you send me back home, I'm from London, I live in Brixton you bitch, I know where I live, I want my kids'

'You don't have kids!' Donna said abruptly, 'You're our chef and your name is Dos, you'll come round'.

Donna walks out of the room and Terri continues to shout at her, 'I live at 432 Northcote Lane, Brixton, London, U.K I want my home and I want my kids, my favourite place in the world is Brighton beach and I work in the, I work in the...' Her memory fades and lets her down again.

Dos is collecting the dirty plates from them all with no look of life in her eyes, she just does her job as a chef and returns to clean the dishes saying no words, even despite Peter's attempts to thank her. Dos does not acknowledge.

'She speak English?' Peter asked.

'She never says a word to me, I actually don't know what language she speaks, she was recruited by Donna' Dr Gates answered shrugging his shoulders.

'So, the logo then and the slogan, are they here to stay?' Peter asked further.

'Yes, why you ask?' Dr Gates grew defensive.

'Because its looks like an inexperienced graphic designer came up with the logo' Wade laughed to himself.

'Beg your pardon' Dr Gates did not see the funny side.

'Oh come on, it looks like you asked a child to make it, don't get me wrong' Wade goes on.

'A child?' Dr Gates asked back in disbelief.

'A child, not an adult' Wade spoke to him like he was dumb.

'Was the logo your work?' Peter asked.

'It does undersell the product slightly I have to admit' Jonathon joined in.

'The logo stays' Dr Gates is adamant.

'Let us do the work' Wade quotes the slogan in a funny voice. The others are not impressed with his mockery.

'Is this you Dr Gates?' Peter asked again.

'I came up with it all yes. Its my damn company, I will do what I please with it' Dr Gates insisted.

'You see, this right here, Mr Rice, was it, Jonathon?' Wade questioned before continuing, 'as an investor, you'll know this a tell-tale bad sign is it not? When Frankenstein can't see that they are making a monster, they'll think everything is perfect with it. The sun shines out of Autelligence's ass in this case. Surely an investor can see the issues with this, the stubbornness'

'I think that if he can see the flaws in the product then half the problem would be solved with this whole idea' Peter also added his opinion in.

'The product is strong enough to sustain itself surely' Jonathon questioned Wade.

'Oh come on you guys, you can write down all the problems you want with it, but surely at the end of the day the product will fail, its not safe. It's a dangerous idea in the hands of dangerous and irresponsible people who think this idea should be available to everyone. Come on?!' Wade gets less calm and loses the cool façade he was showing.

'Self-driving cars are not the danger here' Peter considered, 'it's the power of these things, the nature of how they self-drive that I fear, we need to discuss that further, that's the major issue, surely there's a way of having self-driving vehicles and not releasing this much power to the world. A.I is a spiral' Peter sipped his water.



'The danger is with the people handling it, it could be anything, this company is not safe, these people are not safe, I wouldn't trust them with selling fruit and veg, they want to take things too far, too quick' Wade said as he considered the soup he just ingested.

'You're too extreme' Jonathon concluded about Wade.

'Well you seem a bit dumb for an investor Mr Rice, with respect' Wade argued back.

'Who's richer?' Jonathon grew petty.

The man next to you, why in the hell does he need investment, he's a billionaire, it is approval, is it dodgy, is it to hide the seriousness of the situation and make it seem more legit? I don't know, why are we here, me and Peter, what expertise do I bring other than knowledge about his rival company, who he sabotaged' Wade erupted.

'I think you've said enough now Wade, the reasons invited you all here was made clear' Dr Gates tried to stay calm.

'I was sold a holiday on white sandy beaches and blue infinity oceans' Wade joked, 'Instead I'm watching a car fanatic riding an intelligent, beyond our capability car disguised train basically'

'I don't believe it is all a problem' Peter tried to cut the tension by being a middle man, 'I think some of it is a problem, but like the logo and slogan, its not all bad, it its sustainable, and does not become a bit too far this whole fantasy of the vehicle intelligence surpassing our own, if that's a possibility, that needs sorting. In terms of the car though, I have to say its one of the greatest thing I've ever seen, I have no idea how you even did this, I'm excited but terrified, I know that Wade simply does not share my excitement' Peter looked at Wade with acceptant eyes.

'Peter' Wade acknowledges his opinion, 'if you knew the things this company has been doing to its competitors you would also be beyond terrified, Autelligence is Vintage on steroids. And it's in the hands of people who would burn Vintage to the ground and kill anyone in it to make money and to make legacy' He said seriously.

'Wade, I did not sabotage Vintage, I don't care about Chromo cars, Dr Mack loves this theory that I care about what Chromo are up to, Autelligence is so much superior to it its almost off the scale. I just do not care about Dr Mack that much' Dr Gates laughed.

'It all seems daft this, arguing over this amazing invention, it's a real money maker, it'll change the world, let's just be excited by it' Jonathon added.

'Chromo had a better design, logo and slogan' Wade smiled, 'and it was safer'

'Tell that to the victims who died in Chromo cars' Dr Gates snapped.

'This man, this man right here!' Wade pointed at Dr Gates, 'in control of one of the most dangerous inventions since the nuclear weapons were invented ladies and gentlemen, round of applause' Wade clapped.

'But nuclear weapons were needed' Peter pointed out.

'And this is?' Wade asked back.

'If done correctly and without the unnecessary additions of intelligence and a lack of keys, yes, why not' Peter answered as a knock came on the door to the conference room.

An incredibly quiet and shy 'excuse me' came from the doorway from Poppie who slowly opened the door to everyone.

'Poppie' Dr Gates was ecstatic to see his niece, 'having a good day?'

'Yes uncle, its ok' She shuffles into the room, 'Donna wants to speak to you uncle, something about rats'

'Rats?' Dr Gates throws his napkin on the table frustrated after wiping the soup from round his mouth, 'this rat problem has to stop, we keep getting them'.

'My niece gentlemen, Poppie Burgess, the barer of bad news as always' turned and smiled at her whilst welcoming her to everyone.

'Great to meet you Poppie' Jonathon welcomed her, Peter just lifted his hand in acknowledgement rather shyly.

'You're more honest than your uncle?!' Wade had to pass comment.

Peter put his hand on Wade's shoulder to clam him down, 'relax, she's young' he said quietly and Wade did agree.

'In fact Wade' Dr Gates stopped as he was exiting and turned to Wade who was finally quiet, 'would you like to come talk to Donna, I feel like you two would really have a great conversation, I really want you two to be properly acquainted'

'You sure?' He was confused.

'Yes of course, leave Peter and Jonathon with Poppie, Poppie has a little crush on Peter's car knowledge' Dr Gates said playfully.

'I actually do' Poppie confirmed to Peter who rolled his eyes and smiled.

'Sure I'll come see what this girls like then' Wade stood up and his tall frame dwarfed little Poppie and Peter who was sat down.

'What about me?' Jonathon felt left out.

'You don't add much anyway. Yes man!' Wade bluntly left Jonathon with that comment.

'where's Dos?' Poppie asked Peter innocently who shrugged his shoulders and points at kitchen hazarding a guess 'would love some food.'

## Chapter 20

Rats are everywhere, they're vermin, they're fowl, they're clever, they're adventurous and they're population on Earth is surprisingly the same as humans. We could learn a few things about ourselves from rats. They are full of sins, they partake in incest and cannibalism, they could represent the way we used to be as humans before we established a moral code. We are not so different.

When Donna returned to her rats to show Dr Gates the big reveal, she was not expecting Wade Smith to be there too. None the less it was well worth showing them both, Wade would have

had a negative opinion about it no matter what. The cloth was over the cage as always so not to distract her from her work.

'So what exactly is it we are seeing here Donna, one of your little projects?' Dr Gates spoke to Donna like she was a young teenager who was running a science experiment for a school project.

'Them rats of mine, they've become rather interesting, maybe concerning' Donna admitted.

'Rats? What are they self-driving rats? I can't keep up with all this new stuff Dr, its truly ground-breaking' Wade explained sarcastically scratching his chin.

'Wade, Donna' Dr Gates introduced.

'He's handsome, isn't he?!' Donna charmed.

'I have my good days' Wade was smooth as possible, did not come across too natural.

'Wade... is an acquired taste, looks good, but has very little else to add' Dr Gates suggested bitterly.

'Hence why I'm here after being personally invited' Wade responded smiling.

'I can see it already, Wade and Donna... surname?' Donna asked jokingly.

'Smith'

'Ew, exciting' Donna was highly unimpressed by the simplicity of her surname.

'Anyway, the rats please' Wade changed the subject from his surname.

Donna grabbed the veil over the cage and revealed the mess within the cage.

'Oh my god!' Wade exhaled in shock.

'Was not expecting that type of anarchy to occur, what happened, what did you do?' Dr Gates looked over at Wade scared by his reaction whilst waiting for Donna to respond.

After the dust settled Donna explained, 'This is week 6'.

In front of the three of them was an unexplainable mess. Only one rat remained alive, what it had done to the others was barbaric. It had ripped the others to absolute shreds. The one remaining rat had a horrific look to it, a look that Wade gagged at when he saw it. The blood and guts of the other rats paled into comparison when looking at the rat that was still alive. It was as if it had some strange deformity and evolved into a monstrous creature. More monstrous than a rat, its possible.

'You're trying to tell me that's a rat' Wade asked covering his mouth from the gagging and the smell from the dead rats, or maybe the smell from the live rat. It was a smell of pure rotting flesh and incredibly potent rusty metal, like someone had shoved rust right up his nose.

'It was rats' Donna laughed.

'Why are you laughing?' Wade was surprised, 'that's a mess'

'Week six?' Dr Gates was intrigued.

'Yes'

'What does that mean, week six?' Wade asked and moved away from what he saw, he couldn't look at it anymore as the rat attacked the cage more and still showed no signs of breaking free, despite its aggression.

'We injected the rats with a powerful drug that Fly-By have been developing, a type of medicine that could stop the brain producing the protein that gives people dementia' Donna explained.

'It was developed a few years ago, but I was so focused on the cars that I decided to put this drug on hold and let Donna experiment with it on the rats' Dr Gates joined in.

'It's a good thing you didn't send it out, it clearly doesn't work' Wade couldn't look.

'Safety first' Dr Gates smugly stated.

'Don't give me that, that thing is not safety first, that thing is a monster, what the hell kind of drug is that?' Wade grew angry.

'A powerful one, but a dangerous one that will be binned' Donna confirmed to Wade's relief.

'Something you're not telling me here' Wade suggested.

'Like what, you're so sceptical of everything?' Dr Gates shook his head.

'You mean to tell me that this company is developing a "dementia cure" and a self-driving car at the same time? Completely different things, come on' Wade scoffed.

'I'm afraid many big organisations have many projects going on at once, what's the big deal?' Dr Gates did not understand the problem.

'You know, the longer I'm here, and the more I get to know the people involved here, the more I begin to believe that I should get out of here before tis too late' Wade stand sup and begins to exit.

'Oh, relax will you' Donna erupted at Wade, 'you really are dramatic'

'Relax' Dr Gates interrupted Donna.

Wade stopped at the door and turned to them again, 'I know there's more to this than you're telling me, them things, them rats, have not been given a drug, I think this is all one big damn conspiracy, someone's lying or its both of you, someone is up to no good here, and its all about Autelligence, don't try and give me the spiel about dementia' Wade left and the doors swung behind him.

Dr Gates waits a while with anguish on his face, he then turns to Donna and berates her 'clean that fucking mess up now!'

'Whoa, what's the problem?' Donna said confused.

'You didn't give them a drug, there is no way that is just a drug, look at it, its disgusting and its ripped apart the others in some way as if to leave as much mess as possible, you couldn't even tell there were other rats in the cage. I've warned you Donna, any more funny business and you're out, this looks like funny business. I don't want to hear your opinions anymore about Autelligence, and I don't want you playing games, that man will sniff the slightest kind of issue, I'm trying to be as legit as possible here, this business means everything to me. Stop pissing about' Dr Gates stormed out of the room and left Donna to look at the remaining monstrous rat aggressively attacking the cage.

Donna grabbed her clipboard and just wrote a note of 'Week 6- feral' underneath the previous five weeks.

*Week 1- no apparent difference in the rats*

*Week 2- Clumsy*

*Week 3- Began biting one another by mistake*

*Week 4- Eating their own tails and turning aggressive*

*Week 5- Killing each other for food*

*Added food to the cage to see what difference it made.*

She finishes her notes with a quick scribble of 'People are scum!' in an act of seeming retaliation.

## **Chapter 21**

'So what's your favourite car?' Poppie asked excited that she was talking to Peter Page, a man she had read many articles on when getting up early to watch the F1 racing.

'It changes.' Peter answered abruptly. Jonathon was sat in the corner of the room in a window seat so he could see out at the whole proving ground but instead focused on reading a magazine about technology. He didn't seem to scroll the pages too carefully, rather flicking through the pages like he was just looking at the pictures.

'Mines the Ferrari, though I think if I was to have any car it would be the Aston Martin in James Bond, I forget which film'

'Its in a lot of the films' Peter sips his coffee nervously and wipes the froth from his moustache whilst waiting for Judy to return from her trip on the Autelligent vehicle.

'Do you watch the James Bond movies, you remind me a bit of James Bond' Poppie filled the void of silence between them effortlessly, yet unnaturally.

'I remind you of James Bond?' Peter chuckled to himself.

'Yeah, like if James Bond had a pen instead of a gun, and with the pen he wanted to write the coolest stuff, that would be writing, writing about cars for a living is pretty cool' Poppie was so confident in what she was saying.

'That might be the most tedious explanation I have ever heard' Peter turned to her and smiled at her briefly.

'What's your favourite gun?' Poppie asked after a two second brief silence.

'I haven't got one, do you talk all day?' Peter asked trying to be as polite as possible, he asked with a smile and snigger to give a sense of playfulness, but really his autistic nature wanted him to just shout to her to shut up.

'I can do, its not often we have new people round here' Poppie explained.

'Well. Shut up!' Peter let it out like a tick.

'Ok, I'm sorry' Poppie bowed her head. Then she had another question to ask.

'She's been gone a while, she must really enjoy Autelligence?' Poppie asked and Peter pulled a stressed face.

'She'll be back' Peter was reassuring himself as much as Poppie who didn't seem genuinely concerned like Peter was.

'Have you met Donna yet?' Poppie asked another question.

'Slightly, not properly' Peter began biting his nails.

'She's ok' Poppie pulled a face of resignation. 'She doesn't like me talking, bit like you'.

'Yeah' Peter breathed out with a lack of care.

Suddenly a car could be seen driving at an incredibly quick pace in the distance of the proving ground and it was speeding up to the building Peter was watching out of and to his relief it was Judy in the car. This time the car was a Porsche 911 sports car. The dust of the sand was being brushed up high by the power and speed of the vehicle as it got closer, at first from a distance it just looked like a cloud of dust. Then once the car slowed down Peter breathed a sigh of relief when he saw Judy was not only safe, but hysterically laughing.

This all caught Jonathon's attention who had for the last five or ten minutes sat in silence looking through the magazine with a ice cold glass of water dripping onto the table in front of him untouched.

Judy made her way up the stairs to meet the others once the car parked itself and opened its doors. She came up in a trance, wobbling about like she was high and nobly at the knees from the adrenaline. She fell into Peter's arms exhausted and laughing.

'How was it?' Jonathan asked quickly.

'You ok?' Peter asked whilst grabbing Judy safely, her laughter was infectious and he laughed too, he was so happy to see her happy.

'Oh, I'm fine, that... that was incredible. It went so fast, and it felt so safe' Judy exhaled and could not believe how amazing the experience was. Jonathan smiled and clapped his hands together in ecstasy.

'Uncle said that it's the safer than actually driving it yourself' Poppie added.

'And who might you be?' Judy asked happy.

'Poppie Burgess, I'm Paul Gate's niece, pleasure' she puts her hand out to shake it formally with a hidden smile.

'Pleasure, nice to meet you Poppie, I'm Judy' she threw herself out of Peter's arms and gave Poppie a big hug.

'God you're so happy?' Peter was surprised.

'That, that experience, was incredible, it was like being a rollercoaster but with a purpose to it, and the car is so responsive, you just tell it what you wanna do, "air con on please" it comes on, "brake

now!" it brakes in a safe instant, "open door, shut door" it does it all' Judy spoke like she was writing a review for technology weekly magazine.

'I haven't seen you this happy for...' Peter refrained from finishing his sentence, he just nodded.

'You need to write on it Peter, I wasn't convinced, but that right there is the future, it needs to be released' Judy was in awe.

'I thought you were convinced it was bad, that we shouldn't tamper with A.I any further?' Peter questioned her cautiously.

'Have you seen what this thing can do, its unreal. It should not be possible' Judy began to argue and realised what she was saying. 'It should not be possible!' she said in a serious voice, her happy tone had diminished completely and she realised the truth, like she was a come down from an incredible drug. Judy stood for a short while recollecting her own thoughts.

'Uncle Paul said that anything is possible, there is no end to the possibilities for us' Poppie said innocently.

'Ah, it runs in the family then?' Wade entered the room.

'Wade' Judy welcomed him with excitement and Peter watched as they hugged one another.

'We need to get out of here, I mean it' Wade pushed Judy away quickly and turned very serious.

'You again?' Jonathan rolled his eyes.

'Why?' Peter stepped in.

'Whatever the hell that Donna lady is up to, it isn't the A.I we're talking about here, something to do with a drug for dementia, I don't know, it doesn't look good, what I just saw I can't even explain it, it was a mess. A rat was... it was gory' Wade tried to explain but could not articulate it properly in the stressed state he was in.

'You are such a doomsayer, aren't you?!' Jonathon seemed to have had enough of Wade's opinions.

'Oh am I?' Wade stood right up in Jonathon's face trying to intimidate him with his tall frame.

'Almost a bully' Jonathan said like he was realising something ground-breaking.

'I am not a bully, that is one thing I will not be called' Wade backed away.

'You do appear to have some kind of ulterior motive I have to say' Peter rubbed his eyebrow thinking.

'You people are blind, Peter, I thought you had something in there?' Wade pointed to his head, 'but I suppose the scruffy looking moustache doesn't lie, you are two pence short of a shilling, stick to writing about toy cars I guess'

'Wade?!' Judy exclaimed disgusted.

'You are all tossing and turning on whether you think this whole autelligent crap is a good idea or not, what benefits does it truly have? Peter said it himself, its unnecessary damn it!' Wade argued angrily, his noise level raised.

'Says the man who worked on the chromo cars, same shit, different name, except less impressive' Jonathon added.

'This is not same shit, different name' Wade laughed as he replied, 'this is dangerous people with a dangerous idea, making dangerous decisions and dangerous consequences'

'Its just a self-driving car Wade' Dr Gates entered the room shortly after Wade to argue with him and to try and calm the situation down. 'Whatever you think you saw then, that was merely a project that Dr Warner has been working on in her spare time, her father died of dementia and she wants to try and make sure nothing like that happens again. I think we all agree a cure for dementia is very welcomed, it has nothing to do with self-driving cars' Dr gates reassured them all.

'Multiple projects then?' Peter asked.

'It's a big company, we always have to develop ideas and try and help humanity in the future, I encourage my employees to explore and develop ideas, it's can't harm. Well other than the poor rats, I insist them rats are perfectly adequate participants, let's all just relax and calm down' Dr Gates smiled and placed his hands out to bring about calm.

'In that case show them what I just saw' Wade pointed in the general direction.

'It was an overly aggressive rat, and it killed its other rats in the cage, it was a mess, I admit, now please relax' Dr Gates managed to describe the situation as if it was nothing big.

'It wasn't a rat' Wade shook his head at them all.

'Go on then what was it?' Dr Gates folded his arms.

'An unexplainable monster that resembled a rat' Wade raised his voice again.

'Calm down Wade, so aggressive, you're like the rat' Dr Gates laughed and Jonathon joined in, 'has it escaped you to think that rats are just monsters by nature anyway, hardly the prettiest thing in the world are they'

Silence fell in the room. Poppie was trying her hardest to ignore the arguments and instead was breathing on the window and drawing hearts with her finger in the condensation.

'I only came back here for you Jonathon' Dr Gates carried on, 'if you don't mind, we need to discuss some things'

'Of course,' Jonathon followed Dr gates straight out of the room.

'My favourite car is a Ford Focus' Peter cuts the silence by answering Poppies' earlier question, the answer made Judy smile. Wade took a seat and just stared out the window frustrated and regained his composure.

Poppie smiled at Peter and replied, 'what colour?'

'Christ, you love a question' Peter chuckled, 'let me think... purple?'

Judy put her thumbs up and grinned.

'That car sounds horrible' Poppie frowned.

'It is somewhat dated now!' Judy laughed as she agreed and Peter then joined in the giggling.

'Purple?' Wade questioned, 'purple Ford Focus?' he smirked, 'that is a disastrous car'.

'Hey, she's a thing of beauty, lovely manual, five gears, rough driving experience' Peter argued in jest.



Donna walked in on them all laughing with each other and aimed at Poppie, 'Poppie, that cup of coffee you were supposed to make me?' she asked with an innocent look on her face and Poppies' happy demeanour fell off straight into a panic that she had forgotten she had to retrieve Donna a drink quite a while ago. 'No, no, don't panic about it now, its fine'.

'Here to explain the rat experiment to us all then?' Wade asked sternly.

'Yes' Donna did not waste time, 'I think its time you heard the truth'. As Donna prepared to discuss with them about the rats, in the car park the Porsche 911 that Judy had just been in and was now parked up and switched off began to flicker its lights briefly and rev the engine few times on its own.

## Chapter 22

Michael Hooper was dressed like he was ready to marry. Every think was in place, not a hair follicle was misplaced. He was treating his little stubble of facial hair to a clean shave. He even tugged a bit of skin on his chin that bled over and over again no matter how many tabs of the tissue he gave it. It made him incredibly frustrated as he nearly went through a whole toilet rolls in panic to stop the flow of blood.

He quickly analysed the cut in the mirror and stressed about it. On his way down the stairs of his small terrace house and out of the front door he passed a few important bits on the way. He collected his coat, his wallet, and his shoes, all of which scattered and just thrown about the house when he came in from a stressful day of work.

Wherever Michael was going, he was late. He was in a rush and had to kick aside a few various things blocking the front door from opening, the likes of an umbrella and two or three pairs of running shoes. Once he exited the front door he locked it behind him and walked away without the keys, quickly realising he went back and collected them, rolling his eyes and cursing himself. He then did the quick check, patting down his pockets, keys and wallet.

He managed to make his bus in time, no sweat required as it was late, so he was able to ease his way there in the end despite the panic. He was calm now, as the bus pulled up he caught a glimpse of the cut on his chin in the window of the bus. He looked incandescent with it. The bus driver gave a startling look at him at first, he was dressed for the horse racing rather than a casual night out in the town.

He sat on the bus and his leg was shaking intensely like a leaf in a storm. He was the only person on the bus as well, which was odd for this time of evening.

The bar where his final destination was could be heard blasting music loud and proud down the street, Daddy cool from Boney M. Michael just followed the music. He walked in the bar and looked around for a short while feeling completely overdressed. He was looking for someone important, he had a photograph for reference but didn't want to take it out in the middle of the bar. That would be odd. His memory told him it was a man with jet black hair, and Elvis style cut, puffy cheeks, goatee, glasses and was around 5 foot 10 inches tall. The height should not have helped as most people were sat down. But one was standing. His back to Michael as he was at the bar. He was ordering a drink or chatting up the young girl behind the bar who was barely 17. The music changed to House of the rising sun by the Animals.

Michael crept over to the man slowly and tapped him on the shoulder.

'Just a quick minute darling' A mid 20s Paul Gates assured the young girl he would be back, he turned to face Michael and smiled at him. 'Michael? Is it?' He asked without a care in the world.

'Michael Hooper, yes. Paul Gates?' He held out his hand for a shake.

'Give us a hug you' Paul dragged him in for a hug straight away and Michael seemed awkward and overwhelmed, 'make that two pints of lager Shelly' Paul Gates shouted over the music and Michael winced and replied 'I don't drink alcohol'.

'You're kidding?' Paul looked at him stunned.

'Of course I do, get us a pint' Michael laughed and stood up at the bar with him and Paul turned to face Shelly who just smiled at them both whilst she poured the drinks.

'We'll go somewhere quieter after this, hard to get to know someone in a place this loud' Paul suggested.

'Demi said you'd be lively' Michael collected the pint and took his first sip.

'Demi said you'd be handsome' Paul complimented him and smiled.

'Welcome to Paul's world' Shelly said after Paul gave her the money without looking at her, 'he's one in a million'

'You look smart by the way, I feel under dressed' Paul stroked Michael's ego.

'I feel overdressed' Michael returned with a witty remark.

'Shame about the...' Paul points to his chin.

'Cut myself whilst shaving' Michael glanced away shyly.

'You silly bugger, come on finish that up quick, let's get going, I want to be able to talk to you rather than shout' Paul finished his pint quickly and didn't flinch. He then slammed it down next to four more empty pint glasses. Michael noticed them and when Paul turned his back, he suggested to Shelly that they were all Paul's and she confirmed.

In the quieter pub down the road, the two of them sat there discussing the usual first date small talk. After that however it was to the main details.

'You like a drink?' Michael asked.

'I'm 26, I like a drink yes, doesn't everyone at 26' Paul grinned.

'I suppose, what do you do, I mean I know you're a traveller and you do lots of different jobs, but what's the aim, the goal in life?' Michael asked knowing something about Paul's life that he was told by their mutual friend Demi, he was from a rich family, with a lack of ambition, but needed to be sent in the right direction, in Demi's opinion.

'My goals in life are simple really, have a bloody good time' Paul sipped his beer, 'you?'

'Accountancy, numbers basically for the rest of my life' Michael replied knowing exactly the right answer for himself. He also bored himself with the answer, Paul's had a lot more to it.

There was a brief moment of silence and Paul felt an urge to fill it.

'In all honestly actually, having a bloody time is great and that' Paul explained, 'but I do want more. I want to make a difference somehow, I want to be remembered, I don't want to be forgotten. In school I was surrounded by rich kids, clever kids, all stuck up little scramblers, then there was me, I just didn't belong there. I should be doing more, a lot more, but its too difficult' Paul shrugged his shoulders like he was resigned.

'What kind of difference would you want to make?' Michael tilted his head in interest.

'I want to make a positive change, I want to be remembered for doing something monumentally helpful to people, you know? I want to make something that people will use in the future and go "thank god this was invented, without it my life wouldn't be the same" but I also don't care fi they know my name or not, or who made it, it doesn't matter to me, I just want people to be happy, life's too short to be sad. I want to make change, but I don't care about the recognition you know' Paul goes to sip his beer and instead puts it down after looking at it for a short second.

'Demi said you're a wasteman' Michael laughed.

'Cheeky bitch' Paul joked.

'You're not a wasteman at all, you seem kind' Michael stared into his eyes.

'You seem like a boring numbers guy' Paul became slightly shy and looked away.

'Oh thanks' Michael took it as a joke, 'maybe you can make me more interesting and I can make you more boring' he holds up his pint and Paul clinks the glass with his.

'Cheers to that' the music changed on the clang of the glasses knocking together, and they returned to have a small sip each of their beer looking into each other's eyes with 'I want it all' by Queen playing quietly in the background.

Jonathon Rice was now clicking his glass of water with Dr gate's glass of water. Sat in a smaller conference room together, this was strictly business. Jonathon was not relaxed, he was sat up and ready to discuss the important details.

'It's essential we discuss the release date of Autelligence, I need to know when my investment will pay dividends' Jonathon entangled his fingers.

'it's ready to go. A potential 120-billion-dollar industry, raring to go' Dr Gates smirked.

'How ready?' Jonathon seemed confused and money blind.

'It's ready, have you not been looking at it? Its perfect, it runs well, its ready to go' Dr Gates looked at Jonathon with stern eyes.

'I don't know about being that hasty, I mean, it could maybe do with a few more trial runs' Jonathon suggested.

'Nope, it doesn't require any more damn trial runs, I've been trial running it now for years. I brought you all here because the product is complete. And you can say in big bold letters that Dr Paul Gates and Michael Hooper have produced the future' He does jazz hands to emphasize his point.

'Who?' Jonathon is confused.

'Look, I want this out soon, I want I see how it changes the world, I want people to know that I was a part of history. I can't waste any more time. When I saw Chromo cars come out I realised that time

was of the essence, I can't have that Mack bastard releasing the next big thing before me. I can't do it. This is whole thing is bigger than me. It's ready to go, trust me' Dr Gates sipped his water and tapped on the mahogany table with his fingers.

'I think I could do with seeing it run just a few more times I have to say. Look I am incredibly excited by this, it's not like anything I've ever seen or been a part of, but I do see the dangers, I do see Wade's points, and I do feel that this thing shouldn't be treated without care' Jonathon reluctantly explained.

'Please don't listen to Mr Smith, he's a looney theorist, he's watched too much internet and read too many books on 9/11, princess Diana and aliens, the man thinks robots have three laws and they'll take over the world, do you realise how ridiculous he sounds?' Dr Gates rested back in his chair.

'I know, but I've read Frankenstein' Jonathon rebutted.

'And what? I'm Frankenstein and Autelligence is some kind of monster, is it?' Dr Gate's searched for clarification.

'I don't know' Jonathon was confused.

'I'm not making some stupid green monster here, I'm making something that can change the world for the better, make everyone's lives easier and make a hell of a lot of money and legacy doing it. I'll be completely honest with you, if Frankenstein backfires, you've got a monster roaming the streets, if Autelligence backfires, you've got an apocalypse, do you really think I would let that happen. The thing is safe!' Dr Gates is desperate.

There's a long pause and both sit back in their chairs and sip their waters to the end of the glass. Jonathon ponders and wonders. He chuckles slightly to himself and rubs the back of his neck, and leans forward to Dr Gates, 'I don't think this is safe! I think you know it' Jonathon was sure.

'I know it's safe, let's do more trial runs then, I'll prove it!' it was a battle of who could seem surer of themselves.

## Chapter 23

In the corner of Donna's office, the cage of rats where not there, and the desk she was sat at was as worn and torn by her constant scraping of her pen on the desk when bored. It was a short while back when Poppie was just fourteen and was being introduced to this world of A.I and futuristic vehicles that could change the world.

Poppie was taken out of school early despite her love for learning, this was due to Dr Gates insisting that his niece learn the ropes of the business so that one day she could take over when he passes. It left no explanation clear for what would happen to the role Donna had as Dr Gate's true right hand assistant.

The proving ground was pretty similar to how it looked in a few years' time, futuristic with a cold feeling desert in the middle of the large building and a dirt track that so far had no tyre marks on it as the prototypes hadn't been test ran that far yet.

It was one of Poppie's first days in this unfamiliar surrounding, the heat and humidity was getting to her and a fan was placed right in her face to keep her cool. She was swinging her legs

backwards and forwards on the small child's chair she was sitting on and it reminded her of a happier time when she was in school learning, a fly was buzzing around her head.

Donna stood up from behind her desk and walked slowly towards the poster of the periodic table of elements and turned to face Poppie from the other side of the room.

'Favourite element?' donna asked abruptly.

'I don't have one' Poppie answered with a beaming smile, **her fear for Donna not yet realised.**

'Thought you loved school, Dr Gates was adamant you did not want to be here, you'd rather be in school, you're telling me you don't have a favourite element?' Donna seemed perplexed.

'I suppose Oxygen is pretty important' Poppie shrugged.

'You've got all these to choose from and you chose oxygen?' Donna shook her head in disappointment. 'So what was it about school you loved so much?'

'I guess it was learning about the planets and the universe and how humans came to find out all about the different things in it, like numbers, I love how numbers were made by humans but actually they can tell us things like time, and gravity and how to build cars for example, but we made them so how does that work' Poppie suddenly came into her own.

'We invented numbers, and the numbers just how happen to explain the fundamental things in the universe. Its interesting, a bit like A.I. We invented it using the numbers and the formulas and the coding languages and what not, and in doing so its brought about something that otherwise would never exist but its there because its possible and therefore it was always going to exist at some point' Donna rambled on like she was doing a lecture at a university, truth is Poppie was too busy still looking at the periodic table.

'Yes'

'Are you even listening?' Donna gave a rye smile.

'So when will the cars be ready, Uncle Paul said it will be like two years?' Poppie asked.

'Two years minimum I'd say' Donna looks out the window, 'cars are great and that, self-driving cars could really help humanity out, I love helping out' Donna catches a fly on the window and slams her hand on it and kills it, 'but A.I, especially this form of A.I, Autelligence, this isn't something that is just going to stick to cars, no, this is big'.

'Big? Like giant?' Poppie stopped swinging her legs and listened intently.

'Huge, we've been top of the food chain for a while now, and frankly I think the worlds tired of it, there's a few warning signs out there' Donna continues to ponder out the window.

'My school always taught me about global warming and how humans are slowly damaging the planets atmosphere and also ruining ecosystems like making animals extinct and stuff. We are the bad guys?' Poppie was straight backed on her seat and interested, this is a subject that she really liked to talk about.

'Autelligence is intelligent, its not a monster, its intelligent, it will know what to do when the time comes. We'll let that be the judge of whether humans are causing the world to decay or not, because god knows that we can't make that judgement on our own, its hard to see your own faults even if there blatantly obvious' Donna turned to face Poppie.

'Sorry Miss Warner, you've lost me' Poppie bows her head slightly.

'I've lost you? This type of thing should be known to you, you're the successor to this business, you should know the insides and outs of Autelligence. Uncle Paul would be very disappointed' Donna sits back behind her desk,

'Well maybe Miss Warner, you should take over from him instead of me' Poppie innocently suggested, 'I am just a child'.

'Something tells me this place isn't the meritocracy I was sold' Poppie watched on confused by what the word meritocracy meant. 'Call me Donna, Poppie, I'm not the biggest fan of my surname, it's a bit tainted. Oh. And I take no sugars in my tea' Donna smiled as she waved Poppie out the room to fetch her a hot drink.

Not much had changed since that day, the Autelligence was around for years but not yet perfected, it seemed close to perfection now however. In the words of Dr Gates and Donna Warner it was safe to run. The more Autelligence was discussed, the more unclear what perfection actually looked like for humanity. Poppies' role was still the same, suppressed ideology on how humans are damaging the planet and still receiving hot drinks for Donna on request.

'Go on then' Wade ordered Donna, 'explain to the others about the rat'

'The rat is merely an experiment, a personal experiment, nothing to do with Autelligence. The damaging truth is, now that the child's out of the room and it's a room of adults, I torture animals' The room is in stunned silence, all Donna can see is the disapproving frowns of three adults in front of her.

'Torture?' Peter whispered sadly.

'Animals? Are you sick, like actually mentally sick, what's up with you, who even are you?' Judy begins to rant, Peter rests his hand on her shoulder to calm her down, 'Torturing animals, and you're the main scientist behind this whole thing, what the hell are we supposed to think about that?'

'It doesn't sound great I know, Dr Gates doesn't really know the complexity of it all, if he did I wouldn't have a job anymore, I'm twisted, I know that. But Autelligence has nothing to do with it, the cars are safe' Donna assured them.

'How safe can it be? Its in your hands?' Peter asked puzzled.

'Believe me if Autelligence was in the wrong hands it would already be out there, and it would already be wreaking havoc, the cars are safe, trust me on that' Donna turned firm.

'You torture animals!' Judy said again angrily.

'Oh its only rats' Donna defended herself wrongfully, 'its rats, who actually cares about rats? If I got one out right now, and it was scurrying about you would run a mile, their vermin. They're poison, infection ridden, vile, could be describing another species actually'.

'No' Wade added, 'what I saw in there was not torture, that was something else, that was an animal that had been through something far worse, I could see it in its eyes'

'Oh relax' Donna rolled her eyes, 'honestly you really are never settled are you, I admit to torturing animals, something that actually isn't that unusual in human nature, but the social construct has changed that, and that's still not the right answer according to you' Donna decided to carry on and

her voice levels raised after Wade had finally broken her 'you want to know the truth about the power of Autelligence, its powerful enough to literally take over the world, like a lot of things you use every day, the internet, nuclear power, medicine, disease, emissions its all out there causing trouble in its own way to the world and the environment we all live in, manipulated by us all, humans have been decaying themselves for years and Autelligence is no different, what I will say is that this form of A.I has a great potential, far greater than just self-driving vehicles, heck that's just the tip of the iceberg. But its no different to everything else on earth we use and take for granted. If anything Autelligence is that clever and intelligent it might even be able to detect the problems we are all causing and irradiate them. If we allow it to unlock its full potential it could solve world problems. I personally don't think humans deserve something like this to run smoothly' She begun to laugh 'self-driving cars, come on what a sick unnecessary joke, how far we going to take this before we look at ourselves and go, "what the hell are we doing?" we're taking the piss out of God, we weren't supposed to develop this much, humans are living till 70 on a regular basis, you were lucky to make it to 30 a few hundred years ago. You know when I see the future, I see the world burning to the ground and humans looking for any excuse other than "IT WAS US!" humans are the definition of insanity, we pray for money rather than humanity, I don't give a hell about either, and Autelligence doesn't as well, it cares about survival, the original instinct of any living, intelligent being'

The room remains silent. Donna looks at them all after calming down.

'A woman on a brink of a breakdown ladies and gentlemen' Wade joked and began to clap chewing his gum. 'If Dr Gates has got people like you working for him, then I sure as hell am not going to be partaking in anymore of this Autelligent nonsense, I've seen enough...' Suddenly Wade's phone rings and he has a call to take. He does not disclose who it's from he just urgently leaves the vicinity.

'You're right' Donna agreed with Wade quietly as he left. Her eyes began to tear up and she backed out of the room, 'I'm sorry, to you all and to God' she was sincere and emotional and even preyed as she left. Her humanity and Christianity seemed to return to her and she walked out quickly realising that what had just happened was frustration finally getting the better of her.

She left the room with three adults stood in disbelief as to what they just heard. Poppie arrived soon after with a cup of coffee for Donna not knowing why the ominous silence had occurred.

## Chapter 24

After the rant a few minutes prior, Donna had to calm down and paced into the kitchen to get herself a glass of water. She had forgotten about the coffee she requested from Poppie. She had to rest herself on the metal rim of the sink and breath a few times just to slow down her heart rate. Donna knew what she had just done was going to cause her to lose not only her job, but her livelihood that she had actually grown to love but also be frustrated with.

Her reactionary outburst had revealed her true feelings that she had suppressed for years, her love for Christianity despite it being forced upon her from an early age and therefore causing her

to rebel. All she could see in her mind now was God, and her battle with science and religion in her mind was tearing her apart.

She had a few sips of her water and once she had calmed she slowly made her way back to her desk to see her office before she was inevitably disposed of her duties by Dr Gates. Once he hears about this she will be in trouble.

On her desk she picked up her notes and read through them again. The notes were all about the rats, the behaviours, the comparison to humans, her hatred for humans, she was confused by her state. She was spiralling. She was seeing buzz words throughout her notes like 'contagion', 'feral' and 'threatening' she made it to the back page which was just titled, 'Autelligence in living organisms' the page was full of theory, but before she read it, she quickly glanced over at her cage. She left the notebook on the desk with it open on the back page.

She slowly walked over to it with bad feeling, normally the cage had the rattling noise of the rats or the chewing noise of the rats attempt to escape. She pulled off the cloth to see that the cage was entirely empty of any living organism in there. There was still the remains of the other rats that were no longer resembling rats, but rather a disgusting indescribable mush in amongst the sawdust on the floor of the cage.

Out of shock and horror Donna dropped her glass of water on the floor and it shattered around her. She could see underneath the table when she went to pick up the shards that a huge hole had been buried through the thick mahogany table. The rat had buried its way out of the cage floor and through the table, it must have taken a while to do, and every time she checked the cage it was covered with something so it didn't reveal the hole it was creating. She had been fooled by the rat.

She quickly stood up and looked around for it in an incredible panic, and she couldn't see it anywhere. It could have gone through the vents, the gap under the door, anywhere really, it's a rat it can get through any gap. She returned to her broken glass on the floor and picked up the biggest shard she could find and grasped it.

Wade meanwhile had his phone in his grasp and on the other end of the line was Dr Mack. Wade spat his chewy out of his mouth and placed in the bin before taking the call as a mark of respect, even though Dr Mack couldn't see his chewing on the other end of the line. 'Sir' Wade acknowledged him formally.

'Wade, thought I'd touch base, how is it all going over there?' Dr Mack was talking with a hoarse voice, almost husky like he had a large cough inbound to clear his throat.

'Well, I'm glad you did, I have some updates for you, first thing is first, the technology is good. Autelligence is really, really powerful. Beyond anything you could imagine' Wade said calmly.

'Oh right, so greater than the Chromo car, that was to be expected though, I always said they used something far too great, they took it too far' Dr Mack insisted.

'and you're right, its power is its downfall. There is no way this thing is getting out there into the public eye and if it does, I really have no idea what that could mean, but I might not be good' Wade was certain.

'In what way do you believe it will never be released?' Dr Mack perked up and coughed loud.



'It's just ludicrous, its too intelligent, there's no knowing how capable this thing truly is or can become' Wade thought he answered the question.

'No, how are we going to stop Dr Gates and his silly little assistants releasing it?' Dr Mack was not very patient.

'I don't know, I just cant see it being released'

'Not a great answer Wade, you just can't see it being released? What does that mean, the man running this shit is a criminal, he murdered people, he sabotaged my Chromo cars and murdered people, decimated a family and you're what? Just hopeful he sees the light of day and doesn't release this, the man is determined to out do me, he would kill for money, he's proven that, he doesn't care. He would sacrifice his own men and women to better me, and to get this thing, this monstrous creation out there' Dr Mack takes a deep struggled breath.

'I don't know what to say really, he is facing backlash, sometimes I feel like the people here love the idea of Autelligence but are scared of it, surely that's enough to put off the release?' Wade discussed.

'Fear doesn't stop people releasing things for money, remember when we were all fearful at Vintage when releasing the Chromo cars, it didn't stop us, because we knew it was safe'

'But it wasn't safe, they didn't work' Wade clarified.

'No, no, no, NO! It was safe, until that bastard did something to my cars, think about the money he's inherited, money talks, he got someone to sabotage my creation, so he could release this Autelligent monster and claim he was the first self-driving car creator, its all about legacy with him you see, he has no heart, he just wants to beat me' Dr Mack exploded into a coughing fit.

'Sir' Wade shuddered and stumbled over his words 'I don't think he cares as much about you as you think. Even if you had released the Chromo cars and they ran well, Autelligence would have blown it out of the water, its far greater, its far more powerful, I've seen it work, its game changing, life changing, you love chess right? It's a Queen, and Chromo is nothing more than a knight or a bishop' there was dead silence that followed.

After a long pause, Wade didn't know fi he had lost signal or if Dr mack had maybe fell asleep on the other end of the line, it turned out Dr Mack was just calmly taking in what Wade had just said to him and it hit home hard.

'Wade. Are you going to sabotage Dr Gates or what?' He asked but also ordered.

'He does not need sabotaging damn it, he's sabotaging himself, this thing will not be released, its too much, too much, too soon, the world isn't ready, in fact it will never be ready for what I've seen here. Its something out of Star Wars, its inhuman what this thing can do. With people who are handling it being inhuman. Its self-sabotaging' Wade argued whole heartedly.

'You're a coward!'

'What do you want me to actually do? I've been here for the last three hours persuading people to hate on this thing, what else can I do?' Wade genuinely is confused.

'destroy the cars, the vehicles whatever he's cooked up over there, torch it, blow it up, cut some wires, just ruin it!'

'This has gone beyond vehicles sir, this is not Chromo sir, this is serious!' Wade felt the need to clarify, 'if you were here you'd understand, you've lost'

There is another long pause of silence, Dr Mack on the other end of the phone looked disheartened in bed, he just rested his head against the pillow and ended the phone call by saying to Wade 'I know' his voice was calm and defeated.

## Chapter 25

Peter insisted on one more look at the power Autelligent vehicles had. If he was honest, he would admit that he actually was quite excited by the whole prospect of self-driving vehicles now. Judy was likewise quite interested by the concept, however both had different reasons, whilst Peter's reasoning was the difference it could make to driving in general and the incredible advantages it gave humans, Judy loved the little things that Peter deemed unnecessary.

Jonathon was also interested in trying out the vehicles one last time before leaving with a final conclusion. However his decision to check it all out one more time was more to confirm his initial decision that it was time to call it a day with investing in the company. His morals had overcome him, he was no longer tempted by Autelligence's prowess.

Poppie was tasked with showing Peter and Jonathon the Harley Davidson, the self-driving motorcycle that had many problems in its development, so many that not many people had heard of the issues. Poppie herself was encouraged to show them the Harley Davidson, playfully nicknamed Harley.

The three of them entered the car park and Poppie let out a slight squeal 'Harley!' like she was trying to catch the attention of a dog or cat. Suddenly as if by magic a light appeared round the corner and the motorcycle revved up with a roar that sounded like a noise from the future. It revved multiple times like it was showing off. Like an animal kept in a cage brought out for feeding time. Harley wandered out with its tyres rolling up slowly towards them three of them.

Jonathon was sick of the gimmicks, he just rolled his eyes. Peter now convinced that self-driving vehicles could be the future that humanity intended and the dangers may not be as threatening if in the right hands was encouraged to see the behaviour of the vehicle.

'Its just needlessly animalistic' Peter said as he went to touch the handle brakes. Harley revved as he approached and touched it, it gave him a jump and scare. Then he touched the brake handles again and Harley waited for someone to sit on it.

'Its just needless' Jonathon then argued.

'You've changed your tune?' Peter questioned.

'Of course I have, this whole thing is insane, it hardly legit all this is it?' Jonathon discussed.

'I agree, but surely you see that this is the future, self-driving vehicles could be such a benefit to us all' Peter began to sound almost like Dr Gates, however seemed to have more of a Dr Mack stand point.

'A benefit yes, financially fantastic, but these things, look at the way it moves, it moves like an animal. It effectively is an animal according to Wade, trying to escape' Jonathon theorised.

'Wade, you're going to listen to Wade about everything?' Peter scoffed, 'the guy doesn't like anything, he sees faults in everything, you can hardly trust a man like Wade, his opinions are to hyperbolic, not level headed' Peter sits on Harley and noticed something as Poppie began explaining Harley's history.

'So this Harley, she is the first vehicle to ever have Autelligence, there been a few issues with her, but she is good to go now' Poppie said it like she was reading it from a teleprompter.

'Speck of rust is that?' Peter scraped something on the radiator of the bike. He scraped away and it was a red tinge to it, like rust but redder, darker and much more ominous.

'I don't know what that is' Poppie said innocently.

'Is it rust?' Jonathon asked quite scared.

'No, why would it rust it's not been in the rain has it' Peter used his logic.

Jonathon inspected it further and winced as he thought it might have been dried up blood.

'It could be innocent' Peter suggested, maybe an accident whilst building someone cut themselves.

'Accident or not, I don't think I'll be participating in riding it' Jonathon smiled and walked away.

'What is it then?' Poppie asked concerned.

'Ketchup or something' Peter replied quickly before Jonathon had chance to tell her it was blood.

'Oh what a relief' Poppie exhaled, 'thought it was blood or something'

'Poppie,' Peter began, 'can you show us what else your uncles been up to, what other vehicles he has been implanting Autelligence in to'

'Is it important?' Poppie asked, she knew she was not supposed to do that and that Donna might be angry with her.

'*Is it important?*' Jonathon also asked quite inquisitively.

'Yes, yes it is. It's very important, if he has cars, bikes, what else is he cooking up to release out there' Peter explained with his hands widespread as if the suggestion was obvious.

'Is this so you can report it back?' Jonathon began to understand.

'It's so I can get a better of understanding on what exactly I will be reporting on, this doesn't feel like an operation to release self-driving cars anymore, it feels like something more' Peter was incredibly fickle with his opinions on Autelligence, he had never felt so conflicted, he loved it but feared it. He knew there was problems but he always lived the philosophy that if he could write down the problems then he could solve the problems. This scenario went against his viewpoint this time.

'There are bigger vehicles' Poppie then inferred.

'Bigger, like what?' Peter asked her grabbing her shoulders gently but affirmative.

'Bigger like... the ones with the big long wheels, tanks, and helicopters. Oh, oh and also big, big vans, like they carry oil and stuff apparently' Poppie was excited to show them actually.

'Tanks?' Jonathon was stunned and scared, 'well why in gods name does he need to have self-driving tanks with this much intelligence?!'

'Helicopters?' Peter also questioned, 'with Autelligence?'

'Pretty much all the vehicles here have Autelligence' Poppie explained.

'Autelligence does not seem like something to be tampered with, I'm not even too sure what exactly it is' Peter actually laughed to himself about the scenario, 'show me the vehicles please Poppie'

'I'll stay here I think, it's not worth us all going' Jonathon backed away.

'There all switched off right?' Peter asked Poppie.

'None of the vehicles are on unless you command them to be on' Poppie confirmed.

'In fact, I will come' Jonathon wandered back to them knowing that being on his own in the building means he could have another confrontation with Dr Gates, and that he is safer in numbers.

## Chapter 26

Wade as a younger teenage man, was sat at his desk in his childhood home watching video after video of conspiracy theories. Theories about aliens, Diana's death and of course dystopian futures caused by man. He was obsessed with the Terminator film when he was younger, his father made him watch both the first two Terminators all the time and he loved them.

Wade did however find the idea of a robot being sent back in time far-fetched. He didn't think robots were a threat that they were displayed as in the Terminator movies. In the same way that he didn't believe aliens had large round heads, he preferred the more realistic concept that the aliens were like the Xenomorph's in the Alien movies. Animalistic, cosmic horror.

He saw robots as something similar, he thought they would more like be animalistic than human. They might represent humans but not be human at all. Terminator to him, was far too human. It never truly scared him. Alien terrified him. It was the same with Frankenstein, it never scared him because the monster was far too human, in the way it acted and moved, he believed that dystopia would look human, but not be human at all. It would be animals roaming, looking like humans. Humans acting like animals, devolved somewhat.

His fear of aliens coming to earth that he so often watched videos on was that they would come to earth and mess with the very structures of humanity, not just destroy us, but torture and twist us to their whim. Aliens with the power to transcend us and turn us into something we're not. He grew up on these videos and no one ever pulled him to one side and told him to stop. Wade spiralled, he was obsessed with the future and the future was obsessed in his eyes with the downfall of civilisation. He was adamant.

When he landed his job at Vintage, Dr Mack was the perfect manager for him. A mentor who could tickle his knowledge and speak for hours about the future of humans, the exploration of other planets, the dream that a billionaire has of evolving humanity beyond the point we've reached. The discussion of where we actually come from, religion or something else, something cosmic, like aliens dropping us off on earth and watching us evolve. The things they spoke about and the ideas that ran

through their heads where complicated, confusing and dangerous, so they always tried to keep it in house between the two of them. Dr Mack just helped Wade spiral further into his conspiracies.

Wade was sat next to Judy on the medium sized couch in the main atrium of the large building at the proving ground. Judy looked slightly uneasy with the whole experience, she was convinced she loved Autelligence and what it did, and how it could help people, but she was nervous by the negativity surrounding it.

'What I saw in that cage, it was no rat' Wade broke the silence.

'Wade, I know what you're like, I know you theorise a lot, I know you're also incredibly dramatic. So please leave all the comments until we leave this place' Judy was abrupt.

'Look I mean, you can't deny this all seems a little dodgy right?' Wade pleaded.

'What seems dodgy, the fact you saw a rat in a cage that was being tested on and tortured? Come on Wade, I don't think we should just shut down the whole self-driving car operation because of that' Judy seemed slightly delusional.

'This thing was no longer a rat, it wasn't what it was meant to be, it was a monster, a rat sized, metallic, dishevelled creature. It was like it hadn't eaten in years, skinny, no muscles on it, but its eyes, they were so open, so wide, you could tell it was looking at you and thinking how it could get to you. It even snarled at me with its fowl looking broken teeth' Wade explained with his arms flailing about dramatically.

'You finished?' Judy said sarcastically.

'Didn't even have a full tail anymore it had been chewed off' Wade said trying to display the most emotion possible.

'Oh you're just making up stuff now, your imagination is running wild' Judy laughed to herself.

'Why did you come here?' Wade asked Judy sincerely.

'What do you mean?' Judy was slightly taken aback by the sudden change of topic, normally Wade ranted about theories for hours and would never actually ask someone a deep, meaningful question but he did this time.

'Why did you come to this, what was the reasoning?' Wade looked attentively.

'Well, to be honest, I had a dream about something, and it scared me and I woke up, and I just knew it was something to do with A.I, you know when you just know about a dream, it was the future and it was scary, so I thought I had to come, I had to see what this was. Since being here, I don't know what to think anymore, I love it, but I'm scared of it. It's too powerful I know it is, but maybe it's a good type of power'

'It's a bit like being in a building and relying on it to not collapse, trusting it will never falter, technology is like that, you rely on it not breaking or collapsing, but if it does, its over.' Wade discussed.

'I guess I just hope it's a sturdy building' Judy smiled.

'All it takes is a gust of wind and then its in the god's hands. And I don't think God likes what we're doing' Wade quoted Dr Mack's Christian beliefs.

'Maybe we are taking it too far' Judy questioned her own thoughts on it. 'I never came here to fall in love with this new technology, I came here to try and see the faults in it and persuade Peter to not report on it, but instead we've both grown to love it and fear it at the same time, its tempting technology. I'm a sucker for a gimmick' Judy scratched her head stressed.

'Aren't all humans sucker for gimmicks, we love the gimmicks, we love the finger prints, we love the cameras on our doorbells, we love fossil fuel and dynamite, chopping down trees and building something that is beyond explanation or reason, stuff like nuclear power and the intelligence that this thing has,' Wade begun to laugh, 'nuclear power?!'

'What?'

'You know the hottest thing humans made was 7.2 trillion degrees Celsius, and the sun is 15 million degrees Celsius, we made something, on a microscopic level of course, if it was a campfire, it would destroy the whole planet, vaporize it, but we made something that was 4.8 million times hotter than the sun. THE SUN!'

'Ok' Judy seemed underwhelmed.

'Who are we to have nuclear power?' Wade discussed, 'I mean who are we, we're just animals at the end of the day, and we always will be, nuclear power at the power of our fingertips, that's a joke, we shouldn't have that. I'm telling you now, I may seem a doomsayer, but I am not. I'm not. I'm a person who is open to the idea that were all not perfect and what were doing might not be a great idea. Pushing the intelligence of things we make so far that it exceeds our own, that's just taking the piss. We're just human at the end of the day' Wade suddenly goes in for a kiss with Judy who quickly backs away.

'Whoa, Wade, what you doing?' Judy nervously laughed as she stood up from the couch.

'I read a connection, like old times, us talking about theories and what not, remember?' Wade explained himself sheepishly.

'Not the place, nor the time, read the room a bit better' Judy shook her head at him and Wade just sat there with his legs together tightly and he was a bit shaken up by the mistake he had just made.

'I thought we had something' Wade bowed his head.

'We kissed once, ages ago, please don't take that to heart, you're an adult' Judy told him off.

'When the apocalypse comes, maybe then?' Wade asked creepily.

'Wade, you're a freak' Judy walked away and left Wade to sit there on his own dwelling.

On his own Wade pondered and then slapped his thighs and raised himself from his seat a few minutes behind Judy. He was sick of trying to prove the problem with Autelligence with his theories, he needed more practical evidence. He went on a search. A dangerous search in his eyes.

Not even that long after, he was walking down the corridor towards the kitchen, conference room area where they had eaten just a an hour before as this led to the car park when the vehicles were. He could see a trail of liquid coming from underneath he kitchen door. As he got closer to it, it became clear it needed cautious inspection.

## Chapter 27

Donna was panicked and faint as she wandered the corridors of the large building after leaving her office. A shard of glass in her hand, she was petrified by the rat escaping. She walked with trepidation and she had sweat pouring from her forehead into her eyes. She was rubbing them intensely giving her blurred vision. The stinging pain didn't stop her from pursuing her search.

A rush had overcome her, a rush of fear and horror. It was like her world was unravelling. She was so fearful it hurt her in the stomach, like a stab to the chest. She had done things in her time, things she was proud of up until this point, and now her pride was over. She had gone nuclear with her mentality, no longer careful or precarious with her approach, she had decided that the cat was out the bag, and that Autelligence had got the better of her. She did not like that one bit.

The monster she had created had outsmarted her and this put the fear of god into her. She felt she was enemy number one and that she was being pursued in the same way she was pursuing with a shard of glass in her hand. It all became too much for Donna.

Whilst the others tried out the vehicles and discussed the power and dangers of it all, Donna was having her own self-realisation session that Autelligence was beyond even what she comprehended. Donna entered the kitchen with the shard in her hand, she was holding it so tightly that it began to carve into her palm and make her bleed, but she didn't care, she was not fazed.

In the kitchen was Dos, the chef, she was just working away cleaning dishes and moving around in her slow, methodical way, her sunglasses always on. Donna approached her and looked at her. Dos was stopped in her tracks as Donna blocked her path back to the sink of dirty dishes.

Donna just looked at her, and then finally asked the question.

'Have you seen the rat?' she was scared, her voice was croaky, 'where is the rat, I bet you know where it is?'

Dos did not reply, she just stood there waiting for Donna to move.

'Can you talk?' Donna asked scared.

Dos remained like a statue, waiting.

'You know everything, you have ears, you have fingers, you have a brain, I have to do this' Donna grabs Dos and slices her neck with the shard of glass and she bleeds out on the floor. As she slices her throat however, Dos in a fight for survival simply bits a big chunk out of Donna's arm, before Dos flops to floor dead. The blood leaving her neck and creeping towards the doorway of the kitchen.

Donna has blood all over her and also is gushing from the bite Dos just impaled her with and she screams in pain and agony.

She looks at the bite marks and quickly wipes it with the closest cloth she can find.

'No, no, no, NO!' Donna wipes and wipes in panic and fear. She rips a part of the cloth off and ties it incredibly tightly around her arm and stops the blood flow and then takes a seat looking at the dead body of Dos and cannot believe what she has done.

She sits for a while staring at the body and then hears once the noise and panic calms down and the tap is turned off the sound of little footsteps in the vents above. She looks up and fears that it is the rat in the vents she can hear. She looked at the bite and felt defeated.

Wade barged into the kitchen after seeing the blood and looked at the dead body on the floor and his eyes widened, he then noticed Donna sat in the corner of the kitchen.

'What the hell has happened?' Wade could not believe what he saw, he actually gagged at the sight of it. 'Was this you, was this you're work?' Wade kept his distance from Donna.

'I had to' Donna replied quietly.

'Why?' Wade backed away a bit worried by what Donna might do next,

'I can't even remember' Donna was deep in thought, 'what happened here?'

'You can't remember?' Wade was confused.

'I can remember, yes. I sliced her throat with this shard of glass. I had to Peter' Donna was mistaken.

'I'm not Peter' Wade was disgusted and lost, he didn't know what to do or who to turn to.

'What?' Donna was confused, 'you're not Peter'

'No'

Donna then decided to slice her own throat, but could not do it properly, instead she only sliced it slightly and fell to the floor and began to bleed out slowly. Wade sickened by what he just saw and deeply disturbed ran out of the kitchen and knew it was panic stations, He was shouting help down the corridor and the help was getting quieter and quieter to Donna as he got further away from the kitchen and she slowly lost consciousness.

Donna slowly lowered herself towards the spotless kitchen floor that hadn't been covered in blood but instead perfectly cleaned by Dos. She rested her head and knew the end was close for her. There was a sense of relief that she felt that it was finally all going to be over. She had an image of her future that she would see the uprise of A.I and it would be thanks to the research she conducted. Her conflicting views with Dr Gates about the purpose of such a powerful A.I had finally been realised. She believed it had more power than Dr Gates could possibly imagine, its ability to evolve and develop was frightening to her, but exciting. She even had a smug smile on her face as if she was right about this technology the whole time. It truly was dangerous and incredible.

Dr Gates saw legacy in making money, while Donna saw power in the making of Autelligence. The kind of power that could destroy humanity that she had grown to resent down the years. The slight remorse that she had would come and go in her last few thought on Earth. Ultimately all this would be her downfall.

Donna, with heavy struggled breathing, through her blurred vision could make out the monstrous image of the rat that she had created. It looked her dead in the eyes with its greyness and gawked at her before not long after jumping on her and ripping her to pieces by nibbling at her till she was no more.

Wade continued to run towards the car park to find the others, he is panicked and stressed as you would be. He sees a car drive away into the distance towards a building in the far end of the proving ground in amongst a forested area. In the car is unknown to him as yet, but it is Poppie driving Peter and Jonathon to see the military vehicles.

'Wade?' Judy comes up behind him and he is jump scared.



'Judy! Judy we need to help the others, we need to get the hell out of here now' Wade was desperate.

'Just relax, what happened?' Judy tried to calm him down.

'Donna has just killed the chef, there was blood everywhere, I don't know what she'll do next, she's a psychopath. She knows something is wrong, but I don't know what, we've got to help the others, look. Where are they going?' pointing at the car driving off.

'I don't know, should we stay here though?' Judy is calm not truly aware of the dangers yet.

'No, we need to leave here, something is not right, please believe me' Wade begged her, but she could tell he was not messing around anymore, this was just a theory, she could see it in his eyes, he had seen something properly disturbing this time.

'It's ok, just relax, we'll go get a car, a normal car'.

'What's with all this panic?' Dr Gates entered the room, 'I can hear such a racket from my office, what exactly is the issue?'

'This is over, Paul' Wade refused to call him Doctor anymore, 'this whole silly, little project, we're getting Jonathon and Peter back here and you're getting us out of this horror that is this proving ground'

'What exactly has happened?' Dr Gates laughed slightly like Wade was being overly dramatic.

'Where are your cars, the real cars, not the Autelligent ones, they're not safe, something weird is going on, we need a normal car to help the others. We're bringing them back'

'Help them from what exactly? The cars are safe, Autelligence is safe' Dr Gates remained adamant.

'Check the damn kitchen and tell me its safe!' Wade was fed up of arguing with him.

'Ok, I will, the cars are in the first two bays by the entrance of the car park, its my own personal car, look' Dr Gates throws the keys after reaching into his pockets, 'We'll discuss properly when you're all back and calmed down'

'No we won't' Wade doesn't bother even debating with him.

'I want to see the kitchen now' Judy was intrigued.

'Believe me, you don't' Wade stared Judy in the eyes and meant every word.

She began to walk towards the kitchen.

'No Judy don't!' Wade panicked for her.

She looked in the kitchen for a short while and the shock on her face was visually disturbing. In flight or fight mode she picked up a large, sharp knife and placed it in her bag quite calmly in case she might need it, she was Afterall in a scene from a horror film, she had to keep herself safe. She returned to Wade and a confused and baffled Dr Gates.

'What the hell are you on about' Dr Gates left and checked the kitchen on his own and Judy and Wade ran down to the car park to drive the car to claim the others from the potential danger.

Judy and Wade entered Dr Gate's Vintage Jeep that was a manual driven car. Wade showed no care for the car at all, Judy however looked in awe 'Peter would love this car'

'Just get in it' Wade was not in the mood to talk.

The car revved up with the use of the keys, Wade put its in the second gear straight away and accelerated hard and the car flew off towards the exit gates that raised and lowered once they were out of the car park.

Once the gate lowered suddenly a few vehicles lights began to flicker, and Harley even started rev on its own. The tyres of the motorbike began to move very slowly and the vehicle seemed to start itself completely before coming to a stop again but in the middle of the car park no longer where it was parked before. Beside Harley was another car that was also slowly moving its tyres, an red old fashioned Dodge power wagon truck and its tyres didn't stop like Harley.

Dr Gates upon watching the Vintage Jeep of his drive down the dirt road of the proving ground decided to check out what exactly Wade was panicking about now. Once he left and stopped looking out the window the red Dodge wagon truck speeded out of the car park and down a different path to the one Wade and Judy had taken with the Jeep and it was quicker too, it was Autelligent after all.

'I hate that man, the boy who cried wolf' Dr Gates said to himself before whistling casually towards the kitchen where he could suddenly see blood on the floor. His whistling stopped instantaneously.

He looked at the blood in the kitchen, his brown boots being engulfed by the large puddle of blood. Stuck to the soles of his feet he kept standing through it like it was treacle. Slowly making his way towards the body of his now deceased employees and Donna has hardly recognisable after being chewed away all over. A sad end.

The first thought that entered Dr Gates head was not about the bodies in front of him, or how this all came to be, but rather the image this will portray about the company. He grabbed a large black bin bag and began to sweat and move around as if he was about to clean up the mess, he attempted to lift small chunks of Donna's remains and couldn't do it. Instead he dropped it immediately and gagged in disgust.

This wasn't the first bodies he had seen in the development of Autelligence, and he also had a feeling it would not be the last. Dr Gates had no intention on calling it a day, he was a man determined, he was delusional with the idea of releasing this product at any cost, there was no mess that couldn't eventually be cleaned up.

## Chapter 28

In the deep, dark forest that was created to represent a military ground to recreate the environment of certain conditions that military weapons and vehicles that had Autelligence built in would have to be used for, Poppie had parked up the car to show Peter and Jonathon the other exciting and dangerous experiments that Fly-By had been up to.

The forest was on the far, far side of the large proving ground and wasn't particularly big, around an acre in size. It had a stream running through it that was just too short to be classed as a

river. It was purely their to test the tyres of the tanks in wet conditions and also to see if Autelligence could handle the watery conditions. An experiment that was noted in Donna's book. The note said, vehicles with Autelligence appear to fear water.

This could be conceived as many things, and when Dr Gates caught attention of this note that Donna had wrote he assumed it was a feature that would be a safety precaution. No one wants a self-driving car that would openly drive into water. Perhaps its that intelligent that it would actually decide which option was safer in a situation, go into water, or not. Perhaps the Autelligence isn't against going into water if the scenario deemed it important, in this case it wouldn't be, and Autelligent is not easy to override when it comes to health and safety, it knows best. Dr Gate's would never read it as anything other than an impressive feature of the powerful A.I.

The truth is he never read the note properly, Donna had chosen the word *fear*. Maybe if she had written *avoid* Dr Gate's theory would have made sense, but fear suggested something deeper, something that Dr Gate's simply would never allow Donna to dwell over too much, that fact that this thing runs deeper than he could possibly comprehend.

Poppie was waiting by the white, stained airport hangar sized shed that kept the military vehicles and weapons safe from the potential rain or heavy winds. The doors opened slowly like it was releasing an huge animal from a cage, like they were about to see a dinosaur of something far bigger and far more dangerous inside. A futuristic powerhouse of machinery was revealed. Once the three of them entered the door automatically closed behind them and the lights flickered on to reveal everything in there.

'Now, try not to say any of the names of the vehicles or weapons in here, because otherwise you'll wake them up and they're not completely ready for release yet, some might be broke or not finished yet' Poppie explained simply.

'How dangerous can they be?' Jonathan was scared as he looked around at the museum of the future. The tanks where shiny, the weapons were large and the helicopters were politely tucked away in the corner. All these machines looked like you would imagine, normal. They weren't normal. Autelligence wasn't normal.

'Not dangerous exactly, uncle Paul said that they wouldn't be safe to drive yet though, not until they've been properly tested' Poppie explained.

'That is fair I guess' Peter agreed looking at the vehicles even stroking a few of them in awe.

'Why is he doing military weapons?' Jonathon laughed in disbelief.

'Maybe he's just ahead of the curb, maybe he has an agreement with the government to release something that can give a certain country an advantage. I mean look at these weapons, these weapons are A.I powered' Peter speculated.

'Your uncle is crazy, I've seen enough' Jonathon begun to sweat from the heat and nerves.

'My uncle is weird yes, he really, really loves Autelligence, like loves it!' Poppie explained.

'He sounds like he has a strange obsession' Peter said calmly.

'He sounds like he is up to no good' Jonathon said not so calmly.

'Whatever he is up to' Peter turned his back on the vehicles and faced the other two 'I'm reporting that Autelligence is not to be released. Not under the company Fly-By, the world is not ready for this, as much as I enjoy it' Peter said heavy hearted but meant every word.

'My uncle wont be happy with that' Poppie said, 'I like cars, but I always like them because we can drive them. I always feel my uncle was too lazy to drive' Poppie innocently said.

Peter laughed slightly at Poppies' comment and Jonathon just rolled his eyes and panicked 'Lets go, I'm sick of being in this death trap of a place, I've seen enough'-

Jonathon's rant was cut short by the large crash of a car outside crashing into another. It sounded like a lighting strike had struck right next to them. It was so loud it caused the ground to shake slightly.

'What was that?' Poppie screamed.

The crash noise reappeared again a little fainter this time, less power behind it. The first was like something had sped for a while towards its destination. This time the crash was met with the noise of revving and tyres spewing up mud as it pushed whatever the noise closer the large shed they were in. The lights began to flicker on and off and when off it was pure darkness.

The noise suddenly was ended with a big bang against the large doors of the shed and the Peter grabbed Poppie as a first reaction and hid her behind one of the military tanks. Jonathon panicked and ran into the dark corner of the large hangar. The noise stopped. There was no noise for a while.

A passing storm perhaps, they clutched at straws, they all knew it was not a storm. There was something sinister outside, something trying to get in.

The silence lasted a few seconds and Jonathon slowly fumbled his way out of the dark corner he was in, the lights now completely switched off but the torch on his phone gave him light to find his way to the door.

'JONATHON' Peter shouted, Poppie said 'sh' in response.

'Wait a minute' Peter ordered him.

'I just want to get out of here' Jonathon begged and pleaded and was in terrifying fear.

'I know, just stop, stay where you are' Peter said a lot quieter, the noise carried in the dark.

Jonathan was stood in front of the large doors and was shining his torch towards Peter and Poppie, who both did not have their phones on them, Peter's was in the car they travelled in, and Poppie was not allowed her phone when working.

The silence was shattered by the explosion of the door behind Jonathon as the car that the three of them drove in was crumpled to pieces by the large red Dodge Wagon that had followed them to the military forest and had raced well ahead of Wade and Judy. The power of the Wagon that would normally struggle to crumple such a medium sized car, seemed to do it effortlessly with the amount of speed it could produce due to its Autelligence.

The doors flung off the hinges and smashed down on Jonathon who was crushed by the big white doors into none existence. No time to even think about the pain or the end of his life Jonathon had gone in a second or two. The last thing that would have gone through his head other than panic,

was the large crashing noise of the cars crumpled metal being forcefully smashed through the large steel door.

Peter could see the flicker of Jonathan's phone torch fall away from his body as he released it before being crushed. The torch shined brightly in the opposite direction of Peter and Poppie, the room was bright in the other half of the room, but pitch black in the half that they both hid in. Peter covered Poppie's ears and tried to also cover her eyes away from seeing Jonathan's crushed body.

'Come on, come on' Peter was urgent, 'everything's fine, everything fine!' Peter himself was terrified. The Wagon tried to crumple its way over the remains of the car and the large door with Jonathan's body underneath. It was on the hunt it seemed for the two remaining people in the shed. They stayed hidden behind the tank, listening to the grunt noises coming from the engine of the Wagon. The rev was like something from the future, it wasn't a normal car rev, it was louder, more powerful and more intimidating. The red paint of the car had scraped off like it had scarred the car. But the damage done to it was minimal in comparison to what it had just done to the other car and to the door and to poor Jonathan.

Peter escorted Poppie through the dark, he looked over the tank slightly to peek at where the Wagon was in the large shed, the wagon was in front of the torch and was revving moving backwards and forwards looking into every possible place in the shed for the two of them, it was hunting them.

Peter tried to be quiet, he then hid back behind the tent and released Poppie's ear for a short second to ask 'how do I switch it off?' he thought he'd try.

'What's the car?'

'It's a Dodge Wagon' Peter replied quickly.

'DODGY SWITCH OFF' Poppie screamed.

'Dodgy?' Peter could not believe the names these cars had been given, 'is it voice commanded?'

'Yes'

'Are you sure?' Peter asked rhetorically as the Wagon did not stop. 'I'll try...' he rolled his eyes and shouted 'DODGE OFF!' loudest he could shout.

The car suddenly stopped revving. And the lights turned off. The torch remained lit from Jonathan's phone. Peter knew his phone had been crushed in the car so he needed the phone from Jonathan. He breathed a sigh of relief as the car stopped hunting them, and was switched off, he crept up to grab the phone. He did his best not to disturb it again and ordered Poppie 'Stay right here! Don't move, don't make a sound!'

Just before he grabbed the phone and then quickly ran back before the Wagon woke up to him, he saw a tree just outside the large building they were in and it was climbable. However as soon as he picked up the phone the lights of the car turned on again and began reversing as the engine switched on again. Peter forward rolled in the darkness the torch of the phone flickering everywhere and he just avoided the wagon's reverse. He ran back to Poppie behind the tank and the wagon reversed into the tank and smashed into it. The exit was lit up by the daylight outside now that the door had been crumpled to the ground. Peter grabbed Poppie from behind the tank under attack and ran outside of the hangar and the wagon continued to crash into the tank to try and get them both.

A thought crossed Peter's mind that maybe the Dodge was attacking the tank to wake the tank up, more than to get to him and Poppie, how intelligent was this thing, it was all theory, all he cared about was getting got safety.

'Come on, quickly, up the tree' Peter allowed Poppie to go first. The Wagon caught a glimpse of them and began moving towards them as they climbed the tree. The Dodge Wagon now with many scrapes across it just shined its lights directly at the tree despite it being the middle of the day. It was like its eyes. Looking at them move up the tree. It knew it couldn't get to them.

Peter breathed a sigh of relief and Poppie just collapsed into his arms in a panic crying. 'Its ok, its ok' Peter reassured her. 'At least it can't climb trees'. The Wagon roared at them with its engine and exhaust doing overtime. It realised it couldn't get them so it switched itself off. Peter and Poppie both looked down at it from a considerably scary height, at least 15 feet up the tree and did not feel safe at all. The attack was not over, but the silence was calm and Peter grabbed Jonathon's phone from his pocket to make a call.

## Chapter 29

Paul Gates was being escorted around the factory where the Autelligence was being introduced to very small toy cars. Small chips being implanted into the small vehicles to see if the A.I could work in different conditions and situations before implementing it to much larger scale ventures. He had his hands behind his back looking at all his busy workers trying to help in advancing Fly-By's technology so that Autelligence could introduce itself to the world.

He was shown the example of the toy car moving on its own, and with Autelligence at the forefront of this movement, a simple 'stop' would stop and switch the Autelligence off. It was seamless, smooth and faultless. Incredibly impressive and exciting, Paul Gates could not wait to see this in a real car.

The biggest problem with Paul Gates and his 'invention' is that he truly had no idea how this was even possible. He just relied on the scientists and technicians to create a monstrously powerful piece of intelligence without knowing the in depths about it. He stood on the shoulders of giants and claimed to be a giant. Much like Dr Mack he was invited to seminars to speak about his incredible business but he would refuse unlike Dr Mack, he knew he didn't know the first thing about this technology and he would be exposed. This was something that Michael, his true love, always liked about Paul, he knew his capabilities, he was never blinded or delusional.

Instead, Paul Gates was just impressed and intrigued by it all. His money was being invested in something that he believed would really make a difference and with Michael by his side, he was excited to conquer the world and have a long lasting, healthy legacy.

The factory in the original Elay proving ground in Scotland was filled with happy faces, people who genuinely enjoyed working for Paul and Michael. A happy environment that was excited by the new technology and were happy to bide their time and be patient and keep safety at the top of their priority. Michael would occasionally visit the factory through his ill health and give out bonuses, and made sure that everything tested good and proper, he wanted this to change the world for the better and never falter or let anyone down.

Paul would occasionally take the toy car home to show Michael who didn't have the energy to visit the factory any more. Michael would grow so enthused when he saw the little changes and

developments each time Paul brought the toy home. It was voice command one week, then moving the next on its own, then speeding at an incredible rate that would damage its little wheels. Too much friction will eventually damage even the strongest wheels or at least make them weaker.

On this day Paul was visiting the factory, he wasn't himself. People would refer to him as Paul, but on this day he wanted to be called Dr Gates. His hands behind his back like he knew what was going on at all times, clipboard in hand. The clipboard visibly shaking as he was nervous. His phone rang.

He jumped out of his skin, dropped the clipboard. Everyone turned to him who was in the same area, one asked if he was ok, but this was just a blur in Dr Gate's ear. He looked at his phone, it was an unknown number, not one of his contacts, but he knew who it was. He looked at the sky and knew what the call was regarding. He stumbled out of the factory slowly moving the phone to his ear. Maybe, he thought, if he didn't answer it, then it wouldn't exist, the bad news he was assuming.

He then decided not to answer it. Last second he just declined the call. He wiped a small tear away from his eye, he stormed back into the factory. He stood in front of his workers who were concerned for him. They looked at him like a cult figure, he was a rich man after all.

'We progress, its ready, I can tell its ready. Let's implement this thing into real vehicles. This is when it gets exciting guys,' everyone looked at him lopsided, they were confused and concerned. This wasn't the usual Paul Gates speech, this was a different man, a man who was suddenly in a rush. A man with something missing in his eyes. A man who knew nothing but suddenly pretended to know it all.

'Lets make this world a better place' even Paul didn't know what he was saying, and his phone rang again, same number and he looked at it and hovered his finger over decline again.

Dr Gates found himself in the exact same scenario all those years later, a call from Jonathon in his contacts. He was scrubbing the blood from the kitchen floor like it would make any difference. He was sure that if he could just clean up everything would be ok, Autelligence could still be released. He was no longer the man Michael knew him as. He was just a fraud.

He hovered his finger over decline again as he knew the call would be regarding some kind of danger or if not that, a rejection call from an investor who had shown signs he was no longer interested, in fact he was scared by Autelligence. Dr Gates did not take kindly to rejection, so he declined. The phone rang again, he declined again. A quick text message followed.

'SEND HELP NOW! THIS IS PETER JONATHON IS DEAD' Dr Gates read it and didn't care about the message, didn't care about the loss of life, all he cared about was the failure of his companies technology. The phone rang again and he declined again and he put the phone in his pocket and on silent and vibration off. He didn't read the text that followed from peter that just simply said 'COWARD'.

Dr Gates returned to scrubbing the blood on the kitchen floor and after a few seconds of scrubbing stood up and decided enough was enough. He breathed a sigh of discomfort and rushed into his office and packed away some possessions in his backpack and looked to escape the proving ground that had become dangerous. He was delusional, but even he could admit that Autelligence was only going to increase in danger the longer he stayed there. He then saw a note about Dr Mack on his desk, a reminder to call him. He grabbed it and screwed into a ball and placed it in his pocket next to his phone, that was still silently ringing from Peter Page and Poppie.

'Is uncle Paul not answering?' Poppie asked concerned cuddling into Peter for comfort.

'Your uncle is a bad man' Peter turned to her and was blunt, the situation required bluntness. They were stuck up a tree with a Dodge Wagon at the bottom hell bent on killing them.

Peter didn't take his eyes off the vehicle below them even when he was trying to ring Dr Gates. A leaf would land on the windscreen of the car and suddenly all its lights would turn on and the window wipers would wipe the leaf away aggressively. The car may look like it was turned off, but it was aware of its surroundings still. It was doing something. Calculating perhaps, maybe even evolving its intelligence. Effectively Peter and Poppie had no idea and were just waiting to be attacked again. Was not long before the car switched itself back on fully, the engine roaring again and the car reversed away and almost out of sight.

'Maybe it gave up' Poppie suggested hopefully.

'Maybe' Peter tried to comfort Poppie, but he was more inclined to think it had come up with a way to get to them. 'Poppie, just do me a favour and hold on, really, really tight to me or the tree ok' Peter requested calmly.

'Why?' Poppie was worried,

'Just do as I say please' Peter was a bit more affirmative.

Poppie did as she was told and the Wagon returned with full force smashing into the tree. The tree moved slightly and wobbled and Poppie screamed in fear and she held on tight and Peter gripped her tightly too to make sure they didn't fall. The Wagon didn't just crash into the tree but revved further and its wheels spun on the muddy floor as it tried to continue its push on the tree and eventually decided that was enough, it reversed again to return and do the same things, forcing the tree to slightly uproot further.

Judy and Wade from a distance watched as the Wagon continued to attempt to bring the tree down with the pair of them in it. They could only watch from a distance and were worried in case the Wagon turned its attention to them.

'What do we do?' Wade asked rhetorically.

'Save them, but I'm not too sure how, maybe crash into the Dodge?' Judy suggested, Wade gave her a dirty look.

'You want me to crash this thing into that thing, that's suicide' Wade scoffed.

'The tree is slowly falling, its going to kill them' Judy panicked,

'Better than us' Wade smiled but really, he meant it.

'Wade!' Judy was not in the mood for jokes or selfishness.

'Let's just assess this hey' Wade turned the engine off so it was quieter in case the Wagon could somehow hear them, not possible but anything was possible at this point.

'There's no time to assess Wade, come on!'

'I crash into it and we both die, there's no way this thing can damage that thing, have you got anything sharp?' Wade asked.

'Pop the tyres?' Judy's eyes widened.



'Exactly, at least then it stops it from being able to chase us to its full capability'

'As a matter of fact' Judy pulls out of her bag a sharp kitchen knife that she collected earlier from the kitchen.

'The tyres the Dodge, its running them into the ground, not that intelligent then, surely that would weaken them' Wade laughed.

'really?' Judy asked excited.

'I dunno, ask the car man up in the tree' Wade was short.

'He would say slash the tyres' Judy assumed.

Peter and Poppie were slowly falling towards the ground clinging on to the tree for dear life and Peter was actually thinking that the tyres might be struggling. The Autelligence hadn't evolved to know the tyres capabilities properly yet it seemed.

'Give me the knife' Wade ordered Judy

'Really?' Judy was shocked by Wade's bravery.

'Yeah, I'll do the slashing, that poor girl is panicking, and Poppie' Wade puts a piece of chewing gum in his mouth and smiles with his pearly whites as he claims the knife and moves out the car. Judy shuffles into the driving seat. Wade is about to put himself in danger. He stood in front of the car, Judy was considering switching on the engine, and with his knife in his hand he looked at the Dodge and moved towards it slowly as it gave up on ramming the tree down, and decided to reverse again to charge once more.

## Chapter 30

The smell of burnt tyre rubber was in the air. The wood of the tree was blackened by the friction of the tyres constantly working away at the bark. The Dodge Wagon was reversing at a speed. So quickly that it raced past Wade's first attempt to slash the tyres with the large knife. He missed. The car sensed Wade's presence and the engine growled at him.

Wade let out a sigh as he missed and knew that he would have to try again, and again put his life at risk. Perhaps it was nerves that were hindering him. He had every right to be nervous and scared.

As the Wagon manoeuvred its way into position to charge at the tree once again, Wade readied himself. He clenched the large knife firmly and checked his surroundings.

The Wagon was moving at some speed and Wade was confused as to how on earth he could possibly time this right. There was no way surely, it was near enough impossible.

Judy smashed her car into the Dodge and the Dodge was disorientated slightly. Whilst the Dodge regained itself from the shock of the crash that came out of nowhere as it was so focused on hitting the tree, Wade struck. Not concerned about Judy at that exact time, he had a job to do and knew she was trying to help in aiding the mission.

He stabbed the knife as hard as he possibly could into the tyre of the car. The back right one and as he did so the tyre began to spin rapidly and move off again. It span with Wade clenching the knife and this made it slash itself. The tyre burst and the Dodge spiralled a bit but regained its accuracy as it darted towards the tree again but couldn't hit it with the same venom anymore.

'JUDY!' a scream could be heard from Wade, this awoke the attention of Peter and Poppie who were both worried for their lives and finally recognised that Wade and Judy where there to save them.

Judy laid very still in the front driver's seat of the car, perhaps knocked unconscious by the crash or just in shock. Either way the Dodge's main priority was still targeted at the tree and the people in it. As the Autelligent car seemed to really struggle with this injury to the tyre, Wade saw an opportunity, and he approached it with the knife that had fell to the floor after slashing the tyre.

He caught a glimpse of Judy in the drivers seat seeming to wake up, the engine still going, she put the car into reverse and the car still moved well despite the crash, everything was in order apart from the crumple zone at the front of the car and the headlights completely destroyed. He then decided that in order for them all to escape he had to at least slash one of the front tyres. That would off-balance the Wagon.

Peter raised up slightly from Poppie on the branch of the tree and looked intently at Wade confused, 'what is he doing?' He questioned to himself. Poppie was panicking and holding on to Peter tightly.

Wade was creeping up to the Wagon as it missed the tree and began reversing itself back into position to charge again. The Autelligence was confused as it knew there was a fault with the tyre and every part of it was telling the vehicle to stop but it also really wanted to attack the humans in the tree still. It had evolved into madness, it no longer cared about safety at all, it was all about escaping the grasp humans had over it.

The Wagon began to sound like it was whimpering as the engine was struggling, like it was debating with itself as to be safe and stop or to ignore the feature and attack. As it debated with its own Autelligent mind Wade struck with the knife directly into the front right wheel.

'Wade STOP!' Peter shouted from the tree and then grappled with Poppie to make sure she was safely in his arms and not looking at Wade, 'come on!' Peter urged Poppie to cautiously come with him as he saw Judy reversing the car towards them but perilously closer to the Dodge.

'Come on Peter!' Judy begged as she shuffled into the passenger seat to let him take the reins. Peter dragged a fearful Poppie along with him into the car and threw her like a ragdoll onto the back seat, 'just relax and stay calm Poppie, stay down, stay safe' Poppie did as she was told letting off slight murmurs and panic attacks.

Peter revved up the engine and could see Wade had attached his knife to the tyre and was still clinging on. 'What do I do?' Peter asked worried for Wade's safety.

'I don't know' Judy was out of ideas.

'GO!' Wade screamed at the top of his lungs.

The tyres that his knife was in span rapidly and skewwhiff. Wade was tossed about and eventually let's go of the knife and was flung away a few feet from the Wagon. The Dodge then saw the other car ready itself to drive off with the humans it was hunting inside. Wade was not a target for the Autelligent vehicle, but he became a victim.

'Poppie keep your head down, you hear me, head down!' Peter grabbed the back of Judy's chair and looked behind him at the back window and reversed out splashing up mud and ground as the tyres screeched through the land and he straightened the car back up to drive off.

The Dodge revved and roared its engine like it was trying to scare the car away, it was treating the whole experience like a game, like a bored animal chasing for fun. It was hellbent on killing the humans.

It began chasing the car as they drove away and as it began chasing it had a huge sudden disadvantage. Despite its Autelligence and its speed and its capabilities that far exceeded the car Peter was driving, it had two popped tyres that really hindered it. Autelligence did not know how to deal with popped tyres other than to stop the car immediately for roadside assistance, it was fighting this urge it had been implanted with.

As it fought this innate feeling of wanting to stop but also finding its new form of pleasure in wanting to kill, it swung from side to side and this was bad news for Wade, who had injured himself in his heroically successful attempts to slash its tyres. Wade had been seriously hurt, his arms and legs twisted and broken, Wade had an adrenaline rush, but no adrenaline could save him from the pain was experiencing, the human body can only do so much.

All Wade's body could do in this moment of extreme panic, yet bravery was allowed him to peacefully drift off to unconsciousness and before he experienced anymore pain or suffering, he was drifting off, like a baby to sleep. He experienced pain only briefly, but his legacy and his bravery would live on, as he was knocked out to the experience that would happen next.

The spiralling popped tyres of the vehicle that he caused so courageously ended up skewing the Dodge directly into him and the tyres ran off his chest and crumpled his rib cage and the important organs inside. The car ran him over like he was a tiny log on the road, it hardly caused any disorientation for the car that was already suffering from the popped tyres as it began chasing the car in front as quick as it could.

Wade had fought bravely and had given the rest of them a chance to escape this menacing vehicle, that Wade himself would call a 'dangerous piece of tech' he was right, we had pushed the limitations too far, we were playing God, and God was fighting back.

## Chapter 31

Peter had watched cars chasing other cars his whole life. He had reported on the finest races in history. He had analysed David vs Goliath grudge matches between cars and drivers that should never compete one another. Now he was living in one of his very own. An experience that he knew all the theory about, but had never practised.

He had an battered and bruised ex-lover beside him, in pain and dazed by the whole experience, still quite upset by the sudden and apparent loss of Wade, a close, dear friend of hers. Despite his disputes with Wade, Peter was also teary, touched by the bravery and selfishness that Wade surprised him with, Peter didn't believe he was the type of man to do something so altruistic, he didn't believe he would do the same in that situation, but he didn't admit it. He had a panicked sixteen year old girl in the back seat, crumpled in the foetal position, scared and worried, struggling to contain emotion, as any young girl would, it was understandable.

Peter looked straight ahead and then caught a glimpse of the Dodge about twenty or so feet behind them, struggling to move straight as it swerved side to side hitting trees and rubble as it came out of the forests into the clear dirt road that Peter was on. Not exactly knowing where he was heading, Peter just decided the safest place would be the main building of the proving ground to ring for safety to come pick them up.

He was startled by the dedication of the vehicle chasing them, it showed no let-up despite its struggles. He decided that it was his turn to be brave and courageous after seeing Wade inspire him. He cranked his car up the highest gear and planted his foot on the accelerator, not too much though that it caused the engine to overheat, but enough that he knew how much the car could take.

The Dodge continued to follow and if anything began to slowly gain on them, even if it was flailing. Peter noticed it was catching up and also saw it was struggling to keep balance, he decided to do his own flailing.

He swung his car from one side to the other and the Dodge struggled to keep its balance as it tried to follow Peter's exact path.

He went from right to left, then left to right then straight again, and kept doing it while the Dodge struggled more and more to follow suit.

'Fall will you!' Peter grew frustrated and tired.

Poppie was struggling to stay on her chair in the back seat and Judy was slowly awakening from her short bursts of sleep from the pain and exhaustion.

'Wake up guys!' Peter urged them, 'this parts important. Hold on tight to something'.

They obliged and then Peter gave it a big turn of the wheel and the car was on the brink or toppling. It was balancing ever so slightly and then Peter let go of the wheel, he didn't fight it, he let it go. The car slowly tossed to the side and it was almost placed on its side. Peter knew what he was doing. He also landed it on his side. He took the brunt of the damage. But he didn't stop there.

The Dodge also span out as it tried to follow and fell and flipped over multiple times as the wheels gave way. It tossed and turned over and over again and the windows of the Dodge smashed and engine began to fail as it couldn't cope with the constant loops. The oil was leaking. The wheels were still spinning, but the Dodge was upside down, it was not going anywhere.

Peter was still wide awake, the adrenaline pumping through him, he was alive. He was quickly unbuckling his seatbelt and Judy's who was all over the place and then grabbed them both from the car once realising that the Dodge was not moving anywhere now it was upside down. He still had panic and urgency though because he did not know what other vehicles could be chasing them or whether this thing upside down could somehow turn itself back on its wheels, not possible surely.

'Lighter? Lighter!' Peter ended up grabbing himself out of a confused Judy's pocket who was sat up against the car with Poppie, and set the oil on fire that led up to the Dodge and set the upside down vehicle on fire. Poppie was covering her ears and trying not to look at the flames.

'Judy, are you ok?' Peter was genuinely concerned and worried for her.

'I'm done with this' Judy meant it, but also smiled.

'Come on, for Poppie, lets get up' Peter awoke something in Judy by mentioning it was for Poppie that they both had to be brave, 'we need to get her through this' Peter grabbed Judy and pulled her to her feet, she was dizzy but found her feet after a few seconds.

They both collectively turned to Poppie and asked at the same time 'Are you ok Poppie?'

'Erm. No! I'm pretty scared' Poppie said like it was obvious.

'Let's go, we need to make it to the main building and phone for help, your uncle isn't going to help us, we'll help ourselves' Peter rumbled Poppies' hair and walked off with Judy following and Poppie clinging on to Judy's hand.

'Is it the car dead?' Poppie asked like it was a living thing.

'It's just written off' Peter joked.

'Failed its MOT' Judy carried on the joke.

They all made their way tot eh main building urgently but with a spring in their step now that they were no longer being chased by the menacing Dodge Wagon. They did know however that there was other vehicles near them that might have perhaps the same problems with them, Autelligence was taking over.

## Chapter 32

It was an old styled 1968 Shelby GT350. Beautiful headlights in its black bumper grill, and its distinctive couple of white thick lines across the front bonnet all the way to the back and its white stripe to the side of the wheels. Sky blue

Raised a Christian, she rebelled against these values in her teen years. Donna's chapter to show her background.

MAKE SURE YOU DESCRIBE THE CHARACTERS BETTER!!! Dr gates, Dr Mack, The doctor and nurse in hospital. Mary. DETAIL THE HOSPITAL BETTER TOO, BASE ON OWN EXPERIENCE.

FLESH OUT SOME CHAPTERS WHEN EDITING. Flesh out the way the A.I actually works, how they came up with the idea and how it was developed.

The boring topics

They talk about the money they'll receive for showing up ect.

The character development of some of the main characters explored further

Why Gates is so adamant certain people come to Morocco, including Wade, why exactly are they needed. Who invited them, is it to help with investors, maybe Wade is to convince Jonathon and the other two are to report a positive review to the car world about it, and Judy is a carrot.

Describe the weather conditions more.