

ENGLISH EXTENSION I

Science Fiction Creative Writing

How an apocalypse sounds.

Sixteen.

The First Law of Thermodynamics: Energy can never be destroyed.

Human beings are merely vectors, with acceleration and energy.

Human beings can never be destroyed.

- President, United Universe Liaison for Artificial Intelligence.

One.

Kneeling upon the wooden pews, Mach shut his eyes. Was praying for atonement futile? He decided to do it anyway.

Bless me Father, for I have sinned.

The weight of three thousand years of human civilisation fell upon him as he bowed his head, and half-prayers fell awkwardly from his lips. The defensive upheld shoulders belied an unfamiliarity, as if he had read about Churches from some historical hologram. As he left, the quaint wooden doors glided shut.

“Thank you for visiting the Museum of Westminster Abbey. Your shuttle awaits you.”

Sixty.

We have predicted, guessed, spent countless hours imagining the end. Since the dawn of man, we have conceived images of fire, water and particle bombs. Oh, what fools we were. Silence smothers the living. And yet, people walk again. They walk toward the flat glass of the Mediterranean and they gather in citadel buildings. They seek company, the air and the intangible.

Oh yes, the sparing lyricism of it all. It delights me on a most immoral level. I will witness what Newton, Schrodinger and Hawking never dreamt of. I will see the rage with which we came into existence as the last light is extinguished.

Ten.

A memory: Fragile autumn grass in a sealed hermetic vault. A shivering, blood-tinged poppy behind nuclear-resistant glass. The remnants of life, the alive. Elise turns to him. A broken smile, which holds in it the joy of breathless hot afternoons and the creep of illness. She beckons him to the next exhibit, a photograph.

A woman with a child in her arms, standing amidst rows of white linen flapping in the breeze. She touches his arm, as if to steady herself. She tells him to take care of her child after she dies. She says: I know you, I created you, you are a microcosm of what humans used to be, Mach. With you, I set right all the problems in the world. Take care of him, show him what it means to be human because only you can.

And then Mach could see colours. Real and imagined, pain and light. With a gasp, Mach withdrew his head from the water basin, as the oxygen monitor on the wall beeped frenetically. And for a moment, he paused, at the thought of 30 billion of these sounding their alarm for all eternity. An eerie cacophony of life, borne silently into space.

“Mach. Reveal.”

The priceless timber walls of the child’s Pod shimmered, and slowly turned transparent. He watched the child sleep, the atmosphere holder feeding him precious oxygen. They had enough left to last a month; ten days worth was all they would require. He wanted his child to fall asleep breathing real air.

Thirty Five.

Evolution is driven by an organism’s will to survive. If there ever was a species built to survive, it is the Homo Sapien. We possess the Animus, like every other animal. What separates us, what makes us the Rulers, is our ability to use it to drive evolution in new directions, while still preserving the Homo Sapien. We have created to further the human race. And now our creations will be the new human race. For they alone can survive this apocalypse.

Mobilisation of the creatures is of paramount importance. They have absolute free will and herein lies the problem. Every creature must be put in a state of Premeditation and administered enough Time to remain in this state past the Last Hour. They will awaken to a new world, the only true new-age human being.

We are giving them what they were meant to give us. Time. Life.

Nine.

“Mach, get the door,” Meth’s familiar, lifeless voice filtered through the room. For all its faults, synthetic air had furthered communications beyond anyone’s wildest molecular dreams.

“Transfer me.”

“Machine M. 441?”

If Mach had a heart, it would have ceased its traitorous beating immediately.

“Meth, seal all channels, ports and change satellite positions at once. Camouflage Orfon immediately.”

“Altered diction, syntax and pitch. It would be beneficial if you calmed down about now Mach,” she replied lazily.

He closed his eyes and a laughing sob overcame him as Meth played Fur Elise. This really was for Elise. He had sworn that he would protect her child. His child now.

Mach walked out onto the deck, where two men and a woman waited.

“Mister.... Mach is it?” She didn’t wait for a reply.

“I am from the United Universe Liaison for Artificial Intelligence. President, in fact. You, of course, know what is going to happen nine days from now.”

She said it unflinchingly, with the resolve of someone who either did not care or someone who had accepted the terrible cruelty, the scope of the tragedy that was only nine days away.

“We believe that the M-series, as I’m sure you have suspected, has a chance of surviving what is to come. M. 441, your final order is to assist us in ensuring the survival of this race.”

“My child. Orfon,” a strange, bullet-riddled voice emerged from him.

“He is not your son. When Elise Butler entrusted him to your care before her death, we honoured her wishes. Unnatural as they may be, she is held in great esteem by my colleagues. The orphan will be in good hands. Good day Sir.”

Yours is a fleeting life. Mine, eternal. Orfon of the Stars, reared by my hand, will die by it. I cannot alter my fate, escape my duties, but for you.... I can quicken death and vanquish the fear of a lonely end. Alabaster eyelids shroud your gun-metal eyes as I watch you, tenuous breath the only symptom of accursed life. I will walk in a new land, without your small hand in mine, the evidence of my humanity. Yes, history is discontinuous, back-to-front and terrible. But I will build a new world upon your memory, upon what you gave me. If a parent's grief is the most unendurable, then I am your mother and your father. On an eye-blue day in some far-off frontier you will run, hungrily devouring the strange scents of grass-scythes and soft petals. And you will forgive me for what I am about to do.