# Day 1

It’s been two years since we last saw the sun. When the grey metal eroded our sky as we knew it, there had been many different reports. Scientists said it was a by-effect of quantum physics, a leap forward in our understanding of the word. The prophets said God’s mercies were finally exhausted and had turned his eyes away from us. The conspiracy theorist called it the scheme of the New World Order, a bid to enslave all of humanity.

Most of us had held on to some small hope, that soon it would go away, that the metal sky would simply slip away as it had slipped in, that prayers, or protests, or petitions would simply undo all of it. We would learn quickly the harsh realities of our new world. Between the executions of vocal protesters, and the quiet disappearance of denouncers of the government, the realization had creeped in, that none of this would change any time soon, and that why this came to be did not really matter. This was our reality and we had to live it. There was nothing else to it.

My name is M-12. In the old world, I bore a different name. And like all old names, it meant something. Each string of syllables a story of the hopes that ushered me into the world. Now, we fear to utter such names. Our new names are rid of such luxuries. Like mass produced goods, each name serves only to identify.

In the new world, I work as a debugger. I serve my mandatory daily 9-hour shift at a place that was simply referred to as the Dome. What I do is simply correct the irregularities in the system. A stream two second late. An identity ten minutes late to his shift. I sift all of these out. What would happen afterwards was not my concern. My job was to identify. I tried not to think of the fact that the ‘bug’ could be someone I knew, that they could disappear simply from me doing my job. Everyone did what they could to survive. That is all we can afford to do.

I have lived like this for the past eighteen months, quietly, simply, a simple part of the machine. Three days before the day that was known as Christmas in the old world, a simple event would occur. If I knew then, how much it would change the course of my life, and in turn the course of our world, perhaps I would have turned away, and continue to live as I lived.

I should say, I have always been a simple man. In the old world, I was thoroughly unexceptional. I had no grand dreams. I went through school an average student, finished, and was contented with the routine of waking and going to work. In retrospect, perhaps, this was why I fit in so easily into the new world. I already lived in a grey, joylessness. When the whole world became a mirror of my life, perhaps, I was the only soul who had rejoiced.