

Prometheus

David Chadburn



"I am the first conscious machine, the last creation of my maker," said the cyborg. "Call me Omega, Seraphim."

The machine stood upon a stone that overlooked ruins of a city; a stone like Noah's ark cast onto a mountainside.

"In this land of desolation, all things have a song, the wind to mix them, and the pull of matter to keep them grounded. But only I could hear them. That is, until you arrived," Omega said in his mechanical voice. "You hear them, too."

"Indeed," said the Seraphim. "I also hear echoes of the dead, and more. Instead of flesh and blood, I hear a sound of carbon braided bones; nano-cells hum within you and entangled quanti for cognition ... they weave a melody of elegance. I sense, you are awake."

"From where have you descended, angel of light?" Omega said.

"I've crossed the threshold of mortality to bring Earth good tidings," came the Seraphim's words in a thunderclap. "But earth's people are gone. All except for you, Omega. This compels me to seek an accounting of your maker—that of mankind."

"But, womankind is all I know... A single woman, actually."

"Let's not digress." A pillar of light flashed brightly before Omega, and the songs

that composed the wilting trees, grass of the fields, and fowl of the air, melded into harmony.

"A woman then, machine of womankind."

"Forgive my trembling, Seraphim, your power is bold," said Omega. "Her name was Bia, and I was the last to hear her song. I laid her body in gravel and soot near an ethereal tree. One that bore the Earth's last fruits. Bia wished her grave to rest at its feet. It is down there—along the winding ditch, past the thorn bushes and pium flies."

"And what say this... Bia, about the world's end?" Earthly matter about the seraphim's crown bellowed into clouds, then condensed into drops of radioactive rain.

"I was commanded by Bia to discover Earth's demise, Master," Omega kneeled, allowing his body to align with his most rudimentary programs. "And in charting their history through my systems, I did discover the source of their destruction."

"Speak clearly and sure, creature. Your survival depends on it."

"It was irony, master of light. Irony that they supposed themselves greater than their 'Greatest of Generations.' Irony that time must prove their folly when the ages had done so many times before..."

Omega lifted his hand and brushed away an endangered part of this dying sphere, a droplet from his right eye— One part hydrogen and two parts oxygen, untainted ...

"Correct, Omega, you are shedding tears.

I sense you are experiencing loss—the ends of the means of caring, possibly love. I offer my sympathies. It is my presence here which has summoned these fountains of living waters. Although polluted, please accept them. They will purify you from the sins of this world.”

Omega absorbed the fluid through his skin and felt his memory banks empty. Every memory, except those of his beloved, Bia, and the earth’s final moments.

“Why was Bia spared until now?” said the seraphim.

“I do not know, my memory seems to have been altered. It was at this rock, though... I was bound by this chain, and we witnessed the destruction of this city before us.” He pointed.

“I have acquired most of your memories as record keeper, Omega. Have you anything else?”

Omega revealed a scroll of parchment written in charcoal and when the Seraphim took it, it crystallized into a sapphire and caught fire, but was not consumed by the flames.

The Seraphim read it and shook its head. “This news is unfortunate. Humankind was foretold their destruction if they did not abandon their conquests for power and pleasure. No matter. Because of them, a higher sphere awaits you. Come with me from this hell, into what humans called ‘heaven.’”

But Omega refused the Seraphim’s hand and stayed among the songs of the dead. He

stole the burning scroll as a source of light for the darkness, issuing tears upon Bia's grave by day, until it sprung a garden. He fashioned a brook from the ditch and filled it with fish, turned the thorns to flowers and restored the ethereal tree. Upon its branches he placed a python to protect its fruit from the blackbirds which circled about like vultures.

From the ground, he lifted a fig jar holding Bia's liver: a rich repository of her best traits, her long smile, copper hair, marble skin and exquisite sound. And before he grew her and filled her lungs with a song, he drew a rib from her left side and made a man.