

Short Stories for the Creation and Delivery of Sean's Computer

By Chris Riffey

The Organism

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The morning sun should have been clearly visible at this hour, but the black clouds kept it hidden from the small village.

The storm was getting worse.

Inside his lab, a man with wide eyes listened to the incessant howling of the wind and the beating rain. He was quite mad, but the sounds of the storm brought him a measure of peace as he worked. The lone light fixture above his head cast dark shadows throughout the ghastly scene that surrounded him. Empty husks that had previously been home to organs, the parts he needed for his Creation, littered the workspace. Their mangled remains mixed in with the tools he had used to peel and pry the useful bits from their homes.

But none of these were any longer of consequence to him. His attention was now focused on the organism in front of him. It lay there, amid the mess, unmoving. Much of its skin was missing, heaped in a pile to one side, exposing the places where the mad man had worked to insert the harvested organs. Bare though it was, the blackness of its true nature could not be mistaken.

From outside the light, the mad man pulled a black umbilical cord. The cord snaked its way through the carnage to where he attached it to the silicon organism. This essential cable of life was the only thing left. The thing that would validate his insane work. The man trembled as he made sure the connection was secure. The time had come, and that scared him.

He stared at the organism, though it did not look back at him. He took a deep breath and said a short prayer to whatever pagan god would listen.

He touched the organism. There was noise.

It was alive.

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The Numbers

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Alarms woke the air force lieutenant from his sleep. He had never heard them before but he knew what they meant.

He extracted himself from the thick sleeping bag that passed for his bed and quickly began adding layers of clothing to his thermal bodysuit. Today was supposed to be one of the warmer days so he left the

electric heat jacket and simply grabbed his thick parka from the wall hook embedded in the ice. He was still fastening it closed as he made the traditional run at the corrugated metal door and slammed into it with his shoulder. The ice and accumulated snow holding the door closed broke free and he was engulfed in darkness and freezing wind. The alarms could barely be heard out here. He made sure the door was closed shut before running toward a larger dome some 30 yards away across the snow.

When he got to the control center the others were already there. One scientist was sitting in front of a computer with 3 others crowded around him. There was excitement in the air and the scientists were muttering to each other. He'd never seen them like this.

"The detector works!" said one of them as he saw the air force officer approach. "We're actually getting data!"

The lieutenant moved in close so he could see the screen. All he saw were a bunch of numbers. He couldn't understand what these egg heads were so excited about.

"So, what have you found doctor? I need to report this." said the officer.

"Numbers!"

"I can see that, what do they mean?"

"We think they're indicators of some sort of power measurement. Well, we're not sure...yet."

"Doctor, we've been up here freezing our asses off for months. Now you're telling me the detector is finally picking up something and it is just a bunch of numbers that you don't understand the meaning of?"

"If we'd ever been given more information about the device itself then we would!" the scientist countered.

"It's time we call Washington."

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Colonel Simmons sat at his huge oak desk and drank his black coffee, it was a good batch this morning. He sipped it as he watched the video feed from the polar research station. The scientist was still typing on the computer.

"Here they are sir, these are the numbers the detector recorded." said the lieutenant.

Below the video feed the numbers were displayed. The Colonel stared at the numbers for some time.

"Colonel", the lead scientist was speaking, "as I said we have no idea what they mean and the detector has not picked up any more data. We were hoping since your people provided the detector that you might know more about what these numbers are."

"Sorry doc, they look like figure skating scores to me. We aren't paying you to be clueless. Let me know if you come up with anything pertaining to their meaning."

The scientist looked frustrated. The lieutenant leaned in, "Yes, sir. We'll keep you posted." and the video vanished.

The Colonel sat back in his chair. He felt somewhat bad for lying to the scientists. It would take them months more to figure out what type of power the detector was actually measuring, by then it wouldn't matter. He took another sip of his coffee, keeping his eyes on the numbers.

7.5

7.5

7.7

7.7

7.4

Not only did he know what they were, he knew things would never be the same. He decided to finish his cup before making his next call. He knew once he made it, he might not get another moment of peace.

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The Package

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It was a typical day for winter, but not for Joshua. In fact he would later rank this one of his worst days ever. The Portland sky was cloudy, and cold. As was so often the case this time of year what fell from it was something between drizzle and snow. Many people might consider this type of weather hostile to the work of a UPS driver, but Joshua knew it was par for the course here. Ordinarily, he would smile to himself and think about all the spoiled drivers in places like Florida and California would balk at working conditions he thought of as easy. If they only knew what it was like when the weather really got hairy! But Joshua wasn't in such an amusing mood today.

He'd clocked in at 5am as usual, the packages for his route sorted and ready for him to load into his truck. He'd finished the bulk of his route by 10 and was quite pleased with himself. Then he made the worst mistake of his life, going home for lunch break. An unfamiliar car had been parked on the curb. He hadn't thought much of it at the time. He was preoccupied by the fact that Helen's car was parked in the driveway when it should have been at her work. This was indeed unusual.

He opened the front door and immediately heard sounds coming from down the hall. Human sounds. Erotic sounds. He felt dizzy as he heard Helen making sounds she only made for him...

He'd gotten back into his truck barely seeing straight. He had begun driving, he wasn't even sure how. He was lost in a fog of sadness and anger. When the fog lifted a bit, he realized he was in Wilsonville, way off his route. He'd stopped the truck in an alley behind a Harbor Freight Tools, the engine was still running. He was trying not to think, and it wasn't working.

He was startled by the sound of the back doors opening. As he turned around he saw a figure in a black coat. But the figure wasn't trying to steal anything from the truck, instead he threw a large box in and

shut the doors. Joshua was about to get out to confront the figure when they appeared at his window. He didn't really see a person, all he saw was the black revolver pointed at his face.

"You need to deliver that package. I'll kill you if you don't. No police."

Joshua's eyes widened. He felt like nothing was real. He didn't know what to say or do. All he did was nod slightly.

"Drive!" said the gun.

Joshua mechanically worked the gearshift drove off slowly. He didn't know where he was going, he wanted to get away. He drove for miles. Eventually his mind reconciled that he wasn't be followed. He pulled the truck over and killed the engine. He sat motionless, staring into nothing. He just listened to the sound of his heart pounding in his ears.

Eventually, his mind started processing again. He thought for a moment, he turned slowly and looked in the back of the truck. The box was on its side. It had strange pictures on it with the words "Metal Boned" featured prominently on its side. Professional curiosity began to get the better of him and he moved towards the box to read the address.

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Joshua now drove to the address on the box, it hadn't been far away. He had a bad feeling about what was in that box. It was something powerful that he didn't want to mess with. He just wanted to get it out of his possession as soon as he could. He was nearly there. Drizzle was beginning to turn to honest rain. Whoever this Sean was, he probably had no idea what was in store for him.

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