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### PART - II

**S**he took out a gun and shot me in the head. It all blacked out. I couldn't hear anything or feel anything; it was like I really was dead, so that's what after death is—no heaven, no hell, no afterlife, just pure darkness.

Then, my eyes opened, and from what I could tell, I was in a bunker; various papers were stuck to the walls, ceiling, and ground everywhere. They all had one thing in common: they all had various types of lines drawn on them; some of them had calculations and formulas that I didn't understand. I look around, and I see an old man in rusty old clothes.

I stood from the metal cuboid that I was on and slowly grabbed a metal rod, and before I could strike him, he turned around and said, "You're awake, finally. After so many years, I've saved you."

"What are you talking about, old man?" I said to him,  
He replied, "Alan, it's me, Eric."

I had a dozen questions, like how is he so old, how am I alive,

where's Runa, and so many more, but they all got cleared by listening to his second flashback.

He said, "After she betrayed me, I understood her plan, so I went underground into a bunker like this one. She, on the other hand, killed you and everyone else on that ship; she let the scientists live so they could create a cure for Linear.

And with the help of the original serum Linear, which they found in one of my bunkers, they succeeded, and then they were murdered by her. She revived some of the humanity and trapped them in a dome covering as much area as New York.

She held the last of the cure and the original serum. Whomsoever she revived, she took their loved ones as hostages and forced them to work for her. In a few years, she built a perfect empire with everything, but not everyone. She held absolute power; whoever stood against her faced a fate worse than death.

Then, 40 years later... they found me, her soldiers took me in, and I saw her for the first time in years, but one thing stood out to me: she had a necklace of a material I had never seen before.

She told me that after I went underground, an extraterrestrial being, an alien ship, appeared on Earth, having four extraterrestrial beings. They were pacifist explorers, going to pacifist planets only, but they made a mistake coming to Earth.

Since mindless Linears roamed the Earth, there was no visible conflict in over 20 years. They went there hoping for peace and prosperity, but all they found was pain.

She took three of them captive and experimented on the fourth one. Her scientists, with the help of the aliens, created a spaceship big enough to cross the space and reach the pacifists' home planet. 2 wars over 3 years, and due to Runa's superior

firepower, they won.

Then she went on a rampage; they had a map of planets that were pacifists, and she took them over.

She was now the dictator of seven planets, and then she went to the armed planets. I was in my bunker, trying to find ways to save you. I had a small farm, cows, and a well for water. I had no idea that over the course of a mere 40 years, she took over 36 planets and 3 whole solar systems.

Runa told me that they had found something new: everything is made of matter, matter is made up of atoms, an atom consists of an electron, a proton, and a neutron, and a neutron consists of a Chronyte, which is always reacting with Aeonir, which is present everywhere but in different amounts, causing Chronyte to release a pheromone called Chroniscent that causes everything to age.

She wanted me to experiment with it and create something that could keep her young forever. And I did so; I created a serum. When you take it, you'll regain a few years you've lost. It will make you younger by a mere 20 years.

But then I betrayed her; I used the research of my life, Linear, and the serum X to create a way to time travel.

Linear and serum X gave me a body that could sustain itself when being exposed to pure Chronyte. And my new research . . . well, all in all, I was able to create an organic time travel machine.

Then I saved you, and all we now have to face is Runa, or at least you're expecting me to say that. After I went through time and saved you. An anomaly was created; a being that looked like you was born from dust on the tiles where you died. It was pure black, and it multiplied into millions and millions of itself.

When I returned to my time, it was everywhere, and it was

hunting . . . you.

I hid for a few years, and it had killed every human I knew except for Runa. I believe it is because she frequently takes the serum Zyrum, which means “youth” in an alien language.

Welcome to the future, Alan. It’s been 189 years since you died.”

“189 years?” I said to him, “You took the Zyrum as well.”

Eric answered, “Yes, I was too scared to die, knowing that I failed.”

So much has happened since I died, and this time, the apocalypse has taken over the galaxy. The circumstances couldn’t look any worse, but trust me, it got worse.

Eric rushed to me and said, “I bring bad news.”

I replied to him, “And I thought it couldn’t get worse.”

Eric continued, “I have detected someone traveling through time. I believe it is Runa who took my time machine, since she is the only one alive aside from us.”

I said, “But why?”

Eric answered, “She must be trying to fix things.”

I said with a shocked voice, “You can do that!?”

Eric answered, “Yes, but you must have proper knowledge of what you’re doing; otherwise, it’s like throwing a C-Quadratrical nuke without a guess of which solar system you target.”

I then gave him the all-confused-and-amazed look.

He then sighed and said, “It’s like throwing a nuke without knowing which country your target is in.”

I said to him, “Then, we just need someone who has proper knowledge of how this works; we’re going to the future.”

Eric had a prototype of the time machine; it had only one fault: you had to navigate yourself through time, but Eric had

made a set of navigational inputs that would tell the system where to go, without them having to navigate manually. So yeah, it wasn't a problem.

Next thing I knew, we were off to save the universe and possibly all of time. What I didn't realize was that I am not saving anyone; I am the one who brought the linear apocalypse galaxy-wide.

I was standing in a room, I suppose; it was pitch black there, and I could see no difference between the sky and the floor. It seemed infinite at first glance. But it wasn't. Eric had betrayed me.

He brought me to a time prison. For crimes I haven't committed . . . yet.

Apparently, I created the Linear X. After Eric saved me, I spent my time researching, and there was no Linear X back then, but a hundred years later, I turned evil. I created Linear X to wipe out life from the face of the galaxy. I had learned all there is to know about time and the universe.

Eric and Runa were the only two people who had taken Zyrum aside from me. And so they were safe.

Eric said to me, "This time prison has its effect on all times, meaning that since I kidnapped and trapped you here, all the future versions of you are also going to be trapped here. And so, Linear X won't exist. I'm sorry, Alan, I couldn't let you die, and I also couldn't let you live freely."

He used the time machine and left me here.

I was now alone, trapped in a prison I've never even heard about before, and for some reason, I didn't want to escape. I guess the reason is obvious. But then, the prison of white cubes started to break apart and fall into blackness.

## PART - II

So, I ran . . . and ran, and ran, and ran, cubes falling behind me, until it reached me, and then I fell into the blackness.

I saw a man in a black mask, wearing a black coat and black pants, with white hair. He was walking up a white staircase.

He said, “Yo, it’s as if I’m looking in a mirror.” He took off his mask, “but not quite.”

I had that weird feeling you get when you’re in trouble because of someone but still feel happy to see them.

I asked him, “Tell me something . . . was Eric lying about his backstory?”

He answered, “Not everything . . . after Eric saves me, we create a resistance against Runa’s empire, and we create Zyrum of our own, and we fight for years, approximately 200 years. We won.

And then we parted; he went his own way, and I went my own . . . I learned all there is to know, how our universe began and how it will end . . . A being, the personification of darkness, was trapped trillions of years ago, and now He is free.

I first created a device that made me, well, not age anymore; it was permanent Zyrum. Then I created Linear X to wipe out everyone in my timeline, since Dark, that’s what I have been calling him, gets his power from life in our universe . . . So I created a plan to stop him, and that required another version of me,” he said while poking me, “This version of me.”