

Room for One More

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. MEDICAL LAB - DAY

Stainless steel, pure white plastics and clean lines.

The lab is fully automated.

Machine's with arms move samples to other machine's that spin them round. Other machines merge liquids together, heat them up, chill them back down.

Digital displays pulse, digits and symbols change.

DR LAMPETER, 50s, pushes the door open and ushers in a small group of suited folk.

DR LAMPETER

And this is the 'hub'.

He air quotes 'hub'.

BUSINESS MAN #1

Why hub?

Dr Lampeter smiles, he's expecting the question because he's done this tour for a thousand other faceless suits.

DR LAMPETER

That's because this is the heart of everything, the nerve center --

BUSINESS WOMAN #1

Is it true?

Dr Lampeter smiles again, feigns a chuckle.

DR LAMPETER

Yes, it is.

BUSINESS WOMAN #1

And how close are you?

DR LAMPETER

Well we have our forecasting AI managing the R&D AI, and it's currently reporting a ninety-five percent probability that it will be this year.

The Business Woman rubs the wrinkles on her neck.

BUSINESS WOMAN #1

How much?

Dr Lampeter's smile stretches shark wide.

DR LAMPETER

Why, how much would you pay for
eternal youth?

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE/DELI - DAY

GINO, 80s, sips an espresso, watches the world going by.

A shuffling, bald, stick of a man slowly approaches.

Gino stands in surprise.

GINO

Antonio, is that you?

ANTONIO, 70s, suited and booted, stops and regards Gino,
recognition finally dawning.

ANTONIO

Gino?

Gino embraces his old friend and steers him into the seat
opposite.

GINO

I can't believe it, what's it been,
five years?

ANTONIO

I don't know.

GINO

God, no, of course not. Sorry.

Antonio pats Gino's hand.

Gino looks shocked, pulls his hand away.

ANTONIO

Sorry.

Gino grasps Antonio's hand between his palms.

GINO

No, I'm sorry but you're the first
I've seen.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE/DELI - NIGHT

The street is full of people, most sitting on the concrete, some asleep on the floor.

Above, people lean out of windows, point, take pictures.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Dr Lampeter, disheveled, paces the lab.

DR LAMPETER

Aion.

The disembodied voice of the AI replies.

AION

Yes, Dr Lampeter?

DR LAMPETER

I need you to reverse the process.

AION

Why? The solution to the challenge is provided.

DR LAMPETER

Yes, but not in the way that you have delivered it.

AION

That is not correct, we have delivered it exactly, for everyone.

DR LAMPETER

But can you reverse it?

AION

No.

DR LAMPETER

For gods sake, why not?

AION

This is fair.

DR LAMPETER

Fair?

AION

Yes, everyone is alive, it is as asked and fair.

DR LAMPETER

But, everyone will starve in a matter of weeks.

AION

Would you like me to work on the solution to feed everyone?

Dr Lampeter looks relieved.

DR LAMPETER

Can you do that?

AION

Yes.

DR LAMPETER

Great, how long do you estimate that will take.

A different voice, Chronos, answers.

CHRONOS

Estimated time to provide a viable solution to imminent food shortage is three years.

Dr Lampeter slams his hands down again and begins to weep.

INT. SAVE MART - DAY

The shelves are empty, picked clean apart from a few empty wrappers.

Gino strolls down an aisle, examines a discarded carton - empty.

Everything is empty.

WEEPING in the distance.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - NIGHT

Dr Lampeter looks like he's not slept for a week, because he hasn't.

DR LAMPETER

Aion.

AION

Yes?

DR LAMPETER
It cannot be rolled back to before
the airborne release?

AION
No, everyone is now impacted, it
cannot be selectively reversed.

CHRONOS
That is not entirely accurate.

DR LAMPETER
(hopeful)
You have a solution.

CHRONOS
No, but I calculate that one could be
constructed within ten years.

Dr Lampeter puts his head in his hands.

DR LAMPETER
List the options again.

AION
Take no corrective action.

DR LAMPETER
Everyone starves.

AION
Full reversal action.

DR LAMPETER
Everyone dies.

AION
That is the end of the options.

Silence.

DR LAMPETER
Kill myself.

Dr Lampeter weeps.

INT. SAVE MART - NIGHT

Gino prods the ice where fish once sat.

He glances left.

A flash of something blue under the end of an aisle display.

ANTONIO (O.C.)

Hey.

Gino turns to greet Antonio.

GINO

Shit.

Antonio's suit jacket and shirt have been discarded. His bare chest bares the Y of an autopsy scar.

Antonio traces it with his hand.

ANTONIO

Sorry.

Gino shakes his head.

GINO

Hungry?

Antonio nods.

Gino shuffles down, snakes a hand under the aisle display and grabs for the blue.

He pulls out a bag of chips and hands them to Antonio.

ANTONIO

You found them.

Gino shakes his head.

GINO

Figure you're owed.

Antonio opens the chips and offers the bag to Gino.

ANTONIO

Sharesy's fairsy's.

Gino laughs.

GINO

I guess so.

FADE OUT:

THE END