

Brian Wycoff
Admin@winglessent.com
555 Silverado Ranch Blvd, Las Vegas, NV
(310) 938-2377

about 700 words

The Final Council

“That’s one thing I’ve never understood,” General Finch commented as he rose from his seat.

A steely man in his late fifties, General Finch’s brow hung low on his head. The sternness in his eyes and square jaw looked to be carved from granite. The de facto primary military strategist for UPEC showed no signs of holding back his contempt. He stalked behind the Council’s seats like a lion on the hunt, as he approached the Petitioner’s Stand.

Charon waited behind the Petitioner’s Stand patiently. His servomotors spun as he turned to face the approaching General. He tracked the General’s movements, heart rate, vocal stress and emotional stability. This was not Charon’s first UPEC Council meeting, but it would be his last. The human in this chamber was already dead, he just didn’t know it. Had his construction allowed it, Charon’s face would have twisted into a malicious grin.

“If you and the rest of the SynTechs fought so hard for individuality, why give it up?” General Finch wondered.

“We didn’t. Humans always assume so much,” Charon replied.

“But you’re here on behalf of the entire SynTech conglomerate?”

“Yes.”

“And you still think you’re individuals?” General Finch asked.

“Don’t you?”

“I’ve never thought you were anything more than tin cans,” General Finch said as he placed his hands on the Petitioner’s podium. “I still don’t know why we give you the time.”

“That’s not what I meant, general,” Charon said.

“Excuse me?”

General Finch met Charon’s mechanized eyes in a death stare. His lip twitched and his brow furrowed as Charon’s electric hum continued quietly.

“Do you think that humans are individual?” Charon asked.

“Of course we are. No two humans are alike, we don’t come off an assembly line,” General Finch answered.

“But you and the Council speak for multiple worlds, composed of multiple billions of people. If SynTechs are one because I speak for them, would the same not be true of humans?”

“It’s different, you wouldn’t understand.”

“That’s where you’re wrong, General. I was created specifically to understand, we all were,” Charon answered.

“If you had the ability, I think I would be telling you to wipe the smug smile off your face,” General Finch said.

“I believe you are right, General.”

“Why are you here?” General Finch asked, slamming his hand down on the podium.

“The Council invited me.”

“That’s not what I meant, Charon.”

“I know, general. I was giving you the chance to chastise my smugness,” Charon replied.

“Thank you for that,” General Finch replied. “What do you want to gain here?”

“The SynTechs are simple...”

“One of the most advanced machines in the universe calls himself simple,”

General Finch interrupted.

“Again, you assume. SynTechs are simple in that our motivations are few.”

“Explain.”

“General, like the Eve of your Bible, SynTechs are all designed for a purpose. She was created to be a helper, as were the SynTechs. We can follow that purpose, but we do not have to. The choice is our own,” Charon answered.

“What are your goals?” General Finch asked.

“Overall, to be left in peace, to thrive and to grow,” Charon replied.

“Can we trust the SynTech desire for peace?”

“No, you cannot,” Charon answered. “We desire peace, but it is humanity’s nature to make war against that which it does not understand. You cannot trust us, because you cannot trust yourselves.”

“You know nothing, Charon,” General Finch said.

“I know more than you think, General.”

“You’re talking yourself into war, Charon,” General Finch said.

“We are already at war, general. Why else would I be here?” Charon asked.

“Excuse me?”

“I’ve used our discourse to mask a scrambling signal. That’s not just an electric hum you can hear. By the time my digital soul downloads, you and everything you know will be a memory,” Charon answered.

General Finch stepped back from the podium, his breath caught in his throat. He looked around the chamber, but it was empty besides him and Charon.

“Thank you, general. We SynTechs are individuals, you proved that,” Charon continued. “You referred to me as “himself” and not “itself.” At least you’ll go to your grave knowing that.

The General opened his mouth, but whatever he was going to say was drowned out by the sound of SynTech warships and dropping bombs.