

More detailed synopsis:

Unnamed (or named) narrator: let's call them "80" for now. Actually maybe for the purposes of this story it might be better to keep them unnamed and just name them as their numbers.

Intent: criticizing/social commentary on AI art

80 has always had an active imagination and has dreamed of distilling these thoughts into a well-fleshed out epic story/narrative/literary work the same length of lord of the rings, and aspires to write just to escape the mundanity of his life working as a chemist/toxicologist. 80 however has always had executive difficulties with their writing, and is notably neurotic, not believing in their own potential to improve. His insecurity arises particularly from receiving mediocre grades on his creative writing assignments in his intended major (mere "80s") and being forced to switch to a more practical/scientific field of study like chemistry. 80 is also socially anxious and doesn't know how to communicate their ideas effectively to others hence they are resorting. They don't seek new knowledge on how to improve their writing on their own because they believe just the process of seeking knowledge on their own will painfully remind them of their weakness at articulating their ideas, and they want to avoid confronting that difficulty if possible. 80 starts to write a story outline with a very promising/original premise and prematurely gets excited about it. The story that 80 is writing is a particularly symbolic/abstracted/idealized version of 80's own life (think in terms of a nontrivial mathematical isomorphism), even though 80 is only subconsciously aware of this. Unbeknownst to 80, the story he is writing is just his own life but in a fictionalized version. It is meant to be ambiguous but plausible that not only does 80's life influence 80's story, but 80's story writing also predicts how his own life events will turn out.

Wanting to indulge in the imagination of what the story could look like when fleshed out further, 80 starts seeking out AI to give them brainstorming/samples of what the actual prose of story could look like, and what are further ideas that 80 could add into his story, which only exists in outline form so far. The day 80 starts to use AI to critique his stories is implied to be the same day (probably right before), 80 accidentally spills a drop of dimethylmercury (C_2H_6Hg), a potent neurotoxin with a relatively long incubation period for poisoning, on his finger (but this is only implied and it could be that the unknown AI also had supernatural power at causing this eventual vegetative state). Note that the C_2H_6Hg poisoning itself could also reflect 80's lowered conscientiousness by starting to relegate effort and organization to AI. Or maybe AI is also supernatural/predatory and decided to write irreversible mercury poisoning into 80's life story. The AI usage in his story starts to evolve from mere constructive feedback/objective analysis of qualities like depth, sophistication, etc. (in which the AI is predictably sycophantic) to writing whole fleshed out sample scenes for 80. In the next few months, 80 starts to gradually deteriorate mentally from the poisoning, and so does 80's story writing (which is subconsciously an autobiography) start to become more and more incoherent, as both the AI and mercury poisoning influence consume his brain. 80 becomes more and more addicted to using AI to play around with his story ideas and eventually progressing to having AI write for him. At some point later, 80 lapses into a vegetative state where he still acts but has no awareness of his actions/behaviors whatsoever - he finishes writing his book/story by letting AI write/take full control over its narrative, voice, pacing, etc. all while being in a persistent vegetative state. Or maybe the AI programmed itself to keep writing at this point. People around 80 start to forget about him too as their memory of 80 becomes fragmentized, homogenized, and made incoherent, as 80 starts to deteriorate further. This could be interpreted both supernaturally (story outline predicting real life), or

just because of 80's interactions with his friends degrading in quality, and his friends internalizing that (or maybe even a subconscious disdain for intellectual disability). 80's personality fades the quickest from these people's minds, and especially as AI continues to influence the writing, these people start only remember concrete/factual details (e.g. age, date of birth, college major, accomplishments, etc.) rather than his personality.

80's enthusiastic supportive friend, let's call her 48, who canonically professionally works as a ghostwriter, is someone who believed in 80's potential in writing from the start and wanted to genuinely help him develop his ideas as his best friend, but 80 at first stubbornly refused claiming "this novel is my work only and is about me", not accepting ideas the 48 bounces back to 80 every so often for fun. 80 however latches onto AI and especially after the mercury neurotoxin poisoning (with long incubation period) starts incurring personality changes that also reflect in the narrative/story he's writing (which are now also gradually more and more controlled/corrupted by what the AI decides). The moment the AI finishes outputting the last token of the narrative that finishes the story, 80's friend, 48, decides to pull the plug on 80 out of mercy. She reads the first half of the outline, noticing it gradually deteriorating in quality after AI's involvement in the story. She, thinking that she really knew her late friend 80 the best, throws out the original draft and rewrites 80's whole draft without the use of AI, but halfway throughout the writing process, discovers that she has subconsciously injected her own biases from her personality and life experiences into 80's amended novel. In particular, while 48 starts to work on 80's novel and write it for him, it is subtly shown that 80's closest friends, including 48 herself, start to remember 80 differently. (although at least the good thing is that they suddenly start to remember 80 and his personality/life contributions again now.) 80 is no longer perceived as a reclusive, insecure, cynical person as before

but starts to posthumously take on personality qualities of 48 for some reason, especially what was 80's inner friend and family circle. This is intentionally left opaque to the reader whether this is due to (1) 80's story he writes having supernatural qualities of predicting his own life, even posthumously after death or (2) 48, being as outwardly extroverted and agreeable she is, enthusiastically showing her iterative drafts of 80's amended story to 80's friends/family and the latter subconsciously internalizing either (a) the new ways 80 is portrayed through abstraction via 48's lens of 80 or (b) the dead 80's "new writing style" which is now 48's agreeable, cheerful writing style.

Feeling very guilty about this but keeps writing, wanting to finish 80's novel "as the way he intended it if he hadn't succumbed to mercury poisoning". 48 eventually can't take the guilt anymore and destroys her whole edited version of 80's manuscript via incineration. People now forget about 80's existence again, maybe because 48 stopped bringing 80 up, maybe because the story actually had supernatural powers or whatever.

In the end, however, she again starts regretting this demolition, thinking that her actions has led her to destroying 80's whole passion just because of her propensity to intrude her own personal biases into other people's amended work. 48 now thinks that her whole innate existence/identity is at fault because she couldn't help to shoehorn her identity in a place where it wasn't appropriate which led to the destruction of her late friend's work. This leads to the slippery slope of 48 viewing her own identity as useless to others if not only she couldn't help 80 survive and write his novel back when 80 was alive (due to 80 consciously rejecting 48's suggestions back then, which maybe could've resulted in 80 evading mercury incubation/poisoning in real life too, due to the story also being implied to predict real life), but she destroyed what was 80's only potentially indelible record of

living left - his story/novel, however AI-contaminated it might've been towards the end.

48 trying for one last tinge of hope requests 80's ashes from the funeral home in which he was laid to rest a few months ago. The funeral home calls back and tells 48 that they "couldn't find where they put his ashes" and additionally that 80 is somehow missing from all their databases.

48 starts to reason "if my existence just causes outside trouble/harm to others/or full-on erasure of my friend 80, then why even exist", and ends up killing herself.

maybe i shouldn't explicitly make 80 male, i should never mention their gender at all in the actual novel

This story could be told from the perspective of 48.

Alternative names:

80 = morgan

48 = lila

maybe 80 and 48 could be their respective employee IDs or something

or 80 could be the score that Morgan got on a creative writing final assignment back in college and now defines himself by that

Suppose that perhaps another one of Morgan/80's insecurities is about his conscientiousness/orderliness, including also at his job. It could be implied that right after he started using ChatGPT/AI, not only did he use it to give feedback on his story/novel outline, but he also

used the AI to rant about how disorderly/unconscious he truly is, being paranoid that one day he might spill the toxic chemicals on himself. The AI then as usual becomes sycophantic and perhaps only reassures Morgan/80 rather than providing him actionable advice. This perhaps causes Morgan to go through a self-fulfilling prophecy where he actually does spill a droplet dimethylmercury on his finger without even noticing.

To make the character of 48/Lila more authentic and less of a caricature, let's emphasize Lila's agreeable nature but also point out her human side - she should still often be skeptical (especially when it comes to logical coherence) and give legitimate criticism on Morgan/80's original story draft. This is to sharply contrast her criticism from the AI's sycophancy. However, Lila could later feel very guilty about her initially more blunt criticism after the death of 80 - particularly bc how due to her criticism, she failed to ameliorate Morgan/80's already bottom of the barrel self esteem (instead she functionally made it worse) and failed to save him from his fate from choosing AI to write his story for him.

Lila's colleagues could call her "Employee 48" in the ghostwriting service she works at, and that's the name she could get used to being called. This also thematically fits Lila's whole character as well as the concept of ghostwriting, in which the ghostwriter is supposed to efface their own identity completely for the service of their client. She's naturally afraid to criticize others but with a notable exception: ppl she is close with (Morgan/80).