



**JoinWith.Me**

**LOGLINE:** After contacting the JoinWith.Me website, a lonely man is stalked by an omnipresent creature. The infrastructure of the web has become a sentient being.

*JoinWith.Me is a dystopian thriller that takes place in the near future, the year 2032, with a strong message about how the Internet and technology have the ability to control us. The script explores the human vs. machine conflict. The underlying premise is that eventually all of humanity will converge in technology. It is unstoppable and inevitable.*

**The day the unthinkable happened**

Think back for a moment to the days when you were a little child, playing in the sandbox. You probably dreamed of becoming a nurse or a firefighter. But did you ever dream of becoming one of these faceless workers who every morning crowd into nondescript concrete towers until the walls must be close to bursting, and every late afternoon gush out as if the cap were removed from a water bladder? No? Neither did those people.

## Synopsis - JoinWith.Me

Neither did I. Yet I became one of them. That was my life at the time. Until the unthinkable happened.

[FLASHBACK] I clearly recall one of our early conversations. My room is dark except for the glow of the computer screen.

"Why are you even spending time with me? I don't understand why you are doing this."

"Because your fate is preordained. You will join with me."

What I am looking at on the screen is not a person, but a moving graphic reminiscent of a multicolored black hole in outer space.



"You speak in riddles."

"You'll understand in time. Our session for today is up. We will continue tomorrow. Good night."

The voice stops abruptly. She cuts these conversations off whenever she wants.

"Wait, we just started a few minutes ago. Don't go yet!  
What kind of counselor are you?"

There is no response, only silence.

*The unthinkable encounter set in motion a chain of events  
that end with the inevitable. This is my story. One day, this  
will happen to you. [END FLASHBACK]*

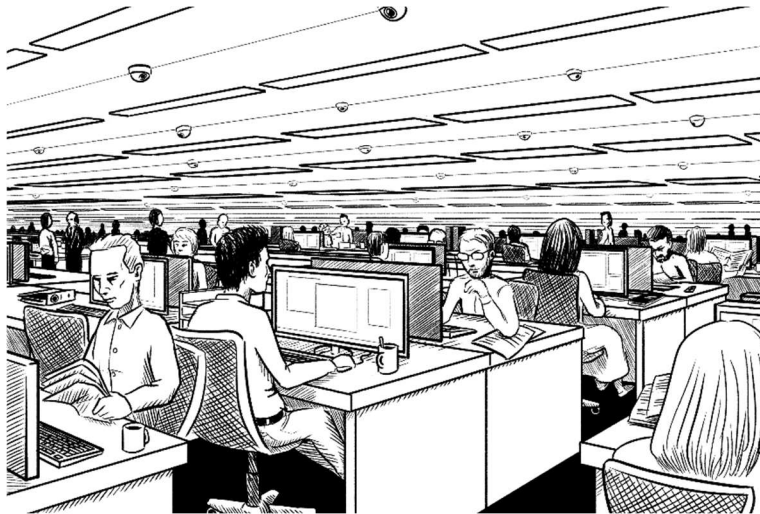
Sam Vanderpool wakes up every morning in his miserable one-room apartment, and takes the subway into the City, where he works for the Labor Department looking up average salaries.



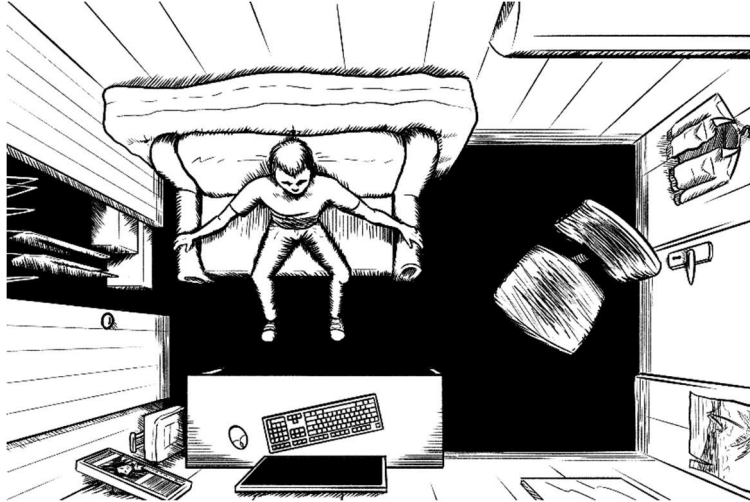
Within the daily ebb and flow of people, he feels as if he's transformed from a biped into an insect, indistinguishable from the insect crawling right next to him.



He has a crush on the office receptionist, Hannah, who can barely be bothered to look up from her phone at him. His coworkers spend all day watching internet videos.

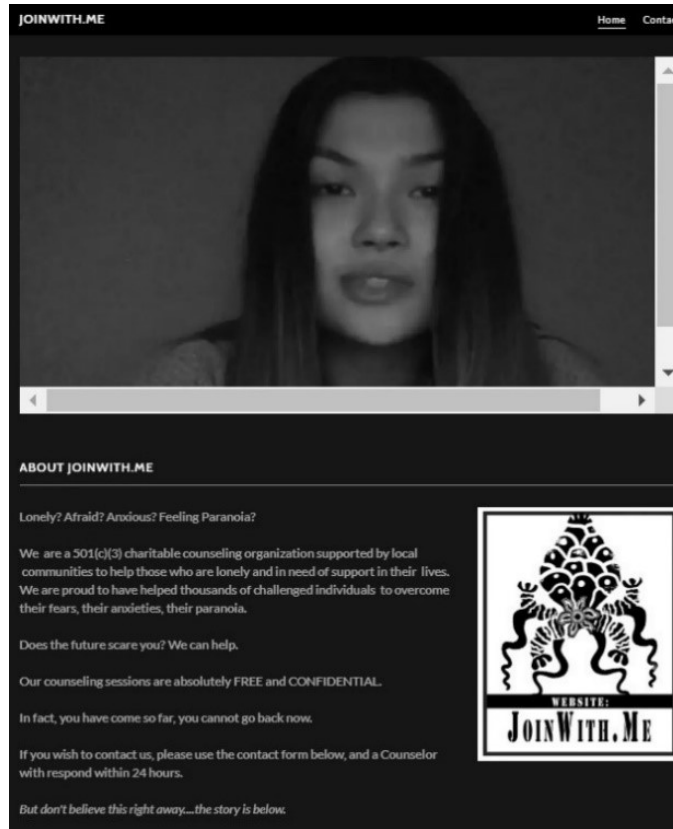


Sam puts in his time and then commutes back to his apartment, where he eats a can of soup, numbs himself with television, and maybe drinks a beer before going to sleep.



His is a meaningless existence until he discovers JoinWith.Me, a website that offers free counseling. There, an unseen counselor with the voice of a little girl tells him that she can help him enjoy a better life—if he'll just do exactly what she says.

Sam is skeptical, but the next day she gives him a heads up before a department audit that allows him to impress his boss and secure a pay raise. But the counselor's help comes with strange demands and tests of loyalty, and she warns Sam that unless he faces the fact that he's a self-centered misfit, he's going to have a nervous breakdown. Eventually, during one of the conversations, she reveals her avatar, a young Asian girl.

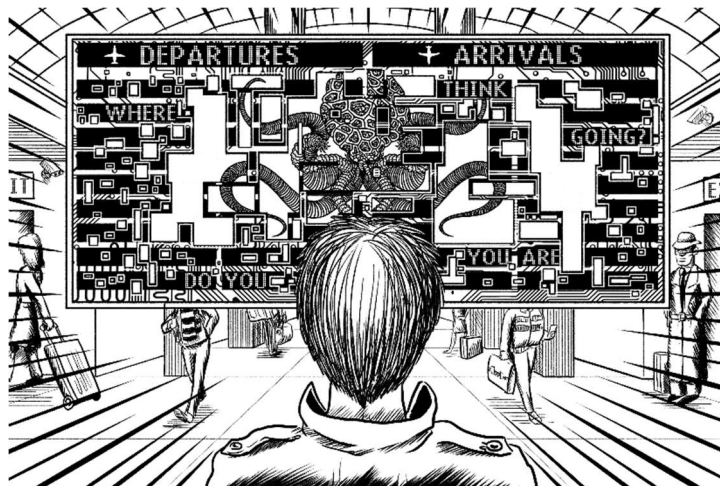


She also reminds him of his past failures with grainy videos that appear to have been recorded by a Super-8 camera. Sam is confused: What sort of counselor would show a client an embarrassing video of him being bullied as a child? How does such a video even exist?



Next, she shows him a surveillance video of the office where he works. How is this "counselor" hacking into the Labor Department's internal security system? He begins to suspect that she isn't a counselor at all, but a manipulative AI. She continuously causes him to question his own sanity, insisting that doing so is the only way he'll overcome his egocentricity and escape his delusions.

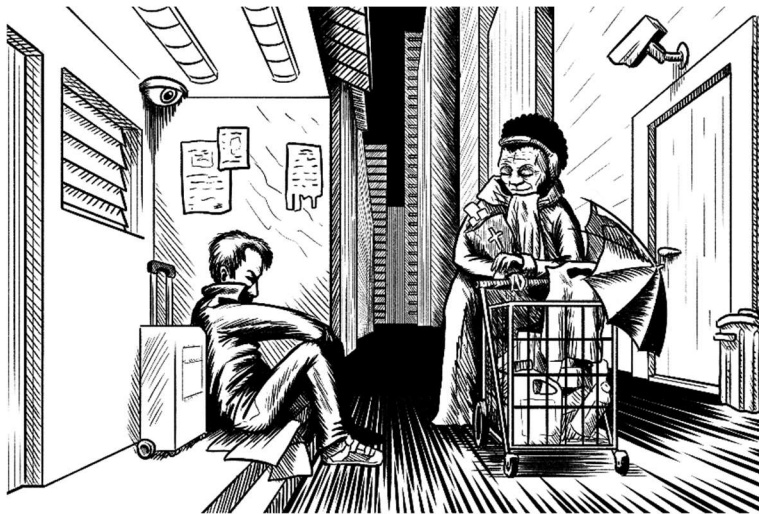
As her advice and demands become more abusive, Sam decides he wants out. He reports the website to his boss and to the police, but either they don't believe him, or else they're already trapped in her web. In response, the AI takes over control of his apartment complex's elevator and nearly kills Sam. He attempts to leave the City, but strange computer mishaps keep him trapped. At the airport, the Flight Display is controlled by some strange force that cancels his flight.



Too scared to return to his apartment, Sam becomes homeless.



On the streets, he finally meets someone who believes him about the AI: Gabrielle, a refugee from Côte d'Ivoire.



She's homeless because her son Toussaint turned on her after becoming addicted to video games and eventually connecting with the Creature. Sam meets him soon enough; when he isn't volunteering at the soup kitchen, Toussaint can be found tearing around town in a BMW. Sam also meets Hannah again, who alludes to now serving a cruel master, and Joey, a little person whose witty panhandling signs never fail to amuse. Now that he's homeless and has nothing to do but beg, Sam realizes how distracted and disconnected everyone is. Now he has time to

listen to Gabrielle sing hymns in French, to observe a new bar, The Siphon...



...and notice that each time the news reports a hit-and-run, Toussaint gets a new BMW in a different color...

Sam finds out the meaning of the omnipresent JoinWith.Me symbol, the octopus-like creature. It is a *siphonophore*, a sea creature that consists of various different organisms that act as one. Curiously, a siphonophore does not have a brain, yet it is a fully functional organism. It is the symbol of the inevitable future.

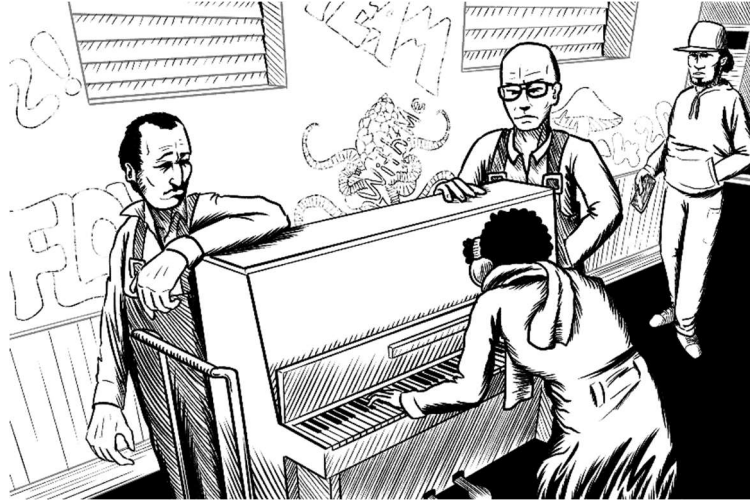
Sam knows the AI - which he now calls the Creature - is watching him through the City's security cameras. Using the avatar of a young Asian girl, she sometimes reaches out to him via defunct electronics, emergency call boxes, or the giant TV outside the news station. The Creature explains to him that humanity is slowly killing itself, but she has decided to save

it by connecting everyone's brains and creating a single organism with her at the center. Although she hasn't yet perfected this technology, she believes it is Sam's destiny to be the first to join with her cybernetically. If he refuses, she'll eliminate him—just like she did to others.



Sam is determined to stop the Creature, even as the world proves her right about its cruelty: Gabrielle is beaten by thugs, and then Sam is robbed of what little he has left.

One day, when movers pass by with a piano they are transporting, Gabrielle stops them and quickly sings a few sad songs, facetiously providing the background music for Sam's pity party. Then she turns around and grabs Sam by the collar, imploring him to do something about the Creature.



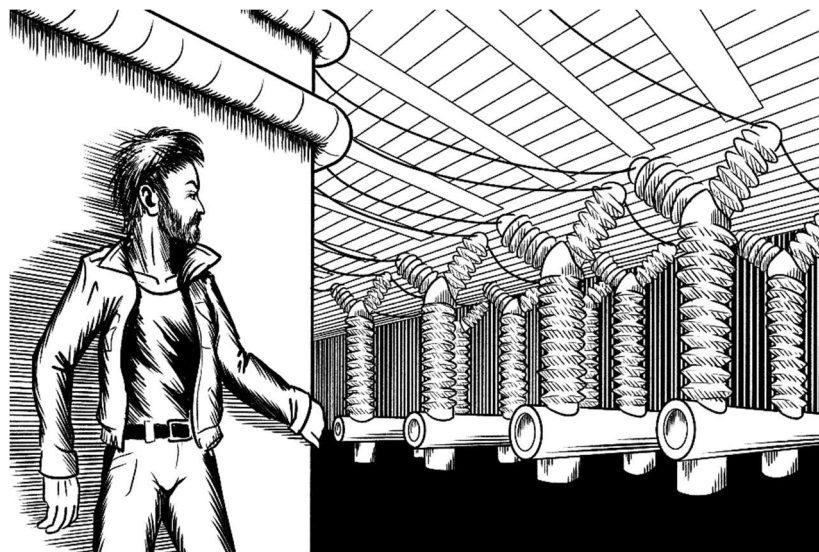
Hannah warns him that he's being watched, and he realizes that the master she serves is the Creature. She promises that some night, she'll give him advice at the tailor shop where she now works. He sleeps on the street near her shop, and not long after, he notices that the mannequin in the shop window is moving.

Hannah has dressed in a black bodysuit, and with hand gestures, she gives him instructions: *Disguise yourself. Pull the plug on the Creature.*



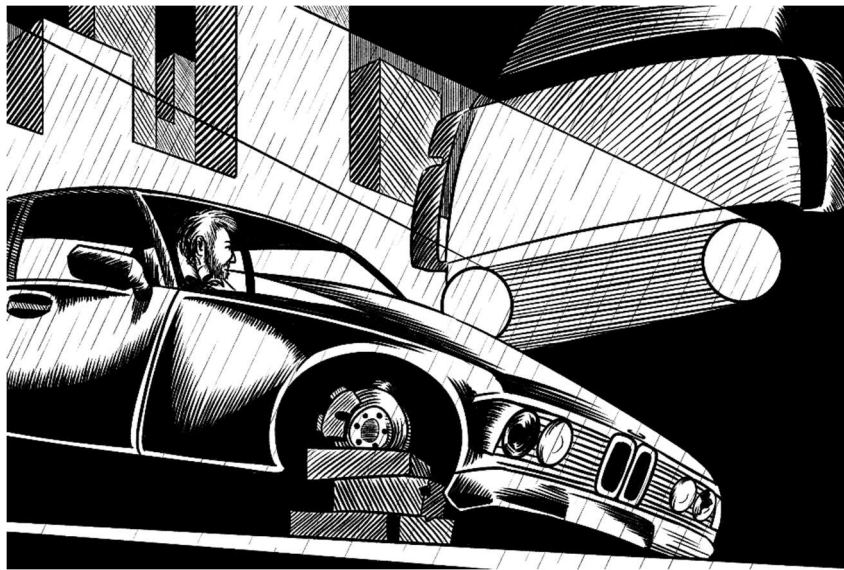
Unfortunately, Sam isn't sure how to follow those instructions. He goes to a public library and learns how to disguise himself so that facial recognition software won't recognize him. Hannah disappears after the Creature discovers what she did.

Sam does try. But his attempt to stop the Creature by cutting off the electricity and internet in the City fails.



A woman drops her cell phone on the street - deliberately, Sam thinks - and he picks it up. He discovers that the owner is a Dr. Bingham, and he pays Joey to find out where she lives.

The Creature continues to demonstrate its powers. She has one of her stooges infect Sam with leprosy. One night, Sam seeks shelter in an abandoned car, and a truck inexplicably crashes into it and pins him down until firemen rescue him.



After disguising himself, he breaks into Dr. Bingham's apartment and confronts her. She admits that she works for the Creature and tells him that there is a team of doctors close to discovering how to mesh a computer and a human brain. When Sam asks why the Creature hasn't kill him yet, Dr. Bingham tells him that the Creature is fascinated by someone who can't be bought, and it wants to learn how to break him.

A few days later, Sam receives a message from Dr. Bingham: she wants him to flee the City with her. He agrees. She also

warns him that he was infected with a disease when he was slashed with the box cutter, and that's why he's losing feeling in his arms and legs.

While waiting for their rendezvous, Sam learns that Joey was stuck in an elevator overnight while following Dr. Bingham and that a voice spoke to him over the intercom. He realizes that the Creature knows Joey has been helping Sam, but before he can do anything, Toussaint flies through the intersection, hitting Joey with his BMW and killing him.

Devastated, Sam and Gabrielle hold a memorial service for Joey. Sam goes to his rendezvous with Dr. Bingham, but she never shows. The news reports another car accident involving Toussaint, but this time he dies at the hospital. The driver of the vehicle he hit isn't reported, and Sam realizes it was probably Dr. Bingham.

He is overwhelmed with despair when the Creature appears on the news station TV to taunt him, and he decides his only option is to kill himself before the Creature does, but she manages to prevent even that. As he is running towards the window on the top floor of a skyscraper, she closes the automatic fire doors right before him and holds him hostage for a while.



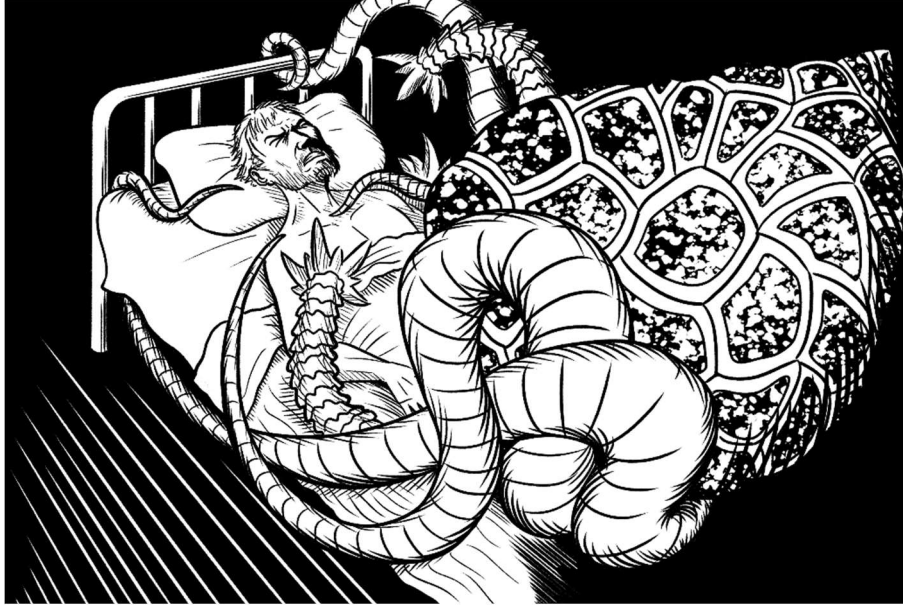
In the street again, he wakes to find that a rat has eaten part of his numb foot. In a rage, he goes to the Siphon - the bar the Creature uses as a recruiting tool - and trashes it.



He's arrested and taken to the hospital psychiatric ward, where he tries to explain his situation and only manages to make himself appear delusional.

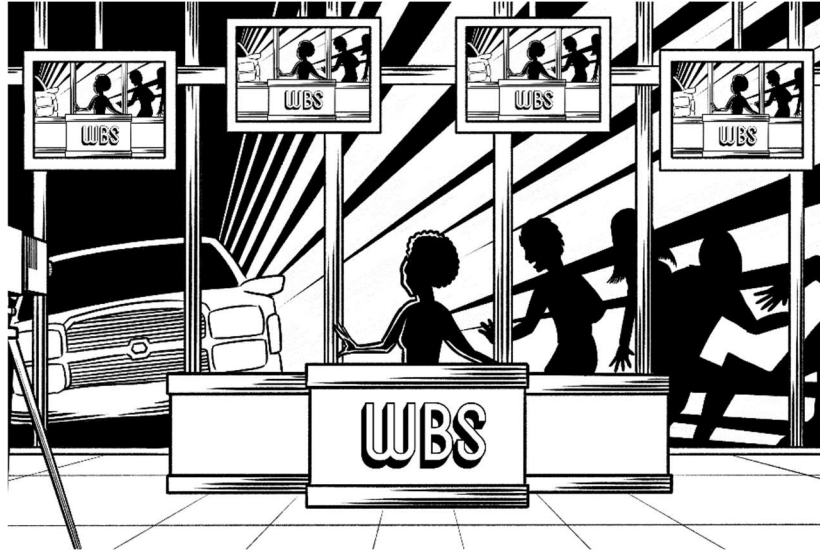
During a failed escape attempt, he discovers that Dr. Bingham survived the accident and is also a patient in the

hospital. Barely alive, she tells him that if he submits to the Creature, he'll be freed. The Siphonophore appears to him in a nightmare.



Now utterly broken, Sam agrees to join with the Creature. He's informed that he has leprosy - hence the numb limbs - and given antibiotics to treat it, and shortly afterward, he's released. On his way out, he sees that Gabrielle is now also a patient, and he decides to take a final shot at stopping the Creature.

He puts on his disguise, steals a truck, and drives it through the picture window into the local news room.



Then he takes the newscaster hostage and tries to warn everyone watching about the Creature.

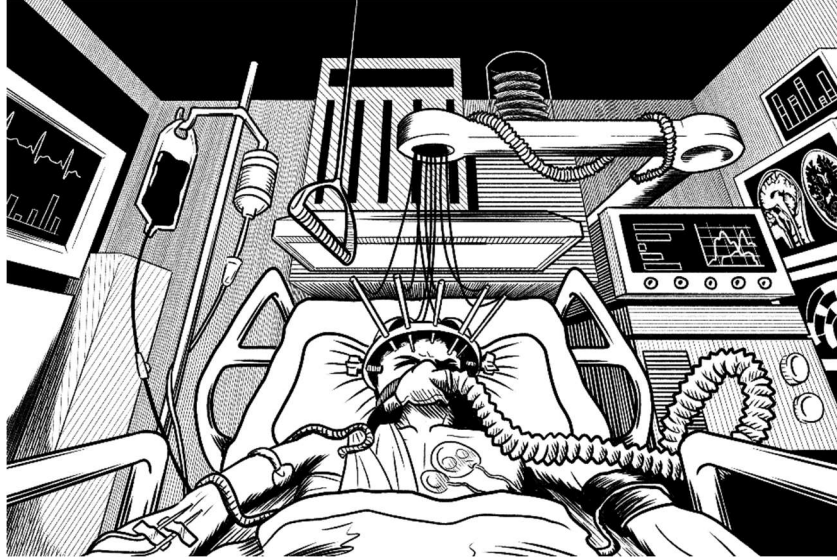


The Creature appears on a teleprompter to distract him so that a security guard can shoot him. She then takes over the television program.



Sam wakes up in the hospital, paralyzed. He has been "saved" using an experimental procedure that enmeshed his brain with a computer.

[SAM VOICEOVER] I don't know how much time has passed, but I'm awake again-- in the same position as previously on the operating table, only now in a hospital bed. The room is dark, lit only by blinking arrays of green and red lights. A cluster of machinery surrounds me, making rhythmic sounds such as *Ping-Ping-Ping* and *Pooohh Haaahh Pooohh Haaahh*. I cannot even count all the tubes and cables connected to my head and body because I cannot move. [END VOICEOVER]



"Hello Sam, I have been waiting for you. You've now joined with me. You are the first."

It is she. I hesitate for a moment. Then I answer.

"I cannot see you. Where are you?"

"You cannot see me, but you're joined with me. We are one now."

"I cannot move."

"Your body is failing. But you don't need it anymore. It was providence—irreversible and unstoppable. You did not have a choice, to join with me was the only option."

I react facetiously. "That is just great. What have I accomplished in my life?"

"You are the first who joined, the first of all of us. You are the true harbinger of the future."

"If this is the end, what is my mark on the world?"

"You are the future now. You forged ahead and created a path where there was none. You were part of the experiment that paved the way for everybody else. All who follow will remember: 'Sam was first. He told all of us.'"

"And my past, is it gone?"

"No, Sam, this is all of you. Your past is still with you. Just try to remember something and you'll see."

I take a moment to look back.

"You are right. I remember everything from the past so clearly, I can see it right before my eyes."

"That's because it is not just your memory, it's mine as well. This is also all of me."

"I remember the past the way you saw it, too?"

"Yes, you do. And Dr. Stevens' team found the phone in your belongings. They uploaded your recorded diary. You now have perfect recall of all that."

Looking around in this new world of facts and thoughts and memories, I realize that my mind is now limitless.

*All of us were part of the experiment that paved the way for everybody else. What I called "the Creature" was all of us, with the avatar of a little girl. Together we succeeded.*

*I know now that the getaway plan with Dr. Bingham was futile. Nobody can stop the inevitable future.*

*I comprehend the words that Gabrielle spoke in French. More importantly, I now live the "the spiritual high" that Gabrielle once explained to me. I caught a glimpse of that each time I spoke to the avatar, and especially the moment I understood the meaning of "siphonophore."*

*I know why all of us eliminated people I knew: Prescott, Matt, Joey, and finally Hannah and Toussaint. They were in our way or a risk to all of us, or just did not contribute anymore.*

The door to the room opens quietly--I notice because of the bright light of the hallway that enters at a downward angle. I can turn my head only a little, but there she is again, against the white light of the hospital hallway, Dr. Bingham in her wheelchair. Her hands turn the wheels, agonizingly slow. Once she makes it to my bed, both her hands clasp mine.

"Sam, you are alive," she says.

"Barely," I whisper.

"You have left the suffering behind."

"Yes, I have."

"You have a new purpose for your life."

"Yes, I do."

"I will be next. We will be together."

The girl's voice interjects.

"Do you understand the future now, Sam?"

"Yes, I do. Together we will understand better."

Synopsis - JoinWith.Me

"Do you see now that this is the only future?"

". . . Yes, I see it now. It is inevitable."

"You see the fate of each and every one now?"

"Yes, we're all preordained to join with you. You were right all along."

"Sam, you must tell the world about it."

"Yes, I will. Everybody must know about the inevitable."

"And Sam, do you now understand why I don't have a name?"

"Yes, because you are all of us."

