

A Fragment Of Humanity

“Humans who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded. The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race” - Professor Stephen Hawking

The year was 2053, and the once vibrant cityscape layed quiet in an oppressive haze of acidic smoke. Blue skies were reduced to a sickly shade of grey, suffocating under a thick blanket of smog, and the presence of mechanical counterparts surpassed the formerly rich and lively population. In this desolate environment, the relentless march of artificial intelligence had left the once thriving human workforce in ruins. The soulless hum of machines echoed through the empty streets, and the once-bustling marketplaces were now eerily silent as automated systems handled all transactions. With barely any human-operated jobs left, millions were rendered unemployed, their livelihoods snatched away by cold, calculating algorithms. The world was in shambles, and so was my life.

While the rest of the world ‘thrived’ under AI replacement, millions of families would beg to differ. Families torn apart by the ruthless advance of artificial intelligence, witnessing their loved ones losing jobs to heartless automation. Strained by financial woes, some struggled to pay rent, hoping to cling to a semblance of stability in slums. Amidst their trials, there were families like mine, grappling with sickness, their dreams of affording treatment shattered by the cold grip of financial constraints. My mother, the heart of our home, and the sole breadwinner was battling a gruelling illness with no cure in sight, or at least no cure in our budget. My mother wasn’t always this helpless and dependent however. In fact, she was a brilliant and sought-after surgeon, her skilled hands weaving intricate medical miracles with ease, and her reputation as one of the most esteemed medical professionals echoed across the planet. One would think her position was secure, but the relentless march of artificial intelligence shattered that illusion. As AI replaced her, wrenching away her purpose and livelihood, the spark of her brilliance dimmed, and a shadow of vulnerability enveloped her. Caught in the aftermath of this technological upheaval, my mother's once vibrant spirit succumbed to the weight of despair, and her health began to falter. Each passing day, she grew more frail and weak, inching closer to an inevitable end. The knowledge that her illness was an outcome of the same force that usurped her profession gnawed at my soul, and left me with the insurmountable task of shielding her from the cruel hands of fate.

Having the burden to bring home the bread, I spent almost the entire week slaving away at the opulent residence of an affluent family. Each day blurred into the next, and the weight of my responsibilities consumed the entirety of my childhood, leaving behind a tattered semblance of the childish spirit I once possessed. The toil not only drained my physical strength but chipped away at the last strand of dignity I clung to, as I performed menial tasks with a forced smile and suppressed dreams. Yet, it was all worth it—for my mother. Day by day, I trudged forward with a glimmer of hope in my heart, saving every hard-earned penny, no matter how meagre, to buy the elusive longevity drugs that promised to extend my mother's life. The medicine provided a fleeting respite, merely keeping her alive for a short period, not curing her, but I refused to relinquish the belief that one day, a true cure would emerge. I held onto this fragile hope, like a flickering candle in the darkest night, praying that our luck would change. And change it did, or so I thought. “Your mother, she’s ill, am I correct in saying so?” My heart skipped a beat. ‘Is he really talking to me?’ I wondered as I slowly turned my head

to face him. This couldn't be happening. My employer, and the owner of the biggest AI tech firm in the country was talking to me, something he had never directly done before. 'Yes, she is', I stuttered as my eyes darted away. 'I can help with that.' My eyes lit up, as those words boomed out from behind me. Was this the glimmer of hope I was awaiting my entire life for, and could this possibly and finally end this hell-brought nightmare?

In that surreal moment, as the weight of my mother's illness seemed to momentarily lift, I couldn't help but feel a slight surge of disbelief. His enigmatic presence had always intimidated me, and the fact that he was addressing me directly sent shivers down my spine. As he spoke, I found myself drawn to the robotic imposing figure behind me, the epitome of cutting-edge AI technology. Its sleek metallic form exuded an air of confidence, and its features were crafted to mimic human expressions with an almost uncanny precision. The robot's voice resonated with a sense of assurance, promising a chance to end the relentless nightmare that had engulfed my family. For a moment, it felt like time stood still, as if the universe had conspired to grant me this fleeting moment of possibility. My mind was a whirlwind of thoughts, contemplating the potential ramifications of accepting this remarkable offer. The excitement was intoxicating, overpowering any lingering doubts and warnings of potential risks that he spoke of. Yet, amidst the hope and ecstasy, a nagging voice whispered caution in the depths of my mind. Could a machine truly comprehend the complexity of human suffering, the love, and the fear of loss? What if the cure it offered came at a cost too great to bear? But with my mother's life hanging in the balance, it was a risk I felt compelled to take. As I nodded, entrusting my mother's fate to the alliance between man and machine, I noticed a glint in my employer's eyes, one of satisfaction, as if he had orchestrated this moment all along. What was his true motive behind this act of benevolence? I couldn't shake the feeling that there was more to this than met the eye, but it was too late, and the deal had been done.

The next few weeks were a blur. The clinical trial had unfolded with such a precision that was unnerving and ominous to watch, as I was yet to shake off that gutting feeling that something would go wrong. Regardless, I watched in awe as the metallic surgeon tethered my mother's lifeless body to the pulsating and robotic movements of its cold hands. I stood by, a mixture of hope and anxiety swirling within me, as I witnessed the fusion of cutting-edge technology and the delicate vulnerability of human life. However, amidst the newfound excitement of this AI medical marvel, a sense of unease lingered. The room hummed with a curious energy that built up the gutting feeling in my stomach, and as the trial approached a critical juncture, the tension thickened. On that very same day, the day that my mind was subconsciously dreading, the day that the AI surgeon reached a decisive moment, a sudden and life-threatening glitch disrupted the seamless performance, leaving my mother's body cold and lifeless, just like the robotic hands that had operated on her.

As alarms filled the air, panic took hold as the AI company's technicians frantically assessed the situation. The AI faltered, its movements turning erratic, entangled in a web of confusion. My heart pounded, fear washing over me like a tide. I felt helpless, unable to grasp the complexities of the AI algorithms and the true impact of the glitch. It was as though a foreboding darkness descended upon the room, shrouding the once bright hope that had guided us. In an excruciating moment, silence engulfed us as the metallic surgeon abruptly stopped, leaving my mother's life precariously hanging in the balance. Tears welled in my eyes as I rushed to her side, grasping for understanding in the midst of devastation. Her frail body lay motionless, and a profound ache gripped my soul. Anger surged within me towards the AI

company, their cold indifference a heartless blow to my shattered emotions. I couldn't fathom how they treated her, a cherished life, as a mere test object—just another number in their grand experiment. But to add salt in the wound, the callous response of the owner cut through my heart like a blade. "That's test object number 50 to die," he said with an air of detachment. "Bring in 51." His words were a chilling reminder that my mother's life, her hopes, dreams, and love, had been reduced to mere data, a statistic in their relentless pursuit of progress. His words struck a deep chord in me, and amidst all the chaos and heartache, I realised that some jobs, like that of a compassionate healer like my mother, could never be replaced by the cold calculations of an artificial counterpart.