

**TOMORROW**  
PROJECT ANTHOLOGY

# A DAY IN MY LIFE IN 2025

**BRAZIL**

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with an Introduction by Gustavo Gennari

**A DAY IN**

**MY LIFE**

**IN 2025**

**BRAZIL**

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These stories were written and submitted in Portuguese. English translations have been provided by Regina Scharf.



# **FOREWORD**

**BRIAN DAVID JOHNSON**

## **1,000**

I have spent the last 960 mornings of my life on the phone with Joe Zawadsky. Joe is the engine that drives The Tomorrow Project. His passion and enthusiasm give us the ability to span the globe having conversations about the future. Joe has run The Tomorrow Project for the last four years. We have a standing phone call each morning to talk about the status of the various projects we have going on all over the world.

The calls usually go like this:

Joe Z.: “Hello . . .”

BDJ: “Good morning, Joe Zawadsky!” (Yes, I usually yell that part because it’s early and it helps wake us both up.)

Joe Z. [chuckling]: “Good morning, Brian. How are you this morning?”

BDJ: “I’m doing great, Joe. How are you?”

This is where I find out what kind of call it’s going to be. I’ve worked with Joe long enough that I can tell how he’s doing by the tone of his voice and his mannerisms. I can tell if he’s stressed about a legal contract or if he’s worried about an event that’s coming up, but I can also tell when he’s excited. I love it when Joe’s excited. It means he has good news.

When Joe gets excited he laughs a little and stutters before he starts to talk. This is my cue to get excited. This year at The Tomorrow Project we had a lot of good news, like this:

BDJ: “How is The Tomorrow Project Brazil going?”

Joe Z.: “Well . . . [quick, excited laugh] Well . . . you see Brian. You see . . . [quick laugh] We got over 300 submissions from Brazil. 300!”

BDJ: “Wow! That’s awesome!”

Joe Z.: “I know! It’s REALLY amazing!”

BDJ: “How many stories do we have now? We’ve gotten so many this year. How many do we have in total?”

Joe Z.: Well Brian . . . [quick, excited laugh] We’re getting pretty close to 1,000.”

## **GETTING TO 1,000**

This year The Tomorrow Project passed a milestone that both humbles me and blows my mind. We passed the 1,000-submissions mark. Each submission captures a vision of the future from people all over the world. Most are science fiction stories based on science fact, while others are interviews, comics, movies, artwork, essays, podcasts and especially passionate opinions. We have over 1,000 now and I find that truly incredible. Each one is a personal vision, a commentary on a future that someone wants or a future that they want to avoid. They have shared it with us and everyone else who might be interested in the future. 1,000. How generous. How amazing.

The goal of the project has always been the same: Have fact-based, science-based conversations about the future. Get people talking about the futures they want

and the futures they want to avoid. That's it. Just create conversations so that we can all be active participants in our future.

These conversations have been moving all over the world. We started in Germany, and have been to the United States, England, Brazil, and China—and we're just getting started! Along the way we've talked with some truly amazing people, from working scientists and engineers to science fiction writers and regular folks who are passionate about the future.

These 1,000 visions in their different forms and languages show how engaged people can be in our future. They embrace the fact that we all build the future each day, and that to build it we all must have our own vision of that future so that we can actively work to bring it into being.

Nothing amazing was ever built by humans that was not first imagined. Each of those 1,000 visions is a personal dream for the future, a call to action, a warning, and a hope for tomorrow. Embedded inside them you will find our humanity and the seed of a future that is radically better than the future we're living in today. 1,000 possibilities. 1,000 conversations that will change the stories that we tell ourselves about the future we will live in.

## **HUMANS ARE CAPABLE OF WORKING MAGIC**

Carl Sagan happily haunts The Tomorrow Project. Sagan was a trained physicist and astronomer, but he was best known as an author of science fiction and science fact with more than 20 books, as well as a science popularizer and communicator. He rose to his greatest notoriety for his award-winning 1980 TV series *Cosmos: A Personal Journey* that he starred in and also co-wrote.



*Cosmos* is one of the most watched TV series in the world and covers a wide range of topics from the life of stars to the human brain. In Episode 11, “The Persistence of Memory,” Sagan talks about books, the written word and the power to capture our visions to share with others:

*What an astonishing thing a book is. It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.*

The 1,000 visions in The Tomorrow Project have done just that. They have captured the future and broken the shackles of time. These visions have been shared all over the world and will continue to touch generations of curious minds.

They may not have known it but each author, each person that has contributed to The Tomorrow Project, has not only captured the DNA of tomorrow — they have also proved that they can do magic, and that we human beings have the ability to build our own future.

## **DREAMERS & STORYTELLERS, SCIENTISTS & ARTISTS**

Edward O. Wilson is the world's leading expert on ants. He's also a Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist that's written a mountain of books (most of them about ants) and taught thousands of young minds at Harvard University.

In his recent book *Letters to a Young Scientist* Wilson illuminates one of the ideas we've been striving to express with The Tomorrow Project: At their very core science and storytelling come from the same place.

Innovators in both literature and science are basically dreamers and storytellers. In the early stages of both literature and science, everything in the mind is a story.

Science needs storytelling and storytelling needs science. The 1,000 visions of The Tomorrow Project serve many purposes. They not only excite conversations but they can actually help guide science and engineering, the building blocks of our future. They can inform government policy and media opinions. One need not be a Sagan or a Wilson to get involved.

These magic visions from The Tomorrow Project and the ones contained in this anthology have the power to shape our future. This collection brings together tomorrows from a wide range of ages and nationalities. We have contributions from world famous scientists and hardworking students. Some are written by *New York Times* Bestselling authors while most are from average people with a passion for tomorrow. Each captures a vision for the future, some sought after and some to be avoided. Each is a little piece of magic, a hope, a first step. 1,000 visions is just the first step. Always remember:

**You can change the future.**

Brian David Johnson  
On a 737 over the West Coast of the United States of America



# **INTRODUCTION**

**GUSTAVO GENNARI**

Since the dawn of Humanity, we have been using our imaginations to transform and improve the environment, with the intention of advancing their quality of life and the human condition. Thanks to their geniality and ability to execute, they conquered great technological, scientific, and social progress that has boosted the advancement of many different civilizations.

The wheel, the compass, the steam engine, the lamp—fantastic inventions that revolutionized and radically transformed our world. But, how fast? How long did it take? And what's their reach?

Internet, mobility, Cloud, connectivity, super processors... Technology. Tomorrow was never this close, and, even better, it was never this close to everyone.

We are living in an era in which technology has exponentially reduced the distance between individuals, socialized the resources, and increased transparency, ethics and commitment. These are new times, when each one of us has super powers in our minds and at the tip of our fingers.

Here at FIAP, we are convinced that a youthful way of thinking, creativity, boldness and technology are the paths to increasing improvement.

As a Technology University, we put together the efforts of students, professors, researchers, executives, and partners in order to harness all the energy generated in our classes, to effectively benefit society.

That's why we were happy to support and to become partners of The Tomorrow Project initiative in Brazil, because we believe that it offers an invaluable path to stimulate the human imagination and possible futures of technology.

Everything that was created till these days was conceived by individuals and everything still to be created will be conceived by individuals. The stories gathered in this anthology give us a glimpse of possible scenarios for our future limited only by our own imagination. Therefore, tighten your seatbelts and be part of this journey: The Tomorrow Project.

Gustavo Gennari  
CEO, FIAP University





# **MY SECOND CHANCE**

**LAURO ELME**

I hold the palm of my right hand to my shoulder so the camera can make the identification. What happened before this is hidden by clouds. I don't know where I am or how I arrived here. But I am home, and that's what is important, even if this hasn't been a reason for joy in the last few years. The camera doesn't recognize my hand; it turns on a red light and asks me to look directly to a certain spot to read my face and retinas. I obey impatiently. Damned incompetent machines.

I lift my hand to my head to brush away any hair that might have fallen on my forehead, and I am startled when I realize that it is covered in bandages. It's painful. An accident, maybe? This would explain my confusion and lack of recent memory. On the other hand, accidents are rare these days. There are so many computers that monitor roads and vehicles that it is almost impossible to get run over or to hit another car. Maybe I fell and hit my head. This is more likely. After all, I am not a young man anymore. The machine turns on the red light again. I don't have any other option but to ring the bell. But I am so impatient that I decide to knock with my fist, just like the troglodytes in old times. The sound doesn't penetrate the door of aerated plastic wood, so I knock again. This time harder.

I wait for an eternal twenty seconds, till somebody comes to the door. That gives me time to speculate about what might have happened. If it was really a fall, somebody must have helped and treated me. Where are the nurses and doctors?



Did a *robulance*, a van driven by machines, drop me at the door of my house? So ironic, I have seven cars in my garage, but I was driven by a *robulance*. Finally the door opens up.

A boy who is probably six years old stands in front of me. It takes a while for me to recognize him. He has a *hologame* in his wrist and he is moving his arms frenetically, fighting against enemies that only he can see. “Hi, buddy,” I say, trying to get down to pick him in my arms. But my head aches a lot and I stop midway. He immediately jumps back and runs to the living room. “Mommy!” he calls, almost shouting. The bandages must have scared him. I close the door and go straight to the stairs. I have to get a painkiller or my head will explode.

Before turning on the stairs that will take me to the bedroom, I see Silvia coming from the living room. The boy hides behind her. Silvia is as beautiful as the day I first met her. In fact, instead of delighting, this disturbs me; after all, we have been married for twenty years. The multiple beauty products and constant SPACs (Surgical Processes of Age Conservation) gave her the looks of a wax doll. No matter what others think, this is certainly not natural. It only seems to please her young lovers.

“Who are you? What are you doing here? I am going to call the police,” she threatens. I want to tell her who I am and that I am in my house, but the headache obliges me to turn my back on her and activate the mobile stairs. Normally I am not that harsh, but this pain... On my way, I see Carla, my fifteen-year-old daughter, coming down the other stairs. She looks at me as if I were a complete stranger. But this is normal; she has been acting that way since she was twelve.

Carla brings in her arms her inseparable *dogmachine*, a perfect poodle imitation, a gift from her boyfriend. She has programmed the little robot to bark frenetically every time it sees me, and that's what it's doing right now. This makes my head vibrate in pain. "At least somebody seems to remember me." Carla runs down the stairs and stops by her mother's side. I hear her asking, "Who's this poor guy, Mom?". Silvia is talking on the microcell phone. Is she fulfilling her threat of calling the police? "I wonder if we will all act as barbarians today!" I shout while leaving the stairs.

I enter the bathroom and open wide the cabinet over the sink. I am so quick that I do that even before the lights are turned on by my presence. I look for something in that cabinet that might stop the pain. I want something really strong, such as a good and obsolete analgesic pill, but I only see anti-depression led flashlights, electric impulse patches and acupuncture kits. I throw it all in the sink till I find what I want. I put two painkiller pills on the palm of my hand—no, four are better—and I take them with a sip of tap water. I wash my face and, despite doubting their effectiveness, I decide to pick two electric patches. Any help is welcome. The patches must be installed on the temples, so I close the cabinet door to remove the bandages from my head.

Only then do I realize it. The image I see makes me suddenly dizzy and I hold on the sink to avoid falling. I understand my family's reaction when I arrived. Whoever looks at me from the mirror, it's not me. Another man is looking at me and imitates my gestures. Maybe I forgot how my face really looks? Impossible. I still remember the red circles under my eyes, my round nose and prominent chin. So, who's this person that looks at me from the mirror? With my fingers I touch the digital mirror. This might be publicity, like the ones that appear every

morning on that mirror when I am brushing my teeth. But the screen is off. It is really a mirror. A mirror that shows somebody that is not me.

I suddenly feel breathless. Panic. The old syndrome that I carry with me since childhood and modern psychology couldn't cure. I have to go down, to talk to Silvia and try to explain who I am. To discover who I am. "I hit my head," I say loudly to the other person on the mirror, "and, when I woke up I had this appearance."

"I have already called the police!" Silvia shouts from downstairs. I have to go down, explain to her what is going on. I go down the stairs. Silvia stands in the same place I left her.

The microcell phone was attached to her left ear and a non lethal shock gun on her hand. "You'd better stay away. I have already called the police," she repeats.

"It is me, Silvia," I began to say. "I am your husband..." I want to tell her my name, but I am not sure what it might be. I don't remember. My head is aching again. I chew two extra pills. I am getting crazy. That's what's happening, for sure. I would better go away to avoid scarring my family. The police won't help in any way. It is better to go. I leave to the street in the exact moment when the electric police car appears, silently, at the corner.

I walk fast past neighbors who don't greet me. They don't recognize me. I walk for several hours without a destination. Without knowing how my life turned upside down.

I spend many hours sitting at a mall's bench, seeing wax dolls walking by with their superfluous purchases. I remember Silvia. When did we grow apart? I think of my children and I don't feel they are mine. Not even little Victor (now I remember his name), who preferred the old gardener to me a thousand times.

I reach the conclusion that, despite all the money I made in this life, I am not a rich man. I have a wife who wants to stop time and please young lovers, a daughter who hates me, and a son who ignores me. To complete the picture, I now also have a face that is not mine. By the way, it is not just the face. While sitting and lamenting my fate, I realize that my hands have also changed. They look darker and less wrinkled. I am also taller and less hunched. This stocky body is also not mine. Maybe I underwent a SPAC intervention? Did Silvia somehow convince me to get submitted to a treatment, also converting me into a wax doll? I lift my hands and massage the bones in my face. It feels like I am caressing another man. It doesn't look like a rejuvenated version of my face. It is not the artificial face of somebody that underwent a SPAC. No, definitely, this is not me.

A cleaning robot zooms by me, sweeping a floor that is already clean. "What time is it?" I ask, ignoring the watch on my wrist.

"One hour and two minutes p.m.," the gadget answers, with a disturbingly human voice.

"Thanks," I answer, even knowing I won't receive a reply. It's peculiar—these robots are programmed to thank you every time you give them way or lift your feet for them to sweep under a seat. But they don't know what to say when someone thanks them for their services.

I feel like walking around. I don't know exactly where, but I feel an urge to go away. I enter the first taxi that I see standing by. Unfortunately it is a *robotaxi*. As soon as I enter, a screen lights up and a voice announces: "Good afternoon: please type or say the desired destination."

"I just want to ride around town, without any specific destination," I answer.

The *robotaxi* threatens to go, jumps in place but brakes to stop. “Good afternoon: please, type or say the desired destination.”

I leave and look for a taxi with a real driver. I find one five minutes later.

“Where to? If you prefer, you can type the address on the screen in front of you.”

“We are just going to ride a little, without destination,” I answer, sinking in the comfy seat.

“Do you have credits?” That’s a question that a *robotaxi* would never make.

I look in my pockets. They are all empty. “That’s all I have,” I answer, showing my gold watch.

“That’s a museum item, boss.”

“For that reason, it must be worth several credits. Can we ride a little?”

“With that, you can go to Mars if you want.” He smiles and puts the watch in his pocket.

“Have men been to Mars? ,” I ask, curious, as soon as we begin to roll.

“Were you in coma, boss?” the driver asks, pointing to my head. “Men landed on Mars last week.”

We rode for a long time on roads chosen by chance by my driver. “Enter here”, I tell him, when we pass by a large avenue lined with artificial trees.

“Do you remember now where you want to go?”

“No, but this seems to be a good way.”

“You make the decisions, boss.”

A little ways ahead, I show him another street, and then another. I have no idea where I am going, but I feel as though I might know this neighborhood. In my way to my office and strolls with the family, I never came to this part of town, but, even then, I keep indicating street after street with a surprising self-confidence. The driver stops at a small square in a suburban area. "What now? Where to?"

Five streets radiate from the square. "I will get out here," I tell him.

"This place is a little too dangerous for you to walk by yourself."

"I will be okay, thanks," I answer, getting out of the car. Before I get away from the car, the driver reaches out to me through the window and hands me a small wad of bills. "It is your change. It is not credits, but there are some places that still accept this kind of money. Good luck."

"Thanks", I answer.

As the car pulls away, I look at the streets ahead of me. Where am I? What am I doing here? My head is less painful now. I feel like removing the bandages, but I give it up. I pick a street randomly and begin to walk. I don't go very far before feeling attracted by a small two-story house squeezed between two bigger houses. I stop by the gate. An antique gate, made of real wood. There is no identification sign with retina readers and all that silliness. Just a traditional ring. I have no intention of ringing it or to clap hands like the cavemen used to do. I just stand there, in front of the little house, as if it could give me some answers.

At that moment, the door opens and a girl of about four comes from the garage shouting "Daddy! Daddy!" Not knowing what to think, I push the gate with my hands and go down to receive one of the rare warm hugs of my life. Her name is Raquel.

I don't even imagine how I know this, but I do. Raquel covers me in kisses while her little arms squeeze my neck. I feel tears in my eyes. It was impossible not to fall in love with a little creature like that. A woman appears through the slightly open door. I immediately try to remove Raquel from my neck and to put her down on the floor, so I won't be accused of being a child kidnapper. But the woman doesn't seem startled or scared. Her expression is a mix of surprise and joy. Her name is Sofia, my mind says. I never saw her in my life, but I somehow know her. She is not as beautiful as Silvia, but her beauty is natural and pleasant, without creams or plastic surgeries that stretch the face.

Sofia invites me to enter and sit down. She offers me water and prepares something for me to eat. Only then do I realize that I am starving. Raquel stays by my side all the time. Sometimes I feel like crying for getting so much love from people I never met in my life. Sofia is a total mystery. She treats me with respect and care. Sometimes she looks at me with shiny eyes. Sometimes she seems to feel like hugging me, just like her daughter did. Other times she seems to want to broom me out of the house. She only begins to talk to me one hour after entering the two-story house. We are sitting on the sofa of a living room that was simple but quite cozy. Raquel plays on the floor with little colorful construction blocs. No holograms or virtual images.

"Who are you?" asks Sofia.

"I don't know." I answer. "I thought you might tell me."

"Why me?" she asks again.

"I was attracted to your house, where I had never been before. The girl called me father and, despite having never seen her, I feel a very strong connection with her. And with you," I add, blushing lightly.

“Your name is Fred,” Sofia began, “or rather, it *was* Fred. Your true name I don’t know.”

“Is this Fred’s face?” I ask her, touching my chin.

“Yes”. I wait a century before asking the next question. “So, Fred is dead?”

Sofia holds up her answer for the same length. “Yes.” She speaks with tears in her eyes. “Well, most of him is,” she adds.

I begin to understand what happened and to realize how despicable I am.

I stay silent for a long time, while memories begin to come back. Once in a while I look at Sofia, at the far end of the sofa. I am with two people who have every reason to hate me, but, even then, they were the only ones today to treat me kindly.

While memories keep coming, I speak softly to Sofia and myself: “I was suffering from a terminal disease. I would live one year and a half at most. The only solution would be to undergo a Transcorp, the radical method of total transplant. The idea is simple: they remove your brain, with all its memories, and insert it in a healthy body. In practical terms, though, it is not that easy. The process is very expensive and long. Only some thousand individuals in the whole world have resources to pay for a Transcorp. I am one of them. It demands almost a whole year, with daily interventions, to complete the process. I remember the day when I was admitted to the hospital. I was almost dying when a compatible donor appeared. He had to have a perfect body but he also had to be officially brain dead for the process to work.

“You bought his body,” Sofia says with sadness.

“No,” I reply. “He was dead. His brain was dead.”



Another long silence. When Sofia starts to talk again, it's with a sad but stern voice. "Fred was not dead. He was not even ill. He agreed to participate in a Transcorp so we wouldn't lose this house to the bank. He never told me anything. He had been unemployed for two years. In the last few months, he justified his absence saying that he had a new job. I only learned the truth when I got a letter informing that our mortgage was paid for.

I tried to argue that I didn't know that these things could happen, but I remained silent. It would be hypocrisy. While there were rich men like me, there would be always somebody willing to sell his soul. After a long while, I ask, "So, why did you receive me in your house?"

"You saw the girl's reaction. For her, you are still her father. Your brain and gestures may be different, but your voice and smell are still Fred's. Besides, I feel that a little bit of him is still alive in you."

It is true, I left long before the completion of the process. Somehow I could run away from the hospital before being readapted. Even before my family was introduced to the new body. The process was not completed. Part of the thousand brain connections were not completed. I was living the life of two people, with memories of two people.

"What will happen now?"

"You can stay here till you find your place in this world," Sofia suggests. "It will be good for the girl, who was without her father for so long."

I hear these words and I see Sofia's eyes shining. Fred is here, I feel. She feels. This is my good side. I think about my wealthy and empty life and feel jealous of Fred's riches. I want to do the right thing. I want, at least, to minimize the suffering that I caused. I know that my disappearance will only bring happiness to Silvia

and my children. I want to learn with Fred to be a better person. To love those who deserve it.

We stay for a long time on the sofa watching little Raquel playing in front of us. In a given moment, our hands touch and remain that way. Even if scientists have already proven that God doesn't exist, the sight of Sofia and little Raquel makes me feel that somebody is giving me a second chance to be happy.



# **A LONG DAY**

**GERARDO FURTADO**

I woke up with that hoarse, old voice literally shouting inside my head.  
“Son?”

I tried to open my eyes, the brightness was painful. Everything was painful. Apparently I had laid down in my clothing, and I had a terrible taste in my mouth.

“Son?”

“Mmmm...”

“Son, are you awake?”

Damn, I forgot to remove the transducer from my head before going to bed and, to make it worse, it was in “automatic answer” mode. What happened yesterday evening? Oh, what an awful hangover! My head was throbbing... Sylvester yawned his terrible cat breath a few inches away from my nose. I thought, “You are so lucky you don’t have a transducer hanging on your head,” but, of course, I didn’t mentally say those words: my mother would hear and, certainly, would raise hell for a whole week.

“Where are you?”

“Home, Mom,” I asked the time and the numbers 8 and 20 took shape upon my retina. “Where do you think I would be at 8 am?”

“At work! Listen, why didn’t you come yesterday? Your father and I were waiting for you, and he is really upset.”

I invented an excuse. What happened yesterday? Where was I? How much did I drink? I only know that my eyes, the back of my neck, my temples—well, everything—ached. I decided to have a bath to see if the hangover might ease up. “Deactivate automatic answer,” I mentally ordered the transducer. Today will be a long day, I foresee... Maybe I should call the station and tell them I am not going to work.. Yeah, that’s it, I will call them. After all, when was the last time I missed work? I cannot even remember.

I removed the transducer and put it on top of the sink. I threw the clothes on the floor and turned on the tap. Wow, that’s good! The pain didn’t disappear fully, but I was feeling much better. I brushed my teeth, combed my hair, and put on the transducer. My model was composed of a metallic semicircle that ran over my head from ear to ear and was connected behind my right ear to a second metallic semicircle that went from the temple to the back of my neck. It looked a little like the headsets I used to use to make video calls through the web, before the 2010s, when I was still in college. Good old times. I remembered the first transducers, so ugly and gigantic. They were rather similar to a cyclist’s helmet. If compared to those, mine was a technological wonder. Naturally, mine was not even close to the best transducers, such as those by NeuroVigil. They have a new model that doesn’t operate over the retina or the ear neurons, but directly over the brain neurons, those on the cortex, I think, but I don’t remember precisely. A colleague assured me that the sensations are amazing; it is perfect for augmented reality, virtual reality, transgressive reality, interpersonal reality... Anyway, it is perfect for everything. A consumerist’s dream, but incompatible with my meager salary as a federal police agent.

I stopped dreaming with open eyes and began to plan an excuse. The superintendent was crankier lately than in average, so my excuse had to be particularly good. But, at that exact moment, I got a phone call. As the saying goes, speaking of the devil... While I put my socks on, I mentally said, “Reduce the volume and pick it up.”

“Where are you, miserable creature?” I will need patience; this day promises to be long...

“I am on my way, sir...”

“I am not at the Superintendency. Come to the airport, immediately!”

Sylvester stretched and rolled on the bed, stopping belly up. “Yeah, keep sleeping, all comfy, while I go to earn your cat feed.”

The headache came back. No wonder, the avenue that led to the highway was in the throes of an epic traffic jam. Maybe the pain would decrease if I were not effectively in charge of driving my car, a museum-worthy 2008 Ford Focus. The guy in the car beside mine kept his hands behind his head, while mine had to hold the steering wheel. This is one of those moments when I really crave having a remotely guided car. Right now, I could keep my eyes closed and listen to relaxing music to reduce the hangover. But, willingly or not, I will have one, because the government decided that in three years all the clunkers like mine would have to be removed from the streets. “Play Beethoven, Seventh, second movement”. I tried to relax a little.

The airport was almost empty. The new customs agent was a delicious little thing, but I was not in conditions to be very friendly. She took me to the interrogation room. The superintendent, Marshal Paiva, and another agent were staring at a

finely dressed, tanned, fair-haired man. My attention was immediately drawn to an object on the table.

It was just slightly bigger than a cereal bar. It was composed of little cubes about one centimeter squared. I counted ten cubes long, three wide and three high: so, ninety cubes in total. Each little cube's ridges were made of a metallic material, while the interior was a semitransparent, multicolored mass. Very beautiful, to tell the truth. I checked it more closely, and it looked like each cube was built of repeating structures even smaller...

"Do you have any idea what kind of drug this is?"

Drugs had been legalized all around the world. The US, Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan... But here, since that preacher won the election, repression had become much more strict. We were driving in the opposite direction of the rest of the world. Because of that, apprehensions in the airport happened almost daily; in most of the times, it involved average people that didn't know (or didn't bother to check before travelling) that they were forbidden in Brazil. Normally we would apprehend the drugs and explain the situation to the dismayed traveler and allow him to continue his trip. Occasionally, though, we would bump into people who were deliberately importing drugs.

"No, but I can tell you what this is not", I answered.

"Very well," said the superintendent, "the guy caught with this arrived from New York and had a connection to Johannesburg in a British Airways flight. We can talk freely; he apparently doesn't understand one word of Portuguese." I was wondering if the man in the suit had activated automatic translation, but I realized that he had no transducer. Probably the boys removed it right after his detention—standard procedure when a suspect is considered dangerous. "Since

we discovered this device, he's stopped talking and refused to collaborate. He is not saying anything. So, what this is not?"

"This is not a drug of my knowledge."

"Isn't it MDMA?"

"No."

"Maybe crystallized LSD?"

"Are you crazy? This amount of crystallized LSD would be enough to take the whole world on a trip," I exaggerated. I looked again at the object. "To begin with, why are you so sure this is a drug?"

"And why would Mister Congeniality refuse to talk, if this was not something illegal? Anyway, if it is not a drug, you will have to discover what it is. Take this to the Superintendency. Paiva will follow you later and take our good friend here."

I was afraid of touching the object. "Did you talk with the biosecurity guys? What if this is a virus or bacteria?"

"Stop being such a sissy, the guy was transporting this in his hand luggage, covered only with a tiny plastic cover." He pointed to the cover at the other side of the table. "It's obvious that it is not a virus."

Here I went, crossing the city in my Ford Clunker, the headache giving no signs that it would ever be appeased. We met at the office and gazed mesmerized at the object. None of agents had any clue of what that could be. At that moment, the IT agent entered the room and asked an irrelevant question.

I answered, "Later, Josué, later. We are very busy right now."

"What is this?", he asked, coming close to the table.



“I have no idea. Do you have a clue?”

“May I?”, he asked.

I nodded approval.

He picked up the object and observed it closely for a few seconds. Then, he returned it to the table.

“In fact, I know what this is”. We all looked at him, in moderate disbelief. “This is compacted DNA.”

“What?” I asked. “DNA?”.

“Yes. We use DNA to make permanent backups, but normally we keep it in a solution. We might eventually have to compact it for transportation, or to transfer information in secrecy. This is compacted DNA, but I never saw this type of compression... And never in that quantity. It’s beautiful...”

“What do you mean by that quantity?”

“These little cubes have around one cubic centimeter, right? Mmmm... each cubic centimeter must have around 800 terabytes, or maybe 1.6 petabytes, depending on the way it was compacted. Let’s see, 90 cubes? This makes...70 petabytes, give or take. It’s a lot of information. Where did you find this?”

“Can you read this data for us?”

“Here? No. We cannot do that job; all the DNA synthesis and sequencing is outsourced.”

“Call the superintendent,” I said mentally. A few seconds later he answered. I briefly explained the situation in a deeply silent room, while everybody admired the object. This is one of the transducers’ wonders: once they can read our brain

waves, I don't have to speak if I want to make a call or do any other task. My headache appreciated that help...

"I am on my way", he answered.

Half an hour later we had a meeting in his office. We explained our latest suppositions.

"If this is just a DNA data storage, why did Mister Congeniality refuse to talk, since this is legal?"

"Did you ever mention to him that we suspected he was carrying drugs?"

"No."

"If he stayed silent," I continued, "it is because he was doing something illegal." And, if this thing is legal, I assume what is illegal is the information that it contains.

We all looked nervously to the multicolored bar.

"We have to discover what this contains. Now!"

Josué explained to the superintendent that this type of compression was new to him and dissuaded him from using the sequencing service that the Federal Police normally used. He suggested contacting Fernandez, a College professor, who had the best equipment available in Brazil.

"That's your job, Maurício," my supervisor shouted to me.

Well, here I go, in my Ford Myopia, crossing the whole city to reach the campus. It was unbelievably hard to find his department (I remembered my days as a student...) and even harder do find the professor's lab. When he saw the black vest of my uniform, he realized that this was a serious matter.

I asked two students to leave the lab, and we closed the doors to talk. I showed him the object.

“It’s beautiful!”

“I know, that is what everybody says. Listen, Professor Fernandez, can you sequence that?”

“I believe I can. I will try.”

“Without destroying it?”

“No, I am sorry, but that is impossible. I have to dissolve it to be able to sequence it. There is a laser sequencing method for compacted DNA, but it is not compatible with this level of compression. But you have no reason to worry. Do you see those minicubes? Do you realize that each one has thin vertical and horizontal lines? We call them a grid, and they divide the minicubes into microcells. These minicubes have 1,000 microcells each. I will remove only one out of 90,000, to use in the sequencing. And after the end of the process, I can synthesize the DNA again. But, obviously, not in this level of compression...”

“Yes, obviously...”

We exchanged our universal identifiers, so he could call me right after he finished whatever he was going to do. I returned downtown with my old wreck of a Ford, taking the park’s avenue. I love to drive on the park’s avenue, even if it takes longer, because it always calms me down. “Time?,” I thought, and visualized “12:42 pm.” “Find Paiva”, I said next, and the arrow indicated a restaurant that was passing by my right window. I pulled the breaks, made a quick curve, and entered the side street. A pedestrian who was getting ready to cross gave me the bird. I was going to give it back to him, but I restrained myself in time. By law,

all the agents' mental activity is monitored and recorded. To insult someone or commit other illegal acts, we have to remember to remove the transducer first.

All the boys were at the restaurant. We had lunch and then returned to the headquarters.

"So, what was it?"

"It will take some time, boss," I answered. "Don't worry; the professor will call me as soon as he gets any information."

"I hope that will be soon. I am not very sure, but I think this guy"—he pointed his thumb in the direction of the lock up — "he has debts, serious debts. We checked his information... American citizen, armed forces, a Marine, Pentagon, etc. What this guy was carrying must be very, very illegal."

"We will know soon."

I took an aspirin and an antacid and sat at my desk. A pile of papers was waiting for me. "Oh, no....not today". I only wanted to be in my bed, with my eyes closed. At that exact moment, I got a phone call. "Professor Fernandez" appears at the gray background of my closed eyes. "Pick up."

"In approximately one hour, I will have the reading."

"I am on my way."

I crossed the city once again, and once again I got lost on the campus. I finally reached the professor's laboratory.

"So, professor, what have you got for me?"

"Sit down." I hate when people tell me to sit, it never precedes good news. "It is complicated", he says.

“What happened?”

“First, the information is encrypted. Terribly encrypted. It will be impossible to decipher it without a key. You can even take this to the police IT team, but I really doubt they will be able to grasp anything.”

“So, it is impossible to discover what this is?”

“For now it is. But this is not important. Do you remember that you mentioned, in the morning, the amount of information you suspect that this device contained?”

“Yes... four petabytes, or forty petabytes, one of these two...”

“Well. The thing is: this nice DNA package was written with the maximum possible compression. We never use this level of compression, because it is more prone to mistakes and also because it is not really necessary. Are you following?”

“Sort of.”

He made a pause. He seemed to like to add a touch of drama to a narration.

“The microcell that I sequenced has 140 petabytes...so, each cube has 140 exabytes of information. So, the whole package has 12 zettabytes of data. Twelve zettabytes! This means we have 12 thousand exabytes, 12 million petabytes, 12 billion...”

“I’ve got the picture, professor.”

We looked at the object on the center of the table.

“And what does this mean? What is all this information for?”

“I have a hypothesis... Do you remember when Google was closed, in the aftermath of the Nipo-Chinese war? Well, do you remember the rumors that, in the middle of the mayhem and the chaos of the company’s closing, somebody

stole all the information that they had, both open and secret, public, private, and everything else? That is, that somebody had stolen, so to speak, the whole internet?”

“Yes, I remember...”

“That alleged theft, that information, it is the Holy Grail of the modern world—even if that episode not confirmed, of course... Well, 12 zettabytes is more than enough to keep all the world’s information that existed at the time.”

We looked simultaneously at the object on the center of the table. I picked it up and got up.

“Professor, I believe I don’t have to remind you that you shouldn’t mention this to anybody, right?”

“Sure, sure!”

“I have to return to headquarters.”

“Yes... in the meanwhile, I will keep synthesizing the DNA that I sequenced, OK?”

“Sure, of course, naturally.” I had completely forgotten that.

I crossed the city once again in my Ford Jalopy and ran up the stairs of the headquarters, without waiting for the elevator.

“Boss! I—”

“Maurício,” he cut me off. “I will need to get back that DNA. Things have gotten really complicated; the American government intervened. We released Mister Congeniality and we will have to return the DNA.”

“But, boss—”

“There is nothing we can do, Maurício. I am going to the consulate right now. Do you have the DNA?”

“But, boss—”

“Oh, one more thing: that little piece that was read at the University. Go back, pick it and make sure that there is no copy of the information.”

“But, boss—”

I returned the multicolored bar and returned to the parking lot. On my way to the campus, I parked my car. (The rules forbid accessing the Web while driving in a car that is not remotely guided, like mine.) I asked “research Google’s history.” I closed my eyes to have a better view of the information; the sun was already setting ahead of me. The rise and fall, the final days, the government intervention, scandals, information leakage... I open my eyes and turned the key. The motor started with a grunt that was not particularly promising.

The professor gave me the sequenced DNA, a little sealed tube, very different from the little colorful squares, and I explained the situation. I asked him to erase all the sequencing information from the computer, in my presence.

“Sure, of course. But don’t even worry about this; it is not necessary, because this kind of encrypting you would never be able to decode unless you got the key...”

We erased everything and he led me to the building’s door. As I was leaving, he asked me, “It is what I thought it was, right?”

“I cannot say, professor, I cannot say. Nice to meet you.”

I crossed the city for the thousandth time in my non-remotely-guided Ford. Night had fallen; the signs’ lights were illuminating the world. I decide to return home.

I prepared a cup of antacid and laid down on my bed. “What was that, Sylvester? What information it contained?” Sylvester gave a big yawn, closed his eyes and lay on his side. “I wonder if it was what I think it might be?” I got a call, “Mom.” I removed the transducers from my head without picking up. In 10 minutes I will call her back, I thought.. Lying down, still in my clothes, I put the transducers on the pillow and began to slowly massage my temples. The headache was almost completely gone. No hangover is eternal, after all.





**FILL**

**PAULA GOMES**

**H**e sat down while finishing charging his leg. Fifteen minutes every four hours. He had to do this at least three times a day. Three breaks for thinking. However, in most of them he would just sit and stare at the void, occasionally peeking at those passing by till he attracted somebody's attention. Then, he would look the other way, afraid of getting undesirable company.

That afternoon, he still had six deliveries pending. Two of them were at the Nest. He was going to focus on that now, while there was still daylight. Volkz promised that he wouldn't accept any more deliveries to that area, but, in the last few weeks, trips there were not phased down. He had already lost a few parts there, but that place still didn't scare him. Somehow, he felt that he blended into that background.

The streets were empty at this time of day, but he knew that he was under intense scrutiny of eyes that hid behind the pod's windows. Linda lived there. She was one of the oldest in that neighborhood. She used to say, "We owned the first pods parked here. Their first generation. Very few could pay for one of them, and my father, who worked at the time at the Drugstores, was one of them. Later came other generations, and all this became scrap metal, unwelcome waste, a circuit cemetery." It was not exactly true, and she knew it. The place was shared with types so diverse that the urban landscape looked like a parade of anachronisms: It was the only place where you could see, walking side-by-side, *vets* and *nots*,

obsolescence and innovation. It was also strange to see some unique circuits, inspired jerry-rigging by the average Joe trying to increase his machine's longevity. They were so popular among artists that you could frequently see creators strolling in the neighborhood, looking for vestiges of creativity that might have survived these new times. It was still possible to find in that area any conceivable type of *specialties* that stood in the way of progress, dedicated to activities that could only be practiced in a place with such inattentive vigilance.

Linda almost never left the old pod, because the Nest became, in her eyes, sort of a parallel universe, or a very distant future where everything that she once knew was reduced to ruins. He nourished a certain anguish for that person trapped in her own past, but he couldn't do anything but bring her some *wuds*, when he could obtain any. It was the only refuge that she could find. Salvation thanks to a psychotropic trip within her own memories. The elders' drug.

He knew the address: He had been there other times. The same man always came to the door. A second generation engine, with damaged bottom circuits, kept on an improvised mobile platform. He lacked an eye, probably lost in an attack by metal scavengers. He was made with parts so ancient that the nostalgic would pay a fortune for them. He obviously new that. That is why he wouldn't keep his pod's door open for long. "Tell that damned Volkz that, if he doesn't send two of these packages next week, I will dismantle his whole fleet of deliverymen." Great, he just got involved in one more of Volkz's poorly patched businesses. He slid the leg he had just charged in the closing door to get some extra time. This would cost him a few circuits. "Could you tell me what is in the package? Because I have a few trustworthy suppliers myself..." He didn't have the habit of stealing Volkz's clients, but this time it was necessary, a matter of survival. That's what he told

himself on the way back, thinking on a way to obtain two kilos of *tera* till the following week.



Sometimes he would catch himself remembering that 2025 was his sixth year living in Nakkar. He had moved from North Korea against his will, in one of the last migration waves before the country's final embargo. Within a few days he had adapted to the new landscape like so many other immigrants, but he never really loved it.

The first thing he discovered about the new land was that after that moment, he would exhibit his identity on his own body. The second was that his identity was the one of an undesirable expatriate.

He also found out that the richest portion of the country referred to itself as the Pures, and, because they were submitted to surgeries to look different from other social groups, they ended up establishing a new aesthetic imperative valid not only in Nakkar, but in all New Asia: they were darkish, had Oriental eyes with grey pupils, plug ears, and slender bodies that could reach 2.5 meters. Fill was white, short, and, to his favor, he had only the almond shaped eyes. Of course, anybody could become a Pure, if capable of paying the price, the advertisement guaranteed. And that was the only thing Fill liked to hear.

A few years after their transfer, his father had died. He could never really breathe well in Nakkar, unlike him, who could fill his lungs, never satisfied. He felt a certain relief after his father departed. Now he could dedicate more time to his goal.

He began to work in the liquid market, producing different variations of symbiosis pills, to increase his client base. He made enough money with his inventions to buy mechanical legs - minimum requirement to work as a delivery man. The job was awful, but it had its advantages: guaranteed access to almost all the areas, restricted or not, in New Asia. He worked non-stop, motivated only by a mental image: the artificial Great Lakes of the Core, with its areal residential modules and subterranean parks.



He was in front of the Dead Zone's large wall. Despite what one could think, this region was not protected by high gates, and the walls were so degraded that they only offered a symbolic barrier to separate those inside from the outside world. The entry was guarded by a small security cabin with dark glass, in such way that it was impossible to know if there was effectively someone surveying who entered or left. He held his forearm to the sensor installed on the gate. Nothing happened.

He had bought this pass for 500 grams of Zantrax, subtracted from innumerable deliveries. He could only steal a few milligrams per package, an amount too insignificant for Volkz's clients to miss.

He knew that if the pass couldn't be read by the sensor, the zone's inspector would be there in 20 seconds. Even quicker, since that was the Dead Zone. He tried once again. The identifier hissed and then opened the gate.

He followed the path, always straight, walking fast. He couldn't give clues that he didn't know where he was going. It could be fatal. At the Dead Zone, everybody knew where they were going. He passed in front of a bar and couldn't resist staring at it for a few seconds. He never saw that, not even in the remotest areas

of the Nest. "Hey, boy!" Somebody at one of the tables shouted. He couldn't identify who that was, he could barely see through the night. He sped up his pace. He knew that, if he didn't find the place soon, it would be his end.



-Who is that?

-I came to have a reconstitution done.

-I don't do that.

-I know you do, and I can pay for it.

-How much do you have?

- 500 grams of Zantrex. And 500 grams of Blows.

The door opened with a click.

The place stank. He couldn't see almost anything and this calmed him down, because he wouldn't like to see what was producing that smell.

- I cannot give you any guarantees. Sometimes it doesn't work... Some get infections... Die.

-I know the risks.

He did not. He always chose to avoid that kind of information.



In the first few days he couldn't feel any member or muscle of his body. I must still be under the effect of the anesthesia, he thought. A few days later he got the confirmation: the paralysis was replaced by a striking pain that invariably

ended up in fainting spells. Nausea would wake him constantly, at unexpected moments. He didn't know if these symptoms were indication that he was recovering – or if he was dying. He couldn't see anything for five days. He considered the possibility of becoming blind forever. In that case, he would die. He didn't know where he was. Before the procedure, the “doctor” put in his pocket a key and told him that, in case he woke up, he could just open the room's door and leave. He also said he would come back in two weeks to bury him, in case of need. That was the agreement. This didn't scare him at that moment, but now it was different. He tried to refrain from those thoughts, forcing himself to dream about the future he planned for himself. But he dreamed for so long that the images began to fade, losing their color and even disappearing completely. It became pitch dark. One day, the door was opened. It was the doctor. He hadn't waited for two weeks; he needed the room. He had another patient. “Can you see my hand? No? It is not a problem, it is still too early, and maybe there is hope for you. But not here.” He abandoned him a few kilometers away from the Dead Zone. “You will have better chances of survival if you remain outside. I destroyed your pass. Don't ever come back.”



He couldn't estimate how long he laid inert in that road till he was found. A small familiar group of disposables that lived in a discarded pod-4 helped him. They took care of him for a few months - but the worst was still to come. His body had to fight against an aggressive infection that would cost him part of his vision.

When he could finally look at himself on the mirror, and joyfully recognize the image of a Pure, Marien, the beautiful daughter of the disposable couple, got pregnant. Fatalities kept repeating themselves with no respite, while he built

his way back to the Nest. When he arrived there, he almost never thought about these things. It was as if those concerns couldn't reach him at that distance. In fact, he barely ever thought about that baby. Back to the Nest, he went back to networking, bought new parts and changed his name. After five years he had raised enough money to move to The Lakes.

Now he was the owner of a residential module version HM; five virtual dolls - they would be soon nine, because he was waiting for the shipment of a new lot of four Asians, bought recently; and an enviable stock of psychotropic drugs.

He was happy. There was no way he wouldn't be, ingesting the right dose of Zantrax and keeping his hyper sensors calibrated. He had fun telling his story to whoever was around, repeating uncountable times that he "had chosen the hardest path." He convinced himself of that day after day. He didn't really have to make that many efforts, since the smooth mud of the shortcuts doesn't really keep for long the footprints of those that passed by.





**DEAR ME**

**ISABELLA VERISSIMO**

**D**ear Me,  
If you are reading this, it worked. The TimeWarpPlus functions... I know, you are probably still confused. It is hard to explain... Please, try to be understanding, okay? It's hard to believe I am you. I mean, not exactly. I am you in the future, in 2025, to be more precise. I know, this sounds like a joke, doesn't it? Candid camera... But it is not. It is true. How can I prove it to you? Hmm... Okay, do you remember that journal that you wrote when you were eleven, that had tons of comments about a certain Eric that you liked? You never showed it to anybody, right? You gave up that stupid platonic love soon enough and got rid of your journal... Well, you are the only one that knows about that. Need more evidence? All the songs that you wrote and never showed anybody, I know them. And how you loved to leave the house in the middle of the night to go to the garden, where you sat and lay thinking. Nobody could see you, but I know that you did that, because it was me. Do you get it, now? Do you believe me?

I cannot really explain how it all happened. Now you are 28. You are a grown up woman. Isn't strange to think about it? Many things changed... It is another world, totally different. Just understand that this is possible these days. I sent a letter to myself in the past... No, this is not very ordinary, but you will meet people who will invite you to test a new machine... A time machine. Amazing. Remember how you dreamed of time travel while watching *Doctor Who*? Or *Back to the Future*? But they still didn't try to send people to the future or to

the past. Only objects... Yes, in fact, this is a huge risk we are running. If I give you information about the future, it might be catastrophic, so we have to be very careful.

Please, understand that I cannot tell you much about the future. I understand that this might frustrate you. You must be dying of curiosity, full of questions... I remember how I was confused at that age. The teen years are such a difficult phase... You really want to know what happened to you, don't you? But I cannot tell you. And I am very sorry for that. But the choices that you will make to enable your future (and my present) must happen naturally. I cannot influence you in any way... No, I won't tell you what career you will ultimately choose. But I can tell you that it all worked out. You graduated without problems, but never ceased to study. You graduated in more than one major (yes, you read it right) and attended many courses... You learned a lot. You also travelled extensively... You still travel. I don't think you are ready to settle down. No, your life is not perfect. Perfection doesn't exist.

Would you believe that now you have a family of your own? And you have more plans in that domain, plans for the future. But this is also something that should come naturally, so I am not going to elaborate on that. You would be so surprised to learn how things happened... Things that seemed so complicated, you will realize they were mere vapors. You will see, many people will go away. Of course, that is how it always works... But others will remain and they should be the center of your attention. You have the company of wonderful people, Bella. It's funny to imagine how you would react to our present life.

You will be living in a spacious and beautiful apartment that you decorate yourself. It is quite impressive, right? You will have to struggle a lot to reach all that, but it will be worth it. And you have plans of having a house in the future.

A house with lots of space, if you understand what I mean... Okay, I have to control myself.

Understand that this is also difficult for me, it's hard to refrain from telling you everything at once. But this is something I cannot do. First of all, because we are trying to avoid the creation of paradoxes, which are possible in this situation. Second, because you have to discover your path by yourself. I have been through so much, I cannot deprive you from all of that. It would also deprive myself of it. Yes, life is complex. It is really hard; there is no alternative. But it was meant to be lived the best possible way. Look, dear, you will commit several mistakes. One after the other. You will also make good decisions, that will make a world of difference. Things that you would never imagine...

You know, in the future, you will laugh about all of these problems. I mean it, things will change a lot. Houses will be totally equipped, just like in the films you used to watch. Voice command will be commonplace (I mean, a good voice command, really intelligent. Not like Siri, that never understands what you say). You know, the future is not as bad as you thought. It changes a lot and is not catastrophic, as you thought it might be. Of course, it is not all roses. People are still quite stupid... But some revolutions will happen... No, there was no major war or anything like that. Neither did the water vanish. The good side is that there are still many people who are extremely intelligent in this world. And, above all: intelligent people that know how to use their brains the right way. And, if you were afraid of not participating actively at anything, well, don't worry. You will do lots of things.

I think you will like to learn that books won't be exclusively electronic. Libraries full of physical books, made of paper, will still exist. And they are still favored by the majority... Better this way, right? 3D quality improved a lot. These days,

it is not even called that anymore... And film image is extremely realistic—not like that weird flickering image that gives you a headache. Wow, you will get crazy when you discover how videogames have evolved. And some problems were solved... Such as the chaotic traffic in major cities. Environmental questions never ceased to be debated, but everything is under control. There are still some very bad things happening, which vary according to the moment, but the world continues in its path. As I said, it is not even vaguely as bad as you imagined.

Some values got lost, and this is worrisome. People have way less freedom... Technology is maybe excessive. Nothing is as simple as it used to be, despite all the new amenities. But I think it is all part of the process... Things have to change, right?

I have this feeling that you would be proud if you could see how your life will be in the future... Everything you will do. For yourself, for people you love and for the world. Considering you used to think that nothing was really worth the effort, that you were only a little grain of sand in the middle of nowhere... Just a pinch of stardust living in a rock that floats in space... You became someone great. No, I am not talking of a Nobel Prize or several million dollars or medals. After all, both of us know that you really don't care for those. But you managed to make a difference for yourself and many other people, close to you or not. Is there anything better than that? No, there is not...

You still have many books to read, films to watch, places to visit and people to meet. Many problems, many solutions, so much mess... No, you won't change your essence. You will still be a vaguely strange girl, all complex and full of manias. Finding yourself in your own mess, losing yourself when you try to tidy up too fast. Yes, the dyed hair, the unusual clothes, the tattoos that you always

wanted. You are free, you know? You live on your own terms, as you always wanted. And you have the best possible company (you will be really surprised!).

But I want to ask you a favor: please, try not to worry so much. Since the future is a little more certain now, maybe you will feel better. That is why I am sending you this letter. I remember quite well how sometimes things were difficult... I remember your pains, your concerns. I remember quite well the pressure. The fear... Try to calm down. Just relax... Listen more to your own advice. You will be able to overcome all the obstacles you want to. You will still grasp the meaning of all this, but the truth is that you are capable of so much! Run risks, make mistakes, try everything you can... Enjoy! You thought that you wouldn't miss at all your teen years when you became adult, because they were so complicated... Well, in fact you will really miss them. A lot. So, do this to both of us! Enjoy! Go after your dreams and goals and make all of them come through. Eat lots of chocolate, dance whenever you feel like it, never abandon your passion for music and follow in the Wicca path. Don't take for granted those people that you know are important for you. Take very good care of yourself... And live. Simple as that. You can trust me, everything will be OK. You will be all right.

Good luck.

With love,

Your future you.

P.S.: this machine is wicked—seriously, you will love it. Among many other things, that is...You will be amazed by WHAT THE COMPUTERS WILL BECOME.

P.S.2: You have no idea how difficult it was to control myself not to tell you EVERYTHING. But I cannot spoil the surprise, right?

P.S.3: In a few years you will receive an offer you won't be able to refuse, but since you love to overthink, you will hesitate. Don't worry, just say yes. Accept it. This will change your whole life (improving it!).







# **THE COLOR OF YOUR EYES**

**ALEXANDRE OLIVEIRA  
SILVA DOS SANTOS**

Coffee was ready when I woke up. The coffee maker had a clever program. It was connected to my cell phone's alarm clock. As soon as I turned it on, the maker would begin to operate. This would give me enough time to have a good shower. In fact, this was not the only task performed by these new cell phones. Looking back in time, this would be, in itself, a relevant evolution, but it was not even close to the discovery that changed dramatically the history of the human race.

While I had my coffee, I listened to the news to recall it all: It's been 12 years since the explosion of the Large Hadron Collider. In one of the efforts to reproduce the Big Bang, the shock between atoms generated a disproportionate amount of energy, causing an explosion that killed 47 of the 48 scientists at the lab. The energy dispersed affected only those in the immediate vicinity, but data decoded by the computers of Meyrin during that episode revolutionized science.

They revealed a new dimension of particles, generated by the Higgs boson. One of them was named Qayin. Much research was developed with the only survivor till the laboratories realized how this particle interacted with human DNA. It could shape it to optimize the natural defenses of the organism, increasing its physical abilities and removing any type of contamination. This meant the cure for several diseases, such as AIDS and cancer, and total immunity to any other biological weakness that might occur.

I turned the television off. Yellow press would explore this story exhaustively in the following weeks. I opened the doors of my car with Bluetooth, and the panel exhibited a message: “Good Morning, Mr. Walts.” I drove to the psychiatric wing of Geneva University Hospital, where I was going to meet a new patient - that same scientist who had survived the explosion in Meyrin, John Druker. Apparently he had developed a psychotic condition and an aversion to electronic devices in the last few months. After the traumatic loss of all of his colleagues, he began to tell stories about other dimensions and abductions that might indicate his unhealthy state of mind. Now he is taking some pills to sleep and spends part of his day under medical observation.

I understand part of his fears. Humans that received Qayin injections were miraculously cured. Blind people could see again, and paraplegics recovered their movements after a few months. All of them gained immunity to diseases and even the aging process was delayed. Naturally, even if close to perfection, this procedure had some small flaws. Twenty-four hours after the injection, the iris would become metallic blue, completely changing the patient’s appearance, reflected in the eyes’ color. It is said that the eyes are the windows of the soul and, in this case, they seemed to be completely closed. It was like removing the humanity from those who experienced a cure. What could be the price of a miracle?

What an irony! On the way to work, traffic was stopped by a religious group protesting against the use of Qayin. Their signs read, “You are selling your soul.”

The truth is that society is divided by these events. The Qayin treatment wasn’t cheap. Those who suffered from terrible diseases lost their faith when they experimented with the new kind of redemption. I am saying that religions lost their followers and became organizations with little power of persuasion in the

world. Some government leaders still keep good connections with the population, but science became the most frequent prayer in the life of any human.

I was a very religious kid myself, but I lost all interest. I believe that, if something is capable of eradicating certain human diseases, it cannot be totally bad.

My arm was a little painful, and I felt weird after the injection, but my vision problem seemed to have disappeared. Either I did that or would have to be submitted to a laser surgery to avoid blindness.

It didn't take long for me to reach the hospital, where I was received by an assistant:

-Doctor, he is ready!

I picked my stuff up and went to the room where Druker was. It was easy to open the door, but difficult to face what appeared in front of my eyes.

There was very little left of the scientist. His clothes were still white, but now they had restraining belts. And his short, messy hair, overgrown beard developed a dirty, awkward aspect. The almost skeletal man in front of me had yellow, apathetic eyes, maybe because of lack of exposure to the sun or due to his mental state. By chance, he had only shown signs of violence against the *Nods*. At least, I still hadn't become one. But in a few hours it will be different - but he won't know it beforehand.

- Hello, Mr. Druker. I am Able Walts, your new therapist. I understand you have been having some very hard days. I am here to talk with you for a while. What do you think of sitting in this stuffed chair to relax so I can ask you a few questions?

Coming from the end of the white room, with his hands slightly restrained by the strait-jacket, he sat down. He stared at my eyes, looking for something.

-Yeah. It is not possible. Your soul cannot be saved anymore. hesitating, with a shaky voice, sedated by pills, he expressed these few words:

-So, you believe in the soul?

-Are you religious, John? I asked back.

-Religion cannot either. It caaaaaanot. He got up in fury, shouting while his syllables projected saliva. He continued:

- I told them, what was there killed everybody and will kill many more in order to arrive here.

He would skip from wrath to wailing in a few seconds. Poor guy, experiencing the explosion had been a really big trauma. Some patients develop serious phobias related to some element related to their trauma. This could explain his technology aversion.

-Calm down, John. I imagine how difficult it was for you that day. You are full of intense emotions and unresolved memories that need to be exposed. You will feel much better after talking to me. I know that many others have listened to your story before, but I would like try to help. May I?

-Alright! He dried his tears and stopped the sobbing to start his narrative.

In the beginning his tone was insecure, not so much about what he was saying, but rather because he was anticipating my rejection. He told me that, that day, something went wrong at the LHC. The energy readings registered by the computers were above the average and, even then, the test routine began.

Several explosions happened before the main one. Then, the energy surge was such that all the electronics in the surroundings turned off. The cameras couldn't register that part of the collider walls were torn like a sheet of paper.

John realized that the biggest fear of the scientific community had happened. A “wormhole” the size of the explosion was open. Whoever was inside was transported to another dimension and, at that moment, a frightening story began:

-Everything was dark and even the darkness seemed to be absorbed by something that we couldn't see, only feel. It was this terrible feeling of being immersed in a place where nothing that we knew existed, not even time...or space. he paused for a while.

-I looked around, trying to rub my eyes and wake up from that slumber, and my search for the safety of vision revealed to me the greatest insanity that the human mind could capture. An aberration. With a body similar to a jellyfish's or a sea wasp's. Translucent, but dark and with a vascular system that carried to the top a goo thick as crude oil. The upper part looked as if a few toads were fused, forming three nose-less, mouth-less heads. Only eyes, dozens of them.

I felt worried that he seemed to be really seeing the scene he was describing, but I let him continue.

-Its claws seemed to grow or retract according to its needs. He was somehow connected with that universe and that connection reached each one of the scientists when we arrived. I felt what they felt and we could listen to the thoughts of the others. The creature was obsessed with our existence, something that I had never seen before, and it was as if it had read our souls and discovered Humanity. Then it tried to touch us, as if it wanted to possess all of us, but apparently our bodies couldn't stand this energy. Every time one of us was touched by its clawed arms, we could all feel the same pain. The thick goo that it carried in its interior began to leak from my colleagues' heads and then their

eyes and bodies lost their vitality until their death. One after the other they died that way. Somehow the heavens seemed to be getting darker to illustrate the despair of that being that couldn't take possession of its new toys. John seemed to be getting very emotional while remembering all this - I mean, while he recreated the fantastic story in his mind.

- I was afraid, when its gooey arms came in my direction, and closed my fist, without realizing that it held my cell phone. I hold it ahead of me and felt an unbearable pain when I touched one of the freak's disgusting claws. That's when a ray of light came closer from afar. I thought it was the end, but this was the energy of the explosion that was contracting and taking me back home. When I came back, I was the only survivor. All my colleagues were fallen on the floor, dead without an explanation, according to the paramedics. I tried to believe that it was not true, but I looked at my cell phone and it was covered in some goo. I felt that the entity was still around and knew that its vestiges had remained somewhere. I destroyed my cell phone, but it seemed that this was not enough. It had already been connected to the laboratory network and to myself.

The room was taken by an ironic, sadistic laughter. It was the first time I had seen John smiling, and I didn't like that in the least.

- Do you want to know what could save me? I am already corrupted, but I didn't have a choice. Now, you are allowing it to happen. Do you really think that that computer would solve the Qayin formula by itself? It is alive, it is inside of me and now it is trying to discover a way of connecting with all humans.

Patients with such ability to describe a hallucination in detail are rare. The truth is that John Druker was exposed to some sort of radiation during the explosion and tests revealed that he was the first man to present Qayin in his cells. His

structure indicated how this particle could be used to produce a powerful vaccine. It's a pity that the first and only being that was cured without having collateral damages lost his mind that way.

This was the ideal moment for the confrontation. I felt my pockets, looking for some gadget and found my cell phone that carried a few songs that I liked. I put it on the table and realized that the patient's eyes converted into an abyss of fear.

-Put that away, he can appear! John said as he ran to the corner.

-Here, John, it has only a few songs, photos and a data connection with Overgate it's a kind of internet network hundreds of times faster than 7G, developed with Qayin quantic technology. It only works after sunset, but that's OK.

His dread and shouts increased, but it was time to expose him to reality. So, I looked for a music app to initiate him.

- Wait, the system is jammed. I will show you that...hey, what is this? a shock repelled my fingers.

I heard lamps in the hallways bursting. The screen of the cell phone broke in two and I couldn't approach it with my hands. The electricity began to invade the device, sending a wave in all directions in the room, like a magnetic explosion. The energy broke the cameras, bent the door and threw the table towards the wall.

John fell on his knees and it seemed like something had invaded his head. It looked like it was going to explode. Energy kept flowing out of the gadget with no respite. That is when I felt a real and crazily powerful presence occupy all the room. An intense light, almost like a white fire with blue borders, began to shape up.



It crystallized claws hang over the eyes of Druker, almost crushing them. Then they came in my direction. Even if I kept my eyes closed, I could see, and this made it all the worse and scarier. While I touched my eyes, I was connected with that conscience and began to understand all its past. If we could compare it to something in our reality, it would be equivalent to some ancient god, ancestor of the universes. Above time and matter, carrying in each of his traces thousands of years of an existence that couldn't be assimilated by the human dimension. The pain was just like that of a thousand needles that played with my organs, but the entity knew that my brain was swinging between a solid state and a grayish soup thanks to that communication.

That contact with John's cell phone made it realize that it could hide among the bytes. Thanks to the Wi-Fi networks, it could pass from one device to another and now it could live in practically all the equipment connected to the internet.

Most of its consciousness was still within the limits of the universe. It knows that our scientists opened the portal once and can open it again, but this time it doesn't want to lose the lives that it was so eager to conquer.

With a malignant ability to deceive men, it showed ways of reshaping the human DNA, making our bodies stronger and open to its possession while it engages in the nourishment of our souls. With Qayin, thousands of men became *Nods* - that stands for Non-Degenerative New Organisms. Without it, John Druker was the only one capable of establishing a connection with that being. But it tried through mobile phones and computers. I can see every death and every disturbed mind that it created after touching their brains without success during the possession.

Qayin is, in fact, the ruin of humans, but one thing was still missing. It missed. Men created a new and more potent network of computers based in a connection with rays that would wander all around the Earth, getting reflected by satellites to transmit data at speeds faster than the light's. At that time I couldn't resist anymore at such a high volume of information. I remember that I heard steps arriving. I looked around and saw that John was foaming at the mouth. There was also blood; I think he had bitten his own tongue. That's when I passed out.

I woke up at the infirmary. It was night time already, and my vision was still blurry. A woman arrived with a painkiller for my headache. I asked her what happened and her answer was obvious. Druker had bled to death, severing his own tongue. She told me that I could have a day off, but I knew they were blaming me for the death of the patient. In fact, this wouldn't be good for my career, but who cares for a career when you don't have a future?

The girl was a Nod. I looked at her face - I didn't realize before how the metallic blue of her eyes made her life so artificial. I entered the car and my digital reader began to read loudly the feed headlines. The Overgate project, on the internet, had been activated. In a few hours the world would discover a new way of being interconnected.

On the way home, the protest that had slowed the traffic down since that morning was still going on, but now it faced, on the opposite side, a line of policeman, some of them *Nods*. Their eyes shone like those of a cyborg. They seemed rigid and devoid of emotion. I realized that they didn't change, unlike my own way of looking at them. I noticed that some had black goo flowing like tears. It looked like their souls were crying, locked in those bodies, and then I understood that the plan conceived by the freak described by John had succeeded.

At home, I turned on the TV. That's when I realized that the news was about a state of civil emergency. The full HD transmissions had hissings that were unknown since the 1980s and cell phones had no reception. Lights went out, together with the electricity, and I knew that this was the beginning of the end. I was so tired that the only thing left was to sleep on the balcony, looking at the stars and cursing what they had hidden.

The world had completely changed when I woke up at five a.m. Abandoned cars, people lighting bonfires, and children crying for their parents who hadn't returned home the previous night. Those

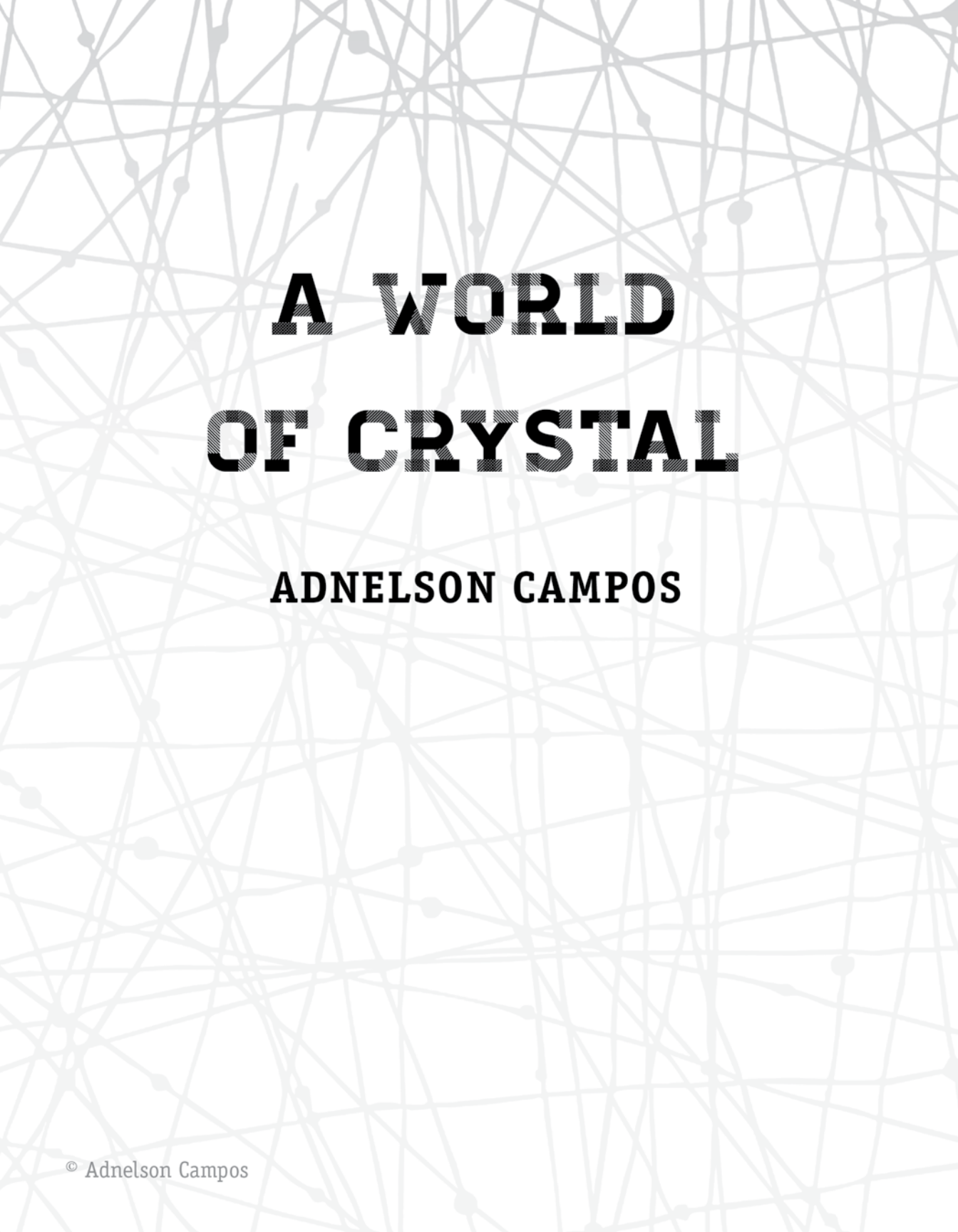
Nod policemen were there, now with their grey skins and dark veins that seemed to pump oil instead of blood. They didn't have a human voice or self-will, and if they still had any soul, it was hidden in the metallic blue of their eyes.

On the street, a car played Guns N'Roses "Ain't It Fun": It is not really funny when you know you will die young. Or maybe it is funny... Maybe it is. Every minute that goes by the Qayin makes me feel less human. I know this because of the mental connection with the other *Nods*. We are receiving constant orders from the entity that intends to cross the dimensions till it reaches our universe. It used the Overgate connection to get transferred to all modified humans and assimilate their existences.

I still have a few hours. The humanity that I am quitting is not totally lost. Only I and a few thousand that surrendered to the seductive promises of life without imperfections.

I looked through the window and in the reflection I realized my eyes didn't have the human shine. Nothing was left for me, except sitting down and enjoy daybreak, while I can still listen to the Guns.





# **A WORLD OF CRYSTAL**

**ADNELSON CAMPOS**

**T**oday is my 62nd birthday. I woke up very early to take care of my college professor routine, after a long time of professional services to the oil industry.

The alarm clock rang at 4:30 a.m. This was sign for me to accelerate my rhythm, as imposed by the world these days. The computer reproduced the voice of a famous early century Hollywood star who invited me to get up—a choice made by my wife. I would have preferred Angelina Jolie, or, rather, her image at the top of her beauty. But agreements should be honored, no matter what technologies are available to satisfy our desires.

The living room window projected the image of the garden of a country home we kept till three years ago, including the swing under the trees, the sound of the breeze, everything adjusted to that time of the day. A voice command ordered the image to disappear, substituted by a view of the next door building, adjusted to the day luminosity, correcting the effects of darkness in this pre-dawn moments. Our constructions, our objects—everything is part of an adjustable crystal world.

Ten minutes after waking up, the bathroom sound apparatus began to announce the weather forecast and a summary of the main world and local news, based on themes I had pre-selected. The day would be particularly hot, something frequent these days, and at the end of the afternoon a storm would inevitably fall. Thankfully, rain doesn't imply the same problems we had at the beginning

of decade, when the traffic used to become totally unviable and mudslides were constant. Meteorology is more precise now, and the population that lives in areas at risk is better prepared to face possible emergencies. I touched the mirror and once more checked the weather forecast. I looked at an old picture of my children. I always loved to see them smiling. To shave and smile at my kids, what a delicious sensation! At that moment, I got a message from my older son. He is in Tokyo. Japan is an electronic vortex, and robots had become minimum necessities. If it were not for the Japanese diet, they probably would be as obese as the Americans, or even the Brazilians, who copied the US sedentary model and diet.

To allow my wife to sleep a little longer, I used the ear point at table for breakfast and thus I had access to the same system that now reproduced the sexy voice of Angelina Jolie, who started to report, after my voice command, the appointments of my daily and monthly agenda. I remembered that I had to renegotiate the service prices and I did that immediately, talking directly with the attendant on the other end of the line. I will suggest to the service provider that they should offer a conversion service to adapt the attendant's voice to the client's preference!

I heard that new evidences that Enceladus, Saturn's moon, had the conditions necessary for the development of life. Under my voice command, that story appeared on the crystal screen installed in the kitchen's wall, which took the place of Van Gogh's "12 Sunflowers in a Vase." These are images from the New Voyager III spaceship that landed on the satellite's surface in the beginning of the month and confirmed the evidence collected by the New Voyager I, which had left the Earth in 2020. We are really into expanding our frontiers, indeed! Maybe we will have there a base and a starting point for the exploration of new solar systems, towards the interior of our galaxy.

My cup's digital temperature display shows me that my coffee is getting cold. I have to rush.

That day my routine would be disrupted. My youngest daughter had scheduled the delivery of my first grand-daughter at 3 p.m. I felt butterflies in the stomach, as if I were reliving my three previous experiences, when my children were born.

I got to my workplace just a few minutes after finishing my breakfast: my home office, which doubled as a school class, since I was a professor at the Nelson Mandela International School of Sociology. It was essential to wake up early because of the different time zones. That day we would discuss the influence of North Korea's forced nuclear disarmament, which had happened in December 2013, on the planet's economic and social behavior.

In front of me, on the crystal top of the table, a quilt of images of students spread around the world. When I was a student, I would never imagine that one day a sheet of glass would substitute, at the same time, the table, the blackboard, the books, the notes and still would allow access to all libraries and all information sources in every part of the world. Furthermore, it is my communication instrument. It is much easier to sell an idea these days than in the last century - more precisely in the 70s, when I started my first job in a print shop where the tools were a few printer trays and the printer's ink rolls.

Still on memory lane, looking at the images, I remember the day my boss called me in his room, when I was the manager of the unit's supply area, 35 years ago. He asked me for a suggestion regarding a decision he had to make. He asked me: do you think the color monitors will have a future? Do you think we might have to exchange our monochromatic monitors? This may sound funny, but this was a



hard decision for him, who was a little older. At the time, he still hadn't accepted the idea of exchanging his typewriter for a word processor.

When the instant voice translator was invented, in 2018, language ceased to be a barrier and now it is possible to share knowledge online with any person in the world. Naturally, some expressions still have to be translated to languages that are more popular, such as English and Spanish, but only in exceptional circumstances, where exotic languages are used. Speech is converted into text automatically. When one thinks that I used, back in 1986, a little card to learn the keys and shortcuts to use WordStar!

Today, most of the classes are virtual, taught by teachers that telecommute and local instructors. That allowed education to leapfrog, because the best professionals were picked for both live and recorded classes. The teacher is, before anything else, a global communicator. They have to get additional training to do that. On the other hand, they get better salaries. We can share in this international classroom, simultaneously, a speech by former American president Barack Obama, interacting with a pre-selected group connected to the web, without depending on transmission towers or cables. Our PowerPoint presentations were replaced by 3D image projections. In engineering classes, my colleagues can remotely project and build equipment, reproducing objects with the help of 3D printers.

Thanks to the perfected and increased number of satellites that now are launched even by local jurisdictions, the use of these programs and systems became even more popular. China doesn't cease launching those. Of course, the development also raises some concerns, and there are negotiations of international agreements to regulate the use of the Earth's orbital space. My

middle son participates in those discussions. He works for the International Space Agency, created by the United Nations.

Another discussion that appears on the screen is the possibility of using the Moon as a base for the installation of image, voice and data transmission towers, alongside the possible satellite defense systems. I think the best idea is to transform the Moon in a platform to reflect the Sun light and generate more clean energy for the Earth. But it is controversial; after all, to whom does the Moon belong? Since 2010 Japan has shown its desire to install a robotic base on the Moon. The Americans say they should have priority because they were the pioneers in launching missions to the Earth's satellite and placing their flag there first in 1969. To me, the Moon is mine since the first time I truly fell in love.

Unfortunately, criminal organizations also develop and use those technological accomplishments in their illegal or unethical business. All nations' police had to invest increasing amounts on the fight against cybernetic or hyper information crimes. Information transcends all barriers and, thus, individuals with bad intentions end up with access to the same information than the most brilliant minds of the planet.

At ten a.m., I went to the City Produce Depot in search of fresh fruit and vegetables. I had to give a break to my microwave oven where I unfreeze my lunch and use a little more my old digital electric stove to make a delicious homemade meal. I live in Curitiba [a metropolis in the South of Brazil] and, while the market is on the other side of town, I reached it quickly.

Today, public transportation is a better option. Most passengers have a cellular intercommunicator. When they arrive at the bust stop, they communicate their destination. The right car will detect their presence, stop for 20 seconds or more,

and depart after the passengers are on board. Our intercommunicator also works as credit card, boarding pass, badge, and key to most building entrances. It has also meant the end of the career of the leather wallet previously used to keep one's card collection, because a unique gadget may store all data and information of all credit cards you use. The intercommunicator only responds to its owner's fingerprints and voice.

Today there are no more bus drivers or ticket collectors—and, once again, crystals predominate in the vehicle structure, adapting its luminosity to suit the outside environment. Because there are still differences between social levels and some don't have access to the same opportunities, those who don't have the intercommunicator can insert their ticket card in a mechanism installed at the bus stop and communicate their destinations. Mute people still use the good old keyboard on the wall of the bus stop.

The asphalt of lanes created exclusively for the bus is equipped with a mechanism that emits electric impulses that remotely guide the vehicles. Those mechanisms can also detect possible obstacles ahead and transmit information to the public transportation vehicle. To get its license, every vehicle needs a localization system. That way, it is possible to control the city traffic, making it safer. This avoids, for instance, crashes between buses and other vehicles on crossroads.

Despite population growth, traffic is less jammed. To circulate on the roads, drivers with private cars have to pay a very high fee, and that's why so many migrated to public transportation: light vehicles are compact, electric and very comfortable. Even the cheapest models have all sorts of gadgets, all available on crystal screens.

Crystal is also present in cars' structure, which helps in the choice of colors and even in the application of graphics and images on their surfaces. They can be real moving outdoors or simply reproduce the owner's extravagance. Carbon fibers, also used in cars and other equipment, became popular and are produced in scale by the oil industry, in a way of adding value to their products. Americans and South Koreans are testing the first vehicles that float in the air, guided by special waves transmitted by towers strategically built on the top of buildings, making thoroughways controlled by a central computer. This gave us independence from traffic control operated by human specialists, who are subject to distractions or mistakes.

Before visiting the Produce Depot, I had to get something my wife ordered. I typed the address on the SNG (Sensor Navigation Guide) supplier website and then activated the device in my glasses, that I was using as a protection against sunrays. I could follow the system directions projected on the lenses and, if I wanted to, I could also get the directions through a voice system on my headphones. By the way, the plugs are way more comfortable and hygienic than at the time when the iPod was released. Since the sensors are installed in communication towers and are local, the SNG information is always up to date and it even indicates work on streets and roads, suggesting alternative ways. They are also used as commercial guides.

Glasses also evolved significantly and you don't have to change the lenses anymore every time your optic nerve gets a little more tired, or that your degree of myopia becomes higher, for instance. The user can adjust the parameters himself. They say that in a few years we will be able to see the stars and other celestial bodies without the need for telescopes. The lenses receive a light signal and, in an electronic conversion, can enable that. It will be also possible to go to

a stadium and notice the details of the game. You won't have to guess the name of the player anymore or be in doubt if the ball effectively hit the net. Thanks to the progress of the technology of materials, we don't even have to deal with dirty, foggy, or scratched lenses.

I never liked to shop at supermarkets. I had always trouble localizing the products on the shelves and found in tedious waiting on endless lines to pay. Today we can prepare our shopping list with the barcode of each product we need, and keep it in the intercommunicator card. When you arrive at the supermarket, you touch the cart's tablet with the intercomunicator and the computer's screen shows the location of each product, the number of units in stock, the price, and a whole gamut of other information about the product, including a list of alternatives available. At the end, when you cross the door of the market, the cost of your purchases is debited from your credit card. That's why you should inform what credit card you intend to use before establishing the connection with the shopping cart. Lines are gone, since the door has a device that reads each product label, which includes, besides the barcodes that allow verifying the price on the cart's pad, a microchip programmed during the printing process to contain the product's info and price.

After shopping, I returned home. My wife and I prepared lunch and left to witness the delivery of my granddaughter.

We connected the monitor in the living room of our apartment to the website of the hospital and typed the password required to access the images of one of the surgery rooms. We could follow the whole preparation procedures and, in another window in our screen, we could see the baby, still in the belly of her mother, with all the movements, in colorful images, transmitted from diagnostic

equipment that projected waves generated by devices installed on the ceiling of the waiting room and the surgery room.

The procedure began. I got a message on the cellular intercommunicator screen. It was an alert from the company that specializes in cardiac diagnosis. My arterial pressure changed its frequency and grew. The ring that I have on my third finger of the right hand has a micro device that receives signals from my body and sends them by Internet to a center of specialists in cardiac diseases. In case something more serious happens, messages will be sent to people that I listed as contacts and to my health plan's hospital.

Scientists are developing similar rings that are capable of receiving brain impulses and moving and controlling electronics or even bionic prostheses. Rings will also substitute chip implants in the brain, offering less risks to the users. Since each nervous terminal has connections with the brain, these rings gets a preferential channel, amplifies the signals, and commands the objects remotely.

I had to take my antihypertensive. The emotion was huge. The delivery was successful. My granddaughter's cry was a rewarding sound. She was sent to an incubator. The nurse programmed the equipment and, according to the doctor, it reproduced the environment inside her mom's body. As soon as she was born, they got her finger, hand, and foot-prints. My granddaughter received an ID, a social security number, and an Internet account. She was, so early in her life, a citizen of the world. The material collected for analysis was submitted to an online analyzer, and the results began to appear in my granddaughter's account.

At the end of the afternoon, we left, my wife and I, to go walk. Thanks to the city's verticalization, new green areas were created for the population to practice

sports or stroll with friends. The Government established an education program to promote quality of life and, with that, managed to convince people to spend less time in front of the computers and increase time spent in social activities in face-to-face quality time. This may sound amazing, but we finally began to interact with our neighbors, to make new friends. Nature and electronics managed to reconcile, humanizing the city.

It is interesting to see how green mingles with the electronic signs and panels. Street lights underscore the beauty of nature. Today we have more forests than in 2015, and there are plans to expand them another 30 percent by 2035. Genetics created new species. Deserts are beginning to produce food thanks to species that are more resistant. That way, despite the population growth, we managed to feed more and better the eight billion people who live in this world.

Stem cell implants allowed the generation of vital organs. Even new teeth are possible. In consequence, my healthy life expectancy increased. Maybe I will be able to follow the lives of my little granddaughter and other grandchildren to come. I also want to experiment a little with all this technology, all the discoveries and inventions that appear every day. There is no limit for imagination. So there is no limit for the materialization of dreams. This is what differentiates Man, in his capacity to dream.







# **FIVE COLORS IN HER HAIR**

**BEATRIZ VANZETO**

**Y**ou know we shouldn't be here, right? – shouted Lola over the roar of the wind. Even if she was behind me, I could see her black hair fluttering like a comet's tail, the colorful locks giving it an extra spatial effect. Special.

I nodded, concentrating hard on directing the magnetic board in the unfathomable darkness. Silently I thanked the fact that Lola, like me, was not adept at exclusive surgeries. Several aesthetic surgeries had become more simple - and common - than in old times, thanks to the progress of medical technology. You could change your skin color to shocking hues, modify the structure of your hair, exhibit sensorial tattoos, use intelligent nail polish and makeup, or maybe permanent clothes; fortify or substitute the skin with scales, bones made of ceramics... All this was bringing difference into the mainstream. And vice-versa. There were so many ways of reinventing your body that it was hard to establish a limit.

Besides, the fact that exchange currencies were not used any more only contributed to those excesses. In the absence of nations, the city-states - self-sufficient and ruled by their own laws - established alliances in order to keep world order. Agreements that allowed free circulation of individuals, sharing new technologies and raw materials were common these days.

– Branch – I gave the alert while bending to avoid the deadly piece of wood that came in our direction at 60 kmh.

We flew for a few more minutes in silence. I knew Lola felt uncomfortable in the absence of the interface, but it will be worth it. The great abandoned museum was one of our city's kids' favorite forbidden excursions. The dark environment, abandoned and gloomy, gave that outing a mysterious and vaguely romantic vibe. In other words, perfect. With the interface, Lola would have sent a signaling flare with our location to the Searchers and, in ten minutes, this entire trip would have been pointless.

We entered a clearing that revealed the dark skies. In this spot of the path, so far from the city, we could see the stars. We barely needed the board lights to illuminate the way; the moon did that for us. Ahead of us, the huge building stood straight in the darkness, sided by old, gigantic trees. The sign "National Museum of Technology" was the only visible decoration after so many years of neglect.

I couldn't avert a smile. The Museum was one of my favorite spots in the world.

– We arrived.

Lola held tight around my waist, her body came a little closer to mine. I moved my foot and the magnetic board landed a few meters away from the entry. We removed the anti-shock bracelets and came down, touching the dewy grass.

– Why did we come here, again? Refresh my memory – Lola was whispering, despite the fact that we were the only people in a radius of, say, 150 kilometers.

– Why, why, why. You have too many doubts. By the way, you know we are completely alone, right?

– Sure, but let's not get in trouble. I feel naked without the interface. – she laughed when she saw the smile in my face.

We held hands and walked till the museum's entry. We didn't have to make much effort to enter because the door was left open after previous visits. I removed the flashlight from my pocket and turned it on, illuminating the place. There was a path opened in the dust accumulated on the floor that indicated the expositions that were frequently visited.

– Let's explore! – I said playfully.

In the next few hours, we walked past several relics.

In the personal use aisle, a 25 centimeter black screen was identified as an iPad - a cross between a telephone and a portable computer. Two identical gadgets were placed side by side and below them a little sign explained why: one of them, known as iPhone, would make calls, while the other, the iPod, couldn't. Another little device, the pen drive, was used to store archives and data. Cables in different colors were used in the ears to listen to music. Laptops, notebooks and portable computers were organized in a progressive time line.

– When you think that the interface ring does all of that and some extra things – Lola thought.

In the next section, which covered transportation, big heavy vehicles, ugly and rusty, were indicated as being the last car models: square automobiles, big trucks, compact motorcycles, giant airplanes. All of them were equipped with engines that burnt fossil fuels that liberated gases harmful to the earth's atmosphere. On the walls, big panels explained the problems related to a certain greenhouse effect.

Huge robotic hands, clumsy telescopes, gigantic white machines, various surgical tools and an infinite number of gadgets were exposed in the space dedicated to medical technology.

– We do so much with so little, in comparison with those times. Today we have less than half of the instruments, and we make three times more surgeries. With only one mean of transportation we can travel to further destinations, with less environmental impact. We merged many gadgets into a simple ring. It is interesting to think this way.

– Yes, now we have all this, but we wouldn't reach this point without cruising all this paraphernalia. In the same way, in a few years, our children will look back and think the same about us. It's an endless process. And, sincerely, it scares me a little. We compacted and improved so many things... what will be left to be compacted and improved in 50 years? What is still left to be invented? – I asked. I always wander about that when I am alone.

We walked silently to the exit, both digesting our personal doubts. We jumped on the magnetic board and put on the anti-shock bracelets. I moved my foot and the board woke up, levitating a few centimeters over the soil. Lola stood behind me, hugging my waist like before.

– You know, I like the present time. Not the past, or the future: just the present. I like to think that we are way more advanced than many people have been, while we are also crawling babies in technological terms I am happy that's how things are.

I smile. – Now you know why? Why I brought you here, I mean.

– Yes– she returned the smile.

I bend slightly and we began to move. Even being that far, I could feel our city's innovative energy pulling us in its direction. We turned our back to the past and went towards the present.





# **POLICE OF THE FUTURE**

**LUCIEL RIBEIRO**

Here's what happened in 2025:

Paulo was bored at work, when he had a sudden, violent curiosity to know where his wife was. He picked up his cell phone, the latest model to reach the market, and asked:

– Where is Raquel?

A few seconds later, a woman's voice answered:

– 299, Laranjeiras Street, in Botafogo neighborhood, in the city of Rio.

Paulo found that address odd and quickly accessed the web on his cell phone to locate his wife on a map.

– Bananeiras Motel!!! – the man was furious. He jumped out of his table and grabbed the car keys.

– I have an urgent problem to solve – he told his secretary. He entered his car, which ran on soy oil, and commanded to the board computer:

– 299, Laranjeiras Street, in Botafogo neighborhood, in the city of Rio.

Paulo drove, guided by the GPS. He stopped in front of the Bananeiras Motel around three p.m. He wasn't very sure what to do, and so he picked up his Decisitor, a gadget invented by the Japanese to help humans make decisions. It looks like an iPod, but had two little lights, one for YES and another for NO.



– I should enter this motel to see what my wife is up to? – he asked – the Decisitor lit the little YES light.

Paulo entered.

He ordered to his cell phone: “Turn on the tracking mode: Raquel!”. It automatically began to emit a noise, sort of like this: BIP.....

BIP.....BIP.....BIP.....BIP

Paulo walked really slowly past the rooms until, suddenly, the gadget’s noise sped up: BIP.....BIP.....BIP.....BIP.....BIP.....BIP

And when Paulo stopped in front of room 17, the gadget got completely crazy: BIP!BIP!BIP!BIP!BIP!BIP!

Room 17: that was the destination. Paulo cleaned the sweat off his forehead. What else could he do?

– If she is inside with another man, what should I do? Should I just forget it?

Decisitor: NO

– Should I file for divorce?

Decisitor: NO

– Should I kill her and her lover?

Decisitor: YES

Paulo picked a gun that was lying under the car seat. He approached the door and tried the doorknob - it was open.

The moment he got ready to kick the door open with violence, two patrol cars entered the motel.

- Drop your gun and lift your hands over your head! – ordered the officer. Paulo obeyed and, without understanding, asked: – But, what did I do?
- What you were going to do – answered the policeman, while handcuffing him – this is the future. Now, the police can get to the crime scene even before it is perpetrated.
- My wife is inside this room with another man. I just wanted to scare them
- Paulo argued. The policeman looked at his wristwatch and answered: – According to my watch's polygraph, you just said a lie.
- Daddy! – shouted a young girl that left room 17.
- What are you doing here? – Paulo asked, without understanding anything. Just behind the girl, he saw her boyfriend, that he recognized immediately.
- I will return the question to you: what are you doing here? – his daughter replied.
- I thought your mother was in this room with a lover. My cell phone tracked her down here.
- Maybe it's because I borrowed Mom's cell phone. Mine was still charging.
- Do you see, sir, this was just a misunderstanding – Paulo said.
- Maybe, but you are arrested.
- But I have done nothing!
- If we didn't arrive in time, do you know what you would have done?
- No.

– You would have entered the room and heard moans. You would have thought that it was your wife and you would point and fire your gun till the last bullet. You would do all of this without turning up the lights and, when you turned them on, you would realize that you had killed your daughter and her boyfriend.

– Oh, my God! – said a despairing Paulo.

– So, you are arrested for double homicide. You will spend the next 50 years in jail. Now let's go! Paulo was taken by the police; his daughter and her boyfriend went on with their life; and Raquel ended up divorcing him to get married to her vibrator.

All this happened in 2025, believe it or not.





# **ONE DAY IN MY LIFE IN 2025**

**JOSÉ SILVA**

**B**ack from the Group of 12 meeting, I join Helena, my 17-year-old great granddaughter, who's reading my old 1992 agenda, which I decided to give her earlier today. Before any greetings, she asks me:

- Great Grandpa, what is this reference to ono-zone energy and the Brodie Report? Did you really believe that?
- You, the old timers, you mean? I answer back, teasing her.
- No, Great Grandpa, don't get mad at me...I mean, those who belonged to that Council of 12.
- No, the Group is something new, it appeared later.
- But in your agenda you mention a certain Council of 12. I thought it was the same thing.
- No, dear, it is not. We are merely inspired by the Alpha and Omega Council, but it is way more important than our group...
- But, tell me Great Grandpa, is this really true? The report actually existed?
- Sure, of course it did, but I cannot guarantee that the story that it reports is true. How am I supposed to know? Almost everything that we read in this domain is subject to doubts. It seems so implausible that very few believe it.

- However, things seem to have developed sort of in the direction that you predicted.
  - Not by us, Helena, but by those beings in which we believe, the members of that Alpha and Omega Council.
  - So, maybe not others, but you believe in what the report says? Come on, tell me more and give me more details....
  - Well, the story goes that a certain William Brodie was travelling in a domestic flight in the United States, when the airplane's door opened and he was mysteriously sucked out of it. What is stranger, though, is the association of this fact to another: Roosevelt, who was the US President at the time, received a message a little after this episode from the King of Sweden, Gustaf V, which was delivered by that country's ambassador. It was an alert about the risks associated with the use of atomic energy, which the US was considering.
  - Yeah, I know, Hiroshima...
  - Exactly, and three days later Nagasaki, both destroyed by atomic bombs.
- Helena asked me if there was any correlation between that and the earthquakes that happened along the last decade.
- Sure there is, Lena. In the last 70 years, we endured a few important challenges related to everything that happened since that. However, most didn't seem to realize that three of these challenges were particularly exciting.
  - What challenges? Helena wants to know.
  - So, take note, curious girl: first, the phenomenal knowledge explosion; then, the huge risks of technological progress, and, finally, the evil obscurantism born of that growing knowledge.

- This seems a little confusing...
- To some extent, it's simple, Helena. Try to understand: all that technology was disconnected from a global vision of life. We absorbed this progress without rooting it into a bigger planetary conscience and our emotions. And given our incapacity to understand the need to reconnect knowledge and love, all the knowledge that we accumulated ended up being harmful to us. Now, do you understand?
- Sort of... it's as if we had built a robot that we didn't know how to control, right?
- Exactly. That "robot" didn't think, didn't feel, and didn't love. It only knew how to do what he was programmed for. Whoever programmed it was among those who couldn't escape the "evil obscurantism" and had no real conscience of our effective needs.
- But nobody did anything to avoid that, Great Grandpa? Everybody just silenced and accepted? We were all normotic?
- No, Helena, not everybody. Today you say "normotic" in a casual way, but in those times this word was little known. People didn't bother to understand it. The normotics were not able to listen to Life's outcry. But some did not stay silent. There was even a man who pointed out repeatedly the path to take. And that was, precisely, the path that could, ultimately, save us from total demise. Today, it is easy to realize that he was a prophet. At that time, that statement might have seemed ridiculous.
- Go on, Great Grandpa; go on, this is getting interesting.
- So, keep listening. At the end of the last century, few people understood the need to construct an integral intelligence, to continue with the "delivery" that



Humanity had initiated, as the prophet used to point out, in his forecast: “We have to think globally and act locally, so we won’t act crazily. The challenge is cross-disciplinary and demands a cross-disciplinary education”. He believed that this was the only possibility to reach an integral intelligence that would allow us to face the huge challenges raised by the new century that had just begun. He used to describe the need for “a new disposition do Listen” to reality that we refused to face.

Helena’s silence and attention were total... Suddenly she realized that precisely that day I was completing one more year of life.

- Great Grandpa, forgive me, I was almost forgetting that today is your birthday! I didn’t even get you a present...
- It’s better that way, Helena. What for? Today is just one more day in my life. You are my present, for all the light you brought with you when you were born. You say you don’t have a gift, but you personify it every day.
- Great Grandpa, let’s have lunch together, OK? It will be my present to you. My study group will get together at the New Food Technologies Research Center, and after lunch we will watch a presentation about some studies they are developing. You will like it. Aunt Virna will present the first results she got with her project of soil detoxification and we will be able to taste breads and cookies produced with cereals planted in detoxified soils.
- Great, I am in. In fact, I really miss her. You know that your aunt was responsible for us moving there to the Central Plateau, right? Since her return from Europe, she insisted on pursuing the studies that led to this project.
- Well, when Aunt Virna left everything to return to Brazil, I was still very young, but she came back just in time, isn’t it? Just before those environmental disasters

practically crushed Europe. I remember that for several days we had no news because all communications were interrupted.

- It's true, Helena, it's true. I think that we never lived in such isolation since the Middle Ages. Nothing worked. But that's past, my dear, that's past...

- But, Great Grandpa, couldn't robots sent to repair the satellites solve the problem? Didn't we have enough technology to overcome that?

- Yes, there was, Helena, but the storms were so frequent and intense that it took us a long time to defeat them.

- Yes, if we didn't get help from the Pleiades Guardians...

- Come on, Helena, I revealed that to you, but you shouldn't repeat this information. Nobody would believe you, and you would be humiliated unnecessarily. Don't forget that the normotics are still ruling the Planet, and this says it all, don't you think?

- Sure, Great Grandpa, don't worry, I know where I can and where I cannot mention what I know...

- Exactly. Despite the progress that was imposed on us, we are still quite far from the day when the Planet will live under the hegemony of the new doctrine. And when I say that, it doesn't mean we intend to act according to the old formula of domination of one human group over others. I am talking about Fraternity. You understand, right?

- Sure I do. But, Great Grandpa, tell me more about our Guardians, if you can. Or, at least, tell me what you can. I feel hugely curious...

- Well, they helped us a lot. They say they did it to stabilize the Universe that we share, even if they belong to another galaxy.

- Okay, but how did that happen? How did they reach us, if they live so far away? What did they say about our future, when they arrived here— this future that we are experiencing today?

- Helena, they and their technology are light-years ahead of us. They are transported by matter disintegration and reintegration. That is the only way they could come to us. They introduced themselves as transparent bubbles with multi colored lights twinkling in their interiors. We communicated telepathically and they made no claims or impositions. Quite the contrary, they excused themselves because the Intergalactic Council didn't give them permission to interfere in the destiny of other cosmic civilizations. They alerted us that the use of atomic energy might destroy the planet...

- But we already did that, Great Grandpa, at Hiroshima, Nagasaki...

- It's true, but in a scale that did not fully compromise the integrity of the Earth. They also reminded us that we must recognize that the Universal Fraternity Law must be immediately adopted, something so obvious to them as many other laws that influence us, such as the Law of Gravity, for instance.

But we were incapable of understanding that, as the prophet had hoped. Still in 2010, the UN Secretary presented a report that said: "the true menace to the planet's security is the insidious growth of poverty and the pressure on the global environment... If we do nothing to change our present standards of indiscriminate development, we will compromise the security of the Earth and its population in the long run." We did almost nothing...

- Great Grandpa, how could we be that insensitive? People had no love for their fellow creatures, for the Planet? They didn't have children, grandchildren? They didn't think about the future?

- I would say that they didn't, dear, that they were only interested in money and power. Today, we know that money has a relative power. There are even communities where it is not used, that live really well without a currency. By the way, in our worst moments, something became clear: you cannot eat money!
- But, back to your mention of their incapacity of seeing how they harmed the Planet and themselves. How did that end up?
- Badly. We have seen happen many of the earthquakes that they predicted, although we failed to analyze their causes. It was obvious that water was going to be a problem. We consumed too much, poorly, and we polluted the sources, rivers and lakes. What else could we expect? Fortunately, the prediction that we wouldn't have access to potable water after 2025 was wrong. We were not willing to make changes. Nobody seemed to understand that the system generated a destructive cycle from the cruel exploitation of the Planet to the production of waste and pollution in unendurable levels. Everybody believed that consumption equaled happiness. You know the rest, Helena. Vast territories disappeared. The same happened to whole populations. Maybe now we are in conditions to rethink our presence in this Planet and the Cosmos.
- But, Great Grandpa, are things today that different from what they used to be? I think my posse is indifferent to all that.
- Many things changed, some of them important. When most of Italy disappeared, the Catholic Church moved to what was left of Latin America. Now we see emerge the simpler, Christianized Church that Pope Francis dreamed of. And, concerning your generation, notice that you were not born to fight the system, like we— your grandparents, parents and me— did. Your generation is in charge of acting through inaction. For you, it's not about fighting the system. What you

are doing is to ignore it. It doesn't seem like much, but I believe that this is one of the most concrete ways of defeating it.

- But what effectively changed? The world is better today than it was in your days— or not?

- I think it is. We had major losses. I am talking about the Humanity as a whole and even of our family, as you know. We lost loved ones. But what is important is the global result, as a whole, for all Humanity. Analyze our recent past. This is important, so that you, representatives of a new phase of life in the Planet, don't commit the same mistakes that we did. And, I should say, for you to grasp where we got it right— because in some aspects we evolved correctly.

- Can you give me an example?

- You see, Helena, Kurzweil forecasts became reality. We had major advances in Medicine thanks to Synthetic Biology that, supported by Nanotechnology, enabled the development of minuscule *nanobots*, capable of travelling in our circulatory system, destroying pathogenic cells, repairing our DNA, eliminating toxins and waste, reversing the aging process and extending our lives. Very soon, other forecasts by Kurzweil will become reality, such as the biological implants that will improve our memory, our thought, and our visual and hearing perception. In 2049, food produced by Nanotechnology, with the same characteristics of the one produced organically, will be conceivable.

- I doubt that Aunt Virna would appreciate these forecasts about *nanofood*...

- I am sure she wouldn't. And you know why, Helena? Because there are huge risks that come with it. Let's not forget that Kurzweil himself compromised his health because of the many pills that he took in the effort to extend his life. Kurzweil, with no doubt a brilliant scientist-technologist, is a good example

of the absorption of huge knowledge that we accumulate without the essential internalization of it, aiming to collaborate to the Whole that we are and from which we spring, as the prophet used to say.

- After all, Great Grandpa, can this really be considered progress, since you admit yourself the risks of that new technology?
- Helena, you have to understand this. Life is built on a paradox. Do you remember the Ying-Yang, white that embraces black and vice-versa? Well, nothing is completely whole. Only the Whole.
- Wait, Great Grandpa, you are saying that the Whole contains everything, right?
- Exactly.
- So, if the Whole contains everything, does it contain both Good and Evil? And, if I got it correctly, the Whole, for you, is God! So, let me see... God contains the Evil?
- I repeat, that's what it is. Think: how could the Only One, the Absolute, encompass only the Good? How could He be only half of the essence of Life?
- Hum... I am not sure if I like all that....Well, let's change the subject. Let's go have lunch?



After lunch, followed by Virna's presentation, we returned home on our solar bikes. Helena moved with me because she wished to experiment a new way of life, in closer contact with nature. Virna lives near the lake that is our water source and where the residential units with enough space to grow fruit and vegetables are located. We are self sufficient— or almost. The old production model, typical of a

society dominated by consumerism and the use of the economy as a domination weapon, is obviously inadequate for us. That's why, despite having private production units, we work according to a rational planning of our needs and possibilities, in the way of cooperatives. At least for now we are better this way.



Helena is an indigo child. Some of the members of our family group were not capable of realizing that. I was, together with her maternal grandfather and her own father. The rest of our family group showed to be less understanding and some simply thought that “she really doesn’t want to study.” This couldn’t be more wrong. Helena, with her penetrating gaze, her sweetness and beauty, always proved to be hyperactive and distracted, but sensitive, loyal and with a wide variety of interests that conventional education doesn’t cover up. That is why she was always uneasy with the activities that she was presented with, adopting a behavior that was considered rebellious. I understand that easily and, because I was the one with more acceptance of her way of being, we became close partners.



- So, Great Grandpa, why don't we invite Mr. Brodie to have dinner with us today?

Helena is that way, playful and intelligent. This was her way of saying that she was curious and wanted to continue discussing the topics raised by reading my agenda.

- Sure, why not? There are really some little funny things to add to that story.

When the time came for the last meal of the day, Helena didn't wait long to attack me.

- So, Mr. William Brodie, our illustrious guest - where has he gone? After being abducted from that airplane, he disappeared from this story, right?
- It looks that way, but that's not what really happened...
- So, what happened, tell me quickly, I am curious...
- You see, Helena, as I told you earlier, I know that the report is real. It does really exist, but the rest of this story might be sheer legend. According to my readings - I admit I don't remember where I read it—Mr. Brodie was that Swedish ambassador that took a message from King Gustav to President Roosevelt, recommending that he abstain from using the atomic energy.
- Oh! So, that's what happened? Really fantastic! And the aliens that visited the Swedish King, where did they come from, who were they?
- This I cannot answer. But, it would be fair to imagine that they were our Pleiades Brothers, that may have introduced themselves that way, remember: little beings projected on a wall, speaking English, etc.
- And that energy... What is it called, again?
- Ono-zone energy - that's what you mentioned, right? Well, that is another story, maybe even more fantastic than Mr. Brodie's. But I am not sure if I want to discuss that with you now.
- Oh! Come on, Great Grandpa; tell me...I love this conversation.
- Me too, Helena, but look: it's nine p.m. and it's a little cold. Tomorrow the Group will meet once again and we have lots of work ahead of us...as the Master said, "Each day has enough trouble of its own." If you don't mind, I am going to bed. Sleep well, my dear!





# **2025: A NEW ERA FOR HUMANITY**

**MARCELO ANDRADE GAVIOLI**

The alarm clock rang for the second time at seven am. I woke up and got dressed, while my virtual personal assistant presented the headlines of the day. One of them called my attention. Since the United States declared war on North Korea, the world had changed a lot, and was practically split between two blocs, each supporting one country, both politically and financially. The two nations might end up engaging in war, according to the news.

My assistant also gave me the weather forecast and my appointments. After getting dressed, I went to the kitchen to have breakfast. When I arrived there, the lights went on. The fridge, connected to the web, informed me the quantities of every product available and what I needed to buy, and instantly sent a shopping list to my cell phone.

It's strange how technology had evolved in the last few years. In old times, building a shopping list used to be time-consuming. Now, an appliance is in charge of that. In the second decade of the 21st century, everything became interconnected, from your alarm clock to your car. My microwave is way more modern than those used a decade ago. It prepared a complete breakfast by itself, because it knew how busy my day would be.

After I finished eating, I picked up my suitcase with all the documents needed for work and walked towards the elevator. I live in the penthouse, the 96th floor. The

distance to the ground floor is great, over 200 meters. The high-speed elevator arrives in a few seconds and completes the trip as quickly.

At ground level, I walk to the nearest subway station, only 200 meters away. I don't have to buy a ticket—I just show my fingerprint and the total is automatically charged to my bank account. My office is far away, the other side of town, but I arrive quickly. I work as a Production Engineer for a company that produces electronics, which are indispensable to anyone these days. My department supervises tablet production and is very busy, thanks to the high demand for these gadgets.

Work drags till the end of the day, and I have to find ways of increasing our productivity, innovating through new logistics and production processes, always trying to improve. At six pm, I leave the company and return home. I relax for a while and watch TV. I don't have to move a finger for that to happen. It is enough to lie on the couch.

The television turns on automatically as soon as it notices my presence and indicates a few shows that might interest me, while tuning in the channel that is showing my favorite movie. While I watch the broadcast, my cell phone rings. It's my girlfriend. The television connects to the phone, and her face appears on the huge screen in front of me. It's a video call. Communication became much more realistic since we abandoned the old style voice telephone. It got much more realistic. We agree to have a stroll at the park the next morning, a Saturday.

After hanging up, I pick up my tablet to check the social networks and world news. The headline on my favorite online daily scares me. There will be no agreement between the two belligerent countries, the United States and North Korea, which the morning news had speculated might occur, because tension

between the two governments escalated during the day, after a nuclear attack threat. The Third World War was waged.

All news channels reported these events and nobody knew what their dimensions would be. I went to bed without knowing how the next day would be and what changes would occur at the world scene.

