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about 1000 words

## Kevin's New World

by Kasisi D. Harris

"Damn it, Tony. We're obligated to do this." The bottle of Captain Morgan shook and slid a few inches as Dr. Kevin Moran's hands slammed down on the small glass table. His face grew more and more red. "If we don't act now, you know what they'll do. Einstein, Nobel, Galston, Oppenheimer, the freaking Wright Brothers, all of them contributed great things to society and all of their contributions were quickly turned into weapons used to show who has the bigger stick. We can't just sit idle and let history repeat itself." He flopped down in the patio chair, relieved the top button of his fitted white shirt, and loosened his tie.

On the opposite side of the table, Dr. Anthony Santos sat captivated by the bottle of white rum now resting and still. This wasn't the first time he had seen Kevin's anger flare. He once watched Kevin knock a Program Manager's block off for referring to test subjects as pin pricked monkeys. That was Kevin: never afraid of a fight and always preferring fisticuffs to diplomacy. However, this time, Kevin wouldn't be using his fist. Moreover, the target of his anger wouldn't be the meaty flesh of a cheek.

"Tony?" Kevin's eyebrows rose, relieved of their tension. He lowered his eyes to the bottle of Captain Morgan and exhaled deeply. "Tony, we started this together. I need you with me on this."

In the distance, parked cars lined the curbside of the steep hill named Macross street. The glow of the setting sun crowned the top of the street like a halo. Tony rose from his chair. He broached the glass doorway into the hotel room and stopped short of the mirror mounted across from the bed. Turning back toward the patio entrance he said, "I promise to work for a better world, where science and technology are used in socially responsible ways."

"I remember the Oath, Tony..." Kevin looked down and away. He clenched his fists and stood up.

"...I will not use my education for any purpose intended to harm human beings..."

"All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Kevin snatched the Captain Morgan from the table and turned to face his old friend. "We don't have much time."

"Kevin, we created the nanites to give movement to those who are paralyzed: to eradicate the notion of being physically handicapped. But, you want to use it as a weaponized form of telekinesis. How is this any different than what the government intends to do?" Tony's voice was more stern. The lines in his forehead became more prominent. He turned away from the mirror and focused on Kevin. "Maybe we opened Pandora's Box. Maybe the nanites should be destroyed. Maybe that would be better for mankind instead of we, the select few, playing god."

"No. No. Tony, we could use the nanites to guard the world against all those who seek to use science and technology as a means to threaten it. We could still give movement to those who are cripple. Hell, we could eliminate fossil fuels. With the nanites we could unleash a power the world has never seen. We could break the cycle. But, we have to act now."

Tony walked back to the patio doorway. "The government would use all of its military might to bring you down. They're probably scrambling to figure out where the nanites are at this

very moment. Innocent people would be hurt, Kevin. How could we live with that?"

The glow from the setting sun disappeared giving way to street lamps a few miles away. Tony stood in front of his friend and placed his hand on Kevin's shoulder. "I understand the reason for your fight, but there has to be another way. There is already too much suffering in the world. We don't need to cause more."

Kevin's eyes returned to the Captain Morgan in his right hand. He shook his head in silence for a few moments. "Please, Tony?" His voice was broken and barely above a whisper.

Tony squeezed Kevin's shoulder just a bit tighter. "Brother, I can't."

"I understand," Kevin replied. He lifted his head up revealing a slight smile. "Let's have a drink before we go," he said, lifting the bottle of white rum into the air.

"Sounds like a plan," Tony replied.

Kevin walked toward the mini bar located just beneath the Television, grabbed two glasses, and walked back toward Tony who stood inside the room beside the bed. He handed the glasses to Tony, twisted the cap off of the bottle, and poured a round into both of the glasses. He twisted the cap back onto the bottle and tossed it on the bed. He grabbed a glass from Tony.

Tony raised his glass and said, "To friendship."

Kevin raised his glass in return and said, "To a better future."

Tony placed the glass to his lips and swallowed the rum in a gulp.

Kevin lifted the glass to his mouth but stopped short. *I'm sorry, old friend.*

"What did you...". The glass became too heavy to hold. His arm fell to his side and the glass dropped bouncing on the carpet. *What's happening?*

"This won't kill you. I was afraid you wouldn't come, but I know you'll see things my way in time. When you wake up, the world will be new. Sleep, old friend."

The darkness spread engulfing Tony's vision. He could hear Kevin. However, when he tried to speak his lips wouldn't move. His attempt to step forward failed and his body collapsed to the ground. For what seemed like an instant, the world faded to nothing; no sound, no sight, no feeling. A scream pierced the air. Tony's eyes opened. His body, still sluggish from the drug, stood up. Though his mind was still a bit cluttered, he headed to the open patio door. Fires were burning across the landscape like red squares on a checker's board, the black darkness in between. Armed military personnel moved swiftly from street to street gathering civilians at gun point. Cars burned. *A new world. Damn you, Kevin. Damn you.*