The Starcaster was a simple hotel. The building stood two stories tall at the end of town. It was an easy stop right off the main road. It was run down a bit, but that matched the rest of the town.

The lobby was full of visitors for a Remembrance happening in town. Every year the town celebrated a Remembrance. Three days filled of food, fun, and entertainment during the day. At night they would remember what liberties the government had taken away from them. It was a way of remembering who they were and who they are now. The costs of war had been high. Many lost their lives. Many lost their homes. It was the way things turned out to be.

Eugene headed towards the stairs. Passing by people who gave him dirty looks. Word had spread fast that he was in town looking for someone. Possibly there to stir up trouble with the Remembrance celebration. As he walked through the lobby people blocked off his access causing him to go around them. His bionic arm twitched and squealed. He would need to regenerate it soon, if not he wouldn’t have an arm to use.

Upstairs, Eugene entered the hotel room. It was a simple one bed room. The bed was a queen size and sat against the wall. On the other side of the room was a bathroom. Eugene stepped in the bathroom and turned on the water. Splashing cold water on his face he dried off with a towel. There was a sign on the mirror. Hot water out, hope to have it fixed by end of week. Management.

He sighed. Great, no hot water for this trip. Oh well, could be worse. There could be no water at all.

Crossing the bedroom, Eugene removed his robotic arm and plugged it in for the night. He settled down on the bed. The bed was a little lumpy. Something he expected upon coming to a lower income town. The pillow was lumpy as well. He would have to make due. Eugene hoped he could get his job over quickly and be home soon. He had no problems serving the capitol, Eugene just wished the outlying colonies were better kept up.

He didn’t understand their ways. Computers and technology were the way to go. People could learn faster and understand things better with technology. These people had abandoned almost all forms of it, and what did that leave them? They became a third world country overnight. When the most advanced piece of equipment was an electric light, or a nozzle for running water or filling a beer glass, there was something wrong with that.

Oh well, it didn’t matter. As long as Eugene kept his cool they could pour beer out of a garden hose for all he cared. His duties were clear. Get the girl back. Don’t cause any trouble and be sure not to burn down the town. The capitol, though evil, had to at least appear to look interested in all of the citizens. If a lawman burned down a town and killed innocent people. Well that would just be bad press. No one would trust them ever again.

Picking up a magazine, Eugene looked through it. A catalogue for western clothing. They had everything from boots, to hats, to belt buckles. Everything a person could ever want to fit in with the town. He laughed at the thought and set it aside.

There was a newspaper on the nightstand. Eugene picked it up and started reading. The date was current, that was a relief. He frowned at the headlines. The majority of them were anti capitol. Eugene knew they had the freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but it was too much. Enough to cause riots in the streets of the capitol, well if these people ever made it to the capitol. Not many people traveled from the colonies to the capitol anymore. There weren’t enough resources and the journey took well over a month by foot. Eugene sighed. Another good thing about this place. They could stay in their old civilization all they wanted, as long as they didn’t cause trouble in the capitol, they could live in peace.

Setting the newspaper down a thought struck him. What if that’s what they wanted. What if all they wanted to do was live in peace? Putting aside the technology issues, all they wanted was to be left alone.

Eugene chuckled. Well if that’s all they want, they didn’t move far enough from the capitol. There were always lawmen coming out to the colonies checking in on things. Some had specific missions like Eugene had. Others just were there to make sure rents were paid and the capitol received its share of what was owed them. He could see where they were coming from. No one forced them to live outside of the capitol. If they could afford it, they could live in the best of luxuries too. But they would have to pay for it.

Trying to get comfortable, Eugene attempted to sleep. Easier said than done. He felt a box spring poking through the mattress. It would be a restless night indeed.

Hours passed. Eugene laid in bed staring at the ceiling. A cool breeze filtered in through the window. The curtains danced along with the breeze. Outside, the sound of horses walking down the pavement could be heard. The sounds of their shoes hitting the asphalt made a light chopping sound. These sounds were followed by a wagon wheel rolling across the pavement. People were delivering their late night / early morning goods to stores.

Eugene got out of bed and walked towards the window. He looked out at the street below. It was dark out still. The only lights were from the candle lit street lamps.

The same thoughts he had that evening kept going through his mind. How could people live like this? Eugene didn’t even want to think about their health care system. What kind of hospital would they have? Surely they wouldn’t be able to sterilize a person enough to clean up wounds. A gunshot would mean certain death to the wounded.

Eugene checked his bionic arm. It had a full charge. He unplugged it from the wall and set it on a nearby chair where it would wait till morning when he put it back on. He hated the thing. It always served as a reminder of what he lost. The cost of survival. If he could, Eugene would rather not live with the arm. Do without. He could survive off one arm, it wasn’t rocket science.

His superiors ordered the arm. They said it would put a more human look about him when he went about his duties. A more human look. What more human would people need than his own flesh and blood face? He shook his head. If anything, the arm would give off a robotic complexion that would force him to hide it. It was clear if he wanted to keep his job and keep his pension, Eugene would have to wear the arm and live with it.

That was just the facts, and he had to accept it.

Looking back to the window, Eugene smiled. The cool air felt good. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes. So this is what these people hear at night. He mused. He felt at peace. It was a different peace than he was used to in the capitol. Eugene didn’t like different. He preferred things be a certain way. Change was something he never enjoyed.

Eugene reminded himself that it was only an assignment. Before long he could go back home and be in his own bed. Be among the things in life that he enjoyed.

Turning back to his bed, Eugene started to climb back in.

That’s when he heard it.

A woman screamed out for help.