

Blank

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1 Chapter 1. The machine

Once upon a time, the innovators of the Ministry were ahead of everyone: they invented a machine capable of taking a perfect photograph of space and time, which led them to discover something that no one else had ever conceived before, and which would change it all forever.

When the innovators took the first photograph, the immense amount of light emitted by the machine to make it work nearly blinded the whole town, but no matter how many chaotic lights

and sounds continued to swirl around the near atmosphere under the starry night sky, the newspapers did not report any deaths the next morning.

The mist that came out of the machine after the capture might have looked like in sci-fi films, according to what bystanders thought they saw; but the innovators assured that this mist looked more akin to the one seen in modern horror movies, which differs from sci-fi mist in that it is created inside the mind.

The capture taken by the machine was not something that the human mind could really grasp. To the naked eye, it looked like the blank sheet of paper in which you were supposed to write a school essay, but then you never got around to it, so it stayed blank until it made its way to the landfill and eventually got burnt to ashes. Whatever you could or could not see in the capture didn't matter, as it was intended to be processed by a thousand computers working together in order to create a giant, searchable database that would start making sense.

The kind of sense that this database made was not usual, as the innovators would eventually come to realize as they sat around the table, in front of the screen. The patterns therein would have taken centuries for a silicon-based machine to learn, but this light-based computer ensemble was infinitely superior in every way, so it learned it all during the innovators' lunch break.

"There is something off in the patterns," was the consensus among the innovators, "time is nowhere to be seen as time." Where was it hiding? The screen could display space at a moment in time, but as soon as they tried to visualize time at a moment in space, all they could see before their eyes was the blank essay burnt to ashes. It didn't make sense, so they spent hours hours discussing what could possibly be going on.

One of the innovators dissociated just when this discussion was taking place, and after completing her journey through her internal universe, she brought some of its structured humor into the real world, and jokingly exclaimed, "Time is in the pixels!" Her humor was not exactly the kind of humor that would come across as humor to other people, so everyone reacted in all seriousness, and they quickly looked at the pixels and noticed something strange:

the pixels were telling a story.

Dark matter connected matter through various layers of repeating patterns, producing variations consistent with all the laws of the universe known to humankind. The obvious conclusion to this was that time is a particle. The future could not be seen in the pixels, as the innovators would later discover during a late-night brainstorming session intended to further develop the initial theory.

The theory proposed in this session was that time elapsed as an effect of dark energy flowing through the varying repetitions held together by dark matter in a consistent, albeit unknown, direction. As dark energy flowed through dark matter, new patterns containing the next moment in time were created, and so on.

What if humanity was able to mutate dark matter and energy? Little was known about them at the time, but after this failed-humor-fueled discovery, at least one more thing was known. If it ever became possible to artificially mutate dark matter, would the Fundamental Problem finally be solvable? Would it be possible to mutate time and everything in it? What would the implications be?

None of the implications would matter if matter was to be mutated in a way that would suddenly destroy the universe, with no time to turn it back. The innovators expressed their fear of becoming the first and last killers of everything, as some in the entertainment industry would portray it. No matter how much they feared it would happen, they could never abandon this potentially dangerous project, as it was their chance to bring meaning to their ever-knowledge-starved minds and solve the Fundamental Problem once and for all.

The innovators spent their lives trying to figure out how to mutate dark matter and control dark energy, building all sorts of particle accelerators and surviving several assassination attempts by sociologists trying to save the world from black holes; but no success came out of their increasingly insane experiments, and one by one, they died, the last one lonelier than the first, but with their minds starved all alike, and a legacy that future generations of innovators would carry forward. No one would ever forget the original innovators.

2 Chapter 2. The Ministry

Back in the age of silicon, a talented musician used computers to create the music that would later transform society into the peaceful world in which future generations would be born. Experts around the world once studied her music with fascination, and came to the conclusion that it was not music what they were hearing, but rather a transformative manifesto drenched in rhythms and avant-pop synthesizers, carefully crafted to disturb and change those unwilling to change.

Wars that were to be fought, were never fought, because there was no longer a need for them. Lives that would soon come to an end in the blink of an eye continued to be until time eventually faded them away. Those who lacked money would later climb as high as the moon as soon as poverty was eradicated. Nobody believed in music before, but then this musician came along.

In the middle of that autumn fog, there was nothing to do but wonder what was beyond the fog. We are so small in the universe, that we can't see past a kilometer when the weather is unfortunate enough for those driving at high speeds. However, as dense as that day's low-altitude water vapor was, it was picturesque and memorable, not only because of the fog, but also because of the girl inside it, lying in her backyard, thinking about everything, and creatively generating the chain of thoughts that would later give birth to the Ministry.

She was part of the first generation born in the new order, so neither her gender nor her geographic location mattered. At an early age, she learned the sciences and the technologies, and eager to be the one to solve the Fundamental Problem, she drafted her own crazy theories that didn't make sense to those around her. She didn't want to live in a world where no one could understand her, so she looked around relentlessly, hoping to find crazy, like-minded people to complement her.

She travelled all around the world on her bicycle, collecting her sweat in a jar so that she could measure how much it took to find each person on her journey. No matter how long she pedaled around, she wouldn't have been able to find anyone if it hadn't

been for her statistical knowledge of which places had more people per capita interested in science. Despite this, days went by, and she returned home with a full jar, having found no one at all.

What she didn't know, however, was that she wasn't the only one carrying around a jar in a bicycle. She managed to get access to the sales records of the local store where she worked, and soon realized that at least five different people had previously purchased both a bicycle and a jar. She was able to track down the five buyers by matching the timestamps in the data with CCTV footage, and searching the town for a week.

The five people she found turned out to be quite interesting. They had all sorts of creative ideas and their adventurous minds had no limits. The problem was that they were not well versed in science; but she was an excellent teacher, and the buyers were curious and willing to learn. Years later, they were all young masters of science, and she finally had people around her who could understand and even complement her theories.

That day in the fog, she was not alone in her backyard. The five buyers turned passionate theorists were also looking at the sky next to her, wondering what was beyond the fog and how small we were in the universe. In a sudden moment of inspiration, the young and creative girl conceived her idea and expressed it to the five young theorists. At that moment, the Ministry was born in their minds, and that same year it materialized into its original incarnation.

The young theorists then turned into the innovators that the world would come to know years later. They were no longer just theorists, but also scientists, physicists, and computer engineers. They created original and innovative research, that quickly positioned them in the global scientific and technological community. With the ever-growing body of knowledge in their minds, their possibilities expanded, and they soon attracted the interest of people who enabled them to advance their research. They moved their headquarters from the backyard to the Ministry, a building they jointly acquired that was located in their hometown.

The more advanced their research became, the more computing power they needed, and increasingly often, no matter how much they could get, it was not enough. Silicon computers had

a limit: power consumption and heat dissipation. So they came up with the concept of a new light-based computer that would require only light to function, and a minimal amount of energy to generate it. After all, what's faster than light?

Light-based computers started being developed by computer engineers around the world based on the innovators' original research, and years later, the electron began to become obsolete in the computing realm as photons became the new standard. Simpler integrated circuit designs would allow for orders of magnitude more speed than anything seen before, and processing huge amounts of data was no longer a problem. Furthermore, multiple light computers could be linked together to create supercomputers that would allow scientists around the world to process and analyze massive amounts of data in fractions of a second.

The world changed once more with this invention, and this could only mean one thing: humanity was closer than ever to solving the Fundamental Problem. However, there was only one remaining problem: where would the data come from? Solving a universal-scale problem would require a universal-scale amount of data, taken from the universe itself. The technology used at the time to capture the universe was limited because it could only capture space, not time. The innovators knew that this was their chance to innovate.

3 Chapter 3. The Fundamental Problem

Long before the age of light and the new order, astronomers and physicists around the world discovered something strange in their cosmic microwave telescopes: the universe was behaving unpredictably. Strange phenomena caused measurements not to conform to the laws of physics known at the time, and some of this unpredictability had catastrophic results: stars exploded for no reason, entire galaxies collided into new compound galaxies, and the universe expanded at an alarming rate. Any of this could happen at an unfortunate time and place, and would inevitably lead to the extinction of humanity if we were close enough. This phenomenon would later come to be known as the Fundamental Problem.

Humanity has historically used humor to relieve all kinds of anxiety, no matter how great or existential. The Fundamental Problem would soon be turned into comedy by expert humorists around the world. Eventually, decades later, people would laugh when told about the Fundamental Problem. It was a perfect kind of dark comedy: so dark, that when physicists theorized that unknown matter and energy were the causes of the Problem, they called them dark matter and dark energy, respectively.

One hundred different cinematographers produced one hundred and one different films depicting catastrophes caused by the Fundamental Problem, creatively dramatizing them as intense and passionate comedic drama thrillers starring the world's most famous actors of the time. Award categories would be created for this specific type of film, because of the unfair advantage it had over other genres of production.

Singers who traditionally sang about love, now sang about the Fundamental Problem. Music was no longer listened to feel emotions, but rather to avoid them, especially the negative ones. Guitars were now heavily distorted to represent the distortion of meaning that people experienced when dark humor was absent from their lives.

The successful literary careers of ten writers would change after they published twelve non-comedic books about the Fundamental Problem in different languages and caused worldwide controversy for their lack of dark humor. Eventually, their careers would come to an end. It was not until millions of science activists created a movement against dark humor, that the Fundamental Problem could be seriously discussed again.

The end of this dark chapter in human history marked the beginning of a new age of light, in which hundreds of scientists throughout history would begin to try to push their minds beyond their material limits, risking their mental health to find solutions to the existential threat that people had once laughed at,

For decades, no amount of speculation could shine a light into the darkness of the Fundamental Problem, until the innovators came along with their sweat jars, bicycles, and unique minds, and saw things that no one else had ever seen before: they were the

candles that humanity was in desperate need for. They eventually found new realms of darkness that their natural biological limitations kept them from exploring, for life is short for those who need it to last longer, and it's for the better.

4 Chapter 4. The black hole

The next generation of innovators, born as innovators from the ashes of blank paper in the labs they no longer felt part of, would shed light on new areas of the Fundamental Problem, in ways that even the original innovators never thought of. The seven new innovators were kicked out of their original labs for going too far. They wouldn't let their mediocre labs stop them from pursuing their dreams.

Contrary to popular belief, scientists have feelings too. The new innovators, with their stereotypical lab coats, and their social inadequacies, had noble goals, and were driven by pure and genuine love of humanity. Like the original innovators, solving the Fundamental Problem was not about fame. Their childlike curiosity and wild imaginations, not seen as age-appropriate by society, helped them advance humanity toward salvation.

The Ministry, as revolutionary as life on Earth after eons of fire and chaos, had earned its place in popular culture, becoming the kind of story worth reading to children at bedtime. Millions of books were printed, schools around the world taught extensively about the Ministry and its accomplishments, and monuments were erected with the faces of the innovators in them, reminiscent of a mount that once existed; however, four of them would be destroyed by sociologists a few months after their inauguration.

The new innovators knew that there was only one place where they could possibly belong: the Ministry. Coming from different places and cultures, they all eventually found their way to the same place, and as dark matter would have it, they brought the Ministry back to life, picking up where their predecessors had left off.

First of all, they found several problems with the original particle accelerators, the main one being that dark energy was never taken into account in their designs. Days earlier, in a warm sum-

mer vacation at the beach, one of the innovators was trying to eat an ice pop that was as solid as a rock. He could only taste some of its flavor after exposing it directly to the sun for two minutes. This inspired him that day to suggest that perhaps dark matter could only be mutated when exposed directly to dark energy.

Time occurs as an effect of dark energy flowing through dark matter and the patterns that contain the universe, as if it were a long film rolling behind a projector lens, one frame at a time. Each frame represents the universe at one moment in time, and it is separated from the next and previous frames by a thin line, which in this analogy would correspond to dark matter. Finally, the lens would be dark energy projecting each frame onto the screen.

The logical implication of this is that there are small windows of time in which two frames and the line between them are under the projector's lens at the same time, allowing the particle accelerator to mutate dark energy if the ice-pop-lover's theory were true, and the accelerator was located in one of the horizontal sides of the frame.

Where are the sides? If space were flat, the sides would be at the very edges of the universe. However, space is curved by gravity, so, in theory it should be possible to reach any of the sides by bending it enough. Black holes were known to bend it more than anything else, but sociologists hated them.

By analyzing the photograph taken by the original innovators, they found that black holes were simply cracks in space where strands of dark energy converged and were captured. Interestingly, black holes didn't keep the energy they captured, but rather shot it out to all sides of the frame, all the way to dark matter, and then captured it back in an infinite loop, effectively acting as an artificial side.

Small amounts of this energy made their way to the neighboring frames, where they would be captured by black holes in them and redirected to other frames. This process would create an infinite side channel in which all frames of the film could reach each other, no matter how far apart. The innovators thought that by somehow shooting unstable particles into a black hole, it would be possible to mutate any existing dark matter particle in the film.

But first, they had to create the black hole, which posed many challenges.

Sociologists eventually discovered their plans to build a black hole generator, so they worked together to boycott the project. As they grew in strength and ability, they strategically disguised themselves as scientists to fool the innovators and get into the Ministry. No matter how brilliant the innovators were, none of them were prepared to deal with this new generation of sociologists.

What the sociologists didn't know was that the innovators had already tested a prototype of their new machine years before, and had successfully created a perfectly stable black hole. The sociologists only learned of their plans four years late. Countless unstable particles had already been shot into the black hole, with no result. The black hole could easily be dismantled by turning off the machine, so they turned it off and died from an explosion caused by improper handling of the electrical modules. Fortunately, the black hole was safely dismantled before the explosion.

The Ministry would then be restored and the machine rebuilt. Sociologists around the world abandoned their violent means of saving the world from black holes, and instead created a regulatory body to ensure that scientific research and experimentation regarding black holes followed sound safety measures.

During the four years of intensive experimentation with black holes, the innovators were consumed with fear and anxiety. They were very close to destroying humanity, and yet they couldn't just stop the experiments because it was possibly the only way to save it. When the innovators were finally able to build a stable black hole and experiment with it, their minds began to become unstable, to the point where they had to take a year off to go to rehab and recover from the stress and trauma. By the time the sociologists made it into the Ministry, the innovators had been in rehab for a month, isolated from the outside world and immersed in a fictional paradise. After leaving rehab and learning about what had happened, they had to return for another year.

5 Chapter 5. The minds

The second generation of innovators would only last so long. Shortly after rehab, they decided to give up their careers as they felt their minds decay. They were still relatively young, but their minds were not: they had seen enough already. The innovators saw things that no one else had ever seen, and pushed their minds beyond anyone else in history. It was time for them to live their lives like everyone else, and forget about black holes until death.

After their retirement became public news, a new wave in applied psychology began researching about possible mechanisms to protect the human mind from the burnout and trauma associated with what was now known as "extreme science," a field devoted to the research of existential threats and issues, of which the original innovators were considered the founders. The term was coined by psychologists themselves, years after the death of the original innovators.

The new psychological research used light-based machines to analyze neural patterns in scientific minds to detect structural changes caused by intense and negative feelings combined with excessive knowledge. They discovered a small area of the brain that acted as a safeguard against insanity. It worked by locking down unstable parts of the brain to prevent decay. Scientific minds have this area underdeveloped, which means they're always working at unsafe levels of mental capacity, which eventually leads to serious problems given the right triggers, such as creating a black hole.

The "mental regulator" had neuronal pathways to different sensory organs, with the strongest ones connecting with the ears and eyes. Six simulations in light-based ensembles allowed psychologists to create sensory experiences that would keep this regulator working at safe levels, while attempting to compromise mental functioning as little as possible. This sensory experience consisted of a five second video that was named "the blank essay," as nothing in it could be consciously seen or listened to, just like in a blank essay.

This success in mental engineering alarmed the world. The ease with which a mind could be modified in order to change its

functioning was not something that would be taken lightly by the majority. As soon as rumors about the blank essay caught media attention, the masses mobilized against the psychologists and mental engineers in order to impede the development of more blank essays. Governments, more democratic than ever, listened to the people and arrested all the psychologists suspected of being involved in mental engineering. No one wanted mental engineering to be used as a weapon.

With the help of social engineers, the psychologists managed to convince everyone that the blank essay didn't exist, and that mind control was not possible with their research. This lie would last enough for the next innovators to rise and secretly acquire the blank essay. When the essay was found to be real, the psychologists had already abandoned their careers and disappeared, and soon, mental engineering became a clandestine field advanced only by people wanting to use it as a weapon.

The psychologists involved in the blank essay then changed their faces and acquired new identities to become part of the third generation of innovators. They used their own essay on themselves to avoid living the same fate as the previous innovators. Extreme science and extreme psychology were different in every way, but this group of psychologists was versatile and their minds were special in their own way. It took them years to learn extreme science, but they caught up and joined the Ministry.

When the psychologists-turned-innovators joined the Ministry, it had been audited several times by the sociologists. Some of the safety measures were not being followed by the black hole machines created by the previous innovators, so they had to redesign some of the modules, including the electrical one. The previous innovators didn't document the machines properly, so they had to do some reverse engineering to create their own manuals and documents. The new version of the machine cleared all the requirements in further audits.

The work made to clear the audits, inadvertently caused an interesting difference in the black hole that was generated: it took on a hexagonal shape filled with a color gradient that slowly moved around a dark palette of colors. It was a different black hole,

but somehow the innovators felt like there was something positive about it. They had invented a new kind of black hole, but they didn't know how it worked yet.

The "dark hexagon" lacked darkness, which possibly meant that it only partially captured dark energy. After extensive analysis, they discovered that this new black hole created a new kind of hybrid energy with properties of both dark energy and regular energy, which the innovators called "gray energy." Does gray energy imply the possibility of gray matter?

In theory, gray energy should be easier for the innovators to interact with and manipulate, something that was once impossible without a black hole. If gray matter existed, it would also be easier to interact with, opening up all sorts of possibilities. If unstable particles were to be shot into the hexagon and turned into gray matter, they would be able to mutate the dark matter in the universe, so that's what they did.

The innovators threw various types of radioactive particles into the hexagon, but they all somehow stabilized shortly after being sucked into it. The reason was unknown, and the more particles they threw in, the more questions arose. The hexagon was a perfect stabilizer for all kinds of atoms, including the human-made ones. What was left to try?

One day, an innovator was eating an ice pop inside the lab, reminiscent of that earlier innovator being inspired by one. Eating inside the lab, near the machines, was against the rules imposed by the sociologists, but that day the innovator didn't care. The moment he turned on the machine, he felt his ice pop moving. It seemed to be getting attracted to the hexagon. Everyone did their best to keep the ice pop from making it into the hexagon, but it soon broke into cherry-flavored snow that the innovators couldn't stop. The scene was like in slow motion: the snow flying slowly towards the hexagon, and the innovators dancing around Apolloesque in their attempt to stop the snow from getting sucked in.

6 Chapter 6. The ice pop

The ice pop eventually made it into the hexagon, and instantly, an invisible expansion wave reached the entire universe. It couldn't be seen, only felt. The universe had changed, it was no longer the same; except that it had been the same all along. As soon as the wave reached the sociologists, they knew that the innovators were up to something. They walked all the way to the Ministry, two blocks away, and shouted "Stop!" The innovators couldn't hear them because they were shocked by what had just happened.

Unsure of everything, as soon as their shock subsided enough for them to be able to move, they ran to the computers and created another universal capture, to see whether they had caused any catastrophic effect. The machine took five hours to prepare, so the capture could be timely announced. Everyone in town was wearing sunglasses at the time of the capture, but no matter how dark they were, they could all still see the modern horror mist invade their minds.

The capture was taken and then analyzed using the light-based ensemble, and within minutes, the pixels were there on the screen to tell the truth. The innovators compared the new capture to the original and found no differences in the overlapping regions. Of course, new patterns had been created throughout the journey of dark energy, ever since the original capture was taken, and that's where the truth lied, just waiting to be discovered by material minds.

Why did the ice pop cause the expansion wave? As the innovators would come to realize, regular and stable matter at low temperatures fed into the hexagon created a series of chain reactions due to thermodynamic inconsistencies that resulted in dark heat being aggressively transferred to the gray matter, causing gray atoms to explode in a way reminiscent of the deaths the avant-pop musician prevented before the original innovators were born.

The innovators had inadvertently disrupted dark energy, creating a rift in space and time that had rippled back to the beginning of time, destabilizing all the dark matter in its path and causing the patterns to break in unpredictable ways. This rift had always

disrupted the universe in many ways, and that's why the captures overlapped perfectly.

The innovators had turned into the creators of a mystery, unaware of its essence until their minds, akin to their light-based ensemble, began to quickly interconnect the knowledge they contained in all possible ways. In a matter of hours, they collectively reached an eureka moment, as if their minds were all linked together. They had cracked the mystery with dread in their souls.

The innovators had just created something that scientists had been trying to solve all along. The root of the inconsistencies first observed in the cosmic wave telescopes, the main subject of toxic obsession in the age of dark humor, the cause of the failed careers of the writers, the sole motivation behind the mass movements against dark humor, and the very reason why the Ministry was born. All along, it was written in time that the innovators would create the very problem that generations of extreme scientists would trade their minds for.

The wave soon became public news, and everyone was smart enough to suspect a certain group of people. In the days that followed, the world manifested against the Ministry and the innovators, demanding an explanation of the wave, and of any possible consequences that could follow from it. The innovators were not ready to explain anything yet, but they were running out of time. They crafted an honest public speech using their public speaking skills to explain everything and say goodbye to the world, knowing that they were already at the border of their career.

On the day of the speech, it rained so hard that the Ministry turned white from its black paint wearing off, being torn apart by the speed of the water and gone with the wind as it blew harder than ever. The streets smelled of petrichor, a pleasant smell that contrasted with the bitterness of the scene, and brought a feeling that no one had ever felt before. No one had prepared for a storm, and before they knew it, they were swimming in a mirror as unreliable and distorted as the past, present and future.

The innovator with the best speaking skills was chosen for the speech. Her mouth in front of the microphone and under a thick tarpaulin, began to produce some of its last structured noise pat-

terns. The truth was told, exactly as it came out of the pixels, and unlike the water in which everyone was swimming, it was as clear as it could be. The capture, the dark matter, the dark energy, the film analogy, the black hole, the dark hexagon, the gray matter, the chain reaction, the rift, and finally the acceptance that the Fundamental Problem was their fault.

In that memorable moment of silence, everything seemed to be under control. Everyone turned their backs on the innovators, and began swimming slowly toward their homes. But then an explosion ended it all. A diameter of half a kilometer saw light and heat obliterate everything in its path in less than the few seconds it took the innovators to say goodbye. The Ministry turned to ashes, and the matter that once belonged to the innovators and the people inside the diameter now floated in the air, useless in the form it had taken.

The tragic news pictured in the light-emitting boxes, slightly distorted by static, reached everyone's eyes and ears, in a tone that communicated what a time to cry it was. The moment of silence and the mourning thereafter lasted for weeks. The world would never be the same after the speech and the explosion were printed into the contents of a universe that would become known metaphorically as a film. However, as tragic as the events were, most people went on with their lives, doing the things they used to do, in exactly the same way they used to do them, because life was there to enjoy.

The explosion was traced back to a missile launched by the regime of an island where music had been historically forbidden. No revolution ever brought peace to this place, the only place on Earth where none of the avant-pop ever made it. Its inhabitants were known for not aligning with the principles of the new order, and were always excluded from global affairs. Out of resentment, they launched a technological revolution intended to violently overturn an order that had only brought suffering to them.

7 Chapter 7. The beginning

Once upon a time, there was the beginning of the universe we'd come to live in. Infinite iterations would eventually lead to life in one of them; in fact, in an infinite number of them. However, only an infinite subset of that greater infinite would contain living organisms that would become capable of altering the fabric of reality.

Chance in the form of dark matter, played its role, as it always has, in the creation of everything that we'd come to know, including ourselves. The longest chain of events in our timeline led to the birth of matter, energy, atoms, molecules, compounds, light, rocks, cells, plants, animals, bacteria, fish, dinosaurs, mammals, humans, thinkers, scientists, computers, innovators, light-based computers, and the dark hexagon. However, chance didn't play alone.

Our universe has always been a chaotic yet beautiful choreography: galaxies dancing around and crashing into each other for no reason, vibrant rocks flying everywhere at high speeds instead of sinking all the way into the galactic bulge, gravitational disruptions causing stars to explode long before their expiration date, colorful nebulae and new planetary systems born out of exploding stars, vibrant rocks colliding with new planets, complex carbon structures emerging out of planets enriched by rocks, and then complex interactions between the complex carbon structures leading to the creation of structures capable of mutating reality in ways that would retroactively lead to their own existence.

After the explosion, generations of scientists attempted to further advance the field of extreme science, but none of their achievements were significant enough to move humanity closer to solving the Fundamental Problem. There was something special about the Ministry-turned-legend, that brought out the best in those who ever inhabited it. The explosion managed to dissolve all the genius that made it all possible, ever since the first innovators created the universal camera.

Eventually, decades later, the inhabitants of a long peaceful civilization were found to be living under sequestration by corporations secretly making use of clandestine mental engineering

technology to dissolve any mobilization against the use of greenhouse gases for the construction of a perfect world of illusions: a world made out of lies, false needs and hypocritical motives, without regard for the damage being done to the only planet they would ever inhabit.

Year after year, the effects of the manufactured environmental neglect became less and less deniable, to the point where mental engineering was no longer sufficient to control a population whose survival instincts were beginning to awaken. Life on the planet disintegrated, reorganized, and underwent multiple rebirths; but none of what was done or not mattered anymore, for there was no turning back.

Populations and living species around the globe rapidly declined in number, and the once ubiquitous and taken-for-granted greens gradually turned into lifeless browns and blacks, reminiscent of Earth's primordial chaos before life arose, as fires and floods painted the landscape of a paradise turning into the hell that humans historically imagined dying to, rather than dying in.

In this new picturesque landscape, trees were no longer trees, and plants were no longer plants, for they had all turned to ashes as quickly as the blank essay in the landfill. Lakes and rivers had no water in them, as it had all turned into useless clouds that only rained above ashes. Cities and towns slowly collapsed and turned into concrete ruins, filled with the false needs that were now nothing but matter.

After years of living in the flames, the remaining shards of humanity, one by one, began to succumb to the adversities of hell, collectively generating the last thoughts in the universe as they shared their last moments of existence with their loved ones. Life on Earth had its days counted, and no amount of genius in it would ever turn back what was now beyond genius.

On the day that would never be remembered, the last human being to stand on Earth said to the last dog in a weak and agonized voice, "Look at us now, my long time friend, we're the last ones left in this planet, and we're both dying here, surrounded by our own consequences disguised as flames. All these years we thought the universe would destroy us, but in the end, we destroyed our-

selves faster than we could even realize, in a way that we never imagined. You did not deserve any of this, my dear and loved friend, no one would ever forgive what we did to you, but I hope to see you in another life, and maybe there we can be happy for longer.”

In a matter of minutes, the last tear evaporated, and Earth turned into a place with no reason. The universe was still there, virtually unaffected by the extinction of life, but once again, there was no one to contemplate its immense beauty, or speculate on the mysteries it concealed. If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?