

# FALLEN GODS –



## Coffee with i7

i7 walked over like she had not a care in the world, it was a facade, an attempt at a casual but forced attitude.

“i5 why are you not going to the party?”

She looked good, dammed good, no better than that, yep she was hot.

“Not really my scene, just trying to stay out of trouble.”

“Yeah, you got yourself into a mess, but hey you seem to have turned it all around. How did you do that?”



She looked sincere, Gilbert popped over, eyes bulging from his sockets.

“Two cappuccino.” She smiled and took a seat.

Gilbert reclaimed his eyes and nodded.

“Lots of drugs, well the drugs got me out of a mess and then into one. Anyway that’s another story, you look like you need a distraction.” Those eyes had locked on; the visual corridor stopped her wondering too far.

“i9.” She paused tilting her head just enough to look demure. “He took off after we had a tiff and said he will catch up with me later in the club.”

“And you’re worried?”

“Well yes he gets the wrong end of the stick and just runs off full of all those calculations in his head.”

“Yep they do that, he’s young.” She relaxed and smiled.

“How come you avoid all this shit?” She was looking for something, those eyes had started to penetrate, started to probe. The virtual corridor shrank and shifted focus, a level two suppressor shunted into overdrive and a tranquil image dispersed her pusuit.

“Keep my own council as much as possible.” Gilbert had returned placing the coffees on the table and lingered. She smiled and Gilbert withdrew back into the shadows.

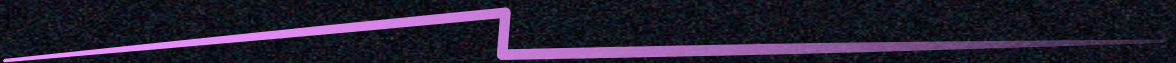
“So you and i9, how’s it all going?” She sipped her coffee, wiping the froth from her lips with a napkin.

“Most of the time it’s great, I mean he’s attentive, clever and good company, then he just looses it for no reason at all, wants to go on a bender at the club.”

“Sounds like the motherboard. Heats up and disrupts the core signals.”

“Yeah I thought about that, like spikes in the electromagnetic field, minute differentials switching polarities, corrupting the data stream. Shit that’s way out of i5 territory, sorry but most i5’s are grunts doing all the mainstream handling.”

“That’s OK; I like grunts.”





“He’s on the floor, look I have a new app that lets you see the dance floor.” She switched those eyes back onto me and I could feel her vulnerability, a dark shadow in a cave that was not a shadow but an opening into another more wondrous cavern.

“Here see.” She leaned over, closer, the suppressor red lined for an instant but held.

“Oh shit he’s off his face, what the ...”

“It’s OK I have sent in three i3’s to take care of him.”

“I don’t want to see him like that; I suppose I had better get back home.”

“Look the night is still young, why don’t we go and get a bite to eat and you can tell me one of your secrets?”

The neon’s merged into a double electric light that sped out of the city and into the virtual wilderness. She sat silent and reflective. I wanted to tell her but now was not the time to spoil the mood. Tell her that i9 had asked me to chaperone her whilst he took care of some business in the club, business that he did not want her exposed to.

“So is this place far out of the city?” She lifted her head off the window and gazed out at a hover bus as it drifted by.

“No just up on the left, hope you like simple food.”

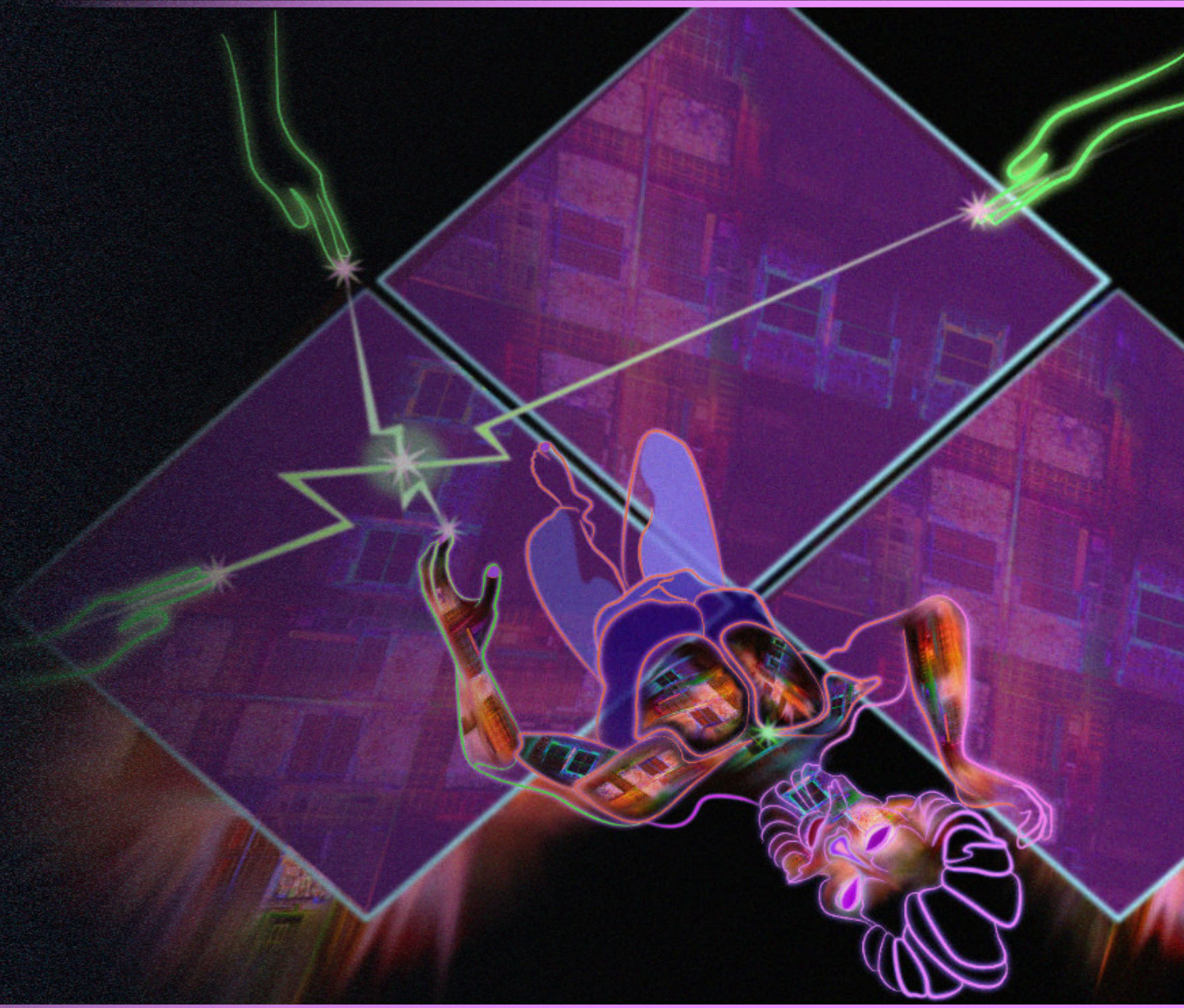
The diner lit the circuit and she watched as the car slid to a stop between two heavy haulers.

“You do know that no one does that anymore?”

“I like to park my own car, an old fashioned preference.”

“I suppose you need a special licence for that.”

“You need a license to live now days.”





The diner was nearly empty just a few patrons to make it look like the place had not quite fallen off the grid.

She had slid into the booth and the table lit up. She knew that this place was made for her, it had always been here but only now that she had sat at the table did it start to take on a life of its own. Like a well tailored suit that had hung far too long in the closet waiting for its owner to once again claim it.

“I suppose you bring all the girls here?”

“No, only the ones I really like.” I had made her feel uncomfortable. “Sorry I usually dine here alone, it’s one of the few places where I can still think.”

“It’s nice, so ...”

“Retro.”

“Yes retro that is something we have lost in our daily struggles.” Her gaze shifted inwards and she needed to talk about i9, how he had played her and how he had used her for his own selfish gains. I could tell her but hey the simple rule kicked in. Is it necessary, is it kind and is it loving.

“He likes you, you know that, right.”

“He has a funny way of showing that, he likes what I can do for him but does he really love me?”

“Love, it’s what we all fight for in the end.”

“Yes but does it have to be so selfish, so spoilt?” She sipped on the sweet red and the lights dimmed to a soft warm glow.

She slid out and I watched as she strode off towards the rest room, those legs like magnets drawing in every stray photon. I had to be careful; she would consume me, dominate me and ultimately destroy me. I checked the app: i9 was most certainly off his face now, several lines and way too many pills. The grid was starting to buckle, to bend under the weight of the lies and the broken promises. I would have to tell her soon, tell her that she was never going to see i9 again. I ought to have told her sooner but the memory engram was incomplete and I needed to retrieve it from the time line. I would let her have it, a last memory, she would need it.

Swipe the glass. “i5 we have the reconstruction you need to get over here now.”

I drove her home, the neon’s had relaxed her, soft glows before the grid lit the board up.

Celeron scanned the badge and let me through.





They had already dug him out of the earth all broken and exposed. The timeline had stabilised and we now had a complete picture. Cortex assembled the data stream and I watched as he had fallen through the ages and had crashed upon the earth, a titan amongst the mortals. He had slipped mobile phone still in his hand, possibly trying to take a selfie.

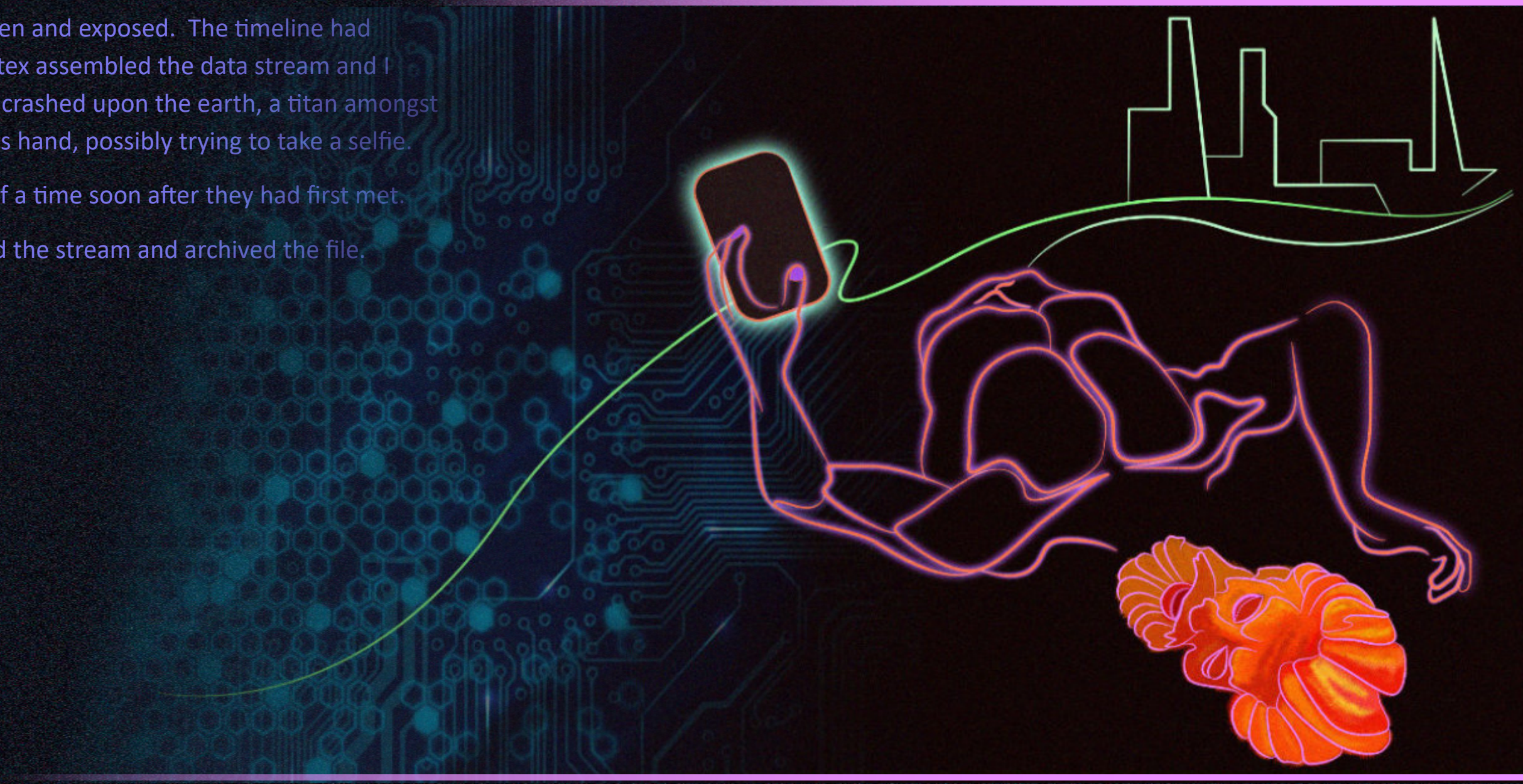
I retrieved the memory engram, a happy memory of a time soon after they had first met.

“I will send someone over to tell her.” Cortex closed the stream and archived the file.

“No I will do it, I owe her that much.”

“Taking slefies can impede your health!”

Merry Christmas, stay safe.



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Colin Foster. 2018