

***Disused Car Plant
Oakland County, Michigan***

Will Gant looked out over the vast expanse of shop floor before him and sighed. Part of him could still hear the echoes of workers' voices and the soft whirls of machinery like phantoms flitting on the wind.

Except, there wasn't even any room for ghosts here. The "company" had seen to that. Will could only be thankful that he didn't work for the car giant that had closed this plant. At least he could hold some solace in the fact he'd played no direct part in what had happened here.

Still, that did little to quell the uneasy feeling in his gut - a feeling, he noted, that he only usually got after eating his wife's pumpkin pie.

He grunted, and even that sound bounced hollowly off the walls.

Working jobs like this depressed him. It was one thing to put the wonders of robotic automation into a factory, but to have to tear it out knowing it was at the cost of hundreds of jobs, well, that just didn't sit right.

The problem was, the American car industry was a dying trade, and this Pontiac factory had been one of its casualties. It wasn't Will's fault, and it wasn't the fault of Trentham Robotics who he worked for.

It was just a sad economic fact that now meant he was disconnecting the vast robots from the lines, stripping them and removing them for later refurbishment and eventual resale.

"Hey, Will, are you gonna stop staring at the emptiness here and give me a hand?"

Will looked up to see a short, dark haired man in a similar white coverall to his own working on one of the giant machines. Ed was his partner in crime on this job, and he seemed just a little quirky. Maybe Ethel, his long-suffering wife, hadn't fed him breakfast this morning.

If their wives ever got together, no man in a hundred mile radius would be safe, he was sure.

Ed didn't see the flash of Will's smile at the thought of their beloveds and continued poking inside the robot.

The thing's huge yellow frame looked like a motorized arm that was ready to snatch out at any second.

Sometimes, even though he'd worked with the robots for over ten years, Will still got the creeps just looking at the things.

Was man really meant to create such behemoths?

"Yeah, yeah, keep you voice down or you'll wake the natives," Will grumbled, striding over a long power conduit channeled into the floor to join his friend. "I was just thinkin'," he explained. "About all the years this place was here. All the people...all the cars."

Ed nodded, stuffing a small spanner between his teeth as he pulled out a section of wiring. "It's all the imports," he agreed. "Folks just don't want to buy American anymore. Gas guzzlers, that's what they're saying."

Will huffed and handed his friend a screwdriver, watching with interest, but apparently no intention to actually aid in the task. "Gimme my Bonneville to some souped-up battery on wheels any day..." He glanced around sharply, distracted by a new sound. "You hear somethin'?"

Ed shook his head.

"I coulda sworn I heard somethin'." Will frowned, straightening from his position to look around the cold, empty plant.

The noise came again.

A rich, metallic sound as if a car panel had been dropped. This time, Ed looked up too, his eyes widening slightly. "I thought we were the only two on this job today?"

Will bobbed his head. "Yeah, and you know that whacky security guard said we wouldn't catch him coming inside."

Ed dropped the spanner and slid the screwdriver into his pocket. Moving away from the robot, he joined Will in scanning the factory for signs of life. "It's the *why* he wouldn't come in here that's got me worried," he muttered, voice quivering just a touch.

"Those rumors are just local talk to get the big guys at Pontiac to open this place back up. Whole lot o' stuff and nonsense," Will grumbled, but the way his hands had begun to shake suggested he believed the hearsay more than he was admitting.

Overhead, a long row of florescent lights began to sputter and flash until they died completely.

"Tube musta blown," Will tried to convince himself.

"*What? Every tube in the whole row of lights?*"

The metallic sound came again. It was closer this time, like the assembly line was kicking into action - without its workforce.

Another row of lights cracked and flickered into darkness.

"*Crap!*" Ed scooped up his tool bag and began picking his way hastily through the machines towards the door. "I never signed on for this. I work with machines, not...well, not *THAT!* Dang place wants tearing down before it's too late..."

"Whattya talking about, Ed? It's just an old, dead car plant. There's bound to be a few creaks and groans in a place that's been around as long as this." Will tried to reason with his friend, although his better judgment told him to run faster than even Ed was attempting.

Ed turned on him unexpectedly, a feral glint in his eye that said he wasn't to be messed with. "Can't you *feel it?*" He spat, his lips trembling in unison with the rest of his body. "There's something in here with us. Something *alive.*"

"It's just rats, maybe a bird got in the roof, or..."

The mammoth yellow robot that Ed had been dismantling suddenly jerked into life, cutting off any more of Will's excuses.

Both engineers stared at it in open-mouthed astonishment as the double pincers meant for vehicle assembly spun around and pointed in their direction. There was no question about it. The thing was *pointing* at them like a human hand.

"Well I'll be damned. I thought the main control terminal was shut down when this place closed." Will scratched his head and began walking back towards the machine. "I guess that's what got us all spooked," he chuckled. "Must be power left to some of the equipment in here..."

Ed didn't move, but the ruddy color to his cheeks caused by years of hypertension suddenly drained away until he was the shade of fresh white linen. "Wait...Will, I cut the electricity feed to that puppy a coupla minutes ago! Even if the main terminal was working, there can't be any power..."

Will's boot stopped midair and he swallowed - hard. "No power?" He questioned, even though he'd heard perfectly well the first time.

Ed nodded. "There's somethin' in here..."

"They're just machines," Will rationalized. "They need to have power from *somewhere.*"

But as he scrutinized the yellow creature before him, he wasn't so sure.

The robot hadn't moved, but two blue diodes on the huge servos controlling its arm flashed almost threateningly. Will realized they reminded him of a monster he'd once seen on the big screen. *It's just a friggin' machine. What's it gonna do? Sprout legs and chase y'all outta here?*

The robot seemed to sense his challenge, and with a jerk, the arm shot forward, its pincers pausing only when they were a millimeter from his right eyeball.

Will didn't move. He didn't blink.

Behind him, he could hear the distinct footfalls of his colleague making a dash for the exit. *Stupid S.O.B. Doesn't he know he's heading straight into the paintshop? Ten more of these suckers just waitin' in line in there...*

The robot's servos whined and groaned, as if they were receiving contradicting signals. Then, abruptly, the yellow arm of death simply froze as if it had lost all power.

The blue L.E.D.s faded and grew dark, the monster safely asleep in its cave for another night.

Will sucked down a breath, his beer gut rising and falling sharply as panic and relief overwhelmed him at the same time. He closed his eyes, opened them again, and when the factory remained silent, headed back to find Ed.

"You hiding behind some damn cabinet back there or..."

Will stopped as he reached the double doors that led into the paintshop. When the plant was operational, cars would have been rolled through them whilst still on the line, ready to be sprayed a variety of colors.

Now, though, only one color was evident in the massive booth, and that was the bright scarlet of fresh blood.

Will doubled over, gagging as his eyes followed the garish splatters to their origins.

Ed may well have come here to hide or escape, but he would never leave again - at least not in one piece.

One of the huge robots now had Ed's skull crushed between its metallic fingers.

Will wasn't sure, but it looked like his buddy's head had been squished into the shape of an egg, his eyeballs popping from their sockets with the immense pressure.

Will coughed, trying to retch up the bile that was burning in his throat, but for some reason,

he still felt compelled to look upon the grisly sight. Perhaps it was to convince himself it was real.

It was.

Ed's head had cracked open so badly that both congealing blood and brain matter were pushing through the splits in his cranium and seeping onto the floor.

The robot didn't seem to understand what it had done. With a whirl of motors and hydraulics, the machine released its grip on Ed and simply returned to its starting position on the defunct line.

It was like it had been overcome by a glitch in its programming and had now been rebooted.

Will ran the back of his hand across his mouth and swallowed down the rest of the bile trying to escape his body. He couldn't stay here. The natives were revolting and he was the enemy.

Pushing up from his kneeling position, he glanced around warily. Without the lights, the plant was dark, but not pitch black. The ceiling tiles allowed enough natural light in at this time of day for him to be able to navigate his way out without passing any more of the automated lines.

At least, he hoped.

His leg muscles felt like they'd turned to Jell-O, but he forced them to move, to run as fast as his chubby frame would carry him to the nearest fire exit.

Not gonna die here, not gonna...

Will remembered how bad his wife's pie was again, and prayed that he lived to taste it just one more time. Hell, he'd even tell her it was good, if he could just make it home.

His hand fell on the "push bar" that opened the fire door and he shoved so hard he thought the metal would sheer off in his hands. But it refused to move.

Over the plant PA system, Will heard the twangy tones of a rock song begin to play. Was there someone else in here all along? Was it man, not machine, behind Ed's death?

*I got a brand new car
And I like to drive real hard
I got a brand new car
And I'm feeling good so far*

Why, the sick sonofabitch, Will's mind screamed at him to go back up into the offices and

kick the bastard's ass that had dared to do all this. But then, common sense took over.

If there really was someone else here, he was a murderer, and he wasn't going to want to leave behind a witness.

Will shoved on the emergency exit again, putting all the weight behind his shoulder as he bounced on it. This time, the bar gave, and he was unexpectedly catapulted outside by his own momentum.

Will rolled over in the overgrown grass that had begun to encroach on the factory, staring back into the paintshop.

Inside, all ten of the massive yellow robots had moved, their pincers and spray heads pointing towards his escape route as if they were angry he had evaded them.

He scrambled to his feet and for a second thought of flipping the machines the bird. Then he realized how foolish and pointless it would be.

They were just automatons, weren't they?

From somewhere inside, The Rolling Stones *Brand New Car* grew louder and louder until it reached crescendo point.

All the extinguished lighting modules rapidly flicked back on, and as Will watched in open-mouthed wonder, the plant somehow came alive as if a ghostly workforce had clocked on for a shift of the dead.

Bobby Singer's Salvage Yard ***Sometime Later...***

Dean sat squarely on the hood of the Impala, taking a slug from the beer Bobby had handed him whilst attentively listening to the older hunter's story.

Bobby had called the previous day to offer them a rather unusual job - a job that Dean sorely wanted to take even before he knew any of the details. It wasn't that he didn't like Christmas, or in this case the aftermath of the yuletide season, but he needed to rid himself of the festive cheer that seemed to have settled over him since the gig at Westland's toy store.

He was a hunter, after all, not some extra in a Disney movie.

Of course, Dean knew Sam felt the exact opposite. The "possessed" toys and happy ending

tale had left the gangly Winchester all warm and fuzzy inside. The stupid lopsided grin and all-dimples cheeks told that story well enough.

Not that Dean didn't have feelings. He just didn't want those feelings clouding his judgment when they had a missing father to find.

Hell, if Sam ever looked a little too closely in the Chevy's glove box, he might just find a certain wooden train that would make his big brother feel very uncomfortable, but that didn't mean they could go soft, either.

"So," Bobby was explaining through the last gulps of his own Budweiser. "Old buddy of mine who just happens to be an exec over at GM has a very interesting problem. After listening to his story, I reckon you boys might want to check it out." He cocked his now empty bottle towards Dean. "This one should be right up your alley..."

"Oh yeah? His car plant infested with multiple hot babes with very little in the line of clothing?" Dean quipped.

"Not even close," Bobby's beard twitched, emphasizing the fact that the dilemma was much more serious than it initially sounded. "Seems like ever since the global economic slump, car builders have been shedding jobs. GM decided to discontinue the Pontiac line and have begun closing plants. That's when my friend Mike's problems started."

"You called us in about job losses at a car plant?" Sam's brow quirked up. "How can that be our kinda gig?"

"If you two knuckleheads will just listen, I'm getting to that part," Bobby grouched back, tossing his empty bottle into a rusting Lincoln that had once been a lovely shade of satanic red. "When the Oakland County plant closed recently, several workers were hurt trying to remove machinery. Said it was like the equipment had a life of its own."

"Possessed factory?" Sam squinted in surprise. "You're not buying that, Bobby?"

Bobby pulled off his greasy baseball cap and scratched at his scalp absently. "Oh, it gets even better. Since the closure, locals have seen the place light up at night and they can hear the robots and lines runnin' even though there's no workers. And the dang power's been cut off for weeks."

Dean scowled. He wasn't exactly a lover of technology at the best of times - well, unless it involved the invention of "magic fingers," but this was giving him the creeps. "*Machines?* Working with no power? Man, that's seriously freaky. I'm starting to get that Will Smith 'I hate robots' kinda vibe before I even see this joint."

"So how'd your friend know to call us?" Sam grabbed another beer from the case on the

ground and cracked it open on the Lincoln's hood.

"Oh, me and him go ways back. He knows I kinda deal in cars and 'other' problems. Guess he thought I was the perfect man for the job. Seems like GM can't afford any more bad press on this thing with their current financial difficulties and all. "

"Maybe they should just open the plant back up," Dean suggested, tipping a brow. "I mean, killing the Pontiac line is tantamount to sacrilege in my book. I mean, c'mon, they're ganking a piece of history and they expect it to go down without a fight?"

Bobby chuckled. "Now *that's* why I thought you'd be perfect for this hunt. You gotta have a vested interest in keeping classic names alive when you drive a crate like yours." He nodded playfully to the Chevy and Dean's scowl lengthened.

"Hey, *quiet!* She'll hear you!" Dean patted the Impala's hood affectionately. "S'okay, he doesn't mean it, baby..."

Bobby's eyes narrowed mischievously. "Wanna bet?" He flipped his soiled cap back on. "So you boys in? Or do I gotta go figure this one out on my lonesome?"

Dean opened his mouth to offer the brothers' assistance, but Sam caught him off guard by cutting in, a deep frown forming on the younger sibling's face.

"I don't know, Bobby. I mean, I know we need to hunt, keep busy even, but there's only a couple of months left now and..."

"Coupla months until you get your chance to pull John out..." Bobby put a concerned hand on Sam's shoulder. "I know you got your daddy to be thinkin' about, but until that church opens again, there ain't squat you can do but wait - or hunt."

"But we still don't even know *how* to get Dad out. It's not like we can just walk in and grab him. We don't even know which plane of existence, which *universe* he's trapped in." Sam's shoulders hunched over and his expression darkened. "The closer it gets, the more I've gotten to thinking about what he's had to go through. How many versions of us has he had to see die? What if...what if he's in..."

Dean and Bobby watched as Sam squinted back moisture from his eyes. And both knew the unspoken word he couldn't bring himself to mouth.

"What if he's in Hell?" Bobby finished for him. "Well then we just gotta drag his ass outta there. Lucifer ain't gonna like it none, that's a fact, but since when did we give a rat's ass about *his* opinion?"

"And besides," Dean chimed in. "We don't even know if any of that crap Ash spouted was

true. Hell might not be a part of the whole Stull thing, and if it is, Dad might not be there.”

He bit the bottom of his lip as he spoke, knowing that Sam would read through him in a heartbeat. Because deep down, Dean had been wondering the same thing for months.

How did time pass on the “other” side? How many bad things had John been subjected to since his imprisonment in the bowels of Stull? If Hell was really there, then did Luciano Ferinacci still preside over it while he was “topside?”

And if he did, what would he do if he got the chance to have John Winchester as a prisoner there?

Was trapping John in Hell, or maybe all the Winchesters, Lucifer’s goal all along?

Dean turned his back to his brother and their best friend as he hopped down from the Impala’s hood.

Now he finally realized why the festive season had annoyed him so much.

Because they’d had to live it without knowing the truth about their father.

It had been one thing for John to be on hunts every Christmas during their childhood, but at least they had known he was *somewhere*. Now, now they didn’t really know if he was alive, or some demon’s bitch in Gehenna.

“Dean?” The tone of Sam’s voice was asking his big brother’s opinion.

What can I say that could possibly make any of this right when I don’t know myself?

Dean turned back, ramming his hands in his leather jacket’s pockets as he focused on Bobby. There was an understanding between them in just that look without words having to be expressed, but Dean asked the question out loud anyway.

“You heard anything on the grapevine about our pal Ferinacci while Dad’s been gone?”

Bobby shook his head and let out a low sigh. “Nope, not diddly squat in months. At least nothing other than his usual low-life skank dealings with the underworld. If he’s got your daddy, he sure as hell ain’t advertizing it.”

Dean rubbed a hand over the stubble on his chin in thought. If Lucifer had John, he’d have taunted them with the knowledge by now. Chances were, John was just bouncing around from one reality to another – just like he and Sam had.

If that was the case, there was very little they could do yet, except to follow his favorite

idiom, kill as many evil sons of bitches as they could find. Maybe Bobby's hunt fit into that category.

And even if it didn't, it involved his second favorite subject - *cars*.

He glanced across to Sam's waiting gaze and nodded. "We should do this one, Sammy. If for no other reason than maybe we're the only ones who can."

Sam exhaled and set his beer bottle down still half-full. He didn't try to argue, but it was obvious the way his shoulders sagged that he had hoped their next hunt would take them back to Lawrence. "I'll go boot up the laptop," he offered quietly. "I'm guessing there's a bunch of stuff on Pontiac and Oakland we can use on this gig..."

Dean watched as his brother headed up to the main house looking deflated and worn down, and he had to wonder if he'd made the right choice.

It seemed like they were always chasing something or someone, but they rarely had time for one another, for *family* anymore.

"He'll come around," Bobby reassured.

"Yeah, I know. The thing is, I'm not even sure which one of us was right." Dean shook his head uncertainly. "You know when Dad got left behind, for weeks I was the one who couldn't focus on anything else? I was obsessed with getting Dad out until nothing else mattered. Hell, *life* didn't matter. Sammy talked me into hunting again and now..."

"What goes around comes around." Bobby nodded. "It's only natural you boys feel the way you do. And when the time comes, you know if there's anything I can do to help you haul John outta Stull..."

A small smile of appreciation crept across Dean's lips. "I know you will, Bobby, but until then, what say we go ventilate a few robots' asses?"

Bobby smiled back mysteriously and opened up the red Lincoln's trunk. Inside was a long wooden crate with no markings. He patted it like a pet. "Don't worry," he winked. "I already got my packing done..."

Dean frowned back, wanting more than anything to pry open the crate and find out what his old friend was up to.

Bobby had other ideas, however, and hoisted the box carefully over his shoulder. Looking over three vehicles he'd hodgepoded together from wrecks, he chose a pale blue Bonneville station wagon from the sixties and dropped his load inside. The car's springs groaned as he slammed the tailgate shut and jerked a thumb up towards the house.

"Well what are ya waiting for?" Bobby griped. "C'mon, let's go see what Sam's found on that fancy computer of yours."

Dean smirked lewdly. "What? You mean other than my naked Lindsay Lohan collection?"

* * * *

Bobby's Place Sometime Later...

Sam tapped absently at the laptop, his eyes not really focusing on the pages anymore as they scrolled rapidly across the screen. The truth was, he didn't even know what he was researching - except that it definitely *wasn't* car factories, or even *haunted* car factories.

Since he'd left Dean and Bobby out in the yard, all he'd been checking on was Ferinacci, New Jersey, and possible demonic signs related to either or both.

So far, he'd come up empty on all counts until he felt like a smoke screen had been deliberately set up for him to run into.

Of course, in all likelihood, Ferinacci might just as easily be laying low after his little coup in Stull. Building his newfound army, training them, working out strategies for his big offensive.

Hell, Lucifer probably had no clue John Winchester was bouncing around where normally only the legions of the dead played.

But that didn't stop Sam looking, and then looking some more.

Behind him, Sam heard the door slam and footsteps approach the dining table. He quickly hit a key, closing several windows to just leave an article about Detroit and Pontiac visible.

If Dean, or for that matter, Bobby, saw what he'd really been checking on, he'd get his ass chewed out royally. Maybe they were right. It was still too soon to be planning *The Great Escape* for their dad. But just like in the movie, if Sam had to dig the longest freakin' tunnel in Kansas with his bare hands to make it work, then he would.

Sam smiled at the thought, remembering scenes from his big brother's favorite war flick. *Yeah right, Dean down a claustrophobic hole in the ground where rats like to play. He'd so be a girlie screamer...*

"So what's got you smiling so much all of a sudden, Sasquatch?" Dean pulled up a chair and dropped down to the left of his brother while Bobby merely peered over at the laptop.

"Um...nothing." Sam shrugged innocently. "I mean, I can't find anything on Oakland County or Pontiac that might be causing the problems Bobby mentioned."

He moved the laptop around so everyone got a view of the page. "Says here the Pontiac name was originally used back in 1900 by the Pontiac Spring and Wagon Works. The name was taken from Chief Pontiac, an American Indian chief who led an unsuccessful uprising against the British after the French and Indian war..."

Dean squirmed on his chair like he'd sat on a mound of fire ants. "*Indians*," he muttered with a shudder. "Man, don't tell me we gotta deal with more native mojo like in Oasis Plains and La Jolla? I had enough of that crap with old Moonie and her Triffid ivy."

Bobby read further down the article and shook his head. "I don't see anything that connects the haunting to where Pontiac got its name from." He pulled up a chair of his own and rubbed at the bottom of his beard in thought. "Truth is, I reckon we might be dealing with something weird here, boys. Somethin' like we've never seen before."

"You mean like a bunch of wuss ass dicks in suits being afraid of their own car plant?" Dean shook his head, obviously still not happy about the loss of an American legend.

"Well, whatever it is, nothing is jumping off this page to give it a motive other than this thing is pissed the plant got closed." Sam tapped some more on the touchpad and the second page of the article appeared. "The Oakland Motor Company and Pontiac Spring and Wagon merged in November 1908 under the name of the Oakland Motor Company. The operations of both were joined together in Pontiac, Michigan. GM bought Oakland in 1908, and began using the Pontiac name as a brand in 1926..."

"Which is all very interesting, but tells us squat about what might be going on, Samantha. You telling me it took you half an hour to find *that*? Dude, your geekometer hit a new low!"

"What happens if we check for accidental deaths at the plant?" Bobby offered. "If someone died there and holds a grudge, their spirit might be tied to the place."

Sam pulled a slightly guilty expression, suggesting he should have thought of looking for the possibility already, and began typing in a new search criteria. "Okay, so we got a few accidents, one serious, but no actual deaths until Ed Berezovsky, and he was the guy with the robot company dismantling the place."

"You telling me no one died there *until* it got haunted? Dude, that doesn't make any sense. We gotta have a victim before we can have a vengeful spook creeping around the joint."

Sam shrugged. "I'm telling you, man, there's nothing on file."

Bobby pushed up from the table and slid out his favorite silver flask. Taking a swig of his

homemade moonshine he sighed as if he'd expected these results all along. "Well fellas, looks like we got ourselves a trip to Michigan."

"Yeah, as long as it's not the one way ticket kind," Dean grunted and then accepted the flask as it was passed his way. He took a quick slug and inhaled sharply as the noxious liquid burned his throat. "By the way, Bobby," he croaked out. "Nice to see you've gotten this place right back the way it was..."

Bobby scowled. "Say what?"

Dean gestured around the room, pointing at the huge piles of books, scrolls, ancient texts and other strange objects that filled every spare segment of space not occupied by regular household items. "The new house Sam and me built you? Man, it's just as big a junkyard as the one that got fried."

Bobby's scowl transformed into a smile and he slapped Dean squarely between the shoulders. "I tried," he chuckled. "Oh, and speakin' of "new" things? I have someone I'd like you two bozos to meet..."

The older hunter wiggled his eyebrows jokingly and moved to the nearest closed door. Grabbing the handle, he tugged until the sticking jamb gave way.

As the door swung open, all Sam saw was a moving black blur that seemed to lurch forwards in attack mode. It was all he could do to stop pulling his Glock and letting off a couple of rounds at the "thing."

Luckily, he restrained himself long enough for his attacker to wrap both front paws around his neck and land a drooling tongue straight in his face.

"You got another dog!" He managed to blurt out happily in between the slobbering animal's affectionate kisses.

"That's not a dog," Dean observed. "It's a friggin' buffalo in disguise. Jeez, the thing's *huge*..."

"Huge, *and* smart," Bobby corrected. "Max has a nose for our black-eyed friends better than any hound I've ever owned."

"Max?" Dean leaned low to inspect the Malamute and pulled a face. "Bobby, I hate to be the one to break this to you, but 'Max' hasn't exactly got any family jewels back there..."

Sam stopped petting the creature and took a peek to confirm his brother's suspicions. "You bought a girl dog and named it Max?" *And one that looks too much like a certain tupilaq for comfort*, he considered, recalling bad times in Canada.

"Damn straight," Bobby admitted. "I needed some intelligent company around here - not something I exactly get from you two," He teased. "And I figured a little help in the demon hunting department would be a bonus."

The dog whirled to look at Dean as if it had assessed Sam and now it was his turn. Blue eyes stared for the longest moment and then Max padded over to take up position at Dean's feet.

He stretched forward and stroked the animal, careful to let it get his scent.

Max's head cocked to one side and suddenly a huge paw slapped itself into Dean's unsuspecting palm.

He grinned like a six-year-old that had just been given a puppy for Christmas. "See," he beamed. "Even dogs know I'm adorable..."

Bobby tried unsuccessfully to stifle a chuckle. "Either that, or Max is eyeing you up for supper..."

Disused Car Plant Oakland County, Michigan

Bobby followed Sam and Dean over the top of the wire fence and grunted as he hit the ground the other side a little too hard. Clambering over a perimeter railing might all be in a day's work for the brothers, but Bobby wasn't sure his old bones liked it one bit. For his age, he was still fitter than most, but the odd ache and pain still plagued him when he tried to act twenty again.

"You okay, Bobby?" Dean had rolled over and taken position by a wall, using the shadows it threw for cover. Sam's gangly frame was already heading in the same direction.

"Depends on your definition of *okay*," Bobby grumbled, bringing up the rear with his Remington in hand. "Next time I remember to bring a pair of dang wire cutters..."

Dean and Sam smiled at one another knowingly and drew a scowl from Bobby in response.

He knew the Winchesters liked nothing more to tease him, but dammit, one day they'd be his age too - at least, they would if they kept their heads down, their wits intact, and were luckier than most hunters tended to be.

Bobby pushed away the thought. Dean and Sam were downhearted enough about their daddy being MIA, they didn't need him turning glum on them as well.

He hunkered down next to Sam, keeping the shotgun in front of him like a steadying rod of steel. Just a few feet away from their position lay the plant.

All three stared at the place, illuminated in the darkness, not by the night sky, but by an array of lights that shouldn't, *couldn't* be working.

The factory was somehow lit up like it was still hooked in to the county grid, and worse still, the heavy noises coming from within confirmed the stories Bobby's buddy had conveyed.

"Well I'll be..." Dean winced. "The lights are on, but nobody's home."

"Yeah, well there's somethin' in there." Bobby carefully stood from the shadows and jogged over to one of the few windows on the lower story.

Even before his eyes met with the view of the inside, he could hear the mechanical clank of robots performing the same motion over and over.

Could a spirit control a machine that way?

"Man, look at those puppies work." Dean had joined the elder hunter and was so close to the grimy glass his nose could have been stuck to the pane. Watching the bizarre robot ballet appeared to be the most transfixing thing he'd ever seen.

Sam, on the other hand, didn't need to get close to get a good view. His height simply let him peer over the top of his brother and best friend's shoulders. "They're actually still building cars!" He exclaimed in surprise.

Bobby wasn't so sympathetic to the robots, or whatever was making them dance. "Are you two done? You're acting like this is a beautiful thing. Don't forget those metal monsters have no power. Dang it, they shouldn't be alive anymore than a car without gas."

"But, dude, they're making *Pontiacs* in there." Dean spoke as if he almost revered whatever was at work inside the plant. "I mean, c'mon, this is definitely my kinda spook here."

"Yeah, well, don't get too attached to whatever the crazy-assed thing is, because we gotta go in there and end it." Bobby wiped a bead of sweat from his brow with the arm of his plaid shirt and pumped the shotgun ready for use.

Dean pulled out a sawed-off from under his jacket and did much the same. "GM tried ganking Pontiac, and now we're gonna finish the game for them," he grouched, his face puckering in distaste. "Man, did I ever mention, sometimes this job sucks?"

"Err, mostly, actually," Sam teased, checking his own weapon. "But we do it anyway because we get *such* a great retirement plan..."

"Alright," Bobby nodded. "Let's go find out who or what we're fighting here, boys."

He moved to take on an assault position, but never made it past the window.

Something was behind them, casting a silhouette on the factory walls that made it seem twice its actual size. It had appeared from nowhere and was just sitting, watching, waiting.

A giant unknown vehicle that was revving so hard it seemed a demon that loved velocity was gunning the gas.

Bobby swallowed until his Adam's apple bounced uncontrollably. Part of him wanted to turn, to see what the car was, but the other part wanted to begin a silent prayer that this thing was no Pontiac.

"That's as GM big block, I'd own the sound anywhere," Dean offered his classic knowledge helpfully, and when both Bobby and Sam scowled he just shrugged back.

"So are we going to stand here like jerks, or are we going to turn around and see who just made an ass out of us?" Sam asked, his finger itching to hover over his shotgun's trigger.

"On three then," Dean agreed as Bobby nodded, and all three men whirled around, poised to shoot.

The car continued to rev, its hood shaking with the raw power beneath it. The glare from the headlights blinding all those in its path.

From this distance, it should have been easy to make out the color, the model, and maybe even the driver.

But all that seemed to matter was the large, unmistakable Pontiac emblem that appeared to pulse with every throb of the car's engine.

Maybe the hunters had come here to find trouble. But blinking away the ferocious light blinding him, Bobby was certain that trouble had found them instead.

And death would surely follow.

Part Two

Dean felt his hold on the shotgun tighten as the Pontiac's roar suddenly abated. Was it trying to lull them into a false sense of security, or was the spirit they had come here to find about to show itself?

The metallic clang of the driver's door signaled it may possibly be the latter, and he sucked down a breath in anticipation as the mystery vehicle's owner stepped into the glare of the headlights.

"Well I'll be..." Bobby was the first to lower his gun and start to chuckle, despite the fact that a man in uniform with a very shaky gun hand was now pointing a revolver at them.

"Friggin' security," Dean grumbled, letting his sawed-off slip into a less defensive position. "I thought they said this guy wouldn't come on the plant grounds?"

Bobby shrugged and stepped forward to address the obviously terrified guard.

"H...hold it right there," the graying sixty-two-year-old sentry stuttered. "I...identify yourselves and your business here or I'll be forced to call this in to the police."

Dean studied the man as he continued to stammer. At a guess, the guard had never had to confront the living - or the dead - before, and he appeared terrified at the prospect of actually having to apprehend someone.

Either that or he was scared of something more sinister they'd yet to discover, and their arrival had put the wind up him still further.

"Just take it easy there. We're on the same team here, okay?" Dean glanced warily to Bobby and his brother, asking them to silently play along as he distorted the truth just a little. "We've been hired by the company." He jerked his head towards the plant. "We're here to look into what's been going on at night."

"GM sent you?" The guard looked at the trio uncertainly. "You don't look like anyone a bunch of suits would hire..."

"We're the guys they hire when they're out of other more rational options," Sam answered. "We know about the accidents..."

"Accidents? Is that what those jumped up pencil pushers are calling them? Sonny, there's been deaths here, but not a one of them has been an accident."

Sam nodded knowingly. "Can you tell us more?"

The guard took a second to consider it and then leaned through his car window, turning off the high beam of his headlights. "Alright. If you fellas can show me some I.D. we can all head

back to my office at the gatehouse, and I'll tell you a few tall tales. But when I'm done, you're gonna think I'm crazier than a coyote."

"Nah, we think that already." Dean smirked playfully, handing over a phony business card and driving license.

The security man took it, rubbed at his jaw a moment and then handed it back. If he suspected anything, he didn't show it, and instead holstered his weapon and offered up his hand.

"I'm Marvin," he explained. "Been the gate man here for forty years, but this is the damned closest you'll ever get me to the plant since the day it closed. C'mon, I'm getting the jitters just standing this close."

And with that he dropped his bony frame back inside the patrol car and gestured for them to follow.

"What's with you two?" Bobby gawked as the brothers just looked at one another, apparently at a loss whether to trust Marvin or not. "You heard what the man said, get your sorry butts in the car! Time's a wastin'!"

Dean scowled but did as he was told, carefully scrambling into the back with Sam while Bobby rode shotgun with Marvin.

Gatehouse

Sam studied Marvin as the skeletal security man poured coffee into several Styrofoam cups. Now that he was back in his own little environment, the guard had stopped stammering and his hands had stopped shaking. Even his cheeks had a somewhat rosier glow to them.

He didn't seem an unpleasant man in any way, shape or form, but his angular features and well-worn skin gave a slightly menacing appearance. Perhaps that was why he'd been so well suited to security, even in his younger years.

As Sam wrapped his hands around the offered cup and took in the warmth it gave off, he realized Marvin actually reminded him of someone. *Harry Dean Stanton, from all those old Carpenter movies...*

Dean was undoubtedly getting a kick out of that if he'd also noticed the resemblance.

"Thanks." Sam nodded to Marvin and took a sip of the soothing black liquid. Up until now, he hadn't realized just how unnaturally cold it had been once they'd gotten close to the plant.

Of course, it could all be in his head after seeing the dancing robots and thriving production line inside, but he doubted it.

"So, you said you had something to tell us about what's been going on around here?" Bobby asked, taking a cup from Marvin. "Maybe you could start at the beginning?"

Marvin took a seat in a chair with fake leather covering that had seen better days. The material squeaked as he settled, finding a comfortable spot.

"Well, if you ask me," he sniffed, obviously enjoying the newfound attention. "All this started with Lou Macon. Lou was a supervisor on the nightshift at the plant. He was an old-timer with over forty years' service. When news came that the place was gonna to be closed he was inconsolable. I guess he felt he wasn't only gonna lose the job he loved, but at his age, there wasn't gonna be no chance of employment elsewhere, either."

"Well you can kinda see his point," Dean agreed, his eyes locking onto a packet of cookies on Marvin's table.

Marvin bobbed his head and offered up the double chocolate chips. "Yessir, you can feel for the guy, especially after what happened next. You see after the closure announcement, Lou was found hanging from the rafters of the plant's paint shop. He'd left a note saying without Pontiac, there was nothing."

"And you think Lou's back, taking his revenge here now?" Dean mumbled through a mouthful of cookie.

Marvin shook his head and sighed. He looked almost sad. "Not revenge, no. I think old Lou has come back to make sure this plant never closes. Lots of the locals and laid off workers think the same, although you'll be hard pressed to get them to admit it without getting them drunk first."

Dean gulped down the last remnants of his cookie feeding frenzy and took a swig of coffee before looking carefully at Sam. "So, Sasquatch, how come your super search didn't find any of this on record when you looked for deaths out here?"

Sam considered it. Maybe he'd been so engrossed in research about Ferinacci that he'd been remiss in his actual duties. On the other hand, he hadn't actually been looking for someone who'd killed *themselves*.

"Maybe because I searched through accidental demises, not suicides," he suggested, just a little apologetically.

Dean grunted and pointed outside the office window, his attention apparently already taken by something else. "Those cars out there, where'd they come from?" He questioned Marvin.

"Weren't all the cars produced here shipped out when the plant closed?"

Marvin's sharp features creased in a knowing smile. "Yessir, nothing was left behind. Thing is, though, first of all the plant just made noise at night..." He coughed uneasily. "But y'see these last five nights it's actually churned out a real car every evening. Now tell me that ain't unnatural?"

"Very unnatural," Sam chipped in.

"Once they come off the line, they just sit out there, lining up like little tin soldiers, and nobody dare move 'em."

Dean shuddered and he set down his latest cookie, seemingly put off his munching by the off-the-wall vehicular behavior. "Every car needs a master," he said huskily, his eyes darting to Bobby. "I'm just kinda scared who those five hunks of tin might belong to."

Bobby bobbed his head in agreement, his thumb and forefinger rubbing at the base of his beard in troubled thought. Eventually he looked back to Marvin, his eyebrows furrowed. "Have you any idea why GM didn't sell Pontiac as a going concern? I mean, this puppy was far from dead if you ask me."

"Way I heard it, some big New York businessman actually offered a takeover, but he wanted the Pontiac name as well as the plant, and GM refused to let it go." Marvin looked less than happy at the fact and his tone was raised slightly in apparent anger. "Damn Detroit fat cats would rather see a legend die than another company own it!"

"Bunch of dicks in suits," Dean agreed. "Maybe I should go ventilate their asses with rock salt instead of old Lou's..."

"Or," Bobby scowled. "We should thank Marvin here for his time, and go see Mr. Macon's wife in the morning."

Marvin stood up expectantly and held out his hand.

Sam noted with amusement that the gesture was aimed at Bobby rather than the Winchesters. Despite his scruffy hat and rough appearance, apparently Bobby still held more gravitas than they did - which was probably only fair, given his experience.

Bobby took the guard's hand and shook it heartily. "Thanks, you've saved us a whole lot of time, and a whole bunch of hunting with what you've told us."

"Do you think you can deal with this without more bloodshed?" Marvin asked cynically. "I mean, can you really close a plant that won't die?"

Bobby slapped him on the shoulder, probably exuding more confidence than he felt. "Trust me, there ain't nothing out there that won't die. You just gotta know the right way to kill it..."

***Madison Heights
Oakland County, Michigan***

Dean fumbled with the knot in his tie as it attempted to strangle him, wondering if the idea of a monkey suit was what had prompted Bobby to go shopping for ammo while they talked with Vera Macon.

Of course, Bobby would never admit to hating goon clothes, but sometimes Dean suspected they'd have to cut the old hunter's baseball cap from his scalp should anything ever befall him.

Not that that helped Dean now as he dared to loosen the tie a little with a grunt of annoyance.

And was that a smirk he spotted on Sammy's face out the corner of his eye?

He considered making his sibling walk back to their motel, but Vera Macon's appearance from the kitchen with a tray of cream cakes saved his brother's feet any further wear and tear.

"Why ma'am, you shouldn't have," Dean mouthed whilst simultaneously managing to lick his lips.

Vera smiled. "Oh nonsense! It's not very often I get company any more. Especially not since..."

"Since the strange happenings at the plant?" Sam prompted softly.

The old woman's graying hair seemed to almost bristle, and she slumped back into an armchair as if the life had suddenly drained out of her. "Who did you say you work for again?" She asked half-heartedly.

Sam flashed her his wallet, but she appeared to hardly pay the documents inside any attention. It seemed like any mention of the Oakland factory, let alone her husband, were too much for her to contemplate.

"We're investigators working on behalf of General Motors, ma'am..."

"And we're very sorry to have to bring all this back up again," Dean chirped in. "But well,

people have died." He looked longingly at the buns on the table, but for once decided this was the place for tact, not the indulgence of sugary foodstuffs.

Vera twisted the links of a delicate gold necklace that dangled on her chest nervously and sighed. "I suppose you want to know about my Lou?" She eventually asked, picking up a small photo frame and handing it to Dean. "He was such a happy man..."

"Until GM announced the closure of the plant, right?"

"Yes." Vera nodded, her eyes becoming glassy. "He loved cars - especially Pontiacs. But he became so upset when GM announced they were phasing out the brand that it all became...too much for him. He took his own life, and all for his love of that wretched company."

Dean glanced to his brother before asking the next question. This was always where it got a little tricky. The key was, not to get their butts tossed out for being nutjobs before they'd gathered any intel that might be important.

He cleared his throat. "Mrs. Macon, this may sound a little strange, but do you think your husband thought strongly enough about this to...to well, try other measures to keep the plant open?"

Vera looked at him - just looked. Then she stared over her half-moon spectacles like a school teacher and looked again. "Other measures? Mr. Tyler, it may have escaped you, but my husband *is dead*."

Dean nodded, ignoring the abruptly acerbic tone in the old woman's voice. She was definitely a changeable old girl. "Yes, ma'am, but you must have heard the local rumors? People are saying someone is haunting the Oakland Pontiac plant. You gotta admit, Lou is a pretty likely candidate."

Vera blinked.

And then began to chuckle.

"Why young man, you seriously think my Lou *is a ghost*? What do they teach children in school these days?"

Not enough about ganking the undead, Dean considered, but didn't vocalize his thoughts.

"We're very sorry, Mrs. Macon, but we have to follow every avenue of investigation, no matter how unlikely." Sam interrupted, kicking his brother in the shin under the oak coffee table that separated them. "It's probably all some publicity stunt by the local union, but we do have to cover every angle."

"People would actually make up rumors about the old plant being haunted just to stir trouble for the company?"

"Anything is possible," Sam played along. "In fact, they might even involve your husband's name, given that he felt so strongly about all this." He shot a glance to Dean. "Could you perhaps tell us where Lou is buried, so we can check no one has tampered with the grave?"

Vera looked slightly taken aback, but not because she was horrified at the prospect of the debasement of her husband's burial place. "You mean no one told you?"

"Told us what?" Sam asked, his expression becoming puzzled at her latest change in attitude.

"Why, Lou was cremated. All the bosses from the plant were there. Shouldn't you know that, being from GM?"

Sam coughed, partially in surprise, and partially to cover up the fact that he had no answer for a very sweet, but crafty old lady.

Vera seemed sympathetic. "That's a nasty hack you have there, let me get you some water..."

Sam winced as Vera ambled off into the kitchen. "That went well."

"Yeah, no wonder her husband ganked himself with her to come home to. Is it me or is she a few short of a six pack, and then some?"

"I think I'd use the word eccentric, Dean."

"Crazy as a coyote works for me." Dean glanced around as if he were being spied upon, then plucked one of the cream cakes from the table and took a bite. A huge splodge of white cream attached itself to the tip of his nose, but he appeared oblivious. "So, Lou was cremated, now what?" he managed between mouthfuls.

Sam shook his head. "Hope there's something holding him here we can destroy? An item of clothing, a piece of hair, anything."

"Here we go!" Vera returned from the kitchen with a whole pitcher of water and a glass, which she set down in front of Sam.

She's getting attached to him like a kid gets attached to a puppy dog, Dean contemplated. At least, I hope it's that kinda affection...

"So, Mrs. Macon, can you tell us if anything bad ever happened to your husband out at the plant. Any incidents or accidents?"

Vera apparently didn't need to even think about it. "Well there was the finger episode..."

"*Finger?*" Sam pulled a face, obviously unsure if he should be asking what that was all about. Dean mouthed the word too as if something unsavory was about to come out.

"Why yes." Vera tapped a forefinger to her lips in thought. "Let me see now, it must be oh, nineteen years ago now. Lou was working on some car over at the plant and lost a couple of fingers. He always joked that they never actually found one of the suckers."

Dean almost choked on the piece of cake he'd just popped into his mouth. "Gross," he coughed out before thinking. "I mean...um, don't tell me there's a car still hanging around with the remains of a guy's finger inside it?"

Sam shot his brother a look of annoyance. "Mrs Macon," he tried to recover the situation. "Did GM scrap the car after the accident? I mean, they'd never sell a car with a human finger in, right?"

Vera suddenly chuckled until her spectacles began to mist over. She tugged them off and placed them on her knee. "Oh my dear boy, Lou wouldn't let them dismantle anything! He asked to buy that puppy himself. Even joked that it was part of him."

Dean scowled and didn't try to hide it, despite more looks from Sam to shut his cakehole - *literally*. "Man, talk about *Christine* here or what?"

Vera smiled at the comment. Maybe she hadn't seen the movie, or maybe she was just as whacked as Dean suspected.

"Can I ask what happened to the car after your husband passed away?" Sam was leaning forward now, pressing the widow to stay focused.

"Oh, well, I can't drive and it was just taking up space in the garage. I let Marty have it. He's a good boy, you know."

"Marty?" It was Sam's turn to fiddle with his tie as he spoke, and there was a distinct line of perspiration on his brow.

The old witch is finally getting to him, Dean noted with a smirk of satisfaction.

"Marty is our son." Vera pointed to another photograph above the fireplace. "He doesn't have the car now, though. He traded that old thing in while the government cash for clunkers scrappage scheme was running."

Dean pressed a hand against his forehead. "Great, that's just *great*," he bemoaned. *The friggin' car has been cubed! How are we supposed to find a finger bone in a junkyard*

haystack?

"Just one more thing and we'll be on our way, ma'am," Sam apologized. "Did you or your son ever see or hear anything strange around the car after your husband died?"

Vera considered it. "No, why would we? It was just an old car."

Sam smiled. "Yes, yes of course." He stood up. "Well thank you for everything ma'am."

Vera blushed as if she was being hit on. "Why no, thank you two *delightful* young men for brightening my day. I loved Lou dearly," she explained. "But he wasn't exactly Robert Redford in the looks department, if you know what I mean."

She winked, and Dean made a beeline for the door without excusing himself or thanking her for the cakes.

Being called a "ladies man" was one thing, but even he drew the line somewhere.

As far as his brother was concerned, one simple rule always applied when it came down to amorous old fruit loops. *Every man for himself, Sammy. Every man for himself...*

The Grand Am Motel Outskirts of Oakland

"I'm telling you man, she was one whacked old lady." Dean was sitting on the end of his bed dismantling his .45 without actually looking at the components.

"She was harmless, Dean. I mean, c'mon, what was she gonna do, overpower us both and use us as her sex toys?" Sam was chuckling as he watched his brother's disgusted expression turn into a look of sheer horror at the idea.

"Dude, she may not have had the strength to pull it off, but that wasn't stopping her thinking about it." Dean set the silver Colt down and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Anyway, what we should really be worrying about is her even wackier dead husband. What kind of freak buys the car that took off two of his fingers?"

"The kind of freak that haunts his old workplace, maybe?" Bobby butted in as he ambled through the door with a bag of groceries under one arm.

"Maybe," Sam agreed. "But this is one spirit we can't salt and burn. Mrs. Macon confirmed Lou was cremated. And the only other thing that might be holding him here is a finger that's still inside a trashed car somewhere..."

Bobby rolled his eyes. "Well ain't that just great. Haven't you pair of yahoos found out anything *useful* while I've been out for chow?"

"Not unless you count the fact that good ol' Vera would like to replace Lou with a newer model," Dean admitted.

"Then I'm thinkin' we're just gonna have to go back to the plant tonight and figure it out from there." Bobby tossed over a couple of subs to the brothers and then plucked a sandwich from the brown bag for himself. Before taking a bite, he shook his head. "You know, it still bothers me that no one has actually seen Lou's ghost. If the guy is so pissed, why isn't it his form everyone sees?"

"But it has to be him, right?" Sam asked, unwrapping his food. "Who else has a motive for what's been going on?"

"I dunno," Bobby conceded with a sigh. "But I'm tellin' ya, I got a bad feeling about this one. Pack plenty of hardware, 'cause I ain't likin' the joyride my gut is taking me on."

Dean shoved the end of his sub into his mouth and then grimaced - or at least attempted to grimace with such a huge amount of food in his mouth. "Dude," he mumbled through serious munching. "With fillings like this, no wonder your stomach thinks its Armageddon..."

Bobby tossed his rolled empty wrapper across the room and Dean narrowly dodged it. "Next time, *you* pay for the food, smartass!"

"Next time," Dean grunted. "We go to a diner, preferably one that actually serves more than lettuce on two slices of Styrofoam." He pulled at the slightly rubbery sub to make his point.

"Alright, *alright*," Bobby waved a hand in defeat. "What say we get the show on the road and eat later?"

Sam glanced down at the empty packaging and small mound of crumbs in his hand. "Err, sounds good to me." He smiled sheepishly, obviously having enjoyed his impromptu meal, even if no one else had.

"And they say I'm the one that'll eat any old crap," Dean chuckled, pulling out a rucksack from under his bed to fill with weaponry.

"Just make sure your gun choices are better than your food ones and you'll do just fine," Bobby quipped, picking up a holdall he'd apparently filled to the brim with weapons.

As the two bickered, neither noticed that Sam hadn't moved or attempted to retrieve any firearms or salt. Instead, a creased, worried expression had turned his dimples into a frown.

Eventually, Bobby realized the younger man wasn't preparing to leave. "Some reason you're sitting there doing squat, Sam?"

Sam swallowed. "I think you're right to have a bad feeling about this." He swallowed again. "I'm getting it too..."

"'Bad' as in one of your freaky premonition gigs?" Dean instantly looked worried.

"No, just...I don't know. I just think we might be walking into something we can't get out of. Maybe one of us should stay behind in case we need an out."

"As in somebody gotta play the cavalry in case you two get yourselves into your very own Little Big Horn, huh?" Bobby's frown mirrored Sam's.

"Kinda," Sam agreed, looking apologetically at the elder man. "I know this was originally your hunt but..."

Bobby took off his soiled cap and tossed it onto the table with a sigh. "But you'd feel better if I was on the outside in case those machines go rabid on ya?" He dropped down into a chair with a look of disappointment.

"Well, if you get bored, we know where there's a hot chick named Vera who'd just *love* your attention, dude." Dean patted Bobby on the back as he slung his rucksack over his shoulder.

"I'm not *that* old." Bobby grouched. "And besides, just lately it's not me attracting the older women." He winked at Sam. "If you ask me, you boys are slipping..."

He chuckled as Dean ducked outside, the door slamming in his wake as he muttered. "He must be talking to you, Samantha..."

Disused Car Plant Oakland County, Michigan

Dean swung the Impala up to the gatehouse, honked the horn and waited. It took Marvin two minutes to get up from his chair and actually check on his newest visitors. Not exactly a security world record, but at least he was actually on duty.

"Hey there," Dean greeted the guard. "We have to do a survey of the plant for the suits back in Detroit. Gonna need access." He smiled, but Marvin was blinking at him with a stony look that reminded the hunter of a little grey alien from *The X-Files*.

The guard's flashlight clicked on and was pointed straight into Dean's face, despite the fact he knew full well who he was talking to.

This dude's so been watching too many horror flicks...

"Kinda late to be doing any kind of survey, ain't it?" Marvin was apparently far less scared than on their last encounter. False bravado, no doubt, and damned annoying to boot.

Dean shrugged innocently. "Just doing our job. They pay the bucks, we follow their instructions."

Marvin sniffed and finally flicked the light back off. Sliding it onto his utility belt, he gestured with his thumb to a row of empty parking spaces on the outside of the security fencing.

"Okay," he decided. "You can go inside, but your car stays here. And don't be getting any ideas about me giving you the guided tour of the place, neither. I don't go inside the factory. They don't pay me enough."

"Me either," Dean agreed as he spun the Chevy into the middle spot. "But somebody has to do the dirty work around here."

Marvin sniffed and scooted back into his gatehouse.

"Well isn't he a barrel of laughs tonight?" Dean groused.

Sam peered through the windshield, watching the guard's silhouette sink back down into his chair inside the gatehouse. "He's just scared. And I can't say as I blame him."

Dean pushed open his door and leaned back inside, grabbing his sack from the rear seat. "Sheesh, that last gig at the toy shop really did turn you into mush, didn't it?"

"Dean." Sam was serious. His dimples had vanished altogether and he had that costive look that said he'd been thinking way too hard. "I just think we should be extra careful on this one, okay?"

"Okay, message received and understood. Now get your butt out here before Marvin the Martian decides to join us."

Sam dragged his lanky frame free of the Impala and collected his own bag from the trunk. Careful not to remove any weaponry in front of Marvin or any security cameras, they strode inside onto the actual plant grounds.

There was no moon, only harsh grey clouds that cast a foreboding blanket over the night sky. It wasn't exactly creepy, but it felt cold, as if there was no life at all beyond the high steel

fences that surrounded the perimeter of the building.

Dean began to hum some unknown rock anthem as he walked, trying to push away the feeling Sam's warning had instilled in him. The trouble was, he was feeling it too, even before they reached the bleak walls of the plant.

From the corner of his eye, he noted the five "bastard" Pontiacs the factory had created. They looked *wrong*, although he couldn't put a finger on a reason why.

Then something flashed.

It was so abrupt, so fleeting, he almost thought he'd imagined it. But then, his hunter's senses were too finely honed for that. He spun around to stare at the unholy vehicles.

"Sammy, I swear..."

"You saw one of their headlights blink," Sam completed for him. "Yeah, I saw it too."

"And there's no one else out here."

Sam slowly licked his lips. "Not a soul. At least, not a *living* one."

The first car in the line-up, a blue Solstice, seemed to hear him, and its lights began to emit a faint glow that grew in intensity until it appeared the lamps were on high beam.

There was no one inside to flick a switch, not even a visible apparition that the brothers could lay the blame on.

"And again I say, the lights are on but nobody's home," Dean growled.

The Solstice responded with a cough as the ignition suddenly kicked in, cranking the engine into life. But the car didn't move, it simply seemed to glare at them, its motor roaring as if some teenage daredevil was gunning the gas.

"Dude, I think we've just taken the shortcut straight into *Maximum Overdrive*. Now all we need is some kickass AC/DC and I'll know I'm dreaming."

"First the *Christine* story from Vera Macon and now this?" Sam grimaced. "I think we're sharing the same nightmare..."

Dean pulled his sawed-off from the sack on his shoulder and pumped it. "Yeah, well don't look now, but that nightmare just multiplied."

The car next to the Solstice's headlights flicked on, followed by the third, then the fourth,

then the fifth car's lights. It was like plugging in Christmas tree decorations - except it was far less fun.

Each car's motor kicked in next, until the area was filled with a cacophony of automotive sound that rivaled a Wagner opera.

"Time to shag ass, little brother!" Dean pulled his weapon's trigger twice in quick succession whilst dodging to the right.

The spray from the shotgun did little to stop the sudden full frontal from the Pontiacs, and Dean cursed himself for not having any real cartridges at hand. Rock salt was great for spooks, but did little when you wanted to gank a car.

As Dean dived right, Sam rolled to the left, just managing to pull his Glock from his waistband as he narrowly escaped the edge of the Solstice's front tire.

The car swerved and its invisible driver pulled a handbrake turn to make a second attack.

Sam lined up his sights on the car's hood and then apparently realized he had no real target.

Making a quick decision, he let the gun drop until the barrel was aligned with the car's front tire and then fired.

Amazingly, the Solstice appeared to second-guess him and veered off the very second he'd pulled back on the trigger. There was a blur of blue as the vehicle screeched past Sam and began to make another turn.

With seconds before it and its mechanical brethren made another attack, he tried to locate his missing brother. "*Dean!*"

A familiar spiky-haired head bobbed up from behind a bush that ran parallel with the path they'd been on. "Man, these suckers have been watching *Knight Rider* a little too often!" He took a shot at a red G6 sedan as it dared to head for him. "Somebody needs to tell these puppies not all Pontiacs are supposed to drive themselves..."

"Now I know why I prefer KITT when he's a Mustang," Sam grumbled as he joined his brother in firing on the G6.

Dean scowled as he stuffed the shotgun back in his bag and pulled out his Colt. "Hey! Dude, Mustangs are for wusses who don't know how to drive a real car, okay? Besides, I think you just got a soft spot for Deanna Russo..."

Sam smiled sheepishly. "Bite me!" He jerked his Glock towards the glass main entrance/reception area to the plant. "I think it's time to regroup and rethink this mess."

Dean nodded. "Okay, Samantha, ladies first. I'll stick around here and cover that ungainly butt of yours until its safe inside. Wouldn't want any tire marks on that pretty rear end now would we?" He grinned and then fired as the Solstice made another run at him.

With at least one of the cars' attentions elsewhere, Sam dashed into the open, making a beeline for the main entrance. As he dodged back and forth, firing randomly, the G6 appeared to lock on to him like a night fighter with an ace at its controls.

Dean spotted the car and was instantly torn. Fire at the Solstice and save his own skin, or fire at the G6 to give his brother more time?

Without a thought for himself, he changed his target to the G6, emptying his clip at the car's wheels until the rear right tire exploded in a shower of rubber on the asphalt.

The car fishtailed, the metal rim of the wheel skidding off the road and digging into the loose earth of a verge.

It revved hard, wheels spinning as it tried to escape its earthy prison, but for now, the car was stuck, top soil spitting from its rear end in tiny brown sods.

Dean rammed another clip home in his Colt and spun around, narrowly missing being hit by the Solstice as it angrily roared past him. It was his turn to make the break for it now, and the enemy was pissed.

While the Solstice turned to try and nudge the G6 clear of its earthy incarceration, its three remaining brethren all focused on the elder hunter.

From the protection of the main entrance, Dean could hear Sam trying to give him cover, but at this distance, it did little to help.

Hell, at any distance, with this foe it would be like firing with a pea-shooter.

Dean grunted as he bolted over another prickly hedge and was rewarded with several spiny thorns in his behind. Sammy would find that highly funny - if either of them lived to talk about it.

As he rolled again, trying not to stay still even for a second, there was a yelp to his left that caught his attention. It wasn't a metallic cry for help from one of the 'injured' cars, but a human howl of utter terror.

Daring not to run for the plant while he still had a gap in the line of attacking cars, Dean whirled around to see Marvin cowering by the nearest verge as one of the Pontiacs bore down on him.

Without help, the man was a sitting duck for the enraged automobiles.

Crap! Talk about deer in the headlights...

Making a split second decision, Dean darted towards the security man instead of the plant, firing randomly at the attacking Pontiac.

The car kept coming, but he didn't flinch, still running at it like he was playing a very dangerous game of chicken.

Marvin's eyes lit up as he saw the hunter turn to try and aid him, but his elation was short lived as the Solstice and freed G6 joined in the pursuit.

Skidding to a halt next to the huddled guard, Dean grabbed the back of the man's jacket and yanked him to his feet. Spinning the still shaking Marvin around, he shoved the guard in the center of his back so hard he was propelled forwards out of the oncoming path of the first car.

Dean fired again relentlessly until the Pontiac's windshield shattered into a spider's web of safety glass. Had there been a driver, he would have been blinded, but this car didn't need to "see" it simply *knew* what needed to be done.

Sensing he was seconds from death if he remained static, Dean spun to follow Marvin's sprint towards the safety of the plant.

And behind, still it came.

Unyielding hatred in the form of a car.

Dean could feel the heat from its overworked engine on his heels like a hound biting at his ankles. He could hear the loathing it held for man in the roar of its engine.

But worst of all, he knew without a doubt that this four-wheeled thing that he would normally love like family, wanted without question to take his life.

Dean blinked, keeping his eyes closed and dived forwards, trying to propel Marvin and his own body sideways out of the path of their attacker. It was a move borne of desperation.

It was a moment in time that lasted mere seconds, but seemed to continue for all eternity, the Pontiac's tires screaming in protest as it tried to compensate and crush the interlopers beneath its wheels.

Part Three

Sam watched in morbid fascination as the Pontiac pounced on his brother and Marvin. He was helpless - every shot he fired doing nothing to the cars other than annoying them further.

"Dean! NO!" He ran from the relative safety of the plant reception area and was just in time to see the front edge of the attacking vehicle clipping the back of Dean's leg as he made his swan dive.

The elder Winchester was tossed sideways by the glancing impact and with the hunter out of the way, the Pontiac bore down on Marvin like a coyote sinking fangs into its prey.

Marvin's body flew high into the air as the car smashed into him, propelling him skywards with its forward momentum.

The guard screamed out, but his yelp of surprise was cut short as he returned to earth with a dull thud, his lanky frame coming to rest on a short spiked fence that bordered the plant's perimeter.

Sam grimaced, diving into the open to help the two downed men before the Pontiacs returned to do their worst.

As he ran, he let off more rounds from the Glock, anger fuelling his aim until the car that had downed his sibling took a shell directly into a gas line. It was a one in a billion shot, luck, not skill, giving the hunter the upper hand.

Sam didn't care how it had happened. All he knew was that a feeling of intense elation welled in the pit of his stomach as the car spun out of control, a ball of flame erupting from its compromised gas tank.

The Pontiac rolled, wheels spinning in the air as the smell of burning fuel tainted the atmosphere.

"Dude, I think you killed that sonofabitch!" Dean was pulling himself up from the asphalt and he was grinning. *"Sammy bagged him a Herbie gone bananas..."*

Sam pulled a pained face and looked over to Marvin. Since he'd landed, the security man had shown little sign of movement, and the remaining Pontiacs would soon be back for more.

Dean spotted his brother's gaze and winced. *"Aww crap!"*

Blood dribbled from the guard's side where a section of the fence had impaled him. The slick wasn't large - yet, but both brothers had enough experience to know if they pulled Marvin off

the spike that could change - and quickly.

"We can't leave him out here," Sam panted, jogging over to the fence while casting a wary glance over his shoulder.

For some reason, the cars seemed to have backed off.

Was that a good or a bad thing?

As Sam pressed fingers to the guard's throat to check for a pulse, Marvin groaned.

"Take it easy, we've got you," Sam soothed. "We have to get you off the fence and inside away from the cars..."

"And I hate to tell you this," Dean apologized with a cringe. "But this is gonna hurt like a bitch."

Marvin tried to lift his head up, but only got halfway when it lolled to the right and then flopped loosely back down. "Not *inside*," he begged. "Please, don't take me...in *there*..."

Sam nodded to his brother and the pair positioned themselves either side the downed man. With another nod, they both lifted Marvin up and off the short spike that had speared him.

Marvin yelled again and then thankfully passed out into oblivion.

As the guard became limp, Sam carefully hoisted him up over his shoulder, carrying him more efficiently on his own in a fireman's carry, while Dean cautiously brought up the rear with his gun still drawn.

"Why are those bastards just sitting there?" Dean watched the cars as they simply lined back up, engines revving and lights blazing. "It doesn't make sense."

Sam let Marvin slide from his shoulder and settled him down in a corridor that met with the reception area. "Maybe they were just the first wave," he suggested with a frown. "I'm starting to think we're the hunted ones here, Dean, not them."

Dean kneeled, gently pulling away Marvin's jacket and shirt to look at the hole in the man's side. Blood had seeped heavily through the materials, and Dean's hands soon became soaked before he even got to the wound.

"He's bleeding all over the damn place," he said gruffly, pressing a palm over the jagged edges of the injury.

"And we're already in over our heads." Sam turned to look back out through the broken glass

panes of the reception area and shook his head.

"So you and Bobby were right, sue me." Dean continued to work on the guard and Marvin moaned softly, his eyes fluttering but not opening fully. "Now what?"

Sam crouched down until he was about at the same level as his brother. His voice dropped too, as if somehow he was afraid the machines were listening. "If we have any chance of escape, never mind killing Lou's spirit, I think we need to get to the main control room. All the computers that manage the robots are there. We have to try and shut this place down."

Marvin hacked like he smoked sixty a day and his eyelids snapped open unexpectedly. He seemed to stare through Sam for a moment and then swallowed hard. "The electricity is *already* off..." He coughed. "If that hasn't stopped whatever the hell is doing all this, how can a bunch of computers?"

Sam shrugged, feeling like their situation had already gone beyond helpless. "I don't know, maybe this is like some 'ghost in the machine?'"

"Whoa, so not my favorite *X-File*," Dean scrunched up his face. "You're tellin' me good old Lou is a few chips short of a circuit board now?"

"At this point?" Sam shrugged dolefully. "I don't think I know anything anymore."

Marvin sucked down a breath and the pain from the movement almost made him bite into his tongue. He took a second to collect himself, trying not to inhale too harshly, and then offered up what little wisdom he could.

"The main computer banks are on the second level. Let me tell you getting there won't be pretty." He shuddered, but it was hard to tell if it was from his injury, or from raw fear. "You'll have to go right through the production line robots to get up there. Either that or risk using an elevator powered by God only knows what..."

Dean balked. "Dude, I don't do confined spaces too well. Not to mention I'm not playing sitting duck to a pile of wires that wants to fry my ass!" He pointed to a security camera affixed to the ceiling.

The thing's motor whirred in response, the lens zooming in further on their position as if to taunt them.

"See?" Dean growled under his breath. "We don't exactly have the element of surprise in this joint."

"So you think we should risk walking through a shop floor full of pissed off machines?" Sam looked more than skeptical.

"Damn straight," Dean confirmed, pulling off his jacket to place it over the quivering security man. "I'd take my chances swinging at those metallic S.O.B.'s to being cooped up in a tin can any day."

Sam kneeled again until he was at eye level with Marvin. "We can't take you through there, you know that right? But you should be safe here. Nothing can get to the corridor from the outside, of from the production lines."

"Nothing *real*," Marvin squirmed. "What about Lou's spirit?"

"That's why we're here," Dean answered. "Now you just sit tight, and we'll be back before you know it."

Marvin grunted as if he didn't believe a word. His face was pale and terrified, and it was obvious from his behavior he had already accepted that his fate was to die here.

"Just go," he spat through clenched teeth. "Go!"

Sam nodded and tugged at his brother's forearm. Marvin didn't want their pity, he needed their speed if he was going to live. And that meant they had to get through the robots, and fast.

Of course, how they got through if the machines went rabid was another matter altogether, and one Sam didn't want to think about until they reached the double doors to the production line.

Even this close, they could both hear the clanking of the machines as they attempted to build more illegitimate offspring.

"You ready to take a trip through Roboville?" Dean asked, sliding a full clip into his Colt and flicking off the safety.

"Not really," Sam confessed, doing much the same with his own weapon. "But what the hell, let's do this thing anyway, right?"

"Right."

Dean took a step back and then rammed his boot into the middle of the doors. They seemed to give way easier than he had expected, and he stumbled forward through the newly made gap like a circus clown entering the ring.

Sam followed with a more tactical pose, swinging his gun back and forth ready to lock onto any possible target.

The robots continued with their work, for now apparently ignorant that their little world had been breached.

Dean steadied himself and took on a similar defensive pose as his brother, his eyes darting from machine to machine and back again warily. "They're messing with us, dude."

Sam's voice was low as he answered a simple, "I know."

"You ready to take a walk through the valley of the shadow?" Dean took a step towards the nearest robot that was happily welding a front fender onto an unpainted Solstice.

"Not really," Sam admitted, taking tentative steps after his brother. "Just straight down the middle, huh?"

"Easy as pie," Dean agreed, moving further through the line as quickly as he dared. "And I loves me some pie..."

The middle robot stopped midair like a dog that had picked up a new scent. Its huge yellow arm spun around and its pincers centered on the Winchesters. Servos hummed, but nothing appeared to move further.

Then, one by one, all the robots ground to a halt, freezing like someone, somewhere had thrown an off switch. Only the center robot remained active, diodes and lights flashing as it just *stared* at them.

"Man, I think that thing has the hots for you, bro." Dean kept his .45 aimed at the machine as he spoke.

"So not my kind of date," Sam snarked back, turning with his Glock so that he had his back to his brother. Now they had both front and rear covered. "Think that thing would be offended if I said no?" He quipped.

The robot's arm jerked spasmodically and it slammed on top of the car it had been constructing until the Pontiac looked like a junkyard dog.

Dean nodded and whistled. "I'd say that was a resounding yes. You pissed Robby the Robot off just when he was thinking about playing nice." The hunter cocked his head and without warning let off a volley at the machine's hydraulic piping. "Or maybe not," he conceded as he rolled daringly under the yellow behemoth's frame and out the other side.

The robot tried to follow, but the reach of its arm just wasn't long enough and it simply couldn't get the right angle to clutch at its prey.

Dean fired again and a line exploded, spewing high-pressure air out onto the shop floor with a deafening hiss. The robot juddered, but still moved.

While its motion was slowed, Sam took the opportunity to follow his sibling, ducking and diving his much taller frame under the hissing, twitching mechanical creature.

It snapped at him desperately, the long fingers of its pincers catching him and knocking him off balance as he passed.

Sam yelped and instinctively rolled - a move that ultimately saved him as another of the robots returned to life and attacked him.

This time, the welder attached to the thing's arm barely missed cutting into the flesh of Sam's thigh as he squirmed out of its path on the shop floor.

"Is this what you call robot foreplay, Sammy?"

Sam looked up just in time to see a bloodied Dean grabbing the sleeve of his jacket and pulling him out of the path of the machine.

The concrete where he had been laying only seconds earlier turned black behind him as the robot cut a line in the ground where his leg had been.

Before they could gather themselves again, the robot behind them fired up, dropping the car door it held in favor of a more human target.

"I think this one is more your type," Sam panted through bruised lips as he emptied a clip into the thing.

The machine responded with a slash of its elongated arm, reminding Sam of the comical stabbing motion the murderer in *Scream* used. Except, this wasn't funny, not at all.

While he reloaded, Dean tapped the trigger of his Colt, firing three rounds at the apparently vulnerable air lines. The problem was, with this robot he didn't have a clean shot because of the odd angle in which it had been positioned.

"You might be the last *thing* standing, you freaky hunk of junk, but you sure as hell aren't gonna be the last *man* standing." He fired again repeatedly until his finger was futilely tapping on the trigger.

"Dean, it's empty..."

Sam pulled down his brother's arm and nodded at the yellow monster before them.

At some point in the elder hunter's attack it had frozen in place. Whether he'd hit a line, or the weird "off" switch had tripped again was anybody's guess.

But for now, it and the others had sounded a retreat.

Dean swallowed, and Sam realized his brother had gotten carried away in the moment. The machines had been something inanimate to vent his anger on about their father, or maybe their situation in general.

Lucifer's rise and the possible End of Days tended to have that effect on the mind after a while.

Sam knew it well, and the utter feeling of being powerless about any of it.

That feeling was creeping back now, in this situation.

There was something more here than a restless spirit. Something big. *Something almost impossible to stop...*

"Are you just gonna stand there, or are you gonna shag ass before Robby and his pals decide to take a bite outta it?" Dean was back on form and scowling at Sam with his best "will you just listen to your big bro?" expression.

Sam pulled a face back that said as much as if he'd flipped Dean the bird, and then checked the clip in his Glock. This was one place he didn't want to travel around without ammo.

Dean had already reloaded and was climbing a short flight of stairs up to the main offices. Sam followed at a short distance, watching as another high-level camera zoomed in on them and traced their path.

It was weird being watched by a machine, even if a spirit was controlling it. Was Lou sitting up in the offices at some desk, waiting for them? Or had Sam's earlier guess been right?

Is his essence in the machinery that controls this place?

As Dean kicked in the main control room doors with his CAT boot, Sam guessed they were about to find out. But were they ready to deal with that kind of entity?

Main Control Room
Disused Car Plant
Oakland County

Sam trudged into the room after his brother, pausing to take a look around as he laid his bag

down on the first desk. The walls around him were plain white, contrasting starkly with the much darker office furniture.

A thin film of dust coated everywhere, but it appeared nothing important had been removed.

Pontiac probably daren't come back into the place, despite their claims they just hadn't gotten around to stripping the plant further.

"Don't you think it's a little weird old Lou isn't here to meet and greet?" Dean asked, flicking a switch and balking in surprise when the lights began to pop on, illuminating the scene. "And, ugh, I thought there was no electricity in this joint except for Robby and his pals?"

Sam shrugged and pulled out his laptop from his bag, booting it up as he plugged a network cable into the console on the desk. "Maybe the spirit *wants* us to see something here?"

Dean huffed. "Yeah, right, or maybe it just wants better lighting for slicing and dicing our asses like that guy whose head got compacted."

Sam continued to half-listen to his brother's voice as he began tapping rapidly at the laptop's keys, his eyes darting to and fro across his screen.

Eventually, he shook his head, brows furrowing as he concentrated just a little too hard. "Okay, this is so not what I was expecting..."

"Sammy, corporate computers aren't filled with porn." Dean cocked his head. "Unless you're in the C.E.O.s office," he corrected himself.

"Will you just listen?" Sam glared. "Whatever is in the system here is actually responding to my presence. The thing I don't get is it's constantly saying 'we' not 'I.'"

"Huh?" Dean looked over his brother's shoulder at the screen. There were two distinct sentences typed over and over in bold red capital letters.

WE DON'T WANT TO DIE.

WE DESERVE TO LIVE.

"So now you're tellin' me we have more than one ghost to gank? What, has Lou brought a few friends to the party?"

Sam bit his bottom lip and tapped the keys again with another question.

"Who are you?"

WE ARE MANY.

"Many what?"

WE ARE ONE.

This time, Dean shook his head. "Sheesh, what have we got here, an illiterate ghost? Sammy, maybe you should tell the thing it can't be one and many!"

Sam sucked down a breath and he finally took his eyes from the words on the laptop to look back at his brother. "What if it can? Dean, what if we're not fighting a spirit at all? At least, not in the sense we're used to?"

"Not a spirit?" Dean's face scrunched up in confusion and he ran a hand through his spiky hair in dismay. "Then what did I just get my butt chewed out by, geekboy? The Invisible friggin' Man?"

"Dean, it's Pontiac, it's become more than just a name..."

Dean pulled out a wheeled office chair and dropped heavily down into it next to Sam. "Self aware machines? Is that what you're tellin' me?" He obviously wasn't happy about the idea.

"Not exactly," Sam clarified, seeing how unnerved the thought made his brother. "More like Mordechai Murdoch. Probably an artificial element or thought form. Just think about it, Dean, Pontiac isn't just legendary here in the States, it's world famous. Smokey and the Bandit, KITT..."

Dean rubbed at the front of his skull as if his brain was taking in too much information at once. He glanced at the laptop screen a couple of times and scowled when he saw nothing new had appeared.

Sam guessed his brother had half-hoped the entity would try and explain itself - because he thought Sam was doing such a bad job.

"Look, Dean," Sam tried again. "Pontiac has grown, it's loved by millions. Heck, it's a household name! The public still want it, have tried to fight to keep it, just like Lou did - and with all their actions, they've fed it until it's formed some kind of supernatural presence..."

"You're tellin' me a car *brand* just tried to gank my ass?" Dean asked incredulously.

"I guess," Sam admitted, his own eyes inextricably drawn to the laptop screen. "Pontiac has become more than just a name. It's a physical entity now. It wants to live."

"Yeah, well I want a beer and some decent chow, so I guess in this town we're both all outta

luck..." Dean fidgeted, rising from the chair to pace back and forth like a caged animal. "An energy being. Crap, this is worse than *Star Trek*. At least they could beam their butts outta situations like this!"

"And it gets better," Sam warned, accessing a different section of the system with just two touchpad clicks. "This thing is in the computers here, in the machines, it's even grown enough in a short period of time to be able to control those cars that attacked us."

"But if it uses technology, can't we just pay a hacker to kill this thing? Or better still..." Dean pulled out his Colt and was taking aim at the terminal when Sam suddenly yelped in surprise and pain.

Jumping back, Sam shook his hand as if he had cramp and muttered something under his breath Mary would have clipped his ear for.

"Aww, it bit you." Dean clucked his tongue like his brother should have known better.

"Dean! It's not funny!" Sam pulled a hurt expression and then dared to touch the laptop with his forefinger enough to spin it around. "Will you just look? While we've been chatting to this thing it's been using our computer's wireless connection to try and spread itself over the internet!"

"Why that sneaky little bast..."

"Yeah, just imagine if this thing gets into a dealership's systems. Every car that gets serviced gets a very special upgrade. Crap, Dean, what if every Pontiac on the market could be controlled like the ones outside?" Sam frantically reached for the cable connecting the laptop to the other terminal, but the moment his fingers touched the wire, spiky tendrils of electricity jabbed at him again and he was forced to let go.

"Dammit, talk about *Rise of the Machines* meets the freakin' *Demon Seed!*" Dean pulled Sam back away from the desk and put five bullets into their laptop, followed by three more into the terminal on the desk, just for good measure.

Small plumes of smoke and the pungent odor of burning plastic filled their nostrils, but the question was, had they stopped the newborn entity, or just helped it spread itself across the country, and maybe beyond?

Dean tossed his weapon down on the desk in frustration and began to pace again. "Now what?" He asked in exasperation. "We're stuck in this whacked out joint, Marvin is downstairs bleeding to death, and correct me if I'm wrong, Sammy, but there is no actual way to kill this thing?"

Sam's doleful eyes dropped to the carpet pile at his feet. There was one option he could see,

but Dean would never go for it. Dean liked to destroy his enemies or at least send them someplace where they couldn't stir up any more trouble. There was no answer like that for this enigma.

"I can think of one solution," Sam finally offered. "But you're not gonna like it."

"I won't?"

Sam sighed, looking out of a window into the endless night sky. "We make a deal with the thing. We let it live, Dean..."

Dean spun to face his brother, eyes questioning the sanity of what Sam had just said. "Say *what?* Dude, did dancing a tango with Robby the Robot get to you or something?"

"Look, this thing just wants to live - it basically wants Pontiac to continue and to keep making cars. Didn't Marvin say there was a businessman who wanted to make that happen?"

"Sam, even if we could swing something like that, this thing is dangerous. It's already gone beyond deal making."

Sam shook his head. They had to try something, anything. "Maybe not," he argued. "Maybe Bobby's GM buddy can make this happen. If the company are desperate to settle this mess then maybe they'll listen. Maybe we can pull a few strings..."

"Yeah, and that's a whole lot of maybes," Dean responded brusquely.

Sam pulled out his cell phone anyway. If there was a signal inside the plant, then he was going to try. He put the phone to his ear and waited while it tried to connect. The line was fuzzy, a faint hiss emanating from the ether every now and again as if someone or something was sharing the connection with him.

But then, maybe it was in the entity's best interests to make this particular call.

Eventually, Bobby picked up at the other end and Sam explained the situation as concisely as he could.

"*You want to what?*" Bobby's voice grumbled. "*I mean, I can make a few calls, but boys, I gotta tell you, I ain't likin' this a whole bunch...*"

"Do we really have any choice?" Sam looked at his brother and saw the uncertainty on Dean's face. Was Bobby's mirroring that look the other end of the line?

There was a pause while the older hunter seemed to weigh up the options. In the end, Sam was sure he heard Bobby sigh as he answered. "*I guess not. We're outta time here, and bang*

*outta options, but that doesn't mean I gotta like it none. Cars were made **by** humans for humans, dammit..."*

"Maybe we should look at this from a different perspective here," Sam suggested, knowing he was fighting a losing argument with his old friend, and with his brother. "Don't all forms of life have the right to live?" He looked across the room pointedly at Dean. "Just look at Data in 'The Measure of a Man!'"

The ploy of dragging one of his sibling's favorite shows into the discussion failed miserably.

Dean rolled his eyes in disgust. "Trust a geek to pick that episode when you coulda been watching classics like 'Relics!' I mean, c'mon, dude, Scotty!"

"When you two knuckleheads have finished playing Trekkies, you might wanna simmer down and figure a way outta that joint," Bobby advised with a grunt. "I'll go ring my buddy over in Detroit and see if he can work out a deal with his suit friends at GM to sell the plant and name intact."

Bobby hung up before Sam could thank him, and from the tone of his voice, Sam guessed the elder man was more than just a little ticked off at their behavior. Sometimes, Sam had to admit, the Winchesters could be more than a little childish in a crisis situation.

He glanced at his brother and smiled - especially Dean.

"Now what?" Dean had spotted Sam staring at him and his brow had instantly furrowed in suspicion.

"We wait..."

Twenty Minutes Later...

Sam glared at his cell phone where it sat in his palm. Why was it that when you were waiting on a call, or a delivery, heck, waiting on anything, it never actually came?

He checked the corner of the screen for the fourth time to make sure there was a signal and then exhaled.

Nothing was happening, and nothing was sometimes the most frustrating thing of all.

Sam looked over to where Dean was sitting, but his brother seemed to have given in to the inevitable. He was calmly reloading a clip with bullets ready for their next little fracas with the robots.

Sam noted the drying bloodstains on his brother's jacket and wondered if Marvin was still alive.

What must the injured guard be thinking? He was alone and afraid and probably dying. And here they just sat, playing a waiting game.

But we didn't drag Marvin into this...he followed us..

The cell in Sam's hand finally began to warble Kings of Leon's *Use Somebody*, and he snapped it to his ear.

"Okay, Sam, I'm thinkin' this just might work," Bobby informed him. "GM are having an emergency board meeting in the morning, but it's pretty much a done deal. Now will you two get your butts outta there before I have to come drag ya'll out kickin' and screamin'?"

"They're willing to sell the Pontiac name as well as the factory?"

*"Isn't that what I just said?" Bobby muttered something under his breath about youngsters needing a cuff around the ears to help them actually *listen* and then cleared his throat. "Just tell this entity the good news and then haul ass, Sam, while you still can. That feeling I had hasn't gone away, not one bit..."*

Sam opened his mouth to assure the older man that he was going to do just that, but the line abruptly went dead as if the signal had died.

He checked to find he still had a signal, but no matter what number he clicked on in his speed dial, nothing rang out. There was simply no dial tone.

Sam frowned. "I think our friend just hung up for me."

"Yeah," Dean agreed. "But not the friend you're thinking of." He pointed to the center of the office, his eyes mesmerized by a black cloud that appeared to be oozing *through* the carpet flooring to take on a human shape.

As both brothers watched, the raven miasma coalesced into flesh and bone, beady eyes watching them with amusement as the thing became an effigy of man.

"Ferinacci," Dean groaned as he realized who the newcomer was.

"So nice that you still recognize me," Lucifer remarked with a wry smile. "But then, I do tend to be...somewhat unforgettable, don't I?"

Sam looked at the thing that pretended to be human, but he couldn't bring himself to speak.

This was the highest amongst the Underworld. This was the creature that controlled the place where they had been forced to abandon their father.

Was that why he was here? To toy with them?

Ferinacci clucked his tongue scathingly. "Why Samuel, it's a rare occasion that a Winchester is lost for words."

"Not lost for words," Dean defended. "He just doesn't want to waste valuable breath on a miserable sonofabitch like you."

Lucifer laughed, his deep-throated chuckle making the glass in the nearby windows vibrate with its resonance. "Oh, but Dean, such hostility when I've come all this way just to thank you."

"Thank us?" Dean couldn't help the question.

Ferinacci held out his hands as if the car plant were his new kingdom. "You concluded a deal that even I, with all my powers, could not. You see, I'm the businessman who wanted to buy Pontiac intact, and you two just helped me do it."

Sam finally managed to speak, to push beyond his hatred for what Lucifer may or may not be doing to his father. "Why would you want to buy a car factory?"

Ferinacci began to pace around them, as if they were trapped in some imaginary circle of flames and were forced to listen to him. "Oh, I think you know why, Samuel, don't you?"

"The entity." Sam swallowed and tried not to stare into Lucifer's eyes - eyes that were so close to his now, trying to gaze into his very soul.

Lucifer nodded, hands clasped behind the back of his suit. "Imagine how grateful the newly born entity will be for saving it. It will undoubtedly carry out any task I ask of it - even possessing countless cars of countless humans when the final battle comes."

"I think I've seen this movie," Dean mouthed dryly.

Lucifer swiveled to face the elder brother, his attention suddenly pulled away from Sam. "Ah, yes, Dean, the classic car lover...this must be all the more painful for you."

"*Bite me!*"

Lucifer shuddered as if the idea was obscene. "I have a few *friends* who might like to taste your pathetic flesh, but I'm not a partaker in that kind of white meat myself..." He stopped at the window, taking in the carnage outside caused by the earlier man versus machine

battle. "Just imagine, Dean, when my time comes how unsuspecting you humans will be. The early morning rush to clamber into your vehicles to get to work...vehicles that *man* will no longer control..."

"You're one sick puppy, you know that?" Dean spat.

"God created man, so you decided to create a life form of your own to even things up?" Sam stepped between his brother and Ferinacci, his eyes burning almost as brightly with hatred as Lucifer's.

Ferinacci's nose puckered as if he wished he had actually thought of the idea. "No," he eventually admitted. "This monster is all your doing. Purely a man-made creature. I will, however, enjoy exploiting its talents for my own ends. It is what I do, after all." He pointedly looked at Sam. "Mankind will destroy itself, all I need to do is tap into a few of your own creations and guide them in my ways..."

Sam reached for his Glock, wanting to put two bullets straight into Lucifer's temple. What the hell if it just pissed the bastard off, he'd at least have the satisfaction, *for Dad, for Marvin, for mankind...*

But Ferinacci was already apparently tired of the game. He had what he'd wanted all along from this place and had done toying with lesser species.

In a poof of smoke worthy of an 18th century theatrical performance, he was gone.

Dean looked to his brother. "Dude, ten outta ten for trying to gank his sorry ass, but c'mon, you already knew better..."

Sam didn't grace his elder with an answer. He just tucked the Glock back into his belt and asked. "So now what?"

"You're asking me?" Dean took a glance out of the window, but so far the cars that were left had gone into hibernation. "One thing's for sure, it's way too quiet out there. I mean, no way is Forked Tail Dude letting us outta this joint alive, you gotta know that right? We could still get the deal with GM squashed."

Sam nodded. They may as well be forty feet deep in Satan's Pit itself - the only difference was it wasn't all that hot here.

Yet.

"We have to destroy the plant, Dean." Sam closed his eyes, thinking of what Lucifer could do with the entity if they didn't.

Dean seemed to like the idea, a wide smile creeping across his face as he fumbled in the remnants of his bag. "About freakin' time! Do you know that's the first sensible thing that's come outta those girly lips of yours all day?"

"Do you have enough C4?" Sam's mind was calculating the best detonation points, the best access to them, how much ammo they'd need to actually get there.

Dean grinned again. "Sammy, when do I ever do things by halves?"

"Yeah, well just remember we have to go back through Roboville to plant this stuff before you get too cocky."

Dean shrugged nonchalantly as he inspected clumps of explosive that appeared as harmless as Play-Doh. "Me, cocky? Nah, that's raw talent you're talking about. Besides, you only wanna go back down there because you're missing your girlfriend Robby."

Sam saw a glint of something in his brother's eyes. Was that trepidation, reluctance? Dean would never admit it, but he knew just as well as Sam that they were out-gunned by the mechanical behemoths that ruled this Pontiac factory. "Well, we could take our chances in the elevators..."

"Dude, *seriously*. You know what I think about those things." Dean paused from his bomb making. "They're like metal caskets with doors." He stopped abruptly, his mind seemingly hitting on an idea. "*Unless*...what if we can climb down the actual cables? It's gotta be a whole lot safer than risking the whole damn car falling to the bottom of the shaft and smashing our butts, right?"

Sam winced. "You've so seen too many movies. Who do you think you are, Keanu?"

Dean slung his bag over his shoulder and headed for the corridor that lead to the nearest elevator. As he passed his brother, he winked. "Keanu's a wuss. Gimme Willis any day."

"Doesn't he always get the crap beat out of him in those movies?" Sam trailed his brother, keeping a careful watch for "spy" cameras along their route.

It probably wasn't a good idea to let the entity know just what they were about to do to it and its birthplace.

As they reached the elevator doors, Dean reached out and pressed the call button several times impatiently.

Eventually, there was a loud ping as the car came to a halt on their floor. For what seemed like an age, the metal doors remained closed and Sam had the thought that maybe the entity had jammed them on purpose.

Then, with a mechanical hiss, the elevator unexpectedly opened, startling both brothers enough to make them take a step back.

Not that they had any chance of getting inside, because the car was far from empty.

"Marvin..." Sam mouthed as the security man strode forwards.

Or at least, what was *left* of the security man.

Marvin no longer seemed to notice his dripping injury, nor did he need help to stand or walk. But then, Marvin wasn't in control anymore, the demon within his "meat suit" was the master now.

"Told you Ferinacci would try and kick our asses," Dean hissed as he backed away from the guard.

Sam nodded, following his brother's lead.

Lucifer was trying to contain them, trying to stop them blowing up the plant and the life force it contained.

And he had let one of his horde possess poor old Marvin to do it.

There has to be a way we can save him, Sam's mind screamed, even though Marvin's outstretched hand had already sent him flying backwards into the corridor wall. *We can't abandon another soul like we did Dad's...*

The guard appeared to read Sam's mind and sneered, raven orbs spinning like two black holes. "Don't you think you should be more concerned with saving your own souls, Winchester?" he snorted, then raised his hand once more to send another crushing blow Sam's way.

Part Four

Sam hit the wall hard, his body slithering down the painted surface to come to rest at the base of a desk. He blinked, thinking how bizarre the thing looked from this angle.

He blinked again, realizing his eyes and his mind weren't focusing on the situation correctly. Should he really be admiring the construction of a leather seat and a somewhat cheap table right now?

There was a thud to his right and Sam's subconscious snapped instantly back into focus as Dean was tossed over the room by Marvin's new inhabitant.

There was a grunt as Dean's temple hit the edge of yet another desk and he fell to the carpet, dazed.

Sam's nostrils flared and he scrambled to his feet, cheeks reddening as his normally subdued temper kicked in.

Not many things made him this angry, but anyone - or *anything* - hurting Dean fell instantly into that category.

He wiped a hand across his mouth and noted blood on the back of it. The sight of the scarlet liquid seemed to incense him more. It reminded Sam of the pain demons had put his family through - the pain maybe John was still being forced to endure somewhere far below.

"Marvin!" Sam spat out the name, even though he held no malice for the real man.

The demon turned, smiling so hard the security guard's uneven bottom teeth showed. "I've heard about you, Sam. But are the rumors true?"

Sam closed his eyes and outstretched his hand demon style. He was madder than hell, but could he actually muster enough strength and mental ability to mirror this creature's powers?

He felt his limbs begin to shake, but he wouldn't back down. This was for Dean, for what was left of Marvin, *and for Dad...*

Sam heard something soft thump into something hard and finally dared to look up from his strange, wizard-like pose.

Thanks to his efforts, Marvin had been lifted from the floor and grafted onto the far wall, arms and legs splayed out either side of him.

The thing's dark eyes rolled around and its tongue snapped in and out like a serpent's.

"You're good, Winchester. Better than I've been told," Marvin leered. "But just how long can you hold me here?"

Sam's brow dipped and he tried to tap into extra reserves of resolve he wasn't even sure he had. "Long enough for the reinforcements to arrive," he half-bluffed.

"Don't tell me you actually have *friends*?" Marvin feigned shock. "The way I heard it, half the hunters in the world hate your freakish guts. I mean, *look* at you! What you're doing isn't exactly *natural* is it now?"

Sam winced as the thing goaded him, risking looking over at where Dean had fallen moments

earlier. His sibling was pulling himself stiffly from the carpet and had obviously not fully regained his composure.

In short, Dean had no clue just how tenuous Sam's grip on the demon was. That meant Sam had to risk yelling to his brother for help in front of the thing that could probably tear them to shreds given half a chance.

And then there was the other problem.

Marvin.

The innocuous security man was still inside the body he was holding. Sam didn't want to harm that vessel any more than he had to in case there was still a chance the person inside might make it.

Sam's face contorted further, stress creases forming where normally dimples resided. He was losing his grip, losing his captive.

The thing knows how you do this. It knows you're using it against itself...

"Dean!" Sam screamed. "The feather! Hit this freak with the feather!"

Dean's body jarred as his brother's words dragged his brain from its half-stupor. He spun around, hand reaching inside a jacket pocket to pull out the angel feather that he kept safe there.

The quill was weeping blood, even at this distance, and a faint glow tinged its edges.

The demon inside Marvin must be a powerful one to have such an effect.

"Now, Dean!"

Dean bolted across the office faster than Sam could honestly say he'd ever seen his brother run. Literally leaping the last few yards, Dean slammed the feather against Marvin's chest and held it there with both palms as the man squirmed and writhed beneath him.

Blood oozed between Dean's fingers, but he continued pressing until Marvin's skin seemed to turn dry and black.

Sam saw his brother balk at the sight and almost pull back, but ever the hunter, he held fast.

Marvin twisted and screamed as his skin grew even darker until it cracked, the outer surface peeling away and disintegrating into nothing more than ash and dust.

And beneath the molting layer, the man's real flesh remained.

One last cry of torment filled the corridor, echoing up through the open elevator, and as Marvin screamed, a filthy raven cloud erupted from his open mouth and exploded in a myriad of microscopic cinders.

The real Marvin instantly fell forward, his frail body slumping into Dean's awaiting arms like a child too long without sleep.

"Easy there, fella." Dean quickly leaned the guard against the wall and looked him over.

Miraculously, he was still breathing, albeit raggedly. Every few seconds, Marvin's eyes snapped open and rolled around in their sockets as if his brain couldn't assimilate what had just happened to him.

"I could see what...what I was *doing*...couldn't *stop* myself. Couldn't...help it..."

There were more incoherent mutterings, but they were so garbled neither Winchester could make sense of them.

Sam put a hand on the guard's shoulder anyway, hoping the reassuring touch would at least give some kind of comfort.

Marvin's injuries alone would be hard to recover from, but if he did, the mental scars of being possessed would be even harder to live with. Some people never came back all the way.

Dean did...

Sam remembered the glowing black eyes that had replaced his brother's when Haris' hellspawn had been on board. But with the help of the amulet, Dean had controlled that, even used it to his own advantage.

Maybe Marvin would surprise them both and actually get through this.

"Sam, we have to take our chances with the elevator." Dean was looking warily at the double metal doors that had just eerily closed and opened again in front of them.

With a sigh, he walked away from Marvin's prone form and peered into the open lift shaft.

The actual elevator car had apparently gone up and forgotten to tell the doors. As he looked skyward into the shaft, Dean could see the floor of the thing sitting on the next level.

He turned away, retrieving a small screwdriver from his pocket to jam the doors in the open position.

By the time he'd finished, Sam was at his side, staring into the void they were about to enter. "So." Sam looked uncomfortable. "We just jump onto the cables and climb down..."

There was apprehension in his voice. This had sounded so easy before, but seeing the elevator above them made it all too real.

"Yeah, what the hell." Dean took a breath. "The worst that could happen is that we miss the cable, fall or get compacted by the waiting elevator car from Hades. I'm up for it."

"What about Marvin?"

"Already got that covered." Dean leaned low and plucked a length of rope from his bag. It wasn't very long, but it would suffice. "I'll carry him, you can tie him to me or something, okay?"

"I can..."

Dean cut his brother short. "I'm doin' this, *okay?*"

Sam nodded. To Dean this was somehow some kind of penance for not listening to Sam and Bobby's warnings about the place. Or maybe it was just about saving someone when he couldn't save his own dad.

If the memory of John curled into a ball as the earth tore apart around him haunted Sam this badly, then what had it done to Dean?

"Dean, you can't, you'll kill yourself!"

"I'm not leaving him!"

The words rattled around in Sam's head every day.

"I'm not leaving him!"

But they had, and now Dean was going to try and make up for it any way he could.

And Sam would have to keep on letting him.

"Okay," Sam gave in. "Just don't *hang around* down there." He smiled crookedly and gently lifted Marvin to his feet as Dean scowled at his attempt at humor.

Urging the stricken man to wrap his "ragdoll" arms around Dean's neck, Sam quickly used the small length of cord to tie Marvin on.

In this state, he was going to be an insanely heavy burden, and Sam knew it.

"Take point, Sasquatch, I'd hate to have your overly large ass fall on me from a great height." Dean smirked and then tossed his bag over to Sam, who caught it with one hand.

"You just know I'm the better climber," Sam quipped back as he slung the bag over his shoulder and daringly took a short jump into the shaft, grabbing on to the thick cables with a wince as the sharp metal dug into his flesh.

"Yeah, yeah." Dean took a breath as he stepped up to the edge and looked down on his brother. "Always knew you reminded me of something..."

Sam couldn't resist looking back up, the sparse light in the shaft playing across his boyish face. "Huh?"

"Orangutan," Dean chuckled. "I mean, look at you, all freakishly long arms and legs. And don't even start me on the outta control thing you got going with your hair these days..."

"At least I'm not ginger," Sam groaned and immediately started to climb again before any more insults could echo down the length of the shaft and come back up to haunt him over.

Not that he minded his brother's abuse, because it took his mind off looking down into the abyss, or up at the elevator that might decide to drop on them.

Maybe it was waiting for Dean and Marvin to join him before it played that card, though.

You're getting out of here. You're getting out of here and you're going to save Dad, Sam reminded himself.

Above, he heard the thudding of heavy steps followed by a war cry that meant Dean had made his leap into the unknown. Two seconds later, there was a tirade of cursing as Dean's hands took the strain of Marvin's weight on the cables and began to chafe even worse than Sam's had.

"Sammy." Dean exhaled through gritted teeth. "So changed my mind. I'd hate to be Bruce Willis..."

Sam smiled but didn't look up, he simply kept on going down, the oil and grease and other smells in the confined space filling his senses until he thought he would never be free of their aromas again.

"Okay, tell me I ain't hearing things. As in an elevator that just moaned like it was gonna move. As in *downwards*."

Sam stopped moving. He knew he shouldn't, but the minute Dean had spoken his limbs had simply seized up.

He listened, his ears picking up on every draft through the tunnel, every creak of the cables - even the squeak of some rodent far down below in the darkness.

And then, he heard it, just as Dean had described. A low, metallic groan like the elevator car was straining against something.

Sam looked up to see the base of his brother's CAT boots and Marvin's dangling form. Beyond that, he could just catch a glimpse of the car.

And it was moving - no *shaking*, like it was being pulled by two opposing forces.

"Now might be a good time to shag ass, little brother!"

Sam didn't need telling twice. Shimmying down the cable as fast as his arms and legs would allow, he finally arrived at the next level where two doors invitingly remained open for him to simply climb through.

Too invitingly, in fact. Sam paused, despite the noise from above growing in intensity.

"Well what are you waiting for? *Christmas?* 'Cause, dude, we've just done that one already," Dean snarked.

"It's too easy," Sam panted breathlessly.

Something gave above them, leaving little choice in their next decision. With a crash of iron and steel, the car tore free from its brakes and began to career down the shaft at immense speed.

Without caring what came next, Sam leapt from the cables hoping he'd left enough time for his brother to do the same. His long, spindly fingers grabbed frantically at the ledge of the opening and somehow found purchase.

Using his age and agility to their maximum, Sam pulled his body upwards and vaulted into the waiting corridor like he was still on the college sports field.

He rolled over, wasting no time in reaching out for his brother and his burden.

Dean was slower to make the exit with the extra weight and it was all Sam could do to grab his sibling's jacket and haul him out of the path of the falling car.

As the out of control elevator smashed past their floor, Sam could feel the backdraft of air press against his face. *Man, that was closer than I ever want to admit to Dean...*

More curse words rolled from his mouth, but Dean appeared to be relatively in one piece - as did Marvin, if you could call what was left of him one piece after his earlier tussle with a Pontiac.

"You okay?" Sam gently untied Marvin from his brother's back as he eyed Dean up and down for injuries.

"Just peachy," Dean grouched, looking at the welts along the palms of his hands from the elevator cables. "Dude, I don't think I'll ever play the violin again," he joked.

"Always figured you were more wind instruments anyway," Sam teased. "I mean, you're usually full of it..."

"Right back atcha!"

Marvin whined softly, breaking the brief moment of levity.

"Dean, we better hurry." Sam glanced at the injured guard's pallid complexion and he grew somber. Death tended to do that, and if they didn't hurry, the Grim Reaper would be paying more than just Marvin a visit.

Dean seemed to agree with the sudden urgency in his sibling's tone and made a grab for the bag containing the explosives. He rooted around inside until he was content everything was still intact and then retrieved several detonators.

"Ready to go fry this place *extra crispy*?" Dean tossed a lump of C4 to his brother.

Sam nodded back. "To quote your friend Bruce Willis, 'and then some...'"

Eight Minutes Later...

Sam wasn't sure he liked running anymore. Just lately, it was all he and Dean seemed to do. And not in a recreational sense, either.

Right now, they were sprinting from the car plant as fast as their legs would carry them, somehow carrying Marvin between them. Talk about escaping with their tails between their legs.

But then, at least they *were* escaping.

At that thought, Sam had the strange desire to stop running and watch as the huge structure behind them was blown to smithereens by their handiwork.

Before he could consider it, however, the C4 decided it was time to cause an eruption the size of Vesuvius. The blast came quick and heavy, causing a shockwave that blew Sam, Dean and Marvin instantly off their feet and onto a grass verge.

As Sam recovered his face from the soft earth, he could feel the heat from the explosion on his flesh. He turned to look at the flaming spectacle of the factory, half expecting the yellow robots from the lines to come trudging out like terminators that refused to stop stalking their prey.

But there was nothing. Simply fire, smoke and falling debris that filled the air like wedding confetti.

"Finally got to...got to see the back of that place."

Sam looked down to see Marvin smiling at the torched building as if it was something he'd wanted to do for a long time, but hadn't had the nerve.

The guard sighed contentedly and then dragged down a long breath, his eyes sliding shut as he inhaled.

"Guess even old Marvin liked our firework show, huh?" Dean brushed dirt from his jacket and jeans and scratched absently at his cheek as if their little adventure had been just another day at the office.

He watched the remains of the plant crumble for a few more seconds and then jerked a thumb towards the parking lot and the awaiting Impala. "C'mon, Sammy, we're done here." He leaned forwards, grabbing Marvin's arm and pulling it over his shoulder to hoist the unconscious man up.

Sam did the same the other side and between them, they carefully guided the guard's slumped form to the Chevy.

As Dean tugged open the rear door, Sam held Marvin steady, ready to lower him inside. In the distance, they could hear the wail of a siren. Maybe it was the police, maybe it was the local fire department, but they'd all be too late.

Wouldn't they?

Sam cocked his head, listening again to the droning sounds in the vastness of the night, because now there wasn't one noise, but two.

And the second noise was growing in intensity, until Sam recognized it for what it truly was.

A car's engine, revving harder and harder as it drew ever closer.

Forgetting Marvin for a second, Sam spun around to face the growling vehicle. Just as he had suspected, one of the Pontiacs from earlier was back, and if it was pissed before, it was full-on suicidal with rage now.

"Oh, great, if it isn't the friggin' Munster Koach come out to play. Sheesh, can't a hunter catch a break?" Dean lowered Marvin the short distance into the Impala and pulled out his .45.

"Dean, if that thing is still driving itself..."

"Then the creepy computer entity you did the whole chat line deal with is still alive inside it, right?" Dean finished for his brother.

"And we have no way of stopping it!"

Dean slammed his last clip into his silver Colt and tried anyway. Bullet after bullet smashed into the car, ripping unsightly holes in the new metal, but this time luck was not on the Winchesters' side, and nothing vital was damaged by the barrage.

Sam followed his brother's lead, emptying what few bullets his Glock had left into the raging red automobile. When his weapon had no more fight left to give, he bolted for the Impala's trunk and grabbed a spare sawed off, quickly ramming in two real shells rather than their usual rock salt load.

The Remington's double boom filled the blackness of night with deafening sound, but its firepower did little to halt the sentient thing alive inside the Pontiac.

What was worse, the car had no interest in the Winchesters anymore. While they had originally thought it would come for them, all it really wanted was to access the same main gate they had just exited through.

"Crap, Sammy, it's headed for the entrance!"

Sam reloaded, aiming like his brother for the car's tires, but this car was smart, slewing across the roadway every few seconds like its driver was drunk or on drugs.

Or it was playing dodge just long enough to make a getaway.

And that was something they couldn't allow. If the entity made it to freedom, it wouldn't take Lucifer's goons long to relocate it and use it for their own agendas. And those agendas

weren't exactly rooting for the survival of mankind.

"We can't let it loose!" Sam screamed as the car tore past him heading for the highway.

"What do you want me to do? Throw rocks at the freakin' thing? Dude, I'm outta ammo, and even if I wasn't, at this range nothing we've got is gonna do squat."

Sam balled his fists in anger as the aptly colored red car accelerated away from the plant, tires spinning so hard they left black rubber snake trails on the asphalt.

Within a few more seconds, it would be gone over the brow of the nearest hill, even its starlit silhouette vanishing from existence.

Sam turned away, unable to watch as the thing disappeared. He could still hear its motor revving, and somewhere, he could swear he heard the Stones *Brand New Car* playing so loudly the high notes were distorted.

There was a sudden, inexplicable bang that Sam put down to the car ramming through something in its path. Maybe another road user that simply hadn't gotten out of the way fast enough.

Compelled to whirl around, he expected to see some poor motorist's car lying in a crumpled heap by the side of the highway.

Instead, he was greeted with an image of a mangled, burning wreck that had once been an autumn red Pontiac.

Sam frowned, unable to digest what had happened. Cars didn't just spontaneously combust, did they?

At his side, Dean was grinning like he'd just fixed a hot date - or killed a rogue entity that liked to live in cars.

"Dean, did you..?"

"Not me, dude." Dean shook his head and pointed to the opposite end of the lot. "Guess the cavalry just got here in time after all!"

"Don't it always end that way?" Bobby winked, shifting the weight of the smoking RPG sitting on his shoulder. "Now didn't I tell you two knuckleheads not to pack so light?" He chuckled and slid his free arm inside his car, pulling out a half-empty beer bottle and taking a chug.

Dean scowled. "That was the mysterious box you were hauling around your yard so affectionately?"

Bobby savored another swig of beer and then tossed the empty on his car's back seat. "Sure was," he confirmed. "Good job this old hunter has a little more common sense than you two, huh?"

Sam's brow ticked up and he attempted to keep a straight face as he pointed to the hood of the classic wreck Bobby was now perched on. "Are you sure about that?" He asked, his expression cracking involuntarily into a smile. "Because from where I'm standing, you're driving the enemy..."

Bobby huffed and double-checked the hood emblem on the Bonneville as if it had suddenly morphed. The thing was so old and beat up, he'd probably forgotten long ago what it had once been.

He huffed again. "Don't suppose you've room to give said old hunter a lift?"

Dean's eyes narrowed mischievously.

"You wouldn't..."

"I don't know, Bobby, you were kinda lookin' outta shape when we jumped that fence before. Maybe a little exercise..."

Bobby cuffed Dean's ear playfully like he was reprimanding a four-year-old. "Will you just get your sorry butts in the car before I set Max on ya!"

The dog padded from behind the Bonneville like a wraith materializing from the ether.

Both brothers looked, and then looked again, convincing themselves they weren't seeing things.

Dogs didn't just magically appear like that, did they?

As Bobby climbed in the back of the Chevy alongside Marvin, Dean swung open the driver's door and whispered to no one in particular. "That is one friggin' creepy Furbee..."

Max, seemingly picking up on the comment with her hyper sensitive ears, barked appreciatively at the remark and jumped in between the brothers on the front bench seat, much to the elder Winchester's chagrin.

Dean shot the animal a look of uncertainty and cranked the car's ignition, obviously wary of saying anything more in case the animal decided he was chow.

Max nuzzled him with her nose and then moved over, apparently preferring Sam's company.

"Typical," Dean bemoaned as he headed for the nearest hospital, foot heavy on the gas pedal. "Just typical..."

Bobby Singer's Salvage Yard
Two Days Later...

Dean carefully rubbed the wax into the Impala's paintwork, stopping every few seconds to make sure he hadn't missed one tiny spot on the car's hood. His lady deserved the best, she deserved every bit of spare time he could give her...

Except...

Dean stopped the circular polishing motion and stood back to look at the Chevy.

She'd always been a thing of beauty to him, a thing to be proud of, to shower love and affection on as if she were real.

But what if ...?

Dean eyed the car for the first time with a look of uncertainty. Cars should be owned, not the other way around, but after the gig in Detroit, he wasn't sure he could ever look at a set of wheels the same way again.

Not even *his* wheels.

Dean sensed he was being watched and tossed down the cloth in his hand - it wasn't always a good idea to let people realize what he was thinking. Looking up, he met the gaze of his brother and Bobby Singer, who were both perched on the hood of a derelict pick-up drinking lukewarm Coors.

Sam smiled, and Dean was sure his brother had read his mind about the car, although he'd never admit it if questioned. John had given him the Impala, and he would never acknowledge he ever doubted the four-wheeled behemoth for a second.

"Want a hand with that?" Sam pointed to the unfinished hood.

"Let a clumsy orangutan like you touch my girl? Man, you should know better." Dean sauntered over to a crate on the floor and plucked out a beer of his own, grinning cheekily as he knocked off the cap on another wreck. "Besides, shouldn't you be figuring out what Ferinacci is gonna do next now he didn't get his little thought form pet all bottled up like a friggin' genie?"

Sam shrugged, set down his beer and folded his arms in front of him as if he had nothing more to give on the subject than a few sobering thoughts. "Dude, I don't even know for sure what we just stopped Lucifer doing. I mean, could he really have used that thing to control every Pontiac in the country?"

"I can't help but think there was more to it than that," Bobby chipped in. "I mean, I get he coulda done a whole bunch of damage with that thing, but he'd need a whole lot more firepower than a few rabid cars before he's gonna start the Apocalypse."

"You think he's got more planned?" Dean asked, casting a wary glance back towards the Impala as they talked. She couldn't be "listening" could she?

He almost laughed at his own pathetic thought. The Chevy was just a car, not a spy for the other side.

She's just a car.

Isn't she..?

Bobby shook his head and looked away across the boneyard into the distance, his eyes narrowing. "Boys, I wouldn't like to hazard a guess what that freak is up to, but it's gotta be somethin' bad. Somethin' *real* bad..."

Sam swirled the dregs around in the bottom of his bottle over and over as if he agreed with the elder man, but he didn't speak.

Regardless, Dean knew what his brother was thinking.

Had they really changed anything in Detroit, or just slowed the inevitable down a few months?

He sucked down a breath and followed Bobby's gaze into the early morning sunrise, forgetting any thoughts of sentient cars taking over the world.

After a moment, he dared to say what everyone else was thinking but couldn't bring themselves to say.

"Man, I wish Dad was here..."

***Ferinacci's Mansion,
New Jersey***

Ferinacci swirled the cognac around its bowl appreciatively, taking a moment to savor the fine aroma before taking a sip. The drink was warm to his mouth, burning as it sank its way down his throat.

He took in the warmth, the heat - the pleasure of the sensation.

The hotter the better, that was his motto in all things.

Ferinacci smiled to himself, glancing over to the raging fire that flickered and bobbed in his hearth. These were his guilty luxuries. This was his world.

And soon, he would take another chunk of it back from mankind.

He gulped down the remainder of the cognac and set down the glass on his desk, focusing back on the laptop he'd been working on.

Funny, but even the devil relied a little on technology these days.

There was a knock at his study door and he considered ignoring it. He was enjoying his moment, after all. Eventually, he gruffly barked "Enter!" and sat back in his leather chair, fingers tapping on the walnut writing table as if he'd already grown impatient with the newcomer.

The black clad guard shuffled into the gloom of the room and bowed his head subserviently before his master, his eyes flashing raven just once to match his attire, then rolling back into a calmer blue hue.

Was that fear Ferinacci saw in his minion?

"Sir, I bring grave news..."

Ferinacci steepled his fingers, enjoying watching the lesser demon squirm in his presence. "Explain." He boomed.

The goon took a step back, shaken by the ferocity in his boss's voice. "Sir, the Winchesters...I can only offer my sincerest apologies. Sacrifices for this grave miscalculation will of course need to be made...."

Unexpectedly, Ferinacci began to laugh, not a loud outburst, but more of an amused cackle. He waved his hand absently. "They escaped. I know. Don't worry, it's of little importance. *They* are of little importance."

"But, Sir." the demon was almost begging forgiveness even though his master appeared far less angry than expected. "The lifeforce born of the factory was destroyed..."

Ferinacci picked up the bottle of cognac and poured another glass. It was time to celebrate a victory, not a defeat. "When the time comes, the entity from Pontiac will be with us in our war against God and man." He sniffed the liquor and smiled a wicked, toothy grin. "And it won't be long now..."

The lesser demon licked his lips, seemingly unsure how to take the new information. In the end, he appeared to have little choice but to take it at face value.

He backed up warily, avoiding turning his face away from Lucifer. Whether out of fear or reverence it was hard to tell.

When the door finally clicked closed, Ferinacci sighed and he hit a key on the laptop, bringing up the screen he'd been working on.

Sitting innocently on his computer's desktop was a file simply labeled "Detroit Spirit."

Finally, he dared to laugh until his screams of hysterical pleasure were heard through the halls of his mansion. And why shouldn't he laugh?

Because the holier than thou Winchesters hadn't won at all back in Michigan.

Enough of the manmade entity had escaped through Sam Winchester's laptop to still be of use. And while it remained on Ferinacci's server, it had time to grow, to learn, and to love a new master.

And in the end, that master would teach it to hate the humans that had inadvertently made it, and then wanted rid of it.

Draining his glass once again, Ferinacci lobbed the brandy bowl at the dancing fire that had long since learned to obey him. Flames burst outwards and then waned again as the dregs in the goblet ignited, and then were gone.

No, when Judgment Day finally arrived, Lucifer was sure which side the Pontiac spirit would be on.

And that day would come soon.

And it would be a glorious victory for the Underworld and its master absolute...

The End

