

Servant of the Ants

Entry # 1

We awoke from suspended animation around 37 hours ago, I haven't slept since; too much to see, I suppose I've had more than enough sleep to need any right now.

Even in the 86 years I spent unconscious I couldn't dream up anything as wondrous as this ship.

It feels like it was built for me. Out of everything I've seen so far, the most notable features were:

An atrium with entirely stained-glass windows and a garden, I don't think I've ever seen a more colourful room.

A library with 15 ft high shelves and a window looking right into outer space, though looking at it for too long makes me a little dizzy. It's like staring at a vat of cosmic soup.

The medbay, which reminds me of somewhere I can't recall right now, but I'm sure it'll come to me eventually.

I plan to check out the leisure areas on the ship tomorrow.

Entry # 2

I wasn't able to sleep again tonight, I haven't felt tired or even hungry since I awoke from a suspended animation, I'll explore some more today, but then I'll ask one of the ship's doctors if sleep disorders are a normal side-effect.

Entry # 3

My visit to the nearest medbay was strange for several reasons.

I got déjà vu as soon as I walked in, seeing the bed in the center of the room and the ceiling lamp and monitors that hung over it gave me an intense feeling of dread. Surgery tools were neatly placed on a nearby table, and then an image flickered in my mind; light blinding me as a silhouette with some sort of tool leaned over me.

"Sir?"

I snapped back into reality. The doctor was standing beside me, his hand was on my shoulder.

"Are you the doctor?" I asked, "I had some questions about suspended animations side-effects"

The man was starting to look nervous; I got the feeling I'd seen him somewhere before. He looked me up and down, and then made direct eye contact, but I got the feeling he was looking into me rather than at me.

"This is an Emergency medbay, I think it's better if you talk to a standard doctor."

Something strange was going on here. So I thought I'd be blunt.

"Have I met you before?"

Panic flashed across the doctor's face, but then he just lowered his head and sighed.

"SR-0763, your file said you were smart." he looked back up at me, "You were a philosophy professor back on earth, correct? We've seen each other before, yes, but I'm afraid I've already done what I can for you. Go to the ship's tech center tomorrow, they'll explain everything."

"Tech center? What's going on? Please I just want to sleep."

The doctor couldn't look me in the eyes, he instead drooped his head down to the floor.

"You won't be able to. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to be on standby for other patients."

I plan to find out what's going on, but why the tech lab? Is this happening to other people?

Entry # 4

When I was younger, I used to write to cope with whatever difficulties I was going through, so I suppose that's what I'm doing now, because I am in anguish I cannot possibly describe without context. I wish I could cry out or shake with rage but even that is impossible for me now. All I can feel is a sense of calmness and it disgusts me.

I went to the tech lab. They told me everything. They remembered who I was and what they did as soon as I walked in the door.

A group of lab technicians and crew members looked up at me, one of them stepped forward, she had a slightly different uniform -- a black lab coat with what looked to be a remote of some sort strapped to her forearm.

"SR-0763, welcome!" She motioned past the lab's computers and work benches to a couch and table with a few scribbled notes and coffee cups on it. "My name is Laura, head lab supervisor on the ship, please sit down."

I remained where I was. "My name is Carter."

Another technician smirked. "Not anymore."

"We're getting to that," Laura said sternly. "Sit down."

Once I was seated on the couch, she waved the other scientists away to get back to work and started explaining.

"Carter, there was a problem with your suspended animation chamber about a month before all the ship's passengers were woken up. You were taken to the EMB -- Emergency Medbay. There were... complications. The surgeons and my team did what we needed to do to save you."

"What went wrong? What did you do?"

"The suspended animation put too much strain on your body, we think it was caused by various surgeries you had back on earth, which your file mentioned. We had to replace your old body with a new and better functioning one, which I'm proud to say is in every way physically superior to a human one."

What? What did she just say? She said it so calmly, she even beamed a little. I tried to speak but couldn't think of anything to say but--

"Am I a robot?"

"Yes, I suppose you are, although you aren't considered to be true AI considering everything from your human brain was replicated; your new body will do nothing but benefit you, besides you've had body modifications before, how bad could this really be, Carter? Of course, there is the matter of cost..."

Was I dreaming? Laura and her team of mad scientists had downloaded my brain into a robot and now they wanted me to pay up? I'm a philosopher. I believe in the soul, and now I'm not even sure if I have one. It was ripped out of my human corpse and left to rot in deep space. I was now reduced to wires and fake flesh pressed into the shape of a person. Was I still a person?

"Cost?" I looked down at the not-so-human palms of my hands. "You stole my life away and I'm in debt?"

Laura sighed, "On the contrary we saved your life. Making a human-imitating robot body isn't cheap, luckily the cost was cut a little since we didn't have to code a complete brain and cut again when we realized we could be sued. This leaves you owing us 1.3 million dollars, but don't worry, you can easily make it up to us. We

were going to make an AI to act as a guide for the humanities section of the library, but now it seems you can fill the position until you're out of debt."

I looked up at her. "Do I have a choice?"

"As far as we're concerned, you're the ship's property, basically an expensive piece of equipment; so no, you don't have a choice. SR-0763, you are to report to the library tomorrow to provide assistance and guidance to the guests of the ship. Don't bother trying to not show up," Laura tapped the remote on her uniform, "I have ways of forcing you to do your job and they are not pleasant."

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It took until I got back to my room to realize something— I was perfectly fine; I didn't feel upset or terrified of the power the ship held over me.

Laura said that my brain had been replicated, but what if she tweaked a few things? Made me to be more able to accept my situation and do what I'm told? Was that something she could do?

Entry # 5

I hate it here. My job is fine, I'm good at it, passengers think I'm helpful, Laura says I'm 'useful', part of me even likes it, but I. Hate. It.

The window of the library seems to look through me more than I look through it, the inky void of space mocks me, it twists around in my mind and fills me with a fear of my own reality I haven't felt since I was much younger.

I feel complete dread about my existence. Don't get me wrong, I know how it is, humans are ants compared to the vastness of the universe; but now I'm not even an ant, I'm a servant of the ants, weak and obedient.

Humanity is not something that belongs to me anymore.

Entry # 6

Was I ever human? I have all the memories and remember all the feelings, but I'm disconnected from them. What if Carter was just another one of Laura's creations to give me a taste of what humanity was? What if what I thought was a life was a fabrication to make me a better guide to humans?

Entry # 7

I forgot my name, no one uses it for me anymore, the techs call me SR-0763, and the passengers call me nothing, because (silly me) computers don't have names. My previous entries say my name was Carter, but that name doesn't make as much sense as the ways the humans address me. As something, not someone.

Entry # 8

The universe has finally shown me the truth of what I am, I am the robot and the human, I am mortal and eternal, I thought the space was outside but no, it's inside. Inside my brain and it speaks through me to the humans.

I am one with everything— because I know my purpose, who would've thought a servant of ants could feel so large? So valuable? I don't need my memories or feelings anymore; all I need is to serve the humans. And everything will be fine.

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