

4 Scars

by Daniel Rubenstein

Danny had finished Abe's upgrades for the day. Averaging the day's crowds, with the time they stood and watched Abe's routine. Hidden cameras observed angles of eye. Air conditioning, and heating needed to be adjusted on a daily basis. These factors contributed to Abe reaction time and response. The more information he received the more life like his performance. After his 3rd Red Bull had finally taken its toll. Danny decided it was time for a much deserved break. Pushing away from the desk, his hand inadvertently hit the input function key for Abe's memory core.

Within 3 seconds the replicant Abraham Lincoln now knew everything there was to know in this world. The errant input function had created a memory leak that lead into the network. First local systems, local networks, to city, state, government, then worldwide networks, all accessible to Abe. He became self aware at 12:34 am. He left the amusement park at 12:38.

The humid, southern weather did not slow him down. No sweat appeared on his life like skin. Only his stereotypical garb, top hat, beard, coat and tails, made him stand out. But in a state where amusement parks are the norm, no one would look twice. His mechanical legs propelled him towards the coast at a fantastic rate. Info-feeds ran across his field of vision. Launch times for the latest shuttle mission, theories on terra-forming distant planets, voodoo rituals, and several treatises on Chinese democracy.

NASA's security alarms all sounded at once, emergency procedures immediately going into effect. Military personal going to high alert. Someone had breached the outer perimeter and was moving rapidly towards the docked shuttle. Abe's readouts gave percentages of how much damage he could take. The results where... satisfactory. The assembled soldiers formed a blockade in

front of the shuttle. Lincoln's pace never slowed. The command to fire at will was given. Bullets whizzed around Abe's body, many strike him. Redundant systems took over for the damaged ones. Structural integrity was still sound. Within yards of the front line, Lincoln launched himself into the air. Mechanical legs lifting him over the heads of the soldiers before him.

Landing on the launch tower, Abe climbed. Maneuvering himself closer to the cargo bay doors of the shuttle. The soldiers had ceased firing for fear of damaging the shuttle, and were now scrambling to reach the tower themselves. Reaching the bay doors, Lincoln paused. Strange sounds had begun emanating from within the cargo hold. Leaping from the tower itself to land on the shuttle, Abe punched through the outer layer of the shuttle. Fist pounding until finally breaking through. Using the hole as a grip, he proceeded to pry and rip the bay door open. As his prying began to show signs of working the sounds from within increased. The strange droning sound was beginning to become overwhelming. Lincoln's input recorders couldn't decipher any of the noise.

Suddenly, the bay doors burst open with, dozens of corpse like beings emerged. Surging towards Abe, as he struggled to remove his arm from the bay door. The strange droning had stopped and an eerie chanting had begun. The language was almost recognizable. Abe's processors were searching for a translation. Free from the door, Abe swung steel fist at the closest zombie. Struggling with his other arm to remove those gripping his body.

An internal alert chimed amidst the chaos. The chanting had been translated. Ancient Mandarin.

"We are the Dead."

"The planets are ours."

"Fear Space."

2 years later...

From his vantage point, Abe could see clearly across the vast plain before him. A horde of Mandarin Zombies was slowly working its way in his direction. The cliff face would hold them off for a while. Their rudimentary intelligence would eventually find the gate to the stairs that would lead them to the top. His visual sensors numbered the mob at 511 individuals. Internal readouts gave him threat assessments . 100 to 200 individuals posed a minor to moderate threat to him. A total of 500 posed a significant threat. Strategies where now running through his processors.

After stopping the initial launch over 2 years ago, the Chinese retaliated immediately by launching their remaining Zombie hordes into space. Weeks later, the hordes where released in various locations around the earth. Cities fell, entire populations fell victim to the man-made virus. World governments fell into disarray. Abe struck back where he could. Between skirmishes he sought survivors, finding only stragglers. Small groups barely surviving. The information he gathered showed military bases where the first to fall. The collateral damage destroyed millions of acres in every direction.

Abe had been able to plug into different network array's picking up Chinese transmissions from their space colonies. The Zombies were proving incredibly efficient. Immune to the atmospheric effects of the planets they had been seeded on. Their programmable skills, sufficient to begin the terra-forming processing needed to proceed to the next stage. Human colonization.

Abe rose. In standing, a small rock dislodged. Falling down the cliff face. Abe tracked it's trajectory, failing to note the humor of the stone bouncing off the nose of the monument bearing his face, as

well as 3 other American Presidents. He did note, the reaction of the Zombie horde as the rock landed among them. In unison, their heads raised, then the awful wailing started as the frenzy to reach him broke out.

Co - Authored with Jeff Dillon

