

THE STORY OF A HOPEFUL BORG

Spiro came from a family of great wealth and knowledge. His parents were the leading systems engineers in North America before they suddenly died while they were away on vacation, when an unexpected tsunami hit the pacific shores of Costa Rica. Spiro was 18 the last time he saw his parents. His regular optimistic mindset about his future quickly faded and he began to approach the world with an anger that swelled deep within his soul. He was angry that he was born into a world with such atrocities. There was simply no hope and Spiro quickly fell into a darkness that consumed him.

Spiro grew up stuck in a bubble of fantasized happiness and order. He was clueless about the work that his parents were involved in. After many long months of grief and depression, Spiro woke up and looked out his window, emptiness in his eyes. Trapped with himself yet again, he decided it was time to face what he had been fearing most: his parent's very secret workshop. It was always a restricted zone when he was a child and as he grew older he began to fear the room, knowing that he may find something that he was not yet ready to accept.

He approached the room with caution and confidence, knowing very well that what was behind those doors might change the life he had always known to be his. He was not wrong. He discovered a very organized but chaotic arrangement of computers, mechanical tools, and skeletons. The skeletons resembled those of humans, but as Spiro took a closer look he realized they were made out of a combination of metals, creating an

unrecognizable alloy. Spiro became incredibly interested in what he discovered. All the robots were at different stages of development, some with tiny motors and bundles of multifilament muscles.

Spiro continued investigating his parent's lab. He read their research and their theories regarding the production of these androids, discovering a meticulously detailed ten year plan. For the first time in a long time, Spiro began to feel an immense amount of hope. Although he was not an educated engineer, he thought like one. His parents had always made sure that Spiro would excel in problem solving and critical thinking. They also integrated their knowledge and ideas into his upbringing. He felt as though his entire life had been leading to this.

For the next four years, Spiro focused solely on studying his parents' work and vowed to himself that he would carry on his parent's legacy for the greater good of the people and his community. He believed that if he was able to market this in the right way or meet with the right people, he would be able to change the world, just as his parents had always wanted. He kept quiet about his findings for quite some time, he wanted to be sure of the programming before sharing this complex creation.

At the young age of 23, Spiro began to network and connected with two young men who he grew to trust. Together, they founded a startup tech company, Syntech Corporation. Spiro's goal for the company was to better the lives of future generations through integrated technologies in the lives of everyday people. Having not had the social literacy of most people his age, Spiro

believed that his partners intended the same. Unfortunately, they had other plans.

Because of the taboo nature of android development throughout these years the partners knew that the entire operation would need to be kept away from the public. Anyone involved in Syntech Corporation was required to create a secret identity which they would use in their everyday lives. Their existing selves would seem to disappear off the face of the planet, only ever known to exist by their fellow co-workers. Spiro felt a sense of unease at this process, but was willing to do whatever it took to push his project forward. He knew he would need the help of a team to continue his work. It was helpful that his team also had seemingly endless amounts of money to fund the project.

Spiro worked with his partners for the next two years, where everything he had planned was moving along seamlessly. The only real roadblock that came up was a recurring discussion of who would have access to these androids once they were ready for distribution. Spiro always believed that in order to foster peace and community, everyone should have access to these new technologies. The others argued that this would be a profitless endeavor and all for nothing if they did not restrict access to only those who could afford it, or somehow met their requirements of deserving it. As time went on, the discussions became deeper and more complex, the true colours of each partner started to shine. Spiro realized that the people he had learned to trust with his life's work were no longer the people he wanted to be working with. He saw the evil that they had been hiding; he saw the greed within their eyes.

Spiro was in a very difficult position. They had access to all his work and they had recruited some of the most skilled hackers in the company to their side. If he made one wrong move, he could be killed without any evidence he was ever involved in the first place. Since his true identity was destroyed the moment he agreed to found Syntech Corporation, he knew he had no real way out.

The others at Syntech noticed Spiro pulling away and isolating himself; they felt his uneasiness. It wasn't long before Spiro was the victim of a not-so-mysterious armed robbery and attack. He came home to his entire estate being flipped inside out. He tried to fight back, but he was sedated, the drugs taking hold of his body, leaving him unable to move. Everything became blurry as he slipped into a chemically induced coma.

Unaware of when or where he was, Spiro woke up strapped to a surgical table. He was surrounded by state of the art medical utensils and robotics systems which were very similar to what he had been working on at Syntech Corporation. He had his mind and senses, but he had no control over his own body. When he looked down at himself he did not see a human. Instead, he saw wires and engines, his inner workings were visible and extremely synthetic.

For many years, Spiro was held prisoner in this unimaginable nightmare, being subject to horrendous acts of experimentation. Not only did they mutilate his body, they mutilated his mind. They used him as their puppet for whatever new idea they had. They tortured him and degraded him. They had no sense of consideration for his well-being or basic needs, only

barely keeping him alive in order to continue their vile research.

Spiro had lost all sense of self. He gave up, he shut down, he was empty.

Everything changed when Zo (short for Nozomi) started working for Syntech Corporation. Zo was assigned to visit Spiro, check in on him and bring him the things he would need to stay alive. During the first few months, Zo kept her head down and did her job, grateful for the position. But Zo started to feel oddly connected to Spiro and her compassion drove her to secretly start helping him.

At first, Spiro thought it was just another sick plan to send him even deeper into despair and torment, but Zo was patient with him and took her time to gain his trust. She helped him become more mentally stable, gave him information on what was happening around him and to him. Ever so slowly, he began to pull his mind back together.

He learned from Zo that 70-80 years had passed while he was kept prisoner. He had missed years at a time, being kept alive but unconscious, only to be reawakened to be assessed with the new technology implanted within him. Syntech Corporation had grown to heights he could have never imagined. The original partners were trying to find the key to immortality, and Spiro was the perfect candidate. They sought to create a human/robot hybrid, as they already had access to the most advanced robotics in the world. And they succeeded in doing so, to the extent that they had also risked their own lives to become borgs and live forever.

Spiro maintained the youthful appearance and mindset of a 20 something year old man. Zo did as much as she could to give Spiro back the life he deserved. Spiro formed a deep connection with Zo; they cared deeply for each other. They worked together on creating an escape plan where they would be free and together at last.

When the riots began, Zo and Spiro were able to take advantage of a breach in Syntech's headquarters to finally escape this hell, together. Trying out his new body for the first time ever, Spiro discovered he was an unstoppable force. He now had superhuman speed, strength and stamina. His mind was clearer than he had ever experienced in his lifetime and he was able to analyze, interpret, and learn new things at a pace much faster than any human could.

Spiro, the original borg, a great force to be reckoned with, was born into an unfamiliar world. But it was a world he would be able to navigate almost seamlessly. This is what he was made for, and he would stop at nothing to destroy those who had done this to him. He knew it wouldn't be easy or quick, he knew he would need the help of many others to take these people down, and he knew there would be no moment where he and his beloved Nozomi would be safe.

They laid low for quite some time, enjoying their moments together but never feeling quite as free as they had initially hoped. They knew they needed to stay quiet until the time was right. They continued to watch the news and gather information. Between the two of them, they were able to access future development plans for Syntech.

When they learned that Syntech's androids started going rogue, they knew it was their time to take action. Spiro planned to gather androids to create an army and take down Syntech Corporation once and for all. Spiro and Zo were not prepared for what followed. They truly believed that these sentient androids would be seeking revenge, but this wasn't always the case. The androids had plans of their own, they trusted no one and they did not feel confident about organizing on a bigger scale. They knew it was way too risky to do anything like that. Syntech was too powerful and the androids were only trying to do one thing - survive against all odds.

PERSONAL CHRONICLES OF SPIRO

DECEMBER 25, 2028 - AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

I woke up this morning, forgetting it was Christmas at all. Not that Christmas means much anymore. Sure, I have those sparkling, dazzling memories of waking up as a child and feeling excitement that was hard to contain. But as I grew older I realized that this holiday didn't mean much to a family so disconnected from religion. I know that in my younger years my parents just wanted to create a sense of magic in my life, in whatever way they could. They showered me with gifts, we baked cookies, we put up a tree and read stories by the fireplace. It was all very wholesome and warm. I crave the warmth I felt as a child when things felt so much simpler than they do now. Even as I continued to

grow into a teenager we kept some of the traditions alive and held this day dear to our hearts as it was a day we could forget about our dark reality, disconnect from the grid and be together. I remember the sounds of laughter, I remember impatiently waiting by my mother's side to lick the icing off the spoon as she worked away, I remember my father excitedly curating the music in the den with all his favourite records laying about. The sounds of Radiohead and Arcade Fire echo in my ears.

When I woke up this morning I did not expect to receive a gift, I barely made it out of bed at all. I looked out the window for quite some time and I felt a strong pull from within. I finally looked down at the date on my phone and realized it was Christmas morning. I was drawn to put on a record and spend some time remembering them. Finally, giving them the honor and respect they truly deserve. As I dusted off The Suburbs and let it play I was transported back in time. I immediately felt the love, warmth and presence of my parents all over again. I felt hope for the first time in many months and I felt motivated. I have been dreading it all along, I have been terrified of finding something horrible but it was time to finally open the doors to the elusive lab that my parents kept away from me all these years. They are not coming back, so what does it matter? I knew before going in that the secrets behind these doors may change everything, for good or evil.

Yes, I was definitely taken aback when I discovered the android skeletons. But I finally feel relieved, I understand why they kept it from me all this time. If I did know anything about this project and the advancements they were making it could have put me in

great danger. And now that they are gone it is my responsibility to carry the torch forward and continue their work. I know it's what they would have wanted. I thought that the magic of the holidays was only for children, but right now I can feel it all over again, like I am five years old, waking up with stars in my eyes. The feeling of hope has not disappeared.

JULY 19, 2032 - THE BIRTH OF SYNTECH CORPORATION

Today was my first day at the Syntech Corporation facility. I was surprised by the size, for a startup we are really going all in. Sven and Billy are my partners, I was skeptical at first but getting to know them a little bit more, they do seem like great guys. They were not joking about taking this project seriously. They gave me the grand tour and showed me where I will be setting up shop. It will be a bit of an ordeal to transport all the equipment here without being noticed, but they said not to worry too much about it. They have non descript vehicles and plenty of labor to make it happen.

Today is my last day living as Perry Nguyen and from here on out I will only be known as Spiro Spero. Sven and Billy also operate under aliases and I do not know their true identities. All evidence of Perry ever existing on this earth has been destroyed and I feel a sense of freedom in my new identity. It's a chance to start over and give some meaning to this life full of despair. I look forward to what the future holds and feel that a strong bond with my new team will be built in no time.

OCTOBER 28, 2034 - EVERYTHING STARTS FALLING APART

I've been at Syntech for two years now and I am sad to report that things have turned, dramatically. It is not safe here and I am starting to become very paranoid. I don't know who to trust and it seems like everyone is out to get me. I want to protect the project but I don't really know how to do so while also keeping myself safe. I know I have to act fast or it will soon be too late.

APRIL 8, 2115 - A NEW LIFE

It feels like I've lived too many lives at this point. But I am once again starting over and I can say that after many years of uncertainty and suffering I am finally able to begin my process of healing. The future is not what I had hoped it would be. In fact, things are much worse than ever before. The monsters at Syntech ruined life as it once was and have turned it into their own little game where death and horror are the main attraction. And yet, even after all the unspeakable terror I have witnessed and experienced I still carry the slightest thread of hope in my heart. Hope that love still exists, hope that the human race will continue to change and flourish and grow against all odds. I can see it in the eyes of everyone who continues to fight for freedom and peace. I can feel it in the actions of everyone who helped me get to where I am now, finally in safety, finally in some sort of comfort. It's not much but it is home, a home I've craved since the death of my parents. I know now that I made mistakes and I had it wrong all along. It was never

about trying to be the best or making more money or enjoying the hedonistic luxuries that everyone chases after. It was always about family. And I should have realized that long ago. There is simply no comparison.

Even though I made mistakes I am learning to live without regret because I know that if I didn't go down this path and experience what I did I would not have met Nozomi. And with her I am able to have everything I ever wanted, a family to call my own. It isn't much, it's only us, but it is the most significant thing I have ever experienced. How could she love someone teetering on death's door, who is barely a human at all, is beyond me. But I am grateful for the unconditional love she shares with me each and every day. I have a chance to do it all again, to do it right this time and I will not fail. Together we will organize, together we will gather others, and together we will defeat the evil that controls this world. As I lay quietly in the dark next to her, using our bodies to stay warm and listening to her soft breaths, I remember my name Spiro Spero and why I chose it. The name that carried me through the nightmare that is my life, the name that brought light into the darkness, I survived it all because.. while I breathe, I hope.

SYNTECH CORPORATION

Syntech Corporation is a multi million dollar organization that was founded in the year 2030. Syntech began as a small start up company with the intention to create and build androids, but it became so much more as the years went on. Syntech grew to become the leading tech company in North America controlling multiple aspects of society today and

becoming much more than just a tech company. Some of these aspects include trade with other regions, agriculture, housing, the Grid and of course the manufacturing and production of all technology. They have also implemented and streamlined many public services including employment recruitment services, transit services, law enforcement, education, wellness and entertainment. To live within city limits means that everything you consume, purchase, interact with or use has in some way gone through **Syntech** before coming into contact with you. Their main goal is to monopolize the entire region, leaving citizens with no choice but to subscribe to their services.

LOCATIONS

SAFE HOUSE

Safe houses offer a brief refuge for Androids on the run. They are oases in an overwhelmingly hostile city. It could be a friend's house, an abandoned building, or even a small PATH Apartment. Typically, safe houses are only disclosed to those deemed trustworthy, their locations are never given up on a whim. Safe houses change locations frequently and often create decoys so that they can remain secret and safe. Visiting a safe house isn't without risk, however. The information may have been outdated, or it could have been a trap from the start, so it is a good idea to verify the information gathered about the location with a reliable source. These locations can be easily compromised from a single person being bribed or threatened. Before entering a safe house, prospective residents will be